

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND PART-TIME TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION: A STUDY INVOLVING A TALIS SAMPLE FROM SERBIA

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine part-time teachers' attitudes (based on a sample of respondents from the Republic of Serbia) (N=727) about school climate and job satisfaction; it also aimed to examine the nature, level, and intensity of the connection between these two complex variables. To examine such attitudes, we used several questionnaires on school climate and job satisfaction extracted from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), 2013. Based on the instrument we utilised, the school climate could be categorised and studied as a two-component dimension reflecting two aspects of part-time teachers' school life: general school issues, and issues related to students' needs and well-being. We concluded that there is a significant correlation between part-time teachers' school climate and job satisfaction. School climate explains 27% of the job satisfaction variance, indicating the importance of the observed regression relationship.

Key words: part-time teachers, school climate, job satisfaction, TALIS 2013, Serbia.

ШКОЛСКА КЛИМА И ЗАДОВОЉСТВО ПОСЛОМ НАСТАВНИКА ЗАПОСЛЕНИХ НА ОДРЕЂЕНО ВРЕМЕ: ИСТРАЖИВАЊЕ НА УЗОРКУ ИСПИТАНИКА ИЗ TALIS СТУДИЈЕ У СРБИЈИ

Апстракт

Истраживање је имало за циљ да утврди ставове наставника запослених на одређено време (на узорку испитаника из Републике Србије) (N=727) о школској клими и задовољству послом, те да испита природу, ниво и интензитет везе између ове две комплексне варијабле. Користили смо неколико скала процене о школској клими и задовољству послом издвојених из Међународног истраживања о настави и учењу (TALIS), 2013. На основу резултата, школска клима би

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се могла проучавати као двокомпонентна димензија која одражава два аспекта школског живота наставника запослених на одређено време: општа школска питања и питања која се односе на потребе и добробит ученика. Закључили смо да постоји статистички значајна повезаност између школске климе и задовољства послом наставника запослених на одређено време. Школска клима објашњава 27% варијансе задовољства послом.

Кључне речи: наставници на одређено време, школска клима, задовољство послом, *TALIS* 2013, Србија.

INTRODUCTION

Part-time teachers face many challenges that full-time teachers do not; thus, they tend to have different teaching experiences. Therefore, it is essential for them to possess certain additional skills, abilities, knowledge, and resilience (personal and pedagogical flexibility) (Duggleby & Badali, 2007; Mitina, 2012), which can help them progress under continuously changing environmental conditions.

Studies have shown that the part-time teachers' teaching differs from that organised by classroom and full-time teachers, and that it has very special features (at all stages of organisation and planning) (Jenkins et al., 2003). These teachers are expected to adapt, reframe, and make concessions regarding prepared plans for different groups of students, classes, and schools, and thus they tend to describe this experience as emotionally exhausting. In literature regarding part-time teachers, two 'key' feelings are described as being a predominant part of such experiences for these teachers: helplessness and professional isolation (Duggleby and Badali, 2007).

Available literature on part-time teachers' experiences is surprisingly finite, but in all these studies there is a conclusion that most teachers labour under professional isolation and constant negative feelings (Lunay and Lock, 2006). There are authors who also specify part-time teaching as "a time of uncertainty, frustration, and dissatisfaction" (Pietsche and Williamson, 2009, p. 24).

Part-time teachers' roles are further complicated because these teachers describe themselves as 'marginalized employees' (Damianos, 1998). Marginalised employees are not incorporated into the official structures of the institution (organisation) and, by that, cannot give their contribution to achieving its desired (formal and informal) goals (Clifton and Rambarau, 1987).

A quick look at the study results regarding part-time teachers attests to the minimal representation of this topic in the extant related literature despite these teachers' vital everyday roles in the process of education. This daily routine turned out to be stressful for teachers (Driedger-Enns, 2014; Gershenson, 2012; Vorell, 2012) who may consequently have negative (self) perception (Cardon, 2002).

