Research Article

Life satisfaction of teachers from pre-school and elementary education in the context of personality traits, sociodemographic factors, and factors related to school and teaching

Mária Dědová[1], Naďa Bizová[2] and Gabriel Baník[3,4]*

[1]*Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Trnava University, Trnava, Slovakia*

[2]*Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, Trnava, Slovakia*

[3]*Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Presov, Slovakia*

[4]*Institute for Research and Development of Education, Faculty of Education, Charles University, Prague, Czechia*

*Correspondence to: Gabriel Baník, Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Universtiy of Presov, 17. Novembra 1, 080 01, Presov, Slovakia, E-mail: gabriel.banik@gmail.com

Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6601-3619

Abstract

The study examines the life satisfaction of teachers in the context of selected sociodemographic factors, factors related to teaching and school, and personality traits. In 163 pre-school and elementary school teachers, life satisfaction was measured by Life Satisfaction Questionnaire and personality traits by NEO-FFI Personality Inventory. In the sociodemographic variables, were not found any significant predictor of life satisfaction. In the variables related to school, was found that teacher from church schools have slightly higher life satisfaction than teachers from public or private schools. Also was found that teachers who are not being as head of class have lower life satisfaction. In the context of personality traits were found that neuroticism is the strong predictor of life satisfaction of teachers.

Keywords: life satisfaction, personality traits, pre-school and elementary school teachers.

Introduction

The term life satisfaction was firstly introduced by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin in 1961. It is a result of benchmarking, comparing two situations that humans want to have and what they really have. Shin and Johnson (1978, p. 476) define life satisfaction as an overall assessment of a person's quality of life according to subjectively defined criteria. The authors state that the life satisfaction is the result of a positive assessing of one's life situations and comparing them in a positive way to other situations experienced in the past. Diverse personal characteristics and values such as gender, age, income, and others measure and define the level of one´s life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is the result of two psychological processes: process of assessment and process of comparison.

For most people, life satisfaction is the final goal to be achieved in their lives. The condition of happiness and satisfaction is completed by positive feelings prevailing in day-to-day life and result in man´s life satisfaction. Life satisfaction includes individual expectations and in what range the expectations are fulfilled (Avşaroğlu, Deniz, & Kahravam, 2005). Life satisfaction concerns the positive feelings of a man has towards his/her life as a whole (Mustafayeva & Bayraktaroğlu, 2014).

The concept of overall life satisfaction (Fahrenberg, Myrtek, Schumacher, & Brahler, 2001) is created by individual´s satisfaction in ten aspects of life: health, work and employment, financial background, leisure, marriage and partnership, relations with own children, his/her personality, acquaintances and relatives and housing.

One of the factors that have a powerful impact on life satisfaction is the aspect of job satisfaction. Life satisfaction is a measure of achieving goals that individuals set up for themselves. Referring to the fact that one of the goals of humans is to be good at jobs they do, it can be concluded that life and job satisfaction are definitely interconnected. Results of analysis have proved a positive correlation between life and job satisfaction (Bonebright, Clay, & Ankenman, 2001; Perrone, Webb, & Jackson, 2007). Working environment, material and technical background of schools, remuneration, management, and some endogenous factors such as subjective satisfaction with social relationships, self-awareness of own ability (Kacmarova, 2011) belong to the group of exogenous factors and are very important in terms of job satisfaction.

Other factors that have impact on life satisfaction include family-work conflict (it is about how family life affects our performance, jobs) work – family conflict (how our jobs may have an impact on our family lives). The results of the research carried out with teachers have indicated that the jobs of teachers have an impact on their family lives as teachers often work on their tasks at home. They make their schedules at home, work out the tests for students, prepare examinations, or correct students' tests and compositions at home what results in insufficient time spent with the family. Such a form of workload often leads to work-family conflicts (Erdamar & Demirel, 2016).

Aim of this study is to explore the overall life satisfaction and its ten aspects (health, work and employment, financial background, leisure, marriage and partnership, relations with own children, own individuality, sexuality, friends, acquaintance and relatives, and housing) in teachers from pre-school and elementary school. Also, the aim is the explore the possible predictors (selected sociodemographic variables, variables related to school and teaching, and personality traits – big five personality factors) of life satisfaction of these teachers.

