



**BRITISH ACADEMY  
OF MANAGEMENT**

---

**BAM**  
CONFERENCE

---

**3RD-5TH SEPTEMBER**

**ASTON UNIVERSITY BIRMINGHAM UNITED KINGDOM**

This paper is from the BAM2019 Conference Proceedings

**About BAM**

The British Academy of Management (BAM) is the leading authority on the academic field of management in the UK, supporting and representing the community of scholars and engaging with international peers.

<http://www.bam.ac.uk/>

# From job satisfaction to profession satisfaction

1. HOSSEIN ALI ABADI

2. CHRISTIAN L. VAN TONDER

3. DESMOND TUTU AYENTIMI

---

1 School of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia

2 School of Psychology and Exercise Science, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia

3 School of Business and Economics, University of Tasmania, Hobart Tasmania, Australia



# BACKGROUND

---

- Research into workforce shortages view low levels of job satisfaction as the key reason for employees' leaving the profession (Struyven and Vanthournout, 2014).
- The logic for the association of job satisfaction and turnover intention is derived from employee perceptions about their jobs, which in turn are influenced by the extent to which their role expectations are met in the workplace i.e. job satisfaction (Ghosh et al., 2015).
- The literature indicates that a work environment that attracts, meets or exceeds employees' expectations will theoretically increase their satisfaction, thereby dissuading them from leaving (Lee and Way, 2010). Those aspects that are considered satisfactory or dissatisfactory have been demonstrated to directly and indirectly influence quitting behaviour (Shahnawaz and Jafri, 2009).

# Beyond job satisfaction

---

- When employees elect to leave both the job and the profession it suggests that factors beyond those that influence job satisfaction may be involved. People may 'like' a job, but not necessarily like the profession, which consequently may influence their intention to remain / leave the profession.
- Logically a decision to leave not only the job but also the profession de facto implies dissatisfaction not only with the job, but also dissatisfaction with the profession... sufficiently so to warrant moving out of the profession.
- Research to date, however, has not significantly or purposefully investigated satisfaction with a profession as a construct in its own right.

# Beyond job satisfaction (cont.)

---

- The theoretical logic for the existence of the construct of profession satisfaction can be found in several quarters. For example,
- Commitment literature distinguishes between commitment to organisation and commitment to occupation (Meyer et al., 1993).
- Some studies that have attempted to examine predictors of the intention to leave a job and a profession (De Milt, Fitzpatrick, and McNulty 2011,).

# Research Aim & Research Question

---

- This study aims to empirically explore the existence or otherwise of profession satisfaction among a sample of former educators who have left the teaching profession to work in a different profession as well as the influence of this concept in relation to their intention to leave the profession
- Research question: Does satisfaction with profession influence educators' intention to leave the profession?

# From a 'job' to a 'profession' and profession satisfaction

---

- Scholarly literature regards a 'job' and 'a 'profession' as distinct constructs, suggesting firm grounds for assuming and treating 'job satisfaction' and 'profession satisfaction' as distinct constructs.
- Job is a set of established task elements, grouped together under one job title and designed to be performed by a single individual" (Ilgen and Hollenbeck, 1992, 173).
- Profession: a set of specific features (characteristics) that extends beyond the usually implicit social contract and output or work control (service or product) that characterise any profession such as: 1) skill based on theoretical knowledge, 2) training and education, 3) demonstrated competence through testing, 4) adherence to a code of conduct, 5) altruistic service, and 6) formal organisation (Wilensky, 1964).

# Profession satisfaction and the education sector

---

- Although in many quarters education is viewed as a quasi-profession, educators regard their occupation as a profession (Su, 1997).
- In the field of education, educator shortage is commonly considered a function of educators' "turnover intention" (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003).
- Research in this field generally reveals job satisfaction as the primary contributor. When educator satisfaction levels decrease, an increase in educators' decisions to leave the profession is observed (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011).



# METHOD

- To capture the perceptions and experiences that participants had about teaching, a classic Grounded Theory research strategy (after Glaser and Strauss 1967), elaborated with Strauss and Corbin's (1994) open, axial and selective coding and analysis procedures, were adopted.
- 20 Western Australia former educators in that had left the teaching profession were secured in the study. A sizeable majority of the participants were married and the median tenure was seven (7) years (range: 3 to 14 years). A minimally structured, open-ended interview was the method of choice for data collection (Charmaz, 2006, 28).

# METHOD (cont.)

---

- The constant comparative method was used to analyse the data. During the open coding stage, nine (9) saturated themes emerged.
- Themes provided insight into the dynamics of specific job factors such as workload and time demands, the associated stress and subsequent impact on work-life balance of educators. These themes have a direct bearing on experienced job satisfaction/dissatisfaction.
- These general themes provided the backcloth for the focused analysis of relationship between the key categories (codes) of job satisfaction, profession satisfaction and turnover intention (axial coding stage).

# FINDINGS (cont.)

---

## Profession satisfaction

Features of the profession differentially contributed to satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

### **1. Working with children**

*'[it was] so rewarding to see an entire school turn around and make all that progress as a result of my influence' (Female, 30 years)*

### **2. Contributing to society (altruistic service / duty in the public interest)**

*I think as a teacher you have a positive impact on their lives (Female, 36 years)*

# FINDINGS (cont.)

---

## **3. Societal respect, recognition and the perceived value**

I would say the whole time I was teaching, I was not appreciated and valued at all by society' (Female, 39 years)

## **4. Professional autonomy**

I think one of the things that ultimately caused me to leave education was the flexibility. I have a lot more flexibility to design what my job looks like in my current job. I don't have a curriculum to align with and I don't have people from outside to tell me how I should do my job (Male, 38 years).

