

## Examining the Job Satisfaction of Ethnic Music Teachers: The Experience of Guangdong Province, China

Li Hong Lou<sup>1\*</sup>, Mohd Muslim Md Zalli<sup>2</sup>, Mohd Syaubari Othman<sup>3</sup>  
Mohd Ridhuan Mohd Jamil<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia.

Email: lilorence1219@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia.

Email: muslim@fpm.upsi.edu.my

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia.

Email: syaubari@fpm.upsi.edu.my

<sup>4</sup>Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia.

Email: mridhuan@fpm.upsi.edu.my

### ABSTRACT

The job satisfaction of ethnic music teachers remains underexplored despite their important role in preserving cultural heritage and promoting arts education. This study examines the determinants of job satisfaction among ethnic music teachers in Guangdong Province, China, using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 100 teachers through a structured questionnaire measuring five dimensions: personal factors, workload and resources, social and cultural factors, salary and benefits, and administrative support. Standardized regression coefficients were compared within a composite satisfaction index framework. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with six teachers were used to further interpret the statistical findings. The results indicate that administrative support and salary and benefits are the strongest predictors of overall job satisfaction, while cultural identity and intrinsic motivation also contribute meaningfully. Interview findings reveal that leadership style, institutional recognition, and professional growth opportunities play critical roles in shaping teachers' experiences. The findings support Herzberg's two-factor theory and extend its application to arts education in regional Chinese contexts. The study provides policy implications for improving teacher retention and strengthening support systems in ethnic music education.

### CORRESPONDING

#### AUTHOR (\*):

Li Hong Lou  
(lilorence1219@gmail.com)

#### KEYWORDS:

Job satisfaction  
Ethnic music teachers  
Administrative support  
Cultural education  
Mixed methods

#### CITATION:

Li, H. L., Mohd Muslim, M. Z., Mohd Syaubari, O., Mohd Ridhuan, M. J. (2026). Examining the Job Satisfaction of Ethnic Music Teachers: The Experience of Guangdong Province, China. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 11(5), e003873.  
<https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v11i5.3873>

**Contribution/Originality:** This study contributes to the existing literature by examining job satisfaction among ethnic music teachers, a relatively underexplored group in educational research. Using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design,

it provides context-specific evidence from Guangdong Province, China, and highlights how administrative support, salary, and cultural commitment jointly shape teachers' job satisfaction.

## 1. Introduction

Teacher job satisfaction has long been recognized as a crucial determinant of educational quality, teacher retention, and institutional sustainability. Satisfied teachers are more likely to demonstrate higher instructional effectiveness, stronger commitment to their institutions, and greater resilience in the face of professional challenges. Conversely, low levels of job satisfaction may contribute to burnout, reduced teaching quality, and increased turnover intentions. For this reason, teacher job satisfaction has become an important topic in educational research and policy discussions worldwide (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020).

Although a substantial body of research has examined job satisfaction among general education teachers, comparatively limited attention has been devoted to educators in arts and culturally specialized disciplines. Within this broader context, ethnic music teachers represent a particularly underexplored group. Their professional responsibilities extend beyond classroom instruction; they are often entrusted with the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage, the cultivation of students' aesthetic literacy, and the promotion of cultural identity within school communities. These distinctive responsibilities suggest that the determinants of job satisfaction among ethnic music teachers may differ from those of teachers in core academic subjects (Hancock, 2009; Robison & Russell, 2022).

In China, recent national and provincial policies have emphasized the importance of cultural inheritance and aesthetic education. Ethnic music has been positioned as an essential component of traditional cultural preservation and educational development. Guangdong Province, as a region characterized by rapid modernization, economic dynamism, and cultural diversity, provides a particularly meaningful context in which to examine these issues. On the one hand, policy initiatives encourage the strengthening of ethnic music education; on the other hand, disparities between urban and rural schools, uneven distribution of educational resources, and varying levels of administrative support may shape teachers' professional experiences in complex ways (Reimers & Chung, 2019; Ren & Cheng, 2022).

Existing studies suggest that teacher job satisfaction is influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including workload, compensation, leadership support, professional development opportunities, and social recognition. However, most prior research adopts either purely quantitative approaches or focuses on broad teacher populations without considering the unique structural and cultural positioning of ethnic music educators. In addition, few studies have integrated theoretical frameworks such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory to systematically interpret the interplay between intrinsic motivation and institutional conditions within arts education settings (Zhou & Ma, 2022; Liu et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2023).

Ethnic music teachers may experience a dual professional reality. On one side, they may derive strong intrinsic motivation from artistic expression and cultural transmission. On the other side, they may encounter structural challenges such as limited teaching

resources, unclear evaluation standards, and marginalization within school administrative hierarchies. Understanding how these intrinsic and extrinsic factors interact is essential for developing more effective support systems and policy interventions (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Guan, Luo, & Matsunobu, 2023; Schmidt & Morrow, 2016).

To address these gaps, the present study investigates the determinants of job satisfaction among ethnic music teachers in Guangdong Province, China. Specifically, the study examines five dimensions of job satisfaction: personal factors, workload and resources, social and cultural factors, salary and benefits, and administrative support and analyzes their relative contributions within a composite satisfaction framework. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design is employed, combining quantitative survey data from 100 teachers with qualitative interviews from six participants. This integrated approach enables both statistical generalization and contextual interpretation.

