

Working Conditions and Professional Well-Being: Teacher Retention and Performance in Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

The sustainability and attractiveness of the teaching profession has received increased attention in recent years due to labor shortages in public education and the exodus from the teaching profession. The aim of this research was to explore what factors provided by employers secondary school teachers consider most important in terms of job satisfaction, and to what extent these factors influence their performance, their intention to remain in the profession, and their positive communication about their school. Our original plan was to conduct a comparative analysis between Hungary and Slovakia, but unfortunately, we were unable to collect enough responses from the Slovak side. The questionnaire survey was therefore conducted in Hungary from May 2024 to May 2025, using convenience sampling, based on the responses of a total of 157 people. During the research, weighted satisfaction indicators were developed, combining the benefits and conditions that teachers considered important and actually experienced. Using multivariate linear regression analyses, it was found that access to continuous professional development, technical equipment, humane leadership, and professional recognition have a positive and significant impact on teachers' attitudes. These factors predicted performance, loyalty, and a positive image of the school, while the "important but lacking" elements proved insufficient to maintain motivation. The research showed that

providing benefits considered important at the level of promises is not enough to retain teachers—their availability and actual satisfaction are at least as important.

Keywords: Teacher well-being, secondary education, working conditions, retention and performance, quantitative research

INTRODUCTION

When examining the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers, it is essential that the research be based on appropriate theoretical and methodological foundations. There are numerous approaches in the literature that explore the relationships between teacher well-being, motivation, and career retention. Traditional models, such as Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation and hygiene and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, remain important starting points. In recent years, however, approaches that take into account the individual importance of workplace factors and their weighted impact have received increasing attention (Nickerson, 2025; McLeod, 2025; Hsieh, 2018). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the study of teacher satisfaction has once again come to the fore. The educational changes introduced during the pandemic, such as the sudden emergence of digital teaching, have significantly increased teachers' workloads, while the performance expectations placed on them have remained high. Based on research by Li and Yu (2022), there was a strong correlation between teachers' digital competence, role perception, and satisfaction: teachers who received adequate support in using online tools reported lower stress levels and greater professional confidence. The latest international reviews also emphasize that teacher well-being not only affects their own work, but also indirectly affects student academic achievement and school experience. According to an analysis by Yin, Huang, and Wang (2021), teacher well-being contributes to higher levels of student engagement, increased motivation, and an improved classroom atmosphere. However, well-being alone is not enough—it is important that teachers also perceive this as recognition, which in the long term helps them to remain in the profession and commit to their vocation. At the international level, the OECD (2021) also emphasizes that increasing teacher satisfaction is a prerequisite for the operation of sustainable education systems. The long-term performance of education systems is determined by whether they succeed in creating an environment where teachers feel valued and receive adequate resources for their work. According to the OECD report, countries where the teaching profession enjoys high social prestige typically achieve better student outcomes. The above research shows that measuring satisfaction cannot be reduced to simple indicators. The importance of different factors may vary from teacher to teacher, which is why this publication uses a weighted measurement method that not only asks to what extent a particular factor is realized, but also how important it is to the respondent. This provides a more sensitive, accurate, and realistic picture of teacher satisfaction, which can be used for both education policy decision-making and school-level improvements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Old and New Methods of Measuring Satisfaction

Measuring job satisfaction is a central issue in organizational psychology, which requires increasingly nuanced and complex approaches over time. Classic questionnaire tools, such as the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire or the Job Descriptive Index, are still widely used today, but more and more research emphasizes that these measurement tools are often unable to capture the complex effects of the rapidly changing workplace environment (Weiss et al., 1967; Judge et al., 2001). Modern measurement trends include, for example, the Experience Sampling Method (ESM), which examines the current experiences and emotions of employees at multiple points in time, typically through mobile applications. This dynamic approach can collect real-time data on employees' current mood, stress levels, and satisfaction, providing a more accurate picture of experiences that change throughout the day (Ilies, Schwind, & Heller, 2007; Sonnentag, 2018). Another innovative tool is the Job Embeddedness model, which maps employees' relationships with the organization, their commitment, and embeddedness factors, including workplace networks, community ties, and potential losses associated with leaving. This model can estimate not only the level of satisfaction, but also the extent to which an employee is prone to organizational loyalty (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2014). Employee Experience Management is becoming increasingly popular. It does not merely measure employee satisfaction through questionnaires, but tracks employee moods, preferences, and problems through continuous feedback, digital experience platforms, and real-time data analysis (Morgan, 2017; Plaskoff, 2017). This approach integrates HR and IT systems to proactively support employee well-being. Another direction is social network analysis, which examines relationships between employees, revealing who in

