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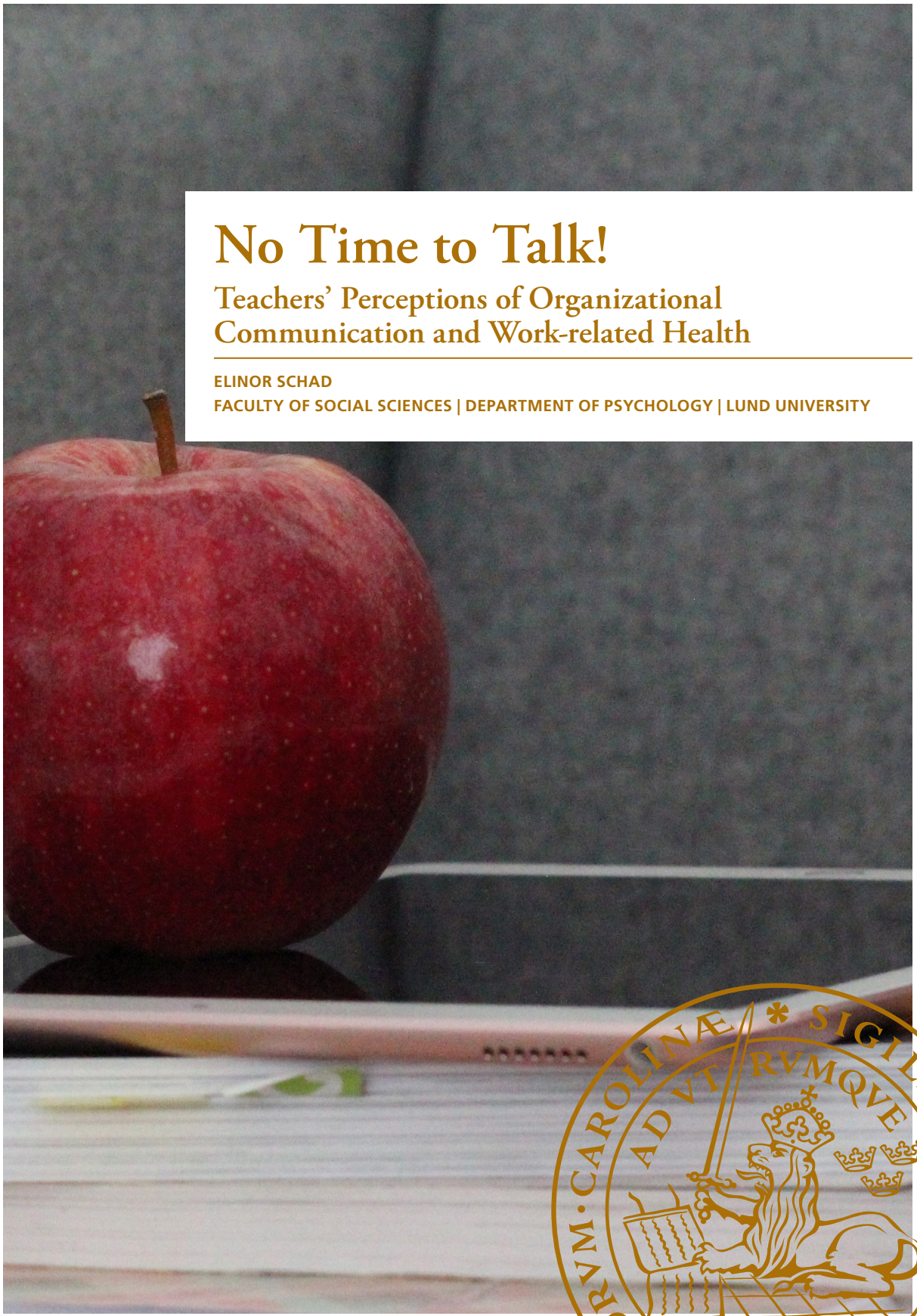

No Time to Talk!

Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Communication and Work-related Health

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No Time to Talk! Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Communication and Work-related Health

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I dedicate this dissertation to the teachers who changed my life

Content

Abstract 1
List of papers 3
Introduction 5
Aims of the present dissertation 5
The teaching landscape in Sweden 6
Teacher work-related health and well-being 6
Policy context 7
Organizational aspects of teaching 8
Theoretical framework 9
Communication and organizational communication 9
Facets of organizational communication 11
Work environment and work-related health 15
The Job Demands-Resources model 16
Personal outcomes 19
Methodology and methods 23
Study context 23
Study I 24
Study design and data collection 24
Research participants 25
Sampling methods used 25
Procedure 26
Data analysis 26
Study II 27
Study design and data collection 27
Survey methodology 27
Research participants 28
Central measures 28
Statistical analysis 33
Ethics approval 34
Summary of papers I-III 35
Paper I – Lacking structures of communication for teachers in Sweden, a focus group study 35
Aims 35
Methods 35
Results 36
Conclusions 38
Paper II - No time to talk! Teachers' perceptions of organizational communication: Context and climate 39

Aims 39
Methods 39
Results 40
Conclusions 41
Paper III - A comprehensive evaluation of well-being and working conditions for teachers in Sweden 42
Aims 42
Methods 42
Results 44
Conclusions 45
Discussion 47
Principal findings 47
Interpretation of the findings 48
The absence of a school culture of communication 48
Motivated and well-functioning teachers 50
Teacher work-related health and well-being 51
Practical implications of the findings 52
Communication, a strategic tool for school leadership 52
Insufficient recovery and boundless work 53
Critical considerations from an ethical perspective 54
Study I 55
Study II 56
Methodological perspectives 56
Working with the focus groups 56
Working with the survey 57
Working with municipalities and schools 58
Future development needs and suggested studies 59
Implementation research 59
Conclusions 61
Abbreviations 63
Summary in Swedish/ Svensk sammanfattning 65
Bakgrund 65
Syfte och vetenskapliga frågeställningar 66
Metod och resultat 67
Slutsatser 68
References 69
Appendix A-D

Abstract

During recent years, schoolteachers in Sweden have experienced many reforms and societal changes, resulting in altered conditions for work. Subsequently, many teachers have reported an increased workload and reduced well-being. In addition, previous research has identified a need for more contextually anchored measures of demands and resources pertaining to teachers' work situation.

This dissertation, based on two studies generating three papers, aims to investigate primary and lower secondary school teachers' perceptions of organizational communication and work-related health. A need for more contextually anchored research on teachers' worklife, in relation to organizational communication and in combination with other salient demands and resources is the theoretical and empirical starting point for the present research.

Paper I is based on results from an explorative study using focus group methodology. In this study, workplace communication practices among schoolteachers were examined. A total of 44 participants (11 men, 33 women), were divided into five groups, each meeting twice. The qualitative study design was supplemented with two questionnaires, identifying demographic variables and group climate. Several problem-areas regarding especially structure and time aspects of organizational communication were found. One noteworthy observation was the many idiosyncratic ways teachers handled daily challenges.

In order to counter this, there is among other things an apparent need for support structures for organizational communication, such as communication platforms and meeting structures. The observed problems with deficient and weak communication may in the long-run negatively influence teachers' work sustainability. These results speak directly to the relevance of organizational communication processes as they occur between teachers today.

Paper II and III are based on results (N = 401) from a cross-sectional survey administered to all primary and lower secondary school teachers in two municipalities in southern Sweden. Central to the study was the use of contextually anchored organizational communication measures, partially developed from study I.

Paper II reports on teachers' perception of time for communication with colleagues, structures for communicative interactions in the school, the workplace communication climate, and collegial communication. Furthermore, this paper explores to what extent organizational communication in schools is associated with salient work environment indicators (quantitative demands, physical work environment, and role clarity), and to what extent organizational communication predicts job satisfaction above and beyond the work environment indicators.

Utilizing the Job Demands-Resources model as a framework, it was found that, along with the work environment related constructs, teachers' perceptions of organizational communication act as predictors for job satisfaction (in total, 49.2% of the variance in job satisfaction is explained). Time for communication and collegial communication were the relatively stronger predictors for job satisfaction.

Paper III reports on teacher work-related health and working conditions. In addition, the associations and proportional contributions of salient work-related constructs for health-related outcomes were examined. The results show that 40.2% of the teachers are at risk for depression. A worrying 43.8% of the teachers in this study qualify as leading a sedentary life-style, and 33.7% reported insufficient recovery from work. The results further indicate that separation between work and spare time as well as recovery from work partially mediate the association between job satisfaction and the outcome variables, well-being and health complaints as explored in two separate models. These results confirm recent national research pointing to the teaching profession as a vulnerable occupational group.

The results from the present dissertation add to previous findings on teachers' work situation, using contextually anchored demands and resources. The results further suggest that the Job Demands-Resources model can be extended by including organizational communication as one important aspect of organizationally centered constructs. Of practical relevance are results indicative of problems with teachers finding time to interact with colleagues, the possibility to recover from work, and insufficient separation between work and spare time.

The studies have not received any external funding.

List of papers

The present dissertation is based on the following three papers, referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

I. Schad, E. (submitted). Lacking structures of communication for teachers in Sweden, a focus group study

II. Schad, E. (2017). No time to talk! Teachers' perceptions of organizational communication: Context and climate. *Journal of Educational Management & Administration.* p. 1-22. DOI: 10.1177/1741143217739358

III. Schad, E., & Johnsson, P. (submitted). A comprehensive evaluation of well-being and working conditions for teachers in Sweden.

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Introduction

As an applied area of psychology, work and organizational psychology finds itself dealing with the human being in relation to his or her work and the organization in which this work takes place. International research points to the teaching profession as one of the most stressful occupations. In Sweden, recent reports have documented that teachers belong to a profession with difficult circumstances for work. In light of today's circumstances for teaching, the present dissertation examines aspects of teaching that might be supportive or hindering for teachers' work situation.

Aims of the present dissertation

The overall aim of the present dissertation was to investigate teachers' perceptions of organizational communication and work-related health. The specific aims of the research were, as listed below.

Study I: To explore primary and lower secondary school teachers' perceptions of organizational communication as it occurs between themselves during their day-to-day activities.

Study II: To assess aspects of organizational communication and work-related health as reported by primary and lower secondary school teachers. In detail the objectives were:

a) To assess teachers' perceptions of organizational communication.

b) To examine to what extent organizational communication, as reported by the participants, is associated with salient work environment indicators.

c) To examine to what extent these aspects of organizational communication predicts job satisfaction beyond salient work environment indicators.

d) To assess teachers' perceptions of work-related health and working conditions.

e) To examine the relationship between several key characteristics in teacher work environment and well-being.

f) To examine the importance of separation between work and spare time and recovery from work, for well-being.

The teaching landscape in Sweden

In Sweden, teachers report unfavorable working conditions and a high prevalence of stress, which may help explain the high turnover of especially new teachers. Teachers in Sweden have furthermore experienced various cutbacks and reforms in recent years, and these have substantially altered the conditions for teaching. A special circumstance for teachers in Sweden is the 45-hour workweek during the school year. Ten of these working hours are regulated to be done in the home, something which may potentially influence teachers' possibility to separate work from private life and to recover from work.

Due to these psychosocial working conditions, with high emotional demands coupled with long working hours, teachers are at risk for developing ill health at work. In the following sections, I highlight some aspects of teachers' work from a health-, policy-, and organizational perspective.

Teacher work-related health and well-being

Teaching is commonly referred to as one of the most stressful occupations (for an overview see Collie, Perry, & Martin, 2017). Teacher stress is consequently a well researched area. Kyriacou (2001) among others has reported that interacting with difficult students, balancing demands from students, colleagues, school administration, and parents, as well as time constraints, a high workload, and continuously being evaluated and handling change, to be aspects of teaching which caused stress. Longitudinal research has shown a link between teacher stress and depressive and psychosomatic symptoms, increased alcohol consumption, and burnout (Schonfeld, Bianchi, & Luehring-Jones, 2017).

Notwithstanding that many teachers like their job, there are a number of reports indicating that they experience a problematic work situation (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2014). Compared to ten years ago, teachers report a higher workload and increased demands (Fromm & Hagström, 2011; Kjellström, Almquist, & Modin, 2016). Similarly, sleeping problems, sick leave,[1] and intention to quit their job are also issues that have been reported (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2014; Fromm & Hagström, 2011).

National data are in line with international research pointing to the teaching profession as one of the most stressful occupations today (Travers, 2017).

Of particular national interest is that the boundary between work and spare time is particularly blurred for teachers in Sweden, as they during school weeks have a 45-hour

[1]Statistics on grundskollärare from 2016: men 6.9 days/year, women 13.7 days/year retrieved from: https://www.forsakringskassan.se/wps/wcm/connect/eca49949-6bc6-4e03-ae57-60398ff31ff1/PM_sjukfranvaro_olika_branscher.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=

workweek, of which 10 hours are regulated to be done in the home.[2] Indeed, the way teachers' work is organized could potentially limit possibilities for recovery from work. Results from a previous study on primary and lower secondary school teachers in Sweden indicated that the lack of possibilities for recuperation from work was associated with symptoms burnout (Arvidsson, Håkansson, Karlson, Björk, & Persson, 2016). Furthermore, research on new ways of working (Demerouti, Derks, Lieke, & Bakker, 2014) indicates that blurred boundaries between work and spare time may make it harder for employees to switch off from work and find the necessary time for recovery.

To conclude, teachers belong to a group of workers whom can be said to currently experience several areas of psychosocial risks associated with the way work is designed, organized, and managed. Houdmont and Leka (2010) have described five thematic areas of psychosocial risk factors: 1) new forms of employment contracts and job insecurity, 2) the ageing workforce, 3) work intensification, 4) high emotional demands at work, and 5) poor work-life balance. Due to the job market for teachers, all but the first factor can be considered to currently pose a risk for teachers in Sweden.

Policy context

The Swedish education system has been heavily debated in recent years. The situation has been described as being at an all-time low, in particular regarding the popularity of the profession and the performance of students. Indeed, the continuous decline in results on international measures of educational achievement, such as PISA (OECD, 2016), and the low interest among young people in becoming teachers[3] is worrisome for society. A current estimation by the Swedish National Agency for Education points to the need for an additional 77 000 full-time teaching positions by 2031 (Skolverket, 2017).

This situation has not gone unnoticed, however, and the last ten years have been reform-intensive (Beach, Bagley, Eriksson, & Player-Koro, 2014; Imsen, Blossing, & Moos, 2017). Nonetheless, critical voices have been raised as to the scientific underpinnings of recent reforms and policy changes (Beach et al., 2014). One important reform in Sweden was the introduction of *school choice*, implemented through a nation-wide voucher system in 1992 (SOU, 2013:56). Before the initiation of this reform, almost all students attended a local municipality-run school. To date, approximately 15% of children aged 6–16 attend independent schools as reported by the National Agency for Education.[4] Although inequalities in educational outcomes are

[2]The annual working time is - although more condensed - the same as for other employees in Sweden (generally between 1760 and 1800 hours per year).

[3]In the yearly rapport from UKÄ, one can read that there are 1.5 applicants for each study place at the program to become a primary and lower secondary teacher, *Grundlärarexamen*, (2017:8, p. 24.)

[4]Such statistics can be found on: https://www.skolverket.se/statistik-och-utvardering

not *caused* by the introduction of *school choice,* much attention has been given, by NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations) and politicians, to the recently found increase in school segregation in Sweden (Holmlund, 2016).

Another recent reform is the implementation of *First teachers* (*Förstelärare*), which came into effect as of 2014 (SFS 2013:70). By introducing a new career step, the government intended to make the teaching profession more attractive trough the promotion of skilled teachers (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2012).

Other reforms have been the implementation of a new Educational Act in 2011, a new national curriculum (*läroplan*, Lgr 11) in 2011, followed by a new grading system, as well as an implementation of assigning grades to students from school year six as opposed to from year eight. These reforms have, furthermore, been described as an increase of governmental control over lower and secondary schools in Sweden (Berg, 2011). A reform still to be implemented is the mandatory start of six-year olds in the currently optional preschool class (*Förskoleklass*).

Organizational aspects of teaching

Teachers are required to deal with a diverse range of issues relating to, for example, a multicultural society, technological advancements, and various stakeholder opinions concerning the role of schools in society today (Carlström & Wersäll, 2006). Furthermore, it is well known that an ordinary teacher's work situation might typically entail dynamic interactions with colleagues, school administrators, students, and parents. To this, of course, can be added the complexity of teaching in and of itself.

The work situation of teachers has been in focus for many union surveys and one recent example is a survey done by Lärarförbundet (*Tiden räcker inte till, en granskning av lärares arbetsbelasting och sjukskrivningar.*, 2017), which reports that 41 % of the participating teachers responded that they did not have time for large parts of their assigned tasks during working hours. Something likely to influence the possibility for collegial interaction. Statistics from the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) report that 30% of the teachers whom commenced work as teachers in 2010, had seven years later, left teaching.[5]

In an organization such as a school, shared responsibility and active participation among the employees is important (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Furthermore, democratic decision-making is especially important when an organization is dependent on the ability and skills of professionals (Bouchikhi & Kimberly, 2003). Teachers' work engagement, creativity and innovation, are also important for organizational growth and development of a school (Bouchikhi & Kimberly, 2003).

Future development forecasts, frequent organizational changes, new regulations and directives, continued high demands, and inadequate employment conditions are situations that are likely to test any workplace communication climate and social

[5]Välfärd 2/2016, p. 28

interactions at work. Research furthermore underlines the importance of work-related relational mechanisms for employee work engagement and subjective well-being (Freeney & Fellenz, 2013). In addition, communication is, as Elving (2005) states, crucial for development and learning. Thus, it seems warranted to examine how teachers interact and communicate with one another. In-depth knowledge about how and when and with whom teachers communicate and interact might serve to guide subsequent interventions aiming to improve or optimize communication practices in schools. This could potentially result in better psychosocial work conditions and a more sustainable worklife.

Theoretical framework

Teachers' working conditions are of interest to society and constitute a relevant area of study within work and organizational psychology. Adhering to the basic premise that communication organizes work (Keyton, 2017), it is furthermore interesting that there is still limited empirical evidence for the relationship between organizational communication in schools and work-related variables (De Nobile, 2016). Coupled with this there is, as stated by Taris et al. (2017) in a recent overview of teacher stress, a need for research utilizing contextually anchored measures of demands and resources in teaching.