By focusing on a culturally specialized group within a rapidly developing regional context, this study contributes to the broader literature in three ways. First, it extends existing job satisfaction research to the domain of ethnic music education. Second, it integrates motivational and structural theoretical perspectives to interpret teacher experiences more comprehensively. Third, it provides context-sensitive insights that may inform educational policy and administrative practice aimed at strengthening teacher support mechanisms and sustaining cultural heritage through formal schooling.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Teacher Job Satisfaction Research**

Teacher job satisfaction has been extensively examined in educational research due to its close association with teacher retention, instructional effectiveness, and school performance (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). Early studies conceptualized job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct influenced by both internal psychological states and external working conditions. Subsequent empirical research has consistently identified salary, workload, leadership style, professional development opportunities, and interpersonal relationships as key determinants of satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021; Zhou & Ma, 2022).

Quantitative investigations frequently demonstrate that compensation and working conditions are significantly related to overall satisfaction levels (Hao, 2019; Hu et al., 2024). Teachers who perceive fairness in remuneration and workload distribution tend to report higher levels of professional commitment and lower turnover intentions. Leadership support has also been repeatedly identified as a critical factor, particularly through transparent communication, instructional guidance, and participatory decision making (Liu et al., 2021; Fan et al., 2024).

In addition to structural conditions, intrinsic motivational elements play a vital role. Teachers often derive satisfaction from a sense of accomplishment, recognition, autonomy, and professional growth. Studies grounded in self-determination theory highlight the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering sustained professional engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These intrinsic factors may be particularly relevant in creative or artistic disciplines, where professional identity and

personal meaning are deeply intertwined with instructional practice (Hess, 2019; Salvador, 2019).

However, most existing research focuses on general subject teachers in mainstream academic contexts. Comparatively fewer studies investigate arts educators, and even fewer address teachers engaged in ethnic or culturally specific disciplines (Yan et al., 2019; Robison & Russell, 2022). Arts teachers often operate within institutional environments where academic subjects receive greater prioritization in terms of funding, evaluation standards, and administrative attention. This marginal positioning may create distinct professional pressures that are not fully captured by traditional teacher satisfaction models (Shaw, 2019; Schmidt & Morrow, 2016).

Within the Chinese context, research indicates that demographic variables such as age, gender, and career stage influence satisfaction levels (Wang et al., 2022). Younger teachers frequently report economic pressure and role ambiguity, while mid-career teachers emphasize workload imbalance and promotion constraints. Senior teachers tend to prioritize job security and health-related benefits. Nevertheless, empirical investigations specifically targeting ethnic music teachers remain limited, and existing studies often rely on single-method quantitative designs without integrating qualitative insight (Zhou, Choi, & So, 2024).

These gaps highlight the need for more context-sensitive and methodologically integrated research to better understand how multiple structural and psychological factors interact within specialized educational domains.

## **2.2. Ethnic Music Education and Contextual Challenges**

Ethnic music education occupies a distinctive position within school systems. Beyond teaching musical skills, ethnic music educators are responsible for transmitting cultural heritage, sustaining traditional artistic practices, and fostering cultural identity among students through culturally responsive pedagogy (Guan, Luo, & Matsunobu, 2023). In China, recent policy initiatives have elevated the importance of traditional cultural education and the protection of intangible cultural heritage, strengthening the symbolic legitimacy of ethnic music within educational agendas (Reimers & Chung, 2016; Ren & Cheng, 2022).

Despite this policy level recognition, practical challenges persist in the implementation of ethnic music education. Schools may face resource constraints, including insufficient teaching equipment, outdated instruments, and limited budget allocation for arts programs. Professional development opportunities tailored specifically to music teachers may be scarce, resulting in limited career advancement pathways (West, 2021; Fan et al., 2024). Furthermore, evaluation systems in many schools remain oriented toward academic examination performance, potentially marginalizing arts education and reducing institutional recognition of cultural subjects (Schmidt & Morrow, 2016; Shaw, 2019).

Guangdong Province presents a particularly complex context. As a region characterized by rapid economic development and cultural diversity, Guangdong experiences both modernization pressures and strong traditions of regional cultural identity. Urban schools may have access to better infrastructure and funding, whereas rural or mountainous areas may struggle with limited resources and professional support. These

disparities can directly influence teachers' perceptions of fairness, support, and professional sustainability (Leung, 2021; Zhou, Choi, & So, 2024).

Ethnic music teachers frequently assume multiple roles within their institutions. In addition to classroom instruction, they may coordinate extracurricular performances, organize cultural events, manage community engagement activities, and mentor students in artistic competitions. This multiplicity of roles can increase workload intensity and blur the boundaries between artistic passion and administrative obligation, raising the risk of stress and reduced well-being (Liao et al., 2023; Magtalas & Eduvala, 2024).

Existing literature suggests that arts educators often report lower institutional recognition compared to teachers of core academic subjects, which may weaken professional identity and diminish motivation over time (Yan et al., 2019; Salvador, 2019). However, empirical research systematically examining how these contextual challenges influence job satisfaction among ethnic music teachers in Guangdong remains limited. A deeper understanding of these structural and cultural dynamics is therefore necessary.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

To interpret the complex interplay of structural and psychological determinants, this study draws upon Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory as organizing lenses for interpreting teachers' needs and workplace experiences (Rojas, Méndez, & Watkins-Fassler, 2023; Lee et al., 2022).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs conceptualizes human motivation as progressing through successive levels, from physiological and safety needs to belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Within the professional context of ethnic music teachers, salary and job security correspond to foundational needs, while collegial relationships and social recognition align with belongingness and esteem. At the highest level, artistic fulfillment and cultural preservation may represent forms of self-actualization, linking professional meaning to cultural mission (Rojas, Méndez, & Watkins-Fassler, 2023; Guan, Luo, & Matsunobu, 2023).

