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The relationship between managerial feedback and professional satisfaction of primary education teachers

Introduction

Managerial feedback, provided to teachers by school management, plays a crucial role in shaping their professional satisfaction. This relationship is complex and influenced by a multitude of factors, with research indicating a significant correlation between the two. T. K. Gamble and M. Gamble (2002, p. 58) define feedback as “all verbal and nonverbal messages that a person transmits consciously or unconsciously in response to another person’s communication”. According to Longenecker (1973, p. 41), feedback “is necessary to determine the extent to which the message has been understood, believed, and accepted”.

Managerial feedback certainly constitutes an essential element of the institutional managerial process. According to several researchers in the field – Gordon and Burch (2011), Bocoş (2013), and Pănişoară (2015) – managerial feedback is considered a significant tool for professional development, motivation, and increasing employee satisfaction.

In Table 1, a diachronic overview of definitions and approaches to managerial feedback correlative to teachers’ professional satisfaction is presented. We present a perspective on how feedback can be used to motivate and support teacher development, in relation to professional satisfaction in the school environment.

A comparative analysis of managerial feedback across different scientific and temporal contexts reveals that, since the 1970s, it was initially perceived as a simple communication of performance results. Over time, it has evolved into a much more complex process, which encompasses continuous development and improvement of skills through constant, reciprocal interactions between managers and employees. In the context of the issue under study, managerial feedback is also found to be correlated

Table 1. Conceptual approaches to managerial feedback in relation to professional satisfaction

Researcher	Definition of managerial feedback	Essential dimensions of feedback	Correlation with teacher professional satisfaction
Locke (1976)	Feedback is considered an important motivational tool, supporting goal setting and professional development.	Constant feedback, correlated with clear objectives.	Provides opportunities for professional growth and improvement. Feedback oriented towards performance and personal development contributes to professional fulfillment and increases professional satisfaction.
Ilgén, Fisher, Taylor (1979)	Managerial feedback is considered an important component of the organizational learning process, providing employees with valuable information about how they can adjust their behavior	Specific, immediate, frequent feedback. Focus on continuous process improvement.	Timely and frequent feedback is positively correlated with professional satisfaction because teachers feel that they are supported and guided in their professional development.
Sadler (1989)	Managerial feedback is defined as a form of constructive assessment, which should be explicit and detailed and provide opportunities for performance improvement.	Clarity, action orientation, and continuous improvement. Formative and summative feedback.	Formative feedback, which helps develop skills, leads to greater job satisfaction, reducing performance-related stress.
Kluger, DeNisi (1996)	Managerial feedback is defined as information provided to employees to help them adjust their behavior and performance to achieve goals	Constructive feedback, focused on improvement and development.	Clear and constructive feedback increases motivation and improves performance, which leads to increased job satisfaction.
Bandura (1997)	Feedback is a means of strengthening self-efficacy, providing teachers with information about their progress and how to improve their performance.	Focused on increasing self-efficacy and motivating teachers.	Positive and constructive feedback. Positive and self-efficacy-supporting feedback increases teachers' self-confidence and professional satisfaction.
Hattie, Timperley (2007)	Feedback is considered an iterative process in which the employee receives information about their performance and how to continuously improve.	Feedback focused on progress, self-evaluation, and behavior adjustment.	Teachers who receive continuous and constructive feedback have a better perception of their performance, which increases job satisfaction.

with the professional satisfaction of teachers (including in primary education). Effective, current, specific, and constructive feedback improves not only the professional performance but also the well-being of teachers, an aspect that influences the general

climate in the educational institution. Teachers who receive effective managerial support, through clear and constructive feedback, are more motivated and satisfied with their job, which creates a favorable socio-affective educational environment.

Moreover, educational policies at European and national levels constantly signal the importance of creating a favorable working environment for teachers, which would stimulate motivation, creativity, and commitment to the profession. European normative acts such as the *European Strategy for Education and Training 2030* (2021), the *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training* (2021), as well as national ones such as the *Education Code of the Republic of Moldova* (2014) and the *Education Development Strategy 2021–2030* (2022) prioritize improving the quality of the educational act, through measures that aim both at the professional development of teachers and the creation of adequate working conditions.

Therefore, managerial feedback has a significant impact on professional satisfaction. Studies in the field of educational management point out that different types of feedback have varying effects on teachers' motivation and perception of their work.

