

**ANALYZING THE CORE FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION
AMONG VETERAN TEACHERS AND THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL
LEADERSHIP ON THEIR RETENTION**

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This thesis has been submitted in fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

In Education Management and Leadership Studies

University of South Africa, Pretoria.

SUPERVISOR: DR. S. J. RAPETA

2026

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I, Xolani Javier Leonhard Ndayeni, Student number: 46309918 solemnly declare that the thesis entitled "*Analyzing the Core Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction among Veteran Teachers and the Influence of School Leadership on Their Retention*", is presented in fulfillment of the criteria for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education at the University of South Africa. It represents my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution of higher education. All sources cited or referenced in this research study are duly noted and acknowledged through complete citations, accompanied by a thorough list of references.



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ANALYZING THE CORE FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION AMONG VETERAN TEACHERS AND THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ON THEIR RETENTION

BY

JAVIER L. NDAYENI

ABSTRACT

The global education sector faces challenges affecting teacher job satisfaction, including heavy workloads, burnout, and inadequate support, particularly for early career teachers in urban areas. This study investigates factors influencing job satisfaction among veteran primary school teachers in Johannesburg East (D9), highlighting the need for principals to recognize these factors in urban primary schools. Utilizing qualitative methodology, the study involved purposive sampling from three schools and semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with teachers, departmental heads and deputy principals in each selected primary school. Key theories explored in this study include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, linking challenges to issues such as limited resources and low salaries. Data were coded and analysed through qualitative content analysis. This study found that retention improves in environments valuing teacher expertise and collaboration, emphasizing the importance of non-monetary rewards and professional development. Again, job satisfaction is a critical drive for teacher retention, with satisfied teachers significantly more likely to remain in their profession. This study recommended that curriculum revisions be done. It also recommended extended training for early career teachers, and a supportive work environment. The study concludes by advocating for the recognition of the teaching profession and a balance between challenges and resources to improve teacher retention and satisfaction.

Keywords: burnout, calling and education, job satisfaction, leadership, policy change, resilience, stress/adversity, theory of care

ANALISE VAN DIE KERNFAKTORE WAT WERKSTEVREDENHEID ONDER VETERAANONDERWYSERS BEÏNVLOED EN DIE INVLOED VAN SKOOLLEIERSKAP OP HUL BEHOUD

DEUR

JAVIER L. NDAYENI

OPSOMMING

Die globale onderwyssektor staan uitdagings in die gesig wat onderwyserstevredenheid se werkstevredenheid beïnvloed, insluitend swaar werkladings, uitbranding en onvoldoende ondersteuning, veral vir onderwysers in die vroeë loopbaan in stedelike gebiede. Hierdie studie ondersoek faktore wat werkstevredenheid onder veteran-laerskoolonderwysers in Johannesburg-Oos (D9) beïnvloed, en beklemtoon die behoefte dat skoolhoofde hierdie faktore in stedelike laerskole moet erken. Deur gebruik te maak van kwalitatiewe metodologie, het die studie doelgerigte steekproefneming van drie skole en semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude behels. Semi-gestruktureerde, aangesig-tot-aangesig onderhoude is gevoer met onderwysers, departementshoofde en adjunk-hoofde in elke gekose laerskool. Sleutelteorieë wat in hierdie studie ondersoek word, sluit in Maslow se Behoeftehiërargie en Herzberg se Twee-Faktor-teorie, wat uitdagings koppel aan kwessies soos beperkte hulpbronne en lae salarisse. Data is gekodeer en geanaliseer deur middel van kwalitatiewe inhoudsanalise. Hierdie studie het bevind dat behoud verbeter in omgewings wat onderwyserkundigheid en samewerking waardeur, met die klem op die belangrikheid van nie-monetêre belonings en professionele ontwikkeling. Weereens, werkstevredenheid is 'n kritieke dryfveer vir onderwyserbehoud, met tevrede onderwysers wat aansienlik meer geneig is om in hul beroep te bly. Hierdie studie het aanbeveel dat kurrikulumhersienings gedoen word. Dit het ook uitgebreide opleiding vir onderwysers op die vroeë stadiums, en 'n ondersteunende werksomgewing aanbeveel. Die studie sluit af deur te pleit vir die erkenning van die onderwysberoep en 'n balans tussen uitdagings en hulpbronne om onderwyserbehoud en -tevredeheid te verbeter.

Sleutelwoorde: uitbranding, roeping en onderwys, werkstevredenheid, leierskap, beleidsverandering, veerkragtigheid, stres/teenspoed, sorgteorie

**UKUHLAZIYA IZINTO EZIBALULEKILE EZITHINTA UKWANELISEKA KOMSEBENZI
PHAKATHI KOTHISHA ABAMAKADEBONA KANYE NETHONYA LOBUHOLI
BESIKOLE EKUGCINWENI KWABO**

NGU

JAVIER L. NDAYENI

ABSTRACT

Umkhakha wezemfundo womhlaba wonke ubhekene nezinsalelo ezithinta ukwaneliseka kwemisebenzi yothisha, okuhlanganisa ukuthwala kanzima, ukutubeka, nokusekelwa okwanele, ikakhulukazi kothisha abasakhula ezindaweni zasemadolobheni. Lolu cwaningo luphenya ngezinto ezinomthelela ekwanelisekeni kwemisebenzi kothisha abangomakadebona bezikole zamabanga aphantsi eJohannesburg East (D9), olugqamisa isidingo sokuthi othishanhloko baqaphele lezi zinto ezikoleni zamabanga aphantsi ezisemadolobheni. Kusetshenziswa indlela yokusebenza esezingeni eliphezulu, ucwaningo lubandakanya amasampula okuhlosiwe avela ezikoleni ezintathu kanye nezingxoxo ezingahlelekile. Izingxoxo ezihleliwe, ubuso nobuso zenziwa nothisha, izinhloko zeminyango namaphini othishanhloko ezikoleni ngasinye samabanga aphantsi esikhethiwe. Imibono esemqoka ehloliwe kulolu cwaningo ihlanganisa i-Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs kanye nethiyori ye-Two-Factor ka-Herzberg, ehlanganisa izinsalelo ezindabeni ezifana nezinsiza ezilinganiselwe kanye namaholo aphantsi. Idatha yafakwa amakhodi futhi yahlaziywa ngokuhlaziywa kokuqokethwe kwekhwalthi. Lolu cwaningo luthole ukuthi ukugcinwa kuyathuthuka ezindaweni ezikwazisa ubungcweti bothisha nokusebenzisana, kugcizelela ukubaluleka kwemiklomelo engeyona eyemali nokuthuthukiswa kochwepheshe. Futhi, ukwaneliseka komsebenzi kuyisici esibalulekile sokugcina othisha, nothisha abagculisekile okungenzeka kakhulu ukuthi bahlale emsebenzini wabo. Lolu cwaningo luncome ukuthi kubuyekezwe ikharikhulamu. Iphinde yancoma ukuqeqeshwa okunwetshiwe kothisha bemisebenzi yangaphambi kwesikhathi, kanye nendawo yokusebenza esekelayo. Ucwaningo luphetha ngokugqugquzela ukuqashelwa komsebenzi wokufundisa kanye nokulinganisa phakathi kwezinsalelo nezinsiza zokuthuthukisa ukugcinwa nokwaneliseka kothisha.

Amagama angukhiye namqoka: ukukhathala, ubizo kwezemfundo, ukwaneliseka emsebenzini, ubuholi, ukuguqulwa kwenqubomgomo, ukuqina, ingcindezi/ubunzima, ithiyori yokunakekela

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACE – Advance Certificate in Education

CDE – Centre for Development Enterprise

COVID-19 – Coronavirus disease 2019 (*COVID-19*) is a contagious disease caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.

CPTD – Continuous Professional Teacher Development

D9 – Johannesburg East Education District (also known as District 9)

DBE – Department of Basic Education

ECT – Early Career Teacher(s)

EEA – Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1996

ELRC – Education Labour Relations Council which is a bargaining council that serves the public education sector in South Africa

GDE – Gauteng Department of Education

LSEN – Learners with Special Education Needs

LST – Long-Serving Teacher(s) also known and referred to as Veteran Teachers

LTSM – Learning and Teaching Support Material

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAM – Personnel Administrative Measures

SACE – South Africa Council for Educators

SASA – South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

SNA – Support and Needs Analysis

SSI – Semi-Structures Interviews

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNISA – University of South Africa

DEDICATION

- To two important families that raised me: my adoptive Godparents: Godfathers – Amnadaba Kawula (1930 – 2007) and Siyalu Xaba (1924 – 2007) and Godmothers – Lillian Mandiya Kawula (1933 – 2024) and Sibongile Xaba (1939 – 2012). Your light continues to shine on my journey and I love you both. Thank you both for making me your Godson and raising ME well!
- To my beautiful children, Javier Cristiano Alejandro and Kimberly Alexis Shawntae. I wish you prosperity everywhere you go!
- To my biological parents whom I never met.
- To my friend, sister and colleague in primary education, Dr. Nobel Tshirangwana
- To all primary school teachers of this beautiful land, who continue to develop children even under adverse conditions and do the very best they can for the future of our nation.
- To all primary school children who lit a smile on my face each day and inspired me to improve my teaching repertoire and carry on with my craft of social service.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The journey towards obtaining a doctoral degree illustrates John Donne's claim that no person is truly alone. Although the initial idea for this thesis originated with me, its development and refinement were made possible by a multitude of contributors, both directly and indirectly involved. At the forefront of this support is my esteemed supervisor, Dr. S. J. Rapeta, to whom I express profound gratitude for accepting me into the graduate program. His roles as a discerning critic, unwavering support system, and compassionate leader throughout my academic endeavours have proven to be invaluable. The intellectual challenges he consistently posed and his unwavering faith in my abilities were pivotal to my advancement. The time he dedicated, the advice he offered, and his constructive feedback on my research were of immense value. The chance to gain unique perspectives from him has been a considerable advantage. Furthermore, this thesis would not have been possible without the significant sacrifices made by my family. I wish to convey my deepest gratitude to my wife, Joyce, for her unwavering support, encouragement, and management of our household during my frequent writing retreats. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to my children, Javier Cristiano Alejandro and Kimberly Alexis Shawntae, who have only known a reality where their father is primarily engaged in doctoral studies. The constant support from Joyce, Javier, and Kimberly was crucial to the successful completion of this academic endeavour. I am also grateful to Mrs. Rheigana Hardien, an outstanding English teacher, for her mentorship in the teaching profession and her high expectations for my work. I would like to further express my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. George D. Sokwaliwa, my first full-time teaching principal, for his foundational support in my career. I sincerely appreciate all my teachers and supervisors who guided me from my primary school studies through to my master's degree. Special recognition is warranted for Ms. Doreen Thembekile Kheswa, Mr. Rogers Kheswa, Mrs. Lucinda Meyer-Pinto, Mrs. Elizabeth Anderson, Dr. Jean Place, and Dr. Lorraine Excell, who nurtured my passion for primary education. I am thankful to Dr. Ana Ferreira for enhancing my English language skills, Mr. Jumara Musetha for his guidance on library resources, Mrs. Thelma Tshesane for her instruction in Setswana, and Mrs. Balungile Magwaza for helping me improve my isiZulu language proficiency. I extend my gratitude to Prof. Brahm Fleisch for further developing my interest in primary education, Prof. Anthony Essien for fostering resilience within me, Dr. Zak Mbokazi for deepening my understanding of management and leadership in challenging urban educational settings, as well as to Prof. Thulani Zengele and Prof. Tony Bush, who provided substantial support throughout both my undergraduate and postgraduate studies under their mentorship. I would like to particularly

thank the readers and examiners of this manuscript, whose meticulous review and insightful feedback greatly contributed to the enhancement of this work and offered profound insights. The successful completion of this research was facilitated by the collaborative efforts of the Gauteng Provincial Ministry of Education, the D9 District Director and school principals, who permitted the study to be conducted within their educational institutions. I am grateful for the invaluable support provided by school principals and teachers during the data collection phase through interviews. Their insightful contributions and recommendations have played a crucial role in shaping the direction of this academic inquiry. Each participant's input has been vital and has served a distinct purpose in furthering the research objectives. I express my heartfelt gratitude for the continuous support and guidance provided by everyone engaged in this academic pursuit.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The global education sector is currently confronted with a substantial challenge regarding teacher job satisfaction, primarily stemming from excessive workloads that frequently lead to teacher burnout and a decline in job satisfaction. Contributing factors include large class sizes, onerous administrative responsibilities, and inadequate support systems, all of which can significantly undermine the quality of education in various global regions (Gillani, et al., 2022; Darling-Hammond, DiNapoli Jr, & Kini, 2023). Additionally, the low social status of teachers and the absence of a proper work-life balance in numerous countries, particularly in low-income developing nations, further intensify this predicament. A significant number of early career teachers (ECTs) exit the profession prematurely, raising concerns among stakeholders in the education sector (Maready, Cheng, & Bunch, 2021; Hulme & Wood, 2022). The high turnover rates of ECTs, especially in urban educational settings, pose a critical challenge for government entities and those who have committed resources to teacher training and policy reforms (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). The primary issue at hand is not merely the number of teachers leaving but the underlying reasons for their dissatisfaction and departure (Opoku, et al., 2025). Urban public schools frequently encounter more difficulties than their private counterparts, with elevated teacher turnover being a significant concern. Many teachers depart from these institutions rapidly, leading to far-reaching consequences, such as interruptions in educational continuity, unexpected expenses for governmental and school leadership, strained professional relationships, and reduced academic performance among students (Gillani, et al., 2022; Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). Research indicates that nearly all urban schools consistently experience vacancies for entry-level teaching roles. In South Africa, over half of the teachers in urban schools catering to economically disadvantaged students are more likely to leave their positions compared to their rural counterparts (Matla & Xaba, 2020).

Urban educational institutions encounter considerable difficulties because of elevated turnover rates, which result in an uneven distribution of underqualified and inexperienced teachers who frequently operate in isolation to address the learning

needs of students. Principals within these institutions express apprehension regarding the departure of teachers to alternative professions. Research demonstrates that although numerous teachers commence their careers in urban environments, a significant proportion ultimately transitions to schools that cater to more affluent populations or exit the profession altogether (Mabusela, 2021). Constrained government budgets and diminished school funding continue to affect public educational institutions, causing many teachers to perceive themselves as undercompensated, overburdened, and lacking support in executing their professional duties. Moreover, recent scholarly work has established that urban schools are deficient in the essential resources required to effectively mentor and retain ECTs, and ECTs in urban settings are frequently inadequately equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students (Balang, 2021; Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2022a; Ingersoll & Tran, 2023).

A substantial body of educational literature acknowledges the significance of job satisfaction, teacher retention, and their correlation with school leadership and management (Abitabile, 2020; Botha & Hugo, 2021). Teacher retention is defined as the phenomenon where teachers opt to remain in their educational institutions for over a decade, rather than transferring to another school or exiting the education sector entirely because of job satisfaction (Arthur & Bradley, 2023). Thus, retention pertains to an organisation's capacity to keep its employees, thereby ensuring the stability of its workforce and facilitating growth (Caven, Durodoye, Zhang, & Bock, 2021; Ashley, 2022). The premise is that in educational settings where teachers experience job satisfaction and receive leadership support, there are likely to be no teachers wishing to transfer to different schools or leave the profession entirely. Scholars (Burić & Moè, 2020; Nguyen, 2021; Burić, Zuffiano, & Lopez-Perez, 2022) contend that it is the responsibility of school leaders to cultivate a positive working environment and extend support to ECTs through their leadership capabilities. Nevertheless, recent developments in education at local, provincial, and national levels have altered the dynamics of both leadership and the roles and expectations of teachers (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Tabassum & Waqas, 2021). The repercussions of an assessment-driven educational environment, which lacks comprehensive student engagement, understanding, and writing, instigated by various educational policies, have prompted a call for progressive curricular practices from a novel perspective. The ever-shifting

landscape of education introduces new initiatives, philosophical changes, instructional methodologies, heightened accountability, and a more accelerated pace for anticipated implementation (Tshabalala & Nthontho, 2024). As school leaders and teachers strive to keep pace with a multitude of changes, redesign educational programs, train their classroom staff, and foster a sense of agency for transformation, all while fulfilling existing duties and obligations, students continue to arrive at school daily, eager to achieve progress in their growth and development (Parveen, Tran, Kumar, & Shah, 2022). The role of the school principal is increasingly broadening to include additional responsibilities, heightened accountability, teacher motivation, and an escalating expectation for proficiency in curriculum and assessment (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Mabusela, 2021; Gillani, et al., 2022). Over time, the educational landscape has witnessed the transformation of the school principal's role from that of a master or lead teacher to that of a building manager, and more recently, to that of an instructional leader (Susanto, Syailendra, & Suryawan, 2023). In order to address the continuously evolving demands of the principalship, while also becoming adept in both building management and instructional leadership, principals must empower novice teachers and ensure the retention and satisfaction of the current teaching workforce at higher levels of leadership to help manage the plethora of newly imposed responsibilities from local, provincial, and national mandates. Additionally, school leaders must recognise their influence and guidance in fostering teacher empowerment and cultivating positive working relationships to improve teacher retention (Amissah & Addison, 2025; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025).

While there is substantial evidence indicating that teachers exit the profession, particularly in high-need schools (Maready, Cheng, & Bunch, 2021; Barak, 2021; Diliberti, Schwartz, & Grant, 2021), it is undeniably crucial to investigate and comprehend the influence of leadership and the experiences of teachers who continue to teach, especially in urban primary schools, amidst the relentless implementation of educational reforms. The notion of teacher job satisfaction has emerged in contemporary educational literature as a significant phenomenon worthy of exploration, as it may facilitate efforts to enhance teacher education programs and improve retention rates within the profession. The primary aim of this research is to discern the factors that enable long-serving teachers to persevere despite the challenges posed by ongoing educational reforms over the years. Central to this study

is an empirical investigation into what motivates a select group of teachers to sustain their careers in education, even as many others depart the profession earlier than expected. The experiences of these seasoned teachers may provide valuable insights into the challenges and complexities surrounding their persistence, as well as the lessons that can be gleaned from their journeys. This may yield practical insights for both novice and experienced teachers, including senior school leaders. Collectively, these new insights, derived from their experiences, present fresh perspectives that warrant consideration from the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of leadership resilience. As a doctoral student, the researcher's understanding of the subfield of teacher job satisfaction is notably limited. Nevertheless, the researcher in this study aspired to make a meaningful and original contribution to this area of inquiry. His aim is to initially highlight the contributions of those who can legitimately assert their expertise as connoisseurs within these research domains. Subsequently, alongside prior discoveries related to similar types of research studies, the researcher will introduce his unique insights into the discussions surrounding teachers who have chosen to remain in the profession while others have departed. Consequently, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the current study, the issues that prompted the need to investigate this scale regarding what motivates long-serving teachers to continue in their roles despite various challenges, and the rationale for conducting such a study is also articulated. Additionally, this chapter includes a summary of the research methodologies and procedures that will be employed throughout this academic endeavour.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The justification for this research, as articulated by various researchers (Bonnell & Smith, 2021; Monrroy, Franco, & Garcia, 2022; Tabatabaei & Tayebi, 2022), encompasses the underlying motivations for the study and the emergence of interest in the selected topic. This research seeks to explore the primary factors that determine teacher job satisfaction and the influence of leadership in cultivating positive perceptions among teachers regarding their profession. Teachers are essential to the educational system, engaging directly with students more than other personnel within the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Nevertheless, the duties of public school teachers have become increasingly complex in recent years, facing both internal and external challenges within educational environments. Internal issues include students

with limited English language skills, the inclusion of students with special needs in regular classrooms, and the ongoing increase in class sizes (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; de Klerk, du Toit, McLeary, & Malan, 2023). Public education is under intensified examination from policymakers and the general public, resulting in increased pressure and expectations for accountability from both teachers and educational institutions. Numerous media sources contend that South African students are falling behind their counterparts across the continent, claiming that these students are not receiving sufficient educational support. The teaching profession is characterised by significant emotional demands, with the emotions of teachers playing a crucial role in shaping their professional experiences, values, and identities (SACE, 2010). Recent research conducted in South Africa reveals that inadequate working conditions, second only to salary concerns, adversely affect teachers (Gustafsson & Maponya, 2020; Swanepoel & Saurombe, 2022; de Klerk, du Toit, McLeary, & Malan, 2023). The DBE places a strong focus on improving teacher performance; however, it falls short in addressing the enhancement of working conditions, which are vital for maintaining teacher motivation and reducing job dissatisfaction (Mpundu, Assan, & Mokoena, 2023). The main aim is to acknowledge the importance of investigating and understanding the strategies that some teachers utilise to persist in their roles within urban schools, despite facing significant pressures and stresses. Reflecting on his own experiences as an undergraduate education student at the university, the teacher training curriculum primarily emphasised teaching methodologies, instructional strategies, and assessment policies. Even at the Master's level, the training program failed to include discussions, insights, or preparations for the numerous stresses and challenges that teachers may face in their daily classroom duties. The university offered more training on pedagogical content knowledge but overlooked critical issues such as teacher burnout, conflicts with frustrated parents, student disengagement in the learning process, and the challenges of working in adverse conditions. A decade and a half has passed since the researcher entered the teaching profession, and although some advancements in curriculum and instructional methods may have occurred during the teacher preparation process, there is a lack of substantial academic evidence demonstrating a significant reduction in teacher turnover rates over the last ten years. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of research focused on teacher resilience. Most of the existing studies are conducted outside of South Africa, including regions in Sub-Saharan Africa such as Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone,

Namibia, Tanzania, and Zambia, as well as in the UK, Morocco, and Europe. This indicates a pressing need for further investigation in this domain (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020; Opoku, et al., 2025; Ntjikelane, et al., 2025). Such research is essential, as its findings will be particularly pertinent to both prospective and current teachers, school administrators, and governing bodies, especially within urban educational settings and their surrounding communities. By gaining insights into the factors influencing teachers' decisions to remain in their positions, school leaders can make informed decisions regarding the recruitment and selection of new candidates, while practising teachers can reflect on their professional experiences and pursue opportunities for continued growth and development (Opoku, Dogah, & Aluko, 2022; Smet, 2022). In summary, given that turnover is a prevalent issue among employees in various sectors, resilience should also be considered a critical factor in careers beyond education. This study may hold significant relevance for professionals in nursing, social work, and other public service fields (Ntjikelane, et al., 2025).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The teaching profession is currently experiencing considerable fatigue because of a range of occupational difficulties, which include systemic corruption, ineffective leadership, issues related to student behavior, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate work environments, insufficient support from leadership, ineffective ongoing mentorship on new and experienced teachers, and conflicting roles (Burić & Moè, 2020; Nguyen, 2021; Burić, Zuffiano, & Lopez-Perez, 2022; Gebreziabher & Thompson, 2023). Factors that contribute to job-related stress and burnout encompass low social status, inadequate compensation, limited professional autonomy, a lack of support from leadership, and a trend towards de-professionalisation (Steiner & Woo, 2021). Dissatisfaction in the workplace adversely affects teachers' commitment, motivation, and self-efficacy (Burns, et al., 2020; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Goldhaber, Krieg, Naito, & Theobald, 2021). Factors such as dissatisfaction, fatigue, and social support are associated with demographic factors, including gender, age, and years of professional experience. Nevertheless, the connection between perceived school resources and teacher burnout remains ambiguous. Some teachers have shown resilience in coping with occupational demands, sustaining long-term engagement without yielding to exhaustion (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Chen & Chi-Kin Lee, 2022). This

situation has led to an exploration of the interactions among working conditions, demographics, job satisfaction, resilience, retention, and other factors that affect teachers' decisions to continue in their careers.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aims to investigate the factors that motivate experienced teachers to continue their teaching careers by focusing on the following principal research question:

What factors influence veteran primary teachers' decisions to remain in their schools?

1.4.1 Research Sub-Questions

In order to delve deeper into the central research question, the study was structured around the following sub-questions:

- What are the factors influencing veteran teachers to remain in schools?
- How do veteran primary teachers perceive the relationship between job satisfaction and teaching and learning?
- What role do school managers play in shaping veteran primary teachers' job satisfaction?
- What strategies could be implemented to enhance job satisfaction, resilience and retention of newly recruited teachers?

1.5 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of leadership and identify the key factors influencing job satisfaction among experienced primary school teachers in Johannesburg East Education District, Gauteng Province. The research aimed to identify factors that encourage veteran teachers to continue their professional engagement despite adverse conditions. D9, a district that supports legislative initiatives and community dialogue, plays a crucial role in recruiting high-quality teachers and retaining competent staff. The study aimed to address a gap in current research by focusing on the motivations behind teachers' decisions to remain in the profession. Principals must identify specific factors influencing job satisfaction in urban schools to gain a comprehensive understanding of why veteran teachers choose to continue their careers.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine the key factors influencing teachers to remain in schools.
- To determine the perception of veteran primary teachers on the relationship between job satisfaction and teaching and learning.
- To determine the role school managers play in shaping veteran primary teachers' job satisfaction.
- To determine strategies that could be implemented to enhance job satisfaction, resilience and retention of newly recruited teachers.

1.7 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

Teachers in primary and secondary schools frequently work in isolation, which can result in diminished job satisfaction, higher rates of absenteeism, and lower academic performance (Balang, 2021). Conversely, teachers who engage in collaborative activities with colleagues tend to experience increased motivation, lower absenteeism, and better academic results. The findings indicate that a conducive working environment, sufficient support, and resources can greatly enhance the quality of primary education. It is assumed that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection. The research presumes that participants comprehend the research tools, provide truthful responses, and ensure that data analysis and research design are aligned with the study's goals.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The departure of teachers from the teaching profession poses a considerable challenge for educational stakeholders globally, with more than fifty percent of teachers exiting within their initial five years. This phenomenon of a revolving door is marked by the swift turnover of qualified teachers, especially ECTs, from an already limited pool of individuals entering the teaching field (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2022a). The main obstacle in increasing the number of qualified teachers is not that they qualify and choose not to enter the profession, but that qualified ECTs exit the field. Retaining a group of experienced teachers provides numerous advantages to educational institutions. Experienced teachers contribute a vast array of knowledge and specialised skills to the classroom, which newer teachers may lack. Because of their extensive experience and ongoing participation in continuing professional teacher development (CPTD), veteran teachers have refined their teaching methodologies and

acquired significant expertise in their subject areas, thus promoting better outcomes for students. Mastering the art of teaching is a progressive journey, where experienced teachers exhibit a profound understanding of their subject and teaching techniques, exceptional skills in managing classroom interactions, comprehensive knowledge of pedagogical content, and effective assessment methods that facilitate informed decision-making. Furthermore, they possess the ability to cater to a diverse range of students, including those facing language proficiency challenges (Hulme & Wood, 2022; Arthur & Bradley, 2023). The retention rates of teachers are enhanced when seasoned teachers work in an environment that acknowledges their expertise and value (Beck, Lunsmann, & Garza, 2020). A culture that values the knowledge, experience, and insights of all staff members at different levels is crucial for sustaining long-term service. Promoting a collaborative and collegial environment is another essential factor in improving teacher retention. Employment conditions should also consider the qualitative features of the physical work environment and the accessibility of instructional and learning support materials (LTSMs) (Gebreziabher & Thompson, 2023). Access to suitable facilities and resources, such as libraries, laboratories, computers, copying machines, and a safe environment, is a critical factor influencing teacher retention. Moreover, teacher self-efficacy (TSE) is instrumental in teachers' decisions to remain in the profession, with positive TSE significantly enhancing their commitment and professional engagement. Compensation plays a crucial role in influencing teacher job satisfaction, with more than 60% of teachers reporting dissatisfaction with their pay (Gustafsson & Maponya, 2020; Burić, Zuffiano, & Lopez-Perez, 2022). Prior studies have indicated that raising teacher salaries could have a beneficial impact on retention rates. Recently, analogous research conducted in South Africa has also concluded that increasing teacher compensation will positively affect teacher retention (Gustafsson & Maponya, 2020; Selesho & Matjie, 2024). Nevertheless, other aspects related to the teaching profession are equally important, including non-monetary rewards. Failing to enhance these factors necessitates compensation through higher salaries, as the overall appeal of teaching diminishes and the profession becomes less enticing for some individuals. Furthermore, researchers suggest that professional development represents a more effective approach to improving teacher retention than merely enhancing working conditions (Burns, et al., 2020; Uştuk & De Costa, 2021; Smet, 2022). Engaging in interviews with experienced teachers may yield valuable insights into the factors that affect

teacher retention, drawing from their personal stories and experiences in the educational field. This study seeks to deepen our understanding of teachers' perspectives on retention and the consequences of teacher turnover. School principals can utilise these findings to enhance their comprehension of the factors that affect teacher job satisfaction, allowing them to tackle aspects within their control, such as improving leadership approaches, strengthening leadership support, and optimising the allocation of resources. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) can apply this research to more accurately assess how their decisions influence teacher satisfaction. Policymakers can harness the outcomes of this study to foster an environment that is more favourable to teacher job satisfaction, given that policies and their implementation have a substantial impact on teachers and their effectiveness in the classroom. Increased levels of job satisfaction may encourage teachers to elevate their academic performance, especially in their engagements with students (Hemelt, Ladd, & Clifton, 2021; Afzal & Rafiq, 2022).

1.9 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Following the first democratic election in 1994, South Africa was delineated into nine provinces (Gauteng, Western Cape, Limpopo, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Free State, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, North West and Mpumalanga province). Johannesburg, established in 1886, is the largest city in the metropolitan area of the Gauteng Province of South Africa. With the country's estimated population of over 58.8 million, the city of Johannesburg has an estimated population exceeding 5.7 million (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Gauteng Province serves as the country's business capital and is divided into 14 education districts, including Johannesburg East Education District (D9), which is located in Parkmore, Sandton. The D9 comprises approximately 82 ordinary public primary schools. This study was conducted in three public primary schools selected within D9.

1.10 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE STUDY

The study explores the factors influencing teacher retention in urban educational settings, focusing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, and Bandura's social cognitive and perceived self-efficacy theories. Urban schools face unique challenges, such as resource scarcity, suboptimal working conditions and limited access to materials, insufficient leadership support, and lower compensation

compared to suburban and rural counterparts. Despite these challenges, certain aspects of the teaching profession remain appealing to some individuals. Previously, researchers indicated that working conditions, induction programs, and mentoring support are critical factors influencing teacher decisions to remain in specific schools or the profession. The study's conceptual framework suggests that leadership support, self-efficacy, school climate, culture, and collegiality are directly linked to teacher satisfaction and retention in urban educational settings.

1.10.1 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Motivation and satisfaction in a workforce are linked to enhanced productivity (Belle & Horil, 2020; Setiawan, et al., 2021). Teachers with high motivation demonstrate effectiveness through improved methodologies, self-development, and autonomous work habits, reflecting commitment, diligence, institutional loyalty, and job satisfaction. Motivation is the internal drive that compels individuals to behave in specific ways, and can act as an internal, external, or combination of behavioural catalysts. Intrinsic motivation is the internal evaluation individuals make upon completing work-related tasks, encompassing four components: impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice. Intrinsic motivation is primarily driven by intrinsic value, such as the task being captivating, gratifying, and intellectually demanding (Belle & Horil, 2020; Kanonire, Lubenko, & Kuzmina, 2022). Psychological rewards, such as diverse and meaningful work, task autonomy, participative decision-making, constructive feedback, leadership support, reasonable workloads, adequate resources and compensation, and growth opportunities, enhance intrinsic motivation in the workplace. Extrinsic motivation is driven by external objectives, such as acclaim, recognition, rewards, increased remuneration, and improved working conditions (Tindan, Abukari, Antwi, Dorsah, & Kwakye, 2022). Research indicates that extrinsic factors do not influence teacher job satisfaction and effectiveness to the same extent as intrinsic factors. Genuine satisfiers are intrinsic and promote greater effectiveness by cultivating teachers' higher-order needs, specifically by providing them with increased opportunity, responsibility, authority, and autonomy (Tindan, Abukari, Antwi, Dorsah, & Kwakye, 2022; Kanonire, Lubenko, & Kuzmina, 2022).

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative methodology. In order to collect data and address research issues, this study employs a thorough research methodology that comprises a number of techniques and strategies which are discussed below.

1.11.1 The Population Sample

As indicated in section 1.9, this research study was located in the D9 district of the Gauteng Department of Education because of their representativity in terms of race, ethnicity and demographics. The district is comprised of both township, urban and suburban schools. This study took place at the selected public urban primary schools to which all participants are employed. A sample is a small portion of the total population that forms the subject of the study and from which data is obtained. The researcher chose both purposive and convenient of three primary schools in the D9 to identify teachers as participants to the study. All participants in this study sample have considerable teaching experience in education

1.11.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a lens through which investigators interpret reality and perceive life. It encompasses various frameworks that aim to understand the world from diverse perspectives (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). In this study, the interpretivist paradigm was chosen because of its focus on teacher and stakeholder experiences regarding job dissatisfaction in South African public schools. Interpretivists believe in multiple realities, which are imperfectly understood because of individuals' unique perspectives (Allemang, Sitter, & Dimitropoulos, 2022). Constructivism, on the other hand, suggests that knowledge is socially constructed by those involved in the research process (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Allemang, Sitter, & Dimitropoulos, 2022).

1.11.3 Research Approach

The current study employed a qualitative research methodology, grounded in the constructivist paradigm, which necessitates the use of qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the various realities shaped by individuals within a specific context (Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022; Gamage, 2025; Bernard, 2025). The decision to utilise a qualitative approach arose from its descriptive and non-quantitative characteristics, which leverage language to facilitate reasoning and

express meanings and emotions that shed light on the phenomenon being examined. Furthermore, this methodology allowed for an in-depth exploration of the research question, particularly focusing on the views of teachers and stakeholders regarding job dissatisfaction among teachers in public schools. By adopting a qualitative approach, the study could investigate teacher job satisfaction in its natural environment and interpret it from the participants' perspectives. This methodological framework was advantageous in thoroughly investigating the phenomenon, highlighting the qualitative dimensions of a specific activity rather than its quantitative aspects (Gunbayi, 2020). The research initiative, rooted in humanistic values, ensured the application of qualitative methods that would produce more substantial and meaningful results (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022; Gamage, 2025).

1.11.4 Research Design

The conceptualisation of research design, as articulated by various scholars, encompasses the strategic choices made by researchers concerning data collection, measurement, and analysis during the planning phase of a study (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Bunmi, 2022; Gamage, 2025). Gamage (2025) characterises a case study as a detailed examination of a specific instance, which can vary from an individual to an entire city. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) define instrumental case study research as a methodology that concentrates on a singular context to shed light on broader, analogous situations. This methodology was utilised to investigate job satisfaction within public schools, employing an instrumental case study of approximately ten educational institutions located in the Johannesburg East district. As highlighted by various researchers, a notable advantage of this research design is its ability to facilitate in-depth exploration, allowing for comprehensive investigation and sustained engagement with the subject through follow-up sessions and extended interactions (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Gamage, 2025).

1.12 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

In qualitative research, it is argued that trustworthiness is more significant than conventional notions of reliability and validity (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Allemang, Sitter, & Dimitropoulos, 2022; Bunmi, 2022; Gorard & Tan, 2022). This trustworthiness is assessed based on four essential criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Gorard & Chen, 2023). To enhance the trustworthiness of a study,

it is recommended that researchers employ multiple data collection techniques, which facilitate the integration of information regarding specific facets of human behaviour from diverse sources.

1.12.1 Credibility

To improve the reliability and credibility of the study, member checking was conducted after the completion of the transcripts. This procedure entailed sending draft reports back to the participants for their feedback and insights (Gorard & Tan, 2022; Owen, Watkins, & Hughes, 2022). The main objective was to confirm the research findings through participant validation. The application of various data collection techniques, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, facilitated the verification of findings from multiple sources, thus reinforcing the study's credibility (Gorard, 2023). This method of utilising a range of strategies aimed to provide thorough evidence and bolster the overall dependability of the research results.

1.12.2 Dependability

The constraints regarding generalizability that are characteristic of case studies are applicable to this research. Dependability, which relates to the reliability of findings, assesses whether consistent results would emerge from repeated observations of the same phenomena (Gamage, 2025). In line with the best practices established by Gorard (2023) and Gamage (2025), thorough documentation was preserved throughout every stage of the research process. To guarantee dependability, an audit was conducted to assess the quality and appropriateness of the interview methodology (Gorard, 2023; Gamage, 2025).

1.12.3 Confirmability

Gorard (2023) argues that confirmability pertains to the degree to which researchers mitigate their personal biases from improperly affecting the research process. In his strategy for ensuring confirmability, the researcher engaged in a thorough post-data collection procedure. This process included a detailed examination of the audio recordings and the transcription of the spoken material into written format to reduce potential bias. To further reinforce confirmability, the researcher established an audit trail, which offered a detailed account of the data collection methods, analytical techniques, and interpretative processes utilised throughout the study (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021).

1.12.4 Transferability

The transferability of qualitative research is ascertained by readers who discern similarities between the study site and the context to which the findings are applied. To facilitate this process, the present study delineated the background of the selected schools and provided the interview protocol.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before data collection, ethical clearance was secured under the University of South Africa requirements. Ethics, as defined by, encompasses matters of right and wrong. This investigation addressed various ethical considerations, including participant confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, informed consent, and voluntary involvement.

1.13.1 Confidentiality

In order to protect the privacy of the participants, their personal details were kept confidential, under the recommendation to remove real names from all data-collection forms. The confidentiality of participants was preserved by using their information solely for research. Steps were implemented to guarantee the anonymity of the data submitted by participants (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021). After the data collection process, access to the information was limited exclusively to the supervisor. Before their participation, individuals were informed about the confidentiality protocols, allowing them to make an educated decision regarding their involvement in the study (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021).

1.13.2 Anonymity

The ethical necessity of maintaining participant anonymity in research is highlighted by scholars who argue that information provided by participants should not reveal their identities (Unger, 2021; Mirza, Bellalem, & Mirza, 2023). In line with this principle, the present study employed pseudonyms to protect participant anonymity, a method supported by numerous researchers (Holmes, 2020; Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021). The researcher implemented strategies to ensure the confidentiality of the information provided by participants, acknowledging the ethical violation that would arise from identifying individual participants or revealing their contributions (Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021).

1.13.3 Privacy

This study emphasised the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of all participants and related individuals. Accordingly, measures were put in place to safeguard participants' personal information from unauthorised access. The identities of both the institution and the participants were secured, and the inquiries were carried out with care to prevent any violations of privacy, as recommended by various researchers (Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023).

1.13.4 Informed consent

The societal advantages, both direct and indirect, derived from this research study required the acquisition of informed consent from participants (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023; Gamage, 2025). As the principal investigator, it was essential to protect participants from any potential harm by securing their informed consent. Consent forms were provided to participants for their examination and signature, and these documents were subsequently stored in a secure location, distinct from the study's results (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). Participants were clearly informed that their participation in the study involved no risk or danger. Furthermore, they were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time should they choose to do so.

1.13.5 Voluntary participation

Cilliers and Viljoen (2021), along with Mumford, Higgs, and Gujar (2021), contend that voluntary participation requires the absence of any form of compulsion, coercion, or force in the recruitment of study participants. To uphold this principle, a consent form was provided to prospective participants, clarifying the completely voluntary nature of their involvement and emphasising their autonomy in deciding whether to engage in the study (Cilliers & Viljoen, 2021; Mumford, Higgs, & Gujar, 2021). The issuance of informed consent indicated a participant's readiness to contribute to the research effort. Furthermore, participants were clearly informed of their right to withdraw from the study, thereby further reinforcing the voluntary nature of their participation (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023).

1.14 RESEARCH METHODS

The methodological framework for conducting research encompasses various techniques. This section elucidates the approaches employed for sampling and data collection. Subsequently, it outlines the data analysis methodology, procedural aspects, and ethical considerations pertinent to the study.

1.14.1 Data collection

The collection of empirical data was essential for this study to achieve a thorough understanding. This research employed a triangulation strategy, integrating interviews and document analysis as methods for data collection. Observational methods were appropriate for data collection in light of COVID-19 regulations (Schmidtke & Drinkwater, 2021).

1.14.2 Interviews

Interviews represent a methodological approach in research where the researcher and participant partake in a dialogic interaction focused on inquiries pertinent to a specific study. To facilitate data collection, this research employed semi-structured, face-to-face interview methods (SSI) (Gorard, 2020; Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel, & Cook, 2020; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021).

1.14.3 Document analysis

In qualitative research, documents serve as an easily accessible and significant source of data for researchers. To explore the phenomenon of teacher motivation plans, I analysed a range of documents, such as management plans, meeting minutes, standardised forms, collective bargaining agreements, institutional policies, and pertinent legislation. These materials were obtained through direct requests to schools and by utilising online resources (Mumford, Higgs, & Gujar, 2021; Taherdoost, 2022).

1.15 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative content analysis constitutes a systematic method for examining data, which includes coding, categorisation, and interpretation to clarify a specific phenomenon. This analytical procedure begins at the early stages of conceptualising research ideas, before the collection of data (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021). The main aim is to identify patterns within the data and uncover the fundamental concepts that explain these patterns. The analysis of qualitative data seeks to distil the researcher's observations into recurring words, phrases, themes, or patterns (Cirkony, et al., 2022). In this study,

qualitative content analysis was employed to scrutinise the gathered data, following a defined sequence of steps:

1.15.1 Preparing and Organising the Data

The research data were divided into more manageable components to alleviate the daunting nature of the large, unclassified dataset (Taherdoost, 2022). The first step involved a word-for-word transcription of all audio recordings, followed by a methodical process of data analysis and categorisation to clarify each factor based on its unique characteristics (Taherdoost, 2022). Simultaneously, while reviewing the interview recordings, notes were taken to capture issues and ideas using the participants' exact words. Considering the complex data collection strategy that included interviews, document analysis, and observation, the collected information was reformatted to enhance the analytical process. Interview data were systematically organised by individual participants, compiling responses across the sample (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021). Additionally, the data were structured by questions, enabling a cross-participant analysis to identify patterns of agreement and disagreement. Observational data were analysed separately, taking into account the specific context and event, while document analysis was utilised to corroborate participant responses (Gunbayi, 2020; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021).

1.15.2 Coding the data

Coding, as articulated by Cirkony and colleagues (2022), refers to a methodology that involves the identification of distinct sections within data that signify related phenomena, along with the assignment of broad categorical labels to these sections. This process initiates with a thorough analysis of the data, which includes multiple readings aimed at developing a comprehensive mental framework (Cirkony, et al., 2022). Following this, unique codes are allocated to significant sections. The fundamental aspect of coding is the tagging or indexing of text, or the assignment of a value on a scale. The recognition of small, self-contained units of data, referred to as sections, each embodying a single idea, is essential (Taherdoost, 2022). The coding process follows this sequence:

- Selection of an interview or field notes for analysis
- Examination of data, focusing on potentially significant ideas and behaviours

- Highlighting of data sections related to a single concept and creation of a corresponding code word
- Continuation of code creation for the remaining interviews and field notes
- Compilation of a comprehensive code list

This methodical approach to coding facilitates the retrieval and aggregation of text and data associated with thematic concepts.

1.15.3 Establish categories and themes.

The process of data analysis encompassed the identification of both primary and secondary themes within the coded information, aiming to clarify the findings of the study. Thematic categories, which signify essential concepts, were utilised to interpret the significance of similar coded data (Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022).

1.15.4 Analyse and interpret data

The analytical procedure consisted of breaking down the data into individual factors for comprehensive analysis (Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022). The interpretation involved clarifying the results obtained from participant data. Similar codes were merged to form categories, which were then named to reflect the importance of the codes. Shortened codes, terms, or symbols were assigned and compared with the recognised themes and concepts to aid in data analysis (Owen, Watkins, & Hughes, 2022).

1.15.5 Reporting data findings

The results of the study were showcased and examined by integrating direct quotes from participants, with the objective of genuinely reflecting the experiences of the subjects and the contexts under investigation. Following this, the interpretation phase included the recognition of thematic patterns and interconnections to clarify the findings, thus assigning significance and importance to the analytical results (Taherdoost, 2022; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023).

1.16 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Urban school settings

This study focuses on urban school settings in Johannesburg, excluding central cities, characterised by homogeneous demographics and funding difficulties. These schools often have free meals, English as a Home Language, violence, poverty, high student attendance, overcrowding, and high teacher absenteeism. These schools are often located far from the central city (Welsh & Swain, 2020; Blackwell & Young , 2021).

Suburban school settings

This study defines suburban school settings as those situated around the central city in Metropolitan areas, as per:

Veteran teachers

This study defines veteran teachers as those with over 10 years of experience (Beck, Lunsman, & Garza, 2020).

Early career teachers (ECTs)

Teachers who have served for less than five years are considered early career teachers for this study (Botha & Hugo, 2021).

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an emotional state resulting from an individual's assessment of their work and experiences (Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, Richard , & Capwell, 1957). It is a significant concern for authorities, policymakers, and top executives because of its connection to various factors in organisations, including schools. Job satisfaction is defined as organisational determination, engagement, and loyalty that lead to a motivated attitude or satisfaction in the working environment. It is a feeling of fulfilment that an employee experiences once a certain demand is met, reflecting their happiness with their role, comfort, and overall pleasure at work (Clark, Oswald, & Warr, 1996).

Teacher

A teacher is defined as anyone appointed to a vacant post in a learning or teaching institution who teaches, educates, and trains people, including professional therapy and educational psychology services, at any public or independent school. The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 also includes those who instruct or train students in schools, technical colleges, and teacher training institutions. The International Labour Organisation and UNESCO also define “teacher” broadly, including all school employees with teaching duties (UNESCO, 2006).

Motivation

It is posited by researchers (Akdemir, 2020; Belle & Horil, 2020) that motivation constitutes a process rather than a singular event, which entails persuading individuals to direct their energy towards enhanced performance. The term derives from the verb ‘movere’, which translates to move. In a broader context, motivation fosters diligence and additional effort to achieve objectives, suggesting that motivation represents the capacity to sway others towards better performance (Akdemir, 2020).

Teacher morale

Morale refers to an employee’s perspective on their job or employment, shaped by their professional interests and eagerness to meet both personal and collective objectives within a particular work setting. It constitutes an internal set of beliefs that emerge in response to various stimuli (Mboweni & Taole, 2022). High morale can be fostered when the goals of the organisation are in harmony with the needs of individual employees, whereas low morale may stem from a failure to alter a detrimental status quo, leading individuals to perceive their work as lacking significance. Morale is characterised as a blend of the needs of individual workers and the aims of the organisation, which has a direct impact on employee motivation and performance (Mboweni & Taole, 2022; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025).

Self-actualisation

Self-actualisation is defined as the aspiration to achieve one’s fullest potential and make use of one’s capabilities. This concept is grounded in the work of Maslow, who posited that self-actualisation entails progressing to elevated stages of psychological growth and fulfilment.

1.17 CHAPTER DIVISION

The thesis is structured into six chapters, with the outline provided as follows:

Chapter 1: Orientation of the Study

This chapter provides the direction for the study and the methodology for answering the research question:

What factors influence veteran primary teachers' decisions to remain in their schools?

The research project's program was developed as follows:

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides a foundation for the study, examining factors that motivate teachers to work hard and their job satisfaction, which supports the research.

Chapter 3: A review of local and international literature on teacher turnover, retention, job satisfaction and school leadership

This chapter reviews literature on teacher turnover, job satisfaction, and motivation in the teaching profession. The chapter explores strategies to empower South African primary school teachers and explores innovative approaches to teacher autonomy and professionalism. The research aims to contribute to a greater recognition of teacher job satisfaction and professional autonomy, ultimately incorporating these concepts into practical teaching methodologies.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology and Design

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the research methodology, highlighting the choice of a qualitative approach and the case study, examining the population, sampling techniques, and participant sample, and discussing reliability, trustworthiness, and methodological triangulation. It also addresses ethical considerations and participant consent procedures.

Chapter 5: Findings and Interpretation of Results

Chapter 5 of this research uses qualitative data analysis (QDA) to analyse veteran teachers' experiences and insights into their motivations for staying in the profession. The study examines how teachers express their emotional and personal dedication to their profession, especially in a global context where strict regulations and difficulty in

attracting and retaining high-quality personnel are prevalent. The analysis also provides conclusions on the changes and overall contribution of the research.

Chapter 6: Recommendations, Further Research and Conclusion

This chapter presents the study's findings, inferences, and recommendations, while also addressing its limitations and suggesting future research. The aim is to understand factors influencing veteran teachers' persistence in their profession within D9, potentially improving job performance.

1.18 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The changing global education policy has led to a need for new perspectives on teacher retention, considering emerging responsibilities, migration-induced student diversity, and changing professional relationships. A study was conducted to investigate factors affecting veteran teachers' career longevity in primary schools. The review of literature on teacher turnover, retention, and job satisfaction was conducted, guiding understanding of prevailing interpretations and debates. Chapter 1 examined the teacher job satisfaction discourse, addressing methodological approaches, ethical considerations, and study limitations. The following chapter explored the theoretical underpinnings of the current study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF MOTIVATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

With an emphasis on the factors that encourage veteran teachers to stay in their field in spite of challenges (Beck, Lunsmann, & Garza, 2020), this chapter examines the theoretical underpinnings of a study on teacher turnover and job satisfaction. Several models serve as the foundation for the study, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the two-factor theory of Herzberg et al., Bandura's theories, leadership styles, Duffy's et al (2009) work as calling theory (WCT), and the ethics of caring theory. Nel Noddings' (2005) extension of Carol Gilligan's (1982) ethics of care theory is also taken into account in this study. Every theory is thoroughly examined in this chapter, along with its description, purpose, traits, and importance. A thorough analysis of each theory follows, with particular emphasis on its relevance to the present study. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the key concepts discussed.

2.2 MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THEORY

One well-known and significant addition to needs-based theories is Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (HNT). It suggests five levels of human needs, which go from physiological needs (sleep, hunger, and thirst) to safety and security (no fear or harm), social and belonging (social relationships), self-esteem (status and self-respect), and self-actualisation (realising one's potential) (Maslow, 1943; 1954; 1957). According to Maslow's theory, teachers' needs are based on what they presently have, and they are always looking for more. He discovered that teachers who were raised in a setting that did not meet their needs later in life were more likely to experience mental health issues. He concluded that supervisors ought to understand the requirements of their teachers and that these needs groups might explain the behaviour of teachers in various cultural contexts. Maslow felt that his motivation model was a good, general way to understand how most teachers are driven by wants, even though it did not apply to all of them (Letele & Massyn, 2020).

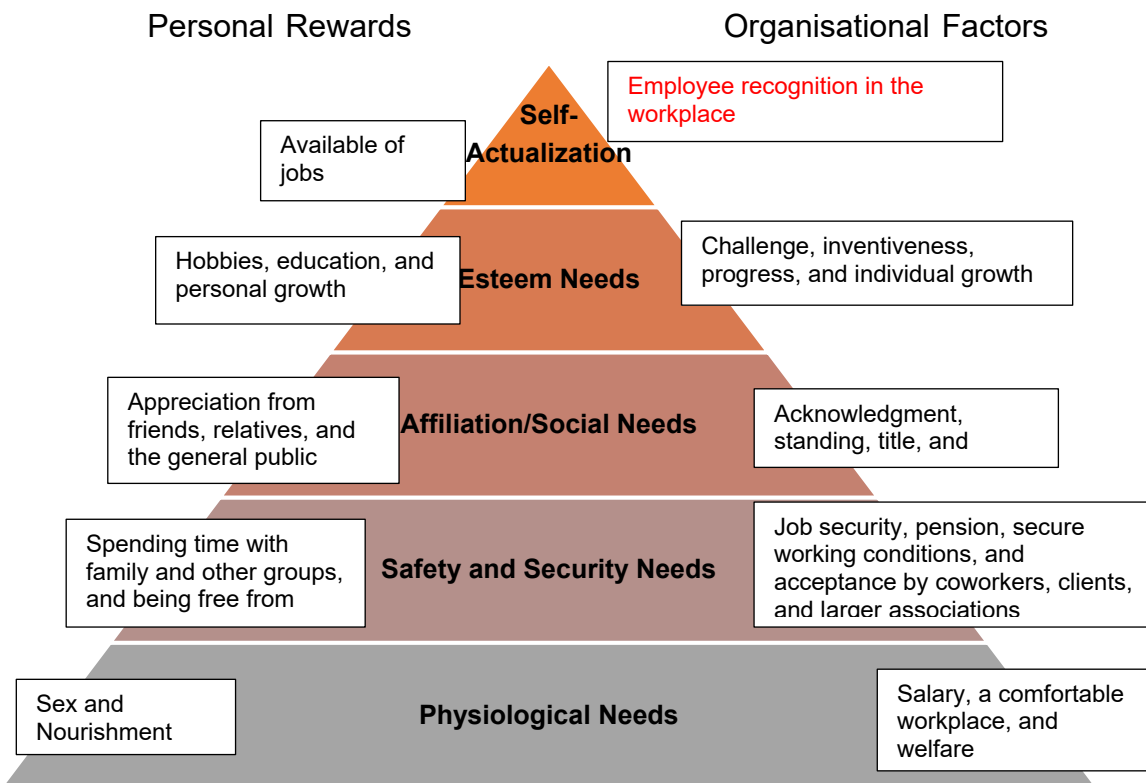


Figure 2.1 A Traditional Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid. Source: (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2013, p. 116), Human Resources Management in Education.

The significance of satisfying lower-order needs before concentrating on higher-order requirements is the main topic of research on teacher job satisfaction that employs Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (HNT) (Letele & Massyn, 2020). Before concentrating on more advanced criteria, HNT states that teachers must meet their workplace safety needs. A sense of worth, belonging, and recognition; possibilities for professional growth; and good working relationships are examples of higher-order requirements. Additionally, the HNT pyramid emphasises self-actualisation as the final phase in meeting the needs of teachers. The inner motivation to advance professionally, realise potential, and accomplish goals is symbolised by this stage. Maslow's hierarchy of needs places self-actualisation at the top, inspiring teachers to reach their greatest potential and develop into their ideal selves. Safety, esteem, love/belonging, and physiological requirements are all included in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The traits of self-actualised teachers allow them to address these demands and resolve the conflict between determinism and free will. Self-actualised teachers have qualities that allow them to address these demands and resolve the conflict between determinism and free will (Maslow, 1957). All things considered, Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs offers a framework for comprehending and resolving

teacher job satisfaction. Teachers can improve their general well-being and more effectively navigate their positions by recognising and meeting these requirements (Letele & Massyn, 2020; Ross, 2021).

2.2.1 Acceptance and Realism

Maslow's self-actualisation is a teacher's acceptance of their identity, capabilities, and evaluation of the world around them. It involves a realistic and accurate perception of oneself and the world, preventing a destructive mismatch between the internal self and the external world. Those with the most accurate self-image achieve self-actualisation (Maslow, 1954, p. 292).

2.2.2 Problem-Centering

Maslow's theory suggests that self-actualised teachers prioritise their personal well-being over addressing others' problems to improve their environment, driven by an empathy-based sense of right and wrong. This desire to assist others is a crucial aspect of their approach (Maslow, 1954, p. 17).

2.2.3 Spontaneity

Self-actualised individuals, characterised by their genuine self-view and worldview, tend to think and act spontaneously, but they often conform to societal standards and expectations, exhibiting unusual communication tactics and speech in their interactions with others (Maslow, 1954, p. 100).

2.2.4 Autonomy and Solitude

Self-actualised individuals, despite adhering to social norms and focusing on teaching, also desire personal freedom and seclusion, spending quiet moments intellectually and physically to identify strengths and weaknesses (Maslow, 1954, p. 160).

2.2.5 Continued Freshness of Appreciation

Maslow's theory suggests that self-actualised teachers can view experiences from various perspectives, appreciate their surroundings' complexity, and use this skill to develop innovative problem-solving strategies, regardless of the simplicity or familiarity of the experience (1954, p. 163).

2.2.6 Peak Experiences

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (HNT) identifies five levels of teacher needs: esteem needs, social belonging needs, safety and security requirements, and physiological needs. These levels are crucial for teachers to achieve their professional goals and maintain their well-being. Esteem needs refer to a teacher's self-esteem at the pinnacle of their profession, which includes recognition, appreciation, and respect from oneself and others (Maslow, 1954, p. 164). Teachers who do not feel their employment meets these needs may become discouraged and seek recognition for their achievements. Other important concepts associated with status and esteem include teacher autonomy, collegiality, and empowerment. Social belonging needs involve the desire for social belonging, partnerships, collaborations, and collegiality. School principals should develop assignments that revolve around their staff and inspire and include their teachers in collaborative work. This can be achieved through praising teachers, incorporating a participatory approach into decision-making processes, and developing harmonious interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships amongst teachers. Safety and security requirements are essential for teachers' early careers, as they require protection against mental and bodily injury, steady work, healthcare, safe neighbourhoods, and shelter. However, these requirements are considered higher than physiological demands, leading to greater control and order in their lives (Maslow, 1954, p. 287). The lowest level of Maslow's HNT, the initial and main level, is linked to newly graduating teachers and their physiological needs. Physiological needs comprise the most fundamental necessities for survival, such as water, air, food, and shelter. These needs are likely self-evident, as everyone requires food and water to exist. Teachers also need to breathe and maintain a steady body temperature. In conclusion, Maslow's hierarchy of needs plays a significant role in understanding the needs and motivations of teachers. By addressing these needs, school principals can better support and develop their staff (Maslow, 1954, pp. 20-26).

2.3 HERZBERG ET AL'S TWO-FACTOR THEORY

In order to better comprehend job satisfaction, behavioural scientists Herzberg et al. employed the Herzberg-Hygiene (MHT) theory, which was put forth by Frederick Herzberg in the late 1950s (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Funded by the Buhl Foundation, the study examined the relationship between workplace motivation and teacher attitude. In their classification of variables, Herzberg et al. distinguished

between extrinsic (such as policies, supervision, compensation, and interpersonal interactions) and intrinsic (such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and progress) motivators (see Table 3.1). Professional relationships in educational contexts were regarded as independent factors, whereas job satisfaction was the dependent variable (Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, Richard , & Capwell, 1957). Since professional interactions in educational settings can be categorised as either hygiene factors or motivators based on whether they lead to job satisfaction or discontent, the theory is pertinent to our study. While their absence correlates to job unhappiness (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959, p. 113), the presence of hygiene variables does not necessarily result in job contentment. The study sought to better understand how employees felt about their jobs and the factors that influenced their level of job satisfaction.