the organization plays a key role in information flow, support, or motivation. This method is particularly useful for identifying hidden opinion leaders or marginalized employees, thus indirectly affecting satisfaction (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). International studies on teacher job satisfaction show that the social and cultural context has a significant impact on the well-being of educators. Scandinavian countries—especially Finland, Sweden, and Norway—are often cited as positive examples in international research, while the Central European region, including Hungary, typically shows more modest results in this area (Chung, 2023; Lennert da Silva, 2021).

International Overview

The research was originally intended to compare the satisfaction levels of Hungarian and Slovak secondary school teachers. However, the Slovakian sample produced such a low response rate that it was insufficient for statistical analysis. One explanation for this may be that at the time of the survey, the reform aimed at performance evaluation and salary increases for teachers was still in its preparatory stage in Slovakia: teachers' salaries will increase by 7% from September 2025 and by a further 7% from January 2026, and from 2027 they will be supplemented by a performance-based bonus (Eurydice, 2025a). In contrast, Hungary implemented an average salary increase of 32.2% in January 2024 and plans a further increase of 21.2% from January 2025, so that teachers' salaries reach 80% of the average salary for graduates (Eurydice, 2025b). The different timing of the reforms and the early phase of the Slovak measures probably contributed to the differences in response rates. According to the latest OECD TALIS survey (2018), only 30% of Hungarian teachers feel that society values their work, compared to 87% in Finland (OECD, 2019). At the same time, Scandinavian teachers enjoy significantly greater professional autonomy: they have more freedom to choose methods and teaching materials, and they have more leeway in organizing their lessons (Chung, 2023). This professional freedom directly contributes to satisfaction and the prevention of burnout (Yin, Huang & Wang, 2021). The role of school leadership is also a key factor in the well-being of teachers. While in the V4 countries, including Hungary, leadership support is often formal and hierarchical, in Scandinavian countries, the model of distributed leadership is typical. In this model, decision-making is collaborative, and teachers are actively involved in shaping school processes, which strengthens their sense of competence and professional self-esteem (Veletić & Scherer, 2025). There are also significant differences in the school environment: in Scandinavian countries, a democratic, open, and mentally safe atmosphere in which teachers feel supported is much more common, whereas in Central European systems, a more rigid, regulated school culture is common (Admiraal, 2025).

Taking all this into account, it can be said that Scandinavian teachers' job satisfaction is fueled by a complex system that combines professional autonomy, supportive leadership, social recognition, and a developed work environment. In the case of the V4 countries, including Hungary, factors that limit satisfaction include excessive centralization, low social recognition, and high administrative burdens (OECD, 2020; Yin et al., 2021). Consequently, the Hungarian education system could learn from the Scandinavian approach, particularly in terms of increasing autonomy, strengthening collegial networks, and developing leadership styles.

