



Teacher Satisfaction Levels in Three Second-Level Schools in the Midlands of Ireland

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work described in this dissertation is, except where otherwise stated, entirely my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other higher education institution.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASTI – Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland

A Posts – Assistant principal posts of responsibilities

B Posts – Special duties posts of responsibilities

CEIST – Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust

CID – Contract of Indefinite Duration

DEIS - Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

NIPT – National Programme for Teachers

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Science

TALIS - Teaching and Learning International Survey

TUI – Teachers Union of Ireland

QQI - Quality and Qualifications Ireland

ABSTRACT

The present study explored satisfaction levels of teachers in three second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland, concentrating on student-teacher relations, pay, contracts of employment, promotional opportunities, staff-relations and finally, examining second-level teachers views on the overall attractiveness of the teaching profession. A total of 124 hard-copy questionnaires were distributed to teachers from three second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland with a response rate of 52%. Most people who took part in this survey were aged between 24-29, female and held either temporary or continuous contracts of indefinite duration (CID). In addition, one second-level school in the midlands of Ireland participated in semi-structured interviews. The interview cohort consisted of six teachers who were divided up into three sub-groups based on experience levels: two teachers with less than five years' experience, two teachers' with between five and twenty years' experience and finally two teachers' with more than twenty years' experience.

Overall, findings of the present study indicated that teachers were generally satisfied in their teaching profession. According to the results of the analysis, teachers were satisfied with both student-teacher relations and staff-relations in their second-level school. Furthermore, most teachers were satisfied with their contracts of employment, even though only very few teachers held permanent teaching contracts. This could be attributed to the finding that half of teachers held contracts of indefinite duration (CID), which means that teachers have similar privileges as permanent teachers (ASTI, 2017) and they experience a sense of job stability. In addition, one unanticipated finding of the present research indicates that teachers were satisfied with their pay. On the contrary, less than half of teachers agreed that their wages were sufficient to pay their important expenses and bills. In support of this, interviewed teachers cited that a number of teachers in their schools did not having full-time hours and

this could result in a below par average weekly wage. In addition, many teachers disagreed that their wage levels reflected the level of effort they provided in their teaching jobs. Teachers views suggested that this could be due to the increase in demand for extra-curricular activities from students and school-management. Most teachers who took part in this study did not hold any promotional posts of responsibility and furthermore they were not satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available within their school. In addition, findings indicated that ‘career ladder progression’ was the least important benefit associated with second-level teaching. Although teachers were unhappy with the level of promotional opportunities, it seems that it didn’t affect teacher’s overall satisfaction levels as ‘job satisfaction – love of teaching’, followed by ‘holidays’ and finally ‘working with young people ranging in ages from twelve to eighteen’ were the most important benefits associated with the teaching profession. Surprisingly, the present research indicates that just over a third of teachers would recommend teaching as a profession. Some teachers specified in the semi-structured interviews that if the Irish Government improved pay issues and promotional opportunities in the teaching profession only then would they consider recommending teaching as a career.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 - Introduction

This research explores secondary school teacher satisfaction levels in the midlands of Ireland. Chapter two of this paper will provide a critical examination of existing literature based on pay, promotional opportunities, contracts of employment, staff-relations, student-teacher relations and views on the attractiveness to the teaching profession using both national and international studies. It will continue to illustrate how the research was conducted, which includes justifications for choosing each type of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and research limitations in chapter three. Chapter four will analyse the results of interviews and questionnaires, which has addressed the research aim and objectives. Chapter five will present the critical discussion where the findings of the study will be linked with previous literature on teacher satisfaction.

1.2 - Background to the Study

1.2.1 - Evolving Role of the Teacher

Traditionally, the role of a second-level teacher was to effectively deliver a quality educational, learning experience to students (Jesson and Simpkin, 2007, p. 4) however, there is a growing body of literature that recognises that the role of the teacher has advanced over the last three decades (Gewirtz et al., 2009, p. 4) which includes ensuring that students receive a holistic and spiritual education whereby personal development is catered for (Education Act, 1998, Section 9D).

1.2.2 - Teaching Qualification

To become qualified as an Irish second-level teacher, one must achieve a level eight degree QQI award (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) in the subject areas that they wish to teach. In addition, they must complete a level nine Masters in Education formerly known as a Higher Diploma / Post-Graduate Diploma in Education. Once qualified, teachers must complete 300 hours probationary induction period and undertake 20 hours of induction workshops from the national induction programme for teachers (NIPT).

1.2.3 - Second-Level Education System

In Ireland, second-level education is aimed towards students from the ages of twelve to eighteen who have completed primary school education. In addition, second-level education provides a wide variety of subjects to students, with the aim of completing the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate state examinations. The Irish second-level school system can also be inclusive of different genders and religious beliefs. Furthermore, schools can be in the form of co-educational (mix of boys and girls), an all-girls school or an all-boys school. Moreover, schools may take the following forms based on religious beliefs: multi-denominational schools which are inclusive of a number of different religions, Church of Ireland schools, Catholic religious order schools which provides a Christian education to students, and CEIST schools which aims to use Catholic practice in providing an education (CEIST, 2017). In addition, some Irish second-level schools may also take the form of DEIS schools which is a school programme which intends to provide an inclusive education to meet the demands of educationally disadvantaged students in a community (Murray, 2012).

1.2.4 - Personal Interest

My interest in this area developed as I became a qualified second-level teacher. It was my personal experience as a second-level teacher which enabled me to fully understand the issues which were causing teacher satisfaction. From a personal context, there were several areas which were a cause for concern; lack of promotional opportunities, issues with pay and lack of availability of full-time contracts in Irish second-level schools which have affected the overall attractiveness to the teaching profession. These issues have had a direct impact on the quality of teaching, motivation, staff-relations and students-teacher relations and have affected second-level teachers overall job satisfaction levels. Van Der Westhuizen and Du Toit (1994) found that job security was an important influence for teacher satisfaction while Kotterman (2000) found that levels of support were one of the main determinants for retaining teachers. This study has provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding of the following issues: promotional opportunities, pay, student-teacher relations, staff-relations and contracts of employment and finally an assessment of the overall attractiveness to the teaching profession.

1.3 - Rationale

From an Irish context specifically, recent general unrest and an increase in Irish industrial action by the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) have highlighted issues that many second-level teachers are facing. In Ireland, there are two Irish second-level teaching unions in Ireland, the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) and the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) (O'Dowd-Lernihan, 2011, p. 8). Industrial action taken by the ASTI has identified factors such as pay inequality and lack of pay restoration for supervision and substitution duties to be causing unrest amongst many second-level teachers (O'Brien, 2016). It is evident from the increase in industrial action by the ASTI that second-

level teachers are facing many challenges which are causing dissatisfaction amongst teachers in the teaching profession. Issues that have been highlighted as causing the greatest dissatisfaction amongst teachers are with pay, contracts, promotional opportunities, staff-relations, student-teacher relations and the overall attractiveness to the teaching profession. These recent developments in industrial action with the ASTI has heightened the need for research into the issues that are causing discontent amongst second-level teachers in Ireland. Currently, there is no existing research which has been conducted on teacher satisfaction levels in the midlands of Ireland. This research could help school principals, school managers, the Irish Government and the teacher trade unions to identify the matters which are causing dissatisfaction amongst second-level teachers in the current economic climate. In addition, identifying issues which are causing teacher dissatisfaction could help find solutions and improve teacher satisfaction levels which will help to avoid any further potential industrial disputes.

1.4. - Research Aim

The overall aim of this research was to explore satisfaction levels of teachers in a number of second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland. In researching literature, there was a broad list of issues that affected teachers' satisfaction levels such as pay, contracts of employment, student-teacher relationships, discipline, promotional opportunities, substitution and supervision, class-sizes, staff-relations, trade union membership, teacher support, extra-curricular activities and reasons for leaving the teaching profession. The sheer volume of these topics was too broad to examine and were narrowed down to six issues. In terms of the thesis, second-level teachers' satisfaction levels with student-teacher relations, pay, contracts of employment, promotional opportunities and staff-relations were examined. Considering

these matters, second-level teachers opinions on the overall attractiveness to the teaching profession were examined.

1.5 - Research Objectives

The research aim was achieved by examining these six research objectives.

- To examine the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to student-teacher relationships.
- To examine the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to contracts of employment.
- To examine the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to staff-relations.
- To examine the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to promotional opportunities.
- To examine the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to pay.
- To examine Irish secondary school teachers views on the attractiveness to the teaching profession.

1.6. – Project Roadmap

This chapter has provided a brief introduction to the study together with an outline of the research aim and objective. The remaining sections were broken down as follows:

- Chapter 2 - literature review: a review of secondary research which includes previous national and international literature on teacher satisfaction based on a number of differing educational systems.

- Chapter 3 - research methodology: a detailed explanation of how data was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.
- Chapter 4 - analysis of findings: findings from the questionnaires and interviews are presented in this section.
- Chapter 5 – discussion: findings from this study are discussed and linked to previous research.
- Chapter 6 - conclusion: this chapter concludes this study with an overview of findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 - Introduction

Previous literature based on teacher satisfaction is presented in this section. Particular attention is drawn to defining job satisfaction and existing theories based around satisfaction. Specific consideration is given to existing national and international literature which examined the following areas: student-teacher relations, pay, contracts of employment, staff-relations, promotional opportunities and the overall views on the attractiveness to the teaching profession.

2.2 - Job Satisfaction

Research shows that job satisfaction is a multifaceted issue and according to Locke (1976, p. 1300) job satisfaction can be defined as the enjoyment experienced because of a person's evaluation of their job. Furthermore, Hoppock (1935) described job satisfaction as the environmental, psychological and physiological factors which influences a person to display job satisfaction. Moreover, Hodgetts (1991) listed the main sources of teacher job satisfaction: leadership, pay, work-group, job and working conditions. Further evidence from Shiel, Perkins and Gilleece (2009) who carried out a summary report based on TALIS findings on second-level education in 2007 and 2008 found that Irish second-level teachers have experienced lower levels of satisfaction than other countries internationally apart from Poland. Furthermore, evidence suggests that there is a difference in satisfaction levels between second-level education and primary education, Perie and Baker (1997) found that second-level teachers in the US experienced less teacher job satisfaction than elementary teachers. Current research highlights the positive outcomes that can be gained from developing and maintaining job satisfaction from an individual and organisational point of view. McKenna (2006) found that elevated levels of job satisfaction are linked to improved

organisational performance, motivation, commitment and reduced turnover. This research is further compounded by evidence from Ostroff (1992) who studied the effects of teacher job satisfaction on organisational effectiveness from 13,808 teachers in 298 American and Canadian schools including junior high and senior high levels, found that there was a positive correlation between attitudes (psychological stress, commitment and adjustment), satisfaction and organisations effectiveness (student behaviour, student satisfaction, academic achievement, administrative performance and teacher turnover). Research on these topics illustrated the impact of increased teacher satisfaction on the organisations overall effectiveness. To provide a deeper analysis on teacher job satisfaction, two proliferate theories of satisfaction and motivation are reviewed; Herzberg Two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs which are highlighted in the following section.

2.2.1 - Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) conducted research on white-collar workers which cemented their theory on satisfaction. Herzberg's Two Factor Theory was based on motivational and hygiene factors. Hygiene factors comprised of environmental issues which were extrinsic to the job itself such as security, status, working conditions, personal life, salary, supervision, company policy, relationship with employees, peers and supervisor. Hygiene factors existed to ensure that workers did not become dissatisfied e.g. absence of salary, security and status which would create job dissatisfaction. However, the existence of hygiene factors did not influence motivation or generate satisfaction. Herzberg et al (1959) found from their research that the existence of hygiene factors did not cause white-collar workers job satisfaction or motivation and consequently did not improve job performance. The second factor in Herzberg's Two Factor theory were the motivators. Herzberg et al (1959) found from their research that motivators drive workers to achieve elevated work

performance and improved job satisfaction. Motivators consisted of issues such as growth, achievement, recognition, work itself, advancement and responsibility.

Tang and Yeung (1999) explained the importance of this theory in demonstrating how to satisfy and motivate workers. Furthermore, in a school context, school management should note the importance of this theory in creating teacher job satisfaction and motivation. School management should implement this theory in their schools by providing teaching staff with opportunities for gaining job status, security and developing staff-relations which will reduce teacher dissatisfaction (hygiene factors). In addition, school management should provide job enrichment opportunities (motivators) which has been defined as giving employees more challenging work with responsibilities (Paul, Robertson and Herzberg, 1969). This will allow teachers to flourish in their job and ultimately improve teacher's motivation.

2.2.2 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

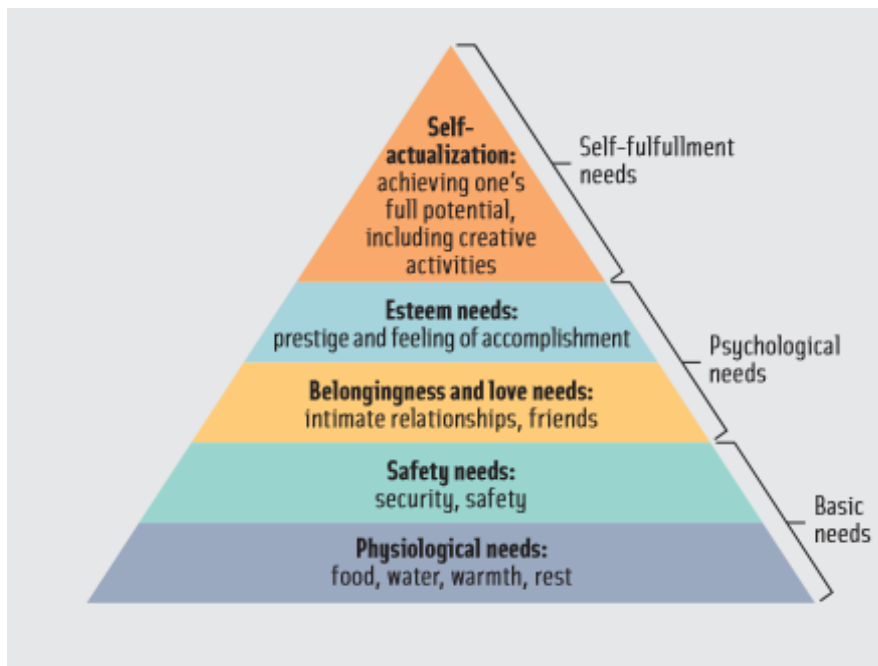
A second theory which has aided the understanding of satisfaction and motivation is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (see Figure 2.1). Maslow's (1943; 1970) theory of motivation identified a hierarchy of needs. This theory specified that individuals had five needs: physiological, safety / security, social / belongingness and love, esteem and self-actualisation. This theory illustrates that as one need was satisfied, the next need became the motivator.

- Physiological needs were basic human needs such as clothing, air, food, water, adequate work conditions.
- Safety needs were the need to feel secure, safe and to have job security.
- Social needs were the need for belongingness, friendship and love.

- Esteem needs was the need to feel good about oneself, to gain recognition and respect from others around you.
- Self-actualisation was the need to achieve one’s full potential, gain fulfilment and develop personal growth.

This theory could help school management to focus on how to improve teacher’s satisfaction and motivation. School management should evaluate each teachers’ needs as per Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and use the motivators to improve overall job satisfaction.

Figure 2.1: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs



Poston, B., (2009) Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. *Surgical Technologist*, 41(8), pp.347-353.

2.3 - Student-Teacher Relations

Student-teacher relations have a significant impact on teacher job satisfaction. A substantial amount of research has highlighted student-teacher relations as an important component of teacher job satisfaction, which is conducive to increasing student's educational performance. Shiel et al (2009) found that student-teacher relations were positively related to teacher job satisfaction and this finding was further compounded by Hamre et al. (2006) who identified the importance of maintaining positive student-teacher relations and its importance in improving education outcomes. Furthermore, research undertaken by Lyons (1990) found that maintaining positive student-teacher relations was important for developing students learning. For this review, student-teacher relations are further divided into sub-sections, each of which influence student-teacher relations; discipline, communication, daily interactions with students and school climate.

2.3.1 – International Perspective: Discipline

Several studies have examined the area of discipline and its effect on teacher satisfaction levels from an international context. Investigating the prevalence of discipline issues, Shiel et al (2009) found that teacher job satisfaction was positively related to effective classroom discipline. In addition, an American study found student behaviour was instrumental in determining teacher job satisfaction (Perie and Baker, 1997). Furthermore, an English study undertaken by Chaplain (1995) and Borg, Riding and Falzon (1991) found that in primary and second-level schools, student discipline issues were the highest factor causing teacher stress. Moreover, stress has been found to significantly impact on teacher job satisfaction (Thompson, McNamara and Hoyle, 1996). This is further compounded by De Nobile and McCormick (2005) who found in their Australian study of occupational stress and job

satisfaction among Catholic primary schools, that negative student-teacher relationships can be a cause of teacher stress. In Norway, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) explored the relationship with teacher burnout and job-satisfaction, by conducting a study based on 127 elementary and middle schools with 2,569 participants. The study found that issues with discipline was a predictor of emotional exhaustion and ultimately resulted in job dissatisfaction (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2009). In addition, Byrne (1994) observed that American teachers responded negatively towards students who demonstrated behavioural issues. The findings of these international studies illustrated the extent to which discipline issues caused teacher dissatisfaction and were furthermore compounded by research from an Irish context.

2.3.2 - Irish Perspective: Discipline

From an Irish perspective, a report conducted by the TUI (2006) found that there were elevated levels of discipline issues in Irish comprehensive, community and vocational schools. Not surprisingly this is also evident at primary level, Darmody and Smyth (2011) explored job satisfaction and occupational stress among teachers and school principals and found that teachers experienced higher job satisfaction in primary schools that had limited behavioural issues. In addition, Shiel et al (2009) found that Irish teachers with permanent contracts reported improved effective classroom discipline, due to the length of teaching experience. Furthermore, Morgan et al. (2010) identified in their Irish research that negative student-teacher relations impacted on primary school teachers' efficacy and commitment to their teaching role.

