



Novice teachers' job satisfaction and coping strategies: Overcoming contextual challenges at Qatari government schools



Youmen Chaaban ^{a, *}, Xiangyun Du ^{b, c}

^a College of Education, Qatar University, Al Jamia St, Al Tarfa, 2713 Doha, Qatar

^b Department of Educational Sciences, Qatar University, Al Jamia St, Al Tarfa, 2713 Doha, Qatar

^c Department of Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University, Fredrik Bajers Vej 5, 9100 Aalborg, Denmark

HIGHLIGHTS

- The sources of job satisfaction differed among novice and experienced teachers.
- Direct-action and palliative strategies were key in overcoming contextual challenges.
- Novice teachers need to develop coping strategies to deal with contextual challenges.
- Findings emphasized a need for support practices at the university and school levels.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 3 May 2017

Received in revised form

30 June 2017

Accepted 6 July 2017

Keywords:

Job satisfaction

Contextual challenges

Coping strategies

EFL teachers

Support practices

ABSTRACT

The first years of teaching are challenging and how novice teachers cope has important implications for their satisfaction. The current study examined the perceptions of five novice and five experienced teachers about sources of their job satisfaction, challenges they faced, and coping strategies they employed. Findings show that novice teachers' satisfaction, or otherwise, was related to their aspirations, self-efficacy beliefs, and school context. They experienced challenges that differed from their more experienced peers. The paper highlights the similarities and differences in the coping strategies employed by the participants. Implications for future research and the development of support practices are presented.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Teaching is a highly complex profession comprising a multitude of challenging situations (Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016). Across several occupations, teachers have been found to experience the highest levels of stress and dissatisfaction (Lomas, Medina, Ivtzan, Rupperecht, & Eiroa-Orosa, 2017). As a result, many teachers leave the profession specifically during the first five years (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Korstjens, & Volman, 2014). Despite evidence suggesting that teacher effectiveness peaks after these few years, many teachers do not stay long enough to reach this level of expertise (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). In several

countries, the high attrition rate of novice teachers has resulted in a shortage of qualified teachers, who would have the largest impact on student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

According to international research, novice teachers may experience several challenges as they adapt to their new roles as professionals. During the transition from support and dependence to sole responsibility and independence (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010), novice teachers have been described as experiencing praxis shock (Veenman, 1984), reality shock (Huberman, 1989) or transfer shock (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Feiman-Nemser (2012) portrays this transition period as “a time of intense learning” and “intense loneliness” (p. 10).

Alternatively, while all teachers experience work-related stress at some point in their careers, most teachers cope successfully (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006), even when they are still novice (Tait, 2008). Resources available within the school context help teachers overcome job demands and increase the prospects of

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: ychaaban@qu.edu.qa (Y. Chaaban), xiangyun@qu.edu.qa (X. Du).

job satisfaction (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Additionally, novice teachers may employ or even learn the kinds of coping strategies that allow them to overcome contextual challenges and construct a better working environment (Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Soini, & Salmela-Aro, 2013). Several studies have, therefore, examined the contextual factors associated with teacher job satisfaction as a way to diminish, or perhaps prevent, the large numbers of new teachers leaving the profession (Lam & Yan, 2011). To this point, the negative aspects of teaching have dominated the literature on novice teachers (Mansfield et al., 2016; Tait, 2008). Therefore, the current study aimed to draw a constructive illustration of the teaching profession by examining teacher job satisfaction and the coping strategies that teachers at different stages of their careers employ to overcome contextual challenges and manage their first few years.

2. The current study: context and purpose

Studies conducted in different countries confirm the high attrition rate among novice teachers (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014; Gu & Day, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lam & Yan, 2011; Mansfield et al., 2016). However, the situation in Qatar differs in significant ways from these countries, despite concerns about the quality of teachers and the high turnover rates. Since the number of novice teachers graduating from the local teacher preparation program is insufficient, many teachers are recruited from neighboring Arab countries. The large number of expatriate teachers has created a mobile teaching force and increased the likelihood of attrition. Adding to the problem, novice teachers begin their work in schools without formal induction programs. Novice teachers are expected to take on a full teaching load to the same extent as their experienced peers.