Facts and Figures about Hungarian Secondary Education

In recent years, Hungarian secondary education has undergone a number of structural and content-related changes, which together affect teachers' job satisfaction and professional well-being. One of the most important and most controversial elements is the teacher remuneration system, which has undergone significant changes in the last two years. The government's goal is for teachers' salaries to reach 80% of the average salary for graduates by 2025, for which a 32.2% increase is planned for 2024 and a further 21.2% increase for 2025 (Medosoft, 2024; Magyar Közlöny, 2024). At the same time, professional opinion and research suggest that raising salaries alone is not enough to make the teaching profession more attractive. In their research, Ceglédi and Lólé (2023) showed that career abandonment is most prevalent among teachers who are just starting their careers and those who have been teaching for up to ten years, particularly due to general uncertainty and a lack of vision for the future. Nevertheless, it can be considered a positive trend that, in parallel with wage adjustments, more and more attention is being paid to supporting professional development and conducting complex studies of teacher well-being (Fónai & Szabó, 2024). Initiatives aimed at reducing the workload of teachers in everyday school life include, for example, simplifying digital administration, expanding mental health services, and encouraging community development within teaching staff. According to Kocsis (2023), one of the key elements of motivation is the creation of organizational psychological safety, which has a direct impact on teacher satisfaction, particularly in terms of the atmosphere within the teaching staff and the quality of management communication. Another positive development is that the social prestige of the teaching profession, although still below the EU average, is gradually improving, especially among teachers working in talent development and vocational training. In addition, the number of continuing education courses financed by grant funds has increased in recent years, and new pedagogical innovations such as gamification, project-based learning, and hybrid teaching models have also become widespread (Fónai & Szabó, 2024).

Based on the above, it can be said that Hungarian secondary education faces a number of challenges, including teacher shortages, regional disparities in educational standards, and the risk of teacher burnout, but there are also encouraging developments. However, the success of the current reforms largely depends on whether decision-makers are able to create a sustainable, predictable, and people-centered educational environment in the long term.

METHODOLOGY

When examining teacher job satisfaction, it is increasingly common to use a segmented approach, which allows for a more targeted and nuanced analysis of complex factors. Some studies, for example, differentiate based on working conditions and relationship with management. One such study is that of Spilt, Koomen, and Jak (2022), which examined the impact of perceived autonomy, professional support, and classroom control on overall well-being and commitment. Another study (Li & Yu, 2022) divided the investigation into three main segments: physical environment (e.g., infrastructure, technical equipment), work organization flexibility (e.g., schedule adjustments, remote work options), and professional development opportunities (training, recognition). The importance weights assigned to each segment also made it possible to calculate a weighted satisfaction index.

The present study uses a similar methodology, but we examine 25 specific factors, which we have classified into five main segments. These are as follows:

1. Working hours and work organization (e.g., flexible working hours, overtime regulations, remote work options).
2. Financial benefits and incentives (e.g., fair pay, benefits package, housing assistance).
3. Professional recognition and advancement (e.g., career opportunities, recognition, further training).
4. Working environment and infrastructure (e.g., technical equipment, staff room, heating/cooling, dining options).
5. Community and organizational atmosphere (e.g., quality of leadership, community of colleagues, school programs, social recognition).

The survey separately assesses how important teachers consider a given factor to be and how much they feel they receive it at their current workplace. The data obtained in this way can be used to create weighted satisfaction indicators, which enable segment-based comparisons, for example by demographics, school type, or region.

We used a quantitative method for the research, which involved collecting data through an online questionnaire starting in the spring of 2024. The questionnaire was distributed using convenience sampling: we reached secondary school teachers who volunteered to respond or who worked in schools where their colleagues forwarded the questionnaire to them. Responses were anonymous, and participants took part in the research on a voluntary basis. The questionnaire, completed by a total of 157 people, provided adequate data quality for descriptive and multivariate statistical analyses. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. The main analytical techniques included the calculation of weighted satisfaction values and multivariate linear regression, which related to three outcome variables: performance, intention to remain in the profession, and positive communication about the school. The research is not representative, but it reflects the diverse age and school type composition of the teaching staff. The results therefore reflect the characteristics of the given sample rather than the situation of all teachers in Hungary.

