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Analysis of the Contributing Factors to Teachers' Job Dissatisfaction in Lesotho Secondary Schools and the Mitigating Strategies

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Abstract: Teachers are expected to influence the development of certain attributes, including courtesy, discipline, accountability, and diligence among learners. These attributes echo the basic premise of the child-friendly school framework (CFS) and the ideology of sustainable learning environments. In order for teachers to contribute towards efficacy in schools and in instructional activities, studies indicate that they should be satisfied. However, it has been revealed that in some Lesotho secondary schools, teachers are not happy with their jobs. The reported teachers' discontent adversely affects their commitment and enthusiasm. In order to reveal the causes of teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools, this study adopted a narrative qualitative approach design. This approach was ideal as it enabled 10 purposively identified teachers in Leribe and Maseru to freely narrate their lived experiences. The Herzberg duality theory (HDT) and the Transformational leadership theory (TLT) were adopted as the philosophical underpinning for this study. The inductive thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data generated for this study. The findings suggest that teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools is caused by factors such as the use of resources for personal gain, lack of maintenance, intolerance, and habitual absenteeism among principals. The findings further suggest that strategies including teacher involvement, impartiality, and external school auditing could reduce teacher job dissatisfaction and instead create the opposite effect.

Keywords: *Herzberg duality theory, secondary schools, teacher job satisfaction, teacher job dissatisfaction, transformational leadership theory.*

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Introduction

Lesotho is a signatory to several international treaties aimed at improving the quality of education. Among others, in 2005, the Child-Friendly School Framework (CFS) was adopted (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018). The CFS framework is contextualised as conditions in schools required for the creation of a safe, clean, and caring school environment (Fitriani et al., 2021; Fitriani & Istaryatiningtias, 2020; Xiao et al., 2023). The framework was developed primarily to promote quality instructional interactions for learners to acquire essential characteristics, attitudes, and skills (Pratiwi & Hariri, 2022). The characteristics of a CFS framework echo the basic principles of sustainable learning environments (Xiao et al., 2023). Sustainable learning environments are those that prioritize excellence in both teaching and learning processes (Ben-Eliyahu, 2021; Mahlomaholo, 2012). These educational landmarks are fundamental to the realization of the Education Agenda 2030. The advent of the CFS framework and sustainable learning environments, amongst others, is dependent on the level of teachers' job satisfaction (Niñeza et al., 2023). It is theorized that the success of schools in carrying out their mandate, among others, is dependent on teachers' job satisfaction. (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Moloele & Moeti, 2024). Teacher job satisfaction constitutes one of the major predictors of quality education (Niñeza et al., 2023). Teachers – due to their proximity to learners – are expected to nurture sustainable learning environments capable of influencing good character among learners. These traits include courtesy, discipline, accountability, and diligence (Pratiwi & Hariri, 2022). This unique role has designated teachers as luminaries both in schools and in the communities (Ansah-Hughes, 2016; Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Crisci et al., 2019; Moloele & Moeti, 2024). The implication thereof is that, for teachers to perform their duties exceptionally, they should be satisfied with their jobs (Ansah-Hughes, 2016; Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Crisci et al., 2019). Satisfied teachers devote their energy to the success of the school. On the contrary, those who are dissatisfied are less committed at work. Teacher job dissatisfaction, as a result, adversely

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prohibits the creation of child-friendly schools and sustainable learning environments (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Okeke & Mtyuda, 2017).

With the foregoing in perspective, the motive for undertaking this study did not only spring from the apparent literature gap on issues surrounding teachers' job satisfaction and or dissatisfaction that exists in Lesotho but also due to the reports of discontent amongst teachers. With the latter, for example, while I was conducting community service– a contractual obligation with my current employer in some secondary schools in Lesotho – it became apparent that there was significant job discontent among teachers. Due to teacher dissatisfaction, some teachers divulged that they only report to work to earn a living. The prevailing teachers' discontent in some Lesotho secondary schools is a cause for concern. The extent of teacher job dissatisfaction has far-reaching implications on teachers' motivation and professional commitment (Afshar & Doosti, 2016; Werang & Agung, 2017). Since teachers play a critical role in knowledge transfer (Werang & Agung, 2017), it stands to reason that teacher job dissatisfaction compromises the delivery of quality content, the creation of sustainable learning environments, and the realization of CFS. While teacher job dissatisfaction may adversely affect Lesotho's education system's ability to produce learners who are competitive and creative, among others, teacher job satisfaction may promote higher levels of productivity, efficiency, and development. Consequently, the current study attempts to investigate the contributing factors to teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools and how these factors could be mitigated. The study further intends to bridge the literature gap that exists in the context of Lesotho by providing context-based triggers of teacher job dissatisfaction and possible strategies for the phenomenon. To this far, the following questions will be addressed.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- Which factors contribute to teacher job dissatisfaction in some secondary schools in Lesotho?
- What strategies could be deployed to mitigate teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools?

