Comparison of Motivation and Job Satisfaction of Teachers Working in Schools with Low and High International SACERS Scale Scores

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, countries have taken many initiatives to determine the quality of their educational environments and to raise them to a certain level of standard. At the center of this effort to assess and improve quality is the School Age Care Environment Rating Scale International [SACERS]. At its core, SACERS assesses critical aspects of school-age care settings. This study aimed to compare the teaching motivation and job satisfaction levels of teachers working in schools with high and low SACERS scores. A total of 242 teachers from five general schools in Kazakhstan with low SACERS scores and five schools with high SACERS scores participated in the study, which used a causal comparison design. Schools were categorized according to SACERS score. 'Teaching Motivation Scale' and Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale' were used to collect the data. The analysis revealed that teachers had high levels of job satisfaction and teaching motivation in schools with high SACERS scores.

KEYWORDS

Educational environment; quality of education; SACERS scale; international research; environmental research; schools; teaching motivation; teacher job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement and developmental processes of school-age children are highly influenced by the quality of their care and educational environments (DeLeon et al., 2022; Fedorova, 2019; Shatri & Kelmendi, 2023). Considerable efforts have been made in the last few years to raise the standard of care provided to children of school age. This is a reflection of the increasing understanding (Harms et al., 2005) of the crucial role that care and education environments play in children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. In order to achieve this, nations are launching a number of initiatives to assess the quality of their educational settings and elevate them to a certain level. The core of this effort to assess and improve quality is the International School Age Care Environment Rating Scale [SACERS]. SACERS is a large-scale instrument used to assess the care and education environments of children aged 5-12 years (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018). It is a broad framework designed to assess and improve the conditions in which children grow and learn outside of school hours, encompassing dimensions essential for their well-being and appropriate developmental environments. Therefore, SACERS is becoming a standard instrument that provides educators, administrators, and policy makers with an organized method for assessing the quality of programs in a range of global educational settings (Fedorova, 2019).

At its core, SACERS assesses critical aspects of school-age care settings. These include the adequacy and safety of physical spaces, the effectiveness of health and safety protocols, the richness and appropriateness of developmental activities offered, the quality of staff interactions with children, the structural integrity of programs, provisions for staff development, and accommodations for special needs. By comprehensively assessing these dimensions through a systematic scoring system, SACERS provides a detailed picture of program strengths and areas for improvement (Haleta et al., 2023). A distinguishing feature of SACERS is that it goes beyond mere assessment and acts as a catalyst for continuous improvement. SACERS is a standard that identifies specific areas for improvement and provides stakeholders with evidence-based strategies that aim to raise educational standards and promote appropriate developmental outcomes (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018). This emphasis on continuous improvement creates a dynamic environment in which educational practices evolve based on continuous evaluation and feedback, ensuring that programs remain responsive to the changing needs of children and families (Cárcamo et al., 2014).

SACERS also plays an important role in the professional development of school-age children. By setting clear benchmarks for quality and aligning professional development opportunities with assessment results, it supports educators to develop their skills, expand their databases, and improve their practice (Harms et al., 2005). This integration of assessment and professional development not only upgrades the skills of individual educators, but also increases the overall effectiveness of school-age care programs in meeting the diverse needs of children (Roy, 1999). Another important dimension is that SACERS promotes transparency and accountability in the school-age care sector (Fedorova, 2019). It fosters an environment of

accountability and trust by creating standardized assessment scores that can be accessed by parents, funding agencies, and regulatory bodies. These scores serve as a reliable indicator of program quality, empower parents to make informed decisions about their children's care and development, and encourage education providers to maintain rigorous standards of excellence. As the care environment for school-aged children continues to evolve, the importance of instruments such as SACERS becomes increasingly evident (Haleta et al., 2023).

When teachers are involved in schools' processes related to SACERS scores, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the success of the program, leading to increased motivation and a stronger commitment to achieving high standards (Harms et al., 2005). To address the areas highlighted by the SACERS assessments, it is important to consider teachers' teaching styles and affective characteristics. When teachers are provided with opportunities to improve themselves and their schools, school SACERS scores improve (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018). This support not only improves teacher skills but also fosters a sense of value and appreciation by demonstrating the program's commitment to their professional development. Moreover, schools having SACERS goals help to motivate teachers and increase their job satisfaction (Vladimirovna et al., 2021). A school culture based on SACERS will influence teachers' motivation to teach and their job satisfaction (Cárcamo et al., 2014; Fedorova, 2019). The influence that SACERS-based school quality has on teachers' job satisfaction and motivation is explained in detail below.