Herzberg's two-factor theory further distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivational factors. Hygiene factors, including salary, institutional policy, working conditions, and administrative supervision, can cause dissatisfaction when inadequate, while motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and professional growth contribute to positive satisfaction experiences. Recent education studies applying two-factor theory similarly emphasize the balance between structural guarantees and meaningful professional growth (Thant & Chang, 2021; Jiang et al., 2023).

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the present study conceptualizes job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct shaped by both institutional structures and intrinsic professional meaning. The five dimensions examined: personal factors, workload and resources, social and cultural factors, salary and benefits, and administrative support reflect this theoretical integration. Personal and cultural dimensions correspond to motivational aspects, whereas salary, workload, and

administrative support align with hygiene components (Lee et al., 2022; Zhou & Ma, 2022).

This combined framework enables a more nuanced understanding of how structural support and intrinsic cultural commitment interact to influence the professional experiences of ethnic music teachers in Guangdong Province.

## **2.4 Research Gap and Conceptual Positioning**

Although prior research has explored teacher job satisfaction from multiple perspectives, several limitations remain evident. First, many studies treat teachers as a homogeneous group without distinguishing between subject disciplines. This generalization may obscure discipline-specific professional dynamics, particularly for arts teachers whose work involves both pedagogical and cultural responsibilities (Yan et al., 2019; Robison & Russell, 2022).

Second, existing studies often emphasize either structural conditions such as salary and workload or psychological variables such as motivation and commitment. Fewer investigations attempt to integrate these dimensions within a unified analytical framework, leaving the interaction between institutional support and intrinsic cultural dedication insufficiently explored (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Zhou & Ma, 2022).

Third, methodological limitations are also apparent in the literature. Many studies rely exclusively on large-scale surveys, which identify statistical patterns but may not adequately capture contextual nuance. In contrast, purely qualitative studies may provide rich description but lack structural comparison across dimensions. Mixed-methods approaches offer a practical pathway for combining explanatory breadth with contextual depth (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The present study addresses these gaps by combining quantitative measurement with qualitative interpretation and by situating ethnic music teachers within a multidimensional satisfaction framework. By examining proportional relationships among structural and personal factors, the research seeks to provide a more balanced and contextually grounded understanding of teacher satisfaction in a culturally specialized domain.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1. Research Design**

This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. The quantitative phase was conducted first to identify general patterns and structural relationships among job satisfaction dimensions. The qualitative phase followed to provide deeper interpretation of the statistical findings and to contextualize teachers' lived experiences (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The explanatory sequential approach was selected because job satisfaction is a multidimensional construct that involves both measurable structural factors and subjective professional perceptions. Quantitative data alone may identify statistical trends but cannot fully explain the underlying reasons behind teachers' responses. By integrating qualitative interviews after the survey analysis, the study aims to achieve a

more comprehensive understanding of how institutional and personal factors interact (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **3.2. Participants and Data Collection**

The study was conducted in Guangdong Province, China, involving ethnic music teachers from primary and secondary schools. Guangdong was selected as the research location because it represents a culturally diverse and economically dynamic region where ethnic music education is influenced by both cultural preservation efforts and uneven school-level resource conditions. This context provides a meaningful setting for examining how institutional and personal factors shape teachers' job satisfaction.

The target population of the study consisted of ethnic music teachers working in primary and secondary schools in Guangdong Province. The study focused only on teachers as the main respondents and did not include other stakeholders such as school administrators, parents, or students. For the quantitative phase, 100 ethnic music teachers were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation across different teaching experience levels, administrative roles, and class size conditions. This sample size was considered appropriate for descriptive, correlational, and group comparison analyses within a specialized population.

Demographic information was collected to analyze potential group differences, including years of teaching experience, administrative responsibilities, and student numbers per class. These variables were selected because previous research suggests that career stage and workload conditions may influence teacher satisfaction.

For the qualitative phase, six teachers were selected for semi-structured interviews. Participants represented different age groups and professional roles to ensure variation in perspectives. The interview sample size was considered appropriate for obtaining in-depth accounts and for further explaining the quantitative findings within the explanatory sequential mixed methods design.

### **3.3. Instrumentation**

The questionnaire consisted of five dimensions of job satisfaction: personal factors, workload and resources, social and cultural factors, salary and benefits and administrative support.

Items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The dimensions were constructed based on established job satisfaction literature and aligned with Maslow's and Herzberg's theoretical frameworks.

Content validity was evaluated through expert review prior to data collection. Reliability analysis indicated strong internal consistency for the overall instrument, with Cronbach's alpha exceeding recommended thresholds. These results suggest that the questionnaire demonstrated acceptable reliability for research purposes.

The interview protocol was developed to further explore themes emerging from the quantitative phase. Questions focused on factors influencing satisfaction, professional challenges, administrative support experiences, and suggestions for improvement.

