Iranian Sworn Translators' Perceptions regarding Their Work-Related Satisfaction, Happiness, and Burnout

Fatemeh Badi-Ozaman[1] ⓘD
Masood Khoshsaligheh[2*] ⓘD

[1]Ph.D. Candidate in Translation Studies, Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

[*2]Professor of Translation Studies, Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

ABSTRACT

The concepts of work-related satisfaction, happiness, and burnout have received increasing attention in psychological research. As the field of translation studies is interdisciplinary, it has consistently drawn inspiration from various fields in the humanities, including psychology. Since sworn translators play a crucial role in translation communities, the present article aimed to look into job-related satisfaction, happiness, and burnout utilizing a qualitative interview-based approach and Iranian sworn translators as participants. The findings revealed that sworn translations involved challenges and occasionally unpleasant aspects; nonetheless, the majority of participants reported feeling satisfaction and happiness in terms of the job in general, the translation process, and their income. Furthermore, this profession has led several participants to experience fatigue, stress, nervousness, sleep disturbances, and indigestion, but the most frequent manifestations of burnout are mental exhaustion and pain in the neck, arms, hands, and eyes. These findings can be helpful for sworn translators and policymakers seeking solutions or preventing negative consequences.

KEYWORDS: sworn translators, job satisfaction, happiness at work, burnout

1. Introduction

Although Translation studies has had a strong focus on translation itself and translated texts, this discipline has shifted from solely text-related studies to translation as a social practice in which many actors cooperate (Wolf, 2010). With the emergence of sociological trends, Chesterman (2009) proposed a branch of study called translator studies with a primary focus on the agents of translation, like translators and interpreters. Many researchers have accordingly concentrated on translation professionals; however, sworn translators seem to have received less attention compared to other types of translators (Plencovich et al., 2021).

Sworn translators are highly professional individuals whom the Judiciary has authorized to translate legal, official, and personal documents (Mayoral, 2000; Seddighi Seresht, 2021). They reside at the heart of the translation community, making them an ideal candidate for research by examining their attitudes towards their working conditions, the presence or absence of job satisfaction and happiness at work, and the possible existence of mental and physical burnout. Sworn translators were chosen for this research because their situation is unique compared to other translators; they have to deal with issues that freelance, in-house, and other types of translators will not normally encounter, such as a rigorous accreditation process, higher profile texts, legal liabilities, and generally less freedom over translation procedures and translation rates. These added challenges and responsibilities make sworn translators' attitudes, especially towards satisfaction, happiness, and burnout, intriguing and study-worthy.

While there have been some studies into sworn translators in the Iranian context (Abbas Nejad & Ghasemi Nejad, 2016; Ghasemi Nejad, 2018; Pezeshki, 2017; Seddighi Seresht, 2021); there is a notable absence of research exploring Iranian sworn

translators' job-related satisfaction, happiness, and burnout. Job satisfaction and happiness at work are both undeniably worthy subjects of investigation because they can affect both translators and their translation quality (Liu, 2013). Moreover, work-related burnout can easily influence translators' perspectives and performance (Akbari Motlaq & Tengku Mahadi, 2020). Therefore, this study can contribute to understanding sworn translators' well-being by offering insights that can inform professional support systems and improve working conditions.

To pursue the objective of studying these concepts, the following research questions must be answered:

1. What is sworn translators' attitude toward their job satisfaction?

2. What is sworn translators' attitude toward their happiness at work?

3. Has this job caused any form of burnout in official translators?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sworn Translators' Duties and Responsibilities

Although there are seemingly minor differences in every country, the concept of sworn translation and the roles and duties of sworn translators remain essentially the same. These individuals are crucial in the translation community: they are legally capable of producing sworn translations, and they also approve the credibility of translations with their signatures and seals (Ordóñez-López, 2021; Plencovich et al., 2021). A sworn translation has the same legal significance as an original document and can be used for judicial and administrative purposes. (Arcones, 2015). Translations by sworn translators in Brazil, for instance, have jurisdiction throughout the country. In other words, such translations will be accepted across the entire region, including Brazilian embassies and consulates abroad (Nascimento, 2006).

