

Determinants of job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers in the division of Butuan City

Jeanneth C. Capilitan*

Saint Joseph Institute and Technology
Butuan City, Philippines
Email: jeaneth.capilitan002@deped.gov.ph

Fernando T. Herrera

Saint Joseph Institute and Technology
Butuan City, Philippines
Email: fherrera@carsu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the determinants of job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers in the Division of Butuan City. A total of 113 teachers from ten districts participated through a researcher-made survey questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression techniques. Findings revealed that teachers are generally highly satisfied, largely due to strong work engagement and administrative support. However, compensation and work-life balance emerged as areas needing further improvement. Career development drivers—teaching engagement, professional development, workload, and career advancement—were perceived to be highly manifested, although variations across schools were noted. Correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between career development drivers and job satisfaction, while regression results confirmed that only teaching engagement and professional development significantly predicted job satisfaction. An intervention program was proposed to strengthen teacher engagement and provide sufficient opportunities for professional growth. The study concludes that enhancing these determinants is vital to sustaining teacher satisfaction and overall school performance. Findings provide valuable insights for the Department of Education, school leaders, and policymakers in designing programs that foster teacher development, empowerment, and well-being.

Keywords: determinants, job satisfaction, public secondary school teachers

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*Corresponding author
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INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone of both personal development and national progress, and teachers remain at the heart of this mission as they dedicate their lives to shaping young minds and values (Aaronson et al., 2020; Korthagen, 2020; Muijs & Reynolds, 2021). In the Philippines, the government has introduced several laws and policies to protect the rights of teachers, promote their professional growth, and support their job satisfaction. A landmark legislation is the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Republic Act No. 4670, 1966), which ensures fair treatment, security of tenure, and safe working conditions. This was later reinforced by Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, which decentralized educational governance, granting more autonomy to school heads and local offices and allowing teachers to focus on instructional duties rather than excessive administrative work.

Further professionalization of teaching was achieved through the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), institutionalized under DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, in collaboration with the Teacher Education Council (TEC). The PPST outlines quality benchmarks for teaching practice across a teacher's career, encompassing domains such as subject mastery, inclusive education, classroom management, assessment literacy, and relationships with the community. Among these, Domain 7 on Personal Growth and Professional Development highlights reflective practice, collaboration, and lifelong learning as central to sustaining teacher effectiveness. Integrated into the K to 12 education reform, the PPST seeks to raise teaching quality by ensuring teachers are systematically supported in their growth and performance.

Recent policy innovations reflect the government's recognition of workload and career development as critical determinants of teacher well-being. DepEd Order No. 5, s. 2024 introduced a more balanced eight-hour workday—six hours for teaching and two for related tasks—with provisions for compensation or service credits when exceeded. Other reforms, such as Executive Order No. 500, s. 1978 on merit-based promotion and DepEd Order No. 20, s. 2024 on improved recruitment, aim to strengthen teacher career paths and inclusivity within the profession. These reforms indicate an ongoing effort to address systemic issues like burnout, low morale, and limited career mobility, while ensuring teachers remain motivated contributors to nation-building.

Despite these policy initiatives, Filipino teachers continue to confront substantial challenges. Global literature shows that teachers frequently struggle with heavy workloads, inadequate resources, and limited financial incentives, all of which undermine job satisfaction (Borman & Dowling, 2022; Carnoy & Rothstein, 2021; OECD, 2022). In the Philippines, the situation is mirrored by realities such as overcrowded classrooms, low salaries, and insufficient teaching materials, often resulting in burnout and attrition (Ilagan et al., 2023; Manansala, 2022; SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues, overburdening teachers with new responsibilities in online and blended learning while exposing gaps in existing support systems.

Context-specific studies shed further light on these challenges. Solania (2022), in a case study at Butuan Central Elementary School, reported that teachers faced oversized classes, heavy administrative and extracurricular demands, limited appreciation, and weak career growth

opportunities—factors that led to stress, demotivation, and even intentions to leave the profession. Similar findings by Baluyos et al. (2019) highlighted exclusion from decision-making, overwhelming responsibilities without support, and lack of recognition as critical barriers to sustaining teacher satisfaction. These studies underscore the risk of losing talented educators to migration or career shifts, with significant implications for communities and student learning outcomes.

