



Exploring the Predictors of Job Satisfaction among Arab ESL Teachers

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 06 March 2023

Received in revised form: 25 April 2023

Accepted: 27 April 2023

DOI: 10.14689/ejer.2022.102.001

Keywords

Teacher retention, Self-efficacy, Classroom goal structures, Professional development, Kuwait

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Low teacher retention rates have been an ongoing issue facing the education sector worldwide, and low job satisfaction is viewed as the reason for teacher shortage. This study examines the factors influencing Arab ESL public school teachers' (N=579) job satisfaction and the extent to which their English language proficiency, teaching self-efficacy, and classroom goal structures impact their job satisfaction levels. It further investigated ESL teachers' experiences. **Method:** This study employed mixed methods research design. The questionnaire for data collection was adapted from previous studies, and data was gathered using purposive sampling. Correlations, one-way ANOVA, and stepwise hierarchical regression were used for analysis. Three ESL teachers with high job satisfaction scores were interviewed with interview protocol based on the initial quantitative results. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. **Findings:** The

questionnaire results showed classroom goal structures were the strongest predictor of teachers' job satisfaction with efficacy in student engagement significantly related to teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, qualitative interviews revealed a practical list of strategies, classroom goals, and engagement methods driving teachers' satisfaction. **Implications and Future Research:** The study's findings show that increasing teachers' job satisfaction levels and retention rates can be accomplished by using mastery and performance classroom goal structures, like competitive activities, and focusing on student growth, not grades. The results are beneficial for future research and policy makers, who might benefit by creating a professional development plan for increasing teacher job satisfaction.

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Introduction

Kuwait, located in Western Asia, is home to approximately four million people. 70% of the population consists of non-national expatriates, while 32% consists of Kuwaiti nationals (Central Statistics Bureau, 2015). The 1940 discovery of oil dramatically increased the number of employment opportunities available to expatriates (Dashti, 2015). Despite the fact that Arabic is still the official language and English is considered an unofficial second language, this population demographic has since made Kuwait linguistically diverse (Tryzna & Al Sharoufi, 2017). Since English has evolved into a lingua franca, it is now much simpler for native Arabic speakers and the growing population of expatriates to communicate with one another (Crystal, 2003). As a result, a demand was placed on public school ESL instructors by institutions of higher education, and organizations responsible for the professional workforce to better teach the centralized English curriculum (Winokur & Sperandio, 2017). This obligation has been placed on the shoulders of English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in public schools, but relatively little research has been conducted in this area.

Arab Times (2023) highlights a teacher shortage in Kuwait, which has prompted significant concerns regarding the retention rates of the nation's teaching staff. In 2021, the Ministry of Education in Kuwait (MOE, 2021) reported that there were 74,326 teachers in the country; however, between 2009 and 2019, more than 17,000 teachers resigned. Teachers across the globe are leaving the profession because they lack job satisfaction (JS) (e.g., Liu and Ramsey (2008)). In order to increase teacher retention, those responsible for formulating educational policy must investigate the factors that influence ESL teachers' JS. Moreover, a person's sense of self-efficacy (SE) is their self-assurance regarding their capacity to achieve a desired result. Those who have a higher score on SE are likely to also have a higher JS because they have a higher level of confidence in their own abilities as educators. In the field of education, a significant amount of focus has been placed on investigating the relationship that exists between SE and JS.

Arab teachers of ESL face a variety of unique challenges. The teaching of English in Kuwait presents its own set of challenges. Due to these factors, it is possible that their JS will suffer, which will have repercussions not only for their health but also for their overall productivity. It is therefore extremely important to determine the factors that contribute to such high rates of JS among Kuwait's ESL teachers. The primary objective of this study was to investigate whether there is a correlation between ESL educators in Kuwait's perceptions of their English language proficiency (ELP), levels of self-efficacy (SE), the organization of their classroom's goal structures (CGS), and levels of job satisfaction (JS). The teachers' "self-perceived ELP" in this study refers to teachers' own opinions and assessments of their own English language skills. It is premised in this study that teachers' JS can get better if they have more confidence in their own linguistic abilities, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will feel successful in their professional lives.

The findings of this study can be used to develop professional development (PD) programmes that are more effective and better able to meet the needs of English as Second Language (ESL) teachers, thereby contributing to the cultivation and preservation of the teaching profession.

