

Exploring the Effects of Socio-Political Factors on Teacher Job Satisfaction and Retention in Afghanistan Case Study: Afghan High Private-Public School

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Abstract

The lack of sustainable policies, traditional norms, and unbalanced social attitudes in Afghanistan are major socio-political challenges that significantly undermine teacher job satisfaction and retention in Afghanistan. Thus, this research aims to examine the significant role of socio-political factors in teacher job satisfaction and retention in Afghanistan among public and private schools. This study used mixed methods, and since a huge number of teachers, data were collected randomly from 300 professional educators based on an online survey. In this research, data were analysed descriptively and inferentially with the aid of SPSS.

The findings show that the socio-political factors significantly predicted teachers' job satisfaction and their leaving ($\text{Exp}(B)=0.386$, $p=0.022$). This study highlights the critical role of socio-political factors. This study emphasises social awareness and reform of government policies towards teachers. Thus, this study recommends supportive policies, job stability, the establishment of professional development programs, and the appreciation of teachers' efforts by society.

Keywords: socio-political factors; teacher job satisfaction and retention; educational policy

1. Introduction

The education system in Afghanistan has always been tied to the country's traditional policies and norms. As the country has witnessed the instability of various political systems, teachers in the country's education system have consistently suffered due to socio-political factors such as political instability and a traditional view of education. In addition, socio-political changes in the country have presented teachers with serious challenges, such as low salaries and wages, deprivation of political support, lack of community support, and indigenous norms that constantly threaten teacher retention. Therefore, socio-political factors in Afghanistan significantly reduce the increase in job satisfaction and retention of teachers.

The existing literature shows that social and political factors play an important role in the job satisfaction

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and staying of teachers in their positions. In addition, SPFs lead to shaping teachers' decisions, commitments, and goals within educational institutions. The main factors that affect the life aspect of teachers regarding their position in educational institutions involve social and political factors. Social factors include environmental culture, social support, reward, promotion, students' treatment, teachers' recognition, employee relations, and so on. Political factors included government policies, political stability, budget allocation for teachers, changing educational programs, etc.

This research deals with the significant effects of social-political factors and measures how these factors can influence the satisfaction and retention of teachers in private and public schools in Afghanistan. This research aims to understand job satisfaction and retention levels among teachers.

As we all know, in this modern era and the use of technologies, especially AI in research and studies, has caused growth and progress in research dimensions such as information gathering and analysis. Despite all this progress in research, there are gaps and limitations in the existing studies, such as insufficient explanations, limited focus on teachers' job satisfaction and retention, and heavy reliance on quantitative methods. In addition, few researchers studied socio-political influences among teachers, while most of them investigated social and political factors as a sub-content.

By providing valuable insights, this research helps to understand the significant effects of social and political factors on teachers, to know about the perceptions and experiences of teachers regarding their current job, to provide practical solutions, and to discover major challenges and suggestions regarding the negative effects of these factors on the satisfaction and retention of teachers in Afghanistan. Ultimately, the main purpose of this research is to enhance the level of teachers' satisfaction, contribute to developing the educational system, and reduce the turnover and attrition of teachers in Afghanistan.

2. Literature Review

Job satisfaction and retention are two of the most important parts of human resource practices that help organisations achieve their goals, create efficiency, productivity, employee well-being, strong work commitment among employees, and create a strong relationship between employees and the organisation. Therefore, this study has examined the important role of socio-political factors on job satisfaction and retention of teachers. Therefore, this study tried to employ a literature review approach from the latest and most valuable sources to understand the concepts of job satisfaction, retention, and the impact of socio-political factors on educators in educational institutions.

a. Job Satisfaction

According to Meier and Spector (2015), job satisfaction covers all over an individual, whether he/she is happy or unhappy with their job, and the factors that influence their feelings about their position are the individual's characteristics and individual traits. Based on Čulibrk et al. (2018), job satisfaction is

an important part of HR practices, and the factors that most affect and enhance job satisfaction are employee recognition, motivation, employee characteristics, work conditions, and organisational policies. In a study that exhibits positive relationships between job satisfaction and employee performance. In addition, the type of job and level of position are the elements that determine satisfaction rates. Furthermore, implementing strategies and effective programs, building supportive environments, opportunities promotion, employee engagement, and regular evaluation of satisfaction level are the factors that shape satisfaction level (Inayat & Jahanzeb Khan, 2021).

