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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Factors Influencing Teachers' Job Satisfaction

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**ABSTRACT**

Job satisfaction is important both for the qualitative development of activities of an organisation and for the well-being of employees when their work activities also meet the needs that are important to an individual. In today's education system, the turnover of teachers and their retention in general education institutions pose many challenges; thus, the issue of job satisfaction is becoming increasingly more relevant. Moreover, research on teachers' job satisfaction is significant not only because of its importance for staff turnover and retention but also because of its impact on students' learning outcomes. The subject of this research is teachers' job satisfaction. The aim of the study is to theoretically substantiate the concept of teachers' job satisfaction and to reveal the factors influencing the job satisfaction of Lithuanian teachers. To achieve the aim of the study, a quantitative research method and a questionnaire survey were chosen. The Job Satisfaction Survey by Paul E. Spector was used to assess teachers' job satisfaction. The study results revealed that teachers' job satisfaction is most strongly affected by the nature of their work and communication at work, while teachers are least satisfied with their pay and promotion opportunities.

**KEYWORDS**

Teacher, job satisfaction, job satisfaction factors, school, teacher retention.

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### 1. Introduction

Teachers' job satisfaction is a critical issue for the Lithuanian education system, as increasingly more teachers leave the education sector and fewer new teachers join in. Teachers' job dissatisfaction is one of the most frequently cited reasons for quitting the profession. The number of young teachers coming to work in Lithuanian schools has tripled in the last ten years, and in 2022, teachers aged fifty years and older in Lithuanian general education schools accounted for 59% of all teachers.

### 2. Literature Review

There are many definitions of job satisfaction in the academic literature, with a variety of different emphases, but there is still no single universally accepted definition of job satisfaction today. The Cambridge Online Dictionary (2018) defines satisfaction in a general sense as the pleasant feeling that a person feels when he gets what he wants or does what he wants to do. Job satisfaction, in a broad sense, can be defined as the general attitude towards one's job or particular aspects of one's job. The analysis of the concept of job satisfaction in the scientific domain also highlights the emphasis on the emotional component.

Today, one of the most popular and frequently cited definitions of job satisfaction is that of Locke (1976), who defines job satisfaction as an emotional response to a job, which, in light of job appraisal, can be seen as a pleasurable response or as a negative response resulting from frustrations experienced in the area of work. The author focuses on the cognitive (appraisal) and emotional aspects of job satisfaction. Some researchers consider job satisfaction as one of the work attitudes and, in addition to the two aforementioned attitudinal components, i.e. emotional and cognitive (appraisal), they also distinguish a third attitudinal

component, i.e. the behavioural component, i.e. the willingness to work or not to work (Kondalkar, 2007). Aziri (2011) had a similar approach describing job satisfaction as a combination of positive and negative feelings towards work. According to Spector (1997), job satisfaction is a person's attitudes and feelings towards his job as a whole and towards its individual aspects. Singha and Raychaudhuri (2016) present a similar understanding of job satisfaction, i.e., at an overall level that encompasses the employee's satisfaction with his job in general and at the level of individual aspects of the job.

Spector (1997) considers job satisfaction to be a multidimensional psychological construct covering such components as pay, promotion opportunities, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, colleagues, nature of work, and communication.

Job satisfaction is often classified into two main types: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic job satisfaction is based on the tangible aspects of work, including pay, colleagues, retirement, health insurance benefits and care. Meanwhile, intrinsic job satisfaction relates to internal sources such as the complexity of the work done, extent of responsibility, use of skills, ability to help others and enjoyment of work tasks and challenges (Haider et al., 2015).

Job satisfaction is linked to motivation, as employees can only be effective and productive when they are properly motivated (Viningienė & Ramanauskas, 2012). For example, Sahito and Vaisanen (2017) consider job satisfaction and motivation to be two key factors for organisational success, and in their analysis of the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, they highlight that motivation reflects the rewards an individual receives in order to satisfy his needs, while job satisfaction reflects a positive emotional state towards work (Sahito and Vaisanen, 2017). Interestingly, the authors consider motivation to be the result of future expectations, whereas job satisfaction is the result of past events and experiences (Sahito and Vaisanen, 2017).