Method

Sample and procedure

The sample includes 163 teachers in pre-school and elementary education in western Slovakia. There were 15 men (9.2%) and 148 women (90. 8%). The average age of teachers was 34.18, SD = 11.16, range from 20 to 59. From the point of view of marital status, the group includes 79 married teachers, 69 single, 12 teachers divorced, and 2 widowed. Forty teachers live alone, 30 live with partner, and 82 live with wife or husband. From the characteristics of teaching and school. 77 are from elementary school, and 75 are from pre-school; 65 teachers are head of class (being a head of class means to manage the same class from the first to the last years of study); 123 are from public school, 20 from private school, and 12 from church school (church school means catholic school); 93 have less than 15 colleagues, 61 have from 15 to 45 colleagues, and 8 have more than 45 colleagues; 87 teachers have woman as a head of school, 74 teachers have man as a head of school; 63 teachers are from school situated in village, 71 teachers are from school situated in small city (less than 50 000 people), 19 teachers are from school situated in city (from 50 000 to 100 000 people), and 5 teachers are from school situated in bigger city (more than 100 000 people); 93 teachers are from smaller school (less than 150 students); 40 teachers are from school with from 150 to 300 students, 20 teachers are from bigger school (from 300 to 500 school), and 4 teachers are from big school (over 700 students). Data collection was carried out personally, in the year 2018. Participation in the research was voluntary and teachers can leave the research at any part. The research was anonymous and every teacher fills the informed consent. The average time needed for filling the questionnaires was 25 minutes.

Measures

Life satisfaction was measured by the *Life Satisfaction Questionnaire* by the authors Fahrenberg et al. (2001). The questionnaire assesses satisfaction in ten aspects of life: health, job and employment, financial situation, leisure, marriage and partnership, relations with own children, own individuality, sexuality, friends, acquaintances and relatives. Housing. The index of overall life satisfaction is the result of addition of values in 10 aspects of life, each of them is assessed by 7 items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging between "very dissatisfied" and "very satisfied".

Personal traits were measured by *NEO-FFI five-factor-personal inventory* by Costa and McCrae (1980, translation by Ruisel & Halama, 2007). The questionnaire includes 60 items measuring five personality dimensions: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and amiability. Each item is assessed on a five-point scale ranging from "disagree strongly", up to "agree strongly".

Data analysis

Data were analyzed in the statistical software R. After inspecting the quality of data was found that some values in personality traits were missing. Missing values in the personality were imputed by multiple imputations using the package MICE (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011), 5 imputations with 10 iterations were used. After that average values from all 5 imputed dataset were used for final analysis (pooled dataset according to Rubin's rules; Rubin, 1987). Some missing values were also in the categorical variables, because of that in the regression the pairwise deletion was used to dealing with missing data. For inspecting of possible predictors of life satisfaction, the hierarchical linear regression was carried. Variables in the regression were tested in the three blocks (Block 1 – sociodemographic variables; Block 2 – variables related to school were added; Block 3 – personality traits were added). The data and analytical code are available in supplementary materials.

Results

Descriptive analysis and correlations

In Table 1 are descriptive statistics of life satisfaction, its 10 domains, and personality traits. Teachers scored highest in job satisfaction and lowest in their relations towards their children.

In Table 2 are the correlations between life satisfaction, its 10 domains), and big 5 personality traits. From the point of view of the relationship between life satisfaction and personality, the strongest correlation was found between overall life satisfaction and neuroticism. Life satisfaction was positively moderately related to extraversion, agreeableness, and positively slightly related to conscientiousness.

Regression analyses

In Table 3 and Table 4 are results of hierarchical regression analysis. From the sociodemographic variables was not found any predictor of life satisfaction.

After adding the variables related to school and teaching was found that life satisfaction is slightly higher in teacher from a church school and in teachers who are head of the class. After adding the personality factors, only neuroticism was found as a strong negative predictor of the life satisfaction of teachers.

Significant predictors of life satisfaction find by the hierarchical regression analysis are shown in Figure 1.