Literature Review

There is no dearth of studies on the connection between ESL teachers' perceptions of their own English proficiency and instances of self-efficacy and job satisfaction. [Zheng and Yu \(2018\)](#), for instance, discovered that Chinese ESL teachers' estimation of their own level of English proficiency has a positive correlation with the judgment of their students' language skills. In more recent studies, keeping the trend alive, a few other studies ([Liu, Zhang, & Greenier, 2022](#); [Liu, Xu, & Stronge, 2018](#); [Wang et al., 2021](#); [Xia, Wang, & Zhang, 2022](#); [Zhang, 2022](#)) arrived at a similar conclusion after conducting research into the relationship between ESL teachers' perceptions of their own English proficiency and the prevalence of JS in China. Likewise, [Alkandari \(2023\)](#), in his study based on Kuwait, found that the ESL teachers' JS had a positive correlation with their students' perceptions of their own English proficiency.

[Park, Lee, and Kim \(2018\)](#), in their study of Korean ESL teachers, discovered a significant positive correlation between SE and JS. According to their findings, JS plays a big role in teachers' retention and enhances a person's sense of self-efficacy (SE) which plays a big role in achieving the desired results. [Warsi and Khurshid \(2022\)](#), in a study conducted in the same vein, discovered that, among Pakistani ESL teachers, SE had a positive correlation with JS the higher a score on SE, the greater is the likelihood to have a higher JS. In the Kuwaiti context, [Alkandari \(2023\)](#) found a positive correlation between SE and JS among ESL teachers. According to the findings, increased levels of self-esteem were associated with increased levels of confidence in one's ability to successfully perform one's job, which in turn leads to increased levels of job satisfaction (JS).

Interestingly, teachers' levels of JS also have been found to be linked with a variety of factors, one of which is the organization of classroom goal structures. While referring to classroom goals, it is important to discover the strategies that educators employ to assist students in structuring their educational goals as well as working towards achieving those goals. Two of the most common strategies to classroom goals are mastery-oriented and performance-oriented. Mastery-oriented goal structures, opposed to performance-oriented goal structures, put more emphasis on the development of one's skills and knowledge in relation to the accomplishment of the goals, rather than placing as much of an emphasis on demonstrating one's ability in comparison to others.

[Liu et al. \(2022\)](#) found that a mastery-oriented goal structure is positively related to an ESL instructor's level of job satisfaction (JS) in the Chinese context. [Deng et al. \(2020\)](#), in a similar study conducted on elementary school teachers in China, found a high level of JS among teachers who focused on mastery of their goals. These teachers prioritize their students' learning and development over their grades to enjoy higher levels of JS. [Zhang et al. \(2019\)](#) found the Chinese college English instructors focusing on mastering their classrooms goals and feeling more satisfied to see improvement signs in their students. [Warsi and Khurshid \(2022\)](#) also discovered a positive correlation between the presence of mastery-oriented goal structures and JS among ESL teachers in Pakistan. On the contrary, in Brazilian elementary school teachers, [Akdere and Egan \(2020\)](#) found a negative correlation between performance-oriented goal structures and JS. The reason behind this negative correlation was that teachers who worked in performance-oriented classrooms experienced greater stress and pressure to perform, which led to lower levels of JS. In the context of Kuwait, [Al Kharusi and Al-Mekhlafi \(2019\)](#) found setting goals based on student mastery associated with higher levels of job satisfaction among ESL educators.

Based on the findings of the aforementioned, educators are required to foster their

pupils' intellectual development rather than merely assisting them in improving their academic performance or standardized test scores. Only then these educators can achieve greater job satisfaction and experience greater self-efficacy. To examine these perspectives, this study framed the following three questions:

1. How do non-native English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in Kuwait evaluate their own English skills, the goals that they set for their classrooms, and the pedagogical approaches that they use in their classrooms?
2. Among Kuwait's non-native ESL educators, how much do factors like gender and years of teaching experience moderate the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy, ELP, classroom goal structures, and JS levels?
3. How do ESL educators' perspectives on student engagement (SE), mastery-oriented (MA), and performance-oriented (PA) classroom goal structures play in their overall JS?

To find out answers to these questions and considering the arguments of past studies, a few hypotheses were also framed to establish a link between teachers' self-perceptions of their linguistic competence and their sense of professional fulfillment.

Hypothesis Development

Factors such as JS can have a substantial impact on employee motivation, retention, and productivity. It is the extent to which a person feels overall satisfaction and fulfillment in the role they play at work. Numerous factors have been shown to be associated with JS. These elements include English Language Proficiency, self-efficacy, compensation, job security, work-life balance, and the nature of the work itself. Numerous studies have demonstrated that an employee's JS has a positive effect on their health and performance. The following account presents a few hypotheses in the context of ESL teachers' job satisfaction and contextualize with this study.

- ***English Language Proficiency and Job Satisfaction***

The ability to comprehend, speak, read, and write in the English language is what we mean when we refer to English language proficiency (ELP). Influencing a person's level of proficiency are their level of education, the amount of time they have been exposed to the language, and the amount of time they spend using it regularly. ELP is frequently required for effective workplace communication, especially with coworkers, clients, and other stakeholders. A person's level of proficiency can also affect their capacity to comprehend and carry out the responsibilities of their job.

