



Factors That Influence And Motivate Teachers To Be Part Of Public Junior High School Education In Mexico

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Abstract: Achieving a more comprehensive understanding of teaching practitioners' views on their day-to-day work is one of the greatest challenges of public educational systems around the globe. This paper showcases the results of a study that looked at the factors that influence teachers' decision to motivate teachers to stay in the profession of the public Junior High School system in a developing country such as Mexico. In this cross-sectional study, a group of 50 junior high school teachers were sampled having met the condition of being actively working in the public system at the time of the study. Their experience ranged from 5 to 20 years in the profession. The participants responded to an online survey digitally distributed through Google Forms. The responses were analyzed using a phenomenological and descriptive approach, which considers reality experiences as subjects of study to generate theory around them. The results showed that, while very few participants identified a teacher as being the main influence that swayed their career choice, they acknowledged that their interactions with colleagues were important to keep them motivated to continue in the teaching profession. In particular, the participants expressed that verbal and written demonstrations of appreciation coming from peers, as well as opportunities to exchange teaching strategies with them ranked as a highly important factor to feel motivated. In addition, interactions with parents, when these conveyed verbal or written acknowledgements of their efforts, were also deemed important. Unsurprisingly, 80% of the participants did not see salary as an influential factor to stay in the teaching profession. Most of them saw their positions as poorly paid in relation to the demands of the job, which they qualified as exhausting. The participants' responses also offer a practitioner's view on the changes they would like to see happening to make their work more rewarding. More support from government and educational authorities, a reduction of bureaucratic burden in their everyday job, more curricular autonomy, more involvement with institutional activities, learning new teaching methodologies, and having access to more efficient school-management processes were the most relevant changes mentioned by the teachers.

Key words: - Motivation, teaching, junior high school education, developing countries education

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching should be one of the most appreciated professions in the world, and teachers, along with students, should be at the center of the educational process. In this context, teachers deserve social recognition for their role as facilitators of the social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students under their charge. In this role, teachers carry heavy responsibilities planning, implementing, and assessing the learning process, managing available resources and actions to ensure the success of the learning experiences they design. It is expected that such orchestration of actions and resources should not only focus on the acquisition of academic knowledge, but also on every aspect of the human experience that makes a learner become a round person. A job of such a demanding nature imposes a high level of emotional investment from its practitioners.

Educating a person is indeed an emotionally charged, ethically minded, and challenging task because it requires direct involvement in a relationship of trust. Research shows (Hentea, Shea & Pennington, 2003) that learners thrive when teachers are able to foster an emotional, personal, loving, empathetic, and close relationship with them, especially if they are very young and easily influenced by older individuals. Such relationships have been singled out as paramount to motivate students, helping them develop a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction about their learning outcomes. Therefore, unlike other sort of relationships that may not require a great deal of planning and reflection, the relationship that teachers need to nurture with their students demands managing and balancing praise and corrective feedback, as well as planning stimuli. The list of technical and emotional demands on teaching practitioners is certainly long but the rewards are often meagre.

In developing countries such as Mexico, where most people fight every day to make ends meet, teachers are not the exception. The salaries of Mexican school teachers reflect the socially constructed negative views about a job that is often seen as inferior to other professions. As a result, most teachers keep several jobs to be able to survive, which adds to the already demanding nature of their work lives and, understandably, represents a threat to their physical and mental health.

The unsatisfactory working conditions of Mexican teachers constitute a threat to the education of about thirty million students. The already dire educational landscape prevalent in the country was significantly aggravated by a lack of clarity in the current national curricula and a still unaddressed learning deficit, consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. This significant educational lag was made more evident in the recent results obtained by Mexican students in the 2023 OECD assessment (PISA).

In such a discouraging scenario, one may ask what keeps schoolteachers in a job that is demanding, frustrating, and financially unrewarding. Therefore, the present study was designed to explore the possible factors that may be motivating public schoolteachers in Mexico to keep their jobs against all odds, expanding our comprehension of the teachers perspective and how they build their reality facing situations of famine and marginalization.

II. METHODOLOGY

The general objective of the study is to analyze factors that influence and motivate teachers to be part of the public Junior High school education in Mexico. The present study explored teachers' perspectives using a mix-methods design following the theoretical underpinnings of the phenomenological paradigm. In this approach, any experience of reality can be turned into theory and generate theoretical paradigms for future research on a specific field. By the same token, any aspect of reality can be analyzed and studied from a theoretical perspective (Alvarez-Gayou, 2014).

Due to its scope, the study is considered descriptive, as it addresses one of the most widespread and yet insufficiently explored phenomena within the field of teachers' professional development, namely that of the factors that influence their motivation to stay in their jobs. Therefore, the intention was to describe the phenomenon in as much detail as possible to understand it in the best possible way, offering a window to teachers' perspectives about their everyday job realities.

Considering the goals selected for this project, a mixed-methods design was estimated appropriate, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques in an effort to expand our comprehension of the participants' opinions and aspirations.

The time frame available for the data collection led us to select a cross-sectional approach, as we would only have access to the participants for a short period of time.

III. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.1 Population and Sample

The population under study comprises Mexican junior high school teachers employed in the public school system. For this study, intentional sampling was employed to recruit a sample of 50 participants.

3.2 Research Questions (main research question)

What are the factors that influence and motivate teachers to be part of public Junior High School education system in Mexico?

3.3 Secondary Questions

- What are the aspects that inspire teachers to develop their profession?
- What are the moments that teachers identify as their most satisfying professional experiences?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages that teachers encounter in their teaching practice?
- What are the institutional and value-related issues that teachers perceive as obstacles or motivators for their teaching practice?
- What knowledge do teachers have regarding constructivist and student-centered teaching strategies?.

IV RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology section outlines the plan and method of how the study was conducted. This includes the universe of the study, sample selection, data sources, variables, and analytical framework. The details are as follows:

4.1 Technique and instrument

The research design involved the development of a questionnaire aimed at both operationalization and conceptualization of variables. This questionnaire was then digitized using Google Forms for efficient distribution and collection of responses. To ensure the questionnaire's validity, it underwent validation by three methodology experts who provided valuable feedback for improvements. Content analysis and statistical techniques were utilized to validate the questions, ensuring their relevance and internal consistency. Participant selection criteria were clearly defined, including a minimum of five years of teaching experience and a requirement to have taught at least five groups. Intentional sampling methods were employed to ensure the sample's representativeness. Regarding questionnaire administration, informed consent was obtained from participants, who were given the flexibility to respond at their convenience, thereby ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of responses. Ethical standards were maintained through obtaining approval from relevant committees, emphasizing voluntary participation, and transparent communication about the study's nature and objectives. Overall, these measures were implemented to uphold high standards of quality, validity, and ethics throughout the research process.

4.2 Theoretical framework

Variables of the study contains dependent and independent variable. The study used pre-specified method for the selection of variables. The study used the Stock returns are as dependent variable. From the share price of the firm the Stock returns are calculated. Rate of a stock salable at stock market is known as stock price.

