

## Teachers in Russian Schools: Working Conditions and Causes of Dissatisfaction

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### ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to studying the causes of discontent, management methods at school, dynamics of teachers' wealth status; it is based on statistical data and results of all-Russian sociological studies, the timing of the teachers' working time conducted in 2015-2016. The model of teachers' professional self-identification has been proposed. Besides, dynamics of teachers' salaries in the Russian Federation over the past two years have been shown. A review of the mood of protest among teachers due to dissatisfaction with conditions and salaries has been presented; characteristics and causes of their arising have been defined.

### KEYWORDS

sociology of education, work of teachers,  
study of school education, study of teachers' working  
conditions

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### Introduction

For the past 20 years in Russia large-scale transformation of the economic relations in the market ones occurred, which resulted in a change in not only distribution relations, but also the modernization of social institutions, including those performing the function of the formation of the social structure. One of the important components of these institutions is a school which is carrying out the socialization of the young generation, in fact, forming the ethical, civic, and in many ways professional shape of society in the future. Measures undertaken by the state for school reform in terms of the content of the educational process brought it closer to the standards of European countries, but the qualitative composition of the teaching staff, that is, of the contingent, which influences entirely on the effectiveness, changes slowly for several reasons.

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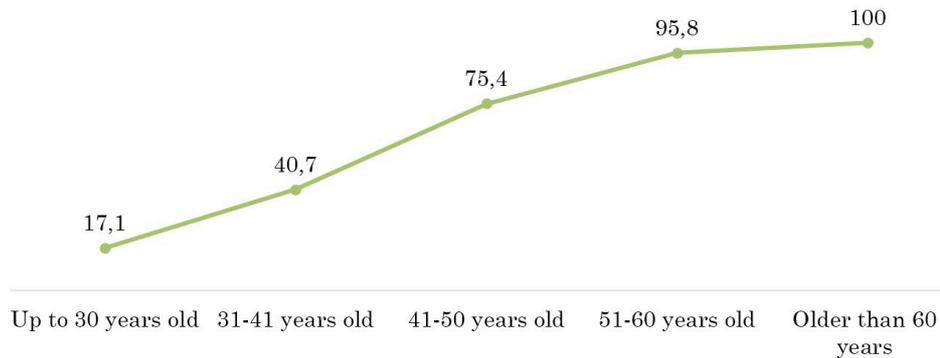
Actuality of the theme of the study is due, in the first place, to the fact that the problem of teachers' work, their job satisfaction is now regarded as one of the most fundamental problems by not only the sociology of education and labor, but also by many other sectors of social science (O.I. Yefremova (2011; 2012; 2013), L.G. Ponomareva (2012), F.E. Sheregi (2016), V.N. Varaksin (1996), A.A. Mishin (2012) and others).

Professional stress of the teacher is generally recognized to be the objective law, which is manifested in many varieties of professional activity, and can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of its implementation, on professional formation and personal development of the subject of labor, his/her professional longevity, physical and mental health. In examining the educators' professional fatigue, the study of the teacher's personality deformation can be distinguished, which occurs with chronic professional fatigue. The works by V.A. Bodrov (2012), N.A. Tyurina (2010; 2011), S. V. Kozlova (2015), Y.V. Selezneva (2010), A.A. Mayer (2011), A.I. Cherlyunchachkevich (2013) have been devoted to this phenomenon.

Much attention in national research is paid to the study of occupational stress and professional exhaustion and its consequences in pedagogical professional activity (A.A. Kondratyeva (2014), I.K. Schatz (2013), O.V. Kuzmina (2011), S.Y. Shalova (2013), A.V. Plotnikova (2014), O.A. Semizdralova (2010) et al.). At the same time, dissatisfaction with the work by teachers and its causes, as well as their working conditions in recent years in Russia and the CIS have almost not been studied, which makes the given work particularly relevant.

Since 2010, government decisions in the area of improving the social status of teachers of secondary schools were taken in Russia. Increasing fertility, stimulated by the introduction of the parent capital in the country, boosted the number of students and therefore teachers; for the period from 2010 to 2014 the number of secondary schools increased by 6.8% (from 12.970.1 to 13.848.800 thousand persons) and 3.5% (from 1243 to 1.286.500 thousand persons) (Bodrov, 2012).