Characteristics and Use of the International SACERS Scale

One of the key features of the International SACERS Scale is its structured approach covering a broad spectrum of care divided into seven categories. These are Space and Furnishings, Health and Safety, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, Staff Development and Special Needs (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018). With items rated from 1 to 7, each domain is carefully detailed and offers a comprehensive assessment that reflects both strengths and areas for improvement. It is important to note that the scale not only assesses the physical and safety aspects of the setting, but also the quality of interaction between staff and children, the variety and appropriateness of the activities offered, and the overall program structure (Fedorova, 2019). This holistic assessment ensures that all aspects of a child's developmental needs are taken into account, emphasizing a healthy and balanced development process (Harms et al., 2005). Furthermore, the scale is designed to be user-friendly and accessible for a variety of school-age programs worldwide. It includes detailed scoring criteria and explanatory notes, making it easier for educators and administrators to accurately understand and administer the assessment (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018). This clarity in design helps to maintain consistency and reliability in assessments across different cultural and educational contexts (Cárcamo et al., 2014).

The implementation of the International SACERS Scale involves several critical steps to ensure its effectiveness in assessing and improving school-age care settings. First, it requires extensive training for educators and program managers (Harms et al., 2005). A thorough understanding of the scale's criteria and the ability to apply them properly are ensured by

appropriate training for those performing the assessments. This step is crucial for maintaining the reliability and validity of assessments (Haleta et al., 2023). Once trained, evaluators conduct comprehensive assessments of school-age care settings. These assessments are usually conducted through direct observation and interaction with both staff and children. Evaluators take detailed notes and score each item according to set criteria (Fedorova, 2019). The process also includes interviews with staff and a review of program documentation to get a complete picture of the quality of the program. After the assessment, the results are analyzed to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The analysis forms the basis for the development of targeted improvement plans. Schools and programs can use this data for staff training, resourcing, and making informed decisions about programs (Shishova & Akhatova, 2022). The aim is to achieve continuous improvements in the quality of care by creating a continuous cycle of assessment and improvement (Haleta et al., 2023). In most cases, the implementation of the SACERS Scale is supported by external agencies or organizations that provide additional resources, guidance and monitoring. These institutions often play an important role in ensuring the integrity of the assessment process and supporting programs in the improvement phase (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018).

Effectiveness and Limitations of the International SACERS Scale

The effectiveness of the International SACERS Scale is widely recognized in the field of school-age care. One of its main strengths and highlights lies in its ability to provide comprehensive and standardized data on program quality. This standardization allows for consistent assessments across different programs and settings, facilitating comparison and benchmarking (Harms et al., 2005). Programs implementing SACERS often see significant improvements in the quality of care they offer. The scale helps practitioners identify specific areas for improvement and develop strategies to address them. However, the scale's focus on a holistic assessment ensures that all aspects of a child's experience in the program are considered. This comprehensive approach leads to more balanced and multifaceted improvements, benefiting children's overall development and well-being (Fedorova, 2019). It is also extremely important to use the scale as a professional development tool. Helping educators improve their skills and knowledge by providing clear criteria for high quality contributes to their professional development, leading to better program quality and increased job satisfaction among staff (Cárcamo et al., 2014).

Despite its strength, the International SACERS Scale also has some limitations. One of the main limitations is the intensity of the assessment process. Conducting comprehensive assessments requires considerable time and effort, which can be a burden for programs with limited resources (Osherbayeva et al., 2023). Furthermore, the need for training for evaluators can also be a barrier, especially in regions where access to such training is limited (Harms et al., 2005). Another limitation is that the scale, while comprehensive, may not fully capture the unique cultural and contextual nuances of each school-age care setting. Programs in diverse cultural settings may find that certain criteria are not entirely applicable or need to be adapted to fit their specific context (Parczewska, 2020). This adaptation process can be challenging and

requires careful consideration to maintain the integrity and reliability of assessments (Haleta et al., 2023; Ivanova et al., 2019).

The Effect of SACERS Rating on School Environment and Student Achievement

SACERS scores provide a detailed and structured assessment of school-age care settings, reflecting the quality of these settings. These scores are critical indicators that influence various aspects of school activities and outcomes (Harms et al., 2005). This section discusses the interpretation of SACERS scores, their impact on the school environment and student achievement.

