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## **Perspectives of Basic School Level Headteachers in Accra Metropolitan Education Directorate about their Job Satisfaction amid the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

*The study's goal was to investigate the job satisfaction of basic level headteachers in the Accra Metropolitan Education Directorate during the COVID-19 Pandemic. An explanatory sequential methodology was used in this investigation. A purposive sampling technique was also utilized to choose a total of 67 basic school heads, 15 of whom were males and 52 of whom were females. Data on job happiness was collected using the BGSU Abridged Job Descriptive Index. For statistical analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-test and one-way between-group analysis of variance) were used. The findings show that basic school headteachers think that their current employment is good and that their current compensation is sufficient to support them. However, they were dissatisfied with their jobs in general. The results demonstrated that gender, level of headship, age differences, as well as marital status, did not have a substantial impact on job satisfaction in general during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**Keywords:** Age; basic school headteachers; COVID-19 pandemic; gender; job satisfaction; marital

### **1. Introduction**

Job fulfilment is becoming progressively important in the workplace, and it has been linked to a variety of aspects, including effectiveness, productivity, non-attendance, and turnover. Employee work satisfaction is critical in dealing with the changing and ever-increasing complexity and problems of preserving an organization's profitability by getting its employees engaged and motivated on a regular basis (Claypool, 2017; Rane, 2011). The job of a school principal has gotten more difficult and demanding. Because both headteachers and teachers are responsible for the future of the society in which they operate, the relevance of job satisfaction has become increasingly apparent in educational settings (Toropova, *et al.*, 2022). As a result, a school head's responsibilities are critical in ensuring the school's success by maintaining a positive climate, providing enough resources, and ensuring strong relationships and excellent student achievement (Day, *et al.*, 2020). School leaders cannot effectively carry out their tasks and obligations unless they are satisfied and secure in their employment. Bad leaders can have a variety of unpleasant and undesirable outcomes for businesses and their employees, all of which have a detrimental impact on the organisation's overall success. Thus, job satisfaction, which is linked to both organisational production and individual prosperity, is the most important factor for investigation in such a situation. Job fulfilment also implies that one enjoys and enjoys one's employment. Job satisfaction is essential since it leads to recognition, advancement, money, and the achievement of many goals that lead to a sense of fulfilment (Davidescu, *et al.*, 2020; Kaliski, 2007). Job satisfaction is also defined as the sensation experienced after finishing a task, which can be either favourable or unfavourable based on the results of the errand undertaken or in other words, it is a pleasurable or positive emotional state (Inayat, & Khan, 2021; Montuori, *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, job satisfaction refers to a person's feelings and ideas regarding their current job. Individuals'



levels of job satisfaction might range from ecstatic delight to utter dissatisfaction. Individuals can also have differing perspectives on certain aspects of their careers, such as the type of job they do, their co-workers, and their pay (Wang, & Brower, 2019). Job satisfaction is more of a mental and emotional condition than it is a physical state. It could, for example, be linked to a person's feelings of achievement, whether quantitative or qualitative (Unanue, *et al.*, 2017).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had enormous effect on the educational field, changing methods of instruction across the world, such as switching from classroom instruction to online instruction (Lizana, *et al.*, 2021). "Social distancing" and "working from home" (WFH) are two terms used to describe practices that have resulted in major adjustments in regular activities. Establishing a schedule in education gives headteachers, teachers, and students a sense of responsibility, consistency, and security. Schools at all levels of education resumed in the following order after a 9-month closure: kindergartens, primary and junior high schools reopened on January 15, 2021, senior high schools reopened on January 18, 2021, and tertiary institutions reopened on January 9, 2021 (Xinhua, 2021). In the Ghanaian media, there were worries expressed from all sides. This is because, at the time of the announcement, there was a wave of new cases. According to Africa news (2021, p.1), Ghana's President stated, "we have noticed an increase in the number of active cases, from a little over 900 to 1,924". "Because of an increase in infections, our COVID-19 treatment facilities have gone from zero to full in the number of patients." As Ghanaian schools resumed for the 2020/2021 school year following a ten-month closure, the directive called for temperature checks and the mandatory wearing of masks. At the primary and junior high levels, headteachers were supposed to coordinate this. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about these developments, which have surprised educators and presented difficulties for both teachers and students. Because of this, many educators continue to struggle with rising workloads and uncertainty, which raises questions about mental health (MH). (Aperribai, *et al.*, 2020). These concerns tend to lower the job satisfaction of the teachers and headteachers in the schools.

