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Teachers' perception of their job-satisfaction in private schools in São Paulo
municipality

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on teachers and teaching in schools, specifically investigates teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction and the interplay between their satisfaction and work conditions in a set of private schools in Brazil. Based on qualitative research, semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the study collected insights from an intentional sample group of 10 teachers who work in different school environments that offer different working conditions for teachers in São Paulo. The results showed that teachers in the study experienced satisfaction by working with and for students, which is the most important element of their perception of satisfaction. In that regard, teachers differentiated the satisfaction in their careers and job. Also, echoing previous studies, the teachers evoked four recurring aspects of the working conditions related to satisfaction; organized through the thematic analysis, they are (i) autonomy, (ii) space for authorship as intrinsic factors, (iii) collective work, as a school-based factor, and (iv) work management, with concerns to extrinsic factors such as overload and remuneration. Findings also suggested that intrinsic factors contributed to their satisfaction, while extrinsic factors, mainly work overload, were seen as problems in their current schools.

Key words: Teaching; Teachers' work conditions; Teachers' job satisfaction; Private Schools; São Paulo.

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INTRODUCTION

People commonly have a positive opinion of teaching importance. There are at least four reasons for that, all related to education's critical role in modern society. First, in many cultures, education is one of the citizen's rights, and teaching is the professional activity of direct contact with students to build this right. Second, based on information and knowledge, modern society made the school the central and dominant practice of education (Tardif, 2012), where teacher-student interaction is constant. Concerning that, education and the teachers' work, besides constituting a social right, is a fundamental condition for exercising other rights, whether civil, political, social or economic (Saviani, 2013). Fourth, regardless of education being primarily a student's right as a citizen, it also impacts the rights of those responsible for them, who can leave their children in a safe environment with professionals capable and prepared for teaching (the Covid-19 pandemic reinforced this aspect of the teachers' work).

Apart from the profession's complexity and importance to society, many academics and policymakers also pay close attention to several challenges faced by educational systems regarding teachers and teaching. One of the core issues is attracting and retaining qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Dolton, 2006; OECD, 2014; Pinto, 2014; Thompson, Mokler & Hogan, 2022). As Parrachione, Rosser and Petersen (2008) mentioned, much of the crucial research on the topic explored the factors that lead teachers' turnover, attrition and leave. However, little research has focused on the "why" and "how" part of the teachers remains in the profession. In that regard, there is a growing number of studies in which the main objective is exploring teachers' satisfaction with their careers and employment and its association with different conditions of schoolwork (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2021).

By the same motivation, this study aims to understand how the teachers in a set of private schools in São Paulo experience the relationship between job satisfaction and work conditions. To address this research purpose, a qualitative research design was built to systematise this dissertation's goal, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten private school teachers to achieve the objective. The research utilised multiple case studies (MCS) by focusing on the participants' reports, all working in different schools in São Paulo, Brazil. Also, the investigation developed a thematic analysis (TA) to analyse the interviews, and themes and its categories were formed as the main findings.

This dissertation will be divided into four chapters. In Chapter One, the reader will find a review of the relevant literature pertaining to the definitions and theories of job satisfaction and private schools, which will lead to specific research aims and questions. Chapter Two will explain the research design and methods. Chapter Three will display the findings from the interviews, while Chapter Four will contain the discussion of these results and present the conclusions of the research.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explores the definitions of job satisfaction and reviews previous studies that have associated job satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with teachers' work conditions. In addition to learning from and presenting the work of academics, this chapter also presents a research gap that this dissertation intends to fill. Finally, it examines private schools in Brazil to explore the context of the participants and then arrives at specific research questions to be answered.

1.1 Teachers' perception of their career and job satisfaction

There are several reasons for claiming the singularity of the teacher's career, and many of them have been explored by scholars. When looking at the tasks done, Tardif (2012) points out that teaching involves double-facet activities. On the one hand, it is a highly regulated profession by local jurisdictions which involves dealing with daily guidelines and bureaucracy. At the same time, it requires high flexibility to address the many informal, undetermined, or unexpected elements which compound a school's routine and student-teacher interactions. Moreover, to build a pedagogical process within the schools, personal commitment and self-fulfilment are necessary for teachers and students (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Thompson, 2021), which is also different from many occupations. Accordingly, cognitive aspects – such as theoretical insights, beliefs about education and political values — and non-cognitive factors like emotion and motivation play a significant role in the profession's singleness (Hargreaves, 1998; Korthagen & Evelein, 2016; Gredinarova, 2020).

The interaction between these characteristics mentioned above blends into the teachers' tasks. However, accurate analysis of the profession also requires examining its social and economic status. The first general challenge is overturning a public mind, reinforced by some policymakers and scholars, that teaching is easy work, straightforward and strictly technical activity (Bartlett, 2004; Ravich, 2008; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). This idea frequently overlooks the expertise and work that goes into teaching to encourage learning (Salhberg, 2021), especially the extra-classroom tasks done by teachers. Along with this misleading low complexity status, in many contexts, there is also general recognition of the profession's scarce pay retribution, poor work conditions and low levels of well-being (OECD, 2019; Thompson, 2021). Thus, more than dealing with the complexities of everyday tasks, it

is fair to say that teachers also navigate through social and economic pressure that can be extremely overwhelming, especially for those beginning their career (Codo, 1999; Jesus & Santos, 2004; Pinto, 2014; Pagani, 2019).

The consequences of these problems that remain unsolved in many contexts is the teachers' shortages and attrition in schools (Ingersoll, 2001; Dolton, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; OECD, 2014; Williams, 2015; IEA, 2018; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Madigan & Kim, 2021; Thompson, Mokler & Hogan, 2022). The literature reveals that the teachers' work intensification is alarming, as there is a societal trend for overworking teachers (Naylor, 2001; Tardif, 2012) in many countries (OECD, 2019; Madero, 2019; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). According to Dinham (1993), there was a significant and potent relationship between increased dissatisfaction and increased stress and workload. Thompson (2021) shows an example in the Global Report on the Status of Teachers 2021. The study presents that the average hours worked without students has increased over the years; however, in many contexts, these working hours are not recognised; consequently, they are not adequately valued and paid.

Considering the context mentioned, over the past years, policymakers and researchers have been increasingly concerned with the profession's status (IEA, 2018). To build a more complex and nuanced understanding of the issue, researchers have been looking beyond traditional measures for assessing work conditions, such as teachers' salaries, contracts, school settings and workload. Analyses concerning the combination between teachers' work conditions and their perception of job satisfaction, for example, have delivered a refreshing approach to the research field, mainly because their findings provide a further understanding of teachers' well-being within schools. As additional research is developed, data on teachers' job satisfaction could prove essential to examining the relationship between teaching from the teachers' perspective and their engagement with educational objectives, leading to the retention on the career (Parrachione, Rosser & Petersen, 2008).

The term "job satisfaction" has a history attached to human resources in a highly accelerated industrial production period. According to Sahito & Vaisanen (2020), job satisfaction as a concept of analysis has been used since the beginning of the 20th century with the seminal work of Frederick Taylor (1998), *The Principles of Scientific Management*. His work looked at the factors that could enhance motivation and productivity among workers. Taylor tried with his thesis to prove a possible

conciliation between capital and labour in a period of high pressure on workers and poor work conditions. It also could be seen as an answer to unions pushing for more labour rights, as well as the advance of socialist ideas and parties across the globe arguing against this conciliation between capital and labour. However, the term had been re-conceptualised for different purposes in history. Furthermore, many scientific areas, such as psychology, law, and education, started addressing the term from their perspectives (Evans, 1997).

One way the topic has been addressed in educational research is by probing for factors that teachers evoke as essential work conditions that satisfy them in their careers and employment. Throughout this scenario and these investigative lenses, teachers have reported to researchers the potential relationship between specific teachers' work conditions and aspects of workplace environments (Donald & Siu, 2001; Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2020; Sims, 2020). Examples of those will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

Regarding framing the concept, Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2015: 181) state teachers' jobs satisfaction as the positive or negative assessments *teachers make* about their work. One virtue of the concept above is that it conveys the teachers' experiences and voices as an analysis facet. Besides an academic analysis of teachers' work conditions and well-being, there is an advantage factor in understanding teachers' evaluations and expectations of their careers in specific locations and educational settings. Also, Skaalvik & Skaalvik's (2015) phrasing of job satisfaction does not individualise workers' perceptions as Evans did: "[...] when the individual perceives her/his job-related needs to be met" (1997: 328). This is important because an assessment of a career could be an ultimate individual act (i.e., responding to a questionnaire or granting an individual interview), but it should be regarded in a dynamic and comparative analysis as careers are also a collective, practical and social experience, and so are its workers' evaluations.

As the literature presents and already mentioned, one common approach to the topic is to pursue the factors related to the teachers' job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. However, one should consider that all the aspects involving the career, tasks, environments and contexts, the teaching social status and the relationships built within schools, mix in their daily routines. In order to systematise the knowledge gathered regarding teachers' job satisfaction and reflect upon the elements driving it, Dinham and Scott (1998; 2000) put forward three domains in which teachers perceive career

satisfaction: intrinsic factors of teaching, extrinsic factors, and school-based components. In the following topics, this study will explore the literature that delved into each of these factors.

1.1.1 The intrinsic factors

The intrinsic factors of teaching specifically concern teaching tasks. According to Dinham and Scott (1998), this domain crosses schools and specificities of locale and broadly affects teachers' perceptions. Examples of this domain that could be cited include working with the students, preparing lessons, colleagues' collective work, and seeing students learn and develop. In that way, studies point out that many sources of job satisfaction are related to working directly with students in classrooms and to the actual tasks related to it (Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006). Reinforcing that, for Ma and MacMillan (1999), evaluation of teachers is often based on affective or subjective judgments of how successfully they meet the instructional tasks and objectives in classrooms.

Following that idea, many studies have looked at the intrinsic aspects of the profession, presenting elements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In that domain, competence and autonomy within teachers' tasks are the two most significant predictors of satisfaction and retention (Albert & Levine, 1988). Toropova, Myrberg and Johansson (2020) suggests that teachers who better evaluate their self-efficacy tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction. In the same direction, Sims (2020) analysed that the teachers who feel competent because they have had the proper training for their everyday tasks are more likely to stay in their careers and are more satisfied. The same is reported regarding teachers' autonomy within their tasks. Teacher autonomy addresses the freedom to select teaching methods and strategies that align with the teacher's pedagogical beliefs and values (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Research shows that teachers who experience high levels of autonomy in their job also perceive more satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; 2010; Sterns et al., 2015; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006). Moreover, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) point out that teachers' autonomy is negatively related to emotional exhaustion and burnout syndrome. Conversely, empirical work shows that programs and job demands that diminish teachers' sense of autonomy and competence harm their perception of satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Fernet et al., 2013).

1.1.2 The extrinsic factors

The extrinsic factors of teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction are related to the educational systems. Extrinsic factors are those not related to the everyday tasks within schools; nonetheless, they can affect the everyday work and routine, such as payment, career progression, educational policies and procedures changes, society's perception of the teachers' work, and other factors. For instance, fair remuneration packages, opportunities for career development and timely promotion have been significantly associated with job satisfaction (Nyamubi, 2017; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020; Madero, 2019). However, as pointed out by the Voluntary Service Overseas (2002) report, while teacher salaries and promotions are essential measures for impacting their positive perception, these policies must come along with an upgrade in the teachers' social status and the social recognition of their vital contribution to society.

Interestingly, according to Dinham and Scott (1998), the literature generally described the extrinsic factors as dissatisfying elements such as unsuitable educational changes. In line with that, Folle et al.'s (2008) study indicates that the main factors of dissatisfaction refer to the social devaluation of the profession, professional instability for temporary positions and the lack of appropriate educational investment. In their study exploring teachers' attrition, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found that dissatisfaction was highly mediated by systemic pressures such as test-based accountability, unhappiness with the lack of administrative support, a languid teaching career and financial reasons. These elements also have influenced society's general perception of teaching; evidence has shown it is rare for students to choose a teaching career for its extrinsic qualities (Yong, 1995; Leme, 2012).

1.1.3 The school-based factors

According to scholars, the school-based factors that affect job satisfaction are related to the specificities of the school settings. Examples include the type of leadership within the school, friendship among the community, pedagogical beliefs and values shared within the school community, location of the school and others. Regarding this domain, studies on job satisfaction and organisational school culture are valuable to explore. In these studies, the authors have shown that positive social relations between teachers and the school administration and students are associated with higher job satisfaction (Simbula et al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b). In the same perspective, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011a; 2019) indicate that teachers who

experienced an inclusive and supportive school environment significantly had a positive perception of their work.

According to the studies above, a school's organisational culture is related to job satisfaction because teachers are keen to share educational goals and values with their colleagues, the school administration and the community. School cultures with these characteristics, expressed in terms of collegiality and collaboration, are usually those organisations which support satisfaction, professional involvement of teachers, and feelings of belonging (Hargreaves, 1994). Madero (2019), looking at Chile, Mexico and Brazil, pointed out that collaboration among teachers and having a culture of participation in the school are essential factors associated with warding off career dissatisfaction. Also interesting, Sterns et al. (2014), by analysing teacher–student ethnic/racial mismatch in schools, found that strong professional communities moderate the possible negative influences of the mismatch, especially on white teachers' job satisfaction. In another study, the authors evidenced that strong professional communities and collective pedagogical culture effectively support high levels of job satisfaction (Sterns et al., 2015).