Table 2.1 Herzberg et al’s Motivation factors and Hygiene factors

Motivation Factors	Hygiene Factors
Achievement Recognition Status Responsibility Opportunity for Advancement/Promotion Growth Job Content	Compensation, Wages, & Benefits Organisational Policy/Administration Quality of Managerial Supervision Job Security Working Conditions Work-Life Balance Workplace Relations Hips
When In Place, These Factors Results In:	When In Place, These Factors Results In:
High Job Satisfaction Strong Level of Commitment	General Job Satisfaction Prevention of Job Dissatisfaction

According to Herzberg as al. (1959), teachers’ job satisfaction is greatly influenced by their achievement and acknowledgement. School administrators should highlight the good, encourage teacher empowerment, and show that they value their work and dignity. However, teacher discontent may result from a lack of leadership recognition and support. According to the MHT theory, hygienic factors lead to unhappiness, whereas motivators drive job satisfaction. Workplace policies, compensation, supervision, and interpersonal interactions are examples of hygiene factors that are beyond an individual’s control. Hygiene variables are not linked to job satisfaction when they are present, but they can contribute to discontent when they are not. In

order to demonstrate how hygiene factors and motivators affect teachers' job happiness, Herzberg et al. (1966) provided scenarios. A balance between hygienic considerations and motivating factors is required to obtain the desired effect. Teachers may be neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and job satisfaction and discontent may not have distinct scales. Since hygienic factors do not directly affect job happiness, teachers are not unhappy but are also not necessarily satisfied when they are present. While they do not affect contentment, hygienic aspects may lessen discontent. Rather, teacher satisfaction is influenced by motivational factors. Teachers are content when their demands for motivation are fulfilled. This viewpoint ignores the nuances of teachers' feelings, though, as they may be neither pleased nor dissatisfied at all, or they may be both content and unsatisfied at the same time (Herzberg, 1966). Unsatisfied but not content is the reverse of satisfied, while dissatisfied but not satisfied is not displeased but not satisfied.

2.4 BANDURA'S SELF-EFFICACY THEORY

In 1977, Albert Bandura established the idea that self-efficacy perceptions are beliefs in one's ability to plan and carry out the actions necessary to achieve goals (Bandura, 1977). People with high self-efficacy have been shown to display specific behavioural patterns, such as actively seeking challenges and taking on new tasks, supporting these notions. In order to persevere in tough educational environments, teachers who possess high self-efficacy tend to welcome challenges and stay unfazed by the possibility of failure. According to Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which has a direct bearing on human motivation and self-efficacy, some parts of a person's knowledge acquisition might be linked to seeing others in social situations, experiences, and outside influences. The theory contends that the social environment in which teachers work has a major impact on fostering intrinsic motivation, social growth, and well-being.

Educational institutions should use collaborative leadership, boost teacher involvement in decision-making, and give ECTs the chance to observe experienced teachers in action and participate in professional development centred on successful tactics for urban education in high-poverty areas in order to increase teacher retention. Students from high-poverty urban areas need teachers with expertise and certification who can meet their specific requirements. Higher levels of self-efficacy

among teachers have been linked to both positive internal and external effects, such as longer life expectancies and improved instructional effectiveness, according to research. High self-efficacy teachers in urban school environments credit their positive perspective to their capacity to accept their jobs, adopt culturally appropriate techniques, and appreciate racial and ethnic diversity. Acknowledging, encouraging, and relating a teacher's uniqueness to practical situations fosters development and success. Urban teachers have a thorough awareness of the behavioural patterns, thought processes, and significant factors of their students. They use efficient techniques to foster their desire for more education and are conscious of their current body of information. The diverse needs of students, their families, and the larger community context are also acknowledged and met by these teachers. According to research, teachers can have a significant impact on urban students' social, emotional, and intellectual development by fostering a sense of connection and belonging through sincere interactions.

Teachers at urban schools with high rates of poverty recognise their responsibility to foster an atmosphere that puts students' well-being first, promoting both their academic achievement and overall development. Because it influences people's emotional reactions, mental processes, self-motivation, and behavioural patterns, self-efficacy is essential to teacher retention (Bandura, 1993). Because urban teachers deal with particular difficulties and unfavourable situations, it is necessary to look at how their own self-efficacy and coping mechanisms interact. Devoted urban teachers often have high levels of intrinsic drive, which is a crucial component for those who decide to stay employed in underperforming, high-poverty schools. In urban contexts, especially, the presence of highly engaged urban teachers benefits not only students but also other teachers.

Research on teacher motivation has become increasingly important, particularly in countries where issues of teacher quality and retention have become urgent (Burić & Moè, 2020; Ellison, 2023). Teacher retention has been associated with self-efficacy, a term that refers to teachers' perceptions of their capacity to influence the learning and development of their students. Many urban teachers continue in their positions despite falling retention rates (Fathi, Greenier, & Derakhshan, 2021; Burić, Zuffiano, & Lopez-Perez, 2022). Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are extremely

beneficial in urban schools with high rates of poverty and poor performance because they exhibit greater dedication and openness to learning (Burić, Zuffiano, & Lopez-Perez, 2022). They stand out from their peers due to their varied life experiences. The phrase “Irreplaceable” describes outstanding urban teachers who think that good instruction can assist students in overcoming obstacles in challenging educational settings. The largest rates of teacher turnover occur in low-performing, high-poverty schools; thus, creating a sense of achievement is essential for retention. Teachers at urban schools with high rates of poverty and poor academic performance have high levels of self-efficacy and a strong desire to be change agents. It is unclear, though, how much these inherent qualities can do to keep teachers in underperforming schools (Fathi, Greenier, & Derakhshan, 2021). Teacher retention is influenced by several factors, including leadership support, mentoring and induction programs (Barak, 2021), contextual factors, leadership support for school atmosphere (Viswanath, 2020), and hiring highly self-efficacious teachers (Arthur & Bradley, 2023). Nonetheless, there is still a lack of information in the literature about what drives teachers to stay in urban schools with high rates of poverty and poor academic performance.

2.5 LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

At the heart of any effective school and its improvement lies a new approach to collaboration between teachers and management (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020). In institutions focused on enhancement, both school leaders and teachers must operate as leaders and decision-makers in their efforts to implement significant changes. Crucially, school improvement requires a rethinking of leadership, wherein teachers and leaders participate in collective decision-making and embrace risk-taking (Amissah & Addison, 2025). The development and establishment of leadership styles have occurred over a prolonged period (Viswanath, 2020; Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Blackwell & Young, 2021). Leadership styles are continuously evolving in relation to their traits, behaviours, actions, and values (Hiwa, Durman, & Demir, 2021). Grasping the importance assigned to leadership styles is vital, as leadership serves a foundational role in any business, organisation, or community (Jabbar & Yousaf, 2020; Salas-Vallina, Alegre, & López-Cabrales, 2020). Continuous investigation into leadership styles is necessary because of the significant impact leadership has on an organisation’s success. Moreover, Top, Abdullah and Faraj (2020) expressed that an

organisation's success or failure is intricately connected to the type of leadership practised. The leadership style chosen can ultimately change the direction of the organisation (Jabbar & Yousaf, 2020).

A considerable emphasis should be placed on effective leadership styles and their effect on employee productivity (Jabbar & Yousaf, 2020). Historically, no singular leadership style has reliably shown effectiveness (Wongsunopparat & Jaroensuk, 2021). Studies suggest that different leadership styles can produce both effective and ineffective results (Wongsunopparat & Jaroensuk, 2021). Hiwa, Durman and Demir (2021) observed that the effectiveness of leadership styles depends on the context. They claimed that various leadership styles can be utilised by school principals to improve effectiveness and success. In contrast, Buckman (2021) argued that regardless of the leadership style employed, effective leaders cultivate successful students, teachers, and school districts. A significant number of studies have been conducted to explore the influence of different principal leadership styles on teacher job satisfaction (Buckman, 2021; Abdullah & Hamzah, 2021). Recently, there has been a trend among teachers to reformulate the philosophy of school leadership (Abdullah & Hamzah, 2021). This philosophy involves school leaders creating numerous opportunities for staff to assume leadership roles while also being strong instructional leaders (Burns, et al., 2020; Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Mefi & Asoba, 2020). All leadership styles are designed to motivate teachers to improve their performance. This section explores different administrative leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, authoritative, democratic, laissez-faire and responsible leadership (Gabriela, 2024).

The first style, transformational leadership, focuses primarily on empowering followers by assigning them leadership roles that showcase their skills, talents, and abilities (Gao, Murphy, & Anderson, 2020; Ghimire, 2022). Transformational leaders aim to incorporate individuals' strengths into the organisation's functions and consistently promote unity and a sense of shared leadership among staff (Ghimire, 2022). The unity that is fostered allows leaders to pursue common goals and develop a collective vision among all personnel (Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021). According to Ghimire (2022), in transformational leadership, the leaders set goals that extend beyond immediate objectives and focus on higher organisational needs. This suggests that

transformational leaders are always oriented towards the big picture (Ghimire, 2022). Most employees under a transformational leadership model feel motivated about their work and endeavor to create a positive impact each day (Gao, Murphy, & Anderson, 2020; Han, Oh, & Kangpil, 2020). Transformational leadership promotes a constructive outlook and a sense of gratitude among employees (Ghimire, 2022). Those who experience these two aspects frequently report increased levels of job satisfaction (Gao, Murphy, & Anderson, 2020). As highlighted by (Karunakaran & Temam, 2022), many researchers and practitioners have attempted to contrast transformational leadership with other styles; however, a distinct difference exists between transformational leaders and those who represent alternative leadership styles.

Transformational leaders focus on enhancing their followers' strengths and are dedicated to their staff (Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021). Dwipayana and Suwandana (2021) posited that transformational leaders do not merely concentrate on organisational goals, but also emphasise achievement. In the context of transformational leadership, achievement ensures that all staff members are effectively applying their skills, resources, and abilities to attain a common objective (Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021). Transformational leaders do not aim to achieve success in isolation; instead, they involve all personnel in the quest for organisational success (Gan & Voon, 2021; Kalogiannidis, Kontsas, & Chatzitheodoridis, 2021; Nsubuga, 2022). They guarantee that employees play significant and vital roles in the overall development and success of the organisation. Moreover, transformational leaders sincerely and profoundly care about their employees' personal and professional ambitions (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020). Their commitment to employee success transcends professional accomplishments to include personal aspirations as well. Clearly, transformational leadership has a positive impact on job satisfaction due to the engagement opportunities it creates (Kalogiannidis, Kontsas, & Chatzitheodoridis, 2021; Ghimire, 2022). Although this may not be universally applicable, studies consistently reveal that transformational leadership ranks among the most effective leadership styles in modern contexts (Bastori, Eliyana, & Yanti, 2020). The actions of transformational leaders are especially critical in public organisations, such as educational institutions (Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021). School districts prefer leaders who prioritise collaboration, a core factor of transformational leadership (Wongsunopparat & Jaroensuk, 2021). Furthermore,

researchers have noted that various leadership styles, aside from transformational leadership, have proven effective in public organisations; however, the capacity to inspire has emerged as an essential trait of a capable leader, regardless of the leadership style adopted (Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021). Being inspirational is a fundamental aspect of the transformational leadership model, which makes it a highly endorsed approach for school principals (Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021; Parveen, Tran, Kumar, & Shah, 2022).

The second leadership model, referred to as transactional leadership, operates within a framework of order and structure, where the leader fosters a directed environment (Wongsunopparat & Jaroensuk, 2021; Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2021). Transactional leadership is often described as a system of rewards and penalties that highlights the principle of mutual exchange between leaders and their followers (Ghimire, 2022). Furthermore, transactional leaders clearly articulate their expectations to employees to ensure comprehension of the standards and rewards linked to meeting those standards (Maheshwari, 2022). Instances where individuals under transactional leadership face confusion or misinterpret expectations are uncommon. Scholars have identified three specific dimensions associated with the transactional leadership style, which include rewarding staff, correcting staff, and the lack of corrective leadership (Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021; Karunakaran & Temam, 2022). This essentially suggests that transactional leaders may display different behaviours at various times (Maheshwari, 2022). Some researchers (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Hiwa, Durman, & Demir, 2021; Ghimire, 2022) emphasised that all three dimensions are crucial to the transactional leadership style. Although there are significant differences between transformational and transactional leadership, both share a commonality in the establishment of trust (Ghimire, 2022; Nurtjahjani, Alotaibi, Batubulan, & Puspita, 2023). In contrast to transformational leadership, which seeks to build trust through inspiration and empowerment, transactional leadership establishes trust by consistently rewarding and penalising employees based on their behaviours and actions (Maheshwari, 2022). Transactional leaders may be perceived by their employees as exclusive problem solvers who neglect the significance of value, appreciation, and the emotions of their staff (Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021). This method can negatively affect employee morale and commitment, potentially resulting in increased turnover rates. However, research suggests that this leadership style can

still enhance productivity and effectiveness across various organisations. As with any leadership approach, further studies should be conducted to evaluate whether a transactional leadership style may lead to teachers feeling either dissatisfied or satisfied with their roles (Jabbar & Yousaf, 2020; Mefi & Asoba, 2021).

The third leadership style, referred to as authoritative leadership, emphasises the belief that leaders possess superior knowledge, experience, and skills compared to their employees, allowing them to make executive decisions without seeking input from others (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Solihah, Budiawan, & Nugraha, 2021). This leadership approach frequently results in restricted decision-making opportunities for employees (Viswanath, 2020; Wongsunopparat & Jaroensuk, 2021). Employees are expected to agree with executive decisions, irrespective of whether these choices serve the organisation's best interests (Viswanath, 2020). Consequently, authoritative leaders may sometimes be perceived as domineering and controlling by their employees (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020). As a result, only certain types of individuals have the ability and patience to succeed under an authoritative leadership style (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Viswanath, 2020). According to (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020), authoritative leadership is also known as autocratic leadership. This leadership style entails the leader making all decisions, choices, and conclusions for the organisation with minimal to no input from other organisational members (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Mickson, Anlesinya, & Malcalm, 2020). One perspective on the authoritative leadership style is its detrimental effect on individuals, arising from the leader's domineering and overpowering demeanour, which can ultimately erode the confidence and effectiveness of employees (Viswanath, 2020). Authoritative leadership embodies a more conventional approach within organisations, and extensive research suggests that embracing an alternative leadership style may improve teacher job satisfaction (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020).

A fourth frequently observed leadership style is the democratic leadership style (Wahidin & Wibowo, 2020). This leadership approach integrates diverse viewpoints that affect the overall operation of an organisation by setting shared goals, visions, and themes (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020). Wahidin and Wibowo (2020) described democratic leadership as a moral pursuit, highlighting the importance of responsiveness and the formation of democratic communities through decisions that

embody responsiveness, thus offering prospective principals a flexibility of spirit, ideas, and heart to navigate their experiences. Some scholars have noted that democracy is becoming increasingly irrelevant because of the growing demands for expectations and accountability placed on leaders (Ximenes & Da Silva, 2024). Organisations, including school districts, are occasionally forced to make executive decisions without the consent of employees (Ximenes & Da Silva, 2024). Although the application of democracy in organisations seems to be declining in favour, some research suggests that democracy continues to be one of the most effective, productive, and widely utilised leadership styles (Bastori, Eliyana, & Yanti, 2020; Bikamane & Makambe, 2020). The main objective of a democratic organisation is to establish channels for employee involvement, engagement, and feedback to improve the organisation (Ximenes & Da Silva, 2024). A democratic leadership style is based on the idea of including all staff members in the decision-making process, which is essential for teacher satisfaction (Wahidin & Wibowo, 2020; Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Mefi & Asoba, 2021).

Another leadership style is laissez-faire leadership, often described as a non-interventionist approach (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Abdullah & Hamzah, 2021; Mohamed & Saeed, 2022). As noted by Mohamed et al (2022), the laissez-faire style is characterised by a leader who lacks a definitive goal and fails to offer professional direction to their team; this leader does not employ a systematic method for working, overseeing, or generating ideas. Laissez-faire leadership is defined as a style that allows for the unrestricted exchange of ideas and opinions without the leader's interference. The adoption of a laissez-faire leadership style has consistently resulted in negative effects on an organisation's productivity and performance (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Robert & Vandenberghe, 2021). Proponents of a laissez-faire leadership style show little initiative to enhance the organisation (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Abdullah & Hamzah, 2021). Often, promoting cohesion among employees becomes difficult because of this lack of initiative. In research conducted by Dwipayana and Suwandana (2021), an organisation that adopted a laissez-faire leadership approach found itself divided among its employees, lacking adequate direction concerning expectations and goals. Mefi and Asoba (2020) argued that laissez-faire leadership has a negative impact on individuals' emotional states and motivation levels in their work environments. Mefi

and Asoba (2020) further emphasised that nothing is more harmful than eroding employees' confidence in, attitudes towards, and perceptions of their own performance. Paais and Pattirubu (2020) offered a different viewpoint that, in this context, laissez-faire leadership might be interpreted as arising from ignorance or negligence; however, it could also be perceived as respect from a leader.

Therefore, given that laissez-faire leadership may represent a strategic choice by a leader and/or be regarded positively by subordinates, it is vital to examine laissez-faire leadership with greater nuance to move beyond the conventional viewpoint that carries implicit biases and potential links to adverse outcomes (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2021). Thus, while the prevailing definition of laissez-faire leadership is often linked to negative implications, it is important to assess laissez-faire leadership in a more impartial manner (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Gan & Voon, 2021). Although it is widely believed that a laissez-faire leadership style is not the most prudent choice, critics of leadership must adopt an open-minded perspective (Lopez, Delgado-Bello, Veas-Gonzalez, & Villar, 2025).

Nonetheless, a laissez-faire leadership approach may result in dissatisfaction among teachers in the workplace (Solihah, Budiawan, & Nugraha, 2021; Dwipayana & Suwandana, 2021). Leaders who choose a laissez-faire style may eventually feel compelled to seek alternative career opportunities (Lopez, Delgado-Bello, Veas-Gonzalez, & Villar, 2025). It is vital to acknowledge that various leadership styles have demonstrated effectiveness (Gan & Voon, 2021). Different leadership approaches yield unique implications for an organisation and the satisfaction levels of its workforce (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2021). In their study, Karunakaran and Teman (2022) highlighted the importance for researchers to continue investigating leadership areas because of the significant impact leadership has on organisations. Leadership is a fundamental component in every organisation, and the absence of effective leadership can lead to detrimental consequences for an organisation (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020). Many organisations, particularly educational institutions, have the necessary resources and strategies to thrive in various fields; however, a lack of strong, quality leadership reduces the chances of achieving excellence in those areas (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020). Moreover, school leaders need to be aware of their own leadership styles, as a specific style can negatively impact teacher job satisfaction (Alanoğlu &

Demirtaş, 2020; Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2021; Mefi & Asoba, 2021; Karunakaran & Temam, 2022).

The sixth leadership style is known as responsible leadership. Responsible leadership is essentially a relationship based on shared values between leaders and stakeholders, aimed at producing positive results for team members (Makirimani & Naicker, 2025). It encompasses ethical principles, relational dynamics, and requires integrity, compassion, consistency, and morality. Responsible leaders play a crucial role in establishing and embedding organisational values throughout the organisation. Responsibility is the cornerstone of effective leadership, distinguishing it from other leadership models (Makirimani & Naicker, 2025). There is an urgent demand for a new generation of responsible leaders who can embrace a more radical approach to change and demonstrate a willingness to redefine self-interest in relation to societal welfare. These leaders are expected to serve as catalysts, motivating others in the pursuit of a more equitable, just, democratic, and sustainable world by initiating significant changes in institutional power structures and fostering personal growth and character development (Mamdouh & Hamed, 2024; Lopez, Delgado-Bello, Veas-Gonzalez, & Villar, 2025). Responsible leaders should be perceived as accountable, trustworthy, and ethical, exhibiting strong character, moral reasoning, and creativity. They create stakeholder value, energise individuals and teams, mentor and empower staff, and advocate for equitable employment opportunities (Mamdouh & Hamed, 2024; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025).

2.5.1 Leadership Supervision influence on teacher job satisfaction

The retention of urban teachers is significantly influenced by leadership at both the building and district levels. Inadequate leadership support has been identified as a crucial factor contributing to teacher turnover in urban educational institutions (Mamdouh & Hamed, 2024). Teacher commitment is strongly related to their perceptions of district leadership, the quality and quantity of professional development opportunities, and their sense of empowerment and autonomy (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Mamdouh & Hamed, 2024). The absence of leadership programs, effective leadership, and professional development increases the probability of a teacher's departure from urban educational settings (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Matla & Xaba, 2020). Moral leadership plays a vital role in retention, particularly the

ability of principals to facilitate teacher interactions within schools, fostering supportive and fulfilling environments (Susanto, Syailendra, & Suryawan, 2023).

Key factors valued by teachers include the need for leadership support to provide assistance to address negative student behaviour, a commitment to maximising learning, a positive school climate, and the ability to maximise professional autonomy through teacher input (Matla & Xaba, 2020; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Tshabalala & Nthontho, 2024; Mamdouh & Hamed, 2024). Studies further indicate that teacher autonomy is a significant factor in retention and job satisfaction across various subject areas, grade levels, and school settings (Worth & van den Brande, 2020). The scarcity of effective leadership, professional development opportunities, and leadership programs has been shown to increase the likelihood of teachers leaving the profession (Arthur & Bradley, 2023). School principals play a critical role in creating an environment conducive to trust-building, which can enhance teacher retention and satisfaction through the development of collaborative and supportive school cultures. Research indicates that principals enhance teacher job satisfaction and intrinsic value through various means, including acknowledging teachers' efforts, employing teaching assistants to reduce workload, providing financial incentives for professional development, promoting further education, and exemplifying positive leadership.

Recent studies also suggest that the support of administration, besides principalship, professional development, and autonomy, is a factor that might contribute to teachers remaining in the field. The leadership approach of school principals significantly affects job satisfaction among urban teachers (Botha & Hugo, 2021). Integrated leadership, which combines transformational and instructional leadership styles, leads to teacher empowerment and improved retention rates (Ning, Liu, & Cui, 2022; Susanto, Syailendra, & Suryawan, 2023). Research also highlights the emerging concept of distributed leadership, which is sharing leadership across various staff levels from teacher to school principals within a school (Samancioglu, Baglibel, & Erwin, 2020). Institutions with robust organisational cultures typically demonstrate effective leadership, clear objectives, structured organisational frameworks, a history of acknowledging and appreciating staff, open communication, teacher collaboration, and elevated student expectations (Samancioglu, Baglibel, & Erwin, 2020; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021).

2.5.1.1 Influence of effective leadership communication on teacher job satisfaction

Research shows that positive communication relationships lead to increased job satisfaction among employees (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Mohammed, Araf, & Fahmy, 2021). Factors such as assistance, cooperation, interaction frequency, and trust significantly influence subordinates' job satisfaction. Organisations with weak task-related communication, informal socialising, and advice-giving can experience work-related disintegration (Mamdouh & Hamed, 2024). Effective communication is crucial for leaders to gain support for their vision. Dysfunctional communication patterns contribute to discontent with superiors, job roles, and organisational structures. Diminished interpersonal communication between workers and supervisors can lead to deteriorating relationships, negatively affecting job satisfaction and potentially resulting in employee turnover (Khaliq, 2021; Mohammed, Araf, & Fahmy, 2021). Leadership style also plays a significant role in employee satisfaction with their jobs and communication experiences. In urban education, principal communication plays a pivotal role in teacher job satisfaction. Effective communication strategies foster an environment conducive to dialogue and teacher participation (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Khaliq, 2021). Inadequate communication and deficient leadership from principals are primary factors contributing to teacher turnover (Mamdouh & Hamed, 2024).

2.5.1.2 Mentoring and Induction influence on teacher job satisfaction

Researchers observed that educational institutions frequently interchange the terms mentoring and induction; however, inadequate support for teachers and weak collegial relationships are significant factors that lead to teachers departing from urban teaching settings (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Barak, 2021; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021). Teachers in schools with a high percentage of low-income, underperforming minority students are particularly susceptible to leaving the profession because of limited resources, poor collegiality, and a lack of adequate support and mentoring (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020). The DBE projects that by 2014, around one million new teaching roles will be filled by ECTs, each of whom will require both leadership and peer support to meet the intricate needs of 21st-century students. Effective induction programs are essential for retaining new teachers and improving teaching practices (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021).

The mentoring relationship is vital for fostering confidence, skill, and collegiality during the initial years of teaching. Urban teachers need substantial support but often receive very little in terms of induction and mentoring. Research conducted by Barack (2021) reveals that ECTs often face a deficiency in professional support and constructive dialogue, both of which are essential for a successful transition from pre-service to in-service teaching. This lack of support contributes to a high turnover rate among new teachers within their first three to five years. Teacher retention is more closely associated with the quality of induction and mentoring during early teaching experiences than with individual academic ability. In South Africa, enhancing the skills and performance of teachers already working in the most underserved schools is crucial, highlighting the growing need for induction and mentoring programs (Mpundu, Assan , & Mokoena , 2023). The retention of urban teachers is adversely affected by the absence of tailored induction and mentoring systems in schools characterised by high poverty and low performance.

Numerous districts provide minimal to no preparatory programs for urban teachers, resulting in elevated turnover rates driven by factors such as job dissatisfaction, alternative job opportunities, personal circumstances, staffing difficulties, and retirement (Mpundu, Assan , & Mokoena , 2023). Common reasons for teachers departing include disciplinary issues, lack of student motivation, insufficient time, and classroom interruptions (Center for Development and Enterprise, 2015; Palm, 2022; Shepherd, 2022). Further investigation is required into urban preparation programs and their outcomes, as these are frequently limited and primarily located on university campuses, distant from the urban communities they are intended to serve. Urban educational environments encounter a variety of obstacles, including poverty, transient populations, inadequate funding, and scarce resources (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020). Insufficient induction and mentoring initiatives undermine the professional development of new teachers, their practical experiences, and their personal commitment to remaining in high-poverty, low-performing urban schools (Balang, 2021). Principalship programs ought to optimise opportunities for collaboration with university experts dedicated to the professional growth of teachers and the academic success of students (Balang, 2021; Flores & Shuls, 2024).

The progress and development of teachers can be significantly linked to the structured guidance and coaching offered by university specialists and school leadership. To adequately address the needs of 21st-century students, there should be a focus on high-quality planning and diverse induction programs designed to enhance teacher knowledge and professional skills, promote communication, and alleviate feelings of isolation. Incorporating new teachers into collaborative and supportive community frameworks encourages dialogue that reinforces effective practices and builds networks that are beneficial to their success. Despite the numerous challenges faced by teachers, research suggests that effective mentoring and induction programs enhance urban teachers' willingness to remain in high-poverty, low-performing schools (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Balang, 2021; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Mpundu, Assan, & Mokoena, 2023; Cells, Sabina, Touchton, Shankar-Brown, & Sabina, 2023; Flores & Shuls, 2024).

2.6 DUFFY'S WORK AS A CALLING THEORY (WCT)

In academic literature, the idea of calling has been highly variable, with several meanings developing throughout time (Duffy, Perez, Dik, & Marsh, 2023; Herman, Dearthe-Wesley, & Whitaker, 2023; Kenny, Di Fabio, & Dik, 2025). The seminal work of Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1986) divided work orientations into three categories: calling, career, and job. These orientations were operationalised by Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997), who found that they were equally distributed among a diverse sample of university employees who were not enrolled in school, with those who felt a calling reporting the highest levels of career and life satisfaction. Later studies have examined calling as a separate notion, and academics have put forth a number of conceptual formulations. Scholarly debate has centred on how the idea of calling has changed over time, with different interpretations emerging. A fundamental definition of calling was provided by, who defined it as what an individual believes to be their [sic] purpose in life (Kenny, Di Fabio, & Dik, 2025). This definition marked a shift away from religious overtones and toward a more individualistic, self-centred viewpoint. Such interpretations, which emphasise inward desire towards self-realisation and happiness, were categorised as modern viewpoints by other scholars in similar field (Herman, Dearthe-Wesley, & Whitaker, 2023; Mauno, Mäkikangas, Mäkinen, & Puttonen, 2025; Akkaya & Akçay, 2025). Although some definitions have included personal fulfilment, it could be more realistic to think of it as

a result rather than a characteristic that distinguishes calling. A different paradigm, known as the neoclassical approach, re-establishes the idea's historical roots by stressing outside factors, a sense of obligation, and selfless motives. This method was exemplified by, who defined calling as a transcendent summons that is perceived as coming from beyond the self and that is focused on approaching a specific life role in a way that demonstrates or derives a sense of purpose or meaningfulness while using other-oriented values and goals as motivating factors. Participants' conceptions of calling have recently become the subject of empirical research.

Zookeepers were the subjects of a 2009 study by Bunderson and Thompson, which revealed a neoclassical interpretation emphasising duty and prosocial commitment. A driving force, work fit, altruistic attitudes, enthusiasm, and a perceived burden in pursuing one's calling are some components that have been identified by qualitative research involving college students. Research on Chinese students, university employees, pious Catholics, psychiatrists, counselling psychologists, and working mothers in academia has found similar trends (Leung & Pong, 2021). These studies show that calling is a complex concept that is being further explored in contemporary studies. Rather than in its effects afterwards, the interpretation of calling might be more variable in its developmental and discerning processes (i.e., the antecedents of calling). This finding is corroborated by the striking consistency of results across research that looks at calling correlates, regardless of how they are conceptualised (Herman, Dearthe-Wesley, & Whitaker, 2023; Duffy, Perez, Dik, & Marsh, 2023). The quest for a comprehensive definition may be less pertinent given the mobility of language across different settings, even though further research is required to clarify the latent taxonic and/or multidimensional character of calling.

These factors do not need to be present in one's career or place of employment to detect a calling; one might sense a calling without actively pursuing it. Perceiving a calling also goes beyond a simple desire for a vocation; to fully embody the concept, purpose, prosocial motivation, and an internal or external sense of compulsion must be present (Kenny, Di Fabio, & Dik, 2025). Finally, it is suggested that any respectable profession can be considered a vocation, as evidenced by studies of Duffy's work (Herman, Dearthe-Wesley, & Whitaker, 2023; Duffy, Perez, Dik, & Marsh, 2023; Akkaya & Akçay, 2025; Mauno, Mäkikangas, Mäkinen, & Puttonen, 2025).

2.7 ETHICS OF CARE THEORY IN TEACHING

Noddings (1984) established the ethics of care theory, which is essential to comprehending the duties and characteristics of a caring teacher. This approach highlights the value of developing close relationships with students, attending to their individual needs, and fostering a supportive learning environment in the classroom. By offering a more fulfilling and significant work experience, this strategy can greatly increase teacher job satisfaction. Teachers' sense of purpose and general job satisfaction are increased when they believe that their compassionate efforts are having a positive influence on their students' lives (Noddings, 2005). A more positive and productive learning environment is created by the symbiotic relationship between teacher satisfaction and student well-being, which is fostered by the ethics of caring framework in education. Instead of being purposefully encouraged or taught, this capacity for caring is frequently presumed. Teachers in physical education frequently only show concern for students who demonstrate a desire to learn or who are athletically gifted. Improving incoming teachers' training and helping current teachers understand the ethic of caring are urgent priorities. These days, the ethic of caring and its importance in the educational process are frequently overlooked in teacher education programs and professional development activities (Noddings, 2005). Without fully comprehending the ramifications of this idea, teachers could feel overburdened by the day-to-day obligations of providing care. Thus, it is advised that the curriculum for undergraduate physical education teacher education incorporate the ethic of caring as pedagogical content knowledge (Noddings, 1984). Research findings support and build upon Noddings' ideas in the relatively new field of education studies known as the ethic of care. Relational knowing, teacher development of self, and the ethic of care itself are three theoretical frameworks linked to teachers who exhibit an ethic of care.

2.7.1 Nel Noddings' Theory of the Ethic of Care and Education

The idea that caring ought to be the cornerstone of educational systems is the basis for the ethic of care in education, as stated by Noddings (1984). By emphasizing interpersonal relationships and relational decision-making, Maslow argued that this feminist paradigm stands in opposition to conventional male-centric methods (Maslow, 1954, p. xxii). Carol Gilligan's (1982) research on female development and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule's (1986) theories of women's modes of knowing both

lend credence to this viewpoint. A reassessment of school morality is advocated by Noddings (1992), who emphasises caring as the main moral orientation in instructional methods.

2.7.2 Defining and understanding the concept of Care

Various philosophical perspectives on care have been articulated in the literature. Martin Heidegger (1926/1962) defined care as the fundamental essence of life, Milton Mayeroff (1971) proposed that it includes self-care, and Gordon, Benner, and Noddings (1996, p. xiii) emphasized the interpersonal aspect of care by characterizing it as a collection of relational practices that promote mutual recognition, growth, development, protection, empowerment, and the cultivation of human community, culture, and potential.

2.7.3 The One Caring and the Cared For

The reciprocal link between caregiver and recipient is emphasised by Noddings' ethic of care, especially in educational contexts where students are the beneficiaries and teachers take on the role of caregiver. It is morally necessary for the caregiver-teacher to sustain a caring ethos in this interaction. By supporting a subjective, proactive approach rather than an objective one, teachers who adopt this ethic see themselves as agents of change for students. This strategy differs from abdicating personal accountability or assigning the well-being of the students to others. Both the caregiver-teacher and the student-recipient must possess certain qualities in order for the ethic of care to be implemented successfully.

2.7.4 Understanding the Characteristics of Care in Teaching

There must be certain components in place for a nurturing teacher and a nurtured student to develop an ethic of caring connection. The nurturing teacher has a deep concern for the student's welfare, a strong dedication to their growth, and a shift in focus from the self to the student. This caring attitude is established by the nourished student, who is both responsive to and receptive to the teacher's efforts. A relationship between the nurturing teacher and the nourished student encourages motivational redirection, commitment, and absorption. Absorption happens when the teacher understands the significance of the students' experiences and accepts their feelings. Believing that the teacher's duty to look out for students comes first is a sign of commitment (Noddings, 1984). A dedicated teacher consistently pursues profound

engagement with the child, surpassing surface-level exchanges. In order to see the world from their students' perspective and comprehend their desire for reflection, caring teachers likewise need to be motivated (Noddings, 1992). This motivational displacement happens spontaneously and is supported by the care recipient's receptivity. The ethic of care relationship is completed when the student responds to the teacher's motivational energy sent towards them throughout caring exchanges. In education, caring entails engaging moments in which teachers have a receptive posture, listen to students objectively, and give priority to their goals. Because of this motivational displacement, teachers treat every student differently in every circumstance, which allows the student to be free, creative, and respond spontaneously, completing the caring connection (Noddings, 1996).

2.7.5 Responsibilities of the One-Caring Teacher

The idea of caring, which comprises the art of relating to people and other living things, is derived from human empathy (Noddings, 1984). Through a variety of techniques, including modelling, conversation, practice, and confirmation, compassionate teachers seek to replicate their own most sympathetic experiences and pass these feelings along to their students. While conversation is a two-way process of communication and response that exposes concerned teachers and students to a variety of viewpoints and ideas, modelling is a way for teachers to show their concern by cultivating nurturing connections (Noddings, 2005). In conversation, compassionate teachers take on the roles of counsellors and facilitators, modifying their methods to meet the changing needs of their students. To strengthen relationships, teachers could, for instance, help students comprehend the emotional toll that shame takes and encourage them to talk about their own embarrassing moments. One-caring teachers provide students with the chance to practice providing care, which helps to mould their viewpoints and mental models. Through the development of particular attitudes that improve their ability to provide care, this experiential learning approach moulds students' viewpoints and cognitive frameworks. The foundation of confirmation is trust, which teachers build by getting to know their students well and learning about their goals. The building of trust is greatly aided by the responsiveness and responses of students who are cared for. Confirmation is not a consistent process in the ethic of caring teaching; rather, it takes place within a foundation of trust and requires consistency over time. Caring teachers use practice,

confirmation, modelling, and conversation to accomplish their professional and personal obligations (Noddings, 1992). Research indicates that incorporating care-based ethical concepts into teaching methods can greatly improve teachers' job satisfaction by creating a more engaging and supportive learning environment.

2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The theoretical analysis presented in this chapter corroborates earlier research on the function of systematic and organisational supports in urban teacher retention. Historical background, leadership assistance, mentoring initiatives, and aspects of the school climate are all examined. The study topic focuses on the factors that encourage urban teachers to stay in high-poverty, low-performing environments. Chapter 4 of this study provides a comprehensive review of local and international literature on teacher satisfaction and its effects on educational institutions.

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON TEACHER TURNOVER, RETENTION, JOB SATISFACTION AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A significant issue nationwide and beyond borders is the growing dissatisfaction among teachers in their roles (Maready, Cheng, & Bunch, 2021; Gillani, et al., 2022; Darling-Hammond, DiNapoli Jr, & Kini, 2023). The education system in South Africa has been shaped by the country's history of injustice and inequality. As the country continues to recover from these issues, teachers face both unique opportunities and significant challenges. Teachers are ultimately departing from the profession because of their discontent with the field (Matla & Xaba, 2020; Botha & Hugo, 2021). Three prevalent factors contributing to teacher attrition include the school working conditions and teacher characteristics (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021), leadership styles under which teachers operate (Bikamane & Makambe, 2020; Viswanath, 2020; Hiwa, Durman, & Demir, 2021) and the escalating demands for accountability (Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Wronowski, 2021). To avert this situation, effective and quality leadership is essential, as there is a strong correlation between school leadership and teacher satisfaction levels. Recognizing that teacher satisfaction is a vital component for the overall success of school districts is crucial (Belle & Horil, 2020). First, the focus of this chapter will address the key factors influencing teacher job satisfaction. Secondly, it will explore several fundamental factors that shape teacher perceptions and their job satisfaction and retention. Finally, the fifth area will concentrate on different teacher demographics that may affect teacher satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021).

3.2 JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is a complex construct involving psychological and environmental factors (Maslow, 1943; 1954; 1957). In the educational sector, Herzberg et al (1959) suggest that teachers' job satisfaction is linked to their role within academic institutions, with a positive correlation between teaching aspirations and role expectations. Some researchers (Ou & Gu, 2024; Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024) have argued that teacher satisfaction stems from aligning professional needs with career outcomes. This study proposes that teachers' job satisfaction refers to their

overall positive feelings and attitudes towards fulfilling professional requirements in the South African education system.

3.3 IMPORTANCE OF JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is a critical factor in employee and teacher well-being, with global studies identifying it as the most influential factor affecting overall life satisfaction (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021). Satisfied employees tend to perform better, exhibit creativity, and show greater commitment to their employers. Conversely, job dissatisfaction is linked to increased absenteeism and turnover rates. Job satisfaction also correlates with employees' physical and mental well-being, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of this relationship (Dreer, 2020; Capone & Petrillo, 2020). In the education sector, job satisfaction has been extensively studied, with a connection between it and teacher retention. Teacher satisfaction is influenced by turnover and retention factors, with satisfied teachers more likely to excel and remain on the job, while dissatisfied teachers may underperform and decide to leave the job. Job satisfaction also affects teachers' psychological and physiological well-being, with a correlation between stress levels and job satisfaction (Opoku, Dogah, & Aluko, 2022; Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius, 2023). Research shows that teachers with reduced burnout and increased job satisfaction can have extended career longevity and enhanced classroom efficacy. Educational authorities must understand the factors contributing to teacher satisfaction and explore methods to enhance their professional satisfaction (Matla & Xaba, 2020; Welsh & Swain, 2020; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021).

3.4 THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION CHANGE ON TEACHERS

This study reveals that changes in education, especially those mandated by higher authorities, do not occur in isolation but are influenced by ongoing efforts and unforeseen events. This cycle of innovation and transformation alters the professional environments of teachers, leading to stress, burnout, frustration, excessive workloads, and cynicism (Balang, 2021; Fathi, Greenier, & Derakhshan, 2021; Gillani, et al., 2022; Cells, Sabina, Touchton, Shankar-Brown, & Sabina, 2023; Uralovich, et al., 2023). The dynamic teaching landscape and evolving school requirements create an atmosphere where teachers struggle with stress, burnout, and overwhelming duties. Such circumstances may lead to increased turnover rates among new teachers and

significantly affect seasoned teachers (Cells, Sabina, Touchton, Shankar-Brown, & Sabina, 2023).

3.4.1 Studies on Teacher supply and demand in South Africa

The shortage of teachers in South Africa constitutes a significant national concern, worsened by the declining number of teachers produced by universities and the prevailing view of teaching as a last-resort profession (Ngcamu & Mantzaris, 2021; Mpundu, Assan, & Mokoena, 2023). Currently, South Africa produces an insufficient number of teachers to satisfy demand, with teacher training institutions yielding approximately 15,000 new teachers annually, which is below the 25,000 needed to uphold appropriate teacher-student ratios (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019; International Task Force on Teachers for Education, 2021; Mlambo & Adetiba, 2020). The South African educational framework struggles with the imperative of generating an adequate supply of qualified and skilled teachers to deliver high-quality education across all academic levels and disciplines (Van der Berg, Gustafsson, & Burger, 2022; Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2024). Each year, between 18,000 and 22,000 teachers leave the profession, surpassing the number of new entrants. As reported by the Department of Basic Education, South Africa's public education system employs 410,000 teachers across nearly 25,000 schools, catering to 12.9 million students nationwide. A global analysis of Teaching and Learning reveals that the average age of teachers in South Africa is 43 years, with 32% of teachers aged 50 or older. In the forthcoming decade, it will be necessary to replace approximately half of the existing teaching workforce. To guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of educational institutions, the establishment of a comprehensive Human Resource Management and Development (HRM&D) strategy is essential. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has observed a decrease in the number of graduates from Foundation Phase teacher programs, with 33% of total school enrollments in 2012 comprising Foundation Phase students. It is expected that the demand for Foundation Phase teachers will surpass the available supply, especially in critical subjects such as languages, mathematics, and mathematics literacy. In 2012, there was a significant lack of new graduates from Foundation Phase teacher programs who were proficient in mother tongue instruction across any language group, highlighting the pressing need for graduates skilled in employing indigenous African languages for educational purposes. Maphalala and Mpofu (2019) stress the importance of

reintegrating qualified and experienced teachers who are willing to return to the teaching profession. The study conducted by Botha and Hugo (2021) highlights the importance of mentoring-related factors for school leadership teams, which are crucial in helping new teachers acclimate to their professional environments, thus improving teacher satisfaction and retention rates. These approaches aim to deliver high-quality education that addresses the socioeconomic needs of the country, thereby mitigating the potential long-term educational impacts of rising teacher turnover (Botha & Hugo, 2021; Ntjikelane, et al., 2025).

3.4.2 Foundations of Teacher Job Dissatisfaction and Teacher Turnover

Research on labour turnover has revealed contradictory results regarding the motivations behind employee departures and their relative significance. Gillian et al (2022) and others (Botha & Hugo, 2021; Mpundu, Assan , & Mokoena , 2023) posited that teacher turnover represents a multifaceted interplay of various factors, including burnout, retirement, job dissatisfaction, unstable policies, increased workloads, ineffective management and training, inadequate compensation, and reduced leave benefits. This situation is further complicated by the precarious status of temporary teachers and the repercussions of health issues and mortality related to AIDS (Ringisai & Sutiningsih, 2023). Data derived from Annual School Surveys indicate a rise in four primary categories of employment termination: turnover, retirement, medical incapacity, and death. These categories may hinder the nation's ability to achieve its educational objectives. While teachers frequently leave for personal reasons such as career changes or family obligations, institutional factors also play a crucial role (Ntjikelane, et al., 2025). Teachers might opt to resign because of insufficient support from colleagues and administrators, academic disengagement and misconduct among students, low salaries, restricted professional autonomy, overwhelming workloads, limited opportunities for professional growth, and ineffective time management (Saziwa & Olaseni, 2025). The principal factors affecting turnover at both individual and organisational levels encompass job content, job-related stress, and managerial support. School-related factors, including working conditions, disciplinary issues, and the quality of leadership, can prompt teachers to seek new employment or exit the teaching profession altogether (Mpundu, Assan , & Mokoena , 2023; Saziwa & Olaseni, 2025). Common motivations for leaving include retirement and childcare responsibilities. Employee turnover within organisations can be linked to factors such

as a shortage of skilled labour, high recruitment costs, emotional distress related to work, concerns about school safety, inadequate pay, and challenges within the workplace (Saziwa & Olaseni, 2025). Paradoxically, research (International Task Force on Teachers for Education, 2021) further indicates that the relatively high qualifications of teachers can intensify teacher shortages in certain contexts. Teachers with advanced education may be more inclined to exit the profession, as they can swiftly secure employment in an array of economic, public, and social sectors.

3.4.3 Effects of Job Dissatisfaction and Teacher Turnover

Research has indicated that teacher turnover significantly affects educational quality, especially when experienced and skilled teachers leave the system (Gillani, et al., 2022). This results in resource squandering, expertise erosion, and financial burdens on the Department. High turnover rates increase the workload for remaining staff, disrupting program continuity and planning, and signalling systemic issues. In South Africa, teachers are responsible for delivering quality public education. High turnover rates pose risks to teacher quality, equity in student opportunities, and system efficiency because of the diversion of funds towards recruitment and training of ECTs (Matla & Xaba, 2020). Teacher turnover also destabilises regulatory, academic, and professional standards, undermines goal achievement, and creates a tumultuous teaching environment. The abundance of novice teachers leads to mediocrity in the experience vacuum created by the departure of veteran teachers, resulting in a rotating door of ECTs, lower staff morale, and personal trauma, persistent distress, and anxiety. The continuous process of teacher replacement is contentious, restrictive, and disruptive, potentially resulting in inexperienced teachers being employed to fill roles previously occupied by veteran professionals. Innovative approaches are needed to address teacher turnover, as it impedes schools' capacity to effectively utilise resources for retaining ECTs and fostering professional growth. The absence of intervention by policy leaders exposes schools to the risk of ongoing instability, leading to disorder, adverse outcomes, and perpetuation of challenges, placing educational institutions at an elevated risk of failure.

3.5 TEACHER JOB (DIS)SATISFACTION WITHIN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

An investigation conducted across six African nations: Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia reveals a persistent deficit of mathematics and science teachers. This shortage is particularly pronounced in isolated rural regions,

where teacher turnover is notably severe (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). The study uncovered an average turnover rate of 4% among these countries, primarily resulting from retirement, turnover, mortality, and terminations. Notably, Lesotho and Zambia exhibit elevated turnover rates because of AIDS-related morbidity and mortality. Zambia, in particular, has experienced a significant exodus of skilled professionals, exacerbating teacher turnover, especially at the secondary education level (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020; Ntjikelane, et al., 2025). The investigation identifies inadequate remuneration and suboptimal working conditions as principal factors driving this brain drain. Nevertheless, Kenya has alleviated these shortages by executing a thorough program focused on the training, recruitment, and retention of mathematics and science teachers, providing additional compensation as an incentive (Opoku, et al., 2025; Ntjikelane, et al., 2025). Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa reveals a greater turnover rate in secondary schools in comparison to primary institutions. This pattern is supported by various case studies conducted in Anglophone African nations, where the turnover of secondary school teachers consistently exceeded that of primary school teachers in every case where specific data was available, as demonstrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Primary School Teacher Annual Turnover Rates, 2004

Country	Urban Primary Schools (%)
Lesotho	3
Zambia	9
Uganda	5
Malawi	5
Zanzibar	5
Ghana	7
Sierra Leon	3
Tanzania	1

Source: Teacher motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007)

A report from the World Bank indicates a notable disparity between the supply and demand of teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa, largely attributed to issues such as high teacher turnover, inefficiencies in training programs, and perceived inadequate working conditions (Noori, Said, Orfan, & Mohd Anis, 2024; Ntjikelane, et al., 2025). The report further underscores the absence of effective governmental initiatives aimed

at motivating secondary students to consider teaching careers within their educational framework. The results highlight the necessity for innovative strategies in resource allocation to improve the quality of education in secondary schools. Teacher shortages are particularly acute in underprivileged areas, especially in remote rural regions and among economically disadvantaged communities (Saziwa & Olaseni, 2025; Ntjikelane, et al., 2025). The region is on the brink of a significant teacher shortage, driven by the rising demand for education because of an expanding school-age population. UNESCO has indicated that Sub-Saharan Africa will need an additional 6.3 million teachers to achieve universal primary education by the year 2030. Countries such as Ethiopia, Cameroon, Namibia, South Africa and Lesotho are currently implementing measures to address these shortages; however, primary educational institutions in Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Malawi, and Nigeria are expected to need more teaching personnel by 2030 (Van der Berg, Gustafsson, & Burger, 2022; Saziwa & Olaseni, 2025). The global deficit of lower secondary school teachers is disproportionately situated in Sub-Saharan Africa, which represents 46% of the total shortfall.

3.6 TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION IN THE USA

Teacher turnover in the United States has significantly increased since the 1990s, with nearly half of the teaching staff expected to retire between 2000 and 2010, causing a potential shortfall of over 2 million ECTs. This issue is particularly pronounced in challenging subjects like science, math, and special education. Schools with low performance, low income, and minority student populations are more likely to face staffing swings and an influx of inexperienced teachers. Despite numerous studies and suggested solutions, most have proven ineffective (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2022a; Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). UNESCO predicted that if current turnover rates are not reduced, persistent teacher shortages will persist for decades after 2015. Teaching is considered the most revolving door occupation in the United States, with qualified teachers leaving after a few years because of subpar working conditions (Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). High-need courses, such as science and math, and schools with high poverty levels experience high turnover rates. Teachers face ongoing challenges such as a lack of collegial teamwork, poor facilities, and incompetent leadership. Teacher turnover is influenced by both individual factors and institutional factors, leading to psychological discomfort, marital difficulties, and serious health problems. Public

schools in the United States often quit their jobs within the first five years of employment, especially in underfunded schools and fields like science and math (Williams, Swain, & Graham, 2021; Gillani, et al., 2022). School systems spend millions on hiring and training new teachers, hindering students' progress and learning. Teachers no longer hold extended tenures in the classroom, making the teaching profession less secure than it was in the 1950s.

3.6.1 Studies on the management of teacher turnover through teacher retention

Teacher turnover and retention are critical in the educational sector, with turnover referring to the departure of teaching staff and retention promoting long-term employment. Scallon et al (2021) posited that organisations face challenges in retaining talent, especially in the face of aggressive recruitment efforts. However, retention is essential for economic growth and effective teaching environments. In developing countries, teachers are considered the most valuable institutional resource. To manage teacher retention, organisations should focus on action plans that promote employee dedication, unity, and commitment. Various researchers (Abitabile, 2020; Botha & Hugo, 2021; Ashley, 2022) further argued that fostering professional development and advancement can encourage staff to stay in their roles. Therefore, focusing on goals and results and encouraging a positive attitude can inspire and motivate the workforce. Others (Gao, Murphy, & Anderson, 2020; Roberts & David , 2020) have contended that effective leadership must develop strategies that support worker productivity and job satisfaction to retain qualified teachers. Staff appreciation and recognition are also essential components for retention (Barak, 2021; Burić, Zuffiano, & Lopez-Perez, 2022; Garcia, Han, & Weiss, 2022).

3.6.2 Studies approaches for teacher retention and job satisfaction.

Retaining teachers in academic institutions is a significant challenge for governments and educational leaders in both developing and developed nations (Opoku, et al., 2025). High teacher turnover rates necessitate the hiring of new employees, and to address this, educational leaders must implement strategies grounded in pertinent policies. School administrators are tasked with fostering an environment conducive to employment, enhancing job satisfaction, and reducing teacher turnover. Research indicates a strong correlation between the level of support provided by school principals and teacher retention. Principals should exemplify professional commitment and lifelong learning, serving as role models for their staff (Opoku, et al., 2025). To

promote teacher job satisfaction and retention, principals can employ various strategies, such as encouraging team-teaching methodologies, fostering collaborative decision-making processes, and establishing shared responsibilities among faculty members. Retention of experienced teachers as ECTs is instrumental in alleviating the decline of critical pedagogical acumen necessary for guiding ECTs (Mpundu, Assan , & Mokoena , 2023). School principals should support ECTs in their professional development through emotional and personal assistance, task-oriented guidance, and the promotion of self-reflective practices. Effective mentoring is linked to teacher retention and job satisfaction, establishing it as a common practice for novice teachers. School leaders can assist both experienced teachers and ECTs by articulating their professional visions and nurturing professional standards (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Mpundu, Assan , & Mokoena , 2023; Saziwa & Olaseni, 2025).

3.6.3 Studies on job satisfaction, turnover and school leadership

Leadership is a critical aspect of organisational success, especially in schools. Since the 1980s, school reform initiatives have emphasised the role of leaders in fostering collaborative efforts to improve school efficacy and student performance. Leaders oversee administrative aspects, empower individual members, set a precedent, and assist others in enhancing job performance. They must be mentally attuned, aware of team members' needs, and provide necessary resources, materials, time, information, and expertise. A proficient leader acts as the organisation's architect, steering relationships, catalysing change, and exemplifying commendable conduct (Botha & Hugo, 2021; Arthur & Bradley, 2023). They cultivate an environment that champions equality, eliminates biases, and provides a safe forum for discussion and idea-sharing. Job satisfaction is also a critical factor in organisational success, involving job-specific, positional, and attitudinal factors (Samancioglu, Baglibel, & Erwin, 2020).

3.6.4 Studies on effective school leadership and school-related challenges

School leadership and management are crucial for improving school and student outcomes, influenced by legislative and policy frameworks (Tshabalala & Nthontho, 2024). Leaders must possess competencies like self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and effective social skills. Effective school leadership involves providing clear direction, fostering progress, and identifying new aims. Principalship is

challenging and dynamic, requiring exceptional management and interpersonal skills (Garcia, Han, & Weiss, 2022; Darling-Hammond, DiNapoli Jr, & Kini, 2023). A servant leader demonstrates empowering others through collaboration and gaining follower acceptance. Teachers should feel valued by leadership, acknowledged, encouraged, and supported. School principals are responsible for the comprehensive administration and supervision of educational institutions (Makirimani & Naicker, 2025).

3.6.4.1 Parental pressure

A significant challenge for principals is addressing the concerns of outspoken parents, particularly those who express dissatisfaction with staff members. Principals often find themselves in the delicate position of mediating between teachers and parents, sometimes without prior notice or scheduled appointments (Darling-Hammond, DiNapoli Jr, & Kini, 2023).

3.6.4.2 Academic performance pressure

Principals face ongoing pressure from parents and educational authorities at local and national levels to continually enhance standardised test scores (Hemelt, Ladd, & Clifton, 2021). This pressure is often transferred to teachers, potentially leading to what Farber describes as a terror mode environment. This situation is characterised by heightened competition among teachers, diminished collaborations, and a test-centric atmosphere that may alienate staff and ultimately result in their departure from the profession (Williams, Swain, & Graham, 2021; Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2022a; Hemelt, Ladd, & Clifton, 2021; Cells, Sabina, Touchton, Shankar-Brown, & Sabina, 2023).

3.6.4.3 Disciplinary challenges

Student discipline poses a considerable challenge for teachers, particularly when addressing students and receiving insufficient support from school administration (Flores & Shuls, 2024). The dimensions of trust for school leaders encompass integrity, proficiency in both technical and interpersonal skills, and consistency in decision-making, loyalty, and transparency. Both teachers and principals need assistance to effectively adapt to their changing roles. School principals often experience professional isolation, face overwhelming responsibilities, and endure significant stress (Afzal & Rafiq, 2022). Leadership programs can provide guidance

and practical insights for novice principals. They are required to exhibit skills in interpersonal communication, adaptability to change, decision-making, staff motivation, and the capacity to establish appropriate boundaries with both staff and parents. Regular meetings with experienced or peer principals create opportunities for exchanging strategies, collaborative problem-solving, and tackling complex challenges. Makirimani (2025) contends that there is a growing deficiency in practical, ethical, and courageous leadership in the world. Makirimani asserts that organisational transformation demands responsible leadership, which is characterised as a modern leadership approach that includes trust, a vital quality for effective school administration (Abitabile, 2020; Burns, et al., 2020; Hemelt, Ladd, & Clifton, 2021; Afzal & Rafiq, 2022; Flores & Shuls, 2024; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025).

3.7 STUDIES ON PERSONAL DETERMINANTS OF JOB SATISFACTION

Demographic variables significantly influence an individual's framework and perceptions, affecting job performance (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Topchyan & Woehler, 2021; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, Collins, & Harrison, 2021). As previously emphasised by, the interrelation between personal characteristics, job satisfaction, and motivational needs is well-established in managerial literature. This study further investigates the connections between demographic factors, job satisfaction, and motivational requirements. Six relevant personal characteristics include age, gender, occupational level, education, tenure, and training, which are relevant to this study.

3.7.1 Age and Job Satisfaction

The age-job satisfaction relationship has been extensively studied, with three primary patterns identified: U-shaped, linear, and curvilinear. Herzberg et al. (1957) proposed a U-shaped relationship, suggesting that job satisfaction initially increases as employees adjust their expectations. This model received support from subsequent studies by Kacmar, Ferris and Gerald (1989) and Clark et al. (1996). However, Hulin and Smith (1965) challenged this notion, advocating for a linear model. Hunt and Saul (1975) found support for a linear relationship between age and job satisfaction. Saleh and Otis (1964) found a positive linear relationship until pre-retirement, followed by a decline in satisfaction. Luthans and Thomas (1989) corroborated this curvilinear relationship, observing a linear increase in job satisfaction until age 40, followed by a decline because of limited expectations and aspirations. The relationship between age

and job satisfaction has been consistently studied, with numerous managerial investigations showing a significant positive correlation. Older employees tend to be more content with their work, exhibiting higher levels of satisfaction, work values, and morale, while displaying lower rates of absenteeism and turnover compared to younger counterparts. Research has also explored the connection between age and satisfaction with extrinsic and intrinsic work factors. Solanki (2022) suggested that intrinsic factors become more influential determinants of job satisfaction as employees age. Recent empirical evidence (Caven, Durodoye, Zhang, & Bock, 2021; Bryant, Ram, Scott, & Williams, 2023) suggests that younger employees prioritise intrinsic factors such as recognition and advancement, while older workers place greater emphasis on extrinsic rewards like compensation and benefits (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). Gender has also been identified as a factor influencing the age-job satisfaction relationship (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021; Özkan & Akgenç, 2022).

3.7.2 Gender and Job Satisfaction

The study of gender-based disparities in motivation and job satisfaction has been a topic of interest for researchers (Solanki & Mandaviya, 2021; Santiago, Santos, & Santiago-Centeno, 2022). However, definitive conclusions regarding the relative satisfaction levels of men and women remain elusive. Some studies report higher satisfaction among male employees, while others indicate greater satisfaction among female workers. Some studies have produced mixed findings, while others have found no significant relationship between gender and job satisfaction (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Özkan & Akgenç, 2022). Another considerable brand of similar studies (Chanana, 2021; Solanki & Mandaviya, 2021; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Sarker, et al., 2024; Zakariya & Wardat, 2024) involving teachers found that teachers reported higher levels of satisfaction with their salaries, organizational policies, promotional opportunities, and overall job experience compared to their male counterparts. However, this disparity was not evident at higher managerial echelons, and no significant gender-based differences were found regarding motivational factors. Specifically, studies by Chanana (2021) and Toropova (2021) found that teachers experience greater job satisfaction than their male counterparts, citing heightened needs for achievement and power compared to men. However, no significant disparities were observed regarding the need for affiliation between genders. This could be because of the perception of teaching as a

more conventional career path for women, potentially diminishing their need for motivation. Some researchers (Solanki & Mandaviya, 2021; Chanana, 2021; Zakariya & Wardat, 2024) have reported varied outcomes, suggesting that men and women prioritise different aspects of their work. For example, Chanana (2021) explored gender differences in managerial satisfaction, identifying specific areas where women managers expressed significantly higher satisfaction than men, and vice versa. Managers reported greater satisfaction with learning opportunities, career advancement prospects, salaries, and benefits, while managers indicated higher satisfaction with job security, recognition, peer relationships, cooperation, and challenging opportunities. In contrast to men, women's job satisfaction was more significantly influenced by working conditions. However, several studies have challenged the notion of a gender-based disparity in job satisfaction (Solanki & Mandaviya, 2021; See , Munthe, Ross, Hitt, & El Soufi, 2022).