Similar to other countries, according to Iranian laws, sworn translators are authorized by the legal authorities to perform certain translational acts. Written translation is required for documents produced in a language other than Persian, whereby their Persian renditions are required in an Iranian administration. This is also required for documents created in Iran, whose translations are called for in a foreign country (Zahedi, 2013). Interpreting is required when a person present in any legal setting, especially in court sessions, does not know the official language (Vahabi & Ghorbanzadeh, 2023).

Additionally, even after a strict accreditation process, serving as a sworn translator is a significant responsibility. For example, translation errors are punishable by law, because they can have serious negative consequences for clients (KUBACKI & Gościński, 2015). Misconducts include translating without a valid license, refusing to provide service to clients, refusing to attend court or legal sessions without a plausible excuse, not having an office, not adhering to prices set by the Judiciary, and finally, committing translation errors; additionally, first-time offenders are punished by license disqualification for one year, second-time offenders by disqualification for two years, and the penalty for recidivism is lifetime disqualification (Zahedi, 2013).

2.2. Job Satisfaction, Happiness at Work, and Work-Related Burnout

Job satisfaction refers to the degree of positive or negative feelings that employees experience in their jobs (Şchiopu, 2015). It is an employee's sense of success on the job (Aziri, 2011). Job satisfaction is influenced by a myriad of factors such as the nature of the tasks, work environment, compensation, recognition, feedback, autonomy, relationships, and alignment with personal values and goals (Belias & Koustelios, 2014; Pitaloka & Sofia, 2014). In turn, job satisfaction can have a positive effect on the overall well-being of employees, both mentally and physically (Westover et al., 2010). In fact, one of the most evident effects of job satisfaction is on an individual's mental health (Nadinloyi et al., 2013). When employees are happy and satisfied with their jobs, they experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Poursadeghiyan et al., 2016).

Although the concept of job satisfaction has not been widely explored in translation studies, it has received increasing attention. For instance, both Wallis (2006) and Mohammadi Dehcheshmeh (2017) focused on the effects of technology (specifically, translation memories for the former, besides an assortment of translation memories and machine translation for the latter) on translators' job satisfaction. They both concluded that use of such technology could greatly affect translators' satisfaction. From another perspective, Çoban (2019) and Hubscher-Davidson (2018) sought to find a relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction (although the second author also studied translators' tolerance for ambiguity). Both studies found a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, while Hubscher-Davidson was led to another positive correlation between tolerance for ambiguity and job satisfaction. From yet another perspective, Liu (2024) examined the experiences of Chinese translators during the COVID-19 pandemic. She found that these translators were satisfied with working in environments that allowed them to learn more, and they viewed the pandemic as another challenge to overcome.

Proceeding to a few studies about interpreters, Leminen and Hokkanen (2024) examined interpreters' job satisfaction and ethical stressors; although they did not observe a clear link between the two, they were able to identify Finnish interpreters' ethical dilemmas. Both Monzó-Nebot and Álvarez-Álvarez (2024), as well as Phanthaphoommee and Thumvichit (2024), qualitatively evaluated health-care interpreters' job satisfaction: the first article found job satisfaction to be tied to fulfilling essential needs, which for that sample of interpreters was competence, connectedness, and autonomy; the second article discovered that interpreters required social support, self-worth, and a sense of belonging to feel satisfied.

More importantly, two articles addressed sworn translators' job satisfaction. Piecychna (2019) stated that she could find no previous research into sworn translator job satisfaction, which is why she had 73 Polish sworn translators (i.e., the number of people who ended up responding) answer a multi-item Likert scale questionnaire. She discovered that the participants enjoyed high levels of job satisfaction in the following items: independence, variety, ability utilization, responsibility, creativity, and achievement, whereas the security and compensation items tended to cause dissatisfaction. Korpal (2021) took a broader approach by tackling the stress, medical complications, and job satisfaction of sworn translators through a questionnaire administered to 127 participants. He presented the participants with nine aspects of the job and asked them to rate their satisfaction, bringing positive results.

