

A Preliminary Measure of Teachers' Occupational Well-Being in Baku Schools and Contextual Factors Affecting It

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Abstract

Teachers' occupational well-being is the work-related aspect of teacher's well-being. This study investigates the levels of occupational well-being of Baku school teachers and the factors that may influence them. The studied indicators of occupational well-being are self-efficacy, job satisfaction, psychosomatic symptoms, and social relations (among colleagues, principals, and students), and the studied contextual factors are school type, classroom size, gender, age, experience, and education. A quantitative questionnaire based on an OECD instrument was implemented among 100 participants to assess their levels of occupational well-being and compare the above-mentioned contextual factors. The data showed positive levels of the participants' occupational well-being, the teacher-student relations were notoriously strong, and the teacher-principal relations were significantly low. The classroom size and teachers' educational level showed the most notorious differences in occupational well-being, while the quality of teachers' relation with their principal was a predictor of job satisfaction and self-efficacy. The most frequent psychosomatic symptom among the participants was fatigue, which showed some differences across groups. The minor participation of male teachers did not allow for the analysis of the data based on gender. More details and other findings, as well as implications for research and practice, are discussed.

Keywords: education, teachers' occupational well-being, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, psychosomatic symptoms, social relations, contextual factors.

Introduction

Well-being is a broad and complex concept that may refer to mental and physical health, quality of life, or happiness. Indeed, over the years, many researchers have defined well-being in different terms (Allin & Hand, 2014), and no single study has belittled the importance of well-being over employee performance. Teachers' case is not the exception, making it possible to find abundant literature addressing the

dangers of not caring for teachers' well-being (Bubb & Early, 1996; Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Lüdtke, & Baumert, 2008; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011; Viac & Fraser, 2020). However, it is not until recent years that teachers' well-being has taken the importance that it deserves, having now a special place in international studies such as TALIS 2018 and PISA 2021 (Viac & Fraser, 2020).

Teachers are expected to be multitasking in the school. They are supposed to facilitate the development of students' emotional and social skills, address students' individual needs, and work collaboratively with other teachers and parents to ensure their students' improvement (Viac & Fraser, 2020). It has been found that low levels of teachers' well-being can result in stress and burnout (Viac & Fraser, 2020), while teachers' stress and burnout can influence student outcomes (Herman et al., 2018). It is, therefore, essential to study teachers' well-being to assure students' development.

In order to study teachers' well-being in their workplace, the concept of occupational well-being is introduced, which is defined as the work-related aspects of teachers' well-being (Viac & Fraser, 2020). For this study, teachers' occupational well-being is understood as a complex term compound of four indicators: self-efficacy, job satisfaction, psychosomatic symptoms, and social relationships. Self-efficacy is teachers' beliefs in their ability to perform (Viac & Fraser, 2020), and job satisfaction is the sense of fulfillment and gratification that teachers get from working (OECD, 2014). In this definition, psychosomatic symptoms are physical diseases caused by mental factors such as stress and anxiety (Weiss, 2015), and the term social relationships refer to the quality and depth of the social interaction (Viac & Fraser, 2020); here, only the relationships of teachers with their colleagues, students and principals were considered.

Studying teachers' occupational well-being takes particular relevance in Azerbaijan since little is known, and no records of measuring their well-being have been found. Thus, this study shows a preliminary measurement of teachers' occupational well-being in Azerbaijan, using a questionnaire based on an existing OECD survey (Viac & Fraser, 2020). This study also explores how different contextual variables can impact teachers' occupational well-being in Azerbaijan. This study is expected to advance the discussion of teacher well-being in Azerbaijan and put teachers' problems in the spotlight. In order to guide the study, two research questions were posted:

What are the levels of occupational well-being of Baku school teachers?

How are the contextual factors affecting Baku school teachers' occupational well-being?

Literature Review

Well-being

Well-being has been endowed with several definitions over the last years. That is clearly shown by Allin and Hand (2014), where they spend many pages exploring the contrasting interpretations that well-being can have. For instance, Felce and Perry (1995) argue that well-being is a general word that comprises objective and subjective indicators, such as physical, material, social, emotional well-being, personal development, and purposeful activity (as cited in Allin & Hand, 2014). On the other hand, Michaelson, Mahony, and Schifferes (2012) explain well-being as how people feel and function personally and socially and how they evaluate their lives as a whole. The OECD understands well-being as a misleading term, with no single and right definition (OECD, 2011a). Accordingly, they have developed a deep framework with three essential dimensions for well-being: quality of life, material living conditions, and sustainability (OECD, 2011b).

Any definition given to well-being does not quite meet teacher needs when it comes to discussing policy decisions. Day et al. (2006) identified three factors that shape teacher's well-being: situated (pupil characteristics, site-based leadership, and staff collegiality), professional (teachers' roles and responsibilities, and educational policies), and personal (family support and demand). Thus, to make improvements in teacher's well-being, the focus should be on situated and professional factors; "personal factors, although relevant, are beyond the scope of influence of educational policy" (Viac & Fraser, 2020, p.18). Hence, the general concept of well-being is narrowed to teachers' work-related aspects of their lives, producing the idea of teachers' occupational well-being.

Occupational Well-being

Thus, the OECD created a framework to study teachers' occupational well-being (Figure 1). This framework was built by incorporating dimensions covered in TALIS 2018 and instruments used in the development of PISA 2021 (Viac & Fraser, 2020). The framework serves as a cornerstone for the present study and guides the understanding of the core components of teachers' occupational well-being and the working conditions that shape teachers' occupational well-being. Thus, the framework defines teacher's occupational well-being around four key dimensions:

cognitive, subjective, physical and mental, and social well-being. Also, each of those dimensions contains several indicators that help to measure those dimensions. For this study, only one indicator of each dimension was considered: self-efficacy (from cognitive well-being), job satisfaction (from subjective well-being), psychosomatic symptoms (from physical and mental well-being), and social relationships (from social well-being). Each indicator has its importance, and there is a logic behind its selection.

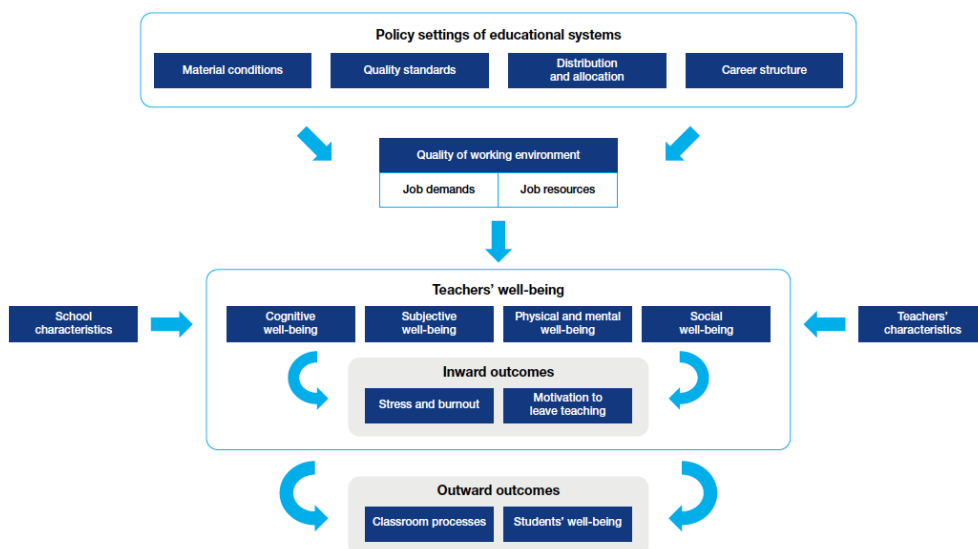


Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework of Teachers occupational Well-being* (Viac & Fraser, 2020)

Self-efficacy is the primary indicator of cognitive well-being in the OECD framework of teacher's occupational well-being; thus, self-efficacy is a cognitive process where people build beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of succeeding (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Teachers' job satisfaction is a sense of fulfillment and gratification that teachers get from working (OECD, 2014); more specifically, teachers' job satisfaction consists of the satisfaction that they can get from the profession and the current work environment (OECD, 2014). Psychosomatic symptoms are those diseases where mind and body are related; in other words, they are physical symptoms that may have been caused due to the current mental state (Weiss, 2015). The psychosomatic symptoms to study on teachers are headaches, stomach pain, back pain, feeling down, irritability, nervousness, fatigue, feeling dizzy, feeling anxious, and sleep deprivation (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Finally, teachers' social relationship refers to the quality and depth of teachers' social interactions (Viac & Fraser, 2020) with their students, colleagues, and principals;

indeed, the focus is put on the factors that can impact teachers' occupational well-being, such as student misbehavior, support or lack of support from management, or challenging situations that may arise with colleagues (McCallum et al., 2017).

