

**School of Management**

**Job Satisfaction, Satisfaction with the Profession, and  
Intention to Leave the Profession: The Case of Educators**

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# **Declaration**

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature: Hossein Ali Abadi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hossein Ali Abadi". It is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

# **Acknowledgement**

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## **Abstract**

Job satisfaction has been and continues to be one of the most frequently researched variables in the domain of management and organisation behaviour and is a significant attitudinal variable when it comes to the prediction of employees' intention to leave or remain in a job. In this regard research has consistently demonstrated that employees who experience low levels of job satisfaction are more likely to leave the job or organisation, compared to those with higher levels of job satisfaction. Moreover, research into workforce shortages view poor job satisfaction as the key reason for employees' leaving employment in a specific occupation or profession. Such research suggest that organisational attempts at ensuring job satisfaction, remains the most cost-effective and sustainable strategy for retaining employees and addressing future workforce shortages.

In the field of education, the intention to leave the profession, among educators has been reported consistently as a serious concern and several studies have reported that many educators do not intend to remain in the teaching profession for the duration of their working lives. As a result educator shortages have now become a prominent focus both in Australia and internationally, which warrants greater attention. Despite extensive research into the factors that lead to educators' job satisfaction and ultimately their intention to leave the job/organisation, its impact on employees' intention to leave the occupation or profession, as opposed to leaving the job or organisation, has not received any meaningful research attention. A review of the existing research indicates that most studies that were concerned with employees' departure from employment in a specific occupation or profession are often undertaken from an organisational perspective. Research interest accordingly tended to be more focused on variables that are demonstrably related to the job or organisation, rather than the occupation or profession. In view of the current concerns about educators shortages and the desire for empirical evidence about educators' plans to leave the profession, it is necessary and timely to differentiate between educators' job satisfaction and their satisfaction with their profession. It is reasonable to assume that

when educators leave the teaching profession to work in a different occupation or profession, their decisions entail a degree of dissatisfaction or at least inadequate satisfaction with the profession. It is consequently plausible that educators' satisfaction with the teaching profession will play a potential role in their intention to leave the profession. It is intuitively logical that people may 'like' a job, but not necessarily like the occupation or profession at a general and holistic level, which consequently may influence their intention to remain / leave the profession. Despite the potential role of satisfaction with the profession being a co-determinant in employees' intention to remain or leave their profession, limited research has focused on this construct and the potential factors that may influence it. The current study broadly aimed to address this deficiency in the knowledge base, as this would offer an additional perspective on the educator turnover and shortage situation. The purpose of the study, more specifically, was to empirically explore the notions of job and profession satisfaction among educators and to advance a theory, grounded in empiricism, which will account for the existence, interdependencies and influence of these concepts in relation to educators' intention to leave the profession.

For this purpose a classic Grounded Theory research strategy (after Glaser and Strauss), elaborated with Corbin and Strauss' open, axial and selective coding and analysis procedures was adopted. This approach is known to remain close to the data and to provide a rigorous outcome, i.e., a grounded theory. In pursuit of this outcome the study would investigate the distinction between educators' satisfaction with the teaching job and profession, as well as the primary factors (antecedents and consequences) that relate to these central constructs. Twenty former and eighteen current educators were engaged in semi-structured interviews in order to gain insight into their experiences of the teaching role. This generated two comprehensive sets of educator narrative, one each for the former and current educator cohorts. Coding and analyses initially proceeded independently for the two cohorts, but in the final construction of the grounded theory, datasets were integrated. Open coding surfaced multiple themes that provided meaningful insights into educators' work experiences.

Analyses designed to reveal the relationships of different variables with the core constructs of job and profession satisfaction, were however initially constrained by a lack of definitional clarity in respect of ‘job satisfaction’. A confounding plethora of diverse job satisfaction definitions observed in the literature, but also the absence of a definition for the profession satisfaction construct directed the research to a review of the fundamental grounding constructs of a ‘job’ and a ‘profession’, as a first step. More precise definitions of these constructs were developed as basis for critically reviewing and reconceptualising *job satisfaction*, but also for advancing a workable definition of *profession satisfaction*. This enabled the more focused, subsequent analyses from which the conceptual framework for explaining turnover intention emerged. The latter captured the ‘story’ of educators and their experience of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction and how it related to their departure from the profession (former educators) and intention to leave (current educators).

