

Understanding Beginning Teacher Socialization: A Study of Single-Gender and Mixed-Gender Institution

Abstract

In the view of current educational reforms in Pakistan, professional socialization of beginning teachers is being discussed from various perspectives. This study focuses on the question if there is a difference between effective socialization of beginning teachers working in mixed-gender staff institutions and those working in single-gender staff institutions, and if so, which group is socialized more effectively. For this purpose a detailed survey was conducted in which 295 beginning English teachers from 55 different institutions participated and communicated their self-perceptions. The result of independent samples t-test showed that teachers working in mixed-gender staff institutions scored less than teachers working in single-gender staff institutions with Mean difference = .17 and $d = .53$. The results of this investigation reveal an optimistic picture regarding the gender-mixing in teaching workforce in Pakistan. The conclusions from these results are helpful in understanding the gender perspectives in the socialization process of beginning teachers.

Keywords: *Effective socialization, Mixed-gender staff, Single-gender staff, Beginning teachers, Organizational culture, Job satisfaction*

Adnan Tahir

Assistant Professor
COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Wah
Email: adnantahirqureshi@gmail.com

Samina Amin Qadir

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts
Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan
Email: dr_sqadir@yahoo.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

Education and teaching in Pakistan are currently passing through a phase of reformation both in public and private sectors. Among these multidimensional reformative endeavors, teachers' professional development and socialization are one of the focused areas. However, it is a general criticism on these reforms that they do not focus on workplace teacher socialization practices and are limited only to off-the-job training workshops and refresher courses. This study has focused on the workplace and organizational socialization of beginning (English) teachers in the perspective of gender-based categorization of Pakistani institutions. It brings a comparison in the effective socialization between the single-gender staff and mixed-gender staff institutions. The issues of gender in higher education have been viewed from various perspectives, e.g. gender differences at workplace, gender differences between male and female teacher socialization, comparison between co-ed and single-sex institutions (e.g., Chapman, 2008; Christofides, Hoy & Yang, 2006; Droulet, 2007; Jacobs, 1996; Tahir & Qadir, 2009). Usually, the public sector institutions offer single-sex education and allow only single-gender staff to be the part of teaching workforce. However private sector offers both kinds of single-sex and co-education and also allows mixed-gender staff to work together.

Generally it is believed that women teachers do not feel free and easy to work with men teachers and thus are not effectively socialized in teaching profession when they have to work in mixed-gender staff environment.

This aspect of teacher socialization has gained very little attention in Pakistan, though the gender disparities are growing faster. Nevertheless, the perspectives are changing and women's role in education and teaching is being recognized as one of the key factors in educational development of Pakistani society (Bari, 2000). Women teachers, generally, are reluctant to join the mixed-gender staff institutions where they develop a weak self-perception and feel themselves insecure and less successful. This study compares the self-perceptions of the beginning teachers of single-gender staff institutions with those of mixed-gender staff institutions. It is hoped that the finding of this study would help in understanding the role of gender in teacher socialization at higher education level and would make a link with studies being conducted in the area of gender and teacher socialization in other cultures.

LITERATURE REVIEW**Workplace Socialization of Beginning Teachers**

Teacher socialization is that branch of scholarship which mainly attempts to understand the process whereby the individual becomes an active part of the community of teachers (Danziger, 1971). The literature in the field of teacher socialization reveals that socialization is an ongoing process that continues throughout the entire period of one's career. The teachers continuously remain busy in adjusting themselves to the changing working conditions and incoming academic and administrative challenges. According to Harden and Crosby (2000), teachers' role is not only limited to delivering a lecture, rather they have to perform in many dimensions. However, Cherubini (2009) observes that most studies have focused on beginning teachers' socialization process as it is generally believed that early socialization experiences have long-term effects on teachers' thinking, practices and professional behaviors in the later stages of their career. Calderhead (1992) believes that beginning or prospective teachers pass through various stages of change which determine their behaviors even when they become seniors. Louis (1990) has discovered that in the course of organizational socialization the newcomers learn those organizational and professional behaviors which can facilitate their adjustment into new organizational culture and organizations.

