The importance of early (second career) teachers' social capital on job satisfaction and the intention to quit through the induction process

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Abstract

Considering the teacher shortage, research has increasingly focused on insights about the dynamics that cause second career teachers (SCT) to have a higher attrition rate than first career teachers (FCTs). Previous studies have shown that SCTs have less social capital and are not as well induced into their jobs and job environment. This leads me to my research questions which investigate in which way social capital has an impact on the induction process and therefore on job satisfaction and the intention to quit comparing the situation of FCTs and SCTs. Furthermore, I am investigating to what extent the amount of social capital and the perceived experience of the induction process is different between SCTs and FCTs. Data collection was limited to Belgium participants, with a sample size of 1036. For the first line of hypotheses I performed structural equation modelling, which determined the induction process to be a relevant mediator. For the second line of hypotheses t-tests were used, to investigate the differences between SCTs and FCTs. Results show that the indirect paths from social capital to intention to quit and job satisfaction passing through induction process are statistically significant, and that all paths as well as the total amount of social capital and the extent of the positive perception towards the induction process is higher for FCTs than for SCTs. Direct effects of social capital to job satisfaction and the intention to quit have shown to be significant for FCTs only.

Keywords: Second-Career Teachers, Social Capital, Induction Process, Job Satisfaction, Intention to Quit

Introduction

Over the years, but especially growing in numbers nowadays, teachers have become more dissatisfied with their job, with around 27% of Dutch teachers reporting burnout complaints (De Algemene Onderwijsbond, 2023). Edinger and colleagues (2018) found that teacher motivation is at the lowest it has been in 20 years in the United States. This dissatisfaction and demotivation have been reported as one of the causes of our continued teacher shortage crisis (De Algemene Onderwijsbond, 2023). In the Netherlands, the teacher shortage is estimated to be at its highest point in history, with up to 9,5% of teacher's shortage in major cities, and 9,100 full-time teaching vacancies. The shortage is predominantly present in secondary education (Centerdata NL, 2021). Dupriez and colleagues (2016) found that in French speaking regions of Belgium 44,9% of teachers in secondary education leave their job within five years. In this ongoing teacher shortage, as the government is trying to produce solutions to this pressing issue, we have seen a rise in Second-Career Teachers (SCTs) recruitment. SCTs are "professionals who leave a prior occupation to become teachers" (Chambers, 2002). The governmental strategy is specifically encouraging professionals from all fields to join the educational field to tackle the teacher shortage. While efforts have been put in to attract SCTs to join the teaching profession, a sustainability problem arose. That is, SCTs have a higher rate of quitting than first-career teachers (FCTs), in fact they are double as likely to leave (Coppe et al., 2023), even though they are both at the same early stage of their careers as teachers. Therefore, the attempt to solve the teaching shortage through the high recruitment of SCTs fails, as they have an even higher attrition rate than FCTs. Consequently, the strategy of hiring on SCTs is steady, but with the failure to retain them, it appears to be an ineffective strategy to combat the teacher shortage.

Keeping teachers satisfied with their jobs is crucial for keeping them in the teaching profession (Kelchtermans, 2017). Beyond participating in the teacher shortage, teacher

attrition breaks up the consistency that students need in their learning development, as well as disrupts the social dynamics and developments of the school culture (Kelchtermans, 2017). One explanation why attrition rates (attrition relates to teachers leaving their profession before retirement) are so high in general is that their induction process is complex and often negatively experienced (Kelchtermans, 2017). The induction process represents the developmental process occurring during the first years of new teachers in the teaching profession (whether they are first or second career teachers) (Kearney, 2015). Mansfield & Gu's (2019) outlined the importance of professional support —through interactions with colleagues— that early career FCTs and SCTs should receive during their induction period for their motivation and commitment to be consistently continued, which eventually will lead to teacher retention, a good teacher performance, and eventually student performance. While records of teacher induction consistently reports the importance of interaction with colleagues for all early-career teachers, it is particularly the case for early SCTs (Coppe et al., 2022, 2023).

However, previous studies have shown that SCTs struggle in being integrated into the social dynamics of the school which results in a lack of connection to colleagues, which eventually leads to social isolation (Coppe et al., 2022, 2023). This is a crucial aspect as it has been outlined by previous studies that the principal factor in retention of teachers as well as job satisfaction is their professional interactions with peers (Mansfield, 2019); even more for SCTs.

