

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING, JOB SATISFACTION AND STUDENTS-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP AMONG PRESCHOOL TEACHER IN PERAK

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the level and the relationship between psychological well-being, job satisfaction and students-teacher relationships among preschool teachers. This quantitative survey involved 86 preschool teachers in Perak who were selected through random sampling technique. Correlation design was used in this study. The theories used in this study were Ryff's theory of psychological well-being, Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and Ryan and Deci's theory of self-determination. The instruments used were PERMA questionnaire, Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) questionnaire and Students-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) questionnaire. All three instruments have been verified by seven experts and the reliability value for PERMA was $\alpha=0.91$, JSS was $\alpha=0.85$ and STRS was $\alpha=0.73$. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and inference by using percentage, standard deviation and Pearson correlation. The findings showed the psychological well-being among preschool teachers was moderate ($M=6.97$, $SP=0.99$) in the scale of 0 to 10. The job satisfaction of preschool teachers was satisfactory ($M=4.16$, $SP=0.48$) in the scale of 1 to 6. The students-teacher relationship ($M=3.07$, $SP=0.26$) in the scale of 1 to 5 among preschool teachers was low. Findings also revealed a significant correlation between teacher's psychological well-being and job satisfaction ($r=0.39$, $p<0.01$), teacher's psychological well-being and students-teacher relationship ($r=0.38$, $p<0.01$) as well as job satisfaction and students-teacher relationship ($r=0.37$, $p<0.01$). In conclusion, the main finding showed that the psychological well-being of the respondents was moderate. In addition, the preschool teachers were satisfied with their work. However, the students-teacher relationship was low. The correlation between three variables were low. In implication, the preschool teachers need to improve their psychological well-being and their student-teacher relationship. Operating procedures in preschool also need to be focused as this is important in ensuring job satisfaction.

Keywords: Psychological Well-Being, Job Satisfaction, Student-Teacher Relationship, Preschool

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a long journey in Malaysia. The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) began implementing annex preschool education program in 1992, as a pilot project based on the decision of the Cabinet on December 18, 1991, which agreed to create 1,131 preschool classes. Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers meeting on June 6, 2001 agreed that the MOE would continue to expand its preschool from 2002. Since then, preschool extensions have been conducted from time to time in accordance with existing policies and these actions are also listed in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM). PPPM 2013-2025 is to provide equitable access to international quality education (Preschool Management Guidelines, 2018). The target under this shift is to improve quality of preschool and encourage universal enrollment by Wawasan (2020). According to the Preschool Management Guidelines

(2018), the number of preschools under the MOE through 2018 is 9,398 across Malaysia and the total number of preschool and preschool teachers is 9,398 people.

Based on the National Key Result Areas (NKRA), preschool teachers need to educate preschool students with quality in order to ensure increased interest and continuity to higher education (Ministry of Education, 2010). A teacher must also always equip himself with various added values so that he is always ready to face challenges in educating preschool children. Preschool teachers have different tasks than regular teachers because the daily workload is also quite unique where teachers are not focused on teaching tasks only (Denham, 2005).

According to Spodek & Saracho (2006), an early childhood education teacher plays a more complex role in various dimensions compared to a teacher who teaches in primary and secondary schools. Preschool teachers are a very noble and challenging job because teachers are important people in shaping a student to be a person who can contribute to the country in the future. Therefore, the psychological well-being of preschool teachers is of particular concern (Day & Leitch, 2001). All problems related to preschool teachers need to be addressed well including job satisfaction and students-teacher relationship in order to ensure the psychological well-being of teachers (Osgood, 2006).

Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are as below:

- i. Identify the level of psychological well-being among preschool teachers.
- ii. Identify the level of job satisfaction among preschool teachers.
- iii. Identify the level of students-teacher relationship among preschool teachers.
- iv. Measure the relationship between the level of psychological well-being and job satisfaction among preschool teachers.
- v. Measure the relationship between the level of psychological well-being and the relationship of teachers-students among preschool teachers.
- vi. Measure the relationship between job satisfaction and students-teacher relationship in among preschool teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study using survey design. This study is to look at the relationship between the level of psychological well-being, job satisfaction and student-teacher relationships among preschool teachers. In this study, the dependent variable was psychological well-being while the independent variable was job satisfaction and students-teacher relationship. In this study, the data collected and analyzed are based on various types of calculations that include specific formulas. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and inference by using percentage, standard deviation and Pearson correlation.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of preschool teachers of the Ministry of Education Malaysia located in Larut Matang District and Selama state of Perak. Based on data provided by the Perak State Education Department (JPN), a total of 104 preschool teachers in Larut Matang and Selama districts in 2019.