Zeichner & Gore (1990) have revealed that the issue of organizational socialization has been discussed from various perspectives, for instance Van Maanen & Schein (1979) have discussed socialization tactics, Louis (1980) describes the new sense making and understandings of the new employees, Feldman (1981) presents the three stage model of newcomers' organizational socialization which later revisited by Wanous (1992), Reichers (1987) discusses various forms of symbolic interactionism, Nelson (1987) highlights the job stress newcomers usually face at the start of their career. Further, Atzori et al. (2008), Tahir & Qadir (2009) have discussed the gender differences at workplace socialization. Anakwe & Greenhaus (1999) define effective socialization as the criterion through which the success of the organization's socialization programs and the newcomer's adjustment through the entire socialization process is evaluated. In other words, it may be considered as the chief output of all the organizational and individual efforts employed to adjust newcomers in conformity with cultural norms

and required professional behaviors incorporated with inner commitment and job satisfaction. Smith (1989) believes that effective socialization helps the newcomers by enhancing their job satisfaction, making their job commitment stronger and lessening their concerns for leaving the profession. In other way, effective socialization may be interpreted as an informal psychological contract between the individual and the organization which complement each other's needs and objectives (Hunsaker, 1986; Kotter, 1973; Schein, 1982).

Gender Differences in Workplace Socialization: Pakistani Cultural Perspectives

Many studies assume that within organizational working certain male and female behaviors exist which contribute to building self-perception of individuals (e.g., Gutek & Larwood, 1987; Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992). In Pakistani local culture, gender differences (gender discrimination) can be seen almost at every workplace setting and there is no exception to education field (King & Mason, 2001). In Pakistan, the educational institutions at college (and higher secondary school) level are divided into three kinds from the perspective of gender-specified teaching staff: 1) institutions with male teachers only; 2) institutions with female teachers only; 3) institutions with mixed-gender staff. The first two categories usually offer single-gender education (either for girls or boys only) whereas the last type of institutions offer both single-gender education (either girls or boys only) as well as co-education. Atzori et al. (2008) have found that in the workplace settings women express more interest in seeking advice from senior and experienced colleagues. Similarly, Tahir & Qadir (2009), in their study conducted in the local workplace settings, have found that female teachers are better socialized in teaching profession at higher secondary level than male teachers.

So far very scanty work is available to see the socialization difference between the beginning teachers of single-gender staff and mixed-gender staff institutions in Pakistan. This question is important and requires attention whether the beginning teachers who are working in single-gender staff institution are better socialized and more satisfied than the beginning teachers who are working in mixed-gender staff institution. Teachers' performance is highly influenced by the nature, size and gender type of workgroup with which they construct their identity and self-perception (Oldham & Hackman, 1981). Gender identity with workgroup imprints impression on teachers' social and professional behaviors and the way they perceive

their success and failures. The social and cultural values which Pakistani beginning teachers bring to their organizations are highly influenced by religious discourse which does not promote free relationship building of teachers in mixed-gender staff environment. This leads to a general perception that people working in single-gender staff environment can focus their job and responsibilities in a more effective way and show higher level of inner commitment to the same gender workgroup they belong to.

It is also believed that mixed-gender staff environment discourages female workers to promote and grow freely whereas male staff shifts its focus towards unnecessary unprofessional activities and thus ultimately both genders' performance is negatively affected. Moreover, many administrative and managerial issues require different settlements for different genders (e.g. different staffrooms/ common rooms, toilets, relax rooms, maternity leave, transport) and this increased burden on organizations ultimately requires unnecessary mutual adjustments between teachers and institutions. According to Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly (1992), it has been found that the employees who exploit gender as criterion for self-identification and make their self-perception based on gender differences are more successfully socialized into the organizational culture where the number of their gender is higher than that of other gender.

Rationale of the Study

From the review of related literature, it appears that on the issue of gender differences in workplace socialization, a scanty literature is available in Pakistani local context. It is a general assumption that working in a mixed-gender staff or single-gender staff environment the beginning teachers have different kinds of socialization problems in their adjustment to newly joined organizations. This ultimately affects their socialization effectiveness. This study intends to know and understand the differences in the self-perception of beginning teachers working in mixed-gender staff environment and single-gender staff environment. Conclusively, gender is an important issue for teaching community in Pakistan which needs to be viewed and researched from various perspectives to settle down the perceptions and social beliefs.

