JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, AND TURNOVER INTENTION

OF TEACHERS USING COMPUTER BASED CURRICULUM DELIVERY

IN A DROP-OUT RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL

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This current study examined the job satisfaction and turnover intention of teachers working in a drop out recovery program using online curriculum. The subjects of the study were from one charter school district in north Texas that is designated as a drop out recovery program. This qualitative case study used interviews and focus groups to examine eight different areas of teacher job satisfaction to examine factors that influence a teacher's intent to quit or remain at a school. Previous research showed a connection between job satisfaction levels and the intent of a teacher to terminate employment or not. Previous research had not looked into this specific school environment. Results showed that compensation was the largest factor in job satisfaction but negative feelings could be overcome if other areas of importance for teachers brought positive job satisfaction. Overall, teachers in this environment were more likely to have high job satisfaction and less likely to terminate employment.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

An increasing population of students are not progressing through traditional classroom

settings or are dropping out completely from the education process. Stillwell and Hoffman

(2008) concluded that the United States had a serious dropout problem as consensus among

researchers showed that 3 in 10 students never complete high school. Sparks, Johnson, and

Akos (2010) stated that as many as 6% of freshman they studied never finished the 9th grade,

and as reported by Neild, Stoner-Eby, and Furstenberg (2008), in large urban cities more than

50% of students failed to complete high school or earn a diploma within four years. Neild et al.

(2008) found that many of these students failed to accumulate the credits to promote beyond

the 9th-grade. McFarland, J., Cui, J., and Stark, P. (2018) stated that the dropout rate for

students 16-24 was about 6.3% of those enrolled in Grades 10-12. More alarming in their

report was that based on income level that rate could vary from the low of 2.6% (high income

household) to 9.6% for those living with low-income families. When looking across the United

States these same authors stated that about ten states (mostly located in the south) reported

higher than average dropout rates (above 6.3%) with Texas being one of those states (7.5%).

Johnson, Montes, and the Intercultural Development Research Association, IDRA (2017)

published the Texas Public School Attrition Study for the year 2016/2017 and found that the

attrition rates for Texas have decreased since the early 1980's when they first began tracking

and that rates have decreased from 33% to 24%. The study measured the 9th grade enrollment

number at Texas high schools and compared that to enrollment numbers for that same group

four years later. The bad news is that the Johnson and Montes study showed that Texas

schools are failing to graduate one in every four students. As of the 2016/2017 school year

data, 33,000 students between the 8th and 12th grades dropped out the education system of

Texas. This accounts for almost 2% of the students educated by the state in the 2016/2017

school year. With only slight variation of the percentage each year the drop-out rate has

remained the same in the state of Texas for the past two decades (Johnson, R., Montes, F., &

IDRA, 2017). The highest percentage of those numbered among the dropouts of Texas are

those considered special populations of each school campus. These special population sub-

groups are students who are at-risk of dropping out of school, students who qualify for special

education services, and the English language learners who are balancing learning a new

language with acquiring core academic skills (Koepke, Kupozynski, & Holland, 2011).

The state of Texas has tried to help with the drop out problem by creating schools to

help students who have already dropped out or are at-risk of dropping out. The state

designates these schools as credit recovery schools. Credit recovery schools, also known as

Drop-out Recovery Schools (DRS), are a sub-group of a larger population of campuses across

the state of Texas known as Alternative Education Campuses (AEC). AEC's are 6-12 grade

campuses that have 75% or more of their students at-risk for dropping out. The state of Texas

gives permission to certain campuses to address the problem of students dropping out of

school by being innovative in their approach to education. DRS's are certain campuses under

the AEC umbrella where 50% of the students served are over the age of 17 (TEA, 2018).

Currently in the state of Texas there are 360 AEC campuses with 213 of those considered DRS

schools (TEA, 2018). As of this writing there are eight charter schools operating in Texas as part

of the DRS system (TEA, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The current study seeks to expand on the research conducted by Larkin et al. (2015) that looked at factors that contribute to how teachers using online delivery of curriculum feel about their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. Larkin (2015) concluded the study with this statement:

> Finally, an important component, which this study lacked, is follow-up in which the researchers could compare participants' turnover intentions versus their turnover actions. As more longitudinal data concerning K-12 online teachers begins to emerge, careful attention should be paid to the attrition of online teachers. At present, researchers can only measure turnover intentions but do not have trend data for actual K-12 online teacher attrition. It would be worth comparing the attrition of online teachers, particularly those brand new to teaching, in relation to traditional teacher attrition, which generally, ranges from 30-50% within the first five years of employment. (p.56)

This study examined the factors contributing to teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention in an online drop-out recovery district within the state of Texas. The online school district in this study reports that teacher attrition has averaged 50% since the 2012/2013 school year when records began tracking this data. Data on individual schools is not available within this district.

Conceptual Framework

This study examined factors that contribute to teacher turnover, or intention to stay or leave, by understanding influences on job satisfaction. This study was set within a specific type of school system (drop-out recovery as part of alternative education campuses) and aimed to better understand the factors influencing job satisfaction so that organizational commitment and teacher intention will be better understood within this type of school. Figure 1 depicts the

framework this study used to evaluate the job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers in online classrooms. This graphic depicts how the theories related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention can be examined as individual concepts and as part of interdependent theories that are interacting and effecting one another.

Maslow (1954), Herzberg et al. (1959), and Vroom (1964) all looked at the definition of job satisfaction and how it could be measured while Borup and Stevens (2016), Hung (2012), and Larkin (2015) looked at the findings of these researchers and tried to apply them to the field of education. Meyer and Allen (1991) and Akomalafe and Olatomide (2013) examined how and why workers become committed to their work and then stay committed while Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Chovwen et al. (2014) looked at how employers could know what creates intent to leave a job and if it could be predicted before it actually happens.

Job Satisfaction

-Maslow (1954)
-Herzberg et al. (1959)
-Vroom (1964)
-Hung (2012)
-Larkin (2015)
-Borup & Stevens (2016)

Organizational Commitment

-Meyer & Allen (1991)

-Akomalafe & Olatomide (2013)

Turnover Intention

-Fishbein & Ajzen (1975)

-Chovwen, Balogun & Olowokere (2014)
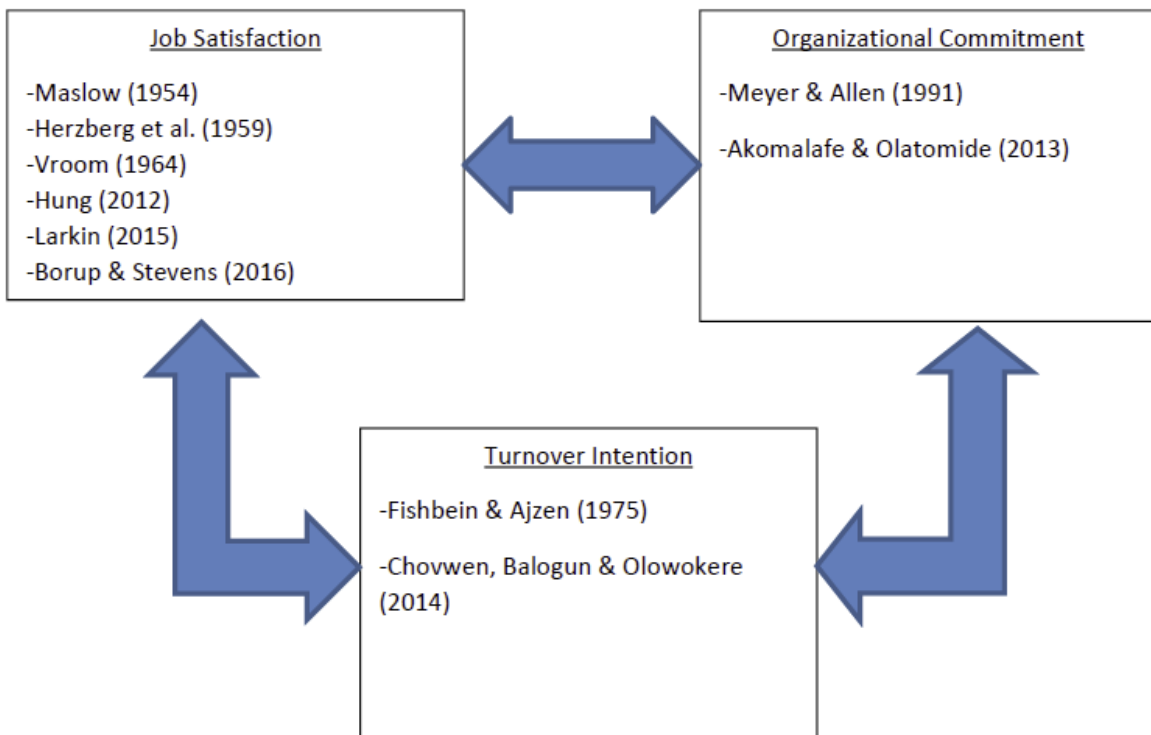
Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

As indicated by the use of blue arrows in Figure 1, past researchers and this current study wish to understand how these concepts interact upon one another and how knowing one concept about an employee can predict how that employee would feel about the others. Using a framework such as this and expanding the ideas of Larkin (2015), helped determine the turnover intention of teachers using online curriculum in one drop-out recovery school district. All of the researchers, theories, and concepts are discussed in greater length in the literature review in chapter 2.

<div align="center">Purpose of the Study</div>

This current study looked at one such drop-out recovery school district located in north Texas. This district has six drop-out recovery campuses serving students between the ages of 14 to 26 years. These campuses use a combination of teachers and online curriculum to meet the needs of their students. Students attend one session each day for a four-hour period. These sessions occur in the morning, afternoon, and evening giving students the flexibility as to when they can attend school. This accommodates their work schedules as many of them to work while going to school. School work is completed in a self-paced timeline meaning the students can work at a faster pace and finish classes in a shorter time span than typically done at a traditional school setting. This provides the opportunity to recover lost credits in a timelier manner. While drop-out recovery schools provide a unique opportunity for these students the teacher retention rate of 50% is a cause for concern.

The school district in this study reports (Texas Academic Performance Report, TAPR, 2017) it loses 40- 60% of their teaching staff each year easily exceeding the state wide averages reported for Texas schools of about 30% (Zelinski, 2019).

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors contributing to teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention in an online high school within the state of Texas that has the designation of drop-out recovery. The data are limited concerning the environment teachers work in when delivering computer-based education to students in high school (Fournier, 2013). Further, there is even less research into how these environments and job duties affect teachers' level of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or turnover intention when working with students in a computer-based classroom. The study sought to expand on the research conducted by Larkin et al. (2016) that looked at factors that contribute to how teachers using online delivery of curriculum feel about their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention.

Research Questions

- What are the factors that influence teachers' job satisfaction while working in a drop-out recovery school using online curriculum?

- What are the factors that influence teachers to terminate their employment in a drop-out recovery school using online curriculum?

- What is the turnover intention of teachers in a drop-out recovery school?

Significance of the Study

Online student enrollment across the nation is climbing each year. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2017), there are almost five million students at this time in some form of online platform and as many as two and a half million enrolled in online schools. Many schools are switching to online services for general education and alternative education campuses. The increased implementation of online programs has created a demand for individuals who can effectively serve students within an online environment

(Archambault & Crippen, 2009). According to the NCES (2017), there were 3.5 million teachers employed in the U.S. with little data designating how many of those teach in online settings. School district needs and specific school setting needs determine staffing and training for virtual, alternative, and online teaching positions. Professional development for teachers using virtual classrooms is also lacking.

Currently, teacher preparation and in-school trainings use the traditional classroom models used in traditional classrooms. The U.S. Department of Education suggested that improving this model would be a significant and much needed innovation (Davis & Roblyer, 2005). The U.S. Department of Education further advocates for a program of mentoring and training that provides "beginning teachers the ability to be assisted in virtual schools or have teachers with experience help in virtual school training." (Davis & Roblyer, 2005, p. 402). Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention have been studied in different professions, but there is very little work focusing on high school teachers using computers to deliver curriculum, in either traditional schools, or alternative education schools. Administrators in educational settings where computers deliver curriculum, can utilize this information when assessing professional development for staff, determining hiring practices, and developing school culture to retain teachers. The benefit to school districts are the costs saved from less hiring and training for new teachers.

Researcher Trustworthiness

As noted by Gearing (2004), internal biases are present as researchers investigate environments in which they are personally associated. To combat these biases, it is important

for researchers to remain as transparent as possible. As part of that transparency, it is important for the researcher to explain personal biases and how they will be eliminated.

In many years in education, I have had the pleasure to serve in roles from teacher to administration. Because of many rewarding experiences in education, I have grown to be passionate about making the experience the best it can be for student and educator. I work as a school administrator at one of the campuses associated with this studies' research. A bias may exist because of the commonalities and interactions with the teachers who were participants for this study. During my tenure in this drop-out recovery school district I have worked with students and teachers using the online curriculum, helped mediate behavior issues with students, and helped with creating a climate and culture that enables teachers feel empowered.

As I reflect on my role as an administrator in a charter high school using online curriculum, it is important to bracket current and previous experiences to eliminate any biases that contribute to influencing perceptions of teacher and principal responses about their experiences with online curriculum in this dropout recovery school district. In 2009, Fischer defined bracketing as:

> . . . an investigator's identification of vested interests, personal experience, cultural factors, assumptions, and hunches that could influence how he or she views the study's data. For the sake of viewing data freshly, these involvements are placed in 'brackets' and 'shelved' for the time being as much as possible. (p. 583)

The driving force behind this study is a passion for assuring that students in drop-out recovery school programs have the best and most effective teachers. Far too often, students experience negative impacts when teachers stay at the campus for only a short time. As interactions with teachers typically involves their professional progress, personal goals, and evaluation of job

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performance, it is important to ensure that the teachers understand the investigative nature of their involvement in this study. Information gathered in this study is for research purposes and can help working conditions for those employed in this district.

Although there are direct ties to teachers through professional relationships with them, I did not have supervisory status with the participant teachers. Collected data was coded and analyzed with every effort made to bracket my experiences to assure the elimination of bias. I intentionally recorded, analyzed, and reported findings based solely on participants' responses, avoiding any interpretation based on connections with the participants. The purpose for conducting this study was the desire to seek possible solutions to high teacher turnover and the costs associated with teacher turnover that places a greater financial stress on alternative education schools. Examining job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers in this study was the focus. I continually bracketed my position and experiences in the credit recovery school district, as well as my assumptions or motivations related to this district and its teachers, so the findings of this study may be considered trustworthy.

Delimitations

The delimitations are those characteristics that I control to limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study. Delimiting factors include the choice of objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives that are adopted, and the population chosen to investigate (Simon, 2011). Study participants included representatives from five schools in north Texas area that are identified by the Texas Education Agency as alternative education campuses, have been designated drop out recovery schools, and deliver curriculum

via computer based curriculum using online curriculum software. This research study consisted

of face-to-face interviews with three administrators and seven teachers from schools located

within this north Texas school district, as well as a focus group discussion with the teachers that

participated in the interview process. Data from the interviews and focus group was collected

during the fall and winter of the 2019- 2020 school year. Questions focused on job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, and turnover intention of the teachers working at the specified

campuses.

Assumptions

Roberts (2010) impresses upon the reader to understand that by identifying

assumptions, researchers acknowledge what may be taken for granted relative to the study.