Selection of samples in this study through simple random sampling method. This method is used to ensure that each unit in the population has an equal opportunity to be selected as a study sample (Chua, 2011). Researchers have undergone three processes during sample selection. First, the researcher prepared a list of populations in Larut Matang and Selama districts. Second, researchers label population subjects by numbers. Third, the researcher selects the subject at random by using a draw from inside the box to meet the required study sample.

In addition, the method of determining the sample in this study was made based on the sample size determination table of study by Krejcie & Mogan (1970). This method of sampling is similar with the views of Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) view that sampling is a research strategy that allows researchers to obtain information in a population from some individuals who are the members of that population. Given that the population in the study was 104 people. Thus, the determination of 86 preschool teachers from the population was taken as a sample and it is sufficient in the process of analyzing this study.

Instruments

In this study, three sets of instruments were used. The questionnaires namely *PERMA*, Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) and Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS). This instrument consists of four sections. Section A: demographic form, Section B: *PERMA*, Section C: Job Satisfaction and Section D: Students-teacher Relationship Scale (STRS). The following table is the summary of the instruments of this study.

Sections / Instruments	Total	Scale
Section A (Demographics)	5 Items	None
Section B (Psychological wellbeing: <i>PERMA</i>)	23 Items	Scale 0 to 10
Section C (Job Satisfaction: Job Satisfaction Survey, JSS)	36 Items	Scale 1 to 5
Section D (Student-Teacher Relationship: Student- Teacher Relationship Scale, STRS)	28 Items	Scale 1 to 5

Pilot Test

The validity and reliability of the research instrument is to see the suitability of a measuring instrument used in conducting the study. The validity and reliability of the instrument will be reviewed with SPSS software and use Cronbach's Alpha value because it is very important to maintain the accuracy of the instrument from being exposed to defects. In addition, the researcher conducted this pilot study with the aim of ensuring the overall suitability of the use of the three instruments namely *PERMA*, JSS and STRS to the respondents by referring to the suitability of language, use of terms, sentence structure and compilation of questionnaires distributed.

According to Chua (2011), the Cronbach Alpha value between 0.65 to 0.95 is satisfactory because the value that is too low indicates the ability of the study instrument items to measure the concept in the study is low while the Cronbach Alpha value that is too high indicates that all items are similar or overlapping each other.

Instrument	Total Item	Cronbach Alpha
PERMA	23	0.89
JSS	36	0.67
STRS	28	0.73

Table 2 above is the Cronbach Alpha value achieved in each instrument in this study based on 30 respondents. The Cronbach Alpha value for the PERMA instrument is 0.89 while the Cronbach Alpha value for the JSS instrument is 0.67. The STRS instrument achieved a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.73. All three instruments are said to be satisfactory as they reach Cronbach Alpha values between 0.65 to 0.95.

RESULTS

Below is the result based on objective of the study:

- i. Identify the level of psychological well-being among preschool teachers.

This section is to discuss the results of studies related to the level of psychological well-being which has nine categories namely positive emotions (P), involvement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M), achievement (A), negative emotions (NE), health (H), silence (Lon) and joy (Hap).

Category (Mean)	Level	N	Percentage (%)
≥ 9.00	Very high functioning	10	11.6
8.00 – 8.99	High functioning	23	26.7
6.50 – 7.99	Normal functioning	34	39.5
5.00 – 6.49	Sub-optimal functioning	15	17.4
< 5.00	Languishing	4	4.7

Based on table 3, the overall results of the analysis show that the majority of preschool teachers, a total of 34 preschool teachers (39.5%) have a normal functioning of psychological well-being. There are ten preschool teachers (11.6%) have a very high functioning psychological well-being. Followed by 23 preschool teachers (26.7%) have a high functioning psychological well-being, 15 preschool teachers (17.4%) are in sub-optimal functioning. Analysis also showed that there were only four preschool teachers (4.7%) with languishing level of psychological well-being. Thus, the majority of the level of psychological well-being of preschool teachers in Larut Matang and Selama districts is functioning normally.

- ii. Identify the level of job satisfaction among preschool teachers.

Category (Total score)	Level	N	Percentage (%)
36 – 108	Dissatisfy	1	1.2
109 – 144	Undecided / hesitate	30	34.9
145 – 216	Satisfy	55	64

Based on table above, the overall results of the analysis show that the majority of preschool teachers, 55 teachers (64%) have a satisfy job satisfaction. Meanwhile, a total of 30 teachers (34.9%) are undecided (hesitate) with the level of job satisfaction and only one teacher (1.2%) is dissatisfied with the work. Thus, the level of job satisfaction for some (more than half) preschool teachers is satisfy.

- iii. Identify the level of students-teacher relationship among preschool teachers.