3.7.3 Occupational Level and Job Satisfaction

Recently, there has been renewed interest on the influence of occupational level on employment on employee satisfaction. Researchers have argued that the relationship between occupational levels and job satisfaction in organizations is crucial for work motivation research (Chanana, 2021; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021). Researchers and practitioners need to consider occupational level effects when designing studies and interpreting findings, as failure to do so could undermine the validity of job satisfaction and motivation studies contexts (Shang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022). Studies consistently show a positive correlation between hierarchical position and job satisfaction, attributed to the enhanced opportunities and benefits typically afforded to higher-level positions (Özkan & Akgenç, 2022). Middle managers reported significantly higher satisfaction levels regarding esteem, security, and autonomy needs compared to their bottom-management counterparts. Top managers experience greater satisfaction of these needs because of the increased status, compensation, ego gratification, control, and self-direction associated with higher positions. Top managers also reported higher satisfaction levels regarding job security and colleague cooperation compared to their middle-management counterparts (Ning, Liu , & Cui, 2022; Özkan & Akgenç, 2022). The positive correlation between occupational level and job satisfaction is supported by various studies, including those prior studies by Toropova et al (2021) and Chanana (2021). These studies highlight

the importance of understanding the relationship between occupational levels and job satisfaction in organisational contexts to improve job satisfaction and motivation.

3.7.4 Educational Level and Job Satisfaction

Educational attainment is a significant personal variable that can predict job satisfaction. It can enhance both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards while simultaneously reducing satisfaction by elevating expectations beyond an organisation's capacity to fulfill (Solanki & Mandaviya, 2021). However, the relationship between education and job satisfaction has yielded inconsistent findings across various studies (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Solanki & Mandaviya, 2021). Some researchers have observed that individuals with higher educational qualifications tend to report greater job satisfaction compared to their less educated counterparts. In the literature focused on education levels and job satisfaction, researchers (Solomon, Nikolaev, & Sheperd, 2021) determined that higher education levels correlate with increased growth opportunities, potentially fostering greater job satisfaction. However, a significant body of evidence points to an inverse relationship between these variables. Several researchers (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021; Susanto, Syailendra, & Suryawan, 2023) also reported a notable negative correlation between managers' educational levels and their job satisfaction. Others (Solomon, Nikolaev, & Sheperd, 2021) observed a negative association between education and both overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with intrinsic factors. Susanto and colleagues (2023) demonstrated that education negatively affected satisfaction with compensation. Solomon and colleagues (2021) proposed that higher education elevates expectations and cultivates a desire for more diverse and less routine work experiences. The literature is not unanimous on this matter. Some studies have failed to establish a significant link between education and job satisfaction. Therefore, there is a notable paucity of empirical studies focused specifically on teacher qualifications and their job satisfaction. For instance, they found no significant relationship between educational level and intrinsic work motivation. Solomon et al (2021) and Opoku et al (2025) respectively reported a negligible connection between education and overall job satisfaction, and only a weak association between over-education and pay satisfaction. The inconsistency in these findings underscores the necessity for further research to elucidate the complex nature of the relationship between educational attainment and job satisfaction, particularly within managerial contexts.

3.7.5 Training and Job Satisfaction

The relationship between training and job satisfaction has been understudied in research, with studies primarily focusing on education rather than training experiences. However, researchers have found a positive association between training and job satisfaction (Solomon, Nikolaev, & Sheperd, 2021; Santiago, Santos, & Santiago-Centeno, 2022; Susanto, Syailendra, & Suryawan, 2023). Susanto et al (2023) argued that training positively affects organisations, while adequate training enhances efficiency and job satisfaction. Their work on factors influencing turnover demonstrated that training increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover rates. Solomon et al (2021) proposed that training serves as a significant predictor of behaviour, motivation, and performance. Susanto et al (2023) found that leadership training positively influenced managers' job satisfaction, with managers with extensive training reporting higher overall job satisfaction compared to those with limited training. Susanto et al (2023) study identified managerial training as a significant factor influencing job satisfaction, as middle managers must handle leadership duties distinct from technical responsibilities. Solomon et al (2021) confirmed the affirmative correlation between employee training and job satisfaction through a nationwide survey involving 134,924 British workers. They further investigated the relationship between employee training and job satisfaction, concluding that enhanced training correlates with increased satisfaction in both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. They identified gender-specific interactions, age-related effects, and the most substantial positive impact on overall satisfaction among those with the highest qualifications (Solomon, Nikolaev, & Sheperd, 2021).

3.7.6 Years of Experience and Job Satisfaction

Research indicates that an employee's length of service is a significant factor in determining job satisfaction, with effects similar to those of age. This variable's importance stems from its impact on organisational decisions regarding promotion, retention, and selection, which are intrinsically linked to individual job satisfaction. Herzberg et al. (1959) proposed that the relationship between length of service and job satisfaction follows a U-shaped curve, similar to the age-satisfaction correlation. However, the literature presents conflicting viewpoints. Hulin and Smith (1965) challenged the U-shaped model, suggesting a linear function to explain the tenure-satisfaction relationship. Topchyan and Woehler (2021) supported a positive

correlation between length of service and job satisfaction, attributing this to increased promotion opportunities. They also identified a negative linear relationship, particularly among teachers, offering three potential explanations: disconfirmed expectations of relatively hopeful news transpires, acculturation into a “we-they” value system transpires, and discernments of nepotism occur as other people in the system are promoted. Some researchers (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021) have found no significant relationship between length of service and job satisfaction, highlighting the complexity of the relationship and the need for further investigation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this important aspect of organisational behaviour.

3.8 WORK PASSION, INTENTION TO STAY AND CAREER CALLING

Recent scholarly investigations have explored the motivational processes that influence teachers’ attitudes and behaviours, influencing learning processes and students’ outcomes (Arthur & Bradley, 2023). The concept of calling has gained interest among educational researchers, as it refers to the intrinsic motivation that drives individuals to fulfil their professional responsibilities. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in socially-oriented professions like teaching, where individuals view their work as an integral part of their identity and a means of contributing to society. Educational literature has established connections between career calling and various outcomes (Huang, et al., 2022). For example, teachers who perceive their profession as a calling demonstrate heightened self-awareness, enhance their career development, and prioritise their professional commitments over personal matters. Work passion, another significant construct in motivation research, has gained prominence in education (Huang, et al., 2022; Shang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022; Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024). This study aims to expand the empirical foundation concerning the outcomes of teachers’ calling, provide insights into the antecedents of work passion, and enrich the literature on work meaningfulness by examining both its precursors (calling) and consequences (work passion and satisfaction).

3.8.1 Calling and job satisfaction

The concept of calling, rooted in religious traditions, is a spiritual imperative for individuals to engage in work of moral and social significance (Huang, et al., 2022). Historically, it was seen as a divine summons to fulfil God’s will. However, contemporary secular interpretations have expanded this view to emphasise self-

actualisation and societal contribution. This study adopts Huang et al's (2022) definition of calling as work that a person perceives as their purpose in life, including notions of purpose, direction, and personal fulfilment. In the educational context, calling manifests as a deep-seated belief in the teacher's crucial role in fostering children's growth, often inspiring teachers to surpass their formal responsibilities. Perceiving one's work as a calling is associated with numerous positive outcomes, such as enhanced life satisfaction, improved self-concept clarity, a more robust vocational identity, and reduced depressive symptoms. Individuals with a strong sense of calling tend to exhibit greater personal involvement, heightened dedication, increased job satisfaction, and stronger organisational commitment. While calling and passion share similarities, they are distinct concepts (Shang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022; Huang, et al., 2022).

3.8.2 Calling, work passion and job satisfaction

Research indicates that individuals who perceive their work as a calling exhibit a more favourable attitude towards their professional pursuits (Huang, et al., 2022). Drawing from the literature on work passion (Huang, et al., 2022; Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024; Ou & Gu, 2024), this study posits a relationship between calling, work passion, and job satisfaction. Passion is characterised as a deep-seated inclination towards an activity that individuals find enjoyable, meaningful, and to which they commit time and energy. There are two types of passion: harmonious and obsessive. Harmonious passion originates from a self-directed internalisation process, whereas obsessive passion results from a controlled internalisation, driving individuals to engage in activities to achieve self-acceptance and self-esteem. This study examines the factors that encourage experienced teachers to persist in their careers and the role of harmonious work passion, as it shows stronger theoretical connections to both calling, work meaningfulness, and teacher retention. Harmonious passion can act as a motivator, improve overall well-being, and infuse daily life with purpose. Researchers have frequently associated occupational calling with enthusiasm and passion for work-related tasks (Huang, et al., 2022; Ou & Gu, 2024).

3.8.3 Calling and work meaningfulness, and job satisfaction

Meaningful work is a crucial aspect of individuals' lives, encompassing the perceived importance of their professional activities (Ou & Gu, 2024). It is characterised by the degree to which employees perceive their job as meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile.

This perception fosters individual motivation and personal development. Conversely, diminished work meaningfulness may lead to workplace disengagement or alienation. Calling, a sense of meaning, dedication, and personal involvement, is a significant antecedent to work meaningfulness. Calling enhances employees' sense of purpose and meaning in their professional roles. Numerous scholars (Huang, et al., 2022; Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024) argue that calling contributes to increased work meaningfulness. Based on this theoretical and empirical foundation, it is postulated that calling will engender higher levels of work meaningfulness (Shang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022).

3.8.4 Work meaningfulness, job satisfaction and work passion

Work meaningfulness refers to the value one attaches to their work and the direction of their life. In their study, researchers (Shang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022; Huang, et al., 2022; Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024) posited that work meaningfulness is a crucial psychological condition that influences individuals' attitudes towards their work and can predict positive outcomes for both individuals and organisations, such as job satisfaction and performance. Work meaningfulness fosters engagement in professional endeavours and increases motivation levels (Huang, et al., 2022). It encapsulates the value attributed to a work goal in relation to personal standards and beliefs, and is closely associated with intrinsic motivation. Harmonious passion, which signifies an autonomous internalisation of the importance of one's work, correlates with greater passion for one's work (Shang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022; Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024). However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the factors that encourage teachers to remain committed to teaching in urban school environments.

3.9 JOB SATISFACTION AND THE INTENTION TO QUIT/STAY

Job satisfaction, as delineated earlier in this chapter, encompasses an individual's subjective perception and positive emotional response, serving as the most effective measure of the value one derives from their occupation, taking into account personal desires and value systems. Although job satisfaction has been identified as a crucial direct predictor of employees' intention to depart from an organisation, this relationship may be moderated when individuals perceive their supervisors as supportive (Roberts & David, 2020). Employees tend to place higher value on supportive supervisors compared to supportive colleagues, a phenomenon theorised to stem from supervisors' capacity to modify working conditions (Salas-Vallina,

Alegre, & López-Cabrales, 2020). Salas-Vallina et al. (2020) define employee well-being as the overall quality of an individual's experience and functioning within the workplace, a concept closely intertwined with job satisfaction. Well-being plays a pivotal role in both individual and organisational performance. Job satisfaction is also intricately linked to motivation and is associated with social belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1954). Expectancies are rooted in workers' beliefs that their efforts will yield strong performance, ultimately leading to rewards. Organisational commitment, characterised by an intention to remain, can be conceptualized as an attachment to the organisation (Samancioglu, Baglibel, & Erwin, 2020; Chanana, 2021). The process of developing an intention to quit or remain with an employer begins with an evaluation of current work conditions, followed by progression through several stages until a firm intention to quit is established. The study of intention to quit is prevalent because of its representation of the likelihood of employee departure, providing critical data for leaders and managers (Özer, 2020). Employee withdrawal can significantly affect organisational processes and outcomes negatively. Research on intention to quit can aid organisations in turnover prevention by addressing identified influencing factors (Gao, Murphy, & Anderson, 2020). Voluntary employee departures result in high turnover rates, adversely affecting organisational productivity, customer service, and profitability. Moreover, the exodus of employees leads to a loss of institutional memory within organisations (Samancioglu, Baglibel, & Erwin, 2020).

3.10 ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION ON TEACHER RESILIENCE

Job satisfaction is a personal concept that refers to a person's sense of pleasure or satisfaction after completing a task or attaining a goal. It is a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental factors that contribute to a sense of satisfaction (Dreer, 2020; Beltman, 2020). Job satisfaction is not just about the job itself but also about the emotional orientations towards the job positions one is currently holding. There is no clear consensus on the concept of job satisfaction among scholars in organisational behaviour studies. Some authors (Beltman, 2020; Mansfield, 2021) argue that it is not only constant between occupations but also genetically driven. For example, found that if identical twins exhibit similar levels of job satisfaction while being raised separately and working in different occupations, a genetic predisposition for job satisfaction is plausible. The difficulty in articulating job

satisfaction may be attributed to the term's usage in many situations and contexts, where it might be conceptualised as a need, attitude, feeling, or quality (Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, Richard , & Capwell, 1957). Positive attitudes to a job contribute to the overall well-being of a teacher and their general life satisfaction. Satisfied teachers maintain better relations with their colleagues, tend to record few absenteeism on their profile, and are less likely to leave their teaching job than their less satisfied colleagues, and exhibit greater commitment and work engagement to their schools. Resilience research has shown that resilient teachers can effectively regulate their emotions when faced with challenging circumstances (Beltman, 2020; Dreer, 2020). Even though they experience emotional downswing at levels comparable to their colleagues who may be less resilient when faced with adversity, they still bounce back and experience positive emotions. Most recently, researchers in education believe that resilient teachers can effectively cope with job-related stress and experience positive emotions in their job, making them more likely to be highly satisfied with their assignments compared to their less resilient colleagues. In addition, most education research students concur that resilient teachers are also more likely to remain on their job (Mansfield, 2021; Weatherby-Fell, Neilsen-Hewett, & Duchesne, 2021).

3.11 ROLE OF JOB ENGAGEMENT ON TEACHER RESILIENCE

Research on the relationship between teacher resilience and job engagement has shown that psychological capital, such as resilience, hope, optimism, and self-efficacy, plays a crucial role in job engagement (Han & Wang, 2021; Topchyan & Woehler, 2021). Job engagement occurs when teachers are committed to their work and their institutions, motivated to achieve high performance levels. Recent scholarly writings (Beltman, 2020; Mansfield, 2021) have argued that engagement is a positive, fulfilling state of mind characterised by dedication, vigour, and absorption. In agreement with Beltman (2020) and Mansfield (2021), Segalo (2021) also viewed engagement as a state of mind that is moderately resilient but may oscillate over time. Research indicates that job engagement helps teachers improve and achieve high job performance. The resilience and intensity with which teachers pursue their job performance should be related to job engagement. Engaged and resilient teachers are active agents, feel competent, and set high goals (Beltman, 2020; Segalo, 2021; Mansfield, 2021).

3.12 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

Parental involvement in urban teacher job satisfaction represents a critical issue, as insufficient parental cooperation or trust adversely affects a teacher's sense of belonging and professional experience. In urban schools characterised by high poverty, challenges of student discipline, the limited engagement of parents leads to teachers feeling uncertain about their professional future (Segalo, 2021; Dueñas, Morales-Vives, Camarero-Figuerola, & Tierno-García, 2022). The Epstein's (1995) theory of school-parent community partnership to better understand the involvement of parents in their children's education, it identified six distinct forms of parental involvement: establishing home environments that foster learning, encouraging effective communication between school and home, supporting the school and its students, facilitating learning at home, participating in school decision-making processes, and collaborating with various stakeholders to improve the school. Research indicates that parents' positive attitudes towards education and their communication of academic expectations to their children enhance both student performance and teacher satisfaction (Maiya, Carlo, Gülseven, & Crockett, 2020; Segalo, 2021). Factors that motivate parental involvement include motivational beliefs, perceptions of invitations to participate, and the context of their personal lives. In urban educational contexts, socioeconomic status plays a crucial role in determining parental engagement, with low-income parents frequently encountering challenges such as rigid work schedules, multiple job responsibilities, and a lack of paid leave (OECD, 2020; Lechner, Bender, Brandt, & Rammstedt, 2021; Poortvliet, 2021). South African parents with limited financial resources and educational backgrounds face greater barriers to involvement compared to their white or more affluent peers. Additionally, low-income parents may experience psychological obstacles and adverse mental health effects that hinder their ability to participate in school activities (Martinez-Yarza, Solabarrieta-Eizaguirre, & Antibáñez-Gruber, 2024; Motshusi, Ngobeni, & Sepeng, 2024; Ngozwana, Machobane, Chauke, & Lepholletse, 2024). Urban school teachers might unintentionally exacerbate parental involvement by avoiding the promotion of parental engagement, stemming from frustration with low-achieving students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds or perceiving parents as contributors to their students' academic difficulties. Research has shown that the school environment, particularly the expectations, practices, and policies of personnel, plays a significant role in

shaping parental engagement (Smith, Sheridan, Kim, Park, & Beretvas, 2020; Maiya, Carlo, Gülseven, & Crockett, 2020).

3.13 ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER SATISFACTION

Teacher job satisfaction is influenced by various external factors such as educational policies, remuneration structures, and societal recognition of the profession (Samancioglu, Baglibel, & Erwin, 2020; Raza, St-Onge, & Ali, 2021; Ellison, 2023). In contemporary education, the emphasis on teacher and school accountability for student outcomes has become a significant factor affecting job satisfaction, stress levels, and turnover rates (Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Garcia, Han, & Weiss, 2022; Ellison, 2023; Flamini & Wang, 2024). However, the push for teacher accountability has been divisive and consequential, putting teachers under a burden and contributing to issues like economic competitiveness, academic achievement decline, teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and gender and racial stereotyping. Perceptions of accountability may differ between educational systems (Perryman & Calvert, 2020).

3.14 ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICE FACTORS

Research on teacher job satisfaction has identified that factors such as institutional size, leadership styles, organisational climate, socioeconomic background, and professional autonomy significantly influence satisfaction levels (Grant, Hann, Godwin, Shackelford, & Ames, 2020; Worth & van den Brande, 2020; Botha & Hugo, 2021). Researcher further indicate that the key factors include opportunities for career progression, working conditions, relationships with colleagues, support from administration, the socioeconomic status of the institution, the overall environment, and student behaviour (Botha & Hugo, 2021). The quality of interpersonal relationships among teachers, as well as those between teachers and students, is positively associated with increased levels of job satisfaction. The relationship between demographic factors such as gender and years of experience and teacher job satisfaction is still unclear, with some research indicating no substantial correlation. Nevertheless, numerous studies (Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Fathi, Greenier, & Derakhshan, 2021; Ellison, 2023; Gabriela, 2024) have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction, where teachers' confidence in managing student behaviour enhances job satisfaction and mitigates burnout. Classroom disruptions are a common issue affecting teacher job satisfaction, with significant differences observed across various geographic and

institutional contexts. Gabriela (2024) argues that job satisfaction in the teaching profession stems from higher-order needs, such as fostering positive social connections, rather than from lower-order needs like financial incentives. This underscores the essential role of interpersonal relationships in influencing teachers' professional satisfaction (Botha & Hugo, 2021).

3.14.1 Pay and promotion influence on teacher job satisfaction

Compensation as pay is defined as a financial remuneration for executing routine tasks, and research shows a significant association between pay structure, additional benefits, and job satisfaction (Ndembele, Paston, & Zuma, 2021). However, teachers often feel their income is insufficient relative to their efforts, leading to dissatisfaction with remuneration and the absence of a structured pay system. Salary is the most significant predictor of retention among science teachers in high-poverty schools. Compensation and promotional prospects influence teacher motivation, performance, absenteeism, and turnover rates (Gustafsson & Maponya, 2020; Khaliq, 2021; Ndembele, Paston, & Zuma, 2021; Shepherd, 2022). Shepherd (2022) recommends implementing policies to establish competitive and equitable compensation packages, ensuring that districts catering to high-need students can effectively attract well-qualified teachers. Incentives to make the teaching profession more financially viable, such as housing assistance, childcare support, and opportunities for retired teachers to teach or mentor, can improve recruitment and retention of teachers (Shepherd, 2022; Rokeman & Kob, 2023; Saenz-Armstrong, 2023). School principals can influence job assignments within their districts, and highly effective teachers may be rewarded with increased professional responsibility through promotion to teacher-leader positions or instructional coaching roles.

3.14.2 Influence of operational conditions on teacher job satisfaction

Urban educational institutions face significant challenges compared to suburban or rural settings, with high rates of teacher turnover often linked to working conditions (Opoku, et al., 2025). Research indicates that working conditions have a positive correlation with job satisfaction, regardless of the teacher's background attributes or school demographics. Urban school settings typically exhibit less favourable working conditions and are often characterised by poor organizational structures, which pose significant obstacles to teacher retention (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Barak, 2021). Suboptimal working conditions are the most influential factor in predicting teacher

turnover, with factors such as resource limitations, overcrowded classrooms, behaviour from students, and high-stakes accountability measures contributing to decreased student performance. Factors such as class size, classroom facilities, leadership support, and access to teaching resources are key factors influencing teacher work conditions (Opoku, et al., 2025). School facilities also face numerous challenges, with research indicating a significant relationship between the quality of school infrastructure, student performance, and teacher satisfaction. Substandard physical conditions, inadequate air quality, poor lighting, extreme temperatures, and excessive noise levels contribute to diminished student performance (Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Lopes & Oliveira, 2020). Furthermore, deteriorating school environments are linked to increased teacher burnout and reduced retention rates. Working conditions and safety concerns are significant contributors to teacher turnover in urban schools, with new teachers negatively affected by poor working conditions found in many of their schools. Factors contributing to increased job satisfaction among teachers include leadership support, collegial cooperation, access to necessary resources, opportunities to provide input on instructional approaches, perceived classroom control, and influence over school policies (Matla & Xaba, 2020; Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021). Toropova et al (2021) suggest that modifying and improving operating conditions can potentially enhance teacher job satisfaction, as research shows that a positive school environment is crucial for teacher job satisfaction.

3.14.3 Influence of fringe benefits on teacher job satisfaction

Fringe benefits are additional compensation offered to employees, such as subsidized professional development tuition, health and dental coverage, life insurance policies, sick leave allowances, paid holidays, and retirement plans (Palm, 2022; Saenz-Armstrong, 2023; Rokeman & Kob, 2023). These benefits have been found to significantly correlate with employee attitudes and job satisfaction. Insufficient benefits can lead to dissatisfaction, higher absenteeism, lower performance, and higher turnover rates (Khaliq, 2021). Urban school teachers receive similar fringe benefits as their non-urban counterparts, such as health insurance, retirement plans, extended summer breaks, and shorter workdays (Blackwell & Young , 2021; Ngcamu & Mantzaris, 2021). Arthur and Bradley (2023) contend these benefits contribute to the

family-friendly nature of teaching, making it an attractive occupation for those seeking to balance work and family needs.

3.14.4 Contingent rewards influence on teacher job satisfaction

Contingent rewards are non-wage compensation systems that acknowledge and reward employees for exemplary work. Despite various methods, the majority of teachers in the United States are compensated based on salary schedules that primarily recognise years of experience and educational attainment (Xu, Liu, Huang, & Fang, 2024). This system provides little financial motivation for teachers to enhance their effectiveness, as two teachers with equivalent experience and education receive identical salaries regardless of student outcomes. Performance-based pay for teachers remains largely speculative, and both state and federal levels have initiated teacher compensation reform through financial incentives (Rokeman & Kob, 2023; Mboweni & Taole, 2022; Palm, 2022; Xu, Liu, Huang, & Fang, 2024). Merit pay exemplifies a contingent reward for teachers, but attempts to implement it have produced inconsistent results and have not been widely adopted or sustained. Inefficient performance monitoring and the complexities of measuring student learning are key factors in the failure of pay-for-performance systems (Rokeman & Kob, 2023). Teachers often oppose merit pay because of factors beyond their control, such as students' socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, or inadequate preparation from previous teachers or parents. The responsibility for non-merit-based contingent rewards often falls to the building-level principal, who plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher job satisfaction and promoting retention within their current educational environment (Zakariya & Wardat, 2024; Xu, Liu, Huang, & Fang, 2024).

3.14.5 Co-workers' influence on teacher job satisfaction

Collegial relationships are crucial in determining job satisfaction among teachers, particularly in urban settings. Positive interactions with colleagues foster teacher commitment, which is essential for educational institutions to foster an environment conducive to school-wide instructional enhancement (Mohammed, Araf, & Fahmy, 2021). Aesthetic factors, such as the quality of relationships between teachers and supervisors, positively influence their career longevity. Collaborative endeavours with fellow teachers and school personnel have been shown to augment teacher job satisfaction. Research has established a correlation between staff collegiality, teacher job satisfaction, and the inclination to persist in the teaching profession (Mohammed,

Araf, & Fahmy, 2021; Chanana, 2021; Gillani, et al., 2022; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025). Teachers believe collaborative teamwork, joint planning, and collective goal achievement substantially contribute to their professional satisfaction. A positive social atmosphere and support network are positively associated with motivation and teacher satisfaction. Emotional support and positive collegial relationships foster a sense of belonging, which enhances job satisfaction (Makirimani & Naicker, 2025). Trust among teachers is positively linked to their professional attitudes, collective efficacy, and collaborative efforts (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021). Conversely, negative interactions with coworkers can exacerbate job dissatisfaction.

3.14.6 Influence of the nature of the teacher's work on job satisfaction

Toropova et al. (2021) and Padmanabhanunni and Pretorius (2023) identified key factors influencing job satisfaction, including working with children, collaboratively with the education community, and achieving personal professional growth. Some teachers choose to work in urban school environments, as their perceptions of the work's nature significantly affect retention (Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). Teachers often view non-urban teaching as less challenging and urban education as requiring specialised skills. Student interactions are crucial for teacher commitment and career longevity, with positive relationships contributing to teaching persistence. Social-emotional rewards significantly contribute to enhancing satisfaction and retention within the classroom (Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius, 2023). Research indicates that urban teacher preparation programs bolster commitment to students and prolong teaching careers. Nonetheless, teachers in urban settings encounter distinct challenges stemming from socioeconomic issues such as crime and poverty (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021). Behaviours among students further complicate classroom management in urban areas, leading to increased teacher turnover (Arthur & Bradley, 2023). The demands and pressures associated with testing, leadership tasks, classroom management, and insufficient leadership play a crucial role in teachers' decisions to remain in the profession (Arthur & Bradley, 2023; Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). The specific characteristics of urban school environments can independently affect teacher mobility. Schools characterised by lower student achievement, elevated poverty levels, higher incidences of behavioural issues, and a greater proportion of students of colour experience increased rates of teacher mobility. Teachers who opt to remain in the profession but transfer to different schools typically

seek out institutions with greater financial resources and/or fewer minority students. Notably, teacher turnover rates are 70% higher in schools that serve the largest populations of students of color (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2022a).

3.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter offered a comprehensive examination of the factors influencing teacher motivation and job satisfaction, as well as turnover and the intention to either leave or remain in their positions, alongside the concept of teaching as a vocation and a source of passion. However, factors influencing teachers to remain in their teaching job remained understudied. These insights may hold significance for the Johannesburg East Education District, which is the primary focus of this research. The review outlined an array of factors, encompassing demographic, organisational, and operational practices, which play a role in job satisfaction. It is crucial to recognise that these factors are interrelated and together affect teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The chapter concluded with an analysis of the repercussions of reduced job satisfaction and motivational shortcomings among teachers. The following chapter, Chapter 3, outlines the theoretical framework that supports this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters (2 and 3) presented a comprehensive local and international literature review encompassing theoretical perspectives on motivation and job satisfaction, as well as empirical studies examining educational change, teacher stress, turnover, and job satisfaction. This review also incorporated biological influences on job satisfaction, theological viewpoints, and teacher job satisfaction. Building upon this foundational literature, the current chapter addresses the primary research question, methodological approach, and study design. Detailed explanations of research, research methodology, and research design are provided. Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the researcher's positionality and personal narrative, as documented in a journal. The study design, which employs a single-case study approach with a phenomenological qualitative framework, is thoroughly delineated. This investigation is guided by the central research question: What factors influence veteran primary teachers' decisions to remain in their schools? Specifically, this exploration sought to answer the following research questions:

- What are the factors influencing veteran teachers to remain in schools?
- How do veteran primary teachers perceive the relationship between job satisfaction and teaching and learning?
- What role do school managers play in shaping veteran primary teachers' job satisfaction?
- What strategies could be implemented to enhance job satisfaction, resilience and retention of newly recruited teachers?

The scholarly literature has extensively documented job satisfaction, professional identity, and job satisfaction among ECTs worldwide, highlighting a persistent concern for education practitioners. This study's primary aim was not to generate broadly applicable findings but to investigate the factors influencing a specific cohort of teachers to persist in their chosen profession. Although the results are not generalizable, they contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge and offer potential applications for policy development and future research on teacher retention.

4.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

A paradigm serves as the researcher's framework for interpreting life or understanding reality (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Allemang, Sitter, & Dimitropoulos, 2022; Bunmi, 2022). Alharahsheh & Pius (2020) describe a paradigm as encompassing a variety of competing perspectives for understanding the world, as all phenomena are perceived from different viewpoints. Allemang et al (2022) characterise a paradigm as a lens shaped by philosophical assumptions that guide both thought and action. They identified four paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. The primary aim of this study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction among veteran teachers in urban primary schools within the Johannesburg East Education District (also known as D9). Consequently, an interpretivist approach was adopted, aligning with the social constructivist paradigm. Interpretivists assert that multiple realities exist, though they are imperfectly comprehended, as individuals perceive the world from their unique perspectives and construct their own realities. As noted, the objective of interpretivism is to elucidate the socially constructed reality of a phenomenon or social group (Allemang, Sitter, & Dimitropoulos, 2022).

4.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

Social constructivism offers valuable insights for understanding and managing the context of diverse perspectives and cultural diversity (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Gamage, 2025). Constructivists view knowledge as a dynamic process of meaning-making through dialogue with participants, aiming to comprehend the meanings they attribute to their cultural and historical contexts. According to Alharahsheh & Pius (2020) and Allemang et al (2022), the social world is a construct with historical and political underpinnings, shaped by individuals' actions, meaning-making processes, and experiences with power dynamics and agency. Constructivism posits that social actors generate social reality through interaction, which influences their perceptions and understandings of social reality (Bunmi, 2022). Within the framework of social constructivism, individuals strive to comprehend the world in which they reside and work. Constructivists argue that truth is subjective and contingent upon individual perspectives (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023; Gamage, 2025). Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) suggested that engaging participants in the construction of

meaning extends beyond merely stating existing facts, fostering a negotiated understanding of their social environments. Constructivism assumes that individuals independently determine their meanings and interpretations of events, with human potential being boundless (Gamage, 2025). Constructivist researchers focus not only on the interactions among individuals but also on the specific contexts in which people live and work, to gain insights into the historical and cultural settings of the participants. Within the constructivist paradigm, participants, through their involvement in the research process, derive meaning from their experiences, particularly concerning the motivation and job satisfaction (Gunbayi, 2020; Pabel, Pryce, & Anderson, 2021). The researcher paid close attention to the expressions and actions of individuals within their life settings. The emphasis was placed on embracing multiple perspectives rather than adhering to a singular true perspective, to address the limitations of overlooking critical dimensions of problem-solving when maintaining a unique, individualist view. To develop subjective meanings of the study participants' experiences, the researcher extensively relied on the diverse perspectives of the situations. Subjective meanings are socially and historically negotiated through interactions with others, shaped by historical and cultural norms that influence individuals' lives. The interpretive researcher navigates between multiple worlds during research, the social world of participants and their own sociological perspective. In this research study, he further relied on participants to construct their knowledge regarding teacher job satisfaction in urban public schools (Pabel, Pryce, & Anderson, 2021). The researcher reported comprehensively from the perspective of the individuals being researched and interpreted the study findings from their viewpoint. He also sought to ascertain the meaning of a phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. The research objective is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation studied. Social constructivism and interpretivism are concerned with how individuals or groups perceive and make sense of social phenomena and environments. Proponents of qualitative research concluded that social constructivism, in particular, seeks to develop an understanding of the meanings that individuals ascribe to the world (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021; Kang & Hwang, 2021). The following sections will outline and explain the paradigm chosen for this study, informed by the researcher's epistemological and ontological perspectives.

4.3.1 Epistemology

Gamage (2025) defines ontology as the explanation of how the real world exists, whereas the epistemological paradigm allows researchers to investigate this reality. Epistemology focuses on what constitutes acceptable data and knowledge within a particular field of study (Gamage, 2025). Two primary epistemological perspectives exist: positivism (quantitative) and interpretivism (qualitative). Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) stated that positivists maintain that reality exists independently in the universe and can only be understood through scientific theory testing (deductive method). The positivist approach advocates applying natural science methodologies to social reality research, although it is employed in both deductive and inductive reasoning. Positivist research is conducted objectively, with the researcher remaining detached from the subject (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Gamage, 2025). Realism, another epistemological approach, shares similarities with positivism and also requires a scientific approach to knowledge generation, including data collection and analysis (Gamage, 2025).

Conversely, interpretivists argue that reality is subjective and can be comprehended through interpretation (inductive method) (Allemang, Sitter, & Dimitropoulos, 2022). This perspective necessitates that social scientists understand the subjective meanings of social actions. Interpretivists emphasise the underlying phenomena of perceived importance to social actors and their reliance on contextual factors. They view their choice of qualitative methodology as an ethical and value-laden decision with significant implications. Interpretivists consider knowledge to be socially constructed through language and interaction, with reality being interconnected and understood through societal cultural and ideological frameworks (Pabel, Pryce, & Anderson, 2021; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Gamage, 2025). Gamage (2025) argues that human activity is not seen as a tangible reality to be measured, but as a text that can be interpreted and analysed. Interpretivists draw upon hermeneutics to achieve a comprehensive understanding. It is noteworthy that the study's objective was to examine both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing teacher job satisfaction in public primary schools. The interpretivism paradigm posits that researchers cannot detach themselves from the inquiry, as they are integral to the subject under examination. This epistemological stance, rooted in ontological perspectives, shapes the approach to participant engagement and research question exploration (Gamage, 2025). Maintaining a trustworthy study was a paramount concern

throughout the process (Gorard, 2023). Consequently, adopting an interpretivist epistemological framework for this investigation is justified. Within this paradigm, reality is conceived as existing solely within the researcher's mind, with a singular reality present in the minds of primary school teachers. Gorard (2023) elucidates that researchers employing hermeneutics analyze discussions and texts by empathically envisioning participants' experiences, motivations, and contexts, followed by a cyclical analysis alternating between textual data and situational scenes. This study focused on teacher job satisfaction and resilience amidst ongoing educational changes. Gorard and Chen (2023) assert that research quality can be ensured through transparent declaration of the researcher's position, further emphasising the crucial role of reflexive mentoring in biographical research. Cognizant of caution regarding reflexivity limitations, efforts were made to establish a firm footing by acknowledging the researcher's role in the methodological process and recognising the ethical obligations of reflexive research (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). The research strategy incorporated data collection through unstructured interviews, and field notes (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Neelen & Kirschner, 2020; Pabel, Pryce, & Anderson, 2021; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). A comprehensive discussion of research positionality is provided in Section 5.11 on page 100. It is noteworthy that the discussion of epistemological perspectives and reflexivity consistently references the application of interpretivism criteria.

4.3.2 Ontology

The philosophical domain of ontology examines the fundamental nature of reality and social phenomena. Researchers and scholars (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Allemang, Sitter, & Dimitropoulos, 2022; Gorard, 2023; Gamage, 2025) adopt varying stances on the nature of reality, alternating between objective and subjective viewpoints. Gamage (2025) posits that both parts of ontology are likely to be acknowledged as creating legitimate information. Gamage defines objectivism as an ontological position that holds that social phenomena and their meanings exist independently of social actors. Conversely, subjectivism aligns with constructionism, which perceives reality as a social construct (Gamage, 2025). Educational institutions, such as schools, derive substantial benefits from their teaching staff. Thus, administration continuously explores innovative compensation strategies to sustain teacher engagement, motivation, and satisfaction. Teachers must comply

with institutional policies and procedures. Both teachers and senior principals are obligated to adhere to operational guidelines as part of their professional duties. Educational management, functioning as an objective entity, employs a range of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors to satisfy and motivate its employees, the social actors. This study concentrates on the structural dimension of management, presuming commonalities in motivational strategies across the public school sector. The core function persists, regardless of alterations in management structure. The selection of interpretivism was based on the analysis of a singular reality, the impact of teacher resilience on retention and the incorporation of subjective qualities in public primary school organisations. The current investigation examined concrete, actor-independent motivators, both intrinsic (job satisfaction, appreciation, engaging work, stress management) and extrinsic (leadership support, empowerment, collegial networks) (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Gunbayi, 2020; Gorard & Chen, 2023).

4.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

In academic research, three primary methodologies are commonly employed: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel, & Cook, 2020; Kang & Hwang, 2021; Taherdoost, 2022; Gamage, 2025). Each methodology encompasses specific procedures that researchers utilize to describe, explain, and predict phenomena. These procedures are crucial for effective data collection and problem resolution (Bernard, 2025). This study adopted a qualitative research approach, situated within the constructivist paradigm. Qualitative research focuses on understanding the quality of activities and aims to grasp how individuals navigate their lives, the meanings they attribute to their experiences, and their emotional reactions to their situations, rather than quantifying these occurrences (Stahl & King, 2020; Gunbayi, 2020). The primary aim of qualitative research is to capture the meanings, emotions, and descriptions of situations to comprehend the subjectivity within the study's focus area. It predominantly explores the subjective experiences of individuals or groups. Qualitative research is inherently non-numerical, relying on verbal reasoning, which precludes graphical representation of the data (Stahl & King, 2020; Gamage, 2025). The objective is to provide a comprehensive understanding with depth, rather than a numerical analysis of data. Qualitative methods offer a robust interpretative framework for examining research problems related to the meanings individuals or groups attribute to social or human issues (Burns, Bally,

Burles, Holtslander, & Peacock, 2022). A notable advantage of qualitative research is its capacity to produce detailed and precise analyses of a limited number of cases, allowing participants greater freedom to determine what is relevant and present it within context (Gorard & Chen, 2023; Gamage, 2025). The constructivist paradigm, which acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, guided this study to employ qualitative methods to understand the constructions individuals have within that context. The qualitative research approach facilitated an in-depth examination of factors contributing to job satisfaction among veteran urban primary school teachers. The significance of employing a qualitative approach lies in its ability to collect data in natural settings by engaging directly with individuals and observing their behaviours and actions within their context (Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtslander, & Peacock, 2022). This approach also enabled the study to contextualize the data within its broader social framework. The researcher developed data collection instruments to analyze documents and conduct interviews with participants. Through a qualitative approach, he further examined teacher job satisfaction in its natural settings, interpreting this phenomenon through the meanings provided by participants. In this exploration of teacher job satisfaction, the researcher prioritised a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, focusing on the entirety rather than isolating individual variables. The qualitative research approach the researcher employed is characterised by its openness to integrating various data types and sources, which are then synthesised into a cohesive analysis and interpretation of the context (Kang & Hwang, 2021). Gamage (2025) underscores the advantage of qualitative research in its emphasis on contextual and holistic perspectives, as opposed to fragmenting the subject into separate components. This methodology allows for the observation of behaviours in their natural environments (Gorard & Tan, 2022). Naturalistic inquiry, as described by Gorard and Tan (2022), involves collecting data in settings that remain as unaltered as possible. This approach is particularly relevant for studies like mine, which aim to explore groups and empower individuals to share their experiences, articulate their perspectives, and address power imbalances. Additionally, suggests that qualitative research is crucial for developing new theories when existing ones do not sufficiently address the issues being studied (Gamage, 2025).

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The circumstances and methods for collecting and analysing data are outlined in a study design. According to Gorard (2023) and Gamage (2025), research design refers to the choices a researcher takes while organising a study for data collection, measurement, and analysis. For this qualitative investigation, a case study approach was used as the method of research. The utilisation of qualitative case studies is a proven method for conducting in-depth research strategy exploration that examines a phenomenon from various angles of the intricacy and distinctiveness of a specific project, policy, institution, program, or system in a real-world setting (Gorard, 2023; Gamage, 2025). Eight categories of qualitative research designs are thought to be commonly employed, according to and: case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, historical studies, phenomenological studies, basic interpretative studies, content analysis, and ethnography (Gorard & Tan, 2022; Taherdoost, 2022).

4.6 THE CASE STUDY DESIGN

Gamage (2025) delineates four distinct categories of case study designs: multiple-case (holistic), multiple-case (embedded), single-case (holistic), and single-case (embedded). A case study is described as a qualitative research design that enables a detailed analysis of a confined system, utilising data sources located inside the system or case. A qualitative case study makes sure that the problem is examined from a number of perspectives, allowing for the revelation and understanding of many aspects of the phenomenon (Gamage, 2025). As a framework that provides a boundary, the case study is an essential technique for several significant social science research projects. Individuals, groups, communities, instances, episodes, events, subgroups of a population, towns, cities, or communities can all be considered cases (Strzelecki, et al., 2022; Gamage, 2025). A genre provision that often occurs within the qualitative paradigm, which concentrates on smaller groups or people and aims to address concerns regarding settings, connections, processes, and practices, was made possible by the use of a case study method (Olawale, Chinagozi, & Joe, 2023; Gorard, 2023). An in-depth description, analysis, and comprehension of the entity created by the researcher of a case, typically a program, event, activity, processes, or one or more people, are the goals of a case study (Corley, Bansal, & Yu, 2021). In order to investigate the phenomena of teacher work satisfaction in public schools, the researcher employed a case study approach that

integrated the use of many methodologies, including policy documents analysis, interviews, and observation. According to Gorard and Tan (2022), one of the many benefits of doing a case study is that it allows the researcher to record or examine the real world, whether it be a circumstance, an organisation, or a group of relationships in all of its complexity. Since the research's participants included principals and teachers, each school served as a case study that looked at teachers' experiences with work satisfaction in public primary schools. According to Gorard and Chen (2023), case study research concentrates on a single person, environment, or event at a time. Its benefit is that it facilitates an in-depth investigation of the case by allowing for prolonged immersion in the case (Gorard & Tan, 2022; Gorard & Chen, 2023). Since case studies come in a variety of forms, I choose to utilise an instrumental one. Exploring and describing a specific topic in order to acquire fresh information that may guide policy creation was the goal of employing an instrumental case study. A problem or worry is the topic of a single instrumental case study, in which a single constrained instance is chosen to highlight the issue. Nonetheless, it extends beyond what is immediately apparent to the observer and is employed to comprehend more. Because it aids in pursuing the external goal, the case is frequently examined in great detail, with consideration given to its surroundings and routine actions. Case studies have the benefit of being grounded in real-world scenarios and allowing for the direct testing of opinions on the phenomena as it is observed in reality (Gorard & Chen, 2023). A case study that focused on instrumental variables shed light on the topic of teachers' job satisfaction. According to qualitative researchers (Savolainen, Casey, McBrayer, & Schwerdtle, 2023; Olawale, Chinagozi, & Joe, 2023; Gamage, 2025), the case study generates the kind of context-dependent knowledge research on learning that would enable individuals to go from rule-based novices to virtual experts.

4.7 RESEARCH METHODS

The steps taken to choose a sample strategy, choose a site, find real participants, and secure authorization to carry out the research are described in this section. It also goes into detail about the procedures used for data collection and analysis.

4.7.1 The Target Population

This investigation was conducted across three primary schools within D9, encompassing one hundred and twelve (112) teachers. As noted by, a population

constitutes a set of factors or instances, whether human or otherwise, meeting specific criteria to which the researcher aims to generalise the study's findings. Gill (2020) and others (Campbell, et al., 2020; Cash, Isaksson, Maier, & Summers, 2022) refer to this group as the target demographic. To maintain confidentiality, the identities of the three selected primary schools were protected (Campbell, et al., 2020; Morse, 2020; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Mumford, Higgs, & Gujar, 2021; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). The research focused on teachers with a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience, a duration considered adequate to provide extensive insights into teachers' job satisfaction. The selection of D9 was based on the researcher's familiarity and proximity to the study site, employing purposive and convenient sampling techniques (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Hays & McKibben, 2021; Cash, Isaksson, Maier, & Summers, 2022). The chosen primary schools are public, co-educational institutions. The district's diverse racial, ethnic, and demographic composition of teachers further influenced the school selection. Cash et al (2022) emphasised the importance of assessing how crucial it is that [the sample] actually reflects the entire population in issue for legitimacy. Among the three schools, Parkland Primary School, located in Saxonwold, requires tuition fees. Conversely, Sunview Primary School in Hillbrow and Silverton Primary School in Parktown are non-fee-paying institutions. Only 15 teachers were interviewed. The following were the primary selection criteria for schools and teachers in this study:

- They are all under the same education district;
- They are all D9 primary schools.
- The teachers must have accumulated 5 or more years of full-time teaching experience; and
- The participants are both male and teachers

4.7.2 Sample Selection

The process of sampling, as elucidated by, commences with a thorough delineation of the target population (Schmidtke & Drinkwater, 2021; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024; Bernard, 2025). A sample, as defined by, constitutes a selected section of the population subjected to examination, effectively a subset of the broader demographic (Taherdoost, 2022). The sampling methodology employed in a study is typically dictated by one or more objectives, such as random, convenience, deliberate, or stratified sampling (Taherdoost, 2022). This investigation utilized a dual sampling

approach, incorporating both purposeful and convenient selection of participants. Through purposive sampling, specifically maximum variation sampling, the researcher identified and enlisted 15 teachers possessing requisite knowledge of the phenomenon under scrutiny and willingness to participate (Campbell, et al., 2020). The researcher posited that teachers with less than a decade of full-time teaching experience were still adapting to the educational milieu. Given the study's focus on teacher job satisfaction, it was imperative to include teachers with extensive tenure who had become fully acculturated to the profession. Maximum variation sampling, also termed heterogeneous sampling, is a technique employed to gather diverse perspectives on a particular subject. This purposive sampling method involves selecting a single instance for investigation, with the researcher's assumption that its study will yield insights applicable to analogous scenarios. Consequently, the purposive sampling approach entailed a deliberate selection of individuals based on specific attributes (Campbell, et al., 2020). Concurrently, convenience sampling was deemed appropriate for efficiently and cost-effectively contacting participants.

4.7.2.1 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling, as elucidated by, is a research methodology wherein participants are selected based on their availability, willingness to volunteer (i.e. 15 participants), or ease of recruitment for study engagement. This approach facilitated the selection of teachers who were conveniently picked for the investigation. Define convenience sampling, alternatively termed haphazard or accidental sampling, as a type of non-probability sampling in which members of the target population who meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate, are included in the study. This sampling technique allows researchers to efficiently gather data from readily accessible subjects within the target population.

4.7.2.2 Purposive Sampling

The necessity of collecting information from specific target groups, rather than those most conveniently available, is highlighted by Gill (2020) and Ahmad and Wilkins (2024). This approach, termed purposive sampling, involves selecting participants who possess the required information, either because of their unique knowledge or their alignment with predetermined criteria. Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) describe

purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or quota sampling, as a method where researchers identify population characteristics of interest and seek out individuals who exhibit these qualities. They further elaborate that purposive sampling involves choosing participants who are optimally positioned to provide the desired information. Campbell et al (2020) note that the selectivity in non-probability sampling stems from the researcher's conscious choice of a particular group, acknowledging its non-representativeness of the broader population. Campbell et al (2020) emphasise that qualitative research aims to deliberately select individuals who can best illuminate the research topic. Essentially, purposive sampling targets information-rich cases for in-depth analysis, allowing researchers to construct a sample that meets specific requirements. This method involves determining the necessary information and identifying individuals capable and willing to provide it based on their expertise or experience (Campbell, et al., 2020; Gill, 2020; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). The subsequent section addresses the sample size utilized in this study.

4.7.3 Site selection

A case study, as elucidated by, constitutes a research technique that incorporates an empirical assessment of a particular current event within its real-life environment using several sources of data (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). Braun and Clarke emphasise the blurred boundaries between the phenomena under investigation and their contextual surroundings. While the study environment supports the research topic, an interpretative approach necessitates engaging participants in their natural settings (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Hennink and Kaiser (2022) assert that comprehending the background is essential for researchers to fully grasp case studies. They further contend that diverse situations are inextricably linked to their environments, underscoring the significance of context. Consequently, contextual information holds substantial relevance. This phenomenological study was conducted in the Johannesburg East Education District (D9), which oversees predominantly urban schools, including former Model C institutions and those in townships such as Alexander. The district comprises 82 public primary schools with approximately 20,000 students, over sixty percent of whom come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The majority of schools where research participants teach operate on a zoning system, with most students residing within designated

school zones. A small fraction of students from adjacent areas attend these schools because of the school choice policy (see Maile, 2004). Some students reside in affluent neighbouring areas where property values range from R4.5 million to R17 million. Several urban schools serve a growing population of non-English and non-South African indigenous language speakers, with school members who are not native speakers of French, Portuguese, or Swahili. These institutions primarily cater to students living within the school zone, determined by home addresses and other verifiable information, as well as those from more distant locations. The urban schools participate in State Assessment Testing Initiatives, where students achieve lower scores compared to counterparts in neighbouring states with similar contexts, such as Zimbabwe and Botswana. Most of these schools employ a higher number of LSTs relative to ECTs. While previous research has examined factors contributing to teacher turnover, this study aims to explore factors that enhance teacher job satisfaction, focusing particularly on understanding the factors that influence LSTs' decisions to persist in the profession.

4.7.4 Participants selection

Purposeful and convenience sampling were employed as a suitable approach for choosing the fifteen participants for the interviews for the current study on the phenomena of LSTs' job satisfaction and perseverance in the profession (Hays & McKibben, 2021; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). Six participants in this study are in management positions (i.e. PL 2 and PL 3). The technique was determined by factors such as participant availability and accessibility. Furthermore, the interviews were performed with the sole purpose of discovering factors contributing to LSTs' job satisfaction and perseverance in the profession. Eleven of the fifteen respondents were female, and there was a spread of ages from 29 to 57. Then the remaining four respondents were male, with their ages spread between 38 and 52. All teachers surveyed were permanently employed by GDE in their respective schools. Fourteen teachers were born outside Gauteng Province, and only one teacher (Participant 9) was born in the province of Gauteng. The majority of teachers who participated in the study are in the Foundation Phase (6) followed by the Intermediate Phase (5), and the least number of participants came from the Senior Phase (i.e. Grade 7) (4). What was also important to note was that the average teaching experience among these teachers was twenty years. Gratitude, justice,

creativity, patience, honesty, and a love of learning were the most often mentioned attributes by research participants. These are consistent with the virtues defined in common discourse as qualities that excellent teachers should possess. This may simply be absorbed impressions, but it suggests that teachers are committed to justice and knowledge, which bodes well for education. A good sense of humour was highlighted in government teacher recruiting literature, although there was less evident agreement among survey participants on its relevance. Social intelligence and collaboration, which are closely connected, ranked lower and had a scattered distribution. They are definitely vital in education, but it is unclear where they fit. Participants were few, if they included any mention of transcendence and temperance. Despite the emphasis on technical proficiency, these results are in line with the policy discussion on the qualities of effective teachers. Intellectual inquiry, love of learning, and positive attitudes are highlighted in SASA 84 of 1996, the revised Code of Conduct and Practice (SACE 2002, 2010), and the Teachers' Standards (ELRC, 2003). These points are also reflected when members of the public characterise teachers who are knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects. In their emphasis on the joy of learning in their survey replies, LSTs acknowledged this. According to the aforementioned Codes and Standards, as well as general opinion, honesty and justice are also important qualities for teachers. In the CDE report (2017), honesty and integrity were included as two of the seven principles of public life. Teachers should uphold these values if they want their students to behave responsibly. Fairness in education may take many forms, such as treating students with dignity, reacting to them as unique persons, and transparently enforcing school rules, all of which are in line with the Teachers' Standards. Thus, there is a significant degree of coherence between public impressions, teachers' stated qualities, and professional codes and standards in teaching, even though these are not emphasised in the political debate. A brief profile of individual participants is shown below.

Table 4.1 Participant Profiles

Participants	Gender	Post level	Years of teaching experience
Participant 1	F	PL1	20
Participant 2	M	PL1	19
Participant 3	M	PL1	19
Participant 4	F	PL1	23
Participant 5	F	PL1	30
Participant 6	M	PL2	18
Participant 7	M	PL3	30
Participant 8	F	PL1	22
Participant 9	F	PL1	9
Participant 10	F	PL1	12
Participant 11	F	PL1	14
Participant 12	F	PL1	23
Participant 13	F	PL1	18
Participant 14	F	PL2	21
Participant 15	F	PL2	24

4.8 DATA COLLECTION

This qualitative case study utilised a triangulated approach to data collection, encompassing interviews, and field notes (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtslander, & Peacock, 2022). The primary method of data collection involved face-to-face SSI. Upon completion of a demographic survey by all teacher participants, individual interview schedules were arranged. Dual recording devices, including a digital tape recorder and a mobile phone, were employed during the interviews with the consent of the 15 participants from the three selected schools (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). Each interview was conducted at the participant's institution, accommodating their preferred timing. Concurrent field notes were taken to capture salient information that emerged during the conversations. The interviews were designed to elicit participants' perspectives on the phenomena under investigation. As observed, there is one key benefit that an SSI has over other sorts of interviews: you can have your notes and materials in front of you as the interview is taking place (Campbell, et al., 2020; Morse, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2021b; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) emphasise the importance of clear, measured speech and the formulation of clarifying questions when necessary. The researcher cultivated a professional yet welcoming atmosphere through vocal modulation, facilitating candid responses. The appropriateness of interviews for this

study is further elaborated in Section 5.8.1. Participants signed non-disclosure agreements (ANNEXURE F: Consent Form), committing to use the confidential information solely for the study's purposes, as outlined in Section 8.12 of the ethics clearance application (Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021; Gorard, 2023). Both parties were expected to safeguard the confidentiality of the information with reasonable care. The recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed, with some narrative accounts preserved verbatim and others summarised (cf: Section 5.8.2) (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024).

4.8.1 Interview Guide

This study employed two interview guides (cf: ANNEXURE G and ANNEXURE H) for personal information and an interview schedule, which were developed beforehand to transform four research questions and four assumptions into study questions. According to Ahmad and Wilkins (2024), the SSI is a widely utilised technique in qualitative research. This approach involves preparing a schedule that allows for content reordering, expansions, and the exploration of new avenues, while enabling extensive probing. Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) describe SSI as those centered on a specific phenomenon of interest. These interviews, also known as open-ended or guided interviews, permit customization of phrasing and order for each interviewee, with responses elicited through prompts and probes. The SSI guide was developed and submitted for review to principal research supervisors and senior school leaders at each primary school prior to initiating the study's interviews. While the semi-structured format was maintained, it did not preclude additional probing and investigative inquiries during the telephone interviews when deemed necessary (Neelen & Kirschner, 2020; Morse, 2020). Consequently, the incorporation of these probing questions did not negatively affect data collection or restrict access to information from participants or interviewers (Campbell, et al., 2020; Gill, 2020; Epp & Otnes, 2021).

4.8.2 Audio Recorder

A crucial prerequisite for the interviews, established after consulting participants, was the permissible use of digital devices (such as audio recorders or smartphones) while prohibiting video recording (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). This stipulation was incorporated into both the UNISA ethical clearance application and the GDE's Application for Conducting Research in Schools. As a result, the study employed

SSI, as outlined in an Interview Guide. Numerous scholars (Campbell, et al., 2020; Morse, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2021b; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022) have characterised SSI and in-depth (unstructured) interviews as 'non-standardised,' often termed qualitative research interviews. The order of questions may fluctuate based on the conversation's rhythm and progression. Campbell et al (2020) and Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) noted that, depending on organisational circumstances, supplementary questions might be necessary to thoroughly investigate the research topic and objectives. In this study, digital audio recording captured the nature of questions and ensuing discussions, with verbatim sections analysed to discern common relationships, patterns, and themes. The digital audio recorder proved particularly beneficial when time constraints were present, accelerating the interview process and enabling subsequent retrieval of information (Campbell, et al., 2020). Moreover, audio recording facilitated transcription and minimised misinterpretations during data analysis. This aspect is further explored in the data analysis section of this chapter. The audio recorder also aided in triangulating certain interviews by simplifying data retrieval for fact verification (Matos, et al., 2023; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024).

4.8.3 Data Storage

Transcription is a foundational step in qualitative research, central to turning collected data into a form that can be thoroughly analysed. Researchers such as Holmes (2020) and Morse (2020) have underscored the significance of transcribing the majority of collected data for rigorous analysis, a view echoed by Ahmad and Wilkins (2024). By defining transcription as the transformation of qualitative data whether interview audio, observational notes, or other records into typed text, these scholars emphasize that the written transcript becomes the primary vehicle for deeper interpretive work (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). In this way, transcription converts data from a less accessible medium into a format that is more conducive to systematic examination (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Campbell et al., 2020). Transcription serves several interconnected purposes that advance qualitative analysis. First, it creates a textual record that can be revisited, coded, and compared across cases, enabling researchers to surface patterns, themes, and discrepancies that might be less evident in audio or field-notes alone (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) describe transcription as the process of carefully listening to recordings or reading field notes and producing

accurate digital text, a step that lays the groundwork for transparent and replicable analysis. Moreover, the written transcript often acts as a bridge between the researcher's initial impressions and the data's underlying meanings, making the analytic process more accessible to peers who may re-analyse the material (Campbell et al., 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2021a). Alongside the analytic benefits, ethical and practical considerations surround transcription and data handling. The excerpted practice highlights a structured approach to safeguarding original data after transcription: storing recorded information on password-protected devices with a retention period of up to five years, and taking additional precautions such as scanning handwritten documents and securely transferring hard copies to restricted storage. Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) and Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) describe these measures as essential to maintaining confidentiality, integrity, and traceability of the data. Handwritten notes and audiotapes are moved into secure storage with limited access, including locked file cabinets in dedicated spaces, to allow potential reference during the same five-year window. Together, these procedures illustrate a holistic data-management approach that supports ethical practice while preserving the materials needed for potential re-analysis or verification. Synthesis of these perspectives reveals a coherent picture of transcription as both a technical and ethical anchor for qualitative inquiry. The technical dimension transforming spoken or written data into a usable textual form enables rigorous analysis and transparent reporting (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024; Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Campbell et al., 2020). The ethical dimension embedding secure storage, access controls, and clear retention timelines ensures that participants' information is protected and that the research remains auditable over time (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). In sum, transcription, coupled with thoughtful data-security practices, supports credible, reproducible qualitative research while honouring the rights and privacy of research participants.

4.9 METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR: TRUSTWORTHINESS

Gorard (2023) argues that trustworthiness replaces conventional views of reliability and validity in qualitative research. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is determined by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. To enhance the quality of data and to ensure rigour in this study, the researcher also used

Gorard's and other qualitative proponents' criteria as employed by the positivist investigators as follows:

4.9.1 Trustworthiness of Research Findings

The concept of trustworthiness in research is characterised by the accuracy with which a study is conducted, as evidenced by the correctness of its findings (Gorard & Tan, 2022; Owen, Watkins, & Hughes, 2022). Qualitative research has faced significant criticism from positivists because of the inability to address validity and reliability in the same manner as quantitative designs. This critique led positivists to question the validity and trustworthiness of qualitative research outcomes. In response, researchers demonstrated that qualitative studies could incorporate measures to address these concerns. Some naturalistic researchers adopted alternative terminology to differentiate themselves from the positivist paradigm; for instance, they proposed four criteria for qualitative researchers to enhance the credibility of their studies (Gorard, 2023).