Literature Review

Teacher job satisfaction is the extent to which teachers like their jobs (Ansah-Hughes, 2016; Niñeza et al., 2023). Teacher job satisfaction increases efficacy by fueling teachers' enthusiasm to perform core duties satisfactorily (Dilekçi, 2022; Iqbal et al., 2016). As such, teacher job satisfaction is associated with reducing, among others, absenteeism, anxiety, and depression, thereby increasing commitment (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Emoja, 2016). On the contrary, teacher job dissatisfaction is the extent to which teachers despise their jobs (Ansah-Hughes, 2016). Teacher job dissatisfaction may result in a significant loss of interest in performing core duties (Crisci et al., 2019). Moreover, dissatisfied teachers are often absent from work (Ansah-Hughes, 2016). As a result, teacher job dissatisfaction may lead to a high failure rate and increased learner delinquency, resulting in high dropout rates (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021).

Studies highlight that principals' leadership approaches are the decisive determinant of either teacher job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Liu et al., 2021; Machumu & Kaitila, 2014; Torres, 2017). Although there is no single best leadership style school principals could adopt (Zafar et al., 2018), research indicates that the authoritarian leadership style, amongst others, leaves teachers mostly distressed, resulting in reduced fervor (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Sepiriti, 2024; Tria, 2023). However, scholars appear to have no consensus on which leadership approach to use in order to achieve teachers' job satisfaction. For example, Machumu and Kaitila (2014) posit that democratic leadership approaches promote teacher job satisfaction. On the other hand, Basar et al. (2021) argue for the adoption of transformational leadership approaches. Panagopoulos et al. (2024) suggest a blend of both transactional and transformative approaches to achieve overall teachers' job satisfaction. Elsewhere, Meney (2024) postulates that to achieve teacher job satisfaction in schools, the focus should be primarily on laissez-faire and transformational leadership styles. However, despite the seeming divergence in leadership approaches to synergistically achieve teachers' job satisfaction, it is theorized in this study that transformative leadership approaches that empower teachers to be creative are most likely to promote teacher job satisfaction. These approaches are anchored on reflective participation, artistic approaches, tolerance, and collective responsibilities (Changar & Atan, 2021; Thanh & Quang, 2022).

The literature further suggests that poor communication between and among teachers and principals, in particular, leads to misunderstandings and teacher job dissatisfaction, among others (Aryawan et al., 2024). If teachers feel the school principal is not timely communicating with them, their enthusiasm is likely to fade away, resulting in crippled teaching and learning activities (Tesfay et al., 2022; Tria, 2023). As a consequence, communication is considered an essential variable to promote harmony and teacher job satisfaction (Aryawan et al., 224; Curado et al., 2022; Tesfay et al., 2022).

Studies further indicate that salaries are important teacher job satisfaction or dissatisfaction predictors (Ansah-Hughes, 2016; Mohammed & Abdulai, 2022; Moloele & Moeti, 2024; Tria, 2023). If teachers feel they are paid well, they are most likely to be enthused (Tria, 2023). However, if they feel their remuneration packages are not proportional to their duties, their preparedness to perform may decrease considerably (Ansah-Hughes, 2016; Demirdag, 2015; Emoja, 2016; Machumu & Kaitila, 2014).

Studies further indicate that inadequate resources cripple the provision of quality education (Emoja, 2016; Okeke & Mtyuda, 2017). The deficiency of teaching materials also leads to teacher job dissatisfaction (Mohammed & Abdulai, 2022). Teaching resources are vital in supporting teaching and learning activities. Therefore, without these resources, teachers struggle to teach sustainably. Apart from that, literature has cited that huge teaching loads propagate teacher job dissatisfaction (Ortan et al., 2021; Toropova et al., 2021). Unmanageable teaching loads further impede teachers' ability and readiness to attend to the individual needs of learners (Emoja, 2016).

Furthermore, it is asserted that learners' delinquency and violence contribute to teacher job dissatisfaction (Kapa & Gimbert, 2017; Torres, 2017). Research designates that in schools where there is a high prevalence of ill-discipline and violence among learners, teachers exhibit high levels of dissatisfaction (Kapa & Gimbert, 2017; Lopes & Oliveira, 2020; Niu et al., 2023; Okeke & Mtyuda, 2017; Toropova et al., 2021; Torres, 2017). In schools where the aforementioned behaviours among learners are on the rise, teachers normally seek transfers to less violent schools (Torres, 2017). The unrest in schools further leads to poor teacher-learner relationships. Learners' misconduct may weaken teacher-learner relations and reduce teacher professional commitment. Teacher-learner relations are also predictors of teachers' job dissatisfaction (Niu et al., 2023). Good relations between teachers and learners are important variables towards the attainment of school objectives (Ortan et al., 2021). As a result, for responsive education to be realised, it is vital that learners' behaviour is managed to enable the emergence of good relations between teachers and learners. Learner delinquency could be moderated if teachers consistently apply the provisions of the code of conduct in schools (Zondo & Mncube, 2024). Through their expertise, teachers have a responsibility to ensure that a safe learning environment is maintained.