Another factor influencing teachers' job satisfaction in schools is the administrators' leadership behaviour (Bogler, 2001). As Kottkamp, Mulhern and Hoy (1987) indicate, teachers are more satisfied with their jobs when principals are perceived as democratic leaders and can maintain communication channels with the staff. According to Josanov-Vrgovic and Pavlovic (2014), analysing the Serbia case, a people-oriented administration style positively impacts teachers' satisfaction in school development, management, relationships with colleagues, and teamwork. In that sense, it is not surprising that a collaborative and democratic school administration would maximise teachers' perceptions of satisfaction since schools count on their autonomy and participation; as mentioned, these are important predictors of satisfaction among teachers (Madero, 2019).

1.1.4 Establishing the gap

The studies mentioned are essential in presenting and determining different factors contributing to teachers' satisfaction in educational systems, sectors, school settings and countries. Moreover, all these factors play out in the teachers' everyday lives to build the general perception of satisfaction. As some authors indicate (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2016), most studies on these topics are built on

questionnaires data and quantitative methodologies. Almost all of their research questions are based on “what” questions, searching for the job satisfaction factors and possible generalisations for the educational system. Hence, few studies have tried to understand how teachers navigate these elements by exploring teachers' voices in specific contexts and employing qualitative method approaches.

The studies' research questions, which point to using tools for a qualitative analysis, also presented compelling findings, especially in hearing about how teachers cope with satisfaction and dissatisfaction. According to Sahito and Vaisanen (2016), in the context of the topic, qualitative research is relevant to delineate the personal meanings of the narrated teachers' experiences without losing the richness and genuineness of the responses. For instance, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) showed that the interviewees' sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are the same for teachers regardless of their age and experience. Nonetheless, the consequences of dissatisfaction and stress vary between age groups. While young teachers are more ambitious, work long hours (including weekends) and rest when they can, middle-aged teachers reported using sick leave to take short breaks from work; in a different direction, senior teachers reduce their workloads, accepting lower salaries or partial-disability pensions. For the authors (2015), all of this produces negative consequences for the quality of education and teachers' sense of competence.

Also, very few studies have examined the private sector to evaluate satisfaction among hired professionals in private schools. Papanastasiou and Zembylas (2006) compared the differences in job satisfaction among public and private kindergarten teachers in Cyprus. Their findings show that private school teachers earn less salary, work longer hours, and have fewer holidays. Thus, private kindergarten teachers in the sample were not as satisfied as public kindergarten teachers as they presented worse working conditions and fewer benefits. Also, when comparing private school settings, Crossman and Harris (2006) found significant differences in teacher job satisfaction depending on the type of school. They suggested that teachers in privately-managed and independent schools are more satisfied than those in foundation-managed and Church of England schools, proving that school settings and values are important elements for the debate.

In studies about teacher job satisfaction, the modicum number of research using qualitative tools (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015) and the relatively rare studies investigating the private sector (Cross & Harris, 2006) are clear. In that sense, this

dissertation tries to contribute to the field and the public debate by analysing through qualitative lenses the teachers' perception of their career/job satisfaction in the Municipality of São Paulo, Brazil.

1.2 The private sector in the Brazilian Basic Education

The private sector's involvement and intervention in Brazilian Education are not recent. However, the current growing role of the private sector in Brazil has drawn the scientific community's attention. A mark of this expansion of the Brazilian privatisation process is the range of educational areas it affects, such as state school management, didactic/pedagogical material support, curriculum development, teaching systems and others (Peroni & Scheib, 2017; Adrião, 2018; Adrião & Crosso, 2022). Nevertheless, it is not only in the public budget that the private sector is interested; the private direct education provision also expanded in absolute and relative terms in Brazil (Quibao Neto, 2020) in both basic and higher education. Such growth is a phenomenon that deserves further investigation, especially considering its consequences for the general reckoning of education as a public development (Ravich, 2012).

Looking at the past, although the history of Brazilian education is permeated by the presence of the private sector in education provision (Cunha, 1986; Pinheiro, 2001; Romanelli, 2014), it gained new nuances in the educational field and debate in 1988. In the Federal Constitution (CF/88) of that year, Article 209 reiterated that private schools could become for-profit businesses if they complied with the requirements of the general norms of Brazilian education. In Article 20 (recently changed) of the Education Act of 1996 (LDB, 1996), the ordinary legislation established what categories of private enterprise could participate in the educational field: (a) religious, (b) philanthropic, (c) communal schools, and (d) private in the strict sense, which, unlike the other categories, could earn a profit from the educational activity.

Due to such recognition of for-profit private enterprise in the Brazilian legislation, these categories have been allowed to operate beyond the idea of a supplementary sector to the public system or a religious option for families pursuing schools with specific values and ideological orientations. Since then, this sector has positioned itself as a parallel market in educational provision, pressuring the educational system with its values. In that sense, it generated competition within itself and with the public sector, trying to transform Brazil's right to education for children,

young people and adults into a commodified and individual perspective (Cury, 1992; Quibao Neto, 2020).

As indicated by specialists, this increasing commodification of education follows the guidance of neoliberal policies (Belfield & Levin, 2002; Ball & Yodell, 2007; Klees, 2008; Klees, 2020). As part of an important economic trend in the last quarter of the 20th century, neoliberalism massively impacted how public policies such as education were shaped. Neoliberalism can be seen as a response to the previous state-guided capitalism model where public policies were anticyclical protection against the extreme "commodification" (Polayni, 1944) of society, pushed by market action. In contrast to that form of system administration, neoliberal ethos is guided by a greater devotion to market logic. It sheds light on the poor "efficacy" of government-provided public services (Friedman, 1966). In education, neoliberal theory highlights the role of the public sector as the primary provider of education and its disadvantaged consequences on individuals' freedom/rationale of choice (Friedman, 1955; Tooley, 2014).

When neoliberalism took form inside governments around the globe, it impacted the educational systems. However, it is essential to note that the policies stemming from this framework happened in two layers: first, in "big waves" of implementation across the educational debate as a political/theoretical framework (Ball, 2016; Sahlberg, 2021), then in a "sub-process" that was a product of the interaction between the theoretical framework and the specific settings where the educational policies were implemented (Fitzgerald & Rainnie, 2012). The result is several different education policies that could be outlined as "neoliberal" but have particularities, for they were developed and adapted geographically. An excellent example of this argument is the numerous "privatisation" policies in Latin America depicted by Adrião and Croso (2022).

In Brazil, progress has been made in investigating private providers as a form of privatisation, which has become more complex since the turn of the 21st century. As early as the 2000s, especially in the middle of the decade, direct provision by the private sector continuously increased in basic education. The private growth exceeded, in relative terms, the growth of the public sector, as pointed out by Adrião and Kanno (2018). According to Oliveira (2009), an important part of the growth of private schooling has been linked to the increase in private equity funds, which, in turn, is related to franchises of established schooling systems that have spread across the

country. Additionally, in some localities, existing private schools have expanded their provisions (Dantas, 2018). According to data from the School Census, enrollment in the unsubsidised private sector increased from almost 8% in 2007 to approximately 16% in 2020 (Quibao Neto, 2020).

In addition to exploring the weight of the private sector in Brazilian education, the relevant literature also leads to analyses for understanding the relationship between social classes and the schools they seek. This is a prevalent approach within the field of Sociology of Education in Brazil. Overall, these analyses on the private sector are commonly associated with studies on the education of elites (Quibao Neto, 2020). Considering the above, it is essential to note that Brazil's increase in private education provisions is marked by a heterogeneity associated with distinct economic, social, and cultural niches, not just a privileged economic and social group. Accordingly, the recent relevant literature on schooling strategies for different social classes in Brazil has shown that there is private education provision among economic and cultural elites (Brandão & Lellis, 2003; Brandão, 2007; Brandão & Almeida, 2001; 2003), the middle classes (Nogueira, 2010; Saes, 2005), and in the peripheries of large cities, including low-fee schooling models (Medeiros & Januário, 2014; Dantas, 2018).

Advancements in exploring this sector in its expansion and social aspects, as presented above, have not been met with equivalent advancements in the analysis of private school teachers' work conditions. Few academic studies have focused solely on private sector providers of basic education in Brazil. Some places use teaching working conditions, especially data on teacher remuneration, to compare what happens in the public sector, as in the cases of Moriconi (2008), Barros, Mendonça and Blanco (2001), and Barbosa Filho, Pêsoa and Afonso (2009). As Pinto (2009) comments, these works help overturn a common myth in Brazilian society that private school teachers have better salaries and work conditions than those in the public sector.

In general, the few works that focus only on the studies of teacher remuneration in the private sector are critical to its organisation. Silva (2017) states that in all the studied private schools, the calculation basis for the remuneration of extra-class working hours is not a defined period but a percentage of 5% of the amount paid per class hour. Vargas (2016), looking at private schools in the state of Santa Catarina, noted there was no payment for work performed by teachers outside the classroom. In addition, per other authors, most private schools are workplaces where teachers look

exclusively to generate family income and not to develop a career as a teacher (Alves & Pinto, 2011).

In that sense, with the growth of the private sector in Brazil and the ongoing development of studies exploring that sector, this work tries to contribute to the field, especially regarding private school teachers' work conditions and their perceptions of job satisfaction.

1.3 Research questions

This literature review has explored contiguous issues related to teachers' job specificities, work conditions and perceptions of career satisfaction. Scholars have increasingly examined teachers' work conditions and job satisfaction as problems with teacher attrition and the profession's attractiveness are constant issues many educational systems face. As observed through the reading of many studies in different localities, the source of teacher satisfaction is usually located in the intrinsic factors of the job (e.g., the classroom routine, students' progress and achievements). Conversely, extrinsic factors (e.g., changes in educational policies and financial aspects) are the usual sources of dissatisfaction among the professionals in several educational systems.

Much of the research on teachers' work conditions and job satisfaction has focussed on the "what" research questions, looking for the work condition factors that would correlate with job satisfaction. In that sense, questionnaires are the principle source for data collection, and statistical analyses are applied to achieve the above objective. This is true because most educational research studies employ quantitative analysis to analyse the teachers' work conditions and looking for generalisation claims.

All these studies have made advancements in the field that are key to the educational debate and crucial for interpreting teachers' job satisfaction. As Green (2006) framed, the analyses of work conditions and job quality were too often circumscribed by the salaries and workload, when in fact, researchers should also pay attention to the relationships that those aspects have with other facets of work conditions essential to understand a specific work, such as the relationship between peers. However, quantitative methods using tools like interviews could also lead the researcher to unfold the "lives and perspectives of others" (Agee, 2009: 431) and many contextual elements to explore educational issues (Braun et al., 2011). With that, research might offer different ways to analyse a profession that has been under a lot of social and economic pressure, such as teaching. In addition, it is important to guarantee

that teachers' voices and experiences have space in this debate about their careers, especially in a society where knowledge and schools are essential.

Agee (2009: 433) also suggests that good qualitative questions might probe a process of exploration and discovery of what is happening in a particular situation with a particular person or group. With that in mind and "standing on the shoulders" of the crucial work that has been done in the field, this dissertation tries to "fill the gap" discussed in this literature review and aims to contribute to the debate by endeavouring to answer the main research question: *how do teachers in the studied cases experience the relationship between job satisfaction and work conditions?*

For narrowing and delving into the case studies, the following sub-questions were designed:

1. Among the tasks performed by the interviewed teachers, which of them stands out as the main source of professional satisfaction?
2. What work conditions factors do teachers mention that relate to their perception of satisfaction?
3. From the teachers' perspective, how do the factors of work conditions relate to the specific workplace/context in which they develop their work?

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

This study investigates how teachers in the studied cases experience the relationship between job satisfaction and work conditions. For this aim, three sub-questions were designed. The first aimed to capture the most critical task in teaching that the participants elect as the principal satisfaction driver. Secondly, the study looked at the work conditions factors teachers pointed out during the interviews, which relate to their perception of satisfaction and school settings. The third research question explores how the teachers understand the role of the working conditions and school setting in the satisfaction reported, considering their previous and daily experiences working in the private educational sector.

To systematise the answers and analyse them systematically, a methodology was placed. Thus, this chapter's main objective is to elucidate the measures and stages taken in the research process. It will consider the following aspects: (1) the research design, (2) the philosophical assumptions of the study, (3) the cases analysed, (4) the category of the interviews, (5) data analyses, (6) cross-language research, (7) ethics, (8) positionality, and finally, (9) the limitations of the research.

