

# Relationship between Teachers Level of Job Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy: A Comparative Study between Korean and Non-Korean Perspectives

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## Abstract

The study aims to compare the perceptions of self-efficacy and job satisfaction level between Korean and Non-Korean teachers. Questionnaires based from literature review were administered to 44 teachers at Hanseo University. Descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment of Correlation and ANOVA have been used to analyze the data in the study. According to the result, there is no significant difference on the level of job satisfaction and the perception of efficacy between Korean and Non-Korean teachers. On the other hand, there is a significant positive relationship between teacher efficacy and job satisfaction level.

**Keywords:** Culture, Efficacy, Job Satisfaction, Teacher

## 1. Introduction

Education is aptly described as the greatest equalizer of the society. In most developing countries, education is regarded as the key to greater social mobility. A nation with highly educated people is perceived to be more successful in attaining global competitiveness. South Korea associates its triumph to rise from the ruins of the Korean War to become one of the most highly developed economies of the world, to their zeal for education.

Indeed, South Korea has made a remarkable journey in terms of providing education to its population. According to OECD Briefing Note<sup>1</sup>, 7% of the 25 to 34 age bracket population now completes an upper secondary education, making it on top among the OECD countries, compared with the average 37% in other countries. Furthermore, 53% of the same age bracket completes their tertiary education which places South Korea among the top four OECD countries in terms of tertiary attainment among the younger population.

Aside from these, Korea is at the forefront of the global marketplace, having the most significant industries in electronics, transportation and communication. Its distinctive Korean pop culture has invaded the whole world and is now becoming one of the benchmarks for arts and entertainment. Finally, South Korea is fast becoming a preferred location among foreigners worldwide to pursue their college degrees. Apart from their public education system, South Korea also prides itself with a number of distinguished private universities with a long history and tradition. Inarguably, universities in South Korea provide some of the best educational facilities in the world.

Korea's investment in education has catapulted it to become the third largest economy in Asia. The quality of education is a function of a myriad factors, which include among others, instructional strategies, educational infrastructure, and teacher quality. This research is focused on the last factor, teacher quality, which is considered to be the most dynamic part of the education production function.

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Teacher quality is one of the educational inputs that can be directly controlled by policy makers. The teacher background such as education level, experience, sex and race, can easily be identified during the recruitment stage. However, the efficiency of teachers or professors is not a discrete end result. Rather, it is a volatile variable which, if not managed correctly, can easily veer on a downward slope.

Teachers play a crucial part in the development of any nation. No country can be progressive without the efforts of its teachers. Although technology and institutional infrastructures are essential in educational institutions, it is primarily the work of the teachers that give these colleges and universities their distinctive character. It is thus imperative for an educational institution to attract and retain high quality teachers. In addition, exploring on the dynamics of teacher efficacy is important since previous studies had proven that teacher self-efficacy has a significant contribution to teacher's job satisfaction and students' achievement<sup>2</sup>.

Furthermore, teacher quality is not just a function of skills and academic qualifications. To a great extent, the personal belief on their capabilities, otherwise known as their teaching efficacy, is also an important factor to consider. In this study, self-efficacy is the person's faith and belief in his/her abilities to achieve his/her goals. It does not refer to the actual capabilities, but to the confidence of the teachers on these capabilities. Moreover, how satisfied the teachers are in their job is indicative of their level of commitment and productivity in their profession.

Literature is replete with the positive relationship between teacher efficacy and job satisfaction<sup>2-4</sup>. When a teacher is efficacious, he or she is more creative to make more meaningful outcomes regardless of how difficult the situations may be. This intrinsic belief in their capabilities drives teachers toward greater commitment in their work and in making positive contributions to the fulfillment of the organization's goals and objectives.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore the underpinnings of the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher efficacy and how it compares between the Korean and Non-Korean teachers. Specifically, the study aims:

- To identify the current level of job satisfaction between the Korean and non-Korean respondents.
- To determine the current level of teacher efficacy between the two group of respondents.

- To evaluate the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher efficacy.
- To compare the responses between the Korean and Non-Korean teachers as pertains to the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher efficacy.

## 3. Review of Related Literature

### 3.1 Job Satisfaction

The aspect of job satisfaction has always been a dynamic focus of modern research. This is due to the fact that job satisfaction is usually associated to greater productivity and enhanced effectiveness. Job satisfaction is a function of expectations and actual job performance. If the actual performance exceeds the expectation of the individual, then he may feel satisfied in his or her work. However, if the expectations are not met, individuals tend to become more dissatisfied in their job.