Moving on, happiness at work is the joy individuals experience with their work; it is a mindset characterized by self-improvement and the pursuit of personal and professional goals (Willis, 2024). Happiness at work is influenced by both internal factors and external circumstances, making it susceptible to emotional fluctuations and shifts in the work environment (Lutterbie & Pryce-Jones, 2013; Lyubomirsky & Kurtz, 2008). This emotion is significant, as employees who experience it tend to be more productive, creative, and committed to their jobs; moreover, they tend to have higher levels of overall well-being (Costa et al., 2024).

Similar to the concept of job satisfaction, a few scholars have examined the subject of translators' happiness at work. For instance, the ultimate goal of Liu (2013) was to find a correlation between translators' visibility and happiness at work; she found that the more visible the translators were, the more positive their feelings. Interestingly, Bednárová-Gibová (2020) and Bednárová-Gibová and Majherová (2021) assessed literary translators' happiness at work, finding that they were happy, with happiness positively correlated with status and remuneration. Then for agency translators, Bednárová-Gibová (2021) discovered significant positive correlations between happiness at work and environmental factors, text types, time pressure, and concentration.

Bednárová-Gibová and Madoš (2019) measured happiness at work between two groups of high-profile legal translators: Slovak sworn translators and Slovak EU institutional translators. Their primary goal was to identify the factors correlated with happiness before comparing happiness levels between the two translator groups. They reported both groups to be happy although neither was significantly happier than the other; they also observed correlations between happiness and age, remuneration, status, visibility, and influence. In another study with the same participants, Bednárová-Gibová (2022) identified some differences between the two groups: sworn translators described higher levels of hedonic happiness and instant satisfaction than institutional translators.

Last but not least, burnout is a condition of physical and emotional fatigue that leads to a slow decline in a person's motivation and professional identity, causing them to lose the sense of purpose and significance they once experienced from work (Kristensen et al., 2005; Riethof & Bob, 2019). Employees suffering from burnout often lack the energy required to perform their jobs effectively and struggle to connect with their work; this condition typically arises from prolonged exposure to high levels of work-related stress (Bakker et al., 2005). As individuals grapple with stress, they may also face disengagement and detachment from their responsibilities, along with feelings of negativity and cynicism toward their work environment or colleagues (Bakker et al., 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001).

There is a visible shortage of literature on burnout (and not just some of its symptoms) in the field of translation studies. Araghian and Ghonsooly (2018) examined burnout syndrome and its relationship with personality traits in Iranian undergraduate and graduate students. They claimed that translation was a demanding task, resulting in emotional strain and that individual personality characteristics may influence performance outcomes. Their findings indicated a positive correlation between burnout and neuroticism and a negative correlation between burnout and agreeableness, suggesting that students exhibiting elevated levels of anxiety, stress, and insecurity were at a greater risk of experiencing burnout, whereas students who possessed more amicable and cooperative traits were less susceptible to experiencing burnout.

Through a longitudinal study, Akbari Motlaq and Tengku Mahadi (2020) sought to investigate the influence of diverse life stressors encountered by translation students during their pre-service training on their burnout and career optimism in their inaugural years as professional translators. They found that the participants' experiences of burnout were influenced by various life stressors and a lack of social support, leading to diminished positive attitudes towards their careers as translators.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design

This research is based on a phenomenological research design which sets out to pursue subjective perceptions of reality by describing the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants, dealing with personal experiences instead of objective data (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008; Patten, 2016). "It is usually akin to descriptive research in that it is about describing rather than explaining" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 90). Interviews, focus groups, and observations are typical instruments for this design (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). Potential limitations of this design (and qualitative models in general) include subjectivity and non-generalizability (Polkinghorne, 1989; van der Schaaf, 2019). Nonetheless, these limitations posed no issue for this article, as it never aimed to be generalizable; it only aimed to be exploratory and uncover the sworn translators' point of view.

3.2. Instrumentation

Since this avenue of research is very new in the Iranian context, an exploratory study was imperative, leading to descriptions through interviews instead of statistical corroboration.

