



# Role of Demographic Variables in the Relationship between Work Environment and Job Satisfaction in Damascus Islamic Schools

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## Abstract

This quantitative study examines the moderating effects of demographic variables in the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction of teachers at the Islamic Schools in Damascus, Syria. The problem of this study is that these schools have policy, ideology, principles, objectives, and vision different from those of public and private schools, and not enough is known about the moderating effect of the Demographic Variables on the relationship between factors of work environment and job satisfaction, while this matter has been well established in traditional profit making organizations.

This quantitative correlational design study included two surveys to collect the data from the respondents. The Employee Environment Diagnostic Survey (EEDS) and the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) are used; the demographic items sought data about the teachers' gender, age, highest level of education, and years of teaching experience. The total number of questionnaire was 720 of which only 565 questionnaires were actually usable. Results show that the gender did not moderate the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction among teachers in Islamic Schools in Damascus (z-score = 0.946, and p-value for both males and females was 0.000). Moreover, the results show that years of experience item moderates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction for less than 5 years' experience (z-score = 2.013, and p-value for less than 5 years' experience was 0.000 while p-value for more than 5 years' experience was 0.721). Also, the analysis shows that the level of education moderates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction for undergraduate level. (z-score = 3.929, and p-value for undergraduate was 0.000, and postgraduate was 0.518). Finally, the analysis shows that age moderates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction for less than 39 years (z-score = 3.535, and p-value for less than 39 years was 0.027, and 39 years and above was 0.396). Gaining this knowledge will contribute to the field of education and this study will increase the body of knowledge in the field of work environment and teachers' job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction, work environment, moderating, demographic.

## 1. Introduction

The workplace environment was among the top three factors impacting employees' decision to leave or stay at their job. Employees placed great importance on their sense of accomplishment and the freedom of performing their tasks when they evaluated the work environment. People were found to be looking for a company that valued them, provided a challenging yet stable work environment, and allowed them to realize their potential (Florida, 2002; Duffy, Autin, & Bott, 2015; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017)[2].

On the other hand, the belief that satisfied employees are more productive than dissatisfied once has been a basic tenet among managers for years (Robbins, 2003).

The belief that satisfied employees have more productivity than dissatisfied employees was a basic tenet among managers for years (Robbins, 2003). So, schools should give more attention to increase teachers' job satisfaction (Heller, Clay & Perkins, 1993). This encourages the search for practices, and processes for use in improving the academic achievement of students

(Crane, 2012). Teachers' job satisfaction influences teaching and the performance of the school generally (Bolin, 2007).

## 2. Research Question and Hypotheses

RQ1: Does demographic variable (gender) moderate the relationship between work environment and Job Satisfaction?

RQ2: Does demographic variable (age) moderate the relationship between work environment and Job Satisfaction?

RQ3: Does demographic variable (level of education) moderate the relationship between work environment and Job Satisfaction?

RQ4: Does demographic variable (years of teaching experience) moderate the relationship between work environment and Job Satisfaction?

H1: Demographic variable (gender) significantly moderates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.



H0: Demographic variable (gender) does not significantly moderate the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

H2: Demographic variable (age) significantly moderates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

H0: Demographic variable (age) does not significantly moderate the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

H3: Demographic variable (level of education) significantly moderates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

H0: Demographic variable (level of education) does not significantly moderate the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

H4: Demographic variable (years of teaching experience) significantly moderates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

H0: Demographic variable (years of teaching experience) does not significantly moderate the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction.

### 3. Research Objectives

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the effects of demographic variables on the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction among Islamic Schools teachers in Damascus to better understand how and to what extent do demographic variables affect the relationship work environment and job satisfaction at Islamic schools in Damascus. as well as identify teachers' demographic characteristics.

### 4. Problem Statement

The problem is that not enough is known about the moderating effect of the demographic variables on the relationship between work environment and job Satisfaction in Damascus Islamic Schools which are non-profit organizations under the supervision of the Ministry of Awqaf in Damascus, the capital of Syria. These schools are supervised directly by this ministry. So, these schools basically have policy, ideology, principles, objectives, and vision different from those of public and private schools.

