

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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## FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION OF TEACHERS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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### Abstract

The problem of teacher job satisfaction is crucial, as dissatisfaction can negatively impact teachers' retention, commitment, and the overall quality of education. The study objectives were to examine how school leadership support and collegial relationships are influenced by job satisfaction and to investigate the mediating role of job stress in these relationships. The research is based on the Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg and the Social Exchange Theory, which describe the beneficial impact of a favorable organizational and interpersonal environment on satisfaction among employees. A survey design was employed, and non-probability convenience sampling was used to select 201 teachers from 32 Catholic private schools, who were provided with a structured, self-administered questionnaire to collect data. The statistical analysis conducted using SPSS indicated that school leadership support is a significant predictor of job satisfaction ( $\beta = .723$ ,  $R^2 = .523$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, collegial relationships were also found to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction ( $\beta = .574$ ,  $R^2 = .330$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Despite the negative impact of school leadership support on job stress, job stress did not serve as a significant mediator between the support variables and job satisfaction. The findings suggest that direct social and organizational support have a more substantial influence on teacher satisfaction than indirect stress-reduction mechanisms. The results mean that supportive leadership practices of school administrators, group peer cultures, and sustainable workload management strategies should be strengthened to keep teachers satisfied. The findings suggest that enhancing supportive leadership practices among school administrators, fostering positive group peer cultures, and implementing sustainable workload management strategies are essential for maintaining teacher satisfaction.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction, school leadership, collegial relationships, private schools.

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## **Introduction**

Teacher job satisfaction has emerged as a central topic in educational research since it directly reflects teacher commitment, teacher retention, teacher performance, and student performance. Teachers are the core of the provision of quality education in any given educational system, and teacher welfare is a major liability in the institution's effectiveness. Sri Lanka is a country where the role of teachers is especially important, since schools remain one of the most important institutions of academic and social formation. The teaching profession is important both personally and institutionally, as Hook (2000) noted; people tend to remember their teachers more than the modalities employed in their education. In this context, it is required to know the determinants of teacher job satisfaction to enhance the welfare of the staff and the quality of education offered.

The Sri Lankan school system includes government and non-government schools, among which Catholic schools represent an important component of faith-based education. Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Colombo operate under different religious congregations and Archdiocesan authorities, and several of these institutions are located in the Western Province (Archdiocesan Education Service, n.d.-a; Archdiocesan Education Service, n.d.-b). The Catholic education system of the Archdiocese of Colombo seeks to promote not only students' academic development but also their dignity, individual potential, holistic formation, and faith-based values (Archdiocesan Education Service, n.d.-a). Therefore, teachers in Catholic private schools work within an institutional environment that combines academic expectations with moral, spiritual, and community-oriented responsibilities. Teacher job satisfaction in this context warrants scholarly attention because school working conditions, supervisory support, collegial relationships, emotional exhaustion, and teachers' sense of belonging are associated with job satisfaction and their intention to remain in the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Toropova et al., 2021).

Despite the importance of the teaching profession, teacher job dissatisfaction remains an important concern because it can be associated with emotional exhaustion, reduced commitment, lower motivation, and an increased intention to leave the profession. Research has shown that teachers' job satisfaction is negatively related to emotional exhaustion and motivation to leave teaching, while a positive sense of belonging within the school is associated with greater satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Teacher satisfaction is influenced not only by salary and physical working conditions but also by organizational and interpersonal aspects of the school environment. In particular, supervisory support, relationships with colleagues, workload, time pressure, school leadership, and opportunities for professional development have been identified as important factors associated with teachers' job satisfaction and well-being (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Toropova et al., 2021). In the context of the present study, preliminary informal observations suggest that some teachers in Catholic private schools may experience varying levels of dissatisfaction despite receiving basic employment benefits. However, these observations have not yet been empirically established and therefore provide the contextual motivation for examining whether organizational and interpersonal factors, particularly school leadership support, collegial relationships, and job stress, influence teacher job satisfaction.

This paper aims to investigate three key constructs: school leadership support, collegial relationships, and job stress. School leadership support is the extent to which teachers believe their principals or school administration are supportive, respectful, and helpful with professional issues. Collegial relationships are described as the level of emotional support, cooperation, trust, and friendliness between colleagues at the workplace. Job stress is defined as psychological pressure that is negative, caused by workload, demands, and work-related pressures. These aspects are analyzed to learn their positive and negative influence on teacher job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1943; Locke, 1976; Spector, 1997; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Toropova et al., 2021).