Component	Category (%)	Level	N	Percentage (%)
Conflict	≥ 25	Low	-	-
	26 – 74	Moderate	35	40.70
	≤ 75	High	51	59.30
Closeness	≥ 25	Low	29	33.70
	26 – 74	Moderate	53	61.60
	≤ 75	High	4	4.70
Dependency	≥ 25	Low	1	1.20
	26 – 74	Moderate	12	14.00
	≤ 75	High	73	84.90
Overall	≥ 25	Low	58	67.40
	26 – 74	Moderate	28	32.60
	≤ 75	High	-	-

Based on table 5 above, there are 35 preschool teachers (40.70%) having moderate conflict and 51 preschool teachers (59.30%) have high conflict in students-teacher relationship. Besides, 29 preschool teachers (33.70%) had low closeness, 53 preschool teachers (61.60%) preschool teachers with moderate closeness and 4 preschool teachers (4.70%) had high closeness in students-teacher relationship.

While in the dependency section, one preschool teacher (1.20%) had low dependency, 12 preschool teachers (14%) had moderate dependence and 73 preschool teachers (84.90%) had high dependence in students-teacher relationship.

Overall, the results of the analysis show that the majority of preschool teachers with the total of 58 preschool teachers (67.40%) have a low level of students-teacher relationship. While a total of 28 preschool teachers (32.60%) are at a moderate level of students-teacher relationship and there is no high students-teacher relationship. Thus, the level of students-teacher relationship among preschool teachers as a whole is low.

- iv. Measure the relationship between the level of psychological well-being and job satisfaction among preschool teachers.

	N	M	SP
Psychology Well-Being	86	6.97	0.99
Job Satisfaction	86	4.16	0.48

		Job Satisfaction	Psychology Well-Being
Job Satisfaction	<i>Pearson correlation (r)</i>	1	0.39**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.00
	<i>n</i>	86	86

Based on table 6 and 7 above, this study shows the study sample ($n = 86$), psychological well-being ($M = 6.97$, $SP = 0.99$) and job satisfaction ($M = 4.16$, $SP = 0.48$). Table above shows

that there is a significant moderate relationship ($r = 0.39, p < 0.01$). According to Cohen, Manion and Marrison (2011), the value of coefficient ($r \pm 0.31$ to 0.50) is a moderate relationship. Thus, there is a relationship between psychological well-being and job satisfaction. Therefore, the H_01 hypothesis is rejected.

- v. Measure the relationship between the level of psychological well-being and the relationship of students-teacher among preschool teachers.

	N	M	SP
Psychology Well-Being	86	6.97	0.99
Students-Teacher Relationship	86	3.07	0.26

		Students-Teacher Relationship	Psychology Well-Being
Students-Teacher Relationship	Pearson correlation (r)	1	0.38**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	n	86	86

Based on table 8 and 9 above, this study shows the study sample ($n = 86$), psychological well-being ($M = 6.97, SP = 0.99$) and students-teacher relationship ($M = 3.07, SP = 0.26$). Table above shows that there is a significant moderate relationship ($r = 0.38, p < 0.01$). According to Cohen, Manion and Marrison (2011), the value of coefficient ($r \pm 0.31$ to 0.50) is a moderate relationship. Thus, there is a relationship between psychological well-being and students-teacher relationships. Therefore, the H_02 hypothesis was rejected.

	N	M	SP
Job Satisfaction	86	4.16	0.48
Students-Teacher Relationship	86	3.07	0.26

		Job Satisfaction	Students-Teacher Relationship
Job Satisfaction	Pearson correlation (r)	1	0.37**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	n	86	86

Based on table 10 and 11 above, this study shows the study sample ($n = 86$), job satisfaction ($M = 4.16, SP = 0.48$) and students-teacher relationship ($M = 3.07, SP = 0.26$). Table 4.14 shows that there is a significant moderate strong relationship ($r = 0.37, p < 0.01$). According to Cohen, Manion & Marrison (2011), the value of coefficient ($r \pm 0.31$ to 0.50) is a

moderate relationship. Thus, there is a relationship between job satisfaction and students-teacher relationship. Thus, the H03 hypothesis was rejected.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The discussion of the findings of the study is based on the level of psychological well-being, job satisfaction and student teacher relationships among preschool teachers. This discussion covers the similarities and differences in levels as well as the relationship between psychological well-being, job satisfaction and student-teacher relationships.

Preschool teachers in this study can face a variety of new challenges in life. This is same with the opinion of Ryff & Singer (2006) stated that the development of well-being is an ongoing process and an individual has to face various new challenges. In addition, preschool teachers feel very meaningful in carrying out their duties as a preschool teacher. They feel the responsibility given is greater than their own responsibility. However, the level of psychological well-being among preschool teachers in Larut Matang and Selama districts is only at a moderate level which is "normal functioning level". Experiencing stress caused by teaching and workload in schools (Abdul, Mustafa & Hosshan, 2017). Some teachers also leave the teaching profession due to teacher stress and burnout (Fleming et al., 2013).