A persistent issue is the gap between policy and practice. While frameworks such as the PPST and DepEd's workload policies exist, their impact at the local level, particularly in smaller divisions such as Butuan City, remains uneven. Teachers in these areas often report difficulties in accessing professional development opportunities, limited administrative support, and persistent workload imbalances. Much of the existing research presents national averages that obscure localized realities, leaving a lack of nuanced understanding of how policies are experienced on the ground. This creates a context-specific research gap that needs to be addressed to design interventions that are responsive to the lived experiences of teachers in specific regions.

The present study seeks to address this gap by focusing on public secondary school teachers in Butuan City. It explores the determinants of job satisfaction through career development drivers such as teaching engagement, professional development, workload, and career advancement. By examining how these factors relate to teachers' sense of fulfillment in their profession, this research aims to provide evidence-based insights for school leaders, DepEd officials, and policymakers. Specifically, it underscores the importance of supporting teacher engagement, recognizing contributions, and creating sustainable professional growth opportunities.

Ultimately, this study emphasizes that improving teacher job satisfaction requires moving beyond broad national frameworks to contextually grounded solutions that account for the unique challenges of local school environments. By centering the voices and experiences of teachers in Butuan City, the research aims to contribute to more targeted and effective interventions that foster a motivated, resilient, and high-performing teaching workforce. Such efforts not only enhance teacher well-being but also strengthen the broader educational system, ensuring that students benefit from inspired, engaged, and professionally supported educators.

Statement of the problem

This study aims to investigate the determinants of job satisfaction among public secondary teachers of Butuan City Division. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of job satisfaction of public secondary school teachers in the ten districts of Butuan City Division in terms of work engagement, compensation, work-life balance, and administrative support?
2. What is the extent of the manifestation of the career development drivers affecting job satisfaction in terms of teaching engagement, professional development, workload, and career advancement?
3. Do career development drivers significantly correlate with the job satisfaction of public secondary school teachers?

4. Which of the variables, either individually or in combination, significantly relate to the job satisfaction of public secondary school teachers?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what intervention can be designed to enhance the job satisfaction of public secondary school teachers?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a purely quantitative and predictive research design to develop a regression model that explains the determinants of job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers in the ten districts of the Butuan City Division. The model particularly examined the direct effects of teaching engagement, professional development, workload, and career advancement on teachers' job satisfaction. The use of a quantitative approach was deemed appropriate since all data gathered were numerical and were collected through a structured, researcher-made questionnaire designed to capture perceptions of job satisfaction and career development drivers.

The study was conducted in Butuan City, the capital of Agusan del Norte and the administrative center of the Caraga region. The research locale encompassed the ten districts of the Butuan City Schools Division, namely Central Butuan District I, Central Butuan District II, East Butuan District I, East Butuan District II, North Butuan District, Northwest Butuan District, South Butuan District, Southeast Butuan District I, Southwest Butuan District, and West Butuan District. These districts included a wide range of schools, from densely populated urban institutions to rural campuses with limited resources. This geographical diversity mirrored the socioeconomic and cultural variations across the city, with schools in the urban core having greater access to facilities and technology, while those in more remote areas encountered infrastructure and resource limitations. Despite these differences, all districts shared a common goal of providing quality education, and the teachers who participated in the study represented the backbone of these efforts.

The respondents of the study were limited to Master Teachers and Teacher III educators who had at least five years of teaching experience. This criterion was established to ensure that the participants had accumulated substantial classroom experience and achieved recognized levels of professional growth and leadership in their schools. These teachers were often entrusted with responsibilities beyond teaching, such as mentoring colleagues, spearheading curriculum initiatives, and supporting school improvement, which gave them a deeper understanding of the factors influencing career development and job satisfaction. While the contributions of Teacher I and II educators are also significant, the study focused on more senior teachers to establish a consistent benchmark for career progression. Notably, all 58 Master Teachers in the division participated, reflecting their professional engagement and commitment, while only 45 out of 171 Teacher III respondents were able to take part. The lower participation rate among Teacher III respondents highlighted the heavy workloads and competing responsibilities that constrained their ability to participate in research activities, offering a parallel insight into the daily pressures that many teachers face.

