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# Student Discipline and Teacher Job Satisfaction: A Dual District Analysis

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# Student Discipline and Teacher Job Satisfaction: A Dual District Analysis

## Abstract

This study aimed to contribute to the empirical literature related to student discipline's influence on teacher job satisfaction. Further, this research aimed to explore the correlation between student discipline and teacher job satisfaction while controlling for the contributing factors of job satisfaction). Also, this research study's results were interpreted through the lens of the Affective Events Theory indicating a person's emotions and behaviors for the workplace may influence their job satisfaction. An Ordinary Least Squares regression found that the correlation between student discipline and teacher job satisfaction was not statistically significant. However, the directionality of the relationship between student discipline and teacher job satisfaction was negative. By studying student discipline and teacher job satisfaction, this research determined that student discipline does harm teacher job satisfaction.

## Keywords

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Haynes (2014) documented that America spends 1 billion to 2.2 billion dollars annually on teacher replacements. Although there is a multitude of reasons that teachers leave the teaching profession, replacing teachers, in general, is an enormous task for school districts. In addition to America's overarching teacher retention and teacher shortage issues, certain types of school districts, compared to others, often struggle with acquiring and maintaining a sufficient teaching force (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). For instance, Martinez et al. (2010) emphasized that retaining teachers in schools serving predominantly students of color is challenging because statistically, 50% of teachers nationally already leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. Considering the environmental factors associated with schools serving predominantly students of color (e.g., high poverty, low performing, poor working conditions), the turnover percentage for these schools exceed the national average (Clotfelter et al., 2011; Scafidi et al., 2007; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Georgia is no different from any other U.S. state in terms of teacher turnover. Literature from Owens and the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) (2015) reported that 47% of Georgia teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. More pointedly, Williams et al. (2021) highlights that concerns of teacher turnover are much more pronounced in rural Georgia communities with large Black populations. Owens and the GADOE's (2015) survey of 53,000 educators in Georgia also noted student discipline as 18.6% of the problem for why teachers are leaving the profession and 17.6% reporting issues concerning lack of administrative support (Owens & the GADOE, 2015).

When focusing on the student discipline aspect of teacher turnover and its essential impact across the school ecosystem, Public Agenda (2004) documented that teachers generally identify student behavior as a significant problem to the overall work environment. For instance, Stanley (2020) indicated insufficient support for student discipline from administration influenced the turnover of a selected groups of black female teachers. When educators perceive negative student behavior as a frequent action, they struggle with low student scores on high stakes tests (Skiba & Rausch, 2004), and challenges could arise with maintaining high-quality learning experiences during instructional time (Noguera, 2003). Teachers and leaders identify students as having poor student discipline when they exhibit disregard or disrespect for school authority, resulting in suspension or expulsion from school. All of the aspects mentioned previously can lead to a high-stress environment for teachers.

When identifying the list of pressures teachers face, for example, high stakes accountability, lack of autonomy in curriculum and instruction, low wages,

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external politics, and the other myriad of stressors associated with the job, student discipline at large could be the seemingly minor or routine issue at a school that causes an unpredictably large and sudden reaction (i.e., quitting).

Each stressor associated with a job can ultimately influence an individual's job satisfaction. Ma and MacMillian (1999) specified that teachers who were satisfied with their classroom environment indicated they felt optimistic about their content knowledge capacity and ability to apply learning through instructional strategies; both positive indicators of job satisfaction. In contrast, the literature indicates that dissatisfied workers, including teachers, have bad attitudes and approaches that can be unfavorable to an organization (Ostroff, 1992). So, when conceptually analyzing the stressors associated with the teaching profession which lead to teacher dissatisfaction, any mitigating practices to relieve said stressors could reduce the 48% of teachers who leave the profession due to dissatisfaction as highlighted in Walker's (2015) research.

To further address the impact of the environmental stressors that could potentially lead to negative teacher performance or turnover, this study investigates whether there exists a relationship between student discipline and teacher job satisfaction. By studying the relationship between student discipline and teacher job satisfaction, school district leaders can identify areas that leadership support can remedy to minimize and alleviate negative student behavior that adversely influences a teacher's work experience.

## Literature Review

The potential connection between student discipline and job satisfaction involves intricate underlying influences, constructs, and determinants. Therefore, this literature review provides a summary of literature to help understand the concepts and impact of job satisfaction in organizational operations and success and the influence of student discipline on the educational environment. Specifically, this literature review will provide insight on 1) how job satisfaction is defined, 2) the composition of job satisfaction, 3) student discipline and its relationship with the work environment, and 4) the influence of student discipline on job satisfaction.

### Defining Job Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely studied constructs within industrial and organizational psychology (Hora et al., 2018; Judge et al., 2002; Sahito & Väisänen, 2020). Nevertheless, job satisfaction is one of the most challenging constructs to define as authors have suggested various approaches. From an operational perspective, Spector (1997) best defines job satisfaction as

how people feel about their employment and the amount they like or dislike their jobs.