The research is significant because most previous studies on teacher job satisfaction in Sri Lanka have focused on government schools and public-sector teachers. In contrast, this study specifically examines teacher job satisfaction in Catholic private schools in the Western Province. These private schools operate under religious management and differ from government schools in terms of administrative structure, working conditions, and institutional expectations. Therefore, understanding teacher satisfaction in this unique private school context is important.

### **Objectives**

1. To identify the nature and factors contributing to the levels of job satisfaction of teachers.
2. To examine the impact of positive school leadership on the job satisfaction of teachers.
3. To investigate how job stress adversely affects the job satisfaction of teachers.
4. To analyze the extent to which job satisfaction depends on the rapport among teachers.

The importance of the research is theoretical and practical. It, in theory, maps Herzberg Two Factor Theory and Social Exchange Theory to a comparatively research-unexplored educational context (Herzberg, 1966; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In practical terms, the results can assist school leaders, diocesan administrators, and education policymakers in formulating approaches to enhancing teacher motivation, retention, and well-being in the workplace (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Toropova et al., 2021). Through this, the research contributes to the overall objective of sustaining the educational standards at the Catholic private schools in Sri Lanka (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Toropova et al., 2021).

### **Research Problem**

What factors influence the job satisfaction of teachers in Catholic private schools in the Western Province of Sri Lanka?

The study found that school leadership support and collegial relationships are the main factors influencing teacher job satisfaction in Catholic private schools in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. School leadership support was the strongest predictor, explaining 52.3% of the variation in job satisfaction ( $\beta = .723$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while collegial relationships explained 33% ( $\beta = .574$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Although job stress was examined, it was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction in this study ( $p = .104$ ;  $p = .467$  in the mediation model). Therefore, the findings suggest that supportive leadership, trust, recognition, cooperation, and positive relationships among teachers are the strongest contributors to teacher job satisfaction.

## **Literature Review**

### **School Leadership Support and Job Satisfaction**

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides an important foundation for understanding teacher job satisfaction. According to Herzberg (1966), hygiene factors such as salary and working conditions help reduce dissatisfaction, while motivators such as recognition, responsibility, and support create genuine job satisfaction. In the school context, teachers are more likely to feel satisfied when they are valued, appreciated, and supported by school leaders. Similarly, Social Exchange Theory explains that when teachers experience trust, respect, and support from their school administration, they are more likely to respond with positive attitudes, commitment, and greater job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction refers to the positive feelings employees develop toward their work and work experiences and can be influenced by supervision, working relationships, workload, and opportunities for professional growth (Locke, 1976; Spector, 1997). Supportive school leadership therefore plays an important role in creating a positive working environment through guidance, recognition, trust, and professional support. Such leadership practices can strengthen teachers' motivation, commitment, and overall satisfaction with their profession.

### **Collegial Relationships and Job Satisfaction**

Positive relationships among colleagues are another important factor influencing teacher job satisfaction. Collegial relationships are characterized by trust, cooperation, mutual assistance, friendliness, and emotional support among teachers. According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011), positive peer relationships can reduce feelings of isolation and strengthen teachers' sense of belonging within the school environment.

Toropova et al. (2021) also emphasize that supportive relationships among teachers contribute to better wellbeing and higher job satisfaction. In Catholic schools, where community values and shared responsibilities are often emphasized, strong collegial relationships may be especially important. Cooperation, teamwork, and mutual respect among teachers can therefore create a supportive professional environment and contribute to greater job satisfaction.

### **Job Stress and Job Satisfaction**

Job stress is also identified in the literature as an important factor associated with teacher job satisfaction. Stress among teachers can arise from heavy workloads, time pressure, job demands, and other work-related challenges. High levels of stress may lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, reduced motivation, and stronger intentions to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Viseu et al., 2016).

However, supportive leadership and positive collegial relationships may help teachers manage or reduce work-related stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Toropova et al., 2021). Viseu et al. (2016) suggest that job stress may therefore have both a direct relationship with job satisfaction and an indirect role in explaining how workplace support influences satisfaction. Accordingly, examining job stress together with leadership support and collegial relationships provides a broader understanding of the factors associated with teachers' job satisfaction.

## Research Gap and Contribution of the Study

Most previous studies on teacher job satisfaction have mainly focused on public schools or general school systems, while there is limited research conducted in faith-based private school contexts, especially Catholic schools.

