



Reducing teacher turnover in Dubai's private international schools

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ABSTRACT

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Teacher turnover has become a significant problem for schools globally, with research proving that more teachers are now leaving schools, and even the profession, at higher rates than before. The costs of turnover, both direct and indirect, impact schools and their potential to raise student attainment levels. Within the private school sector, there is increasing competition to improve their ratings and student enrolment numbers.

This study examines the causes of teacher turnover in Dubai's private international schools, focusing primarily on leadership styles, leadership practices and organisational conditions which are present within these schools. The study aims to address the reasons why teachers are leaving schools in search of other posts and provide senior leaders with insight into how to reduce turnover in schools.

This thesis utilised a mixed-methods approach. A survey comprising both closed and open-ended questions was administered to teachers in private schools in Dubai, with 66 participants responding. Further to this, four follow-up interviews were conducted with educators to gain further insight into the reasons for them staying or leaving their current schools. Results were then correlated to assess the impact of some of these factors on turnover rates.

The results indicate that poor working environments, pay, and leadership are the principal reasons for teachers seeking employment elsewhere. Involvement in decision-making, the provision of more professional development opportunities, and decreasing workloads are the main organisational conditions influencing teachers' job satisfaction. Providing support, open communication, and listening to teachers are leadership strategies that are most effective in decreasing turnover.

These outcomes can be used by educators to attempt to reduce the turnover in Dubai's private schools. Senior leaders and Boards of Directors of the school groups can use this research as evidence of the strategies that need to be implemented to encourage staff to stay and student outcomes to improve as a result. Further recommendations for this research included the assessment of parental involvement and student behaviour in addressing the causes of turnover as well as further leadership behaviours that were not explored in this paper.

Key words: teacher turnover, leadership styles, leadership practices, organisational conditions

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	6
	1.1 Background.....	6
	1.2 Research context.....	8
	1.3 Research aims and questions.....	9
2	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
	2.1 Teacher turnover.....	11
	2.1.1 Personal characteristics influencing teacher turnover	13
	2.2 Leadership and turnover	16
	2.2.1 Leadership styles.....	16
	2.2.2 Motivation	19
	2.2.3 Leadership practices	20
	2.2.4 Organisational conditions.....	24
3	METHODOLOGY.....	29
	3.1 Methodological approach	29
	3.2 Participants	31
	3.3 Quantitative data analysis.....	34
	3.3.1 Quantitative data collection.....	34
	3.3.2 Quantitative data analysis.....	36
	3.4 Qualitative data	37
	3.4.1 Qualitative data collection	37
	3.4.2 Qualitative data analysis.....	39
	3.5 Ethical considerations.....	40
4	RESULTS.....	41
	4.1 Theme 1: Basic needs impact on teacher turnover	41
	4.1.1 Autonomy	42
	4.1.2 Competence	47
	4.1.3 Relatedness	52
	4.2 Theme 2: Organisational conditions.....	53
	4.2.1 Decision making	55
	4.2.2 Professional development	56
	4.2.3 Career progression.....	57
	4.2.4 Workload.....	58
	4.3 School leadership.....	60
	4.3.1 Support.....	60
	4.3.2 Empowerment.....	62
	4.3.3 Praise.....	63
	4.3.4 Leadership styles.....	64
	4.3.5 Leadership practices.....	67
	4.4 Other factors influencing teacher turnover.....	71
	4.4.1 Pay.....	71
	4.4.2 Motivation.....	73
	4.4.3 Working environment.....	74

4.4.4 Personal factors.....	76
5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	77
5.1 Research question 1.....	77
5.1.1 Working environments.....	77
5.1.2 Pay.....	78
5.1.3 Leadership.....	79
5.2 Research question 2.....	80
5.2.1 Involvement in decision making.....	80
5.2.2 Career progression and Professional Development.....	80
5.2.3 Workload.....	82
5.3 Research question 3.....	83
5.3.1 Providing support.....	83
5.3.2 Open communication.....	84
5.3.3 Listen to teachers.....	85
5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research.....	86
REFERENCES	88
APPENDICES.....	101
Appendix 1. Survey questionnaire – Background information.....	101
Appendix 2. Survey – Basic needs satisfaction section	104
Appendix 3. Evidence of the number of respondents.....	108
Appendix 4. Semi-structured interview questions.....	109
Appendix 5. Examples of qualitative thematic analysis.....	110

GLOSSARY

TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
MBA	Masters of Business Administration
UAE	United Arab Emirates
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
KHDA	Knowledge and Human Development Authority
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PME	Professional Masters of Education
NFP	Not-for-profit
PD	Professional Development
USA	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It is generally well accepted by school management and policymakers that teacher retention is a significant factor influencing the successful development of a school and its student's success. Given that teaching experience is positively associated with improved student outcomes, not only in terms of learning more but also in other areas of school life such as attendance and well-being, schools must try to retain their teachers to elevate their academic standards (Kini & Podolsky 2016). Teacher turnover represents organisational challenges for schools such as loss of collaboration for planning and implementing the curriculum, poor morale amongst staff, as well as lost positive rapport built between students and staff, something which needs time to be developed and therefore is not easily replaced with subsequent new hires (Guin 2004, 2).

Teacher turnover has been a focus of educational research for several years and has been recognised as a problem for many regions across the world, in particular, the USA (Bickmore & Dowell 2019, 388) and the UK (Allen, Burgess & Mayo 2018, 5). Studies that have been conducted have identified a range of factors influencing this trend, such as limited support from management, heavy workloads, limited input into decision-making, and, to a lesser extent, pay, all of which are encouraging teachers to look elsewhere for employment, with some leaving the profession altogether (Ingersoll 2001, 505-507). Despite this extensive research carried out in some countries, there has been limited research conducted thus far regarding teacher turnover in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), specifically within the private school market in Dubai, which is the focus of this study.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has identified the UAE as having a higher teacher turnover than its world average (Mohammad & Borkoski 2024, 1). With the UAE being a predominantly expatriate society, taking into account that 88.5% of the population are expatriates as of January 2024 (Global Media Insights 2024), it is somewhat expected that labour turnover will be higher than average as people move there for a few years before repatriating to their home countries again (Carson 2013, 5). UAE Nationals are

not enticed into the teaching profession, and due to the high levels of wealth in the country, there is little need for many Emiratis to join the workforce, thereby increasing the country's dependency on expatriate teachers instead (Lalich 2021, 22). Ensuring these teachers' satisfaction in their schools is important. A Teaching and Learning International Survey conducted in 2018 found that 37.9% of teachers in the UAE would like to change to another school if given the opportunity. This is in comparison to an OECD average of 20%. (OECD 2019). This implies that the turnover is not necessarily being caused by teachers wanting to move home or leave the profession, but rather change their workplaces owing to other factors worthy of investigation. Furthermore, data published in 2020 by Dubai's overseer of private education, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), revealed that only 20% of teachers stayed at the same school for six years or more (KHDA 2020). Such figures are concerning, particularly given that the UAE aims for the highest education standards as announced in the National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 (UAE Ministry of Education 2017). With continuous high turnover amongst its schools, the subsequent effects of this may present challenges to these aspiring "first-rate" education standards.

Organisational conditions such as involvement in decision-making, professional collaboration, and having a supportive workplace environment are significant factors in teacher turnover (Mohammad, A. & Borkoski, C. 2024, 2). The competence of the organisation regarding these factors majorly lies with the senior management team, who have an important role to play in not only developing the organisation, but developing the employees also, and creating a workforce who are satisfied and motivated and who want to contribute to the school's vision (Frahm 2020, 124). However, doing this without causing additional stress to staff is a balancing act. While trying to raise standards in schools, the term 'burnout' has been appearing more frequently in literature and research regarding education, which refers to a state of emotional exhaustion and personal and professional inefficiency (Capone, Joshanloo & Sang-Ah Park 2019, 97). There is mounting research within the educational sector to suggest that this feeling of burnout stems from the lack of support teachers feel they have in their professions (Helou, Nabhani & Bahous 2016, 554). While burnout may not be solely a result of a person's job alone, there are increasing amounts of research to suggest the 'emotional labour' of teaching as a significant cause of burnout amongst educators,

and the crucial role that senior management can play in alleviating such instances of burnout is not to be underestimated (Bodenheimer & Shuster 2020, 69-71).

The leadership style of a manager can greatly impact on the culture of an organisation and an employee's experience of a job, and their ultimate decision on whether to stay or leave (Muttalib, Danish & Zehri 2023, 135). The significance of leadership and its impact on employee turnover will be explored in this thesis through different leadership theories, as well as researching employee's experiences of leaders with regard to these various theories and leadership practices. Specifically, the effectiveness of transactional and transformational leadership theories will be investigated to determine the value of each theory in terms of influencing teacher's desire to stay in a particular workplace.

1.2 Research context

This study investigates the rates of teacher turnover in private international schools in Dubai, UAE, and the extent to which leadership practices and organisational conditions have an impact on these rates of turnover. The private education industry in Dubai is continuously growing, with the academic year 2023-2024 seeing the biggest increase in student enrolment numbers since the KHDA was launched in 2007, with an increase of 12% in student admissions (Rizvi 2023). More than 365,000 students are now enrolled in Dubai's private schools, and such growth is expected to continue, with an extra 150,000 student places to be made available by 2027 to meet the growing population's needs (Abbas 2023), making it a lucrative business opportunity within the education market. Dubai was rated the top city in the world to have the largest population of students enrolled in international schools in 2018, proving the city's prevalence for offering quality education (Smith 2021).

Given the business-like manner in which private schools are run, there is immense competition between schools to raise enrolment numbers. One factor influencing parents in choosing a suitable school is the school's ratings, assigned annually by the KHDA following a week-long inspection. These ratings are also a source of financial benefit to schools, with schools rated 'outstanding' being permitted to raise their school fees by 1.5% in 2023 (Roberts 2023). In addition,

being rated as 'outstanding' offers promotional power in this competitive educational market. As such, school leaders are under immense pressure to raise their school's ratings which makes for intense working environments and often poor morale amongst staff if the strategies being put into place to raise the school's standards are not managed correctly.

Senior management teams are also under pressure to ensure continuity and that turnover remains low to not impact academic attainment levels and overall student progress. Turnover challenges within schools are sometimes tackled with strategies such as increasing class sizes, hiring inexperienced teachers, or decreasing subject offerings, all of which are strategies that are not sustainable in the long term given the competitive business environment in which these private international schools operate in (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond 2019, 3). In addition to this, the financial commitment schools make to international teachers that they hire is significant, with visa costs as well as benefits such as housing and flight allowances and medical insurance being borne by the school (Linkedin 2024). Recruitment and training costs of hiring new teachers as well as other non-financial costs impacts on the school as a business (Watlington, Shockley, Gugliemino & Felsher 2010, 25). Hiring teachers for international schools is certainly an investment, but retaining them should be a priority to avoid further substantial costs.

1.3 Research aims and questions

This thesis aims to investigate the specific causes of teacher turnover within private international schools in Dubai and the conditions that must exist for teachers to be encouraged to stay at their respective schools. Effective, appropriate, and practical leadership strategies will be recommended for school management which they can implement to decrease teacher turnover within their schools.

With teacher turnover negatively impacting a school's improvement, it is pertinent to investigate the reasons behind this turnover. Senior leaders within schools are the most influential in making changes to enhance the school environment and create the right conditions that would encourage staff to stay. This leads to the following research questions:

- What are the main causes of teachers leaving their school or profession?
- What organisational conditions influence teachers' job satisfaction?
- What leadership and management strategies are effective at decreasing teacher turnover?

The author of this thesis is an Assistant Deputy Head of a private international school in Dubai. Having joined this school as a teacher seven years ago, the author has been promoted to middle management positions before now being a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the school. During this time, the researcher has observed high levels of turnover within the school, with an average yearly turnover of 23% (KHDA 2023), and has reflected on the generally high levels of turnover among certain schools in Dubai. This has prompted the investigation into strategies that could be implemented in these schools that could improve the teacher turnover ratio and lead to a better-functioning school with higher outcomes for all stakeholders.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Teacher turnover

Teacher turnover refers to teachers leaving their current teaching job in search of a new opportunity (Johnson, Berg & Donaldson 2005, 6). Turnover can refer to teachers leaving their positions either voluntarily, where the person chooses to leave, or involuntarily where the organisation dismisses the member of staff (Jammal & Ghamrawi 2013, 68). Schools should not aim for zero percent turnover as this would imply that even ineffective teachers should keep their jobs. A certain amount of turnover is necessary to ensure high teaching standards are maintained, hiring teachers who may bring fresh insights to the school and are enthused about the prospect of a new workplace (Johnson et. al. 2005, 10). It is difficult to quantify the point at which turnover becomes so big that it begins to have negative impacts on the workplace, but reports have identified figures over twenty percent in the education sector as problematic (Ryan 2014). Schools should be most concerned about those teachers who leave voluntarily, which is often referred to as 'dysfunctional turnover,' as these are often the workers who are highly effective at their jobs and are performing well, and therefore their departure from the school will have the most significant consequences (Posada, Martin-Sierra & Perez 2017, 4).

A 2019 World Bank Report stated that some schools in Dubai had an annual turnover between 30 percent to 40 percent (Thacker 2019). In the context of Dubai, there are certain schools whose turnover consistently tends to be quite low, and in the majority of these cases, these tend to be not-for-profit (NFP) schools (Barda 2022). There is a general perception that these schools are 'better' because profits are reinvested back into the school to ensure it is well resourced and they place emphasis on hiring and retaining highly qualified and well-experienced teachers. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate the features present in these not-for-profit schools that deter teachers from leaving. Although it is reported that these NFP schools can pay teacher salaries around 20-50% higher than for-profit schools, pay may not be the only influence in encouraging teachers to stay at these schools (Barda 2022).

Research supports the idea that retaining teachers is a significant aspect in improving student outcomes in schools (Adnot, Dee, Katz & Wyckoff 2017, 1). When a teacher leaves a school and is replaced there is disturbance to the students and their rhythm of learning. Particularly in Dubai, there is a culture of younger teachers moving for a few years and then repatriating to their home country, with 45% of teachers staying at their schools for three years or less (KHDA 2020). These teachers are often replaced by newly qualified and inexperienced teachers, and therefore such frequent turnover has implications for students of being on the receiving end of weak teaching as a result of this chain of novice teachers. As the private international school market consists mostly of for-profit schools, many of these educational institutions will offer jobs to those who are newly qualified to save on salary costs, running the school as a business rather than as an educational entity (Gangwani, Gernal & Matthew 2021, 21).

The issue of teacher turnover may not be such a prevalent one if the supply of teachers was guaranteed. However, globally there is a shortage of teachers, with a recent UNESCO report affirming that 44 million teachers are needed to meet the goal of primary and secondary education for all by 2030 (Azoulay 2023). In Dubai, the situation is being described as a 'looming iceberg' as the problem is manifesting itself in future years, with the UAE now competing with neighbouring country Saudi Arabia for qualified teachers amidst a growing economy and a decline in entrants to teacher training universities in the United Kingdom, where many teacher graduates are sourced from (Gibbon 2024). If these trends are to continue, there may be problems for schools in recruiting qualified and experienced teachers who are vital to the success of raising student's academic outcomes.

There are also significant financial costs to teacher turnover. Recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers is expensive, particularly where there are additional expatriate costs involved, such as visas and medical insurance, as part of the package for international teachers. Advertising teaching positions on specialist education websites such as tes.com, attending recruitment fairs overseas and sometimes using professional recruiters are costs borne by the school when try-

ing to source suitable replacements for staff leaving (Yates 2021). Induction training and professional development programmes specific to the curriculum taught in the school also incur additional costs for the business. For example, the fees for professional development workshops for the International Baccalaureate curriculum range from €150 to €860 per staff member, depending on the course and its length (IBO 2021). Such costs represent an investment to the teacher and one that may be futile if that teacher decides to leave the school after their initial two-year contract ends.

The impact of teacher turnover does not lie only with the direct impact on students within the classroom but has a spill-over effect on other areas of school life. The educational environment, including the levels of teacher collaboration and morale amongst staff, is also impacted by higher levels of turnover. There is a loss of institutional knowledge, which erodes the organisation's culture and consistency in its practices (Menzies 2023, 10). In addition to this, time will also be needed to build trust and relationships with new members of staff, with both colleagues and students (Menzies 2023, 5). This can distract from the teacher's core functions.

2.1.1 Personal characteristics influencing teacher turnover

Research conducted by Evers-Gerdes & Siegle (2021, 4) notes that a significant influence on teacher retention is the environment of the school. This refers to aspects such as leadership, trust, and communication, all of which have the potential to make a teacher's job less stressful if managed correctly. However, research also suggests that personal factors such as age, marital status, and gender also impact a teacher's decision to stay or leave an organisation (Aulia & Haerani 2022, 39).

Ingersoll (2001, 502) denotes research that points towards age being a significant factor in determining teacher turnover. The relationship between age and teacher turnover follows a U-shaped curve, with younger teachers leaving the profession within the first few years of their career, with rates declining mid-career before rising again near retirement age (Ingersoll 2001, 502). In a study conducted by the Australian Education Union, it was found that 45% of early career teachers

surveyed did not believe they would still be teaching in ten years (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke & Louviere 2013, 113). This is supported by statistics released by the OECD (2023) which indicates 44 years old to be the average age of a teacher. Particularly in the case of Dubai, a predominantly expatriate city, there is a young population with the median age being 32.6 years as of 2024 (Statista 2024). This may indicate why there is a large proportion of younger teachers in the region, who move for a short period before moving back to their home countries again. Additionally, the OECD reported that one out of eight teachers in the UAE is aged 50 or above, signalling that the profession is mostly made up of younger teachers, and also giving rise to the fact that at least one of every eight teachers will need to be replaced over the next decade, thereby contributing to turnover figures (TALIS 2018).

The adaptation of expatriate teachers to the UAE culture presents both opportunities and challenges. While the prospect of moving to a new country and experiencing a new culture, and perhaps a better quality of life, is alluring for many, the reality of such a move may be quite different. Expatriates do not only need to adapt to the national culture but the organisational culture of the school also and this can be overwhelming for people who are not flexible and adaptable (McLean, McKimm & Major 2014, 758). The research presents evidence for expatriate teachers experiencing difficulty with adjusting to cultural norms, distance from their home countries, and spouses encountering challenges seeking employment (Herrara & Proff 2023, 3). Teachers may not be prepared for the organisational cultural change and the new expectations of them in their new roles (Bunnell 2017, 198). In a 2018 TALIS survey conducted by the OECD, data revealed that 91% of UAE teachers adapted their teaching to the cultural diversity of the students. In addition to this, teachers encountered other cultural practices in their schools such as raising awareness of cultural differences among students, reducing ethnic stereotyping, and organising multicultural events (OECD 2020). Given that the instructional language of private international schools is English, teachers also need to be aware that this is not the first language of many of the students that they teach. This may present an additional challenge for the teacher.

Family circumstances of expatriate teachers are an additional factor contributing to one's decision to leave an organisation. While single teachers may experience loneliness and isolation in this new culture, those with families have a support system to rely on to alleviate these feelings. On the other hand, those expatriates who are married or have children will have dependents, whom they are obliged to provide for, and therefore switching jobs may be perceived by those people as being riskier given their personal circumstances. (Ababneh 2020, 313). In addition, spouses of expatriate teachers may have difficulty in settling into a new country and culture and may find it difficult to find work themselves, and this too may be a push factor to leave.

