

Music Teachers' Job Satisfaction During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed the nature of the music teacher's job. The aim of the study is to determine music teachers' job satisfaction on four study scales – emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation. The following research questions were raised: RQ1: At what level do music teachers assess each of the study scales that describe job satisfaction? RQ2: Is there a statistically significant correlation between music teachers' job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic and their emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation? RQ3: Is there a statistically significant difference in the levels of job satisfaction between music teachers who work only in comprehensive schools and those who have additional work in other music-related educational institutions? A questionnaire was created to achieve the study aim, in which the respondents ($N = 73$) had to assess the importance of various factors that affect the music teacher's job satisfaction on a Likert scale from one to four points. The study involved music teachers working in comprehensive schools and other educational institutions where music is acquired. The study results were reflected in four scales: (1) emotional well-being scale, (2) social involvement scale, (3) self-expression scale, and (4) achievement orientation scale.

The study revealed that the respondents rated all job satisfaction scales at a moderate level. Music teachers' job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic is most affected by the inability to control school activities and the lack of positive emotions in daily life. The results do not show a significant difference in job satisfaction levels during the COVID-19 pandemic between music teachers who work only at comprehensive schools and those who have additional work in other music-related schools.

Keywords: achievement orientation, COVID-19 pandemic, emotional well-being, job satisfaction, music teachers, self-expression, social involvement

Introduction

A music teacher helps students discover their musical potential through singing, playing musical instruments and other musical activities. Therefore, a music teacher's job requires creativity, special knowledge and skills. Making music during the learning process needs a variety of sound tools and other material and technical means. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the specifics of a music teacher's job, as several conditions had to be considered in daily work. At first, the learning process took place remotely or online for several months. Secondly, at a time when it was possible to teach and learn face-to-face, it was necessary to distance yourself, wear face masks, ventilate classrooms, sanitize hands and various items, as well as observe other epidemiological requirements to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 infection at school. That had a significant impact on the pedagogical work of the music teacher. It was a challenge to provide singing in a face-to-face music lesson because of wearing face masks, and synchronous joint singing by several students when learning online was impossible due to different speeds and quality of the internet connections. Playing sound tools in music lessons also required extra work from the teacher, as they needed to be disinfected after each use. However, it was hard to provide all students with the necessary sound tools during learning music online. The various restrictions and additional responsibilities of teaching music face-to-face and online have changed the daily work of a music teacher beyond recognition. That may have affected the job satisfaction of music teachers. Therefore, **the aim of this study** was to determine music teachers' job satisfaction on four study scales – emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation.

Theoretical Background

The level of job satisfaction indicates the teachers' attitude towards their profession and the daily work they perform. Job satisfaction is associated with the positive emotional state of the music teacher and results from evaluating the daily work routine. Researchers recognize that job satisfaction is an essential requirement for teacher performance (Baluyos et al., 2019), it is related to individual work results (Iqbal et al., 2016; Ismail & Meran, 2021), enhances the status of the teaching profession (Toropova et al., 2020) and is decisive for employees' well-being and retention in the career (Dicke et al., 2019). Donald Boyd and his colleagues also point out that job dissatisfaction remains one of the main factors influencing teachers' decisions to leave the school (Boyd et al., 2011). Teachers' mobility and willingness to change workplaces are influenced by several factors such as administrative support, discipline enforcement, school safety, small class sizes, and access to high-quality professional development (Viano et al., 2020). It is essential for teachers to be mostly satisfied with the work they do.

Job satisfaction is examined in the context of gender, age, school type and location. Researchers do not have a clear research-based opinion on this issue. For example, a study by Michael Galanakis & Evmorfia Alamani (2020) determined that gender does not affect job stress and satisfaction. A similar result was obtained by Bhagat Singh's study (2016), which found that primary school teachers' job satisfaction was independent of gender. However, Ramazan Sak (2018) revealed that males have lower job satisfaction than females by studying the impact of gender differences on job satisfaction among preschool teachers. The opposite results were obtained by Volkan Burak Kibici (2021), who examined the job satisfaction of music teachers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and found out that men have a higher level of job satisfaction than women. There is also a difference in research-based evidence on job satisfaction among teachers who work in public or private schools. One study determined that teachers who teach in private schools are more satisfied with their work than public school teachers (Sungu et al., 2014), but another study found the opposite results (Kibici, 2021). Several studies have also revealed that younger teachers have higher job satisfaction than older teachers (McNeill, 2016; Kibici, 2021). However, one of the studies found that music teachers with more work experience who work in music schools are more satisfied with their work than their colleagues with less work experience (Sabljarić et al., 2020). Huan Wang (2022) and colleagues report disturbing indicators for the level of job satisfaction among teachers in rural schools in China. In Latvia, teachers' job satisfaction does not depend on the location and the type of the school. In the early and late stages of careers, teachers are more satisfied with their work than in the middle of their working life (Geske et al., 2015). The contradictory results obtained in previous studies are determined by the differences in the sample size of the study, the location of the study, and the chosen research methodology.

