

Reward satisfaction and leadership satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka, Malaysia

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Abstract: Analyzing the relationship between leadership satisfaction and reward satisfaction in primary schools can offer valuable insights for enhancing management and performance. This study aims to determine if there are significant differences in reward satisfaction and leadership satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka, based on their gender and teaching experience. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Stratified random sampling was employed in choosing 60 Tamil Primary School teachers in Melaka as a sample. This study used Leadership Satisfaction and Rewards Satisfaction Questionnaire (LRSQ) as instruments to collect the data. A pilot test was conducted among 30 randomly selected teachers to obtain the reliability of the instrument. The findings of the pilot test showed that the instrument is highly reliable and can be used for data collection. The key findings of the study revealed, that the reward as well as the leadership satisfaction of the male teachers were significantly higher than those of their female counterparts. On the other hand, there is no significant difference between senior teachers and junior teachers in the area of reward satisfaction. Similarly, the findings also indicated that the leadership satisfaction of the senior teachers is significantly higher than those of the junior teachers. This study has crucial pedagogical and practical implications because leadership and reward satisfaction can effect teachers' performance in schools.

Keywords: Male and female teachers, Reward and leadership satisfaction, Senior and junior teachers, Tamil primary schools.

1. Introduction

Education contributes a lot towards ensuring development of a country. Teachers play a crucial role in enhancing the education level of the progeny. (Tondeur et al., 2019). Every teacher is expected to perform an excellent role to achieve their goal and to obtain job satisfaction. When the teachers are satisfied with their job, they will be highly motivated and strive excellently for their students' success (Gusriani et al., 2022; Joseph et al., 2021; Omar, et al., 2021; Muhd Khaizer et al., 2018). Thus, job satisfaction is the main agenda in the teaching profession across the globe.

Leadership styles of school principals and their communicative styles go a long way to create satisfied teachers with regard to their job (Nair et al., 2021). As such, Malaysian Ministry of Education (Malaysian Education Blue Print 2013-2025 keenly wanted that the school principals should exhibit

effective leadership style by helping the teachers and asking them to participate in school activities most of the time. In addition, principals can be role models in schools by guiding teachers in the process of teaching and learning. If teachers and principals have positive relationships, it can contribute to teachers' job satisfaction.

On the other hand, there is a significant relationship between teachers' reward satisfaction and their job satisfaction. First, teachers require good salary for financial security and to fulfil their family needs. Besides that, if teachers feel unsecure and not satisfied with their salary, it has a negative impact on their job satisfaction. A study by Saudagar et al. (2020) affirms that teachers' rewards had a significant effect on their job satisfaction. Nor Roselidyawaty et al. (2023) also claimed that salaries, incentives, allowances, bonuses, and similar factors contribute to teachers' job happiness.

1.1. Problem Statement

Reward and job satisfaction play a crucial role in determining the social status and financial stability of teachers. Sahito et al. (2017) asserted that job satisfaction and motivation are crucial determinants of organizational success. Their study concluded that motivation is determined by the rewards an individual receives to fulfill his needs, while job satisfaction is determined by a positive emotional state towards work.

Similarly, a study conducted by Keçeci et al. (2023) found that there are three factors contributing to teachers quitting the profession. The reasons can be categorized into three main groups: economic, personal and environmental, and organizational. Regarding economic factors, their research revealed that salary, late payment of salary, perception of work undervaluation, and participation in part-time work outside regular working hours can impact job satisfaction related to rewards. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the satisfaction of teachers in terms of rewards and leadership in order to improve productivity and establish a teaching environment that is more supportive in this connection.

According to Syptak (1999), job satisfaction is a crucial factor in a working environment and has been correlated with outstanding performance and a strong commitment to the organization. Employee satisfaction can be gauged by observing the contentment and happiness level that employees experience in their working environment. In order to maximize the productivity of the employees, particularly teachers, it is crucial for the leader to uphold a strong sense of morale among the workforce. Contented employees are more inclined to exhibit high level of performance. It also reduces absenteeism, and demonstrates loyalty to the organization.

