

# Can Teachers' Job Satisfaction Be Ensured Despite Economic Inadequacies? The Impact of Positive Psychological Capital

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Doi:10.19044/ejes.v9no1a1

[URL:http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/ejes.v9no1a1](http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/ejes.v9no1a1)

Submitted: 06 October 2021

Accepted: 16 December 2021

Published: 31 March 2022

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## **Abstract:**

This research examines the impact of teachers' positive psychological capital (PPC) on their job satisfaction (JS) levels. In the study, the relational survey model was used by conducting hierarchical regression analysis. The sample of the study consists of randomly selected 376 teachers in Batman, Turkey. The data were collected with the "Positive Psychological Capital Scale" and "Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale (MSQ-Short form)". According to the results, the PPC levels (total scores and dimensions) of the teachers are at a very high level; only the optimism dimension of the PPC scale and JS were found to be at a high level. In the regression analysis, the model (Model 6) that measures the effect of all dimensions of PPC on JS is significant. This finding implies that PPC is a significant predictor on JS and approximately 22% of the total variance in job satisfaction is explained PPC. The results of the study imply that self-efficacy and optimism components of PPC can be used to increase JS of teachers even the economic needs are not adequately met.

**Keywords:** Positive psychological capital, job satisfaction, economic inadequacies, teacher

## **Introduction:**

Global events such as wars, crisis, chaos, etc. that have occurred in the process of rapid change from industrialization to today have caused changes in organizational structures. This rapid change process has revealed organizational competition. Organization managers who wanted to be successful in this competition realized the potential of people (Anik & Tosten, 2017). This situation resulted in psychological pressure on the employees of the organization in order for the organization to survive (Yalcin, 2019). The need to change the roles of the employees within the organization and their adaptation to these roles became important for the continuity of the organization. In the change of these roles, the importance of meeting the expectations and needs of the employees has been realized to get a high level of efficiency from them. With the realization

of the importance of “individual” for organizational structures, there has been a focus not only on the development of the physical aspects but also on the psychological aspects of the human being. Thus, the importance of new types of capital, such as human, social, cultural and positive psychological capital, which takes the human factor into account, has been continuously increasing until today (Luthans & Youssef, 2004).

The researches in the related literature emphasize that the PPC levels of the teachers should be increased to have a high job satisfaction in educational organizations. These kinds of findings imply important relationships between PPC levels and job satisfaction of employees (Erkus & Findikli, 2013). Luthans et al. (2008), in their study on psychological capital and job satisfaction, determined that there is a positive relationship between these two variables. Moreover, a significant relationship has been observed in some studies in the sub-dimensions of PPC. There are some other researchers who have reached important findings on this subject. In these studies, it has been revealed that there is a positive relationship between the level of job satisfaction and the dimensions of hope and resilience in the PPC (Larson & Luthans, 2006). Similarly, significant positive relationships have been reported between job satisfaction and the optimism dimension of the PPC (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). This study is examining the role of positive psychological capital levels of teachers on their job satisfaction level.

### **Literature Review**

The concept of positive psychological capital (PPC) is accepted as one of the important types of capital that has been the subject of research in recent years. A positive psychological approach that emphasizes efforts to improve negative situations in people and the importance of individual happiness and personal development aims to ensure that employees continue a happy life within the organization. In this context, PPC has taken its foundations from the positive organizational behavior approach that takes into account the development of positive behaviors of employees in the organization (Erkus & Findikli, 2013). PPC based on positive psychology and positive organizational behavior approaches was concerned with the strengths of employees and their potential characteristics (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Since PPC aims to increase organizational productivity, it can be defined as any kind of capital that increases the productivity of employees (Oruc, 2015; Tosten, 2015).

