

## **A Study of the Relationship Between Teachers' Perceptions Towards Professional Development and their Job Satisfaction at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar**

Khun Htike Aung Po<sup>1</sup>

Master of Education (Educational Administration) Student, Graduate School of Human Sciences,  
Assumption University, Huamak, Bangkok 10240, Thailand  
khunhtikeaungpo20@gmail.com

Watana Vinitwatanakhun<sup>2</sup>

Program Director, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University, Huamak,  
Bangkok 10240, Thailand  
watan54@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

This research sought to study the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards professional development and their job satisfaction at Naung Taung Monastic School. The research objectives were (1) to identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards professional development at the selected school, (2) to identify the level of teachers' job satisfaction at the selected school and (3) to determine the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards professional development and their job satisfaction at the selected school. There were two sets of questionnaires: teachers' professional development questionnaire and teachers' job satisfaction questionnaire. A response rate of 100% was achieved. These were analyzed by *frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation* and *Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient*. The findings discovered that in order to become a more sustainable school, teachers from Naung Taung Monastic School were recommended to participate more in development programs in order to enhance their pedagogy knowledge, promote their academic level and improve their ability. Additionally, teachers were recommended to apply a variety of teaching methods to encourage greater student participation. The school leader was recommended to understand how important teachers' job satisfaction is to professional development as it can lead to improved student achievement and school success. The school leader was recommended to provide personal growth opportunities to emphasize the school vision and enhance the utilization of technology in the school.

*Keywords:* professional development, job satisfaction, Myanmar.

### **Introduction**

The school is a foundation for people to improve society, politics and economics because it is a crucial stage for citizens' as well as being a means to help people improve their ability to face real-world challenges (Ekinici & Acar, 2019). Teachers are a role model in educational development - because they determine the lessons to teach children, to share knowledge and experiences, in order to guide their students' future (Lucilio, 2009). Teachers helped the development of students in many ways, through many factors, by using their knowledge and their experiences. This interaction would guide them in shaping their community, and nation, because knowledge makes a society stronger. Consequently, teachers need to shoulder this vital responsibility properly throughout their professional life. To become effective teachers, schools need to respond to the needs of

enhancing teacher competencies, abilities and knowledge regarding professional development (Lowden, 2003).

According to Ekinici and Acar (2019), professional development was an ongoing learning activity that could maintain a school's success, teachers' job satisfaction and student achievement. Ekinici and Acar (2019) stated that enhancing teachers' knowledge and their skills would affect student outcomes. So, upgrading the teachers' quality through professional development programs would have a significant effect in developed countries. Similarly, job satisfaction was equally important to professional development because employees showed their experience, emotions, cognitions and behavior during their job performance. The definition of job satisfaction stated that the range of definite satisfaction and dissatisfaction is based on the teachers' experiences with the various dimensions of the job (Herzberg, 1966).

In Myanmar, every citizen believed in improving society for the good of many, in order to become talented and qualified individuals. Education was an essential key that opens the door to a better community. Therefore, it could not be denied that everyone needs education (MEC, 2016). Concerning the development of the education system, the Ministry of Education in Myanmar provides education with a vision to developing a learning society for the purpose of facing the challenges of the knowledge-age.

In Myanmar, there are three types of basic education, namely: private schools, monastic schools and government schools (MOE, 2013). Particularly in Shan State, the monks established the monastic schools, which run under the Ministry of Regional Affairs using the government curriculum and supported by supplementary education for orphans, and needy children, in order to fill the gaps in the education system (MEC, 2016).

