Research Article

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Exploring Teacher Job Satisfaction in Regular Basic Education: The Case of Peru

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Abstract

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the educational journey of children and adolescents. This article endeavours to examine whether teacher satisfaction in Peru has seen consistent improvement over time, influenced by various factors such as salary increments, enhancements in infrastructure and working conditions, as well as changes in teaching and learning methodologies. This inquiry stems from the significant increase in government budget allocation to the education sector since 2000, with a notable 546.2% rise in student expenditure at the secondary level. We proposed as research question: "How has job satisfaction been for regular basic education teachers in Peru?" To address this, a qualitative, descriptive, non-experimental approach was adopted, drawing upon data from the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) and the Ministry of Education (MINEDU). We found that despite the increase in factors such as salary, budgetary allocation, and job stability within the public sector, teacher satisfaction has not seen the desired improvement. On the contrary, teachers express a sense of unrecognized contributions by their educational institutions.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction; basic education; teachers; Peru; education sector*

1. Introduction

The educational system is a crucial pillar for a country's development, and it is in this sector where nations should allocate the majority of their budget for improvement, particularly towards their teaching staff. Parrales & Puero (2021) mention that teaching involves intellectual, technical, and technological effort, aimed at constant training and updating to achieve the objective of educating and shaping society. Consequently, employee satisfaction is crucial as it enhances performance when dealing with issues in their work areas (Quispe Álvarez, 2023). Peruvian educators exhibit low satisfaction due to economic factors, educational infrastructure, materials, and lack of training

(Juarez Díaz, 2022), all of which are key indicators for knowledge transmission to students. According to Valero Ancco et al. (2022), high levels of satisfaction among teachers are reflected in their commitment to personal development, stemming from recognition. Teachers provided with resources, support, training, and higher compensation by the institution demonstrate high levels of job satisfaction and commitment to their educational institution (Treviño-Reyes & López-Pérez, 2022). Job satisfaction is directly and significantly related to organizational commitment if the institution provides adequate working conditions and salaries (Araoz & Ramos, 2021). In contrast, Avendaño Castro et al. (2021) note that teachers' job satisfaction was affected by the shift from in-person to virtual work, as many struggled with digital technologies, resulting in increased workloads. As part of its measures, the Ministry of Education of Peru (2021) established axes and measures in the emergency education plan, focused on professional development for teachers, aiming to enhance teacher training (development of professional competencies), promote the welfare system, and recognize teachers (use of technologies for teaching) to develop teachers for appointment to the public teaching career. This panorama has been repetitive throughout Latin America, where governments adopted innovative changes to continue teaching processes during the health crisis caused by COVID-19 (Suyo-Vega et al., 2022).

Torres Silva & Espino Flores (2021) mention that the organizational climate of teachers worldwide is affected by low salary remuneration by 57% and minimal opportunities for professional development by 75%. According to research conducted by the Ministry of Education of Peru (2017), in 2015 about 19% of teachers showed a negative attitude towards their remuneration and 31% towards interpersonal relationships with colleagues. It is essential to acknowledge that teachers are the main actors in education and their importance in the educational process. In some cases, dissatisfaction with collaboration and participation in the school stage is observed; thus, satisfaction in their professional field is essential (Sánchez Cruz et al., 2023).

Given this, we pose the following research question: How has job satisfaction been for regular basic education teachers in Peru? According to Quispe Flores & Paucar Sullca (2020), job satisfaction has a significant relationship with organizational commitment; satisfied teachers are 3.39 times more likely to have commitment to their institution, while in other regions of Peru, teachers lack continuity commitment due to low remuneration compared to the cost of living. Data from Peru indicates that the education sector leads in budget allocation, surpassing other sectors such as transportation and agriculture (Ruelas et al., 2022). Specifically, the budget increase per student in secondary education rose from S/. 751 in 2000 to S/. 4853 in 2022 (see Table 1). Finally, according to Reyes (2017), teachers in state schools are dissatisfied with their work life (despite the perceived salary increase.

