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Faktory, ktoré ovplyvňujú sebaúctu a spokojnosť s prácou učiteľov v Kirgizsku

The Factors that Affect Teachers' Self-esteem and Job Satisfaction in Kyrgyzstan

Ainuru Zholchieva, Aelita Zholchieva

Abstract

The term „self-esteem“ has been worked out in psychological science in the field of human necessities, but within a self-regulation theory, demonstrating an area of psychological phenomena including a human's experiential subjective aspect. Satisfaction is one of the indicators of well-being, as a self-assessment of life as a whole, on the base of the comparison between personal goals and achievements. That is why, a person is usually satisfied succeeding in previously set goals or achievements, where professional goals are also included.

This study aims to examine various factors that affect teachers' self-esteem and job satisfaction at municipal secondary schools in Kyrgyzstan. The identification of possible factors that affect the quality of education and teachers' job satisfaction are the research goals of the article.

Keywords: Self-esteem. Teacher community. Condition. Professionalism. Satisfaction.

Introduction

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic Development Strategy of Education (2012) considered the motivation and encouragement of teachers who systematically improve learners' achievement as one of the important and priority areas. Meanwhile, the teacher community in Kyrgyzstan sees a problem in the Government's position, regarding the effectiveness of teachers' work. The level of efficiency and effectiveness of teachers job does not require a constant request for higher wages, encouragement and improvement of working conditions. Teachers argue that the specified wage structure, benefits, and working conditions do not satisfy their basic needs, since in other sectors of the economy the wage structure is higher, motivation, and working conditions are higher. It is most likely that

public school teachers cannot provide quality education when there is a gap between the Government and teachers.

Officially, school education in Kyrgyzstan is free (Law on Education of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2003), but fees for certain needs are still required by schools, but not directly through the teacher, it can be done through Parental Committees. It is unofficially called "voluntary-compulsory" contributions from parents. This is also a very popular issue in society; many parents mention the law and do not want to pay additional fees at a time especially in Bishkek when sometimes there is a need for unforeseen repairs in schools or, because of a large number of children, additional classes have to be equipped and sometimes the principals need to stimulate their teachers with additional payments in order to keep them at places.

This issue often causes a conflict between the school and the parent society. The amount of fees for unexpected school expenses or sponsorship is negotiated between the school principal and the parent committee. The parent has the right to refuse this payment since these finances are not mentioned by law as due fees.

Along with the problems the Ministry of Education of the country reports a shortage of teachers as the main problem of the education system. According to its report, it is associated with low salaries, which is why many teachers are forced to either change their field of activity or leave for other countries (<https://zen.yandex.ru>, 2020). Statistical information on the phenomenon of teachers leaving the profession (Hee et al., 2019) is difficult to obtain in Kyrgyzstan. But it is evident that most students upon completion of secondary school instead prefer other professions teaching. They only turn to it as a last resort, and when all other things must have failed them. In recent years, more school graduates choose the profession of an economist, working in the field of tourism and IT technology. This explains why the rate of teacher attrition is high today. Teachers, who entered the profession because of their first and second choices (for example, the student with good English who failed to be an interpreter) need to be motivated, or else they will leave the profession when another door opens (Marinette, 2018).

Literature Review

After the USSR collapsed in 1991, instability increasingly shaped teacher professionalism in Kyrgyzstan (Teleshaliyev, 2013). Despite a strong Soviet legacy of respect and support for the teaching force (DeYoung, 2011), teachers have suffered a loss of social status (Silova, 2009). On the decline in social status of school teachers, the data of many studies (Abasov, 2020) suggest there is a decline in prestige in the teaching profession. Matyash & Pavlova's research in Moscow in 2010 showed that 44% of Moscow citizens

do not want their children to choose the teaching profession and only 17% of them would like their children to become teachers in the future. Although there was not conducted a similar study identifying the opinion of the Kyrgyz people regarding the teaching profession, we can assume that the situation is mostly like in Russia because we see the shortage of teachers at schools.

