

# **Linking the School Facilities Conditions to Teachers' Level of Job Dissatisfaction in the South Central Region of Botswana**

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## **Abstract**

School facilities influence the teaching and learning process and are central concerns of educational planners. School facilities determine trends in school activities and processes which influences teacher performance and student achievement. The school physical environment play key roles in influencing teachers level of dissatisfaction and their level of performance or productivity. The importance of facility quality is an important predictor of the decisions of teachers to leave their current position. The argument is that the quality of school facilities is an important factor in the decision making of individual teachers. Although the school facility has been studied only in context of teacher retention in developing countries, it is also relevant to Botswana where facility quality is poor and vandalism in schools is the order of the day. It also tested the effect of facilities to teacher performance, retention and level of dissatisfaction. Job dissatisfaction of teachers due to school facility is taking a toll on teachers as it was reported in the National Commission on Education in 1993 that teachers were struggling to cope with enormous amount of dissatisfaction and job stress. This was because they were unable to keep with the demand of their job in dilapidated buildings to such a point that many were reaching burnout levels. The study included a comprehensive review and critical analysis of research and literature on levels of teacher job dissatisfaction because of school facilities. The study confirmed that teachers were highly dissatisfied with their teaching job. Furthermore, facility state significantly influenced teachers' level of job dissatisfaction and the general academic performance of students. The state of facilities influenced the school climate and accommodation issues which affected the level of teachers' job dissatisfaction.

**Keywords:** School facilities, school climate, teachers job dissatisfaction, students achievement.

## **Introduction**

Educators are increasingly being held accountable for student achievement and growth as determined by a myriad of tests and data, but not much is being acknowledged about the

buildings and learning environments where the educational process is housed. Educators are directed to leave no child behind academically. The educators were encouraged not to leave the children behind, but the physical environments and status of buildings were overlooked. The surroundings and environments in which teachers and students find themselves in, certainly may influence the ways in which they teach and learn. There are indicators that educational environments in which human beings learn do indeed have a definite influence on a child's learning process and growth in the affective, behavioural and cognitive development.

## **School Facility**

Dejong (1997) stated that the physical layout and design of the school could enhance certain instructional strategies, discourage others and have a significant impact on discipline. As designers, architects and school administrators develop future schools and learning spaces for the growing school populations, the process of designing building facilities is to be based on the intended curricular programs. This should encompass the attending populations, and available technologies should be the main guide to the design of these learning spaces. In basic terms, the facility should be designed to fit the intended curriculum and use. Unfortunately, the way the majority of schools are currently built is not keeping with this simple philosophy. While this knowledge base is growing, it is still a reality that most educational systems and buildings do not yet subscribe to this idea, instead are opting for standardized school facilities and buildings.

One of the largest monetary investments made in educational systems in Botswana is found in the brick and mortar of the physical structure that house the educational process. These facilities should be well designed and planned to enhance the individual curriculum and support teaching and learning that is enacted through the walls. Otherwise it seems to be a great expenditure of time, effort and time to try to shoehorn curricular programs into generic shells that were not designed to be advantageous to begin with.

There is limited amount of research being conducted in the area of school facility and its effects on teachers and students achievement. The stresses that teachers and students are exposed to on the job are of concern to educational leaders and researchers. Teachers were leaving the field of education for other careers due to the poor unpalatable conditions they work in. much of this is attributed to low job satisfaction and high stress levels. Poor working conditions and student misbehavior as well as poor attitudes and lack of resources are seen as contributing factors to this career dissatisfaction. According to Taylor, Aldrich and Vlastos (1998) there are a number of environments in which children must spend a large share of their time. Some of these are antagonistic, hostile or incompatible to self-expression. In this regard the school leaves little room for a sense of ownership or involvement. Students have very little to say, and are rarely asked of their opinions, about their schools physical characteristics. In its present state the architecture and physical setting of most schools are deplorable. It almost always follows the passive 'egg crate' closed classroom format of 200 years ago, all too often it is more like a prison than a place of discovery, wonder and creativity.