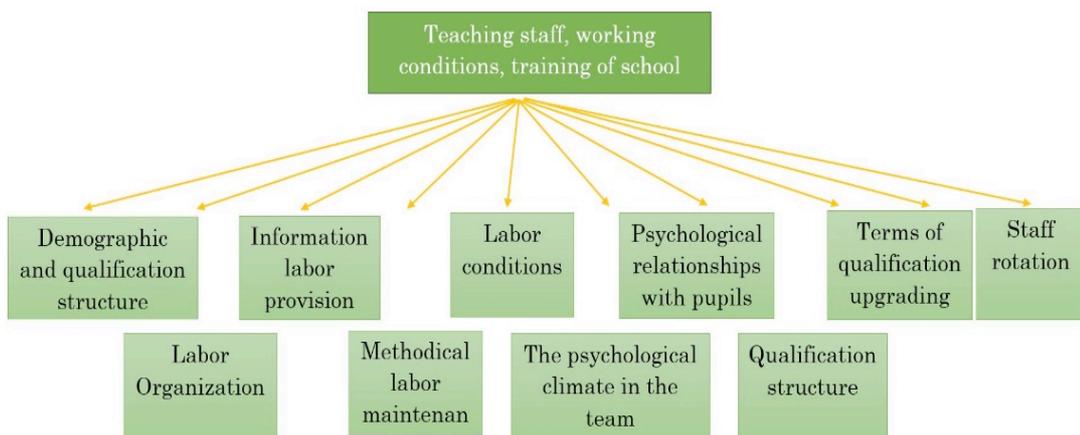
Two-thirds of teachers choose to work at school due to dedication. Most of them are working in the same subject, in which they were educated. This is generally satisfactory performance. However, the inflow of young specialists in the sphere of general education has slowed. The share of the teachers of retirement age among all teachers in Russian schools now amounts to 23%. Also, high feminization of the teaching staff in schools is observed; among teachers women it makes 87.7% (Bodrov, 2012). A sharp accumulation of teachers with many years of record of work (see Fig. 1) begins after 15 years of service.



**Figure 1** - The cumulative increase in the teaching staff in organizations of general education by age, %

An equally important problem is the welfare status of teachers in Russian schools because of low salaries (based on teacher's standard workload of 25, 800 rubles per month; that is \$ 400). Therefore, two-thirds of the teachers are forced to further work in other organizations to provide a decent living for the family. Distraction of teachers from work for a long time is not conducive to the growth of any of their skill level or quality of teaching.

These data indicate that the measures taken by the Government are not sufficient to solve the problems of ensuring the qualitative teaching staff in schools. In November 2015 a personal survey of 5000 teachers of 1-11 grades in 500 secondary schools in the Russian Federation was conducted to find effective ways of forming the qualitative teaching staff in schools. The empirical data of the study was the basis of this article. A formalized sociological questionnaire was constructed to conduct a personal interview, the blocks of questions of which are displayed on the chart (see Fig. 2).



**Figure 2** - Operational scheme of teaching staff in schools, their working conditions and professional development

## 2. Professional identity of teachers

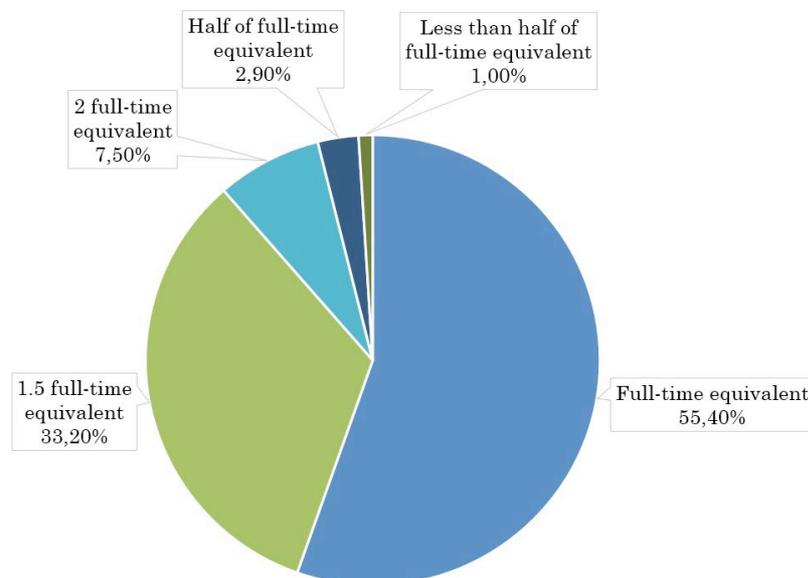
The nature of professional identity of teachers has an impact on the quality of teaching. In this respect, the mere presence of the pedagogical education (profiled or non-core) does not always guarantee the identity of the occupation. In Russian schools 88.1% of teachers have pedagogical education but among them 73.2% consider their job to be a vocation, 26.8% of teachers do not regard their job as a vocation, 3.1% of teachers refer it as a wrong choice. First and foremost teachers at the age of 30 years (more than 40%, see Table 1) do not consider this job to be their vocation.

