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FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION OF GRADUATE TEACHERS IN THE DENUWARA EDUCATION ZONE IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This research was conducted using a survey method with the primary objective of uncovering the factors that affect the professional satisfaction of a teacher. Seven hundred teachers from 1AB and 1C schools belonging to the Denuwara Zonal Office in the Central Province of Sri Lanka were randomly selected to collect data through questionnaire. Maslow's theory of interests was used as the theoretical basis. According to the data obtained from the questionnaires, the teacher-student relationship was the leading factor affecting the professional satisfaction of teachers; salary was presented as the second, while the leadership given by the principal was the third most important factor. It was clear from teacher feedback that internal and external supervision was not an important factor in professional satisfaction. Factors such as congestion in the classroom, shortage of teachers, available physical and human resources as well as other facilities, curriculum, parental support and community relations were revealed as unsatisfactory factors. It was also found that there is a significant difference in the analysis depending on the type of teacher response degree. Thus, it can be concluded that the teacher-student relationship and salary factors have a positive effect on the professional satisfaction of graduate teachers. Recommendations have been made to bring school alumni to school regularly and to increase teachers' salaries.

Keywords: Factors, Graduate Teacher, Profession, Satisfaction

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Introduction

The paramount role of the teacher is considered to be teaching. It is important for a teacher to be satisfied in performing professional roles, including his or her teaching and learning process. It enhances the efficiency and productivity of the teacher and enables him/her to move towards a desired goal. Education is one of the key elements in the development of a country. This the reason for the selection of literacy as a key criterion for measuring development indicators. The teacher plays a vital role in developing literacy or education. Lumsden (1998)¹ states that job satisfaction has a profound effect on teacher performance as well as student performance. Luthans (1998)² also pointed out that in order to perform the role of the teacher well, the teacher must be employed satisfactorily. It is also important to study teacher satisfaction as the role of the teacher is more important and fundamental when compared with most other professions. Teacher satisfaction ensures the maintainance of a high level of efficiency as well as productivity in the role of a teacher. Bolin (2007)³ states that a teacher's behaviour, subject knowledge and teaching skills affect a quality learning and teaching process. In order to develop these features, the need for teachers to be satisfied in their professions becomes clear. Witte (2007)⁴ states that, work-related factors contribute to the efficiency and productivity of a profession. Therefore, it can be surmised that it is possible to increase professional satisfaction of teachers by investigating the factors that affect the same, either positively or negatively. The objectives of this study were to uncover the factors that affect the professional satisfaction of teachers and, the study were to find out whether the factors affecting the professional satisfaction of graduate teachers in Sri Lanka vary according to gender, school type and type of degree obtained.

Review of Literature

In the study of factors affecting the professional satisfaction of teachers, it is necessary to first examine what professional satisfaction is. Hongying (2008)⁵ says that teaching career satisfaction refers to the overall working conditions of teachers and the prevailing attitudes and ideas towards the profession. Baron & Greenberg (2005)⁶ state that Professional Satisfaction is the attitude of a person towards his / her profession and it is based on the cognitive and perceptual evaluation of his / her career. In examining the factors affecting the professional satisfaction of teachers, the theory of requirements hierarchies presented by Maslow (2013)⁷ can be taken as the theoretical basis and according to this theory, the requirements develop sequentially from the basic requirements. It is clear that in order to satisfy the professional needs of teachers, it is necessary to satisfy these basic needs along with the higher needs. Robbins & Judge (2008)⁸ describe, according to Maslow's theory of need, food, water, sleep, social and occupational safety, affection, social acceptance, self - esteem, leadership, self - actualization, etc.