However, the impact of gender on job satisfaction remains inconclusive. A research by Hauret et al. (2017) found that women report higher levels of job satisfaction as compared to men, attributing this difference to varying expectations and work values between genders. Conversely, Singha et al. (2016) concluded that gender does not influence employees' job satisfaction. Similarly, Baykara et al. (2020) found no significant difference in job satisfaction levels among physical education teachers based on gender. Sharif et al. (2021) conducted a study on job satisfaction among primary school teachers and also reported that gender does not affect job satisfaction. Given these mixed findings, further investigation is needed, which is the focus of the current study that intended to examine job satisfaction among teachers with regard to gender.

1.2. Research Questions

The following four research questions were formulated for this study:

RQ1. Does gender have a significant impact on reward satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka?

RQ2. Does teaching experience have a significant impact on reward satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka?

RQ3. Does gender have a significant impact on leadership satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka?

RQ4. Does teaching experience have a significant impact on leadership satisfaction among Tamil

primary school teachers in Melaka?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, which differentiates between motivational and hygiene factors in relation to job satisfaction. Herzberg (1959) proposed that motivational factors, also known as intrinsic factors, enhance job satisfaction, while hygiene factors, or extrinsic factors, influence job dissatisfaction. Motivational factors drive employees and promote satisfaction, whereas hygiene factors are related to the working environment. Although hygiene factors do not actively motivate employees, their absence or inadequacy can lead to dissatisfaction. Herzberg's theory (Herzberg, 1966) also identifies salary as a hygiene factor; its lack can result in decreased motivation. Consequently, employers should prioritize motivational factors to boost job satisfaction and encourage better performance among employees.

Organizational productivity is positively correlated with employee satisfaction towards their leaders (Herzberg et al., 1966; Tang et al., 2024). Moreover, it will reduce absenteeism and foster harmonious working relationships among the teachers. The principal of a school plays a pivotal role in determining the quality of education and the presence of educational inequality within the institution. To enhance school performance, it is imperative for the principal to consistently engage in effective communication and collaboration with teachers. Regardless of the leadership style implemented by the principal, it has the potential to either positively or negatively impact teachers' job satisfaction.

2.2. Studies Related to Reward Satisfaction

Bryson et al. (2017) emphasized that an effective system, which is both competitive and fair, and is in line with employees' contributions and market standards, can improve employees' job satisfaction, motivation, performance, and retention. According to Alrawahi et al. (2020), increasing employees' wages can boost their self-motivation and productivity. The study conducted by Mathis et al. (2004) revealed that a key factor influencing job satisfaction is the congruence between employees' work expectations and the rewards they obtain from their job. Teachers will be contented with their work when rewards are commensurate with their performance and level of experience.

Furthermore, Khaliq's (2018) research asserts that salary, promotion, and relationships with colleagues exert a substantial impact on teachers' job satisfaction. The researcher emphasized the substantial combined impact of salary, promotion, and relationships with colleagues on the level of job satisfaction among secondary school teachers. Hence, it is advisable for the government to examine the salary structure of teachers, enabling them to achieve a harmonious, prosperous, and contented life with their families, while also attaining a respectable position in society. The study also determined that teachers can only perform their effective role in their professional activities when they are contented with their job.

The research conducted by Pancasila et al. (2020) demonstrated that reward has a greater influence on employees' job satisfaction than other factors. Similarly, the research conducted by Nor Roselidyawaty et al. (2023) demonstrated that providing teachers with personalized rewards and recognition based on their specific needs and preferences can greatly improve their overall job satisfaction. A well-designed incentive system can assist organizations in both attracting and retaining highly skilled employees. When employees perceive that their contributions are valued and acknowledged, they are more inclined to remain with their respective organizations and consequently improve their productivity.

Korlo et al. (2016) found that various factors, including administrative issues, student performance evaluation, poor disciplinary management, heavy workload, inadequate wages, lack of professional respect, and limited promotion opportunities, can impact teachers' job satisfaction. Guoba et al. (2022) conducted a study on the level of job satisfaction among teachers in Lithuania. The findings indicated

that teachers' job satisfaction is primarily and adversely influenced by the nature of their work and communication in the workplace. Conversely, teachers express the lowest level of satisfaction with their salary and opportunities for advancement.

