

The Impact of School Organizational Climate on the Professional Adjustment of Secondary School Teachers: A Critical Review

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Abstract

Professional adjustment and organizational climate play a vital role in shaping the experiences, effectiveness, and retention of secondary school teachers. Professional adjustment refers to teachers' ability to adapt to their work environment, manage stress, and sustain motivation, while organizational climate encompasses the shared perceptions of policies, practices, and procedures within a school. A positive organizational climate fosters teacher satisfaction, reduces burnout, and enhances overall performance, whereas a negative climate can lead to stress, dissatisfaction, and attrition.

This review synthesizes existing literature on the relationship between professional adjustment and organizational climate among secondary school teachers. Theoretical frameworks such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Organizational Climate Theory provide insights into the factors influencing teachers' adjustment and how the school environment impacts their job satisfaction and performance. Studies suggest that workload, interpersonal relationships, autonomy, and professional development opportunities significantly impact teachers' professional adjustment. Furthermore, leadership styles, collegial support, and resource availability are key determinants of a school's organizational climate.

Empirical findings indicate a strong correlation between a supportive organizational climate and teachers' ability to adjust professionally. Research has shown that schools with democratic leadership, collaborative work cultures, and adequate resources report higher levels of teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Conversely, bureaucratic constraints, workplace conflicts, and inadequate professional development opportunities pose significant barriers to professional adjustment. Studies by Ingersoll (2001) highlight that positive school climates reduce teacher turnover, while Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2010) emphasize the role of supportive environments in lowering burnout levels.

To improve teachers' professional adjustment, schools must implement policies that foster a supportive and inclusive climate. This includes mentorship programs, opportunities for continuous professional development, and participative decision-making. By prioritizing teachers' well-being and creating a positive work environment, schools can enhance teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and ultimately student outcomes.

This review underscores the importance of organizational climate in shaping teachers' professional experiences and highlights the need for further research to explore innovative strategies for improving teacher well-being. Educational policymakers and administrators must recognize the significance of these factors in ensuring a motivated and resilient teaching workforce.

Keywords: Professional Adjustment, Organizational Climate, Secondary School Teachers, Teacher Well-being, School Environment

1. Introduction Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the academic, social, and emotional development of students. Their ability to perform effectively depends significantly on their professional adjustment and the organizational climate within their schools. Professional adjustment

refers to the extent to which teachers can adapt to their work environment, handle stress, and remain motivated despite challenges (Kyriacou, 2001). Organizational climate, on the other hand, encompasses the policies, practices, leadership styles, and interpersonal relationships that define the working environment in a school (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). A positive organizational climate fosters teacher satisfaction, enhances performance, and improves student outcomes, while a negative climate can lead to job dissatisfaction, burnout, and high turnover rates (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

1.1 Importance of Professional Adjustment

Professional adjustment is a multi-dimensional concept that includes psychological, social, and occupational adaptation. Teachers who experience a smooth professional adjustment tend to be more committed, resilient, and effective in their roles (Day, 2004). Various factors influence professional adjustment, including workload, interpersonal relationships, job autonomy, and professional development opportunities (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). A well-adjusted teacher is more likely to foster a positive learning environment, which benefits students academically and emotionally.

However, many secondary school teachers face significant challenges that hinder their professional adjustment. High workload, unrealistic expectations, and lack of administrative support often contribute to job-related stress (Kyriacou, 2001). Furthermore, teachers who lack professional autonomy and opportunities for career growth may struggle to stay motivated, leading to lower job satisfaction and decreased teaching effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2001). Addressing these challenges requires a supportive organizational climate that prioritizes teacher well-being and professional development.

1.2 Organizational Climate and Its Influence on Teachers

Organizational climate refers to the collective perceptions of employees regarding their work environment. In the context of secondary schools, it includes leadership styles, collegial relationships, resource availability, and the overall school culture (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). A positive organizational climate is characterized by supportive leadership, collaborative teamwork, fair policies, and adequate resources, all of which contribute to higher teacher satisfaction and retention (Lindahl, 2006).