Judge et al. (2002) recommend when defining job satisfaction, researchers divide job satisfaction into intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that affect a person's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction based on work situations, environments, and triggers. Thus, employee job satisfaction represents a combination of positive or negative emotions that employees have towards all aspects of one's place of employment (Davis & Nestrom, 1985). Said differently, job satisfaction is a polarized construct to which one classifies their satisfaction with their job as high (i.e., satisfied) or low (i.e., dissatisfied). If one demonstrates optimistic or favorable behaviors toward work, these individuals are providing indicators of job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). However, displays of pessimism and insubordination can serve as indicators of dissatisfaction.

Opposite to job satisfaction, researchers define job dissatisfaction as unpleasant emotions toward work that often causes employees to respond by finding a solution that will minimize the level of dissatisfaction (Afshar & Doosti, 2016; Okeke & Dlamini, 2013). Leung and Lee (2006) noted that job dissatisfaction is routinely related to job stress, and Leung and Lee's research suggested that support from supervisors or colleagues reduces the likelihood of someone quitting their job. However, an employee's job satisfaction is necessary for a business to sustain a healthy and productive work environment (Chalofsky & Krisha, 2009; Likert, 1961; Truxillo et al., 2016). Because job satisfaction is beneficial to any workplace, the importance of job satisfaction is evident in the school setting for teachers (i.e., the focal position for this study).

**Facets of Job Satisfaction**

A variety of factors/facets, such as salary, promotion, supervision, coworkers, and workplace characteristics, can influence a person's job satisfaction (Ostroff, 1992). These facets can universally evaluate an employee's overall job satisfaction or independently evaluate an employee's feeling toward certain aspects of work operations.

*Salary*

Salary or pay is the facet that satisfies a person's financial needs and influences a person's outlook and behavior (Singh & Loncar, 2010). Research provided by Williams et al. (2007) established that pay satisfaction is a multifaceted construct. When studying job satisfaction, Berkowitz et al. (1987) detailed that a person's level of pay determines how satisfied they will be with their employment.

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When serving as an isolated construct, researchers have captured pay satisfaction by evaluating facets such as pay level, pay raise, benefits, and pay structure (Heneman & Schwab, 1985). A meta-analysis of 213 examples and 182 studies conducted by Williams et al. (2007) found a .79 and .81 correlation between pay raise and pay level satisfaction and the relationship between pay raise and pay structure satisfaction, respectively. Employee perception of the significance of individual performance toward the possibility of obtaining a pay raise may gain more satisfaction with their pay raise than people who do not value the correlation between performance and pay outcomes (Heneman et al., 1988).

### *Promotion*

Luthans (1973) identified promotion as a component of a person's job satisfaction and a key element in the growth of one's job satisfaction. Kosteas (2011) argued that promotion increases job satisfaction because workers who think positively about the idea of receiving a promotion typically have higher levels of satisfaction. In contrast, Anfara et al. (2003) argued that negative perceptions toward work are evident when employees feel they have a minimal chance of receiving a promotion.

Shields and Ward's (2001) review of job satisfaction suggested job dissatisfaction may have a more substantial influence on a person's intentions to resign rather than the dissatisfaction a person may have with the work itself or pay because of promotions and professional growth opportunities. Idson (1990) and Scherer (1976) described a negative association between organization size and job satisfaction in their employee survey research. They indicated that the relationships between promotion rates and job satisfaction positively increased as an organization's size decreased. Kosteas (2011) suggests that promotional opportunities enhance a person's satisfaction level because this factor brings about higher positions relative to a person's coworkers and higher potential for increased wages.

### *Administrative supervision*

Administrative supervision influences teachers' satisfaction level, as explained by Boyd et al. (2011), because district leaders, principals, and assistant principals play a significant role in every teacher's daily operations and growth. Also, administrative leadership is a critical component of the school necessary to empower and motivate teachers (Bass, 1990; Bennis & Nannus, 1985). Hulpia et al. (2009) and Tillman and Tillman (2008) report that educators have increased job satisfaction levels when receiving encouragement and assistance from their building principals.

*Coworkers*

Professional learning communities with colleagues are essential to developing a trusting relationship amongst educators (McNeil, 2000). Because of the work community and the established relationships between coworkers, George and Jones (2005) believe that coworkers can also influence employee job satisfaction. Many researchers have corroborated George and Joneses (2005) study by highlighting that employees who support each other develop a festive work atmosphere and improves the job satisfaction for the work community (Churchill et al., 1974; Wright & Kim, 2004).

