

## **'Teacher Job Satisfaction' and 'Intention to Leave the Profession': Does Age Matter?**

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### **Abstract**

This study explored issues on job satisfaction among secondary school teachers on one hand and intention to leave the profession in relation to varying age-groups. A Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) and Intention to Leave Scale was administered to 400 teachers from Musoma municipality in July-August, 2013. A total of 340 respondents (a response rate of 85%) returned the questionnaires which were used for analysis. Teachers aged 25-40 years indicated low level of satisfaction and higher intention to leave the profession compared to teachers aged 40-60+ years. Respondents also indicated the lack of freedom to perform their duties, utilization of their skills, and the way they get along with other co-workers as contributing to their job dissatisfaction. The study results provide a picture on how teachers vary in their satisfaction with the job and suggest for a counter strategy to enhance their job satisfaction with respect to age variations.

**Keywords:** *job satisfaction, teacher profession, age, Tanzania*

### **1. Introduction**

Teachers' job satisfaction is one of the research topics that have attracted researchers in education, organizational behaviour and management. Scholars have suggested and put forth different definitions and perspectives of the concept 'teacher job satisfaction'. Two of these are as follows:

*Teachers' job satisfaction is an important indicator of teachers' psychological well-being and it reflects the extent to which teachers like teaching (Yin, Lee, Zhang & Jin, 2013).*

*Job satisfaction improves workers' health and well-being; it affects productivity and retirement decision (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006).*

The above assertions take us to the fact that job satisfaction is such an important aspect in any organization that researchers in education and other related fields have had a consistent interest in researching on it (Hofmans et al., 2013). Research informs that individuals place different values on factors of their job that may influence their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the job. For instance, Hofmans (ibid.) and Mbua (2003) argue that there are differences in job satisfaction between individuals, some attaching much importance on reward systems (monetary) while others place more importance on non-monetary rewards. With the above arguments related to job satisfaction, we can say that job satisfaction is a component that cannot be ignored in any organization.

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Considering the nature and relationship existing between job-satisfaction and other variables such as teachers' job performance, this study will seek to respond to the following research questions: (1) Is teachers' vocational age-group a significant correlate to their level of job satisfaction? Is it a significant correlate to intentions to leave the profession? (2) Is teachers' vocational age-group a significant factor in relation to the level of job satisfaction? Is it related to intentions to leave the profession? (3) Is there a (statistically) significant difference in teachers' job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession between their vocational age-groups?

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Job Satisfaction Among Teachers in Tanzania**

Job satisfaction denotes an attitudinal judgments/evaluation that employees place on various aspects of their job. Researchers of teachers' job satisfaction have examined the level of teachers' job satisfaction (Mbua, 2003); the relationship between motivation and teachers' job satisfaction (Mukyanuzi & Paul, 2005); and the role of job satisfaction on teachers' absenteeism and turnover (ibid.). Mbua (2003) reported that teachers' job satisfaction in Tanzania is low leading to teacher absenteeism and turnover. Supporting the finding above, Mukyanuzi and Paul (2005) revealed that teachers, especially in rural areas of Tanzania, are highly dissatisfied with their job. Masath (2012), researching on secondary school teachers' job satisfaction in Kinondoni district, reported that teachers are characterized with low level of job satisfaction; and that the level of dissatisfaction is high in public than in private secondary schools.

Various research findings inform that teachers in Tanzania are less satisfied with their job. Low level of job satisfaction among employees of any profession not only leads to negative impact on an employee's psychological health (Yin et al., 2013), job performance, turnover and absenteeism (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza; 2007); but also limits organizational goals and objectives, efficiency and effectiveness in job performance and production; and acts as a setback to national economic development (Cha, 2008). Thus, in the teaching profession the anticipated outcome resulting from dissatisfaction is a threat to teachers themselves, students and the nation at large.

