EXPLORING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING TURNOVER OF SLOVAK TEACHERS

Monika Magdová[1], Miroslava Bozogáňová[2], Marianna Berinšterová[3], & Tatiana Pethö[4]
[1]*Institute of Pedagogy, Andragogy and Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences, University of Presov (Slovakia)*
[2]*Institute of Social Sciences of the Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences SAS (Slovakia)*
[3]*Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, University of Presov (Slovakia)*
[4]*Department of Managerial Psychology, Faculty of Management and Business, University of Presov (Slovakia)*

Abstract

Turnover of teachers is major problem in society. However, most teachers point to problems that are not being solved and which lead them to turnover. It is necessary to emphasize that turnover is linked to a number of negative impacts (e.g., financial). Furthermore, turnover also has negative consequences on the remaining employees, performance. This is why it is necessary to focus on teachers and find a way to prevent the occurrence of turnover. The aim of the contribution was to explore which areas leading to turnover are the most important for Slovak teachers. 132 teachers (87.1% women), aged 24 to 68 (Mage=38.03, SD=10.20) participated in the research. Of the total number of teachers, 15.6% worked at preschools, 53.9% worked at primary schools, 13.3% worked at secondary vocational schools, 14.1% worked at secondary schools. The research sample was selected from teachers reachable via social networks or email, taking advantage of the snowball effect. Questionnaire consist of sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, the type of school, length of practice) and the list of 27 areas related to the teaching profession. Teachers were asked to select a maximum of 7 areas they consider to be the most problematic in the teaching profession and for which they would consider leaving their job. The list of areas was created according review of the researched factors determining teacher turnover and turnover tendencies. Additionally, the teachers were also given the choice of adding another area, other than those specified in the compiled list. We identified the most problematic areas in the teaching profession. They were these, which were label by at least one third of the respondents, specifically remuneration (72.7%); job satisfaction (63.6%); students' behavior during classes (50.0%); stress linked to the teaching profession (47.0%); students' aggressiveness (45.5%); work with a minority group (42.4%); students' performance (42.4%); communication with parents (42.4%); class size (number of students in class; 33.3%); and working conditions (environment; 33.3%). We analyzed the importance of each area according the age, type of school and length of practice in more details. Results point to the importance of chosen areas of turnover among Slovak teachers and offer an opportunity for further exploration and creation of a complex scheme of mutual relations between factors of turnover. Based on this knowledge, we can work in the future on reducing negative factors and supporting positive factors in order to reduce teacher turnover.

Keywords: Turnover, Slovak teachers, factors.

1. Introduction

Turnover of teachers is major problem in society. However, most teachers point to problems that are not being solved and which lead them to turnover (e.g., the declining status of the teacher in society (Kariková, 2016; Pašková & Valihorová, 2010); the increasing demands on teachers' performance (Hroncová, 1999); a growing number of problem students (Pašková & Valihorová, 2010)).

There are several reasons why these issues need addressing. The first is the fact that teachers represent a large proportion of the population (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Another reason are the statistics suggesting an increasing number of unoccupied teaching positions. Slovak media often mention that qualified teachers, particularly younger teachers (Kosová, 2011 in Hanesová, 2014), more particularly foreign language speakers, are opting for other sectors or positions abroad (Kariková, 2016).

In addition to pointing out that not solving teachers' problems translates into turnover tendencies and turnover itself, it is necessary to emphasize that turnover is also linked to a number of negative impacts, including negative financial impacts (Abbasi, Hollman, & Hayes, 2008; Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). Furthermore, turnover also has negative consequences on the remaining employees, particularly their ability to complete duties, decreased work morale, overall performance (Abbasi et al., 2008; Yin-Fah, Sok Foon, Chee-Leong, & Osman, 2010). High rates of teacher turnover will likely mean greater school instability, disruption of curricular cohesiveness, and a continual need to hire inexperienced teachers, who are typically less effective, as replacements for teachers who leave (Grissom, 2011). This is why it is necessary to focus on teachers and find a way to prevent the occurrence of turnover.