Understanding SACERS scores requires a comprehension of the structure of the scale and the meaning behind the numerical ratings. SACERS scores are derived from observation and assessment in seven areas; each area contains items rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, with specific criteria defining each score level (Zhundybayeva et al., 2023). A score of 1 indicates inadequate quality where critical issues may exist in safety, space or interactions. A score of 3 reflects minimal quality, meeting basic standards but with significant room for improvement. A score of 5 indicates good quality and shows that the environment generally supports children's development and well-being (Fedorova, 2019). A score of 7 represents excellent quality, where the program exemplifies best practices and exceeds standard requirements in all areas assessed. The sum of the scores in these areas provides an overall picture of the quality of the program. This overall score can be used to benchmark against other programs, to monitor improvements over time, and identify specific areas in need of targeted interventions. Understanding these scores helps educators, administrators and stakeholders make informed decisions about program development and resource allocation (Harms et al., 2005). High SACERS scores are typically associated with well-resourced, safe and stimulating environments that are conducive to children's development. High-scoring schools often have well-maintained and adequately furnished spaces, a wide range of engaging and developmentally appropriate activities, and positive, nurturing interactions between staff and children (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018). The emphasis on health and safety in SACERS assessments enables schools to prioritize children's physical well-being, leading to environments that are not only educationally enriching but also safe and supportive (Fedorova, 2019; Ivanova et al., 2019). This focus on safety and health fosters an environment of trust and safety, creating a foundation where children can explore and learn without taking excessive risks. Furthermore, high SACERS scores can contribute to a positive school culture and climate. When staff are part of a high-quality program, they often experience higher job satisfaction and motivation, which allows them to be more enthusiastic and committed to children. This positive attitude of the staff improves the overall environment of the school, resulting in a warm and supportive learning environment for both children and their families (Cárcamo et al., 2014). Low SACERS scores highlight areas where the school environment may be lacking, encouraging necessary interventions and improvements. These scores can serve as a wake-up call for administrators to address deficiencies, whether they relate to inadequate facilities, insufficient activities, or poor

staff-child interactions. By focusing on improving these scores, schools can systematically improve the quality of their environments (Haleta et al., 2023; Parczewska, 2020).

The impact of SACERS scores on student achievement is significant and multifaceted. High-quality school-age care environments are associated with better academic and developmental outcomes for children, as evidenced by high SACERS scores (Harms et al., 2005). One of the primary ways in which SACERS scores influence student achievement is through the provision of a structured and supportive learning environment. High scores in areas such as program structure and activities ensure that children have access to a variety of learning opportunities that are both engaging and developmentally appropriate. These opportunities increase cognitive development, critical thinking skills, and motivation to learn, which are essential for academic success (Ivanova et al., 2019). Furthermore, positive interactions between staff and children, an important component of high SACERS scores, can contribute to a supportive educational atmosphere. When children feel they are valued and supported by their caregivers, they are more likely to develop strong self-esteem and social skills (Cárcamo et al., 2014). These characteristics are crucial for academic success as they enable children to actively participate in the learning process, collaborate with peers and be resilient in the face of challenges. In addition, the emphasis on health and safety in SACERS assessments ensures that children's physical needs are met, reducing absenteeism and promoting attendance. A safe and healthy environment minimizes disruptions and allows children to focus on learning, leading to better academic performance (Fedorova, 2019). Research has shown that children who participate in high-quality school-age care programs exhibit higher levels of school readiness, improved language and math skills, and better overall academic outcomes, as measured by instruments such as SACERS (Ivanova et al., 2019). These programs help children develop the skills and attitudes necessary for long-term academic success, providing a strong foundation for future learning. SACERS scores play a critical role in shaping the school environment and influencing student achievement (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018).

International SACERS Scale and Its Effect on Teachers

Effect on Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation is a crucial factor in the quality of education and care provided in school-age programs. The International SACERS Scale, a comprehensive assessment of program quality, plays an important role in influencing teacher motivation and enhancing teachers' professional satisfaction. High SACERS scores generally indicate a well-organized and resource-rich environment where teachers have access to the necessary materials and support to implement high-quality educational activities (Cárcamo et al., 2014). When teachers receive high SACERS scores, it supports their efforts and demonstrates the quality of their work. This appreciation can lead to increased job satisfaction and greater commitment to their professional tasks. However, while low SACERS scores may initially reflect low motivation by highlighting areas for improvement, they can catalyze professional development and improvement (Fedorova, 2019). Furthermore, SACERS scores can be used to promote a culture of continuous improvement by

providing concrete evidence about a program's strengths and areas for improvement (Vladimirovna et al., 2021). Seeing the effect of their efforts on SACERS scores, teachers are likely to feel more motivated to maintain and further improve the quality of care and education they provide (Haleta et al., 2023).