2.3.3 - School Climate / Communication and Daily Interactions between Teachers and Students

School climate can be described as positive or negative depending on the level of collegiality and collaboration between staff and is an integral part of teacher job satisfaction. Wisniewski (1990) found in his Polish study that an effective school climate was an important determinant in teacher satisfaction. In addition, Shiel et al (2009) found in their TALIS report that positive classroom climate was strongly correlated to effective teaching and learning in second-level education. Moreover, a Pakistani study undertaken by Ul Haq and Hasnain (2014) measured job satisfaction levels of private sector teachers, who tested variables such as workload, salary, supervision and school climate by obtaining questionnaires from 105 teachers from private schools. Findings indicated that a supportive school climate impacted positively on teacher's satisfaction levels (Ul Haq and Hasnain, 2014). Further research from Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) found that teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy was due to maintaining a positive school climate.

Research suggests that a positive school climate can be achieved by maintaining daily communication and interaction with students. Relatively recent research undertaken by Smyth et al. (2007) for the Teaching Council examined occupational stress and job satisfaction among Irish school principals and primary school teachers and found daily communication and interaction with students were important in developing a positive school climate. These results corroborated with an Irish survey conducted by Morgan et al. (2010) which examined the factors that kept teachers motivated by surveying 749 primary school graduates from each of the universities of Ireland, which found that teachers' motivational influences come internally within the school or classroom environment. Furthermore, Bishay

(1996) conducted an American study on teacher motivation and job satisfaction on second-level schools using an experience sampling method collecting data from 12 teachers and a conventional survey collecting data from 51 teachers. Bishay (1996) found that the activity of teaching improved overall job satisfaction levels, specifically engaging in class-room discussions with students satisfied teacher's higher order needs, which in turn significantly elevated teachers' job satisfaction levels. Furthermore, evidence suggests that students highly regard having their opinions heard and suggestions acted upon in the school environment. Oldfather (1995) conducted research into American middle-school students and found that students held being able to contribute and provide feedback to teachers as being an important benefactor to increasing satisfaction. Students were more likely to participate and engage in their learning if they felt a sense of autonomy over their learning, Oldfather (1995). This is substantiated by research undertaken by Johnson (1991) who identified that motivation to participate will increase if a person experiences feeling of control. This can be achieved by encouraging; feedback from students e.g. student council and active participation in classroom discussion, both of which will allow students to feel more autonomy and engagement. Additionally, class size has been found to impact on teacher job satisfaction possibly due to the level of interaction required to deal with larger student-teacher ratios (Morgan et al., 2010). A relatively recent Irish study conducted by Morgan et al. (2010) examined factors that kept teachers motivated and satisfied, which took place in December 2006 and was completed by 749 Irish newly qualified primary teachers who had been teaching between 2002 to 2006. Findings identified that Irish primary school teachers from schools with higher enrolment numbers experienced elevated job satisfaction levels (Morgan et al., 2010).

2.4 - Pay

Pay is defined as the reward that employees receive for work, generally it can be received in a remunerative and / or non-remunerative form and it can be classed as an incentive to work. In Ireland, teachers receive remunerative pay and are paid as per an incremental salary scale with each years' service that a teacher has completed, teachers can then move up a point on the incremental salary scale (Department of Education and Skills, 2016a). While the issue of teacher satisfaction regarding pay has been extensively researched from an international context, there is an apparent lack of research on pay from an Irish perspective. Interestingly, there is a mix of findings from international research on the importance of pay and teacher satisfaction. Mosley, Meggins and Pietri (1993) found significant links between job satisfaction and rewards such as pay. Furthermore, Wisniewski (1990) found in his Polish study that satisfactory pay was an important determinant in teacher satisfaction. This finding can be further compounded by Lee (2006) who observed through conducting a comparative case-study of two primary, non-governmental organisations in Cambodia and found that the levels of remuneration determined overall teacher job satisfaction levels. Furthermore, these results corroborated with more recent research from Ul Haq and Hasnain (2014) who measured satisfaction levels of teachers in the private sector of Pakistani schools, he noted that there was a positive relationship between teachers' salary and satisfaction i.e. the more salary teachers receive, the more satisfied they were in their profession. Moreover, a Nigerian study found that factors such as dissatisfaction with pay motivated teachers to leave the teaching profession (Ladebo, 2005). In addition, issues with salary were related to staff turnover (Ingersoll and Alsalam, 1996; Lee, Dedrick and Smith, 1991). On the contrary, international literature from Perie and Baker (1997) identified in their study of American teachers that pay had little to no impact on teachers' satisfaction levels. Further evidence from Firestone (1990) found that workers on low salaries experienced higher levels of

organisational commitment possibly due to the presence of other motivational factors which influenced their decision to join the teaching profession. In support of this finding, in another American study conducted by Bishay (1996) examined factors that affect second-level teacher motivation and satisfaction, found that younger teachers were not satisfied with their pay and overall results showed that teachers felt that pay incentives would improve morale amongst the teaching profession.

2.5 - Contracts of Employment

In Ireland, there are four forms of employment contracts available to second-level teachers – namely, those who are working in permanent, continuous employment, temporary and probationary employment (ASTI, 2016). Permanent contracts are contracts without a specified end date, whereas temporary contracts can be sub-categorised into either pro-rata contracts, casual or non-casual part-time teaching contract (ASTI, 2016). Probationary contracts are known as contracts of probationary employment and finally, teachers who are working in continuous employment can obtain contracts of indefinite duration (ASTI, 2016). The type of contract held by teachers is significant in maintaining and improving teacher satisfaction. Irish data collected by Shiel et al (2009) for the OECD TALIS report found that 25% of Irish teachers under the age of thirty held permanent contracts. Furthermore, 95% of teachers over the age of fifty held permanent contracts (Shiel et al., 2009). In addition, existing research suggested that many younger, Irish teachers were in non-permanent teaching positions as purported in the TALIS report which identified that overall, 73% of Irish second-level teachers held permanent teaching contracts compared to an average of 85% of international second-level teachers (Shiel et al., 2009). With over a quarter of Irish second-level teachers not obtaining permanent teaching contracts, one can surmise that there is an extensive amount of job-insecurity throughout Ireland which has been defined as an

individual's belief of the possible danger of the future of their job (Heaney, Israel and House, 1994).

2.5.1 - Length of Teaching Experience

Generally, in Ireland second-level teachers who had permanent or contracts of indefinite duration tended to have more teaching experience than second-level teachers who held temporary contracts. Steven-Liu and Ramsey (2008) found that teacher job satisfaction levels differed at different stages of their careers. Furthermore, findings from Bishay (1996) found that length of second-level teaching service improved teacher's motivation and satisfaction levels. In addition, Clark (1996) found from research that there was a strong correlation between job satisfaction and age; the older you are, the more likely you are to have extensive teaching experience, effective classroom management thus improving overall satisfaction levels. On the contrary, evidence gathered by Schmidt (1999) found that employees in their first year of service reported higher satisfaction levels. This corroborated with evidence from an American and Canadian study undertaken by Schmidt (1999) from a non-teaching profession (technical and customer service employees) who found that temporary or contract staff reported higher satisfaction levels compared to permanent employees, the enthusiasm and challenges that exist with a new job are key factors in elevating satisfaction levels. Additionally, this data corroborates with research from an American study of public schools conducted by Perie and Baker (1997) who found in public schools that more inexperienced, younger teachers experienced higher satisfaction levels compared to veterans. This finding is compounded by Ma and Macmillan (1999) who indicated that American teachers with longer teaching service were less satisfied than teachers with less experience. Surprisingly, from an Irish perspective, Darmody and Smyth (2011) found that both newly qualified teachers and teachers who had been teaching for a considerable length of time both experienced higher job

satisfaction levels. These results are in line with those from Perie and Baker (1997) who found in private schools that younger teachers who had relatively little experience together with older teachers with considerable experience had higher satisfaction levels. As this research used a broad array of findings, it is problematic in trying to conclude as to the extent as to the type of contract and length of time in a teaching position influenced overall teacher job satisfaction.

2.6 - Staff – Relations

A growing body of research has identified the significance of staff-relations on teacher satisfaction. Staff-relations is the level of collegiality, collaboration and support received from both superiors and colleagues and the impact that school culture has on teacher satisfaction. McKenna (1991) defined leadership as a power that facilitates staff to improve their productivity. Moreover, Ma and MacMillan (1999) found that American school leaders have an important role to play in creating teacher job satisfaction. These results corroborated with those in other studies, principal leadership was found to be influential on high-school teacher's satisfaction levels in a Vietnamese study undertaken by (Tran and Lam Le, 2015). Furthermore, Aho, Pitkanen and Sahlberg (2006) commented on Finland's highly renowned educational performance and emphasised the importance of having strong leadership for continued effectiveness. Teachers who experienced positive relations with their peers developed enhanced teaching and learning excellence (Van Maele and Van Houtte, 2012). Extensive research exists on the influences of support from management and colleagues on teacher job satisfaction. Elementary and middle-school teacher's positive relations with colleagues and supervisory support improved their sense of belonging, which resulted in higher levels of job satisfaction (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011). In an American study of

schools, leadership and supportive administration were factors in determining teacher's satisfaction levels (Perie and Baker, 1997). Similarly, Lee (2006) observed in his Cambodian comparative study of primary schools, that non-remuneration factors such as principal leadership and school management impacted on teachers' level of job satisfaction. Moreover, collaborative staff-relations and effective communication were important in elevating teacher satisfaction levels (Kyriacou, 2001). In addition to supportive leadership and collegiality from peers, a positive organisational culture was deemed important in maintaining teacher job satisfaction. Moorhead and Griffin (1992) defined organisational culture as the organisational values which supported people in comprehending the positive and negative activities which were accepted and unaccepted within the organisation. Hodgetts (1991) identified the benefits to a positive organisational culture which were valuable contributions to new ideas for improved individual and organisational effectiveness and employee commitment. In addition, Perie and Baker (1997) found in their American study that school atmosphere was influential in determining teacher job satisfaction levels. According to Ostroff (1992) and Ashton and Webb (1986) unsupported American teachers experienced less motivation which impacted their teaching performance and effectiveness. Furthermore, De Nobile and McCormick (2005) found in their Australian study that causes of teacher stress are absence of school administration support, teacher's relationships with their principals, supervision and finally a lack of support from school management. Additionally, an American study conducted by Abel and Sewell (1999) found that rural second-level teachers had experienced less stress from weak staff relations compared to urban second-level schools, this is possibly due to smaller classes and other factors which has caused satisfaction. However, contrary evidence exists from Ma and MacMillan (1999) who found that organisational culture has little impact on overall teacher job satisfaction in the US. Similarly, Ul Haq and Hasnain (2014) found from his study of private schools that intense

levels of supervision negatively impacted upon job satisfaction, this could be due to the intense levels of pressure. From an Irish context, findings from Morgan and O’Leary (2004) corroborated with those of international studies and found that principal support had a substantial bearing on teacher job satisfaction. Overall findings from this research showed continued support for effective leadership and moreover highlighted the impact of maintaining a positive organisational culture.

2.7 - Promotional Opportunities

Promotional opportunities are important in determining the level of satisfaction experience by teachers. Research in this area is relatively limited compared to other areas such as student-teacher relations which has extensively been researched. Research from Lee (2006) found that teachers regarded career development opportunities to be an important determinant of teacher job satisfaction. Teachers may seek promotional positions in the form of Assistant Principal known as ‘A posts,’ deputy principals and Special Duties of Responsibilities known as ‘B posts’ (Department of Education and Skills, 2016b). Consequently, as a result of the economic downturn in 2008, there are relatively less opportunities to become promoted in the Irish education system due to the moratorium that presently exists since 2009, whereby promotions to A posts and B posts are disallowed with only some A posts being filled on a critical needs basis (Department of education and skills, 2016b). However, there remains several opportunities for teachers to become principals and deputy principals, which are considered promotional posts.

Bishay (1996) found from his American study that second-level teachers who had higher responsibility levels had improved teacher job satisfaction levels. In support of this, a South-

African study undertaken by George, Louw and Badenhorst (2008) explored factors influencing job satisfaction amongst urban second-level school teachers in Namibia and found that rank was an important determinant in teacher job satisfaction. It seems that gender differences exist regarding promotional development which was identified in research undertaken by Ma and MacMillan (1999) who found that American female teachers were less likely to assume managerial / leadership roles compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, from an international context, findings from an American study undertaken by Ma and MacMillan (1999) also found that male teachers were less satisfied than their female counterparts. This finding can be linked to Irish research on job satisfaction levels, which included participants from several different working sectors and found that in general Irish women have experienced higher satisfaction levels (Fitzmaurice, 2012). The higher satisfaction levels that female already experience compared to male teachers could limit the inherent need to achieve promotional opportunities to feel satisfied (Fitzmaurice, 2012). Furthermore, these results corroborated with Irish research from Darmody and Smyth (2011) who found that female primary school teachers had elevated job satisfaction levels compared to male teachers. However, in general findings from existing literature have shown that promotional opportunities are valuable components in determining the level of teacher satisfaction.

2.8 - Views on the Attractiveness to the Teaching Profession

The overall views on the attractiveness to the teaching profession has been reviewed in terms of the factors which attract people to a career in teaching. Additionally, findings on reasons for leaving the teaching profession has also been reviewed.

2.8.1 - Attractiveness to the Teaching Profession

A relatively recent European research study from 2013 identified that teaching in general was an attractive profession within the European Union (IBF Internal Consulting, 2013). Many reasons were cited as being significant determinants in attracting people towards a teaching career, the opportunity to work with children was found to be the most important decider (Yong, 1995). Moreover, the opportunity to share knowledge, work with young people, the satisfaction gained from helping young people and love of the subject were identified as reasons for becoming a teacher in a study conducted throughout several regions of Brazilian private and public final year second-level schools, by means of questionnaires and discussions (De Almeida, Nunes and Tartuce, 2010). These findings corroborated with those in a UK study undertaken by Hargreaves et al. (2006) who explored the status of UK teachers and the teaching profession and found that respondents highly regarded working with children, influencing children and interesting work were the three highest reasons given for attracting people to the teaching profession. On the contrary, this research does not corroborate with Choy et al. (1993) who found that few teachers were drawn to the teaching profession due to the perceived benefits, status and salary. Alternatively, a study prepared by IBF Internal Consulting (2013) for the European Commission on policy measures to improve the attractiveness to the teaching profession within Europe identified areas such as high salary, autonomy levels, public perception and economic variables such as unemployment levels to have contributed to attracting people to the teaching profession. This study identified that teachers in Cyprus had high levels of pay per hour and the country experienced an over-supply of teachers (IBF Internal Consulting, 2013), which can be compared to the Irish education sector in recent years. In addition, Cros and Obin (2003) found that people from countries who experienced high levels of unemployment are attracted towards a career in teaching, which was evident in Greece as they experienced high levels of unemployment

(IBF Internal Consulting, 2013). This can also be similarly compared to the high level of unemployment which Ireland had experienced during the recession. Furthermore, Aho, Pitkanen and Sahlberg (2006) noted Finland's impressive educational performance and it was found that teachers and school management in Finland experienced high autonomy levels and in addition, supportive, positive public support which were significant determinants in attracting people to the teaching profession (IBF Internal Consulting, 2013).

2.8.2 - Leaving the Teaching Profession

A Brazilian study undertaken by De Almeida et al. (2010) found the following reasons in prevented people from being attracted towards a career in teaching; poor pay and working conditions, dealing with difficult students and the lack of social recognition. Ultimately, Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) found that lack of teacher satisfaction to be one of the main reasons for Belgian teachers leaving the profession early. In addition, Choy et al. (1993) found that unsatisfied American teachers were more likely to leave their teaching jobs or move to an alternative school. It is important to note that determinants such as burnout and emotional exhaustion were significant factors in causing teachers low levels of teacher job satisfaction. This finding was compounded by a South-African study undertaken by George, Louw and Badenhorst (2008) who indicated that second-level teachers had low levels of job satisfaction which occurred due to burnout, depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion. Moreover, in an American and Canadian study, Ostroff (1992) found a significant relationship between satisfaction, intention to quit / turnover and attitude. As discussed previously teacher job dissatisfaction can inadvertently affect students' academic performance, issues with stress and satisfaction can result in teacher burn-out, absenteeism and adversely affect student's educational performance (Kyriacou, 1987). In addition to

overall teacher satisfaction, issues with heavy workloads and time pressures were found to have reduced teachers job satisfaction (Ma and MacMillan, 1999). Heavy workloads have been found to cause high stress levels (Foley, 2013, p. 270). Moreover, extreme administration responsibilities have reduced teacher's ability to deliver effective teaching and learning content to students (Esteve, 2000, p. 206). International research from private schools in Pakistan undertaken by Ul Haq and Hasnain (2014) found that heavy workloads hugely impacted on teacher job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, in a study undertaken in Hong Kong, by Tang and Yeung (1999) found that heavy workload was the most significant factor influencing high-school teacher's burnout. In addition, Norwegian elementary and middle-school teachers were under severe time pressure, which was found to be a predictor of emotional exhaustion which resulted in job dissatisfaction which were predictors of motivation to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011). Further issues such as; lack of teaching jobs and support from colleagues and management and additionally low levels of student motivation had been found to be instrumental in teacher job dissatisfaction. Additionally, the main reason for Belgian teachers leaving the profession early was due to the limited future teaching prospects (Struyven and Vanthournout, 2014). Moreover, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) found that limited support from superiors and reduced student motivation both caused elementary and middle-school teachers to leave the profession early. As these studies show a wide array of Irish and international issues regarding the views on leaving the teaching profession namely: burnout, emotional exhaustion, workload, time-pressures, lack of promotional opportunities and lack of support, it is difficult to suggest which of these issues is the more prevalent determinant of the attractiveness to leave the teaching profession. Nonetheless, this research highlights many issues which have arisen due to job dissatisfaction within the teaching profession.

