



# An investigation on school attachment of primary school students, and their class teachers' job satisfaction

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## Abstract

The purpose of the quantitative study was to determine the relationship between school attachment of primary school students and their teachers' job satisfaction. Within this frame, it was also aimed to determine whether these two parameters differ in terms of some demographic variables. The research was carried out as a correlational survey. The participants consisted of 610 primary school students and 22 class teachers in different primary schools in Erzurum, Turkey. The data of the study were collected via the "School Attachment Scale for Children and Adolescents" and the "Job satisfaction scale". Pearson correlation analysis, independent samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance were used in the analysis of the data. The results revealed that there was no significant relationship between the students' attachment to school and their teachers' job satisfaction. Also, it was determined that there were some differences in terms of the study groups. It was determined that students' attachment to school did not differ according to grade level, but there were significant differences on behalf of the boys. It was also found out that job satisfaction of teachers differed in terms of the class size they were teaching, their age, their professional experience, the years of teaching their class, and their teaching years in their current school.

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**Keywords:** Classroom teachers, job satisfaction, school attachment, primary school, student

## 1. Introduction

Education is a complex process that includes many variables. The success of this process goes through the quality school environment. School is a very important environment that has a significant impact on student welfare and development (Roeser, & Eccles 1998). Children now spend a significant amount of time in school every day and possibly interact more with their classmates and teachers than with their parents (Wei, & Chen, 2010). These interactions within the school can affect students in different dimensions.

In particular, their relationship with their teachers will affect students' approach to education. The behavior and characteristics of teachers and student-teacher interaction will affect the student's educational outcomes. A study provides evidence that

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relationships with teachers every day of quality and classroom interactions in the form of instructional and emotional support moderates the risk of early school failure (Hamre, & Pianta, 2005). Moreover, teachers have the power to shape the school environment and influence students both cognitively and affectively. Another study asserts that teachers have a critical role to play in creating a positive school environment, which can in turn help them to optimize their students' perceptions of their school environment (Wang, & Eccles, 2013). The contribution of teachers' behavior and school organization to school attachment and academic success has explained by Bergin and Bergin (2009). This model supported by research is shown in Figure 1.

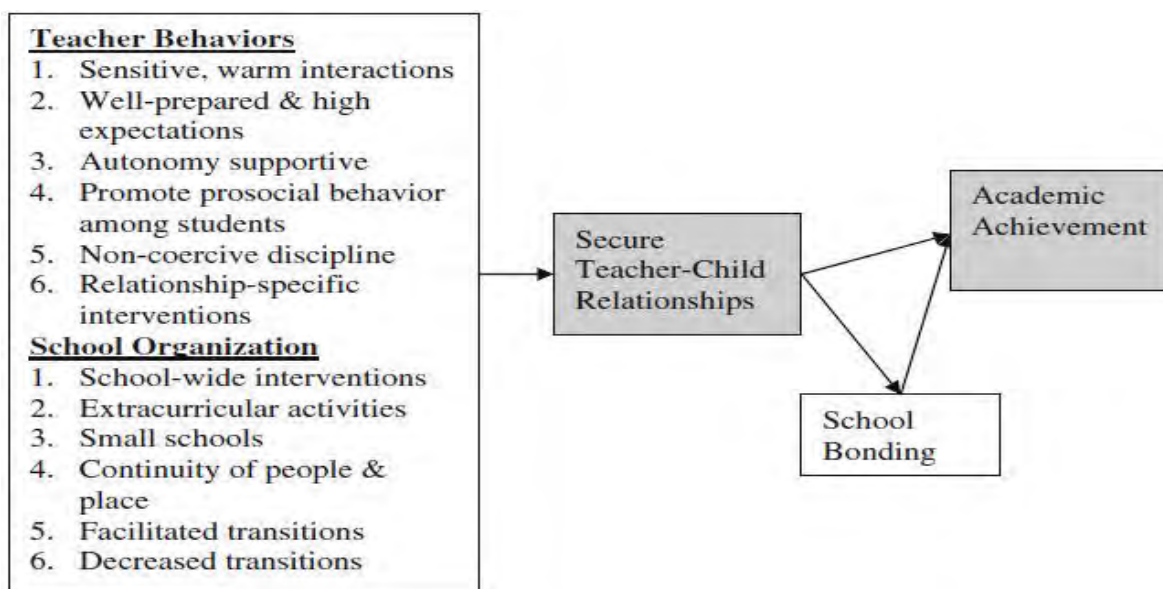


Figure 1. Model of how teacher behavior and school organization might contribute to attachment at school and academic achievement (Bergin, & Bergin, 2009).