There is an abundance of questionnaires about work-related satisfaction, happiness, and burnout, especially in psychological and organizational research. The researchers analyzed some of these questionnaires to find the most essential topics to raise, which formed the basis of a semi-structured interview. Initially, the researchers drew questions about job satisfaction from the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and its companion piece the Job in General Index (JIG). These widely used measures of job satisfaction were developed to assess individuals' feelings toward their jobs (Kiefer et al., 2005; Kinicki et al., 2002; Stanton et al., 2002). Second, happiness-related questions were developed using the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS). This scale was initially developed to assess overall life happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999); however, the researchers made minor adjustments to the phrasing to evaluate happiness at work. Third, burnout questions were part of the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT), which was created to consolidate research on the intricate nature of burnout among workers (Schaufeli et al., 2019). As the unabbreviated title suggests, "the BAT only measures burnout complaints, not the causes or consequences of burnout" (Schaufeli et al., 2019, p. 6).

Once the scales were chosen, the researchers asked the three sworn translators to examine the questionnaires and identify the most important questions. Because the researchers wanted the interviews to comprise as few questions as possible (so that interviews would not take too long), among the marked-down items, they selected several that were the most representative of each issue. They then proceeded to translate these items into Persian language. After the translation was completed, the researcher had several other translators, and experts looked it over and suggested any necessary revisions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Persian.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews are essentially a bridge between the rigidity of structured interviews and the chaos of unstructured ones, whereby a balance of power is maintained because interviewers guide and direct interviewees through conversation without restricting them (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014). Advantages of using this type of interview include conducting in-depth explorations, the potential of hearing unanticipated information, and not letting participants get too carried away with their explanations (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

As semi-structured interviews were the target, the interviewer controlled the themes discussed. Still, interviewees were allowed to elaborate and talk more to address the issues on their minds, so, at the end of each section, they were explicitly asked if they wanted to add anything. Appendix 1 covers all questions asked during the interviews.

3.3. Participants

The sampling procedures were a combination of criterion and convenience sampling. For the former, criterion data gathering searches for participants that possess a specific criterion or feature; moreover, "the researcher deliberately targets cases which offer a dramatic or full representation of the phenomenon, either by their intensity or by their uniqueness" (Dorneyi, 2007, p. 128). Accordingly, the only inclusion criterion in this inquiry was for translators to be certified by the judiciary system and, more importantly, to run a practice with the said certification.

As for the latter, convenience sampling entails selecting those participants who are most readily available (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014). As an epitome of non-probability sampling, convenience sampling suffers from the drawbacks of non-generalizability, "non-coverage" (since representatives of certain aspects in the population may not be selected), and "self-selection" (as individuals may refuse to participate) (Golzar et al., 2022, p. 3). In all fairness, convenience samples are seldom entirely derived from convenience alone; they typically incorporate elements of purposeful selection (Dorneyi, 2007).

Convenience sampling was, for lack of a better word, convenient since the researchers first visited translators based in the cities of Kerman and Mashhad, where the researchers had lived, and they directly or indirectly knew many sworn translators there. Next, they traveled to Tehran because this is the capital city of Iran, and more than half the population of the sworn translators in the whole country (precisely 497 out of 815 according to https://sanam.eadl.ir, which is the official website for sworn translators), are situated in this city. As a result, the final tally of participants covered 27 sworn translators located in three cities: Kerman, Mashhad, and Tehran.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection in this research was straightforward; the most taxing step was persuading as many sworn translators as possible to participate. Since personal contact was bound to be more effective than calls and texts, the researchers walked into the sworn translators' offices and asked if they would be willing to be interviewed. To ensure positive responses, they were assured that their anonymity would be protected and that the interviews would not take too long. Unfortunately, many people refused to participate either because they were too busy or because they had no interest in participating in such research (at least, these were the reasons they offered). Those translators who were kind enough to accept were asked the interview questions, and their answers were carefully written down word for word, and the sessions were voice recorded with the participants' explicit permission.