The relationship between work environment and job-related outcomes (such as commitment and job satisfaction), and the moderating effects of demographic on this relationship has been well established in traditional profit making organizations (Verquer et al., 2003; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Al-Hamdan [1], Manojlovich & Tanima, 2017; Terri Brown, Newton & Seeley Sr, 2017; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Ravenswood, Douglas, & Haar, 2018). Teachers in Islamic schools are responsible to educate their students

according to Islamic rules and government policy and must supervise school activities. They have many administrative duties as teachers in private and public schools. According to the law of Islamic schools, teachers should maintain the Islamic role and behavior. In addition, teachers who teach Islamic subjects should be a graduate from Islamic studies faculties, which means that they should have beliefs different from other teachers in other schools. Thus, they remain under pressure to address the academic needs of all students and maintain an Islamic school environment. This leads to the fact that teachers at Islamic schools have a work environment that is different from those in private and public schools (Islamic Schools Act No.1967, 2011). Hence, this study examined the moderating effect of the demographic variables on the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction in Damascus Islamic schools.

### 5. Literature Review

Teachers make up the largest portion of the professional body in the school, they have the most contact with students throughout the day, and they influence the environment of the school (Crane, 2012). They remain under pressure to address the academic needs of all students. The issue of teachers effectiveness has gained urgency as schools have come under increased pressure to raise students achievement, and public demands for more information about the effect individual teachers have on student learning (Crane, 2012).

#### 5.1. Teachers' work environment:

The work environment is of a great significance to the performance of employees as they perform their tasks within such environment. Moreover, work environment could be the single most important factor at work as its influence is reflected on the teacher's performance and the relationship between the teacher and students.

According to Rios, research results showed that work environment influences employee productivity, morale, and turnover (Rios, 1995; Ravenswood, Douglas, & Haar, 2018; Terri Brown, Newton & Seeley Sr, 2017). In the same context, psychologists have shown increasing interest in the influences of physical environment on performance, particularly influences of noise, temperature, ventilation, and lighting (Sundstrom, 1986). Also, a poor work environment is proved to be connected with reduced job satisfaction, absenteeism, burnout and depression. It was reported how a poor work environment might influence the work performance negatively, and promote negative and cynical attitudes towards patients and colleagues. Haynes found that office workers perceive that the environment has an impact on productivity of an employee. He also found that there is evidence to support the claim that office comfort can affect productivity (Haynes, 2008;



Copanitsanou, Fotos & Brokalaki, 2017). De Croon et al. (2005) systematically reviewed a total of 49 scientific literature publications that were original studies and examined work environment variables that were conducted among individuals who performed office work to determine the effects on work conditions.

A favorable work environment affects and increases performance, commitment, and satisfaction (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005; Terri Brown, Newton & Seeley Sr, 2017; Barasa, 2017). According to Brim and Wheeler, the impact of environment on human's physical, emotional, and adaptive conditions were documented (Brim & Wheeler, 1966) [7]. Role development and performance are influenced by the physical, social, interactive systems that constitute the environment; which included people's values and their actions in the environment; and the organizational structures in the organization. (Pearson et al., 2007; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Copanitsanou, Fotos & Brokalaki, 2017). Naff believes that the efforts by a given organization to turn the workplace into a more positive environment for employees would be a strong start to revolutionize the way employees view work. (Naff, 2012).

The work environment can have a profound effect on the health and work stability of employees. For many employees, work serves as a source of social communications (Rossberg, Eiring, & Friis, 2004). Workgroups become a source of satisfaction when the members have similar attitudes (Jegadeesan, 2007). Environmental support (work environment, and the worker; and organizational and competitive environments) has the potential to keep actual performance or to raise it to a higher level (Van Tiem et al., 2004; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Ravenswood, Douglas, & Haar, 2018). A good perceived work environment is found to be a highly significant determinant of workers' health. Lin and Liang (2007) presented evidence that decreased job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, and decreased retention levels were a result of factors in the work environment.

Today, some of the most successful organizations, including Pixar and Google offer a work environment based on employees' needs (Naff, 2012; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Barasa, 2017) [4]. Windlinger (2008) found that the design of office environments affects performance that are not direct but mediated, and the variables for the mediation of these effects are job satisfaction and perceived control over the physical work environment. He found that the perceived physical work environment and the experiences in work environments play an important role in job satisfaction. The research that was conducted by the Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Employees-by Design (according to American

Society of Interior Designers, 2002) found two main findings (in 1999): the workplace environment was among the top three factors impacting employees' decision to leave or stay at their job. Employees placed great importance on their sense of accomplishment and the freedom of performing their tasks when they evaluated the work environment. People were found to be looking for a company that valued them, provided a challenging yet stable work environment, and allowed them to realize their potential (Florida, 2002; Duffy, Autin, & Bott, 2015; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). Tschannen (2004) found that workplace emotional stress is a factor that reduces quality of care. According to Osborne and Gruneberg, many factors of work environment influence employees' working behaviors (Osborne & Gruneberg, 1983).