The reason to choose those indicators is first its relevance in the literature: several studies on teachers' well-being consider job satisfaction (Klusmann et al., 2008; OFSTED, 2019) and social relationships (Collie et al., 2015; Demo & Paschoal, 2013) as key concepts when referring to teachers' occupational well-being. In the same way, Schleicher (2018) considers that teachers' self-efficacy has been the most extensively studied part of teacher well-being at the international level; accordingly, Viac and Fraser (2020) put self-efficacy as the central concept to study when inquiring about teachers' cognitive well-being.

Finally, psychosomatic symptoms have been left aside on the general discussion of teachers' well-being, with only some studies considering it as an indicator (Van Horn et al., 2004; Viac & Fraser, 2020). However, some researchers have shown that teachers are more likely to suffer sleep disorders, forgetfulness, pain, and irritability than other occupational groups (Scheuch et al., 2015), and it has been highlighted that teachers can have lower health status than the general population (Yang et al., 2009). Thus, I consider it is essential to add this last indicator to the understanding of occupational well-being. Since this new definition of teachers' occupational well-being considers each dimension's main points, it is expected to be a fair representation of Viac and Fraser's framework. Also, as teachers' well-being has been understudied in Azerbaijan, a good starting point is to explore the most relevant indicators.

Several working conditions can shape teachers' occupational well-being. Viac and Fraser (2020) pointed out that the school characteristics and the working environment's quality (subdivided into job demands and job resources) are the most important external factors shaping teachers' occupational well-being. However, they also added teachers' characteristics as an essential factor in teachers' well-being. Due to the extension of the study, it was only considered school characteristics and teachers' characteristics as the contextual factors for Baku school teachers' occupational well-being.

The school characteristics are those school features to consider that can contribute to creating the working conditions in which teachers operate (Viac & Fraser, 2020); the school characteristics to examine in this study are school type (public or private) and school size (number of students per classroom). Teacher characteristics are those individual attributes of teachers that may influence their well-being, such as their experience, education, age, or gender. School and teacher characteristics are

contextual variables that help understand how well covered the levels of well-being are in the system, the extent to which they vary across school and teacher profiles, and the sources of those variations (Vian & Fraser, 2020). Contextual variables are relevant if the aim is to identify initial variances and possible causes of the problem.

Viac and Fraser (2020) have done a tremendous job breaking down the concept of teachers' occupational well-being. However, not all studies have been that rigorous. Klusmann et al. (2008) have considered occupational well-being as the levels of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction in the school setting. In the same way, the OFSTED (2019) has made a report on teacher well-being in work, measuring life satisfaction, and considering occupational well-being as "how you feel about your work" (p. 18), which corresponds to the definition of job satisfaction more than occupational well-being. Van Horn et al. (2004) used a more detailed interpretation of teachers' occupational well-being, considering affective, cognitive, professional, social, and psychosomatic dimensions. Viac and Fraser (2020) managed to put together all the different ideas of teachers' occupational well-being, guide data collection, and analyze teachers' well-being.

Importance of Occupational Well-being

As already stated, the aspects of teachers' occupational well-being to be studied on this project are self-efficacy, job satisfaction, psychosomatic symptoms, and social relations. There is increasing evidence showing that teachers' self-efficacy influences academic student outcomes (Caprara et al., 2006; Schleicher, 2018). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) related self-efficacy with teachers' behavior in the classroom and their general performance, stating that those teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to be open to new ideas and experiment with new methodologies. Similarly, Viac and Fraser (2020) emphasize that teachers' self-efficacy can influence how much effort they put into accomplishing their goals and how long they can persist in facing their obstacles. Additionally, Schleicher (2018) mentions that higher levels of teachers' self-efficacy imply high job satisfaction levels. Caprara et al. (2006) and Collie et al. (2012) agree that there is a link between low levels of self-efficacy and high levels of job-related stress, and low levels of job satisfaction. Thus, it is important to study teachers' self-efficacy since it has been directly connected with their classroom performance.

Job satisfaction of employees has always been of significant matter, and teachers are not the exception. According to Caprara et al. (2003), teachers' job satisfaction plays an essential role in teachers' attitudes and efforts in their daily work with children (as cited in OECD, 2014). Teachers' job satisfaction has been associated with their motivation and commitment to teaching (Collie et al., 2012). Moreover, improving

teachers' job satisfaction can reduce costs related to high teacher stress levels, such as teacher absenteeism and teacher illness (Collie et al., 2012). Accordingly, Veldman et al. (2013) inform that "when job satisfaction declines, phenomena such as work-related stress and burnout can become manifest" (p. 56). It is then vital to have an eye on teachers' job satisfaction since it is a variable that can predict mental tiredness.

Little has been studied about the psychosomatic symptoms of teachers when referring to their well-being. Van Horn et al. (2004) consider it necessary to study these symptoms since they can often be traced to unfavorable work circumstances such as high job demand, low job control, or long working hours. As job satisfaction, teachers' psychosomatic complaints can also be related to their stress and burnout (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Teachers play an essential role in helping children grow, but in order to do that, they have to be physically and mentally healthy (Pillay et al., 2005).

Teacher social relations can be studied in three spectrums: relations with students, colleagues, and principals. A good teacher-student relationship can be beneficial for both: students tend to have a better performance in the school (Spilt et al., 2011), and teachers may have higher occupational well-being (Viac & Fraser, 2020). According to Viac and Fraser (2020), disrespectful, conflictual, or distant teacher-student relations can negatively impact teachers' well-being. Viac and Fraser (2020) also point to the relationship with colleagues and school leaders, explaining that teachers who feel supported by their colleagues and principals usually experience high self-efficacy, less pressure at work, and a more pupil-centered orientation. In the same way, Aelterman et al. (2007) noticed that when teachers have good relations with their colleagues and leaders, they are also better equipped to deal with external pressures (as cited in Viac & Fraser, 2020). Thus, the type and quality of the relationships that teachers hold in the school can be significant to their well-being in the school setting.

Contextual Factors

Finally, it is possible to find an agreement that teachers' contextual factors can influence their well-being. According to a study by Lee et al. (1991) from the University of Michigan, the school's organization can affect the school members' lives (student, teacher, and administration). Lee et al. (1991) have also found that, in private schools, it is more likely that teachers have higher self-efficacy than in public schools. Bubb and Early (1996) noticed that "one in five new teachers leave the profession before they reach their fourth year of teaching" (p. 16), which suggests that the experience and the education of the teacher may play a role in their job

satisfaction. Lastly, a UNFPA/SCFWCA (2018) survey about gender equality in Azerbaijan showed that Azerbaijan's male population tends to feel healthier than females. The contextual variables, such as school type or size, and teachers' age, gender, experience, and education, may show some hints on where to start looking to analyze the reasons behind teachers' occupational well-being levels.

This literature review explored the concepts of teachers' occupational well-being and its acceptances. It also brought a justification to study teachers' occupational well-being and the elements that may impact teachers' well-being. Thus, this review highlighted the positive impacts of high levels of teachers' occupational well-being; although intuitive, this review showed colleagues' agreement that teachers' occupational well-being is an essential piece that needs to be considered to improve the educational system. Lastly, this review helps to reflect on the possible reasons behind teachers' occupational well-being levels. It was found that contextual variables – school and teachers' characteristics – can shape teachers' occupational well-being. Understanding those contextual variables can give a starting point to know where it is more urgent to change the educational system.

Methodology

The data was collected from an adapted quantitative questionnaire developed by the OECD (Viac & Fraser, 2020) to measure the different dimensions of teachers' occupational well-being. The quantitative data collection used snowball sampling as a sample approach, a nonprobability convenience sampling procedure where the researcher asks participants to identify other participants to become members of the sample (Creswell, 2012). The population for the questionnaire was teachers of Baku schools. The snowballing procedure started spreading the questionnaire with teachers working in Baku schools known by the researcher. The researcher had immediate access to 10 teachers from different schools. The questionnaire was online for two weeks, and in total, 100 teachers answered the survey. Teachers accepted to participate in the questionnaire after submitting their responses.