*Workplace Satisfaction*

Bokemeier and Lacy (1987) reported that workplace conditions significantly influence a person's intentions to resign rather than the dissatisfaction a person may have with the work itself. Price and Mueller (1986) believe people who spend most of their time in the work environment care about the type of satisfaction received from the workplace. How much an employee likes or dislikes the workplace culture around them will determine their thoughts and feelings. Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) communicated that teachers use defining factors for employee satisfaction centered on how they feel about work, such as student support, affiliation, professional interest, innovation, resource adequacy, and principal leadership. However, when teachers find particular facets of job satisfaction that influence their situations dissatisfying, then overall job dissatisfaction may arise (Farrell, 2000).

**Student Discipline and the Work Environment**

Although no universal definition for student discipline exists, the literature conceptualizes student discipline as a vast component of a classroom environment that can negatively impact the teaching and learning process. Researchers also highlight student discipline as the series of operations used to maintain order in a classroom when inappropriate student actions or behaviors occur (Finn et al., 2008; Ylimaki et al., 2007). Negative student behavior influences student achievement, school climate, school safety, school suspension, school dropout rates, and ultimately, the classroom teacher. To document student discipline, schools use Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) as standardized records of problem behaviors (McIntosh et al., 2010). Blank and Shavit (2016) have identified student background, student gender, and peer distractions as factors connected to negative student behavior.

The act of providing consequences for student misbehavior (i.e., discipline) teaches students social and moral lessons about responsibility, responsiveness,

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relationships, fairness, authority, and control, and practically how the world operates (Marcucci & Elmesky, 2020). Using the logic mentioned above regarding the importance of discipline, teachers may perceive student behavior as unfavorable based on the school or classroom's normed expectations, which may lead to students getting in trouble for inappropriate actions more often. Teachers working in challenging instructional environments experience more stress from disruptive student behaviors than those teaching in less challenging environments (Vassallo, 2014). Due to the challenges associated with inappropriate and disruptive classroom behavior, teachers may become incapable of effectively doing their job (i.e., delivering quality instruction and supervision).

A preceding analysis of middle and high school teachers explained how 76% of educators indicated they would be better able to teach students if negative student behavior was not so prevalent. Over a third of teachers documented they would consider quitting the educational profession because of extensive student behavioral challenges (Public Agenda, 2004). While in a disruptive environment, negative student behavior could have a physical or emotional effect on a teacher's job satisfaction.

The assumption is that student behavioral issues can act as the source of teacher job dissatisfaction; however, a teacher dissatisfied with their job and the associated negative teacher behaviors related to dissatisfaction (i.e., worker strikes, absenteeism, and insubordinate teacher behaviors; Ostroff, 1992) could potentially influence student misbehavior. School and district leadership personnel should be mindful of the elements that influence teacher job dissatisfaction because they could promote student behavioral issues.

**Student Discipline influence on Job Satisfaction**

Research highlights potential causes of low teacher satisfaction and poor retention rates are due to the overwhelming increase of demand on teacher workload (Dinham & Scott, 2000), increasing governmental controls, negative student discipline (Moriarty et al., 2001; Personnel Today, 2003; Sillitoe, 2003), poor principal leadership or management style (Schultz & Teddlie, 1999), job associated stress (Evans, 1998), minimal importance placed on teaching as a profession (Evans, 1997; Halpin, 2001; van der Doef & Maes, 2002), oversized student classes (Maclean, 1992), challenges of working with colleagues (van der Doef & Maes, 2002), negative associations of the social media's impact of working in a 'failing' school (Scott & Dinham, 2003), and pay (Chung et al., 2004). As noted, the literature highlights many negative factors that influence teacher dissatisfaction that can increase a teachers' propensity to quit; however, negative student discipline is the area of focus for this study because of the considerable amount of the teacher

workday consumed with interactions with students during instruction as well as during supervisory duties.

Although some may view negative student discipline occurrences as isolated events, empirical research identifies an association between isolated behavioral disruptions and peers' negative student behavior. Student behavior identified as disruptive or rebellious within a classroom can influence negative behavioral patterns that obstruct learning from multiple peers (Osher et al., 2010; Thomas et al., 2006). Additionally, Neidell and Waldfogel (2010) claimed that only a few unruly students could impact an entire classroom's learning.

When students do not comply with the classroom's general expectations, negative student behavior may correlate with teacher job satisfaction (Kohut, 2015). For instance, findings from a study of 64 instructors at Western University indicated how student discipline had a strong relationship with teacher satisfaction and negative student behavior with teacher satisfaction ($r = -.50$, $p < .05$; Ruggeri-Dilello, 2015). To further explain the correlation found in Ruggeri-Dilello's (2015) study, Cooper and Yan (2014) highlight teachers' confidence in their ability to competently deal with negative student behavior may affect their job satisfaction. When teachers lose job satisfaction because of negative student behavior, teachers often display heightened dissatisfaction with other job elements (Calitz et al., 2014).