Generally, the literature suggested that work environment impacts employees' behaviors, job satisfaction, and productivity (Suvagondha, 2003). The influence of work environment on employees has been the object of research in several recent studies. There is a growing body of evidence which link the workplace with both satisfaction and productivity of employees (De Croon et al, 2005; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017).

So, work environment design should not only focus on meeting the functional needs of the organization but also the individual needs of employees. According to Rios, research results have shown that work environment influences employee productivity, morale, and turnover (Carnevale & Rios, 1995). Lambert found significant positive correlation between the likelihood of leaving the current job position and workplace stressors like workload, conflict with supervisors as well as with other co-workers, and lack of supervisory support which are factors of work environment, because these factors cause burnout (Lambert, 2004; de Oliveira, Griep, Portela & Rotenberg, 2017).

## 5.2. Teachers' Job Satisfaction

On the other hand, the belief that satisfied employees are more productive than dissatisfied once has been a basic tenet among managers for years (Robbins, 2003). It is argued that job satisfaction may actually have a positive impact on organizational effectiveness, and employees may develop new ways of doing things (Zhou & George, 2001). Over the years, there were many researchers who suggested that "schools must give more attention to increase teachers' job satisfaction" (Heller, Clay & Perkins, 1993).

Teachers play the most important role in the professional body in the school. They have the most contact with the students during the school day, and they have important effect on the school environment. When the teachers feel positively about their jobs and/or their



positions in the school, they will positively influence the students and thus the school. (Markow & Martin, 2005). Thompson et al. (1997), found 474 articles on job satisfaction only in just one major educational journal between 1965 and 1990. A number of researchers investigated the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction (Crane, 2012; Terri Brown, Newton & Seeley Sr, 2017; Boamah, Read & Spence, 2017) [5].

Many researchers examined factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction. Such as demographic factors (gender, age, education, and length of service) which emphasized teachers' job satisfaction studies (Bolin, 2007). But in general, teachers' job satisfaction affect teaching, and the quality of the school (Bolin, 2007) [6].

### 6. Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study was quantitative to study the moderating effect of the demographic variables on the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction in Damascus Islamic schools

Quantitative research methodology allowed the researcher to analyze the results of the two surveys statistically to determine if there is a moderating effect of the demographic variables on the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction (Creswell, 2012). To examine the moderating effect of the demographic factors: gender, age, education and years of experience among teachers in Islamic School in Damascus. Several methods were used to test the moderating effect within structural models; testing by using interaction effect and examining using multiple-group analysis (MGA) (Hair et al., 2006). This study used multi-group analysis using AMOS to examine the moderating effect. The moderating variable for gender was categorized into two groups: male, and female, age was categorized into two groups: less than 39 years, and 39 years and above, while education level was categorized into two groups: undergraduate, and postgraduate, finally, years of experience was categorized into less than 5 years, and more than 5 years.

### 7. Population and Sampling

This research studied the moderating effect of the demographic variables on the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction in Damascus Islamic schools. Thus, the target population for the current study was teachers at the Islamic School in Damascus. This population consisted of 12 Islamic Schools (Directorate of Awqaf Damascus, 2016)[15], with reference to the yearly book of the Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria. The total number of the teachers at the Islamic School in Damascus was 1413 teachers (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

According to the calculation, the recommended sample size was 452 on a level of confidence of 99% (Raosoft, 2004).

The researcher selected the following Islamic Schools, Sheikh Abdul Ghani Al-Nabulsi School (two branches) , Sheikh Badr al-Din al-Hassani (three branches) and Algaraa Islamic School (two branches), because of the following reasons: 1) these are the three largest Islamic Schools in Damascus, 2) these three schools are located in different places in Damascus. The first school is located in the north of Damascus, while the second, and the third schools are in the south, and west respectively (Directorate of Awqaf Damascus, 2016). In addition, some teachers taught at more than one Islamic School at the same time as a part-time teachers according to the Islamic Schools Act (Islamic Schools Act No.1967, 2011). So, the total sample size for this study was 720.

### 8. Data Analysis and Results

The total number of distributed survey questionnaires was 720. Of the survey, 612 questionnaires were returned which represented approximately 85% response rate. Due to some cases of missing values, 29 questionnaires were excluded from the analysis, and 18 cases were outliers; thus, the total of usable questionnaires were utilized with 78% response rate. The sample size of N=565 was considered as sufficient for this study. The study sample size (N=565) achieved the ratio of 10:1 as recommended by (Hair, et al., 1998; Kline 2005).