2.9 - Summary

This chapter examined literature based on teacher satisfaction levels from different educational systems from both a national and international context based on several key issues such as student-teacher relations, pay, contracts of employment, staff-relations, promotional opportunities and the overall views on the attractiveness to the teaching profession. Overall, Irish second-level teachers had lower levels of satisfaction than most other countries. In addition, less Irish teachers had permanent contracts compared to their international counterparts, and this could be a factor in the lower levels of teacher satisfaction experienced by Irish teachers. There was a vast array of research in support of maintaining positive staff-relations and student-teacher relations to elevate teacher satisfaction levels. There was a mix of views from international research on pay, with some in support of pay being an important determinant in teacher satisfaction and some findings indicated that pay had no impact whatsoever. There was limited research available of promotional opportunities, however existing research suggested that it was a valuable component in improving teacher satisfaction. In addition, it was noted that females were less likely to take on promotional posts than males however this can be linked to the finding that female teachers already experienced higher teacher satisfaction levels and thus did not need promotional posts to elevate teacher satisfaction levels. Finally, it seems that the opportunity to share knowledge, work with young people, the satisfaction gained from helping young people were compelling reasons for individuals being attracted to a career in teaching. Furthermore, reasons such as poor pay and working conditions, stress, excessive administration duties, dealing with difficult students and the lack of social recognition are factors which resulted in teachers leaving the profession. This research represents a vast array of findings from differing educational systems from an international context however from an Irish context, studies were somewhat limited regarding pay. The next chapter provided a

detailed description as to how primary research on teacher satisfaction in the midlands of Ireland was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 - Introduction

The research methodology used to study satisfaction levels of teachers in many second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland is presented in this section, of which there is no existing literature available. To explore teacher's satisfaction levels in the midlands of Ireland, primary research was collected using qualitative and quantitative research designs which were adopted to provide insight into student-teacher relations, pay, contracts, promotional opportunities, staff-relations and their overall evaluation on the attractiveness to the teaching profession. Sixty-five second-level teachers from three schools in the midlands of Ireland completed hard-copy questionnaires exploring teacher satisfaction levels (see appendix one). Data collected from the questionnaires were collected accurately, more quickly and were analysed with ease. In addition, semi-structured interviews were used whereby six teachers were selected based on their experience levels which resulted in more meaningful data (see appendix two for interview questions). The methodological approach taken in this study used mixed methods using both deductive and inductive approaches, based on questionnaires and semi-structured interviews which were exploratory and descriptive in nature. Furthermore, the between-method triangulation was used to collect more than one method of data, which validated the results. Using both interviews and questionnaires as methods for collecting data allowed for a deeper understanding of each contextual issue affecting teacher satisfaction levels. Methods of data collection such as observation, case-studies, focus groups or experimentation weren't used as there may have been social loafing, bias or pressure to conform. One of the main limitations was lack of research participation. This research could not provide a comprehensive review of teacher satisfaction levels across all second-level schools in Ireland. Thirteen second-level schools were asked to participate however, only three schools accepted the researchers request to conduct the study. As the midlands area of Ireland is quite spread out, the distribution and collection of boxes to each of the three

schools required a lot of seamless organisation. In addition, there was a limited supply of computers for teachers to gain access to online questionnaires and so it was more feasible to use hard-copies of questionnaires however, using hard-copy questionnaires instead of online surveys or survey monkey to collect data took a considerable amount of additional time. All results were manually entered into Google Docs and results were presented in pie-chart format only. To improve its visual appeal, data was entered into Microsoft Excel and alternative bar charts and line graphs were created which was time-consuming.

3.2 - Research Strategy

The strategy showed the method of how the data was collected, it also showed which type of analysis was used (Denscombe, 2010, p.99). The strategy used in this research collected data on each research objective by using both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. A brief description of the types of questions that were used for each objective is provided below (see appendix 1 for complete questionnaire).

3.2.1 - Student-teacher Relationships

Student-teacher relationships were examined to determine teacher satisfaction levels. Teachers satisfaction with student-teacher relationships was evaluated based on several issues such as whether they felt that student's well-being was important, if teachers were interested in what students had to say and if they felt that teachers and students got on well together. In addition, issues such as whether teachers felt valued and respected by their students were assessed. Finally, teachers were asked if they agreed that their second-level school provided students with opportunities to make valuable contributions. Questions based on these issues were asked in both surveys and interviews. To gain a deeper understanding of teacher satisfaction levels, interview participants were probed to elaborate on some of the most

contentious issues that were important to them. Typical questions such as the following were asked:

- *Overall, would you agree that your students respect your classroom rules?*
- *Do you agree that in general your students value you as a teacher?*

3.2.2 - Pay

Pay is an important element in determining satisfaction levels and so it was included in both the questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires included questions such as teacher's satisfaction with pay, if they agreed that their wages were sufficient to pay important bills and expenses and if they felt their wages reflected the level of effort that they provided in their job. Similar questions were asked in the interviews. However, questioning participants on pay was dealt with in a sensitive manner and so it was more feasible to keep the interview questions very broad and less detailed compared to the questionnaires. Interviews were used to follow-up on any opinions that were expressed as being important to each of the six participants.

Questions such as the following were asked:

- *Which of the following best suits your satisfaction levels regarding your pay in general?*

Please tick as appropriate.

Very *Fairly* *Not Very* *Not at all*

3.2.3 - Contracts of Employment

To answer the research question, the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to contracts of employment were examined. Previous literature found that the type of

teaching contracts of employment that teachers have is an important issue in determining overall teacher job satisfaction levels. Teacher's satisfaction levels regarding contracts of employment was examined in both semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Three questions assessing the type of contracts that teachers held, their satisfaction levels with their current teaching contract and finally teacher's satisfaction levels with the general level of job security in their second-level school. Interview questions assessed second-level teachers about their views on contracts of employment and job security in the teaching profession and how they felt that the level of job security could be improved. More specific and detailed questions were explored in the questionnaire asking participants the following details about their own contracts of employment:

- *In general, how satisfied are you with your contract of employment?*
- *How satisfied in general are you with the level of job security in your second-level school?*

3.2.4 - Staff-Relations

To answer the research question, the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to staff-relations were examined. This included teacher's relationships with their colleagues and their superiors (principal and deputy principal). The interview questions asked general question on teacher's thoughts on staff-relations in their own school e.g. whether they thought that teachers and staff generally got on well. Interview participants were further probed by asking about whether the school had a positive, supportive and collaborative culture with their colleagues and their superiors. Finally, teachers were asked how they thought the culture of the school could be improved wherever necessary. The questionnaire consisted of four questions on staff-relations which identified if teachers agreed that their school had a collaborative culture, if they felt their colleagues trusted and appreciated them,

teacher's satisfaction with the way their superiors treated them and finally if they felt that their superior's behaviour towards teaching staff was positive and supportive. Typical questions were asked as below:

- *In general, would you agree that your colleagues trust and appreciate you?*
- *Do you feel your superiors behaviour towards teaching staff is positive and supportive in general?*

3.2.5 - Promotional Opportunities

To answer the research question, the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to promotional opportunities were examined. Interview questions examined candidate's views on promotional opportunities within their school and if they were satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities in their own school. The questionnaires asked if teachers held a promotional post and in addition they were asked to rate their satisfaction levels with the availability of promotional opportunities in their school. Questions such as the following were asked:

- *Do you currently hold either of the following?*
 - Deputy Principal* *Assistant Principal (A post)* *Special Duties (B Post)*
 - None*
- *Overall, are you satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available within your school?*

3.2.6 - Views on the Attractiveness to the Teaching Profession

To answer the research question, Irish secondary school teachers views on the attractiveness to the teaching profession were examined. The overall attractiveness to the teaching profession was examined by asking in questionnaires and interviews whether teachers were happy to recommend teaching as a profession to students, family members etc. In addition, a ranking method style question examined elements which are typically associated with teaching, asking respondents to rank them in order of importance. Perceived benefits such as holidays, working with children ranging in ages of 12 – 18, financial reward, job satisfaction – love of teaching, pension, career ladder progression, job guarantee, making a difference to student’s lives, making a valuable contribution to society were ranked by second-level teachers. In addition, a similar question on the perceived benefits of teaching was also asked in the interviews, whereby interview candidates elaborated on their answers as to why would or wouldn’t recommend teaching as a profession.

3.3 - Methods

3.3.1 - Research Philosophy, Methodology, Type, Approach and Data Validation

The researcher used a pragmatic philosophical approach, combining several viewpoints to answer the research question (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 119). By submitting questionnaires to second-level teachers and conducting semi-structured interviews, a more diverse range of answers were collected on teacher’s satisfaction levels in the midlands of Ireland.

The mixed method approach combined both questionnaires and interviews to gather data from teachers (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 153). Using questionnaires alone would not have provided enough understanding on the research question of teacher satisfaction levels (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014, p. 575), furthermore conducting interviews allowed for a more in-depth analysis than would be possible from using questionnaires alone (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 135). To ensure that the important issues and questions were covered, the interview questions were designed after the questionnaires were drafted, distributed and completed.

The research type was both descriptive and exploratory. The researcher used descriptive research methods in the questionnaires to gain an insight into second-level teachers viewpoints and to obtain a precise representation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 125). The exploratory element was used in the semi-structured interviews, which prioritised finding out new information, which was possible as teachers viewpoints came across very effectively throughout the interviews (Denscombe, 2014, p. 109). Interviewees were asked a set list of questions which the interviewer probed into issues and asked for clarification on certain topics.

The deductive and inductive research approaches were used in this research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 41, p.99). The results of the interviews were inductive which used a more humanistic approach to draw conclusions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 127). From personal experience, having worked as a second-level teacher, many assumptions were made on teacher job satisfaction, therefore using the deductive approach pre-empted that specific assumptions had been made around the teacher satisfaction levels and the results corroborated or disproved those assumptions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 41).

Each method of data collection has inherent incompetency's and so triangulation was essential to confirm the validity of the collected data. To ensure the validity of results the between-method triangulation used more than one method to collect data which resulted in more in-depth analysis, (Smith, 2003, p.136; Denscombe, 2014, p. 154).

3.4 - Sampling Strategy

Data collected from a sample of the second-level teachers was required to answer the research question on teacher satisfaction. The interview and questionnaire samples were selected using a non-probability, non-random, self-selection sampling approach (Krishnaswamy and Satyaprasad, 2010, p. 54). Self-selection sampling is a form of non-probability sampling whereby questionnaires were delivered to each school and teachers could choose to participate in the research themselves (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 241). As requested by the researcher, the three principals emailed all teachers in their school requesting voluntary participation in this study, providing details of the interview cohort which required two teachers with less than five years' experience, two teachers' with between five and twenty years' experience and finally two teachers' with more than twenty years' experience. Six teachers confirmed that they would participate in the research based on this stratified random sampling technique (Denscombe, 2014, p. 38). The reason for choosing these three sub-groups with differing experience levels was to get a wider viewpoint and more diverse range of results.

3.4.1 - Population and Sample Size

A total of 124 hard-copy questionnaires were distributed to second-level teachers (this figure excludes principals) within each of the three schools in the midlands of Ireland - 43 questionnaires in envelope one, 45 questionnaires in envelope two and 36 questionnaires in

envelope three. It was estimated that the response rate would be 81% which consisted of 100 teachers, however 65 teachers responded in the survey giving a 52% response rate. Research was limited due to smaller sample size of the population who took part in the questionnaires. The interview cohort consisted of six teachers from one second-level school, of which there was 100% participation. As discussed previously, these six teachers were sub-divided into three groups: two teachers with less than five years' experience, two teachers' with between five and twenty years' experience and finally two teachers' with more than twenty years' experience.

3.5 - Procedure

The purpose of using questionnaires was to collect data to examine teacher's satisfaction levels with student-teacher relations, pay, contracts, promotional opportunities, staff-relations and the overall attractiveness to the teaching profession. To identify teacher satisfaction levels with these issues, questionnaires were designed using simple, easy to understand language which consisted of twenty-three questions making sure to cover objectives one to six, all of which were tick the box answers except for one ranking question. Clear instructions and a statement which ensured anonymity were written on the top of the questionnaire in simple to understand language.

Initially, letters requesting access seeking participation were posted to the principals of thirteen second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland in week one (see appendix three). The purpose of the letter was to gain permission from the principals to distribute a box of questionnaires to each school whereby participants anonymity was guaranteed at all stages of the research. Two of these second-level schools were asked in alternative letters for permission to conduct semi-structured interviews (see appendix four). Originally, the

researcher required a total of six interviews between two second-level schools. Following on from this, two principals emailed confirming acceptance in conducting quantitative research. At the end of week two, follow-up phone-calls were made to the remaining eleven second-level schools, whereby one more school accepted the request to conduct semi-structured interviews and distribute questionnaires. The remaining second-level schools declined the researchers request for access. Explanations for rejecting the request were that some specified the need for confidentiality, others had heavy workloads and the remaining schools said that they were not authorised by the board of management to allow research to be conducted.

The questionnaires were delivered on week three to each of the three second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland. A total of 124 hard-copy questionnaires were distributed to 124 teachers from three second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland (this figure excludes principals) divided into three envelopes placed on top of each box - 43 questionnaires in envelope one, 45 questionnaires in envelope two and 36 questionnaires in envelope three. The principal dispensed these boxes in the staff-room and teachers were asked to complete the questionnaires on teacher satisfaction. The box was used to return completed questionnaires where all teachers returned questionnaires confidentially and anonymously. The questionnaire box was collected from each school on week four. There was a response rate of 52% from the three second-level schools, which accounted for 65 teachers.

Once results from the questionnaires were compiled and analysed, it was possible to gain a clearer insight into any pertinent issues that arose and these main issues were included in the interview questions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 153). The interview questions were designed to question teachers on student-teacher relations, pay, contracts, promotional opportunities, staff-relations in their own schools and the overall attractiveness to the

teaching profession. Non-standardised, semi-structured interviews were carried out on a one-to-one basis where a broad set list of questions was asked however, the researcher could clarify and follow-up on the interviewees answers asking for further explanation on replies allowing for interviewees views and opinions on each issue to be developed and highlighted (Williamson, 2002, p. 243).

The initial letter specified that the interview cohort was to be divided into three groups according to teaching experience required for research. Criteria for selecting the participants were as follows: two teachers with less than five years' experience, two teachers' with between five and twenty years' experience and finally two teachers' with more than twenty years' experience were required to take part in the study. The principal emailed all teachers requesting voluntary participation in the study. Six teachers replied to the email stating that they would participate in the research. As requested, these six teachers had the necessary experiences levels required for the research. With the teacher's permission, the principal forwarded on their contact details to the researcher. Each teacher was contacted by the researcher and an interview schedule was drawn up. Semi-structured interviews took place over two weeks which lasted for half an hour at 5 o'clock on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of weeks five and six on the school premises (see table 3.1 – schedule of events). To make each interviewee feel as comfortable as possible, the interviewer explained fully the purpose of the research and assured their anonymity and confidentiality throughout the entire process.

3.5.1 - Justification

The reason for using questionnaires as a research instrument instead of using observation, case-studies, focus groups or experimentation as it was a method of collecting specific data in

a confidential, speedy manner and furthermore information was simple to compile and analyse (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015, p. 156). In addition, questionnaires used accurate data that reflected the views of all second-level teachers without bias, social loafing or pressure to conform which may have occurred when conducting in focus groups, observation, experimentation and case-studies. The one-to-one, semi-structured approach as opposed structured interviews was chosen because it allowed for teacher’s points of view and opinions to come through the data, gaining a deeper evaluation on teacher satisfaction (Williamson, 2002, p. 243). Interviews were more useful for recognising and classifying common themes from teachers’ responses (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 482).

3.5.2 - Data Collection Tools

Primary research data was collected via questionnaires and interviews. Both the interview questions and questionnaires was drafted on Microsoft Word. The questionnaires were printed and distributed in hard-copy format. Questions and results from the questionnaires were created in Google Docs which created several pie charts. To add variety to the visual presentation of results, some of this data was entered onto Microsoft excel which created an array of bar charts and line graphs.

3.5.3 - Analysis of Data

The most appropriate means of analysing the results was by using visual charts and graphs which were generated, as all questions and data were entered onto Google Docs. Google Docs created pie-charts and percentages that were easily evaluated (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 482). Information from the interviews was recorded by note-taking. However, on reflection taped interviews would have been more beneficial throughout the interview process and would have meant less time was spent on note-taking. Interview results

were analysed and common themes were identified from each of the six interviews (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 482). Due to the type of research, it was not necessary to use S.P.S.S. (Statistical Package for the Social Science) or field notes.

3.5.4 - Ethical Issues

Ethics is defined as how one conducts themselves throughout their research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 183). Prior to commencing the study, ethical clearance was sought from all participants, whereby their privacy and anonymity was protected throughout the entire research process. Full disclosure of the purpose of the research, confidentiality and transparency to both research candidates and principals was given at all stages of the research process. Results were presented in an honest manner.

3.6 - Limitations

- The reader should bear in mind that one of the main research limitations was lack of research participation. A large volume of eleven second-level schools were not willing to participate in this research due to time constraints and workload pressures. Due to practical constraints, this paper cannot provide a comprehensive review of teacher satisfaction levels across all second-level schools throughout Ireland. If this were possible an extensive and inclusive range of results would have been generated.
- Distributing boxes to each of the three second-level schools was a logistical challenge. As the midlands area of Ireland is quite spread out, the researcher found that distributing and collecting the questionnaire boxes to each of the three schools on week three and four required a lot of seamless organisation.

- Hard-copies were distributed instead of emailing questionnaires or using survey monkey. This process took more time than using email to distribute soft copy questionnaires. It must also be noted that there was limited availability of computers and laptops in each staff-room – with a maximum of three personal computers in existence per staffroom. In addition, not all teachers had their own class-rooms with access to personal computers or laptops and may have to resort to using the staff-room computers, of which there is limited supply and access.
- The analysis of the questionnaires was problematic as google docs presented the results in pie-chart format only. To allow for more visually appealing results, the researcher chose to use Microsoft excel to transfer data and create alternative bar charts and line graphs to create a wider variety of results which would be more visually appealing to the reader. An alternative software package such as survey monkey whereby an array of different graphs would have been more ideal.

3.7 - Summary

This chapter described the research methodology used to explore teacher satisfaction levels in the midlands of Ireland, both questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate methods for collecting data from teachers. Thirteen schools were contacted to take part in the research, however participation was limited which reduced the diversity of results. 124 hard copy questionnaires were distributed to three second-levels schools, which resulted in a response rate of 52%. In addition, six teachers from one of these schools took part in semi-structured interviews. Questionnaire results were manually inputted into google

docs and Microsoft excel and several different types of graphs and charts were generated. Note-taking was used to collect data from interview participants, whereby common themes were identified throughout. In using hard-copy questionnaires, a considerably more amount of time was spent in distributing and collecting boxes throughout the midlands of Ireland than would have been the case if questionnaires were created online using survey monkey. Finally, an alternative computer software package which could generate a variety of graphs instead of Google Docs would have been more ideal.