According to Frederick Herzberg, employee satisfaction includes two components: "hygiene" and "motivation." Employee unhappiness with the workplace is reduced by hygiene factors like pay and supervision. Motivators like praise and success increase commitment, creativity, and productivity in employees. He claimed that after cleanliness issues are resolved, the motivators increase employee satisfaction. You can produce employees that are motivated, effective, and fulfilled by fostering a positive work environment. This will ultimately result in more satisfied students and better teaching and supervision. According to the Herzburg's Hygiene Theory, job satisfaction and discontent are not mutually exclusive concepts. According to the research that supports this idea, certain job traits are linked to job satisfaction, whereas other job characteristics are linked to job unhappiness. Hence, removing unhappiness won't always result in satisfaction, and vice versa (Hertzberg, Mausner, Snyderman, 1959; Herzberg, 1965.)

Job satisfaction is important in determining whether a person wants to resign or stay at a job (Aldridge & Frazer, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Tziner, *et al.*, 2015). Job satisfaction, as a complex construct, may be traced back to Herzberg's (1965) work, but it has also piqued the interest of a slew of other academics (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). Job satisfaction has been characterised by some studies as people's negative or positive evaluations of their jobs (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Reeves, Pun & Chung, 2017; Veldman, *et al.*, 2016). Thus, a study on job satisfaction among secondary school principals discovered that principals were dissatisfied with their jobs (Suleman, *et al.*, 2018), as a result of poor remuneration and other working conditions. Also, a study on the predictive value of individual and work-related resources for the health and work satisfaction of German school principals was conducted (Dadaczynskia, *et al.*, 2019). The study revealed that primary school principals were more often affected by low levels of resources as well as lower health status and work satisfaction.

Research has also shown that the job of a school principal has gotten more difficult and demanding because of its relevance during the COVID-19 era (Toropova, *et al.*, 2022), and how to ensure and maintain a positive climate (Day, *et al.*, 2020). School leaders cannot effectively carry out their tasks and obligations unless they are satisfied and secure in their employment. If this is the situation before the pandemic, then it is important to look at how contented headteachers in schools in the Accra Metropolitan Education Directorate were during the pandemic. It is against this backdrop that the researchers decided to investigate the perspectives of basic school level headteachers in Ghana about their job satisfaction amid the COVID-19 pandemic era in the Accra Metropolitan Education Directorate.



## 2. Research Methods

An explanatory sequential design (Creswell, 2015) was used as it consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture. In this research, a quantitative cross-sectional descriptive survey methodology was used in order to evaluate job satisfaction among pre-tertiary heads in the Accra Metropolitan Education Directorate in their day-to-day operations. After this, a qualitative design was used to see how the pre-tertiary heads' job satisfaction was affected or otherwise.

The Job Descriptive Index (Balzer, et al., 1997), is a tool for assessing employee job satisfaction. The BGSU Abridged Job Descriptive Index is an "aspect" measure of job satisfaction, which means respondents are asked to consider certain aspects of their job and rate how satisfied they are with those aspects. The JDI has five components, including happiness with co-workers, the work itself, remuneration, advancement chances, and supervision. In this study, however, just co-workers, the work itself, and pay were used, with each subscale having six statements. Each component assesses a different aspect of job satisfaction. These are the five options: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) undecided, 4) agree, and 5) strongly agree. In a study by Norbakhsh and Mirnaderi (2007), the questionnaire's validity and reliability were evaluated, and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.88 was found. All pre-tertiary headteachers in the Accra Metropolitan Education Directorate in Ghana's Greater Accra region were the target group for this study. Nevertheless, the accessible population used for the study will be the basic level headteachers in the Accra Metropolitan Directorate of Education. The basis for choosing the location for the study is since the students' population is very high and so many schools could be found on the same compound (cluster of schools) that can impact the observance of the COVID-19 protocol. A sample of 67 headteachers from a population of 79 headteachers from the Accra Metropolitan Directorate of Education's pre-tertiary institutions (specifically, primary, and junior high schools) was chosen for the study. For the investigation, the study used both purposeful and convenience sampling. Data for the research was collected between March 2021 and September 2021 from the headteachers of all the identified basic schools in the Accra Metropolitan Directorate of Education.

## 3. Analysis Result

### 3.1 The kind of job satisfaction experienced by basic level headteachers.

The results presented in Table 2 show the extent of job satisfaction experienced by male and female headteachers concerning their jobs. Male and female headteachers (M=3.63, SD=1.03) agreed that their present job is good. Also, they claimed that their current pay is enough for them to live on (M=3.81, SD=1.86).