Gorard & Tan's (2022) framework of trustworthiness aligns with positivist criteria by addressing similar concerns as quantitative studies, but employs distinct terminology: a) credibility (analogous to internal validity in quantitative research); b) transferability (corresponding to external validity/generalizability); c) dependability (parallel to reliability); and d) confirmability (instead of objectivity in quantitative research). As most of this study utilised qualitative methods, terminology for assessing the reliability of qualitative research findings was adopted and implemented accordingly.

4.9.2 Credibility of the Research

Positivist researchers prioritise internal validity as a crucial criterion in their studies, striving to ensure that their research accurately measures or tests the intended phenomena (Gorard & Tan, 2022; Gorard & Chen, 2023). For qualitative investigators, credibility is proposed as the recommended criterion, which involves verifying that the results align with reality. Credibility assessment determines whether the study's conclusions accurately represent the participants' original concepts and are grounded in reliable information derived from their primary data (Owen, Watkins, & Hughes, 2022). To enhance the credibility of their findings, the researcher considered implementing several techniques, including: a) adopting well-established research methods; b) gaining familiarity with research sites; c) employing

triangulation; d) promoting participant honesty during data collection; e) utilising iterative questioning; and f) conducting member checks (Gorard, 2023; Gamage, 2025). These aspects of credibility of the research used in this study are discussed below.

4.9.2.1 Participants Recruitment Process

In order to put the participants at ease throughout the research process, the researcher became acquainted with the study surroundings prior to commencing the data collection technique. The researcher visited the research sites, introduced himself to the participants, and provided them with all of the information they required regarding the research that would be done in their social environment. Participants were also given their own copies of the Participant Information Sheets (see Appendix E) to acquaint themselves with the nature and aims of the study, allowing them to make educated decisions about whether or not to participate based on the information provided. In order to develop a trustworthy relationship with the participants, the researcher became acquainted with the research venues. Participants were willing to participate in the study and open to communicating with the researcher about the subject under investigation since the researcher had already presented himself to the research sites. Since the researcher had presented himself to the research sites before to the empirical inquiry, participants were willing to participate in the study and open to conversing with the researcher on the problem being investigated. Their eagerness is connected to their capacity to contribute to the research in a trustworthy manner.

4.9.2.2 Prolonged Engagement in Field or Research Site

Data collecting for qualitative research necessitated self-determination to immerse the researcher in the world of the participants (Braun & Clarke, Can I use TA? Should I use TA? Should I not use TA? Comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches, 2021a; Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022). This allows the researcher to get an understanding of the study's context, which reduces information distortions caused by his presence in the field. The researcher's longer stay in the field increases respondents' trust and gives a better grasp of the participants' culture and background (Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022). For example, a doctorate student doing an intervention research on teachers' professional development might conduct an assessment of

teachers' needs, followed by professional development training and evaluation. This indicates that the researcher would have to stay in the field for nearly 3 months due to pandemic regulations, and the evaluation would have to take place 2-3 months following the intervention. The goal of this gestation period is to assess if there is any change as a result of participation in professional development. Larsen and Adu (2022) previously remarked that longer time period is crucial because as rapport builds, informants may offer different and frequently more sensitive information than they did at the beginning of the study project. Thus, longer participation in fieldwork assisted the researcher in understanding the key concerns that may impact the quality of the data since it aids in the development of trust with study participants (Larsen & Adu, 2022; Taherdoost, 2022; Gorard, Judging the relative trustworthiness of research results: How to do it and why it matters, 2023).

4.9.2.3 Triangulation

Several scholars define triangulation as the use of multiple data collection methods to complement one another and guarantee that the data exhibits similar patterns and themes (Gunbayi, 2020; Larsen & Adu, 2022). According to Cilliers and Viljoen (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021), mixing varied techniques (i.e. mixed methods) in a research compensates for their individual weaknesses while maximizing their benefits. When possible, supporting data from documents may be gathered to provide context for the occurrence and to help explain the attitudes and behaviours of teachers in the group under inquiry, as well as to validate particular information supplied by participants. Triangulation assists the investigator in eliminating bias and double-checking the correctness of the responses provided by the participants (Gunbayi, 2020; Schmidtke & Drinkwater, 2021; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Larsen & Adu, 2022). According to Larsen and Adu (2022), triangulation comes in a variety of forms. In this study, data triangulation and methodological triangulation were used. Data triangulation refers to the use of many sources of data to improve the validity of a study (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Larsen & Adu, 2022; Gorard, Judging the relative trustworthiness of research results: How to do it and why it matters, 2023). Another proponent of qualitative approach argue that methodological triangulation refers to the use of multiple qualitative methodologies to investigate a phenomenon (Gamage, 2025). In terms of data triangulation, the researcher used a varied set of teachers to triangulate data collected through various approaches. This implies that individual concepts and

experiences may be compared to those of others, allowing for the building of a rich picture of the phenomenon under inquiry based on the viewpoints of a diverse set of participants (Gorard, Handling missing data in numeric analyses, 2020; 2023; Taherdoost, 2022). Data triangulation refers to the fact that the researcher was able to compare the results from the same techniques performed on different persons, and the conclusions obtained were generally the same, proving the dependability of the research findings (Gorard, 2023). In terms of methodological triangulation, the researcher used three techniques of data collection to allow approaches to complement one another. Multiple data collection methods are beneficial in the sense that one strategy compensates for the shortcomings of another by providing strengths that another method could not, hence boosting the credibility of study findings (Gorard & Tan, 2022; Gorard & Chen, 2023; Owen, Watkins, & Hughes, 2022; Gamage, 2025).

4.9.2.4 Use of peer debriefing

Peer debriefing, according to Owen et al (2022), gives inquirers the opportunity to test their increasing insights and subject themselves to probing questioning. During the research process, a qualitative researcher must seek assistance from other experts who are willing to give scholarly counsel, such as academic personnel (researcher supervisors), the postgraduate dissertation committee, and the department (Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtslander, & Peacock, 2022). Furthermore, proponents of qualitative inquiry argue that peer feedback also assisted me in improving the quality of the investigation's results (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). This indicates that a qualitative researcher should communicate his or her study findings to peers before drafting a report in order to gain feedback. In other words, when producing the study's conclusion, a researcher should solicit peer perceptions. The researcher considered this type of background information, data collection techniques and processes, data management, transcripts, data analysis procedures, and study conclusions (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Gorard & Tan, The difficulty of making claims to knowledge in social science, 2022).

4.9.2.5 Member checking

The goal of member checking was to determine whether or not the participants agree with what the researcher had written about them (Olmos-Vega, Stalmeijer, Varpio, & Kahlke, 2023). The practice of constantly evaluating facts and interpretations gained from participants is referred to as member checking (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021). The

purpose of this was to get feedback from participants and share their interpretations of the data in order to resolve any miscommunications, identify mistakes, and collect more useable data. It is conceivable that participants will be invited to view any transcripts of conversations in which they participated (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Olmos-Vega, Stalmeijer, Varpio, & Kahlke, 2023). The emphasis is on whether participants feel their remarks correctly represent what they intended to say at the time the data was collected. The majority of the data was acquired through taped interviews. The interviews were recorded and typed out. The researcher reviewed the transcripts with the participants to ensure that they correctly reflected what they stated during the recorded interviews (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021). Afterwards, the researcher informed the participants via WhatsApp and others through emails that the researcher had de-identified the data in the interviews and have provided them a pseudonym (Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Mumford, Higgs, & Gujar, 2021). As a consequence, participants were able to verify the accuracy of the transcribed interviews. Participants were then advised to make adjustments to the transcriptions if it was determined that what had been written down did not accurately reflect what had been said during the interview (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). This was done to ensure that the data received from interviews was evaluated and interpreted only on the original versions of the participants as recorded and transcribed, thereby increasing the credibility of the study findings. The participants functioned as a check throughout the analysis process, ensuring an ongoing debate regarding the interpretation of the informant's actuality and meanings, assuring the data's genuine significance (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021). In order to establish the credibility of the data acquired via document analysis (e.g. education policies, such EEA, SASA, and PAM document), the data was verified with the participants of the different research sites to validate that the data had been obtained and documented appropriately. This dialogue allowed data misinterpretation to be challenged, as well as the absence of error and prejudice (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Braun & Clarke, To saturate or to not saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales, 2021b; Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022).

4.9.3 Transferability

The study's findings met the criteria for transferability, which refers to the applicability of results to other contexts involving different teachers (Campbell, et al., 2020; Cilliers

& Viljeon, 2021; Kang & Hwang, 2021). To enhance transferability, the investigator implemented thick description, providing an in-depth account of methodological factors and employing purposive sampling to select information-rich participants (Campbell, et al., 2020). This approach allowed for a comprehensive explanation of contextual, philosophical, methodological, and procedural factors utilised throughout the research process, as evidenced in various sections of the research report. The final document offers a detailed overview of the entire study, encompassing research paradigms, methodologies, designs, population and sampling techniques, data collection and presentation methods, analysis and interpretation procedures, and ethical considerations (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Kang & Hwang, 2021; Epp & Otnes, 2021; Cirkony, et al., 2022). Such meticulous documentation enables other researchers to assess the relevance of this particular study to similar contexts, facilitating potential generalisation of findings. Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) posit that purposive sampling enhances transferability by targeting key informants well-versed in the areas under investigation. Additionally, Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) concurred with Campbell et al (2020), who argued that this sampling method aids researchers in identifying data-rich individuals, allowing for focused data collection and a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied. Consequently, the use of purposive sampling bolstered the transferability of this qualitative research by selecting participants with comprehensive knowledge of the issue under examination (Campbell, et al., 2020; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Cash, Isaksson, Maier, & Summers, 2022). This study was qualitative in nature based on sampled public primary schools. The researcher provided accurate, detailed and complete description of the context and participants to assist the reader in determining transferability.

4.9.3.1 Thick description

According to Burns et al. (2022), thick description offers a thorough explanation of the phenomenon under study and is distinguished by logical consistency and an interpretation that goes beyond simple facts. According to Larsen and Adu (Larsen & Adu, 2022), thick description functions as a synthesis of theoretical insights and empirical evidence and is linked to qualitative research's ability to acquire tacit knowledge. As it was described in section 4.9.2.2, the researcher spent more time interacting with individuals and collecting more data in order to achieve thick description (Braun & Clarke, Can I use TA? Should I use TA? Should I not use TA?

Comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches, 2021a; Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtslander, & Peacock, 2022; Taherdoost, 2022).

4.9.4 Dependability

In research reliability, positivist researchers employ methods to establish that identical outcomes would be achieved if the study were replicated under the same conditions with identical procedures and participants (Gamage, 2025). To explicitly address reliability concerns, researchers should provide a meticulous account of their methodology, enabling future replication efforts. This level of detail also allows readers to evaluate the appropriateness of the employed research techniques. It is noteworthy that transferability and dependability share related implications (Gunbayi, 2020). Proponents of qualitative research assert that these concepts are interconnected in this study, as both seek comprehensive documentation of the research process (Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtslander, & Peacock, 2022; Cirkony, et al., 2022). While transferability aims to determine the applicability of findings to comparable contexts, dependability focuses on whether consistent results would be obtained if identical procedures were repeated (Gorard & Chen, 2023). To bolster research reliability and facilitate readers' comprehension of the methodologies and their efficacy, research reports should address three crucial factors: a) Strategic level: delineating research design and execution; b) Operational level: elaborating on data collection procedures; and c) Reflective appraisal level: assessing research effectiveness. These factors were incorporated into the study report to ensure the reliability of the findings (Gorard & Tan, 2022; Cirkony, et al., 2022).

At the strategic level, the research design and its implementation were explicitly outlined. The underlying philosophical assumptions were clearly articulated within the relevant research paradigm, accompanied by justifications for their suitability. This approach provided readers with a comprehensive understanding of the study's ontological, epistemological, methodological, and rhetorical foundations (Gamage, 2025). At the operational level, the report elucidated the research design and data collection techniques. The sample size and data collection process were described in detail. At the reflective assessment level, the study findings were presented as a research report, with intentions to publish in a peer-reviewed journal article. This dissemination strategy aims to make the findings accessible to researchers for

evaluating the effectiveness of the conducted research (Pabel, Pryce, & Anderson, 2021; Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021; Taherdoost, 2022; Gamage, 2025).

4.9.5 Confirmability

In the field of qualitative research, the concept of confirmability is defined by scholars such as Cilliers and Viljeon (2021) as the extent to which a study's findings and interpretations are grounded in actual events rather than the researcher's personal perspectives. To establish confirmability in this study, a transparent audit trail was implemented as the primary methodological approach. This audit trail facilitates the evaluation of the research by addressing critical questions: Are the conclusions derived from the data? Is there a logical connection between the evidence and the inferences? Does the category structure demonstrate explanatory power and align with the collected data? Additionally, the research process, particularly during the writing phase of this study, was guided by a series of seven questions developed by. To ensure confirmability, the researcher transcribed recorded voices into text and incorporated direct quotes to support the research findings.

4.10 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY: REFLEXIVITY MATTERS

Reflexivity, as defined by, encompasses the process of researchers scrutinizing their own practices and acknowledging the ethical complexities inherent in the research process (Olmos-Vega, Stalmeijer, Varpio, & Kahlke, 2023). This self-examination adds value to investigations by assessing one's attitudes, judgments, and behaviours, as well as their potential impact on the study. The interpretation of reflexivity can vary significantly, as noted by, depending on the specific objectives and theoretical or methodological frameworks employed. Within the interpretative paradigm, there is substantial support for emphasising researcher reflexivity and encouraging informant self-reflexivity (Holmes, 2020; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Allemang, Sitter, & Dimitropoulos, 2022). Given this study's foundation in constructivist principles, it recognises the existence of multiple realities within the research context. Holmes (2020) characterises reflexivity as an elevated form of reflection that examines researchers' objectives, values, and their manifestation in relation to the study subjects, methodologies, and conclusions. As reflexivity has become an essential component of qualitative research, researchers must provide reflective accounts of data analysis or elucidate the operationalisation of reflexivity.

The concept serves to validate and substantiate research methodologies, focusing on the ethical pursuit of truth while minimizing researcher influence on participants. To maintain research integrity, it was imperative to reflexively monitor behaviour within the study environment, carefully considering the interpretation of participants' actions, words, and behaviours, as well as those of the researcher (Holmes, 2020; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021). Reflexivity fundamentally involves comprehending the psychological and cognitive processes underlying participants' decision-making (Savolainen, Casey, McBrayer, & Schwerdtle, 2023). Consequently, while adhering to GDE regulations regarding COVID-19 health precautions, all three schools were visited to gain insight into the study's contextual realities, collect data addressing the research questions, and present authentic participant narratives through verbatim codes. As part of this project, diverse data collection methods involving teachers on factors that sustained them in the profession over the years even during the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the 2020-2021 academic years, as outlined in the data collection section, were utilized to capture multiple voices and realities, resulting in the emergence of marginalized perspectives and a more comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation (Carver-Thomas & Burns, 2021; Schmidtke & Drinkwater, 2021).

The practice of reflexivity demands a critical examination of how a researcher's sociocultural background, preconceptions, and conduct influence the investigative process, as well as an acknowledgment of the co-constructed nature of research outcomes (Unger, 2021; Savolainen, Casey, McBrayer, & Schwerdtle, 2023). Engaging in reflexivity enables qualitative researchers to heighten their awareness of potential biases or prejudices. Olmos-Vega et al (2023) warn that neglecting self-examination may result in research findings tainted by personal attributes, preconceptions, and partialities. This approach facilitates a more nuanced description and interpretation of the phenomena under investigation. The implementation of reflexivity contributes to enhanced consistency and reliability in research findings. Consequently, reflexivity serves as a tool for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the research process. The primary aim of reflexivity is to bolster the ethical underpinnings of research practices. Holmes (2020) and Olmos-Vega et al (2023) note that a significant concern among writers regarding reflexivity pertains to the power dynamics between researchers and participants, particularly given that many participants occupy marginalised positions in society.

This necessitates that researchers transcend barriers to foster mutual understanding. In conducting this study, the researcher identified as a doctoral candidate and adhered strictly to the ethical protocols delineated in the data collection methodology. Other scholars (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021; Mirza, Bellalem, & Mirza, 2023) further emphasise the ethical imperative of remaining cognizant of and responsive to participants' rights, beliefs, cultural contexts, and their position within societal power structures, including patriarchal systems. The majority of qualitative researchers strive to elucidate the impact of their inter-subjective factors on data collection and analysis, thereby enhancing the credibility, transparency, and accountability of their research (Holmes, 2020; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Savolainen, Casey, McBrayer, & Schwerdtle, 2023; Gamage, 2025). Reflexivity is crucial for cultivating self-awareness, allowing researchers to identify potential influences on data collection and analysis. Engaging in the reflexivity process is thus essential for presenting a credible and plausible account of participants' experiences while avoiding unsubstantiated conjectures. Researchers must demonstrate both willingness and ability to recognise and scrutinise the various ways in which they may impact their findings, a practice intrinsically linked to the quality and credibility of their research (Stahl & King, 2020; Unger, 2021; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023).

The concept of reflexivity serves as a dynamic mechanism through which researchers can attain a more profound understanding of themselves and their investigations (Savolainen, Casey, McBrayer, & Schwerdtle, 2023). This is particularly crucial in interpretative studies, as it fosters a more rigorous methodology, enhances quality, bolsters credibility, and minimises bias. The researcher occupies a central role in the processes of data collection, selection, and interpretation. Reflexivity aids in contextualising the research endeavour and deepening comprehension of the subject matter (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Savolainen, Casey, McBrayer, & Schwerdtle, 2023). The researcher employed reflexivity as a tool for introspection and personal knowledge acquisition, given its function as a self-critical lens. To bolster the reliability of the findings, he utilised reflexivity to consistently monitor and audit the research process. The significance of reflexivity lies primarily in its capacity to mitigate the risk of producing research that is unduly influenced by personal attributes, prejudices, and biases. Furthermore, reflexivity conceptualises the researcher as more than a mere data-collecting instrument, enabling them to

recognise their own impact on the study and explore potential methods of minimisation when feasible. Savolainen et al (2023) further posited that rather than attempting to conceal or deny shortcomings, researchers can address them directly and adjust interpretations to provide a more authentic and accurate representation of participants' narratives. Prior research by Hasan et al (2021), Kang and Hwang (2021) demonstrated that reflexivity can assist in evaluating the influence of the researcher's position, perspective, and presence. Additionally, it facilitates productive understanding through the examination of human responses and interpersonal dynamics, uncovers the researcher's latent objectives and implicit biases, empowers others by fostering a more radical mindset, assesses the research process, methodology, and outcomes, and provides a systematic record of research decisions for public scrutiny of the study's integrity (Kang & Hwang, 2021; Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021). Savolainen et al (2023) introduce several concepts and illustrate how aspects such as researcher reflexivity, eliciting informant reflexivity, and co-research can enhance the qualitative research process by generating authentic voices. These authentic voices, representing the study participants, ensure that their genuine thoughts and feelings are conveyed in a naturalistic context where they feel at ease. To elicit honest responses, researchers must establish a relationship of trust with the study participants. They argue that these inner voices provide qualitative researchers with the rich descriptions necessary to contribute to an accurate narrative of the phenomena under investigation. Consequently, researchers must transcend surface-level observations and delve deeper into understanding participants' inner voices to enhance their comprehension and interpretation of data (Van Burg, Cornelissen, Stam, & Jack, 2022).

Reflexivity, as posited by various researchers (Gorard, 2020; Gunbayi, 2020; Pabel, Pryce, & Anderson, 2021; Strzelecki, et al., 2022; Van Burg, Cornelissen, Stam, & Jack, 2022), serves as a crucial tool for investigators to discern the alterations they undergo during the inquiry process and evaluate how these changes influence their research. In the context of life history research, another valuable technique for generating trustworthy findings involves emphasising and authenticating the participants' perspectives. Consequently, the researcher prioritized this aspect of the study to ensure that his own viewpoint did not eclipse those of the participants. To maintain the credibility of the research and distinguish the researcher's voice from

that of the participants, he consistently engaged in self-reflection through his diary and conducted regular, in-depth discussions with his supervisor (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023).

In 2013, the researcher's transition from the Foundation Phase to the Intermediate Phase, initiated by the school principal, sparked his interest in this research. With 18 years of experience in the education sector, the researcher has witnessed firsthand the effects of turnover on teacher effectiveness at his institution since 2015. The increased workload on teachers, including himself, stems from frequent absences due to illness and personal matters, potentially linked to job dissatisfaction and low motivation. While some teachers transfer between schools, others exit the profession entirely. These circumstances have created significant challenges for the principal in finding timely replacements, as current teachers often lack the necessary subject specialisation or phase-specific training. Even when replacements are found, they sometimes possess similar experience levels to their predecessors. Time constraints often force the principal to select any available teacher, disrupting the continuity of student learning. Such situations typically necessitate schedule adjustments to accommodate new hires. Transferees from other schools also require mentorship to adapt to the new environment and understand the institutional culture. Although recruits bring fresh ideas, their tenure is often short-lived due to motivational issues and job dissatisfaction. This perspective informed the study's findings. The researcher proposed that this investigation into teacher job satisfaction and resilience factors could enhance our understanding of teachers' viewpoints and their influence on policy implementation. Employing a reflexive approach bolstered the credibility of this research and ensured transparency of his perspective. The researcher further maintained a balanced engagement with participants, attentively listening to and accurately representing their voices. The researcher's approach to entering the participants' lives was viewed as an ongoing process (Savolainen, Casey, McBrayer, & Schwerdtle, 2023).

Throughout pivotal stages of the research process, the researcher disclosed personal experiences to foster a conducive rapport. Savolainen et al (2023) emphasise that reflexive researchers recognise their interconnectedness with the social realm, acknowledging potential influences from their own life experiences and viewpoints. This awareness, encompassing participant selection, research process

perception, personal background, and guiding paradigms, bolstered the researcher's function as a reliable research instrument. Savolainen et al (2023) elucidate dependability as the researcher's capacity to account for evolving circumstances in both the research context and social environment. Aligning with the highlight bias as the foremost concern. Consequently, the researcher remained vigilant of three potential bias sources in research: the researcher, the participants, and their interrelationship. To address this, he incorporated diverse data sources, including transcriptions, psychological timelines, field notes, a research decision diary, member/stakeholder verifications, and input from fellow researchers (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023; Gorard, 2023).

4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics and morality are often intertwined, as both address concepts of right and wrong. The Webster New World Dictionary characterises ethics in research as conforming to the rules of behaviour of a certain profession or organisation, a definition that exemplifies many similar entries. Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) and Gamage (2025) describe ethics as principles and standards that guide us in upholding our values. Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) note that observed that most teachers associate ethics with moralistic lectures and lengthy philosophical debates. Ethics, however, are pervasive in our daily lives. The UNISA research ethics policy emphasises both participant rights and researcher obligations in its ethical considerations (UNISA, 2012). This policy aligns with guidelines from various research organisations, including the American Educational Research Association [AERA] (2011), American Psychological Association [APA] (2010), Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), and American Counselling Association (ACA). The AERA (2011) established a five-point criterion set governing educational researchers' work, encompassing professional competence, honesty, responsibility, respect for rights and diversity, and social duty. These international protocols aim to regulate research conduct, considering potential psychological harm to both subjects and researchers. The UNISA Research Ethics Policy (2012) delineates four fundamental principles: confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw. Given that public schools are closely monitored for safety, these ethical standards were crucial for this study. To ensure a rigorous ethical approach,

the researcher incorporated an argument for participant-researcher collaboration within an ethical framework.

4.11.1 Informed consent

To safeguard participant anonymity and confidentiality, stringent measures were implemented. The collection of identifiable information was strictly limited to essential data, thereby minimising the risk of confidentiality breaches (Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021). Participant identities were obscured through the use of designated labels, as detailed in ANNEXURE E and ANNEXURE F. Participants were explicitly informed by the researcher of their right to withdraw from the study at any juncture (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). This option was emphasised during both the questionnaire completion and telephone interview phases, particularly if participants experienced any adverse effects, harm, or discomfort including emotional distress attributable to their involvement in the research. Crucially, provisions were made for counselling or psychological support for those experiencing distress, and comprehensive debriefing sessions were conducted with participants upon completion of research activities (Mumford, Higgs, & Gujar, 2021; Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023).

4.11.2 Privacy

An alternative perspective, presented by researchers frames privacy as a fundamental value and basic human need that supersedes utilitarian considerations (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). They identify anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent as its corollaries, which have been examined through the prisms of information sensitivity, observational context, and data dissemination (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). This study employed individual, private interviews in primary school settings, necessitating strict adherence to confidentiality principles. In compliance with the UNISA Research Ethics Policy (UNISA, 2012), school and participant identities were not disclosed in the study's findings. These ethical guidelines were applied with utmost rigour and consistency. The study participants, comprising teachers from three primary schools, provided informed consent for their involvement (see ANNEXURE F). All consent documents explicitly stated the study's primary objective. Teachers who did not provide signed consent were excluded from the research. As the study did not involve minors, assent was not necessary. These

measures ensured strict adherence to ethical standards throughout the research process (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023).

4.11.3 Non-Maleficence, Benevolence and Human Dignity

The ethical principle of non-maleficence, which emphasises the avoidance of harm to others, is fundamental in research. Hasan and colleagues (2021) assert that researchers must, from the outset of their projects, exhibit an unwavering dedication to respecting, protecting, and assessing ethical concerns that may emerge when interacting with and collecting data from study participants. This ethical stance requires researchers to consistently uphold integrity, reliability, and prioritize the welfare of others in all their endeavors. The right to protection, therefore, finds its roots in the Greek ethical notions of beneficence, which underscores the imperative of not inflicting harm on others (Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021; Kang & Hwang, 2021; Unger, 2021; Mirza, Bellalem, & Mirza, 2023).

4.11.4 Anonymity

The research addressed the critical concepts of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality for study participants, along with potential risks of compromising these principles (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). As assert, dissemination of a participant's personal information without explicit consent is prohibited. Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) define anonymity as the complete concealment of one's identity (e.g. participant 1).

4.11.5 Confidentiality

Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) describe confidentiality as a research tool for safeguarding participant privacy. They emphasise that privacy involves controlling access to participant data, including by researchers, and stress its crucial role in research practices (ibid).

4.11.6 Voluntary Participation

The study adhered to ethical principles of voluntary participation and informed consent, allowing participants to withdraw at their discretion (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Mumford, Higgs, & Gujar, 2021). As stipulated by AERA guidelines, research subjects possess the freedom to resign from a study at any time, unless otherwise bound by their official status or positions. The BPS Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research (BPS, 2013) outline four fundamental principles, encompassing respect

for teachers' autonomy and dignity, which address issues such as privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, copyright, valid consent, withdrawal, and debriefing. Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) noted that while this approach appears straightforward, simply informing participants of their right to withdraw may not suffice. Although such a statement might seem to fulfil the AERA's freedom to withdraw requirement, it may prove inadequate from the participant's viewpoint, particularly if they experience coercive pressure to engage. To address this concern, the researcher emphasised participants' rights to both engage in and withdraw from the study prior to data collection (Gorard & Tan, 2022; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023).

4.11.7 Option to opt out

The researcher must respect the right of the interviewee at any point during the data collection to opt out. When this happens, any already collected data about the participants must be discarded. This ensures that no interviewee is forced to engage in the research if some questions go against their values (Mumford, Higgs, & Gujar, 2021). The researcher owes it a responsibility to respect the rights of the interviewees.

4.11.8 Trust and Rapport

This investigation into factors influencing veteran teachers' retention in the profession aimed to evaluate teacher satisfaction and identify variables contributing to their professional satisfaction. The research was categorised as low-risk due to the non-sensitive nature of the topics explored, which were anticipated to have minimal impact on participants' privacy and well-being (Gorard, 2023). Experienced teachers, deemed non-vulnerable by the researcher, served as participants, experiencing negligible inconvenience regarding the four pillars of research ethics: confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). Nevertheless, potential drawbacks of the study procedures included the time commitment required for form completion and participation. The paramount ethical concern for researchers, as emphasized by, is the treatment of research participants (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021). In this study, the protection of participants' confidential information was given the highest priority. Maintaining confidentiality was especially critical in this particular case study, where the limited number of participants and their potentially high-profile status within their respective environments necessitated extra caution. The primary aim was to create an environment of absolute confidentiality for each participant, enabling them to express themselves openly,

freely, and comprehensively (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). Consequently, data analysis had to be conducted in a manner that preserved the anonymity of the participants. Additionally, at the outset of data collection, participants were instructed that safeguarding their identities required them to refrain from disclosing any information to colleagues or individuals with whom they had personal or professional relationships (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). To mitigate potential risks, the following precautionary measures were implemented:

4.11.8.1 Data Analysis

The analysis of data involves researchers' utilisation of information to comprehend, elucidate, and interpret the phenomenon under scrutiny (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). These authors further elaborate that research analysis encompasses various tasks, including data organisation, deconstruction, description, comprehension, accounting, and explication. It also involves interpreting data from participants' perspectives, identifying patterns, themes, categories, and regularities, all of which are integral to the research processes. The examination of data is a complex undertaking. Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) noted that while data analysis transforms information into insights, no definitive methodology exists for this process. The approach to analysing and presenting data should be tailored to suit the specific purpose, as there is no universally correct method. Data interpretation is often multifaceted, allowing for multiple potential interpretations. A distinctive feature of this process is the integration of analysis and interpretation, often occurring simultaneously with data collection in an iterative manner. Notably, the analytical methods themselves constitute data. Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) posit that researchers' field notes, memoranda, concepts, and reflections during interviews or observations are also considered data. The progression from description to comprehension, explanation, interpretation, and conclusion must be transparent and demonstrate validity. Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) concurs with other scholars (Pabel, Pryce, & Anderson, 2021; Taherdoost, 2022; Gorard & Chen, 2023) and proposes that data analysis involves: (a) sectioning data into 'units of meaning'; (b) classifying and grouping these units; (c) integrating new data units into existing groupings/categories; (d) identifying and merging similar categories; (e) reviewing large data categories for potential subdivision; (f) ensuring comprehensive and mutually exclusive categorization (with some data potentially appearing in multiple

categories); and (g) identifying linkages, contrasts, and comparisons between categories (iterative analysis/constant comparison).

4.11.8.2 Interviews

This study utilised three distinct data analysis methodologies. As described in Section 5.9.3, iterative data analysis involves a cyclical and recursive process wherein the researcher oscillates between examining predominant patterns across data collected through various methods (Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Larsen & Adu, 2022; Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022; Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). Laryeafio and Ogbewe (2023) further illustrate that when data from three primary schools underwent coding, evaluation, and analysis, the repetitive, cyclical, and bidirectional nature of this approach became apparent. Interview data were subsequently organised into thematic categories, forming headings and subheadings aligned with the research questions guiding the current investigation.

4.11.9 Iterative thematic analysis [ITA]

This research employs an interpretative qualitative case study approach, as previously outlined in Section 5.8. Interpretive qualitative case studies utilise various methodologies to extract information from qualitative data (Corley, Bansal, & Yu, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021a). For high-quality research outcomes, each technique must be articulated consistently and unambiguously (Epp & Otnes, 2021). These studies adopt an inductive approach to generate realities from qualitative data. Inductive analysis, an ITA, involves sorting and organising qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documents, and deriving units of meaning, categories, patterns, and themes to form abstract knowledge sets (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). The iterative nature of this process involves multiple revisits to the data, flipping back and forth between physical bits of data and abstract conceptions, inductive and deductive reasoning, and description and interpretation. Scholars such as Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) concur with Braun and Clarke (2021a) that qualitative interviewing design is characterised by fluidity, iteration, and ongoing development, rather than rigid pre-planning. Braun and Clarke (2021a) and Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) emphasise the iterative nature of qualitative interview design. As researchers progress through data acquisition, interpretation, winnowing, and testing, they approach a clear and persuasive model of the studied phenomena. The ongoing nature of qualitative interviews necessitates question redesign during the

research process (Gill, 2020; Morse, 2020). In this study, codes and themes were regularly compared across the three primary schools to identify reliability and dissimilarities (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). The substantial data collected from these schools revealed distinct traits and qualities, despite operating under similar educational regulations. The constant-comparison method allows researchers to analyse consistencies or patterns between codes to uncover categories, then repeat the procedure until the category 'saturates' and no new codes connected to it are discovered (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). This process continues until the theory remains intact or the study's bounds are reached. Inductive interpretive criteria focus on data interpretation from participants' perspectives using systematic rules, while semantics involves analysing the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs (Braun & Clarke, 2021b; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The inductive analysis of qualitative data in this study employed five approaches: data organisation, generation of meaning units, category contribution, theme generation, and manuscript production.

4.11.9.1 Organisation of data

In interpretative qualitative research, the meticulous organisation of extensive qualitative data obtained from audio-recorded interviews and questionnaire sheets is crucial for quality control and analysis (Morse, 2020; Epp & Otnes, 2021). The researcher segregated the audio-recorded and questionnaire documents from their corresponding materials for each study participant. Subsequently, the audio-recorded data underwent transcription to depict what was said or meant in a specific occurrence (Campbell, et al., 2020). This transcription process proved to be labour-intensive, with 20 minutes of audio-recorded data requiring two to three hours to transcribe, in contrast to surveys, which took only 40 minutes. To ensure accuracy, initial transcriptions were subjected to eight or nine rounds of review before being finalised for analysis.

4.11.9.2 Generated Unit of Meanings and Themes

In the context of qualitative research, the unit of meanings encompasses words, things, phrases, characters, themes, meanings, and symbols encoded within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). The process of coding involves assigning tags or labels to text data using numbers, words, or alphabetic symbols to facilitate data analysis and meaning extraction. For this study, pseudonyms were created and allocated to the recorded data from teachers. Unique identifiers were assigned to

each participant for both interview and questionnaire data (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). The recorded material underwent multiple playbacks, and transcriptions were reviewed repeatedly to ensure thorough comprehension. The analysis proceeded word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph, with units of meaning or concepts tagged using alphabetic symbols. Coding of meanings or concepts incorporated both verbatim participant language (oral and written) and researcher-derived interpretations (Campbell, et al., 2020; Cilliers & Viljeon, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021b; Cash, Isaksson, Maier, & Summers, 2022). An iterative process of reading and sifting was employed to refine and redefine units of meaning, aiming to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the salient aspects pertaining to the phenomenon under investigation.

4.11.9.3 Constructed Categories

The process of categorization, as elucidated by, involves the arrangement of previously unitized data into categories that provide descriptive or inferential information about the context or environment from which these units originated (Hays & McKibben, 2021). In order to comprehend the meanings embedded within the units of codes or concepts in relation to the study's focus and research questions, multiple iterations of careful examination were undertaken. Subsequently, each unit of code or concept was methodically allocated to one of the three study questions, thereby establishing a structured framework for data analysis (Epp & Otnes, 2021; Hays & McKibben, 2021).

4.11.9.4 Developed themes

In academic research, a theme serves as an overarching concept that unifies primary categories and their associated characteristics (Hays & McKibben, 2021). Through a process of construction and linkage, themes were established based on fundamental categories (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). The analysis yielded three principal themes that methodically connected categories, subcategories, and their respective attributes, ultimately giving rise to a data-driven theoretical framework (Hays & McKibben, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021b).

4.11.10 Writing Up of the Manuscript

The iterative process of assigning and reassigning labels to themes and sub-themes continued throughout the analysis and documentation of results (Campbell, et al.,

2020; Morse, 2020). This stage marked a departure from the recommended approach, as the emergent themes did not align with their proposed model of discrete, non-overlapping categories. This divergence from established guidelines, which is elaborated upon in chapters four and five, led to the characterisation of the methodological approach as being informed by ITA (Braun & Clarke, 2021a).

4.11.11 The Availability of the Results

As the significance of research data gradually grows in education, data sharing has come to be encouraged and even mandated by scholarly publications (Jiao, Li, & Fang, 2025). Following this trend, the data availability statement has been increasingly embraced by academic communities and has become a central condition in contemporary research practices in nearly every knowledge domain as a means of sharing research data as part of research publications. This condition, a tenet of the growing body of science movement, requires data to be sharable to the broader community (MacFarlane, 2022). Major benefits of sharing data have been well documented in the literature, including improved scientific reproducibility and data reusability and fairer assignment of credit to researchers who contribute to the academic world and science in different ways (Tedersoo, Kungas, & Oras, 2021; MacFarlane, 2022). In compliance with these conditions, the findings of the current study were disseminated through online platforms and made available in the UNISA re3data (i.e. Registry of Research Data Repositories) system. Access to copies of the thesis for each participating school was restricted to senior school leaders. Participants interested in obtaining copies of the study were advised to access the UNISA website and view the thesis in the online thesis repository, or to utilize Google and Google Scholar search engines by entering the title of the manuscript to locate the available document and perhaps use it for scholarship purposes only (UNISA, 2012; Tedersoo, Kungas, & Oras, 2021; MacFarlane, 2022; Jiao, Li, & Fang, 2025).

4.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explored the methodological framework and rationale for adopting a qualitative research design, specifically a case study approach. The investigation encompassed three primary schools as the research context, illustrating the congruence between the selected design and the data collection and analytical procedures employed. Thirty teachers were chosen through a combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Half of these participants

underwent interviews conducted via smartphones, face-to-face interactions (while adhering to COVID-19 guidelines set forth by the GDE), and digital voice recording devices, with all sessions documented. The researcher utilised interview protocols, field notes, and electronic equipment (including digital voice recorders and various types of phones) for data collection. Iterative analytical methods were applied to examine the gathered information using thematic and constant-comparison approaches. Within the qualitative dataset, the researcher implemented five iterative steps (data organisation, meaning unit generation, category formation, theme development, and theory construction) multiple times to uncover the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, this chapter addressed measures taken to ensure data consistency and validity, as well as ethical considerations. The subsequent Chapter 5 primarily presents the findings from this single-case phenomenological qualitative study, which aimed to elucidate factors contributing to veteran teachers' professional longevity, particularly those who mentor ECTs within the same district.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the factors that affect job satisfaction and career longevity for veteran teachers mentoring ECTs within the same educational district, utilising a single-case qualitative study, with a primary emphasis on the central research question: What factors influence veteran primary teachers' decisions to remain in their schools?

5.1.1 Research Sub-Questions

To delve deeper into the primary research question, the study was guided by the following sub-questions:

- What are the factors influencing veteran teachers to remain in schools?
- How do veteran primary teachers perceive the relationship between job satisfaction and teaching and learning?
- What role do school managers play in shaping veteran primary teachers' job satisfaction?
- What strategies could be implemented to enhance job satisfaction, resilience and retention of newly recruited teachers?

5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The overarching objective of the research was to investigate the principal determinants of job satisfaction among experienced primary school teachers in the Johannesburg East Education District, located in Gauteng Province. Specifically:

- To determine the key factors influencing veteran teachers to remain in schools;
- To determine the perception of veteran primary teachers on the relationship between job satisfaction and teaching and learning;
- To determine the role school managers play in shaping veteran primary teachers' job satisfaction; and
- To determine strategies that could be implemented to enhance job satisfaction, resilience and retention of newly recruited teachers.

5.3 PARTICIPANTS

This research examines the job satisfaction levels among experienced teachers in the Gauteng province, concentrating on a sample of eleven female and four male teachers who possess an average teaching tenure of twenty years. The primary characteristics identified include gratitude, fairness, creativity, patience, integrity, and a fervour for learning. These traits correspond with policy dialogues regarding effective teacher attributes, such as SASA 84 of 1996, the updated Code of Conduct and Practice, and the Teachers' Standards. The results resonate with societal views on knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers, highlighting the importance of intellectual exploration, a passion for learning, and optimistic dispositions. The research was carried out in D9, a moderately sized school district.

Table 5.1 Challenges faced by experienced teachers, available resources, and their future aspirations

Name	Individual Obstacles	Individual resources	Ecological issues	Environmental resources	Future intentions about teaching
Participant 1	Attaining a balance between work and personal life (insufficient time for leisure activities)	A constructive mindset, drive, and perseverance	Difficulties in establishing a good relationship with administration of the school	Family support and friends	Wants to be involved in political levels of teaching
Participant 2	Attaining equilibrium in life (lack of time for personal interests)	A positive mindset, drive, and perseverance, along with previous personal life experiences; as well as prayer and meditation practices.	Relationship with colleagues and SMT, too much disorder, lack of advancement, too much workload, poor planning	Family support (my wife); reading more books and attending educational gathering	Also wants to work in community developments projects but still remain in the profession
Participant 3	Feeling overwhelmed	Positive attitude and prior personal and professional life experiences	Prior knowledge and preparation for new changes and transition, too much workload	Family and friends	Just want to remain in the profession
Participant 4	Maintaining a social life with colleagues in general, friends	Persistence, positive attitude (not giving up easily-prayers and meditation)	Student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students	Family support and encouragements from my husband, church members, friends and other staff	Wants to remain in the profession until my retirements.

				members in the school	
Participant 5	Achieving work/life balance	Reading academic books, positive attitude, meditation and prayer	Lack of support from SMT, high teacher turnover, poor decision-making	Relationships with some colleagues and parents.	Want to remain in the education but not in the classroom
Participant 6	Achieving work/life balance	Positive attitude, seeking help, reflections	Student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students	Family, relationships with colleagues and parents.	Wants to remain in the profession and move out of school to district
Participant 7		Positive attitude, motivation and job satisfaction, faith and self-belief	Student diversity, difficult teachers, emotional and social difficulties of students	Relationships with family, some colleagues and friends	Wants to remain in the profession until my retirements.
Participant 8			Student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students	Relationships with some colleagues and parents.	Wants to remain in the profession.
Participant 9	Maintaining a social life with colleagues in general, friends	Positive attitude, seeking help, reflections	Lack of classroom resources, student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students, difficult parents	Family, colleagues and friends	Wants to remain in the profession especially because I still young and wants to grow my children then I can decide.
Participant 10		Positive attitude and seeking help, meditate	Student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students, poor planning by SMT	Relationships with some colleagues and parents.	Want to continue working here because I am permanent already.
Participant 11	Feeling overwhelmed and trying to strike work/life balance	Positive attitude, seeking help, reflections	Challenges with student discipline, Student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students	Colleagues and parents.	Wants to remain in teaching
Participant 12	Sustaining a social life with colleagues and friends in general	Positive attitude, motivation and persistence	Student diversity, emotional and social issues, high workload,	Relationships with some colleagues and parents.	Wants to remain in the profession until my retirements.

			non-stop disruptions		
Participant 13		Positive attitude, motivation and persistence	Student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students	Family, colleagues, friends and parents.	Wants to remain in teaching
Participant 14	Sustaining a social life with colleagues and friends in general	Positive attitude, motivation and persistence	Student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students	Relationships with some colleagues and parents.	Wants to remain in the profession until my retirements.
Participant 15		Positive attitude, motivation and persistence	Student diversity, emotional and social difficulties of students, difficult parents	Relationships with some colleagues, family and friends	Wants to remain in the profession until retirements.

5.4 FINDINGS

This research employed case study methodologies to develop a participant portrait, emphasizing the significance of personal narratives in the process of identity formation. These narratives are dynamic and reflect evolving social contexts, encapsulating individual aspirations while being shaped by dominant ideologies (Mazhar, Anjum, Anwar, & Khan, 2021). As the language, meanings, and identity positions within society transform, individuals engage actively in this identity labour. Personal narratives, articulated through storytelling, provide a platform for marginalized voices and contribute to the modification and shaping of identity work. Identities emerge from continuous discussions, explanations, negotiations, arguments, and justifications, which are integral to the lives and practices of teachers. Narrative serves to integrate conflicting experiential factors, promoting continuity and depth of self (Campbell, et al., 2020; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). The accounts shared by participants regarding their teaching experiences illustrate their involvement in identity work as experienced teachers, often encompassing their teaching philosophies, reflections on personal identity, and interactions with significant figures in their professional environment (Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024). The intricate balance between personal and professional identities presents a considerable

challenge for individuals in teacher preparation, as they endeavor to maintain their authentic selves within the classroom setting. This study was also informed by Maslow's need theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, leadership theories, self-efficacy and social cognitive theory, as well as Noddings' ethic of care theory, as outlined in Chapter 2. All these theories were considered pertinent to this study as they address employee motivation, job satisfaction, effective leadership, and moral values and ethics in delivering quality teaching and learning. This observation raises the question of whether experienced teachers who actively construct their professional identities exhibit greater resilience and derive more satisfaction from their careers. The research sought to comprehend the factors contributing to job satisfaction among experienced teachers across three educational institutions while identifying unique traits. It included establishing personal connections with teachers, documenting interviews, and permitting them to review and amend their statements. The interview process delved into the teachers' backgrounds, expertise, and departmental duties, concentrating on factors that affect retention and the challenges that lead to demotivation and turnover. Participants evaluated the character strengths deemed vital for teachers based on Peterson and Seligman's 24:1 model. A minimally structured methodology was employed, with interviews ranging from 40 to 60 minutes, organised according to the questions asked. The study aimed to promote open communication between teachers and researchers. While these meetings provided me with an opportunity to listen and come to an understanding of the factors that influence teacher job satisfaction and retention in schools, they also provided me with an opportunity to understand the challenges they faced in their careers. The following themes emerged from these meetings with participants:

- Teachers' passion for working with children on both a personal and professional level
- Teachers were supported by a blend of various environment-focused, individual-focused, and role-focused factors
- Teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction are primarily based on person-centred factors and school-based environmental factors
- Teachers viewed job satisfaction as a combination of their personal growth and contribution to their role

- Teachers emphasise acknowledgement of the classroom environment in their suggestions to government policy makers
- Teachers have encountered a mix of beneficial and difficult experiences during their professional journeys
- Teachers' experiences, both demanding and rewarding
- Role of educational leadership in managing teacher turnover and teacher job satisfaction
- Inexperienced teachers (ECTs) might gain from assistance in organising their workload and refining their teaching style
- Teachers faced numerous and interconnected challenges affecting their professional well-being, motivation and deprived professional recognition and respect

Each of these themes has several sub-categories (sub-themes), and these are outlined in the table below:

Table 5.2 Summary of themes and sub-categories (sub-themes) of the study

Themes	Sub-categories (Sub-themes)
1. Teachers have a passion for working with children, both on a personal and professional level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Satisfaction and a sense of professional pride • Recognising agency in teaching: A sense of mission and passion for social justice
2. Teachers were supported by a blend of various environment-focused, individual-focused, and role-focused factors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyable aspects of being a teacher • Professional purpose and pride • Gaining additional responsibilities • A good cultural connectedness and humility • Feeling supported and valued
3. Teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction are primarily based on person-centered factors and school-based environmental factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and professional growth • Favourable alterations in the environment • Continuous development as a teacher • Acknowledging the nature of teaching as it is
4. Teachers viewed job satisfaction as a combination of their personal growth and contribution to their role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What teachers benefit from their roles? • Teacher's best strategies to succeed in their roles • Creating a healthy work/life balance
5. Teachers emphasize acknowledgement of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect and recognition by government policymakers

classroom environment in their suggestions to government policy makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become more knowledgeable about teaching in general
6. Teachers have encountered a mix of beneficial and difficult experiences during their professional journeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenge of transitioning • A challenging teaching environment • The task is too extensive for the available time
7. Teachers' experiences, both demanding and rewarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and positive leadership • Valuing individuals • A supportive leadership style
8. Role of educational leadership in managing teacher turnover and teacher job satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job satisfaction • Leadership style and teacher job satisfaction • Establishing the school's vision • Leadership and the application of Ubuntu Principles
9. Inexperienced teachers (ECTs) might gain from assistance in organizing their workload and refining their teaching style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership, teacher turnover and job • Possessing understanding and complying with stipulations • Increasing the work's manageability • Establishing a strategy for better teaching • Fostering an open-door policy and encouraging teacher autonomy • Relationship with the teachers
10. Teachers faced numerous and interconnected challenges affecting their professional well-being, motivation and deprived professional recognition and respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and emotional demands of teaching • The nature of the teaching job • Lack of Professional Recognition and Support • The government has implemented measures to ensure accountability • Lack of Teacher Empowerment • Low status of the profession and lack of professional recognition as perceived by both government and society

5.4.1 Theme 1: Teachers have a passion for working with children

Senior school principals identified research participants with beneficial effects on student performance, exhibiting common attributes such as systematic approaches, positive life perspectives, and enthusiasm for knowledge acquisition, student-focused methodology, and compassion. The most prominent characteristic was their desire to interact with children and foster achievement. The study found that urban teachers'

decisions to pursue careers in education are influenced by various factors, including professional opportunities, diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, purpose, passion, and potential for personal and professional development. Rural origins were a primary motivator, while teachers with less than 17 years of experience typically began their careers in urban schools due to their prior attendance at Gauteng institutions of higher learning, facilitating their transition to a familiar professional environment. They expressed their decision to pursue teaching as follows:

Participant 9 said: *“I was born and reared in this province, even though I studied abroad; this is the atmosphere I am more familiar with.”* Participant 2 stated that his motivation: *“I have lived and attended college/university in this province for over 25 years and have no plans or desires to move or work elsewhere.”*

Teachers often choose familiar teaching environments without considering cultural differences or advantages. The primary motivation for entering the teaching profession is to contribute to society’s development, particularly for young children (Noddings, 2005). Participants often cite their “love for students”, enthusiasm for working with them, or simply the students themselves as the primary factors driving their decision to pursue a career in education. Participant 2 meanwhile, just shruggled his shoulders, smiled and responded: *“I always knew that teaching was what I wanted to do. I was not in any doubt at all. We used to play school when I was younger, and I used to be a principal or teacher. I was and still am an extremely strict student.”* Participant 1 revealed that her path to becoming a teacher was quite simple: *“I guess I’ve always wanted to be a teacher since I was a student, and I’ve always sat down with all the teachers...and I guess I had some pretty good teachers in school. Teaching was my first option in college in the early 1990s because teachers at the time affected my choices, and I do not regret it. The transition from rural to urban schools was noteworthy due to infrastructure and other amenities not accessible in rural settings.”*

A subset of teachers posited that their aspiration to engage with young students and their commitment to imparting knowledge are fundamentally intertwined. These aspiring teachers, typically recent graduates, are in the process of obtaining certification for roles in early childhood education or primary school settings. When asked about how she became a teacher, Participant 14 noted: *“I love children, and I admire them. Remember, working with young teachers needs patience from you.”*

You have to be patient with them because their behaviour might test your patience. I am a very patient teacher. But they must also know when you are serious about work.”

Many participants have participated in child-related activities in various domains, including family settings, religious communities, athletic programs, and youth-focused organisations. Some teachers' motivation to pursue a teaching career is influenced by their family's educational legacy. Participant 5 commented: *“I simply had one desire: to become a teacher. It had always felt like a calling for me. I took pleasure in assisting him in marking books for students. We paid him numerous visits at school, and I made family friends with other teaching families. Teachers have become our natural role models as a result of our admiration for them. On the other side, my mother also taught me a lot, including how to be helpful to others. So, becoming a teacher came in handy for me. I became more patient as I grew.”*

Participant 5, a teacher, has held various child-related positions, including preschool teacher for ASHA, after-care assistant, full-time teacher, part-time teacher, and transferring to other educational institutions after completing her teaching degree and working part-time while pursuing her studies. This is what she had to say: *“I had a warm relationship with the principal of Parkland Primary School. We had a terrific discussion about my future, and the principal told me how much she valued education and how she wanted me to complete my studies. She was really rigorous, it was breath-taking, and I was happy to have her as my boss. She started working after receiving a non-teaching degree from college.”*

Participant 15's working hours, however, were not good for her. She was generally dissatisfied and believed that she could not continue doing it, and yearned to alter her profession for the better. She gave the reason, *“I adored working with youngsters”*, for her desire to change careers. She completed a conventional curriculum for teacher preparation. After earning her postgraduate credential in education, Participant 15 was hired as an Afrikaans teacher in her first school, where she worked for more than 20 years until she was able to transfer to her present institution. Participant 15 revealed that although she enjoyed spending time with her two sons, she believed that working outside the home would benefit her more. *“I am not a homemaker by nature”*, she recalled in her account: *“I do not believe that*

I could have been a better mother to my boys at the time, despite my youth. I believed that working with lots of children would be good for both my physical and spiritual health because I consider myself to be spiritual. So far, teaching has been my greatest option.”

Similar thoughts were expressed by Participant 4, who stated: *“Working with young children was concept for me since even at a church I have always been working with children ministry. It felt like I chose the job I have wanted.”* Participant 3’s viewpoint differs from others since, in his opinion, his upbringing compelled him to choose a career as a teacher. Even if the climate seemed unfriendly to them in the past, he feels he made the right decision in choosing to become a teacher because he still enjoys his job. He said: *“In those days, we did not have a lot of options. Only teaching, policing, nursing, and joining the military were the careers to which we were exposed. I decided to become teacher.”*

In Participant 8’s words: *“If you feel a connection with the teachers you work with and the students you teach more than one level, it is amazing and you may continue teaching as long as you can.”* Connection was a recurring theme among the teachers we spoke with. The only way to feel linked to other teachers, in the words of great teachers like Participant 7 and Participant 2, is via cooperation. In particular, when all teachers interact, Participant 2 continued: *“I feel glad and content with my work since it is when we contribute more concepts and feel supported by other teachers. This makes my job incredibly enjoyable and simple. I do not stress over other administrative matters since I feel like I’m a member of a successful team.”*

It is excellent for all of us, even the new teachers can feel more accommodated and welcomed, and they can easily learn how things are done from experienced teachers, said Participant 7. Participants emphasised the importance of patience (Maslow, 1954, p. 42), a trait derived from years of experience, particularly in teaching, particularly for ECTs who often find it challenging.

5.4.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Job Satisfaction and a sense of professional pride

The research indicates that teachers’ job satisfaction is affected by multiple factors, such as the pleasurable facets of their work, a sense of professional pride, and the acquisition of supplementary roles. Each teacher shared their unique combination of

factors that enhance their satisfaction, with statements from two teachers exemplifying the varied influences on job satisfaction.

Participant 2 commented: *“Teaching is a passion that has never disappeared, and it provides confidence in a subject that I am familiar and comfortable with. I work with a gentle heart, I feel that my work contributes to the surrounding community and society at large and I also feel useful in my role. The human side of teaching is also important, as I work with students who come from disadvantaged background, interesting teachers, and parents, and maintain good relations with all of them. Despite challenges, these aspects keep the teaching experience enjoyable and fulfilling.”*

Participant 5 added that: *“I enjoy in being in my own classroom, creating engaging lessons and helping students fulfill their potential and avoid bitterness and inconsistency. My classroom is my office. I also enjoy creating resources for their students and engaging with parents, form tutors, and other supportive individuals. I believe that the day-to-day aspects of teaching, such as contribution to relationships and fostering positive relationships, are what keeps me going in spite of constant changes in education as a result of new technologies. I have upcoming parent evenings and am very excited about the interaction I will have with parents. I sincerely believes that the bigger aspects of teaching are not as important as the day-to-day aspects, which are what keep me going.”*

5.4.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Recognising agency in teaching

The study explored the concept of agency in education, focusing on the role of teachers in their careers. Teachers recognize that they can influence aspects of their school and work environment, and this agency is primarily evident in their second role. They actively seek experiences to support their development and career progression, such as volunteering or participating in school-wide projects. They also stand up for their beliefs, challenging school policies, disagreeing with managers, and requesting changes to their schedules. Some teachers even hold their ground under pressure from bullying managers. They emphasize the importance of standing up for their values and principles, even in conflict. In addition to active challenges to management decisions, teachers also talk about a different kind of agency: quietly choosing not to do things they do not see their value in, such as deciding which initiatives to implement, saving for later, and rebranding practices to fit new

initiatives. These decisions are made to meet the needs of students while managing their own workload, especially during busy times. Overall, the study highlights the importance of teachers' agency in their professional development and career progression. Participant 2 shared his experience: *"I have passion for social justice. I teach because I think it would be foolish to think that I am done learning or that I would learn more by myself and not with others. I believe in sharing of knowledge, so I teach because I would be selfish not to share what I have had the privilege to learn from those who came before me, teachers, parents, community members, books professors, from nature and from my own professional and personal experiences. I teach because I am part of this nation, this country. I teach because I hope the world would be better tomorrow. Gandhi once said: if we are to reach real peace in this world, we shall have to begin with the children."* Participant 5 stated: *"I teach in public primary school because I still believe in public education. I went through it. I believe that regardless of public scrutiny of public education, whether it delivers or not, its mission is to give quality education to all children of this country and to all children who come through the open school doors. I want to be part of this crazy and lofty service. I teach in public education because I want to make a difference in Africa and beyond."*

Other teachers express their desire to continue teaching because they feel it is their sense of mission as a major reason for teaching in public education. Participant 13 said: *"I teach because they [students] deserve better teachers. There is a sense of mission in education. If people can join military service putting their lives on the line for their own birth countries, why not me in education. It is a service to the nation."*

Managing their teaching profession and the value of living a life outside of the classroom were topics of discussion among the participants. They agreed that being better at what they do is a job that requires effort. Meeting deadlines, enforcing boundaries, and acknowledging that scheduled classes are adequate particularly in times of high workload are some strategies for managing workload. Along with recognizing their boundaries, controlling speed, and concentrating on the tasks at hand rather than planning too far ahead, teachers stressed the need of making the most of their time and energy. Participant 2 said: *"Ultimately, I believe that maintaining perspective is essential. Although it seems a bit of a throwaway job, it*

is one nonetheless. Indeed, it is a pretty vital profession for a lot of individuals. It is a profession, but even if you work nonstop, you will never finish your preparation or be on top of your marking. You must keep in mind that this is only a job and that your life, health, and sanity are far more important.”

5.4.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Enjoyable aspects of being a teacher

Consistent with the findings of Herzberg et al. (1959), teachers in this study discovered that pleasurable factors of their teaching responsibilities, including fostering relationships with students, collaborating with novice teachers, and instructing particular groups or students in designated schools, contributed to the maintenance of their job satisfaction and the longevity of their teaching careers. Participant 1 stated: *“Schools are enjoyable places for children to be, as they can be both entertaining and annoying. Even in moments of annoyance, there are students who are on the same wavelength as you, and even a brief glimmer of eye contact can indicate that they have learned something from each other. In some ways, schools allow students to be as they wish to be in a classroom, making it both fun and rewarding for them. This autonomy allows students to be themselves and learn from each other in a supportive environment.”*

Teachers derived satisfaction from their positions, especially in instructing particular subjects or enhancing their own expertise. They took pleasure in resource creation, collaborating with a variety of individuals, and guiding students on educational excursions. Additionally, they valued their contributions to student relationships and the time spent beyond the classroom. Teachers expressed enjoyment in their subject matter starting from the second role, experiencing a sense of independence within the classroom environment. Engaging with students provided them with motivation, enabling them to concentrate on the aspects of their work that they find fulfilling. Participant 7 said that: *“I have five-hour day of working with students, focusing on their humour and their sense of humour. My work is not about doing something amazing, but rather a funniest program for students, similar to a students do the funniest things kind of program. This keeps me going and provides a sense of humour in my work.”* Participant 15 added that: *“During bad days, the children often remind me about my purpose in my work. They may say or do something, reminding me of the interaction I have with them and the importance of contribution to*

relationships. This interaction is one of the reasons why I remained committed to my work.”

