

# **How transformational leadership affects beginning teacher retention mediated by job satisfaction: a comparative study between first and second career teachers**

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**Table of contents**

Introduction..... 3

Theoretical Framework..... 4

Method ..... 7

    Sample and data collection ..... 7

    Measures ..... 7

    Data analysis ..... 8

Results..... 9

Discussion and conclusion..... 12

References..... 16

### Samenvatting

Het percentage beginnende leerkrachten dat stopt met lesgeven is groot en dit percentage blijkt onder beginnende zij-instromers nog groter te zijn. Onderzoek wijst uit dat de leiderschapstijl van de directeur een rol kan spelen in de retentie van beginnende leerkrachten. Het blijkt echter dat het effect van bepaalde factoren voor het stimuleren van retentie van leerkrachten verschilt tussen zij-instromers en niet-zij-instromers. Deze studie onderzoekt de directe en indirecte relatie tussen transformationeel leiderschap en leerkrachtretentie, gemedieerd door werktevredenheid voor beginnende leerkrachten. Ook onderzoekt de studie of deze relaties verschillen tussen zij-instromers en niet-zij-instromers. Dit kwantitatieve onderzoek maakt gebruik van een vragenlijst. Deelnemers (n=140) zijn Nederlandse leerkrachten uit het basis- en voortgezet onderwijs met maximaal vijf jaar ervaring. Om de relaties te toetsen is er gebruik gemaakt van een mediatieanalyse, deze is twee keer uitgevoerd om de relaties tussen zij-instromers en niet-zij-instromers te vergelijken. De resultaten laten zien dat transformationeel leiderschap via werktevredenheid de neiging om te stoppen van beginnende niet-zij-instromers kan verlagen. Voor beginnende zij-instromers is er geen effect van transformationeel leiderschap op de neiging om te stoppen gevonden. De conclusie van het onderzoek is dat transformationeel leiderschap voor beginnende niet-zij-instromers een rol kan spelen in het stimuleren van hun retentie, maar dat dit voor beginnende zij-instromers niet het geval is. Beperkend aan de studie is dat er geen onderscheid tussen leerkrachten uit het basisonderwijs en het voortgezet onderwijs gemaakt wordt en dat de steekproef relatief klein is.

## **How transformational leadership affects beginning teacher retention mediated by job satisfaction: a comparative study between first and second career teachers**

### **Introduction**

Teacher shortage is a global problem. According to recent findings, there is a gap of 44 million teachers worldwide and the progress of reducing this shortage falls short (Unesco, 2023). In the Netherlands, the shortage is 9.7% in primary schools and 5.8% in secondary schools (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2023).

To overcome this teacher shortage, governments around the world have implemented strategies for teacher recruitment. However, since attrition rates amongst beginning teachers are significantly higher than attrition rates amongst experienced teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2018), teacher recruitment alone is the wrong solution. For example, in the Netherlands, the attrition rate of beginning teachers is 22% within the first three years of teaching (Van der Grift & Helms-Lorenz, 2013).

To overcome teacher shortage, many governments have made it possible for people from different careers to become teachers (Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). These teachers are so-called second career teachers (SCTs) (Trent, 2018). Literature has shown that SCTs are of value in the classroom. For example, SCTs can have a high level of problem solving and lesson planning skills (Chambers, 2002). Several researchers argue that SCTs clearly have something to bring to the table when it comes to teaching (e.g., Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). However, while teacher attrition for beginning first career teachers (FCTs) is a problem, it appears that it is an even bigger problem for beginning SCTs. According to Chambers Mack and colleagues (2019), SCTs are two times more likely to quit teaching in the beginning of their teaching years than first career teachers. This can be explained by the different needs that SCTs seem to have, which are not being recognized (Rose & Sughrue, 2020). High attrition rates for beginning FCTs and SCTs are a problem, since we need teachers to stay in their profession in order to overcome the teacher shortage. Therefore, several researches have attempted to unravel the factors involved in teacher attrition, in order to get a clear view on how teacher attrition can be lowered.

