

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The rapidly rising demand for an 'international education', has meant that teachers now have the opportunity to work in virtually every country of the world. Potential overseas-hire (OSH) teachers are often offered lucrative contracts to entice them to leave their national systems and seek employment in an 'international school' abroad. However, the process of adjustment that expatriate employees inevitably experience following their international relocation is often fraught with stress, anxiety and disorientation, which can impact upon their ability to work effectively.

International schools are characterised by a high turnover of OSH staff, which is detrimental to organisational effectiveness and disruptive to student learning. Understanding the perceptions and experiences of OSH teachers is a critical first step towards developing strategies that encourage higher levels of retention in international schools. This understanding will enable the managers of these institutions to provide conditions conducive to the cross-cultural adjustment and job satisfaction of their foreign teachers, thereby increasing the likelihood that these teachers will be retained beyond their initial contracts.

Context of Study Involving International Schools

In a world where national boundaries are eroding, and global flows of information, people and ideas are intensifying (Appadurai 1993), international schools are becoming an increasingly influential educational context. These schools have emerged in response to a demand for education that meets the special requirements of

globally mobile families and that prepare local and expatriate students for a globalised world in which ‘international-mindedness’ and ‘global citizenship’ are becoming increasingly marketable attributes (Cambridge 2002a). Leading educational sociologist, Dr. Carlos Alberto Torres, recently stated in an interview, “a truly international education is the way to work towards a better world” (2008: 11). Such perceptions of international education have led to “a staggering demand” (Greenlees 2006 online) for international schooling and, consequently, a substantial increase in overseas job opportunities for teachers.

Recent years have seen an unprecedented growth in the number of institutions promoting themselves as ‘international schools’ – from around 50 schools in the early 1960s, to 1082 in the late 1990s (Cambridge & Thompson 2004: 161), to 3700 in 2007 (Wigford 2007: 2). The exponential growth in international schooling is expected to continue; International Schools Consultancy Research has predicted that the number of international schools worldwide will rise to “well over” 5000 by 2012 (Wigford 2007: 2).

According to Hayden and Thomson (1998a: 551), it is only relatively recently that research has directly addressed the context of international schools. More specifically, Canterford (2003: 48) alluded to the dearth of literature relating to teachers in international schools, suggesting, “the focus thus far has been to concentrate on the methods used to recruit teachers to the various establishments, rather than on what happens once they arrive.” This view is supported by Millican (2000 quoted in Canterford 2003: 48) who highlights the need for more research into experiences of international school teachers:

In the sparse literature of international school education, little attention has been paid to the teaching staff; and yet, in the absence of any commonly defined methodology or administrative system, only the shared characteristics of the faculties can give any coherence to the functioning of the disparate schools.

Participating Schools

The proposed research will be conducted with OSH teachers working in five international schools in a Latin American country. The Directory of International and English Schools Worldwide (2008 online) currently lists eleven international schools in this country, however only five of these colleges have a policy of contracting OSH teachers from abroad. Banfi and Day (2004: 400) describe the growth in international and bilingual colleges in this Latin American country, and attribute the increasing popularity of these institutions to the “foreign curriculum, delivered in a foreign language”, which indicates the main reason why these schools seek a market advantage through recruiting OSH teachers.

Many ‘international’ schools of this Latin American country are comprised largely of affluent home country students, a trend Lowe (1999) found in other developing countries across the world. International school populations in some parts of the world can be comprised of up to 90% of local students (Yamato 2003: 23). This is the case in all but one of the international schools in this Latin American country. In addition, Latin America is one of the few regions of the world in which local teaching staff outnumber OSH staff within international schools (Canterford 2003: 51).

Research Problem

International schools invest heavily in OSH staff. This significant cost is pronounced in developing countries, where resources may be scarce and local teaching salaries low. Therefore, it is in the best interest of international schools to protect this investment, by developing strategies which recognise that OSH teachers are often susceptible to very different stresses and threats to their job satisfaction than home-based teaching professionals.

Research has consistently reported the positive impact of effective classroom teachers upon student attainment (Hill, Rowan & Loewenberg Ball 2005; Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain 2005; Rockoff 2004; Ross, Stringfield, Sanders & Wright 2003; Wright, Horn & Sanders 1997), and that high teacher turnover is detrimental to student performance (Elfers, Plecki, & Knapp 2006; Ingersoll & Smith 2003). International schools experience a level of teacher turnover that has been described as “debilitating” (Bunnell 2006: 388). The rapid turnover of quality OSH teachers, Hardman (2001: 125) argues, creates a “vacuum which replacements can never fill entirely”, and consequently compromises student learning. Such findings emphasise the need for international schools to recruit, develop and retain quality OSH staff, in order to achieve excellence in educational provision.

In addition to a negative correlation with student learning, excessive teacher turnover generates significant institutional costs, in terms of time, money, and also organisational effectiveness. The financial cost to an organisation of replacing a worker has been estimated to be approximately 50-60 per cent of the worker’s annual salary (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee 2001: 97). These costs are far higher for international

employees, who produce additional turnover costs including: the cost of interviewing abroad; shipping; 'settling-in' allowances; air travel; immigration processes and the establishment of rental accommodation contracts. Concomitant to the financial burden is the time required by administrators to recruit new teachers and facilitate their transition to a new work environment. A new employee may need up to one year to adjust and work at their previous level of productivity in a new workplace (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee 2001: 96), and this period is likely to be even longer for an employee who has been relocated internationally. The considerable costs highlight the need for international schools to encourage talented educators to extend their stay beyond their initial two or three year contracts.

The negative consequences of high levels of teacher turnover within an institution also extend to organisational effectiveness. According to Ingersoll (2001a: 505), the inability of schools to retain teachers is worrying not only because this "may be an indicator of sites of potential staff problems, but because of its relationship to school cohesion and, in turn, performance." When teachers leave schools, they take with them valuable knowledge and expertise, and this loss of social capital is difficult to replace immediately, as newcomers need time to adapt and adjust. Furthermore, excessive employee turnover reduces "organisational memory" (Walsh & Ungson 1991), therefore impairing the organisation's capacity to reflect, learn and grow.

A perceived crisis in the recruitment of teachers for international schools further reinforces the importance of retaining quality OSH teachers. Literature from the field of International Human Resource Management indicates a decline in the willingness of individuals to accept posts abroad and "increasing signs" that there are barriers to

the global mobility of employees; one significant obstacle being the prevalence of dual career couples (Harzing 2004: 266). This phenomenon appears to be affecting the international education context as leaders of international schools are expressing concerns that there are “just not as many good quality applicants for vacant positions as there used to be” (Wigford 2007: 3). The principal of International School Bangkok, Dr. Bill Gerritz (2007 online) outlines similar concerns:

Perhaps you believe as I do that learning is all about the quality of our teachers. We all know that around the world the number of international schools is growing rapidly and the pool of available teachers is not. If we want to staff our schools with excellent teachers as we have in the past, how will we attract, support and develop them?

Statement of Research Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of OSH teachers in relation to their experiences in international schools. More specifically, it is the purpose of this research to provide insight into conditions that encourage the likelihood of retention of OSH teachers in international schools. Through a grounded theory approach, this study will explore the following questions:

What factors impinge upon the job satisfaction of OSH teachers?

Which are the conditions that facilitate improved rates of retention of OSH teachers in international schools?

The study seeks to provide a basis for international school leaders to develop and implement strategies designed to improve the quality of OSH teachers’ professional lives and also the likelihood of their retention.

Significance of the Study

The high turnover of teachers in international schools is a phenomenon that warrants significant attention from researchers, as previous research has consistently reported that high levels of teacher turnover “are both cause and effect [sic] of dysfunction and low performance in education” (Ingersoll 2001b: 7). The current research study represents a valuable contribution to the field because, according to Maertz and Campion (1998), the identification of determinants of turnover intention in an organisation is fundamental to any intervention aimed at increasing levels of employee retention.

Despite the fact that the high rate of employee turnover in international schools has been identified as a significant concern (Cambridge 1998; Hardman 2001), there is “insufficient attention paid to teachers in the international school literature” (Bunnell 2006: 387). The small body of literature regarding staff turnover that does exist has been largely quantitative in nature (Hardman 2001; Odland & Ruzicka 2009). The current research study moves beyond the quantitative conclusions of previous research, to explore and communicate the perceptions and subjective experiences of OSH teachers working in international schools, thereby making a unique contribution to the area of investigation.

Another of the ways this study provides fresh insight into the turnover intention of OSH teachers in international schools is through a careful consideration of job satisfaction. An important reason for examining the job satisfaction of these teachers is that employees’ positive and negative attitudes towards their work exert a powerful influence on organisational effectiveness (Malhotra & Mukherjee 2004; Wilson &

Rosenfeld 1990). Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to stay in organisations and those who are not, often leave (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee 2001: 97). International schools will benefit from a consideration of factors impinging upon the job satisfaction of OSH teachers, as teacher job satisfaction has been inextricably linked to organisational commitment and teacher retention (Shann 1998: 67). From an organisational perspective, understanding the factors associated with job satisfaction is an essential element of developing teacher retention strategies. The correlation between a stable staff of satisfied, committed teachers and school performance clearly indicates the need for international schools to create and implement strategies that encourage OSH teachers to stay in their schools for longer periods of time.

International schools have become an increasingly important educational context, providing stability and continuity for globally mobile families. Indeed, for some students, the school “represents the only stable environment ... the international school and its microcosm, the classroom is their community” (Akram 1995 quoted in Hardman 2001: 123). The term ‘global nomad’ refers to a student who has “lived a significant part of his or her developmental years in one or more countries outside his or her passport country because of a parent’s occupation” (Schaetti 1998: 13). For these students the numerous benefits of this experience are often accompanied by a sense of grief and loss (Dixon & Hayden 2008; McLachlan 2007), including the loss of relationships and role models. A high level of teacher turnover in international schools can exacerbate the feelings of loss and insecurity experienced by ‘global nomads’. International schools must seek to retain quality international educators, as

these teachers are an integral component of the provision of a stable and consistent environment that meets the unique needs of internationally mobile students.

According to Ruhland (2001 para. 6), “turnover is costly to any organisation, and it is far more cost effective to retain teachers than to hire”. This organisational wisdom reinforces the importance for international schools to develop induction and training¹ programmes that facilitate the adjustment of OSH teachers to their new environments, therefore making retention more likely. Snowball (2007: 247) highlights the fact that most university training prepares teachers only for their national education systems, and undergraduates receive little preparation for teaching in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, Joslin (2002: 34) asserts:

unlike international companies where personnel ... are given pre-departure cross-cultural training and orientation programmes, teachers choose to apply for a post overseas and it remains the teacher's responsibility to ensure they are well prepared for the task.

Tertiary education will have a significant role in preparing graduates for a career in the increasingly important context of international education (Wigford 2007: 3). By describing the adjustment challenges perceived by OSH teachers, this study will provide direction for universities and international schools in the development of effective training programmes for international educators.

In addition, this study is highly pertinent for OSH teachers themselves, as it enables these individuals to assume a level of responsibility for developing realistic expectations and a metacognitive appreciation of the processes which may affect their experience.

¹ While not a popular term in the context of education, professional development opportunities are sometimes referred to in this thesis as ‘training’, reflecting the preferred term in the literature of Human Resource Management.

Definition of Terms

International schools are defined by Hayden and Thompson (1995: 13) as a “conglomeration of individual institutions which may or may not share an underlying educational philosophy”. In the absence of an accepted definition for international schools, they will be referred to as educational institutions offering an internationally recognised programme of study, such as the International Baccalaureate or the Cambridge international examinations (Cambridge 2002a; Lowe 1999), and that employ teachers recruited from overseas countries.

Overseas-hire (OSH) teachers are international school employees with timetabled teaching loads, who are not native citizens of the host country, and who receive a preferential employment contract, often including a substantially higher salary than local teachers in the school (Richards 1998; Tamatea 2008).

Job satisfaction refers to a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from self appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke 1976: 1297).

Teacher turnover, for the purpose of this research, will focus on voluntary turnover, defined as the movement of teachers across the membership boundary of an international school, which is initiated by the teacher (Gaertner 1999: 480).

Turnover intention is a teacher’s idea of leaving their current school or post (Mobley 1978) and the process of reflection and decision-making preceding voluntary turnover (Sager, Griffeth & Hom 1998).

Retention in this study refers both to a systematic effort by an international school to ensure OSH teachers remain in their posts for an optimal period of time, through policy and practice that creates and encourages a desirable work environment; and also to the decision made by OSH teachers to renew their employment contract at the expiration of a contract.

Summary and Conclusions

Despite the rapid expansion of the international school industry, the professional experience of OSH teachers in international schools is an area of research that has received little scholarly attention. International schools are often characterised by an extremely high turnover of OSH teachers, and very little is known about the determinants of this phenomenon. Excessive turnover is costly to institutions, both financially and in terms of institutional effectiveness. The following research study, therefore, is exploratory and expository in nature and aims to provide an initial understanding of factors impinging upon the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers in international schools.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Despite the increasing number of expatriate teachers serving in foreign locations, authors have commented on the paucity of existing research into the professional lives of those working in international schools (Bunnell 2005; Canterford 2003; Hayden & Thompson 1998a; Richardson, von Kirchenheim & Richardson 2006). Due to the dearth of literature pertaining specifically to the experiences of OSH teachers in international schools, the following literature review draws upon research from a range of disciplines.

The chapter begins with a consideration of the much-disputed role of the literature review in grounded theory studies. A detailed description of grounded theory and the application of this research approach to the current study will be provided in Chapter 3.

The review of literature focuses initially on the small body of literature relating to international schools and the people who work within these institutions, and broadens to examine theories of job satisfaction and past research into the job satisfaction of teachers in national education contexts. The chapter also includes a consideration of literature from the field of International Human Resource Management relating to the expatriation of employees. Finally, the chapter concludes with a review of studies into teacher turnover and retention, and the few recent studies that have been conducted into teacher turnover within an international school context.

Using the Literature in Grounded Theory Studies

The extent to which a grounded theorist should be familiar with extant literature before entering the field remains a highly contentious issue (Charmaz 2006; Hesse-Biber 2007). The creators of grounded theory, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967: 37), called for researchers to initially “ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated”. However, later work by Corbin and Strauss (2008: 37) indicates that the inductive properties of grounded theory may have been formerly overstated and these authors suggest that while the “researcher does not want to enter the field with an entire list of concepts ... familiarity with the relevant literature can enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances in the data”. Suddaby (2006: 634) argues that the idea that reasonable research can occur without an awareness of relevant theory “defies logic”.

Suddaby (2006: 635) and Charmaz (2006: 166) advocate adopting a middle-ground approach, in which the researcher is aware of extant literature, but is continuously alert to the possibility of being influenced by pre-existing conceptualisations of the research topic. For the current research project an initial literature review was conducted to elicit ‘sensitising concepts’, to provide “initial ideas to pursue” (Charmaz 2006: 16) and also to guide the formulation of questions for early interviews (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 37). The following detailed literature review was compiled throughout data collection and analysis, and allowed me to examine emerging concepts for similarities and differences with extant literature.

International Schools

Interest in the field of international schooling is presently more intense than ever before. Greenlees (2006 para. 4) discusses the “global phenomenon” of the enormous and “rapidly rising demand for international education”. This exponential and largely “ad hoc” (Hayden 1998: 3) growth has been identified as a critical problem for the management of development planning in these schools (Leggate & Thompson 1997).

The commonly accepted origin of the modern era of ‘international schooling’ is 1924, with the opening of the International School of Geneva (Hayden 1998; Walker 2000). However, the term ‘international school’ was proposed as early as the 1860s and has been in continuous use since this time (Sylvester 2007). In an article entitled ‘International Education’, novelist Charles Dickens argued in favour of a style of education that would prepare students for global citizenship, and provide continuity and stability for globally mobile individuals:

The plan is to establish in the different countries of Europe a series of international and corresponding schools for middle and upper classes, which will enable a boy during the course of liberal and general education, to acquire thoroughly several modern languages, each being learned with the others, among fellows of all nations, in the land where it is spoken. The arrangement of classes and method of study being precisely the same in each international school ... so that pupils passing from one language and nation to another would find no notable change in the course of study to retard the progress of their education (1864 quoted in Sylvester 2002: 8).

Despite the rapid expansion of institutes promoting themselves as ‘international schools’ in the 150 years since Dickens’ article, little has changed regarding the perceived role of international schooling. Crossley and Watson (2003: 14) identify the purposes of international schools as the preparation of students “for employment

anywhere in the world” and to encourage “an understanding of different cultures, as well as good relations with people of different nationalities and languages”.

While international schools may be united to some extent by purpose, a review of international education literature fails to provide a definitive answer to the question, ‘What is an international school?’ (Blanford & Shaw 2001; Bunnell 2007; Hayden 2007; Hayden & Thompsom 2000; Leggate & Thompson 1997; MacDonald 2006). An institution is not required to fulfil any specific criteria to adopt the label ‘international school’, therefore, as Welton (2001: 96) explains, “international schools are heterogeneous in type and origin.” Hayden (2007: 223) acknowledges this lack of uniformity, explaining that an institution may describe itself as an international school for a range of reasons, “including the nature of the student population, the nature of the curriculum offered, marketing and competition with other schools in the area, and the school’s overall ethos or mission.”

The literature does, however, identify some of the similarities that these disparate institutions share. Institutions promoting themselves as ‘international schools’ are usually private and fee-paying (Hayden 2007), employ staff from a mixture of cultural backgrounds and provide consistency in education for globally mobile students or local elite seeking a globally recognised educational qualification (Lowe 1999; Yamato 2003). In order to prepare students for study in foreign universities, these schools usually offer either an international programme of study, or a national programme other than that of the country in which the school is situated (Cambridge 2002a; Lowe 1999).

International School Teachers

Teachers play an influential role in the lives of their students. This sentiment is echoed by Rowe (2003: 1) who states, “the quality of teaching and learning provision are by far the most salient influences on students’ cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes of schooling”. Given the rapidly expanding context of international education, and the relationship between quality teachers and effective schools, the experiences of staff in international schools should be an important area for academic scholarship. However, according to Bunnell (2006: 481) there is a lack of published research available investigating the “industrial sociology” of international schools. This claim is supported by Richardson, von Kirchenheim and Richardson (2006: 884) who state that there exists “very little published research devoted exclusively to the study of educators serving in foreign destinations.”

Three distinct groups of international school teachers have been identified by Canterford (2003: 49):

1. Host country nationals
2. Local-hire expatriates
3. Overseas-hire expatriates

International school staff rooms are ‘melting pots’ of the global and the local as many of these institutions employ both expatriate and host country national teachers. It is the third group identified by Canterford; those teaching professionals contracted from abroad to work in foreign international schools, who will be the focus of this study.

Cambridge (2002b: 159) discusses the 'tripartite' organisational structure of staff in international schools, consisting of: an administrative core (head or principal who could be a business manager, and deputies); a fringe of OSH teachers, usually hired on relatively lucrative two or three year contracts; and local staff, who receive lower rates of remuneration, and are likely to be longer term employees. Teachers in many international schools are required to work within this two-tier system of remuneration, with highly paid expatriates working alongside significantly lower paid local counterparts, which can be a source of division and resentment within the organisational culture of these institutions (Tamatea 2008: 69). Richards (1998: 178) identifies the differentiated salary scale as one of "the most contentious issues in international schools" and questions to what extent such practice is congruous with the egalitarian mission statements marketed by international schools.

The increasing popularity of international schools has clear implications for the teaching profession. Educational institutions worldwide are now actively recruiting the services of English-speaking, university trained teachers under the assumption that the presence of these professionals increases opportunities for students to successfully compete in a globalised, borderless world (von Kirchenheim & Richardson 2005: 407). There are approximately 75 000 British teachers alone employed by international schools abroad (which is equivalent to 14% of teachers currently working in the British national system), and over the next four years this number is expected to rise a further 54% (Sheppard 2009: para. 3).

The overwhelming majority of OSH teachers are from Western nations. Sutcliffe (1991 quoted in Richards 1998: 175) notes, "Most teachers on the international circuit

are ... either British or American". Richards (1998: 178) attributes this disproportional recruiting trend to market demand. Furthermore, it has been suggested that international programmes of study are dominated by Western thought and epistemology (Bartlett 1998; Blaney 2000; van Oord 2003); therefore, those educationalists trained in Anglophone cultures are often perceived as the most capable of delivering these prestigious programmes of study (Canterford 2003). In the highly competitive international school market, hiring teachers from Western nations offers institutions a comparative advantage in the field. According to Fenwick (2004: 308) it is "through having human resources which are rare, valuable, and difficult to imitate or replace" that organisations increase market competitiveness. In the case of international schools, native English-speaking, Western-trained educational professionals are perceived as providing a market advantage.

An overseas teaching post can offer financial, professional and travel opportunities for a teacher (Broman 2004). A study by Walsh (1999 cited in Canterford 2003: 59) revealed that teachers considering an overseas appointment were primarily attracted to "employment in a location that offered a particular lifestyle, quality of life, financial considerations, generous holidays, the ability to travel and the excitement of living in a foreign country". In return for their specialised skills and mobility, international school teachers are often amply rewarded with some or all of the following incentives: highly competitive salaries, annual bonuses, free or subsidised education for children, housing, working opportunities for spouses, retirement schemes, health insurance and annual air travel to their home country (Hardman 2001: 124).

Cambridge (2002b: 162) identifies the need “for a globally mobile workforce of teachers who are experienced and qualified to provide for the globally branded service offered by international schools”. However, the literature indicates that few OSH teachers have received any formal preparation for a role in an international schools, and any training specific to the context of working in international schools that is received tends to be ‘on the job’ (Deveney 2007). Relatively few teacher training programmes around the world reflect the demand for teachers who are qualified to work in culturally diverse classrooms (Levy 2007; Snowball 2007; Thomas 2000). Therefore many of the increasing number of teachers working abroad may not automatically possess the specialised skills and experience required to adjust to a new post in an international school setting. Snowball (2007: 254) questions:

In both international and national systems around the world, schools and education authorities emphasise international ideals for their students. They use terminology such as ‘contributing responsibly in a global community’, ‘becoming an integral part of our diverse multicultural society’, and ‘education for international understanding’. Yet how can schools and governments hope to fulfil such missions when many of the teachers they hire have little preparation in the key elements of internationalism?

Theories of Job Satisfaction

Locke’s (1976: 1297) definition of job satisfaction as the “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from self appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” remains widely accepted in the field of human resource management. An inextricable relationship exists between job satisfaction and employee turnover, and any effort to increase levels of retention within an organisation is likely to benefit from an investigation into the job satisfaction of employees. Previous studies (Arnold & Feldman 1982; Cotton & Tuttle 1986; Gruneberg 1976; Mattox 1974) have revealed that dissatisfied employees are more likely to leave an organisation. The relationship

between job satisfaction, organisational commitment and voluntary turnover of staff has been “firmly established though numerous Meta-Analyses” (Gaertner 1999: 480). Educational research has also demonstrated the link between job satisfaction and teacher turnover (Bogler 2002; Houchins, Shippen & Cattret 2004; Koustelios 2001; Rhodes, Nevill & Allan 2004; Shann 1998). These findings suggest important implications for research concerning teacher retention, as Stockard and Lehman (2004: 762) argue, “it is important to look at both satisfaction and retention. Satisfaction is strongly related to retention intentions and decisions”. Therefore, an investigation into the job satisfaction of OSH teachers is crucial to understanding the reasons why these teachers choose to stay in, or leave, their posts.

Theories of job satisfaction can be divided into two major categories: content and process theories. Content theories of job satisfaction specify the needs and values of an individual that must be fulfilled in order for the individual to be satisfied at work. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1954), Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman 1959) and Alderfer’s (1969) Existence-Relatedness Growth Theory are three examples of widely recognised content theories of job satisfaction. Process theories, on the other hand, emphasise that there are differences between individuals’ needs and seek to understand the cognitive processes that determine an employee’s level of motivation (Ramatulassamma & Bhaskara Rao 2003: 16). Examples of typical process theories are Adams’ Equity Theory (1965) and Locke’s Value Theory (1976).

Content Theories of Job Satisfaction

Research interest in the job satisfaction of employees emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, with Abraham Maslow's publication, *Motivation and Personality* in 1954. Maslow is considered a pioneer in highlighting the need to provide employees with a motivating work environment, and his work was pivotal in emphasising the importance of human resources for successful workplaces. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1954) identifies five general groups of human needs, and proposes that these needs can be arranged in the following hierarchical order: physical, security, social, self-esteem and self-actualisation. According to Maslow's theory, the higher order needs of self-esteem and self-actualisation can only be realised after lower order needs have been satisfied.

Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Theory (1954) has important implications for the workplace. When the basic physical human needs of food, shelter and clothing are fulfilled, the higher order need of security will emerge. For employees this will often imply financial and job security. If the need for security is satisfied, individuals will seek a sense of belonging and social acceptance, and the absence of these conditions at work may lead to loneliness, depression and antagonism, which can inhibit efficiency and productivity. Maslow's two higher order needs are particularly pertinent in the workplace. Human beings have a need for recognition and respect, in order to experience self-esteem. The deprivation of this need can lead to reduced self-efficacy. Finally, the highest level of the needs hierarchy is self-actualisation, which is the desire to realise one's own potential and it is this need that motivates an employee to perform productively if all other needs have been satisfied (Maslow 1954).

Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) continued to refine the Needs Theory by positing a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic needs. Their Motivation-Hygiene theory is one of the most used and widely accepted theories of job satisfaction (DeShields, Kara & Kaynak 2005: 131). Herzberg and his colleagues developed a model identifying: (i) motivational factors, which, if present, contribute to job satisfaction and (ii) hygiene factors, which if absent, contribute to job dissatisfaction. Motivators or 'satisfiers' include: achievement, advancement, possibility of growth, recognition of achievement, responsibility and the work itself, corresponding with Maslow's (1954) higher order needs. Hygienes, also referred to as 'dissatisfiers', can be associated with Maslow's (1954) lower order needs, and consist of: interpersonal relationships, job security, personal life, policy and administration, salary, status, supervision and working conditions. On the basis of the research Herzberg et al. (1959) postulated that intrinsic factors (motivators) are responsible for job satisfaction, however, their absence will not result in dissatisfaction. Extrinsic factors (hygiene factors) will result in dissatisfaction if absent, but will not provide job satisfaction if present.

Although the work of Herzberg et al. (1959) has been criticised on the grounds that the "two-factor structure could not be replicated with other methodological procedures" (Hertel & Wittchen 2008: 34), much research into the job satisfaction of teachers supports the Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Dinham & Scott 2000; Evans 1999: 12; Sergiovanni 1967). Owens (1995 quoted in Dinham and Scott 1997: 363) acknowledges the criticisms of Herzberg's work, but argues, "Herzberg's research –

after exhaustive review in the literature over a period of two decades – must be accepted as representing state of the art.”

Alderfer’s Existence-Relatedness-Growth (ERG) Theory is another historically important content theory of job satisfaction. Alderfer (1969) extends and refines Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory by condensing the needs into three categories: existence, relatedness and growth. Existence needs are those essential for human survival, corresponding with Maslow’s physical and security needs. Relatedness, refers to an individual’s need to experience a sense of belonging, and relates to Maslow’s social needs. Finally, growth needs are similar to the self-esteem and self-actualization component of Maslow’s Hierarchy (Griffin & Moorhead 2007: 89).

ERG theory addresses criticisms of Maslow’s Needs Hierarchy, in that it recognizes that more than one need may motivate an employee at any given time. Another important difference between the theories of Maslow and Alderfer is that ERG theory includes the concepts of satisfaction-progression and frustration-regression. Similar to Maslow, Alderfer suggests that when one level of need is satisfied an individual will progress to the next level. However, Maslow’s theory implies that individuals will remain on a level until the needs of the next level are fulfilled. According to the frustration-regression component of Alderfer’s theory, an employee who is frustrated in attempting to satisfy a higher order need may regress to the preceding need level (Griffin & Moorhead 2007: 89).

At the time of its publication, Alderfer’s theory was viewed as an improvement on Maslow’s work, however, Jex (2002: 213) reports that subsequent tests offer mixed

support for ERG theory. Nevertheless, Alderfer's ERG theory remains influential because of its emphasis on the needs satisfaction of employees.

Process Theories of Job Satisfaction

Adam's Equity Theory (1965) explores how individuals make social comparisons. Equity Theory is concerned with how employees evaluate their input or contribution in comparison to the outcome they receive, and how this ratio compares with workers around them. If it is perceived that outcome is less than input, the individual will feel inequity, and may seek to rectify this situation through behaviours that are potentially harmful to the organisation, for example, reduced productivity, absenteeism or turnover intention. If the employee feels that input and outcome are congruous, the employee will maintain her/his current input. According to Equity Theory an individual who determines outcome to be greater than input will increase input to match outcome in order to preserve self-esteem. Equity Theory is therefore a useful conceptual framework for understanding the performance and motivation of employees and designing incentive schemes for workers.

Locke's Range of Affect Theory (1976) is a process theory which recognises that job satisfaction is determined by the discrepancy between what an employee desires and what she/he is currently receiving. However, Locke expands on this notion, and argues that employees differ in the value they place on certain aspects of their working lives. To describe how these individual differences impact upon job satisfaction, Locke proposed the Range of Affect Theory (1976). Where an employee values a particular facet of the job highly, motivation increases when expectations are met, and conversely, motivation will be affected negatively when expectations

regarding this facet are not fulfilled. Furthermore, values of low importance to the employee have little influence on the range of affect experienced. The employee will be neither particularly satisfied by the presence of such values, nor dissatisfied by their absence. Locke's (1976) work highlights the importance for employers and managers of being aware of the facets of the job that are valued by employees, in order to develop interventions that will improve employee work satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction in Teaching

Studies conducted in commercial companies have consistently demonstrated that the organisations that have enjoyed sustained success are those that are concerned with "the beliefs, values, visions and satisfaction of their staff" (Ortiz Elias 2007: 326). These findings also apply to successful educational institutions. Latham (1998) argues that one of the most effective ways to strengthen the teaching profession, and therefore enhance the quality of schools, is to create conditions that will foster job satisfaction among teachings. A study by Zigarelli (1996) found teacher morale and job satisfaction to be the sole statistically significant predictor of school effectiveness.

Research studies that have focussed on the job satisfaction of teaching professionals have yielded inconsistent results. While many researchers have concluded that the job satisfaction of teachers is generally positive (Brunetti 2001; Galloway, Boswell, Panckhurst, Boswell & Green 1985; Huang 2001; Klecker & Loadman 1999; Walker, Garton & Kitchel 2004), other studies have reported high levels of dissatisfaction among teachers (Bogler 2002; Galton & Macbeath 2008; Latham 1998).

A wide range of factors may impinge upon a teacher's job satisfaction, which may account for such vast discrepancies in the literature. Both the demographic characteristics of the teacher and attitudinal variables have been associated with levels of job satisfaction. Research has reported a correlation between job satisfaction and a host of demographic factors including: gender (Bogler 2002; Huang 2001; Koustelios 2001; Ma & MacMillan 1999), education level taught (Brookhart & Loadman 1996; Koustelios 2001), teacher experience (Conley & Levinson 1993; Fraser, Draper & Taylor 1998; Ma & MacMillan 1999), geographical district (Bogler 2002) and private versus public schools (Sonmezer & Eryaman 2008).

It is attitudinal variables, however, which can be directly related to the working conditions and atmosphere of the institution, that hold far greater import for the managers of schools. Many teachers consider their work a vocation or a calling, and derive job satisfaction from the intrinsic rewards associated with their involvement with students and interactions with colleagues. Educational research has generally supported the Herzberg et al. (1959) Motivation-Hygiene theory and reported that teachers experience most satisfaction from factors intrinsic to the role of teaching, such as recognition, achievement and the work itself (Brunetti 2001; Sergiovanni 1967; Ulriksen 1996). According to Galton and Macbeath (2008: 4), "teaching may be tougher, more challenging, requiring greater resilience and tolerance, but the satisfaction derived from watching children learn and grow is still its primary reward." An international study of 2000 teachers conducted by Dinham and Scott (2000) concurred, reporting that teachers are satisfied by student achievement, working with students to modify behaviour and attitudes and productive teacher-student relationships.

Shann (1998) reported that middle school teachers perceive teacher-student relationships to be the most powerful and important source of job satisfaction in their working lives. Researchers have also emphasised the relationship between positive and supportive relationships amongst colleagues and teacher job satisfaction (Fraser, Draper & Taylor 1998; Rhodes, Nevill & Allan 2004). The feeling of belonging to a professional community serves as a “powerful motivator and a significant source of job satisfaction” (Protheroe, Lewis & Paik 2002 online). This facet of teacher job satisfaction is particularly salient for schools, as Powell (2007: 355) explains, “increasingly, Western educational research is revealing the vital connections between high quality adult relationships and high quality student learning”.

Capable school management can promote teacher job satisfaction. Latham (1998) posits that school policy can influence teacher job satisfaction, and that school leaders must strive to provide a supportive, collegial environment in order to enhance the quality of teachers’ working lives. According to Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004), effective school leadership entails possessing an understanding of the key issues impinging upon teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Teachers tend to be more satisfied when they perceive that school leaders are supportive, encourage teacher involvement in decision-making processes and allow teachers to experience a degree of autonomy at work (Bogler 2001; Rice & Scheider 1994; Shann 1998).

Bogler (2001) reports that principal leadership style can have a significant impact upon teacher job satisfaction. Bogler investigated two contrasting styles of principal leadership in his study, transformational and transactional leadership. Transformational leaders are those who seek to create positive changes in the lives of

people and organisations through intrinsic, rather than tangible, rewards. The transactional leader focuses on a range of reciprocal transactions with subordinates, implementing a system of reward and punishment to achieve compliance. Teachers who perceive a transformational leadership style in their schools are more satisfied than those who perceive a transactional leadership style, according to Bogler (2001: 679):

School principals need to be more aware of how strongly their role and behaviour affect teachers' perceptions about their occupation – and their job satisfaction. Through transformational leadership and participative behaviour, principals can develop and foster positive feelings and attitudes of teachers.

The classroom today is arguably a more challenging environment than ever. Dinham and Scott (2000) suggest that teacher satisfaction is eroding over time, and cite the nature and pace of educational change and increased workload as the most strongly felt sources of teacher job dissatisfaction. A survey of teachers in an English local education authority found that 96% of teachers involved in the study considered themselves to be 'deeply dissatisfied' with their workload and the proportion of time they spend on administration. In the same study, 97% of respondents were deeply dissatisfied with society's view of teachers (Rhodes, Nevill & Allan 2004).

Wubbels (2007: 267) identifies classroom management as being "a major cause for teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction". Galton and Macbeath (2008) conducted research into the job satisfaction of teachers working in England, and reported six major 'dissatisfiers' for teachers: stress, accountability and bureaucracy, personal and domestic concerns, societal factors, salary and workload. This research tends to support the work of Herzberg et al. (1959), as 'dissatisfiers' are matters extrinsic to the core business of teaching.

While previous research into teacher job satisfaction can provide valuable insight, it is important to recognise the unique challenges and opportunities for OSH teachers, particularly in respect to their expatriation and the nature of the schools in which they work. This can mean that they experience job satisfaction very differently to home country professionals. Remarkably, in the increasingly important context of international education, there has been no previous exploration of the job satisfaction of OSH teachers working in international schools. However, in closely related research, von Kirchenheim and Richardson (2005) reported a positive correlation between self-efficacy and the successful adjustment of expatriate teachers. Richardson, von Kirchenheim and Richardson (2006) found that expatriate teachers who were satisfied with their salary were more likely to adjust to the international relocation process.

Expatriation and Adjustment

Although sparse literature exists pertaining to OSH teachers working in international schools, the discipline of International Human Resource Management can offer valuable insight into the common experiences of expatriate employees. Existing research indicates a significant failure rate for expatriate assignments (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou 1991; Buckley & Brooke 1992; Richardson, von Kirchenheim & Richardson 2006). Unsuccessful overseas postings can incur heavy costs for organisations in both financial and organisational terms. Furthermore, Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991: 291) cite research that claims that of those expatriates who do complete their overseas assignments, between 30-50% are considered ineffective or marginally effective by their employers.

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) suggested that expatriate adjustment is comprised of two elements: anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. Anticipatory adjustment refers to the 'expectational set' the individual holds about the new country or posting. It is believed that the more closely an individual's pre-departure expectations represent the reality of the new culture and work, the more likely it will be that they enjoy a successful transition. There are three dimensions of anticipatory adjustment: pre-departure training, previous overseas experience (if that experience has been positive) and effective organisational selection criteria and mechanisms. The 'in-country' component of the adjustment model posits that after an employee arrives in the new work environment, successful adjustment will depend largely on individual skills and non-work factors like cultural adjustment and familial adjustment.

Harzing (2004: 269) describes Tung's (1981) highly influential work in which four sets of variables were identified as being critical to the success or failure of international assignments: technical competence on the job; personal traits and relational abilities; ability to cope with environmental variables and family situation.

Technical Competence on the Job

A study conducted by Schaffer, Harrison and Gilley (1999 cited in Harzing 2004: 271) investigated aspects influencing expatriate adjustment to a new job. Factors impinging upon technical competence on the job emerged as influential to the 'work adjustment' of the expatriate employee. The research revealed that role clarity (that

what is expected of the expatriate is clearly defined) and role discretion (flexibility in performing the role) related positively to work adjustment (Harzing 2004: 271).

Effective training can enhance technical competence on the job and therefore, the adjustment, of expatriate workers. Although the demand for teachers with the specialised skills and attributes necessary for success within international schools is rising, pre-service teaching programmes do not currently reflect this situation and continue to focus solely on preparing educators for their own national context (Levy 2007; Snowball 2007). Furthermore, Snowball (2007: 254) discusses the limited professional support systems and formal teacher evaluation procedures present in international schools and claims that teachers must be “highly self-reliant in terms of professional development”. This lack of professional support has the potential to adversely affect the technical competence of OSH teachers, and consequently their adjustment to a new cultural environment.

Training for teachers in additional languages is also an important component of preparation for working in an international context. Language is inextricably linked with self-esteem, cognition and cultural identity (Snowball 2007: 249). Therefore, when a teacher is relocated to a country in which the language differs from her/his first language, she/he may experience threats to both technical competence and self-efficacy.

Personal Traits and Relational Abilities

Personal traits and relational abilities refer to the ability of the worker to interact effectively within a new culture. Harzing (2004: 268) explains that for successful

adjustment to occur, “the crucial thing is the ability to live and work with people whose value system, beliefs, customs, manners and ways of conducting business may be greatly different from one’s own.” Deveney (2007) emphasises the importance of personal traits for teachers in international schools, describing those most successful in these institutions as ‘culturally responsive’ individuals who are highly flexible and knowledgeable of the languages and cultures of students.

Personal traits, such as flexibility, adaptability and open-mindedness assist expatriate employees to negotiate the challenges of working in a new cultural environment. Joslin (2002: 36) suggests that teachers need more than the ability to teach a subject to be successful in an international school context, and that these schools should seek to recruit individuals who demonstrate an emotional commitment to adapting to the new culture. Research has indicated that a positive attitude to relocation is the strongest predictor of successful expatriate adjustment, and that employees who are reluctant to relocate will experience greater difficulties adapting to the new work and life environment than eager candidates (Brett & Stroh 1995: 406).

Relational abilities in the staff rooms of international schools can be complicated by organisational policies, as well as cross-cultural differences. International schools often operate a salary scale which remunerates OSH teachers disproportionately and therefore can be a source of tension within these institutions (Cambridge 1998; Canterford 2003; Tamatea 2008). Furthermore, host-country staff often perceive limited opportunities for advancement within a system that appears to favour Western-trained professionals (Cambridge 1998; Canterford 2003; Richards 1998).

Discrepancies of this nature may generate considerable resentment (Cambridge 1998: 198).

The division that may exist between groups of teachers in international schools can be further exacerbated by cultural differences. Communication between staff from different cultural backgrounds may be complicated even when they speak the same language; according to Harzing (2004: 257), the “opportunity for misunderstandings is usually high” within cross-cultural contexts. Caffyn (2007: 341) asserts “cultural variants, which are subtle and layered in their impact ... are powerful factors that can pull apart multinational organizations.” According to Caffyn (2007) individuals and groups in international schools can become isolated and this in turn can generate cultural polarities and exaggerate cultural differences. Tension and segregation amongst international school staff has the potential to inhibit the process of adjustment for OSH teachers.

The potential threats to healthy staff relationships must be minimised by international school leaders. Research has demonstrated that the single most important predictor in evaluating the effectiveness of a school and student learning is the quality of adult-to-adult relationships and communication within the organisation (Powell 2007: 351). The influence of culture on teacher-student interactions within international school contexts must also be acknowledged, as relationships between teachers and students will influence classroom management, student motivation and performance, pedagogical effectiveness and teacher job satisfaction (den Brok & Koopman 2007: 233). These issues emphasise the importance for international schools, to support the

adjustment of OSH teachers by ensuring they develop and provide effective cross-cultural training programmes.

Ability to Cope with Environmental Variables

Tarique and Caligiuri (2004: 284) assert that “an expatriate’s success in the host country is largely determined by his or her cross-cultural adjustment”. Immersed in an unfamiliar culture, expatriates are:

susceptible to adjustment problems because of the numerous challenges that inhibit their cross cultural adjustment, like the need to speak the foreign language, to cope with culture shock, to understand different laws and cultures, to interact with local nationals (2004: 284).

The term ‘culture shock’ is used to describe the failure to adjust to a new cultural environment caused by the rejection of the unfamiliar aspects of the new culture (Fennes & Hapgood 1997). While there is very little published research in this area specific to OSH teachers, it is evident that, “for the employee in general, across all disciplines ... adjustment following foreign relocation is fraught with tremendous amounts of anxiety, stress and pitfalls” (Richardson, von Kirchenheim & Richardson 2006: 884).

The role of the organisation in encouraging the job and life satisfaction of relocated employees is crucial. However, despite the high turnover of staff in international schools, the literature indicates that few OSH teachers participate in induction programmes or receive any form of cross-cultural training (Bunell 2006; Deveney 2007; Joslin 2002; Pearce 1998; Stirzaker 2004). The failure of international schools to provide an adequate induction process directly contributes to feelings of disillusionment and dissatisfaction among new employees as well as “an

unnecessarily rapid turnover of staff” (Stirzaker 2004: 34). Organisational policies, such as careful recruiting, well-designed orientation programmes and cross-cultural training contribute to the job satisfaction of employees and consequently the stability of the institution (Richardson, von Kirchenheim & Richardson 2006; Stirzaker 2004).

Family Situation

The ability of the expatriate’s family to adjust to the new environment is a decisive factor in the success or failure of an expatriate assignment (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou 1991; Brett & Stroh 1995; Harzing 2004). It was noted by Langford (1998: 32) that organisations are becoming increasingly cognisant of the importance of ensuring a holistic, successful transition for the family of the employee, as the worker may become “distracted if their spouses and families are not adjusted”. According to Tung (1981 quoted in Langford 1998: 37), “one of the main reasons for ... failure among American and European expatriates is the inability of the spouse or family to adjust to living overseas”.

Teacher Turnover and Retention

Research into the job satisfaction and voluntary turnover of staff in organisations has identified a range of structural determinants and processes underlying employee turnover. A meta-analysis conducted by Gaertner (1999) supported the 1986 Price Mueller model of the relationship between structural determinants, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Price and Mueller (1986 cited in Gaertner 1999) contend that a high level of job satisfaction will increase organisational commitment and therefore reduce voluntary turnover. In their model, the structural determinants of pay, promotional chances, distributive justice, peer support, supervisory support and

autonomy demonstrate a positive correlation with job satisfaction and therefore the retention of employees, while high workload, role conflict, role ambiguity and routinisation negatively influence job satisfaction and contribute to turnover intention.

Studies in the field of human resource management indicate that not all employee turnover is detrimental for an organisation. Ingersoll and Smith (2003: 31) explain, “organisations usually benefit from a limited degree of turnover, which eliminates low-caliber [*sic*] performers and brings in new blood to facilitate innovation.” However, teaching is an occupation that has been associated with worrying levels of employee turnover. Ingersoll and Smith (2003: 31) concluded that excessive turnover “can suggest that an organisation has underlying problems; in turn, this high turnover can cause turmoil and lead to problems in how the organisation functions”.

Employee turnover attracts significant attention from human resource management researchers because of the significant financial costs associated with high levels of employee mobility. A study conducted by the magazine *Business Week* in 1996 estimated that for an employee who leaves an organisation, replacement costs alone are over \$10 000 for about half of all jobs (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee 2001: 97). Research into the financial costs generated by teacher turnover has also reported considerable costs. A study of five school districts in the United States of America found that “thousands of dollars walk out the door each time a teacher leaves a district.” (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer 2007: 90). Costs include: separation costs, recruitment and hiring costs and training costs. The study proposed that schools and districts can make substantial savings on costs associated with teacher turnover by investing in teacher retention strategies.

In addition to the financial costs associated with high employee turnover, there are significant organisational costs, such as time, productivity and morale (Tziner & Birati 1996). A comprehensive study conducted by the Texas Center for Educational Research (2000: 1) concluded that high teacher turnover reduces the efficiency of educational institutions and can inhibit student performance. Loeb, Darling-Hammond and Luczak (2005: 49) concur with these conclusions, suggesting that students in schools with high levels teacher turnover experience a range of negative consequences, including instability in their educational experience, low quality instruction, the weakened “collective knowledge” of the organisation and the redirection of much needed funds to recruitment efforts. Ingersoll (2001a) argues that because schools are organisations that rely on organisational stability, continuity and coherence, high rates of teacher turnover will negatively influence the effectiveness of a school.

It is important to note that teacher turnover literature concerns both teacher attrition (teachers who are leaving the profession) and teacher mobility (teachers who leave a school to move to another educational institution). Whether a teacher leaves a school through attrition or to seek employment elsewhere as a teacher, the loss to the school will be the same. It is therefore critically important for schools to be aware of the cognitive processes underpinning turnover intention.

Ingersoll (2003) investigated the sources of teacher turnover and found that contrary to conventional wisdom, retirement emerged as a minor factor contributing to teacher shortages in the United States. Ingersoll (2003) reported that the most important

sources of teacher turnover are family and personal circumstances, job dissatisfaction and opportunities for career advancement. Of those teachers who cited job dissatisfaction as their primary reason for leaving a school, most attributed their decision to poor salary, poor administrative support, student discipline problems and lack of faculty autonomy. Loeb, Darling-Hammond and Luczak (2005) found low salaries, working conditions, the quality of professional development, involvement of parents and the appropriateness of tests teachers are required to administer, to be indicators of teacher turnover.

Falch and Strom (2005) studied the relationship between teacher turnover and non-pecuniary factors and concluded that Norwegian teachers tend to leave schools with a high proportion of minority and special needs students. It has been reported by Falch and Ronning (2007) that Norwegian schools with low student performance experienced higher rates of teacher turnover. These findings are supported by Smithers and Robinson's (2005) observations that teacher mobility in the United Kingdom was typically associated with moving to schools with better examination results.

Studies have also identified factors that increase the likelihood of retaining teachers in schools. Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004: 68) studied a population of teachers in England and concluded that the retention of teachers represents a complex issue, comprising factors including: personal circumstances, job commitment, job satisfaction, morale and self-conception. These authors emphasise the responsibility of school leaders to provide a workplace environment that supports the quality of teachers' professional lives. According to their study, teachers cited higher pay,

feeling valued by stakeholders in education, a desire to help children learn, less administration, more non-contact time and more support with student discipline as the factors most likely to lead to their retention in the teaching profession.

Smithers and Robinson (2005) report that teachers leave schools primarily due to opportunities for career development, the characteristics of the new school and dissatisfaction with the present school, and are more likely to remain in schools where they perceive a clear sense of purpose, recognition of staff needs and the provision of support. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004: 2) refer to the “perennially high rates of beginning teacher attrition and the teacher shortages that seem to perennially plague schools” and conclude that empirical evidence indicates the high rates of teacher turnover can be alleviated by carefully developed induction and mentoring programmes. Researchers have also identified the importance of careful recruiting to ensure the right teachers are appointed for the right posts. Inman and Marlow (2004: 612) posit, “many beginning teachers are poorly matched with the schools in which they initially begin their career”.

Teacher Turnover in the International School Context

An extremely high level of staff turnover has been identified as “a unique characteristic of international schools” (Bunnell 2006: 481). The literature suggests that OSH teachers do not tend to remain in one institution for long periods of time (Bunnell 2006; Cambridge 2002b; Leggate & Thompson 1997; Stirzaker 2004). Although the level of turnover in international schools has been described as “debilitating” (Bunnell 2006: 388), very little research has been conducted to determine the processes underlying this situation, and the research that does exist has

been largely quantitative in nature, therefore potentially overlooking the lived experience of OSH teachers.

A small study by Hardman (2001: 129) investigating factors contributing to the turnover intention of expatriate teachers in international schools, led him to conclude that no-one working in international schools “considered that the customary 2-year [OSH teacher] contract offered the greatest benefits to student learning.” International schools must deal with an average staff tenure of three and a half years, which is well short of the perceived optimal duration of service for teachers in international schools of five to six years (Bunnell 2005; Hardman 2001). According to Bunnell (2006: 389), the problem of teacher turnover in international schools “has reached a new high and ... contract breaking is on the increase”. Excessive turnover of teachers is unsettling for all in the international school community, with implications for student learning, and significant financial repercussions for an institution “in terms of repeat recruitment” (Stirzaker 2004: 34).

.Hardman (2001) concluded that in order to retain quality teachers beyond their initial contracts international schools must provide: opportunities for professional advancement, financial incentives, a happy working environment, job challenge and an effective induction programme. According to Hardman (2001: 130), when OSH teachers leave after an initial contract, the potential benefit for students and schools of hiring such teachers may be lost:

A teacher may determine what needs to be changed in the first year, plans and implements the change the second year, and assesses and improves on the change process in the third year.

Hardman's reasoning suggests that it might be only after three years in an institution that a teacher will be operating at optimum efficiency, and that effective schools should be striving to retain OSH staff beyond initial contracts.

It is, however, important to acknowledge that OSH teachers are often recruited to share their up-to-date, specialised skills with colleagues and students. Therefore, it could reasonably be argued that after a period of time a teacher will no longer possess the attributes that international schools value in OSH staff. Hardman (2001: 130) argues that after eight years of service in one international school a teacher may not be able to offer schools the 'cutting-edge' knowledge and expertise for which they were hired.

Joslin (2002) explored teacher relocation, and the challenges confronting OSH teachers working in international schools. She examines the impact of culture on the foreign teacher working abroad, and suggests essential qualities required by OSH teachers in order to be successful in international schools. Joslin (2002: 57) concludes that as well as professional competence the OSH teacher must possess, "the motivation to embark on a journey of self-discovery and adaptation to develop qualities conducive to an international mindset." Joslin's work has contributed to the current study, in that it moves beyond the organisational characteristics of the school, and recognises the conditions of the host country as influential to the success of the OSH teacher.

Odland and Ruzicka (2009) have made the most significant contribution thus far to understanding teacher turnover in international schools. In their study, two hundred

and eighty-one international school teachers completed a questionnaire to determine reasons for leaving an international school upon the completion of just one contract. The administrative leadership of the school, personal circumstances, salary, and the perception of operational decisions being driven by profit, emerged as the most commonly cited reasons for teacher mobility. As the study was conducted solely with teachers who had left their international school after just one contract, the data may reflect the views of a disproportionately disgruntled group, given their decision to leave after a relatively short period. The current study seeks to obtain qualitative data to compare with Odland and Ruzicka's findings; and also to extend upon their work by providing information about the factors that OSH teachers identify as sources of job satisfaction, and incentives to stay within the school.

Summary and Conclusions

The integration of the global economy and increased global mobility and have led to an increased demand for international education. Institutions promoting themselves as international schools are actively seeking the services of Western-trained, native English speaking teachers, for two predominant reasons: to offer continuity in education for globally mobile families and to provide a perceived competitive advantage for affluent local students.

These teachers are often offered lucrative contracts to entice them to relocate abroad. However, adjustment to a new culture and workplace is often characterised by high levels of anxiety and disorientation, which can be detrimental to employee productivity and effectiveness. The high rate of turnover of OSH teachers in international schools is costly to the institution in terms of resources, employee

productivity, organisational effectiveness and perhaps most worryingly, student learning.

The lack of literature concerning educators serving in foreign destinations emphasises the significance of the current study. OSH teachers are often required to adjust to an unfamiliar culture and language and adapt to a completely new environment at work. While extant literature reporting on teacher job satisfaction, employee relocation and teacher turnover is useful for enhanced conceptual sensitivity, the unique challenges and opportunities for OSH teachers in international schools can mean they experience job satisfaction and turnover decisions very differently from their home-country counterparts.

The current study contributes to previous research into teacher turnover in international schools, adding depth to the findings through the use of qualitative data collection instruments that explored the subjective experiences of teachers working in international schools in one Latin American country. Furthermore the study provides an initial understanding of the job satisfaction of teachers who are working in international schools, which despite being of critical importance to the effective operation of these institutions, is a previously unexplored area of research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

When exploring the complexity of human experience, questions arise that cannot be answered satisfactorily by the objective reporting of statistics. Qualitative researchers pursue the illumination and understanding of human experience and produce rich descriptions that enable us to better understand those experiences (Morgan & Drury 2003). The qualitative approach to research has become widely accepted in recent decades, and is now applied across most disciplines, including education (Buchanan 2009; Goulding 1998; Huberman & Miles 2002; Johnson 1995).

The aim of the research study is to explore the particular experiences and situations of OSH teachers in international schools, and to provide an understanding of the complex processes influencing the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of these employees. Grounded theory has been used in this study to communicate the experiences of OSH teachers and to invite the reader to consider the results and apply the findings to their own schools, and/or situations, and/or research. The following chapter discusses the theoretical underpinnings of grounded theory and how this research methodology was applied throughout this study.

Theoretical Perspective

Grounded theory originates from the symbolic interactionist perspective, which is derived from the disciplines of sociology and psychology (Chenitz & Swanson 1986). Symbolic interactionism has been defined by Charmaz (2006: 7) as “a theoretical perspective that assumes society, reality and self are constructed through interaction

and thus rely on language and communication.” Symbolic interactionism seeks to explore the meanings of events to individuals and the symbols they use to communicate that meaning (Baker, Wuest & Stern 1992: 1356).

Blumer (1969) coined the term ‘symbolic interactionism’, and explained that three basic premises underpin this theoretical perspective. The first assumes that “human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them” (Blumer 1969: 2). The second premise is that “the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows” and the third premise suggests that “these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (Blumer 1969: 2). Thus, symbolic interactionists view meaning as dialogic and subjective construction that is embedded in human sociality. Central to this theoretical perspective is the assumption that individuals will act in certain ways according to how they define situations.

Although symbolic interactionism emerged as a key school within social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s, few guidelines existed for how researchers could incorporate this perspective into their research design (Goulding 2005: 295). In 1967, two American sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, proposed a rigorous and systematic approach to the collection and analysis of qualitative research data based on the premises of symbolic interactionism. Their approach was labelled ‘grounded theory’ to reflect the idea that theory is ‘grounded’ in the words, actions and social relationships of research participants (Goulding 2005: 296).

Since the conception of grounded theory, a great deal of conjecture has arisen over the procedures and methodology of the approach (Bryant & Charmaz 2007; Dey 1999; Glaser 2004b; Goulding 1999; Suddaby 2006). Subsequent to Glaser and Strauss' original collaboration, these two authors developed grounded theory along sharply divergent trajectories, divaricating on the aims, principles and procedures associated with grounded theory research. While Glaser emphasises the “interpretive, contextual and emergent nature of theory development”, Strauss' work is characterised by “highly complex and systematic coding techniques” (Goulding 1999: 7). This bifurcation has sparked lively scholarly debate between Glaserian and Straussian schools of grounded theory, with Glaser (1992) offering a particularly scathing critique of the popular text written by Strauss and his student Juliet Corbin, *The Basics of Qualitative Research*. Glaser (1992: 3) argues that what Strauss and Corbin present is a research methodology, but is most certainly not grounded theory, describing their book as “without conscience, bordering on immorality”.

The multiple and competing understandings of the term ‘grounded theory’ further reflects the contention surrounding the principles and practices of this research method. The term ‘grounded theory’ is applied to a qualitative approach to research that generates theory through the constant comparison of observations (Babbie 2007: G5). Grounded theory can also refer to the research product, i.e. a ‘grounded theory’, or the method employed during the research process. Bryant and Charmaz (2007: 3) call upon the methods world to “accept that the phrase Grounded Theory has now become part of common parlance, resonating with both meanings: the method and the resulting theory.” However, in order to resolve this ambiguity, throughout the following thesis I have adopted the phrase ‘grounded theory method’ to refer to the

method used in the research. Grounded theory, then, refers to both the research approach, and to the theory that has emerged from the use of grounded theory method (Bryant & Charmaz 2007: 3).

Many scholars concur that there are three widely-used versions of grounded theory method, the Glaserian school, the Strauss and Corbin school, and a third approach, constructivist grounded theory method, most commonly associated with Kathy Charmaz (Bryant & Charmaz 2007). The constructivist approach to grounded theory challenges the positivistic, objectivist underpinnings of the Glaserian and Straussian versions of grounded theory. Constructivist grounded theory differs from earlier conceptions of grounded theory in “its emphasis on the studied phenomenon, rather than the methods of studying it”, and in the recognition that “no qualitative research rests on pure induction” (Charmaz 2005: 509). The researcher shares in “constructing what we define as data” and “conceptual categories arise through our interpretations of data rather than emanating from them or our methodological practices” (Charmaz 2005: 509). Thus, constructivist grounded theorists reject notions of the researcher as an unbiased observer and view theoretical analysis as “interpretive renderings of a reality, not objective reportings of it” (Charmaz 2005: 509).

Glaser fiercely disputes Charmaz’s constructivist position, claiming “it is totally irrelevant to GT” (2002: 7), and a “remodel erosion of pure GT” (2002: 10). He criticises constructivist grounded theory on the grounds that it relies on ‘descriptive capture’, favouring accurate descriptions rather than abstraction and conceptualisation. Glaser (2002: 11) states, “describing what is going on, does not explain conceptually what is going on”. Glaser (2002: 12) also refutes the

constructivist emphasis on the role of the researcher in constructing the theory, arguing, “researcher impact on data is just one more variable to consider whenever it emerges as relevant ... it must earn its relevance”. Defending the constructivist position against such claims, Bryant (2007: para. 2) attacks Glaser’s publication as an “incoherent and inconsistent article, formatted like a poor piece of tabloid journalism”. Bryant provides a summary of the major differences between the “objectivist and constructivist” interpretations of grounded theory:

The former assumes the reality of an external world, takes for granted a neutral observer, and views categories as derived from the data. The latter recognises that the viewer creates the data and ensuing analysis through interaction with the viewed (2007: para. 3).

According to Bryant (2007: para. 6), Glaser’s response to the constructivist approach indicates a position “uninformed by what are now acknowledged to be key arguments about science, claims to knowledge, and representation”. Bryant argues that the constructivist approach to grounded theory is the most suitable for social research in the 21st century, as the positivist stance of Glaserian grounded theory, which views the researcher as a neutral observer, has been “severely discredited” (2007: para. 7).

Acknowledging the diversity that exists, Bryant and Charmaz (2007: 11) describe grounded theory as “a family of methods that claim the GTM mantle” which bear “family resemblances”. In response to divergent and contrasting opinions on how to practise grounded theory, Skodol-Wilson and Ambler-Hutchinson (1996) argue that grounded theorists are obliged to specify which approach they will adhere to. However, Heath and Cowley (2004: 149) contend that novice researchers need to overcome anxieties over whether they are “doing it right”, and simply adhere to the fundamental tenets of grounded theory method (constant comparison and theoretical

sampling) until they discover which approach best suits their methodological orientation.

The constructivist grounded theory approach has informed the research process in the current study. Charmaz (2005: 509) explains that a constructivist approach employs traditional grounded theory guidelines as tools, “but does not subscribe to the objectivist, positivist assumptions of earlier formulations”. This approach was considered the most appropriate given my own position as a novice and as an ‘insider’ in the research setting. As constructivist grounded theory advocates the use of grounded theory method as a “set flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes and requirements”, it is an appealing approach to a novice researcher (Charmaz 2006: 9). Furthermore, my seven years of experience as an OSH teacher mean that traditional ‘objectivist’ conceptions of grounded theory are less suitable than a constructivist stance, in which “researchers construct their respective products from the fabric of the interactions, both witnessed and lived” (Charmaz 2006: 178).

Research Design

This study is concerned with investigating the perceptions and subjective experiences of OSH teachers in international schools, and seeks to identify factors influencing the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of these individuals. The grounded theory approach to research offered a systematic set of procedures for obtaining deep, enriched insight into the complexities of OSH teachers’ situations and for exploring the variables affecting their experience of work.

Grounded theory was selected as the research methodology for this study on the basis of the research questions and aims, and the paucity of extant literature in the area. The research questions underpinning this study were flexible and designed to inquire about the dominant processes in a social area, and are therefore characteristic of a grounded theory study (Starks & Brown Trinidad 2007: 1374). The objective of grounded theory is to “discover patterns and develop theories from the ground up” (Babbie 2007: 296), which is congruent with the aims of my research project.

There is little existing research pertaining to the experiences of OSH teachers in international schools (Bunnell 2005; Hayden & Thompson 1998b), and according to Goulding (1998: 51) grounded theory is considered particularly appropriate for research contexts in which there is little already known. Punch’s (2001: 17) assertion that research directed at theory generation is required when a new area is being explored provides further justification for the use of grounded theory method in this research project. Moreover, Allan (2007: 435) discusses the potential of this methodology to provide explanations for the problems and challenges confronting international schooling, and he further contends that a grounded theory approach offers the advantage that educator-researchers are able to utilise their most valuable asset – experience.

Grounded theory research has been employed to illuminate many social processes; from characteristics of contemporary Japanese society (Mizuno 1997) to abusive relationships (Lempert 1997). Buchanan (2010) adopted a grounded theory approach to investigate teacher attrition, from the perspective of ex-teachers. Grounded theory method was used by Ridley (2004) to explore academic issues confronting

international students in universities and by Dunne (2009) to generate theory relating to perspectives of intercultural contact in Irish universities. The success of such studies indicates the suitability of grounded theory method for studies of social processes in international education contexts.

Corbin and Strauss (2008: 32) discuss the notion of ‘sensitivity’, which is the researcher’s insight into the studied phenomenon. According to these authors, the professional experience of the researcher can enhance theoretical sensitivity, enabling a researcher to “understand the significance of some things more quickly”. However, Suddaby (2006) advises the researcher is obliged account for his or her position in the construction of a grounded theory. My theoretical sensitivity to the experiences of OSH teachers in international schools has been shaped by seven years of professional experience in this employment context. Furthermore, my Masters coursework research into international education and international schooling provided background knowledge and theoretical concepts drawn from extant literature in the field. As Corbin and Strauss (2008: 32) argue, “objectivity in qualitative research is a myth”, therefore throughout the research project I engaged in continuous self-reflection to ensure I was cognisant of the ways that my personal perspectives, predispositions, world-views and assumptions might influence data collection, analysis and presentation.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are sharply divergent views regarding the role of the literature in grounded theory studies. Glaser (2004a: para. 46) maintains that conducting a comprehensive review of the literature before data analysis has begun “violates the basic premise of GT – that being, the theory emerges from the data not

from extant theory”. Furthermore, Glaser (2004a: para. 46) posits that an extensive knowledge of the literature compromises the researcher’s capacity to remain sensitive to the emergence of new and original categories. However, Suddaby (2006: 634) asserts that the idea that reasonable research can occur without an awareness of relevant theory “defies logic”. Likewise, Lempert (2007: 261) argues that a researcher should be familiar with literature relevant to the area of study, in order to obtain “knowledge of the substantive area in sufficient depth to understand the parameters of the discourse and to enter into current theoretical conversation”. Constructivist grounded theory literature indicates that researchers *should* be aware of important concepts related to the area of investigation, however they must remain alert to the possibility that pre-conceived ideas are impinging upon data analysis (Charmaz 2006; Suddaby 2006). As Dey (1993: 63) succinctly explains, “there is a difference between an open mind and empty head”. An initial literature review was performed in this research project to develop theoretical sensitivity, and provide initial ideas to pursue.

A further more detailed literature review was created as categories relating to the experiences of the OSH teachers began to emerge from the data. The grounded theory approach to research views literature as a form of data to be incorporated in the constant comparative process of analysis after the emergence of well-developed categories (Glaser 2004a). Relevant literature has informed the construction of my grounded theory and I have interwoven data with extant literature to reinforce the theoretical exposition provided in Chapters Four to Six. Situating the research within the existing body of literature provides an opportunity to demonstrate how my theory

“extends, transcends or challenges” dominant thinking in the field (Charmaz 2006: 168).

Grounded theory moves beyond mere description of our studied worlds by providing a systematic approach to research, which enables the researcher to develop explanatory theory of “basic social processes, studied in the environments in which they take place” (Starks & Brown Trinidad 2007: 1374). In response to Suddaby’s (2006: 640) criticisms of grounded theory studies which offer “little, if any, description of their methodology”, the remainder of this chapter contains a careful explanation of the application of grounded theory method to the construction and realisation of my study.

Sampling Strategy

While in quantitative research it is essential to recruit a random and representative sample of the population, in a qualitative study the researcher aims to acquire an in-depth understanding of the experiences of particular individuals and groups, and therefore deliberately seeks respondents who will provide rich data. Morse (2007) emphasised the need for researchers to locate ‘excellent’ participants in order to obtain ‘excellent’ data. According to Morse (2007: 231) ‘excellent’ participants must:

be experts in the experience or phenomena under investigation; they must be willing to participate, and have the time to share the necessary information; and they must be reflective, willing and able to speak articulately about the experience.

Thus, homogeneity in data is not required or even desirable; the qualitative researcher is “not interested in an on-average view” of a population (Greenhalgh & Taylor 1997: para. 12).

Grounded theory method provides a rigorous approach to identifying participants, known as theoretical sampling (Charmaz 2006: 96). This is a purposive sampling technique which “necessitates building interpretive theories from the emerging data and selecting a new sample to examine and elaborate on this theory” (Marshall 1996: 523). In theoretical sampling, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously; and the emerging theory informs the researcher of who or what will be studied subsequently.

According to Glaser (2004a), apart from decisions concerning the initial collection of data, it is not possible to plan further collection in advance of the emerging theory; the appropriate sample size is determined when theoretical saturation occurs. Theoretical saturation is achieved when no new data is revealed in a category, categories are well developed and demonstrate variation, and relationships between categories are well established (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 148). It has been indicated by Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007: 1375) that the sample size that will saturate a grounded theory typically ranges from 10 to 60.

Theoretical sampling has been criticised by some authors, on the grounds that it makes it virtually impossible for the researcher to anticipate a time-scale for research (Goulding 1998; Suddaby 2006). Furthermore, Dey (1999: 257) contends that the term ‘saturation’ cannot apply to a procedure that is based on a researcher’s supposition that the properties of a category are developed and elaborated. To describe this process more clearly, Dey (1999) has proposed the term ‘theoretical sufficiency’. Charmaz (2006) retains the label ‘theoretical sampling’, and argues that

it is an essential process that enables researchers to explicate categories. Theoretical sampling was employed in this research study to develop and elaborate categories relating to OSH teachers' perceptions about their job satisfaction and turnover decisions in international schools. The sampling strategy offered the researcher flexibility to make decisions about the control of data, while ensuring the data's relevance to emerging theory.

Eligible participants were native English-speaking teachers working in five international schools in a Latin American country, who had been contracted for their posts from abroad (See Table 1 below for demographic details). Prospective participants were contacted via e-mail and invited to participate in data collection. Theoretical sampling continued until I perceived that theoretical saturation has been achieved.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants (n=15)

Age Range	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59
Number of Participants	3	7	3	2
Sex	Female		Male	
Number of Participants	7		8	
Civil Status	Single		Living with Spouse or Partner	
Number of Participants	5		10	
Nationality	British	Australian	American	Other
Number of Participants	11	1	3	
Years Experience in International Schools	1-2	3-6	7-10	More than 10
Number of Participants	4	6	3	2

Fifteen teachers participated in data collection. The number of potential participants was limited because of the relatively small number of teachers in the country who met the inclusion criteria. However, it has been argued by leading grounded theorists that small samples are acceptable when employing grounded theory method (Glaser 1998; Stern 1994). These researchers argue that theoretical saturation is far more important than a large sample size. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 93) in theoretical sampling “the actual number of cases studied is relatively unimportant. What is important is the potential of each case to aid the researcher in developing theoretical insights into the area of social life being studied.”

Intentionally, the sample size was not pre-specified, but rather was determined when I perceived that theoretical saturation had occurred. The sample size was expanded until focus group discussions, written reflections and interviews revealed no new data. After initial data collection and analysis, I identified categories which required further exploration and development. To elaborate these categories I conducted further interviews, and re-interviewed four of the original participants.

In grounded theory studies, sampling goes beyond the level of participants, and extends to the data. Morse (2007: 243) advised grounded theorists to “purposely sample from our data, selecting and sorting, prioritizing or back-staging, as we craft our analysis”. The researcher must then make important decisions about which data to disregard as irrelevant, as “it is a fact that all data are not equal” and choose to include data which are “*better illustrations or better descriptions*” (original emphasis Morse 2007: 243).

Data Collection

Three data collection methods were utilised to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the teachers' experiences: focus group discussions, personal written accounts and intensive interviewing. The use of more than one data collection method is referred to as 'triangulation' and is a "valuable research strategy" (Babbie 2007: 113). In qualitative studies, the use of triangulation enhances the credibility of the research outcome. Glaser and Strauss (1967: 65) explain, "while the [researcher] may use one technique of data collection primarily, theoretical sampling for saturation of a category allows a multifaceted investigation." According to Wimpenny and Gass (2000: 1491) the need to "elicit and illuminate" a social process may necessitate multiple data collection methods, "ensuring the theory is grounded in the data".

In order to obtain initial ideas regarding the facets likely to lead to teacher satisfaction and retention in international schools, a group of five OSH teachers were convened, and a series of focus group discussions were conducted. The focus group method allowed me to "question several individuals systematically and simultaneously" (Babbie 2007: 308), whilst the group dynamic enabled me to elicit information that may not have emerged in the interview process. An open-ended discussion guide was developed to ensure rich, relevant, detailed responses from participants, included as appendix A.

The focus group met for one hour, once a month for three months in the English department staff room of an international school. In addition, focus group participants were asked to write personal reflections (see appendix B) relating to their experiences

in an international school. Charmaz (2006: 36) advises that elicited anonymous texts can encourage “frank disclosures” that an individual may not wish to make in an interview or focus group situation. Focus group discussions and the written reflections yielded a number of facets impinging upon the job satisfaction, dissatisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers in international schools. This stage of data collection developed and enhanced my ‘theoretical sensitivity’, before beginning intensive interviewing.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews constituted the primary data collection technique of this study. This method of data collection allowed me to focus on the “subjective perceptions, meanings and understandings” (Minichiello, Madison, Hays & Parmeter 2004: 412) of the teachers. I was also guided by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 1) who espoused the use of interviewing for qualitative research:

Through conversation we get to know other people, learn about their experiences, feelings, attitudes and the world they live in. In an interview conversation, the researcher asks about and listens to, what people themselves tell about their lived world. The interviewer listens to their dreams, fears, and hopes; hears their views and opinions in their own words; and learns about their school and work situation.

Initially, the interview process was highly flexible, to allow participants to express their own subjective ideas, unhindered by the interviewer. From a grounded theory perspective this flexibility is essential during the early stages of data collection, however, “theoretical sampling based upon the emerging theory brings a sharper focus to subsequent interviews” (Wimpenny & Gass 2000: 1487). Therefore, data collection in later interviews was directed towards those categories and concepts requiring further theoretical elaboration.

While acknowledging the importance of flexibility during interviewing, Charmaz (2006: 18) recommends that novice researchers develop open-ended interview guide in order to provide a structure that ensures the collection of rich data from the interview. An interview guide is a “list of questions or series of issues that the interviewer brings to an interview” (Minichiello et al. 2004: 417). The interview guide used in this study was developed after data from focus group discussions had been analysed (see appendix C), and was used to facilitate the interview process, however questions were not necessarily used or worded in the same way in every interview. The questions and conversations inevitably deviated from the interview guide according to the unique experiences and responses of each participant. The interview techniques of funnelling, storytelling and probing were employed to establish rapport and elicit rich data from the informants (Minichiello et al. 2004: 415).

The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. An interview that runs for less than half an hour is unlikely to be valuable and one that exceeds 60 minutes in duration would place unreasonable demands on the time of busy teachers. Minichiello et al. (2004: 416) emphasised the need for the interviewer to be “mentally alert at all times, concentrating and listening carefully”. For this reason interviews were audio-recorded to enable me to focus on the interview process, and engage in appropriate eye contact and non-verbal communication to foster rapport. Some interviews were conducted in the workplaces of the participants, after receiving permission from the head teachers of the schools. Other interviews were conducted outside workplaces, at the request of participants.

Prior to each interview participants were given an information sheet explaining the aims and objectives of the research study (see appendix D) and asked to provide written consent for interviews to be recorded and transcribed (see Appendix E). I personally transcribed all interviews in order to preserve the privacy of the participants and also to begin a process of intimate engagement with the data. Follow-up interviews were conducted with four participants to clarify meanings and to develop categories that required further elaboration.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research methods require a “continuous interplay between data collection and theory” (Babbie 2007: 378). The data analysis for this study was conducted iteratively with data collection, and theory emerged through the careful comparison and analysis of the transcripts. Constant comparison is at the heart of grounded theory data analysis; Dick (2007: 408) asserts, “grounded theory emerges from the process of constant comparison”. According to Kelle (2007: 193) the “basic operations which provide the basis for category building are ‘coding’ and the constant comparison of data, codes and emerging categories”. Constant comparison of incidents in the data to look for similarities and differences, enabled me to enhance conceptual understanding by defining analytic properties of categories and treating these properties with rigorous scrutiny (Charmaz 2006: 179).

Coding involves the categorising of individual pieces of data with a short name. While grounded theorists have developed different systems for coding, Charmaz (2006: 46) contends that there are two main stages in the coding process: initial coding and focussed coding. When conducting initial coding, the researcher is open

to all ideas, naming lines and sections of data and searching for “analytic ideas to pursue later” (Charmaz 2006: 46). After the most frequent and important ideas have been identified, focussed coding is conducted to “sort, synthesise, integrate and organise” the large amounts of data collected (Charmaz 2006: 46). Categories emerge from the focussed codes, and it is categories that constitute the “theoretical bones of the analysis” that are later “fleshed out by identifying and analysing in detail their various properties and relations” (Dey 2007: 168).

Coding in this study was performed through a line-by-line analysis of interview transcripts. Key words were underlined on the transcript and initial categories were suggested in an adjacent column. The initial codes remained firmly grounded in the data, and I remained alert and reflective during this process to avoid forcing pre-conceived categories onto the data set. Charmaz (2006: 49) recommends using gerunds in initial research codes, as this grammatical structure encourages the researcher to examine actual actions and processes at work, rather than making premature conceptual leaps, or forcing extant theory onto the data. At the conclusion of initial coding, focussed coding was conducted to identify potential categories emerging from the data. Suddaby (2006: 637) recommends the “process of data analysis, including coding techniques and data collection should be made apparent to the reader ... accounts are most effective when authors provide illustrative examples”. Therefore, an example of the coding procedure is included in Table 2.

Table 2: Examples of Line-by-line Coding

Interview	Initial coding	Focussed coding
<p>Example 1: I think again, it is where there is a <u>communication breakdown</u> specific areas where there are <u>grey areas</u>, I think that others that I have thought about are regarding school, I think the school <u>suffers from a lack of definition</u> because of <u>poor leadership</u>, I don't think that it knows if it wants to be a <u>highly academic achieving school</u>, I don't know if it wants to be a <u>flagship IB school in [country name]</u> or <u>whether it wants to provide a service for its community</u>, it seems to have a <u>lack of definition</u>, and therefore its quite <u>hard to know</u> where you need to <u>pitch your lessons or your own expectations for the students</u>. And because of that lack of definition, it's hard to know if you are going to be <u>backed up by the senior management</u>.</p>	<p>Feeling frustrated by lack of clarity in communication</p> <p>Describing lack of definition of school's purpose/ poor leadership</p> <p>Questioning purpose school</p> <p>Leading to difficulties to perform role</p> <p>Lacking confidence of support from senior management</p>	<p>Leadership</p> <p>Core business of teaching and learning</p> <p>Leadership</p>
<p>Example 2: I have <u>travelled more than ever</u>, as in I have travelled more in the last two years than I had ever in my life until this point. That has been a <u>very positive change</u> in my life. I have <u>met some incredible people</u>, the <u>quality of my accommodation</u> is a lot better here than it was in England. I have <u>learnt an awful lot about myself, about the world</u>, I have become I think, a more <u>open-minded</u> person. I have <u>gained and am gaining</u>, this is work in progress, an <u>independence</u> that I didn't have before I came out here.</p>	<p>Appreciating travel opportunities</p> <p>Meeting incredible people</p> <p>Perceiving quality of accommodation</p> <p>Learning about self</p> <p>Becoming more open-minded</p> <p>Developing independence</p>	<p>Unique opportunities for OSH teachers</p> <p>Interpersonal relationships/Social life</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Opportunities for growth/Personal traits.</p>

Theoretical coding led to the emergence of core categories, which explicated relationships between concepts in order to offer a theoretically integrated explanation of the social process under study (Goulding 1999: 12). In this study the core categories that emerged were: a) high control factors; b) moderate control factors and c) low control factors. My core categories enabled the integration of data into an

explanatory theory of the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers, which acknowledged the degree of control international schools are able to exert over these factors. In order to group the factors into the core categories the original focus group was re-convened. The group was given a set of cards, each with one of the categories written on it, and asked to reach a consensus as to which were high, moderate or low control factors, in terms of the potential for an international school to influence the factor. The participants were able to reach a consensus and their organisation of the factors formed the basis for the conceptual overview of the study provided in Figure 1 (Chapter 4).

In addition to coding the data, memos “describe and define concepts, deal with methodological issues and offer theoretical formulations” (Babbie 2007: 388). Memos are “rudimentary representations of thought that grow in complexity, density, clarity and accuracy” throughout the research process (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 117). Early grounded theorists attempted to identify different types and stages of ‘memoing’ (for example, code notes, theoretical notes and operational notes); however, Corbin and Strauss (2008: 17) instruct researchers “not be concerned with writing memos for each type, more important is to get into the habit of doing them.” Furthermore, Lempert (2007: 248) explains that memos “are often messy and incomplete, with undigested theories and nascent opinions”. Memos represent a free flowing conversation between the researcher and data, and are therefore often written in an informal, unofficial style.

Memo writing is a crucial intermediate process between data collection and generating a grounded theory. By continuously producing memos from the beginning

of the research process, I was able to explore emerging patterns and ideas about categories relating to the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers in their schools. Literature was incorporated into the data throughout the memo writing as part of the constant comparison method. This is a practice endorsed by Lempert (2007: 254) who writes, “I use literature extensively when I conduct research, as I collect, code, memo, and write ... in order to participate in the current theoretical conversation, I need to understand it”. An example of a section of a memo is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Example of Memo

(Small section from) Memo 1: Deriving satisfaction from the work itself
<p>It seems that no matter where in the world the teaching professional is situated, nor for that matter the context that the teacher is situated within, the work itself will always emerge as the single biggest component of job satisfaction for teachers. Koustelios: job satisfaction is strongly related with the nature of the job itself, existing cultural differences do not exist when referring to job satisfaction – job satisfaction seems to have a universal basis worthy of further study. Overwhelmingly, teachers in international schools in this study, as in most educational contexts, have responded that the most important source of JS is the classroom experience, helping students to learn. If this contributes so significantly to job satisfaction, then it is an integral part of retaining quality teachers, and therefore managers need to provide conditions that allow the teacher to do their work unhindered. How can they do this for teachers?</p> <p>These views were true for the teachers who were interviewed as part of this research project:</p> <p><i>I've been teaching for many, many years and the source of satisfaction for me is always, being in the classroom, I've never wanted to be promoted up to deputy or head teacher ... I've never taught in an international school before but in this school my job satisfaction regarding the teaching itself is high, and I feel well motivated, just from the classroom experience.</i></p>

The analytic processes of grounded theory reduced the data into manageable categories, which allowed me to identify patterns of meaning and enabled a model for

the increased job satisfaction and retention of OSH teachers in international schools to emerge from the data in the form of a grounded theory.

The findings of this research study include verbatim quotations to enable the 'voice' of the participants to be communicated. This reporting technique offers several advantages, including the clarification of links "between data, interpretation and conclusions" and enhanced "validity, reliability, credibility and auditability" (Corden & Sainsbury 2006: 3). The incorporation of respondents' voices invites audiences to participate in analytic arguments, ensures that the researcher's findings remain grounded in the participants' data, and provides rich illustrations for how a researcher has arrived at a conclusion (Lempert 2007: 256).

Although the data reported in this study largely respects the original 'voices' of the research participants it is important to clarify that occasionally comments have undergone minor editing for readability, including the removal of utterances, the correction of grammatical errors and the inclusion of punctuation to communicate the way in which the researcher heard the spoken words. According to Corden and Sainsbury (2006: 17) researchers must make a range of editing decisions when producing speech as written text and many researchers choose to add simple punctuation to enhance readability of verbatim quotations. It is acknowledged that such editing may not be supported by researchers undertaking micro-linguistic analysis. However, given that grounded theory relies on content analysis rather than micro-linguistic analysis, such editing is regarded as unproblematic. The information has not been edited for content or expression, thereby preserving intended meaning and allowing the OSH teachers to convey their everyday realities in their own words.

Credibility, Originality, Resonance and Usefulness

The issue of research quality is critical for researchers, however much conjecture has arisen around what constitutes good qualitative research, and how quality should be evaluated (Rolfe 2006: 304). In keeping with the constructivist approach to grounded theory adopted in this study the four evaluative criteria recommended by Charmaz (2006: 182-183) have been applied: credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness.

Credibility was achieved by demonstrating familiarity with the setting, using systematic comparisons between observations and data and grounding claims in the data. Holloway and Wheeler (2002: 254) contend that credibility is the most important facet of a trustworthy qualitative study. According to Sandelowski (1986: 30) a qualitative research study is considered credible when “it presents such faithful descriptions or interpretations of a human experience that the people having the experience would immediately recognise it from those descriptions as their own”. Therefore the researcher’s conclusions should be compatible with the perceptions of the research participants.

Detailed information about the research method has been provided to reinforce the credibility of this research study. Credible research ensures that both the researcher and the audience are able to make judgments as to the quality of the research process and product (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 307). Furthermore, I have maintained a clear ‘audit trail’ throughout the research process. By creating audit trail documentation including: audio files, transcripts, memos, categories, conclusions and relevant literature; a retrospective evaluation of the credibility of the findings can be made.

Charmaz (2006) explained *originality* as the extent to which the study offers new insight into the area of investigation, the social and theoretical significance of the work and how the grounded theory challenges, extends or refines current ideas, concepts and practices. A successful grounded theory study will generate theory that makes a relevant and useful contribution to the area under investigation (Baker, Wuest & Stern 1992: 1359). This study is the first qualitative attempt to provide insight into the experiences of OSH teachers working in international schools. Many of the categories, such as ‘unique opportunities for OSH teachers’ and ‘governance and leadership of international schools’, are novel in that they offer OSH teachers’ perspectives on these issues in international schools. Originality is further evident in this study as analysis demonstrates that existing research into the job satisfaction and turnover of teachers in national education contexts is often not applicable to the experiences of OSH teachers in international schools.

Resonance was described by Charmaz (2006) as portraying the fullness of the studied world, revealing participants’ intended meanings, drawing links between institutions and individual lives and ensuring the theory makes sense to participants and people who share their circumstances. In order to ensure resonance ‘member checks’ were conducted. Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocate ‘member checks’ to determine whether the findings construct a recognisable reality for participants. In order to ascertain whether participants considered that the findings of this study accurately reflected their own perceptions, five teachers were sent a summary of the research product. The teachers were asked to feedback on the degree to which categories and descriptions portrayed the essence of their experiences in international schools. On

the basis of their responses further theoretical sampling was conducted to ensure the resonance of the grounded theory.

Finally, a grounded theory must be evaluated in terms of its *usefulness* (Charmaz 2006); whether the theory offers analytic interpretations that individuals can use in their everyday world, whether the analysis offers scope for further research and how the work contributes to making a better world. The articulation and description of the factors impacting upon the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers represents a significant contribution to the field. The theory is useful because it offers a highly pertinent and pragmatic model for the retention of OSH staff. Furthermore, my grounded theory of OSH job satisfaction and retention provides scope and focus for future research in the area. International education has been described as a way towards a better world (Torres 2008), therefore any contribution targeted at improving the professional lives of those working within these institutions will be fundamental to this achieving this ideal.

Ethical Considerations

Of critical importance in any research project are ethical considerations. The well-being of research participants must be of paramount importance at all times during the process. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006: 82), although a researcher cannot anticipate every eventuality, “she must reveal an awareness of, an appreciation for, and a commitment to ethical principles for research”. Unethical research has the potential to compromise the well-being of research participants, the credibility of findings and also the research field for future researchers.

The research project was granted approval by the University of New England Human Research Ethics Committee, Committee Approval Number: HE09/044. Conditions stipulated by the UNE Human Research Ethics committee were met in full. Ethical issues for this research project included: gaining the informed consent of participants, guaranteeing and preserving confidentiality and harm minimisation.

Each participant was provided with an information sheet including an overview of the research project and an invitation to be involved (see appendix D). This document also explained that participation in the research project was voluntary and that participants were able to withdraw at any time. Participants were also provided with the contact details of my supervisors and invited to contact them with any concerns or queries related to the research project. Informed consent was obtained from all informants (see appendix E) for their participation in the interviews and also to have the interviews voice-recorded.

In presenting the following grounded theory, I needed to make some unconventional decisions in order to protect the identity and privacy of participants. Many participants expressed concerns, and even fears during interviews, that their employment status could be compromised by the content of their responses. I assured these teachers that they would be in no way identifiable in the research product. Due to the small pool of eligible participants in this country, many teachers could be recognisable through their anecdotes, the subject areas they refer to, and even through their style of verbal expression. In order to minimise the potential threat of participant identification, the geographical context will be referred to as a 'Latin American country' throughout the thesis. Furthermore, participants will not be assigned

pseudonyms or identifying tags, as the range of responses for each individual may indicate their identities. The specification of the country was deemed to be unnecessary. The project seeks to learn “how people make sense of the situations and act on them” (Charmaz 2006: 11); the specific national context in which these social processes occur is unimportant to the current study. The dynamics of culture within the larger geographic region, Latin America, are however, highly pertinent to the study.

Ethical research requires safeguards to protect the privacy and identity of research participants. Bulmer (1982: 225) urges that “identities, locations of individuals and places are concealed in published results, data collected are held in anonymised form and all data kept securely confidential.” The informants in this study were assured of confidentiality by limiting access to raw data to the principal research supervisor and myself. All data was kept in electronic format in password-protected files. Informants were provided with a summary of the interviews to check the accuracy of the information, ensure they felt their views had been accurately represented, and to encourage informant participation in, and ownership of, the finished grounded theory.

Limitations of the Study

1. A potential limitation of this study will be researcher predispositions, unavoidable given my position as an OSH teacher. This creates a danger that the "research is open to bias, personal reactivity, observational bias, selective encoding, personal expectations [and] hasty judgement" (Allan 2007: 435). However, a grounded theory approach to the research problem encourages a researcher to take advantage of previous experience, as long as she is able to acknowledge and minimise

threats posed by pre-conceived ideas. Throughout the study, my experience of international schools enhanced my theoretical sensitivity. A familiarity with the social processes at work enabled me to recognise properties and dimensions of emergent concepts. Furthermore, my 'insider' position facilitated access to research participants and to sensitive, rich data on a number of occasions throughout the research process.

It is, however, imperative that grounded theorists are highly self-reflective about how they are influencing the research process, in order to recognise and respond in instances when they may be forcing their own interpretations onto the data (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 11).

2. A second potentially limiting factor is that the data will be self-reported and, therefore, susceptible to 'response bias' originating from a participant's desire to answer questions in a socially acceptable way. Babbie (2007:493) contends that if there is a danger of social desirability, that is, obviously right and wrong answers, participants may respond on the "basis of what people will think of them". It is assumed that the creation of rapport and assurances of confidentiality have minimised the influence of response bias upon the data.

3. Thirdly, not all schools agreed to allow their teachers to be interviewed, one institution explaining that the school was experiencing a time of change and instability and a very high level of staff turnover, and therefore to interview OSH teachers would be "unsettling". This situation has limited data collection to those

schools that have permitted me to speak to their OSH staff, potentially excluding the views of those who are most intensely dissatisfied with their professional situation.

4. The researcher acknowledges that the lack of previous research provided presents challenges for the reader in contextualising the findings of the research project. There are two reasons for this omission, firstly the paucity of existing quantitative data and demographic information relating to staff and students in Latin American international schools. Secondly the inclusion of such information could make schools and research participants easily identifiable, thereby raising serious ethical concerns. The importance of this study lies in its qualitative and exploratory base, designed to generate awareness about the issues that confront OSH teachers in international schools and direct further inquiry into the job satisfaction and retention of OSH teachers in these institutions.

Delimitations of the Study

1. There is much conjecture in the literature about what type of institution constitutes an international school (Cambridge & Thompson 2001; Richards 1998), and previous attempts to categorise these schools as a single definable entity have invariably failed (Leggate & Thompson 1997: 269). International schools often share few common characteristics, as Blandford and Shaw (2001: 2) explain:

International schools defy definition: they may include kindergarten, primary, middle and upper, higher or secondary pupils, or incorporate all of these in a combined school; they may range in number from 20 to 4500; they could be co-educational or single sex.

International schools educate both “ex-patriot [sic] students from international families and/or affluent local students who have frequently travelled or lived abroad”

(Levy 2007: 213). Therefore, in order to establish parameters, this study will consider an international school to be an educational institution in which an international programme of study is offered (Cambridge 2002a; Lowe 1999) and that employs teachers recruited from overseas countries.

2. The scope and sample selection of the study will be limited to those OSH teachers working in international schools in one Latin American country. The fact that the data will only be collected from one country may raise questions regarding the ‘usefulness’ of the data. However, the data are likely to reveal experiences of OSH teachers that will be illuminating regardless of geographical location. Babbie (2007: 96) acknowledges that in social science “studies are typically limited to the people living in a single country”. The characteristics of Latin American international schools will inevitably share common characteristics with other international schools worldwide. The comprehensive sampling of the literature, as well as the variation in demographic characteristics of participants ensures that my grounded theory will be applicable to a range of international education settings, despite data collection being conducted exclusively in one Latin American country.

Summary and Conclusions

Grounded theory was the most suitable approach for this research project because it provided explicit guidelines for conducting rigorous qualitative research and also because the area under investigation is relatively unexplored. Ethical issues were considered and addressed to ensure the well-being of research participants. Theoretical sampling was employed to select participants for the research project. Data collection began in April 2009 and the last interview was conducted in March

2010. Data collection involved focus group sessions, written reflections, semi-structured interviews, memoing and an extensive literature review.

Data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection, using the constant comparison method. The comparison of data and incidents led to the emergence of categories, which describe the factors impinging upon the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers in international schools. The following chapters present the theoretical exposition of the research study, explore the perceptions and experiences of OSH teachers, and suggest a model for improving the job satisfaction and retention rates of these teachers in international schools.

Chapter 4: High Control Factors

Selection and Presentation of Data

The purpose of the following theoretical exposition, presented within chapters Four to Six, is to communicate OSH teachers' perceptions, concerns, reactions, observations and thoughts regarding the quality of their professional lives in international schools. Throughout these chapters extant theory has been 'interwoven' with participants' own words, to provide data that supports analytic arguments. In order to "preserve the form and content of analysis" (Charmaz 2006: 151) I have employed major categories as chapter sub-headings. According to Charmaz (2006: 163) the use of categories to organise analytic writing grounds readers in your topic and guides them through the analysis.

The constant comparative method of data collection and analysis generated many hundreds of pages of memos exploring, describing and explaining the experiences of OSH teachers in international schools. The selection of what content of all this analysis to include in the following chapters presented a significant challenge. Goulding (1999: 19) explains, "grounded theory will not appeal to the researcher in search of absolute certainties, neatly defined categories and objectively measured explanations". To select content, I have followed Corbin and Strauss' (2008: 280) recommendation that the writer must determine what the main analytic message will be and include appropriate conceptual detail and descriptive quotations to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the social process under study.

Qualitative researchers are concerned with how social actors “define events and realities and how they behave based on their beliefs” (Tavakol, Torabi & Zeinaloo 2006: 2), and do not seek to present findings as irrefutable ‘truths’. Glaser (2004b: para. 3) explains grounded theory “does not deal in facts or findings, but generates concepts that apply as explanations.” In keeping with the grounded theory research paradigm, the following theoretical exposition does not represent an attempt to make ‘truth statements’ about the reality of the professional lives of OSH teachers working in international schools. Instead, what follows aims to contribute to an understanding of how OSH teachers interpret their reality and communicate their perceptions.

The categories that ‘earn’ their way into a grounded theory emerge through meaning, rather than quantitative values. Suddaby (2006: 638) posits that the process “has a creative component that cannot be delegated to an algorithm”. It is therefore essential to acknowledge the role of the researcher in the construction of a grounded theory, who inevitably must “make key decisions about which categories to focus on, where to collect the next iteration of data and, perhaps most importantly, the meaning to be ascribed to units of data” (Suddaby 2006: 638).

The raising of categories to a conceptual level in an intergrated GT requires the researcher’s active engagement in the process of ‘abduction’. Charmaz (2006: 186) defines abduction as reasoning that commences with the examination of data, entertaining all possible explanations for observed data, and then generates hypotheses to confirm or disconfirm until the researcher arrives at the most plausible interpretation of the data. Abductive reasoning is a process of logical inference first developed by Charles S. Pierce (Reichertz 2007: 215), and according to Charmaz

(2006: 103) the form of reasoning invoked in constructivist GTM is abductive reasoning, because GT “includes reasoning about experience for making theoretical conjectures and then checking them through further experience”. It is through abduction we “invent a way of understanding, a conceptualisation, which achieves a synthesis of observations” (Locke 2007: 567). Abduction emphasises the creative and dynamic element of creating a GT; and it is critical to recognise the subjective and permissive characteristics of ‘abduction’, and that it therefore, “produces no conclusion more definite than a conjecture” (Locke 2007: 567). The following chapters aim to provide ‘conjecture’ regarding the perceptions and lived-experiences of OSH teachers, and to provide an explanatory model through which international school managers can design interventions that facilitate the job satisfaction and retention of this group of teachers. These chapters are further intended to guide researchers in the design of future studies to test theory in practice.

Grounded theory method requires the researcher to explore both commonalities and differences among and between categories. In creating my categories a certain degree of overlap has occurred. This overlap can be expected in grounded theory studies, as often the words of participants suggest multiple codes. For example, the level of English language proficiency of students was mentioned by some teachers to be a source of job dissatisfaction, as it can inhibit communication and teaching and learning. In these cases, ‘English language proficiency of students’ was categorised as a ‘language proficiency’ issue. However, teachers also discussed feelings of frustration at not having received accurate and honest information about the English language proficiency of students during recruiting, and such comments were used to illustrate the category of ‘recruitment and expectations’. These, and other examples

of overlap between categories, highlight the commonalities and relationships between categories inherent in a study of complex social processes.

According to Charmaz (2006) it is common practice among grounded theorists to briefly introduce the grounded theory at the beginning of the theoretical exposition, in order to enhance advance clarity and reader comprehension. Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007: 1377) suggest the findings of a complete grounded theory are often represented diagrammatically. In response to these suggestions, I have included a diagrammatic overview of my grounded theory of the factors that impinge upon the job satisfaction and turnover intention of OSH teacher. Figure 1 illustrates the range of factors that can influence the quality of OSH teachers' professional lives. My grounded theory also proposes that schools have varying degrees of control over factors, and that it is a combination of factors that determines the job satisfaction of OSH teachers, and will influence their turnover decisions. In framing this conceptual overview, I have employed the categories that emerged during data analysis, so as to ensure theoretical concepts remained grounded in the data.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic Overview of the Grounded Theory

Creating a Supportive Environment for OSH Teachers

Factors Moderating Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention of OSH Teachers

Low control factors:

- Personal life
- Family situation
- Desirability of geographical context
- Personality traits

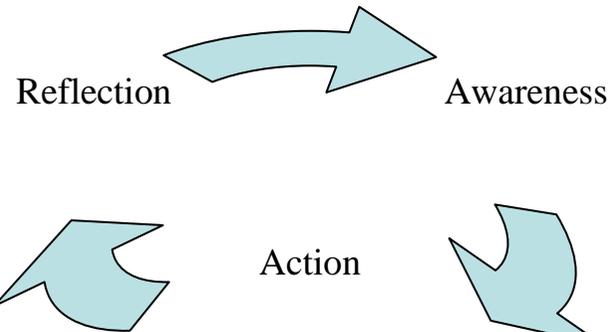
Moderate control factors:

- Working with international school students
- Working with international school colleagues
- Language proficiency
- Curriculum in international schools
- Organisational support of the adjustment process
- The nature of the work
- Repatriation issues
- Autonomy over work

High control factors:

- Governance and leadership
- Recognition
- Employment security and rights
- Professional growth and advancement
- Recruitment and managing expectations
- Salary and benefits
- The environment and conditions of work
- Induction

School Strategies



Higher levels of OSH teacher job satisfaction
Increased likelihood of retention of OSH teachers beyond initial contract

Introduction

As a foreign member of staff, you're working a long way out of your comfort zone, certainly outside of your country, I think that there's an expectation that you're going to be looked after by the school ... if that doesn't happen, then that really is demotivating (Focus group session).

Many of the aspects that impinge upon the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers are specific to the unique context of international education, a context perceived by teachers to be simultaneously highly rewarding, and highly challenging. Therefore, existing research into more generic teacher job satisfaction and retention often cannot reliably be applied to the context of international schooling. Of interest for strategic planning, is that international schools are able to exert significant control over many of the factors that most powerfully influence the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers. For the purposes of this research study, such factors will be referred to as 'high control factors'.

The following high control factors emerged from data analysis: governance and leadership; recognition; job security and protection of worker's rights; opportunities for professional growth and advancement; working environment and conditions; salary and benefits; and the provision of induction and training. These are the factors over which the organisation is clearly able to exert a significant degree of control, and therefore represent the greatest opportunities for international schools to create conditions that are conducive to a satisfied, stable contingent of OSH teachers. The factors that are well within the school's realm of control are also the factors that OSH teachers tended to discuss with the most emotion, conviction and often, frustration. The participants indicated they often felt powerless to influence these factors, and

many associated high control factors with job dissatisfaction and increased propensity to leave the post.

Governance and Leadership

The OSH teachers reported high levels of dissatisfaction with the governance and leadership of the international schools in which they work. All expressed a degree of dissatisfaction relating to negative perceptions and experiences of school leadership. Of concern for international school leaders is that no teacher interviewed associated any positive feelings of job satisfaction or retention intention with school leadership. This category is particularly pertinent, as research in the field of educational management has established an inextricable link between teachers' perceptions of their relationships with senior managers and their level of professional satisfaction (Betancourt-Smith, Inman & Marlow 1994; Blase & Blase 2001; Chittom & Sistrunk 1990; Ma & Macmillan 1999). This relationship is evident in the comments of the OSH teacher below.

The management and leadership of the school is sometimes, I think poor. I don't feel like the school is well led, I don't think that I am well led by the school leadership team. I would say I am most dissatisfied at work by this (Interview).

The dissatisfaction with school governance and leadership reported by the participants in this study is consistent with the findings of a qualitative research study conducted by Brown, Ralph and Brember (2002: 7) of teachers working within the British national school system. These researchers found that virtually every teacher in the sample identified school management as a source of occupational stress. The teachers in Brown, Ralph and Brember's study attributed job dissatisfaction with leaders to

poor communication and a distance in perceptions between senior managers and teaching staff.

Odland and Ruzicka (2009) also report that OSH teachers are strongly dissatisfied with the governance and leadership of international schools. In their study of more than 200 teachers, administrative leadership was found to be the number one reason cited by OSH teachers for leaving an international school after only one contract, and these authors added that the strength of feeling surrounding this issue is notable. Also, consistent with the data obtained from participants in the current research study, Odland and Ruzicka (2009) found that very few positive comments were made by teachers to describe their experiences of international school leadership.

Research conducted in national education contexts indicates the critical importance of effective school leaders for the overall effectiveness of schools. Blandford and Shaw (2001: 9) propose that although research on the topic is scarce, “there is a strong possibility that this also applies to international schools”. Leaders of international schools may exert an even greater influence on the institution than their national system counterparts, as many international schools “are like islands with minimal reference to authorities” (Blandford & Shaw 2001: 9). Therefore, international school leaders often possess a great deal of autonomy in the management of schools. Malpass (1994: 22) offers a critical assessment of international school management, positing that many of the boards and heads of international schools “have either forgotten, or indeed have never learnt, the basics of good school management”. This is a sentiment strongly supported by the responses of the OSH teachers in this study, as the comment below indicates.

I feel like [school name] is a school that has great students, a good teaching body and quite appalling leadership (Written reflection).

Research in the field of international education has emphasised the importance of harmonious professional relationships between the school board and the school leader (Blandford & Shaw 2001; Hawley 1994; Malpass 1994). According to Blandford and Shaw (2001: 9), the role of the school leader is to “create, maintain and develop conditions which enable effective learning to take place”. This role can be compromised by a problematic relationship between the board and the school principal. Blandford and Shaw (2001: 18) assert that to manage international schools effectively the board of governors must demonstrate “sufficient confidence in the Head teacher and the staff to allow them to fulfil their designated roles without interference”. Some of the OSH teachers perceive that the over-involvement of the school board in the everyday functioning of the school is an impediment to teacher job satisfaction.

I think here and in a lot of international schools ... a lot of administration control over academics makes the job very difficult ... the administration becomes the purpose of the school, and the purpose of the school is supposed to be education. So I think that causes a lot of dissatisfaction amongst a lot of teachers (Interview).

The board can bully the academics into doing what they think should be done in schools, in so far as how it should be taught, hours of work, best results; things like, “my son is in school all day, I expect this and that.” We are the ones who have studied how learning takes place and then the boards decide they don’t think that is how it is and they go against it. The schools that work best are the schools where the headmaster or the director, whoever, is very strong, and will stand up to these boards (Interview).

Blandford and Shaw (2001: 23) quote an experienced international school head who clearly shares the views of the OSH teachers above:

Governors should hire the head, set the long-term goals for the school, maintain overall budget control - then get out and let the professionals get on with it!

Littleford (1999) argues that interfering school boards can have a detrimental effect upon the school climate, cohesion and stability. Boards are often instrumental in the alarmingly high turnover of heads in international schools, particularly when a Head is perceived as weak (Hawley 1994; Stout 2007). Such rapid turnover of senior management makes it difficult for international schools to develop a stable core of managers and implement the strategic planning that is fundamental to the creation of an innovative and fulfilling work environment. Malpass (1994: 22) concurs, suggesting that the constant change of Heads in international schools leads to the “domination of short term solutions when long-term planning is needed”. Hodgson (2005: 10) also discusses the potential for tension in international school governance between the board and senior managers, and claims, “the selection and success of board members is a very inexact science and continues to be the number one reason for the early resignation of Head teachers.” The OSH teachers below discuss the disruption to school life caused by a rapid turnover of Heads, and the consequences of this situation for the job satisfaction of individual teachers.

A lot of it has to do with stability in leadership. I am saying, there hasn't been time to get settled with what we are doing and I think that perhaps the board of governors has an agenda ... It makes a mess for all of us (Interview).

The whole problem with the school is very simple, continuity and longevity. Why are we losing Headmasters? Because the board is too strong. Someone gets a whim and they act on it (Interview).

According to Stout (2007: 320) a “seemingly disproportionate” number of Head teachers are replaced after a conflict situation with the school board. Due to the

precarious position of board-appointed school leaders, these leaders may be reluctant to place the job satisfaction and retention of teachers first where these issues exist in tension with the agenda of the board and the established tradition of the school.

The OSH teachers in this study were more disillusioned by negative perceptions of senior managers inside the schools than by the governance of the school board. All of the OSH teachers reported that these negative perceptions of school leadership pose serious threats to their job satisfaction and propensity to stay in the school.

In his seminal work, *Leadership*, James Macgregor Burns defines leaders as those who identify and utilise the motives of employees to accomplish goals (1978: 18). Burns distinguishes between two styles of leadership: transactional leaders and transformational leaders. The transactional mode of leadership is based upon an exchange between leaders and followers and relies heavily on systems of reward and punishment. Leaders and followers engage in the relationship in order to serve their own self-interests. In contrast, the transformational leader encourages workers to “higher levels of morality and motivation” (Burns 1978: 20), through engaging with others, offering intellectual stimulation and creating personal connections. Transformational leaders will be responsive to the needs of employees, and provide opportunities for employees to realise their fullest potential. The data collected from interviewees suggest that OSH teachers working within this Latin American context view their leaders as transactional rather than transformational.

I came here to further my career. I have done that, but I do not feel I have had strong role models in leadership to aspire to. Not at all. They have not ever really thought about what it means to lead or to inspire a group of highly competent professionals (Interview).

It is not that they are not nice, they just don't know how, and so they have to resort to punitive stuff, to treating us like little kids to keep us under control (Interview).

Bogler (2002) conducted a study of 930 Israeli teachers and discovered that teachers who reported low levels of job satisfaction tended to perceive their senior managers as transactional leaders, whereas teachers with high job satisfaction perceived the leadership culture within the school to be transformational. The findings of Bogler's research study imply that school managers need to be cognisant of their powerful influence on teacher job satisfaction, and the leadership culture they are creating. Powell (2007: 351) also emphasises the critical role school leaders have in ensuring the quality of teachers' professional lives, arguing school leaders "can and do have a powerful influence on school climate, and this influence nourishes powerful learning relationships and reflective craft practice". Several of the OSH teachers considered their leaders to be incapable of providing this type of educational climate.

I think if he was a stronger person, if he took more time to really think about what his decisions were doing to the people directly below him, which then impact on the people below them, with that impact ultimately on the children; he would possibly, or should take a step down and go (Interview).

What I am feeling, it is that person at the top is basically losing the whole momentum and he is a lovely guy, he is a very personable person and he is easy to like, if you have a long chat with him, but he isn't in the right place (Interview).

Numerous authors have attempted to identify a tangible set of characteristics to describe an effective school leader. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000: 114) identified six main characteristics: building school visions and goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualised support; symbolising professional practice and values; demonstrating high performance expectations; and developing structure to foster participation in school decision making. The National Education Assessment

Centre (UK) produced a list of key competencies for successful school leaders, which consisted of: problem analysis; judgement; organisational ability; decisiveness; leadership; sensitivity; stress tolerance; oral communication; written communication; range of interest; personal motivation and educational values (Blandford and Shaw 2001: 11). It has been argued by McEwan (2003) that successful school leaders possess a combination of the following qualities in varying degrees: communicator; educator; envisioner; facilitator; change master; culture builder; activator; producer; character builder and contributor. Although researchers differ in the terminology employed, they seem to concur on the point that while skills relating to the day-to-day management of the institution are essential, actual leadership is far more than this. Excellent school leaders will ensure the job satisfaction of their staff and the motivation of students by inspiring others in an intellectually stimulating environment, in which all feel valued and respected, and can influence decision-making. The OSH teachers in this study reported diminished job satisfaction resulting from a perception that their school leaders do not possess key leadership attributes.

The poor quality of the leadership - I find that very, very frustrating but what I have learnt to do is accept things that cannot change about the leadership here ... There are things I would like to see differently in the senior leadership, but I have no power to change that (Interview).

Blandford and Shaw (2001: 13) argue, “whatever the elusive quality of leadership is, a strong focus on people emerges very clearly”. The experience described by the OSH teacher below, accentuates how impersonal human resource management in international schools can influence job satisfaction.

I had been working really hard in my school for a couple of years and had achieved a lot. I really rarely take a day off. Then I had to ask my boss if I could go for a week

to go to my home country to attend the wedding of an immediate family member. Seriously, you'd have thought I had asked him if I could pull his teeth out one by one. I felt there was absolutely no consideration given to my circumstances and the contribution I had made to the school (Written reflection).

Haywood (2002) discusses leadership styles in the context of international schooling, and identifies two types of school missions, which must be carefully balanced by successful international school leaders. An international school must serve a *pragmatic* function, and in doing so serve the needs of the multinational school community. However, Haywood (2002: 171) contends that schools must also be *visionary*, and provide an educational experience that encourages “cross-cultural understanding, leading towards a holistic view of world affairs and ultimately towards more peaceful collaboration between people and nations.” Many of the research participants felt very strongly that visionary leadership, a key component of international education, was neither practised nor modelled by their senior managers, and this contributed to feelings of teacher dissatisfaction.

The big thing is there are people who run the school, and they run it reasonably efficiently, but it lacks vision. It needs someone to come ... who is an educationalist first, who will take the school forward, as an international organisation (Interview).

Most important for me is the lack of vision and the lack of direction, it is a desire to maintain a status quo and not make changes that might rock the boat. So it is very much, “this is the way we have always done things, this is the way we will carry on doing things at [school name]”. So that is frustrating (Interview).

According to Haywood (2002: 181), the chance of the successful dissemination of visionary values is enhanced when the school is managed in such a way that ensures “the philosophy statement does not just exist on paper but is explicitly promoted in the community and actively utilised to direct planning”. Blandford and Shaw (2001: 16) reinforce this idea, “boards and teachers may articulate values, but unless they are

manifestly lived they are meaningless”. The comments from OSH teachers suggest they have relocated expecting to work in a climate of international vision and innovation, and are often frustrated by what they perceive as antiquated, reactive leadership styles.

Reactive leadership, I think would be my thing. And am I happy with it? No. I find it very frustrating. I don't think enough thought goes into, almost anything, from an assembly, to attention to staff, to appointments of staff. I know I can think of a litany of examples (Interview).

In terms of leadership, it's always reactionary leadership, there is never a pro-active scenario. My girlfriend works in the school I am going to leave here to go to; she was seconded out of lessons three months ago to set up internet classes in case it happened [outbreak of H1N1 virus]. That's what you do when you run an international school well, because you foresee that problem, you deal with it before it happens, as opposed to what happened yesterday, running around trying to get kids email addresses, it is ludicrous. That is typical of the lack of vision ... they are fire-fighting all the time as opposed to doing it (Interview).

A study conducted by Ortiz Elias (2007: 332) into the organisational culture of international schools in Peru found that although a hierarchical leadership culture predominates, most people working in these schools consider the characteristics of a ‘clan culture’ to be the conducive to the aims and ideology of international education. This ‘clan culture’ implies, according to Ortiz Elias (2007: 332), a strong emphasis on the construction of cohesive teams, a clear sense of vision, frequent meetings keeping everyone informed about relevant issues, assignment of clear roles, concern for close personal relationships, carefully prepared feedback to colleagues, frequent expression of esteem, celebration, awards, accessibility of managers and clear goals relating to people’s career and personal development. Ortiz Elias (2007) asserts that when a clan culture exists, teaching staff tend to be satisfied. The views expressed by the OSH teachers in the current research project suggest that their international schools are characterised by hierarchical management structures, very limited opportunity for

staff to contribute to decision-making and few visible aspects of the ‘clan culture’ described by Ortiz Elias.

I do find it autocratic rather than democratic and I’m not happy with it, no. And I don’t think staff are ever asked their opinions enough about how the school is run or decisions in general (Interview).

It’s quite frustrating, when you have your opinion and obviously you hope that people listen to it, but if they [managers] have a very different opinion and are not interested in any change or a suggestion of change, then that’s what I find most frustrating and I am most dissatisfied (Focus group session).

Bogler (2001) reported a positive correlation between teacher participation in decision-making and levels of teacher job satisfaction. According to Blandford and Shaw (2001: 21), unless staff feel they have personally participated in important decision-making they are unlikely to carry out policies with motivation and competence.

A hierarchical leadership culture can inhibit communication within an organisation, stifling the upward communication flow. Osland, de Franco and Osland (1999: 229) posit that in hierarchical organisations communication is usually top-down, and middle managers are often submissive and reluctant to question the decisions of senior managers. Consequently, middle managers will also often tend to treat subordinates in an autocratic manner, passing on information in a one-way fashion. Such hierarchical relationships restrict the flow of information laterally and upwards, and managers seldom receive input about the effectiveness of their decisions or working conditions from those below them. The following comments from OHS teachers illuminate this concept.

I think the management need to look at how they run the school, and what is being taught and whether things can be improved. And a good way to do that would be to ask the staff what they think, maybe get some feedback. “How do you feel?”, “What frustrates you at school?” “What can we do to improve things?” (Interview).

There is a certain amount of reluctance to speak up. Part of that is cultural - I know some staff are not happy and are frustrated, but whether management is aware of that or not, I am not sure (Interview).

Cultural dimensions almost certainly influence the leadership culture in international schools in Latin America. These cultural dimensions can exist in tension with the expectations of OSH teachers, who are often accustomed to more horizontal management structures with schools. Some OSH teachers expressed surprise at the autocratic, authoritarian manner of their supervisors. According to Osland, de Franco and Osland (1999: 220) one of the few exceptions to the characteristically warm relations of Latin American workplaces is the normalisation of exhibitions of rudeness by managers. Such behaviours stem from a fear that warm relations with followers who are not one's 'power equals' will lead to a lack of respect, and are manifestations of the 'high power distance' characteristic in Latin American organisational culture (Hofstede 2009 online). Individuals in Latin American societies often readily accept “that power in institutions and organisations is distributed unequally” (Hofstede 2009 online).

Until I came here, I had never been shouted at by a boss. That type of bullying just does not go on anywhere else, but here we have no-one to complain to, so you just have to deal with it (Written reflection).

Each of these leaders has their own little kingdom and they are free to do whatever they want in their kingdom, it does not matter to them what anyone else below them might have to say about it. The way they treat people is so disrespectful. We are not little kids (Interview).

Another frustration the OSH teachers reported with their senior management is the way change is handled within the international schools. Fink (2001: 80) urges international schools to “change current practices”, criticising educational institutions that “seem determined to polish yesterday’s educational paradigm” in a world that increasingly requires innovation to confront unpredictable and complex challenge. All of the OSH teachers interviewed worked in International Baccalaureate schools, an educational programme that seeks “to develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world” (IBO 2009 online). However, many OSH teachers communicated a perception that their schools continue to favour tradition and maintaining the status quo rather than embracing change.

That’s when you feel good about what you are doing, when you see real change. It’s not valued in an institution that doesn’t do well with change, I can’t imagine that [school name] is today is much different to what [school name] was like in 1878. As an institution, it has a battle between tradition and its desire to be a 21st century school. ... It’s weighed down by a hundred and eighty years of tradition (Interview).

I have no idea what the senior managers do during much of the day but I think they would all be happy if the school was exactly the same in ten years time as long as there hasn’t been a problem (Interview).

The following female OSH teacher also alludes to a ‘men and boys’ culture among managers of international schools in this geographical context. Of the teachers interviewed only two of the teachers worked with a female senior manager, and both of these teachers worked in primary school environments.

The management side of it dissatisfies me, the men and the boys, and the lack of any women at all. I think it’s really interesting, because I think at the moment people in those positions are not taking responsibility and are not making thoughtful decisions. I mean if you have staff that are brilliant teachers that have a crap manager, your kids aren’t going to get a good time. Because however good these teachers are, there

is not going to be consistency, there is not going to be motivation and there is going to end up being resistance (Interview).

Studies of leadership in international education have revealed a disproportionate number of male senior managers in international schools. Thearle (1999) reports that in spite of the fact that women comprise over 60% of the workforce in international schools, they are significantly under-represented in senior management positions. Blandford and Shaw (2001: 13) discuss the type of people who make the most effective Head teachers, and claim that women are often highly suited to such positions, which require a flexible and person-orientated approach, in order to generate loyalty and encourage voluntary compliance among staff. While such claims contain obvious potential for stereotyping according to gender, they do highlight the need to examine the gender imbalance in senior management positions in international schools.

Some of the OSH teachers expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of support from senior management in relation to the daily functioning of the schools. Where OSH teachers felt that senior management inhibited them in the completion of tasks related to the core business of teaching and learning, they expressed frustration.

There was an assembly where the headmaster told the students it was going to be made easier for them to pass the subjects. The phrase was 'less students failing' actually, which I think lead to directly lowering the bar of expectations. I couldn't understand why the wording wasn't something to do with 'more students passing' ... it seemed to be much more of an onus on the teachers to pass more students. I think the lack of thought put into that has been a ripple, the problems of that have disseminated through the last 18 months of teaching (Interview).

One of the teachers had a done a massive project with the kids and the school captain and it was really positive, and one of the heads stood up and took the whole lot of credit for herself, which was just appalling (Interview).

The comments from OSH teachers also suggest that negative perceptions of senior leadership within the school can influence turnover decisions.

If really they wanted to keep me for – let's say they wanted to keep me for much longer, what would have to happen? There would have to be a real shift in the school, honestly right now I think if my principal left in the middle school, it would be a complete blessing, I think he is a very nice man but he has no clue about education (Interview).

It got to the point where she made my life very difficult, through very small petty things, so I felt for the first time that I wouldn't stay out my contract and that is really unusual for me, because even if I am not happy I will complete the contract that I've signed (Interview).

Recognition

I mean job satisfaction is very much tied into being valued, if you don't feel like you are valued then you feel dissatisfied with your job and I think there are times when I feel implicitly not valued (Interview).

Research into effective organisations emphasises the importance of creating an environment in which employees feel that their efforts are recognised and valued. The two-factor model of Herzberg et al. (1959) identified recognition as a crucial element of job satisfaction. According to Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro (1990: 51) the perception of being valued by the organisation encourages: conscientiousness in carrying out conventional job responsibilities; an expressed affective and calculative involvement in the organisation; innovation on behalf of the organisation even in the absence of an anticipated reward and a stronger loyalty to the organisation. Organisations ultimately reap the rewards of ensuring employees feel recognised and valued, as employees who feel this way are more committed to achieving organisational goals.

Educational research has reinforced the link between recognition and job satisfaction (Fraser, Draper & Taylor 1998; Sergiovanni 1967). Feeling valued is a powerful indicator of teacher desire to remain within the profession, and a perceived lack of recognition can contribute significantly to job dissatisfaction and turnover intention (Rhodes, Nevill & Allan 2004). Brown, Ralph and Brember (2002: 8) report that teachers can experience significant occupational stress from a lack of positive reinforcement. The OSH teachers in this study communicated that recognition is a powerful determinant of both job satisfaction.

I think they need to make us feel more valued. I know myself and other staff that have been here and left, we don't feel particularly valued as a resource in the school (Interview).

I go to my boss' office, and a lot of times it's just to ask for something. He is just like, "Oh what now?" I mean literally that's how they greet me, and I feel like I've done a lot of good things at the school since I got there. I don't think I have heard them say, "Hey, you're doing a great job" (Interview).

According to Lazarova and Caligiuri (2004: 346) studies in the IT profession indicate that one of the most effective ways to retain high quality international assignees is through recognition, praise and encouragement. The comments below reinforce the importance of recognising and valuing OSH teachers for retention efforts.

I mean if a top-level teacher comes here, they find they are just not being listened to. We had one last year, a head of science, who was promised a lot of things, that he would be taken care of, and then they just ignored him. He felt totally under-valued. He quit. Halfway through the year (Interview).

When it comes to re-signing, just to value us a little, just a little, through salary or professional development or something (Focus group session).

What will decide it [retention] is whether or not I feel that I have been listened to, and whether I am seen as a contributing member of staff. Believe it or not a lot of people will stay and work hard, as long as they feel they are contributing something (Interview).

OSH teachers do not appear to consider themselves to be a transient population working in international schools to fill a gap for a certain period of time and move on. According to Harzing (2004: 262) international transfers represent a powerful means of achieving organisational development, through “knowledge transfer, management development and the creation of a common organisational culture and effective informal informational network”. Many teachers in the sample spoke of believing their role as an OSH teacher involved a responsibility to bring knowledge and expertise to effect change, and share best practice in the international school. Some OSH teachers expressed that the role of the contract teacher as ‘expert’ can be extremely satisfying if it is recognised and utilised by the institution. However others felt frustrated and dissatisfied that this role is not always acknowledged and valued by the wider school community.

We are exemplars of good practice and I think because of that, when I get job satisfaction here it’s because I have fulfilled that particular role (Interview).

In terms of our, our wider role, as foreign contract staff, we’re expected to share our expertise and share ideas, that’s always been a source of satisfaction, you know, that ability to try and make change by drawing on your previous experience (Focus group session).

They don’t really value or appreciate you or even use you in the same way as other schools. I know that expat staff generally around the world are paid more than the local staff, to bring our expertise and share it (Interview).

If the school is paying all the extra money for this package for somebody then they want to get their money’s worth out of you and use your expertise and your experience from other countries to improve their school in some way, rather than just giving you the same role as local teachers have for far less money. That would be the reason, when I leave that will be part of it certainly ... what I find most frustrating, is that they don’t appreciate me (Interview).

The OSH teachers did report perceptions of feeling valued by parents, and of deriving job satisfaction from positive interactions with parents of international school

students. This perception may be related to the context of international schooling, given research indicating poor relationships with parents to be a significant source of occupational stress for teachers working within national education systems (Brown, Ralph & Brember 2002; Galton & Macbeath 2008).

I feel that the actual role of the teacher seems to be more appreciated by parents, out here, than maybe in the UK where the image of teaching and teachers is maybe a bit more tough (Interview).

On parent days and parent consultations, I've always just felt positive about them, I've never felt attacked, so on the whole they support you (Focus group session).

Parents often place a high degree of importance on the presence of high quality English instruction in Latin American international schools, which may explain the positive interactions described by OSH teachers, who are almost always native speakers of English. Potter and Hayden (2004: 88) conducted research in private, bilingual schools in a Latin American context and reported “the acquisition of English language skills for ... children is considered by many to be indispensable if they are to progress and maintain their position in society”.

Employment Security and Rights

If you ask me about dissatisfaction I would say, lack of support, lack of security, and a lot of feeling that what you were brought here for is not valued by the powers that be (Interview).

Crucial aspects of self-esteem are derived from simply holding a job, and job insecurity compromises the job satisfaction of workers (Nord 1977). Job insecurity is defined by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984: 438) as the “perceived powerlessness to act to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation”. According to

Maslow's (1954) motivation theory, the safety and security of workers is one of the most basic needs that must be met before higher order needs can be realised. Maslow (1954: 87) discusses the importance of job security and protection for employees, "we can perceive the expression of safety needs ... in such common phenomena as ... the common preference for a job with tenure and protection".

In contrast to Maslow's (1954) description of employment security as a motivating factor, Herzberg et al. (1959) identified security as an extrinsic hygiene factor, therefore a factor that will not contribute to job satisfaction, but the absence of which, has the potential to induce job dissatisfaction. The content analysis of interview data performed by Herzberg et al. (1959) identified job security as the most influential extrinsic hygiene factor, highlighting the critical importance of ensuring valued employees feel protected and secure in their employment. In a study of job satisfaction, Shann (1998) found job insecurity to be a critical concern among dissatisfied teachers. Responses from OSH teachers indicate that some feel unprotected in their employment situation, and stifled in the workplace by threats to job security.

There is also a risk of losing your job. People don't want to be seen to be causing trouble or asking difficult questions, because there is that always hanging over your head (Interview).

The only people that are safe are the administration; the system works like number one are administration, then parents, then students and finally teachers. So if anything goes wrong, let's blame the teachers. Why would you work at a school when you can be fired any day?(Interview).

OSH teachers are usually employed by international schools on short-term temporary contracts of two or three years. Feather and Rauter (2004) found that teachers on

short-term contracts are more prone to experiences of job insecurity than permanent teachers. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984: 443) postulate that employees will react to job insecurity and that these reactions will have consequences for organisational effectiveness, which is evident in the comments of the OSH teacher below.

A school like this can fire people, at will. There is no union backup on that. Then people are left a little bit de-motivated. It creates a little bit of competition, people can often do things for themselves rather than for somebody else ... people kind of just let you have trouble (Interview).

Organisational consequences of job insecurity among employees include impaired productivity, increased employee turnover and barriers to organisational change (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984: 443). The relationship between turnover and job insecurity is important, as research has demonstrated that this phenomenon is not randomly distributed across employees, rather the most valued employees tend to leave earlier (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984: 443).

Some of the OSH teachers expressed feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability in relation to a lack of protection of their rights as employees, as evident in the comment of the teacher below.

I feel kind of powerless, there aren't any channels, or not any obvious channels, that I can use to express my ideas (Interview).

Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984: 442) explain that a sense of powerlessness exacerbates the perceived threat of job insecurity among workers. According to these authors powerlessness is experienced in four forms. The comments from the participants revealed experiences of powerlessness in all four of these forms. The

first form of powerlessness discussed by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) is a lack of protection. Unions and meaningful employment contracts serve to protect workers' rights and to challenge threats to job security. Many teachers in this study expressed feelings of powerlessness stemming from the absence of a professional body to protect their rights as workers.

We've got very little protection as workers, we've not got a professional place you can go to and apply any pressure on the powerful (Written reflection).

If you're not happy with something, you go and have a conversation with somebody, but really there is a power imbalance there, hence the sense of, of powerlessness regarding some decisions ... You're not really feeling at all that you have a choice with a lot of things where, certainly in the UK you'd get your union rep onto it (Interview).

It's quite difficult working in a school where your status is less defined. We are not members of unions here so if something does go wrong it's very hard to find a framework through which you can follow something up ... If I was to complain it would very much become a personal issue between me and the headmaster (Interview).

Most OSH teachers have arrived from national education systems with articulated rights and conditions for teachers. The following experienced teacher expressed frustration with the number of contact hours allocated on his timetable, a frustration aggravated by his powerlessness to act upon the perceived injustice.

I'm a fairly easy-going person really, and in the United Kingdom, they give us some protection to help me be easy going, trade unions and professional organisation support, so a lack of that here in the school, I start to notice really. I have no way to act when things are unfair. So, for example, the rules and guidelines about how many hours you would teach over the year, and for two of my three years, I felt I was abused in a way (Interview).

The responses of the OSH teachers indicate a desire for affiliation with some form of organisation or body to protect their rights as workers and regulate their working

conditions. Iverson and Currivan (2003) report that union participation reduces the turnover of teachers. Some of the teachers also spoke of perceptions that attempts to establish and assert their employment rights are ‘frowned upon’ by the school management.

When I first started here and a bunch of teachers were trying to set up a kind of association and the headmaster walked in and he said, “I’m telling you, the truth is that piece of paper is just worthless, if we want you gone, you’re gone” (Interview).

A second form of workplace powerlessness identified by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) is unclear expectations, explained as a situation where an employee may sense a threat to job security but may not possess knowledge of what is required to maintain employment status. This issue was highlighted by the comments of the following OSH teacher.

What do they want from me? What do they want clearly in terms of hours, in terms of how many Saturdays you do? In terms of extra-curricular activities? Because, I think that none of those things were really made clear, and having them made clear would be a good incentive to stay. Because I am worried if I get it wrong, it affects my situation here, and also my reference for my next place of employment (Interview).

The culture of the organisation is a third potential source of powerlessness for employees. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984: 442) suggest that an authoritarian, hierarchical organisational culture deprives employees of an internal locus of control, and “provides little comfort” in terms of security for employees. For the OSH teachers in this study, the authoritarian leadership culture they perceive in their schools contributes to perceptions of powerlessness and job insecurity. The following teacher provides an example of authoritarian leadership.

An open letter was posted on the staffroom board by the Headmaster. There was one line in it that the staff has committed to memory; that “staffing decisions and appointments of staff here will be based on attendance to such school events”. You can hardly claim that such events are optional and good for the atmosphere of the school and simultaneously say that staffing decisions are based on turning up to these things (Interview).

Caffyn (2007: 342) notes that OSH teachers are usually transient, with limited opportunities for alternative employment in the foreign country, and therefore depend heavily on the international school for job security and economic stability. Consequently, the school management possesses significant control and power over OSH employees.

The final factor contributing to an employee’s sense of powerlessness is the organisation’s standard operating procedures for the dismissal of employees. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984: 442) explain, “the absence of policies such as progressive discipline and automatic review of a decision to fire makes the employee feel very much at the mercy of the superior.” Some of the OSH teachers interviewed expressed their discontent with their school’s procedures for the dismissal of employees.

Some of this [interview] could get me fired, but when these types of things happen they have to go to the staff and give a legitimate reason why people are losing their jobs. Otherwise people will be thinking, “Are they going to do that to me?” The rumours that go around this school because we are not told anything ... they are often just fabrications, but we have no idea what is going on (Interview).

I mean there are people that have been fired from here without a word about it. One day they are here and the next day you open the door and you see someone escorting them off the property (Interview).

Professional Growth and Advancement

OSH teachers are often recruited directly from home-country systems and may have received little training for the unique and challenging context of international schooling. Therefore, a posting in an international school represents numerous opportunities for OSH teachers in terms of professional growth. According to Lazarova and Caligiuri (2004: 335) an overwhelming majority of former expatriate employees report that the skills, knowledge and expertise acquired during an overseas posting greatly enhanced their professional competence and performance. A study by Gregerson, Morrison and Black (1998 cited in Harzing 2004: 267) found that when asked to describe the single most powerful experience for developing global leadership qualities, 80% of company managers identified the experience of living and working in another country. The following OSH teachers relate opportunities for professional growth directly to retention decisions.

Number one, when I think about whether or not I will stay, I am thinking about, "What can I learn in this school? About teaching English? About teaching and learning in general? About education? About how schools run effectively?" ... there is still a lot for me to learn, I think I can learn quite a lot here (Interview).

I want to spend longer professionally in this position, because I am really enjoying it and I am learning a lot here (Interview).

Some OSH teachers attributed feelings of job satisfaction to the opportunity to become skilled in new educational programmes and knowledgeable about international curricula.

It is a different education system, so I found myself working only alongside people from different countries, also learning new skills, new teaching approaches, being open-minded to their approach but also sharing my ideas. Professionally that is really rewarding (Interview).

Changing from the British curriculum to the PYP curriculum was a big step for me and quite a different approach but there were lots of advantages. And now I have that experience, it means that if I go and work somewhere else I have those dual curriculum approaches (Interview).

Despite the growing popularity and rapid expansion of international education, researchers suggest that very few OSH teachers have received any form of formal training specific to the context of international schools (Deveney 2007; Levy 2007; Snowball 2007). Effective professional development programmes are therefore crucial for equipping teachers with the necessary tools to successfully carry out the objectives of international education. Snowball (2007) argues that international school teachers should be required to show evidence of certain competencies, including: understanding international education in context; teaching in multilingual classrooms; multiculturalism; student characteristics and learning; transition; international curricula and reflective practices. According to Snowball (2007) a carefully designed programme which trains international school teachers in these areas would be of benefit, through the recognition of their specialised skills, and also schools, through greater assurance of teacher preparation and quality. The teacher below recognises her need for professional development specific to the international educational context, and attributes her intention to leave the school at the end of her first contract to the lack of provision of any such training.

I think massively, definitely some work on professional development, I think that has been a real issue for me and probably why I would go back to the UK, because in the end I was like, “You put me in a role that I’ve never had before, which you knew I’ve never had before, I need some form of, guidance, I need some form of mentoring” (Interview).

Powell (2000: 98) contends “professional isolation perpetuates professional ignorance”. The very nature of international schooling means that many OSH

teachers are geographically isolated from professional development opportunities; however successful schools will seek ways to ensure teachers do not become 'professionally isolated'. It is in the interests of international schools to ensure OSH teachers receive professional development that both provides a sense of job satisfaction and encourages best practice.

Only two of the OSH teachers who participated in the study identified professional development as a factor currently contributing to job satisfaction. These teachers valued their 'ownership' over the content of the professional development they were involved in. Joslin (2002: 37) contends that teachers are professionals who need to have the opportunity to "exercise critical independent judgements about the context and content of their own professional development", rather than receive training according to the agenda of the school administration.

I've been very interested in the opportunities I've had really to think of different teaching methods and techniques, like differentiation, or assessment for learning, ... we've got freedom really, creative freedom to do what we like and just your own little bits of research. It's lovely really, compared to previous staff meetings and developments ... we've been in control of what we do (Focus group session).

The good thing I've had is the opportunity for choice, with any of the various schemes that they've set up, we can opt into the various working parties, that we want to, so that's been nice, to have that freedom (Interview).

Wilkinson (2002: 190) identifies meaningful professional development of staff as the most effective way to establish a sense of continuity and stability in international schooling. International schools may be discouraged from investing in the professional development of OSH staff because of high turnover, however Blandford and Shaw (2001: 22) implore international school managers to recognise the training and professional development of OSH teachers as indispensable for greater stability

and high quality international education for students. If teachers are to be exemplars of international mindedness, they need context-specific training and opportunities to reflect upon and improve their practice. The continuing professional development of OSH staff also contributes to a network of skilled international education specialists who are cognisant of the values upon which international education has evolved, and carry this knowledge and understanding with them as they move from school to school.

Externally provided professional development for staff in international schools is essential, given the geographical isolation of many OSH teachers. Training opportunities outside of school generate a sense of belonging to a community of international educators, and unite teachers to work together to enhance the provision of international education. OSH teachers relate a lack of opportunities to participate in externally provided professional development sessions to job dissatisfaction and turnover intention.

Probably it would be professional development and if I went back to the UK once or twice a year and went on courses ... because that is my biggest source of dissatisfaction, that's what I am finding quite challenging (Interview).

If I were to stay in this school I would want to have training that is relevant, that I can use in the classroom or use to improve my teaching and the opportunity ... It's always going to be a problem overseas ... but I believe a good school will invest money in either bringing experts out to the school to train the staff, or sending their staff to places wherever the training is happening (Interview).

The teachers attributed the lack of externally provided professional development opportunities to the value placed on such training by the school administration and also to pragmatic considerations like budgetary constraints, and the difficulties of replacing teachers out of school for training sessions.

Dissatisfying, professional development, we don't have one day where we have an in-service, which is ridiculous ... they never hire people to come into the school, they flinch when you ask for money for professional development (Interview).

They don't have the money to send people to North America or to Europe for 10 day courses, nor do I want to cover those classes (Focus group session).

Where professional development was internally provided, OSH teachers expressed frustration at the fact that training was often conducted in the host country language (Spanish). According to Snowball (2007: 249) of all facets of professional development "language is, arguably, the most fundamental". In Spanish-language professional development sessions, expatriate teachers, unsurprisingly reported feeling frustrated, undervalued and marginalized.

They need to provide bilingual inset [training] and that is not a hard thing to do, essentially if you are speaking in one language, you invite the people who speak that language to contribute, and you implicitly exclude the people who aren't absolutely comfortable in both languages (Focus group session).

One thing, that is quite frustrating, is the lack of in-service training, or as happens here, a lot of the training is in Spanish, which when I first started, I didn't understand enough Spanish to get anything out of it (Interview).

Hayden (2007: 224) suggests that professional development for adults in international schools must be practical and relevant, and constitute new learning for the teachers. When this does not occur, training can generate frustration and be counter-productive; the word "demotivating" was sometimes used by participants to describe inappropriate training sessions. Such perceptions are evident in the comments of OSH teachers below, and reinforce Hayden's (2007: 225) assertion that "a one size fits all approach" to adult learning is unlikely to be successful for all.

You have training in IT for example, when you are basically being taught how to use Microsoft Word or programmes that you have used for 10 years. Or you have been given theory on, for example PowerPoint, that is also something that you covered 10 years ago, that is de-motivating (Interview).

The level of instruction regarding differentiation was simply not appropriate for my learning needs. In fact, it was a workshop about differentiation, with absolutely no attempt at differentiated instruction for the participants involved, some of us learnt this years ago ... an extremely de-motivating experience (Written reflection).

The OSH teachers expressed anxieties that the lack of quality professional development could inhibit their career progression, and that they are falling behind in the latest advances in pedagogical research and practice. These concerns were related to both satisfaction with the job and propensity to leave the post.

My professional life will mean I leave earlier. Because of my professional development, and I feel already, despite the fact I have only been here a year, thoroughly deskilled (Interview).

Sometimes I feel like that the lack of professional development here means that I'm going backwards professionally speaking (Interview).

Issues relating to the importance of culturally appropriate professional development were also raised by some OSH teachers. Blandford and Shaw (2001: 15) discuss the challenges inherent in the provision of professional development for a multicultural staff and advise that the cultural dimensions of models, theories and training techniques must be considered and addressed before introducing them in international schools.

INSET is a time when I don't feel valued, or satisfied. I feel the teachers from the UK are trained differently. For example, to the teachers from [country name]. the training seems to be much more theoretical with much less emphasis on the practical and the UK training is definitely a pragmatic approach ... I feel that my areas of expertise aren't really valued, so I feel often you are being told things that are incredibly obvious and to be totally honest not entirely relevant to your own training (Focus group session).

Alongside a desire for professional growth and development, many of the OSH teachers who participated in this research project related their turnover decisions to opportunities for career advancement. Gaertner (1999: 487) reports a significant correlation between promotional chances, employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In a study of OSH teachers Hardman (2001: 127) found that 88.5 per cent of teachers cited opportunities for professional advancement as the reason for joining/remaining in an international school. Most of the OSH teachers in the current study indicated that the opportunity for career advancement is an important consideration for them when making career decisions. International schools must consider that OSH teachers who do not perceive possibilities for advancement within the school will tend to search for these opportunities elsewhere.

It is quite a small school, so in my career my next job will be the Head of Department, then I basically need to leave to achieve that (Interview).

At the moment, I don't have any responsibilities at the school I am at, but I would really like some, but in reality I don't think that is going to happen, in the next two years that I am at the school, so for that reason I probably will move on (Interview).

Some of the OSH teachers interviewed have remained in their schools because they have been offered promotions. In addition, those who perceived that opportunities for advancement existed within their schools identified promotional opportunities as a factor that would encourage them to stay.

Number 1, I decided to stay because of the promotions I was offered. And so that gave me a sense of being wanted, and appreciated (Interview).

I am thinking about what's the value of staying here, what will that add to or detract from, the quality of my future employment or career prospects and experience. Right now I think there is potential for me to progress up the career ladder and become Head of Department ... I think there is potential in staying here (Interview).

I'm looking to move ahead in my career, it is the beginning of my career ... opportunities for promotion would definitely influence my decision to stay or go (Interview).

Some OSH teachers expressed dissatisfaction and disillusion about the school's procedures for appointing staff members to positions of responsibility. The comments below indicate dissatisfaction at a lack of transparency surrounding promotional opportunities. According to Osland, de Franco and Osland (1999: 24) such concerns are rife in Latin American organisational culture; a study conducted by these authors found that 70% of middle and high level managers in Latin American companies secured their positions through personal contacts. These authors further suggest it is common for senior managers in Latin American organisations to make all personnel decisions, and avoid rigid regulations that limit the degree of freedom to make particularistic decisions.

Although I do feel there is potential, I am not aligned with the ideology of promotion that goes on in this school. I have seen people promoted without any explicit job advertising, candidate criteria, any interview taking place, and it disturbed me greatly. So I don't know if it is something I want to be involved in, actually (Focus group session).

A member of the English department, who was applying for a job in the primary, had certainly been led to the impression that she had been given this job and she found out in the toilet that it had been given to someone else. I think there is a lack of transparency around job applications (Interview).

The comments made by OSH teachers in this study indicate that providing attractive and transparent opportunities for career advancement will be highly motivating for OSH teachers, and will encourage them to extend their contract beyond the original agreement.

Recruitment and Managing Expectations

I think the word expectations is absolutely crucial and I think it's a little different from recruiting for someone within the same country, or the same culture ... If you're going for a normal British high school, you've got a pretty good idea of how that institution runs ... it's not a step into the dark (Focus group session).

Many of the comments from participants in this study indicate that the successful human resource management of OSH teachers must commence at the stage of recruitment, and be characterised by clarity of information about the school and the role. Joslin (2002: 37) emphasises the importance for potential candidates to be “sure that the role for which they are applying is appropriate to their skills and interests, they need to be well informed about the culture and purpose of the school.” Research in international human resource management has consistently demonstrated the centrality of careful and honest recruiting for the success of overseas assignments. Most of the OSH teachers interviewed felt that the schools had not provided them with sufficient, accurate knowledge about aspects of their employment, especially in relation to housing, the working language of the school and the English language proficiency of students.

What we're told is that, “We do everything”. We're told, “We'll find you a house.” It's about clarity from the very beginning, if the deal is, “You find your house”, then you know that will be coming. It seems clear to me that, that when most domestic things go well here it's kind of more a matter of luck than anything else, and that's a bit dissatisfying (Focus group session).

I was told at interview, that every single public situation, like assemblies, meetings, are all conducted in English, that you may have to speak some Spanish ... but all professional meetings would be in English. This is just not true (Focus group session).

The thing they should have done for me, was at interview, clarify the nature of the students, their abilities and really the language issue. The word ‘bilingual’ was used, when it should have been ‘English as their second language’ ... I think I was deceived a little bit there. It was never brought up there that students might not have good English, ever (Interview).

The teachers' perceptions echo the findings of Odland and Ruzicka (2009) who reported 'misrepresentation during recruitment' to be a significant reason cited by teachers for leaving international schools at the completion of one contract. Some of the disappointment expressed by OSH teachers related to a lack of information about the level of Spanish required to effectively perform their role within the school.

At interview, it apparently wasn't going to be an issue ... I can order a taxi and buy things, but I was surprised how within the school, I would really need to have a better knowledge of Spanish, and that has caused me some dissatisfaction (Interview).

When we apply for the job, we apply for a job at an international school. We are told at the interviews that the language of the school is English, that assemblies would take place in English (Focus group session).

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) emphasise the importance of transparency throughout the recruitment process, suggesting that the expectations the expatriate forms about the host country and the prospective work context should be informed by accurate, factual information. According to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), the better the anticipatory adjustment, the fewer surprises and negative affective reactions occur, and adjustment to the new work environment will be smoother and quicker. The OSH teachers in this study often alluded to the idea of anticipatory adjustment, suggesting that some job dissatisfaction could have been avoided had certain aspects of the employment been communicated to them more accurately and honestly during recruitment stages.

I thought I was coming to an IB school, with very high academic students who were bilingual, bilingual in the sense that they were equally comfortable in both languages ... there was just a lack of thought put into the information that I needed (Interview).

It relies on the organisation being up to date, and ...having the knowledge they need to have. You put a lot of trust when you're at job interviews, and when you're having contract discussions, you're relying on them knowing what's going on in terms of what rent allowances are and so on, and then you come and you find that the rent allowance discussed is unrealistic, well that's a bad start (Focus group session).

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991: 306) posit that adjustment to an overseas working environment may be facilitated by previous international experience, as prior experience in an unfamiliar location may contribute to a reduction of the uncertainty initially experienced by newly recruited expatriates. The following comments from OSH teachers support this view.

My job satisfaction is 9 out of 10, or even higher, because I came here knowing where I was going. I've been in Latin America for over 20 years, so there are no surprises for me. I have seen a lower morale at this school than at a lot of schools, because a lot of people come here, that have no perception of what they're getting into (Interview).

I have been to two other countries around the world, both of which were quite significant culture shocks for me, and so to come here, I'd learnt how to assimilate, as I'd done a number of times. That really helped, because there is a tendency for people who come directly from the home countries, to come in and say, "Wow, you aren't doing this right because in my country it's done this way" (Interview).

While previous experience can assist adjustment and therefore may be an important consideration for the recruitment of OSH teachers, some participants communicated that such experience can actually contribute to job dissatisfaction, if expectations formed in a previous posting are not fulfilled in the new environment.

The school I came from was one of the best schools you could work for in the world, and particularly schools in Asia are known for being really top notch schools, educationally wise, so I think that your standard, when you come here, is all relative. ... I'd come from a school where they strive for professional development and that level of professionalism and you come here, it's a disappointment (Interview).

I feel quite lucky that this is my first post, and I haven't been in Asia for 5 years, living like a princess and then coming here and going, "God I've got no money" because it's not cheap in this country (Interview).

Harzing (2004: 270) claims that many organisations use technical skills and knowledge of organisational systems as selection criteria for overseas posts, and overlook crucial factors such as relational abilities, cultural empathy and family support. Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991: 294) support Harzing's view, arguing that organisations consistently underestimate the importance of cross-cultural skills in the recruitment of expatriate workers, favouring potential employees who appear to possess the relevant technical knowledge. According to Joslin (2002: 36) this organisational wisdom applies to staffing in international schooling, and while the ability to teach a subject is crucial, "this ability may not be sole priority in considering whether an individual is able to contribute to the environment of the international school." Some participants discussed the recruiting policies of international schools and communicated that practices could be improved by placing a greater emphasis on selecting more suitable candidates.

He also wasn't a good fit for the school. And although obviously it is very hard as a teacher, I don't think that he was really ready to come abroad. To be honest, I think that was the problem (Interview).

I think they need to be a lot more careful about their recruitment strategies and how they go about it. And I think they need somebody who is an expat in charge of that and maybe someone who has some idea, so they can ask the right questions (Interview).

Induction and Training

I don't think we were encouraged to settle into the school comfortably, there was no induction programme or follow up meetings about how we were settling in. That is what induction is, helping people to settle in (Interview).

It's really horrible to see staff, especially new, not get the help they need ... people can be left to flounder and then the answer to is just fire people, that was a really big shock. That is probably the most dissatisfying side (Interview).

Commencing a new job can create significant anxiety and uncertainty for an individual. Induction is the process whereby employers receive and welcome new employees, and provide the basic information needed to perform their role effectively within the organisation. Despite the abundance of research indicating that induction enables employees to become “integrated, effective employees, at the earliest opportunity” (Deb 2006: 191), none of the participants in this research study felt that they had received effective induction to their positions in international schools. This is a perception of critical importance for international schools, as poorly managed induction programmes can lead to dissatisfied teachers and excessive turnover of OSH staff (Stirzaker 2004: 34).

I was surprised that I didn't have a meeting until well into my first year, that I didn't have a first month meeting, or one before the term had started to really identify my role (Interview).

New teachers need to be exposed to school manuals, department handbooks and curriculum documents and to be provided with opportunities for formal and informal exchanges with the management, staff, administrators and pastoral leaders for clear and accurate information about rules, expectations, salaries, benefits and housing.

I don't think I was ever given induction. I don't think general school rules or the way the school is managed here, a lot of the administration, was explained to me fully. Even now after almost four years, there are many things I don't know about how the school should operate ... people don't talk to you enough or make it simple (Interview).

Well it would certainly be follow up meetings, not forever, but say during the first 6 months, maybe a monthly meeting, just to see how things are going and really just to

clarify that you know where to go or who to see, or just that you understand the systems ... Someone should have the role of perhaps regular meetings, individually or in groups (Interview).

Studies have demonstrated that expatriates who are under-prepared for the challenges of living and working abroad find it difficult to adjust and often incur high costs for the organisation (Tarique & Caligiuri 2004). In order to avoid such costs many multinational companies include cross-cultural training in induction programmes. Cross cultural training is defined as “any planned intervention designed to increase the knowledge and skills of expatriates to live and work effectively and achieve general life satisfaction in an unfamiliar host country” (Tarique & Caligiuri 2004: 284).

According to Tarique and Caligiuri (2004) effective induction must target both general cultural orientation and specific cultural orientation. One purpose of general cultural orientation is to enable individuals to understand factors that may influence their receptiveness to effective cross-cultural interactions (e.g. resistance to change, the ability to manage stress, preconceptions about other cultures). Induction training in an international context should therefore seek to build awareness about the effects of transition, and to provide strategies that enable workers to successfully cope with change (Snowball 2007). A second purpose of general cultural orientation is to communicate how cultures may differ and the potential impact of these differences in the workplace. In order for such training to be truly effective in international schools, it must involve local-hire staff, so that all staff have an understanding of the way cultural forces can impact upon the workplace dynamic.

It goes back to the example I gave before of the Director of the school using the label, 'contract staff' loosely. How does it occur? It festers really, through a lack of an orientation program and it occurs through the fact that there isn't really an international atmosphere in the school ... So if I feel that I am 'othered', I don't really know who to turn to, to discuss that or talk about it or solve it or work on improving it ... no one has thought about it and written an orientation programme for local staff or contract staff (Interview).

Specific cultural induction should be designed to foster employee sensitivity to, and understanding of, the new cultural context. This element of induction should provide information about language, customs, history and geography as well as an understanding of appropriate cultural behaviours and ways of performing necessary employment tasks (Tarique & Caligiuri 2004: 291). Successful induction systems encourage realistic expectations about living and working in the new country, and reduce the potential for dissatisfaction arising from an incongruity between employees' expectations and their daily reality.

So I think the biggest problem still is, orientation is bad here, when you come to the school. I mean at other schools, they take you around the city for God's sake, show you how to get things, and how to get by (Interview).

With hindsight, some of my frustrations could have been avoided or improved with a better integration program which would include teaching new members of staff Spanish and providing training or setting up a buddy system that would help with fitting in and cultural assimilation (Interview).

Salary and Benefits

In many international schools throughout the world, OSH teachers are amply rewarded for their specialised skills and mobility, and often receive emoluments including competitive salaries, free or subsidised education for children, shipping allowances, air travel, housing allowances, health insurance and annual bonuses (Cambridge 1998; Hardman 2001). However, the OSH teachers from this study revealed multifarious perspectives regarding their international compensation.

Fenwick (2004: 308) defines international compensation as “the provision of monetary and non-monetary rewards, including base salary, benefits, perquisites, long and short term incentives” which are valued by employees, and are relative to their contribution to organisational performance. International schools have long recognised the importance of international compensation strategy in the implementation of organisational strategy, and there is often a wide differential in the salary scales of overseas and local hire teachers in international schools. The value for the international school of recruiting expatriates lies in the market advantage they create, as a human resource possessing marketable skills and competencies. Fenwick (2004: 309) argues that an international compensation strategy that effectually applies appropriate incentives to reward and retain such employees can protect this competitive advantage.

Gaertner (1999: 490) reports that empirical evidence into the job satisfaction of employees in a wide range of professional settings does not indicate any statistically significant relationship between pay and employee job satisfaction. Financial rewards are described by Herzberg et al. (1959) as ‘extrinsic motivators’ and therefore, if perceived as absent will contribute to job dissatisfaction, but the presence of monetary incentives will not increase job satisfaction. However, Richardson, von Kirchenheim and Richardson (2006) found that OSH teachers who report high pay satisfaction are more likely to adapt successfully to international relocation, resulting in increased job satisfaction and propensity to stay within the post.

The comments from teachers in this study supported the suppositions of Herzberg et al. (1959): financial incentives were not identified by any of the teachers to be a source of job satisfaction. The teachers did, however, cite compensation as an incentive that could increase the likelihood of their retention within the school. Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-LaMastro (1990) argue that continuance commitment (the desire to remain with one's employer) is influenced by the perceived economic advantage available in one's job, relative to alternative employment opportunities. Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004) reported that an increase in salary is the factor most likely to lead to the retention of teachers..

My feeling is if you want people to stay you need to come up with some cash. I'll give you a 'for instance': in my previous school, on average, teachers stay at the school seven years. That for an international school is unbelievably high, but they pay unbelievably well (Interview).

Feeding my selfish greed, sorry I know I'm going straight to hell, but up the money. That would definitely induce me to stay, particularly in today's economic climate (Focus group session).

Teachers' perceptions regarding the international compensation they receive varied greatly, even within the same schools. According to Fenwick (2004: 314) the basis for determining appropriate expatriate compensation is maintaining parity with home country colleagues; ensuring that the employee enjoys at least the same standard of living as he or she experienced at home. Many relocated employees expect additional perquisites in order to compensate for their mobility and specialised role within the organisation, as well as to offset additional costs concomitant with international relocation. Some of the young, relatively inexperienced teachers in this study perceived that their international compensation allowed them to experience a higher quality of life than in their home country.

In terms of financial package, I'm very, very happy with the financial package that [school name] offers me and they increase it. When I re-negotiated my contract, I asked for a number of things, and this school granted me everything that I asked for (Interview).

Here I have managed to save a lot ... I eat out a lot; basically I can also do everything I want. Because they pay the rent and because they give this dollar bonus at the end of the year, actually to be honest with you, it was things I was not expecting (Interview).

Teachers working in their first foreign teaching assignment were less likely to be dissatisfied by their salary than more experienced teachers. This may be attributed to the fact that teachers in their first overseas teaching position tended to be younger, and therefore less likely to be supporting dependants with their wage. Also, these teachers had not worked in international schools in other parts of the world where financial compensation is perceived to be significantly higher, and therefore did not experience disappointment associated with unfulfilled expectations. Teachers with experience in a range of international settings expressed dissatisfaction and increased turnover intention related to their international compensation. This was linked with the perception that financial incentives in this particular country do not represent parity with the global 'going rate' for an OSH teacher.

If you want people to stay you have to pay them the going rate, and the going rate is not what they pay ... I have never been paid less to teach anywhere in the world (Interview).

I thought about it, people I know and why they are leaving or why they will leave. Firstly, this is not a cheap city to live in and I took a fifty percent pay cut to come here (Interview).

The comment below suggests that realistic expectations about financial compensation will minimise the potential for OSH teacher job dissatisfaction arising from compensation issues.

I didn't come to Latin America for the money. It's not a part of the world that you come to earn a lot of cash, if you want to earn lots of money there are a lot of other places in the world you can go (Written reflection).

A concern for many OSH teachers is the fluctuation and instability of the local currency. Some teachers perceived that high levels of inflation had eroded the purchasing power of their salary package. According to the annual global Mercer (2009 online) survey, the increase in the cost of an international basket of goods and services over the last three years in this particular Latin American country reveals one of the most pronounced levels of inflation worldwide, and this was reflected in the comments of the teachers.

I think that job dissatisfaction, the insecurity of the finances, the fluctuation of the currencies, the fact that you are paid in the local currency. That can be a problem (Interview).

There is another thing that obviously has been a negative change to my life. It is a short-term negative impact on my finances ... The thing that causes it is a miscalculation, or a misinformation about the cost of living here and the cost of living has risen dramatically from when I arrived and than the paperwork of the contract suggested (Interview).

All of the participants in the research study receive free housing as part of their international compensation package. Relocating to a completely foreign culture can be a disorientating and highly stressful experience. The anxiety associated with establishing a “home” in an unfamiliar environment can be either compounded or alleviated by the quality of housing provided by the school. Interviewees who were pleased with the housing provided for them, expressed their satisfaction.

They have been really caring about where I live, right from the beginning, right the way through, and I've had a chance to move now, and I think that's probably quite

important and a little bit of change, so with the job promotion came the chance for a nicer apartment (Interview).

The quality of my accommodation is a lot better here than it was in England (Focus group session).

However, some OSH teachers expressed disappointment at the quality of housing provided by the schools and also the way the school handles issues relating to housing arrangements.

He left before his contract finished, in the conversations I had with him, he was always very unhappy here. Mostly, he felt they hadn't put him in a particularly nice place to live (Interview).

I hate sounding like a spoilt brat, but in comparison to other deals for contract staff at schools in this city, our accommodation allowance falls short of that, so that's an issue for my satisfaction, it kind of relates to how valued I feel (Focus group session).

Multinational companies are aware of the importance of providing a housing allowance that “ensures that the expatriate can maintain the same standard of living” as in their home country (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright 2004: 470). It is evident from the disappointment expressed below that some OSH teachers perceive international schools are not ensuring a suitable standard of housing. Furthermore, some teachers were dissatisfied by the complications they faced when they decided to move house.

Two colleagues I know were placed in accommodation that was completely unsuitable and the school had signed a contract and put them into the accommodation. I was quite shocked that the school would place a family and a couple in what was clearly unsuitable accommodation in the first place and that they would then be obstructive and unhelpful in improving it (Interview).

I was constantly fixed between feeling like a spoilt child, when I was complaining about something, and feeling ripped off, or really let down when I didn't ... the flat that I had was much less than I expected based on inference from the contract, and in

the negotiations in interview. I felt when I tried to change that I came up against a wall of defensiveness and aggression (Focus group session).

In terms of housing ... you put a lot of trust in the organisation that you work for that you're going to be put somewhere that's appropriate for you, and if that doesn't happen, that's a big issue, because sorting it out is very difficult and expensive (Interview).

International schools should manage the expectations of staff they are recruiting from abroad, with accurate information about accommodation, including photographs, in order to minimise the disappointment and dissatisfaction evident in many of the comments above. Teachers in this study often felt they had little control over decision-making about their living arrangements.

I felt with my accommodation that, I was given no power over the choices that I made at all (Interview).

I keep saying 'in other schools', it's very tedious, but previous schools, you know, you arrive, they put us up for a, for a month in a hotel, the deal was, your Spanish lesson is in the morning and in the afternoon, we'll take you around, you go round in a bus and we'll show you houses and flats, and you choose one (Focus group session).

I wouldn't want to pick somebody a birthday present let alone a house ... And with an absolute two year commitment (Focus group session).

From an international human resource management perspective, international compensation is one of the most visible strategies for motivating and retaining staff (Fenwick 2004: 308). Pay satisfaction, Richardson, von Kirchenheim and Richardson (2006) suggest, is a factor of paramount importance for attracting, motivating, and retaining of global assignees. International schools must be diligent in ensuring their international compensation structures acknowledge local and international conditions, in order to recruit, motivate and retain high calibre employees.

Working Environment and Conditions

Respondents reported some school environment characteristics as impacting upon job satisfaction. One of the features that teachers identified as contributing significantly to job satisfaction was small class sizes. Research in the context of the British national education system has revealed large class sizes to be a major source of occupational stress for the teachers (Brown, Ralph & Brember 2002; Galton & Macbeath 2008). Class sizes, Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004: 71) found, have potential to be either deeply satisfying or deeply dissatisfying, highlighting the importance of this facet of the work environment.

Smaller classes would be the factor most obviously contributing to job satisfaction. Considerably smaller I'm teaching classes about half the size that they were in the UK (Interview).

It is so easy to teach the lessons you always dreamed of, but never could. Because of the behaviour of students, but first and foremost because of the very small class, the learning environment is so manageable (Focus group session).

This is an aspect of international schooling that these institutions would do well to preserve. Studies have linked large class sizes to the turnover of teachers (Ingersoll 2003; Loeb, Darling-Hammond & Luczak 2005; Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain 2005). As well as providing conditions for satisfied, productive teachers, small class sizes also represent a market advantage for international schools. According to a study by Potter and Hayden (2004) small class sizes is one of the most important factors for parents in choosing a bilingual school. So while increasing teacher job satisfaction, schools are also creating the conditions that make the school more attractive to prospective 'clients'.

Many teachers identified a lack of physical resources as a source of dissatisfaction in the international schools of this country, a factor that may not be expected to emerge in a worldwide study of this nature. Consider the following information from the website of an international school in Asia in comparison with the comments of participants in this study:

World-class facilities with 2 computers for every 3 students, unrivalled online resources and computer labs with CISCO training, computers and SMART Boards in every classroom, 60,000 books and media items in the school libraries.

The lack of resources, particularly IT resources ... it's hugely important, resources, would enable much smarter working, and would enable getting more things done in the day. The resources are sub-standard, particularly for a school of this nature, that is supposedly one of the best schools in [country name] and in theory an international school, it's appalling. And specifically there are not enough computers to go around, they are very old, they are bad quality (Interview).

There is one printer in the library that is for staff and students, and if the teacher is working in the staff room, they have to make a telephone call to ask to print a document, and then when they get there ... the print job might be cancelled, you have to run upstairs to send it to print again. It's a farce, it's like a comedy. So, yes it's a source of great dissatisfaction, running around trying to print one document and it taking an hour and a half (Interview).

Another aspect of the working conditions that the OSH mentioned in relation to job dissatisfaction was the policy of 'cover' which was reported to be widespread in their international schools, whereby teachers are asked to substitute for absent members of staff during their non-contact time.

One of the reasons why we don't have time to do the jobs that we want to do well, is because we are often covering teachers who are absent ... I would do at minimum one maybe two covers every week (Interview).

I find that there are teachers here that are incredibly lazy, like there is a guy that I teach with now and he has taken so much time off work and his colleagues end up having to cover his class because the school is too cheap to get a sub (Interview).

Teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their work/life balance due to the long working hours and often mentioned this aspect of their job in relation to turnover intention. Their views are supported by research in national education contexts, which has consistently linked teacher stress, dissatisfaction and turnover to an unsatisfactory work/life balance (Brown, Ralph & Brember 2002; Buchanan 2009; Dinham & Scott 2000; Galton & Macbeath 2008). The average teaching day for teachers in this study begins at 8.00 am with classes until 4.30, and sometimes 5.30pm. Staff meetings are scheduled outside these hours, and there can be significant demands on time for extra-curricular activities, trips and Saturday functions.

The school day is very, very long. It is seven lessons for students, the effect is that their last lessons of the day are very difficult because the students are exhausted and so are the teachers. It just doesn't seem to make any sense to try and teach seven lessons, seven different subjects a day (Focus group session).

In the United Kingdom before I left there was a big movement among staff to try and make the managers realise that we have a life outside of school, but that doesn't seemed to have happened here ... the fact that we have a private life isn't really recognised. So quite often with additional Saturday events, you'll be pressured by senior management ... quite nasty pressure I felt really (Interview).

The number of teachers in this study who expressed dissatisfaction at work requirements outside normal school hours indicates the need for international school leaders to consider the growing body of research that suggests that individuals do not seek more involvement in their work. Nord (1977: 1027) posits there is “no more reason to suggest that work ought to be a central life interest than to assume the opposite”. Brown, Ralph and Brember (2002) report that additional work demands placed upon teachers outside normal work hours are a substantial source of job

dissatisfaction, particularly where such demands impinge upon family and personal life.

Summary and Conclusions

The OSH teachers participating in this study identified a range of factors that impinge upon their job satisfaction and turnover decisions, many of which are within the employer's control. The participants related dissatisfaction, frustration and increased propensity to leave the school to many 'high control factors'. The comments of the OSH teachers suggest low levels of confidence in the governance and leadership of the school, and poor professional relationships with senior managers. Many of the participants experience feelings of job satisfaction when they are provided with opportunities to utilise specialised knowledge and skills, however most report that they are currently dissatisfied by a lack of recognition of their talents and efforts.

A significant source of job dissatisfaction for OSH teachers in this study was the perception that they have little employment protection and no regulatory body to ensure their rights as workers. The interviewees derived job satisfaction from small class sizes in international schools, however were dissatisfied by a lack of physical resources and poor organisational systems. A significant number of OSH teachers linked job dissatisfaction and turnover intention with the long working hours required of them by the international school.

The OSH teachers did not tend to link salary to feelings of job satisfaction; however, many did identify compensation as a strategy capable of influencing turnover decisions. A number of participants expressed disappointment and frustration with

issues surrounding their housing arrangements. OSH teachers seek opportunities for meaningful and relevant professional development, and some OSH teachers expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of such possibilities. The OSH teachers associated opportunities for career advancement with propensity to remain in their current post.

The perceptions of the OSH teachers indicate recruitment and the early stages of a posting to be crucial for the establishment of a satisfied and stable body of OSH staff. However, OSH teachers were often dissatisfied by perceptions of misrepresentation during recruiting, and a lack of strategic planning in recruiting and induction policy and practice.

While the preceding presentation of data may represent grim reading for managers of international schools, all of the above categories fall within the school's locus of control. International schools, therefore, have much scope for developing policy and practice that will improve the job satisfaction and rates of retention of OSH teachers.

Chapter 5: Moderate Control Factors

Introduction

It's not the school's responsibility to help me have positive relationships in the school, it's my responsibility to learn the language and build positive relationships with staff, but I think that there are things that the organisation can do to support that; to try and help us break down those barriers (Interview).

The responses of the OSH teachers in this study revealed factors influencing their job satisfaction and turnover intention over which international schools can exert a 'moderate' degree of control. 'Moderate control factors' are those factors which can be influenced by school management, but may also be affected by factors external to the school's locus of control. Moderate control factors often represent challenges and rewards that are unique to the context of international schooling.

While international schools may not be able to exercise the same degree of influence over moderate control factors as they can for high control factors, an awareness of these factors can inform strategic human resource management and relevant training to promote the job satisfaction and retention of OSH staff. Encouragingly, teachers in this sample derived significant job satisfaction from some of the moderate control factors; in particular through their relationships with international school students, the International Baccalaureate curriculum, the nature of their work and the autonomy they are afforded over their work. It was interesting to observe the teachers' perception of a high degree of autonomy over their work, given that some had discussed their dissatisfaction with 'autocratic' leadership. A closer examination of OSH teachers' responses indicates that teachers may experience this autonomy in relation to the actual content they teach and their work within the classroom, while

simultaneously perceiving that outside the classroom they have little control over their working lives. The OSH teachers reported their interpersonal relationships with colleagues in the school to be complex and challenging, capable of contributing to both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Issues relating to the delivery of a dual curriculum, the bilingual work environment, organisational support for adjustment and repatriation issues were often identified by participants as creating job dissatisfaction, and impinging negatively upon their propensity to remain at the school.

Working with International School Students

It's the nature of the kids that makes it pleasant (Written reflection).

Successful teacher-student relationships have been consistently linked to teacher job satisfaction and higher rates of teacher retention (Shann 1998). Poor student behaviour is a source of job dissatisfaction and teacher turnover (Galton & Macbeath 2008; Ingersoll & Smith 2003; Inman & Marlow 2004). Student behaviour, Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004) found, has the potential to be either deeply dissatisfying or deeply satisfying and is therefore a powerful determinant of teacher job satisfaction. When teachers and students enjoy positive communications, teachers exhibit greater job satisfaction and experience less burnout (Den Brok & Koopman 2007). The enthusiasm in the comments of the OSH teacher below highlights the satisfaction teachers can derive from positive teacher-student relationships.

I felt like they really appreciated the work I did, the more creative I was, the more positive feedback I got. Like an example is: I had a student who never really did his homework and really could be happy just getting by. And one day we had a test where they had to design a restaurant and the lighting inside and show me that they understood the physics of light and how it works, and he just loved it, and at the end

of the class he was like, “Miss this test was awesome!”, and I was like, “Oh my gosh! Can I get a witness? Peter just said my test is awesome!” (Interview).

According to Galton and Macbeath (2008), poor pupil behaviour heads the list of factors contributing to the job dissatisfaction of teachers working within the British national context. Brown, Ralph and Brember (2002: 10) reported that poor teacher-student relationships contribute significantly to the occupational stress of teachers; they included in their findings the following verbatim quote from a teacher working within the British national system.

I hate getting up in the morning. The thought of having to face the year ten class yet again fills one with despair. I cannot control them. They do not want to learn. I am terrified that my colleagues will hear the noise and call me a failure. I can't sleep at night.

These comments contrast sharply with the perceptions of the OSH teachers in this study; most reported deriving an enormous amount of job satisfaction from interactions with their students. Interviews with OSH teachers consistently revealed that they feel truly fortunate to work with such “exciting”, “co-operative” and “motivated” students.

I do find them more co-operative, rarely has a class resisted doing what I've asked them to do. In my comprehensive school in England sometimes there'd be large groups of students who'd be reluctant to go along with your plans (Interview).

Obviously it's a real pleasure to teach here, the children are very, very well motivated, very self-motivated, want to learn, that makes your job as a classroom teacher very, very easy (Focus group session).

The quality of the students that we have gives me job satisfaction. We have a number of very powerful students who are very exciting to work with (Written reflection).

The responses of the OSH teachers are supported by the work of Odland and Ruzicka (2009: 26) who found that among teachers leaving international schools after their

first employment contract, the least frequently cited reason for turnover is student behaviour. The quality of teacher-student relationships is emerging through research as an appealing and deeply satisfying feature of working within international schools. Many OSH teachers consider relationships with students in an international school to be of higher quality than those they experienced within their own national education systems.

I've found that, particularly in comparison to the school that I taught in the UK, the types of students that I teach in this international school are quite different, they come from different backgrounds, their motivations are different, and their level of behaviour in the classroom is better. The relationships I have with the students on the whole are more positive than the relationships I've had in the past (Interview).

The thing that was frustrating in the UK was the progress was often very slow ... class management was always an issue, you always had one class in your timetable that was going to be a fight ... Whereas those things aren't factors here, the students are generally much better behaved, the progress in the classroom is quite exciting (Focus group session).

While student behaviour and teacher-student relationships were reported by most OSH teachers in this study to be a satisfying aspect of their professional lives, the teachers also identified barriers to forming these productive relationships, often rooted in the challenges of inter-cultural communication. Den Brok and Koopman (2007: 233) argue that the influence of culture on teacher-student interaction within an international school is crucial, as the quality of this interaction influences student outcomes and teacher job satisfaction. The comments below suggest that OSH teachers perceive teacher-student relationships in international schools to be subject to cultural forces.

I find the cultural difference between where I've come from and here, constantly a source of challenge, because the differences question my approaches to teaching (Focus group session).

It took me a lot longer than I thought to be happy with the atmosphere in my classroom. There are a lot of things that I misinterpreted: sincerity for sarcasm, and sarcasm for enthusiasm, it is a very different place to teach (Interview).

According to den Brok and Koopman (2007: 234) teachers and students in international schools must possess sound inter-cultural communication skills, because healthy teacher-student relationships are a pre-requisite for engaging students in learning activities. International schools have a responsibility to develop the inter-cultural skills of teachers, so that these professionals are able to operate effectively in an international classroom. As Gay (1986: 156) argues:

we cannot afford to gamble students' school success on the pretentious assumption that untrained or ill-trained teachers can teach that which and those whom they neither know culturally nor value unprejudicially.

In their comments about working with students, the OSH teachers alluded to the cultural construct of *personalismo*, which Osland, de Franco and Osland (1999: 221) identify as a tendency, in Latin American organisational culture, to produce work for others primarily because of a personal relationship. In Latin American employment contexts it is common to observe instances of people making special arrangements for others because a personal relationship exists (Osland, de Franco & Osland 1999: 221).

According to the OSH teachers interviewed, *personalismo* is sometimes reflected in student behaviours and expectations.

For me an issue is that students misinterpret the relationship. There really is a fine line between the professional and personal here, and if you're nice to students, then they assume you're going to pass them (Interview).

The dissatisfaction links in with students crying at end of the trimester, or the end of the year and saying, "Why, why did you fail me?" So that's very uncomfortable, it's very personal, it's a personal attack on a teacher, and it's unprofessional. It's an atmosphere that's very difficult to work in. It can change the culture and the atmosphere of the working relationships that are otherwise pretty good (Interview).

These comments are virtually echoed by an anecdote from Osland, de Franco and Osland (1999: 222), which highlights the complexity of culture in cross-cultural educational institutions:

The [expatriate] professor was shocked to discover, after grading his exams, that the students with whom he had the closest relationships had the lowest grades. These students were counting on their friendship with the professor to guarantee their grade because this is how they would show loyalty to friends. They did not understand that US Americans are more likely to separate the particularistic demands of personal relationships from the universalistic, bureaucratic demands of the job.

Successful expatriate business managers in Latin America maintain appropriate, pleasant professional relations with workers, as well as a certain degree of distance. Managers are able to prevent misunderstandings relating to *personalismo* when they clearly communicate that personal relationships with employees will not affect personnel decisions, and then act accordingly (Osland, de Franco & Osland 1999: 222). Such recommendations contain obvious implications for expatriate teachers. To create and maintain appropriate learning relationships with Latin American students, OSH teachers need to be sensitive to cultural expectations and to define the parameters of the relationship early on, through unambiguous expectations and ground rules.

Den Brok and Koopman (2007: 236) identify South America as a 'highly immediate culture', characterised by behaviours that "communicate closeness, approach and accessibility". The Western-trained teacher comes from a contrasting cultural background in which the teacher traditionally maintains a degree of distance and authority in teacher-student relationships; therefore opportunities for

misunderstanding within the relationship can be high. Latin American students are often accustomed to teacher behaviour that is “supportive, friendly and occasionally emotional” (den Brok and Koopman 2007: 236). In order to be culturally responsive to student expectations, it is necessary for OSH teachers to acknowledge the complex relationship between dimensions of culture and teacher-student relationships, and to develop strategies to minimise negative consequences for student learning. The comments below reflect tensions in cultural expectations of teacher-student interactions.

I will just not tolerate such behaviour and if they don't like me, I really don't mind, whereas that's something here that they are definitely the friend ... in the UK, they are not your friend, they are your student, but obviously it has to be based on respect (Interview).

The way behaviour is dealt with is people sit down with the kids and they are very sweet to them and very nice to them, which is absolutely fine. But with certain situations you have to step in and be like, “No, I'm not tolerating this” (Interview).

Working with International School Colleagues

It's very hard to pick up on staffroom politics, but it's harder when you're divorced by culture and language as well (Interview).

International schools are a microcosm of the globalised world in which we live; they are a melting pot of people, cultures and ideas and combine the global with the local. Diversity in cultural behaviours, values and norms can exert a considerable influence on working relationships inside international organisations. Caffyn (2007: 341) asserts that conflict is inevitable “where there are diverse epistemological, economic and cultural backgrounds”. Stout (2007: 320) concurs, reporting, “conflict, sadly, seems to be becoming almost a way of life in many international schools”. The retention of OSH teachers can alleviate problems associated with working in cross-

cultural groups, as staff who have acquired an understanding of the host country culture will be more culturally sensitive than a group of highly transient employees. The following comments from OSH teachers reinforce the importance of retaining OSH staff beyond initial contracts.

It's taken me quite a long time to understand and appreciate some of the cultural differences that do exist between staff; I'm only just starting to figure it out now (Interview).

For the staff it doesn't create a very healthy atmosphere if you've got high turnover of staff. If every single time the teacher arrives from overseas to stay 2 years, leaves, stays 1 year, leaves, then that will build a wall in between the local staff and the children and the contract staff, and that wall will grow. It becomes 'them and us'. If overseas contract staff are staying that builds warmth between contract staff and the local staff (Interview).

The participants in this study identified some challenges associated with intercultural work relationships. Research in the field of cultural theory can offer valuable insight into the underlying causes of the interpersonal challenges reported by OSH teachers. Cultural theory is based upon the assumption that implicit differences in cultural values and norms can manifest in divergent beliefs and behaviours in an organisation (Romani 2004: 142). Research by Hofstede (1980) identified and validated cultural dimensions, which provided a framework for understanding how cultural diversity can influence professional relationships. Hofstede's (1980) work has been highly influential in the field of international human resource management as it offers an explanation of possible organisational consequences of culture, an area which had been previously thought of as abstract and intangible (Romani 2004: 148).

According to Hofstede's (2009 online) dimensions, in comparison with Anglophone cultures, the country in which the current study was conducted is a society with a

considerably higher ‘power distance index’, and is a collectivist (as opposed to individualist) culture. A greater power distance score indicates organisations are more likely to feature a vertical hierarchical structure, in which “subordinates are often told what to do and do not feel entitled to discuss superiors’ decisions” (Romani 2004: 144). As discussed in Chapter Four, OSH teachers are often uncomfortable and frustrated in this environment, having arrived from cultures in which superiors and subordinates work in more collaborative relationships, where the hierarchy tends to function as a “distinction of task rather than of persons” (Romani 2004: 144).

Collectivism within a culture is expressed through the integration of individuals into the strong, cohesive groups. Western teachers, raised in more individualistic societies, are often accustomed to working within an environment where ties between individuals are less personal and people are expected to look after themselves (Hofstede 2009 online).

In addition, the culture of the research context has a significantly higher tendency towards ‘uncertainty avoidance’, than Anglophone cultures. According to Hofstede (2009 online), a high Uncertainty Avoidance Index ranking indicates:

a society’s low level of tolerance for uncertainty. In an effort to minimise or reduce this level of uncertainty, strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations are adopted and implemented. The ultimate goal of this population is to control everything in order to eliminate or avoid the unexpected. As a result of this high Uncertainty Avoidance characteristic, the society does not readily accept change and is very risk adverse.

While there are dangers inherent in making generalisations that treat culture as predictable and static, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions serve to illuminate areas where OSH teachers may feel disoriented within a new cultural context.

Facilitating collegial relationships is a priority for educational managers; Powell (2007: 351) posits, “the manner in which adults speak, share ideas, form work partnerships and manage conflicts is often a profoundly accurate predictor of the quality of learning within the classroom”. This view is supported by Stout (2007: 316) who argues that the success of a school is determined by the “unification of people around values”. In the context of international schooling, where teachers have often received no specific training for their role, supportive adult relationships are crucial. The following OSH teachers associate successful professional relationships with their job satisfaction, and also with high quality teaching and learning experiences for students.

For me, satisfaction comes from having a school where the majority of people working in it are really looking to better themselves as educators and there is open communication and people are constantly sharing something that went well, or can say, “Hey, this lesson is bombed, can I talk through it with you see what you might think was the reason it bombed or any suggestions?” ... But that doesn’t happen here (Interview).

I taught maths in [previous international school] and I was not comfortable teaching maths at all, and my actual principal used to be a maths teacher and he was so awesome, I could come in and be like, “This lesson was awful I’m so frustrated, I’m an awful teacher”, and he would be like, “Ok. Let’s get out the maths books and let’s locate what the problem in your lesson was and see how we can do it differently.” And it was just really nice to have that kind of support (Interview).

While teachers in this study did not generally perceive negative relationships with colleagues, very few identified their interpersonal relationships as a factor currently contributing to job satisfaction. In contrast, a study conducted by Fraser, Draper and Taylor (1998) in the United Kingdom reported ‘relationships with colleagues’ as the primary source of job satisfaction for teachers. Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004:72), who also carried out their research in the United Kingdom, found that 97% of teachers

who identify relationships with colleagues as a facet of their job satisfaction, consider this aspect of their work to be “deeply satisfying”. However, adult relationships in international schools are highly complex. International schools must contend with the challenge of unifying a culturally and demographically diverse staff; Caffyn (2007: 347) describes this dilemma as “the essential paradox of such a school”. The language of ‘us’ and ‘them’ employed by some of the interviewees, implies the extent of the segregation that exists within some international schools.

But there are just some things that I have to bite my tongue. There is one of you and 500 of them, and you are just not going to change it (Interview).

Although we are actually alongside each other I don't think that it is as collaborative as it could be between us and them. The children are not really getting the best education, because there is no effective communication (Interview).

Hambrick, Davidson, Snell and Snow (1998 cited in Cambridge 2002b: 165) conducted a study to determine the influence of cultural diversity upon organisational effectiveness. These authors identified four dimensions that may distinguish cultural groupings within an organisation: diversity of values; diversity of cognitive schema; diversity of demeanour and the relative facility with the working language. These authors concluded that cultural diversity can inhibit performance of coordinative tasks within multinational organisations and create “interpersonal strains and mistrust” within the group. Cultural differences in values and cognitive schema were emphasised by the comments of some the OSH teachers articulating a ‘preference’ for working alongside colleagues of similar cultural backgrounds.

The fact that we are mostly contract [OSH] staff means, that we are quite similar in the way that we think, and the way that we work (Interview).

I find it's much easier working with people who have either come from abroad as well, or had international experience. Where I have had more difficulty, it is dealing with local staff, when they don't understand the type of education that I have had or training that I have had or experience, or don't appreciate it, or in some cases I think they feel threatened (Interview).

The idealisation of one's own culture and a tendency to reject the host culture can lead to fragmentation within international schools and to teachers withdrawing into communities according to cultural groupings. Joslin (2002: 50) contends that overestimating the importance of one's own culture is a barrier to successful cross-cultural communication:

socialisation with people of the same cultural background may provide a useful anchor, but it is the degree to which an individual retains a domestic mindset that may be significant to their cultural adaptation. The individual needs to take steps to confront alternative ways of thinking and behaving, and to be aware of the complex ambiguities of exchanges in foreign cultures.

The OSH teacher below appears to be aware of this, and comments that this actually makes him feel uncomfortable spending time with other OSH teachers during the working day.

Because it's a small school, with a small expatriate staff, you're also conscious of becoming a clique and being seen as isolating yourself. So there are external factors that maybe affect what would otherwise be quite simple social choices. I would feel self-conscious, for example, if myself and all other contract staff were seen having lunch together (Focus group session).

National and OSH teachers may view the teaching profession very differently, and this can be a source of tension in international schools. According to Oplatka (2007: 476) the profile of the teaching profession in developing countries is:

a kind of default or a supplementary form of income, from which male members are constantly trying to escape, and many teachers are described as holding low qualification with limited opportunities to participate in in-service training.

Oplatka (2007: 483) discusses the reluctance of teachers from developing countries to renew their teaching methods. Caffyn (2007:345) writes that the complex diversity within international schools is often revealed by tensions among stakeholders over “achieving consensus on school philosophy and standards”. The incongruity between the deeply held assumptions about how education should be ‘done’ in an international school was found to be a source of frustration and dissatisfaction for OSH teachers.

The lack of movement from the teachers, I’ve walked into a lot of classrooms and they are just sitting at their desks. You don’t sit at a desk when the kids are working, you sit at the table with the kids and you help them out (Interview).

They read a lot of books in this country and they think that that answers a lot of questions, and my attitude is, no, you do it. You practice it, and you work it out and you don’t send teachers off with books, you stand there and show them how to do it and then you get them to try (Interview).

A belief in testing, is the main problem, it is certainly my biggest problem. People think that the only way really to judge progress is through testing, I think you get teaching to tests, and the only form of assessment is testing. That doesn’t philosophically sit easy with what I believe in terms of assessment and about what the curriculum should look like (Focus group session).

This belief in testing discussed by the teacher above is consistent with a culture that has a tendency towards high uncertainty avoidance. Oplatka (2007: 476) reports that teaching in developing countries:

is characterised in terms of knowledge transmission, adherence to prescribed curriculum and text books, summative assessment of student achievements, and conservativeness. Student assessment in many classrooms may be typified by memorisation and knowledge and comprehension level questions.

According to Osland, de Franco and Osland (1999: 225) a reluctance to trust group processes is at the heart of the difficulties some Latin Americans have in listening to others and accepting ideas other than their own.

I find myself bumping up against the background of local staff. They've been trained in one way and have very strongly held beliefs of how teaching should be done. I come at it with a different background. It's difficult to challenge people's way of doing things ... when you try and suggest that there might be different ways of doing stuff, that doesn't always go down well and that's demoralising, especially we've been hired on that basis, we're there to help, make a difference (Focus group session).

Osland, de Franco and Osland (1999) discuss the importance of *simpatía* in Latin American organisations. *Simpatía* is a Spanish word which translates roughly to friendliness and affection. People in Latin American workplaces “always take the time to greet one another with a show of genuine pleasure, asking after their health and family” (Osland, de Franco & Osland 1999: 220). While offering a warm and pleasant work environment, *simpatía* also has the potential to compromise organisational effectiveness, as it can encourage conflict avoidance, and reluctance from workers to confront under-performing colleagues. Powell (2007: 355) contends that quality adult relationships in school should not be about “civility, passive cooperation or conviviality”, rather “hard-earned collegiality and ... thoughtful, reflective and highly productive teams.” Many of the teachers interviewed found it difficult to adapt to the cultural expectation of *simpatía* in the workplace.

Underneath the surface there are some quite important cultural differences, for example the ways of working that are valued here are quite different to those in the UK, such as having a conversation in the staff room about your private life is considered in some ways more valuable than preparing your lesson (Interview).

Here, obviously, the culture is very different to working in a school in the UK. How you talk to people is not the same. And maybe what you say they take in a different way to how you meant it, they are much more outgoing and friendly and more affectionate people here and so you have to be that way as well or else they perceive you as being very cold and typically English and unfriendly (Interview).

A tendency of the local organisational culture to place more emphasis on ‘talking’ rather than ‘doing’ was noted by many of the respondents, who described this as a frustrating aspect of their working lives.

Whole staff meetings, whether it be the short weekly briefings or the monthly staff meetings, usually will dissolve into a discussion where lots of voices are shouting at each other at once, shouting different ideas and complaints into what becomes a huge mess of noise (Focus group session).

Not as much time is spent on the actual important meeting part of discussing or planning, more time is spent on getting side-tracked on other issues (Interview).

Culturally sensitive issues have the potential to exacerbate the division between local and international teachers. International schools market themselves on their commitment to ideals such as international-mindedness and global citizenship, and therefore have a responsibility to ensure groups within the school are not subjected to marginalising, discriminatory experiences. The following OSH teachers attributed feelings of job dissatisfaction to the way culturally sensitive issues are treated within the school.

An assembly on an emotive issue like that could only make any foreigner in the room feel extremely uncomfortable (Interview).

One assembly was the [event not disclosed to protect identity and privacy]. You feel yourself looked at the same way as if you were at a Vietnamese school and there was an assembly on the Vietnam War. If you were an American teacher you would feel that people would be naturally looking towards you as a representative of that country. That was exacerbated by the fact that I didn't understand everything that was going on so you find yourself joining the dots ... So the meaning that I created at the end of that assembly was extremely negative. I felt very much like a minority; I felt very self-conscious. And accurately or not, that was then reinforced by students asking, "How did you feel about that?" or "I hope that wasn't offensive to you, sir" (Focus group session).

OSH teachers often receive much higher rates of compensation than local staff. Discrepancies of this nature may generate tension and segregation amongst the international school staff. Some teachers mentioned this issue in their interviews; however they felt that they were able to manage this situation.

Being humble or thankful is important here, because of the situation that we are a contract staff that have a better package than the local staff. If we were bragging about our lifestyles, then we wouldn't fit in very well, people really would not like us very much (Interview).

If you come with unfriendly manners ... you could be subject to animosity from the local staff, quickly. I also feel that if you do come, you do work hard, and you are nice to the people, it is OK. But does it create negativity to you, being paid more? It's there (Interview).

Importantly, some research participants identified a relationship between interpersonal relationships and the decision-making process surrounding their retention.

When you feel like you have a close group of colleagues who kind of blur the line between colleagues and friends, I think that's a very enjoyable place to be, if you like the people you are working with. I think that's a really strong motivation to stay (Focus group session).

That relationship I have is quite a key relationship and it's good for 70% of the time, but when it's bad it's horrendous. I have moments of going, "I just want to get on a plane and go home because this is just frustrating and it's unprofessional" (Interview).

Interpersonal relationships in international schools are often threatened by the very quality that attracts OSH teachers to this working environment: cultural diversity. Stout (2007: 320) argues that the richness of cultural and professional diversity, can “provide a potential breeding ground for conflict if unregulated in the hands of a weak chair or head.” Managers and leaders of international schools must acknowledge their

profound influence on school climate and collegial staff relationships, and seek opportunities to support and nourish productive adult relationships within the school.

Language Proficiency

Language is one of the most important resources available to humans. Language is essential to the “process of dialogue, development of meaning, and to the production of knowledge” (Darder 1991: 101). Language, therefore, carries enormous potential to either empower or disempower individuals according to their access to the language. According to Briscoe and Schuler (2004) ‘language’ is often cited by expatriate employees as the most significant personal and professional challenge of an overseas assignment. Proficiency in the host country language is an important component of cross-cultural adaptation (Dowling, Festing & Engle 2008: 146), and therefore should be supported and encouraged in countries where the language is reasonably accessible to foreigners.

While the OSH teachers in the study were positive about the opportunity to learn a new language, many felt that their limited linguistic ability in Spanish inhibited communicative skills and access to important information. Some of the participants do not feel confident to perform certain aspects of their role because of language barriers, which threaten job satisfaction and crucially self-efficacy; Richardson, von Kirchenheim and Richardson (2006) report that self-efficacy has a significant impact on expatriate adjustment. The comments of the OSH teachers in the study emphasise language issues as important determinants of job satisfaction. Many teachers spoke of the frustration they experience as a result of their inability to communicate in the host country language.

I think that language barriers are dissatisfying, whether it is the kids speaking their own language in the class or whether it is assemblies in another language. There is too often I don't know what is happening and that is frustrating; the way you don't control the meetings and these sorts of things (Interview).

I can speak a little bit but not enough to speak with parents, that's the level of Spanish you need, especially when you're dealing with tricky situations, parents who are upset - which at home I can do quite well, but here, in another language, it's very difficult (Interview).

Here I do a lot of my work in Spanish, and that came as a big surprise for me. I didn't feel prepared for that either ... I certainly felt prepared to buy my groceries, but not to chair a meeting in Spanish (Focus group session).

Although many of the OSH teachers considered language barriers to be a source of frustration in their work environment, the opportunity to learn a new language is a facet of their professional life that OSH teachers often value highly, and therefore language training and support can function as a powerful motivator for them to stay within the institution.

In terms of what the school could do to retain my services - at least they could offer to teach me Spanish effectively (Interview).

I feel I am getting better at Spanish, and I hope to get at some point some fluency. I would love to be able to speak it without having to really stop and think, much more second nature, and now I'm getting a lot better. I'm still quite a long way off, so I think that will encourage me to stay (Interview).

Teachers reported receiving varying levels of support and training in the foreign language from the international schools. The OSH teacher below expressed his satisfaction about this aspect of his working life.

One thing I am really happy about with the school: they continue to offer me a large amount of Spanish lessons, so many that I've not been able to do all the ones I could have done. They have really pressed it (Interview).

However, several of the teachers felt that they should have been offered intensive language training before the commencement of their post to more adequately prepare them for the linguistic demands of the role.

It's something they could have done, sent me to an intensive Spanish school. And then I could have started early, and been more ready (Interview).

I think the school could definitely do more. If I'd been offering me a contract, I'd have said "Come out here at the end of January, we're going to put you into a Spanish school for three weeks, and you get stuck into that 6 hours a day until you start." And that would kind of jump-start you, it would set the tone (Focus group session).

In many international schools around the world there are separate language streams within the same institution, and all of the participants in this study worked in schools that offer Spanish and English programmes concurrently. The staff body of these schools is constituted by a combination of bilinguals, English speakers, and Spanish speakers. The variation in language and language proficiency sometimes produces a sense of difference between staff and generates fragmentation within the organisational culture.

It's not really a surprise that if you don't speak the language it's harder to assimilate, but I think the school could definitely do more. I think there's a big barrier between you and the Spanish-speaking staff when you arrive, and there are enough barriers as a new member of staff anyway (Interview).

Successful communication is vital for productive working relationships and organisational effectiveness. Language barriers sometimes lead to conflict in international schools when intended messages are misunderstood. The following comment from an OSH teacher highlights this challenge to establishing and maintaining of productive professional relationships in international schools.

It does make it very hard to do your job. This year I've had a really unfortunate incident, which was simply from using a word that I thought had one meaning that it didn't. So I think you can have real breakdowns of professional communication if you're expected to speak in a second language, and you've never really been trained to do that (Focus group session).

The Formal Curriculum in International Schools

Curriculum is fundamental to the schooling process. Traditionally, curriculum has been considered in terms of the specific content taught in a programme of study, but scholars now contend that curriculum encompasses formal, informal and the hidden elements of schooling (Catling 2001: 30). The term 'formal' curriculum refers to all activities on the academic timetable, and 'informal' curriculum describes school activities during break times and outside school hours. The 'hidden' curriculum is the context in which the content is delivered and the "unintended, unconscious or unplanned outcomes of its delivery" (Stobie 2007: 141). The comments of OSH teachers indicate that the formal curriculum in international schools exerts a multi-faceted influence upon job satisfaction and turnover decisions. While the teachers reported highly positive experiences of teaching the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme, many teachers were dissatisfied by the fact that this curriculum is offered alongside the national programme, and also by the low level of student motivation towards the international curriculum.

The International Baccalaureate Organisation has been central to the emergence of international education and it provides schools with a framework for building a curriculum that espouses cultural sensitivity and equips learners with the necessary tools for success in a globalised world. A study by Hayden and Thompson (1998a) concluded that teachers view ideological concepts such as 'learning to be tolerant of cultures with different perspectives' and 'learning how to consider issues from more

than one perspective' to be critical dimensions of international education. OSH teachers could therefore be expected to derive satisfaction from working with the IB curriculum because of the emphasis on such outcomes for students. All of the teachers in the sample were working in schools that offer the IB programme and many identified working with this curriculum to be a highly motivating and satisfying aspect of their professional life.

A significant part of my enjoyment of teaching here is the curriculum. I think the [IB] Diploma course in English is great. There's much more variety, there's much more opportunity for writing in different forms, rather than just analysis (Interview).

I very much enjoy teaching the IB, I think it is a really, really good curriculum, promoting really important values in students (Interview).

However, in many cases, this satisfaction is offset by the lack of importance attached to external examinations and qualifications by the students. The informal and hidden curricula in schools can be as influential as the formal curriculum, and some of the OSH teachers do not feel that the school actively promotes the value of IB qualifications among students.

I don't have the impression that the IB is sold as much as it could be ... through conversations with students there seems to be a misunderstanding of how internationally recognised the IB is, about how employers and universities overseas will know exactly what it is, and also what a great opportunity they have to get scholarships and train overseas (Interview).

There is a situation where the administration is keen to follow government standards. And I think secretly, or even subconsciously, it tends to be a little 'anti' international standards. And when the administration says, "Well this is how we do it", I think it does frustrate a lot of teachers (Interview).

While international schools may strive to deliver a truly international curriculum experience for students, the influence of the host country can be very strong. The education ministries of some countries require international schools to provide

specific content and time for subjects particular to the local context (Catling 2001). All of the teachers who participated in this study worked in schools where the IB programme was offered in tandem with the national curriculum, and these schools are obliged to include local studies of history, geography, sciences and civics in their programme. Many of the OSH teachers perceived this situation as placing unreasonable demands on students, consequently decreasing their motivation towards international programmes of study. Furthermore, many students in international schools in Latin America are host country nationals and international qualifications are often not recognised for access to local universities. Therefore, the OSH teachers were frustrated at the lack of incentive for students to achieve to their potential in the IB programme of study.

Well, the school has a bit of an identity crisis, in that it's a [country name] school, within the [country name] system that teaches the IB to students who don't want the IB. Certainly in the two departments that I teach in, all the criteria are based on IB criteria, and that's what I'm teaching towards the whole time. But for nearly none of the students I teach is the IB ever going to be a useful qualification (Focus group session).

It's also the fact that they have to do the [country name] curriculum, as well as the IB. It's a bit harsh on students in a way, because if you're going to pass all those subjects and you've got to do your IB as well, you're bound to just try to survive, rather than to shine (Focus group session).

Another dissatisfying thing for me is the difference between the two international schools I've worked in ... the one in [another country] where IB was accepted by universities, and where students were incredibly highly motivated ... and they got fantastic results. One of the sources of dissatisfaction for me is that I see a lot of students here who are just as able but who are underachieving, because IB is just not important to them (Interview).

Haywood (2007) discusses the range of constraints imposed on curriculum and assessment in international schools by the local environment. Some OSH teachers expressed frustration related to the host country national regulations.

The pass/fail system does definitely have an impact on my job satisfaction because there is a real tangible thing that motivates the students, but I question whether that's for right or wrong reasons (Interview).

The OSH teacher above refers to an education system widely used in Latin American schools, whereby a student must reach 21 points out of 30 over three trimesters to 'pass' the subject. In the final trimester the student must have a minimum of 7 to pass. If the student has less than a 7 in the third trimester, or their total grade for the year is below 21, they 'fail' that subject. Students have an opportunity to re-sit an exam and 'pass' the subject after other students have left for holidays, in December, and then in February before official classes begin. Failing more than two subjects in the February exam session means the student must repeat the school year. Predictably this system places teachers under pressure to 'pass' students.

The biggest source of dissatisfaction for me is the [country name] education rules, which drive me crazy, and working in the context of an educational system where kids fail the year, is something that I find so difficult to deal with. It's something I'm philosophically opposed to, and having to work within that system, I find that makes me feel uncomfortable (Focus group session)..

Because the clients are the student and the parents, and they're paying for a service, they see a reflection of that service as getting a 7 - that we should teach them well enough for them to pass. I can understand that, but if they're failing then they tend to look at us, rather than their kids (Interview).

Some OSH teachers associated turnover and retention decisions with the organisation of the school curriculum. OSH teachers appear to be attracted to schools which place an emphasis on the IB programme and where this programme is valued highly by the students.

I don't think my next school is going to be a national school with an international flavour that offers a dual curriculum: an IB and a local curriculum. It will be one where it is all about the IB (Interview).

I would like the kids to be better motivated in my next school, I would like the IB external examinations to be more important (Interview).

Organisational Support for the Adjustment of OSH Teachers

While OSH teachers should assume some responsibility for ensuring they are informed about working conditions in a prospective school, it is critically important for international school to recognise that OSH teachers have different needs than home country professionals. These teachers commit to significant life changes when they accept a teaching post abroad, but they do expect that their employers will be sensitive to the unique challenges they face as a group, and will be flexible to their individual circumstances. Expatriate employees are susceptible to adjustment problems related to the need to communicate in a new language, cope with culture shock and to understand different laws and customs (Tarique & Caligiuri 2004: 284). International schools should show awareness of such concerns, according to Haywood (2002: 176), as OSH teachers face “a range of novel problems that are sometimes underestimated by the organisation for which they work”. In this study, some of the participants attributed feelings of job dissatisfaction to a lack of organisational support for their situation as expatriate employees. Some of the issues discussed below overlap with other high, moderate and low control factors. However, this category emphasises the importance for international schools that OSH teachers perceive support for the ‘novel problems’ that confront them.

I think you need to feel professionally that you're going to be in safe hands and that all your basic needs are going to be looked after, so you don't have to worry about those sorts of things in a different context. If that doesn't happen then that really is de-motivating (Focus group session).

Regarding shipping - I was told by the school that there would only be a small fee to bring in excess and I was landed with a bill for well over a thousand dollars – again, there's just that fundamental lack of communication. I felt very, very let down by the school. It's hugely de-motivating (Interview).

I know of serious examples of how the school has been deliberately unhelpful, unsupportive in administration issues, relating to how things happen in our lives outside of school (Interview).

OSH teachers are confronted with the double challenge of adjusting to a completely new cultural context and well as the professional environment. These teachers are susceptible to 'culture shock', which can manifest in serious psychological consequences, with potential implications for job satisfaction, job performance and turnover intention. Oberg (1960) identified the following potential consequences of 'culture shock': strain or stress relating to psychological adaptation; a sense of loss or deprivation resulting from the removal of friends, status, role, and personal possessions; fear of rejection by, or rejection of, the culture; confusion in role definition; unexpected anxiety, disgust or indignation regarding cultural differences and feelings of helplessness, including confusion, frustration and depression.

International schools can expect that OSH teachers will need a period of adjustment before they are able to work at optimum capacity. The greater the disruption of the prior routine resulting from an expatriate's relocation, the greater the resulting uncertainty, and the longer before this uncertainty is reduced to a comfortable level (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou 1991). For OSH teachers living in Latin America, cultural discrepancies are significant and can take the form of general culture, ways of working, living conditions, health care, daily customs, political systems and bureaucracy, as well as a foreign language.

I would say there was little support outside the school, just even finding your feet in a new area, a new culture, with the language (Interview).

The lexical choice of participants when describing their experiences of organisational support for their adjustment was revealing. Participants expressed “disappointment” and feeling “let down”, “having placed trust in the organisation” and the belief that they should “be looked after”. Many of the views expressed below contain the suggestion that international schools are not investing adequate “thought” into providing a smooth and positive transition for OSH teachers, and are underestimating the challenges confronting expatriate employees. OSH teachers expect schools to accept greater responsibility for their adjustment to the new environment.

You need to just put so much more thought into anything where you’ve got an audience coming from different backgrounds ... It’s just a lack of thought, and a lack of understanding and these things can be really disappointing (Focus group session).

I just think really, not enough thought has gone into looking after anybody’s needs ... for all of the staff, not just us actually, for local staff as well (Interview).

The OSH teachers conveyed a lack of confidence in the organisational competence of international schools in relation to the management of foreign staff. Some of the OSH teachers interviewed also commented on the fact that there was no one person in schools responsible for the welfare and concerns of the contingent of OSH teachers.

I think a lot of the people who are in charge of doing those sorts of negotiations actually don’t know what the local rents are or what the cost of things are because they are rich, they don’t have to sort those things out for themselves (Focus group session).

There is no one in the school with that job, to look after things when they need to be sorted out for us. I have no idea where to go to say, work out my end of year flight home. There are seriously about ten people each with small little jobs relating to contract staff – and we never know who to go to for what (Interview).

Personal security is also an extremely important component of supporting the needs of OSH teachers. According to the work of Maslow (1954) personal safety is one of the most basic human needs, and when unfulfilled can create tension and anxiety. OSH teachers spoke of harrowing experiences in foreign countries, and the lack of organisational support they received after such experiences.

I don't feel like the school really care about whether they have established me in a safe situation or not. The accommodation that has been provided for me has no security in front. There was one morning I was walking to the van that takes me to work and I was robbed and assaulted at gunpoint. I was dragged through the mud and was bruised and shaken up. I went home and had a shower and then caught a taxi straight to work. While many people asked how I was, the school offered absolutely nothing in terms of psychological support, and insurance to cover my financial losses was never even mentioned, even though I was on my way to work. No arrangements were made by the school to make my situation any safer (Interview).

They should make sure that you have places that are safe. I just had a friend who is a teacher in an international school that had her place broken into ... She was beaten so badly that they broke her eye socket and her nose, and so having a place that is safe I think is really important, you know paying extra money to make sure your employees are in a really safe situation and area (Interview).

Developing a formalised mentoring programme for new OSH staff can assist in supporting some of their unique needs. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004: 1) claim that recent empirical evidence indicates mentoring programmes have a positive impact on teachers and their retention in schools. Teaching is a profession conducted largely in isolation from colleagues and mentoring programmes can provide new teachers with a “local guide” to working in the new environment (Ingersoll & Kralik 2004: 3). The comment below from a female teacher, living away from home for the first time in her life illustrates the potential of such programmes to alleviate some of the difficulties perceived by OSH teachers.

I seek advice from my colleagues in the English department and feel like they give good advice ... whether it is about teaching or learning; whether it is about the pastoral side of school life; whether it is about life in general (Interview).

Expatriate employees have unique needs, as individuals and as professionals, which must be considered by international schools in the design of coherent strategies to retain their OSH teachers beyond an initial contract. Cushner, McClelland and Safford (2006: 102) postulate that for the majority of people it takes as long as two years to understand the more subtle aspects of a foreign culture. Most OSH teachers are recruited on two-year contracts; therefore, if these teachers leave after this time, schools may never realise the full potential of the investment they have made. In the initial stages of a new posting, expatriates experience an intense period when they have to adjust psychologically to the new environment. International schools must seek to build a stable core of experienced foreign teachers, and manage turnover carefully, so that new employees can benefit from working alongside experienced colleagues.

The Nature of the Work

The work itself for me is mainly in the classroom, because I am an ordinary classroom teacher. So it's that experience, when the institution supports that and lets that happen comfortably and nicely then I'm happy, and overall I am happy here with that side of things (Focus group session).

It appears that regardless of where in the world a teacher is working, or the educational context within which the teacher is situated, 'the work itself' emerges as the most powerful component of job satisfaction for teachers. Studies exploring the job satisfaction of teachers have consistently concluded that the core business of teaching and learning is perceived by educators to be the most satisfying aspect of their work (Brunetti 2001; Dinham & Scott 1997; Galton & Macbeath 2008;

Koustelios 2001; Sergiovanni 1967). The OSH teachers interviewed for this study emphasised the intrinsic rewards of their occupation, and most derived significant job satisfaction from the classroom experience; watching their students learn and grow.

I've been teaching for many, many years and the source of satisfaction for me is always: being in the classroom ... I've never taught in an international school before but in this school my job satisfaction regarding the teaching itself is high, and I feel well motivated, just from the classroom experience (Interview).

It can be so rewarding to see them not only developing as individuals academically but also in another language as well, and being able to express themselves in that language (Interview).

Deriving job satisfaction from the nature of the work as an OSH teacher in an international school was often expressed by teachers in terms of a favourable comparison with their home country system. This process of interpretation through comparison with past workplaces parallels 'reasoning by analogy' in which individuals view present events as like or different to historical occurrences (Isabella 1990: 22). According to Isabella (1990: 23) the "human cognitive apparatus is more comfortable with the past than the present". When evaluating job satisfaction many OSH teachers applied the frameworks that have been used in the past. This frame of reference serves as a "context-specific dictionary", which enables them to reference and compare their current realities (Isabella 1990: 23). This process may help reduce anxiety by utilising pre-existing cognitions to indicate appropriate behaviours and actions.

There are very little discipline issues that you would get in the UK that contributed to my stress before (Interview).

It is a range of things, the kids are more motivated here than the UK, there is less pressure from the senior leadership; there is less external pressure like from governments (Interview).

Autonomy Over Work

According to Nord (1977) a significant body of literature has established that perceptions of control and creative freedom in the workplace are related to high levels of worker self-esteem and professional efficacy. A number of studies in the field of education have also posited a positive correlation between the professional autonomy of teachers and their job satisfaction (Fraser, Draper & Taylor 1998; Kim & Loadman 1994; Klecker & Loadman 1999). The OSH teachers who participated in this study were deeply satisfied by the autonomy, freedom and flexibility they experience in their roles. The autonomy reported by the OSH teachers was attributed to both the flexibility afforded by the IB curriculum and also to the 'role freedom' experienced within the school. While this finding is surprising considering perceptions of autocratic leadership, responses indicate that teachers experience a satisfying degree of freedom inside their classrooms, but feel powerless to influence decision-making at a whole school level.

Many of the teachers interviewed had spent time working within the British national education system where, according to Galton and Macbeath (2008), teachers are highly dissatisfied by a lack of professional autonomy. Galton and Macbeath (2008: 9) report that the rigid structure of the British national curriculum, the pressure to meet curriculum targets and the preparation required for external inspections are significant sources of stress and frustration for teachers. Other research conducted within national contexts has reported that a lack of professional autonomy increases a teacher's propensity to leave a teaching post (Ingersoll 2003; Rhodes, Nevill & Allan 2004). For some of the teachers interviewed, comparison with previous experience

intensified their satisfaction with the flexibility and autonomy they experience in international schools.

The freedom we have to design the curriculum. The lack of the bureaucracy and stress and pressure that you have in the UK, the lack of the straightjacket that I've experienced in the UK (Focus group session).

You are not being tied by so many restrictions that you have at home. And it's really fun to be creative (Interview).

Additionally, the interviewees tended to associate the IB curriculum with a high degree of control over the teaching and learning process.

It is a combination of working with the IB and the nature of the school in that the school doesn't really impose a lot on us ... it does give us a lot of freedom to be creative as teachers and that is very satisfying (Written reflection).

It is because of the nature and flexibility of the international school, the nature of the IB curriculum as opposed to a national curriculum and GCSE in the UK, we are able to be innovative in ways that are successful (Interview).

This feature of working in an international school was considered by OSH teachers to be an incentive to remain at their current school.

I wouldn't rush leaving here to go back to the UK. I would rather stay here and continue. At the end of the day, I do have free reign in what I do here (Interview).

I know as soon as I go back to England, it will be, "This is what you have to do. This is how you have to do it. If you don't do it, then you're rubbish" (Interview).

It is also important to note, however, that some of the OSH teachers in the study perceived the freedom and flexibility of working within an international school, to be a dissatisfying aspect of their professional lives. The comments below reveal a perception that excessive autonomy can lead to a lack of professional accountability, which has the potential to threaten the quality of teaching and learning.

I think it's quite easy for people to do a lot less, whereas in the UK, especially in the state system, you are very accountable and there is little accountability in this culture (Interview).

There's a massive lack of accountability and that is a big thing for me, people are free to do what they want, and that is not always best for the kids (Interview).

Repatriation Issues

The concern is if I do go back to the UK, I have been out of that environment now for four years and a certain part of me worries that I have been deskilled ... If I did go back to the UK, I would have to go back as a Head of Department - being out of the loop for four years. I wouldn't be able to go back as an Assistant Head (Interview).

The perceptions of the OSH teacher above are supported by literature in the field of International Human Resource Management. Lazarova and Caligiuri (2004) explain that while international postings are beneficial to individuals in many ways, the repatriation process often results in unexpected challenges. According to these authors, repatriates from multinational companies often experience professional disappointment; only 40% of repatriates report having the opportunity to utilise their newly-acquired international skills upon returning to the home country (2004: 338). In addition, repatriates in multinational companies perceive limited career options and are often overlooked for promotions because they “have been removed from the mainstream of corporate advancement” (Lazarova & Caligiuri 2004: 338). The OSH teachers in this study expressed their concern about this issue, as illustrated by the comment below.

Being out here, you lose a lot of ability and seniority in your own country - it becomes difficult to get on the ladder. You may have higher credentials but you have not put in your time in your system or school and that tends to be a problem (Interview).

Individuals can experience reverse culture shock upon returning home after a number of years abroad, and some repatriates even suggest that coming home can be more emotionally stressful than going abroad. This phenomenon is attributed to the fact that an expatriate expects differences in culture and lifestyle; but may misguidedly assume that the home culture has remained static since their expatriation (Lazarova & Caligiuri 2004: 337).

There is also going back to your home country and you feel like a complete stranger, having moved around (Interview).

It is so much more disorientating to feel culture shock in my own country than it is somewhere else. I have this every time I travel home, and it is probably one of the only negatives of living outside my own country (Interview).

Lazarova and Caligiuri (2004: 338) report that many repatriate employees of multinational companies experience “bitter disappointment” with the repatriation process. This is clearly not a desirable situation for any organisation, and international schools need to exercise care in order to ensure OSH teachers’ career paths are not disadvantaged as a result an international posting. International schooling is a highly competitive industry, and skilled human resources provide a market advantage. Good practice in repatriation is critically important for the international school industry; if international schools gain a reputation for representing ‘the end of the line’ for burgeoning careers, there will be an increased reluctance for high-calibre teachers accept international postings.

If you are very ambitious, it is simply not a great career move to come out here. It is a life experience, but it does not help you to get ahead in your career. Do you know what? I’ve probably gone backwards since I came out here, so I won’t stay long (Interview).

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has examined a range of factors affecting the job satisfaction, dissatisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers over which international schools can exert a 'moderate' degree of control. These are factors that may be influenced by forces external to the school's locus of control, for example by national education systems, the intrinsic motivation of teachers and the dynamics of culture. However, international schools can, and do, exert a powerful influence upon these 'moderate' control factors. They can create conditions that encourage OSH teachers to derive job satisfaction from these aspects of working within an international school; this will in turn increase the likelihood of retaining the services of these individuals.

Despite the challenges inherent in forming productive learning relationships with students in a foreign cultural context, OSH teachers consistently reported that working with students is an exciting, motivating and a powerfully satisfying component of their jobs. OSH teachers consider their students to be creative and co-operative. It is ultimately for the welfare of these students that international schools should be seeking to provide continuity and stability through the retention of OSH teachers.

Supportive, collaborative professional relationships are crucial for OSH teacher job satisfaction and retention in international schools. These teachers report a number of barriers to forming such relationships in an international environment. Schools should actively seek ways to promote cohesion and supportive relationships among staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Working within a bilingual institution presents both challenges and opportunities for OSH teachers. The participants in this study described their surprise at the level of Spanish required to perform their roles effectively. This suggests OSH teachers would benefit from accurate information about this issue at interview stage. Many of the OSH teachers were excited and motivated by the opportunity to learn a new language, however they also felt that language barriers sometimes inhibit organisational communication. The participants receive varying levels of support for Spanish language training from their schools.

Many of the teachers in the sample cited the core business of teaching and learning to be their principal source of job satisfaction. The OSH teachers reported enjoying a motivating and satisfying level of autonomy in their classrooms, and this was also considered to be an incentive to stay within the international school. The International Baccalaureate curriculum was identified by OSH teachers to be a significant source of job satisfaction, as it affords them creative freedom over course content. However, OSH teachers were often dissatisfied that this international programme is delivered in conjunction with the national programme of study; a requirement they feel places unreasonable demands on students, and reduces student motivation towards the IB programme.

Expatriate employees face numerous challenges to adjustment in a new cultural context, and many of the OSH teachers perceived that the school could do more to facilitate this difficult process; they believe that international schools do have a responsibility to support their unique needs as expatriates. In addition, the comments of OSH teachers indicate a need for international schools to recognise and minimise

the challenges associated with repatriation. International schools should be able to assure the ‘best and the brightest’ talent that a long-term stint in an international school will not be a detrimental career choice. A sustainable future for quality international schooling will rely to some extent on good practice in repatriation.

Chapter 6: Low Control Factors

Introduction

I mean, you've got to be happy everywhere, haven't you? In your private life, and your school life, it's all got to be going swimmingly for you to want to stay. And on the whole, in terms of the institution, I think the school does need to look after you in your private life (Interview).

'Low control factors' refers to the components of OSH teachers' job satisfaction and turnover decisions that are very difficult for schools to control, because they pertain to the personal characteristics and circumstances of teachers. Personal and family considerations represent powerful factors of influence in teachers' decisions to stay at or leave a school (Elfers, Plecki & Knapp 2006).

The low control factors that OSH teachers reported as impinging upon their job satisfaction and retention decisions were: family situation, personal life, personality traits and the desirability of the geographical context. These factors appear to be outside the organisation's realm of control, however, an awareness of the way these factors influence the professional lives of OSH teachers enables schools to offer support for these issues, and to direct strategic planning in human resource management. Furthermore, it is important to examine and explore these low control factors, because of the relationship that exists between general life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Several researchers have proposed that contentment and satisfaction with work contributes to overall life satisfaction, while other research indicates that the disposition to satisfaction or dissatisfaction at work is connected to intrinsic personality traits (Fraser Draper and Taylor 1998: 63). Either way, there exists an important relationship between an individual's personal and professional satisfaction.

Family situation

On the record, my wife decides what I do (Focus group session).

While in national education systems, schools may have little involvement in, or knowledge of, teachers' family situations, international schools can benefit from an awareness of the familial circumstances of OSH teachers. The adjustment and turnover intention of OSH teachers is very often heavily influenced by their family situation. Several of the participants in this study had relocated with a spouse and/or children. Brett and Stroh (1995) claim that the satisfaction of a spouse with the overseas assignment is critical to the success of the posting, and that when a spouse experiences difficulties adjusting to a host culture, the expatriate employee tends to report similar maladjustment. The most commonly cited reason for premature return from an international post, according to Konopaske, Robie and Ivancevich (2005), is the inability of a spouse to adjust to a new culture. The OSH teachers in this study reported that their turnover decisions were often based upon familial needs, obligations and desires.

There's three of us, and we all want to go back now, we are missing our families and people from the UK ... the time's right now to go back ... I mean, that's nothing to do with the school and the way they've treated me (Interview).

Kids, when they arrive, become absolutely all-encompassing thoughts, in a sense if they are happy then nothing else really matters. It's simple really, if I didn't think my daughter was happy, or I didn't think my wife was happy, then we would leave - that's the biggest factor. So at the moment, it's certainly a strong factor in staying, my daughter is very happy at kinder (Focus group session).

The education and well being of dependent children is considered by OSH teachers to be paramount to retention decisions. Many international schools offer free education for the children of OSH teachers, which can encourage these teachers to extend their

contracts, in order to ensure continuity and stability in the lives of their children. Zilber (2005: 6) argues that educators with school-age children can be an advantageous addition to the learning community, as they possess a “special commitment” to the school and a “vested interest” in the quality of educational provision. On the other hand, teachers who feel the education or welfare of their child is compromised by the international posting will be likely to leave, regardless of their satisfaction with the job or their adjustment to the host culture.

The only reason that we are going to leave is because when we came here X had a speech difficulty, and according to the people he is working with that has been exacerbated by the Spanish language. So, we were quite surprised about that, and therefore it's a big factor really, in our decision to leave. A very big factor (Interview).

I am leaving for my son's education. I think about my son and if he will be looked after well, so the English teaching would have to be much better if I were to look at teaching in another international school (Interview).

As parents, OSH teachers may feel guilty about the decision to relocate, and be concerned that their internationally mobile lifestyle will be detrimental to their child's emotional and academic development (McLachlan 2007: 235). In a qualitative study of international school educators and their children, Zilber (2005: 14) discussed the conflict of interest that may arise when school decisions are not supportive of the learning needs of the children of OSH teachers, “as employees, educators must endure weaknesses in the school, even if this is to their child's detriment, this may cause feelings of guilt.” While Zilber's study found that teachers expressed confusion over their priorities in such instances: their own child's needs or their commitment to their students, the above respondents indicate that when making turnover decisions, concerns surrounding the education of their own child outweigh any sense of organisational commitment.

Perceived obligations to family and friends in the home country also affect the turnover decisions of OSH teachers. OSH teachers reported feeling torn between their personal desires and career aspirations, and pressures from family and friends.

I think there is a slight feeling of guilt. My Mother also says things like, “Oh, I thought you were only going away for two years”, etc etc. It’s fuelled by the death of my father, so sometimes I get torn in between staying there to be close. I’ve been here for two years, but am also living the life that I want to live (Interview).

Last year my mum had cancer again ... that was incredibly hard. She had the mass removed, and then in the end she had to have the breast removed, so it was a two-year period. So I think sometimes it’s hard when you’re in an international school because something can happen in someone’s life back at home (Interview).

The comments above indicate the need for international schools to be sensitive to some of the tensions experienced by OSH teachers in relation to their separation from loved ones. Given the paucity of existing literature exploring the experiences of OSH teachers in international schools, these institutions should look to research in the field of international human resource management for best practice in managing and retaining expatriate staff. According to Dowling, Festing and Engle (2008: 163) many companies offer expatriates generous ‘home leave allowances’, in terms of both time and the financial ability to return to home country regularly (one or more times per year), in order to alleviate some stress and tension experienced by relocated employees.

Multinational companies recognise the importance of family adjustment to the success of international assignments. Konopaske, Robie and Ivancevich (2005: 426) assert, “in order to survive and prosper in this era of globalisation, it is critical that businesses develop spouse-friendly human resource policies”. For an educational institution this may involve supporting spouses to secure work visas, obtain

employment and build social networks, and ensuring the provision of high quality education for children. International schools should offer pre-departure orientation and cultural training not only for the OSH teacher, but also for the spouse and family, as their adjustment can be just as influential to the success of the assignment as that of the teacher.

Personal Life

The data collected from interviews indicates that when personal circumstances weigh heavily on an OSH teacher's turnover intention, there is very little a school can do to influence this decision. Odland and Ruzicka (2009) attribute a high degree of teacher turnover in international schools to personal circumstances. Literature pertaining to personal circumstances and employee retention is sparse, probably because organisations are largely powerless to influence this determinant of turnover and retention. However, an awareness of these factors provides insight for schools looking to implement strategies for recruiting, managing and retaining OSH teachers. The OSH teachers in the sample spoke openly and honestly about the personal circumstances affecting turnover decisions.

It's not a professional decision, that's the key. I'm not leaving because I'm unhappy with the job ... My girlfriend, lives in Singapore. We made the decision eight months ago, that we were going to try and live on the same continent and possibly in the same city as each other (Interview).

Changes and things to your personal life - there just isn't anything you can do about it and they kind of happen and that is just the way life is. So, in terms of staff retention, that is the variable that is completely unmanageable (Interview).

I'd been wanting to gradually do something different, having taught in the same school in England for 18 years, and my plan was to spend some time abroad, but it was never going to be forever ... Now I want to retire, nothing the school can do (Focus group session).

Another factor raised by many teachers, in terms of both their job satisfaction and their retention decisions, was the unique opportunities OSH teachers enjoy in their personal lives – in terms of travel and of fulfilling personal ambitions of living and working away from home. Although this is clearly a low control factor, an awareness of the opportunities individual teachers are seeking, and will be fulfilled by, certainly contains potential to inform recruiting and human resource management. Several of the participants spoke very positively about the wonderful travel and personal growth opportunities available through their position.

Trying new things is the best part of working in my job. I went skiing, I have never been skiing in my life and at the age of 40, I thought, “Ok, I am in Latin America; here is the opportunity so grab it with both hands”. Same in other schools I have worked, I learnt to dive when I worked in the Middle East, sail in Asia - all these opportunities that I wouldn't have had, I am really aware that I have them (Interview).

I have achieved a life goal that I had before coming here. I held working in a different country and living in a different country as an important goal in my life, and so I am very satisfied by achieving that (Interview).

It changes your perceptions about the world, which is exactly what I wanted to happen. I'm a geography teacher, I wanted to be able to empathise with the people in Africa, and to know what it is like to live in China and know what it is like to live in South America; to understand what these people's lives are like, and you can't do that unless you go and live there (Interview).

OSH teachers in this study discussed the importance of their social life to overall satisfaction in the new environment and also for their turnover and retention decisions. Teachers expressed the challenges inherent in forming lasting friendships and relationships on the international circuit, and also the potential of a supportive social circle to encourage them to stay within an international posting.

I would like to be involved with someone, and for various reasons that has not happened. Often you meet people, especially people you work with ... but when a contract is up people leave and move on (Interview).

I think about, "How good is my social life?" As that is important, social and family life, and I think it's getting better. I have learned that you really have to work hard on that when you move to a different country, inevitably you have international friends; your friends can be very transient (Interview).

While it would appear to be far beyond the scope of how an international school can support OSH teachers, an awareness of how teachers perceive the quality of their personal lives enables the school to support the adjustment process. Schools may be able to minimise some dissatisfaction among OSH teachers by organising social events, conducting informal discussions with OSH teachers about their transition to the new life, or by assigning more experienced mentors to assist OSH teachers in their first months. The teachers in this study identified the importance of a strong, supportive, social network for their adjustment to a new life and culture, but there was no mention of any school initiatives to try to foster such relationships.

Certainly if you go somewhere where it's less easy to assimilate into the local culture you tend to live a bit of an expat bubble life. And that means you are working and socialising with a relatively small group of people. The school does little to try to encourage more socialising (Interview).

They had a building here and used to allow just a very few beers on Fridays, but they cancelled that. I don't think anyone knows anyone outside their department, or outside or your little world. I mean, you're asking about satisfaction (Interview).

Desirability of Geographical Location

I have come here for 2 years. I will stay 3 maybe 4, because I do love this country and think it's the most amazing place (Interview).

The responses obtained from participants indicate that the perceived desirability of a geographical and cultural location is linked to the success of the posting and retention decisions. International schools exert no influence over the geographical context, or

over the relative attractiveness of this destination to expatriate employees. However, it is important for schools to be aware of the profound impact that perceptions about the geographical location can have on the both professional experience and career decisions of OSH teachers. In this study, the perceived desirability of the location was high, and emerged as one factor that may encourage participants to extend their current employment contracts.

Maybe professionally I am less satisfied, but personally living here I am very happy (Interview).

I came here for the cultural experience and to live in a different country with a different language and different type of people and live in a beautiful city with lots going on. That's what I am doing and maybe I will stay because this alone is rewarding (Interview).

I moved to [country name] for [country name]. I didn't move for work. Here I've got a job, which is paying my accommodation, the children are lovely, but mostly it is a way to be here (Interview).

Personality Traits

In my experience, people who are successful expat teachers have certain character traits; certain characteristics, and tend to be relaxed, fairly open to change and able to deal well with things going wrong (Interview).

According to Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2004: 7) unsuccessful overseas assignments are usually the consequence of the selection of candidates who, while possessing the technical skills required for the position, lack the necessary personality characteristics for adjusting to the new cultural context. Multinational corporations are beginning to acknowledge a correlation between successful overseas postings and employee personality characteristics, and many of these organisations have developed recruiting policies that reflect this growing awareness. For example, the American-based franchiser, Tricon Restaurants International, select candidates for foreign

postings based on an assessment of whether the candidate possesses the necessary attributes to succeed in the foreign context. Tricon identifies the characteristics of empathy, acceptability and the ability to interact with others (sociability) as essential attributes (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright 2004: 7).

Specific character traits are highly relevant to the adjustment of OSH teachers in international schools. According to von Kirchenheim and Richardson (2005: 409) an attitude of open-mindedness can exert a significant moderating effect on the stress associated with culture shock for new employees. Successful adjustment enables an OSH teacher to be more satisfied at work, and therefore more able to contribute productively. In addition, von Kirchenheim and Richardson (2005: 409) suggest that individuals who demonstrate extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability and conscientiousness tend to be less susceptible to culture shock and adjustment problems. The interviewees reported that the personal traits of flexibility, open-mindedness, adaptability and strong interpersonal skills were fundamental to success in an international school in this geographical context.

I think absolutely above all is flexibility, I have to be very flexible to work in this environment where things are very laid back. Luckily I am quite flexible, laid back, patient, so that helped me adjust to a less structured, less organised work place (Interview).

Obviously the ability to adapt, be flexible, being open-minded to realise things aren't quite the same here as they are in England, and accepting those things. Teachers who can't manage that seem to be the ones who disappear, leave their contract early (Interview).

The teacher above raises a critical point relating to the personality traits required for integration into a new cultural context, when he mentions the need to approach a new assignment with an open-mind, and to avoid comparisons to own culture. Barna

(1994: 341) discusses a tendency to evaluate the new culture as a potential “stumbling block” to successful adaptation. Barna (1994: 341) suggests that according to norms and expectations formed by experiences of their own culture, individuals may tend to approve or disapprove of the behaviours, statements and actions observed within another culture. The comments of the teachers interviewed for this research project indicate that individuals who are open-minded and empathetic are more able to examine situations from different points-of-view, and tend to be more satisfied.

There are things that frustrate me about the school and frustrate me about the country but I've learnt to accept those things and learn that I can't change those things. And then you just have to get on with school and life outside of school and accept that you are living in a different place and working in a different school (Interview).

There is a tendency for people who come directly from the home countries, be it England or whatever, to come in and say, “Wow you aren't doing this right because in my country it is done this way”. And what I've tried to do here, is not to be judgemental about the way things are done, to look at the way things are done and to try to understand the cultural reasons why things are done, because often processes and policies do not just apply globally (Interview).

Good interpersonal and communication skills were reported by teachers to be essential to achieving a high level of job satisfaction. This attribute was considered to be particularly important in this culture where warm personal relations within a workplace are sometimes valued as highly as technical competence on the job by colleagues (Osland, de Franco & Osland 1999).

Because being agreeable goes hand in hand with being open-minded. To fit into a new culture you have to be open-minded and agreeable with what already exists before perhaps trying to challenge that. And being pleasant is common sense, if you are pleasant to people you are going to fit in (Interview).

I think also it's really important to have good communication skills. Here it was a bit of a hindrance to start with, the lack of Spanish, but once my Spanish got to a level where I could communicate, for example with the parents, they felt they could come to me more easily and talk to me if there was a problem (Interview).

Teachers also discussed deriving satisfaction from the opportunity to grow as a person, and to develop different positive attributes. These comments again indicate that those individuals who are open-minded to change, and who view challenges as opportunities for growth, will tend to be satisfied by the opportunities inherent in the role of OSH teacher in an international school.

I think I am much more confident as a person. I know when I lived in England I never thought I would work overseas. Then the circumstances changed and so I had the opportunity to work overseas and it made me try new things that I wouldn't have done if I'd stayed in England

I've learnt an awful lot about myself, about the world, I have become a more open-minded person. I have gained and am gaining, this is work in progress, an independence that I didn't have before I came out here.

International schools looking to develop a stable, satisfied, motivated staff need to carefully evaluate current recruiting policies. Although knowledge and experience of curriculum and subject matter are essential, recruiting must also focus on personality traits conducive to a successful posting (Joslin 2002). International school managers must be aware of the personality traits that are indicative of success in an expatriate assignment when developing recruiting guidelines and when discussing candidates during reference checks. Interview questions should also reflect an awareness of the importance of key personality traits of flexibility, adaptability, open-mindedness and strong interpersonal communication skills.

Summary and Conclusions

International schools can exert considerable influence over many of the factors that affect OSH teacher job satisfaction and turnover intention, however some factors are further outside the realm of school management influence. OSH teachers make

significant life changes in order to accept a position in an international school, and they often associate personal issues related to living and working abroad to the quality of their professional lives. Schools need to recognise that job satisfaction and turnover decisions can be influenced heavily by ‘low control factors’ and be prepared to respond appropriately to personal issues that may arise.

OSH teachers who relocate with a family tend to place their family situation above all other considerations when making retention decisions, therefore, where possible, international schools should support familial adjustment to the new culture. Managers of international schools should meet regularly with OSH teachers to enquire about familial adjustment, as employees are more productive and satisfied when families have made a successful transition to the foreign environment.

The participants in this study spoke very positively about the unique opportunities inherent in living and working abroad. Such opportunities, including travel and learning about new cultures, are often powerful motivators for OSH teachers. The comments of OSH teachers also revealed the importance of a supportive social circle to both overall satisfaction in the foreign context and retention decisions.

The data analysis in this study indicates the need for schools to develop an understanding of the desirability of the geographical location of the school. In this way, schools can offset deterrents to living in certain environments through attractive retention incentives for OSH teachers. Where teachers perceive their geographical location to be desirable, they are more likely to stay in the school, and be happier at work.

Finally, OSH teachers highlighted the importance of certain personality traits for success in an international school. The teachers identified open-mindedness, flexibility and sound communication skills as conducive to a positive experience in an international school. Managers of international schools will benefit from considering these attributes alongside subject knowledge and previous achievements when selecting candidates for roles within their schools.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

“Pleasure in the job, puts perfection in the work.” (Aristotle)

International schools seek to provide a stimulating, high-quality educational environment for each of their students. In order to achieve this, these institutions must establish and successfully manage a stable, satisfied body of teachers. The message of the current study is certainly not that international schools should seek to retain OSH teachers forever, but that these schools must reduce current high levels of OSH teacher mobility. The excessive level of OSH teacher turnover implies that the educational experience of students in many international schools is currently compromised by a lack of attention to strategic human resource management. A major challenge for many students in these schools is the cycle of separation and loss associated with their internationally mobile lifestyle (McLachlan 2007: 236), and anxieties can be exacerbated by a lack of stability in their educational environment. International schools can ameliorate such threats to student learning and psychological development through carefully designed interventions that target OSH teacher job satisfaction and retention.

This study has used grounded theory method to investigate OSH teachers' perceptions of the factors that impinge upon their job satisfaction and retention decisions. The following chapter offers a discussion of the categories that emerged from the study, suggests implications for international school managers and provides recommendations for future research.

Discussion of the Categories

The current study offers a resonant and original grounded theory of the factors that impinge upon the job satisfaction and retention decisions of OSH teachers. The categories that emerged from the data are potentially useful for a wide audience, most importantly for international schools managers, but also for teachers embarking on a career in international schools, agencies that recruit candidates for these institutions and universities seeking to prepare teachers for the context of international schooling. While data collection focused on the perceptions and experiences of OSH teachers in international schools, the categories are also useful for understanding the professional experience of expatriate teachers working within national education systems.

Latham (1998) argues that in order to influence teacher satisfaction through school policy it is essential to first determine the components of the working environment that lead to teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In the past, the voices of OSH teachers have often been ignored in the environment of international schools. OSH teachers perceive that the school community sometimes views them as transient employees who are ‘passing through’. Therefore, this study attempts to communicate the perceptions of OSH teachers with the clarity necessary for others to recognise the very real, and often unique, issues that confront these teachers.

An important conclusion of the current study is that OSH teachers in international schools work in a unique and challenging context. OSH teachers enjoy different rewards, and are susceptible to different challenges than counterparts working within national education systems; therefore much existing research into teacher job

satisfaction, turnover and retention has had limited applicability to an international school context.

It is apparent from the data that OSH teachers experience positive and negative feelings towards their professional lives, which often co-exist. The categories and subcategories that emerged from the data indicated a range of factors that impinge upon the job satisfaction and the retention decisions of OSH teachers. These categories were organised into three core categories: 'high control factors', 'moderate control factors' and 'low control factors'; according to potential for international schools to influence these processes. The data analysis revealed a great deal of consensus among the sample with regard to the main determinants of job satisfaction, dissatisfaction and turnover intention.

Low Control Factors

My study confirms the importance of considering both personal and organisational factors in any investigation into the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers. These teachers experience significant upheaval in their personal lives to accept a position abroad, and therefore perceptions of work are often closely connected to personal issues relating to relocation and adjustment. The OSH teachers in this study identified their family situation, the desirability of the location, their personal life and personality traits as factors that influence job satisfaction and turnover decisions. According to several of the teachers, personal circumstance and family situation take priority over all other considerations when making turnover and retention decisions. This idea is supported by the work of Odland and Ruzicka (2009) who found that 'personal circumstance' is one of the most important reasons cited by

OSH teachers for leaving international schools at the completion of a single contract. Researchers in the field of international human resource management have concluded that the family situation is one of the most important determinants of the success of international postings (Brett & Stroh 1995; Konopaske, Robie & Ivancevich 2005). OSH teachers often associate the desirability of the geographical location of the international school (in terms of the city and/or country) with job satisfaction and an increased propensity to stay within the school. It is therefore important for schools to be aware of OSH teachers' perceptions regarding their quality of life in the host country.

Living and working abroad offers teachers a range of exciting possibilities for travel and personal growth, and many of the participants in this study related these opportunities with career satisfaction and the increased likelihood of their retention for an additional contract. OSH teachers also identified personality traits as influential to job satisfaction and career decisions, and conveyed that flexible, open-minded individuals with effective communication skills tend to be more successful and satisfied at work. The aforementioned categories could all be considered 'low control factors' inasmuch as these factors appear to be outside the purview of school administration. However, low control factors exert a significant influence upon the job satisfaction and career decisions of OSH teachers and an awareness of these factors enables schools to establish a supportive and caring professional environment, conducive to organisational stability.

Moderate Control Factors

The data also suggested a range of ‘moderate control factors’ affecting the job satisfaction and the turnover decisions of OSH teachers. These factors include: the nature of the work; relationships with students; relationships with colleagues; language issues; the formal curriculum; autonomy over work; cross cultural adjustment and repatriation issues.

The altruistic nature of teaching is highly valued by OSH teachers; the sense of helping young people to learn and grow is a significant source of job satisfaction for these professionals. For many teachers the satisfaction derived from watching children learn is the greatest reward of the profession. Metcalfe and Game (2006: 105) explain that for many teachers the profession is more than a decision or career, and is more accurately described as a “calling” or a “vocation”. OSH teachers, like national system counterparts, are motivated and satisfied by the opportunity to respond to this ‘calling’.

OSH teachers reported finding their work in international schools ‘easier’ due to the nature of the students in these institutions. This perception is consistent with Odland and Ruzicka’s (2009) finding that student behaviour is rarely influential in OSH teachers’ decision to leave an international school after a single contract. The OSH teachers in this study described the enormous satisfaction they experience every day from working with co-operative and creative students. According to den Brok and Koopman (2007: 234), when teachers and students enjoy positive interaction, teachers exhibit greater job satisfaction and experience less burnout.

OSH teachers often compared the high quality of student-teacher interactions with negative previous experiences in home country systems. Educational research from national contexts reinforces this view, and highlights the challenges of student behaviour for teachers working within national education systems. Galton and Macbeth report (2008: 109) “a noticeable change in the climate of schooling since our earlier surveys has been the extent to which teachers singled out pupil behaviour as a major source of stress and additional work”. Buchanan (2010: 206) also identified poor student behaviour as the catalyst for the attrition of many teachers. Such conclusions contrast sharply with the way OSH teachers discussed this aspect of their professional lives, indicating the quality of interaction with students to be an appealing and satisfying feature of teaching in an international school.

OSH teachers did, however, identify some barriers to establishing these positive relationships with students which relates to Hofstede’s (1986: 303) assertion that teacher-student communication is “so deeply rooted in the culture of society, that cross-cultural learning situations are fundamentally problematic for both parties”. OSH teachers reported that these challenges often diminish with time and experience. The findings also supported Deveney’s (2007) conclusion that OSH teachers receive most preparation for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms ‘on the job’. However, Deveney (2007) urges international school leaders to encourage collaborative learning and guided reflection opportunities among staff, in order to avoid the initial trial and error period that OSH teachers often experience in their classrooms.

The quality of adult interpersonal relationships is a powerful determinant of job satisfaction and turnover intention in schools, and it appears international schools are

no exception. According to Zigarelli (1996: 104) educational research has established that effective schools are characterised by a “collegial, familial environment that culminates in high teacher morale and satisfaction”. The participants in this study perceive cross-cultural relationships with colleagues to be challenging and complicated, often due to tensions over deeply held values and assumptions about effective pedagogical practice. Caffyn (2007: 347) argues that by their very nature international schools are not collaborative institutions, and cannot achieve consensus because they are “artificial structures” situated in diverse and complex environments. OSH teachers are sometimes dissatisfied by the friction and conflict present in international schools, and some teachers cite this as a factor that will contribute to their decision to leave their current school. Conflict within international schools is detrimental to school climate and school effectiveness (Shaw 2001: 157), but can be managed by leaders who understand cultural dimensions of conflict. Leaders should seek to provide meaningful and relevant professional development experiences are provided to raise the cultural awareness of staff, and strive to develop a distinctive organisational climate for the school. These measures will, according to Shaw (2001: 157), enable staff to work together “regardless of cultural programming”.

Many international schools include separate language streams within the same institution, in order to provide a bilingual learning environment for students. All of the participants worked within schools that utilise Spanish and English as the languages of instruction. While most of the teachers in the study viewed the opportunity to learn Spanish as an attractive feature of living and working abroad, many felt frustrated by the level of Spanish required to interact with others in the school community and to perform their role effectively. Much of this frustration was

attributed to a lack of accurate information about this aspect of the work environment during recruitment. Teachers also reported surprise and disappointment at the English proficiency of their students, and again communicated that they had arrived at the school with inaccurate expectations. As Louis (1980: 238) explains, unpleasant surprises and unmet expectations upon arrival in a new workplace threaten successful adaptation, and are associated with high levels of voluntary turnover.

Language is central to the learning process for both teachers and students. According to Briscoe and Schuler (2004: 279) language training should be an integral part of interventions designed to reduce the failure rate of expatriate assignments. Those OSH teachers who perceived the school to be responsive to their language learning needs, expressed their satisfaction with the way the school supports them in this area.

The OSH teachers communicated that curriculum issues influence both their job satisfaction and their turnover intention. The participants conveyed satisfaction with the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, which they feel promotes the values central to international education. In addition, the teachers consider the IB curriculum to be supportive of teacher autonomy and innovation, as it “stipulates themes and avenues of enquiry, but rarely specifies precise content” (Oden 2007: 186). The flexibility of the curriculum is an aspect of working in an international school that OSH teachers compare favourably to their experience of national systems. In contrast, Galton and Macbeath (2008: 19) report that teachers in the British national system are frustrated and dissatisfied by the inflexibility and rigidity of the highly prescriptive national curriculum.

However, the organisation of the formal curriculum in international schools also poses threats to OSH teacher job satisfaction and retention. The teachers in this study often discussed the dual curriculum offered by their schools, whereby the host country curriculum is offered alongside the rigorous and challenging IB programme of study. Many of the teachers felt that this curriculum organisation places unreasonable demands on students, and that there is often too little incentive for students to realise their full potential in IB courses. In this Latin American country, according to the participants, the situation is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of their students are seeking entrance to local universities, many of which do not recognise the IB qualification. Furthermore, some OSH teachers perceive little school support for this issue, and believe that schools and universities should be doing more to visibly promote the importance and value of the IB curriculum to students.

Teachers value the ability to exercise control over their professional lives. According to Galton and Macbeath (2008: 8) teachers are less likely to leave schools that protect the academic freedom of teachers. Recent research has revealed that in national contexts, teacher job dissatisfaction and turnover is linked to low levels of professional autonomy (Buchanan 2010; Fraser, Draper & Taylor 1998; Ingersoll 2003; Kim & Loadman 1994). In contrast, the OSH teachers in this study reported high levels of professional freedom, which they relate to their job satisfaction and cite as an incentive to stay within their current posting. Some participants, however, perceive that the level of role autonomy contributes to a lack of teacher accountability, and a lowering of professional standards.

The high failure rate of expatriate assignments across disciplines and employment contexts is often attributed to issues of adjustment to a new culture. In addition to the significant stress involved in commencing a new job, expatriate employees contend with the stress of “unfamiliar norms related to general culture, business practices, living conditions, weather, food, health care, daily customs and political systems, plus a foreign language” (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou 1991: 292). The OSH teachers in this study expressed disappointment, frustration and dissatisfaction at the lack of school support for their transition to the new culture. The data suggest that international schools underestimate the unique challenges that confront relocated staff, and the effect that a lack of organisational support can have upon teacher morale and satisfaction.

Another moderate control factor raised by teachers was repatriation. Some teachers communicated concerns that their time in an international school may be detrimental to their career progression. The participants reported perceptions of becoming “de-skilled” during their time in an international school. International schools, clearly, need to rectify this perception, in order to ensure they are able to recruit and retain high quality educators for their schools. According to Dowling, Festing and Engle (2008: 184) “expatriation includes repatriation”, because the organisation’s “ability to attract future expatriates is affected by the manner in which it handles repatriation”.

High Control Factors

The data collected from interviews indicates that schools could exert a high degree of control over many of the factors that most strongly affect OSH teacher job satisfaction and turnover decisions. In light of the perceptions revealed in this core category,

international school managers should consider current policy and practice, as OSH teachers attribute high levels of job dissatisfaction to factors well within the school's realm of control. High control factors include: the governance and leadership of the school; recognition of efforts; job security; working conditions; international compensation; opportunities for professional growth and advancement; the recruiting process and induction programmes.

Much of the frustration and dissatisfaction expressed by teachers was associated with school leadership. Some of this dissatisfaction was related to the over-involvement of the school board in academic affairs. The issue of school governance appears to be a frustrating feature of working within an international school; Stout (2007: 319) postulates that in international schools, "truly effective and efficient boards are rare" and that the boards of international schools "tend to be, in fact, incompetent groups of competent people".

The perceptions of OSH teachers in this study contain worrying and powerful messages for international school leaders. OSH teachers perceive senior leadership in their international schools to be ineffective, hierarchical and reactive. The OSH teachers in the study were unanimously dissatisfied and frustrated with their senior leaders, and some spoke of a link between the school leadership and their intention to leave the school. None of the participants associated any degree of job satisfaction with senior leadership in the school. This factor is of critical concern for the leaders of international schools as educational research has established an inextricable link between the professional satisfaction of teachers and their positive perceptions of their senior managers (Betancourt-Smith, Inman & Marlow 1994; Ma & Macmillan 1999).

The OSH teachers in this study felt that ineffective school leadership is compromising organisational effectiveness and educational quality in international schools.

Educators derive satisfaction from positive feedback and a sense that their professional efforts are recognised. The OSH teachers communicated that feeling valued by the school is a powerful determinant of both their job satisfaction and their propensity to stay in the post. However, most teachers in this study do not feel that their opinions and ideas are valued, or that their contribution to the organisation is recognised. Anderman, Belzer and Smith (1991: 16) report that a school environment that emphasises accomplishment and recognition is conducive to teacher commitment and job satisfaction. Some teachers reported feeling that their efforts are valued and recognised by the parents of their students. International schools need to promote an organisational culture of positive feedback and recognition in order for staff to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, and ultimately to retain quality OSH teachers.

The participants in this study were dissatisfied by feelings of job insecurity. OSH teachers also perceive limited protection for their rights as employees. Research has linked job insecurity to intention to quit and reduced job satisfaction (Ashford, Lee & Bobko 1989: 803) and this relationship was highlighted by the responses of OSH teachers in this study. OSH teachers also communicated feelings of powerlessness over their employment conditions. The teachers felt that the absence of a professional body such as a union means that they have little recourse to address issues that they feel impinge upon their rights as workers.

The OSH teachers in this study related very high levels of job satisfaction to the small class sizes they teach. The teachers reported that class sizes within an international school are typically considerably smaller than those in national systems. This is a feature of international schooling that managers would do well to preserve; according to Theobald (1990) large class sizes are detrimental to teacher retention efforts. OSH teachers were dissatisfied by the inadequacy of physical resources, especially ICT resources, in their schools. This is consistent with Loeb, Darling-Hammond and Luczak's (2005: 65) finding that poor access to resources and technology is one of the strongest predictors of high levels of teacher turnover.

The requirement to work long hours was associated with job dissatisfaction and turnover intention by many teachers in this study. The teachers described their frustration with the eight and a half hour school day, and the number of Saturdays they spend in school. This supports Galton and Macbeath's (2008) argument that an unsatisfactory work/life balance is the source of significant job dissatisfaction among teachers. According to the OSH teachers the long school day is not in the best interest of students, or their academic progress. This perception is supported by Link and Mulligan (1986: 373) who found that with increased hours of instruction, student learning demonstrates diminishing returns, and therefore little benefit can be expected from extended hours of academic instruction.

Some teachers identified increased financial rewards as a strategy the school could employ to entice them to stay within their current posting. In a comprehensive review of recent empirical literature into teacher turnover, Guarino, Santibanez and Daley (2006: 194) concluded that the prospect of future higher earnings is associated with

increased levels of teacher retention. Housing was an aspect of the international compensation package that tended to cause dissatisfaction among some OSH teachers. Lack of consultation with OSH teachers about the selection of their living arrangements is a primary concern and some were disappointed by the quality of housing provided for them by the school. OSH teacher dissatisfaction with housing should be a matter of great import for international school administrators, as comfortable living arrangements are identified as crucial to the successful adjustment of an expatriate employee (Briscoe & Schuler 2004).

A powerful incentive for OSH teachers to remain within an international school is the opportunity for professional advancement. Several of the OSH teachers perceived a lack of appealing promotional opportunities and communicated their intention to leave the school at the completion of their current contract in order to pursue career progress elsewhere. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984: 438) contend that workers can become frustrated and dissatisfied when possibilities for professional advancement appear limited. Hardman (2001) found that the most significant motivator for teachers to join or remain in an international school is the potential for professional advancement.

Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman's (1959) work is based upon the premise that employee motivation is closely associated with the worker's need for psychological growth. The perceptions of OSH teachers reinforced this idea; they are satisfied by the opportunity to learn new skills and work with new curricula in international schools. However, the frequency and quality of formal professional development opportunities offered by international schools was identified as a source of job

dissatisfaction and turnover intention. This could become a target area for international school improvement as, “the importance of structured professional development for a school cannot be overstated” (Richards 2002: 100). A commitment from the international school to teachers’ professional growth, according to Holderness (2002: 96), can “be helpful in attracting an otherwise potentially transient staff to stay longer, and yet feel professionally fulfilled.”

Much OSH teacher job dissatisfaction arises from poor recruiting and induction procedures. International schools should pay closer attention to the very early stages of OSH teachers’ involvement with the school. The OSH teachers in this study felt that some aspects of their employment had not been carefully explained and/or had been misrepresented during initial job interviews. The teachers communicated that more honesty and accuracy during recruitment would have enabled them to formulate more realistic expectations about the post. Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) emphasise the importance of supporting employees to form accurate expectations about the new culture and role, as the more accurate these expectations are, the more successfully the employee will adapt to a new life and work situation.

Some of the teachers discussed their disappointment at never having participated in a formal induction programme. OSH teachers face numerous challenges to adjustment and the school must assume some responsibility for preparing these individuals to succeed in a new cultural environment. Effective induction programmes could reduce the uncertainty and anxiety confronting new OSH teachers. Hardman (2001: 131) found that effective induction practices benefit both the OSH teacher and the international school.

This study has highlighted areas for international schools to target in order to facilitate high levels of job satisfaction among OSH teachers, and also increase the likelihood that these teachers will choose to stay at the school beyond their initial contracts. Many of the most frustrating and dissatisfying aspects of OSH teachers' professional lives are within the influence of international school managers.

Recommendations for Practice

The present study contains a great deal of significant information for those seeking to improve the quality of international education. The major implication of this study for those who lead international schools, is the need to identify and manage a complex nexus of 'high, moderate and low control factors' that impinge upon OSH teacher job satisfaction and career decisions. Effective strategies to encourage job satisfaction and the likelihood of retention of OSH teachers will involve a cycle of: an **awareness** of factors that impinge upon job satisfaction and career decisions of OSH teachers; **action** that reflects understanding of the importance of these factors, and **reflection** about the ways that schools can most effectively support teachers who are living and working in a foreign culture. This cycle, as illustrated in Figure 1, recognises that the processes of awareness, action and reflection are inter-related, and dependent on each other to be effective.

Awareness

Developing an understanding of the key issues that influence OSH teacher job satisfaction, dissatisfaction and retention is a crucial facet of effective international school leadership. Guarino, Santibanez and Daley (2006: 175) posit that policies

designed to encourage teacher retention must concentrate on adjusting the rewards offered by the post relative to those offered by competing or alternative opportunities. This conceptualisation of teacher retention was reflected in some of the comments made by OSH teachers. The teachers below refer to the multitude of factors that influence turnover decisions, and describe a decision-making process of evaluating the 'sum of all the parts'. Although schools may not be able to control all of the factors that influence OSH teacher job satisfaction and turnover, it is critically important for schools to be aware of which 'parts' they must target to encourage a positive evaluation of this equation.

You're constantly re-evaluating whether the sum of the parts is worth staying, or leaving (Interview).

I think it comes down to a combination of many things. The sum of all parts. If everything here adds up to more than the potential elsewhere (Interview).

In order to develop effective staff morale and retention strategies, international schools should first identify the rewards that matter to OSH teachers. This study has revealed that there is much to be gained from meaningful dialogue with OSH teachers to determine the factors that impinge most powerfully upon their professional experience and turnover decisions. Such dialogue would generate an awareness that would allow school managers to implement strategies to create rewards that outweigh the opportunities offered elsewhere.

An awareness of the factors that impinge upon the professional experience and turnover intention of OSH teacher involves acknowledging that expatriate adjustment involves not only adjustment to a new employment situation, but also a more general adjustment to living in a foreign country. Schools need clear and frequent

communication with OSH teachers in order to ascertain and support individuals to meet the unique challenges associated with living and working abroad. International schools should conduct regular formal and informal, quantitative and qualitative assessments of the job satisfaction of employees, in order to act and make changes based on authentic data.

In addition, the school could use this information to empower teachers by stimulating their own awareness of the types of satisfaction and dissatisfaction they are experiencing. This process, according to Nord (1977: 1033), allows employees to gain “leverage points by which to attack their discontent”. It is only when OSH teachers can recognise threats to their job satisfaction that can they develop the skills and attitudes that will allow them to respond and succeed in an international school environment.

Action

The data in this study suggest that for this Latin American setting, action strategies that will encourage OSH teacher job satisfaction and retention include: a shift in leadership style; honest and savvy recruiting practices; well-defined support networks for OSH teachers; competitive international compensation; the provision of cross-cultural and language training; effective induction and professional development programmes; and the recognition of OSH teachers as valued and protected workers. These strategies are suggested by the data gathered in this study and would be expected to be highly applicable to a range of international school settings. These school-based action strategies should also be informed by an awareness of the

context-specific factors that impinge upon the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers.

The responses of OSH teachers from this sample indicate that what is needed in international schools is a greater focus on transformational school leadership. An emphasis on transformational, rather than transactional leadership, would potentially allow leaders to improve organisational effectiveness with an approach that recognises and develops the talents of each individual, through a leadership posture that is sensitive to the needs of workers. Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004: 79) argue that supportive school leaders can “make significant interventions to enhance the working lives of teachers within their schools”. This study highlights the importance for international school leaders to accept responsibility for promoting worker job satisfaction and greater stability within the organisation.

Good practice in OSH teacher management can begin at the recruitment stage. International schools should seek to recruit professionals who demonstrate personal traits conducive to success in an international posting. International human resource management researchers suggest that international organisations have traditionally overlooked key criteria in the selection of candidates for international assignments (Harzing 2004: 269). While the necessary technical skills for a job are of obvious importance, organisations should be giving greater consideration to recruiting candidates who possess sound cross-cultural skills. A teacher’s enthusiasm and willingness to commit to the process of cultural adaptation can be a significant predictor of success; Brett and Stroh (1995: 406) suggest, “substantial research indicates that intent is the best attitudinal predictor of future behaviour”. During

recruiting international schools should seek to identify candidates who are open-minded and flexible, with effective communication skills. OSH teachers need to be reflective individuals, in order to engage in a process of critical reflection about how their values and attitudes influence their interactions and experiences in the international school context. Through recruitment, international schools should also seek to provide realistic job previews for new employees in order to reduce 'negative surprises'. OSH teachers need accurate information about the new culture, their living arrangements, their rights and responsibilities, and the characteristics of the school and the student body.

Effective induction programmes would support the initial adjustment of the OSH teacher. International schools should also consider offering induction programmes for the families of newly relocated OSH teachers, as family adjustment is often more, or just as, significant as employee adjustment in determining the success of the posting. Newly arrived OSH teachers and their families will benefit from induction programmes that provide important information about the country; for example, the culture, the language, and main systems, as well as understanding culture shock and strategies for coping with relocation. OSH teachers also need a formalised induction to the school, including: meetings with senior management, social opportunities to interact with other staff, cross-cultural training and clear information about staff rules, expectations, international compensation and housing. Induction programmes should reflect the school's awareness of the specific rewards and challenges associated with working in the international school.

Multinational organisations of all sizes and industries are increasingly recognising the importance of retaining talent and many assign a full-time human resource manager to the area of retention (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee 2001: 97). The appointment of one person within the institution to manage and respond to the needs of OSH staff would appear to be an important strategy for international schools. The existence of this specialised role within international schools would enable OSH teachers to feel 'looked after', 'valued' and 'heard', and reduce the feelings of powerlessness and frustration expressed by OSH teachers in this study. This role would involve ensuring a visible and effective organisational support system for OSH teachers, and could include: co-ordination of induction programmes, support for relocation issues, regular meetings with OSH staff, acting as a 'go-between' for staff and administration, co-ordinating mentoring systems and organising relevant and meaningful training and professional development opportunities.

Mentoring programmes have the potential to promote cross-cultural adaptation. Dowling, Festing and Engle (2008: 118) suggest that companies can facilitate cultural adjustment by assigning 'volunteer' employees who have international experience to assist recently arrived families with their integration into the new environment. International schools could create non-contact time for experienced teachers to offer mentoring programmes to newer, more inexperienced OSH teachers. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) report that mentoring programmes can have a positive effect on the professional experience of teachers and also their retention. Furthermore, effective mentoring programmes can be expected to improve interpersonal relationships and collegiality within international schools.

Adjusting international compensation is a powerful strategy for encouraging the retention of expatriate employees. This human resource management strategy, according to Guarino, Santibanez and Daley (2006: 200), also applies to educators. These authors report that higher salaries are related to reduced teacher attrition and mobility. This finding emphasises the importance for international schools to offer competitive international compensation and to be aware of what other international schools are offering as salaries and benefits for OSH teachers. Retention bonuses for second and third contracts would also be expected to encourage OSH teachers to remain within an international school beyond the initial contract.

International schools should consider providing cross-cultural training for OSH teachers. Cross-cultural training aims to increase the knowledge and skills of expatriates so that they can work successfully and enjoy general life satisfaction in a new culture (Tarique & Caligiuri 2004: 284). As cross-cultural adaptation is essential for the success of an OSH teacher in an international school, Joslin (2002: 54) argues cross-cultural training should be provided as one of several strategies to facilitate adjustment. Sound cross-cultural training within international schools promotes a collective sensitivity to the impact of culture upon interpersonal interactions. Such training should be available to all teachers and students. International schools should also incorporate language training into cross-cultural training programmes, in order to promote the interpersonal relationships, cultural adjustment and technical competence of OSH teachers.

The success of multinational organisations depends on groups of people working together to achieve common goals. Schools should look to successful precedents in

international human resource management for creative ideas to encourage dynamic and cohesive teamwork. An example of this is the Octagon Programme, designed by the Dutch-based, multinational firm, Phillips (Harzing 2004: 267). In order to develop cross-cultural team skills, young, high-potential employees are selected to work together on actual company problems, in international teams of eight people. In an international school context such teams could be assembled as task forces or project groups that work on school initiatives.

Opportunities for professional growth will increase the likelihood of retaining quality OSH teachers, as Richards (2002: 99) argues:

There is a symbiotic relationship between the teacher, international schools and international education. Crucial to the health of this relationship is the provision of opportunities for a constant flow and interchange of ideas, and it is within this context that the importance of professional development is apparent.

Professional development in international schools needs to alleviate the professional isolation experienced by many OSH teachers. Professional development should also reflect an awareness of the training needs communicated by OSH teachers, and keep them abreast with developments in international and national education contexts. Carefully planned professional development opportunities can reduce OSH anxieties about becoming de-skilled during their time working within an international education context.

Many OSH teachers also seek opportunities for professional advancement. To achieve higher levels of OSH teacher retention, international schools should seek to continually identify which professional opportunities will motivate individual teachers, and work to support teachers to attain these occupational goals.

Good practice in OSH teacher repatriation will encourage a sense of career security, and will therefore encourage these teachers to be more confident to extend their contracts in international schools. Supportive repatriation practice can include: facilitating continuous contact with home educational systems; career management activities; training seminars on emotional response and lifestyle changes following repatriation; financial provision for downtime and job seeking upon repatriation; the establishment of creative partnerships so that teachers can move between international and national systems with relative ease; and supporting teachers at the end of their contract with quality references and sound professional advice. In addition, international schools can encourage teachers to enrol in courses of professional study through tertiary institutions in their home country to keep their qualifications and skills current. The career security provided by such measures will mean that OSH teachers will be more likely to commit to longer contracts, confident that their international experience will make them highly desirable candidates for future positions in both international and national systems of schooling.

Finally, the data from the current study indicate that the protection of the rights and job security of teachers is a critical concern in international schools. The perceptions and feelings expressed by teachers indicate a need to establish a professional body responsible for ensuring desirable working conditions and for protecting OSH teachers from exploitation by these private and largely unregulated institutions. The logistics of forming such a body amongst such a disparate group of institutions, and the challenge of convincing international schools to be affiliated, may mean that such an organisation is some way off. In the meantime, truly innovate and caring

international schools could seek to create a policy document that articulates the rights and responsibilities of OSH teachers, and their employers, as well as clearly defined grievance procedures that protect the interests of both the worker and the school.

Reflection

In order to maintain a continuous cycle of awareness and action, international schools should sustain engagement in the process of reflection. Powell (2007: 356) contends that learning occurs not from experience, but by reflection on experience, and suggests, “one year’s reflection is immensely more valuable than 20 years experience”. Culture and organisations are dynamic, they experience change; and furthermore, individual OSH teachers will experience the challenges and opportunities inherent in working in an international school very differently. Schools need to be aware of the complex nexus of factors influencing OSH teacher job satisfaction and career decisions, ensure that this awareness is visible in actions, and perhaps most importantly, reflect upon the effectiveness of strategies designed to retain teachers beyond their initial contracts. Such reflection, in turn, increases organisational awareness of staff morale and turnover, allowing schools to adapt intervention strategies, and so the ongoing awareness, action and reflection cycle continues.

Reflection will require routine processes of data collection to monitor the reasons people stay within the school and the reasons people leave. Odland and Ruzicka (2009: 24) recommend that international schools conduct exit interviews with outgoing OSH teachers to gather this information. Exit interviews encourage reflective practice relating to the management of OSH teachers, and according to

Randhawa (2007: 97), is a tool that provides invaluable insight about “what’s right or wrong with the organisation.”

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has identified a framework for understanding the factors that may impinge upon the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers in international schools. Recommendations for future inquiry include:

- To replicate this study with OSH teachers in other geographical and cultural contexts, to determine which factors may be specific to the sample itself and which are more broadly applicable.
- The model provided by this study for understanding the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers sets the stage for focused quantitative data collection. Previous studies have tended to apply data collection instruments developed within national systems to investigate teacher turnover in international schools, potentially overlooking some of rewards and challenges unique to the context. Quantitative data could also provide information about the relative importance of each of the ‘high’, ‘moderate’ and ‘low’ control factors described in this study.
- This study is ground-breaking in its attention to the job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction of OSH teachers. What is now needed is quantitative data to explore these findings further.

- In order to promote the organisational effectiveness of international schools, it is also crucially important to investigate the professional experience of local-hire teachers in international schools.
- This study offers a range of recommendations for international schools to develop coherent and meaningful intervention strategies that encourage higher levels of job satisfaction and retention among OSH teachers. Action research to trial and evaluate these strategies will make a significant contribution to improving this dimension of international schooling.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Discussion Guide for Focus Group Sessions

Session 1

- What factors contribute to your job satisfaction in an international school?
- What factors contribute to your job dissatisfaction in an international school?

Session 2

- What factors influence your decisions about whether to stay in, or leave, your current school?
- Is there anything the school could do to increase the likelihood you would stay at the school?

Session 3

- Is there anything the school can do to increase the job satisfaction of OSH teachers in the school?
- How can the school help out with the personal issues that affect your job satisfaction and turnover intention?

Appendix B: Written Reflection for Focus Group Participant

WRITTEN RELECTION for FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Research Project: Understanding the job satisfaction and turnover decisions of OSH teachers: A Dimension of International School Improvement.

Human Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: HE09/044

Years experience in international schools:

Years in current school:

Age:

Nationality:

Marital status:

Number of children (please include ages):

1. Please discuss below issues/incidents/factors experienced this month which contributed to your job satisfaction.

2. Please discuss below issues/incidents/factors experienced this month which contributed to your job dissatisfaction.

3. Please discuss below issues/incidents/factors experienced this month which could influence your intention to stay at the school.

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Can you tell me what job satisfaction means to you?

What positive changes have occurred in your life since you began working in international schools?

What negative changes have occurred in your life since you began working in international schools?

As you look back on your career in international schools, are there any factors that stand out as contributing to your job satisfaction?

Are there any factors that stand out as contributing to your job dissatisfaction?

Can you think of ways you could experience a higher level of job satisfaction?

Can you think of things your employer could do to help you experience a higher level of job satisfaction?

Which factors in your professional life will influence you when you are deciding whether or not to renew your current contract?

Which factors in your personal life will influence you when you are deciding whether or not to renew your current contract?

What could your school do to increase the likelihood of retaining your services beyond this contract?

Is there anything else you think I should know to better understand the job satisfaction of overseas hire teachers in international schools?

Appendix D: Information Statement for Participants

Research Project: Understanding the job satisfaction and retention of OSH teachers: A dimension of international school improvement.

I wish to invite you to participate in my research on the above topic. The details of the study are included below, I hope you will consider being involved. I am conducting this research project for my Master of Education (Hons) from the University of New England. My supervisors are **Dr Joy Hardy** and **Dr Siri Gamage** of the University of New England. Dr Hardy can be contacted by email at: joy.hardy@une.edu.au or by phone on: +61 2 6773 2520. Dr Gamage can be contacted by email at: siri.gamage@une.edu.au or by phone on: +61 2 6773 3836. You can also contact me by email on: ally_doyle77@hotmail.com.

Aim of the Study:

The aim of this project is to report findings that will enable international schools to develop effective policies for the recruitment, training, management and retention of overseas-hire staff.

Time Requirements:

A one hour interview. During this interview we will discuss your experiences of working in an international school, and issues related to your job satisfaction.

Methodology:

The study will be qualitative in nature. I will be asking you a series of open-ended questions that allow you to communicate your views relating to your experiences in an international school. These sessions will be audio recorded. Following the session, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.

Participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the project at any time and there will be no disadvantage if you do so. It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does please contact me and I will provide details of a psychologist.

The audiotapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home office until they are transcribed and then they will be destroyed. The transcriptions will be kept in the same manner for five years following thesis submission and then destroyed.

Research Process:

It is anticipated that this research will be completed by the end of 2010. The results may be presented at conferences and published in journals but will not include any identifying information.

University of New England Human Research Ethics Committee information:

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE09/04 - Valid to 01/04/2010).

Should you have any concerns regarding the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351
Telephone: +61 (02) 6773 3449
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Thank you for considering my request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Regards

Allison Doyle

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

Consent Form for Participants

I,, have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

Yes/No

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

Yes/No

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published using a pseudonym.

Yes/No

I agree to the interview being audiotape recorded and transcribed.

Yes/No

.....
Participant

.....
Date

.....
Researcher

.....
Date