

The relationship between job satisfaction and teacher retention among Iranian high school teachers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine high school teachers' job satisfaction and its impact on teacher retention in the independent school. The present study was done among the high school students in Shahre-Ray, Iran. 87 full-time English teachers who were distributed throughout the lower, middle, and upper school divisions were selected. Participants included 69 females and 18 males representing. Osborne & Reiman's (2005) teacher retention questionnaire and Smith's job satisfaction questionnaire (1969) were used to measure the variables. Data from the survey instrument incorporated the use of the Likert Scale. The result of analysis confirmed the significant correlation between the subscales of two variables. The findings of this study can be used by language teachers and researchers in the field.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Teacher Retention.

Introduction

Few issues have taken into account with qualified teachers; yet studies on turnover within diverse types of schools indicated that small schools have the highest rate of teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2002). Ingersoll displayed that few researchers have studied the characteristics of schools that can affect teacher turnover. Yet, when a school raises a sustainable climate, teachers are to feel socially, emotionally, and safe (Booth, 2007). Thus, further study is needed to develop an understanding of job satisfaction to make strategies to scaffold satisfaction. So, more attention must be placed on job satisfaction. Institutional conditions such as environmental, psychological, and demographic factors

can actually affect on job satisfaction (Crossman & Harris, 2006). Johnson, Berg (2005) reported that critical factors such as: a) leadership, b) benefits, c) salary, and d) compensation should be taken into consideration to decrease teacher attrition.

Recruiting, hiring, and training in schools should be designed with teacher satisfaction as one of the goals. The findings from this research could help administrators screen teachers during the recruiting and interviewing process. Administrators want teachers with whom they share educational philosophies (Heller, 2004), and teachers want administrators with whom they share teaching and learning perspectives (Heller, 2004). In the long term, an administrator's time is better spent recruiting, hiring, and retaining prospective teachers who are like-minded than retaining those who have an opposite philosophy on teaching (Heller, 2004). For example, if the principal knows that the prospective hire places a high value on working alone and independently, and the school functions with a team teaching philosophy, the prospective teacher may not be the best applicant for the job.

After an appropriate teacher is successfully recruited and hired, the principal needs to be sure that collaboration and support are available to the new teacher during the first few years. One of the main reasons that new teachers leave is isolation (Heller, 2004). New teachers should be provided collegial support. Collegial support should not end after the first few years, though. According to Heller (2004), teachers need continual training and support during their entire teaching career.

Senge (1990) believed that learning organizations are places where people continually expand their capacities to create effective results, encourage new and expansive patterns of thinking, and learn how to learn together. Deming (1982) believed con-

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tinual training is essential to help workers develop the skills they need to do their job. Ongoing training or professional development in all professions is necessary for workers to keep up-to-date in their fields. Leaders should provide staff with all the resources, materials, and training that they need in order to do their job regardless of their career stage (Deming, 1982).

Job Satisfaction & Teacher Retention

Teacher job satisfaction as a general measure has been found to be a significant predictor of effective teacher retention (Hall, Pearson, & Carroll, 1992; Ostroff, 1992; Zigarrelli, 1996). Those planning to leave teaching had lower levels of job satisfaction (Hall *et al.*, 1992; Ostroff, 1992. A New Jersey State Board of Education study in 1984 found similar results (Ellis, Klagholz, Schechter, & Newman, 1991; cited in Gold, 1996). Thus, it implies that while hiring individuals provides a teacher in the short term, it does not address the problem of retaining teachers in the long term. In addition to a higher probability of teacher attrition, teachers without proper personal and academic qualifications when entering teaching have lower satisfaction with their job than do traditionally prepared teachers (Lutz & Hutton, 1989).

One way to way to increase productivity in many organizations is to increase employee satisfaction. Chung (1977) showed that teachers had varying needs and motivators depending on a variety of external and internal factors. For example, a more experienced teacher who has reached the level of competence and is striving for the level of self-actualization may need a totally different approach to professional development in order to be satisfied in their jobs (Podsen, 2002). According to Chung (1977) focusing on the intrinsic needs of the teachers helps increase their job satisfaction.