Many of researches have searched for an answer on how to reduce teacher turnover. The result is a list of many researched factors and mediators influencing turnover.

2. Objectives

The aim of the contribution was to explore which areas leading to potential teacher turnover are the most important for Slovak teachers. Subsequently, examine whether the importance of individual areas differs depending on age, type of school and length of practice.

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and data collection

132 teachers (87.1% women), aged 24 to 68 (Mage=38.03, SD=10.20) participated in the research. Of the total number of teachers, 15.6% worked at preschools, 53.9% worked at primary schools, 13.3% worked at secondary vocational schools, 14.1% worked at secondary schools. The research sample was selected from teachers reachable via social networks or email, taking advantage of the snowball effect. Suitable research participants (n=150) were subsequently contacted online. After giving their informed consent, they filled in an online survey questionnaire.

3.2. Measures

Questionnaire consist of sociodemographic characteristics:
- Age - open question, but we used 3 categories in data analyses, which were created through visual binning (a) under 33 years; b) 33 - 42 years; c) over 42 years)
- Gender - man / woman;
- the type of school - 3 categories: preschool / primary / secondary
- length of practice - open question, but we used 3 categories in data analysis, which were created through visual binning (a) under 5 years; b) 6 - 14 years; c) over 14 years).

Subsequently, the teachers had a list of 27 areas related to the teaching profession. Teachers were asked to select a maximum of 7 areas they consider to be the most problematic in the teaching profession and for which they would consider leaving their job. The list of areas was created according review of the researched factors determining teacher turnover and turnover tendencies (Allen, Burgess, & Mayo, 2017; Barnes et al., 2007; Grant, Jeon, & Buettner, 2019; Grissom, 2011; Guin, 2004; Hanesová, 2014; Holme, Jabbar, Germain, & Dinning, 2017; Hroncová, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001a; Ingersoll, 2001b; Kariková, 2016; Kraft, Marinell, & Shen-Wei Yee, 2016; Pašková & Valihorová, 2010; Popelková et al., 2010; Shakrani, 2008; Stuit & Smith, 2010; Tomčíková & Živčák, 2013). Additionally, the teachers were also given the choice of adding another area, other than those specified in the compiled list.

3.3. Statistical analyses

The information collected in the course of the survey was processed using descriptive statistics available in the SPSS 21.0 program.

4. Results

We identified the most problematic areas in the teaching profession (Table 1). They were these, which were label by at least one third of the respondents, specifically remuneration, job satisfaction, students' behavior during classes, stress linked to the teaching profession, students' aggressiveness, work with a minority group, students' performance, communication with parents, class size (number of students in class, and working conditions (environment).

Table 1. A percentage representation of individual areas depending on perceived problems in the teaching profession.

Researched area	n	%
Remuneration	96	**72.7**
Job satisfaction	84	**63.6**
Students' behavior during classes	66	**50.0**
Stress linked to the teaching profession	62	**47.0**
Students' aggressiveness	60	**45.5**
Work with a minority group	56	**42.4**
Students' performance	56	**42.4**
Communication with parents	56	**42.4**
Class size (number of students in class)	44	**33.3**
Working conditions (environment)	44	**33.3**
School's financial resources	38	28.8
Non-financial benefits	30	22.7
Management, superiors and relationship to them	22	16.7
Teacher status and value of teacher's work	22	16.7
Quality of relationships with colleagues	18	13.6
Health risks	18	13.6
Perception of justice	18	13.6
Career growth, opportunities for promotion	16	12.1
Work with students in general	16	12.1
Support from superiors	16	12.1
Motivation	12	9.1
Work commitment and engagement	12	9.1
Workplace communication	10	7.6
Mobbing / bossing	8	6.1
Type of job (work itself)	6	4.5
Conflict between professional life and personal life	4	3.0
Freedom to take decisions and manage	4	3.0
Other – school's material equipment; changes of textbooks for the worse	2	1.5

Subsequently, we analyzed these important areas according the age, type of school and length of practice in more details. Considering age, we found that younger teachers (under 33 years) consider the following areas to be less problematic: a) students' behavior during classes; b) stress linked to the teaching profession; c) students' performance in compare to other teachers. On the other hand, they consider working condition more problematic with compare with other groups. In addition, we found that older teachers (over 42 years) consider communication with parents to be a problematic area compared to other teachers.

