Examining Teachers' Perceptions Of Workplace Happiness: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to reveal the opinions and suggestions of elementary teachers regarding workplace happiness. The research employed descriptive research model, a qualitative research method. In the 2021-2022 academic year, three primary schools were selected in Izmir according to maximum diversity sampling, and 20 elementary teachers working in these schools participated in the research. The research data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using content analysis. According to the results of the research, in order to ensure workplace happiness, school administrators should place more emphasis on interpersonal relationships, adopt a fair management approach, appreciate teacher achievements based on merit, care about the emotions and thoughts of employees, assign tasks related to educational activities, organize social activities within the school, improve working conditions, provide opportunities to develop skills and competencies, and periodically change assignments. Additionally, it is important to emphasize cooperation between employees and parents, and to have class sizes that allow teachers to individually engage with their students, as well as improve the transportation conditions of the schools.

Keywords: *Workplace happiness, school, teacher, elementary teacher, qualitative research*

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Introduction

People spend most of their lives working at a job. The time spent at work can exceed the total time people allocate to their friends, families, and hobbies. Besides providing the economic income necessary for daily life, work plays a crucial role in meeting individuals' needs for socialization, self-improvement, and feeling successful (Dalgın, 2021). Working is one of the most fundamental human rights. The right to work is guaranteed by national and international regulations. The right to work, which is included among the social and economic rights in the 1982 Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (Article 49), is a right that people are born with and is considered an inseparable part of human dignity (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1976). Work, which is considered in different meanings, is to do something that requires physical or mental effort as part of a job (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). The job is the driving force that forms in employees about what needs to be done to maximize their performance (Jones, 2010).

Warr (2007) focuses on two fundamental questions related to work: 1. Why are some people happier at work than others? 2. Why are some people happier than others while working in the same job? While Warr (2007) states that the happiness of people working in different jobs can be explained by the job itself and its content, he emphasizes that the main point to be investigated is the reasons why some people are happier than others while working under the same job title. According to him, happiness is a desirable trait in any job title, and people are happier and more successful in their jobs if they find the characteristics of the job parallel to what they desire or can integrate with their personality.

Workplace Happiness

Workplace happiness, which reflects positive attitudes (positive judgments) or experiences (positive emotions, moods, feelings, flow states) related to the workplace, is influenced by the structure of the organization, the nature of the work, the management approach of the manager, the physical and psychological aspects of the work environment, individual personality traits, the alignment between what the organization provides and the individual's expectations, needs, and preferences (Fisher, 2010). According to Chaiprasit and Santidhiraku (2011), the factors affecting workplace happiness are classified into five main categories:

Job inspiration: Refers to the satisfaction and goal attainment of employees with their given tasks.

Organization's shared value: Refers to the collective behaviors and organizational culture of employees.

Relationship: Refers to the good relationships established between colleagues, the sense of belonging to the group, and being accepted by group members.

Quality of work life: Refers to the relationship between the work environment, employee participation in work, and humanizing work. A balanced interaction between the three increases employee satisfaction and ensures high productivity from work.

Leadership: Refers to the effects of the management approach exhibited by organizational managers on employee happiness.

Gangwania et al. (2020) have categorized the components of workplace happiness into environmental factors, family environment and living conditions, genetic and personal factors, social interaction, organizational factors, leader behaviors, spirituality, emotional health, and conscious activities.

Although there are specific factors that make people happy in their workplaces, just as people explain their subjective well-being for different reasons, not everyone can be happy at work for the same reasons. What makes one person happy at work can be a reason for unhappiness for another. Therefore, workplace happiness necessitates treating everyone differently.