Moreover, studies indicate that self-efficacy is an important predictor of teacher job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Kasalak & Dağyar, 2020; Lopes & Oliveira, 2020; Ortan et al., 2021). Teacher efficacy is grounded in the inner belief that teachers have the required competencies to influence learners' academic achievement (Demirdag, 2015). Resultantly, if teachers feel incompetent, they are unlikely to love their jobs. Teachers' ineffectiveness can, as a result, be attributed to many factors, including limited professional development opportunities. Professional development initiatives are meant to equip teachers with specific competencies for the smooth facilitation of classroom interactions. The adequate exposure of teachers to professional development initiatives influences teacher job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2021), while insufficient professional development initiatives weaken their competencies, resulting in a loss of devotion (Niu et al., 2023).

Literature hints that a lack of teacher autonomy negatively affects job satisfaction (Dilekçi, 2022; Ertürk, 2023; Liu et al., 2021). Teacher autonomy empowers teachers to freely reflect on their instructional activities and adapt their practices to a specific context (Ertürk, 2023), resulting in enhanced commitment (Dilekçi, 2022). The implication, as a consequence, is that higher teacher autonomy equates to higher job satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021).

To mitigate some of the challenges, the literature proposes the creation of a participative school culture that will enable both teachers and the principal to maintain a dialogue (Liu et al., 2021). The proposed participative culture will enable the emergence of a democratic culture, which is said to have a positive effect on promoting teacher job satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021; Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019). This contention is based on the premise that teachers will be able to make contributions regarding the inception and rolling out of school programmes and activities. In participative-driven schools, a congenial atmosphere is easily created and maintained. The friendly climate is likely to allow the principals to support teachers through professional teacher development opportunities (Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019). Moreover, research advocates teamwork for the effective implementation of enacted school policies, as well as the disciplining of delinquent learners (Kapa & Gimbert, 2017). Lastly, for teachers to enhance their job satisfaction, they should attempt to build and maintain relationships with their learners.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on a theoretical grounding that triangulated the Herzberg duality theory (HDT) and the Transformational leadership theory (TLT). HDT is considered in this study because it can predict factors that contribute to teacher job dissatisfaction and or satisfaction. HDT is grounded in the premise that teacher job satisfaction or dissatisfaction depends on two dimensions: motivators and hygiene factors (Tripathy & Sahoo, 2020). Motivators, on the one hand, focus on the elements of the job itself that can significantly propel teachers' efforts in accomplishing their duties (Alshmemri et al., 2017; Bušatlic & Mujabašić, 2018; Ihensekien & Joel, 2023; Tripathy & Sahoo, 2020). These factors include aspects such as teachers' achievement, recognition, responsibilities assigned, advancement and personal growth (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Chavan & Warke, 2018; Gangwar et al., 2022; Ihensekien & Joel, 2023). Motivators may create teacher job satisfaction and fuel teachers' professional growth (Niñeza et al., 2023).

Regarding hygiene factors deal with aspects not directly related to teachers' core tasks and responsibilities (Chavan & Warke, 2018). Hygiene factors include dimensions like teachers' salaries, working conditions and relationships, educational and school policies, leadership approaches, and job security (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Gangwar et al., 2022; Niñeza et al., 2023). Issues surrounding hygiene factors cannot necessarily influence teacher job satisfaction; however, they could reduce the level of job dissatisfaction (Ihensekien & Joel, 2023; Niñeza et al., 2023; Tripathy & Sahoo, 2020).

The HDT hints that those at the helm of school governance and administration in Lesotho – the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), school boards, and school principals – should not only guard against the hygiene factors to reduce teacher job satisfaction but also the motivators as well (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021). To enhance teacher job satisfaction, both dimensions should be addressed (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Without adequate consideration of both motivators and hygiene factors, teacher job satisfaction cannot be sustained, leading to the collapse of child-friendly schools and sustainable learning environments (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Niñeza et al., 2023).

Transformational leadership theory (TLT) was also used as the second theoretical lens for this study because it provides the tools needed by school authorities to curb teacher job dissatisfaction. Through the emancipatory characteristics of TLT, those in authority, including school principals, could constantly reflect on their practices. In that way, the transformative agenda in schools could be attained. The transformative ideology underpinning TLT, amongst others, will enhance teachers' enthusiasm, resulting in the attainment of child-friendly schools and the sustainability of friendly work environments (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

TLT is founded on the following four components: a) Idealized influence describes the expected behaviours and the extent to which school authority adheres to the professional ethics (Hosna et al., 2021; Mdletshe & Mzimakwe, 2023; Mwadime & Yusuf, 2022). b) Inspirational motivation focuses on, amongst others, the principal's ability to motivate and communicate clearly the school vision to the teachers (Khan et al., 2022; Mwadime & Yusuf, 2022). Through proper communication and motivation, the teachers' efforts will be directed towards the attainment of school aspirations (Hosna et al., 2021). c) Intellectual stimulation focuses on the principals' ability to inspire teachers to incorporate innovative strategies while interacting with learners (Khan et al., 2022). d) Individualized consideration focuses on the school authority's ability to show concern for the teachers' needs (Hosna et al., 2021). Thus, it is expected that school authorities should support teachers and show appreciation for tasks completed (Mdletshe & Mzimakwe, 2023; Mwadime & Yusuf, 2022). These elements could individually or collectively enable the principal and other management structures in Lesotho to address animosities perpetuating teacher job dissatisfaction in different school environments.