As can be seen in Figure 1, different types of teachers' behavior and school variables affect students' academic success, teacher-student interaction, and school bonding. In similar studies, it was determined that affective processes related to students were also affected by many variables. In this research, we will consider the structure, characteristics, and related variables of school attachment.

### 1.1. School Attachment

In general, the student's attachment to school; positive student behaviors such as attendance, participation, and effort are seen as a structure that includes students' psychological connections with the school environment (Önen, 2014). There are studies (Fredrick, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004) that address school attachment with a three-dimensional structure (affective, cognitive and behavioral dimension); There are also studies that address the four-dimensional structure by adding the academic dimension in

addition to the three dimensions (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006). Simons-Morton and Crump (2003) address school attachment with a one-dimensional structure of academic motivation, such as how much students care about school, how much attention they care about, and how much they strive to do academically better. The student's attachment to the school is considered an integral part of academic success, as it involves the social and emotional connections of students with school settings (Furlong & Christenson, 2008). For this reason, it is one of the most important effective concepts to be considered in learning environments.

There are many studies in the literature on school attachment. In the study of Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), the concept and its sub-dimensions, effects on the educational process, and outcomes were comprehensively analyzed and a general framework for school attachment was established. Arastaman (2009) states that the level of attachment to school differs in terms of some demographic variables; Ünal and Çukur (2011) found that school attachment reduced negative behaviors. In studies, students' attachment to school has a positive relationship with the quality of school life (Kalaycı, & Özdemir, 2013); it has been revealed that there is a negative relationship with school burnout (Özdemir, 2015). In another study, it was determined that students' attachment to school was not related to teacher motivation (Yıldız, & Kılıç, 2018). It was also stated that attachment affects students' success in school and this is valid for their attachment to students' parents and teachers (Bergin, & Bergin, 2009). The question is whether the students' attachment to the school is related to the affective characteristics of the teacher. In this study, we will deal with the relationship between job satisfaction, which is an effective feature of the teacher.

## 1.2. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be defined as the general attitude of the employee towards his job (Kumaş, & Deniz, 2010); as described by Locke, "an enjoyable or positive emotional state that results from evaluating someone's work or work experiences"(Green, 2000). In the literature, business, tourism, health, etc. In addition to those working in many fields, teachers working in the field of education have an important place in the studies on job satisfaction. In this respect, the concept of teacher job satisfaction is at the center of many types of research. Teacher job satisfaction is an existing concept in managerial psychology. This concept expresses the general attitudes and opinions of teachers towards working conditions and professions. Job satisfaction affects job enthusiasm and psychological health for the teacher (Hongying, 2007). Many factors affect teachers' job satisfaction. Kim and Loadman (1994) determined that seven variables predict job satisfaction. These are:

- Interaction with students,
- Interaction with colleagues,

- Professional difficulties,
- Professional autonomy,
- Business conditions,
- Salary,
- Opportunities for progress.

When the literature is examined, many studies dealing with teachers' job satisfaction are found. In the studies, it was observed that the job satisfaction of teachers has a relationship with their organizational attachment levels (Madenoğlu, Uysal, Sarier, & Banoğlu, 2014); with the leadership behavior levels of school administrators (Yılmaz, & Boğa Ceylan, 2011); with levels of professional burnout and life satisfaction (Avşaroğlu, Deniz, & Kahraman, 2005; Telef, 2011); with self-efficacy levels (Telef, 2011); with physical conditions of the school (Kılıç, 2011). Ferguson, Frost, and Hall (2012) revealed that anxiety, gender, grade level, and job position are not significant predictors of teacher job satisfaction. Also, it is determined that stress and depression have a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction and that professional experience is a meaningful and positive predictor of job satisfaction.