Regarding the data analysis, the researchers found that qualitative content analysis—a qualitative method for analyzing information—would be appropriate for semi-structured interviews. Content analysis involves taking analytical steps to identify themes, label and interpret said themes (coding), and draw conclusions on their basis (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014). Coding is an essential part of content analysis and can be divided into two stages: 1) initial coding, where the researchers find themes related

to the matter at hand and clearly label them; and 2) second-level coding, in which researchers examine the labels, recognize recurrent themes, and find patterns as well as categories (Dörneyi, 2007).

Accordingly, the researchers of the present article carefully went through the interviews before highlighting any thoughts that the participants had voiced about work-related happiness, satisfaction, enjoyment, income, burnout, and challenges and labeled them as such. The researchers then analyzed these labeled sections to find recurrent themes, patterns of ideas, agreements, and disagreements, so that the translators' attitudes could be reported in well-organized categories. It is noteworthy that the researchers conducted the coding process individually, thoroughly reviewed each other's work, and reached a consensus on the most reliable codes and patterns.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Information

Table 1.

Demographic Information

Demographics		n
Gender	Female	7
	Male	20
Age[1]	31 to 44	4
	45 to 64	19
	65 and older	4
Language[2]	English	23
	German	3
	Arabic	1
Degree	Highschool diploma	1
	Associate degree	2
	Bachelor's degree	9
	Master's degree	6
	Ph.D.	9
Major[3]	Translation Studies	12
	Language related	11
	Non-language related	4
Years of Experience[4]	1-5	1
	6-10	5
	More than 15	21

Even though English translators were not specifically targeted, it is not surprising that this count is much higher than that of other languages because that is precisely how the whole population is: in accordance with https://sanam.eadl.ir, out of all the 815 sworn translators in Iran, 571 operate in English.

High school education is the minimum requirement for taking an exam for sworn translation. In the past, fewer people would reach higher academic levels, but according to the report of informed applicants, in the last two rounds of interviews, PhD students and holders seemed to be preferred (or they could have simply been the most qualified candidates).

Sworn translators who had studied translation studies covered the majority (by a narrow victory), followed by the runner-up of language-related majors. This sounds reasonable, as these people studied to work with languages, translate, and interpret.

4.2. Happiness

Apart from five participants who admitted to being negative people and having an unhappy approach towards life, the rest of the

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[1] Since a statistical analysis was not the endgame, knowing the exact numerical age would be useless here. As a result, the interviewer only needed to know in which age group the participants fit; the only issue left was how to forge the age groups. In as much as this research followed professionals' attitudes towards their careers, it would be appropriate to associate age to profession. Super and Jordaan (1973) proposed age groups based on stages of career development, as in how far in their careers people have come at each certain age. Obviously, people of lower age groups (like teenagers) did not exist in this sample.

[2] Working language apart from Persian.

[3] Specifying the exact major for each participant was not the directive. It was only important if they had studied translation studies, a language-related major (aka literature, teaching, or linguistics), or one of the many other university majors that have nothing to do with studying the language.

[4] Even though they may have had more years of experience as other types of translators (freelance translators for instance), only their experience as official translators mattered to this study.

participants gravitated towards the happier side of the scale. Surprisingly, when later asked if they were happy translators, fewer people (3) saw themselves as unhappy translators, meaning that the majority of participants identified themselves as moderately to very happy translators. A few of them decided to explain further:

"I'm happy to have this job."

"Translating makes me happy. But I'm not completely happy because of how challenging this job is."

"Making people happy makes me happy, but some people are bad."

4.3. Satisfaction

When they were asked if they enjoyed the act of translation in general, only two participants disagreed. These two individuals were highly negative towards everything, all aspects in question. When asked why they kept doing this job if they intensely disliked the work to its core, they remarked:

"When you are not working, you will get more tired. This is the only job I am familiar with and know how to do well."

"Translation is killing me. I do it out of necessity."

Three participants remarked that they loved the act of translation itself, but not much as sworn translation or as a business done for money:

"I enjoy translating, but not sworn translation."