### **3.4. Data Collection**

Quantitative data were collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed to eligible ethnic music teachers in primary and secondary schools in Guangdong Province. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality was assured, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Following the completion of the quantitative phase, the survey data were analyzed to identify general patterns of job satisfaction across the five dimensions. Based on this phase, six participants were invited to take part in semi-structured interviews in order to provide further explanation of the quantitative results. Interviews were conducted individually with participants' permission and recorded for research purposes. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes, and the audio recordings were transcribed for subsequent thematic analysis.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to examine mean scores across the five dimensions of job satisfaction. One-way ANOVA was conducted to explore group differences according to teaching experience levels, administrative responsibilities, and class size categories. Pearson correlation analysis was applied to assess the relationships among the five job satisfaction dimensions.

To examine the relative contribution of each dimension to the overall structure of job satisfaction, standardized regression coefficients were compared within a composite job satisfaction index framework. Because the overall job satisfaction index was derived from the same five dimensions, the analysis was intended to compare proportional contribution across dimensions rather than to establish independent predictive effects.

Qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic approach to identify recurring patterns in participants' accounts. Initial codes were generated from the interview transcripts and subsequently grouped into broader themes. The qualitative findings were then used to provide further explanation and contextual interpretation of the quantitative results in line with the explanatory sequential mixed methods design. To enhance analytical rigor, coding decisions were reviewed iteratively and linked back to the quantitative patterns identified in the first phase (Creswell & Poth, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017).

### **3.6. Ethical Consideration and Research Rigor**

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Participation in both the questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews was voluntary, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the study before data collection. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. All data were used solely for academic purposes.

To enhance research rigor, the quantitative data were checked for internal consistency, and the qualitative analysis followed systematic thematic procedures. Coding decisions were reviewed iteratively to improve consistency and analytical clarity. In addition, the interpretation of the qualitative findings was linked carefully to the quantitative results

to strengthen the explanatory sequential integration of the study. The findings were interpreted based on empirical evidence to reduce the risk of overgeneralization and unsupported theoretical assumption. These procedures contribute to the credibility and reliability of the study and support the validity of the conclusions drawn.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive Patterns of Job Satisfaction

The descriptive results show generally positive levels of job satisfaction across the five measured dimensions. As shown in Table 1, Personal Factors recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.43), followed by Social and Cultural Factors (M = 4.32) and Workload and Resources (M = 4.29). Administrative Support and School Management demonstrated a mean of 4.09, while Salary and Benefits showed the lowest mean among the five dimensions (M = 4.03), although it remained above the midpoint of the scale. The pattern suggests that teachers express strong intrinsic commitment and cultural engagement. At the same time, compensation-related perceptions appear relatively more moderate when compared with other aspects of their professional experience. Detailed descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction Dimensions (N = 100)

Factors	Mean Score
Personal	4.43
Workload and Resources	4.29
Social and Cultural	4.32
Salary and Benefits	4.03
Administrative Support and School Management	4.09

### 4.2. Group Comparisons

Group comparisons reveal variation in satisfaction patterns across teaching experience, administrative responsibility, and class size. Teachers in earlier stages of their careers more frequently emphasized workload and classroom management challenges. Mid-career teachers appeared more attentive to the balance between professional contribution and compensation. Senior teachers placed greater emphasis on long-term stability, including health benefits and flexible work arrangements. Teachers holding administrative responsibilities reported additional duties beyond classroom teaching. While these responsibilities increased workload in some cases, they also provided closer engagement with institutional decision-making processes. Differences related to class size were reflected primarily in perceptions of work intensity. Teachers responsible for larger classes reported greater classroom management demands, which may influence overall satisfaction perceptions. These findings indicate that satisfaction patterns vary according to career stage and institutional context.

### 4.3. Correlation Analysis

Correlation results show significant positive relationships among all five job satisfaction dimensions. As presented in Table 2, the strongest correlation was observed between Salary and Benefits and Administrative Support and School Management ( $r = 0.721$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This suggests that teachers who reported higher satisfaction with administrative practices also tended to report higher satisfaction with compensation-related conditions.

Moderate correlations were observed among the remaining dimensions. For example, Workload and Resources was positively associated with Salary and Benefits ( $r = 0.533, p < .01$ ), and Social and Cultural Factors was positively associated with Administrative Support ( $r = 0.561, p < .01$ ). Personal Factors also demonstrated positive associations with structural dimensions, including Workload and Resources ( $r = 0.490, p < .01$ ).

The correlation pattern confirms that the five dimensions are interconnected while remaining conceptually distinct. The complete correlation matrix is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Correlations among Job Satisfaction Dimensions (N = 100)

Variable	Personal Factors	Workload and Resources	Social and Cultural	Salary and Benefits	Administrative Support	Overall Job Satisfaction
Personal Factors	1.000	0.490**	0.413**	0.439**	0.369**	0.666**
Workload and Resources	0.490**	1.000	0.494**	0.533**	0.462**	0.746**
Social and Cultural	0.413**	0.494**	1.000	0.573**	0.561**	0.778**
Salary and Benefits	0.439**	0.533**	0.573**	1.000	0.721**	0.861**
Administrative Support	0.369**	0.462**	0.561**	0.721**	1.000	0.829**
Overall Job Satisfaction	0.666**	0.746**	0.778**	0.861**	0.829**	1.000

Note. \*\* $p < .01$ .