5.4.2 Theme 2: Teachers were supported by various environment focused factors

The study identifies three person-centered factors: teachers’ roles, workplace environment, and personal life. Some participants see positive aspects of personal life as sustaining their careers, forming an intersection with significant interrelationships (Maslow, 1954, p. 42).

5.4.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Feeling supported and valued

Teachers have indicated that they experienced backing from senior school leaders at various points throughout their careers, which includes roles such as principals and department heads. The nature of this support was diverse; some teachers benefited from the backing of principals, while others received practical assistance. A majority of teachers expressed that they felt heard and were motivated to take action, with one teacher noting their head of department’s modification of a marking policy following staff feedback that highlighted how burdensome marking was affecting the quality of lessons. This support encompassed the ability to be candid about emotions, acknowledge errors, and receive encouragement. Strong relationships with the SMT fostered a sense of support and care among teachers, who placed a high value on leaders who exhibit compassion and empathy. Participant 2 commented: *“I possess confidence in my capability to execute the tasks required, and I am sufficiently honest to acknowledge when I am uncertain about the next steps. This indicates that I do not need to fear admitting my errors. For instance, there are occasions when a meeting with a parent can go terribly awry, necessitating an admission of fault and the recognition that both parties must collaborate to resolve the issue. Consequently, fostering an open and trustworthy relationship is essential, as it assures the parent that I am equipped to manage the situation.”*

The research sought to explore the factors that influence teachers’ perceptions of value and acknowledgement. It revealed that being appreciated by school leadership, students, parents, colleagues, D9 inspectors, external consultants, and fellow teachers is a crucial positive influence for teachers. Additionally, recognition from external sources is regarded as beneficial by certain teachers. Teachers expressed positive feelings when acknowledged for their additional time, extra efforts due to

curriculum modifications, organising trips or extracurricular activities, fostering relationships with difficult students, possessing expertise in their subject area, and developing educational resources. Recognition for examination outcomes appeared to be associated more with a sense of relief than with feelings of satisfaction or achievement (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959, pp. 114-117). Furthermore, access to training and professional development opportunities was deemed a supportive factor contributing to feelings of being valued among some teachers

5.4.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Professional purpose and pride

The research indicated that teachers experienced fulfilment from their sense of achievement and their ability to effect change, which they regarded as a crucial motivational factor in enhancing students' opportunities in life, among other factors. Participant 4 responded by saying: *"I must emphasize the moral purpose of this work, which guides my actions and integrity. I believe that this purpose is a stick of rock that guides my actions, guiding me to make difficult decisions based on what is best for everyone else, rather than just my own interests. This moral purpose guides my actions and ensure that I prioritize the well-being of others."*

The majority of teachers derive fulfilment from assisting students in grasping new topics, encouraging positive behaviour, effecting change, and obtaining affirmative responses from students regarding their instruction, as these factors enhance their capacity to create a beneficial influence. Participant 2 responded by adding that: *"there is so much that I enjoy in my job, particularly dealing with children and helping them see things differently. I find satisfaction in having a class of engaged students, as it provides a sense of satisfaction and motivation. Overall, I find the job enjoyable and rewarding because at the end, they are the ones who express gratitude on my work."* Participant 14 added that: *"Sometimes, it is amazing when someone does a good job or connects with your previous work, asking good questions. When your students do that, I feel amazed."*

Teachers frequently hold the conviction that their vocation is meaningful and advantageous to society, resonating with personal principles such as the appreciation of education and the desire to assist students in attaining improved opportunities in both their professional and personal lives. They are driven to support their students by elevating their ambitions, providing encouragement, and cultivating a constructive

educational atmosphere. This conviction regarding their contribution to societal welfare serves as a beneficial factor in maintaining their teaching careers. Participant 2 responded: *“I believe that teachers arrive without knowledge and leave with newfound knowledge. I enjoy acquiring knowledge myself and believe that this is beneficial for others. I believe that teachers who arrive without knowledge and leave with new understanding are also beneficial. Therefore, I view this as a positive aspect of knowledge acquisition.”*

When they discovered they were performing better than anticipated in their first teaching job, a few individuals had an early sense of success. Exam results were the only occasions they acknowledged pride, which was evident when they sought to find satisfaction in small wins and when they made a big turnaround from a historically poor place after enrolling in a new school. Participant 9 shared by saying: *“I believe that if I can influence a small change in a child’s behaviour, I can help them become more chatty and happier, which may be the only solution on some days.”*

The research indicates that receiving praise from a diverse group of individuals, including teachers, students, parents, colleagues, leaders, and managers, can instil a sense of pride and achievement in teachers. This process involves building trusting relationships, providing support to individuals or organisations, and becoming knowledgeable in the subject matter. This concept is notably supported by Abraham Maslow’s work, which posits that the sense of identification and belonging with others, particularly the profound feeling of love for humanity, can frequently serve as the fundamental motivation for individuals (Maslow, 1954, p. 32).

5.4.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Gaining additional responsibilities

In line with Frederick Herzberg’s work, most teachers in the current study experienced positive improvements in their timelines, with the first extra function occurring within their first five years, and participants appreciated some early career responsibilities (Herzberg, 1966, pp. 72-73). Participant 5 responded: *“As a not so great, I had significant responsibility in my first year, particularly in teaching and training PGCE students. I was tasked with delivering the course and was encouraged to participate by deputies who believed it was beneficial to have younger, experienced teachers’ guide and mentor newcomers. This experience was enjoyable*

and greatly appreciated by the individual. Overall, I found the experience to be beneficial and enjoyable.” Teachers find new roles exciting and provide opportunities for growth and development (Maslow, 1954, p. 35). These roles can include head of department, head of year, liaison contact, staff coach, and seconding to other settings. These roles often reduce workloads by providing non-contact hours and excluding teaching-related work. Teachers also see promotions as positive recognition and career direction. Participant 13 clarified this sentiment by: *“I felt happier due to increased pay and a sense of accomplishment, rather than a sense of status. I felt rewarded for my hard work, commitment, and conscientiousness in the job, rather than solely focusing on the status.”*

At different phases of their careers, teachers recognised good features of the school environment that favourably contributed to their sentiments and beliefs about teaching. At various points in time, they mentioned a few good things about the school; a cumulative good experience was thought to be very good. Participant 3 agreed to that and shared: *“I would describe the school as the friendliest and most politically conservative, with a culture of openness and care for each other. The school is a caring environment where teachers look out for each other. This ethos extends to the staff, who are also friendly and supportive. I believe that this approach is evident in the school’s students and staff. I also believe that the school’s ethos is not about big issues, but rather small, everyday interactions, where teachers check in with each other and ensure everything is okay. This approach is not about waiting for a major crisis to arise.”*

Participant 10 stated that: *“My experience has been brilliant in this school, which I loved from the start. I worked under a great female leader as the head of the school, who was a role model. The school was exciting and supportive of women, making it a great place to work. The staff morale was high, and the students felt a united group. I believe that without my experience, I may have been bored. Overall, the school was a great experience for me.”*

This study further reveals that feeling part of a team is beneficial for teachers, especially during difficult times like transitioning into a new role or school. Teachers often rely on immediate peers for mutual support, sharing experiences, and helping each other with practical issues. Support can come from within their department or

across the school, and some teachers find their colleagues understand their school experiences better than friends or family. Participant 3 commented: *“The Language department, consisting of 8 teachers, was a tight-knit team with supportive and helpful Departmental Head. Other departments and their DHs were also brilliant in working with the large school, making the experience of working with them a brilliant experience.”* Participant 6 argued that: *“I think that I still feel slightly prickly about my past relationships with certain individuals that I have worked with, but now I feel more aligned and supportive of them. I think that there was a strong sense of partnership and collegiality between my colleagues, which may not be fully understood by other staff in the school. I relied on these individuals and found the relationship mutually beneficial. I also think that my past experiences may have influenced my current relationships.”*

The research indicates that teachers frequently obtain informal assistance from non-instructional personnel, facilitating their swift adaptation to a new educational environment. Teachers express that their most fulfilling career moments occur when they are integrated into a team of similarly minded individuals, fostering a sense of collegiality and friendship. Additionally, they perceive their colleagues as enjoyable and engage in sharing experiences across various departments. Collaborating towards a common goal, such as exchanging methodologies, sharing insights about students, and creating resources, is also regarded as a beneficial aspect. Moreover, some teachers mention the collaborative effort in problem-solving, which enhances their overall job satisfaction. Participant 2 continued by adding that: *“The teaching job can be a lonely journey and very challenging, but it is essential to make connections and contributes to relationships. As a link member of staff with the skills department, we meet with the principal once a half-term to a term. She mentioned that the school is focused on different groups and finding the best way to teach them. Contributes to relationships and bridges, such as a support network, is crucial in this challenging job. It is essential to find ways to work with different groups and find the best way to teach them.”* Participant 1 echoed the Participant’s 2 opinion and stated that: *“I am heading PLC committee and this is an added responsibility for me and it helps me understand with people from the management point of view. I am happy with it. In the classroom, perfectionists cannot be achieved due to the multitude of variables and the impossibility of total control over every student and preparation, requiring a*

superhuman level of skill. But it can be a great experience when there is a variety of things to do. We support each other too and these relationships and connectedness help to ease stress levels.”

5.4.2.4 Sub-theme 4: A good cultural connectedness and humility

Teachers expressed favourable views regarding a shared ethos or compatibility with their work environment, which was defined by a collective set of values, a uniform methodology, or a school culture that resonated with their convictions. Teachers exhibited diverse preferences, such as discovering a suitable environment in a demanding urban institution or a school where students demonstrated care for one another and their teachers (Noddings & Shore, 1984, p. 34). The positive factors of the ethos were predominantly observed in the context of the entire school; however, some teachers also perceived that a consistent methodology and expectations had an impact on student behaviour and learning, thereby influencing their enjoyment and satisfaction (Maslow, 1954, p. 72). Additionally, some teachers believed that the school’s ethos of mutual care and support led to students being more compassionate towards each other and the staff, transforming the school into a favourable workplace that fosters social connections. In summary, teachers identified a positive ethos within their professional environment. Participant 10 also shared similar views as those of Participant 1 and Participant 2: *“I have a strong appreciation for the department I am currently part of due to its nurturing environment. Whenever I encountered an issue, particularly with students, I felt reassured as the matters were addressed without excessive scrutiny towards me. Consequently, I maintained a good rapport with all my colleagues. Overall, it was a pleasant department to be employed in.”*

From the standpoint of the SMT, Participant 6 asserts that the culture within a school significantly influences the overall success and contentment of school leaders. A constructive school climate, defined by robust relationships, common values, collaboration, and a nurturing environment, not only promotes the well-being of both students and teachers but also improves a school leader’s sense of fulfillment and efficacy in their administrative and leadership responsibilities. Participant 6 argued that: *“The school environment was welcoming and pleasant, yet it posed challenges. Students arrived at the institution aiming to foster positive relationships with teachers and to enjoy a supportive atmosphere. While there was an absence of hostility, a few*

children were encroaching upon others' personal space. At that time, I was not required to address this issue."

As a principal of a school, some colleagues support your decisions and those who do not concur with your choices. Participant 14 noted that: *"It is essential for you to become more at ease with everyone and to accept that not all individuals will appreciate you or ... concur with your views. However, as a leader, it is your responsibility to foster a robust culture because ... I mean ... it revolves around acting ethically."*

The perception of what constitutes a good fit among teachers has changed throughout the years. Certain teachers hold their initial school in high regard due to its organised methodology, whereas others find merit in its adaptability. Initially, some teachers relished the collaborative spirit and casual atmosphere of their smaller institution, but subsequently came to value the structured assistance offered by their second school. Furthermore, teachers indicate that positive environments are often found with students who exhibit favourable attitudes, which are shaped by various attitudinal factors such as their approach to learning, behaviour, and personality characteristics like compassion or humour. Participant 8 commented: *"My experience as a teacher in a lovely year group, which I found to be incredibly supportive. Ummm...they (teachers) were good friends in the school, including the head of school, who had funny assemblies and a real character. The lessons and teaching period were enjoyable, despite any challenges they faced."* Participant 2 added by saying: *"I think there are strong relationships and good behaviour among students in their school. Students are amenable, respectful, polite, and engaging, with a keen interest in learning. I have observed similar behaviour in other schools, where students are respectful, polite, and engaged. In a recent year seven lesson, students were eager to ask questions and learn more, which is a positive aspect of their learning environment. I believe that students take their learning forward rather than being merely drilled with facts. Overall, the school's relationships and student engagement are commendable."*

Teachers identified their professional niches, focusing on fun aspects of their work and avoiding rivalry. They shared their work, allowing one teacher to create new materials and engage in fun activities. This shared experience gave them a sense

of worth in challenging or unpleasant duties, helping them pursue their hobbies and advance their careers (Maslow, 1954; Herzberg, 1966).

5.4.3 Theme 3: Teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction are based on various factors

Participants in a research study articulated their views on teacher job satisfaction, with two teachers expressing disagreement with the notion due to its complexity in explanation. Nevertheless, all participants recognised that their extensive careers, particularly in light of elevated early teacher turnover rates, serve as evidence of their job satisfaction. The predominant understanding of teacher job satisfaction was that it integrates person-centred factors with aspects of the school environment. Additionally, the study pinpointed two significant themes: person-centred job satisfaction and the influence of the school environment in promoting teacher job satisfaction. The research questions posed in this study were interconnected, leading to the development of themes to categorise similar perspectives. The investigation explored the careers of teachers, revealing that all participants encountered a peak within the initial five years, a trough between three and five years, and a trajectory above the midline for at least half of their teaching careers. It emphasised the necessity of comprehending the equilibrium between favourable and challenging factors.

5.4.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Learning and professional growth

Enhancing teaching abilities made the task easier and more pleasurable, according to participants who rated positive factors of learning and growth. The connection between improving as a teacher and having greater fun with it is demonstrated by Participant 5's concepts. Participant 5 responded and said that: *"At times, I recognised my continuous improvement, particularly in grasping the distinct traits of each student and their progression over time. Advanced students challenge knowledge, whereas less proficient students assess their peers. This dynamic leads to more accessible learning experiences. It is essential to acknowledge that certain years have been beneficial; however, I must also recognize that my achievements stem from my capacity to differentiate and assist students across the entire spectrum. I believe it is crucial to underscore the distinction between crafting engaging classes and relying on luck, as well as the necessity to support both ends of the spectrum in teaching methodologies. In summary, I must emphasise the significance of cultivating a nurturing learning environment for all students."*

Developing teaching abilities and maintaining the position of a teacher were highlighted by the topic, which also highlighted the need to strike a balance between participants' agency and acceptance of what they thought could not be altered. Participant 2 commented: *“Many teachers frequently respond to new initiatives; however, those who endure in the field of education often reframe their strategies according to the new terminologies. To maintain progress, it is essential to remain stable, consistent, and not to react impulsively to every emerging initiative. It is important to listen attentively, remain silent when necessary, and be truthful with oneself. If you believe that improvement is possible through such actions, then pursue it. Reflect on your current practices and assess whether the proposed changes are truly necessary for enhancement. It is advisable to refrain from approaching new initiatives with scepticism, as this attitude can obstruct learning and development. Continue with your existing methods until you are confident that a change will yield positive results, while also being receptive to innovative ideas. Proceed cautiously and with assurance, rather than hastily adopting the latest trends, and ultimately, aim to thrive.”* Participant 1 further stated that: *“To begin with, effectively managing your workload necessitates the identification and completion of essential tasks. Furthermore, possessing a clear comprehension of what requires attention, as well as recognising what merely serves as a box-ticking exercise, can assist you in directing your efforts and discovering an efficient method to accomplish tasks, thereby enabling you to redirect your focus to other aspects of your life.”*

5.4.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Favourable alterations in the environment

The research investigated the advantages of changes initiated by teachers, including relocating to different schools, as well as the effects of alterations in the environments of participants. A majority of teachers reported enhancements in their timelines following a period of decline, even though transitions were a significant factor contributing to these low points, frequently resulting in a move to a more prestigious institution. Participant 14 indicated that: *“After completing my ACE certificate, I gained valuable leadership and support from a supportive head of department and the principal. Being part of a team and wanting to join a larger team was a significant reason for my decision to come here.”* Participant 7 shared that: *“I realized that Sunview had a solid reputation, but I missed the hustle and bustle of a larger institution. And the day I started working at Sunview was just wonderful. I felt like I*

was returning home, and it was great.” Transitions to new settings frequently took place following the exit of an earlier senior leader or the induction of a new principal. Participant 4 stated that: *“He could listen to teachers and make time for chats since he had new eyes and ears when he came. Teachers began to value his presence once they all had a 20-minute talk with him. As so, he was a great benefit since he took time to hear from everyone.”*

5.4.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Continuous development as a teacher

Teachers’ growth as positive aspects of their careers has been evident in their experiences and generalisations. As they gained more knowledge and experience, their jobs became simpler, leading to a sense of accomplishment and a positive work environment (Maslow, 1954, p. 263). This growth fostered a wider range of abilities, enhancing connections with students. Participant 2 responded by saying: *“Teaching becomes easier and comfortable as you become more comfortable with your subject and your confidence grows along the way. As you gain more knowledge, you may still have areas of knowledge that you still do not know. However, you may not know the answer to a question you asked 15 years ago, which you would have likely blamed on your past experiences. ...I think the biggest thing honestly is that, that means continuous development becomes important.”*

The professional development of teachers during their initial tenure at a school was largely influenced by their experiences, formal education, and the guidance of role models. They placed significant importance on their personal growth, with even negative experiences playing a role in their development. The process of being re-established in a new educational setting fostered a sense of positivity, as teachers formed connections with students, understood the expectations placed upon them, and adapted their teaching methods to fit the new context. They became adept at recognising patterns in their responsibilities, articulating strategies to simplify their tasks, and identifying familiar behaviours exhibited by students. Among the practical strategies they employed were the reduction of administrative burdens and the promotion of peer assessment. Participant 13 said: *“After encouraging students to self-mark their arithmetic answers, I verify their correctness. Additionally, I advise them to check off each response and give an explanation if they get one wrong.”*

A majority of teachers cultivated an increasing empathy towards the backgrounds of their students, which enabled them to discern challenging behaviours without perceiving them as personal problems. They acknowledged that students encountered various challenges that could influence their learning approach, and this empathy facilitated their understanding that students were grappling with multiple difficulties that could impact their educational experience. Participant 12 also added by saying: *“I believe that those without the necessary support and experiences in life lack the belief that they can achieve success, as they have not had the experiences and support they need to reach their goals.”*

5.4.3.4 Sub-theme 4: Acknowledging the nature of teaching as it is

In their schools, teachers reconciled with aspects of their roles that were beyond their control, along with the extrinsic characteristics of the profession of teaching. Participant 3 described the situation as tensed and said that his colleagues resigned because of the student behaviour issues and DBE’s policy (or lack thereof) on student discipline. When asked to elaborate, she said that: *“There are classes that you like teaching, but there are still others that you wish you had no schedule for. In other words, some classes are still more difficult to teach than others.”* Some of this exaggerated responsibility of being a teacher was an obvious root of job dissatisfaction for some teachers like Participant 9 who felt overwhelmed by the system of government and status quo in the school.

She stated: *“I was given work for the sake of having a large volume of paper trial. I lost planning periods due to meetings that could be conducted after school. We have SNA forms that we keep on filling or completing but we no difference. Sometimes I have to take work home. Sometimes I do not know what was finished. Following planning sometimes does not work. You feel exhausted but I am resilient to this job because I love the people I work with. I prioritize kids other they never get far from here.”*

The study found that most participants felt accepted when starting their first teaching position, which was related to their aspirations for the profession. They anticipated that teaching would be challenging and heavy, but most participants saw the early part of their first teaching role as relatively high point. Some found their role more pleasurable than expected. Teachers had to deal with disagreements, embrace new curriculums, and not fight over differences in viewpoints. They had to come to terms

with their own good enough in individual classes and daily chores. Participants stressed the importance of appreciating small victories and incremental advancements in students' understanding or methodology, rather than focusing solely on changing their students' future lives. Participant 4 stated: *"I'll speak out and express my opinions, but there are instances when I have to stay inside the lines. And while it irritates me, at this point the things I'm able to positively alter or better outweigh the negative ones, so I have to accept it and go on."* The study found that teachers' predictable workload patterns, particularly during summer semesters, helped them identify short-term obstacles and manage expectations. Despite their experience as LSTs, they also anticipated normal ups and downs in their profession. Teachers were able to address various scenarios, controlling expectations and recognizing immediate obstacles. Most participants predicted new projects and modifications would continue, impacting their attendance and practice modification.

5.4.4 Theme 4: Teachers viewed job satisfaction as a personal growth

A study on teachers revealed that majority believe flourishing is unattainable in their current educational environment, despite understanding it as a goal. Three themes emerged: benefits from responsibilities, approaches to duties, and maintaining work/life balance. The last theme was deemed unattainable. Examples are provided throughout the curriculum.

5.4.4.1 Sub-theme 1: What teachers benefit from their roles?

Teachers derive pleasure, inspiration, and zeal from their positions, which are engaging, stimulating, and allow them to experience excitement regarding their profession. Furthermore, they view new challenges and interests as crucial for their success. Participant 4 responded by saying: *"...I believe that a teacher should be constantly challenged by new challenges, rather than simply repeating the same methods and syllabus year after year. I think that this is what keeps me motivated and keeps me from giving up teaching. I also think that many teachers give up teaching due to the constant change, but I find new challenges in teaching that keeps me motivated and satisfied. Moreover, I believe that the key to success in teaching is constantly evolving and adapting to new challenges."* Participant 13 added by saying: *"I think that if you were performing well, you might maintain some passion and a sense of ownership for what you're doing. However, if you can push it further and do more fascinating things, and if you really concentrate on the things*

that fascinate you ... if we could accomplish things like that, and if we were excited to present an concept instead of just wondering if I was able to put together what I was supposed to do so....that seems like it may be what a prospering looks like.”

Other teachers have indicated that one of the most difficult aspects of their teaching responsibilities is the constant requirement to multitask (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959, p. 113). A significant portion of their time is taken up by addressing matters related to student discipline, which, although important, can divert their attention from their main objective: teaching and learning. Participant 12 note: *“While it is beneficial to be a teacher, it is difficult because you cannot be in multiple place and doing different task. Student discipline takes much of the time. Classroom management is challenging.”*

5.4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Teacher’s best strategies to succeed in their roles

This study found that teachers believe that teachers who embrace a certain attitude to their roles such as learning from others, taking risks, contributing to the profession through reading and enrolling in higher education institutions, who are aware of new developments in their profession, pushing themselves, and doing well are sometimes referred to as flourishing teachers. Three teachers expressed their views like this: Participant 5 said: *“Successful teachers have a positive attitude towards their work, which includes doing well, pushing oneself, learning from others, and contributing to the profession. They are willing to take what is given, accept what cannot be altered, and keep going. Some teachers may question the reasons behind their actions and wonder if they can achieve their goals. They are willing to learn from others and contribute to the profession, demonstrating their commitment to their craft.”* Participant 2 stated that: *“One of the reasons I hold is that I am perpetually acquiring new knowledge from fellow teachers, which I find immensely stimulating. Consequently, I consistently encourage teachers to observe their peers, as this practice can significantly enhance their professional growth by allowing them to step beyond their own disciplines, discover novel concepts, and contemplate how they might integrate these insights into their own teaching. This is genuinely exhilarating. It fosters an ongoing eagerness to experiment with new approaches. I frequently remind teachers that I do not consider myself an exceptional teacher, as there is always something new I can learn to improve my methods, and this aspect is what renders teaching so captivating.”*

Others spoke about taking breaks from time to time and letting go when confronted by persistent job demands. Participant 3 stated: *“I take breaks to engage in activities that I am confident will not induce stress. I aim to collect my thoughts and maintain a sense of humor, similar to those teachers who enhance their departments by introducing new concepts, documents, and improvements. They contemplate advancement and the acceptance of greater responsibilities, yet they do not feel daunted by the idea. They foster positive relationships with parents, colleagues, and students, and they possess a good sense of humor. Additionally, they typically greet others with a smile upon their arrival.”*

5.4.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Creating a healthy work/life balance

The theme emphasized teachers' ability to maintain high standards while maintaining a positive work/life balance. However, most teachers believed achieving flourishing standards and maintaining a positive work/life balance was unattainable, with certain aspects achievable but not the whole (Maslow, 1954, p. 80). Participant 8 commented like: *“For me, a manageable workload would entail working from eight in the morning until five in the evening, and possibly one or two days during the holidays; this, in my view, constitutes thriving. Additionally, I can arrive at 06:00 and depart at 15:30, while effectively organizing my time to avoid working from home, on weekends, or during holidays. This, I believe, represents true prosperity. Moreover, excelling in my classes is also a significant aspect of thriving, in my opinion.”* Participant 9 also responded in this manner: *“A successful teacher is someone who starts their day full of energy and passion. They bring positivity to their work and have a real impact on the lives of young teachers. After work, they spend their evenings with family or doing activities they enjoy. A good day for them means making a positive difference, feeling motivated, and ending the day feeling fulfilled.”*

5.4.4.4 Sub-theme 4: Spiritual Coping and Gratitude

Arthur (2021) suggests that developing a spiritual connection with a higher power or religious deity, known as the ‘transcendent other’, is crucial for effective coping. Research indicates that such a connection can lead to positive outcomes such as comfort, social support, inner strength, acceptance, and emotional relief. The current study supports these findings, with one finding suggesting that teachers who have a spiritual relationship with God are assured of His help, support, and protection (Arthur J. , 2021, pp. 24-25). Overall, this connection plays a significant role in the

coping process. Participants in this study expressed their spiritual coping like this: Participant 4 stated that: *“I believe in the importance of relying on God’s help and strength, even in difficult times. I also believe that God is the ultimate source of peace and that without it, success is impossible. I think that through Christ, I can accomplish all things and am strengthened by God.”* Participant 5’s words: *“I believe in God and I carry myself in that way, and I hope that I always have Him in the front of everything that I do, including teaching. In terms of my job satisfaction, whenever something does become too much, you look to what you believe in and who you believe in for guidance. I ask for guidance, and when you truly believe in that, it usually comes through. Prayer is always a good thing. As a teacher, and as a person, it keeps me going. God has always been very good to me. I aim to always put God first in all I do, even teaching, since I believe in Him and I conduct myself accordingly. Regarding my job satisfaction, once everything does seem to be too much, you turn to your values and your heroes for support. When you sincerely feel that you’re asking for advice, it typically answers. There is never a bad time to pray. It motivates me both as a teacher and a person. I have always had great favour from God.”*

Participant 2 had something similar to report: *“Yes [I am a spiritual person]. One of the things that I always did [as a teacher] was I always made a point to get to work early and pray and express my gratitude to God just to be alive. I would read some devotionals and meditate and read scripture. That got me centered. I would pray for my class as a whole. I would also use that time to pray for specific student that I had concerns about. That really set up my day in a positive way. It provided me with a point of reference when dealing with students. Sometimes as the students walked into class I would say a short blessing to them in my head, and ask the Lord to remove whatever concerns might be troubling them.”* Participant 7 had a similar story to share: *“Of course, I am! As a teacher, I made it a point to be in the office early and pray. This was one of my guiding principles. In addition to reading scripture and meditating, I would read some devotionals. That helped me regain my composure. For the entire class, I would pray. Additionally, I would pray during that time for a particular student about whom I had worries. My day has been greatly improved by it. When interacting with students, it gave me a frame of reference. I occasionally prayed in my brain for the Lord to take away whatever worries and cares the children might be carrying as they entered the classroom and said a little*

blessing to them.” Participant 14 expresses some of the same experiences. She articulates some of the same feelings as well: “Before I start class I say a prayer for myself and for the students, that they will be successful and that it’ll be a worthwhile day. It [Spirituality] keeps my head together. It helps me not to sweat the small stuff. It also helps me let my conscience guide me. I always pray before I walk in. Where does (my enthusiasm) come from and how do I maintain it? I guess it comes from my spirituality. The more I probed into the factor of spirituality, the more I was struck by how directly my subjects experiences with, and attitudes about their spiritual lives were connected to job satisfaction. Before I begin class, I pray for myself and the students, asking God to grant them prosperity and a fruitful day. Spirituality helps me maintain mental stability. I find it beneficial to not worry too much about little things. Additionally, it aids in allowing my conscience to lead me. To have motivation, I usually say a prayer before I enter. Where does it (my zeal) originate from and how can I keep it up? I suppose it stems from my faith. The more I looked into the spiritual aspect, the more I was astonished by the link between job satisfaction and my participants’ experiences with and attitudes about their spiritual life.”

Consider the following excerpt from my interview with Participant 15: *“I used to get up a little earlier and have some quiet time for prayer and exercise and I really miss doing that. It seems like when I used to do that it gave me more energy in the mornings and I was more alert. I used to do that a lot and I am going to get back into it again soon. I am more satisfied when I do that. You really do have to have something else to focus on because our students come in with so many different problems and if you let that get to you, it will drive you stone crazy! You have to have some other outlet.”* A quote from my conversation with Participant 15 is as follows: *“I used to wake up a bit earlier and have some quiet time for prayer and exercise and I truly miss doing that. I appear to have had more energy and alertness when I used to do that in the mornings. I used to do that frequently, and I am going to start doing it once more very soon. When I do it, I am tougher. Since our students come in with so many various issues, if you let it bother you, it will drive you absolutely insane. You really need to be focusing on something else. A different outlet is required.”*

Participant 2's interview revealed the following: It sounds like you haven't experienced much, if any burnout. How come? Participant 2's interview made the following revelations, when she was asked, you do not seem to have had much burnout, if any at all. Why is that? Participant 2 responded: *"It is because of my spirituality. I pray to always be able to discern the good in each individual. That does not mean that I always like individuals, no, but I love everybody. I will say this: my faith teaches me to love everyone, but there are deeds and acts that teachers do, where you do not like the act, but you love the person. Like and love are not interchangeable. It is due to my religiosity, I suppose. I ask for the ability to always see the good in everyone. I love everyone, but it does not imply that I always get along with particular teachers. I will say this: Although my faith teaches me to love everyone, there are some actions and behaviours that individuals choose that you may not agree with while still loving the person. Love and like are not synonymous. There are times, for example, where I do not like what my daughter is doing, but I always love her. Now with my students, there may be times when I do not like what they do, and why I do not like they are doing, but I always try to understand why they do what they do at a given time. The reason I am the way that I am, a positive, uplifting person, is because of my vertical connection, because of my spirituality, and that is the one thing that always keeps me centered. And in that I find faith in mankind and am able to understand that children are children and that they are growing up. For instance, there are moments when I do not like my youngest daughter, even though I always do. Now, there may be times when I do not like a student, and the reason may be due to whatever they are doing, but I always attempt to understand why teachers act the way they do at a particular moment. I am the way I am because of my spirituality and vertical connection, and it is the only thing that can keep me grounded at all times. I am a happy, upbeat person. And in it, I discover humanity and am able to accept that young teachers are still growing up and being children. She further stated that: "I cannot speak for everybody because there may be teachers who say I am just as spiritual as the next person. It all comes down to my spirituality, to my faith, and in that I am always eternally hopeful. Now every now and then I may get slapped in the face, and have to recoil and say, Man, I do not like this, but after prayer, after processing, I am always hopeful and determined. Since some teachers could claim to be just as spiritual as the next person, I cannot speak for everyone. My spirituality and religion are what ultimately*

matter, and because of that, I will always be optimistic. Even if every now and then I might get hit in the face and have to flinch and mutter, Man, I do not like this, once I have prayed and thought things through, I am always optimistic and determined."

Participant 4 also reported spirituality having a strong impact on her life as a teacher: Are you a spiritual person? If so, does your spirituality play any part in your role as a teacher? Additionally, Participant 4 claimed that her life as a teacher was greatly influenced by her spirituality: Do you consider yourself spiritual? Does your faith in any way influence your work as a teacher, if that's the case? Participant 4 swiftly responded by saying: *"Absolutely! On some days I pray for help getting through the day, or thanks for getting me through the day. I think prayer and spirituality helps. Those teachers who are having a hard time in teaching, sometimes I think some of it may stem from the fact that they may not necessarily be as spiritual. I am thinking of some of teachers I know in teaching and they do not like their job, they're frustrated at home, I mean it all ties in."* In addition, she said: *"Oh yeah! On certain days, I pray for guidance in getting through the day or express gratitude for getting me through it. I believe that spirituality and prayer are beneficial. I sometimes believe that some of the difficulties teachers encounter come from their potential lack of spirituality. It everything connects together, but I am thinking of several teachers I know who dislike their jobs and are upset at home."* For Participant 8, spirituality was manifested in a slightly different way, but was also significant.

Although it had a significantly different form for Participant 8, spirituality was nonetheless significant: Participant 8: *"I am very religious, but I have a very strong sense of the separation between church and state, particularly in music. Teaching is my stewardship or evangelism. This is how I live out my religious beliefs, in the way I teach. I believe everybody is equal, and teaching gives me a chance to reach out. For me, my spirituality is connected to teaching through my strong sense of social justice. My first child was severely multiply handicapped, and that coloured everything I did in my life from then on. Despite the fact that I am quite devout, I strongly believe in the separation of church and state, especially when it comes to music. I steward or evangelize via teaching. In the manner I teach, I try to live according to my religious principles. As a teacher, I have the opportunity to share my belief that everyone is created equal. As a teacher, I strongly believe in social*

justice, which connects my faith to my work. My life was forever changed by the fact that my first student was profoundly disabled on several levels. Equality, and how you view other teachers took on a whole new meaning. I think I feel sort of a spiritual calling, and this job is a way of giving back to the community. I am getting paid, but it is about service. It affects my job satisfaction because it lets me perform the service that I really feel like I need to provide.”

Participant 10 indicated that: *“The concepts of equality and how you regard other individuals were completely redefined. This employment is a chance for me to give back to the community and I believe it to be some kind of spiritual calling. Although I am compensated, the focus should be on service. Because it enables me to do the service that I genuinely believe I must offer, it has an impact on my job satisfaction.”*

Teachers seemed to feel that their spirituality had a large impact on how they dealt with children, which appears to improve both patience and personal connections with students (each factors of job satisfaction in their own right), and in the following quotation from Participant 15, it even was tied to the factor of collegial support: *“I have been in the church since I was a student, but as I have gotten older, church has gotten into me. A lot of the things that I get taught in church really apply to my life and it makes it so things do not bother me that otherwise could. For example, a lot of teachers in this contributes to have had to move their classrooms and it is got some teachers so upset, and I was just wondering, what are they so upset about? It is just a change. I try not to let simple things like that bother me. Also, I try to seek God first. If you try to be Christ-like, to emulate Him you won't get as upset. If you notice, He never really got angry, He never really let anything upset Him, and so if you try to have that type of attitude in the classroom, it can really help. You might get a student whose goal this week is to get you upset, and to get you to fly off the handle. But if you just keep your cool and go on with what you're doing, they might see that they cannot get to you and they might change what they're doing. Spirituality also played a part in that we had a little prayer group here a while back. We'd say something real quick and sweet, it was about five teachers, and we'd get together first thing in the morning and encourage each other.”*

Do you think it helped? She add: *“I think it did. A lot of times when stuff is going on you need someone you can talk to so you won’t pull your hair out.”* Clearly then, spirituality was not simply common to the study sample, but was also a characteristic that was perceived by every member as something that actually promoted their job satisfaction, and in some cases, as illustrated, promoted other factors of job satisfaction as well, such as patience, personal connections with students, and collegial support. The other strongly evident factor among the study sample that the researcher would like to discuss is that of having a collegial or personal support system or group. This factor was strongly evident among five of the six sample members, and unlike spirituality, was referenced frequently in previous research and relevant literature. Sample members did not speak of it quite as passionately as they did for spirituality, and for one sample member, it was not a factor at all, but it was certainly a significant finding in this study, and its presence supports past research. A good example of the role that collegial and personal support played in the lives of the researcher’s sample members is illustrated by Participant 15. Participant 15: *“Supportive colleagues would probably be the second most important thing (after spirituality) that keeps me satisfied. When you have supportive colleagues, someone who you’ve grown to know and who really knows you, they’ll give you an honest answer when you go to them. They’re not afraid to tell you when you are wrong. That’s important for me. I need teachers who will be that way for me, and I respect when they can offer that kind of honesty.”*

5.4.5 Theme 5: Teachers emphasise acknowledgement of the classroom environment

Teachers voiced apprehensions regarding governmental policies impacting their professional trajectories, emphasising the necessity for a deeper comprehension of the educational landscape, along with acknowledgement and esteem for teachers. This research sought to tackle these concerns and offer recommendations for fostering prolonged teaching careers, underscoring the importance of a more inclusive and supportive governmental strategy.

5.4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Respect and recognition by government policymakers

Participants discussed the importance of respecting and acknowledging teachers’ duties and professional standing. They aimed for official recognition and improvement in their standing, with some aiming to make recognition policy by lowering accountability standards, delaying projects, and stabilising assessments

(Herzberg, 1966, pp. 72-73). Some teachers highlighted the importance of compensation and salary disparities between new and experienced teachers. For example: Participant 2 who said, *“I feel compelled to assert that recognition is a critical concern in the field of education, as we operate under challenging circumstances where financial compensation is of considerable importance. Given that every individual in the nation has experienced schooling, there exists a common presumption of expertise regarding education, which complicates the task of dismantling the stereotypes that both the public and teachers hold about teachers and the educational system. Furthermore, I perceive that certain government advertisements can sometimes appear somewhat patronizing. My primary desire is for teachers to receive national recognition for their outstanding contributions. This sentiment is one that even unions would support.”*

The functionality of school governors was heavily condemned by some teachers who believe that the chairperson of the governing body is the only one available at school. Some members of the governing body are not known and not seen at school. Other teachers in the study question the presence of the chairperson of school governors at school all the time. Participant 2 argued: *“I do not see his presence making any difference. In fact it has a negative influence. They spend money on non-teaching things. The very same money they should be using buying teaching resources. I have seen him sitting by the office. He waits to sign cheques only. I know that when I see him, he is here to sign....yeah.”*

The dissatisfaction with too much workload was evident during the interviews as it has been in the previous research. Teachers believe that there is too much work with assessments invading their admin times and private lives.

Participant 13 noted: *“...too much marking, as a language teacher, I am always with red pen marking, marking and marking during breaks and after school. It is tiring, and these students are so small and too many. You cannot see what they write...you see?”* The above comments confirm the findings of the previous research by other scholars on the subject of teacher job (dis)satisfaction.

5.4.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Become more knowledgeable about teaching in general

The majority of participants believe the government should better understand teaching realities, including academic challenges and homeschooling difficulties.

They suggest funding for improved instruction quality through expanded pastoral care and resource accessibility. Physical environments are crucial for a conducive learning environment. Teachers emphasise the importance of lower workloads and work-life balance for their well-being. Participant 4 suggests prioritising pastoral concerns over marking in workload projects. Participant 4: *“The funding for early intervention and prevention will focus on small group workshops to address major issues before they become major problems. This would provide a breathing space for the entire system, allowing children, students, and parents to take a breath. The workload for teachers is currently unclear, but if they can support students to engage in lessons, it would be more pleasant. This would reduce the workload for teachers, as they can focus on teaching and not have to deal with issues like uniforms or pencil cases. This would also allow teachers to focus on their job, not social care, which would ultimately reduce their workload. The goal is to provide a more pleasant learning environment for students, reducing the workload and allowing teachers to focus on their teaching duties.”*

5.4.6 Theme 6: Teachers have encountered a mix of beneficial and difficult experiences

The research investigated the careers of teachers, revealing that all participants encountered a peak during the initial five years, a trough between the third and fifth years, and maintained a trajectory above the midpoint for at least half of their professional lives. It emphasised the necessity of comprehending the equilibrium between favourable and adverse factors. The substantial workload, which encompasses instructional leadership, school administration, staff requests, student requirements, parental expectations, and navigating policies, can pose challenges for SMT members who are dedicated to their roles in managing their duties. This situation may lead to diminished job satisfaction and increased frustration. Participant 7 noted: *“As a Deputy Principal, one must navigate the complexities of multiple concurrent events that may not align with one’s expectations. It is important to recognise that schools serve functions beyond mere educational instruction; they host a variety of activities unrelated to teaching and learning. For instance, community-based organisations and departments such as Health and Social Welfare frequently engage with schools, which can disrupt the institution’s proper functioning.”*

Participant 8 contended that: *“the most substantial job demands involve the holistic management of diverse responsibilities. The primary challenge lies in maintaining equilibrium and ensuring the seamless operation of all components, which include expectations, deadlines, meetings, and unexpected challenges such as staff misconduct and the needs of students.”*

Participant 6 articulated the distinct differences between the roles of a principal and a deputy principal. He observed that: *“as an assistant principal, his primary responsibilities involved supporting the principal’s initiatives and addressing site-specific requirements. In contrast, as a principal, he perceives the expectations of the district office more acutely. The responsibility for addressing the needs of staff, students, and families now rests with him, and he is tasked with making the majority of the decisions.”*

5.4.6.1 Sub-theme 1: The challenge of transitioning

The study revealed that all teachers experienced a transition period, causing a shift in their emotional timeline, with most moving to a new school within their first five years. The reasons for this downturn varied, with most teachers needing to adapt their teaching approach. Transitioning to a second school required teachers to develop new skills due to different subjects or parent-teacher evenings, while others had to re-learn the teaching process due to differences in student types and school culture. Some teachers expressed their views about the challenge of transition: Participant 6: *“In my previous school, we won many isiZulu projects organised by the district. Students were interested in doing isiZulu projects/activities. They would take up the challenge I present to them, and parents were supportive, not because they were isiZulu speakers. They wanted to support their children. Now, here in Silverton, students are not interested, and teachers are less motivated. I cannot blame them, it is the system, principal do not care. The culture of teaching and learning is bad. I have been in this school as a DP for 6 years now, the environment, the atmosphere, the setting is not.....you know what I am saying? But what can I say?”*

Participant 1 indicated that: *“My previous school had challenges here and there. We are teachers after all, but here I found out that the principal dismantled a staffroom, and there no phase meetings and grade meetings. So, teachers are working in*

isolation. It is so stressful. There is no communication. Everything is decided (exams, fundraising activities, outings, internal functions, assemblies, e.g.) by some teachers you do not know, and the information is disseminated through the intercom. We hardly talk with colleagues and they show no interest in you, unless are smoking with them. The school culture is so stressful. The worst thing is that the principal is an African female. When they make decisions, they do not inform us in advance so that we can have input. No!”

The teachers faced a challenging transition to a new school due to unexpected changes in exam boards, expectations, culture, and a shift from a settled to non-settled system. This increased workload and adapted behaviour management approach led to difficulties, first-time issues, and disappointment due to unmet expectations. Participant 4 also indicated that: *“I came to his school after my daughter encouraged me to come. It is funny because when I came here for an interview, I was very positive with incredible leadership mindset. I was young and naive and thought that schools are the same everywhere, but I was more into the job and never thought of the school as whole. This was white dominant school then. Eh! The school was difficult, the infrastructure was very good, but teachers were so mean, unwelcoming, and I was given the most difficult class with many of them having behavioural problems.”*

A teacher resigned due to inadequate training and support during a challenging transition to a new school role, resulting in inherited issues like lack of syllabus teaching, heavy-handed discipline, difficult student relationships, increased workload, and exam performance concerns.

5.4.6.2 Sub-theme 2: A challenging teaching environment

Participant 5 articulates that every teacher has encountered obstacles throughout their professional journeys, and the core of this discussion revolves around the impact of challenging environments on teachers' perceptions of their roles, highlighting the necessity of adjusting to these difficulties. Participant 5 stated: *“The lack of unity among staff led to disparate learning and teaching, resulting in a low level of performance. The pressure to improve and daily grind led to destructive behaviour. One person would notice a lesson not being successful and send an email to all staff, expressing their dissatisfaction. This led to staff having conversations with the individual, who was working hard to do their job well. The situation did not require*

a top-down intervention, as there were too many instances of failures and not enough positives. This resulted in a lack of praise and a feeling of challenge, with too much pressure to improve.”

5.4.6.3 Sub-theme 3: The task is too extensive for the available time

Participants in a study reported challenges in balancing the workload of teachers with available time. The workload was a common factor, requiring long hours, including weekends, due to the need to create everything from scratch. Participant 15's early experiences exemplify the challenges faced by new teachers. Participant 15 commented as: *“I work very hard, I come to work almost earlier than anyone and try to sort things out before students come. I takes time to prepare everything because I teach so many classes, you know? Our curriculum is highly paced, and with Afrikaans, almost all students do not speak Afrikaans at home but are expected to pass it as a Home Language. New teachers leave (resign) because it is too much for them. Marking is another thing that is so exhausting because everything is wrong. It sucks the life out of me. Students have bad attitude towards their learning. It is difficult because when you want homework, they are forever not done but we still give as per policy. It is tiring because you preach the same thing throughout the term. Terms are short with so much going on in-between.”*

Another teacher expressed that achieving a balance between his preferred teaching approach and the demands of the school and the Senior Management Team (SMT) posed a considerable challenge. This workload persisted beyond the early years, with certain teachers needing to compensate for absent peers and address prolonged vacancies, occasionally worsened by the rapid departure of staff. The workload remained a substantial challenge for teachers. Participant 2 responded as: *“As we speak, we had a teacher in Grade 4 who just left. He told me few weeks before that he cannot cope. He has been here about 3 years, I think. In Grade 4 and Foundation Phase, it is a crisis because teachers keep coming but leaving too early. They do not stay, they just do not stay. It is tiring because we have to have temporal teachers who are not going to stay anyway. Some teachers are stressed and are absent. Each time SMT has to fill in the gaps for teacher absenteeism but you cannot blame them, it is stressful. The principal does not have good management and leadership skills. Everyone is demotivated, even the SMT members are just demotivated*

because if the principal does understand teachers' management principles, it would be difficult for followers to follow."

Teachers experience stress differently during different times of the year, with summer being the least demanding. Some SMT members find greater satisfaction as instructional leaders, focusing on improving teaching and learning, encouraging professional growth, and boosting academic success. However, overseeing operational tasks may seem less fulfilling, and they find greater satisfaction when focusing on instructional leadership. A reflective account by Participant 15 highlights a day dedicated to meeting with Language teachers, always reviewing educational data. She noted: *"Yeah, we're here to teach. As long as our daily interactions are meaningful, I am happy. We have meaningful and insightful engagements. I am satisfied with that..."*

5.4.7 Theme 7: Teachers' experiences were greatly impacted by school leadership

The good factors and problems that teachers face are greatly influenced by school leadership. Teachers talked about their experiences with both challenging and successful leadership during interviews. Some of them underlined the significance of clear and good leadership, while others focused on interpersonal skills and behaviours as crucial components of leadership. The way that Participant 6 explains the interplay of behaviours and interpersonal skills emphasises how crucial senior school leaders are to the survival and success of teachers. Participant 6 explains: *"An effective teacher is one who comprehends and appreciates the unique personality of each student, demonstrating genuine interest in them as individuals. This concept parallels the dynamic between teachers and students, where students value teachers who engage with them on a personal level, rather than merely viewing them as participants in a classroom setting. A proficient teacher acknowledges the worth of their students and identifies their strengths, which is crucial for fostering educational success. To be deemed a good teacher, one must be willing to extend their efforts by assisting with extracurricular activities, school excursions, or cultivating positive relationships with students. Verbal affirmations, such as providing stickers or writing notes, are well-received, as they indicate that the teacher is sincerely invested in the well-being and needs of their students. Such forms of acknowledgement can profoundly impact the learning atmosphere and enhance the overall experience for students. While it presents challenges, I find it to be a rewarding endeavour."*

Three key themes emerged from teachers' recommendations: clear, positive leadership; individual value; and a supportive leadership style.

5.4.7.1 Sub-theme 1: Valuing individuals

The research underscores the significance of feeling appreciated in the educational context, emphasising the roles of appreciation, recognition, and gratitude. Teachers value the dedication they demonstrate, the daily achievements they experience, and the acknowledgment they receive for their contributions. They also find worth in being recognised for their efforts within the constraints of their time and resources. Certain teachers feel esteemed when invited to engage in particular activities or assume responsibilities. The majority of teachers contend that minor acts of gratitude, such as relaying thanks from parents or students, suffice to make them feel valued. The research highlights that the recognition of teachers extends beyond mere examination outcomes and encompasses everyday accomplishments. Participant 13 explained that: *“To demonstrate appreciation for your staff, it is crucial to recognise their worth and not presume they are aware of your gratitude. While it is not always essential to convey your appreciation in an overly sentimental way, there are times when acknowledgement for minor contributions is warranted. For example, rather than merely congratulating someone on achieving a high exam score, consider expressing gratitude for their support during a difficult week. Additionally, it is vital to acknowledge the hard work you have put into your class over the past two years, as this reflects your commitment and effort towards achieving the desired outcomes. This method not only conveys to your colleagues that you hold them in high regard but also motivates them to pursue excellence.”* Participant 2 responded on this issue: *“As a result, I believe that management should be advised that their employees are their most precious asset. Alright, so some teachers won't be really skilled. Perhaps arrangements need to be made to help them, or something else entirely. However, I believe that the great majority of teachers really want to do what's best for their students as well as for the institution where they work. Staff should, in my opinion, be recognised for their contributions; they should not feel the need to express appreciation or even just be acknowledged for the work they perform on a daily basis, including any extracurricular activities or excursions they may take.”*

The research emphasises the significance of managers paying attention to their employees, spending time in conversation with them, hearing what they have to say,

and demonstrating an interest in their perspectives and personalities. In order to be viewed as unique individuals, teachers want their hobbies and abilities to be recognised by their headteachers. A SMT member's inquiry on her math intervention techniques, for example, was praised by one teacher, but her inquiry regarding her half-term vacation was valued by another. Having personal interactions is not necessary, though; some teachers value a teacher who checks in discreetly, while others prefer a professional distance. Leaders should, in general, be conscious of the demands and interests of their personnel.

5.4.7.2 Sub-theme 2: Establishing a strategy for better teaching

The research indicated that novice teachers would gain from an awareness of the psychological dimensions of their profession, which encompass the substantial workload and the necessity for realistic expectations (Mari, et al., 2021). Furthermore, it proposed that these new teachers should comprehend the significance of fostering relationships with fellow staff members and actively seek informal support within the educational institution. The findings also recommended that novice teachers remain receptive to learning from veteran colleagues, proactively seek assistance, and maintain a balanced perspective. Additionally, it was advised that new teachers identify the aspects of their roles that they find enjoyable and engage in stimulating projects (de Klerk, du Toit, McLeary, & Malan, 2023). The study further suggested that new teachers should be motivated to acknowledge and appreciate minor achievements and recognise when their efforts are satisfactory, rather than pursuing perfection. In summary, the research advocates for new teachers to embrace their personal lives while striving for a more rewarding career. In a conversation with Participant 2, he shared his insights: *"I emphasise the importance of celebrating these small victories. Keep in mind that if you are struggling with a challenging student, you are likely not alone. We have several well-known high-needs students in the context of my current briefing, so I encourage you to discuss it with someone. Indeed, I believe that is the core issue. You should take pride in your small successes. Challenges will arise, but it is crucial to communicate with fellow teachers about them promptly, as you may be assisting someone else in the process. After all, no one is isolated in this regard, correct? Additionally, I often discuss alternative roles they might consider. If you are passionate and seek a bit more oversight and control, it does not necessarily have to be pastoral in nature. Leadership is not the sole avenue available. Just out of*

curiosity, are you interested in taking responsibility for the entire school regarding any ideas you have on improving home learning?”

Another Participant 3 also noted: “To uphold a constructive teaching approach, persist in seeking and engaging in activities that bring you joy. Modify your strategy if needed, but refrain from giving up. If teaching fails to be fulfilling, consider alternative techniques, request an A-level, experiment with teaching interventions, or push yourself with diverse challenges.” Participant 15 shared that due to a number of students in each classroom, teachers need to establish new and different strategies to teach better. Participant 15 further stated that: *“I have informed fellow teachers that obstacles will invariably exist, and it is vital not to surrender merely due to their challenging nature. With accumulated experience, one can navigate these difficulties more swiftly than in earlier years. It is essential to contemplate your present circumstances and pinpoint areas that require enhancement. Even veteran personnel may find this challenging, as they frequently adhere to methods that are ineffective. Acknowledging that challenges will gradually become more manageable over time is crucial, and it is imperative to discover strategies to surmount them.”*

5.4.8 Theme 8: Role of educational leadership in managing teacher turnover

5.4.8.1 Sub-theme 1: A supportive leadership style

The research indicated that the interpersonal abilities of leaders, including effective communication, empathy, and comprehension, are essential for their achievement. Certain teachers also appreciated the personality characteristics of leaders, notably their kindness and nurturing disposition. They believed that leaders ought to foster a supportive atmosphere, with some teachers expressing a preference for additional time to complete their tasks or a reduction in their obligations. Moreover, they valued the flexibility offered by leaders, such as the allowance to undertake fewer responsibilities or to adapt to external changes. Some teachers also advocated for a more adaptable methodology, recognising that there is no singular correct approach to teaching and that various teachers may operate differently. Additionally, some teachers underscored the significance of leaders adopting a consultative stance, particularly when navigating substantial changes, as they reported feeling more content when teachers did not perceive these changes as being imposed upon them. In summary, the research underscores the critical role of effective leadership in cultivating a positive work environment. Participant 5 said that: *“...possessing the*

confidence to acknowledge that you have the backing of your department head, your curriculum, and your own capabilities allows you to assert, Indeed, I am evaluating that, I am considering that when I instruct them, we will not proceed in that manner. Therefore, there exists that department, alongside the overarching school policy, which states that it is permissible to address the requirements of the students or to genuinely reflect on what you aim to achieve today.”

The majority of participants highlighted the significance of contribution in establishing trust between leaders and teachers, which is essential for nurturing positive relationships. Teachers appreciated having autonomy, enabling them to make decisions regarding their students without being subjected to micromanagement. Furthermore, they expressed the need for a balanced level of trust among staff, with some individuals requiring additional support. Teachers also valued the opportunity to acknowledge their mistakes or challenges without the fear of facing blame or adverse repercussions. A leader who is prepared to assist in finding solutions promotes a culture where teachers feel more comfortable discussing their difficulties. In summary, trust plays a vital role in cultivating positive relationships within the educational environment. Participant 15 said: *“A senior leader expressed concern about increasing workload without reason and requested a list of ways to assess students. She clarified that assessments do not necessarily mean tests, and that such a request is acceptable. The senior leader’s willingness to ask for changes and clarify what they won’t do to accommodate new requirements is impressive.”*

Participant 9 commented that: *“Due to her exceptional intellect and a leadership approach that contrasts significantly with my own, I have learned immensely from her. She sets high expectations and ensures accountability, yet there is an absence of blame or fear, as all team members are aware of their purpose, actively participate, comprehend the objectives, and recognize the actions required to achieve them. We possess a substantial level of professional autonomy essential for this process, and we are entrusted to devise the necessary steps to attain the outcomes we seek.”*

5.4.8.2 Sub-theme 2: clear and positive leadership

Most participants appreciated the importance of clear leadership, particularly valuing a professional and respected principal. They emphasised the need for consistency and fairness in decision-making, as well as the reassurance of understanding their positions. Other significant leadership qualities differed among teachers, including the

provision of constructive feedback for learning, guidance on student discipline, the establishment of a clear vision, and the demonstration of appropriate behaviour. Some teachers believed that a strong leader must be willing to make unpopular decisions and effectively communicate the rationale behind those choices. The importance of consistency was also highlighted, as it enabled teachers to feel more assured in their decisions and foster positive relationships with students. Additionally, several teachers pointed out the necessity of having a clear vision and the capacity to exemplify good behaviour within their senior leadership team. The majority of participants underscored the importance of leaders understanding their teaching responsibilities to support teachers without adding to their workloads. In summary, clear leadership is essential for promoting effective teaching and learning.

Participant 1 stated that: *“I think it is important to emphasize the importance of a consistent principal, as I have worked with senior school leaders who can be both supportive and negative but with clear vision. I love teaching and I believe that a good principal should be professional and consistent, as he/she can be both supportive and negative depending on the situation. This ensures that the teacher maintains a positive attitude and maintains a professional demeanor but this can always improve...you know.”* Participant 3 added that: *“...I think the importance of understanding staff, being flexible, and creating a smarter working environment. It could be difficult to do performance management targets in public education, acknowledging existing tasks and achievements, rather than reinventing the wheel or creating more workload. We have got so much going on. I also think that a quiet approach to monitoring staff, focusing on their awareness and attentiveness to school events. It would also be important to think that this approach can help address issues and promote a smarter working environment.”*

The individuals involved in the study highlighted the significance of the values and beliefs upheld by the principal and senior leadership team. They concurred that these values should not place greater emphasis on examination outcomes than on other critical factors. Several teachers stressed the necessity for leaders to recognise students as unique individuals, cultivate positive relationships, create a nurturing environment, prioritise the satisfaction of both staff and students, and foster a sense of community. Some participants expressed that it was essential for leaders to

articulate their values and ethos clearly, instilling hope in teachers regarding student success, translating values and policies into actionable steps, and consistently reminding new staff members about the institution's values. In summary, the participants underscored the importance of leaders prioritising the well-being of students and promoting teamwork. Conversely, other teachers held differing perspectives on leadership within their schools. Participant 11 remarked: *"....what keeps me going is the love of teaching and working with a team of supportive colleagues. But my school is problematic for now, when it comes to leadership. The principal has no leadership qualities. She is unprepared for meetings. Sometimes we do not know what the next will look like here at work."*

5.4.8.3 Sub-theme 3: Leadership, teacher turnover and job satisfaction

As noted by, leadership serves as the paramount factor influencing an institution's success or failure. The leadership approach adopted by principals plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' choices to either stay in their existing roles or seek opportunities elsewhere. A favourable view of the principal's leadership can bolster teachers' dedication to their positions. In contrast, if teachers feel discontent or unease regarding the principal's leadership style, they might consider departing from their current jobs in pursuit of more advantageous circumstances.