"A translator is an artist, but sworn translation is a business."

"Only interest can keep you going; our job does not allow for spare time; we have to take work home."

As mentioned, apart from two interviewees, the rest highly appreciated the act of translating, so some of them added these statements:

"I have always been passionate about translation."

"I love translating."

Then, the interviewees were asked directly if they were satisfied with their jobs, which resulted in 22 positive responses through statements similar to the following:

"This job is valuable because it can help many people."

"The job as a sworn translator is good overall."

"I'm satisfied with my job."

Nevertheless, five people were not satisfied with sworn translation as a job. Some of them elaborated:

"It appears good in the beginning, but then you realize this job has too many responsibilities with a low income."

"It's fascinating only if we consider the income."

Despite mostly positive attitudes towards the job, the participants had difficulty deciding whether being a sworn translator was a better job than most jobs. Apart from one neutral person, the remainder were divided into equal groups of agreement and disagreement. The neutral individual refused to provide a straight answer:

"I do not know if it is better than other jobs because I do not know how to do other jobs."

Afterward, participants unanimously agreed that both the process of translation and running a sworn translation office were challenging. This is because of the following reasons:

- Rude clients

- Time pressure

- Complex process of approving the translation

- Massive financial and legal responsibility

- Translation errors incur full liability, particularly in personal documents. One translator recounted an amusing little tale, in which it is clear how even a minor error can cause trouble for the client:

  On a day just like any other, a previous client walked into our office all irate and snapped: "Can you see my big mustache? Do you see it?" When we let out a hesitant yes, he complained: "Then why did you list me as female in my ID?"

Finally, in response to whether translation was exciting or boring, the larger part of cluster (18) admitted that it tended to get boring because translating personal documentation and educational certificates was routine. Here are the reasons they

provided:

> *"There is not much variation; it is just a matter of replacing names and numbers as well as going over minor details."*

> *"These types of documents require not much creativity; only texts like contracts require some creativity, although certainly not as much as literary texts."*

> *"Sworn translation is mostly working with templates and clichés."*

4.4. Satisfaction with Income

Clients are responsible for paying for services delivered by the sworn translators. The Judiciary has published a list of prices for each type of document (but the translators' hands are not entirely tied; they could somewhat raise the prices if they see fit, but not much they wish, only according to the proportion approved by the Judiciary). Moreover, the list of prices must be attached to the wall for all clients to see. Under the circumstances, clients may throw a fit if the asking prices do not match the list, even though they cannot understand how difficult translation is, especially if the documents are illegibly handwritten.

As for sworn translators' attitudes towards their incomes, in response to how they assessed it in terms of regular expenses, more often than not (19 versus 8), they marked income as sufficient. When asked if they agreed that the fees were fair in exchange for the amount of work they did, minus nine translators, they agreed, however, begrudgingly. The third question was met with a positive majority, meaning that 22 translators had enough income to live on. Despite these positive answers, the participants voiced many complaints:

> *"Other translators get to set their own fee; we have no choice but to follow the Judiciary's rules."*

> *"The office has many expenses, too."*

> *"The pay is only enough because I own the office and am not paying rent."*

> *"The income was acceptable before the inflation, but not anymore."*

Some sworn translators were also bitter because, in their jobs (and similarly in other knowledge-based jobs such as teaching), they make less than other people, such as businessmen, car dealers, or realtors. They thought it unfair how one had to study for years and constantly work to keep their knowledge up-to-date, yet they could not make as much as other jobs that require less expertise.

4.5. Burnout

Regarding the likelihood of suffering from fatigue, a larger number of participants acknowledged mental exhaustion than physical exhaustion (16 versus 10); thus, mental exhaustion was more common in sworn translators than physical exhaustion. A few translators even elaborated:

> *"Health hazards of this job are plentiful, especially mental health hazards."*

> *"We face many irritants on this job. We are all angry and annoyed."*

The subsequent issue addressed was whether or not working as a sworn translator could cause negative feelings of stress and nervousness, neither of which turned out to be too common, with nervousness being a little more common, as 13 people reported occasionally getting nervous when things do not go their way, or they have to deal with difficult people, compared to eight participants who had encountered signs of stress.