According to Basumallick (2021), job satisfaction is the level of feelings and happiness of employees with their current position by considering job status, relationships between colleagues, and policies of industries. In addition, the elements that contribute to enhancing job satisfaction level involve employee recognition, challenging solutions, making a convenient workplace, better salaries, developing career opportunities, and stable work-life balance.

Quality of Work Life (QWL), positive work conditions, and regular evaluation of employee satisfaction enhance job satisfaction and employee performance (Suci et al., 2022). According to Noori (2023), by comparison between public and private schools, the most effective factors were salary, job security, environmental support, colleagues' relationships, educational policies, and work conditions. Job satisfaction is subjective and related to employees within organisations regarding their feelings that are relevant to their work, and the elements that contribute to their happiness fulfilment are compensation, colleagues' attitudes, work environment, expectations, and rewards that make employees' satisfaction within organisations (Baxi et al., 2024). School climate is an important social factor that significantly impacts the job satisfaction of teachers. In addition, demographic factors are another element that makes teachers' experiences (Noori et al., 2024).

At the end, the existing study related to job satisfaction and the factors that impact and shape satisfaction among employees in industries show gaps and limitations such as limited understanding with insufficient exploration, cross-sectional study, which is inadequate to understand a subject comprehensively, complex measuring, lack of cultural diversity considerations, irrelevant studies to explore job satisfaction, heavy reliance on quantitative research methods, personal reporting that makes biases, specific geographical scope.

b. Employee Retention

Based on Gorde and Ulhas Gorde (2019), define retention as an important and valuable asset among employees within organisations and suggest that employee engagement in the workplace and the implementation of modern strategies of retention are significantly needed to align with organisations. Krishnamoorthy and Aisha (2022) Highlights the retention like this: Human resources are an important asset of organizations; thus, employees' retention is a need for staying employees in organizations and recommends positive relationships, building trust, opportunities promotion, positive job security, employee recognition, post-retirement, supervisory support, financial rewards, and destroying employees'

pressure to enhance employee retention. Another research that emphasises applying HR practices and retention strategies in organisations by considering cultural differences to enhance employee retention. In addition, work-life balance, improving talents, regular communication with employees, and developing employee expectations lead to employees remaining in their current position (Wahyudi et al., 2023). According to studies, the elements that effectively enhance employee retention involve applying various retention strategies and positive relationships between employees and employers (Neena, Dinesh, and Bhat, 2023). Job satisfaction is an important reason that leads to teachers staying within their current position and reducing turnover rates. Therefore, there is a specific relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover that, by improving job satisfaction, sufficient compensation, and a positive environment, we will be able to control employee turnover and enhance education quality (Khalid Khawrin and Shibzada, 2023). Another study with almost the same concepts by Khawrin and Sahibzada (2023) has mentioned that job satisfaction with job security is the main cause to shape employees' turnover. Furthermore, recognition of employees' exceptions, training and development promotion opportunities, and keeping a stable work-life balance are significant factors that enhance job satisfaction rates, employees' retention rates, and high job security. The existing research shows few weaknesses, including a small sample size, using only a descriptive approach, self-reporting, a lack of longitudinal study, and relying on a quantitative approach.