Simon (2011) would tell us that assumptions are those things that are somewhat out of our

control, but if removed our research would be irrelevant. The primary assumption of this study

is that this research will relate to a larger number of educators across Texas and the United

States and will benefit the leaders of those schools that computer based curriculum plays a

large role in educating students. As computer based education increases leaders will need this

information to help them in their tasks. Also, participants in this study were assumed to be

providing honest responses to the interview questions during individual interviews and focus

group participation. By ensuring confidentiality of participant responses and participation, it is

assumed that participants' responses to questions contributed trustworthy data related to the

intended outcomes of the topics this study hopes to answer. By interviewing subjects not

directly in subordination to the researcher it is assumed that honest answers were given.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the study. In order to ensure consistency and clarity as the terms are used in this study, they are defined as follows.

- *Alternative education campus.* Campuses in Texas that have an enrollment of 50% of their students in Grades 6-12 and at least 75% of those students are considered at-risk. These campuses are given leeway to create an alternative method of delivering instruction in order to meet the needs of their students. They are monitored by the state commissioner of education.

- *At-risk.* A student is considered at-risk if they have a high chance of dropping out of school due to circumstances such as homelessness, language barriers, or pregnancy. Other potential descriptors are if the student has been held back, is on parole for a committed crime, has been expelled, or has received lower than 70 in two or more classes in one semester.

- *Attrition*. Attrition refers to a reduction in employees due to retirement, leaving education to pursue other professional fields, or an employee transfer to another site or organization.

- *Blended school.* Such schools include courses that blend online and face-to-face delivery. A substantial portion of content, approximately 30% to 79%, is delivered online and typically uses online discussions, and reduces the number of face-to-face meetings (Allen & Seaman, 2013).

- *Drop-out recovery school.* A school is designated as such if it first qualifies as an alternative education campus and has more than 50% of students above the age of 17.

- *Hybrid or blended school*. Courses that blend online and face-to-face delivery. A substantial portion of content, approximately 30% to 79% is delivered online or via a computer based curriculum, and reduces the number of face-to-face encounters (Allen and Seaman, 2013). Students may or may not report to a brick-and-mortar building depending on the model.

- *Hygienes.* This term was used by Herzberg et al. (1959) to explain extrinsic factors that are related to job dissatisfaction, including pay, job security, work conditions, supervision, and interpersonal relationships.

- *Intent to leave.* This term refers to an employee's intention to quit, as identified by an individual's estimated probability of permanently leaving the organization at some point in the near future. This intent is an important determinant in attrition and retention.

- *Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction is the favorable or unfavorable subjective feeling with which employees view their work. Job satisfaction is dependent upon how closely a person's abilities match the requirements of the job and the degree to which the person's needs are met by the rein forcers in the work environment (McLawhon & Cutright, 2011).

- *Motivators.* Intrinsic factors related to job satisfaction are considered motivators, including items such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement.

- *Online school.* In an online school, 80% or more of the courses and content are delivered online and typically will have no face-to-face meetings (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Online schools may or may not have a physical campus to which students and teachers report

and may or may not offer face-to-face extensions and enrichment, such as field trips. Instruction may be delivered synchronously and/or asynchronously.

- *Organizational commitment.* A strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership.

- *Retention*. Retaining employees within their current organization and/or position for continued employment.

- *Turnover*. The voluntary and involuntary withdrawal of an employee from an organization.

- *Turnover intention.* The extent to which an employee intends to continue or leave their present employment relationship with their current employer.

- *Virtual school/education.* Virtual school is a learning environment where the teacher and the student are separated by time, space, or both. The teacher provides course content via course management applications, multimedia resources, the Internet, video conferencing, or other alternatives to traditional face-to-face education.

<div align="center">Organization of the Study</div>

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction to the study, statement of the problem and purpose, description of the framework, research questions, the study's significance, delimitations and assumptions, and key terms. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature on the history of education in Texas, charter schools, alternative schools, online education, teacher attrition and retention, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology and procedures of this research. The research design is reviewed, as is the process of data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 provides the data collected. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the findings in relation to each of the research questions, a summary of the research study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment to determine the turnover intention for teachers using computer based curriculum. The participant teachers are those working in one drop out recovery school district in north Texas. These teachers were chosen because they work with students using an online delivery of the curriculum. Current research into teachers in similar situations is just emerging, so the information gathered should be of benefit to future research and to current school districts trying to keep classrooms staffed with qualified educators. Because of the lack of available research, a growing demand for teachers working with online curriculum, the increasing use of this method to help in drop-out recovery, and very high levels of teacher attrition, it becomes imperative that scholars and administrators alike understand how computer based curriculum affects teachers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This research study explored teachers' level of job satisfaction, organizational

commitment, and intent to remain teaching in public, state-run, credit recovery, 9-12 online

schools in a single district in north Texas. When considering the long-term sustainability of

online learning in an alternative education environment, hiring and retaining 9-12 online

teachers becomes a pressing issue for stakeholders and establishes a need to examine how

satisfied teachers are within their jobs, their commitment to the charter/online environment,

and their intent to remain in the 9-12 online charter setting. With a large deficit in peer-

reviewed literature for virtual education, most available research is generated by dissertations

of graduate students (Barbour & Reeves, 2008). To gain more insight, research was examined

related to traditional K-12 teachers and online teachers of higher education. In addition to

reviewing literature on the funding of education in Texas, a careful look at research related to

teacher attrition, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention was

conducted.

All state school districts receive money and help from the state through a redistribution

system of tax money, in an effort to keep funding equitable to all districts around the state.

This system is known as the Foundation School Program (FSP) and is administered by the Texas

Education Agency. The two main components are operations funding and facilities funding.

The operations funding of FSP consists of a Tier I basic funding for most school programs, Tier II

funding that supplements Tier I so basic funding matches daily attendance, and revenue at the

compressed tax rate. The facilities funding of FSP assists districts with debt service related to

facilities purchases, construction, renovation, or expansion (TEA, 2017). As of this writing, the

Texas Supreme Court has declared this system to be an equitable distribution of funds

throughout the state (Wiesser, 2016).

It is these two major functions, operating costs and staffing, that occupy most of

districts' leadership time and effort. Just in terms of money spent, a school will spend 60 cents

of every dollar on staffing teachers in a classroom and 25 cents of every dollar on issues related

to facilities (Texas Association of School Boards, 2014). A more alarming number is how much

money schools in Texas spend on trying to staff and replace teachers as they lose them to other

careers or they move to other schools for better working conditions. On average, schools in the

United States and Texas lose about 33% of teachers through those leaving the profession,

moving to new schools within a district, or moving to new schools outside of the district each

year (Brown and Wynn, 2009).

Texas is a state rich in racial diversity so it is important not only to make sure economic

issues are equitable, but also that these diverse races are accessing the education equally

throughout the state. Although the state constitution calls for equal education for all of its

citizens, for most of the state's history, racial minorities were segregated into schools that

served only minority populations. Even after the landmark court case *Brown v. Board of

Education* (1954), many districts in Texas failed to create systems that allowed for equal access

to a quality education.   R.R. Valencia (2000) addressed these issues in a study conducted in

Austin, Texas as part of his response to the decision made in *GI Forum et al. v. Texas Education

Agency*. In this case, the state argued that current education conditions and their outcomes

cannot be linked to historical treatment of minorities. Valencia testified during the trial and felt

there needed to be more said about systemic issues that minorities face when trying to receive a quality education. Valencia stated in his study that since the state's founding, minorities have been segregated to schools not populated by diverse races (mostly African-American and Hispanic students), and that the quality of teachers employed at these schools has always been inferior to their counterparts at mostly White-populated schools. He then argued that state testing and the consequences of failing were unfair as minority students did not have the same education in order to pass mandated tests. In the study, Valencia was able to show that even current school districts, such as Austin ISD, had not created a system where every student had equal access to a quality education.

As time, technology, and students' needs have changed or progressed, a need for alternative forms of education and delivery models became obvious. As dropout rates increased and a focus on career readiness became larger, the need for alternative education campuses became necessary. From school year 2002/03 to school year 2015/16, the rate of dropouts in high school increased from 1.3% to 2.0% (Texas Education Agency, 2018). This percentage increase, coupled with the ever-increasing numbers of students in Texas schools, shows an ever-growing population of dropouts not being educated. Schools in Texas can apply to be an alternative education campus if they meet the following criteria: 50% of the population of the school is enrolled in Grades 6-12 and the at-risk population is above 75%. Texas schools that meet these criteria and try to meet students' specific needs are charter schools, private schools, home schools, GED preparation schools, and the Texas Virtual School Network of online courses and schools. As of May 2018, there were 359 schools designated as an alternative campus in the state of Texas (TEA, 2018).

Texas Charter Schools

The idea of having charter schools in Texas began in the 1990's as a way to bring innovation, flexibility and autonomy to school systems (Texas Education Agency, 2017). It is assumed that teachers are drawn to charter schools because of these conditions so they can be more creative in delivery of the curriculum. Leaders and teachers of charter schools hope that innovative curriculum ideas will foster better education, while parents want choice about where they send their children when not satisfied with the local school (National Alliance for Public School Charters, 2016). Since the first laws regulating charter schools were passed in Texas, in 1995, Texas charter schools have grown in numbers, reaching close to 800 campuses serving more than a quarter of a million students by the year 2015 (NAPSC, 2016). This makes Texas second only to California in the number of schools and students served by charter schools. Texas law states that charter schools must have open enrollment so that all students have access to the schools, just as they would in the traditional public-school setting.

As reported by the Texas Charter Schools Association (2017), there are currently four types of charter schools operating in Texas. 1) Campus program charters, where independent school districts authorize and oversee the charters. They operate as part of the independent school districts (ISD) and are funded and staffed as part of the ISD's public schools. 2) Open-enrollment charters are the type for most Texas charters. The commissioner authorizes these charters and they are typically designed to meet the needs of specific groups of students. These charters are started by individuals, groups, or sometimes businesses. An application is made to the state of Texas and charters are granted based on the need the charter is attempting to fill. 3) University or junior college charters are authorized by the commissioner.

Eligible entities for university or college charters include public colleges and universities. These charters service specific needs within their communities, including college preparation for four-year college attendance. 4) Specialized-help charters focus on students with specific and distinct needs, such as residential treatment centers, or juvenile detention centers for students who are ordered to attend school by court of law. Other types of specialized-help charters include pre-kindergarten charters that serve students who need help preparing for school attendance, or credit recovery charters that serve at-risk students who have dropped out, or could drop out, before high school graduation). As the state regulates charter schools in Texas, the same attendance rules for funding are required as they are for independent school districts. In August of 2017, the Texas state legislature passed House Bill 21, a school finance law that included up to $60 million annually for charter facilities funding, beginning in fiscal year 2018-19. That funding will be divided per student among the charter schools that meet state standards (Swaby, 2017).

Online Schools/Virtual Learning

The growth of online curriculum and virtual education can be traced to the growth of technology. As technology improved, starting in the early 1990's, so has the number of opportunities for virtual learning, online schools, and distance learning opportunities. There are now opportunities for online individual classes, fully online schools over the Internet, and blended schools where students work online but are supported by classroom teachers. Since many state and local education budgets are funded by property taxes and since ADA funding barely covers operating costs, sometimes leaving districts to operate in deficits, it is little wonder that online schooling, or similarly virtual learning, is growing in popularity (Educational

Testing Services, 2011). Many school districts now look to online availability to help with cost

savings (Watson et al., 2011). A Georgia state committee designed to look at budget issues

found that the state could save almost $5 million dollars if just one percent of their students

took online courses as part of their daily curriculum (AEE, 2010). Florida Virtual School (FLVS),

the largest online school in the nation, claims that a school would spend 33% less per online

student compared to a traditional full-time student (FLVS, 2011).

Statistics show that upwards of five million students now participate in some form of

online education and that all 50 states offer k-12 online learning experiences (NACOL, 2012;

Watson, Pape, Murin, Gemin, & Vasahw, 2014). The National Center for Education Statistics

(NCES, 2011) reported that about 50% of districts offer students some form of access to online

education. Thus, virtual schooling has become the fastest growing alternative to traditional

high school education (Glass & Weiner, 2011). Because of this acceleration in electronic ways

of learning, many school districts expanded their offerings of online services and expanded

facilities and curriculum to accommodate their students.

This increase also brings with it the need for teachers who can be effective in this

format (Deubel, 2008; Fournier, 2013). Unfortunately, teacher preparation courses for this

newer delivery method have lagged behind or are non-existent. Researchers Kennedy and

Archambault (2014) reported that only 1.3% of responding teacher education programs are

addressing this need via training and field experiences in virtual schools. Typically, teacher

preparation programs require the ability to work technology into curriculum, but not how to

teach curriculum when it is located online. This form of education requires different skills than

a typical brick and mortar classroom (Ko & Rossen, 2010). Classroom management,

teacher/student and student/student interactions, and motivation take on new forms in the virtual learning environment.

　　While evidence shows that teacher preparation has lagged behind, so too has the preparation opportunities for administrative leadership in this type of school environment. Researchers LaFrance and Beck (2014) found that 91% of administrator training programs do not contain virtual school field experience, and that 75% of accredited programs have no plans to add that to the requirements. They felt this indifference was due to a lack of knowledge about the effectiveness of online learning and that issues like student performance were more important. In a study designed to look at cyber school leaders and their experiences, Richardson, Beck, LaFrance, and McLoud (2016) verified that leadership preparation was lacking for cyber schools and that the tasks associated with the job were different than those of a leader in a brick and mortar school. The main differences are that technology can transform how leaders interact with students; how leaders evaluate, supervise, and professionally develop their teachers varies; and how leaders operate on a day-to-day basis may be different.

　　The benefits to implementing virtual and online education opportunities for students may be beneficial in ways not expected when first designed. Studies are showing that populations typically underserved are benefitting from online and virtual experiences. In a study conducted by Beck, Egalite, and Maranto (2014), parents of special needs students, and the students themselves, reported a high satisfaction with online or virtual education, and had a lower level of satisfaction with traditional classroom experiences. Many of the social stigmas that were dealt with in a traditional environment were not prevalent when using online or virtual programs. Berge and Clark (2005) and Clark (2013) identified four similar benefits of

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virtual schooling for those schools (rural, urban with high minority populations) that are underserved: expanding educational access, providing high-quality learning opportunities, improving student outcomes and skills, and allowing for educational choice.

The state of Texas followed this growth in online delivery through state-run programs, the offering of individual classes completed online, and alternative schools. The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN), established by the 2007 Texas Legislature (TEA, 2017), began operations in 2009 to provide Texas students with equitable access to quality, online courses. The TEA works in partnership with districts around the state to administer the TxVSN. Together with the commissioner of education, TEA sets standards and approves courses, provides teacher training, and, in general, provides fiscal support. The state uses the Region Ten Education Service Center to oversee these areas and to convene day-to-day operations. In school year 2013-2014, this program served 10,000 students in full-time programs and had 5,708 supplemental course enrollments. Students do not have to be present to generate Foundation School Fund money, as course completion and grade promotion trigger the funding; however, if a student is enrolled online outside of the TxVSN network of schools, then normal attendance procedures are required for funding (Watson, Pape, Murin, Gemin, & Vasahw, 2014).