One factor predicting teacher attrition is job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Job satisfaction refers to the judgments people make about their profession (Weis, 2002). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) state that low levels of job satisfaction correlate with the intention to quit teaching. Additional to this predictor, there are different factors that influence teacher attrition. Some argue that teacher attrition is related to personal characteristics of teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008) and a poor work environment (Kelly,

2004). Another factor that plays a pivotal role in leaving the profession is social capital (Demir, 2021). A different factor affecting teacher attrition is the support and leadership of the principal (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Kim, 2019). Kim (2019) argues that the principal could play a role in reducing teacher attrition. Furthermore, Al-Mahdy and Alazmi (2023) found that more principal support increased the level of job satisfaction, which decreased the intention to quit teaching for beginning teachers in Kuwait. When looking at the specific types of principal leadership, Mitchell (2021) states that transformational leadership has the most positive effect on teacher retention.

Although these studies give a clear view of the direct and indirect impact of principal leadership on teacher attrition of beginning teachers, there is a gap in the literature. To the best of my knowledge, most of the literature about the direct and indirect relation between principal leadership and teacher attrition focuses on beginning teachers in general and does not distinguish FCTs from SCTs. However, the needs of SCTs differ from the needs of FCTs (Rose & Sughrue, 2020). Moreover, the attrition rate of SCTs is higher than of FCTs in the first five years of teaching (Chambers Mack et al., 2019). On top of that, the comparative study between first and second career teachers of Coppe et al. (2023) shows that there are, indeed, differences between first and second career teachers. This suggests that SCTs and FCTs should be studied separately. Therefore, in this study, I want to fill the gap in the literature about the direct and indirect impact of transformational leadership on teacher attrition through job satisfaction for SCTs in comparison to the direct and indirect impact of transformational leadership on teacher attrition through job satisfaction for FCTs in the Netherlands. The objective is operationalized as followed:

RQ1: To what extent does transformational leadership directly predict the intention to quit for beginning FCTs and SCTs?

RQ2: To what extent does job satisfaction predict the intention to quit for beginning FCTs and SCTs?

RQ3: To what extent does transformational leadership predict job satisfaction for beginning FCTs and SCTs?

RQ4: To what extent does job satisfaction mediate the relation between transformational leadership and the intention to quit for beginning FCTs and SCTs?

RQ5: How do these direct and indirect relations differ between beginning FCTs and SCTs?

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Transformational leadership and attrition**

Teacher attrition is a complex problem with several factors influencing the attrition rates. Principal leadership seems to be one of these factors influencing teacher attrition. (Kim, 2019). The study of Kim (2019) included beginning teachers with different certificates, teachers at schools with low and high socioeconomic status (SES) and teachers with teaching experience differing between 0 and 5 years of teaching. Kim (2019) found that principal leadership has a consistent impact on these different teachers. The study implied that the support of the principal is crucial in reducing teacher attrition rates within the school. One specific type of leadership which seems to have an impact on teacher attrition is transformational leadership (Mitchell, 2021). The transformational leadership theory of Korejan and Shabazi (2016) characterize transformational leaders as leaders who provide trust, act as mentors and give advice to their employees. Additionally, Bass et al. (1987) state that transformational leaders are charismatic, aim to meet the individual needs of their employees and stimulate them to think in new ways.

Transformational leadership has several positive effects. For instance, the study by Mitchell (2021) showed that transformational leadership has a positive influence on the intention of teachers to stay in their profession, whereas other leadership styles, like transactional leadership and 'laissez-faire' leadership, did not have this positive effect on the intentions of teachers to stay in the teaching profession.

### **Transformational leadership and job satisfaction**

Research has shown that transformational leadership also has a positive effect on job satisfaction (e.g. Thomas et al., 2020). Job satisfaction can be defined as a happy emotional state caused by how a person perceives their job as a pleasurable situation (Locke, 1976). The study of Thomas et al. (2020) looked into the relation between transformational leadership and the job attitudes of teachers with up to five years of experience. Thomas et al. (2020) found that the more the beginning teachers perceived their principal as transformational, the more they were satisfied with their job. Other research is consistent with this finding of Thomas et al. (2020). For example, Nguni and colleagues (2006) found that transformational leadership had a positive influence on job satisfaction of the teachers, whereas transactional leadership did not appear to be of influence on the job satisfaction of the teachers conducted in this study.

