

## **The Nexus between Work Satisfaction and Happiness among IBDP Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between work satisfaction and happiness among teachers in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). This study employed a quantitative approach following multiple regression analysis. Adapted research instruments in the form of questionnaires were utilized and generated each variable's Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for internal consistency. Multicollinearity issues were also addressed through their tolerance and VIF values. The questionnaires were used to collect IBDP teachers' numerical data using Likert scales and were analyzed using SPSS. Results revealed that four significant elements emerged in order to fulfill teachers' happiness. Propositions were crafted based on the results of the study that led to the development of a theory called Synergistic Well-Being of Teachers Theory which suggested that the nexus between work satisfaction and happiness among the IBDP teachers was shaped by four elements: self-esteem, stress factors, work environment, and security of tenure.

**Keywords:** work satisfaction, happiness, International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, self-esteem, stress factors, work environment, security of tenure, Synergistic Well-Being of Teachers Theory.

### **Introduction:**

This study focuses on the relationship between work satisfaction and happiness among teachers implementing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). Teachers' job satisfaction is crucial for their effectiveness and student outcomes, and their happiness is essential for their overall well-being. While previous studies have explored work satisfaction and happiness among teachers in general, none have specifically focused on IBDP teachers.

The IBDP is an internationally recognized curriculum offered to senior high school students. Teachers in the IBDP face significant pressure due to the rigorous nature of the program, which can affect their work satisfaction and happiness. Research consistently shows that satisfied teachers exhibit higher levels of motivation, engagement, and commitment, positively impacting student achievement. Factors associated with teacher satisfaction include administrative support, professional development opportunities, autonomy, positive relationships with colleagues, and recognition of their efforts.

Recent studies emphasize the importance of scaffolding mechanisms and investment in teachers to enhance their satisfaction and happiness. Providing various development programs and

challenging responsibilities can improve teachers' professional competence and contribute to institutional goals. Teacher satisfaction also plays a significant role in their overall well-being, classroom environment, relationships with students, and instructional delivery.

To enhance teacher satisfaction, schools should foster a culture of democracy, cooperative learning, and belongingness. A positive school culture that encourages shared decision-making and collaboration contributes to higher levels of teacher satisfaction. Creating supportive and inclusive environments where teachers feel connected to their colleagues and have a sense of belonging is also crucial.

Despite the importance of teacher satisfaction and happiness, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on IBDP teachers. This study aims to fill this research gap by exploring the factors contributing to teacher satisfaction within the IBDP and investigating its impact on teachers' happiness. The findings will provide valuable insights for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners in optimizing professional development programs and wellness activities within the IBDP context.

## **Research Methodology:**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative research method. Specifically, this research followed a correlational research design which is primarily involving the relationship between two or more variables and examining the extent to which these variables correlate with each other (Tan, 2014). The main advantage of this type of method is that it enables the researcher to critically and objectively evaluate the data logically. The researchers therefore used the design to assess teachers' works satisfaction and their happiness in the IBDP in one of the schools in Taiwan.

### **Research Environment**

The participating school in this study is located in the northern region part of Taiwan. This school is authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) where one of the researchers is currently teaching. Thus, the school is considered as a large school.

### **Research Sample**

The respondents of this study are the teachers in an IBDP school in Taiwan. The teachers who took part in this study are scrutinized by the researchers and they must have at least one year of teaching experience in the IBDP. The sample composed of 14 males and 16 females. A total of 30 IBDP teachers participated in this study.

### **Research Instruments**

The research instruments used to gather data for this study are the Teacher Satisfaction Survey which is adopted from Cantrell-Scamara (1994) and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire of Hills and Argyle (2002). The respondents were asked to fill out the form with important information about themselves before going to the main part. They may or may not write the complete names on the survey questionnaires. The first questionnaire about teachers' work satisfaction consisted of 10 variables, each with 5 performance indicators: Self-Esteem, Professional Growth, Decision Making, Perception of Principal, Teacher Relations, Student Relations, Parent Relations, Stress Factors, Work Environment, and Security of Tenure. A Likert Scale was used to record their responses. As for the second research instrument, 29 statements were afforded to the teachers and they responded the degree of their agreement or disagreement to each statement through a Likert Scale.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

Primary data were gathered from the respondents of this study in a form of an online survey. The form included the questionnaires which served as the research instruments of this study as well as the consent specifying that confidentiality was highly observed throughout the research process. It also included pertinent information about the study and its significance. A total of 30

teachers answered the survey form where 14 (46.7%) are male teachers and 16 (53.3%) are female teachers.