<center>Drop-out Recovery Schools</center>

Included in alternative education campuses in Texas are drop-out recovery programs. These programs are designed to meet the need of students who are at risk of leaving school or have already left the school system and are trying to return. By law, a student in Texas may earn a diploma until they turn 26 years of age (TEA, August 2018). For an alternative school to

be considered a credit recovery program, 50% of the student population must be over 17 years of age (TEA, August 2018). As of May 2018, there were 215 schools designated as credit recovery programs in the state of Texas (TEA, 2018). Many of these programs supplement or provide curriculum through online resources. Students work on assignments and receive instruction through an online program on their computers. A lot of these programs have teachers available to help students when needed and to provide some instruction to prepare students for state-mandated testing. Many of the online programs still require teacher-made assignments using traditional tools such as paper, pencil, and other such items. The flexible school day program gives these schools the opportunity to alter their daily schedules to help meet the needs of older students who may be attending school while holding down a part- or full-time job (TEA, August 2018). They are given permission from the state education commissioner to find creative ways to meet the minimum number of minutes of attendance to receive class credit. The commissioner retains the right to create rules governing this program, as needs arise.

Because of the non-traditional format, it is important to understand the effects of these programs on teacher retention. By looking into teachers' job satisfaction, turnover intention, and organizational commitment, stakeholders can utilize this information to help retain teachers in these alternative programs.

Teacher Attrition

Nationally, the United States has faced teacher shortages for decades and will continue to do so (Brown & Wynn, 2009) until solutions for attracting people to the profession and keeping them in the profession can be found. Ingersoll further stated that the shortage isn't

the result of increasing student enrollment or teacher retirement but mostly due to teachers

leaving the profession. This loss of teachers costs schools $7 billion annually for recruiting,

processing and hiring, and for training replacement teachers (NCTAF, 2017). In addition to

teachers leaving completely, teacher mobility from school to school has an almost similar

effect, costing local school districts tens of thousands of dollars. The National Center for

Education Statistics (2011) and the Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) estimate that the

costs of replacing teachers each year can be in the billions of dollars, and that schools lose a

thousand teachers a day to other fields of work, while another thousand per day leave to better

working conditions in other schools.

Unfortunately, the schools being hardest hit by teacher shortages are the ones where

good, experienced teachers are needed the most. The students attending these schools are

usually the lowest achieving academically and can be found in urban settings (Garcia, Slate, &

Delgado, 2009). Statistics are worse for schools with high minority populations, combined with

a high poverty rate, where almost half of the staff changes each year. This exceeds that of

student dropout rates at many schools (AEE, 2005; NCTAF, 2003; Singleton, 2005). Literature in

the last decade points to poor working conditions in low-income schools (Allesworth et al.,

2009; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012) as more of a driver of teacher turnover than student

populations. Teachers flee the conditions, not the students (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak,

2005; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Simon and Johnson (2015) found similar results in their look at

studies on teacher turnover in high minority schools. They concluded that school leadership,

collegial relationships, and elements of school culture had more of an impact than the students

themselves. Other studies have shown that many teachers who enter struggling schools are

there because they want to help underserved communities and it is their frustration with the conditions impeding their attempts that drives them away (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Kraft et al., 2013; Johnson, 2006). Ingersoll (2003) felt that a contributing factor is that teachers need some autonomy in the school, especially over discipline matters and scheduling.

Attrition in Texas Schools

Texas tends to follow what national studies have shown when it comes to teacher turnover and retention. Teacher turnover is a major problem (Garcia, Slate, & Delgado, 2009; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004) and the major contributing factors include salary and working conditions (AEE, 2005; Garcia, Slate & Delgado, 2009). The Texas Comptroller's Office (2004, 2006), in conjunction with the State Board of Educator Certification and the Texas Education Agency, reported that turnover in Texas was highest where teacher pay was the lowest. From 2003 to 2006, many jobs in the state (those that required similar education and training) paid four to eight thousand dollars more per year than teaching positions. The Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA, 2007) stated working conditions as the major reason for teacher turnover in Texas. Researchers Garcia, Slate, and Delgado (2009) reaffirmed what the TSTA found in their report that salary and working conditions were a primary cause of turnover in the state.

Attrition in Alternative Education Campuses

As alternative education grows in popularity with parents, so does the need to employ more teachers on these campuses. Because charter schools tend to offer less money, require longer hours of work, and provide less job security than public schools (Malloy & Wohlstetter, 2003, Bierlein, 1997; Ni, 2012), many teachers working at charter schools tend to be younger

and newer to the profession of teaching (Miron & Applegate, 2007). Thus, the turnover rate for

alternative schools tends to be 1.5 to 2.5 times greater than for traditional schools (Keigher,

2010; Stuit & Smith, 2012), which means that many newer and younger teachers are working in

charter schools than typically would be in a traditional school (Stuit & Smith, 2012). While

there is flexibility in hiring and firing in a charter school, as well as offering longer school days

and school years that help attract more students, it typically means that teachers are more

resistant to working there. One study pointed out that teachers felt less job security and

commitment by the school to their careers. To balance this out, it was suggested that

alternative schools create an environment where staff can feel they are valued and part of a

team (Lake, Bowen, Demeritt, McCullough, Haimson, & Gill, 2012).

One study, conducted by Torres (2014), looked at autonomy in alternative schools and

how that affected teacher turnover. Since these schools tend to hire teachers who prefer or

expect professional autonomy, it was expected that this would be a high priority in teachers'

decisions to leave a school. In the end, the authors found that autonomy had the greatest

influence on teacher turnover. Like other studies (Ingersoll, 2003; Renaulli, Parrott, & Beattie,

2011), Torres found that the alternative school teachers he interviewed wanted to have more

autonomy in student behavior programs, since they were the ones implementing them. This

one factor was mentioned by those he studied more than any other as the reason for leaving or

not enjoying the alternative school experience.

Renzulli, Parrott, and Beattie (2011) looked at what they termed "racial mismatch" (p.

25) - the pairing of White teachers within a mostly minority teaching environment. This term

was created to describe teachers of races different than the student body. Since 80% of

teachers in the U.S. are White and 60% of the students are minority, many situations of racial

mismatch are happening, which could have an influence on teacher satisfaction and turnover.

These researchers looked at 1,700 alternative school teachers from 450 public charter schools

across the country. They reported several findings from their study: teachers felt more

autonomy in their teaching situation and autonomy in alternative school environments negated

the racial mismatch of White teachers teaching minority students, thus increasing job

satisfaction.

Attrition in Computer Based Schools

Very few studies examined the job satisfaction, attrition, or retention of teachers

working in an online environment. Studies such as the one conducted by Larkin, Brantley-Dias,

and Lokey-Vega (2016) are of the few that looked at the causes of teachers leaving or staying

with online schools. Their study found that monetary compensation, or the lack of income

growth, along with lack of student participation, were the strongest factors in influencing an

online teacher to leave. The authors felt the most salient point is that assigning a mentor

proved to have the largest effect on a teacher's intent to remain teaching. Those who were

"assigned a mentor were 274% more likely to stay at their job" (p. 181).

With an increase in online resources, schools designed for complete online experiences,

and students able to participate from home, there is a need for qualified and properly trained

online teachers to meet the higher demand of high-tech learners. Alarmingly, new teachers in

education rarely last past their fifth year, with half leaving for other pursuits. Most school

districts already struggle to keep up with the pace of attrition (AEE, 2014; Darling- Hammond,

2001; Ingersoll, Merril, & Stuckey, 2014; Ingersoll, 2002; Dawson, 2001). Very few programs

have been established that train teachers to specifically work in an online environment. Most

teachers who do venture into online delivery rarely have the training needed to be considered

proficient. Many newer teachers feel that lack of training, lack of experience, feelings of being

unprepared, and less access to mentors to help guide them all contribute to a desire to turn

away from the profession (Larkin, Brantley-Dias, & Lokey-Vega, 2016; Bollinger et al., 2014;

Green et al., 2009; Miron & Applegate, 2007). These alarming findings exist with less

experienced teachers but also impact more experienced teachers who try to make the

transition to the virtual classroom from their more traditional environment. The biggest issue

for them is how to take what they do in the classroom and recreate it online (Larkin, 2015;

Bollinger et al., 2014; Green et al., 2009; Allen & Seaman, 2013; Bollinger & Wasilik, 2009).

As colleges use online delivery more frequently than earlier stages of education, we can

look at surveys completed by college faculty to find more evidence of the issues and problems

facing teachers working online. One survey of over 10,000 college professors found that 65% of

them found teaching online took more effort than in the classroom and even those with online

experience felt that it consumed more time and effort to teach online (Picciano, Seaman, &

Allen, 2010). This same research revealed that the majority of faculty felt the online version of

class was inferior to the classroom environment. As the literature shows, the shortages of

teachers are a growing problem in the United States and in Texas, so understanding what drives

them away or keeps them in the profession would be a benefit to research, to leaders trying to

improve school systems and to the teachers who will someday be part of these schools.

Conceptual Framework

Utilization of longstanding research in job satisfaction, organizational commitment,

turnover intention, and traditional education models adds credibility and theoretical anchoring to the current study. The following sections summarize the literature pertinent to the study and understanding of the frameworks used to measure a teacher's intention to remain within a current position. It is intended that an understanding of job satisfaction, combined with an understanding of organizational commitment, will allow a prediction of turnover intention of online teachers working in a 9th-12th drop-out recovery school environment.

Job Satisfaction Theories

The difficulty in explaining what job satisfaction is and how to recognize it is that researchers have yet to put forward a clear definition of what this means. Because job satisfaction can be contextual and very personal, it will always hold some ambiguity. Pioneering researchers such as Maslow (1954); Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959); Adams (1963); and Vroom (1964) gave differing approaches to define job satisfaction and how we might measure it. The ideas presented by these researchers guided the current study to examine the satisfaction level of teachers using online delivery at a credit recovery school district located in north Texas. As Ohari (2013) stated we can look at job satisfaction as the favorable or unfavorable subjective feelings the work brings an individual. Job satisfaction can also be defined as how closely a person's abilities match the requirements of the job and how much of a person's needs are being met in the job (Weis, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). Vroom (1964) felt that job satisfaction could be the aligning of job requirements and employee expectations into a positive experience. Since this is such a subjective quality, perhaps Locke (1976) described it best when he noted that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are a function of the relationship between what one wants from the job and what one perceives the job to be

offering. It seems one can know when it happens but may have a difficult time describing how.

Maslow's Theory of Motivation and Satisfaction

Maslow (1954) explained that job satisfaction can be achieved when the job and its environment meet the needs of the worker. He organized his needs into a five-level hierarchy.

- Physical needs (food, clothing, shelter, sex)

- Safety needs (physical protection)

- Social (close associations with others)

- Esteem/Achievement needs (prestige given by others)

- Self-Actualization (self-fulfillment and accomplishment through personal growth)

Maslow (1943) rationalized that the higher states of self-actualization cannot be met until the basic needs are met. He stated, "If all these needs (physiological) are unsatisfied, and the organism is then dominated by those physiological needs, all other needs may become simply nonexistent or be pushed to the background" (1987, p. 16). When workers feel safe and connected emotionally to their job, only then will they be able to focus on the prestige and accomplishment their job can bring them.

Herzberg's Two-factor Theory

Herzberg and fellow researchers Mausner and Snyderman (1959) felt that the variables affecting job satisfaction could be categorized into two groups: intrinsic and extrinsic factors that they called *motivators* and *hygienes*. The motivators could be such things as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement, while the hygiene factors could be money, relationships, supervision, security, and work conditions. Herzberg et al. (1959)

proposed that the intrinsic factors could produce job satisfaction while the extrinsic would produce job dissatisfaction. These intrinsic motivators closely align with Maslow's higher order needs and all lead to job satisfaction, while Herzberg's hygiene factors correspond with Maslow's lower order needs and could lead to dissatisfaction. Herzberg (1966) maintained that "The opposite of job satisfaction would not be job dissatisfaction, but rather would be no job satisfaction" (p. 76).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Vroom (1964) theorized that behavior results from conscious choices among alternatives whose purpose is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Vroom felt that work performance was based on individual factors, such as worker personality, worker skills, the experience the worker did or did not have in their field, and the overall abilities of the worker. Vroom felt individuals would be motivated if they believed the following:

- There is a positive correlation between effort and performance

- Favorable performance will result in a desirable reward

- The reward will satisfy an important need

- The desire to satisfy the need is strong enough to make the effort worthwhile.

Vroom referred to his variables as:

- Expectancy- If I increase effort it will lead to increased performance

- Instrumentality- If I perform well, then a valued outcome will be received

- Valence- The amount of value I place on the expected outcome

"This theory emphasizes the need for organizations to relate rewards directly to performance and to ensure that the rewards provided are those rewards deserved and wanted

by the recipients" (Montana & Charnov, 2008, p. 248).

Organizational Commitment Theories

Since the original research conducted by Porter, Setter, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), the science of organizational commitment (organization, management, and behavior) produced various definitions and perspectives that try to understand how and why workers build a psychological attachment to an organization. The work promoted by Porter et al. focused on an attitudinal, rather than a behavioral, approach to commitment. These researchers felt that commitment was the strength of a worker's identification with and involvement in an organization. They characterized the commitment into three factors:

- Strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values

- Willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization

- Strong desire to maintain membership in the organization

Since the work of Porter et al., however, the science of organizational commitment has undergone change as scientists attempt to improve upon the original work done by Porter and colleagues. Scientists have relaxed the belief that commitment is not just an attitudinal commitment but also more of a behavioral commitment than first believed (Cohen, 2007; Rusu, 2013c). More survey instruments were constructed to try and measure commitment, based on the three commitment characterizations listed above (Porter et al., 1974; Meyer & Allen, 1997). The created surveys all carried the same name through all iterations, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), with most surveyors today using the one created by Meyers and Allen (1997). That version delineates between the types of organizational commitment,

which is the reason this version is chosen as the measure of organizational commitment for the current study.

Meyers and Allen (1991) are credited for research on commitment that is still in use today, using terms such as affective, normative, and continuance that allow researchers to try and quantify behavior in the organization. Affective commitment includes emotional attachment, desire to see the organization succeed, and a feeling of pride in being part of the organization. Normative commitment addresses moral and ethical obligation, noting that staying with the company is the right thing to do. Continuance commitment is when a worker stays because leaving is costlier than staying or the worker must stay because there is no other choice. Currently, there is little consensus among researchers as to whether there is a causal relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Larkin, Brantley-Dias, & Lokey-Vega, 2016).

Turnover Intention

When presenting the theory of reasoned action and planned behavior, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) stated that predicting a planned behavior is usually thought of before the actual behavior. They formulated that the best predictor of a behavior will be some measure of the intention to perform the behavior. To Fishbein and Ajzen, a good definition would be that a person's turnover intention is their behavioral intention to leave an organization. Models of turnover intentions, to stay or leave an organization, have been linked to employee job satisfaction and how strongly the worker feels about the organization (Mobely, 1982). Later, Farrell and Rushbult (1992) stated that quitting is a cognitive behavior that occurs before leaving when an employee thinks about quitting and then begins to look for a new job.

Because the term is perceived to be self-explanatory, Bester (2012) noted that turnover

intention is rarely defined in a precise way. Even definitions that are attempted, such as Lacity,

Lyer, and Rudramuniyaiah's (2008) attempt, reflect an obvious outcome, "the extent to which

an employee plans to leave an organization" (p. 228).

Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are less likely to leave. Adeyemo and

Afolabi (2007) found a direct link between job satisfaction and turnover intention, as did

Chovwen et al. (2014). In the study conducted by Chovwen and colleagues, 200 public and

private sector employees reported on job stress, job hopping, and other factors that would

influence satisfaction and intention to leave a job. The researchers concluded that those

reporting stress or who had been a job-hopper had higher levels of turnover intention and

those who reported more job satisfaction had a lower turnover intention. Laschinger could

explain this phenomenon in a study he did in 2012. He found that when work conditions

provide support, resources, growth, and autonomy, then job satisfaction improves and

turnover intentions drop. In one study using classroom teachers, Perrachione, Petersen, and

Rosser (2008) suggested there is a relationship between job satisfaction and intent to remain in

teaching. Those teachers who stated their intent to remain teaching, due to the high level of

job satisfaction, were influenced both by intrinsic (e.g., teaching efficacy, working with

students, contributing to society) and extrinsic variables (e.g., salary, vacation or time off,

retirement benefits). Those teachers who did not intend to remain in teaching were motivated

to leave by solely extrinsic variables (e.g., workload, low salary, unfair policies). These findings

supported Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966), in that motivators of an individual's job

produce job satisfaction, and subsequently their intent to remain, but that hygiene factors led to job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions.

Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intention

Employees who are highly committed to their organization tend not to leave. According to research by Meyer and Allen (1997), those with strong affective commitment (emotional bond and identifying with goals) will be motivated to higher levels of performance. Cohen (1996) found that affective commitment produced better job performance than other forms of motivation and when employees stayed because they really wanted to (affective), they showed higher levels of commitment to work, job, and career. Irving, Coleman, and Cooper (1997) validated the work done by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) and Meyer and Allen (1991) when they related that employees who remained with an organization because they felt they had to were less satisfied with their jobs and that any type of commitment (affective, continuance, or normative) will bring about lower turnover intention.

Since the current study is specifically concerned with the turnover intention of teachers, work done by Sandoval-Lucero, Shanklin, Sobel, Townsend, Davis, and Kalisher (2012) provides another interesting look at possible turnover intention. These researchers looked at training programs for potential teachers and then evaluated job satisfaction and turnover intention. The three training programs reviewed were traditional college training, those entering as a second career after graduating from professional development programs, and those being alternatively certified without much classroom experiences. Of the three, the first two models provided teachers who felt confident and well prepared for what was expected of them. These groups reported high job satisfaction and high willingness to remain in the field long term. The

last group reported some confidence but felt ill prepared, which led to less interest in remaining in the profession long term. In feeling better prepared, teachers were more likely to experience efficacy and satisfaction, take on the challenge of student learning, and remain in the classroom.

Job Satisfaction as an Indicator

In separate studies (Akomalafe & Olatomide, 2013; Chovwen, Balogun, & Olowokere, 2014) researchers provided data that connects job satisfaction by employees with an increase or decrease in organizational commitment and an intent to stay or leave their positions. Those examined in the studies who reported a higher job satisfaction had a higher organizational commitment and lower intent to leave their positions. In contrast, those in the studies that reported lower job satisfaction had a lower organizational commitment and a higher intent to leave.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

While not an exhaustive review of literature, the research explored in this chapter lays a foundation on which to ground the current study. The research reveals intersecting relationships between the constructs of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. Most research in this field (Akomolafe & Olatomide, 2013; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Sirin & Sirin, 2013) revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between an employee's job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Likewise, as an employee's level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment increases, so does the employee's intention to remain with the organization.

While some of the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions do vary between traditional 9th-12th grade teachers and online instructors in higher education, the models of support and reasons for leaving education bear striking resemblance. Both fields of research reveal that teacher candidates benefit from extended field placements, the guidance and modeling of an experienced mentor, administrative and institutional support, and preparation prior to employment, thereby reducing teacher turnover. Both traditional 9-12 teachers and online teachers in higher education reveal that concerns with workload, return on investment, compensation, feelings of incompetence or lack of preparedness, and a lack of value and support from administration are reasons for leaving the classroom.

The availability of scholarly research focusing on 9-12 online teachers is limited; moreover, online education operates under the disadvantage of a lack of longevity in theory, practice, and policy. This study may make a significant contribution to the field of 9-12 online teaching and learning by generating new research through the lens of online teachers' level of satisfaction, commitment, and intent to remain in the field of online teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers using computer-based curriculum in 9th-12th drop-out recovery schools. Chapter 3 includes the methodology of the study and is organized by research design, population and sample, data collection, analysis, and instrumentation. The author of this study sought to expand on the research conducted by Larkin, (2015) that looked at factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with online delivery of curriculum instruction. This understanding will aid leadership in these types of schools to recruit, hire, and retain a qualified body of teachers while understanding what is most important to having high job satisfaction and low employee turnover. "When considering the long-term trajectory of online (computer-based) learning, employing and retaining a critical mass of K-12 online teachers becomes a pressing concern and establishes a need to investigate" (Larkin et al., 2016, p.27).

This study differs from Larkin (2015) as it attempts to focus solely on campuses where teacher and student interaction is blended between computer-based delivery of instruction and traditional teacher led instruction in a drop-out recovery program. During a typical school day students work on specific subjects on their computers and teachers within the classroom assist as needed. Then, a few times a week, direct instruction takes place when preparing students for state mandated testing over core subjects. An awareness of these factors may give school leadership in schools using computer-based instruction a better understanding of what factors

contribute to job satisfaction and organizational commitment for qualified instructors thereby improving the quality of education and teacher work environments.

The overreaching question guiding the focus of the study is: What are the factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers using computer-based curriculum in 9-12 drop-out recovery schools? This study specifically sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the factors that influence teachers' job satisfaction while working in a credit recovery school using online curriculum?

- What are the factors that influence teachers to terminate their employment in a credit recovery school using online curriculum?

- What is the turnover intention of teachers in a credit recovery school?

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative design to further explore Larkin (2015) and her research on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with computer based curriculum. Larkin's research used a sequential explanatory design by collecting and analyzing first quantitative data then qualitative data, in two phases. When considering the most appropriate research design for this study, it was clear that the best way to answer the research questions was a qualitative study design. Yin (2011) stated that, "Qualitative research differs because of its ability to represent the views and perspectives of the participants in a study. Capturing their perspectives may be a major purpose of a qualitative study" (p. 8). This study is deductive in its premise as I took known theories about teacher satisfaction and applied them to the district in this study. The known premise that there are certain factors that will affect teacher job satisfaction was used to observe teachers in

this situation (O'Reilly, 2009). This study examined the reasons why teachers stay or leave

when working in a computer-mediated environment, but more importantly, the goal is to

understand the perceptions and feelings behind those choices; therefore, qualitative research

provides the best avenue to achieve this. As spoken of prior in this study, job satisfaction and

the organizational commitment are predictors of the intent to leave or stay. Yin also stated,

"qualitative research covers contextual conditions—the social, institutional, and environmental

conditions within which people's lives take place" (p. 10).

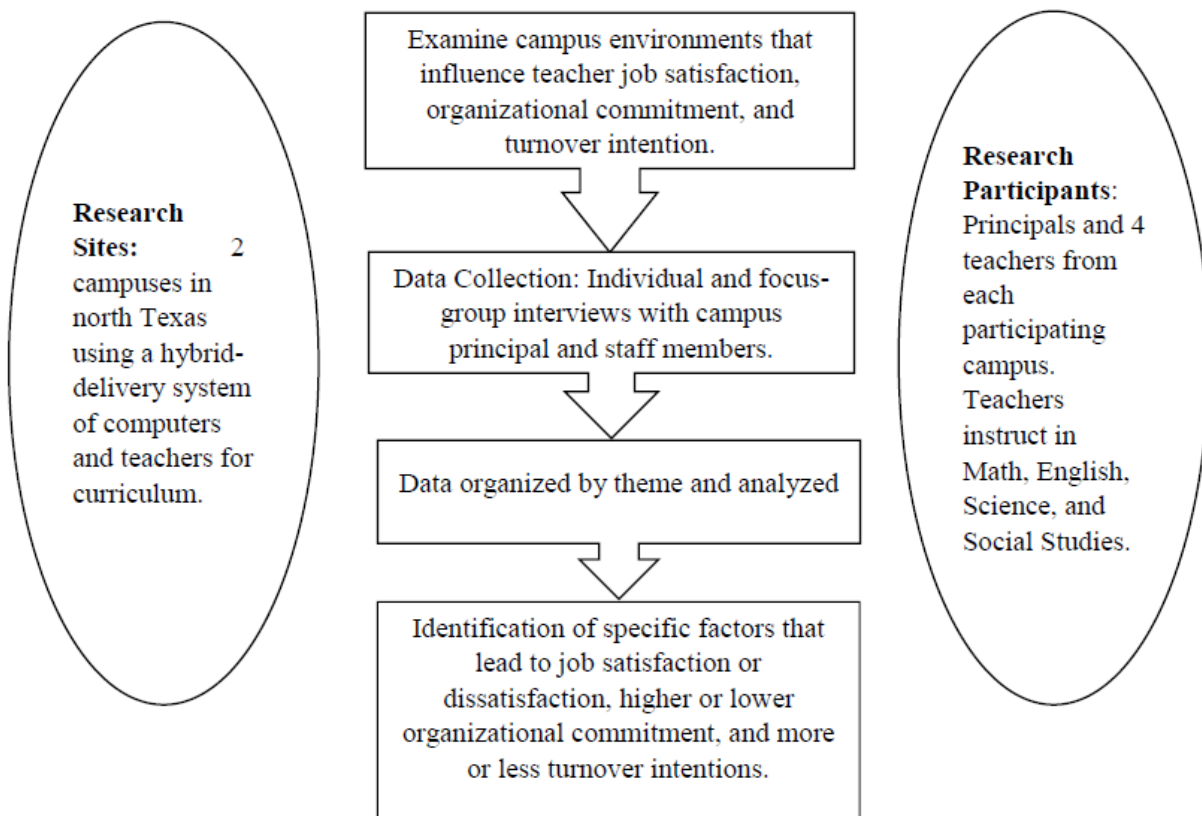*Figure 2*. This research design graphically illustrates how this study was conducted. The design includes the qualitative elements of the study.

I chose to use an explanatory case study format to understand the environment of

schools fitting the sampling criteria, in an effort to explain what creates high job satisfaction

and organizational commitment. The findings of the case study may allow leaders in these

schools to improve conditions to attract future teachers, or, to retain teachers already employed. A case study method was chosen as it is based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group, or event. In this case the author looked at individuals trying to find job satisfaction in a unique environment in the education system. Typically, case studies are very descriptive and are explanatory in nature so that the reader has a better understanding of causes and outcomes (Yin, 2011).Figure 2 offers a visual overview of the elements of the study.

The multiple case study was conducted in three phases. Focus group interviews were conducted at three designated campuses located in one school district in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. This area consists of Dallas, Collin, Denton, and Tarrant counties. This area of Texas has a high concentration of alternative education campuses designated as credit recovery schools. The location of these campuses was within a reasonable distance of my location, thereby, travel to the campuses for data collection was not problematic. The designation as credit recovery school allows each campus the flexibility to use a computer-based curriculum delivery system. The schools in this study use an online curriculum and support service provided by a third party.

One principal and three to four teachers at each campus were chosen for a face-to-face one-on-one interview. The decision to interview three-four teachers at each campus was based on the minimum number of teachers needed to cover the core subjects of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. If teachers in these four areas were unavailable or refused to participate, replacements from the campuses were chosen based on principal recommendations. With participant permission, all interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded. Using individual and focus-group interview protocols, participants were asked to share their opinions, based on their experiences teaching in a computer-based environment.

This sharing of viewpoints was used to provide an understanding of factors that lead to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Recruitment of participants was done by first obtaining permission from the district that participated in the study. This was accomplished by contacting district leadership via phone and email to explain the study goals and design. Second, principals were contacted in the same manner to obtain permission to use their campuses and staff. When permission was granted by principals, an email was sent to the teachers who taught in core subject areas and recommended by each campus principal. The recipients of the email were provided the purposes, benefits, and risks of the study, and made aware that at any time during their participation they may terminate their involvement. Coordination of the focus group sessions and individual interview sessions was done through campus principals.

The last phase of this study was the transcribing and analysis of data gathered so that findings could be shared, and conclusions drawn to explain job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers working in this environment. With participant permission, the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by GMR Transcription Services, INC. The last phase included analysis of responses using a priori coding, identification of themes, and validation of information through member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Member checking involved participants reading their responses and checking for accuracy in order to give participants an opportunity to clarify any comments they may feel were inaccurate.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was chosen based on several criteria. The first criteria being campuses that use an online education program- a computer-based program that

delivers high school curriculum instruction on student computers. To find out which campuses

in the state of Texas use this program the southwest regional representative for the online

curriculum program was contacted and a list of schools in Texas was provided. The second

criteria considered were those high schools in Texas that use online education program and are

considered Alternative Education Campuses (AES). AES campuses are those that have at least

75% of their population being at-risk (TEA-TEC §29.081d, 2018) and 50% of the students on that

campus are in Grades 6-12.

The AES distinction allows these schools to try alternative ways of educating students to

try and meet the specific needs of students such as at-risk students. From here the list was

further narrowed by considering those AES schools using online curriculum that are considered

drop-out recovery schools (DRS) (TEC §29.918, 2018). These schools come from the same AES

designated campuses but are also specially designated DRS as they also have 50% of their

population above the age of 17. It is noteworthy to mention that in the state of Texas a student

can earn a high school diploma until the end of the school year they turn age 26 (TEC §42.003,

2018).

Next, the list of schools was narrowed further to those that use teachers in a blended

delivery of the computer-based curriculum instruction. As the study is to measure job

satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers it was crucial to find schools that had

teachers involved in the classroom while also using the computer program. Lastly, for

convenience of the research, schools that fit all these criteria and were located in the Dallas/Ft.

Worth area were selected. This left a possible sample group of nine campuses in three

different districts, one of these being an independent school district and two charter school

districts. This yielded a possible group of approximately 10 to 20 teachers per campus to

interview and use in focus group discussions. As districts were contacted, this list was

narrowed down to one charter school district in north Texas as the other districts declined to

participate. Within this district there were two campuses that chose to participate and

volunteers were selected from these campuses.

Table 1

Information Related to the Participants of the Study

Alias	Age	Role	Current Role	Experience
Jane	28	Teacher	3 Years	4 Years
Kaley	29	Teacher	4 Years	5 Years
Victoria	31	Teacher	1 Year	1 Year
Lisa	44	Principal	13 Years	16 Years
Steven	46	Principal	5 Years	20 Years
Clint	48	Teacher	4 Years	10 Years
Sandy	48	Teacher	3 Years	20 Years
Calvin	49	Teacher	3 Years	9 Years
David	56	Principal	13 Years	21 Years
Nellie	70	Teacher	4 Years	31 Years

Table 1 reflects the participants who provided written consent to be included in the

study, their age, position in the school district, how long they have been employed in their

current role in a drop out recovery school, and their overall experience in education.

Participants' years of experience ranged between a first year teacher and a veteran of 31 years

with the group as a whole having an approximate mean of 15 years of experience. Participants

were sent an email requesting their assistance in this study and were instructed to notify their

building principal if they were interested. The principal then notified me of the teachers who

volunteered and what time they were available for interviews and focus group sessions. The names of all research subjects have been changed to protect their identity and provide anonymity in responses.