c. Impact of Socio-Political Factors on Teacher Job Satisfaction and Retention

Based on analysis by Khazaei et al. (2016), it indicates that socio-political factors—including a lack of respect for teachers from the public, cultural perceptions that conflict with educational values, and insufficient government support—negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction and retention. Furthermore, higher education levels, increased income, and the availability of resources within institutions significantly enhance teacher job satisfaction. According to Hopkins et al. (2019), socio-political factors (SPF) are critical elements that contribute to increased job satisfaction and teacher retention within educational institutions. Evidence shows that various factors such as environmental conditions, supportive management, and the creation of mutual trust between teachers and school leadership contribute to teacher retention and increase. Meanwhile, various other factors such as participation in decision-making, educational school policies, and budget allocation also indirectly promote teacher satisfaction and retention. A study that highlights the importance of teacher retention has examined political factors on teacher retention. In this study, factors such as government educational policies, leadership style, social support, and government accountability significantly affect teacher job satisfaction and retention (Akah-Jen et al., 2022). Similarly, in another study, socio-cultural factors such as collective support and cultural acceptance significantly lead to reduced emotional exhaustion, increased employee job satisfaction, and improved well-being in the organisation (Garmendia et al., 2023). Socio-political factors, including institutional support and educational policies, significantly

influence teachers' job satisfaction and retention. Teachers' job satisfaction is closely linked to their passion for pedagogy and their professional success among well-educated individuals (Li and Wang, 2022). Specifically, socio-political elements such as educational policies and accountability measures have a considerable impact on teacher satisfaction and retention. While supportive environments and opportunities for advancement have a minimal effect on professional quality, teachers' high expectations regarding student behaviour and motivation can lead to increased attrition rates and decreased job satisfaction (Hanks and Davies, 2020). The work conditions, family dynamics (especially having children), positive attitude, stress level, and employee behaviours are critical elements that affect job satisfaction (Montuori et al., 2022). Leadership style is a political factor that contributes to enhancing job satisfaction. Thus, job satisfaction leads to employee retention, employee promotion, developing work conditions, improving employee morale, and ultimately, enhancing organisational performance. In addition, social factors such as work conditions, opportunity promotion, pay, job characteristics, and self-efficacy impact job satisfaction (Katua Ngui, 2023).

In a study by Anglum et al. (2023), various socio-political factors that affect teacher retention were identified, including government unresponsiveness, societal ideologies, prejudices, and traditional attitudes. Thus, these factors increase the level of teacher deprivation in schools of education and contribute to their departure from the profession. Moreover, the research reveals ineffective relationships between public policies and teacher retention, as well as significant correlations between teacher retention and school accountability policies (Bryan, 2024). In the above, existing studies that were relevant to socio-political factors impact teacher satisfaction and retention exhibits the weak points need to be solved via researcher in their future research such as own-reported, limited generalizability, missing out of mechanisms that run correlation between social factors and teacher job satisfaction, small sample size, relying in quantitative approach, inadequate exploration of long-term impacts on teachers' attrition with running policies in education institutions and unclearing about socio-political dimensions that importantly impact teacher satisfaction and retention, inadequate address of teacher diversity perceptions and teacher experiences, lack of discussion into social factors that impact job satisfaction and retention in the long term, inadequate focus on teacher, lack of investigation into cultural diversity that impacts job satisfaction and retention, convenience sampling method, heavy reliance only on survey method which is insufficient to gather comprehensive data about teachers' experiences and perception, lack of consideration of local opinions that importantly influence teacher satisfaction and retention, and pervasive social policy recognition that impacts teacher retention.

3. Hypothesis

H₁: There are no significant differences in job satisfaction levels among public and private school teachers in Afghanistan

H₂: Socio-political factors have a significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction.

H₃: Teachers' consideration of leaving their teaching positions is significantly predicted by their job satisfaction scores and socio-political pressures.

4. Research Methodology

This research used a mixed method, both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, to obtain data with a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding their current position or those who had teaching experiences in an Afghan school. All, the online survey was conducted with a structured questionnaire that was distributed through email, Messenger, and WhatsApp groups. Questionnaires were divided into six sections that include section one and two: demographic information such as name, age, gender, education level, teaching experiences, current position, and type of school; section three involves a few questions about teachers' satisfaction; section four includes a few questions about the critical impact of socio-political factors on teachers; section five includes some questions about influences factors that lead teacher retention within their position; and ultimately, there is an appreciation text for those who have given time to mention their perceptions, opinions, and recommendations. The targeted population was High private and public-school teachers, generally across all schools in Afghanistan. Based on a huge population of teachers, I used random sampling to collect data from 500 teachers as a sample that all had an equal chance to answer the questionnaire. But only 300 teachers responded to share their experiences and perspectives.