### **Job satisfaction: a predictor and a mediator**

Mitchell (2021) has established that transformational leadership decreases intention to quit. However, since Thomas et al (2020) found that transformational leadership affects job satisfaction and Ingersoll (2001) found that job satisfaction affects intention to quit, this

implies that transformational leadership affects intention to quit via job satisfaction (at least partially). This suggestion is supported by Lim et al. (2017) who found an indirect relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit mediated by job satisfaction. Lim et al. (2017) explain that a higher level of transformational leadership has a positive effect on job satisfaction which leads to a lower level of intention to quit. This shows the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit.

### **SCTs and FCTs: should they be studied separately?**

When focusing on the relations between leadership, job satisfaction and teacher attrition it is important to focus on beginning teachers, because attrition amongst beginning teachers is higher than amongst experienced teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2018) and one of the main causes of teacher shortage (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Within the group of beginning teachers, we can distinguish two groups: FCTs and SCTs. FCTs are teachers whose only career has been teaching. This differs from SCTs, who can be defined as teachers whose teaching career is not their first career (Trent, 2018). These two types of teachers do not only differ from career path, they also differ in challenges and needs (Rose & Sughrue, 2020) and in attrition rate (Chambers Mack et al., 2019). The attrition rate of SCTs is higher than of FCTs due to the difference in needs of SCTs, which, according to Rose and Sughrue (2020) are not successfully met. The pace of the training of SCTs is usually faster than for FCTs, which results in SCTs having less opportunity for practice during their teacher training before having to face the realities of teaching in their own classroom (Unruh & Holt, 2010). This can result in SCTs having to face more challenges when it comes to entering the teaching profession (Linek et al., 2012), for example with classroom management (Kelly et al., 2015). Coppe (2025) wrote recently that SCTs are seen as a solution for teacher attrition by governments, but the different needs and challenges of SCTs are not taken into account, which eventually makes recruiting SCTs as a solution for teacher attrition ineffective. A second problem with SCTs is the lack of research on teacher attrition focusing on SCTs as a group on its own (Ruitenbunrg & Tigchelaar, 2021). When looking at different studies on the relation between principal leadership, turnover intentions and job satisfaction, FCTs and SCTs are studied together (e.g. Kim, 2019; Thomas et al, 2020). However, research shows that these groups are different (e.g. Ruitenbunrg & Tigchelaar, 2021) and research by Ruitenbunrg and Tigchelaar (2021) clearly shows that SCTs deserve recognition within teacher attrition and should be studied (at least partially) separately.

## **Method**

### **Sample and data collection**

This quantitative study is part of a research project comparing the induction experiences of beginning first- and second career teachers in the Netherlands and French-speaking Belgium. Beginning FCTs and SCTs in the Netherlands and French-speaking Belgium were asked to fill out an online questionnaire (Qualtrics platform). This questionnaire includes open-ended questions, rating scales and multiple-choice questions and took about 15 minutes to complete. Data collection was conducted in two rounds. The first round was conducted between January and March 2023. The second round was conducted in the Netherlands between February and April 2024. The target population for the research project is beginning first- and second career teachers in the Netherlands and French-speaking Belgium with up to seven years of experience. This present study focuses on five years of experience and only on teachers from the Netherlands, therefore, teachers with more than five years of experience and teachers from Belgium have been excluded. The questionnaire was distributed through principals, direct contact with teachers, personal networks of bachelor's and master's students and social network sites.

The questionnaire can be divided into three parts and starts with an informed consent form. The first part contains questions regarding demographic and professional information (e.g., gender and age). The second part contains questions about to what extent the participants receive support from colleagues and the last part contains different psychometric scales (e.g., intention to quit). In this study I will only focus on the first part of the questionnaire and on the intention to quit-, the job satisfaction- and the transformational leadership scale.

The sample consists of 143 teachers, 48 of whom are SCTs and 95 of whom are FCTs. This sample consists of 114 female teachers and 28 male teachers. Of these 143 teachers, 111 are primary school teachers and 32 are secondary school teachers.