The data of the 30 respondents were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). With regard to the Teacher Satisfaction Questionnaire, respondents rated their level of agreement through a Likert scale, to wit: (5) Strongly Agree; (4) Agree; (3) Neutral; (2) Disagree; and (1) Strongly Disagree. As for the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, the same scale was utilized having six levels, namely: (6) Strongly Agree; (5) Moderately Agree; (4) Slightly Agree; (3) Slightly Disagree; (2) Moderately Disagree; and (1) Strongly Disagree.

A total score was determined for each variable, and after that, individual scores were put through a multi-regression analysis to determine how satisfied the respondents were with their jobs. Cronbach's alpha varied from 0.761 to 0.961 in a reliability study to validate internal consistency and that the components of a credible scale are present. Self-esteem ( $\alpha = 0.798$ ), Professional Growth ( $\alpha = 0.836$ ), Decision Making ( $\alpha = 0.780$ ), Perception of Principal ( $\alpha = 0.941$ ), Teacher Relations ( $\alpha = 0.855$ ), Student Relations ( $\alpha = 0.881$ ), Parent Relations ( $\alpha = 0.784$ ), Stress Factors ( $\alpha = 0.761$ ), Work Environment ( $\alpha = 0.849$ ), Security of Tenure ( $\alpha = 0.910$ ), and Happiness ( $\alpha = 0.961$ ) garnered a Cronbach's value beyond 0.70 which is deemed to be generally accepted by many studies and required for a valid construct (Griethuijsen et al., 2014).

### Data Analysis Procedure

Multiple Regression Analysis was utilized as the statistical technique in this study that aimed to evaluate the relationship between a dependent variable and various variables (Petchko, 2018). The data were collected right after the respondents finished answering the questionnaires. The data were consolidated and statistically analyzed with the use of SPSS-Statistical tool. Tolerance values as well as Variance Inflation Factors were generated in order to address multicollinearity issues. The test of significance was primarily performed at the probability level of  $p < 0.05$ .

### Ethical Considerations

The responses to the Teacher Satisfaction Survey as well as to the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were anonymous. Respondents did not write any identifying information. For the purposes of this research study, the responses were held with utmost anonymity and confidentiality. Moreover, the participant or his/her representative was informed once the data and results were made available.

### Results and Discussion:

Work satisfaction and happiness among IBDP teachers are the key variables mainly focused in this study. The relationship between the variables of work satisfaction, to wit: (1) self-esteem; (2); professional growth; (3); decision making; (4) perception of principal; (5) teacher relations; (6) student relations; (7) parent relations; (8) stress factors; (9) work environment; and (10) security of tenure was correlated with IBDP teachers' happiness. Collinearity statistics of independent variables were presented and analyzed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Collinearity Statistics of Independent Variables**

Independent Variables	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Self-Esteem	0.321	3.116
Professional Growth	0.389	2.572
Decision Making	0.224	4.461
Perception of Principal	0.265	3.774
Teacher Relations	0.198	5.052
Student Relations	0.368	2.717
Parent Relations	0.325	3.078
Stress Factors	0.571	1.752
Work Environment	0.205	4.886
Security of Tenure	0.279	3.580

Based on Table 1, it is clear that the utilization of multiple linear regression analysis in this study showed no problems regarding multicollinearity. As regards tolerance values, Pallant (2007) recommended that a value of less than 0.10 signifies no multicollinearity issues as concurred by the study of Tanko et al. (2019). When it comes to the variance inflation factor (VIF), Hair Jr. et al. (2010) and Pallant (2007) suggested that the values must be limited to less than 10 in order to avoid multicollinearity concerns. With this, it can be gleaned from the data above that all tolerance values are greater than 0.10 and variance inflation factor (VIF) values are less than 10 which clearly affirmed the recommended values by different authors.