Workplace happiness has tangible and intangible benefits for the organization in terms of satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment. According to Maenapothi (2007), happy employees are more satisfied with their jobs compared to unhappy employees. Happy employees have high motivation (Erdoğan &Akduman, 2013), which allows them to find a way to accomplish their tasks even in the most challenging situations (Munar et al., 2020). When employees are happy, they make fewer mistakes, are less likely to be ill, and experience less stress. Happy employees show higher commitment to their work (Erdoğan &Akduman, 2013; Achor, 2010/2020) and exhibit less resistance to change. The overall quality of life of employees who are happy at work also improves (Kjerulf, 2007/2014). Januwarsono (2015) found that happy employees are more productive, energetic, have lower turnover intentions, higher job satisfaction, and are more confident compared to unhappy employees. In this context, it is extremely important to identify the factors that make teachers happy in their workplaces and to eliminate organizational deterrent factors that make teachers unhappy in schools where interaction among people is intense and which host employees with different characteristics. This study aims to reveal the opinions and suggestions of elementary teachers regarding workplace happiness. For this purpose, teachers were inquired about the factors contributing to their recommendations for enhancing workplace happiness.

Method

Under the method heading, the research design, study group, data collection process and tools, data analysis, and the validity and reliability of the research are explained.

Research Design

In the research, the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. The phenomenology design is based on the paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity. Therefore, it is strong in understanding subjective experience, obtaining in-depth information about people's motivations and actions, and eliminating generally accepted assumptions (Lester, 1999). The phenomenology design consists of two different approaches: interpretive and descriptive phenomenology (Elliott &Timulak, 2005). In this research, the descriptive phenomenology design was used. The aim of the descriptive phenomenological approach is to clarify and understand the most basic meaning of a phenomenon of interest from the perspective of those directly related to the subject (Giorgi, 1997). In other words, the researcher does not make any interpretation but rather analyzes the explanations given by the participants (Penner, 2008).

Study Group

In determining the study group, the maximum diversity sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used. The aim of maximum diversity sampling is to reveal common or differing aspects and patterns between different situations and to describe the problem within a broader framework (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

Morse (1994) states that the sample size in qualitative research using the phenomenology design should be at least 6 people, while Ritchie et al. (2014, p.118) suggest that the sample size should not exceed 50 to avoid a decrease in the quality of data collection and analysis. In this research, the study group consists of 20 voluntary elementary teachers working in primary schools with high, medium, and low socio-economic levels in Izmir during the 2021-2022 academic year. In determining the schools, factors such as the population of the area where the school is located, geographical location, socio-economic development level, and transportation conditions were taken into consideration. The primary school with good physical and social environment conditions is named "A School," the one with moderate conditions is named "B School," and the one with low conditions is named "C School."

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Interviewed Teachers

		N
A School	Elementary Teacher	8
B School	Elementary Teacher	8
C School	Elementary Teacher	4
	Total	20
Gender	Female	11
	Male	9
	Total	20
Marital Status	Married	13
	Single	7
	Total	20
Years of Service	0-5 years	2
	6-10 years	1
	11-15 years	5
	16-20 years	8
	21 years and over	4
	Total	20
Education Level	Associate Degree	2
	Bachelor's Degree	15
	Graduate Degree	3
	Total	20

According to Table 1, 40% (8 people) of the teachers working in A and B schools, 20% (4 people) in C school, 82% (11 people) are female, and 18% (9 people) are male. 65% (13 people) are married, and 35% (7 people) are single. 10% (2 people) have 0-5 years of service, 5% (1 person) have 6-10 years, 25% (5 people) have 11-15 years, 40% (8 people) have 16-20 years, and 20% (4 people) have 21 years and over. 10% (2 people) have an associate degree, 75% (15 people) have a bachelor's degree, and 15% (3 people) have a graduate degree.

Data Collection Process and Tools

In the research, data were collected using a semi-structured interview form suitable for content analysis. Semi-structured interviews were preferred because they do not restrict individuals' responses (Karasar, 2009).

The questions included in the interview form are as follows:

1. What are the reasons for your happiness at your workplace?

   1.1. What makes you happy at your school?

2. What would you suggest to increase workplace happiness?
    2.1. How would you define a school where you can be happy?
    2.2. What would make you happy at your school?