Part-time teachers are often 'denied' access to many parts of school life because they are not included in extracurricular activities, and formal-informal and hidden curriculums, all of which make the school an interesting and miraculous place (Damianos, 1998). In relevant narratives and auto-ethnographic research materials, part-time teachers have often reported experiencing feelings of alienation when they cannot participate in their students' school lives. Somewhat ironically, and as expected, they often tend to experience the greatest sense of alienation where their professional role is most challenged and undermined among their fellow full-time teachers.

Research on the relationship between school climate and job satisfaction shows that the relations between these constructs has several points of impact, especially as regards teachers' identification, retention, and recruitment and, by extension, the quality of learning outcomes (Zakariya, 2020). Some researchers have examined these two constructs through association with a mediator variable, in most cases self-efficacy (Aldridge and Fraser, 2016; Kasalak and Dagyar, 2020; Kašparova, Potužnikova and Janik, 2015; Malinen and Savolainen, 2016; Shaukat, Vishnumolakala, and Al Bustami, 2019; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2014; You, Kim, and Lim, 2016; Xia and Sun, 2018). However, the basic limitation to this line of research is that the "lack of cross-validation of the tested structural model on school climate, teacher self-efficacy and teacher job satisfaction coupled with inconclusive results on the relationships between these constructs have created knowledge gaps begging for more investigation" (Zakariya, 2020, p. 2).

The impact of school climate on self-efficacy and job satisfaction has also been examined, with diverse outcomes depending on different facets of the school climate (Malinen and Savolainen, 2016; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011; Valdeman, van Tartwijk, Brekelmans and Wubbels, 2013; You et al., 2016). The direct influence of the school climate on job satisfaction has been examined in a few studies, with results confirming a prominent connection (negative and positive) between these two constructs (Aldridge and Fraser, 2016; Malinen and Savolainen, 2016).

As previously indicated, there is almost no research wherein a subsample of part-time teachers is extracted from the general sample of teachers in order to question the relation between the school climate and job satisfaction.

Considering these factors, our study aims to prepare a survey on attitudes regarding part-time teachers' assessment of the school climate and job satisfaction in the Republic of Serbia.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Participants

The sample consists of 727 part-time teachers in the Republic of Serbia. The respondent sample was sourced from the available TALIS 2013 research database (the database is available in standard SAV (Sparse Allele Vectors) file extension). The total sample includes 3,857 teachers from 191 schools. The basic sample characteristics of the part-time teachers are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample characteristics of the studied part-time teachers

Background questions	Part-time (71-90%)	Part-time (50-70%)	Part-time (≤ 50%)
Current employment status as a teacher	363	194	170
Female	238	122	93
Male	125	72	77
How old are you?	38.96	37.94	37.17
Year(s) working as a teacher at this school	6.98	5.83	5.24
Year(s) working as a teacher (total)	9.90	9.21	8.15
Year(s) working in other education roles	6.24	6.71	7.75
Year(s) working in other jobs	4.37	4.80	5.27

N= 727; Z= 1.936, p= 0.001

Measures

The TALIS 2013 collected data through a teacher questionnaire that contains 49 questions. Its questions are grouped into six thematic units: background data (demographic data, data on teacher education, and data on current employment), teachers' professional development, teaching, teaching in general, teacher feedback, and school climate and job satisfaction. This research depended on the survey type, and the following basic principles were followed while constructing the questionnaire: the importance of data in relation to educational policies, orientation based on indicators, validity of measurement, reliability and comparability of data, and interpretability of results (Andjelković and Petrović, 2018; OECD, 2014a). This present study utilised questions concerning demographic data, as well as data on school climate assessments and job satisfaction. The degrees of agreement regarding statements in relation to the questions in the school climate (nine items) and job satisfaction (ten items) sections from the same domain (school climate) were marked on a four-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – agree, and 4 – strongly agree). Preliminary reliability analysis for the sample of surveyed part-time teachers showed the following Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the school climate assessment scale: $\alpha = 0.83$; furthermore, for the job satisfaction scale, the Cronbach's alpha value was $\alpha = 0.36$.