Strong motivation has both psychological and behavioural consequences. Psychological consequences manifest through job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation, while behavioural consequences enable employees satisfied with their job to exhibit desirable behaviours such as quality work, avoiding absenteeism, and staying with the employer (Chmiel, 2005). Due to a close relationship between the concepts of job satisfaction and motivation, some of the theories that scholars have used to explain job satisfaction are closely related to, or even overlap with, motivation theories. We will discuss the theories of motivation that are most closely related to job satisfaction, i.e. the two-factor and equity theories, later on.

Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory (sometimes called motivation and hygiene factor theory) is based on the idea that there are factors that affect job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Herzberg (1959) distinguished between two groups of factors, i.e. motivational factors, which affect job satisfaction, and hygiene factors, which affect job dissatisfaction. Motivational factors are also known as intrinsic factors, and hygienic factors – as extrinsic factors. The author classified achievement, contingent rewards, work, responsibility, and promotion opportunities as motivational factors and pay, quality of supervision, interpersonal relations, management policies and physical working conditions – as hygiene factors. The first group of factors motivates employees, generates positive attitudes towards work and promotes job satisfaction. In contrast, hygiene factors related to the working environment do not motivate employees, but if these factors are insufficient, they will lead to job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors do not, therefore, encourage employees to perform better but prevent them from experiencing job dissatisfaction; thus, it is appropriate to focus on motivational factors in order to increase employee job satisfaction and motivate them.

The theory of justice developed by Adams (1965) relies on the idea that employees are motivated by a desire to be treated fairly and impartially. According to this theory, each employee strives for personal contribution and rewards to be proportionate and equivalent to those of other colleagues in similar positions because this is when the employee will feel a sense of balance and job satisfaction (Dugguh and Ayaga, 2014).

In today's society, knowledge of organisational factors is essential from a managerial point of view, as it enables managers to modify these factors in order to increase employee job satisfaction. For example, Spector (1997) argues that employee job satisfaction is driven by two main groups of factors: personal characteristics, work environment and job peculiarities. Personal characteristics include personality traits and previous work experience. Work environment and job characteristics include the way employees are treated, the nature of work tasks, relations with co-workers and the reward system.

In the research world, job satisfaction factors can be divided into two main groups, i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Viningienė and Ramanauskas (2012) emphasise that extrinsic job satisfaction factors are more important for job satisfaction as they can be monitored and modelled in the desired direction in pursuit of the set objectives. Extrinsic factors, also referred to as organisational factors by other authors, shape the work environment and enable employees to fulfil their potential and pursue the goals of an organisation. Intrinsic job satisfaction factors include factors such as gender, age, marital status, education, personality traits and

values, and work experience. Extrinsic factors include the content and nature of the job done, organisational culture, work atmosphere, salary and other forms of remuneration, working conditions, career prospects, leadership and colleagues.

When analysing job satisfaction from a gender perspective, research findings are rather ambiguous. Based on the results of the International European Social Survey, some authors (Hauret and Williams, 2017) argue that women have higher levels of job satisfaction than men. The authors attribute this to different expectations and work values of women and men. The results of research conducted by Singha and Raychaudhuri (2016) show that gender does not affect employees' job satisfaction. The same position is also adopted by Baykara and Orhan (2020), who found that there is no gender difference in the overall level of job satisfaction among physical education teachers. Sharif et al. (2021) study also indicates that gender does not affect the job satisfaction of primary school teachers.