Under the premise of isolated instances of student disruption catalyzing large-scale classroom behavioral issues, one could suspect a latent relationship between negative student behavior and teacher job dissatisfaction. Frenzel et al. (2011) found a positive association between good classroom discipline and teacher satisfaction, while research from Sutton (2007) revealed a negative association between ineffective classroom discipline and teacher anger or anxiety. The consequences of the psychological and physiological pressure of being a teacher could result in low job satisfaction, high absenteeism, and employee turnover due to headaches, excessive stress, sleeping problems, hypertension, alcoholism, and smoking (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2014). This literature review indicates the impact of teacher dissatisfaction on schools, students, and teachers. School decision-makers should warrant research that sheds light on areas to reduce teacher dissatisfaction and mitigate teacher dissatisfaction problems.

## Theoretical Framework

For theoretical framing, this study utilized the Affective Events Theory (AET) developed by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996). Judge et al. (2002) identify AET as a situational theory (i.e., assumes job satisfaction is an outcome resulting

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from the nature of a person's job or other features of the work environment) and serves as the framework for this study because of the theory's alignment with job satisfaction. The basis of Weisman and Cropanzano's (1996) theory centers on the concept that emotional experiences influence employees' attitudes at work, and in effect, impacts the behaviors exhibited in the workplace (Kwun & Saavedra, 2000). Therefore, AET supports the impact of negative and positive emotions influencing job satisfaction (Carlson et al., 2011), especially when describing how work events can impact attitudes toward work and yield a cognitive reaction based on a person's perception of work events.

When utilizing negative student discipline occurrences as a work event, the negative occurrences can influence a teacher's emotions. Considering teachers encounter a multitude of various student behavioral problems regularly in the classroom environment (i.e., disrespect, verbal abuse, physically aggressive, profanity, extreme tardiness, and disorderly conduct; DeVoe et al., 2004), it is probable this behavior will impede a teacher's ability to teach and will eventually affect the teacher's attitude or emotion toward the job. Through the Affective Event Theory lens, one would suspect that adverse student behavior incidents would negatively influence a teacher's job satisfaction.

**Methodology**

The researchers selected participants from a sample population of 13 secondary schools from two suburban school districts in Georgia during the 2020-2021academic school year (N=768). The student demographics from the two participating school districts consisted of 58.05% Black, 24.5% White, 5.5% Asian, 2.4% Multiracial, and 1.5% American Indian. Additionally, 74% of the districts' students identified as economically disadvantaged, 5.75% identified as English Language Learners, and 12.3% identified as students with disabilities.

Although Black students account for 58.05% in the focal schools, Black students account for 71.95% of students suspended with ODRs (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2019). Consistent with the research on the disproportionality between Black students' suspension from school in comparison to their White counterparts (Steinberg & Lacoe, 2017), the researchers purposefully selected these two school systems for this study because the school systems reported a higher percentage of Black student suspensions over other races which is consistent with the research (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2019). Concerning job satisfaction, both of the school districts selected for this study expressed interest in gathering research related to their teachers' job satisfaction or have made efforts to complete initiatives to gather data on certified employees' sentiments.

To determine the number of participants, to ensure adequate power, and to reduce the likelihood of type one and type two errors, the researchers utilized Cohen's (1988) power analysis. By Applying Cohen's recommended parameters, the power analysis concluded that the study needed a minimum of 97 participants to achieve adequate power to detect statistical significance between variables. The researchers used the following parameters in determining the minimum sample size: medium effect size of *($f^2$ = .15)*, a distinct level of significance set at ($\alpha$ = .05), and a power level of ($\beta$= .80).

The full population of middle and high school teachers from two suburban school districts in Georgia (N=768) received the job satisfaction survey and demographic questions. In sum, participants opened 256 surveys, and 216 participants started and submitted the survey. The researchers analyzed all received surveys to assess if the participant's data was useable for the study. Of the 216 surveys received, the researchers removed ninety participants due to having incomplete data or missing values. After removal, the researchers selected 126 participants who completed the survey in full to serve as the sample group for the study rendering a final response rate of 16 percent.

**Variables**

The survey and questionnaire administered to participants addressed demographic information (i.e., personal attributes, human capital elements, and workplace characteristics), principal leadership, and job satisfaction. The survey helped acquire data to address the dependent variable, independent variable, and all of the study's potential covariates.

*Dependent Variable*

Job satisfaction served as the dependent variable for this study. The 2009 revised Job Descriptive Index survey (JDI/JIG) is a 72-item survey composed of 5 facets (i.e., promotion, pay, work itself, coworkers, and supervision) developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969). The researchers rendered a cumulative JDI/JIG from each coded participant response to determine the participants' level of job satisfaction. Each facet of job satisfaction identifies a subscale, and each subscale contains 9 to 18 responses where teachers can express their feelings toward various components that make up job satisfaction.