Procedure and Statistical Analysis

A sub-sample of part-time teachers was extracted from the publicly available database. For such a defined sample, the structure factor was examined on a scale that assessed attitudes regarding school climate and job satisfaction. We examined the invoice structure and the number of components obtained through exploratory factor analysis (EFA), parallel analysis (PA) (Horn, 1965), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Considering the obtained results and the internal consistency indicators, which were unsatisfactory for the job satisfaction scale ($\alpha = 0.36$), appropriate modifications were made (by reversing the scoring for items 3, 4, and 6). Subsequently, through correlation and regression analyses, we examined the nature and characteristics of the connections between the basic variables of interest. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 17.0, and LISREL 9.30.

RESULTS

The nine-item school climate scale was subjected to principal components analysis (PCA). The values of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = 0.82) and the Bartlett test of sphericity (reaches statistical significance) indicate the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Table 2. Component matrix for school climate factor analysis

Items	Components	
	1	2
This school provides staff with opportunities to participate in school decisions.	0.836	
This school provides students with opportunities to participate in school decisions.	0.806	
This school promotes a culture of shared responsibility for school issues.	0.770	
This school provides parents with opportunities to participate in school decisions.	0.739	
There is a collaborative school culture that is characterized by mutual support.	0.726	
Most teachers in this school believe that students' well-being is important.		0.871
Most teachers in this school are interested in what students have to say.		0.821
In this school, teachers and students usually get along well with each other.		0.771
If a student needs extra assistance, the school provides it.		0.576
Cronbach's alpha	$\alpha = 0.86$	$\alpha = 0.79$

The first factor explains 50.03% of the variables related to school climate, and we interpreted it as being related to school issues. The sec-

ond factor explains an additional 14.83% of such variables, and we interpreted it as being related to student issues. Parallel analysis (PA) (Horn, 1965) confirmed this two-factor solution.

We identified a problem in the internal consistency analysis of the scale, through which the variable *job satisfaction* was being classified. The obtained Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was unsatisfactory ($\alpha = 0.36$). When items 3, 4, and 6 were reversed, satisfactory results were obtained. Factor analysis indicated the existence of two factors, and parallel analysis indicated the justification of a one-factor solution. In the two-component solution, we obtained another factor that contained only one item. We accepted the solution obtained through parallel analysis (after eliminating another factor that contained one item from the scale). This factor explains 43.96% of the variables related to job satisfaction, and this was a completely accurate result. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for such a one-component solution was $\alpha = 0.737$. We rejected the item "I would like to transfer to another school if that were possible". Interestingly, this subscale indicated a statistically significant difference between the responses of full-time and part-time teachers ($\chi^2 = 61.843$, $df = 36$, $p = 0.005$).

Furthermore, to test this solution (by comparing it with the previous model), we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the goodness-of-fit model that was constructed this way. The results also showed that the model that lacked this item from the job satisfaction measurement scale (with two components from the school climate measurement scale) had a good fit: χ^2 (31.66), p-value (0.002), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (0.159), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) (0.909), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) (0.788), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) (0.506), Normed Fit Index (NFI) (0.898), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) (0.879), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (0.923).

Table 3. Component matrix for job satisfaction factor analysis

Items	Components	
	1	2
All in all, I am satisfied with my job.	0.844	
If I could decide again, I would still choose to work as a teacher.	0.794	
About your job/I enjoy working at this school.	0.748	
I would recommend my school as a good place to work.	0.737	
The advantages of being a teacher clearly outweigh the disadvantages.	0.695	
About your job/I regret that I decided to become a teacher.	-0.648	
About your job/I am satisfied with my performance in this school.	0.578	
About your job/I wonder whether it would have been better to choose another profession.	0.525	
I think that the teaching profession is valued in society.	0.502	
I would like to transfer to another school if that were possible.		0.680
Cronbach's alpha coefficient.	$\alpha=0.73$	

Thus, we obtained two factors related to school climate, and one factor related to job satisfaction. The obtained factors were correlated, and the matrix is listed in Table 4.

Table 4. The inter-factors correlation matrix

	School Issues	Student Issues	Job satisfaction
School Issues	1		
Student Issues	0.552**	1	
Job satisfaction	0.503**	0.486**	1

** : Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Unexpectedly, the obtained correlations between job satisfaction and student issues were lower compared to the correlations between job satisfaction and school issues. However, when job satisfaction was lower, the mean values for student issues were higher than the mean values for school issues. Our assumption was based on analyses conducted in previous studies (Bekingalar, 2015; Belmonte, 2006; O'Connor, 2009), which suggested that part-time teachers had sufficient opportunities and time at their disposal to participate in school life because they tend to have volatile and incomplete work engagements. Therefore, part-time teachers' primary orientation involved students. However, our data showed that this was the case only for part-time teachers who had lower job satisfaction (Figure 1).