Similarly, the research conducted by Lee et al. (2015) demonstrated that salary is the primary determinant of job satisfaction for teachers in primary schools. The researchers found that a higher salary was the primary determinant of teachers' exceptional performance in schools. The findings of the studies conducted by Hanushek et al. (2001) and Guarino et al. (2006) also determined that providing teachers with fair rewards leads to job satisfaction and improved performance in achieving the school's objectives. Similarly, the research conducted by Khan et al., 2021 and Zulkiflee et al. (2021) found that salary plays a vital role in determining job satisfaction among employees. Nor Roselidyawaty (2023) emphasized the significance of a teacher's salary in ensuring their financial stability and security. Therefore, maintaining salary satisfaction is crucial in order to retain them in the profession.

Korlo et al. (2016) found that various factors, including administrative issues, assessment of student performance, ineffective handling of disciplinary issues, heavy workload, inadequate compensation, lack of professional recognition, and limited chances for career advancement, can impact teachers' level of job satisfaction. Guoba et al. (2022) conducted a study on the level of job satisfaction among teachers in Lithuania. The study findings indicated that teachers' job satisfaction is primarily influenced by the nature of their work and communication in the workplace. On the other hand, teachers expressed the lowest level of satisfaction regarding their salary and opportunities for promotion. The findings revealed a notable disparity in job satisfaction between female teachers and their male counterparts, with female teachers reporting significantly higher levels of satisfaction in areas such as fringe benefits, co-workers, nature of work, and communication.

In Nigeria, Mabekoje (2009) conducted a study on job satisfaction, focusing on 338 teachers from 35 secondary schools. The results indicated that there were no significant gender differences in job satisfaction between male and female teachers across all nine dimensions, including pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work, and communication. A recent study conducted by Izzati et al. (2023) revealed that experienced teachers, who have been in their positions for more than five years, expressed greater job satisfaction compared to their less experienced counterparts. Additionally, the study found that female teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction than their male counterparts.

Iqbal et al. (2023) conducted a study examining the job satisfaction of male and female teachers in private and public secondary schools in Lahore. Their research revealed that female teachers exhibited higher levels of satisfaction compared to male teachers in regards to their salaries, supervision, fringe benefits, promotion opportunities, and the nature of their work. Similarly, the research conducted by Adewale et al. (2023) revealed that inadequate salaries and unfavorable school policies were significant factors leading to the high rate of male teachers leaving private schools. Furthermore, research conducted by Ipiri (2021) revealed that the attrition of teachers can be attributed to factors such as leadership style, excessive teacher workload, insufficient recognition for teachers, and inadequate salary.

Nevertheless, multiple studies have demonstrated that there is no discernible relationship between wages and job satisfaction. A study conducted by Batool et al. (2022) among science secondary school teachers in Rawalpindi, Pakistan found no significant relationship between salary and both job satisfaction and job performance among teachers. Similarly, the research conducted by Estafianto et al. (2020) demonstrated that salary does not exert a significant influence on job satisfaction and does not contribute to employees' performance. However, the present study examined teachers' satisfaction with rewards based on their gender and work experience, considering the inconclusive nature of previous findings.

2.3. Leadership Satisfaction among Teacher

Ismail et al. (2020) emphasized that the satisfaction of leadership plays a vital role in improving the functional competency of teachers in teaching and learning processes. The adoption of sustainable

principles can motivate teachers to enhance school climate conducive to learning and confront the educational challenges of the 21st century. In their research, Iqbal et al. (2023) conducted a study examining the level of job satisfaction among male and female teachers in both private and public secondary schools located in Lahore. Their research revealed that female teachers exhibited higher levels of satisfaction as compared to their male counterparts with regards to their salaries, supervision, fringe benefits, promotion opportunities, and the nature of their work.

In their study, Kiboss et al. (2014) examined the relationship between principals' leadership styles and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Kenya. The results revealed that male teachers exhibited lower levels of job satisfaction in response to the leadership style of principals, as compared to their female counterparts. According to Abdullah's (2019) study, female teachers at the elementary level exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and satisfaction with their principal's leadership compared to their male colleagues.

Nevertheless, a study conducted by Hussain Ch et al. (2017) revealed that both male and female teachers demonstrate an equal level of job satisfaction. The findings also indicated that male and female teachers held similar views regarding the leadership styles of their superiors, with no discernible gender-based differences.