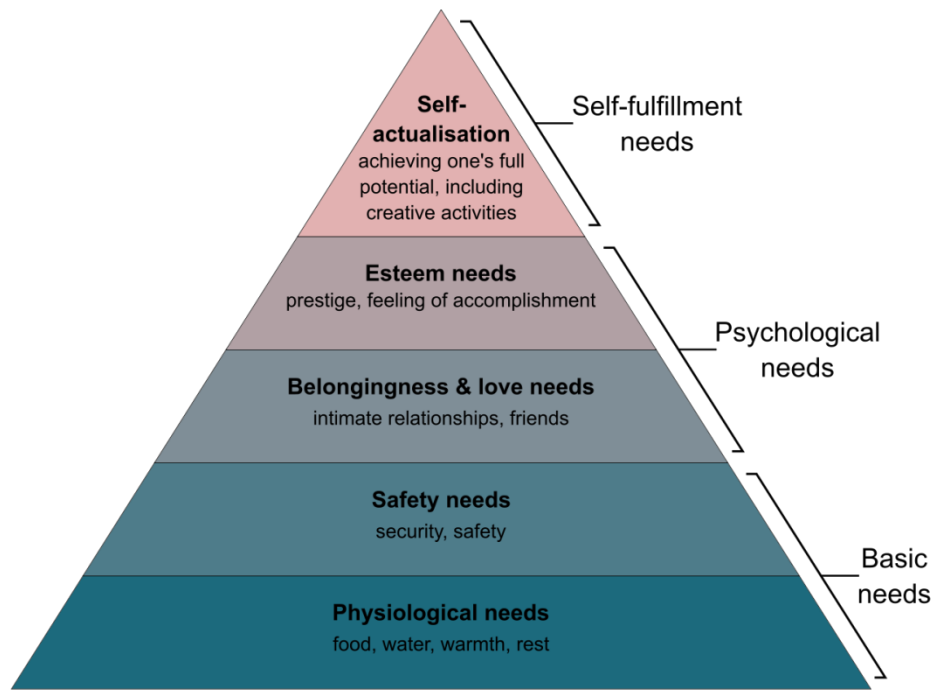


Figure 1: Maslow's theory of needs.
 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs)

Table 1 presents the views expressed by Lunenburg & Ornstein (2004)⁹ on how employees can achieve professional satisfaction according to Maslow's theory of needs.

Table 1
How employees can be satisfied according to Maslow's theory of needs

Higher Needs	General factors	Levels of needs	Organizing factors
	Development	Self-actualization	Challenging jobs
	Victory Development Self-esteem Respect for others	Esteem	Development Victory in work position Situation Promotions
	Recognition Love Friendship	Love/ Belonging	Monitoring status Appropriate work teams Professional friendship
	Safety Care Stability	Safety	Safe working conditions Additional benefits Job security
	Water Foods Accommodation	Physiological	Basic salary Working conditions Heat, air and light

Basic Needs	Rest		
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Lunenburg & Ornstein, (2004)⁹

From the above table, it is clear that satisfaction can be created by adjusting the professional background and work ethic to meet the needs of individuals. Akyeamong & Bennell (2007)¹⁰ have pointed out that the practical application of this theory can enhance professional satisfaction and thereby achieve the desired goal.

It is also important to look at research studies that have been done on career satisfaction. Ranawaka (2006)¹¹ Gates & Mitika (2011)¹², Chang et al. (2011)¹³, Tayyar (2014)¹⁴ and Abas et al. (2014)¹⁵ have pointed out that salary contributes to the professional satisfaction of the teacher. As teachers' salaries are lower than in other professions, it is a major factor affecting salary satisfaction. Additional benefits for teachers Artz (2010)¹⁶ have also been identified as a factor influencing satisfaction. Studies conducted by Olube (2006)¹⁷, Weerasinghe (2007)¹⁸ and Priyadarshani (2009)¹⁹ confirm that teachers are dissatisfied with the lack of additional benefits. Various studies have shown that school administration, leadership styles, work ethic, and interpersonal relationships also contribute to career satisfaction. Among them are some important studies by Kalubowila (2000)²⁰, Ellickson and Logsdon (2002)²¹, Davis (2003)²², Johnson (2006)²³, Lankathilake (2006)²⁴, Sancar (2009)²⁵, Mengistu (2012)²⁶, Panditharatne (2013)²⁷, Jayasena (2013)²⁸ Ayele (2014)²⁹, Mostafa & Pal (2015)³⁰. In addition, studies from Bolin (2007)³, Sinclair (2008)³¹ and Gardner (2010)³² have revealed that responsibilities, recognitions and promotions are affected in the workplace. It can be concluded from all the above studies that various factors affect the professional satisfaction of teachers. Accordingly, attention has been focused on uncovering those factors that affect career satisfaction in Sri Lankan teachers.

Methodology

The objectives of this study were to uncover the factors that affect the professional satisfaction of teachers and, the study were to find out whether the factors affecting the professional satisfaction of graduate teachers in Sri Lanka vary according to gender, school type and type of degree obtained. To achieve the above objectives, The survey research design was employed in the study. Although the population relevant to this study was all graduate teachers in Sri Lanka, the target population was Sinhala medium teachers in schools 1AB and 1C in the Denuwara Zonal Office of the Central Province. Out of those teachers, 700 graduate teachers participated in the survey as a sample for the study and data were collected from a questionnaire. In addition, the validity of the data was verified by triangulation of the data by conducting focus group interviews with 100 teachers selected from the sample.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The main objective of this study is to identify the key factors affecting the professional satisfaction of teachers. Accordingly, 11 key factors identified through the literature review were given to the teachers and they were selected according to how important they are in determining their job satisfaction. The mean values calculated according to the selection of the sample are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Factors affecting professional satisfaction in teachers