Data collection for the research took place between May 2024 and May 2025, primarily using an online questionnaire. Convenience sampling was used to reach respondents: the questionnaire was primarily distributed to teachers who agreed to distribute it within their own school environment. Completion was voluntary and anonymous. The sample cannot be considered representative, but it is sufficiently diverse to capture the main patterns of teacher job satisfaction. The final database contained 157 valid responses. The gender distribution of respondents was relatively even: 82 women and 75 men completed the questionnaire. Based on age distribution, most respondents were under 36 (54 people) and between 46 and 60 (48 people), while 35 respondents were between 36 and 45 and 20 were over 60. Respondents also assessed their financial situation. Most of them – 85 people – said that they “get by on their income,” while 33 people said they “struggle,” 24 people said they “get by well,” and 15 people said they “struggle greatly” to live on their current income. This self-assessment of financial situation clearly shows the financial challenges of the teaching profession, even though the salary increases of recent years had already begun to have an impact at the time of the survey.

The diversity of the sample made it possible to perform statistical analyses based on weighted satisfaction indicators, including multivariate regressions. However, it is important to note that the results cannot be generalized to the entire domestic teaching community, as the sampling was not random but based on voluntary participation. The primary aim of the research was to identify the factors determining job satisfaction among secondary school teachers among the available respondents, laying the groundwork for the development of further representative surveys. The aim of the research is to explore how secondary school teachers relate to individual

working conditions, to what extent they perceive their existence, how important they consider them to be, and how satisfied they are with them. The study also sought to understand which of these factors most influence the subjective experience of individual performance, the intention to remain in the workforce, and positive communication about the employer.

The following research questions focused on the relationship between working conditions and attitudes:

1. Which workplace factors do secondary school teachers perceive as most secure?
2. Which factors do they consider most important in terms of their work?
3. Which conditions are teachers most satisfied with?
4. Which factors show the greatest gap between importance and provision?

In the second quantitative phase of the research, we tested the following three hypotheses using multivariate linear regression, focusing on three different outcome variables:

- H1: Satisfaction with "continuous training opportunities" has a positive effect on teachers' perceived performance.
- H2: Satisfaction with "provision of technical equipment" increases the subjective intention to remain in the workforce.
- H3: Satisfaction with the availability of "awards and prizes" has a positive effect on positive communication about the school.

RESULTS

In the first part of the results section, we aim to provide a comprehensive picture of the workplace environment as perceived by secondary school teachers, based on their subjective experiences. Our analysis examines the responses from four main perspectives: First, we present the ten factors that teachers feel are most assured in their current workplace—that is, the characteristics that they believe are most fulfilled in their everyday lives (Table 1). Next, we explore which factors they consider most important in terms of their work, i.e., which expectations, when met, most influence their satisfaction and commitment.

Table 1: The most readily available factors

1.18 Humane and competent leadership	7.97
1.25 Provision of meals	7.76
1.19 Workplace that employees can be proud of	7.27
1.23 A cultured, well-equipped teaching environment	7.25
1.24 Provision of technical equipment	7.15
1.22 Adequate cooling, heating, lighting	7.11
1.13 Continuous training	7.03
1.17 Good working environment	7.03
1.1 Working hours that can be adapted to individual needs	6.94
1.11 Long-term career opportunities	6.76

Source: own compilation

In the third dimension of the study, we analyze the ten factors with which they are most satisfied—that is, where there is the greatest harmony between importance and fulfillment. Finally, we also present the factors with which they are most dissatisfied, either because they consider them particularly important but find them difficult to achieve, or because there are significant shortcomings in this area in their school environment (Table 2 and 3).

Table 2: Most desired factors

2.18 Humane and competent management	8.90
2.17 Good working community	8.85
2.25 Provision of meal options	8.47
2.22 Adequate cooling, heating, lighting	8.38
2.19 A workplace that employees can be proud of	8.25
2.21 Protection from student/parent aggression	8.25
2.12 Professional respect and recognition	8.15
2.6 Satisfactory, fair pay	7.93
2.23 Cultured, well-equipped teaching environment	7.92
2.2 Good accessibility, short commute	7.80
2.1 Working hours that can be adapted to needs	7.75