The questions in the interview form were prepared by the researchers through literature review. Expert opinions were obtained from two faculty members in the Educational Administration Department of Buca Education Faculty at Dokuz Eylül University, two elementary teachers, and one Turkish teacher to ensure the appropriateness of the questions in terms of meaning and language. Thus, the content validity of the questions was tried to be ensured. The questions in the semi-structured interview form were asked to 4 teachers as a pilot study, and it was observed that the questions were mostly understood correctly, and minor adjustments were made to the interview form.

The prepared interview form consists of two parts. The first part includes questions about the teachers' gender, marital status, years of service, educational background, and teaching field, while the second part includes the interview questions. The interviews lasted between 25-40 minutes. For teachers who did not want their interviews to be recorded, their opinions were taken using the note-taking method.

Data Analysis

The content analysis technique was used to analyze the data. Content analysis is a technique in which inferences are made by identifying certain characteristics of a message in an objective and systematic manner (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018). The questions in the interviews were used as an umbrella, and the answers given to the questions were examined to determine codes and categories. Since the number of participants in the study was low, it was thought that giving percentage rates would be meaningless, so only frequencies were provided in the article. Sentences that were considered to be used as direct quotations were identified and included in the findings section. The data, converted into plain text, were analyzed separately by two researchers to ensure reliability.

Findings

In this section, the findings obtained by analyzing the data in accordance with the research questions and the related interpretations are provided.

Teachers' Opinions on the Reasons for Happiness at Work

The answers given by teachers regarding the reasons for happiness at work were categorized under seven sub-themes: 'professional competence,' 'relationships,' 'working conditions,' 'parent attitude,' 'sense of belonging,' 'perception of the profession,' and 'work-life balance.' The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Reasons for Teachers' Happiness at Work

Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes	f (A)	f (B)	f (C)	f (Total)
Reasons for Teachers' Happiness at Work	Professional competence	Students' academic success	2	1	2	5
		Contributing to students' development	1	2	1	4
		Completing tasks on time		1	1	2
	Relationships	Developing good relations with colleagues	1	2	2	5
		Being loved by students	1	2		3
		Developing good friendships with colleagues	1		2	3
		Teachers being sharing		1	1	2
		Colleagues not gossiping about each other		1		1
		Colleagues not focusing on finding each other's mistakes			1	1
		Valuing each other			1	1
	Vorking conditions	Easy of transportation	3			3
		Full-day education		1		1
		Class size			2	2
	Parent attitude	Parental interest	3	1		4
		Parental cooperation	4			4
	Sense of belonging	Feeling at home	2	3	2	7
	Perception of the profession	Considering teaching an important proffession	1	1	1	3
		Loving the teaching proffession	1	2		3
		Autonomy			1	1
	Work-life balance	Time		1		1

Professional Competence Theme

Teachers at A, B, and C schools stated that they feel competent and happy in their work when their students succeed academically (5 people), when they contribute to the development of their students (4 people), and when they complete tasks on time (2 people). Below are examples of teacher opinions on the professional competence sub-theme.

A teacher working at A School said, *"As a teacher, I can reach many students. Contributing to their academic and psychological development makes me happy."* Another teacher at B School said, *"I try to prepare my students for life and exams in the best possible way. Seeing their success makes me very happy. I feel proud."* A teacher at C School said, *"I am happy when I conduct my lessons as planned and complete the curriculum according to the schedule."*

Relationships Theme

Teachers at A, B, and C schools stated that they are happy at their schools because they get along well with their colleagues (5 people), are loved by their students (3 people), develop good friendships with colleagues (3 people), their colleagues are sharing (2 people), they do not gossip about each other (1 person), do not focus on finding each other's mistakes (1 person), and value each other (1 person). Examples of teacher opinions on this theme are provided below.