In the adapted questionnaire, five Likert scale questions measured the different aspects of teachers' self-efficacy, seven Likert scale questions for teachers' job satisfaction, ten psychosomatic symptoms were inquired, and nine Likert scale questions regarding teachers' social relations. Also, six contextual questions were added at the beginning of the survey. Table 1 presents background information about the participants surveyed. The majority of participants were female teachers, and only six teachers were male. Thus, the analysis across gender groups was omitted since the difference among their participation was too big. Almost 70% of

respondents from private schools were young teachers, while only 28% of respondents from public schools were aged between 20-29. Oppositely, only 9% of private school teachers were aged over 40, while 28% of the public school respondents were old teachers.

Table 1

Teachers' Characteristics		Frequency
School Type	Private School	43
	Public School	57
Classroom Size	About 8	7
	Between 8 – 15	39
	Between 15 – 30	48
	More than 30	6
Gender	Male	6
	Female	94
Age	22-29	46
	30-39	34
	40-59	20
Experience	1-5 years	50
	6-15 years	19
	16-38 years	31
Education	Highschool	2
	Bachelor	65
	Master	29
	PhD	4

Data Analysis

Since there were several Likert scale items to measure one indicator, a composite variable was created with the average of teachers' responses; this was possible to do for self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and social relations (subdivided in relations with colleagues, principal, and students) since the values of the Likert scale responses were intervals well-distributed. For psychosomatic symptoms, it was not possible to

create a composite variable, and I focused on the central tendency (only median and mode) of those responses.

The initial analysis of the composite variables focused on central tendency, while the Students' t-test was used to check if the difference in the means of two different samples of the same group was statistically different. The data must be normally distributed to use the Students' t-test, and since the responses were combined into a composite continuous variable, I assumed they were normally distributed. It can be done since the population of Baku school teachers on a big scale is normally distributed.

The responses for self-efficacy ranged from *Not at all* (1), *To some extent* (2), *Quite enough* (3), to *A lot* (4), while for job satisfaction and social relations were responses ranged from *Strongly Disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Agree* (3) to *Strongly Agree* (4). Thus, the composite variable for self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and social relations took values between 1 and 4. Values between 3 and 4 showed a high level on that indicator, while values between 2.5 and 3 showed regular levels of those indicators. Thus, means lower than 2.5 were considered as low levels of the measured indicator. The possible responses to measure the frequency of their psychosomatic symptoms were *Every Day or Almost Every day* (1), *About Once or Twice a Week* (2), *About Once or Twice a Month* (3), *About Once or Twice a Year* (4), and *Never or Almost Never* (5); thus, the lowest value (1) indicates a high frequency on that symptom, while a high value (5) would show the symptom being barely present in teachers' life.

Validity and Reliability

The online questionnaire was translated into the Azerbaijani language. The quantitative instrument comes from the OECD, a well-recognized organization, and a valid source of information. Thus, the questions of each indicator on the OECD instrument were already reliable.

Data Report

Self-Efficacy

The mean value of the composite variable of self-efficacy for Baku school teachers surveyed was 3.078 ± 0.544 , which means that the participants had a pretty high self-efficacy. After comparing self-efficacy across groups (see Figure 2), I found that teachers' school type, age, and experience did not substantially differ in their self-

efficacy. However, classroom size and the education of teachers show notorious differences. The t-statistic and the p-value between teachers with 8 to 15 students (mean = 3.31 ± 0.53) and 15 to 30 students (mean = 2.97 ± 0.5) in their classroom was $t_{(85)} = 2.96$, $p = .004$, and between teachers with 8 to 15 students and more than 30 students in their classroom (mean = 2.57 ± 0.45) was $t_{(43)} = 3.25$, $p = .002$, which means that there is a statistically significant difference of self-efficacy between teachers working on classrooms with 8 to 15 students and teachers working in bigger classrooms. Teachers holding a Ph.D. showed a notable self-efficacy (mean = 3.75 ± 0.5), and it was significantly higher than teachers holding a bachelor's degree (mean = 3.08 ± 0.32 ; $t_{(67)} = 2.3$, $p = .024$) and masters' degree (mean = 2.99 ± 0.41 ; $t_{(31)} = 3.37$, $p = .002$).

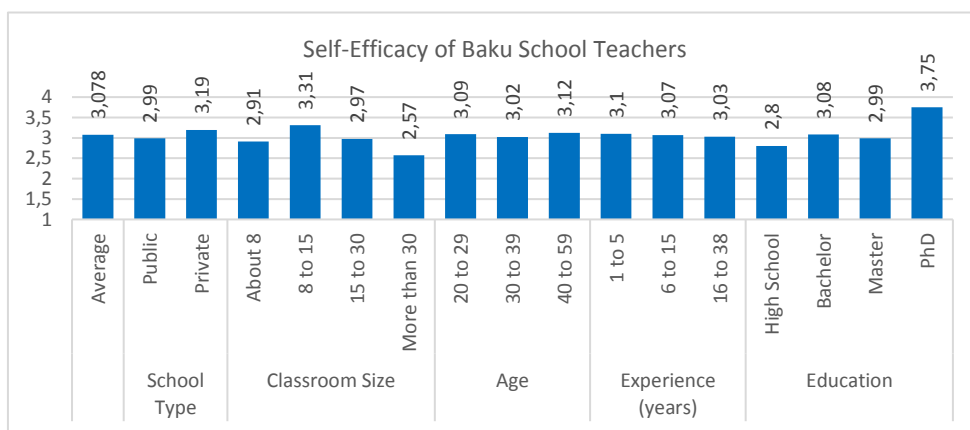


Figure 2. Self-efficacy of Baku School Teachers

Job Satisfaction

The mean value of Job Satisfaction was 3.027 ± 0.498 , which shows a high level of satisfaction of the Baku school teachers surveyed with their job. Some slight differences across groups can be noticed in Figure 3. Public-school teachers' job satisfaction (mean = 2.9 ± 0.47) seems lower than private school teachers' job satisfaction (mean = 3.14 ± 0.51) by more than 0.2 points, however, the p-value of the Students' t-Test was $t_{(98)} = 1.92$, $p = .057$ which is slightly higher than .05, and therefore, there is no statistically significant difference between these groups. Also, teachers with more than 30 students in their classroom have the lowest job satisfaction across groups (mean = 2.87 ± 0.55); however, after running the Students' t-Test of differences of means, it did not show a statistical difference with other teachers within that group. Older teachers showed a higher job satisfaction (mean = 3.24 ± 0.42) than the average, and it was statistically higher than teachers of ages between 30 and 39 (mean = 2.92 ± 0.53 ; $t_{(52)} = 2.25$, $p = .029$), which

suggests that the age may be a factor for job satisfaction. Furthermore, a significant difference can be seen between the experience of teachers. Teachers with fewer years of experience (mean = 2.95 ± 0.46) had a significant lower job satisfaction than teachers with more than 16 years of experience (mean = 3.24 ± 0.21 ; $t_{(67)} = 2.34$, $p = .022$). Finally, teachers' education did not appear to have a major difference in teachers' job satisfaction.

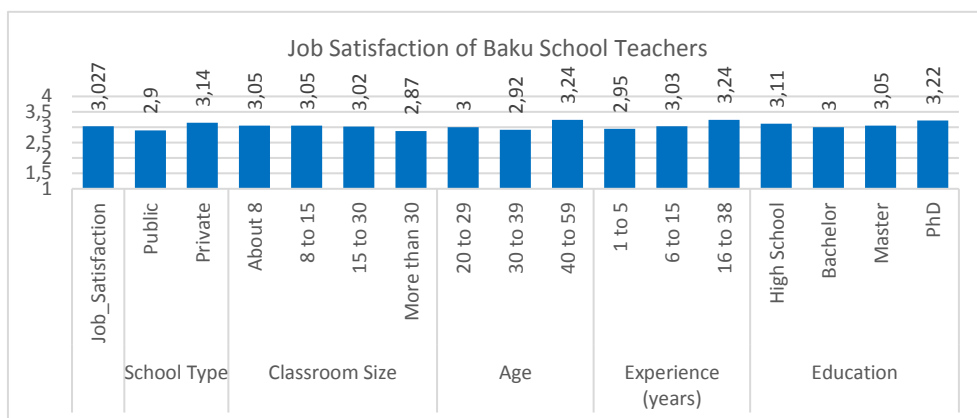


Figure 3. *Job Satisfaction of Baku School Teachers*

Social Relations

As shown in Figure 4, the teacher-colleagues relations of Baku School Teachers had an average of 3.097 ± 0.453 , which shows that Baku school teachers have solid relations with their colleagues. There were no notorious differences in teachers' responses depending on the type of school and years of experience. Teachers with small classroom sizes (mean = 2.76 ± 0.53) has a statistically lower type of relations with teachers in classrooms with 15 to 30 students (mean = 3.19 ± 0.44 ; $t_{(53)} = 2.35$, $p = .023$), which may suggest that there are some difficulties to establish good relations among teachers with small classroom sizes. The age was also a factor; teachers aged over 40 had a very high type of relationship with their colleagues (mean = 3.28 ± 0.45), and in comparison, it was statistically higher than teachers with ages between 20 and 29 (mean = 3 ± 0.41 ; $t_{(64)} = 2.43$, $p = .018$). Lastly, teachers holding a Ph.D. (mean = 3.58 ± 0.17) had statistically better relations with their colleagues than teachers with a bachelor's degree (mean = 3.09 ± 0.48 ; $t_{(67)} = 2.02$, $p = .047$) and masters' degree (mean = 3.02 ± 0.34 ; $t_{(31)} = 3.17$, $p = .003$).