The researcher chose the JDI/JIG survey because of its consistent use in the literature as a tool in determining job satisfaction (Buckley et al., 1992; Smith & Stanton, 1998). Additionally, the literature deemed the JDI/JIG survey reliable and valid with various populations (Johnson et al., 1982). Because a paucity of current

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research exists that examines the correlation between student behavior and job satisfaction (Klassen & Anderson, 2009; Landers et al., 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Stauffer & Mason, 2013), it would be beneficial for school or district leaders to explore this relationship.

Due to the abundance of studies employing the JDI, extensive normative data are available for potential users of the scale and provide evidence of both the instrument's reliability and validity. The researchers selected the JDI/JIG survey as the basis for quantifying job satisfaction (i.e., cumulative score) to ensure consistent reliability and validity when determining job satisfaction (Ironson et al., 1989). Literature suggests using a Cronbach's coefficient alpha method when evaluating the JDI and JIG for reliability (Brodke et al., 2009). An alpha of .80 or higher indicates a substantial degree of reliability. When psychometrically examined, the JDI facets reported internal stability at the following measures: pay .88, work .90, promotion .91, coworkers .92, supervision .92, and JIG .92.

Pearson correlations helped determine the validity with other scaled mechanisms (i.e., quitting intentions scale, stressful feelings scale, and the single-item measure of job satisfaction). For example, researchers compared the JIG with the quitting intentions scale, stressful feelings scale, and the single-item measure of job satisfaction and reported scores of -0.61, -0.30, and 0.79, respectively. In alignment with the populace involved in this study, the JIG correlates with school demographic concepts and offers the expected reliability and validity across diverse populations (Gillet & Schwab, 1975; Johnson et al., 1982; Kinicki et al., 2002). The researchers used both the JDI and JIG to capture job satisfaction in this study through a cumulative score. The average JDI/JIG score for the sample was 167.42 (see Table 1 below).

### Independent Variable

As previously noted, Georgia educators (Owens & GADOE, 2015) reported that student discipline (18.6%) is why teachers leave the profession. Based on Owens and GADOE (2015) findings, this study used student discipline as the independent variable to identify the relationship student discipline has with teacher job satisfaction. The researchers operationalized the independent variable (student discipline) using the number of ODRs that a teacher had submitted to the office for processing within one academic school year.

ODR numbers were self-reported to the researcher by each participant based on the number of referrals submitted during the 2019-2020 school year. The researchers used the student discipline data from the teachers of 13 secondary level schools. As noted in Table 1 below, the average number of discipline referrals

submitted from the sample group was 6.3 (see Table 1). Discipline referrals ranged from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 50 referrals.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics: Central Tendency*

| Variable | N | Mean | Range | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Discipline[e] | 126 | 6.30 | 50 | 9.235 |
| Age[d] | 126 | 45.38 | 52 | 10.156 |
| Class Size [a] | 126 | 24.71 | 41 | 7.308 |
| Workload[b] | 126 | 16.89 | 75 | 13.106 |
| Experience[d] | 126 | 13.64 | 34 | 8.40 |
| Salary[c] | 126 | 56994.57 | 93000 | 10.68 |
| Job Satisfaction[f] | 126 | 167.42 | 177 | 42.09 |

Note. [a]Students. [b] Hours.  [c]U.S. Dollars. [d]Years. [e]ODR. [f]JDI scale

*Covariates*

Personal attributes served as covariates because of the considerable amount of research supporting the relationship between personal attributes and job satisfaction (Buckman, 2017; Crossman & Harris, 2006; Perie & Baker, 1997). Other factors such as workplace characteristics (Colgaltay & Karadag, 2016; Schwichtenberg, 2012), human capital elements (Faupel-Badger et al., 2017; Ganzach, 2003; Ng & Feldman, 2010; Oshagbemi, 2000), and principal leadership (Dutta & Sahney, 2016; Nazim & Mahmood, 2018) have all been identified through literature to correlate with teacher job satisfaction.

**Class Size**. Research has indicated a potential influence of class size on job satisfaction (Alt et al., 1999; Greenhouse et al., 1992). Schwichtenberg (2012) surveyed educators to assess the comparison of class size and job satisfaction and found that student achievement was an important trigger of emotions toward job satisfaction. Large class sizes reduced student achievement, ultimately contributing to decreased teacher job satisfaction. In agreement with *Public School Review*, the average student/teacher ratio in a Georgia Public School is 16:1 (Georgia, 2018), but for this research, participants selected the average numerical value of students they teach per class as opposed to the reported school average. The average class size for the participants was slightly over 24 students (see Table 1 above).

