

## Teachers' individual characteristics and job satisfaction in Southern Papua

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the possible impact of individual characteristics of teachers on their job satisfaction in the elementary schools of Southern Papua, Indonesia. To do so, two survey questionnaires were distributed to 319 respondents. Employing the SPSS software version 21, obtained data were statistically analyzed using simple linear regression. Result of the data analysis revealed a significant positive impact of the individual characteristics of teachers on their job satisfaction in the elementary schools of Southern Papua. This study provides knowledge on how the individual characteristics of elementary school teachers affect their job satisfaction within the real context of Southern Papua. Therefore, finding of this study may supposedly contribute the body of knowledge by providing the valuable extension of relevant studies in other parts of Indonesia as well as in other countries.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is one of the most commonly explored factors in organizational behavior [1] and one of the most thoroughly studied topics in both industrial and organizational psychology [2]. Among many, the most widely accepted definition of job satisfaction was offered by Locke [3], who described it as a pleasant experience arising from the appraisal of one's job as the achievement of one's employment values. Locke [4] identified three core factors as the following: i) One's perception of some job-related qualities; ii) An implicit or explicit value standard; and iii) A conscious or unconscious assessment of the relationship between one's perceptions and values. This judgment may result in a value-percept discrepancy, which could have a significant impact on whether a person experiences high or low levels of job dissatisfaction [4].

The concept of job satisfaction can be classified into six distinct types [5], [6]. The first is progressive job satisfaction. Employees feel happy with their work in this type of satisfaction. Employees strive for better levels of satisfaction by raising their aspirations. From this viewpoint, a 'creative dissatisfaction' with some parts of the work situation might be an inherent feature of this form. The second is stabilized work satisfaction. Employees in this type of satisfaction are motivated to sustain both the level of aspiration and the pleasurable feeling of fulfillment while feeling content with their work. Employees with stabilized satisfaction, in other words, tend to keep the level of aspiration inside the job and are motivated to maintain the existing satisfying condition. The third is resigned work satisfaction. Employees in this type of satisfaction have ambiguous work dissatisfaction and lower their degree of aspiration in order to adjust to the

unfavorable facets of the work situation on a lower level. Employees can regain a joyful sense of satisfaction by lowering their degree of aspiration. The fourth is constructive work dissatisfaction. Employees in this state are unsatisfied with their jobs and, thus, make an effort to control the situation by making problem-solving attempts based on a sufficient level of frustration tolerance in an effort to maintain the level of aspiration. Furthermore, the offered action concepts provide goal focus and incentive to change the work condition. Fifthly, fixated work dissatisfaction. Employees in this state are unsatisfied with their jobs. Unlike constructive contentment, employees in this sort of fulfillment do not try to manage the circumstance through problem-solving attempts while keeping their level of desire. Not surprisingly, if employees become preoccupied with their own problems, pathological development cannot be ruled out. Sixthly, pseudo work satisfaction. Employees in this state are unsatisfied with their jobs. A skewed perceptions or a denial of the poor work situation may lead to a false sense of work situation while dealing with insoluble issues or stressful work conditions.

Individual characteristics are intrinsically linked to the individual [7] and have been regarded as a crucial component for organizational success since they can have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction and productivity. Individual characteristics were defined by Yang and Hwang [8] as the distinctive physical qualities, psychological attributes, and conduct of an individual, while Werang [9] defined individual characteristics as internal aspects influencing a worker's conduct when seeing and evaluating others and performing work in a certain organization.

The term 'individual characteristics' and 'job satisfaction' here refers to teachers' individual characteristics and teachers' job satisfaction. All teachers have job satisfaction as one of their top priorities, regardless of what their individual characteristics are. Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs are more productive, creative, and devoted [10]. Satisfied teachers will be more loyal to the organizations and its goals [11]. When dissatisfaction affects teachers' emotional state, they will design an alternative plan based on the assessment of their own ability to deal with the problem [12].

The impact of an employee's individual characteristics on job satisfaction has been the subject of numerous studies in Indonesia [13]-[31]. However, we are still motivated to conduct another research on this topic to fill in the gap of knowledge on this topic between the western and eastern part of Indonesia. Besides, another reason to learn more about this topic was that of the willingness to address the problem of teacher absenteeism in the elementary schools of Southern Papua [32]-[39]. To the best of our knowledge, none of empirical studies exploring this topic within the context of the elementary schools of Southern Papua.

Thus, this study aimed at filling in the knowledge gap by examining the causal relationship between the individual characteristics and the job satisfaction of teachers, taking the elementary school teachers in Southern Papua as the population and samples. The research question that motivated us to investigate this topic was "Does the individual characteristics of elementary school teachers in Southern Papua affect their job satisfaction significantly positively?"; to answer the research question, a quantitative approach using a survey technique was used.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This quantitative study intended to describe the possible impact of the elementary school teachers' individual characteristics on their job satisfaction. The survey research design was used to gather data as several current studies [34]-[38] offered the benefits: i) Inexpensive; ii) Easier data collection; iii) Extremely accurate results and iv) Slight investigator subjectivity.