A teacher at A School said*, "I am happy because I get along well with my colleagues and work with people I like."* Another teacher at B School said, *"I am happy because I know that my work is supported by the school administration and my colleagues, and no one speaks behind my back."*

Working Conditions Theme

Three teachers at A School said they are happy because their schools are easy to reach. One teacher at B School said they are happy because they work at a school that provides full-day education. Two teachers at C School said they are happy because they teach in classrooms with fewer students. Examples of teacher opinions on this theme are provided below.

A teacher at A School said*, "It is very easy to reach the school by both public transportation and my own vehicle. I am happy because I do not waste time on the road."* A teacher at C School said, *"There are 17 students in my class. Since the number of students is small, the lessons are more productive. I can individually attend to each student. It is easier to maintain classroom control. Seeing that I am more beneficial to my students makes me happy."*

Parent Attitude Theme

Teachers at A School (3 people) and B School (1 person) said they are happy at their schools because parents are interested in their children, and teachers at A School (4 people) said they are happy because parents cooperate with teachers. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at A School said, *"My parents are interested in their children and always cooperate and communicate with me. Therefore, the education I provide at school is not left incomplete. Parents reinforce what I teach at home. This makes me happy at school."*

Sense of Belonging Theme

Teachers at A, B, and C schools stated that they feel happy at their schools because they feel a sense of belonging to their schools (7 people). Examples of teacher opinions on this theme are provided below.

A teacher at A School said, *"I feel at home at school and feel loved by my colleagues." A teacher at B School said, "I feel a sense of belonging to my school, which makes me come to work happily."*

Perception of the Profession Theme

Teachers at A, B, and C schools stated that they are happy at their schools because they consider teaching an important profession (3 people), love the teaching profession (3 people), and have autonomy in the classroom (1 person). Examples of teacher opinions on this theme are provided below.

A teacher at A School said, *"We are raising individuals for society, so I consider my job extremely important. Knowing that I am doing an important job makes me happy." A teacher at B School said, "I am happy because I do my job with love." A teacher at C School said, "I feel free when I practice my profession in the classroom."*

Work-Life Balance Theme

A teacher at B School said they are happy with their job because they can allocate time to social activities and hobbies after work. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at B School said, *"I can allocate time to my hobbies and social activities because I do not leave work late, and this makes me very happy."*

Teachers' Suggestions to Increase Workplace Happiness

The answers given by teachers regarding increasing workplace happiness were categorized under eight sub-themes: 'parent attitude,' 'managerial factors,' 'human relations,' 'physical conditions,' 'cooperation,' 'professional development,' 'rotation,' and 'social activities.' The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Teachers' Suggestions to Increase Workplace Happiness

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	f (A)	f (B)	f (C)	f (Total)
Teachers' Suggestions to Increase Workplace Happiness	Parent attitude	Interest	2	4	1	7
		Cooperation	2	2	1	5
		Respect	1		1	2
		Expertise	1			1
	Managerial Factors	Open communication	1	1		2
		Fair management	1	2	2	5
		Being respectful and understanding	1			1
		Not being prejudiced			1	1
		Supporting teachers			1	1
		Working in disciplined manner and knowing responsibilities	1			1
		Making employees feel valuable	2			2
		Valuing opinions	1	1		2
		Appreciation	1	1		2
		Not collecting money		1		1
	Human relations	Good relationships	3		1	4
		Not talking about employees' private lives			1	1
	Physical conditions	Green garden	1			1
		Class size	1	1		2
		Cleanliness and hygiene			1	1
	Cooperation	Solidarity	1	2		3
		Harmony		1	1	2
	Proffessional development	Developing knowledge and skills	1	1		2
	Rotation	Periodic relocation		1		1
	Social activities	Activities to be organized inside or outside the school		1		1

