Factors Influencing Teachers' Job Satisfaction: The Case of Kosovo

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between school context variables and teachers' job satisfaction. Six aspects of the school context were addressed: the general climate in the school, workload, relationships with colleagues, relationships with students and parents, external motivators, as well as internal and external motivators that influence the teacher to feel fulfilled with the work they did. The study involved 132 primary and lower secondary school teachers and 15 written interviews. Qualitative data from the interviews were thematically analyzed and combined with quantitative data, categorizing variables based on factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction. The findings confirm direct and indirect links between school context factors and teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Identifying these relationships adds value by fostering institutional harmony and enhancing teachers' sense of belonging. Moreover, high job satisfaction correlates with increased student achievement, indicating its importance as a latent variable.

Keywords: peer relations, positive school climate, supervision, administrative workload, external motivators, internal motivators

INTRODUCTION

Teacher job satisfaction is crucial for achieving positive outcomes with students and overall school performance. Various factors uniquely influence teacher satisfaction in the educational context compared to other professions.

According to Lucy Crehan (2016), research in the humanities, focusing on motivation and job satisfaction is closely intertwined. Crehan suggests that these areas of study share significant common ground and likely inform each other in understanding the complexities of teacher satisfaction and motivation. At first glance, motivation and job satisfaction are closely intertwined concepts. A motivational factor can lead to job satisfaction when it fulfills either an internal or an external demand of the teacher.

The level of teachers' job satisfaction is influenced by various factors, including the working environment, relationships with colleagues and leaders, relationships with students and parents, as well as internal or autonomous factors related to the individual. These factors, among others, are addressed in this paper, drawing from the insights of various authors.

Review of the literature-the theoretical context of the problem

Based on the research of Dimitri Van Maele & Mieke Van Houtte (2015), there exists a correlation between teachers' social relationships and job satisfaction, as well as between years of experience and job satisfaction. According to this finding, the quality of relationships among school colleagues significantly affects the level of job satisfaction among teachers. Additionally, as per Crehan (2016), job

satisfaction entails the fulfillment of teachers' requests or desires, thereby linking closely with the concept of motivation. Crehan has also identified the factors that affect teachers' dissatisfaction at work. Among those factors, he mentions the institution's policies and administration, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, pay, status and security (Crehan, 2016, p. 27). So the same factors that are a source of satisfaction at work, by their action can be transformed into factors of dissatisfaction. Factors primarily related to the working environment and positive relationships between individuals are termed "hygiene factors" by Herzberg (1968) (as cited in Crehan, 2016, p. 27).

According to Troesch & Bauer (2017), job satisfaction is influenced by external factors such as working conditions, as well as internal factors such as self-efficacy (p. 390). Troesch and Bauer (2017) also suggest, based on their meta-analysis, that job satisfaction significantly determines teachers' success at work and their attitude toward work. According to Judge et al. (2001) and Troesch & Bauer (2017), teacher satisfaction is vital for job success and retention. Kinicki et al. (2002) & Demir (2020) suggest that job satisfaction positively influences motivation. Federici & Skalvik (2012) and Potera & Mehmeti (2019) found a positive relationship between motivational factors and job satisfaction.

Studies suggest a theoretical distinction between motivation and job satisfaction, although they are interrelated and can influence each other. Van Dat Tran & Minh Tuan Lam Le (2015) found that the strongest predictor of job satisfaction was professional interest, followed by mission consensus, while innovation was the weakest predictor (p. 41). Their study highlights the significance of school environment factors in determining teachers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

The purpose of the research

The research aimed to: Examine the hierarchy of factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction and to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction factors and demographic variables, including sex, age, work experience, and school size based on the number of students..

Research Questions:

1. What is the hierarchy of factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction?

     1.1. Which external and internal factors influence job satisfaction?

     1.2. What is the relationship between job satisfaction factors and demographic variables?

2. What are teachers' opinions regarding the factors of satisfaction/dissatisfaction at work?

Study limitations

This study has several limitations. The study is multi-dimensional, because the phenomenon of job satisfaction requires a multi-dimensional approach in a larger sample.

Population and Sample:

The sample consists of 132 regular, qualified teachers with over one year of teaching experience, randomly selected from schools in both rural and urban areas. Additionally, 15 teachers were purposively selected for qualitative interviews based on a list of case selection. The sample includes teachers of both genders.