Sarwar et al. (2013), who studied the impact of demographic factors on job satisfaction, found a relationship between age and job satisfaction. According to these authors, young workers have the highest levels of job satisfaction at the beginning of their careers, then their job satisfaction declines as they mature, and finally, job satisfaction increases again towards the end of their careers (Sarwar et al., 2013). Baykara and Orhan (2020) also found that teachers 30 years of age and younger had higher job satisfaction levels than the others. This can be explained by the fact that young workers are more energetic, ambitious, risk-taking and unafraid of new challenges, whereas older employees are less likely to be able to get a job or change jobs, and often get paid more, have longer holidays or other incentives, which leads to higher job satisfaction in these age groups.

Studies by Viningienė (2012) show that employees with more seniority have higher job satisfaction. Sharif et al. (2021) study also revealed that professional experience influenced teachers' job satisfaction. As employees with more experience in an organisation tend to have positive attitudes towards work and identify more with the organisation, their level of job satisfaction is higher.

Saner and Eyupoglu (2013), who studied the issue of marital status and job satisfaction, found that those who are married have higher levels of job satisfaction than those who are single. Marriage leads to a stronger sense of responsibility, a greater commitment to the family and a desire for stable employment, which makes workers less likely to change jobs and more likely to have higher job satisfaction.

Many authors agree that certain personality traits are related to job satisfaction (Seddigh et al., 2016; Zhai et al., 2013; Judge et al., 2002). The Big Five personality model is often used to analyse the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction. Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to innovation have been found to be positively correlated with job satisfaction, whereas neuroticism has a negative correlation (Zhai et al., 2013).

Extrinsic factors also affect job satisfaction. One obvious extrinsic factor is pay or the potential for pay growth. Pay has been found to correlate with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction levels tend to increase with increasing pay (Grund and Rubin, 2017). Many studies not only show the importance of pay for job satisfaction but also reveal that employees find the fairness of pay distribution very important (Janicijevic et al., 2015; Šukaitė et al., 2015).

To retain employees and enhance job satisfaction, organisations use a range of additional motivational measures, such as non-financial incentives and fringe benefits. In addition to financial benefits, contingent rewards, decision-making, and organisational appreciation have been found to affect job satisfaction (Haider et al., 2015). These factors are important in that they highlight the role of an individual as a valuable employee in the organisation while allowing the individual's self-esteem and self-worth to take hold.

Researchers agree that job satisfaction is related to promotion and career opportunities (Šukaitė et al., 2015). Traditionally, a career is understood as a successful advancement of an employee in the service, in the areas of social or scientific activities. It should be noted that if employees do not have greater opportunities to pursue a vertical career due to the specificity of the organisation, it is important to create conditions for the development of a horizontal career, which is particularly relevant for those working as teachers.

Every employer today strives not only to provide good working conditions but also to continuously improve them. Good working conditions have a direct impact on employee performance and job satisfaction. Baykara and Orhan (2020) found that teachers working in schools with no material resource shortages had higher levels of job satisfaction than teachers working in schools with some material resource shortages. Hauret and Williams (2017) found that the same working conditions can have a different impact on the job satisfaction of men and women.

The influence of a manager on employee job satisfaction is unquestionable; it is a manager who mobilises and motivates members of the organisation to work together to achieve the organisation's goals. Kula and Guler (2014) found that managerial support for employees has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction, while a lack of managerial support increases job stress and decreases job satisfaction. Abelha et al. (2018) found that there is a direct relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. The findings of the research conducted by the authors revealed that transforming leaders are much more likely to lead to employee job satisfaction.

A harmonious relationship between colleagues is likely to lead to higher levels of job satisfaction. Šukaitė et al. (2015) argue that in the absence of psychological comfort and satisfying social relationships, employees will experience low job satisfaction. Research by Janicijevic et al. (2015) also shows that employees' job satisfaction is affected by the competence and reliability of colleagues, as well as by good communication and a friendly working atmosphere. The positive influence of colleagues on job satisfaction can be explained by individuals' need to communicate.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Survey instrument**

Based on the idea that quantitative research allows for more accurate identification of the current situation and the discovery of statistically significant relationships, a questionnaire survey was chosen as the method of quantitative research.