Studies have found that gender has an impact on job satisfaction, mostly in favor of women and sometimes men (Castillo, Conklin, & Cano, 1999; Ma, & MacMillan, 1999; Liu, & Ramsey, 2008; Griffin, 2010; Sak, 2018). Also, it has been revealed in some studies that teachers' job satisfaction differs according to the professional seniority year variable (Ma, & MacMillan, 1999; Demirel, 2006; Liu, & Ramsey, 2008; Yavuz, & Karadeniz, 2009; Kılıç, 2011). Also, it is determined that branch variable (Ertürk, & Keçecioğlu, 2012; Telef, 2011; Yılmaz, & Boğa Ceylan, 2011); age variable (Demirel, 2006; Griffin, 2010); marital status (Demirel, 2006; Kılıç, 2011) settlement (Ertürk, & Keçecioğlu, 2012) and many variables like this affect job satisfaction.

In the studies, although it was determined that job satisfaction is related to many variables, no direct study on the relationship of students with school attachment was found. Besides, there is no study dealing with job satisfaction in terms of variables "year of being with students" and "working year in current school". It can be said that the study will bring innovation to the literature.

This study aims to determine the relationship between class teachers' job satisfaction and primary school students' school attachment. It is also aimed to determine whether job satisfaction and school attachment differ in terms of some variables. For this purpose, answers to the following questions will be sought:

- Is there a relationship between students' school attachment and teachers' job satisfaction?
- Does students' school attachment differ according to their gender and grade level?

- Does teachers' job satisfaction differ according to class size, age, professional seniority, year of being with their class, and working year at school?

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Research Design*

Since this quantitative research aimed to determine the relationship between students' school attachment and teachers' job satisfaction, it could be considered as correlational research. Correlational studies attempt to determine whether there is a co-change between variables without intervening in these variables (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012; Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, Demirel, 2016).

### *2.2. Participants*

The study comprised 610 students and 22 teachers of these students in different schools in Erzurum, Turkey. The teachers and their students who were the participants of the research were determined by a random cluster sampling method. (Frankel Wallen and Hyun, 2012, p.95). In cluster sampling, instead of using random sampling to select individual individuals or items, random sampling is used to select specific sets or groups. All people in each set are included in the sample. The advantage of this sampling technique is that, as the name suggests, clusters normally contain items that are grouped closely together in one place or geographical area (Denscombe, 2010, p. 29).

### *2.3. Data Collection*

The data of the research were obtained via two-scale forms, namely; the "School Attachment Scale for Children and Adolescents" adapted by Savi (2011) and the "Job satisfaction scale" adapted by Yerdelen (2013). The information about these two measuring tools is provided below.

#### *2.3.1. School attachment scale for children and adolescents*

The 5-point Likert-type "School Attachment Scale for Children and Adolescents", which was developed by Hill (2005) and adapted to Turkish by Savi (2011) consisted of 13 items and three sub-dimensions. Its sub-dimensions were the attachment to school, attachment to friends, and attachment to teacher. Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficients for the scale was calculated 0,82 for "attachment to school" sub-dimension; 0.74 for "attachment to teacher" sub-dimension; 0.71 for the sub-dimension "attachment to friend".

#### *2.3.2. Job satisfaction scale*

Job satisfaction of teachers was measured by the “Job satisfaction scale”. The scale consisted of 3 items and one dimension, was developed by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) and adapted to Turkish by Yerdelen (2013). This dimension was called "general job satisfaction". In the study, Cronbach Alpha Internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0.87. Although the number of items in the scale is low, it contains conceptually inclusive questions.

#### 2.4. *Data Analysis*

With missing value analysis, very few missing data in the data were filled in automatically. Later, Mahalanobis Extreme Value Analysis was performed and the form for 17 students showing extreme values was excluded from the study. Thus, research questions were answered with data on 593 students and 22 teachers. Then normality and homogeneity analyzes were done. It was determined that the data were normally distributed and the variances were homogeneous. Then Cronbach Alpha Internal consistency coefficients were calculated. Then the research questions were answered. Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted to answer the first research question. Since there was no relationship between the dependent and independent variables, multiple regression analyses could not have performed. MANOVA analysis was requested for the second and third research questions, but it could not have done because the assumptions were not provided. An independent samples t-test was conducted to find the answer to the second research question. To answer the third research question, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. Multiple comparison (post hoc) tests were used concerning the differences that emerged in the variance analysis. In this context, when comparing the groups with equal or close sample numbers for homogeneous groups, Gabriel test was performed if there were differences between the sample sizes of the groups. Hochberg’s GT2 analysis was decided for comparisons with significant differences between sample sizes. For the non-homogeneous groups, the Games Howell test was performed, which gave reliable results (Field, 2013, p.374-375).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. *Is there a relationship between students' school attachment and teachers' job satisfaction?*

Table 1 shows the results of the Pearson correlation analysis conducted to determine whether there is a significant relationship between primary school students' school attachment sub-dimension and their teachers’ job satisfaction.