Research methods and instruments

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire featuring closed-ended questions with alternative answers. Qualitative data were gathered through open-ended questions in the questionnaire and through in-depth interviews.

Instruments

Quantitative Data Collection: The included demographic data, 35 statements on potential factors influencing job satisfaction, and 22 statements on factors influencing dissatisfaction. External factors (i.e. work environment, relationships) and internal factors (i.e. personal, administrative requirements) were addressed comprehensively. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale for teachers to rate factors influencing their satisfaction/dissatisfaction at work, and a number of open-ended questions.

Data collection procedure

Schools were randomly chosen for the study, with the number of sampled teachers determined by school size. Schools with fewer than 500 students had five teachers surveyed, while those with over 500 had up to ten. Physical questionnaires were distributed with an estimated completion time of 10-15 minutes, plus 20 minutes for open-ended questions. Completed questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes. This method aimed to explore the relationship between school size and teacher satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Research Results

The reliability of the statements addressing satisfaction (35) was found to be $\alpha=.888$, while for the remaining 22 statements it was $\alpha=.897$. The overall reliability of all statements was $\alpha=.790$, indicating acceptable reliability of the questionnaire. Data were coded and processed using SPSS 23. According to Dat Tran & Lam Le (2015), there is a significant relationship between the principal's leadership ($r=.68$), professional interest ($r=.66$), and teachers' job satisfaction.

Hierarchy of Factors with the Highest Impact on Teachers' Satisfaction at Work:

According to teachers' rankings, internal factors predominate among the 13 assessed as having a very high influence. These include student success, satisfaction with working with students, passion for teaching, and gratitude for work. Additionally, external factors such as gratitude from students, cooperation with colleagues, a good climate at school, and good relations with school leaders were identified as significant contributors to job satisfaction.

Descriptive analysis results indicate that factors with a very high impact on teachers' job satisfaction include student success (M= 4.82, SD= .444), ranking first, followed by gratitude from students (M=4.72, SD= .646), ranking second. These factors, among the 13 assessed with maximum impact, encompass both internal and external influences.

Regarding the relationship between age and the factor under consideration, the report indicates that as teachers' age increases, the impact of student success on job satisfaction also increases. This suggests a correlation between teachers' age and the balance of internal versus external factors influencing job satisfaction. Specifically, the experience and perception of student success resulting from their work significantly impact job satisfaction, with most of these factors being internal.

Table 3 illustrates that among middle-aged teachers (aged 31-40 years), student success has the strongest impact on job satisfaction compared to other age groups, accounting for approximately 28% of the variance, followed by the age group over 50 years.

Table 3. Age increase and the factor ranked as the first of job satisfaction

		The success of the students makes me proud, a motivation for work and commitment			Total
		Medium impact	High impact	Very high impact	
Age	Up to-25	0	0	5	5
	25-30	0	3	21	24
	31-40	3	1	37	41
	41-50	0	6	23	29
	over 50	0	8	24	32
Total		3	18	110	131

Factors Affecting Teachers' Job Dissatisfaction:

The research findings reveal that among the 12 factors causing dissatisfaction at work, the majority are external. Consequently, teachers perceive the underestimation of their authority as having a high impact on their job dissatisfaction. However, the behavior of students, salary, administrative requirements, neglect from parents, bad relationships with colleagues, and pressure for professional development exert an average influence on their dissatisfaction. Regarding the relationship between the type of factors that influence the satisfaction vs dissatisfaction of teachers at work and the demographic variables sex, age and education, the research results do not show any significant relationship between them, except for the age group 31-40.

Qualitative Data Findings:

Teachers' responses regarding factors influencing their job satisfaction closely align with the quantitative data. The majority listed factors according to the given hierarchy, with little variation.
Regarding factors influencing satisfaction at work, responses mainly highlighted the importance of the learning environment, positive relationships and cooperation among colleagues, recognition by parents, student achievement, cooperation with school leadership, and use of teaching technology as organizational values. Similarly, in response to factors influencing dissatisfaction at work, teachers mentioned dysfunctional aspects of factors that contribute to satisfaction, along with additional concerns such as the influence of politics in the school and subjective assessment of teachers by school management.