In sum, due to the ongoing teacher shortage, SCTs have been more frequently recruited, but are failed to be retained. The induction process has been shown to be more severely challenging for SCTs than for FCTs. This difficult induction process can be understood as SCTs seem to suffer from social isolation within the school when it is known that interaction with colleagues is of extra importance for them. Therefore, this study has as

its overarching objective to investigate in which ways having the opportunity for professional interactions with colleagues can affect retention for SCTs. To pursue this objective, I operationalize the induction process (IP) with the construct of work socialization and operationalize the opportunity for professional interactions with the concept of social capital (SC). I am taking a comparative perspective between FCTs and SCTs on the importance of social capital in their work socialisation process, and in turn, on their intention to quit and job satisfaction and analyse the differences in social capital between FCTs and SCTs. While our entry point is to better understand SCTs' induction realities, taking this comparative perspective allows us to highlight specificities of SCTs, in comparison with a well-known teacher population that are FCTs.

Theoretical Framework

Teacher Induction as a work socialisation process

Teacher induction is seen as a process of learning that allows teachers to become familiarised with their job as teachers (Kearney, 2015). It has also been referred to as a work socialisation process. This latter concept[1] has been particularly used recently to emphasise the multiple dimensions of the teaching profession (which includes aspects such as class-related tasks, organisational culture, cooperation, etc.: Coppe et al., 2020; März & Kelchtermans, 2020). The teacher socialisation process can be facilitated through formal activities on a micro-level such as teacher, students, subject, or curriculum-based matters (Kelchtermans, 2017). In these kind of induction activities, workshops and courses can be provided to early-career teachers (Mansfield, 2019). However, several scholars have argued as of late that the social aspect of induction plays an equal, if not even more significant role than the formal

[1] The use of "induction" has been often related to classroom activities while working as a teacher implies other aspects beyond the classroom (i.e., organisational aspects).

activities (Mansfield, 2019, Thomas et al., 2019). In fact, as Mansfield (2019) outlined in his work, teachers attributed more significance to informal dialogues with colleagues in which they received personalised, specific support. The learning activities that new teachers valued the most were characterised by having an impact on building trust with colleagues and a sense of collegiality. As referred to above, professional support has a positive effect on teacher retention (Mansfield, 2019), which in turn suggests that a lack thereof can contribute to the intention to quit. The social aspect of teacher induction is one of the most crucial factors of job satisfaction as well as teacher retention. This rings especially true for SCTS. The importance of interaction with peers, or said differently, the socially embedded nature of teacher induction can be understood through the lens of the concept of social capital (Coppe et al., 2022).

Social Capital

Social capital is defined as "the resources embedded in social networks that are formed by social relations" (Liou et al., 2017, p. 636) Therefore, social capital represents the social resources that can be found in relationships and how individuals can achieve their desired outcomes by using these social resources, which can be categorised as access to and mobilisation of social capital (Fang et al., 2011). The source of social capital, which is reflected in one's amount and quality of relationships between people and specifically the network around colleagues, can be used to receive and pass on practical information as well knowledge on guidance and assistance that is related to the teaching profession (Edinger & Edinger, 2018). Once the social connections have been made, it is the main way a new teacher can get their needs met (Kearney, 2015). Recently, Csíkos and colleagues (2018) and Coppe and colleagues (2022) have shown that social capital is of additional importance for SCT work socialisation. The latter study compared this importance for first and second career teachers and while the availability of social capital strongly predicted the socialisation of both

groups, this relation was stronger in the case of second career teachers. Many studies have conceptualized social capital differently as there are multiple ways to conceptualize it in different contexts. Namely, it can be operationalized as individual social capital or collective social capital. The former focuses on the benefit individuals receive from their own personal networks, whereas with the latter individuals comprise social capital which is a benefit to the entire collective (Portes, 2000). For the purpose of this study, I am focusing on the conceptualization of individual social capital.

The present study

Under the aspect of the induction process of teachers and its relation to social capital and eventually retention, the aim of this study is to give insight to the socialisation process of SCTs and FCTs and its relation to social capital.

My first research question is “In which way does social capital have an impact on the induction process and, in turn, on job satisfaction and the intention to quit and how does this differ between FCTs and SCTs?”.

Hypothesis 1 states that social capital positively impacts the induction process, which has a positive impact on job satisfaction (JS) and a negative impact on the intention to quit (ItQ).

Hypothesis 1b states that the effect of the path from social capital through the induction process has a higher impact on job satisfaction and on the intention to quit for SCTs than for FCTs.

Hypothesis 2 states that social capital also has a direct positive effect on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 states that social capital also has a direct negative effect on intention to quit.

The second research question is “To what extent is the amount of social capital and the perceived experience of the induction process different between SCTs and FCTs?”.

