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BACHELOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (HONS)

2025

A STUDY OF PRESCHOOL TEACHER'S JOB STRESS AND THEIR JOB SATISFACTION IN KLANG VALLEY

LIM YIK HWA

A RESEARCH PROJECT

SUBMITTED IN

PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

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FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

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LIM YIK HWA

Declaration

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

Name: Lim Yik Hwa

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Approval Form

This research paper attached hereto, entitled "Preschool Teachers' Job Stress and Their Job Satisfaction" prepared and submitted by Lim Yik Hwa in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (Hons) is hereby accepted.

_____ Date: _____

Supervisor

Dr. Annie Wong Kai Sze

Abstract

Preschool teaching is widely recognized as a high-stress occupation. Two major contributors to job stress among teachers are inadequate school-based support such as limited assistance from students' families, school administrators, colleagues, and personal networks and teaching-related demands, including excessive workloads and insufficient time. These stressors may significantly reduce teachers' job satisfaction. Despite its importance, limited research has explored the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in the local context. Guided by Lazarus's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, this study aims to examine the levels of job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in the Klang Valley, as well as the relationship between the two variables. A quantitative correlational research design was employed. The instruments used were the Teacher Stress Scale (TSS) developed by Chen et al. (2022) and the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) by Spector (1988). A total of 66 preschool teachers were selected using purposive sampling. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse demographic data, mean scores, and standard deviations, while inferential statistics were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Results revealed a significant negative correlation between job stress and job satisfaction ($r = -0.556$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher job stress is associated with lower job satisfaction. This study is limited in terms of generalizability due to the small sample size and use of purposive sampling. Additionally, the reliance on a purely quantitative design restricts deeper insight into participants' perception. It is recommended that future research adopt a mixed-method approach and apply random sampling across a broader geographic area to enhance data richness and generalizability.

Keywords: Preschool teachers, job stress, job satisfaction

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List of Abbreviations

V1	Variable 1
V2	Variable 2
TSS	Teacher Stress Scale
JSS	Job Satisfaction Survey
ECE	Early Childhood Education

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study's background and outlines the problem statement. Additionally, it presents the research objectives, research questions, and hypotheses. The significance of the study is also discussed, along with the definitions of key terms used throughout the research.

1.2 Background of study

Early childhood education (ECE) is extremely important in influencing children's development, including language, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth (Indeed, 2023). In Malaysia, preschool education lays the foundation for primary education. In addition to teaching, preschool teachers juggle administrative, extracurricular, and co-curricular responsibilities such as lesson planning, student assessment, teacher-parent meetings, and supervision (Hosain, 2016; Zydziunaite et al., 2020). They face significant challenges, including child behaviour problems, workplace stress, low levels of institutional support, and burnout and poor work conditions (Tebben et al., 2021; Hur et al., 2022; Clayback and Williford, 2021; Stein et al., 2024).

Large class sizes, as noted by Sultana and Aurangzeb (2022), place immense pressure on teachers to provide individualized attention, often leading to reduced job satisfaction and increased fatigue. According to Chen et al. (2022) mentioned the two main factors causing teacher stress are inadequate school-based support (e.g., teachers face challenges such as a lack of support from students, school administrators, colleagues, and personal relationships) and teacher-related demanding like too much work and too little time. Following the COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia, teachers were faced with increased responsibilities, including integrating

ICT, enforcing safety measures, and adapting to hybrid learning (Daniel, 2020; Liu et al., 2024). They had to embrace uncertainty, develop digital literacy, and manage blended learning, which remains the norm (Raykova et al., 2023; Al-Fodeh et al., 2021). In addition, teachers' workloads were further increased by enforcing hygiene practices and monitoring student welfare (Gouge et al., 2023). These expanded roles, coupled with curriculum pressures, have increased stress, anxiety, and burnout among educators (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021; Zulhairi et al., 2016).

Job satisfaction is characterised as an individual's assessment of their professional experience, which encompasses their sense of contentment and fulfilment with their roles, responsibilities, and work environment (Montuori et al., 2022). It is an important part of workplace psychology as it can affect employee performance, retention, and overall organizational efficiency (Meier & Spector, 2015). It is influenced by intrinsic factors such as acknowledgment, recognition, appreciation, departmental respect, and job autonomy (Baroudi et al., 2020), and extrinsic factors such as pay scale, relationships with colleagues, and supervisory support (Yunita et al., 2021). Teachers with high levels of job satisfaction are more motivated and effective in imparting knowledge, fostering positive learning environments, and contributing to the developmental outcomes of the children in their care (Dziuba et al., 2020).

In additionally, teacher stress is negatively correlated with teaching job satisfaction, with highly satisfied teachers experiencing lower stress levels, and less satisfied teachers experiencing higher stress levels (Tajudeen et al., 2020; Kamil et al., 2023). The literature review has suggested consistently a negative association exists between stress and work satisfaction among educators (Ahmad et al.,2020; Woods et al.,2023; Heng et al.,2018; Koros et al.,2018; Bharani et al.,2023; Pozas et al.,2023; Kamil et al.,2023; Kundaragi et al.,2019; Ling,2023).

Job stress is an important factor influencing job satisfaction, and teaching is widely recognized as a high-stress profession (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). As mentioned by Ekici (2017), the teaching profession is determined to be a high-stress profession, often resulting in mental health issues, job dissatisfaction, poor health, or even burnout (Idris et al., 2023), thus causing teachers to shift into new fields (Gomez, 2022). When educators encounter elevated stress levels, it often leads to frustration, absenteeism, burnout, and higher turnover rates (Adamopoulos, 2022). In Malaysia, teacher stress is a growing concern, particularly in the Klang Valley, where studies have shown that a significant percentage of educators experience work-related stress (Othman & Sivasubramaniam, 2019). Rising turnover rates and declining well-being among teachers further highlight the urgent need for intervention (Hwang et al., 2019).

Teacher stress and job satisfaction are intricately connected, significantly influencing the well-being and retention of early childhood educators (Jayaraja & Mohamad, 2024). Elevated stress levels frequently result in burnout, diminished job performance, and a heightened probability of career departure (Woods et al., 2023). In contrast, job satisfaction promotes motivation, commitment, and long-term stability in the workforce. Examining the correlation between teacher stress and job satisfaction is crucial for enhancing teacher retention and guaranteeing the overall quality and sustainability of early childhood education.

1.2 Problem Statement

Jamian et al. (2020) found that teachers are overworked and prone to stress and burnout. In a more recent study by Othman and Sivasubramaniam (2019) found that educators in the Klang Valley region showed a high prevalence of stress at 32 %. Of these, 7% displayed signs of acute stress. These reports show the severe need for adequate stress management among Malaysian teachers, and the first step towards assisting teachers is for them to recognise stress

in their lives (Kaur et al., 2022). Excessive workload raises stress levels, which reduces employee job satisfaction and increases the likelihood of turnover (Jermsittiparsert et al., 2021).

Despite the growing recognition of the challenges of teacher stress and job satisfaction, most Malaysian studies have mainly focused on primary and secondary school teachers rather than preschool teachers. A review of the current literature suggests that the most relevant investigations were undertaken at the elementary school level. (for example, Kamil et al., 2023; Koros et al., 2018), secondary school level (for example, Tajudeen et al., 2020; Leow et al., 2020; Hamid & Sukir, 2022) or on the general population of teachers (for example, Yaacob & Choi, 2015; Kundaragi et al., 2019; Heng et al., 2018). It lacked focus on studying stress and its impact using local preschool teacher samples, leaving a gap in the literature. Given the rationale that the demands placed on preschool teachers differ significantly from those at other educational levels due to variations in children's ages, socio-emotional and cognitive development, and pedagogical requirements (Massari, 2015), further investigation is necessary to examine how teaching stress relates to other teacher outcomes, with a specific focus on the ECE context.

Moreover, there is a need for increased local research focusing on the relationship between stress and job satisfaction among preschool teacher as present studies have found to be lack systematic. Most studies have examined teachers' stress and job satisfaction separately rather than exploring their interrelationships in a single research model. Research in this area has mainly focused on other factors influencing job satisfaction such as job performance (Rokeman et al., 2023; Granger et al, 2022), job demands (Han et al., 2022), turnover (Ertürk & Ramazan, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022), work environment (Taheri et al., 2020), work overload (Shukri et al., 2024) and self-efficacy (Mokthar et al., 2023), and others. The scholastic evidence has revealed local relevant studies seemed largely overlooked psychological factors, particularly the impact of stress on preschool teachers' job satisfaction. Given the unique

challenges faced by early childhood educators, it is important to examine the relationship between their job stress and overall job satisfaction.

The ongoing discourse on teacher stress and job satisfaction continues to be predominantly based on western evidence, as highlighted by studies such as those conducted by Pozas et al. (2023), Infurna et al. (2018), Ortan et al., 2021; Okeke and Ogbeche (2022), Woods et al. (2023), and Polishchuk et al. (2022). However, these western studies may not fully capture the unique challenges faced by preschool teachers in Malaysia due to significant differences in educational policies, curricula, and teaching methods (Puteh-behak et al., 2015). Additionally, a review of the existing literature and an extensive online search of prominent electronic databases such as Google Scholar, Web of Science (WOS), ProQuest, and ScienceDirect revealed a notable lack of research on preschool teachers' job satisfaction in Malaysia (Jayaraja & Mohamed, 2024). This gap highlights the need for further research to explore the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, particularly in the Malaysian context.

Due to these research gap, this research concentrated on investigating the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers. This study expanded on the local literature and contributed to existing knowledge by examining the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teacher in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

1.2 **Research Objectives:**

The following is the research objectives:

a. To determine the job stress and job satisfaction levels of the preschool teachers in Klang Valley.
b. To examine the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teacher in Klang Valley.

1.3 Research Questions:

The following are the research questions of this research:

a. What is the level of job stress and job satisfaction of preschool teachers in Klang Valley?
b. Is there any significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teacher on Klang Valley?

1.4 Research Hypothesis:

The following is the hypothesis of this research:

a. There is a significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in Klang Valley.

1.5 Significance study

The present study is expected to benefit preschool principals, preschool teachers, and local researchers. By utilizing the correlational design, this study can aid to further understanding of the relationship between stress and preschool teachers' job satisfaction in a local ECE context. The present findings can be used as useful insights to improve teachers' satisfaction, reduce burnout and facilitate their general well-being in the region of Klang Valley.

Firstly, the findings of this study are valuable in raising awareness among preschool teachers in Klang Valley about their levels of stress and job satisfaction. By providing local statistical data, the study highlights the extent of teacher stress and satisfaction, potentially encouraging teachers to manage their stress more effectively and offering insights for developing self-regulation strategies. Emotional management practices can improve teaching efficacy while maintaining professionalism (Wang et al.,2023). For example, to encourage teachers to express positive emotions (like enjoyment), conceal negative emotions (like anxiety), and keep their emotions balanced (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015). To support this, teachers

can implement behavioural strategies such as mindfulness practices and relaxation techniques (Kennedy et al., 2023). Mindfulness is the most widely investigated intervention for reducing stress and burnout among teachers (Agyapong et al.,2023). When teachers become aware of their own stress, they can engage in regular stress reduction practices. By incorporating such strategies into their routine, teachers can better manage stress and increase job satisfaction. The findings highlight the need for focused interventions, like workload modifications, improved supervisory support, and stress management programs, to assist reduce stress-related discontent among preschool teachers, especially in high-pressure areas. It has been discovered that putting into practice healthy coping strategies, such as mindfulness training and peer support groups, reduces teacher stress and enhances job satisfaction (Syed et al., 2020; Krishnan et al., 2024).

Moreover, this study aims to assess whether preschool teacher stress is significantly relating with the job satisfaction. Based on the findings, preschool principal can make necessary adjustments to support teachers in reducing their work burden and making attempt to improve job satisfaction. Preschool principals in the Klang Valley play a key role in creating a supportive work environment, which has a direct impact on teachers' stress levels, job satisfaction, and teaching quality. Understanding and addressing teachers' teaching stress can help to improve job satisfaction and retention (Jaganjac et al., 2020). Preschool principals can provide regular assessments, such as surveys and open discussions, to help staff identify stress triggers. For example, organizational interventions, such as fair workload distribution and teamwork-focused policies, improve efficiency and reduce burnout (Naghieh et al., 2015). Preschool principals can provide opportunities to increase teacher resilience and motivation through stress management workshops, behavioural training, and networking opportunities (Richards et al., 2018). By prioritizing teacher well-being, administrators can create a healthier workplace, leading to increased job satisfaction, teacher retention, and improved student outcomes.

Furthermore, this study helps to generate local evidence revealing connection between job stress and job satisfaction based on specific preschool teacher samples. This study provides a reference for future researchers planning studies on job stress and job satisfaction in the Malaysian ECE sector. It provides empirical evidence to assess whether findings from Western-based studies are applicable in a local context. Given the unique cultural, economic, and institutional factors that influence the Malaysian education system, this verification is also essential to ensure that international measurement tools, theories and models accurately represent the experiences of local ECE teachers.

1.7 Definitions of terms

1.7.1 Conceptual definition

Job stress: The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines job stress as "the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker" (NIOSH, 1999, p. 1).The World Health Organisation defines stress as "mental tension caused by difficult events or situations" (World Health Organisation, 2023). According to Chen et al. (2022), a teacher's stress might manifest as unpleasant emotions such as anger, worry, tension, or melancholy caused by their work.

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction referred to as employee or work satisfaction reflects the extent to which employees are content with their jobs, including overall enjoyment and satisfaction with specific aspects such as the nature of the work and supervisory support (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is the level to which people are pleased and fulfilled in their employment positions and work environments (Ali, 2016). It considers a variety of aspects, including the nature of the work, compensation, prospects for growth, and the quality of relationships with coworkers and supervisors. Job satisfaction is an important part of workplace

psychology since it can influence employee performance, retention, and overall organizational efficiency (Meier & Spector, 2015). Organisations and employers now recognise the importance of employee job satisfaction since it has a direct and indirect impact on job performance and efficiency. As a result, measuring job satisfaction is critical for establishing worker resilience (Narandaran et al., 2018).

1.7.2 Operational definition

Job Stress: The Teacher Stress Scale (TSS), developed by Chen et al., 2022, is used in this study to quantify stress in order to evaluate teachers' stress levels in two key risk factors: Two major issues that lead to teachers experiencing stress are inadequate school-based support (i.e., lack of support from students' families, school administrators, colleagues, and personal friends) and teaching-related demands (i.e., too much work and too little time) (Chen et al., 2022). The responses to these enquiries will be used to calculate the degree of stress experienced by Klang Valley preschool educators in Malaysia.

Job Satisfaction: The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), developed by Spector (1985), is a widely used instrument for assessing employees' attitudes toward various aspects of their jobs, particularly within public and private human service organizations (Dhamija et al., 2019). According to Dhamija et al. (2019), the JSS evaluates job satisfaction across multiple dimensions, including pay, coworkers, promotion opportunities, operating procedures, fringe benefits, supervision, contingent rewards, the nature of the work, and communication.

Preschool Teacher: In this study, a preschool teacher is operationally defined as an early childhood educator who teaches children in the Klang Valley, is employed full-time, and has at least one year of experience in educating and nurturing children in a preschool setting.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, relevant articles, journals, and online resources aligned with the research objectives were reviewed. Additionally, theoretical frameworks related to job stress and job satisfaction were discussed. The chapter also explored the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers.

2.1 Job stress

Job stress among preschool teachers has become a growing concern, as it affects not only teachers' well-being but also the quality of early childhood education (Bhargava & Trivedi, 2018). Teaching is widely recognized as a stressful profession, with high levels of burnout reported globally (MacIntyre et al., 2019). On top of that, preschool teachers often experience unique stressors due to the emotional and developmental needs of young children, coupled with heavy workloads and low recognition (Jeon et al., 2019). In Malaysia, research on teacher stress has primarily focused on primary (for example, Kamil et al., 2023; Koros et al., 2018) and secondary education (for example, Tajudeen et al., 2020; Leow et al., 2020), leaving a significant gap in understanding the specific challenges faced by preschool teachers.

Numerous studies show that stress is common among preschool teachers, with workload, emotional labour, and work-life imbalance being the main causes (Maclntyre et al., 2019). According to research by Skaalvik et al. (2017), time constraints, inadequate compensation, and a lack of acknowledgement are some of the causes of teacher stress. Another major stressor is emotional labour, which requires teachers to control their own emotions while attending to the emotional needs of their students (Jeon et al., 2019). Preschool teachers' stress levels are further increased by the fact that they frequently lack adequate professional development opportunities and support networks (Embse et al., 2019). In the Malaysian context,

studies on preschool teacher stress remain limited. Research conducted by Hassan (2019) indicate that local teachers struggle with similar stressors found in international studies, including administrative burdens and work overload. Moreover, a separate study by Herman et al., (2018) revealed that teachers experiencing elevated stress and burnout, coupled with limited coping abilities, tended to have students who exhibited more disruptive behaviours and lower academic performance. However, specific data on the extent of stress and its direct effects on job satisfaction remain scarce.

Research generally agrees that high workloads, emotional labour, and a lack of work-life balance cause preschool instructors to feel high levels of stress. Studies by Agha et al. (2017) and Yuh & Choi (2017) emphasize that teachers often struggle to separate their personal and professional lives, leading to chronic stress and reduced job satisfaction. However, some discrepancies exist regarding the role of external support systems in mitigating stress. For instance, Koch et al. (2015) argue that workplace interventions, such as wellness programs and stress management training, can significantly reduce stress levels. However, MacIntyre et al. (2019) suggest that structural issues, such as low pay and high workload, remain key contributors to stress, which cannot be fully addressed by training programs alone.

The degree to which stress affects employee turnover and work satisfaction is another topic of discussion. According to some researchers, stress directly lowers job satisfaction, which increases the likelihood of burnout and turnover (Richards et al., 2018). On the other hand, Embse et al. (2019) suggest that if instructors are given enough credit and opportunity for professional growth, stress does not always translate into job discontent.

2.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a key factor influencing workforce stability and performance in all professions, including early childhood education. Job satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' well-being, motivation, and overall productivity. In the context of preschool education, job satisfaction is particularly significant as it directly affects teaching quality, student outcomes, and institutional success (Jayaraja & Mohamad, 2023). Research indicates that satisfied teachers tend to be more committed and engaged in their roles, leading to improved educational experiences for children (Ong et al., 2019). However, preschool teachers face numerous challenges, such as heavy workloads, low salaries, and job-related stress, which contribute to dissatisfaction (Yaacob & Choi, 2015; Heng et al., 2018).

Job satisfaction has been widely studied, with scholars identifying multiple factors that influence it. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory states that job satisfaction is shaped by intrinsic motivators such as achievement, recognition, and professional growth, while dissatisfaction arises from extrinsic factors like low pay, rigid policies, and poor working conditions (Herzberg, 1968). Research on preschool teachers has revealed that workload, salary, stress, and administrative support are key determinants of their job satisfaction (Schoen Hepfner, 2017). According to McDonald et al. (2018) found that financial instability due to inadequate salaries significantly contributes to teachers' dissatisfaction, leading to frustration and instability. Furthermore, communication plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction, as unclear expectations and inconsistent policies can lead to confusion and reduced motivation (Petković & Rapajić, 2021). Additionally, research by Jeon and Wells (2018) highlights that dissatisfied teachers are more likely to disengage from their work, negatively affecting teacher-student interactions and instructional quality.