Positive climate at school as a factor and value of job satisfaction

The qualitative data highlights the significance of healthy relationships among colleagues, consistently mentioned by participants regardless of age or gender.

> *Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of cooperation and mutual support among colleagues, which fosters a comfortable atmosphere and a sense of support. Open*

communication and the exchange of ideas were noted to inspire innovation and solutions to challenges, contributing to a sense of belonging and increased self-confidence. Furthermore, a positive environment at school, including good relationships with colleagues, was seen to enhance motivation, productivity, and job satisfaction.

One teacher, with up to 10 years of experience, underscored the role of communication and idea exchange with colleagues in shaping the school's general climate. They emphasized that such interactions are crucial for the effective functioning of the school.

The teacher, with up to 10 years of experience, emphasized key factors contributing to the overall climate in the school and their influence on job satisfaction. Notably, they highlighted the importance of communication and the exchange of ideas among colleagues as crucial for the effective functioning of the school.

> **(Mf.1.1[1])** *The teacher expressed satisfaction derived from contributing to students' well-being, which brings happiness to their role as a teacher. They also noted positive changes in the school climate, even though these changes have not yet become fully ingrained as a culture. Additionally, cooperation with colleagues and recognition by parents, albeit in certain instances, were mentioned as factors contributing to their job satisfaction.*

One teacher finds happiness in contributing to students' well-being, emphasizing the sense of purpose derived from benefiting students. They also note positive changes in the school climate, despite it not yet being fully established as a culture. Cooperation with colleagues and recognition by parents contribute to their job satisfaction. Another teacher, sharing similar experience, derives satisfaction from working directly with students, adding to their fulfillment as a teacher. This internal motivator intersects with external factors such as cooperation with colleagues within the school's culture. Yet another teacher adds personal drive to work, alongside students' enthusiasm for the subject, as additional elements contributing to their satisfaction as a teacher.

> *(Mm. 3) Collegial cooperation, conducive learning environment (equipped with necessary tools), personal willingness to work, and students' enthusiasm for scientific subjects were all highlighted as contributing factors to job satisfaction.*

This teacher, with 20-29 years of teaching experience, emphasized factors such as collegial cooperation, conducive learning environments equipped with necessary tools, personal willingness to work, and students' enthusiasm for scientific subjects. Additionally, two teachers with similar experience (30-39 years) highlighted additional factors related to the positive school environment and climate

> *(Mm. 4) The human factor brings me satisfaction in the workplace and the school environment.*
> *(Mm. 4.1) Factors contributing to this satisfaction include a positive spirit within the collective, conducive learning environments, positive relationships with colleagues, and successful outcomes achieved with students.*

The teacher (Mm. 4.1) stands out by mentioning the results achieved with students as a factor contributing to satisfaction. This aligns with quantitative results where this factor is ranked among the top contributors. Regarding the positive climate and its impact on job satisfaction, most teachers, regardless of experience group, emphasize similar factors or elements.

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[1] MF-1. Teachers emal, MM- teachers male

The level of teacher-parent cooperation as a factor in job satisfaction

As for the cooperative relations with parents, the quantitative results rank it as a high factor of influence on the satisfaction of the teachers. These factors are also mentioned in qualitative data. Some of the opinions of the teachers about the importance of this factor are given below

> (*Mf. 2*) *The good results of students, cooperation with colleagues, adherence to school rules by both teachers and students, and cooperation with parents are all highlighted as important factors contributing to job satisfaction.*

This teacher, with 11-19 years of experience, highlighted almost all the factors emphasized in the quantitative results, with cooperation with parents mentioned twice. Additionally, they mentioned the importance of respecting school rules, a factor not initially anticipated as a possible contributor to teachers' job satisfaction. Moreover, these teachers perceive the influence of cooperation with parents in a similar manner.

> *(Mm.5) Positive spirit within our school team, conducive learning environment, relationships with colleagues and school leadership, and cooperation with both <u>colleagues and parents.</u>*

> *(Mm.4) Positive spirit within the collective, conducive learning environment, positive relationships with colleagues and school leadership, successful student outcomes, and <u>cooperation with parents.</u>*

> *(Mf.2) Positive spirit within the team, cooperation with the school leader, relationships with colleagues, <u>cooperation with parents</u>, successful student outcomes, and having necessary work tools contribute to a satisfactory working day.*

It is notable that all three participants emphasize the importance of cooperation with parents as a significant factor contributing to job satisfaction. To compare with factors of job satisfaction, let s analyze some factors of dissatisfaction according to teachers' perceptions and opinions.