2.1 Research design

Entering the methodology sphere of this study, it is important to start presenting the research design that reflects the choices made during the research process (Bryman, 2008). However, first, it is necessary to clear some characteristics of the research which helped decide the design. This study considers and explores the diversity within schools' settings in the Brazilian (specifically in São Paulo) private sector context. Thus, instead of examining broader generalisations, it is interested in the specificities of the schools and how this aligns with the teachers' reports of their work conditions and job satisfaction. In different words, the researcher's curiosity transformed into a systematic enquiry (Stenhouse, 1985) lies in the teachers' perceptions, which may converge or diverge from each other since they are experiencing different school settings. Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge that the researcher did not select the participants. As will be clarified in this chapter, they decided to participate in the study spontaneously by receiving the advertisement in the Union's online newspaper (Sinpro-SP), on social media or via indication of other teachers who had previously participated

in the study interview. After having the participants' answers, analysing their profiles and reviewing the schools' characteristics, the researcher decided on the next steps.

This dissertation uses a Multiple Case Study (MCS) focusing on ten participants' reports, each working in different private schools in the São Paulo municipality. According to Yin (2017), MCS are particularly beneficial to research when it aims to explain contemporary circumstances, which is typically followed by the "why" and "how" research questions. In different words, it is common for MCS studies to convey a "holistic and real-word perspective" (2017: 4) out of specific circumstances experienced by the participants. In that sense, the MCS is considerably potent for this study since the data gathered helped to portray a profile of teachers, events or situations that they experience in everyday conditions in the school (real-life scenarios) (Gorard, 2013). With that, it was possible to explore how they navigate through their career and how they understand the relationship between work conditions and job satisfaction.

Another interesting factor in this research is that the cases have a degree of "empirical intimacy" (Sandelowski, 2011). Within each case of the group, they are sufficiently different to represent various school settings, specific work conditions and school organisational cultures that reverberated in the teachers' perception and insights of job satisfaction and sorting them as specific cases. On the other hand, across the group, they are similar enough to make possible comparisons, as the group of teachers who answered the recruitment process work in middle-class and elite private schools in the city of São Paulo, which intends to form the country's economic, academic and cultural elites (Lellis & Brandão, 2003; Almeida & Nogueira, 2003; Cattani & Kielling, 2007). In short, these characteristics established a diverse but cohesive group of cases.

2.2 Philosophical assumptions and cultural background

Many authors bring to their readers' attention the theoretical and philosophical assumptions underpinning their studies, especially in qualitative research. They usually present these when referring to the paradigms chosen to conduct their research. To Tracey (2013: 37), paradigms "are preferred ways to understand reality, building knowledge and gathering information about the world"; the term encompasses ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological perspectives. According to Pring (2015: 109), explicitly presenting these aspects is the predominant way of thinking and framing social phenomena within educational research through different

theoretical positions (a mixture of "cultural and philosophical foundation"). As he pointed out (2015), researchers would otherwise stay innocently unaware of the more profound intention and commitment of what they conduct and convey in their works.

Following Pring's suggestion, this dissertation situates itself closely with a post-structuralist approach. It aims to combine two dimensions of the teachers' labour market. First, it acknowledges the structural power relationship in which teachers are within by working in private schools. In that scenario, there is a constant pedagogical conflict between schools' owners/maintainers and teachers that reflects in the investment contention among teachers' work conditions versus the profitability of schools' owners or institutions (Paro, 2018; Quibao Neto, 2020). At the same time, this study is also interested in highlighting how teachers interpret and navigate their "avenues of resistance" (Tracey, 2013), focusing on teachers' voices, specific situations and everyday practicalities (Tardif, 2012).

In other words, it concentrates on how the participants use their space for agency in the specific workplace while reflecting on the structural power relation involving working conditions in private schools.

Furthermore, it considers that agency and satisfaction are not determined only by the teacher's characteristics or individual distinctions, nor does it aim to only look at the structural elements of their work relationship. For this study, the teachers' agency is determined by the relationship between the structural conflict they live in and the pedagogical actions and voices within a specific workplace that could potentially convey satisfaction. As Tracey (2013: 44) says of the post-structuralist stance, the reality is fixed in some ways that tend to favour the interests of those who can exercise power. However, examining how the other side of the conflict finds ways to voice and resist is essential. Thus, it is necessary to explore this type of knowledge which is more fluid, plural and determined by many factors in the schools (Tardif, 2000; 2012).

In that sense, and following Tardiff's (2000: 11) work, the focus is an epistemology of professional practices for teachers: a study of a set of knowledge used by professionals in their daily workspace to perform their tasks. Nevertheless, considering the literature review in the last chapter, many factors related to teachers' job satisfaction are built into the daily tasks, especially if they bring a sense of competence, autonomy and collaboration among school authors (not actors). Thus, for this study, it would be added to Tardiff's epistemological concept: a study of a set of

knowledge used by professionals in their daily workspace to perform their tasks, voices, resistance, and satisfaction.

Having said that, it is worth noting that the attitude assumed in this dissertation is not in a "paradigm war" (Bryman, 2006) with other philosophical approaches. It is the opposite. This research counts on the findings and advancements made by many research studies. Those, especially with a positivist and critical approach, referred to in the literature review will also be reported and used in the following chapters of this study.

2.3 The cases: recruitment, schools, and teachers

As previously mentioned, ten cases form this study. Participants were approached by considering their work sector and the city where they work. For that, two main strategies were utilised for purpose sampling (Flick, 2009). The first way to recruit was by asking for the private schools' teachers' Union, SINPRO-SP, to be the gatekeeper. As agreed with those responsible in the Union for contacting researchers, an invitation for teachers was released in the Union's online newspaper (Boletim SINPRO-SP) and was spread on their mailing list with associated teachers and on social media. The message for recruitment in text-news format explained the research's aim, the research's benefits for the educational debate about the topic and the researcher's academic contact for initiating the teachers' engagement. This contact with the Union was important because SINPRO-SP is the country's most significant teachers' Union that works private sector and represents teachers who work in the São Paulo municipality. According to their website, for over 60 years, SINPRO-SP has represented the interests of teachers working conditions in the private sector of all stages and degrees in São Paulo (nursery schools to higher education).

Regarding the first contact with the participants, teachers emailed the researchers or answered on their social media, and the researcher directed the initial engagement to the institutional email. After the first contact, a detailed letter (Appendix A) explaining the research was sent to the participants to make a more informed option for partaking in the study. If participants agreed with the terms in the information letter, the informed consent (Appendix B) was sent to them, and a date was decided for the interviews.

The second way to approach teachers was by snowball sampling. After the interview, the researcher probed if they knew a colleague working in a different private

school who might be interested in the study, and some indicated colleagues. The way it worked out was that the participant got in touch with their peers, asking if the researcher could contact them to present the research and probe their interest in participating.

All ten participants work in the private sector but in different schools. At the same time, there is a similarity once these schools tend to the cultural and economic elite of the city and, in some cases, the country (Lellis & Brandão, 2003; Cattani & Kieling, 2007; Brandão, 2007). These are considered elite private schools because of their high visibility and perceived elite status (Almeida, 2003). In that sense, as mentioned by all participants, these schools charge high fees considering the Brazilian economy and are generally known to have adequate resources and infrastructure for the teachers' and students' work. The schools differ regarding their pedagogical proposals and the objectives they present to their clients. According to their website, some frame their work as a "humanistic approach" or a "constructivist view", others present their work as an "education for the global citizenship" or "a pedagogical view aligned with the best between the traditional and contemporaneous", "an Education based on the Catholic values", "an education view for the global knowledge", and so on. They also differ in size and, consequently, the number of students teachers work with.

Considering the teachers who were interviewed, the Table 1 below presents each participant's overall formation, school's characteristics, experience and work contract:

Table 1 – Teachers and their workplaces characteristics

CASES	Pseudonymy	Stage	School's size (classroom)*	Students' age	Number of school	Contract working hours	Years in the same school	Years of Service	Degree	School Salary (US\$-PPP/2021)**
Case study 1	Adriana	High school	12 to 20	15 to 17	1	15	8	22	Post-Doctoral	1979.31
Case study 2	Sylvia	High school	>60	15 to 18	1	44	6	12	MSc Degree	6333.80
Case study 3	Ana	Early Childhood Ed	41 to 60	3	1	22.5	4	11	MSt in SEN	2906.82
Case study 4	Oliver	Fundamental 1	21 to 30	6 to 10	1	36	7	7	Linguistic Degree	3958.62
Case study 5	Ben	Fundamental 2	>60	14	1	40	2	11	PhD	4750.35
Case study 6	Laura	Pre-school	12 to 20	5	1	22.5	3	9	MSc Degree	1789.50
Case study 7	Olivia	Fundamental 2	12 to 14	12 to 4	1	24	8	8	MSc Degree	3562.76
Case study 8	Clara	Early Childhood Ed	12 to 20	2	1	44	1	7	MSt in Bilingual Ed.	2440.10
Case study 9	Gracie	Fundamental 1	>60	9	2	44	9	14	MSt in SEN	5641.04
Case study 10	Rosie	Fundamental 1	>60	10	1	22.5	7	14	MSc Degree	3562.76

Source: The author based on the teachers' interviews; *School Census Inep (2021); **Sinpro-SP Salary Ranking and the teachers interviews [monthly payment] indexed to purchasing power parities (PPP) US\$ dollar using in the OECD (2021) National Accounts Statistics database to 2021.

2.4 The semi-structured interviews

For this study, it was chosen semi-structured interviews to answer the research questions. First, standardisation or generalisation was not the focus; thus, there was no need for full structured interviews (May, 2011). Also, concentrating on the participant's voice and agency, the idea was to consider that the participant "may be 'answering' questions other than those we are asking them and making sense of the social world in ways we had not thought" (Mason, 2002: 231). In that scenario, although questions were specified for initiating the conversation, the participants were "freer to probe beyond the answers" (May, 2011: 135), which could potentially present more interesting data to strengthen the case study (Yin, 2018). Also, as this study aims to learn what happens in a particular situation with a particular group of teachers (Agee, 2009), open questions and more flexibility assisted the researcher in exploring their thoughts and examples of quotidian situations during the interview.

The plan was also to take a more conversational and dialogued approach in the interview, yielding "a co-production, involving the construction or reconstruction of knowledge" (Edwards & Holland, 2013: 3). That was necessary because the research questions investigated the participants' experiences and perspectives, looking at framing and understanding how they do navigate and relate their work conditions, job satisfaction and the context of their workplaces. This way to approach the topic is a gap in the literature regarding teachers' job satisfaction, which requests and depends on the teachers' elaboration and analysis during the interviews. Moreover, the co-production factor aligns with the paradigms expressed earlier.

For achieving those objectives mentioned above, it is essential to negotiate the research terrain instead of only leading the "participants onto the terrain of the research interview" (Edwards & Holland, 2013: 9). In that sense, exploring different directions within the topic was considered an open space into a new landscape brought up by the participant that the research could benefit from. In this research perspective, the research ground could shrink in the immobilisation and restriction of the interview script; conversely, it expanded as it sums up the participants' terrains. Hence, a more open approach was essential to guarantee fertile paths for the teachers and their considerations of what was important to be said regarding the topic.

An interview frame (Appendix C) was designed to initiate the topics with the participants. Following Bryman's (2008) words that compelling semi-structured

interviews are more likely to have distinct sections, this research's interview frame has three. The first section focuses on the teachers' characteristics and backgrounds to contextualise their answers; it asks when they started working for the private sector, when they were hired for the school, which subject and year group they teach, and what form of teacher training background they have. This part of the interview was an exciting opportunity to strengthen the interaction between researcher and participant. The second section concerns the teachers' working conditions, such as the number of hours in their contract, the activities they develop in the school, any hours they have worked over those designated by the contract, and hours paid for time in the classroom with students and out-of-classroom activities. The third and final section aimed to probe the teachers' experiences and perceptions about their work conditions and job satisfaction.

2.5. Data analysis: interviews, transcription, coding, and themes

2.5.1 Online interviews

All ten interviews were conducted online using video calls. However, the researcher only recorded the audio for accuracy and commitment to the participants' words in the transcription process. Also, following the advice of Merriam (1988), after the online interviewing, the researcher wrote down initial thoughts and ideas brought up during the interview, which could potentially lead to a broader analysis and new ideas to discuss with the next interviewees.

Although technical problems are a persistent issue with online research, no one was perceived during the interviews. Part of the success came from scheduling the participants' most opportune moment and advertising to them the possibility of technical issues, such as internet connection stability. Every interview took place in spaces where the participants felt safe and relaxed, such as their homes or offices, which had an excellent online connection. Due to that, it was possible to maintain a continuous conversation with the participants, hold eye contact, pay full attention to what they were saying and adequately probe them, all essential aspects of gathering qualitative data by interviewing (Bryman, 2008; Tracy, 2013).

2.5.2 Thematic Analysis: transcription, coding and themes

This study utilised Thematic Analysis (TA) to delve into the interviews and answer the research questions. The analysis was based on an inductive process through

the stages of the TA mentioned by Terry et al. (2017: 29-30) in qualitative research. This process accounted for three main stages. It initiates with the (i) familiarisation with the topic, then moves to the (ii) coding as an "organic process", and (iii) constructing the themes that are developed from the coding and the final work with the data and codes (Terry et al., 2017: 21).