The need for more contextually anchored research on teachers' worklife, in relation to organizational communication and in combination with other salient demands and resources is therefore the theoretical and empirical starting point for the present dissertation.

Communication and organizational communication

Given that the word communicate means *common* or *shared,* communication research covers diverse areas such as message composition, message encoding and decoding, signal transmission, and interpretation (see e.g. Putnam & Nicotera, 2009). Diverse scholarship fields, from mathematics to rhetorics, have defined and studied communication from various aspects, and many have emphasized the formative effect of communication practices for the collective understanding of the organization (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011).

Organizational communication as a research stream is a sub-area of communication research. Prior to world war II communication scholars directed their attention to personality aspects of communication, while post WWII researchers turned their attention to communication in groups and teams (Keyton, 2017).

As a research field, organizational communication emerged in the United States post war era and can be accredited to Charles Redding (1914-1994). Organizational

communication scholars during this time set out to boost productivity and improve worklife for employees (Keyton, 2017).

A paradigm shift in the 1980s originated from a turn towards interpretive methods, as described in Linda Putnam and Michael Pacanowsky's book from 1983. Scholars at this point turned to qualitative research methods to explore "how knowledge is socially constructed from the point of view of participants within organizations, as well as between organizations and the larger society" (Keyton, 2017, p. 503). Researchers focused on topics such as superior-subordinate relationships, communication skills, organizational culture, cross-cultural communication, networks, and socially constructed power (Allen, Gotcher, & Seibert, 1993).

Towards the millennium, researchers diversified their interests and organizational communication has in recent years been studied using a multitude of philosophical and theoretical approaches (for an overview see Putnam & Mumby, 2014). A vast body of empirical research now gives evidence that organizational communication is fundamental for organizations and for organizing work (Keyton, 2017).

Sweden has been a late bloomer when it comes to research in the area of organizational communication (Johansson, 2007). In a review, Johansson (2007) outline the field of organizational communication in Sweden to mostly have covered areas such as public information (health communication and crisis communication), and internal communication (superior-subordinate communication, organizational learning, sense-making, and communication strategies and efficiency).

Although organizational communication is the most studied area within communication research, several aspects are still of great interest for further study (Jones, Watson, Gardner, & Gallois, 2004). As described by Jones et al. (2004), two such areas are new technology and changing organizational structures. There is, also, still limited knowledge of the relationship between organizational communication in schools and work-related factors. A notable exception is the work by De Nobile and colleagues who have demonstrated that aspects such as schools' formal and informal channels of communication are linked to teacher occupational stress (De Nobile, 2016).

One theoretical approach for understanding organizational communication is from a systemic standpoint. Systems theory allows for a close look at communication from several interesting aspects, including open *vs*. closed communication climates, individualism *vs*. collectivism, organizational hierarchies, flow of information, and feedback, all of which focus on interacting variables and patterns (Weick & Browning, 1986). According to systems theory, all systems consist of: 1) objects or elements of the system, 2) characteristics of both the elements and the system as a whole (attributes), 3) relationships, and 4) the surrounding environment (Weick, 1976).

Applied to a school context, schools then consist of teachers (objects/elements) with differing experiences but a shared knowledge base (attributes). Teachers' interactions with each other can therefore be considered to be internal relationships, while the environment would be the milieu of the school and even the surrounding society. The

systems perspective may serve as a relevant theoretical point of departure for understanding how the interactions of different aspects of the system affect the communication practices in schools.

Herbert A. Simon and Peter Senge are two of the many important scholars influencing the development of organizational communication as a research field. Simon, a Nobel laureate,[6] is interesting from the perspective that he points to the importance of both formal and informal communication processes as this strongly influences decisions-processes in organizations (Simon, 1997, p. 46).[7] Peter Senge, a systems theorist, adopts a more optimistic view on communication, as he puts learning at the center of organizational development (Kofman & Senge, 1993). Senge means that, in a learning organization, the exchange of knowledge and experience can move easily back and forth between the individual, the work-group, and the organization as a whole. Taking advantage of peoples' learning potential and creativity to transform a system is an appealing aspect that is at the core of organizational learning.

Despite the strong tradition of teachers being highly autonomous and performing solitary work, teachers nowadays often work in teams, resulting in higher demands for effective communication practices and collaborative learning. Scholars such as Putnam and Nicotera (2009) claim that organizational communication is a cornerstone of any organization. This is in line with, as Francis (1989) states, that the aims of organizational communication are to provide information and create a community within the organization. Indeed, good communication practices are essential for the development and learning a teacher continually needs to engage in to develop as a professional.

Facets of organizational communication

To date, the measurement of workplace communication has primarily focused on assessing communication competencies and communication behaviors (Keyton et al., 2013). Less effort has been directed at capturing subjects' own beliefs and perceptions of communication in the workplace. A starting point for my research was that a stronger focus on assessing the perception of workplace communication should, in theory, be a fruitful source to advance the understanding of how communication behaviors are understood, to what consequences they are related, and for which behaviors they might be predictive (Ajzen, 1985). To this end, teachers' evaluations of organizational communication may be conceptualized as constructive individual representations of the work environment (e.g., Ashforth, 1985). I therefore focus on aspects of teachers' sense-making of organizational communication, by having them report on their perceptions of communication with regards to time, structure, climate, and collegial interactions.

[6]Nobel Prize in Economics, 1978.

[7]Bounded rationality, implies that people have limited cognitive abilities to make completely rational decisions.

Temporal aspects of organizational communication

In this dissertation, temporal[8] facets of organizational communication that pertain to teachers' perspective of having enough time for essential aspects of their work are delineated. In the educational literature, time constraints are highlighted as a key aspect of school success on all levels; from studies at classroom level to the implementation of reforms (Collinson & Fedoruk Cook, 2001). Further, Collison and Fedoruk Cook (2001) noted that research on finding strategies for countering time constraints (e.g., freed-up time, restructured time, common time, better use of time, or purchased time) could be better coupled with studies on teachers' perceptions and interpretations of time constraints. In line with this, Ancona et al. (2001) have proposed constructs such as employees' views on an "individual's time urgency" as important aspects of time-related constructs. From a communication perspective, one direct way to study teachers' perception of lack of time to talk would be to focus on issues closely related to teachers' work, such as student issues and school development. Consequently, a perception of lack of time to talk about key school-related issues is likely to be linked to accumulated frustrations and act as a job stressor; in other words, work environment demands (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). In the long term, such employee experiences will not only influence the individual employee but will also have a significant effect on organizational outcomes (e.g., Karasek, 1979).

Structural aspects of organizational communication

New technology and changing organizational structures are of great interest in educational research (Jones et al., 2004). Structural aspects of organizational communication may encompass for example how a school has organized the possibility for teachers to interact at work with a good mix of informal and formal meeting points. It is likely that well-functioning structural aspects of organizational communication will act as a resource for work (Ford & Youngs, 2017). In addition, previous research has shown that opportunities for both formal and informal meeting-points for teachers, where they can interact and exchange ideas, support, etc., are important for establishing well-functioning professional communities (Penuel et al., 2010). Furthermore, the structuring of electronic platforms, use of e-mails, and the purpose and contents of meetings will influence teacher interactions and communication.

One way to describe and approach the field of communication in a school context is to view communication as a form of social interaction via messages (Fiske, 2004). Expressed another way, the back and forth exchange of messages is an essential part of a feedback loop that stimulates self-regulation and changes in behavior. Whether this occurs as quick exchange in the corridor or through e-mails, this type of communication is an interactive process between two (or more) persons.

[8]Temporal here means time-related.

Individual and group aspects of organizational communication

Central to professional functioning and well-being are relationships between employees and how they are manifested as behaviors. Ordinary social interactions and strong social groups at work have been shown to be important for teachers' ability to cope with demands (Lakey & Orehek, 2011) and to be negatively associated with teacher burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Moreover, social interactions function to fulfill employees' relatedness needs (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000), help create an atmosphere of trust and shared vision and openness (Price, 2012), and to reduce teacher turnover (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). In light of this, stimulating positive social interactions while minimizing negative ones might be particularly important for retaining new teachers, turnover being more likely early in an individual's career (Griffeth & Hom, 2001).

The communication climate in a workplace will influence how employees perceive demands and resources. Studies have shown that organizational climate influences attitudes and behaviors of employees (e.g., Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014; Schneider, Macey, Lee & Young, 2009). The choice to study workplace communication climate is in line with Schneider's suggestion to be specific rather than general when trying to measure aspects of organizational climate. Already in 1975, he suggested that researchers be "functionally specific". One example of such an approach can be found in a recent study by Albrecht et al. (2018) where the authors are the first to explore the importance of "organizational engagement climate" for employee engagement. Likewise, the choice to study the importance of a workplace communication climate for job satisfaction is in line with Schneider's ideas of functional specificity.

For the purpose of this dissertation, the workplace communion climate is defined as "teachers' shared perceptions of communication at their workplace". This could be exemplified as openness and willingness to share ideas, criticisms and constructive feedback.

The communication climate in a school is also important for the self-improvement a teacher continually needs to engage in, in order to be able to teach. Seen as a form of reiterative loop of communication it can, at best, spiral into a cascade of learning. It can further be hypothesized that this type of day-to-day learning is what breaks or makes a successful teacher. If new and better strategies for supportive learning environments are identified and implemented, then schools as organizations will benefit by having employees better prepared to undertake the roles of teachers as well as learners.

The workplace communication climate is an important part of the more general organizational climate (Falcione, Sussman, & Herden, 1987). Of particular interest are relational aspects, such as openness, trust, perceived participation, and having a voice in the organization (Smidts, Pruyn, & Van Riel, 2001). Previous research has shown communication climates to be important for organizational identification and group belonging.

Previous educational research underlines the importance of trust as a prerequisite for collaboration (Van Maele, Moolenaar, & Daly, 2015). For example, trusting relationships build on high-quality interactions with peers (Van Maele et al., 2015), school level collaborations, (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998), informal and formal interactions with management (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015), and productive parent-teacher interactions (Forsyth, Barnes, & Adams, 2006). It is in the advent of such exchanges that relationships are established, tested, and reaffirmed.

While the workplace can be a place to establish trusting relationships, work may also lead to trauma and stigmatization. The destructive side of organizational communication may be displayed as incivility. Thus, more or less well functioning communicative interactions also have to do with a civility/incivility spectrum of collegial interactions.

Incivility in the workplace has been defined by Andersson and Pearson in 1999 as a "low-intensity and deviant behavior with an ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect". As such, incivility is a low intensity behavior while ambiguous in its intentionality. Civil behaviors on the other hand are characteristically polite and courteous, displaying regard for others. Examples are behaviors like considering the view of one's co-worker or simply greeting someone entering a room.

The perception of someone's behavior is likely influenced by the social norms of the individual and that of the workplace, and is therefore interwoven with and difficult to tease out from contextual factors (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2013). Cortina, Magley, Williams, Hunter and Langhout (2001) argue that being exposed to uncivil behaviors can be equated with a kind of stressor, albeit not very strong. Furthermore, negative effects on both mental and physical health have been found after prolonged exposure to hard-to-cope with stressors.

Workplace incivility has been recognized in the field of work and organizational psychology as an important as well as common aspect of worklife. During the last decade, incivility has become a well-studied construct as reported in the workplace aggression literature (e.g. Blau & Andersson, 2005; Cortina, 2008; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Milam, Spitzmueller, & Penney, 2009). Areas closely related to incivility, such as bullying, have been extensively studied in Scandinavia. Nevertheless, incivility has gained very little attention as pointed out by Göransson, Näswall, and Sverke (2011). Blau and Andersson (2005) suggested incivility to be associated with downsizing, modern employee demographics as well as being a result of an increased pressure on productivity.

Recently the interests in this milder type of interpersonal mistreatment has moved researchers to more closely examine both the perspective of the instigators and the targets (Blau & Andersson, 2005). Spector and Fox (2003) called for an integration of these two perspectives and Hershcovis and Reich (2013) investigated the reciprocal nature of workplace aggression. Hershcovis (2011) has also shown there to be an overlap between incivility and other related constructs, such as bullying, social

undermining and emotional abuse, with respect to both causes and outcomes. In light of the trends in psychology of moving towards more positively defined constructs, *civility* (e.g., acting in a professional manner) is one important aspect of organizational communication.

Organizational communication as a resource

As described above, effective organizational communication is a cornerstone for work processes and the psychological and social climate (McPhee & Zaug, 2001), and it therefore seems reasonable to assume that sound and strong communicative processes may serve as a resource for work. Consequently, communication at work could counteract fluctuating demands and constraints and thus alleviate the perceived workload or other demands as, for example, experienced by teachers. It can therefore be expected that teachers who report that they experience well-functioning communicative processes, adequate time for communication, and supportive formal and informal structures for communication, will also be more satisfied with work.

The choice to focus on specific and contextually derived aspects of organizational communication also holds an attempt to respond to calls by several authors to expand the Job Demands-Resources model to incorporate organizational resources and organizational climate constructs (Albrecht, 2014; Albrecht, Breidahl, & Marty, 2018; Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, & Courtright, 2015; Biggs, Brough, & Barbour, 2014).

Work environment and work-related health

To give a contextual understanding of the theoretical framework of this dissertation I begin with presenting some important features of the relationship between work and health. I then introduce the Job Demands-Resources model. Finally, the outcome variables job satisfaction and well-being are placed in the context of this dissertation. To the extent that it is possible, I refer to previous empirical work on teachers.

Work and health

The connection between work and health has been described in many models. One such occupational stress model was presented by researchers from the Institute of Social Research (ISR) in Michigan, USA in the sixties (Figure 1). The ISR-model is a widely used theoretical model, which describes individual characteristics and social relationships as important moderators of an individual's perception of the work environment. The model thus conceptualizes the interdependence of the individual in his or her environment with the perceptions of work and the work environment. The ISR-model thus encompasses the subjective work-environment and short-term reactions. The short-term reactions are manifested as cognitive, emotional and or physiological outcomes. The individual perceptions will thus influence the long-term outcomes.

Against the backdrop of teachers' work, which entails many social interactions, these are highlighted in pink (Figure 1). The objective work-environment would be, for example class and school-size while the subjective work environment would be a teacher's perception of work demands and resources. Furthermore, workplace communication and collegial communication, is part of the social relations spectrum influencing, in the long run, such outcomes as health and productivity.

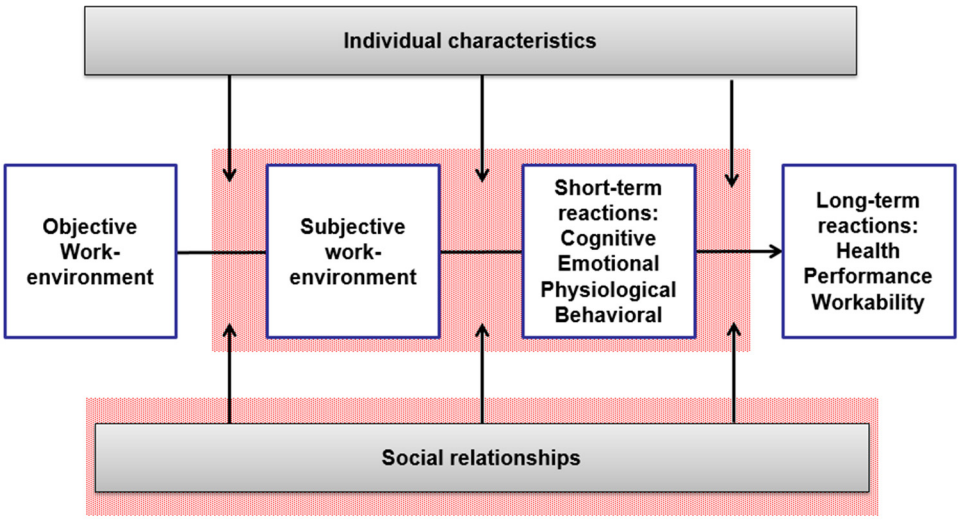

Figure 1.
The ISR-Model (Katz & Kahn, 1978) adapted from Johansson (1991).

The Job Demands-Resources model

In the field of work and organizational psychology as well as in education, much attention has been given to finding well-substantiated explanations for teachers' ability to handle their work environment and prevent development of ill health. Successfully addressing pervasive as well as new problems within teaching requires contextually anchored application of theoretical models. To meet this end, education research and organizational psychology could mutually benefit from a better exchange of knowledge as pointed to by Collie et al. (2017). With the ultimate goal to influence teacher sustainability and student outcome, knowledge from the education stress literature in combination with flexible organizational models and interventions techniques would, indeed, be beneficial. Therefore, to acknowledge that each occupation has its own set of assets, challenges, and job characteristics is relevant for organizational outcome.

An occupational stress model that allows for flexibility regarding varying job characteristics is the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). According to the JD-R model (Fig. 1), physical, psychological, social, and/or organizational aspects of the job, can be understood in terms of the balance between demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Specifically, demands refer to aspects of work that require sustained physical, cognitive, and/or emotional effort and skills, while resources refer to the aspects of work that support the achievement of work goals and reduce job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001). JD-R theory is further used to predict organizational outcomes such as job performance, commitment, and turnover (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

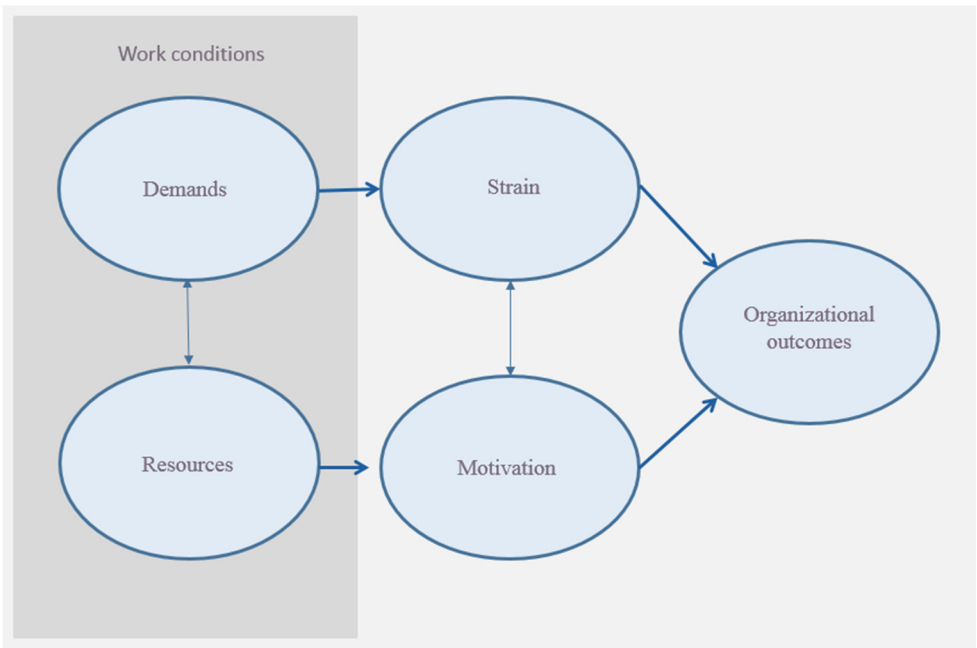

Figure 2.
Adapted from the original Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

It is worth noting that research on teacher stress, utilizing the JD-R model, has mostly focused on job characteristics such as quantitative demands, autonomy and support (Taris et al., 2017). In other words, factors that already take center stage in other theoretical models. As pointed out by Taris et al. (2017) in their recent review of research on teacher stress during 2005-2012, there is a lack of educator-specific job characteristics being used. The authors therefore encourage the use of contextually relevant aspects in research designs (Taris et al., 2017).