In contrast, the relationships of Baku School Teachers are relatively weak with their principal (mean = 2.783 ± 0.674). There was a statistically significant difference between the means of classroom size as determined by the Students' t-Test. The

teacher-principal relationship was statistically significantly lower for teachers with more than 30 students in their classroom (mean = 2.05 ± 0.95) compared to teachers working in classrooms with 15 to 30 students (mean = 2.78 ± 0.65 ; $t_{(52)} = 2.45$, $p = .018$). On the other hand, with a score of 3.5 ± 0.57 , teachers holding a Ph.D. show a very healthy teacher-principal relationship, and in comparison, it is significantly better than teachers with a bachelor's degree (mean = 2.77 ± 0.66 ; $t_{(67)} = 2.13$, $p = .037$) and masters' degree (mean = 2.71 ± 0.69 ; $t_{(31)} = 2.16$, $p = .039$). Also, teachers older than 40 years (mean = 2.9 ± 0.75) seem to have better relations with their principals than teachers of other ages. However, they did not show a statistical difference of means. Other groups do not seem to have any differences among their responses.

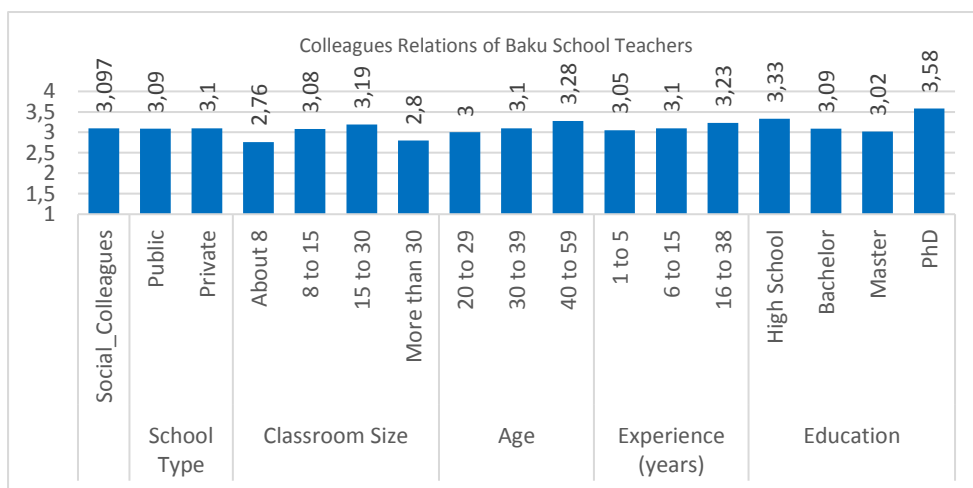


Figure 1. *Colleagues Relations of Baku School Teachers*

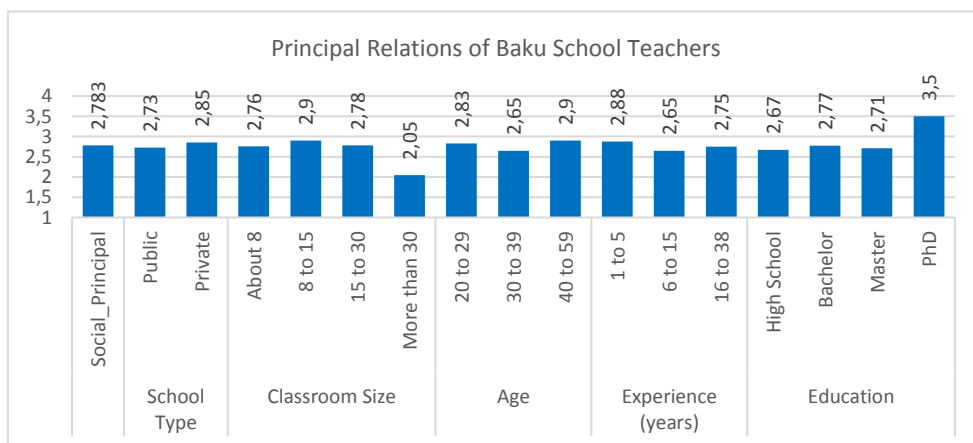


Figure 2. *Principal Relations of Baku School Teachers*

The teacher-students relation had the highest score of all, with an average of 3.43 ± 0.472 , which means that Baku school teachers have excellent relationships with their students. There were minimal differences across groups, where teachers with more than 30 students per classroom seemed to have the lower value, being 0.2 points below the average with a mean of 3.22 ± 0.27 ; however, this score is still considered high, and all groups of teachers are reported to have positive relations with their students. No statistical differences across groups are reported.

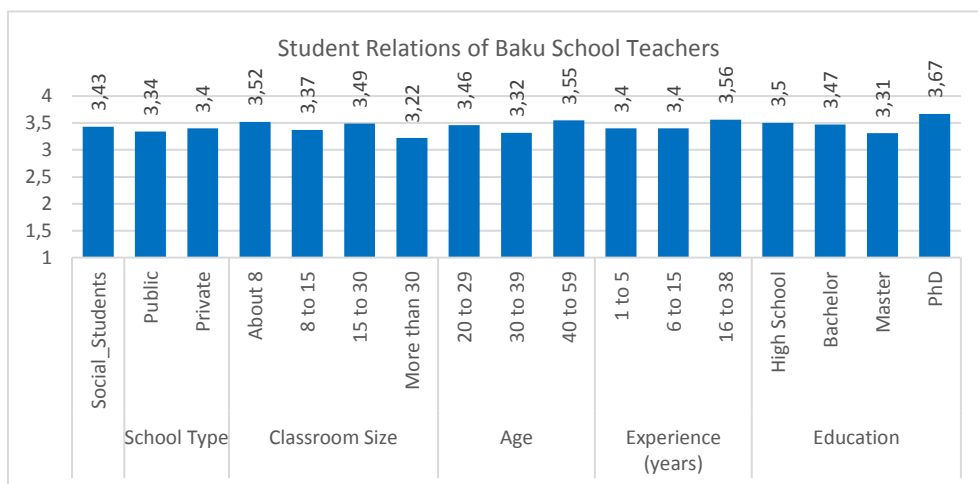


Figure 3. *Student Relations of Baku School Teachers*

Psychosomatic Symptoms

The general results for Baku school teachers are shown in Figure 7. Here we can see that fatigue is a very recurrent symptom among Baku school teachers (median = 2, mode = 1). Also, sleep deprivation seems to be a persistent symptom for teachers (median = 3, mode = 2). Baku school teachers are likely to feel down, anxious, or have headaches once or twice a month. Other symptoms are less persistent. However, there is too much difference between back pain responses, where the median is 3, and the mode is 5. This suggests looking at back pain symptom responses more closely. Fatigue would also need some closer look since it is the most frequent complaint of the participants.