Moreover, other studies have also highlighted the importance of assessing multicollinearity in multiple linear regression analysis. For instance, Lavery (2019) emphasized that high tolerance values and low VIF values indicate the absence of multicollinearity issues. Similarly, Yakubu (2009) stated that a tolerance value above 0.1 and a VIF value below 10 provide evidence of no significant multicollinearity problems. By considering these perspectives and the results presented in Table 1, it becomes evident that the independent variables in this study were not affected by multicollinearity concerns.

**Table 2.** Teachers' Happiness and Work Satisfaction in the IBDP

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		Happiness	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.530	.722		2.119	.047
Self-Esteem	.494	.173	.471	2.849	.010
Professional Growth	.219	.188	.197	1.163	.259
Decision Making	-.017	.205	-.016	-.084	.934
Perception of Principal	-.156	.130	-.216	-1.196	.247
Teacher Relations	.232	.194	.261	1.194	.247
Student Relations	.135	.136	.150	.992	.334
Parent Relations	-.049	.226	-.040	-.217	.831
Stress Factors	.234	.087	.334	2.696	.014
Work Environment	-.642	.205	-.668	-3.129	.006
Security of Tenure	.361	.121	.567	2.991	.008

As displayed in Table 2, all independent variables regarding IBDP teachers' work satisfaction are presented. Particularly, variables attributed to self-esteem ( $t=2.849$ ,  $p=0.010 < 0.05$ ), stress factors ( $t=2.696$ ,  $p=0.014 < 0.05$ ), work environment ( $t=-3.129$ ,  $p=0.006 < 0.05$ ), and security of tenure ( $t=2.991$ ,  $p=0.008 < 0.05$ ) in terms of work satisfaction revealed to be significant towards level of happiness among teachers in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). Relative to this, the respondents' work satisfaction was strongly related to all essential variables. This implies that the fulfillment of these teachers' self-confidence, stress factors, job atmosphere, and employment security can positively manifest the attainment of their happiness in the IBDP.

Furthermore, security of tenure garnered the highest standardized coefficient ( $Beta=.567$ ) in accordance with the standardized coefficients beta. Consequently, the model suggests that having the assurance of job protection entails to be the most important element in determining teachers' happiness in the IBDP. Thus, it is imperative to note that this variable has a significant impact on the fulfillment of IBDP teachers' happiness in teaching. Following the significant variables that emerged, their estimated coefficient values were 0.494, 0.234, -0.624, and 0.361 based on the unstandardized coefficients. Ultimately, Table 2 delineated the definite regression model utilized in the analysis of this study.

## GENERALIZING THE CONCEPT

All-inclusive, the study revealed a significant relationship between the four independent variables and the level of happiness among IBDP teachers in the field of teaching. Based on the statistical method utilized, there is a strong correlation between these factors to the dependent variable in this study which can help to the development of a theory for teachers, especially in the IBDP classroom contexts. This clearly suggests that happiness among teachers implementing the IBDP can be satisfied when self-esteem, stress factors, work environment, and security of tenure are considered in their job fulfillment.

### Self-Esteem

**Proposition:** High confidence levels reflect happiness among IBDP teachers

The significance of self-esteem in maintaining mental health has long been acknowledged and recognized, and in recent years, numerous scholars have focused on this issue (Gebresilase & Zhao, 2023). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs included this trait and according to the theory, it can only be fulfilled once all other needs are met (e.g., physiological needs, safety needs, and belonging needs). Self-esteem was found to have a strong positive relationship with teacher satisfaction (Smith & Johnson, 2020). Teachers with higher levels of self-esteem tend to report higher job satisfaction. Subsequently, Benevene et al. (2018) reported that self-esteem positively influence teachers' happiness, thus improving their overall health and well-being. Hence, the development of confidence in one's self not only produces significant results for one's job but also creates a joyful atmosphere towards life.

The ability to successfully provide instruction and support learning is associated with teacher confidence (Cook, 2017). Self-confidence is usually tied with the experience that teachers get in the profession. In the context of the IBDP, Sieve (2018) revealed how teachers confidently implement different teaching strategies (e.g., constructivist, student-centeredness, etc.) to their students and felt elated with regard to the results of their students' external assessments. Their self-esteem towards teaching materialized through their students' academic performance. This implies that when teachers have a high level of self-esteem, this will lead to their happiness towards their work and this has a profound impact on both their own performance in the delivery of instruction as well as the overall achievement of their students (Stark et al., 2022).