Table 1. Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable	Job Satisfaction (r)	n	p
Attachment to school	-.019	593	.65
Attachment to friend	.01	593	.98
Attachment to teacher	-.10	593	.81

Here it is seen that none of the students' sub-dimensions of school attachment, "attachment to school" ( $r = -.19$ ,  $p = .65$ ) "attachment to friends" ( $r = .01$ ,  $p = .98$ ), and "attachment to teachers" ( $r = -.10$ ,  $p = .81$ ) have any significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction.

### 3.2. Does students' school attachment differ according to their gender and grade level?

Independent samples t-test results are given in Table 2 to determine whether students' attachment to school differs according to gender and grade levels.

Table 2. Comparison of School Attachment Scores by Gender and Class Level

	Sub-dimension	Group	n	M	sd	t	df	p
<b>Gender</b>	Attachment to school	Female	299	1,50	,53	-2,50	591	.012
		Male	294	1,62	,57			
	Attachment to teacher	Female	299	1,75	,54	-1,96	591	.050
		Male	294	1,85	,64			
	Attachment to friend	Female	299	1,41	,48	-2,93	591	.003
		Male	294	1,53	,51			
<b>Class Level</b>	Attachment to school	3 <sup>th</sup> Grade	295	1,51	,56	-1,93	591	,054
		4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	298	1,60	,55			
	Attachment to teacher	3 <sup>th</sup> Grade	295	1,79	,60	-,58	591	,562
		4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	298	1,82	,58			
	Attachment to friend	3 <sup>th</sup> Grade	295	1,49	,48	,70	591	,480
		4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	298	1,46	,53			

As seen in Table 2, the students' scores for attachment to school ( $p = .012$ ) and attachment to friend ( $p = .003$ ) differ significantly. The means were shown to be higher for male students, thus it can be said that male students have more feelings of attachment than female students. However, it was determined that none of the students' attachment dimensions differed in terms of grade level.

### 3.3. Does teachers' job satisfaction differ according to class size, age, professional seniority, year of being with their class, and working year at school?

One-way ANOVA test results to determine whether teachers' job satisfaction differs in terms of variables of class size, age, professional seniority, year of being with their class, and working year at current school are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Job Satisfaction Scores by Class Size, Age, Professional Seniority, Year of Being with Class and Working Year at Current School

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Class Size	Between Groups	3,002	3	1,001		
	Within Groups	145,708	589	,247	4,046	,007
	Total	148,710	592			
Age	Between Groups	13,597	2	6,798		
	Within Groups	135,113	590	,229	29,687	,000
	Total	148,710	592			
Professional Seniority	Between Groups	3,178	2	1,589		
	Within Groups	145,532	590	,247	6,442	,002
	Total	148,710	592			
Year of Being with Class	Between Groups	2,089	2	1,045		
	Within Groups	146,621	590	,249	4,204	,015
	Total	148,710	592			
Working Year at This School	Between Groups	18,643	2	9,321		
	Within Groups	130,067	590	,220	42,283	,000
	Total	148,710	592			

As Table 3 shows, teachers' job satisfaction differ significantly in terms of class size ( $F=4,046$ ;  $p<,05$ ); in terms of age ( $F=29,687$ ;  $p<,05$ ); in terms of professional seniority ( $F=6,442$ ;  $p<,05$ ); in terms of year of being with class ( $F= 4,204$ ;  $p <,05$ ); in terms of working year at this school ( $F=42,283$ ;  $p<,05$ ).

As a result of multiple comparison tests to understand which groups favor differentiation between groups:

1. As a result of Gabriel analysis made to compare in terms of class size, the teachers who have 21-30 students have higher job satisfaction compared to 10-20 students, 31-40 students, and teachers with 41 or more students.

2. As a result of the Gabriel analysis conducted to compare in terms of age, teachers between the ages of 27-34 and teachers aged 40 and over showed higher job satisfaction than those in the age group 35-39.