Several studies agree that job satisfaction is essential for teacher retention and professional commitment. Teachers who experience high job satisfaction tend to be more

effective in the classroom, resulting in better student outcomes (Iqbal et al., 2016). Additionally, research suggests that positive work environments, supportive leadership, and opportunities for professional development contribute to greater job satisfaction (Diya & Lama, 2023). Another common finding is the impact of low salaries on job satisfaction. Many studies highlight that preschool teachers receive inadequate compensation, which affects their motivation and ability to remain in the profession (Forson et al., 2021). Moreover, workload has been identified as a significant factor influencing job satisfaction, as teachers often spend unpaid hours preparing materials and lesson plans, leading to stress and burnout (Schoen Hepfner, 2017).

While there is consensus on some factors influencing job satisfaction, scholars differ in their views on its primary determinants. For example, some researchers argue that intrinsic motivators, such as passion for teaching and personal fulfilment, are more influential than extrinsic factors like salary and workload (Baroudi et al., 2022). This study believes that teachers who derive joy from their profession can remain satisfied despite financial and institutional challenges. Conversely, other studies emphasize the importance of external conditions in shaping job satisfaction. McDonald et al. (2018) assert that financial security and job stability are essential, as teachers struggling with basic needs are unlikely to remain satisfied in their roles. Similarly, Petković and Rapajić (2021) highlight that ineffective communication within educational institutions contributes significantly to dissatisfaction, as it creates uncertainty and stress among educators. Another area of debate is the extent to which job satisfaction affects teacher retention. While some studies suggest that dissatisfied teachers are more likely to leave the profession (Schoen Hepfner, 2017), others argue that many educators remain in their roles despite dissatisfaction due to limited alternative career options (Jeon & Wells, 2018).

In conclusion, job satisfaction is a vital factor influencing preschool teachers' performance, commitment, and overall well-being. Research indicates that factors such as

salary, workload, leadership support, and work environment play significant roles in determining job satisfaction.

2.3 The relationship between job stress and job satisfaction

According to a study by Tajudeen et al. (2020), work satisfaction and teachers' reported stress are inversely connected. In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 77 secondary school teachers took part in the study, which used a quantitative research approach to gather data. Perceived stress and job satisfaction were shown to be significantly and relatively strongly correlated negatively ($r = -0.423$, $p = 0.00$). The study highlighted the adverse effects of stress on job performance, including reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, health complications, and a higher risk of burnout. Furthermore, persistent stress can lead to emotional exhaustion, negatively impacting teachers' ability to effectively engage in their profession hence decreasing their job satisfaction. This study emphasizes the importance of managing workplace stress through initiatives such as stress management programs, work-life balance promotion, and supportive work environments. By implementing these strategies, organizations and educational institutions can enhance job satisfaction, improve employee well-being, and foster a more productive work culture.

In a study conducted in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, private preschool educators' job satisfaction, teacher-child interactions, and stress were examined by Jayaraja and Mohamad (2023). This quantitative study had 219 professors in total. The results showed that relationships between teachers and students, stress, and work satisfaction were all at moderate levels. A substantial inverse association between stress and job satisfaction was found by correlation analysis ($r = -0.433$, $p < 0.01$). It is suggesting that increased stress, often resulting from workload and lack of organizational support, contributes to lower job satisfaction. Crucially, the study identified teacher-child relationships as a significant mediating factor, where positive, emotionally supportive interactions with children helped buffer the adverse

effects of stress on job satisfaction. This aligns with prior literature indicating that teacher child relationship not only enhances children's development but also contributes to teachers' emotional resilience and professional fulfilment. Positive relationships and emotions are foundational to overall flourishing here represented through job satisfaction and reduced stress. Although extrinsic job factors such as low pay and limited promotion opportunities remain significant, the emotional rewards derived from witnessing children's growth and maintaining high closeness with minimal conflict in teacher child relationship appear to offer intrinsic satisfaction that sustains teacher engagement and well-being.

The association between job stress and job satisfaction among teachers in private and international schools in Selangor, Malaysia, was investigated in a study conducted by Heng et al. (2018). This quantitative study involved 249 teachers in total. According to the findings, occupational stress and job satisfaction are significantly correlated negatively ($r = -0.460$, $p = 0.00$). The results indicate that international schoolteachers generally report higher job satisfaction than their counterparts in private schools. Factors contributing to increased stress include salary dissatisfaction, growing workloads, and gender-related challenges. Teachers who struggle to cope with these stressors often experience decreased job satisfaction, which may lead to withdrawal behaviours such as absenteeism or resignation. The study suggests that addressing salary concerns, improving work-life balance, and implementing teacher support programs could help mitigate stress and enhance job satisfaction.

A study by Hamid & Sukir (2022) investigated the relationship between burnout, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction among early intervention centre teachers in Selangor, Malaysia. A total of 385 teachers participated in this quantitative study. The findings indicate a strong negative correlation between burnout and job satisfaction ($r = -0.890$, $p < 0.05$). The study highlights that burnout, which stems from persistent stress, is commonly caused by overwhelming workloads, emotional exhaustion, insufficient organizational support, and

unmet expectations within the teaching environment. Teachers experiencing burnout often develop negative perceptions toward their roles, leading to reduced motivation, emotional detachment, and ultimately lower job satisfaction. While self-efficacy can act as a protective factor enhancing teachers' belief in their ability to manage classroom challenges burnout tends to override these positive effects when left unaddressed. Moreover, prolonged stress may not only diminish teachers' effectiveness but also create an unproductive learning environment for students. Teachers who experience higher job satisfaction are generally more engaged, motivated, and effective in their roles, which can positively influence student outcomes. To address burnout, the study recommends improving salary structures, reducing excessive workloads, and implementing well-being programs to support teachers.

Polishchuk et al. (2022) investigated the connection between professional burnout and job satisfaction among European preschool teachers. In this quantitative investigation, 90 preschool teachers took part. According to the results, there is a significant inverse relationship between burnout and job satisfaction ($r = -0.487$), indicating that lower job satisfaction is linked to higher burnout levels. Preschool teachers experience stress and burnout when job demands exceed their emotional and cognitive resources. Contributing factors include emotional exhaustion, lack of organizational support, negative self-perception, unmet professional expectations, and poor coping strategies such as avoidance or impulsive reactions. This study suggesting teachers who lack confidence in their abilities, feel unsupported, or undervalue their professional achievements are more prone to burnout. This, in turn, leads to job dissatisfaction, as prolonged stress diminishes motivation, lowers self-esteem, and erodes emotional engagement with the profession. Ultimately, the inability to manage stress effectively compromises both teacher well-being and professional performance. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the importance of workplace interventions, such as providing adequate

compensation, fostering positive work environments, and ensuring alignment between job roles and personal values to mitigate burnout and enhance job satisfaction.

A study by Okeke et al., (2022) in Nigeria examined the impact of work stress on job satisfaction among early childhood educators using a survey research design with a sample of 362 teachers. The correlation analysis revealed a strong negative relationship between work stress and job satisfaction ($r = -0.63$), highlighting the detrimental effects of stress on teachers' overall job fulfilment. The study identifies several key stressors, including irregular payment of salaries, lack of adequate teaching resources, low remuneration, difficulties managing young children (ages 1–6), administrative overload, and the pressure to meet rigid academic schemes. These stressors not only elevate psychological and physical strain but also undermine educators' sense of professional efficacy and motivation. A lack of resources impairs educators' ability to perform their duties effectively, fostering frustration and helplessness. The emotional labour involved in handling young children without sufficient support contributes to burnout, while role overload from administrative and academic duties erodes work-life balance. When educators feel unsupported, overwhelmed, or underappreciated, their intrinsic motivation and professional commitment decline, ultimately resulting in decreased job satisfaction. The study underscores the importance of school administrators implementing stress-management strategies, improving workplace conditions, and providing adequate support systems to ensure that teachers remain satisfied and motivated in their roles.

There is one discovery, nevertheless, that contradicts the earlier research. According to a study by Elfita et al. (2022) based on a group of 45 Indonesian teachers, stress and job satisfaction do not significantly affect one another ($r=-0.033$, $p=0.678$). Despite the lack of significance in the results, this study concludes that stress still has a negative impact on teachers' job satisfaction because it leads to unhealthy competitiveness among coworkers, which makes teachers uncomfortable at work and causes them to neglect their responsibilities.

Furthermore, the study by Elfita et al. (2022) also emphasised how teachers' experiences with the teaching process, the workplace environment, their coworkers, and their working hours are likely to affect their stress levels, which in turn affect their job satisfaction.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study employs two key theories to underpin the research framework**: Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping** and **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation**. These frameworks help to understand how preschool teachers perceive, experience, and manage stress in their working environments, and how these experiences relate to their overall job satisfaction.

2.4.1 Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress

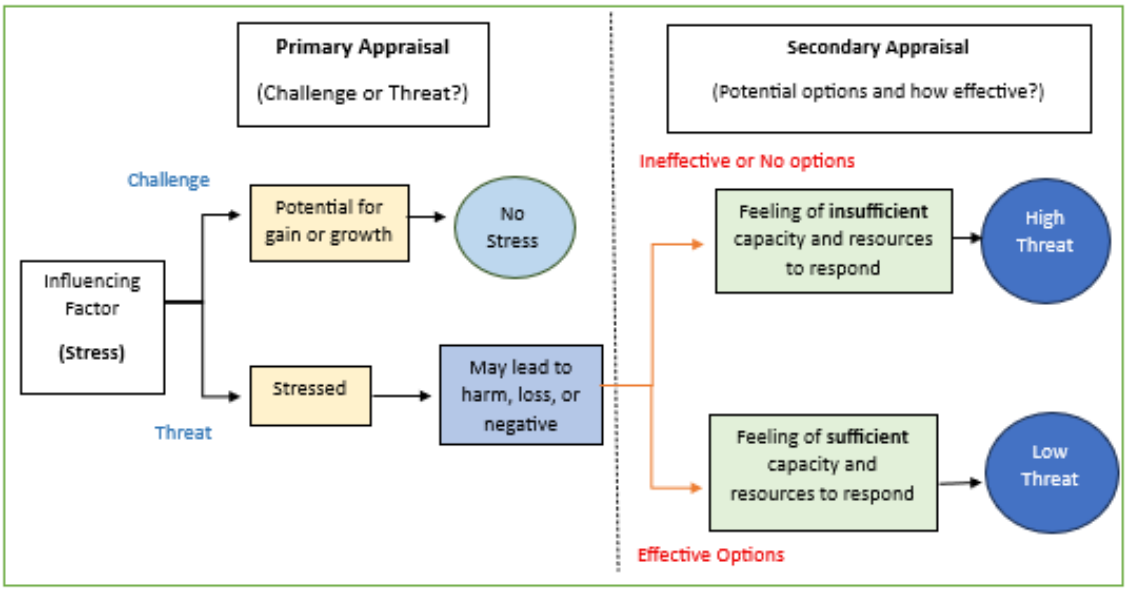

Figure 1: Lazarus' Appraisal Theory of transactional model of stress

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress explain that when individuals face a challenge or demand, they engage in a cognitive evaluation process to determine whether they can manage the situation. This evaluation occurs in two stages: primary and secondary appraisal. In the **primary stage**, the individual considers whether the situation poses a threat to their well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). During the **secondary stage**,

they assess whether they possess the necessary resources or strategies to cope with the situation effectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). If the perceived demands exceed their coping capacity, a stress response is likely to occur. Conversely, if the individual believes they have adequate resources to manage the situation, stress may be minimized or absent. The model underscores the importance of coping mechanisms, suggesting that effective coping can reduce the impact of stress. Additionally, it highlights that coping serves a moderating role in the stress process, with strong coping skills buffering individuals from negative outcomes, while inadequate coping can worsen stress-related effects (Cohen & Wills, 1985)

2.4.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

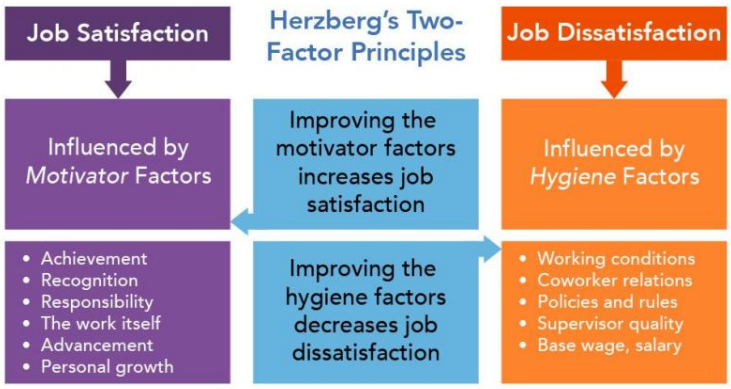

Figure 2: Herzberg Two Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivator-Hygiene Theory is a significant content theory in the study of workplace motivation and job satisfaction. The theory was groundbreaking in that it separated job satisfaction and dissatisfaction into two distinct categories rather than viewing them as opposite ends of a single spectrum (Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg et al., 2011).

Herzberg proposed that there are two sets of factors influencing employees' attitudes toward work:

1. **Motivator Factors (Intrinsic)**

Motivator factors are intrinsic to the nature of the work itself and play a critical role in fostering job satisfaction. These factors are closely tied to how individuals experience personal growth, achievement, and recognition in the workplace. Unlike hygiene factors, which prevent dissatisfaction, motivator factors contribute positively to job satisfaction when present but do not cause dissatisfaction when absent; they simply fail to promote satisfaction. These factors satisfy the human need for self-actualization, a concept that, while essential to motivation, can be difficult to measure and achieve in practice (Dwyer & Ganster, 1991). The key motivator factors include **achievement,** where employees feel a sense of accomplishment after completing challenging tasks or solving job-related problems; **recognition,** which involves receiving praise or rewards for good performance, reinforcing a sense of value; **the work itself**, which pertains to the meaningfulness, interest, and challenges presented by the actual content of the job; **responsibility**, which refers to the freedom to make decisions and be accountable for the outcomes; **advancement,** which provides opportunities for promotion or upward mobility within the organizational hierarchy; and **personal growth**, which encompasses opportunities for employees to learn new skills, gain knowledge, and develop professionally. By improving these motivator factors, organizations can significantly increase job satisfaction and foster a stronger sense of commitment and enthusiasm among employees (Herzberg, 1966; Alshmemri et al., 2017).

2. **Hygiene Factors (Extrinsic)**

Hygiene factors are closely related to the environment and context in which the job is performed. These factors do not directly motivate employees or lead to job satisfaction on their own, but their absence can lead to significant job dissatisfaction. In a way, hygiene factors serve a preventive function, much like medical hygiene, which is used to prevent disease (Herzberg, 1959). The key hygiene factors include **base wages and salary**, which involve fair and adequate compensation, along with timely salary increments and bonuses; **company policies**

and rules, which refer to clear, supportive, and fair policies, procedures, and management practices; **supervision quality**, which pertains to the fairness, competence, and leadership ability of supervisors; **coworker relations**, which involve positive interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and subordinates; and **working conditions**, which encompass the physical aspects of the work environment such as workspace, ventilation, temperature, tools, and general safety (Alshmemri et al., 2017). When hygiene factors are poor or lacking, they directly contribute to employee dissatisfaction. However, improving these factors does not necessarily lead to job satisfaction—it merely removes dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg, 2003). As such, hygiene factors are essential for preventing job dissatisfaction but do not actively enhance employee motivation or overall job satisfaction.

2.4.3 Application of Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress Herzberg's two-factor theory

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress highlights how individual cognitive appraisal play a critical role in how teachers perceive and respond to workplace stressors. Preschool teachers assess whether challenges like workload or student behaviour represent threats, losses, or opportunities for growth (Aulén & Anna-Mari, 2025). Their ability to cope through strategies like emotional regulation or problem-solving moderates the impact of these stressors on their emotional well-being (Woods et al., 2023). When teachers have strong coping resources, they are more likely to appraise stressors as manageable challenges, leading to greater resilience and job satisfaction; when coping resources are lacking, however, stress can escalate into dissatisfaction or burnout (Danauskė, et al., 2023).

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959, 1966) also offers insight into teachers' job satisfaction by distinguishing between hygiene factors and motivator factors. Hygiene factors, such as salary, supervision, and work conditions, must be adequately met to prevent

dissatisfaction, while motivator factors, like recognition and meaningful work, actively promote satisfaction (Spector, 1985; Karadeniz, 2023). In this study, the nine subscales of the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) align with Herzberg's framework: issues like pay fairness, coworker relationships, supervision, fringe benefits, operating conditions, and communication are key hygiene factors, while contingent rewards, promotion, opportunities for growth, and the intrinsic value of teaching itself act as motivators (Massari, 2015; (Hyseni Duraku et al., 2022). When hygiene factors are weak, even strong motivators may not be enough to maintain satisfaction among preschool teachers (Allen et al., 2016).

By integrating Lazarus and Folkman's stress model with Herzberg's job satisfaction theory, this study adopts a more holistic view of how stress and job satisfaction are interconnected. Rather than treating them as separate issues, this approach emphasizes how teachers' ability to cope with stress is influenced by both their interpretation of challenges and the conditions they work under. In this context, working conditions such as organizational support and workload can either help reduce or increase stress, depending on how effectively teachers are able to cope. This suggests that coping is not just a personal skill, but a critical factor in determining whether work conditions lead to job satisfaction or emotional strain. (Woods, 2021). It also challenges the assumption that poor working conditions automatically result in dissatisfaction, highlighting the role of both personal and contextual factors in shaping outcomes.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

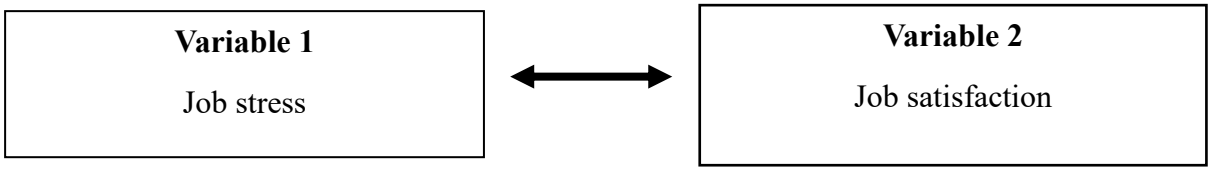

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the assumption that preschool teachers' job stress (V1) negatively influences their job satisfaction (V2). The framework proposes a direct relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, where increased levels of stress among teachers may lead to decreased satisfaction in their job roles.

Past literature supports this hypothesis. For instance, studies by Tajudeen et al. (2020), Yaacob and Choi (2015), Heng et al. (2018), Jayaraja and Mohamad (2023), Polishchuk et al. (2022), Kundaragi et al.(2019), Kamil et al.(2023),Hamid and Sukir (2022) and Okeke & Ogbeche (2022) have consistently found that high perceived stress is associated with lower levels of job satisfaction among teachers. These findings suggest that when teachers are unable to effectively manage their stress, their overall satisfaction with their job declines.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter illustrated the research approaches in conducting this research. The methodology and instrument used for data collection were identified in this chapter. Moreover, sampling determination and data analysis techniques were discussed as well to ensure that collected data and information were reliable and valuable.