CHAPTER 4 - ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 - Introduction

The evaluation presented in this section concentrated on teacher satisfaction among second-level teachers in the midlands of Ireland. In evaluating teacher job satisfaction, a recurring theme throughout the research for the most part was that teachers reported as being satisfied with student-teacher relations, staff-relationships and contracts of employment in their schools and many regarded 'job satisfaction-love of teaching' as being the most important benefit associated with teaching. Furthermore, many teachers indicated that 'shorter working day' was one of the least important benefits associated with teaching. However, one significant finding was that only a third of second-level teachers would recommend teaching as a profession. Motives for this important finding were that many teachers disagreed that their wages reflected the level of effort provided in their daily teaching. In addition, less than half of teachers agreed that their wages were sufficient to pay their important bills and expenses. Furthermore, most teachers did not hold promotional posts of responsibility and less than half of teachers were satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities in their second-level school. Moreover, 'career ladder progression' was the least important benefit associated with second-level teaching. Together these results provided important insights into teacher satisfaction levels.

- Student-Teacher Relations: teachers believed that student and teachers got on well together and believed that student well-being was important in their school. Furthermore, teachers were interested in what students had to say and agreed that students had opportunities to make valuable contributions to school decision making however, themes that came up in the interviews that focused more so on reasons for dissatisfaction with the level of student contribution allowed in their schools. Some

interviewees believed that more should be done to increase the levels of contribution that students could make to their school. In addition, teachers felt valued and respected by their students.

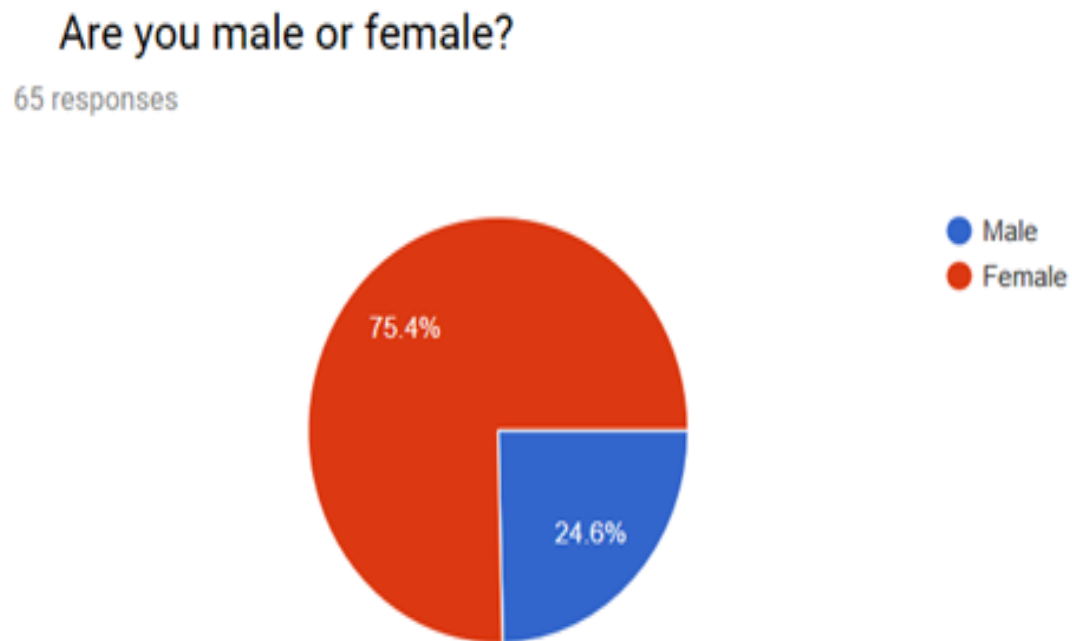
- Pay: most teachers were fairly satisfied with their pay although less than a half of teachers agreed that their wages were sufficient to pay their important bills and expenses. Many disagreed that their wages were an adequate representation of the effort that they put into their daily work. Common statements from interviewees specified that more could be done to improve the inequality between more experienced teachers and new-entrants.
- Contracts of employment: most teachers involved in this research were on continuous and temporary teaching contracts (94%). Over a half of teachers were fairly satisfied with their contracts of employment. Themes that came up in the interviews focused more so on reasons for dissatisfaction, some felt that more could be done to improve part-time teacher's hours by giving them any available substitution hours rather than employing external substitute teachers. Most teachers were satisfied with the level of job security in their second-level school however this theme was not supported by teachers who took part in the interviews with many articulating that job security could be improved in their second-level school.
- Staff-relations: many agreed that there was a collaborative culture which was characterised by mutual support in their school, whereby most colleagues trusted and appreciated them. Furthermore, teachers felt supported by management on a personal and whole-school perspective.
- Promotional opportunities: a large proportion of respondents didn't hold a promotional post and most teachers were not very satisfied with the level of

promotional opportunities that were available in their second-level schools. Some interviewees expressing their dissatisfaction with the promotional process however, they also acknowledged that it wasn't on an individual school basis but more so a country-wide dilemma due to the national moratorium which limited the availability of promotional posts. Not surprisingly, considering this result, 'career ladder progression' was regarded as being the least important benefits associated with the teaching profession.

- Views on the overall attractiveness to second-level teaching: Many regarded 'job satisfaction – love of teaching' as being the most benefit associated with teaching. Surprisingly, only a third of second-level teachers indicated that they would recommend teaching as a profession. Many views in the interviews suggested that issues with promotional opportunities could be improved by the Government.

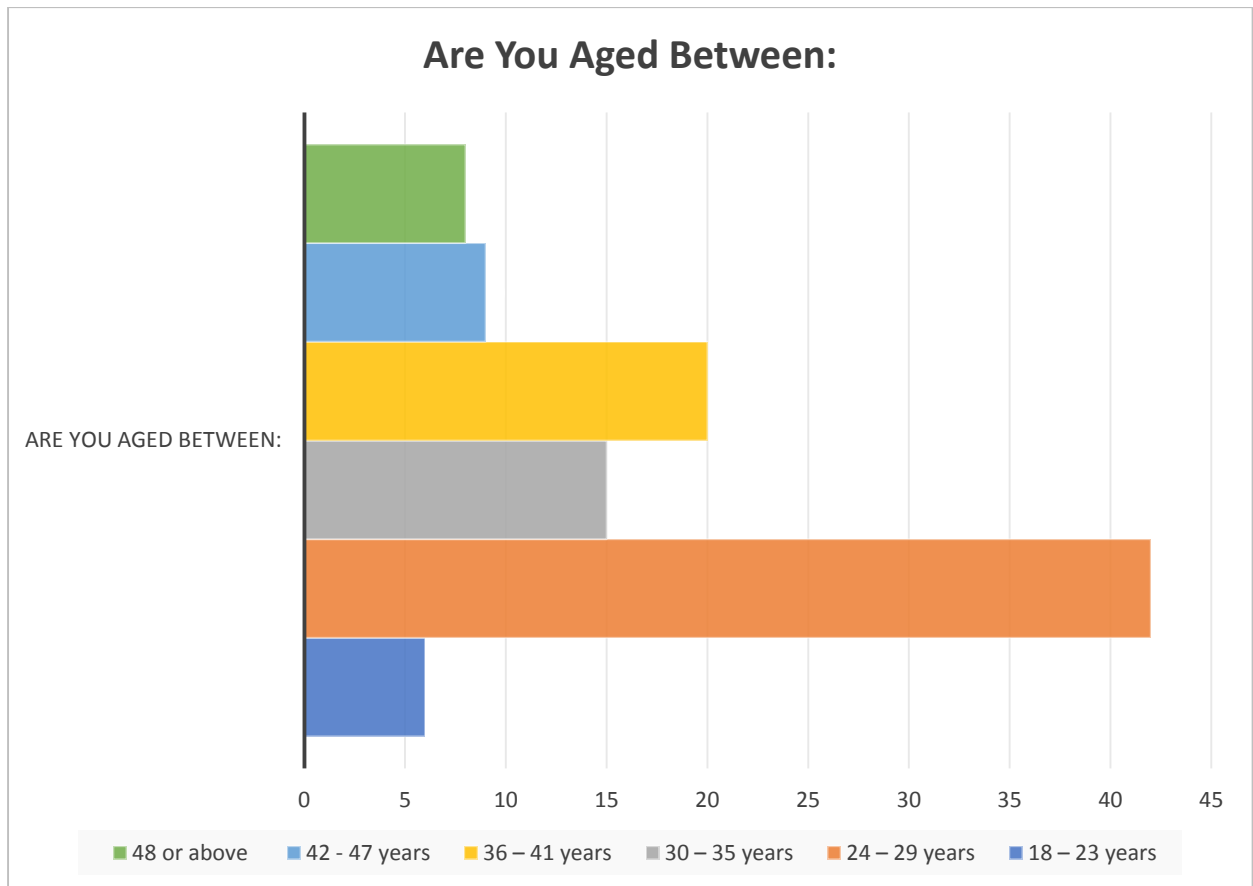
4.2 - Background Information on Teachers

Figure 4.1: Gender



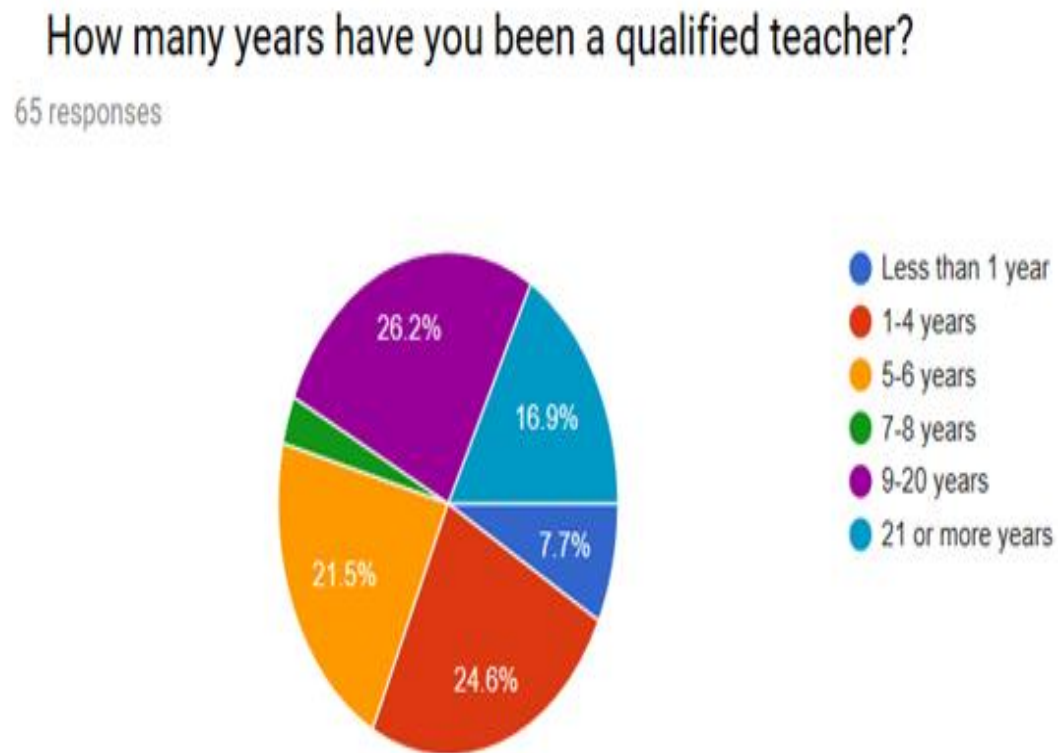
It is apparent from the pie chart in figure 4.1 that over three-quarters of second-level teachers who participated in the survey were female. The interviewees consisted of 50% male and 50% female teachers.

Figure 4.2: Age



Closer inspection of figure 4.2 above identifies that the majority of teachers were aged between 24-29. The interviewees ages ranged from 26 to 42 years of age.

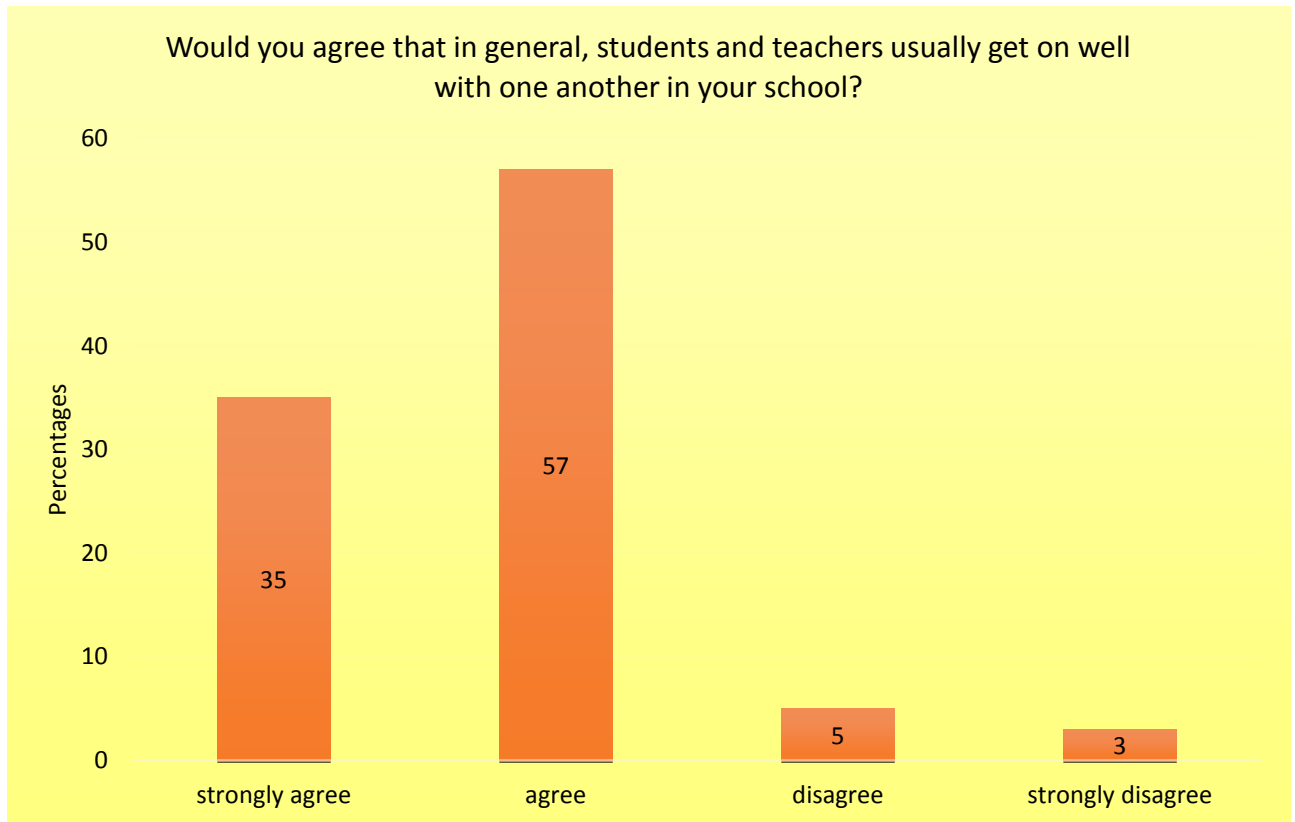
Figure 4.3: Qualified



It is apparent from figure 4.3 that most teachers who participated in the survey were qualified as a teacher from nine to twenty years. The interviewees had a variety of experience levels ranging from four to twenty-one years.

4.3 - Student-Teacher Relations

Figure 4.4: Student-Teacher Relations

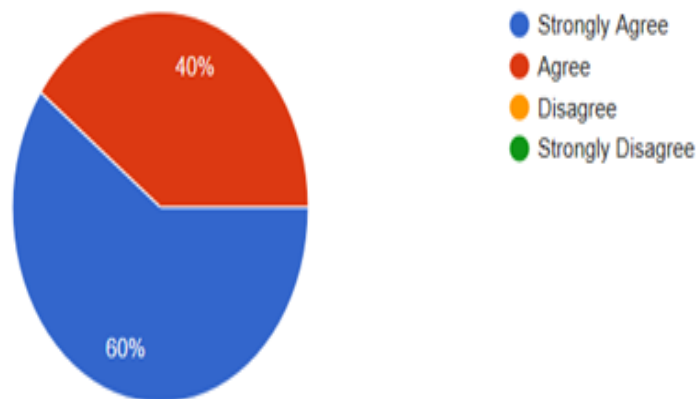


The most interesting aspect in the bar chart in figure 4.4 is that most teachers agreed that students and teachers got on well with one another in their second-level school (57%). These views were echoed in the interviews, whereby many teachers agreed that there was a very caring relationship from teachers towards students in their school. Examples of recommendations were made in the interviews as to how to improve student-teacher relations; engaging in more extra-curricular activities, introducing a mentoring service for each year group, implementing a student council to improve student-teacher relations and rewarding students and organising trips for good behaviour via a merit system. Further suggestions that were suggested such as giving students teacher evaluation sheets regularly throughout the year would give students an opportunity to provide feedback would help and support students through their learning thus building student-teacher relations.

Figure 4.5: Importance of Student's Well-Being

Overall, would you agree that many teachers in your school believe that students well-being is important?

65 responses

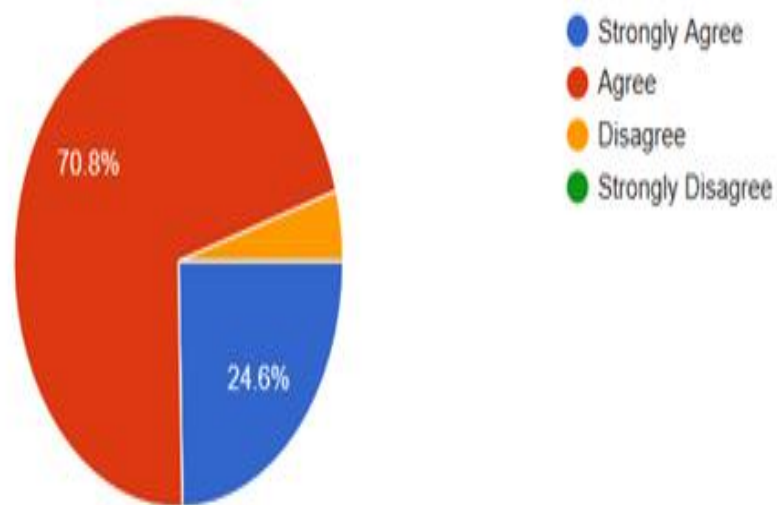


From figure 4.5, we can see that student's well-being was reported as being important to teachers with 60% of participants who strongly agreed and 40% who agreed that student's well-being was important. What is striking about figure 4.5 is that none of the teachers disagreed that student's well-being was important and this finding was reverberated in the interview results.