Multiple studies have investigated the relationship between a strong command of the English language and JS. Several of these investigations have concluded that there is a positive relationship between the two factors. For example, a study conducted by [Zhang and Koda \(2014\)](#) found that employees in the hospitality industry who reported higher levels of JS also had higher levels of English proficiency. According to the researchers, this may be due to improved communication with customers and coworkers, as well as greater confidence in one's ability to perform job duties. Similarly, [Kucharska and Erickson \(2019\)](#) conducted a study in which they found that employees in the information technology industry who perceived they to have a higher level of ELP reported higher levels of JS.

According to the findings of the researchers, this trend may be due to the increased opportunities for career advancement and higher pay associated with a strong command

of English in this industry. However, other studies have concluded that there is no significant connection between being able to speak English well and being happy in one's job. For instance, Lakitan, Hidayat, and Herlinda (2012) and Lee et al. (2023) discovered that employees in the education industry in Indonesia did not find their knowledge of the English language to be a significant predictor of their level of JS when compared to other factors. According to the findings of the researchers, this could be because this sector places a significant emphasis on other aspects, such as job security and pay, as compared to other sectors. Overall, while there is some evidence to suggest a positive association between self-perceived ELP and JS, the relationship appears to be complex and may vary depending on the industry and job role.

Other researchers, however, have found no correlation between one's command of the English language and their level of JS (Brezicha et al., 2020). When compared to other factors, Rezai, Namaziandost, and Çakmak (2022) found that English language proficiency (ELP) was not a significant predictor of JS among ESL teachers. The researchers suggest that this is because job security and compensation are given a higher priority in this industry than in others. In sum, while there does appear to be a positive correlation between self-reported English proficiency and happiness on the job, the exact nature of that correlation appears to be complex and may vary considerably across sectors and job functions. The relationship between ELP and JS among ESL educators has received surprisingly little empirical attention (Afshar & Doosti, 2016; Han & Xu, 2020; Wiens et al., 2018). According to a study conducted by Afshar and Doosti (2016) with 64 Iranian secondary EFL teachers, a lack of subject knowledge was a contributing factor to low JS. Wiens et al. (2018) surveyed 609 ESL educators in Niger and found that those with a higher self-perceived level of ELP were happier in their positions. Teachers' levels of ELP have been found to correlate with their levels of JS. This is because teachers who are fluent in English are more likely to engage their students and maintain their enthusiasm for the profession. Based on that, it is hypothesized that:

H1: *Self-perceived English language proficiency will be positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction.*

- **Teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction**

Bandura (1997) introduced the concept of SE, which is defined as an individual's perception of his or her own competence in a given situation. One definition of SE is an individual's belief in their own competence. Researchers have found that educators' perceptions of their own competence have a significant impact on their classroom practices and the results they achieve with their students. Self-confident educators are more likely to employ productive pedagogical practices, offer constructive feedback to their students, and foster an upbeat learning environment. Teachers' SE has been linked to better mental health and greater JS. Confidence in one's own abilities to plan and carry out the steps needed to achieve a goal is what he called "SE" (p. 3). According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), TSE is "the educator's assessment of his or her own competence in achieving the learning outcomes for all students, including the most challenging and unmotivated." This definition comes from the social and emotional learning theory developed by Bandura (SE theory) (Putman, Cash, & Polly, 2022).

A number of studies have investigated the relationship between SE and JS among English teachers (Bai, Wang, & Chai, 2021; Rani & Jain, 2023; Safari, Davaribina, &

Khoshnevis, 2020). These studies almost unanimously concluded that there is a positive relationship between the two factors. For example, Safari et al. (2020) and Bai et al. (2021) found that the level of SE of English teachers was positively correlated with their reported JS. According to the findings of these studies, educators with a high level of SE are more likely to report JS because they are confident in their ability to achieve their goals and positively influence their students. In a study conducted by Won and Chang (2020) and Lee and Hsieh (2019), SE was found to be a significant predictor of JS among Korean English teachers. According to the findings of the study, educators with high levels of SE are better able to manage classroom dynamics and instruct their students effectively. Consequently, they are more likely to report being satisfied with their role as a teacher. Other studies have found that SE can serve as a mediator between other factors and JS among English teachers. These factors include workload and colleague support. For example, Hu et al. (2023) discovered that SE partially mediated the relationship between workload and JS among Taiwanese English teachers. The focus of these researchers was on English teachers in Taiwan. Teachers with high levels of SE may be better able to manage their workload, and as a result, they may report greater JS.