Source: own compilation

Table 3: Factors causing the highest satisfaction

3.18 Humane and competent management Weighted satisfaction	7.14
3.17 Good community of colleagues weighted satisfaction	6.39
3.19 Workplace that employees can be proud of weighted satisfaction	6.09
3.24 Weighted satisfaction with technical equipment	5.99
3.1 Weighted satisfaction with working hours that can be adjusted to needs	5.75
3.23 Satisfaction with well-equipped, furnished classrooms	5.4
3.2 Good accessibility, short commute weighted satisfaction	5.4
3.22 Adequate cooling, heating, lighting weighted satisfaction	5.26
3.12 Professional respect and recognition weighted satisfaction	5.16
3.13 Continuous training weighted satisfaction	5.11

Source: own compilation

Table 4: The biggest shortcomings

4.10 Performance-related pay components Importance-certainty	3.54
4.4 Possibility of remote work Importance-certainty	2.86
4.16 Gaining experience and contacts abroad Importance-certainty	2.79
4.7 Diverse, flexible benefits package Importance-certainty	2.76
4.5 Minimal administrative burden Importance-certainty	2.41
4.6 Satisfactory, fair remuneration Importance-certainty	2.39
4.3 Overtime only when required Importance-certainty	2.22
4.17 Good working relationships Importance-certainty	1.82
4.12 Professional respect and recognition Importance-certainty	1.7
4.9 Housing support Importance-certainty	1.73
4.8 Travel assistance Importance-certainty	1.47

Source: own compilation

According to the teachers surveyed, the most important conditions relate primarily to the physical environment and basic infrastructure. These include adequate lighting, heating, and cooling, as well as the condition of staff rooms and the availability of technical equipment. These factors support the comfort and efficiency of everyday work, and based on the responses, it appears that these elements are present at an acceptable level in most schools. The factors considered most important are strongly linked to employee safety, motivation, and recognition. The highest priority expectations include fair pay, long-term career opportunities, and managerial support and humane treatment (Kálmán et al., 2021). Professional recognition and a good working community are also of paramount importance. This shows that although the technical and physical environment is important, human and structural values are even more important to teachers. In terms of satisfaction, there is a significant overlap between the factors with the highest scores and the conditions perceived as most secure. Teachers are most satisfied with areas that contribute to the smooth running of everyday operations, such as the provision of technical equipment, the quality of the staff room, and the availability of lighting and heating. In addition, in some schools, management support and staff relations also generated satisfaction, but these tend to vary between institutions. The main sources of dissatisfaction are factors that are particularly important to teachers but which, in their experience, are not or only partially fulfilled. These include excessive administrative burdens, the lack of opportunities for remote working, an uncompetitive benefits system, and the handling of overtime issues. There is also significant dissatisfaction with career advancement opportunities, performance-based pay, and professional recognition. This result clearly indicates that the greatest tension arises where there is a large gap between teachers' expectations and their actual experiences. Teachers feel most secure in terms of their working conditions, while there is a serious sense of deprivation in terms of recognition, career advancement, and remuneration. The study therefore outlines not only the current situation but also areas for improvement, which could also contribute to making the teaching profession more attractive. Based on the final stepwise linear regression model, it can be said that four factors have a statistically significant influence on teacher performance. The explanatory power of the model (Adjusted R Square = 0.391) suggests that these elements can predict approximately 39% of performance changes. Although this cannot be considered a particularly high value, teacher performance is largely determined by personal attitudes,

mental and physical condition, and relationships with student groups – in other words, several uncontrolled variables also influence the result. Of the four factors, weighted satisfaction with continuing education has the strongest impact on performance ($\text{Beta} = 0.557$; $p < 0.001$), which shows that teachers who experience adequate development opportunities in their workplace are more motivated and perform their tasks more effectively. Honors and awards ($\text{Beta} = 0.267$; $p = 0.001$) are also significant predictors of better performance, meaning that recognition not only has prestige value but also motivational power. The possibility of remote work ($\text{Beta} = 0.227$; $p = 0.005$) shows a positive correlation with performance, probably because flexible working options reduce stress, increase autonomy, and facilitate individual time management. Finally, pride in the workplace variable ($\text{Beta} = 0.151$; $p = 0.032$) is also significant: if teachers associate a positive image with their institution, this can strengthen their commitment, which is also reflected in their performance. The model contains only positive and statistically significant variables, i.e., factors with a negative effect or those that are not significant were automatically filtered out. This shows that in order to improve performance, it is worth focusing on organizational factors that directly contribute to appreciation, development, and flexible working conditions (Table 5 and 6).