The schools provide free lodging and free education to students. The reason why there was an establishment of monastic schools was to provide education to children who do not have a chance to continue their education (MOE, 2013). When children did not receive a suitable opportunity, they were likely to become street kids and/or irresponsible adults (MEC, 2016). However, the monastic schools are not supported by the government and could only survive by the support of their local community donors. So, the teachers were recruited from their local area. Some of these teachers had graduated, while some did not, so the teachers had a deficient level of education with wide gaps in education. Some teachers had very little training on how to teach and so they applied knowledge that they gained within the traditional teaching system that had taught them when they were students (MEC, 2016). Therefore, professional development could enhance idea-creation and knowledge-development for these teachers, especially in rural areas. By supporting professional development programs, teachers would be satisfied in their job (Whitehead, 2006). Ulla (2018) reported that teachers, who were satisfied in their job, were eager to study new teaching methods and upgrade their skills and methods of classroom management. Teachers, who were not satisfied in their job, would not be active in participation in any kind of professional development activity. Consequently, the level of teachers' job satisfaction was also a necessary factor compared to professional development, which has the implication of influencing the quality of teaching.

## Research Objectives

The following research objectives were used for this study, they are as follows:

1. To identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards professional development at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar.
2. To identify the level of teachers' job satisfaction at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar.
3. To determine the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards professional development and their job satisfaction at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar.

## Literature review

In Guskey's (2003) Theory of Professional Development, three common characteristics of professional development are considered. The characteristics of professional development for teachers are 1) *to provide time and resources*, 2) *to promote collaboration* and 3) *to enhance teachers' content and instructional knowledge*.

*Time and resource* was the first essential characteristic of professional development, which measured the presence of time when teachers share their knowledge and improve their teaching methods, new approaches, and new ideas in order to increase their skills and contribute to their students.

Another factor was *collaboration*. When teachers collaborate, they could offer to share their ideas freely, as well as share their teaching approaches, which could be more effective. Collaboration in teaching could achieve various benefits such as observing partners' classroom teaching, peer dialogue, action research and other activities among co-workers. Teamwork and collaboration played a vital role in professional development (Richardson, 2014), although teachers would work individually on development growth, working together would upgrade the learning process and assist the school to achieve their goals (Wu, 2015).

The last important characteristic was *enhancement of teachers' content and instructional knowledge*. While teachers are fully expected to know their subjects intimately, they should also be able to explain well, and help students to improve their understanding thoroughly during each lesson. Enhancing teachers' knowledge would benefit teachers on higher-order thinking skills within the subject in order to be effective.

Herzberg discovered that job satisfaction has two distinct dimensions. One-dimension called *hygiene factors* consists of the environmental surroundings of the job and includes extrinsic aspects such as salary, interpersonal relations, security, working conditions, and status. The second dimension of job satisfaction is called *motivator factors* that are related to the job tasks, job content, and involve intrinsic aspects such as personal growth and advancement, responsibility, work itself, and recognition for achievement.

Herzberg proposed that satisfying motivation factors can lead to job satisfaction, but the absence of these factors cannot lead to dissatisfaction with the job. Nevertheless, satisfying hygiene factors cannot increase job satisfaction, but their absence can cause job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966).

Motivator factors were related to the content of the job, such as the individual relationship between their job, and cause feelings of growth and personal development (Pinder, 1984 as cited in Islam & Ali, 2013). According to Flores and Subervi (2013), motivator factors are fundamental to job satisfaction while hygiene factors tend to be a predicament of job dissatisfaction.

## Conceptual Framework

The researcher aimed to investigate the level of teachers' perceptions of professional development and job satisfaction and to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards professional development and their job satisfaction at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar.