PPC can be expressed as a combined superstructure, and it consists of four main sub-dimensions: the confidence of the individual towards himself in showing the necessary effort to be successful in difficult conditions (self-efficacy), positive judgments that he will be successful at this time and in the future (optimism), pursuing its goals to be successful and re-evaluating its goals when necessary and seeking different ways to achieve these goals (hope), the ability to return to the previous state after losses to be successful in the face of problems and changes (resilience) (Cinar, 2011). Thrust and extroversion dimensions are added to these sub-dimensions, which contribute to the employee's awareness of their responsibilities, their efforts to solve problems, and their strong communication with their environment (Tosten & Ozgan, 2014).

The school organization needs to determine the the components of positive psychology capital of teachers, who raise the generations and are among the important components of the education sector. Positive psychological capital approach aims to increase efficiency in the education sector by focusing the positive aspects of teachers (Kilic, 2019). For a better quality education, it is important to increase the positive psychological capital of school staff, especially teachers. Employees with high positive psychological capital are happy and work effectively in the workplace. A happy teacher at work may experience more satisfaction. The teacher's attitude

towards his profession, which affects the whole society, must be positive. In order to develop a positive attitude, the feeling of satisfaction should be high. According to researchers, job satisfaction of teachers can be defined as satisfaction or dissatisfaction of teachers with their jobs (Vural, 2004) or attitude of teachers towards their students and school (Tasdan & Tiryaki, 2008). Another important factor in organizational life is the satisfaction of employees with their job. The better performance of the employees requires the employee to be satisfied. The concept of “satisfaction” mentioned here means reaching the inner satisfaction of the person, that is, the realization of his desires. At the same time, the feeling of satisfaction can only be felt by the individual and plays an important role in providing the individual's inner peace (Iscan & Timuroglu, 2007). In that sense the main determinant of job satisfaction is the needs of individuals and to what extent these needs are met (Celik & Gursel, 2017). Job satisfaction is the result of an individual's attitudes towards his job (Balci, 1985). Job satisfaction is closely related to employee expectations from the job, the rewards the job provides, and psychological agreement (Bingol, 1996). Meeting the needs of employees increases both productivity, job satisfaction (Basaran, 1991) and motivation (Han, Tosten & Elcicek, 2021). The rate of meeting many expectations in working life such as wages, promotion, social security, job security, and the quality of work relations affects job satisfaction (Asik, 2010). When employees' expectations from the job are met, job satisfaction increases and corporate goals are realized more efficiently (Tengilimoglu, 2005). The satisfaction of the people in the workplace with their job is important both for the happiness and peace of the employees and for the success of the organization since it affects the performance of the employee positively.

Anyone who loves his job will show a more positive attitude towards that job and act more carefully, in a planned and methodical manner. This approach will lead him to success, so he will experience more job satisfaction (Sinangil, 1998). Employees work with more positive feelings in organizations that have a fair wage system and promotion policy in line with their expectations, and this leads to a positive increase in job satisfaction (Caliskan, 2005). Fair wages according to what the job wants from the person, the ability of the individual and the economic structure of the society have a positive effect on the attitude of the employee towards his job (Sevimli & Iscan, 2005). Providing teachers' job satisfaction is necessary to increase teacher performance (Gundogdu, 2013). Job satisfaction affects the physical and mental health of the employee, the working environment and productivity of the organization, the peace of the society, and its economic development (Erdogan, 2004). Providing job satisfaction in the organization is both a necessity for the continuity of the organization and the duty of the organization for the success of the society and individuals (Ogretmen, 2013). Individuals with a high level of job satisfaction develop positive attitudes about their job on the contrary, employees who are not satisfied with their job show a negative attitude towards their job (Arisoy, 2007). The most prominent form of job dissatisfaction is behaviors such as low productivity, slowdown in work, increased absenteeism and occupational accidents, disruption of work discipline, careless use of resources, and increased employee complaints (Yilmaz & Ceylan, 2011). Job dissatisfaction causes employee turnover, labor turnover, worker problems, theft, worker complaints and an unfavorable organizational climate (Tikici, 2005).

## **Methods**

Sample, data collection, data source, empirical model will be discussed.

### ***Research model***

The relational survey model was used in this study. In this model, it is aimed to reveal the relationships between variables. Hierarchical regression analysis was used in this study. In this way, it was possible to determine the contribution of each dimension of positive psychological capital to the total effect.