Table 5: Summary of the performance model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.498	0.248	0.243	1.611
2	0.603	0.364	0.356	1.487
3	0.623	0.388	0.376	1.463
4	0.638	0.406	0.391	1.446

Source: own compilation

Table 6: Step-by-step structure of the performance model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.260	0.345		15.232	0.000
	3.13 Continuing education weighted satisfaction	0.450	0.063	0.498	7.177	0.000
2	(Constant)	4.364	.361		12.104	0.000
	3.13 Continuing education weighted satisfaction	0.504	0.059	0.558	8.575	0.000
	3.14 Awards. prizes Weighted satisfaction	0.265	0.050	0.345	5.306	0.000
3	(Constant)	4.158	0.364		11.413	0.000
	3.13 Continuing education weighted satisfaction	0.523	0.058	0.579	8.966	0.000
	3.14 Awards. prizes Weighted satisfaction	0.175	0.061	0.227	2.853	0.005
	3.4 Opportunity for remote work Weighted satisfaction	0.137	0.055	0.199	2.480	0.014
4	(Constant)	3.323	0.527		6.304	0.000
	3.13 Continuing education weighted satisfaction	0.503	0.058	0.557	8.625	0.000
	3.14 Awards. prizes Weighted satisfaction	0.205	0.062	0.267	3.300	0.001
	3.4 Opportunity for remote work Weighted satisfaction	0.157	0.055	0.227	2.825	0.005
	3.19 Workplace that employees can be proud of Weighted satisfaction	0.135	0.062	0.151	2.170	0.032

Source: own compilation

The second regression model examines secondary school teachers' intention to remain in the profession based on two significant and positive explanatory variables. In addition to identifying the goal, the analysis of the model highlights the factors that may play a role in long-term commitment to the teaching profession. The explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.141$) is moderately weak, which means that weighted satisfaction with technical equipment and protection against aggression explains approximately 14.1% of teachers' intention to remain in the profession. The adjusted R^2 value is 0.130, which shows that the model fit is acceptable for the sample as a whole.

The remaining variance can be attributed to personal factors or institutional differences. Built-in variables and their effects:

1. Provision of technical equipment ($\beta = 0.350$, $p < 0.001$) This is the strongest explanatory factor. Teachers' satisfaction with technological tools is closely related to whether they see themselves staying in the profession in the long term. Adequate digital infrastructure not only supports the comfort of work, but also a sense of professionalism, thereby increasing commitment.
2. Protection from student/parent aggression ($\beta = 0.148$, $p = 0.049$) Although the effect is smaller, it just reaches the significance threshold. This indicates that teachers' sense of physical and psychological safety also contributes to their intention to remain in the profession. Dealing with stressful situations in the teaching profession and measures to protect against aggression noticeably increase the acceptability of the teaching profession in the long term.

The model shows that adequate working conditions (technical equipment) and a low sense of threat (protection against aggression) have a positive influence on teachers' intention to remain in the profession. Although the R^2 value is low (Table 7 and 8), the significant and interpretable predictors provide a useful starting point for interventions by school owners and administrators. Long-term teacher retention is not solely dependent on personality, but can also be improved through organizational tools.