3.1 Research Design

To achieve its goals, this study used a quantitative methodology. To uncover averages, forecast outcomes, assess causal relationships, and extrapolate results to larger populations, quantitative research involves collecting and interpreting numerical data (Bhandari, 2022). In quantitative research, correlations between variables are examined, patterns and averages are sought, and predictions are made (Creswell et al., 2017). Numerical data is gathered and analysed using statistical techniques in quantitative research (Apuke, 2017). This strategy is also used to test hypotheses to produce a coherent statement about the subject under investigation (Nardi, 2018). For instance, the survey approach will be utilised. The survey is carried out by distributing questionnaires. According to Nardi and Peter (2018), survey research is the process of acquiring information from a large sample population using question replies. This study will utilize two primary instruments: the Teacher Stress Scale (TSS) and the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). The TSS comprises seven items measured on a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Meanwhile, the JSS includes 36 items, each rated on a six-point Likert-type scale, also ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Furthermore, correlational design is one of the quantitative research designs suitable for this study. The correlational coefficient is a tool used in this research design to express the

strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables (Teacher's job stress and job satisfaction) (Bhandari, 2024). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) will be used to determine whether the variables job stress and job satisfaction have a linear relationship. According to Mindrila and Balentyne (2017), a linear relationship occurs when one variable increase significantly at the same rate that the other variables change by one unit. It is possible to ascertain the association between job stress and job satisfaction among Klang Valley preschool instructors by employing the correlation design.

3.2 Sampling method, respondents, and population

Sampling is a critical process in research that involves selecting participants from a larger population based on pre-defined criteria (Turner, 2020). Non-probability sampling relies on the researcher's judgment, expertise, and the requirements of the study rather than statistical probability (Shamsudin et al., 2024). Among the various non-probability sampling techniques, purposive sampling is chosen for this research due to its effectiveness in targeting a specific subgroup within the population.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgemental, selective, or subjective sampling, is the purposeful selection of participants based on established criteria related to the research objectives (Rai et al., 2015). This method is particularly useful when the population of interest is small or when the researcher aims to study individuals with specific characteristics that are critical to answering the research questions (Rahman, 2023). The main aim of purposive sampling is to focus on specific characteristics or experiences within a population to ensure that the sample provides meaningful and relevant insights into the research topic (Campbell, et al., 2020). This approach ensures that the sample is homogeneous, meaning that participants share similar characteristics in this case, being preschool teachers. Homogeneity is important because it reduces variability caused by irrelevant factors, allowing the study to focus

specifically on the variables of interest: job stress and job satisfaction. When a sample is homogeneous, external factors such as differences in job roles, organizational environments, or levels of responsibility are minimized, which helps to maintain data reliability and ensure that findings accurately reflect the experience of the target group rather than being skewed by unrelated influences (Bullard and Eric, 2019). By controlling for these potential external factors, the study can better isolate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, leading to more precise and generalizable insights within the population of preschool teachers. This strategy supports internal validity by ensuring that observed outcomes are more likely due to the studied variables rather than external variation (Etikan et al., 2016). As such, a homogeneous sample is essential in preventing the results from being affected by confounding variables, thereby enhancing both the credibility and clarity of the study's findings. By targeting this specific group, the research aims to collect in-depth and consistent data that reflect the experiences of full-time preschool teachers in a defined geographical area.

The target sample size for this study is 60 full-time preschool teachers from the Klang Valley. The data collection process involves the distribution of a structured questionnaire to participants, either online via Google Forms or in person via paper copies. Teachers who agree to participate will be required to sign a consent form, ensuring that they understand their rights and the confidentiality of their responses. To maximise participation, the researcher will use a combination of institutional distribution (via preschool principals) and social media outreach (via platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Red Note). Regular reminders and follow-ups will be conducted to ensure a high response rate. The questionnaire is designed to take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete, minimising the burden on participants while still capturing essential data.

In summary, the use of purposive sampling in this study ensures that participants are carefully selected to align with the research objectives. By focusing on full-time preschool

teachers with at least one year of experience in the Klang Valley, the study aims to collect consistent and contextually relevant data that reflect the daily, long-term realities of individuals who are fully immersed in the preschool teaching profession. While part-time teachers or volunteers may also engage regularly in teaching, their experiences may vary significantly in terms of workload intensity, continuity of tasks, and level of institutional involvement, which could lead to inconsistencies in the data. The exclusion of part-time teachers is therefore justified by the need to minimize variability in work conditions, such as differences in hours worked, administrative responsibilities, and exposure to organizational dynamics. These diverse conditions can result in differing levels and sources of stress and job satisfaction, which may compromise the reliability and comparability of the findings. Including individuals with widely different employment contexts could introduce confounding factors, making it difficult to interpret patterns in the data with clarity and precision.

Furthermore, this sampling strategy enhances the internal consistency of the study by maintaining a focused lens on a specific subset of the population, allowing for clearer identification of correlations between job stress and job satisfaction within that group. It is important to note that this study does not aim to determine causation, but rather to explore potential relationships within a defined professional context. As such, the findings will be more meaningful and applicable to the broader field of early childhood education in the Klang Valley, especially for stakeholders seeking to understand and support the needs of full-time preschool teachers.

3.3 Research Instrument

Sections A, B, and C make up the research instrument that was utilised to gather the data for this investigation. The survey will be administered both online using Google Surveys and offline using printouts.

The respondents' demographic data, which is presented in Section A, gives a quick overview of the study participants' backgrounds. Eight questions about gender, age, race, personal income, years of teaching experience in the ECE field, highest degree of education, working days per week, and working hours per week make up this survey.

Concurrently, to examine the respondents' stress, the Scale of Teacher Stress Scale (TSS) used in Section B. This scale was designed and developed by Chen et al. (2022) to assess the level of stress experienced by early childhood teachers regarding a specific aspect of their teaching situation. The seven questions on the scale are split between two subscales: demand connected to teaching and insufficient school-based support (Chen et al., 2022). Through questions like "I felt stressed because I did not have support from administrators at my school," the first risk factor of the subscale relates to teachers feeling pressured because they believe they lack support from the school, including administrators and coworkers. Teachers who experience stress because of high job demands are more likely to be at risk for the second risk factor. For example, 'I felt stressed because 'I felt stressed because I did not have enough time to do my teaching work (e.g., preparation, teaching curriculum content). The overall reliability confirmed a Cronbach alpha value of 0.84, while each subscale had a Cronbach alpha of 0.75 for inadequate school support and 0.87 for teaching demands. An instrument is considered adequate in terms of internal dependability when its score is 0.7 or above (Taber, 2018). The TSS is a valid tool for assessing teachers' stress levels because its total score was higher than 0.7. Respondents to the TSS are given a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree. The scores for each subscale are summed to provide individual subscale scores, which are then combined to yield. Higher scores indicate higher levels of stress, providing insight into both specific areas of stress and an overall measure of the stress levels of preschool teachers.

In Section C, the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) is used to measure local preschool teachers' job satisfaction levels developed by Spector (1985). The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) aims to evaluate job satisfaction among employees by examining various aspects of their work. It is intended to gauge employees' feelings toward different facets of their jobs and workplace environment. First created for use in public and private human services organisations, it is now also appropriate for research on job satisfaction in the health and education sectors (Liu et al., 2008; Spector, 1997).

JSS considered nine subscales, and each of them represents a distinct aspect of job satisfaction. These subscales include coworkers (items 7, 16, 25, 34), pay (items 1,10, 19, 28), communication (items 9, 18, 26, 36), supervision (items 3, 12, 21, 30), nature of work (items 8, 17, 27, 35), fringe benefits (items 4, 13, 22, 29), promotion (items 2, 11, 20, 33), operating conditions (items 6, 15, 24, 31), and contingent rewards (items 5, 14, 23, 32). It also contains 19 reverse items, which are no.2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 36 that needed to be calculated in reversed scoring. The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) employs a 6-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to express their level of agreement with each statement. The scale ranges from 1 to 6: 1=Disagree very much, 2=Disagree moderately, 3=Disagree slightly, 4=Agree slightly, 5=Agree moderately, and 6=Agree very much. The scores range from 36 to 216 after the 19 items are scored in reverse and the 36 items are added up. The range for ambivalence is between 108 and 144, the range for satisfaction is between 144 and 216, and the range for dissatisfaction is between 36 and 108 (Spector, 1985). According to Spector (1985), the overall Cronbach's alpha for the JSS reached 0.91. The nine subscales (coworkers: 0.60, nature of work: 0.78, communication: 0.71), operating conditions: 0.62, benefits: 0.73, contingent rewards: 0.76, promotion: 0.73, pay: 0.75, supervision: 0.82, and benefits: 0.73.

3.4 Data analysis

In this study, descriptive statistical analysis was employed to examine the demographic characteristics of the participants and to summarize scores related to the two primary variables: job stress and job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics serve as a method of summarizing the sample under study without making probabilistic inferences and are particularly useful for presenting data using measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, medians, modes, and standard deviations (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni, 2019; Mishra et al., 2019). The analysis of demographic variables included gender, age, ethnicity, monthly income range, education level, teaching experience in early childhood education (ECE), days worked per week, and weekly working hours, which were presented in the form of tables and frequency distributions. Furthermore, descriptive analysis was used to interpret participants' responses related to the Teacher Stress Scale (TSS) and the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS). The mean was calculated to determine average values, while the standard deviation (SD) provided insights into the variability of scores around the mean, offering a clearer understanding of the spread and consistency of responses （Mishra et al., 2019）. This approach allowed the researcher to effectively describe the characteristics of the study population and summarize key patterns in the data.

In addition to descriptive analysis, inferential statistics are used to examine relationships and differences between groups (Lee et al., 2022). These analyses allow for generalization of findings from the sample to the broader population. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) is applied to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers. A positive correlation indicates a direct relationship, while a negative correlation indicates an inverse relationship (Schober et al., 2018). According to Cohen (1998), correlations are categorized as weak (r = 0.10–0.29), moderate (r = 0.30–0.49), or strong (r = 0.50–1.0).

Hypotheses are tested using inferential statistics, including significance testing to compare means (Ali et al., 2016). The p-value indicates the probability of obtaining results as extreme as those observed, assuming the null hypothesis is true (Benjamin et al., 2018). A p-value below 0.05 suggests a statistically significant relationship, supporting the alternative hypothesis. Conversely, a p-value above 0.05 indicates no significant association, leading to the rejection of the alternative hypothesis (Kwak, 2023). A two-tailed test is used to interpret statistical significance, and all inferential analyses are conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.5 Research procedure

The data collection process is projected to take between two and three weeks. The researcher will use Google Forms to create a structured questionnaire and produce a consent form for participants prior to beginning data collection. Participation is entirely voluntary, all answers will be kept private, and the data gathered will only be utilised for this research, as the consent form will make clear. Additionally, participants will be made aware of their freedom to leave the study at any moment without facing any repercussions.

Once the questionnaire and consent form are finalized, the researcher will target full-time preschool teachers with at least one year of experience in the Klang Valley. The researcher will contact the preschool principals through online searches. The initial contact will be via WhatsApp or email, where the researcher will introduce the study, explain its objectives, and seek the principal's consent for participation. After receiving consent, the researcher will provide a link to the questionnaire and ask the principal to distribute it to the teaching staff. If permitted, the researcher will visit the preschool in person to distribute paper copies of the questionnaire, which could help increase the response rate and expedite data collection. Before completing the questionnaire, teachers who would like to participate must sign the consent form.

Furthermore, the researcher will send regular reminders to principals during the two-week data collection period to ensure full participation. Follow-up reminders will be sent if teachers do not respond to the questionnaire within three days of receiving it. If participants have any questions or concerns, they will be able to contact the researcher directly by email or telephone, as specified in the consent form. Data collection will continue until a target sample of 60 preschool teachers is reached. The questionnaire is designed to take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

Besides that, the consent form will include a clear explanation of how their data will be protected to ensure participants fully understand their rights and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants will be reassured that no personally identifiable information will be disclosed to the public or used beyond the scope of the study. If a teacher wants to withdraw at any point, they may do so without providing a reason, and their responses will be removed from the dataset upon request to uphold their autonomy in the research process.

If a principal declines to assist with the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher will discontinue communication and seek participation from other preschools. Additionally, the researcher will leverage social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and red note to identify potential respondents who meet the study criteria, thereby extending the study's reach. Through direct contact, the researcher will explain the study's aims and invite kindergarten teachers to participate. Those who agree will receive a link to the online questionnaire, where they can review the consent form and complete the survey at their convenience.

This dual approach of institutional distribution and social media outreach aims to maximize participation and ensure the timely completion of data collection. After two weeks, the researcher will review submissions to confirm that all responses have been received. Finally, the collected data will be analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

version 30.0. This comprehensive strategy ensures a smooth, ethical, and efficient data collection process.

The flow chart of the research collection

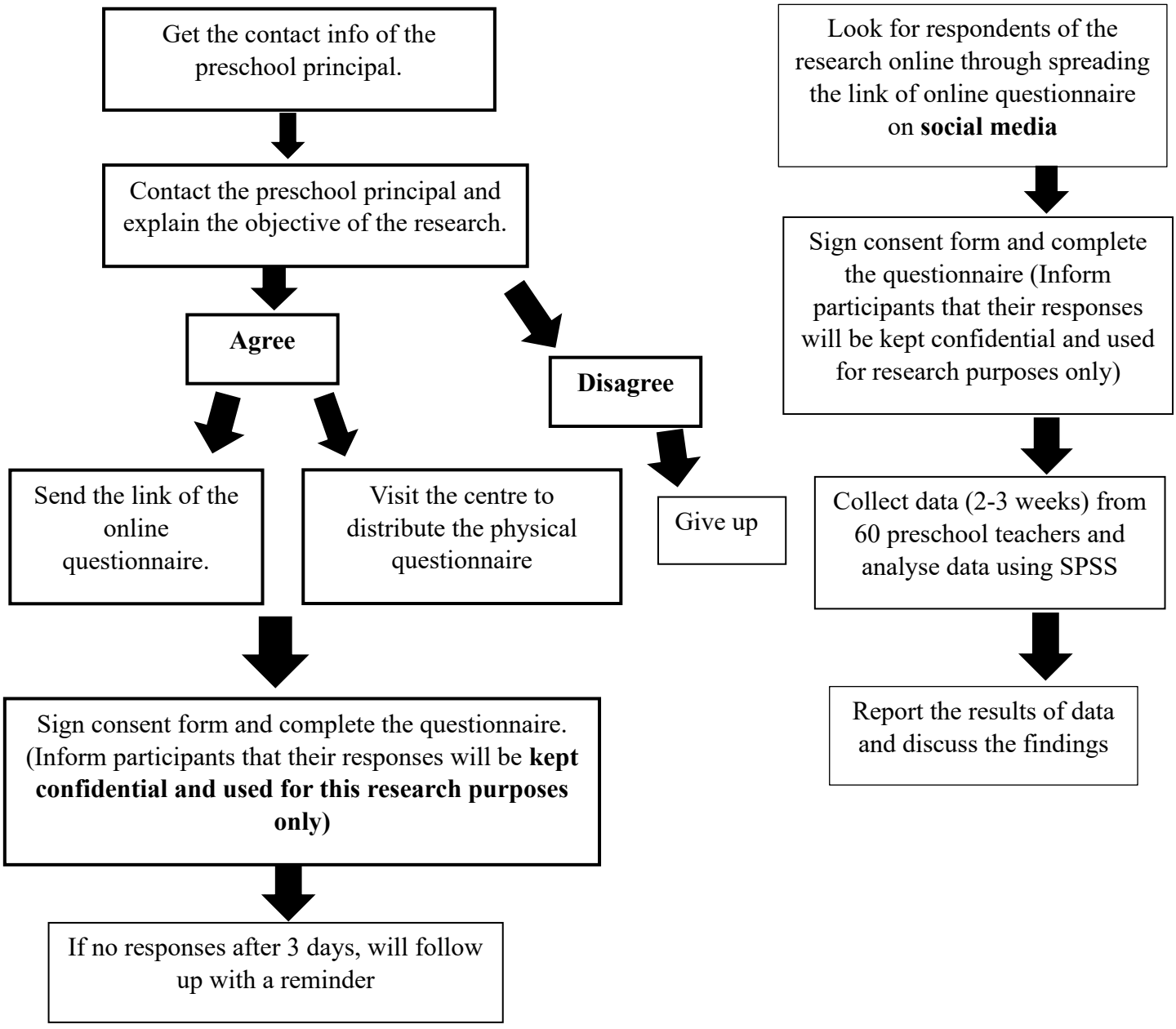

Figure 4: Flow Chart of Data Collection

Chapter 4

Findings & Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter illustrated the results and analysis that study the relationship between preschool teacher's job stress and job satisfaction. The researcher collected data from 66 preschool teachers who teach children from four to six years old and at least one year teaching experience in the Klang Valley area. The first part of this chapter was the descriptive statistics, which the researcher used to analyse the demographic information of participants. Other than that, inferential statistics was used to analyse the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction in this study. Both statistics were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 30.0, and Pearson correlation was used in analysing the variables as well.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Analysis

The demographic items will be presented included gender, age, ethnic, educational level, income range, years of teaching experience in ECE industry, working days per week and working hours per week.

Table 1

Gender of Teachers

Gender	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Male	6	9.1
Female	60	90.9
Total	66	100.0

Most of the teachers involved in this study are female. Table 1 shows 60 (90.9%) are female and 6 teachers (9.1%) are male.

Table 2

Age and Ethnic of Teachers

	Item	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Age	< 20 years old	1	1.5
	21-30 years old	36	54.5
	31-40 years old	22	33.3
	41-50 years old	4	6.1
	>50 years old	3	4.5
	Total	66	100.0
Ethnic	Chinese	56	84.8
	Indian	2	3.0
	Malay	5	7.6
	Others	3	4.5
	Total	66	100.0

Table 2 presents the distribution of teachers based on age and ethnicity. The majority of the teachers fall within the 21–30 age group, accounting for 36 individuals (54.5%). This is followed by 22 teachers (33.3%) aged 31–40 years, 4 teachers (6.1%) aged 41–50 years, and 3 teachers (4.5%) who are above 50 years old. Additionally, 1 teacher (1.5%) is under the age of 20.

In terms of ethnicity, the majority of participants are Chinese, comprising 56 teachers (84.8%). This is followed by 5 Malay teachers (7.6%), 3 teachers (4.5%) from other ethnic backgrounds, and 2 Indian teachers (3.0%).

Table 3

Educational Level of Teachers

Highest Education Level	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Secondary education (SPM)	3	4.5
Post-secondary education or pre university (STPM/Matriculation certificate/University Foundation)	2	3.0
Diploma/Teacher education at Teacher Teaching	11	16.7
Bachelor's degree	45	68.2
Master's degree/PhD	5	7.6
Total	66	100.0

As shown in Table 3, the majority of teachers hold a Bachelor's degree, with 45 individuals (68.2%) reporting this qualification. This is followed by 11 teachers (16.7%) who possess a Diploma or have completed Teacher Education at Teacher Training Institutes. Additionally, 5 teachers (7.6%) hold a Master's degree or PhD, while 2 teachers (3.0%) have attained a STPM/Matriculation Certificate or University Foundation qualification. A smaller group of 3 teachers (4.5%) reported having completed only Secondary Education (SPM).