The surroundings and environments in which students and teachers find themselves may exert influence on the way in which they teach and learn. It seems that the morale and quality of work of the educational staff may be directly related to the influences and conditions of the environments in which they work (Borg & Riding, 1981). The classrooms and other facilities in which students learn and teachers teach may be a very important factor during educational growth and development and should be treated as an active tool to improve and support these processes.

The school building is a prominent type of building in which a high percentage of citizens from all walks of life, ethnicity, gender and religious backgrounds spend large amount of

time. These facilities and their design should therefore be high on the list of concerns when professionals look for ways to improve and enhance student achievement. Educational leaders should be highly concerned to make sure the facility they develop and manage is as safe, cost efficient, functional and supportive of the educational process as possible. Unfortunately, more often than not school leaders have very limited input into the actual design process, even when they are assigned to new facilities (U.S Department of Education, 1999; U.S Department of Education and Justice, 1998).

## **School Climate**

The importance of school climate and to some extent culture of an effective school system has been a subject of discussion in many fora. The school climate can directly influence the emotional well being and health of teachers as well as academic outcomes. The climate of the school is important not just because young people spend time there, but also because it provides a major setting in which students develop new and different relationships with peers and teachers. A sense of belonging in a school is a major protective factor against health risk behaviors in young people.

The school administrators know that teacher attitudes, good or bad trickle down to the students. Where teachers are not treated as professionals, the result is that they are pushed out of the profession. Vail (2005) says school climate is associated with educational administration and rest on the assumption that schools can be viewed as a formal organization. According to Hoy and Woolfore (1990), a healthy school deals effectively with outside forces while directing its energies towards its goals. An open climate is characterized by low hindrances, low disengagements, average intimacy, high morale, low aloofness, low production, high thrust and consideration for the school leadership.

It is clear as perceived by Lowe (1990) that school climate is a significant variable in the teacher's thoughts and feelings. The ability of leadership to create and promote a conducive climate was essential in encouraging and supporting superior quality teaching and reduction in the level of dissatisfaction. It could be inferred that a good school environment could lead to increased willingness on the part of the teacher, to do a good job.

## **Physical State of the School**

The state of a school is one effective predictor of student achievement and level of teacher job dissatisfaction. The physical state of buildings affects the teacher's self esteem, peer and student teacher interactions, parents' involvement, discipline, motivation and interpersonal relationships. As more important attention is being given to the issue of teacher retention and dissatisfaction, more factors contributing to these aspects are being realized.

According to Kennedy, (2001) the quality of school facilities is seen as an influencing factor in the decision making of the individual teachers, as to whether they stay in the profession or not. Although the importance of the facility quality has a bearing on teachers' job dissatisfaction in developed and developing countries, the quality of facility and its availability is an influencing factor to teacher job dissatisfaction (Benner, 2000; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). To consider buildings and other amenities within the education system is to traverse the contrasting perceptions and expectations of different stakeholders. Jago and Tanner (1990) and Haar (1999) cite facility as an appropriate predictor of teacher and student commitment to their duties and reduce off-task behaviour and play a significant role in the achievement of both teachers and students.

According to Benya (2001) a majority of teachers are concerned that the maintenance and refurbishment of the education estate has be neglected and fitfully managed for such an

extended period. The direct observations of the conditions in many public schools have indicated the sub-standard conditions in which teaching and learning are taking place. It is important to note that for any learning to effectively take place buildings must be of good standard and supportive of teaching to take place. Teaching and learning can be enhanced or retarded by the presence or absence of appropriate physical conditions of the infrastructure in the school.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Research shows that job satisfaction of teachers in developing countries is not improving and productivity is low. The schools outcomes and students achievement are gradually going down. Teaching in Botswana is characterized by high levels of job dissatisfaction, low morale, low status and an attitude that regards teaching profession as a last resort (Republic of Botswana, 1993). It is important to acknowledge that teachers in Botswana are not happy with the facilities in their schools. Despite all attempts by educational planners to address the situation it is clear that teachers' dissatisfaction and low levels of motivation and morale are worrisome as they have been a mention of them in the two National Commissions of Education (Republic of Botswana, 1977; 1993), which influenced the contents of the Botswana National Policy on Education (Republic of Botswana, 1994). It seems the previous remedies on the school facilities maintenance did not help save the image of the profession in any way as the problem is still rampant among the teachers and cannot be ignored.