Factors that promote teachers' job dissatisfaction

Even regarding factors of dissatisfaction, teachers have ranked them based on personal perceptions. These factors can be grouped into two main types: external, circumstantial factors, as well as internal factors.

> *(Mf.1) The perception that the school leader does not treat all teachers equally can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and a sense of injustice. This disparity in treatment may influence motivation and performance, as not all teachers feel they have equal opportunities for recognition and evaluation of their work, leading to a loss of interest and enthusiasm for work.*

According to this teacher, unequal treatment or discrepancies in how teachers are treated by school management significantly contribute to their dissatisfaction at work.

> *(Mf.1.1) The inappropriate intervention by parents, coupled with a lack of evaluation of the teacher's work, has made me feel that my efforts are not being appreciated. This has led to a sense of frustration, where my kindness is perceived as naivety.*

While cooperation with parents is considered a factor of job satisfaction, interference in the teacher's work can lead to negative feelings. Another teacher highlighted parents who do not sufficiently care for their students as significant factors contributing to their dissatisfaction at work.

> *(Mm.4) The human factor, specifically parents, has a negative impact because very few show interest in their children's teaching and educational process.*

Therefore, the teacher perceives the low interest of parents in their children's education as a factor that hinders their success with students and complicates classroom management.

> *(Mm.4.1): Cooperation with parents, colleagues, and school management are crucial factors for achieving success and obtaining good results with the class that I manage. Without applying these factors as a teacher, success may be hindered.*

> *(Mf.2): The cooperation factor with parents must be in the right form for work to develop, as it should. Additionally, the digitization of the school is important, as new teachers have a great need for it, and it would facilitate their work.*

The more experienced teacher (30-39 years) and the teacher with 11-19 years of experience both emphasize the lack of cooperation with parents as a factor affecting their dissatisfaction at work. This factor, rated high in terms of its impact on job satisfaction, is understandably problematic, as the lack of cooperation can hinder work and hinder success with students, which are factors that contribute to their job satisfaction.

On the other hand, the teacher with 1-10 years of experience presents an interesting perspective. They highlight unequal assessment practices at school as factors that affect dissatisfaction and lead to a loss of enthusiasm for work.

> *(Mf.1.1): The unequal treatment of teachers by the school leader leads to increased feelings of dissatisfaction and a sense of injustice, which can negatively affect work motivation and performance. The lack of equal opportunities for evaluating our work sometimes results in a loss of interest and enthusiasm for work.*

The issue of objectivity in evaluation and equal access to opportunities for evaluation and appreciation of contributions is a significant element of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction, as highlighted by the teacher in question. This concern is particularly pertinent for younger teachers, who express a need for evaluation and motivation.

Upon analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, it becomes evident that factors influencing teacher satisfaction vs dissatisfaction at work encompass both external and internal elements. In the group of factors, influencing job satisfaction, a slight, albeit non-significant dominance of internal factors is observed based on teachers' evaluations. Conversely, in the group of factors influencing dissatisfaction, external factors dominate.

Discussion of results

The purpose of this study was to identify factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction based on teachers' perceptions and evaluations of their influence on satisfaction versus dissatisfaction at work. Significant findings include the relationship between demographic variables and job satisfaction/dissatisfaction factors, alongside other relevant research variables. These insights offer valuable implications for educational practice and policymaking.