Preschool teachers are satisfied with their work. This is because they have good administrators and colleagues. Pepe, Addimando & Veronese (2017) said that job satisfaction is related to characteristics such as administrative control. They also feel like having fun when teaching preschool students because they are satisfied with their work. This became an evident when Spector (2001) said that job satisfaction refers to the extent to which an employee likes their job. Besides, salary is a factor that influences job satisfaction among preschool teachers (Abdul Halim Masnan, Mazlina Che Mustafa, and Hasrul Hosshan, 2017). However, it was also found that the study of Salehi & Taghavi (2015) said the majority of teachers are dissatisfied because they believe other teachers have more influence and power than themselves. Therefore, it can be concluded that the level of job satisfaction of teachers is different and influenced by various factors.

This study found that low level of students-teacher relationship. This is because there are problems of student behavior and conflicts in the interaction of teachers and students. This is evident when the study of Gallagher, Kainz, Vernon-Feagans & White (2013) stated that teachers who fail to form relationships will face more conflicts with students as well as result in disciplinary problems. However, it was found that conflict did not affect the students-teacher relationship among preschool teachers. This is likely because preschoolers are less likely to harbor negative feelings such as anger and resentment towards others. For example, they will quickly forget and get back together as usual with friends after the conflict. Thus, it is found that reports by Tsouloupas, Matthews, Grawitch & Barber (2010) stated that conflict only provides modest support in students-teacher relationships.

In addition, the low students-teacher relationship is due to the high dependency aspect. The high dependency aspect indicates that preschool teachers have high sensitivity. This can be found in the study of Spilt, Vervoort & Verschueren (2018) said that high dependence indicates high teacher sensitivity and can increase student engagement in the classroom. preschool teachers have a higher students-teacher relationship compared to other teachers. Findings indicate moderately high density and high dependence in students-teacher relationships. In this regard, it is found that there are similarities in the study of Guo, Justice, Sawyer & Tompkins (2011) which show the overall finding of the level of students-teacher relationship among preschool teachers is higher and more prosperous compared to the relationship with other teachers.

Hypothesis H₀₁ is rejected in this study because there is a significant relationship between the level of psychological well-being and the satisfaction of preschool teachers. This is found similar with Morgan (2012) which said that teacher well-being is influenced by a teacher's perception of adequacy and level of satisfaction with his or her job. The H₀₂

hypothesis was rejected in this study because there was a significant relationship between the level of psychological well-being and the relationship of preschool-teacher teachers. This opinion is same with Spilt, et al., (2011) stated that the experience of students-teacher relationship affects the well-being of the teacher because it is the source of the teacher's emotions and daily cognition. Thus, it is also evident when Chang (2013) stated that the students-teacher relationship affects the well-being of teachers. Hypothesis H₀₃ is rejected in this study because there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and students-teacher relationship among preschool teachers. This is evidenced when there are similarities in Milatz, Luftenegger & Schober (2015) who argue that the main key to teacher happiness and satisfaction in life is the students-teacher relationship. Therefore, teacher satisfaction and students-teacher relationships among preschool teachers are interrelated.

Therefore, the Ministry of Education Malaysia, the psychological well-being of preschool teachers should be considered more important than other primary and secondary school teachers. This is because preschool teachers are the earliest educators in understanding preschool students. Give implications to preschool teachers in handling the PdP process more effectively. a teacher can better understand, identify and overcome problems that occur in the classroom.

Implications from the theoretical aspect can be seen through the theories used throughout this study. For example, the Theory of Psychological Well-Being which touches on positive psychology is a relatively new field in education. The findings successfully detailed the PERMA introduced that it is a measuring tool that measures the psychological well-being of teachers based on the aspects of happiness and happiness. In addition, the findings also prove that Self-Efficiency Theory can be a guide in assessing job satisfaction by detailing each sub-domain such as payment, promotion, supervision, side benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, colleagues, nature of work and communication. Thus, the findings of the study also detail the important aspects of the Theory of Self-Determination that contributes to the students-teacher relationship, namely conflict, density and dependence when a preschool teacher is in contact with preschool students.

CONCLUSION

Overall, it can be concluded that this study has been successfully conducted and all objectives and research questions have been answered. Based on the findings of this study, psychological well-being, job satisfaction and students-teacher relationships are interrelated with each other. These three variables are important in ensuring the quality of early childhood education especially in preschool education. This is important because one of the shifts in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 is to improve the quality of preschool and promote universal enrollment by 2020.

In addition, it was also found that psychological well-being, job satisfaction and students-teacher relationships play an important role in preschool education because preschool students are human capital that needs to be given full attention in optimal and comprehensive development in order to compete globally in the future.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the findings of this study can help improve aspects of psychological well-being, job satisfaction and students-teacher relationship, psychological well-being, job satisfaction and students-teacher relationship

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