It is well established that employees' evaluations of work experiences, their psychological evaluation of the content and processes of work, as well as their role in the organization, overall, are important for job satisfaction, well-being, and organizational outcomes (e.g., Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton, 2001). The evaluative judgments employees make of their workplace are, in addition, influenced by the culture and climate in any particular workplace (Ajzen, 2001).

Previous research has shown that the organizational climate at work influences employees' perceptions of both job demands and job resources (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). Yet, contextual variables such as organizational culture and communication climate, although theoretically described, are understudied (for a review see Albrecht, 2014). One way to illustrate how communication at work influences the psychological and social work environment is, therefore, via the Job Demands- Resources model.

Furthermore, the way a school organizes its activities can be a job resource, as may support from a colleague or supervisor (Hollingworth, Olsen, Asikin-Garmager, & Winn, 2017). Work load, conflicting demands, and student issues have been recognized as especially important demand related job stressors for teachers (for a review see Greenglass and Burke, 2003). One example of how demands may be buffered by resources comes from recent research by Klassen et al. (2013) who showed teaching-related stress among pre-service teachers, to be related to occupational commitment, while mediated by self-efficacy.

The JD-R model, being heuristic, allows for a wide variety of demands and resources to be included in the model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Thus several aspects of organizational communication can be considered resources, influencing for example job satisfaction.

Quantitative demands, physical work environment, and role clarity

In addition to the communication variables used in this research, I have focused on several key characteristics in the work environment, which, in line with the JD-R model and previous educational research, would influence job satisfaction and teacher well-being.

Physical working conditions have been shown to be important predictors for teacher turnover (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005) and job satisfaction (Kloep & Tarifa, 1994). Role clarity is defined in the literature as the degree to which an individual understands job information and performance expectations of their position (Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, 1970). Role clarity has been shown to be important for teachers (Conley & You, 2014), especially in light of changing circumstances for teaching (Miller, 2002). Drawing on Role Theory, which states that individuals strive to behave according to expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Wickham & Parker, 2007), unclear communication may, in addition, cause teachers to feel increasingly unsure regarding their role in the organization.

The idea that the communication climate at work will influence how pressures of work are perceived is consistent with previous research by Tims, Bakker, and Derks

(2013), who studied the importance of social job resources and the perception of quantitative demands. Quantitative demands, as a form of work overload, refers to high demands and few opportunities to take breaks (Byrne, 1999; Day et al., 2006). Research using quantitative demands as an indicator in the JD-R model has shown to be of relevance for burnout and work engagement (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009).

As recently pointed out by Albrecht, Bredahl, and Marty (2018) the Job Demands-Resources model could be used more frequently as a model of analysis while utilizing more organizationally focused constructs. Coupled with these conclusions by Albrecht et al., there is, as I mentioned before, a need for more contextually anchored research on teachers' worklife. To assess organizational communication as a potential resource in combination with other salient demands and resources common for teachers should therefore provide new insights into teachers' worklife.

Personal outcomes

From a psychological perspective, the results of organizational activities, or organizational outcomes, pertains to consequences of work for both the individual and for the productivity and success of the organization. From an organizational health perspective, OHP-perspective (Raymond, Wood, & Patrick, 1990), individual aspects of organizational outcomes include both health and ill health related to work and non-work (Warr, 1987). Consequently, besides strictly work related factors, OHP concerns itself with, for example, work-home interference and unemployment (Schaufeli, 2004). Important for the results of work are then: 1) the individual, 2) work aspects, 3) organizational aspects, and 4) external factors surrounding work (Schaufeli, 2004). Examples related to teaching are, from an individual perspective, well-being and health symptoms. Factors related to work aspects could be demands, while role clarity would be an organizational aspect of work. The forth aspects as delineated by Schaufeli (2004) would encompass, for example, events occurring in an employee's private life.

Job satisfaction

One important contributor to the field of OHP was by Robert L. Kahn, an American scholar who worked on role conflict and role ambiguity from the sixties and onwards. He established outcome variables, such as job satisfaction, to be linked to role stress, moderated by for example interpersonal relations at work (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Furthering Kahn's work on role theory, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) brought the intersection of work and private life into light.

As a construct, job satisfaction does indeed tap into attitudes to work or the work situation (Weiss, 2002). Whilst, according to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009), there is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of teacher job satisfaction, it can be considered a multifaceted construct stemming from the work of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman during the 1950s (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2011).

Research has shown that important determinants for job satisfaction are: interesting work, good relationships with colleagues, high salaries, and independent work (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000). Studies in educational research have shown that positive judgments of work are negatively associated with turnover and positively associated with work enthusiasm (Weiqi, 2007) and engaging relations to students (Van den Berg, 2002). In particular, low job satisfaction has been associated with retention of teachers in the UK as described by Crossman and Harris (2006). Cockburn and Haydn (2004) have reported that job satisfaction is associated with teachers' positive perceptions of work tasks, relations with colleagues, and school climate. In addition, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) have reported on job satisfaction being negatively associated with burnout. Therefore, opportunities for communication, organizational structures for communicative interactions, the workplace communication climate, and the collegial communication in schools could influence the level of job satisfaction reported by teachers.

Subjective well-being

Peoples' well-being is associated with their physiology (Ryff & Singer, 1998), ability to cope with stress (Salovey, Rothman, Detweiler, & Steward, 2000), and longevity (Chida & Steptoe, 2008). Satisfying social relationships, being productive at work and being active in society are some of the behavioral consequences reported for people with high subjective well-being (for a review see Diener, Tay & Oishi, 2017). Furthermore work related well-being has in a longitudinal study been shown by Hakanen and Schaufeli (2012) to predict general well-being.

Well-being can be measured and quantified in several areas of life (e.g., physical, emotional, social, and spiritual) (McDowell, 2010). Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to psychological well-being in three areas (life satisfaction, positive mood, and the absence of negative mood) (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003) and is often assessed trough positive self-appraisal.

Subjective well-being is frequently measured using the World Health Organization Well-being Index (WHO-5) (Topp, Østergaard, Søndergaard, & Bech, 2015). The scale is a positively worded five-item questionnaire assessing well-being during the past two weeks (Bech, 1999). The WHO-5 has, in terms of clinimetric validity and as a distinctly generic scale proven, in comparison with other well-being measures, to be free of overlap with other specific disease related aspects (Hall, Krahn, Horner-Johnson, & Lamb, 2011). In addition, the WHO-5 has proven to have high sensitivity for the screening of depression, and is therefore often recommended as a screening tool, whether for clinical diagnostic use or for research purposes (Topp et al., 2015).

Recovery from work and the link to well-being

Employee well-being is influenced by the possibility to recover from work (Sonnentag, Venz, & Casper, 2017). For teachers the process of recovery from work is likely influenced by the amount of work regulated to be done in the home.[9]

Recovery, in OHP research, has been defined as "the process of psychophysiological unwinding that counteracts the strain process triggered by job demands and other stressors" p. 365 (Sonnentag et al., 2017). Drawing on the effort-recovery-model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) and the conservation of resources model (Hobfoll, 1989), Sabine Sonnentag showed that recovery from work (spending time of physical and social activities) was associated with well-being (Sonnentag, 2001).

Furthermore, Sonnentag established that on-the-job experiences and proactive behaviors also were influenced by recovery processes (Sonnentag, 2003). Advancing a theoretical model for recovery from work, Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) presented four specific processes underlying recovery to be: psychological detachment from work, relaxation, mastery and control. What are then, the experiences influencing these recovery processes from work? Psychological detachment has to do with "switching off" or in other words, both physically or mentally leaving work at work. Being able to relax at home is defined as low sympathetic activation.[10] Having mastered a new situation will improve a person's capacity to recover, while control has to do with autonomy regarding ones free time. Research has established a link between recovery and well-being, psychological distress, and physical complaints (Sonnentag et al., 2017). In a recent meta-analysis Bennet, Bakker and Field (2017) indeed found evidence for recovery to be important for well-being. In a recent study on teachers' in Sweden, Arvidsson et al. (2016) found that the lack of possibilities for recuperation from work was associated with symptoms of burnout.

[9]As mentioned previously ten hours per school week.

[10]Sympathetic activation of the SNS refers, in this case, to biological markers of stress.

Methodology and methods

In this chapter, I start by describing the study context in which the research took place. I then present my research strategy for the two studies included in this dissertation.

The first study primarily has a qualitative research design utilizing focus group methodology. This first study was framed by a pre-survey concerning demographic data and a post-survey collecting data on the teachers' assessment of the focus group climate. A general objective was to obtain results that could be used to inform the design of the second study of this dissertation. The second study has a quantitative research design making use of a cross-sectional survey.

The research questions in this dissertation stem from societal problems and concerns and the methodological starting-point is therefore problem-based. Furthermore, the general objective was to conduct studies with a strong contextual anchor. The contextual anchoring is partly achieved through modification of well-established measures to fit the teaching profession.

Study context

In order to initiate a collaboration with a municipality, I contacted the development section of the Skåne Association of Local Authorities (Kommunförbundet Skåne) with the aim to reach out to school commissioners in the region through their channels of communication. The interest among the school commissioners was, however, limited and only a few showed even a rudimentary interest in the project.

In December 2014, the school commissioners who had indicated an interest for the project were contacted via e-mail. This resulted in one potential research collaborator.

After a series of introductory meetings where the research project was presented in detail, a research collaboration was formalized with this municipality in January 2015. This research partner can, as defined by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, be described as a suburban municipality with a population of around 35 000 inhabitants (*förortskommuner till storstäderna*).

The data was collected during 2015 (study I in the spring and study II in the fall). Both data collections took place in primary and lower secondary schools, servicing students from six years of age up to 16 years of age (Grundskolan) in Scania, in southern Sweden.

Regarding the second study, I wanted to increase the generalizability of the results, and therefore recruited a supplementary municipality, hereafter called municipality II (defined by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, as a "larger city" with a population of around 50,000 inhabitants).

Regarding dissemination of results, all school leaders and union representatives in the municipalities were invited to attend a presentation of the central results. In March 2016, I presented the results in municipality I, municipality II declined the offer.

Study I

Study design and data collection

Critical for this semi-structured focus group study was that, as a study population, teachers can be considered a group with shared experiences, and a willingness to discuss work-related issues with each other (Gibbs, 2012). Moreover, teachers often share responsibility for a specific group of students and as such, teachers are naturally required to interact with each other on a daily basis and acquire shared experiences. The subject matter studied is suitable for group discussions as it involves ideas and conceptualizations that can be developed successfully by differing thoughts and opinions. Because the social context of the work situation is central to the research questions being asked and the nature of data we aimed to collect, the focus group method was especially well suited. Work-related situations can be compared and contrasted based on the subjective experiences of the participants, resulting in a description refined by group processes rather than in-depth personal accounts, as would be expected in individual interviews (Silverman, 2013).

In order to establish report and cover the overarching themes in depth, the focus groups were arranged to meet twice within a two-week period. Each focus group was scheduled to meet for 90 minutes, and consisted of participants who regularly worked together. The meetings took place at the participants' respective schools. Data were collected by electronically recording the discussions. No incentives were used in the study. A form of reciprocity was established as an agreement about a series of presentations on research results were to be given after the completion of the study. These presentations were to be held at both the local school level and at the municipality level.

A semi-structured interview guide was used (appendix A). Care was taken to follow the structure and cover the content in the interview guide, while allowing the conversation to flow freely. The first session was by and large used to pose sensitizing question and encourage discussion.

The focus group interview method was supplemented with two short surveys (appendix B and C), one shortly before the first session and one shortly after the last

focus group meeting. The purpose of the pre-survey was to gather demographic data such as age, educational background, and work experience. The post-survey was intended to assess the group climate during the interviews, from the participants' perspective.

Research participants

Of the seven school districts in the municipality, three school districts, comprising schools from preschool class to ninth grade, were drawn to participate in the study. The local headmasters of the three allotted schools were then in charge of informing the teachers and distributing information material regarding the study to all teachers working at least 75% of full time. At two of the schools, the interest to partake was high and two groups were formed at each school. At one school, however, the interest was low and no groups could be formed. The school commissioner recruited one additional school and in this way one additional group was formed, generating in total five groups (*N*=5).

Sampling methods used

In this study, several sampling methods were used. The research partnership was established though a broad call for interest and is therefore a volunteer sampling. This introduces potential bias in that the researcher cannot be aware of any rationale as for why the research partner volunteers to participate.

As the research collaboration was established, care was taken to examine the organizational structure of the schools in the municipality. According to Ivanoff and Hultberg (2006), four to five groups is a suitable number. I decided, however, to aim for six groups and that two groups per school would be an administrative advantage. A small degree of probability sampling was then introduced as the three participating schools were randomly drawn from the population of the seven schools in the municipality. This model of sampling had to be supplemented, however, with a volunteer sampling as one school failed to sign up enough interested participants and an additional school was therefore asked to sign up. Within each participating school, research participants volunteered to participate, again introducing bias. Each group was planned to have 6-8 research participants (Ivanoff & Hultberg, 2006), and an oversampling was used as 9-10 research participants were allowed to sign up for each group.

Procedure

As a guiding principle, I used the five stages recommended by Finch and Lewis (2003) to carry out the focus group discussions. Those are:

1. Setting the scene and ground rules
2. Instructions
3. Opening topic
4. Discussion
5. Ending the discussion

As described by Finch and Lewis (2003), it is important to make the participants feel at ease. Although the focus group interviews took place at the participants' schools, an effort was made to create an environment that felt special, in the sense that it was not an ordinary teachers meeting. I arranged for fruit and water and made sure that the room was arranged so that everyone would be seated comfortably and that I would be able to have eye contact with all participants. I greeted everyone as they entered the room and tried to establish a report trough small talk.

Instructions were kept to a minimum, yet I made certain to present specific aspects of the focus group interview (confidentiality, duration, audio recording etc.). Participants were then asked to sign a consent form of which they received a copy at the second meeting. The audio recording was started, preceding a round of introductions.

As the allotted time was ending, I made sure to point out that time passes quickly and that there were only some minutes remaining. I gave some feedback to the group as a way of wrapping up the session.

Data analysis

The interviews lasted an average of 1 hour and 13 minutes (*SD* = 4.5 minutes), generating in total over 12 hours of recorded discussions. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was done in an iterative manner, including re-reading of transcripts (Rice & Ezzy, 1999), resulting in themes relevant to the research questions.

In order to establish a rigorous analytic process, the thematic analysis was conducted in three steps: 1) Preliminary coding of one focus group (both meetings), 2) the preliminary coding framework was then further expanded and modified in order to adjust the themes to the data from the remaining four groups, 3) the findings were then presented to the teachers at two of the schools and they were given ample time for discussion. The themes were not altered due to this calibration.

Study II

Study design and data collection

Central to the design of the second study was the objective to be able to make statistical inferences about the population studied. A cross-sectional survey method was thought appropriate as it would fulfill this need and generate significant data material. The study was, in part, designed on the outcomes of study I. For inreased generalizability, the sampling framework was supplemented with a municipality very different in socio-economic character from municipality one. This additional municipality was also located in southern Sweden.

Survey methodology

In designing the second study, great care was taken to create a survey which was esthetically appealing, comprehensive and relevant in the material covered, as well as easy to use. To this end, a self-report computerized questionnaire was designed and distributed through Webbenkäter, an online survey distribution tool (Webb-enkater.com).

The research participants were sent an e-mail containing the title of the project and a short statement of the purpose of the study. This e-mail also fulfilled the requirement of informed consent, as it stated that responses would be kept anonymous, treated with confidentiality, and that the participant could at any time choose to opt out from completing the survey. It was clearly stated that the participant chose to participate by answering the survey. In addition, the participants were encouraged to contact the researcher, had they any questions or concerns. There was contact information, and a link to my website at Lund University, where the results from the study were to be published from 2016 and onwards.

Three reminders were distributed within a two-week period after the initial survey distribution. To minimalize the burden on the participants, reminders were only sent to those that had not previously answered the survey (this was automated in the survey tool).

The questionnaire contained both previously validated scales and new questions derived from the focus group interviews. To minimize the amount of missing data, prompts were given if items were left unanswered.

Several well-established and commonly used scales were used in the survey. Some scales were used verbatim; they were however carefully scrutinized as to both the wording of the questions and the response alternatives. In several instances, I chose to modify questions from already established scales to better suit the educational context and the teaching profession. Response alternatives were occasionally modified for readability and logical progression, some of which were tested in a separate study (Schad, Nipe, & Persson, 2015).

A choice was made to collect continuous data when possible in order to maintain flexibility in the data analysis.

Research participants

All teachers (N = 744) working as primary and lower secondary teachers in the two municipalities were invited to participate in the study. The response rate was 61.2% (N = 455). In detail and regarding municipality 1 ($N_{invited}$ = 275) the response rate was 85.1%, while for municipality 2 ($N_{invited}$ = 469) the response rate was 47.2%.

In total, 401 teachers (216 from municipality 1 and 185 from municipality 2) were included in the study, as they met the inclusion criteria of working at least 50% of full time and having responded to at least 60% of the questions in the survey.