Missing data could have been replaced by the mean value but this can only be the case if the missing data were below five percent of the total required data (Hair et al., 2010). Table 1 shows the summary of data collection and response rate.

**Table 1**  
*Summary of Data Collection and Response Rate*

Responses	Total
Distributed questionnaires	720
Unreturned questionnaires	108
Returned questionnaires	612
Uncompleted questionnaires	29
Outlier	18
Usable questionnaires	565
Response rate	78.4%



### 8.1. Descriptive Statistics

The results of the descriptive frequency analysis in Table 2 show that the respondents of this study consist of 218 women, or 38.5%, and 347 men, or 61%.

**Table 2**  
*Distribution of Respondent by gender*

Category	Frequency	%
Male	347	61.5
Female	218	38.5
Total	565	100

### 8.2. Moderating Effect of Gender

To examine gender invariance, a simultaneous analysis based on male, and female was carried out. In this case, the path coefficient (work environment, and job satisfaction) was constrained to be equal to each other across the groups (males = N1 = 347) and (females = N2 = 218). Table 3 shows that z-score = 0.946 less than 1.964 (not significant effect), and p-value for both males, and females was 0.000. Therefore, gender did not moderate the relationship between work environment, and job satisfaction among teachers in Islamic School in Damascus. Hypothesis H1 is not supported. Table 3 shows that the results of gender effect as a moderator factor.

**Table 3**  
*Results of Moderating Effect (Gender)*

Variables	Male		Female		Z-score	Result
	Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value		
WE → JS (H1)	0.364	0.000	0.408	0.000	0.946	Not support

### 8.3. Moderating Effect of Years of Teaching Experience

To examine years of teaching experience invariance, a simultaneous analysis of experience based on less than 5 years, and 5 years and above grouping was carried out. In this case, the path coefficient (work environment, and job satisfaction) was constrained to be equal to each other across the groups (less than 5 years = N1 = 219), and (5 years and above = N2 = 346). Table 4 shows that z-score = 2.013\*\* more than 1.96 (significant effect), and p-value for less than 5 year

experience was 0.000 while p-value for more than 5 years' experience was 0.721. Therefore, experience moderates the relationship between work environment, and job satisfaction for less than 5 years' experience among teachers in Islamic School in Damascus. Hypothesis H4 is supported. The results are shown in table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Results of Moderating Effect (Experience)*

Hypotheses	Less than 5		5 and above		Z-score	Result
	Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value		
WE → JS (H4)	0.355	0.000	0.046	0.000	2.013	Supported

### 8.4. Moderating Effect of level of Education

To examine education invariance, a simultaneous analysis based on undergraduate, and postgraduate grouping was carried out. In this case, the path coefficient (work environment, and Job satisfaction) was constrained to be equal to each other across the groups (undergraduate = N1 = 271) and ( postgraduate = N2 = 294). Table 5 shows that z-score = 3.929 more than 1.964 (significant effect), and p-value for undergraduate was 0.000, and postgraduate was 0.518. Therefore, education moderates the relationship between work environment, and job satisfaction for undergraduate level among teachers in Islamic School in Damascus. Hypothesis H3 is supported. Table 5 shows that the results of education effect as a moderator factor.

**Table 5**  
*Results of Moderating Effect (Education)*

Hypotheses	Undergraduat		Postgraduat		Z-score	Result
	e	p-value	e	p-value		
WE → JS (H3)	0.912	0.000	0.036	0.518	3.929	Supported



### 8.5. Moderating Effect of Age

To examine age invariance, a simultaneous analysis based on less than 39 years, and 39 years, and above grouping was carried out. In this case, the path coefficient (work environment, and Job satisfaction) was constrained to be equal to each other across the groups (less than 39 years = N1 = 217), and ( 39 years and above = N2 = 384). Table 6 shows that z-score = 3.535\*\*\* more than 1.964 (significant effect), and p-value for less 39 years was 0.027, and 39 years and above was 0.396. Therefore, age moderates the relationship between work environment, and job satisfaction for less 39 years among teachers in Islamic School in Damascus. Hypothesis H2 is supported. The results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
*Results of Moderating Effect (Age)*

Hypotheses	Less than 39 years		39 years and above		Z-score	Result
	Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value		
WE → JS (H2)	0.912	0.000	0.036	0.518	3.535	Supported

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