Typology of managerial feedback

In the works of renowned researchers, types of managerial feedback are listed as:

1. *Formative feedback*. According to Sadler (1989), formative feedback aims to support learning and continuous improvement of performance, providing teachers with data on how they can adjust and improve their professional activity. This is constructive feedback, focused on the teaching process and professional development. Regarding the relationship with professional satisfaction, formative feedback increases professional satisfaction because it offers teachers specific opportunities for improvement and continuous professional development (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). In addition, teachers who receive formative feedback frequently perceive their work as more valuable, thus increasing their sense of professional achievement.
2. *Summative feedback* is focused on evaluating performance and providing a final verdict on the quality of teachers' work, usually at the end of a teaching cycle or the end of an academic year. Ilgen et al. (1979) characterize summative feedback as an evaluative process focused on the classification of performance. We note that summative feedback can negatively influence professional satisfaction when it is perceived as too critical or unjustified. Locke (1976) states that teachers can experience a decrease in motivation and professional satisfaction if summative feedback is perceived as unfair or nonspecific, which can generate negative emotions in employees, feelings of frustration, and demotivation.
3. *Positive feedback*. Bandura (1997) notes that positive feedback strengthens teachers' feelings of self-efficacy, increasing their confidence in their abilities. Positive feedback recognizes successes and encourages the continuation of effective behaviors. This type of feedback is closely related to the professional satisfaction of primary school teachers because recognition of merits and

professional successes stimulates motivation and strengthens the sense of achievement. Teachers who receive positive feedback are more satisfied with their work and feel appreciated and respected within the educational institution.

4. *Constructive (negative) feedback.* Although it may seem contradictory, negative constructive feedback, when provided appropriately, can have beneficial effects on job satisfaction. Constructive feedback identifies areas for improvement and offers specific solutions for improving performance (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996). Negative feedback can have a positive effect on job satisfaction, if it is provided in a constructive, judicious way, guiding teachers towards solutions and opportunities for improvement. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), constructive feedback provided tactfully and accompanied by support for development can increase professional commitment and motivation.

The methodological approach of the study

Research purpose: To assess teachers' perceptions of the role of managerial feedback in creating a favorable organizational climate.

Research hypothesis: Primary school teachers who receive constructive, relevant, and recurrent managerial feedback have a higher level of professional satisfaction, compared to those who perceive managerial feedback as insufficient, inadequate, or negative.

Research methods: documentary analysis (normative framework); observation (observing interactions between managers and teachers to identify communication patterns and the use of feedback); questionnaire; data analysis and interpretation.

The primary method of data collection was a questionnaire administered in 2024. Its *objective* was to identify teachers' perceptions of managerial feedback, including its frequency, type, and quality.

The questionnaire is built on a 5-point Likert scale, offering respondents the opportunity to express their agreement or disagreement with various statements regarding managerial feedback and professional satisfaction. The scale is as follows:

- 1 – *Strongly disagree*
- 2 – *Disagree*
- 3 – *Neither agree nor disagree*
- 4 – *Agree*
- 5 – *Strongly agree.*

The scores can be interpreted as follows:

- Range for *managerial feedback*:
 - 1–2: Managerial feedback is perceived as very low.
 - 3: Moderate managerial feedback (average involvement).
 - 4–5: High managerial feedback (active and motivational involvement).
- Range for *job satisfaction*:
 - 1–2: Low job satisfaction (feeling of unfulfillment, lack of appreciation).
 - 3: Moderate job satisfaction (partial fulfillment, occasional recognition).

4–5: High job satisfaction (feeling of fulfillment, appreciation, and autonomy).
The experimental group (respondents) consisted of 166 primary education teachers from the Republic of Moldova, who were randomly selected. Survey participants were distributed according to age, work environment, gender, professional experience, and type of educational institution.

Results and meanings of the data collected through the questionnaire

The questionnaire was the basic method of data collection. The analysis of the data from the questionnaire is organized into relevant categories, with the results presented as percentages in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic data

Category	Subcategory	Percentage (%)
Age	Under 25	13%
	25–34	13%
	35–44	32%
	45–54	26%
	55+	16%
Work environment	Urban	65%
	Rural	35%
Gender	Female	98%
	Male	2%
Work experience	Under 5 years	27%
	5–10 years	9%
	11–15 years	14%
	16–20 years	12%
	Over 20 years	38%
Type of educational institution	Public	98%
	Private	2%

Age distribution. The predominance of the 35–44 age group (32%) denotes a concentration of teachers with moderate experience, able to understand the complexity of managerial feedback correlated to job satisfaction. Ages under 25 and between 25 and 34 represent a minority (26% cumulatively), which indicates a relatively slow entry of young people into primary education – a factor that could influence innovation and diversity of pedagogical approaches.