Considering type of school, we found that teachers from preschool education perceived: a) students' behavior during classes; students' aggressiveness; students' performance; communication with parents than less problematic areas; b) remuneration than more problematic areas with compare to teachers form other types of school. Moreover, teachers form primary schools perceived stress linked to the teaching profession and work with minority group than more problematic areas than others teachers.

Finally, according the length of practice, we found that differences appear only in relation to teachers with the shortest length of practice. These teachers perceived a) remuneration and working condition such as more problematic areas; b) students' behavior during classes; communication with parents; class size such as less problematic areas in compare with others teachers. We can summarize that even if the differences do not appear in every area, there are still some small ones.

Table 2. Important areas (percentage representation) according the age, type of school and length of practice.

	Age (%)			Type of school (%)			Length of practice (%)		
	≤ 32 years	33-42 years	≥43	preschool	primary	secondary	≤ 5 years	6 - 14 years	≥ 15 years
Remuneration	77,8	76,2	61,1	**90,0**	68,1	77,1	**82,6**	68,2	66,7
Job satisfaction	66,7	64,3	58,3	65,0	62,3	62,9	58,7	68,2	64,3
Students' behavior during classes	**37,0**	57,1	61,1	**20,0**	56,5	48,6	**34,8**	59,1	57,1
Stress linked to the teaching profession	**29,6**	57,1	55,6	30,0	**58,0**	40,0	43,5	40,9	52,4
Students' aggressiveness	40,7	57,1	38,9	**0,0**	60,9	51,4	43,5	45,5	47,6
Work with a minority group	44,4	38,1	44,4	30,0	**50,7**	31,4	34,8	45,5	47,6
Students' performance	**33,3**	47,6	50,0	**10,0**	44,9	54,3	39,1	40,9	47,6
Communication with parents	33,3	33,3	**61,1**	**20,0**	42,0	42,9	**26,1**	45,5	52,4
Class size (number of students in class)	27,8	38,1	36,1	30,0	34,8	34,3	**21,7**	47,7	31,0
Working conditions (environment)	**42,6**	26,2	27,8	30,0	34,8	25,7	**41,3**	29,5	28,6

5. Conclusions

The aim of the contribution was to explore which areas leading to potential teacher turnover are the most important for Slovak teachers. The aim was filled though survey, where 132 teachers were participated and they stated, which areas are the most important and for which they would consider leaving their job. Results point to the importance of chosen areas leading to potential turnover among Slovak teachers. These areas are: remuneration, job satisfaction, students' behavior during classes, stress linked to the teaching profession, students' aggressiveness, work with a minority group, students' performance, communication with parents, class size (number of students in class), and working conditions (environment).

The descriptive character of statistical analysis may represent a limitation of this study, however this survey represent the first step of the exploration Slovak teacher turnover in wider context. The aim was to find out on which area it is important to focus in the future complex research.

We are based on the findings of the authors Price and Mueller (1981) and also Steers and Mowday (1979), who developed a comprehensive turnover model (which was several times revised) consisting of variables and intervening variables (direct and indirect impact) causing the variation of turnover. We would like to create similar model which will be consist of variables, which are the most important for Slovak teachers and which take into account the current situation and current events. We also mean the knowledge of the aforementioned authors that turnover is not affected only by a single factor, but a complex of several factors.

Based on this knowledge, we will explore the most important areas in more detail with the aim to create a complex scheme of mutual relations between factors of turnover. Based on this, we can work in the future on reducing negative factors and supporting positive factors in order to reduce Slovak teacher turnover.