To a large extent, the teachers' job satisfaction depends on the head of the educational institution and the school administration, who have an essential responsibility to take care of teachers. What should school administrations do to keep teachers satisfied with their work? Studies examining the effects of leadership style on teacher job satisfaction found that teachers are happier with their jobs when a democratic leadership style is used (Ch et al., 2017; Munir & Iqbal, 2018). The leadership approach of the school principal and the decision-making style determined job satisfaction among teachers (Hui et al., 2013). Researchers recommend that school principals have to decrease the supervision of teachers and give them more autonomy (Baluyos et al., 2019). Autonomy-supportive school leadership is associated with less stress and emotional exhaustion among teachers (Collie, 2021). School administration should make efforts to meet the needs of music teachers by allowing them to do what they like, including using innovative teaching methods and creativity (Feng & Angeline, 2011). That means ensuring

the professional freedom of teachers. Teachers need daily support, especially where they do not feel safe. In several studies, there is conflicting evidence about the effect of the emotional and informational support of school administration for teachers on job satisfaction. For example, Ramazan Ertürk (2021) determined in his research that supportive behaviours of school administrators can positively affect teachers' job satisfaction and subjective well-being. If school administrators provide moderate emotional and informational support for their teachers, they will also have decent job satisfaction. However, Beau Hannah (2021) proved that the job satisfaction of teachers who work in a school for the first year is not significantly affected by receiving emotional support or informational support. The researchers believe that the principals should improve the school climate because it is connected with teachers' job satisfaction (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). There is a significant correlation between teachers' perceptions of school climate and job satisfaction. More attention should be paid to the school as an educational organization that ensures a healthy work climate and the necessary conditions for the teacher's professional development (Yuan & Chayanuvat, 2022). The school administration can influence the teacher's job satisfaction by choosing a management style and creating an appropriate school climate, as well as by providing the necessary support and at the same time ensuring autonomy.

Job satisfaction is multidimensional, which includes several aspects. That is proven by the results obtained in several studies where job satisfaction is analysed in the context of various influencing factors. For example, Gene Lynn Forsythe (2016) found out that job satisfaction refers to teachers' experiences and the respect and support they receive from others, which, in turn, creates a sense that the teacher can change something. Anna Toropova (2020) and her colleagues identified a significant relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and factors affecting schools' working conditions, such as work stress, teacher cooperation and perception of student discipline at school. On the other hand, Mahmut Polatcan and Ramazan Cansoy (2019) believe that a strong school culture with support, trust, justice and communication are the decisive factors that ensure teacher job satisfaction. The job satisfaction of music teachers is negatively affected by the low value of music in the school community, the dissonance between professional goals and community values, and isolation as an unseen barrier to student-centred goals (Padron, 2020). In developing countries, the autocratic management style, mistrust, non-transparent system, work-life imbalance, ineffective learning environment and lack of resources are the main factors that influence teachers' job dissatisfaction (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). In the last ten years, many studies (Kibici, 2021; McNeill, 2016; Sabljar et al., 2020; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020; Wang et al., 2022) have been conducted on teachers' job satisfaction, but only some have analysed teachers' job satisfaction in the context of the restrictions and additional duties imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

The following research questions were raised: RQ1: At what level do music teachers assess each of the study scales that describe job satisfaction? RQ2: Is there a statistically significant correlation between music teachers' job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic and their emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation? RQ3: Is there a statistically significant difference in the levels of job satisfaction between music teachers who work only in comprehensive schools and those who have additional work in other music-related educational institutions?

The study involved 73 ($N = 73$) music teachers from all over Latvia, 97,3% are women, and only 2,7% are men. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 51 and 60, and their work experience was mostly more than 20 years (see Table 1). All respondents teach music in comprehensive schools, and 17.8% of them work in other music-related educational institutions at the same time, for example, music schools or interest education centres.