2. Materials and Methods

The research article employs a qualitative approach, as stated by Calle Mollo (2023), with the purpose of presenting reality through a set of environmental components and subjects' perceptions; moreover, the results cannot be generalized to other contexts. Similarly, Rojas-Gutiérrez (2022) describes this research approach as opting for a holistic view of the environment to understand the importance of real events. Since there is no manipulation of the study variable, it is non-experimental in design, as it observes the situation of teachers' job satisfaction as it naturally occurs in their context and can be analyzed (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza Torres, 2018). Finally, it is descriptive in nature, as it explains the characteristics of an existing reality, such as the case of basic education regular (EBR) teachers in Peru, noting that despite the government's increase in the education budget, discontent among them persists.

The data regarding government spending directed to the education sector and expenditure per student in EBR according to educational level were obtained from the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru - [https://m.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/expenditure-of-education-sector/]. Additionally, data on the number of schools by level and mode and the quantity

of teachers in the education sector by level and mode were obtained from the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru - [https://m.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/education/]. Finally, data on the remuneration of EBR teachers in Peru were obtained from the Ministry of Education of Peru - [http://www.minedu.gob.pe/reforma-magisterial/docentes-nombrados.php]. In the results, trend graphs were used to depict the expenses incurred by the Peruvian state in the education sector, along with statistical tables to describe the number of schools established and teachers hired.

3. Results

3.1 Regular Basic Education (EBR) as a Foundation for Knowledge Formation

According to the definition of Basic Education, it is aimed at the comprehensive formation of citizens to achieve their personal and social identity, individual development in their work and economic activities through the development of their competencies, skills, attitudes, and values . Within this framework, we have Regular Basic Education (EBR), which targets children and adolescents, comprising three levels: early childhood, primary, and secondary (SINEACE, 2022). Moreover, in Peru, there exist both public and private education systems. It is observed that in state secondary education, there is greater inequality for students from higher-income backgrounds, and this inequality decreases as economic resources diminish. Conversely, in private educational institutions, the inequality is more pronounced for families with fewer resources (Carrillo & Murillo, 2023). In Peru, students from low-income backgrounds attend public education. In response to this, SINEACE (2022) proposes the goals to be achieved in its strategic plan by 2036: citizenship seeking coexistence in a free and fair manner under the rule of law; inclusion and equity; rejecting all forms of discrimination and ensuring equality in learning and development; productivity, prosperity, research, and sustainability; and finally, emotional well-being.

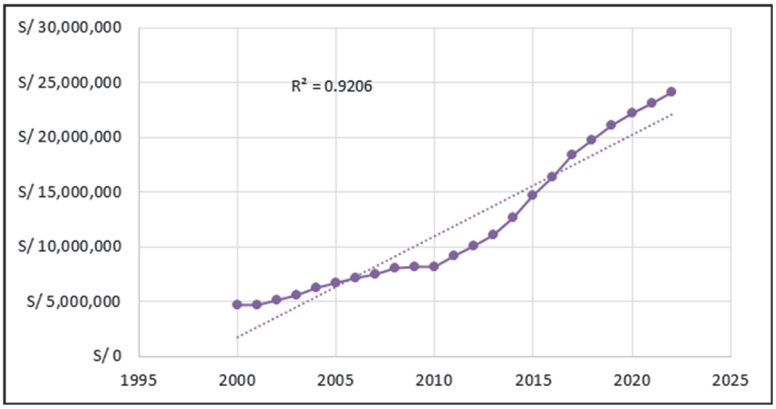

Figure 1: Government Central Expenditure Allocated to the Education Sector, 2000 – 2022 (Thousands of Soles).
Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática. https://m.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/expenditure-of-education-sector/

The Peruvian educational system has exhibited shortcomings in the social-political structure, notably cultural segmentation in education, low educational quality, and limited student engagement (Ruíz Rafael et al., 2022). Figure 1 illustrates a significant upward trend in government expenditure in the education sector (R^2 = 0.9206), rising from S/ 4,663,781 thousand soles in 2000 to S/ 24,130,000

thousand soles (PEN) in 2022 as show in Table 1.