Table 4

Personal Income

Personal Income	Frequency (N)
Average value: RM 2634.55	55
Prefer not to say/Confidential	11
Total	66

Table 4 show the teacher's personal income range. The average income of 55 teachers is RM2,634.55, while 11 teachers preferred not to disclose their income for confidentiality reasons.

Table 5

Years of Teaching Experience in ECE industry of Teachers

Years of Teaching Experience in ECE Industry	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
1-5 years	35	53
6-10 years	27	40.9
11-15 years	3	4.5
16-20 years	1	1.5
Total	66	100.0

The majority of teachers have 1–5 years of teaching experience in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) industry, accounting for 35 individuals (53.0%). This is followed by 27 teachers (40.9%) with 6–10 years of experience, and 3 teachers (4.5%) who have been in the field for 11–15 years. Only 1 teacher (1.5%) reported having 16–20 years of experience in the ECE industry.

Table 6

Working Days and Working Hours per Week of Teachers

Items		Frequency	Percent
Working days per week	5 days	61	92.4
	6 days	5	7.6
	Total	66	100.0
Working hours per week	35 hours	8	12.1
	40 hours	16	24.2
	45 hours	26	39.4
	50 hours	16	24.2
	Total	66	100.0

Table 6 presents the working days and hours per week among the teachers. The vast majority of teachers work five days per week, accounting for 61 individuals (92.4%), while the remaining 5 teachers (7.6%) reported working six days per week.

Regarding working hours per week, the highest proportion of teachers, 26 individuals (39.4%), reported working 45 hours per week. This is followed by 16 teachers (24.2%) who work 40 hours per week, and 8 teachers (12.1%) who reported 35 working hours per week.

Table 7

Mean and Standard Deviation of Total Teacher Stress Scale (TSS) and its subscales

	Items	Mean	SD	N
Total TSS		3.794	0.720	66
Subscales	Inadequate School-based Support	3.722	0.838	66
	Teaching-related Demands	3.849	0.749	66

Table 7 presents the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for Variable 1 – Job Stress and its two subscales, based on a sample size of 66 participants. The overall score for the Teacher Stress Scale (TSS) indicates a mean of 3.794 with a standard deviation of 0.720.

Among the two subscales, the "Inadequate School-Based Support" subscale recorded a mean score of 3.722 and a standard deviation of 0.838. The "Teaching-Related Demands" subscale showed a slightly higher mean of 3.849 and standard deviation of 0.749, indicating that teaching-related demands may contribute more significantly to the overall job stress experienced by the teachers.

Table 8

Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) Subscales

Items		Mean	SD	N
Total JSS		116.833	21.268	66
Subscales	Supervision	23.00	13.121	66
	Nature of work	15.288	3.533	66
	Co-workers	14.621	3.436	66
	Promotion	14.272	2.593	66
	Fringe Benefits	12.500	3.739	66
	Pay	12.167	3.593	66
	Communication	12.060	3.459	66
	Contingent Rewards	11.591	3.556	66
	Operating Conditions	11.212	3.155	66

Table 8 presents the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for Variable 2 – Job Satisfaction and its nine subscales, based on a sample size of 66 participants. The overall job satisfaction score yielded a mean of 116.833 with a standard deviation of 21.268.

Among the nine subscales, the four highest-scoring dimensions were: Supervision (M = 23.000), Nature of Work (M = 15.288), Co-workers (M = 14.621), and Promotion (M = 14.272), suggesting these areas were perceived more positively by the participants. In contrast, the five lower-scoring subscales included: Fringe Benefits (M = 12.500), Pay (M = 12.167), Communication (M = 12.060), Contingent Rewards (M = 11.591), and Operating Conditions (M = 11.212), indicating relatively lower levels of satisfaction in these aspects.

Table 9

Frequency and Percentage of Total Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)

Total JSS	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Dissatisfaction (36 – 108)	20	30.3
Ambivalence (108-144)	40	60.6
Satisfaction (144 – 216)	6	9.1
Total	66	100.0

Table 9 indicates that the majority of respondents reported experiencing ambivalent feelings toward their job, accounting for 60.6% of the sample. This is followed by 30.3% of respondents who expressed dissatisfaction, while only 9.1% reported feeling satisfied with their job.

4.2 Inferential Statistics and Analysis

Inferential analysis in the present study is performed using Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between the Variable 1- job stress and Variable 2-job satisfaction based on 66 local preschool teachers in Klang Valley.

Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teacher in Klang Valley.

Table 10

Correlation between Total Teacher Stress and Total Job Satisfaction

	N	*r*	*P*
Total TSS	66	-.556**	<.001
Total JSS	66	-.556**	<.001

Based on Table 10, the results indicate a significant negative relationship between teachers' job stress and their job satisfaction, with r = –.556, N = 66, p < 0.001. According to Cohen (1988, 1992), an r value between –0.50 and –1.0 suggests a strong correlation between the variables. The negative r value signifies a negative linear relationship, meaning that as job stress increases, job satisfaction decreases, and vice versa.

Furthermore, the p-value of 0.001 is below the significance threshold of 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), as stated by Beacom (2023), indicating that the result is statistically significant. In conclusion, the hypothesis stating that there is a significant negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction is accepted.

Summary

Table 11

Summary of Findings

Hypothesis Assumption	Result	Decision
There is a significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in Klang Valley	r = -.556**, N = 66, p<0.001	Accepted

The findings show that there is a negative significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in Klang Valley. In brief, the hypothesis is accepted.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrated the discussion and interpretation of the result. Besides that, the implications, limitations of conducting this study, and recommendations for future study were discussed.

5.1 Discussion

Descriptive Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the descriptive results related to preschool teachers' levels of job stress and job satisfaction in the Klang Valley. The analysis is intended to answer the study's first research question: *What are the levels of job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in the Klang Valley?*

5.1.1 Job Stress Level of Klang Valley Preschool Teachers

The present study reveals that the overall teacher stress scale (TSS) among preschool teachers in Klang Valley has a mean of 3.794 on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5 =strongly agree). This score falls between the neutral (3) to agree (4) range. This suggests that preschool teachers are at a borderline of feeling stress about their job. When determining the two key dimensions of teacher stress measured in the present study, teaching-related demands (M=3.8485) was slightly higher than inadequate school-based support (M=3.722). This indicates that teaching demands, as mentioned in the Teacher Stress Scale (TSS) survey, such as heavy workloads, limited lesson planning time, strict curriculum requirements, and managing diverse student needs, are more stressful for teachers.

Supported by the present literature, preschool teachers are expected to carry multiple responsibilities, which include lesson planning, grading, administrative tasks, and extracurricular activities (Tajudeen et al., 2022; Hosain, 2016; Zydziunaite et al., 2020). The challenges posed by heavy workloads, coupled with a lack of adequate preparation time, hamper teachers' ability to provide high-quality instruction, thus increasing stress levels (Stoddart & Fergus, 2024). Furthermore, rigid curriculum demands require teachers to cover extensive material while simultaneously ensuring students meet prescribed learning standards, a situation that often leads to frustration and burnout (Kundaragi, 2019). Additionally, the challenge of managing classrooms with students of varying abilities, behaviours, and language barriers becomes particularly stressful when teachers lack proper institutional support (Kazlauskaite et al., 2025). These interrelated factors collectively create a demanding work environment that significantly impacts teachers' job stress levels.

The study revealed that a majority of participating teachers (53%) had between 1 to 5 years of teaching experience, and 56% were under the age of 30. According to Haydon et al. (2018) and Curry et al. (2016), teachers with less than five years of experience are generally classified as novice or early-career educators. These teachers often encounter a range of professional challenges, such as managing classroom behaviour, building effective relationships with students and colleagues, and balancing the sometimes-conflicting expectations of parents and school administrators (Schuck et al., 2018). Scholarly evidence suggests that limited professional experience can leave novice teachers feeling underprepared to navigate these complex demands, contributing to heightened stress levels and an increased risk of burnout (Abdurrahman et al., 2016). These findings underscore how the combination of limited experience and the multifaceted nature of teaching responsibilities may create particularly stressful working conditions for early childhood educators in the Klang Valley.

In the present study, the dimension of inadequate school-based support recorded a mean score of 3.72 is also at the borderline agree feeling stress. This score suggests that many preschool teachers in Klang Valley are experiencing notable levels of stress associated with a perceived lack of institutional support. In the context of present studies, institutional support in the TSS survey refers to teachers feeling stressed because they feel they lack support from students, school administrators, colleagues, and personal relationships, as well as demanding circumstances like too much work and too little time (Chen et al., 2022).

Existing literature consistently highlights lack of support as a major predictor of teacher stress. Skaalvik et al., (2023) emphasized that insufficient support from school leadership and colleagues can lead to feelings of isolation, professional helplessness, and emotional exhaustion, all of which significantly contribute to elevated stress levels. Similarly, Malinen et al. (2016) found that when teachers perceive a lack of administrative and collegial support, their ability to manage classroom challenges effectively diminishes, resulting in heightened stress and decreased job satisfaction.

The present study has revealed that most of the participating Klang Valley teachers (63.6%) indicated working approximately 45-50 hours per week, which likely compounds feelings of being overwhelmed when institutional support is insufficient. Moreover, 53% of the respondents were identified as novice teachers (with 1 to 5 years of teaching experience), a group that is particularly vulnerable to stress in the absence of structured support systems. Supported by den Brok et al. (2017) and Redman and Suzanne (2015) that novice teachers who lack access to mentorship, guidance, and emotional backing are more prone to reduced job satisfaction, increased feelings of burnout, and a higher likelihood of attrition.

Furthermore, studies by Squires and Vicki (2019) and Chen et al. (2022) highlighted the crucial role of positive school relationships, whether with mentors, leaders, or colleagues,

in strengthening teachers' resilience, effectiveness, and job satisfaction. Without this support, educators may find it difficult to overcome professional challenges, which can negatively impact their overall well-being. Similarly, Carson et al. (2017) pointed out that early childhood educators face unique stressors due to the emotionally demanding nature of their work. When support systems are lacking, these stressors intensify, ultimately undermining both teacher wellbeing and the quality of early childhood education.

5.1.2 Job Satisfaction level of Klang Valley Preschool Teachers

Based on the present descriptive analysis, the overall job satisfaction (JS) level among preschool teachers in Klang Valley showed to be at mean=116.833, which falls within the ambivalent (108-144) category according to Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) score indicators. This suggests that the teachers neither expressed clear satisfaction nor dissatisfaction with their jobs, reflecting an ambivalent and uncertain stance toward their work. A further investigation into the frequency and percentage distribution of JSS scores revealed that 60.6% of Klang Valley preschool teachers experienced ambivalent feelings about their jobs, 30.3% reported dissatisfaction, and only 9.1% of teachers felt satisfied.

These findings are alarming, highlighting that the majority of preschool teachers are not fully satisfied with their professional roles, which may have implications for staff retention, teacher morale, and educational quality (Yoshihara & Kevin Frank,2018). This finding is in line with the local study conducted by Jayaraja and Mohamad (2022) found that among preschool teachers in Johor Bahru, 69.4% reported ambivalent stress levels. This study highlighted those higher levels of stress among preschool teachers, mainly from student-related issues and time management challenges, lead to lower job satisfaction, affecting their productivity, performance, and overall well-being. Similarly, Polishchuk et al. (2022) found that an ambivalent level of job satisfaction characterized 64.44% of preschool teachers. The

study suggests that preschool teachers with low job satisfaction, characterized by emotional exhaustion and dissatisfaction, are more prone to professional burnout, often exhibiting workaholic tendencies and difficulties in managing stress. Okeke et al. (2017) further explained that dissatisfaction could stem from factors such as workload, lack of promotion opportunities, and emotional pressure. Ortan et al. (2021) similarly noted that teachers' work involves not only teaching but also heavy administrative tasks, making the job more complex and intense, which decreases job satisfaction. Teachers with higher self-efficacy manage their tasks better and experience greater job satisfaction (Peng et al.,2015), but Zang et al. (2022) emphasize, poor working conditions, excessive weekly workload, and limited time for lesson preparation further reduce satisfaction.

Further investigation into the 9 subdomains of JSS has found that the highest satisfaction is in the domain of supervision. The research results indicate that the highest satisfaction score was recorded in the **supervision** (being properly supervised and treated fairly at work) (Mean = 23.0), indicating that preschool teachers in Klang Valley benefit from strong supervisory support. It is fascinating that supervision received a much higher rating compared to other job satisfaction domains. Research by Skaalvik et al. (2023) highlighted that adequate supervision enhances job satisfaction by providing teachers with guidance, constructive feedback, and fair treatment. Heilala et al. (2021) found that in Finland, early education staff establishing effective leadership that encourages staff participation and fosters a positive workplace environment plays a vital role in enhancing job satisfaction and reducing turnover rates. In the present study, where many preschool teachers are relatively young (56% under the age of 30) and early in their careers (53% with 1–5 years of experience), structured supervision appears particularly beneficial. Younger and less experienced teachers often rely on consistent guidance and mentoring to build their confidence and competence in the classroom (Jayaraja & Mohamad, 2024). Effective supervision not only supports professional development but also

enhances motivation and overall teacher effectiveness. Studies by Firdausi (2018), Lie et al. (2021), and Winaliyah et al. (2021) confirm that well-implemented supervisory practices can significantly contribute to higher job satisfaction by helping educators navigate challenges and improve their instructional practices. This trend may be attributed to several contextual factors in urban centres like Klang Valley. Urban early childhood education centres are more likely to implement structured supervision systems to comply with national quality standards and ensure consistent feedback (Henderson, et al., 2024). Additionally, heightened parental expectations and intense competition among preschools in these areas may drive centre administrators to invest in stronger supervisory practices and mentoring initiatives to maintain service quality and retain staff (Lin et al., 2023).

Besides supervision, Klang Valley preschool teachers also reported feeling more satisfied with three domains: **nature of work** (meaningful and enjoyable jobs and having a sense of pride in doing their job), **promotion** (chances for advancement and equitable opportunities to progress), and **co-worker** relationships (cooperation among employees and fewer disputes with colleagues), with means achieved within 14 to 15. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966), motivational factors (such as nature of work and promotion) are intrinsic elements that promote and enhance job satisfaction when present (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Establishing good interpersonal relationships between co-workers and leaders is crucial for enhancing employee satisfaction, as it helps create a supportive work environment (Lodisso, 2019; Wells, 2017). Conversely, hygiene factors (such as relationships with co-workers) are defined as extrinsic motivators (Alshmemri et al., 2017). A lack of supportive relationships can lead to low job satisfaction and poor work attitudes (Wells, 2017). Therefore, improving hygiene factors- such as supportive relationships with co-workers, good working conditions, and effective administrative policies is essential to prevent job dissatisfaction among preschool teachers.

At the other end, teachers reported the having lower satisfaction levels in five domains **operating conditions** (restrictive rules, excessive workload, and paperwork), **contingent rewards** (recognition and performance-based incentives), **communication** (clarity in roles and workplace engagement), **fringe benefits** (teachers' satisfaction with the additional benefits they receive - including monetary and non-monetary benefits) and **pay** (salary fairness and financial compensation). These factors received lower mean satisfaction scores between 11 and 12.5. The present result is supported by a recent local study based on preschool teachers in Selangor (Idris et al, 2023) saying teachers are commonly facing issues related to unfair job evaluation, lack of promotion opportunities, and emotional or cognitive pressure. These problems impact an individual's job satisfaction and well-being. The dissatisfaction with contingent rewards and pay is particularly concerning. Many teachers feel that their efforts are not adequately recognized or compensated, leading to feelings of undervaluation. This sentiment is exacerbated by the average monthly salary for preschool teachers in Malaysia, which stands at approximately RM2.6 k. This finding is aligned with the findings from Baroudi et al. (2020) that pay is the item that is least being satisfied. In addition, the basic salary (statistics) that a person needs to have in order to survive in Klang Valley is RM 1930 (public transport user) and RM2600 (car owner) (Parkaran, 2023). According to McDonald et al. (2018) found that financial instability due to inadequate salaries significantly contributes to teachers' dissatisfaction, leading to frustration and instability. Given the high cost of living in urban areas like Klang Valley, this remuneration is often insufficient to meet basic needs, leading to financial strain and reduced morale. Job satisfaction is strongly correlated with a work environment that is both supportive and enjoyable, mainly when it includes safe working conditions. As stated by Yean et al. (2022), schools may enhance working conditions and offer sufficient wages for teachers to reduce their job dissatisfaction effectively. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions by local ECE stakeholders by improving

financial compensation, enhancing workplace support systems, and promoting professional recognition are essential steps toward retaining a motivated and stable ECE workforce in urban Malaysia.

Inferential Analysis and Discussion

This section reports the inferential analysis results concerning the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in the Klang Valley. The findings specifically respond to the second research question: *Is there a significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in the Klang Valley?*

5.1.3 Relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teacher in Klang Valley

The results of this study showed a significant negative association between job satisfaction (JSS) and teacher stress (TSS) ($r = -0.556$, $p < .001$), suggesting that job satisfaction decreases as stress levels increase. This finding aligns with prior local studies that have investigated the relationship between stress and job satisfaction among teachers, particularly in Selangor and Johor. For instance, Tajudeen et al. (2020) found a negative correlation of ($r = -0.423$, $P=0.00$), Heng et al. (2018) reported a correlation of ($r = -0.460$, $P=0.00$), and Jayaraja and Mohamad (2023) found a negative correlation ($r = 0.433$, $P<0.01$) supporting that stress reduces teachers' overall job satisfaction.

Among the local literature Jayaraja and Mohamad (2024) emphasized that high workloads and lack of institutional support contribute to preschool teacher stress in Johor Bahru, which lowers job satisfaction by reducing enthusiasm for teaching. Similarly, Tajudeen et al. (2020) found a negative relationship between stress and job satisfaction, noting that teacher stress is mainly caused by student-related challenges and poor time management, which negatively affects their job satisfaction by reducing their productivity and overall well-being.

The study by Heng et al. (2018) showed that stress can result in low job satisfaction and that teachers' job unhappiness subsequently causes frustration, withdrawal behaviours, absenteeism, and turnover. Additionally, Polishchuk et al. (2022) highlighted that prolonged stress will eventually cause emotional burden and general tiredness, which will lower professional accomplishment. Long-term stress can also make instructors feel exhausted and negatively impact their attitude and behaviour at work (Hamid & Sukir, 2022). Consequently, unaddressed stress can lower job satisfaction, while reducing stress can enhance it. This aligns with Okeke and Ogbeche (2022), who found that teachers' psychological well-being, including lower stress levels, contributes to increased job satisfaction by boosting morale and productivity.

A detailed investigation into the relationship between teacher stress and job satisfaction reveals a consistent negative correlation across various regions in Malaysia. Several local studies have demonstrated that higher levels of job stress are significantly associated with lower levels of job satisfaction. For instance, studies conducted in Johor Bahru ($r = -0.433$, $p < .01$; Jayaraja & Mohamad, 2024), Malacca ($r = -0.50$, $p < .05$; Kamil et al., 2023), and Selangor ($r = -0.460$, $p = .00$; Heng et al., 2018) all report negative correlations between the two variables. In line with these findings, the present study shows a based on a sample of preschool teachers in Klang Valley found an even stronger negative correlation ($r = -0.556$, $p < .001$) between teacher stress and job satisfaction. This suggests that as job stress increases, satisfaction levels decline significantly, with the effect appearing more pronounced in this highly urbanized region.