### **Measures**

#### ***Independent variable***

Transformational leadership is measured by the transformational leadership scale of Geijsel et al. (2001, 2009). This scale is a questionnaire with eighteen items, which assesses individualized consideration, vision building and intellectual stimulation of the principal. An example of an item designed to measure the perception of the participant on the transformational leadership of the principal is: "The management of my school invites and helps teachers to talk about their emotions.". The items use Likert-scale responses ranging



from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The questions of the transformational leadership scale were carefully translated to Dutch and French. The scale has a good reliability score ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

### ***Control variable***

In this study, I controlled for socioeconomic status of the students, so-called SES, as this could influence both job satisfaction and intention to quit. Students' SES is found to be a predictor for teacher attrition (Yang et al., 2023). Secondly, research by Wang et al. (2020) states that SES is also a predictor for job satisfaction. SES is measured by one item: "I think that at my school there are mostly students with the following socioeconomic status:", using likert-scale responses ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

### ***Dependent variable***

The intention to quit is measured based on the scale of Becker and Billings (1993) and McInerney et al. (2018). The intention to quit teaching was measured by three items, for example, "I think about leaving the teaching profession". These items were carefully translated to French and Dutch. The scale has a good reliability score ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

### ***Mediating variable***

A mediator between the relation between intention to quit and principal leadership is job satisfaction. This is measured by a psychometric scale based on the job satisfaction scale of Eisenberg et al. (1997). This scale includes four items, for example, "In general, I am very content with my job as a teacher". The items use a Likert-scale response ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree) and were precisely translated to French and Dutch. The reliability score of the scale is high ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

### ***Group variable***

This study is a comparative study in which I am interested in the differences between SCTs and FCTs in the effects of principal leadership on job satisfaction and intention to quit. Second career teachers are teachers whose teaching career is not their first career (Trent, 2018), whereas first career teachers are teachers whose teaching career is their first career.

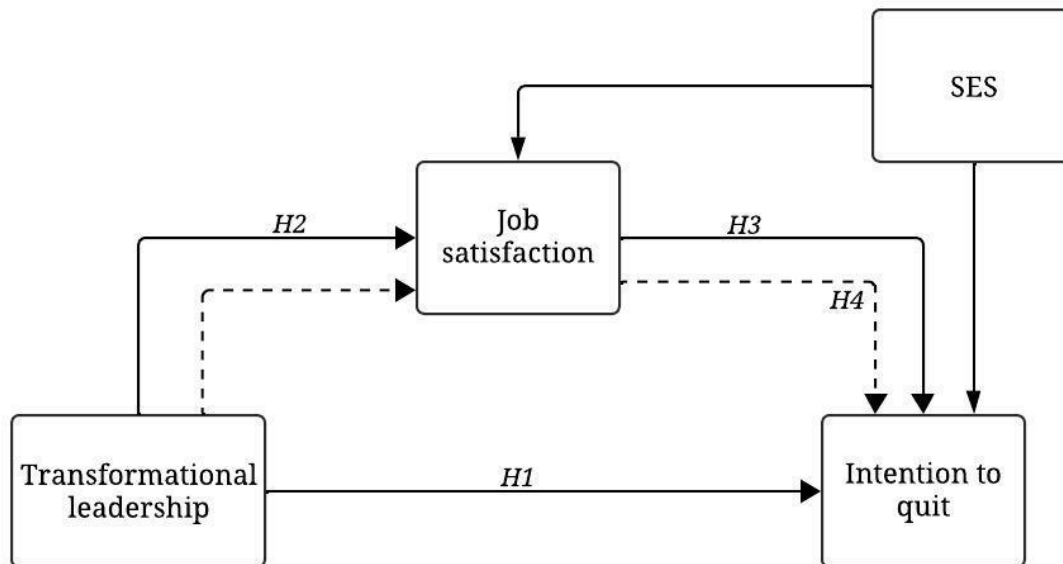
### **Data analysis**

Research shows that there is evidence that principal leadership can have an impact on teacher retention, mediated by job satisfaction. The aim of this study is to describe the relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit, mediated by job satisfaction for beginning teachers and to compare the effect between FCTs and SCTs. This is controlled by SES for the relation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction

and the relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit. Figure 1 shows the analytical model central to this study.