The Job Satisfaction Survey by Paul E. Spector was used to assess teachers' job satisfaction. The questionnaire is designed to measure the total job satisfaction and nine aspects of job satisfaction: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, colleagues, nature of work, and communication. The questionnaire emphasises that this survey instrument can be used in a wide range of public and private sector organisations.

The free English version of the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire is freely available on the author's official website, where the author states that the free questionnaire may be used for non-commercial educational and research purposes and that no further consent is required to use this instrument.

To assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire scale, Cronbach's Alpha was used, which relies on the correlation of the individual statements that make up the questionnaire and assesses whether all the statements in the scale sufficiently reflect the problem of the study.

The study and the analysis of data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical software (IBM SPSS Statistics 22) found that Cronbach's Alpha is equal to 0.879, which means that the research instrument (the Lithuanian version of the Job Satisfaction Survey) is reliable. The internal consistency of the individual subscales ranges from 0.061 to 0.813. Since the internal consistency of the subscales for satisfaction with fringe benefits, satisfaction with operating conditions and satisfaction with colleagues is insufficient (Cronbach's Alpha is below 0.6), these subscales were excluded from the analysis. After removing these subscales, Cronbach's Alpha of the questionnaire was 0,889.

#### **3.2 Survey organisation and data processing**

The organisation of the survey consisted of four stages: analysis of scientific literature, empirical research (questionnaire survey); data processing and analysis of results; and the drawing of conclusions. 413 respondents took part in an anonymous questionnaire survey. The survey data were analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 statistical software. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the consistency of the scales of the questionnaires, with a range of values from 0 to 1. If Cronbach's Alpha is 0.60 and above, the questionnaire is suitable for a survey.

Descriptive statistics (percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics were calculated to analyse the data. To test the statistical differences between the means of independent groups, the Student's t-criterion, one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA), and correlation analysis were used to calculate the Pearson's correlation coefficient, which was interpreted as follows: 1) when the correlation coefficient  $r > 0.8$ , the relationship is very strong; 2) when the correlation coefficient  $r = 0.6-0.8$ , the relationship is strong; 3) when the correlation coefficient  $r = 0.4-0.6$ , the relationship is substantial; 4) when the correlation coefficient  $r = 0.2-0.4$ , the relationship is weak; and 5) when the correlation coefficient  $r = 0-0.2$ , the relationship is essentially non-existent between the traits (Bitinas, 2006). The p-value and the theoretical significance level  $\alpha$  were used in the analysis of the results of the survey: a) the difference between the frequencies is statistically significant when  $p < 0.05$ ; b) the difference between the frequencies is substantial when  $p < 0.01$ ; c) the difference between the frequencies is highly significant when  $p < 0.001$ ; 4) complete difference between the frequencies when  $p < 0.0001$ ; d) differences between the frequencies are statistically insignificant when  $p > 0.05$  (Bitinas, 2013).

4. Results and Discussion

Analysis of the survey data (see Figure 1) shows that teachers are least satisfied with their pay (mean: 9.07, SN = 4.03) and most satisfied with the nature of their job (mean: 18.87, SN = 3.72). This data reflects and confirms the reality of the situation in general education institutions, where salaries in this sector are low, and career opportunities are rather limited. These unresolved problems are, therefore, not only a factor in failing to attract young teachers to general education institutions but also a factor that undermines the job satisfaction of working teachers. However, teachers feel most satisfied with the nature of their work (mean: 18.87, SN = 3.72), which indicates that the activities teachers perform are not considered to be a key factor in low job satisfaction. Teachers also indicated that they felt more satisfied with supervision and communication at work.