(i) Familiarisation

The familiarisation "is about intimately knowing the dataset – this facilitates a deep engagement with the data" (Terry et al., 2017: 27). For this study, this process came along by conducting the interviews and re-listening to the audio during the transcription process. As explained by Tracy (2013: 132), "qualitative interviews provide opportunities for mutual discovery, understanding, reflection and explanation", and at this point, it was possible to start approaching/understanding the topic via this active interaction with and about the participants' perspectives and experiences.

Also, familiarisation was based on casual observational notes, and the first idea drafts taken just after the interviews also helped in this stage. Mainly, it aided the researcher in becoming more engaged and enthusiastic with the data on hand. Finally, transcribing was another critical stage in the familiarisation, as transcribing is a process of "transforming embodied interviews into usable data" (Tracy, 2013: 177). As transcribing is a time-consuming activity, it was appropriate to use this process to start thinking about possible codes and conceptual ideas brought up by the interviews.

(ii) Coding

After the interview and the transcription, the coding process took place by using the CAQDAS. The first marks in the transcription were made as insights while listening, writing down teachers' statements, and consulting the written material after the interviews. Coding is an interpretative and decision-making process to "break" the interviews apart to extract information before putting the data into themes (Elliott, 2018). For this study, following Saldanã's words (2021: 5), codes were the way to capture the "summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attributes" of the teachers' knowledge on the topic. After the interview and the transcription (carried in an online tool and refined by the researcher), the coding process took place using the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) Nvivo v.1.

The coding was done in two steps: the first and second levels of coding pointed out by Tracy (2013). A first-level practical coding method was developed, in which the objective was to take the responses apart (Saldanã, 2021; Elliott, 2018). First-level

codes were necessary for the first research sub-question because they concentrate on what the teachers communicated. This initial process was very descriptive and focused on semantic/surface coding and the teacher's wording during the interviews (Terry et al., 2017; Punch & Oancea, 2014).

The second coding cycle developed a codebook (Tracey, 2013) that aimed to narrow down the first-level codes and write down the codes' definitions and examples. This codebook's intention was not to build up a definitive list of codes but to organise and map the codes in the ten interviews flexibly. That process was focused on a flexible engagement with the data, developing depth and moving beyond the obvious surface level (Terry et al., 2017). Thus, it transformed the first-level into more specific coding or sub-codes that could be used for contrasting and comparing the cases. Moreover, for this second part, the process was concentrated on the meaning by arranging the teachers' experiences and ideas in a systematic order, making their words "part of a system or classification, to categorisation" in themes (Saldanã, 2021: 15).

(iii) Building the themes

Following second-level coding and categorisation, the researcher started the third level, which was the construction of the themes. Elliott (2018) mentions that themes are wide units of codes aggregated to form and answer an idea. Following this concept, each theme reported derived from the coded data is tightly around the central organising concepts (work conditions and job satisfaction). Also, the themes' selection for reporting considered a balanced study where themes represent distinctive codes but should also be related in the analysis. This was important for comparing the work conditions and ways in which teachers perceive satisfaction and, after that, comparing with the literature review's interpretations of the topic.

All of this required explaining in the findings chapter each theme's definitions that aimed clarity and scope. Each subtopic presenting the themes raised the themes' core ideas and meanings. Apart from that, data extracts were employed to illustrate key elements of the teachers' stories.

Finally, the research questions guided relevant potential answers to address the topic and open channels of dialogue with the literature review. Also relevant to the cross-language nature of this research, the first translations into English were conducted during the first stages of constructing the themes. This methodological point will be more explicit in the next section.

2.6 Cross-language research

There is an increasing number of cross-language research from outside the Anglo-American sphere. This enriches many research fields with original investigations and presents various contexts to a broader English speaker community. Besides reaching more people, another important outcome of this movement is forcing an expansion of different types of paradigms in the academic realm. Hence, it is possible to observe important changes in the traditional academic circles and many research areas, such as social science.

Besides the benefits of cross-language research and its overall influence in academic domains, it requires translation decisions that also impact the research process and the outputs, especially for the qualitative researchers who use interviews and textual data (Abfalter, Mueller-Seeger & Raich, 2021). Considering these challenges, this part of the text is invested in explaining this study's choices regarding the translation factor.

For this research, the preferences between the languages (Portuguese and English) started very early in the process. The analysis context is in Brazil; thus, the schools and the participants are based in the country. As the researcher, gatekeeper and participants are Portuguese speakers, their first language was employed during the recruitment process. With that, it was possible to widen the participants' spectrum since speaking in English is not a common way to interact in Brazil; therefore, there are not many teachers' residents who would be comfortable with being approached in English.

Considering the interviews, they were all conducted in Portuguese. Besides the problems already mentioned, ethical issues regarding linguistic discrimination would emerge and build up an undesirable border and lack of confidence between the researcher and potential participants (Baumgartner, 2012). Moreover, even for teachers who work in English as international school staff, it was more comfortable for both parties to express themselves without meaning and vocabulary constraints; addressing linguistic comfort leads to higher quality results (Carless, 2008; Abfalter, Mueller-Seeger & Raich, 2021).

Another important aspect is that using the interviewees' language helped increase validity. First, it was imperative to preserve the participants' language skills at their maximum proficiency, thus, maintaining their ability to develop their ideas regarding their practice, workplace and satisfaction. This proved to be a crucial strategy considering their memories of lived experiences came easier in their native language,

yielding better original statements with additional nuances (Welch & Piekkari, 2006). To answer the research questions, it was necessary to apprehend the teacher's knowledge via their voice and agency, which was more evident in their spontaneous and accessible native vocabulary. This choice also tends to balance the power between the researcher ("expert position") and participants, which is a common ethical issue in qualitative research that relies on interviews and interactions (Abfalter, Mueller-Seeger & Raich, 2021).

As said earlier, the researcher transcribed the interviews to familiarise himself with the content; translations at that stage would take too long in a time-constrained process (Santos et al., 2015; Chen & Boore, 2010). Translation evolves many difficulties because not all concepts are adaptable, meaningful and transferable (Jones & Kay, 1992) to other cultures and languages. Thus, quandaries of looking for the "best definition" would not help this research. Also, Gawlewicz (2020) mentions that operating translation for transcription could also cause ethical problems related to distortion of meaning and cultural differences. For instance, the Portuguese language and its dialects are rich in expressions, idioms and analogies; translating them during the transcription could harm the comprehension of the participants' words in the analysis process, especially considering that the researcher is not a professional translator and there were no available resources for hiring one.

The translation in this research started during the Data Analysis in locating the themes stemming from the codings and sub-codings. This research follows Van Nes et al.'s (2010: 315) recommendation of staying in the original language as long as possible in the research process. According to Abfalter, Mueller-Seeger and Raich (2021), addressing the translation in this moment of the research allows the continuous refinement of the material at hand and enhances nuances in the findings. At this stage, the translation of concepts for building themes went back and forth to ensure the content and the preciseness of the teacher's words when selecting the statements and examples to support the themes and the analysis. Moreover, this process provided awareness and search for teachers' word fidelity since it demanded several rounds of pursuits for synonyms until finding a good or satisfactory approximation and interpretation between the source and the target language.

The contextualised hermeneutic approach was utilised during the translations, concentrating on meaning to remain faithful to the context (Abfalter, Mueller-Seeger & Raich, 2021). During the process, additional tools helped the translations, such as

the Oxford Online Dictionaries, Thesaurus, and IT applications, including online computer-aided translation tools, which have become increasingly popular and accurate (Holmes, 2004). The researcher coded everything on the CAQDAS, facilitating the usage of these applications, which was essential for the translation process while constructing the themes for the analysis.

Finally, it is worth noting that researchers must be conscious of language's significant role in developing knowledge. This statement has a special meaning when the knowledge is produced in a specific context not based on the anglophone domain. For this research, preserving most of what the teachers stated in cross-language research also leads to one of the central issues in respecting and appreciating the work done in different places and contexts. This idea lies within the scope of the production and circulation of efforts, struggles, knowledge and ideas for the future (Santos, 2014) produced by workers and communities outside the centre of the economic system and far from the proclaimed best teachers' practices.

2.7 Ethical concerns

As in any research, the investigation's ethical concerns are essential for analysis. This study aimed at the researcher's and participants' emotional, physical and professional safety regarding ethical practices (Bryman, 2008). Most of all, it attempted to respect the principles of maximising benefit for both parties and reducing harm, respecting the rights and dignity of the participants in all stages of the research project. Given the topic analysed and the poor common perception of teachers' work conditions in the country (Alves & Pinto, 2011; Alves & Kazuko, 2018; Quibao Neto, 2020), it was crucial to guarantee the mitigation of any damage to the teachers' sense of pride and dignity during the interviews, thus, preventing any judgemental harm, distress or lack of motivation (Eynon, 2021).

Before approaching the gatekeeper and contacting the participants, this study received ethical approval from the Central University Research Ethics Committee – CUREC (Appendix D). It pursued all the necessary precautions regarding the participants' safety following the University of Oxford and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines by respecting participants' local rules, cultural contexts, and participant comfort in answering the interview questions. It is worth mentioning that this study did not seek formal additional local ethics due to the short-term nature of the research process and the small number of interviews that

are unlikely to cause problems, and any ethical governance and legal frameworks were being harmed.

As Eynon (2021: 7) states, "individuals who choose to participate in any research project must do so on the basis of informed consent". Following that, in this research, the participants received an information letter before scheduling an interview. The letter presented the research's aims, what participants would agree to do, the types of knowledge and activities that would be asked, and the potential risks and benefits of taking part. Once they accepted participating in the study, this research acted on that front in three different ways: a) by presenting the informed consent document for participants to sign before the interview; b) at the beginning of the interview, the researcher read a document asking for their verbal consent; and c) at the end of the interview, asking if the researcher can use all the content that the participants produced. In this way, the researcher expected to provide more opportunities for the participants to reflect on the data and how they would like their privacy and voices to be respected.

The interviews were Internet-mediated to gather the data; nonetheless, some principles of traditional face-to-face interviews were required to prevent harm and "objectification of those being researched" (Eynon, 2021: 18). First, strategies to build a good rapport with participants were used, based on the researcher's previous knowledge of the sector and being a former teacher. Although this could not overcome the physical separation between the interviewer and interviewee that could affect communication, this "insider" positionality presented an opportunity to create a safe and open space for interviewees to express themselves, share, and construct a good dialogue between the researcher and participant.

As internet-based research was conducted in different time zones, it was essential to be attentive and respect the schedule and privacy of the participants fully. Thus, interviews were scheduled in hours and periods of participants' convenience even though there was a time zone difference between researcher and participant. It was necessary to guarantee that the participants were comfortable and also ensure technical security, such as good connection and equipment for the interview. As anticipated during the schedule negotiation, the researcher and interviewees did not experience any technical problems. This research also considered the practicalities of conducting the online interviews, especially assuming varying degrees of digital literacy. Thus, the discussions could be achieved via Microsoft Teams or by telephone, but all the interviewees preferred the online meetings.

As mentioned, all interviews were in Portuguese, the interviewees' and researcher's first language. This choice prevented ethical linguistic discrimination problems and a lack of confidence between researcher and potential participants (Baumgartner, 2012). Also, this preference counterbalances the undesirable power differential between the researcher ("expert position") and participants, a common ethical issue in qualitative research that relies on interviews and interactions (Abfalter, Mueller-Seeger & Raich, 2021).

After finishing the interviews and audio transcripts, the audio files were deleted to reduce the possibility of harming participants' anonymity. The research participants were anonymised using pseudonyms in the transcripts and dissertation. Regarding their workplaces, the dissertation did not mention them by name, franchise, or community or organization in the case of religious schools. The transcripts were saved on an encrypted hard drive in a password-protected folder for the duration of the study and at the OneDrive for Business, provided as part of the University's Nexus365 offering until expiring the research account.

2.8 Positionality

It is essential to consider the research position and the impact this could potentially have on the research findings, especially because the topic at hand is largely influenced by the researcher's personal, political, and professional experience. In this study, positionality is understood as the researcher's position concerning the social and political context addressed by the study (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). In practical terms, the topic was addressed here in two main ways. The first was reflecting on the potential power position when researchers interact with participants, as holding the "expertise role" exploring the subject and determining the length and depth of the interview. Second is the researcher's position as a former teacher in the private school sector in São Paulo, presenting his political perceptions of the career in this sector.

Especially for research which relies on interviews for gathering data, researchers hold positions of power when conducting these (Brooks, de Riele & Maguire, 2014). One of the potential power positions when researchers interact with participants is the "expertise role". To mitigate that, the researcher focuses on using the interview as a co-production, in which the length and the depth of the content were determined by both involved. First, the participants could speak freely and have time to finish their ideas without interruption. Moreover, the researcher explored and valued

new aspects teachers offered in the conversation. This happened several times, especially when the participants presented lived examples to illustrate a specific topic or add new elements that the researcher did not bring up.