5. Conceptual Model

The graph below shows how socio-political factors affect teachers in public and private higher education institutions in Afghanistan. The graph shows that socio-political factors significantly affect teacher job satisfaction and retention.

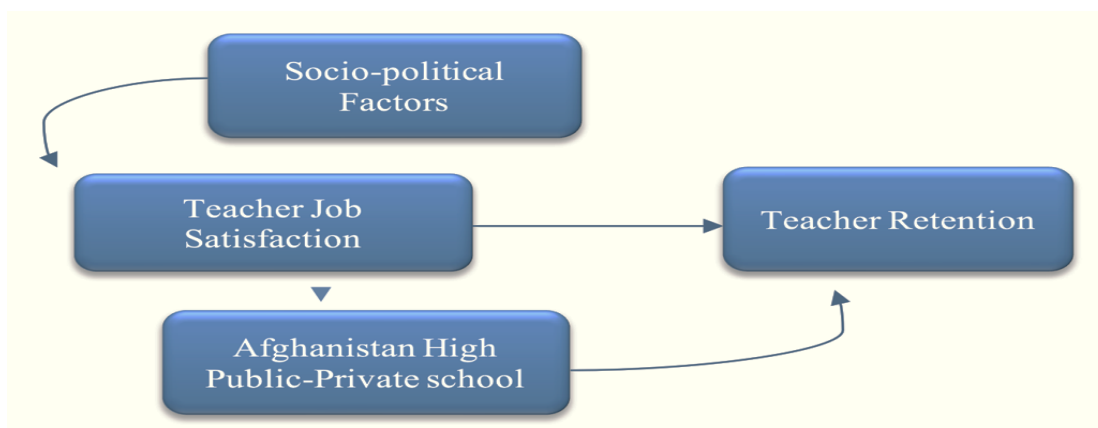


Figure 1

In this diagram, socio-political factors such as salary, government support, security and politics directly shape the level of teacher job satisfaction. Moreover, teacher retention is directly proportional to job satisfaction, wherein if job satisfaction increases, then so does the former. In this diagram, the variables are linked to each other: geographical region Afghanistan, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. It shows how geographical conditions affect job satisfaction and teacher retention in educational institutions. Thus, geographical factors in Afghanistan, including political instability, traditional norms, lack of social support, and lack of access to facilities, substantially undermine job satisfaction and retention.

6. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the IBM SPSS software program. The statistical analysis was carried out in three steps. In the first step, the descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe the frequencies of gender, type of school, and level of teacher experiences to summarise basic information of the statistical sections. In the second step, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the level of job satisfaction among school teachers. Ultimately, in the third step, a binary logistic regression was used to predict the probability of pressures of socio-political factors on teacher retention.

Descriptive Statistics

Reporting Frequencies

The sample consisted of 139 (66.8 %) male and 68 (32.7%) female respondents (N= 208 %).

Table 1: As Statement 1: Table of frequency for gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	141	67.8%
Female	67	32.2%

Table 2: As Statement 2: Table of frequency for school type

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Public	109	52.4%
Private	99	47.6%

Reporting summary statistics

The average experiences of teachers was 14.55 (SD=139.572).

Table 3: As a statement 3: Table of experiences based on year

	Mean	SD
Teachers' Experiences	14.55	139.572
Teachers Age	33.83	11.311

H₁: There are no significant differences in job satisfaction levels among public and private school teachers.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the level of job satisfaction among school teachers for male and female school teachers. There was no significant difference between the mean scores of the Males and Females ($t(206) = -1.686$, $P=0.093$), with the Male mean ($M= 3.02$, $SD= 1.13$) being higher than the Female mean ($M= 3.30$, $SD= 1.030$). The magnitude of the differences in means (mean difference) was not significant either. Hence, H₁ was not supported.

