



## **A Qualitative Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions of School and Community in Relation to Their Motivations to Satisfy Their Occupational Needs**

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### **Abstract**

An abstract is a single paragraph, without indentation, that summarizes the key points of the The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences of teachers' motivations that influence occupational satisfaction in a small, rural school district in a state in the Southern United States. The theory guiding this study was Maslow's motivational theory. The research question was: How do perceptions of school culture and community qualities motivate teachers to satisfy their occupational needs? Results revealed a significant theme: the habitat is essential to a teacher, signifying that surroundings mean almost everything to a teacher. Teachers find value in the occupation in many different aspects, including the small school environment, being at their alma mater, close peer relationships, and a welcoming work environment. In conjunction with this, participants express that a quality school environment leads to quality schools. Conversely, negative outside noise from parents, leadership, and the community can actually discourage teachers, leaving them feeling helpless and alone. Thus, creating an atmosphere most conducive to teachers is vital for flourishing schools and districts, and, most importantly, significantly impacts a teacher's ability to positively impact students, which is the core of education. The participants in this study found their central motivation, satisfaction, and value in the student, coworkers, love of school, and pride in the community. Ensuring districts have transparency, building a culture of camaraderie, and receiving positive contributions and encouragement from outside stakeholders to support the classroom, contribute significantly to the teacher's ability to have deep, meaningful relationships with students, leading to the highest quality of learning.

**Keywords:** Occupational Culture; Retention; Rural; Satisfaction; Teaching Occupation