Hypothesis 4 states that FCTs have more available social capital than SCTs.

Hypothesis 5 states that FCT perceived their induction more positively than SCTs.

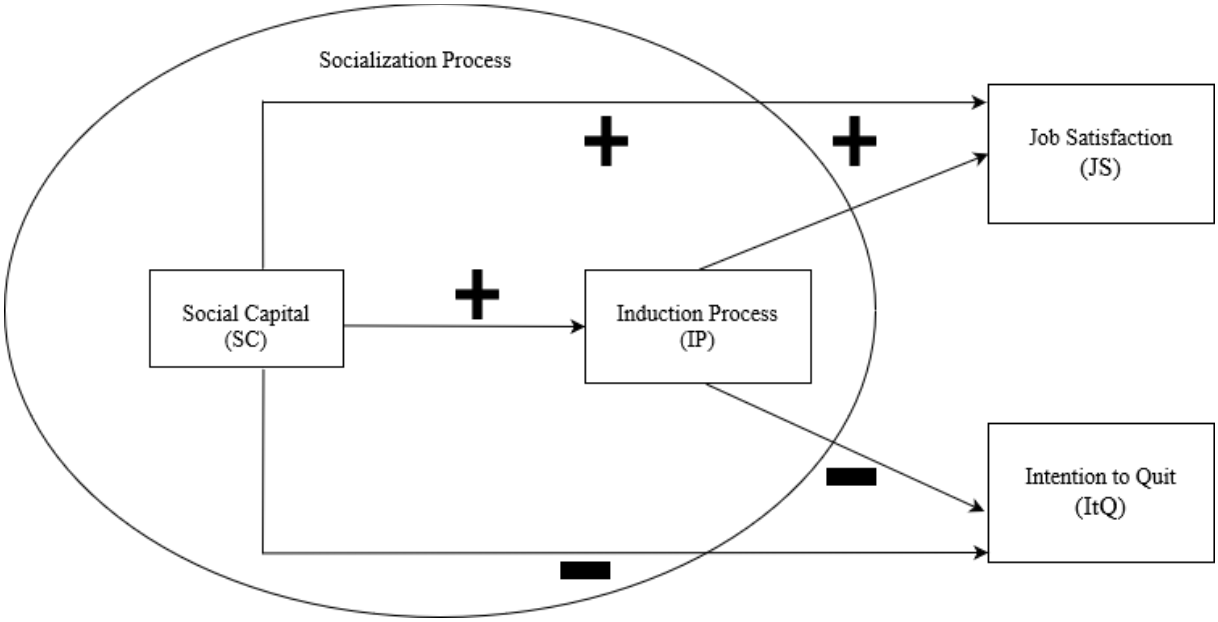

Figure 1 Hypothesized Model

The hypothesised effect of social capital through the induction process on job satisfaction and the intention to quit

Methodology

Participants

The total sample size of the participants was 1036, with 365 SCTs and 671 FCTs. The sample included 238 males and 784 females and the mean years of experience in the teaching profession for SCTs were 2.74 and for FCTs was 2.72. As a team we collected the data targeted specifically towards secondary education teachers. As we were looking at early-career teachers the cut-off point was 5 years of experience maximum in the teaching profession. The criteria for SCTs was that the participant's first career was non-teaching related and had now switched to their second career path which is teaching.

Data Collection

Procedure and measures

The participants completed a questionnaire compiled in Qualtrics which had items from several different psychometric scales and a name generator, which measure the concepts of social capital, induction process, job satisfaction and intention to quit. The demographic information of participants included their gender, education level, and teacher certificate. Their professional information included teaching position, approximate number of students in the school, the school's socio-economic status (SES), if they are a first or second career teacher, their teaching sectors as well as their workload and teaching discipline.

The variable of social capital was measured through having the participants name colleagues from whom they received professional and/or emotional support, and then furthermore stating the frequency and quality of the interactions as well as the role that the named colleagues have within the school (e.g., teacher in the same discipline, teacher in another discipline, principal, etc.). The induction process for teachers was operationalized through their work socialisation and measured with the teachers' work socialisation scale (Coppe et al., 2020). This scale includes 20 items regrouped in four first order factors that load in one second order factors. The four dimensions are the teaching task socialization, group socialization, micropolitical climate socialization, and organization socialization. The two outcome variables job satisfaction and intention to quit were asked about in the job satisfaction scale (Eisenberger et al., 1997) and intention to quit scale (Becker & Billings, 1993; McInerney et al., 2018). Both these scales are first order factors with respectively four and three items. Additionally, there are two variables that were controlled for namely: existence of formal induction activities (FIA) in the school and seniority (SEN), which represents years of experience. Formal induction activities have been measured on four distinct aspects namely adjustments to schedules to facilitate the beginning as a teacher, being informed about the functioning of the school, having received feedback on teaching as an

early-career teacher, and the opportunity to be offered a mentor-like support from the school. These measures have been inspired from the paper Helms-Lorenz and colleagues (2016) wrote in which they divided measures of formal induction activities into four separate categories, which are each represented with one question in this paper. The validity of all scales has been shown in previous research and fit of our measurement models are reported below.