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**Workload**. Based on previous research, workload is a substantial factor when assessing job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Lesson planning, grading papers, contacting parents, checking emails, attending conferences, holding team meetings, and coaching student extracurricular activities are all part of the workload that their districts may not compensate some teachers for in addition to the traditional 40 contractual hours work week. To operationalize workload for this study, participants calculated the average number of unpaid hours they worked per week outside their contractual 40-hour workweek. The researchers include workload as a covariate for this study because of the abundance of literature highlighting the relationship between workload and teacher job satisfaction (Burke et al., 1992; Hussain & Saif, 2019). Table 1 above highlights participants in the sample reported a workload (non-paid hours worked outside of contractual hours) average of 16.89 hours.

**Age.** The researchers utilized personal attributes (i.e., age, gender, and race) as covariates because of the large amount of research documented in empirical literature supporting personal attributes relationships with job satisfaction (Buckman, 2017; Crossman & Harris, 2006; Perie & Baker, 1997). The researchers computed the age covariate, a discrete variable, by calculating the participants' reported birth dates. The average age of the teachers in the sample was roughly 45 years old.

**Experience**. Experience was determined based on the number of years the participants served as a teacher. Perie and Baker (1997) insist that newly employed and less experienced teachers in public schools are more likely to be satisfied with the teaching profession than teachers in the later phases of their careers. Oshagbemi's (1997) research suggests that teacher experience positively influences job satisfaction and additional results by Oshagbemi (2000) specify that employees with 10 or more years of experience have greater levels of satisfaction. The average level of experience for participants was 13.64 years.

**Salary.** The researchers utilized salary as a covariate because of its heavily reported relationship with job satisfaction (Berkowitz et al., 1987; Faupel-Badger et al., 2017; Muhammad & Akhter, 2010). Public school districts often use a fixed-rate teacher salary schedule that provides intermittent step increases determined by years of experience and educational attainment. Buckman (2017) notes, teachers receive incremental pay increases until they reach a salary cap that is usually determined by the total number of years of service allowed by the respective school district. Teacher salary was operationalized by identifying participants' total salary, which included their annual based salary defined by the district's fixed-rate salary schedule and any district's supplemental pay. Table 1 above indicates the average salary of the sample group was $56,994.57.

**Table 2**
*Descriptive Statistics: Counts and Percentages*

| Variable | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelors | 33 | 26.2 |
| Masters | 60 | 47.6 |
| Specialist | 24 | 19.0 |
| Doctorate | 9 | 7.1 |
| Female | 80 | 63.5 |
| Male | 46 | 36.5 |
| Black | 60 | 47.6 |
| White | 58 | 46.0 |
| Multiracial/Other | 8 | 6.3 |
| Tenured | 96 | 76.2 |
| Untenured | 30 | 23.8 |

**Gender**. The relationship between gender and job satisfaction is not conclusive. However, the literature finds women to be more satisfied than their male colleagues as ministers (McDuff, 2001), scientists (Dhawan, 2000), lawyers (Hull, 1999), and clinicians (Bashaw, 1999), and these repeated findings have summarized females as generally content in most work professions overall. To add, results of an independent sample t-test comparing the job satisfaction of a sample of 141 female elementary teachers and 92 male elementary teachers in Turkey indicated a significant difference between the genders (t = 4.429, p < .05), with male teacher job satisfaction ($\overline{X}$= 73.26) being lesser than their female counterparts ($\overline{X}$= 76.06) (Sak, 2018). In Table 2 above, descriptive statistics indicate that females accounted for 63.5% of the sample, while males accounted for 36.5% of the sample within this study.

**Race.** Researchers have historically identified race as a factor that influences job satisfaction, and Bartel (1981), Duncan (1977), and Hersch and Xiao (2015) have conducted various studies to assess the relationships between race and job satisfaction. Mukerjee (2014) discovered that Blacks reported considerably lower job satisfaction than their White counterparts. Table 2 above indicates that Black teachers accounted for 47.6% of the sample group, while White teachers accounted for 46.0% of the sample group. The Multiracial/Other category accounted for the low percentage of teachers identified as non-Black or non-White. Teachers classified as either multiracial or other represented 6.3% of the sample.

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**Tenure**. The researchers included tenure in the analysis as a covariate because empirical evidence has correlated its influence on job satisfaction (Bedeian et al., 1992; Clark et al., 1996; Ng & Feldman, 2010). Georgia's tenure practices indicate the school board deems any teacher who receives their fourth consecutive contract tenured. Tenure served as a dichotomous variable (i.e., tenured or untenured). The data indicated 76.2% of teachers identified as tenured in their school district, while 23.8% of teachers identified as untenured in their current school district (see Table 2 above).