Although leadership, peer support, and stress have been widely studied as individual factors, very few studies have examined these variables together within a single model to understand their combined effect on teacher job satisfaction.

There is a lack of research specifically conducted in the Sri Lankan private school context, particularly in the Western Province, which considers the unique influence of faith-based educational environments on teacher job satisfaction.

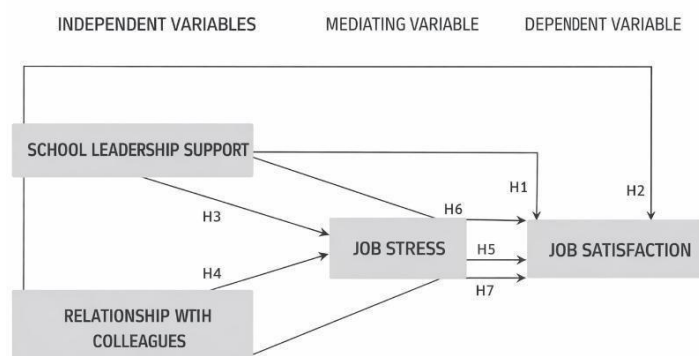


**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework shows how the independent variables, school leadership support and relationships with colleagues, influence the dependent variable, job satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through job stress.

Supportive leadership can improve job satisfaction by making teachers feel valued, recognized, and professionally supported (Toropova et al., 2021). Positive collegial relationships also enhance job satisfaction through trust, cooperation, emotional support, and a sense of belonging (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Toropova et al., 2021).

Job stress is included as a mediating variable because workload, time pressure, and work demands may reduce job satisfaction, while supportive leadership and collegial relationships may help reduce stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009, 2011; Viseu et al., 2016; Toropova et al., 2021).

Overall, the framework proposes that stronger leadership support and better collegial relationships increase teacher job satisfaction, while job stress may reduce satisfaction and mediate these relationships.

## Research Methodology

The research method employed in this study is a quantitative research approach that is based on the positivist paradigm. This method is selected due to the possibility of objectively measuring

variables and testing hypotheses with the help of statistical tests. Through a quantitative approach, the researcher can determine patterns and relationships among constructs such as school leadership support, collegial relationships, job stress, and job satisfaction in a large sample of participants. The study design adopted is a survey. Surveys are more effective in collecting a considerable amount of data at one point in time about a certain population, and therefore a cross-sectional analysis. This design is suitable for this study since it aims at capturing the present levels of job satisfaction among teachers as well as the organizational variables affecting the same in the specific cultural environment of the sample schools.

To provide enough power in the analysis, the determination of the sample size was done using standard statistical tables, including the Krejcie and Morgan tables. A sample of 201 teachers was finally chosen to take part in the study. Non-probability convenience sampling was the sampling method. Although probability sampling is usually used when it is sought to have generalizability, convenience sampling was considered more feasible, considering the availability of teachers in the 32 schools throughout the academic year. Nonetheless, there was an attempt to have a mixed group of participants in regard to age, sex, ethnicity, and educational levels to counter any form of bias.

Job Satisfaction (JS) was measured using pre-tested scale items to assess teachers' perceptions of working conditions, salary, and overall professional fulfilment. This section reflects how teachers evaluate their roles within the school environment. The scale demonstrated good reliability through consistent measurement of the construct. Validity was ensured through established theoretical foundations of job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Locke, 1976; Spector, 1997), supporting both content and construct validity. School Leadership Support (SLS) was measured using items that capture both cognitive and emotional support provided by school leaders, including trust, guidance, and mutual respect. This section evaluates the influence of leadership on teachers' experiences. The scale showed strong reliability with consistent responses across items. Its validity is supported by established theories of motivation and leadership, which emphasize the importance of supportive leadership in improving employee satisfaction (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1966). The Relationship with Colleagues (RC) scale assessed interpersonal relationships among teachers, including friendliness, cooperation, concern, and mutual assistance. This section highlights the importance of social support within the workplace. The scale demonstrated acceptable reliability, ensuring consistent measurement. Validity was supported by prior research showing that collegial relationships significantly influence teacher satisfaction and well-being (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Toropova et al., 2021). Job Stress (JST) was measured using items that evaluate teachers' negative emotional responses to workload, job demands, and work-related pressures. This section identifies the extent of stress experienced in teaching roles. The scale showed good reliability through consistent responses. Its validity is supported by studies highlighting the impact of stress and burnout on job satisfaction and teacher performance (Viseu et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

This section collected background information such as age, gender, nationality, religion, and tenure to provide context for the analysis. Reliability is not applicable, as the data are factual. However, validity is high since the information is directly reported by respondents and used to support meaningful interpretation of results (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Most items in Sections A–D were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). This scale allows respondents to express varying

degrees of agreement, providing more precise and sensitive data. The use of structured measurement scales supports consistency and enhances the accuracy of responses in line with established measurement practices (Weiss et al., 1967; Spector, 1997).