The main factors of job satisfaction

The research findings highlight the impact of external factors on internal motivation and job satisfaction among teachers. Additionally, they suggest that a positive school climate and strong relationships within the internal school community are linked to higher job satisfaction, while a negative climate correlates with lower satisfaction levels
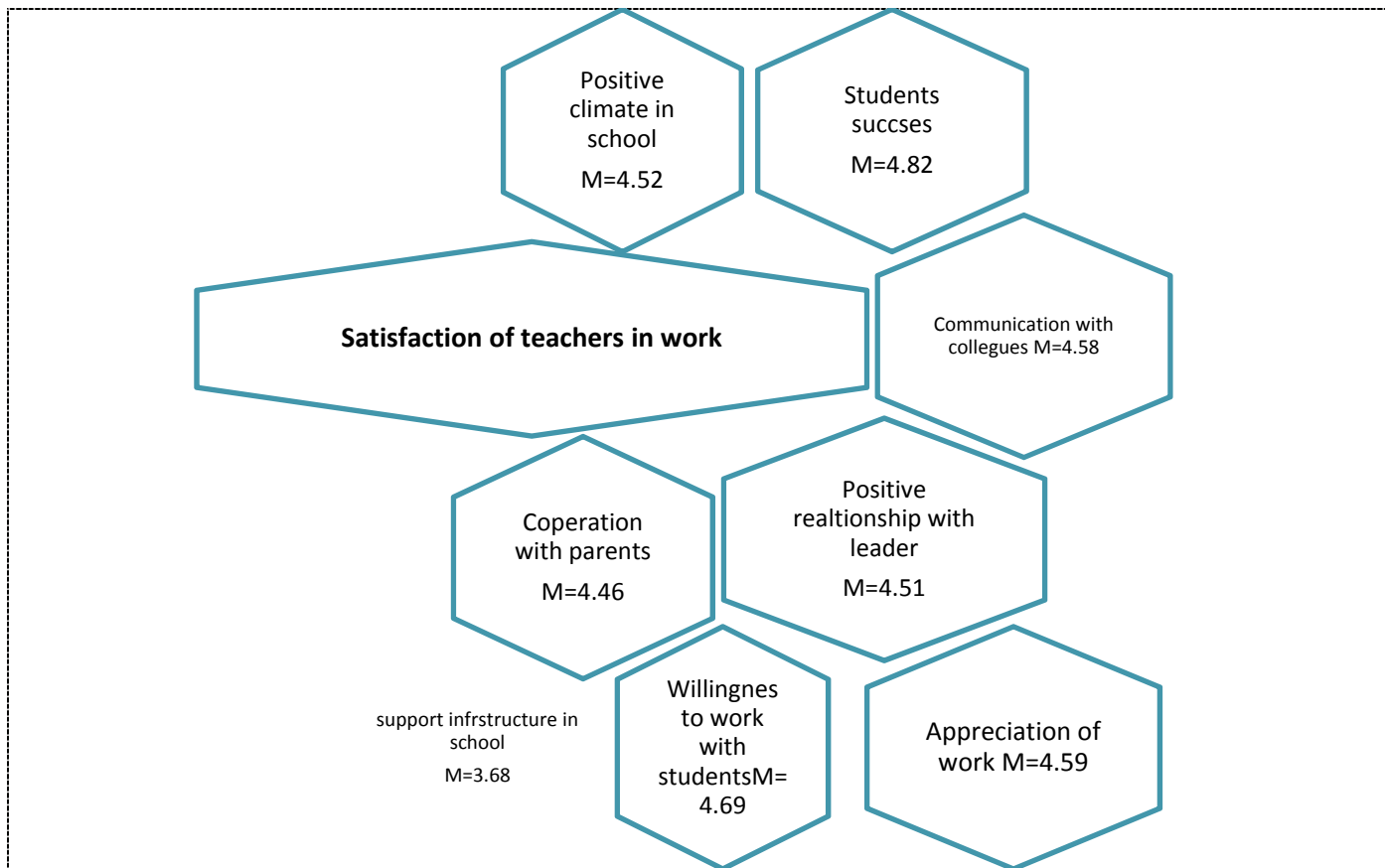
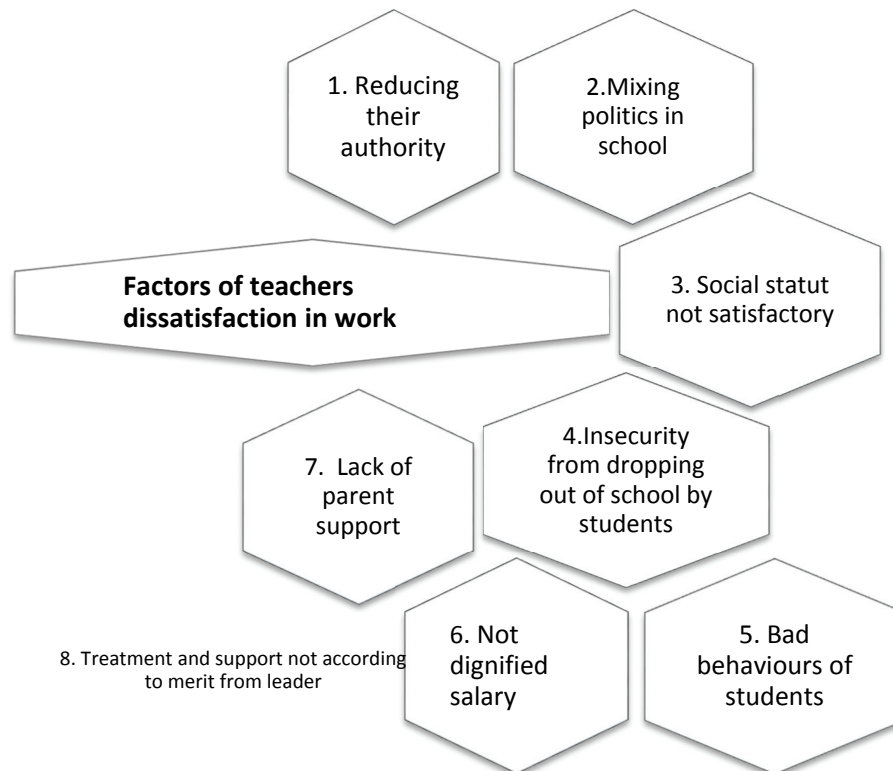*Figure 1. Main factors of teachers' satisfaction at work*