In terms of preserving participant's privacy and wishes, it was made evident in various stages of the contact that they could ask to remove a specific part of the audio transcription, reschedule the interview for any reason or even completely withdraw their participation if the interaction and the topic became sensitive and harmful for them. The ten participants did not present any issues or withdraw from the research. However, due to Covid-19 infections, it was necessary to reschedule 3 of the interviews; this did not affect the data gathering or the relationship between the participants.

Another potential issue concerning the researcher's position is that he is a former teacher in the same sector and city. Being a practitioner can be seen as an "insider" position who shares experiences and knowledge with the community interviewed (Labaree, 2002). This insider's positionality also reflects the researcher's opinions and political views on the matter. It is essential to mention that the researcher is not only a teacher who worked in the sector but also involved in pro-labour political parties and unionised while working as a teacher in the private sector. The topic and the research questions made were not only a matter of scientific interest but also a political agenda/issue for the researcher. In the researchers' view, improving teachers' work conditions and satisfaction with their careers is a matter of respecting all involved in the educational process and developing the country's human rights.

In many moments, the insider position also facilitated the conversation as explaining some situations was unnecessary, as it was a knowledge or experience lived by both parties on the same side of the political "negation table" within schools. However, this inside position does not interfere with the validity and quality of the research or impose own perspectives on the participants' words; in fact, it is the opposite for this research perspective. As Tracy (2013) presents, much qualitative research comes from the researchers' personal life, asking about what is happening around them and assessing the lived conditions critically. Becker (1967) states that researchers inevitably – although sometimes unconsciously – take sides and propose that they think and declare whose side they are on. Also, Rata points out, knowledge building derives from a researcher's engagement with a "socio-political process" rather than an abstract and universal activity (2012: 116).

2.8 Limitations of the study

As the researcher was based in Oxford, UK, and the research is about the Brazilian context with Brazilian participants, limitations arose during the study's process that is worth mentioning. Namely, using the Union as a gatekeeper imposed considerable limitations on the participants' recruitment reach. Similarly, Internet accessibility was also a recruitment issue. Third, the cross-language issue in this research set difficulties translation-wise. Finally, the reach of this case study must be considered in terms of its limitations.

First, those teachers who work in the private sector in São Paulo and do not have any connection with SINPRO-SP could not be reached. Professors in Brazil are not required to be affiliated with their union representations. Considering how this study approached the participants, non-affiliated teachers did not receive an invitation or message regarding the research. Second, as the invitations to participate were made in an online format, either in the SINPRO-SP newspaper or on social media, part of the population of professors who do not have easy access to the Internet could not have contact with the invitations and, consequently, with the research. Unfortunately, the Internet is not free and easily accessible in Brazil. To most Brazilians, reliable and fast Internet is expensive, especially considering the teachers' salaries (Alves & Sonobe, 2018). Consequently, the coverage of the participants' recruitment was reduced significantly, proving to be a limitation of this research regarding reaching teachers with specific work conditions.

Translations were also complex in this cross-language research; as Abfalter, Mueller-Seeger and Raich (2021: 482) mention, "research is bound to subcultures." This process can cause limitations when translations are required since not all concepts and expressions are adaptable, meaningful and transferable to another culture based on the target language. This is especially important as a limitation when the researcher is not a professional translator – although proficient in both languages – and there are no available resources for employing one.

Considering the above, with 10 participants in that scenario, it would be impossible to extrapolate any empirical principles or theories about how teachers perceive and understand the relationship between work conditions and job satisfaction due to the study's small scale and limited representation of teachers and workplaces. Finally, as with most research, this study also suffered from time and resource

constraints. Nonetheless, it still aims to contribute to the debate over the topics in the current educational field, especially about teachers' work conditions and satisfaction with their careers in Brazil; both topics still in development in the country.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS

Considering the methods applied in this study, interviews with ten teachers who work in the private sector in the Sao Paulo municipality were conducted. Following the thematic analysis steps mentioned in the last chapter, after the interviews and their transcriptions, the researchers worked on the themes which could potentially answer the research questions. In this regard, this chapter reports the five main themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews. All of them were depicted as essential features for developing the participant's work as teachers and were closely related to their job satisfaction.

The first theme is "on the classroom ground: with and about the students", which reports teaching as the primary source of teachers' job satisfaction. The second theme concerns authorship as part of the culture of participation and decision-making that relates to the curriculum but goes beyond this. After that, teachers report their autonomy as a necessary work condition and a source of job satisfaction since it provides a sense of freedom and competence. Third, collective work was also highlighted by the participants, and this study explored the theme by digging into two elements of it, collegiality and collaboration. Finally, there was the fourth element, teachers' work management; it examined the interaction between teachers' work overload and remuneration from the participants' perspective.

3.1 Theme 1 – On the classroom ground: with and for the students

Schools are social complex workplaces; jobs there require multi-ability professionals to accomplish their objectives, especially for teachers. During the interviews, teachers reported working on various tasks in their workday. To quote some, they teach in classrooms, attend several meetings, do collective work, prepare materials independently and with peers, study and research for classes, do fieldwork with students, produce and review assessments and students' productions, and review and design the school curriculum, just to present the general teachers' duties. For all these tasks to channel into a satisfactory outcome, teachers' work must encompass skills, abilities (or aptitudes), values, personalities and attitudes, which typically bind to a specific school setting (Tardif, 2012).

In the participants' view, the importance of this set of activities, prepared and carried out inside and outside the school, seems to be focused on preparing them for

classroom work. In the interviews, when discussing the many tasks they develop, teachers clearly and positively positioned satisfaction with their careers on the "ground of the classroom". For instance, Laura states:

Look, my life is education; I find the whole process very productive and very pleasant to experience. But I mostly like the classroom, so it is something that moves me and makes me up – Being with the children and organising the process. [...] Understanding that their knowledge is also knowledge as mine. First, it is important to acknowledge that they have knowledge, and from there, build this expansion and deepen our educational process together. [Laura]

Beyond expressing her work preference, it is clear what she considers precious in classroom work. She emphasises that she wants to be in the classroom to build on the intercept between different knowledge inputs. Also, she agrees that the teachers' work is planning and organising the classroom interaction in a way in which the educational process's outcome considers the students' and her transformation. In that sense, Laura's idea of teaching (and the whole educational process) is a critical stance on the traditional perspective of the teachers' work. In this view, teachers are the only knowledge-holders (Romanelli, 2014). As is well known, Freire (1996) criticises this teaching tradition by calling it an educational banking system. The author emphasises that students are not empty bags, and the teachers' work is limited and reduced in scope by just "depositing" their knowledge in the students. Laura appears thrilled to override this traditional perspective by pointing out that students can also bring compelling and essential knowledge to the classroom. Later in the interview, she presented this interaction as "one first step to decolonising the curriculum".

As Tardif (2012) and Arroyo (2000) mentioned, student and teacher transformation in the educational process is expected in a social organisation like a school. Nonetheless, this is not the general teachers' perception of their satisfaction. In some cases, teachers' satisfaction comes only from the students' transformation, as Ana said:

Without a doubt, [I prefer] working with students. I really like the moments of exploration, such as moments with paints, moments with different materials, or even just water and soil. It could be in the woods, "let us dig the soil", or "what does it have to offer by putting water on it?". [...] I like to let them discover everything through these [experimentation] moments. [Ana]

For Ana, teaching is about presenting students with the opportunity to explore and discover. Like Laura, she also believes that teaching is about "organising learning moments and situations"; however, she is satisfied with observing their educational development and does not mention the role of students' pre-existing knowledge or her discovery, exploration and transformation as a teacher. As she comments, she sees her career's value in these "enlightening" situations and, in the case reported, with different materials than the usual traditional didactic ones. Her idea is in line with what Horta (2016: 85) underpins by pointing out that it is through experience, observation and exploration that the child constructs their knowledge and modifies situations and conceptions, thus, developing cognitive, emotional and social skills. In that analysis key, all senses are essential for the child's development; hence, the various materials and learning spaces are exceptionally significant. Ana seems to support these ideas.

Teachers who work with older students also emphasise classroom work as the primary source of satisfaction. These teachers' comments are different from the teachers' comments above; it is interesting to observe that these teachers in the study case are less preoccupied with the students' "knowledge" or "investigation/discovery". They tend to phrase it differently, focusing on the possibilities of "dialogue" with students. According to these teachers, preparation and delivery are essential for holding students' attention and ignite longer, deeper interaction with them:

I really like teaching; it is essential. I really like the discussion with the students right there in the classroom and seeing their attention. It gives me great satisfaction to plan something that I think will work very well – to plan something that I want to work very well. And seeing the planning working, you see that it made sense and made the students move forward concerning what is being discussed. It is the moment for me to fulfil myself professionally. [Olivia]

For Olivia, according to her comment, planning and delivery are critical factors for satisfaction. In this sense, validation lies in the students' interactions with the subject and classroom discussion. In Olivia's perception of job satisfaction, there is a clear link between the carefully prepared work outside the classroom and the work within the classroom. Hence, this element of student engagement with the planned content is much more noticeable in her report.

During the interviews, it was also perceived that students' discipline and teachers' authority were sensitive aspects for teachers working with older students. This

adds complexity to analysing teachers' satisfaction if the work in the classroom is that important. At these stages of schooling, students have several teachers, while in the early stages, they have just one principal teacher responsible for their classroom. The way students bond with teachers and their classes is different. Students are more inclined to compare and assess their teachers' styles, values, disciplines, personalities, and so on. Consequently, holding students' attention and engagement seems to be a valuable resource for their performance as teachers. Olivia believes one way to address this engagement is through good class planning and preparation.

Another interesting factor is how the teachers picture themselves in classrooms. In contrast to the teachers who fulfil themselves by digging the soil and mixing it with water with the students or plan classes where the "wooden spoon or Canson paper will be the most relevant material" (Gracie's comments), for some teachers, there is a scholar picture of the profession to conserve, as Ben reports:

I dedicated my life to education and my family too; education is a fundamental matter to me. I particularly like to teach and be in the classroom. [...] And as I said at the beginning [of the interview], I am that teacher from the 19th century. I like to be in class, talking with the students, but I think that all teachers would say that, isn't it? [Ben]

The academic way Ben evokes his attitude towards the profession and how he imagines himself as a 19th-century teacher indicates the typical image of the "classic" teacher who likes to be listened to (and admired) by their students. This image is widespread in the academic realm, of which he is also a participant. In his discourse, classroom work is centred on delivering the subject discussed – in the "talking" of the content – and less in the "students' progress" (Oliver's comments) or the "learning consolidation and expansion of knowledge exchanges" (Laura's comments). Ben is correct in placing his approach in the 19th century, when curriculum and teachers were the most crucial elements in the educational process (Romanelli, 2014). Although highly criticised over the XX century (Freire, 1996; Teixeira, 1968), this idea of education still echoes throughout Brazil, especially in traditional private schools like the one that employs Ben.

Considering the interviews, especially the above statements, teachers pointed out that they perceive the most satisfaction in their careers when working in learning situations with students. However, the reports stressed differences in how to perform

the profession and interact with students, reiterating the work complexity. In other words, although the primary source of their satisfaction is the same, how it is developed varies. From the interviews, factors such as the teachers' previous experiences, understanding the student–teacher relationship, the student's age, and how teachers picture the profession all play an essential role in teachers' performance and what they expect as working conditions. In the following themes, this study will be interested in showing what teachers did present as crucial working conditions that enrich (or lessens) their experiences as a teacher, and how these work conditions relate to the school settings they are inserted. Also, it will show the ways in which these are associated to their perception of satisfaction (or lack of it) within their careers.

3.2 Theme 2 – Autonomy

Another compelling aspect that emerged from the interviews is autonomy, which is closely related to authorship but is not the same concept for the participants. For the literature review analysed, teachers' autonomy addresses the space to select methods and strategies that align with the teacher's pedagogical beliefs and values (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Also, research indicates that teachers who experience high levels of autonomy in their job also perceive more satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; 2010; Sterns et al., 2015; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006). Conversely, losing autonomy can be related to a negative perception of teachers' job satisfaction, exhaustion and sense of competence (Madigan & Kim, 2021; Fernet et al., 2013).

From the comments, autonomy can be attached to classroom situations, but it also goes beyond curriculum decisions and daily activities with students. For private schools and their interactions, teachers reported concern regarding the degree of trust in their work by superiors and clients (students' families), which influences their sense of autonomy as teachers. Rosie's experience is an interesting report of autonomy within her workplace:

Since I arrived [at the school where I work today], I felt there was a space for authentic reflection. So there was no dogma, you know, a school that does not "deify" any author or specific method that you must follow. I think everything you can call into question, you know? Debate everything honestly, and disagree without being called anything. So this is something I found there when I arrived

that gives me a lot of satisfaction. [...] It is a place where I have this autonomy.
[Rosie]

The concept Rosie mentioned in her comment concerns free speech or frankness between peers. She presented that in her previous experiences, she felt that not only did she need to follow some conventions and the school curriculum, but also her voice was restricted by peers' judgements of what was "pedagogically correct". Her idea of autonomy is hooked to what Raaen (2011) suggests, namely that autonomy can play a vital function in the teachers' professionalism as its ultimate purpose is to secure one's independence of thinking and speech from others' critiques. Thus, Rosie's satisfaction with her autonomy in the profession is closely related to a specific "freedom to construct a personal pedagogy, which entails her personality, training, and experience in a specific educational context" (Hoyle & John, 1995:92).