#### 4.4. Relative Contribution of Satisfaction Dimensions

A regression analysis was used to compare standardized coefficients the relationships between the five satisfaction dimensions and the composite overall job satisfaction index. Because the overall index was derived from the same dimensions, the regression results are reported here to compare standardized coefficients across dimensions. As shown in Table 3, Administrative Support and School Management demonstrated the largest standardized coefficient ( $\beta = 0.298, p < .001$ ). Salary and Benefits followed closely ( $\beta = 0.292, p < .001$ ). Social and Cultural Factors ( $\beta = 0.241, p < .001$ ), Workload and Resources ( $\beta = 0.227, p < .001$ ), and Personal Factors ( $\beta = 0.217, p < .001$ ) also showed significant associations with the overall satisfaction index. The distribution of standardized coefficients indicates that institutional conditions, particularly administrative practices and compensation-related aspects, are more strongly aligned with the composite satisfaction index than individual level perceptions alone. However, all five dimensions contribute meaningfully to the overall structure of job satisfaction. The regression coefficients are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Relative Contribution of Satisfaction Dimensions within the Composite Index

Predictor	Standardized $\beta$	p
Personal Factors	0.217	<0.001
Workload and Resources	0.227	<0.001
Social and Cultural	0.241	<0.001
Salary and Benefits	0.292	<0.001
Administrative Support	0.298	<0.001

Note. Standardized coefficients are reported to indicate proportional influence within the composite job satisfaction index.

#### **4.5. Summary of Quantitative Finding**

Taken together, the quantitative findings suggest that job satisfaction among ethnic music teachers reflects both structural and personal dimensions. Descriptive analysis shows generally positive evaluations across all five dimensions. Correlation analysis demonstrates interconnected relationships among intrinsic and institutional factors. Regression results indicate that administrative support and salary-related conditions show relatively stronger associations with the composite satisfaction index.

These quantitative results provide the empirical basis for the subsequent discussion of how institutional context and professional identity shape teachers' professional experiences.

### **5. Discussion**

#### **5.1. Institution and Structural Determinants of Satisfaction**

The findings indicate that administrative support and salary and benefits demonstrate the strongest proportional influence within the composite job satisfaction index. This pattern suggests that institutional structures play a decisive role in shaping the professional experiences of ethnic music teachers in Guangdong Province (Zhou & Ma, 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings strongly align with Herzberg's two-factor theory. Administrative policies, leadership practices, and compensation structures function as hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction when adequately maintained. In the present study, the relatively high standardized coefficients associated with administrative support and salary suggest that institutional conditions form the structural foundation upon which other motivational factors operate.

In the Chinese educational context, school administration often exercises significant authority over resource allocation, evaluation standards, and career progression pathways. Therefore, administrative support may not only influence material conditions but also affect teachers' perceptions of fairness, recognition, and professional legitimacy. When ethnic music teachers perceive insufficient transparency in resource distribution or limited acknowledgment of their cultural contributions, dissatisfaction may emerge regardless of intrinsic motivation (Fan et al., 2024).

Moreover, the strong correlation between salary and administrative support indicates that financial satisfaction is closely intertwined with institutional trust. Compensation is not merely a monetary issue; it symbolizes institutional valuation of teachers' work. For ethnic music educators whose discipline may be perceived as secondary to core academic subjects, fair compensation and administrative endorsement carry symbolic importance that extends beyond financial reward.

## 5.2. Intrinsic Meaning and Cultural Identity

Although structural factors dominate, intrinsic and cultural dimensions remain significant contributors to job satisfaction. Many interviewed teachers expressed a strong sense of mission in preserving and transmitting ethnic music traditions. This intrinsic commitment reflects Maslow's higher-order needs, particularly esteem and self-actualization.

Ethnic music education often provides teachers with opportunities to engage in creative expression, cultural preservation, and identity construction. These elements may foster deep professional meaning and resilience, especially in challenging institutional environments. The qualitative findings suggest that teachers derive satisfaction not solely from material rewards but from witnessing students' cultural engagement and artistic growth.

However, intrinsic motivation cannot fully compensate for structural deficiencies. When workload becomes excessive or administrative demands encroach upon artistic autonomy, even highly motivated teachers may experience professional strain. This dynamic illustrates Herzberg's distinction between hygiene and motivational factors: motivational elements may enhance satisfaction, but inadequate hygiene conditions can still generate dissatisfaction (Magtala & Eduvala, 2024).

The dual presence of structural pressures and intrinsic cultural commitment creates a complex professional reality for ethnic music teachers. Understanding this interaction is essential for developing balanced support systems that address both institutional conditions and professional identity.

## 5.3. Career Stage Differences and Professional Challenges

The analysis of group differences further reveals that job satisfaction is not static across career stages. Younger teachers appear more sensitive to economic pressures and workload distribution, while mid-career teachers emphasize equity between effort and reward. Senior teachers prioritize health benefits, flexibility, and long-term security (Wang et al., 2022).

These findings correspond partially with existing career stage theories in teacher development. However, ethnic music teachers face additional context-specific challenges. For example, artistic disciplines often require extracurricular rehearsals, performance preparation, and community engagement activities. Such responsibilities may intensify workload demands beyond formal classroom hours.

Mid-career teachers may encounter limited promotion pathways due to the relatively small number of specialized positions available for ethnic music educators. This structural constraint may create perceived ceilings in professional advancement, thereby influencing satisfaction levels.