THE DECLINE OF EDUCATION IN MEXICO

"The education crisis in Mexico is a fact, not a forecast" (Miranda Arroyo, 2021). The Mexican educational landscape was indeed dire prior 2020. In that context, COVID-19 delivered the coup de grâce to our already precarious education system. The dropout rate in the education sector increased exponentially with 5.2 million school dropouts registered during 2020 only (Palma Montes, 2022). Some of the reasons identified as motivations for those dropouts were the loss of direct contact with teachers or inability to do homework (28.8%), the loss of a job or reduction of income in the student's household (22.4%), the permanent closure of the local school (20.2%), and lack of a computer, other mobile device, or internet connection to enable

engagement in online instruction (17.7%) (INEGI, 2021). As dramatic as these reasons may sound, they represented just the tip of the iceberg.

If there was already evidence—thanks to educational research—that school life could be boring because it was irrelevant to the subjects, imagine being at home all the time, sitting in front of a screen. Bad pedagogy also generates exclusion and neither the money distributed in scholarships, nor the money given to media companies is useful for this. Sadly, a little more than 738 thousand students did not finish the last school year and of these, 435 thousand (59%) declared a reason related to Covid. (Miranda Arroyo, 2021)

While the factors that stall Mexican education deserve attention and will be duly addressed in this paper, we must not lose sight of the socio-political complications involved:

The education system is not an abstract concept, but it is composed by people who organize themselves into institutions, in which legislative frameworks, rules, procedures, infrastructures, financing and programs, etc., are built and established. In this context, the federal and state authorities (Executive Branches) are responsible for the proper management of the country's education system. (Miranda Arroyo, 2021)

LACK OF PLANNING AND CONTINUITY IN THE MEXICAN EDUCATION CONTEXT

Education in Mexico has historically faced significant challenges due to issues such as lack of continuity, planning, and clear direction. This instability is exacerbated by frequent changes in administration, with governors and cabinet members often exerting influence over educational policies. The current presidential administration (2018-2024) has seen particularly high turnover, with the head of the Ministry of Public Education being replaced three times in just four years (LXV Parliamentary Group of the Senate of the Republic, 2022). This preamble sets the stage for examining the impact of such instability on various aspects of the education system, providing context for the subsequent sections.

PUBLIC BUDGET

The education system has been plagued by crises over the years, with certain six-year terms garnering more attention due to these issues. One of the primary challenges is the lack of professionalization among teachers, compounded by high levels of unemployment in the country. Consequently, many professionals who may not have originally intended to pursue a career in education find themselves compelled to do so out of necessity. Furthermore, there exists a stark disparity in quality between public and private education. Public schools often suffer from underfunding and inadequate resources, while private institutions enjoy more substantial support. Unfortunately, the government's allocation of funds to education tends to prioritize other sectors, leaving public education to fend for itself.

Despite these glaring issues, there persists a narrative that educational quality is on the rise. However, this perception stands in stark contrast to the reality faced by many, as evidenced by declining standards and outcomes. It is imperative to acknowledge these challenges honestly and work towards meaningful solutions to ensure equitable access to quality education for all (Acuña Quezada, 2022)

To understand the origin of the educational crisis, it is necessary to take a look at the budget that is allocated to the Mexican education sector. Every year, the government claims the current budget is at its highest and increasing, but in reality it only represents 3.2% of our GDP, which is below the 8% recommended by UNESCO and the UN. On the other hand, there is also the educational backwardness that is heightened by the appalling number of dropouts at the basic education level (33 million). The completion rate at the other end of the educational system is not encouraging either. Recent reports reveal that only 2 of every 10 Mexicans who enter the tertiary education system get to graduate (Acuña Quezada, 2022).

As a matter of fact, the budget allocated to education in Mexico is decreasing every year. In 2023, public spending on education represented 3.24 points of our GDP, which is below pre-pandemic levels that stood at 3.84 GDP points, and at least 0.76 points below the recommendation of the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank). This standard recommends a minimum of 4.0 to 6.0% of GDP, while countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) allocate an average of 4.9% of their GDP (Llanos Guerrero, 2022).

NATIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Regarding the new curriculum, Senator Lupita Saldaña pointed out that only 16% of the teaching staff was consulted about the new curriculum; half of the teachers are not aware of the proposal and the other half does not agree with it. In addition, specialists consider that it is a proposal with little pedagogy but a lot of ideology (LXV Legislature. Senate of the Republic, 2022).

We are concerned that the new curricular framework and curriculum demerits the importance of standardized and systematic evaluations; it is more comfortable ignoring the status of our children's education. It seems that the idea of demonizing the issue of evaluation has become so prominent that Mexicans do not realize that they could be failing in their children's education. (LXV Legislature. Senate of the Republic, 2022)

PISA TESTS

The analysis of the results of PISA 2022 presented by Dr. Arcelia Martínez Bordón (2023), an academic at the Department of Education at Ibero-American University, reveals a worrying regression in the quality of education in Mexico. According to Martínez, the 51st position out of 81 countries evaluated reflects a two-decade setback in the country's education. She attributes this decline to several factors, including the mismanagement of the education system, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Martinez highlights the elimination of INEE (National Institute for Educational Evaluation) in 2019 as a key factor that harmed the education system by eliminating institutions capable of evaluating academic performance at the national level, resulting in the cancellation of tests such as Planea. In addition, this educational deficit points to the lack of equitable access to technological resources during distance education as another significant challenge (Cortés Hernández, 2023).

Martínez (2023) urges future government officials to take these results seriously and use international assessments such as PISA to identify priority areas for improving the education system. She warns us that if effective measures are not taken, outcomes could worsen in the future. Martínez presents a solid and relevant analysis of the educational challenges in Mexico, underlining the importance of addressing these problems in a priority and systematic manner. Her arguments reflect the need for greater attention and political commitment to improve the quality of education in the country. Educational research should serve as the basis for effective policies that drive educational advancement and reduce the inequality gap in the Mexican education system.

FULL TIME SCHOOLS

Full Time Schools Program, which offered an extended school day with extracurricular activities and food for students, was seen as an opportunity to improve the quality of education and reduce social inequalities in the country (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2015).

The Ministry of Education, on February 28, 2022 eliminated the Full-Time Schools program, an initiative that provided food and extra class hours to 3.6 million children in poverty in Mexico. This program had been running for over a decade in about 27,000 schools across the country and was abruptly scrapped by the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Mendoza Becerril, 2022).

The rules of operation for The School Is Ours (LEEN) for 2022, hid the elimination of one of the most defended educational projects by researchers and organizations. The decision to eliminate this program not only violates the right to education but also the principle of the best interests of the child, the right to equality, and various human rights (ídem). This program provided between 1.5 and 3.5 hours of extra classes – from music, art, and sports to foreign languages, especially English – for students aged five to 14 in highly marginalized areas. Additionally, it included meals for the students. A UNICEF analysis in 2019 found that for 11% of the children in the program, this was their only meal of the day. Of the 27,000 participating schools, 70% were indigenous and rural, and 55% of the beneficiaries were below the poverty line (ídem).

The concern is that for many children from low-income families, indigenous communities, or vulnerable conditions, this was their only nutritious meal of the day. By eliminating full-time schools, Mexican children are left defenseless, deprived of extracurricular activities that shaped their social and environmental interactions. The government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador has called itself the government of the Fourth

Transformation, close to the people and acting in their name; however, this elimination does not benefit the people nor act in their name, but rather directly violates the rights of children, for whom school is a refuge, a second home.

The disappearance of this program also affects the families of the students, especially single mothers, and public school teachers. By providing more teaching hours for children, this program facilitated family members' participation in the labor market, primarily mothers who bear the economic, ethical, and moral burden of a household. It is regrettable the impact the Ministry of Education has had on Mexican families, teachers, and especially children. The Mexican government has made it clear that the education sector is not a priority for its public policies (idem).