On the other hand, teachers who are in the middle of their teaching career may be feeling restless or bored. These teachers experienced different feelings about their job from the teacher-steward or teacher-inductee. While they may be familiar with their colleagues and classroom management strategies, they may be looking for other career options. These teachers may want to be able to become more involved in their schools by leading teachers or pursuing an advanced degree. Teachers who are not novice but not considered veteran should be looked at as a separate group with different professional needs (Podsen, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Therefore, based on the previously survey due to the importance of retaining quality of teachers, it was important that teacher job satisfaction be evaluate why teachers work in schools. The study identified elements of teacher satisfaction while emphasizing the issues for teacher retention. Research in this area considered the aspects of the school environment, organization, and culture that impacted teacher job satisfaction and assessed whether these factors are related to the retention of teachers. According to Booth (2007), schools were initially able to attract teachers because they offered small class sizes, active participation in curriculum development. Further examination evaluated if these factors were enough to retain teachers. An examination of teachers identified by years of teaching experience accomplished to explain if schools were at risk for losing teachers with regard to dissatisfaction and conclude when schools were in the danger of losing their professionals. An examination of environmental, psychological, and demographic issues in an attempt to understand the factors that have affected on job satisfaction (Crossman & Harris, 2006).

Research Question and hypothesis

The present study explored the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and its impact on teacher retention. This study was directed by the following questions:

Q: To what extent, do the factors of job satisfaction impact on teacher retention?

H0: Factors of job satisfaction does not have any impact on teacher retention.

Methodology

Participants and Procedure

This study was taken place among high schools in Shahre-Ray, Iran. 87 full-time teachers who were distributed throughout the lower, middle, and upper school divisions were selected. Participants included 69 females and 18 males. The age of teachers who were invited to participate ranged from 24 years of age to 60 years of age. Participants completed the questionnaire within a month. The questionnaire distributed through email. Teachers received instructions on completing all questionnaires through a letter from the researcher.

Instruments

To collect the data, the following instruments were utilized.

Osborne & Reiman's (2005) teacher retention questionnaire which assesses teachers' perceptions on teacher retention. There are three sections to this questionnaire. The first section includes 35 statements that describe issues affecting teachers. These statements can be categorized into five domains: (a) time issues, (b) student discipline, (c) teacher professional growth and development, (d) school leadership, and (e) classroom materials, supplies, and resources. Teachers were asked to respond to: (a) the degree to which the statement is true for them in their school and (b) the degree of importance as to how each statement affects their decision to stay at or to leave their school. Responses were measured by a five point Likert scale (1 = never true to 5 = always true and 1 = not important to 5 = very important).

Smith's Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (1969) is a valid measure of job satisfaction. This measure has been designed to measure satisfaction through 5 aspects of a job, the work itself, pay, promotion, supervision and co-workers.

Data Analysis

The objective of this study was to examine teacher satisfaction and its impact on teacher retention in among high school teachers. Null hypothesis was tested for significance at the .05 level. Statistical methods utilized to analyze the data included: descriptive statistics, Spearman Correlation Analysis. Table 1 displays that the mean total scores of the job satisfaction. The mean total scores of the job satisfaction are represented in Table 1. Job satisfaction was operating procedure with a mean of 1.2857 (S.D.= 2.6277). The second job satisfaction facet was contingent reward with a mean of 7.5714 (S.D.=6.7295). Benefit was the third job satisfaction facet, with a mean of 14.8571 (S.D.= 9.0079). The fourth section was supervision with a mean of 19.0 (S.D.=10.2307). The most utilized facet was problem solving, with a mean of 57.2857 (S.D.= 10.0285) which had the highest ratings.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction

J.S	Mean	S.D.
Promotion	57.28	10.02
Supervision	19.0	10.23
Benefits	14.85	9.007
Contingent Reward	7.57	6.72
Operating procedures	1.28	2.62

The mean scores across the four dimensions of teacher retention are represented in Table 2. Mentor support and classroom management had almost the highest ratings, with a mean of 37.311 (S.D. = 11.698) and 31.71 (S.D. =14.77), respectively. Student success that received the second highest ratings with a mean of 27.55 (S.D.=15.61). Instructional resources were third subscale, with a mean rating of 13.46 (S.D. = 6.78) which had the lowest rating.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of teacher retention.

Teacher Retention Subscales	Mean	S.D.
Mentor Support	37.311	11.698
Classroom Management	31.717	14.778
Student Success	27.555	15.614
Instructional Resources	13.463	6.786

As it is obvious in Table 3, various correlation coefficients of the measures applied in this study are reported. The correlation table represents a significant positive relationship ($r=.886$) between the job satisfaction and teacher retention. The highest positive correlation is associated to promotion ($r=.878$) followed by supervision ($r=.871$), contingent reward ($r=.853$) and operating procedure ($r=.841$) and a strong negative relationship with benefit ($r=-.864$). Strong internal positive relationships were observed between sub-scales of job satisfaction and teacher retention.