With a different experience regarding autonomy in her work environment, Olivia determines her sense of independence by reading the possible spaces between the school's expectations and its leaders' work methods:

I have the feeling that, over the years, knowing more about the expectations of the institution and the work of the coordinators, what are the results that the school wants, I think I can strike a balance there, between the school expectations and my autonomy and satisfaction with my work. [Olivia]

Another manner in which teachers articulated autonomy was by examining the context outside the school, which reverberates in their capability to express their values and social concerns. Laura underpinned these elements in her interviews:

As teachers, society asks us to teach certain things. I think that within the schools, as I said, there is a certain degree of autonomy depending on where you are; there is a certain autonomy for you to act and adjust according to your values and beliefs, right? [...] And it also enters a lot, in something that I think is quite complex, and it is also an external issue [to the school], which is the issue of conservatism in our society. Depending on the topic you will work on and how you will work, for example, there is the content of African and Indigenous cultures to be worked on. And the school won't allow [teachers to address it], for example, when it reaches the religious topics of these cultural groups fearing parents overaction. You can work and develop a sequence, for instance, about African music in generic terms, but you cannot talk about Exú and other religious entities. [Laura]

Laura's concern is entailed in the society's conservative conceptions about some topics and how this interference affects teachers' autonomy within schools. This element has a more obvious layer in the curriculum decisions but also reflects the professional's power (or the lack of it) to act in a determined context (Garland, 1997) which he/she is the specialist. In general, private schools avoid being involved in confrontations regarding sensitive topics. The argument is that the schools are afraid of losing clients. Therefore, the typical school policy is to suppress teachers' autonomy in those matters. Thus, as expected, autonomy in these areas is a valuable feature that teachers try to find in schools.

Sylvia presented in her testimony how a type of surveillance evolved during the Covid-19 pandemic, pushing teachers' autonomy to a shaded area:

We have cases at school, for example, when students attended online classes during the pandemic, and parents recorded the classes, so they could take what they considered problems to the coordinators. We also have cases of parents being extremely aggressive [against teachers' classes] on WhatsApp groups that sometimes we find out, which is a "horror show." And, the fact that it is a very expensive school, right? And having this elite, the 0.1%, that pays this monthly fee makes all the interactions very clientelistic: "Well, I'm paying; you're going to do what I want you to do". I feel that sometimes, students also express themselves this way. Everything revolves around the students' "satisfaction". [...] I believe it is essential to consider the students' interests, but I am the specialist. [Sylvia]

During remote classes, when students learned from home and their guardians were present, her autonomy, professionalism and job satisfaction were undermined. In those cases, her autonomy clashed with the stances of the students' guardians, lessening her sense of professionalism and authority. Moreover, in this quotation, Sylvia reinforces a usual view of private schools where teachers are constantly being scrutinised by an economic elite who find difficult in the coexistence of its values and beliefs with other people's (social classes) views (Souza, 2017). In other words, it evokes in Sylvia a self-awareness of her different social and economic position compared to the families and students. This socioeconomic hierarchy undermines her position as a teacher and lessens her sense of autonomy (Hall, 1993); hence, as neither she or her peers control this workplace characteristic or receive administrative support,

her satisfaction as a teacher there reduces, as also reported by previous research looking at the same situation (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, 2017).

3.3 Theme 3 – Space for authorship

As previously discussed in this dissertation, the literature review presents the "culture of participation" in the schools' decisions as a critical factor associated with teachers' career satisfaction (Madero, 2019; Burke et al., 2013; Crossman & Harris, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001). Nonetheless, private schools typically do not allow teachers to be involved in the school's administration and its management decisions, since they do not have democratic management as a pedagogical pillar for their administration, as is the case in the public schools in Brazil by constitutional and administrative law (Brazil, 1988). Besides that, one way this culture of participation and decision making emerged from the interviews was through their participation in curriculum decisions, leading to a sense of "authorship" as teachers presented.

Authorship is seen as possibility that teacher must recreate and constructed pedagogical senses in their classrooms and schools (Oviedo, 2004). In this direction, the concept of authorship has surfaced in various works, making references to the quality of teaching, in order to express the particularities in the way in which teachers mobilize their own knowledge of the profession (Maia et al., 2020). Gois and Santos (2014), for instance, present the term authorship associated with the teacher's ability to produce something linked to their pedagogical views, experience and professional development within the school context. In this case, authorship is revealed in the elaboration of an educational object (a project, a simulation, a journal, a study club, a study group between peers), or as a form of protagonist in the planning and development of the school and class.

Along with authorship, then, comes a sense of authority that guarantees them a professional projection that authorizes them to plan and be part of school decisions, even if only in the curricular realm which is also very important (Nascimento & Rezende Júnior, 2010). In some cases analysed, teachers reported experiencing a kind of collective curriculum authorship in which they recognise themselves as one of the producers. Rosie's case calls attention to this point as she mentions that the school presents the possibility of authorship through a constant review of curriculum heritage. These curriculums have been redesigned and re-signified by the current teachers from their experiences and analysis of working with students:

Building the curriculum is fundamental for me [...], but we have an accumulation of teams before ours that preceded us. We then have handouts made up of didactic sequences of varied activities produced by us teachers that we review and exchange yearly. [...] but not always, which is a good thing and favours workflow and continuity. [Rosie]

Adriana gives an equivalent experience in her report:

Certainly [the school inheritance is something very positive]. That is the school culture there. It both allows me to understand what has been done before, to process and access it, and have the freedom to do the work that I believe. Present [to the students] a course that I believe in and has to do with the school culture. [Adriana]

First, it is important to consider the legitimacy of curriculum knowledge built from previous experiences; thus, their authorship has a relevant starting point to the teachers' statements, which allows them the security of working on a solid basis. Furthermore, according to the interviews, in both cases, the schools have a positive expectation about teachers revising curriculum in a way that guarantees an opening for teachers' authorship. Rosie and Adriana recognise themselves as part of the school's decisions throughout their agency in the curriculum. This sense of authorship might prosper alongside the perception of their work's contribution, importance, increasing their sense of satisfaction.

This way teachers phrase “authorship” develops in schools in different ways. Although they also bring satisfaction with their work, this authorship can be less connected with the previous teams' experiences in the school compared to the abovementioned cases. Such is the case with Ana, who presents a degree of authorship mediated by coordinators:

Because of my experience [in teaching], this is a moment when I am happiest in terms of being able to do and plan what I want to offer my students. Of course, it is not entirely open; I have my coordinator behind me, who is always walking with me. There is an independence to bring news to my students that I did not have in other places. [Ana]

Ana's experience with authorship in the curriculum is important for her, especially since she mentioned working where there was no possibility of authorship.

In her report, she does not seem to be asked to work on previous curriculum experiences designed by previous teachers. Apart from direct contact with the coordinator, her comments suggest that her authorship is a solo activity. Although it might not be in Ana's case, some private schools' relationships between teachers and coordinators can be highly hierarchical, impacting teachers' understanding of authorship. According to Contreras (2012), many teachers experience "half authorship"; in other words, they are free to develop different activities with students but do not have a say in orienting the curriculum, which also has to do with setting the school's educational objectives.

Like in Ana's previous workplaces, some of the interviewed teachers do not feel any sense of authorship in their schools, and they face more constraints in their daily work. Clara's report asserts her predisposition to change jobs when authorship is considered a factor of satisfaction:

[Where I work] is not a school where you can create your didactic sequence or anything like that. I really want someday to work in a place where I can develop my didactic units and where I can have a voice in the school's and my class's goals. [Clara]

Sharing the same dilemmas as Clara, Olivia expressed that authorship is a matter of "surviving" in the school workplace. According to her:

As a form of survival in the school space, I think we dig into these situations [authorship]. So I find myself in several situations, running away from the project I should develop with the students or from a specific part of the curriculum to propose content that instigates me. So, I usually suggest reading a text that I liked, and I think it will be promising to work with students, which is not proposed [in the formal school curriculum], but I believe the discussion will be good and essential. [Olivia]

In Olivia's case, as she acknowledges that the school does not support her authorship in the curriculum, she needs to create opportunities for contributions as someone "intellectually active in the profession". Olivia has a research background, having completed a master's programme at the University of São Paulo, one of the country's most prestigious and demanding universities. However, despite her efforts to challenge the class curriculum, the impossibility of thinking, discussing and changing the school's core curriculum frustrates her as a teacher, lowering her job satisfaction.

3.4 Theme 4 – Collective work: collegiality and collaboration

Collegiality, collaboration and strong professional communities are characteristics in school settings that, according to the literature review, promote satisfaction and professional involvement among teachers (Hargreaves, 1994, MacMillian & Xi, 1999; Sterns et al., 2014). For instance, sharing knowledge and experiences and systematically using these to improve pedagogical practice has been perceived as rewarding by teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021) in many cultures (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). According to the participants, these work conditions also make a difference in their perceived workplace satisfaction, which was commented on regularly during the interviews.

From the reports of the case study professors, collegiality is positively perceived in workplaces and can be seen by how people treat others daily with simple acts. Gracie's description of her first days at work sums it up:

It was completely different from my last job. The relationship with work was different. The first thing that caught my attention was that everyone greeted each other there. That, for me, was something far from ordinary. The cleaning staff, teacher, coordinators, interns, everyone says "good morning", you know? Even the director. It seemed that, finally, I was working in a place where everyone mattered. [Gracie]

Gracie noticed a friendly space in her new work setting where everyone shared a different respect for each other that she was not used to, not only between the teachers but the whole team. Underlining Gracie's comments is a compelling picture of workers from different areas aiming for build up a health environment, which leads to an appreciation of everyone's importance in the school and its objectives. Although her comment evokes just the first level of collegiality, it does set the basis for more work-directed interactions.

Oliver's comments mixes both ideas and collegiality with collaboration, especially after Covid-19 which imposed many adversities on teachers returning to the school environment in the whole country (Instituto Península, 2022):

Collaboration has been crucial for me. This exchange of experiences and the listening between peers create support groups for work and emotional support; it is a collective help, genuine support, you know? It matters when you have this collaboration between teachers who can thus share their anxieties, experiences,

daily lives, strategies, and ideas, right? And now, that has been more critical than ever. [Oliver]

In the same sense, Adriana, commenting on her case, analysed her interactions with colleagues in her school. She said, "The relationship is based on an absolute professional respect, of great affection, and, in fact, it helps to build a solid pedagogical debate." She was more direct in evoking her relationships with peers in a more professional sphere. For her, colleagues do not have to agree; that is not a critical issue. She arouses the idea of having an unrestrained space for dialogue, which is essential in schools and makes the job easier when it exists among the teachers:

It is a group of professors with whom it is a great pleasure to work. Most of the time, we have different views, but as we do a lot of interdisciplinary activities, we discuss a lot, and we need to talk a lot to set up these multidisciplinary projects. And then, the fact that we have a good relationship and mutual respect facilitates the exchange of ideas; it is a construction of trust [...] The relationship of trust allows us to express even the craziest ideas and pass them on to the other, and from there, we build things together. Sometimes it has a greater or lesser degree of close friendship, it depends a lot, and it is not the rule. But this shared collegiality, this good relationship between teachers, certainly makes a difference when establishing a dialogue about our work and pushing it forward to the school culture with students. [Adriana]

Adriana's experience suggests that the positive social environment at her school has incisive implications for teachers' motivation and welfare. For instance, it is possible to note the idea of creating a safe environment at school, allowing teachers to share thoughts seemingly challenging to implement, but there is a fertile field for these ideas to sow. In the comment, it is also interesting that good teachers' professional relations might positively correlate with the students' interaction with each other and the school's culture, as Moller et al. (2013) indicated. Her discourse leads to the idea that collective work between teachers can motivate students to join the culture of dialogue within the school, influencing their work in the classroom.

In her comment is the idea that collegiality and collaboration allow one to join a team of teachers with high professional standards. An essence of pride can be perceived by participating in a group of workers that is hugely important for the school's development and its pedagogical culture. In that sense, Olivia expressed:

Undoubtedly, teamwork is essential for the school. [...] Some teachers, they have been there for over 20 years involved, discussing, and supporting the school. I think one of the central factors is that they are outstanding teachers, and we are very competent. [...] If it were not for these people who have become essential figures in my professional and personal life, I would have already left. [...] When it's teachers' meeting day, we get very happy and excited; it is a moment to sit down and think together. [Olivia]

Olivia states the team's importance by recognising herself as part of it. Looking at the positive experiences emerging from the teachers' interview, when discussing collective work and its power to drive the school objectives and design an encouraging school culture, they are at the same time affirming the distinction of being in a team they recognise themselves as competent professionals.

3.5 Theme 5 – Work management: overload and remuneration

Teaching is not uncommonly depicted as a low-demand profession, especially by media commenters and policymakers interested in educational debate (Bartlett, 2004). Typically, the argument is presented that teaching has some “perks”, such as half-period workdays, free weekends and longer holidays compared to other occupations. In that standpoint, teachers' wages are not an issue. However, teacher shortages and leaves are still usual problems when discussing the profession worldwide (OECD, 2019; Thompson, 2021); and low salaries, stress and work overload are frequently associated factors with these problems (Bartlett, 2004; Pinto, 2014). As Alves and Pinto (2011) and Camargo et al. (2009) note, there is a tendency for some commentators and scholars, when referring to the teacher labour market, to bypass the share of work done outside schools, looking only at the contract hours.

In fact, the participants' comments are incisive in showing that teachers have busy routines, not only in school. Ana's report, for instance, shows clearly how the work overload combines in-school assignments and work they usually have to do in their private spaces:

My workload [at school] is 22 hours a week, and that's my contract. So I'm at school every day for four and a half hours on non-meeting days. [...] but like, almost the same amount I work at school, I do after. It's not every day that I work 8 hours for the school. But, for example, when the weekend arrives, I have to do the same hours on Saturday and Sunday because there is a weekly schedule, there is a monthly schedule to adjust, I have to study, and I can't just

sit and start writing the planning and the week activities. I need to research, read and look at old things I've already prepared, pay attention to the year schedule, school projects and so on. So, I say like this, that we are "inside" our school daily, even though we are at home. So on average, I tell you that per day, I work at least 6 hours, adding Saturdays and Sundays. [Ana]

In the interview, Ana did not seem bothered about doing her preparation and studies; nonetheless, she is unpaid for that. According to the collective bargaining agreement signed between the teachers' union and employers, the teachers are guaranteed an additional 5% of hours of activity in their wage, intended exclusively to pay for their working hours spent outside school. In Ana's and others' testimonies, the 5% (approximately one hour paid in Ana's case) does not cover all the work she spent preparing, which is essential for the profession (Tardif, 2012). Thus, teachers' overwork does not always mean just tiredness; in teachers' professional context, it also has to do with being unpaid for part of their essential tasks. In that scenario, Ana tries to find other resources for completing her household income:

In terms of salary, I would have to double the workday [at school] to earn what I need. But I have my children, and I have to deal with that. So I look for other ways; for example, I teach private lessons because then I have a little more time flexibility. I work with families too. I help families plan activities at home [to help students], so even though I am not on another work journey at school, I do a little outside too. [Ana]

When asked, Ana said she was positively satisfied with her salary and wished to retire from the same school. Apparently, the reasons did not lie in the amount received but in her rights as a teacher. The primary element is that, as a teacher there, she could enrol her children in that school, which counts as an *indirect salary*. In that sense, apart from the fact that, in her perspective, it would be hard for her family to afford the school fees, plus the additional costs that came along with the enrolment (textbooks, literature books, fieldwork expenses, uniform etc.), she highlighted two other benefits. First, working in the same place where the children studied allowed her to adjust her and her children's school schedule—not only the day-to-day activities, which also helped, but also bank and summer holidays. Second, her beliefs aligned with the school's pedagogical and social values. This is undoubtedly the case for many teachers in the private sector, as mentioned before by previous studies (Quibao Neto, 2020).

Regarding these unpaid hours, Adriana presents her perspective by looking at her sense of authorship, which she is very proud of as a teacher. She says the following:

This is the other side of the coin of my autonomy in the school, of my curricular authorship. If you want to be authorial, you have to study more and do more work hours without the students. So, my studies and updating time, preparing time, I am not paid for, and this unpaid time ends up being much, much longer. [Adriana]

As examined in the earlier parts of this dissertation, Adriana's authorship and autonomy represent a significant share of her job satisfaction at her school. However, the payment seems incompatible with how much work the school requires from the teachers, especially when designing the school's curriculum is expected. When discussing the salaries, she said that her salary is below what her duty as a teacher requires; she needs to buy books, organise cultural activities, and attend different courses. Consequently, as Ana does, Adriana needs to find different sources for her household income:

I earn much more than the Brazilian population. So I have to contextualise my answer using this information. From that perspective, I think it's OK. Now, what does this salary give me concerning what I have to spend to keep my job because I also have expenses with books, courses and activities that help me in my classes, and compared with other professions with the degree of training and dedication that I have, then the answer is that my salary is far from adequate? It's always in comparison. I'm not starving, far from it, but I'm also in a situation where just teaching is not enough, and I have to look for and build other possibilities for supplementing my income. [Adriana]

Teachers' wages are a sensitive issue for researchers in the area (Quibao Neto, 2020), and the reasons are at the core of Adriana's comment. One way to discuss the topic is by comparing the salary with the country's economic situation. Contrasting this with the current Brazilian case and contextualising it, Adriana presents that her salary is acceptable. Nonetheless, when addressing the topic by comparing teaching with similar professions, she underpins the inadequacy. In this sense, her concern is based on the fact that teachers' salaries in Brazil, on average, are about 35% lower than that of other professions requiring the same education level to exercise the career (Jacomini, Alves & Camargo, 2016; Alves and Sonobe, 2018). Moreover, as she presents, teaching

demands more physical and emotional engagement and involvement than many other professions (Tardif, 2012; Paro, 2018) which present better remuneration and more reasonable workload. From this perspective, the payment does not equate well with the degree of attention and dedication she puts into her job.

Apart from what the two teachers expressed above, this situation where teachers must work many hours outside schools has another undesirable outcome, as voiced by Olivia:

I think that there is a harmful idea [entailed in the school culture] that is very problematic and that I think it will become more complex as school workers are more exploited, that we are increasingly overloaded and stressed. It is like we are available for the school all the time. So even in your unpaid hours, you have to be available. So, there is no problem in the head of those who organise the work [in the school], in the heads of some coordinators, to book, for instance, exceptional teachers' meetings at any time that you are "free", that you are not in the classroom. [...] If they [teachers] are not at school, they are available for other tasks than teaching. And some of the coordinators get upset if you say, "I can't". I have other things to do. That should not be how it works. [Olivia]

Unlike Ana, Olivia presented a more confrontational perspective regarding the unpaid hours worked outside the school. To illustrate this, Olivia used a word ("exploited") to describe the situation from a Marxist standpoint. From that perspective, workers in a capitalist society are exploited by being pushed to sell their labour force to capitalists for less than the entire value of the commodities they produce. In other words, only part of the work done by them is paid. In private schools, one source of their profits comes from these non-paid hours in the preparation mentioned by Ana, Adriana and Olivia. However, in Olivia's case, she is even more pressured by leaders calling for some "exceptional" hours in her free time. Thus, what could be seen as just inadequate management of teachers' work hours is how private schools are administrated to amplify their surplus. Olivia seems to be well-acquainted with and assertive when evoking this debate during the interviews, especially when discussing salaries and satisfaction, which also reveals the political nature of this topic.

In a different type of contract from Ana's, Adriana's and Olivia's, some participants were hired for 44 hours of work, which is the maximum allowed for teachers according to the local labour rules. Usually, schools that hire teachers for whole work journeys require work exclusivity. This is not a standard work condition

in Brazil since almost 75% of teachers work partial periods, and more than 20% work in more than one school (OECD, 2019). Although teaching in one school and for the entire work journey is a fundamental condition for teachers to develop their pedagogical roles instead of being just class providers (Moriconi, Gimenes & Leme, 2021), some teachers on a full contract also described being stressed by the overwork. For Ben, one issue is the struggle to communicate this problem to the school. Ben said:

I am well paid, and I am truly satisfied. I have never earned so much money as a teacher [...], but concerning the workload and the school demands, I'm very little satisfied; I'm pretty overloaded and don't know if I want to do it again next year, but it isn't easy to present that. [Ben]

Ben presented a common issue in schools such as the one he works for, where the characteristic of overloading teachers is assumed as the basis of the school's effectiveness. Thus, in his understanding, finding space for objections and negotiations is hard since overworking is normal. This picture becomes clearer in the interview; discussing collective work, he identifies that teachers are "used to the school's work overload, and they are great"; in that way, by connecting teachers' professional distinction with the managed overwork, he illustrates the culture of some school settings that inevitably influenced the teachers' perceptions of a suitable professional in this type of work environment. Thus, underpinning Ben's work setting, school culture conceivably pushes the teachers to accept the job's more elevated demand. This force is seemingly constituted by the interaction among three factors: (i) they have a better contract and a higher remuneration than teachers in the labour market; (ii) to be considered a good teacher there, it is necessary to handle the overload, commonly seen as "expected" and "normal"; and this leads to the fact that (iii) there is no space for complaints.

In her own experience, Sylvia, likewise in a full-contract job, presented difficulties with the overwork. As she mentioned, one major problem is the adversities in the interaction among the school, the students and students' families, aggravated by returning to face-to-face classes:

It is not all right. I also feel it's a little absurd to say that, you know, because it's a high salary. And it's probably one of the highest salaries in private schools. But I think it comes at a very high cost for the amount of work that often is not well managed. And this semester, in particular, was tough at the school. This semester of return [from face-to-face classes], I think the students

are quite aggressive, you know? And we still have a lot of problems with the parents and stuff, so it's exhausting, and I'm seeing all the teachers very tired. So, on the one hand, we don't have financial concerns; we don't need to look for other sources [of income]. On the other hand, we can't have tranquillity; our classes are often taken out of context. [Sylvia]

In terms of payment, Sylvia recognises that her salary is far above the job market average for teachers. For instance, Sylvia's salary is the highest payment of the cases in this study, which already exceed salaries for the private educational sector (Quibao Neto, 2020). Furthermore, as mentioned by Adriana, this cannot go unnoticed in the teachers' work conditions discussion. However, for Sylvia, the good salaries do not compensate for the tensions that reduces her job satisfaction, mainly due to the high degree of interference from what she judges as inadequate relationships between students, families and teachers.

What Sylvia reports seems to be rooted in the present political scenario. Currently, in the country, schools and their teachers have been the principal centres of critics in conservative social movements supported by government representatives (Miguel, 2016) (including the current president). The main accusation is that teachers practice ideological "harassment" of students in the classrooms (Coparverde, Lessa & Souza, 2019; Knijnik, 2021). Tension in society has found fertile soil in private schools, where some families are discontent with the curriculum and the teachers' work and views. In these schools, topics and activities linked to gender, sexual orientation, religion, feminism, racism and human rights are the typical issues addressed by these families (Saldanã, 2018). Taking action, these families and students started a scrutinising process that reached its zenith during the online classes. Parents filmed teachers and used it to expose them on the internet and social media; in some cases, they use their influential positions to reach out the broader media in country. This untrusted and violent school environment has been the predominant issue for many teachers in Brazil (Frigotto, 2017), especially, as in Sylvia's case, in private schools. In that sense, for her, salaries do not mitigate this confrontational and coercion situation within the school.

3.5 Next step...

The next step in the dissertation is to present the discussion, which will delve on how these themes can answer the research questions, and to draw some possible conclusion regarding what have been discussed in this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to understand how teachers in the studied cases view the relationship between job satisfaction and work conditions. Based on the interviews, evidence was gathered and analysed based on the thematic analysis (Terry et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2021) in the previous chapter. This chapter will be divided into two main parts; the first will discuss the findings, which aim to answer the research questions; the second will present some achievable conclusions.

4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 Among the tasks performed by the interviewed teachers, which stands out as the primary source of professional satisfaction?

According to the participants, working with and for students in the classroom was reported as the most satisfying activity within the profession; this finding parallels results from previous research (Ma & Macmillan, 1999; Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006; Parrachione, Rosser & Petersen, 2008). Thus, school settings that can facilitate and not lack barriers to teaching increase the teachers' perception of job satisfaction (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995) and, in the cases analysed, enhance retention in the same school.

Within this study, highlighting the role that teaching has in their satisfaction is essential, indicating that participants mediated their opinions about working conditions and satisfaction with their work from this "classroom" perspective. For the participants, the working conditions associated with the adequate development of their work in the classroom are the potential satisfaction factors.

Furthermore, these findings corroborate the field literature (Hargreaves, 1994; Perie & Baker, 1997; Parrachione, Rosser & Petersen, 2008) when participants evoke a difference between satisfaction with teaching ("career") and satisfaction in their workplaces ("job"). In that sense, for the teachers in this study, one can be dissatisfied with the job but still satisfied with developing their careers. None of the study participants commented on leaving their careers, but some indicated a desire to move to another school or sector.

4.1.2 What work conditions do teachers mention that relate to their perception of job satisfaction?

Overall, the most important working conditions participants evoked as affecting their job satisfaction involved (i) autonomy, (ii) space for authorship, (iii) collective work, and (iv) teachers' work management.

Supporting earlier studies, room for autonomy and collective work are potential elements of work conditions positively associated with teachers' perception of job satisfaction. According to Dinham and Scott (1998), both factors are intrinsic teaching elements, as they tie to locale specificities. Research shows that teachers who experience high levels of autonomy at their jobs experience more job satisfaction (Albert & Levine, 1988; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Sterns et al., 2015; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006). In the participants' comments, autonomy addresses freedom of speech and freedom of selecting teaching methods and strategies aligning with the teacher's pedagogical beliefs and values. In private schools, autonomy was mentioned as an important factor for counterbalancing confrontations when families scrutinised and negatively valued the teachers' work.