The evidence of the impact of familial ties on employee turnover is conflicting. Linehan (2000, 811) notes that spouses are particularly important in the success of the expatriation process. In a research study conducted in Western Europe focusing on female senior managers, it was concluded that ninety-two per cent of women interviewed said that their success or failure in their new jobs overseas was directly linked to their spouse's happiness (Linehan 2000, 811). Schoepp & Forstenlechner (2010, 317) conducted a study of the role of family on expatriates' experiences in the UAE specifically and found that family was a motivator in them staying in the country rather than leaving, with employment opportunities and children's schooling being key variables. However, research conducted in Korea determined no association between spousal adjustment and employee turnover (Cho, Hutchings & Marchant 2013, 1069). The opposing evidence may be rooted in cultural differences, considering these Western and Eastern research studies are yielding such different results. What is perceived by one culture as a challenge may be embraced by another. It must also be noted that the UAE is a popular country for expatriates, being voted number eleven in the top expat destinations (InterNations 2023), and therefore conducting this research in another country may skew the results with regard to familial ties and turnover.

2.2 Leadership and turnover

Leadership is one of the most crucial factors in enhancing the success of an organisation, and ensuring staff are productive yet satisfied in their roles. Goleman (2005, 12) emphasises the importance of emotional intelligence in leaders, claiming this aspect of a person is even more important than their IQ or technical skills as a leader (Harvard Business Review 2011). Kouzes and Posner (2000, 34) insist that leadership is not about personality but about behaviour. Meanwhile, Kotter (1999, 1) bases his leadership theory on the premise that leadership is about setting a vision for the future of the organisation alongside developing strategies to achieve that vision.

The terms leadership and management are sometimes used interchangeably but it is important to note the distinction between the two. While leaders are visionaries for the organisation and focus on developing the organisation through change and motivation, a manager's role is more tactical, involving planning, controlling and monitoring the organisation to ensure the smooth running of operations (Swanwick 2019, 99). Nevertheless, management and leadership styles differ greatly, with personality and culture influencing one's style. In a multicultural setting, such as an international school in Dubai, a leader must be aware of how different leadership approaches can affect subordinates, which can either help or hinder the workplace environment (Bealer & Bhanugopan 2014, 294).

2.2.1 Leadership styles

Burns (1978) stipulates that workers in an organisation may be influenced and motivated by their leaders. Transactional and transformational leadership are two theories that attempt to rationalise leadership effectiveness, and have been developed and adapted into several different versions since the late twentieth century (Odumeru & Ifeanyi 2013, 355). Transactional leadership involves leaders encouraging their subordinates to perform through incentives. The leader assigns the subordinate a task with set standards, and once this has been completed the subordinate is given a reward, which can be likened to a social exchange theory. (Wang 2020, 45). On the other hand, transformational leadership theory is based on the inspiration and motivation of followers to create a positive change in the

group as a whole (Baškarada, Watson & Cromarty 2017, 507). The idea of transformational leadership was first created by Burns in 1978 to describe the approach of political leaders but has since gained attention and adaptation to organisations and workplaces (Hay 2006, 2).

Transformational leadership is underpinned by four main characteristics – charismatic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personal attention (Odumeru & Ifeanyi 2013, 356). Charisma is one of the central aspects of this theory and refers to the extent to which followers identify with their leader, and the leader putting their follower's needs over their own (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson 2003, 208). Inspirational motivation measures how much leaders motivate those around them by being confident in their subordinates and helping them realise their own potential. Intellectual stimulation indicates how well the leader gets subordinates to see things from other perspectives and encourages creativity, while personal attention assesses how sensitive the leader is to their followers needs and the extent to which they act as a mentor to them. (Bealer & Bhanugopan 2014, 297). Research conducted in China showed a positive correlation between transformational leadership and organisational commitment (Long & Thean 2011, 96). When teachers are part of a change that is leading to better things, they are committed and are more likely to remain working in that school.

Transactional leadership is a style of leadership that focuses on the role of supervision and performance, rather than inspiration and vision. Transactional leaders focus on contingent rewards or contingent penalisation, depending on how well the set goals have been accomplished. (Odumeru & Ifeanyi 2013, 358). Because there is a mutually beneficial exchange taking place under this type of leadership, there can be varying levels of power and influence, depending on the situation. For example, a subordinate may possess a special skill set to solve a problem, which increases their leverage for negotiation (Vito, Higgins & Denney 2014, 810). Although this system is based on good performance, this form of leadership does not formulate a solid basis for generating creativity within employees or establishing motivation in the long term (Jacqua & Jacqua 2021, 2).

Distributed leadership refers to a more systemic approach to leadership where leadership is not directed but rather contributed to by interactions and interdependencies within the organisation (Bolden 2011, 252). Staff who do not have formal authority may become empowered through distributed leadership. In order for this to occur, a suitable environment needs to be created where there are processes in place to support the capacity for teacher leadership (Lumby 2013, 588). Several studies conducted have shown evidence of a positive correlation between distributed leadership and student academic outcomes, as organisational factors such as teacher's self-efficacy and morale are enhanced (Bellibas, Gumus & Liu 2021, 404). However, critics of the distributed leadership theory argue that there are obstacles to implementing this type of leadership in schools in reality. Issues such as priorities, boundaries, and conflict may arise, as teachers taking on a distributed leadership role have no formal authority or title and this may therefore result in a lack of cooperation and respect on the part of others. (Harris 2009, 13).

The extent to which one is motivated by a certain leadership style will undoubtedly be influenced by their cultural perspective. Culture refers to "the way of life of a particular people, especially as shown in their ordinary behaviour and habits, their attitudes toward each other, and their moral and religious beliefs" (Cambridge 2024). Hofstede's cultural six-dimension model presents an opportunity to understand the culture of a country based on its values (Hofstede 2024). These six dimensions include power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, short-term versus long-term orientation, and restraint versus indulgence (Hofstede 2011, 8). Considered collectively, these six dimensions can explain the outlook of a country's culture and values. Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory as an example, an Irish teacher may have a low Power Distance ranking in comparison to a teacher from the UAE (Hofstede 2024). While inequalities and hierarchical structures are minimised in Irish society, they are an inherent part of life in Emirati culture where centralisation is popular and workers are often told what to do (Hofstede 2024). Therefore, the cultural adjustment of an Irish teacher for example to such a high power distance culture may be difficult for some to adjust to, and may pose challenging conditions in which to lead a multicultural school effectively.

2.2.2 Motivation

Motivation can be defined as “being moved to do something” (Deci & Ryan 2000, 54). Evidence suggests that there is a strong link between the motivation and commitment of employees (Imran, Allil & Ali 2017, 829). Motivation and morale decrease in some instances as turnover rises, leading to a ‘turnover contagion’ where turnover causes more turnover (McCluskey 2023, 565). The staff that is left often have the responsibility of training new members of staff and thus have this added obligation to fulfill.

Ryan and Deci’s Self-Determination theory explores human behaviour and motivation through people’s intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to completing an activity because of the satisfaction that is derived from doing so, rather than being rewarded or pressured (Ryan & Deci 2000, 56). When intrinsically motivated, people engage in tasks voluntarily because they are enjoyable to them and it challenges their competencies. Positive feelings are linked to the purpose of the task and therefore this motivation is considered to be “highly self-determined.” (Demir 2011, 1399). In contrast, extrinsic motivation involves an activity that is completed to attain a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci 2000, 60). Extrinsic motivation can have varying levels of self-determination, but external influences such as rewards and pressures from others form the lowest basis of self-determination (Noels, Clement & Pelletier 1999, 25).

The basic needs satisfaction survey is based on Ryan and Deci’s Self-Determination Theory, which proposes that humans must have three basic needs met in order for psychological well-being to be fulfilled. These three needs are competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci 2017, 10). Competence refers to the ability to carry out our tasks effectively and achieving a sense of mastery. Autonomy encapsulates engaging in tasks that align with one’s interests and values. Relatedness entails one’s feelings of significance in relation to others and feeling like one belongs in a workplace (Ryan & Deci 2017, 11). For teachers to be motivated, all three of these basic human needs must be satisfied and present (Ryan & Dec 2000, 65).

2.2.3 Leadership practices

Kouzes and Posner's (2000, 34) Leadership Challenge Model is constructed on five principles. These principles include modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. These key principles are described in more detail below:

Model the way

Leaders need to have a set of core values that they truly believe in and are willing to communicate clearly to staff to garner support for such values. Leaders must set the standards and expectations that they want followed by aligning their actions with their values (Kouzes & Posner 2023). Having a genuine belief in certain values will help a leader to gain credibility as followers see the leader as being true and authentic. These values need to not only be spoken about but used regularly within the leader's actions, serving as guiding principles in plans of action and decision-making. (Kouzes and Posner 2000, 65).

Schools need leaders who care about both their employee's personal values but also how they can align these values with the organisation's values. The school principal is often viewed as the 'leader' but it is important to acknowledge the impact of teacher leaders within the organisation also and the influence they can have on teachers who are new or are struggling (Goe, Alkaabi & Tannenbaum 2019, 4). A lack of alignment between a teacher's values and those of the school can lead to feelings of alienation which will encourage that teacher to leave to find a better-fitting school (Alkhawaja 2017, 6). Indeed there are cases in which the person is not a good fit for a workplace, but this is more so due to personality traits rather than goals and values.

Research conducted in Scotland acknowledges the importance of mentoring relationships within schools for newly qualified teachers and the effectiveness of formative feedback on teaching practice when being given in an environment of trust (Aderibigbe, Colucci-Gray & Gray 2016, 9). Genuine support from colleagues leads to feelings of being cared for and a sense of belonging, which can contribute to one's desire to stay at an organisation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2011,

1030). Effective mentoring and coaching models the way for teachers to be more successful in their roles.

Inspiring a shared vision

Kouzes and Posner (2000, 120) described effective leaders as those who have a vision of what could be and a desire to make a change happen to enact that vision. Having a vision is an essential part of being a leader. However, it may not always be easy to enlist others in your vision, and it may not be realistic to consider your vision as the 'best.' Employees will be motivated when they are heard and valued (Human Resource Management International Digest 2008, 2). They will want to feel like they are part of the decision-making process which will strengthen their commitment and loyalty to the workplace. A collaborative environment is essential for this exchange of ideas to take place, which occurs under the guidance of a democratic leader who is willing to listen to others and accept that there may be better ideas other than their own (Kouzes & Posner 2000, 132). Collaboration should be a natural element of a school environment, as teachers share best practices and co-operate with one another on curriculum demands.

Research has shown a positive link between creating shared values and positive work attitudes. Employees who feel involved in creating a set of shared values are more loyal to the company, have reduced feelings of job stress, and promote a greater sense of pride in the business. (Kouzes and Posner 2000, 136). In addition to this, when work is challenging, meaningful, and purposeful employees are more motivated and committed to the cause. This is supported by Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination theory of motivation which suggests that humans are intrinsically motivated by three overarching pillars, namely autonomy, competency, and relatedness. Employees need to feel that they have freedom in their work (autonomy), that they influence important decisions to be made (competency), and that they have meaningful social connections and supportive relationships in work (relatedness) (Stone, Deci & Ryan 2009, 77). This theory is associated with transformational leadership, with employees having the opportunity to be a part of something that is leading them to higher levels of purpose and motivation.

Challenge the process

Kouzes & Posner (2023) identified the 'best' leaders to be those who were risk-takers and were innovative in their approach to leadership. These leaders challenged the systems that were already in place with new ideas and new methods of doing things allowing them to learn from both their successes and their failures (Kouzes & Posner 2023).

Senior leaders in schools need to create a trusting environment that encourages teachers to take initiative and suggest areas for improvement. Being innovative and incorporating new practices into lessons allows for students to be more engaged and attainment to be raised, while at the same time motivating teachers by celebrating their creativity (Bukko, Liu & Johnson 2021, 66). This inspires others to become more resourceful in their practice too and be intrinsically motivated, which has been argued by many motivational theorists, such as Ryan and Deci, as the highest form of motivation (Ryan & Deci 2000, 56). A working environment that creates conditions that are satisfying for teachers will positively influence them in wanting to stay and thereby reduce turnover (Loeb, Darling-Hammond & Luczak 2005, 47). However, it is important to note that this will not be the case with all, as humans are not motivated by the same things, and therefore, being 'challenged' may appear like a burden to others. One such theory is the Reiss Motivation Profile which has scientifically identified 16 basic desires of human nature that drive behaviour and create this intrinsic motivation (Reiss 2004). This profile can help leaders to identify what the inherent motivators are within their individual employees and therefore how to create working conditions that are suited to their personality types (Reiss Motivation Profile 2024).

Enable others to act

Kouzes and Posner (2023) identified the most successful leaders as those who empowered others and created climates of trust in which team members felt safe in taking risks. This psychological safety, where team members are confident in admitting mistakes without fear of negative consequences, creates conditions in which employees are more engaged with their work and are motivated to do better for the organisation (Gallo 2023). Power is shared and employees feel competent and committed as a result (Kouzes & Posner 2023).

School leaders need to create a collaborative climate where colleagues show mutual respect and are trusting of one another. Trust is important to not only instill confidence in teachers' perceived capability and encourage them to take responsibility but also to create conditions where creativity is encouraged and innovation can flourish (Dedering & Pietsch 2023, 2). Having good working relationships with colleagues is an essential ingredient in creating this trust climate, where interdependency creates synergy, making it impossible for any individual teacher to achieve the organisation's goal alone (Park & Henkin 2005, 472). In the same way that colleagues working as part of a team need to trust one another, senior and middle leaders in schools must demonstrate this trust from the top down also. Sharing of information is crucial to be transparent and engage in collaboration at its most effective level. (Kouzes and Posner 2000, 240). Evidence supports the notion that trusting relationships are positively correlated with retention (Hopkins, Bjorklund, & Spillane 2019, 293), and those schools that have high values of trust see lower rates of turnover (McCluskey 2023, 567).

Encourage the heart

A leader's capacity to recognise and praise their workers can have a big impact on an employee's motivation and willingness to stay with an organisation. Praise is one of the easiest ways to encourage the heart. However, for praise to be effective it needs to be timely, specific, and sincere (Al-Baradie 2014, 14). School leaders should consider staff praise as part of their daily routine to lead to a more motivated workplace. This does not only impact employees but the functioning of the workplace itself as setting high expectations creates a norm for staff to live up to, and in turn, improves the performance of the organisation. (Kouzes and Posner 2000, 291). The extent to which employees do this will depend on how well-appreciated they feel. Celebrating employee's achievements and success is important, but how it is celebrated is imperative to how it will motivate the staff member. For example, public recognition in front of one's peers may result in embarrassment for one colleague, while another would relish the opportunity (Kouzes and Posner 2000, 299). Therefore a leader needs to know their team well and learn what motivates each member of staff individually.

2.2.4 Organisational conditions

Organisational conditions refer to an array of factors that affect a teacher's work environment and their ability to carry out their daily functions. According to the European Union (2013), these include aspects such as access to technological material, the number of responsibilities aside from their teaching role, the number of students in their class, student behaviour, and the presence of teamwork, to name but a few. The extent to which a teacher will be impacted by one or some of these factors will vary based on personal characteristics, but patterns can be identified across groups of teachers who share some similar traits. While it is not necessarily guaranteed that better working conditions will result in lower turnover, there is evidence to suggest that there is a positive correlation between the two. In a study conducted in Arizona there was a positive correlation found between good working conditions and teacher retention rates. (Geiger & Pivovarova 2018, 607). Meanwhile, the EU found that poor working conditions have led to high turnover rates in Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey, and these countries are now suffering from a shortage of teachers (European Union 2013).

Career progression

Career development has been noted in research as one of the main reasons for expatriates to move to another country for work. A lack of career progression is a significant factor in teacher dissatisfaction and results in higher turnover (Ingersoll 2011, 522). In one such study conducted in Portugal, it was found that career prospects were the second most important reason individuals make the move, coming closely behind challenge being the number one reason (Pinto, Cabral-Cardoso, & Werther Jr. 2012, 2309). Not all expatriates may experience this career progression, which could influence their desire to leave their schools in search of this progression elsewhere. However, there may also be a certain percentage of teachers who do not desire to progress further in their career, and thus this will not have an impact on their job satisfaction or desire to leave the workplace.

Professional Development opportunities

As the educational landscape is continuously evolving, particularly with regard to technology, it is important for school leaders to create a supportive environment

in which teachers feel capable to perform at their best, in a job that has become increasingly accountable and pressurised in recent years (Darling-Hammond 2020, 60). Teachers may feel unsupported when they lack essential skills and knowledge and this will impact not only on their motivation but on student outcomes also. The school culture should focus on continued growth and development of its staff, particularly newly qualified teachers who may be overwhelmed with a full-time teaching role (Whitaker & Fiore 2004, 38). However, these professional development opportunities should be genuinely supportive measures. In a research study conducted in the US, 68% of teachers surveyed agreed that professional development influenced retention figures, while 91% of school leaders surveyed were of the opinion that professional development positively impacted teacher retention (Rose & Sughrue 2020, 44). This difference in perception demonstrates a lack of understanding on the part of these school leaders, who perceive the usefulness of professional development opportunities to be of much more benefit than teachers do. This proves that teachers need support in more areas than the professional development opportunities given to them. (Rose & Sughrue 2020, 44). Dr. Helen Kelly focuses on the importance of tailored professional development to middle leaders specifically, who are often responsible for numerous roles and responsibilities. This professional development should up-skill middle leaders in their specific roles. (Kelly 2020).

Support

Working as part of a team and supporting one another is recognised by some scholars as one of the most significant factors in determining one's desire to stay at a workplace (Schoepp 2011, 63). Working in an expatriate environment where one is away from family and usual support networks, having a support system and good colleagues reveals itself as being even more important in the context of Dubai. In a study conducted in a neighbouring emirate to Dubai, Ras Al Khaimah, participants felt less satisfied with their jobs in the UAE than in their home countries, with the key reason being the lack of community and support they felt at their schools (Herrera & Proff 2023, 8). Although this is not the sole responsibility of senior leaders at a school, as support can occur within departments and amongst colleagues, there is an onus on management to create some conditions in which support can be facilitated, even if it is amongst the teachers themselves.

Pay

Research has proven that an increase in teacher's salaries is correlated with a reduction in turnover, particularly among those teachers who are less experienced (OECD 2020). Motivational theorists such as Taylor and Adam Smith support the view that pay has a direct impact on an employee's motivational levels and their propensity to want to stay at a particular workplace (Levin-Waldman 2015, 4). If workers feel that their pay is not adequate to their input then there will be a feeling of injustice which leads to turnover (Ryu & Jinnai 2021, 211). A person's salary is not only a way for them to meet their basic needs but is also a symbol of their self-value, the more one is rewarded monetarily for their work the greater the degree of commitment to the organisation (Zhou & Ma, 2022). In a research study conducted in the UAE, salary and housing benefits were the second biggest predictor of whether a teacher would stay or leave their current school (Yates, 2021). With such a vast range in pay differences between schools in Dubai, many teachers felt they could take advantage of this, coupled with the high demand for teachers, and move schools to a better-paying job (Yates, 2021).