This unique observation may be attributed to the unique socio-economic context of Klang Valley, Malaysia's most economically developed and densely populated area. As a fully urbanized region, Klang Valley is characterized by a fast-paced working environment, intense competition, and elevated professional demands (Wong & Wei Thong, 2023). Teachers in such urban settings often face heavier administrative workloads, larger student-teacher ratios, and higher expectations from both school management and parents (Ibrahim et al., 2021;

Santamaría et al., 2021). Based on these insights, it is plausible to explain that in the Klang Valley, teaching related stressors may be appear to be a more powerful factor that related to their perception on job satisfaction. Research by Kingsford-Smith et al. (2023) highlights those regional variations, including urban vs. rural differences, can significantly influence the levels and sources of stress as well as job satisfaction among teachers.

5.2 Implication

This study provides local statistics reveal teacher stress and job satisfaction levels in Klang Valley. The current analysis reveals that over 90% of preschool teachers in the Klang Valley report feeling either ambivalent or dissatisfied with their jobs. This is a concerning and alarming that warrants immediate attention from the stakeholders in the early childhood education (ECE) sector. Low levels of job satisfaction have been consistently linked to an increased intention to leave the profession, which poses a significant threat to the stability and continuity of ECE settings (Schaack et al., 2022). High turnover rates among early childhood educators can disrupt the quality of care and learning experiences for young children, hinder the formation of secure educator-child relationships, and create additional burdens on remaining staff.

This finding underscores the importance of developing targeted intervention strategies at the institutional level to improve job satisfaction and retain skilled educators within the Klang Valley region. The school administrators should offer continuous professional development to equip teachers with the skills necessary to adapt to changing educational demands. This research identifies five key domains of low satisfaction among preschool teachers: operating conditions, contingent rewards, communication, fringe benefits, and pay. ECE stakeholders can address these domains through systematic improvements in infrastructure, equitable reward systems, transparent communication channels, enhanced

benefits packages, and fair compensation structures. By addressing these areas, institutions can foster a more supportive and satisfying work environment, ultimately improving retention and the quality of early childhood education delivery.

In addition, descriptive analyses indicate that preschool teachers in the Klang Valley are at a borderline of feeling stress about their work at overall. Two prominent domains of stress identified through the analysis are work demands and institutional support. These include factors such as excessive workload, administrative pressure, insufficient organizational support, and difficulties in managing young children's behaviour (Jeon et al., 2019; Herman et al., 2018; MacIntyre et al., 2019). These stressors contribute significantly to emotional exhaustion, which, in turn, can negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction and reduce their level of professional engagement.

This finding highlights the need for individual and organisational interventions to help teachers manage stress more effectively. At the individual level, teachers should be encouraged to self-regulate to reduce stress and seek strategies to maintain a healthy work-life balance. At the centre level, preschool principals and administrators are urged to implement structured programmes, such as engaging teachers in stress-free or wellness activities, and to review centre policies related to reduce workload demand and to improve the support system provide to teacher. Regular policy reviews can ensure that organisational support is aligned with the changing needs of teachers and create a more supportive work environment, leading to greater job satisfaction. Continuing professional development enables teachers to learn to better adjust their abilities to their responsibilities and workloads.

Furthermore, inferential analyses confirmed a significant negative correlation between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in Klang Valley (**$r = -0.556$; $p < .001$**). This finding is consistent with previous local studies (Hamid & Sukir, 2022; Tajudeen et al.,

2020; Leow et al., 2020; Jayaraja & Mohamad, 2023). However, unlike most previous research, which focused on general teacher populations, this study specifically uses ECE sample for testing, a group that has received limited attention in local contexts. Notably, this study produced a unique finding: the negative correlation between teacher stress and job satisfaction appears stronger in the Klang Valley ECE context than in other regions. This may be attributed to urban-specific challenges, such as higher costs of living, larger class sizes, and intensified administrative demands. These findings provide important insights for future researchers, especially those exploring urban early childhood education contexts. There is also a pressing need to raise awareness among the Klang Valley preschool teaching population about the impact of work stress on job satisfaction and the importance of self-care, peer support, and institutional advocacy.

5.3 Limitation

One of the primary limitations of this study is the restricted generalizability of its findings. The research was conducted solely in Klang Valley, which is a fully urbanised area, and therefore the results are only applicable to preschool teachers working in similar urban contexts. This geographical focus limits the study's applicability to other regions in Malaysia, especially suburban and rural areas that may have distinct structural, socioeconomic, and institutional characteristics. Statistical generalizability in quantitative research is achieved by studying a sufficiently large and unbiased sample that accurately reflects the population, allowing findings to be applied broadly (Kassiani Nikolopoulou, 2022). Consequently, there remains a gap in understanding the experiences and needs of preschool teachers operating in remote or semi-urban settings.

The representativeness of the findings is further limited by the small sample size and the use of purposive sampling. With only 66 participants, the sample may not comprehensively

reflect the diversity of Malaysia's preschool teaching workforce. Purposive sampling, while useful for targeting specific participant characteristics, inherently carries a risk of selection bias, as participants are chosen based on predefined criteria rather than through random selection (Andrade, 2021). In this study, the sample leaned heavily toward younger, Chinese female teachers (84.8% Chinese and 56% below 30 years old), which reduces the generalizability of the findings to other demographic groups. This selective recruitment approach, although practical for quantitative insights or focused group characteristics, may omit critical perspectives from ethnically diverse teachers. As a result, the findings should be interpreted with caution when considering their applicability to the wider preschool educator population.

Another important limitation pertains to the methodological design, as the study relied exclusively on quantitative research. While the use of standardised Likert-scale questionnaires allowed for the systematic collection of numerical data, it restricted the depth of understanding regarding participants' subjective experiences and may fail to reflect the depth and complexity seen in social phenomena as well as the emotional experiences of people involved (Queirós et al., 2017). Quantitative methods often produce surface-level data that may overlook contextual and emotional nuances (Queirós et al., 2017; Rahman, 2016). Structured questionnaires are often based on closed-ended questions, which prevents the respondents from telling their point of view or detailed explanations as well as they would prefer or could if the question was open-ended ((Romero, 2021). In this case, the absence of qualitative data limited the researchers' ability to uncover deeper explanations behind preschool teachers' perceptions of stress and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the use of a single cross-sectional data collection point constrains the ability to identify causality or changes over time (Morgado et al., 2017). The exclusion of open-ended responses and personal narratives may have hindered the discovery of meaningful insights, thereby affecting the richness and interpretive power of the findings.

5.4 Recommendation

In response to the limitations identified in this study, the researcher makes several recommendations to improve the validity, generalisability and depth of future studies. Firstly, future research should aim to expand the study to a wider geographical in Malaysia, including both urban and rural settings. Such an expansion would allow for a more diverse range of perspectives and contextual differences in the study, especially since living and economic conditions vary greatly between urban and rural areas, potentially affecting preschool teachers' levels of stress and job satisfaction. A more inclusive geographical sample would produce findings that are more representative of the national context and provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of preschool teachers across Malaysia.

Whilst expanding the regions, it is crucial to increase the sample size and include participants from different demographic backgrounds. Andrade (2020) states that the larger the sample size, the more accurate and representative the data will be. To achieve this, random sampling is recommended as it gives everyone in the population an equal chance of being selected, thus reducing selection bias and increasing the generalisability of results (Bhardwaj, 2019; Showkat & Parveen, 2017). This method facilitates the assembly process and upholds representativeness, attributing any variations to sampling error. Consequently, it enables accurate inferences and generalizations about the population (Sharma, 2017). Hence, through enlarging the sample size or using probability sampling, the findings of this research can be more generalizable. However, future researchers should also be prepared to allocate more resources in terms of time, finances, and manpower to effectively manage larger studies (Ahmed et al., 2024).

Additionally, in order to increase the richness and depth of the findings, future studies should use a mixed-method approach that combines qualitative interviews with the current

quantitative design. While quantitative data can provide statistical data, qualitative methods can provide researchers with a deeper understanding of preschool teachers' personal experiences, perceptions, and emotions, leading to a more nuanced understanding of their stress and job satisfaction. Mixed-methods research compensates for the limitations of single-method approaches and enriches research findings by triangulating data sources (Regnault et al., 2018). This approach also increases the validity and reliability of research findings by capturing measurable patterns and meaningful narratives (Subedi & Madhusudan, 2023).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study focuses on the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teachers in the Klang Valley. Previous local studies have focused on other educational levels or districts, whereas studies specifically focusing on the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector in the Klang Valley have been limited. The present study fills this gap by exploring how various stressors (e.g., insufficient in-school support from families, administrators, and colleagues) as well as teaching-related factors (e.g., time constraints and heavy workloads) affect the job satisfaction of preschool teachers in the region. Findings showed that higher levels of job stress were significantly associated with lower levels of job satisfaction, suggesting that job stress is a key factor in teacher professional engagement. This study has important implications for Klang Valley ECE educator and administrator management, highlighting the need for stress reduction strategies and supportive working conditions in the Klang Valley to improve teacher satisfaction and retention.

Nevertheless, the research presents limitations, such as a low response rate, employing only a single method (quantitative method), and limited generalizability for human subjects. To address these limitations, the researchers can increase the duration of time collecting data and increase the number of questionnaires distributed, employ mixed methods (utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods), and enlarge sample size or do probability sampling. These improvements help obtain accurate and complete data to construct thorough illustrations of factors that may affect early childhood teachers' job stress and job satisfaction. Similarly, increasing the generalizability of the findings allows future studies to provide a comprehensive viewpoint based on large sample size, which is crucial for early childhood educators, as well as other factors.

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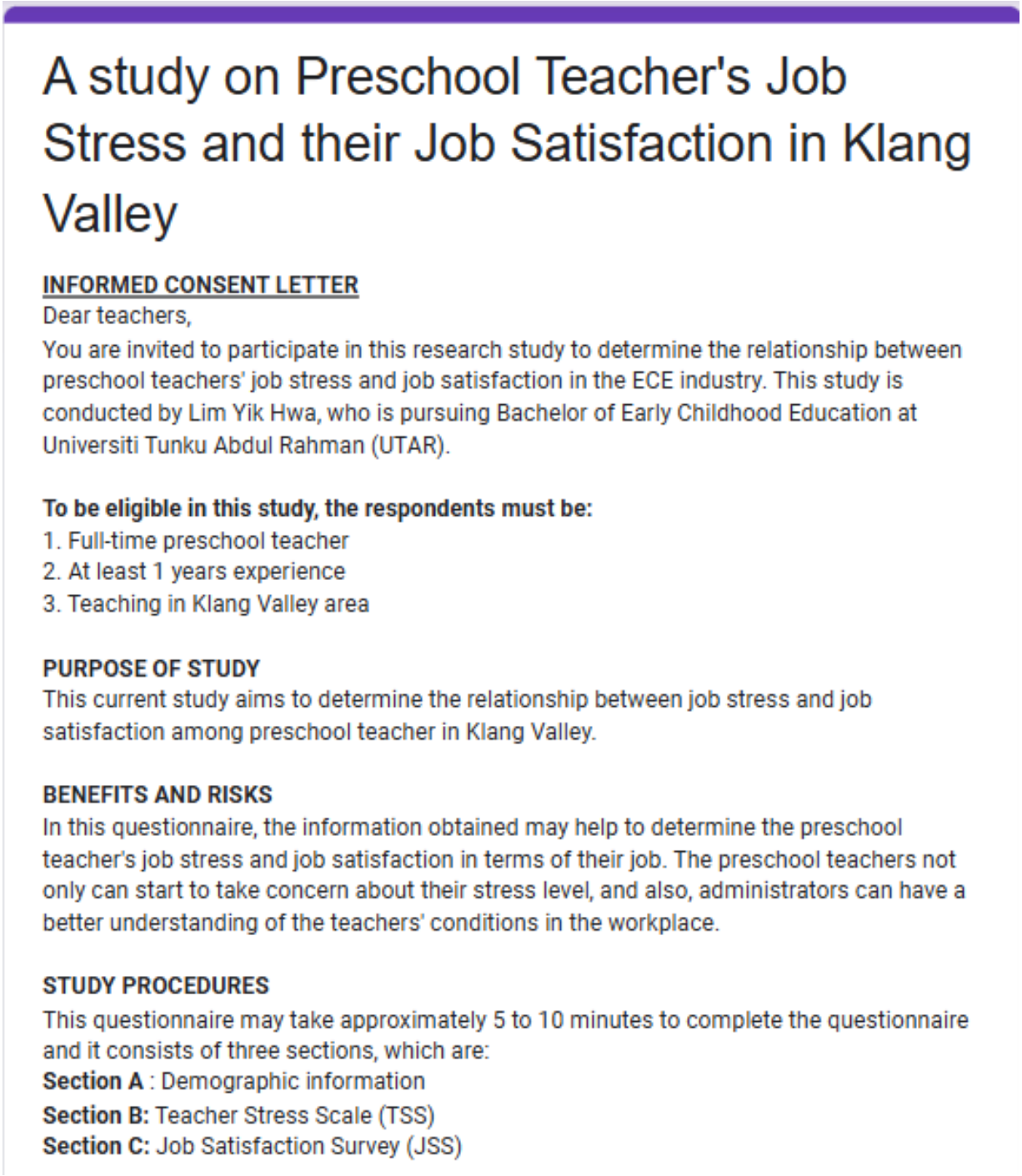
Appendix

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Figure 5

Questionnaire – Informed Consent Letter



A study on Preschool Teacher's Job Stress and their Job Satisfaction in Klang Valley

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear teachers,

You are invited to participate in this research study to determine the relationship between preschool teachers' job stress and job satisfaction in the ECE industry. This study is conducted by Lim Yik Hwa, who is pursuing Bachelor of Early Childhood Education at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR).

To be eligible in this study, the respondents must be:

1. Full-time preschool teacher
2. At least 1 years experience
3. Teaching in Klang Valley area

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This current study aims to determine the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among preschool teacher in Klang Valley.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

In this questionnaire, the information obtained may help to determine the preschool teacher's job stress and job satisfaction in terms of their job. The preschool teachers not only can start to take concern about their stress level, and also, administrators can have a better understanding of the teachers' conditions in the workplace.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This questionnaire may take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and it consists of three sections, which are:

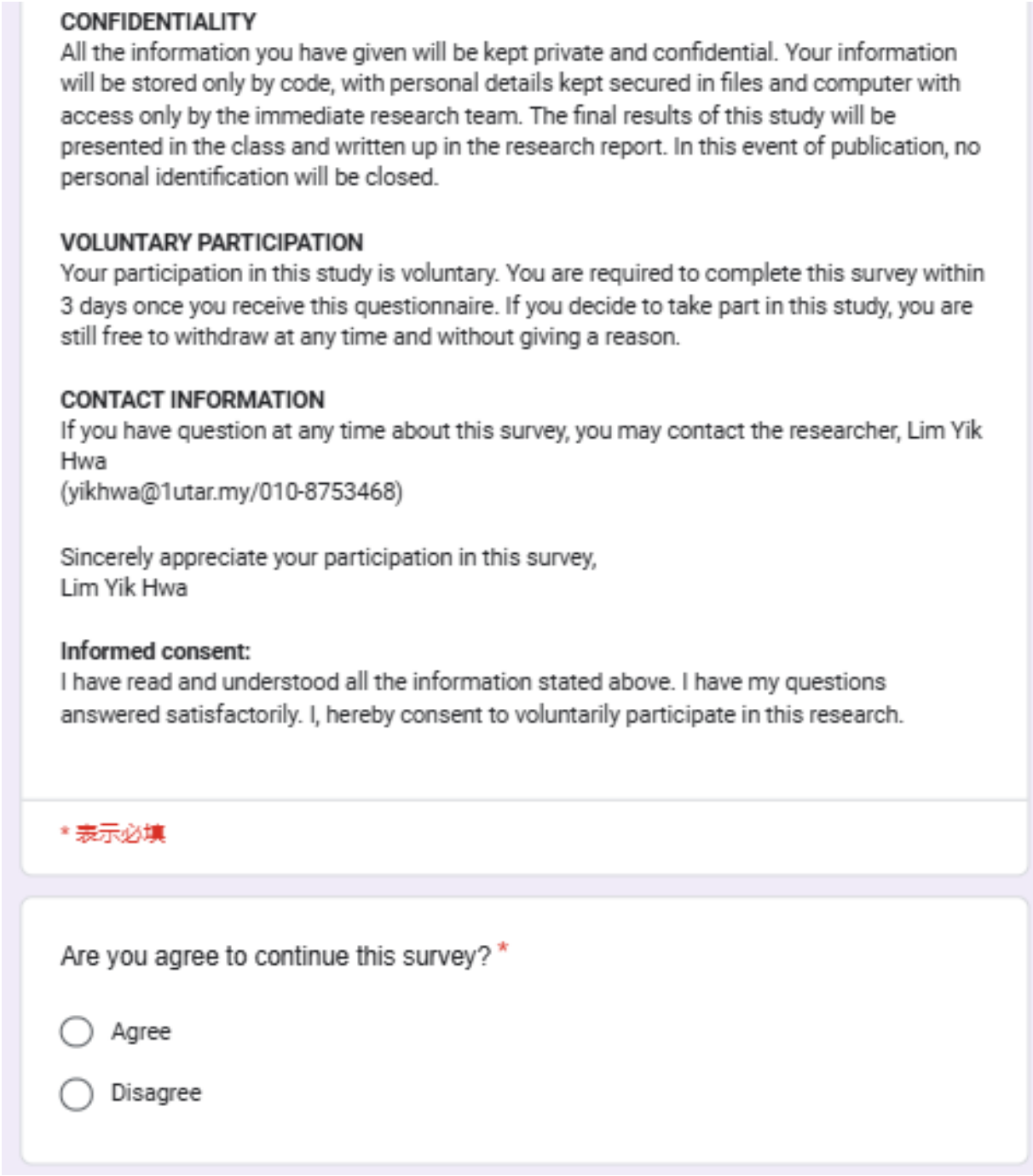
Section A : Demographic information

Section B: Teacher Stress Scale (TSS)

Section C: Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)

Figure 6

Questionnaire – Informed Consent Letter



CONFIDENTIALITY
All the information you have given will be kept private and confidential. Your information will be stored only by code, with personal details kept secured in files and computer with access only by the immediate research team. The final results of this study will be presented in the class and written up in the research report. In this event of publication, no personal identification will be closed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are required to complete this survey within 3 days once you receive this questionnaire. If you decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have question at any time about this survey, you may contact the researcher, Lim Yik Hwa
(yikhwa@1utar.my/010-8753468)

Sincerely appreciate your participation in this survey,
Lim Yik Hwa

Informed consent:
I have read and understood all the information stated above. I have my questions answered satisfactorily. I, hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this research.