Teachers in this case study pointed to "space for authorship" as an essential element of satisfaction in their workplace, especially when conveyed collectively. However, authorship was not found in the literature review as a motivator associated with job satisfaction, though some studies account for the importance of authorship in teachers' professional experience and formation (Maia et al., 2020; Gois & Santos, 2014; Paro, 2018). One way to interpret it is through an indirect link to a "culture of participation" and decision-making, commonly associated with teachers' job satisfaction, indicated by the literature (Madero, 2019; Burke et al., 2013; Crossman & Harris, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001). In sum, more studies need to explore this factor for more precise appreciation regarding its relation to job satisfaction in the educational field.

As a school-based factor, teachers' comments towards the collective work conveyed the third theme. As presented in the literature review, the main elements of collective work are collegiality and collaboration, and both usually support satisfaction by enhancing teachers' professional involvement and feelings of belonging (Hargreaves, 1994; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011a; Sterns et al., 2014; Madero, 2019). When discussing collective work, the participants who experienced collegiality and collaboration in their schools evoked a sense of consideration, support, belonging,

appreciation, and competence (Sims, 2020). Also, as a benefit of these work conditions, some teachers reported that collectiveness based on dialogue among teachers tends to positively affect the students' posture. The result is a strong professional community and a collective pedagogical culture, which can effectively be associated with high levels of job satisfaction as presented by previous (Sterns et al., 2015).

Teachers also presented concerns about work management, especially work overload and salaries. In the participants' accounts, both elements are connected since much of their work outside the classroom is the overload source (Thompson, 2021), and private schools inadequately pay for this part of the work (Vargas, 2016; Silva, 2017; Quibao Neto, 2020). This case study's findings also support previous research (Dinham, 1993; Parrachione, Rosser & Petersen, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020) since work overload and salary inadequacy are levers of dissatisfaction and stress. However, in this case study, intrinsic factors can moderate poor extrinsic factors, as will be mentioned in RQ3.

4.1.3 From the teachers' perspective, how do the factors of work conditions relate to the specific workplace/context in which they develop their work?

Teachers' comments highlighted contrasts in performing and interacting with students, reiterating the work complexity. In that sense, although their satisfaction's direct source is identical, its development varies for each participant in each school setting. On the teachers' side, characteristics such as their previous experiences, understanding of the student-teacher relationship, the student's age, contract hours, and how teachers picture the profession all play an indispensable role in their performance and expectations for working conditions.

On the schools' end, their organisational culture also influences teachers' perception of job satisfaction, resonating with earlier research (Simbula et al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b). In other words, how work conditions are organised within the school environment affects teachers' perception of satisfaction. For example, Rosie, Ana, and Adriana are satisfied with their jobs and want to remain in their workplace; the three participants also reported experiencing the previously mentioned work conditions. Nonetheless, the differences lie in how they describe these elements in their daily work, how the schools design the work conditions, and what the school's expectations are when systematising/promoting these conditions in their environment.

In that sense, teachers' perception of job satisfaction seems to relate to their school's pedagogical organisation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Thus, in the cases studied, when teachers are very satisfied with their jobs, a congruent connection exists between the school's and teacher's pedagogical perspectives, working as a mutually beneficial "key and lock" mechanism.

Finally, teachers seem to counterbalance their work conditions against the lack of some of it in their jobs, possibly affecting their perception of satisfaction. For instance, Oliver's, Rosie's, Gracie's, and Adriana's cases show that their sense of autonomy, authorship, and collective work sufficiently override their overload issues or inadequate salaries, leading to the wish to remain in their workplaces. When overload issues and insufficient salaries are combined with a lack of space for authorship, as in Clara and Olivia's case, these tend to associate with dissatisfaction, leading to more stress, compelling them to work at another school (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Furthermore, even when these extrinsic factors are improved and counterbalanced with a lack of autonomy, as in Sylvia and Ben's case, better contracts and payments do not disengage the dissatisfaction of being highly under pressure within their school settings. In sum, for this case study, intrinsic and school-based factors appear to lead to job satisfaction and even surpass problems with overload and inadequate wages; however, extrinsic factors related to work management seem unassociated with job satisfaction when counterbalanced with the lack of some intrinsic factors (Parrachione, Rosser & Petersen, 2008).

4.2 Conclusion

This study has offered insight into how the teachers in the studied cases experience the relationship between job satisfaction and work conditions. While the results cannot be generalised due to the sampling and this case study's limited nature and the sampling – a group of teachers working in specific private schools in São Paulo – conclusions to the research questions can be drawn. Through a qualitative research approach, participants reported that teaching and working with and for students in the classroom (Tardif, 2012; Paro, 2018) was the primary source of their satisfaction. During the interviews the interviews, teachers also seemed to distinguish between their career satisfaction and job satisfaction.

Moreover, the teachers depicted work conditions as factors that could enhance their classroom performance. Teachers in this study presented four recurrent aspects of work conditions the thematic analysis organised: (i) space for authorship, (ii) autonomy, which functioned as intrinsic factors and (iii) collective work, as school-based factor, and (iv) work management, with concerns such as overload and remuneration functioning as extrinsic factors (Dinham & Scott, 1998). In the teachers' comments, the intrinsic and school-based factors contributed to their satisfaction; the extrinsic factors, especially work overload, were seen as issues in their current schools. Also, teachers seem to counterbalance their work conditions and the lack of factors they would expect. In the participants' experience, adequate intrinsic factors can counterbalance issues with extrinsic factors, but the contrary was not perceived, echoing previous studies (Parrachione, Rosser & Petersen, 2008).

Finally, while this case study focused on private schools in São Paulo, its results may be relevant to teachers with similar characteristics working in similar contexts. Nonetheless, with an understanding of these participants' perceptions and how much their work conditions influenced their satisfaction in specific school settings, this research's results cannot be generalised, although the findings were close to those in previous works on the topic. Also, it is essential to highlight that further research into this area would be welcome in the Brazilian context, especially in the private sector which is very heterogeneous. Particularly, it would be advantageous for the field to also use quantitative analysis, as most existing works are related to teachers' job satisfaction or mixed-methods research, adding more elements to qualitative research. Brazil has a vast set of educational data allowing for exploring the topic with these approaches. Results from further research using this data could be compared with findings in other educational contexts and form a dialogue with the broader academic community.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A – Invitation letter

Teachers' perception of their job-satisfaction in Private Schools in São Paulo Municipality

Invitation letter: teachers

Dear teachers,

My name is **Dr. Jose Quibao**. I am currently attending the MSc in Education (Research Design and Methodology) at the University of Oxford.

As a requirement for obtaining a master's degree, students conduct independent research and submit a dissertation as a result. The topic of my dissertation is related to the teachers' work conditions and teachers' job satisfaction in the private sector in São Paulo municipality. More specifically, it examines the role of different work conditions in private schools in the teachers' understanding of their satisfaction with the job. In São Paulo, there is a high concentration of the private educational sector attending students from 0 to 17 years old (Brazilian Basic Education); nonetheless, the sector is not homogenous in terms of working conditions for their employees. Thus, incorporating teachers who work in different settings of school organisation into one study provides a valuable opportunity to compare and contrast teachers' perceptions toward an apparent similar job (teaching).

For the primary purpose of this research, interviews will be conducted with teachers working in schools that provide different work conditions. For this, we would appreciate your collaboration and participation in the study. This research perspective lies in the dialogue between researcher and participants, as both bring ideas, values, experiences, and multiply overlapping identities, all of which can play a role in this research interaction. The knowledge within this interaction will be seen as a co-production, and the research process can be a potential learning experience for both parties.

If you are interested in participating, please reply to this message to **[REDACTED]** for initial arrangements and schedule. All interviews will be conducted online, and only the audio will be captured and necessary for the research.

We already much appreciate your collaboration,
Best wishes.

Appendix B - The informed consent

Teachers' perception of their job-satisfaction in Private Schools in São Paulo Municipality

Information for Participants

Invitation

We appreciate your interest in participating in this interview. Please read through this information before agreeing to participate (if you wish to) by ticking the 'yes' box below.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is essential to understand why the research is being conducted and your participation. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if any aspects of the project are unclear or if you would like more information ([REDACTED]). Take time to decide whether or not you would like to participate in this research.

This project is being completed under the supervision of the Principal Researcher, [REDACTED] will conduct the interviews and analysis, as the research is a requirement for the MSc in Education completion at the University of Oxford.

What is the purpose of the study?

This research investigates the teachers' perception of their job satisfaction in the private schools in São Paulo Municipality. More specifically, it examines the role of different work conditions in private schools in the teachers' understanding of their satisfaction with the job. Thus, incorporating teachers who work in various settings of school organisation into one study provides a valuable opportunity to compare and contrast teachers' perceptions toward an apparent similar job (teaching).

This interview intends to develop a dialogue regarding work experiences, work conditions on your place of work and your perception as a teacher. You will be asked some broader questions around the topic, and you are free to navigate towards the topic in the way you see most appropriate. The interview should take about 45 to 60 minutes. No background knowledge is required. In this case, the data will support discussion over teachers' work conditions in the private sector in Brazil.

Do I have to take part?

No. Please note that participation is voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you may withdraw at any point for any reason. Also important to mention that if any of the questions during the interview convey any discomfort or constrain, you feel free not to answer them. Every effort will be made to preserve confidentiality, guaranteeing your anonymity.

Your participation will help produce an informed picture of the teachers' work conditions in the private sector, which has not been much explored in the country. As part of this study, your participation will benefit those trying to understand the topic by putting forward your voice and experiences.

What will happen to the results of this research?

The results of this research will form the basis of an Oxford master dissertation. Some results will be published in academic journals concerned with exploring educational policy and teachers' work conditions. If you wish to obtain a copy of the published results, please inform the researcher. The study will take place over the next five months, after which time the published results will be publicly available.

How will my data be used and stored?

The researcher will not collect any data that could directly identify you. The data will only be used for this research in hand, and it will be transcribed and analysed only by [REDACTED].

The interview you provide will be stored in a password-protected electronic file on University of Oxford secure servers and used during the analysis. The data will be stored for one month after publication or public release of the research work.

Who will have access to my data¹?

The data you will provide may be shared with [REDACTED], supervisor of this research, and potentially with an internal and external examiner for the final assignment. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>.

¹ Guidance is available within CUREC's [Best Practice Guidance \(09\) on Data collection, protection and management](#)

Who is funding and organizing the research?

The research is funded and organized as an independent master research project in conjunction with the Department of Education, Oxford University.

Contact for Further Information or Follow-up

Should you have any further questions about this research, please feel free to contact: [REDACTED] Your inquiries are most welcome.

Participant's answer:

- ☐ I agree to voluntarily take part in this interview.
- ☐ I confirm that I have read this information sheet and understand the intent and purpose of this research.
- ☐ I agree that data captured by this research can be shared among the research supervisor on this project.

Appendix C - Indicative question

Teachers' perception of their job-satisfaction in Private Schools in São Paulo Municipality

1. Could you present your experience being a teacher in the private sector?
2. How long have you been teaching in the private sector and this actual school?
3. Do you teach in which discipline and for which student's age?
4. How many hours are your weak workload? Does the school divide it by working in the classroom and non-classroom activities?
5. Have you always worked this amount per week?
6. Do you work in one or more schools?
7. Which kind of job have you been involved in the school?
8. What type of activities are related to your job that you like the most in school?
9. Does the school you work at now give you the conditions to do these activities?
10. And what type of activities do you like the least?
11. How do you cope with these activities that you do not like much?
12. Do you believe that you have control over your tasks to make them more suited to your beliefs and goals as a teacher?
13. Could you give some examples of how do you control your work in your current job?
14. Does the school encourage you to coordinate and manage your work?
15. Do you feel that the school, students and parents appreciate your work?
16. When and how do you recognise this appreciation/lack of appreciation?
17. What do you think about the teacher's team in the school you work?
18. Is there a degree of collaboration between the teachers in the school that work now?
19. How would you frame your satisfaction within your work as a teacher?
20. Does it apply to your current work? Can you provide specific examples of daily satisfaction?
21. Do you believe your salary and the work conditions of your current work are in line with your perception of satisfaction?

Appendix D - Central University Research Ethics Committee – CUREC - Approval

Dear [REDACTED]

Title: Teachers' perception of their job-satisfaction in Private Schools in São Paulo Municipality

Ref: [REDACTED]

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethics approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted.

If your research involves participants whose ability to give free and informed consent is in question (this includes those under 18 and vulnerable adults), then it is advisable to read the following NSPCC professional reporting requirements for cases of suspected abuse <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/factsheet-child-abuse-reporting-requirements-professionals.pdf>

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application you should submit details to research.office@education.ox.ac.uk for consideration.

Good luck with your research study.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

Member of the DREC