**Table 2: Extent of Job Satisfaction Experienced by Male and Female Headteachers**

Statements	Mean (Standard deviation)			Sig. Level
	Overall	Male	Female	
The people with whom I work or meet in connection with my work are boring.	2.58(1.23)	2.18(1.29)	2.72(1.20)	.117
The people with whom I work or meet in connection with my work are slow	2.78(1.09)	2.35(1.12)	2.92(1.05)	.062
The people with whom I work or meet in connection with my work are responsible	3.46(.97)	3.94(.66)	3.30(1.02)	.005*
The people with whom I work or meet in connection with my work are smart	3.34(.95)	3.78(.66)	3.20(.99)	.011*
The people with whom I work or meet in connection with my work are lazy	2.88(1.44)	2.29(1.31)	3.08(1.44)	.051
The people with whom I work or meet in connection with my work are frustrating	3.10(1.45)	2.88(1.45)	3.18(1.45)	.468
My present job is fascinating	3.24(1.12)	3.24(1.09)	3.24(1.14)	.988
My present job is satisfying	3.34(1.04)	3.41(1.18)	3.32(1.00)	.755
My present job is good	3.63(1.03)	3.53(1.07)	3.66(1.02)	.654
My present job is exciting	3.46(.96)	3.24(1.09)	3.54(.91)	.261
My present job is rewarding	3.12(1.16)	3.00(1.11)	3.16(1.18)	.627
My present job is uninteresting	2.96(1.19)	2.94(1.14)	2.96(1.21)	.955



I barely live on my income	3.31(1.22)	3.76(1.15)	3.16(1.22)	.078
The pay you get now is bad	3.31(1.25)	3.00(1.54)	3.42(1.13)	.233
I am well paid at my current job	2.37(1.23)	2.24(1.44)	2.42(1.16)	.596
I am underpaid at my current job	3.12(1.31)	2.82(1.47)	3.22(1.25)	.284
I am comfortable with my current pay	2.60(1.10)	2.41(1.00)	2.66(1.14)	.426
My current pay is enough to live on	3.81(11.86)	7.94(23.49)	2.40(1.20)	.096

However, male, and female headteachers differed on the fact that “the people with whom they work or meet in connection with their work are smart” ( $p=.011$ ). Similarly, they were different on the fact that “the people with whom they work or meet in connection with their work are responsible” ( $p=.005$ ).

### 3.2 The gender difference in job satisfaction between basic level headteachers.

An independent-samples t-test was used for these 17 males and 50 females that took part in the survey to see if there were any variations in job satisfaction among them. The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Gender differences in job satisfaction among headteachers.**

	Gender	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Job satisfaction	Male	17	62.18	25.31	65	.868	.594
	Female	50	58.80	6.72			

*Significant at  $p < .05$*

Male headteachers ( $M = 62.18$ ,  $SD = 25.31$ ) had higher levels of job satisfaction than female headteachers ( $M = 58.80$ ,  $SD = 6.72$ ), but a statistically not significant difference,  $M = 3.38$ , 95% CI  $[-9.74, 16.50]$ ,  $t(65) = .868$ ,  $p = .594$ . Thus, there were no differences between male and female headteachers regarding the job satisfaction they experienced. This suggests that both male and female headteachers experience similar job satisfaction at their workplace.

### 3.3 The effect of age on job satisfaction among basic level headteachers.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to answer research question three regarding the differences in age in job satisfaction among basic level headteachers in the Accra Metropolitan Directorate of Education. From Table 4, headteachers between the ages of 41 and 45 experienced higher levels of job satisfaction, whereas those between the ages of 51 and 55 experienced lower levels of job satisfaction. The first three assumptions of the one-way ANOVA relate to the study design as follows: (a) there is the presence of a continuous dependent variable (job satisfaction); (b) the independent variable is categorical with two or more independent groups (age), and (c) they have independence of observations (every participant belongs to only one age group). The study design met these three assumptions; hence the one-way ANOVA was chosen as the statistical test to use to analyse the data.