5.4.8.4 Sub-theme 4: Leadership style and teacher job satisfaction

The data indicate that principals use various leadership styles based on the current situation, as indicated by some participants. In an interview with Participant 15 regarding leadership styles and their influence of teachers' decision to remain in the school, she stated: *"Indeed, you recognize that my leadership approach involves direct communication with you. I engage in discussions with transparency and do not hesitate to express my thoughts. I am a member of the SMT. We convene and provide updates daily, and upon receiving pertinent information, I reach out to the teachers. We engage in discussions, and when we visit the teachers, we do so collectively. I strive to interact with individuals as frequently as possible. I find little time for formal meetings. From my understanding, the teachers and SMT utilise WhatsApp groups. Additionally, some teachers receive documents via email. We make a concerted effort to communicate effectively to prevent any misunderstandings, while still demonstrating my concern."*

Speaking from the management perspective, Participant 7 argued that: *“At times, I can exhibit a somewhat dictatorial approach regarding matters that I firmly believe should be addressed in a certain way. I would characterise my style as situational, as it genuinely depends on the specific context of each situation. There are instances when some teachers may overlook your contributions, prompting me to adopt a more democratic stance; I am inclined to consider the perspectives of others prior to reaching a decision. Consequently, there are occasions when I may fully embrace a democratic approach. Conversely, there are moments when I can be quite autocratic.”* Another participant (Participant 14) was not very much when it comes to leadership but economical about her views. She further stated that: *“Various styles are used depending on the circumstance. Depending on the circumstance, I may be a participatory, autocratic, or democratic leader. This is contingent upon the circumstances, you know.”*

The data suggest that school principals place a high value on involving the SMT and teachers in the operations of the school by actively seeking their feedback and perspectives. This inclusive approach is implemented through various methods, including meetings, briefings, and WhatsApp chat groups. These digital communication groups were created during the health pandemic, COVID-19, which was announced by the WHO on March 11, 2020, and subsequently declared an emergency health hazard in South Africa on March 23. On March 23, 2020, the President officially announced a national lockdown set to commence on March 27, 2020. WhatsApp groups, recognised as an effective communication platform, were also employed in this study. As noted by Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2021) and Chana (2021), compassionate leaders foster participatory dialogue, ensuring that voices that may be at risk of being ignored are recognised and addressed. By offering teachers opportunities to engage in school-related matters, principals facilitate their participation in decision-making processes, thereby promoting collaborative solutions to mitigate misunderstandings. The SMT members exhibited a comprehensive understanding of leadership: *“Simply said, leadership entails being fair, forceful, and accountable as a principal.”* (Participant 6) – DH – Intermediate Phase commented: *“Look, sir. You must understand that leadership is nothing more than persuading others to act morally”* (Participant 7) – DP also commented: *“Alright, sir, leadership is just setting an example, supporting others, showing them the path, and offering*

direction to encourage others to attain a high degree of dedication” (Participant 15) – DH, Senior Phase responded: “Ehhmmm...look, leadership is about helping others and show them the right direction, encouraging them. It is not about principalship, but leaders must be firm in doing the things at the right time. Leadership happens everywhere” (Participant 14) – DH, Foundation Phase

The results indicate that participants possess a thorough comprehension of the core leadership values and characteristics vital for effective leadership. Consequently, they perceive themselves as individuals who influence, empower, mentor, lead, and guide teachers. Researchers have in the recent past (Abitabile, 2020; Blackwell & Young , 2021; Buckman, 2021) expressed that leadership includes the mission, direction, inspiration, and influence required to organise and transform activities and relationships.

5.4.8.5 Sub-theme 5: Establishing the school’s vision

Participants perceived themselves as accountable for establishing the school’s vision, guiding both teachers and students. According to, leaders are required to overcome challenges such as teacher turnover to ensure the organization remains on its intended path. Participant 14 and Participant 6 expressed their views regarding the formulation of the school’s vision as follows: *“In the end, you are responsible for the school’s vision” (Participant 14). “If you do not have a clear idea of where you want to go, you can turn back and realize that no one is following you. Since everyone has to agree with your viewpoint” (Participant 6)*

The analysis reveals that principals hold a crucial position in establishing the vision for their schools and ensuring that this vision is communicated effectively among teachers. This perspective is consistent with the views of, who argue that it is the responsibility of principals to create a vision that is collectively accepted by all stakeholders. They elaborate that the vision articulated by principals includes the efficient distribution of resources, the implementation of evaluation processes, and the safeguarding of the premises and property. In earlier works, they expressed a similar understanding of the role of principals, emphasising that these functions are vital for upholding high standards of teaching and learning, as well as for improving teacher satisfaction, irrespective of the context. Furthermore, suggest that effective leadership

encompasses the mission, direction, inspiration, and influence necessary to organise and transform activities and relationships.

5.4.8.6 Sub-theme 6: Leadership and the application of Ubuntu Principles

The qualities of Ubuntu, an African philosophy that emphasises essential human traits such as compassion and humanity, are utilised by principals. From the perspective of the Ethics of Care (Noddings, 2005), principals extend the same level of consideration, compassion, understanding, and empathy towards teachers.

Participant 15 remarked, *“I think we possess an additional aspect, a gentler side, where our human nature is evident. I believe this contributes to our effectiveness as managers.”* Participant 14 elaborated on the complexities of being a woman in a leadership position, noting that the inherent motherly instinct often surfaces when others require assistance. She articulated her views on the principles of Ubuntu in the following manner: *“Ehhh, as a woman, I believe I am employing my maternal instincts in leading people. I regard my teachers as my children, particularly since some of them are quite young. When they encounter difficulties, I can easily sense it as a mother would, because I am familiar with them. I do not see myself as a boss lady; rather, I consider myself a mother and a caregiver, which allows them to feel at ease. It is essential to learn to empathise with their situations, and that is the approach women tend to adopt.”*

She additionally noted her sensitivity to the needs of others and the intricacies of specific relationships. Consequently, from this viewpoint, moral reasoning is understood to encompass empathy and concern, highlighting the importance of responsiveness and accountability in interactions with others. She expressed that: *“As a leader, I believe you embody leadership while simultaneously becoming part of their community. I am very nurturing and highly attuned to emotions; when I engage with an individual, I do so as if I were their own mother. Regardless of how gentle I may appear, I embrace them, particularly the younger individuals, treating them as if they were my own. I guide them with a deep understanding of the educational challenges, especially in urban settings. Teachers are tasked with educating a diverse group of students, and parents frequently voice their concerns, yet often teachers find themselves without adequate protection.”*

This study's finding corroborates earlier research regarding teacher job satisfaction and the importance of caring for teachers (Gilligan, 1982). Principals, as leaders, who embody civilised behaviour, would implement the principles of Ubuntu. Participant 7 expressed: *"I exercise patience with teachers and lead by the tenets of Ubuntu, even when they may exploit this generosity. I maintain sincerity and honesty in my interactions. I am truthful, sharing all information openly without concealing any secrets."*

The research findings suggest that certain school principals and members of the SMT broadly integrate the principles of Ubuntu into their leadership approaches when engaging with teachers, managing school operations, and addressing both professional and personal issues. Effective leaders strive to cultivate qualities such as humility, compassion, integrity, and self-discipline and seek to exhibit empathy by thoughtfully considering the feelings of others. In their interactions, principals employ advanced social skills, which involve guiding individuals towards their goals through efficient communication. By demonstrating care for their teachers through empathy, sympathy, and compassion, in alignment with the principles of Ubuntu, teachers feel valued. This sense of value enhances their feelings of security and overall satisfaction (Botha & Hugo, 2021; Gimbert & Kapa, 2022; Bryant, Ram, Scott, & Williams, 2023).

5.4.9 Theme 9: Teachers faced numerous and interconnected challenges

The study used a reflexive thematic analysis to identify challenges faced by teachers in their roles. It found significant interlinkage between sub-themes and themes, making it difficult to categorise. Key factors identified included work nature, accountability measures, lack of recognition, senior staff, school culture, changes, and issues around professional recognition and empowerment. The study emphasises the importance of understanding these interrelationships.

5.4.9.1 Sub-theme 1: Low status of the profession and lack of professional recognition

Participants indicated a deficiency in acknowledgement from external entities, such as government and society, concerning the teaching profession (Maslow, 1954, p. 93). These perspectives were largely generalised and attributed to a particular era and policy initiative, underscoring a separation between educational institutions and the broader society. Participant 2 said: *"In many countries, job status affects how*

teachers treat teachers. While it is important to avoid having a higher status, there are a few jobs where someone without training would criticise a teacher for not doing it properly.”

Teachers have voiced their dissatisfaction regarding governmental policies, curriculum development, and accountability frameworks. They contend that these modifications may place certain students at a disadvantage, particularly through the enhancement of academic content or the need to balance ongoing assessments with final examinations. This lack of comprehension is associated with the criteria by which teachers are evaluated and prioritised, potentially undermining student confidence and mental well-being. Additionally, some teachers perceive that shifts in funding priorities adversely affect their professional experience, as they feel they are forfeiting a rewarding aspect of their vocation. The manner in which teaching is promoted to attract new teachers reflects a deficiency in appreciation and understanding, as communications suggesting that anyone can teach and targeting individuals from other professions to transition into teaching diminish the significance of the teaching profession. This situation may result in a misunderstanding of the requirements for success in this role. The politicisation of education has persistently influenced reforms, with teachers believing that these alterations are unwarranted and harmful to student welfare. They argue that governments can attribute societal issues to teachers by intensifying the emphasis on examination outcomes. Furthermore, some teachers feel that each successive government seeks to modify educational factors to project an image of improvement over its predecessor, while social mobility is perceived as politically advantageous for the government, yet not necessarily favourable for individuals wishing to remain within their existing communities. Participant 1 remarked: *“I was there when everyone wanted to be teachers, I was there when most parents encourage their sons and daughters to look up to teachers and to become teachers in future. I was also there to witness so many changes happen with each passing government and each cabinet and so the teaching profession needs contribute to the communities and restore it previous standard.”*

Participant 5 frankly mentioned: *“I would not speak lies, as someone who clearly knows where I am coming from, teachers are looked down on in South Africa in general. Even the ministry of education does not take teachers seriously, we struggle about anything....teachers in South Africa are not encouraged on anything. Most qualified teachers who could be in management are discouraged to join*

management ranks. They are bullied during interviews, some are not even short listed for interviews.”

Adding to what Participant 5 had mentioned, Participant 2 and Participant 3 shared similar sentiments each saying: *“.....I think that each passing administration, things get worse than the previous one. When teachers are not paid accordingly and motivated, they cannot take care of themselves and will subsequently represent the organisation and institutions negatively. Communities and societies see this and no-one wants to fail in life and so teaching is not regarded as a profession to go to in South Africa. Why go to teaching where working conditions are not so pleasing?”* (Participant 3)

Participant 2 added that: *“I think most of the teachers today in the profession do not want to be in it. For some, teaching was not their preferred first choice of study and these teachers continue to fail the profession.”* Participant 4 shared a similar perception about the role of our government on the declining status of the teaching profession. She said: *“I believe that the issue is that each new government both provincial and national spend too much time on other aspects of the nation and fail each time they consider education. This is because education is political. But education should be a priority. My understanding is that if a state is educationally viable, even crime will be reduced by half.”*

Keitumentse and Participant 15 shared their opinion too. Participant 14 said: *“The status is very low. We just choose to stay. I chose to stay but frankly, teachers are no longer interested, they are not motivated, they do not know what to do.....everything is just not working well for many young teachers. Like me, veteran teachers are now working towards their retirement.”* Participant 15 said: *“The morale is low. Change needs to happen in order to keep young teachers and prospective teachers on the profession.”*

Ultimately, several teachers express feelings of being undervalued or misunderstood by society, which results in a perception that their contributions are not esteemed. This sentiment is connected to the broader societal view and the perceived lack of prestige associated with the teaching profession as a whole. Teachers believe that there exists a public perception suggesting that teaching is a task anyone can perform, and that teachers are not seen as possessing a high level of expertise. In summary, the dissatisfaction of teachers regarding governmental policies, curriculum development,

and accountability frameworks underscores the necessity for enhanced recognition and appreciation of the vital role teachers play in the educational landscape (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; 1966; 1993).

5.4.9.2 Sub-theme 2: Physical and emotional demands of teaching

The research inquiry identifies six primary themes, which are divided into environment-centred and person-centred categories, along with two additional themes: role-centred factors and environmental changes, aimed at elucidating the factors that influence teachers. Each theme illustrates the intricacies and difficulties inherent in the teaching environment. The discussion elaborates on the differences and commonalities in teachers' experiences, underscoring the significance of comprehending the factors that impact them. The themes are designed to organise the findings and offer a lucid understanding of the obstacles encountered by teachers. Teachers encounter various challenges in their professional lives, such as excessive workloads, the nature of their work, and organisational problems. These role-centred factors adversely affect their teaching responsibilities, shaped by both the environment and the teachers' approaches. Despite the prevalence of high workloads, the challenges experienced varied among teachers and across different stages, thereby emphasising the complex nature of their roles.

5.4.9.3 Sub-theme 3: The nature of the teaching job

The research indicated that the difficulties faced by teachers were not solely due to the volume of work, but also stemmed from the intrinsic nature of the tasks involved (see Section 2.5; Section 2.19; and Section 3.9). Teachers frequently encountered challenging behaviours from students, which proved to be significantly stressful and were often linked to particular times, schools, or groups of students. No teachers reported ongoing negative experiences related to student behaviour. The majority of teachers attributed this phenomenon to students testing boundaries with new instructors, which was associated with their experiences as ECTs or transitions to different educational institutions. The emotional labour involved included concerns for students and the effort to cultivate positive relationships with them. Additionally, some teachers reflected on how students' home challenges or previous experiences influenced their reactions within the classroom (Noddings & Shore, 1984). Participant 9 said: *“Well, it difficult for us because, poverty is another thing that is out of our control. Some students have to eat at the feeding scheme every morning. Some do*

not have proper writing material and it is difficult to even begin to teach when you have students who still stuck in feeding scheme eating and when they come back, they tell you they do not have pens. Now, instead of teaching, you have start thinking about where to find writing materials for them. It is draining because you even wonder what am I doing here?” Participant 13 further indicated that: *“this job requires that you must be generous especially because we teach children who come from difficult and different backgrounds. While toughness on them a bit is needed but you still need to think about the kind of the environment they come from.”*

Teachers are encountering heightened emotional and cognitive pressures stemming from students’ mental health challenges and diminished assistance from school pastoral personnel. Modifications in curriculum, instructional strategies, evaluation methods, and the introduction of new school processes such as IT systems (SA-SAMS) further influence their workload. In addition, teachers perceive a necessity to establish themselves as authorities in their respective subjects while also focusing on emerging areas. External factors, insufficient resources, and a lack of leadership support exacerbate these difficulties. Several teachers express frustration regarding their school’s management practices and workload distribution, alongside the burdens of extensive administrative tasks and initiatives that are not recognised. Participant 2 responded referring to SASA on learner attended policy section: *“In terms of policy, there must be 2 registers in each class. There is what is called control register and communication books from parents. This register must filled each time the teacher enters the class, you must do a head count to check how many students are there before you teach. You also have point system in each class, you must give or take out points if a class misbehave. In case you forget one of these, you get to be called in the office to explain what happened. It is frustrating because you spend more time on none teaching activities. By the time you teach, the bell goes! Then, you also have civvies and money collection. Ah! You sit down doing these none teaching, administrative activities.”*

According to Participant 6, one of the biggest obstacles in their position is the ongoing need to be present in several places at once. Although necessary, dealing with the operational facets of management takes up a large portion of their time and might divert them from their main objective. He stated that it is difficult to balance

these responsibilities. He noted: *“To genuinely influence students in a positive manner, it is essential to simplify our approach and focus on fundamental concepts. Everyone seems to be in a constant rush, striving to accomplish numerous tasks simultaneously. We find ourselves engaged in multi-tasking, eliminating various activities, and attempting to juggle additional responsibilities. We are merely experimenting with different strategies.”* This suggests a conflict between the instructional and managerial aspects of school leadership, with the latter frequently requiring intentional focus amidst various competing demands. Consequently, both teaching and non-teaching (administrative) responsibilities increasingly place greater demands on teachers.

5.4.9.4 Sub-theme 4: Lack of Professional Recognition and Support

As outlined in Sections 2.19.1 and 2.19.4, recognition and status serve as crucial factors for employee satisfaction and are essential for enhancing job contentment. This theme highlights the experiences of teachers who perceive a lack of recognition or professional treatment from the government, society, or their educational institutions. They often feel compelled to fulfil their duties while being evaluated against performance metrics by individuals who do not comprehend or appreciate the intricacies of their profession. This absence of acknowledgement significantly influences teachers' perceptions of their treatment, as evidenced by the quotes from participants. Participant 3 noted that: *“Teachers acknowledge that the profession of teaching is challenging; however, it does not receive adequate respect within the broader economic context. The general perception may suggest that transitioning from another career to teaching is less arduous than moving to a different field altogether. Furthermore, teachers are often perceived as lacking a high level of expertise, despite the absence of evidence to substantiate this belief.”* Participant 1 responded: *“..... it is important to acknowledge the importance of accountability in education, but also acknowledge the need for the government to maintain a positive perception of students who do not achieve a certain grade. They believe that politicians may not understand the potential of students, who can excel in various roles, such as healthcare workers. The system that assigns a grade of one to students is a hindrance to their potential, as they perceive themselves as lacking positive qualities. This can hinder their career progression and hinder their ability to pursue their desired careers. I believe that the current system may hinder the growth and*

development of these students, hindering their potential for success in their chosen careers.”

5.4.9.5 Sub-theme 5: Lack of Teacher Empowerment

Teachers frequently experience a diminished sense of control regarding their professional responsibilities, which leads to feelings of frustration and a perceived inability to affect decisions at both the school and national levels. This sense of frustration is largely associated with curriculum and the DBE mandates, as well as school-level decisions that result in additional workload or conflicts with principles. Furthermore, teachers express a deficiency in professional trust, which can be linked to insufficient consultation and accountability practices (Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Wronowski, 2021). Many teachers feel that their opinions are overlooked, leading to decisions that create unnecessary challenges. Moreover, teachers often perceive themselves as inadequately prepared for their roles, particularly when addressing broader issues such as student mental health and socioeconomic challenges. This erosion of professional trust may be connected to insufficient training provided within educational institutions, especially concerning changes in individual responsibilities or school-wide reforms. Supporting earlier research, teachers may also indicate feelings of unpreparedness for the obstacles they encounter, including broader issues like student mental health and poverty. In summary, the job satisfaction of teachers is significantly influenced by these factors, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced training and support. Participant 4 note: *“I felt that I was not skilled enough to handle the mental health issues in this job, as we were referred to outside organisations with a long waiting list. I also felt that I could not handle the students who would be very wobbly, as I believed this was not my job. There is always a feeling that most of us did not have the necessary skill set to handle difficult situations, as I am just a human being and this affect our satisfaction greatly.”*

5.4.9.6 Sub-theme 6: The implementation of accountability measures

Participants voiced worries about accountability, especially in relation to test outcomes and the effort that occurs from continuous accountability measures (cf. Section 3.5). Teachers believed that a student’s skill, dedication, and family support had a significant role in their exam performance. But the government and senior school leaders believed that teachers might be held fully responsible for students’ exam results. The primary sources of information for this were the generic accounts

provided by teachers and the occurrences of students performing below expectations on exams or worrying about their expected performance. Participant 1 commented: *“The demand for results poses a considerable challenge in education, as teachers possess limited authority over the outcomes of their students. Although they can affect students’ performance and motivation, the final success in examinations relies on students’ study habits and inherent capabilities. Additionally, the support from families and other stakeholders is crucial in influencing examination success. The extent of teachers’ impact on results remains ambiguous, yet they are held responsible for these outcomes. This disparity within the educational system represents a significant concern that may affect the future of the profession, complicating the ability of teachers to reconcile their duties with the needs of their students.”*

Some staff members expressed that performance management strategies, including lesson observations, adversely influenced their perceptions as teachers (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959, p. 113). The DBE was perceived as a detrimental factor, primarily impacting the operations and leadership decisions within the school. Concerns regarding inspections shaped leadership and management choices, rather than the immediate effects of the inspections themselves. Only one teacher viewed the influence of DBE inspections negatively on her timeline, mentioning the stress associated with being rated as needing improvement and persistent worries about upcoming inspections. The pressure for accountability regarding outcomes also influenced workload, which in turn affected the manner in which teachers instructed students and the regularity of assessments, ultimately straining their relationships with students.

5.4.10 Theme 10: Organising workload and refining teaching styles

In order to guarantee that new teachers have a successful career, a study was conducted asking teachers about the significance of early career assistance and teacher training. Their answers were erratic and concentrated more on the requirements of recently hired teachers than on discrete stages. Four sub-themes emerged: factors that teachers believed were crucial for aspiring teachers at any point in their careers, from their first training to their later years.

5.4.10.1 Sub-theme 1: Increasing the work's manageability

In order to facilitate the work of new teachers, teachers defined several themes. They believed that in order to properly develop their abilities in areas like behaviour control and resource appraisal, ECTs required greater assistance. They recognised that various classroom and behaviour control strategies were needed due to the diverse conditions seen in schools. In order for new teachers to adjust to their positions, teachers believed that they needed effective mentoring and positive role models. They gave special emphasis on abilities that lightened workloads and improved job satisfaction. It was shown that one factor that might increase job satisfaction is classroom management. In general, teachers thought that these features would facilitate the work of freshmen teachers.

Participant 7 stated that: *“Being a teacher is crucial for contributing to strong relationships with students. Effective communication and interest in their learning are essential for a successful teaching experience [ECTs]. It is crucial to follow up on promises and not let students feel weak. Students need to know that their expectations are met. Classroom management... [ECTs] is also crucial for contributes to strong relationships with students. Once students are in control, they are more likely to follow through with any teaching methods. Their [ECTs] contributions to strong relationships with students is the key to success in any educational setting.”*

Instead of depending just on their perceived solutions, new teachers should find it helpful to learn that there is no one-size-fits-all method to teaching and how to assess new initiatives or studies. Participant 9 said: *“There is a significant amount of teaching craft involved, and I am uncertain about the extent to which it is addressed in the PGCE or during the initial year of study. However, I am concerned that it is sometimes viewed merely as a method of teaching. Furthermore, I would assert that it encompasses the science of teaching as well. I lack a clear understanding of how much of teaching is purely craft, but once one attempts to rationalize an approach, it transforms into a process. Novice teachers can experiment with what proves effective for them.”* Participant 10 said that: *“Such information, however, ought to be conveyed in a manner that does not present the facts as absolute truth. I believe that is the aspect I would change if given the opportunity. You have positioned teachers to instruct in a manner that, in my view, they should not be permitted to do, as it is futile*

to present something as a reality when it may not hold true in five years. Therefore, I would revise that approach concerning both of those factors, particularly the overarching professional studies aspect. Additionally, I would remove all those peculiar references to learning styles and other unrelated subjects.”

Participants in the study were asked about how novice teachers ought to handle their workloads, emphasising the significance of maintaining a work-life balance and adopting personalised strategies. While some teachers preferred to bring their work home to create a more relaxed environment, others opted to remain at their workplace until all tasks were completed. Furthermore, they highlighted the necessity of understanding the teaching rhythm, recognising and managing moments of pressure, and accepting that fluctuations are an inherent part of the process. Some participants suggested that it is important to acknowledge that certain tasks can be postponed and to focus on immediate needs rather than worrying about potential future challenges. Participant 6 remarked, *“Take it slow. Indeed, pace yourself and exert your utmost effort. Strive to produce the best work possible for the largest number of students, and as I previously mentioned, reassure yourself that this is adequate. However, I believe this approach may not align well with teacher training programs, as teachers frequently face pressure to perform at high levels. Yet, sometimes the most effective strategy is simply to accomplish what is necessary. I must remind myself that it is acceptable, from time to time, to open a textbook and engage in straightforward tasks. Just consider what the students require today; they might need this, this, and this. Yes, indeed. Maintain a positive mindset, pace yourself, and plan ahead so that you can identify potential challenges. Understand your students’ pace as well. For instance, if you realize that this week is going to be particularly hectic, you may need to adjust your pace over the next few days. Reflect on what Grade 6 students can manage more independently, and remember that it is not necessary to perform constantly. It is perfectly fine for them to engage in activities on their own.”*

5.4.10.2 Sub-theme 2: Possessing understanding and complying with stipulations

Principals are required to have the essential knowledge and departmental prerequisites to effectively lead teachers and ensure the smooth functioning of school operations. The research indicated that even novice teachers recognise the significance of policies aimed at reducing teacher turnover. Participant 11 held distinct

views regarding the qualities of leadership within her school, whereas Participant 2 articulated his thoughts concerning leaders' comprehension of policies, asserting that: *"You must be well-informed as a leader; it is imperative to be cognizant of all policies [legislative frameworks] and have them readily accessible. In the context of COVID-19, I am uncertain which policy applies. However, the principal, as a leader, should possess this knowledge. A leader is someone who actively seeks information, disseminates it appropriately, and, to elevate beyond the level of teachers, fosters the emergence of new ideas."*

Participant 1 conveyed her insights on the leadership roles involved in managing turnover, stating: *"As a leader, it is essential to recognise that before my team is fully aware of everything and understands the expectations, I must be informed about forthcoming developments. This is the essence of effective leadership being prepared at all times. A leader must be well-versed in school activities, ensuring comprehensive engagement with teachers, students, and parents to facilitate seamless operations."*

Participant 5 expressed that: *"Ehhmm... I would need to be aware of what is happening within the school; therefore, I would also engage with the students and parents, providing my contact information to them. Thus, I believe that the principal, as a leader, must have a holistic understanding of the school environment."*

A leader's familiarity with the curriculum is vital for supporting teachers, as teachers tend to be more dedicated when they view the principal as competent. Additionally, leaders should be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Participant 2 emphasised that the principal's understanding of the curriculum is of utmost importance. He articulated: *"It is essential for a leader to possess an understanding of the curriculum to prevent teachers from being misled. A leader must be well-versed in the curriculum, as ignorance of this fundamental aspect can sometimes lead to teachers misleading you."*

Participant 3, in his capacity as a senior teacher, conveyed his perspective in the following manner: *"It is crucial to understand your team, to be aware of their competence levels, and to know how to manage them effectively. Develop a deeper understanding of them, recognize their frustrations, and be attentive when they express their thoughts. Avoid hasty judgments."* The SMT participants indicated that principals must adhere to DBE policies and guidelines to manage their schools both effectively and efficiently. Participant 7 noted that while some policies may not be

favourable for teachers, he remarked: *“As a Deputy Principal, I am committed to doing what is right and what is expected by the DBE/GDE.”* Participant 15, leveraging her experience as an HOD, emphasized the importance of maintaining a professional relationship with her principals and the necessity for the principal to comprehend the policies. Nevertheless, she pointed out that ineffective leadership and poor decision-making can swiftly damage the teacher-principal relationship. For instance, Participant 15 stated: *“You must be precise in all your actions. Every task must be executed in accordance with established protocols. Adhere to the policy and fulfil your responsibilities...you see.”*

The research indicates that school principals need to possess a thorough understanding of the curriculum and pertinent policies to effectively guide teachers and address turnover challenges. They should recognise their teachers’ strengths and set high expectations for them. Depending on the context and circumstances, principals adopt various leadership styles, including democratic, transformational, and open-door methods.

They collaboratively formulate the school’s vision with teachers and communicate it to stakeholders. Transformational leaders clearly articulate expectations to staff members, illustrating organisational objectives and a shared vision. Principals incorporate Ubuntu principles, such as caring for teachers and demonstrating empathy, sympathy, and compassion, to ensure that teachers feel appreciated. They implement an open-door policy to retain teachers, granting them autonomy and opportunities for professional growth. The manner in which principals interact with teachers significantly impacts their decisions to stay or leave the school. Principals need to comprehend teachers’ challenges, accommodate their needs, exhibit caring behaviours, and ensure they feel valued. A positive rapport between principals and teachers cultivates trust and job satisfaction, whereas a negative dynamic may result in resignations. Principals must strive to establish constructive working relationships with teachers and empower them. They recognise the critical role of understanding the curriculum and relevant policies, which serve as guidelines for supporting teachers and managing turnover issues.

5.4.10.3 Sub-theme 3: Fostering an open-door policy and supporting teacher autonomy

Open communication that fosters transparency and openness, where participants are accessible to the teachers, is known as an open-door policy (Mamdouh & Hamed, 2024). The accessibility of participants (SMT members) ensures that teachers can engage with their principals or any of their supervisors, discuss concerns and challenges, and ultimately express themselves freely:

Participant 7 remarked that: *“I consistently encourage them to approach me and inform me if they are dissatisfied with anything I do, as I maintain an open-door policy.”*

Participant 15 expressed that: *“When my teachers encounter issues, they promptly come to me to discuss them, which makes me quite receptive to their needs. They also have the option to approach the principal; if she is unavailable, the deputies are present. Indeed, we are open to any challenges that teachers may face.”*

Moreover, in addition to being accessible to the teachers, some participants indicated that they provide teachers the liberty to express themselves, to work, and to develop within the parameters established by the school. Participant 6 noted that teachers are required to adhere to policy to perform their duties without being monitored or controlled. He stated: *“It is not my aim to dictate that you must teach in a specific way. While I have standards that I uphold, I also allow students the freedom to be themselves.”*

Participants in a study discovered that open access to teachers is advantageous, as it enables them to tackle challenges without being micromanaged. This strategy aligns with the concept of nurturing a supportive environment for teachers. Teachers favour autonomy within schools, and an open-door policy can enhance job satisfaction and retention. School leaders should also contemplate this strategy to mitigate teacher turnover, as it can contribute to sustaining a positive workplace atmosphere.

5.4.10.4 Sub-theme 4: Relationship with the teachers

The relationships that SMT members have with teachers play a significant role in shaping their perceptions of school dynamics. Participants need to comprehend and connect with the teachers, as a positive relationship cultivates trust among them. Consequently, creating a favourable school climate necessitates effective communication and mutual understanding. Participant 14 and Participant 7 elaborated on their collaborative efforts with teachers as follows: Participant 7 remarked, *“My*

relationships with my colleagues are amicable. We collaborate closely and are so connected that we even share personal matters. This camaraderie extends to all teachers, including our SMT. I believe in the importance of human interactions, respect, and being accommodating. Indeed, as you may know, personality can sometimes be a source of conflict if one is not cautious. Thus, the manner in which we treat our colleagues is significant, whether in formal or informal settings.”

When the researcher asked how Participant 14’s relationship with teachers as a Head of Department influences them, she responded: *“A key factor of partnerships is the aspect of trust. Being dependable entails ensuring that others know they can rely on us at any time.”*

SMT members, particularly the principal, must cultivate robust relationships with teachers to uphold trust and foster a positive working atmosphere. They should treat teachers with fairness and equality, actively listen, show respect, and acknowledge others to maintain meaningful relationships. These principles are foundational to compassionate leadership in educational institutions. Principals ought to be attuned to teachers’ challenges, accommodate their needs, and ensure they feel appreciated. Such relationships inspire teachers to persist in their roles, prolong their careers, enhance their job satisfaction, and build trust in leadership (Abitabile, 2020; Botha & Hugo, 2021).

5.5 DISCREPANCY CASES AND NON-CONFORMING DATA

When participant responses differ from or contradict the dominant themes identified through data analysis, this phenomenon is termed a discrepant case in qualitative research. Although this study did not encounter such instances, the research design was established to accommodate any potential discrepancies by examining and integrating the perspectives of all participants, should they arise (Burns, Bally, Burles, Holtlander, & Peacock, 2022). This approach ensures that the analysis remains thorough and impartial while safeguarding against the oversight of unique responses. The findings would have encompassed any responses that significantly diverged from the average, accompanied by a detailed analysis elucidating the reasons and mechanisms behind such deviations. Since divergent cases can yield valuable insights and potentially enhance the study’s findings by uncovering contrasting perspectives, this methodology underscores the importance of considering a range of viewpoints. Despite the lack of any contradictory cases, the framework of the study upheld

rigorous standards for transparency and diversity in data interpretation (Cash, Isaksson, Maier, & Summers, 2022).

5.6 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

5.6.1 INTRODUCTION

The provided interpretation outline sections of the study that perform a deliberate, multi-layered synthesis of its findings. It foregrounds not only what was discovered, but also how those discoveries relate to the study's aims, how they fit within the broader scholarly landscape, and what their limitations mean for interpretation and application. Taken together, these elements illustrate a rigorous approach to integrating results with theory and prior research, a hallmark of a mature empirical report.

First, the section's emphasis on extensive analysis of results, researcher insights, key outcomes, and participant examination signals a commitment to depth over surface descriptions. By foregrounding qualitative findings and the researcher's interpretive judgments, the text demonstrates how data are not merely cataloged but interrogated. This dual focus supports a coherent narrative in which results are not presented in isolation but are continually made meaningful through the researcher's perspective. The inclusion of participant examination also foregrounds the human dimension of the study, reminding readers that the data emerge from real individuals and contexts, which in turn grounds the interpretation in lived experience.

Second, the move to contextualize and comment on results in relation to the research aims chapter 1's objectives is a deliberate act of alignment. This juxtaposition ensures that the study remains tethered to its original questions, so readers can trace how each finding contributes to addressing the central goals. Such alignment enhances the transparency and accountability of the research, enabling readers to assess whether the evidence supports the intended inquiries. In synthesis, this practice transforms results from isolated statements into a coherent argument about whether and how the study's aims were met.

Third, the final section's engagement with existing literature functions as a critical hinge between the study and the wider scholarly conversation. By comparing findings with what has already been reported, the authors situate their work within established

debates, corroborate or challenge prior conclusions, and identify unique contributions. This literature-facing synthesis is essential for assessing both the novelty and the reliability of results. It also provides a framework for theoretical interpretation: if the findings align with certain theoretical predictions, they reinforce those theories; if they diverge, they invite refinement or the development of new theoretical perspectives. In this way, the section moves beyond a single study's claims to participate in ongoing discourse, demonstrating how empirical work can advance or complicate existing knowledge.

Fourth, the discussion of theoretical implications within the section underscores the study's potential to influence how scholars think about the topic. By articulating how results illuminate, extend, or constrain existing theories, the authors translate empirical observations into conceptual insight. Yet the text also hints at a tension between theory and data when it notes alignment with the investigator's expectations. This acknowledgment invites critical reflection on epistemological stance and methodological rigor: while alignment can signal coherence with a solid theoretical base, it can also raise concerns about confirmatory bias. A balanced synthesis, therefore, weighs how theoretical implications arise from the data while remaining vigilant about the interpretive lens through which those data are viewed. Fifth, the explicit articulation of limitations particularly those bearing on reliability or generalizability serves as a crucial corrective to overgeneralization. By naming constraints that may temper the interpretation or applicability of findings, the section encourages a cautious, context-aware understanding. This transparency not only enhances trust but also points to avenues for future research. A thoughtful synthesis considers how unresolved questions or methodological boundaries might be addressed in subsequent studies, thereby turning limitations into productive prompts for further inquiry rather than mere caveats.

In sum, the described section exemplifies a comprehensive synthesis that weaves together results, aims, literature, theory, and limitations into a single, coherent narrative. It demonstrates how a well-structured synthesis can illuminate the pathway from data to interpretation to broader significance. The reader is guided from concrete findings through their alignment with initial objectives, into a dialogue with existing scholarship, and finally toward theoretical consideration and candid acknowledgment

of boundaries. For researchers, this pattern offers a model: report what you find, show how it maps to your aims, connect your conclusions to what others have said, articulate what the results imply for theory, and be clear about what your study cannot claim. Used well, such synthesis strengthens the credibility, relevance, and future impact of scholarly work.

5.6.2 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS FROM THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This synthesis' study brings together five theoretical perspectives Herzberg's two-factor theory (hygiene factors and motivators), needs theory, ethics of care, transformational leadership, and social learning theory to interpret how workplace variables influence employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The study's structure rests on nine emergent findings under each factor, offering a dual lens: first, hygiene factors act to prevent dissatisfaction, and second, motivational factors drive deeper satisfaction. When these strands are woven together, a richer picture appears of how organizational conditions shape not only how employees feel about their jobs but also why they stay or leave, with particular implications for contexts such as teacher retention. The synthesis below unpacks how each theory contributes to understanding the findings and how their integration clarifies practical pathways for improvement. Herzberg's two-factor theory provides the foundational map for interpreting the data. Hygiene factors such as working conditions, pay, policies, supervision, and job security are described as prerequisites that prevent dissatisfaction but are not sufficient by themselves to create high levels of satisfaction.

The nine emergent findings under the hygiene factor cluster illuminate how the absence or weakness of these conditions reliably triggers frustration, disengagement, and turnover risk. Yet, the theory also implies that simply eliminating dissatisfaction does not guarantee motivation or commitment; additional drivers captured in the motivators must be engaged to elevate experience and performance. In integrating needs theory, the synthesis expands to acknowledge that employees regulate their work lives according to a hierarchy or progression of needs. When basic or security-related needs tied to hygiene factors are met, individuals are more open to pursuing higher-order needs such as achievement, recognition, and growth. In this frame, the hygiene findings do not vanish; they set the stage for fulfilling more complex motivational demands.

Needs theory contributes a complementary lens by foregrounding how individuals' evolving needs shape their responses to workplace conditions. The nine hygiene-related findings align with a progression from basic comfort and security to more sophisticated aspirations. This alignment explains why organizations that merely fix surface-level conditions may see short-term improvements but still encounter drift in satisfaction if higher-level needs remain unmet. The synthesis therefore argues that satisfying needs is a multi-stage process: first stabilizing the environment to reduce fear and irritants, then enabling opportunities for self-actualization, mastery, and meaningful contribution. The nine motivator-related findings further illustrate this by highlighting how opportunities for growth, achievement, and recognition can transform neutral or even slightly favorable conditions into robust satisfaction and commitment.

The ethics of care theory adds an essential relational and moral dimension to the synthesis. It emphasizes responsiveness, attentiveness, and responsibility to others within the workplace. Relational care helps explain why some hygiene improvements do not translate into lasting satisfaction unless employees perceive genuine concern from leaders and peers. In practice, care-oriented interactions listening, customization of support, and fair treatment can amplify the positive effects of both hygiene and motivator conditions. The nine findings under each factor, viewed through care ethics, reveal that employees are more likely to interpret organizational practices as fair and benevolent when care is evident in daily routines, supervisory behavior, and peer collaboration. This relational view also intersects with transformational leadership, which models care through individualized consideration, inspires trust through ethical conduct, and fosters a shared sense of purpose. Transformational leadership and social learning theory offer dynamic mechanisms for translating the theoretical insights into observable workplace changes. Transformational leaders articulate a compelling vision, provide individualized coaching, and recognize employees' contributions precisely the behaviors that convert motivator opportunities into sustained satisfaction and higher retention. In the synthesis, nine motivator findings dovetail with transformational leadership by illustrating how recognition, responsibility, and growth are amplified when leaders actively guide development and model aspirational behavior. Social learning theory explains how these leader-driven patterns cascade through the workforce: employees observe and imitate effective practices, adopt positive attitudes, and internalize norms of collaboration and excellence. The hygiene

findings become more than compliance checks when they are embedded in a culture of exemplary leadership and constructive role modeling.

Taken together, the integrated interpretation suggests a holistic approach to improving employee satisfaction and retention. The hygiene factor findings illustrate what must be in place to avoid dissatisfaction; the motivator findings, enhanced by needs-based and care-oriented perspectives, reveal what elevates satisfaction and fosters commitment. Leadership emerges as the critical conduit that aligns these elements: leaders who demonstrate care, provide meaningful growth opportunities, and model productive behaviors can transform baseline conditions into high-quality employee experiences. Social learning ensures that these benefits propagate through teams and classrooms alike, sustaining a positive organizational climate even as external pressures evolve. For practical application, the synthesis points to several implications for workplaces and, in particular, for teacher retention. First, establish and maintain reliable hygiene foundations: fair compensation, safe working conditions, transparent policies, and consistent supervision. Second, attend attentively to needs-based growth: create clear pathways for advancement, recognize contributions, and provide meaningful responsibilities that satisfy higher-order needs. Third, cultivate a culture of care: train leaders to listen, respond empathetically, and treat staff with respect and fairness. Fourth, invest in transformational leadership development and mentoring programs that enable individualized guidance and inspirational, values-driven direction. Finally, leverage social learning by pairing new staff with positive role models, promoting collaborative problem-solving, and publicizing best practices to encourage imitation of constructive behaviors. In sum, this synthesis demonstrates that employee satisfaction and retention arise from the interplay of stable, fair working conditions (hygiene factors), meaningful growth opportunities (motivators aligned with needs theory), and a relational, ethically grounded, leadership-driven culture (ethics of care, transformational leadership, and social learning).

By integrating these theories, organizations can move beyond simply preventing dissatisfaction to actively cultivating fulfilling, sustainable work experiences that support long-term retention.

5.6.2.1 The Theory of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The study under consideration presents Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a guiding framework for understanding the factors that influence teacher retention in urban primary schools. It argues that Maslow's theory comprising five levels from physiological needs to self-actualization offers a valuable, though not universally applicable, lens through which to analyze how teachers' motivations and job satisfaction are shaped by their workplace environment. By integrating Maslow's categories with empirical observations about urban teaching contexts, the piece suggests that leaders who attend to teachers' basic, social, and esteem needs create conditions that enable higher-order motivations, professional growth, and ultimately greater retention. This synthesis essay draws these ideas together, highlighting how a needs-based perspective can inform practical strategies while also acknowledging its limitations.

First, the core premise is that Maslow's hierarchy delineates a progression of human needs that influence work behavior. The theory starts with physiological and safety needs, moves through belonging and social needs and self-esteem, and culminates in self-actualization, the realization of one's potential. The study notes that the theory is widely used to interpret motivation in educational settings and that satisfying lower-order needs is a prerequisite for teachers to pursue higher-order outcomes such as professional growth and a sense of value within the school community (cf: Figure 2.1; cf: Sections 2.8.1 and 5.6.2.). In the context of urban primary schools, this means that a teacher's decision to stay in a challenging environment is influenced by whether their basic safety at work is assured, whether they experience supportive relationships, and whether they feel respected and connected to their colleagues and students. Only after these needs are addressed can teachers engage in meaningful, self-fulfilling work that fosters long-term commitment.

Second, the synthesis highlights how the theory translates into concrete retention-related implications. The study emphasizes that safety, psychological and physical safety in the workplace must be secured before teachers can focus on higher-order aspects such as professional growth and a sense of belonging. Positive working relationships, opportunities for performance improvement, and recognition contribute to esteem needs, which in turn support engagement and persistence in the profession.

When teachers perceive that their contributions are valued and that they can advance professionally, their motivation to remain in the system increases. The self-actualization level is portrayed as the pinnacle of motivation, where teachers aspire to grow, develop their ideal professional selves, and navigate complex dynamics with greater autonomy and purpose (cf: Sections 5.6.2.2–5.6.2.4). In urban contexts, where stressors are often pronounced, ensuring these conditions can be a decisive factor in whether a teacher remains in the classroom over the long term.

Third, the synthesis acknowledges the nuanced stance the study takes regarding the applicability of Maslow's model. While Maslow's hierarchy provides a coherent framework for organizing factors related to retention, the study concedes that it is not universally applicable to every teacher. This caveat invites a more nuanced interpretation: while addressing lower- and mid-level needs can significantly bolster retention for many teachers, cultural, contextual, and individual differences mean that some teachers may be motivated by factors that do not neatly align with the pyramid. The study also signals a broader theoretical conversation about how intrinsic and extrinsic motivators interact, and how the balance between free will and determinism may shape teachers' pursuit of self-actualization. In practical terms, this means school leaders should adopt Maslow's framework as a flexible guide rather than a rigid blueprint, tailoring supports to fit diverse teacher experiences and local circumstances (cf: general statements about universality and Section 2.8.6).

Fourth, the synthesis integrates these ideas into actionable implications for practice and policy. If safety and belonging are prerequisites for engagement, urban schools should prioritize secure and supportive work environments, including manageable workloads, predictable expectations, and access to mental health resources. Building a culture of collaboration and mentorship can fulfill social and esteem needs, helping teachers feel valued and connected to a professional community. Structured professional development and clear pathways for growth address self-esteem and self-actualization, enabling teachers to develop new skills, take on leadership roles, and realize their potential within the school system. The study's finding implies that school leaders principals in particular should be mindful of teachers' evolving needs and design interventions that address multiple levels of the hierarchy simultaneously. While Maslow's model should not be used in isolation, aligning retention strategies

with its levels can create a comprehensive approach to reducing turnover, especially in challenging urban environments (cf: Sections 5.6).

Finally, this synthesis underscores the value of Maslow's needs-based lens as part of a broader, multi-faceted approach to teacher retention. The strength of the framework lies in its clarity and its emphasis on foundational conditions that enable growth and commitment. Its limitations remind us to complement the model with other theories and to remain responsive to context and individuality. In urban primary schools, where retention challenges are often tied to structural and relational factors, Maslow's hierarchy offers a practical language for diagnosing needs, prioritizing interventions, and communicating a shared commitment to teachers' well-being and professional fulfillment. By integrating the needs-based perspective with empirical observations and locally informed strategies, policymakers and school leaders can craft more effective, humane, and sustainable approaches to keeping dedicated teachers in the classrooms where they are most needed.

5.6.2.2 Herzberg and colleagues' Two Factor Theory

The Herzberg-Hygiene (MHT) theory, introduced by Frederick Hertzberg in the late 1950s, was utilised in a research study conducted by Herzberg et al., a behavioural scientist, to explore job satisfaction. This study, which received funding from the Buhl Foundation, concentrated on the relationship between employees' (specifically teachers') attitudes and their motivation in the workplace. Herzberg et al. categorised factors into motivators and hygiene factors, identifying intrinsic motivators such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement as detailed in Section 2.12, alongside extrinsic factors like policies, supervision, compensation, and interpersonal relationships, which are also discussed in Section 2.18 and Section 2.19 (refer to Figure 2.2). Job satisfaction served as the dependent variable, while professional relationships within educational settings were treated as independent variables. This theory holds significance for the current study, as professional interactions within school environments can be classified as either motivators or hygiene factors, based on their potential to foster job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The presence of hygiene factors does not automatically result in job satisfaction; however, their absence can lead to job dissatisfaction. The objective of the study was

to gain a deeper understanding of employees' perceptions regarding their jobs and the factors influencing job satisfaction.

5.6.2.3 Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy perceptions, initially introduced by Albert Bandura in 1977, refer to the beliefs regarding one's ability to organize and carry out actions necessary for achieving goals. These perceptions have been consistently validated in the realms of human learning, performance, and motivation. Teachers who possess high self-efficacy are more likely to take on challenges and remain resilient in the face of potential setbacks, which allows them to persist in challenging educational environments. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is closely associated with individual motivation and self-efficacy, positing that the acquisition of knowledge can be derived from observing others in social contexts, as well as through personal experiences and external factors (cf: Section 2.10). Teacher efficacy, a significant concept within educational psychology, evaluates teachers' beliefs about their professional abilities. Research has pinpointed three essential psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which are crucial for fostering self-motivation and overall well-being. To enhance teacher retention, educational institutions ought to adopt collaborative leadership practices, increase teacher involvement in decision-making processes, and offer opportunities for ECTs to observe veteran practitioners and participate in professional development that emphasises effective strategies for teaching in high-poverty urban settings. Urban educational contexts pose complex challenges, such as poverty, disciplinary concerns, cultural diversity, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners. Teachers mustn't work in isolation, as this can result in diminished self-efficacy (as noted in Section 2.10). Research shows that teachers with high self-efficacy tend to experience more favourable internal and external outcomes, such as enhanced longevity and instructional effectiveness. In urban educational environments, teachers who possess high self-efficacy credit their optimistic perspective to their capacity to fully engage in their roles while applying culturally relevant practices and acknowledging the significance of racial and ethnic diversity.

Over half of the participants indicated that factors associated with the school environment would influence their decision to remain in the profession. The respondents identified factors related to the school environment, including positive

morale, a supportive workplace, and alignment between management and staff on disciplinary matters. For instance, Participant 12 and other participants expressed sentiments such as: *“A mentor or someone to support my ideas and bounce other ideas off would be required. I would need someone who would support me by identifying what I need and then provide support and assistance.”* These remarks from respondents may connect to self-efficacy, as having the aforementioned statements and needs could potentially enhance their self-efficacy levels.

The presence of supportive management, whether through supervision, mentoring, training, or fostering unity among staff and positive morale, could significantly boost their self-efficacy. In these contexts, mentoring is viewed as a beneficial relationship between experienced or veteran teachers and novice or (ECTs, where the ECTs receive guidance from their veteran counterparts (Palm, 2022, p. 163). Hence, robust support systems are essential for facilitating ongoing professional development and achieving success in challenging and diverse classroom settings.

5.6.2.4 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership practices have been demonstrated to improve teacher job satisfaction, primarily due to their inspirational, empowering, and visionary traits (cf: Section 2.15). This model highlights the commitment and skills of organisational staff, leading to enhanced effort and productivity. Nonetheless, it faces criticism for potentially exerting control over teachers by enforcing compliance with the leader’s values. The prevailing policy environment in schools prompts scrutiny regarding the legitimacy of the transformational model, as it may represent a top-down approach rather than a customised assessment of the unique needs of individual schools and their communities. The South African educational framework requires school principals to adhere to governmental policies, which dictate objectives, curricular content, teaching methods, and fundamental values. This indicates that the transformation process might be a top-down implementation rather than a tailored evaluation of the specific needs of individual schools and their respective communities (cf: Table 2.1). Critics contend that the prevailing values frequently stem from the government or the school principal, resulting in the overshadowing of educational values cherished by teachers by externally imposed value systems (cf: Section 2.6.5). In summary, the transformational leadership model emphasises the importance of

values, yet the discourse regarding its validity revolves around the issue of whose values are being prioritised.

5.6.2.5 Duffy's Work as a Calling Theory (WCT)

The notion of calling within academic literature is multifaceted and intricate, with a range of interpretations developing over time. Huang et al (2022) (1986) proposed a tripartite framework for work orientations: job, career, and calling. Following this, subsequent studies have concentrated on calling as a unique construct, with researchers suggesting various definitions. The progression of the calling concept has been a focal point of academic discussion, with diverse interpretations arising over time. Huang et al (2022) provided a foundational definition, characterising calling as the purpose an individual perceives in life. These authors categorised these interpretations as contemporary perspectives, highlighting intrinsic motivation towards self-fulfilment and happiness. Recent empirical investigations (Shang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022; Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024) have explored how individuals conceptualise calling, with neoclassical interpretations underscoring duty and prosocial responsibility. Qualitative studies involving college students have identified components such as a guiding force, job compatibility, altruistic perspectives, passion, and a perceived obligation in realising one's calling. The understanding of calling may demonstrate greater variability in its developmental and discernment processes (i.e., the precursors of calling) rather than in its subsequent impacts. This assertion is reinforced by the notable consistency in results across studies examining the correlates of calling, irrespective of its conceptualisation. At present, research participants who recognise a calling generally engage with their work in a way that links it to meaning and purpose, prioritise prosocial contributions through their professional endeavours, and acknowledge an external or internal influence steering their career path. Recognising a calling goes beyond simple career ambition, necessitating the existence of meaning, prosocial motivation, and a sense of compulsion (whether internal or external) (Shang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022; Huang, et al., 2022; Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024).

5.6.2.6 Ethics of Care Theory in teaching

The ethics of care theory, formulated by Noddings, underscores the significance of developing robust relationships with students, catering to their individual needs, and fostering a supportive classroom environment. This methodology can improve teacher

job satisfaction and promote a mutually beneficial connection between teacher contentment and student well-being, thereby enhancing the overall learning atmosphere. The ethics of care theory arose as a normative framework in the field of psychology, initiated by feminist scholar Carol Gilligan. Nevertheless, it is frequently taken for granted rather than intentionally cultivated or taught. In the realm of physical education, teachers often demonstrate care primarily for those students who exhibit a desire to learn or possess athletic skills. To cultivate compassionate teachers, it is advisable to incorporate the ethic of care as a component of pedagogical content knowledge within the undergraduate teacher education curriculum.

5.7 FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

5.7.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The empirical results of this research are outlined in relation to the study's aims and objectives (see: Section 1.7 and Section 1.8).

5.7.2 OBJECTIVE 1: To determine the key factors influencing veteran teachers to remain in schools

5.7.2.1 Professional moral and ethical purpose and pride

The research revealed that teachers experience professional fulfilment through a sense of accomplishment and the capacity to positively affect students' future opportunities, which they consider a vital vocational motivator. In Section 5.6.2.1.2, the findings indicated that the majority of teachers derive satisfaction from aiding student understanding, managing behavioural issues, implementing change, and receiving affirmative feedback from students regarding their teaching strategies, as these factors enhance their ability to make a significant impact. This is further supported by global literature (Noddings, 2005, p. 26). Generally, teachers view their profession as socially advantageous, resonating with personal principles such as fostering learning and improving students' career and life prospects (Noddings, 2005, pp. 113-114). Participants in this study articulated their motivation to assist students by elevating aspirations, providing support, and creating an ideal learning atmosphere. This belief in their societal function acts as a sustaining factor in their teaching journeys. Some individuals reported early achievements upon realising they were surpassing expectations in their initial teaching roles (cf: Section 5.6.2.4.2 and Section 5.6.2.1.4). Academic outcomes were also the primary source of recognised pride, as seen in their quest for fulfilment through gradual successes and notable

advancements in historically low-performing schools (cf: Section 5.6.1.1). The research suggested that acknowledgement from various stakeholders, including students, parents, peers, and administrators, can foster a sense of pride, resilience, self-efficacy, and accomplishment among teachers. This includes the establishment of trust-based relationships, support for individuals and organisations, and the development of subject matter expertise.

5.7.2.2 A good cultural connectedness and humility

Supported by literature (Maslow, 1957; Hulme & Wood, 2022; Banerji, 2024), teachers in this study perceive a positive workplace ethos as characterised by shared values, consistent approaches, and alignment with personal beliefs. Personal geographies of support ingrained in staff friendships and connections, as well as their shared belief systems, served as a foundation for professional investigation and discourse in a particular school rather than as a replacement for it. This school questioned the dichotomy of personal and professional connections, consensus and controversy, and being a colleague vs a friend, as demonstrated by Participant 2' (cf: Section 5.4.3.3) detailed account of his happy emotional experiences with his coworkers, as he added to his account: *"...here, I collaborate closely with my coworkers. Everyone does. We collaborate really well and almost everything we do is constructive, and I believe that's because we all share similar views on education... The principal requested that we all consider and submit our educational philosophies when he hired us. Because we all come here voluntarily, because we all share the same views on education, and because we all recognise that we are here for the children. I believe our collaboration is excellent."*

This perception varies among teachers, with some finding satisfaction in challenging urban environments and others preferring institutions where students demonstrate care for peers and teachers. This study found that the positive ethos is predominantly observed at the institutional level, but it can influence teacher and student behaviour and learning outcomes, impacting professional satisfaction. However, research has also indicated that the concept of a good fit for teachers has evolved, with some values structured approaches and others appreciating flexibility. The study also found that positive learning environments are associated with teachers and students exhibiting favourable attitudes, influenced by factors such as teaching and learning

approaches, behaviour, and personality traits. Teachers focus on engaging aspects of their work and avoid competition by identifying their professional niches.

5.7.2.3 Gaining additional responsibilities

Teachers typically experience favourable career advancement, with additional responsibilities usually arising within their initial five years. Section 4 of EEA 76 of 1998 stipulates that, alongside the core duties and responsibilities outlined in the Act, certain specialised tasks may be assigned to staff in a fair manner by school administrators. These positions offer intellectual engagement and varied experiences, frequently resulting in decreased workloads. Teachers view promotions, even in the absence of incentives, and added responsibilities as an acknowledgement of their contributions and professional growth (Burns, et al., 2020; Uştuk & De Costa, 2021). Despite the challenges and demands associated with teaching, the research indicated that, throughout their careers, some teachers recognise positive factors within the school environment that enhance their perceptions and beliefs regarding teaching, culminating in a significantly advantageous cumulative effect (cf: Section 5.6.7.1.1). Furthermore, the research underscores the significance of a sense of belonging within a teacher's professional journey (Maslow, 1954, pp. 2-3). Peer support is vital for teachers during transitions to new roles or institutions. It encompasses mutual aid, experience sharing, and addressing practical concerns. This support may originate from within departments or across the institution. The research revealed that teachers frequently gain from informal assistance provided by non-teaching staff, which aids in swift adaptation to new school settings. Informal support is often more effective than formal institutional mechanisms such as mentor assignments (Gimbert & Kapa, 2022). Teachers have indicated that they experience positive phases in their careers when they are integrated into a team of individuals with similar values, fostering a sense of collegiality and camaraderie (cf: Section 5.6.2.1.4; Section 5.6.2.2 and Section 5.6.2.3). Collaborative initiatives, including the exchange of methodologies, teamwork, the development of resources, and the sharing of experiences across departments, were also identified as advantageous among participants. Supporting these observations, prior research has demonstrated that collaborative problem-solving plays a crucial role in helping teachers navigate through difficult periods (Smet, 2022; Ou & Gu, 2024).

5.7.2.4 Enjoyable aspects of being a teacher

Section 5.6.2.1.1 of this research indicates that teachers derive professional fulfilment from various factors of their teaching roles, which play a significant role in their career longevity. Teachers discover personal significance and a broader purpose in their teaching endeavours (cf: also Section 5.6.2.4.3; Section 5.6.2.5; Section 5.6.2.5.1 and Section 5.6.7.1.2). These sources of fulfilment encompass building relationships with students, mentoring ECTs (cf: Section 5.6.2.1.4), and teaching specific groups of students or within certain educational contexts. In essence, they perceive that aiding others or contributing to the greater good, along with feeling an internal and external drive towards their teaching profession (Noddings, 2005, p. 15), is vital. The sense of satisfaction that teachers experience arises from various aspects of their profession, particularly the interpersonal relationships with students. Teachers reported finding pleasure in teaching particular factors of their subject matter and enhancing their own subject knowledge. They conveyed that they are attracted to the teaching profession and view themselves as altruistic individuals, with teaching offering them a platform to showcase their personality and personal interaction styles with their environment, as discussed in Section 3.17 and Section 5.6.2.6 of this research. They consider teaching to be their vocation from the outset. This suggests that there exists an altruistic drive behind their inclination to teach (cf: Section 5.6.2.5.3 and Section 5.6.8.1). Furthermore, they conveyed a sense of fulfilment in creating educational materials, engaging with a variety of colleagues, and coordinating learning trips for students. These affirmative experiences were consistently noted throughout all phases of teachers' professional development. The development of relationships with students was identified as a particularly gratifying factor, enabling teachers to acquire personalised insights into their students and improve classroom dynamics. The findings of the study indicated that extracurricular initiatives, such as field trips or advisory groups, further enhanced this feeling of satisfaction. Beginning from their second professional role, teachers reported heightened contentment in their subject areas as they were afforded the chance to instruct on topics they favoured. A significant number of teachers in this report recognised a sense of independence within their classrooms, and their engagements with students acted as a sustaining influence in their careers. Consequently, this study concluded that such autonomy allowed them to focus on the factors of their profession that continued to yield both

personal and professional satisfaction (cf: Section 5.6.8.2 and Section 5.6.8.3). Comparable findings were documented in earlier research studies addressing the same topic (Worth & van den Brande, 2020).

5.7.2.5 Teachers derive their motivation from the intrinsic nature of their work.

Herzberg et al. (1959) conducted research indicating that individuals in public service positions, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, military personnel, and teachers, typically display a natural enthusiasm for their designated roles. The two-factor theory posits that the nature of the work involves executing job-related tasks to create a positive influence (Herzberg et al., 1959). The findings of the researchers correspond with Herzberg et al.'s notion of the work itself, as illustrated by the participants' descriptions of their motivations for pursuing a career in teaching, which stemmed from a desire to make a positive contribution or a perceived spiritual vocation. Herzberg et al. (1959) caution that, despite the intrinsic motivation exhibited by workers such as teachers, employers must be proactive in preventing circumstances that could lead to boredom, stress, or burnout, as these factors can significantly diminish job satisfaction. All research participants exhibit motivation that arises from the work itself. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) may reasonably infer that many other teachers within their district possess a similar intrinsic passion for teaching. Nevertheless, the lack or insufficiency of motivation and hygiene factors may present a risk of teacher turnover, which the DBE should anticipate and address in a proactive manner (Akdemir, 2020).