Discussion

Our research has been aimed at exploring teachers' life satisfaction in the context of other factors. It was found that the highest score of life satisfaction of teachers was in the domain of job satisfaction. In inspecting the relationships between selected sociodemographic variables and life satisfaction, was not found any significant predictor of life satisfaction of teachers. If the variables related to school and teaching were added to regression, it was found that those teachers from the church schools, and teachers who are head of the class, have higher life satisfaction. If was analyzed all type of variables together (sociodemographic variables, variables related to school and teaching,

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of teachers' life satisfaction and personality traits

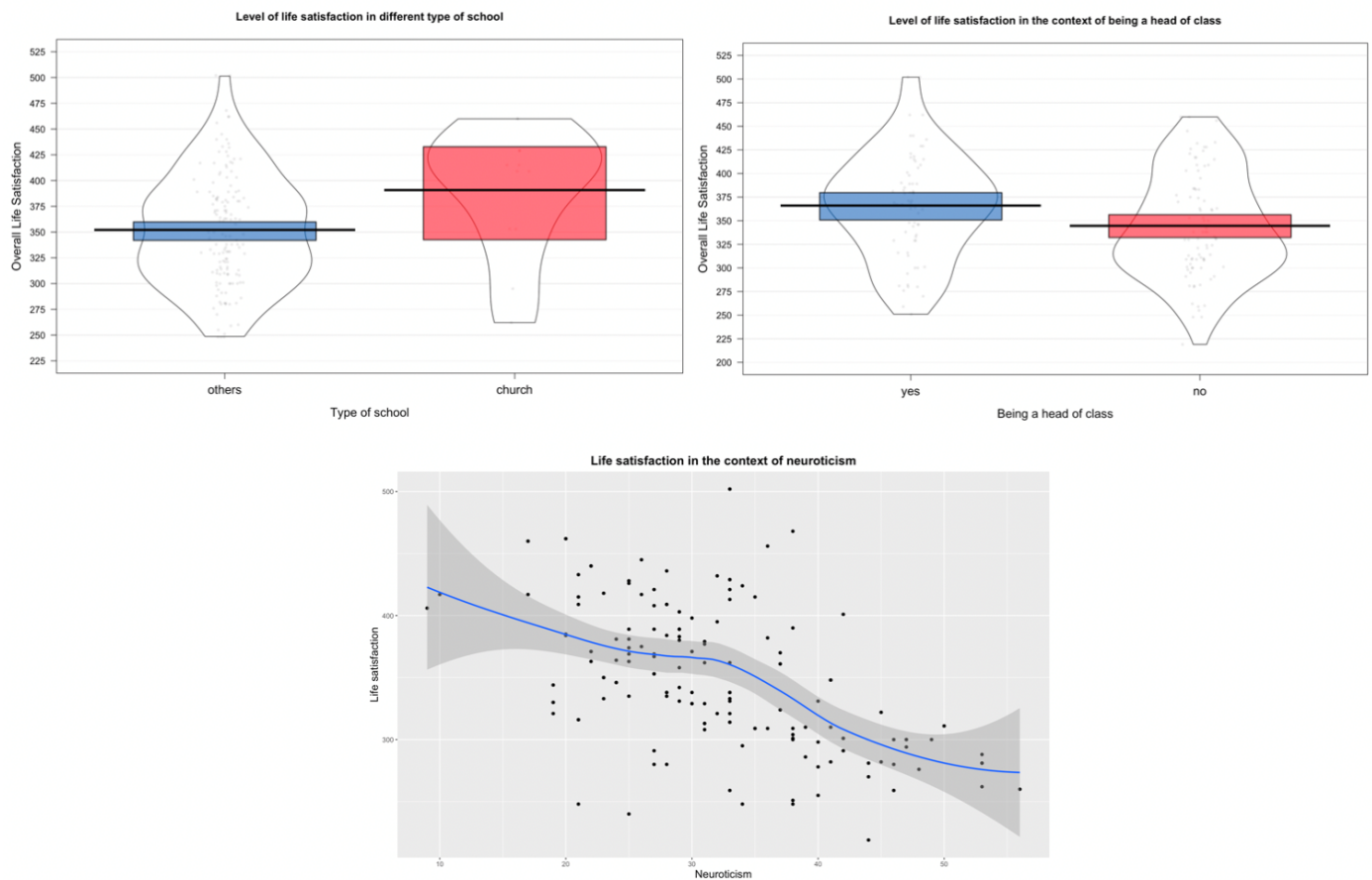|	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	*min*	*max*
Life satisfaction					
Health	35.67	6.90	0.54	7	49
Job and employment	31.50	8.07	0.64	0	49
Financial situation	42.86	10.39	0.81	8	57
Leisure	34.25	9.27	0.73	12	49
Marriage and partnership	34.29	17.35	1.36	0	49
Relations with own children	23.18	21.09	1.65	0	49
Own individuality	39.04	5.76	0.46	24	51
Sexuality	35.02	11.60	0.91	0	49
Friends, acquaintances, relatives	40.24	7.27	0.57	2	51
Habitation	37.33	9.91	0.78	0	49
Overall life satisfaction	352.26	58.05	4.55	219	502
Personality (Big Five)					
Neuroticism	31.56	8.93	0.70	9	56
Extroversion	10.19	3.13	0.25	3	18
Openness to experience	13.69	4.37	0.34	4	28
Agreeableness	10.52	3.23	0.25	0	16
Conscientiousness	18.95	5.13	0.40	3	29