In view of the foregoing, these theories provide a comprehensive theoretical triangulation because they not only complement each other while exploring factors contributing to teacher job dissatisfaction in Lesotho but also suggest possible mitigation strategies.

Methodology

Research Design

To capture the basis of teacher job dissatisfaction amongst some teachers in Lesotho secondary schools and the possible remedies to the phenomenon, this qualitative inquiry adopted a narrative design. The narrative research design enabled teachers' experiences to be recorded (Lyons & Scull, 2024; Pepper & Wildy, 2009). A narrative research design is a qualitative approach that enables eliciting firsthand experiences that generate factors that perpetuate teachers' job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools (Lyons & Scull, 2024). It is therefore considered in this study because it allows studying teachers' lived experiences in their natural settings. Semi-structured interviews were used to allow participants to freely share their accounts. This type of interview enabled both the researcher and the participants to engage in intensive conversations. It further allowed the researcher to ask probing questions to attain further details.

Through the reflexivity processes, the researcher continually interrogated his roles in the entire research process (Berger, 2015; Gurr et al., 2024). This process helped me to carefully craft the interview questions to be asked and those to be avoided (Berger, 2015). The aim was mainly to avoid influencing participants' responses during the interviews (Darwin Holmes, 2020; Gurr et al., 2024). The interview questions were developed from a broader construct embedded in each research question (Roberts, 2020). The main research questions were broken down into manageable pieces that participants could easily comprehend and respond to. However, the researcher ensured that the focus of the study was not lost. The interviews ranged between one hour to one hour and thirty minutes. The study was conducted in two districts: Leribe and Maseru. Ten teachers were purposively identified.

Ethical Considerations

To observe issues of ethics, participants were invited in writing, which facilitated obtaining written consent. For anonymity and confidentiality purposes, the participants were allocated pseudonyms to disguise their identities. The pseudonyms Tr1 up to Tr10 were adopted.

Table 1. Teachers' Biographies

Pseudonym	Teaching experience (in years)
Tr1	20
Tr2	5
Tr3	7
Tr4	15
Tr5	21
Tr6	3
Tr7	8
Tr8	10
Tr9	15
Tr10	13

Data Analysis

In this study, the selected teachers' narratives were audio-recorded and later transcribed. The transcribed data – after being checked for accuracy by the participants – was analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis approach (Perera, 2023). In order to identify codes that led to the emergence of themes and subthemes, Braun and Clarke's six-layered thematic analytical framework was used (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Byrne, 2022; Naeem et al., 2023). To warrant the accuracy of the findings, the transcribed text was shared with some of the participants. This exercise was not only meant to correct any errors but also to allow participants to make further additions (Brear, 2019; McKim, 2023). This exercise further reduced researchers' bias in reporting the findings (Ahmed, 2024; Brear, 2019). For authenticity of the findings and interpretations, some of the specific transcribed texts are included in the findings section (Mckim, 2023).

Findings

The findings on the causes of teacher job dissatisfaction in Lesotho are organised into two main themes: causes of teacher job dissatisfaction and mitigating strategies. Under each theme, related sub-themes were identified and are discussed below.

Table 2. Summary of Findings

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1: Causes of teacher job dissatisfaction	Use of resources for personal gain Lack of maintenance Principal's intolerance Habitual principals' absenteeism Dictatorship Resistance to change Poor communication Favouritism No teacher recognition
Theme 2: Mitigating strategies	Teacher involvement Be impartial External school auditing and support Teacher appreciation Lead by example

Theme 1: Causes of teacher job dissatisfaction

The study sought to explore the causes of teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools. The narratives were analysed and categorised into several broad sub-themes.

Sub-theme 1.1: Use of resources for personal gain

According to the findings, teacher job dissatisfaction in selected secondary schools in Lesotho is caused by the principals' exploitation of school funds and other resources. Teachers asserted that some school property is misused by principals for their personal gain. In her own words, Tr1 stated as follows:

The principal cuts down the trees and collects the money for himself after selling the wood. Also, due to water shortage in the community, members of the community draw water from the school tap for a fee. Likewise, the money generated belongs to the principal.

In a similar fashion, Tr3 echoed: *"Our school does not have a school van; however, instead of hiring other teachers' vehicles for deliveries, the principal only hires his."* Tr6 added:

It is alleged that the principal has used school fees as capital to finance his money-lending business. Due to this mismanagement of fees, private teachers fail to get their salaries on time.

This position was underscored by Tr8 who argued that his principal *"is greedy."* Thus,

When pigs are farrowing, he takes some of the piglets for himself. Also, when he celebrated his children's graduation, he slaughtered a cow belonging to the school, yet he had plenty on his farm.

The participating teachers agreed that principals seem to use different school resources for their personal gain. Due to these behaviors, schools end up having little or no money, which cripples the successful implementation of planned school activities.