Parent Attitude Theme

Teachers at A, B, and C schools stated that parents' interest in their children (7 people), cooperation with teachers (5 people), respect for the teaching profession (2 people), and not interfering with teachers' expertise (1 person) would increase school happiness. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at A School said, *"I think parents should understand that teaching is a profession that requires expertise. If they stop intervening in the classroom and the culture of complaining, we can be more beneficial to our students. Otherwise, we have to allocate the time we should devote to education and training to the problems we face with parents."*

A teacher at B School said, *"One day, I insisted on calling a student's parent to the school due to the student's negative behavior. When the parent arrived, they scolded me for calling them to the school in a disrespectful manner. For teachers to work happily in schools, parents need to have a positive attitude towards teachers, the school, and education."*

Managerial Factors Theme

Teachers at A, B, and C schools stated that open communication between school administration and teachers (2 people), adopting a fair management approach (5 people), being respectful and understanding towards teachers (1 person), not being prejudiced (1 person), supporting teachers when parents accuse them unfairly (1 person), fulfilling responsibilities and working in a disciplined manner (1 person), making employees feel valuable (2 people), valuing teachers' opinions (2 people), appreciating achievements (2 people), and not involving teachers in fundraising (1 person) would increase school happiness. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at A School said, *"To make all employees feel happy, the school administration should make employees feel valuable. For this, they should value our opinions and ideas and implement them in practice."* Another teacher at A School said, *"It is upsetting to feel that students and teachers are considered last in all activities related to the school's 'image' and 'guests'. Prioritizing the comfort and well-being of students over showing off would make us happy."* Another teacher at A School said, *"Teachers should not be appreciated for their closeness to the administration but for their success. The school administration, especially the principal, should be fair."* A teacher at B School said, *"I love working and participate in many extracurricular activities. I do every work with pleasure and dedication, but no one thanks me in the end. It is perceived as only my duty. Our successes should be appreciated."* A teacher at B School said, *"The school administration can be prejudiced against teachers. This even leads to other colleagues developing prejudices. The school administration should adopt behaviors and attitudes that highlight teachers' abilities instead of developing prejudices."* A teacher at C School said, *"School happiness would increase if parents did not disrespect teachers and if there were no principals who support such behavior."*

Human Relations Theme

Teachers at A and C schools (5 people) stated that they would be happier at their schools if good relationships were developed among teachers and if they did not talk about each other's private lives. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at A School said, *"I think teachers would be happier if human relations were handled carefully and there were no cliques in the teachers' lounge."* A teacher at C School said, *"We would be happier if everyone minded their own business and did not try to involve themselves in each other's private lives and gossip."*

Physical Conditions Theme

Teachers at A, B, and C schools (4 people) stated that ideal physical conditions in their schools would make them happier. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at A School said, *"There should be a green garden and reading areas in this garden."* Teachers at B and C schools said, *"Class sizes should not be too large." "Schools should meet at least basic cleanliness and hygiene conditions."*

Cooperation Theme

Teachers at A and B schools (3 people) stated that cooperation among school employees would increase school happiness. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at A School said, *"A school environment where there is solidarity among teachers instead of competition, and where the administration cooperates with teachers would make me happier."* A teacher at B School said, *"I was reported to the national education office just because I worked hard and overshadowed the assistant principal. I expected appreciation and cooperation instead of being reported."*

Professional Development Theme

Teachers at A and B schools (2 people) stated that they need to continuously update their knowledge and skills to effectively and efficiently perform their teaching profession. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at A School said, *"I think it is necessary to keep up with the changes occurring in the information society to be beneficial to my students. The Ministry of Education should organize quality training programs for teachers."*

Rotation Theme

A teacher at B School stated that limiting the duration of working at the same school would increase workplace happiness. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at B School said, *"Working at the same school for many years can be very boring and lead to professional blindness. Therefore, I recommend changing teachers' positions periodically."*

Social Activities Theme

A teacher at B School stated that organizing activities, tournaments, etc., among employees inside or outside the school would increase school happiness. Below are examples of teacher opinions on this theme.