Previous research has demonstrated a link between TSE and teachers' JS, suggesting a mutually beneficial relationship between the two. Caprara et al. (2006) conducted a study with 2,184 Italian teachers and found that teachers' efficacy beliefs affected their JS. Yildirim (2015) studied 306 Turkish elementary and secondary school PE teachers and found that high levels of SE are associated with high levels of JS. Similar results were found by Turkoglu et al. (2018) among a sample of 489 Turkish educators, who also reported a strong and positive correlation between TSE and JS. There is a positive correlation between TSE and JS, which in turn affects teacher retention rates. Based on that, we hypothesize:

H2: *English teachers' self-efficacy will be positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction.*

- ***Mastery vs. performance classroom goal structures and job satisfaction***

Researchers have found that students whose goals are focused on mastery are more likely to succeed in school, feel more confident in their abilities, and remain resilient in the face of adversity. With mastery-oriented goal structures, teachers work to improve their students' abilities and knowledge rather than focusing on students' performance seen in grades or test scores. In contrast, performance-oriented goal structures push educators to prioritize rivalry and comparison by having students focus more on how they measure up to their peers than on their individual development.

The messages communicated within the context of a classroom learning environment that highlight specific goals are called "goal structures" in the Goal Orientation Theory (Anderman & Patrick, 2012). CGS incorporates both Mastery Approaches (MA) and Performance Approaches (PA). Teachers' intentions for their students and the methods they use in the classroom inform these classifications. The CGS with MA is designed to help each student grow and improve throughout the duration of the CGS by adapting the curriculum to their individual needs. Educators who practice MA put less emphasis on students' academic performance. On the other hand, students are more likely to be encouraged to compete with one another in a positive way through PA, and teachers are more likely to highlight students' work as the superior example.

Several studies have investigated how teachers feel about their jobs in relation to the

goals they set for their classrooms. Time and again, these studies have found that a focus on mastery-based goal structures is associated with greater levels of JS. For example, a study by [Deng et al. \(2020\)](#) on elementary school teachers in China found that those who had goal structures focused on mastery were more likely to be happy in their jobs. The study's findings suggest that teachers who prioritize their students' learning and development over their grades or test scores may enjoy higher levels of JS. Similarly, [Zhang et al. \(2019\)](#) found that among Chinese college English instructors, having goal structures focused on mastery was associated favorably with JS. The study suggests that teachers in mastery-based classrooms may feel more satisfied with their work when their students show signs of improvement and development. Researchers have found that setting goals based on student achievement can have a negative effect on teachers' happiness on the job. Among Brazilian elementary school teachers, [Akdere and Egan \(2020\)](#) discovered a negative correlation between performance-oriented goal structures and JS. Scientists examined how different types of goals affected workers' happiness on the job. The study suggests that teachers who work in performance-oriented classrooms are exposed to greater levels of stress and pressure to perform, which may lead to lower levels of JS.

Data showed that when educators set high standards for their students (like MA), they are more invested in their jobs and better able to meet their own intrinsic need for relatedness (e.g., [Berg et al. \(2023\)](#); [Papaioannou and Christodoulidis \(2007\)](#); [Perie and Baker \(1997\)](#); [Skaalvik and Skaalvik \(2011\)](#)). A quantitative study with 2,569 Norwegian educators found that MA positively correlated with JS, while PA negatively correlated with JS ([Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017](#)). However, it is crucial to remember that these studies involved teachers in Western settings. The significance of this setting lies in the fact that research has shown a positive correlation between PA and teachers' JS even in non-Western settings. In both Western and non-Western settings, this correlation has been found to be positive. It appears that in the context of Middle Eastern countries like Kuwait, MA and PA are associated with positive levels of JS, which stands in contrast to the findings from the West. As a result, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H3: *Mastery classroom goal structure and performance classroom goal structure will be positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction.*

Methodology

- **Research design**

The study employed mixed method research design to gain an in-depth understanding of research by employing a methodology for research that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods. The fields of education, medicine, and the social sciences employ this methodology frequently. The mixed methods approach is a powerful tool that can be used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a research question; however, to obtain the desired results, it requires careful consideration of the underlying assumptions and the most appropriate methods to employ. [Creswell and Plano Clark \(2018\)](#) recommend that any study using an explanatory, sequential mixed method research (MMR) design should first gather and analyze quantitative data, followed by qualitative data that expands on the first phase's findings. The quantitative survey data was collected from ESL NNESTs teachers in Kuwait's public schools while the qualitative data was collected through semi-structured follow-up interviews with three teachers from the same

surveyed group.