* 表示必填

Are you agree to continue this survey? *

- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree

Figure 7

Questionnaire – Google Form (Demographic Information) 1

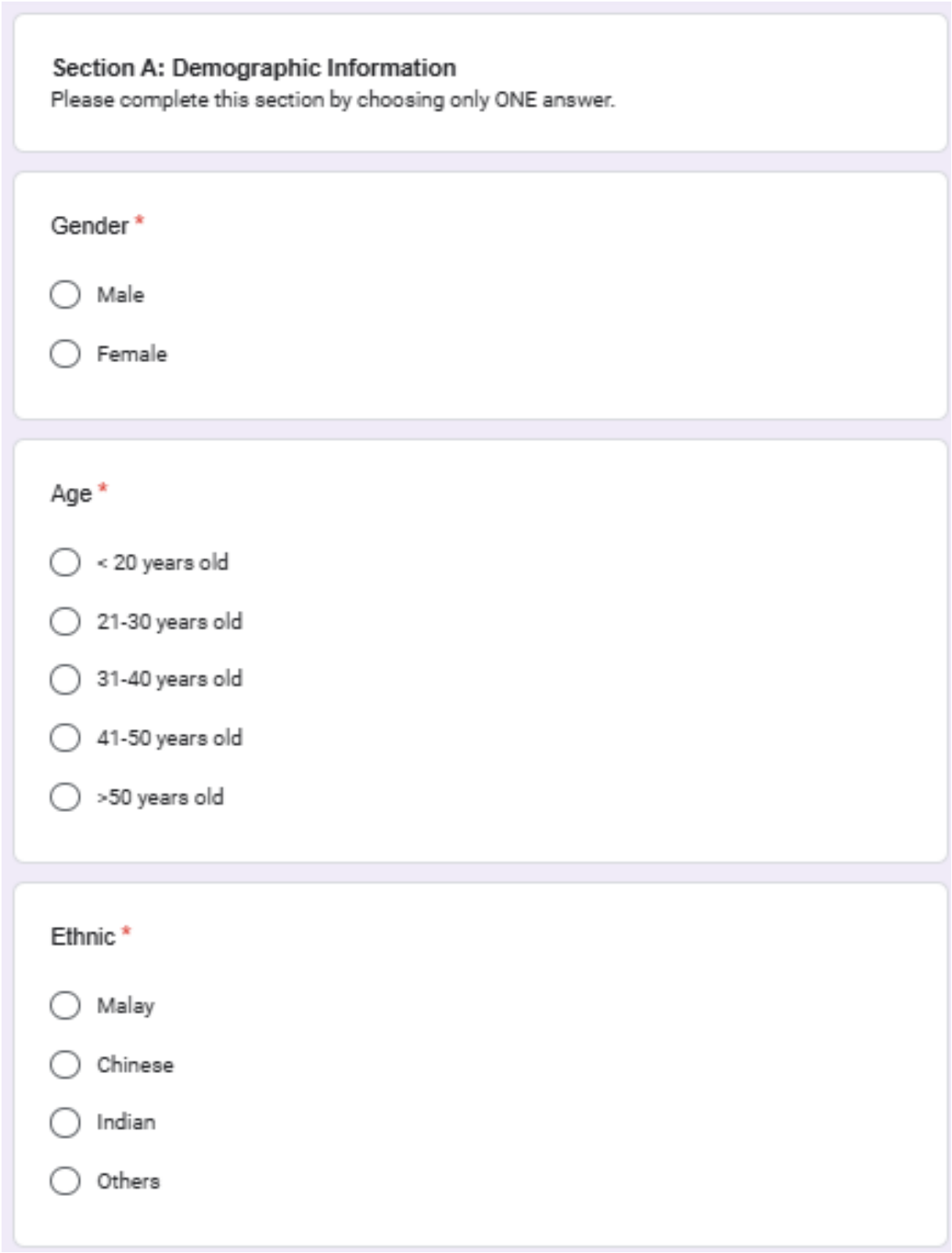
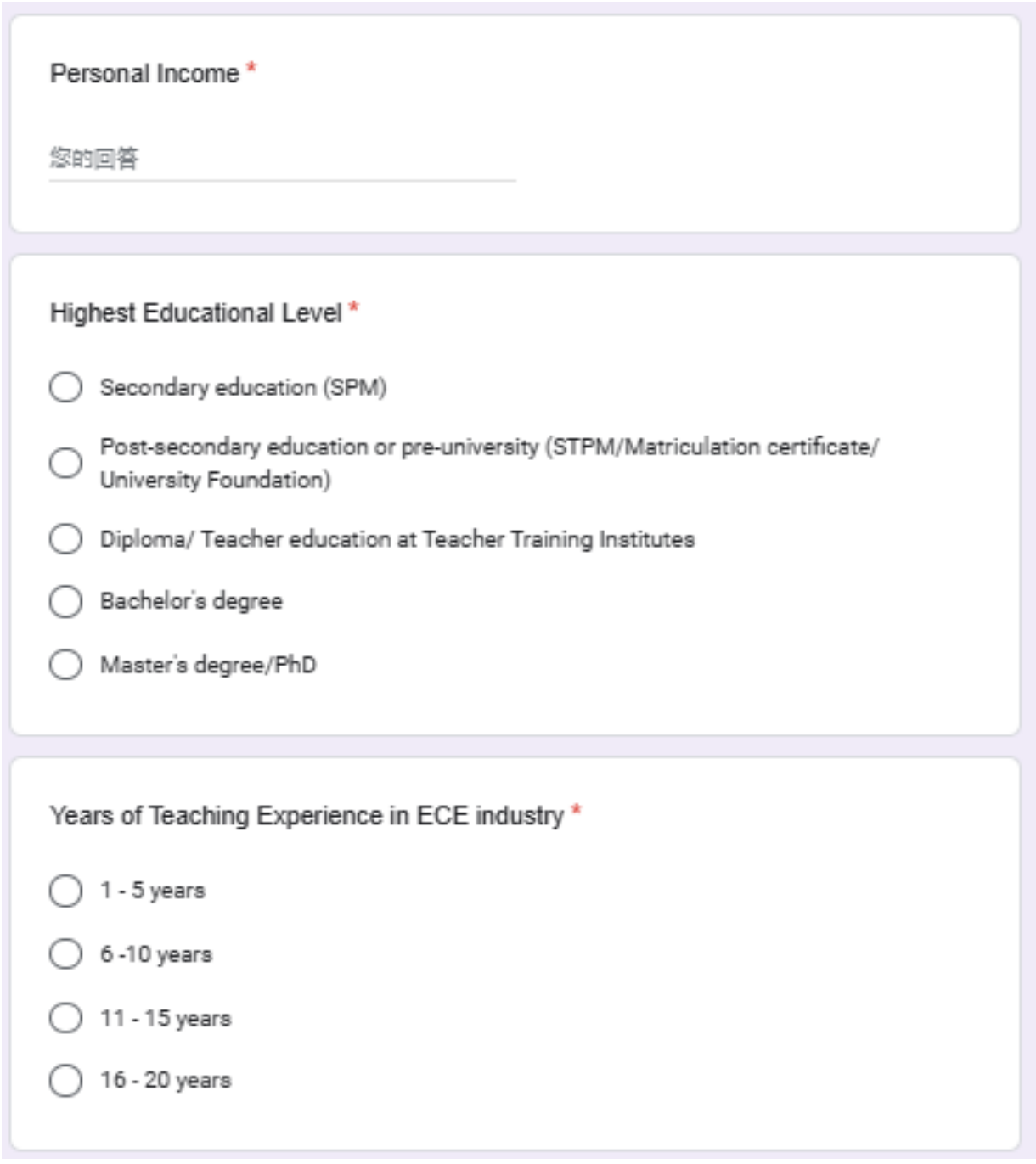


Figure 8

Questionnaire – Google Form (Demographic Information) 2


Personal Income *

您的回答

Highest Educational Level *

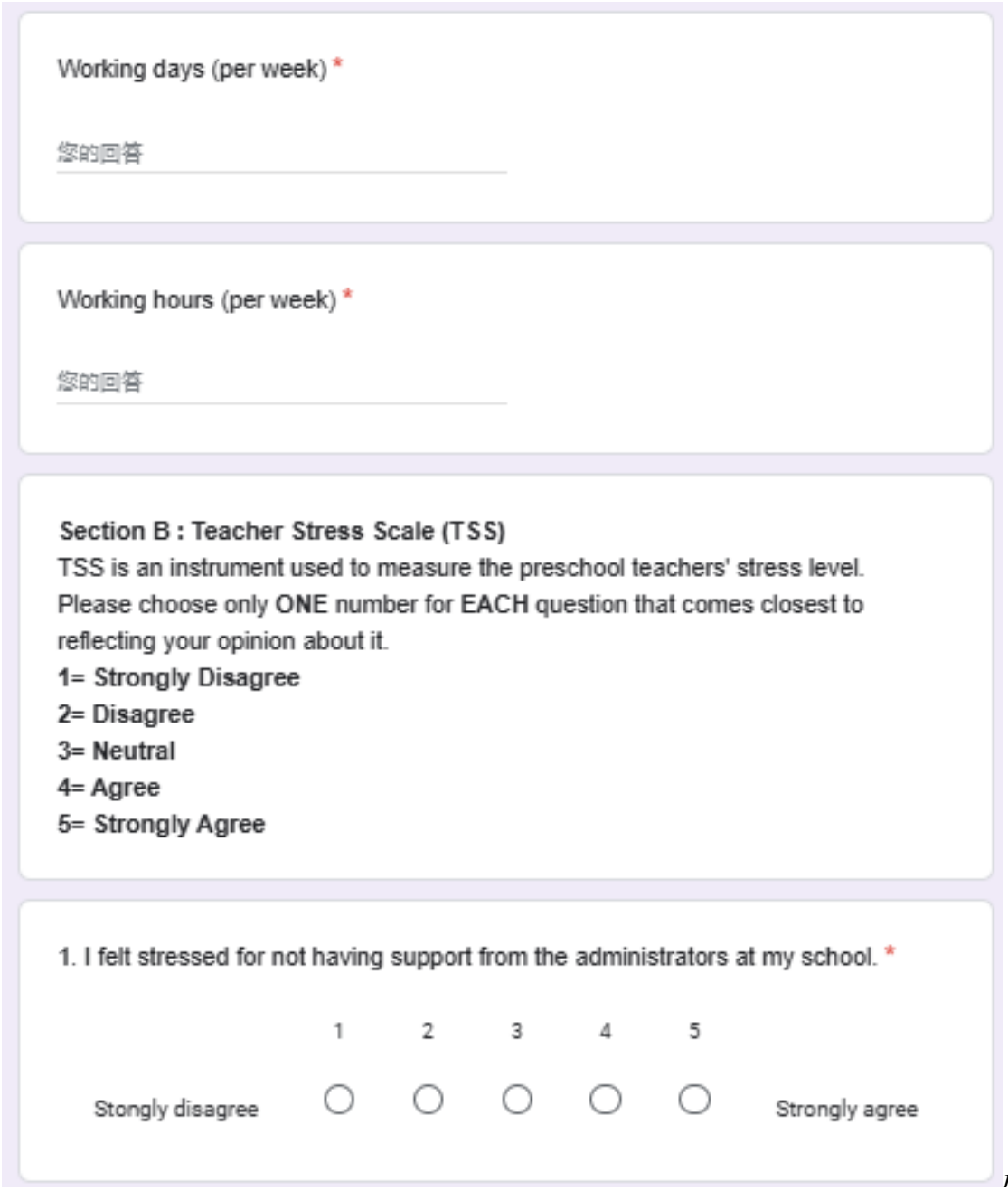
- Secondary education (SPM)
- Post-secondary education or pre-university (STPM/Matriculation certificate/ University Foundation)
- Diploma/ Teacher education at Teacher Training Institutes
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree/PhD

Years of Teaching Experience in ECE industry *

- 1 - 5 years
- 6 -10 years
- 11 - 15 years
- 16 - 20 years

Figure 9

Questionnaire – Google Form (Demographic Information) 3


Working days (per week) *

您的回答

Working hours (per week) *

您的回答

Section B : Teacher Stress Scale (TSS)
TSS is an instrument used to measure the preschool teachers' stress level. Please choose only **ONE** number for **EACH** question that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it.
1= Strongly Disagree
2= Disagree
3= Neutral
4= Agree
5= Strongly Agree

1. I felt stressed for not having support from the administrators at my school. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

m

Figure 10

Questionnaire – Google Form (TSS) 1

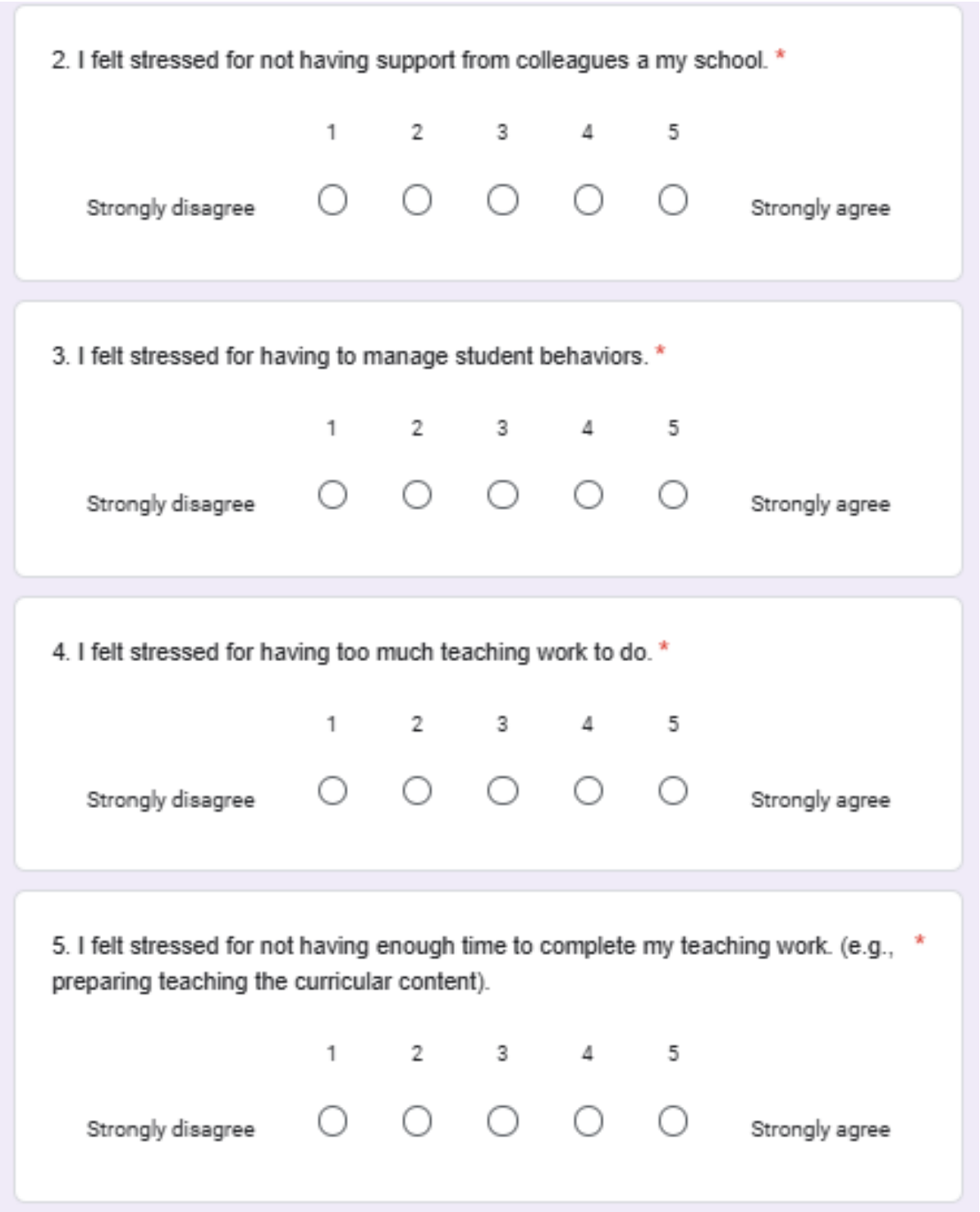


Figure 11

Questionnaire – Google Form (TSS) 2

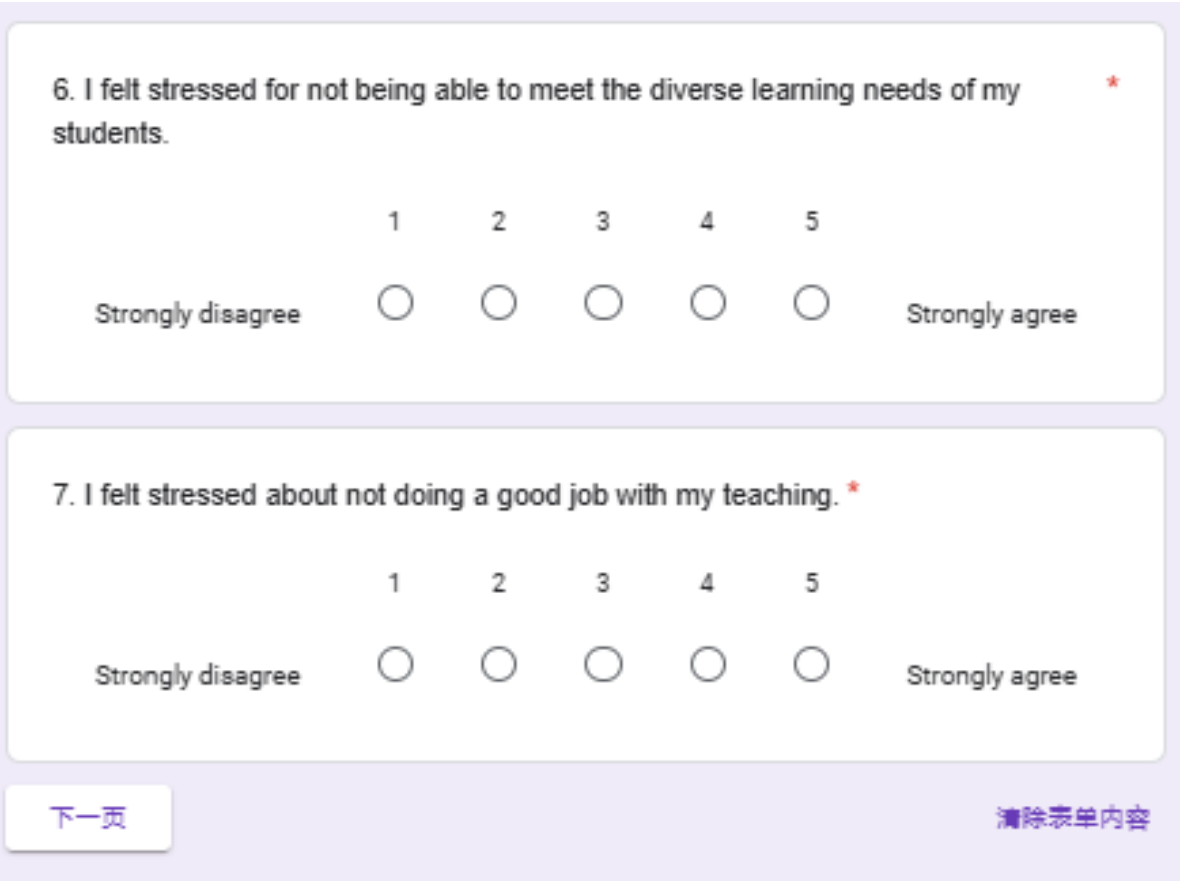
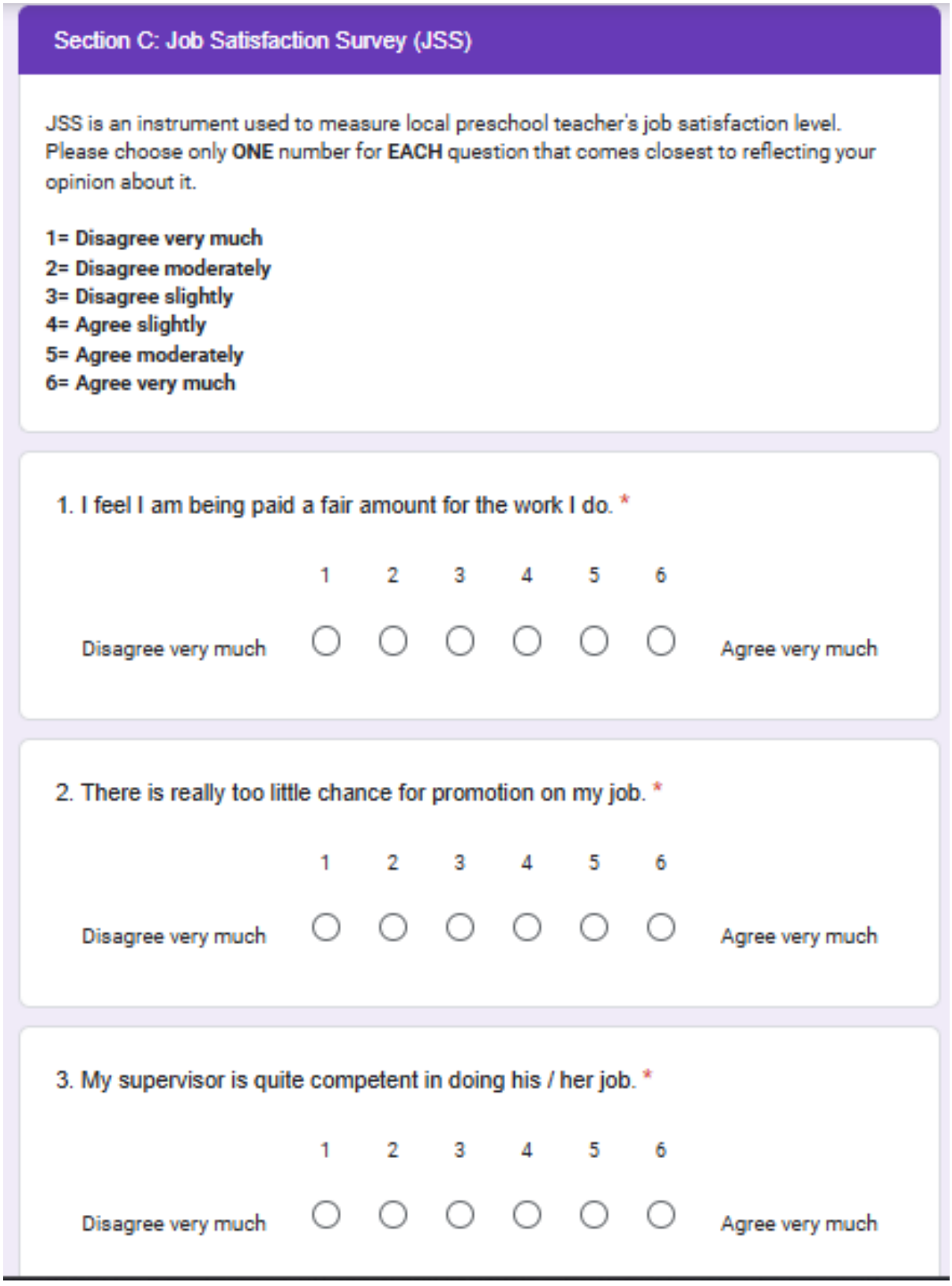