A study by Blase & Blase (1999) found that teachers working under democratic and transformational leadership styles experience greater job satisfaction and professional growth. In contrast, schools with autocratic leadership and rigid bureaucratic structures often report higher levels of teacher dissatisfaction and turnover (Luthans et al., 2008). Effective leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the organizational climate by fostering a culture of respect, trust, and open communication.

Collegial support is another key component of organizational climate. Teachers who feel valued and supported by their colleagues are more likely to remain engaged and committed to their work (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Collaborative work cultures promote knowledge sharing, innovation, and a sense of belonging, which are essential for professional adjustment and overall job satisfaction (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

1.3 The Interplay Between Professional Adjustment and Organizational Climate

The relationship between professional adjustment and organizational climate is dynamic and reciprocal. A supportive organizational climate enhances teachers' ability to adjust professionally, while well-adjusted teachers contribute to a more positive work environment. Schools that prioritize teacher well-being, provide continuous professional development, and encourage participative decision-making tend to have higher levels of teacher engagement and lower attrition rates (Ingersoll, 2001).

Empirical research has demonstrated that teachers working in schools with a positive organizational climate are more likely to experience job satisfaction and professional fulfillment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Conversely, schools with negative climates—characterized by excessive workload,

lack of support, and rigid administrative policies—often struggle with high teacher turnover and low student performance (Kyriacou, 2001). Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that integrates teacher support programs, effective leadership, and organizational reforms.

1.4 Research Gaps and Future Directions

Despite the growing body of research on professional adjustment and organizational climate, several gaps remain. There is a need for more longitudinal studies that examine how changes in organizational climate impact teachers' professional adjustment over time. Additionally, more research is required to explore the role of cultural and contextual factors in shaping organizational climate and teacher adaptation (Luthans et al., 2008).

Future studies should also investigate the effectiveness of various intervention programs designed to enhance teacher well-being and job satisfaction. Understanding the specific needs of secondary school teachers in different educational settings can help policymakers and school administrators develop targeted strategies to improve organizational climate and support professional adjustment.

2. Theoretical Framework Several theories provide insights into teachers' professional adjustment and organizational climate. These theories offer a foundation for understanding how various factors influence teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness in secondary schools.

2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow's (1943) **Hierarchy of Needs** provides a psychological framework for understanding teacher motivation and professional adjustment. Maslow proposed that individuals are motivated by five levels of needs: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Teachers, like other professionals, seek to fulfill these needs within their work environment.

- **Physiological Needs:** Teachers require basic financial security, including fair salaries, benefits, and access to necessary resources such as teaching materials and technology. For example, a study by Bame (1991) found that low pay and inadequate teaching resources negatively impacted teacher motivation in developing countries.
- **Safety Needs:** Job security, a safe work environment, and reasonable workload expectations contribute to teachers' well-being. Schools with high job instability and excessive demands tend to have higher teacher attrition rates (Ingersoll, 2001).
- **Love/Belonging Needs:** Collegial support and positive relationships with students, administrators, and peers help teachers feel valued and integrated into the school community (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). For instance, a study by Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2011) showed that teachers with strong professional networks experienced lower levels of stress and burnout.
- **Esteem Needs:** Recognition, respect, and professional growth opportunities enhance teachers' confidence and job satisfaction. Schools that offer teacher recognition programs and leadership opportunities foster a more engaged workforce (Day, 2004).
- **Self-Actualization:** Teachers who experience career fulfillment, creativity, and opportunities for professional mastery are more likely to remain committed to their profession. Professional development programs and academic freedom contribute to this level of motivation (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

2.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Frederick Herzberg's **Two-Factor Theory** (1968) categorizes workplace factors into two groups: hygiene factors and motivators. This theory explains why certain aspects of the organizational climate influence teacher satisfaction and adjustment.