### Stress Factors

**Proposition:** Addressing stress factors lead to work satisfaction, thereby attaining happiness among IBDP teachers

Stark et al. (2022) highlighted that in order for teachers to effectively manage their stress, self-care alone is insufficient. Indeed, there is a necessity for the work atmosphere to adapt and adhere to their teachers' wellness. Moreover, the teaching profession can be extremely demanding, and this stress may cause burnout, decreased work satisfaction, and subpar work output (Agyapong et al., 2022). In relation to this, it was also revealed by the study of Méndez et al. (2020) that people who are not satisfied with their jobs are more likely to experience stress. This means that schools and their leaders must be able to develop scaffolding mechanisms for their teachers in order to reduce stress as teachers are considered to be the main drivers of quality education (Albright, 2015).

Regarding the school climate of the IBDP, Lee et al. (2022) unveiled that teachers experience high workload stress i.e., the degree of workload strain among teachers. However, this was addressed when teachers reported less workload stress when they felt like they had more freedom in the classroom. In addition, teachers might benefit if some tension could be reduced through sufficient time allotment in the implementation of the IBDP (Taylor, 2018). When this happens, these teachers experience resilience which serves as a stress tolerance resource since it reduces the detrimental effects of stress (Bajaj et al., 2022). Hence, addressing the stress factors perceived by the IBDP teachers such as provision of ample amount of time for class preparation,



reduction of paperwork jobs, and availability of teaching resources can help them attain teaching happiness.

### **Work Environment**

**Proposition:** Pleasant work environment is a key factor towards the fulfillment of the IBDP teachers' happiness

The work environment is perceived differently by teachers depending on their feelings, thoughts, and actions (Masoom, 2021). The way they perform in their respective jobs depends on how they see the job atmosphere's elements whether it is conducive or inconvenient for them. It has been observed that organizations with pleasant workplaces and a diverse range of good employee characteristics achieve a great deal of their targeted goals (Şahin et al., 2019). Apparently, teachers can reach their ultimate goal of providing students quality education if they experience a working condition that is encouraging and empowering.

Lee et al. (2022) discovered that teachers in the IBDP disclosed that they experience more job satisfaction in a more positive work atmosphere. It signifies that having a workplace to one's liking can exhibit enjoyable and pleasurable work. Additionally, Şahin et al. unveiled that circumstances or traits of people or groups in a peaceful work environment may have an impact on employee happiness. This was in concomitant with Cook's (2017) study regarding the impact of the implementation of the IBDP because one of the major themes that emerged was their love for the program. All but one teacher stated they love teaching in the IBDP, despite their stress levels rising. The participants listed the program's rigor, in-depth conversations, relationships with students, and freedom to design activities as reasons why they appreciate it. They appreciate having the opportunity to design classes that will resonate with their students. Thus, happiness was clearly manifested in a pleasant working condition.

### **Security of Tenure**

**Proposition:** Happiness among IBDP teachers is ultimately achieved when employment is secured

Job security is one of the most important factors that employees would be interested in pertaining to their employment. Some workers would even set out from one company to another for the purposes of job steadiness. In the teaching profession, Ballado (2022) disclosed that several informants ventured into education to find a stable job that would allow them to continue supporting their families because their former work's pay did not cover their necessities. However, Farris (2021) articulated that obtaining tenure, which might have negatively impacted teachers' performance because they burdened themselves early in their careers only to become demotivated by inadequate incentives after obtaining tenure, resulting in a decreased work quality as seen in students' performance. Despite a variety of drawbacks, the security of employment provided by the educational system encourages teachers to engage positively and to stay involved since more job satisfaction is encouraged by this mindset (Ortan et al., 2021).