Eight respondents were removed for not meeting the inclusion criteria of working at least 50%. Forty-six respondents were removed for having dropped out before completing 60% of the survey.

National statistics from the year 2015[11] show that men constitute 23.65% of primary and lower secondary school teachers. In this sample men represent 22.7% (a chi-square goodness of fit indicates no significant difference in the proportion men in the sample as compared with national statistics, as ^{2} = .07, p < .75).

Central measures

The survey covered four distinct areas, as listed below:

- Basic demographic data
- Occupational situation
- Work environment indicators
- Health measures

Information was collected on personal demographic variables including gender, age, marital status, had children residing at home, and whether or not the respondent was born in Sweden. Questions regarding the participants' occupational situation covered: employment status, working hours, years of work experience, years employed at current school, and grade levels taught. In addition, a question was asked regarding the match between teaching duties and teaching qualifications. The respondents were also asked if they held a position as team-leader, coordinator, or First teacher (*Förstelärare*).

The survey is presented in its entirety in appendix D. It should be noted that all questions posed to the participants in the survey are not included in this dissertation. All measures on which paper II and III are based are presented below.

[11]Statistics from Försäkringskassan (Statistik om sjukfrånvaro per bransch och sektor).

Time for communication

Teachers' appraisals of time for communication regarding school issues was assessed with a 4-item scale constructed for this study. The questions assess the perception of having enough time and were evaluated on a 6-point scale: 0 = *never,* 1 = *almost never,* 2 = *seldom,* 3 = *occasionally,* 4 = *often*, and 5 = *almost always*.

Communication structure

Communication structure was assessed with a 7-item scale constructed for this study. The items are formulated as statements and the responses indicate degree of agreement on a 4-point scale: 1 = *does not fit at all,* 2 = *fits poorly*, 3 = *fits fairly well*, and 4 = *fits perfectly*.

Workplace communication climate

Workplace communication climate was assessed with six items (Schad et al., 2015). The items are formulated as statements and the responses indicate degree of agreement on a 4-point scale: 1 = *does not fit at all, 2 = fits poorly*, 3 = *fits fairly well*, and 4 = *fits perfectly*.

Collegial communication

The scale measuring collegial communication was constructed from six items drawn from a 7-item scale measuring incivility, originally developed by Cortina, Magley, Williams and Langhout (2001) and translated to Swedish by Schad, Torkelson, Bäckström and Karlson (2014).

The items used in the present study were, contrary to previous work, formulated as positively worded statements. For example, one of the original questions: - *Have your coworkers paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinion?* was changed to the positively worded question: *I am listened to and others show an interest in my opinion*. Answers were given on a 5-point scale: 0 = *never,* 1 = *seldom,* 2 = *occasionally,* 3 = *often,* and 4 = *for the most part.*

Table 1.

Dimensions measuring organizational communication.

Measures	Scale
Time for communication	0-5[a]
How often do you feel that you have enough time to communicate with your colleagues regarding the following?	
1. Student issues	
2. Scheduling issues	
3. Teaching and learning	
4. School development	
Communication structure	1-4[a]
How well do the following statements represent the internal communication at your school?	
1. It is easy to get in touch with a colleague I need to talk to.	
2. Communication via e-mail is efficient.	
3. The meetings structure is conducive for learning and teaching.	
4. We have a good mixture of informal and formal meeting in my school.	
5. We need more informal meetings at my school[b].	
6. The learning platforms work well.	
7. We need more formal meetings at my school[b].	
Workplace communication climate	1-4[a]
How well do the following statements regarding the communication climate represent your workplace?	
1. People are keen on bringing forth their ideas.	
2. At my workplace, we give each other compliments.	
3. At my workplace, the communication between people is open and honest.	
4. I am satisfied with the communication climate at work.	
5. At my workplace, we give each other constructive criticism.	
6. Conflicts and disagreements are usually resolved in an open manner.	
Individual communication climate	0-4[a]
How well do the following statements represent how you feel at work:	
1. I am treated with respect.	
2. I feel like I am part of the workplace community.	
3. I am satisfied with how I am treated at work.	
4. I am treated with professionalism.	
5. I am listened to and others show interest in my opinions.	
6. I get the encouragement I need.	

[a]Higher scores indicate degree of agreement.

[b]Reversely scored in statistical calculations.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was assessed using a modified and expanded 5-item scale building on items from the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II, COPSOQ II (Kristensen, Hannerz, Høgh, & Borg, 2005). Specifically, the items were adjusted to fit the teaching profession (e.g., *-Regarding your work in general; how pleased are you with your work prospects as a teacher?)*.

The original COPSOQ-question regarding satisfaction with how knowledge is used, was divided into two questions, in order to better mirror a teachers work situation (*How pleased are you with the way your knowledge is used for teaching* and *how pleased are you with the way your knowledge is used in the organization*). Answers were given on a 4-point scale: 1 = *very dissatisfied*, 2 = *dissatisfied*, 3 = *satisfied*, and 4 = v*ery satisfied*.

Quantitative work demands

Teachers' quantitative work demands were assessed using a 4-item subscale from COPSOQ II (Kristensen et al., 2005) (e.g., *Do you fall behind with your work?*). Answers were given on a 6-point scale: 0 = *never,* 1 = *almost never,* 2 = *seldom,* 3 = *occasionally,* 4 = *often*, and 5 = *almost always*.

Physical work environment

One subscale from the school version of the Swedish MM-questionnaire (MM = *Miljö Medicin*, translates to *environmental medicine*) developed by Andersson (1998) was used to assess the physical work environment. The scale contains four items (e.g., *- How do you perceive the school environment at large, regarding work environment as far as access to computers goes?).* Answers were given on a 5-point scale: 1 = *very poor*, 2 = *poor*, 3 = *acceptable*, 4 = *good*, and 5 = *very good*.

Role clarity

Role clarity was assessed using a Swedish version (Schad et al., 2015) of a 6-item scale originally developed by Rizzo et al. (1970), (e.g., *Clear, planned goals exist for my job*). Answers were given on a 4-point scale: 1 = *does not fit at all,* 2 = *fits poorly*, 3 = *fits fairly well*, and 4 = *fits perfectly*.

Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being was assessed with the 5-item World Health Organization Well-Being Index (WHO-5) which measures recently-experienced mood (e.g., *Over the last two weeks, I have felt cheerful and in good spirits*) (Bech, Olsen, Kjoller, & Rasmussen, 2003).

The items were rated on a six-point scale (response alternatives: 0 = *never* to 5 = *all the time*) and the total sum was then multiplied with 4 to gain a score between 0-100. An alpha-value of .82 has previously been reported, and the scale has shown strong associations with comprehensive well-being scales (Topp et al., 2015).

Physical activity

Physical activity (moderately strenuous activities) was assessed with one question from the Swedish National Public Health study on health, lifestyle, and living conditions. This study has been conducted annually since 2004 and comprises a random sample of 20,000 individuals aged 16–84 years reporting on the state of their health with the purpose of monitoring changes in health over time in the Swedish. This is part of the public health policy (Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2016).

The question is worded as follows: *-How much time, during an ordinary week do you spend on moderately effortful activities that make you warm, such as brisk walks, gardening, heavy housework, biking, swimming? It could vary over the year, but try to estimate an average.* The response alternatives were: 1 = *none at all*, 2 = *at most one hour per week*, 3 = *between one and three hours per week*, 4 = *more than three, but less than five hours per week*, and 5 = *five hours per week or more*). The objective was to be able to assess how large a proportion of the sample achieved at least 3 hours/week of physical activity.

Self-rated health

Self-rated health was assessed with one item from the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II (COPSOQ-II) (Kristensen et al., 2005) (*In general, would you say your health is:* 0 = *poor*, 25 = *fair*, 50 = *good*, 75 = *very good*, 100 = *excellent*).

Sleep quality, health complaints, and separation between work and spare time

Sleep quality (3-items), health complaints (11 symptoms), and separation between work and spare time (4-items), was assessed using items from the Lund University Checklist for Incipient Exhaustion (LUCIE) (Persson, Österberg, Viborg, Jönsson, & Tenenbaum, 2016). This self-report measure was developed to meet the needs for detecting early signs of stress-related symptoms.

Answers on sleep quality and health complaints were given on a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 4 = *very often.* (e.g., *-I have had trouble falling asleep*).

Answers on separation between work and spare time were given on a 4-point scale, ranging from 4 = *not at all* to 1= *very often*. (e.g., *-Problems at work make me irritable at home*.)

Recovery from work

Recovery from work was assessed with one question from the Work Environment Survey (2015) (*Besides sleep, do you get enough recovery between workdays?).* Answers were given on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = *far from enough* to 5 = *yes, definitely*).

Estimation of work ability and sick leave

Estimation of work ability was assessed with one slightly modified question from the Work Ability Index (WAI) (Toumi, Illmarinen, Jahkola, Katajarinne, & Tulkki, 1998). This modification was done in order to better reflect work ability within the

teaching profession (*Do you believe, according to your present state of health, that you will be able to work as a teacher two years from now?*

Answers were given on a 3-point scale: 1 = *no, I don't think so*, 2 = *I am uncertain*, 3 = *yes, probably*.)

Sick leave was assessed with one item from the same index (*How many days have you been away from work due to illness or injury (care, treatment, or examination) during the last year (12 months)?* 5 = *none*, 4 = *1–7 days*, 3 = *8-24 days*, 2 = *25-99 days*, 1 = *100-365 days*).

Statistical analysis

Teachers working in the two municipalities reported similar mean scores on socio-demographic and life-style factors and were therefore treated as one sample except for the case of the hierarchical linear regression model, where municipality was included as a background variable. The statistical computations were performed with IBM SPSS Statistics 24.0 and SPSS AMOS 24 for Windows.[12]

Cronbach alpha coefficients ( ) were used to assess the internal consistency of the variables (Cronbach, 1951). Two-tailed actual *p*-values are reported where appropriate.

Following the recommendations by Muthén and Kaplan (1992), all items in the variables were inspected for normality, skewness, and kurtosis. As recommended by Hoaglin and Iglewicz (1987) all variables were inspected for outliers and data recoding was used in the case of the variable job satisfaction where a few extreme outliers were found.

Pearson zero order correlations were used to explore associations between continuous study variables. Point biserial correlations were used to estimate the association between binary variables and continuous variables. Effect sizes that represent the percentage of variance accounted for are reported were appropriate.

Group comparisons were carried out using Pearson's Chi-square test, Mann–Whitney *U* test, and independent samples *t*-test.

In paper II an exploratory factor analysis (Beavers et al., 2013) followed by a Confirmatory Factor Analysis using AMOS (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006) was performed to establish psychometric properties of the communication variables. This two-wave analysis was deemed adequate due to the large sample size and the theoretically driven design of the four communication variables. The goodness-of-fit for the structural regression models was evaluated by the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), both recommended to be ≥ 0.90, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is recommended to be ≤ 0.10 and ≤ 0.08, respectively (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

[12]Details of the IBM Statistical software can be found at: https://www.ibm.com/products/spss-statistics and https://www.ibm.com/uk-en/marketplace/structural-equation-modeling-sem.

In paper II a theoretically driven, four-step hierarchical linear regression was performed to assess how much the four communication variables contribute to the variance in job satisfaction above what is explained by the demographic variables (municipality and gender) and the work environment predictors. To assess the occurrence of common method variance among the study variables, a Harman's single-factor test using an exploratory factor analysis of all items included in the analysis, constrained to a single factor was conducted. The resulting 29.0% being explained by one factor is well below the recommended 50% cut-off (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

In paper III a theoretically driven regression using PROCESS, model 4 (Hayes, 2013) was performed to assess whether separation between work and spare time, and recovery from work mediate the association between: 1) job satisfaction and well-being and 2) job satisfaction and health complaints.

In paper III the WHO-5 was dichotomized into good and poor subjective health following recommendations (Topp et al., 2015). The WHO-5 variable was also used as a continuous outcome in correlation and regression analysis.

Ethics approval

The study protocol was approved by the Regional Ethical Review Board in Lund, Sweden (reg. number 2014/654). The ethics application was submitted 2014-09-16 and the approval received 2014-10-22. The main applicant was Dr. P. Johnsson, with E. Schad and Dr. R. Persson as co-applicants. The project title is "Social interaktion och kommunikation bland svenska grundskollärare".

Summary of papers I-III

This chapter offers summaries of the three papers included in the present dissertation. Paper I draws on data from study I, while papers II and III are based on the empirical data collection in study II.

Paper I – Lacking structures of communication for teachers in Sweden, a focus group study

Aims

The aim of this study was to obtain a detailed description and account of schoolteachers' perceptions of organizational communication as it occurs between themselves during their day-to-day activities. This knowledge might in turn underpin the development of ideas for preventing poor, and enhancing good communication processes in schools. In addition, the results from this first study were intended to inform the design of the second study in the present dissertation.

Methods

Empirically, this paper is based on five semi-structured focus groups, each interviewed on two occasions. The interviews were framed by a pre-survey concerning demographic data and a post-survey collecting data on the teachers' assessment of the focus group climate and their own comfort level.

All focus group interviews were carried out during the period February to April 2015. The five groups consisted in total of 44 participants (33 women and 11 men. The mean age of the participants was 48 years (*SD* = 10.6) and they had on average worked as teachers for 18.5 years (*SD* = 11.6). The groups consisted of seven to nine participants, totaling 41 teachers at the first meeting and 37 teachers at the second meeting. The pre-survey was answered by all 44 participants and the post-survey by 31 participants (response rate 70.5%).

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was done in an iterative manner, including re-reading of transcripts resulting in themes relevant to the research questions (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). In order to establish

a rigorous analytic process, the thematic analysis was conducted in three steps: 1) preliminary coding of one focus group (both meetings), 2) expansion and modification of the preliminary coding in order to adjust the themes to the data from the remaining four groups, and 3) presentation of findings to the teachers at two of the schools followed by ample time for discussion. The themes were not altered, however, because of this final calibration step.

Results

Four themes were identified as illustrating aspects of teachers' perceptions and evaluations of organizational communication processes in their schools: 1) circumstances for work, 2) collegial communication, 3) work strategies, and 4) thriving at work. The first theme pertains to conditions for work and exposes communication strategies as perceived by the participating teachers. The second theme organizes the teachers thoughts on aspects of interpersonal communication. Themes three and four are more directly associated with the teachers' views on aspects of their work situation. Each theme is represented by subthemes as elaborated in Table 2.

Table 2.
Themes and subthemes.

Themes	Subthemes
1) Circumstances for work	• Processes and decision-making • Distribution of tasks • Possibilities to interact with colleagues • Scheduling issues • Flow of information • Collaborative learning and feedback
2) Collegial communication	• Interactions with students • Supportive and trusting climate • Friendly and relaxed atmosphere • Loneliness
3) Work strategies	• Intensity of work • Blurred boundaries between work and private life • Individual strategies
4) Thriving at work	• To have personal energy • To experience professional autonomy • To feel satisfied and motivated • To maintain one's health

The results point in general to a vulnerable organizational communication climate with negative implications for worklife sustainability. Findings related to *circumstances for work* and *collegial communication* point to the consequences of organizational communication and teachers' work situation, whereas the findings regarding *work strategies* and *thriving at work*, emphasize long-term work sustainability.

Circumstances for work

The results show participants felling left out from work processes and decision-making, because of various communication problems. The assertions from the groups portrayed communication problems as frequent and relating to the flow of information, scheduling conflicts, distribution of work tasks, and lack of organized collaboration.

A relatively new addition to the work in the municipality where the study took place was a formalized feedback program implemented during the school year 2014/15. The teachers expressed positive views on both observing each other and being observed by the principal. The teachers in this study preferred the observer to be someone whom they both know and trust.

Scheduling conflicts and the requirements for teachers to carry out tasks such as playground duties and eating meals together with the students, reportedly had negative consequences for socialization and collaboration among the teachers. In addition, the time they have set aside for work-related tasks in their weekly schedule was often used to discuss and solve complicated students matters.

Collegial communication

It was evident that teachers valued their colleagues and found trusting and supportive relationships to be important. This was clear from their accounts of how well things work and how easily problems are solved when there is trust and support, but also how misunderstanding and defensiveness make for a negative climate and dissatisfaction. In the schools studied here, all groups described a lack of focus on communication and collaboration processes. Hence, a clear lack of reflection needed for improving their specific culture of communication.

Work strategies

There is evidence of each teacher being required to prioritize and sift through work tasks on his or her own, shown in this study to result in idiosyncratic approaches.

At least one teacher in each group expressed that reaching a satisfactory level of completion in tasks often required withdrawal from social interactions and staying in their respective classroom.

Changes in modern technology have contributed to a significant increase in communication-related tasks with for example students and parents, thereby increasing the amount of administrative work. According to the participants, they experience an unmanageable work situation with a constant flow of e-mails and cumbersome technology.

Thriving at work

The participants stated that to have the drive to do a good job throughout the day was an essential part of being satisfied with work. Work was, however, by many considered draining and the work days depleted them of energy. Several teachers also expressed a worry regarding the sustainability of their work situation, which they feared would exhaust them in the long run.

Even if the teachers expressed that they enjoyed collaborating with their colleagues, they also expressed a need for autonomy regarding for example teaching methods. Some to the contrary felt pressured from their principal and colleagues to follow the latest didactic trends.

One large part of sustainable worklife, as underpinned by the discussions, was to feel satisfied with work.

The teachers' statements regarding health issues centered on reports of sleeping problems, lack of ability to concentrate, and frequent anxiety, often related to the lack of downtime during the day but also to working at home with planning, correcting student work and corresponding with parents.

Conclusions

In this study, several problem-areas regarding especially structure and time aspects of organizational communication were voiced. One noteworthy observation was the many ways teachers handled daily challenges. In order to counter these idiosyncratic tendencies, there is an apparent need for supportive structures for organizational communication, ranging from communication platforms to meeting structures.

The observations, suggest problems of deficient and weak communication patterns and a resulting negative outlook on teachers' work sustainability. In light of the exploratory nature of this study, the results are not conclusive; but the results speak directly to the relevance of organizational communication processes as they occur between teachers today.

Paper II - No time to talk! Teachers' perceptions of organizational communication: Context and climate

Aims

The aim of this paper was to assess key aspects of organizational communication and its association with salient work environment indicators and job satisfaction as reported by primary and lower secondary school teachers in Sweden.