Table 7. Summary of the retention model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.346	0.119	0.114	2.642
2	0.376	0.141	0.130	2.617

Source: own compilation

Table 8. Step-by-step construction of the retention model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.529	0.695		5.081	0.000
	3.24 Weighted satisfaction with technical equipment	0.508	0.110	0.346	4.598	0.000
2	(Constant)	2.894	0.759		3.812	0.000
	3.24 Weighted satisfaction with technical equipment	0.515	0.109	0.350	4.704	0.000
	3.21 Protection from student/parent aggression Weighted satisfaction	0.130	0.066	0.148	1.981	0.049

Source: own compilation

The third regression model explains teachers' positive external communication based on two significant positive variables. The aim is to explore what school factors may encourage teachers to improve the public perception of their institution. The explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.264$) indicates that 26.4% of the level of positive communication about the school can be explained by the availability of technical equipment and weighted satisfaction with humane, competent leadership. The adjusted R^2 value (0.255) (Table 9) confirms that the model fit is reliable at the sample level. The remaining variance can be attributed to other institutional culture, personal attitudes, or, for example, media awareness.

Built-in variables and their effects (Table 10)

1. Provision of technical equipment ($\beta = 0.426$; $p < 0.001$) This is the strongest explanatory factor in the model. Teachers with the appropriate technological background not only work more efficiently, but are also more proud of their workplace, which they are more willing to speak positively about. Technical equipment therefore not only affects work efficiency, but also the public image of the school.
2. Humane and competent leadership ($\beta = 0.250$; $p < 0.001$) The second strongest factor is the assessment of leadership quality. A supportive and humane leadership style, especially in an educational institution, contributes to teachers feeling comfortable and appreciated. This satisfaction is also reflected in external attitude formation: teachers are more inclined to communicate positively about their school.

Based on the model, it can be said that positive institutional communication by teachers is not just a matter of personal conviction or loyalty, but is strongly related to the school environment. A well-equipped working environment and an appropriate management attitude together support the willingness of teachers to strengthen the reputation of their school externally.

Although the explained variance is not exceptionally high, the interpretable and powerful predictors provide useful guidance for school management and maintainers. The results suggest that internal satisfaction, both technical and human, is a prerequisite for positive communication about the school (Table 9).

Table 9. Summary of positive external communication

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.450 ^a	.202	.197	1,583
2	.514 ^b	.264	.255	1,525

Source: own compilation

Both factors are prominent in everyday school life and have a significant impact individually, but together they can promote the external manifestation of teacher satisfaction, i.e., a positive public attitude toward the institution. This research did not attempt to explore all possible factors influencing teacher job satisfaction or performance. The analysis is limited in that it only examined variables that showed a statistically verifiable relationship with the selected output variables in the specific sample. Accordingly, the results cannot be generalized to all teachers in Hungary, but are based solely on the responses of secondary school teachers who participated in the survey. It is also important to note that the issue of remuneration – despite the progress made in recent years in adjusting teachers' salaries – may continue to be a key factor in teacher satisfaction. This study did not measure satisfaction with pay and its impact in a representative manner, so a larger, nationally representative sample would be needed to more accurately assess the impact of "fair pay" on long-term satisfaction and loyalty. Overall, the models presented here indicate valid correlations in the given sample, but they are not comprehensive, thus providing direction for further research rather than definitive answers.

H1: Satisfaction with "continuous training opportunities" has a positive effect on teachers' perceived performance. This hypothesis was confirmed. According to the linear regression model, weighted satisfaction with "continuing education" has a significant positive effect on self-assessment of performance ($\beta = 0.579$; $p < 0.001$). All three of the first models included this variable, and in each case it was the strongest explanatory factor. The Adjusted R² value in the third model was 0.376, meaning that the variables together explained nearly 38% of the changes in performance.

H2: Satisfaction with the provision of technical equipment increases the subjective intention to remain in the workforce. This hypothesis was also confirmed. Weighted satisfaction with "provision of technical equipment" is significantly positively correlated with the intention to remain in the workforce ($\beta = 0.350$; $p < 0.001$). In the second step of the model, an additional factor was included (protection from student/parent aggression), but the effect of technical equipment remained dominant.