- **Research sample**

The participants of the study were 579 ESL educators currently working in public schools in Kuwait. In this case, a non-probability sampling method known as "purposeful sampling" was used. Out of the total population, 339 females and 240 males participated in the research. Respondents' ages varied widely, from 22 to 65 (mean = 37.23, standard deviation = 9.58). On average, educators had been in the classroom for just over 13 years (M = 12.71, SD = 8.87). Of the educators polled, 31.8% worked in elementary schools, 36.8% in middle schools, and 31.4% in high schools. Everyone who teaches English to non-native speakers is fluent in Arabic. This study followed the recommendations of Caruth (2013), Watson et al. (2017) and Li et al. (2015) for participant sampling in explanatory sequential MMR design studies. This study received approval from both the IRB and Kuwait's MOE to distribute surveys to ESL teachers. Surveys were returned in sealed blank envelopes with pseudonyms.

For the qualitative phase, three participants from the initial phase of this study with above average and high JS levels were interviewed (Table 1). In accordance with the guidelines for the conduct of qualitative case studies, the sample size should be between three and five participants, which was the ideal range (Creswell, 2002).

Table 1

Participant Information for qualitative phase

Participant (pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Grade Level	JS Score
1.Haya	Female	22	2 years	Primary	M= 4.27
2.Amal	Female	25	1 year	Primary	M= 4.65
3.Enaya	Female	41	20 years	Secondary	M= 4.01

- **Research instrument and procedure:**

First, quantitative data was collected using a 75-item, eight-part anonymous self-report survey. The questionnaires were adopted from: TSE Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001); ELP Scale (Chacón, 2005); CGS Scale (Midgley et al., 2000), and JS scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). These scales were translated into Arabic based on Beaton et al. (2000) cross-cultural translation recommendations to allow for complete comprehension. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the responses.

In the qualitative phase, data was obtained through a survey in addition to three semi-structured telephone interviews (lasting between 35 and 52 minutes each). The interview questions were crafted to reflect the primary statistical takeaways from the initial quantitative stage of the research study. Using eight semi-structured and open-ended questions, the relationship that exists between TSE, ELP, and CGS, as well as teachers' JS was investigated. The interview questions included "What do you hope to accomplish in your role as an ESL instructor?" and "What methods do you employ in your English language classroom?" More information regarding the high or low levels

of TSE, CGS, and JS exhibited by teachers was required to comprehend and triangulate the findings of the primary quantitative stage of this research. The interview was conducted for each single participant, and any necessary adjustments were made afterward. Following that, the interview questions were initially formulated in English, but then they were translated into Arabic to ensure that they were correct.

- **Data analysis**

Following the completion of component analysis in the quantitative phase, the data were subjected to a variety of statistical analyses, including correlations, one-way analysis of variance, and stepwise hierarchical regression (N = 579). In the qualitative phase, prior consent was taken by each interview participant (Glesne, 2016) to have their phone conversations recorded and transcribed verbatim. A manual content analysis with color coding was done using MS Word. The One Drive that the researchers had access to acted as a safe store for all of the data collected and files that were used in the investigation. To protect people's privacy, their names were substituted with pseudonyms. A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted subsequently. In short, the qualitative analysis was completed in the following stages (1) reading and rereading the transcripts in order to become familiar with the data and writing initial memos; (2) using the initial memos and open coding in order to develop codes; (3) identifying final codes with categories in order to create a codebook; (4) searching for themes; and (5) connecting similar and different themes discovered across participant cases.

Results

- **Reliability and validity**

During the quantitative phase, based on the overall sample of 579 teachers, skewness values ranged from 0.044 to 1.993, and kurtosis values ranged from 0.091 to 5.988. Thus, Kline's (2010) assumption had been met. Next, participants (N= 579) were randomly split into two subsamples (Sample A, n= 290 and Sample B, n= 289) (Pohlmann, 2004). Reliability and validity of the survey scales were established using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) through SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics 26, SPSS Inc.) and AMOS software (Arbuckle, 2014) respectively.

The TSE scale (n=24), the ELP scale (n = 12), the CGS scale (n = 9), and the JS scale (n = 7) were all subjected to EFA in Sample A (n = 290). To ensure that each item loaded on the appropriate factor and that there were no excessive cross loadings, the data were extracted using principal component analysis (PCA) with promax rotation (Thompson, 2004). This was done to guarantee that there were no excessive cross loadings. It is recommended in EFA to use a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.60 or higher or higher (Kaiser, 1974), and a probability of 0.05 or less (p 0.05) from Bartlett's test of sphericity is regarded as statistically significant (Snedecor & Cochran, 1989).