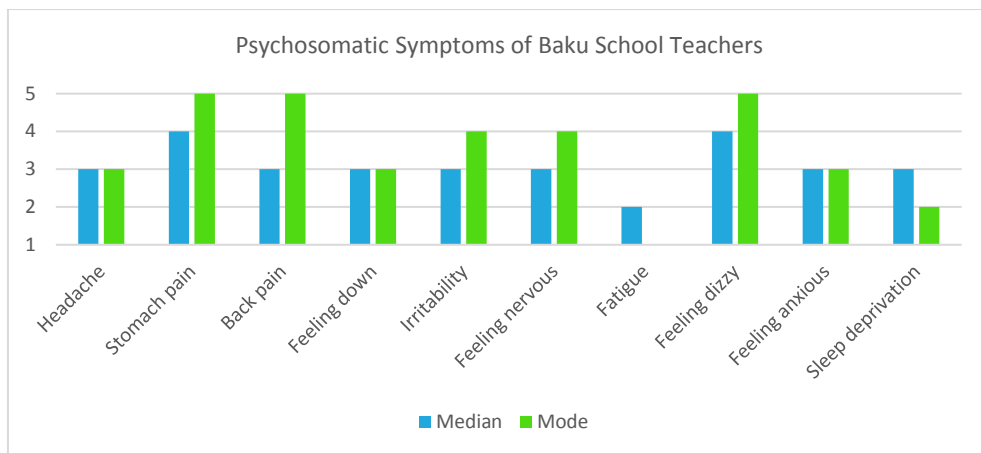


Figure 4. *Psychosomatic Symptoms of Baku School Teachers.*

Thus, Figure 8 shows the median and mode across groups for back pain symptoms. Looking at the bar chart, we can notice that older teachers are complaining more about this symptom, with a median of 2.5 and a mode of 2. Also, there is a notorious difference between public (median =4, mode = 5) and private teachers (median = 3, mode = 3), where public school teachers seem to have almost no complaints with back pains.

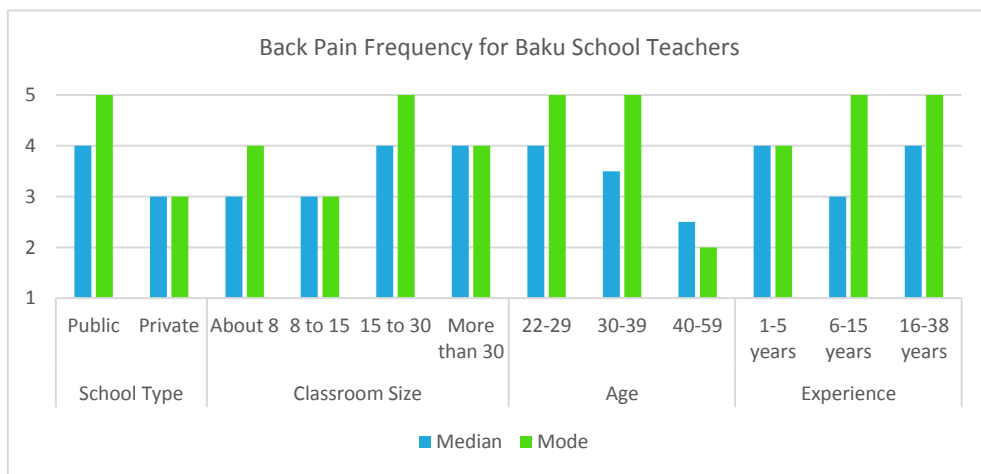


Figure 5. *Back Pain Frequency for Baku School Teachers*

On the other hand, the school type, age, and experience may be a factor for teachers' fatigue. Public school teachers rarely had some fatigue (median = 3, mode = 3), while private school teachers had a very high frequency of this symptom (median = 2, mode = 1). Similarly, older teachers (median = 3, mode = 3) and teachers with more

years of experience (median 3, mode = 3) had lower frequency of fatigue than younger teachers (median = 2, mode = 1) and teachers with little experience (median = 2, mode = 1). Thus, the school type and teachers' age and experience showed to be a factor for fatigue.

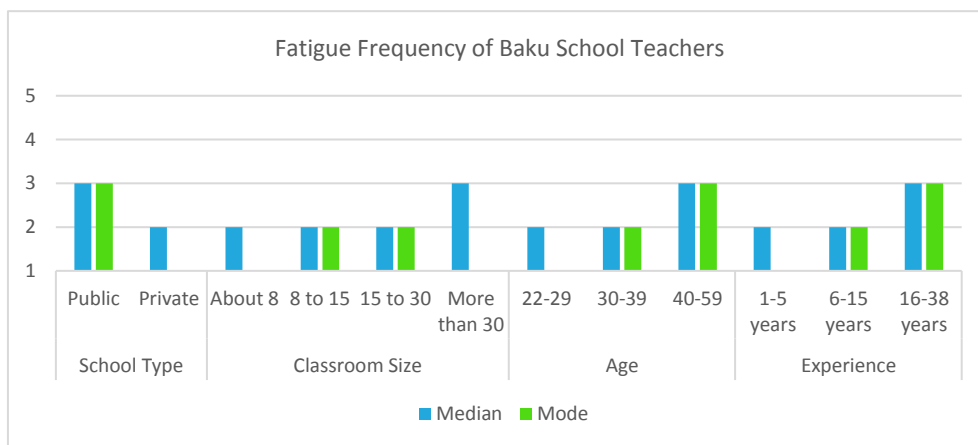


Figure 6. *Fatigue Frequency for Baku School Teachers*

Finally, finding a relation between fatigue and other responses, such as sleep deprivation and headaches, was possible. 76% of the respondents complained of fatigue every day or almost every day also had sleep deprivation every day or almost every day. Similarly, 77% of the respondents who said to suffer fatigue every day or almost every day also complain about having headaches every day or almost every day.

Research Question 1

Occupational well-being

In general words, it can be determined that Baku School Teachers have very positive occupational well-being. The overall average for the occupational well-being of Baku school teachers was 3.083. Figure 10 shows a comparison of the average of each construct. Self-efficacy (mean = 3.078 ± 0.54) and job satisfaction (mean = 3.027 ± 0.49) have very similar scores, and there seems to be no problem among colleagues (mean = 3.097 ± 0.45). Also, Baku school teachers highly regard their relationship with their students (mean = 3.43 ± 0.47). However, the lower note comes from the relations with the principal. The difference between teachers' social

relations with students and principal (mean = 2.78 ± 0.67) is too big, and there seems to be a deep gap in those relations.

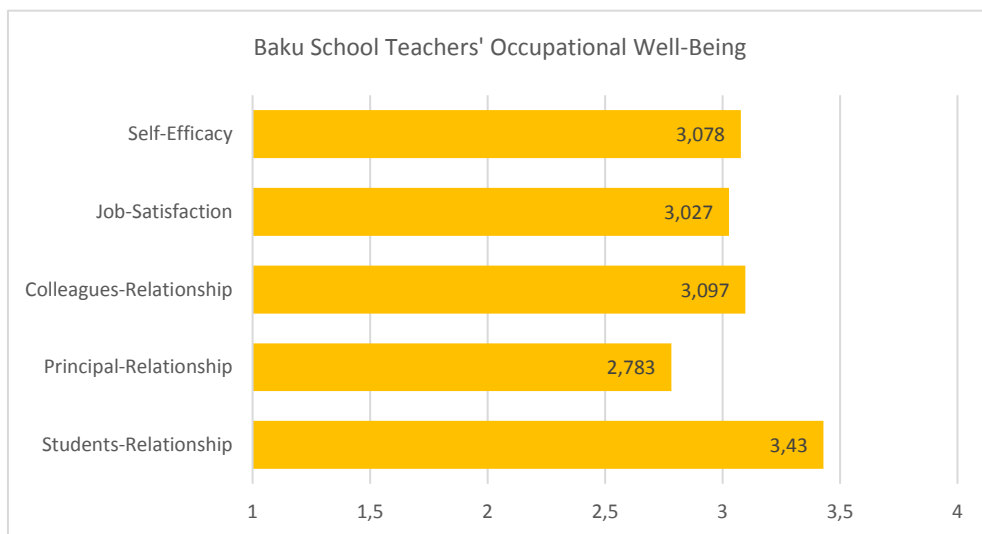


Figure 7. *Baku School Teachers' Occupational Well-Being*

Research Question 2

School type

Private school teachers seem to have a higher level of occupational well-being, with scores above the average. Public school teachers also have positive occupational well-being but with scores slightly below the average. Overall, private school teachers have an average score of 3.14, while public school teachers have 3.04. Figure 11 shows that the job satisfaction of private school teachers (mean = 3.14 ± 0.51) is 0.2 points higher than public school teachers (mean = 2.9 ± 0.47); however, it has already been reported that there is no statistical difference in this construct. As previously shown in Figure 10, private school teachers showed more fatigue than public school teachers. In general words, there is no statistically significant difference between public and private school teachers' occupational well-being.