Instrumentation

The structure of the data collection process involved the interviewing of focus groups followed by personal interviews at participating campuses in the study. In order to provide a comprehensive look into teachers' view of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, processes designed for the study were focused and provided opportunities for me to better understand the topic (Babbie, 2016). The interview and focus group protocols were designed to ensure the same lines of inquiry were explored with each respondent and to support the generation of group discussion aligned with the purpose of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

I conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with school administrators and teaching staff, using a self-developed and field-tested interview protocols (Appendixes D-F). Since this is an original study, there was a need to validate the interview protocol. Through requesting feedback from university personnel with experience in conducting qualitative research and field-testing the protocol with a small group of educators, the interview protocol was validated for use in the semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2014).

The interview protocol included 10 questions, along with recommendations for probing questions that were utilized as necessary. The interviews took place in the office of the principal for each campus, and the duration of the interviews were 15-30 minutes. The focus groups were conducted on each campus taking approximately 30-45 minutes. The use of a

consistent interview protocol supported validity of the interviews and focus groups, to ensure

that necessary information was collected in each interview and focus group session (Marshall &

Rossman, 2016). Consent to participate forms (Appendix A) were signed prior to participants

being interviewed or participating in focus groups.

Data Collection

Yin (2011) suggested four ways that data can be collected in a qualitative study:

interviewing, observing, collecting, and feeling. According to Yin, the more strategies that can

be used, the more reliable are the data when studying a phenomenon. For the current study,

interviewing, observing, and feeling methods were used. After conducting face-to-face, in-

depth interviews and focus groups with principals and teachers at each of the participating

campuses the responses of those participants were analyzed to identify factors that increase or

decrease teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Researchers Guest, Namey,

Taylor, Eley, and McKenna (2017) found in their research that conducting a focus group and

doing one-on-one interviews produces different types of answers. One-on-one interviews offer

the opportunity for a broader range of items but focus groups can reveal more sensitive and

personal disclosures. Yin (2011) suggested that focus groups may not provide in-depth answers

and opportunities for follow-up probing questions that personal interviews can. Both of these

interview approaches were important in collecting data on job satisfaction and organizational

commitment, but the focus groups were conducted first so individual probing questions can be

asked if any sensitive or personal disclosures were made.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with each of the three campuses principals, to

understand their challenges and how they perceive job satisfaction and organizational

commitment of their teachers. In addition, three to four teachers from each of the

participating campuses were chosen for a one-on-one interview. Teachers were chosen based

on the following criteria: one teacher from each of the core subjects of math, English, social

studies, and science.

Interview questions were open ended, as suggested by Yin (2011), as that format allows

the participants more of an opportunity to express reasons and feelings behind responses. As

Yin stated, "Having participants limit their responses to single-word answers would be a

qualitative researcher's last wish. On the contrary, the researcher tries to have participants use

their own words, not those predefined by the researcher, to discuss topics" (p. 135). Open-

ended questions with follow-up probing questions (Appendixes B-D) were based on the model

of interrelated factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover

intention of teachers working with computer-based curriculum in 9th-12th drop-out recovery

schools (See Figure 3, p.51) A protocol was suggested by Yin (2011) to ensure that the same

basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person or group interviewed. An interview protocol

lists questions or issues that are to be explored during the interview.

The interview and focus group questions and responses were audio-recorded, with

participant permission, for transcription and analysis. Audio recordings were transcribed

through use of a professional service GMR Transcription Services, INC. This service is accessed

online.

Researcher feelings about situations, staff responses, and overall impressions were

recorded by journaling during the data collection process. These impressions were imbedded

in the results and discussion sections of the study to provide context and impressions for future

researchers looking at the work done in this study.

Data Analysis

The key component of analyzing content of the data collected is the coding of the

material collected (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014). This coding can help to break information down to

its smallest segments (individual words) and then reassembled to see dominant themes

(Saldana, 2013). As the purpose of this process is to understand the feelings and meaning of

respondents words, it is appropriate to determine if this break down in coding needs to be so

basic. Manageable pieces of text as determined by the researcher can also include phrases,

sentences, or themes (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014). I chose to approach the data in a deductive

manner, having a pre-determined list of themes and coding material based on those themes. I

utilized eight pre-determined themes. These themes were drawn from prior research studies

that had identified the most common reasons for job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The pre-

determined themes and research are seen visually in the conceptual framework (Figure 3).

To help with the organizing of the data into the pre-determined themes, questions for

interviews were designed around each theme. This allowed for responses to more easily be

analyzed for the content that was needed. All responses about compensation, for instance,

were more easily distinguished as they were given by interviewees when asked the specific

question about compensation and job satisfaction. I chose to begin at this level of coding as

frequency of occurrence was not the main target, but to understand significance. As Saldana

(2013) describes it,

The analytic approaches for most coding methods do not ask you to count; they ask you

to ponder, scrutinize, interrogate, experiment, feel, empathize, sympathize, speculate, assess, organize, pattern, categorize, connect, integrate, synthesize. Counting is easy; thinking is the hard work. (p.39)
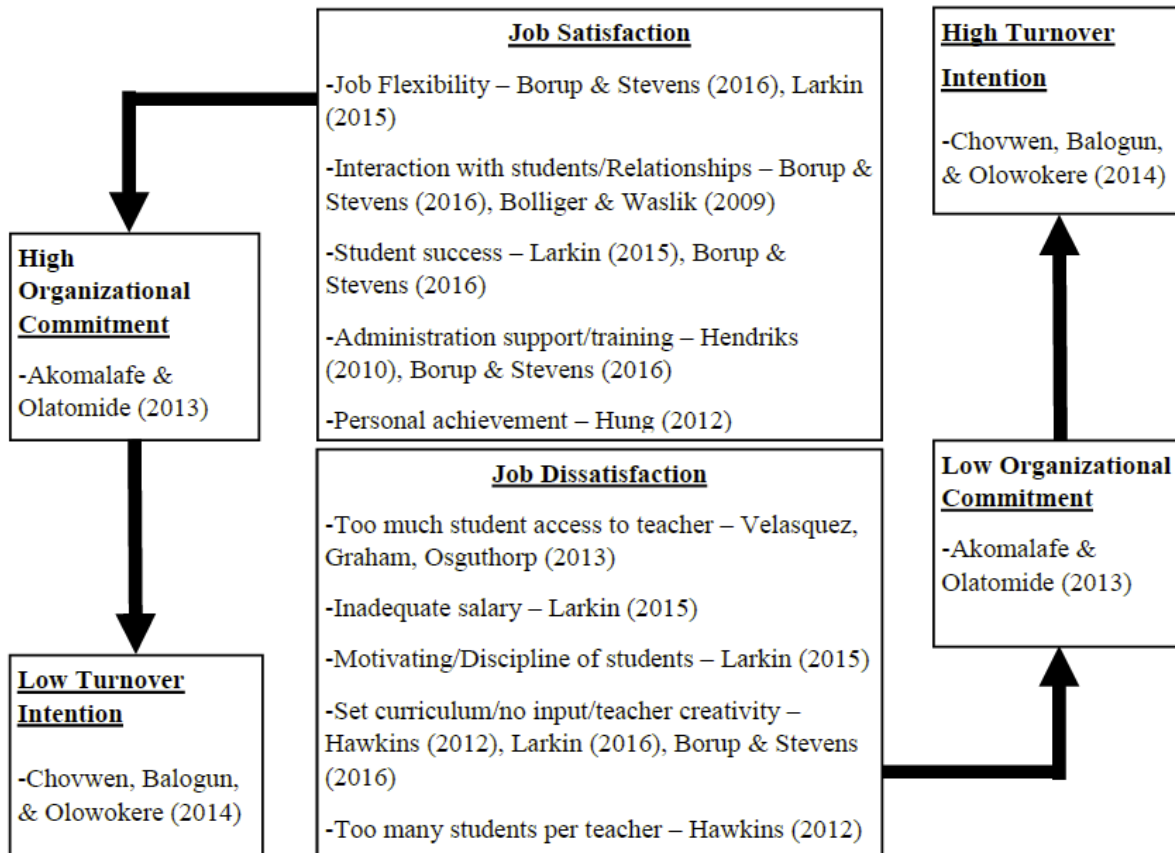
Job Satisfaction

-Job Flexibility – Borup & Stevens (2016), Larkin (2015)

-Interaction with students/Relationships – Borup & Stevens (2016), Bolliger & Waslik (2009)

-Student success – Larkin (2015), Borup & Stevens (2016)

-Administration support/training – Hendriks (2010), Borup & Stevens (2016)

-Personal achievement – Hung (2012)

High Organizational Commitment

-Akomalafe & Olatomide (2013)

Low Turnover Intention

-Chovwen, Balogun, & Olowokere (2014)

High Turnover Intention

-Chovwen, Balogun, & Olowokere (2014)

Low Organizational Commitment

-Akomalafe & Olatomide (2013)

Job Dissatisfaction

-Too much student access to teacher – Velasquez, Graham, Osguthorp (2013)

-Inadequate salary – Larkin (2015)

-Motivating/Discipline of students – Larkin (2015)

-Set curriculum/no input/teacher creativity – Hawkins (2012), Larkin (2016), Borup & Stevens (2016)

-Too many students per teacher – Hawkins (2012)

Figure 3. Model of interrelated factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with computer-based curriculum in 9-12 drop-out recovery schools.

The responses to questions were categorized based on the eight themes as follows: compensation, work relationships, student interaction, job flexibility, administration support, professional growth, curriculum, and student discipline. After all responses were placed into their appropriate category theme, an analysis of the responses was conducted. Responses were examined to see if they indicate more likely or less likely to influence job satisfaction and a desire to return to the place of their employment. This determination was based on specific

wording of responses, tone and inflection of voice when responding, and the general

impressions left on me as responses were given.

Limitations

The current study consists of a small population and sample size. Because of this, it is

difficult to generalize to a greater population of credit recovery schools in the entire state of

Texas or other states. As credit recovery schools have a specific design as part of alternative

school campuses, generalizing to the larger online usage throughout the state may not be

possible. The schools used for this study were chosen based on the similarity of their design in

using online curriculum and teachers within the classroom, and for the fact that they are

servicing the counties that are known as north Texas. Secondly, participants' expressions of

feelings and opinions could be over or under expressed. Lastly, my ability to not project

personal bias into the research process and data outcomes may present a limitation, as I am

employed in a position of leadership within the district being examined and have seen firsthand

the conditions that factor into teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and

turnover intention.

Ethical Considerations

This study came about because I work in an environment that warranted further

evaluation in order to understand how administrators and teachers, working in a drop-out

recovery school and using online curriculum, could improve that environment for the

betterment of all stakeholders. Because I am familiar with the environment, certain advantages

and disadvantages accompany what would be termed insider research. Tufford and Newman

(2010) asserted that insiders have an advantage in that they bring a greater understanding of the context of the situation but may lack objectivity. "The goal then of putting to one side sensory experience to tune in with the others' sense-making, or to see directly, and the putting aside of preconceptions to engage in the sense-making" (p. 82). However, as Punch and Oancea (2014) stated, "There is no such thing as a 'position-free' project" (p. 50). Bracketing the researcher is one way that Tufford and Newman (2010) suggest will help reduce the concern for study bias. I remained aware of my experience and presuppositions to distance myself from the data collection and analytic process so that information gathered was not biased.

To minimize bias and ethical breaches, Vicary, Young, and Hicks (2016) recommended researchers take measures to understand their own biases. One such measure suggested is journaling. The writing of the journal is shown both to "enact some potential validity" while recording and reflectively prompting the process of" learning, interpretation and bracketing, thus evidencing transparency" (p. 28). The researcher typically records the process of learning while they are recording and analyzing data. This helps with improvement but also shows the research process. Eventually, journaling begins to help with understanding of the data and creating links while understanding the patterns that become evident.

As an administrator working at one campus within a district where six campuses meet the criteria for this study, I maintained awareness that there may be a perception of a power differential when working with staff at other campuses within the school district. This concern eliminated one of the campuses available for study as I work on the campus. It was critical that I explained and reiterated constantly in personal interviews and focus group interviews this

dynamic. As part of this explanation to participants, I used permission slips to help participants

to understand that the goal of the research is to help better understand how to support

changes in work environments for teachers so that they will have an increased sense of job

satisfaction and organizational commitment. All participants were assured of confidentiality in

the reporting of results. Before any focus group session or interview, I reiterated that the

participation in the study by staff was purely for research purposes and that I was bound by

ethical and moral obligations to not use information gained in this study to be reflected on the

staff personally or professionally. Their responses and help in this study was designed to

further the literature on this specific working environment. All volunteers responded before

interviews and focus groups that they understood this and that they were very willing and

eager to help with the research. Pseudonyms were also used in place of the school district and

school names were not identified. The school district and individual participants within the

school district were kept confidential.

Summary

In this chapter, the proposed methodology was outlined, and descriptions of study

intentions given. A qualitative explanatory case study (Yin, 2014) was conducted and data

collected via open-ended questions posed to the participants in focus groups and individual

interviews to further explore job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover

intention of teachers working in a north Texas drop-out recovery school district using a

computer-based curriculum delivery method. A sound design and strong protocols helped to

guarantee the collection of valid and reliable data. Since the purpose of the study was to

investigate the job satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions of 9th-12th grade drop-

out recovery school teachers, the sample contains those teachers currently teaching in this

environment. In Chapter 4, the analysis of data is presented.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was two-fold. The primary purpose was to

research and identify those factors that may have a negative effect on job satisfaction while

working in an online drop out recovery high school, and second, to see if current working

conditions create a low or high turnover intention among teaching staff.

Based on a previous study by Ingle Larkin (2015) it was shown that there is a direct

correlation between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention in

teaching environments. Dr. Larkin stated that this correlation existed in all styles for school

ranging from private and charter schools to the traditional public schools. Higher job

satisfaction factors lead to higher commitment and lower turnover, while the opposite is true

for lower job satisfaction factors. Numerous studies, including Dr. Larkin's research, have also

shown that in all of these school models there are certain factors that have the highest

influence on teacher job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Borup & Stevens, 2016; Larkin,

2015; Bolliger & Waslik, 2009; Hendriks, 2010; Hung, 2012; Velasquez, Graham & Osguthorp,

2013; Hawkins, 2012). To accomplish the purposes of this study, I took those factors identified

as having the most influence on job satisfaction and applied them to the teachers working in an

online drop out recovery high school. Larkin's study, and those of other researchers, had not

looked at this specific school model to apply their findings. This study used those same factors

of job satisfaction influence to create the targeted questions used in the interviews and focus

group sessions which allowed for a more focused process in analyzing teacher feelings about

their work environment.

When analyzing responses to interview and focus group questions particular attention was focused on whether or not the comments could be deemed "positive" or "negative." Prior research has shown that positive feelings about job satisfaction will lead to a higher organizational commitment and a lower intent to leave, while a negative feeling about job satisfaction leads to lower organizational commitment and a higher chance of worker turnover (Akomalafe & Olatomide, 2013; Chovwen, Balogun, & Olowokere, 2014).

Analysis by Theme

Administration Support

When speaking with participants it became clear that this topic could be broken into two different types of administrations, campus and district. When looking at each level individually it also became clear that positive and negative feelings changed based on discussing campus or district level personnel. At the campus level, teachers felt mostly positive about the support and relationships they were getting from their campus leadership. Participant Kaley touched on what many respondents felt was the definition of support when she stated:

> I would say for me it's having an administration that has your back and is supportive of different things whether it be discipline or your teaching style or just whatever. That's really important, especially since I came from a school that didn't have that, that definitely can make your job easier.

Another teacher, Clint, stated that leadership support would look like this:

> Definitely attentive to needs, great follow through, and not just how can I help you do your job better, but how are you doing as a person.