**Table 4: Mean Ratings by Age on Job Satisfaction**

Age	N	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
31-35	6	59.33	6.71	53.00	71.00
41-45	15	62.00	28.83	45.00	157.00
46-50	21	60.62	5.93	45.00	75.00
51-55	17	56.18	6.69	43.00	69.00
56-60	8	60.38	9.05	44.00	72.00

*Significant at  $p < .05$*

Although the first three assumptions were met, there were others that had to be met using the SPSS package to analyse. These are (d) that there should be no significant outliers in the groups of the independent variable in terms of the dependent variable, (e) the dependent variable should be approximately normally distributed for each group of the independent variable, and (f) there is homogeneity of variances (i.e., the variance is equal in each group of the independent variable). All six assumptions were met, so a one-way ANOVA was run. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine the extent to which the workplace-related stress score was different for groups with different age ranges. Participants were classified into five groups: 31-35 ( $n = 6$ ), 41-45 ( $n = 15$ ), 46-50 ( $n = 21$ ), 51-55 ( $n = 17$ )



and 56-60 (n = 8). Job satisfaction scores increased from the 51-55 (M = 56.2, SD = 6.7) to 31-35 (M = 59.3, SD = 6.7) to 56-60 (M = 60.4, SD = 9.1) to 46-50 (M = 60.6, SD = 5.9) to 41-45 (M = 62.0, SD = 28.8) age groups, in that order, but the differences between these age groups were not statistically significant,  $F(4, 67) = .394, p = .812$ .

**Table 5: Age differences in job satisfaction among headteachers**

	Age	N	M	SD	df	F	p
Job satisfaction	31-35	6	59.33	6.71	4	.394	.812
	41-45	15	62.00	28.83			
	46-50	21	60.62	5.93			
	51-55	17	56.18	6.69			
	56-60	8	60.38	9.05			

*Significant at  $p < .05$*

In other words, the results of this research show that age differences do not influence job satisfaction.

### 3.4 The difference in job satisfaction among married and single basic level headteachers.

An independent-samples t-test, as shown in Table 6, was used for the headteachers that took part in the survey to see if there were any variations in job satisfaction between them. Single headteachers (M = 57.67, SD = 5.30) had lower levels of job satisfaction than married headteachers (M = 60.23, SD = 15.43), but the variations were not noteworthy,  $M = 4.07, 95\% \text{ CI } [-10.69, 5.56], t(65) = -.630, p = .531$ . From the independent-samples t-test analysis, there were no differences between married and single headteachers regarding their job satisfaction.

**Table 6: Effect of Marital status on job satisfaction among Headteachers**

	Marital Status	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Job satisfaction	Married	52	57.67	5.30	65	-.630	.531
	Single	15					

*Significant at  $p < .05$*

### 3.5 The difference in the level of headship on job satisfaction among basic level headteachers.

To answer research question five, an ANOVA was used to determine the differences at various levels of headship in occupational stress among basic level headteachers in the Accra Metropolitan Directorate of Education. The results are presented in Table 7 and Table 8. Participants were classified into three groups: primary school (n = 17), junior high school (n = 16), and primary and junior high (middle) school (n = 34). The job satisfaction score experienced by the headteachers decreased from the primary and junior high (middle) schools (M = 60.97, SD = 17.76) to the primary school (M = 59.76, SD = 9.07) to the junior high (middle) school (M = 56.75, SD = 6.81) in that order.

From Table 7, headteachers heading both primary and junior high (middle) schools at the same time experienced higher levels of job satisfaction, whereas those heading junior high schools only experienced lower levels of job satisfaction.

**Table 7: Differences in Level of Headship in job satisfaction among headteachers**

	Level of Headship	N	M	SD	df	F	p
Job satisfaction	Primary School	17	59.76	9.07	2	.500	.609
	Junior High School	16	56.75	6.81			
	Primary and Junior High (Middle) Schools	34	60.97	17.76			

*Significant at  $p < .05$*





Table 7 also shows whether there are differences in the levels of headship groups concerning job satisfaction experienced by headteachers. In spite of the differences in the means of the different levels, it can be reported that the differences between these levels of headship groups were not statistically significant,  $F(2, 67) = .500, p = .609$ . The results suggest that in this study there were no differences in the level of headship groups regarding job satisfaction. This suggests that the level of headship groups has no effect on the job satisfaction experienced by headteachers.

### **3.6 Headteachers views regarding their job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic era**

AMED is made up of three sub-metros namely, Ashiedu Keteke, Ablekuma South and Okaikoi South, and eight circuits. The three circuits in Ashiedu Keteke are Ga Mahsie, Ussher and Ayalolo. Ablekuma South also has three circuits namely, Korle Gonno, Ojoo, and Mamprobi. Finally, it is Okaikoi South that has only two circuits namely Kaneshie and Bubiashie. In the qualitative part, one head was selected from each of the eight circuits to find out what affected their job satisfaction or otherwise while going about their work during the pandemic. Most of the statements made by the Headteachers were similar as they virtually had similar job experiences in their schools during the COVID-19 era. Sampled comments made by the Headteachers are as follows:

*Headteacher 1:* “Headteachers were not given any allowances to enable them to perform creditably during the COVID-19 era. The pandemic affected my side job that gave me extra income to support my lorry fare to school. I was not happy during some days because I did not have transport fare to go to school, yet I had to go.”