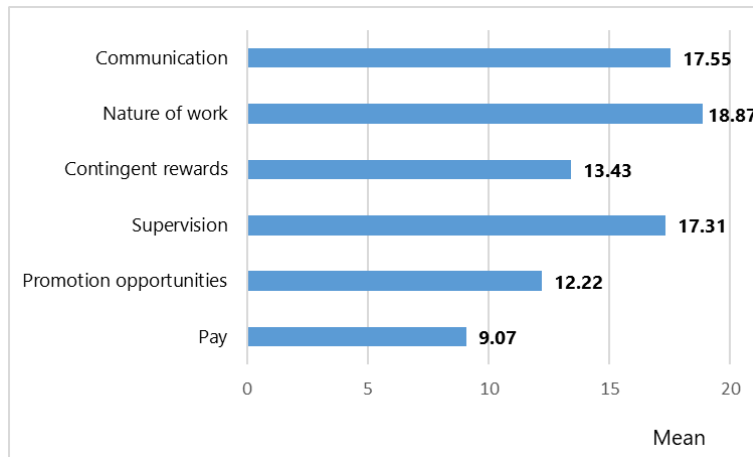


Figure 1. Means of job satisfaction subscales.

The research findings in relation to teachers' contingent rewards, development and meaningfulness of professional competence in the perspective of promotion are also evident in the correlations between job satisfaction and its subscales among the participating general education teachers, which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation between teachers' job satisfaction subscales and the total job satisfaction.

Subscales	Pay	Promotion opportunities	Supervision	Contingent rewards	Nature of work	Communication
Promotion opportunities	0,493*					
Supervision	0,331	0,395				
Contingent rewards	0,561*	0,547*	0,618*			
Nature of work	0,265	0,281	0,390	0,351		
Communication	0,321	0,314	0,585*	0,534*	0,461*	
Total job satisfaction	0,676*	0,700*	0,781*	0,843*	0,608*	0,735*

Note: r – Pearson's correlation coefficient; \*\* statistically significant correlation (p < 0.0001)

The findings of the study confirm the trend that contingent rewards are important for teachers and have the strongest statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction (r = 0.843). Satisfaction with supervision (r = 0.781) and communication (r = 0.735) are also important in teaching. There was also a strong statistically significant relationship (p < 0.0001) between the total job satisfaction and the other subscales: satisfaction with pay - r = 0.676, satisfaction with promotion opportunities - r = 0.700, satisfaction with the nature of the job - r = 0.608.

In addition, in some cases, statistically significant correlations were found between some of the subscales. Teachers' satisfaction with their salaries is statistically significantly related to satisfaction with promotion opportunities (r = 0.493; p < 0.0001) and contingent rewards (r = 0.561; p < 0.0001). Teachers' perceived satisfaction with contingent rewards is related to satisfaction with promotion opportunities (r = 0.547; p < 0.0001) and supervision (r = 0.618; p < 0.0001). Statistically significant relationships were also found between teachers' satisfaction with communication and supervision (r = 0.585; p < 0.0001), satisfaction with contingent rewards (r = 0.534; p < 0.0001) and satisfaction with the nature of work (r = 0.461; p < 0.0001).

The findings of the survey revealed that teachers' satisfaction with their pay was the lowest among all other scales. A more detailed analysis of the results showed that teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience had higher salary satisfaction than teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience ( $F = 2.625$ ,  $p = 0.034$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience in their current job also had a higher level of job satisfaction ( $F = 5.609$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ). Statistically significant correlations were also found between teachers' salary satisfaction and the location of the school: teachers in rural schools have higher salary satisfaction ( $F = 3.076$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, full-time teachers also have higher satisfaction with their pay ( $t = 2.525$ ;  $p = 0.012$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The study found that teachers' satisfaction with promotion opportunities is related to the location of the school (teachers in rural schools in the study had higher satisfaction with promotion opportunities than other teachers,  $F = 9.550$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ), and the full-time equivalent of their position (full-time teachers' satisfaction with promotion opportunities was higher than that of teachers with less than a full-time equivalent,  $t = 2.485$ ;  $p = 0.013$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The analysis of the frequency distribution of teachers' satisfaction with supervision revealed few statistically significant differences. Teachers in rural schools areas only had higher levels of satisfaction with their supervision compared to teachers in large cities, municipal centres or other urban areas ( $F = 3.665$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The study found that teachers' satisfaction with contingent rewards was statistically significantly affected by several factors. Teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience had higher satisfaction with contingent rewards than teachers with more years of teaching experience ( $F = 3.693$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The situation is similar in terms of length of service at school: teachers having worked at school 10 years or less have higher satisfaction with contingent rewards ( $F = 3.134$ ;  $p = 0.015$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, teachers in rural schools have higher satisfaction with contingent rewards than teachers in other areas ( $F = 5.081$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In addition, full-time teachers also report higher satisfaction with contingent rewards ( $t = 2.110$ ;  $p = 0.035$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The use of statistical criteria for comparing teachers' job satisfaction according to seniority, qualification category, having a supervised class, and location of the school showed no statistically significant differences.