According to UNICEF Report (2009) one of the pressing problems of school education in Kyrgyzstan is lack personnel, inadequate qualifications, and low salary for secondary school teachers. Only one-fifth of the graduates of pedagogical specialties subsequently become teachers. A significant part of students of pedagogical faculties after admission to free education in this specialty chooses different specialties. Approximately 20% of those who come to work in school leave their place of work during the first year of study. Low salaries for teachers (that is, below average) are closely related to the social vulnerability of teachers and the unattractiveness of the teaching profession. (UNICEF, 2009). In 2017 the financier, economist and banking employee, on average received 28,500 soms ("som" is the Kyrgyz National currency) and the maximum salary of such specialists reached 90 thousand, but the teacher's salary was 3-3.5 thousand soms per month. (<https://visasam.ru/emigration/pereezdsng/zarplata-vkyrgyzstane.html>).

Humiliating salaries, low social status, lack of career opportunities, colossal workloads that undermine physical and mental health, and consumer wages for teachers, in our opinion, have lowered the prestige of the teaching profession in the eyes of future teachers (Abasov, 2020). The research by Shepher & Sadretdinova (2019) which was held in the Kuzbass region of the Russian Federation shows that 55, 31% of the region sizes would like their children to become teachers in the future. And 75, 60% of Kuzbass region teachers – the respondents of the research answered “yes” to the question would they choose the profession again if there would be another opportunity to be a teacher. In the survey by the European Commission (2020), the majority of teachers in all European countries surveyed confirmed choosing the teaching profession again. Such a difference in numbers could mean that it is entirely possible that teachers and teaching professions are accepted differently by society. This also may be the case that society looks down secondary on teachers, but the teachers themselves do not.

In Kyrgyzstan it is believed that the capital has the best working conditions in secondary schools compared to the regions of the country; each Bishkek secondary school (there are 97 municipal secondary schools) has methodological – office rooms for teachers, where they can work on their lesson plans and share ideas with other colleagues after school hours or when they have no lessons during the day. These rooms are equipped with the necessary methodological resources and manuals. In addition, in these offices, there is at least one computer connected to the Internet. Also, most classrooms are equipped with the necessary equipment to work with students. (Department's

year report, 2019). Some of the secondary schools in regions are not provided with internet and the provision of them quite differs from the capital schools. The Bishkek Education Department regularly organizes teacher training courses for school teachers. Despite all these efforts of the authorities to support the school teachers, a considerable number of public-school teachers in Bishkek leave the system after only a couple of years. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that society often expresses its dissatisfaction with the quality of education in public schools. This became especially evident when the Kyrgyz Republic received the lowest scores in reading, mathematics, and science among the PISA countries in the PISA twice - 2006, 2009 ranking. The Kyrgyz Republic scored 314 points, an average of 500, and a standard deviation for OECD countries out of 100. It is therefore important to understand what factors, other than working conditions, can influence teachers' satisfaction in public schools in the capital. According to the analytical and empirical data of the UNESCO (2019) report, it is impossible to assess the qualifications of teachers in Kyrgyzstan. There is no clear framework for qualifications and professional standards for teachers. A performance-based teacher certification system was developed and tested with the support of the Asian Development Bank with the aim of adopting a Government Decree of August 11, 2016, approving the Regulation on the certification of secondary school teachers. However, it has not yet been fully adopted due to the need to approve the National Qualifications Framework and harmonize and adopt professional standards for teachers. It should be noted again that some schools also use bonus distribution schemes that reflect the criteria proposed by the MOES. However, for the most part, the criteria chosen to assess teacher performance do not reflect the quality of teaching, but rather other aspects of teacher performance, including administrative responsibilities and professionalism (Belyavina, 2017). Studying job satisfaction for teachers in terms of human resource development and advancement can go hand in hand with job stability and teacher retention. The current study aims to explore the various factors that are based on teachers' self-reported job satisfaction in public secondary schools in the capital. Trying to establish the degree of inconsistency between the expectations and needs of teachers regarding the components of professional activity and their implementation we will try to identify the factors that affect the assessment and attitude of teachers towards their own professional activities.

The problem of teachers' self-esteem and job satisfaction with their work has a long history, and it has been accumulated in psychology and sociology as a significant array of empirical results on this topic (Philinkova, 2015). This study aims to examine various factors that affect teachers' self-esteem and job satisfaction in municipal secondary schools of Bishkek. We will try to identify possible factors that affect the quality of education and teacher job satisfaction, as well as factors that motivate or demotivate teachers

to work. The study includes the identification of factors that affect the self-esteem of teachers and their attitude to their professional activities. This will probably help us to determine the extent to which teachers' expectations and needs do not correspond to their constructive, organizational, and communicative components of professional activity and their implementation.