- **Hygiene Factors:** These include salary, working conditions, school policies, and job security. While these factors do not necessarily increase job satisfaction, their absence leads to dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). For example, research by Dinham & Scott (2000) found that inadequate salaries and poor administrative support were primary sources of dissatisfaction among Australian teachers.

- **Motivators:** These factors include recognition, achievement, responsibility, and opportunities for growth. Schools that offer professional development programs, mentorship opportunities, and performance-based rewards tend to have more motivated and professionally adjusted teachers (Evans, 1998).

A practical application of Herzberg's theory is seen in schools implementing teacher empowerment programs. For instance, a study by Bogler (2001) found that teachers with decision-making autonomy reported higher job satisfaction and commitment.

2.3 Organizational Climate Theory

Organizational Climate Theory (Tagiuri & Litwin, 1968) explains how the overall environment of a school affects teachers' professional adjustment and effectiveness. This theory suggests that various dimensions of the organizational climate influence teacher performance and well-being.

- **Leadership Style:** The principal's leadership style significantly impacts school climate. Transformational leadership, characterized by support, vision, and collaboration, fosters a positive climate, while authoritarian leadership may create stress and dissatisfaction (Blase & Blase, 1999).

- **Collegial Support:** Schools with strong professional learning communities, where teachers collaborate and share best practices, enhance teacher satisfaction and retention (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

- **Resource Availability:** Schools with adequate teaching materials, technology, and infrastructure create a conducive learning environment. Lack of resources often leads to frustration and professional disengagement (Lindahl, 2006).

- **Workload and Autonomy:** Excessive workload and lack of decision-making power contribute to teacher burnout (Kyriacou, 2001). Schools that provide teachers with autonomy in curriculum design and classroom management report higher engagement levels (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

An example of Organizational Climate Theory in practice is Finland's education system. Finnish schools emphasize teacher autonomy, collaboration, and professional respect, resulting in high job satisfaction and student achievement (Sahlberg, 2011). Conversely, a study by Johnson et al. (2012) found that schools with rigid administrative structures and limited teacher input experienced higher rates of job dissatisfaction and attrition.

The interplay between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Organizational Climate Theory provides a comprehensive understanding of how teachers adjust to their professional environment. Schools that prioritize teacher well-being, provide professional development opportunities, and foster a supportive organizational climate are more likely to have motivated, engaged, and effective educators. Future research should explore how these theoretical perspectives can be applied in diverse educational settings to improve teacher retention and job satisfaction.

3. Professional Adjustment of Secondary School Teachers

Professional adjustment refers to the ability of teachers to effectively adapt to their work environment, manage stress, and sustain motivation in the face of challenges (Kyriacou, 2001). The process of professional adjustment is crucial for ensuring job satisfaction, reducing burnout, and maintaining a high level of teaching effectiveness. Several factors influence a teacher's ability to adjust, including workload, interpersonal relationships, and opportunities for professional growth.

3.1 Workload and Job Stress

Excessive workload is one of the most significant barriers to professional adjustment among secondary school teachers. Many teachers experience high levels of job stress due to heavy teaching loads, administrative tasks, curriculum changes, and extracurricular responsibilities (Kyriacou, 2001). Research suggests that unmanageable workloads contribute to emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and even teacher attrition (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

For example, a study conducted in the United Kingdom found that nearly 40% of teachers considered leaving the profession due to excessive workload and stress (Barmby, 2006). To mitigate these issues, schools can implement strategies such as reducing administrative burdens, allocating additional support staff, and ensuring a more balanced workload distribution (Day, 2004).

3.2 Interpersonal Relationships

Supportive relationships with colleagues, administrators, and students play a critical role in teachers' professional adjustment. Teachers who work in a positive and collegial environment report higher job satisfaction and lower stress levels (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

A study by Hargreaves (2001) highlighted that strong professional relationships help teachers navigate challenges and enhance their sense of belonging within the school community. Schools that foster open communication, peer mentoring, and teamwork are more likely to retain well-adjusted and motivated teachers.