Specifically, the objectives were:

a) to assess teachers' perceptions of: time for communication with colleagues, structures for communicative interactions in the school, the workplace communication climate, and collegial communication

b) to explore to what extent these aspects of organizational communication in schools are associated with salient work environment indicators (quantitative demands, physical work environment, and role clarity)

c) to examine to what extent these aspects of organizational communication predicts job satisfaction above and beyond the above mentioned work environment indicators.

Methods

A cross-sectional survey was administered during October and November 2015 via Webbenkäter (Webbenkater.com), an online survey tool. A total of three reminders were distributed within a two-week period after the initial survey distribution.

All teachers (N = 744) working as primary and lower secondary teachers in the two municipalities were invited to participate in the study: the response rate was 61% (N = 455). In total, 401 teachers (216 from municipality 1 and 185 from municipality 2) were included in the study, because they met the inclusion criteria of working at least 50% of a full-time schedule and having responded to at least 60% of the questions in the survey. In total, eight participants were removed for not meeting the inclusion criterion of working at least 50%, and 46 participants were removed for having dropped out before completing 60% of the survey

Of the remaining 401 respondents, 305 were women (76.1%) and 91 men (22.7%). Five individuals (1.2%) did not disclose their gender and were therefore excluded in any data analysis including gender as a factor. The age of the participants ranged from 23 to 65 years with a mean age of 46.2 years (SD = 10.0 years); 13.0% of the teachers were below 35 years of age, 49.9% were in the age span 35 to 49, and 37.2% were older than 50. The mean years of teaching experience was 17.3 years (SD = 11.1 years), 9.5% had 1–3 years' experience, 6.5% had 4–6 years, 46.1% had 7–18 years, 21.7% had 19–30 years, and 16.2% had 31 or more years of teaching experience. The average number

of years employed was 8.9 years (*SD* = 8.4 years), with 80% having worked at their school for two years or more.

No gender differences regarding social-demographical factors were found in the sample. Concerning occupational factors, it is worth noting a gender difference in the sample, as more women work part-time.

Results

Roughly 20% of the teachers responded that they *often* or *almost always* had time to communicate about scheduling issues, school development, as well as teaching and learning, while 40% of the teachers responded that they *often* or *almost always* had time to talk about student issues.

Regarding the perception of the school's internal communication structure, a majority of the teachers thought it was easy to get a hold of colleagues when needed (85%), that the email communication was efficient (77%), and that meeting structures was conducive for learning and teaching (61%). About one-third of the teachers perceived a need for more formal meetings in the schools, while about half reported wanting more informal meetings. Regarding the electronic learning platforms used, the teachers were divided, as 56% thought that they worked well.

Regarding workplace communication climate, a majority of the teachers thought that people were keen to present their ideas (80%), give each other compliments (79%), and that the climate at work was open and honest (74%). Regarding giving each other constructive criticism and resolving conflicts and disagreements in an open manner, the teachers were divided, as a mere majority agreed that this was done in an open way.

Regarding the perception of collegial communication, a majority of the participants thought that they often or for the most part were treated with respect (88%), felt part of the workplace community (85%), and were treated with professionalism (74%). About one-half thought that they often or for the most part received the encouragement they needed.

The four communication variables were positively correlated (r between .26 and .63) with the strongest correlations found between workplace communication climate and collegial communication (r = .63).

All four dimensions of communication were positively correlated with job satisfaction (r between .42 and .52). The four communication variables were positively correlated with role clarity (r between .35 and .45), and physical work environment (r between .29 and .38) while negatively correlated with quantitative demands (r between -.21 and -.30).

Hierarchical linear regression analysis was done in order to examine how teachers' perception of physical work conditions, quantitative demands, role clarity, time for communication, communication structure, workplace communication climate, and collegial communication were related to job satisfaction.

First, the control variables municipality and gender were entered explaining 0.3% (p = .527) of the variance. Next, the variables for quantitative demands, physical work environment, and role clarity were added to the regression equation. This set of variables explained 40.4% (p < .001) of the variance in job satisfaction. In the third step, the variables time for communication, communication structure, and workplace communication climate were entered into the regression, resulting in an increase in the proportion of variance explained to 46.0% (p < .001). In the fourth step, the variable collegial communication was added to the regression, resulting in only small increase in the variance accounted for with this set of variables explaining 49.2% (p < .001) in job satisfaction. This final step also rendered workplace communication climate (p = .773) non-significant.

Conclusions

There are several practical implications from this study.

1. First, the general satisfaction and positive view of communicative interactions between teachers is an important foundation on which all improvement can successfully build.
2. Second, the fact that all communication variables studied are associated with job satisfaction, as well as other work environment variables, points to the central role conditions for work, such as organizational communication, has for teachers.
3. Third, since the findings point to that collegial communication is an important aspect of the organizational climate in schools, long-term job satisfaction may be influenced if efforts are directed towards helping teachers establish and maintain excellent professional interactions.

The results from paper II adds to previous findings on teachers' working situation, using contextually anchored demands and resources. Furthermore, the results demonstrate the role organizational communication can play in relation to work-related demands and resources for employee job satisfaction. Management interventions should preferably focus on providing adequate opportunities for communication between teachers. This may be done through using informal and formal settings, providing time for collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Such measures will help build a good organizational climate coupled with a solid foundation for work. Doing "people-work" will naturally involve incidents of friction and miscommunication; school leaders should therefore be prepared to intervene and support teachers in their collegial interactions and collaboration at work.

Paper III - A comprehensive evaluation of well-being and working conditions for teachers in Sweden

Aims

In this paper, the aim was to report on teachers' perceptions of their work-related health and working conditions.

Specifically, the aim was to assess teachers' work-related health and working conditions with a comprehensive battery of health and work-related questions. A further aim was to assess the relationship between several key characteristics in teacher work environment, which would likely influence well-being. In addition, and due to the specific working conditions teachers experience in Sweden today, attention was directed to separation between work and spare time and recovery from work, and the relation of those two constructs with well-being and health complaints.

Methods

Primary and lower secondary school teachers from two municipalities in southern Sweden were invited to participate in a questionnaire study assessing five central aspects of health (subjective well-being, physical activity, self-rated health, sleep quality, and health complaints). In order to get a full picture, I further queried for, separation between work and spare time, possibilities for recovery from work, estimation of work ability, and sick leave. These measures are reported in table 2.

We also tested for the effect of job satisfaction on well-being as well as on health complaints, using mediation models with separation between work and spare time and recovery from work as mediators. PROCESS, model 4 was used for this theoretically driven regression (Hayes, 2013).

Table 3.
Description of measures.

Area	Scale name/Survey question	Number of items	Sample question	Response alternatives	Scale range
Subjective well-being	The WHO-five Well-being Index, WHO-5	5	Over the last two weeks: I have felt cheerful and in good spirits	0 = at no time 1 = some of the time 2 = less than half of the time 3 = more than half of the time 4 = most of the time 5 = all of the time	0-100
Physical activity	Health on equal terms - Hälsa på lika villkor (HLV)	1	How much time, during an ordinary week do you spend on moderately effortful activities that make you warm, such as brisk walks, gardening, heavy housework, biking, swimming? It could vary over the year, but try to estimate an average.	1 = none at all 2 = at most one hour per week 3 = between one and three hours per week 4 = more than three 5 = five hours per week or more	-
Self-rated health	Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, COPSOQ II	1	In general, would you say your health is:	0 = poor 25 = fair 50 = good 75 = very good 100 = excellent	-
Sleep quality	Lund University Checklist for Incipient* Exhaustion, LUCIE	3	I have had trouble falling asleep.	1 = not at all accurate 2 = not very accurate 3 = somewhat accurate 4 = very accurate	1-4
Health complaints	Lund University Checklist for Incipient Exhaustion, LUCIE	11	During the last month, how much have you experienced the following: Impaired short-term memory.	1 = not at all 2 = rarely 3 = often 4 = very often	1-4

Separation between work and spare time	Lund University Checklist for Incipient Exhaustion, LUCIE	4	Problems at work make you irritable at home.	1 = not at all accurate 2 = not very accurate 3 = somewhat accurate 4 = very accurate	1-4
Recovery from work	The Work Environment Survey, 2015-Arbetsmiljö-undersökningen 2015*	1	Besides sleep, do you get enough recuperation between workdays?	5 = yes, definitely 4 = yes, in general 3 = no, somewhat insufficient 2 = no, clearly insufficient 1 = no, far from enough	-
Estimation of workability	Work Ability Index (WAI)	1	Do you believe, according to your present state of health, that you will be able to work as a teacher two years from now? (Considering your health, do you think you will be able to perform your current job in two years?)	1 = no, I don't think so 2 = I am uncertain 3 = yes, probably	-
Sick-leave	Work Ability Index (WAI)	1	How many days have you been away from work due to illness or injury (care, treatment, or examination) during the last year (12 months)?	5 = none 4 = 1-7 days 3 = 8-24 days 2 = 25-99 days 1 = 100-365 days	-

Results

Of the respondents, 40.2% scored below the cutoff recommended in the screening for depression (Topp et al., 2015). A worrying 43.8% of the teachers in this study qualify as leading a sedentary life-style, and 33.7% reported insufficient recovery from work. 61.0% reported one or more symptoms of sleeping problems during the last month while 70.1% reported one or more health complaints.

In order to further elucidate the relationship between the work-related health variables, a series of multivariate analyses were performed, these centered on relevant health variables (well-being and health complaints) and job satisfaction. First, we tested whether *separation between work and spare time* and *recovery from work* would mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and well-being. The results show that the paths from job satisfaction to separation between work and spare time (b = .72, SE = .07, p <

.001) and recovery from work (b = .77, SE = .10, p < .001) were both significant. The direct path from job satisfaction to well-being remained significant, indicating only partial mediation (b = .53, SE = .09, p < .001). Also, the paths from separation between work and spare time (b = .59, SE = .07, p < .001) and recovery from work (b = .26, SE = .045, p < .001) to well-being were significant.

The bootstrapping for indirect effects showed that the total indirect effect (.622 *CI* [.491, .767]) as well as the indirect effect through separation between work and spare time (.426 *CI* [.311, .557]) and recovery from work (.197 *CI* [.123, .291]) were significant. The model as a whole explained 55.8% of the variance in well-being status, while supporting mediation of job satisfaction, by separation work and spare time, and recovery from work.

Secondly, we tested whether *separation between work and spare time* and *recovery from work* would mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and health complaints. The direct path from job satisfaction to health complaints remained significant (b = -0.22, SE = .07, p < .001), indicating only partial mediation. Also, the paths from separation between work and spare time and recovery from work (b = -0.07, SE = .02, p = .006) to health complaints were significant.

The bootstrapping for indirect effects showed that the total indirect effect (-.369 *CI* [-.452, -.296]) as well as the indirect effect through separation between work and spare time (-.316 *CI* [-.397, -.257]) and recovery from work (-.054 *CI* [-.103, -.015]) were significant. The model as a whole explained 55.7% of the variance in health complaints, while supporting mediation of job satisfaction, by separation work and spare time, and recovery from work.

Conclusions

In sum, the results presented in paper III add to previous research pointing to teachers in Sweden as belonging to a vulnerable occupational group.

The main findings are:

- Teachers' perceptions of their own work-related health and working conditions indicate that they belong to a vulnerable occupational group.
- The results give evidence of a moderate relationship between quantitative demands, role clarity, the physical work environment, collegial and workplace communication with well-being.
- There is moderate support for the respective models used to analyze the relative importance of separation between work and spare time as well as recovery from work for the association between job satisfaction and the outcome variables, well-being and health complaints.

Especially disconcerting are results indicative of problems with recuperation between workdays and insufficient separation between work and spare time. In the multivariate

analysis, separation between work and spare time together with recovery from work was found to partially mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and well-being and health complaints, respectively. This suggests that separation between work and spare time and possibilities for recovery from work are important links between teachers' job satisfaction and their individual health and well-being. These results can be expected from previous research on worklife balance and the importance of recovery from work, nevertheless signifying an important aspect of teachers work in Sweden.

Our results may be viewed in the light of that boundaries between work and spare time are particularly problematic for teachers in Sweden, as they during school weeks have a 45-hour workweek, of which 10 hours are regulated to be done in the home. It can therefore be concluded that the way teachers' work is organized could potentially lead to difficulties for teachers to detach psychologically from work, and consequently experience diminished possibilities for recovery from work.

The findings suggest that decision-makers should focus on finding contextually anchored resources to counteract demands experienced by teachers. Radically altering the demands of teaching may prove difficult whereas supporting the implementation of support structures, which could increase available resources, will on the other hand potentially influence job satisfaction and well-being of teachers in a positive direction.

Discussion

The overall aim of the present dissertation was to investigate teachers' perceptions of organizational communication and work-related health. The specific aims of the research were, as listed below.

Study I: To explore primary and lower secondary school teachers' perceptions of organizational communication as it occurs between themselves during their day-to-day activities.

Study II: To assess aspects of organizational communication and work-related health as reported by primary and lower secondary school teachers. In detail the objectives were:

a) To assess teachers' perceptions of organizational communication.

b) To examine to what extent organizational communication, as reported by the participants, is associated with salient work environment indicators.

c) To examine to what extent these aspects of organizational communication predicts job satisfaction beyond salient work environment indicators.

d) To assess teachers' perceptions of work-related health and working conditions.

e) To examine the relationship between several key characteristics in teacher work environment and well-being.

f) To examine the importance of separation between work and spare time and recovery from work, for well-being.

Principal findings

A main discovery was the absence of a school culture that promotes intentional and living discussion on workplace communication (paper I) and that less than one fifth of the teachers reported that they felt that they had sufficient time to talk about school development (paper II). Another main discovery was that a high percentage of the teachers were motivated. However, the results also revealed that a substantial portion of the teachers showed signs of insufficient recovery and problems separating work-life from private life (paper III).

Interpretation of the findings

One rationale for the present thesis was to examine communication aspects of teaching that might be supportive or hindering for teachers' work situation while interpreting the results against a theoretical framework that focuses on the interaction between psychosocial demands and resources. Below, I discuss the principal findings in and of themselves as well as in relation to the JD-R model and theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), while placing at center stage organizational communication and teacher well-being.

I then proceed with a discussion regarding school leadership and teacher sustainability as practical implications of the findings. This section is followed by a deliberation on relevant research ethics and methods. I conclude this chapter with some suggestion for future studies.

The absence of a school culture of communication

Throughout this work, I have pointed to the relevance of good and healthy communication between colleagues for a functional worklife for teachers, inasmuch as functional communication, whether it has to do with small talk in the staff room or modern technology, may serve to mediate and moderate the demands of work and help attain results. In study I, the focus was on teachers' perceptions of workplace communication as it occurs between them during day-to-day activities, and I used this as a framework for understanding their work circumstances.

One main discovery from this first study was the absence of a school culture that promotes intentional and living discussion of organizational communication. These findings are further substantiated by the results from study II, which revealed that less than one fifth of the teachers felt that they had time to talk about school development. This warrants further attention. Drawing on the group discussions, this was attributed to urgent problems with individual student-related issues, taking time away from discussions on didactics and collaborative planning and evaluation. If time intended for collaboration is continuously used for improvised problem solving, productivity and goal attainment will likely suffer in the long run. Indeed, the importance of peer collaboration for teacher learning has previously been described by for example Kraft and Papay (2014). These authors build on previous work, which has shown that school context is important for learning, both for students and teachers. In a recent study they have shown the organizational context to be central for teacher learning above and beyond the initial rapid leaning that occurs during the first years of teaching (Kraft & Papay, 2014).

Modern technology, such as e-mail and internet platforms, have contributed to a significant increase in communication-related tasks with students, parents, and colleagues being done electronically. According to the participants in the focus groups,

they experienced an unmanageable work situation with a constant flow of e-mails and cumbersome technology. These administrative demands were shown to be handled in highly idiosyncratic ways; some evidently avoided taking work home, while others reportedly tried to stay abreast of the workload by being online constantly. In light of this, there is an apparent need for organized and deliberate school-level structures regarding the lines of communication between parents and teachers, preventing a situation where each teacher has to fend for him- or herself. This is in line with recent findings by Dormann et al. (2017) who found the usefulness of technology to be highly dependent on local school implementation.

Findings from study I gives evidence of participating teachers perceiving themselves to be greatly controlled by organizational structures and that they, at times, felt that they had a rather small influence over their daily work situation. A quotation from study I sums up several aspects of the deleterious and complex situation in which many teachers might find themselves.

> I think we could do quite a lot if we, at an earlier stage, started talking about the organization. The first thing would be to have regular dialogues with each other, and from those we could try to pick up on the small changes we could make in order to make things easier and then to evaluate things after each year. We write an evaluation, but we never look at it and we never make any changes based on it, so I think actually quite small things could help ease the workload we experience.

On the one hand, decision-making regarding for example aspects of teaching is normally delegated to the floor (eg., distributed leadership, for a review see Bush, 2015), supported by requirements in the national curriculum (*läroplan*). On the other hand, resources appear not to be in line with such current practices demands. Teachers in that sense have limited possibilities to actively and continuously, collectively work on the implementation of contextually[13] relevant aspects of the national curriculum. This hold for true then, that time needs to be allocated for this type of work. It also holds for true that supportive structures for such distributed decision-making are in place. I would like to argue that placing these demands on teachers as a collective and then not providing them with the necessary tools for doing the job is not only foolish, but also not cost–effective.

Indeed, the lacking procedures for decision-making on the floor have consequences not only for a person's feeling of autonomy and mastery (Bandura & Wood, 1989) but also for inventiveness at work (Amabile, 1993). As concluded by Gretchen Spreitzer and her colleagues, "Being part of organizational decisions helps individuals build new skills and feelings of efficacy, which lead them to feel more comfortable taking risks and exploring new opportunities" p. 542 (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005).

[13] Here, I refer to the local context in the surrounding neighborhood.

Moreover, the unclear distribution of tasks, limited opportunities to interact with others, structural hindrance for collaboration, as experienced by the teachers in this study, will likely hinder teachers' possibilities to influence organizational decisions. It would not be surprising then if in work situations such as these, teachers furthermore lack the confidence to solve urgent problems at work. The situation teachers find themselves in, may indeed, appear to take place in a spiral of difficult circumstances.