Table 1: Government Central Expenditure Allocated to the Education Sector, 2000 - 2022 (Thousands of Soles)

Year	Expenditure (PEN S/.)
2000	S/ 4,663,781
2001	S/ 4,667,018
2002	S/ 5,174,792
2003	S/ 5,566,921
2004	S/ 6,212,893
2005	S/ 6,671,259
2006	S/ 7,155,354
2007	S/ 7,446,000
2008	S/ 8,042,000
2009	S/ 8,191,000
2010	S/ 8,182,000
2011	S/ 9,199,000
2012	S/ 10,021,000
2013	S/ 11,124,000
2014	S/ 12,674,000
2015	S/ 14,665,000
2016	S/ 16,333,000
2017	S/ 18,349,000
2018	S/ 19,741,000
2019	S/ 21,089,000
2020	S/ 22,200,000
2021	S/ 23,082,000
2022	S/ 24,130,000

However, despite this, Osorio Rodríguez (2022) highlights issues with infrastructure and inadequate educational services in schools, especially in rural social strata, posing a long-term challenge. This budget increase doesn't translate into tangible improvements in Peru's public schools, where Canaza-Choque (2022) advocates for the development of policies, plans, and programs to repair and reinforce state schools due to insufficient resources for proper functioning.

In Table 2, there is a noticeable increase in per-student expenditure in Regular Basic Education (EBR) from 2000 to 2021, with growth rates of 539%, 535.4%, and 546.2% in early childhood, primary, and secondary levels respectively. However, this hasn't addressed the disparities in infrastructure, as indicated by Reategui Amat y Leon (2022). In 2018, only 18.8% of educational centers were in good condition, with an 8% gap between urban and rural schools in favor of urban areas. By 2020, 79.4% of educational centers had electricity, and 34.8% had access to potable water, revealing a higher incidence of infrastructure challenges in rural areas.

Table 2: Public Expenditure per Student in Regular Basic Education, by Educational Level 2000 - 2021 (Nuevos soles PEN).

	Nivel educativo		
Año	Early childhood education	Primary education	Secondary education
2000	S/ 533.00	S/ 560.00	S/ 751.00
2001	S/ 550.00	S/ 550.00	S/ 762.00
2002	S/ 649.00	S/ 600.00	S/ 851.00
2003	S/ 694.00	S/ 661.00	S/ 923.00

Año	Nivel educativo		
	Early childhood education	Primary education	Secondary education
2004	S/ 658.00	S/ 747.00	S/ 1,036.00
2005	S/ 712.00	S/ 833.00	S/ 1,195.00
2006	S/ 841.00	S/ 934.00	S/ 1,249.00
2007	S/ 900.00	S/ 1,051.00	S/ 1,287.00
2008	S/ 1,072.00	S/ 1,371.00	S/ 1,490.00
2009	S/ 1,264.00	S/ 1,495.00	S/ 1,712.00
2010	S/ 1,358.00	S/ 1,580.00	S/ 1,862.00
2011	S/ 1,525.00	S/ 1,688.00	S/ 1,885.00
2012	S/ 1,854.00	S/ 1,923.00	S/ 2,326.00
2013	S/ 2,123.00	S/ 2,301.00	S/ 2,427.00
2014	S/ 2,520.00	S/ 2,606.00	S/ 3,048.00
2015	S/ 2,897.00	S/ 2,819.00	S/ 3,673.00
2016	S/ 2,717.00	S/ 2,707.00	S/ 3,868.00
2017	S/ 3,101.00	S/ 3,011.00	S/ 4,243.00
2018	S/ 3,064.00	S/ 3,027.00	S/ 4,284.00
2019	S/ 3,260.00	S/ 3,150.00	S/ 4,480.00
2020	S/ 3,090.00	S/ 3,065.00	S/ 4,431.00
2021	S/ 3,406.00	S/ 3,558.00	S/ 4,853.00

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática. https://m.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/expenditure-of-education-sector/

Furthermore, since 2008, there has been a 20.4% increase in the total number of educational centres (from 87,992 schools in 2008 to 105,940 in 2022), as shown in Table 3. However, there is a pressing need to invest in school infrastructure due to the lack of technological facilities, with approximately 75% of these institutions requiring demolition (Quimper Apaza et al., 2023). Infrastructure entails the provision of potable water, sewage systems, adequate restrooms, infirmaries, pedagogical services, sports fields, auditoriums, gyms, computer labs, administrative offices, meeting rooms, libraries, music and art rooms, telephones, electricity supply, medical offices, and psych pedagogical services (Sánchez Alcalde, 2020).