3. As a result of Hochberg's GT2 analysis to make comparisons in terms of seniority year, those who have seniority between 16-25 years have higher job satisfaction than those with seniority between 4-10 years and 11-15 years.

4. As a result of the Games Howell analysis made to compare the year of being with students in their class, it has been shown that those who have been with their students for 1 year have higher job satisfaction than those who have been together for 4 years.

5. As a result of the Hochberg's GT2 analysis conducted in order to make comparisons in terms of working years in their school, it was determined that:

a. Employees who work in the school for 1-4 years have more job satisfaction than those who work 9 years or more;

b. Employees who work in the school for 5-8 years have more job satisfaction than those who work for 1-4 years and those who work 9 years or more.

#### **4. Discussion**

In the study, the relationship between primary school students 'attachment to school and their teachers' job satisfaction was examined in terms of some variables. As a result of the research, it was observed that there was no relationship between students 'attachment to school and teachers' job satisfaction. As a result of another study, job satisfaction of the homeroom teachers positively contributed to students' attachment to school, but teachers' depression had no significant effect (Wei, & Chen, 2010). In the study of Yıldız and Kılıç (2018), it was determined that students 'attachment to school is not related to teachers' job motivation. It can be said that this study is in harmony with the results.

As a result of the research, it was determined that the attachment dimensions of primary school students did not differ according to the grade level. However, in terms of gender, there was a difference in favor of male students in school attachment and friend attachment dimensions. These results overlap with some of Johnson, Crosnoe and Thaden (2006); It contradicts the results of Wei and Chen (2010). Song Thompson and Ferrer (2009) concluded that there was a differentiation in favor of female students. The fact that the sample groups in the studies were of different ages may have created these contradictions and contrasts.

When the variables that affect job satisfaction of teachers were examined, it was observed that there were differences in terms of class size, age, professional seniority, year of being with students and working year in the current school.

In terms of class size, it has been revealed that teachers who have 21-30 students have higher job satisfaction than teachers with 10-20 students, 31-40 students and 41 or more students. It can be concluded that the number of students in a class is too small or crowded negatively affects job satisfaction. Öztürk and Ünal (1998) also stated that more or less classroom size affects teachers' attitudes towards the course. In the light

of the findings of this study, it can be said that there should be 21-30 students in an ideal class in terms of job satisfaction.

In terms of age variable, it has been shown that teachers between the ages of 27 and 34 and those over the age of 40 have higher job satisfaction than those in the age group of 35-39. These results overlap with the results of Demirel (2006) and Griffin (2010). In terms of professional seniority, it has been shown that those with seniority between 16-25 have higher job satisfaction than those with 4-10 and 11-15 years of seniority. This result coincides with the findings of Griffin (2010). The fact that higher level of job satisfaction of the senior teacher, that is, the older teacher, is an issue to be investigated.

In terms of the year of being with students, it has shown that those who have been together with their students for 1 year have higher job satisfaction than those who have been together for 4 years. Therefore, it can be said that teaching the same students for a long time is a factor that reduces job satisfaction.

In terms of the year of study in the current school, it has been determined that the employees working for 1-4 years in their school experience more satisfaction than those working for 9 years or more. It has been determined that the employees working for 5-8 years in their current school have more job satisfaction than those working for 1-4 years and 9 years or more. It can be said that both groups experienced higher satisfaction than those working for 9 years and more. Therefore, it can be said that working for a long time in the same school is a factor that reduces job satisfaction. In the studies of Uslu and Balci (2012), it was determined that there was a significant difference in terms of teachers' benevolence, volunteering, sportsmanship and conscientiousness -which organizational citizenship behaviour sub dimensions-. The results of Uslu and Balci (2012) coincide with the results of the research.

## 5. Conclusions

As a result of the research, it can be concluded that teachers' job satisfaction is not related to their students' attachment to school. However, some studies in the literature show that variables related to school life and teachers are related to school attachment (Bergin, & Bergin, 2009; Kalaycı, & Özdemir, 2013). Therefore, different results can be obtained with a larger sample group and studies involving different educational levels. It can also be pointed out that teachers' job satisfaction is affected by many variables, in particular. Satisfaction of teachers is indispensable for a successful education process. In this regard, the task of the policy makers and the researchers who carry out these studies on a theoretical scale falls on the task.

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