**Education level**. In public education, a teacher's education level often affects their salary, influences their level of satisfaction with pay, and inadvertently influences their overall employee satisfaction. Typically, teachers' salaries will increase when they earn higher educational attainment levels or degrees (e.g., Master's Degree, Educational Specialist Degree, Doctoral Degree) (GADOE, 2019). Table 2 reports 26.2% of participants received a Bachelor's Degree, 47.6% of participants earned a Master's Degree, 19.0% earned a Specialist degree or credits above a Master's Degree, and 7.1% earned a Doctorate Degree

**Principal Leadership in General.** Researchers have explored the relationship between principals' leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, and performance (Dutta & Sahney, 2016; Kirby et al., 1992; Koh et al., 1995; Silins, 1992) substantially. Each of the 13 principals was dummy coded to capture the principal leadership variable. Although this variable inadvertently captured leadership style, the variable's inclusion addressed the principal's influence at large on their respective teachers' job satisfaction. Table 3 shows that the highest frequency of teachers in the sample was for Principal 0 with 33 participants, Principal 8 with 20 participants, and Principal 6 with 16 participants. The principals who had the highest frequency of teachers who participated in the study also made up 26.2%, 15.9%, and 12.7% of the sample, respectively.

**Table 3**

*Frequency of Participants by School/Principal*

| School/Principal | Frequency of Participants | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 33 | 26.2 |
| 1 | 8 | 6.3 |
| 2 | 5 | 4.0 |
| 3 | 2 | 1.6 |
| 4 | 10 | 7.9 |
| 5 | 4 | 3.2 |
| 6 | 16 | 12.7 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | 3 | 2.4 |
| 8 | 20 | 15.9 |
| 9 | 5 | 4.0 |
| 10 | 9 | 7.1 |
| 11 | 9 | 7.1 |
| 12 | 2 | 1.6 |
| Total | 126 | 100 |

## Results

This study used an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multiple regression to evaluate the dependent variable, independent variable, and covariates. The analysis regressed the dependent variable (job satisfaction) on the independent variable (i.e., student discipline). Because previous research did not indicate a preferred variable entry pattern based on variance, the researchers used a simultaneous entry order.

Before running the multiple regression, the researchers tested the statistical assumptions (i.e., linearity, normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity) to avoid inaccurate findings. The data met all assumptions for regression except the assumption of normality. To address the normality assumption, the researchers utilized a Shapiro-Wilk and Komolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the dependent variable's normality level. The test concluded both the Shapiro-Wilk (Shapiro-Wilk $= .000$, $p < .05$) and the Komolmogorov-Smirnov (Kolmogorov-Smirnov $=.000$, $p < .05$) were significant, indicating the data did not meet the assumption of normality and the dependent variable exhibited a non-normal distribution.

Since the original job satisfaction scores were negatively skewed, the researchers transformed the data using a logarithm and reflection technique. After the data transformation, when tested, the procedure rendered a normality level of non-significance at .09 for the Shapiro Wilk test (sw $= .09$, p $> .05$) and a normality level of non-significance at .061 for the Komologorov-Smirnov test (ks $= .061$, p $> .05$). Considering both tests produced non-significant findings, the data met the assumption of normality.

The findings from Table 4 below indicate that job satisfaction does not have a statistically significant relationship with student discipline (b $= -.077$, p $> .05$). Additionally, no covariates exhibited statistical significance with job satisfaction. Although salary and job satisfaction do not show a statistically significant relationship (b $= .232$, p $> .05$), salary is the covariate that is closest to statistical significance (i.e., marginally significant) out of all the covariates in this study (p $= .15$). Thus, a marginally significant relationship between job satisfaction and salary

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is consistent with research that supports a direct correlation between these variables (Buckman, 2017; Ganzach, 2003; Nazim & Mahmood, 2018).

**Table 4**
*Multiple Regression Table of Student Discipline on Teacher Job Satisfaction*

|  | B | Std. Error | Beta | T | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 2.014 | .156 |  | 12.901 | .000 |  |  |
| Discipline | -.002 | .002 | -.077 | -.796 | .428 | .902 | 1.108 |
| Age | -.001 | .002 | -.062 | -.541 | .590 | .643 | 1.556 |
| Race | -.005 | .032 | -.016 | -.158 | .875 | .849 | 1.177 |
| Gender | .032 | .041 | .077 | .778 | .438 | .840 | 1.190 |
| Class Size | -.001 | .003 | -.022 | -.231 | .818 | .884 | 1.132 |
| Workload | -.001 | .002 | -.060 | -.598 | .551 | .836 | 1.197 |
| Experience | -.002 | .003 | -.086 | -.582 | .561 | .381 | 2.627 |
| Tenure | .058 | .047 | .125 | 1.242 | .217 | .828 | 1.208 |
| Degree Level | -.019 | .028 | -.083 | -.683 | .496 | .567 | 1.764 |
| Salary | 3.68E-6 | .000 | .232 | 1.449 | .150 | .324 | 3.083 |
| Principal | -.001 | .005 | -.029 | -.288 | .774 | .823 | 1.215 |

N (126)
$R^2$ (.05)

Tenure is also an important variable and produced the second smallest p-value in the analysis (p = .217). The positive directionality of the tenure variable (b = .125, p > .05) supports research that teachers who have obtained tenure generally like their job (Kalleberg & Matstekaasa, 2001). Despite data transformation to meet assumption testing expectations, neither the independent variable nor the covariates produced a statistically significant correlation with job satisfaction. Although the study's findings provided evidence supporting the influence of student disciplines on teacher job satisfaction, because the independent variable (i.e., student discipline) was not significant, the researchers accepted the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis's acceptance indicates no significant correlation between student discipline and middle and high school teachers' job satisfaction as measured by their JDI/JIG combined score when controlling for teacher job satisfaction covariates.