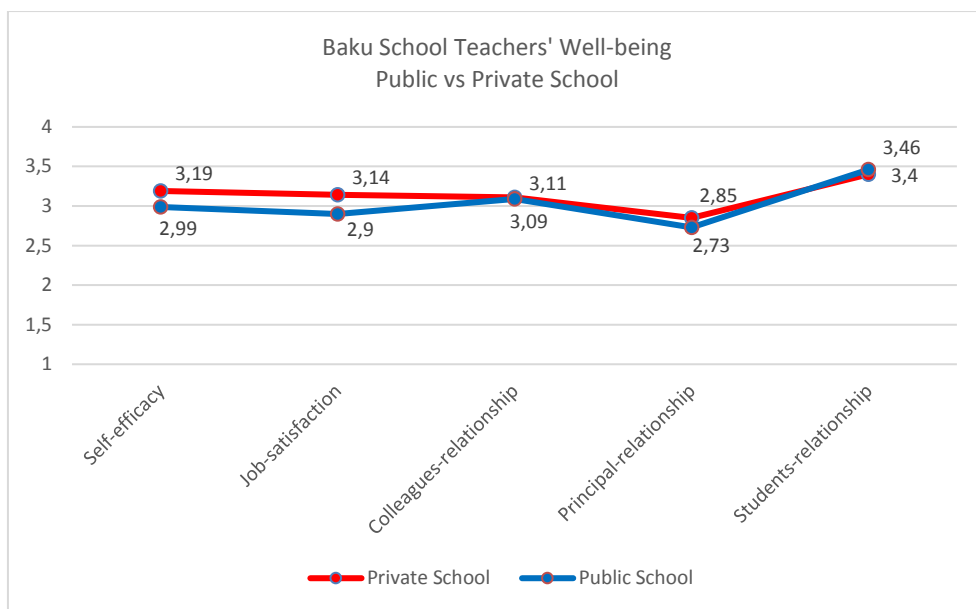


Figure 8. Baku School Teachers' Occupational Well-Being. School Type.

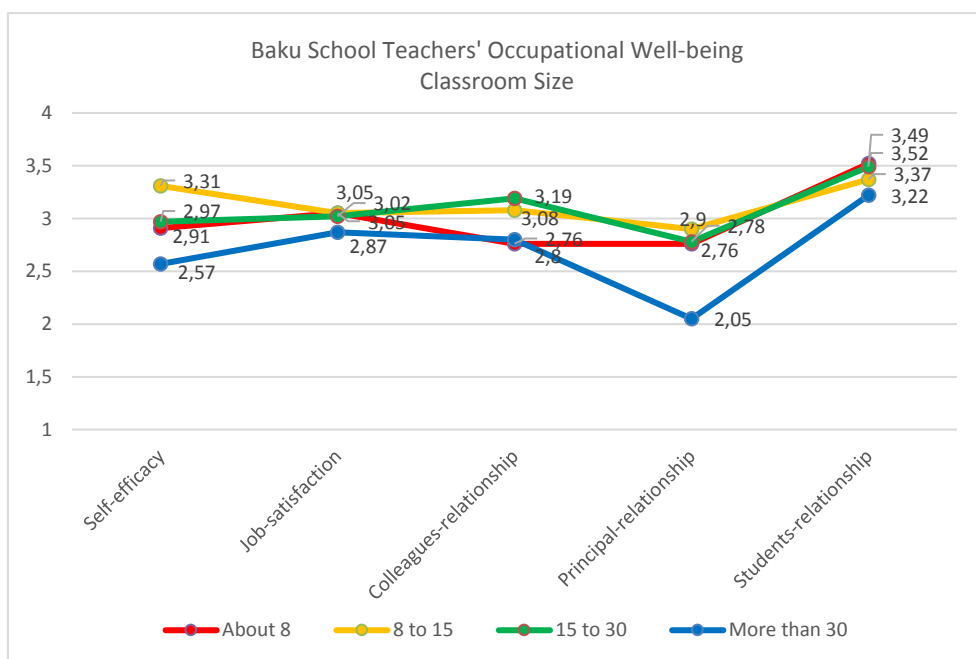


Figure 12. Baku School Teachers' Occupational Well-being. Classroom Size

Classroom size

Figure 12 displays the levels of occupational well-being depending on the classroom size. Teachers with about eight students per classroom (overall mean = 3) and teachers with between 15 and 30 students (overall mean = 3.09) show very similar levels of occupational well-being, with only a notorious difference in their relationship with their colleagues (mean = 2.76 ± 0.53 and mean = 3.19 ± 0.44 respectively). On the other hand, teachers with about 8 and 15 students have higher occupational well-being levels (overall mean = 3.14), with even a positive value in their principal-teacher relations (mean = 2.9 ± 0.59). Contrary, teachers with more than 30 students in their classroom possess quite regular levels of occupational well-being (overall mean = 2.7); their self-efficacy is weak (mean = 2.57 ± 0.45), their relationships with their principal are very negative (mean = 2.05 ± 0.95), and the difference between their responses and the responses of teachers with 8 to 15 students in their classroom is substantial. Thus, Baku school teachers' occupational well-being working in a small classroom is notoriously higher than the occupational well-being of teachers working in bigger classrooms.

Age

Teachers older than 40 years had slightly higher levels of occupational well-being than the rest of the teachers (overall mean = 3.22), while teachers with ages between 20 and 29 (overall mean = 3.08) and 30 and 39 (overall mean = 3.01) had slightly lower scores. In comparison, older teachers showed a high job satisfaction (mean = 3.24 ± 0.42), being even 0.3 points above other teachers; their relationships with their colleagues also seemed to be very healthy (mean = 3.28 ± 0.45). Only on these two constructs, the differences turned to be statistically different. However, older teachers suffered more constant back pain problems. Therefore, it is impossible to state that age could be a factor for Baku school teachers' occupational well-being.

Experience

Regarding the teaching experience, there are no significant differences in their occupational well-being. Teachers with more teaching experience had slightly higher occupational well-being (overall mean = 3.16), while teachers with 1 to 5 years of experience (overall mean = 3.07) and 6-15 (overall mean = 3.05) had almost the same levels of occupational well-being. Also, teachers with the shorter teaching experience showed a slightly lower job satisfaction (mean = 2.95 ± 0.46) and a better relationship with their principal (mean = 2.88 ± 0.58), and teachers with more than 16 years of experience have excellent relations with their colleagues (mean = 3.23 ± 0.45) and students (mean = 3.56 ± 0.43). Nevertheless, it is not

possible to state that the years of experience act as a factor for Baku school teachers' occupational well-being.