The main research instrument was a structured survey questionnaire specifically designed to measure teachers' perceptions of career development drivers—teaching engagement, professional development, workload, and career advancement—and their influence on job

satisfaction, which was measured in terms of work engagement, compensation, work-life balance, and administrative support. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: the first addressed the dimensions of job satisfaction, while the second focused on the career development drivers. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, enabling nuanced responses and permitting a range of statistical analyses. The instrument was validated through expert review by educational leaders and administrators, who provided feedback on content validity, clarity, and relevance. Following expert validation, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing at Agusan National High School using the test-retest method to ensure reliability. Cronbach's alpha was employed to measure internal consistency, with a threshold of 0.70 or higher indicating satisfactory reliability. This rigorous process of validation and pilot testing ensured that the instrument accurately represented the perceptions and experiences of the participating teachers.

Data collection commenced once the survey instrument had been validated and finalized. The researcher sought and obtained approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of Butuan City, followed by coordination with District Supervisors and School Heads to ensure compliance with institutional protocols. Surveys were distributed personally by the researcher, although in larger schools the task was delegated to department heads with the endorsement of principals. Clear retrieval timelines were agreed upon to minimize disruption to school operations while ensuring efficient data collection.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent was secured from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation with full awareness of the purpose and implications of the research. Respondents were assured of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by securing records in password-protected files and restricting access to raw data. These safeguards aimed to protect participants' privacy, maintain trust, and uphold the integrity of the research process.

For data analysis, several statistical tools were employed. The mean and standard deviation were used to describe the extent of manifestation of career development drivers and the levels of job satisfaction. Pearson correlation analysis determined the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables and job satisfaction, while multiple regression analysis identified which variables, individually or in combination, significantly influenced job satisfaction. Together, these methods provided a comprehensive statistical basis for understanding the determinants of job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers in Butuan City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 103 public secondary school teachers from the ten districts of Butuan City Division participated in the study, representing both Master Teachers and Teacher III educators. These participants were carefully selected as they possessed at least five years of professional experience and had demonstrated notable leadership roles in their respective schools. Using a validated researcher-made questionnaire, quantitative data were gathered to measure the level of job satisfaction and the extent of manifestation of career development drivers. The findings are discussed in accordance with the research problems posed in the study.

Job satisfaction of public secondary school teachers

The results revealed that public secondary school teachers in Butuan City reported very high levels of job satisfaction, particularly in terms of work engagement, with an overall mean score of 4.41. Teachers expressed strong passion and fulfillment in their teaching profession, with the highest ratings given to their commitment to student success (4.80), passion for helping learners grow (4.75), and finding meaning in their work (4.63). These results demonstrate that teachers are intrinsically motivated and deeply invested in their roles as mentors and facilitators of learning. Such findings resonate with DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, which underscores the critical role of teachers in fostering holistic student growth.

While teachers showed a strong emotional connection to their profession, areas such as recognition from administrators (4.15) and access to resources (3.35) were rated lower, with the latter only reaching an average level. This suggests that despite high levels of intrinsic motivation, teachers may feel constrained by the lack of adequate materials and limited acknowledgment of their contributions. These findings mirror those of García-Martínez et al. (2021), who emphasized that resources serve as a mediating factor between teacher motivation and burnout. Addressing resource provision and recognition systems would therefore strengthen the already high levels of engagement observed in this division.

Compensation was another significant dimension of job satisfaction, where teachers gave an overall mean rating of 4.09, interpreted as high. While most respondents expressed satisfaction with their salaries and government-mandated benefits, concerns arose regarding salary progression and incentives tied to professional development. For example, satisfaction with salary increases based on years of service and qualifications received only average scores (3.25–3.31). Nonetheless, teachers rated very highly the importance of financial incentives for professional growth (4.66) and fair compensation as a means of retaining teachers (4.68). These results align with Kraft et al. (2020), who noted that salary progression and recognition of professional development are critical to sustaining teacher retention.