**Table 1** - The identification of teachers with their work, depending on the age, %

Educational activities	The age, years				
	Up to 30	31-40	41-50	51-60	Above 60
Vocation	58.8	67.3	76.0	84.3	88.0
Just work activity	34.2	29.7	22.2	12.8	11.5
Wrong choice	4.0	1.4	0.5	0.6	0.0
Heavy "burden"	1.5	0.8	0.4	1.8	0.5
Difficult to answer	1.5	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.0
Total not consider teaching work to be a vocation	<b>41.2</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>12.0</b>
Total ballast clear (the sum of lines 3 + 4 + 5)	<b>7.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>0.5</b>

### B) Teaching load.

The average index of the teaching load of teachers in schools of Russia amounts to 1.2 full-time equivalent. This average figure is a large dispersion (variation). In particular, 39.7% of teachers work with the teaching load of 1.5 and 2 full-time equivalent in the aggregate (see Fig. 3).



**Figure 3** - The structure of the teaching load of teachers, %

These values mean that as compared to the standard full-time equivalent, Russian school teachers are overwhelmed by an average of 20%. The load of teachers increases after 30 years and after 50 years it begins to decline.

Additional teaching load is formed mainly due to the following subjects: Social Studies, Mathematics, 1-4<sup>th</sup> classes, Computer Science, Physics, Local History, Biology, Russian language and literature, Foreign Language, the Basics of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics, Technology, Drawing, Ensuring Safety-of Life.

Within one day, the teachers spend maximum 6 lessons and minimum 4 lessons. With the 5-days working week it means: the maximum load of 30 hours, the minimum load of 20 hours. In the first case, the teachers' workload exceeds the weekly statutory rate by 67%, in the second case by 11%.

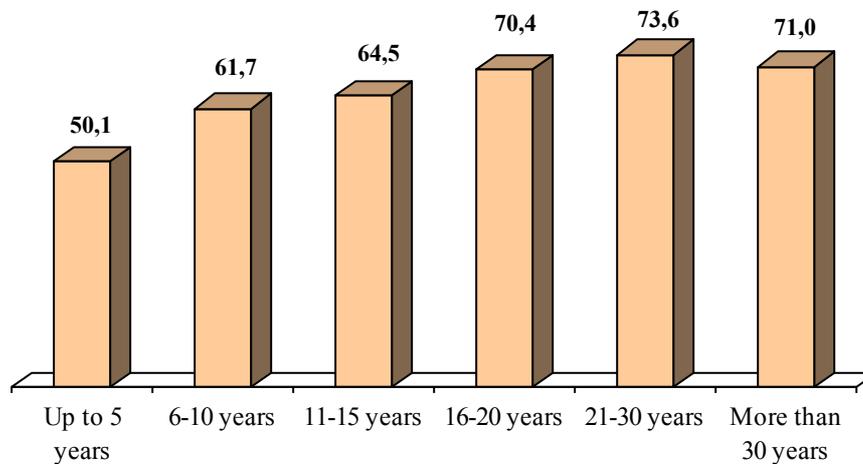
The average number of classes in which teachers hold lessons amount to 6, and the average number of students per class involves 22-23 persons. This means that every teacher has to deal with an average of 135 students, which significantly reduces the pedagogical (educational) effect of such contacts.

#### C) Work performance by teachers at the main place beyond the norm

The vast majority (71.3%) of teachers carry out work at the main workplace above the norm (18 hours per week). 65.3% of teachers said they had been paid for this work fully, 19.6% of teachers had been paid partly-, 15.4% - had not been paid at all.

Those who were not fully paid for the work received no more than 40% of the total cost of the work.

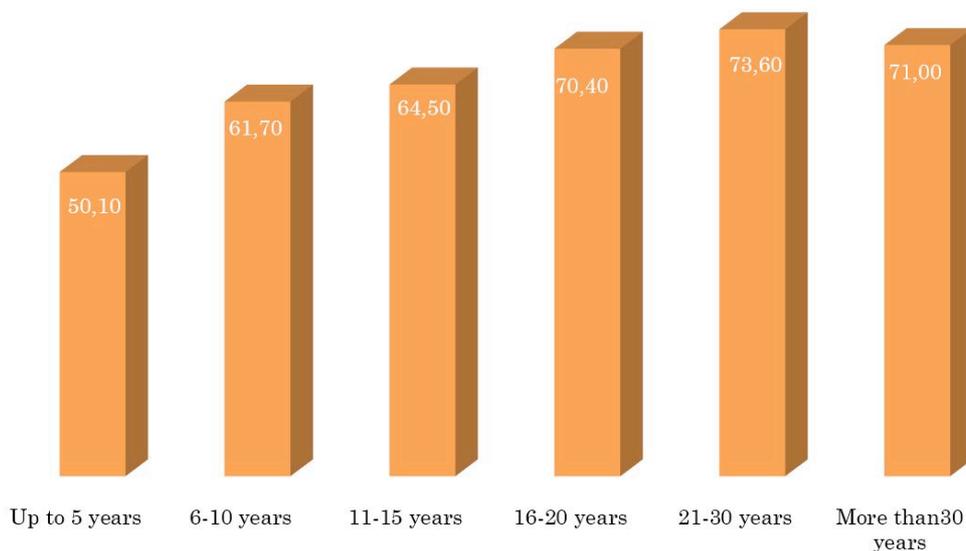
Additional work at the major workplace is often performed by older teachers (see Fig. 4).