As a whole, the participants from these two campuses had a positive relationship with campus leadership and felt that the leaders did what teachers felt was needed; support emotionally, support with student discipline, help with being a better teacher, following through on tasks, and making the work environment enjoyable. Nellie felt her campus leadership:

> Made a great difference in my years that I've been here even with my vice principals and my other leaders – they have always been supportive, they've praised us, we have a good relationship, and for me that makes a difference.

Other comments made by other teachers, such as Sandy:

> I feel like we have that support and we get to connect and do things that a teacher really has a heart to do, that's why you become a teacher. And so, you're able to do it more here.

And Calvin:

> Whereas, here the last three years, the principal and the APs have always backed us. And they've really tried to be our advocates.

And finally, Jane:

> I really feel there's a lot of support and I feel the administration here tries to be as transparent as they can.

> It was also interesting to see how leadership felt they should be with their teaching

staff. Steven, a principal of three years within this district, stated:

> With my teachers here, if they need anything, ask me and I'll help them go through it. And I think that adds to their satisfaction. My leadership team offers constant support/encouragement. We deliberately try to create a family environment for staff and encourage mutual support.

Another principal, Lisa, mentioned:

> Encourage experimentation. It's OK to fail! Try something new if you have an idea. Teachers (and staff) express interest in broadening their skills or in possibly taking on new roles. I always support that.

At the district level the comments became very negative and very critical. In fact, almost

all negative comments within this interview and focus group process were focused on the district

level and decisions made there. Teachers felt that leaders working at the district offices had no

connection to the campuses and therefore did not understand the needs of the teachers or how

policies and procedures they implemented affected teachers. One teacher, Clint, stated that:

> At admin, the problem with that is that a lot of time the stuff they want us to do, they
> don't realize that we only have a four-hour period and that can be really frustrating.

Victoria stated something very similar to Clint when she said:

> The fact that we only have four hours with the kids can be really frustrating, especially
> when they want us to do these different programs, admin does. You don't have enough
> time to do that, because you don't want to keep pulling them out of class because then
> they're not getting their schoolwork. So, that can be really frustrating.

Another, Calvin, said:

> The district, in general, likes to start things in the middle of the year and throw extra
> things at you. And so, we just don't have a good system, so it's like one thing starts here
> and then okay well, it's March, let's do this and then it's May, let's do this. But it's like
> we can't do it all at once, it just doesn't make sense.

Compensation

This topic was the most complicated when analyzing. Almost all comments could be

considered a combination of positive and negative feelings. On one hand, all respondents felt

they could use more money as they would never turn that down, but on the other hand, they

were getting enough to meet their needs. A good example of this was expressed by Calvin

when he stated:

> Teachers can always use more money. We can always use more. But I don't look at the
> money, I look at it am I happy with where I am. I'm happy with the people I work with.
> I'm happy with the people I work for. I'm happy with the students.

As Calvin just stated, many teachers also felt that giving up some compensation was worth the

opportunity to work in this environment as it presented other positives. Jane stated:

> There are other districts and other schools that I have worked there they paid more.
> There are other opportunities out there that pay more, but I feel like I'm well
> compensated for what I do and the job satisfaction, really.

Kaley expressed that:

> I took a pay cut when I came here. I came from a career that compensated very well, but
> honestly, I was okay with it, because there was just so much stuff you had to deal with
> at old job that I don't deal with here.

> A sentiment that came out during the focus group sessions was that of being "valued."

Monetary compensation was just one way of expressing what being valued meant to these

teachers. During that focus group session Sandy stated:

> I think – she makes a good point, not even about the money, but being valued. And not
> even by my campus admin, but by hire up, again it comes back to that. You don't feel
> valued or they have you doing 15 different things that are not in your job description.
> Not that I don't mind doing it, but being valued by that – they just don't put themselves
> in our shoes and so that makes me not want to be committed when they expect more
> than they know that we can do.

Curriculum

As teachers in this environment work with a set curriculum that is located completely

online, it was of interest to me if this fact would be seen as a positive or negative for classroom

teachers. In the environment being studied here, the only time a teacher has complete control

over how topics are taught are on the few days a week that they teach in a "traditional" model

of instruction. This is done when teachers take students, who are preparing for state

mandatory testing, to a classroom and prepare them for the test. This is done in small

increments over an entire semester. During this time each week the teacher controls what is

taught and how it is taught. The comments in this category were quite mixed. Some felt the

ability to focus on teaching and not curriculum development saved them time and effort. As

Katelyn noted:

> I'm actually glad that we don't have to write our curriculum and I feel like a lot of
> teachers don't like doing that.

And Victoria:

> You have that framework. You have that springboard which doesn't require you to do
> quite as much prep in that regard.

And finally Sandy:

> So, for us, to be able to take that curriculum and modify it, accommodate it, it's easier, I
> think, to do something that's already set up for you in a – so definitely would say it's a
> positive as well.

> Some felt the lack of control made it more difficult, while others felt that since it was

preprogrammed curriculum they couldn't adjust the way it was presented to students. The

following comments made by first, Curtis, and then second, Clint, exemplify these feelings:

> It's just hard with everyone in a different subject at a different place in the subject, since
> it's all at your own pace. It's really hard to – like I can't say, "Oh, everybody we're gonna
> do Pythagorean theory today." You just can't do that.

> I don't like the particular curriculum that we have for some classes, like, I wish it was
> more customizable, like, if I feel like it doesn't present a certain topic well, I would like
> to take those questions out of the final exam and so on.

> Finally, the principals seemed to appreciate the level of frustration some teachers had

with the pre-set curriculum.   They also felt there were some benefits as some teachers

mentioned. They added the following comments. Principal Steven stated:

> There is little input into the construction of the regular curriculum. This can be
> frustrating but there are other ways to offer curriculum input. They have great
> discretion in the execution of it. They may change or provide alternate
> assignments/activities/projects. They can, depending on the need of the student, offer

alternative ways of completing an assignment (eg, verbally rather than written.), but the curriculum itself is fixed by Edmentum.

Lisa also added:

> Teachers are sometimes frustrated with the fixed curriculum for a variety of reasons. They enjoy finding effective ways of "making it work." The satisfaction level with focused instruction is high, other than the lack of more opportunity and the mechanics of pulling students. This comes from having more control over focus instruction lessons.

Student Discipline

Teachers took this to mean that they had to be a disciplinarian, student behavior was an issue to deal with on a consistent basis, or that there was a feeling of safety while working in their position. A big influence on whether or not a teacher had a positive feeling about this topic was if they felt supported by administration in the discipline choices they made. A few teachers mentioned that they have made decisions about students and dealt out consequences only to have administrators reverse the decision and make the teacher feel like they were wrong. An example was stated by Nellie:

> They back me up, they'll come and talk to me and get my side of it because they also want to make sure that the student is heard. I have had other administrators in the past who always take the students word and I feel like I don't matter. It is very frustrating and it I feel like I lose some power in the classroom when my decisions are reversed.

Katelyn seemed to support what Nellie stated as she responded that:

> Teachers are extraordinarily patient and understanding, but chronic issues with disrespect are disheartening. Everyone understands the importance of Social and Emotional Learning, and that some of our students have no skills in those areas, but that can difficult and wearing. When disciplining them it can be disheartening when admin does not support our recommendations.

Principal David touched on how he deals with this issue. He seemed to feel that if the

discipline and behavior issues are addressed as a team then it helps with how teachers perceive

his decisions:

> So, my teachers really feel that they have a role and a voice in the disciplinary process.
> They also understand that I will give the students a voice in the process so they feel like
> my decisions are based on all the information I have at my disposal.

Job Flexibility

When I asked this question it was stated that the teacher/administrator could define

this term however they wanted. It could take the form of planning their day, changing

curriculum, or even when they could arrive and leave work. It was given to see how they

defined this term and if they felt positive or negative about it in this work environment. To the

credit of the teachers, most said that flexibility to them meant that they had the ability to try

and help the students the way they felt best. This mostly meant altering assignments to help

them better serve the student or having the ability to create teacher assignments that would

get more out of the student then the one pre-loaded into the online curriculum. Example from

Curtis:

> I think being able to look at what the need is of a particular student and do what I need
> to do to meet that need that would be flexibility to me.

Jane's comment on this:

> I've got a lot of students that are special ed, 504, ELL, combination thereof, almost
> sometimes a majority if not just a minimal minority and the flexibility that we get
> working with the special ed, ELL, 504 departments on figuring out what's best to do.

Clint:

> I think at our campus, we're very flexible making things work, making things work out to
> help our students the most.

Katelyn:

> The kids can approach me easier, than in a traditional classroom, because there's not 30 kids. Well, there are 30 kids, but they're working at different levels, so they can approach me easier and it leads to more job satisfaction because I really feel like I'm relating to the kids which is why I got into teaching. Since they are all on different topics the problems don't seem to all come at one time so I can work more individually.

Even the principals felt that working with the students was the most flexible part of the

job and that it would probably bring the most satisfaction to the teacher. Lisa:

> Encourage experimentation. It's OK to fail! Try something new if you have an idea.

And principal Stevens:

> Through the years, the teachers who I have noticed experience the most satisfaction are those who exploit the flexibility they have to adjust assignments as needed and who enjoy relationships with students.

Professional Growth

Studies talking about professional growth (Hung (2012) typically talk about professional

growth as learning one's craft, to master it, and then using those skills and experience to grow

within the company. In a teaching environment that would be learning to be a master

instructor and then having responsibility within the school to help the school as whole to grow

and improve. Many teachers are satisfied with helping school wide and are not interested and

leaving the teaching position, while there are others who want to move into the administration

field and be able to help in that capacity. The positives in the category were that there were

opportunities to grow as a teacher and to help improve the campus, but some felt that to move

into the administration field they would have to leave this specific district as the opportunities

are few because of the district's size. The first comments to this end were given by Clint. He is

a teacher that wants to help and also change to another field but may not be able to here:

I would say that if that desire ever was there, to move up, become a counselor or whatever, it might be a little more challenging to – it's just those positions are not here. They're filled by qualified people who seem to be happy in their roles.

Jane felt she was satisfied and moving along the path of growth:

I feel like eventually I want to be a special education teacher for people with disabilities and I have a lot of practice because of this job. So, I feel like I'm super satisfied because I will be able to carry the traits that I learned here somewhere else if I were to go somewhere else.

Curtis felt that he is growing but was one of those who is satisfied with how he is using that growth. He stated:

And the growth has been really nice, I've learned a lot. Learning from the principal, learning from the other teachers, just continuing to grow. I really have no desire to continue to go up. Admin is not my thing, but I'm definitely satisfied to be given the opportunity.

Principals expressed that they try to make it a priority to provide growth opportunities for their staff members. First Stevens and then David said the following about their thought process on professional growth:

Teachers (and staff) express interest in broadening their skills or in possibly taking on new roles. I always support that.

Professionally there's room for growth. We have all types of professional development, exercises, and all types of professional development. For them, 'achievement' is felt in student successes and honing the skills they need to help the students be successful.

Work Relationships

This question dealt with two aspects of the work relationship- professional and personal relationships. Teachers commented on both the professional environment and the personal (or lack of personal) relationships that they felt in this environment. Clint expressed this by saying:

It's the size definitely, but it's also the people. Because all the people here are really caring about our students. We have each other's backs. If I need to step out to do

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something I know I can ask a teacher to cover for me and they will. The people I work with all seem to have the same motivation as I do- we want to help the students. A lot of people could make more money elsewhere but we like what we do and we like each other.

Katelyn expressed similar feelings but also added the belonging she felt with staff:

I come to work and many of these people are also my friends. I feel like I am part of each time I come- more than part of a school I feel part of the lives of others. I know that I can ask them to help with anything and they will. It could be the size of the school that I get to know them so closely – I worked at a larger ISD high school and felt that I was alone a lot of the time.

Nellie felt similar as she had worked in education a long time and in many different schools.

She did not feel it was the size of the school but maybe the similar focus on student success:

I have worked in all sorts of schools and felt that I could always connect if I wanted to. I know at the bigger schools you have your department teams and that seems to give me a sense of relationships with a small group. Here, I think it is that we all want the same thing and understand how hard it can be to reach some students. Maybe it is a shared suffering that brings us closer, but I would agree with what others have said about the team feeling.

Kaley stated this during the focus group:

I would agree. Even the camaraderie at this campus. They don't have the same level of – the fact that we all basically get along for the most part. We all work together. We're always trying to help each other out. Whether it be in coverage or in classwork or with students, discipline, or just anything. We're always trying to work together here. Some of us hang out outside of school or even just the different hobbies that we have. Just being able to come together, I think is a big deal.

Sandy said this about her colleagues during the focus group:

I think it is the relationships because we have each other's back. At least I think we do, I can't speak much for Calvin over here, but – I'm being sarcastic, I'm sorry. Yeah, I think it's because we have each other's back and we work well together and we try to – and play off of each other's strengths and shore up those weaknesses.

Sandy also tried to give insight into why maybe the relationships at these campuses seem to be good- over time perhaps the people who don't appreciate the environment move on and leave those who are committed:

> I agree with Calvin. But I also think that just the fact that we all show up every day and I know that there are days we come dragging in but we're all here every day as much as we can be barring any outside interventions. And I think that takes a lot of commitment because this isn't for everybody and if somebody comes in and they're like they don't fit or they're not believing in these kids, they don't last. And it takes a lot of understanding our clientele and who we're working with. And, I mean, there are days, yeah, I go home and I'm just really dragging and do I really want to go in again? Do I really want to face that, but I get up the next morning and, yeah, this is where I want to be long-term.

Student Interaction

This category is probably the most commented on one of all the areas discussed with interviewees. Every teacher and principal alluded to this in some form or fashion. This is where teachers spend most of their time and effort in this type of school. As whole group lessons are few most time is spent on individual needs and trying to help students make progress in their classwork. This interaction comes with many different hats as teachers felt like a motivator, counselor, and life coach to go along with their assigned duty as teacher. Teachers, like the comment here by Victoria, felt this was a vital part of the job because of the students they worked with in this setting:

> I am to be an educator and that's supposed to be my primary goal. But that other part is so important as well to me that being able to develop the relationships is crucial. Because I feel like it helps the educational part even more. I think at this type of school, teachers really influence students' success because they get to work with a student that might not have otherwise done anything and they get to guide him through the curriculum.

Clint felt this way about the topic:

Building relationships, so that's if I couldn't do that, if I was forced to say, "You have to be by the book guy." I would struggle and I would probably be very unhappy, ultimately, with that part for sure. The interactions with students are what make me satisfied with this job. The kids can approach me easier, than in a traditional classroom, because there's not 30 kids. There's 30 kids, but they're working at different levels, so they can approach me easier and it leads to more job satisfaction because I really feel like I'm relating to the kids which is why I got into teaching.

Curtis felt that job expectations were built upon student interactions:

We're encouraged very, very strongly encouraged – it would actually probably be in our culture that we have here- it would be frowned upon if we weren't talking about the well-being of the students other than just the grades and behaviors.

He also stated:

I have pretty good interactions with most of the students here. I feel like building a personal relationship with them makes me more satisfied with my job, instead of just coming in like, "Hey, here's some work to work on." And that's it. So, I think that's the biggest part of my job that I like is the student interaction.

Jane:

For me it's the student relationship with my kids, just because I have case load and so, that's I think that's the most satisfactory part. And then just the other aspect of building those relationships, like, Jane and Nellie talked about earlier. Building those relationships helps them, in the future, have healthy and good relationships because a lot of them aren't used to that. They're not used to having an adult figure. They're not used to having positive relationships. And so, I think that's also another factor that we contribute to.