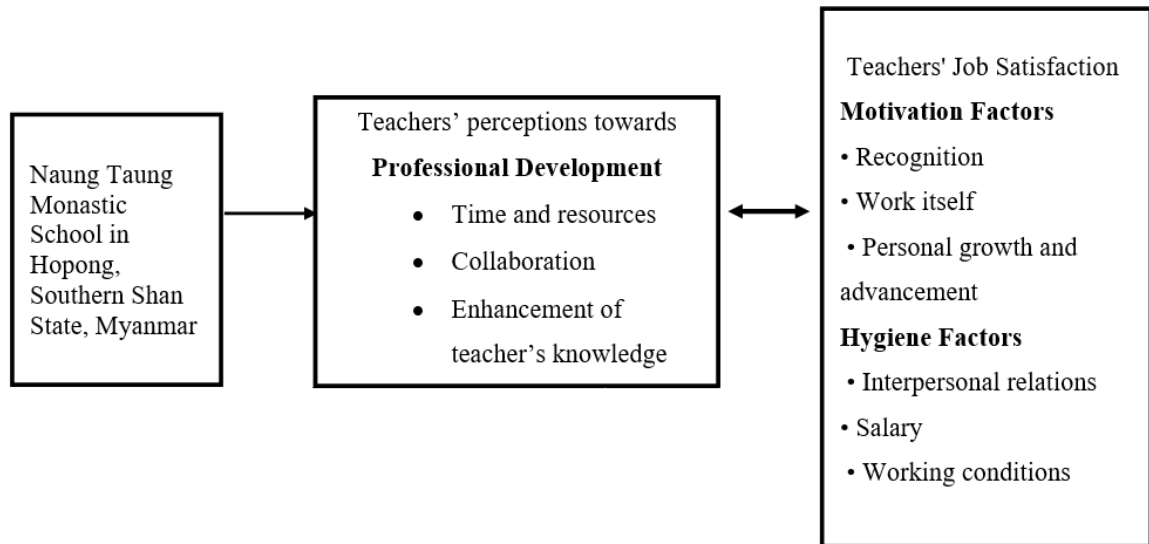


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of this study

## Research Methodology

This study attempted to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of professional development and job satisfaction in the academic year of 2019-2020 at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar.

The research was designed as quantitative research and the researcher utilized a statistical software program to analyze the data according to the selected variables. *Mean* and *Standard Deviation* were used to identify the level of teachers' professional development and job satisfaction, while *Pearson Correlation r* was used to determine the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards professional development and job satisfaction. Therefore, the researcher applied both a survey method, as well as descriptive inferential statistics to accomplish the research objectives.

There were two reasons why the researcher chose Naung Taung Monastic School. First, the school was the largest monastic school in Shan State, so for this purpose it fulfills the development needs for the youth especially from the rural area.

Second, compared with other schools, this school was popular among students who would pass the matriculation exam in grade 11 with distinction and honors each year.

Third, the school also has a large number of teachers. All teachers in the population were requested to participate in the study. Therefore, the researcher conducted this study during the academic year 2019-2020 based on the perception of 75 full time teachers at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar. This study only surveyed teachers who were teaching in the selected school, so the school leader and other staff were not included in this study.

The researcher used a questionnaire for this research, which was translated into Burmese. The questionnaire had three parts; as described below:

*Part 1: Personal Information Questionnaire*

This first part was a researcher-constructed questionnaire which consisted of categorized questions to collect information about the selected personal information; demographic data of the teachers. The structure of the questionnaire for personal information was as follows: 1) *Gender*, 2) *Age*, 3) *Education background* and 4) *working experience*.

*Part 2: Teachers' professional development*

The researcher adopted the professional development questionnaire developed by Meagher (2011). In this part, the question involved 16 items for three components of professional development : (1) *Time and Resources include items numbers 1-6*, (2) *Collaboration include items number 7-10* and (3) *Enhance of teacher's knowledge items include numbers 11-16*. The researcher used three components, which comprised of 16 survey items to analyze and interpret this study.

*Part 3: Teachers' job satisfaction*

There were 22 questions in the teachers' job satisfaction questionnaire. These questions were adopted from a previous researcher, Mai (2013), who completed a study on the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and teachers' teaching performance in three basic high schools in Myitkyina, Kachin State, Myanmar. Altogether, there were 22 questions in the questionnaire.

In the job satisfaction parts, the questions were *Recognition item numbers 1-4*, *Work itself item numbers 5-8*, *Advancement and Personal Growth item numbers 9-12*, *Interpersonal Relations item numbers 13-17*, *Salary item numbers 18-20*, *Work condition item numbers 21-22*.