Senior teachers, in contrast, may seek stability and recognition of accumulated expertise. Flexible administrative arrangements and institutional respect for experienced educators can therefore play a crucial role in sustaining long-term satisfaction.

These patterns underscore the importance of differentiated management strategies that account for career stage diversity within ethnic music education.

#### **5.4. Institutional Recognition and Subject Position**

The findings suggest that ethnic music teachers' job satisfaction is closely related to how their subject is positioned within the school system. Interview participants frequently mentioned concerns about limited teaching resources, outdated equipment, and insufficient institutional attention. These observations are consistent with the quantitative results, which highlight the importance of administrative support and salary-related factors (Shaw, 2019; Schmidt & Morrow, 2016).

In many school settings, academic examination subjects tend to receive greater institutional priority. Although ethnic music is recognized at the policy level as an important cultural component, its practical implementation may still face structural limitations. Teachers' perceptions of insufficient recognition and limited development opportunities may therefore influence their satisfaction levels.

Rather than suggesting systemic marginalization, the findings indicate that clearer work guidelines, improved communication mechanisms, and more consistent administrative support may help strengthen teachers' professional identity and sense of institutional belonging.

#### **5.5. Theoretical Implications**

The findings of this study provide contextual support for both Herzberg's two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Structural elements such as administrative support and salary appear to function as essential conditions influencing teachers' professional stability. At the same time, intrinsic dimensions related to cultural mission and professional meaning contribute positively to overall satisfaction.

Rather than introducing new theoretical propositions, this study demonstrates how established motivational frameworks can be applied to a culturally specialized educational context. The integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence allows for a more comprehensive interpretation of how structural and personal factors interact in shaping ethnic music teachers' professional experiences.

These findings highlight the importance of balancing institutional support mechanisms with opportunities for cultural expression and professional development.

#### **5.6. Regional Context and Educational Development in Guangdong**

The regional context of Guangdong provides an important backdrop for interpreting the findings. As one of China's most economically dynamic provinces, Guangdong has experienced rapid urbanization and educational expansion. At the same time, disparities between urban and rural schools remain visible. Such variation may influence access to teaching resources, administrative support, and professional development opportunities (Leung, 2024; Xu, Tian, & Chen, 2019).

Ethnic music education in Guangdong reflects both modernization and cultural preservation efforts. While policy initiatives emphasize cultural inheritance, practical

implementation depends heavily on school-level management and local funding conditions. Teachers working in resource-rich urban schools may encounter different professional realities compared to those in less developed areas (Ren & Cheng, 2022; Yang & Welch, 2023).

This regional diversity helps explain why administrative support emerged as a central determinant of satisfaction. In environments where institutional capacity varies, consistent leadership practices and transparent management become particularly significant. The findings therefore should be interpreted not only as individual-level perceptions but also as reflections of broader educational development patterns within the province (Zhou, Choi, & So, 2024).

### **5.7. Interaction between Structural Stability and Professional Identity**

The findings indicate that structural stability and professional identity do not operate in isolation. Instead, they appear to reinforce one another. Administrative support may strengthen teachers' confidence in their professional role, which in turn enhances their intrinsic commitment to cultural preservation.

In contexts where institutional policies are clear and consistent, teachers may experience greater autonomy and security. This environment allows intrinsic motivation to flourish. However, when institutional uncertainty increases, teachers may devote energy to managing structural challenges rather than focusing on artistic development. This interaction provides a nuanced understanding of why structural dimensions exert relatively strong influence in the statistical analysis. Structural conditions may not only prevent dissatisfaction but also create the foundation upon which higher-order professional meaning can develop. The balance between stability and cultural dedication therefore becomes central to sustaining long term job satisfaction.

### **5.8. Professional Development and Long-Term Sustainability**

The findings also raise questions concerning long-term professional development pathways for ethnic music teachers. While administrative support and compensation demonstrate relatively strong associations with satisfaction, sustained professional commitment requires opportunities for growth and recognition. Teachers who accumulate experience may seek clearer advancement routes, formal acknowledgment of artistic expertise, and structured training opportunities.

In specialized disciplines such as ethnic music education, promotion criteria may not always align with artistic or cultural contributions. Without transparent development pathways, mid-career teachers may experience stagnation despite strong intrinsic motivation. Institutional mechanisms that recognize performance organization, cultural event coordination, and artistic mentoring could contribute to sustained professional engagement.

By integrating structural stability with opportunities for advancement, schools may better support long-term retention of experienced ethnic music educators.

## 5.9. Structural Context and Cultural Commitment

While administrative support and compensation demonstrate relatively stronger statistical associations with the overall satisfaction index, it is important to consider how these structural dimensions interact with teachers' cultural mission. Ethnic music teachers often carry responsibilities that extend beyond routine classroom instruction. Their work involves preserving cultural traditions, organizing performances, and mentoring students in artistic expression. Such responsibilities require both institutional recognition and emotional investment.

When structural support is stable and transparent, teachers are more likely to experience alignment between their professional identity and institutional expectations. In contrast, when administrative practices are unclear or compensation structures are perceived as inconsistent, professional commitment may become strained despite strong intrinsic motivation. This pattern suggests that structural stability functions as a foundational condition that allows cultural dedication to be sustained over time.

Rather than positioning structural and intrinsic factors as competing influences, the findings indicate that they operate in coordination. Institutional support provides the necessary framework within which professional identity can be fully expressed. In culturally specialized educational contexts, this coordination becomes particularly significant.