Using SACERS scores strategically can significantly increase teacher motivation. One effective approach is to involve teachers in the evaluation process, making them active participants in assessing and improving program quality. When teachers are included in discussions about SACERS scores and have a voice in decision-making, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the success of the program. This participation can lead to increased motivation and a stronger commitment to achieving high standards (Harms et al., 2005). Professional development opportunities tailored to address areas highlighted by SACERS assessments also have an impact on teachers. When teachers are provided with targeted training and resources to improve specific aspects of their practice, there is a direct correlation between their efforts and improvements in SACERS scores (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018). This support not only improves teacher skills but also fosters a sense of value and appreciation by demonstrating the program's commitment to their professional development. Furthermore, using SACERS scores to set clear and achievable goals helps to motivate teachers and increase their job satisfaction. Teachers can manage their efforts by breaking down the overall score into specific, manageable goals (Vladimirovna et al., 2021). Regular feedback and recognition based on SACERS scores are also very important. Whether through formal rewards or informal praise, recognizing teachers' hard work and achievements can strengthen their motivation (Fedorova, 2019). Positive feedback encourages teachers to continue striving for excellence and promotes a positive working environment (Cárcamo et al., 2014).

There is a strong relationship between teacher motivation and teaching quality. Motivated teachers are more likely to engage in reflective practice, seek professional development opportunities and implement innovative teaching strategies. This proactive approach to their work leads to higher quality educational experiences for children (Harms et al, 2005; Kagema, 2018; Mohd Tahir & Mohd Salleh, 2018). When teachers are motivated, they are more likely to create stimulating and nurturing environments that support children's learning and development. They tend to be more responsive to children's needs, use a variety of teaching techniques, and develop positive relationships with children and their families (Fedorova, 2019; Monge-Agüero, 2022). These practices contribute to a supportive and enriching learning environment, which is reflected in higher SACERS scores. Motivated teachers also exhibit greater enthusiasm and energy in their interactions with children (Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2018). This enthusiasm is contagious and creates a dynamic and engaging learning atmosphere that encourages children's curiosity and participation. Children in such environments are more likely to develop a love of learning and achieve better academic and developmental outcomes. Moreover, teacher motivation is linked to lower levels of job stress

and burnout (Zhundybayeva et al., 2020). When teachers feel supported, valued and motivated, they are better equipped to manage the challenges of their role. This flexibility contributes to sustaining high-quality teaching and reduces turnover rates, which is beneficial for maintaining consistency and stability in school-age care programs (Ivanova et al., 2020; Ivanova et al., 2019).

Effects on Teacher Job Satisfaction and Contentment

Teachers' job satisfaction is a critical factor affecting the overall quality and effectiveness of school-age care programs. The International SACERS Scale plays an important role in shaping teachers' job satisfaction through its detailed assessment of program quality (Cárcamo et al., 2014). High SACERS scores typically reflect a well-organized, supportive, and resource-rich environment in which teachers can perform their roles effectively. When teachers work in such environments, they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction. They feel valued and competent knowing that their efforts contribute to a high-quality educational program (Harms et al., 2005). Positive SACERS scores confirm the effectiveness of teachers' practices and their impact on children's development. This endorsement leads to professional satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment, which are key components of job satisfaction, indicating that the program provides adequate resources, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work environment, which contributes to overall job satisfaction (Ivanova et al., 2020). However, low SACERS scores can negatively affect job satisfaction by highlighting areas of deficiency and creating a sense of inadequacy or frustration among teachers. However, when approached constructively, these scores can also be a source of motivation for improvement and professional development. When teachers are supported to address identified areas for improvement, their job satisfaction can increase as they see the positive changes that result from their efforts (Fedorova, 2019). Offering professional development opportunities based on SACERS scores is also a strong strategy. Teachers can become better equipped by developing their practice to improve specific areas highlighted by the scores (Haleta et al., 2023). This not only improves program quality but also demonstrates a commitment to teacher professional development, which can significantly increase job satisfaction. Furthermore, using SACERS scores to set clear and achievable goals will help to increase job satisfaction. When teachers have specific goals to work on, they can keep track of their progress and see the impact of their efforts (Ivanova et al., 2020).