### ***The Universe and the Sample***

The universe of the research consists of 8882 teachers working in public schools in Batman in 2020. Its sample consists of 376 primary and secondary school teachers selected by the simple random method. The teachers participating in the study were 178 women (47.3%), 198 men (52.7%) by gender; according to marital status, 204 married (54.3%), 172 single (45.7%); according to their age, 192 teachers are between the ages of 22-29 (51.1%); 154 aged 30-39 (41%); 28 people aged 40 and over (7.4%). When the distribution of the sample is examined, it is seen that the ratios of women-men and married-single are very close to each other in terms of gender and marital status; in the age distribution, it is seen that the group under the age of 40 is over 90%, so the participants are mostly young teachers. It can be claimed that Batman, which is an Eastern province, reflects the universe in this respect, as the number of first appointments is high.

### ***Data Collection***

Two different scales were used to collect research data. The first scale is the "Positive Psychological Capital Scale" developed by Tosten and Ozgan (2014). The scale consists of 26 items in a five-point Likert type. The scale consists of six sub-dimensions. These are self-efficacy, resilience, optimism, hope, trust, and extroversion. In the exploratory factor analysis of the scale KMO value of the scale was calculated .91; Barlett test .00 ( $p < .01$ ); the explained variance was 61.6%. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), it was understood that the model fit well according to the fit indices " $\chi^2 = 728.83$ ,  $N = 308$ ,  $sd = 285$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ; RMSEA; 0.071, SRMR; 0.13, GFI; 0.85, AGFI; 0.81, CFI; 0.96, IFI; 0.96, NFI; 0.093;  $\chi^2/df = 2.56$ ". "Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale (MSQ-Short form)" was developed by Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967) and adapted to Turkish by Oran Baskaya (1989). The scale consists of 20 5-point Likert-type items. The scale consists of two dimensions; "internal satisfaction (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 20) and external satisfaction (5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19)".

### ***Data Analysis***

The research data were transferred to the SPSS program and made ready for analysis. Cronbach's Alpha values were examined within the framework of the reliability analysis of the data. Cronbach's Alpha value of the 26-item positive psychological capital scale is .91; The Cronbach's Alpha value of the 20-item job satisfaction scale was calculated as .91. According to these results, it was concluded that the data were reliable so the other analyzes were conducted. According to the aim of the research, mean and standard deviation values of the scales and hierarchical regression analysis were used. While conducting hierarchical regression, the required assumptions to reach reliable results were examined. First, the assumption of sufficient sample was checked. According to Stevens (2009), the sample size should be 15 times the number of independent variables. In the model in which 6 dimensions of positive psychological capital were used as independent variables. In this sense, 90 samples are sufficient for 6 independent variables. The number of samples used in the study (376) is well above this and meets this assumption. For

the normal distribution assumption, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the scales were examined. It has been observed that kurtosis values are high (12.711) in some of the dimensions of the psychological capital scale. Since the skewness and kurtosis values should be in the range of +2 and -2 to ensure the normal distribution assumption (George & Mallery, 2010), the extreme values were examined and the normality was checked by removing the extreme values from the data set, respectively. By removing the data numbered 37 and 9, respectively, from the data set, the skewness and kurtosis values came to the range of +2 / -2 and a normal distribution was achieved. Another assumption is that there is a linear relationship between dependent and independent variables. When the correlation values and scatter diagram were examined, it was seen that this assumption was fulfilled ( $p < .01$ ;  $r > .30$ ). Another assumption is that there is no multi-linearity problem. This situation can be observed by two methods. The first is that there must be no high level of correlation between dependent and independent variables (should be  $r < .09$ ). In this respect, it has been observed that the assumption is confirmed. The second way is to look at VIF and Tolerance values. VIF values are expected to be less than 12; Tolerance values greater than 0.2. It was understood that the assumption was confirmed in terms of both values (VIF  $< 2.74$ ; Tolerance  $> 0.37$ ) (Cevahir, 2020). The assumptions required for the regression analysis were tested in this way and it was determined that the assumptions were met.