Two survey questionnaires were distributed in Indonesian language. To assess the individual characteristics of teachers we adopted items of a questionnaire from a prior study piloted by Werang [9], while to assess the job satisfaction of the elementary school teachers, we used questionnaire items from a prior study piloted by Wolomasi *et al.* [39]. We employed a face validity to test the validity as well as the reliability of the instruments as these two questionnaires have been used in the current previous studies. A total of 319 teachers who have been established as respondents were asked to rate their responses on 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

As previously stated, research data were statistically analyzed using a simple linear regression analysis technique by utilizing the SPSS software version 21. There are a lot of variables predicting the high-or-low of the teachers' job satisfaction that may confound the result of the study. Employing the regression as the means of controlling confounding variables, in this study, we focused only on the causal relationship between the individual characteristics and the job satisfaction of teachers in the elementary schools of Southern Papua, Indonesia. Based on the probed research question, the following research hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was proposed to be examined in this study: The individual characteristics of elementary school teachers in Southern Papua will significantly favorably affect their job satisfaction. This research was examined using the alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient of .05.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As aforementioned, this study aimed at describing the possible effect of teachers' individual characteristics on their job satisfaction in the elementary schools of Southern Papua. To describe the possible effect, we used a simple linear regression analysis technique by employing the SPSS software version 21. The important results of the data analysis are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of statistical analysis of the effect of teachers' individual characteristics on job satisfaction

Model	Model summary					Change statistics				
	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.231 <sup>a</sup>	.053	.052	6.90755	.053	59.655	1	1060	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individual\_Characteristics  
b. Dependent variable: Job\_satisfaction

Data in Table 1 showed that the individual characteristics of the elementary school teachers in Southern Papua had a significant positive impact on their job satisfaction as shown by the  $R^2$  coefficient value of  $=.053$  and the Sig. F Change coefficient value of  $.000$ . It demonstrates that the research hypothesis, "The individual characteristics of the elementary school teachers in Southern Papua will significantly favorably affect their job satisfaction," is confirmed at the level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ) $=.05$ . It inferred that 5.3% of the elementary school teachers' job satisfaction in Southern Papua can be connected to their unique individual characteristics. The remaining 94.7%, however, can be attributable to other factors that are not the subject of this study.

Teachers are unique and, therefore, are different in both their ability to learn from experience and their approach to learning. Result of data analysis as it was presented in Table 1 demonstrates that for every digit increasing in teachers' individual characteristics will increase  $.053$  digit in teachers' job satisfaction and, in reverse, for every digit decrease in the individual characteristics of teachers will decrease  $.053$  digit in the job satisfaction of the elementary school teachers in Southern Papua. It illustrates that the better the individual characteristics of the elementary school teachers in Southern Papua, the more satisfied they are with their jobs; the lower the individual characteristics of the elementary school teachers in Southern Papua, the less satisfied they are with their jobs. This finding confirmed the previous findings [18]–[22] that employees' individual characteristics effect significant positively on job satisfaction.

Teaching requires commitment and responsibility as it has a great impact on the growth and well-being of the nation's youth. Teachers with strong individual characteristics are typically disciplined, accountable, upbeat, and able to collaborate with others [40]. They tend to seize the chance to learn from the challenging conditions they encounter and are proud of the work they do as teachers. They are always happy and seem to enjoy with their work of teaching, even at the time of grief. Even in the midst of loss, they are able to establish the mood in their classroom, create a friendly learning environment, and control the classroom's social dynamics [41].

Teachers with strong individual characteristics will use the challenging working conditions as opportunities to advance. They even struggle to handle uncomfortable situations while taking delight in it. On the other hand, rude teachers tend to be unmotivated, slack off, and receive a lot of complaints [9]. Two examples of disrespectful teachers' behavior are leaving students at school and traveling to an urban location to engage in other appealing activities for an extended period of time [33], [34].

Keeping in mind teachers' potential to increase their own job satisfaction, school principals play an important role in fostering improvement and promoting success for schools in difficult conditions [42]. Given their significant role and duty over a school community, school principals can effectively shape a school's outcomes by encouraging creative and effective teaching. From this viewpoint, school principals who provide opportunities for teacher professional development and decision-making are more likely to boost teachers' job satisfaction than those who do not provide such possibilities for teachers [43].

### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of data analysis, the conclusion of this study is that individual characteristics of teachers impact significant positively on their job satisfaction in the elementary schools of Southern Papua as the coefficient value of  $R^2=.053$  is significant at the level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ) $=.05$ . This study provides the knowledge on how the individual characteristics of teachers affects their job satisfaction within the context of Southern Papua and, therefore, finding of this study may supposedly contribute the body of knowledge by

providing the valuable extension of relevant studies in other parts of Indonesia as well as in other countries. Finding of this study may practically give an insight for the school principals to create efforts of improving elementary school teachers' job satisfaction by promoting the best teacher individual characteristics.

Since the result of this study revealed that job satisfaction of elementary school teachers of Southern Papua is mostly predicted by other variables which are not the focus of this study, there is still a need for future studies on this topic with a broader predicted variable, out of teachers' individual characteristics, such as principal leadership, work morale, workload, self-efficacy, and school climate. Besides, the presence of future studies with a bigger size of samples and a wider range of geographical territory are also recommended in order to generalize the findings.




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