The results of the survey show that, in some cases, there were statistically significant differences in teachers' satisfaction with communication. Teachers with more than 30 years of teaching experience have higher satisfaction with communication than other teachers ( $F = 4.944$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, teachers who work in rural schools have higher satisfaction with communication ( $F = 3.061$ ;  $p = 0.028$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, such factors as seniority, qualification category, the full-time equivalent of the position or having a supervised class did not affect teachers' satisfaction with communication. In these cases, no statistically significant differences were found.

When analysing the total job satisfaction of Lithuanian general education school teachers and applying ANOVA and Student's *t*-criterion test, statistically significant differences were found in some cases. Teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience have higher total job satisfaction than teachers with more experience ( $F = 3.194$ ;  $p = 0.013$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The analysis of differences in the total job satisfaction according to the length of service at school revealed that teachers with less than 10 years of service and those with more than 30 years of service have higher overall job satisfaction than the rest ( $F = 4.023$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Teachers in rural schools also have higher total job satisfaction than teachers in other areas ( $F = 7.192$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ). The Student's *t*-criterion test revealed that full-time teachers have statistically significantly higher job satisfaction ( $t = 2.157$ ,  $p = 0.035$ ,  $p = 0.032$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of the present research was to theoretically substantiate the concept of teachers' job satisfaction and to reveal the factors influencing the job satisfaction of Lithuanian teachers. This study has shown that there is no single definition of job satisfaction in the scientific literature, but many researchers link it to attitudes and values, highlighting the importance of the emotional component. This way, job satisfaction is expressed as a positive or negative response to the activity in general or to certain aspects of the activity in particular. Job satisfaction is a dynamic phenomenon which can vary as a result of working conditions, skills, working style and other aspects relevant to work.

The factors that contribute to job satisfaction have been widely studied in the scientific community. It should be noted that job satisfaction is related to both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, with a strong focus on the employee's value system and the culture within the organisation that supports it. Other intrinsic factors determining job satisfaction relate to gender, age or even a person's lifestyle, including education, marital status and professional experience. Extrinsic indicators of job satisfaction come from a rather broad context of operations of an organisation, i.e. supervision, colleagues, the specific nature of the activities performed, career opportunities, organisational culture, etc.

The results of this research show that the most important factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction are the nature of their work and communication at work. On the other hand, teachers' low job satisfaction is related to extrinsic factors, focusing on the problems of pay and promotion opportunities at the level of the education system, which highlights limited career prospects in general education schools. Teachers working in rural schools were found to express higher levels of job satisfaction, emphasising promotion opportunities, satisfaction with supervision, contingent rewards and communication. Similarly, teachers who work full-time express stronger job satisfaction, linking it to contingent rewards and promotion opportunities.

The insights gained from this study may be of assistance to school leaders, national education sector organizers, and policymakers in improving teachers' working conditions and the quality of their services.

A limitation of this study is that the subscales for satisfaction with fringe benefits, satisfaction with operating conditions and satisfaction with colleagues have insufficient internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha is below 0.6), so these subscales were not included in the analysis.

The research perspective is also informed by common ideas that have emerged from other research, and it is important to conduct more in-depth research on teachers' job satisfaction in order to identify specific strategies for enhancing teachers' job satisfaction.

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