Table 1. Age and work experience profile of online questionnaire respondents

	Years	f(%)
Age	21–30	8.2
	31–40	4.1
	41–50	24.7
	51–60	46.6
	Age above 60 years	16.4
Work experience	0–1	0.0
	2–5	6.8
	6–10	2.7
	11–20	5.5
	20 and above	84.9

The study took place in the period from March 2021 to May 2021. Music teachers had to evaluate their job satisfaction during the last year between March 2020 and March 2021.

A questionnaire was created for data collection and structured in two parts. The general part of the questionnaire marked respondents' age, work experience and type of schools. The conceptual part of the questionnaire consisted of 12 statements that the respondents should rate on a four-point Likert scale. The statements were grouped into four study scales: emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation. The questionnaire also included open-ended questions in which the respondents justified their opinion on each statement.

The questionnaire was in digital format and sent to music teachers from all over Latvia. It was anonymous, and the results were analysed as a whole. Participation in the study was voluntary.

The quantitative data were analysed using the SPSS 22 statistical analysis computer program. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for each study scale to examine the reliability and validity of the statements included in the questionnaire. The following descriptive statistics were calculated to identify at what level music teachers evaluate each of the study scales that described job satisfaction: Mean (*M*), Standard Deviation (*SD*), Standard Error of Mean (*SE*), Kurtosis and Skewness values. The following measurements are used to determine music teachers' job satisfaction levels on each scale. The average value from 1.00 to 2.00 points is a low level of job satisfaction, 2.01 to 3.00 points is a moderate level, and 3.01 to 4.00 points is a high level of job satisfaction. The One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and One Sample t-Test were calculated to understand if there is a significant difference between the scores of respondents and the central tendency. The correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between two or more variables. This study defines the relationship between music teachers' job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic and their emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation. The non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine the difference in job satisfaction between music teachers who work only at comprehensive schools and those who have additional work in other music-related schools.

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Results

The Cronbach's alpha test on the scales of emotional well-being ($\alpha = .797$) and social involvement ($\alpha = .700$) proves good internal consistency, but the scales of self-expression ($\alpha = .675$) and achievement orientation ($\alpha = .638$) indicate an acceptable level of reliability.

The music teachers have rated their emotional well-being ($M = 2.53$, $SD = .620$; $D(73) = .160$, $p = .000$), social involvement ($M = 2.68$, $SD = .68$; $D(73) = .115$, $p = .019$), self-expression ($M = 2.57$, $SD = .591$; $D(73) = .111$, $p = .027$) and achievement orientation ($M = 2.75$, $SD = .598$; $D(73) = .167$, $p = .000$) at a moderate level. The emotional well-being scale has the lowest average ratings of the four study scales (see Table 2). This scale determined how often music teachers experienced positive emotions and good moods and were

less exposed to negative stress during the last year. Such assessment could be related to the restrictions and the additional duties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the music teachers rated their emotional well-being at a moderate level and lower than the other study scales.

The highest average ratings are for the research scale, which determined achievement orientation. This research scale identified the self-efficacy of music teachers, the ability to achieve the goals set in the music lesson and the desire to improve themselves professionally. This scale had the highest average ratings compared to the other scales of the study because the music teachers in the last year, to be able to implement new pedagogical approaches in the teaching process, had to improve themselves professionally a lot and regularly ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .986$; $t = 30.945$, $p = .000$). The respondents rated the professional development at a high level.

Table 2. Results of the study scales

Study scales	Mean	SD	SE	Kurtosis	Skewness
Emotional well-being	2.53	.620	.072	.058	-.379
Social involvement	2.68	.683	.080	-.023	-.057
Self-expression	2.57	.591	.069	.319	-.124
Achievement orientation	2.75	.598	.070	.694	-.552

The social involvement scale revealed the opinion of music teachers about their activity in the school team, belonging to the team members and building positive relationships. During the COVID-19 pandemic, music teachers tried to maintain the desire to build positive relationships with colleagues ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .100$; $t = 20.425$, $p = .000$) and belonging to the school team ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .101$; $t = 22.507$, $p = .000$), however, they rated the opportunity to be active lower ($M = 2.58$, $SD = .102$; $t = 17.904$, $p = .000$) because they often lacked authenticity and physical presence.

The scale of the self-expression determined the opinion of music teachers about autonomy, the possibility of controlling ongoing activities and being creative. The music teachers' opinion about creative self-expression is very contradictory, so in this study scale, the opportunity to be creative ($M = 2.73$, $SD = .975$; $t = 25.904$, $p = .000$) was rated even slightly higher than the opportunity to be autonomous ($M = 2.54$, $SD = .915$; $t = 30.397$, $p = .000$) or control ongoing activities ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .106$; $t = 13.849$, $p = .003$).