Table 3: Educational Centers, by Level and Modality, 2008 - 2022.

Year	Regular Basic Education Level (Educational Centers)			Total
	Early childhood	Primary education	Secondary education	
2008	38472	36567	12953	87992
2009	39717	36566	12155	88438
2010	40490	36949	12448	89887
2011	41961	37198	12780	91939
2012	42173	35917	12527	90617
2013	48444	37753	13414	99611
2014	49637	37888	13704	101229
2015	52120	38068	13972	104160
2016	53105	38221	14271	105597
2017	53687	38387	14502	106576
2018	53671	38532	14683	106886
2019	53706	38605	14831	107142
2020	53278	38411	14942	106631
2021	53 101	38 534	15 093	106 728
2022	52 648	38 236	15 056	105 940

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática. https://m.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/education/

3.2 Regular Basic Education (EBR) as a Foundation for Knowledge Formation

Teacher satisfaction is crucial in the transmission of knowledge to their students and fosters a positive work environment. According to Quispe-Llactahuaman et al. (2023), intellectual stimulation enhances teacher performance and institutional climate. Therefore, school directors should consistently organize training sessions for their teachers. Bruns & Luque (2014) identify three categories of incentives that motivate teachers: professional rewards, accountability pressure (job stability and feedback from managers), and financial incentives.

According to the national survey of public-school teachers in Basic Regular Education (EBR) in Peru, the main incentives for teachers are postgraduate scholarships and training, accounting for 57.2%, followed by monetary bonuses at 27.5%, and finally, commendation resolutions at 14.8% (Ministry of Education of Peru, 2022). Similarly, Valdivia Ramírez et al. (2023) argue that teacher recognition and an improvement in the quality of work life generate greater motivation than salary increases, leading to increased commitment to the educational organization. The Peruvian government seeks to motivate its teachers through remuneration increases, but this is often not perceived by them, leading to feelings of deception. Conversely, Erazo Muñoz & Riaño-Casallas (2021) found that teachers are content with the nature of their work and personal fulfillment regardless of age and gender. However, they express dissatisfaction with salary, social security for teachers, and the declining prestige of the profession.

In the public sector, teachers often hold more than two jobs to increase their income and improve their quality of life. Garzón-Godoy & Pineda (2022) confirm this trend, stating that 25% of teachers hold a second job, which increases healthcare, time, and transportation costs, and affects pedagogical dedication and educational innovation.

Due to the increase in the student population and the categorization of teachers, the number of educators has been on the rise from 2008 to 2022, as shown in Table 4. It has increased by 79.9% in early childhood education, 13.4% in primary education, and 28.0% in secondary education. However, the shift to virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in high levels of emotional exhaustion (Celio Pillaca, 2021; Suyo-Vega et al., 2022). Additionally, the number of teachers decreased by 6,588 in 2020 compared to 2019.

Table 4: Number of Teachers in the Education System, by Level and Modality, 2008 - 2022.

Year	Regular Basic Education Level (Educational Centers)			Total
	Early childhood	Primary education	Secondary education	
2008	54851	193384	165224	413459
2009	60543	196775	170179	427497
2010	63918	200572	174375	438865
2011	65155	200288	174849	440292
2012	67285	191537	170219	429041
2013	78541	200983	179983	459507
2014	91684	211292	190308	493284
2015	86678	198907	185050	470635
2016	93938	204444	195384	493766
2017	94946	207100	198286	500332
2018	97935	210140	202027	510102
2019	99539	215293	203628	518460
2020	93362	213618	204892	511872
2021	93 644	215 308	207 789	516741
2022	98 697	219 308	211 530	529535

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática. https://m.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/education/

According to Cuenca & Urrutia (2020), private educational institutions (IEs) experience greater job instability compared to public schools. In public IEs, early childhood education teachers exhibit higher job stability, while in private IEs, secondary education teachers face the most instability. Job stability, school policies, and salary are considered extrinsic motivators for teachers and have a moderate relationship with their performance (Loayza Flores et al., 2022). In an effort to enhance the motivation and satisfaction of Peruvian teachers, the teacher scale is implemented to increase salaries based on their professional development, as depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: Compensation for appointed teachers in Peru 2023, converted to US dollars.