### Findings

Two variables were used in the study. The mean and standard deviation values of these variables are given in the table below.

Table 1. The mean and standard deviation values of these variables

Variables	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Level
<b>Psychological Capital</b>	4.41	.43	Very High
Self-efficacy	4.51	.48	Very High
Optimism	4.17	.73	High
Thrust	4.64	.43	Very High
Extroversion	4.37	.55	Very High
Resiliency	4.38	.58	Very High
Hope	4.47	.55	Very High
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	3.83	.63	High

When the table is examined, the positive psychological capital levels (total scores and dimensions) of the teachers are at a very high level; only the optimism dimension of the positive psychological capital scale and job satisfaction were found to be at a high level.

The answers given to the item "I can make a living with my current salary" directed to the participants within the scope of the research contain remarkable results. The number of those who replied "I agree" with this item is 82 (21.8%), the number of those who replied "I am undecided" is 65 (17.3%), and the number of those who replied "I do not agree" is 229 (60.9%). These results show that participant teachers are mostly not satisfied with their salary. A teacher's salary in Turkey is around 680 USD in 2021.

The determination of the predictive level of job satisfaction on the dimensions of positive psychological capital, which constitutes the main purpose of the study, was tested with the hierarchical regression model. The dimensions of psychological capital were included in the model,

starting from the self-efficacy dimension, and whether each dimension contributed significantly to the model was examined. The findings are presented in the table below.

Model	R	Adjusted Square	RR Change	F	F Change	Sig	Sig. Change	F
1*Self-efficacy	.394	.153	.155	68.739	68.739	.000	.000	
2 *Self-efficacy *Optimism	.458	.205	.054	49.450	25.633	.000	.000	
3 *Self-efficacy *Optimism *Thrust	.468	.212	.009	34.712	4.350	.000	.038	
4 *Self-efficacy *Optimism *Thrust *Extroversion	.471	.214	.003	26.485	1.627	.000	.203	
5 *Self-efficacy *Optimism *Thrust *Extroversion *Resiliency	.476	.216	.004	21.672	2.103	.000	.148	
6 *Self-efficacy *Optimism *Thrust *Extroversion *Resiliency *Hope	.478	.216	.002	18.201	.884	.000	.348	

The table shows that the model (Model 6) that measures the effect of all dimensions of positive psychological capital on job satisfaction is significant ( $p < .05$ ;  $F = 18,201$ ). When we look at the predictive power of all dimensions of positive psychological capital on job satisfaction, it is seen that it is about 22% ( $R = .48$ ;  $R^2 = .22$ ).

Considering the shares of the dimensions of positive psychological capital in this effect, the following findings were found, respectively:

*Self-efficacy* is a significant predictor on job satisfaction ( $P < .05$ ;  $F = 68.739$ ) and has a predictive power of approximately 15% ( $R = .39$ ;  $R^2 = .15$ );

*Optimism* is a significant predictor of job satisfaction ( $P < .05$ ;  $F = 25.633$ ) and has a predictive power of approximately 5% ( $R = .46$ ;  $R^2 = .054$ );

*Trust* is a significant predictor of job satisfaction ( $P < .05$ ;  $F = 4.350$ ) and has a predictive power of about 1% ( $R = .4$ ;  $R^2 = .009$ );

*Extraversion* is not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ( $P > .05$ ;  $F = 1.627$ ;  $R^2 = .003$ );

*Resilience* is not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ( $P > .05$ ;  $F = 2.103$ ;  $R^2 = .004$ );

*Hope* is not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ( $P > .05$ ;  $F = .884$ ;  $R^2 = .002$ ).

As can be understood from these findings, positive psychological capital is a significant predictor on job satisfaction and approximately 22% of the total variance in job satisfaction is

explained by positive psychological capital. Within the positive psychological capital dimensions; self-efficacy, optimism and trust dimensions are significant predictors of job satisfaction, while extroversion, resilience and hope dimensions are not significant predictors of job satisfaction. Self-efficacy has the highest share among the dimensions that have a significant impact with 15%.