The disappearance of the Full-Time Schools program was a setback. While the federal deputies have just rescued this program, it is still not clear which schools will benefit from its instauration and how it will be implemented again. The decision of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) to eliminate the Full-Time Schools Program (PETC) leaves 3.6 million students between the ages of 3 and 15 without additional hours of class and food, mostly concentrated in areas of high social marginalization. The Mexican Institute for Competitiveness (IMCO) considers that the consequences of this decision affect the future of Mexican students and the country's competitiveness (IMCO, 2022).

The disappearance of the "Full-Time Schools" program in Mexico has generated diverse opinions and concerns among education experts. However, its disappearance has created uncertainty about the future of thousands of students who benefited from this program. Some argue that the elimination of "Full-Time Schools" could increase educational gaps and negatively affect the academic performance of the most vulnerable students (IMCO, 2022). On the other hand, some defend the decision to eliminate the program, arguing that its implementation had failed to significantly improve educational outcomes and that resources could be used more efficiently in other areas (Arista, 2022).

Regarding the current situation, it is important to carefully assess the impacts of the disappearance of "Full-Time Schools" on academic achievement, educational equity, and student well-being. It is essential to seek alternatives that ensure quality and equitable education for all children and young people in Mexico. The disappearance of "Full-Time Schools" represents a setback in efforts to improve education in Mexico, especially for the most vulnerable students. A thorough analysis of the results and a reflection on how to ensure inclusive and quality education for all children and young people in the country are required.

JOB SECURITY

On the issue of job security for teachers, Senator Lupita Saldaña said that the President of the Republic has announced 650,000 new positions. In particular, in the southern state of Oaxaca, he created 30,000, because "teachers have been very supportive of the movement", This president's idea represents his preference to support this group (Oaxaca teachers) to get votes from them and stay, as the current Mexican government party for a longer period of time. So, Saldaña questioned the Minister of Public Education (SEP) about this decision to favour Oaxaca while the State of Baja California Sur has been denied the three thousand positions previously requested (LXV Parliamentary Group of the Senate of the Republic, 2022).

The employment situation of teachers in Mexico is a crucial aspect that directly affects the quality of education in the country, hampering efforts. This situation is aggravated by the gray educational landscape that the country is facing, without direction or program; especially in terms of educational lag after COVID-19 pandemic and the results obtained in PISA in 2023. In this context, it is crucial that education authorities take concrete steps to address teachers' labour concerns and develop effective educational programs that drive quality and equity in education.

It is necessary to establish a clear course and a comprehensive program that will allow us to address educational challenges effectively and promote a more optimistic educational future for Mexico. There has been no continuity in the Ministry of Public Education, which in four years has seen its leadership been replaced three times. These reshuffles have negatively impacted a ministry that should have a clear, unique project with measurable goals (LXV Parliamentary Group of the Senate of the Republic, 2022).

REMUNERATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

From the point of view of a Mexican teacher, the perception of whether the teaching profession is well paid and valued can vary according to different factors and individual experiences. In general, many teachers feel that the remuneration and acknowledgement of their work are not commensurate with the importance and complexity of their work. During the third quarter of 2023, the workforce of teachers and teaching specialists in Mexico consisted of 1.86M people, whose salary averaged \$7.68k MX every month (448.00 USD). This salary paid for a workweek of 23.8 hours and was expected to address the needs of a population with an age average of 42.6 years. The workforce was distributed in 37.2% men with an average salary of \$8.3k MX (484.00 USD) and 62.8% women with an average salary of \$7.32k MX (427.28 USD), according to official data provided by the Government of Mexico (Data Mexico, 2023).

In terms of pay, many teachers perceive their salaries to be low compared to the remuneration receive by workers in other occupations that require a similar level of education and responsibility. In addition, some teachers may face precarious working conditions, such as long working hours, lack of resources, and little institutional support, which can affect their well-being and motivation. For example, in terms of industries, the best average salaries were assigned to workers in the following professions:

- Guidance and Social Work Services (\$15k MX – 875.58USD)
- Accounting, Auditing and Related Services (\$12.9k MX – 753.00USD)
- Regulation and Promotion of Economic Development (\$12.4k MX – 723.81USD)

The population of teachers and teaching specialists is distributed across the educational system in the following manner: Higher Technical Education Schools (2.49M), Basic, Middle and Special Needs Education Schools (541k), and Regulation and Promotion of Economic Development (1.64%) (Data Mexico, 2023). In terms of the acknowledgement of the profession, some teachers feel that their work is not fully appreciated by society and education authorities.

The teaching profession often faces stigma and prejudice and is perceived as less prestigious compared to other professions. In Vietnam, for example, a teacher is considering a career plan; in Japan, the payment of additional bonuses, the ability to accelerate career advancements, and the idea of facing challenges make the task of teaching in the country's poorest schools attractive. On the other hand, in Estonia, the strong evolution of salaries and the autonomy to apply creative teaching methods have made the teaching career one of the most coveted in recent years. In South Korea, the high social status of teachers combines stability, good salaries, and a rigorous admissions process. In Finland, the salary is not the highest compared to the average of other professionals, but it is a prestigious job (Passarinho, 2018).

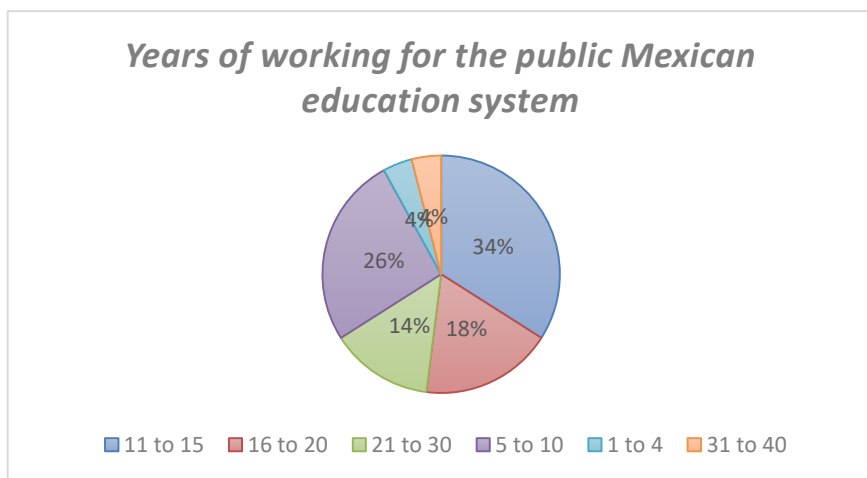
Despite the lack of similar incentives in the Mexican context, it is important to note that there are Mexican teachers who, in the midst of their challenging work lives, are committed to their job, finding satisfaction in the potential positive impact they can have on their students. In addition, there are initiatives and movements that seek to improve the working conditions and recognition of teachers in Mexico, such as the professionalization of teachers and the strengthening of teacher training and professional development.