Figure 1: Relationships between life satisfaction and type of school, being a head of school, and neuroticism

Table 2: Correlations life satisfaction (and its 10 domains) and Big Five personality traits

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Health															
2. Job	.28**														
3. Fin	.39**	.44**													
4. Leis	.48**	.32**	.30**												
5. Mar	.04	.23**	.19*	.02											
6. Relat	.24**	.27**	.17*	.10	.22**										
7. Ind	.31**	.22**	.29**	.32**	.16*	.07									
8. Sex	.15	.10	.22**	.13	.20**	.01	.34**								
9. Friend	.26**	.17*	.40**	.31**	.05	-.04	.45**	.36**							
10. Habit	.20*	.21**	.22**	.26**	.15	.14	.20*	.33**	.41**						
11. LifS	.54**	.57**	.61**	.49**	.53**	.57**	.50**	.48**	.48**	.55**					
12. Neur	-.39**	-.24**	-.41**	-.37**	-.31**	-.13	-.37**	-.34**	-.29**	-.26**	-.54**				
13. Extr	.27**	.12	.21**	.24**	.15	.12	.37**	.26**	.22**	.12	.37**	-.47**			
14. Open	.10	-.10	-.09	.02	-.11	-.03	-.03	.07	.04	.09	-.03	-.08	.14		
15. Agr	.37**	.03	.15	.27**	.05	.05	.14	.05	.09	.05	.22**	-.42**	.38**	.10	
16. Cons	.27**	.05	.13	.16*	.08	-.02	.16*	.08	.18*	.06	.18*	-.23**	.45**	.24**	.38**

Note. Job = Job and employment; Fin = Financial situation; Leis = Leisure; Mar = Marriage and partnership; Relat = Relations with own children; Ind = Own individuality; Sex = Sexuality; Friend = Friends, aquaintances, relatives; Habit = Habitation; LifS = Overall life satisfaction; Neur = Neuroticism; Extr = Extroversion; Open = Openness to experience; Agr = Agreeableness; Cons = Conscientiousness; * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

and personality traits), was found that only the neuroticism is the significant negative predictor of life satisfaction of teachers.

The high score in the job satisfaction may be linked to the responsibility teachers have in their jobs. They consider the job of teaching to be interesting, useful, creative, activating, amusing, challenging (Maeran, Pitarelli, & Cangiano, 2013). In other studies was

also found the positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Aydintan & Koç, 2016; Erdamar & Hemirel, 2016; Heller, Junge, & Watson, 2002; Shyim & Korb, 2016).

On the other hand, our findings indicate that the profession of a teacher has a negative impact on personal and family life of teachers, as they are least satisfied with the way they spend their leisure, with

their incentives and their relations with their children. Similar findings can be found in some national and international research papers. According to the findings by Maeran et al. (2013) one-third of teachers mostly at elementary schools in the Vicenza region, north of Italy, who participated in the survey, consider their profession underestimated from the point of view of society. Similarly results of a research carried out in western Slovakia indicate that 71 per cent of teachers including teachers living with a spouse, suffer from lack of leisure (Chmelarova & Prekopova, 2012), and show results that work-family conflict (Erdamar & Hemirel, 2016) has a negative impact on their family life more often (Maeran et al., 2013).