Activity environment. Most of the teachers work in urban environments (65%), where educational resources and professional training opportunities are more accessible. This may influence the perception of managerial feedback, favoring the adoption of modern and efficient educational policies and practices.

Gender. The gender discrepancy is significant, with an overwhelming majority of female teachers (98%). This inequality may reflect persistent gender stereotypes in the teaching profession and influence managerial feedback and teacher job satisfaction.

Professional experience. A significant percentage of teachers (38%) have over 20 years of experience, suggesting a stable teaching staff and considerable expertise. This experience may have a beneficial impact on perceptions of managerial feedback, as experienced teachers are better able to identify its impact on job satisfaction.

Type of educational institution. The predominance of public educational institutions (98%) highlights the context in which teachers work. The type of institution is often influenced by rigid educational policies and limited resources, which can condition both the type of managerial feedback and the satisfaction of primary school teachers.

Item 1. The manager provides a clear and inspiring vision for the future of the institution. The questionnaire data on providing a clear and inspiring vision for the institution's future by the manager shows that most teachers (77%) believe that they do. This indicates a positive organizational climate and effective managerial feedback. There is a small percentage (4%) with lower scores (1 and 2), suggesting that some teachers do not perceive that their manager provides an adequate vision. These discrepancies could indicate issues in communication or in the implementation of the vision. A clear and inspiring vision can significantly contribute to professional satisfaction, as employees feel more involved and motivated to contribute to achieving the institution's objectives. It is important to identify the reasons for lower results to improve the organizational climate and support managers in developing their leadership skills. Implementing professional training programs for managers of educational institutions to develop communication skills and strengthen the institutional vision would be a recommendation in this regard. At the same time, it is also necessary to create regular feedback mechanisms for teachers to assess the perception of the manager's vision.

Item 2. The manager demonstrates empathy and care for teachers' personal needs and difficulties. A large proportion of teachers (74%) believe that their manager demonstrates empathy and care, which suggests feedback focused on supporting staff with personal challenges. Although the majority of teachers agree that the manager shows empathy, a small percentage (5%) gave scores of 1 or 2. This suggests that a minority of teachers do not feel adequately supported by their manager, which could reflect communication difficulties or a lack of personalized support. It is important to further explore the reasons why some primary school teachers do not feel the same level of empathy and care, in order to improve team relationships and satisfaction levels. Organizing open, empathetic communication sessions and one-on-one meetings between teachers and the manager to discuss personal difficulties and create a deeply supportive environment is a plausible recommendation in this context.

Item 3. Level of satisfaction of primary school teachers with the working conditions offered by the institution in which they work. Approximately 70% of respondents gave scores of 4 and 5, indicating a high degree of satisfaction with working conditions. This denotes that most teachers appreciate the environment and resources offered by their institution, which contributes positively to overall professional satisfaction. This reflects an efficient management of resources and infrastructure. A smaller

proportion, 13% of respondents, gave a score of 3. The respondents are relatively satisfied with the working conditions, but not fully. This may suggest that there are aspects of the working environment that need to be improved, such as the resources available for the teaching process. Also, 17% of respondents (scores of 1 and 2) are dissatisfied with working conditions. These respondents may encounter difficulties regarding inadequate resources, lack of suitable infrastructure, or working conditions below expectations, which may affect motivation and performance. The fact that 30% of respondents express partial satisfaction may signal the need to review certain aspects related to managerial feedback regarding working conditions (equipment, physical conditions of the premises; access to additional educational resources).

Item 4. I feel appreciated for my professional contributions and achievements to my manager. More than half (60%) of primary school teachers feel appreciated by their managers for their contributions. The average score of 3 shows that some teachers (8%) do not feel fully appreciated but are not completely dissatisfied either – possibly due to factors such as the type of feedback or personal circumstances. There is a small group of respondents (4%) who reported a lack of appreciation from the manager, assigning scores of 1 or 2. These employees may represent isolated cases or the result of specific problems in the relationship with the manager. In general, the manager is perceived positively in terms of showing appreciation toward teachers; however, there remains room for improvement and greater consistency of applying this practice at the organizational level.