Job satisfaction is influenced by various factors that are either individual in nature or organizational or both. However, it has to be noted that these variables are intertwined with each other. Organizational factors that affect job satisfaction include job related content, a more empathizing leadership, better salary and promotional opportunities, working conditions, respect from colleagues, relationship with superiors, opportunity for professional and personal advancement, amount of workload and general level of stress<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, the personal variables include personality job fit, work itself, educational level, role perceptions, gender and career development. As related to motivation, it is widely held that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators affect job satisfaction. An example of this is the extrinsic factor such as working environment, which has been found to be a motivational reason for teachers to work harder. Meanwhile, the most intrinsically motivating for teachers was having a good relationship with co-workers<sup>6</sup>.

In the realm of education, job satisfaction among teachers and professors is a much desired condition since various literatures had proven a positive correlation between job satisfaction and productivity and organizational effectiveness. Also, it was found out that a correlation exists between perceived motivation, job satisfaction and commitment<sup>7,8</sup>.

Job satisfaction among teachers was associated with freedom to do their work in accordance with what is expected from them, a competitive salary, a reasonable

class size and existence of support system from colleagues and the administration. Teachers are motivated and satisfied if students show interest in the module or lesson that they are taking. In contrast, teachers' low salaries and low status, growing class sizes and changes in the education system have contributed to teacher dissatisfaction. Furthermore, teachers are dissatisfied with the poor language level of students upon entry to the university. It is most likely that the poor language skill of students creates some level of fear to participate in classroom discussions, thus leading to their lack of interest towards lectures<sup>8</sup>.

Much of the researches made have been based on the direct assumptions that the lack of job satisfaction is a potential determinant of absenteeism, high labor turnover, in-role job performance, and extra role behaviors. On the other hand, teachers who feel more satisfied with teaching appear to remain in the teaching profession longer than those who feel dissatisfied.

The existing literature shows consensus on the positive influence of teacher efficacy to that of job satisfaction. Indeed, job satisfaction among teachers is a multi-faceted construct that is critical to teacher retention. It was premised that varied factors of teachers' job satisfaction are interrelated and exert a positive influence on the different variables of teachers' perception of self-efficacy. Job satisfaction was also perceived as a major factor in establishing teacher commitment which is necessary in building school effectiveness. In addition, teachers who are satisfied with their job often have a high regard on their own professional capabilities enabling them to perform specific tasks even in the most difficult situations.

### 3.2 Teacher Self- Efficacy

The most influential theory of self-efficacy is that of Bandura<sup>9</sup>, which relates to the belief of the individual in his or her capacity to perform certain tasks. This self-efficacy aids individuals in succeeding at their assigned tasks. Efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves as well as how they behave. Based from the social-cognitive theory of learning<sup>10</sup>, the behavioral, cognitive and environmental variables shape the perception of a person regarding his or her self-efficacy. Along similar lines, it was argued that self-efficacy is not a constant state of mind, but something that is susceptible to the changes that are happening to the individual. Furthermore, teacher self-efficacy is deemed as context specific.

This means that teachers feel efficacious for teaching particular subjects to certain students in specific settings.

According to the cyclical nature of teacher self-efficacy<sup>11</sup>, teacher self-efficacy originates from any or from a combination of the sources of efficacy namely: mastery experiences, social/verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, and physiological arousal. Based from these experiences, the teacher analyses the teaching task against the institutional setting. He then makes a personal assessment of his own capabilities in terms of his skills, knowledge and personality traits. Based from these, if the teacher believes that he is capable of organizing the teaching task in a manner that would lead to success, then, he is considered to be efficacious. This heightened sense of self-efficacy will further lead to greater commitment to the organization, and the desire to deliver superior performance despite any adversities. This superior performance eventually leads to greater efficacy and the cycle continuous.

Previous studies reported that self-efficacy has a positive relationship with job satisfaction and job performance<sup>2,7,12</sup>. In the academe, it is viewed that teachers with high teacher self-efficacy expect to succeed in teaching through persistence even in the midst of challenges<sup>1,13</sup>. Furthermore, teachers who feel comfortable with their working environment and are personally supported by the administration tend to have higher self-efficacy.

On the other hand, teachers who have low self-efficacy have low aspirations and view changes as threats, with the attitude of trying to avoid them as much as possible even to the extent of abandoning their effort to achieve their objectives<sup>10,14</sup>. This lack of commitment to deal with a challenging situation often leads to their loss of control over their working environment. This can further lead to lack of interest to manage effectively their classroom as well as to provide more meaningful activities that would encourage greater student participation. Ultimately, this low degree of belief in their capacity to succeed leads to job dissatisfaction and low productivity.

On the part of administrative leadership, a school leader who provides teachers with informative feedback about their performance is very likely to enhance the latter's capacity beliefs, self-efficacy, and effort, which are all precursors of job commitment and job satisfaction. The school administration can ultimately reinforce the level of job satisfaction and self-efficacy beliefs among the teachers. However, without the proper managing and leadership skills, administrators can also weaken the

self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers and render them dissatisfied in their job.