There is a strong relationship between teachers' job satisfaction, job contentment and teaching quality. Satisfied teachers are more likely to be enthusiastic, committed and effective in their work. They tend to create more positive and engaging learning environments, which directly benefit children's development and learning. They are more willing to invest time and energy in planning and delivering enriching activities, developing positive relationships with children and families, and continuously improving their practice (Harm et al., 2005). This level of dedication and commitment is reflected in higher quality educational experiences for children (Haleta et al., 2023). Teacher satisfaction also indicates lower levels of stress and burnout. When teachers feel supported, valued and fulfilled in their role, they are better prepared to cope with

the challenges and demands of their work. This resilience helps to maintain high standards of care and education even in the face of adversity (Ivanova et al., 2019). Furthermore, job satisfaction fosters a positive school culture and climate. When teachers are happy and satisfied, their positive attitudes and behavior influence their colleagues, creating a collaborative and supportive work environment (Ivanova et al., 2020). This positive culture not only improves the quality of teaching but also makes the program more attractive to potential staff, further strengthening the quality and stability of the program (Fedorova, 2019).

The international SACERS scale is of great importance in the field of school-age care programs by providing a standardized and comprehensive framework for assessing and improving program quality (Cárcamo et al., 2014). SACERS serves as a quality assurance tool that allows educators, administrators and policy makers to assess program quality objectively. By assessing key aspects such as space and furnishings, health and safety practices, program structure, and staff interactions, SACERS helps to maintain consistent standards across diverse school-age care settings (Ivanova et al., 2020). This consistency will ensure that all children have access to high-quality educational experiences that support their cognitive, social and emotional development. In addition, SACERS identifies program strengths and areas for improvement through detailed evaluations, enabling strategies for improvement to be implemented. This continuous quality improvement process fosters a culture of learning and innovation among educators, leading to continuous improvements in program quality over time (Harms et al., 2005).

Educators can use SACERS scores to identify professional development opportunities and improve their practice accordingly. This focus on professional development not only benefits individual educators but also improves overall program effectiveness and quality outcomes for children (Ivanova et al., 2019). SACERS scores play a critical role in accountability and transparency. By providing stakeholders, including parents, funding agencies and regulatory bodies, with evidence-based assessments of program quality, SACERS helps them trust their school-age care providers. This accountability encourages programs to maintain standards and prioritize children's well-being (Cárcamo et al., 2014). However, studies on teacher motivation and job satisfaction about schools' SACERS scores are scarce and limited in the literature. It is seen that studies on this subject focus more on student achievement, attitudes and motivation. By utilizing the results of this study, it is thought that all stakeholders, especially education and school administrators, can have information about the effects of the SACERS system on teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. In addition, it is believed that teachers' enthusiasm and determination to work will increase considerably with the reorganization of motivation and job satisfaction factors by taking advantage of the results. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the teaching motivation and job satisfaction of teachers working in schools with high and low SACERS scores comparatively. In relation to this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought in the study.

- What is the distribution of SACERS scores for general schools in Kazakhstan?

- Is there a significant difference between the teaching motivation of teachers working in general schools with high and low SACERS scores in Kazakhstan?
- Is there a significant difference between the job satisfaction of teachers working in general schools with high and low SACERS scores in Kazakhstan?

METHOD

This study had a causal comparison design, one of the relational research models. In causal comparisons, it is aimed to reveal the possible causes of dissimilar situations between individuals and groups without any intervention on the predicted results, conditions and individuals participating. In this research design, it is tried to determine which variables are the cause of the other variable. Consequently, an attempt is made to understand the causal variable influencing the variable associated with the results (Rokkan et al., 2018). With the causal comparison model, this study aimed to examine the intrinsic, extrinsic and general job satisfaction, intrinsic extrinsic and general teaching motivation of teachers working in schools with high and low SACER scores.

The study group of this research consisted of 242 participants working as teachers in general schools in Kazakhstan. It would require considerable time and effort to reach all teachers working in schools with SACERS scores in Kazakhstan and to administer a questionnaire. Since the study had limited time and budget, convenience sampling method was preferred. Thus, teachers working in schools with low and high SACERS scores in Kazakhstan and those who could be reached quickly were included in the study. Participation in the study was voluntary. Of the participating teachers, 160 were female and 82 were male. 114 of the participant teachers worked in schools with high SACERS scores and 128 of them worked in schools with low SACERS scores.