## 6. Practical Implication

The findings of this study provide several practical insights for schools and educational administrators seeking to improve the professional experience of ethnic music teachers. Although overall satisfaction levels appear relatively positive, the results clearly show that institutional and structural conditions play a decisive role in shaping long-term stability and motivation.

At the school level, administrative support should be strengthened in concrete and visible ways. Teachers' perceptions of fairness and recognition are closely linked to how leadership communicates expectations, distributes teaching resources, and responds to professional concerns. Regular consultation mechanisms, transparent allocation of teaching budgets, and clear communication regarding evaluation standards may enhance teachers' sense of professional security. When teachers understand how decisions are made and feel that their voices are heard, institutional trust is likely to improve.

Workload management is another important area for improvement. Ethnic music teachers frequently assume multiple responsibilities beyond classroom instruction, including organizing performances, supervising extracurricular activities, and preparing students for competitions. Schools may consider clarifying workload distribution and ensuring that additional responsibilities are formally recognized within evaluation systems. Such recognition does not necessarily require major structural reform but rather clearer administrative acknowledgment of cultural and artistic contributions.

Compensation and career development pathways also warrant attention. While intrinsic commitment to cultural transmission remains strong among many teachers, sustained professional satisfaction requires material stability. Transparent promotion criteria,

professional training opportunities tailored to ethnic music education, and recognition of artistic achievements can help create a more balanced professional environment. Mid-career teachers, in particular, may benefit from clearer advancement structures that reflect accumulated expertise.

At the policy level, educational authorities may consider developing more detailed work guidelines specific to ethnic music educators. Standardized expectations regarding teaching hours, administrative responsibilities, and professional development support could reduce ambiguity and enhance consistency across schools. Given Guangdong's diverse regional conditions, policies should also remain flexible enough to account for differences between urban and rural institutions.

Overall, practical improvement does not depend solely on increasing financial investment. Rather, the findings suggest that clearer communication, institutional recognition, and consistent administrative practices can meaningfully strengthen teachers' professional stability. By addressing both structural conditions and professional identity, schools can create an environment in which ethnic music teachers are better supported in fulfilling their educational and cultural responsibilities.

## **7. Limitations and Future Research**

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the research was conducted within Guangdong Province. Although the region provides a meaningful and diverse educational context, the results may not fully represent conditions in other provinces of China. Regional variations in educational policy, funding allocation, and cultural emphasis could produce different satisfaction patterns.

Second, the overall job satisfaction index was operationalized as a composite measure derived from five dimensions. While this approach allows for structural comparison among dimensions, it does not constitute an independent measure of overall satisfaction. Future research may consider incorporating a separate global satisfaction item to further validate the relative contribution patterns identified in this study.

Third, although the mixed-methods design enhances interpretative depth, the qualitative sample size remains limited. The six interview participants provided valuable insight into professional experiences, yet broader qualitative representation may reveal additional nuances.

Despite these limitations, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data provides a reasonably comprehensive understanding of job satisfaction among ethnic music teachers in the selected context. Future studies may expand the sample scope, employ longitudinal designs, or conduct cross-regional comparisons to further refine understanding of structural and cultural influences on teacher satisfaction.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study examined the determinants of job satisfaction among ethnic music teachers in Guangdong Province using an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. By integrating survey data from one hundred teachers with in depth interviews from six

participants, the research provides a structured and context-sensitive understanding of how institutional and personal factors interact.

The findings indicate that administrative support and salary-related conditions exert the strongest proportional influence within the composite job satisfaction framework. At the same time, intrinsic dimensions related to cultural mission and professional identity contribute meaningfully to teachers' sense of commitment. These results suggest that professional satisfaction among ethnic music educators is shaped by both structural stability and personal dedication.

Differences across career stages further highlight the dynamic nature of job satisfaction. Early-career teachers appear particularly attentive to workload pressures, while mid-career teachers focus more on equity between effort and reward. Senior teachers prioritize stability and long-term support. Such variation underscores the importance of differentiated management strategies.

Rather than positioning ethnic music education as a peripheral domain, the findings emphasize the need for clearer institutional recognition and consistent administrative practices. When structural support is aligned with teachers' intrinsic motivation to preserve cultural heritage, professional satisfaction is more likely to be sustained.

In summary, this study contributes empirical insight into a specialized educational group that has received comparatively limited attention. By situating job satisfaction within both institutional and cultural dimensions, the research offers a balanced perspective that may inform future policy development and school-level management practices.

Future research may further explore how institutional reforms and educational modernization processes influence arts educators over time. Longitudinal studies could examine whether changes in administrative policy or funding allocation produce measurable shifts in teacher satisfaction. Comparative research across provinces may also reveal regional variations in structural support for ethnic music education.

In addition, future studies may incorporate independent global satisfaction measures to strengthen analytical precision. By continuing to refine both theoretical and methodological approaches, researchers can deepen understanding of how cultural education is sustained within evolving educational systems.

### **Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate**

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and the confidentiality of all respondents was ensured throughout the research process.

### **Acknowledgement**

This article was developed from the author's doctoral research conducted at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia. Sincere appreciation is extended to all participating teachers for their valuable time and responses.