**Results**

*The following are the results for research objective one.*

Table 1: Summary of Means and Standard deviation of teachers' perceptions of professional development (n=75)

Professional Development	Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
Time and Resources	3.56	.576	High
Collaboration	3.95	.562	High
Enhancement of Teacher's knowledge	3.76	.601	High
Total	3.76	.473	High

The overall total of the mean score was 3.76 in the range scale of 3.51-4.50. It meant that the level of teachers' perceptions towards professional development from Naung Taung Monastic School was "high" as Table 1 implied. The research finding showed that each of the total mean scores of professional development: the mean score of time and resources was 3.56, the mean score of collaboration had 3.95 and the mean score of enhancement of teacher's knowledge was 3.76.

Based on the criteria of interpretation, teachers' perceptions towards professional development in the three components was deemed *high*. It can be seen that teachers had a

high level of collaboration, and the enhancement of teacher's knowledge was also high; but time and resources was still the lowest comparatively.

***The following are the results for research objective two.***

Table 2 showed that the mean score and standard deviation for the subscale of teachers' job satisfaction among 75 full time teachers at the selected school. It can be seen that the level of teachers' job satisfaction toward motivation factors (recognition, work itself and personal growth and advancement) was regarded as 'high'. The level of teachers' job satisfaction towards hygiene factors (interpersonal relations, salary, working conditions) was also 'high'.

*Table 2. Summary of Mean and Standard Deviations of teachers' job satisfaction (n=75)*

Job Satisfaction : Motivation Factors		Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
1	Recognition	3.71	.713	High
2	Work itself	3.97	.429	High
3	Personal growth and advancement	3.76	.683	High
	Total	3.81	.480	High
Job Satisfaction : Hygiene Factors		Mean	Standard Deviations	Interpretation
4	Interpersonal relations	3.73	.547	High
5	Salary	3.24	.618	Moderate
6	Working conditions	3.75	.831	High
	Total	3.57	.504	High
	Job Satisfaction Overall	3.69	.455	High

The above table showed that the overall total mean score of teachers' job satisfaction was 3.69 and it was in the range of 3.51-4.50. According to the criteria of the interpretation, the level of teachers' perceptions towards job satisfaction from Naung Taung Monastic School was high. The research findings stated that the area of work itself had the highest mean score of 3.97, while salary had the lowest mean score of 3.24 among six components. Overall, it illustrated that teachers' were more satisfied with motivation factors with a mean score of 3.81 than their hygiene factors with a mean score of 3.57 on teachers' job satisfaction as Table 2 implied.

***The following are the results for research objective three.***

Research objective three was to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards professional development and their job satisfaction at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar.

In Table 3, since Pearson Correlation  $r$  was .533 and Sig. was .001, which is smaller than .05; the relationship between teachers' professional development and job satisfaction was seen as moderately positive. It showed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards professional development and job satisfaction.

Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the research hypothesis: “There is a significant relationship between teachers’ perception towards professional development and their job satisfaction at Naung Taung Monastic School in Hopong, Southern Shan State, Myanmar.”

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between teachers’ perceptions towards professional development and their job satisfaction (n=75)

		Teachers’ Job Satisfaction	Conclusion
Teachers’ perceptions towards professional development	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	.533**	There is a significant relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	

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

## Discussion

This research identified a number of interesting correlations. For research objective one, the total mean score of teachers’ perceptions towards professional development was high according to the findings, which showed that teachers were satisfied with professional development activities that they attended in the school. Teachers also believed that the programs enhanced their pedagogical knowledge and saw this as beneficial for their teaching career, and the school leaders emphasized professional development activities appropriately for the teachers, as shown in the results.