Likewise, the study by Kouni et al. (2018) examined the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among a sample of 171 high school teachers in Greece. Their study asserted that there is no discernible disparity in teachers' satisfaction with leadership based on their level of teaching experience. In addition, the study indicated that the opinions of senior and junior teachers are similar. Similarly, Abdullah's (2019) study found no notable disparity in teachers' satisfaction with leadership based on their age and teaching experience.

Research on the correlation between reward satisfaction and job satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Malaysia is limited. Therefore, it is anticipated that this study will address the lack of research in this particular field. Furthermore, this study is essential for enhancing the reward and job satisfaction of Tamil primary school teachers, as well as facilitating the implementation of policies that would enable positive transformations in Tamil schools.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The research instrument used in this study was the questionnaire which was adapted from Okumbe's (1992) Job Satisfaction Level Measurement Instrument (JSLMI). The questionnaire was divided into two parts, Part A is on teachers reward satisfaction and part B is on their leadership satisfaction. The first construct for leadership satisfaction consists of 10 items while section B for rewards satisfaction consists of 8 items. All the items in the questionnaire use a five Likert scale as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Moderately Agree, 4= Agree and 5= strongly agree. Stratified random sampling was used to select a total of 60 teachers from 4 Tamil schools in Melaka. The samples consist of 30 male teachers and 30 female teachers. Their working experiences are also considered in this sampling. Senior teachers were included by their teaching experience of 15 years and above while junior teachers were involved by their teaching experience of less than 15 years. Each of the sample was given a set of questionnaire to be answered during their free time (within a week). Thus, the researchers believed that the sample will provide the information sufficiently needed to accomplish their study according to its set objectives.

Prior to the actual study, a pilot test was conducted among 30 teachers (15 male and 15 female) to obtain the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by using Cronbach's Alpha. The results of the Alpha value was .924, which indicated that the questionnaire is highly reliable to conduct the research (Griethuijzen et al., 2014). In order to acquire the validity of the questionnaire, the researchers asked two lecturers in the area of educational leadership to confirm the face validity and the content validity of the questionnaire. They duly verified and confirmed the face validity and content validity of the questionnaire. Therefore, the questionnaire is considered highly valid

and reliable for the study. The quantitative data from the questionnaire was analyzed using independent samples t-test (SPSS Program for Windows version 24).

This study utilized a descriptive survey design. Descriptive research is a method of exploration that allows researchers to accurately and systematically describe a phenomenon in its natural environment (Gay et al., 2012). The data in this study was gathered from Tamil school teachers through the use of a questionnaire.

3.2. Research Population

There are a total of 230 Tamil teachers in the state of Melaka. A stratified random sampling method was employed to choose a total of 60 educators from 4 Tamil educational institutions in Melaka. The samples comprise 30 male teachers and 30 female teachers. Their professional experiences are also taken into account in this sampling. Senior teachers were distinguished by their teaching experience of 15 years or more, while junior teachers were distinguished by their teaching experience of less than 15 years. Each participant was provided with a set of questionnaires to be responded at their leisure within a week. Therefore, the researchers have confidence that the sample will yield the necessary data to successfully achieve the study's predetermined objectives.

3.3. Instrument

The research instrument employed in this study was a questionnaire derived from Okumbe's (1992) Job Satisfaction Level Measurement Instrument (JSLMI). The questionnaire was split into two sections: the part A focused on teachers' satisfaction with rewards, while the part B focused on their satisfaction with leadership. The initial construct for reward satisfaction comprises 8 items, whereas section B for leadership satisfaction comprises 8 items. The questionnaire employs a five-point Likert scale for all items, as outlined below: 1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Moderately agree, 4. Agree, 5.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

Before the main study, a pilot test was carried out with a sample of 30 teachers (15 males and 15 females) to assess the reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire's reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The Alpha value of .924 indicates that the questionnaire used in the research conducted by Griethuijsen et al. (2014) is highly reliable. To ensure the questionnaire's validity, the researchers sought confirmation of its face validity and content validity from two lecturers specializing in educational leadership. The questionnaire's face validity and content validity were thoroughly verified and confirmed. Hence, the questionnaire is deemed to possess a high level of validity and reliability for the study. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using an independent samples t-test, utilizing the SPSS Program for Windows version 24.