**Figure 1**

*Analytical Model*



Based on the literature review this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a negative direct relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit for beginning FCTs and SCTs.

H2: A higher level of job satisfaction leads to a lower level of intention to quit for beginning FCTs and SCTs.

H3: A higher level of transformational leadership leads to a higher level of job satisfaction for beginning FCTs and SCTs.

H4: The relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit is mediated by job satisfaction for beginning FCTs and SCTs.

H5: The direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership on the intention to quit mediated by job satisfaction is different for FCTs then for SCTs.

The data is analyzed through a mediation analysis, using the software Jomavi. A  $p$ -value of  $<0.05$  is considered significant. Because this is a comparative study between SCTs and FCTs, I ran the analysis twice, once for FCTs and once for SCTs.

## Results

The goal of this study is to describe the direct and indirect relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit, mediated by job satisfaction for beginning

FCTs and SCTs and to compare this between FCTs and SCTs. To test the hypotheses, I used a mediation analysis and I compared the results between FCTs and SCTs. As stated before, our sample size consists of 143 teachers. However, due to missing data, our  $n$  was lower ( $n = 140$ ). To make sure the results of the relation between transformational leadership, intention to quit and job satisfaction are not influenced by external factors, I controlled for SES. Our results (table 1) show that for early career FCTs, the relation between this control variable and intention to quit is non-significant ( $\beta = -.056, p = .563$ ). The relation between SES and job satisfaction is also non-significant ( $\beta = -.068, p = .516$ ). This means that there is no relation between SES and intention to quit and between SES and job satisfaction for FCTs in this model. For SCTs, there is a negative relation between SES and intention to quit ( $\beta = -.291, p = .031$ ). This means that beginning SCTs, working in schools with higher levels of students' SES, will have a lower level of intention to quit. However, the relation between SES and job satisfaction is insignificant ( $\beta = -.145, p = .192$ ). This this means that the data do not provide strong evidence of a relationship between SES and job satisfaction for SCTs.

**H1: There is a negative direct relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit for beginning FCTs and SCTs**

Our results show a non-significant direct relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit for beginning FCTs ( $\beta = -.144, p = .170$ ). This means that the data do not provide evidence that a higher level of transformational leadership leads to a lower level of intention to quit for beginning FCTs. For SCTs, our results also show that there is no significant direct relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit ( $\beta = -.169, p = .314$ ). These results mean that for beginning SCTs and FCTs, transformational leadership is not a direct predictor for their intention to quit in this model. Our results show no evidence that beginning FCTs and SCTs experiencing a higher level of transformational leadership have a lower level of intention to quit.

**H2: A higher level of job satisfaction leads to a lower level of intention to quit for beginning FCTs and SCTs**

Our results show a negative relation between job satisfaction and intention to quit for beginning FCTs ( $\beta = -.517, p < .001$ ) and for beginning SCTs ( $\beta = -.310, p = .049$ ). This means that both beginning FCTs and SCTs experiencing a higher level of job satisfaction have a lower level of intention to quit.

**H3: A higher level of transformational leadership leads to a higher level of job satisfaction for beginning FCTs and SCTs**

Our results show a positive relation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction for early career FCTs ( $\beta = .559, p < .001$ ) and for early career SCTs ( $\beta = .395, p = .042$ ). This means that beginning FCTs and SCTs experiencing a higher level of transformational leadership will have a higher level of job satisfaction.

**H4: The relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit is mediated by job satisfaction for beginning FCTs and SCTs**

This fourth hypothesis relates to the indirect relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit through job satisfaction. Our results show a negative indirect relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit through job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.289, p < .001$ ) for FCTs. This means that beginning FCTs with a high level of transformational leadership will have a lower level of intention to quit, mediated by job satisfaction. For early career FCTs a high level of transformational leadership will lead to a high level of job satisfaction, which leads to a lower level of intention to quit. For SCTs, the mediation analysis shows a non-significant indirect relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit through job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.123, p = .160$ ). This means that job satisfaction is not a significant mediator for the relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit for SCTs. Our results show no evidence that beginning SCTs experiencing a high level of transformational leadership have a lower level of intention to quit, mediated by job satisfaction.