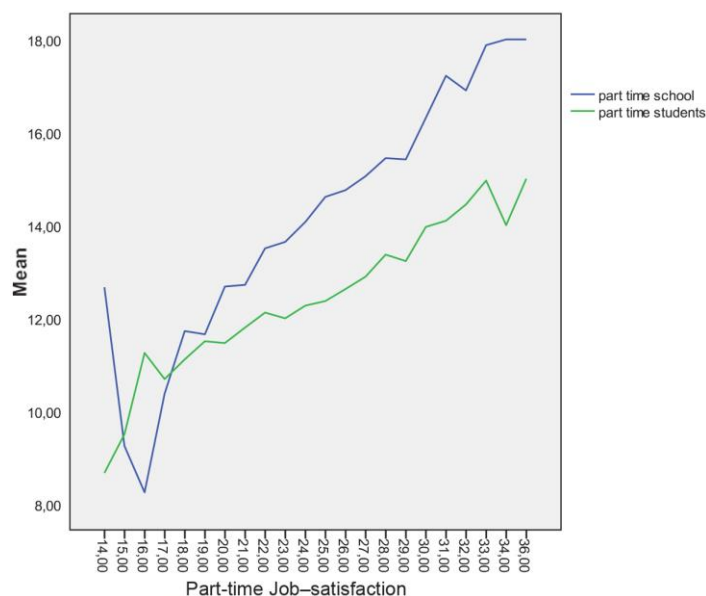


Figure 1. The means for school climate components and job satisfaction: line diagram

The school climate assessment results based on gender were compared with the t-test of the independent samples. No significant difference was indicated between the results of man ($M= 14.71$, $SD= 2.79$) and woman female ($M= 14.56$, $SD= 2.65$) ($t= 156$, $p= 0.11$). The obtained difference between the mean values (mean difference= 0.14; 95% confidence interval= 0.034–0.037) was very small (eta squared = 0.003). The t-test of the independent samples also compared the results of the job satisfaction assessments for man and woman. There was no significant difference in terms of results between man ($M= 25.50$, $SD= 3.26$) and woman ($M= 25.58$, $SD= 3.24$) ($t= 0.722$; $p= 0.47$). The obtained difference between the mean values (mean difference= 0.08; 95% confidence interval= 0.30510 to 0.30564) was very small (eta squared= 0.0007). The responses of man and woman respondents did not differ when assessing school climate and job satisfaction.

Statistically significant differences were observed in the other independent variables. The results are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the differences between the independent variables

Variables	Factors	χ^2	df	p
How old are you?	School issues	823.957	574	0.000*
	Student issues	422.802	369	0.028*
	Job satisfaction	894.433	779	0.002*
Year(s) working as a teacher at this school	School issues	611.696	420	0.000*
	Student issues	394.975	270	0.000*
	Job satisfaction	674.604	540	0.000*
Year(s) working as a teacher (total)	School issues	770.051	490	0.000*
	Student issues	343.912	288	0.013*
	Job satisfaction	778.647	648	0.000*
Year(s) working in other jobs	School issues	312.036	286	0.139
	Students issues	214.096	176	0.026*
	Job satisfaction	404.080	374	0.137

* $p \leq 0.05$

Furthermore, we compared full-time and part-time teachers in terms of their assessments regarding all three obtained components of the relevant variables (school issues, student issues, and job satisfaction). We did not find any statistically significant differences in terms of school climate components, but we found statistically significant differences with regard to job-satisfaction estimates. There was a statistically significant difference in terms of job satisfaction assessments between full-time teachers ($M = 25.53$, $SD = 3.20$) and part-time teachers ($M = 25.48$, $SD = 3.58$) ($t = 0.233$, $p = 0.025$). The difference between the mean values of the features according to group belonging (95% confidence interval = 0.40 to 0.43) was significant (eta squared = 0.18).