To sum up: Some teachers may perceive that the profession is not adequately paid or valued; however, there are also opportunities to improve this situation through policies and actions that recognize and support the important work of Mexican educators. Consumer Price Index (CPI) is used as a proxy in this study for inflation rate. CPI is a wide basic measure to compute usual variation in prices of goods and services throughout a particular time. It is assumed that arise in inflation is inversely associated to security prices because Inflation is at last turned into nominal interest rate and change in nominal interest rates caused change in discount rate so discount rate increases due to increase in inflation rate and increase in discount rate leads to decrease the cash flow's present value (Jecheche, 2010). The purchasing power of money decreased due to inflation, and due to which the investors demand high rate of return, and the prices decreased with increase in required rate of return (Iqbal et al, 2010).

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the questionnaire applied to 50 teachers working for public Junior High Schools in Mexico, the following findings are presented and analyzed in the following pages.

Figure 1. Years of working for the public Mexican education system.



As we can appreciate in Figure 1, 34% of the participants have been working for 11 to 15 years for the public education system, while 26% have been working there for 5 to 10 years. Almost a fifth of the participants (18%) have been doing this job for 16 to 20 years so. Clearly, most teachers have remained in the job for more than 10 years. It is important to say that public teaching positions in Mexico are permanent and are protected by a strong unionized system that ensures lifetime tenure for union members. For this reason, public teaching positions are coveted, especially in schools located in major cities, where most teachers would like to live.

Figure 2. Former teachers as an influential factor in the participants' career choices.

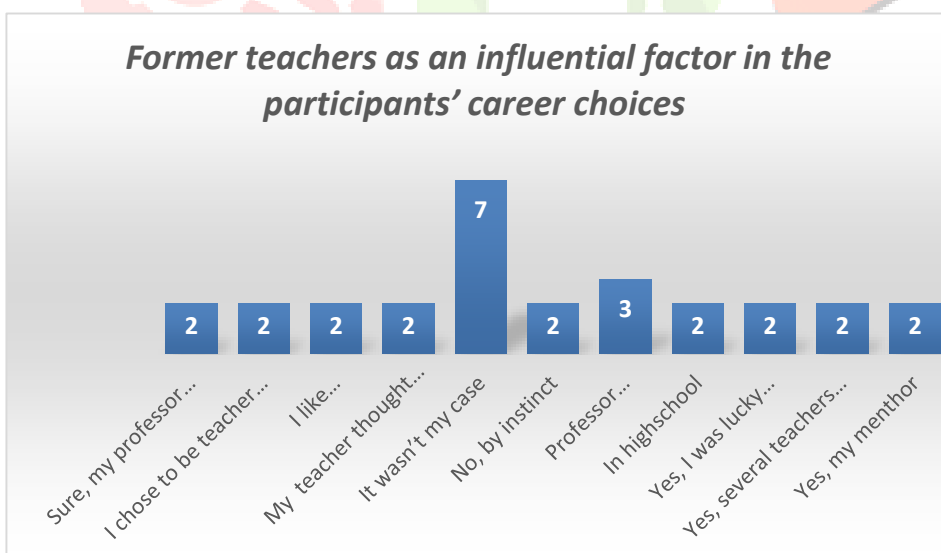
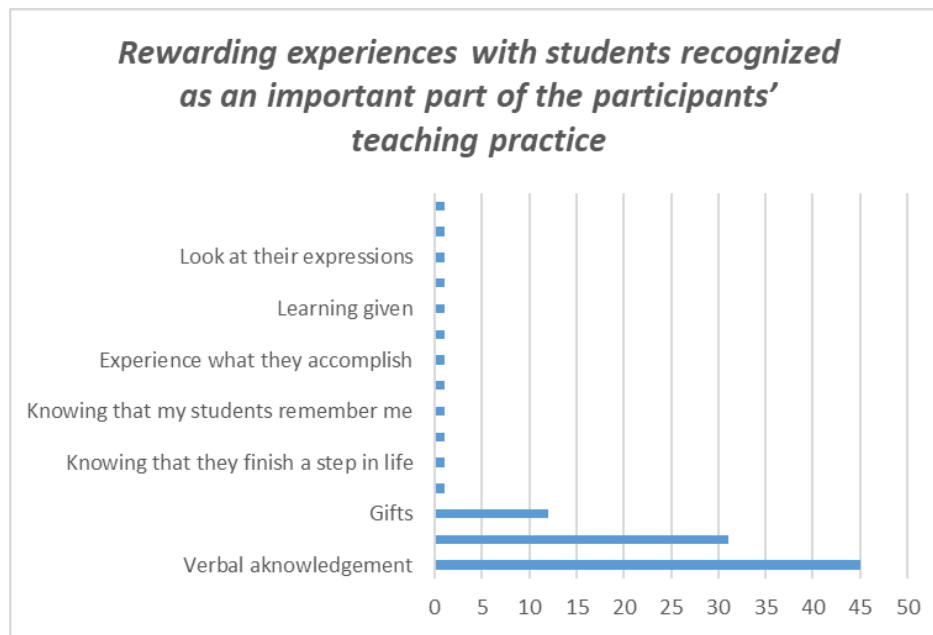


Figure 2 shows that not many participants identified their former teachers as a strong influence in their decision to pursue a teaching career. However, some of them did talk about specific teachers who had inspired them during their student life.

Figure 3. Rewarding experiences with students recognized as an important part of the participants' teaching practice.

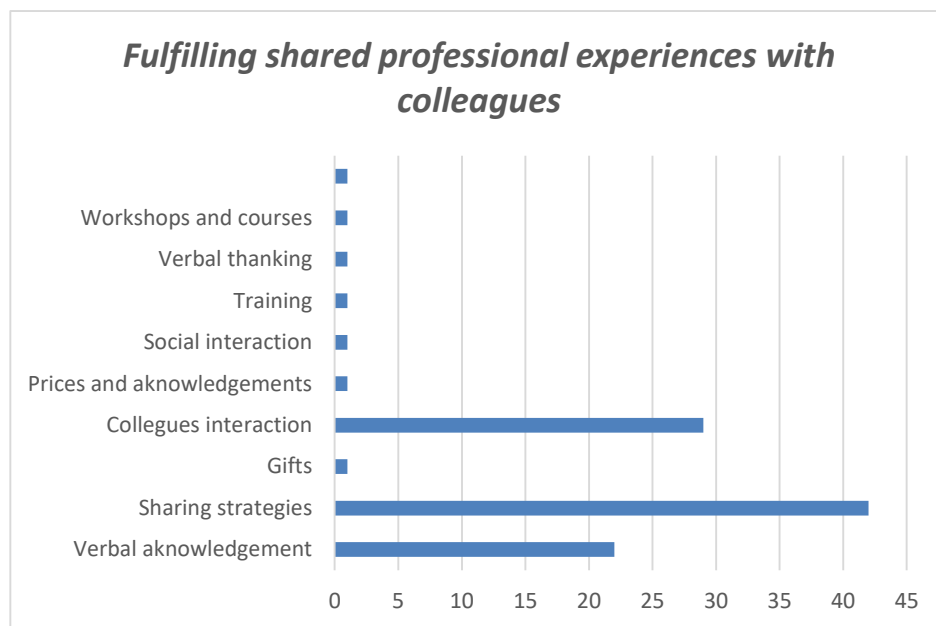


As seen in Figure 3, the participants reported that receiving verbal and/or written acknowledgment for their work was perceived as fulfilling. Some of the acts of professional recognition mentioned by the participants were memories about shared experiences with students, a perceived expression of satisfaction during class or connected to learning outcomes, or receiving small gifts as an expression of gratitude. This data supports the idea that, no monetary results are more important than emotional implications while teaching. Gratitude gestures represent a very important motivation for teachers.