It is necessary to point out that satisfaction with incentives and remuneration of teachers show a very low score also in some other professions (Kapteyn et al., 2009). The research paper by Shyim and Korb (2016) proves no positive correlation between regular income and life satisfaction contrary to the findings by Dağli and Baysal (2017) that show a higher degree of life satisfaction of teachers with higher regular income. The diversity in financial issues and their correlation with life satisfaction are usually reasoned by economic progress in the country.

Table 3: Regression results using Overall life satisfaction as the criterion and selected sociodemographic variables (Block 1) and variables related to school and teaching (Block 2) as predictors

Predictor	B	SE B	β	Fit	Difference
Block 1 (sociodemographic variables)					
(Intercept)	318.55**				
Age	0.94	0.54	0.19		
Males	-20.87	16.93	-0.11		
Single	-11.86	24.93	-0.10		
Widowed	-39.96	45-28	-0.09		
Divorced	-3.63	27.39	-0.02		
Cohabited	17.59	14.39	0.12		
Wife/husband	21.85	24.94	0.19		
				R2 = .163**	
				95% CI[.03,.24]	
Block 2 (variables related to school and teaching)					
(Intercept)	319.95**				
Age	0.39	0.57	0.08		
Males	-31.81	18.72	-0.17		
Single	10.17	29.46	0.09		
Widowed	14.48	47.42	0.03		
Divorced	17.56	29.23	0.08		
Cohabited	11.05	15.32	0.07		
Wife/husband	49.67	27.92	0.44		
Pre-school	-7.96	10.94	-0.07		
Private	-9.81	18.10	-0.06		
Church	48.30*	20.94	0.25		
15 to 45	21.31	15.25	0.18		
over 45	14.09	26.95	0.06		
Head (man)	6.32	11.93	0.06		
50-100 000	-31.95	18.09	-0.16		
Over 100 000	1.06	30.85	0.004		
Village	2.03	13.38	0.18		
150-300	-30.17	17.48	-0.23		
300-700	39.77	20.35	0.23		
over 700	20.62	40.40	0.05		
Head class (no)	-22.28*	9.99	-0.20		
				R2 = .344**	ΔR2 = .180*
				95% CI[.08,.36]	95% CI[.07, .29]

Note. * indicates p < .05. ** indicates p < .01.

Table 4: Regression results using Overall life satisfaction as the criterion and big 5 personality traits (Block 3) as predictors

Predictor	B	SE B	β	Fit	Difference
Block 3 (personality factors – Big Five)					
(Intercept)	455.85**				
Age	0.01	0.53	0.001		
Males	-24.92	16.99	-0.13		
Single	-11.20	26.52	-0.10		
Widowed	4.09	41.02	0.001		
Divorced	-5.88	26.73	-0.03		
Cohabited	-1.28	13.57	-0.001		
Wife/husband	34.37	24.80	0.30		
Pre-school	-4.47	9.45	-0.04		
Private	-10.01	16.09	-0.06		
Church	14.72	19.28	0.08		
15 to 45	7.11	13.66	0.06		
over 45	10.38	23.79	0.04		
Head (man)	19.47	10.51	0.17		
50-100 000	-9.01	16.17	-0.04		
Over 100 000	4.28	27.38	0.02		
Village	-14.09	11.96	-0.12		
150-300	-22.90	15.30	-0.17		
300-700	23.85	19.99	0.13		
over 700	-12.54	37.55	-0.03		
Head class (no)	-14.82	8.99	-013		
Neuroticism	-2.99**	0.59	-0.47		
Extroversion	2.37	1.72	0.13		
Openness	-1.87	1.07	-0.14		
Agreeableness	-1.42	1.76	-0.08		
Conscientiousness	0.41	0.98	0.04		
				R2 = .539**	ΔR2 = .195**
				95% CI[.28,.54]	95% CI[.10, .30]

Note. * indicates p < .05. ** indicates p < .01.