4. Findings and Discussion

RQ1. Does gender have a significant impact on reward satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka?

Table 1.
Teachers' mean score for reward satisfaction according to gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Female	30	3.86	0.33
Male	30	2.70	0.23

Findings in Table 1 indicate that female teachers have a higher mean score for reward satisfaction (N= 30, M= 3.86, SD= 0.33) than the male teachers (N=30, M=2.70, SD= 0.23).

Table 2.
Independent samples t-test for teachers' reward satisfaction according to gender.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	t-value	df	p value
Male	30	3.85	0.33	1.15	17.04	58	0.000
Female	30	2.70	0.23				

Note: Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

The results in Table 2, show there is a significant difference between male teachers and female teachers in the area of reward satisfaction. The mean score of the female teachers is significantly higher than the male teachers ($t = 17.04$, $df = 58$, $MD = 1.15$, $p = 0.000$). The findings suggest a significant difference in the level of satisfaction between male and female teachers when it comes to rewards. Male teachers exhibited lower levels of reward satisfaction compared to their female counterparts.

In the context of organizational life, male employees tend to have a greater need for rewards as compared to their female counterparts. Rewards are not only beneficial for male employees in meeting their fundamental needs, but they are also necessary for fulfilling their other needs. This study further corroborates the findings of previous studies conducted by Jehanzeb et al (2012), Munap et al. (2013), Bustamama et al. (2014), and Akafo et al. (2015) that demonstrate the notable impact of rewards on job satisfaction among male teachers in comparison to female teachers. The present results also support the findings of Iqbal et al. (2023), which demonstrated that male teachers showed lower levels of job satisfaction as compared to their female counterparts with regard to their salaries.

The research conducted by Adewale et al. (2023) also demonstrated that inadequate remuneration and unfavourable school policies were significant factors leading to the high rate of male teachers quitting private schools. The study also discovered a detrimental effect of the quitting of male teachers from the education sector. The majority of male teachers express dissatisfaction with their salaries. One potential rationale for this discovery is that male teachers may have familial obligations, as the majority of them are married and must attend to their families. They find it burdensome to manage the responsibilities of caring for the family, providing for their children's education, purchasing groceries, paying off car loans, housing loans, and other expenses. Consequently, male teachers exhibit a greater inclination towards pursuing higher salaries in alternative industries as compared to their female counterparts.

In the reality of organizational life, reward is really needed by male employees than female employees. Reward is not only useful for male employees to fulfil the basic needs, but is also needed to realize their other needs. This study also supports the results of previous researches conducted by Jehanzeb et al (2012), Munap et al. (2013), Bustamama et al. (2014), and Akafo et al. (2015) which showed that reward has a significant effect on job satisfaction among male teachers compared to female teachers. The current findings also support findings by Iqbal et al. (2023) which concluded that male teachers are less satisfied than female teachers in terms of salaries.

The study by Adewale et al. (2023) also confirmed that poor salaries, and unpleasant school policies contributed to many male teachers' attrition in private schools. The study also found a negative impact of male teachers' attrition on the education sector as most of the male teachers are not satisfied with their salary. A possible explanation for this finding is that male teachers have family responsibilities, Most of them are married and have to take care of their family members. It is a burden for them to take care of their children education, groceries, car loans, housing loans and meet other expenses. As such, they are more interested in getting higher salaries in other sectors than female teachers.

However, the current findings contradict the findings by Mabekoje (2009) which revealed that there is no significant difference in reward satisfaction between male and female teachers. Similarly the study by Estafianto (2020) also concludes that salary does not have a significant impact on job satisfaction and performance of the employees.

RQ2. Does teaching experience have a significant impact on reward satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka?

Table 3.
Teachers' mean score for reward satisfaction according to teaching experience.

Teaching experience	N	Mean	SD
Senior (15 years and above)	30	3.96	0.31
Junior (1-14 years)	30	2.73	0.23

Findings in Table 3, indicate that senior teachers (having 15 years and above teaching experience) have a higher mean score for reward satisfaction (N= 30, M= 3.96,SD= 0.31) than the junior teachers (having less than 15 years teaching experience), N=30, M= 2.73, SD= 0.23.