Figure 4.6: Interested in What Student's Say

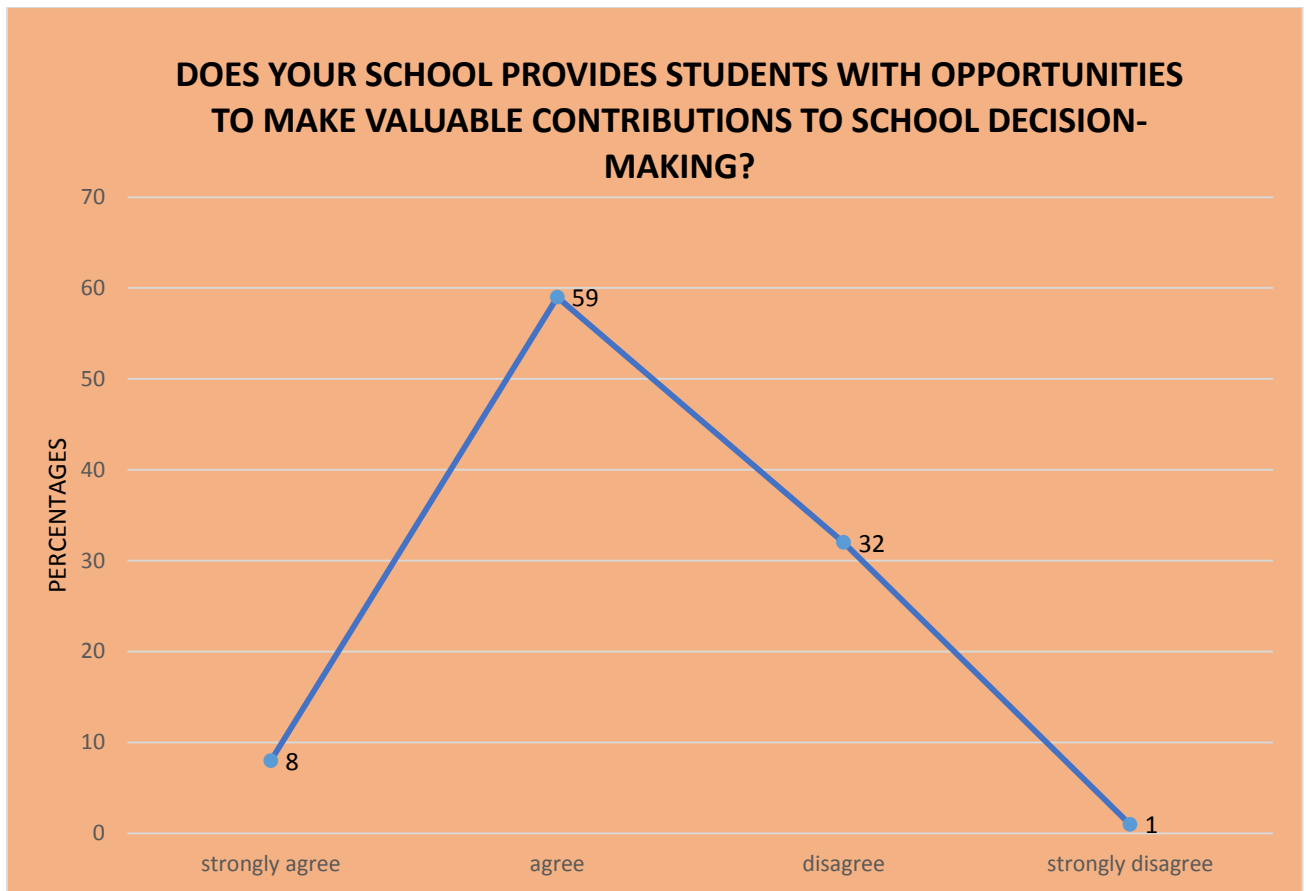
In general would you agree that many teachers in your school are interested in what students have to say?

65 responses



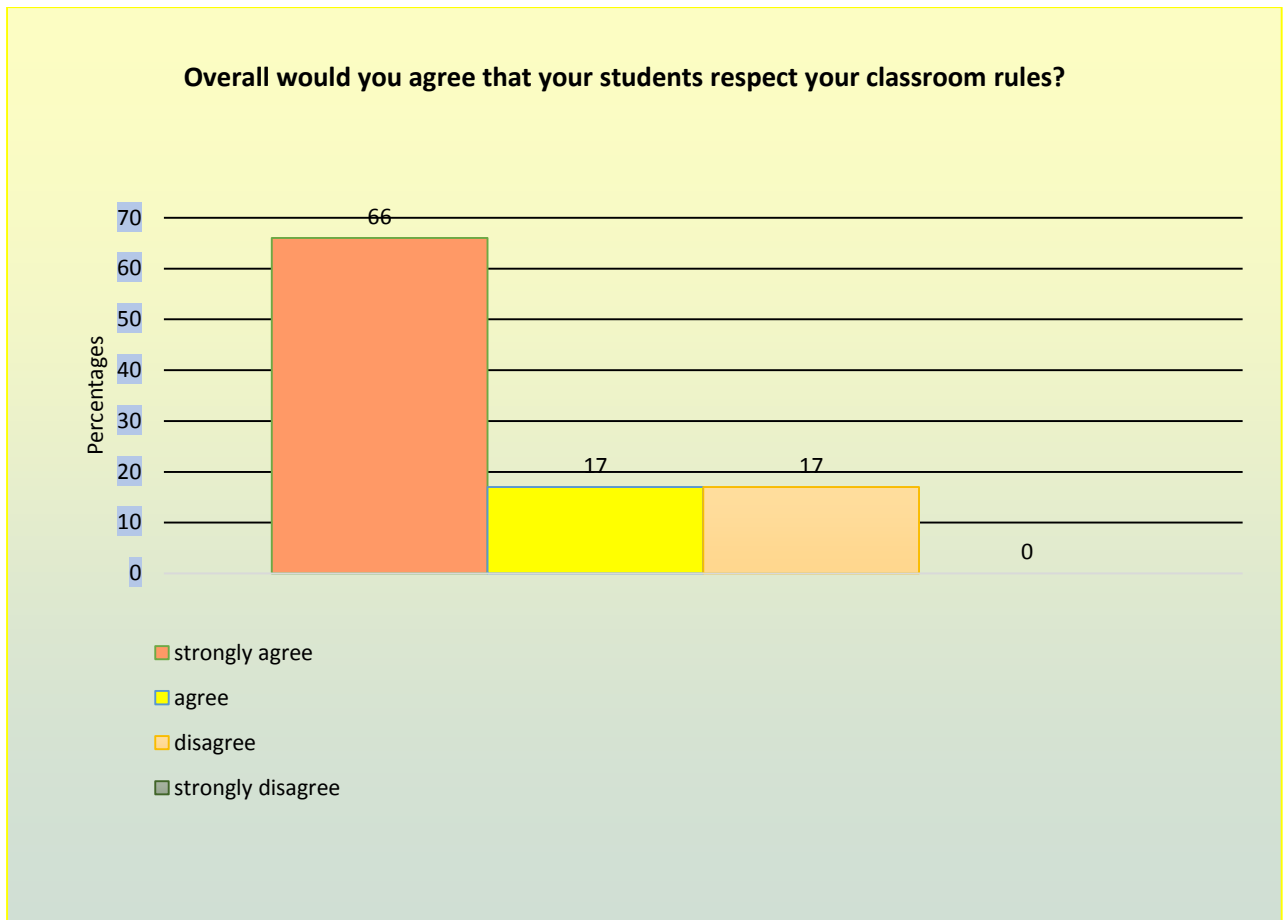
For the most part teachers were interested in what students had to say, with 71% of teachers who agreed with this statement. What is interesting in figure 4.6 is that almost a quarter of teachers strongly agreed that teachers in their school were interested in what students had to say. These views were supported by teachers in the interviews.

Figure 4.7: Valuable Contribution to School Decision-Making



The most interesting aspect on this line graph in figure 4.7 is that a large percentage of 59% of teachers agreed that in general their second-level school provides students with opportunities to make valuable contributions to school decision-making. However, these results did not reflect the opinions of those taken by the teachers in the interview who felt that students were not allowed to contribute to school decision-making. Teachers who were interviewed recommended introducing a student council, surveying students, and introducing a voting mechanism to improve communication between students and teachers so that students can make valuable contributions to school decision-making.

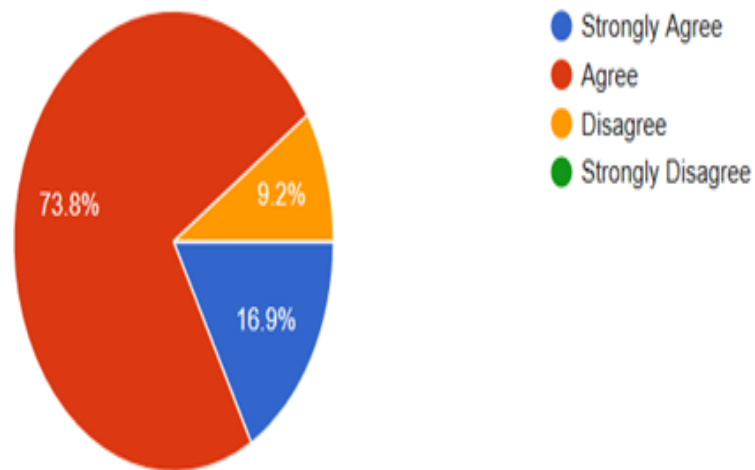
Figure 4.8: Respect Classroom Rules



When the participants were asked if their students respected their classroom rules an overall majority of teachers strongly agreed (66%) with this question as can be seen in figure 4.8. In all cases, this was supported by teachers in the interviews. Examples of when teachers felt that their classroom rules were respected were as follows: students were on time for class, had all their resources with them (books, pencil-case, calculator), home-work was completed fully and students were respectful to other classmates.

Figure 4.9: Student's Value You as a Teacher

Do you agree that in general your students value you as a teacher?
65 responses



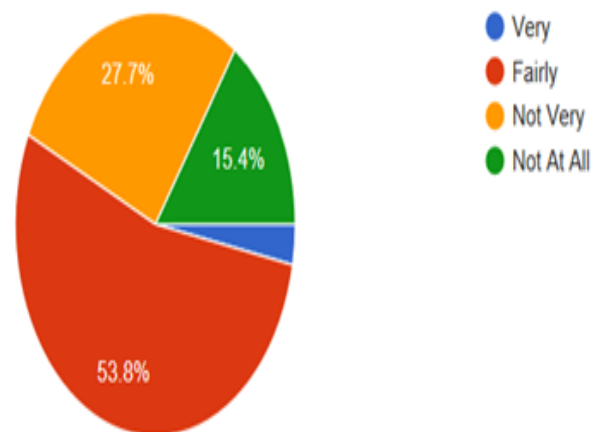
Of the sixty-five teachers who completed the questionnaire, just under three quarters of teachers agreed that their students valued them as a teacher. A variety of perspectives to questions were given in the interviews on whether students valued their teachers, some felt valued whilst others felt undervalued. Examples of when they felt valued was when students were respectful towards them, worked to an exceptional standard to achieve the best results in that subject or asked for extra help if needed. In addition, interviewees provided examples of when they felt undervalued: when students weren't being respectful towards them and found that punctuality was a major issue, with students being late for their classes.

4.4 - Pay

Figure 4.10: General Satisfaction Levels Regarding Pay

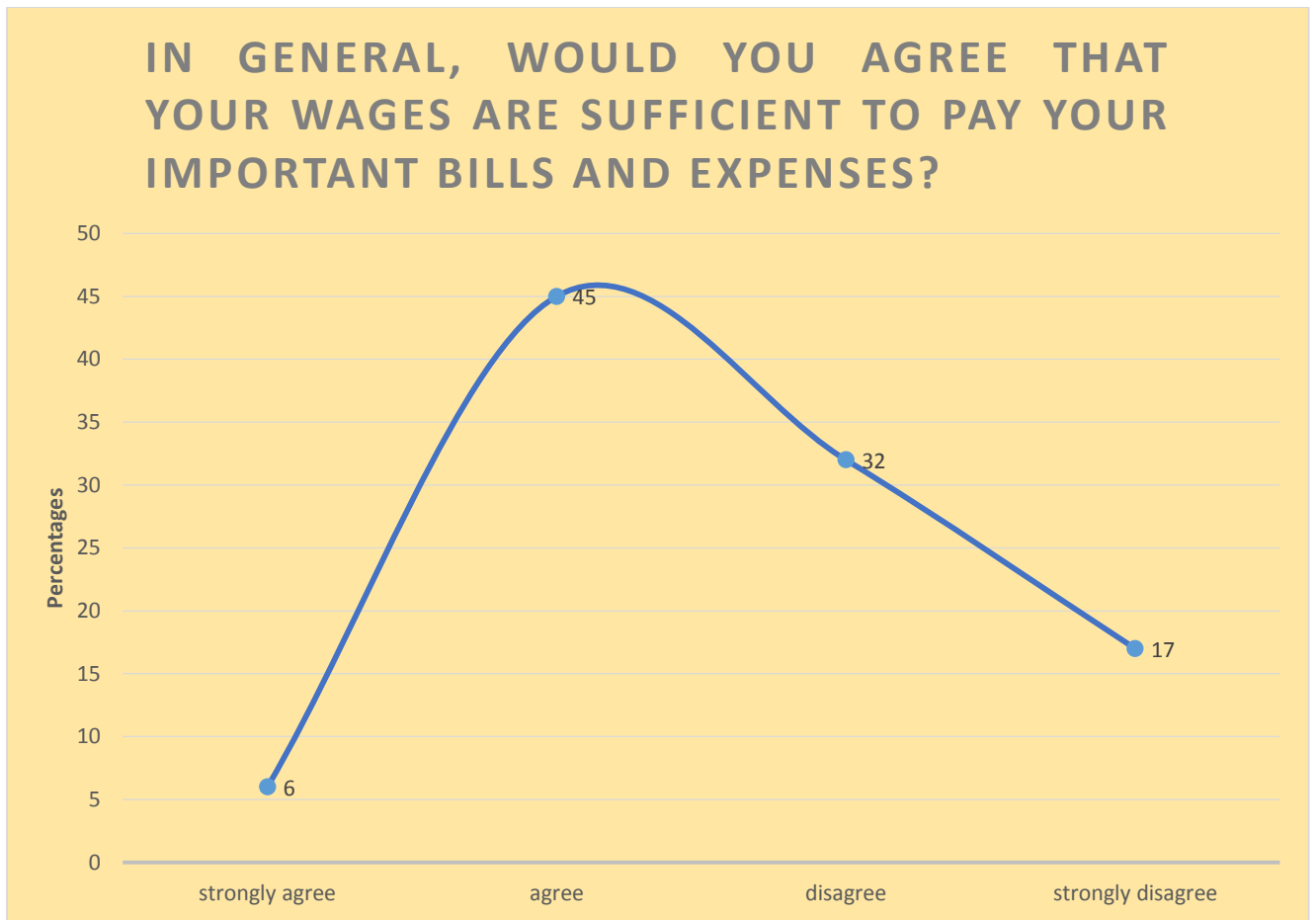
Which of the following best suits your satisfaction levels regarding your pay in general?

65 responses



Over half of teachers were fairly satisfied with their pay and less than half were not satisfied with their pay (43%) as can be seen in the above pie chart in figure 4.10. Themes that came up in the interviews focused on dissatisfaction with pay with many teachers expressing dissatisfaction with their salary and stipulated that pay should be equalised for all second-level teachers.

Figure 4.11: Wages Sufficient to Pay Important Bills and Expenses

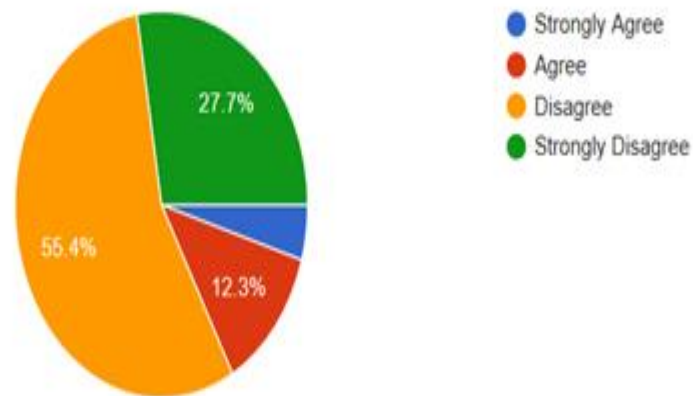


Less than half of second-level teachers (45%) agreed that their wages were sufficient to pay their important expenses and bills with almost a third disagreeing with this statement. Themes that came up in the interviews focused on teacher's dissatisfaction. Opinions expressed to support this dissatisfaction suggested that it would be impossible to get a mortgage and to live in any other city with their current salary.

Figure 4.12: Wage Levels Reflect Effort You Provide in Your Teaching Job

Overall would you agree that your wage levels reflect the level of effort that you provide in your teaching job?