This collection process was to be started with the required permission granted by the concerned authorities in the educational field at the Archbishop's House. The online survey was distributed among the teachers in the sample schools. The participants understood the objective of the study and were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Close observation was made of the response rate to make sure that the target population of 201 was reached.

After data collection, the responses were entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for analysis. Data screening was first conducted to ensure accuracy and completeness. Missing values were checked, and normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis to determine the suitability of parametric tests. Reliability analysis was then performed using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of each construct. This ensured that the measurement scales were reliable and suitable for further analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and to present the central tendency of the main variables. This provided a clear overview of the respondents and key study variables. Pearson correlation analysis was applied to examine the strength and direction of relationships between independent and dependent variables, helping to identify significant associations. To test the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the direct effects of School Leadership Support (SLS) and Relationship with Colleagues (RC) on Job Satisfaction. Finally, mediation analysis was carried out using regression techniques to examine whether Job Stress acted as a mediating variable between the independent variables and job satisfaction.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

### **Data Screening and Normality**

The responses that were screened before the analysis included 201, and the reason was to ensure that none of the values had gone missing or was extreme outliers, which would have compromised the accuracy of the results. Skew and kurtosis were used to determine normality. Kline (2011) establishes parameters of  $\pm 3$  on skew and kurtosis parameters of  $\pm 10$  as acceptable in parametric testing. Table 1 reveals that all the study variables were within these acceptable limits, and thus, the dataset was fit to continue with the parametric analysis.

## Data Collection

**Table 1**

*Normality Statistics for Main Study Variables*

| Variable                        | N   | Skewness | Std. Error | Kurtosis | Std. Error |
|---------------------------------|-----|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| Job Satisfaction (JS)           | 201 | -1.940   | 0.172      | 3.180    | 0.341      |
| School Leadership Support (SLS) | 201 | -1.695   | 0.172      | 2.558    | 0.341      |
| Collegial Relationships (RC)    | 201 | -1.333   | 0.172      | 1.436    | 0.341      |
| Job Stress (JST)                | 201 | 0.399    | 0.172      | 0.124    | 0.341      |

### Nature and Factors Contributing to the Levels of Teacher Job Satisfaction

Measures of central tendency and variation of the key constructs of the study were computed using descriptive statistics. As stated in Table 2, the mean score in terms of job satisfaction was rather high ( $M = 5.944$ ), which means that the sample, on average, had a positive attitude towards job satisfaction in their professional activity. School leadership support ( $M = 5.760$ ) and collegial relationships ( $M = 5.614$ ) were rated relatively high as well, which implies that management support and relations with peers are perceived positively. Comparatively, the job stress mean was relatively low ( $M = 1.617$ ), which implies that the perceived stress was relatively low among the respondents.

Data analysis was conducted using AMOS software through the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. The analysis involved two primary stages. The first stage was Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure that all items accurately measured their respective constructs (construct validity). The second stage was the structural model analysis to test the relationships between the independent variables (curriculum quality, teaching methodologies, and industry collaboration) and the dependent variable (perceived effectiveness/employability). Model fitness was evaluated using standard fit indices: The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) had to be below 0.08, while the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) had to be above 0.90. Path coefficients (beta) and significance levels (p-values) were used to determine whether the hypothesized relationships were supported.

### Ethical Considerations

The university's Research Ethics Committee gave its approval for this investigation. Participation in the study was entirely optional, and respondents were free to leave at any moment without incurring any fees. The data gathered was kept private and utilized exclusively for this research. Unique codes were used to safeguard respondents' identity, and data analysis was done in aggregate to prevent individual identification. The study's findings were presented truthfully and openly, without any data alteration or misrepresentation.