**Figure 4** - The proportion of teachers with a variety of general experience of pedagogical work who had to perform work at the main workplace beyond the norm, %

D) Work performance by teachers at the main workplace that they are not obliged to perform as a teacher.

At the main workplace types of work that they are not obliged to perform as a teacher are performed by 66.7% of teachers. These are mostly teachers with a large working experience (see Fig. 5).



**Figure 5** - The proportion of teachers with a variety of general experience of pedagogical work who had to perform work not related to their pedagogical activity at the main place beyond the norm, %

Types of work not related to their pedagogical activity that teachers had to do are as follows (see List 1).

List 1. Types of work which they were not obliged to carry out as a teacher that had to be done by them, %

- 54.8 – Cleaning class
- 54.2 – Grounds maintenance
- 48.8 – Unplanned events with students
- 36.3 – Unscheduled consultation
- 33.1 – Other chores
- 33.1 – Participation in the preparation of the administrative reporting
- 17.7 – Involvement to assist other organizations

*E) Recalling from annual leave.*

In the survey, 29.1% of teachers mentioned that they were recalled from leave. As the surveyed teachers indicated, the main reason for their recalling from leave on behalf of school administration is technical preparation for the academic year and operational necessity (see List 2).

List 2. The reason for teachers' recalling from leave on behalf of school administration, %

47.1 – Preparation for the school year (cleaning, maintenance, office reception by September 1)

42.5 – Operational necessity (Report writing, methodical seminars, the electoral campaign)

3.5 – Supervision by controlling structures (unannounced checks)

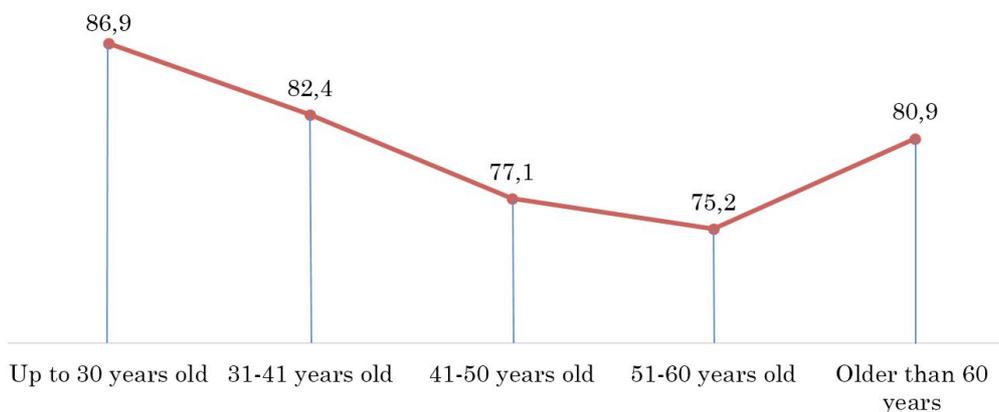
3.8 – The need for replacement of teachers because of illness.

The main forms of compensation for the interruption of teachers' regular leave are additional days of leave (58.7%), bonuses or financial assistance (8.9%), none (34.7%).

79.8% of teachers are satisfied with the load on the whole at the main workplace and 20.2% consider it excessive.

In case of summing up classes (lessons), extracurricular and other types of work, teachers have to be on average 7.6 astronomical hours per day in school. This, according to teachers' point of view, is effective for no more than 80% for the learning process.

With age, the proportion of teachers who are satisfied with the school load is reduced, except those who are older than 60 years old; apparently, their load is reduced (see Fig. 6).



**Figure 6** - The proportion of representatives of different age groups of teachers who are satisfied with the load at the main workplace, %

### 3. Remuneration of teachers

According to teachers' self-assessments, the amount of their monthly salary for work at the main work place, after the deduction of personal income tax (income tax), an average is 25,800 rubles. Judging from Table 2, the load naturally differentiates the value of the teachers' monthly salary.