Katelyn:

I like the relationship with the kids, watching them succeed and grow and seeing them graduate. I would say that having one on one interactions is a positive of this job and in this environment, because you're able to impact students because you're getting to know them on a one on one basis.

Nellie:

You kind of learn their personalities, learn their backstories, and that helps with your interactions with them. And I call it making the turn- when a student makes that turn where they realize they're in a safe place and they can trust you. And so, a lot of times they don't have anybody in their life giving them actually tough love of like pushing

them. And so, they don't know how to take it at first and then after they realize that I'm the same with everybody, then they're like, "Oh, she's not picking on me. She's actually encouraging me to step it up and actually graduate. So, I like that aspect.

Sandy:

I think I get to do that here, like, we make connections with the kids. And that's really – for me that's what teaching is for to help students not necessarily in my subject, but just to help them be better, and to help prepare for the real world.

Later she said:

And here it's small, it's intimate, you get to know them. I have a motherly instinct, so I'm like, "You're my kid, I don't care how old you are, I did not give birth to you but I'm still going to treat you as my child. And this is what we're going to do."

Jane commented on the structure of the school helping with this important process:

But I also think just the structure of the school and the way that it's set up, makes it possible for us to have the interactions with the kids that we need to have with this type of kid.

Principals felt this was an important part of the school structure and something that

makes the school work for teachers and students. Lisa said:

When there is a break through, even a small one, it is cause for celebration and that is often shared among staff. Sometimes a student who opens up and begins to work for only one teacher is cause for celebration.

Steven:

Teachers who seem most satisfied seem to be comfortable with accepting students where they are when they start. They enjoy the journey of getting them somewhere from where they started and then having that relationship.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to answer the three research questions guiding the

study that involved an examination job satisfaction of teachers working in a drop out recovery

school using online curriculum delivery. This examination of job satisfaction was to determine

the level of organizational commitment and turnover intention by teachers working in this environment. The data collected in this study consisted of ten face-to-face interviews and two focus-group interviews with seven participants. The participants in this study included campus administrators and teachers from two high schools designated as drop out recovery and use a blended model of online curriculum with teacher involvement.

The qualitative data analysis of the responses provided during the individual interviews and focus-group interviews provided answers to research questions. The data were collected and analyzed to determine how teachers working in this specific environment perceived (positively or negatively) the eight pre-determined factors that research has shown to have the most influence over job satisfaction intentions (Bollinger & Waslik, 2009; Borup & Stevens, 2016; Hawkins, 2012; Hendriks, 2010; Hung, 2012; Larkin, 2015; Velasquez, Graham & Osguthorp, 2013). The eight factors that were examined were administrative support, compensation, curriculum, student discipline and motivation, job flexibility, professional growth, student interaction, success, and relationships, and work relationships. In Chapter 5, I discuss recommendations for each identified theme and research questions are addressed based on implications from data analysis.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a summary of this qualitative case study, a discussion of the

findings, implications for learning, and recommendations. The results of this study were

obtained through the qualitative methods described in chapter three. The recommendations

are framed around the eight pre-determined themes drawn from prior research studies that

had identified the most common reasons for job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Bollinger &

Waslik, 2009; Borup & Stevens, 2016; Hawkins, 2012; Hendriks, 2010; Hung, 2012; Larkin, 2015;

Velasquez, Graham & Osguthorp, 2013). This information is presented by theme as to give the

reader a better understanding of what effects teachers' job satisfaction, organizational

commitment, and intent to remain or stay. The research questions are then discussed and

recommendations for future research is presented.

Discussion of the Findings and Implications

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand what created job satisfaction or

dissatisfaction for teachers working in an online drop out recovery program. Understanding the

satisfaction and dissatisfaction would allow me to predict organizational commitment and

intent to leave or stay for teachers working in this type of school. Research has shown that high

or low job satisfaction can predict organizational commitment and intent to leave or stay with a

company (Akomalafe & Olatomide, 2013; Chovwen, Balogun, & Olowokere, 2014). With a

better understanding of job satisfaction within this type of school I attempted to answer the

following questions with this study:

- What are the factors that influence teachers' job satisfaction while working in a drop-out recovery school using online curriculum?

- What are the factors that influence teachers to terminate their employment in a drop-out recovery school using online curriculum?

- What is the turnover intention of teachers in a drop-out recovery school?

The following paragraphs are a discussion of the questions asked in this study. The results of the interviews conducted and discussed in chapter 4 provide the basis for the conclusions given. In some instances, I used my experience in the field of education to help interpret responses and to provide insights.

First Research Question

The first research question asked what are the factors that influence teachers' job satisfaction while working in a drop-out recovery school using online curriculum. As is discussed in this chapter, there were many themes that indicated a more likely influence on a positive job satisfaction with teachers in this school system. The most positive comments from interviewed teachers came when discussing student interactions and relationship building that takes place to help at-risk students. Teachers in this study felt that getting to know students on a deeper level really helped with connecting and being able to help these students succeed in school when many of the them had not been successful in the past. This could help explain why teachers in this school system felt passion for the mission of the schools. Ghafoor (2012) showed that the highest influence on job satisfaction was level of salary. This study would support Ghafoor, as shown in Table 2, these participants felt that lower salary was less likely to bring job satisfaction and that it would more likely create a situation where they felt they would leave. Many of the interviewees mentioned that they were aware of the compensation issues

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and then proceeded to give examples of why the job as a whole would compensate for this fact. Some said that they left better paying careers and other teaching positions to be able to work in a school with the specific purpose of helping at-risk students and those who may have dropped out previously. This commitment to the mission and the positive influence of other themes helped to offset this impact on job satisfaction and intent to leave.

Second Research Question

The second research question asked what are the factors that influence teachers to terminate their employment in a drop-out recovery school using online curriculum. Based on the transcripts of the interviews it is apparent that the theme that indicated the most likely influence on negative job satisfaction would be that of teacher compensation. All teacher responses indicated this negative influence and a desire to be compensated more. This would support the findings of many scholars in the field of education, including Ghafoor (2012); Ingle (2015); and Nazir et. al (2013). This research stated that there is a direct correlation between higher compensation and job satisfaction. If taken on its own and in a vacuum I would state that this theme would create a lot of job dissatisfaction and a very high intent to leave the school system. And, based on prior years' statistics in the TAPR (2017) this district and set of schools did face a high turnover rate because of this issue. Based on the interviews I can say that this theme of compensation, while still a negative influence, has not shown to be a determinant for job satisfaction and teacher turnover intentions. One, the district has made a concerted effort to bring salary levels up to be within a reasonable distance from surrounding school districts, and two, the other themes discussed in this study had a great enough impact on teacher job satisfaction that it helped to offset the compensation issue. Many teachers

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expressed that they knew the compensation levels were lower in this district and that a few of them had actually left better paying jobs in education and without to be part of the the mission of this school district.

Third Research Question

The third research question asked what is the turnover intention of teachers in a drop-out recovery school. Based on the interviews conducted I feel that there only one person who participated in this study who had indicators that they would be more likely to terminate their employment. This specific teacher is discussed further in the recommendations section at the end of this chapter. Teachers in this study had a mostly favorable outlook on job satisfaction themes. This would indicate a likely positive opinion of their job satisfaction and a less likely intent to terminate employment. This would support the work of Akomalafe & Olatomide, 2013, Chovwen, Balogun, & Olowokere, 2014, and Ingle (2015). These researchers all indicated that there is a high correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intention, and specifically, that leaders could determine intent to leave a position based on the level of job satisfaction. As the data in Table 2 indicates, only one person among those interviewed would be predicated to be likely to terminate employment.

Table 2 gives a summative look at the responses given and the determination of whether or not the responses could be deemed more likely or less likely to influence the level of job satisfaction and the intent to leave the organization. For instance, if a respondent stated that the curriculum was "helpful so that I could focus on other aspects of working with the students," then I deemed that as a response that is likely to create job satisfaction and less of an intent work to leave the position. If another interviewee stated that "there are times I wish I

could change the curriculum to better fit my students' needs," the categorization would be then deemed less likely to create job satisfaction and less likely to have positive impact on staying with the school system.

Table 2

Conceptual Framework and Results

	Jane	Kaley	Victoria	Clint	Calvin	Sandy	Nellie
Compensation	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely
Administration Support	Likely	Less Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Less Likely
Curriculum	Likely	Less Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely
Student Discipline	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Student Interactions	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Job Flexibility	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Less Likely
Work Relationships	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Professional Growth	Likely	Likely	Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Likely	Less Likely
Organizatioinal Commitment	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Less Likely
Turnover Intention	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Less Likely	Likely

If a teacher was shown to have more responses that were to "likely" create positive job satisfaction and lower intent to leave, then I determined that interviewee to have a likelihood of organizational commitment which would mean a likelihood of returning to the same position the following year. If the teacher was shown to have a lot of "less likely" responses, then I determined them to have a less likely commitment to the organization and a less likely

intention of returning to the same position the following year.

Themes

Compensation

Teachers in this study expressed an understanding that working in this situation came with some sacrifices. The biggest sacrifice being the loss of earning potential compared to that of traditional ISD schools or other career choices. Based on the number of interview responses that were categorized as Less Likely to create job satisfaction in this first theme, this one factor would seem to have the highest impact on teacher retention. This supports prior research in numerous studies (Borup & Stevens, 2016; Larkin, 2015; Velasquez, Graham & Osguthorp, 2013) and also the concept that one needs to have basic needs met (Maslow, 1954) in order to begin to create a work environment that brings job satisfaction and a commitment to stay in a position of employment. In this study all responses about compensation were deemed to have a high negative impact on teachers staying, yet the final determination for likelihood of staying were very positive. In fact, in some teachers' interviews, it was stated that they left more lucrative teaching positions and careers to work in this environment. This indicates that the other factors of job satisfaction within an alternative education campus working with drop-out recovery students using online curriculum are strong enough to compensate for less money. Compensation can still be viewed as a negative, but not enough for teachers to view the organization in a negative light, and for them to have more likely intent to leave. Based on interview responses it is apparent that compensation has been improving in this organization and is now comparable to traditional ISD settings and perhaps lessoning the impact this negative theme has on teacher job satisfaction. Interviewees also indicated that the passion

they have for the mission of the schools they work in and the other aspects of the job they

value allow for less compensation.

Administration Support

Similar to findings by Borup and Stevens (2016) teacher happiness and job satisfaction

seems to increase when teachers feel they are well supported and appreciated by the

administration they are working with at a school. When listening to the interviews it became

very apparent that teachers were less likely to have lower job satisfaction because of the way

local leaders supported them. They felt the leaders at their schools provided an atmosphere

that also helped them to feel more likely to remain at their jobs. Interviewees mostly

mentioned the feeling of support as they described administrators as "having their backs" as to

why they felt this way. This implies that if there were issues with students or parents the

leadership would support the teacher and the decisions made in the classroom. A majority of

interviewees felt that this was not always the case when working with other districts.

Interviewees felt this could be a product of having such small schools and the ability for leaders

and teachers to have a good relationship built around trust. Most teachers felt that they were

listened to by their leadership and if they had comments or concerns they would be given a

voice within the school. The vast majority of negative comments were reserved for what would

be considered district leadership- those people who work in the main district office and have

authority with overall functions of a district. Many felt disconnected with anyone working at

that level and that those leaders did not want to know what was happening at the campus

level. Many felt that there was no empathy for what decisions and actions at the district level

were doing in reality to campus life. They felt many edicts were being given for teachers to do

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without consideration of the lack of resources to carry those tasks out to successful levels. The perception is that district leaders could spend more time at the campus level building relationships and getting the teachers' perspectives on what needs to be done for the students.

Curriculum

Teachers interviewed in this study felt having this curriculum online gave them the ability to focus on other parts of their job without having to spend a great deal of time writing lesson plans and doing planning. This allowed them to focus on student needs and helping them to complete the curriculum. Teachers did have complaints about how some of the curriculum was written and the tasks students needed to complete in certain classes, but because they could alter the assignments as needed it helped to compensate for this. Research by Borup & Stevens found similar feelings among the teachers they studied in an online environment. Teachers in their study felt that having the set curriculum as a starting point and then being able to adjust as needed gave them a great sense of empowerment and the ability to help students in a more personal way. In this current study, improvement to the current curriculum would be welcomed by interviewees as they felt the need to meet the students on a more individual level. An example from one teacher was the high emphasis on reading skills that they felt was detrimental to the students as they had severe gaps in these skills. It would benefit the student to have a curriculum that was more visual or hands on- with the use of virtual teachers embedded in the curriculum to help compensate for learning gaps, particularly reading skills. Overall, teachers would find this theme more likely to create job satisfaction and would help them to feel less likely to terminate employment with this school system.

Student Discipline

Sims (2017,) in a longitudinal study of 35 countries, found that teachers' interactions with students had a profound effect on perceived job satisfaction. Specifically, student behavior and student discipline were very important factors that were part of a teacher's culture and climate. Teachers in this current study indicated their biggest fear entering a drop-out recovery school system was the reputation of the student body. That students who were considered drop outs or who had previously not succeeded in school, were going to be difficult to discipline within the classroom. When teachers experienced the true culture and behavior of students within this district their fears were abated and they could see the culture how it really was, not how it was perceived. Because of the interactions they had with students and the ability to build relationships with students, many of the discipline issues were negated and a positive outlook was expressed. Another factor that created a positive feeling about discipline was that teachers felt supported by campus leaders within the school to help create a safe environment for all and that if any students were in violation of rules they would be dealt with quickly. This gave the teachers a feeling of safety and empowerment as they were able to have input on which students needed correction and how that correction might look. Input from staff was sought and a team atmosphere in discipline made for a positive outlook and high job satisfaction.

Student Interactions

Murphy and Rodríguez-Manzanares (2008) found that face-to-face interactions allowed teachers to more quickly build rapport with their students and would typically be a factor that leads to a teacher being less likely to have job satisfaction in an online system, but those

teachers interviewed felt that this was one of the most positive influences on job satisfaction as many of them are passionate about helping students in general, and specifically, the students that attend a drop out recovery school. The most common interactions were helping to learn curriculum, motivating to finish school, helping with personal life issues students had, and getting to know students as a person. Teachers felt this interaction allowed for the most success academically for the student and for them as a teacher to feel most connected to the school. Most teachers felt that this type of bonding would not take place in a traditional school as the time needed was just not there. Having the system that required them to work one on one with students allowed for conversations and discussions to take place that developed trust and relationships. This hybrid system of online curriculum but allowing teacher interaction seems to have provided the best of both worlds when it comes to working with students. This would validate Velasquez et al. (2013) who stated that teachers at a full-time online high school spent most of their instructional time in one-to-one interactions, which allowed them to build close caring relationships with some students. Teachers in their study also "expressed a sense of joy and satisfaction when students reacted favorably to their caring actions" (Velasquez et al., 2013. p. 110). Teachers were more likely to have higher job satisfaction and less likely to want to terminate employment when examining this specific theme.