Despite efforts by the government to ensure schools get enough teachers and reduce the teacher-student ratio from primary to secondary school levels, a significant number of teachers have also been leaving the profession or not reporting to their new stations of work. The government of Tanzania (URT, 2012) reported a total number of 603 (35.8%) out of a total of 1684 secondary school teachers leaving the teaching profession in public secondary schools due to different reasons, including termination due to truancy (24.2%) and misbehaviour (5.5%). Teacher attrition has been a serious problem in rural areas of Tanzania and where socio-economic infrastructures are poor. This argument is supported by Mukyanuzi & Paul (2005) who found that newly recruited teachers do not report to their posts, particularly in rural areas; and they are more likely to leave their new stations immediately after reporting. Others decide to change their career and opt for new ones that earn them more salary. This problem has led to insufficiency of teachers in some areas in the country, especially in the rural areas. For instance, it was recently reported in the *Mwananchi* newspaper that there is a school

with one teacher teaching and managing 77 pupils from Std I-VII in Njombe (Lupimo, 2013). Anecdotal data also indicates that teachers do not stay long in rural areas, especially those that are remote.

Judging from literature and anecdotal data above, it is worth arguing that teachers' job satisfaction in Tanzania is uncertain. The prevalence of the job dissatisfaction indicators implies that the level of job performance provided by teachers is also questionable. For instance, arguments are made that the recent increase in student massive failures at ordinary level of secondary education (National Form Four Examination General Statistics, 2012) are due to teacher underperformance that is caused by their job dissatisfaction. In reflection to the lack of job satisfaction among teachers in Tanzania, this study intends to examine the way in which teachers of different vocational age-groups are satisfied with their job and unveil their intention to leave the profession. It is anticipated that with the variations in age, teachers' job satisfaction and intention to leave the teaching profession will vary too.

### ***2.2 Age, Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave the Profession***

There are studies that have investigated the correlates between teachers' age, job satisfaction and their intention to leave the profession. For instance, Mukyanuzi and Paul (2005) argue that job satisfaction and motivation correlate significantly with teachers' demographic characteristics, including age. They further argue that teachers' stress levels tend to decrease with years of teaching experience, which possibly arises from a heightened ability to deal with various situations at school that comes from experience. Jonathan et al., (2013) argue that intention to leave the profession may be impacted by personal demographic profile such as age, level of education, location, sex, etc.

This study is grounded on Havighurst's theory of career development that explains the influence of age on one's job decisions and career development (Sharma & Sharma, 2004). The theory puts forth that one's career development is categorized into four main career stages of chronological ages, namely; (i) the identification stage (*5-10 years*: a child observes the role of parents and other members of the family and starts imitating them); (ii) the acquisition stage (*11-15 years*: a child acquires all those qualities and abilities on the basis of which he dreams for success); (iii) the vocational stage (*16-25*: an individual takes a complete and clear decision about an occupation s/he likes and starts preparation for achieving the same); and (iv) the productive stage (*25-40 years*: the person touches the height of his/her task efficiency, trying also to maintain his/her productivity).

In relation to the Tanzanian education and employment contexts, most secondary school teachers get employed after graduating from colleges and universities at the age ranging from 23 years upwards. This stage highly reflects the age composition of Tanzanian secondary school teachers.

From the Havighurst's theory, stage (iv) is also followed by the age of maintaining productive society (*40-70 years*: an individual strives to gain reputation in her/his occupation). Thus, the fact that teachers in the two career age-groups bear different career developmental tasks, the values that they place on different aspects of their job

would also vary (Sharma & Sharma, 2004). They are also more likely to differ in their level of aspiration and satisfaction attached to the different aspects of their job, as well as their intention to leave the profession.

Bearing Havighurst's theoretical proposition, it is worth arguing that what could and should be done to raise job satisfaction of the two vocational age-groups should be differentiated. Thus, if policy and practices related to teacher job satisfaction is favourably revised, it would attract more individuals to join the profession and make those already inside to stay longer. Thus, on the basis of Havighurst's theoretical proposition and on contextual realities, this study intends to: (i) explore the relationship between teachers' vocational age-groups, job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession; (ii) examine the effect of teachers' vocational age on their level of job satisfaction on the one hand, and intention to leave the profession on the other; and (iii) compare the level of job satisfaction and intention to leave the teaching profession between the two vocational age-groups. Three hypotheses guided the study:

*Hypothesis 1:* Teachers' vocational age-groups will be significantly related to their level of job satisfaction [1a] as well as to their intention to leave the profession [1b].

*Hypothesis 2:* Teachers' vocational age-group has a significant effect on their level of job satisfaction [2a] as well as on their intention to leave the profession [2b].