The main research question of the study is:

1. What are the possible factors affecting teacher job satisfaction in Kyrgyzstan?

One of the most detailed analyses of the teacher salary reform of 2011 demonstrates how the subsequent dilution and adaptation of the salary policy in practice resulted in a system that essentially tied compensation to teaching hours - meaning that the de facto take-home salary of absolute majority of teachers remained the same or even decreased (UNICEF & MOES, 2014). In other words, the legacy of the Soviet “ставка” was not entirely eliminated. The post-Soviet teacher salary system is referred to as a “teaching load” (stavka) system because the number of teaching hours accounts for the wide range of teachers' income (Gita Steiner-Khamsi, 2015). This is followed by undesirable consequences, including schools maintaining “strategic” vacancies that are subsequently allocated preferentially to teachers; teaching overload for some teachers which risks teaching-learning quality (UNICEF & MOES, 2014). We consider the remuneration one of the possible factors of job satisfaction of Bishkek municipal school teachers. A school teacher can be satisfied with the work itself. The measure in which work tasks are perceived as interesting, intellectual and provide an opportunity for successful learning and acceptance of responsibility, gives a certain status and does not lead to excessive psychophysical fatigue (Grant, 2008). It is likely that these results will be obtained in the course of my research, but as some researchers (J.D Singh, 2015, Matyash & Pavlova, 2015, D. Stirling, 2014, Zinchenko, 2010 etc.) have found, in some cases teachers who come to school to work with pleasure may find that teaching is monotonous and lose their original interest. In our schools, too, according to unofficial data, teachers complain about the monotony of their work and the fact that there is a lot of paperwork. We will also try to investigate how administrative support affects teacher satisfaction. In my research, the professional development of teachers will be considered as one of the possible factors influencing their job satisfaction.

It was noted above that the quality of teaching in schools has the greatest impact on student achievement. If so, efforts to improve teaching are critical to sustainably improving. Taking into consideration above mentioned the teachers' job satisfaction we will try to see the influence of the promotional opportunities offered by school administration on the teachers' job satisfaction as well. According to the Report of the Bishkek Department of Education (2020),

109 city seminars and trainings for school teachers at the city level. The Department provides the organization and implementation of systematic work of training/seminars, professional development of teachers, consultative support, planning and educational work of schools and preschool educational institutions. In addition, the school administration also sends its teachers to the PD courses by the Republican Institute for Advanced Training of Teachers. These courses are conducted according to the approved schedule of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Methodology of Research

This is a survey-based descriptive study. The 5-point Likert - type - scale was used to analyze data using descriptive and logical statistics. A mixed research approach was used to obtain quantitative and qualitative information. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the overall results on the responses. The purpose of using the mixed method was mainly to get more detailed information from respondents. A simple random sample was used to select the respondents. The capital of Bishkek is divided into 4 regions and there are 97 municipal secondary schools in the city (official site of the Bishkek Department of Education, 2021). Survey goals and instructions were sent to several purposively selected schools.

The questionnaire in Russian and in Kyrgyz languages was sent to the schools. The respondents were introduced with a consent form to participate in the survey and then asked to complete the questionnaire. The full-time teachers of different subjects who have been teaching in the same school for at least one full year at the time of the study were invited to participate in the survey. More than 100 teachers sent their email addresses to get the questionnaire. From this population of teachers, the study has collected data from 85 volunteer teachers. The questionnaire contains questions about possible internal and external factors affecting the academic performance and creativity of a school teacher like the conditions created in schools for work, the attitude of the administration towards teachers, salary, and as well as the opportunities for professional development. The questionnaire included 36 questions and related to factors that can affect teachers' satisfaction, personal self-esteem and motivation to work. Some of the questions for the questionnaire were taken from different TJSQs (Lester, 1987; Seidman & Zager, 1987; Bishay, 1996 etc. Victoria M Hughes, 2006) and adapted for local teachers, but most of them were created by us according to the suggestions of the specialists of the Bishkek Education Department. To better analyze teachers' overall self-esteem and satisfaction, the questions were divided into 6 specific sections: working conditions, administrative support, professional opportunities, salaries, teacher relationships, and parent relationships. Respondents indicated