Research in the field of education psychology consistently highlights the significance of intrinsic motivation and psychological needs satisfaction for teachers' job satisfaction and performance (Ryan & Deci, 2017). While monetary rewards play a role in recognizing teachers' efforts, non-monetary forms of acknowledgment, such as verbal praise, written notes of appreciation, and small tokens of gratitude, can have a profound impact on teachers' morale and sense of fulfillment (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Furthermore, studies have shown that positive social interactions and recognition from colleagues and students contribute significantly to teachers' sense of professional identity and job satisfaction (Hargreaves, 2001). Memories of shared experiences with students, expressions of satisfaction during class, and receiving small gifts not only serve as tokens of appreciation but also validate teachers' efforts and dedication to their profession.

In essence, while financial compensation is important, emotional, and interpersonal aspects of recognition are equally crucial for fostering a positive work environment and sustaining teachers' motivation and commitment to their profession.

Figure 4. Fulfilling shared professional experiences with colleagues.

The findings depicted in Figure 4 highlight the significance of positive interactions with colleagues in shaping teachers' professional experiences and perceptions. Research in organizational psychology emphasizes the importance of social support and interpersonal relationships in promoting job satisfaction, well-being, and organizational commitment (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). When teachers receive praise and relevant professional strategies from their peers, it not only validates their work but also fosters a sense of camaraderie and shared goals within the professional community.

However, the contrast between these positive experiences with colleagues and the perceived lack of collaboration from the Mexican government underscores the complexity of teachers' experiences and their interactions with different stakeholders in the education system. Passarinho's (2018) study on teachers' perceptions of government support in Mexico sheds light on the challenges faced by educators in accessing resources and support for improving their salaries, integrating technology into their classrooms, and accessing continuous education opportunities. Despite the government's efforts to address these issues, teachers may still perceive significant gaps in support and collaboration, which can impact their overall satisfaction and motivation in their roles.

In conclusion, while positive interactions with colleagues contribute to teachers' professional fulfillment and sense of support, challenges related to government collaboration and support remain prevalent in the educational landscape, highlighting the need for continued advocacy and reform efforts to address teachers' needs and concerns.

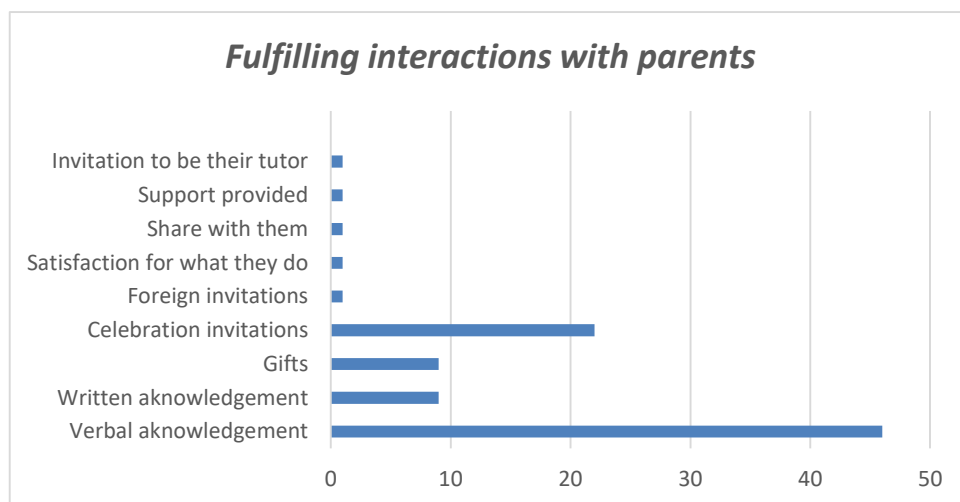
Figure 5. Fulfilling interactions with parents.

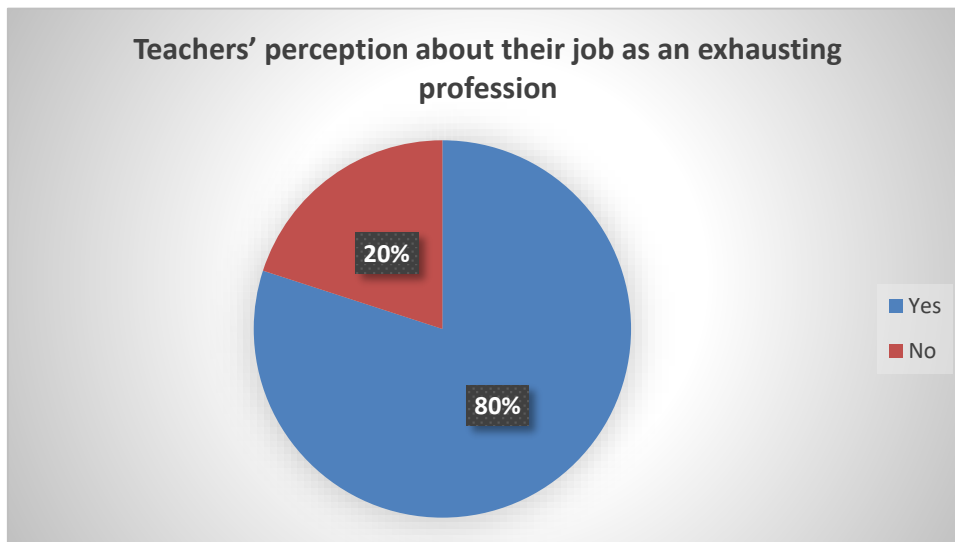
Figure 5. The participants reported that verbal acknowledgement of their work coming from their students' parents was important. This preference for verbal expressions of recognition over written communications of the same sort is evident across all the responses in the questionnaire.

Research in educational psychology underscores the importance of positive parent-teacher relationships in fostering students' academic success and socio-emotional development (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005). When parents express appreciation and recognition for teachers' efforts in nurturing their children's growth and learning, it not only strengthens the teacher-parent partnership but also reaffirms teachers' sense of efficacy and value in their roles.

The preference for verbal expressions of recognition from parents, as opposed to written communications, may stem from the interpersonal nature of verbal interactions. Verbal acknowledgment allows for direct and immediate feedback, which can have a more profound impact on teachers' morale and motivation (Tucker & McCarthy, 2001). Additionally, verbal praise may convey a sense of warmth and sincerity that written communications may lack, enhancing its perceived value and significance for teachers.

Moreover, the consistent preference for verbal acknowledgment across all responses in the questionnaire underscores its universal importance for teachers across different contexts and demographics. Regardless of cultural or institutional differences, verbal recognition from parents serves as a powerful motivator and source of validation for teachers' dedication and efforts in educating their students.

Verbal acknowledgment from students' parents plays a vital role in fostering positive parent-teacher relationships and bolstering teachers' sense of professional fulfillment and efficacy.

Figure 6. Teachers' perception about their job as an exhausting profession.