In our study, the sociodemographic variables were not as significant predictors of life satisfaction of teachers. Contradictory, other authors find the relationship between life satisfaction between e.g., age of teachers (Popelkova, 2011), marital status, and situation of living with (Dağli & Baysal, 2017; Maeran et al., 2013), or gender (Dağli & Baysal, 2017). In the context of gender Popelková (2011) and Kumar (2016) also do not find any significant relationship between gender and life satisfaction of teachers.

In the context of variables related to school and teaching was found that teachers from the church school and teacher who are the head of class have slightly higher life satisfaction. Higher levels of life satisfaction in teachers from the church school could be related to experiencing a higher level of religiosity. According to Striženec (2007), in people with higher religiosity is a tendency towards higher altruism, and in females with higher religiosity is clearly high emotional stability, which could contribute to higher life satisfaction. But it is necessary to state that these findings are explorative and are needed to be examined in further research. Also is necessary to state that after including personality traits into the regression model, these variables have not been as significant predictors of life satisfaction of teachers.

The strongest predictor of life satisfaction of teachers, and the only one significant predictor in the concurrence of other variables, was neuroticism. It was found that neuroticism is a negative predictor of the life satisfaction of teachers. Individuals with a high level of neuroticism are characterized as nervous, explosive, anxious, angry, reluctant, moody, prone to explode and unstable (Hřebíčková, 1999).

The negative relationship between neuroticism and life satisfaction was found also in other studies (Colomeischi, 2014; Vorkapić & Peloza, 2017).

In the meaning of correlations, our study was found a significant positive relationship between extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and life satisfaction. It can be assumed that teachers with this personality trait are sociable, communicative, energetic, spontaneous, active, and brave (Hřebíčková, 1999). Conscientious teachers are labeled to be diligent, caring, hardworking, reliable, decisive, and productive, obeying the rules (Hřebíčkova, 1999). The results of the research carried out by Popelkova, Šišková, and Zaťková (2009) have found a significant correlation between extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and life satisfaction. These teachers seem to be ambitious, persistent, and reliable. The concept of neuroticism and extraversion play a key role in discussing the concept of life satisfaction as they have an impact on emotional experience. Based on its individuals examine and assess life satisfaction (Schimmack, Oishi, Furr, Funder, 2009).

Limitations

The presented results also have several limitations that need to be taken into account when the generalizing results, also bigger N will be needed for better generalization. First, the sample was not representative of the whole Slovakia, only western regions were included. Second, there was a disproportion in selected socio-demographic through category. Third, it would be interesting to look at also on the life satisfaction of teachers from high school and university and compare these teachers in their life satisfaction. Fourth, since the research design was cross-sectional, it is not possible to comment sufficiently on the possible causal validity of the identified relationships, and some of our findings have rather an explorative character than confirmative. For further research can our findings offer a new hypothesis that can be tested. Despite its limitations, this study provides interesting and inspiring research findings.

Conclusions

The results that the life satisfaction of teachers is predicted by personality traits (especially by neuroticism) rather than by sociodemographic variables and/or variables related to school and teaching. Also, it seems that in explaining the overall life satisfaction of the teachers, job satisfaction could have an important role. Teachers, who show a high score of life satisfaction, show also a high score of job satisfaction reflected into the quality of their performance has a positive impact on students. In the context of the variables related to school and teaching is necessary to state that just only a few was measured and included in the analysis. May some other variables (e.g., material and technical support in the school, numbers of students in the class, an opportunity to carrier development, or self-realization, etc.) could have a stronger impact on the life satisfaction of teachers. According to our findings, it seems that the most important personality traits in the context of life satisfaction are neuroticism. It is necessary to state that our sample scored relatively very high in neuroticism in our sample. The life satisfaction of teachers was also positively correlated to extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. In the context of our finding it seems to be useful to point out that further research may be aimed at a) clarifying the causes of the occurrence and persistence of neuroticism in teachers and clarifying factors supporting extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness at a workplace; b) confirming the potential relationship between life satisfaction and teaching in the church (catholic) school; also being a head of the class; c) exploring other relevant variables related to the school and teaching which can be in the relationship of life satisfaction of teachers.

Supplementary materials

https://osf.io/gm9uq/

Acknowledgement

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