## Funding

This study received no funding.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

## References

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. SAGE Publications. [https://books.google.com/books/about/Qualitative\\_Inquiry\\_and\\_Research\\_Design.html?id=DLbBDQAAQBAJ](https://books.google.com/books/about/Qualitative_Inquiry_and_Research_Design.html?id=DLbBDQAAQBAJ)
- DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., & Schutz, P. A. (2017). *Developing a mixed methods proposal: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483399980>
- Fan, Y., Du, M., & Wang, J. (2024). Unpacking the effect of principal empowerment on teacher job satisfaction: The mediation of organizational learning and teacher organizational identification in China. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *128*, 102489. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2024.102489>
- Fan, Y., Wang, T., Tian, S., & Ma, X. (2024). The impact of teacher professional development activities on teacher job satisfaction: An empirical analysis based on TALIS 2018 Shanghai teacher data. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, *12*(7), 191–205. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2024.127014>
- Guan, T., Luo, N., & Matsunobu, K. (2023). Nurturing student ethnic identity through culturally responsive music teaching in China. *International Journal of Music Education*, *41*(4), 598–615. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614221132550>
- Hao, Z. J. (2019). Research on the relationship between work intensity and job satisfaction of ordinary high school teachers. *Basic Education Research*, *13*, 5–10.
- Hess, J. (2019). *Music education for social change: Constructing an activist music education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429452000>
- Hu, C., Wang, C., Chen, B., & Li, S. (2024). Examining the influence of work engagement on the relationship between self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and professional goals of special education teachers in China. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04567-9>
- Jiang, J. Q., Yao, J., Yu, K. R., & Li, C. N. (2023). An empirical study on 'how to retain rural teachers with emphasis on hygiene or motivation factors': A case of Western China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1114107. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1114107>
- Lee, B., Lee, C., Choi, I., & Kim, J. (2022). Analyzing determinants of job satisfaction based on two-factor theory. *Sustainability*, *14*(19), 12557. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912557>
- Leung, B. W. (2021). Transmission of Cantonese opera in school music education: A survey of Hong Kong and Guangdong music teachers for policy review. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *125*(2), 108–123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2021.1992325>

- Liao, J., Wang, X. Q., & Wang, X. (2023). The effect of work stress on the well-being of primary and secondary school teachers in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(2), 1154. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20021154>
- Liu, Y., Bellibaş, M. Ş., & Gümüş, S. (2021). The effect of instructional leadership and distributed leadership on teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction: Mediating roles of supportive school culture and teacher collaboration. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(3), 430–453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220909092>
- Magtalas, S. A., & Eduvala, J. C. (2024). Teacher's workload in relation to burnout and work performance. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 5(10), 4111–4123. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.05.10.11>
- Reimers, F. M., & Chung, C. K. (Eds.). (2016). *Teaching and learning for the twenty-first century: Educational goals, policies, and curricula from six nations*. Harvard Education Press. <https://hep.gse.harvard.edu/9781612509228/teaching-and-learning-for-the-twenty-first-century/>
- Ren, G. P., & Cheng, L. (2022). Supporting the construction of high-quality education system with high-quality teachers—Interview with Ren Youqun, Director General of Teachers' Work Department, Ministry of Education. *People's Education*, 5, 29–32.
- Robison, T., & Russell, J. A. (2022). Factors impacting elementary general music teachers' career decisions: Systemic issues of student race, teacher support, and family. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 69(4), 425–443. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429421994898>
- Rojas, M., Méndez, A., & Watkins-Fassler, K. (2023). The hierarchy of needs: Empirical examination of Maslow's theory and lessons for development. *World Development*, 165, 106185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106185>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, 101860. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860>
- Sahito, Z., & Vaisanen, P. (2020). A literature review on teachers' job satisfaction in developing countries: Recommendations and solutions for the enhancement of the job. *Review of Education*, 8(1), 3–34. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3159>
- Schmidt, P., & Morrow, S. L. (2016). Hoarse with no name: Chronic voice problems, policy, and music teacher marginalization. *Music Education Research*, 18(1), 109–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2015.1014329>
- Shaw, R. (2019). Jumping through hoops: Troubling music teacher dilemmas in the new era of accountability. *Music Educators Journal*, 105(3), 23–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432118816146>
- Thant, Z. M., & Chang, Y. (2021). Determinants of public employee job satisfaction in Myanmar: Focus on Herzberg's two-factor theory. *Public Organization Review*, 21(1), 157–175. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-020-00478-6>
- Wang, H., Cousineau, C., Wang, B., Zeng, L., Sun, A., Kohrman, E., & Rozelle, S. (2022). Exploring teacher job satisfaction in rural China: Prevalence and correlates. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(6), 3537. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19063537>
- Yan, F., Yan, Y.-T., & Long, J.-Y. (2019). An empirical study on the influencing factors of job satisfaction of arts and physical education teachers: Taking the western region as an example. *Journal of Southwest Normal University (Natural Science Edition)*, 44(06), 103–109. <https://doi.org/10.13718/j.cnki.xsxb.2019.06.018>

- Yang, Y., & Welch, G. (2023). A systematic literature review of Chinese music education studies during 2007 to 2019. *International Journal of Music Education*, 41(2), 175–198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614221096150>
- Zhou, H., & Ma, J. (2022). Organizational justice and teachers' turnover intention in primary and secondary schools: The importance of sustainable salary management. *Sustainability*, 14(20), 13314. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142013314>
- Zhou, R., Choi, J., & So, H. (2024). Career experiences of rural music teachers in Jilin Province, China. *International Journal of Music Education*, 44(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614241266626>