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

This research basically examined the relationship between positive psychological capital and job satisfaction, which are two important factors for teachers. According to the research results, teachers' positive psychological capital level and their job satisfactions are high. In the study, the trust dimension of the positive psychological capital scale has the highest mean. In some similar studies, it has been observed that the dimension of trust has the highest mean (Yalcin, 2019; Kelekci & Yilmaz, 2015). It can be claimed that the high level of trust is due to teachers' awareness of their responsibilities and their determination to deal with problems. At the same time, a study by Ocak, Guler and Basim (2015) found that teachers' positive psychological capital levels were high in terms of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy.

One of the important findings of this study is the positive and significant relationship between teachers' positive psychological capital levels and their job satisfaction levels. This result is similar to the findings reported by many studies in the literature (Cakmak & Arabaci, 2017; Erkus & Findikli, 2013; Akcay, 2012; Luthans, Norman, Avolio & Avey, 2008; Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Larson & Luthans, 2006). For example, Luthans et al. (2008) reported significant positive relationships between psychological capital and the level of job satisfaction. Moreover, Larson and Luthans' (2006) research revealed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and positive psychological capital's hope and resilience dimensions. Youssef and Luthans (2007) similarly found a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and optimism. Cetin (2011) also reported a positive relationship between job satisfaction and optimism in his study in Turkey.

In the study, it was concluded that teachers' positive psychological capital levels play an important role and it is an important predictor on job satisfaction. According to the literature job satisfaction is an important factor for job performance (Gundogdu, 2013). Providing job satisfaction in the organization is both a necessity for the continuity of the organization and the organization's duty for the success of the society and individuals (Ogretmen, 2013). Therefore, it is important to know the factors that increase teachers' job satisfaction and to strengthen them. It is a remarkable result that positive psychological capital predicts job satisfaction by 22% in this study. Especially the high level of predictive power of self-efficacy and optimism dimensions can be interpreted as these aspects are strong aspects for the Turkish society.

The items in the self-efficacy dimension of the positive psychological capital scale are measuring the awareness of the person's job and himself. In this respect, the fact that especially the self-efficacy dimension is predicting job satisfaction significantly (15%) in the study explains the high job satisfaction levels of teachers despite the current economic conditions. At that point, another result obtained within the scope of the research is that the teachers consider that their salaries are not sufficient for their livelihood (approximately 61% of the participants). However, the rate of meeting many expectations in working life, such as wages, promotion, social security, job security, and the quality of work relations, affects job satisfaction (Asik, 2010), and fair wages positively affect the attitude of the employee to his job (Sevimli & Iscan, 2005). Although participating teachers consider teaching economically insufficient, it is understood that their job

satisfaction levels are positively affected by the high levels of "self-efficacy and optimism", which are among the positive psychological capital components.

The research is particularly original and remarkable in this respect. Accordingly, it can be claimed that it is possible to provide teachers' job satisfaction in different ways even when economic conditions cannot be fully met. Especially in economically underdeveloped countries, it is important to find alternatives in such cases. In this sense, in cases where economic needs are not adequately met, self-efficacy and optimism components of positive psychological capital can be benefited to increase job satisfaction of teachers.

### **Limitations and Implications**

One of the limitations of this research is related to the scales. We used two scales in the study. The findings of this research can be confirmed by using different measurement tools such as PPC and job satisfaction scales. Another limitation of the study is related to the sample group of the research. This research was carried out by collecting data from teachers working in Batman province, but an inference was made for Turkey in general. Although the sample group is diversified in this study, it is recommended to work on a more comprehensive sample for a country-wide macro-level evaluation. At this point, future researchers can carry out more comprehensive studies by including larger sample.

**Acknowledgements:** This paper was presented as an oral presentation at the 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Education and Research (GLOCER, 2021) on June 8-10, 2021.



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