3.3 Autonomy and Professional Growth

Opportunities for professional development and career advancement significantly impact teachers' ability to adjust to their roles (Day, 2004). Teachers who feel empowered to make decisions regarding curriculum design, teaching methods, and classroom management tend to experience higher job satisfaction and motivation (Bogler, 2001).

For instance, Finland's education system is known for providing teachers with significant autonomy and professional development opportunities, which has led to one of the highest teacher satisfaction rates globally (Sahlberg, 2011). Schools that invest in continuous professional development programs, workshops, and leadership opportunities create an environment conducive to teacher success and well-being.

4. Organizational Climate in Secondary Schools

Organizational climate encompasses the shared perceptions of policies, practices, and procedures within a school. A positive organizational climate fosters job satisfaction, reduces stress, and enhances teacher performance (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Key dimensions of organizational climate include leadership style, collegial support, and resource availability.

4.1 Leadership Style

The leadership style of school administrators significantly influences the organizational climate. Democratic leadership, which emphasizes collaboration, support, and open communication, has been found to enhance teacher morale and job satisfaction (Blase & Blase, 1999).

For example, a study by Leithwood & Jantzi (2006) found that transformational school leaders who engage teachers in decision-making processes foster a sense of ownership and commitment among staff. In contrast, autocratic leadership, characterized by rigid control and lack of teacher input, often leads to dissatisfaction and low morale.

4.2 Collegial Support

A collaborative and supportive work culture contributes to a positive organizational climate and enhances teacher well-being (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Schools that encourage teamwork, shared responsibilities, and peer mentoring create an environment where teachers feel valued and motivated.

An example of this is Japan's "lesson study" model, where teachers collaboratively plan, observe, and discuss lessons to improve instructional practices. This approach not only enhances teaching quality but also fosters a strong sense of professional camaraderie (Fernandez, 2002).

4.3 Resource Availability

Access to teaching materials, technology, and infrastructure directly impacts teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction (Lindahl, 2006). Schools that provide adequate resources enable teachers to deliver high-quality instruction and reduce stress related to lack of support.

For instance, a study by OECD (2019) found that teachers in well-resourced schools reported higher levels of motivation and lower burnout rates compared to those in underfunded institutions. Ensuring that teachers have access to essential resources is a critical aspect of fostering a positive organizational climate.

The professional adjustment of secondary school teachers is influenced by multiple factors, including workload, interpersonal relationships, and opportunities for professional growth. Simultaneously, the organizational climate within a school plays a crucial role in shaping teacher experiences and performance. Schools that prioritize supportive leadership, collegial collaboration, and resource availability create an environment where teachers can thrive. Future research should explore additional strategies to enhance teacher well-being and retention.

5. Empirical Findings

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated the significant impact of organizational climate on teacher professional adjustment. Research findings indicate that a positive school environment contributes to increased job satisfaction, lower burnout, and improved teacher retention.

5.1 Teacher Turnover and School Climate

Teacher turnover is a pressing concern in many educational systems worldwide. Research by Ingersoll (2001) found that schools with positive organizational climates, characterized by supportive leadership, collegial collaboration, and participative decision-making, experience lower rates of teacher turnover. Conversely, teachers in schools with rigid administrative structures and a lack of collegial support were more likely to leave their positions. For example, in a study of U.S. schools, Ingersoll reported that nearly 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years due to unfavorable work environments.

5.2 Teacher Burnout and Supportive Environments

A study by Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2010) found that teachers working in supportive environments reported lower levels of burnout. The study highlighted that factors such as administrative support, positive student-teacher relationships, and access to professional resources significantly reduce stress levels and emotional exhaustion. In contrast, teachers working in stressful, high-pressure environments with little autonomy reported higher levels of job dissatisfaction and professional disengagement. For instance, in a survey of Norwegian teachers, the study found that teachers who felt supported by colleagues and administration were more resilient in handling job-related stressors.

5.3 Psychological Capital and Professional Adjustment

Luthans et al. (2008) introduced the concept of psychological capital, which includes self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. Their research emphasized that teachers with strong psychological capital are better able to adjust to challenging organizational climates. For example, in schools with bureaucratic challenges and limited resources, teachers who possessed high levels of self-efficacy and optimism were more likely to remain motivated and committed to their profession. Their findings suggest that fostering psychological capital through training and mentorship can enhance teachers' ability to cope with adverse work conditions.

6. Challenges and Barriers

Despite the well-documented benefits of a positive organizational climate, several challenges persist in achieving optimal conditions for teacher professional adjustment. These challenges often stem from bureaucratic constraints, workplace conflicts, and inadequate professional development opportunities.

6.1 Bureaucratic Constraints

Many educational institutions operate under rigid bureaucratic structures that limit teacher autonomy and creativity. Excessive regulations, standardized curricula, and strict administrative oversight often reduce teachers' ability to make independent instructional decisions (Ball, 2003). For example, teachers in highly centralized education systems, such as those in China, report frustration due to limited flexibility in teaching methods and assessment strategies (Zhao & Qiu, 2009). This rigidity can lead to professional disengagement and decreased motivation.

6.2 Workplace Conflicts and Collegial Relations

Interpersonal conflicts among teachers, administrators, and staff members can negatively affect professional adjustment. A study by Van Dick & Wagner (2001) found that workplace conflicts, such as lack of collaboration and competitive work environments, contribute to teacher stress and dissatisfaction. For instance, schools where teachers experience frequent conflicts with administration tend to report higher levels of absenteeism and turnover. Conversely, schools that foster teamwork and mutual respect have more satisfied and engaged teachers.

6.3 Inadequate Professional Development Opportunities

Ongoing professional development is critical for teacher effectiveness and adaptation to changing educational demands. However, many schools fail to provide sufficient opportunities for skill enhancement, which can negatively impact professional adjustment (Avalos, 2011). For example, teachers in under-resourced schools often report limited access to workshops, training sessions, and collaborative learning opportunities. This lack of professional growth avenues can result in stagnation, frustration, and ultimately, job dissatisfaction.

7. Implications for Policy and Practice

Given the critical role of organizational climate in teacher professional adjustment, policymakers and school administrators must implement strategies to create a supportive and inclusive work environment. Below are key recommendations for improving teacher adjustment and job satisfaction.

7.1 Fostering a Supportive Organizational Climate

Schools should prioritize creating a positive organizational climate by promoting inclusivity, collaboration, and teacher empowerment. Research by Bryk & Schneider (2002) suggests that trust among teachers, administrators, and students fosters a sense of belonging and commitment. Schools that implement peer mentorship programs, encourage open communication, and provide emotional support contribute to greater job satisfaction and lower turnover rates.

7.2 Implementing Mentorship and Professional Development Programs

Mentorship programs play a crucial role in easing the transition for new teachers and enhancing professional adjustment. Studies have shown that mentorship reduces job-related stress and enhances teaching efficacy (Hobson et al., 2009). Schools should establish structured mentorship initiatives where experienced teachers provide guidance, support, and feedback to new educators.

Additionally, continuous professional development is essential for keeping teachers motivated and up-to-date with new teaching methodologies. Schools should invest in regular training workshops, technology integration programs, and peer-learning initiatives to enhance teacher competency and engagement.

7.3 Encouraging Participative Decision-Making

Teachers who feel included in decision-making processes are more likely to be engaged and satisfied in their work. Research by Somech (2010) found that participative decision-making enhances teacher motivation and fosters a sense of ownership over school policies. Schools should establish teacher committees, feedback mechanisms, and leadership roles that allow teachers to contribute to curriculum planning, policy development, and administrative decisions.