**Table 2** - Average monthly salary of teachers with different load, and duration of wage arrears

Workload	Average size of the monthly payment of labor at the main workplace of after deduction of income tax, rubles	Average duration of delay of salary payment, days
Straight time	24,100	14
Time and a half	29,500	8
Two-rate tariff	28,500	8
Half-rate tariff	12,900	14
Less than half-rate tariff	13,900	18

A surcharge, which 88.9% of teachers get, a number of factors is taken into account (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Factors that are taken into account in the calculation of teacher's salary at the main workplace

Types of surcharges	Share of teachers for which the factor is taken into account, %	Amount of co-payment per month to the basic salary as regards this factor, rubles
1. Geographical and climatic conditions	20.0	5,440

2. Work in the countryside (or another remote) areas	16.4	2,580
3. Nature and level of education (higher pedagogical - non-pedagogical, vocational pedagogical education - non-pedagogical)	27.5	2,780
4. Job profile (grades 1-4, profile - educational subjects)	14.1	5,790
5. Working with children from families with difficult social conditions	5.1	1,910
6. Qualification category	47.8	2,630
7. Pedagogical work experience	38.9	2,310
8. Class supervision	53.9	2,150
9. Award, stimulating supplement	18.2	3,870
10. Additional educational services	3.0	4,220
11. Office supervision	1.9	1,720
12. Extracurricular load (day care center, tours, museums)	0.4	9,010
13. Sporting events, competitions	0.1	7,250
14. Other (Honorary worker title; performing administrative work; checking notebooks)	1.3	3,500
15. Young specialist	0.5	2,570
<b>Average index</b>		<b>9,430</b>

If additional charges for academic affairs (7700 rubles) are deducted from the average of the total fee (9430 rubles), then we obtain the sum of 1730 rubles of payment as non-academic compensation (geographic and climatic conditions, work in rural areas).

*The average value of a teacher's total revenue per month, taking into account all types of work performed by him/her (after the deduction of income taxes) is 29460 rubles, i.e., more by 4160 rubles (or about 15%) than the salary at the main workplace (25,800 rubles).*

*Such income ensures 21100 rubles per a family member per month.*

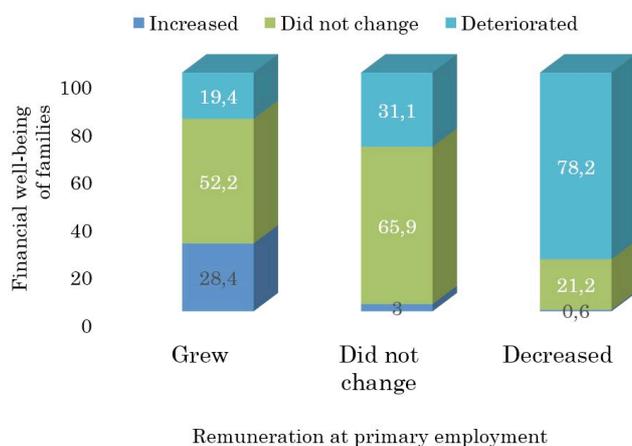
With the above-mentioned indicators, only 34.3% of teachers consider their work as fully paid and 65.7% consider it as unpaid and would like to get 65% more, i.e. 42840 rubles. Expectations of teachers increase: those who are more than 40 years old and they are willing to increase salary by one and a half (see Table 4).

**Table 4** - Indicators of income of representatives of different age groups of teachers, rubles

Age	The amount of total income per month, including all types of work, after the deduction of income tax	The size of the average monthly income per family member	If considering their work not paid in full, what payment per month for work would be fair	By which p.c. is the desirable salary increase, %
Up to 30 years old	27,754	19,5656	34,329	24
31-41 years old	32,141	20,395	42,700	33
41-50 years old	29,140	20,630	46,125	58
51-60 years old	28,771	23,684	43,754	52
Older than 60 years	27,217	23,010	41,928	54

Changes in wages did not lead to favorable changes in the material welfare of teachers, on the contrary, it has increased compared to the 2013/2014 academic year among 7.7% of teachers, and decreased among 40.5% of teachers. It is legitimate to assume that such deterioration is not related or connected to a small extent with teachers' wages, but is a consequence of the general deterioration of the economic situation and inflation.

The well-being of the family has changed positively for those teachers who have had wage increases, and vice versa, well-being of the family of those who had a decrease in salaries has been deteriorated (see Fig. 7).



**Figure 7** - Change in material well-being in the families of teachers from 2013/2014 academic year, depending on the change in the wage at primary employment, %

#### 4. Protest mood among teachers

According to 28.9% of the surveyed teachers there is a possibility of social protest by school teachers because of dissatisfaction with the payment for their labor. According to 38.7% of the teachers under survey, there is no such possibility, and 32.4% of them were undecided.