how much they agree or disagree with each statement by clicking on the appropriate option from strongly disagree; disagree; undecided; agree; strongly agree coded into 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in the data analyses. The respondents had the right to refuse to participate in the survey if they changed their decision to fill out the questionnaire. The survey was conducted online through the link to the questionnaire form on Google. Data distributions are reflected in histograms and tables, where the response ratios are shown. Findings from the population of 100 teachers, 85 filled out the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents were primary school teachers and English language teachers and most of them are teachers with less than 5 years of experience. The collected data was analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, and p-value for analyses and interpretation of the data. We used histograms and tables to show the ratio of the distribution of responses. The respondents did not differ in their answers to many statements, and the *p*-value of most of their responses was statistically insignificant.

We interpreted the ratio as having the section:

1. Overall job satisfaction analyses of the teachers

Table 1.

Question code	Average value for Russian speaking schools	Average value for Kyrgyz lang schools	Difference in means	Standard Error	t statistics	p value
Q16	2,58	4,5	-1,92	0,327999	-5,85368	0,00000016
Q30	4,18	2,416666667	1,763333	0,362846	4,859727	0,00001495
Q26	3,76	2,166666667	1,593333	0,347119	4,590164	0,00003954
Q15	3,82	2,166666667	1,653333	0,370863	4,458068	0,00006368
Q18	2,16	3,75	-1,59	0,369215	-4,30644	0,00008055
Q33	2,54	4	-1,46	0,365593	-3,99351	0,00022320
Q35	3,46	2,125	1,335	0,344852	3,871229	0,00036935
Q17	3,8	2,625	1,175	0,39758	2,955383	0,00529441
Q34	2,66	1,791666667	0,868333	0,328769	2,641168	0,01085409
Q14	3,2	3,833333333	-0,63333	0,334622	-1,89268	0,06512594

According to the results on the Table 1 which is with the responses on working conditions the statement “I would like to see clearer rules and procedures for all activities at our school” (Q3) gets 68% of agreement. This result means that the rules and procedures for organized activities at schools are not clear for many teachers. We also see that the majority of teachers agree with the statement about a convenient workload (Q1), once again it asserts that the teaching load in schools is distributed correctly. The overall picture for statements about working conditions shows more positive responses. 12% of teachers were undecided with the statements but more

“Strongly agree” answers were given than “Strongly disagree” scales to the statement “The work of a teacher consists of routine activities (Q2). This result proves the statements by Budi Utomo (2018) and Zinchenko (2016) who discussed much about the factors influencing teacher’s motivation and personal expectations, and proved that teachers may lose their motivation to work because of the monotony of work. The hesitation to the statement “The large number of students in the classroom has a negative impact on my methodology” (Q6) may be caused by the fact that the teachers do not (or are not able to) monitor the overall level of their students’ achievements and the results of their own teaching methods. This part includes items on teachers’ attitudes towards the teaching profession as well: “Teaching encourages me to be creative; “Teaching turned out to be more interesting than I expected and all these items are given in the positive form. As we see most of the responses are positive; the statement ‘I am pleased with the opportunities for professional development offered by my work’ (Q7) gets 74% of “Agree” and in comparison, with other statements this is the least percentage. This result shows that the professional development policy at schools needs some improvement. Teachers show a positive attitude towards their profession giving mostly positive answers to the statements “Teaching encourages me to be creative and “Teaching allows me to develop and distribute new methods to colleagues” (80%), and 11% of teachers were undecided with the statement “Teaching allows me to use different skills” (Q8) and we can suppose that some teachers do not use different methods in teaching and they need to improve their teaching skills. 19% of respondents disagreed with the statement of career prospects (Q9), they do not agree that they have good opportunities to grow professionally. 66% of the respondents strongly agree that the administration of their school is ready to help them with problems in the classroom if they arise, and 16% of them strongly disagree with this statement (Q13). Only 8% of the teachers are undecided about this statement. This result shows that the teachers trust their school administration and the school administration in its turn supports their teachers in solving the problem in the classes. I can also add that the school principal is responsible for any case which happens at school be it with a bad or good ending. Question #14 – “The administration of our school well informs each of us about its policies” gets comparatively more undecided responses (23%) and proves the statement related to the rules and process of conducting any event at school. It means that the teachers are not well informed about the rules and they need the more clear policy from the school administration. In addition, 57% of respondents gave a “Strongly disagree” answer to the statement “I am allowed to work independently using my own initiative” which means the teachers may not be always allowed to initiate their own ideas.