*Hypothesis 3:* Teachers' job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession will differ significantly between the vocational age-groups.

### **3. Methods**

This study relies much on the use of cross-sectional data for testing, comparing and contrasting variables. The design consisted of drawing respondents of different ages (as prescribed in the study sample), education levels and sex as indicated in Cohen et al., (2007). Informants for the study involved 340 secondary school teachers from selected secondary schools in Musoma municipality, Mara region. The rationale for the choice of the region was based on the nature of the region being one of the upcountry regions, the researcher's easier access to schools, and the region having a mix of teachers at various age levels between July and September 2013. A total of 16 schools were involved in the study, in which questionnaires were distributed to 400 teacher respondents. Respondents were randomly selected. The ultimate working sample was on the total number of the questionnaires returned and sorted into categories by age strata as per Havighurst's categorization approach (Sharma & Sharma, 2004). Age-Group One involved those aged from 25-40 years, while Age-Group Two involved those aged from 41-60 years (maximum age limit based on the civil service policy limit that places the retirement age at 55 to 60 years).

A total of 198 teacher respondents fell under the vocational Age-Group One, while 142 respondents fell under vocational Age-Group Two. Data were collected in Musoma district, Mara region from August to September 2013. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)—comprising 20 items—was answered along the five-point scale

ranging from 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*). The scale (whose reliability in testing individuals' job satisfaction is proved with scale reliability exceeding 0.7 alpha levels) was subjected to the principal factor analysis (PFA) technique to determine the scale-item factor loading contributing to the variation between the two age-groups on their job satisfaction. Upon ensuring that all the rules for PFA were not violated (e.g. Eigenvalues, Linearity, and Scree Plot Check), three (3) components were extracted for this study. This choice is in line with other studies which place the scale items into three components. However, the components naming (whether *extrinsic*, *intrinsic* or *organizational*) remained on the researcher's decision, depending on the study purpose (Pallant, 2005). 'Teachers' intention to leave the profession' was measured by using a scale comprising of six items answered along two responses 'Yes' or 'No'. For coding purposes, the response 'Yes' was assigned a value of 1 (one) and 'No' was assigned 0 (zero).

The analysis of data was done by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The use of mean and standard deviation was computed to identify the degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction of employees with the scale items, and compare the level of satisfaction between vocational age-groups. The Pearson product-moment correlational coefficient was used to examine the relationship between vocational age-groups and teacher job satisfaction, and intention to leave the teaching profession. Linear regression analysis was performed to calculate the effect of vocational age on teachers' job satisfaction on the one hand, and the intention to leave the profession on the other. The independent sample t-test statistical analysis was computed to compare teachers' overall job satisfaction and intention to leave their profession based on their age-groups. The presentation of data is made with the use of tables.

#### **4. Results**

##### **4.1 Presentation and Analysis of Data**

As mentioned earlier, objective one of the study was to explore the relationship between teachers' vocational age-groups and (1a) their job satisfaction; and (1b) intention to leave the teaching profession. The relationship between teachers' vocational age-groups and job satisfaction (as measured by MSQ) and intention to leave the profession (measured by a six-item scale) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The findings indicated a strong positive correlation between teachers' vocational age-group and job satisfaction ( $r=.916$ ,  $n=340$ ,  $p<.001$ ), with higher teacher vocational age associated with high level of job satisfaction. The calculated coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) indicates 81% of the variance between the two variables; with vocational age explaining 81% of the variance on teachers' score on the satisfaction scale.

Subsequent analysis indicated a medium negative correlation between teachers' vocational age and their intention to leave the profession ( $r=-.459$ ,  $n=340$ ,  $p<.001$ ); with higher teacher vocational age associated with less intention to leave the teaching profession. The calculated coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) indicated 16% of the variance between the two variables; with teacher's vocational age explaining 16% of the variance on teachers' score on the 'intention to leave the profession' scale. Thus, the findings confirmed the first hypothesis.