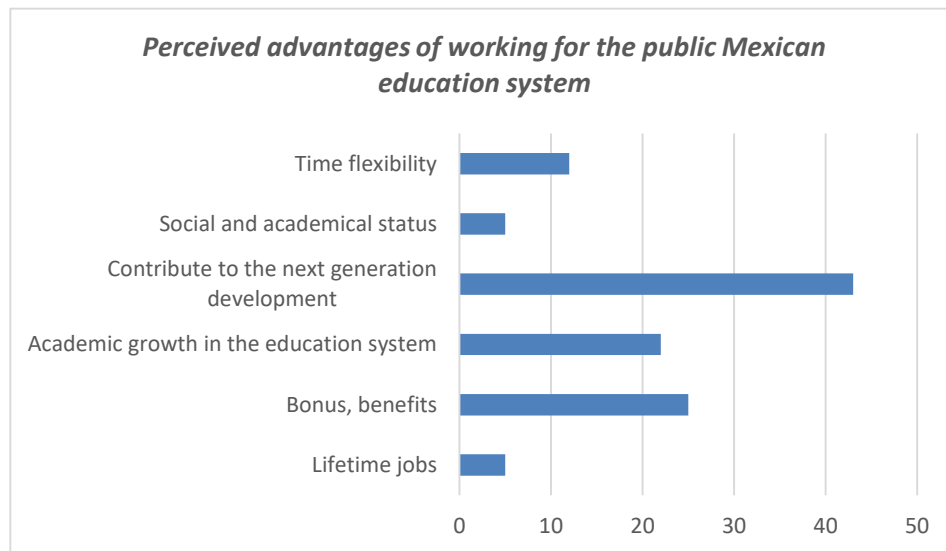
As we can see in Figure 6, 80% of the teachers consider their profession as exhausting. This finding is a very important result because it shows how tired they get while doing their job, which is closely related to the low salary they receive. As a result, they are forced to look for several jobs to be able to fulfill their basic needs. So, instead of working 8 hours a day, as the normal working schedule would be, they end up overworking every day for more than 16 hours. As it was found in Data Mexico (2023), teachers don't perceive their salary as fair or enough to fulfill their personal needs.

Research in occupational health psychology highlights the detrimental effects of chronic work-related stress and exhaustion on individuals' physical and mental health (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). The finding that 80% of teachers perceive their profession as exhausting underscores the urgent need to address systemic issues contributing to teacher burnout, including low salaries and excessive workloads.

The link between perceived exhaustion and low salaries is supported by numerous studies documenting the financial challenges faced by teachers worldwide (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014; Mavrogordato & House, 2018). When teachers feel undervalued and financially strained, they may experience heightened levels of stress and fatigue, leading to burnout and diminished job satisfaction (Gu & Day, 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Moreover, the need for teachers to seek additional employment to meet their basic needs highlights the inadequacy of their current salaries in providing a decent standard of living. This phenomenon, known as moonlighting or secondary employment, is common among teachers in many countries and further exacerbates their exhaustion and work-life balance issues (Shannon & Bylsma, 2016; Tuchman, Natanovich, & Margalit, 2016).

It can be resumed as it follows: The high level of exhaustion reported by teachers underscores the pressing need for systemic reforms to address salary disparities and reduce work-related stressors in the teaching profession.

Figure 7. Perceived advantages of working for the public Mexican education system.

It can be found in Graphic no. 7 that teachers do find some aspects that stimulate their career such as contributing to the preparation of future generations. This way it can be perceived that there is a personal desire and love for what they do, that inspires them to continue teaching in spite of their precarious situation. As a result, teachers find bonus, Christmas payments and other economical stimula quite motivating. On the other hand, they also mention academic growth, which describe their interest for continuous training and schedule flexibility, as well as lifetime positions they they can apply for.

Research in educational psychology and organizational behavior highlights the importance of intrinsic motivators, such as a sense of purpose and autonomy, in fostering individuals' engagement and commitment to their work (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2007). The finding that teachers derive stimulation from contributing to the preparation of future generations underscores the significance of intrinsic rewards in sustaining their motivation and morale.

Moreover, the mention of bonuses, Christmas payments, and other economic stimuli as motivating factors aligns with expectancy theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to exert effort when they believe it will lead to desired outcomes (Vroom, 1964). While financial incentives may not fully compensate for low salaries, they can serve as extrinsic motivators that supplement teachers' income and provide temporary relief from financial strain.

Additionally, the emphasis on academic growth and schedule flexibility reflects teachers' desire for professional development opportunities and work-life balance, which are essential for maintaining their well-being and job satisfaction (Klassen et al., 2012; Nias, 1989). Lifetime positions, which offer stability and security, are also valued by teachers seeking long-term careers in education. While teachers face numerous challenges in their profession, including low salaries and precarious working conditions, intrinsic motivators, economic stimuli, and opportunities for professional growth and advancement contribute to their resilience and commitment to teaching.

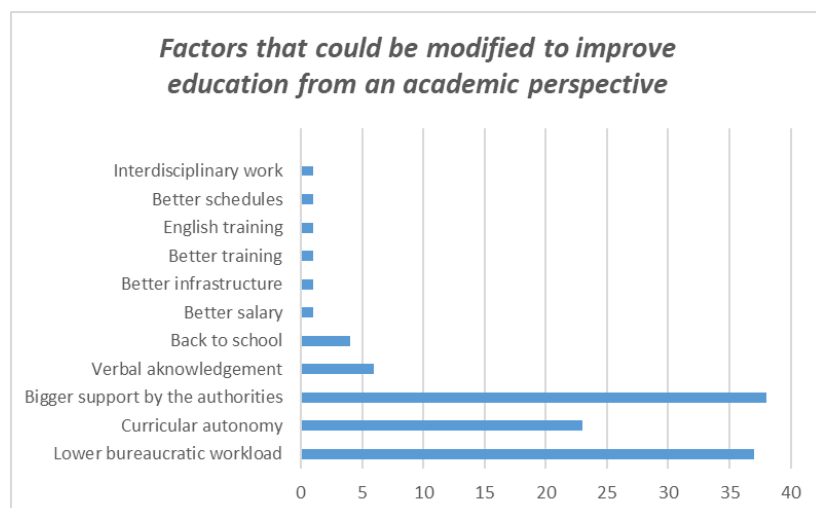
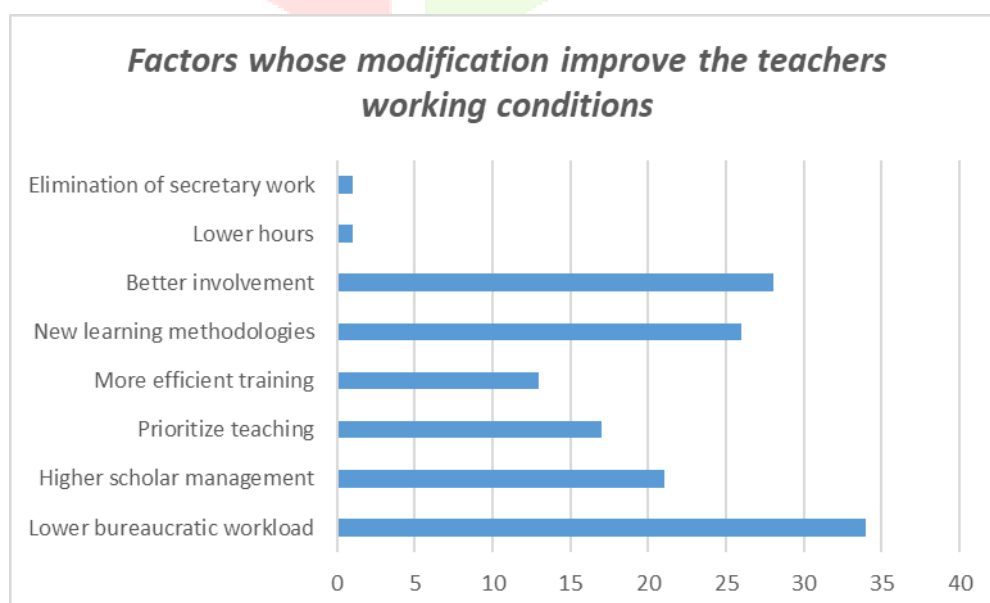
Figure 8. Factors that could be modified to improve education from an academic perspective.