5.7.2.6 Continuous professional development as a teacher

Section 5.4.3.3 of this study found that the trajectory of teachers' professional development revealed a recurring motif of positive growth. These experienced teachers reported enhanced efficacy in their roles as they amassed expertise and experience, resulting in heightened job satisfaction and a sense of achievement (Bandura, 1977; 1993; 1997). The broadening of their competencies not only engendered positivity but also facilitated more effective student engagement and maximised student potential. Professional advancement in the initial educational context primarily involved skill acquisition through practical experience, structured training, and emulation of exemplary practitioners. Similarly, it was previously reported that teachers valued their personal development, with even adverse experiences contributing to their growth. Transitioning to a new institution often

yielded increased positive affect as teachers forged connections with students, acclimated to expectations, and adapted their pedagogical approaches to the novel environment (Ellison, 2023; Banerji, 2024). Some teachers noted improved morale following enhanced student outcomes or the graduation of challenging cohorts. Securing a dedicated instructional space contributed to a sense of establishment, positively influencing self-assurance and classroom management capabilities. As teachers gained proficiency, it was discovered that they developed the ability to discern patterns within their roles and articulate strategies for increased efficiency. This study involved recognising difficult phases within the academic calendar, managing workloads, and understanding the temporary nature of challenges (see: Section 5.6.2.4.2 and Section 5.6.2.4.3). The teachers participating in this research also developed the ability to identify and effectively respond to familiar student behaviours. Furthermore, Section 5.6.2.5.4 highlighted that practical strategies gained through experience included optimising administrative responsibilities, improving time management, and applying teaching methods such as peer assessment. Numerous teachers in this study noted an increase in empathy towards students' backgrounds, which allowed them to tackle challenging behaviours without taking issues personally (also consult Section 2.9.2, Section 2.21.2, and Section 3.17.2 for additional insights). These results are further supported by various scholars who have previously noted that this empathetic approach enables teachers to recognise the complex challenges that students encounter, which may influence their educational involvement and overall learning experience (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006, p. 482).

5.7.2.7 Teachers and Student Performance

Teachers in this study indicated that they acknowledge and address students as distinct individuals, upholding their rights and responding to them with empathy and equity (Noddings, 2005, p. 30). These professionals endeavour to grasp students' initial perspectives, thought processes, and beliefs. They manage matters about students' personal attributes and privacy with the utmost discretion. They devote particular attention to students requiring care and safeguarding, and categorically reject any form of intimidation or maltreatment. The educational role encompasses not only academic instruction but also the development of collaborative skills and social integration. A crucial aspect of teachers' duties involves cultivating self-confidence and fostering constructive interpersonal relationships among students.

The study further revealed that participants consistently identified their primary source of motivation as fostering their students' academic success. This finding suggests a symbiotic relationship between teacher and student achievement, wherein the success of students directly contributes to the teachers' sense of accomplishment. Herzberg et al. (1993) define these feelings of accomplishment as arising from the effective execution of a task (p. 59). Furthermore, Herzberg et al (1959) posit that achievement stands in direct opposition to failure. Consequently, drawing from two-factor theory, it can be inferred that teachers may experience job satisfaction through the cultivation of achievement-related emotions when their students attain academic excellence.

5.7.2.8 Feeling supported and valued

This study further investigated the factors that influence teachers' perceptions of support, job satisfaction, and their sense of value throughout their professional journeys. Some participants indicated that they received support from senior leadership at different times, including principals and department heads. The type of support varied, encompassing situations where principals advocated for teachers in response to student complaints and provided opportunities for greater responsibility (Banerji, 2024). The research revealed that the supportive dynamics between teachers and school principals can be equally, or in some instances, more crucial for job satisfaction (cf: Section 3.15 and Section 5.6.8.3). A vigorous rapport between teachers and a principal fosters positive work environments that are symptomatic of teachers feeling less work-related stress and frustration, as well as professional recognition and respect (cf: Section 5.4.4.2 and Section 5.4.4.3). Some teachers appreciated practical assistance from leadership, such as addressing disruptive students, managing workloads, or enhancing work practices (Dreer, 2020; Akdemir, 2020; Garcia, Han, & Weiss, 2022). Most felt their concerns were heard and acted upon, as evidenced by one participant's appreciation for a department head's modification of marking policies in response to staff feedback about excessive grading impacting lesson quality. Support also encompassed the ability to express genuine emotions, acknowledge mistakes, or admit knowledge gaps. Positive interactions with leadership fostered feelings of encouragement, with teachers valuing empathetic principals who considered both their professional and personal circumstances. The study aimed to identify factors contributing to teachers' feelings

of value and recognition. Appreciation from school leadership, students, parents, colleagues, inspectors, and external consultants emerged as significant positive factors. Some teachers also valued acknowledgement from sources outside the school. A common thread among participants was the appreciation of recognition for efforts not directly tied to student examination performance. Teachers reported positive responses to acknowledgement of additional time invested, extra work due to curriculum changes, organisation of extracurricular activities, fostering relationships with challenging students, subject expertise, and resource creation. Recognition for exam results tended to elicit relief rather than satisfaction, particularly when outcomes fell short of expectations or when teachers had inherited difficult situations. Some participants reported being assigned additional responsibilities, receiving promotions, or being granted autonomy in their roles. Access to professional development opportunities was also perceived as a form of support and validation by some teachers. Two participants mentioned early-career external training events, including management development and teaching skills enhancement. Several teachers recognised actionable enhancements that significantly improved their experiences once implemented, including designated areas within classrooms and the complete allocation of leadership time (cf: Section 5.6.3.1 ; Section 5.6.3.1.1 and Section 5.6.3.1.2). This study highlights the critical role of teachers' perceptions of value and acknowledgement in both their professional and personal lives (Botha & Hugo, 2021).

5.7.2.9 Positive Environmental Changes

The research investigated the advantages of modifications in participants' environments, alongside teacher-initiated changes such as transferring between schools and other academic adjustments. Despite transitions being a primary source of low points, most teachers observed improvements in their trajectories following at least one nadir. These transitions often involved relocating to institutions perceived as superior to their previous placements. This specific subtopic necessitated separate treatment due to its distinct nature. Notably, transitions to new environments frequently coincided with the departure of existing senior leadership or the instatement of new principals.

5.7.2.10 Learning and professional growth

Participants who assessed positive aspects of learning and development reported that the enhancement of pedagogical skills rendered the task more manageable and gratifying. The interrelation between pedagogical improvement and increased enjoyment is exemplified by Participant 5. The subject matter underscored the significance of cultivating instructional proficiencies and sustaining the teacher's position, while simultaneously accentuating the necessity to equilibrate participants' autonomy with their acceptance of perceived unalterable circumstances.

5.7.2.11 Nature of teaching

Teachers, in their generalisations, reconciled themselves with the unalterable aspects of their profession and the intrinsic nature of teaching. This study found that the majority of participants experienced a sense of acceptance upon commencing their initial teaching position, which corresponded with their career expectations (cf: Section 5.4.3.1). At this juncture, it was reasonable for them to anticipate that teaching would be labour-intensive and initially demanding. The majority of participants' perceptions regarding the role were shaped by their insufficient inclination towards pursuing teaching as a profession (cf: Section 2.21.2; Section 3.8.1; Section 3.17.4 and Section 5.6.2.4). Despite the considerable workload, most participants rated the initial phase of their first teaching assignment quite highly on their visual timeline. Some discovered that their first teaching role was more rewarding than they had anticipated. All participants shared experiences from their professional journeys where they had to adapt to factors they disagreed with or could not alter. These experiences included recognising that certain students might not share their passion for the subject, integrating aspects of a new curriculum, and avoiding disputes over differing opinions. Teachers had to acknowledge that, in relation to individual classes and daily responsibilities, they were adequate and functioning at their best within the existing time limitations. Participants also highlighted the importance of appreciating small successes and finding fulfilment in gradual advancements in students' understanding or techniques, rather than depending solely on the transformation of students' future paths as their main source of satisfaction (cf: Section 5.6.4.2). The research indicated that teachers' workload trends were consistent, especially during the summer semester, which helped them identify short-term challenges and manage expectations. Even from their current viewpoint as veteran teachers, they foresaw

typical variations in their profession. The recognized patterns allowed teachers to tackle different situations, including expectation management and identifying immediate challenges (Arthur & Bradley, 2023). Most participants noted that new initiatives and changes were temporary and anticipated that this pattern would continue. This perception influenced the extent to which they engaged with these changes and adapted their pedagogical practices accordingly.

5.7.2.12 Recognising agency in teaching

This study also explored the notion of agency within the educational context, particularly emphasising the roles of teachers in their professional development as outlined in Section 5.6.2.4.3. Teachers recognise their ability to influence various factors of their academic and professional settings, which primarily manifests through their additional responsibilities (Noddings, 2005). They actively seek out opportunities to improve their competencies and progress in their careers, including participating in voluntary endeavours or contributing to broader institutional initiatives. Furthermore, these teachers express their beliefs by challenging organisational policies, articulating disagreements with superiors, and requesting modifications to their work schedules. Some teachers uphold their positions even when faced with authoritative principals. The SACE Handbook of Professional Ethics highlights the difficulties of being a teacher in South Africa. This is due to the fact that many teachers encounter significant challenges daily, often with limited resources, and strive to make a meaningful impact on their students' lives. In executing their responsibilities, teachers are expected to conduct themselves professionally and, in particular, to act ethically. Consequently, this research revealed that teachers emphasise the necessity of maintaining their ethical principles and convictions, even amidst conflict. Beyond overt challenges to leadership decisions, teachers also discuss a more subtle form of agency: selectively disregarding practices they deem less valuable, such as determining which initiatives to implement, postponing certain actions, and adapting existing practices to align with new directives. These choices are made to address students' needs while managing personal workloads, especially during high-pressure periods (Noddings, 2005). The study emphasises the significance of teachers' agency in their professional growth and career advancement. Some teachers express a desire to continue teaching, citing a sense of purpose as a primary motivator for working in public education. Participants discussed the challenges of managing their teaching

careers while maintaining a fulfilling life outside the classroom. They concurred that improving their professional practice requires dedicated effort. Strategies for workload management include adhering to deadlines, establishing clear boundaries, and recognising that scheduled classes are sufficient, particularly during intense periods. Teachers also stressed the importance of acknowledging limitations, regulating work pace (cf: Section 5.4.8.1), and concentrating on immediate tasks rather than extensive long-term planning, emphasising the need to optimize their time and energy allocation.

5.8 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION

A study focusing on teachers revealed that the vast majority of participants perceived flourishing as unattainable within their existing educational settings, despite acknowledging it as an aspiration. The research identified three principal themes: the advantages teachers gained from their professional responsibilities, their methodologies in approaching their duties, and the pursuit of a balanced work-life integration. While the initial two themes were recognised, the third was considered elusive. The curriculum incorporates exemplifications of these themes and their consequential effects throughout its content.

5.8.1 OBJECTIVE 2: To determine the perception of veteran primary teachers on the relationship between job satisfaction and teaching and learning

5.8.1.1 Teachers' best strategies to succeed in their roles

The research findings indicate that teachers perceive flourishing teachers as those who exhibit specific professional attributes. These attributes include a willingness to learn from peers, an inclination to take calculated professional risks, and a commitment to advancing the field through academic pursuits and continued education. Additionally, flourishing teachers are characterised by their awareness of emerging trends in education, their drive for self-improvement, and their consistent high performance in their roles.

5.8.1.2 Establishing a good work/life balance

The study investigated the ability of teachers to uphold outstanding professional standards while also ensuring a healthy balance between their professional responsibilities and personal lives (refer to Section 3.11 and Section 3.12). Nevertheless, most teachers voiced doubts about the practicality of reaching elevated

learning and performance standards that promote well-being, all the while sustaining a constructive work-life balance. They viewed flourishing as an unattainable ideal, with only certain aspects being realisable rather than comprehensive thriving. When prompted to suggest governmental measures that would support their long-term careers, teachers proposed various initiatives they deemed potentially effective. This inquiry stemmed from the universal experience among participants of encountering government policies that conflicted with their educational philosophies. Two primary concerns emerged from teachers' responses: the necessity for policymakers to acquire a more profound understanding of the educational landscape and the imperative to accord teachers appropriate recognition and respect. The study aimed to address these issues and propose strategies for sustaining teachers' professional longevity.

5.8.1.3 Become more knowledgeable about teaching in general.

Most participants conveyed the belief that the government ought to have a deeper insight into the actual conditions of teaching, especially concerning the obstacles linked to rigorous academic curricula and the challenges that students encounter in their home settings. Furthermore, financial resources were suggested as a means of improving the quality of instruction, specifically through the expansion of student pastoral care and the facilitation of improved access to resources. The physical environments of schools were also deemed highly significant in creating an atmosphere conducive to learning. In addition to recommending that government officials acquire a more thorough understanding of teachers' workloads, teachers emphasised the importance of a reduced burden and an improved work-life balance for their personal well-being. Participant 4 proposed, for instance, that pastoral concerns should be the primary focus of the current workload project rather than marking. To ensure that new teachers experience a successful career, a study was conducted inquiring about teachers' perspectives on the significance of early career support and teacher training. Their responses were inconsistent and focused more on the needs of recently hired teachers rather than on discrete stages. Two themes emerged: factors that teachers considered crucial for aspiring teachers at any point in their careers, from their initial training to their later years.

5.8.1.4 Increasing the work's manageability

The study revealed that experienced teachers identified several critical themes to support the integration of ECTs into the profession (cf: Section 5.4.8.1). They posited that ECTs require additional assistance in developing competencies such as classroom management and resource evaluation. This was also reported in the literature. Acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of school environments, the teachers recognised the necessity for diverse approaches to classroom and behaviour management. They emphasised the significance of effective leadership and exemplary role models in facilitating new teachers' adaptation to their roles. Particular attention was given to competencies that could mitigate workloads and enhance job satisfaction, with classroom management identified as a potential contributor to increased job satisfaction. The research participants were asked to discuss workload management strategies for new teachers, highlighting the importance of work-life balance and individualised approaches. Some teachers preferred completing tasks at home in a more conducive environment, while others opted to remain at school until all work was completed. The importance of understanding the teaching rhythm, recognising and addressing high-stress periods, and accepting the inherent fluctuations in performance was emphasised. Certain participants advocated for prioritising immediate needs over anticipating future challenges, acknowledging that some tasks could be deferred.

5.8.1.5 Establishing a strategy for better teaching

The investigation revealed that nascent teachers would benefit from heightened cognisance of the psychological facets inherent in their vocation, encompassing the substantial workload and the necessity for pragmatic expectations (Dreer, 2020). The research underscored the importance of ECTs recognising the value of collegial relationships and seeking informal support within their educational institutions (Arthur & Bradley, 2023). Moreover, the study advocated for new teachers to remain receptive to guidance from veteran professionals, proactively solicit assistance, and maintain a balanced outlook. The findings also recommended that emerging teachers identify gratifying aspects of their role and engage in compelling projects. Additionally, the research proposed encouraging neophyte teachers to acknowledge and value incremental achievements, recognising when their efforts suffice rather than pursuing unattainable perfection. Ultimately, the study advocates for ECTs to

cultivate a harmonious integration of personal and professional spheres, fostering a more rewarding career trajectory.

5.9 ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERS IN MANAGING TEACHERS' RETENTION

Leadership goes beyond the conventional emphasis on task management and performance in today's changing workplace. The ability to foster conditions where people feel appreciated, encouraged, and inspired to reach their full potential is becoming a more and more defining characteristic of modern leadership. The shift towards human-centred leadership is exemplified by the concept of caring leadership, which places a premium on the happiness, growth, and welfare of team members. The five core pillars necessary for fostering a culture of learning, highlighting celebration and recognition, building trust, promoting intentional connections, and supporting meaningful work, are crucial for compassionate leadership and managing teacher turnover. In order to establish a harmonious and successful workplace, these leadership pillars are highly interrelated and reinforce one another. Effective teams and high-achieving schools are built on their basis. The following sections address objective 3 of the study.

5.9.1 OBJECTIVE 3: To determine the role school managers play in shaping veteran primary teachers' job satisfaction

In the realm of educational leadership, where contemporary trends, theories, and practices have converged on accountability, shared leadership, and professional learning communities, one of the three principal areas emerges as particularly relevant to the study's core findings. This research indicates that educational leaders should prioritise providing ample opportunities for teachers to develop social networks and enhance their capacity for job satisfaction and resilience. While senior principals may outline the general direction, establishing robust support systems is a complex and time-consuming process. Observations reveal that teachers often gather in formal settings, but these interactions typically involve passive listening to speakers or facilitators, with interpersonal engagement discouraged as a potential distraction. To foster the collegiality evident among veteran teachers in this study, and subsequently promote job satisfaction in others, educational institutions should implement shared planning and schedule common breaks or lunch periods that allow for organic networking. Professional learning communities (PLCs) and cohort groups

can also serve as platforms for such interactions. The current study utilised the knowledge of one Deputy Principal (Participant 7) and three Departmental Heads (formerly known as HODs) [Participant 15, Participant 14 and Participant 6]. Post level 1 teachers, as experienced and veteran teachers, their views on leadership were of importance in this study. This was because they may not be in the SMT, but they hold important leadership roles in their teaching spaces. The research unequivocally supports the current shift towards increased leadership and the application of cohort groups as professional development tools. These approaches can replicate the peer support and growth opportunities characteristic of satisfied and veteran teachers in the study. One participant, Participant 4, who highly valued cohort learning as one of the senior teachers in the school [but not in the SMT], shared her experience: *“Despite our cohort’s diversity, we discovered numerous shared traits. Our extensive discussions were crucial to understanding my colleagues and our interconnectedness. This collaborative process gave us a unique voice and significantly contributed to my professional growth. Cohort learning is a source of motivation and inspiration for me. I found the cohort experience exceptional, to the extent that I occasionally consider becoming a principal solely to initiate a learning cohort. However, political complexities in South Africa can make this challenging.”*

The results highlight the necessity for continuous dialogue within educational leadership concerning the influence of spirituality on teacher job satisfaction and retention, despite the delicate nature of faith and spirituality in today’s sociopolitical environment. Research indicates that spirituality and religion are separate entities, a distinction that will be clarified later in this section. Therefore, conversations about spirituality should not be shunned due to fears of possible church-state issues. Furthermore, the domain of educational leadership ought to emphasise the recruitment and retention of dedicated teachers. Considering that spiritual traits may represent recognisable personal attributes in this pursuit, it is wise to undertake a more comprehensive investigation into the connection between spirituality and job satisfaction within the educational sphere. In this research, the investigator identified that the Employment of Teachers Act No. 76 of 1998 (EEA), the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 (LRA), the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM), the South African Council for Teachers Act No. 31 of 2000 (SACE), and the Basic Conditions of

Employment Act 5 of 1997 (BCEA) form the legislative framework under scrutiny. Since this study concentrated on the experiences of experienced teachers regarding job satisfaction and the management of teacher turnover by school administrators, these are the sources the researcher consulted for insights on the topic.

5.9.1.1 Establishing a good culture of quality teaching and Learning

The research indicated that a crucial component of organisational achievement is the creation of a robust learning culture, which nurtures an atmosphere where ongoing improvement, inquisitiveness, and the sharing of knowledge are actively promoted. Additionally, it was discovered that leaders who embrace a supportive methodology recognise that fostering such a culture not only improves organisational flexibility and teacher contentment but also empowers team members to innovate and realise their full capabilities. In organisations that emphasise learning, errors are reinterpreted as chances for development instead of setbacks. Leaders who prioritise their teams encourage risk-taking, experimentation, and reflection on experiences, reinforcing the notion that growth frequently arises from difficulties. Resources for both formal and informal learning, whether through organised training initiatives, mentorship, and self-directed growth, are provided to support continuous professional and personal advancement. By nurturing a culture focused on learning, supportive leaders guarantee that their teams are resilient, adaptable, and well-equipped to handle the complexities of the contemporary workplace.

5.9.1.2 Recognition and celebration of teachers' performance

Genuine and meaningful recognition acts as a crucial motivator in organisational environments. Leaders who demonstrate authentic concern go beyond simple superficial acknowledgement, opting instead to offer heartfelt and individualised recognition that highlights the distinct contributions and values of every team member. The effect of recognition is amplified when it is provided in a prompt and specific manner, focusing not only on the results but also on the efforts that contribute to those successes. This research indicates that for District-Based Education (DBE) and schools to attract and retain high-quality teachers, it is essential to implement awards and benefits policies. Awards and incentives are addressed in PAM Chapter E (cf: ELRC, 2003). These rewards and incentives may motivate teachers and assist in their retention. Given that it addresses rewards and incentives that could be viewed as

factors influencing teacher retention, the text is relevant to our research. These honours and benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Incentives (Government Gazette No. 30678, dated 18 January 2008);
- Housing allowances: PSCBC Resolution No. 2 of 2004, Government Gazette No. 27657, dated June 2005, and the Determination of Housing, issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration and PSCBC Resolution No. 7 of 2015;
- Recognition of long service: PSCBC Resolution No. 1 of 2012 and the Determination of long-service recognition in the public service, issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration;
- Service Bonuses: PSCBC Resolution No. 3 of 1999, PSCBC Resolution No. 7 of 2000, and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) Financial manual [for calculations and application of allowances and benefits, issued in August 2010, and PSCBC Resolution No. 2 of 2015]; and
- Medical Aid: PSCBC Resolution No. 1 of 2006 and the Determination of Medical Assistance in the public service, issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration and PSCBC Resolution No. 2 of 2015.

This research additionally revealed that leaders who emphasise the importance of celebrating both individual and group achievements play a significant role in fostering a sense of belonging and purpose. They acknowledge that such recognition boosts commitment, connection, and morale within teams (cf: Figure 3.1). By integrating a culture of recognition and celebration into organisational practices, leaders enhance motivation and reinforce positive behaviours, thus creating an environment where team members genuinely feel valued (cf: Section 3.9; Section 3.15; Section 5.6.9.2 and Section 5.6.9.6).

5.9.1.3 Building trust

Section 5.6.3.2.1 and Section 5.6.9.6 of this research indicate that trust is the essential foundation for effective organisational relationships, especially within leadership frameworks. When trust is cultivated, team members are more likely to demonstrate commitment, engage in open communication, and contribute to collaborative innovation (Burić & Moè, 2020). Trust fosters an atmosphere where individuals feel psychologically secure, enabling them to share ideas and confront challenges (Dreer,

2020). Leaders who show genuine concern build trust by consistently exhibiting integrity, transparency, and empathy (cf: Section 3.16 and Section 3.17, respectively) (Capone & Petrillo, 2020). They are intentional in fulfilling commitments, leading with honesty, and creating environments where team members feel at ease expressing concerns without the fear of adverse repercussions. This research has determined that trust is dynamic and necessitates continuous effort, as leaders must emphasise its development and sustenance over time. By nurturing trust, leaders facilitate the collaboration and openness essential for high-performing, cohesive teams (Burić & Moè, 2020; Capone & Petrillo, 2020).

5.9.1.4 Intentional connection with teachers

The research indicates that teachers and School Management Team (SMT) members recognise that intentional connections exceed mere transactional interactions by fostering authentic relationships based on empathy, respect, and mutual understanding. This observation aligns with the assertions of, who noted that experienced teachers are driven by both intrinsic and altruistic motivations. In this context, intrinsic motivations encompass the pleasure derived from working with children, engaging in stimulating tasks, and forming intentional connections with similarly minded individuals. The study reveals that leaders who exhibit genuine care actively nurture these significant relationships by being accessible, practising active listening, and participating in honest dialogues with their team members (refer to Section 5.6.8.2 and Section 5.6.8.3). By emphasising intentional connections, these leaders demonstrate a profound awareness of the distinct needs and experiences of their team members, thus fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity within the workplace. Through their presence and attentiveness during interactions, these leaders strengthen the relational ties that are essential for team unity and organisational achievement. Furthermore, intentional connections contribute to a collaborative work atmosphere, where team members feel supported and aligned in their pursuit of shared objectives.

5.9.1.5 Meaningful Work

Another significant finding of this study, which corroborates previous research outcomes, is that teachers derive satisfaction from engaging in meaningful work, a

notion supported by various scholars. Work gains importance when it resonates with an individual's values, passions, strengths, and sense of purpose. Consequently, this current research also revealed that leaders are instrumental in helping team members link their roles and responsibilities to broader organisational goals, thus nurturing a sense of purpose that goes beyond mere routine tasks. Compassionate leaders invest time in comprehending the motivations and aspirations of their team members, aligning these personal drivers with the organisation's overarching mission. By highlighting the wider impact of their work, leaders promote team members' fulfilment and engagement, which in turn boosts satisfaction and productivity. Fostering meaningful work within teams ensures that team members not only execute their roles effectively but also flourish, feeling personally committed to the organisation's success.

5.9.1.6 The Interrelation of the Pillars

The five pillars of compassionate leadership are interrelated in a mutually beneficial manner. For instance, a culture of learning thrives in an atmosphere of trust, as team members are more willing to take risks and pursue growth in a secure environment. Likewise, regular and sincere recognition enhances the significance of work when employees feel that their contributions are appreciated and aligned with their purpose. Intentional connection is crucial for building trust and ensuring that recognition and celebration are both personal and impactful. These pillars do not operate in isolation; rather, they work together as a unified system that, when collectively nurtured, fosters a vibrant organisational culture. This research revealed that the five pillars of caring leadership namely, culture of learning, recognition and celebration, trust, intentional connection, and meaningful work constitute a holistic framework for developing high-performing teams and successful organisations. It was also found that each pillar reinforces the others, generating a synergistic effect that enhances both individual and collective performance. Consequently, caring leadership transcends being merely a style or philosophy; it represents a framework that prioritises the well-being and growth of individuals within the organisational strategy. By embracing these pillars and recognising their interrelations, leaders can create environments where team members are empowered to learn, acknowledged for their contributions, trusted to innovate, engaged in meaningful work, and connected through genuine relationships.

Caring leadership addresses the demands of the contemporary work environment. Through the deliberate implementation of these principles, leaders can motivate their teams to reach excellence while cultivating a positive and rewarding workplace culture in which all team members can flourish.

5.10 ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEACHING AS A JOB

5.10.1 OBJECTIVE 4: To determine strategies that could be implemented to enhance job satisfaction, resilience and retention of newly recruited teachers

This theme explored how teachers' perspectives and pedagogical approaches contribute to their positive professional self-concept, both in specific instances and throughout their careers. The manifestation of these attitudes and strategies can be observed across various temporal and situational contexts within the educational sphere.

5.10.1.1 Job satisfaction and Hope

The research further indicated that participants, who have faced professional challenges throughout their careers, shared their narratives of resilience and job satisfaction in difficult situations. Some teachers viewed their teaching profession as a vocation. They regarded their calling to teach as a response to a summons from children, feeling that it is essential for others to recognise and learn how to heed the children's call to the profession. Moreover, the present study discovered that these experienced teachers perceived their calling to teaching as a reaction to the voices of children. This understanding of the fundamental nature of the teaching role underscores an altruistic motivation, which serves as a contributing factor to job satisfaction and influences their decision to engage in teaching and persist in the profession. Some teachers upheld their commitment to their duties, while others endured, hoping for improved circumstances and more favourable times. This viewpoint resonated with their belief in the possibility of positive change. Participants in the study cited previous experiences and institutional progress as sources of hope, convinced that their efforts could lead to advancement. Participant 14, Participant 15, and Participant 5, motivated by their Christian convictions, emphasised the importance of their faith and their aspiration to love, educate, and nurture the children entrusted to them, which contributes to their job satisfaction and sustains their professional dedication despite facing adversities (cf: Section 5.6.1.1). Moreover, the teachers involved in this study shared their methods for overcoming career challenges. They

adapted cognitively to difficult student groups and sought assistance when faced with challenging student behaviour at a specific institution. Some teachers reflected positively on the benefits of demanding periods, such as setting standards for future roles and adjusting their teaching methods in difficult situations (cf: Section 5.6.6 and Section 5.6.7.1, respectively). They also conveyed a sense of professional fortune, believing that students at a particular school were more open to learning due to their attitudes and approaches. The results of this study echoed similar findings from previous research, as other teachers expressed concerns that conditions might be less favourable in other schools or professions, which influenced their decision to continue teaching and remain at their current institution. Participants also indicated a sense of vocational alignment, grounded in their calling and faith, with their religious beliefs seamlessly integrated into their professional lives, as demonstrated by their responses and serving as a contributing factor to their job satisfaction. This study highlights the necessity of recognising and addressing challenges within the teaching profession.

5.10.1.2 Self-Assessment and Awareness

The study investigated the preferences and job satisfaction of teachers across various educational environments. The results of this research supported earlier findings concerning teacher persistence, self-evaluation, and awareness. Participants expressed their preferences regarding school attributes, such as geographical location, size of the institution, organizational culture, leadership styles, school composition, and student demographics. The research revealed that all participants discussed in detail their likes and dislikes concerning the types of school work environments in which they felt content to work (cf: Section 5.6.3.2; Section 5.6.6 and Section 5.6.7.2). Teachers also elaborated on aspects of their profession they found gratifying or challenging, encompassing specific academic disciplines (Motshusi, Ngobeni, & Sepeng, 2024). Some respondents reported that managing problematic student behaviour was feasible when limited to a small number of challenging individuals, while others derived satisfaction from engaging with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Certain teachers expressed enthusiasm for teaching advanced and demanding subjects (e.g. Languages, Mathematics and Social Sciences), notwithstanding the increased preparation required. The NEPA 27 of 1996 prescribes seven roles of a teacher. One of these seven roles is community,

citizenship and pastoral role. The current study found that the attitudes toward pastoral responsibilities varied, with some teachers finding them undesirable and others embracing them (cf: ELRC, 2003, p. A-8). Teachers' perceptions of their capabilities and limitations related to their career progression and current institutional context. For instance, one teacher recognised her classroom strengths and opted to resume a full-time teaching position, while another found satisfaction in motivating and guiding staff in a managerial capacity. The teachers' self-awareness was intrinsically linked to the school environment they deemed most conducive to their professional growth, as evidenced by two contrasting examples. The study underscores the significance of comprehending teachers' preferences and job satisfaction within their professional roles. Teachers frequently adopt a distinct professional persona, projecting confidence and assertiveness in their role, even when experiencing self-doubt. Despite extensive experience, some teachers continue to conceal their lack of confidence from colleagues. However, one teacher posits that the long-term adoption of this professional identity has positively influenced his overall confidence and satisfaction, extending beyond the classroom. The researcher is of the view that the strategy enables teachers to maintain a sense of self-assurance and confidence in their professional capacities, as another factor influencing their decision to remain in the profession and enhance their job satisfaction.

5.10.1.3 Spiritual Coping and Gratitude

It is suggested that fostering a spiritual relationship with a transcendent being is essential for developing effective coping mechanisms. Studies indicate that these connections can produce beneficial results, including comfort, social support, inner strength, acceptance, and emotional relief. The current investigation corroborates these findings, revealing that teachers who maintain a spiritual relationship with a divine being perceive assurances of celestial assistance, support, and safeguarding. This spiritual nexus emerges as a pivotal factor in the coping process, profoundly influencing perceptions of equality and interpersonal dynamics (cf: Section 5.4.4.4). Within this framework, employment is viewed as a means of contributing to the community and as an expression of spiritual calling. Despite the presence of financial compensation, the primary focus remains on the provision of service. The results of

this study further corroborate earlier research findings, indicating that the facilitation of perceived obligatory service has a significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction.

Additionally, several teachers in this study indicated that their spirituality played a crucial role in shaping their interactions with students, seemingly enhancing their patience and nurturing interpersonal relationships with students, both of which are independent factors that contribute to job satisfaction. In conversations about their spiritual aspect, teachers expressed a deep love for their profession, demonstrating enthusiasm, energy, and passionate commitment (cf: Section 6.5.2.5.3). Previous studies on teacher job satisfaction have also revealed that those who regard teaching as a vocation experience considerable satisfaction from a variety of pedagogical activities. These gratifications primarily stem from the impact they have on both their students and professional peers. In Participant 15's account, this spiritual dimension was even associated with collegial support. Evidently, spirituality was not only ubiquitous among participants but was universally perceived as a factor actively promoting job satisfaction. In some instances, as illustrated, it also augmented other job satisfaction components, such as patience, student connections, and collegial support.

Another salient factor identified among the sample was the presence of a collegial or personal support network. This factor was notably evident in five of the six participants and, unlike spirituality, was frequently cited in extant research and relevant literature. Although participants did not discuss this factor with the same fervour as spirituality, and one participant did not consider it a factor at all, it emerged as a significant finding in this study. Its presence aligns with previous research findings such as Participant 15's account. Her expressions offer a commendable example of how collegial and personal support influenced the lives of the individuals in the sample. The teaching profession is characterized by an ethical and moral aspect, as highlighted in academic discussions (see: NEPA 27 of 1996; ELRC, 2003). This perspective is reinforced by Noddings' (2005) examination of the teaching vocation, which characterises teaching as a manifestation of moral voice, ultimately positioning it as a caring profession.

The conceptualisation of teaching as a caring profession, encompassing ethics of care and relational aspects, finds substantial support within the academic literature.

While a substantial body of international literature has concentrated on the workload, emotional, and/or cognitive demands of teachers' roles as primary contributors to stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction, the findings from the present study suggest that each of these aspects may hold significance in varying configurations at different times.

5.10.1.4 Practical coping strategies

The personal factors recognised by researcher participants in this study as contributing to their job satisfaction include various personality traits as well as actions and practical strategies related to their teaching roles (cf: Section 5.6.2.5.4 and Section 5.6.2.6). This investigation further revealed that a considerable number of subjects engage in a variety of extracurricular activities to maintain life balance, which includes physical exercise, musical pursuits, reading, and social gatherings. Section 5.6.2.6 of this study indicated that some teachers who also serve as caregivers choose to fulfil their professional responsibilities at home during the evening, thereby allowing for quality time with their children. Self-management strategies involved setting clear boundaries between work and home life, with some individuals intentionally deciding to limit work-related activities to academic hours. For a portion of the participants, this strategy was a deliberate choice (cf: Section 3.16).

5.10.1.5 Positive comprehension and connections to personal experiences

The study indicated that the personal experiences of teachers frequently exerted a beneficial effect on their views regarding the teaching profession, even though there was minimal discourse surrounding their private lives. The attainment of initial employment and the subsequent advancement in their careers, which allowed for the acquisition of substantial assets such as homes or vehicles, initially improved their perception of the profession. Several teachers mentioned that favourable developments in their personal relationships, including new romantic involvements, positively influenced their attitudes towards teaching. Conversely, some teachers encountered a transformation in their professional perspective following major life events, such as starting a family or dealing with bereavement. Additionally, certain teachers observed that beneficial working conditions, especially school holidays and increased family time, had a positive impact on their overall perception of their educational role (cf: Section 3.8 and Section 3.16).

5.11 RELEVANCE TO TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The findings of this investigation have significant implications for teacher education, which represents the next area of research focus. The persistent issue of teacher turnover, particularly in urban educational settings, has been well-documented (Balang, 2021; Chanana, 2021; Cells, Sabina, Touchton, Shankar-Brown, & Sabina, 2023; Mboweni & Taole, 2022; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025). Integrating these results with those of Balang (2021) and Chanana (2021), recent scholarly writings (Worth & van den Brande, 2020; Botha & Hugo, 2021; Mboweni & Taole, 2022; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025) suggests the need for a greater emphasis on cultivating professional growth, continuous learning, robust support networks, personal values, and achievement orientation among pre-service teachers. This approach may enhance their resilience as they enter the teaching profession. Future studies could explore the role of personal relationships and spirituality in this context. While preparing teachers for urban environments remains critical, this research underscores the importance of developing teachers' internal resources. The findings indicate that teacher satisfaction and retention are largely influenced by internal factors, suggesting that dedicating substantial effort to building internal capacities, alongside preparation for external challenges, could significantly benefit teacher retention. Furthermore, these results imply that teacher education programs should emphasise the importance of fostering personal connections with students as a strategy to enhance teacher resilience. This perspective aligns with the concept of coaches in his work, *Black Students-Middle Class Teachers*. It is asserted that coaches possess a comprehensive understanding of both subject content and pedagogy; however, they also acknowledge the importance of establishing a connection with students initially. They fully recognise that meaningful relationships are a prerequisite for effective learning.

5.12 IMPACTS ON TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION STUDENT OUTCOMES

This study may enhance the conversation surrounding teacher job satisfaction and retention, a field that has garnered relatively less academic focus compared to teacher burnout. The skewed emphasis on burnout may stem from several reasons: the common inclination to regard failure as more intriguing than success, as illustrated by the abundance of negative narratives in the media; the more visible detrimental impacts of burnout in contrast to the subtle positive effects of job satisfaction; or the

perceived greater occurrence of teachers susceptible to burnout. In spite of the scant research on teacher job satisfaction and retention, this investigation seeks to enrich the current knowledge base.

While the main findings are consistent with earlier studies, underscoring the importance of collegial support systems and professional development opportunities for experienced teachers, this research also revealed additional common traits among participants, particularly spirituality and the ability to forge strong relationships with students. These factors were infrequently mentioned in comparable studies. Conversely, key findings from similar research that were not immediately evident in the current study's participants include: (a) the acquisition of coping strategies that fostered job satisfaction; (b) the promotion of job satisfaction through leadership; (c) the tendency of veteran teachers to exceed expectations in ensuring student success; and (d) the use of autobiographical reflection as a means to enhance teacher resilience. The principal findings of these analogous job satisfaction studies did not reveal any information fundamentally at odds with the researcher's own research outcomes.

It is plausible to postulate that, given a larger participant pool and an extended data collection period, either the researcher's investigation or one of the referenced studies might have yielded results congruent with those found in other research. This observation underscores the necessity for further scholarly inquiry to more accurately delineate the concept of teacher job satisfaction and retention, along with the factors that contribute to its attainment. This is particularly crucial in the context of teachers working in urban environments. Evidently, there remains considerable potential for enhancing our comprehensive understanding of teacher job satisfaction and retention. As observed that a parallel can be drawn between the well-established research on teacher burnout and the comparatively underdeveloped studies on teacher job satisfaction and retention. Conceptualising the literature on teacher job satisfaction, retention, and burnout can be likened to palaeontologists unearthing dinosaur fossils. Teacher burnout would be displayed in a museum as a long-standing exhibit, complete with a bronze plaque that outlines its dimensions, historical context, behavioural patterns, and environmental conditions. Over the years, many individuals have noted and recorded it, and it has been thoroughly examined by scholars in

academic literature (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Fathi, Greenier, & Derakhshan, 2021; Ashley, 2022).

In contrast, the fossilised remains that signify teacher resilience remain largely hidden (Beltman, 2020; Segalo, 2021). Some prominent white vertebrae and phalanges are visible, along with possibly some large, ancient teeth and jaw structures. This evidence is adequate to persuade observers of its dinosaurian characteristics, yet a considerable amount remains to be discovered. Teachers will engage in discussions about its exact morphology, considering both the entire organism and the parts still encased in the sediment, with the shapes of these sections being inferred from the landscape of the overlying layers. The existing literature on teacher job satisfaction and retention shares similar traits (Mansfield, 2021; Weatherby-Fell, Neilsen-Hewett, & Duchesne, 2021; Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius, 2023). Although significant research is still needed in this area, most future studies will focus on this subject. The current study, along with other academic works, shows enough alignment in their results to uncover noticeable patterns (particularly, the significance of peer support, spiritual dimensions, and continuous professional development). The researcher aims to enhance the body of knowledge in this area through forthcoming scholarly pursuits.

5.13 THE FINDINGS AND THE RESEARCHER'S PERSONAL EXPECTATIONS

This section revisits the study's initial observations, examining how the research outcomes both challenged and confirmed preliminary expectations regarding teacher job satisfaction. The discussion focuses on the primary finding that emerged as the most strongly supported by the data: the influence of spirituality on teacher resilience. Although the inclusion of spirituality as a factor was anticipated based on work and interactions with a particularly spiritual teacher, its prominence in the results was unexpected. This unanticipated emphasis may be attributed to the minimal attention given to spirituality in professional development and teacher leadership contexts. Despite initial reservations about addressing such a personal topic, participants demonstrated a remarkable openness in discussing the connection between their spirituality and professional job satisfaction. This willingness raises questions about how many other studies on teacher job satisfaction and retention may have overlooked spirituality due to its perceived sensitivity. The researcher, whose own spiritual journey is relatively recent, acknowledges that the study's findings have prompted personal reflection. In the

year subsequent to the commencement of the study, the researcher noted that, in addition to nurturing robust relationships with students, personal spirituality surfaced as a vital factor in preserving professional job satisfaction. The unforeseen importance of spirituality in the research outcomes highlights its possible relevance as a frequently neglected aspect in comprehending and promoting teacher resilience. This revelation has led the researcher to reconsider their own experiences and the role of spirituality in maintaining job satisfaction within the teaching profession.

The research findings regarding long-tenured teachers' relationships with students aligned with the initial theory presented in Chapter 1, albeit in an unexpected manner. Contrary to the researcher's anticipation that these relationships would be deliberately cultivated, as was the case in their personal experience with urban students, the study revealed that participants' connections with students emerged organically from their inherent personality traits. These relationships were predominantly an extension of the teachers' natural interpersonal dynamics, with only occasional instances of intentional development. A notable and unanticipated finding, particularly in contrast to the researcher's preconceptions, was the role of burnout among participants. Chapter 2 discussed the researcher's perspective on burnout and its contributing factors that affect teacher resilience and job satisfaction. Given the literature's assertion of burnout's near inevitability, it was expected that most participants would report similar experiences. The study's title implied that job satisfaction necessitated some form of transcendence over burnout. However, the results deviated significantly from this expectation. While a minority of participants recounted experiences similar to the researcher's, the majority reported minimal burnout, distinguishing between stress and burnout. This unexpected outcome prompted extensive reflection on potential explanations. Initially, the researcher harboured doubts about the authenticity of these responses, questioning whether participants might be projecting an image of resilience or providing socially desirable answers. However, as teachers shared increasingly personal anecdotes and insights, it became evident that their accounts were genuine, dispelling any scepticism about the veracity of their experiences.

Further examination of the subjects revealed that their absence of reported burnout stemmed from their ability to alleviate stressors and circumvent stressful situations.

These teachers had successfully averted burnout by utilising various internal traits identified in the researcher's research, such as patience, support from administration or colleagues, or implementing timely changes. This observation prompted introspection regarding his own resilience and burnout experience. The researcher realised that his encounter with burnout occurred immediately after completing his undergraduate studies, prior to any teaching experience. The researcher began to contemplate whether his personal burnout experience might have resulted from a lack of skills and mindset that the researcher later acquired. The researcher also contemplated whether this phenomenon was common among other teachers as well. If validated, this would offer further rationale for exploring the traits associated with teacher job satisfaction and retention, aiming to prepare pre-service teachers with these qualities. Previous research (Beltman, 2020; Arthur J. , 2021; Chen & Chi-Kin Lee, 2022; Arthur & Bradley, 2023) influenced the researcher's study assumptions in several ways. Drawing from scholars like Arthur and Bradley (2023), who noted the satisfaction most teachers derive from increased student achievement, the researcher expected student accomplishment to be a significant factor. While the researcher does not assert that it was irrelevant to the teachers in the study sample, it did not emerge as a prominent contributor to their job satisfaction. In the researcher's assessment, this does not imply that the teachers in the study sample were oblivious to their students' progress, but rather that their sense of achievement extended beyond academic performance. As a factor of job satisfaction, these teachers reported experiencing satisfaction from perceiving improvements in their students' overall well-being, being frequently chosen by parents over other teachers, and witnessing daily growth through interactions with students. There is scant evidence to suggest that these standardised tests, or the environments they engender, foster job satisfaction for these teachers or the majority of teachers. This is because student achievement has recently become synonymous with the often punitive and consistently high-pressure standardised tests, procedures and expectations mandated by DBE legislation.

Prior research informed the theory that the urban teaching environment would influence participants' job satisfaction, either positively or negatively (Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021). Toropova et al (2021) and Ozkar and Akgenc (2022) highlight the challenges urban teachers face, and it is

generally accepted that urban schools encounter more obstacles than their suburban counterparts, including financial constraints, violence, and staff turnover. It was expected that some participants would report significant stress due to the metropolitan setting. Conversely, it was theorised that the satisfaction derived from overcoming urban teaching challenges might foster job satisfaction in some teachers, including the researcher. Surprisingly, with two exceptions, location did not emerge as a significant factor in participants' job satisfaction. The first exception, Participant 8, believed her area offered more opportunities to make a difference compared to suburban districts, which bolstered her job satisfaction. The second exception involved Participant 9's unexpected encounter with racial tension from disruptive students, as detailed in this chapter. Beyond these cases, participants did not attribute their job satisfaction to location, either favourably or unfavourably. Notably, race generally did not play a substantial role in job satisfaction traits and experiences, although it had a discernible impact in a few instances. For two participants, sharing the same race as most of their students facilitated connection and outreach, but this did not significantly affect their job satisfaction. Similarly, racial differences between teachers and students (barring Participant 9's experience) did not impede job satisfaction. Research on the job satisfaction trait described by Toporova et al (2021) as understanding when to become engaged and when to let go also informed this study's expectations. In addition to Toporova et al's findings, observations revealed many teachers struggling with severe stress due to an inability or unawareness of when to disengage from particular challenges. Some of this stress stemmed from teachers' conceptualisation, which Worth and van den Brande (2020) and Topchyan and Woehler (2021) identified as a potential contributor to burnout when teachers' expectations of their capabilities are not met.

The analysis led to the inference that, in alignment with Patterson's recommendation, teachers with extensive experience must cultivate the ability to abandon unrealistic expectations. While two study participants broached this concept, it did not emerge as a prevalent theme across the sample. Interestingly, several participants exhibited job satisfaction despite acknowledging their struggles with relinquishing expectations. In their efforts to support students or improve situations, these teachers reported seldom abandoning their pursuits. Their sustained job satisfaction was likely attributable to the gratification derived from successful outcomes, which seemingly

outweighed the initial stress associated with navigating challenging circumstances. Certain findings from this investigation were unanticipated and somewhat surprising. The subsequent results each represented a factor that, although uncommon among participants, held sufficient significance for those exhibiting it to merit consideration. Notably, for three participants, either a lifelong aspiration to teach or motivation stemming from childhood experiences appeared to have bolstered their job satisfaction across multiple dimensions.

The research revealed an unexpected finding regarding teachers who entered the teaching profession later in life. These individuals demonstrated enhanced resilience, attributed to their extended period of personal growth and development before becoming teachers. This delayed entry into the field equipped them with a broader array of resources and life experiences, which they could draw upon to inform their pedagogical practices. Another unanticipated outcome, pervasive throughout the study and exerting considerable psychological impact on participants, was the role of educational improvements in fostering job satisfaction. Contrary to initial expectations based on burnout literature, which suggested teachers would primarily opt to leave the profession, the study participants exhibited remarkable adaptability. They navigated transitions between various grade levels, subject areas, and specialisations in response to situational demands, aiming to alleviate stress, identify areas of expertise, or seek new challenges. This unforeseen result, along with other unexpected findings, prompted significant self-reflection. The prevalence of surprising outcomes revealed inherent biases in the research approach, highlighting the influence of personal experiences and perspectives on initial predictions. This realisation underscored the importance of expanding analytical frameworks in future research endeavours to encompass possibilities beyond one's own experiential boundaries.

Despite initial preconceptions, the study's outcomes proved gratifying. The findings contribute novel insights to the field, particularly regarding the strong correlation between spirituality and job satisfaction. Moreover, they corroborate established job satisfaction and job satisfaction data, notably emphasising the importance of collegial support and the value placed on professional learning and development.

5.14 CONTRIBUTIONS OF FINDINGS TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

This study examined a number of variables that might further our understanding of education law and policy, as well as education management and leadership. The goal of the study was to find out what characteristics veteran primary school teachers consider to be most important in determining their job satisfaction in their careers and how this influences student performance. Resilience, job satisfaction, and teacher retention all contribute to high-quality teaching and learning, which advances the corpus of knowledge. Although some of the findings of this undertaking were different from those of other researchers in their previous studies, there were some researchers whose findings supported this research study. New characteristics of job satisfaction that were not previously mentioned by other researchers were found by the study.

5.14.1 Differences

The study's findings on teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy align with previous research, as other studies have also confirmed these findings.

5.14.1.1 Self-efficacy and job satisfaction increase teacher engagement.

This study contributes to the existing empirical literature regarding job satisfaction among teachers, resilience, professional status, motivation, and commitment within schools in Johannesburg. It examines the impact of these factors and proposes a novel model that links them to the teaching profession's condition. To advance the understanding of factors related to teachers, the researcher aimed to pinpoint the primary factors influencing job satisfaction among LSTs in primary institutions within the D9 district. While numerous studies conducted in other regions of South Africa have indicated a growing dissatisfaction among teachers regarding their employment (Matla & Xaba, 2020), the findings of this research revealed that self-efficacy serves as a direct predictor of job satisfaction, corroborated by various prior studies. These studies suggest that teachers with higher self-efficacy are also more likely to exhibit persistence, diligence, and reduced anxiety, alongside increased job satisfaction. This aligns with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, which asserts that individuals with a robust belief in their capabilities are more motivated to excel in their professional endeavours. Furthermore, this study identified an additional distinction: teachers who possess confidence in their ability to meet their students' needs and effectively

manage a successful course tend to be more motivated and engaged in their teaching activities.

The third distinction is that local studies infrequently address self-efficacy and its impact on teacher job satisfaction; however, this research yielded findings similar to those of. In their investigation, they identified a positive correlation between self-efficacy, resilience, and job satisfaction, thereby reinforcing the notion that teacher competence affects ambition, perception, and efficiency. This result suggests that teachers invest more time and energy into their work and become more engaged when they believe in their ability to facilitate learning (Noddings, 1996; 2005).

The study's fourth conclusion indicated that teachers' levels of engagement and reflection on their work are indeed interconnected, particularly in relation to local job satisfaction studies. Given that job satisfaction is the opposite of burnout, this finding aligns with other research that demonstrated a negative relationship between burnout and teacher reflection.

A fifth distinction is that teachers in this study discussed burnout stress and burnout less frequently, suggesting that burnout is negatively associated with teacher reflection, which implies that experienced and reflective teachers are less prone to burnout and, as a result, are more engaged in classroom instruction (Han & Wang, 2021). It can be posited that these two factors are interconnected, as a teacher's level of engagement and the quality of their outcomes improve when they regularly reflect on their practices. Nevertheless, it is equally accurate to assert that a highly engaged teacher consistently assesses their own performance to enhance its quality (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021). Furthermore, one could argue that teachers who demonstrate higher levels of reflection and job satisfaction are perpetually contemplating their teaching methods and are wholly dedicated to elevating their standards of student achievement. Such teachers possess a heightened sense of pride in and dedication to their profession. In reality, they exhibit greater proficiency in managing and directing both positive and negative emotions, which equips them to navigate challenging situations more effectively.

In summary, teachers may experience increased confidence and enhanced emotional regulation when they reflect on their encounters with burnout. In other words, due to their unwavering focus on contemplating their students' academic success and well-being while striving to address the challenges they face, reflective and resilient teachers seem to be more committed and emotionally engaged in their roles. As a result, these teachers view classroom challenges as opportunities for further learning and refinement of their instructional strategies (Uştuk & De Costa, 2021). The final distinction of the current study's findings revealed a strong correlation between job satisfaction and teacher resilience. This significantly contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field of education. In contrast to the studies conducted by and, the observation that teachers who can effectively manage the challenges of teaching enjoy their work clearly illustrates the connection between teacher resilience and job satisfaction. It also indicates that there are still teachers who take pride in and value education as both a profession and a social service endeavor. As a result, this encourages teachers to fully engage in their profession. This finding aligns with the inverse correlation between teacher resilience and burnout identified by. Furthermore, it is suggested that teachers demonstrating higher resilience levels experience reduced stress, which fosters a greater sense of belonging and enhanced confidence in their ability to meet classroom standards. In other words, more resilient teachers tend to feel less exhausted and overburdened, exhibit greater job satisfaction and happiness, and are more capable of collaborating effectively with colleagues. Resilient teachers experience lower workplace stress, which diminishes their likelihood of experiencing burnout. Moreover, it has been indicated that the teaching fatigue of LSTs can be significantly predicted by their resilience levels.

This conclusion corroborates the research findings of, which revealed a negative association between burnout, job satisfaction among teachers, and resilience. The study also established that teacher resilience serves as a mediator between self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Bandura, 1977, p. 198). Teachers with a heightened sense of self-efficacy are less likely to experience burnout, demonstrate greater commitment to their roles, and maintain a more positive outlook. Considering that teacher self-efficacy relates to teachers' perceptions of their teaching abilities and their effectiveness in enhancing students' academic performance, those with lower self-efficacy perceptions are more inclined to harbor negative views regarding their

instructional skills and the academic environment, which increases the risk of psychological stress and disengagement (Bandura, 1977, p. 199). Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that teacher reflection and resilience served as mediating factors between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. This outcome suggests that teacher self-efficacy positively influences job satisfaction in both direct and indirect ways. Teachers also placed a high value on their relationships with colleagues and students within the school environment. The majority of participants reported having positive and productive relationships with fellow teachers and students, which in turn affected their resilience and their decision to continue in the profession. This is noteworthy as it highlights the role of resilience and teacher reflection as mediators in the connection between job satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy (Capone & Petrillo, 2020).

It can be posited that teachers with elevated levels of self-efficacy are more inclined to enhance the overall learning environment in which they operate, thereby increasing their capacity to navigate challenges and potentially boost their job performance. This pertains to the mediating function of teacher reflection in the association between job satisfaction and teacher efficacy. The study indicated a positive correlation between self-efficacy and introspection among teachers, in contrast to earlier research conducted in a similar context. This aligns with the findings of Capone and Petrillo (2020), Fathi et al (2021) and Buric et al (2022), which identified a positive correlation between teachers' efficacy and job satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that highly reflective teachers consistently assess their teaching methods to enhance their quality. Consequently, they become more productive, gain confidence in their abilities, and enjoy their work. Moreover, self-efficacy and reflection can serve as both detrimental and direct indicators of burnout (Fathi, Greenier, & Derakhshan, 2021; Pehlivanoglu, 2023). The claims made by were substantiated by the observed positive correlations, which were expected since job satisfaction is often regarded as the opposite of burnout.

Furthermore, a negative relationship was found between fatigue and teacher self-efficacy. Numerous studies have illustrated the significant connection between these variables, aligning with other research findings. Such investigations have shown that teachers' perceptions of their own capabilities to handle educational responsibilities

influence their levels of burnout and job satisfaction. Teachers who possess greater confidence in their abilities are less likely to experience anxiety and burnout. Consequently, it can be posited that the veteran teachers in this research experienced lower levels of fatigue due to their more favourable beliefs regarding their capacity to manage classrooms, implement effective instructional strategies, and engage students successfully. Teacher resilience is a vital factor in enhancing job satisfaction among teachers in this study. Those with elevated perceptions of self-efficacy demonstrate greater resilience, which subsequently contributes to higher job satisfaction. This underscores the necessity of considering additional factors, such as resilience, which may further intensify the influence of self-efficacy on job satisfaction.

Resilience, defined as the ability to recover from setbacks and sustain well-being in the face of challenges, as reported in this study, is a crucial factor in fostering positive outcomes for teachers. This observation reinforces the notion that resilience serves as a protective factor that enhances the relationship between self-efficacy and well-being, as well as job satisfaction. Additionally, teacher reflection has an indirect effect on job satisfaction, mediated by teacher resilience. Resilience equips teachers to navigate challenges and difficulties.

5.14.2 Similarities

5.14.2.1.1 Heavy workload strains teachers and increases dissatisfaction.

A research study revealed that teachers face significant challenges in managing their workload within the constraints of available time. The extensive nature of this workload, which often necessitates working extended hours and weekends to create materials from scratch, was identified as a common issue. The experiences of Participant 15, a new teacher, exemplify these difficulties. One teacher highlighted the struggle to reconcile their preferred teaching methodology with institutional and examination board requirements. This challenging workload continued beyond the early years of teaching, with certain teachers obligated to substitute for absent peers and to address extended vacancies, a circumstance that is occasionally intensified by swift staff turnover. The ongoing nature of this workload remained a considerable challenge for teachers. While teachers generally find certain aspects of their job particularly stressful, the summer months are typically perceived as less demanding.

However, it is noteworthy that individual teachers may experience peak stress at different times throughout the academic year.

5.14.2.1.2 The nature of the teaching job

The investigation uncovered that teachers faced challenges not only in terms of workload volume but also in the intrinsic nature of their responsibilities. Teachers frequently encountered problematic student conduct, which proved highly stressful and was often context-dependent, varying with specific time periods, educational institutions, or student cohorts. Notably, no teachers reported ongoing negative experiences with student behaviour. The majority of teachers attributed this phenomenon to students testing boundaries with new teachers, a situation commonly associated with ECTs or those transitioning between schools. This lowers their levels of resilience, motivation and job satisfaction. This means that the DBE needs to enforce compliance with the agreed teacher-student ratio of 1:32. The emotional aspects of teaching included concerns for students' well-being and the cultivation of positive student-teacher relationships. Some teachers also noted the influence of students' domestic circumstances or prior experiences on their classroom conduct, which negatively on their motivation. The DBE should promote parental involvement in their children's education. This will help in dealing with bad behaviours in schools, as teachers are prohibited by various laws in terms of dealing with student discipline (Motshusi, Ngobeni, & Sepeng, 2024).

Teachers have reported heightened emotional demands in their professional roles, attributed to increased mental health issues among students and reduced support from school pastoral staff and external agencies. Cognitive challenges were also identified, particularly in relation to modifications in curriculum, instructional methodologies, evaluation procedures, and the implementation of new institutional systems such as SA-SAMS. Some teachers felt compelled to demonstrate extensive subject expertise and prioritise emerging areas within their field of knowledge.

Teachers' perceptions of their work significantly influenced their attitudes towards task completion, with many citing assignments they deemed superfluous, ineffective, or poorly executed by the institution. External factors, including curricular changes and insufficient resources and leadership support, were identified as contributing factors. Some teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their school's management of

teacher workload and institutional expectations, particularly regarding excessive administrative duties and initiatives perceived as lacking value or clear purpose.

5.14.2.1.3 Challenges with organisational issues

The organisational challenges encountered by teachers constitute a significant sub-theme, encompassing issues that are perceived to impact their physical, cognitive, and emotional capacities. These difficulties, often manifesting at the institutional or departmental level, can be seemingly minor yet profoundly affect teachers' professional experiences. The teacher shortage has been discussed in many academic publications as it has an adverse influence on teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The DBE needs to attend to teacher shortages in schools and address the issues of teachers' multitasking roles. This can be done through various teacher recruitment programmes and re-training and re-skilling teachers, upgrading practising teachers through in-service training. DBE can also reduce teacher shortages by promoting more veteran teachers and utilising their expertise in managerial programmes in education. Teachers frequently grapple with resource limitations, including inadequate access to essential materials such as textbooks and photocopiers, as well as suboptimal scheduling arrangements. The fragmentation of administrative time, shared teaching responsibilities, and insufficient allocation of remedial sessions further exacerbate these challenges.