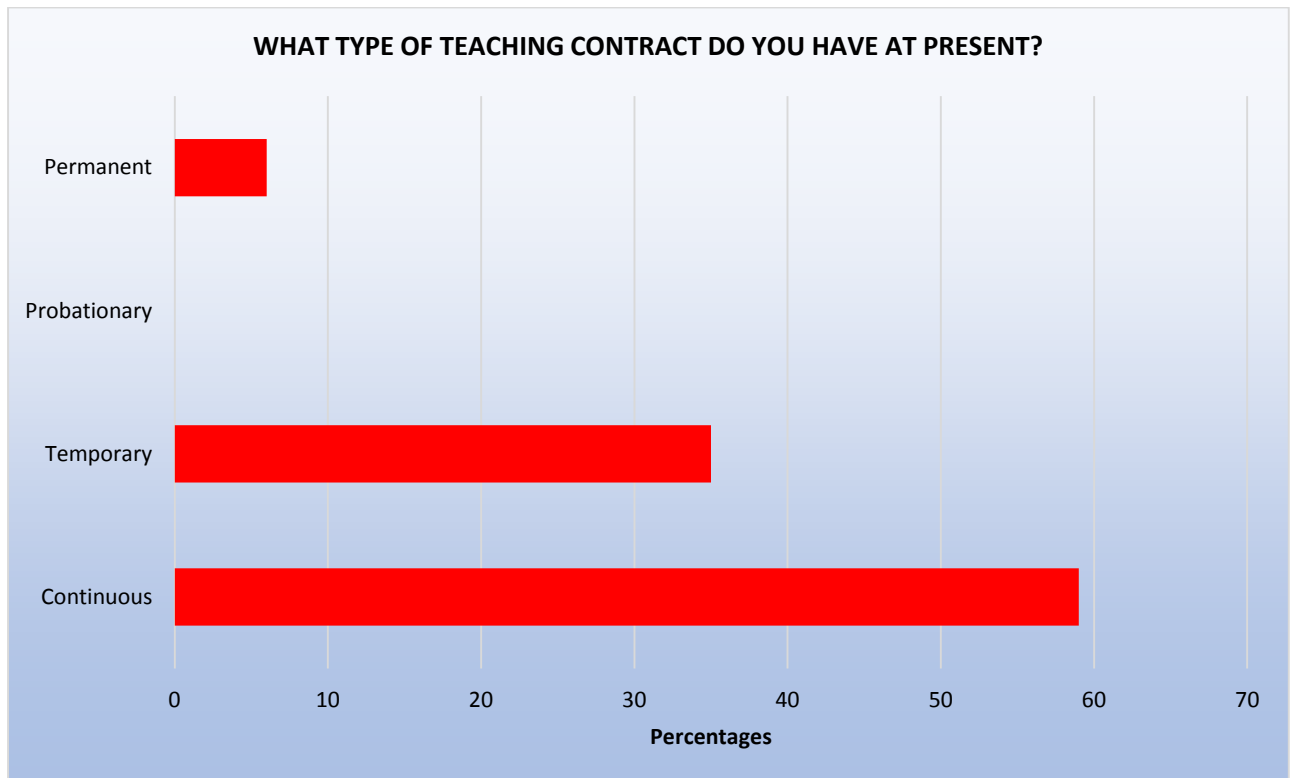
65 responses



When asked whether they agreed that their wage levels reflected the level of effort they provided in their teaching jobs, a very large majority of teachers disagreed with this question. It was apparent that the results from the interviews were similar whereby teachers felt that their wage levels were hugely dissatisfying for work done which reduced teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The interviewees described examples of where they put in a lot of effort was outside the school working day was when they took part in extra-curricular activities, held extra classes on a weekly basis to help weaker students to progress, and put in extra time to help students to complete projects for competitions that aren't part of the school curriculum.

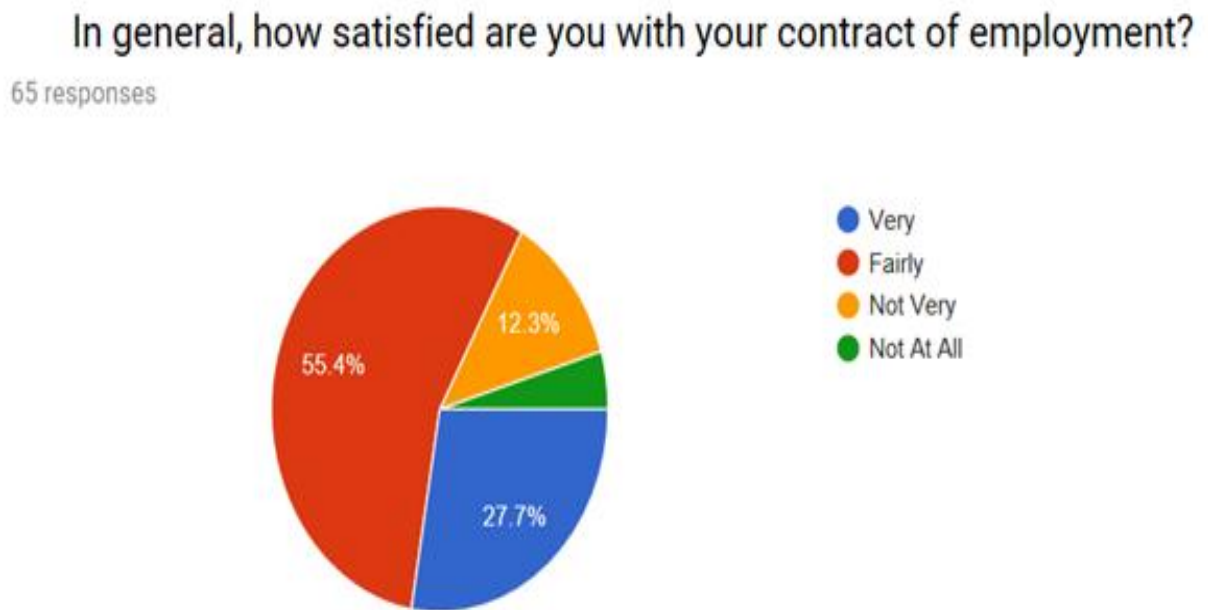
4.5 - Contract of Employment

Figure 4.13: Type of Teaching Contract



An overall majority of teachers held either continuous (59%) or temporary contracts (35%) and only a minute proportion of 6% of teachers had permanent contracts. This result was similar to teachers who took part in the interviews, whereby most held either continuous or temporary contracts.

Figure 4.14: Satisfaction Levels with Contract of Employment

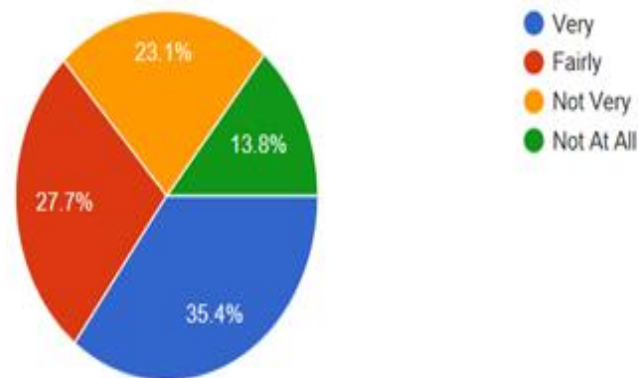


Over a half of second-level teachers were fairly satisfied (55%), with a further 28% indicating that they are very satisfied with their contracts of employment. A variety of perspectives were expressed from interviews suggesting that some teachers were satisfied and unsatisfied with their contracts of employment. Interviewees voiced their satisfaction with the speedier access to gaining contracts of indefinite duration in more recent years as a result of new rules which guarantees teachers CID status on entering their third year of teaching service with the same employer.

Figure 4.15: Satisfaction Levels with Job Security in your School

How satisfied in general are you with the level of job security in your second-level school?

65 responses



A large proportion of 63% of teachers were satisfied with the level of job security in their second-level school. This theme was not reflected by teachers who took part in the interviews which focused more so on reasons for dissatisfaction. Examples to support this was that many teachers felt that there was no job security, lack of opportunities and that teaching was a completely unstable profession. Many teachers felt that job security could be improved by giving all part-time teachers in second-level schools any available substitution hours as currently their school is hiring external teachers to fill these substitution hours. Furthermore, they stated that third-level universities should stop enrolling Masters in Education students to reduce the over-supply of teachers in Ireland. In addition, participants stated that there should be a panel available similar to primary school system, whereby teachers were automatically enlisted and transferred somewhere else if a job opportunity became available.

4.6 - Staff – Relations

Figure 4.16: Collaborative Culture

In general would you agree that there is a collaborative culture which is characterised by mutual support in your school?

65 responses

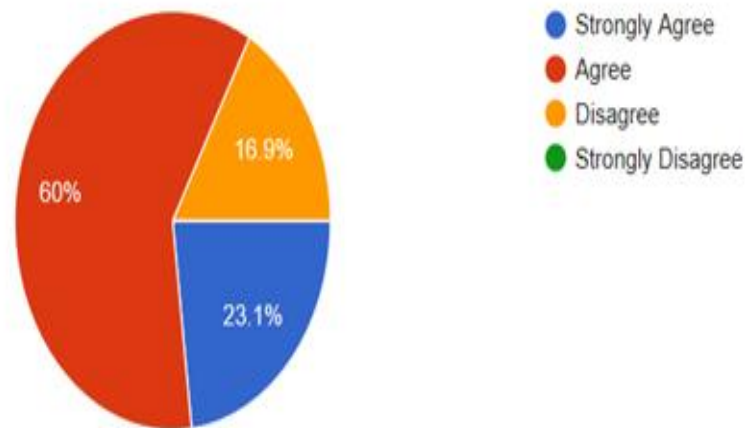
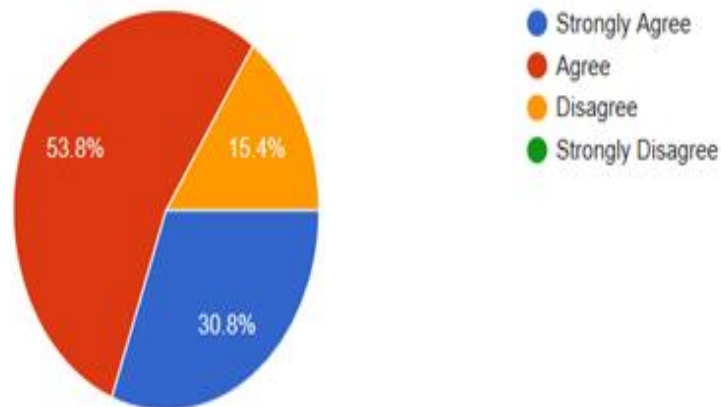


Figure 4.16 highlights the finding that most second-level teachers who completed the questionnaire agreed that there was a collaborative culture which was characterised by mutual support in their school (60%). However, a variety of perspectives were expressed in the interviews whereby teachers suggested that the collaborative culture could be improved. Interviewees recommended that individual teachers should share their subject resources amongst all teaching staff in their respective departments.

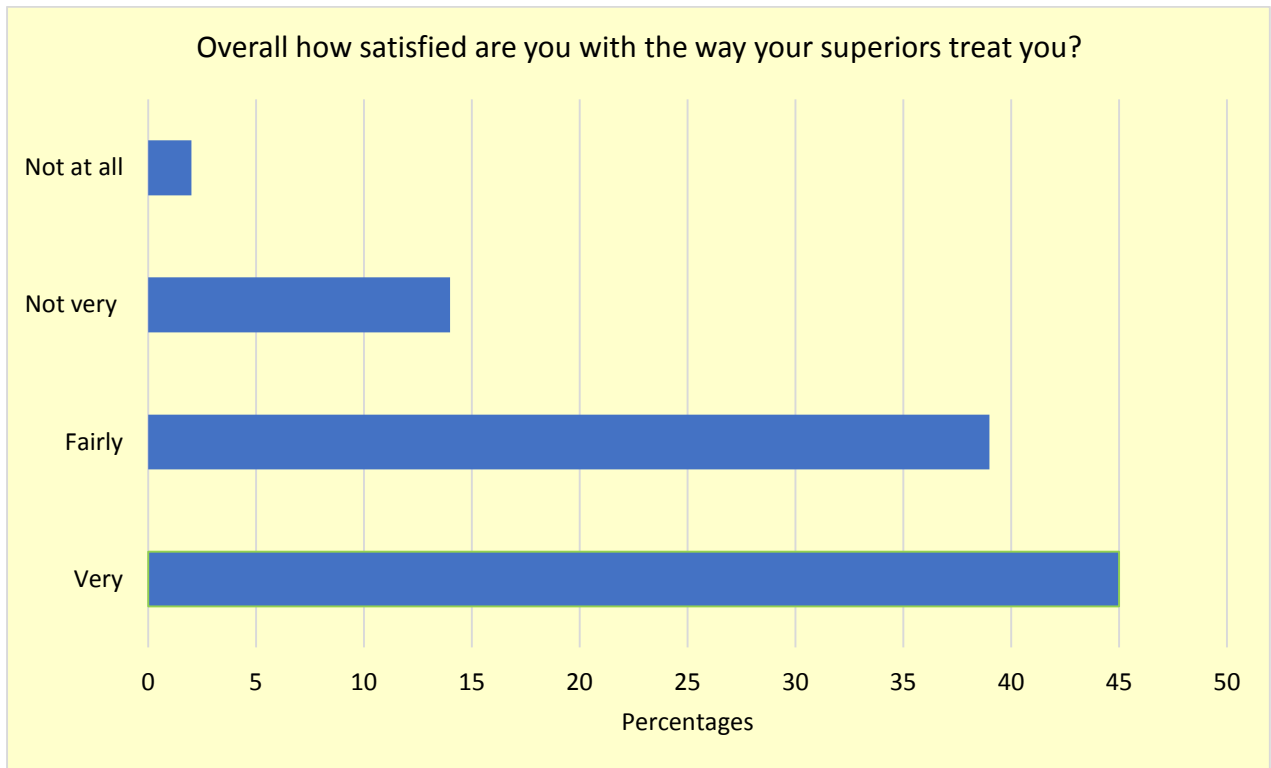
Figure 4.17: Colleagues Trust and Appreciate You

In general would you agree that your colleagues trust and appreciate you?
65 responses



The most interesting aspect of this graph from figure 4.17 was that most of the second-level teachers agreed that their colleagues trusted and appreciated them (53.8%) while (30.8%) strongly agreed with this statement. Results from interviews suggest that some teachers felt that colleagues didn't trust and appreciate them and that teachers generally didn't get on well together in their school.

Figure 4.18: Superiors Treatment Towards You.

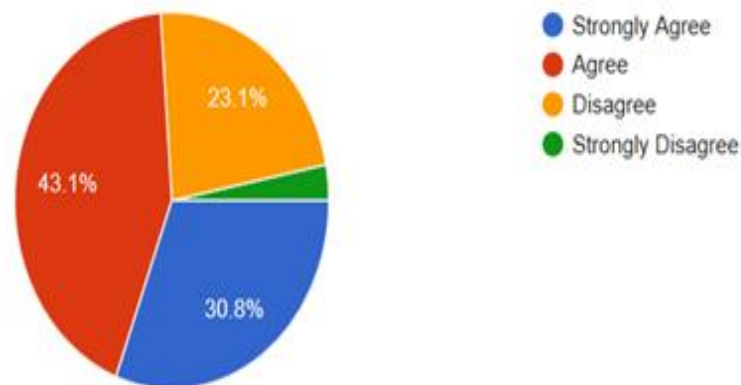


A large majority of teachers (84%) indicated that they were satisfied with the way their superiors treated them. However, themes that came up in the interviews focused more so on reasons for dissatisfaction. Examples of where teachers felt unsatisfied with the way their superiors treated them, was in the lack of acknowledgement for extra-curricular work that had been done with students. Furthermore, superiors lack of support towards teachers who implemented strict school rules and procedures was a clear source of dissatisfaction for many teachers who were interviewed.

Figure 4.19: Superiors Treatment Towards Staff

Do you feel your superiors behaviour towards teaching staff is positive and supportive in general?

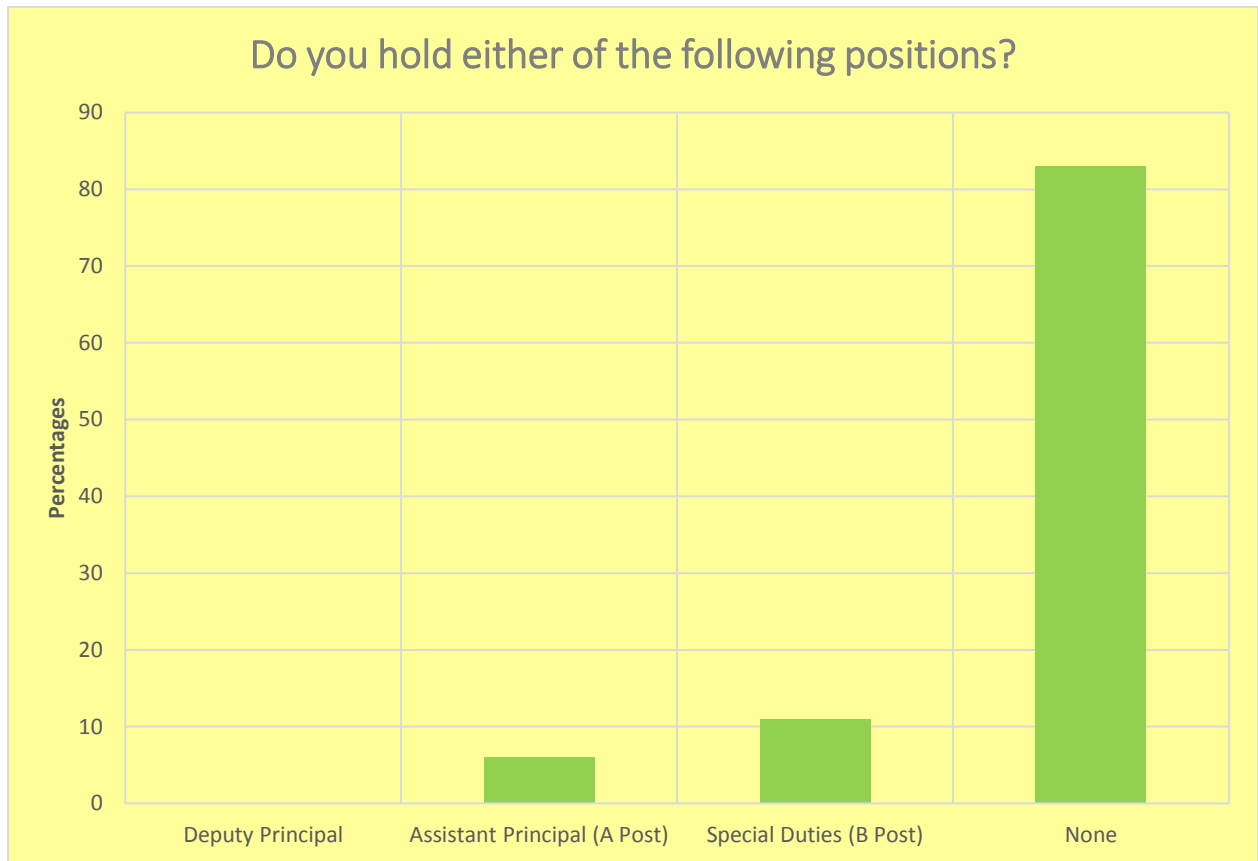
65 responses



Close inspection of the pie chart above in figure 4.19 tells us that the majority of teachers agreed (43.1%) or strongly agreed (31%), that their superiors behaviour towards teaching staff was positive and supportive in general. Results from interviews suggest that some teachers were satisfied with their superiors behaviour towards teaching staff was positive and supportive with some indicating that their superiors were very approachable. However, some teachers were also dissatisfied with their superiors behaviour towards teaching staff in their school. Examples demonstrating this dissatisfaction was in the clear lack of support for implementing school rules. Furthermore, the lack of engagement from superiors with temporary teachers was also noted as being a contributor to dissatisfaction. Some suggestions were made as to how superiors behaviour towards them could be improved - taking feedback from everyone and listening to their opinions, giving all teachers more responsibilities and more efficient delegation of responsibilities and in addition management could be more positive and interested in teachers lives.