Analysis

For hypothesis one, two and three, I conducted path analyses with measurement models included. With the path analysis I investigated the direct effect of social capital on job satisfaction and the intention to quit, as well as the indirect effect of social capital through the induction process on job satisfaction and the intention to quit. For the analysis I used structural equation modelling (SEM), as it considers the measurement error and the weight of items within each construct, is of a confirmatory nature and makes use of latent variables (Khine, 2013). Previous research has shown that SEM is useful in social sciences as constructs are often not directly observable which can be somewhat compensated using latent variables, which is more precise than observed means (Kline, 2015).

For the first hypothesis I analysed the indirect path of the effect of social capital on job satisfaction and the intention to quit through the induction process. For the sub-hypothesis 1b I compared the difference of the extent of this indirect effect between SCTs and FCTs. For the second hypothesis, I investigated the path of the direct effect social capital has on job satisfaction for both SCTs and FCTs. The third hypothesis analysed the path of the direct effect of social capital on the intention to quit for both SCTs and FCTs, which showed to have a significant fit of the model.

The full SEM model computed in a multigroup setting (group 1: SCTs; group 2: FCTs) showed satisfactory to good fit indices according to Shi and colleagues (2019) (*SRMR* = .063; *RMSEA* = .053; *CFI* = .916, *TLI* = .906).

For hypothesis 1-3 I controlled for the variables of formal induction activities (FIA) and seniority (SEN) for the variable induction process (IP).

For hypothesis 4 and 5 I conducted t-tests to compare the means of the amount of social capital available and how positively perceived the induction process has been for FCTs and SCTs.

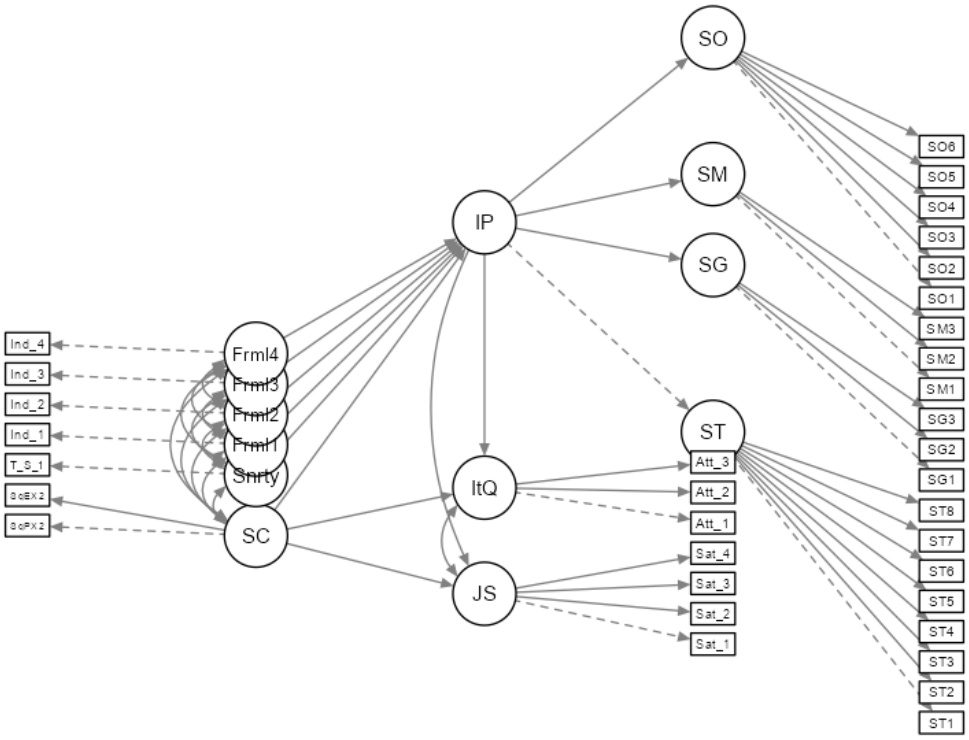

Figure 2 Full SEM model

All paths with latent variables for both SCTs and FCTs

Note. Frml1 to Frml4 are represented as latent variables with only one indicator as Jamovi does not allow to add observed variables in the measurement model. Nevertheless, as loading of each single indicator is 1, each of these latent variables are equivalent to the observed variable.