# FINDINGS (cont.)

---

## Profession satisfaction and the intention to leave

The narratives in many instances clearly indicated this link in the process of withdrawing from and/or exiting the profession (and bear in mind that these statements are provided by people who left the profession).

### **Stress**

*‘I think I reached the point that I needed to do something else... it was too stressful... I think I left it because of stress. When I left, I felt such a relief of leaving’ (F20, female, 34 years).*

### **Workload**

*just think a lot of teachers burn out and then we put report writing on top of all that, sometimes you end up on your holiday, sometimes you get sick because your body wants you to stop, you just feel you can’t do this anymore” and “To me it was like that, I was beginning to think ‘do I really need to keep doing this? Because my health is suffering’, so for me it was kinda my health” (F12, male, 34 years).*

# FINDINGS (cont.)

---

*Contextual considerations such as the role of parents and society*

*“There are teachers **who leave because of the status**, you know... the fact that they don’t get enough respect from parents; they don’t get enough respect from society. It’s a question of feeling valued” (F9, male, 41 years).*

# DISCUSSION

---

Findings provide preliminary evidence for the existence of profession satisfaction construct.

The findings of this exploratory study revealed the importance and indeed necessity of probing beyond job satisfaction to understand why employees leave their jobs.

These findings align with several (educational) studies that found that the reasons for entering teaching are associated with altruistic motivations, which relate to teaching and working with children, social influence, contributing to society, and the academic development of others (Tang et al. 2015, ).

Negative societal views of the teaching profession are widely held, as are educator concerns about the poor (low) status and perception of teaching, which have been reported for different countries (Hall and Langton 2006).

The 'commitment' literature appears to point to the possibility of profession satisfaction impacting on the intention to leave the profession, as observed in the current study. From a literature perspective the stressful nature of teaching is not in doubt and substantial evidence to this effect has been forthcoming (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011).

# CONCLUSION

The findings of this exploratory study revealed the importance and indeed necessity of probing beyond job satisfaction to understand why employees leave their jobs. This could only be revealed after the fact of leaving the job, as turnover intention does not differentially predict leaving the job and leaving the profession.

The study provides a firm foundation for more comprehensive research into profession satisfaction, as constructs extending beyond, but supplementing job satisfaction, in accounting for employee turnover.

Subject to such research confirming the propositions advanced in this study, the focus on profession satisfaction as co-determinants in employees' workplace experience may yield greater predictive power in respect of turnover intention and actual turnover.

The latter could significantly contribute to workplace strategies aimed at retaining and managing difficulties in sourcing human resources, but it would also contribute more generally to workplace policies and intervention practices that are not limited to the education sector.



# LIMITATION

---

The findings could be further analysed to account to a greater extent for the differences (unique characteristics) of former educators e.g. years of service, age, gender, qualifications, education career history and so forth.

Examining the role of these differences in demographic features may reveal more nuanced patterns in terms of those factors that contribute to educators' job satisfaction, satisfaction with the profession and intention to leave the profession.

# REFERENCES

---

- CHARMAZ, K. 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis* London, Sage
- DE MILT, D. G., FITZPATRICK, J. J. & MCNULTY, S. R. 2011. Nurse practitioners' job satisfaction and intent to leave current positions, the nursing profession, and the nurse practitioner role as a direct care provider. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, 23, 42-50.
- GHOSH, P., RAI, A., CHAUHAN, R., GUPTA, N. & SINGH, A. 2015. Exploring the moderating role of context satisfaction between job characteristics and turnover intention of employees of Indian public sector banks. *Journal of Management Development*, 34, 1019-1030.
- HALL, D. & LANGTON, B. 2006. *Perceptions of the status of teachers*, New Zealand, Ministry of Education Wellington.
- ILGEN, D. R. & HOLLENBECK, J. R. 1992. The structure of work: Job design and roles. *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, edited by Marvin D Dunnette and Leaetta M Hough. Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- INGERSOLL, R. M. & SMITH, T. M. 2003. The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership*, 60, 30-33.
- MEYER, J. P., ALLEN, N. J. & SMITH, C. A. 1993. Commitment to organizations and occupations: Extension and test of a three-component conceptualization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 538-551.

# REFERENCES

---

SHAHNAWAZ, G. & JAFRI, H. 2009. Job attitudes as predictor of employee turnover among stayers and leavers/hoppers. *Journal of Management Research*, 9, 159-166.

STRUYVEN, K. & VANTHOURNOUT, G. 2014. Teachers' exit decisions: An investigation into the reasons why newly qualified teachers fail to enter the teaching profession or why those who do enter do not continue teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 43, 37-45.

SKAALVIK, E. M. & SKAALVIK, S. 2011. Teacher job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession: Relations with school context, feeling of belonging, and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 1029-1038.

STRAUSS, A. & CORBIN, J. 1994. Grounded theory methodology: An overview. *Handbook of qualitative research*, edited by Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

TANG, S. Y. F., WONG, A. K. Y. & CHENG, M. H. 2015. The preparation of highly motivated and professionally competent teachers in initial teacher education. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 41, 128-144.

WILENSKY, H. L. 1964. The professionalization of everyone? *American Journal of Sociology*, 70, 137-158.