Therefore, this problem of school facilities has a significant influence on dissatisfaction among teachers and needs to be investigated to find out how school facilities influence teachers' job dissatisfaction. Given such spread of views, this study sought to find out the views of teachers on how school facilities influence teacher job dissatisfaction. Research on school facilities is not only lacking within the African contexts, but as painted out by Dejong (1997), the same is true for other parts of the world like United States of America. The present study investigated the issue as it relates to school facilities with the view to find out whether teacher job dissatisfaction is influenced by the physical characteristics of the facilities.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore how the school facilities influence dissatisfaction among teachers in secondary schools.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were posed:

1. To what extent are school facilities influencing teachers' level of job dissatisfaction in junior secondary schools?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers concerning the state of school buildings including staff houses in junior secondary school?

## **Hypotheses**

The research will test the following hypothesis:

1. The availability of facilities in a school has no significant influence on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction.
2. The school environment caused by facilities has a significant influence on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction.

3. There is no significant influence of teachers' perceived level of availability of accommodation on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction.

## **Significance of the Study**

Investigating the state of school facilities and its influence on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction might have multiple benefits to the government as it impacts on performance of teachers and students. The study highlights the issues impacting on teachers' life within the school facilities which determines their performance.

The study will be of significance to a variety of interest groups in particular the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, teachers and students. It is crucial to find out the status of building in junior secondary schools and how they affect or influence the teaching and learning in those institutions.

This will assist administrators to establish properly directed educational policies to address the issues of buildings in order to improve the level of teachers' job satisfaction. It is of great importance/value to carry out the study now, since teachers performance in schools is a source of concern for the society, parents and government, hence teachers are concerned with the status of facilities within the school, as these puts them under enormous pressure.

It is hoped that the findings will be helpful to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development so that they can develop effective strategies and policies aimed at addressing facility shortage and maintenance of the existing facilities as these can reduce the growing unhappiness of teachers.

## **Methodology of the Study**

This study explores the effects of school facilities on teacher level of job dissatisfaction. In order to gather information on the subject, a questionnaire instrument was developed and administered to educators to solicit information on how school facilities influence teachers' level of job dissatisfaction. In terms of its structure, the questionnaire consisted a series of question items in a likert scale form in which respondents ticked items from the list that was provided. In addition there were also open-ended sections in which respondents could write their comments.

The target group of the study was teachers in junior secondary schools. This particular group or sample was selected because these are the people who are working in the school facilities and have understanding of their requirement for proper implementation of the curriculum. 314 questionnaires were distributed among teachers and 255 questionnaires were returned representing 81% of the questionnaire administered. Feedback from this questionnaire were statistically analysed and results presented.

## **Results of the Study**

The results presented below were trying to test three hypotheses in order to answer the research question.

### **Hypothesis 1**

In the null form, the hypothesis states that the availability of facility in a school has no significant influence on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction.

In testing this hypothesis Pearson correlation analysis was done between teachers' perception of the school environment and their level of job dissatisfaction (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** Pearson correlation between teachers' perception of the availability of facilities on their level of job dissatisfaction (n= 255)

Variables	Level of teachers' job dissatisfaction	Level of availability of facilities
Level of teachers' job dissatisfaction	1.000	-.246*
Level of availability of facilities	-.246*	1.000
		.000
p< (2-tailed)		

\*significant at .05 level; critical r = .195; df = 253

The analysis resulted in an r-value of -.246, which in absolute value was found to be higher than a critical r-value of .195 for .05alpha level and 253 degrees of freedom hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result reveals that there is a significant association between the level of availability of facilities and teachers' level of dissatisfaction. These results indicate that the facilities significantly influence teachers' level of job dissatisfaction in junior secondary schools. The level of availability of facilities has a negative influence on teachers' level of job satisfaction.

## Hypothesis 2

The null hypothesis states that the school environment has no significant influence on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction.