Results

In the following section I will highlight the most significant findings of my research for each hypothesis. For further and more detailed statistical information, refer to Table 1, Figure 3, and Figure 4, as well as Table 2 in the appendix.

Direct and Indirect Effects of social capital (SC) on job satisfaction (JS) and intention to quit (ItQ) through the induction process (IP)

Indirect Effects

The indirect effect of SC on JS through IP has shown to be statistically significant for SCTs (β = .40, p = < .001) and FCTs (β = .56, p = < .001), see Table 1. The indirect effect of SC on ItQ through IP has also shown to be statistically significant for SCTs (β = -.28, p = < .001) and FCTs (β = -.41, p = < .001). This means that the more social capital early-career teachers have, the better they experience their induction process and in turn, the more satisfied they are with their jobs and with less intentions to quit. These results support hypothesis 1. When looking at the difference of the indirect effect between SCTs and FCTs, the relationships between all variables are stronger for FCTs than for SCTs, refer to Table 1. This means that the amount of social capital has a bigger impact on the outcome variables for FCTs compared to SCTs. This result is not in line with the hypothesis 1b. I will come back to this point in the discussion section.

Additionally, another interesting finding is that all associations that make up the indirect path (SC → IP, IP →JS, IP → ItQ) show statistically significant results, refer to Table 1. All of these paths individually add up to make the total indirect path, meaning that the indirect path is significant at every step of it.

Notably, some control variables showed significant results as well. The control variable FIA 1 was statistically significant for both SCTs (β = .19, p = .002) and FCTs (β =

.17, p = < .001). The control item FIA 2 was also statistically significant for both SCTs (β = .19, p = .006) and FCTs (β = .11, p = .03). Control variable FIA 3 showed statistical significance only for FCTs (β = .15, p = .004). The control variable SEN and FIA 4 did not show any significant results, refer to Table 1. An interesting finding is that SC has a bigger impact on IP than any of the control variables FIA have on IP, considering that FIA and IP have their origin in a shared concept.

Direct Effects

The direct effect of SC on JS has shown to be significant only for FCTs (β = -.25, p = .010), and not for SCTs (β = -.14, p = .199), which means that there is evidence found that more social capital available, which does not flow through IP, solely for FCTs influences their job satisfaction negatively. This result is not in line with hypothesis 2. The second direct effect of SC on ItQ is also only significant for FCTs (β = .25, p = .019), and not for SCTs (β = .05, p = .633). This means that there is evidence found in the analysis that the amount of social capital that does not flow through IP, solely for FCTs influences their intention to quit positively. These results are not in line with hypothesis 3.

For SCTs 45,5% of the variance of JS is explained by the model, 54,8% of the variance of IP is explained by the model, and 23,3% of the variance of ItQ is explained by the model. For FCTs 21,3% of the variance of JS is explained by the model, 42,3% of the variance of IP is explained by the model, and 62,4% of the variance of ItQ is explained by the model. The variances of the variables explained by the model are for the direct and indirect effect combined.

Table 1

Statistical Results of the Path Analysis/SEM

Path	SCT	FCT

	β	*p*	*β*	*p*
SC → IP → JS	.05	< .001	.56	< .001
SC → IP → ItQ	-.28	< .001	-.41	< .001
SC → IP	.55	< .001	.67	< .001
IP → JS	.76	< .001	.83	< .001
IP → ItQ	-.51	< .001	-.61	< .001
FIA 1 → IP	.19	.002	.17	< .001
FIA 2 → IP	.19	.006	.11	.03
FIA 3 → IP	.13	.093	.15	.004
FIA 4 → IP	-.06	-.412	.02	.728
SEN → IP	.11	.05	.03	.54
SC → JS	-.14	.199	-.29	.01
SC → ItQ	.05	.633	.25	.019

Note: β is reported as standardized beta coefficients.