- **Confirmatory factor analysis**

Continuing in the quantitative phase, CFA was used to confirm the factor structure that was extracted from EFA by determining which items in Sample B (n = 289) are related to which factors and which are not related to any factors at all. This is done by determining which items in Sample B are related to which factors (Arbuckle, 2014). A comparison of the

various measurement models was carried out using the updated survey measures. We employed the Chi-square test, degrees of freedom, comparative fit index, Tucker-Lewis index, root mean square residual, root mean square error of approximation, and anticipated cross-validation index (ECVI) for the aim of evaluating the fit indices of the updated model. This was done so that we could determine how well the model suited the data. The following table outlines the thresholds that are generally accepted for these fit indices. Validity is determined by a CFI of 0.90 (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). Above 0.9 on the TLI scale is a satisfactory fit. For the SRMR, values lower than .08 is preferable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). If a model's root-mean-squared error (RMSEA) is greater than 0.10, then the model is deemed to be unacceptable (Steiger, 2007) and a value of less than 0.10, or else the model would be rejected (Browne & Cudeck, 1989, 1992). Validity and reliability ratings of the survey scales were established with the assistance of EFA and CFA.

To provide an answer to the first research question, Table 2 uses the Pearson correlation coefficient to investigate the inter-correlations that exist between gender, years of teaching experience, ELP, TSE (IS, CM, SE), CGS (MA, PA), and the teacher's JS and motivation to quit. According to the findings, there is a significant positive correlation between ELP and JS, as well as between gender and JS. Since they are all components of the same construct, the three subdomains of teaching SE (TSE IS, TSE CM, and TSE SE) have high correlations to each other, which was to be expected. There was a positive correlation between all three domains of TSE, including efficacy in IS, efficacy in CM, efficacy in SE, and JS. The significance level for this correlation was significantly lower than .01. Surprisingly, there was not a significant correlation found between the number of years of teaching experience and JS and the other variables. There was a connection between MA, PA, and JS, which indicated a positive correlation.

Table 2

Inter-correlations among Study Variables (n = 579).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	-									
2. Experience	0.31**	-								
3. ELP	.04	.07	-							
4. TSE_IS	.07	.07	.65**	-						
5. TSE_CM	.11*	.05	.53**	.62**	-					
6. TSE_SE	.12**	.03	.61**	.72**	.73**	-				
7. MA	.17**	.03	.53**	.61**	.52**	.63**	-			
8. PA	-.20*	.12**	.22**	.21**	.22**	.32**	.35**	-		
9. JS	.11*	.01	.21**	.21**	.22**	.31**	.32**	.21**	-	
10. MTL	-.12	-.14	-.13	-.11	-.03	-.01	.03	.11*	-.31**	-

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

In order to provide the answer to the second research question, Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, F values, and effect sizes separated according to gender. There was a statistically significant difference between the incidence of TSE (IS, CM, and SE) in females and males (Table 2). There was a significant gender gap among respondents regarding their support for MA, but there was a significant gender gap among respondents regarding their support for

PA. The mean level of JS in men was 3.220 while the mean level of JS in women was 3.41, with a standard deviation of 1.01. Both ELP and motivation to quit did not differ significantly by gender. The effect size guidelines proposed by Cohen (1992) indicate that there is a large effect size between gender differences, TSE in SE, and MA.

Table 3

Results of ANOVA Analyses

	Total (n = 579)		Men (n = 240)		Women (n=339)		F	Partial η^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
ELP	4.34	.64	4.24	.62	4.34	.55	1.62	.002
IS	4.32	.65	4.23	.71	4.32	.53	3.75*	.007
CM	4.27	.73	4.15	.81	4.22	.65	6.12**	.010
SE	4.15	.68	4.01	.71	4.23	.51	9.31**	.018
MA	4.12	.69	4.02	.72	4.24	.51	12.10**	.024
PA	3.98	.89	4.01	.81	3.85	.91	6.11*	.010
JS	3.38	1.24	3.20	1.17	3.41	1.31	4.25*	.008
MTL	3.39	1.18	3.31	1.18	3.31	1.09	0.29	.000

*p<.05; **p<.01

Table 4 displays four hierarchically ordered regression models that were created by sequentially adding the following variables: (1) gender and experience; (2) ELP; (3) TSE (IS, CM, and SE); and (4) CGS. The purpose of this table is to assist us in determining which variable is the best predictor of teachers' JS. In Step 1, the control variables of gender and experience were both entered, and together they accounted for 1% of the variance in JS. When running the first regression model, it was discovered that the gender of the teachers was a significant predictor of JS. After the second entry into the ELP, there was a 4.9% increase in the level of uncertainty. In the second regression model, there was a correlation that was statistically significant between gender and ELP and JS. This correlation was found to exist between males and females. In Step 3, we included the IS, CM, and SE efficacies of TSE in our analysis in order to take into account the remaining 10.8% of JS's variance. Only a significant relationship was found between TSE and JS and SE in the third model, which included all three TSE domains. This model included all three TSE domains. After that, at Step 4, CGS was included (for both MA and PA). In the final model, it was found that MA and PA had significant correlations with JS, which together accounted for 15.1% of the total variance in JS. The correlations between MA and PA were found to be positive (Table 4).