In testing this hypothesis Pearson Correlation Analysis was done between teachers' perception of the school environment and their level of job dissatisfaction (see Table 2).

**Table 2:** Pearson correlation between teachers' perception of the school environment of their level of job dissatisfaction (n = 255)

Variables	Level of teachers' job dissatisfaction	School climate
Level of teachers' job dissatisfaction	1.000	-.407*
School climate	-.407*	1.000
p<(2-tailed)		
		.000

\*significant at .05level; critical r = .195; df =253

The analysis resulted in an r-value of -.407, which in absolute value was found to be higher than a critical r-value of .195 for .05alpha level and 253 degrees of freedom hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result reveals that there is a significant association between the school environment and teachers' level of dissatisfaction. These results indicate that the school climate significantly influence teachers' level of job dissatisfaction in junior secondary schools. The school climate has a negative influence on teachers' dissatisfaction.

## Hypothesis 3

In the null form, the hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of teachers' perceived level of availability of accommodation on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction.

To test this hypothesis a Pearson correlation analysis was done between the level of teachers' perception of both the level of availability of accommodation and their level of job dissatisfaction (see Table 3). The results gave an observed correlation value of  $r = -.271$ . This, in absolute value was found to be higher than the critical r-value of .195 given .05 level of significance and 253 degrees of freedom. From these results the null hypothesis was rejected.

The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between level of teachers' job dissatisfaction and the level availability of accommodation. This is to say that high levels of teachers' job dissatisfaction are associated with low levels of availability of accommodation

**Table 3:** Pearson correlations of the level of availability of accommodation on teachers' level of job dissatisfaction (n = 255)

Variables	Level of teachers' job dissatisfaction	Availability of accommodation
Level of teachers' job dissatisfaction	1.000	-.271*
Availability of accommodation	-.271*	1.000
p<(2-tailed)		.000

\*significant at .05; critical  $r = .195$ ;  $df = 253$

## Discussion of Results of the Study

The results show that the mean level of job dissatisfaction for teachers who perceived the inadequacy of facilities was high indicating that teachers are currently worried with the status and availability of facilities. The results indicated that the state of buildings teachers work in tends to positively influence their level of job dissatisfaction. The staffrooms and classrooms are congested, very cold during winter and extremely hot during summer. Teachers are calling for proper maintenance of the buildings as they are now a source of danger to them and students. They indicated that facilities at this level of education were seriously neglected and hence were a source of frustration of teachers. These results led to the conclusion that the level to which a teacher perceived that facilities are adequate in teaching significantly influences their level of job dissatisfaction.

The ways in which buildings impact upon human life range from purely functional to the aesthetic. These qualities are as important if not more so, to a satisfying and more productive life within schools as they are in other institutions. Teachers have indicated that the maintenance and refurbishment of the education estate has been neglected and not properly managed. The direct observation of the conditions in many junior secondary schools in Botswana has indicated sub-standard conditions in which teaching and learning are being attempted.

According to Benner (2000) it is important to note that for any learning to effectively take place, buildings must be of good standard and supportive of contemporary teaching and learning to take place. Teaching and learning can be enhanced or retarded by the presence or absence of appropriate physical conditions of buildings. The school community spirit can be lifted or depressed by the presence or absence of well designed buildings that are maintained and presented with a view to satisfying the needs of those who work within them.

Teachers believe that due to the bad state of the educational facilities, which are in a state of despair in many schools, it can be concluded that their job dissatisfaction would be high. According to Haar (1999) the National Education Association in America believes that

because many educational facilities are in a state of crisis, as evidenced by decay, neglect and continuing deterioration, schools must be provided with the necessary financial resources to adequately maintain the physical facilities. The findings of this study support this sentiment, as respondents indicated that maintenance in junior secondary school is neglected and buildings are dilapidated and are a danger to both teachers and students. Teachers expressed that they were teaching in classes with poor ventilation and no lights and such classrooms have become an eye sore.