In terms of work-life balance, teachers reported an overall mean score of 4.08, also rated high. They expressed satisfaction with administrative support (4.28) and control over their schedules (4.22), recognizing that balance positively affects their mental well-being (4.30) and job performance (4.67). However, average ratings were noted for how teaching interferes with personal responsibilities (3.34) and participation in social activities (3.31). This indicates that despite structural support, many teachers still find it difficult to separate work from personal time. As Gonzales et al. (2022) observed, teaching often extends beyond official hours, contributing to stress and limited opportunities for relaxation.

Teachers were also very satisfied with the administrative support they received, giving an overall mean score of 4.28. High ratings were given to leadership (4.41), constructive feedback (4.48), and administrative acknowledgment (4.46), reflecting the positive impact of shared governance frameworks such as those outlined in DepEd Order No. 26, s. 2022. However, availability of teaching materials again emerged as a challenge, with only an average score of 3.38. These findings suggest that while leadership practices in the division are strong, resource gaps continue to affect teachers' sense of support. Overall, the composite results across indicators showed very high job satisfaction (mean = 4.22), with the highest ratings in work

engagement (4.41) and administrative support (4.28), followed by compensation and work-life balance, both rated high.

Manifestation of career development drivers

When examining the career development drivers, teaching engagement emerged as a very strong factor with an overall mean score of 4.40. Teachers highlighted school efforts in encouraging student participation (4.66), recognizing engaging teaching methods (4.64), and supporting technology integration (4.63). These results align with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017), which emphasize innovation and continuous growth. However, resource availability to support engagement was rated only average (3.38), underscoring once again the recurring theme of limited teaching materials.

Professional development also received a very high overall rating of 4.36. Teachers particularly valued access to development programs (4.62), support for attending seminars (4.58), and the school culture of growth (4.50). Nevertheless, time allocation for professional development was rated only average (3.37), reflecting the challenge of balancing training with heavy workloads. This gap highlights the need for systemic solutions that not only offer opportunities but also create space for teachers to pursue them meaningfully.

Workload management received an overall very high score of 4.36, with teachers commending manageable class sizes (4.65), adequate lesson preparation time (4.56), and support for extracurricular responsibilities (4.58). However, balancing teaching with administrative tasks was rated only average (3.37), showing that paperwork remains a burden for many teachers. These findings echo DepEd Memorandum No. 291, s. 2022, which advocates for simplifying reporting processes to minimize teacher burnout.

Career advancement was also rated very high, with an overall mean of 4.40. Teachers felt supported in progression opportunities (4.57), leadership roles (4.66), and recognition of achievements (4.69). However, clarity of advancement criteria was given an average rating of 3.31, suggesting a lack of transparent guidelines for promotion. This is consistent with Padillo et al. (2021), who emphasized that clear and attainable career pathways boost motivation and long-term commitment.

Taken together, the results show that all four career development drivers—teaching engagement, professional development, workload, and career advancement—manifested at very high levels, with an overall mean score of 4.38. Teaching engagement and career advancement emerged as slightly stronger than the other dimensions, but all four contributed nearly equally to teacher satisfaction.

Correlation of career development drivers and job satisfaction

Correlation analysis confirmed strong, positive, and significant relationships between career development drivers and job satisfaction. Teaching engagement showed the highest correlation ($r = 0.949$, $p < .001$), followed by professional development ($r = 0.946$, $p < .001$), workload ($r = 0.944$, $p < .001$), and career advancement ($r = 0.919$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that improvements in any of these factors directly enhance teacher satisfaction. The

findings reinforce prior research by Amerstorfer et al. (2021) and Bakker and Demerouti (2017), who highlighted that engaged teachers display stronger enthusiasm, emotional investment, and instructional innovation.

Predictors of job satisfaction

Multiple regression analysis revealed that only teaching engagement and professional development significantly predicted job satisfaction. Teaching engagement had a coefficient of 0.34 ($p = 0.04$), while professional development had a coefficient of 0.59 ($p < .001$), indicating their substantial contribution to teacher satisfaction. In contrast, workload and career advancement did not register as significant predictors. This suggests that while these factors are important, engagement and opportunities for professional growth are the primary drivers of satisfaction among public secondary teachers.