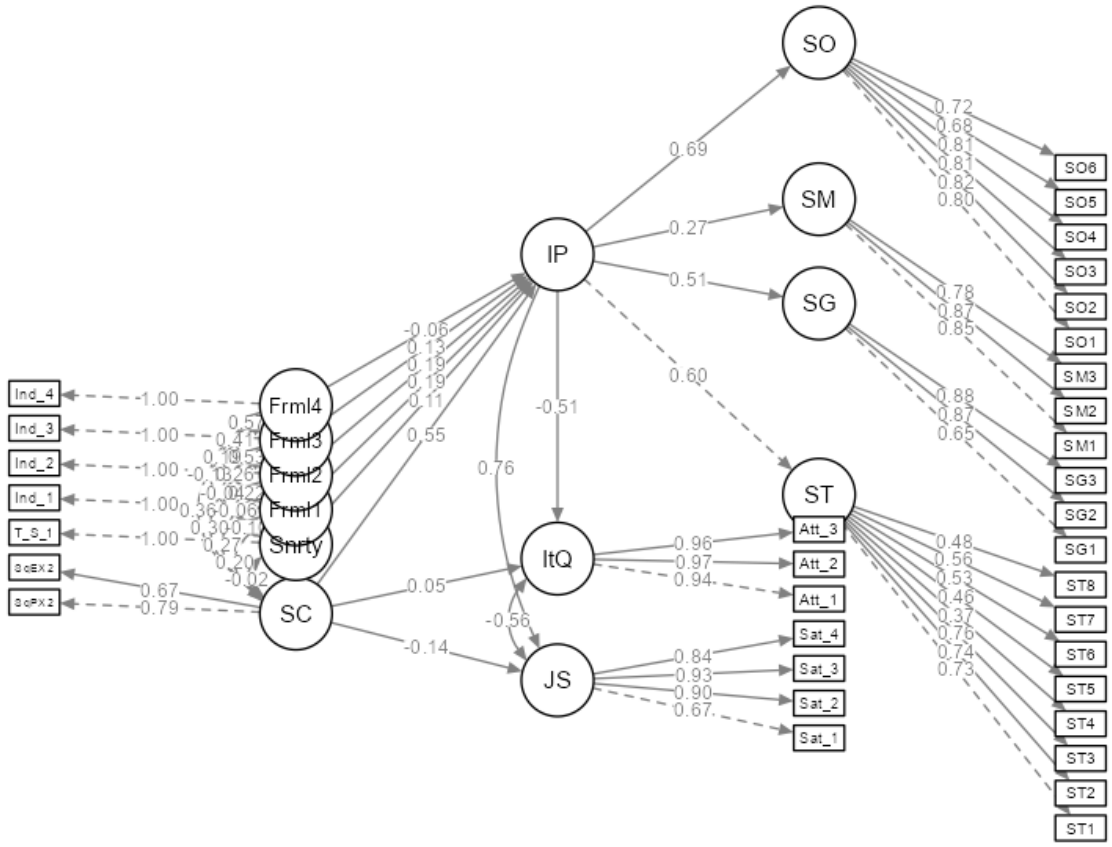

Figure 3

Statistical Output for the measurement mode direct and effect of SC on JS and ItQ through IP for SCTs with latent variables and standardized estimates.