Fig.1 illustrates some of the most prevalent factors identified by teachers, as revealed by both quantitative and qualitative data. The presence of a positive collective spirit, an aspect of the school environment highlighted by Gkolia & Koustelios (2014), emerges as a significant factor contributing to teacher job satisfaction. Conversely, Gkolia & Koustelios (2014) also found that poor interpersonal relationships with colleagues contribute to job dissatisfaction. Similarly, teachers in the sample emphasized the negative impact of reduced authority and politics in the school environment on their job dissatisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of positive school climate and supportive interpersonal relationships in fostering teacher satisfaction and well-being.

Figure 2. Factors of dissatisfaction at work

Fig. 2 illustrates factors that have not been encountered in the reviewed literature. This suggests that these elements may be unique to the current study or have not been extensively explored in existing research. Further investigation may be needed to understand the significance of these factors and their implications for teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Conclusions and recommendation

Based on the significant results of the research, we are giving some significant conclusions and recommendations for the practices of influencing factors on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of teachers in their work while teaching at school. The conclusions and recommendations can be used as a reference for guiding policies and practices of school leadership, but also for making policies that avoid factors or situations that cause dissatisfaction or to promote factors that teachers fulfill during the work process. The research managed to identify the main factors, external and internal, that affect the level of

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                    ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐
                    │ 1. Reducing │   │ 2.Mixing    │
                    │   their     │   │ politics in │
                    │  authority  │   │   school    │
                    └─────────────┘   └─────────────┘

   ┌──────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────┐
   │ Factors of teachers      │         │ 3. Social statut │
   │ dissatisfaction in work  │         │ not satisfactory │
   └──────────────────────────┘         └─────────────┘

                ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐
                │ 7. Lack of  │   │ 4.Insecurity│
                │   parent    │   │from dropping│
                │  support    │   │out of school by│
                └─────────────┘   │   students  │
                                  └─────────────┘

 8. Treatment and support not according   ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐
    to merit from leader                  │ 6. Not      │   │ 5. Bad      │
                                          │  dignified  │   │ behaviours of│
                                          │   salary    │   │  students   │
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satisfaction and dissatisfaction of teachers at work.

It remains a task, but also an incentive for other research in the elaboration and more in-depth analysis of some of the explored factors that affect the teachers' fulfillment while working with students. The quality of the work they do with students depends to a large extent on the level and quality of the satisfaction factors. Regarding this, we propose the following recommendations, the fulfillment of which should be an institutional and social priority.

Reccomandations: Based on the research results, several recommendations for the school and educational policies emerge, such as:

- Invest in fostering positive work culture in educational institutions.
- Eliminate external factors like political interference affecting teacher dissatisfaction.
- Improve cooperation and communication with parents.
- Ensure fair assessment of individual teacher contributions.
- Mobilize social efforts to enhance the image and authority of teachers, promoting job satisfaction

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