Involvement in decision-making

Wall & Rinehart (1997) identify involvement in decision-making as one of six principal aspects of successful teacher empowerment. Decision-making refers to teacher's involvement in making vital managerial decisions that have an impact on their work, such as curriculum and hiring, which then produce real outcomes (Bogler & Somech, 2004). Research supports the view that there is a positive correlation between teacher empowerment and their organisational commitment behaviour, which has further positive impacts on school effectiveness (Balfour & Wechsler 1996). Being committed to the organisation in turn decreases turnover. When school leaders consult with teachers on important decisions to be made there is a value attached to this discussion, where teachers are recognised as active participants in the organisation and the leadership is perceived as being participative (Lin 2014, 52). This benefits both teachers and leaders. Once teachers are consulted on a change taking place within the school they will be more likely to support the change, given their involvement in the decision. Similarly, a feeling of ownership over the decision, however minimal this ownership may be, will lead to greater acceptance and overall job satisfaction. Wu & Short (1996) do

not support involvement in decision-making in such high regard as previous studies and instead denote self-efficacy and professional growth as the most important elements of teacher empowerment. Indeed some teachers may regard involvement in decision making as adding to their workload and could be a source of demotivation rather than a reason to stay at a school.

Workload

The term “workload” describes all of the school-related tasks that teachers, whether they are teaching or not, accomplish in their regular working week (Creagh, Thompson, Mockler, Stacey & Hogan 2023, 3). There have been increasing demands on teachers’ workloads universally in recent years, not only relative to working hours alone but also regarding the intensity of the work being demanded. Paperwork, data, meetings, and after-school clubs are some of the additional regular tasks expected of teachers in addition to their primary role of being a classroom teacher, impacting overall teacher well-being. (Stacey, Wilson & McGrath-Champ, 2022).

Several research studies support the fact that teaching is becoming an increasingly demanding profession, which is encouraging teacher attrition. In the UK, 76% of secondary teachers reported not being able to complete their assigned tasks during their contracted hours. This is supported by further data, with 37% of teachers regarding workload as a “very serious problem.” (Walker, Worth & Van den Brande, 2019). In Australia, 68% of teachers reported working between 41 and 62 hours per week, which is more than the standard 38-hour working week (Windle, Morrison, Sellar, Squires, Kennedy & Murray, 2022), while in Germany it was found that 36% of teachers work longer than the European guidelines of less than 48 hours per week (Kreuzfeld, Felsing & Seibt, 2022). In the UAE, private sector working hours are restricted to 48 hours per week by law, but in reality, some teachers work far beyond this, with some educators working up to 70 hours a week, particularly in preparation for the annual school inspections. This has led some teachers to seek employment in local government schools rather than private international schools despite fewer holidays. (Rizvi 2020).

Teacher’s perception of tasks alters their levels of job satisfaction. In a study conducted in Hong Kong, it was found that teachers who participated in additional

tasks that they valued did not have additional stress and actually had improved job satisfaction (Kyriacou 2001, 30). On the contrary, if teachers perceive certain tasks as being for “others” or outside of their remit, this intensifies their dissatisfaction with their workload (Stacey et. al. 2020). Growing amounts of administrative tasks that teachers view as outside of their responsibility contribute to feelings of discontent. Strategies to reduce teachers' workload have been recommended, which include removing meetings during busy report-writing phases, developing collaboration between staff, implementing staff well-being programmes, and facilitating reasonable workload planning amongst staff (Stacey et. al. 2020).

This literature review has provided an overview of the factors which may be influencing teacher turnover in Dubai's private international schools. These factors include leadership styles, leadership practices, and organisational conditions which this thesis will examine to investigate their propensity to influence teacher turnover statistics. The existing literature provides numerous insights into the relationships between these factors and teacher turnover.

Existing research supports the idea that leadership styles impact the work environment and overall job satisfaction of teachers. Transformational leadership provides positive conditions for teachers to be committed to their workplace, while transactional leadership has more value in the short term. Leadership practices, based on Kouzes and Posner (2000) have been identified as successful factors in retaining teachers. Organisational conditions, such as pay, workload, and support, are influential to varying degrees in attracting and retaining teachers.

These different elements are testament to the complexity of teacher turnover in Dubai's private international schools. Nevertheless, it proves that senior leaders must adopt a multifaceted approach in their leadership to ensure optimal conditions in which these push factors encouraging turnover are not present within their schools and teachers feel motivated to stay.

3 METHODOLOGY

The research methods that will be used will be discussed in this section. Data analysis methods and ethical considerations will also be described in relation to this research.

3.1 Methodological approach

This thesis aims to investigate teacher turnover within private international schools in Dubai and the main causes encouraging teachers to move schools or leave the teaching profession completely. This thesis will aim to develop an understanding of the organisational conditions which influence teachers' job satisfaction and in particular the effective leadership and management strategies that decrease teacher turnover.

The means through which the answers to the above research questions were determined was through a mixed method approach which incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data. A mixed-method approach eliminated weaknesses in any one set of data (Creswell 2023). The quantitative section of the research consisted of a questionnaire, with the majority of questions being based on responses on the Likert scale of 1 – 5 ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree'. The qualitative section of the research was based on open-ended questions contained within the questionnaire which ascertained respondent's thoughts and feelings based on the research topic. This data was supplemented with follow-up semi-structured interviews with voluntary participants.

By using both qualitative and quantitative data, multiple forms of data were collected in terms of both statistical and text analysis. The use of a survey with both open and closed questions allows for a thematic analysis of the causes of teacher turnover amongst teachers in Dubai and the leadership and management styles that created conditions in which teachers wanted to leave the school. Surveys are a useful method to gather descriptive and explanatory information which can then be used to ascertain any correlations or observe patterns in the data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017). The semi-structured interview questions were then

based on the themes that emerged from the survey data, with the interviews allowing participants to express themselves more freely and elaborate on the organisational conditions which either kept them or pushed them from a current or previous school.

Phase one of the research consisted of conducting a literature review to examine past and current research concerning the topic of teacher turnover in the UAE. Phase two of the research comprised the collection of quantitative data and subsequent analysis of this data. Within this phase, teachers were categorised based on their turnover intention, that is whether they would stay at their current school or whether they would leave. Phase three of the research involved analysing the trends emerging from the quantitative data and carrying out qualitative research based on the results from phase two. The final phase of the thesis process involved interpreting and discussing the combined research and drawing conclusions based on the data.

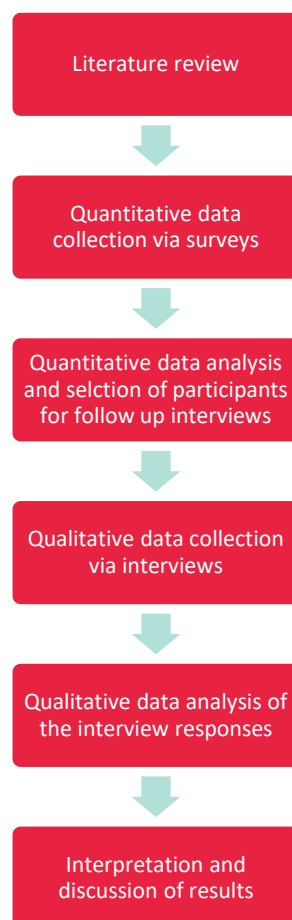


FIGURE 1: Phases of the thesis methodology

3.2 Participants

All participants answering the questionnaire were teachers working in private international schools in the UAE in varying roles and grade levels. Participants were made fully aware of the purpose of the study, with information provided at the beginning stating that the survey aimed to gather data on factors influencing teacher turnover in the UAE (see Appendix 1). Participants were also informed that the research was being conducted as part of a thesis for the MBA in Educational Leadership programme at Tampere University, Finland. It was emphasised that all answers to the survey were anonymous and would be treated confidentially. One question in the survey asked participants to provide their school email address as verification of their occupation as a teacher in a private international school in Dubai. This was a required question to answer, and so without this, automatically the survey could not be carried out and answers could not be submitted. However, those who did provide their email address were guaranteed that this information would be kept anonymous and destroyed after the collection and analysis of data. This was important as questions were based on their perceptions of their current school in terms of effective leadership and organisational conditions and the influence that has on their potential to leave the school. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, with participants having the option to withdraw from the survey at any time, and no incentive was offered for completing the survey. The average time to complete the survey was 16 minutes.

The survey was conducted using convenience sampling as the researcher had access to existing target populations for the study, which were teachers in private international schools. Convenience sampling was chosen as an appropriate method because it is cost-effective and requires little time investment since the sample is already accessible (Golzar, Noor & Tajik 2022, 73). The survey was conducted completely online, initially distributed by email to colleagues within the researcher's current school and then later distributed to teachers in other schools through social media groups and via colleagues working in other institutions. This ensured the survey was completed by teachers in different schools in Dubai to create an accurate portrayal of teacher's perceptions of factors influencing turnover. This also allowed for comparisons to be made between the organisational conditions present in a school and the turnover rates of teachers as a result,

therefore providing more data to analyse in attempting to answer the research questions. If the survey was administered in one school only, it would have provided a limited range of data and possible similar experiences of teachers. In addition to this, all roles were encouraged to participate in the survey, from teacher to middle management and senior management level, to assess how one's experience of a school may differ depending on their role and authority. The survey was opened on Monday 11th March 2024 and the link remained active for two weeks to collect responses.

In total, there were 67 responses to the survey. One of these responses could not be used as the participant could not be verified as a teacher in Dubai, therefore 66 responses were valid and used (see Appendix 3). The below Table 1 summarises the demographic of the survey participants.

TABLE 1: Demographic of survey participants

Demographic variable	Total number	Percentile
Gender		
Male	11	16.66%
Female	54	81.81%
Prefer not to say	1	1.51%
Age		
18-25	0	0%
26-33	24	36.36%
34-41	23	34.84%
42-49	13	19.69%
50-57	6	9.09%
58-65	0	0%
66+	0	0%
Nationality		
UK	27	40.9%
Europe	20	30.3%
Asia	5	7.57%
Africa	8	12.12%
America	4	6.06%
Australia/New Zealand	2	3.03%
Role and position in current school		
Teacher	33	50%
Middle leader	22	33.33%
Senior leader	11	16.66%
Number of years teaching experience		
1-5	6	9.09%
6-10	20	30.3%
11-15	17	25.75%
16-20	14	21.21%
20+	9	13.63%
Number of years teaching experience in the UAE		
1-5	33	50%
6-10	19	28.78%
11-15	13	19.69%
16-20	0	0%
20+	1	1.51%
Grade level of students taught		
Pre KG/KG	5	7.57%
Primary	23	34.84%
Secondary	34	51.51%
Other	4	6.06%
Qualification (highest held)		
Bachelors	12	18.18%
PCGE/PME	29	43.93%
Masters	24	36.36%
PhD	1	1.51%

3.3.1 Quantitative data collection

The first phase of the research involved the survey data collection. This survey aimed to assess the extent to which the participants were satisfied in their current school and what factors, if any, were present that would make them want to leave. The survey was composed using Microsoft Forms, online surveys being the preferred method as it was flexible for respondents, cost-effective for the researcher and simple to create and carry out. (Silver, Stevens, Wrenn, & Loudon 2012). Furthermore, the online survey could also be distributed via email to participants as well as posted on social media groups, thereby making it a convenient method for data collection. Results of the survey were then stored securely and easily accessible through Microsoft OneDrive.

In the first section of the survey, participants were asked for background information such as their age, level of qualifications, and years of experience teaching, both in the UAE and in their home countries, and their current school. This was important to ascertain the demographics of the sample and later use this information to compare with factors that influence turnover to determine any correlation.

Section two of the survey was based on the basic needs satisfaction survey (see Appendix 2). This was because of the links to the theoretical framework of the thesis, including organisational conditions, transformational leadership, and leadership practices. The basic needs survey was chosen as the basis for section two of the survey to assess whether participants' basic needs were being met in their current schools and the potential impacts this may have on their turnover intention. Breugh (2021) notes how the Self-Determination Theory is useful to assess employee motivation, as there is a positive correlation between having basic needs met and the propensity for a person to become interested in their tasks.

Sections three, four and five of the survey comprised questions based on the organisational conditions of the school, school leadership, and other factors that would influence teacher turnover intentions respectively. These three themes were decided upon based on the literature review and to analyse the extent to which these factors impacted turnover in the context of this thesis.

Responses on the survey from sections two to five were based on a Likert-type 1-5 scale response ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree'. This allowed respondents to consider the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a statement and provide an accurate answer based on their thoughts and feelings. There was a 'neutral' option included with each answer range for those who neither agreed nor disagreed with a statement or did not know how to respond to that particular question. Likert scales have been used in many past studies where individual difference variables are investigated such as motivation, where a person's cognition can be measured (Nemoto & Beglar 2014). Considering this thesis is based on the influences of teacher's intentions to stay working at a school or not, this scale is an appropriate measurement of these influences to explore how teachers feel about these different aspects. However, one weakness of using Likert scales is the lack of opportunity for participants to provide their comments. This was addressed by adding open-ended questions to each section to allow participants to add their thoughts and feelings on the relation of the theme to the topic of teacher turnover.

The survey also deployed a correlational design, which tested the extent of inter-relationships between the study variables (Cohen et. al 2017). As correlation is used to test the relationship between two sets of data (Creswell 2023), the Spearman test was chosen as a suitable method to assess the relationship between organisational conditions within a school such as workload and leadership practices, and the degree to which these impacted teacher turnover intentions, if at all. The Spearman test was used and data analysed using a 0.05 significance level. It is important to note that if there is a correlation present between two variables it does not necessarily imply a causal relationship, but nevertheless identifies a link between the two.

TABLE 2: Spearman correlation results between turnover intention and variables

Independent variable	Variable	Spearman's rho
Teachers intending to stay	Age	1
Teachers intending to stay	Years of teaching in the UAE	-0.2
Teachers intending to stay	I am involved in decision-making at my school	.7
Teachers intending to stay	Professional Development opportunities at my school are worthwhile and of benefit to me.	0.9
Teachers intending to leave	There are opportunities for me to progress in my career at my school.	0.8
Teachers intending to stay	The workload at my school is reasonable.	0.8
Teachers intending to leave	I feel supported in my current role.	0.4
Teachers intending to leave	School leaders are a significant factor in me wanting to stay at my current school.	0.6
Teachers intending to leave	I am paid fairly for the work that I do.	-0.2

3.3.2 Quantitative data analysis

The data was then collected and analysed. The first phase of the analysis consisted of calculating the mean, median and mode to evidence the impact of the factors influencing teacher turnover. Microsoft Excel was used to create bar graphs of the data. In addition to this, correlational statistics were employed using the Spearman test to determine the similarities or differences between factors such as age, length of experience teaching in the UAE, and organisational conditions against the propensity for turnover to take place. Nine items from the survey were assessed using the Spearman test. These nine items were chosen based on their significance from the mean data.

The open-ended questions in sections three, four and five of the survey allowed for participants to discuss precisely the conditions created at their schools that

either helped or hindered turnover, as well as the leadership practices observed that influenced teachers' intentions for staying or leaving the school. These open-ended responses were analysed based on the frequency of certain phrases within the answers and how this impacted overall teacher turnover within the school.

3.4.1 Qualitative data collection

Interviews are a valuable source of data that can provide additional insight and more developed explanations than what data from a survey may present (Hochschild 2009). Peters (2005) supports this view, explaining that semi-structured interviews, where the interviewer has prepared questions but can probe respondents further depending on the discussion, are particularly effective in gathering solid data based on people's thoughts and perceptions. The questions in the interviews were shaped by the themes that emerged from the survey, as well as being focused on the research questions of this thesis. Quantitative data that needed to be clarified formed the basis for some of these semi-structured interview questions. Questions were open-ended to ensure respondent's freedom to answer fully based on their thoughts and perceptions (see Appendix 4). Having an open dialogue with respondents that does not rigidly stick to a set of questions allows for a natural conversation to emerge which may reveal other areas of research not initially thought about by the researcher.

Suitable subjects for the follow-up interviews were identified based on the quantitative data. From those who consented to being contacted for a follow-up interview, participants who intended to stay at their current school, and participants who did not intend to stay at their current school were categorised. Out of this selection of participants, purposeful sampling was used to select a range of participants with varied backgrounds based on the information provided in section one of the survey. This involved identifying participants from different schools, length of experience teaching and grade level taught. Two participants who intended to stay at their current schools were selected, and two participants who did not intend to stay at their current schools were selected. These participants were contacted and subsequently agreed to participate in the semi-structured interviews in order to investigate further the organisational conditions, motivational and leadership practices and strategies that are currently being implemented to

influence teacher turnover. The interviews were then conducted online with all participants using the 'Zoom' app. The interview participants were made aware that the interview would be recorded and transcribed and consent was obtained prior to the commencement of the interviews.

Interview questions were designed to ensure lengthy responses from the interviewees. For example, 'how' and 'to what extent' preceded many questions which allowed participants to develop their answers, incorporating their thoughts and feelings and justifying why they felt the way they did. Interviews were recorded using the 'Rev' app which allows for recording and transcribing to happen at the same time. Having a transcript for each interview is important to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. Each interview lasted for 30 minutes and transcripts were destroyed once used for the research purpose.

TABLE 3: Demographic of interview participants

Participant code	A	B	C	D
School employed	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Male
Role	Secondary school teacher	Senior leader – Primary school	Secondary school teacher and middle leader	Primary teacher
Number of years at current school	4-6	1-3	7-10	1-3
Number of years teaching in the UAE	1-5	11-15	6-10	1-5
Number of years teaching experience overall	11-15	More than 20	11-15	6-10
Turnover intention	Stay	Stay	Leave	Leave

3.4.2 Qualitative data analysis

To analyse the wide range of data obtained from the interviews, open coding was used to categorise the data into different themes. Open coding helps researchers to group data into sets which allows for easier analysis (Cohen et. al. 2017). Interview responses were coded using thematic analysis, based on the themes within the survey, which had been created based on the literature review. Each section of the survey had open-ended questions. The interviews then allowed for further elaboration of the initial qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions in the survey.

From the coding of data, patterns could then be identified as well as links between any sets of data. Braun & Clarke's (2006, 87-93) six phases of thematic analysis was used to ensure all appropriate data was analysed correctly. This involved reading the data and note-taking, coding the data, and then assigning data to particular themes based on the codes (see Appendix 5). These themes are then reviewed and named before the final step of producing a report based on the themes.