Figure 12

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 1



Section C: Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)

JSS is an instrument used to measure local preschool teacher's job satisfaction level. Please choose only **ONE** number for **EACH** question that comes closest to reflecting your opinion about it.

1= Disagree very much
2= Disagree moderately
3= Disagree slightly
4= Agree slightly
5= Agree moderately
6= Agree very much

1. I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Disagree very much	○	○	○	○	○	○	Agree very much

2. There is really too little chance for promotion on my job. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Disagree very much	○	○	○	○	○	○	Agree very much

3. My supervisor is quite competent in doing his / her job. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Disagree very much	○	○	○	○	○	○	Agree very much

Figure 13

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 2

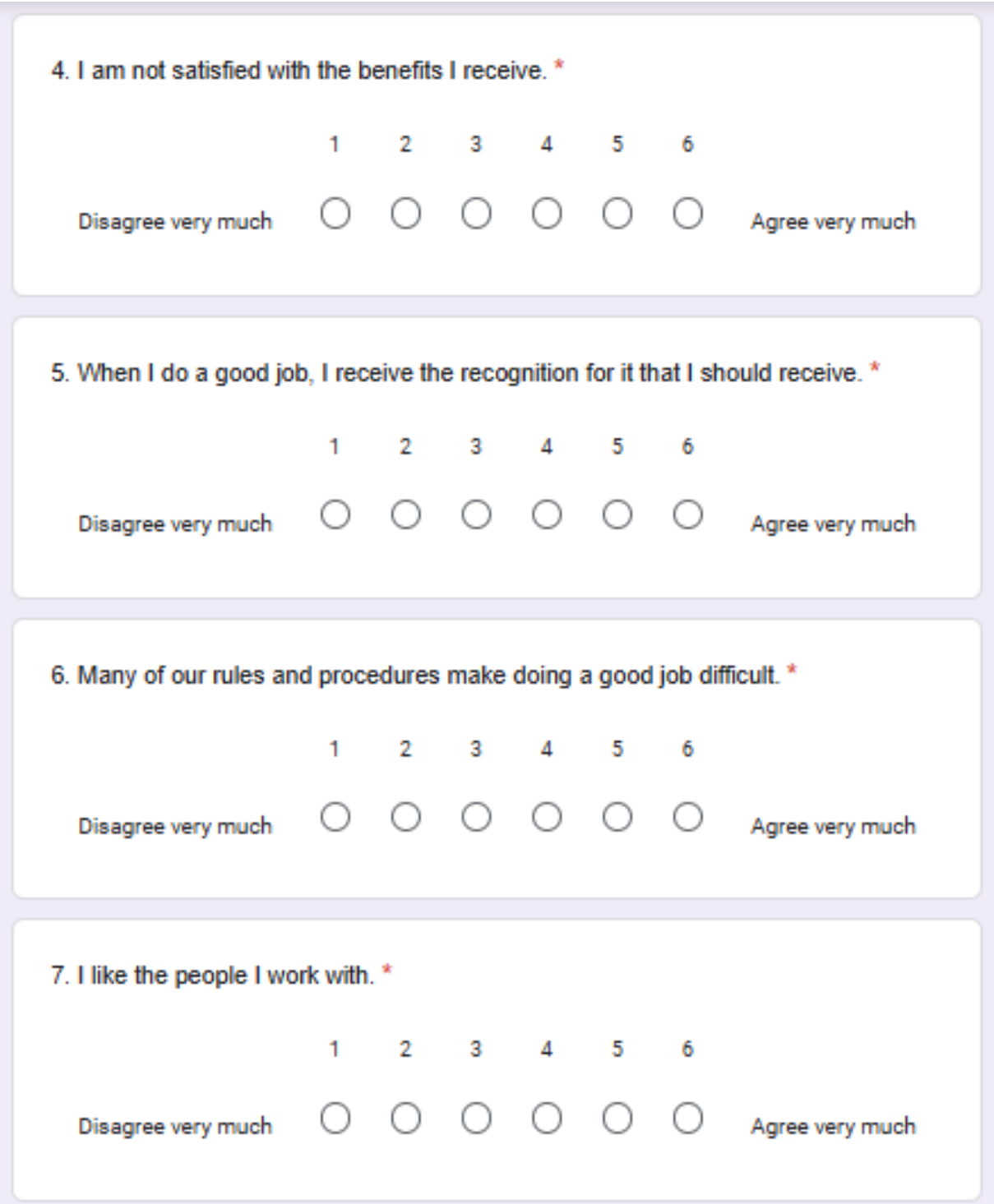


Figure 14

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 3

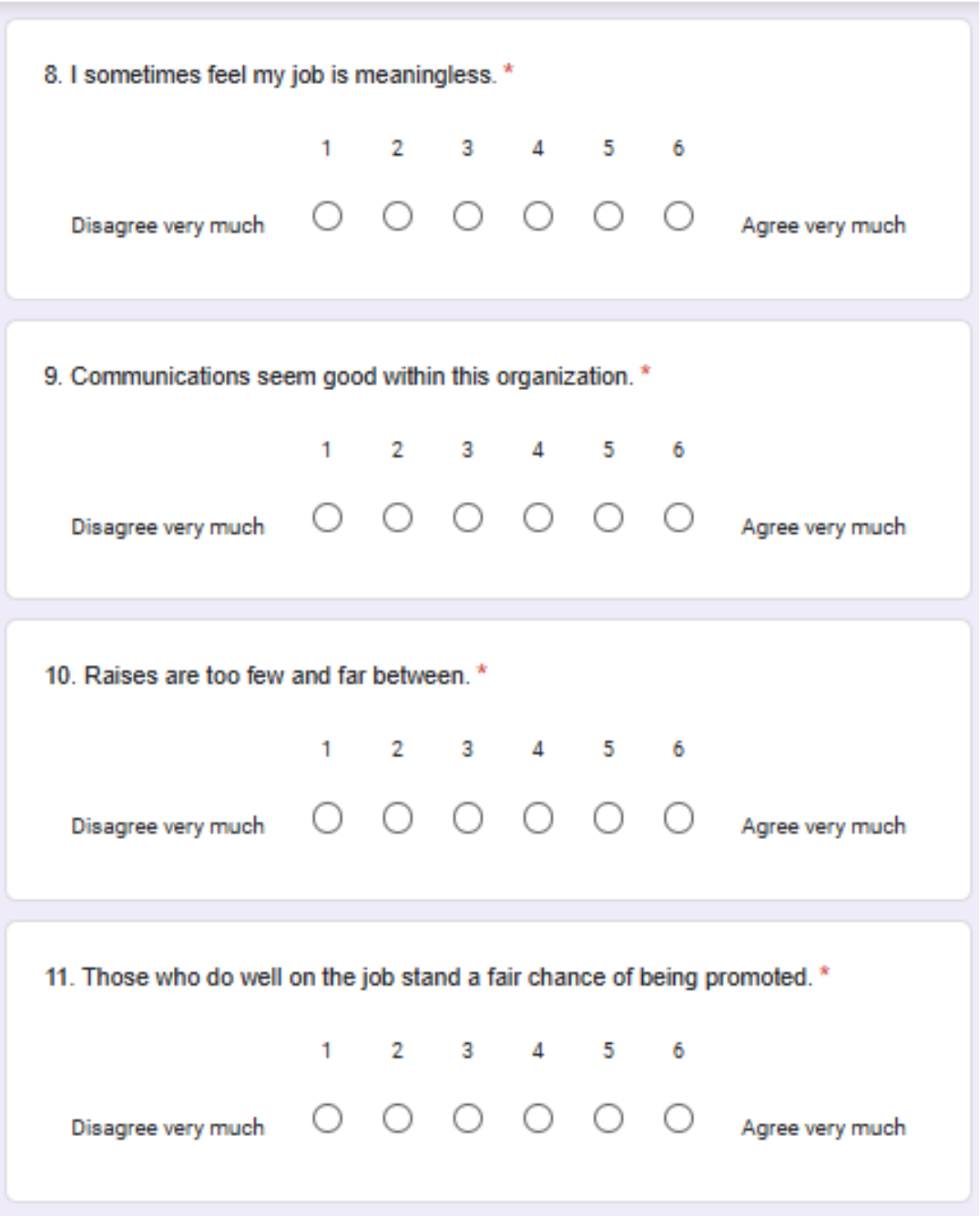


Figure 15

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 4

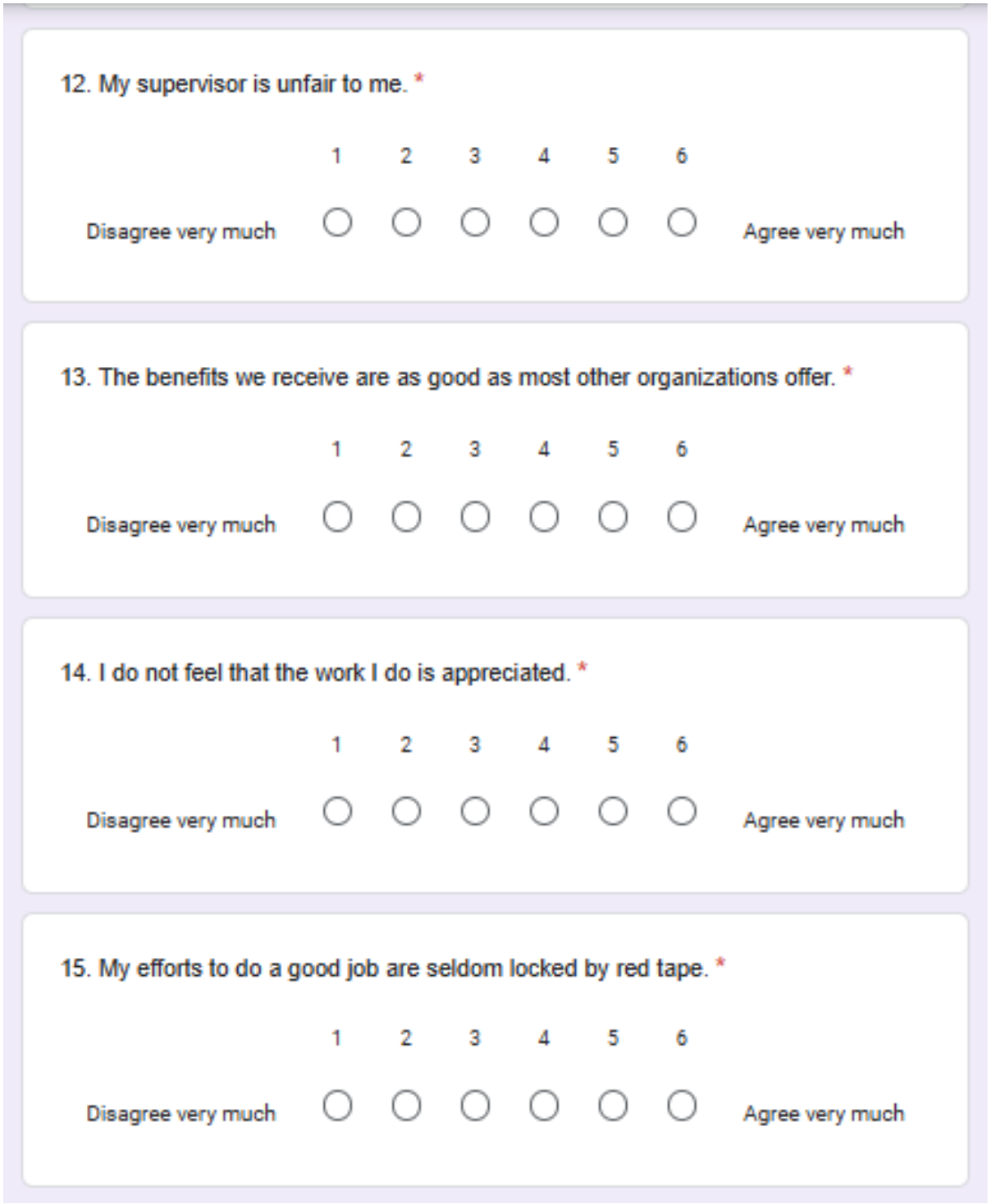


Figure 16

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 5

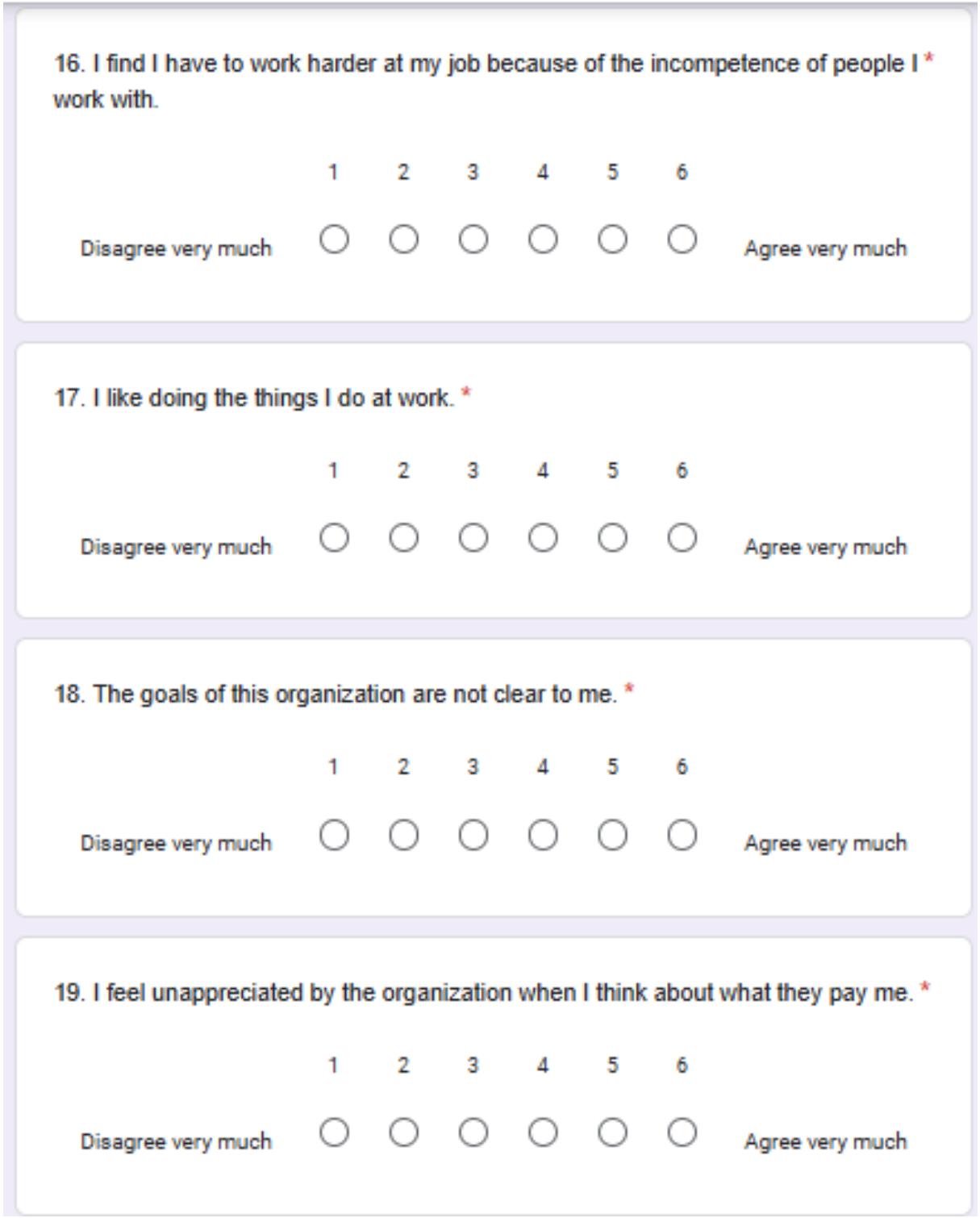


Figure 17

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 6

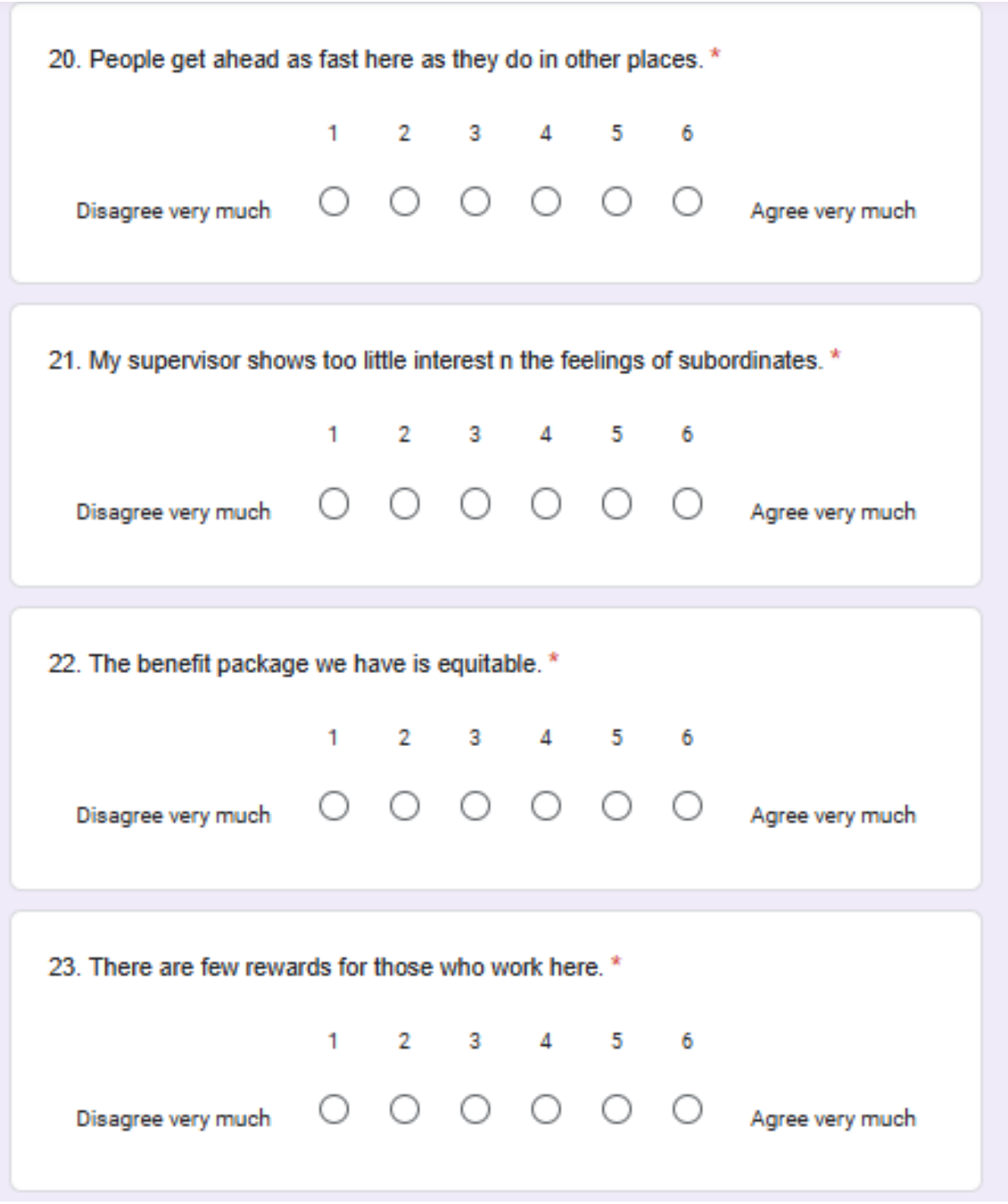
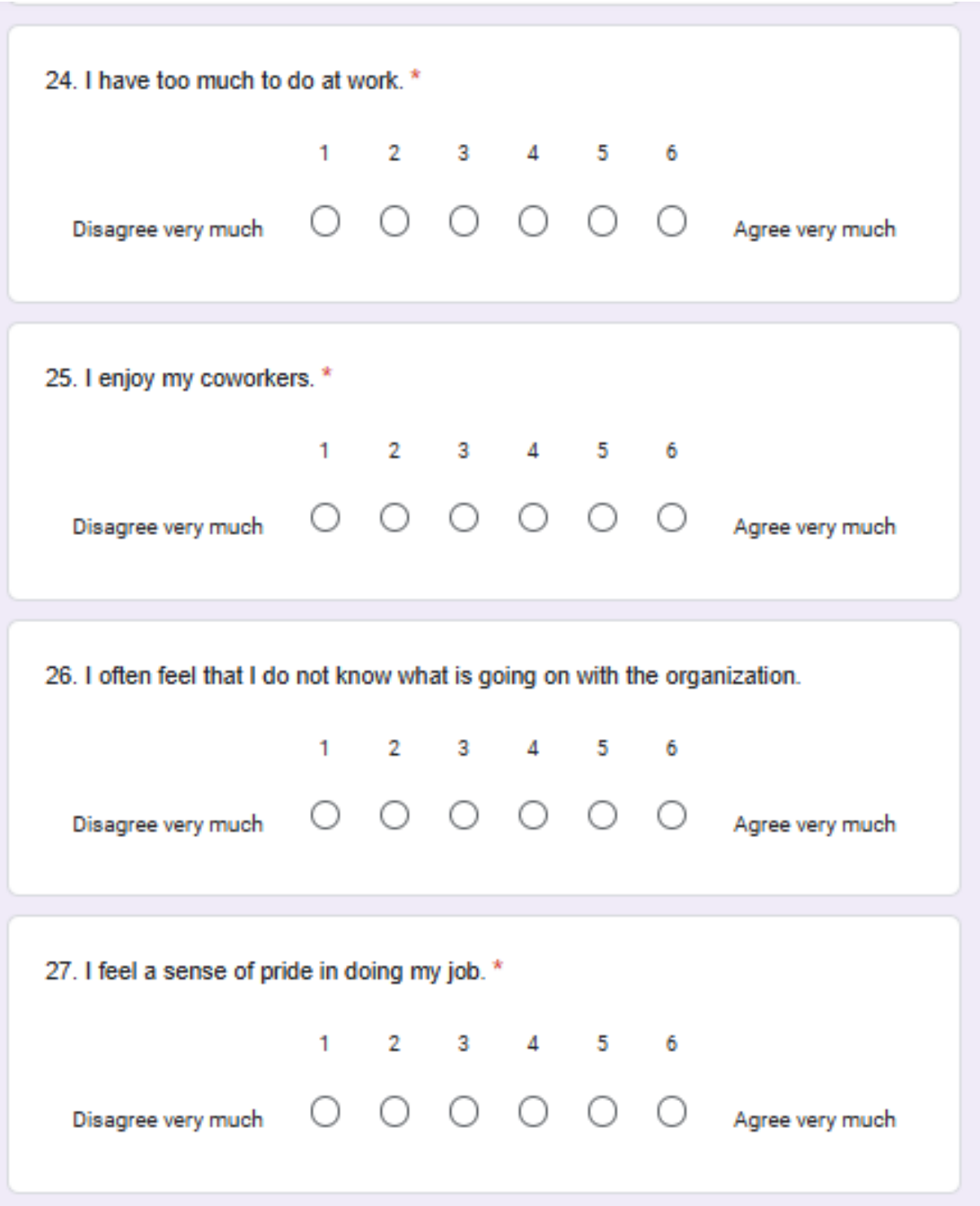


Figure 18

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 7



24. I have too much to do at work. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Disagree very much	○	○	○	○	○	○	Agree very much

25. I enjoy my coworkers. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Disagree very much	○	○	○	○	○	○	Agree very much

26. I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Disagree very much	○	○	○	○	○	○	Agree very much

27. I feel a sense of pride in doing my job. *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Disagree very much	○	○	○	○	○	○	Agree very much

Figure 19

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 8

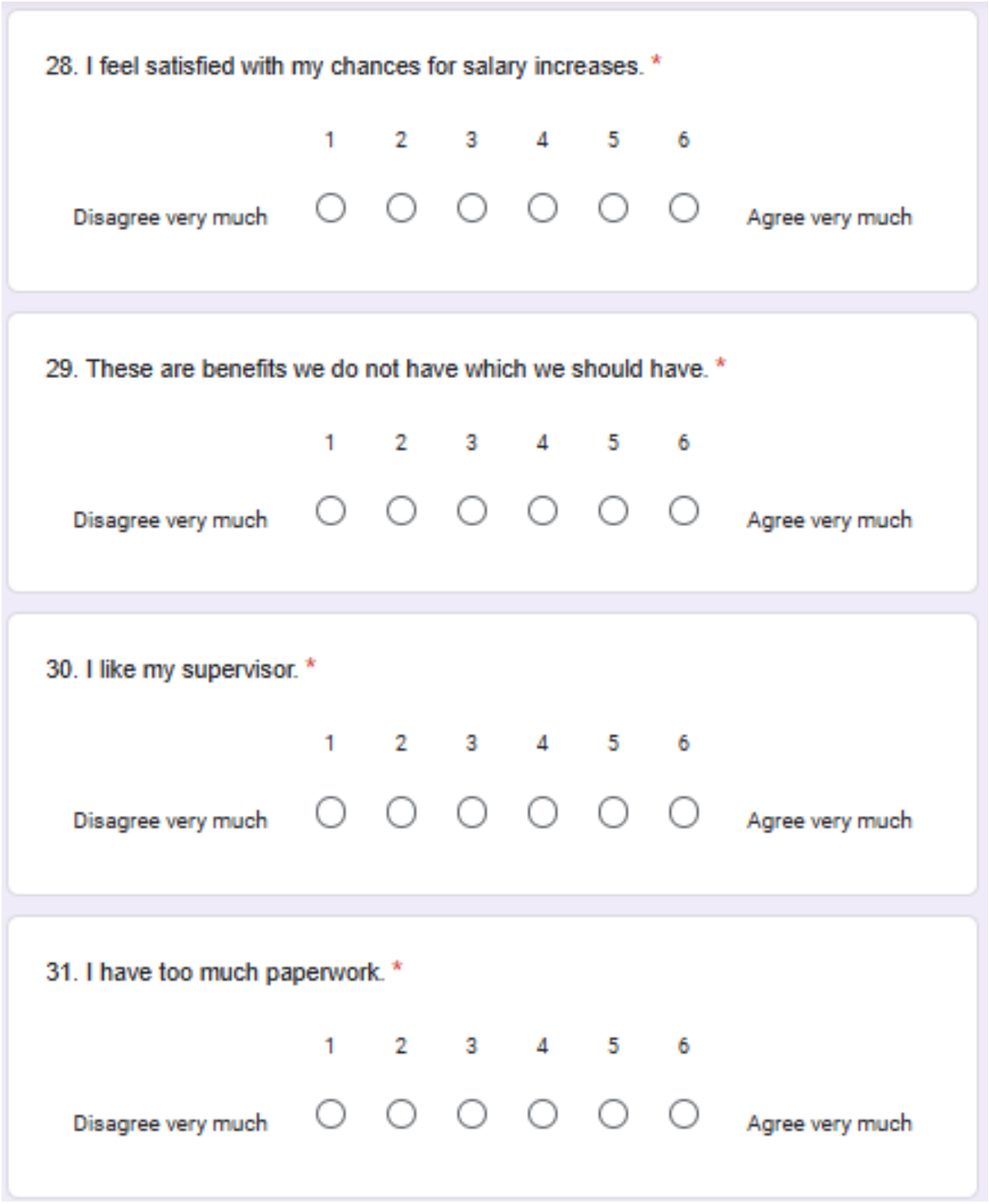


Figure 20

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 9

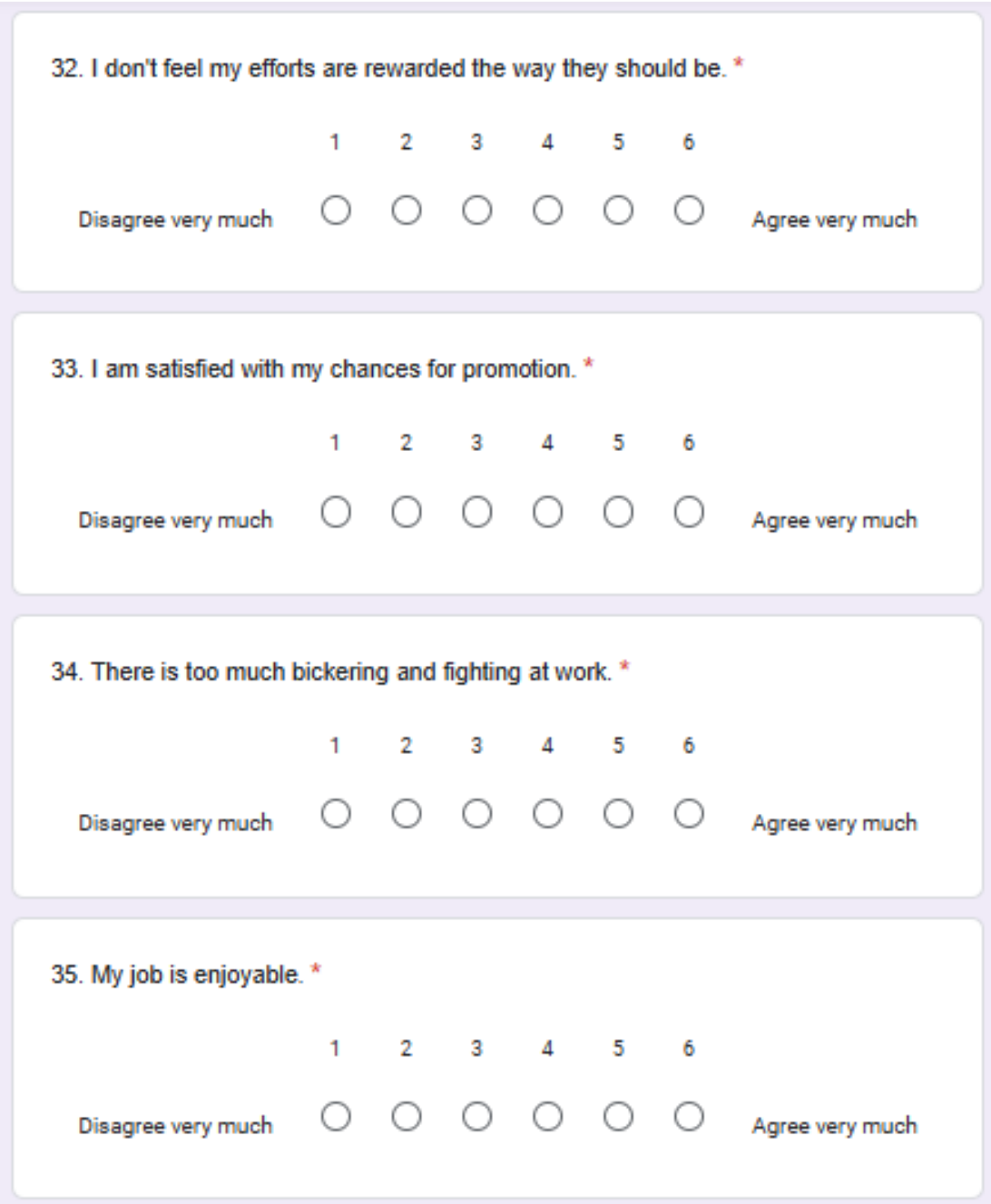


Figure 21

Questionnaire – Google Form (JSS) 10

Appendix B: SPSS Original Data

Figure 22

SPSS output of descriptive statistics – Respondents' Gender

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	60	90.9	90.9	90.9
	Male	6	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Figure 23

SPSS output of descriptive statistics – Respondents' Age

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	< 20 years old	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	>50 years old	3	4.5	4.5	6.1
	21-30 years old	36	54.5	54.5	60.6
	31-40 years old	22	33.3	33.3	93.9
	41-50 years old	4	6.1	6.1	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Figure 24

SPSS output of descriptive statistics – Respondents' Race

Ethnic

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Chinese	56	84.8	84.8	84.8
	Indian	2	3.0	3.0	87.9
	Malay	5	7.6	7.6	95.5
	Others	3	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Figure 25