The fact that 55% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that their effort in the classroom is underestimated by the administration also means that there is a significant issue on the administrative

support in terms of particularly the professional features of the teachers. We consider the importance of administrative support in teachers' daily work and joint the conclusion by Akhtar et. et al (2010) who stated that involving teachers in school policy decisions and giving them some degree of autonomy in their classrooms is associated with high levels of career satisfaction. The overall result of the responses on the administrative support at schools is diverse and there is a need of improving the school administration policy at city public schools. Administrative support plays an important role in the efficiency of any kind of organization with an administrative structure (Ali, 2011).

Looking at the ratio of the responses to the statement on teacher remuneration we see that the most "Strongly disagree" answers (49%) get the statement "The teacher's income is sufficient for ordinary expenses" (Q19). 19% of the respondents were undecided with this statement and 32% (which is the least percentage) of them agreed with the statement. 64% of the respondents pointed out that they need to constantly take out a loan due to lack of salary, 11% of them were undecided with the statement though we can assume that they would agree with it too, just hesitated to say "yes". 5 percent of the respondents do not strongly agree with the statement (Q20) that they are well paid in proportion to their efforts, 30% of them think that their effort is appreciated appropriately. 45% of the respondents do not know what the calculation of their salary is (Q22- I understand what the calculation of my salary consists of) so, we find that not all teachers are informed about the calculation of their salary. Thus, there is a need to inform teachers about their salary calculation so that they would be able to stick up for their own rights. An interesting fact that 22% of the respondents were undecided about the statement "Insufficient income prevents me from living the way I want" (Q 21), and 36% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Thus, we can assume that the teachers' life is not so bad as it is discussed by society (unofficial) and they do not consider their income level preventing things from living the way they want. At worst they might not imagine the way of better living or they get used to their current way of living and don't want to change it. We also see that 55% of the respondents need to work part-time elsewhere to cover all their expenses (Q24). Taking into consideration this fact, we can assume that teachers work hard trying to earn more to provide themselves with a comfortable life. Overall results on remuneration statements show that the public-school teachers of Kyrgyzstan are not satisfied with their income, and they need more information about the calculation of their salary.

Discussion

The aim of the research was to test the overall job satisfaction level of public-school teachers in Bishkek. Studying the factors that affect the teacher job satisfaction, we focused on the languages of instruction, considered

the influence of the language of instruction of the school, and the difference in the attitudes of teachers to their work in these schools. I also tried to compare the responses of teachers depending on their work experience and see the difference in their attitudes to work. The teachers' responses differed on only a few statements. Kyrgyz school teachers were more positive about these statements and confidently agreed that the administration of their schools is always ready to help with problems in the classroom. They also expressed their satisfaction with their participation in the school events. As was stated by Crosby (2015) the visible and approachable administration can help the teachers see that they have a partner that is willing to support them during some of the more pressing times of the school day. Regarding the reaction of parents to the recommendations of teachers, that sometimes they feel negative from the side of parents, and deny that parents somehow react negatively to their comments on their children's' achievement. Teachers agreed that the rules and procedures for conducting any events in their schools are not always clear. Another statistically significant different response we see in the statement "My direct supervisor gives me more criticism than praise" where the majority of the teachers agree with the statement. Hoque et al. (2020) revealed in their study that developmental supervisory practices do not impact teachers' attitudes except for the directive approach. The researchers stated that if teachers are not motivated enough by supervision, the result will be more negative, and if teachers do not accept supervision in their hearts, they will be resentful toward the process of supervision. Overall results of the responses show the improper work on the part of the school administration in the distribution of responsibilities in schools. We can state that the choice of parents to send their children to a Russian-language school is not based on any studies of the atmosphere in the school and the relationship between the administration and teachers, but probably on the fact that these schools are located in the city center, there are more opportunities, and most of these schools are well equipped. The responses analyzed based on the teachers' experience, show that teachers with more than 5 years of experience are not satisfied with their additional benefits, they believe that the teacher's salary is insufficient for normal daily expenses. But they have better relationships with colleagues than younger teachers have. Young teachers, in turn, do not complain about the lack of funds for living and additional benefits; their responses were more positive, the only thing to which most of them responded negatively, was not a good relationship with colleagues. 56% of young teachers agree with the statement "I sometimes feel the dislike of my colleagues" and 12% of them were undecided about the statement. According to the results in the overall job satisfaction section, we can see one more time that the teachers express their dissatisfaction with the clarity of the rules and procedures for the activities at schools. We also find that the teachers agree that the work of a teacher consists of routine activities proving the statements