Possible forms of protest, in the opinion of teachers (in %):

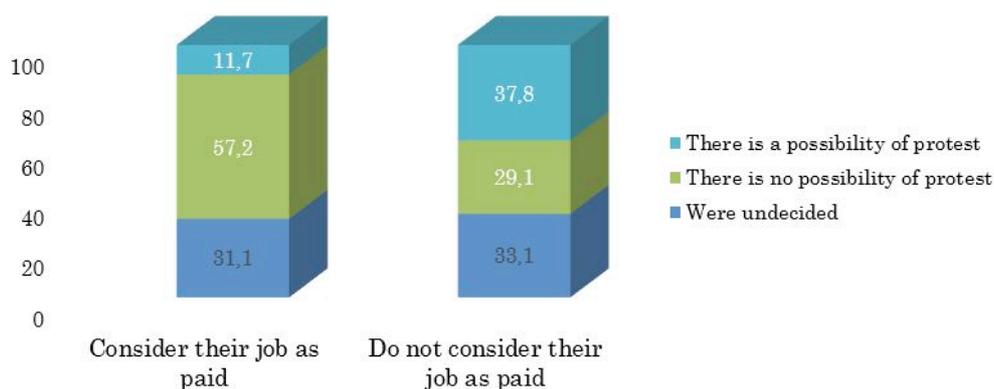
47.1 – Just disturbed communication among themselves

27.2 – Application for the media

22.7 – Participation in demonstrations, rallies

12.1 – Participation in the strike

Among those who believe that their work has not been paid, the percentage of probability of recognizing the social protest of teachers increased to 37.8% (see Fig. 8).



**Figure 8.** The teachers' opinion about whether there is a likelihood of social protest because of dissatisfaction with the payment for their labor, %

## 5. Living conditions of teachers

Data of Table 5 indicate that the material living conditions of teachers have changed not very much, after all, if anything, much less than would be expected with a serious economic crisis. 44.2% of teachers lived unwealthy a year ago, and in 2015 – 57.4% is something else entirely.

**Table 5.** Life opportunities that has been provided by family budget (or personal budget if there is no family) of teachers in the 2013/2014 academic year, and which of them it provides in the 2014/2015 academic year

Opportunities	2013/2014 academic year	2014/2015 academic year
Could (can) afford any purchase, even the most expensive (car, summer house...)	2.6	1.9
There was (is) enough money for food, clothing, purchase of consumer durables and recreation	53.2	40.7
Lived (live) from paycheck to paycheck, there is enough money only for food and necessary clothing	42.1	53.2
Were (are) on a tight budget, do not have always enough money even for food	2.1	4.2

Currently, teachers are provided with accommodation in the following way (see List 3).

List 3. Housing situation of school teachers, %:

50.1 – Have a separate apartment, house, there is no need to improve living conditions

29.1 – Have a separate apartment, house, but there is the need to improve living conditions

11.6 – Live with parents

5.3 – Rent residential property

1.8 – Have a room (rooms) in a shared flat

1.0 – Live in a hostel, hotel

0.8 – Live in the departmental housing

0.3 – Other accommodations

In general, the improvement of living conditions is required by 46.2% of teachers. How do teachers want to solve their housing problem? (see List 4).

List 4. The teachers' opinion about the forms of solution of their housing problems, %:

5.6 – in the waiting list of district (city)

12.4 – intend to build (buy) a house

11.9 – intend to buy an apartment

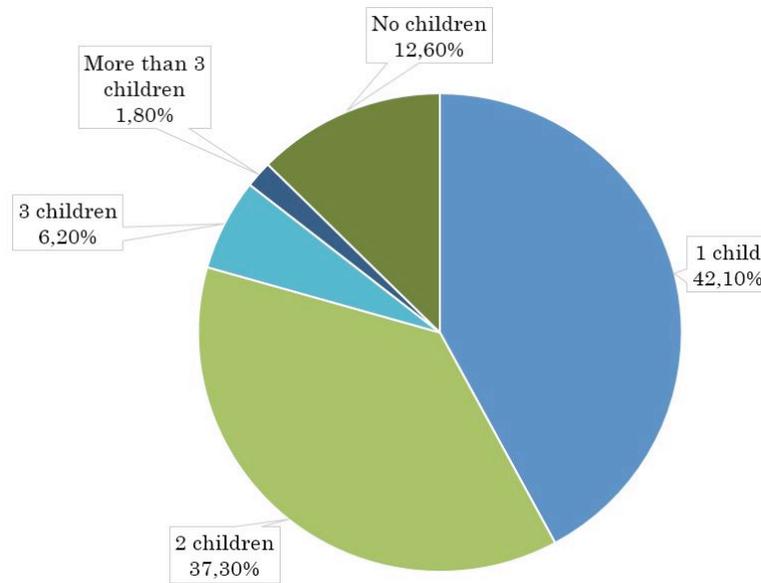
1.9 – the waiting list for service apartment

69.6 – have no idea how to solve accommodation problem

84.8% of teachers have the families of their own.