Discussion

It is significant to verify factors that attract teachers to schools in a small size. It is also vital to look at the factors of job satisfaction to examine whether schools are at risk for losing their teachers and, their quality teachers. Prior research in education emphasized on the connections between the leadership styles, and improved student learning and (Heck, 2000; Mulford & Silins, 2003). The findings of this study were consistent with Ingersoll's (2001, 2002) offers that a teacher deficit might have more to do with teacher migration. Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson's (2005) study that the factors such as work environment, school leadership, and teacher preparation were important factors affecting new teacher satisfaction and retention. Re-

sults of this study indicate that the work environment, leadership, compensation and benefits, and mentoring new teachers were the factors most likely to influence teacher satisfaction and generated the most information from the participants. These results imitate the study by Booth (2007) and will be debated further. Participants in this study displayed that they favorably noteworthy work but found that it was difficult to achieve making it a factor which empowered the schools making progress. Responses from Booth's study and this case study are consistent with other current research in suggesting that organizations take into consideration the work environment to address issues with work (Crossman & Harris, 2006; Spinks, 2004). Personal lives (Koppes, 2008) of teachers is an important factor in attaining satisfaction and is one of the most prominent concerns effecting teacher job satisfaction and the most significant factor impacting work. Certo and Fox, (2002) demanded that those who left other jobs to teach in schools quoted low salary, over-scheduling, no breaks as factors causing dissatisfaction. Results from this study site harmonize with

prior research illustrating that work overload, low salary was diminished the worth of teachers' time. Booth (2007) and Johnson, Berg (2005) reported the importance of the environment and its impact on job satisfaction and personal efficacy. Participants in this study displayed throughout the data that there were elements of the work environment that influenced their satisfaction with their jobs. Throughout the various data sources, participants approved that leadership impacted their satisfaction with their jobs. This is consistent with research that administrators impact on work environment of a school (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). Teaching has often been referred to by researchers as a "flat profession" (Danielson, 2007; Tye & O'Brien, 2002) which necessitates that administrators consider leadership opportunities to sustain professional interest and commitment. Quality teaching, experience, and dedication should be rewarded by school leaders as it is a source of teacher commitment and job satisfaction. All of these factors influence job satisfaction and the ability to achieve work and life balance (McMillan et al., 2008).

Table 3. Spearman correlations between Job Satisfaction and teacher retention.

	J.S.	Promotion	Supervision	Benefit	Contingent Reward	Operating Procedure
T.R.	.886**	.878**	.871**	-.864**	.853**	.841**

Conclusion, implications and limitations

Generally, the results of this research revealed that there is a strong relationship between teachers retention and job satisfaction. In this study, I evaluated teacher retention and job satisfaction as distinctive concepts via their respective sub-scales. Only one sub-scale of job satisfaction was not associated with teacher retention. These findings were consistent with previous studies which mostly assessed job satisfaction as a generic measure that was included in the construct of teacher retention. Although, some of the former research demonstrated positive and predictive relations between teacher retention and job satisfaction, there were also some counter-evidences which could not find any relationships between these two variables. These inconsistencies point to the fact that there may be other factors which mediate the relationships between teachers retention and their job satisfaction that vary from one context to another.

These findings have some implications for edu-

cational researchers and administrators who seek to improve effective teaching and learning situations. If educational researchers and administrators plan to conduct a research to explore the probable factors influencing teachers' performance in teaching contexts, they must approach the issue from various aspects. Considering teachers as whole human beings leads us to the fact that their feelings and thoughts about their job are probable to affect their retention in all aspects. Therefore, taking teachers' individual characteristics into account must be of utmost importance for school administrators to enhance educational outcomes. Although firm conclusions about the relationships between teacher retention and job satisfaction aspects cannot be drawn from this study, both of these issues are important factors contributing to improvements in educational settings. The evidence from this study suggests that in considering teachers' beliefs, feelings and thought toward their job, one should not ignore effective issues such as teachers' inner moral criteria, culture and whole human being properties. Therefore, it

becomes incumbent upon educational administrators to be more sensitive about teachers' inner worlds. In this study we focused on different dimensions of teacher retention and job satisfaction issues. Further studies may approach the issue by considering the overall measures of these two concepts. Despite promising findings with respect to the relationships between variables, cultural and social differences which may impact the obtained results were not taken into account. Providing that cultural and social sources of difference be accounted for, the findings may show more consistency from one context to another.

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