Factors	Rank	(\bar{x}) mean values
Teacher-student interpersonal relationships	1	8.76
Salary	2	7.21
Principal Leadership	3	6.94
The relationship between teachers	4	6.77
Relationship between teacher and principal	5	6.99
Promotions	6	6.32
Leave	7	5.56
In-service training programmes	8	5.13
Teacher-parent relationship	9	4.83
Internal supervision	10	4.20
External supervision	11	3.73
(\bar{x}) = 1 – 5.99 Un-satisfied		(\bar{x}) = 6 > Satisfied

According to the table above, the relationship between teachers and students has been identified by teachers as the key factor influencing career satisfaction. It is clear that the teacher is satisfied that the students who learn from him/her behave in an exemplary manner in society and holds high positions.

Salary is the second factor. Employment is not only expected to provide mental satisfaction, but also to satisfy physical needs, as Maslow puts it, which may have led to the choice of salary as a key factor. It is clear from the above averages that internal and external supervision does not have much effect on the professional satisfaction of teachers. This is due to the fact that teachers do not have much faith in the supervisory process and also because supervision does not lead to teacher development or motivation. It is possible that this may be due to the lack of a supervisory body in schools. This is further confirmed by the following comments made by a school teacher in this regard.

“There are a number of factors that really affect a teacher's satisfaction. The students who learn from the teacher see the results at a higher level as well as the salary. Because we work to earn to living.” (1AB school teacher)

It is clear from the above statement that salary can be considered as a major factor in the professional satisfaction of a teacher. Other factors contributing to occupational dissatisfaction include classroom congestion (69.9%) teacher shortage (63%) lack of parental support for students' learning curriculum (62.9%) and lack of adequate classroom facilities (58.9%). curriculum uniformity (56.1%) lack of relationship between schools and schools community (51.6%) Being was identified by teachers as the main factor.

The Chi-Square was tested to see if the factors influencing teacher professional satisfaction vary according to gender, school type, and the nature of the degree they hold. The resulting Z-values are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Differences between factors affecting satisfaction in the teaching profession

Factors	Gender	School type	Nature of the degree
Teacher-student interpersonal relationships	P= .049	P= .001	P= .000
Salary	P= .035	P= .009	P= .000
Principal's leadership	P= .056	P= .007	P= .000
The relationship between teachers	P= .991	P= .000	P= .000
Relationship between teacher and principal	P= .286	P= .425	P= .000
Promotions	P= .019	P= .000	P= .002
Leave	P= .229	P= .092	P= .000
In-service training programmes	P= .000	P= .356	P= .002
Teacher-parent relationship	P= .031	P= .244	P= .000
Internal supervision	P= .000	P= .000	P= .000
External supervision	P= .104	P= .000	P= .000

Examination of Table 3 reveals a significant difference between the two responses depending on the nature of the degree in relation to each factor. The reason for this is that graduate teachers of mathematics and science are dissatisfied with these factors and the level of satisfaction among the graduates of arts and education is at a high level. It was recognized that there is a significant difference in satisfaction with each school in terms of salary, principal's leadership, promotions and internal supervision. The Chi-Square test also shows that there is no significant difference between the teacher-student relationship, the teacher-teacher relationship, the vacation and external supervision in terms of gender. The types of schools are 1AB and 1C schools. Accordingly, there was no significant change in the teacher-principal relationship, leave, in-service

training programmes, and teacher-parent relationship. Thus, it was found that the factors that affect the professional satisfaction of teachers do not affect them uniformly, but can vary according to the gender, type of school and the nature of the degree.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The following conclusions were drawn from the data revealed by the analysis of the study conducted to identify the factors that affect the professional satisfaction among teachers and whether they differ in terms of gender, school type and nature of degree.

1. Professional satisfaction of graduate teachers is due to the fact that students who have learned from teachers achieve high standards and excel.
2. Salary is a major factor affecting the professional satisfaction of teachers.
3. Teacher promotions have been shown to affect career satisfaction among the variants of gender, school type and nature of degree.
4. Internal and external supervision of the school does not affect the professional satisfaction of the teachers.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made regarding the factors that affect professional satisfaction for teachers.

1. Bringing eminent alumni of the school to the school regularly and getting them to praise the teachers.
2. Raising the salaries of teachers, giving salary increments etc. without delay.
3. Promoting the professional development of teachers through the use of qualified subject matter experts for external and internal supervision.
4. Activation of special welfare services for school teachers.

The implementation of the above will promote positive motivation in those factors that affect the professional satisfaction of teachers.

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