Regarding research objective two, teachers perceived working conditions at a high level in the selected school. Even though the school received government support, teachers were involved in the physical conditions of the work environment and the overall aspect of the school organization structures and policies. Nevertheless, school leaders should emphasize making the environment conducive for teachers to teach as well as provide teaching aid and other materials sufficiently based on the school’s budget. In addition, the total mean score of teachers’ job satisfaction at the selected school was interpreted as high according to the data interpretation standards in this study.

With regards to job satisfaction, teachers were more satisfied with motivation factors than hygiene factors at Naung Taung Monastic School. Even though hygiene factors were not the source of satisfaction, school leaders are recommended to create an environment in which teachers are satisfied with their job.

The results of research objective three showed that teachers’ professional development and job satisfaction were moderately positive at Naung Taung Monastic School. Consequently, teachers at the selected school perceived *professional development* and *job satisfaction* as important factors in the school, and these were beneficial for the future needs related to everyone in the field of education. As such, the implication for school leaders or monks could be illustrated from this study in that each students’ grade level should consider various skills when deciding the professional development activities (for instance, considering teachers’ job satisfaction). Therefore, when school leaders or monks want to develop their teachers’ job satisfaction, they should fulfill development programs for teachers completely.

## Conclusion

Although there is no prior studies similar to the context of this study in which to track data, this study found that teachers had a good relationship with their school leaders, and colleagues, and they also had a sense of belonging in their workplace. This perhaps illustrates that a developing country has the necessary resources to undertake proper professional development and engagement in adequate job satisfaction.

When school leaders arrange development activities, they should take great care when considering the most convenient location for teachers, since some teachers demonstrated that development activities outside of the school took them away from their students, and they also did not want to have the challenge of re-locating. This can have negative implications on student growth since, if teachers are inconvenienced by professional development; they are unlikely to take advantage of these opportunities and students are – in the long term - likely to suffer academically. This is evidenced by the data which showed that *having enough time and resources* was necessary for effective professional development because it was imperative for teachers to practice new teaching methods, as well as to enlarge their knowledge and skills (Guskey, 2003).

Further to having an appropriate location for professional development activities, Sallee (2011) stated that effective professional development required both sufficient time as well as be organized, structured, and focused on pedagogy as well as on content. Naturally, teachers recognized that they preferred professional development when it was physically near to them. Thus, it is recommended to ensure that professional development is located at a suitable place, as well as time and it should be structured and organized.

Collaboration was a central point identified as well. Teachers recognized that they needed to be part of a team to improve professional development as it illustrated the lowest mean score from the respondents in this component. One of the possible reasons could be teachers who have more experience in teaching, or were expert teachers, should lead the discussion or share their best practice skills to those who struggle in the classroom (such as novice teachers). So, novice teachers would have more confidence with sharing their experience and being part of the professional development team. Thus, expert teachers should emphasize supporting novice teachers in order to be more engaged with a team of professional developers, because collaboration improved novice teachers by benefiting from the expert teachers' experiences, such through sharing ideas to solve problems, enhancing interaction between colleagues and making new roles for teachers to be a team leader, teacher trainer and critical friend. Adagiri (2014) also proposed that *Collaboration* was central to teachers' professional development and it was necessary for teachers to enhance their abilities for problem solving. By collaborating throughout the process of teaching and learning, the teacher could adopt a wider range of learning activities in the classroom and could facilitate more by sharing their knowledge, and encourage more active learning among the teachers. For this purpose, it is recommended that school leaders provide sufficient collaboration tasks and opportunities for teachers throughout the school.

With regards to *recognition, work itself, and personal growth and advancement*, teachers at the selected school received the recognition for their achievement in their job. The school leaders believed that when the teachers did something good, they took the time to recognize teachers' work immediately, because, acknowledging their good job could enhance teachers' satisfaction. However, it is recommended that teachers' should receive a higher salary, as well as be given appropriate recognition and enhanced opportunities to develop their personal growth.



What is very important is that teachers at the selected school perceived *professional development* and *job satisfaction* as important factors in the school, and these were beneficial for the future needs related to everyone in the field of education.

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