The study found (see Table 3) that music teachers' job satisfaction is closely related to their emotional well-being ($r = .611$, $p < 0.01$), social involvement ($r = .550$, $p < 0.01$), self-expression ($r = .630$, $p < 0.01$) and achievement orientation ($r = .585$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Correlation between music teachers' job satisfaction and study scales

Study scales	Music Teachers' Job Satisfaction	
Emotional well-being	Pearson Correlation	.611
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	73
Social involvement	Pearson Correlation	.550
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	73
Self-expression	Pearson Correlation	.630
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	73
Achievement orientation	Pearson Correlation	.585
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	73

The results of the study show that the emotional well-being and social involvement of teachers who teach music only in comprehensive schools ($M = 2.69$, $SD = .658$; $M = 2.58$, $SD = .557$) are slightly higher than teachers who teach music at the same time in other educational institutions ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .814$; $M = 2.53$, $SD = .752$). A Mann-Whitney test indicated that this difference was not statistically significant ($U = 324.00$, $z = -.968$, $p = .333$; $U = 409.50$, $z = .285$, $p = .776$). However, the teachers who work in comprehensive schools and other music-related educational institutions have rated the self-expression scale slightly higher ($M = 2.79$, $SD = .788$) than those who work only in general education schools ($M = 2.74$, $SD = .556$). A Mann-Whitney test indicated that this difference was not statistically significant ($U = 406.50$, $z = .242$, $p = .809$). The biggest difference in the opinions of music teachers was regarding the scale that characterized achievement orientation. Teachers who teach music in comprehensive schools and at the same time in other educational institutions ($M = 2.69$, $SD = .854$) were more achievement-oriented than teachers who work only in comprehensive schools. However, even on this study scale, a Mann-Whitney test indicated that the difference was not statistically significant ($U = 347.00$, $z = -.633$, $p = .527$).

Conclusion and Discussion

The first research question aimed to determine at what level music teachers evaluate their emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation. The study revealed that the respondents rated all study scales at moderate levels. However, the highest scores are for the scale that determined the achievement orientation of music teachers and the lowest characterized

emotional well-being. It indicates that even under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, music teachers are trying to maintain efficiency and improve themselves professionally, but the current situation affects their emotional well-being. Feeling good and focusing on achievements are essential for music teachers to be satisfied with their work. Volkan Burak Kibici's study also found a negative relationship between COVID-19 anxiety and the job satisfaction of music teachers (Kibici, 2021). Teachers show a high level of stress related to the new teaching demands created by the current situation in education (Pressley, 2021). Studies have also determined that efficacy is associated with greater job satisfaction among teachers and reduced wellness to leave the teaching profession (Grissom, 2011). The teachers who have more access to professional development and are more effective also have a higher level of job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2020; Hderson, 2022). The relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction has been demonstrated in several studies (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Katsantonis, 2021; Türker & Kahraman, 2021; Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019).

Social involvement and self-expression are essential factors for music teachers' job satisfaction. Social involvement and especially the level of music teachers' activity in the school have been affected by the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some music teachers are more receptive to change and thus see the challenges as opportunities to be creative. At the same time, other music teachers believe that restrictions prevent them from being creative. Music teachers have a greater desire for autonomy and the ability to control the activities taking place in the school. Moreover, several studies have shown that job satisfaction is influenced by relationships and cooperation with colleagues and students (Adams, 2016; Olsen & Huang, 2019; Lopes & Oliveira, 2020), participation in decision-making (Bahtilla & Hui, 2021; Ch et al., 2017; Taiwo & Ogunlade, 2020) and autonomy (Chew, 2016).

The second research question aimed to reveal if there is a statistically significant relationship between music teachers' job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic and their emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation. The study found that music teachers' job satisfaction is correlated positively with all four study scales – emotional well-being, social involvement, self-expression and achievement orientation.

The third research question determined if there is a statistically significant difference in the levels of job satisfaction between music teachers who work only in comprehensive schools and those who have additional work in other music-related educational institutions. Although emotional well-being and social involvement were rated slightly higher by music teachers who work only in comprehensive schools than by those who at the same time teach music in other educational institutions, this difference was not statistically significant. In addition, there was no statistically significant difference in respondents' opinions

regarding self-expression and achievement orientation, even if these study scales were rated slightly higher by music teachers who teach music in both comprehensive schools and other educational institutions.

In a further study, it is necessary to explore whether the opinion of music teachers on job satisfaction using the same study scales will change after lifting all COVID-19 restrictions.

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