We used standard multiple regression to investigate how well the two given school climate measures predicted part-time teachers' job satisfaction (i.e., what school climate component better predicted job satisfaction). The following value was obtained when evaluating the model: $R^2=0.267$. Our model explains 26.7% of the variance in job satisfaction. While assessing this indicator's statistical significance, an ANOVA test was conducted, and the following results were obtained: $F= 649.64$, $p= 0.000$ (the model reached statistical significance). A comparison of both components' contributions showed that the second school climate component (student issues, $\beta= 0.313$) individually contributed more toward explaining job satisfaction than the first school climate component (school issues, $\beta= 0.268$). However, both components represent a statistically significant and unique contribution to the equation ($p= 0.000$). The semi-partial correlation coefficient of the first school climate component (school issues, first subscale) was $SemP= 0.218$; thus, this component uniquely explained 4% of the variance in job satisfaction values. For the second school climate component (student issues, second subscale), the obtained value, $SemP= 0.255$, uniquely explained 6.5% of the variance in job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Although researchers have not yet reached any consensus regarding the definite numbers and structures of school climate components and aspects (Burke and Litwin, 1992; Halpin and Croft, 1963; Jevtić and Milošević, 2022; Kopelman et al., 1990; Schneider, 1972; Đorđić and Damjanović, 2016), in recent meta-analyses (Chirkina and Khavenson, 2018; Cohen et al., 2009; Zullig et al., 2010), scholars have frequently proposed the following sub-components for the concept of the school climate: (1) Relations between school agents; (2) Physical environment (the characteristics of the classroom and the school); (3) Individual factors (the feeling of being a part of the school, and school discipline); and (4) Organisational culture (norms, rules and expectations) (Chirkina and Khavenson, 2018, p. 144). In the present study, which utilised a selected sample of part-time teachers, a two-component school climate structure was obtained, and it contained aspects in which the abovementioned sub-components were intertwined (without the physical environment aspect). This structure depends on the choice of instrument. This study's instrument was taken from the TALIS survey, and it has certain drawbacks that have already been identified in literature (Chirkina and Khavenson, 2018; Cohen et al., 2009; Zullig et al., 2010). In this and similar instruments that can be taken from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, socially desirable answers may distort the picture. Such instruments cannot describe the school climate by using the school and teaching objectives, school characteristics, and organisational processes.

These school properties cannot be estimated directly. It is possible to mix certain aspects of the informal and hidden curricula, and the school and organisational climates; furthermore, we should strive to mix these aspects.

The highest average values for the school climate assessment regarding the school issues component were obtained for items where opportunities for participating in school-level decision-making were assessed. Slightly lower values that were not statistically significant were obtained for items that assessed cultures of shared responsibility with regard to school issues, and for collaboration and mutual support among teachers. In the student issues component, the highest average values were obtained for items that assessed the appreciation for students' opinions, as well as the willingness to provide students with additional assistance.

In the available literature, unlike the school climate, part-time teachers' job satisfaction is well-studied. However, the literature yields few studies on part-time teachers. By contrast, full-time teachers' job satisfaction has been extensively investigated. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) found that teachers identified the contributors to their job satisfaction to be students, changing work environments, opportunities for cooperation, and independence. Bolger and Nir (2012) found that the predictors for high teacher job satisfaction are status and recognition. Shoshani and Eldor (2016) examined the relationships among job satisfaction, teacher learning climate, commitment, and teachers' subjective well-being, and connected these to the provision of positive learning environments for students; therefore, these factors were linked to greater opportunities for student success. Akkaya and Akyol (2016) investigated the connection between job satisfaction and teachers' locus of control, finding a significant relationship between them, including a positive relationship between teachers satisfaction as a whole and their internal locus of control (teachers' subjective feeling that they could make necessary changes). Cucchiara et al. (2015) found that teachers' job satisfaction is affected by school reform efforts. The positive or negative direction of this effect was dictated by the teachers' perception of some school-level factors such as administrative support and climate (Cucchiara et al., 2015). Collie et al. (2015) confirmed that other school-level initiatives can also impact teachers' job satisfaction. They revealed a connection between teachers' perceptions of social emotional learning (SEL) and their job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2015). Scholenko (2018) found that the most common satisfaction sources for part-time teachers are students, co-workers, and the nature of the teachers' work. The respondents also indicated that student behaviour, communication, and pay were their most common dissatisfaction sources.