Difference in satisfaction level between male and female school teachers.

Levene's Test for

Equality of

Variances

T-test for equality of means

Table 4:

NO		mean	SD	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Differences	Std. Error Difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
											Lower	Upper
DV	G1	3.02	1.143	0.040	0.842	-1.686	206	0.047	-0.227	0.164	-0.601	0.047
	G2	3.30	1.030									

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the level of job satisfaction among school teachers for public and private schools. Scores were not significantly different ($t(206) = 0.853$, $P=0.395$) between Public and Private, with Public's mean score ($M= 3.17$, $SD= 1.148$) being higher/lower than Private's ($M= 3.04$, $SD= 1.074$). Because the magnitude of the differences between the means (0.132, 95% CI: -0.173 to 0.437) was quite small, H₁ had no support.

Difference in satisfaction level between Public and Private school teachers.

Levene's Test for

Equality of

Variances

T-test for equality of means

Table 5:

NO		mean	SD	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Differences	Std. Error Difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
											Lower	Upper
DV	School 1	3.17	1.148	3.368	0.068	0.853	206	0.395	1.132	0.155	-0.173	0.0437
	School 2	3.04	1.074									

H₂: Socio-political factors are significantly correlated with teachers' job satisfaction

Reporting Pearson correlation

Pearson product correlation of Socio-political (SP) factors and job satisfaction (JS) among teachers was found to be a very low positive correlation and statistically significant ($r=.242$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, H₁ was supported. This shows that higher socio-political pressures would lead to lower satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis

Table 6:

	PS	JS	RM	TR	SEP	RT
PS	1					
JS	.242	1				
RM	.299	.319	1			
TR	.222	.351	.340	1		
SEP	.382	.156	.159	.052	1	
RT	.385	.338	.387	.405	.405	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

H₃: Teachers' consideration of leaving their teaching positions is significantly predicted by their job satisfaction scores and socio-political pressures.

Reporting Logistic Regression

In the table, logistic regression analysis indicated the probability of teacher consideration leaving their position significantly predicted by socio-political pressures (factors) under a 61.4% pressure level. According to the results of this table, the overall job satisfaction ($\text{Exp (B)} = 0.722$, $P = 0.168$) was a significant predictor. Resource availability ($\text{Exp (B)} = 0.044$, $P = 0.817$) was not significantly related to job satisfaction. Thus, there is no significant power based on the teachers being in their position.

A Logistic Regression to predict teachers' probability considering in leaving their job.

Table 7:

The predictor variables	BE	SE	P-Value	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B)
Job Satisfaction	-0.325	0.178	0.068	0.722	(0.509, 1.025)
Resources Satisfaction	0.044	0.192	0.817	1.045	(0.718, 1.522)
Socio-Political Pressure=Yes	0.044	0.415	0.022	0.386	(0.171, 0.872)

Note: Odds ratios (Exp (B)) show the probability of considering leaving their position. $P\text{-value} < 0.05 = \text{significance}$.

By analysing Exp (B) (odds ratio) as a logistic regression result, I found the impact of job satisfaction and socio-political factors on teacher likelihood prediction in staying in their position. It shows that socio-

political factor is a more significant predictor than job satisfaction and resource satisfaction that influence teachers' decisions to stay in their position.

7. Government's Role in Teacher Job Satisfaction and Retention

The teacher recommendations that I collected from the online survey indicate governments can play a crucial role in enhancing teachers' fulfilment, satisfaction, retention, and shape all other aspects of their lives. The participants from both public and private schools emphasised the supportive role of the government regarding teachers and the education system in Afghanistan. The policymakers with a positive policy and strategies for financial stability can improve the education system, teachers' skills, teachers' knowledge, and the ability of teachers.