## **Findings**

According to descriptive analysis, 60% of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35, and the majority (65%) were female. Thirty percent of respondents had a master's degree, and seventy percent had a bachelors. Business and management majors made up the majority of responses (45%), followed by education (30%) and social sciences and humanities (20%). Twenty percent worked in an unrelated field, fifteen percent were still looking for job, and the majority of respondents (60%) were employed full-time in a field connected to their education.

Objective 1: Analyze the effectiveness of the Malaysian higher education system in producing graduates who meet the needs of the industry.

According to the study's findings, Malaysia's higher education system is thought to be highly successful in turning forth graduates who can match industry demands. The results of the structural equation model study showed that graduates' marketability is significantly positively impacted by the effectiveness of the higher education system ( $\beta = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In particular, it was discovered that the teaching and learning strategies ( $\beta=0.72$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), industry collaboration ( $\beta= 0.66$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and curriculum quality ( $\beta = 0.75$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were the primary factors that contributed to the higher education system's ability to produce graduates who satisfy industry demands.

The results of the survey also indicate that there is still opportunity for development in a number of areas. More active industry involvement in curriculum development (30%), strengthening industrial and practical training programs (25%), and more thorough application of soft skills (20%) were some of the recommendations made based on respondents' open-ended comments. This demonstrates that even while the Malaysian higher education system is thought to be highly successful, there is still a disconnect between what is taught in classrooms and what businesses really require.

The study's conclusions demonstrate that the New Curriculum 2027 is viewed as a possible catalyst for bridging the gap between industry and academics. Most respondents concurred that graduates' employability will be improved by the new curriculum's emphasis on 21st century skills (85%), outcomes-based learning (80%), and closer industry involvement (75%). This suggests that the New Curriculum 2027's main components align with the need to generate graduates who are more employable.

Nonetheless, in order to guarantee that the new curriculum is successful in accomplishing its objectives, respondents also emphasized the significance of efficient implementation (90%) and ongoing monitoring (85%). This suggests that the dedication and cooperation of numerous stakeholders, including higher education institutions, business, and legislators, are essential to the New Curriculum 2027's ability to close the gap between academics and industry.

Overall, by evaluating how well Malaysia's higher education system produces graduates who satisfy industry demands and analyzing the New Curriculum 2027's role in closing the skills gap, the study's conclusions accomplish its goals. The study's findings suggest that while Malaysia's higher education system is thought to be reasonably effective, it can still be improved, and the New Curriculum 2027 may serve as a catalyst for change by making graduates more employable in the future.

## **Discussion**

This study looks at how well Malaysia's higher education system produces graduates who can fulfill business demands and how the New Curriculum 2027 can help close the gap between academic learning outcomes and industry demands. The results of the study show that the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, and industry collaboration are important factors in the Malaysian higher education system's perceived effectiveness in producing graduates who satisfy industry demands.

This result is in line with earlier research that highlights the value of creative pedagogy, industry engagement, and high-quality curricula in improving graduate employability (Tran, 2016; Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016). Respondents' qualitative comments, however, suggested that there is still need for improvement in areas like the use of soft skills, the reinforcement of industrial training programs, and industry participation in curriculum development. This implies that even while Malaysia's higher education system is headed in the right direction, more work is required to match learning objectives with the dynamic demands of the business world.

Based on the available survey data, it is not possible to conduct an empirical evaluation of the New Curriculum 2027's contribution to closing the gap between academics and industry. Secondary data from teacher interviews, however, offer insightful viewpoints on how the new curriculum might be able to handle this problem. The New Curriculum 2027's emphasis on outcomes-based learning, 21st century skills, and improved industry partnerships were rated well by the instructors surveyed. They think that these factors can contribute to the production of graduates who are more employable.

Teachers did, however, also stress the significance of successful implementation and ongoing oversight to guarantee the New Curriculum 2027's efficacy. This is consistent with earlier research that highlights how crucial cooperation between different stakeholders such as industry, government, and higher education institutions is to the success of curriculum transformation (Yusoff et al., 2019; Mohayidin et al., 2017). These results imply that even though the New Curriculum 2027 includes the elements required to close the skills gap, everyone's dedication and cooperation are essential to its success.

This study adds to the corpus of research on the employability of graduates and the function of curricula in closing the skills gap in Malaysia. According to earlier research conducted in Malaysian and foreign contexts, it reaffirms the significance of curriculum quality, teaching and learning strategies, and industry engagement in generating graduates that satisfy industry demands (Cheong et al., 2018; Tran, 2016; Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016). While stressing the necessity of cautious adoption and continual oversight, this study also emphasizes the New Curriculum 2027's potential as a change agent.