Next, the adverse health impacts proved problematic. Six participants reported having suffered from indigestion at one point or another, while 13 described pains in their arms or hands from typing or neck and back, plus eye complications from staring at a screen for long hours. Only five translators experienced trouble sleeping.

5. Discussion

While most participants identified themselves as happy and satisfied, they certainly voiced many complaints (for instance, about income and the many challenges of the job). The existing literature has accounted for why satisfaction can coexist with grievances. According to Herzberg's controversial study, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposites. "The opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction but, rather, *no* job satisfaction; and similarly, the opposite of job dissatisfaction is not job satisfaction, but *no* job dissatisfaction" (Herzberg, 2003, p. 6). Consequently, just because the participants expressed dissatisfaction does not necessarily negate their overall satisfaction, having complaints (i.e., sources of dissatisfaction) does not nullify the existence of satisfaction. Armstrong (2006) proposed another perspective: when people are given a chance to express their opinions, they have no problem complaining, but they may struggle to acknowledge their dissatisfaction or may even be in denial about being dissatisfied.

The outcomes of this investigation are in agreement or opposition with previous research. Responses to queries about general satisfaction and happiness indicated that most sworn translators were satisfied and happy with their profession, which is in line with Bednárová-Gibová and Madoš (2019), Korpal (2021) and Piecychna (2019), who all arrived at the verdict that sworn

translators experienced relatively high job satisfaction and happiness levels. In general, moving from sworn translators to translators, several sources have suggested that translators are typically satisfied with their jobs (Atkinson, 2012; Courtney & Phelan, 2019; Katan, 2009; Leminen & Hokkanen, 2024; Sakamoto et al., 2024; Setton & Liangliang, 2009; Virtanen, 2019).

As for the enjoyment of translational activities, interviewees in this article enjoyed translating, perhaps far more than they liked the business. Likewise, all translator types (excluding sworn translators) enjoyed completing translation tasks (Moorkens, 2020), felt immense satisfaction from completing translation jobs and from the art of translation (Courtney & Phelan, 2019), and enjoyed creating translated texts (Sakamoto et al., 2024).

Regarding whether sworn translation was a better job compared to others, participants expressed ambivalence, making it challenging for the researchers to determine the prevailing sentiment. On the contrary, the majority of non-certified translators in Courtney and Phelan (2019, p. 9) agreed that "it would be difficult to find a better job."

Several participants in this article noted that sworn translation consisted mostly of routine documents and tended to be more repetitive than creative, making the job fairly dull. In contrast, another study has pointed towards highly satisfied sworn translators within the areas of task variety and creativity because they had the chance to try their own methods (Piecychna, 2019).

Although the interviewees expressed numerous grievances regarding income, their positive responses to questions about income fell on the heavier side of the scale. Both Bednárová-Gibová and Madoš (2019), and Piecychna (2019) encountered sworn translators, the majority of whom were satisfied with their compensation. On the other hand, sworn translators in the study by Korpal (2021) exhibited above-average satisfaction with remuneration rates, even though these rates were their primary source of dissatisfaction (as mentioned above, satisfaction and dissatisfaction do not cancel each other out). Focusing on investigations that did not involve sworn translators, Moorkens (2020) maintained that translators saw remuneration rates as moderately fair even though they felt disempowered regarding payment terms. Furthermore, some respondents in Courtney and Phelan (2019) reported that income was a source of stress for them; however, Lee (2017), and Lambert and Walker (2022) decided that translators were not particularly happy about their payments.