Data Collection Instruments

SACERS Scale

SACERS (School Environment Rating Scale) was used by Vladimora et al. (2021) by translating the form previously used in their study into Kazakh. SACERS was used in the study as an independent tool for assessing the educational environment. In this study, the researchers used a version of the scale adapted to the context of the Kazakhstan school system. The SACERS scales are a reasonable continuation of the international educational environment diagnostic line, in particular the ECERS-R scale, which is designed to examine the quality of education and environment in schools (Shiyan et al., 2016). The SACERS scale consists of seven scales:

Interior and Furnishings, Health and Safety, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, Staff Development, Supplementary Items for Special Needs. These scales contain forty-eight items in total and the scores obtained from these items are represented as indicators. Each scale is evaluated with a 7-point scoring system that reveals the level of development of the educational environment. At the end of the evaluation, SACERS scores for the school are classified as inadequate, minimal, good and excellent. The study of the educational environment

of schools in Kazakhstan was carried out using a random sample. Five schools with high SACERS scores and five schools with low SACERS scores were included in the study. Schools with a score of 3 and below on this scale were identified as low SACERS schools, while schools with a score above 5 were identified as high SACERS schools.

Teaching Motivation Scale

To measure teachers' motivation for teaching, a 24-item scale based on the motivation model developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) was used. The 5-point Likert scale has two dimensions: intrinsic motivators (first 9 items) and extrinsic motivators (last 15 items). The construct validity of the scale was analyzed by factor analysis. The factor loadings of the items in the intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation factors were between 0.42-0.76 and 0.40-0.73, respectively. The extrinsic motivational tools dimension of the scale includes social and organizational motivational tools such as benevolence, friendship, support from colleagues, wage diversity, adequacy of resources offered in the work environment, opportunities for promotion and job security. The intrinsic motivational tools dimension of the scale covers the motivational tools related to independence at work, interesting and challenging work, responsibility, variety, importance of work for the employee, providing feedback on performance, and one's abilities and skills. High scores obtained from the scale mean that motivation related to intrinsic and extrinsic means is high. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient was used to determine the scale's reliability. The analysis yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.76 for extrinsic motivation and 0.78 for intrinsic motivation. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire Kazakh form of the teacher motivation scale was 0.78.

Job Satisfaction Scale

In line with the study's general objective, the job satisfaction of the participating teachers was measured using the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale, which was created by Weis et al. (1967) and translated into Kazakh by the researchers. The scale consists of two dimensions: intrinsic job satisfaction (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 19, 20) and extrinsic job satisfaction (Questions 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18). The 5 Likert-type scale consists of a total of 20 questions. High scores on the scale indicate that job satisfaction perception is high, while low scores indicate that satisfaction is low. Numerous studies in the literature have chosen to measure work using the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale because of its ease of use, ability to measure job satisfaction both internally and externally, and ease of evaluation. Explanatory and confirmatory factor analyses were used to determine the validity of the Minnesota Job Scale. Cronbach's alpha was used to examine the reliability of the scale based on internal consistency. Before conducting a factor analysis, it is important to determine whether the data set is appropriate for factor analysis and whether the sample size is sufficient (Büyüktaşkapu Soydan, et al., 2022). These assumptions were checked by calculating the KMO value and performing Barttles Sphericity Test. As a result of the analysis, the KMO value was found as 0.89. The p value was found to be significant as a result of Bartlett's test. The factor analysis revealed that, similar to the original scale, there were 12 items in the first factor and 8 items in the second factor. The

first factor refers to intrinsic job-related resources and the second factor refers to extrinsic job-related resources. The factor loadings of the items in the first and second factors ranged from 0.54 to 0.78. These factors had respective eigenvalues of 4.95 (26.23%) and 3.36 (17.21%), as well as percentages of variance explained. The reliability coefficients calculated for intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and the overall scale were 0.84, 0.82 and 0.83, respectively.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of the study, descriptive analysis techniques such as minimum and maximum value, mean, standard deviation and parametric statistics were used to determine the teaching motivation and job satisfaction levels of teachers working in schools with high and low SCARES scores. Before analyzing the data, it was tested whether the assumptions required for parametric statistics were met. To achieve this, it was determined whether the data set contained any extreme values that would disrupt normal distribution. After calculating the standardized Z values, it was determined if these values fell within the ±2 range. Based on the obtained results, it was determined that the data set contained 8 outliers that did not fall within the range of ±2. The data belonging to these values were removed from the data set and not included in the analysis. The next step was to determine if the data demonstrated an acceptable fit. For this purpose, skewness and kurtosis values of the scores obtained from the scale were calculated and analyzed. For the normality assumption to be met, it is sufficient for the skewness and kurtosis values to take values in the range of ±1 (George & Mallery, 2010). The calculated skewness values were between -0.65 and 0.11 and kurtosis values were between -0.42 and 0.09. The results indicated an acceptable fit and it was decided to use parametric statistics to analyze the data.

FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the distribution of SACERS scale subscale scores of the schools in Kazakhstan.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of SACERS Scale for the schools in the study

SACERS Subscales	Schools with High SACRS Scores Mean Values	Schools with Low SACRS Score Mean Values
Space and Furnishings	5.52	3.08
Health and Safety	5.82	3.26
Activities	6.16	2.98
Interactions	6.32	3.05
Program Structure	6.23	3.84
Staff Development	6.35	2.36
Special Needs Supplementary Items	5.21	2.38
SACERS Mean	6.04	2.99

According to the findings, it is seen that schools with high SACERS scores have a very high and excellent distribution of 'Staff Development', 'Program Structure', 'Interactions' and 'Activities' scores above the mean value of 6.00. The results show that schools with high SACERS scores have very high and excellent distributions of scores above the mean of 6.00 for 'Staff

Development', 'Program Structure', 'Interactions' and 'Activities'. Especially in the 'Special Needs Supplementary Items' dimension, the mean score of these schools (2.38) is quite low and inadequate.

Table 2.

Comparison of teaching motivation of teachers working in schools with high and low SACERS scores

Teaching Motivation Scale	Schools Where Teachers Work	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	-t-	p
Intrinsic Teaching Motivation	Schools with High SACERS Scores	114	3.41	0.50	1.987	0.049
	Schools with Low SACERS Scores	128	3.29	0.46		
Extrinsic Motivation	Schools with High SACERS Scores	114	3.57	0.54	8.983	P<0.001
	Schools with Low SACERS Scores	128	3.05	0.34		
General Teaching Motivation	Schools with High SACERS Scores	114	3.49	0.45	6.562	P<0.001
	Schools with Low SACERS Scores	128	3.17	0.29		

The data showed that there was a significant difference ($p<0.05$) in the mean scores of instructors' intrinsic, extrinsic, and general teaching motivation based on the SACERS levels of the schools. Teachers in schools with high SACERS scores demonstrated higher levels of teaching motivation than their counterparts in schools with low SACERS scores, as indicated by the group mean scores. Especially in terms of extrinsic motivation, there is a very high level of difference in teaching motivation between the groups.

Table 3.

Comparison of job satisfaction of teachers working in schools with high and low SACERS scores

Job Satisfaction Scale	Schools Where Teachers Work	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	-t-	P
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	Schools with High SACERS Scores	114	3.54	0.72	0.674	0.501
	Schools with Low SACERS Scores	128	3.47	0.80		
Extrinsic Job Satisfaction	Schools with High SACERS Scores	114	3.62	0.81	3.349	0.001
	Schools with Low SACERS Scores	128	3.27	0.83		
Total Job satisfaction	Schools with High SACERS Scores	114	3.58	0.56	2.716	0.007
	Schools with Low SACERS Scores	128	3.37	0.63		

The table shows that the mean internal job satisfaction scores of the teachers did not differ significantly based on the SACERS levels of the schools ($p>0.05$). However, a significant difference was found in the mean scores of extrinsic and total job satisfactions based on the SACERS levels of the schools. According to the mean scores of the groups, teachers working in schools with high SACERS scores had higher levels of external and total job satisfaction compared to their colleagues in schools with low SACERS scores.

DISCUSSION

This study comparatively examined teacher motivation and job satisfaction in schools in Kazakhstan with regard to the SACERS scale. The study's first finding states that schools with high SACERS ratings had a high level of competence in the areas of "Staff Development', 'Program Structure', 'Interactions' and 'Activities'. Indeed, in the studies conducted by Haleta et al. (2023), Ivanova et al. (2019) and Parczewska (2020), schools with high SACERS scores exhibit high levels of competencies in all dimensions of the scale. According to Shishova and Akhatova (2022), schools and programs that prioritize SACERS use data from this assessment process to make informed decisions about staff training, resource allocation, and program adjustments. This approach creates a continuous cycle of assessment and improvement in schools, leading to continuous improvements in the quality of education and high competencies. Thus, using SACERS scores strategically contributes to the holistic development of schools, the teaching process, the infrastructure and all elements of the learning-teaching process.