Item 5. Teachers' level of satisfaction with the work atmosphere and organizational culture in the institution. The most frequent responses (66%) are 4 and 5, suggesting a high overall satisfaction. However, 10% of the responses fall below level 3, indicating cases of moderate to deep dissatisfaction that require attention. The existence of some cases of dissatisfaction, with a small proportion of primary school teachers being dissatisfied, may signal specific issues related to managerial feedback that should be addressed accordingly.

Item 6. The extent to which the manager motivates teachers to make extra efforts to achieve excellent results. This question generated a variety of responses, indicating the levels of motivation perceived by teachers. Most responses (75%) are concentrated around scores 4 and 5, suggesting that a significant number of teachers feel motivated by the manager. Score 3 indicates a neutral zone, showing that some primary school teachers (18%) can be motivated, but not consistently. These responses suggest that there is room for improvement in the motivation methods used by the manager. Although scores of 1 and 2 are few, they indicate that there are teachers (7%) who do not feel motivated by the manager. These cases could indicate specific problems in interpersonal relationships or leadership styles. Thus, most teachers perceive the manager as motivating, which can have a positive impact on job satisfaction and performance. There is also a spectrum of responses, suggesting that not all teachers are equally motivated. This highlights the importance of adopting the right type of managerial feedback that responds to the varying needs of the team. Even with a majority of positive responses, it is essential to pay attention to and address cases of dissatisfaction to improve the organizational culture.

Item 7. The extent to which primary school teachers feel valued and appreciated in the institution. Around 68% of respondents gave scores of 4 and 5, indicating that they feel valued and appreciated in the institution. This suggests a generally positive atmosphere in terms of recognition of their efforts and achievements. Around 28% of responses fall into category 3, reflecting a possible ambivalence. These teachers feel appreciated, but not consistently or sufficiently, which indicates opportunities for improvement. The relatively small proportion of negative responses (4%) indicates that most teachers feel appreciated to some extent. However, it is important to pay attention to these voices to address potential problems and improve the organizational climate. The majority of primary school teachers interviewed feel valued in the institution, which contributes positively to their professional satisfaction and can influence performance and motivation. Recognition of teachers' efforts plays a significant role in their professional satisfaction. Effective managerial feedback and frequent recognition of professional achievements can improve the feeling of appreciation.

Item 8. The extent to which teachers feel motivated to come to school every day. The majority of responses (71%) scored 4 and 5, suggesting a predominantly positive feeling among teachers regarding their motivation to come to school. These data could indicate a favorable work climate and effective managerial feedback. Moderate responses, with a score of 3, constitute approximately 18% of the total, suggesting that some primary school teachers may have reservations about their motivation, indicating areas that need improvement. Negative responses, with scores of 1 and 2, represent a small proportion (around 11%), but should not be ignored, as they may indicate specific problems that, if not addressed, may affect morale and overall performance.

This methodological approach helps to quantify perceptions and provides a scientific framework to explore the complex relationship between managerial feedback and job satisfaction of primary school teachers. High scores on managerial feedback items tend to correlate positively with high professional satisfaction scores, highlighting that effective and supportive feedback has a beneficial impact on teacher motivation and performance. Medium or low scores may indicate the need for interventions in leadership style or the organizational environment to increase teacher professional satisfaction.

We observe from the analysis of the questionnaire data that primary school teachers who perceive constructive feedback from their managers report higher levels of job satisfaction. Constructive feedback provided by managers plays a significant role in supporting teachers' motivation, providing guidance for improving performance, and recognizing individual efforts. Teachers who feel that their efforts are recognized by their managers demonstrate a higher level of professional commitment and fulfillment. The strong positive relationship between performance recognition and professional satisfaction suggests that managers who value effective feedback directly contribute to increasing teacher satisfaction.

To increase the level of professional satisfaction of primary school teachers, based on the findings of the questionnaire, the following measures are *recommended*:

- *Promoting constructive feedback.* Managerial feedback must be specific and development-oriented, not just error-correcting. Constructive feedback should

include clear suggestions for improving professional performance and focus on the positive aspects of teachers' work.