Motivated and well-functioning teachers

For the participants, the notion of being personally involved, experience autonomy, and feeling committed to one's work was a basic premise, and they came across, overall, as highly motivated and engaged both in their teaching and in their interaction with students. It was also evident from the focus groups that the participants voiced that a loss of commitment for teaching brings with it a personal responsibility to act and even reconsider one's personal career choices.

Fully aware of the demands of work, the participants seemed to grapple with the unmanageable working conditions they felt were laid out for them. At first glance, being involved and feeling excited about work appears to be positive. However, work can also potentially result in personal vulnerability and feelings of inadequacy (Hobfoll, 2002). Consequently, personal ambitions may clash with possibilities at work, and rewards may not be in line with expectations. It appears difficult for many teachers to even ponder the notion of performing at a lower level, likely because it would have negative consequences for their students. The type of mismatch between the individual and the work environment that the results give evidence of, are in different ways a focus of many psychosocial stress theories such as the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

The motivational process in the JD-R model, links job-resources to positive outcomes such as performance (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). Well-functioning organizational communication could, based on the preliminary finding in this dissertation, function as a resource for work. Providing opportunities for both formal and informal meeting-points for teachers, where they can interact, exchange ideas, and support each other, should be a priority for management since this would be important for establishing and maintaining well-functioning professional communities (Penuel et al., 2010). These thoughts are in line with recent research on social aspects of professional agency as discussed by Tian, Risku, and Collin (2016) who state the need for an increased focus on supportive environments to improve schools. Thus, increased knowledge of practical aspects of supportive environments, like organizational communication, can fed into and help fill this gap, identified by Tian et al. (2016). In turn, this would be important for successful school leadership.

As has been mentioned before, well-functioning electronic platforms and efficient use of e-mail are other support structures for teacher-interaction and communication, and therefore constitute important resources. Likewise, promoting positive

communicative interactions between colleagues and overall good and healthy workplace communication climate in the school may counteract fluctuating demands and constraints. This will in turn alter how the workload and other demands are perceived. Teachers who report that they experience strong communicative processes, adequate time for communication, and supportive formal and informal structures for communication, will likely be more satisfied with work.

Teacher work-related health and well-being

Especially disconcerting are results indicative of problems with recovery between workdays and insufficient separation between work and spare time. Although radically altering the demands of teaching may prove difficult, supporting the implementation of support structures, which could increase available resources, will on the other hand potentially influence job satisfaction and well-being of teachers in a positive direction.

The boundaries between work and spare time are particularly significant for teachers in Sweden, as they during school weeks have a 45-hour workweek, of which 10 hours are regulated to be done in the home. Separation between work and spare time has, for the teachers in study II, to do mostly with having the energy to take care of private matters and being able to relax at home.

The way teachers' work is organized could potentially lead to difficulties for them to detach psychologically from work and consequently experience diminished possibilities for recovery from work. Indeed, over one third of the teachers in study II reported that they did not feel that they got enough rest between workdays. Although there were no significant gender or age differences in the data, there was however, as could be expected, evidence of women having children residing at home to report less rest between workdays compared to women not having children residing at home. Furthermore, a national government work environment survey with over 10 000 people of the employed population aged 16-64 showed an overall 11% prevalence rate of respondents whom reported that they didn't feel that they got enough rest between workdays. Stratified according to level of education, the corresponding prevalence rate was 15% for those with higher education in which teachers are included. The teachers in this study consequently report the prevalence for not enough rest between workdays to be more than twice as high (33.3%), compared to national statistic. The results are in line with the results from a previous study on primary and lower secondary school teachers in Sweden where the lack of possibilities for recuperation from work was found to be associated with symptoms of burnout (Arvidsson et al., 2016). The results may also be viewed in light of research on new ways of working (Demerouti et al., 2014) which indicates that blurred boundaries between work and spare time may make it harder for employees to switch off from work and find the necessary time for recovery.

Practical implications of the findings

In the following two sections, I discuss the relevance of the main findings as they pertain to, in particular, school leadership and teacher worklife sustainability.

Communication, a strategic tool for school leadership

In Sweden, school leaders have the role of leading, managing, and assessing the work of on average 25[14] teachers. The Education Act regulates the role and responsibilities of a principal (*rektor*) as an administrative and pedagogical leader. A vast body of international research give evidence of that principals and school leaders have an important role in clarifying, shielding, and restructuring teachers' work (Murphy, 2015). In addition, as shown by Kraft et al. (2015), school leaders are crucial for developing school-wide approaches to discipline, student support, and parental outreach. These areas, in turn, will influence organizational improvement and success.

In light of the continually changing circumstances for work, principals have a delicate role in balancing the need for implementation of for example new technology with the need for contextual anchoring, which may involve a lengthy democratic process. Contrary to popular belief, distributed leadership in schools has been vitiated with problems of the like, indicating school development as especially troublesome (Bush, 2015). Consequently, there is a risk that implementation are done in a top-down fashion, breaking away from distributed decision-making. Central to successful implementation is the involvement of the teachers themselves (Kraft et al., 2015). Thus, in order to avoid a top-down process, not taking into account the need for local implementation, ample time has to be set aside for planned - and unplanned - processes.

Naturally, requirements for organizational communication will vary over time, and teachers will, also in the future, need to be flexible and resourceful in order to stay abreast of current work environment challenges. To this end, school leaders may gainfully consider teachers' thoughts and evaluations of organizational communication as useful individual representations of the work environment (e.g., Ashforth, 1985). For example, a teachers' perception of lack of time to talk about key school-related issues could, not surprisingly, lead to individually accumulated frustrations and consequently function as a job stressor, or in other words, work environment demands. In the long term, such employee experiences may influence the individual employee in a harmful way, but also have a significant negative effect on organizational outcomes (e.g., Karasek, 1979).

If we, as a society, want teachers to thrive in their profession, certain key aspects of the teaching landscape must change. As mentioned above, drastically altering the demands of teaching may prove difficult. Therefore, the implementation of support

[14]This figure ranges from 5-65 teachers, Rektors ledarskap 2012:1, Skolinspektionen p. 17.

structures, which could increase available resources, could potentially balance demands and resources. Thus, there is a need for good and healthy communication practices between colleagues, and between employees and management, as well as with the community at large. Done properly, this is likely to benefit the next generation of learners.

Insufficient recovery and boundless work

As argued above, I propose organizational communication to be a key resource for teachers pertaining to for example adequate and comprehensive structures for teamwork. From an individual perspective, ample international research has provided evidence for the teaching profession to be stressful and demanding (Collie et al., 2017). The results from study I showed how teachers must consciously work to maintain professional boundaries in an increasingly boundless organizations. The individual teacher has a certain amount of teaching which needs to be done; in addition, there are several tasks for which there is no regulated time. Planning, supporting students, collaborating with colleagues are such tasks, and they can swell far beyond regulated working hours. In the focus group study, the participants testify to a diffuse work situation that, compared with other professions in the school, have not been regulated by trade agreements. They also testify to the change that modern technology has resulted in and how this contributes to a significant increase in tasks related to communication with pupils and guardians. High demands are indeed placed on each individual teacher whom must prioritize and sift through work tasks; something which leads to a personal approach to time-use and task fulfillment. The teachers in the study shared with me, through personal examples, how they managed the burden of administration in highly personal ways, as some evidently avoided taking work home, while others reportedly tried to stay abreast of the workload by being online constantly. There was an apparent lack of deliberate and sustainable school-level structures regarding the lines of communication between parents and teachers, leaving each teacher to fend for him- or herself.

Even though much is known regarding the organizational and psychosocial factors which contribute to a good work environment, the practical use of such knowledge is pivotal for creating sustainable workplaces (Sverke, Falkenberg, Kecklund, Magnusson Hansson, & Lindfors, 2016). A sustainable worklife, not only for teachers, should allow for human, social, economic, and ecological resources, relevant for the organization, to grow and develop over time (Kira & van Eijnatten, 2008). While the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) have been frontrunners in areas of legislation and corporate responsibility practices, and therefore have a competitive international standing in regulatory aspects of sustainable worklife (Räikkönen, 2014), much is left to be done concerning especially the psychosocial aspects of sustainability.

Kira and Lifvergren (2014), furthermore, point to the importance of organizational communication for promoting social and human sustainability at work. In particular,

on-going dialogs between co-workers at work are considered to be an important platform for developing and maintaining sustainable work systems (Kira & Lifvergren, 2014). Furthermore, collaboration and communication among coworkers has been brought forth as cornerstones for sustainability in education (Nocon, 2004). This will in turn stimulate creativity and continued development.

A quote by Kira and Lifvergren (2014) may serve to clarify this.

> "… sowing seeds for sustainability involves engaging co-workers with different knowledge and professional backgrounds in on-going learning dialogues concerning the actual development of the whole system." p.1.

A sustainable work situation needs to be based on a person's individual capacities while respecting basic human needs. It also needs to value human and material resources based on economic long-term thinking, and promote basic human rights such as equality, equal treatment and diversity. Drawing on Argyris' (2002) writings about organizational learning, that is, a learning that originates from individual experiences and may lead to a cascade of learning and development, it is at the intersection between the individual teacher and her needs and the organization's position that both problems and solutions can be made visible. In addition, the issues that teachers struggle with every day are often imminent and a solution cannot wait.

As argued by Mitra and Buzzanell (2015), it is important to examine "the communicative practices and broader discourses within and among different organizations (i.e., corporations, nonprofits, and government agencies) that shape sustainability, make sense of the complex environmental risks encountered, and recommend innovative strategies that have successfully overcome operating obstacles" p. 131.

Critical considerations from an ethical perspective

Empirical studies using employees in their workplace, whether they have a qualitative or quantitative approach, will render many ethical deliberations. Such deliberations have to do not only with the research performed, but also with several other aspects of the research, both before and after the data collection. Deliberate plans for ethical data collection start with *a priori* considerations such as taking into account the culture and context in which the studies are carried out. Other aspects have to do with establishing trust in the organization. Furthermore, respectful and appropriate dissemination of the research results should be considered and planned ahead of time.

My background as a licensed psychologist and my experience working in the Swedish school system has guided me. In addition, the ethical guidelines from VR (2017) have

been helpful throughout many such considerations. In the following sections, I discuss some of the ethical aspects pertaining to the specific data collections.

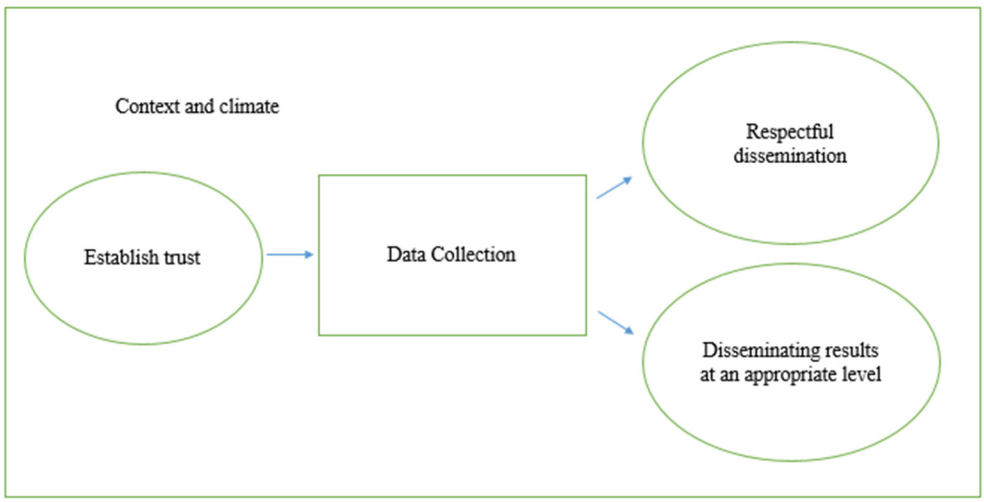

Figure 3.
Ethical deliberations relevant before and after data collection

Study I

Written and oral information regarding the purpose and procedure of the study was presented at the first meeting with each group. I stressed that participation was voluntary, that all information would be treated with confidentiality, and also asked the participants to respects each other's integrity by not disclosing the content of the focus group discussions elsewhere. Participants were also, at that time, given the opportunity to ask questions about the study. Participants were then asked to sign a consent form of which they received a copy at the second meeting.

As a way of controlling for the group compositions, I assessed teachers' individual thoughts on having participated and found that a majority felt comfortable. In addition, verbal feedback given to me indicated a high degree of satisfaction among the participants with having taken part in the focus group interviews. In light of the topics discussed, some teachers heavily burdened by for example stress might feel vulnerable after exposing their feelings and concerns. Not doing harm (non-maleficence) (Beauchamp & Childress, 2013) is an essential part in psychological (and medical) research ethics, and a basic premise within psychology is that evoking patient/client emotions always needs to be coupled with a readiness for dealing with the same. In a research setting, this is not possible and it is important to have an awareness regarding the risk of unintended consequences.

Study II

Ethical considerations of interest in the second data collection in this research project (paper I and II) are survey design, distribution methods, and storage of data. As described earlier, a series of introductions and presentations were done to establish an understanding of the project and the research questions. Key persons in the organization such as principals and union representatives were included in the process throughout the project. This contextual anchoring also rendered possibilities to give something back to the organization.

On the other hand, the data collection was supplemented with data from an organization with which I, besides an introductory presentation to school leaders, have had minimal contact throughout. Although effort was made to establish a similar collaborative relationship as with municipality one, this was not possible. Thusly, the participating teachers in municipality two have not been given the same opportunity as a collective, to voice their opinion regarding taking part in the survey, and they have not received any feedback as a group.

Methodological perspectives

Some methodological aspects of the two studies need to be accentuated. I do this firstly by reflecting on conducting focus group interviews as a means of collecting empirical data. I then continue to discuss survey methodology in general and working with teacher surveys in particular. I end with a critical reflection on the study context, or more specifically: forming a research partnership with representatives from municipalities and schools.

Working with the focus groups

As a method with its own procedures and criteria for inquiry, focus group research is considered helpful for discovering how people reason on a particular issue and what they feel (Ivanoff & Hultberg, 2006). As pointed out by Ivanoff and Hultberg, people "construct their own knowledge in interaction with others" p. 131 (Ivanoff & Hultberg, 2006). Focus groups methodology is intended to tap into the collective understanding and sense making of the research questions.

Focus group research using groups in which members already know each other has been criticized for potentially encompassing group bias (Thomas, MacMillan, McColl, Hale, & Bond, 1995). Juxtaposed with the risk for group bias is, however, in my view, the benefit of a common understanding (*Verstehen*) of the realities experienced by this particular group of teachers. For example, in one of the discussions regarding communication climate, the teachers in one group quickly concluded that they communicated with a certain respectful style with students in the school but not

between themselves. The group then continued to explore what the reason for that could be and a lively discussion followed with many different perspectives being brought forth. I give this example to demonstrate the potential benefit of a common experience-base, which in this case made possible an in-depth account of possible reasons. As Ivanoff and Hultberg (2006) point out, participants learn from each other and an understanding may be gained. In addition, this example gives evidence of the qualitative aspect of a well-functioning focus group discussion, which should in a sense be somewhat self-contained where the participants use each other as experts, and the moderator becomes a side person (Ivanoff & Hultberg, 2006).

In focus group methodology, one important function of the moderator is to balance the discussion, while at the same time allowing it to flow freely. It can sometimes be difficult to find the right balance with a group if some are very active whilst others have a hard time voicing their opinions. This can be exemplified in the present study, which had a few participants who were new to the profession. Even though I tried to balance the discussions in the groups by encouraging the more quiet participants through eye contact and verbal prompts, it did not always give the intended results.

Working with the survey

An observational study is no better than its individual parts. In other words, there are many pitfalls in designing, carrying out, and analyzing a survey study, all influencing especially the validity of the study. It was my intention to contextually anchor the survey by letting the results from the first study feed into the survey study. The focus group results were in my opinion most valuable, in that they helped me formulate many of the questions in the survey. The design of the survey furthermore had a qualitative aspect, having to do with communication between me, as a researcher, and the respondents. Intentions and nuances are nevertheless lost in the process. Still, my intentions were to keep the questions constructed by me as simple, easy to understand, and identifiable as teacher relevant. In addition, most questions were positively worded (De Vellis & Dancer, 1991).

A central set of questions in this research are the four questions on time to talk about various aspects of the teachers work. Do the questions cover the concept properly? Here, I chose to stay close to the results from the focus group study, leaning on the importance of context (Sparks & Cooper, 1999). On the one hand, these four time questions can be said to be a valid measure of teachers' thoughts on their lack of time; on the other hand, the questions are not tested and might lack some important aspect of the concept at hand.

Furthermore, the selection of the participating municipality can be discussed, and it should be noted that the student achievement in the participating municipality is better than average, with almost all students being eligible to apply to post-secondary schools, as compared with the national average of 86.5% (National Agency for Education, 2015). Hence, the schools in this study were at the positive end of the national scale,

possibly challenging the representativeness of this study in representing a broader trend. On the other hand, the picture that emerges from this study could be considered as representing a "best-case" scenario. Even though several of the issues addressed in this study are likely to apply to other schools with poorer results, appropriate caution is warranted when making extrapolations (Patton, 2015).

A strength related to the study sample in study II is the participation of two municipalities quite different in sociodemographic characteristics. A limitation, on the other hand, is that only public schools were sampled. As an increasingly large proportion of teachers in Sweden work in independent schools, future studies could direct attention to work-related health and working conditions among teachers working in independent schools.

Research designs based on self-report measures are often criticized for introducing common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). This is an adequate concern; on the other hand, self-report methods have shown to adequately assess people's perceptions or representations of work environment variables and are therefore valuable despite limitations (e.g., Ashforth, 1985).

The cross-sectional nature of this study limits me from drawing any conclusions regarding causality. There is, however, an underlying implied causality inferring that organizational communication in schools influence teachers' job satisfaction; something needing confirmation in future studies.

Taking into account the cross-sectional design of the study and that an appropriate temporal separation between the predictor, the mediators, and the outcomes can be difficult to achieve in a school setting due to fluctuations in work-load over the semesters, the mediation analyses performed still need to be tested with a longitudinal research design (Cole & Maxwell, 2003).