Using this thematic analysis as a framework, the following themes and codes were identified from the data:

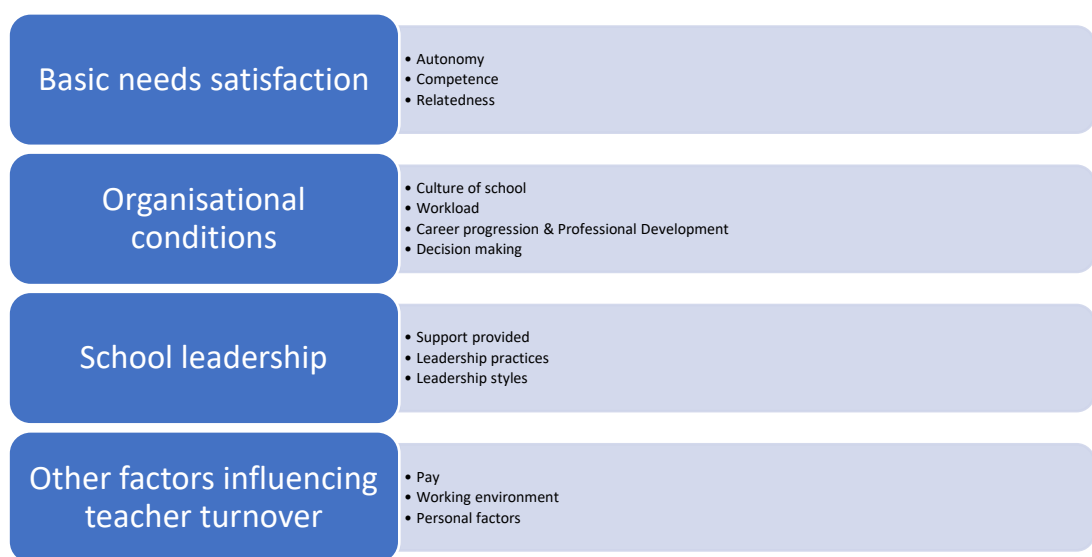


FIGURE 2: Thematic analysis of interview questions

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ensuring an ethical approach to the research is imperative to give the research validity and legitimacy. Methods of data collection, as well as approaches to analysing the data, needed to be considered carefully to ensure an authentic and sound investigation. A mixed methods approach was used to ensure a wide range of data could be collected which was done by a survey, and then more detailed information could be gathered through follow-up interviews with some participants. Artificial Intelligence was not used throughout the research process or the creation of this thesis.

To ensure accuracy in the responses and thus maximum validity of the data, it was vital to phrase questions clearly, using simple and concise language (Ghauri 2020). As this survey was administered to expatriate teachers from a range of different nationalities, with some not having English as their native language, it was essential to ensure no ambiguity in the questions and the possible answers provided. If there was a misunderstanding this may lead to inaccuracy of data, or if some questions were not understood they may have chosen the 'neutral' option to answer with, leading to incomplete data sets. Additionally, the questions were not phrased in a suggestive nature, which may have otherwise led to bias in the responses.

4 RESULTS

In this section, the frequency distribution and descriptive statistics are presented in relation to basic needs satisfaction, organisational conditions, leadership, and other factors relative to teacher turnover within the survey. Open-ended questions in the survey, as well as the answers to the interview questions, were analysed under the themes of the research questions. These were then compared to the demographic aspects to assess the different perceptions of turnover intention and the correlation between the two.

The survey results provided evidence of consistent turnover amongst teachers in the UAE. Of the 66 survey participants, 72% have been working at their current school for three years or less. This is despite 50% of survey participants having more than five years experience of teaching in the UAE. This shows that teachers do not stay at their schools long term, with no survey participant staying at their school for ten years or more. It is therefore important to investigate why this is occurring.

4.1 Theme 1: Basic needs impact on teacher turnover

The basic needs satisfaction survey is a useful tool to assess the level of motivation of employees in having their principal needs met at work. This is a good indicator of employee satisfaction and therefore their willingness to stay at a workplace or search for another job. (Olafsen, Halvari & Frolund 2021).

The survey results were investigated using descriptive statistics. The mean and standard deviation were calculated to evidence the overall perception of the different factors and the extent of the impact of these factors on teachers' intentions to stay or leave their current workplace. The median was used to analyse the spread of the data, and the minimum and maximum were used to show the range of the data.

TABLE 4: Overall descriptive statistics of all items in the basic needs satisfaction survey

Survey question	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Q13. I feel I have freedom to make decisions in my work	3.46	4	1.2	1	5
Q14. I feel I am competent in my work	4.42	5	0.82	1	5
Q15. People at work tell me I am good at what I do	3.9	4	1.18	1	5
Q16. I feel pressured at work	3.48	4	1.19	1	5
Q17. I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job	3.42	4	1.09	1	5
Q18. I have been able to learn interesting new skills at my job	3.54	4	1.09	1	5
Q19. When I am at work, I have to do what I am told	3.83	4	0.88	1	5
Q20. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from my job	3.37	4	1.14	1	5
Q21. My feelings are taken into consideration at work	3.18	3	1.25	1	5
Q22. In my job, I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am	2.75	3	1.08	1	5
Q23. There are not many people in work who I am close to	2.87	3	1.29	1	5

4.1.1 Autonomy

Five of the questions in the basic needs satisfaction section of the survey related to the autonomy of the teacher in their daily working life at their school. This assessed the level at which the teacher felt they had freedom in their role and were trusted to carry out their work.

The results indicate that the majority of respondents felt autonomous in their work, with them being able to make decisions freely, and openly express their opinions and ideas. Figure 3 indicates that 60% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed they had the freedom to make decisions in their work. This was supported by phrases such as *“left to do your job”* and *“not micromanaged”* in the open-ended questions indicating that employees were satisfied when they had some level of autonomy. However, this was not the case for the other 40% of

participants who felt they lacked an independent element to their work, which can inhibit some workers.

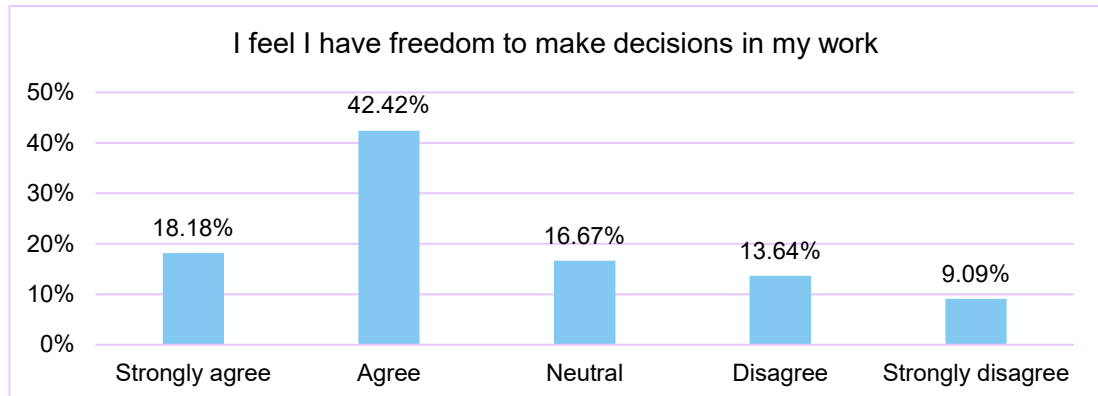


FIGURE 3: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 13

Of these 40% of participants who lacked independence in their work, half intended to look for employment elsewhere for the next academic year. Although this lack of autonomy may not be the sole factor driving this intention, it may contribute to the decision due to a lack of independence and job satisfaction.

Figure 4 shows that 54% of teachers felt pressured in their jobs. Much of this pressure was related to the “*lack of time*” teachers had to complete their tasks, as well as an “*arduous amount of paperwork*” to complete on a regular basis. In some cases, the completion of paperwork is often outside of the control of the school and is obligatory to provide to the KHDA on their annual school inspection each year. However, how this data is collected and managed is the responsibility of the senior leadership, who can make the process more efficient and manageable for staff throughout the year.

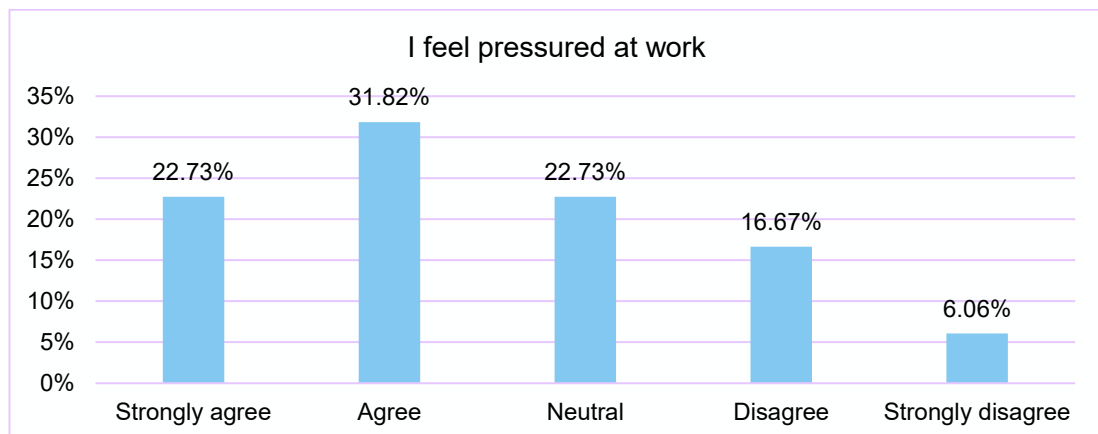


FIGURE 4: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 16

This lack of time was a significant factor in Participant D's decision to leave his school at the end of this year:

“The amount of paperwork is completely unreasonable. I wish my time was reserved to plan impactful lessons for students, and I had to spend less time doing admin tasks and things that are meaningless for student progress and development. I know that this is a problem across all schools in the UAE, but I just feel there is unnecessary extra work we are made do that should really be the responsibility of management”

Similar sentiments were recorded by other teachers through the survey data. It is concerning that some teachers lack time to complete their core function which is to teach. Many teachers felt that the amount of paperwork to complete impacts the quality of lessons they are delivering and may ultimately impact student progress and achievement in the long term. This is not a problem unique to the UAE as has been explored in the literature review, but nevertheless is a lesson for school managers to learn from to retain good teachers. Senior management should learn from this and strategise how this paperwork and data can be completed in a way that does not interrupt teachers' planning and lesson times. Having specific blocked periods on a teacher's timetable to complete paperwork, or sharing the load amongst departments are just two methods that could be employed to minimise this aspect of the role.

Figure 5 shows 57% of respondents felt they were free to express ideas while at work. This was reiterated through the following responses when teachers were asked what they felt their school did particularly well:

“Being listened to and implementing new ideas”

“Staff are listened to and accommodations are made where possible”

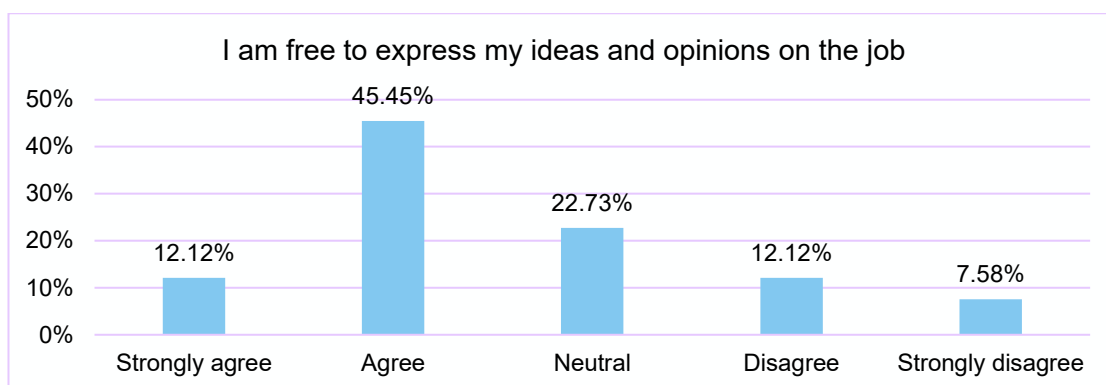


FIGURE 5: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 17

However, while some teachers felt they had freedom in their work, a majority 72% either agreed or strongly agreed that they must do what they are told to do while at work. This suggests a lack of distributed leadership in private international schools in Dubai. This may stifle creativity amongst teachers or result in a lack of efficiency if there are better ways of carrying out a task.

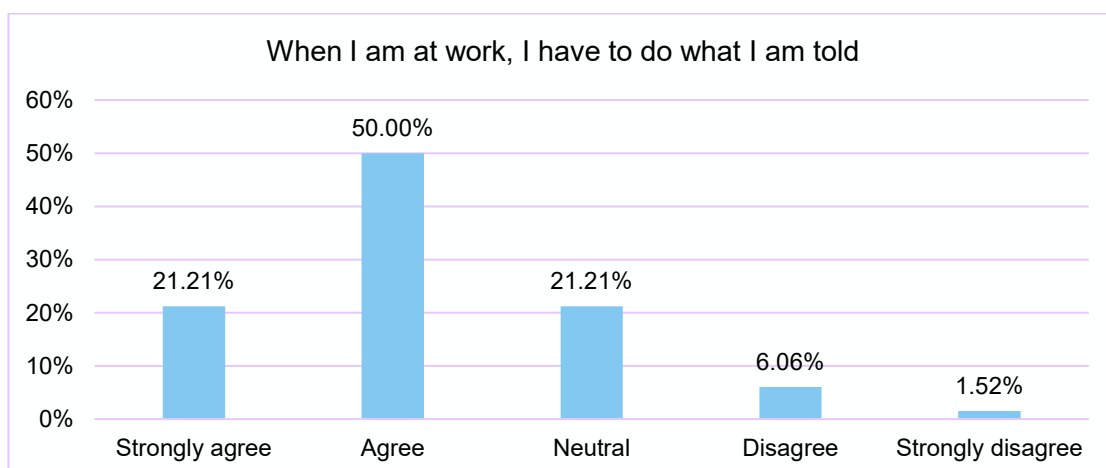


FIGURE 6: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 19

School leaders should try to implement elements of distributed leadership, where teachers become leaders in their areas of expertise. There is evidence that there are improved outcomes for an organisation when shared leadership exists (Harris 2014). Participant A has observed distributed leadership in practice at her school and acknowledges the positive impact it has had:

“We have a new Head of Secondary this year and she is very skillful in creating teams of people to focus on developing different areas of the school. For example, one group of teachers have now assumed ownership of running our PD

sessions, while another focuses on curriculum. It almost erases the need for a Senior Leadership Team as these groups of teachers are effectively running the school and she is just the overseer.”

However, a school's climate needs to be conducive to this perspective of shared leadership if distributed leadership is to become a success. The skills and experience of teachers are important elements to consider when trying to implement distributed leadership in a school. Given that the largest set of respondents to this survey fell between the range of 26-33 (36%), this suggests quite a young workforce present in Dubai's private school sector, and senior leaders may be hesitant to distribute power to those they may perceive as being less skilled or experienced.

Figure 7 represents teachers' impressions of their school's capacity to take their feelings into account. 48% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that their feelings were taken into consideration while at work. This suggests that teachers sometimes feel irrelevant in their workplace and perhaps initiatives are implemented that they may not necessarily agree with.

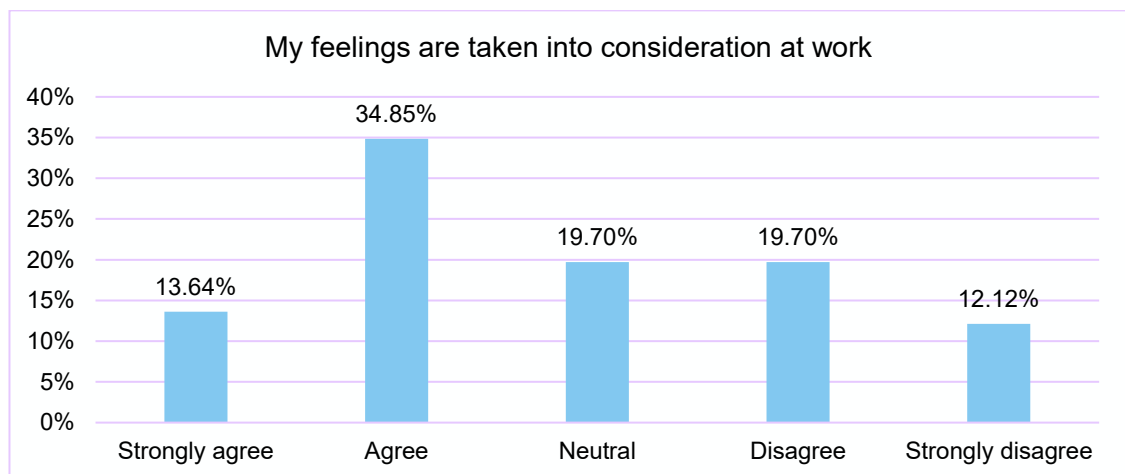


FIGURE 7: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 21

Participant C commented on her frustration with her school which she planned to leave at the end of the year:

“Even though I am in middle leadership, I do not feel as empowered as before. With a recent change of senior leaders, my feelings are not taken into account

when new responsibilities land on my desk. There are times when I really do not want to be the bad person and deliver bad news to my team, for example about extra paperwork or a task that needs to be completed last minute but I am bound by those above me, it is very much an attitude of you will do it no questions asked. I am afraid that my contract will not be renewed if I do not go along with what they ask, which is something that happens quite often to others.”

This represents quite a poor working environment and one in which there is poor morale. This element of fear regarding job security has negative impacts on teachers and does not motivate staff (Shoss, Su, Schlotzhauer & Carusone 2022). This is evidence of a lack of autonomy within some schools in Dubai, even for those in middle management positions who naturally would have a greater degree of independence in their work.

4.1.2 Competence

Five of the questions in this section of the survey related to teacher’s sense of competency in their jobs. Competency refers to having the necessary skills and training to carry out one’s role effectively. A majority 89% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt competent in their work. This is a reassuring figure which shows that teachers feel confident in delivering lessons and are equipped with the essential skills needed for their work.

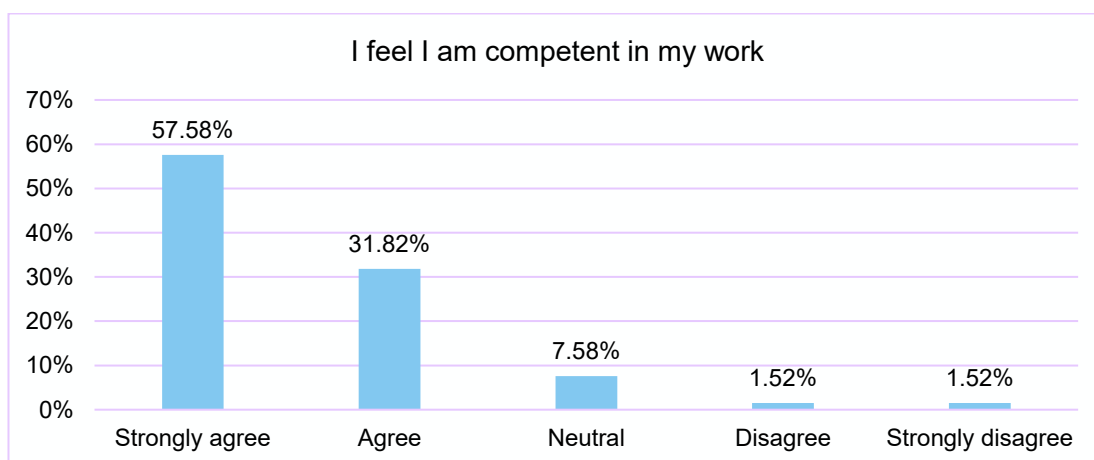


FIGURE 8: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 14

In terms of having this competency and varying skills recognised, 70% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they are recognised for doing their jobs well.