Sub-theme 1.2: Lack of maintenance

As per the findings, some teachers asserted that their dissatisfaction is caused by the lack of maintenance of school infrastructure. They argued that the buildings and mainly learners' restrooms are left in ruins. Thus according to Tr4, in her school

Learners' bathrooms are unusable, and despite their calamitous state, the principal seems not to be bothered, not only by the health but also the safety risks posed by the restrooms to the learners and the general community downstream.

In addition, Tr9 accentuated that in his school,

Classrooms miss both windows and doors. Despite the state of the classrooms, the annual budget does not reflect any intentions to rehabilitate the deteriorating learning environment.

Some participating teachers indicated that due to their principals' reluctance to maintain infrastructure, a safe learning climate is not prioritized, resulting in a loss of teacher enthusiasm.

Sub-theme 1.3: Principal's intolerance

One of the participating teachers revealed that her principal denounces those whose church denominations differ from his. Thus, Tr9 declared that *"the principal discriminates against teachers who do not subscribe to his religious denomination."* In addition, Tr5 and Tr8 asserted that their principal repudiates teachers who subscribe to different political parties from theirs. This reported principal intolerance violates teachers' freedom of association as stated by the Lesotho Constitution.

Sub-theme 1.4: Habitual principals' absenteeism

Participating teachers reported that their dissatisfaction is further caused by the fact that their principals are hardly ever at school. Tr4 and Tr8 asserted that their *principals are rarely at school, and that affects their work because, at times, they cannot access services, including printing and photocopying.* In addition, Tr6 articulated that his principal *"dodges classes allocated to him."* She further argued that the principal's *"erratic attendance has led to a high failure rate in his subject, affecting school overall ratings."*

Sub-theme 1.5: Dictatorship

The participants mentioned that their principals' habitual authoritarian leadership approach causes a lot of discomfort amongst them. Thus, Tr10 asserted that *"teachers are complaining that they are never consulted, decision making lies only with the principal."* In a similar fashion Tr3 and Tr4 hinted that in their school, the principal does not involve teachers during the planning phase; they are just given instructions to supervise certain activities. In addition, Tr9 and Tr2 said their principals misuse their executive powers and treat teachers as if they were children. They alluded to the fact that their principal's word is final.

Sub-theme 1.6: Resistance to change

Some participants asserted that their principals are stuck in the past and do not want to adjust or accommodate contemporary approaches to solve today's problems confronting schools. Tr6 asserted that his principal is *not willing to make any changes that could improve the school, especially if it originates from newly recruited teachers.* Instead, *he is stuck in past where we are constantly reminded that we have just joined the service.* Similarly, Tr2 revealed that in her school, learner enrolment has been dwindling. In recent years they dropped considerably from 879 to 438 learners. However, *"my principal is not doing anything new to salvage the situation. He does not want to advertise the school especially through social media."*

Sub-theme 1.7: Poor communication

The study revealed that some teachers are dissatisfied with their principals' poor communication skills. They asserted that their principals failed to communicate important information to them on time. Tr5 disclosed that her *"principal is not communicating issues pertaining to school funds, yet she expects us to provide the support during parents' meetings."* In a similar manner, Tr6 and Tr3 argued that their *principal does not communicate directly to them to the extent that some issues are known by learners before they do.*

Sub-theme 1.8: Favouritism

The data revealed that some teachers are dissatisfied because their principal favours others over the rest. To illustrate this, Tr4 indicated that *since she started working there, the principal only hired his siblings or relatives to offer miscellaneous services, including cleaning, supplying learners' uniforms, and maintenance.* In a similar vein, Tr5 and Tr10 hinted that their school principal always delegates pleasant activities to those he favours. Tr2 and Tr6 raised similar concerns and said the mistakes of those liked by the principal are often overlooked. In addition, Tr8 indicated that his *principal permits some teachers to be absent while others, including him, are expected to report to work on a daily basis.* Further, Tr7 divulged that her *principal is not a neutral person at all. She revealed that last year she invited the principal to her birthday celebration. Instead, her principal did not apologize for not attending, but in the same month, she attended a colleague's housewarming party.* The data further revealed that some principals favour some departments over others. For example, Tr1 hinted at the following:

The principal only funds activities of the science department neglecting other departments and activities. His hesitance to fund activities by other departments automatically causes a lot of dissatisfaction leading to unnecessary interdepartmental tensions.

Sub-theme 1.9: No Teacher Recognition

The findings suggest that some teachers' dissatisfaction is caused by a lack or insufficient teacher recognition for a job well done. According to Tr7, the *principal rarely compliments teachers for surpassing expectations.* In a similar fashion, Tr10 declared that his *principal does not motivate them, but instead continually ridicules them during staff meetings.* Principals' failure and reluctance to appraise teachers for good work put a strain on their commitment and could have far-reaching implications ranging from loss of confidence in the principal's competencies to teachers not knowing exactly what is expected of them.

Theme 2: Mitigating Strategies

With reference to the question of how teacher job dissatisfaction could be mitigated, several broad sub-themes emerged and are discussed below.