SPSS output of Descriptive Statistics – Distribution of Respondents" Education Level

HighestEducationalLevel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor's degree	45	68.2	68.2	68.2
	Diploma/ Teacher education at Teacher Training Institutes	11	16.7	16.7	84.8
	Master's degree/PhD	5	7.6	7.6	92.4
	Post-secondary education or pre-university (STPM/Matriculation certificate/ University Foundation)	2	3.0	3.0	95.5
	Secondary education (SPM)	3	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Figure 26

SPSS output of Descriptive Statistics – Distribution of Respondents" Years of Teaching Experience in ECE Industry

YearsofTeachingExperienceinECEindustry

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 - 5 years	35	53.0	53.0	53.0
	11 - 15 years	3	4.5	4.5	57.6
	16 - 20 years	1	1.5	1.5	59.1
	6 -10 years	27	40.9	40.9	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Figure 27

SPSS output of Descriptive Statistics – Distribution of Respondents" Working Hours Per Week

Workinghoursperweek

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	35	8	12.1	12.1	12.1
	40	16	24.2	24.2	36.4
	45	26	39.4	39.4	75.8
	50	16	24.2	24.2	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Figure 28

SPSS output of Descriptive Statistics – Distribution of Respondents" Working Days Per Week

Workingdaysperweek

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5	61	92.4	92.4	92.4
	6	5	7.6	7.6	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Figure 29

SPSS output of Descriptive Statistics - Mean and Standard Deviation of Total Stress Scale (TSS), its subscales Inadequate School- based support (TSS-F1) and Teaching related Demands (TSS-F2)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TSSF1NEW	66	1.33	5.00	3.7222	.83836
TSSF2MEW	66	1.00	4.75	3.8485	.74920
TSSALL	66	1.14	4.57	3.7944	.72025
Valid N (listwise)	66				

Figure 30

SPSS output of Descriptive Statistics - Mean and Standard Deviation Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) 9 Subscales

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pay	66	5.00	21.00	12.1667	3.59308
Promotion	66	9.00	20.00	14.2727	2.59316
Supervision	66	4.00	23.00	13.1212	3.47525
Fringebenefits	66	5.00	24.00	12.5000	3.73857
Contingentrewards	66	4.00	21.00	11.5909	3.55604
Operatingprocedures	66	5.00	18.00	11.2121	3.15505
Coworkers	66	7.00	24.00	14.6212	3.43630
Natureofwork	66	7.00	23.00	15.2879	3.53342
Communication	66	6.00	21.00	12.0606	3.45912
Valid N (listwise)	66				

Figure 31

SPSS output of Descriptive Statistics – Frequency and Percentage of Total Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)

TotalJSScategory

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	dissatisfaction	20	30.3	30.3	30.3
	ambivilance	40	60.6	60.6	90.9
	satisfaction	6	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Figure 32

SPSS output of Descriptive Statistics - Pearson Correlation Result for Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

Correlations

		TSSALL	TotalJSS
TSSALL	Pearson Correlation	1	-.556**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	66	66
TotalJSS	Pearson Correlation	-.556**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	66	66

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