The null hypothesis states:

- There is no difference between effective socialization of beginning teachers

working whether in mixed-gender staff or single-gender staff environment.

This hypothesis also tests if the teachers working in mixed-gender staff environment are more effectively socialized in their organizations than the beginning teachers who are working in single-gender staff environment.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study was limited to the same subject and grade teachers, the beginning English teachers with not more than four year teaching experience as regular faculty members in an affiliated institution (both public and private), for higher secondary education, with Federal board or Provincial board, Pakistan were described as the population for this study. For the selection of the sample to represent the population truly, the probability sampling method (more specifically the stratified sampling technique) was used. The respondents were then selected randomly from the following strata for a diverse representation of the population: sex (male & female), institution type (government & private; urban & rural; provincial board & federal board; co-education & uni-sex education, mixed-gender staff & single-gender staff); job nature (permanent/ regular & contract).

Data was collected from 55 colleges and higher secondary schools located in federal capital Islamabad and Punjab province. It was particularly taken into account that both male and female participants must be within reasonably comparable ratio. In this study, 145 (49.2%) of the total respondents were *male* and 150 (50.8%) were *female*, signifying a reasonably comparable ratio of almost 1:1. As the research focused on the beginning English teachers at higher secondary level, it was ensured that no respondent included in the sample had more than four years of teaching experience. Similarly, it was particularly taken into account that representations should have been made from different types of institutions, where the population under study was present.

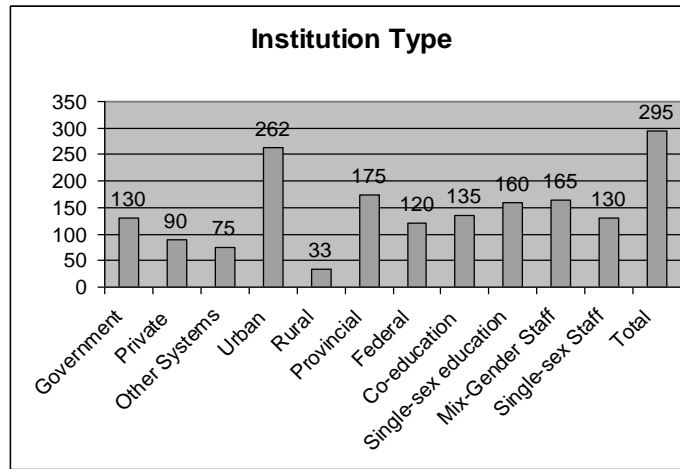


Figure 1. Representation of respondents from different types of institutions

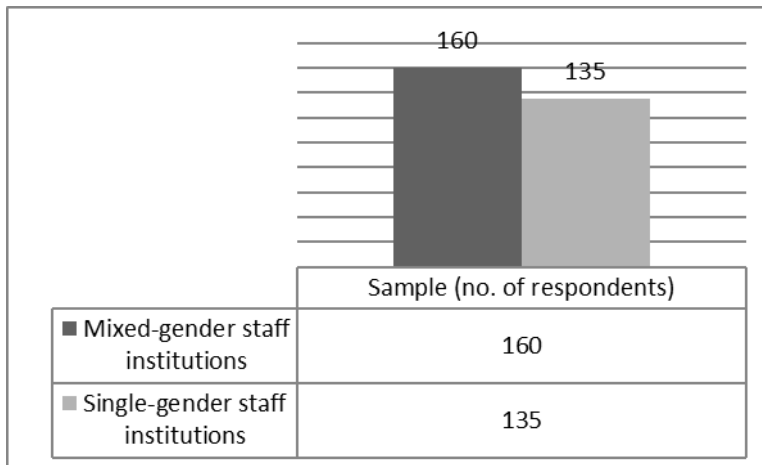


Figure 2. Representation of respondents from mixed-gender staff & single-gender staff institutions

For this study, the survey questionnaire was used as the data-gathering instrument. The questionnaire comprised two sections: *Section One* included the background and demographic information related to the respondent, *Section Two* included measurement scale for *effectiveness of socialization process*. The background profile contained socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents including age, gender, education, the number of years they had served in the organizations as well as their assigned job position, level of teaching and the institution type; single-gender staff institutions and mixed-

gender staff institutions were one of the types of the institutions. The survey properly explored the perceptions of beginning teachers on the effectiveness of their socialization process. The questions were structured using the Likert format. In this survey type, five choices were provided for every question or statement. The choices represented the degree of agreement or satisfaction each respondent had for the given question.

Based on the concept of organizational socialization of beginning teachers in school cultures, *the measurement scale for effective socialization* was devised after adapting from different valid scales being used for the purpose. Some questions were rephrased keeping the main content intact so that the scales might be adjusted to the local situations of Pakistani institutions where the study was conducted. A five-point Likert scale was used for measuring effective socialization ranging from strongly agree/ very pleasing to strongly disagree/ great problem. The 15 items (total 27 including sub-questions) were used for making composite effective socialization scale. Responses to the questions reflected the degree of effectiveness of socialization process. As the scale was prepared in reverse order, the lower their mean rated, the higher their effective socialization level rose and vice versa(See Appendix).

A final draft of the questionnaire was presented to a sample of 30 potential respondents for pilot study and their responses were evaluated. It was found that this yielded useful information. To assess whether the 27 items that were summed to create the composite effective socialization score formed a reliable scale, *Cronbach's alpha* was computed. The alpha for the 27 items (effective socialization) was .85, which indicated that the items formed a scale that had reasonable internal consistency. Overall the response rate of 74% remained encouraging. Out of 430 questionnaires which were distributed, 319 were returned from which 24 were rejected due to errors with them and thus finally 295 questionnaires were used for further analysis and study results.

RESULTS

The study brings in interesting findings in respect of the differences between beginning English teachers of mixed-gender staff institutions (TMSI) and single-gender staff institutions (TSSI) in the effectiveness of their socialization process. For the purpose, the researchers found that this problem should have been solved

with an independent sample *t*-test because the grouping variable had only two values (teachers of mixed-gender staff and teachers of single-gender staff institutions), and the design was between groups (beginning teachers from two independent groups) and the dependent variable of *effective socialization (ES)* was normal or scale data.

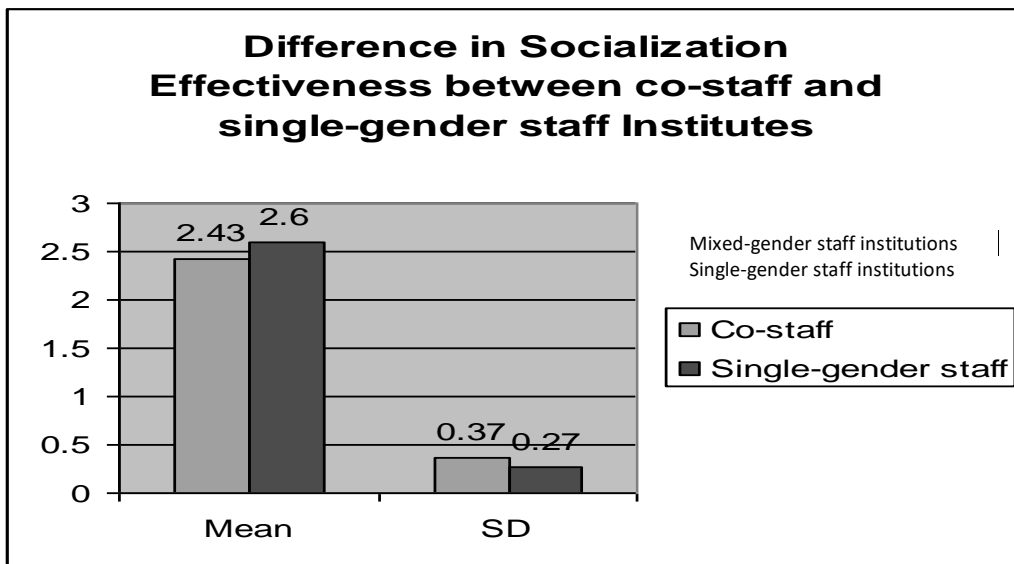


Figure 3. Mean difference between teachers of mixed-gender staff and single-gender staff Institutions on effective socialization scale

The tables 1 & 2, below, show $t(295) = 4.4, p = .00, d = .53$, Mean difference = .17. Mixed-gender staff teachers (M = 2.43, SD = .37) scored less than Single-gender staff teachers (M = 2.60, SD = .27).

Table 1
Group Statistics for Mixed-gender staff and Single-gender Staff Institutions

	Mixed-gender staff or Single-gender staff	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ES	Mixed-gender staff	165	2.4333	.37209	.02897
	Single-gender staff	130	2.6057	.27321	.02396

Table 2

Independent Samples Test for Mixed-gender staff and Single-gender Staff Institutions

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
ES	Equal variances assumed	4.426	293	.000	.17241	.03896	-.24908	.09574

The results show that there is a statistically significant difference ($p = .00.$) between the teachers of mixed-gender staff and single-gender staff institutions in effectiveness of socialization process. As for as the direction of difference is related, it can be seen that mixed-gender staff teachers scored less than single-gender staff teachers which indicate that beginning English teachers of mixed-gender staff institutions are more effectively socialized into their organizations and teaching profession than the teachers of single-gender staff institutions and that former are less dissatisfied than the latter in Pakistani colleges. The effect size defines the magnitude of difference between male and female English teachers on their effective socialization. The ‘ d ’ calculated is .53 which indicates a medium effect size of difference as interpreted.

Table 3

Mean Differences between Mixed-gender and Single-gender Staff Institutions Teachers on Effective Socialization Scale

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Institution Type</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Clear Objectives</i>	Mixed-gender staff	1.85	.718	.138	.000
	Single-gender staff	1.99	.688		
<i>Good Resources</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.18	.956	.178	.002
	Single-gender staff	2.35	.979		

<i>Authorities Care</i>	Mixed-gender staff	1.96	.840	.613	.000
	Single-gender staff	2.58	1.041		
<i>Belongingness</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.19	.778	.043	.088
	Single-gender staff	2.23	.653		
<i>Growth</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.07	.901	.450	.001
	Single-gender staff	2.52	1.094		
<i>Job Stress</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.71	.975	.222	.036
	Single-gender staff	2.93	1.101		
<i>Role clarity & adjustment</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.53	1.151	.564	.000
	Single-gender staff	3.09	.751		
<i>Internal commitment</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.61	1.034	.379	.004
	Single-gender staff	2.98	1.134		
<i>Adaptation</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.48	1.034	.415	.000
	Single-gender staff	2.90	.834		
<i>Confidence</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.01	.826	.372	.014
	Single-gender staff	2.38	.893		
<i>Sociability</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.10	.801	.382	.049
	Single-gender staff	2.48	.809		
<i>Sense of achievement</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.02	.804	.168	.003
	Single-gender staff	2.19	.738		
<i>Cultural adjustment</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.11	.741	.076	.003
	Single-gender staff	2.18	.702		
<i>Job satisfaction</i>	Mixed-gender staff	2.13	.717	.096	.001
	Single-gender staff	2.22	.780		

Finally, the results have not approved the null hypothesis of no differences in the socialization effectiveness between beginning teachers of mixed-gender staff and single-gender staff institutions. Likewise, it does not confirm the assumption that beginning teachers of mixed-gender staff institutions are not more effectively socialized in their organizations and teaching profession than teachers of single-gender staff institutions as the former group has scored less on the scale of effective socialization which indicates the higher level of job satisfaction and effective socialization.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether differences are discovered in effective socialization between the beginning teachers who are working in mixed-gender staff environment and those who are working in single-gender staff environment; and if so, quantify this differential. This quantification of differential would help understand the process of effective teacher socialization in Pakistani colleges, and find out the possible interpretations of this differential. The results have revealed that significant difference exist between effective socialization of teachers of mixed-gender staff institutions (TMSI) and teachers of single-gender staff institutions (TSSI). Similarly, the results appeared not in accurate consistency with the assumption that teachers are more satisfied and effectively socialized in single-gender staff environment, especially the female teachers.