4.7 - Promotional Opportunities

Figure 4.20: Type of Teaching Post

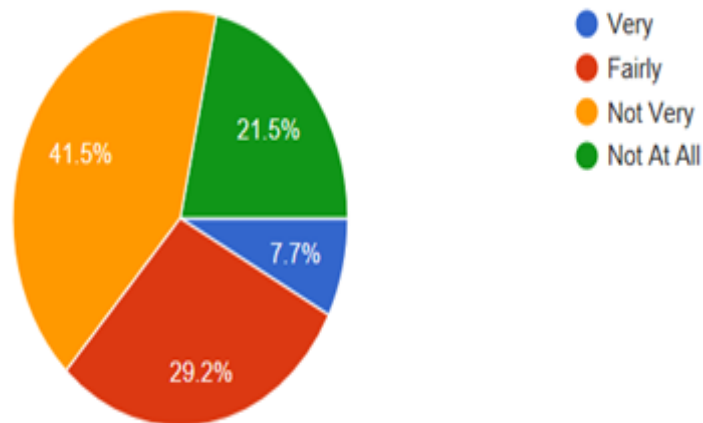


What is apparent from this graph in figure 4.20 is that 83% of teachers didn't hold either a deputy principal, assistant principal or special duties post. These results were somewhat similar to those in the interviews, where none of the respondents held promotional posts of responsibilities.

Figure 4.21: Satisfaction with Levels of Promotional Opportunities

Overall are you satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available within in your school?

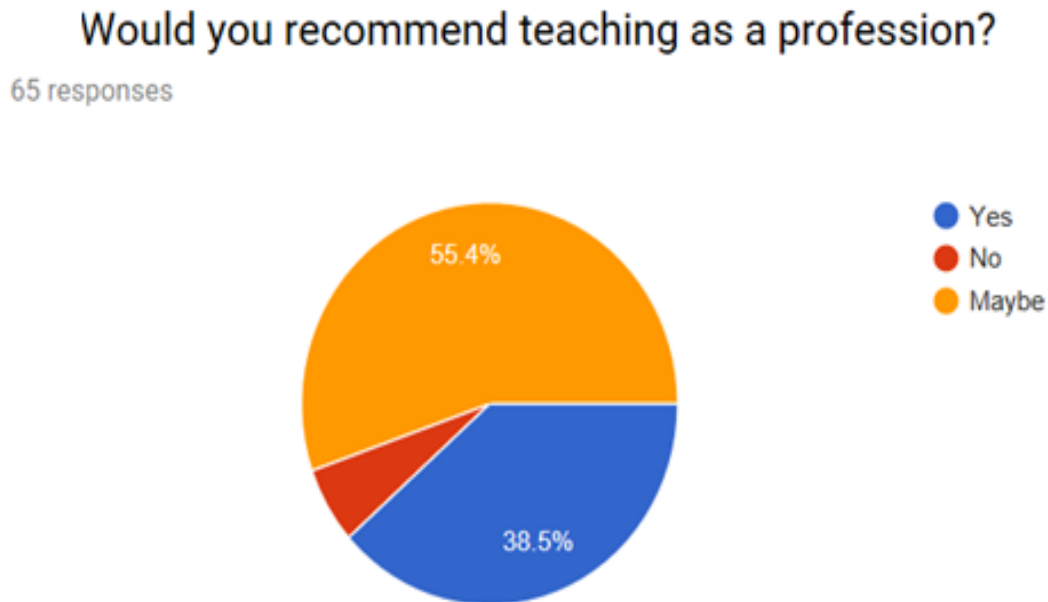
65 responses



The most striking result to emerge from the data in figure 4.21 is that 63% of teachers were not satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available within their school. A common view amongst interviewees was that many teachers were unsatisfied with the level of promotional opportunities in their second-level schools as they felt there was very little opportunity to be promoted. However, they stressed that the lack of promotional opportunities wasn't only in their school but a nationwide problem instigating that there were no promotional opportunities for newly qualified teachers throughout Ireland. Examples whereby teachers demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the promotional opportunities in their second-level school was with the promotional process stressing that it was unfair as 'the best person for the job won't get it.' To improve on this issue, suggestions were made stating that newly qualified teachers could be offered tutor positions to improve experience and job satisfaction. Furthermore, on a nationwide strategy of removing the moratorium which has limited the number of promotional posts of responsibilities being made available.

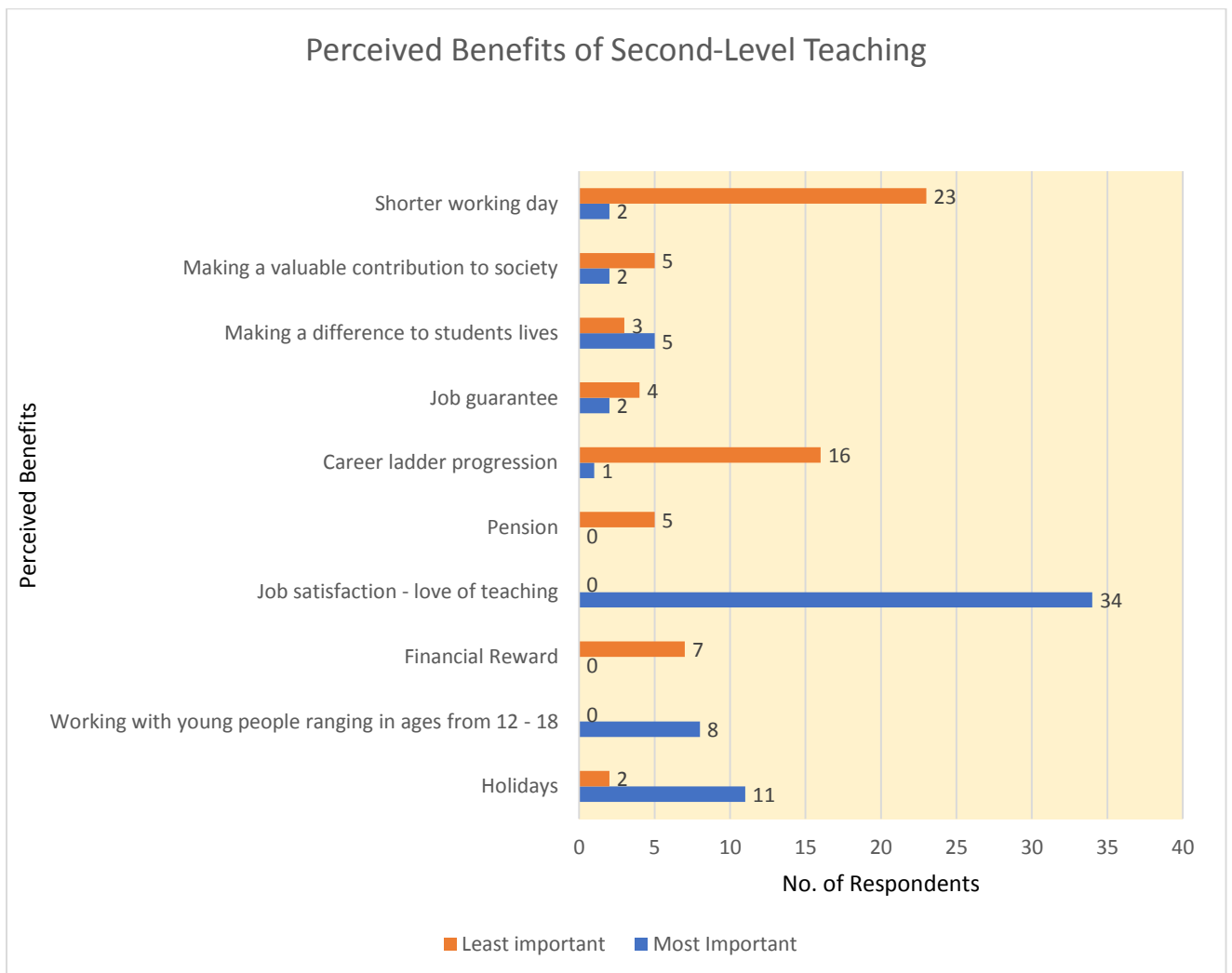
4.8 - Views on the Attractiveness to the Teaching Profession

Figure 4.22: Recommend Teaching as a Profession



Surprisingly, only just over a third of participants (39%) would recommend teaching as a profession. A variety of opinions were expressed by teachers in the interviews, with some recommending and others who would not recommend teaching as a profession. Many of the reasons given for recommending teaching as a profession to younger people would be the holidays, love of the subject, educating the youth, promotions, development, involvement in extra-curricular activities, suits those with families, very fulfilling, varied work-day and lots of student-interaction. However, most teachers stated that they might only recommend teaching to young people if they were prepared to work on short-term contracts and take part-time hours for a number of years and stipulated that it was suited to younger people who had no dependents and few bills. However, some teachers wouldn't recommend it due to its unpredictability, lack of job support and appreciation of work from: management, parents, community and students.

Figure 4.23: Perceived Benefits of Second-Level Teaching



Overall, it is clear from the chart in figure 4.23, that teachers felt job satisfaction – love of teaching was the most important benefit associated with teaching along with holidays and working with young people ranging in ages from twelve to eighteen. Shorter working day and career ladder progression were the least important benefits associated with the teaching profession. These results were aligned with the views amongst teachers in the interviews.

4.9 - Summary

These results provided significant insights into teacher satisfaction levels. Many second-level teachers regarded 'job satisfaction-love of teaching' as being the most important benefit associated with teaching. Most teachers were satisfied with their contracts of employment, student-teacher relations and staff-relationships. A major finding was that only a third of second-level teachers would recommend teaching as a profession. This is most likely due to issues with wages and promotional opportunities. Most teachers did not hold promotional posts of responsibility and under a half of teachers were satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available within their second-level school. Furthermore 'career ladder progression' was cited as being one of the least important benefits associated with second-level teaching. In addition, less than half of teachers agreed that their wages were sufficient to pay their important bills and expenses. Many teachers disagreed that their wages reflected the level of effort provided in their daily teaching as many worked extra hours outside of their contracted hours. This result is further compounded by the finding that many teachers indicated that 'shorter working day' was another least important benefit to second-level teaching.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1 – Introduction

Several studies exist on teacher satisfaction from a national and international context however as this has not been examined comprehensively in the context on second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland, this study set out with the aim of exploring satisfaction levels of teachers in a number of second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland. Acknowledging the importance of this issue, this chapter will illustrate the findings of this study and how they are linked to previous research on student-teacher relations, pay, contracts of employment, promotional opportunities, staff-relations and furthermore second-level teachers' opinion on the overall attractiveness to the teaching profession.

5.2 - Discussion

Overall, research from this study found that Irish teachers were generally satisfied in their profession even though this did not correspond to previous literature which found that Irish teachers except for Poland had lower teacher satisfaction levels compared to other countries internationally (Shiel, Perkins and Gilleece, 2009).

5.2.1 - Student-Teacher Relations

The links between student-teacher relations and teacher satisfaction have long been established. With respect to student-teacher relations, previous studies from Shiel, Perkins and Gilleece, (2009) found a positive correlation between student-teacher relations and teacher job satisfaction, which was an important determinant for increasing student's educational performance (Hamre et al., 2006). Not surprisingly, the findings of the present research indicated that teachers felt that they got on well with students in their school and

held student's well-being as being important. Acknowledging the significance of this subject, preceding literature has shown that teacher job satisfaction was positively related to effective classroom discipline (Shiel, Perkins and Gilleece, 2009; Perie and Baker, 1997). As mentioned in the literature review, teachers who maintained effective classroom management and had limited student discipline issues experienced more teacher satisfaction (Darmody and Smyth, 2011). The findings of this present research indicated that teachers felt valued and respected by students in their school. Teachers must have the ability to implement effective classroom management system whereby teachers feel respected and valued, this in turn will improve student-teacher relations. This result was surprising given most questionnaire participants were from a younger demographic of 24-29 years of age, with just over a quarter having up to four years teaching service and only 6% of teachers having permanent contracts. This finding does not corroborate with that of previous studies which have indicated that Irish teachers with permanent contracts reported improved effective classroom discipline, due to the length of teaching service (Shiel, Perkins and Gilleece, 2009). As discussed in chapter two, student-teacher relations were also associated with effective communication and student engagement, autonomy, daily interaction and school climate. The current study found a large proportion of teachers were interested in what students had to say and felt that their school provided students with opportunities to make valuable contributions to school decision-making. A possible reason for this is that teachers and schools must be continuously developing and listening to feedback from students to improve and maintain a positive school climate, therefore students must have an effective medium whereby they are free to make valuable contribution to school decision-making. These results are consistent with data from previous findings which found that daily communication and student engagement were important in developing a positive school climate which resulted in teacher satisfaction (Smyth et al., 2007; Taylor and Tashakkori, 1995; Bishay, 1996). Existing research from

(Oldfather, 1995) had identified that students highly regarded giving feedback to teachers as being vital, thus sustaining student-participation and students feeling of control over their learning (Johnson, 1991) and ultimately improving student-teacher relations. Overall, student-teacher relations are deemed to be positive and these results supported additional findings in the current study which indicated that ‘working with young people ranging in ages from 12 – 18’ as being in the top three perceived benefits of teaching which corroborated with previous international studies from Yong (1995) who also found working with young people to be an important decider in attracting people towards a teaching career.

5.2.2 - Pay

Another issue that has been found to influence teacher satisfaction relate to pay. Some previous findings specify that pay affects teacher satisfaction levels while others indicate that it has little or no impact. However, given the relatively recent industrial action in which pay inequality was an issue (O’Brien, 2016) one unanticipated finding of the present research indicated that 82% of teachers were satisfied with their pay. A possible explanation for this is that Irish teacher’s pay is higher than the European average (IBF Internal Consulting, 2013). Furthermore, these results are in accordance with previous studies which found that pay was an important determinant of teacher satisfaction (Lee, 2006; Ul Haq and Hasnain, 2014) however international research from Perie and Baker (1997) found that pay was insignificant in determining teacher satisfaction levels. It is interesting to note that less than half of teachers in this study agreed that their wages were sufficient to pay their important expenses and bills. This inconsistency may be due to a large proportion of teachers in this study being employed in temporary contracts and contracts of indefinite duration (94%), which may not necessarily be based on full-time hours, nevertheless pay per hour is satisfactory. The results of this study indicated that teachers disagreed that their wage levels reflected the level of

effort they provided in their teaching jobs. It seems possible that these results are due to the increasing demand for participation in extra-curricular activities, workload and time-pressures that teachers are currently experiencing in the Irish education system. Furthermore, previous literature on teacher satisfaction by Ul Haq and Hasnain (2014) identified heavy workloads to be a determinant in causing teacher dissatisfaction and most significant factor influencing teacher's burnout (Tang and Yeung, 1999).

5.2.3 - Contracts of Employment

In addition to student-teacher relations and pay, contracts of employment have also been found to impact on teacher satisfaction levels. The findings of the present research indicate that most Irish teachers held either continuous and temporary contracts (94%) and the majority of participants were aged between 24 – 29 years. Furthermore, only 6% of participants in this study had permanent contracts. This figure was not representative of the Irish national average and was significantly lower compared to 25% of under 30 year olds who held permanent contracts (Shiel, Perkins and Gilleece, 2009). The main likely cause for the low numbers of teachers in permanent positions may be attributed to the over-supply of second-level teachers in Ireland which has resulted in a high demand for permanent positions. As discussed in chapter two, an economic downturn can contribute to attracting people to a career in teaching (IBF Internal Consulting, 2013) consequently the Irish economic downturn in Ireland since 2008 would have contributed to the growing over-supply of Irish teachers in recent years. What is surprising is that most teachers were satisfied with their contracts of employment even though only 6% had permanent positions. This result is most likely due to 59% of respondents having continuous contracts of indefinite duration (CIDs) which may somewhat contribute to giving teachers a sense of job security. This substantiates findings from Schmidt (1999) who found that temporary or contract staff reported higher satisfaction

levels compared to employees with permanent contracts possibly as a result of the eagerness, passion and challenges that exist in having a new job. Another unanticipated finding is that a large proportion (over a half) of teachers were satisfied with the level of job security in their school. Again, this may be explained by the fact that over half of second-level teachers in this survey had contracts of indefinite duration. As mentioned in the literature review, job security is classed as one of Herzberg's hygiene factors, which exists to ensure that workers do not become dissatisfied e.g. absence of job security will create job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al,1959). However, one explanation for the large proportion of teachers being satisfied with the level of job security in the school must be due to other motivational factors such as; work itself (love of teaching), growth, recognition and achievement that must be held accountable for improving teachers job satisfaction (Herzberg et al,1959). On the contrary, findings in the present study whereby a significant proportion of teachers were not satisfied with promotional opportunities could not be attributed to satisfaction with job security. However, the finding that 'job satisfaction – love of teaching' was regarded as the highest perceived benefit of teaching and could be attributed to the high levels of satisfaction with job security in this study.

5.2.4 - Staff – Relations

International research has identified the influence that staff-relations has on teacher satisfaction. In reviewing the literature on staff-relations, it was found that effective communication and engaging in collaboration with other staff members increased teacher satisfaction (Kyriacou, 2001). These results are consistent with research from Van Maele and Van Houtte, (2012) who found that teachers who experienced positive relations with the other staff members enhanced their teaching and learning effectiveness. This existing literature

supports findings from the present study and one interesting finding is that second-level teachers agreed that there was a collaborative culture which was characterised by mutual support in their school. It seems possible that this result was due to autonomous and uncompetitive nature of teaching, whereby teachers help and support each other to elevate their teaching performance with the aim of improving student's educational outcomes. Another important finding was that second-level teachers were satisfied with the way their superiors treated them and all teaching staff in their school. This result may be related to the fact that teaching is typically a stressful profession and many principals are aware of the importance of providing support and implementing measures whereby teachers feel valued. These results corroborated with previous studies which have shown that school management and leadership impacts upon teachers' level of job satisfaction (Lee, 2006; Tran and Lam Le, 2015; Ma and MacMillan, 1999; Morgan and O'Leary, 2004). Furthermore, existing literature on teacher satisfaction found that lack of support from school management, negative relationship with the principal can result in teacher stress (De Nobile and McCormick, 2005). Additional international evidence from the literature found that stress and dis-satisfaction results in teacher absenteeism, burn-out and adversely affect student's educational performance (Kyriacou, 1987; Aho, Pitkanen and Sahlberg 2006).