Table 4.
Independent samples t-test for teachers' reward satisfaction according to teaching experience.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	t-value	df	p value
Senior	30	3.96	0.31	1.23	17.37	58	0.000
Junior	30	2.73	0.23				

Note: Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$.

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate a significant difference in reward satisfaction between senior teachers (those with 15 years or more of teaching experience) and junior teachers (those with less than 15 years of teaching experience). The results of the independent samples t-test reveal that the average score of the junior teachers is significantly greater than that of the senior teachers ($t = 17.37$, $df = 58$, $MD = 1.23$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, these findings indicate that there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction with rewards between senior and junior teachers. The findings provide a response to Research Question 2.

The results indicate a significant difference in reward satisfaction between senior teachers with 15 or more years of teaching experience and junior teachers with less than 15 years of teaching experience. The findings suggest that junior teachers exhibit higher levels of satisfaction with the rewards they receive in comparison with senior teachers. The senior teachers may have greater obligations towards their family members, daily expenses, loans, bills, and their children's higher education, in contrast to the junior teachers who may still be single and are without any obligations to their children.

The results of earlier studies conducted by Quitugua (2010) were parallel to these findings, demonstrating that junior teachers exhibited higher levels of satisfaction with rewards as compared to senior teachers. Nevertheless, the findings of this study challenge the conclusion reached by Ghazali (2011) that junior teachers exhibit higher levels of dissatisfaction with rewards in comparison to senior teachers. Research by Fioviello's (2011) uncovered that a contributing factor to the departure of junior teachers from the teaching profession is the inadequate remuneration. Hanushek et al. (2001) and Guarino et al. and Daley (2011) have also asserted that junior teachers experience greater satisfaction when they receive a higher salary.

RQ3. Does gender have a significant impact on leadership satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka?

Table 5.
Teachers mean score for leadership satisfaction according to gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	30	3.96	0.29
Female	30	2.89	0.19

Findings in Table 5, indicate that female teachers have a higher mean score for leadership

satisfaction (N= 30, M= 3.96, SD= 0.29) than male teachers (N=30,M= 2.90, SD= 0.19).

Table 6.

Independent samples t-test for teachers' leadership satisfaction according to gender.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	t-value	df	p value
Female	30	3.96	0.29	1.07	17.05	58	0.000
Male	30	2.89	0.19				

Note: Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$.

The findings presented in Table 6 demonstrate a significant difference in leadership satisfaction between male and female teachers. The independent samples t-test reveals a significant difference in leadership satisfaction between female and male teachers ($t = 17.05$, $df = 58$, $MD = 1.07$, $p = 0.000$), with female teachers reporting higher satisfaction levels. Therefore, these results address Research Question 3 and demonstrate that male teachers experience lower levels of satisfaction in leadership roles as compared to female teachers.

The results of the current study align with the findings of Abdullah (2019), which demonstrated that female teachers exhibited higher job satisfaction and greater satisfaction with their principal's leadership as compared to male teachers. Gold et al. (2003) also found that male teachers were less satisfied with the leadership style in schools as compared to female teachers in terms of leadership satisfaction. They determined that a method to promote the retention of male teachers in the teaching profession and ensure their contentment with leadership was to offer them the chance to assume leadership positions. One could argue that men have a tendency to prefer autonomy and, as a result, have a negative attitude towards micromanagement. This study was consistent with the research carried out by Abbasi (2003) and Bindu (2007). Nevertheless, the results of this study are in direct opposition to the findings of previous studies conducted by Gosnell (2000), Sargent et al. (2003), and Hussain Ch et al. (2017), which concluded that there was no discernible distinction in the level of satisfaction between male and female teachers based on leadership style in educational institutions.

RQ4. Does teaching experience have a significant impact on leadership satisfaction among Tamil primary school teachers in Melaka?

Table 7.

Teachers mean for leadership satisfaction according to teaching experience.

Teaching experience	N	Mean	SD
Senior (15 years and above)	30	4.2	0.55
Junior (1-14 years)	30	2.93	0.52

Findings in Table 7 show that senior teachers (Above 15 years of teaching experience) have a higher mean score for leadership satisfaction (N= 30, M= 4.2, SD=0.55) than junior teachers (less than 15 years of teaching experience) (N=30, M= 2.93, SD= 0.52).

Table 8.