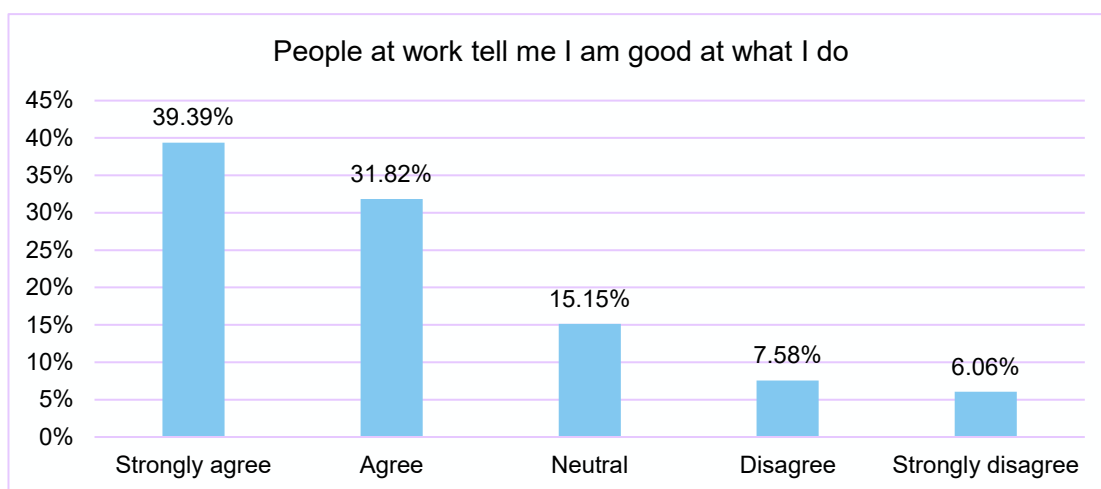


FIGURE 9: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 15

This is further supported by comments in the subsequent open-ended questions where the following phrases were noted:

“We have regular staff shout-outs where particular members of staff who have done a good job with something recently are celebrated during morning briefing...it’s only something small but it really adds to setting a nice tone for the day and creating a warm atmosphere in the school.”

“Our academic vice principal is such a nice and encouraging person, he often stops into classrooms to comment on displays we have created or events we have been involved in lately and it just proves that hard work does not go unnoticed. It makes you want to do more when you know there are people who are thankful for the work that you do.”

This is evidence of the positive impact of praise on teachers and their propensity to feel motivated as a result. However, other participants had different experiences, with a clear lack of recognition or praise in some schools, as evidenced by the following comments:

“People are leaving because they are not praised or recognised for the work that they do.”

“There is little praise and recognition for good work which does not motivate you to do any more than what is expected of you or what is stated in your contract.”

It is important to note that this recognition, or lack thereof, may not solely originate from senior management but from colleagues and middle management. Some teachers explicitly commented on the lack of recognition from senior leaders in their school but were praised consistently by their Heads of Department or Heads of Year. This recognition was enough to encourage and motivate staff.

Being provided with training to enhance their teaching practice is a source of motivation for some teachers. 59% of survey participants felt they have been able to learn new skills in their current jobs. This is seen in Figure 10 below. For the majority of teachers, this was due to teaching a new curriculum that training was essential for. 64% of survey respondents were of Irish or British descent, where national curriculums are the primary programmes of study. Other curriculums, such as the IB curriculum, which was the curriculum of study in 41% of teacher’s schools in this survey, is completely new to some teachers and they would therefore require training for their particular roles.

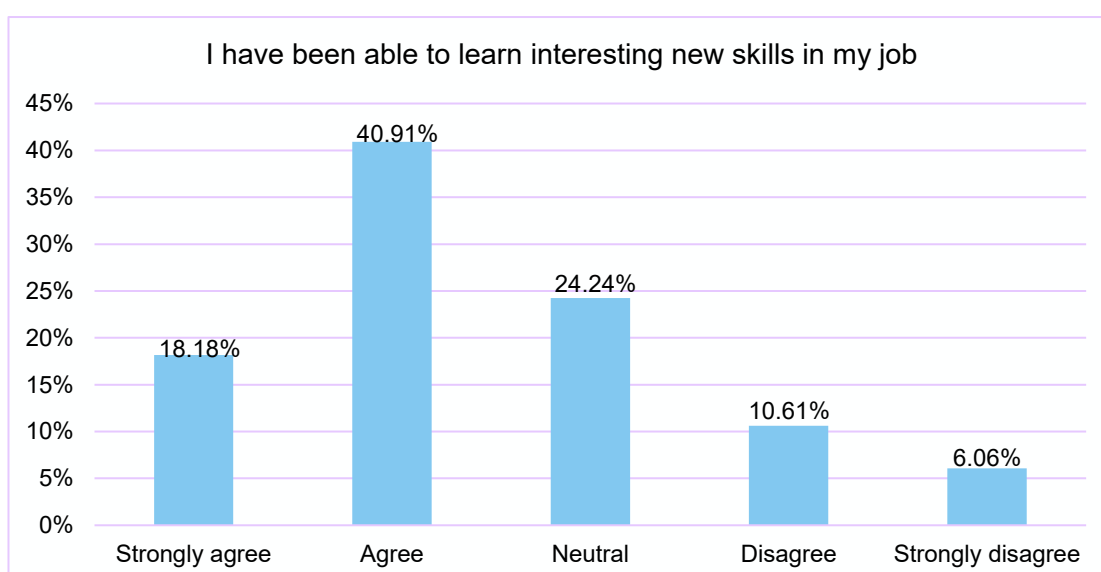


FIGURE 10: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 18

Professional Development opportunities and learning new skills were positively correlated with teachers wanting to stay in their current jobs ($\rho = 0.9$). This suggests that teachers value these opportunities, which are elements of intrinsic motivation leading to them feeling challenged and therefore highly motivated (Demir 2011, 1399).

Varying factors contribute to teachers' feelings of accomplishment. This sense of accomplishment can arise from school leaders praising a teacher or from the teacher's own identification of their student's progress. 57% of teachers surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of accomplishment most days from their work (Figure 11). When asked about their biggest sources of satisfaction at work, the below phrases appeared frequently in the data:

"Pupil progress"

"Seeing results"

"Seeing the students achieving and having fun in their learning"

This was further supported by data from interviews. Participant D, a teacher who intended to leave his school, cited the students as the main factor in providing him with job satisfaction whilst there:

"The kids are nice and easy to teach. I have encountered zero behavioural issues, they (the students) are focused and want to do well. It has made my life so much easier when there have been other parts of the job which have not been so good, such as admin tasks and leadership."

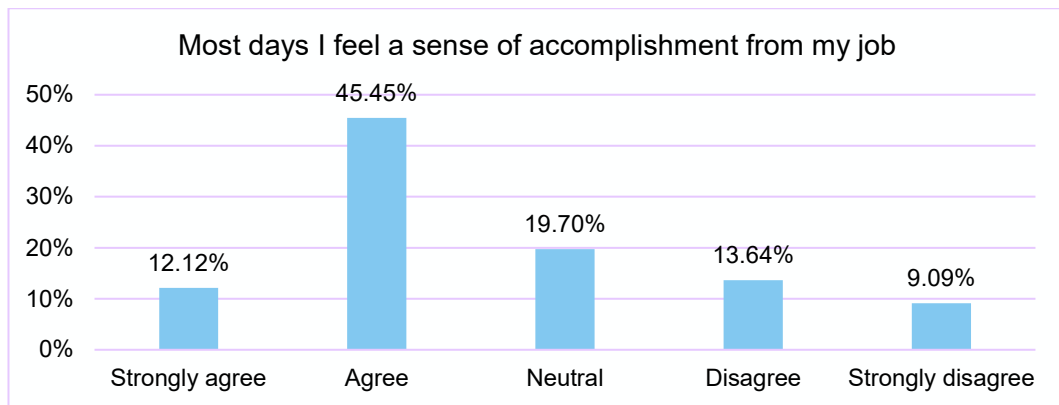


FIGURE 11: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 20

Some teachers referred to the lack of promotional opportunities within their school, or senior leader's decisions to “*promote the wrong people*” in their opinion. Teachers felt that they were not reaching their full potential and had much more to offer in their roles and beyond, if given the chance. However, this referred to the minority of teachers, as only 24% of survey respondents agreed that they did not have the opportunity to show their capabilities at work (Figure 12).

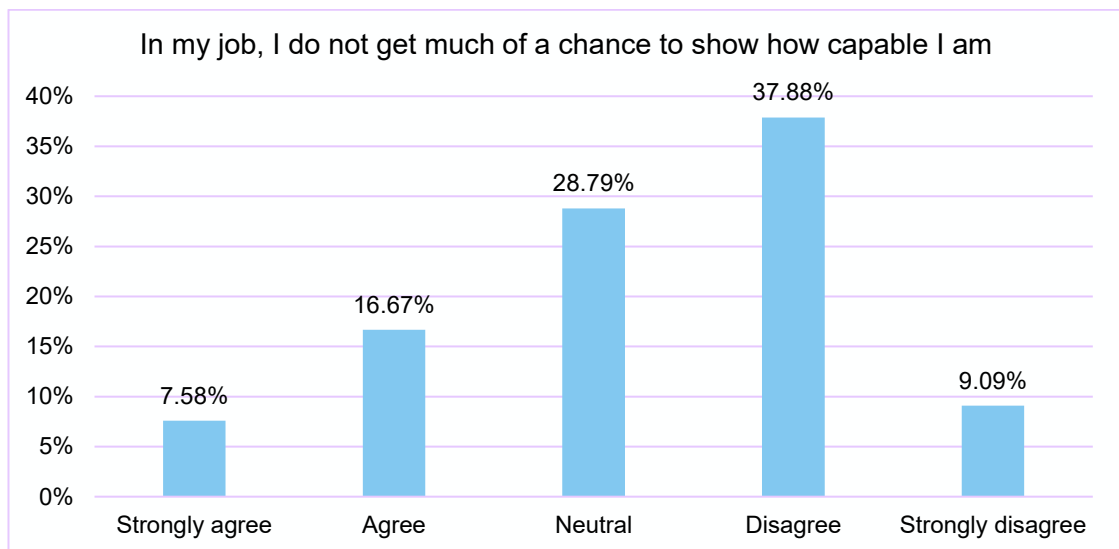


FIGURE 12: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 22

This data is optimistic regarding schools' efficient use of their teacher's skills and abilities. Participant B emphasised the wealth of opportunity that is presented to young teachers in the UAE:

“I, as well as many others, have progressed in my career at a much faster pace here than I would have at home in Ireland. I have had ample opportunity to put

my skills to use in school, such as data analysis, and this has helped me move into a middle management position. The schools are businesses here at the end of the day, so the more capabilities you have and the more you can offer the happier they will be and fight to keep you.”

The overall mean score for this set of data was 3.6, showing that teachers in Dubai’s private international schools feel mostly competent in their work.

4.1.3 Relatedness

In this section of the survey there was one question concerning teacher’s relatedness to their current workplace. Further questions of belonging and culture were explored in subsequent sections of the survey. 36% of people either agreed or strongly agreed that there were not that many people in work who they were close to, and therefore they lacked this aspect of relatedness.

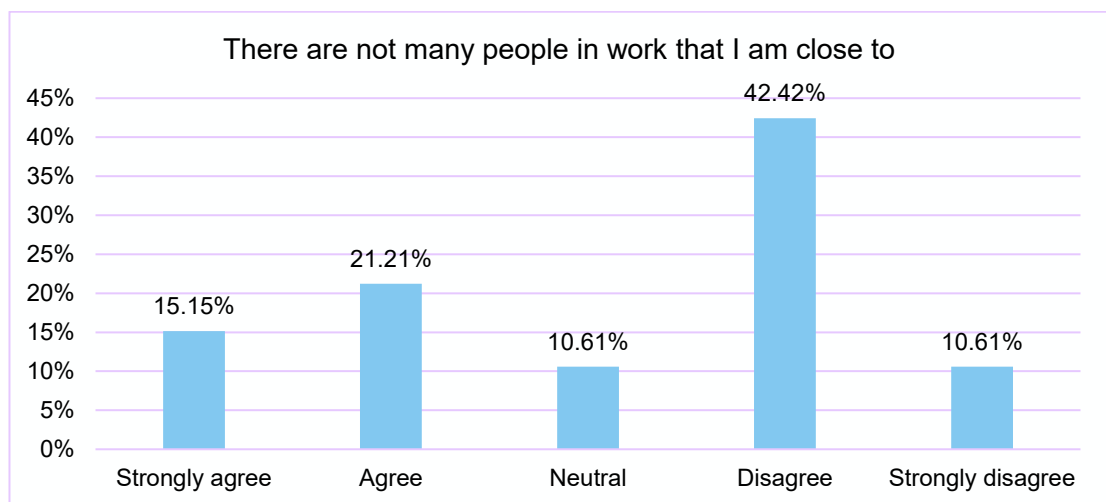


FIGURE 13: Bar graph showing responses to Survey Question 23

Of those teachers who experienced a low level of relatedness at work, 49% signalled their intention to leave their job at the end of this academic year. The negative perception of the feeling of relatedness was due to a number of factors:

“It would make for such a better atmosphere at work if there were department offices - my classroom is remote - I rarely see my department which makes me feel isolated”

“There are days when I am so busy I barely have time to eat lunch, let alone stop and have a conversation with colleagues. It makes me sad and I sometimes feel robotic at work”

However, there was a positive perception of belonging and community present amongst the majority of teachers surveyed. In many instances, teachers commented that it was the staff that contributed to the positive atmosphere present at school rather than efforts made by the senior leadership teams.

“I like the staff and the atmosphere amongst them - we have a nice rapport and it is nice to be able to walk into the staffroom and know it is a safe space.”

“I have lovely colleagues that create a good working environment”

The positive atmosphere and rapport amongst staff was a significant factor in Participant A’s choice to stay at their current school, despite not being completely happy:

“Staff create the nice environment themselves – we organise our own celebrations in the staffroom whether its someone’s birthday or a Christmas celebration. We are all living away from home and so our colleagues and friends become like our families. I have thought about leaving the school but the grass is not always greener and I enjoy working with these colleagues.”

4.2 Theme 2: Organisational conditions at school

Figure 14 represents the mean scores for section three of the survey relating to the organisational conditions of the school. As can be seen from the below data, the perception of the organisational conditions amongst private international schools in Dubai is satisfactory, with a mean score of 3.17.

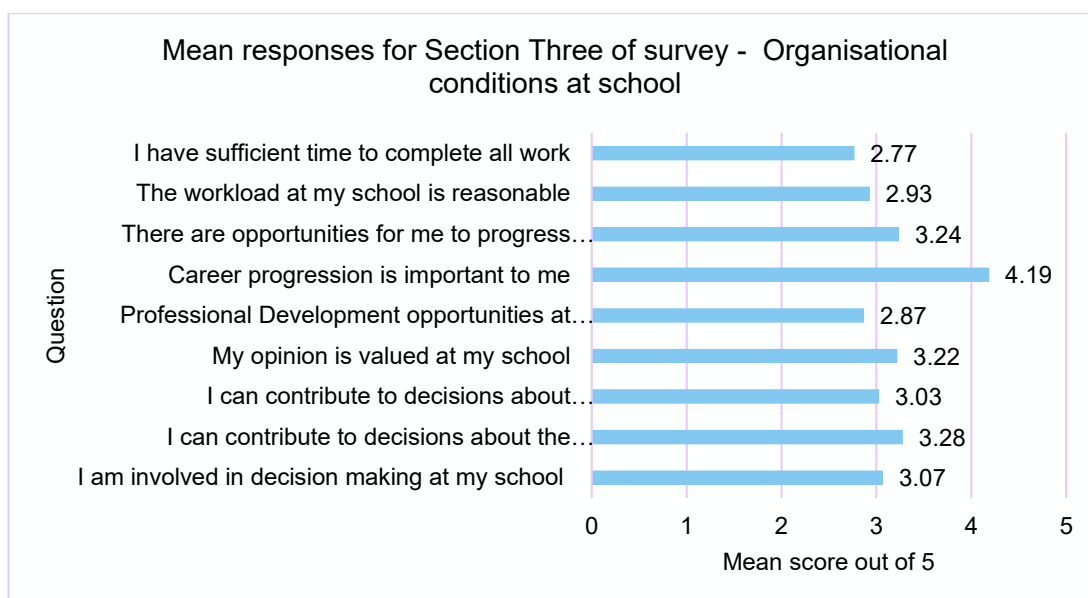


FIGURE 14: Bar graph showing the mean results calculated from the responses obtained in section three of the survey regarding organisational conditions at school.

4.2.1 Decision making

Participants were asked in section three of the survey directly about their impact on decision-making at their school. These questions focused on their contribution to decisions regarding the curriculum, Professional Development, and school matters in general. The mean of these three questions was 3.12, suggesting there is some openness in having teachers involved in making decisions at their schools but this varies greatly across schools. 35% of teachers either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were involved in decision-making at their schools.

“...SLT pass on instructions that I as a teacher must follow...There is no two way conversation to involve me in the decision”

“My working conditions could be made better if they let teachers make decisions instead of parents”

“Involve teachers in decision-making and listen when they are giving suggestions for improvement, we are the ones in the classroom every day!”

As is evident from the open-ended questions on the survey, there is certainly an element of frustration regarding this lack of decision-making power. Of those teachers who disagreed or strongly disagreed with having any input into decision-making at their schools, 72% intended to leave their jobs. This lack of decision-making may be a contributing factor. Furthermore, the Spearman test showed a strong correlation between teachers intending to stay at their current school and their decision-making power, with $\rho = 0.7$. This shows a positive link between those teachers who held an influence in making decisions in their schools and wanting to stay working there. However, it is also important to note that some teachers do not want to be involved in decision-making and may rather be told what to do and how to do it. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that decision-making power is something that is desired by all teachers.

Those teachers with a more positive experience regarding decision-making at their school felt valued and respected in their positions. Participant A provided an example of her input into decision-making at her school:

“At the beginning of the year, we were asked which topics would be of most use to us in PD sessions. These were the areas that informed our PD for the school year, and we also had a choice of which sessions we could attend and when. It was successful because we were involved in making the decision. There would have been a lot more resentment towards the programme had it been something that was being forced upon us and to which we then placed no value. It made us happy and feel like our opinions were valid and respected.”

The extent to which teachers are involved in making decisions within their schools is influenced by the senior management teams. Of those respondents who felt that their senior leaders were more autocratic in nature and not encouraging towards the staff, 79% agreed that they could not contribute to decisions made at work. This shows the top-down approach of many schools in Dubai, where decision-making is centralised to the few at the top of the hierarchy.

4.2.2 Professional development

It can be seen from Figure 18 that there is a relatively low perception of the quality of Professional Development opportunities that are offered to teachers in their schools. This is represented by a mean score of 2.87 when survey participants were asked if the Professional Development opportunities were worthwhile and of benefit to them in their current workplace. Teachers held a mixed view of Professional Development throughout the survey:

“There should be more appropriate and differentiated CPD”

“Either give less PD or at least more valuable PD sessions...I do not feel like I have learned anything from the internal PD sessions held in school”

“We are never offered PD by external companies, there is always time scheduled every Monday afternoon for an hour where we meet as a group of staff but this content varies and is run by other teachers.”

Of the teachers who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the current Professional Development offered to them at their schools was worthwhile and of benefit to them, 50% intended to resign from their jobs at the end of this school year. It may be that this lack of Professional Development influences a teacher's job satisfaction and therefore intention to leave, as some teachers noted how they felt *“unfulfilled”* and *“uninspired”* by the Professional Development opportunities provided to them by their schools. The data showed a very strong correlation between teachers intending to stay at their current school and their perception of the Professional Development opportunities provided to them being worthwhile, with $\rho = 0.9$. This demonstrates a strong link between the value of Professional Development offered to teachers at their schools and their intention to stay.