These findings echo the work of Cui (2022), who emphasized the protective role of engagement in reducing stress and emotional exhaustion, and Vadivel et al. (2021), who noted that professional development fosters networks of collaboration and a sense of career progress. The regression model underscores the need to focus on these two drivers when designing interventions to sustain satisfaction.

Proposed intervention

Based on the results, a school-based intervention model was proposed, emphasizing teacher engagement and professional development as the most critical levers for sustaining satisfaction. The program promotes collaborative decision-making, recognition of teacher contributions, and leadership opportunities to foster engagement. It also prioritizes continuous professional development tailored to individual needs, including workshops, mentoring, and structured learning action cells. Wellness activities, recognition programs, and career orientation initiatives form complementary components to strengthen satisfaction and retention.

By addressing both engagement and professional development, the model seeks to create a school environment where teachers feel valued, supported, and motivated to remain in the profession. This aligns with DepEd's broader policy thrusts to empower teachers and improve student outcomes through a well-supported teaching force.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effects of career development drivers on the level of job satisfaction of public secondary school teachers in the ten districts of the Butuan City Division. A total of 113 teachers participated in the survey, which utilized a researcher-made questionnaire and statistical analyses to determine the relationships between job satisfaction and career development factors. The findings revealed that teachers generally demonstrated very high levels of job satisfaction, particularly in the areas of work engagement and administrative support. Their passion for teaching, strong commitment to student success, and recognition of the meaningfulness of their profession emerged as the strongest contributors to their satisfaction. Compensation and work-life balance, however, received slightly lower ratings, as some teachers

expressed concern over salary progression, recognition of professional development, and the intrusion of work into personal time. These results suggest that while teachers in Butuan City are highly engaged and supported, financial growth opportunities and clearer work-life boundaries remain areas for improvement.

The analysis of career development drivers showed that teaching engagement, professional development, workload management, and career advancement all manifested at very high levels. Teachers reported feeling supported in their professional growth, recognizing opportunities for skill enhancement, and benefiting from manageable workloads and opportunities for advancement. However, certain aspects such as balancing teaching with administrative tasks, limited time for professional development, and the lack of clarity in promotion criteria emerged as areas requiring further attention. These concerns illustrate that while systemic structures for development are present, their implementation and accessibility vary across schools, leaving gaps that can affect teacher morale and satisfaction.

Correlation analysis further demonstrated that job satisfaction is positively and significantly related to all four career development drivers. Teaching engagement and professional development, in particular, showed the strongest correlations, confirming the vital role these factors play in shaping teacher satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis strengthened this conclusion, revealing that only teaching engagement and professional development significantly predicted job satisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of intrinsic motivation, continuous learning, and opportunities for meaningful professional growth in sustaining teacher morale, while highlighting that workload and career advancement, though relevant, may not independently predict satisfaction levels.

Based on these findings, an intervention program was proposed to sustain and enhance job satisfaction by prioritizing teacher engagement and professional development. The program emphasizes collaborative decision-making, recognition of teacher contributions, and accessible opportunities for training, mentorship, and career orientation. By creating a school culture that values teacher input, fosters continuous learning, and strengthens support structures, schools can improve teacher motivation, reduce burnout, and ensure long-term commitment to the profession.

In light of these conclusions, several recommendations are advanced. The Department of Education may use the findings of this study as a basis for designing policies and programs that promote teacher satisfaction as a cornerstone of improved school performance. School heads are encouraged to incorporate the results into school improvement planning, particularly by addressing identified gaps in recognition, workload management, and resource provision. Teachers themselves may reflect on the findings as a guide to maximizing productivity while maintaining balance and well-being, recognizing the value of engagement and professional development as key drivers of fulfillment in their work. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to expand on this study by examining additional constructs not included in the regression model, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher satisfaction and school performance.

In conclusion, this study affirms that the job satisfaction of public secondary school teachers in Butuan City is anchored primarily in their strong engagement with teaching and their access to meaningful professional development. Addressing gaps in compensation, workload

distribution, and career progression will further strengthen their sense of fulfillment and stability in the profession. By acting on these insights, educational leaders and policymakers can foster a more supportive and sustainable teaching environment, ensuring that teachers remain motivated, effective, and committed to shaping the future of learners.

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