- *Continuous training of school managers.* Managers should be trained on methods of providing effective feedback. This includes developing communication and empathy skills so that feedback is perceived as a support tool and not as criticism.
- *Creating an environment in which feedback is continuous.* Feedback should not be an isolated event, but an ongoing process. Encouraging an organizational culture based on regular feedback can improve teachers' job satisfaction.
- *Effectively assessing the impact of feedback on job satisfaction.* It would be useful to implement a system for periodically assessing teachers' satisfaction with managerial feedback. This will allow the feedback strategy to be adjusted according to teachers' needs.
- *Adapting feedback to the individual needs of teachers.* Feedback should be personalized according to the needs and learning styles of each teacher. Adapted feedback can have a more significant impact on professional satisfaction.
- *Including self-evaluation in the feedback process.* Encouraging teachers to participate in self-evaluation of their performance can contribute to a better understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. This can strengthen the perception of external feedback and increase professional satisfaction.
- *Creating a performance-based reward system.* Teachers who receive positive feedback and demonstrate improvements in their work should be rewarded. This system can stimulate motivation and increase professional satisfaction.
- *Improving interpersonal relationships between teachers and managers.* Positive relationships between managers and teachers can significantly influence the responsiveness to feedback. Investing in building a relationship based on trust and respect can improve the effectiveness of feedback and overall satisfaction.
- *Periodically assessing the organizational climate.* The perception of feedback depends not only on the way it is transmitted but also on the overall organizational culture. Assessing and improving the workplace climate can contribute to a more favorable response to feedback and an increase in professional satisfaction.

These recommendations are based on the principles of effective feedback and existing research in the field of teacher professional satisfaction, to contribute to the creation of a performing and satisfying educational environment for teachers.

Conclusion

In the current educational context, teachers' professional satisfaction is closely correlated with the managerial feedback they receive. This is not only a performance evaluation tool, but also a determining factor in the professional development and motivation of teaching staff. Studies and research in the field demonstrate that constructive, specific, and continuous feedback plays an essential role in increasing the

professional satisfaction of primary school teachers, contributing to a positive organizational climate and greater involvement in educational activity. The types of feedback – formative, summative, positive, and constructive – have varying effects on teachers' perceptions of their work, and their effective use can significantly contribute to improving motivation and professional satisfaction.

Formative managerial feedback is particularly effective, providing teachers with opportunities for continuous development and professional growth, and positive feedback contributes to strengthening their sense of self-efficacy. In contrast, summative feedback, when perceived as critical or non-specific, can reduce job satisfaction, which highlights the importance of clear and constructive communication from school managers. These findings highlight the need for educational institutions to implement effective feedback policies that support not only academic performance but also the well-being and motivation of teaching staff.

Therefore, it is recommended that educational managers adopt a continuous and personalized feedback approach that focuses on developing teachers' skills and recognizing their professional contributions. Thus, not only will educational performance be improved, but also the well-being of teachers, which will contribute to a more motivating and productive educational environment. In this regard, European and national educational policies, which emphasize the creation of a favorable environment for teachers, can constitute an appropriate legislative framework for the implementation of these effective managerial practices.

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Abstract

In the contemporary educational environment, teachers' professional satisfaction is closely linked to the quality of interactions with school managers, especially in terms of managerial feedback. That feedback represents not only a mechanism for correcting and guiding performance but also a way of recognizing and valuing the efforts made by teachers. Research in the field indicates a direct link between constructive feedback and the level of professional satisfaction, highlighting the fact that teachers who receive positive and concrete feedback from managers tend to have a higher level of motivation and professional fulfillment. The article aims to analyze the relationship between managerial feedback and professional satisfaction, based on the hypothesis that primary school teachers who receive constructive, relevant, and recurrent managerial feedback have a higher level of professional satisfaction, compared to those who perceive managerial feedback as insufficient, inadequate, or negative. Conceptual approaches to managerial feedback and its correlation with the professional satisfaction of primary school teachers are explored. It also outlines the types of managerial feedback – formative, positive, summative, and constructive – and their impact on teachers' perceptions, aiming to identify managerial strategies that can improve the organizational climate and educational outcomes. This approach supports the need to better understand how effective managerial policies and practices can be implemented to support teachers' professional development in terms of professional satisfaction.

Keywords: managerial feedback, professional satisfaction, motivation, empathy, manager, management, primary education teachers

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