Three teachers from the same school had positive experiences with the Professional Development in place at their school, even though their turnover figures stood at 23% consistently over the past five years. These teachers acknowledged the time and collaborative elements of the Professional Development:

“They don’t force us to do weekly PD/meetings just for the sake of it like other schools to. We have them when we need to and have time to work on other things when needed”

“I feel my school truly values teacher (and students) well-being, and my potential for more growth by allowing me to pick and choose PDs to upskill myself. These have been invaluable to me in my practice”

“Creating opportunities to collaborate with colleagues during PD has been really helpful to me in my teaching. I do not have much time to meet colleagues during the school day so this specific time allocated for that has been really beneficial.”

In this school, perhaps it is the collaborative nature of the Professional Development sessions along with the extra time that the staff valued, rather than the content of the actual Professional Development sessions. Nevertheless, being afforded time to collaborate with colleagues is seen from these teachers’ perspectives as being worthwhile and valuable too.

4.2.3 Career progression

The highest mean score in this data set (4.19) related to whether career progression was important to teachers in general and this high score symbolised career progression as something that the majority of teachers aspire to. It is noteworthy then that there is a mean of 3.24 teachers who feel that there are opportunities for them to progress in their current school. This shows that not all teachers are experiencing the career progression opportunities that they would like, which could be a potential reason for some opting to leave in search of better prospects elsewhere. When this data was correlated, it was found that there was a strong positive correlation between teachers intending to leave their jobs and the opportunities available for them to progress in their careers at their current schools ($\rho = 0.8$). This provides evidence of the lack of opportunities being afforded to some staff and the impact this has on their desire to stay working within that school.

When this was explored further in interviews, participants cited phrases such as “*favouritism*” as reasons for one not progressing to middle management and beyond at their school. The fixed positions of some teachers became immediately apparent to new staff, with one person noting:

“There is a lack of growth opportunities. People seem to get stuck in roles here despite years of experience”

One teacher’s frustration with this lack of career progression was evident:

“I have become very disheartened recently in my job, others have been promoted to positions ahead of me despite me having much more experience in those roles. No explanation has been offered when I asked. It definitely makes me want to look elsewhere. Apart from not being where I want to be career wise it also makes me feel less valued as an employee that others can get promoted without any justification as to why.”

It is evident then that career progression is a significant factor in teachers making the decision to stay or leave their current schools. Given the strong desire of the majority of respondents in this survey to progress in their careers, it is not surprising that teachers may feel dismayed in their schools and hope to achieve further progression in another school.

4.2.4 Workload

The lack of time to complete tasks, along with the increasing workload and expectations of the role, are growing concerns for teachers working in private schools in Dubai. “*Unrealistic expectations*” of teachers have led to burnout and stress in some situations, with 46% of teachers surveyed stating they would leave the teaching profession altogether if given the chance. Phrases such as “*increasing demands,*” “*lack of work-life balance*” and “*workplace stress*” appeared frequently in the survey data when participants were asked why they had considered leaving the profession.

Figure 14 shows having sufficient time is the poorest organisational condition present amongst schools with a mean of 2.77. Teachers are feeling *“overworked and underappreciated”*, contributing to some deciding to look to other schools for employment, even though this is a problem experienced by the majority of teachers surveyed. There was a strong positive correlation between teachers finding their workload reasonable and their intention to stay or leave their schools ($\rho = 0.8$). This proves a teacher’s workload has a significant impact on their desire to stay working at a school.

The data showed that in many instances, teachers are overwhelmed and completing multiple roles at once:

“The most obvious solution is to hire more staff/support staff so that we don't have to work too much after work hours. It is impossible to keep going at this rate.”

“We need more teachers, lighter timetables, and smaller classes”

“There are small changes that could be made to make our lives so much easier - hiring a cover teacher, letting teachers leave at 3pm instead of sitting waiting till 3.40pm and then having to sit in 30 minutes of traffic with the parents. Hiring more teachers for the extremely high level of SEN children we have. Some schools do this very well while others are more concerned at cost-cutting measures and working their teachers to the bone as a result.”

While a clear solution to this issue would be the additional recruitment of teachers, this would result in increased expenses for school managers who are under intensified pressure from school owners to cut costs and ensure a healthy profit at the end of the school year. 15% of teachers who completed the survey work at not-for-profit schools in Dubai. All but one of these teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they had a reasonable workload at school, as well as a culture of trust being present at their school. All teachers intended to stay at their respective schools for the following school year albeit one who was moving back to her home country. Each of these teachers also reported the low levels of turnover that existed in their schools.

4.3 Theme 3: School leadership

Figure 15 below displays an overview of the mean scores from section four of the survey relating to the theme of school leadership. The overall mean for school leadership was 3.25, which was slightly higher than the organisational conditions mean of 3.17. In addition to this, 56% of teachers surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that school leaders were a significant factor in them wanting to stay at their current school. While these figures are not extensive, they still show that school leadership is a significant factor in influencing teachers' intentions to leave their schools and is, therefore, a contributory factor to a school's turnover.

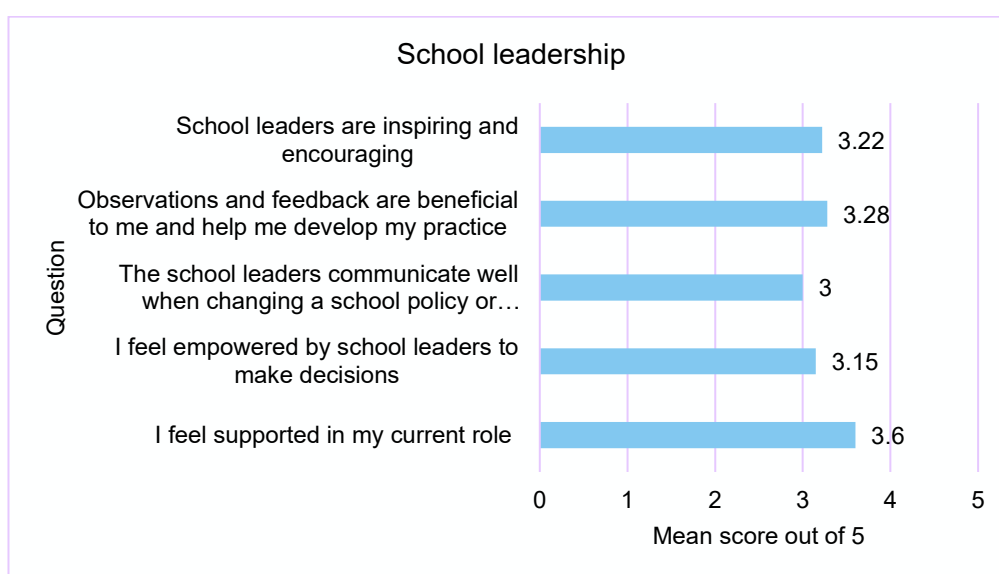


FIGURE 15: Bar graph showing the mean results calculated from the responses obtained in section four of the survey regarding leadership practices at school.

4.3.1 Support

The highest mean in this set of data (3.6) relates to teachers feeling supported in their roles. This support included being listened to, management being flexible with staff needs, and providing help and resources, as and when they are needed. There was a moderate positive relationship between teachers intending to leave their schools and feeling supported in their current roles, with $\rho = 0.4$. This shows a mild link between support and intention.

Participant A valued the “human approach” taken by her SLT:

“We are allowed to leave early two days a week, and take time off when we need it. I feel recognised as a person and not just as a worker, and I feel supported in both my work and personal life. I could have a better-paying job at another school but I would be worried I would not have this flexibility elsewhere.”

In addition to this, teachers commented on how instrumental their department and middle management team were in providing support and making their working environment better.

“I have a strong team and support from my Head of Department and Line Manager and it makes my life so much easier. Everyone is experienced and knows what they are doing and pulls their weight, it makes a huge difference.”

This teacher disagreed that he was paid fairly for the work that he did. However, he intended to stay at the school because of this support and the career progression opportunities provided to him.

Teacher’s experiences of resource-related support varied among the data. While teachers recognised the general facilities among schools in the UAE were superior to their experiences in their home countries, particularly regarding physical education and the arts, there were certain areas identified by teachers where improvements could be made within their respective schools. These improvements included *“school provided iPads/laptops”* and a *“bank of planning and resources for teachers to use, rather than changing the planning expectations six times a year.”* Additionally, one teacher sought *“access to textbooks and printing”* as a basic need to carry out her daily role.

Perspectives from senior management in terms of the challenges they face concerning resourcing were evidenced in the survey data. In allocating sufficient resources, school managers were constrained by budgets and under pressure from school owners to cut costs with the aim of raising profits. One Head of Secondary school described the challenge she faced when trying to find enough space for students in classrooms, with enrolment numbers increasing even though there were not enough classrooms to house these students and teachers. With the

refusal of admission of students not an option, this manager had to implement strategies to work with the enrolment numbers, resulting in teachers sharing classrooms, and classes being physically at full capacity in some cases, with some teachers not having the space to move around the classroom freely. This indicates that in the case of resources, these are sometimes outside of the control of senior management who may be constrained by measures put in place by the school owner or school management group.

However, there were other specific areas identified by teachers as needing particular support with which school leaders were not as constrained, such as “student absenteeism” and “student deadlines”. Teachers' experience of senior leadership, and the support provided, varied greatly across the schools surveyed, and the impact on staff, whether this experience was positive or negative, was profound. When asked about the reasons for staff leaving their schools, phrases such as “*relationships with leaders,*” “*poor management*” and “*lack of support from SLT*” appeared frequently. It is evident then, and as expected, that the senior management and the support system in place within a school influence a teacher's intention to stay or leave, making this a contributing factor in teacher turnover.

4.3.2 Empowerment

Teachers' experience of empowerment within private schools in Dubai is diverse, and the data showed it was ultimately dependent on the individual school leadership teams. The phrase “empowerment” did not appear in the data as often as other phrases such as “support” and “community” which shows that empowerment is not a common phrase used to describe teachers' feelings towards their SLT. When asked about the extent to which teachers felt empowered in their current roles, the mean stood at 3.15. Out of the participants who either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt empowered by SLT to make decisions, 74% of these people were in a management position, being in either middle or senior management. It is not surprising then that these people feel more empowered given their roles and the authority they hold to enable change in their schools. From their perspective also, they may be biased in their view of how empowering the management team is, considering they are a part of it. When asked to describe the senior leadership team at her school, Participant B commented:

“They empower staff to be the driver of their own career.”

Nevertheless, those teachers who had a positive perception of their ability to make decisions and progress in their career felt content in their schools. Of the teachers who agreed or strongly agreed to feeling empowered by their school leaders, 93% intended to stay at their school the following year. This shows the positive impact a feeling of empowerment has on staff, not just in relation to making decisions in the staff but in general. Linking this with having autonomy in their work is also a feature of empowerment that staff value.

4.3.3 Praise

From the survey data, it can be determined that school leaders are somewhat enthusiastic about offering praise to their staff. 52% of teachers reported being praised for their work on either a daily, weekly, or at least monthly basis. Praise contributes to a positive working environment and encourages morale amongst staff.

15% of teachers reported having never received praise from senior management whilst at their current school. 60% of this cohort intended to leave their school at the end of the year. Further to this, some teachers expressed negative experiences of being criticised erroneously rather than praised. Participant D described his frustration with leadership in his interview:

“I feel encouraged at times but I also feel I might be unnecessarily criticised. In feedback from observations I feel discouraged and that good lessons and above average performance and effort are still deemed 'basic' or 'unsatisfactory' by leadership members who do not have the knowledge of the age group and the logistical challenges that have been overcome to achieve what has been achieved.”

As is evident from this interview excerpt, this teacher is frustrated with this feedback and there is a lack of professional dialogue between SLT and teacher for him to explain his grievances. This type of feedback does little to contribute to a

teacher's development. School leaders should become versed in engaging in constructive feedback with teachers, in such a way that is encouraging and motivating while at the same time contributing to the teacher's development.

4.3.4 Leadership styles

The data showed a strong positive correlation between the influence of school leaders on teacher's intentions to stay or leave a school, with $\rho = 0.6$. This demonstrates a considerable link which school leaders need to take into account when leading their staff. From the data, there is limited evidence of transformational leadership being enacted in private schools in the UAE. One survey respondent who indicated their intention to leave their school experienced a lack of intellectual stimulation:

"A more challenging environment would motivate me to do more"

Another teacher commented on the impact of the senior leaders of a school, and the stark differences that can exist within a single leadership team:

"I think the quality of leadership varies from person to person. One leader has a positive impact on me, I admire this leader as they work hard and know what they are doing, this motivates me to work harder. The other leaders don't impact me."

This proves that there may be a lack of synergy within leadership teams in Dubai's private international schools. This has an impact on how well these leaders work together, and ultimately how cohesive these leaders are has an impact down to the teacher level. Not only does this cohesiveness impact how efficiently the school runs but it also impacts the morale and working environment of the school. There is a lack of leaders modeling the way for their teachers.

However, the data suggested that some schools demonstrated an "open door policy" which is consistent with transformational leadership qualities. Participant A appreciated the democratic attitude of her management team:

“The approachable (Aussie) way is a breath of fresh air. Leaders are kind and truly have an open door policy.”

Further to this, this school had a very low turnover rate, with less than 5% of teachers leaving annually. It was also rated as a ‘Very Good’ school during its latest inspection in 2023. This evidences that these transformational leadership traits have a positive impact on teacher retention, and contribute to staff feelings of feeling heard and welcomed. The identification of the Australian nationality in the above comment may also serve as an indication of culture having an impact on leadership styles in general. Indeed, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory provides a framework to explain how different cultures and society’s values influence their behaviour. It would therefore be impractical to ignore the fact that one’s culture influences their leadership behaviour. In addition to this, senior leaders need to have a cultural awareness of their staff if they are to form good working relationships with them, and for them to be viewed as charismatic and inspirational, which are hallmarks of transformational leadership.

Elements of transactional leadership were present in the majority of teachers’ experiences. A culture of surveillance and observation was the norm for many teachers in Dubai’s private schools, with some schools offering performance bonuses based on teacher’s ratings from lesson observations:

“We are incentivised with financial rewards...I receive 3,000 dirhams at the end of the school year if the majority of my lesson observations are rated as ‘outstanding’ by my mentor. It is a nice bonus to get and shows us the value the school places on excellent quality teaching. However, is it motivation for me in the long term? Not really, anyone can put the effort in for those lesson observations, it does not mean they are outstanding consistently.”

Some teachers were certainly welcoming of these financial rewards but they were not significant enough factors in them staying at their schools in the long term if they were unhappy with other aspects.

The data gathered indicated that there were aspects of distributed leadership present in some schools. This motivated certain teachers who wanted a challenge in their work and to whom career progression was important. Participant B described a Teaching and Learning team that she is a part of:

“A few of us who have been rated as outstanding in lesson observations have been given the opportunity this year to mentor other teachers. This includes carrying out lesson observations and feedback, as well as delivering Professional Development sessions. It has really helped me to grow as an educator and I am happy with the experience that I can now add to my CV. I would worry that I would not get the same opportunities in other schools”

Critics of distributed leadership argue that this could cause issues in schools as there is no formal authority assigned to these teachers for these roles. Participant B experienced some of this resistance from staff members, but cases like this were in the minority:

“One staff member was not open to any feedback I provided and argued with me consistently, it was very difficult but again this was a learning experience for me. On the whole, the majority of staff were grateful to have us colleagues observing them and providing feedback rather than SLT as we are also in the classroom full-time and have similar experiences to them. I think the fact that our SLT is spread thin too and are supportive of the initiative definitely helps.”

Senior leaders in Dubai schools may favour distributed leadership as it allows for tasks that traditionally may have only been completed by management to be carried out by staff, thus allowing them more time to focus on their core functions. From a business point of view, it is also beneficial to have staff experience job enlargement as it erases the need to officially appoint roles of responsibility, thus saving money for the school.

4.3.5 Leadership practices

The data suggests there are areas in which senior leaders in the UAE are particularly effective. Phrases such as “*supportive*” and “*approachable*” were used frequently in the survey to describe teachers’ senior leadership teams, as well as being cited as the reasons contributing to why teachers would stay at their current schools. Well-being was addressed frequently also, with some teachers noting successful well-being initiatives implemented by senior leaders for staff in their schools. This resulted in these teachers feeling cared for and satisfied in their jobs.

For those teachers who had positive experiences with their current senior leadership teams, there was much evidence of practices that ‘encouraged the heart’ (Kouzes & Posner 2023). These principally included staff feeling trusted to do their job and “*being left to do your job and not micromanaged.*” Participant B commented:

“I have been given my confidence back by members of my senior leadership team. I feel like my well-being is truly valued here which was definitely not the case in my previous school.”

Participant A encountered support from her senior leaders also:

“I appreciate the support provided by my Head of Secondary when I navigate any stumbling blocks. He is a very uplifting person and inspires me in my work. He is always welcoming and has time for everyone.”

It is not surprising then that despite mounting workloads, this support and kindness offered by SLT was sometimes enough to encourage teachers to stay at a certain school, despite other factors such as pay not being as competitive as other schools.

The data showed evidence of some senior leaders in Dubai creating conditions in which teachers became leaders in their practice. As discussed earlier, this in-

cluded teachers hosting Professional Development sessions and providing feedback to their colleagues on lesson observations. Practices such as this are evidence of modeling the way, a leadership practice that aligns teachers' values with those of the school. This encourages the teachers involved to feel like they are a part of the process, sharing best practice and inspiring others to follow also. A newly promoted Dean of Students reflected on her potential impact in her new role:

“I am now one of the school leaders and my effect is something I am very conscious of because I want my impact to be positive. If we want our teachers to be working as one towards the school’s goal of reaching ‘Outstanding’ then I need to ensure I am modeling best practice and being inspirational to those around me.”

Enabling others to act was an integral feature of some schools in Dubai. Teachers cited a *“culture of trust”* in the survey quite frequently, with senior leaders demonstrating their confidence in their staff by allowing them to teach as they saw fit and not interfering in their approach to their classrooms. Although this trust between senior leaders and teachers was not present in every school, the data showed evidence of this trust existing in higher frequency between colleagues and teams. *“Colleagues supporting each other”* and *“looking out for one another”* were phrases that appeared in the survey data often which are essential elements of creating a culture of trust and interdependence among staff to work towards the school’s goals. Without this positive and encouraging climate, teams would not work as well together and progress would be slowed.

However, a key ingredient to this trust process is communication. Communication was a phrase mentioned frequently in both the survey and interviews which was linked to SLT with negative connotations. Communication also scored the lowest mean in this set of data relating to school leadership, with a mean of 3, signaling that there are issues in Dubai’s private schools with communication between senior leaders and teachers. Participant C commented that *“poor communication makes my job much more difficult.”* This was supported by further phrases in the survey such as:

“Management need to improve on how they communicate. We are told important information at the last minute which then creates stress for us. For example, a ‘No Tech Day’ policy was implemented in our school recently. However we were only told about this the day before it happened, which meant we then had to rearrange our lesson plans and activities we had planned for the following day. It was disrespectful to teachers time. The reasoning behind the No Tech Day was not communicated to us either so it made the initiative seem pointless to staff.”

This lack of communication and transparency proved frustrating for staff and hindered teachers in their ability to take initiative and be efficient in their work. Teachers were not enabled to act in these cases of inadequate communication which further resulted in feelings of insignificance in their contribution to the school environment.