by Budi Utomo (2018) and Zinchenko (2016). These researchers proved that teachers may lose their motivation to work because of the monotony of work. It is interesting that the majority of the teachers didn't agree with the statement that a large number of students in a classroom might negatively affect their methodology of teaching. The hesitation to this statement may be caused by the fact that the teachers do not (or are not able to) monitor the overall level of their students' achievements and the results of their own teaching methods. Although respondents disagree with the claims that they are allowed to use their own initiatives and feel that school policy is not clear to them, we see that the majority of all respondents believe that their school administration is always ready to help with the problems in classrooms if they arise. We find that the teachers were positive with their responses regarding their professional development opportunities. Moreover, the teachers strongly agree that teaching encourages them to be creative, and it allows them to collaborate with other teachers using different skills. D. Stirling (2014) hypothesized that some teachers have a desire to work with children and to change the world for the better. Zinchenko (2016) revealed that the teachers have a higher motivation for labor activity. The majority of his respondents noted that from childhood they dreamed of working at school, teaching, and teaching something to a younger generation. However, our respondents don't believe in their career prospects. The financial remuneration revealing responses show that the majority of teachers consider their income or salary is not sufficient for ordinary expenses. This issue was discussed much throughout the study and most of the stated salary as one of the factors influencing teacher job satisfaction (Mahmood, 2011, Talisheva, 2015, Shefer, 2019, etc.). We revealed that the majority of the respondents constantly take out a loan due to a lack of salary, and most of them do not know the calculation of their salary. We find that not all teachers are informed about the calculation of their salary. Thus, there is a need to inform teachers about their salary calculation so that they would be able to stick up for their own rights. An interesting fact that the teachers were undecided whether the insufficient income prevents them from living the way they want although they admit that they need to work part-time elsewhere to cover all their expenses.

Conclusion

Having studied all sorts of factors that affect the attitude of teachers toward their work, their self-esteem and how satisfied they are with the services provided by the state, it is possible to draw conclusions. We see and understand that teachers, as well as representatives of other professions, adapt to the conditions created for them. Kyrgyzstan school teachers have shown positive attitudes towards their work. Also, many teachers expressed their respect for the profession itself. They reacted positively to the statement that

teaching children turned out more interesting than they expected. They believe that they have a lot in common with their colleagues. Regarding finances and remuneration, it seems that teachers have come to terms with the fact that they almost always have low salaries, that only a few teachers with extensive work experience expressed their dissatisfaction and mostly these are the teachers with long experience. But we do not exclude the fact that most of the teachers work part - timely in other places and try to cover their daily expenses, also they regularly need to take loans because of insufficient salary. We came to the conclusion that young teachers try not to pay attention to the salary size at school but try to improve their professional skills and especially these teachers work in other places part-timely.

In conclusion, we would like to note that we do not blame school administrations for not giving due attention to their teachers, but we encourage them to be open to them, to study and develop programs taking into account the government's capabilities that support teachers morally and financially. Teachers deserve more respect than they currently receive from society. The research results can become the main object of future research and a topic for further detailed study.

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Assoc. Prof. Ainuru Zholchieva, Ph.D.

Department of Pedagogy and Psychology

International Ala-Too University, Faculty of Social Sciences

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

ainuru.zholchieva@alatau.edu.kg

Mgr. Aelita Zholchieva

Education Department of Bishkek City

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

azholchieva@gmail.com