Some schools ensure employment security among their teachers based on their performance as an institution. One of the key informants in Sieve's (2018) study revealed how school enrolment is based on the results of their students' exam results, thus, their colleagues' jobs are likewise somewhat reliant on these outcomes. Albeit Lee et al. (2022) highlighted that job security is a personal motivation among IBDP teachers, this issuance is afforded to teachers when schools decide to grant it to them. Hence, IBDP teachers exercise collaboration not only to increase security of tenure but to also make meaning of their jobs with their peers. To put it another way, participants' feelings of connection to others increased when they focused on making someone else happier, which in turn increased their own pleasure (Titova & Sheldon, 2021). Therefore, securing one's job is rooted in being able to perform well and collaborate properly with coworkers in the teaching profession, which could lead to work satisfaction as well as happiness.

## **PROPOSED THEORY: SYNERGISTIC WELL-BEING OF TEACHERS THEORY**

The theory proposed by the researchers evolved throughout the study, drawing upon the relationship between work satisfaction and happiness of teachers within the IBDP. The "Synergistic Well-Being of Teachers Theory," stems from the amalgamation of four significant variables identified in this research: self-esteem, stress factors, work environment, and security of tenure. These variables play a crucial role in shaping the happiness experienced by teachers within the IBDP. The term "Synergistic" denotes the synergy and interconnectedness among these variables, highlighting their combined impact on teacher well-being. Meanwhile, "Well-Being of Teachers" encompasses the holistic state of teachers, encompassing their physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as their overall satisfaction and effectiveness in their roles as educators within the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). As a result, the Synergistic Well-Being of Teachers Theory emerges as an outcome of this comprehensive study.

The Synergistic Well-Being of Teachers Theory suggests that teachers' work satisfaction and happiness are influenced by four key elements: self-esteem, stress factors, work environment, and security of tenure. The theory posits those teachers with higher levels of self-esteem, perceiving themselves positively as competent professionals, experience greater job satisfaction and happiness (Fisher, 2010). Additionally, excessive stress stemming from heavy workloads, time constraints, behavior issues, and high expectations can diminish teacher satisfaction and well-being (Pillay, 2005).

### **Conclusion**

In light of the aforementioned propositions, it becomes apparent that teachers participating in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) exhibit elevated levels of confidence, which are indicative of their happiness. This assertion finds support in Cook's (2017) study, which posits that high self-esteem is commonly associated with a sense of contentment among teachers. It follows that when educators possess a heightened sense of self-worth, their satisfaction with their profession is positively influenced, thereby profoundly impacting their instructional delivery and the overall academic achievement of their students. Furthermore, the pursuit of work satisfaction among IBDP teachers necessitates the identification and remediation of stress-inducing factors. Hence, administrators must proactively establish supportive mechanisms to alleviate stress, recognizing that teachers serve as the primary catalysts for delivering quality education (Albright, 2015).

Moreover, the creation of a pleasant work environment assumes paramount importance in fostering the happiness of IBDP teachers. As reiterated by Lee et al. (2022), educators within the IBDP have reported experiencing higher levels of job satisfaction in a positive work atmosphere. This observation underscores the significance of cultivating a work environment that aligns with one's preferences, as it facilitates enjoyable and gratifying professional experiences. Ultimately, the attainment of happiness among IBDP teachers is intrinsically tied to the security of their employment. In the study of Ballado (2022) reveals that the assurance of stable employment provided by the educational system instills a positive mindset, encouraging teachers to remain engaged and invested in their roles. Consequently, the promotion of job satisfaction is fostered by this sense of security.

In conclusion, the Synergistic Well-Being of Teachers Theory wires the significance of equipping teachers within the IBDP with effective stress management strategies while providing them with a positive working environment. This inclusive environment encompasses various factors such as school culture, administrative support, collegial relationships, the security of tenure, and the availability of necessary resources. According to Toropova et al. (2021), when these elements are appropriately addressed and optimized, teachers are more likely to navigate stressors successfully, leading to elevated levels of work satisfaction and overall happiness. Furthermore, through targeted interventions and support, these essential components can be addressed and optimized, thereby enhancing teacher well-being and job satisfaction.

Consequently, this contributes to the creation of a more content and fulfilled teaching workforce (Ropanzano et al., 2001). Given these findings, it is imperative for educational institutions to prioritize these elements in order to cultivate a happier and more productive teaching environment.

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