Additionally, the lack of dedicated planning periods or their dispersal throughout the week compounds the issue of limited administrative time. The configuration of student groups, determined at an institutional level rather than based on logistical considerations, also influences teachers' work dynamics. While instructing heterogeneous ability groups presents difficulties in pre-lesson resource development, managing homogeneous groups with a high proportion of lower-ability students can be more demanding in terms of classroom behaviour regulation. The absence of a designated classroom space further complicates teachers' roles, necessitating the physical transport of materials, creating time pressures between room transitions, and impacting their psychological well-being due to the lack of a personal workspace.

Collectively, these organisational issues increase the complexity of teachers' roles and affect their overall performance. Moreover, several participants indicated a lack

of adequate pastoral support for students, which was associated with worries regarding student mental health. This deficiency encompassed both institutional and external agency assistance, thereby exacerbating the emotional pressures that are intrinsic to the teaching profession. These findings have been reported in several previous studies on teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The DBE needs to address the holistic development of teachers and assist them with psychological well-being.

5.14.2.1.4 Navigating change and uncertainty is a challenging task

The investigation revealed that all subjects experienced adverse effects associated with role ambiguity and organisational modifications, both in specific positions and in their broader teaching careers. Each participant reported at least one instance of decreased job satisfaction linked to transitions, with the majority also identifying additional contextual shifts as contributing factors. These changes were accompanied by other detrimental factors, including intensified workloads, elevated stress levels, apprehensions about job security, and institutional alterations that teachers deemed neither equitable nor beneficial. Similar findings were recorded in other teacher motivation studies. The ramifications of these changes were evident in the teachers' necessity to modify their instructional approaches, subsequently influencing their professional self-assurance and proficiency. Notably, the study also underscored that even transitions between academic disciplines presented considerable challenges for the teachers, as was reported in another study.

5.14.2.1.5 The challenge of transitioning

An investigation into teacher transitions revealed that all teachers experienced at least one period of emotional decline during their career shifts. The majority of teachers relocated to different schools within their initial five years of teaching, with most undergoing subsequent moves thereafter. The causes of these emotional downturns varied among teachers, with many needing to adapt their pedagogical approaches to reestablish their professional identity in new environments. This adaptation became particularly apparent during the shift to their second educational institution. Certain teachers deemed it essential to develop additional competencies due to alterations in subject matter or engagement in new activities, such as parent-teacher conferences. Others needed to reassess their comprehension of the teaching

profession within unfamiliar contexts, driven by changes in student demographics and institutional cultures.

The transition to a new school frequently involved numerous factors, including modifications in examination boards, institutional expectations, and organisational norms, as well as transitions from established to non-established systems. These unforeseen changes led to increased workloads and compelled teachers to adjust their classroom management approaches. Some teachers faced unexpected behavioural challenges from students, with some encountering disciplinary issues for the first time in their careers. Leadership styles differed across institutions, with some teachers reporting unwelcoming work environments. Although transitions were anticipated to yield positive outcomes, the reality often did not meet expectations, resulting in disillusionment. This has been a recurring theme in various research findings (cf: Section 2.19.8, Section 2.19.9, and Section 2.9.5). These expectations were sometimes founded on assurances made during interviews or on teachers' assumptions based on their prior experiences. The transition process proved to be arduous for teachers, involving unanticipated changes, increased workloads, and challenges in adapting to new instructional methodologies (cf: Section 2.5 and Section 2.6.2).

In one case, a teacher resigned due to inadequate training and support during a challenging transition. This situation arose from inherited circumstances where students lacked appropriate curriculum instruction, assessments were incomplete, and disciplinary measures were excessively punitive. As a result, this resulted in strained relationships between students and teachers, a heightened workload, and ongoing concerns regarding academic performance, which persisted for extended periods.

5.14.2.1.6 Lack of leadership support

This study highlights the essential importance of individual acknowledgment and validation, especially in relation to professional obstacles and support requirements (cf: Section 2.9.2). A significant number of participants reported a deficiency in necessary assistance or support within their careers, which was frequently linked to the lack or inadequacy of assigned support staff. The neglect from leadership and management teams led to a perception of support being inaccessible, causing

teachers to believe that seeking help was pointless (cf: Section 2.9.3). The findings indicated that the majority of participants engaged in behaviours such as hiding problems, suppressing emotions, and avoiding tasks due to the fear of being discovered. This lack of support negatively impacted their professional self-esteem and views of their teaching responsibilities. Importantly, half of the participants moved to different roles or institutions, while one indicated a possible desire to leave the profession altogether.

5.14.2.1.7 Lack of Teacher Empowerment

The autonomy of teachers is frequently undermined, leading to dissatisfaction and frustration regarding their capacity to influence decisions at both institutional and national levels. This discontent primarily stems from curriculum and the DBE mandates, along with choices made at the school level that heighten workload or create tensions with school principals. Teachers also sense a deficiency in professional trust, which is linked to their limited participation in decision-making processes and the lack of adequate accountability measures. Some teachers believe their contributions are overlooked, resulting in decisions that lead to unnecessary complications.

Additionally, teachers often feel unprepared to tackle broader societal challenges, such as issues related to student mental health and poverty, which are within their scope of responsibility. This perceived deficit of professional trust is intensified by inadequate training within educational institutions, especially regarding organisational changes that impact individual roles or entire schools. The interplay of these factors, along with the necessity for improved preparation and support, profoundly affects teachers' job satisfaction and their overall professional experience. Prior research has indicated that teacher commitment is closely associated with effective leadership within schools (cf: Section 2.6.4 and Section 2.6.5). It is incumbent upon school leadership to ensure that teacher empowerment is actively promoted.

5.14.2.1.8 Low status of the profession and lack of professional recognition

Research suggests that there is a perceived deficiency in recognition for teachers from external entities, such as government agencies and the general populace. These insights, which are predominantly generalised and tied to particular temporal and policy frameworks, underscore a perceived disconnection between educational

establishments and the broader community. Teachers have expressed apprehensions regarding governmental regulations, curriculum development, and accountability frameworks (cf: Section 2.5). They contend that these alterations could potentially disadvantage certain students, especially through the escalation of academic content or the modification of assessment strategies. This perceived lack of comprehension is linked to the evaluation and prioritisation of teachers, which may adversely affect student confidence and mental well-being. Additionally, some teachers observe that shifts in funding priorities have a direct impact on their professional experience, reducing the enjoyable factors of their vocation. The portrayal of teaching in recruitment campaigns indicates a perceived undervaluation and misinterpretation of the profession, with communications suggesting a universal applicability for teaching and appealing to individuals from other sectors. This may result in misunderstandings regarding the competencies necessary for success in the educational field.

The persistent politicisation of education is perceived by teachers as instigating unwarranted changes that could harm student welfare. They argue that governments may link societal challenges to teachers by placing emphasis on examination outcomes. Some teachers believe that successive governments aim to alter educational policies to distinguish themselves from their predecessors (cf: Section 2.3), and that while social mobility is considered politically beneficial, it may not resonate with those who prefer to remain within their existing communities.

Teachers report feeling undervalued and misunderstood by society, leading to a perception of diminished professional status. This sentiment is linked to a broader societal belief that teaching is a universally accessible skill, rather than a specialised profession requiring expertise. In conclusion, teachers' dissatisfaction with governmental policies, curriculum design, and accountability measures underscores the need for enhanced understanding and appreciation of the teacher's role within the educational system.

5.15 SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The case study's findings offer a clear opportunity to synthesize Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory of motivation with contemporary concerns about teacher morale in urban primary schools. The study aligns with the theory's central claim that motivation and job satisfaction arise from two distinct categories of work-related stimuli: intrinsic

motivators (growth and achievement) and hygiene factors (extrinsic conditions such as policies, supervision, and working conditions). While participants reported motivation stemming from the intrinsic aspects of teaching and the sense of achievement, they simultaneously highlighted deficits in recognition, respect, and other hygiene factors. This juxtaposition illustrates the complex interplay Herzberg describes: motivators can fuel a sense of purpose, but without adequate hygiene factors, satisfaction deteriorates and demotivation follows. In this sense, the findings corroborate Herzberg's proposition that intrinsic satisfaction can coexist with, and be undermined by, unfavourable extrinsic conditions.

Beyond reaffirming the theory, the study contributes to a broader literature that situates teacher motivation within the realities of urban schooling. The teachers' acknowledgement of achievement and the intrinsic rewards of teaching resonates with other research showing that professional meaning and growth can sustain commitment even in challenging environments. Yet the reported lack of respect and recognition points to a persistent gap between the internal rewards of teaching and the external validation and support that schools provide. Moreover, the description of excessive workload and the resulting stress and burnout aligns with a growing body of work on educator well-being, reinforcing the idea that hygiene factors such as workload management, administrative support, and collegial relationships play a decisive role in whether intrinsic motivation translates into sustained job satisfaction.

Taken together, these findings underscore that Herzberg's framework remains a useful lens for interpreting how both internal drives and external conditions shape teachers' experiences in urban districts. From a practical standpoint, the synthesis highlights critical implications for school leadership and policy. The study emphasizes that neglecting essential motivators threatens not only momentary job satisfaction but long-term commitment to the organization. Leaders must therefore cultivate environments that sustain intrinsic motivators through recognition of achievement, opportunities for professional growth, and meaningful teaching challenges while simultaneously addressing hygiene factors that commonly erode morale. Although compensation was not the central concern for these teachers, the presence of inadequate policies, strained interpersonal relations, and an unsupportive work climate can significantly undermine satisfaction.

Effective strategies might include workload redistribution, transparent and fair administrative practices, structured recognition programs, professional development aligned with teachers' career goals, and a culture of collaboration and respect. By integrating Herzberg's theory with the lived realities described in the study, districts can design targeted interventions aimed at maintaining motivation, reducing burnout, and improving retention. It is important to acknowledge the study's limitations, which also guide future inquiry. With only four participants, the findings offer rich insights but limited generalizability.

Future research should expand to larger, more diverse samples across different urban and rural contexts, enabling a more comprehensive test of how motivators and hygiene factors interact under varying conditions. Longitudinal studies could examine how changes in workload, recognition, and organizational policies impact motivation and retention over time. Additionally, comparative studies might explore whether interventions focused on enhancing recognition and reducing administrative friction yield measurable improvements in job satisfaction, teaching efficacy, and staff stability. By continuing to synthesize Herzberg's theoretical framework with empirical investigations in education, researchers can build a more nuanced understanding of how best to support teachers in demanding environments.

In conclusion, this case study demonstrates that Herzberg's two-factor theory remains a valuable tool for interpreting teacher motivation in urban primary schools. The coexistence of intrinsic motivation and hygiene-factor deficiencies explains both the passion teachers bring to their work and the strains that threaten their continued engagement. The synthesis of these findings with broader research underscores a clear call to action for school leaders: address both the motivators that give teaching its intrinsic meaning and the extrinsic conditions that sustain a healthy, supportive work environment. Doing so is essential for improving teacher satisfaction, reducing burnout, and enhancing retention in urban education system. The subsequent chapter primarily addresses recommendations arising from the findings of this study, proposed future research on teacher job satisfaction, and the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research initiative began by exploring the challenges and sustaining factors for teachers who persist in the profession, approached from two distinct perspectives: the practical challenges encountered by a group of veteran teachers who have continued teaching despite high turnover rates, and the theoretical perspective on how these experiences correlate with existing research and theories of motivation and job satisfaction. Consequently, this study propose that there are significant implications for both educational practice and future research directions. This chapter also examines the strengths, limitations and delimitations of the study, providing a framework for understanding these implications. Before delving into the strengths and limitations, it is crucial to acknowledge that the study involved a small sample of teacher participants, whose experiences may not fully represent those of other veteran teachers. Nonetheless, their collective experiences, spanning over 160 years of teaching across three different schools, and the comprehensive nature of this study suggest potential implications for educational practice. This is not to claim that the study has uncovered definitive solutions, but rather to leverage the insights of these veteran teachers to propose considerations for enhancing the teaching experience. More importantly, the retention of veteran teachers in Johannesburg urban primary schools is crucial. The presence of experienced teachers in primary education significantly boosts the chances of Black students graduating and pursuing higher education (Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2021). Consequently, teacher education programs and teachers must enhance their efforts to familiarise pre-service teachers with the diverse roles and responsibilities of classroom teachers, thereby increasing their effectiveness and potential for success in the teaching profession. These programs should offer well-rounded, realistic, and high-quality experiences. They need to help pre-service teachers connect theory with practice effectively. If the goal is to create skilled teachers, the programs must go beyond teaching content, classroom skills, and management. They should also teach about social, political, economic, and racial issues that affect South Africa's public schools. These issues influence the diverse groups of students in the system. Furthermore, given the growing diversity of Johannesburg's student body, all

teachers must receive training that equips them with the skills and competencies necessary to meet the educational needs of students from varied backgrounds.

6.2 KEY DETERMINANT FACTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION ON TEACHERS

The study analysed teacher job satisfaction and retention using various methodologies, revealing ten main themes, including but not limited to: teacher attributes, vocational challenges, and institutional culture. It identified factors contributing to job satisfaction and retention, as well as personal and professional obstacles faced by teachers. The study was sectioned into two stages, with the responses organised into main themes and sub-themes, such as effective teaching methods, professional environments, emotional aspects, cognitive functions, job-related stress, and individual background. In response to the primary research question of this study, the key determinant factors influencing job satisfaction amongst veteran teachers in primary schools were found to be as follows:

- Teachers' reasons for choosing teaching and to teach in urban areas varied depending on their backgrounds.
- Teachers experienced low and high points during the course of their teaching career, reproducing an individual balance between successes and challenging factors;
- Teachers sustained their teaching career by a combination of manifold environment-oriented, personal-oriented and role-oriented factors;
- School leadership influence many of the positive and negative factors experienced by teachers;
- Teacher's acuties of the phenomenon under study chiefly included person-centered factors supported by school-centered factors;
- Teacher also felt that flourishing in the profession included what they gained from and contributed, while they managed work/life balance.
- Teachers experience multiple, varied and interrelated challenges to their profession life, motivation and satisfaction;
- Teachers believed that ECTs would benefit from leadership support, their development of faith, applying theological virtues in their lives (personal and professional) and family support in making their work easier and manageable and developing their approach to the profession; and

- These experienced teachers' recommendations for lawmakers prioritize improving recognition, respect, and gain better understanding of the working conditions for teachers.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

To guarantee comprehensive readiness in teacher training programs, effective adjustments in the classroom for teachers, and improved teacher job satisfaction for the delivery of quality teaching and learning, the following recommendations are put forward: 1) revising the teacher education curriculum, 2) incorporating real-world examples and classroom applications, 3) extending the length of teacher training programs can help improve teacher skills. It allows for more in-depth learning and practice. Longer programs give teachers time to understand new methods better. It also helps prepare them for real classroom situations. Increasing program duration can lead to more confident and capable teachers. It makes for a stronger foundation in teaching practices. More time means better coverage of essential topics. It helps teachers stay up-to-date with new techniques and ideas. Overall, lengthening training programs can boost the quality of education, 4) strengthening the emphasis on developing socioemotional learning practices, 5) Recognizing teachers' length of service and quality performance, 6) Promoting an instructional climate and availability of management to consult with teachers, 7) Establishment of a compelling rewards program for teachers, and 8) Having academic and professional conversations with teachers and listen to their professional concerns. Each of these points is explored briefly below:

6.3.1 Creating curriculum revision to support early career teachers

The curriculum must focus on the current problems that block the learning of students in the 21st century. These problems hit inner-city students the hardest, and they often face two types of unfair treatment. Teacher education programs should extend beyond theoretical knowledge to incorporate diverse perspectives, thereby enhancing preservice teachers' cultural competence and responsiveness (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020). A curriculum that is culturally responsive and highlights aspects such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and special education, among others, ought to be incorporated into the educational framework (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Chanana, 2021; Cells, Sabina, Touchton,

Shankar-Brown, & Sabina, 2023). These topics, both individually and collectively, are prevalent in urban primary school environments, influencing both teaching practices, job satisfaction and student learning outcomes. Furthermore, these topics must be directly linked to the identities of preservice teachers, as personal identities play a crucial role in shaping how individuals interact with both the world and the educational setting (Gillani, et al., 2022; Hulme & Wood, 2022; Ingersoll & Tran, 2023).

6.3.2 Contextualised experiences to support pre-service teachers

Including real-world examples, classroom activities, and simulations of on-the-job training in teacher education is essential (Hulme & Wood, 2022). These methods help future teachers learn how to meet different student needs. Studies show that well-planned hands-on experiences let teachers connect what they learn in class with real teaching. This approach improves their skills and knowledge more than programs that do not include such activities (Barak, 2021). However, not all teacher education programs benefit from extensive partnerships with various school districts. To address this, interactive and hands-on clinical experiences can be facilitated through the creation of mentorship programs for both preservice and practising teachers, available in both face-to-face and online formats (Matla & Xaba, 2020; Balang, 2021). Additionally, in situations where diverse classroom settings are unavailable for developing instructional skills, teacher education programs should explore the use of digital simulations with adaptive avatars, offering preservice teachers numerous opportunities for practice and skill enhancement (Hulme & Wood, 2022).

6.3.3 Providing opportunities for extended Student Teaching Experience (TE)

In alignment with a culturally responsive curriculum and the integration of real-world examples and classroom applications, the length of education and training plays a crucial role in shaping competent and effective future teachers (Balang, 2021). Acknowledging this perspective, certain teacher education programs have adopted a year-long Student-Teaching mandate. Extending the Student-Teaching Experience period from a single semester to a full year or more offers pre-service teachers enhanced opportunities to refine their skills, allowing for a deeper exploration of the complexities and subtleties inherent in their future profession (Susanto, Syailendra, & Suryawan, 2023; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025).

6.3.4 Emphasis on socio-emotional learning and building trust

Additionally, teacher education programs must address the socio-emotional aspects of teaching, particularly in underserved, urban environments (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020). To effectively balance pedagogical and socioemotional challenges in the classroom, teacher candidates should consistently engage with these scenarios during their training, cultivating skills that will benefit both themselves and their future students (Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024). Neglecting the emotional components of teaching in preparation programs may lead novice teachers to consider leaving the profession, as they may find themselves inadequately prepared to handle these critical challenges.

6.3.5 Recognise teachers who go above and beyond expectations.

Teachers in every school go beyond what is expected to help their students and support their colleagues. Despite their hard work, their efforts are often ignored and undervalued. Recognising and praising these teachers can make them feel appreciated and valued. It can also motivate other staff members to do their best (Wu, Ghayas, Aziz, Adil, & Naizi, 2024; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025).

6.3.6 Promoting an instructional climate and being available for the teaching staff

In order to manage teacher retention and enhance teacher satisfaction, principals need to be as accessible as they can when it comes to teacher issues and inquiries in order to keep their teaching team enthusiastic and at ease (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025). Teachers will feel more at ease and inspired just by knowing that principals are ready to help with their issues. Keeping an open-door policy and being extremely visible are the greatest ways to be approachable for their teaching staff. Despite their hectic schedules, principals must remain calm and participate in the current discussion. Get outside, spend time with the individuals they serve, and stay focused when interacting with them (Makirimani & Naicker, 2025).

6.3.7 Creating a compelling reward program for teachers

Principals should not forget to create an equally outstanding incentive program for their teachers as they do for their student body (Özkan & Akgenç, 2022). While a more positive school climate allows teachers to work more efficiently and joyfully, rewarding their teachers with some amazing prizes along the way may really inspire

them. It is also entertaining and promotes involvement! Collaborating with nearby businesses that can provide gifts and exclusive discounts for your school may benefit both you and those businesses. Schools' local companies get publicity and public recognition, and their teachers get wonderful presents. Local businesses often show strong support for their community. They like working with local groups to thank teachers. These companies find it important to give back. They enjoy team efforts that recognise teachers' hard work (Makirimani & Naicker, 2025). This helps build a stronger bond between the company and the community. Such partnerships show that they care about education and local growth (Toropova, Myrberg, & Johansson, 2021).

6.3.8 Listening to the teacher's concerns

In addition to acknowledging concrete achievements, principals need to make sure that they pay attention to their teachers' criticism and worries (Xu, Liu, Huang, & Fang, 2024). Even while this is a crucial duty at all times, it is especially required when starting a new project. New initiatives need more labour since they frequently call for a different approach to work. There could be resistance or discontent while implementing something new. It is uplifting to acknowledge their teachers' opinions since it lets them know their opinions are valued and fosters a cooperative, trustworthy work environment. Principals must take the time to thoroughly explain to both experienced and ECTs how a new program would enhance student progress or make their own work simpler, and acknowledge when teachers make valid concerns (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025). The findings of this research indicate that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors significantly influence teachers' motivation in primary education, which subsequently impacts educational outcomes. The study aimed to examine the effects of these two types of factors, successfully revealing that intrinsic factors, such as job satisfaction and professional commitment, exert a more substantial influence than extrinsic factors, which include financial incentives and the work environment. These results align with motivational theories, particularly Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which posits that intrinsic motivators are more effective in enhancing motivation compared to extrinsic factors. This research provides a valuable contribution by presenting a holistic approach that integrates both factors into a unified analysis, offering strategic recommendations for schools to enhance teacher motivation and performance. Specifically, prioritising the

enhancement of intrinsic factors could be a key focus for educational policy in primary schools.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

This study was undertaken with an awareness of several potential constraints. Chief among these was the inherent subjectivity in qualitative research, where data interpretation is filtered through the researcher's perspective before documentation. The risk of observer bias, where desired outcomes may be recorded instead of actual observations, is a significant concern for qualitative researchers. This study is no exception to such concerns. Throughout the research process, the researcher grappled with the challenge of accurately representing the data without imposing the researcher's own expectations or desires. While measures were implemented to mitigate this issue, it remains a potential limitation of the study. Qualitative research, as noted by, requires more than cursory observations or brief interactions. To address this, the researcher conducted multiple interviews and employed question rephrasing techniques to validate earlier findings. The acknowledgement of potential subjectivity in this research paradigm fostered a heightened awareness during the study, which the researcher theorised would help mitigate personal bias. This theory was largely confirmed during the data collection phase, as the researcher frequently reflected on the researcher's own beliefs and the tendency to interpret or ascribe meaning to participants' responses. This self-awareness promoted objectivity and encouraged regular introspection. As previously mentioned, varying degrees of prior knowledge about some participants posed challenges in setting aside preconceptions during data collection. However, recognising that failure to do so could compromise the study's quality and validity motivated increased caution and reduced subjectivity to some extent. The small sample size was expected to be a limitation of the study. Using fewer participants had advantages, especially for collecting detailed data on each person. It would be helpful to see results from a larger group of people in a similar study. Looking back, the small size was less of a problem than initially thought. Several reasons increase trust in the quality. Fewer participants meant more chances for detailed interactions. These helped provide a clearer view of their job satisfaction. This comprehensive understanding enabled the acquisition of richer information about each subject than would have been possible with a more extensive sample.

The final perceived limitation during data collection was the specificity of the participant group. It was recognised that the findings derived from primary school teachers in urban settings with 5-20+ years of experience might not be generalizable to teachers outside this demographic. For instance, secondary school teachers might possess a distinct set of experiences shaping their resilience. Questions arise regarding the relevance of this study to teachers in suburban areas or those in the early stages of their careers. While the participant specificity does constrain the broader applicability of the results, this limitation is considered minimal.

It is worth reiterating that despite efforts to narrow the participant pool, the information provided was influenced by diverse life experiences and varied educational contexts. Moreover, the primary conclusions did not involve characteristics exclusive to primary school teachers. Support networks among colleagues and opportunities for professional growth, for example, could certainly be implemented across various educational levels. Had the participants' experiences such as spirituality, peer support, and fostering connections with students, been unique to primary education settings (e.g., engaging with students during recess or observing early reading development), there might have been greater cause to view the targeted participant group as a more significant limitation. During the investigation, various unexpected limitations arose, the initial one being related to the methods used for data collection and analysis. The discrepancy between the emphasis and expression employed by participants during data presentation and the meaning conveyed by the same data in textual form became strikingly evident. Factors that participants articulated with fervour often diminished in significance and perceived importance during the transcription process.

Conversely, factors that appeared inconsequential during interviews or were addressed with minimal attention by subjects occasionally gained undue prominence in the transcribed text, influenced by word choice. A notable illustration of this phenomenon is the discussion of humour. As previously mentioned, the discourse on teachers' sense of humour and its impact on job satisfaction was limited; however, the terminology used in transcriptions imbued this aspect with a relevance that was not apparent during face-to-face interactions. An additional unforeseen limitation in data collection emerged from the substantial variation in information

volume shared by different participants during interviews. Some individuals were verbose, offering extensive responses to inquiries, which facilitated data collection. In contrast, others provided concise answers and required prompting for elaboration, presenting a greater challenge in data collection. The increased loquacity of certain participants yielded a more substantial corpus for analysis. This disparity potentially introduces constraints, as it did not consistently allow for equivalent data quantities when analysing participants as a group.

Furthermore, individuals who expounded more on specific issues could potentially skew the results in their favour, introducing bias into the analysis. The study encountered unforeseen limitations that impacted participant selection and sampling strategies. One notable constraint was the researcher's prior acquaintance with some participants, potentially compromising objectivity compared to engaging with unfamiliar subjects. While this may have influenced the validity, the overall effect was deemed insignificant because of increased awareness of possible bias throughout the data collection and analysis process. Another possible limitation stemmed from participants' subconscious concerns about evaluation, which may have inhibited disclosure of potentially unfavourable attributes or experiences, such as burnout or financial motivations for continuing in the teaching profession. While the comprehensive nature of data collection suggests this was not a significant factor, it cannot be definitively ruled out as a potential constraint.

The researcher's limited personal and professional network further restricted the pool of potential study participants. The inability to include numerous other qualified teachers in the study was initially perceived as a disadvantage. A broader network and additional time for data collection might have allowed for an expanded sample size. The researcher's limited experience in conducting studies of this scale may have also imposed constraints. Despite satisfactory outcomes, this inaugural research endeavour likely encountered limitations due to inexperience in interview techniques and data collection and analysis methodologies. Substantial learning occurred throughout the process, but novice errors necessitated ongoing adjustments, potentially affecting study consistency. The refinement of interview questions exemplifies this adaptive process. Initial interviews lacked the desired

focus on job satisfaction, prompting the researcher to modify questions to elicit more relevant data.

Consequently, subsequent participants received revised sets of questions for the first two interviews, while all participants received individualised questions for the third interview. These changes, though necessary, might have affected how consistently the study was conducted across different participants. To reduce these issues and improve the trustworthiness of his research, the researcher used member checks. This approach allows participants to review and comment on key findings. The researcher hoped it would bring new ideas and spot any overlooked errors. Most of the teachers had advanced degrees and a lot of experience. Still, the researcher decided to limit the amount of detailed academic material shared during these checks. A full copy of the defended study will be available to participants for future use. However, sharing the entire 250-page report or even the 50-page results and discussion seemed too much for the member check process. As a result, the researcher carefully chose a brief set that included Table 5.1 along with Figures 5.1 and 5.2 for examination. The member checking process took place after the coding and analysis of all gathered data. The researcher successfully completed checks with five of the fifteen participants. Each session, lasting approximately twenty minutes, involved presenting the curated materials and elucidating the researcher's analysis of their support for identified traits or experiences, as well as overall findings. Following this, the researcher solicited feedback and engaged in discussions regarding the perceived accuracy and acceptability of his interpretations.

To maintain the integrity of the research, the researcher meticulously documented their comments in field notes and cross-referenced them with the original text. For one participant unable to attend an in-person meeting, the researcher conducted the member check and obtained feedback via email correspondence. The participants generally found the data to be coherent and credible. Numerous individuals expressed astonishment at the pronounced presence of spirituality. Because religious and spiritual topics are very personal, some might see including them as a mistake. They could think it breaks the rule of separating church and government. The absence of spirituality from professional discourse, in contrast to topics such as

collegiality, reflection, or meta-cognition, may explain why perseverant teachers tend to maintain discretion regarding their spiritual perspectives.

Notably, respondents were surprised by the lack of clear demonstration of job satisfaction-related traits, such as a passion for learning and introspective thinking, despite their prevalence among participants. During member checks, it became evident that careful presentation of Table 5.1, Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2, which illustrated the visibility of each characteristic for individual subjects based on interview data interpretation, was crucial. Initial reactions to these tables by two participants revealed mild defensiveness. Upon clarification that the factor rankings (highly evident, somewhat evident, etc.) were derived solely from interview responses and were not intended as character assessments or evaluations, participants became more at ease and willing to offer feedback. It was further elucidated that a participant might possess a characteristic without it necessarily contributing to their job satisfaction, as observed in several cases. The rankings in Table 5.1 reflected how these factors appeared to influence job satisfaction. For instance, while Participant 14 exhibited independence, the gathered evidence suggested this trait did not significantly impact her job satisfaction. Participants were also reminded that if every teacher had reported strong promotion of job satisfaction by every factor inquired about, such data would not only be highly improbable but would also fail to provide investigable patterns, potentially rendering the findings inconsequential.

The implementation of a preliminary dialogue during member checks significantly enhanced participant responsiveness before data presentation. While all participants generally affirmed the accuracy of their respective data analyses, notable observations emerged. Participant 4 suggested that empowerment played a more substantial role in her job satisfaction than initially indicated in the findings. Similarly, Participant 8 emphasised the prominence of patience, reflective thinking, and teaching passion in her experience. Participant 8 also highlighted an important aspect concerning the main discovery about the importance of contributions to child relationships. She inquired if upper primary school teachers might find it simpler to forge personal bonds with students, based on her experience teaching first grade, where younger children have fewer life experiences and less advanced

communication abilities. The member checking process yielded valuable insights and reinforced confidence in the study's main conclusions. However, a potential limitation to the investigation's validity arose in the presentation of the study's implications for current theory.

The researcher's dual role as a full-time classroom teacher and investigator presented both advantages and challenges in conducting this extensive research project. While the researcher's teaching experience provided unique perspectives on the issue, it also imposed certain constraints. Recent professional reading had primarily focused on classroom education best practices and job satisfaction-related studies, resulting in limited exposure to broader current theories in educational research. The absence of a post-graduate level professional learning community further restricted the researcher's capabilities, reducing networking opportunities and theoretical discussions with colleagues in educational leadership. Consequently, the ability to elucidate the implications of significant findings on current theory was diminished compared to that of an on-school professional researcher, an aspiration for the future. The subsequent section will offer recommendations for further research based on these findings, potentially benefiting future academics and job satisfaction researchers.

6.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A synthesis of the study on primary school teacher job satisfaction reveals a nuanced picture of how motivation and organizational commitment are shaped within education management. The central claim is that teacher job satisfaction is crucial not only for individual well-being but also for the broader functioning of schools, influencing both how motivated teachers feel and how firmly they stay committed to their institutions. By examining a set of interrelated factors such as leadership and management within the school, leadership support, training, recognition, promotions, compensation, and professional efficacy the study integrates multiple dimensions of the work environment to explain variations in satisfaction. Importantly, these relationships are analyzed while controlling for demographic variables, underscoring the idea that satisfaction is not simply a function of personal characteristics but of the organizational and contextual conditions in which teachers operate. Synthesis across these factors suggests that job satisfaction emerges from a dynamic interplay between leadership and opportunities

for growth and reward. Leadership and management in the school set the tone for the work environment, shaping teachers' sense of safety, fairness, and purpose. When leaders provide visible support, opportunities for professional development, and clear pathways for advancement, teachers are more likely to feel capable and valued, which enhances intrinsic motivation and a sense of professional efficacy. Concurrently, tangible rewards through appropriate compensation and meaningful promotions or recognitions address external motivators and signal that high-quality work is valued. Taken together, these elements contribute to a cohesive picture in which both the day-to-day leadership climate and the longer-term career prospects within a school influence how content teachers are with their roles and how committed they feel to their institutions. However, the study's delimitations shape how we interpret these findings and their applicability beyond the sample. Data were collected at a single time point during a particularly turbulent period of the COVID-19 pandemic (February–September 2021), a context known to intensify workload, uncertainty, and stress. This temporal specificity means the observed relationships might be amplified or altered by pandemic-related pressures, such as remote or hybrid teaching, health concerns, and shifting administrative demands. The geographic and institutional scope further narrows generalizability: the focus on D9 primary schools excludes other districts, private schools, LSEN (learners with special educational needs) schools, and farm schools, and the study did not extensively cover tertiary education teaching staff who contend with different materials, infrastructures, and curricular demands. By omitting tertiary educators and limiting the sample to particular school types, the study provides a detailed snapshot rather than a universally applicable map of teacher job satisfaction. The stated time constraints of the academic year may also have influenced responses, potentially underrepresenting longer-term attitudes and experiences. Against these delimitations, the study still offers important implications for education management. Controlling for demographic variables helps isolate the effects of leadership quality, developmental opportunities, and recognition on satisfaction, reinforcing the managerial levers schools can target to improve outcomes. Practically, this suggests that investment in leadership development, structured training programs, transparent recognition and promotion processes, and fair compensation are likely to bolster teacher motivation and commitment, especially in challenging periods. It also points to the value of fostering professional efficacy, perhaps through collaborative practices, mentoring, and access to resources that

enable teachers to feel competent and effective in their classrooms. Future research should aim to broaden the evidentiary base by extending beyond the current delimitations. Longitudinal designs would clarify how relationships among leadership, development opportunities, rewards, and professional efficacy evolve over time and in response to changing conditions, including post-pandemic realities. Expanding the sampling frame to include varied school types, districts, and levels of education would enhance generalizability and illuminate contextual differences. Finally, integrating student outcomes and school performance indicators could deepen understanding of how teacher job satisfaction translates into classroom practice and overall educational quality. In sum, the synthesis of the provided text highlights a coherent model in which teacher job satisfaction is shaped by leadership and management practices, supportive professional development, meaningful recognition and compensation, and a sense of professional efficacy. The study's delimitations remind us to interpret findings with caution, yet they also illuminate clear pathways for educational leaders and policymakers to strengthen teacher satisfaction and, by extension, school effectiveness, while signaling rich directions for future investigation.

6.6 RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

A synthesis of the contemporary literature on teacher job satisfaction and retention reveals a complex, multi-layered picture: personal meaning and calling, relational dynamics within the classroom, and broader institutional and societal factors all intersect to influence whether teachers feel fulfilled and remain in the profession. While studies consistently point to spirituality or a sense of calling as meaningful drivers, they also highlight the moderating roles of age, race, experience, and school context. This integrated view suggests that effective strategies to improve satisfaction and retention must address both inner motivators and outer conditions, rather than focusing on any single cause in isolation (Huang et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2024).

One central thread across research is the potential influence of spirituality or calling on teacher satisfaction and retention. When teachers perceive their work as meaningful or aligned with a deeper purpose, they may experience greater resilience and persistence in the face of stress. However, the strength and direction of this relationship are likely contingent on other factors, including age and race, which may shape how calling translates into day-to-day motivation and persistence (Huang et al.,

2022; Wu et al., 2024). These nuances point to a need for theorizing about spirituality not as a universal buffer but as a context-sensitive resource whose effectiveness depends on individual identity, professional support, and school climate. Future research could meanwhile probe whether younger and older teachers derive meaning differently from their roles and whether the impact of calling differs across racial/cultural groups, with implications for tailored retention initiatives. Closely linked to job satisfaction and retention is the quality of close teacher-student relationships.

Preliminary findings indicate a significant correlation between strong relational ties and both satisfaction and retention, raising important questions about the mechanisms at work. Does the effect of close relationships strengthen with teaching experience, or does it rely more on relational competencies that can be cultivated through professional development? Distinguishing between intentionally cultivated connections employed as a pedagogical strategy and naturally occurring relationships tied to personal characteristics is crucial for understanding how to foster supportive classrooms (Huang et al., 2022). The synthesis therefore points to relational pedagogy as a potential lever for retention, while underscoring the need to identify which relational practices are most protective across different teaching contexts and stages of career. Another recurring theme concerns the balance between internal dispositions and external constraints, and how this balance shapes job satisfaction and resilience. Coping skills, professional autonomy, supportive leadership, and constructive reform efforts operate alongside chance circumstances in determining outcomes.

Notably, the literature raises questions about education reform as a universal, yet underexplored, factor that may enhance or hinder satisfaction and retention when implemented with attention to teachers' values and professional identities (Hulme & Wood, 2022). The relationship between burnout susceptibility and tenure adds further complexity: some veteran teachers do not report burnout, suggesting that experience can confer protective factors and that burnout risk is not uniform across all long-serving educators. A synthesis of these findings implies that both personal coping resources and systemic supports are essential to sustaining teacher well-being over time. Demographic factors, particularly race and resilience, emerge as important yet underexplored moderators of the satisfaction-retention nexus.

Research indicating that a teacher's racial background can influence resilience and, in turn, impact job satisfaction and retention calls for more nuanced analyses of how racism, cultural-alignment, and community support shape career trajectories (Arthur, 2021; Huang et al., 2022). Understanding these dynamics is critical not only for equitable retention strategies but also for ensuring that educational teams reflect and respond to diverse student populations. The synthesis hence advocates for intersectional approaches that examine how race, age, experience level, and other identities interact with organizational practices to shape outcomes. A related issue is how to measure teacher effectiveness in the context of retention research. The literature cautions against relying solely on standardized test performance as an indicator of efficacy, arguing that teacher value extends beyond test scores and encompasses classroom relationships, adaptation to diverse learners, and professional growth.

Moreover, the paradox that veteran teachers often perceived as capable of managing challenging students might be assigned more difficult courses with lower-achieving students has important implications for interpreting retention data. The synthesis therefore recommends incorporating multifaceted efficacy measures, ideally within controlled comparisons at similar grade levels or within the same school, to avoid conflating burnout risk with curricular difficulty or student demographics (Hulme & Wood, 2022; Arthur, 2021). These strands converge on a practical implication: to bolster teacher satisfaction and retention, teacher education and professional development programs should cultivate traits and competencies tied to job satisfaction such as a sense of calling, relational pedagogy skills, resilience, and adaptive coping as well as provide robust supports for reform-driven changes within schools. Given that personal background and experiences outside the classroom can shape job satisfaction, curricula for pre-service and in-service teachers should explore these factors in ethically safe, evidence-based ways. Future research should test whether deliberate inclusion of these traits in teacher preparation curricula enhances retention and reduces burnout, and whether such effects are moderated by gender, race, age, and school context.

In sum, the synthesis of current research highlights a multi-dimensional model of teacher job satisfaction and retention. Internal motivators like spirituality or calling and

external influences such as relationships, school reform, and classroom assignments interact in complex ways to determine who remains satisfied and who leaves the profession. A comprehensive agenda for future inquiry is warranted: longitudinal studies that trace how these factors unfold over teachers' careers; cross-cultural research that examines the universality or variance of these dynamics; and methodologically rigorous work that uses diverse, multi-item measures of efficacy, burnout, and resilience beyond standardized tests. By embracing this integrated perspective, educators and policymakers can better foster the conditions under which teachers thrive, avoid burnout, and sustain high-quality teaching for future generations.

6.7 THE STUDY SUMMARY

6.7.1 Introduction

Job satisfaction is a critical aspect of workforce stability and effectiveness, especially among veteran teachers who have dedicated long years to shaping young minds. Understanding the factors that influence their job satisfaction can help in formulating strategies to retain experienced educators and enhance their motivation.

6.7.2 Importance of Veteran Teachers

This study found that veteran teachers bring invaluable experience, stability, and mentorship qualities to primary schools. Their deep understanding of pedagogical strategies and classroom management contributes significantly to the learning environment. Ensuring their job satisfaction is thus vital for maintaining high educational standards.

6.7.3 Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction amongst veteran teachers

Several factors influence the job satisfaction levels among veteran teachers, including:

- **Recognition and Respect:** Appreciation from colleagues, students, and administration boosts morale.
- **Work Environment:** A supportive and resource-rich environment enhances teaching effectiveness.
- **Professional Development:** Opportunities for growth and skill enhancement motivate veteran teachers.
- **Workload and Work-life Balance:** Manageable workloads and flexibility contribute to overall job satisfaction.

- **Compensation and Benefits:** Competitive salaries and benefits are fundamental yet often supplemented by non-monetary rewards.

6.7.4 Challenges Faced by Veteran Teachers

While experienced teachers are valuable, they face unique challenges such as burnout, adapting to new technologies, and feeling undervalued or overlooked. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions.

6.7.5 Strategies to Enhance Satisfaction

To foster higher job satisfaction, schools can implement strategies like:

- Regular recognition programs
- Providing ongoing professional development tailored to veteran teachers
- Encouraging participation in decision-making processes
- Promoting a healthy work-life balance through policy adjustments
- Ensuring adequate resources and support

6.8 CONCLUSION

Enhancing job satisfaction among veteran teachers in primary schools is essential for sustainable educational success. By acknowledging their contributions and addressing their needs, educational institutions can retain seasoned teachers who continue to inspire and educate future generations. A synthesis of the cited research suggests that teacher retention rests on a triad of influences: the nature of principal support and leadership, the social and professional networks of parents and colleagues, and the broader cultural status assigned to the teaching profession. Across studies (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Gao, Murphy, & Anderson, 2020; Flores & Shuls, 2024; Makirimani & Naicker, 2025), teachers are more likely to remain in classrooms when they perceive that they are supported by school leaders, colleagues, and the school community. This synthesis foregrounds how leadership style, resource provision, and social recognition intersect to shape decisions about staying or leaving teaching, while also acknowledging the specific context of South Africa, where teaching often lacks the professional standing it deserves. Together, these strands point to a comprehensive approach to retention: cultivating supportive, collaborative leadership; ensuring meaningful professional development and resources; and actively rebranding teaching as a valued vocation within society.

First, the evidence consistently highlights principal support as a key determinant of teacher retention. Emotional and instructional backing from principals helps teachers navigate the demands of the classroom and sustain their commitment (Gillani et al., 2022). When school leaders provide instructional resources, teaching materials, and opportunities for professional learning, turnover rates tend to decline. Crucially, leaders who invest in communication channels and budgeting that address diverse student learning needs create environments where teachers feel heard, valued, and equipped to succeed. In other words, the presence of tangible support both moral and material signals to teachers that their work is prioritized and their professional growth is possible within the school's structure.

Second, the leadership style of principals matters as much as the resources they deploy. The literature traces a clear link between non-traditional, collaborative leadership and lower turnover. Principals who view themselves as facilitators, collaborators, or leaders of leaders tend to foster cultures where decision-making is shared, especially with input from new teachers (Alanoğlu & Demirtaş, 2020; Abdullah & Hamzah, 2021). The adoption of leadership teams, interview panels, and site-based management structures distributes authority and legitimizes teacher voices in policy and practice decisions. This form of distributed leadership not only improves morale but also aligns school governance with the needs and insights of teachers who are closest to classroom realities. In this way, leadership style becomes a lever for retention, not simply a factor related to resource allocation.

Third, the social and professional ecosystems surrounding teachers, parents, colleagues, and the broader community play a significant role in decisions about staying in the profession. When teachers operate within supportive networks that include engaged parents and collegial colleagues, their motivation and job satisfaction tend to increase. This social capital helps teachers feel valued beyond the classroom, reinforcing their sense of purpose and belonging within the school and community. The studies emphasize that the involvement of all stakeholders strengthens the teaching profession's standing and contributes to more stable staffing, as shared commitment to student learning becomes a collective aim rather than an individual burden. A central thread in the synthesis concerns the perceived status and respect accorded to teaching within society. Several cited works argue that, particularly in

South Africa, the teaching profession has not received the professional recognition it deserves (Beltman, 2020; Botha & Hugo, 2021). This under-recognition can undermine motivation and commitment, making it harder to recruit and retain skilled educators. Rebranding teaching as a respected, valued vocation requires deliberate efforts to elevate professional esteem, alongside improvements in compensation, facilities, and opportunities for professional growth (Botha & Hugo, 2021).

The literature contends that without broad societal support and recognition, even well-supported schools risk high turnover if teachers perceive their work as undervalued or precarious. The synthesis also reflects a dual focus: theoretical insights about leadership and practical implications for policy and practice, as well as a reflective account of the author's educational journey. The research aims to deepen understanding of topics such as character education, teacher commitment, and school administration, while also sharpening research skills. The author notes positive personal gains enhanced critical thinking, academic writing, time management, and resilience demonstrating how rigorous inquiry can translate into more effective professional practice. These reflections reinforce the idea that improving teacher retention benefits not only students and schools but also those who study and lead educational change. From these interwoven strands, several implications emerge for practice and policy. First, schools should adopt distributed leadership models that actively involve teachers in decision-making, particularly through leadership teams and site-based management structures. This approach not only distributes responsibility but also ensures that policies reflect classroom realities and teacher expertise. Second, principals must continue to prioritize substantive support emotional, instructional, and material along with transparent communication and predictable budgets that address diverse student needs. Such support systems create stable environments where teachers can focus on effective teaching rather than battling administrative obstacles. Third, a sustained effort to engage parents and communities is essential. Strengthened partnerships can amplify the social value of teaching and provide broader support networks for teachers, which in turn enhances retention. Fourth, policy and cultural work must address the broader public perception of teaching. Elevating the profession through recognition, appropriate compensation, professional development opportunities, and elevated facilities is not ancillary but central to long-term retention and national development goals. The South African

context, in particular, calls for concerted measures to elevate teacher status and ensure professional recognition matches the demands of the profession. While the research confirms the importance of school-level leadership and stakeholder involvement, it also signals that systemic change is needed to realign incentives, resources, and public attitudes with the reality of teaching as a demanding, prestigious vocation. Recommendations derived from the study recognition of teaching as a full-fledged vocation, investment in teachers' motivation and dedication, access to effective learning opportunities, secure facilities, and fair compensation point toward a comprehensive reform agenda that integrates school leadership practices with broader societal and policy-level changes. In sum, the synthesis of the cited literature argues that teacher retention depends on a synergistic combination of strong, collaborative leadership; robust, targeted support and resources for teachers; and a culture that respects and values the teaching profession. By implementing distributed leadership, ensuring continuous professional development and adequate resources, engaging stakeholders, and reframing the public perception of teaching, schools and societies can create sustainable conditions for teachers to stay, grow, and deliver high-quality education. The study's recommendations offer a practical roadmap for turning this vision into reality, inviting policymakers, school leaders, teachers, parents, and communities to act together in support of teachers and the students they serve.

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ANNEXURE A: RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER FROM UNISA



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2020/11/11

Ref: **2020/11/11/46309918/36/AM**

Dear Mr XJL Ndayeni

Name: Mr XJL Ndayeni

Student No.: 46309918

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2020/11/11 to 2025/11/11

Researcher(s): Name: Mr XJL Ndayeni
E-mail address: 46309918@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 083 9417659

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr. L. R. Johnson
E-mail address: johnslr@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 481 2740

Name: Prof. M. J. Motseke
E-mail address: motsemj@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: (012) 481 2867

Title of research:

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL
TEACHERS IN THE JOHANNESBURG EAST EDUCATION DISTRICT**

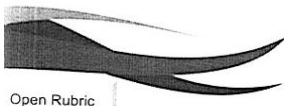
Qualification: PhD Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2020/11/11 to 2025/11/11.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2020/11/11 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.



Open Rubric

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2025/11/11**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2020/11/11/46309918/36/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof PM Sebate
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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ANNEXURE B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Date: February 2, 2021

TO: Head of Gauteng Department Education Research Unit

FROM: Javier L. Ndayeni (Doctor of Philosophy Candidate - UNISA)

RESEARCH TITLE: *Analyzing the Core Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction among Veteran Teachers and the Influence of School Leadership on Their Retention*

RE: Permission to conduct research with primary school teachers in the Johannesburg East Education District

Dear Sir/ Madam

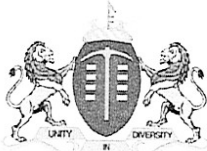
I am a PhD student at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. I hereby request permission to conduct research with primary school teachers Gauteng Province. The responses will contribute towards the research carried out by myself for a research thesis for a doctoral qualification in curriculum studies offered by the College of Education at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. The value of this research depends on the feedback that I receive from the interviews with teachers Please note that all the information collected will serve no other purpose other than that of academic research and all names will be kept confidential. Due to GDE Research regulations, all interviews will be conducted after working hours. The research interview guide will be given to participants by means of WhatsApp and/or e-mails. There will be no interruptions to the school academic programme, as participants will be asked to fill then after working hours and at a convenient time as negotiated with the participants. It is hoped that the feedback I receive will add to the constant research on teacher perseverance, professional identity and job satisfaction and their implications for quality education in our country.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Yours in Education

Javier L. Ndayeni

ANNEXURE C: RESPONSE LETTER FROM GDE



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	08 September 2021
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2021– 30 September 2021 2021/268
Name of Researcher:	NDAYENI, XJL
Address of Researcher:	2521 STANLEY STREET NATURENA EXT 19
Telephone Number:	0765878645 / 0839417659
Email address:	46309918@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Research Topic:	FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE JOHANNESBURG EAST EDUCATION DISTRICT
Type of qualification	PhD
Number and type of schools:	3 PRIMARY SCHOOLS
District/s/HO	JOHANNESBURG EAST

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. **Because of COVID 19 pandemic researchers can ONLY collect data online, telephonically or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate. The approval letter will then indicate the type of arrangements that have been made with the school.**
4. **The Researchers are advised to make arrangements with the schools via Fax, email or telephonically with the Principal.**
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Mr Gumani Mukatuni

Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 09/09/2021

ANNEXURE D: LETTER TO THE SCHOOL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Research title: *Analyzing the Core Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction among Veteran Teachers and the Influence of School Leadership on Their Retention*

Date: February 2, 2021

The Principal

Johannesburg East Education District Primary School

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Permission to do Research

I am a PhD student at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, and am inviting you as a primary school principal to participate in the investigation of the key determinant factors of job satisfaction amongst veteran teachers and the role of school leadership in urban schools. The study aims to identify intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to teachers' perseverance during times of change in education. The research involved interviews. The study will benefit teachers, school leaders, and school board members (SGBs) by providing insights into factors contributing to teachers' job satisfaction. Policymakers can use the findings to design policies that improve teachers' job satisfaction, thereby enhancing their performance. High levels of job satisfaction may motivate teachers to improve their academic performance and engagement with students. The study is classified as low category risk because of its sensitive nature and minimal privacy concerns. The findings will be made available online and at the University of South Africa's library. A copy of the thesis will be given to participating schools, and a summary of findings and recommendations will be discussed with teachers.

Yours sincerely

Javier L. Ndayeni

Doctoral Candidate

College of Education, University of South Africa, Pretoria

Mobile: 0765878645

ANNEXURE E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Date: April 14, 2021

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

I am a PhD student at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. This is a self-funded study and am inviting you to participate in a study entitled: *Analyzing the Core Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction among Veteran Teachers and the Influence of School Leadership on Their Retention.*

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

There is much in the news at the moment about the problems of teaching, and the fact that so many teachers leave in the early years after qualifying, but there has been far less research about the teachers who do stay and have managed to successfully navigate the challenges of the role. My research aims to find out more about why teachers stay, and what has helped to sustain you in your professional life, as well as the challenges you have faced and how you have got through these. I intend to use the findings from my research to help to inform policy and practice: my ultimate aim is that this research makes a difference and that more teachers both stay and thrive in the profession. On a more individual level I hope that taking part will be a useful way of reflecting on your career so far, and that it will also be an enjoyable experience.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because you are a primary school teacher and you have been in the profession for over 10 years. I obtained your contact details from the school principal where you are employed. There are 30 teachers who have been selected to participate in this study. All participating teachers are primary school teachers. Out of 30 teachers, only 10 teachers will come from your school as participants in the study.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This study is beneficial to teachers as it may enable them to be informed of factors that influence their perseverance in the field, to find ways of addressing these factors and improve perseverance and job satisfaction of ECTs. This study will be beneficial to both teachers (especially ECTs) and school senior school leaders, since it may enable them to understand the factors that affect teacher's perseverance and job satisfaction, to respond appropriately on matters within their power, such as adjusting their management and leadership styles and providing required resources. Furthermore, this study is also beneficial to the SGBs since it may enable them to learn more about factors contributing to teachers' perseverance and job satisfaction. The knowledge of these factors could help the SGB members to understand the impact of their decisions on the job satisfaction of teachers. The findings of this study may also benefit policymakers, as it may enable them to design policies that may help to improve the job satisfaction of teachers. The policies and their implementation have a great impact on the teachers and their performance. Therefore, this study would help to make policymakers aware of the impact of policies on the job satisfaction of teachers. The findings of this study may benefit students, since high levels of job satisfaction may motivate teachers to improve their academic performance, and specifically their engagement with students. Lastly, the study will have identified job satisfaction factors, and thus also identify challenges that may hinder satisfaction, and thus inform stakeholders on how such can be addressed.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

The study is classified as low category risk because the issues for discussion are not very sensitive and are envisaged as causing less harm and less intrusive to the privacy of those who will be participating in the study.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. In addition, your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym (e.g. Teacher 1) and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet of the researcher for future research or academic purposes; electronic information (e.g. telephone interviews) will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Indicate how information will be destroyed if necessary (e.g. hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme).

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There are no direct benefits or payments to you for partaking in the study. However, your responses may help us to learn more about what energies or drives satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction among primary school teachers working in the Johannesburg

East Education District, which may better prepare teacher recruitment and teacher retaining approaches.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact me on 0765878645 or email: 46309918@mylife.unisa.ac.za. The findings will also be made available online and at the UNISA libraries and online. A copy of the thesis will be given to each of the schools that participated in the study a summary of finding and recommendations will be discussed with teachers who took part in the study. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact us on the details below

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Javier L. Ndayeni

Doctoral Candidate

College of Education, University of South Africa, Pretoria

ANNEXURE F: CONSENT FORM

Date: April 14, 2021

Research title: *Analyzing the Core Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction among Veteran Teachers and the Influence of School Leadership on Their Retention*

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

- I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.
- I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.
- I agree to the recording of the _____ (telephonic interviews)
- I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) _____

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

ANNEXURE G: PERSONAL BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

The main purpose of this study is to determine factors influencing LSTs to remain in the profession while others leave. The research assures you that this is purely an academic research and that participation is purely voluntary and therefore data is anonymous and confidential.

1. Age group*

- 18-28
- 28-38
- 38-48
- Above 50

2. Gender*

- Male
- Female

3. Marital Status*

- Single
- Married

4. Qualification*

- Below grade 12
- Grade 12 (Standard 10)
- Diploma
- Bachelor Degree
- Master Degree
- Doctoral Degree

5. Type of Employment Contract*

- Permanent (GDE)
- Temporary (GDE)
- SGB

6. Work Tenure*

- Less than 5 years
- Between 5 – 10 years
- Between 10 – 20 years
- 20 years and above

ANNEXURE H: SAMPLE OF RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How long have you been a public school teacher?
2. How long have you been working in this school?
3. What made you decide to become a teacher working especially in the Johannesburg East Education District?
4. As a teacher working in this primary school, please describe areas of dissatisfaction with your job.
5. What factors are most **satisfying** to you about your job as a teacher?
6. Describe your primary frustrations or **dissatisfaction**.
7. **Achievement** has been defined as feeling accomplished and using one's abilities for better performance.
8. Since your employment at the school, have you gone for further studies to improve your education?
9. If yes, describe the further studies conducted and/or completed. If not, tell us why you have not done any further studies?
10. How have your further studies contributed to your satisfaction about your job?
11. How do you experience achievement as a primary school teacher?
12. How does achievement contribute to your job satisfaction, if at all?
13. In your opinion, what constitutes a good day's work? What have been your experiences with **leadership support** in your school?
14. **Comfort** has been defined as experiencing minimal levels of stress at work, and can include factors such as independence, variety, and compensation.
15. How do you experience comfort as a primary school teacher?
16. How does comfort contribute to your job satisfaction, if at all?
17. What is your perception of flexibility and variety with respect to your work?
18. **Status** has been defined as achieving recognition and advancement and often relates to perceptions of prestige and social status.
19. How do you experience status of teaching as a primary school teacher?
20. How does status of teaching profession contribute to your job satisfaction, if at all?
21. Some helping professionals have defined status as working in high profile settings and/or receiving a good wage. What is your experience with these examples?

22. In your work situation, does the amount of work you do, compare favourably with the salary that you earn? Please support your response.
23. In your opinion, would a salary increment motivate you to perform better? Please support your response
24. Do you feel that you as a primary school teacher are provided any opportunities for advancement in your profession? Please explain in details.
25. In your opinion, do you think a teacher with higher academic qualification is more motivated? Please explain your response.
26. **Altruism** has been defined as fostering harmony and being of service to others.
27. How do you experience altruism as a primary school teacher?
28. How does altruism contribute to your job satisfaction, if at all?
29. **Safety** has been defined as experiencing stability, order, and predictability at work and can describe the work environment itself or the individuals with whom you work.
30. How do you experience safety in your school as a teacher?
31. How does safety in your school contribute to your job satisfaction, if at all?
32. Are you able to provide an example of how safety plays out in your work?
33. Are you happy with the working conditions of your present job? Please explain.
34. **Autonomy** has been defined as the ability to be independent and creative at work and taking responsibility for the work you produce.
35. How do you experience autonomy as a primary school teacher?
36. How does autonomy contribute to your job satisfaction, if at all?
37. **Empowerment** has been defined as providing support in order to allow individuals to use power that is naturally their own.
38. How do you experience empowerment as a primary school teacher?
39. How does empowerment contribute to your job satisfaction, if at all?
40. Are you able to provide an example of how you have witnessed empowerment play out?
41. Based on your experience and perceptions, what makes teachers to feel dissatisfied with their job?

42. As a teacher, you interact with various categories of people: students, colleagues, principal, educational supervisors, and parents. To what extent do these interactions impact on job satisfaction? Why?
43. 12) What is your assessment of **departmental/school policies** and practices in your present job?
44. Now that we have discussed (a) achievement, (b) comfort, (c) status, (d) altruism, (e) safety, and (f) autonomy, and (g) empowerment, which two or three variables are most important to you? Please explain why they are so important to you.
45. In your opinion, what are negative factors that demotivate/demoralise you as a teacher?
46. While I have tried to cover all aspects of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction, you may still have experiences that come to mind related to your job satisfaction. What else, if anything, would you like to share with me about contributors to your job satisfaction?

ANNEXURE I: TURNITIN REPORT

ANALYZING THE CORE FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION
AMONG VETERAN TEACHERS AND THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL
LEADERSHIP ON THEIR RETENTION

XOLANI JAVIER LEONHARD NDAYENI

This thesis has been submitted in fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

In Education Management and Leadership Studies

At the

University of South Africa, Pretoria.

PRINCIPAL RESEARCH SUPERVISOR: DR. S. J. RAPETA

2026

PAPER NAME	AUTHOR
ANALYZING THE CORE FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION - THESIS BY JAVIER L. NDAYENI.docx	XOLANI JAVIER LEONHARD NDAYENI

WORD COUNT	CHARACTER COUNT
94194 Words	571457 Characters

PAGE COUNT	FILE SIZE
220 Pages	3.3MB

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● **Excluded from Similarity Report**

- Manually excluded sources

ANNEXURE J: PROOF OF EDITING LETTER



HIGHLANDS

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

THIS IS PRESENTED TO

**XOLANI JAVIER
LEONHARDNDAYENI**

This is a confirmation that professional editors at Highlands Marketing and Investments Pty Ltd have proofread and language edited your Research Paper. Changes were made towards the accuracy of language, sentence structure, punctuation and grammar ONLY.

30-10-2025

DATE

**EDITOR'S
SIGNATURE**