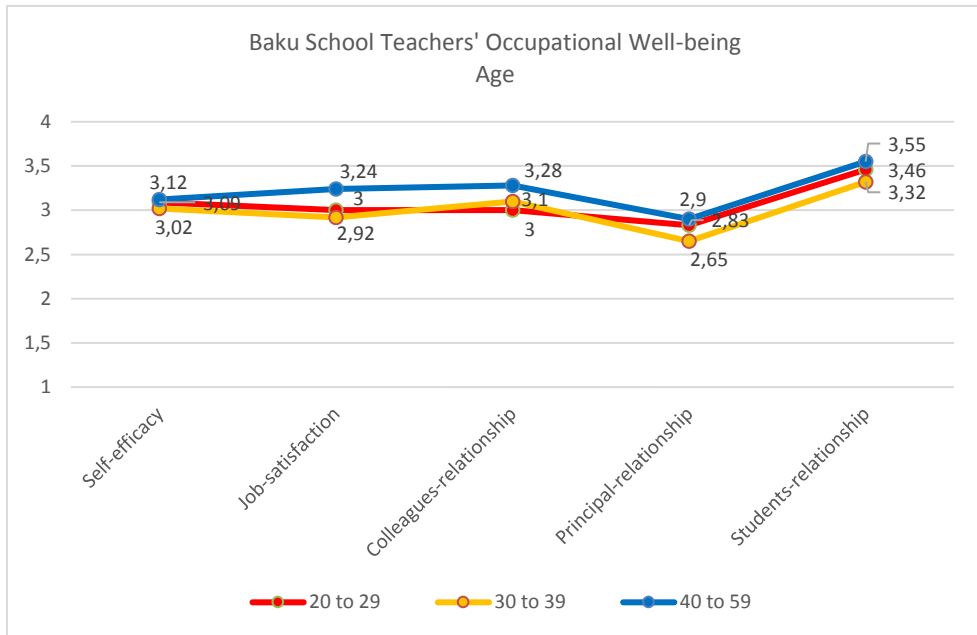


Figure 13. Baku School Teachers' Occupational Well-being. Age

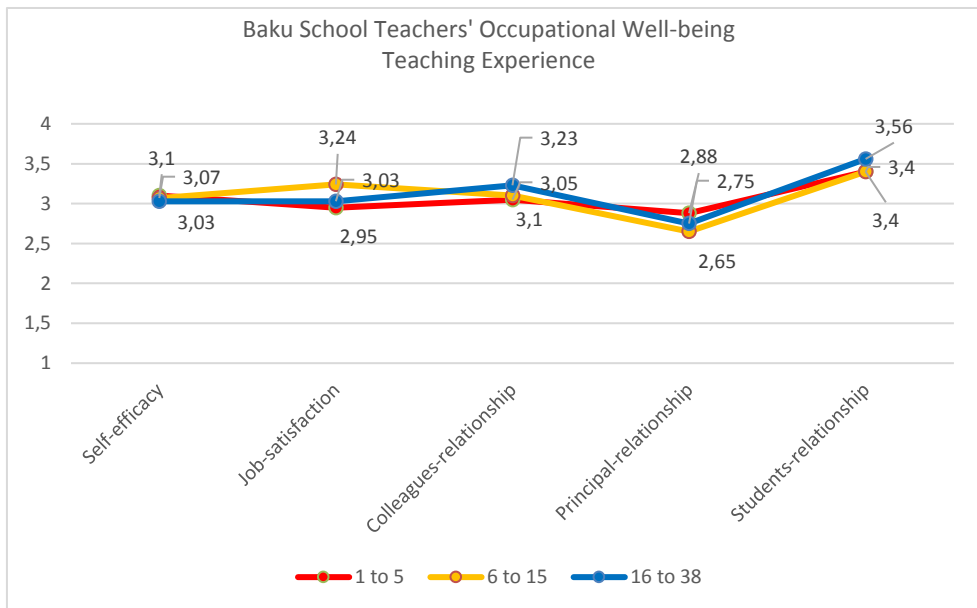


Figure 9. Baku School Teachers' Occupational Well-being. Teaching Experience

Education

Teachers holding a Ph.D. had the highest occupational well-being levels (overall mean = 3.54), with a prominent self-efficacy (mean = 3.75 ± 0.5). In comparison, teachers with a bachelor's (overall mean = 3.08) and master's degree (overall mean = 3.02) had lower occupational well-being levels. As previously reported, constructs such as self-efficacy, colleagues, and principal relations, have a statistically significant difference between teachers holding a Ph.D. and teachers with bachelor's or master's degrees. Thus, teachers' education may be a factor in their occupational well-being. Also, there seems to be no distinct difference between teachers' occupational well-being with bachelor's and master's degrees.

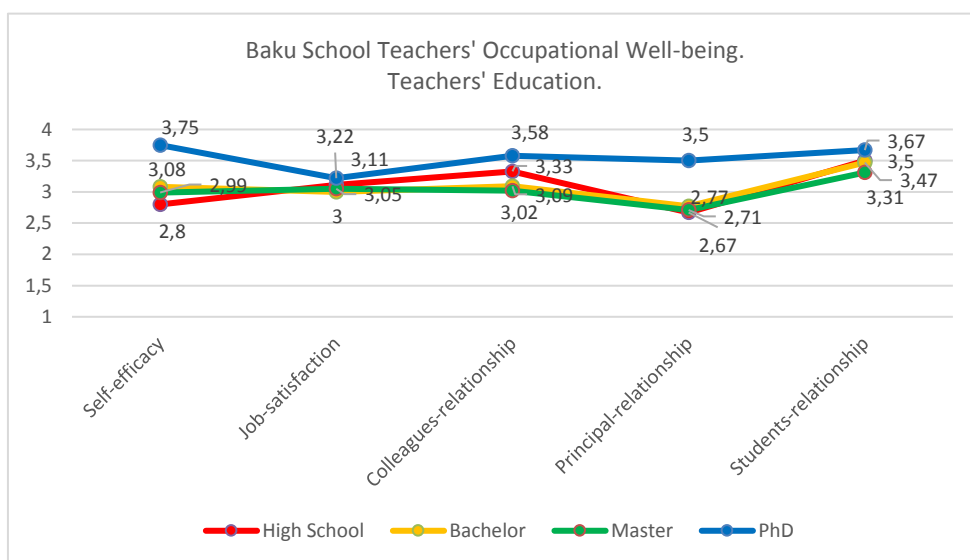


Figure 10. *Baku School Teachers' Occupational Well-being. Teachers' Education*

Teacher-Principal Relations

Finally, I want to bring attention to the results showed earlier in Figure 10. There, it was conclusive that Baku school teachers had a very positive occupational well-being, but with regular relations with their principals. Thus, it is of interest to analyze this construct alone and compare Baku school teachers' responses depending on the type of relations they hold with their principals. To do this, I divided the means of the responses into three groups: low (for values between 1 and 2.49), regular (for values between 2.5 and 2.99), and high (for values between 3 and 4). It turned out that 54% of the questionnaire participants had a high teacher-principal relation, while 21% had regular relationships, and 25% had negative relationships with their principal.

Figure 16 displays teacher responses on the other constructs of occupational well-being, depending on their principal's quality of relations. The numbers are categorical: teachers with healthy relations with their principal have better occupational well-being and have great job satisfaction (mean = 3.19 ± 0.44), while, in comparison, teachers with poor relations with their principal have a very low job satisfaction (mean = 2.59 ± 0.46 ; $t_{(77)} = 5.48$, $p = .0001$) and an overall lower occupational well-being. It is also interesting to notice that teachers with positive teacher-principal relations have a high self-efficacy (mean = 3.23 ± 0.47), keeping a statistically significant distance with teachers with low (mean = 2.94 ± 0.56 ; $t_{(77)} = 2.32$, $p = .023$), and regular (mean = 2.86 ± 0.6 ; $t_{(73)} = 2.8$, $p = .007$) teacher-principal relations. It means that, for the participants, a quality teacher-principal relationship turns into positive job satisfaction and higher self-efficacy. In other words, participants' occupational well-being is significantly higher when they hold good relations with their principal.

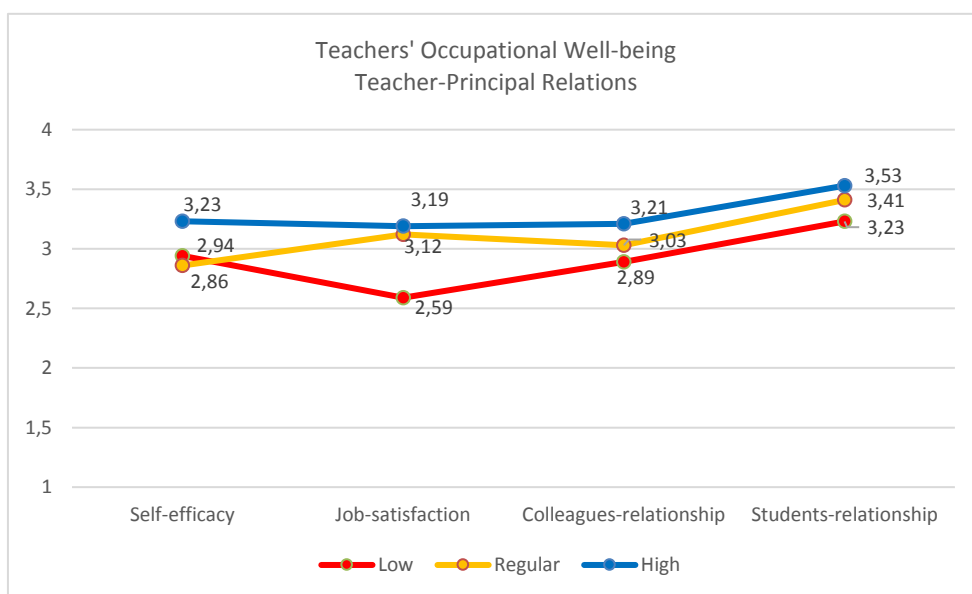


Figure 11. *Baku School Teachers' Occupational Well-being. Teacher-Principal Relations*

Discussion

As previously explained, occupational well-being is a broad and complex concept to define. The framework on which this study is based considers four essential dimensions for occupational well-being: cognitive well-being, subjective well-

being, physical and mental well-being, and social well-being (Viac & Fraser, 2020). In this way, Viac & Fraser (2020) also defined possible factors in the school environment that can affect teachers' occupational well-being, such as school characteristics, teachers' characteristics, and the quality of the working environment. Thus, in the questionnaire, six contextual variables were considered: school type, classroom size, gender, age, experience, and teacher education. I aimed to apply this framework to the Azerbaijani context and understand the most important factors in the school environment affecting Baku school teachers' occupational well-being.

Self-Efficacy

The first dimension to study was cognitive well-being. According to Viac & Fraser, the primary indicator of this dimension is self-efficacy. In simple words, a teacher's self-efficacy is teachers' belief to perform well in the classroom. For Caprara et al. (2006), Emin Türkoğlu et al. (2017), and Schleicher (2018), high levels of self-efficacy are predictors of high job satisfaction. The relation between self-efficacy and job satisfaction was not directly studied in my research; however, my findings are consistent with the stated literature. The overall self-efficacy of Baku school teachers was almost the same as their overall job satisfaction.

On the other hand, Gkolia et al. (2016) found that teachers' background characteristics in Greece, such as gender, teaching experience, education level, and age, may predict teachers' self-efficacy. Similarly, the present study found that Baku school teachers holding Ph.D. studies have greater self-efficacy than the rest of the teachers. To add on, my research suggests that the classroom size could also be a predictor of self-efficacy, where Baku school teachers in classrooms of 8-15 students showed a high self-efficacy, while teachers with more than 30 students per classroom had deficient levels of self-efficacy. Moreover, Lee et al. (1991) found that private school teachers tend to have greater self-efficacy than public school teachers. While it was not conclusive, it was possible to see a slight tendency of private school teachers having a higher self-efficacy and better overall occupational well-being than their public school colleagues.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the most common term to be used as a rough synonym of occupational well-being (Klusmann et al., 2018; OFSTED, 2019). The reason is understandable since teachers' job satisfaction consists of the satisfaction they can get from the profession and the work environment (OECD, 2014). However, for Viac & Fraser (2020), teachers' job satisfaction is only one indicator of the dimension of

subjective well-being. Feng (2007) studied the job satisfaction of Chinese teachers and the factors that may influence it; among other factors, he found that the school's leadership and the personal background of the teacher can influence teachers' job satisfaction. To add on, Treputtharat and Tayiam (2014) also found leadership as a predictor of job satisfaction, and Heidmets and Liik (2014) concluded that principals' leadership style could affect teachers' turnover. The results of the questionnaire also showed a positive correlation between the teacher-principal relationship and job satisfaction. Lastly, older teachers and teachers with more teaching experience had significantly greater job satisfaction, which suggests there are some problems with the job satisfaction of younger generations of teachers.

Psychosomatic symptoms

The frequency of the psychosomatic symptoms was used to measure the physical and mental well-being of teachers. The list of psychosomatic symptoms considered by Viac and Fraser (2020) in their framework is the same used in the present study to measure the frequency of these symptoms in Baku school teachers. Scheuch et al. (2015) found that teachers are more likely to suffer sleep deprivation, forgetfulness, pain, and irritability. Likewise, Baku school teachers' most frequent symptoms were fatigue, sleep deprivation, and headaches. It is interesting to notice that private school teachers seemed to suffer more from fatigue than public school teachers, while young teachers or teachers with the least teaching experience also faced more fatigue problems. After analyzing the sample, these results make sense: most private school teacher respondents were aged between 20 and 29. Thus, the extensive working hours in Baku private schools may turn into fatigue. Bubb & Early (1996) pointed out that excessive working time and workload influences teachers' well-being, while Van Horn et al. (2004) agree that psychosomatic symptoms can be traced to unfavorable working conditions such as high job demands and working hours. Finally, older Baku school teachers seemed to be more likely to suffer from back pain than their younger counterparts.

Social relations

Social well-being is defined as the quality and depth of social interactions with various stakeholders (Viac & Fraser, 2020). In this study, the social well-being dimension was studied with the three indicators of teacher-colleague, teacher-principal, and teacher-student relations. According to Viac & Fraser (2020), teachers who feel support from their colleagues and principals usually have high self-efficacy and less pressure at work. In the Baku school teachers' case, it was impossible to find any relation between colleagues' relations and self-efficacy; however, as already

mentioned, Baku school teachers' self-efficacy was significantly different depending on their teacher-principal relations.

The quality of the teacher-student relations has been linked directly with teachers' occupational well-being (Spilt et al., 2011; Collie et al., 2015). However, my study did not find a strong correlation between teacher-student relations and Baku school teachers' occupational well-being. In Baku, teachers are likely to have good relationships with their students, regardless of their job satisfaction or other factors such as school or teachers' characteristics. To add on, limited material was found in the literature on the factors affecting teacher-student relations; usually, the studies focus on how teacher-student relations affect teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Occupational Well-being

Viac and Fraser's framework of occupational well-being (2020) points to three subgroups as the main factors of teachers' occupational well-being: school characteristics, teachers' characteristics, and quality of the working environment. For the study's extension, this research focused only on school characteristics and teachers' characteristics. Overall, participants have positive occupational well-being. There was no significant difference between the responses of private school teachers and public school teachers. The teaching experience of teachers and their age also did not show to be a predominant factor for the participants' occupational well-being. However, the classroom size may be a factor for their occupational well-being; teachers with more than 30 students in their classroom had an overall regular occupational well-being with very low scores in their self-efficacy and teacher-principal relations, while teachers with about 8 and 15 students per classroom had positive occupational well-being and a very high self-efficacy. Baku school teachers holding a Ph.D. had prominent occupational well-being, while there was no notorious difference between teachers' occupational well-being with bachelor or master education.

Finally, Carnevale (2016) found a link between teachers' well-being and principals' behavior; Carnevale's (2016) data showed that proactive strategies – such as authentic communication or building a foundation of culture management – taken by school leaders helped to maintain teachers' occupational well-being. From the questionnaire, it was possible to find a link between Baku school teachers' occupational well-being and teacher-principal relations. For Baku school teachers, the managerial approach seemed to be critical for their occupational well-being.

Limitations of the study

The framework on which this study is based to comprehend teachers' occupational well-being is too broad and complex. Four dimensions shape teachers' occupational well-being in the OECD's framework (Viac & Fraser, 2020), which are cognitive well-being, subjective well-being, physical and mental well-being, and social well-being. To measure those dimensions, Viac and Fraser (2020) propose the use of 12 indicators. To do feasible research and to consider the time and extension of the research, I estimated studying only one indicator of the first three dimensions and use three indicators for social well-being, such as teacher-student, teacher-colleagues, and teacher-principal relations. Similarly, the questionnaire did not include job demand or job resources questions, which could also widen the scope of the research. These decisions leave room for future research in the Azerbaijani context.

The sample size of the quantitative data is another limitation. One hundred school teachers participated in the survey. However, to get nationally representative ideas over teachers' occupational well-being, a bigger sample size would be needed. Also, the sampling strategy used was nonprobability sampling, which made the study representative of only one population segment. For example, it was impossible to analyze teachers' occupational well-being according to their gender since the male teachers' sample was too small. In other words, the results obtained could be transferable only to the female population. The study also counts with geographic limitations, leaving aside schools outside the Baku area and not generalizing all Azerbaijani schools.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to make an initial measure of the levels of well-being of Baku school teachers. With this purpose in mind, two research questions were drawn: 1) what are the levels of occupational well-being of Baku school teachers? and 2) what are the contextual factors affecting Baku school teachers' occupational well-being? A survey of 100 teachers was conducted to answer these questions.

In general words, the levels of occupational well-being of Baku school teachers turned out to be very positive. Classroom size and teachers' education were the contextual factors that created a more significant gap between responses. However, this research project's key finding is how the teacher-principal relationship can affect teachers' occupational well-being. The teacher-principal relations directly affect teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy, and overall, there was a notorious

difference of responses depending on the quality of the relationship with the principal. Thus, the present study has fulfilled the aim of making a preliminary overview of Baku school teachers' occupational well-being.

Several suggestions can be made for research and practice. One implication for research is to continue the research on this field in Azerbaijan. The present study shows Baku school teachers' different levels of occupational well-being depending on their school type, classroom size, age, experience, and education. I also focused on four occupational well-being constructs: self-efficacy, job satisfaction, psychosomatic symptoms, and social relations. It is recommended to make a major study where more factors can be considered, and other occupational well-being constructs can be studied. Also, there were only six male participants in the questionnaire and no male teachers in the interview. The literature review found that gender can be an essential factor for teachers' occupational well-being. Therefore, it is also suggested to consider a broader sample with gender parity. Finally, the present study is a representation of Baku school teachers' occupational well-being. In the regions, teachers may be living different situations. Therefore, it is recommended to make a more substantial study of the factors affecting Azerbaijani school teachers' occupational well-being at the national level, with a more generalizable sampling. Finally, the present study showed some psychosomatic symptoms that may be present in teachers' lives, and they should be considered when thinking on improving teachers' well-being.

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