Next, some elements of burnout uncovered in the interviews, namely, mental and physical exhaustion, nervousness, stress, and health problems (such as pain in the back, neck, arms, or hands, plus eye irritation), were consistent with the findings of Korpal (2021), who indicated that sworn translation and interpreting could cause fatigue, stress, back pain, and eye irritation. For non-certified translators, Courtney and Phelan (2019) revealed that their respondents suffered from a medium level of occupational stress, and even though previous research claimed that occupational stress lowers job satisfaction, such a relationship was not observed in their study. Then, Leminen and Hokkanen (2024) described many factors, such as speech content, quality, schedules, technical restraints, etc., that cause interpreters considerable stress. Finally, Araghian and Ghonsooly (2018) found above-average burnout scores among translation students, while Akbari Motlaq and Tengku Mahadi (2020) reported that translators experienced burnout through extreme emotional fatigue and depersonalization during their first year on the job.

6. Conclusion

As some studies have shown, one's positive attitude (namely, happiness and satisfaction) can affect one's performance (Fisher, 2010; Hosie et al., 2007; Naveed et al., 2011; Utami & Harini, 2019; Westover et al., 2010). This article's main goal was to gauge sworn translators' attitudes toward the main aspects of their jobs; therefore, the research questions dealt with these aspects.

The participants expressed multiple grievances about the job (such as inferior income, translation difficulties, challenges of running an office, along with personal and legal liabilities). In response to the first and second questions, despite all the present inconveniences, the majority of sworn translators reported themselves to be generally happy and satisfied (at least most of the time).

Concerning the third research question, this job has caused sworn translators to experience at least one form of burnout. Since sworn translations mainly consist of written translations, meaning sitting behind a screen and less leg work, mental exhaustion is more common than physical exhaustion, although physical exhaustion is not rare. Some participants reported stress, nervousness, trouble sleeping, and indigestion; however, the most frequent physical complication reported was pain in the hands, arms, neck, and back, in addition to irritated eyes, all of which are caused by sitting behind a screen all day long and not taking sufficient breaks because of how much work needs to be done.

Although the findings of this article cannot be generalized due to its qualitative sampling methods and analysis procedures, this article can still be helpful because it can broaden the working knowledge about sworn translators in general, their job satisfaction, happiness at work, and burnout. Through this study, sworn translators (and policymakers as well) can recognize what elements regarding mental and physical well-being they should take care of before these elements can negatively influence sworn translators' lives and jobs (as it has been mentioned before, positive attitudes, namely satisfaction and happiness, and burnout can influence productivity).

Regrettably, the researchers encountered a few complications that limited this study. First, there were not many previous investigations into sworn translators' frame of mind or actual working conditions, especially in the Iranian context, from which the researchers could have drawn inspiration. Second, the researchers had difficulty finding enough sworn translators who would agree to spare some time to be interviewed.

Last but not least, there are many routes future researchers can take on the subject of job-related satisfaction, happiness, and burnout. They should be able to adopt one of the following suggestions, or they can mix and match. First and foremost, regarding both translators in general and sworn translators in particular, the apparent presence of relationships between many factors, or lack thereof, remains to be seen: between satisfaction and dissatisfaction and their respective predictors, between attitude, performance, and productivity, between motivation, satisfaction, and happiness, between working conditions and burnout, and so on. Future researchers can judge all these relationships through qualitative methods or turn to quantitative approaches with statistical analyses, including but not limited to relationships between the abovementioned factors and others, such as gender, age, education, etc. Alternative avenues of research include investigating what other elements can generate satisfaction, happiness, and burnout (i.e., predictors), as well as how satisfaction, happiness, and burnout can affect mental and physical health.

7. References

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8. Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Demographic Information

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Working languages
4. Years of experience as an official translator
5. University major
6. Academic degree

Happiness

1. Are you a happy person in general?
2. Are you happy as a sworn translator?

Satisfaction

1. Are you satisfied with your job as a sworn translator?

2. Do you enjoy the act of translating?

3. Do you think this job is better than other jobs?

4. Is translation challenging?

5. Is translation exciting or does it tend to get boring?

Satisfaction with Income

1. Is it enough for normal expenses?

2. Do you deem it fair for the work you do?

3. Is it enough to live on?

Burnout

1. Does the job cause you mental exhaustion?

2. Does it cause you physical exhaustion?

3. Does it cause you stress?

4. Do you tend to get nervous?

5. Do you have trouble sleeping?

6. Has the job harmed your physical health in any way?