## 4. Materials and Method

This study is a qualitative descriptive research. The sample of the study consists of 44 faculty members belonging to different departments. Survey questionnaires were used to gather the necessary data. Descriptive statistics was used to present the profile of the respondents, their level of job satisfaction and their perception of their self-efficacy. Furthermore, Pearson Correlation analysis was computed to determine the correlation between variables. One-way ANOVA was used to find out whether there is significant difference between the Korean and Non-Korean level of teacher efficacy and job satisfaction.

## 5. Results and Discussion

### 5.1 The Demographic Profile of the Respondents is Presented as Follows

More than half (54%) of the Korean respondents are more than 51 years old while 36% of the Non-Korean respondents belong to the age group of 31-35 years old. Majority of the respondents from both groups are male. Majority of the Non-Korean respondents are married (55%) while this is true for nearly all of the Korean respondents (95%). In terms of educational attainment, most of the Korean professors (64%) have earned their post graduate degrees while nearly half (41%) of the non-Korean respondents are graduate degree holders. In terms of the length of teaching experience, 36% of the Korean respondents have more than 20 years of experience while 32% of the Non-Korean teachers have been teaching for 6 to 10 years now.

### 5.2 The Current Level of Job Satisfaction among the Korean and Non-Korean Respondents is Presented in the Following Table

The descriptive analysis reveals that of the 9 variables considered in this study, both groups of respondents were most satisfied with the meaning of their work followed by the rapport that they have with their colleagues. However, the Korean respondents are more satisfied with the recognition that they receive as compared to their pay while the reverse is true among non-Korean respondents. Other

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Korean		Non-Korean	
	F	%	F	%
Age				
26-30 years old	0	0	2	9
31-35 years old	1	4.5	8	36
36-40 years old	1	4.5	4	18
41-45 years old	5	23	3	14
46-50 years old	3	14	3	14
51 years or older	12	54	2	8
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	16	73	17	77
Female	6	27	5	23
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Single	0	0	9	41
Married	21	95	12	55
Separated	1	5	1	4
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>				
Bachelor Degree	0	0	8	36
Graduate Degree	8	36	9	41
Post Graduate Degree	14	64	5	23
<b>Length of Teaching Experience</b>				
1-5 years	2	9	4	18
6-10 years	2	9	7	32
11-15 years	3	14	6	27
16-20 years	7	32	4	18
More than 20 years	8	36	1	4

sources of job satisfaction such as communication flow, amount of workload, rules and procedures, and promotional opportunities tend to neither satisfy or dissatisfy the Korean teachers while these same variables except for the amount of workload, tend to cause dissatisfaction among the non-Korean respondents. Finally, the benefit package is more likely to cause dissatisfaction among the Korean teachers while the amount of workload is perceived to most likely render job dissatisfaction among the non-Korean teachers. These results revealed that while both groups of respondents get the highest job satisfaction in the same areas such as work meaning and rapport

**Table 2.** Respondents' current level of job satisfaction

Variables		Korean		Non-Korean	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Pay	3.136	0.889	3.50	1.225
2.	Recognition	3.545	0.800	2.818	1.296
3.	Rules and Procedures	3.182	1.006	3.364	1.255
4.	Rapport with colleagues	3.727	0.827	4.227	0.528
5.	Communication flow	3.50	1.012	2.636	1.292
6.	Promotional opportunities	3.091	0.811	2.682	1.129
7.	Amount of workload	3.409	1.098	2.545	0.912
8.	Work meaning	4.681	0.568	4.591	0.666
9.	Benefit package	2.636	0.848	3.136	1.283

with colleagues, they tend to be dissatisfied by different variables; benefit package for Korean and amount of workload for non-Korean respondents.

### 5.3 Teacher Self-Efficacy, or the Belief in their Capabilities to Organize and Provide Meaningful Outcomes, is Shown to be Relatively Similar for the Two Groups of Respondents in Most of the Variables Considered in this Study.