The results indicate that TMSI are more clear about the organizational objectives than TSSI and similarly the former are less dissatisfied with the availability of resources in their organizations. Alike, TMSI feel they receive more care from the institutional authorities (e.g., principal, administrator) who listen to their problems. With regard to favorable working conditions (e.g., class size, classroom conditions, duties, workload), it is revealed that both the groups are not so satisfied but TSSI, here also, show more dissatisfaction. In the same way it is found that TMSI feel they are more comfortable with the new organizational roles (e.g., administration, management, monitoring) while the TSSI are found grumbling about this. So far as the personal relationship of beginning teachers with the principal is concerned, TMSI acclaim to have better relationship while TSSI are of not such a good opinion. Finally, a significant difference is revealed with regard to job satisfaction; accordingly TMSI were found more satisfied with their jobs whereas the level of job satisfaction of male teachers remains low. By and large, it has been discovered that teachers of

mixed-gender staff institutions make a distinction that they are more effectively socialized in the workplace culture and teaching profession.

The fact that beginning teachers working in mixed-gender staff institutions are more effectively socialized in their organization and are more satisfied with their job is associated with discussions on gender issues at workplace settings. In mixed-gender staff institutions, the teachers are in a healthy gender competitive environment which contributes to environmental decency and decorum. The teachers of mixed-gender staff institutions are normally more comfortable in discussing their organizational problems and finding their better solutions. Both the counterparts are dependent on each other and contribute to the fulfillment of many gender-specific requirements of organizations, particularly the institutions offering co-education. Tahir & Qadir (2009) have discussed the gender differences among beginning teachers' socialization and associated the differential with the weak (or at least different) perception of female teachers about their level of job satisfaction, cultural adjustment, authorities' concern, role clarity and overall socialization and professional development. However, in the mixed-gender staff institutions the female are in a better role to compare their inputs and outputs with their counterpart male teachers and they can share their future ambitions and professional development issues. Anyhow, this differential may be interpreted in the broader socio-politico-economic cultural contexts of the local community pregnant with many different perceptions about gender-mixing in society and workplace.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that a significant difference exists in professional socialization between the beginning teachers working in single-gender staff institution environment and mixed-gender staff institution environment. The results present an optimistic scope for mixed-gender working environment, particularly for teaching in Pakistan. The healthy competitive environment, equal access to opportunities and unbiased gender attitudes are making their space in educational institutions in the society. The findings of this study regarding effective socialization are also linked up with beginning teachers' job satisfaction, working outputs, professional growth, encouraging organizational culture and effectual role of senior fellow teachers in educational organizations, specifically at higher secondary or college level. This study paves the way for the future researchers to look at the phenomenon of effective socialization among

beginning teachers, with the variation of subjects, disciplines and new conceptual dimensions. The policy makers, administrators and seasoned educationist would benefit from the results of this study to understand the process of teacher socialization from gender-mixing perspective and deal such issues in their particular socio-cultural contexts. This study would also put in any governmental and non-governmental efforts to bridge the gap of gender disparity, and empowering the female teachers to actively participate in the process of their profession socialization.

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APPENDIX

Effective Socialization Scale (Likert Format: strongly agree/ very pleasing to strongly disagree/ great problem)

Sr.	Domain	Questions Asked (Response: agree/ very pleasing to strongly disagree/ great problem)
1	Clear objectives	“You understand well what your organization’s objectives are.”
2	Good resources	“You have good resources to successfully complete your job responsibilities.”
3	Authorities care	“Authorities (e.g., principal, HoD, Administrator) care about you as a person.”
4	Belongingness	“Your colleagues and seniors listen to your opinion.”
5	Growth	“You have the opportunity to learn and grow in this job.”
6	Job stress	“Your workload, in general.”
7	Role clarity & adjustment	“The types of duties assigned to you: Teaching Administration Hostel warden Head of the department Committee member Admission Student affairs Other”
8	Internal commitment	“Extra or Co-curricular duties: Arrange debates or speeches Drafting speeches Arrange sports events Write or edit newsletter/ magazine etc Perform as a compere/ host Other”
9	Conducive working conditions	“Your working conditions, in general (class size, classroom conditions, duties load etc.)”
10	Adaptation	“Participation in new roles other than teaching (e.g., organization, management, monitoring)”
11	Confidence	“You feel your classroom control/ management in general.”
12	Sociability	“You are in good relationship with your principal.”
13	Sense of achievement	“You feel yourself a successful teacher.”
14	Cultural adjustment	“You feel yourself adjusted in the culture of your institution, in general.”
15	Job satisfaction	“Overall, you are satisfied with your job.”