The professional adjustment of secondary school teachers is significantly influenced by the organizational climate within their schools. Empirical studies suggest that a positive school environment reduces teacher turnover, mitigates burnout, and enhances job satisfaction. However, challenges such as bureaucratic constraints, workplace conflicts, and inadequate professional development opportunities continue to hinder optimal teacher adjustment.

To address these challenges, educational institutions must foster a supportive climate, provide mentorship opportunities, and encourage teacher involvement in decision-making. By prioritizing teacher well-being and professional growth, schools can enhance teacher retention, motivation, and overall effectiveness, ultimately benefiting students and the broader education system. Future research should explore additional strategies for improving school climates and supporting teacher professional development in diverse educational settings.

8. Conclusion and Educational Implications

A positive organizational climate plays a crucial role in shaping the professional adjustment of secondary school teachers. Research has consistently shown that schools with supportive leadership, strong collegial relationships, and adequate resources foster an environment where teachers experience higher job satisfaction, reduced stress levels, and greater professional commitment. In contrast, schools with a rigid and unsupportive climate tend to witness higher teacher attrition, burnout, and dissatisfaction.

One of the key findings of this review is that teachers who experience autonomy, professional development opportunities, and collaborative work environments are more likely to be engaged and effective in their roles. A well-adjusted teacher is not only beneficial for their own well-being but also directly impacts student learning outcomes. Schools that invest in improving their organizational climate create a ripple effect that enhances the overall educational experience for students.

Educational Implications

The findings of this review have several important implications for educational institutions, policymakers, and administrators. The professional well-being of teachers should be a priority, as it directly influences the quality of education delivered in schools. Below are some key recommendations:

- 1. Enhancing Leadership Practices:** School administrators should adopt transformational leadership practices that empower teachers, encourage open communication, and provide continuous support. Leadership training programs for principals and school heads can help cultivate a positive school culture that values teacher input and promotes a shared vision for educational excellence.
- 2. Promoting Teacher Collaboration:** Schools should create structured opportunities for teachers to collaborate, such as peer mentoring programs, team teaching initiatives, and professional learning communities. Encouraging teachers to share best practices and support one another enhances job satisfaction and reduces feelings of isolation.

3. **Reducing Bureaucratic Constraints:** Policies that provide teachers with greater flexibility in decision-making, curriculum planning, and instructional methods can enhance their sense of ownership and engagement. Educational institutions should review and streamline administrative procedures to ensure they do not add unnecessary stress to teachers' workloads.

4. **Investing in Professional Development:** Schools must allocate resources for continuous professional development opportunities, including workshops, conferences, and technology integration training. Encouraging teachers to pursue higher education and certifications can also contribute to their professional growth and adaptation to evolving educational demands.

5. **Improving Work-Life Balance:** Schools should implement policies that promote a healthy work-life balance for teachers, such as workload management strategies, mental health support services, and wellness programs. Reducing excessive administrative tasks and offering flexible scheduling options can help prevent burnout.

6. **Strengthening Support Systems:** Establishing teacher support networks and counseling services within schools can help educators cope with stress and challenges. Schools should also encourage positive relationships among teachers, students, and parents to create a more inclusive and harmonious environment.

While this review highlights the importance of organizational climate in teacher professional adjustment, further research is needed to explore innovative strategies for improving school environments. Future studies should examine the long-term effects of different leadership styles on teacher retention, investigate the role of emotional intelligence in professional adjustment, and explore the impact of digital technologies on organizational climate in secondary schools.

In conclusion, fostering a positive organizational climate is essential for enhancing the professional adjustment and well-being of secondary school teachers. Schools that prioritize supportive leadership, collaboration, resource allocation, and professional growth opportunities create an environment where teachers thrive. By implementing evidence-based policies and practices, educational institutions can improve teacher satisfaction, reduce turnover rates, and ultimately contribute to better student outcomes. A holistic approach that addresses both structural and interpersonal aspects of the school climate will ensure a sustainable and effective teaching workforce for the future.

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