Teacher Scale	30-hour workweek regime	40-hour workweek regime
Eighth	USD 1605	USD 2139
Seventh	USD 1452	USD 1936
Sixth	USD 1337	USD 1783
Fifth	USD 1146	USD 1528
Fourth	USD 993	USD 1324
Third	USD 917	USD 1223
Second	USD 840	USD 1121
First	USD 764	USD 1019

Source: Ministry of Education of Peru. http://www.minedu.gob.pe/reforma-magisterial/docentes-nombrados.php

In Peru, in the year 2012, the Public Teacher Career was established through Law 29944 (Teacher Reform Law), aiming to guarantee educational quality and provide incentives to its teachers. This reform emphasizes knowledge and abilities over seniority for promotions (Bruns & Luque, 2014). For the year 2023, the remuneration of appointed teachers is observed in Table 5, and depending on their work schedule, they can earn up to 2139 USD. It is important to note that the basic basket for 4 people in Peru is S/ 1376.00 (370 USD), according to Cuenca & Urrutia (2020). While the salaries received may seem sufficient (First scale, 30 hours, 764 USD), this does not necessarily translate into an improvement in the quality of life.

4. Discussion

According to Barbón Pérez et al. (2020), the variables influencing the improvement of the education system include adequate investment in education, teacher salaries, and expenditure on educational materials. In Peru, to meet these needs, government spending on the Peruvian education system has increased by 417.4% from 2000 to 2022 (see Table 1). However, this increase has not been positively perceived due to deficiencies in expenditure management, leading to dissatisfaction and demotivation among teachers and students.

Erazo Muñoz & Riaño-Casallas (2021) found that job happiness resulting from teacher satisfaction does not significantly differ based on work experience, academic background (undergraduate or graduate), or contract type for a school in Maizales (Colombia), indicating progress in educational management. Conversely, in Peru, teachers express discontent with job instability, especially in the private sector, while those with higher academic degrees and longer tenure exhibit greater satisfaction in the public sector. Despite recent salary increases up to 2139 USD, teachers do not feel adequately recognized by their educational institutions. Rivero & Ferrando (2022) note a gap between recognition in public and private schools, with private sector teachers receiving greater acknowledgment, despite experiencing lower job stability. In Peru, investment per student reaches S/. 3406, S/. 3558, and S/. 4853 (PEN) in early childhood, primary, and secondary levels in 2021 (see Table 2) to meet educational requirements. However, Toribio Roca et al. (2021)

highlight the significant relationship between community management, represented by school administration within a community through the institutional educational project, and teacher satisfaction (r = 0.687). Nonetheless, as observed in Figure 1, the per-student investment has increased since 2000 without proportionally reflecting an improvement in teaching and learning quality.

5. Conclusion

Public educational institutions in Peru demonstrate greater deficiencies in educational quality and infrastructure, despite the increased government budget allocated to the education sector from 2000 to 2022, representing a 417.39% increase (see Table 1). Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of teachers, providing more employment opportunities, and with the new teacher scale, there is a rise in teacher salaries. However, this hasn't resulted in increased motivation or satisfaction among teachers. Other factors, such as recognition from state institutions or valuing teaching in basic education, are crucial indicators. Furthermore, teachers perceive recognition from the private education sector, despite experiencing greater job instability compared to the public sector.

6. Recommendations

In order to ensure that government funding towards the education sector is effectively utilized to address deficiencies in educational quality, it is necessary to implement measures that truly target areas in most need. Some options may involve refining budget management practices.

To improve the quality of education provided in public schools, we recommend focusing on enhancing teacher training, developing curricula, and updating infrastructure.

Additionally, we recommend supporting citizen-led initiatives aimed at improving school performance and fostering connections between the education sector and industry.

Lastly, we suggest regularly evaluating educational outcomes, tracking budget allocations and expenditures, and gathering feedback from educators, students, and other stakeholders to inform future decision-making.

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