It is evident that communication is a problem within schools in Dubai and it is having an impact on teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Senior leaders need to assess the role they play in this dissatisfaction and come up with solutions to better the case. Improved communication would lead to clarity and direction among teachers which would benefit the school in their long-term goals.

Practices such as inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process were seen less frequently in Dubai's private schools. Inspiring a shared vision was made difficult in those schools where teachers were not involved in decision-making and could not therefore become fully immersed in the shared vision of the school. The survey data suggests that some teachers had autocratic leaders whose directions must be followed and in many cases, this direction was primarily focused on achieving an 'Outstanding' rating by the KHDA rather than concentrating on student's genuine achievement. Some teachers held concerns regarding their school's aims. In his interview, Participant D referred to the lack of genuine motives within his school and the impact it was having on his experience of working there:

“The job has become overly administrative and satisfying other stakeholders, and less about genuine student learning and progress. The competition in the

private-school market here has led to most management taking shortcuts to "success", a less student-centred approach, and more of a corporate/marketing/publicity type approach to increasing student enrollments as a priority."

This is worrying for students and parents of private schools in Dubai. Although not all schools will have this as their main motive, there still exists the fact that these school groups are businesses and are therefore run as such. Achieving top inspection ratings as well as increasing enrolment numbers are key focuses of senior management teams who are often under pressure from school group CEOs. This results in some schools losing sight of education and their position in this ever-competitive market.

Challenging the process was also a practice seen in less frequency among leadership in Dubai. Given the autocratic nature of some schools, staff were not comfortable giving suggestions for improvement. In addition to this, some teachers were fearful of the non-renewal of contracts at the end of the school year should they become too challenging in their suggestions of improvement for the school. Participant A raised her concerns regarding this:

"I am always careful with what I suggest during surveys sent around by management, we know we cannot be too honest with these things as our jobs are on the line. Our contracts may not be renewed at the end of the year without any warning and there is nothing illegal about that, so there is nothing we can do. Workers unions do not exist here either so you are on your own."

This lack of democratic leadership hinders a school's development. By not being receptive to teachers' feedback, senior leaders are missing out on the opportunity to gain insight into the classroom and the daily struggles teachers may face which is encumbering effective teaching and learning. School leaders should be more amenable to staff's suggestions and not view them as a threat or insult to their own positions.

4.4 Theme 4: Other factors influencing teacher turnover

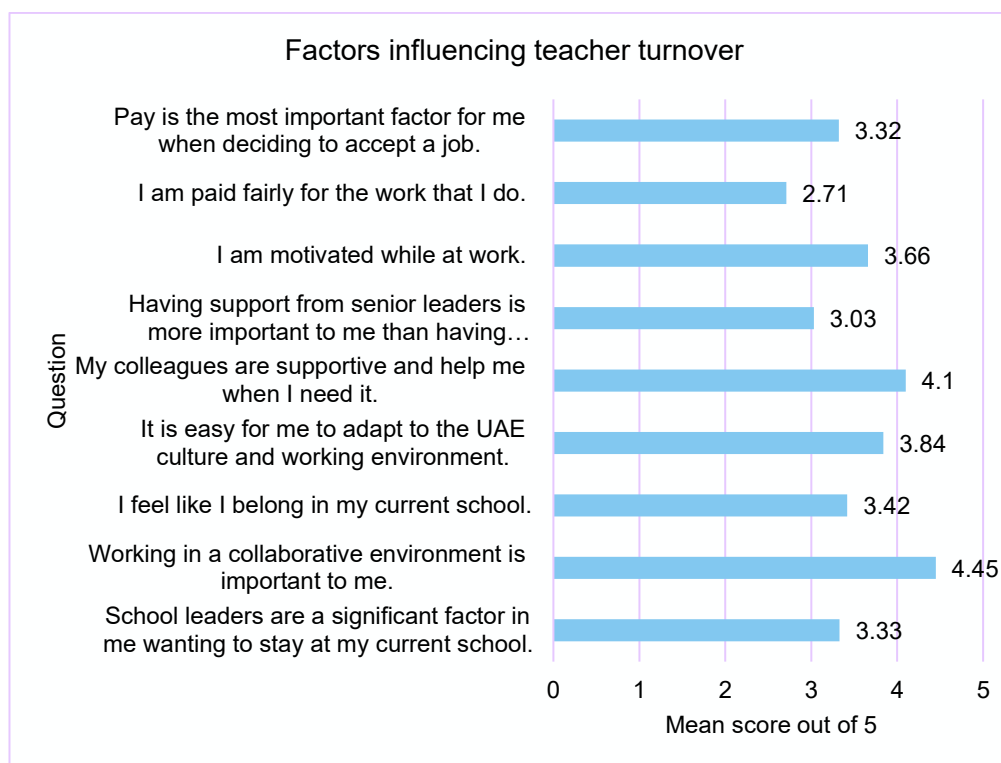


FIGURE 16: Bar graph showing the mean results calculated from the responses obtained in section five of the survey regarding factors influencing turnover at school.

4.4.1 Pay

As can be seen from Figure 16 above, teachers placed significance on pay as a factor in them wanting to stay in their jobs, with a mean of 3.32. In addition to this, when asked to rank a list of ten motivators, pay was placed second overall, with 25% of participants ranking their remuneration as the number one motivator for them at work. Of the 49% of teachers who either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were paid fairly for the work that they do, 57% stated that their schools have a high turnover of teachers, with at least 15% of their teachers leaving annually. This suggests that one's pay is a considerable factor for teachers when deciding on staying or leaving a school for the next academic year. This is further supported by teachers surveyed citing pay as a principal factor in the turnover of their schools:

“Many excellent teachers are leaving our school because of pay, turnover has definitely increased in the past 2-3 years because of pay.”

“More competitive salaries are being offered by other schools which attracts teachers away from us unfortunately.”

From the correlational data, there is a weak negative relationship present between teacher’s perceptions of being paid fairly for their work and their intention to leave their jobs this year, with $\rho = -0.2$. This shows that these two variables are not statistically significant, but have a weak inverse relationship suggesting that as pay increases turnover may decrease.

The research showed disparities in pay occur owing to several factors. One such aspect was the implications of certain contracts that were created several years ago when some schools first opened and were now difficult to alter for legal reasons. Having once had generous packages, some schools may now have changed their compensation offers, offering newer recruits less attractive packages:

“The longer serving staff (founders) stay for the huge package they receive. Everybody else leaves. The majority leave for less money but better working conditions and prospects for promotion.”

Participant A commented on the biased payscale that operates in some schools, with some teachers of particular nationalities being offered a higher salary in their contracts than others:

“Teachers from Western countries such as the UK and US are offered full international contracts with salaries above 14,000 dirhams a month, plus benefits such as flight allowances, housing allowances and medical insurance. Teachers from India and South Africa for instance are offered much lower salaries, and often on local contracts which do not come with any benefits, and you must be on your own visa or your spouses.”

This inequity would certainly encourage teachers to look for a school with an international package on offer and one where they would be treated fairly, irrespective of their nationality. This was reinforced by comments from the survey in response to why teachers thought people stayed at their school and hence had lower turnover than others:

“The pay scale here is defined based on experience, regardless of the nationality”

School leaders should consider the possible resentment of some members of staff given this disparity in pay and the resulting lack of morale that may occur. Although some staff may be willing to accept a local contract rather than an international one and forego any benefits, management needs to be aware of these staff and perhaps put in place other concessions to motivate these staff and encourage them to stay.

4.4.2 Motivation

The overall motivation level of teachers while at work stood at a mean of 3.66. From the responses to the survey, the main sources of this motivation originated from the teachers' feelings of having an impact on their student's lives and their academic progress. This shows that intrinsic motivation is strong among teachers in Dubai and their job satisfaction is derived from the impact of their work.

Reassuringly, 83% of teachers stated that their main source of motivation was present for them at their current job. Whether this was intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, teachers felt encouraged to come to school each day. However, 24% of these teachers still intended to leave their jobs at the end of the year, proving that this motivation alone was not enough to make them want to stay in their current roles. This proves that other circumstances, such as pay, workloads, and opportunities for promotion, were significant driving factors in some teachers choosing to seek employment elsewhere.

4.4.3 Working environment

A good working environment was placed at the top of a list of ten potential motivators amongst survey participants, with 42% of teachers considering a 'good working environment' as their number one motivator and reason for staying at their current school. This was ahead of other factors such as pay, workload, and professional development, signifying the importance for school leaders to place effort into creating a pleasant atmosphere in which to work. In the survey, the working environment referred to aspects of a teacher's life such as support received at work, the collaborative nature of their job, and their feelings of comfort and adaptability to working in their schools in the UAE. The culture and environment of a school have a considerable impact on teachers' intention to stay. The environment refers to not only the physical aspects of the school but also a teacher's relationships with their colleagues, students, and parents, as well as the morale amongst the staff and the feel of the school community as a whole.

In many cases, it was the staff who were responsible for creating a pleasant atmosphere that was welcoming and friendly. Phrases such as "*good co-workers*," "*lovely community feel*" and "*happy community*" appeared frequently throughout the survey, demonstrating that staff felt comfortable and welcome in their schools. This is especially important for those staff who may have moved to the UAE alone and do not have a family in the same country as them. 86% of survey respondents stated that having support from colleagues was more important to them than having support from senior leaders. This fostered a sense of community among the staff who formed important relationships with their colleagues.

However, some teachers who signaled their intention to leave their jobs this year cited "*toxic working conditions*" as one of the reasons that was pushing them to look for better opportunities in other schools. 32% of teachers surveyed did not intend to stay at their school for the next academic year, and of these teachers, 57% expressed poor working conditions as the main driving factor behind this intention. Participant D expressed his concerns regarding his poor working environment:

“There are hostile working conditions...I have seen staff being shouted at by management for making a simple mistake. The gates of the school are also locked during the day and if we want to leave we need to seek permission from the school principal. It feels intense and people are constantly on edge.”

Undoubtedly, management has a direct impact on the working environment of a school. Given the significant statistics found in this data, it is clear that teachers place a good working environment as their top priority when it comes to being satisfied in their jobs and staying. Senior leaders in Dubai then have an onus on them to ensure that the working environment of the schools they operate is congruous to staff's expectations in order to reduce teacher turnover.

4.4.4 Personal factors

Teaching in the UAE presents both opportunities and challenges for expatriates. The data found that 65% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy for them to adapt to the UAE culture and working environment, despite encountering more paperwork and parental pressure. This reaffirms the willingness of teachers to work in the UAE, despite high levels of turnover which indicates that there are issues within certain individual schools. However, 55% of teachers either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the working culture of schools in the UAE was better than that of their home countries. This suggests that teachers may need additional support when adjusting to working life in the UAE, particularly with administrative work that staff may not be familiar with in their home countries.

The impacts of familial ties were also a considerable factor in teachers' decisions to stay in their current schools. Although some teachers were not fully content in their schools they felt they had little choice but to stay for varying reasons:

“I have a family and dependents, I need continuity of income. It is not as easy for me to switch jobs as it would be for my single colleagues.”

“I am staying in my current school until my son finishes sixth form, then I will have more freedom in choosing another school to work in.”

“My children are settled in their school and love going every day. It would be difficult to uproot them if I was to look for another job, it’s easier to just stay for their sake for the time being.”

Some teachers also commented on the positive lifestyle change they have encountered since moving to the UAE and the impact that this has had on their decision to stay:

“We are rooted in Dubai due to our family and have made it our home.”

“We are remaining in the UAE for a better standard of living. Our kids have a good education here and a good life in general, with nice weather and lots to do at the weekend, it would be very difficult for us to leave this all behind.”

This explains why teachers are drawn to work in the UAE, particularly those with families. Although there may be challenges that some teachers face in their schools, these teachers may be willing to sacrifice this for the sake of staying in the UAE and having access to this seemingly better standard of living.

The data showed that age was strongly correlated with a teacher’s intention to stay at a school with $\rho = 1$. This suggests that as age increases so too does one’s intention to stay working at their school. Of the survey respondents whose age were 42 and above, 85% of these people intended to stay at their current schools for the next academic year. When the data from the age range 25-33 was analysed, it was found that 60% of this group intended to stay at their schools. This implies that age may be a contributing factor for a teacher deciding whether to switch jobs, with those being older less inclined to risk leaving their current schools. However, considering that as one grows older one may begin to start a family, the matter of age may be linked with the familial circumstances discussed above.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research aimed to investigate the causes of teacher turnover in the UAE, and the organisational conditions and leadership practices that can be implemented within private international schools in Dubai to prevent such turnover. The study findings suggest that the working environment, pay, and workload are significant factors in encouraging staff to move schools. The paper reverts to the research questions in this section.

5.1 Research question 1: What are the main causes of teachers leaving their school or profession?

5.1.1 Working environments

Having a good working environment is perhaps the most significant finding of the study in terms of encouraging teachers to stay in their jobs. When analysed, three elements of the working environment were considered most important to teachers – a climate of trust, relationships with colleagues, and support and relations with the senior leadership team. Teachers who had negative experiences of these elements identified their working environment to be poor and intended to look for a teaching post in another school. Therefore it can be concluded that teachers with a poor working environment are more likely to leave their school or perhaps the profession altogether to pursue a different career path. This is in line with research conducted in Sweden which found significant associations between the school working environment and teacher job satisfaction (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson 2021, 5). Another study conducted in Estonia identified workload as a main factor in encouraging teacher attrition (Saks, Hunt, Leijen & Lepp 2022, 18).

These findings can be used by senior leaders in Dubai's schools to positively influence the attraction and retention of good-quality teachers, thereby improving both student attainment and staff morale. By actively implementing strategies to reduce paperwork and administrative duties, senior leaders can improve the job satisfaction of their teachers (Stacey, Wilson & McGrath-Champ, 2022). It is also evidence that can be used by senior leaders to justify the recruitment of additional

staff in schools to ease the burden on existing teachers. Creating a working environment that is supportive and inspiring should be relatively straightforward for senior leaders with a common sense approach.

5.1.2 Pay

The data highlights the importance of fair remuneration for staff in encouraging them to stay within an organisation. The pay was a significant factor in teachers' decisions to look to other schools within the UAE for work. While some schools will try to cut costs through hiring newly qualified teachers from overseas, other schools will place more value on attracting experienced teachers and thus offer more generous salaries as a result. Research conducted in the UAE by Buckner (2017) found that salary is more strongly associated by teachers with the job than any other factor, such as workload. This gives rise to its importance as a push or pull factor.

Although disparities in pay exist between different nationalities, this does not deter some teachers of those nationalities who are paid on the lower end of the pay scale. School group CEOs justify these disparities as simple economics, referring to supply and demand as the cause. One CEO explained that British teachers are often paid more than Indian teachers because the demand for British teachers to deliver the UK curriculum is increasing while the supply is dwindling (Clarke 2016). However, in schools with the IB curriculum for instance this justification is not valid, as nationality is not connected to the curriculum. Nevertheless, these schools will adopt the same approach to save money on salary costs.

While the pay being offered to staff is often outside of the control of senior leaders within schools, these recommendations should be considered by Human Resource managers within these education groups. It is important to consider the value of the loss of institutional knowledge and the impact on relationships with students when staff members leave and reflect on this. It is equally important to compare the value of a rise in pay for a current teacher with the cost of recruitment, and which is better for the school in the long term.

5.1.3 Leadership

The study revealed the significant impact a school's senior leadership team has on a teacher and their intention to stay or leave that school. Leadership styles encountered by teachers were mixed but were significant nonetheless in the effect they had on teachers' desire to stay at a school. Features of transformational leadership, such as being adaptable and open-minded, and creating conditions in which teachers feel empowered were noted as positive elements of leaders that teachers in Dubai had encountered in their schools. However, elements that were lacking and causing frustration among teachers were the lack of communication and transparency from leaders to teachers and some autocratic leaders which did not allow for teacher's creativity or innovation. The impact of one's leadership style on teacher retention was explored by Alkhawaja (2017) in a study conducted in the US. This research found that transformational leadership resulted in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in employees, where people are influenced and inspired by their leaders and follow their vision. In a research study conducted in South Africa, there was a positive association between transformational leadership styles of principals and higher levels of teacher's well-being (Van der Vyver, Kok & Conley 2020, 98).

Aspects of transactional leadership appeared much more frequently in the data when teachers were asked to consider the leadership styles they had encountered, suggesting this is the default style of many school leaders in the UAE. Research supports the view that transformational leadership is more effective in motivating teachers in the long term rather than transactional leadership (Bass 2000). The question then needs to be asked why are school leaders not using more transformational style approaches? Transactional leadership is effective to a certain extent, being described as a superficial representation of commitment rather than a long-term motivational method (Williams 2018). When transformational leadership is used in conjunction with transactional leadership it has the most impactful results.

5.2 Research question 2: What organisational conditions influence teachers' job satisfaction?

5.2.1 Involvement in decision-making

The data generated showed a lack of teachers' involvement in decision-making in Dubai's private schools. This stemmed from autocratic leadership that existed in some schools, with teachers not being involved in decisions regarding curriculum and Professional Development. The lack of a teacher's voice in these decisions raises concerns. Firstly, teachers do not feel valued when they are not consulted on their professional judgment regarding important school decisions. Secondly, when teachers are not involved in making the decision, they are less likely to be committed to the change or goal which has an impact on its success and ultimately that of the organisation (Mawajdeh 2021, 10). Additionally, this impacts the teacher's overall commitment to the organisation and the subsequent impact on turnover (Lin 2014, 54).

However, it must be acknowledged that teachers need to be involved in decisions that actually have an influence, not merely decisions of a symbolic nature. Research shows that teachers' job satisfaction will decline if teachers perceive their involvement in the decision has been uninfluential (Rice & Schneider 1994). Furthermore, research cites involvement in decision-making as one of the main features of a trusting environment in schools (Harris, Davies, Christensen, Hanks & Bowles 2019). Senior management teams in schools in Dubai should then put in place specific strategies that can ensure teacher involvement in key school decisions. These strategies could include department meetings in which SLT attend to converse with teachers and gain their perspective on current issues within the school and suggested changes, as well as regular surveys sent to staff to assess their level of satisfaction concerning decision-making.

5.2.2 Career progression & Professional Development opportunities

This study distinguished professional advancement in careers to be vital to educators. However, although the majority of teachers regarded career progression

as important, not all of these teachers experienced the career progression that they desired. This led to feelings of dissatisfaction among some of these teachers in their current roles. In a research study conducted in Qatar, one of the most significant findings was the lack of career opportunities for teachers being one of the leading factors affecting the job satisfaction and retention of teachers in their schools (Abu-Tineh, Romanowski, Chaaban, Alkhatib, Ghamrawi & Alshaboul 2023, 9). Further research conducted in the United States identified the provision of enhanced career opportunities as a method to retain teachers in the profession by providing increased leadership opportunities within schools through mentoring new teachers and planning and delivering professional development sessions (Allen 2018, 242). Borman & Dowling (2008, 396) found that there were higher levels of teacher attrition among those teachers who were more experienced and were more skilled than their lesser-trained colleagues. This is problematic as it suggests that the education system is losing its most valuable teachers in terms of quality, which impacts student outcomes. Kelchtermans (2017, 972) noted the 'flat' career trajectory for teachers, with limited options for promotion aside from the role of Principal, and even then he regarded this as a role so different from teaching that it is more of a career switch rather than a promotion.