Table 4

Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis:

Step	Variable	B	SE	β	R ² Change	ΔF
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JS						
Step 1	Gender	.23	.08	.13*	.02	2.95*
	Experience	.01	.02	.06		
Step 2	Gender	.22	.08	.12*	.03	22.58**
	Experience	.02	.02	.06		
	ELP	.32	.06	.21**		
Step 3	Gender	.13	.08	.07	.07	13.60**
	Experience	.01	.02	.02		
	ELP	-.02	.08	-.03		
	TSE_IS	.07	.12	.04		
	TSE_CM	.15	.06	.08		
	TSE_SE	.34	.12	.24**		
Step 4	Gender	.10	.07	.06	.04	14.54**
	Experience	.00	.01	-.03		
	ELP	-.13	.08	-.06		
	TSE_IS	-.06	.12	-.05		
	TSE_CM	.13	.08	.06		
	TSE_SE	.21	.13	.11		
	MA	.32	.08	.21**		
	PA	.13	.06	.13**		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

In the second phase of the research, the qualitative phase, three participants who had previously been surveyed and scored very highly on a satisfaction survey were interviewed. This was done to help explain the quantitative findings from the first phase. These in-depth interviews with teachers were conducted with the intention of gaining a greater understanding of the pedagogical practices they employ and the goals they have for their students.

To provide the answer to the third research question which was of qualitative type, it was important to understand the correlation between classroom goal structures that emphasize mastery and performance, on the one hand, and subsequent JS, on the other. As it has been discovered that teachers' high levels of JS are correlated with their ability to effectively engage their students in classroom activities, the purpose of these interviews is also to gain insight into the topic of student engagement. As a result of conducting an analysis on each participant case as well as an analysis across three cases, it was determined that three overarching themes associated with ESL teachers' JS in Kuwaiti public schools were present. These themes were flexible teaching strategies, student growth and progress, and student participation and feedback. In Table 5, you'll find condensed explanations of each overarching theme that emerged from the participant interviews.

Table 5

Qualitative Theme Definitions

Themes	Definition
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Flexible teaching strategies	Teachers are fluid and change their strategies depending on the topic being covered that day in class. This allows the teachers to move with the flow of the classroom. They decide what to do and what materials to use based on a selection of options that were determined with student input.
Students' growth and progress	The growth of one's students as a direct result of one's teaching should be an implicit goal and desire of all teachers throughout the school year.
Students' participation and feedback	Teachers flourish when they receive positive feedback from students about their lessons and when they are able to motivate and engage students in their educational pursuits.

Discussion

Considering the importance of the English language in Kuwait and the role that English language teachers play in helping their students become fluent speakers, it is crucial to learn what factors influence teachers' JS in order to increase retention rates. This mixed-method research study looked at how ELP, TSE, and CGS (both MA and PA) affected JS among ESL educators. Kuwait was the site of the study. Furthermore, the moderating roles of gender and years of teaching experience were explored. Surprisingly, the quantitative results showed that classroom goal structures focusing on mastery and performance were more influential than ELP and TSE in determining ESL teachers' levels of JS. The effectiveness in SE was found to have a significant and positive relationship to JS, out of the three components that make up TSE. Flexible pedagogical approaches, student growth and improvement, and student input and feedback were identified as the three overarching themes. Data analysis revealed specific examples of the strategies, goals, and methods of engagement used by these teachers, all of which were associated with high JS.

TSE (IS, CM, SE), ELP, MA and PA were positively and significantly associated with ESL teachers' JS in Kuwait. Efficacy in SE was found to have the strongest relationship to JS (Table 2), consistent with prior empirical evidence (e.g., [Türkoglu, Cansoy, and Parlar \(2017\)](#)). However, CGS was found to be a major predictor of teachers' JS (Table 4), even more than competence beliefs (i.e., TSE and ELP), in particular, MA more than PA. This finding suggests that the teaching practices employed in the classroom and teachers' goals for their students play a major role in their JS.

Prior research studying the predictors of teachers' JS quantitatively examined how TSE is positively related to JS (e.g., [Caprara et al. \(2006\)](#); [Yıldırım \(2015\)](#)), and how ELP is positively related to JS (e.g., [Wiens et al. \(2018\)](#)); however, they did not investigate TSE, ELP, and CGS together and their relationship to JS. The novel finding of the current study not only examined TSE and ELP, but also examined CGS (MA and PA) and found that it explains more than TSE and ELP. This significant finding is partially consistent with prior empirical evidence. Other studies ([Papaioannou & Christodoulidis, 2007](#); [Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011](#)) reported that only MA was positively associated with teachers' JS. Though, in the Philippines and Hong Kong, [King, McInerney, and Watkins \(2012, 2013\)](#) showed that

both MA and PA were positively associated with teachers' JS. Similarly, situated in the non-Western context of Kuwait, this study found a positive association between MA and JS, and PA and JS. It is the first to report relationships between ELP, TSE, and CGS with JS, especially with ESL teachers. Past research showed contrasting findings that could be attributed to contextual and cultural differences of the countries where the studies took place (Western vs. non-Western). Further, research in non-Western contexts linked MA and PA with teachers' JS; as teachers use MA and PA practices and goals, they will become more satisfied and less likely to quit teaching.