Figure 8 shows some of the academically related changes they would like to see in their professional context. Some responses suggested that these changes should come from the government and major educational authorities, others expressed a desire to see a decrease in the bureaucratic procedures they must follow as part of their job, and a last group addressed the need of greater curricular autonomy. Teachers suggested that these three changes would help them achieve greater professional freedom.

In this context, it is crucial, as it was explained in the context of this research, that education authorities take concrete steps to address teachers' labour concerns and develop effective educational programs that drive quality and equity in education (LXV Parliamentary Group of the Senate of the Republic, 2022).

In this context, it is crucial that education authorities take concrete steps to address teachers' labor concerns and develop effective educational programs that drive quality and equity in education. This conclusion aligns with recent research highlighting the importance of collaboration among different stakeholders in the education system to address teachers' labor challenges and promote a more satisfying and effective work environment (Perry & Lubienski, 2020; Schleicher, 2021).

Figure 9. Factors whose modification could improve the teacher's working conditions.

In discussing institutional aspects, Figure 9 illustrates teachers' perspectives on influential factors they believe need to change to enhance their teaching practice. These factors include a reduction in the bureaucratic burden typically associated with their job responsibilities, such as excessive paperwork, too many unnecessary

meetings, and strikes. Research by Acuña Quezada (2022) supports the notion that such bureaucratic burdens can diminish teachers' commitment and adversely affect teaching quality.

Furthermore, teachers emphasize the importance of increased involvement in institutional activities, such as participation in new training courses, workshops, and extracurricular activities. Additionally, they express a desire to learn new methodologies and advocate for more efficient school management processes.

These findings underscore the need for educational institutions to streamline administrative processes and provide opportunities for professional development that align with teachers' evolving needs and instructional practices (Hanushek et al., 2020; OECD, 2021).

Figure 10. Professor's opinion about teaching as a well-paid and appreciated job.

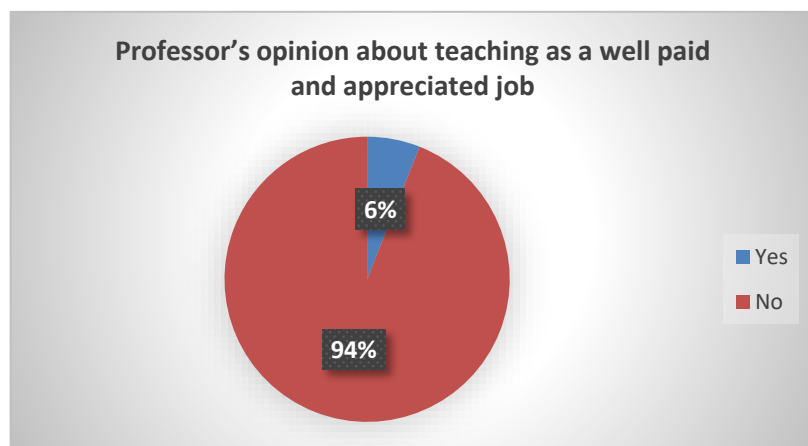
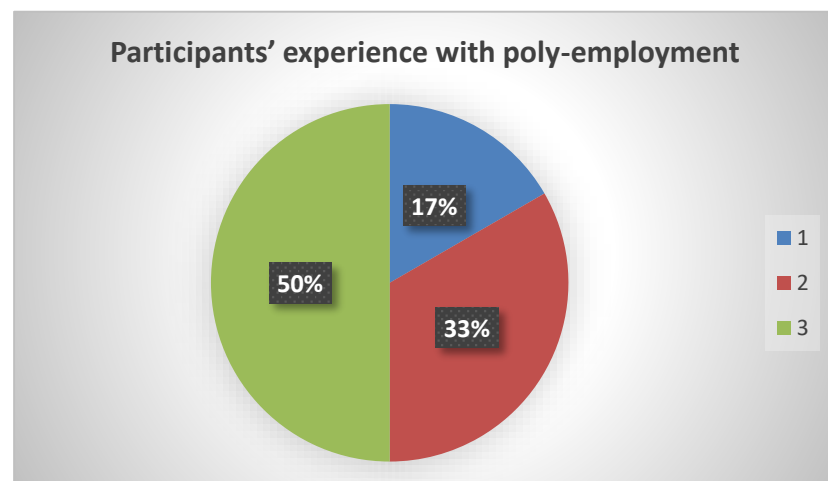


Figure 10 underscores that 94% of participating teachers perceive the teaching profession as underappreciated and poorly compensated, failing to reflect its social importance (Data Mexico, 2023). Consequently, many educators are motivated by factors beyond financial incentives, such as personal fulfillment and moral satisfaction.

This finding resonates with contemporary research emphasizing the multifaceted motivations of teachers and the significance of intrinsic rewards in driving their commitment to the profession (Day & Gu, 2014; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Despite facing economic challenges, teachers derive satisfaction from making a difference in students' lives and contributing to societal progress (Ingersoll & May, 2012; Kyriacou, 2011).

Understanding teachers' diverse motivations is essential for developing policies and practices that support their well-being and professional growth (OECD, 2020; Perry & Lubienski, 2020). By recognizing and valuing the intrinsic rewards of teaching, education systems can foster a more sustainable and fulfilling work environment for educators.

Figure 11. Participants' experience with poly-employment.

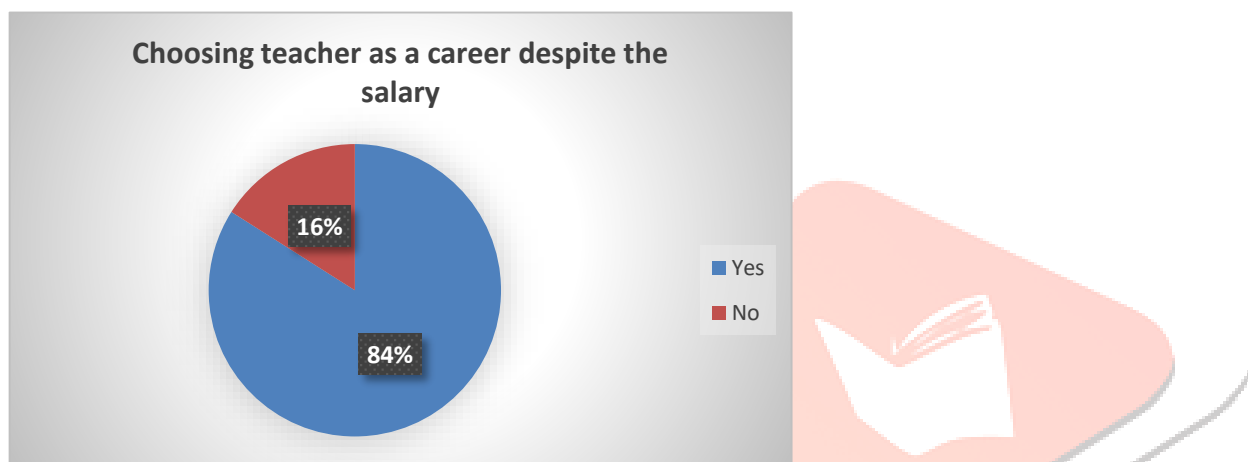


As depicted in Figure 12, a concerning number of teachers are compelled to hold multiple jobs in order to meet their basic life needs. This alarming revelation not only indicates that a significant majority of participants lead physically and mentally draining work lives to make ends meet, but also raises questions about the level of motivation these teachers may experience on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, an overworked employee is prone to becoming disillusioned with their job, viewing it more as a burden than a fulfilling career to be passionate about.