Work Relationships

Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) conducted a case study viewing positive or negative experiences in relationship to isolation and burnout. Their findings showed, "strongly forged relationships and the accompanying feelings of emotional well-being are protective factors critical to teacher retention" (p. 39). The teachers in this study expressed that they had a lot of

positive job satisfaction because of the staff relationships they had formed at their campuses. They felt safe and supported by the staff they worked with. It was expressed that they knew everyone they worked with had the same passion for the job as they did and if that person did not then they would be gone fairly quickly as the job is hard and can be trying at times. They stated that this created a bond between them as they all knew what the job took to be successful. Teachers expressed that they would often socialize outside of work with most of the staff they worked with and this helped to strengthen the bonds. Teachers in the study mentioned a common experience working in this environment that allowed for empathy and a willingness to help each other succeed. Responses would make this theme very likely to create positive job satisfaction and have a less than likely prediction for teacher turnover.

7- Job flexibility. When presented the question about this topic the teachers took flexibility to mean the ability to adjust curriculum as needed to meet the students at their level. Because of this interpretation the responses were very positive as respondents felt that the leadership on campuses trusted them enough to tailor classes to fit the needs of each individual student. Since they dealt with so many students coming from so many circumstances it was difficult to expect the same solutions to work for every student. Teachers expressed a positive view of being allowed to take different routes to success for each student. Archambault and Crippen (2009) noted in their study that many teachers enter this type of environment precisely because it offers more job flexibility. This would parallel a few respondents who felt flexibility in the job meant to accommodate for their own personal lives such as attending appointments, etc. Based on the results it would seem this flexibility made teachers more likely to have high job satisfaction and lower probability to leave.

Professional Growth

According to Borup and Stevens (2016) teachers feel higher job satisfaction when they feel they are being trained properly and that they are being supported in their progress to become a better teacher or to move up in the education profession. Archambault and Crippen (2009) noted that some teachers perceived a lack of administrator support, making their experience with teaching online "overwhelming" (p. 378). Participants in this study felt that they had been afforded many opportunities to grow as a teacher within this district. Least experienced teachers felt this work environment gave them a gradual learning curve to be able to improve on their craft, and more experienced teachers felt they enjoyed the ability to use their knowledge to help other teachers. The perception that instruction time was not as intense as a traditional ISD helped many feel they could focus on doing a better job of instruction when they had the opportunities. The teachers in this study felt that leadership has been very supportive of any efforts to find more training or to attend any conference that would add to the knowledge base. Opportunities to contribute to campus leadership were always accepted by their principals. There were negative feelings some had about the ability to move up in campus leadership positions within the school district. Many felt that there was little turnover at that level so moving up for job growth was limited. Overall, the responses would make this investigator believe that the theme of job growth indicated a more likely influence on positive job satisfaction and a less likely influence on teachers wanting to terminate employment.

Recommendations

A look at the individual responses in Table 2 shows that Nelly had the highest number of

"more likely" to have negative job satisfaction and the highest number of "likely" to cause

termination. Based on the other respondent indicators it would seem that Nelly is the outlier in

the group.   This does not indicate that she is wrong in her perceptions of her environment, but

that there could be more to her feelings and reasons than were explored in this study. Her age

(70), years in teaching (30), and years at this school (4) lead me to believe there could be a link

between job satisfaction, years of service, gender, and age of a teacher. This belief is supported

by research done by Ghafoor (2012) as he indicated that there were definite links to job

satisfaction and different demographic information. Devaney and Chen (2012) believed that

age was one factor that had an impact on job satisfaction, while Malik (2011) stated that

gender may play a role. The demographic information on teachers participating in this study

and how that effected responses was not extensive and would be an area for further analysis.

Future studies may focus on age and years of experience as factors in job satisfaction.

There was a sharp contrast when interviewees discussed how campus leadership

affected job satisfaction and district leadership affected job satisfaction. A study of district

leadership's interaction with campuses and the staff at that level would be an area for further

analysis. Perhaps the questions to be asked are "how far away from a teacher does leadership

impact job satisfaction?," "what interactions do teachers have with district leadership that

would impact job satisfaction?," and "what opinions/information would benefit district

leadership to help create higher job satisfaction and lower intent to leave?"

Summary

The goal of this qualitative case study was to answer the research questions targeting

job satisfaction and turnover intentions of teachers working in a drop-out recovery school using

online curriculum. The outcome of the study added to the literature of online and computer-based schools, drop-out recovery schools, teachers who work in these environments, and the understanding of teacher job satisfaction and how it effects turnover. State and school district officials may look at these results and plan for ways to create a positive job environment that leads to higher teacher retention.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

UNT

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Informed Consent for Studies with Adults

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Turnover Intention of Teachers Using Computer Based Curriculum Delivery in a Dropout Recovery High School

RESEARCH TEAM: Student Investigator: Joey Beauchamp, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Teacher Education and Administration, ████████, ████████████████. This study is for dissertation purposes under the Supervising Investigator: Dr. Elizabeth Murakami, University of North Texas (UNT), Department of Teacher Education and Administration, 940-565-2832, Elizabeth.Murakami@unt.edu

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Taking part in this study is voluntary. The investigators will explain the study to you and will any answer any questions you might have. It is your choice whether or not you take part in this study. If you agree to participate and then choose to withdraw from the study, that is your right, and your decision will not be held against you.

You are being asked to take part in a research study about job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers working with online delivery of curriculum in a drop out recovery school.

Your participation in this research study involves one interview consisting of 10 questions lasting no longer that 45 minutes, and one focus group session involving 10 more questions and lasting no longer than one hour. More details will be provided in the next section.

You might want to participate in this study if you wish to help schools using computer based curriculum create a better working environment to create higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, you might not want to participate in this study if you do not have the time to commit to interviews and focus group.

You may choose to participate in this research study if you are a teacher currently working in a drop out recovery school using computer based curriculum.

The reasonable foreseeable risks or discomforts to you if you choose to take part is sitting for a long period of time to answer questions and time away from work or family to participate, which you can compare to the possible benefit of providing information that may help create more job satisfaction and organizational commitment for you and fellow staff members. You will (or will not) receive compensation for participation.

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY: The following is more detailed information about this study, in addition to the information listed above.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study which involves the understanding of teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention while working with a computer-based curriculum.

TIME COMMITMENT: You will be asked to participate in one interview and one focus group session. Each of these consists of 10 questions and follow up questions as needed. Interview should last approximately 45 minutes and the focus group one hour.

STUDY PROCEDURES: Subjects are interviewed and participate in a focus group session. These will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. When transcribed you will have an opportunity to review responses and correct any errors you feel are present. Data collected will appear in dissertation with no reference to you by name or description.

AUDIO/VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHY:

☐ **I agree** to be audio recorded during the research study.

    ☐ **I agree** that the audio recordings and transcription can be used in publications or presentations.

    ☐ **I do not agree** that the audio recording can be used in publications or presentations.

☐ **I do not agree** to be audio recorded during the research study.

The recordings will be kept with other electronic data in a secure UNT office with locked cabinet for the duration of the study and for 3 years following

POSSIBLE BENEFITS: To express your comments and concerns about your job satisfaction and organizational commitment while working at a drop out recovery school using online curriculum. This could provide schools such as this information to help create better working conditions in these type of schools.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: You will be providing up to 2 hours of your time and may sit for this period of time with few breaks. If you experience excessive discomfort when completing the research activity, you may choose to stop participating at any time without penalty. The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen, but the study may involve risks to the participant, which are currently unforeseeable. UNT does not provide medical services, or financial assistance for emotional distress or injuries that might happen from participating in this research. If you need to discuss your discomfort further, please contact a mental health provider, or you may contact the researcher who will refer you to

appropriate services. If your need is urgent, helpful resources include [provide relevant 24 hour resource information and campus or community resources.

Remember that you have the right to withdraw any study procedures at any time without penalty, and may do so by informing the research team.

This research study is not expected to pose any additional risks beyond what you would normally experience in your regular everyday life. However, if you do experience any discomfort, please inform the research team immediately.

COMPENSATION: There is no compensation associated with this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Efforts will be made by the research team to keep your personal information private, including research study and disclosure will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. All paper and electronic data collected from this study will be stored in a secure location on the UNT campus and/or a secure UNT server for at least three (3) years past the end of this research within a locked cabinet in the Department of Educational Leadership. Research records will be labeled with a code and the master key linking names with codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location.

Please be advised that although the researchers will take these steps to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researchers would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

The results of this study may be published and/or presented without naming you as a participant. The data collected about you for this study may be used for future research studies that are not described in this consent form. If that occurs, an IRB would first evaluate the use of any information that is identifiable to you, and confidentiality protection would be maintained.

While absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the research team will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of your records, as described here and to the extent permitted by law. In addition to the research team, the following entities may have access to your records, but only on a need-to-know basis: the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the FDA (federal regulating agencies), the reviewing IRB, and sponsors of the study.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: If you have any questions about the study you may contact Joey Beauchamp at 940-765-4476. Any questions you have regarding your rights as a research subject, or complaints about the research may be directed to the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at 940-565-4643, or by email at untirb@unt.edu.
CONSENT:
>   Your signature below indicates that you have read, or have had read to you all of the above.

- You confirm that you have been told the possible benefits, risks, and/or discomforts of the study.

- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits.

- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study; you also understand that the study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.

By signing, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Please sign below if you are at least 18 years of age and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

_____

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   **DATE**

*If you agree to participate, please provide a signed copy of this form to the researcher team. They will provide you with a copy to keep for your records.

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Procedures for the Focus Group

A semi-structured focus group session was conducted at each campus involved in the study, consisting of teachers that were purposively selected to participate in this descriptive case study. The participants in this study were teachers using computer-based curriculum as the primary source for student work, and administrators who supervise the activities of these teachers. Before the focus group takes place, the researcher reviewed a general informational letter about the purpose of this study and reviewed a letter of informed consent required for participation in this study. The researcher answered the participant's questions related to the study and the interview process before conducting the interview. Before the focus group began, the researcher obtained the participant's permission to participate by having the participant sign the letter of informed consent and will provide the participant a copy of the letter.

Each focus group will be conducted on location in the buildings of campuses participating in the study. The interview lasted for 30-45 minutes and included ten open-ended questions, with additional probing questions as needed to obtain in-depth responses and clarification. Each participant was assigned an alias to protect anonymity. The sessions were audio-recorded for transcription and analysis.

Purpose of the Focus Group

The purpose of this study was to understand the job satisfaction, online commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with computer-based curriculum in drop-out recovery schools. All open-ended focus group questions were related to this purpose.

During the focus group sessions, the researcher asked the following open-ended

questions based on the model of interrelated factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational

commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with computer-based curriculum in 9-

12 drop-out recovery schools (see figure 3, p.51):

1- What aspects of your job are satisfying?   (RQ 1)

2- What aspects of your job are dissatisfying? (RQ 2)

3- What could be done to increase your level of satisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

4- Describe your commitment to your current organization's vision. (RQ 3)

5. In what ways do you feel or not feel committed to your organization? (RQ 3)

6. What could be done to increase your commitment to your current organization? (RQ 3)

7. What aspects of your current teaching experience encourage you to remain in your current teaching position? (RQ 1 and 3)

8. What aspects of your current teaching experience might encourage you to leave your current teaching position? (RQ 2 and 3)

9. What experiences are different than what you envisioned of the teaching that would affect your decision to leave this current position? (RQ 3)

10. How do you feel age, how long someone has been teaching, or time teaching at a specific school influences whether or not someone remains employed in their current role? (RQ 3)

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS

Procedures for the Interview

A one-on-one, face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interview was conducted with each of the teachers who were purposively selected to participate in this descriptive case study. The participants in this study were teachers using computer-based curriculum as the primary source for student work. Before each interview took place, I reviewed a general informational letter about the purpose of this study and reviewed a letter of informed consent required for participation in this study. The researcher answered the participant's questions related to the study and the interview process before conducting the interview. Before the interview began, the researcher obtained the participant's permission to participate by having the participant sign the letter of informed consent and provided the participant a copy of the letter.

Each interview was conducted on location in the building where the teacher and principals work as an online teacher or supervisor. The interview lasted for 30 to 45 minutes and included ten open-ended questions, with additional probing questions as needed to obtain in-depth responses and clarification. Each participant received an alias in order to protect their identity. The interviews were audio-recorded for transcription and analysis.

Purpose of the Interview

The purpose of this study was to measure the job satisfaction, online commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with a computer-based curriculum and principals who supervise the process. All open-ended interview questions were related to this purpose.

Interview Questions for Teachers

During the individual interviews with teachers, the researcher asked the following open-ended items, based on the model of interrelated factors influencing job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with computer-based curriculum in 9-12 drop-out recovery schools (see figure 3, p.51):

1. Describe what your current student interaction looks like. In what ways does that influence your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

2. What is your current control/input into the curriculum you teach and how does this affect your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

3. Describe the ways you either do or do not contribute to student success and how this influences your feelings of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

4. Describe the ways that your administration does or does not support you in your role as a teacher. How does this influence your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

5. How does your current position offer you job flexibility and how does this influence your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

6. In what ways does your current teaching role allow for personal and professional achievement and how does this influence your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

7. As a teacher in your current teaching environment, how do the expectations of motivating and disciplining students influence your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

8. Does your current environment in teaching allow for building of relationships with students and how does this influence your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

9. In what ways does your compensation package influence your job satisfaction or dissatisfaction in your current teaching environment? (RQ 1 and 2)

10. How old are you? How long have you been teaching? How long have you been in your current role and assignment? (RQ 3)

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PRINCIPALS

Procedures for the Interview

A one-on-one, face-to-face, semi-structured, in-depth interview was conducted with each of the principals who were purposively selected to participate in this descriptive case study. The participants in this study were teachers using computer-based curriculum as the primary source for student work. Before each interview took place, the researcher reviewed a general informational letter about the purpose of this study and reviewed a letter of informed consent required for participation in this study. The researcher answered the participant's questions related to the study and the interview process before conducting the interview. Before the interview began, the researcher obtained the participant's permission to participate by having the participant sign the letter of informed consent and provided the participant a copy of the letter.

Each interview was conducted on location in the building where the principal works as a supervisor of teachers working with computer-based curriculum. The interview lasted for 15 to 30 minutes and included ten open-ended items, with additional probing questions as needed to obtain in-depth responses and clarification. Each participant received an alias in order to protect their identity. The interviews were audio-recorded for transcription and analysis.

Purpose of the Interview

The purpose of this study was to understand the job satisfaction, online commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with a computer-based curriculum. Interviews of principals gave another perspective to this study. All open-ended interview questions were related to this purpose.

Interview Questions for Principals

During the individual interviews with principals, the researcher asked the following open-ended questions based on the model of interrelated factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention of teachers working with computer-based curriculum in 9-12 drop-out recovery schools (see figure 3, p.51):

1- Describe teacher interaction with students in the computer-based curriculum delivery environment and how this may affect job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (RQ 1 and 2)

2- Describe the ways teachers influence or have input into curriculum and how this affects their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (RQ 1 and 2)

3- Describe the ways teachers contribute to student success and how this influences their feelings of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (RQ 1 and 2)

4- Describe the ways that administration supports teachers in their role as a teacher, and how this influences their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (RQ 1 and 2)

5- In what ways do teachers have flexibility in this environment?   How does this influence their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

6- In what ways do teachers reach personal and professional achievement in this environment and how does this influence their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

7- How does motivating and disciplining students influence teacher's job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

8- In what ways does teaching computer-based curriculum allow for student/teacher relationship building and how does this influence job satisfaction or dissatisfaction? (RQ 1 and 2)

9- How does teacher experience in this environment influence job satisfaction?   (RQ 3)

10- How have you seen a teacher's age and or teaching experience influence whether or not they leave or return for another year? (RQ 3)

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