The government should create a safe environment with all basic infrastructure and resources, such as internet access, teaching equipment, and reduced class size. In improving teachers' quality, the governments should prepare opportunities such as scholarships for teachers, preparing training and workshops, familiarising them with modern technologies for teaching,

having partnerships with international educational institutions to exchange teachers' abilities, sponsoring teachers attending educational conferences and seminars, and providing grants for classroom projects.

In encouraging teachers to have a good performance and remain in their positions, the governments should regularly recognize teachers' efforts, specifically women, and consider them as an important asset of the communities and provide both monetary and non-monetary incentives such as life insurance, competitive salaries and benefits, improve retirement policy, trips opportunities, limit tax, rewards, compensation, and retention bonuses.

Building positive work conditions by governments supporting such as establishing teachers' unions and encouraging teachers to be collaborative, and forcing the population to respect and support teachers, and building a transparent with accountable system between teachers and government. The government enhances academic freedom and teacher autonomy in decision-making, considering cultural diversity among teachers.

The government should support the teachers who are in rural or underserved areas because they do not have access to facilities and equipment. Some of the participants recommended giving more chances for the young generation to teach and enhance students' abilities. As currently there is an education restriction with the education institution doors closed for girls and women in Afghanistan, the teachers requested to open all levels of education for girls and women in public and private institutions. Untimely, the governments should support all aspects of teachers' lives.

8. Results

After statistical analysis and interpretation, the following tips are the findings:

- There was no significant difference between male and female teachers in their satisfaction status. The comparison shows that the mean values of variables between males and females are at approximately equal rates in their satisfaction level.
- There was no significant and distinct difference between public and private school teachers. T-test analysis was used to compare the differences between public and private school teachers.
- There is a very low positive correlation between socio-political factors and job satisfaction. It means that by increasing socio-political pressures satisfaction level will decrease, but very low.
- There is a significant prediction likelihood of teachers staying in their position due to socio-political pressures, while job satisfaction was not a significant predictor.

In data analysis, which was conducted using the IBM SPSS statistical analysis program, shows an equal satisfaction level among both genders, male and female. It was the same between public and private schools. In this analysis, socio-political factors impact teachers' satisfaction level, but to a very low extent. At the end, socio-political factors were the main reason for teacher staying within their positions.

9. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on detailed data analysis, Socio-political factors significantly impact teachers' retention within their professional positions, while teachers' job satisfaction is not affected to this extent. In addition, the level of satisfaction and retention was not different between male and female, or public and private schools. The existing studies that I have reviewed had a significant impact on job satisfaction and retention, particularly among teachers. But the level of impact is different in high, moderate, and low to minimal.

The socio-political factors' role is vital in all aspects of teachers' lives that can shape and change their performance. Therefore, this is the government and people's responsibility to play a positive and well-being role in teachers.

In existing studies, weaknesses and challenges include limited exploration, lack of in-depth investigations, lack of longitudinal studies, reliance on quantitative methods only, failure to consider cultural and social differences, failure to provide effective recommendations and solutions for policy mechanisms on teacher support, and lack of comprehensive and detailed research specifically on socio-political factors affecting teachers.

In this research, participants of chosen from public and private school teachers, and were supposed to assess their job satisfaction and retention level, and the impacts of socio-political factors on teachers' satisfaction and retention. The result shows teachers continuously face challenges like a lack of job security, cultural conflicts, and a lack of government support. The analysis shows there are no important differences in the satisfaction level of teachers' gender and type of school. Additionally, socio-political factors significantly predict teachers' remaining in their positions, while teachers' satisfaction is not significantly affected by socio-political factors.

By investigating the critical role of socio-political factors, this research contributes to providing valuable insights and recommendations for governments, policymakers, and all educational stakeholders to consider these issues to improve and support their education systems, especially teachers. Thus, this research highlights all the challenges teachers always face. By offering a practical solution to maintain teacher satisfaction and diminish attrition rates, this study emphasised the tips, such as government supportive policies and professional opportunities to improve teacher skills, abilities, and knowledge. This study has recommended long-term and across all different regions studies in Afghanistan to deeper understand the socio-political effects in this country.

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