Independent samples t-test for teachers' leadership satisfaction according to teaching experience.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference	t-value	df	p value
Senior	30	4.2	0.55	1.27	9.15	58	0.000
Junior	30	2.93	0.52				

Note: Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$.

The results of the independent samples t-test in Table 8 indicate a statistically significant difference in leadership satisfaction between senior teachers (with 15 years or more of teaching experience) and junior teachers (With 1-14 years of teaching experience). The average score of the senior teachers is

considerably greater than that of the junior teachers ($t = 9.15$, $df = 58$, $MD = 1.27$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, these results address Research Question 4 and confirm that there is a notable disparity in leadership satisfaction between senior and junior teachers.

The research conducted by Eliofotou-Menon and Athanasoula-Reppa in 2011 provided evidence that senior teachers, who have more experience, exhibited a greater inclination and familiarity with organizational rules and regulations as compared to their junior counterparts. These findings align with the research conducted by Eliofotou-Menon et al. and Ingersoll (2001), which demonstrated that senior teachers typically enjoy a higher status in the workplace, receive greater recognition, participate in decision-making processes, and receive more support from school management.

The study conducted by Klassen and Chiu (2010) and Fantilli & McDougall (2009) yielded comparable findings to this study. However, Brown and Wym (2015) hold contrasting perspectives on the level of satisfaction in leadership among senior and junior teachers. Their research uncovered that contentment with leadership is a significant factor in fostering happiness among junior teachers and influencing their decision to stay in their current institutions. The present results contradict the findings reported by Kouni et al. (2018) and Abdullah (2019), which suggested that there is no notable disparity in teachers' satisfaction with leadership based on their teaching experience.

5. Conclusion

This study unveiled significant phenomena. Firstly, the study revealed a significant difference in reward satisfaction between female and male teachers, with female teachers reporting significantly higher levels of satisfaction. Secondly, the study found that senior teachers experienced significantly lower levels of reward satisfaction as compared to their junior counterparts. Furthermore, the level of satisfaction with leadership among female teachers is notably greater than that among male teachers. Furthermore, the senior teachers exhibit greater levels of leadership satisfaction as compared to their junior counterparts. The findings confirm that prioritizing teachers' satisfaction with rewards is crucial in order to prevent teachers from quitting their positions (Adewale et al., 2023). According to Alrawahi et al. (2020), raising employees' wages can improve their self-motivation and productivity. In terms of theory, incentive factors, such as rewards, have a substantial impact on the job satisfaction of teachers. According to Herzberg (1959), motivational factors contribute to the enhancement of job satisfaction among employees. When employees perceive that their efforts are acknowledged and compensated, they increase their productivity (Nor Roselidyawaty et al. 2023).

However, there are certain constraints in this study as well. Initially, the sample consists of a mere 60 primary school teachers. Hence, forthcoming research should employ a more extensive sample that encompasses educators from secondary educational institutions. Furthermore, the present study solely examined the satisfaction of teachers with rewards and leadership, taking into account gender and teaching experience. Additional aspects such as the educational credentials of teachers, their compensation, perks, work demands, oversight, and the leadership approach of principals have not been examined. Future researchers should incorporate these variables into their studies to gain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' satisfaction with rewards and leadership. Furthermore, it is anticipated that future researchers will conduct a qualitative analysis to investigate the factors associated with teachers' satisfaction with rewards and leadership.

Finally, this study has practical implications. The findings indicate that the Ministry of Education should ensure that teachers are rewarded in order to enhance their job satisfaction. Teachers' motivation and productivity in school can be enhanced when their fundamental needs are met. Additionally, it is crucial for school principals to assume a significant role in creating a favourable working environment and serving as a role model for teachers. School principals should play their roles as mentors, advisers, and effective managers. Nonetheless, unhappiness among teachers within a school can have a detrimental impact on the overall atmosphere of the school and their effectiveness as educators. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to be satisfied with their leadership in order to stay in the profession and improve students' learning. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should offer courses

and training sessions on leadership styles for professional development of school principals. This will enable them to effectively implement the most suitable leadership style in schools, encompassing areas such as management, planning, teaching and learning, effective communication, active involvement in school activities, and the attainment of the schools' vision and mission. Accordingly, teachers' productivity can be enhanced when they are satisfied with the leadership.

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