It is important to recognize the various limitations of this study. First, it is difficult to evaluate the New Curriculum 2027's role experimentally because the survey data set lacks items that directly gauge graduates' opinions of it. Although the interview data shed some light on this problem, the findings' applicability is constrained by the limited sample size. By adding particular questions on the New Curriculum 2027 to the survey and conducting in-depth interviews with a wider sample of teachers and other stakeholders, future research could get around these restrictions.

Second, the perceptions and self-reports of the graduates used in this study could be biased. Future research could apply additional techniques, such as analyzing curriculum documents, observing classes, or getting input from employers, to offer a more impartial evaluation of the new curriculum's function and the efficiency of the higher education system.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the study offers insightful information about how well Malaysia's higher education system works in terms of graduates' employability and emphasizes how the New Curriculum 2027 may help close the skills gap. In order to guarantee that graduates, have the information, abilities, and competencies required to thrive in the future labor market, the results of this study can help shape the creation and application of policies pertaining to higher education and promote closer cooperation between academic institutions, business, and legislators.

When comparing the findings of this study with the broader higher education landscape in Malaysia, notable institutional differences emerge. OUM graduates, who study through open and distance learning (ODL), view curriculum quality and independent learning methods as the primary drivers of their marketability. In contrast, empirical studies from conventional Public Universities in Malaysia often find that rigid curriculum structures make it difficult to update syllabi quickly. This rigidity sometimes leads to skills mismatches, especially in fast-changing technical sectors. On the other hand, Private Universities are often quicker to align their curricula with market needs due to closer industry ties, but they face challenges regarding high tuition fees and accessibility. This comparison shows that the New Curriculum 2027 cannot be implemented using a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Public universities should adopt the operational flexibility seen in ODL institutions like OUM, while the rapid industry collaboration models of private universities should be emulated to close the skills gap nationwide.

This study concludes that in order to produce graduates who satisfy industry demands, high-quality curricula, efficient teaching and learning strategies, and industry engagement are critical. Along with highlighting the necessity of cautious implementation and ongoing oversight, it also underlines the New Curriculum 2027's potential as a change-catalyst in closing the skills gap. The study's conclusions advance knowledge of graduate employability in Malaysia and serve as a foundation for future investigations and the creation of relevant policies.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion for Further Studies**

The report concludes by highlighting the potential of the New Curriculum 2027 to close the skills gap and offering insightful information about how well the Malaysian higher education system produces graduates that satisfy industry demands. The study's conclusions support the notion that generating graduates who are prepared for the workforce requires high-quality curricula, efficient teaching and learning strategies, and industry cooperation. While stressing the necessity of cautious implementation and continual oversight, the report also demonstrates how the New Curriculum 2027 may serve as a catalyst for change. These findings serve as a foundation for future study and policy development in this field and advance our understanding of graduate employability in the Malaysian setting.

It is important to recognize the various limitations of this study. First, it is difficult to evaluate the New Curriculum 2027's role experimentally because the survey data set lacks items that gauge graduates' opinions of it directly. Although the interview data shed some light on this

matter, the study's findings cannot be broadly applied due to the limited sample size. By adding particular questions on the New Curriculum 2027 to the survey and conducting in-depth interviews with a wider sample of teachers and other stakeholders, future research could overcome these limitations.

Second, the perceptions and self-reports of the graduates used in this study could be biased. Future research could apply additional techniques, such as analyzing curriculum documents, observing classes, or getting input from employers, to offer a more impartial evaluation of the new curriculum's function and the efficiency of the higher education system. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the study adds significantly to the body of knowledge on Malaysian curriculum reform and graduate employment.

Beyond individual graduate perspectives, the results of this study offer important macro-level implications for policymakers and university management. For the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), implementing the New Curriculum 2027 requires a shift in how universities are evaluated. The ministry should move away from assessing universities solely based on raw academic outputs, such as publication counts or graduation rates. Instead, evaluation metrics should focus on sustainable industry partnerships and actual graduate employability rates. At the institutional level, university management must reduce bureaucratic barriers that make it difficult for industry experts to participate in academic development. Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for lecturers should also be updated to reward those who actively engage with the industry through co-designing curricula or managing industrial training programs. In conclusion, this curriculum reform will only succeed if the government, universities, and industries work together closely.

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