A teacher at B School said, *"Organizing activities and tournaments inside or outside the school would increase school happiness."*

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

The reasons for teachers' happiness at work, according to the teachers interviewed within the scope of the research, are categorized under seven sub-themes: (1) human relations, (2) professional competence, (3) parent attitude, (4) sense of belonging, (5) perception of the profession, (6) working conditions, and (7) work-life balance.

In the human relations sub-theme, teachers mostly stated that they are happy at work because they develop good relationships with their colleagues. The reasons contributing to teachers' happiness at work in this sub-theme are, respectively, being loved by students, developing good friendships with colleagues, colleagues being sharing, colleagues not gossiping about each other, not focusing on finding each other's mistakes, and valuing each other. Teachers who stated that not focusing on finding each other's mistakes and valuing each other as reasons for their happiness work at C School.

Most teachers who stated their opinions in the human relations sub-theme work at C School. This may be due to teachers in small schools having more sincere and good relationships with each other. Burns and Machin (2013) found that teachers in small rural schools are happier due to the sincere relationships among teachers. Similarly, Doğanay (2022) found that teachers working in small schools with fewer teachers and students are happier because they have better relationships with their colleagues and administrators compared to teachers working in large schools with many teachers and students.

In the professional competence sub-theme, teachers mostly stated that they are happy at work when their students succeed academically. The reasons contributing to teachers' happiness at work in this sub-theme are, respectively, contributing to students' development and completing tasks on time.
In the working conditions sub-theme, teachers stated that the most powerful reason for their happiness at school is the ease of transportation. All the teachers who consider transportation conditions as a reason for their happiness at school (3 people) work at A School. This may be due to the school's location being easily accessible. Indeed, fast and comfortable transportation to the workplace is considered an important reason for employee happiness (Erdoğan &Akduman, 2013).

Teachers at C School stated that the smaller class sizes compared to central schools are a reason for their happiness at school. Two teachers said that having fewer students allows them to

individually attend to each student and maintain classroom control more easily, which makes them happy. Alkan (2022) also found that teachers' workplace happiness is higher in schools with fewer students compared to schools with more students.

A teacher at B School stated that working in a school that provides education from 9:00 AM to 2:45 PM allows them to allocate time to their personal life, which makes them happy.

In the parent attitude sub-theme, teachers mostly stated that they are happy at school when parents are interested in their students and cooperate with teachers. It was found that teachers at A School are mostly happy because parents are interested and cooperate with teachers. Çakır (2024) found that teachers working in schools with a high socio-economic level have more positive perceptions of cooperation. Teachers at C School did not express any opinions related to parent attitude. In other words, they do not consider parents' interest in their students or cooperation with teachers as reasons for their happiness at school.

In the sense of belonging sub-theme, teachers at A, B, and C schools stated that they feel happy at work because they feel at home in their schools. Chaiprasit and Santidhiraku (2011) also found that the sense of belonging to the group positively affects employees' workplace happiness.

In the perception of the profession sub-theme, teachers mostly stated that they are happy at school because they consider teaching an important profession and love the teaching profession. A teacher at C School stated that they are happy because they can act autonomously in the classroom. This may be due to fewer external interventions in the teaching process at C School.

In the work-life balance sub-theme, a teacher at B School stated that they are happy with their job because they can allocate time to their personal life after work. Munar et al. (2020) also found that work-life balance is a variable that positively affects workplace happiness. Similarly, the literature shows that the balance between life and work is an important variable in workplace happiness (Neve & Ward, 2017).

The suggestions of the teachers interviewed within the scope of the research regarding workplace happiness are categorized under eight sub-themes according to the number of teachers expressing their opinions: (1) managerial factors, (2) parent attitude, (3) human relations, (4) cooperation, (5) physical conditions, (6) professional development, (7) rotation, and (8) social activities. Teachers mostly think that managerial factors, and least rotation and social activities, would increase workplace happiness.