Sub-theme 2.1: Teacher Involvement

The participants asserted that to curb job dissatisfaction caused by authoritarian approaches and poor communication, principals should use participatory approaches more, as these will permit teachers to contribute while planning and making key decisions. That is for Tr10; *principals should allow teachers to actively participate in the running of the school programme.* In addition, Tr3, Tr9, Tr5, and Tr2 expressed that since schools are social organisations, school leaders should incorporate teachers' varied expertise in the running of the school. The emphasis made here is that democratic approaches are likely to motivate teachers since it will be easier for them to assume other duties while the principal oversees operations. The advocated leadership approaches are likely to inspire teachers to become teacher leaders.

Sub-theme 2.2: Be impartial

To curtail the issue of favouritism and intolerance, participants suggested that principals should be objective. They said principals should not discriminate and favour one group of teachers over others. Tr1, Tr7, and Tr8 emphasised that all teachers should be treated equally. In addition, Tr2 and Tr6 urged that the same disciplinary procedures should apply to all teachers irrespective of principals' preferences. To demonstrate justice, Tr4 presented that *the principal should not award job opportunities to their friends or relatives only. Rather, opportunities should be opened to all those qualifying.*

Sub-theme 2.3: External school auditing and support

To lessen teacher job dissatisfaction caused by poor maintenance of school infrastructure and principals' habitual use of resources for their personal gain, participants suggested that principals should be supported by experts and the school operations be continuously subjected to external professional auditing. Thus, Tr1, Tr3, and Tr6 indicated that external supervision and support could assist principals in managing and utilizing school resources effectively, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability. To further guarantee principals' decisiveness, participants said principals should continually be trained on financial management issues for financial skills acquisition and to better manage school funds

and activities. Tr3, Tr4, and Tr8 reiterated that principals should use the internal structures (deputy principals and heads of department) as the school financial advisory board. In that way, risks of financial misappropriation could be avoided. The suggested strategy could empower principals with essential competencies that will allow them to effectively utilise the school resources.

Sub-theme 2.3: Teacher appreciation

The findings suggest that to reduce teacher job dissatisfaction caused by poor teacher recognition, principals should develop tools for measuring good performance. Teachers who have met the required standards should consistently be rewarded. Thus, Tr7 and Tr10 asserted that principals should develop and implement teacher apprentice programmes in the form of financial rewards or otherwise. Teacher appreciation is deemed a scheme that could motivate teachers to go beyond expectations in pursuit of set goals and objectives.

Sub-theme 2.4: Lead by example

The participants claimed that to mitigate teacher job dissatisfaction caused by principals' habitual absenteeism, principals should at all times uphold professional ethics. Tr6 and Tr7 advised that school principals should always be punctual, and regularly present at work in order to support various instructional activities. Similarly, Tr2 and Tr9 urged principals to be neutral and to accept and implement new ideas, especially from the newly recruited teachers. In this way, principals can leverage fresh and innovative ideas to improve school administration and competitiveness.

Discussion

A close examination of the findings reveals that teacher job dissatisfaction stems from and is sustained by the principal's neglect of factors related to both hygiene and motivators. With regard to the hygiene factors, on the one hand, the findings suggest that teacher job dissatisfaction is perpetuated by principals' habitual mishandling of resources, either financial or physical. The findings indicate that some principals mismanage resources like wood, water, and farm produce either for personal consumption or to generate money for themselves. The findings further indicated that some principals increase school expenditure, either by charging extreme prices for deliveries or by funding their money-lending businesses. The mishandling of resources cripples schools' financial well-being and the ability to be self-reliant. Due to the reported misappropriation, schools are unlikely to adequately finance other planned activities. As a result, the sustainability of schools is compromised. Thus, in schools where resources – either physical or financial – are exploited, debts accumulate to the point where a recovery becomes difficult. These debts not only paint a bad credit history for the school, but the negative history affects the quality procurement of resources and budgetary prospects of schools, ultimately imperiling essential programmes. Despite this factor not being directly related to teachers' jobs (Chavan & Warke, 2018), principals should, however, be conscious that their misappropriation of school resources deters teachers' commitment (Ihensekien & Joel, 2023; Tripathy & Sahoo, 2020). Teachers, despite not being chief financial officers of schools, are stakeholders who are interested in how activities are planned and charged. Without their input, principals will not be able to successfully disseminate school mandates. Therefore, mishandling of school resources damages both principals' and schools' credibility, thus affecting stakeholder confidence.

In addition, the findings indicated that the derelict state of some classrooms and learners' restrooms, with no clear intention from the principal to rehabilitate them has contributed to teachers' job dissatisfaction. Although the maintenance of school infrastructure is not directly related to the enhancement of teacher job satisfaction (Tripathy & Sahoo, 2020), their ruinous state deters teacher's professional commitment and motivation. Ultimately, the perilous state of classrooms and learners' restrooms further impedes the realisation of safe learning environments and CFS (Fitriani et al., 2021; Xiao et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the findings hinted that teacher job dissatisfaction is caused by principals' intolerance. Some participants revealed that their principals condemn those who belong to either a different religious denomination or a rival political party with which the principal is not affiliated. The reported intolerance disregards teachers' rights as stated in The Constitution of Lesotho, 1993. Consequently, principals should not intrude on teachers' personal choices because constant infiltration violates teachers' fundamental rights of freedom of association. negatively affect teachers' commitment. If teachers feel their rights are not respected, they could be rebellious and neglect their duties leading to increased teacher job dissatisfaction. Teachers as adults should not be oppressed, but be freed.