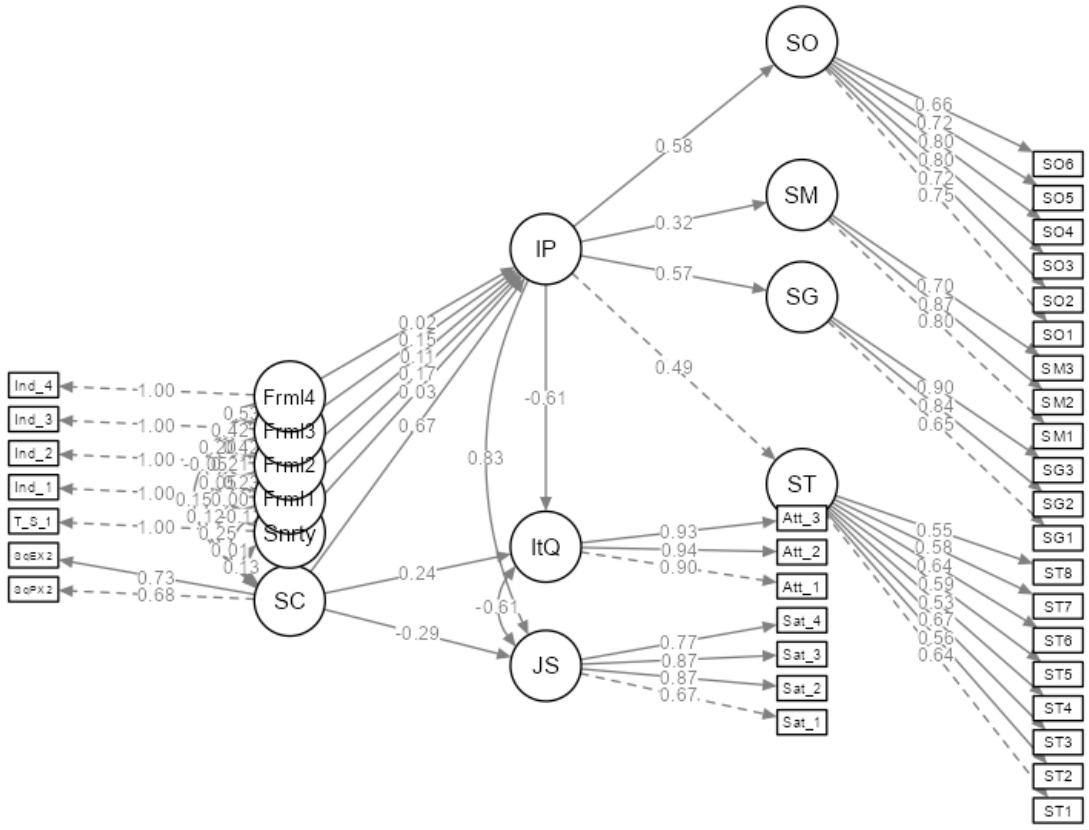

Figure 4

Statistical Output for the measurement mode and direct effect of SC on JS and ItQ through IP for FCTs with latent variables and standardized estimates.

Comparison of social capital (SC) and the induction process (IP) for SCTs and FCTs

The analysis for hypothesis 4 demonstrated with an independent t-test analysis that FCTs (M = 7.1, SD = 2.8) compared to SCTs (M = 6.1, SD = 3) have more social capital available (t (1032) = -5.21, p = < .001, d = -.34). This means that FCTs overall have more social connections available in their social network than SCTs. The effect size of the results can be interpreted as small (LeCroy & Krysik, 2007). However, as mentioned in LeCroy &

Krysik (2007) article, small effect sized can still have important practical implications. These results are in line with the expected outcome of the hypothesis.

The analysis for hypothesis 5 demonstrated with an independent t-test analysis that FCTs (M = 4, SD = 0.48) compared to SCTs (M = 3.8, SD = 0.52) perceived their induction process to be more positive (t (1002) = -4.80, p = < .001, d = -.31). The effect size of the results can be interpreted as small again, which the same consideration towards practical implications as mentioned above. These results support the hypothesis.

Discussion

This paper set out to investigate the relationship that social capital has with job satisfaction and the intention to quit through the induction process for early career teachers, comparing the situation between first and second career teachers. The research on this relationship is supposed to shed some light on the factors that are influencing attrition rates, especially for second-career teachers. I will present the implications of my findings alongside each result.

The following results and findings relate to the first research question which investigates the way in which social capital has an impact on the induction process and in turn on job satisfaction and the intention to quit. The first finding that corresponds to hypothesis 1, shows a significant and clear indirect effect for both SCTs and FCTs, in which social capital positively impacts the induction process which in turn positively impacts job satisfaction, and negatively impacts the intention to quit. This finding conveys the importance of having good social capital as a basis for improving aspects such as the induction process which can predict factors that influence attrition. Harris and colleagues (2022) have found a similar outcome in their paper regarding social capital having an indirect effect through relational learning which positively impacts job satisfaction and negatively impacts the intention to quit. While the

variables relational learning has a different name, it is operationalized very similarly to our variable representing the induction process. Therefore, our findings fall in line with the findings of Harris and colleagues (2022).

Consequently, our first finding also outlines the importance of both the factors social capital and the induction process, which leads us to consider what practical implications relate to this to lower the attrition rates. Considering and including the informal induction processes when socializing early-career teachers, as well as offering opportunities to develop and build social capital in schools is key. As the retention rate of SCTs is especially low, an implication from this finding could be to include activities relating to the informal induction process consistently from the start of the teaching career for SCTs among themselves on top of other informal process for all early-career teachers. This could easily be enforced by passing along this knowledge to staff at schools and having internally organized events. Additionally, as outlined in the work of Squires (2019), when early-career teachers are appointed a mentor with whom they engage in informal social interactions, there is an increase in emotional support and well-being. Therefore, another implication I would suggest is appointing early-career teachers, but especially SCTs, a person of trust or mentor.

A second finding that relates to my second and third hypotheses, is the association between social capital and job satisfaction, therefore representing a direct effect, displays a significant negative relationship for FCTs. This means that with more social capital, which does not impact the induction process, first-career teachers have corresponded with less job satisfaction. Additionally, our analysis presented the same finding for the other direct path, which demonstrated the amount of social capital not impacted through the induction process, having a positive effect on the intention to quit. This means that for FCTs, the more social capital they have, the higher is their intention to quit.