Working with municipalities and schools

In light of the ethical concerns raised above, I would like to reiterate some of the advantages of a close collaboration with the study objects. To start with, the response rate from the teachers in municipality I was much higher than in municipality II. I have previously raised the concern that the studies were anchored in a top down fashion. There are of course many ways of carrying out studies in schools; I would, however, like to point to the stumbling block, experienced in municipality II, of reaching the teachers at respective schools without being given access by those in charge. This is a dilemma for researchers who want to reach all the way out to workers at the floor level, and I and others have to ask ourselves: why me, and why at this point in time am I given access?

However, because the study was anchored in a top-down approach, as the principals at the participating schools helped me invite teachers to the study, it cannot be excluded that some teachers might have felt that they were expected to participate. On the other hand, they were informed about the voluntary nature of the study, and the analysis

from the post-surveys, again, gave an indication that they felt comfortable participating. Moreover, verbal feedback given to the me indicated a high degree of satisfaction among the participants with having taken part in the interviews. As a way of controlling for the group compositions, I did choose to asses teachers' individual thoughts on having participated as a way of evaluating the group climate. The response rate to the post-survey was good, although not perfect. It can therefore not be excluded that those not responding were less satisfied with their level of comfort in the group and with the group communication climate.

Future development needs and suggested studies

If organizational and educational researchers have the ultimate goal of improving working conditions for teachers' areas such as organizational communication, feedback, and professional development could be at the center of intervention studies in the future.

The problems that teachers face on a daily basis are often overhanging and a solution cannot wait. It is here in the cross-section between the individual teacher - and her needs – as well as the organizational factors in the school, that both problems and solutions can be made visible. Teachers, like other professionals, engage in job crafting to solve such daily problems.

Implementation research

According to Torp, Ekelund and Thorpenberg, as presented in a literature review on Nordic workplace health promotion research (2011), it is both in international and Nordic research rare with comprehensive implementation designs that have a focus on participation and empowerment. There is accordingly a need for a research stream with an emphasis on democratic participation while taking into account local complexities influencing the research setting i.e. that of the local school/s (Torp et al., 2011). In addition, as highlighted by Tillgren, Ringsberg and Olander (2014), participant learning is an important aspect of empowerment, while at the same time the importance of the local context as well as other circumstantial features need to be in focus.

Schools have an important social mission and activities need to be juristically well founded, implying that all organizational changes will take time. This is part due to the legal requirement that all development in Swedish school must be based on both science and on a democratic decision-making process. In other words, job crafting trough employees own optimization of work environment (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017). More specifically, this entails countering job hindrances trough bottom-up interventions by using teachers own personal resources, countering the effect of challenging job demands. This type of bottom-up intervention makes use of, for example, a teacher's professional experience or problem-solving capacity (personal resource) to craft his or her job situation.

With the goal of improving working conditions, such as the work environment and work satisfaction of the teaching staff in a school, a primary intervention design based on the framework recommendation by Nielsen and Abildgaard (2013) may be used. Moving beyond the traditional design of a pre and post measure, a close eye on contextual factors specifically related to schools should prove beneficial. Such a program design could preferably hone in on understanding current demands and increasing resources to counter such demands.

Drawing on recent research by Gordon et al. (2018) on job crafting and using the JD-R model to design intervention research in healthcare, an intervention study within education could help teachers and management counter demands and increase resources. A stated by Bakker (2017), "job crafting may be an avenue to integrate job design and job stress theories, by exploring the role of job stressors and job demands in combination with the motivating role of job resources" p. 100. Making use of job crafting as a resource within education, the purpose cold be on increasing resources for work and reducing demands. In line with the work in the present dissertation, increasing resources though improving organizational communication could be fruitful.

To be sure, any intervention in a school requires close attention to the feasibility of the program. Focusing on the work already done by teachers and utilizing preexisting structures would therefore be a good starting point. Student concerns have in this focus group study shown to be a topic deemed to engulf an enormous amount of time consequently causing frustrations in the teams. This can be considered a serious problem as too little time is left for other important issues. Moreover, it would be beneficial if participating groups were drawn from preexisting work teams, and met during the regular meeting times of the work teams.

For example, it could be hypothesized that structured and facilitated discussion on student-related problems would lead to decreased frustration regarding 1) the outcomes of student-related discussions, 2) time-efficiency of the team-time, and 3) more time left over for discussing other work-related issues.

Nielsen and Randell (2013) point to the importance of a close analysis of hindering and facilitating factors in intervention research. One example of a hindering factor in a school based study would be scheduling conflicts and problems. Teachers have a set schedule, making them less flexible than other professionals. This constitutes a problem which has to be dealt with in close collaboration with school principals, in order to prevent scheduling conflicts. Another hindering factor, if a design is to be built around work teams, is the issue of voluntary participation. Work teams are often composed of around eight to ten teachers, and finding whole groups willing to participate could potentially be difficult. One way to approach this problem could be to find participating groups in collaboration with the student health teams whose members often work closely with teacher work teams, together solving difficult student related issues. The results of such a study could expand the understanding of how the work environment for teachers can be better supported and developed in schools.

Conclusions

Teacher efficiency, competence, and well-being are central to societies all over the world. To this can be added that international research points to the teaching profession as one of the most stressful occupations.

In light of today's circumstances for teaching, the present dissertation examines aspects of teaching that might be supportive or hindering for teachers' work situation.

The present dissertation enhances the evidence that teachers are a vulnerable occupational group. Especially disconcerting and relevant for primary and lower secondary school teachers in Sweden are results from this study indicative of problems with finding time to interact with colleagues, the possibility to recover from work, and insufficient separation between work and spare time.

To summarize, the main results are:

- Primary and lower secondary school teachers' perceptions of organizational communication signals that they lack adequate and comprehensive structures for organizational communication.
- There is support for a general satisfactory and positive view of collegial and workplace communication, as reported by the teachers in this study.
- Organizational communication is moderately associated with salient work environment indicators such as quantitative demands, role clarity and the physical work environment.
- Together, these work environment related constructs and teachers' perceptions of organizational communication act as a strong predictor for job satisfaction.
- Teachers' perceptions of their own work-related health and working conditions indicate that they belong to a vulnerable occupational group.
- The results give evidence of a moderate relationship between quantitative demands, role clarity, the physical work environment, as well as collegial and workplace communication and well-being.
- There is moderate support for the two models used to analyze the importance of separation between work and spare time as well as recovery from work, respectively, for the association between job satisfaction and the outcome variables, well-being and health complaints.

The explorative approach in study I, in combination with the empirical data collected in study II, paint a picture from which greater insight into the inner workings

of organizational communication in schools in and of itself as well as in relation to salient work environment factors pertinent to teachers work emerge.

The results from study I advances the understanding of how deficient and weak organizational communication is intertwined with and has consequences for the work situation among Swedish primary and lower secondary school teachers.

From study II (papers II and III) it was found that a general satisfaction and positive view of communicative interactions between teachers is important, constituting a foundation on which all improvements can successfully build. The results augment previous findings on teachers' work situation, using contextually anchored demands and resources. The results further suggest that the Job Demands-Resources model can be extended, by including organizational communication as one important aspect of organizationally centered constructs. School leaders are, based on this study, well advised to improve working conditions for teachers by increasing resources such as organizational communication while controlling demands.

Since the findings point to collegial communication being an important aspect of the organizational climate in schools, long-term job satisfaction may be influenced if efforts are directed towards helping teachers establish and maintain excellent professional interactions.

If we, as a society, want teachers to thrive in their profession, certain key aspects of the teaching landscape must change. Although, radically altering the demands of teaching may prove difficult, supporting the implementation of support structures, which could increase available resources, will potentially influence job satisfaction and well-being of teachers in a positive direction. Thus, the need for good and healthy communication practices between colleagues and between employees and management as well as with the community at large is a precondition for any improvement within schools. School leaders would be wise to become active listeners in their school, seeking to understand the staffs' strengths, resources and needs. Done properly, this is likely to benefit the next generation of learners.

Abbreviations

DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
ICD-10-SE	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems – Tenth Revision, Swedish edition
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHP	Occupational health psychology
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
WHO	World Health Organization
WWII	World War II

Summary in Swedish/ Svensk sammanfattning

Bakgrund

Under de senaste åren har skollärare i Sverige upplevt många reformer och samhällsförändringar som medfört förändrade arbetsförhållanden. I samband med detta har många lärare rapporterat ökad arbetsbelastning och minskat välbefinnande. Dessutom granskas lärare som grupp och ifrågasätts inte sällan av det omgivande samhället.

Nya rapporter om lärares arbetsvillkor har lett till stor oro. Som grupp rapporterar lärarna att arbetsbelastning och krav har ökat jämfört med för tio år sedan (Fromm & Hagström, 2011)Lärare rapporterar också en högre grad av sömnproblem och stress jämfört med andra yrkesgrupper, och i en facklig rapport redovisas att 40% av lärarna enligt uppgift överväger att lämna yrket. De vanligaste skälen bakom detta övervägande anges vara: dålig lön, administrativ börda, dålig psykosocial arbetsmiljö, samt bristande ledarskap och pedagogiskt stöd.

Arbetsmiljön i skolan präglas både av överordnade juridiska och regulatoriska ramar (betygsreformer och finansiering m.m.) samt lokala omständigheter (t.ex. kommunernas ekonomi och geografiska placering, lärarstab och elevunderlag m.m.). I ljuset av att ny forskning betonar vikten av goda arbetsrelationer för hälsa och trivsel (Freeney & Fellenz, 2013), tycks det viktigt att lärare har en god medvetenhet och förmåga att hantera organisatoriska frågor som berör socialt arbetsklimat och kommunikationsmönster på arbetsplatsen.

Begränsad budget, resultatkrav och krav på kontinuerlig effektivisering skapar inte sällan situationer där olika agendor och viljor ställs motvarandra och därmed sätter mänskliga interaktioner och relationer på prov. I bästa fall kan goda rutiner och en fungerande kommunikation bidra till goda lösningar eller minska risken för negativa konsekvenser av konkurrerande agendor och viljor. Motsatt kan bristfälliga rutiner och dålig kommunikation skapa missförstånd och förvärra konflikter samt leda till ett dåligt socialt klimat, vilket kan karaktäriserat av negativa handlingar och i värsta fall mobbing. Det är troligt att förmågan och möjligheterna till att kommunicera hos medarbetarna har en långsiktig påverkan på såväl organisationens funktion som människorna i den.

Organisationskommunikation är centralt för skolbaserade aktiviteter. Även om organisationskommunikation är det mest studerade området inom kommunikationsforskning är flera aspekter fortfarande av stort intresse, varav två är ny teknik och förändrade organisationsstrukturer (Jones, Watson, Gardner, & Gallois, 2004). Vidare ger en stor undersökning bevis för att organisatorisk kommunikation är grundläggande för organisationer och för organisering av arbete (Keyton, 2017). Det finns emellertid fortfarande begränsad kunskap om förhållandet mellan organisationskommunikation i skolor och arbetsrelaterade variabler. Ett anmärkningsvärt undantag är arbetet av De Nobile och kollegor som har visat att aspekter som skolans formella och informella kommunikationskanaler är kopplade till lärarens yrkesspänning (De Nobile, 2016).

Syfte och vetenskapliga frågeställningar

Denna avhandling syftar till att utöka kunskapsbasen om hur grundskolelärare i Sverige kommunicerar och interagerar i sitt yrke och vilka arbetsrelaterade hälsoproblem de upplever.

De specifika vetenskapliga frågeställningarna i avhandlingsarbetet var:

1. Att utforska grundskolelärarnas uppfattningar om organisatorisk kommunikation som det uppstår mellan dem under deras dagliga aktiviteter (studie I).
2. Att undersöka grundskolelärare syn på aspekter av organisatorisk kommunikation och arbetsrelaterad hälsa (studie II). I detalj var syftet:
    a) Att undersöka lärarnas uppfattning om organisatorisk kommunikation.
    b) Att undersöka i vilken utsträckning organisatorisk kommunikation är associerad med relevanta arbetsmiljöindikatorer.
    c) Att undersöka i vilken utsträckning dessa aspekter av organisatorisk kommunikation förutsäger arbetsnöjdhet utöver relevants arbetsmiljöindikatorer.
    d) Att bedöma lärarnas uppfattning om arbetsrelaterade hälso- och arbetsvillkor.
    e) Att undersöka förhållandet mellan flera nyckelförhållanden i arbetsmiljön för lärarnas välbefinnande.
    f) Att undersöka betydelsen av separation mellan arbete och fritid och återhämtning från arbete för välbefinnandet.

Metod och resultat

Denna avhandling bygger på två studier, vilka genererat tre artiklar. Papper I är baserat på resultat från en explorativ studie med fokusgruppsmetodik. I denna studie undersöktes arbetsplatskommunikationspraxis bland skollärare. En hybridinriktning av induktiv och deduktiv kodning och tema användes i dataanalysen. Totalt 44 deltagare (11 män, 33 kvinnor), delades in i fem grupper, vilka var och en mötes två gånger. Den kvalitativa studieutformningen kompletterades med två frågeformulär som undersökte demografiska variabler och gruppklimat. En förståelse för svenska grundskolelärarnas syn på kommunikationspraxis erhölls.

Papper II och III bygger på resultat från en tvärsnittsundersökning som administrerats till samtliga grundskollärare i två kommuner i södra Sverige. Centralt i den andra studien var användningen av kontextuellt förankrade organisatoriska kommunikationsmått, delvis utvecklade från studie I.

Papper II, rapporterar om lärarnas uppfattning om tid för kommunikation med kollegor, strukturer för kommunikativa interaktioner i skolan, arbetsplatskommunikationsklimatet och kollegial kommunikation. Vidare undersöker detta papper i vilken utsträckning organisatorisk kommunikation i skolan är förknippad med tydliga arbetsmiljöindikatorer (kvantitativa krav, fysisk arbetsmiljö och rollklarhet) och i vilken utsträckning organisatorkommunikation förutsätter arbetsnöjdhet utöver arbetsmiljöindikatorerna. Med hjälp av arbetskraftsmodellen som ramverk fann vi att tillsammans med arbetsmiljörelaterade konstruktioner fungerar lärarnas uppfattning om organisationskommunikation som en förutsägelse för arbetsnöjdhet (totalt 49,2% av variationen i arbetsnöjdhet). Angiv att tid för kommunikation och kollegial kommunikation är de relativt starkaste prediktorerna för arbetstillfredsställelse.

Papper III, rapporterar om arbetsrelaterade hälso- och arbetsvillkor för lärare genom ett omfattande antal frågor. Dessutom undersöks föreningarna och proportionerliga bidrag av tydliga arbetsrelaterade konstruktioner för hälsorelaterade resultat. Resultaten visar att 40,2% rapporterade under cutoff rekommenderas vid screening för depression. En alarmerande 43,8% av lärarna i denna studie kvalificerar sig som ledande en stillasittande livsstil och 33,7% rapporterade otillräcklig återhämtning från arbete. Resultaten tyder på att åtskillnad mellan arbete och fritid samt återhämtning från arbete delvis förmedlar sambandet mellan arbetstillfredsställelse och resultatvariabler, välbefinnande och hälsoklagomål. Dessa resultat bekräftar tidigare ny forskning som pekar på lärare som en utsatt yrkesgrupp. Särskilt relevant för lärare i Sverige är resultat som indikerar problem med återhämtning från arbete och otillräcklig separation mellan arbete och fritid.

Slutsatser

Föreliggande avhandlingsarbete ger stöd för att lärare är en utsatt yrkesgrupp. Särskilt problematiskt och relevant för grundskollärare i Sverige är resultat som tyder på problem för lärare att hinna interagera med kollegor, möjlighet att återhämta sig från jobbet och separera arbete och fritid.

Utifrån det explorativa studieupplägget i studie I, i kombination med de empiriska data som samlats in i studie II, ges en inblick i organisatorisk kommunikation i de studerade skolorna både i sig och i förhållande till viktiga arbetsmiljöfaktorer relevanta för lärararbetet.

Resultaten från studie I fördjupar förståelsen för hur bristfällig organisatorisk kommunikation är sammanflätat med förutsättningar för arbetet och vilka konsekvenser detta har för arbetssituationen för svenska grundskollärare.

Gränserna mellan arbete och fritid är särskilt betydelsefulla för lärare i Sverige, eftersom de under skolveckorna har en 45-timmars arbetsvecka, varav 10 timmar regleras i hemmet. Separationen mellan arbete och fritid har för lärare i studie II för det mesta att göra med att ha energi för att ta hand om privatlivet och kunna slappna av i hemmet. Det sätt på vilket lärararbetet är organiserat kan potentiellt leda till svårigheter för dem att psykologiskt koppla från jobbet och därmed uppleva minskade möjligheter till återhämtning från jobbet. Faktum är att över en tredjedel av lärarna i studie II rapporterade att de inte kände att de fick tillräckligt med vila mellan arbetsdagarna.

Från studie II (papper I och II) framkommer det att en allmän tillfredsställelse och positiv syn på kommunikativa interaktioner mellan lärare är viktigt. Dessa utgör detta en god grund från vilken förbättringsarbete kan utgå. Att alla kommunikationsvariabler vilka studerats är kopplade till arbetsnöjdhet, liksom andra arbetsmiljövariabler, pekar på de centrala rollförhållandena som organisatorisk kommunikation har för lärare. Eftersom fynden pekar på att den kollegiala kommunikationen är en viktig aspekt av det organisatoriska klimatet i skolorna kan långsiktigt arbetsnöjdhet påverkas om insatser riktar sig till att hjälpa lärare att upprätta och upprätthålla bra professionella interaktioner. Detta stöds av forskning som visar att tillfredsställande interaktioner med kollegor stödjer lärares självförtroende och självkänsla.

Sammantaget kan det sägas att den lokala arbetsmiljön med de förutsättningar som skapas har betydelse för den enskilde lärarens arbetstillfredsställelse, subjektiva välbefinnande samt professionella utveckling. Detta ger vid hand att god och hälsosam kommunikation mellan kollegor och mellan anställda och ledning samt med samhället i stort, är en förutsättning för förbättringar inom skolan.