**H5: The direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership on the intention to quit mediated by job satisfaction is different for FCTs than for SCTs**

Our results show a difference in the direct relation between job satisfaction and intention to quit between SCTs and FCTs. The coefficient between job satisfaction and intention to quit for beginning FCTs ( $\beta = -.517$ ) was higher than for beginning SCTs ( $\beta = -.310$ ). This means that job satisfaction has a higher influence on the intention to quit of beginning FCTs than of beginning SCTs. Moreover, our results show a difference in the relation of job satisfaction and transformational leadership between SCTs and FCTs. The coefficient between transformational leadership and job satisfaction for beginning FCTs ( $\beta = .559$ ) was higher than for beginning SCTs ( $\beta = .395$ ). This means that transformational leadership has a higher influence on job satisfaction for beginning FCTs than for beginning SCTs. Furthermore, the results show a difference in the indirect relation. For SCTs, there was no indirect relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit, mediated by job satisfaction ( $p = .160$ ). However, for FCTs, this indirect relation is found. This means that

for FCTs, a higher level of transformational leadership leads to a lower level of intention to quit mediated by job satisfaction. Whereas for SCTs, there is no direct or indirect relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit. Lastly, our results show that this model explains more of the variance of intention to quit and job satisfaction for FCTs than for SCTs. For FCTs, this model explains 37.6% of the variance of intention to quit ( $R^2 = .376$ ) and 30.6% of the variance of job satisfaction ( $R^2 = .306$ ). However, for SCTs, this model explains 27% of the variance of intention to quit ( $R^2 = .270$ ) and 14.4% of the variance of job satisfaction ( $R^2 = .144$ ).

**Table 1**

*Results of the Analysis*

<i>Group</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Mediator</i>	<i>Predicting variable</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
FCTs	Intention to quit		Transformational leadership	-.144	.170
	Intention to quit		Job satisfaction	-.517	<.001
	Intention to quit		SES	-.056	.563
	Job satisfaction		Transformational leadership	.559	<.001
	Job satisfaction		SES	-.068	.516
	Intention to quit	Job satisfaction	Transformational leadership	-.289	<.001
SCTs	Intention to quit		Principal leadership	-.169	.314
	Intention to quit		Job satisfaction	-.310	.049
	Intention to quit		SES	-.291	.031
	Job satisfaction		Transformational leadership	.395	.042
	Job satisfaction		SES	-.145	.192
	Intention to quit	Job satisfaction	Transformational leadership	-.123	.160

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Both beginning second career teachers and first career teachers seem to suffer from high attrition rates (Ingersoll et al, 2018). These rates are reported to be higher for beginning SCTs than for beginning FCTs (Chambers Mack et al., 2019). The present study aimed to explore the direct and indirect effect of transformational leadership on teacher attrition through job

satisfaction for beginning teachers and to investigate the differences of these indirect and direct effects between beginning FCTs and SCTs.

The study showed that, for FCTs and SCTs, transformational leadership did not have a direct impact on improving their attrition rates. This is not in line with our first hypothesis, stating that there is a direct relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit for beginning SCTs and FCTs. This finding is somewhat surprising, considering that literature on the direct relation between principal leadership and teacher attrition state that, for beginning teachers, high levels of principal leadership can directly lead to fewer teachers wanting to drop out of the teaching profession (e.g. Kim, 2019). It is difficult to explain this contradictory result, however for FCTs, it might be related to the fact that job satisfaction is found to be an important mediator in this relation. For SCTs, this result may reflect the different needs SCTs seem to have in teacher retention according to several studies (e.g. Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021), which could lead to different outcomes for SCTs.

Secondly, this study hypothesized that high levels of job satisfaction would lead to lower levels of intention to quit. Our results show that job satisfaction is, indeed, a predictor of intention to quit, confirming our second hypothesis. The study showed that teachers with high levels of job satisfaction are less likely to quit teaching. This is in line with the research of Ingersoll (2001).