The results showed that both groups of respondents strongly agree that they are efficacious when it comes to welcoming and encouraging questions from the students. Among the Korean respondents, they agree that they are self-efficacious in terms of making a constant effort to find effective and better methods of teaching as well as the adequacy of their knowledge to be shared with their students. Other items that both groups of respondents find themselves efficacious include their belief in their capability to influence the academic performance of their students, in the improvement of the students' ability, and in encouraging interest and participation from among the students. It is noteworthy to mention that the non-Korean respondents neither agree nor disagree if they are efficacious when it comes to their responsibility in the students'

**Table 3.** Respondents' perception of their self-efficacy

Variables		Korean		Non-Korean	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	If the student's ability improves, it is due to the special effort of the professor.	4.273	0.767	3.409	0.908
2.	I make constant effort to find effective and better methods of teaching.	4.500	0.673	4.333	0.658
3.	The improvement in the student's ability is due to the effective teaching methodologies of the professor	4.136	0.834	3.500	0.802
4.	I can improve the lack of knowledge in some areas among my students	4.091	0.684	4.364	0.581
5.	The teaching ability of the professor helps in improving the student's academic performance	3.818	0.664	4.318	0.477
6.	I have adequate knowledge to share with my students	4.500	0.598	4.409	0.666
7.	In general, the professor is responsible for the student's academic performance	4.364	0.581	3.273	1.162
8.	The professor's teaching ability encourages interest and participation among the students	4.227	0.813	4.318	0.568
9.	I welcome and encourage questions from my students	4.691	0.590	4.864	0.351



academic performance. This perception may be traced to the more impersonal approach of non-Korean teachers toward the academic performance of their students.

The following table shows the general level of teacher efficacy and job satisfaction between the two groups of respondents. It is revealed that the Korean teachers have a slightly higher sense of self-efficacy as compared to non-Korean respondents. However, when it comes to job satisfaction, it is shown that the non-Korean respondents are more satisfied in their job as compared to the Korean teachers.

**Table 4.** Mean and standard deviation of teachers' efficacy and job satisfaction level

Variables	Korean		Non-Korean	
	Mean	SS	Mean	SS
Teacher Efficacy	4.00	0.75	3.96	0.73
Job Satisfaction	3.25	0.94	3.43	1.05

The high level of self-efficacy found in both groups of respondents can be traced from any or a combination of these sources: vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences and their physiological and emotional states. These personal experiences may improve their faith and belief in their own capacities to succeed in performing in their given roles. The personal character of the teachers in terms of facing challenges, aspirations, level of effort exerted in a given tasks as well as the desire to succeed, bears a profound impact on how they perceive themselves as efficacious or not.

On the other hand, the average level of job satisfaction for both Korean and non-Korean respondents imply that job satisfaction is a function of multitude of variables which include interaction with students, colleagues and superiors, professional challenges, professional autonomy, working conditions, salary and opportunity for advancement. It might be true that even if an individual's level of self-efficacy is high, other organizational factors beyond their control might trigger a slightly lower degree of job satisfaction.

## 5.4 Hypothesis Testing

Using the Pearson correlation, it can be gleaned that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their level of job satisfaction. This means that as the teachers' self-efficacy level increases, there is also a corresponding increase in their level of job satisfaction.

**Table 5.** Pearson correlation between teachers' self-efficacy perception and level of job satisfaction

Variables	Korean		Non-Korean	
	r	p	r	p
Teacher Efficacy	0.20	0.01	0.56	0.01
Job Satisfaction				

The one-way ANOVA was used in order to determine if there is significant difference in teachers' efficacy and job satisfaction level between Korean and Non-Korean respondents. As a result, it has been found out that no significant difference exists as to the teachers' perception of their efficacy and level of job satisfaction.

Results of this study lend support to the previous claims that there is a positive relationship between teacher efficacy and job satisfaction<sup>2,5,15</sup>. This study also presents new insights to demonstrate the influence of their belief to effectively handle different professional tasks and challenges leading to job satisfaction. The data appears to suggest that regardless of cultural background, the respondents exhibit the interaction of their faith in their capacity and the satisfaction that they get from performing their assigned tasks.

The results of this study indicate that the strong sense of self-efficacy among teachers, regardless of their ethnicity, emanates from their having full knowledge of their subject matter and to their openness to questions and suggestions from the students. Previous research has found out that highly efficacious teachers are more inclined to commit themselves for the attainment of the organizational objectives, which ultimately provides them with greater job satisfaction<sup>14,15</sup>. In addition, highly efficacious and satisfied teachers dedicate themselves to their work and are more committed to stay with the organization for as long as possible. In the end, this kind of commitment translates to greater organizational productivity and efficiency.

The finding that there is no significant difference on the teacher efficacy and job satisfaction level between Korean and Non-Korean respondents confirms the view that teachers efficacy showed a positive relationship with teachers job satisfaction even in culturally diverse settings.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, it is claimed that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and perception of

self-efficacy. In addition, differences in culture do not pose a hindrance to become a highly efficacious and a highly satisfied teacher. Since both Korean and non-Korean teachers are motivated by the same sets of factors that lead them to greater job satisfaction, it lends insight as to the absence of any bias or prejudice in terms of managing them within the context of their work as teachers or professors. It is highly recommended that the administration should provide a positive working environment that would promote professional development and foster a supportive relationship among all the teachers, regardless of their cultural background.

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