Although it is not practically possible for senior management to provide promotional opportunities to all staff simultaneously, it is important to offer valuable training and upskilling to teachers so they are intrinsically motivated. This upskilling needs to be of value to teachers and promote their growth in their career. Professional Development opportunities need to be personalised, differentiated, and timely (Rose & Sughrue 2020, 51). A one-size-fits-all approach will do little to impact a group of teachers with an array of skills and experience. Professional Development needs to address the daily challenges of teaching and be outcome-based, rather than be focused on an educational topic that may not be relevant to a school at a particular point in time (Williams 2012). From the evidence gathered on Dubai's private schools, this does not seem to be the case. The perception of the usefulness of Professional Development offered to teachers is quite low, and teachers are disappointed at the lack of upskilling being offered to them in their practice. In schools where Professional Development was spoken about positively, this was mostly due to the choice that teachers had of the training to participate in and what would personally benefit them the most. This provides

further evidence of the autonomy teachers should have in their Professional Development, having the choice of what to participate in and when. School leaders in Dubai should take note of this and provide varied programmes of Professional Development to teachers that will motivate and encourage their staff to learn and implement current educational theories into their practice.

5.2.3 Workload

The data presented workload as being a major issue currently among teachers in Dubai's private schools. Increasing expectations as well as a lack of time has led to teachers feeling dissatisfied in their jobs and has been a push factor for many to look for employment elsewhere. This is not an issue that is unique to Dubai. In a study conducted in the Netherlands, a country currently facing a severe teacher shortage, there was evidence found that relations between teachers and students worsened as teacher's workloads increased (Ouwehand, Xu, Meeuwisse, Severiens, Wijnia 2022, 9). In addition to this, research conducted in Pakistan reaffirmed the notion that a reduction in teacher's workloads has a positive impact on both teacher and student outcomes (Kanwal, Afzal & Rafiq 2023, 143). The impact of workload not only affects teacher's efficiency and feelings of job dissatisfaction but is also a significant factor in influencing one's decision to switch jobs or leave the teaching profession. Research conducted in Belgium identified new teacher's workloads as a contributing factor to them leaving the profession (Amitai & Van Houtte 2022).

With such significant impacts on teachers and the wider education system, it should then be a priority for senior leaders in schools to make efforts to lessen the workload of teachers. Particularly in the private school sector, senior management is often constrained in their efforts to hire more teachers by Boards of Directors who are focused on running schools with the aim of profit in mind. Indeed, in some public sector schools management can also face this same issue with budgetary measures in place by the government. Education in the UAE is being described as 'big business' with some private school groups being floated on the Dubai Financial Market for private equity firms to invest in (Khalid 2024). However, if the quality of teaching and learning begins to decline because of this

increasing workload and lack of time then the overall business suffers, and enrolment numbers may decrease in certain schools where this effect is most significant. Therefore, strategies should be put in place to support teachers with their workloads and create a calmer working environment in which teachers are satisfied in their roles.

5.3 Research question 3: What leadership and management strategies are effective at decreasing teacher turnover?

5.3.1 Providing support

It was evident from the data that support provided to teachers, whether from senior management, middle management, or colleagues, was instrumental in providing a good working environment for teachers and creating conditions in which staff felt satisfied in their roles and intended to stay in their schools as a result. This composition of support was varied, with common planning and collaboration time being high on teacher's priorities. Research conducted in the field corresponded with this data, with Smith and Ingersoll (2004, 693) finding that those who experienced mentoring support were more likely to report a positive school environment and remain working within that school. Further research suggests the pivotal role of the principal in retaining teachers, with claims that a teacher's decision to stay at a school depends upon the principal and their leadership at the school based on the level of support they provide (Brown & Wynn 2009, 45). This was in contrast with other research such as that conducted by (Hughes 2012, 253) who found that support from principals had a negligible impact on teachers' intentions to stay or leave a school, with support from parents and students having much more significance.

School leaders in Dubai must consider the calibre of their senior leadership teams, not only in their experience and skills but their personality traits also. Considering the significant role these senior leaders play in the tone they set for the school as well as the culture and working environment they create, these leaders must act appropriately to attract and retain teachers, which benefits the school in the long-term by retaining institutional knowledge and morale among staff. Lack of support regarding the behaviour of students leads to increased turnover

(Brown & Wynn 2009, 47). Although poor behaviour was not a problem that teachers encountered in the UAE, other elements of student behaviour such as absences and missed deadlines led to frustration on the part of teachers who needed support from management. Senior leaders must be putting strategies in place in schools to create a system that supports student attendance and timely submission of assessments.

5.3.2 Open communication

The data showed that communication was one of the areas in which senior leaders were most inefficient in Dubai's private schools. This led to dissatisfaction among teachers and made it difficult for them to carry out their roles effectively given the lack of transparency. Effective communication is essential if schools want to create a climate of shared vision, empowerment, and distributed leadership. Although the view of good principal leadership is broad and will vary among educators, research provides evidence of certain characteristics that teachers value in their leaders, one of which is clear communication of expectations regarding tasks and the expressive sharing of values (Scallon, Bristol & Esboldt 2023, 87). This value in open communication was further evidenced through a study conducted in Chicago, where teachers in low turnover schools were clearly communicated with regarding not only their teaching practice and lesson observations but also consulted with on the reasons behind why certain leadership decisions were taken (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, Easton 2010). This communication initiated support from the staff on the decisions taken and the changes implemented within the school because the reasons why the change had to occur were transparent as well as the vision, which is a key feature of Kotter's eight-step model for implementing successful change within an organisation (Finnie & Norris, 1997).

School leaders need to enact effective communication measures in their daily practice to ensure the success of the organisation. This includes being mindful of the composition of their staff body. Leading an international school where there are stakeholders of many different nationalities and of different mother tongues, senior leaders need to be cognisant that different communication methods may need to be used in order to ensure the effective receipt of a message. Language

barriers may exist, or how a message is conveyed may be interpreted differently based on cultural norms. Having an awareness of your staff and their preferences will be important in ensuring transparency and subsequently satisfaction.

5.3.3 Listen to teachers

“Listening to teachers” and *“valuing teacher’s opinion”* were phrases that appeared consistently in the survey and interviews when questions were posed to respondents about how management could improve their working environment and encourage them to stay working at their current schools. Research provides evidence that employees who are listened to within the workplace feel cared for and valued which in turn leads to them being more likely to stay within the organisation (Rave, Itzchakov, Weinstein, Reis 2023, 24235). This is supported by further research evaluating the impact of effective listening when negative emotions were shared and the subsequently reduced effect it had on turnover (Reynolds-Kueny and Shoss 2020, 474). Both of these studies referred to principals and senior management as being the ‘listeners’ and therefore had the most impact.

Actively listening to employee’s concerns and opinions builds a trusting relationship and increases job satisfaction while ensuring employees are more loyal to the organisation (Arshad 2023). However, having the capacity to listen to teachers and make them feel valued is indicative of the leadership style and personality traits of each senior leader. Nevertheless, the benefits for the organisation are clear in having a democratic leader who focuses on two-way conversations. When senior leaders engage with teachers they will gain an understanding of their perspectives of the school and their work and potential areas for concern (Goe et al 2020, 13). Given that increasing workloads and lack of time are significant concerns for teachers working in Dubai’s private international schools, it would be beneficial to gain teachers’ insight into how to solve these problems to make for a better working environment, thus decreasing turnover within these schools.

5.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

To further enhance the reliability of the data, a greater sample size could have been used. A sample size of 66 respondents is not representative of the broader population of teachers, given that there were over 20,000 teachers working in private international schools in Dubai as of 2020 (KHDA 2020). More respondents would have allowed for a greater analysis of issues present within Dubai's private schools and more comparisons to be made between schools. To achieve a larger sample size, the survey could have been kept open for a longer period of time, and further reminders could have been sent approaching the closing deadline.

A greater sample size would also have ensured a wider demographic of people answering the survey. Only 9% of respondents were aged 50 and above, and therefore the perspectives of this group were limited given the small data set. Presumably, these respondents have more experience teaching than a younger cohort, and a targeted analysis of this group may have revealed further insight into recent changes within the education system that has left them feeling satisfied or dissatisfied with their current roles.

All respondents answering the survey had to enter their school email ID in order to be verified as teachers working in private international schools in Dubai. This may have led to some participants feeling uncomfortable answering some of the questions, particularly relating to their school leadership, because of fear of any confidentiality constraints and subsequent retaliation from employers. Other potential respondents were deterred from participating in the survey because of the obligation to enter a school email ID. This could have been mitigated by further reassurance regarding the anonymity and confidentiality of the data gathered.

The study focused primarily on teachers' perspectives with regard to the impact of leadership and organisational conditions in relation to teacher turnover in Dubai. However, there are a multitude of other factors that may potentially be influencing these turnover trends which were not within the scope of this thesis. Students and parents are significant stakeholders within any school system and will influence teachers' job satisfaction levels. A future study may include the impact

of parental involvement as well as student profiles and their behaviour in relation to teacher turnover.

Another recommendation to be made for further research into this topic of teacher turnover is to compare and assess the impacts of middle management versus senior management. Data gathered in this thesis alluded to the positive influence of middle managers on some teachers while senior leaders were held in higher regard for others. A comparative analysis of these roles and their impact on motivating staff would allow schools to evaluate the usefulness of middle leaders and calculate whether further investment in this area would be of value to the school.

Finally, further studies should consider the use of methods to measure leadership behaviour other than the leadership styles and leadership practices explored in this thesis. Kouzes and Posner's leadership challenge model (2000) was used as the basis for which leadership practices of Dubai's senior leaders were compared. Other methods and theories should be considered to explore further leadership behaviour and its impact on teacher turnover.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey Questionnaire – Background information

Survey on teacher turnover in the UAE

This survey is being conducted as part of a thesis investigating the factors influencing teacher turnover in private international schools in the UAE. The research is being conducted as part of the Masters of Business Administration in Educational Leadership at Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland.

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If for any reason you wish to do so, your data can also be withdrawn from the study at a later date. The data collected will be used purely for the purpose of academic research and participant's identity will not be revealed. A valid school email address is required to verify the participant's identity as a teacher in the UAE and therefore validate the research. This email ID will not be used for any other purpose or shared with anyone. There is an option at the end of the survey to provide your contact details if you are willing to participate in a follow up interview, but this is entirely voluntary. All contact details will be destroyed following completion of the data collection phase.

The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the survey, please feel free to contact me at niamb.byrces@tuni.fi.

Section 1

...

Background information

1. What age are you? *

- 18-25
- 26-33
- 34-41
- 42-49
- 50-57
- 58-65
- 66+

2. What is your gender? *

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

3. What is your nationality? *

Enter your answer

4. What grade level do you teach? *

- Pre KG/KG
- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Other

5. How many years teaching experience do you have? *

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- More than 20 years

6. How many years of teaching experience do you have in the UAE? *

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- More than 20 years

7. How many years have you been working at your current school? *

- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-10
- More than 10 years

8. What is your highest level of qualification? *

- Bachelors
- PGCE/PME
- Masters
- PhD

9. What is your role and position in your current school? *

Enter your answer

10. Do you intend to stay at your current school for the next academic year? (Year beginning September) *

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

11. Why do you intend to stay/not stay at your current school? *

Enter your answer

12. Please provide your school email ID (This will only be used to verify your identity as a teacher in Dubai and for contact purposes for a follow-up interview, should you consent to participate. Your school will not be contacted). *

Enter your answer

Appendix 2. Survey Questionnaire – Basic needs satisfaction section

Basic needs satisfaction

13. I feel I have freedom to make decisions in my work. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. I feel like I am competent in my work. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

15. People at work tell me I am good at what I do. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16. I feel pressured at work *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

17. I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. I have been able to learn interesting new skills in my job. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

19. When I am at work, I have to do what I am told. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

20. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from my job. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

21. My feelings are taken into consideration at work. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

22. In my job, I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

23. There are not many people in work that I am close to. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

24. The working culture of schools in the UAE is better than in my home country. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

25. In your opinion, what is the most significant motivator for you at work? *

Enter your answer

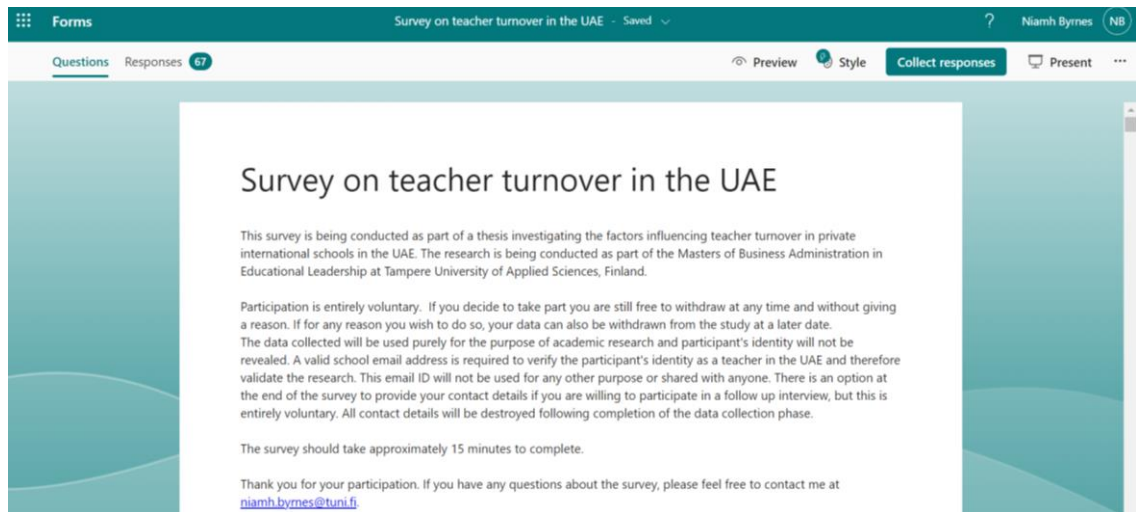
26. In relation to Question 25, is this motivator present for you at your current school? *

- Yes
- No

27. In your opinion, what provides you with most job satisfaction? *

Enter your answer

Appendix 3. Evidence of the number of respondents



The image shows a screenshot of a survey form interface. At the top, there is a teal header bar with the text "Forms" on the left, "Survey on teacher turnover in the UAE · Saved" in the center, and a user profile "Niamh Byrnes" with initials "NB" on the right. Below the header, there is a navigation bar with "Questions" and "Responses 67" on the left, and "Preview", "Style", "Collect responses", and "Present" on the right. The main content area has a teal background with a white central box containing the following text:

Survey on teacher turnover in the UAE

This survey is being conducted as part of a thesis investigating the factors influencing teacher turnover in private international schools in the UAE. The research is being conducted as part of the Masters of Business Administration in Educational Leadership at Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland.

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If for any reason you wish to do so, your data can also be withdrawn from the study at a later date. The data collected will be used purely for the purpose of academic research and participant's identity will not be revealed. A valid school email address is required to verify the participant's identity as a teacher in the UAE and therefore validate the research. This email ID will not be used for any other purpose or shared with anyone. There is an option at the end of the survey to provide your contact details if you are willing to participate in a follow up interview, but this is entirely voluntary. All contact details will be destroyed following completion of the data collection phase.

The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the survey, please feel free to contact me at niamh.byrnes@tuni.fi.

Appendix 4. Semi-structured interview questions

Briefing

Good morning. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this follow-up interview as part of research being conducted on teacher turnover in private international schools in the UAE. This research is solely for the purposes of a thesis being conducted for a Masters of Educational Leadership course provided by Tampere University of Applied Sciences in Finland. The interview will be recorded and transcribed for the research purposes. All personal information will be made anonymous and will be destroyed upon verification of the transcript.

Introduction

- What are the main factors that would attract you to another job?
- What are the main factors that would influence you to leave this job?
- What do you think are some of the main reasons people stay/leave your school?

Organisational conditions

- How would you describe the culture of your school? To what extent do you feel supported?
- Do you have autonomy in your work? Why do you feel this way?
- To what extent is professional development effective at your school? Does this impact your motivation?
- Describe the working environment and workload expectations. To what extent is the workload realistic?

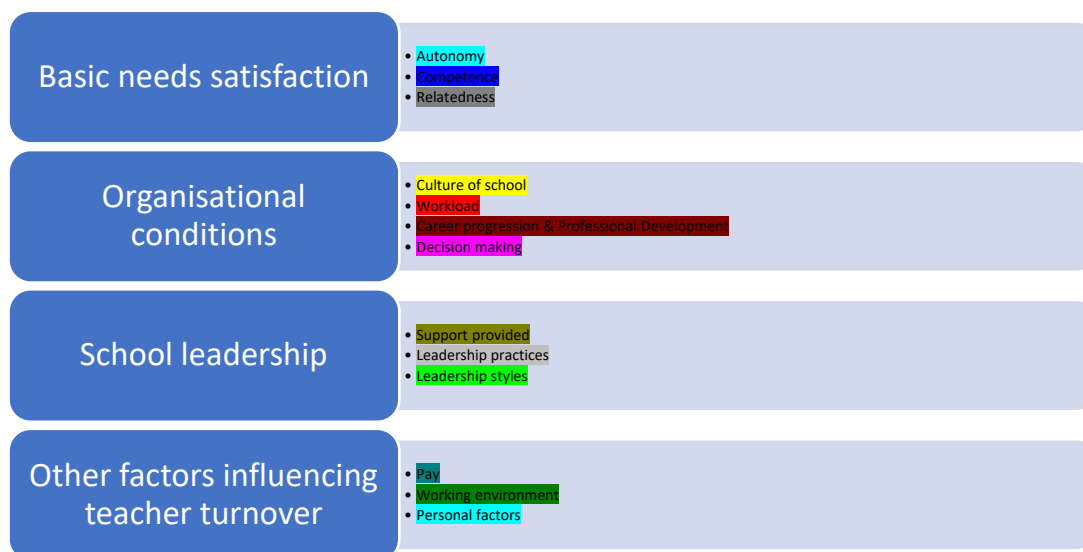
School leadership

- Describe the current leadership style at your school. How does this impact on your motivation?
- What support does the school leadership provide you with?
- What strategies could school leadership implement to improve your job satisfaction?
- Have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession? If so, why?

Other factors

- What would you consider to be the biggest motivator for you to move schools?
- To what extent does turnover impact your school and the staff?

Appendix 5. Examples of qualitative thematic analysis



Q. Describe the current leadership style at your school. How does this impact on your motivation?

A. Currently, there is a democratic leadership style. I feel comfortable in giving my opinions and suggestions to SLT which was not always the case with previous management. There is an open-door policy to communicate concerns and management actively encourage staff to take the lead on initiatives around the school which makes us feel trusted. Teachers are also asked their opinions on decisions to be taken which leads to a good working culture. I do feel supported in my day to day work but equally I worry about the heavy workload which leads to me becoming stressed and sometimes demotivated. I have started a new role recently for which I have received no training which again demotivates me. Although I am very satisfied with the career opportunities being afforded to me I feel I can't do a great job with my current limited skill set.

Q. Can you explain some reasons why there is a high turnover at your school?

A. Many excellent teachers are leaving our school because of pay, turnover has definitely increased in the past 2-3 years because of pay. Its also unjustified because enrolment numbers are higher than ever leading to a bigger student to teacher ratio which increases our workload. However it is not always easy for people to risk leaving because they have children settled in the school and so they stick it out. Although we have a close knit staff and I am grateful for such kind colleagues, there is a stressful working environment present as everyone is just so busy all of the time.