5.2.5 - Promotional Opportunities

Very little national literature was found on teacher satisfaction in relation to promotional opportunities. Contrary to expectations, most teachers who took part in this study did not hold any promotional posts. This result may be explained by a number of reasons; the current moratorium in the Irish education system, which means that promotional posts of responsibilities of special duties (B posts) or assistant principal (A posts) are not allowed to

be created, however only some A posts may be filled only if deemed necessary (Department of education and skills, 2016b). In addition, another reason for this finding could be as a result of teaching experience that participants had, as the majority of participants had less than eight years teaching service – the moratorium is in place since 2009 which means that a lot of teachers surveyed were not qualified teachers when it was possible to avail of these promotional posts of responsibilities. Previous literature found that second-level teachers who had higher responsibility levels had improved teacher job satisfaction (Bishay, 1996). It is interesting to note the results of this study indicate that a large proportion of teachers were not satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available within their school, although many teachers were aware that this was not the schools fault but a nationwide issue. In addition, results from the present research indicated that career ladder progression was regarded as being one of the least perceived benefits of teaching. It seems that satisfaction with promotional opportunities is important in developing teacher satisfaction levels. In reviewing the literature, job status and career development opportunities and rank were important determinants of teacher job satisfaction (Lee, 2006; George, Louw and Badenhorst, 2008).

5.2.6 - Views on the Attractiveness to the Teaching Profession

What is surprising is that findings of the present research indicated that only just over a third of teachers would recommend teaching as a profession. A possible explanation for this result may be due to issues with wages and promotional opportunities. This finding is somewhat consistent with those obtained in a Brazilian study of second-level students, who found that students were not attracted to a career in the teaching profession (De Almeida et al, 2010). Another unanticipated finding is that 6% of teachers who took part in this research, said they that wouldn't recommend teaching as a profession. This result may be explained by the

previous finding in this study that many participants were aged between 24-29 and were working in temporary and continuous contracts (94%) which is far higher than the European average of 75% of teachers under the age of 30, as indicated Shiel, Perkins and Gilleece (2009). In addition, these teachers may not be on full-time hours with less than half agreeing that their wages were sufficient to pay their important bills and expenses and may be finding it difficult to obtain mortgages due to the non-permanent nature of their contracts. These findings are in line with those from previous literature which illustrated that high teaching salary, levels of autonomy, public perception of teachers and unemployment levels have motivated people towards a career in teaching (IBF Internal Consulting, 2013). Several studies found that lack of teacher satisfaction (Struyven and Vanthournout, 2014), poor pay and working conditions, discipline issues and lack of social recognition were contributing factors as to why teachers left the teaching profession early (De Almeida et al, 2010). Additionally, results shown in chapter four demonstrated that teachers felt that their wage levels did not reflect the effort that they provided in their daily teaching job, suggesting that many teachers worked long hours after the school working day had ended. As expected, this study found that shorter working days was one of the least important benefits associated with the teaching profession. The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that second-level teachers identified 'job satisfaction – love of teaching' followed by 'holidays' and finally 'working with young people ranging in ages from twelve to eighteen' to be the most important benefits associated with the teaching profession. These results demonstrate that most participants were attracted to a teaching career for reasons other than wages and promotional opportunities. Several studies on the attractiveness to the teaching profession have shown that the opportunity to work with children (Yong, 1995), share knowledge, satisfaction gained from helping young people and love of the subject (De Almeida et al,

2010), influencing children and interesting work were important determinants in deciding to become a teacher (Hargreaves et al,2006).

5.3 - Reflection

Overall, it seems that teachers in Ireland are generally satisfied. It is interesting to note that only just over a third of teachers would recommend teaching as a profession. Most teachers who took part in this survey were satisfied with student-teacher relations and staff-relations in their school. Some teachers were undecided on whether they would or wouldn't recommend teaching as a career choice, with just over a half stipulating that they 'might' recommend teaching as a career choice. Some teachers expressed reasons for their answers was due to issues with wages and promotional opportunities. Although, most teachers were generally satisfied with pay, they weren't satisfied that their wages were an adequate reflection in the effort they put into their job and they weren't sufficient to pay important bills and expenses. Most participants didn't hold promotional posts and almost a half were not satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities in their school however some noted that it was due to the moratorium and not the schools issue. Although, very few of these teachers had permanent contracts, the majority of teachers were satisfied with their contracts of employment and level of job security in their school. Over half of teachers had contracts of indefinite duration. As discussed previously, a relatively recent rule was introduced in the last number of years whereby teachers can gain CID status on entering their third years teaching service (this was previously on entering the fifth year). This could be the reason for teacher's satisfaction with their contracts. Most participants were from a younger demographic of 24-29 year olds, with over a half having less than eight years of teaching experience with 94% on temporary and continuous contracts. Many participants in this study indicated that 'job satisfaction – love of

teaching' as being the most important benefit associated with teaching and so it can be assumed that given the issues with wages and promotional opportunities that this was a motivational influence in teacher satisfaction.

5.4 - Limitations and Further Research

- This research has some limitations. Most participants in the questionnaire were female, aged between 24 – 29 years and most had less than eight years teaching experience and did not have permanent contracts which reduced the diversity of results achieved. As this was a means of providing feedback for teachers, whereby many could give their views and this may have been a reason for the high uptake in the younger demographic of participants in the study. In addition, further research could be done specifically aimed towards newly qualified teachers as to gather evidence on specific issues that are affecting them.
- Given the lack of participation from eleven second-level schools, a balance of genders may have been achieved if there had been more participation in the survey which could have generated a wider range of results.
- On reflection of these results, future research should include a question asking how many hours teachers have in their contracts of employment. Although participants may have CID contracts, this doesn't necessarily mean they have full-time hours and so this may have resulted in the dissatisfaction with wages in paying important bills and expenses. Knowledge on how many hours participants had would have been very useful in analysing satisfaction levels with various issues presented in results.
- Time was a limitation in the number of topics that was examined in this study. Future research on teacher satisfaction levels could include the following areas: workload,

administration duties, substitution and supervision, class-sizes, trade union membership and extra-curricular activities. Research questions that still could be asked as to the extent to which workload affects teacher satisfaction levels, this could include time spent doing extra-curricular activities and engaging in extra classes to support weaker students.

5.5 – Summary

This chapter discussed the key factors which have caused Irish second-level teachers satisfaction in the midlands of Ireland and discussed these issues in accordance with national and international literature. Support was found for links between maintaining positive student-teacher relations, the importance of having strong relations with staff and maintaining effective and supportive leadership to aid teacher satisfaction. Unexpectedly, only a third of second-level teachers indicated that they would recommend teaching as a profession, although most teachers were satisfied with student-teacher relations, staff-relationships and contracts of employment in their schools. This study found other key factors to be causing dissatisfaction in the teaching profession such as issues with wages and promotional opportunities. Many participants did not hold promotional posts of responsibility and less than half of teachers were satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available and furthermore, ‘career ladder progression’ was cited as being one of the least important benefit associated with second-level teaching. Furthermore, less than half of teachers agreed that their wages were sufficient to pay their important bills and expenses and most teachers disagreed that their wages reflected the level of effort provided in their daily teaching. Despite issues with wages and promotional opportunities overall present research indicates that Irish teachers are satisfied in their teaching profession. The next chapter provides key conclusions and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

6.1 – Key Conclusions

In conclusion, this study explored satisfaction levels of teachers in second-level schools in the midlands of Ireland. Overall, Irish teachers who took part in this study were satisfied in their teaching profession. The study concludes that second-level teachers in Ireland were satisfied with student-relations and staff-relations in their school, whereby they feel supported and encouraged. Findings from this study indicated that most teachers were satisfied with their contracts of employment even though a small number of participants had permanent teaching positions, this is most likely due to over half having contracts of indefinite duration.

Surprisingly, only a third of second-level teachers indicated that they would recommend teaching as a profession and this may be due to issues with wages and promotional opportunities. Second-level teachers were satisfied with their pay, however suggested that their wages weren't satisfactory for the effort that they provided in their daily teaching job and furthermore less than half indicated that it wasn't satisfactory to pay bills and expenses. Promotional posts of responsibility were not held by most of the teachers and unexpectedly less than half of teachers were satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available. Moreover, findings indicate that 'career ladder progression' was the least important benefit associated with second-level teaching. Thus, indicating that although they were unhappy with the level of promotional opportunities, it was no cause for concern due to it being one of the least important benefits to teaching. Albeit, these findings would suggest that issues with wages or promotional posts have not affected teacher's overall satisfaction levels as other areas are more valued such as 'job-satisfaction – love of teaching,' 'holidays,' and 'working with young people ranging in ages from 12 – 18' which were the top three most important benefits to teaching. Further views expressed by teachers highlighted the need for changes to be made regarding pay and promotional posts before they would commit to recommending a career in teaching. Overall, findings suggest that teachers were generally satisfied in their

career. However, dissatisfaction with promotional opportunities and wages raise intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent of the future supply of teachers to the profession and have important implications for the Irish Government in maintaining and improving teacher satisfaction.

6.2 – Recommendations

Overall teachers are satisfied in their teaching profession however issues with wages and promotional availability are predominantly highlighted as causing the most dissatisfaction amongst second-level teachers in the midlands of Ireland. Most importantly, it is recommended that the Irish Government takes note of these important findings and make small changes such as equalising pay for all teachers, limiting college intake for teacher training courses thus reducing the over-supply of teachers and finally lifting the moratorium thus providing more promotional posts of responsibilities for teachers which in turn would improve teacher satisfaction levels. These changes would further elevate teachers' satisfaction levels and thus avoid any future industrial action.

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APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHERS JOB SATISFACTION LEVELS IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS IN THE MIDLANDS OF IRELAND.

Instructions: Please answer all questions which follow by ticking the relevant boxes provided. All information provided by you will be entirely anonymous and will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Please tick as appropriate.

Q1 Are you: Male Female

Q2 Are you aged between:

18 – 23 years 24 – 29 years 30 – 35 years

36 – 41 years 42 - 47 years 48 or above

Q3 How many years have you been a qualified teacher?

Less than 1 year 1 – 4 years 5 – 6 years

7 – 8 years 9 – 20 years 21 or more years

Student-Teacher Relationships

Q4 Would you agree that in general, students and teachers usually get on well with one another in your school?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q5 Overall, would you agree that many teachers in your school believe that students' well-being is important?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q6 In general, would you agree that many teachers in your school are interested in what students have to say?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q7 Would you agree that in general, your school provides students with opportunities to make valuable contributions to school decision-making.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q8 Overall, would you agree that your students respect your classroom rules?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q9 Do you agree that in general your students' value you as a teacher?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Pay

Q10 Which of the following best suits your satisfaction levels' regarding your pay in general?

- Very Fairly Not Very Not at all

Q11 In general, would you agree that your wages are sufficient to pay your important bills and expenses?

- Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q12 Overall, would you agree that your wage levels reflect the level of effort that you provide in your teaching job.

- Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Contracts of Employment

Q13 Which type of teaching contract do you have at present?

Note:

- *Continuous: contracts of indefinite duration.*
- *Temporary: casual part-time teaching contract, non-casual part-time teaching contract, or pro-rata contracts.*
- *Probationary contracts: contracts of probationary employment.*

- Continuous Temporary Probationary Permanent

Q14 In general, how satisfied are you with your contract of employment?

- Very Fairly Not Very Not at all

Q15 How satisfied in general are you with the level of job security in your second-level school?

- Very Fairly Not Very Not at all

Staff-Relations

Q16 In general, would you agree that there is a collaborative culture which is characterised by mutual support in your school?

- Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q17 In general, would you agree that your colleagues trust and appreciate you?

- Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Q18 Overall, how satisfied are you with the way your superiors treat you?

- Very Fairly Not Very Not at all

Q19 Do you feel your superiors' behaviour towards teaching staff is positive and supportive in general?

- Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Promotional Opportunities

Q20 Do you currently hold either of the following positions?

- Deputy Principal Assistant Principal (A post)
 Special Duties (B Post) None

Q21 Overall, are you satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities available within in your school?

- Very Fairly Not Very Not at all

Views on the Attractiveness to the Teaching Profession

Q22 The following is a list of some of the perceived benefits associated with post-primary teaching. Please rank them in order of importance of their benefit to you.

1 = most important 10 = least important.

- Holidays
- Working with young people ranging in ages from 12 – 18
- Financial Reward
- Job Satisfaction – love of teaching
- Pension
- Career ladder progression
- Job guarantee
- Making a difference to students' lives
- Making a valuable contribution to society
- Shorter working day

Q23 Would you recommend teaching as a profession?

- Yes No Maybe

Thank-you for your valuable contribution to this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON SECOND-LEVEL TEACHERS

JOB SATISFACTION LEVELS' IN ONE SECOND-LEVEL

SCHOOLS IN THE MIDLANDS OF IRELAND.

Could you please state your gender? _____

How old are you? _____

How many years have you been a qualified teacher? _____

Student-Teacher Relationships

Q1 Tell me what you think about student-teacher relationships in your school e.g. do teacher and students generally get on?

- In general, what ideas would you have to improve student-teacher relations
- Interested in what students have to say
- Contribute in school decision-making
- Respect your classroom rules
- Value you as a teacher

Pay

Q2 What are your general views on pay in the second-level teaching profession

Are you satisfied with your own level of pay

Contracts of Employment

Q3 What are your views on contracts of employment and job security in the teaching profession

Tell me how you think the level of job security could be improved

Staff-Relations

Q4 Tell me what you think about staff-relations in your school e.g. do teachers and staff generally get on

- Collaborative culture

- Positive and supportive culture

- Colleagues

- Superiors

Tell me how you think the culture of the school could be improved

Promotional Opportunities

Q5 Tell me what your views are on promotional opportunities in your school

Overall, are you satisfied with the level of promotional opportunities in your school

Views on the Attractiveness to the Teaching Profession

Q6 Would you recommend teaching as a profession?

APPENDIX 3 – LETTER REQUESTING ACCESS (QUESTIONNAIRES)

Sender's Address

Date: 20th February 2017

Receiving address here

RE: ACCESS LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear X,

My name is Charlene Minnock and I am a second-level teacher in X, currently completing my Masters of Advanced Business Practice at Athlone Institute of Technology in Athlone, Co. Westmeath. The purpose of this letter is to request your support in conducting research for my thesis. The proposed title of my thesis research is *'Teachers Satisfaction Levels' in Second-Level Schools in the Midlands of Ireland.*

The objectives of my research are:

- (a) to examine the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to:
 - student-teacher relationships
 - contracts of employment
 - staff-relations
 - promotional opportunities
 - pay
- (b) to examine Irish secondary school teachers' views on the attractiveness to the teaching profession

I would appreciate if you would grant me the opportunity to conduct research with teachers in your school. To obtain a more diverse and in-depth range of answers to the research question, I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct my research via questionnaires and interviews.

I would appreciate the opportunity to provide you with a box of questionnaires to be distributed to all teaching staff within your school. I intend to deliver the questionnaires Monday 6th March and will provide a box so that all candidates can return questionnaires. I propose to collect the questionnaire box from your school on Monday 13th March.

I will protect respondent's privacy and anonymity throughout the entire research process.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I undertake to provide you with a copy of the entire thesis upon completion of the study.

This thesis will be conducted under the supervision of Stephanie Duffy. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me (087) 7958072 / charlenoelleminnock@yahoo.co.uk or my supervisor stephanieduffy@ait.ie. Thank you for your consideration and time in this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Charlene Minnock

Athlone Institute of Technology

APPENDIX 4 – LETTER REQUESTING ACCESS (QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS)

Sender's Address

Date: 20th February 2017

Receiving address here

RE: ACCESS LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear X,

My name is Charlene Minnock and I am a second-level teacher in X, currently completing my Masters of Advanced Business Practice at Athlone Institute of Technology in Athlone, Co. Westmeath. The purpose of this letter is to request your support in conducting research for my thesis. The proposed title of my thesis research is *'Teachers Satisfaction Levels in Second-Level Schools in the Midlands of Ireland.'*

The objectives of my research are:

- (a) to examine the satisfaction levels in the teaching profession with regards to:
 - student-teacher relationships
 - contracts of employment
 - staff-relations
 - promotional opportunities
 - pay
- (b) to examine Irish secondary school teachers' views on the attractiveness to the teaching profession

I would appreciate if you would grant me the opportunity to conduct research with teachers in your school. To obtain a more diverse and in-depth range of answers to the research question,

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct my research via questionnaires and interviews. I would appreciate the opportunity to provide you with a box of questionnaires to be distributed to all teaching staff within your school. I intend to deliver the questionnaires Monday 6th March and will provide a box so that all candidates can return questionnaires. I propose to collect the questionnaire box from your school on Monday 13th March.

In addition, I propose to interview three candidates from your school with differing levels of teaching experience; one teacher with less than five years' experience, one teacher with between five and twenty years' experience and finally one teacher with more than twenty years' experience. I would appreciate if I could be granted the opportunity to interview candidate one, for half an hour maximum at 5 o'clock on Monday 20th March and candidate two, on Tuesday 21st March and candidate three on Wednesday 22nd March at your school premises or alternatively candidates can contact me to arrange a more convenient time. I can discuss the selection of candidates for interview with you at your convenience.

I will protect respondent's privacy and anonymity throughout the entire research process.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I undertake to provide you with a copy of the entire thesis upon completion of the study. This thesis will be conducted under the supervision of Stephanie Duffy. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me (087) 7958072 / charlenoelleminnock@yahoo.co.uk or my supervisor stephanieduffy@ait.ie. Thank you for your consideration and time in this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Charlene Minnock

Athlone Institute of Technology

TABLE 3.1 - SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Week Number	Event
Week one	Letter requesting access to conduct research were posted to 13 schools
Week two	Follow-up phone-calls to 11 schools
Week three	Questionnaires distributed to three schools
Week four	Collection of questionnaire boxes
Week five	Three participants interviewed (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 5 o'clock)
Week six	Three participants interviewed (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 5 o'clock)