**Table 1: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient between Teachers' Vocational Ages And Their Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave the Profession**

Variables	Age	TS	ITL
Age	1	.916**	-.459**
TS	.916**	1	-.403**
ITL	-.459**	-.403**	1

Legend: N=340; TS= Teacher Satisfaction; ITL= Intention to Leave; \*\*  $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed)

The second objective of the study was to examine the effects of teachers' vocational age on their level of job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession. The effect of teachers' vocational age on their job satisfaction and intention to leave the teaching profession was examined using the multiple linear regression analysis. Teachers' vocational age had a correlation of .916 with job satisfaction; and -.459 with their intention to leave the profession, indicating correlation between the variables. Teachers' vocational age had a significant effect [ $F = 914$ ;  $t(339) = 41.77$ ;  $R^2 = .840$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ] on their job satisfaction and [ $F = .463$ ;  $t(339) = -9.585$ ;  $R^2 = .220$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ] on intention to leave the profession. Teachers' vocational age contributed 84% on their job satisfaction, and 22% on their intention to leave the profession. The findings confirmed the second hypothesis. Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 present a summary of the results. Table 5 specifically indicates that respondents' age was a significant predictor of teachers' intention to leave the profession.

**Table 2: Model Summary on Teachers' Vocational Age and Job Satisfaction**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R. Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.916	.840	.838	3.078

Predictors: age, sex, education; dependent variable: total satisfaction

**Table 3: Coefficient of Influence of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable**

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	36.429	.942		38.682	.000
Age	14.176	.339	.914	41.771	.000
Sex	.302	.337	.020	.895	.371
Education	.440	.351	.027	1.251	.212

**Table 4: Model Summary on Teachers' Vocational Age and Intention to Leave**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R. Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.469	.220	.213	1.233

Predictors: age, sex, education; dependent variable: intention to leave

**Table 5: Coefficient of Influence of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable**

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-4.717	.377		12.632	.000
Age	1.303	.135	.463	-9.585	.000
Sex	.132	.135	.047	.977	.329
Education	-.231	.141	.079	-1.644	.101

The third objective of the study intended to examine the difference in teachers' satisfaction and intention to leave the profession between the vocational age-groups. The difference in job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession was examined using an independent sample t-test. Levene's Sig. value for the two groups on each dependent variable was .301 and .000. The first value assumed equal variance between the groups, while the second value did not assume variation between the groups; making use of the second value (equal variance not assumed) as suggested by Pallant (2005). There was a significant difference in the mean scores of Vocational Age-Group One (1) [becoming a productive person: 25-40 years; M=51.84, SD=3.204], and Vocational Age-Group Two (2) [maintaining a productive society: M=66.04, SD=2.896, t (338) =-41.921, p=0.00] at  $p < 0.01$  significant level on the satisfaction scale. The magnitude of the difference was small (eta squared 0.01).

A significant difference was also found in the mean scores of Vocational Age-Group One (1) [becoming a productive person: 25-40 years; M=3.26, SD=1.389], and Vocational Age-Group Two (2) [maintaining a productive society: M=1.96, SD=.985, t (338) =10.042, p=0.00] at  $p < 0.01$  significant level on intention to leave the profession scale. The magnitude of the difference was small (eta squared 0.01). In Vocational Age-Group One (1) teachers showed a higher level of job satisfaction than in Vocational Age-Group Two (2) teachers. Consequently, Vocational Age-Group One (1) teachers showed a 'higher' intention of leaving the teaching profession than Vocational Age-Group Two (2) teachers. Table 6 summarizes the results.

**Table 6: t-test [Teachers' Satisfaction and Intention to Leave between Vocational Age-group 1(25-40 years) and Vocational Age-group 2 (40-60 years)]**

Variables	Categories	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	T	Sig.
Teacher Satisfaction	25-40 years	198	51.84	3.204	.228	-41.921	.000
	40-60 years	142	66.04	2.896	.243		
Intention to Leave	25-40 years	198	3.26	1.389	.099	10.042	.000
	40-60 years	142	1.96	.985	.083		

Further analysis by factor analysis on the satisfaction scale indicated 6 items exceeding Eigen value of 1 with .908 KMO value (for accuracy of sampling) and .000 sig. value of Bartlett's test of sphericity. The scree plot indicated 3 components with huge variation, and which were retained for post-analysis. Post-analysis on scale items loading on the three components by using the Varimax rotation method indicated more items loading on the first component [herein referred to as organizational factors (see Table 7)]. Thus, teachers belonging to Vocational Age-Group One (1) showed a lower level of satisfaction with organizational factors than teachers of Vocational Age-Group Two (2). Other results are as Table 7 indicates.