Additionally, our third hypothesis sought to determine whether transformational leadership could positively influence job satisfaction amongst beginning FCTs and SCTs. The results of this study confirmed our hypothesis regarding this research question, stating that transformational leadership has a positive effect on job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the findings of Thomas et al. (2020).

The fourth hypothesis in this study explored the indirect relation between transformational leadership and intention to quit through job satisfaction. The study shows that FCTs' teacher attrition can be reduced by transformational leadership through job satisfaction, confirming our fourth hypothesis partially. This finding supports the literature regarding the indirect effect of transformational leadership on intention to quit, with job satisfaction as a mediator (Lim et al., 2017). However, for SCTs, no significant indirect relation was found. This finding is in line with our last hypothesis, drawing on the literature on the difference between SCTs and FCTs (Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). I hypothesized that the results of our analysis will differ between FCTs and SCTs. The results of this study confirm this by showing that job satisfaction has a higher effect on intention to quit for FCTs and transformational leadership has a higher effect on job satisfaction for FCTs. However,

most striking was the difference in the indirect relation of transformational leadership on intention to quit between FCTs and SCTs. It appeared that for beginning FCTs, transformational leadership can indirectly reduce teacher attrition through job satisfaction. However, for beginning SCTs, this reality is different. I hypothesized that the realities of SCTs will, indeed, be different. However, it is somewhat surprising that transformational leadership seems to have no effect on intention to quit for beginning SCTs at all, since previous research has not addressed this specific result. This finding might be explained by the fact that beginning SCTs are older than beginning FCTs in general (Beaten & Meeus, 2016) and that they have more work and life experience than beginning FCTs. SCTs are more likely to be of the same age as the principal and have more experience working with a manager or boss. This could make the principal of less of an influence on beginning SCTs than on beginning FCTs.

In conclusion, the present study shows that, for beginning FCTs, principal leadership can reduce teacher attrition mediated by job satisfaction. Whereas for beginning SCTs, this is not the case. However, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, in this study, secondary and primary school teachers are studied as one group. However, attrition rates of secondary and primary school teachers are not the same (Unesco, 2023). This is likely to imply some differences between secondary and primary school teachers. Furthermore, research on stress levels between secondary and primary school teachers also show a difference between these two groups of teachers (Kavita & Hassan, 2018). These findings suggest that secondary school teachers and primary school teachers have differences. In this study however, I have not made a difference between secondary and primary school teachers, which could lead to incorrect conclusions on teacher attrition for these groups. A recommendation for future research is to explore the differences of the role of the principal in reducing teacher attrition through job satisfaction between these groups. This way, induction arrangements can be specified to the needs of primary and secondary school teachers separately.

Secondly, this study has a relatively small sample size. Therefore, the results must be interpreted with caution. Studies with a small sample size are at risk of drawing the wrong conclusions, due to less statistical power caused by the small sample size (Van de Schoot & Miočević, 2020). Future research should focus on this issue and should recruit more participants to draw more accurate conclusions.

In spite of its limitations, the findings of this study suggest a number of practical implications. Firstly, governments should provide principals with information on the importance of their leadership style to enhance job satisfaction. This could reduce attrition

rates amongst beginning FCTs, as it seems to be of significance in lowering teacher attrition rates for beginning FCTs. Another implication is that governments should provide school leaders with training to enhance their transformational leadership skills, as transformational leadership seems to positively affect teacher attrition for FCTs. Furthermore, it is important for governments and principals to be aware of the fact that beginning SCTs do not have the same needs as beginning FCTs when it comes to principal leadership. As stated by Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar (2021), governments should recognize that SCTs need a different approach than FCTs in reducing their even larger attrition rate.

In conclusion, this study contributes to existing knowledge of the relation of transformational leadership and teacher attrition for beginning SCTs and FCTs by providing new insights on the direct and indirect effect of transformational leadership. Furthermore, the study presents a deeper insight in the difference in the role of the principal between SCTs and FCTs by comparing these groups. The study contributes to filling the gap in the literature on how transformational leadership affects teacher attrition for SCTs, studied separately from FCTs. Moving forward, it is important to keep exploring the factors contributing to reducing teacher attrition, in order to solve teacher shortage internationally.



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