The number of children in a family of teachers is an average of 1.6. In more detail, the ratio is displayed in Figure 9.

The teachers' recreation is badly adjusted. Among them, 42.8% do not even remember when was the last time they went to recreation with their family (or by themselves) to a recreation home, sanatorium, resort; 18.9% went to recreation before 2010 and 38.1% in the period from 2011 to 2015.



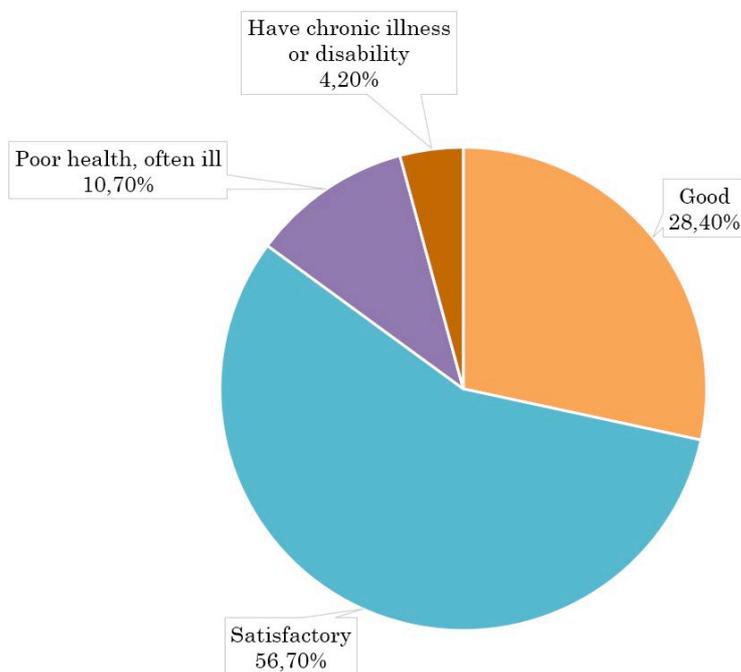
**Figure 9** - The number of children in a family of teachers, %

The idea of the way of recreation by teachers are given in figures in Table 6.

**Table 6** - The idea of the way of summer recreation by teachers in 2013/2014 academic year and in 2014/2015 academic year, %

Form of recreation	2013/2014 academic year	2014/2015 academic year
Had a rest abroad	11.9	7.1
Had a rest at Russian resorts	18.4	16.5
Had a rest in a summer house	17.6	18.8
Went to visit relatives in another region (krai, republic)	15.9	13.5
Stayed at home	<b>36.7</b>	<b>42.4</b>
Earned a bit at a secondary job	<b>6.8</b>	<b>8.6</b>
Other (treatment, care for a sick relative, a sanatorium; wild hiking, camping, sightseeing; pilgrimage; sports events, training courses)	1.4	1.4

This is important because some teachers (14.9%) do not have very good health (see Figure 10).



**Figure 10** - Health state of educators

Structure of revenue and expenditure part of the household budget of teachers is shown in Tables 7 and 8 (all types of income and benefits of all members of the family have been summarized). The discrepancy between the revenue and expenditure parts of teachers' budget, received according to their self-assessment is 2857 rubles, i.e., 3.2% with respect to the expenditure (greater) part, that is a minor error with subjective assessments; and it allows concluding that the structure of revenue and expenditure parts of the teachers' family budget shown in Tables 7 and 8 reflects the objective picture.

**Table 7** - Structure of revenue part of the teachers' family budget

	Share of families with the appropriate source of income, %	Amount of income per month, rubles	Share in total budget
Wages, pensions (together from all members of the family)	100.0	55,170	95.6
Revenues from the infield	10.9	7,070	1.3
Revenues from business, bank interecreation and other sales revenues	3.3	14,910	0.9
Revenue from other sources	10.3	12,530	2.2
<i>Totally</i>		<i>89,680</i>	<i>100.0</i>

**Table 8** - Structure of expenditure part of the teachers' family budget

	Share of families with the appropriate source of expenses, %	Amount of expenses per month, <i>rubles</i>	Share in total budget
For food	100.0	19,388	33.2
For clothing	81.9	9,231	12.9
For utilities	87.9	5,630	8.5
For transport	72.2	3,200.6	4.0
For education of the child(ren)	40.9	7,365	5.2
For cultural spending of weekend	51.1	3,776	3.3
For vacation during the year	37.9	28,488	18.5
For treatment	60.0	4,284	4.4
Other expenses	53.3	11,174	10.2
<i>Totally</i>		<i>92 537</i>	<i>100.0</i>

For the reasons given above, teachers lowly evaluated their material and, consequently, social status. Such a decrease in the precreationige in own eyes of teachers hardly contributes to the optimistic mood of the work. According to the proposed 10-point scale, teachers evaluated their material status (level) at 3.2 points (which corresponds to an estimate of 1.6 points on a five-point scale), and social status (level) – at 3.9 points (on a scale that matches 2.0 assessment score, see Figure 11 and 12).