The findings also indicated that in junior secondary schools there were serious shortages of rooms and specialized rooms such as science laboratories were being used as base rooms, thus exposing students to the danger of chemicals which are used for subjects such as agriculture and integrated science. The teachers' job dissatisfaction is due to the quality of building where most teaching takes place. The quality of the physical structure according to Kennedy (2001) affects the ability and enthusiasm of teachers to teach, teacher morale and the very health and safety of teachers, let alone students. Teachers indicated that if these buildings are not looked after and maintained, there were expecting the problem with school facilities to worsen.

Teachers noted with concern that in some schools health hazard materials like asbestos were still being used in classrooms and staff houses. Another area in which research has linked school facilities to teacher level of job dissatisfaction was the thermal comfort. This agrees with findings of Lowe (1990) that the teachers emphasized their difficulty to control temperatures in the classrooms and staff rooms where they work. Though improving the quality of school facilities can be expensive, the benefits are priceless and important.

It is difficult to promote the principles of social justice when teachers and students are forced to spend day after day in sub-standard buildings. It must be noted that teachers take pride in the learning environment that provide safety. The findings of this study indicate that many teachers share the foregoing sentiments, which they believe can raise their morale and lower dissatisfaction.

On the question of school climate Hoy and Woolfore (1990) described a conducive school environment as a place where resources are easily accessible, information flows freely to all staff, environment is free of threats and transparency and openness are treated as key values. Teachers mentioned that in junior secondary schools information was not easily accessible and teachers were not listened to, resulting in high levels of teachers' job dissatisfaction. The study also revealed that teachers were blamed for students' indiscipline and were never appreciated for a job well done. This inconsistency by management in addressing issues that affect teachers in the workplace, directly created poor work place environment which influenced the dissatisfaction of teachers. The teachers noted that they were highly dissatisfied and frustrated with the conditions of service within their schools. They spoke scathingly of management teams, whom they said lacked vision, purpose and were ineffective. Vail (2005) indicated that those in leadership had deficiencies which affect the quality of service delivery. Teachers were therefore frustrated by workplace environments created by leadership in schools.

The prevailing professional climate in junior secondary schools had been greatly impoverished as a result of poor workplace environments. The teachers mentioned that work environment created by status of the facility did not give teachers the opportunity to display their talents and skills. When a healthy school environment exists and teacher morale is high, dissatisfaction is low; teachers feel good about their work and at the same time, feel a sense of accomplishment from their job.

The low availability of accommodation in junior secondary schools is an issue that cannot be overlooked as it impacts on teachers' performance of their duties and their relationships as



they are made to share two bed-roomed houses. The result confirms that teachers have serious reservations concerning their accommodation and the state of the houses they are accommodated in. They feel that they are not given any descent accommodation and even when they raise concerns about the unavailability and the state of accommodation availed to them, nobody listens or takes them serious. What this means is that the level to which a teacher perceived that accommodation is available significantly influenced their level of job dissatisfaction. It can be concluded that according to teachers' perception, the higher the availability of accommodation, the lower the level of teachers' job dissatisfaction tend to be. The Revised National Policy on Education (Republic of Botswana, 1994) indicated that the Ministry of Education had made a commitment to provide teachers with adequate staff house. This seems to be a dream that never came true as teachers share accommodation and others are renting accommodation outside the institution. The teachers mentioned that shortage of staff houses had caused conflicts in the school, as teachers were unwilling to share two-bedroom houses. Though teachers appreciate the financial constraints experienced by the government, they felt that government had made a commitment and it would be satisfying for teachers if it was fulfilled. Teachers have commented upon the false economy of not building and maintaining assets appropriately and describe the process as demolition by neglect.

## Conclusions

In conclusion the study has discovered that serious deficiencies in school buildings greatly influence the teacher level of job dissatisfaction, thus affecting their performance and productivity. It also discovered that teachers were experiencing problems with the facilities in which they work and are accommodated in as reflected by the results. There is high level of dissatisfaction among teachers with the conditions of their schools and not surprisingly dissatisfaction is much high in junior secondary schools. There is a mounting evidence that many characteristics of the physical environments of the school can and do affect attitudes, behaviors and academic achievements of teachers and students. It is no secret that of late there is a crisis in school buildings. The bottom-line is that a well designed and well maintained facility can, and do, make a difference in students lives and in teachers motivation and morale.

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