*Headteacher 2:* “One of the challenges headteachers faced is the possession of PPEs. Some of the students come to school without the PPEs. For those who had them too either they were too small, too large, or very dirty. I normally have not less than 20 PPEs with me almost every working day. The reason is that some of the students misplace theirs after break and as a head you have to make sure each child is safe while in your care.”

*Headteacher 3:* “You must board vehicles to school during the COVID-19 era. Unfortunately, some passengers do not wear the nose mask and become irritated when they are appealed to. Some cough directly into your face and you have nothing to say.”

*Headteacher 4:* “I always left home in fear when going to school. Some of my teachers and students were getting sick by the day. Some even died of COVID-19, which was very scary. It was really a very difficult time.”

## **4. Discussion**

Empirical evidence from this study suggests that Ghanaian Headteachers used in this survey have a lower level of job satisfaction. This is consistent with Kumar, *et al.*, (2013), who found that personnel in public-sector health-care institutions have a poor degree of overall job satisfaction. Similarly, secondary-school heads were found dissatisfied with their jobs as well (Suleman, *et al.*, 2018). However, Redmond and McGuinness (2019) observed that women were more satisfied with their jobs than men. Similarly, Miao, *et al.* (2017) found that doctors in rural western China have gender inequalities in job satisfaction, with female doctors who took part in the study found to have higher job quality and satisfaction. In addition, female professors in colleges of education were more content with their jobs than their male colleagues (Oladosu & Adeniji, 2015).

Ghazi and Maringe (2011) found that the level of job satisfaction among headteachers differed significantly depending on age and gender. The satisfaction of younger and older headteachers was found to be much higher than that of middle-aged headteachers. That result is inconsistent with the findings of this current study as the opposite is true. Similarly in another study, Rajaseka and Kalaiaras (2018) indicated that job satisfaction is not influenced by experience or age. However, Nguluutu (2012) indicated that levels of job satisfaction increased with teachers' age, teaching experience, and professional grade.

This result on marital status is inconsistent with the findings of Kemunto, *et al.* (2018), who established that marital status had an influence on job satisfaction, such that the married were much happier in their jobs than the single. Similarly, Nguluutu (2012) found that married teachers were more satisfied than unmarried ones. However, Staton (2018) multiple regression analysis revealed that, gender, marital status, and parental status have no significant relationship with job satisfaction.



Regarding the results on headship, Dadaczynskia *et al.* (2019) found that primary school Heads experience low levels of job satisfaction, which is inconsistent with this current investigation.

## 5. Conclusions

This study looked at the job satisfaction that headteachers in the Accra Metropolitan Education Directorate had during the COVID-19 pandemic era. This study was able to achieve its purpose, which was to find answers to the research questions. The results revealed that headteachers agreed that their present job is good. Also, they claimed that their current pay is enough for them to live on. However, they have a lower level of job satisfaction. The findings indicated that male and female headteachers differed in their views on the smartness of the people with whom they work or meet in connection with their work, as well as the fact that the people with whom they work or meet in connection with their work are responsible. Although male headteachers had higher levels of job satisfaction than female headteachers, the difference was not significant. Thus, there were no differences between male and female headteachers regarding the job satisfaction they experienced. This suggests that both male and female headteachers experience similar job satisfaction at their workplace. The findings revealed that headteachers between the ages of 41 and 45 experienced higher levels of job satisfaction, whereas those between the ages of 51 and 55 experienced lower levels of job satisfaction. Also, it was revealed that there were no differences in age groups. Also, the level of headship groups was found not to have an effect on the job satisfaction experienced by headteachers. Similarly, marital status had no effect on job satisfaction in this research. Finally, it was observed that headteachers were not given any allowances although they lost their side jobs that gave them extra income to support their lorry fare to school and buy extra PPEs. Also, they lacked PPEs for their students and had to contend with passengers with no PPEs.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the research the following recommendations were made to ensure that headteachers are helped to maximise their job satisfaction. These should be done by policy makers to support the headteachers in their work. Also, all stakeholders, especially the government is encouraged to look into issues raised by the headteachers regarding their conditions of service.

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