Furthermore, the complexity of the work required of teachers in Qatari government schools seems to increase as a result of the unstable educational policy landscape. After a comprehensive reform initiative in 2004, teachers are confronted with new policies every year. Such reforms have focused on the standardization of teachers' professional appraisal and accountability for student achievement. The reform has also been accompanied by established curriculum standards, prescribed textbooks, and specified assessment procedures. According to researchers, similar reforms have been found to disturb the stability of teachers' work, and contribute to low levels of motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction (Day & Gu, 2007).

While the research on novice teachers is growing internationally, there is little research investigating the experiences of novice teachers in the Gulf region (Dickson, Riddlebarger, Stringer, Tennant, & Kennetz, 2014; Ibrahim, 2012), and no research that targets the Qatari context. Research asserts the importance of providing support practices that are compatible with the problems that teachers experience in their school contexts (Gaikhorst et al., 2014). Therefore, the findings of the study address the way schools can accommodate for novice teachers' needs and inform policy makers, administrators, and teacher educators about the way that support practices can be made more practical and relevant for all teachers.

With the belief that teaching remains a complex profession, novice teachers were further compared to their more experienced peers to draw conclusions as to their future needs. In this regard, there exist few studies that contrast the perspectives of novice and experienced teachers on aspects such as job satisfaction and coping strategies (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). By comparing novice and experienced teachers, the study aimed to identify the contextual challenges they faced, whether they resorted to similar coping strategies, and whether they experienced the same sources of job satisfaction. It can be expected that several differences exist in the

way novice teachers react towards contextual challenges (Bennett, Brown, Kirby-Smith, & Severson, 2013). The current study, thus, adds to the extant literature on improving working conditions for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from the beginning of their careers and beyond.

3. Teacher job satisfaction

In this study, job satisfaction is conceptualized as the positive or negative evaluative judgments that teachers make about their work (Corbell, Osborne, & Reiman, 2010). Job satisfaction is considered a motivational concept and refers to how teachers generally feel about their jobs (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). For teachers in particular, job satisfaction is influenced by intrinsic factors of facilitating student achievement and self-growth, extrinsic factors of school leadership and climate, and societal factors of status and educational change (Dinham & Scott, 2000), thus making the study of job satisfaction quite complex. Therefore, researchers disagree on how to measure job satisfaction, and the concept has been studied as both an overall sense of satisfaction with the job and as a teacher-specific dimension dependent on circumstances (Moè, Pazzaglia, & Ronconi, 2010). The former seems to capture a more objective sense of satisfaction as teachers might evaluate the same contextual factor differently at various times.

Several studies have concluded that job satisfaction has positive consequences for the individual and the school (Corbell et al., 2010; Høigaard, Giske, & Sundsli, 2012; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Novice teachers who experience high levels of job satisfaction are more motivated, committed and determined to remain in the profession despite job demands (Tait, 2008). They are able to focus their attention and energy on the growth of students and their own personal growth (Lam & Yan, 2011), leading to enhanced teacher productivity and improved educational outcomes (Moè et al., 2010). At the organizational level, job satisfaction leads to better interpersonal relationships among colleagues and enhanced cooperation with supervisors (Amorim Neto, Rodrigues, & Panzer, 2017).

By contrast, novice teachers at risk of leaving the profession express strong dissatisfaction with their work environment, frustration with interpersonal relationships, and discontentment with mentoring support (Gaikhorst et al., 2014). Dissatisfied teachers become demotivated, thus, losing the ability to motivate their own students and cater to their diverse needs (Moè et al., 2010). Further, dissatisfied teachers become prone to higher levels of stress and burnout (Klassen & Chiu, 2010), and lower levels of collective and self-efficacy beliefs (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016).

4. Contextual factors: demands or resources?

The literature reveals several factors manifested in different contextual settings as either demands or resources (Mansfield et al., 2016), depending on whether they evoke feelings of job satisfaction or not (Lam & Yan, 2011). Demands refer to the physical, psychological, or organizational working challenges, whereas resources refer to aspects of the work that reduce demands, support goal attainment, and stimulate teacher learning (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). In this way, job demands are negatively related to job resources, in that high job demands (e.g. unsupportive school leadership) may prevent the availability of resources (e.g. teacher autonomy), whereas high job resources (e.g. co-worker support) may reduce job demands (e.g. heavy workload).

These contextual factors can be classified into three categories depending on whether teachers encounter them at the organizational, interpersonal, or personal levels. At the organizational level,

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات