Sierra Nevada College

TEACHER AUTONOMY, JOB SATISFACTION,
AND THEIR RELATION
TO TEACHER RETENTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this critical analysis was to analyze factors leading to teacher job dissatisfaction. Leading indicators of teacher attrition from the teaching profession included the loss of autonomy, salary considerations, and student behavioral issues. School districts were continuously recruiting new teachers to replace teachers who departed the education field more frequently than anticipated, resulting in costs both in teaching talent and in monetary waste. The research was categorized into three sections: (a) teacher retention, (b) teacher job satisfaction, and (c) teacher attrition. The findings indicated that numerous conditions were leading to teacher attrition, and suggestions were presented to stem the tide of teacher attrition.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Should teachers have autonomy alongside self-efficacy? This is a major question that has been asked for decades in the educational field. The concern of educators and administrators is the retention of quality teachers in the classroom. According to Pearson and Moomaw (2005):

If teachers are to be empowered and exalted as professionals, then like other professionals, teachers must have the freedom to prescribe the best learning plan for their students as doctors/lawyers prescribe the best treatment for their patients/clients; and the freedom to do such has been defined by some as teacher autonomy. (p. 37)

Diminished teacher autonomy and confidence, along with increased workloads, can be tied to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Following the passage of NCLB, most teachers were directed to utilize mandated scripted programs from private publication corporations that were on the federal government’s approved list. This practice further eroded and reduced teacher autonomy. The federal government referred instead to private companies such as McGraw Hill, Riverside, Pearson, and Harcourt for educational expertise (Arce, Luna, Borjian, & Conrad, 2005).

While employed as a substitute teacher in various elementary, middle, and high schools in a large school district located in the southwestern part of the United States of
America from 2009-2011, I was intrigued to learn that many of the teachers I had encountered in various grades across the school district felt they lacked autonomy in their classroom. The teachers insisted that because of school district policies, they were teaching from a curriculum that prevented them from adapting teaching styles suited to their students’ needs, while negating their job satisfaction in the process. These teachers, in particular, wanted to be involved in the decision-making process. A study conducted by Rice and Schneider (1994) concluded that teacher involvement in the learning and decision-making process increased job satisfaction.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this critical analysis of the literature was to provide school leaders with information that might be instrumental in retaining both beginning teachers and experienced teachers in the classroom. Additionally, the review might assist teachers in communicating more effectively with their school administrators in order to develop strategies that will ensure that teachers become part of the decision-making process, thereby reducing attrition and transfer rates in the process.

**Research Questions**

The key question being examined is: Can teacher autonomy and self-efficacy increase teacher retention, improve teacher job satisfaction, and decrease teacher attrition rates? This literature review focused on answering the following questions:

1. What are teachers’ perceptions of autonomy, self-efficacy and empowerment in the classroom?
2. What do teachers view as their greatest challenges in their current educational setting?

3. What do teachers view as their greatest successes in their current educational setting?

4. How might teachers’ placements in public schools affect the report of their experiences?

**Significance of the Study**

Teacher autonomy and job satisfaction are of vital importance as they pertain to teacher retention. Decisions that make up class sizes, curriculum, and content scheduling are out of the teachers’ hands and are controlled and implemented by school district administrators, school boards, and state governments (Pearson, 1998). This top-down approach ignores the important role of classroom teachers’ input and can possibly be instrumental in teachers leaving the profession in the first few years of their teaching careers.

This educational problem is worth solving in order to retain highly qualified teachers who may otherwise go into other professions. The information derived from this study can assist principals, school districts administrators, state leaders as well as the U.S. Department of Education in creating new school reforms that can retain teachers in the classroom.

Implementations, such as placing seasoned teachers with first-year teachers in a mentoring role, could become a positive experience (Inman & Marlow, 2004). This research has made the researcher a more informed educator to ensure a better
understanding of the top-down decision-making process. Other teachers will benefit from this research, as it can lead to changes in the current decision-making process and ensure that teachers are at the table when it comes to what content they are teaching in their classrooms to assure student success.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The literature used in this critical analysis of the literature was exclusively derived from the Internet via the ProQuest database using the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN) Website. Other scholarly areas that were researched were from dissertation abstracts, journal articles, and Sierra Nevada College’s Prim Library website in order to conduct a well-defined search on the subject. The goal of this research was to assist administrators in understanding why teacher autonomy is important to teachers, and what strategies could be created and implemented in order to keep satisfied teachers in the classroom. The research examined prior studies on teachers’ perceptions of autonomy, self-efficacy, and empowerment within their respective schools.

Key terms utilized in the searches were "teacher autonomy," "teacher empowerment," and "teacher attrition." As a result of using these phrases, three themes emerged, and the researcher categorized the research into the following three areas of studies: (a) teacher retention, (b) teacher job satisfaction, and (c) teacher attrition.

The journals researched for the purpose of this study were all derived from the ProQuest database. All the articles were from scholarly journals and had been peer-reviewed. Other journals and books such as *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, *Motivation in Work Organizations*, and *Social Justice* were used for key term definitions.


**Limitations**

The research material dated from the timeframe 1994-2012, an 18-year period. Some of the studies revisited prior researched material from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The previous studies did not have the current demographic population to fully incorporate the changing population trends. Additional studies that fell under the three themes mentioned were obtained using prior library and Internet resources as well as additional databases from the Sierra Nevada College Prim Library at Incline Village. The research that was collected from other countries was absent of key data on whether the country’s school system leaned heavily on standardized testing, teachers’ workload, school hours, and the racial makeup of the student population as would be the conditions applicable to U.S. teachers. Consequently, an attempt was made to limit the research to studies of teacher attrition in the United States.

**Definition of Key Terms**

The key terms presented in this study were used throughout the context of the critical analysis of literature and are defined as follows:

*Attrition* is defined as leaving teaching employment. It is sometimes referred to as exit attrition to distinguish from other forms of attrition such as school attrition (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008).

*Autonomy* is defined as a control of one’s destiny (autonomy) and appropriate practice rather than the conformity and standardized practice that bureaucratic organizational approaches demand (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1985).
Beginning teachers are defined as those who have 0-3 years of teaching experience and are truly the beginning teachers (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

Empowerment is defined as a joining of personal competencies and abilities to environments that provide opportunities for choice and autonomy in demonstrating those competencies (Rappaport, 1987).

Job satisfaction is defined as individuals’ affective relations to their work role and is a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one’s job and what one perceives it is offering (Lawler 1973; Locke 1969).
CHAPTER III
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature examined prior research on teachers’ perceptions of autonomy, self-efficacy, and empowerment within the classroom. The research timeframe is for the years 1994-2012. The studies were located on the LIRN database via ProQuest. After reviewing the research, three overarching themes emerged, which were organized into three thematic categories for this review: (a) teacher retention, (b) teacher job satisfaction, and (c) teacher attrition.

Teacher Retention

A study conducted by Boe et al. (2008) examined three major areas of concern pertaining to teacher turnover: (a) exit attrition, (b) teaching area transfer, and (c) school migration. The purpose of the study was to understand why attrition and transfer rates were higher in the special education field than the general education field, and why school migration was higher when it came to special education. The researchers examined previous teachers’ self-reports that consisted of three versions of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Schools and Staffing Surveys from 1990-1991, 1993-1994, and 1999-2000, respectively. One-year longitudinal components were also employed in this study from 1991-1992, 1994-1995, and 2000-2001. The authors discovered that the three components of teacher turnover in the teaching profession—namely, attrition, school transfer, and special education teachers transferring to general
education—were not uncommon over a long period of time and will continue to be a problem in the education field due to lack of proper financial funding of public schools.

Boe et al. (2008) concluded that the findings from the research could be beneficial to school districts that are held accountable by their state legislatures regarding funding of their districts. The focus for administrators looking at this type of research should be examining why higher attrition rates were dominant in the education field compared to other means of employment. Furthermore, administrators should investigate what strategies can be initiated to prevent and reduce teacher turnover in the future.

Similarly, the problems associated with teacher retention, especially beginning teachers, were examined by Smith and Ingersoll (2004). The researchers reviewed prior data pertaining to new teacher induction programs, such as support, orientation, and guidance programs for beginning teachers. The purpose of this study, in particular, was to determine if teacher induction programs were successful and had a positive effect of retaining teachers. The research method was based on empirical data derived from previous analysis of the nationally representative 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) questionnaire. The participants involved were about 52,000 elementary and secondary beginning teachers in the United States during the year 1999-2000.

The results revealed that induction programs had a positive effect on first-year teachers that resulted in positive retention rates. The study suggested that beginning teachers, who were mentored by their peers in the same content field, were more likely to stay at their schools and not move to other schools. Reiteratively, school districts should invest in induction programs in order to negate the revolving door of attrition.
Further examination of teacher retention by Greiner and Smith (2006) provided statistics that showed one-fifth of public school teachers left the occupation within their first 3 years, and half of educators left teaching within their first 5 years. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between teacher education programs and state-mandated certification examination scores and teacher retention rates. Quantitative research methods were utilized with a point-biserial correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between a passing score on the professional development examination and teacher retention. A phi coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the type of teacher education program completed and teacher retention. The researchers used the SPSS 11.5 quantitative software to describe the data. Greiner and Smith (2006) examined the data for these coefficients for 503 teachers, most of whom attended traditional teacher education programs, while some received their credentials through emergency certification programs.

The results of the study did not indicate a significant statistical relationship between the program type or test score and teacher retention. Greiner and Smith (2006) pointed out that many factors, including teachers’ views of preparation programs and their confidence in their preparedness may lead to teacher attrition.

Advancing the research on teacher retention issues, Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) conducted a study to provide policymakers and researchers alike with an effective, up-to-date, evaluative, and comprehensive review of empirical data pertaining to teacher recruitment and retention. The research design was based on recent empirical data that showed various reasons some teachers stayed and others left the profession. The
researchers selected articles that met specific criteria such as: (a) relevance, (b) scholarship, (c) empirical nature, and (d) quality. The data were derived from peer-reviewed journals, organizations, and various books that contained exclusive empirical evidence. Findings from this study concluded that females tended to enter the teaching workforce much more than their male counterparts, but also showed higher attrition rates. Moreover, beginning teachers and teachers near retirement age tended to leave the profession in greater numbers than other teachers. Teachers in urban schools populated with minority students tended to have higher attrition rates than other schools; however, urban schools had the highest attrition rates overall compared to their suburban counterparts. Guarino et al. confirmed that teachers in public schools tended to have higher attrition rates than their colleagues in private institutions.

Continuing to gain an understanding of teacher retention difficulties, Pearson (1998) characterized the problems associated with teacher retention with school reform initiatives. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationships between autonomy and a set of professional participation and reasons-for-leaving variables. The research was conducted using quantitative methods with a Survey of Teacher Characteristics and Activities. As many as 770 public school teachers in Florida were given the survey; 416 teachers responded. Job satisfaction, perceived paperwork load, lack of autonomy, and insufficient rewards for outstanding teacher performance were found to be significant predictors of the dependent variable, autonomy. The lack of prediction for some of the reasons-for-leaving-teaching variables was a surprise to the researcher. Some of the reasons-for-leaving-teaching variables addressed included: (a) lack of student motivation
and parent interest/support, (b) low salaries, (c) stressful working conditions, and (d) student discipline problems. The author recognized that the usual predictors from teachers for reason for lack of autonomy such as low salaries, stress, inadequate salaries, and student behavioral problems were absent in the results. School-based reform initiatives indeed need to be implemented; however, teachers still need to assert control over the process of learning and teaching in order to obtain a successful collaboration.

Shen’s (1997) study examined teacher retention and attrition rates by using discriminant function analyses from data gathered from the 1990-1991 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS91) involving 56,051 teachers and the 1991-1992 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS92) with 5,075 teachers involved. Shen investigated whether the following three groups of teachers who stayed in the same school, moved to another school voluntarily, or left teaching of their own accord between the school years 1990-91 and 1991-92 differed on personal characteristics, school characteristics, and their perceptions of school and profession related issues; and if so, how they differ. (p. 83)

The researcher surmised that the data on unchangeable personal characteristics can assist administrators in the recruiting and hiring process rather than for retention purposes only.

Shen (1997) analyzed teachers from three categories: (a) Teachers who stayed in the same school were called “stayers,” (b) Teachers who voluntarily moved to another school were called “movers,” and (c) Teachers who left teaching of their own volition were called “leavers.” By using both the SASS91 survey and TFS92 follow-up survey, Shen noted that the research was able to determine the total number of teachers who
remained at their schools, moved to other schools, and those who left the teaching profession after completing the Schools and Staffing Survey in 1992.

Shen’s (1997) findings supported previous research that suggested the more experienced teachers and teachers with longer years in teaching tended to stay in the teaching profession and remain in the same school due to seniority and higher salaries. Pertaining to school characteristics, teachers who were movers and leavers tended to leave schools that were socially disadvantaged schools, discounting previous data on reasons why teacher were movers or leavers.

The research by Shen (1997) determined the importance of addressing teachers’ reasons for moving or leaving the profession altogether. The researcher suggested more aggressive tactics such as better salary considerations and the offer of incentives to teachers to stay at schools while additionally allowing teachers to have more influence on decision making, especially where the majority of the students are of low socioeconomic status.

Research conducted by Hallam, Chou, Hite, and Hite (2012) explored two different mentoring models that administrators could adapt in order to retain beginning teachers. The two mentoring programs were different in terms of sources and support. Hallam et al. examined two mentoring models used by Asher and Dane School Districts (pseudonym given). For these particular studies, beginning teachers were referred to as those in their first 3 years of teaching.

The comparative case study used quantitative survey data; the follow-up, qualitative interview data. Two research designs were utilized by Hallam et al. (2012) in
order to analyze the differences and similarities between the two mentoring models including teacher retention in the two school districts.

The authors (Hallam et al., 2012) identified 23 first-year beginning elementary school teachers in six elementary schools from two school districts located in the same state. Two of the teachers dropped out over time, while the remaining 21 were sampled over a 3-year period. Dane School district deployed district coaches to assist its beginning school teachers, while Asher School District created an in-school mentoring program for its first-year teachers. Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted during Year 1 as well as follow-up survey/interview sessions during the third year of their teaching.

The authors (Hallam et al., 2012) found that after Year 3, Asher School District retained more teachers than Dane School District 64% to 42%, respectively. The findings suggested that in-school mentoring may have assisted Asher School District with retaining more beginning teachers, and these teachers may have had better support and tutelage than the other district which had satellite coaches who mentored from outside the school. The Dane School District coaches who went from school to school and were not in-house mentors may have contributed to lower communication intensity efforts ensuring beginning teacher attrition in the process. Having high-intensity communication and in-school mentoring and mentors was more successful in retaining teachers in the classroom.

Liu (2007) measured effective ways of encouraging teachers to remain in the profession. The researcher noted three trends that could cause a higher need to retain and
hire more teachers: (a) the baby boomer teacher generation was near retirement, (b) an increase in higher student enrollment would commence in the coming years, and (c) teachers were leaving the educational field in higher numbers than were becoming employed.

The purpose of the study (Liu, 2007) was to try to understand why teachers were leaving in high numbers and what strategies could be implemented to retain teachers. The research design was based on former teachers surveyed in the 1995 Teacher Follow-up Survey, who also filled out the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) for the previous year. A questionnaire containing 16 questions was given to former teachers. The total number of teachers participating in the 16-item questionnaire was not disclosed; however, teachers from beginning teachers (1-2 years of experience), novice teachers (3-5 years of experience), and teachers who were deemed experienced (5 or more years of experience), participated in the survey. The author found that 37% of former teachers who answered indicated that providing higher salaries and/or better fringe benefits would retain teachers, while 21% answered that dealing more effectively with student discipline is another effective step to keep teachers. Finally, 9% chose giving teachers more authority in school as a means of retaining teachers. The study also discovered that all types of teachers from beginning and novice to the more experienced former teachers selected these three factors as the most important in retaining teachers. Liu (2007) summarized the research by stating that school institutions could become successful at retaining teachers by addressing financial incentives, finding methods to reduce student discipline problems, and delegating more authority to teachers.
Angelle (2002) investigated socialization experiences of beginning school teachers in various middle schools. The purpose of this study was to examine if differences existed in socialization experiences of new teachers and whether these experiences were located in less effective schools or in more effective schools. This researcher studied both the school effects and the teacher effects of mentoring programs.

To this end, Angelle (2002) selected five pairs of middle schools in the state of Louisiana that served grades 6-8 exclusively. Junior high schools that had these grades were included in this sample collection. For the purpose of this study, the author called all junior high schools middle schools.

Beginning teacher observations were conducted in 10 schools—five deemed more effective and five less effective. Nineteen beginning teachers were observed in both effective middle schools and less effective middle schools (Angelle, 2002).

The study (Angelle, 2002) used a prior research model based on the field of school effectiveness research (SER). The researcher examined outliers that Angelle considered to establish what schools were more effective middle schools and middle schools that were less effective. Because of this strategy, intensity sampling strategy was employed. The researcher used a school effectiveness index (SEI) to pair schools for the study: one effective school paired with one ineffective school. This was performed according to Angelle in order to have a more correct comparison relating to beginning teacher observation of school effectiveness.

The data collected for the study (Angelle, 2002) showed that beginning teachers from less effective middle schools had to seek out mentors who were informal at best and
garner guidance in all aspects of their teaching responsibilities. Additionally, new
teachers had to scrape together resources, while their mentors were more concerned with
ensuring the new teacher’s lesson plans were in compliance for the state assessor. In
contrast, in more effective schools, mentors were proactive, involved themselves in role-
playing activities to assist the new teacher, and ensured that the new teacher was
successful at the school. The attitudes of teachers in both effective and ineffective
schools, the involvement of the mentors overseeing and encouraging new teachers, and
their proactive actions seemed to determine whether a beginning teacher was retained or
became the product of attrition.

Finally, Jorissen (2003) conducted a study examining alternate route preparation
programs that related to successful retention of teachers in schools. The purpose of the
study was to induce whether an alternative program could assist the educational field in
preventing high teacher turnover rates in urban schools.

The participants in the study conducted by Jorissen (2003) were identified as six
Black elementary school teachers in their sixth year of teaching, located in two
Midwestern urban school districts. The teachers who went through the alternate teacher
program were required to hold a bachelor’s degree, pass Pre-Professional Skills tests, and
be able to prove their experience in related fields working with children. The participants
had a mean age of 35.8 and had worked in other occupations prior to teaching.

The research design (Jorissen, 2003) was a qualitative study based on in-depth
interviews for data collection. Three 90-minute interviews were administered to each
participant, utilizing an interview guide. The researcher also used inductive data analysis procedures based on the verbatim transcripts of the interviews.

The findings of Jorissen (2003) based on the answers provided by the participants revealed that alternate routes to becoming a tenured teacher can lead to the successful retention of teachers. The teachers cited the integrated program model that featured daily contact with mentors who, in turn, supported the teachers and provided feedback and guidance when needed. The cohort model was also successful for these teachers, as they were able to form a community that supported them with encouragement and assistance. Based on the successful retention of these teachers from these types of alternative teacher programs, administrators should consider the implementation of these programs in their school districts in order to retain teachers.

**Teacher Job Satisfaction**

Tillman and Tillman (2008) commented on job satisfaction:

Job satisfaction and the variables that impact it have been the focus of researchers and management scholars for more than seven decades. The topic has captured the interdisciplinary attention of people involved in the areas of human resources, organizational behavior, and industrial psychology since the days of Elton Mayo and the Hawthorne studies of the late 1920s. (p. 1)

One area of study of job satisfaction has been in the field of education, especially when it comes to new teachers and attrition and retention.

Rice and Schneider (1994) addressed the relationship between teacher involvement in decision making and whether more teacher involvement in decision
making increased teacher job satisfaction. The purpose of this empirical study was to validate previous studies conducted in the 1980s that showed increased job satisfaction when teachers were given more involvement in the decision-making process. The research method was based on empirical analysis. Rice and Schneider’s intent was to see if any changes appeared in the data over a 10-year period and whether teacher involvement and job satisfaction increased or decreased over that time period.

Participants were chosen from public middle or junior high schools in the state of Wisconsin. Twenty two of the original schools from the first study conducted in the 1980s agreed to participate in this new study. The updated follow-up study had the same decision-making involvement analysis questionnaire used previously and was broken down into two parts: (a) four questions measuring variables with a 4-point Likert-type scale and (b) a job satisfaction survey made up of 27 items which assessed nine scales.

The scales were as follows: (a) work conditions, (b) co-workers, (c) administration/supervision, (d) career future, (e) school identification, (f) financial aspects, (g) amount of work, (h) pupil-teacher relations, and (i) community relations.

The results (Rice & Schneider, 1994) concluded that the more a teacher was involved in the decision-making process, the more job satisfaction was affirmed. Likewise, having less involvement confirmed less job satisfaction.

To investigate further research on job satisfaction, Tillman and Tillman (2008) examined teachers’ job satisfaction during the era of the NCLB initiatives. The purpose of the study was to determine if a relationship was present among a teacher’s length of service, salary, and supervision with teachers’ job satisfaction. Quantitative correlational
research methods were utilized with a Job in General (JIG) survey. Tillman and Tillman used a convenience sample of 81 certified teachers in South Carolina for the study. The researchers tested three hypotheses: (a) teacher length of service will be positively correlated with job satisfaction, (b) teacher salary will be negatively correlated with job satisfaction, and (c) supervision will be positively correlated with teacher job satisfaction. The data did not provide enough support for hypothesis one (length of service) or hypothesis two (salary). Some support was provided for hypothesis three (supervision) by the data acquired in the survey. Consequently, the researchers found the following: The literature suggests that the two groups of people in an organization who affect job satisfaction are coworkers and supervisors (p. 13).

Bogler and Nir (2012) analyzed the causality of teacher empowerment with extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction from teaching. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether a correlation appeared between teacher empowerment, their perceived notion of school support, and the teacher’s intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. The research design was performed via a path analysis procedure in order to determine cause and effect. The participants involved were 2,565 teachers from 153 Israeli elementary schools. Bogler and Nir’s research concluded that self-efficacy was the main motivator of teachers pertaining to job satisfaction, while some of the variables such as earned status and respect were also important attributes to teachers.

Bogler and Nir (2012) stated that their research was valid as it was derived from a wide range of elementary schools and included 2,565 teachers. Since the research was conducted in Israel, an absence of data was evident on the expectations of the country’s
school system in relation to expectations in the American system. For example, the United States suffers from an emphasis on standardized testing, teachers’ workload, school hours, and the racial makeup of the student population.

In another study related to teacher job satisfaction, Klassen, Usher, and Bong (2010) determined that Teachers’ Collective Efficacy (TCE) in the teaching profession associates itself with job satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to examine a variety of cultural values and beliefs, and whether these were an influence on job satisfaction, stress, collective efficacy, and collectivism. Klassen et al. asked the following questions: (a) Do teachers’ collective efficacy, job stress, and cultural values influence job satisfaction in three different settings, and (b) Are there differences in the relative utility/power of the predictors of job satisfaction across geographical/cultural settings?

To expand on their study, Klassen et al. (2010) used a cross-cultural framework and chose 500 elementary and middle school teachers from three countries: (a) the United States, (b) South Korea, and (c) Canada. The Collective Teacher Efficacy Belief Scale (CTEBS) was used to measure teacher efficacy, with the questionnaire translated for the South Korean participants. Multi-group path analysis from the findings revealed that TCE predicted job satisfaction across cultural settings. Job stress was negatively related to job satisfaction for North American teachers (i.e., teachers from Canada and the United States), as the cultural dimension of collectivism was significantly related to job satisfaction for the Koreans, but less so for North American teachers. The surprising element discovered by the researchers was that collectivism was significantly lower for Korean teachers than for their Canadian and United States counterparts.
Mau, Ellsworth, and Hawley (2008) explored whether job satisfaction was the key to retaining teachers in the educational workforce over a sustained period of time. The purpose of the study was to examine job satisfaction with college students who were entering the teacher workforce versus students who would not be entering the teacher workforce over a 10-year period. The research design was quantitative, analyzed through the lens of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), with clusters of variables studied. The participants involved were 451 10th-grade students who were studied over a 10-year period.

A pattern emerged showing that job satisfaction was more prevalent in the teaching profession (>90%) than with the other professions of the students studied (Mau et al., 2008). The authors also discovered that male teachers had a higher attrition rate in the beginning years than their female counterparts, and African Americans were less satisfied in their position as teachers than their White counterparts. Mau et al. determined that the research was valid because of the length of the study, 10 years, and the comparison to other professions that the students entered. The study could be useful to school districts, particularly human resources, who could use this valuable information in identifying areas of concern pertaining to attrition and in keeping teachers satisfied in their profession for a longer duration of time, more than the current trends, for example.

Moye, Henkin, and Egley (2005) highlighted the need for trust within an organization to ensure that it would operate in an effective manner. The purpose of the research was to investigate the relationship between teacher empowerment and interpersonal level trust in the principal. The research was conducted using quantitative
methods through a survey which measured trust in two dimensions: (a) affect-based and (b) cognition-based interpersonal trust. The participants in the study were 539 elementary school teachers in an urban school district. Moye et al. stated that “teachers who find their work important and personally meaningful, who report significant autonomy in their work, and who perceived they have influence over their work environment reported higher levels of interpersonal trust in their principals” (p. 270).

Pearson and Moomaw (2006) acknowledged that a link between teacher autonomy and various related constructs had been established by prior research. The researchers described the need for a well-defined measurement instrument which could be validated through replication. The purpose of the study was to validate the underlying theoretical aspects of teacher autonomy identified in a previous study (Pearson & Hall, 1993): curriculum autonomy and general teaching autonomy. The participants in the study were 171 teachers from three neighboring school districts in three different counties in Florida. The research was a quantitative study utilizing the Teacher Autonomy Scale (TAS) which consisted of 18 survey items using a 4-point Likert-type scale. The researchers determined that the TAS was statistically valid as a measurement tool for teacher autonomy since the two-factor analysis supported the results obtained in their prior study. They were able to demonstrate the following results:

As curriculum autonomy increased on-the-job stress decreased, but there was little association between curriculum autonomy and job satisfaction. It was also demonstrated that as general teacher autonomy increased so did empowerment and professionalism. Also, as job satisfaction, perceived empowerment, and
professionalism increased on-the-job stress decreased, and greater job satisfaction was associated with a high degree of professionalism and empowerment. (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006, p. 47)

Stempien and Loeb (2002) examined the reasons the retention of special education teachers differed greatly from general education teachers and from teachers responsible for both group of students. The purpose of the study was to explore why special education teachers were more dissatisfied with their occupations than were general education teachers.

Researchers (Stempien & Loeb, 2002) showed previous research that affirmed job dissatisfaction within the ranks of special education teachers; prior research designs did not compare special education teachers with general education teachers. The research design was based on a questionnaire given to 199 teachers. A total of 116 questionnaires were returned to the researchers by full-time certified teachers, a response rate of 58%. Eight suburban schools from five school districts in the state of Michigan were chosen for this research. Six of the schools were predominantly general education schools; the final two schools had special education programs exclusively. The schools served predominately White, middle-class students who resided in suburban neighborhoods. The teachers were informed that the study was voluntary, and no contact was allowed between researchers and participants.

The teachers were put into three categories by Stempien and Loeb (2002) based on their responses to the questionnaires. The first group consisted of 60 general education teachers, Group 2 had 36 teachers who taught students with emotional/behavioral
impairments in either general education or schools dealing exclusively in special education, and Group 3 had a total of 20 teachers who taught students in both general and special education programs in general education schools, with students with less severe impairments. It should be noted that the second group had taught students who were diagnosed with autism or had autistic-like symptoms, a condition known to cause burnout among teachers.

The researchers (Stempien & Loeb, 2002) employed the Brayfield-Rothe Index in their comparison of special education and general education teachers. The other scale employed was a self-report scale called the Life Satisfaction Index-A (LSI-A). The Likert-type scale ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The results of the research showed that the majority of all three teaching groups would like to see altered the size of their classes, the amount of paperwork, and the amount of time spent planning. The majority of all three groups also affirmed that they liked working with children, observing the growth and the progress of the children, and interacting with their colleagues. The stark difference occurred when teachers who taught special education students exclusively were not in agreement with the other two groups who cited enjoying the creativity as well as the challenge of their jobs with greater occurrence.

Another important discovery in this research by Stempien and Loeb (2002) was that the special education teachers cited frustration pertaining to their jobs. Some of the recommendations the researcher’s cited that can assist with job retention and job satisfaction for special education teachers are as follows: (a) stress management techniques taught to these teachers, (b) acquisition of a low student-teacher ratio, (c)
fewer contact hours with the special needs student, and (d) preparation of new special education teachers with preservice education programs.

In contrast to special education and general education teachers, a gender research project on teacher job satisfaction was implemented by Mahmood, Nudrat, Asdaque, Nawaz, and Haider (2011). These researchers conducted a study on the differences between gender of male and female teachers and the different locations of the schools (both urban and rural locations) in relation to job satisfaction. Of the 785 secondary school teachers contacted from 192 secondary schools, 601 responded to the questionnaires and participated in the study. The quantitative research design used the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire measure teacher job satisfaction. The questionnaire consisted of a 4-point Likert-type satisfaction scale with a range of responses from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (4). Mahmood et al. analyzed the data using descriptive and inferential analysis to test the hypotheses.

The researchers (Mahmood et al. (2011) discovered from the research that males are less satisfied with their jobs overall as teachers than their female counterparts. The location of the school in either urban or rural locations showed no significant differences related to job satisfaction. Overall, teachers were less satisfied with job working conditions, compensation, advancement, and supervision/human-relations. The research also concluded that most of the teachers interviewed were satisfied within their job, but showed that lack of administrative support and excessive demands put on them led to job dissatisfaction. The researchers opined that it is important that administrators of schools
support their teachers by fostering a supportive stature and listening to teachers’ ideas and suggestions.

A final study pertaining to job satisfaction was conducted by Kukla-Acevedo (2009) who explored the characteristics of teachers who left teaching altogether, moved to another school, or stayed at the same school. The purpose of this study was to determine if certain workplace conditions caused teachers to stay or leave.

The author (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009) used results from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the 2000-2001 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) which totaled 3,505 teachers. Binomial and multinomial logistic models were utilized to measure the following: (a) effects of administrative support, (b) classroom control, and (c) behavioral climate that may have accounted for teachers’ decisions to leave, move, or stay. The logistic models also measured samples of all teachers while simultaneously measuring beginning teachers separately.

The results showed that beginning teachers were twice more likely to move to other schools than more experienced teachers. Teachers younger than 30 years of age tended to move or leave teaching collectively than older more experienced teachers. Kukla-Acevedo (2009) also found the following:

Transitions according to teacher race and school urban city were fairly stable across categories, with a few exceptions. Teachers who were African American and who belonged to another race not listed (other) were more likely to switch schools than were teachers who were Latino/a or European American. A higher percentage of teachers who worked in suburban schools exited teaching, and a
lower percentage of teachers who worked in rural schools switched schools. (p. 447)

The research also exposed that beginning teachers were leaving teaching in higher than usual numbers compared to switching schools due to student behavioral problems. In summary, cooperation and trust should always be engaged between the administrators and the teachers, while programs should be attempted by school districts to keep more teachers in the classroom, particularly beginning teachers, by addressing their needs and their dissatisfaction.

**Teacher Attrition**

A high rate of annual teacher turnover has been an enduring aspect of the teaching profession and will almost certainly remain so in the foreseeable future without dramatic improvements in the organization, management, and funding of public schools (Boe et al., 2008). A study related to attrition conducted by Inman and Marlow (2004) examined methods that the education profession could use to stem the tide of attrition of beginning teachers by studying positive attributes that keep beginning teachers in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to use the positive results derived from this study to increase teacher retention by administrators. The research design was performed utilizing Gay’s Table of Random Numbers (1996). Participants involved were approximately 100 teachers from randomly selected schools in the State of Georgia, who completed the professional attitude survey. The researchers conducted the survey on two occasions, in September and November 2000, respectively, and the participants responded to questions
such as demographics, teacher background, job satisfaction, and other reasons for beginning teachers to remain in the teaching profession.

Inman and Marlow (2004) concluded that in order to retain beginning teachers in the classroom, community support and teacher educational programs that continue well after graduation as well as working with educational mentors can all have a positive effect on beginning teachers and stem the tide towards retention instead of attrition. This type of research could be important for administrative personnel in school districts across the United States in implementing education programs and also in encouraging community involvement that can retain first-year teachers in the classroom.

Gardner (2010) examined the problem of why music teachers in K-12 public and private schools had higher attrition rates, in comparison to non-music teachers. Gardner was interested in the phenomenon of higher attrition rates in the music field and not just from 1-2 years, rather over different stages of a music teacher’s career, in order to understand it. The purpose of the study was to figure out why a higher attrition rate appeared in this particular field, music, over other teaching fields. The study was a twofold process: (a) to compare the attributes of music teachers to other teachers and (b) to discover the reasoning behind the high attrition rates of music teachers. The research design was quantitative via a school and staffing survey, and this was analyzed through comparative statistics, factor analysis, logistic regression, and structural equation modeling.

The participants in Gardner’s (2010) study were 47,857 K-12 public and private school teachers, with 1,903 music teachers included in the research. The research
determined that music teachers were much more likely than other teachers to hold itinerant or part-time positions and were less likely to receive support for working with special needs students. Music teachers left the profession for better salary or benefits and were more satisfied in their new field. Music teachers’ perceptions of administrative support were the most influential factor in job satisfaction and retention. The number of music teachers surveyed was proportional to the overall teaching population, and using comparative statistics showed differences and similarities to non-music teachers.

In keeping with the research focused on teacher attrition, Kelly (2004) examined where teacher attrition rates were the highest throughout public schools in the United States to determine what was behind the phenomenon. The purpose of the study was to understand the causality behind teachers leaving the education profession at a high attrition rate. The participants surveyed were approximately 7,200 teachers. Some were teachers who left the profession, some moved to new schools, and some stayed in teaching at their current school.

Kelly (2004) reviewed research based on event history analysis, the 1990-1991 Schools and Staffing Survey, the 1992 Teacher Follow-up Survey, as well as through teacher tracking. The results showed that low salary, coursework, and teachers assigned to problematic students contributed to teacher attrition. It was also determined that White teachers left the profession at a higher rate than their minority counterparts. Female teachers also left sooner than their fellow male teachers. Teacher with higher educational degrees tended to stay on as professional teachers. The research was handicapped
regarding second year and beyond career teachers due to censorship of these teachers, thereby negating much needed data on teacher attrition.

The research has suggested that middle schools had a higher turnover ratio than elementary schools and that rural schools experienced higher attrition rates than urban schools. Likewise, schools located in the western and southern parts of the United States saw higher attrition rates than other areas of the country. The most interesting outcome of the research pertaining to this phenomenon is that teachers who teach in predominantly lower track classes do not leave their profession at higher rates than other teachers. The researcher also concluded that the majority of teachers who stay on as teachers are part of professional organizations and also take professional courses in teaching methods, thus lowering the rates of attrition for these types of teachers.

Continuing the focus on the impact that attrition was having on the teacher workforce, Certo and Jill (2002) explored other options in which teachers could be retained instead of leaving the profession due to a variety of circumstances. The purpose of this study was to examine both attrition and retention rates in order to understand why teachers stayed in the profession and remained in the same school or who stayed but decided to move from school to school. The study further explored why teachers left the profession altogether. The participants involved were a variety of teachers from seven Virginia school divisions representing all levels of elementary, middle, and high schools.

Certo and Jill (2002) divided the research into two categories. The first group interviews were via a semi-structured focus group employing the Teacher Retention Focus Group Discussion Guide for the teachers who stayed in their schools. The focus
group were asked reasons they stayed in their professions and schools with questions such as explanations of the reasons teachers stayed in their school division, their perceptions as to why their colleagues have left the school division or the profession, and the reasons teachers gave for voluntarily moving from their school divisions or leaving the teaching profession. The researchers sent 80 letters and consent forms via mail to participants, and 42 forms were returned. Second, the authors engaged in telephone interviews with teachers who moved around the school divisions and with teachers who exited the teacher profession for a total of 20 telephone interviews. Because of a lack of a valid database on exiting teachers by grade or years worked, the researchers selected teachers randomly for the phone interviews. The telephone interviews were approximately 20 minutes in length. The results from the focus group questions and the reasons they stayed in the school were: (a) a commitment to the profession, (b) quality of the administration, and (c) an appreciation for relationships with their colleagues. These same teachers answered about their perceptions of why their colleagues have left the school division or the profession, and the results were lack of administrative support, salary and benefits, and lack of decision-making power in their classrooms. The results regarding why teachers moved to other schools were working too many hours, parents running the school, and a lack of administrative support. Certo and Jill (2002) concluded that the overarching theme and the reasons for teachers to exit the teaching profession altogether and move to another school was the lack of administrative support and lack of autonomy when it comes to the decision-making process at the school and in the classroom.
The problem associated with teacher retention, particularly special education teachers, is stress burnout and lack of administrative support. Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) addressed these issues by examining protective factors that made teachers stay in the teaching field. The purpose of this study was to examine the risk factors such as collegiality and administrative support that led to attrition and whether protective factors could reverse teacher attrition rates. The research design was qualitative via semi-structured script with open-ended questions. Five first-year special education teachers from a Midwestern state responded to letters sent out by the researchers. The teachers answered various questions pertaining to their experiences as a beginning teacher such as any mentoring, their coping skills as a new teacher, successful outcomes, and positive experiences.

Schlichte et al (2005) analyzed the research and found that many factors led to teacher attrition, especially in the special education field. From minimal support from mentors to lack of administrative guidance to reduced socialization and interaction with colleagues can lead to teacher job dissatisfaction and eventual attrition.

The authors (Schlichte et al., 2005) stated that the research was limited due to only five teachers involved, but I disagree as qualitative research seeks the why and not the what, so I feel this research is valid. This research should align interviews with general education teachers in order to research the experiences and views and seek pertinent comparisons and contrasts to the special education field.

Another teacher attrition study was conducted by Garrison (2006) who focused on teachers in the southwestern part of the United States near the Mexican border. The
purpose of the study was to examine why this particular area of the United States had far less attrition than other areas of the country. Garrison performed a comparative analysis of prior research on attrition rates conducted by researchers Ingersoll and Smith (2003). Garrison found no difference in the teaching conditions examined by either Ingersoll and Smith or Garrison.

Garrison (2006) conducted individual interviews from a randomly selected sample of 527 teachers who were located in a southwestern, rural, low-income area, with a large minority and linguistically diverse population. These teachers earned educational credentials between the years 1991 and 1998. Twenty-one teachers were selected randomly from the original population, using a computer-generated random numbering system.

Garrison’s (2006) study reflected similar conditions that mirrored national rates of attrition. The instrument used was an interview protocol, and it included areas of teacher dissatisfaction that were used previously in research conducted by Ingersoll and Smith (2003). Garrison stated that the difference between Ingersoll and Smith’s population and Garrison’s population was that Ingersoll and Smith interviewed some teachers who left the profession and some teachers who stayed in the profession, while Garrison’s interviewees were still teaching. The questions asked were ones that were used nationally with teachers prior to this research. The interview research was to gauge whether attitudes and conditions had changed or remained the same among the studied population.

In Garrison’s (2006) study, the teachers were read questions via telephone interview, and teachers were asked to select answers from a set of descriptors (e.g., very
dissatisfied, very satisfied) on a Likert-type scale. The questions asked were as follows:
(a) Do the factors of poverty and cultural and linguistic diversity necessarily lead to high
teacher attrition rates, and (b) Can differences in teacher attrition rates be explained by
differences in working conditions? The results showed that over a 6-year span, 6% of
teachers no longer held their teaching credentials, compared to 40%-50% on the national
level. Further research showed that 80% of these teachers remained and taught in the
same county. The question of attrition showed dramatically lower attrition rates than the
national samples. The research demonstrated that factors such as poverty and cultural and
linguistic diversity were not always associated with high teacher attrition rates.

In a side-by-side comparison of Garrison’s (2006) research with Ingersoll and
Smith’s (2003) research, 78.55% of teachers were dissatisfied with their salaries
compared to Garrison’s sample of 19%. When it came to administrative support, both
Ingersoll and Smith’s study and Garrison’s study were split equally, showing about 29%
satisfied and 26% dissatisfied with administrative support, respectively. The findings also
showed that the national percentages mirrored local dissatisfaction when it came to
student discipline at approximately 34%. A surprising result in the research was the
school location. The subjects were close to evenly split when it came to school location:
about 44% of those interviewed chose to remain in the area, while 56% decided to remain
in education. The researcher asked a question about the reasons that kept these teachers in
the local areas, and their response was close proximity to friends and family.

In contrast, gender attrition was addressed in a study conducted by Addi-Raccah
(2005). The purpose of the study was to follow former teachers who exited the teacher
ranks due to attrition. Addi-Raccah wanted to track former teachers, both male and female, in order to examine new occupations into which the departing teachers had moved.

The researcher (Addi-Raccah, 2005) explored gender differences regarding teacher attrition and based the research on a resources-rewards model as well as on the sex segregation perspective in the State of Israel. Three groups of educators were examined: (a) teachers who stayed in the educational system, (b) teachers who left the teaching profession and went into other employment occupations, and (c) the teachers who left the labor market. The researcher used the dataset of the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics of 1983 and 1995, respectively. About 45% of the teaching population was used at the time of the research that equated to 2,108 teachers and school administrators. Teachers from both Arab and Israeli backgrounds were involved in the research.

The researcher (Addi-Raccah, 2005) emphasized that the consensus data were valid for this research because of the examination of attrition and career changes among teachers over a 12-year period. The participants were surveyed by answering three questions: (a) Who were most likely to leave teaching to move to other occupations, (b) Into what type of occupations did former teachers move, and (c) Did gender affect the extent of teachers’ attrition and their destinations?

Four dependent variables were used in the research conducted by Addi-Raccah (2005): (a) attrition, (b) occupational sex-typing, (c) occupational socioeconomic status (SES), and (d) occupational classification. The findings from the 12-year time span found that 69.5% stayed in education, 19.5% left teaching for other types of employment, while
11.1% said they were unemployed. The results also showed that male teachers moved into other male-dominated or balanced occupations. Arab teachers were more likely to be unemployed after exiting the teaching profession. Among women who exited the teaching profession, Arab women were more likely to exit teaching than their Jewish female counterparts—in fact, they were twice as likely.

The researcher (Addi-Raccah, 2005) exposed through an unreported multinomial analysis that male teachers were 14 times more likely than female teachers to enter into other male-dominated employment. Another result from the research showed that 76.4% of teachers who left the profession were employed at lower SES jobs than teaching. The findings further showed that gender made a difference in deciding to stay in the occupation of teaching. The researcher also noted that this phenomenon of male teachers leaving at a more rapid rate in Israel is similar to research patterns found in the United States. The researcher also mentioned reasons females leave the teaching profession, and this could be due to work burnout and other family considerations. Addi-Raccah affirmed that women decrease their SES by leaving the teaching profession more than men do.

Sass, Seal, and Martin (2011) conducted a study investigating the variables between the interrelationships of job satisfaction and teacher attrition. The purpose of the research was to explore various predictor variables including self-efficacy related to student engagement, superior and collegial support, workload stress, and student stressors and their relation to job satisfaction.

Sass et al. (2011) identified 479 certified teachers from elementary, middle, and high schools located in the southwestern part of the United States who participated in the
The authors employed three structural equation models in order to predict job satisfaction and attrition rates. The findings showed that in all three models, student and administrative stressors contributed to teacher job dissatisfaction that led to teacher attrition. The research also showed that the more supportive administrators were to their teachers, the greater the levels of self-efficacy that were present, and this circumstance led to job satisfaction. In conclusion, the researchers noted the following:

Theoretical models are needed to assist school administrators and researchers in developing programs to improve teacher retention and to predict those teachers who will struggle within the profession. Moreover, developing and testing comprehensive models associated with variables related to teacher and student success is critical for a well-functioning school system. (p. 200)

A mentoring program that addressed mentor-teacher strategies that benefited new teachers was conducted by Onchwari and Keengwe (2008). The purpose of the study was to explore the effects of the teacher-coach initiative model on teachers in Head Start programs. The authors conducted the research with 44 Head Start teachers from two Midwestern states. The researchers chose these teachers from the Strategic Teacher Education Program (STEP) Early Literacy Mentor-Coach initiative mode because the teachers were taught strategies from the program. The participants were interviewed via one-on-one interviews with six open-ended questions pertaining to their views on the success of this mentoring program. The authors wanted to know: (a) if the mentoring-coach program was still active, (b) what kind of training and materials were received by the teachers, (c) the frequency of mentor-coach support, (d) if the program assisted and
reinforced literacy practices, (e) examples of practices initiated in the classroom setting, and (f) what challenges and concerns the teacher had regarding the program.

The results revealed that the program was successful in enhancing pedagogy practices in the classroom (Onchwari & Keengwe, 2008). Some of the teachers responses showed that some teachers did not profit from this program as they were taught similar strategies while in college. Some teachers stated that due to their other duties at their respective schools, they were unable to coach other teachers because of how long the coaching period took. Kindergarten teachers who were involved in half-day school days had difficulties implementing this program due to the short hours. For future research, it would be advisable to designate this type of program to a teacher who, in turn, can then teach other teachers in the same grade. What was a positive result from this type of program was that it forced teachers to be collegial to each other, thereby assisting teachers, particularly new teachers, with much needed advice and interaction with more experienced teachers.

Ingersoll (2001) investigated the need to retain teachers in schools. The purpose of the research was to investigate other reasons teachers were leaving the profession other than the usual staff shortages, teacher retirements, and higher student enrollments. The researcher used the 1991-1992 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), aligned with data examined from the School and Staffing Survey of 1990-1991 (SASS). The SASS also contained teacher and administrator questionnaires. These surveys were used to examine the organizational perspective of teacher turnover and staffing problems at schools.
The TFS contained a total of 6,733 elementary and secondary school teachers broken down into categories of continuing teachers (3,343), migrations (1,428), and leaving teachers (1,962). The author divided the research analysis into three stages: (a) overall magnitude of teacher turnover; (b) multiple regression analysis of the characteristics of teachers, schools, and organizational conditions on turnover; and (c) teachers’ testimonials about why they departed from their schools.

The findings revealed that high-poverty public schools had an attrition rate of 14.4%, while small private schools had an even higher turnover rate of 22.8%. Nearly 42% of total departures were caused by job dissatisfaction such as salaries, lack of support from school administrators, student discipline problems, and an absence of influence in the decision-making process contributed to the high turnover rates. Ingersoll (2001) noted that the results were consistent with prior research.

Ingersoll (2001) recommended solutions to decrease turnover. Solutions such as support from the administration, reduction of discipline problems, involvement of teachers in the decision-making process as well as better teacher compensation can stem the tide and keep teachers teaching.

**Summary**

The educational field must be willing to look at itself in the mirror and admit that it has a systemic problem with higher rates of attrition compared to other professions. Although the review of the literature divided three key areas of rationales about why teachers have left and are considering leaving the education field, the research also provided strategies for education departments and administrators in devising methods to
stem the tide of attrition. In the next chapter, the literature is analyzed critically in an attempt to better understand and resolve the problems of teacher attrition, retention, and job satisfaction.
### Table 1

**Literature on Teacher Autonomy, Job Satisfaction, Retention, and Attrition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)/Year</th>
<th>Problem/Purpose</th>
<th>Research Question(s)</th>
<th>Research Design</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addi-Raccah (2005)</td>
<td>To examine gender differences in teachers’ attrition by comparing three groups of teachers: those who stayed, those who left the labor market, and those who left teaching and entered other occupations.</td>
<td>Why do male teachers leave in higher rates than their female counterparts?</td>
<td>Inter-generation dataset of the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, multinomial logistic regression analyses</td>
<td>One-third of teachers left the teaching profession; male teachers tended to leave for male-dominated professions more frequently.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angelle (2002)</td>
<td>To investigate differences in the socialization experiences of novice teachers in more effective middle schools.</td>
<td>What role does the quality of mentoring assistance play in the beginning socialization experience?</td>
<td>Mixed-method; case study approach; constant-comparative analysis method; MANOVA</td>
<td>Differences appeared in behavior between teachers in more effective schools and teachers in less effective middle schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boe, Cook, &amp; Sunderland (2008)</td>
<td>To determine whether disproportionate teacher turnover was main cause of teacher shortages in both special and general education fields; purpose was to evaluate trends.</td>
<td>Are teacher shortages due to teacher turnover, attrition, school transfer, and teacher area transfer (from special education to general education)?</td>
<td>Analyzed SASS/TFS (1990-1992, 1993-1995, and 1999-2001) using chi-square, finer grain analyses</td>
<td>The three components of teacher attrition were not uncommon over time and will continue to be a major issue due to funding problems in schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s)/Year</td>
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<td>Bogler &amp; Nir (2012)</td>
<td>To examine teacher empowerment and job satisfaction; to test perceived organizational support and job satisfaction with teacher empowerment</td>
<td>What is the mediating effect of teachers’ perception of their school support and their intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction?</td>
<td>Path analysis procedure, (cause and effect) from sample of 2,565 teachers from 153 Israeli elementary schools</td>
<td>Self-efficacy, earned status, and respect were important attributes for teachers’ job satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certo &amp; Jill (2004)</td>
<td>To investigate teacher attrition and retention rates from an organizational perspective</td>
<td>What policies and compensation benefits can be implemented to eliminate insufficient salaries, lack of administrative support, and a lack of planning time?</td>
<td>Qualitative; focus group and telephone interviews; transcripts were analyzed using Hyper-research qualitative software</td>
<td>Insufficient salary, lack of administrative support, and lack of planning time were the main reasons teachers left the education field.</td>
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<td>Gardner (2010)</td>
<td>Factors that influence the retention, turnover, and attrition of K-12 music teachers to construct a profile of K-12 music teachers comparing them to other classifications of teachers</td>
<td>Why did music teachers stay, move to another school, or leave the teaching profession? Is their answer similar to that of other classifications of teachers?</td>
<td>Theoretical model; comparative statistics, factor analysis, logistic regression, and structural equation modeling with the 1999-2000 (SASS) and the 2000-2001 (TFS)</td>
<td>Retention, turnover, and attrition rates of music teachers are comparable to those of other types of teachers; support from administrators assisted with positive retention rates; need for information on music teachers holding part-time or itinerant positions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garrison (2006)</td>
<td>To determine if teacher attrition was high in rural, low-income areas with large numbers of minority and bilingual students and compare rates to national average.</td>
<td>Why were attrition rates lower in this rural location compared to higher rates of the national average?</td>
<td>Qualitative; interview protocol, credentialing history</td>
<td>Limitations of study due to 5 participants; development of programs to employ teachers from within a school district</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s)/Year</td>
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<td>Greiner &amp; Smith (2006)</td>
<td>To examine relationships between teacher education programs and certification exams with teacher retention</td>
<td>Do certain teacher certification programs lead to better teacher retention rates?</td>
<td>Quantitative, point-biserial correlation coefficient and phi coefficient analyses</td>
<td>No relationship between program type or test score and retention. Other factors may lead to attrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarino, Santibañez, &amp; Daley (2006)</td>
<td>To research characteristics of individuals and schools districts that lead to successful retention rates; to provide policymakers and researchers with empirical data on teacher recruitment and retention</td>
<td>What are the characteristics of individuals who enter and remain in the teaching profession?</td>
<td>Literature review, analyzed 1990-1991 SASS, 1990-2000 SASS, and subsequent TFS</td>
<td>Females entered education field more than males; attrition rate is higher for new/young teachers compared to older/experienced teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hallam, Chou, Hite, &amp; Hite (2012)</td>
<td>To explore various beginning teacher mentoring programs aimed at improving retention efforts; to advise administrators on successful mentoring programs that can assist with retention efforts</td>
<td>Do mentoring programs succeed in retaining beginning teachers?</td>
<td>Mixed-method; quantitative survey data and follow-up qualitative interview</td>
<td>In-school mentoring program resulted in more successful teacher retention rates compared to off-campus coach mentoring programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ingersoll (2001)</td>
<td>To investigate the role of teacher turnover in the staffing problems of schools; to examine the role of school characteristics and organizational conditions in teacher turnover rates</td>
<td>Does teaching turnover occur because of staffing problems or because of other considerations or a combination of both?</td>
<td>Quantitative; 1990-1991 SASS and 1992 TFS; stratified survey design; multiple regression analysis and descriptive data</td>
<td>A large percentage of teachers left the profession for personal reasons, but the largest group left because of personal dissatisfaction at work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s)/Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inman &amp; Marlow (2004)</td>
<td>Beginning teachers leave in first years of teaching; to examine positive aspects of beginning teachers in order to assist with teacher retention</td>
<td>What are the factors that make beginning teachers leave the teaching profession?</td>
<td>Quantitative; Professional Attitude Survey</td>
<td>School-community support and continuing teacher education programs with mentoring could assist with increase of retention rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorrisen (2003)</td>
<td>To explore factors that contribute to successful retention efforts of urban teachers from a long-term alternate route program</td>
<td>Can alternative route programs assist with teacher retention?</td>
<td>Qualitative; focused in-depth interviews; inductive data analysis procedures</td>
<td>The integrated program model was an effective bridge between prior academic and vocational experience and the real world of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly (2004)</td>
<td>To examine teacher attrition due to low salary, teacher tracking, and excessive coursework; to track teacher attrition over the course of the teaching career</td>
<td>Will recognition of general determinants of attrition pave the way for more localized and specific understandings of teacher attrition overall?</td>
<td>Event history analysis of 1990-1991 SASS and 1992 TFS; teacher tracking</td>
<td>Low salary, coursework, teacher tracking, and teachers assigned to problematic students contributed to teacher attrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klassen, Usher, &amp; Bong (2010)</td>
<td>To examine cultural beliefs/values across various countries to see if they influence job satisfaction, stress, collective efficacy, and collectivism</td>
<td>Does cultural context influence motivation beliefs in diverse settings related to job satisfaction?</td>
<td>Quantitative, cross-cultural framework, survey—Collective Teacher Efficacy Belief Scale (CTEBS)</td>
<td>CTEBS predicted job satisfaction across settings; job stress was negatively related to job satisfaction for Canadian and U.S. teachers; cultural dimension of collectivism was significantly related to job satisfaction for Koreans as opposed to North American teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kukla-Acevedo (2009)</td>
<td>To understand why administrator support, behavioral climate of the school, and classroom autonomy contribute to attrition and teacher transfer rates</td>
<td>What policies could be implemented to stem the tide of teacher attrition?</td>
<td>Quantitative analysis of SASS/TFS; binomial logistic model and multinomial logistic model; multivariate and interactions analyses</td>
<td>Teacher transfer depended on the categorical teacher and school characteristics; beginning teachers transferred and quit teaching more than more experienced teachers; the lower the age, the more a teacher transferred compared to teachers over 50 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu (2007)</td>
<td>To examine effective steps to keep teachers in the classroom</td>
<td>What is the most effective way to keep teachers in the profession?</td>
<td>Quantitative analysis of prior SASS/TFS</td>
<td>Higher salaries, effective student discipline, and providing more teacher authority would stem attrition rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmood, Nudrat, Asdaque, Nawaz, &amp; Haider (2011)</td>
<td>To investigate the differences between teachers’ gender and comparisons of urban and rural school locations pertaining to job satisfaction.</td>
<td>Are gender inequalities at play alongside rural and urban locations when it comes to teacher job satisfaction?</td>
<td>Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire; descriptive and inferential analysis</td>
<td>Female teachers had greater job satisfaction than their male counterparts; no difference in job satisfaction between rural and urban school locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mau, Ellsworth, &amp; Hawley (2008)</td>
<td>To determine why beginning teachers stay in the teaching profession; to examine career persistence and job satisfaction of beginning teachers</td>
<td>What are the reasons beginning teachers persevere and stay in the teaching field?</td>
<td>Quantitative, social cognitive career theory framework</td>
<td>&gt;90% job satisfaction rate in education jobs, higher than non-education jobs; males had higher attrition rates in beginning years; African Americans were less satisfied than White counterparts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moe, Henkin, &amp; Egley (2005)</td>
<td>To examine if interpersonal trust between teachers and principals leads to job satisfaction</td>
<td>When teacher/principal interpersonal trust is present, do higher levels of job empowerment and satisfaction appear?</td>
<td>Survey measured affective and cognitive interpersonal trust; multidimensional measure of psychological empowerment</td>
<td>Increments in empowerment and trust can mitigate effects of teacher empowerment and trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onchwari &amp; Keengwe (2008)</td>
<td>To examine the mentor-coach model on participating Head Start programs</td>
<td>Can the mentor-coach model work in the retention of beginning teachers?</td>
<td>Qualitative, one-on-one interviews, observations, and researcher anecdotal notes</td>
<td>Need for additional research in order to gather strategies to counter multiple mentor/mentee teacher duties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson (1998)</td>
<td>Reasons for attrition; to examine the relationships between autonomy and reasons-for-leaving variables</td>
<td>What are the predictors of teacher autonomy?</td>
<td>Teacher Characteristics and Activities survey (STCA); multiple regression analysis of prior research</td>
<td>Low salary, stressful working conditions, student discipline problems, lack of student motivation, and lack of parental interest contributed to teacher attrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson &amp; Moomaw (2005)</td>
<td>To validate the underlying theoretical aspects of teacher autonomy identified in a prior study; to examine the relationship between teacher autonomy and on-the-job stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism</td>
<td>Could autonomous teachers demonstrate less on-the-job stress, have greater work satisfaction, perceive empowerment, and maintain a high degree of professionalism?</td>
<td>Quantitative; Teacher Autonomy Scale (TAS); two-factor analysis</td>
<td>As teacher autonomy increased, so did empowerment and professionalism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice &amp; Schneider (1994)</td>
<td>To validate previous studies that showed by giving teachers more autonomy, teacher satisfaction increased</td>
<td>Can autonomous teachers demonstrate less stress, greater work satisfaction, perceived empowerment, and a higher degree of professionalism?</td>
<td>Quantitative; decision involvement analysis questionnaire; correlational analyses, stepwise regression analysis</td>
<td>Teacher job satisfaction was linked more to effective supervision and support than to salary or number of years in the teaching profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sass, Seal, &amp; Martin (2011)</td>
<td>To add to previous research by examining whether job dissatisfaction mediated the relationships between several predictor variables and intent to quit teaching</td>
<td>Can developing and testing comprehensive models associated with variables related to teacher and student success be employed for successful retention?</td>
<td>Quantitative; Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale completed via email by teachers</td>
<td>Lack of support from administrators and student discipline problems were main reasons for job dissatisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlichte, Yssel, &amp; Merbler (2005)</td>
<td>To determine if any protective factors for beginning teachers might reverse attrition; to examine collegial and administrative support and related stress factors perceived by first-year special education teachers</td>
<td>What school programs or policies could be employed to keep beginning teachers in the classroom?</td>
<td>Qualitative; semi-structured interviews, case studies, analytic commentary</td>
<td>Mentoring strategies, administrative supports, and collegial support are crucial elements in retaining beginning teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shen (1997)</td>
<td>To explore why teachers stayed, moved to another school, or left teaching; to examine personal and school characteristics pertaining to profession-related issues</td>
<td>Why do teachers stay, move, and leave schools and the profession?</td>
<td>Discriminant function analyses of 1990-91 SASS/1991-92 TFS</td>
<td>Beginning teachers left poorer schools with higher percentage of minority population; experienced teachers stayed due to higher salaries, seniority, and autonomy.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Smith &amp; Ingersoll (2003)</td>
<td>To determine effects of teacher induction programs on teacher retention; purpose was to understand effects of the distribution on overall teacher turnover.</td>
<td>Do induction programs have positive effects on first-year teachers?</td>
<td>Quantitative, NCES Survey, 1-year longitudinal model</td>
<td>First-year teachers who were mentored by a colleague in the same content area were more likely to remain in their school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stempien &amp; Loeb (2002)</td>
<td>To explore whether job dissatisfaction was more prevalent among special education or general education teachers</td>
<td>Which area of teaching has more job dissatisfaction: general education or special education?</td>
<td>Quantitative; Brayfield-Rothe Job Satisfaction Index and a Life Satisfaction Index; 2 open-ended questions</td>
<td>General education teachers’ frustration moderately correlated with low job satisfaction; special education teachers’ frustration significantly correlated with low job satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tillman &amp; Tillman (2008)</td>
<td>To determine whether teachers are left behind because of job dissatisfaction; to explore the relationship among length of service, salary, and supervision with job satisfaction of teachers</td>
<td>Are teachers being left behind because of job dissatisfaction?</td>
<td>Quantitative correlational methods with a Job in General (JIG) survey; correlation analysis</td>
<td>Future research needed pertaining to service years, compensation, and teacher job satisfaction and retention remedies.</td>
</tr>
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CHAPTER IV
CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE

The following syntheses of research on teacher autonomy and job satisfaction were derived from peer reviewed journal articles. Following the themes selected for this review, (a) teacher retention, (b) teacher job satisfaction, and (c) teacher attrition, the participants involved in this thematic research were teachers who taught in various elementary, middle, and high schools. Additionally, a portion of the analyses were spent on special education teachers and private school teachers in order to envelop the full spectrum of the educational problems. The research data were acquired from urban, suburban, and rural school districts, including schools that were located in other countries of the world such as Canada, Israel, and South Korea. Beginning teachers, seasoned teachers who left the teaching profession, and teachers who moved to other schools were also included. Gender and racial considerations were also explored.

Special education teachers were also studied and contrasted against general education teachers. A variety of school districts across the United States were used in the research studies. Some schools were used in prior studies, and these studies were revisited again after a decade or so in order to look for both consistency and inconsistency in the research. The studies of other countries’ schools were used to show that teacher attrition, autonomy, and job satisfaction were not just problematic in the United States alone. These studies were used because of their usefulness to the research
related to attrition, autonomy, and job satisfaction of teachers in a wide range of geographic locations.

The study was not structured in chronological order; rather, it was broken down in thematic criteria in order to define the three problematic areas of concern pertaining to teacher attrition. The implications for the continuation of teachers’ attrition due to job dissatisfaction, low wages, and student discipline problems is not only problematic to school districts domestically, but will continue to be a huge detriment to the United States in the near future as students will not be prepared by highly qualified and seasoned teachers. The research exposed many reasons for applying both effective mentoring and induction programs in all aspects of American education.

As the research progressed, not only did job satisfaction occur due to loss of autonomy in the classroom, but other factors were also discovered such as lack of administrative support, student discipline problems, and low monetary compensation that amounted to high attrition rates that are significantly higher compared to other professions in the marketplace. Other areas associated with high attrition rates discovered in the research were in poorer urban schools, in which decidedly more students were in free lunch programs, and these schools held a higher percentage of minority students than other schools. These schools continue to suffer high rates of turnover.

What was also remarkable about the research was that small private schools suffered high attrition rates similar to, if not more than, poor public schools in urban areas. The research demonstrated that it was not always low-income area schools that had high attrition rates, but private schools suffered also due to their typically low
compensation. The studies further indicated that lack of autonomy was not the only reason that teachers leave the profession for better jobs. Student discipline problems caused some teachers to leave or move to other schools, most especially from low SES schools.

Limitations

The limitations on the data researched showed that other countries’ educational systems lacked vital data, statistics, and valid surveys from teachers such as testing procedures, demographic makeup of schools including hours students are taught on a daily basis, and gender considerations pertaining to both male and female teachers. These may be limitations also to the Student and Staffing Survey (SASS) as well as The Teacher Follow-up Survey due to teachers’ reluctance to answer truthfully because of retribution from their administration or school districts. Some teachers have professed that while the administrators may say these surveys are anonymous, the electronic mail of the teachers is used to send out the online surveys, and this method may cause some of the research to be invalid.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, 
AND REFLECTION

This study examined the many reasons teachers are dissatisfied and are leaving the teaching profession in earnest. In this chapter, I revisited the literature researched and discussed the impact teacher attrition has on the education system and particularly on the student population due to loss of teacher autonomy, lack of fair compensation, and a lackluster attempt at mentoring and induction programs countrywide. It is clearly evident that school districts cannot compete with private industry that can provide better compensation, benefits, and less stress to well-educated potential employees. Teacher autonomy and self-efficacy can indeed increase teacher retention, improve teacher job satisfaction, and decrease teacher attrition rates, but this is a small portion of the problem. Other considerations must be addressed such as AYP, which in the district where I teach has changed from school- to individual-level data gathering.

Response to the Research Questions

Research Question #1

The first question asked: What are teachers’ perceptions of autonomy, self-efficacy, and empowerment in the classroom? The findings suggest that teachers lack both autonomy and self-efficacy due to mandated districts’ requiring scripted programs and teaching to the test. Additionally, the research has shown that teachers who were
given more freedom and autonomy in their classrooms showed an increase in their self-efficacy and increase in their job satisfaction.

**Research Question #2**

The second research question asked: What do teachers view as their greatest challenges in their current educational setting? From the research, a picture emerged that showed teachers have a variety of challenges. From low compensation, student discipline problems, lack of autonomy in the classroom, lack of induction and mentoring programs, and an absence of administrative support, all have added to the challenges that teachers continue to face.

**Research Question #3**

The third research question asked: What do teachers view as their greatest successes in their current educational setting? The data showed that mentoring and induction programs alongside support from school personnel led to great success and satisfaction of teachers. Receiving fair compensation for hard work accomplished in the classroom also contributed to successes. Administrative support pertaining to student discipline assisted in successful retention as well.

**Research Question #4**

The fourth research question asked: How might teachers’ placements in public schools affect the report of their experiences? It is evident from the research that teachers placed in urban schools with low SES and higher enrollment rates of minority students tended to affect teachers in a negative way. A substantial part of the research showed that high attrition rates occurred in schools with a higher percentage of low-SES students
more than in urban, suburban, and rural schools without a low-SES population. The only types of schools with a higher attrition rate are small private schools, and this only occurred because of compensation complications rather than student discipline struggles.

**Reflection**

I arrived at this study based on personal interactions with teachers who relayed to me their lacked of autonomy in their classrooms. After I delved into the phenomenon more closely, I came to the realization that it is so much more than just teacher autonomy that is causing teachers to leave their classrooms and the educational field with high attrition rates. I learned that the bulk of beginning teachers are leaving in excessive rates during the first few years because of the *sink or swim* mentality that these teachers have to endure. The research showed that schools that had induction or mentoring programs present showed lower attrition rates compared to schools with no programs for their new teachers. This revolving door in education cannot endure as the teacher workforce is becoming grayer, thus requiring the education field to address the high attrition rates in a more rapid fashion. A well-trained cadre of teachers who dedicate their lives to teaching K-12 students, in particular, can provide a solid education that future leaders so richly deserve.

I was deeply troubled about the high attrition rates in urban schools, particularly schools that have a high minority and are labeled Title 1 schools. It is these schools that need teachers to provide the strongest solid foundation and support so that these students can hold out hope that they are not abandoned by teachers for an easier assignment in an urban or a suburban school. In addition, it is in such schools that children have an
opportunity, at least on school days, to escape the poverty and chaos they may experience at home. In that way, their future seems possible and bright.

As I conducted this research, I felt that teachers are trying desperately to hang on because I feel every teacher starts his or her career with good intentions to make a difference in a child’s life, but unfortunately, these teachers are blindsided by the realities of low compensation, poor benefits, discipline problems, and lack of support from the administrators and their fellow teachers that propel them to leave teaching for good. The research showed that mentoring programs and induction programs can indeed work for teachers, especially beginning teachers. The education field must invest in these types of successful entities in order to keep teachers who are good in the classroom.

I have learned that teacher autonomy can lead to teacher job satisfaction, but it is only one rung of the ladder that must be given back to teachers. Many other considerations must be looked into additionally such as administrative support, better compensation packages including bonuses, and various mentoring programs that fit different demographics that schools are in.

Colleges that prepare teachers have a tremendous disconnect to the real world of teaching, as their teaching methods that provide strategies do not parallel the reality in schools. These teaching methods courses, though well-intentioned, do not prepare the beginning teachers for the restrictions that are placed on them when they enter the world of education, such as mandated scripted programs, lack of preparation time, and lack of administrative and colleague support. It is of vital importance that induction and
mentoring programs become mobilized in all school districts in the United States in order to retain teachers in the classroom.

In conclusion, I learned so much about this phenomenon by researching broad amounts of literature pertaining to teacher autonomy and job satisfaction and their relation to teacher retention. In spite of its challenges, I hope to remain a teacher for a long time to come.
References