The findings also revealed that teachers' job dissatisfaction is caused by principals' habitual absenteeism. Although this factor is not related to teachers' job description (Chavan & Warke, 2018), the findings show that principals' absenteeism negatively affects teachers' lesson planning and teaching as, in some cases, they are unable to access some services and equipment. Principals' habitual absenteeism also has a bearing on the quality assurance of instructional activities. Principal absenteeism, as a consequence, compromises the quality of instruction and the learners' academic achievement.

The findings highlighted that teachers' job dissatisfaction is further caused by principals' tendency to rely on authoritarian leadership approaches. The above is consistent with the literature (Liu et al., 2021; Machumu & Kaitila, 2014; Torres, 2017). The findings revealed that teachers are hardly consulted on matters affecting the school program,

and the centralized leadership approach wanes teachers' commitment (Tria, 2023). Teachers may not occupy a formal leadership position; however, principals should strive to incorporate teachers' views for both collegiality and ownership. Some teachers have unique talents that could contribute positively towards school effectiveness. Teachers should be afforded an opportunity to influence the school enterprise with their ingenuity and creativity.

Moreover, the study disclosed that some principals resist change. The findings divulged some principles repel some opinions, irrespective of their value. The reported resistance, according to the findings, appears to frustrate newly recruited teachers mostly because their suggestions are generally unfairly scrutinized and rejected. Through this attitude, some secondary schools in Lesotho may struggle to adapt to a changing landscape. This may result in schools' inability to attract the best learners and be less competitive.

Findings revealed that principals' erratic communication contributes to teachers' job dissatisfaction. Despite communication not being directly related to teachers' instructional duties (Chavan & Warke, 2018), the findings are consistent with the literature that erratic communication by principals causes teacher job dissatisfaction (Tria, 2023). Poor communication from principals implies that teachers may not know the vision of the school and its priorities. Principals' failure to timely communicate with teachers does not only disrupt their planning but also further weakens collegiality in the school. In order for schools to thrive, principals should improve on this essential competency.

The participants revealed teacher job dissatisfaction is also caused by principals' biased conduct. On one hand, the alleged disparities expose acts of nepotism and unfair hiring of family members and friends as support staff – which could be labeled as hygiene factors. The alleged nepotism contradicts the basic principles of distributive justice that should underpin daily school practices and engagements (Namea et al., 2022). On the other hand, the prejudiced conduct of some principals directly affects teachers. Thus, the findings unveiled that some principals favour some teachers over others. The findings asserted that those favoured by the principal are generally delegated appealing duties, they absent themselves as they please, they are hardly disciplined, and their leaves are approved without hesitation. Unlike hygiene factors that are not directly related to core teacher duties, biased teacher treatment has a direct influence on teachers' job satisfaction and how they eventually perform their duties (Alshmemri et al., 2017; Bušatlic & Mujabašić, 2018). As a result, it is important that fairness is consistently applied during the allocation of duties and when implementing disciplinary procedures. The above proposition will not only enable the emergence of CFS and sustainable leadership approaches but will further enhance principles of social justice.

Lastly, despite the HDT assertion that teacher recognition is one of the elements that is directly related to the job of the teacher and can propel teachers' efforts in accomplishing their duties (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Gangwar et al., 2022), the findings revealed that teachers' good performance is not in some recognised schools. It is revealed that instead of rewarding teachers who surpass expectations, principals are never satisfied and continually deride their efforts. Teacher recognition is an important component for teachers to improve their quality of teaching. If principals consistently reward good performance, self-actualization among teachers is likely to be achieved. However, lack of teacher recognition as witnessed in some Lesotho secondary schools, leaves teachers uncertain about the exact expectations and key priorities. The current practice in some schools erodes the quality of teacher-learner interactions. As a consequence, lack of teacher recognition does not only increase cases of teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools but also social injustices.

With this perspective, since it has argued that satisfied teachers are most keen to improve their instructional practices (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Molele & Moeti, 2024), the attempt to address one element may only reduce teacher job dissatisfaction and not increase satisfaction (Alrawahi et al., 2020). As a result, school principals and other school management structures should address both the factors related to hygiene and motivators in order for teachers to be motivated and satisfied (Alrawahi et al., 2020). This, therefore, implies that priorities have to be well-defined to enhance teachers' job satisfaction. In order to address teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools, the findings suggested the following strategies.

In order to moderate the use of authoritarian leadership approaches and principals' erratic communication, participatory leadership approaches were suggested. With these approaches, as indicated in the literature, teachers will actively participate during the planning and while making resolutions on key activities (Liu et al., 2021; Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019). The respect teachers get through being listened to is likely to enhance their enthusiasm and job satisfaction. The suggested strategy resonates with TLT components of intellectual stimulation. The extent to which principals create a democratic environment for teachers to develop their wisdom, talents, and skills has a bearing on the level of satisfaction (Khan et al., 2022).