Statistically significant correlations were obtained for both school climate aspects; this finding aligns with the research of Shoshani and Eldor (2016), and Cucchiara et al. (2015). Moreover, regression analysis showed

that both school climate components explained 26.7% of the variance in job satisfaction. A comparison of full-time and part-time teachers showed that these two groups differed in terms of job satisfaction assessment. More specifically, full-time teachers had a significantly higher average score on the job satisfaction assessment compared to part-time teachers.

The present study has multiple implications, and its findings could influence education policymakers. Although they are often found on the periphery of school culture, part-time teachers form a fifth of the teacher population in the Republic of Serbia. Even so, their professional status has not been thoroughly researched. This study focused on two specific aspects of professional status (school climate and job satisfaction); however, these form only a part of part-time teachers' professional identity, which has not yet been fully researched in the Republic of Serbia, or globally. Therefore, these findings imply the importance of paying attention to part-time teachers in the Republic of Serbia. Furthermore, based on our research results regarding all aspects of professional life, customised professional development programmes should be designed for schools.

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ШКОЛСКА КЛИМА И ЗАДОВОЉСТВО ПОСЛОМ НАСТАВНИКА ЗАПОСЛЕНИХ НА ОДРЕЂЕНО ВРЕМЕ: ИСТРАЖИВАЊЕ НА УЗОРКУ ИСПИТАНИКА ИЗ TALIS СТУДИЈЕ У СРБИЈИ

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Резиме

Готово да нема истраживања у којем се из општег узорка наставника издваја подзорак наставника запослених на одређено време како би се истражио однос између самопроцена школске климе и задовољства послом. Узимајући ово у обзир, циљ нашег истраживања је био да испитамо ставове наставника који раде на одређено време у Републици Србији о школској клими и задовољству послом. Узорак је екстрахован из базе добијене са међународног истраживања о наставницима TALIS 2013.

Група наставника запослених на одређено време у овој студији била је углавном млађа од наставника са пуним радним временом. Скоро сваки пети наставник из узорка свих наставника је радио по неком уговору на одређено време; просечна старост таквих наставника била је 38 година, а просечно искуство рада у настави девет година у школи у којој тренутно раде. Већина таквих наставника имала је у просеку шест година наставничког искуства на другим сличним наставничким пословима и просечно пет година искуства у другим професијама.

Добили смо статистички значајне корелације између две компоненте школске климе (школска питања и питања у вези са радом са ученицима и њиховој добробити) на узорку наставника који раде на одређено време. Након поређења групе наставника са непуним радним временом и групе наставника са пуним радним временом, утврдили смо да нема статистички значајних разлика у погледу процене између ове две групе испитаника. Брига за добробит ученика, као издвојени фактор, боље предвиђа задовољство послом наставника на одређено време него аспект школска питања. Поређење доприноса обе компоненте објашњавању зависне променљиве показало је да друга компонента школске климе (брига за ученике и њихову добробит) ($\beta = 0,313$) појединачно више доприноси

објашњавању задовољства послом него прва компонента школске климе (општа школска питања) ($\beta = 0,268$). Обе компоненте су дале статистички значајан и јединствен допринос једначини ($p = 0,000$). За оба аспекта школске климе добијене су статистички значајне корелације. Регресиона анализа је показала да обе компоненте школске климе објашњавају 26,7% варијансе задовољства послом. Поређење наставника запослених на одређено време и наставника запослених на неодређено време показало је да се ове две групе разликују у погледу процене задовољства послом. Наставници запослени на неодређено време су имали значајно већи просечан резултат на процени задовољства послом у поређењу са наставницима запосленим на одређено време.

Овај преглед анализа и резултата истраживања и са њим повезане увиде треба посматрати као пролегомену за педантнији рад, а не као свеобухватан одговор на питања о феноменологији праксе и професионалног живота наставника запослених на одређено време.