References

Abbasi, S. M., Hollman, K. W., & Hayes, R. D. (2008). Bad Bosses and How Not to Be One. *Information Management Journal*, *42*(1), 52-56.

Allen, R., Burgess, S., & Mayo, J. (2017). The teacher labour market, teacher turnover and disadvantaged schools: new evidence for England. *Education Economics, 26*(1),1-20.

Barnes, G., Crowe, E., & Schaefer, B. (2007). *The cost of teacher turnover in five school districts: A pilot study*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Grant, A. A., Jeon, L., & Buettner, C. K. (2019). Relating early childhood teachers' working conditions and well-being to their turnover intentions. *Educational Psychology, 39*(3), 294-312.

Grissom, J. A. (2011). Can Good Principals Keep Teachers in Disadvantaged Schools? Linking Principal Effectiveness to Teacher Satisfaction and Turnover in Hard-to-Staff Environments. *Teachers College Record, 113*(11)*,* 2552-2585.

Guin, K. (2004). Chronic Teacher Turnover in Urban Elementary Schools. *Education Policy analysis archives, 12*(42), 1-30.

Hanesová, D. (2014). Teacher recruitment in Slovakia. In A. Marinović, B. Di Blasio et al. (Eds.), *Teacher education case studies in comparative perspective* (pp. 107-130). Debrecen: Center for higher education research and development.

Holme, J. J., Jabbar, H., Germain, E., & Dinning, J. (2017). *Rethinking Teacher Turnover in Texas: Longitudinal Measures of Instability in Schools.* Texas: Education Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Hroncová, J. (1999). Súčasné problémy učiteľskej profesie na Slovensku. *Pedagogická orientace, 3*, 33-39.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001a). *Teacher Turnover, Teacher Shortages, and the Organization of Schools.* CPRE Research Reports.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001b). Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(3), 499-534.

Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2003). The Wrong Solution to the Teacher Shortage. *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 30-33.

Kariková, S. (2016). Sociálno – psychologické aspekty kultúry školy. In E. Karmoliňska-Jagodzik, I. Nowosad, & A. Soroka-Fedorczuk (Eds.), *Edukacja w kulturze. Kultura (W) Edukacji* (pp. 37-62). Wydawnictwo internetowe e-bookowo.

Kraft, M., Marinell, W. H., & Shen-Wei Yee, D. (2016). School Organizational Contexts, Teacher Turnover, and Student Achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 53*(5), 1411-1449.

Pašková, L., & Valihorová, M. (2010). Life satisfaction of Slovak teachers depending on the school type. *The New Educational Review, 20*(1), 157-172.

Popelková, M., Šišková, A., & Zaťková, M. (2010). Životná spokojnosť a vybrané osobnostné premenné učiteľov. *Psychologie a její kontexty, 1*(1), 15-31.

Shakrani, S. (2008). *Teacher Turnover*. Michigan State University. Retrieved August 20, 2023, from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502130.pdf

Stuit, D., & Smith, T. M. (2010). *Teacher Turnover in Charter Schools*. Nashville: National Center on School Choice. Retrieved August 21, 2023, from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thomas_Smith26/publication/255600494_Teacher_Turnover _in_Charter_Schools/links/0c960537cf9c4b270c000000/Teacher-Turnover-in-Charter-Schools.pdf

Tomčíková, M., & Živčák, P. (2013). Fluktuácia vs. absencia. Možnosti ovplyvňovania stability a fluktuácie zamestnancov pomocou stratégie celkovej odmeny. *Zborník vedeckých prác z riešenia projektu GAMA 11/11* (pp. 71-77). Prešov: Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, Fakulta manažmentu.

Yin-Fah, B., Sok Foon, Y., Chee-Leong, L., & Osman, S. (2010). An Exploratory Study on Turnover Intention among Private Sector Employees. *International Journal of Business and Management, 5*(8), 57-64.