This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the inadequate salary levels for teachers in Mexico, which often fall far below minimum wage standards observed in other countries such as the United States (Passarinho, 2018; Data Mexico, 2023). Such disparities in compensation not only contribute to financial strain for teachers but also undermine their overall job satisfaction and morale.

Understanding the detrimental effects of overwork and inadequate compensation on teacher motivation is essential for developing policies and interventions aimed at improving teacher well-being and retention rates (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & May, 2012). By addressing systemic issues related to teacher salaries and workload, educational authorities can create a more supportive and sustainable environment for educators.

Figure 13. Choosing teacher as a career despite the salary.



It is essential to highlight that, despite facing low salaries and poor working conditions, many teachers remain dedicated to their profession, demonstrating a profound commitment to both their career and their students' education.

The findings of this study shed light on several crucial aspects concerning motivation in the classroom and its implications for teachers' practice and student engagement:

Firstly, there is a pressing need for teachers to be adequately motivated personally, professionally, and economically (Acuña Quezada, 2022). Research suggests that motivated teachers are more likely to exhibit enthusiasm in the classroom, engage in continuous professional development, and foster positive relationships with their students (Day & Gu, 2014; Guskey, 2019).

Secondly, teachers must be actively involved in institutional initiatives and equipped with the necessary training in new teaching strategies to effectively guide their students. However, recent studies indicate that teacher involvement in curriculum development processes is often lacking, leading to dissonance and dissatisfaction among educators (LXV Legislature, Senate of the Republic, 2022).

Furthermore, there is a growing recognition of the need to redefine the teacher-student relationship, emphasizing a more personalized, friendly, and emotionally supportive approach in the classroom. Research suggests that cultivating interpersonal connections and fostering a sense of belonging can significantly reduce students' stress levels and enhance their overall learning experiences (Hentea, Shea & Pennington, 2003).

By addressing these key aspects of motivation and classroom dynamics, educators can create more engaging and supportive learning environments that promote student success and well-being.

Conclusions and recommendations

The teaching profession in Mexico has evolved into more of a survival job than an esteemed, well-compensated career, primarily due to the inadequate salaries and challenging working conditions that teachers must contend with throughout their careers (Data Mexico, 2023). Despite these adversities, teachers seek fulfillment beyond financial and social recognition to sustain their motivation and view their profession as rewarding (Acuña Quezada, 2022). This study identifies factors such as verbal and written acknowledgments from students and parents, as well as supportive interactions with colleagues, as sources of motivation for teachers. However, the demanding nature of their work, coupled with the need to seek additional employment to maintain a decent standard of living, contributes to their overall exhaustion.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to improve the conditions for teachers in Mexico:

- Increase salaries and provide acknowledgment grants for teachers.
- Promote teamwork through special incentives and credits.
- Establish various communication channels to facilitate better interaction between students and teachers, incorporating methods such as chats, video conferences, and telephone communication.
- Combine distance learning sessions with face-to-face interactions, if feasible, to foster closeness and rapport.
- Provide support to teachers managing large student groups by dividing students into smaller cohorts.
- Vary message stimuli through different media and develop creative and effective materials (Zhang, 2004).
- Analyze audience characteristics to determine motivational requirements, utilizing appropriate tactics as outlined in the ARCS Model (Colakoglu & Akdemir, 2008).
- Offer real or symbolic incentives tied to successful outcomes.

From the teacher's perspective, several factors could be modified to enhance the quality of education in academic terms:

Curriculum design: It is critical to review and update curriculum design to ensure it is aligned to educational standards, student needs, and progress in the field. Curriculum design must be flexible and adaptable to allow personalization of learning and the inclusion of innovative approaches (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2015).

Teaching Methodology: Teachers can explore and use a variety of teaching methodologies that are effective in promoting meaningful learning and active student engagement. This includes the use of approaches such as project-based learning, cooperative learning, educational technology, and differentiated teaching to address the students' diverse needs (Herrera Corona & Mendoza Zaragoza, 2018).

Assessment and feedback: Teachers can improve assessment practices by providing specific and constructive feedback to students on their academic performance. It is important to use a variety of assessment tools, such as tests, projects, presentations, and portfolios, to comprehensively assess student progress (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Teacher training: Continuing education and professional development are key for teachers to improve their pedagogical skills and stay on top of the latest trends in education. Teachers can participate in training programs, workshops, conferences, and professional learning communities to improve their teaching practice (Herrera Corona & Mendoza Zaragoza, 2018).

Attention to diversity: It is important for teachers to recognize and address students' diverse needs and learning styles. This includes adapting teaching to students with different abilities, interests, cultural backgrounds, and language proficiency levels (Herrera Corona & Mendoza Zaragoza, 2018).

Peer collaboration: Fostering collaboration among colleagues can be beneficial for sharing best practices, educational resources, and teaching strategies. Teachers can work in collaborative teams, participate in planning meetings, and share ideas through online platforms (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2015).

In conclusion, teachers play a pivotal role in improving academic education by implementing effective pedagogical strategies, engaging in professional development, and collaborating with peers to create enriching learning environments.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study, while offering valuable insights into teacher motivation and job satisfaction in Mexico, is subject to several limitations. The relatively small sample size of 50 participants may not fully represent the diverse population of teachers across the country, warranting caution in generalizing the findings. Additionally, the presence of social desirability bias, potential environmental distractions during survey completion, and the limited scope of survey items may have influenced the accuracy and depth of the data collected. Furthermore, the study's reliance on voluntary participation introduces self-selection bias, which could affect the external validity of the results. Addressing these limitations through larger sample sizes, anonymous data collection methods, and comprehensive survey instruments would enhance the reliability and applicability of future research on teacher motivation and job satisfaction in Mexico.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH IN THE AREA

In addition to the identified limitations, future research in the area of teaching motivation should explore several key areas to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher satisfaction and performance. Firstly, investigations into the effectiveness of teacher training programs and professional development initiatives are crucial to enhancing educators' pedagogical skills and job satisfaction. Moreover, examining the contextual factors within schools and communities, including school leadership, organizational culture, and community support, can shed light on the broader influences shaping teachers' experiences. Furthermore, exploring the impact of family background, socioeconomic status, and cultural values on teacher motivation and retention is essential for addressing disparities and promoting equity in education. Additionally, future studies should delve into the monetary and social implications of teaching, including salary levels, benefits, and societal recognition, to identify strategies for improving teacher compensation and status. Lastly, fostering collaboration and values sharing among educators and stakeholders is paramount for building a supportive and inclusive educational environment that nurtures teacher motivation and student success. By addressing these research gaps, policymakers, administrators, and educators can develop evidence-based interventions and policies to enhance teaching motivation and promote positive outcomes in education.

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