In addition, to address principals' nepotism and intolerance, the findings suggested that principals should be impartial and be guided by school leadership frameworks. The findings asserted that principals should not favour one group of teachers or other members of the community over others. Instead, the findings advise principals to be neutral and consistent while assigning duties, applying disciplinary measures and also hiring support staff. The findings further expressed that principals should respect teachers' right of association. Teachers who subscribe to a different political party or church denomination should not be persecuted but respected and accommodated. Principals' disrespect of teachers' rights of association not only propagates social injustices but further violates the provisions of the constitution

of Lesotho. The impartiality advocated in this instance resonates with individualised consideration (Mdletshe & Mzimakwe, 2023; Mwadime & Yusuf, 2022).

Furthermore, the findings recommended external school auditing and support for principals. This strategy is not only meant to develop protocols for the maintenance of school infrastructure but also to curb the rampant exploitation of physical and financial resources by principals. The suggested external school auditing and principal support are likely – on a regular basis – to provide mentorship on resource management and allocation. The findings further indicated that principals should continually be trained on school financial management issues for skills improvement. It was also suggested that principals should use the internal structures (deputy principals and heads of department) as school financial advisory board. These strategies are likely to empower principals with the essential skills required to manage school resources. With these strategies, it is argued in this study that transparency and accountability in schools will be enhanced. The risks of financial misappropriation could be avoided.

Moreover, the findings suggested that principals should develop and consistently apply a teacher recognition policy. The emphasis made in this respect is that the teacher recognition protocols should consistently be applied to all teachers who were able to meet and surpass expectations. These suggested tools will enhance teacher job satisfaction because teacher appreciation programmes are deemed an important tool to motivate teachers to exert more effort (Alrawahi et al., 2020; Chavan & Warke, 2018; Gangwar et al., 2022; Ihensekien & Joel, 2023). Appreciated teachers will remain focused, thereby increasing efficacy and learners' academic performance (Sepiriti, 2024). The suggested strategy resonates well with the component of TLT inspirational motivation. Recognition of teachers will influence them to work in the same direction to reach school aspirations. Through teacher recognition, teachers' morale could be enhanced, thereby reducing their level of job dissatisfaction (Hosna et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022; Mwadime & Yusuf, 2022).

Lastly, the findings suggested that principals should lead by example. Thus, principals should not always be late or absent from school for them to sufficiently support and supervise teaching and learning activities. In a similar manner, principals are advised to be attentive to all suggestions and refrain from openly rebuffing other ideas. The suggestions should be interrogated to establish their worth. The suggested strategy resonates with the TLT component of idealized influence. The idealized influence element provides frameworks on how principals should present themselves to teachers. The extent to which principals command respect through good conduct inspires teachers to emulate their leader (Hosna et al., 2021; Mdletshe & Mzimakwe, 2023; Mwadime & Yusuf, 2022).

Conclusion

The current study was aimed at analysing the causes of teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools. The study departed from a theoretical grounding that triangulated the Herzberg duality theory (HDT) and the Transformational leadership theory (TLT). The findings revealed that teacher job dissatisfaction is caused mainly by the use of resources for personal gain, lack of maintenance, principal intolerance, habitual absenteeism by principals, dictatorship, resistance to change, poor communication, favouritism and lack of teacher recognition. The mentioned factors illustrate that teacher job dissatisfaction in some Lesotho secondary schools is on the raise due to principals' inattention of both hygiene and motivators components as highlighted in HDT. As enabled by TLT, the subsequent mitigating strategies – teacher involvement, impartiality, external school auditing and support, teacher appreciation and leading by example – could positively enhance teacher job satisfaction. This study concludes therefore that teachers' job satisfaction or dissatisfaction significantly influences teachers' commitment towards the attaining of CFS and facilitation of sustainable learning environments. Thus, satisfied teachers play an indisputable role in promoting CFS and sustainable learning environments in Lesotho secondary schools.

Recommendations

The study recommends that to reduce teacher job dissatisfaction and increase teacher job satisfaction, principals in particular – should make significant efforts to address the concerns identified by teachers. The suggested strategies could engender a change in both practices and culture, leading to the creation of thriving school environments. It is further recommended that key stakeholders – teachers and the school boards – should support principals in creating a school environment that prioritizes an effective teacher-learner environment. In this way, factors that propagate teachers' job dissatisfaction would be easily identified and dealt with accordingly.

Limitations

The findings in this study could not be generalised to all Lesotho secondary schools because only ten teachers took part. The other limitation of this study is the obscurity of the data. Thus, the data was only generated from teachers, excluding the school boards and the relevant units of MOET. The inclusion of these stakeholders could have corroborated teachers' viewpoints on the phenomena. Moreover, the sole use of semi-structured interviews was also a limiting factor. Triangulating the latter with other techniques could have provided other dimensions to the findings on the issue of teacher job dissatisfaction.

Ethics Statements

The research involving human participants underwent thorough review and approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the National University of Lesotho. Prior to participating in the study, all participants provided written informed consent, indicating their voluntary agreement to participate.

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