**Conclusion**

Although this study did not find statistical significance, the findings provide evidence of student discipline's impact on teacher overall job satisfaction. Lack of

statistical significance indicates that readers cannot infer the study's results on the study's entire population; nonetheless, the participants in the sample did demonstrate that the number of ODR's submitted harmed their overall job satisfaction. Statistically speaking, when dealing with a limited population (i.e., two school districts), school leaders should not dismiss a finding that lacks statistical significance because practical significance may be just as important. Specifically, the directionality of the coefficient (b= -.077) highlights that 16 percent of the teachers in the focal school districts found student behavior issues unfavorable and weakened their level of satisfaction with their job.

Sixteen percent may not appear large; however, when factoring in the current national and Georgia teacher turnover statistics (50% and 47%, respectively), as well as the difficulty in replacing a teacher, or even multiple teachers, the propensity of losing 16% of a district's teaching force, can be detrimental. When considering low job satisfaction and one's intent to quit are correlated (i.e., r = -0.61; the correlation between intent to quit scale and JDI/JIG), coupled with the likelihood of teacher's quitting within their first 5-years of teaching, losing roughly 16% of your teachers is a problem that will not be easy to mitigate after the teachers leave.

Research has expressed multiple practices that may help support negative student behavior that school district leaders should implement to avoid potential teacher turnover resulting from negative student discipline. These practices are cultural responsiveness (Larson et al., 2008; Weinstein et al., 2003), teacher induction programs (Önder & Önder-Öz, 2018), progressive discipline methods (Hoffman, 2014), positive behavior interventions (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008), professional development (McIntosh et al., 2014), and helpful student-teacher relationships (Gregory et al., 2016). Practices that benefit student learning and relationships may help to improve the discipline issues teachers experience, and as a result, support job satisfaction.

In addition to the main findings of the study (i.e., student discipline), school district leaders should be mindful of the core facets that determine job satisfaction, such as coworkers, pay, promotion, supervision, and the workplace (Boyd et al., 2011; Kosteas, 2011; Ozpehlivan & Acar, 2016; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995; Wright & Kim, 2004). These core facets likely contributed to teacher job satisfaction in this study as the JDI/JIG scores were generally high, and thus, caused the data to be negatively skewed. Although the participant's job satisfaction data was mostly high, the data supports how negative student behavior negatively contributed to teacher job satisfaction.

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When analyzing the outcome of this study, readers should interpret the negative relationship between teacher job satisfaction and student discipline through the Affective Events Theory's theoretical lens. Ultimately, negative occurrences at work, such as student discipline, influence teacher's emotions. Consistent behavioral problems in the classroom environment resulting in increased ODRs impede a teacher's ability to teach and increases their level of dissatisfaction toward the job. As such, the researchers found that incidents of negative student behavior (i.e., increased ODRs) negatively influenced a teacher's job satisfaction.

Future researchers should consider exploring the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and student discipline with a larger sample to include a wide variety of covariates. Because the associated variance accounted in our model was 5% ($R^2 = .05$), future researchers should include the following determinants of teacher job satisfaction: increased governmental controls (Moriarty et al., 2001; Personnel Today, 2003; Sillitoe, 2003), job associated stress (Evans, 1998), minimal support (Evans, 1997; Halpin, 2001; van der Doef & Maes, 2002), challenging work environments (van der Doef & Maes, 2002), testing or low performing schools (Scott & Dinham, 2003), and pay (Buckman, 2017; Chung et al., 2004). With a larger, more diverse population and a host of covariates, student discipline research could increase teacher outcomes and performance and impact positive student-centered outcomes.

Like all research studies, this study has limitations that readers should acknowledge when deducing the study's results. It is important to note; the researchers conducted this study in Georgia with middle and high school teachers from two school districts. Results are only generalizable to the sample of participants in this study.

Additionally, some schools and districts chose not to participate in this study due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Schools and districts may have wanted to focus on other matters and were not interested in participating in this empirical research during school closure or virtual learning. Amid a pandemic, some participants within the sample may have altered their view of student discipline or job satisfaction because of compelling life-altering circumstances. Also, the Coronavirus pandemic could have negatively influenced the study's response rate (i.e., 16%), and teachers may have chosen not to participate in the study to attend to more pressing matters.

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