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Intervjuguide fokusgrupper

Första träffen

Tema 1: hållbart arbetsliv
Syfte: att beskriva deltagarnas syn på sitt arbetsliv ur hållbarhetsaspekt
Klargörande frågor:
Vad är ett hållbart arbetsliv?
Vilka förutsättningar krävs för ett hållbart arbetsliv (ex. behålla hälsan, drivkraft, sköta jobbet)
Hur ser det ut på er skola?
Vad skulle behöva vara annorlunda?
Vad är bra?
Menar ni att ni arbetar på ett hållbart sätt?
Tema 2: synen på den framtida yrkesutvecklingen i din lärarroll
Syfte: att beskriva hur deltagarna ser på sin framtida yrkesutveckling
Klargörande frågor:
Vad innebär/betyder yrkesutveckling för dig?
Vad har ni för möjlighet att påverka er arbetssituation?
Har ni ett meningsfullt uppdrag?
Vilka aspekter av arbetsmiljön är viktig för att man ska utvecklas som lärare?
Vad finns det för utvecklingsmöjligheter?
Vad har ledarskapet för betydelse för yrkesutvecklingen?
Vilken betydelse har arbetskamraterna?

Andra träffen

Tema 3: betydelsen av återkoppling
Syfte: att beskriva hur deltagarna ser på strukturella och kulturella aspekter av återkoppling
Klargörande frågor:
Vad betyder återkoppling för dig i ditt arbete?
Hur ser du på dina behov av återkoppling?
Skiljer det sig mellan skolor/arbetslag etc. hur återkoppling kan se ut? Vad kan det bero på?
Tema 4: kommunikationsklimatet på arbetsplatsen
Syfte: att beskriva hur deltagarna kommunicerar på arbetsplatsen och hur de konceptualiserar kommunikation.
Klargörande frågor:
Vilka personer är centrala/viktiga att kommunicera med på jobbet (kring innehåll, kultur)?
Hur samtalar man om kommunikation/kommunikationsklimat på skolan?
Var och när sker dessa samtal?
Vilka hinder ser ni? Vilka möjligheter ser ni?

Fokusgruppstudie

Sida 1

Bäste deltagare,

Inför vår första fokusgruppträff vill jag samla in lite bakgrundsinformation. Frågorna handlar om dig, din utbildning samt lite om din yrkeslivserfarenhet. Anledningen till att jag samlar in denna information är att jag ska kunna beskriva gruppen som helhet.

Tack för att du tar dig tid att fylla i detta.

Elinor

Här kommer några frågor om dig:

Personuppgifter *

För- och efternamn

Hur gammal är du? *

[ ] år.

Hur länge har du arbetat som lärare? *

[ ] år.

Vad har du för utbildning (t.ex. lågstadielärare, ämneslärare, 1-7 lärare)? *

Har du fått din lärarlegitimation ännu? *

- ○ ja
- ○ nej

På hur många skolor har du arbetat som lärare mer än en termin? *

[ ] st.

Här kommer några frågor om din nuvarande tjänst:

Hur mycket arbetar du för närvarande (i procent)? *

[ ] %

Hur många år har du arbetat på nuvarande skola? *

[ ] år.

Undervisar du till största delen i ämnen som du är behörig i? *

- ○ ja
- ○ nej

Efterenkät- fokusgrupper

Sida 1

Hej forskningsdeltagare,
Här kommer efterenkäten. Jag är mycket tacksam för att ni tar er tid att svara på mina frågor.
Ett stort tack till alla deltagande lärare!
Med vänliga hälsningar,
Elinor Schad

Sida 2

Hur upplevde du samtalsklimatet i din grupp?

Slutet ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Öppet

Hur kändes det för dig att vara med?

Jag kände mig obekväm ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Jag kände mig bekväm

Har du något du vill lägga till angående fokusgruppträffarna eller lärares arbetsmiljö?

Vilka anser du är de tre största utmaningarna för dig som lärare på din skola?

Du har nu slutfört enkäten. Tack så mycket för att du deltog.

Du kan nu stänga fönstret.

Med vänliga hälsningar,
Elinor Schad

Social interaktion och kommunikation på arbetsplatsen

Några bakgrundsfrågor om dig

Ålder: *

Välj...

Kön: *

- ○ kvinna
- ○ man
- ○ vill ej uppge

Födelseland: *

- ○ Sverige
- ○ annat

Är du: *

- ○ sambo eller gift
- ○ ensamstående

Har du hemmaboende barn? *

- ○ ja
- ○ nej

Några frågor om din anställning

Har du: *

- ○ tillsvidaretjänst
- ○ vikariat
- ○ timanställning
- ○ annat

Hur många procent arbetar du? *

- ○ mindre än 25 %
- ○ mellan 25 och 50 %
- ○ mellan 51 och 80 %
- ○ mellan 81 och 99 %
- ○ heltid

Arbetar du för närvarande enligt ditt anställningsavtal? *

Välj

Undervisar du huvudsakligen i: *

- ○ förskolan
- ○ F-6
- ○ 7-9
- ○ annat

Har din tjänst ett innehåll som motsvarar din lärarutbildning? *

- ○ ja, helt och hållet
- ○ ja, delvis
- ○ nej

Hur många år har du arbetat som lärare? *

Välj

Hur länge har du arbetat på din nuvarande arbetsplats? *

Välj

Är du: *

	ja	nej
arbetslagsledare	○	○
samordnare	○	○
förstelärare	○	○

Några frågor om din arbetssituation

Instruktioner:
- Vänligen läs instruktionerna i rubriken för varje grupp av frågor.
- Försök svara spontant.
- Titta inte bakåt i formuläret.

Följande frågor handlar om din arbetsbelastning under det senaste året: *

	aldrig	nästan aldrig	sällan	ibland	ofta	så gott som alltid
Arbetar du i ett högt tempo under hela dagen?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kommer du efter i ditt arbete?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Är din arbetsbörda ojämnt fördelad?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Har du tillräckligt med pauser under arbetsdagen?	○	○	○	○	○	○

Följande frågor handlar om stöd från kollegor under det senaste året: *

	aldrig	nästan aldrig	sällan	ibland	ofta	väldigt ofta
Om du behöver, får du hjälp och stöd från dina kollegor?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Om du behöver, är dina kollegor beredda att lyssna till dina problem med arbetet?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hur ofta talar dina kollegor med dig om hur du utfört ditt arbete?	○	○	○	○	○	○

Följande frågor handlar om stöd från din chef under det senaste året: *

	aldrig	nästan aldrig	sällan	ibland	ofta	väldigt ofta
Om du behöver, är din närmaste chef beredd att lyssna på problem som rör ditt arbete?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Om du behöver, får du stöd och hjälp med ditt arbete från din närmaste chef?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hur ofta talar din närmaste chef med dig om hur du utfört ditt arbete?	○	○	○	○	○	○

Några frågor om ditt arbetsengagemang

Hur ofta upplever du nedanstående? *

	aldrig	nästan aldrig några gånger om året eller mindre	sällan en gång i månaden eller mindre	ibland några gånger i månaden	ofta en gång i veckan	mycket ofta några gånger i veckan	alltid varje dag
Jag spritter av energi på jobbet.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
På jobbet känner jag mig stark och energisk.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag känner mig entusiastisk inför mitt jobb.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mitt arbete inspirerar mig.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
När jag stiger upp på morgonen så känner jag för att gå till jobbet.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag känner mig lycklig när jag går upp i mitt arbete.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag är stolt över det arbete jag utför.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag rycks med när jag arbetar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag är uppslukad av mitt arbete.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Angående ditt arbete i allmänhet, hur tillfredsställd är du med? *

	mycket otillfredsställd	otillfredsställd	tillfredsställd	mycket tillfredsställd
Dina framtidsutsikter i läraryrket.	○	○	○	○
Din arbetsmiljö.	○	○	○	○
Det sätt dina kunskaper används på i undervisningen.	○	○	○	○
Det sätt dina kunskaper används på i organisationen.	○	○	○	○
Ditt arbete som helhet, allt inräknat.	○	○	○	○

Några frågor om din roll på arbetet och hur du känner dig

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden? *

	stämmer inte alls	stämmer ganska dåligt	stämmer ganska bra	stämmer precis
Klara och tydliga mål finns för mitt arbete.	○	○	○	○
Jag vet att jag fördelar min tid på ett bra sätt.	○	○	○	○
Jag vet vad som ligger inom mitt ansvarsområde.	○	○	○	○
Jag vet vad som förväntas av mig.	○	○	○	○
Jag har möjlighet/befogenhet att genomföra det som förväntas av mig.	○	○	○	○
Förklaringar över vad som ska göras är tydliga för mig.	○	○	○	○
Jag har lätt för att prata med mina kollegor.	○	○	○	○
Jag har lätt för att utrycka min åsikt på jobbet även om andra inte håller med mig.	○	○	○	○
Jag har lätt för att umgås på ett avslappnat sätt med mina kollegor på jobbet.	○	○	○	○
Jag är nöjd med den sociala interaktionen på min arbetsplats.	○	○	○	○

Några frågor om ditt behov av återkoppling

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden om återkoppling in på just DINA BEHOV? Var vänlig tänk på det senaste året när du svarar: *

	stämmer inte alls	stämmer ganska dåligt	stämmer ganska bra	stämmer precis
Jag behöver mer återkoppling som har att göra med min undervisning.	○	○	○	○
Jag behöver mer återkoppling som har att göra med min utveckling som lärare.	○	○	○	○
Jag behöver mer återkoppling som har att göra med min säkerhet som lärare och mitt självförtroende.	○	○	○	○
Jag behöver mer återkoppling som har att göra med interaktionen med elever.	○	○	○	○
Jag behöver mer återkoppling som har att göra med olika sorters bedömning.	○	○	○	○
Jag behöver mer återkoppling som har att göra med min förmåga till självbedömning/utvärdering.	○	○	○	○
Jag är nöjd med den återkoppling jag får från min chef/mina chefer.	○	○	○	○
Jag är nöjd med den återkoppling jag får från mina kollegor.	○	○	○	○

För att få återkoppling på RESULTATET av ditt arbete: *

	aldrig	nästan aldrig	sällan	ibland	ofta	mycket ofta
Hur ofta frågar du rakt ut vad en kollega tycker?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hur ofta frågar du rakt ut vad din chef tycker?	○	○	○	○	○	○

För att få återkoppling på HUR du arbetar: *

	aldrig	nästan aldrig	sällan	ibland	ofta	väldigt ofta
Hur ofta frågar du rakt ut vad en kollega tycker?	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hur ofta frågar du rakt ut vad din chef tycker?	○	○	○	○	○	○

Några frågor om kommunikation

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden om kommunikationsklimatet på din arbetsplats? Var vänlig tänk på det senaste året när du svarar: *

	stämmer inte alls	stämmer ganska dåligt	stämmer ganska bra	stämmer precis
På min arbetsplats ger vi varandra beröm.	○	○	○	○
På min arbetsplats ger vi varandra konstruktiv kritik.	○	○	○	○
På min arbetsplats är kontakterna och samtalen mellan människor öppna och raka.	○	○	○	○
Konflikter och motsättningar behandlas öppet och reds vanligen ut.	○	○	○	○
Folk här är pigga på att lägga fram sina idéer.	○	○	○	○
Jag är nöjd med kommunikationsklimatet på min arbetsplats.	○	○	○	○

Hur ofta upplever du att du har tillräckligt med tid att kommunicera med dina kollegor om följande: *

	aldrig	nästan aldrig	sällan	ibland	ofta	så gott som alltid
Elevärenden	○	○	○	○	○	○
Schemaärenden	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lärande och undervisning	○	○	○	○	○	○
Skolutveckling	○	○	○	○	○	○

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden om den interna kommunikationen in på din skola? *

	stämmer inte alls	stämmer ganska dåligt	stämmer ganska bra	stämmer precis
Mötestrukturen på min skola är stödjande för lärande och undervisning.	○	○	○	○
Vi har behov av fler formella möten på min skola.	○	○	○	○
Kommunikationen via e-post är effektiv.	○	○	○	○
Lärplattformarna fungerar bra.	○	○	○	○
Det är lätt för mig att få tag i en kollega som jag behöver prata med.	○	○	○	○
Vi har behov av fler informella möten på min skola.	○	○	○	○
Vi har en bra blandning av informella och formella möten.	○	○	○	○

Hur ofta träffar du dina närmaste kollegor? *

○ dagligen ○ flera gånger i veckan ○ varje vecka ○ flera gånger i månaden ○ flera gånger per termin

Några frågor om bemötande

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden med hur du upplever att du blir bemött på din arbetsplats? *

	aldrig	sällan	ibland	ofta	för det mesta
Jag får den uppmuntran jag behöver.	○	○	○	○	○
Jag blir lyssnad till och andra visar intresse för mina åsikter.	○	○	○	○	○
Jag blir behandlad med respekt.	○	○	○	○	○
Jag blir bemött med professionalitet.	○	○	○	○	○
Jag känner mig som en del i gemenskapen.	○	○	○	○	○
Jag är nöjd med hur jag blir bemött på min arbetsplats.	○	○	○	○	○

Några frågor om sömn, arbete och fritid

Följande påståenden handlar om din sömn. Var vänlig tänk på den senaste månaden när du svarar: *

	stämmer inte alls	stämmer ganska dåligt	stämmer ganska bra	stämmer precis
Jag har haft svårigheter att somna.	○	○	○	○
Jag har vaknat flera gånger eller sovit oroligt.	○	○	○	○
Jag har vaknat tidigt på morgonen och inte kunnat somna om.	○	○	○	○

Utöver sömnen, tycker du att du får tillräckligt med vila/avkoppling mellan arbetsdagarna? *

○ ja, definitivt ○ ja, i stort sett ○ nej, något otillräckligt ○ nej, klart otillräckligt ○ nej, långt i från tillräckligt

Följande påståenden handlar om ditt arbete i relation till din fritid. Var vänlig tänk på den senaste månaden när du svarar: *

	stämmer inte alls	stämmer ganska dåligt	stämmer ganska bra	stämmer precis
Arbetet tar så mycket energi att jag förlorar orken att ta itu med saker som jag behöver göra därhemma.	○	○	○	○
Problem på arbetet gör mig irriterad därhemma.	○	○	○	○
Jag har svårigheter att koppla av på fritiden p.g.a. ständiga tankar på arbetet.	○	○	○	○
Jag har svårigheter att sova p.g.a. ständiga tankar på arbetet.	○	○	○	○

Några frågor om din hälsa

Var vänlig markera för varje påstående vad som är närmast hur du har känt under de senaste två veckorna. *

	aldrig	ibland	mindre än halva tiden	mer än halva tiden	mestadels	hela tiden
Jag har känt mig glad och på gott humör.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag har känt mig lugn och avslappnad.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag har känt mig aktiv och kraftfull.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag har känt mig pigg och utvilad när jag har vaknat.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mitt vardagsliv har varit fyllt av sådant som intresserar mig.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Hur tycker du att din hälsa är i allmänhet? *

○ dålig ○ mindre god ○ god ○ väldigt god ○ utomordentligt god

Hur mycket tid ägnar du en vanlig vecka åt måttligt ansträngande aktiviteter som får dig att bli varm, t.ex. promenader i rask takt, trädgårdsarbete, tyngre hushållsarbete, cykling, simning? Det kan variera under året, men försök ta något slags genomsnitt. *

○ fem timmar per vecka eller mer ○ mer än tre timmar, men mindre än fem timmar per vecka ○ mellan en till tre timmar per vecka ○ högst en timme per vecka ○ inte alls

Några frågor om din hälsa

Hur ofta har du under den senaste månaden känt av eller lagt märke till följande? *

	inte alls	sällan	ofta	väldigt ofta
Hjärtklappning eller obehagskänsla i hjärttrakten (t.ex. tryck över bröstet).	○	○	○	○
Ljud- eller ljuskänslighet.	○	○	○	○
Försämrat närminne.	○	○	○	○
Försämrad koncentrationsförmåga eller förvirring.	○	○	○	○
Yrsel, ångest eller oro.	○	○	○	○
Svår trötthet/energibrist som inte minskar efter vila.	○	○	○	○
Otålighet.	○	○	○	○
Brusar upp (blir irriterad) för småsaker.	○	○	○	○
Tar illa vid dig för småsaker (t.ex. haft nära till gråten).	○	○	○	○
Känslor av hopplöshet eller maktlöshet.	○	○	○	○
Känner dig initiativlös.	○	○	○	○

Med tanke på din hälsa: tror du att du kan arbeta som lärare även om två år? *

○ nej, det tror jag inte ○ jag är osäker på det ○ ja, troligen

Blir din röst trött, ansträngd eller hes när du talar? Bortse från besvär som beror på att du är förkyld/har en luftvägsinfektion. Besvären kan variera, men försök ange ett genomsnitt. *

○ nej ○ ja, i liten utsträckning ○ ja, i stor utsträckning

Röker du? *

○ ja, dagligen ○ ja, men inte alla dagar ○ nej

Hur många dagar har du varit borta från arbetet p.g.a. sjukdom eller skada (vård, behandling eller undersökning) under det senaste året (12 månader)? *

○ ingen dag ○ 1-7 dagar ○ 8-24 dagar ○ 25-99 dagar ○ 100-365 dagar

Några frågor om arbetsmiljön i personalutrymmena

Hur upplever du skolmiljön i stort vad gäller arbetsmiljön i personalutrymmena, för: *

	mycket dålig	dålig	acceptabel	bra	mycket bra
Arbetsutrymmen	○	○	○	○	○
Tillgång till telefon	○	○	○	○	○
Tillgång till dator	○	○	○	○	○
Arbetsro/arbetsmöjlighter	○	○	○	○	○

Du har slutfört enkäten. Tack så mycket för att du deltog.

Du kan nu stänga fönstret.

Med vänliga hälsningar,
Elinor Schad

No time to talk!

International research points to the teaching profession as one of the most stressful occupations. In Sweden, recent reports have documented that teachers belong to a profession with difficult circumstances for work. In light of today's circumstances for teaching, the present dissertation examines aspects of teaching that might be supportive or hindering for teachers' work situation. One important aspect of this work was to bring forth the voices of the teachers themselves, as exemplified here:

I think we could do quite a lot if we, at an earlier stage, started talking about the organization. The first thing would be to have regular dialogues with each other, and from those we could try to pick up on the small changes we could make in order to make things easier and then to evaluate things after each year. We write an evaluation, but we never look at it and we never make any changes based on it, so I think actually quite small things could help ease the workload we experience.

The results reveal problems with teachers finding time to interact with colleagues, a possibility to recover from work, and an insufficient separation between work and spare time.

Elinor Schad is currently working in the department of psychology at Lund University. Her expertise is in educational and organizational psychology. She has a special interest in teacher professional development and well-being.

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