In the managerial factors sub-theme, teachers mostly stated that adopting a fair management approach would ensure happiness in schools. Additionally, teachers suggested that to ensure workplace happiness, school administration should establish open communication with employees, make employees feel valuable, value employees' opinions, appreciate good and valuable work, notice the efforts of teachers, be respectful and understanding towards employees, approach teachers without prejudice, support teachers, and not involve teachers in fundraising. Selbi (2018) and Bulut (2015) also found positive relationships between managerial

factors and employees' workplace happiness. The management approach and fairness exhibited by administrators directly and significantly affect workplace happiness (Chaiprasit&Santidhiraku, 2011).

In the parent attitude sub-theme, teachers at all three schools suggested that parents' interest in their students and cooperation with teachers are necessary for workplace happiness. A teacher at A School and a teacher at C School suggested that parents should respect teachers, and a teacher at C School suggested that parents should accept that teaching is a profession requiring expertise. Assigning homework to students by elementary teachers may create the perception among parents that they can also teach. Article 43 of the Basic Law of National Education No. 1739 defines the teaching profession as "a special expertise profession that undertakes the education, training, and related administrative duties of the state." Making teaching a professional profession and gaining the right to be a profession is the most fundamental condition for providing "quality education" in schools, which is the greatest aspiration of every individual and every society (Şahin, 2022).

In the human relations sub-theme, teachers mostly suggested that good relationships among employees should be developed. Similarly, Çakır (2024) found that teachers' positive perceptions of cooperation with colleagues, parents, and students increase their workplace happiness. Chaiprasit and Santidhiraku (2011) also stated that good relationships among colleagues positively affect employees' workplace happiness by creating a sense of belonging to the group and being accepted by group members.

A teacher at C School suggested that employees should not talk about each other's private lives. This may be due to the small number of employees in small schools, leading to faster dissemination of information and more conversations among employees.
In the cooperation sub-theme, teachers suggested that solidarity and harmony among school employees would increase workplace happiness. Çakır (2024) also found that teachers' positive perceptions of cooperation increase their workplace happiness.

In the physical conditions sub-theme, teachers mostly suggested that having smaller class sizes would increase happiness in schools. This was followed by having a green garden and meeting basic cleanliness and hygiene conditions. The literature also shows that physical conditions are among the most influential factors on workplace happiness (Erdoğan &Akduman, 2013).

In the professional development sub-theme, teachers suggested that they would be happier if their schools provided opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Qaiser et al. (2020) stated that as employees develop themselves in their jobs, their workplace happiness increases.

In the rotation sub-theme, a teacher at B School stated that working at the same school for many years can be very boring and suggested that rotation could eliminate this boredom.

Rotation, defined as the movement of employees among workplaces belonging to the same organization at certain intervals (Triggs & King, 2000), is one of the most effective tools to increase job satisfaction levels and individual performance (Al-Nashmi &Almoayad, 2015).

In the social activities sub-theme, a teacher at B School suggested that organizing activities and tournaments among employees inside or outside the school would increase school happiness. Erdoğan (2020) also found that teachers who meet with colleagues outside of school are happier at their schools. Salas-Vallina et al. (2018) also found that social interactions among employees affect workplace happiness in their study aiming to reveal the components of workplace happiness.

According to the results obtained from the research data, to ensure workplace happiness, school administrators should place more emphasis on interpersonal relationships, adopt a fair management approach, appreciate teacher achievements based on merit, care about the emotions and thoughts of employees, assign tasks related to educational activities, organize social activities within the school, improve working conditions, provide opportunities to develop skills and competencies, and periodically change assignments. Additionally, it is important to emphasize cooperation between employees and parents, have class sizes that allow teachers to individually engage with their students, and improve the transportation conditions of the schools.

Workplace happiness is not limited to individual benefits but also contributes to fostering a more positive climate across the entire school (Alkan, 2022). This highlights the critical importance of school administrators developing strategies to enhance workplace happiness, as such efforts yield significant gains both at the individual and institutional levels.

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