Another finding of the study is related to the differences in teachers' teaching motivation based on the SACERS levels of the schools. Teachers working in schools with high SACERS scores have high levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic teaching motivation. Indeed, the studies of Guskey (2002), Hoy and Miskel (2008), Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), Mola and Kelkay (2020), Nhlumayo (2024), Schellenbach-Zell and Gräsel (2010) support this finding. According to Hoy and Miskel (2008), schools with adequate and modern infrastructure provide teachers with easy access to course materials and allow them to use technology more effectively. This can help teachers to be more motivated. Research shows that teachers who teach in well-equipped classrooms have higher levels of motivation to teach. On the other hand, as Guskey (2002) points out, professional development opportunities offered by schools help teachers increase their knowledge and skills. Such opportunities increase teachers' motivation to improve themselves continuously and become more successful in their profession. The study found that teachers working in schools with high SACERS scores had relatively high levels of extrinsic teaching motivation. According to Nyakundi (2012), school culture, teaching quality, and the quality of influence in schools come to the fore as important factors for teachers with high extrinsic motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (2012), motivation arising from extrinsic factors often does not contribute to intrinsic motivation in individuals. Many employees with extrinsic motivation achieve the expected outcomes and performance in positive organizational environments and this indirectly increases their intrinsic motivation. Therefore, in extrinsic motivation, the expectations, needs and demands of the environmental factors in the school and of people and things outside the individuals themselves become more apparent.

The last finding of the research is about teachers' job satisfaction based on the SACERS scores of the schools. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' intrinsic job satisfaction based on the SACERS scores of the schools. However, differences were found in teachers' external and total job satisfaction scores in terms of the SACERS characteristics of schools. It was found that teachers working in schools with high

SACERS had high levels of external and overall job satisfaction. According to Moolenaar et al. (2010), the nature and quality of schools significantly affect teachers' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the level of satisfaction and contentment that teachers feel while doing their jobs. Well-equipped schools, appropriate teaching materials and technological facilities enable teachers to conduct their lessons more effectively. Thus, teachers find their jobs more satisfying (Iwu et al., 2018; Sharma & Jyoti, 2006; Weiqi, 2007). The availability of modern and high-quality educational environments and instructional resources facilitates teachers' lesson planning and delivery, which in turn increases job satisfaction. The school's contribution to teachers' professional development provides them with the opportunity to improve themselves continuously. Teachers who participate in professional development programs report higher job satisfaction (Crisci et al., 2019; Guskey, 2002). Guskey (2002) emphasizes that professional development opportunities increase teachers' job satisfaction. The fact that schools with high SACERS scores have better infrastructures and environments in terms of teaching processes, and the continuous development and improvement efforts in these schools might have positively affected teachers' job satisfaction. In addition, good working conditions directly affect teachers' job satisfaction. While excessive workload, unplanned and inadequate working conditions negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction, good working conditions increase this satisfaction. A study by Klassen and Chiu (2010) indicates that teachers' job satisfaction varies significantly depending on their working conditions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study found that the SACERS scores of general schools in Kazakhstan provide important indicators of their multidimensional quality. The results of the research show that teachers working in schools with high SACERS scores, in a sense, in high quality schools, had high teaching motivation and job satisfaction levels. The program, functioning, teaching environments, infrastructure, equipment and technological adequacy, quality and competence of schools are important factors in teacher motivation and job satisfaction.

Based on the results of the study, teachers' motivation and job satisfaction decrease due to the low quality of the multifaceted functioning of schools and the inadequacy of the environments, and limited educational materials and resources, which makes the working conditions of teachers more difficult. Therefore, it is recommended that a holistic approach based on SACERS should be taken into consideration when developing strategies and policies to improve teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. The following suggestions could be made for researchers who will study on the international SACERS Scale;

- *Longitudinal Studies*: Longitudinal studies can be conducted to explore the long-term effects of high-quality school-age learning environments, as measured by SACERS, on children's academic achievement, social-emotional development and overall well-being.
- *Cultural Adaptation*: Research can include cultural adaptation of SACERS to ensure its relevance and applicability in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.

- *Impact on Staff*: The impact of SACERS scores on other staff working in school-age education programs can be investigated.
- *Parent Perspectives*: Parents' perceptions of SACERS scores and their influence on decision-making processes related to enrollment in school-age education programs can be explored.
- *Effectiveness of SACERS Implementation Models*: Different SACERS implementation models (e.g., self-assessment and external evaluation) can be compared to identify best practices to maximize the effectiveness of the scale in improving program quality and outcomes.

The findings of this study are limited to the self-reports of teachers working in general schools with SACERS scores in Kazakhstan. Teacher motivation and job satisfaction, its sources and related variables can be investigated in a multidimensional way with the views of other stakeholders of education such as school administrators, students and parents.

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