These results are not in line with my hypotheses or previous research. A possible explanation could be that more social interactions are engaged in when there are more emotional or stress-related problems. This could explain the negative relationship as a reflection of an unrelated situation rather than the interpretation that social capital causes more job dissatisfaction and a higher intention to quit. The connection between personal life factors and decreased job satisfaction has been demonstrated by Kelly and colleagues (2020) in their research. Additionally, Chang (2009) outlined three separate factors, namely individual, organizational, and transactional factors which can contribute to teacher burn-out, especially when they combine their effects. Therefore, future research should have a closer look at the categorization and directions of social interactions, as well as add control for personal life situations of early-career teachers, to further specify and differentiate the effect of social capital on aspects such as job satisfaction and the intention to quit, which are crucial for retention.

Lastly, the following findings relate to the second research question which investigated to which extent the amount of social capital and the perceived experience of the induction process differs between SCTs and FCTs. Overall, the relationships between all paths, direct and indirect, are higher for FCTs than for SCTs. This is not in line with hypothesis 1b and is contrary to the literature found so far. Though, the total amount of social capital and how positively the early-career teachers perceive the induction process is higher for FCTs than for SCTs, as seen in the results of hypothesis four and five. This is in line with previous literature, showing overall that FCTs have more social capital available and perceive the induction process more positively. This could be due to various aspects that were mentioned above, e.g., potentially a formal induction process included in their education and recognition from other teachers. A possible explanation could be that as first-career teachers have engaged in studies, apprenticeships or any kind of general education geared towards

teaching, they have more knowledge in how to effectively make use of their social capital and their informal induction process in the context of a school. FCTs could essentially then mobilize their social capital better, which then would also lead to stronger connections to job satisfaction and the intention to quit. There is research that demonstrates that the idea of social capital only being an effective resource if mobilized sufficiently and correctly (Maurer et al., 2011). Therefore, social capital as a variable could be further divided into amount of social capital and the ability to mobilize it for future research. Practically, schools could consider designing sufficient spaces and time for social interactions between all new early-career teachers, which outlines what kind of resources the school has to offer. This would be a formal activity with opportunity to also offer informal processes throughout, which has the advantage of being supported by the school, and potentially even promoted by it too. It does not seem doable to offer courses for early-career teachers in which they learn how to mobilize their social capital effectively, therefore for future research this variable should be included and used as a control variable to offer more information on its potential effect.

Thus, the results of this research can have different implications depending on what relationship truly looms behind them. If one of the alternative explanations is correct, then practical implications should include a safe space for early-career teachers where they can confide in a person of trust. Furthermore, organized meetings could be planned between all the early-career teachers in the school as a forum of exchange in their potential challenges and difficulties inside and outside of school.

To summarize, future research should further specify and investigate the different categorizations of social interactions and what effect they have on job satisfaction and the intention to quit. To do this, I would suggest splitting up the variable social capital into its distinct emotional and professional support function. Another interesting future research

direction could be to further investigate social capital in its total amount and the ability to mobilize it as a trait.

Limitations

Potential limitations of this study are three-fold. The first limitation is a potential self-measurement bias. Participants could have responded in ways that reflects how they feel about situations, rather than how situations truly are in real life. This so-called self-measurement bias is common in behavioural and social sciences (Blattman et al., 2015).

A second limitation is that the measure of social capital included a combination of emotional and professional support as well as a combination of frequency and quality, without distinction. The effect of these four aspects separately could have an impact on the associations to the other variables. The amount of social capital and its frequency regarded separately from the perceived usefulness (quality) has been shown to have associations to distinct variables in the research of Thomas and colleagues (2019). This supports the idea that breaking down social capital into more distinct variables could be interesting for future research. Furthermore, this lack of distinction could be related to the alternative explanation that the personal life stressors of early-career teachers influenced the pure social capital measure (when not related to the induction process), which caused a negative association. If social capital is divided between emotional and professional support as well as frequency and quality, this connection could be further investigated.

The last limitation is that this study conducted a cross-sectional design, which suggests that we cannot claim causation. These findings granted us an insight into relationships, and even positive and negative directions of the relationships, however there is no certainty that the directionality of variables presented is correct.

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Appendix

Table 2

R^2 for the variables in the model

	Variable	R^2
SCT	IP	.455
	JS	.233
	ItQ	.548
FCT	IP	.423
	JS	.213
	ItQ	.624

Note.