**4.2 Discussion of Findings**

The findings have revealed a significant relationship, on the one hand, between teachers' vocational age-group and their job satisfaction and, on the other, between teachers' vocational age-group and their intention to leave the profession. This complies with other research findings on age and job satisfaction, as well as intention to leave.

Table 7: Varimax Rotation on Three Components Factors for MSQ

Item	Comp. 1 (organiz.)	Comp. 2 (extrinsic factors)	Comp. 3 (intrinsic factors)
The way my co-workers get along with each other	.861		
The chance to be somebody in my community	.792		
The chance to work alone on the job	.766		
The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	.763		
The chance to tell people what to do	.734		.302
The chance to do different things from time to time	.671		
Being able to keep busy all the time	.651		
The praise I get for doing a good job	.648		.312
The way my job provides for steady employment	.540		
The way my boss handles his/her workers	.476		
The way company policies are put into practices	.420		
The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	.383		
The chance to do things for other people	.350		
The chance to try my own methods of doing the jobs		-.662	
The working conditions		.584	
Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience		.428	
My pay and the amount of work I do		.330	
The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities		.315	
The freedom to use my own judgement			.735
The chances for advancement on this job			.628

Goh et al., (1991) found that age was a significant predictor of job satisfaction. The variation in satisfaction level between age-groups can be attributed to the fact that having gone through a lot of experiences, teachers above the age of 40 are in a position to overcome work-related challenges or stress than those below the age of 40, and that their job mobility is high (Clark, 2001; Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2007). This is in line with the finding by Nagy and Davis (as cited in Bishay, 1996) that decrease in stress level is determined by one's teaching experience. Inference can be drawn with respect to this study that Group One teachers (below 40 years) are mostly dissatisfied with a number of organizational factors such as decision-making, job relation, and limited opportunities to apply their skills at full potential. Judging that most of them had not stayed much longer in the profession, they would expect to find the working environment friendlier, more challenging and rewarding, which is contrary to the reality. The picture is different with those above 40 years who, as explained by Goh et al. (1991), have gone through those challenges and think of consolidating themselves in the profession.

In the light of the finding above, teachers' job satisfaction seems to exert a strong influence on their intention to leave the profession. Teachers in Vocational Age-Group One indicated a low level of job satisfaction, and their intention to leave the teaching profession was relatively high. Thus, we can argue that relatively younger teaching professionals (40 years and below) have a declining interest to continue in their profession due to the challenges and stresses they face in the profession. Due to similar reasons there is also little interest of others younger people to join the profession. The power of interest in individuals' career is well explained by Clark (2001) and Rounds and Su (2014): that it is a powerful predictor of one's performance, career progression and success, as well as persistence in their job.

The findings above have clear implications for practice. For instance, without a friendly working environment that supports younger professionals to be creative and use their skills optimally, the government would find it difficult to engage the interest of younger professionals, both to join or remain in the teaching profession. Without this younger professionals either willing to join or remain, there will be no Age-Group Two with good experience to like to continue with the profession. As such, this argues both for the need to meet 'satisfaction' among younger teachers (so that they do not quit), and to guard against a decline of satisfaction among older teachers (so that they grow more and more productive in their job).

### **5. Conclusion and Implications**

As indicated in the foregoing section, a declining trend in teachers' job satisfaction and an existence of an enhanced wish or intention to leave the profession among young teachers point to a fear (and future reality) that the teaching profession is at the risk of losing a significant number of teachers currently in the field. Teachers' dissatisfaction with a number of job-related factors indicates that there is need to improve working conditions, as well as to maintain a strong morale among teachers. Deliberate efforts should be made to attract more young people to join the profession. Orientation programmes should also be seen as one of the strategies designed to engage young people's interest in taking up a teaching profession, as well as to prepare (and 'groom') teachers. Organs and organisations that recruit and employ teachers should establish links with the wider community from which teacher trainees come so as to make them well-prepared and fitted to provide public service as much as in their respective community as elsewhere. This may reduce teacher attrition and refusal to report at centres especially located in rural areas.

Finally, we recommends that further studies be carried out in to determine if there are no any other intervening variables that make old teachers (those aged from 40 upwards) to be better satisfied than the younger ones in their jobs.

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