However, this study found no significant differences between teachers' years of experience and JS. However, gender differences do exist with ESL in Kuwait (Table 3). First, female teachers reported higher TSE than male teachers (e.g., Klassen and Chiu (2010)). Second, female teachers endorse MA, while male teachers endorse PA, which might result from different teaching styles, (i.e., MA or PA). Since CGS was found to be a predictor of JS, even more than PA, this explains the finding that female ESL teachers in Kuwait report higher JS than male teachers (Table 3). To gain an in-depth understanding of what MA, PA, and SE strategies teachers use that contribute to their high JS, three highly satisfied teachers were interviewed. The purpose was to find out how to determine what makes English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in Kuwait so happy in their profession. The collected data from three highly satisfied ESL teachers were analyzed thematically, which resulted in the identification of three overarching themes. These themes include adaptability in the classroom, development and progress, and student voice and opinion.

It was found that the first theme, which emphasized adaptable pedagogical approaches, is a major factor in ESL educators' high levels of JS. Teachers who are happy in their positions are more likely to use instructional strategies that promote student input, visual aids, technology, collaboration, and authentic materials in the classroom. Furthermore, these teachers cared more about tracking their students' growth than they did about grading their work. Second, ESL teachers who reported high levels of JS highly valued the growth and improvement of their students. To improve their teaching and find more fulfillments in their careers, these teachers said they focused on mastery-oriented goals, catered to each student's specific needs, and closely tracked each student's progress. They also utilized competitive strategies (e.g., instructional games) as part of employing performance-oriented goals in their classroom. Third, the participation and feedback of students showed that highly effective ESL educators in Kuwait use a wide range of strategies to keep their students actively involved in the learning process. These strategies can help teachers reach students who are struggling or are not making progress in English, as well as those who are resistant to learning the language. In conclusion, the study shows that highly satisfied ESL educators in Kuwait use a wide range of methods to keep their students actively involved in the class. This variety positively contributes to the classroom environment, student outcomes, and teacher satisfaction.

Overall, these results stress the importance of adaptable teaching methods, students' development and progress, and students' participation and feedback in boosting JS among ESL teachers in Kuwait. The following is a summary of what these results mean for ESL teacher training and professional development programs that aim to boost teachers' happiness on the job and their ability to educate their students.

Conclusion, Recommendations and Limitations

The goal of this study was to examine how teachers' own perceptions of their own English proficiency, SE as an English teacher, and the structures of their classroom goals predict how happy they are with their jobs teaching non-native ESL students. To do so, 579 ESL teachers were selected at random and asked to fill out a questionnaire designed to assess their confidence in their ability to teach English, their motivation for using English in the classroom, the goals they set for their students, and their overall happiness with their careers. The study's results indicated that a teacher's use of mastery and performance classroom-oriented goals was a significant predictor of that teacher's happiness on the job with ESL students. Teachers who said they were more comfortable communicating in English also reported being happier in their positions. Based on these results, it seems likely that ESL teachers will be happier with their work and their students' progress if they have a higher opinion of their command of the English language. Teaching self-efficacy in student engagement (SE) in English language teaching was also found to be a strong predictor of JS for ESL educators. Teachers who reported higher levels of JS also reported higher levels of SE in their teaching abilities. Teachers of ESL who have more faith in their own abilities to instruct may be more pleased with their work and more successful in helping their students learn the language.

The goal of the current study was to increase ESL teachers' retention in Kuwait. Both locally and internationally, teacher shortage has become an ongoing problem across all content areas. Learning what works to keep a teacher satisfied at work is therefore crucial since satisfied teachers lead to high achieving students. Hence, policymakers can use the findings of this study to create PD plan aimed at improving the quality of teachers and equipping them with the necessary tools for increasing their JS.

As with other empirical investigations, the present study has some limitations. We encountered an issue with the participant sample. An online survey was used at first, but less than 100 participants completed the survey in full. Therefore, a paper-based survey was the better option and yielded more than 500 participants. Future research can employ the adapted and validated Arabic version of the surveys. Since the teacher shortage is not exclusive to ESL teachers, future research can expand the participant pool to include teachers from other content areas to discover if the predictors of JS are the same across all teachers or are just applicable to ESL teachers.

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