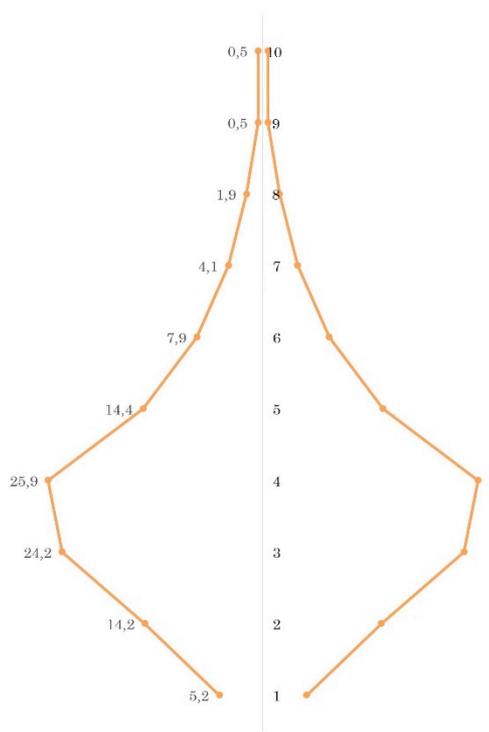
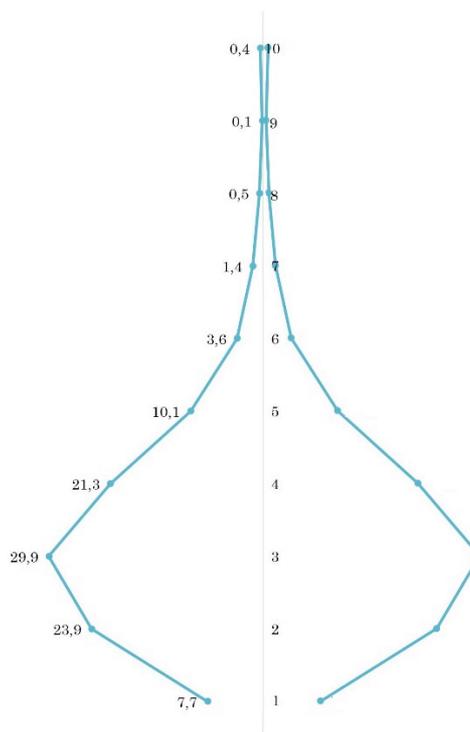
### General Conclusions

Based on the analysis of research data, it is appropriate to draw the following general conclusions.

1. There is a serious dissatisfaction with the excessive workload at the work in the teaching environment. By itself, the load does not play a decisive role in generating discontent, but the fact that in most cases the school management either do not pay or pay partly for additional work.

2. There are violations of the teachers' rights that often occur in school: first of all, workload, not related to the teaching profession, as well as an early recalling from leave for various reasons. This is an evidence of the imperfection of the work of quite a number of school principals, their lack of any skills or abilities to the organizational work.

3. Teachers are dissatisfied with the payment of their labor, but they do not require too much, their expectations for salary increase do not exceed an average of 40% (higher only in Moscow – up to 70%, but the cost of living here is also higher). They just expect to compensate them for the losses that occurred during the period of the last year due to a significant increase in inflation.

*Low social status***Figure 11** - Very high social status, %*Unfavorable material conditions of life***Figure 12** - Highly favorable material conditions of life, %

4. Dissatisfaction is dictated by the fact that due to inflation their life (material) level began to drop (currently moderately). Projecting problems in their living standards on salary is due to the fact that it generates teachers' family budget by 95% on average (including salaries of the spouses).

5. Teachers largely associate their social status (in fact – the social status due to the profession) with their material well-being. Since they estimate their well-being value low, it entails a low estimate of their social status (on a five-grade scale both statuses are estimated as no more than at two). Reduced status leads to the low precreationige of the teaching profession in the public opinion, including the teachers, and for this reason, at least one third of young teachers under the age of 30 years no longer consider the teaching profession as their vocation.

6. These problems give rise to stress among teachers and the idea of the feasibility of social protest occurs to some of them.

7. The acuteness of these thoughts shows that among the forms of social protest, along with discussions about the protest “in their environment”, as well as appeals to the media, there are also such forms as taking part in demonstrations and strikes.

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### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### Notes on contributors

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