H3: Satisfaction with the availability of "honors and awards" positively influences positive communication about the school. This hypothesis was not confirmed. Although satisfaction with awards proved to be significant, the relationship was negative ($\beta = -0.410$; $p < 0.001$). This indicates that teachers with high satisfaction with awards are less likely to communicate positively about their school. The interpretation of the result may suggest that recognition of awards may take place at the individual level, but ambivalent feelings arise in connection with institutional communication or atmosphere. Further qualitative research is needed to explore this phenomenon in greater depth. Based on the hypothesis tests, the factors influencing performance and retention were empirically confirmed, while the expectation of positive communication was not confirmed based on the given sample.

DISCUSSION

The results of the research clearly confirm that the performance, loyalty, and positive communication about the school of secondary school teachers are most influenced by those elements to which they have actual, functioning access and in which they experience genuine satisfaction (Juhász, Kálmán & Tóth, 2022). Weighted satisfaction indicators—the combination of benefits considered important and those actually experienced—are reliable predictors of these attitudes (OECD, 2019; Desimone & Garet, 2015). Access to continuous professional development had a significant positive effect on teacher performance in all regression models. This is consistent with the international literature: Desimone and Garet (2015) showed that targeted, relevant training makes teachers more effective in the long term, increasing their motivation and teaching effectiveness.

Performance was also strongly influenced by the positive experience of receiving awards and prizes, as well as the opportunity to work remotely. Although this tool is less common in education, research conducted during the COVID-19 period (e.g., Kim & Asbury, 2020) has confirmed that flexible work arrangements, especially for administrative tasks, can contribute to teacher satisfaction. The availability of technical tools was a key predictor of both staff retention and positive communication. This is consistent with the findings of OECD TALIS 2018, which show that the availability of ICT tools is closely linked to teacher commitment and digital pedagogical competence (OECD, 2019). The importance of humane and supportive leadership was also reflected in the regression results, particularly in relation to positive communication. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), a

transformative leadership style—which incorporates teacher autonomy and intrinsic motivation—is a significant factor in teacher commitment and the development of the institutional climate.

Based on a comprehensive literature review by Spilt, Koomen, and Jak (2022), the most decisive dimensions of teacher satisfaction include leadership support, collegial relationships, teacher autonomy, and the physical and psychological characteristics of the work environment. Particular attention should be paid to the cohesive power of the teaching community and the fact that reducing administrative burdens and providing opportunities for development can compensate for difficulties. In response to the challenges of the post-COVID period, Teepe (2025) examined in his doctoral dissertation how a supportive school environment and positive school culture can contribute to teacher well-being. He found that schools that placed greater emphasis on emotional support, community building, and constructive feedback were able to offset the negative effects of the crisis period. Interestingly, attitudes toward awards and prizes emerged as a mixed factor. Desimone and Garet (2015) point out that extrinsic rewards, such as prizes, are only motivating if they are properly integrated into the teacher's motivation system and do not appear as an end in themselves.

CONCLUSION

The retention rate and performance-supporting environment of the teaching profession do not depend solely on issues of salary or workload, but also on the value system that surrounds teachers in their everyday lives. Satisfaction and actual accessibility are linked in a way that goes beyond formal measures: teacher motivation is based on opportunities for professional development, personal appreciation, security, and a sense of autonomy. According to the present study, these are the factors that can reliably predict teachers' performance, their positive communication about their school, and their intention to remain in the profession.

John Wooden, the legendary American coach and educator, aptly summed up his pedagogical credo: *"A child may not listen to what you say, but he will watch everything you do."* (Wooden & Jamison, 1997, p. 45) This quote clearly illustrates that it is the exemplary presence of teachers—in their behavior, attitude, and human qualities—that most influences young people. However, to achieve this, teachers themselves need support, recognition, and stability. They need a working environment in which they are not only expected to give, but also to receive – opportunities for development, appreciation, and security.

Restoring the social value of the teaching profession not only improves the quality of public education, but also contributes to the moral and intellectual development of society as a whole in the long term.

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