Apart from a more fine-grained understanding of the dynamics that give rise to educators’ experiences, the results revealed the necessity of a broader and more precise conceptualisation of satisfaction in the workplace. Job satisfaction as conventionally viewed and measured does not adequately account for the wide array of variables that contribute to the educator’s overarching sense of (dis)satisfaction, which ultimately prompt him/her to leave the job *and* occupation / profession. Variables associated with features of the profession (e.g. societal recognition and respect), but also contextual influences (e.g. change introduced by the Department of Education) contribute to and sway the educator in his/her overall sense of satisfaction and intention to leave. The most prominent dynamic revealed by the analyses, indicates that workload (job demands) exacerbated by changes regularly imposed by the Department of Education (and inadequate support and resources), expose educators to long periods of intense stress resulting in a gamut of undesirable consequences (health, well-being, social), which prompt significant dissatisfaction and induce the intention to leave. Several other dynamics feed into this cycle (e.g. experiences giving rise to dissatisfaction with aspects of the profession) and compound the educator’s

overall experience of stress and dissatisfaction. Analyses, in particular, revealed how the intention to leave the profession can be influenced by job satisfaction and profession satisfaction respectively. The final Grounded Theory emerging from the study advanced eighteen (18) main propositions and a substantive research agenda that encapsulate the overall experience of educators in relation to the main variables of the study.

The study meaningfully enhances the existing body of knowledge on organisational behaviour and management, and with the introduction of the profession satisfaction construct, could materially direct future research in this domain. An added level of analysis and understanding in respect of the dynamics giving rise to turnover intention has been added which should enable novel and / or elaborated strategies to contain educator turnover. Its contribution at an applied level, however, potentially extends also to the domains of educational policy and institutional management practice where the containment of educator turnover and the elimination of educator shortages are serious considerations.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

With globalism and increasingly integrated and competitive workplaces, securing and retaining quality employees have become a crucial success and sustainability consideration for organisations, whether private or public. Against this setting excessive employee turnover is generally regarded as a costly and undesirable phenomenon. It is understandable that research into the prediction of employee turnover and, related to this, the intention to leave ('quit'), would remain high on the research agenda for management scientists. However, determining the reasons why people leave ('quit') their jobs and occupations has been a difficult task that has received significant attention in scholarly research.

Traditionally, the literature draws attention to the costs of turnover for the organisation (AharonTziner and Birati 1996, Mobley 1982, Staw 1980). The costs of replacing a departed employee (*i.e., recruitment, selection and orientation and training*), lost productivity and loss of sales are conventionally reported expenses related to the organisational costs of employee turnover (Davidson, Timo, and Wang 2010, Guilding, DawneLamminmaki, and LisaMcManus 2014, Tracey and Hinkin 2008). Indirect costs associated with turnover such as opportunity costs or the time it takes the newly hired employee to acquire and learn work duties and procedures have also received attention (Tracey and Hinkin 2008). Given such costs, it is crucial to examine the causes of employee turnover.

Research suggests that an employee's job satisfaction plays a major role in his/her intention to remain or leave the occupation, *i.e.*, turnover behaviour (Ingersoll 2002, Saari and Judge 2004). It is shown in turnover models that job satisfaction affects the intention to leave, which in turn influences actual turnover behaviour (Mobley 1977). For this reason, *intention to leave* is viewed as the last sequence of withdrawal behaviour (Mobley 1977) and job satisfaction is considered as its primary antecedent. Several empirical examinations of job satisfaction have reported the existence of a relationship between job satisfaction and the intention to leave (Alam and Mohammad 2010, Carsten and Spector 1987). Moreover, the research suggests that the influence of job satisfaction on turnover behaviour results from the perceptions that individuals

hold about their jobs (Bright 2008). Employees tend to remain when the workplace meets their expectations and needs. On the other hand, employees' intention to leave may be heightened when their expectations in and of the workplace are not met (Bright 2008). As a result, job satisfaction will be experienced when individuals receive what they actually wanted from the job (Locke 1969). Several other workplace variables associated with job satisfaction have also been suggested to play a role in turnover intention including employee productivity (Vandenabeele 2009), commitment (Aydogdu and Asikgil 2011), and well-being (Mäkkikangas, Feldt, and Kinnunen 2007). These constructs, however, have not garnered the same degree of research interest in this regard, as did 'job satisfaction'.

While job satisfaction has been researched extensively, its employment however has been characterised by the proliferation of (different) definitions – often substantially at odds with one another. Probably one of the more known positions is that provided by Spector (1997), who viewed job satisfaction as an attitudinal variable that measures the degree to which individuals like their jobs and the different aspects of their chosen jobs (Spector 1997). This view attempts to accentuate the extent to which a person likes or dislikes the job, i.e., distinguish job satisfaction from job dissatisfaction. Cranny and colleagues for example defined satisfaction "*as an affective reaction (that is, emotional) to one's job, resulting from [the] incumbent's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired (expected, deserved, and so on)*" (Cranny, Smith, and Stone 1992, 1), while Isen and Baron's (1991) defined it as the "*specific beliefs about one's job, behaviour tendencies (intentions) with respect to it, and feelings about it*" (Isen and Baron 1991, 35). Many others definitions that focus on considerations such as what people anticipated they will receive from a job, compared to what they actually receive; and the nature of job satisfaction, i.e., cognitive, affective or a combination of these elements.

With a proliferation of definitions comes also a range of measurement approaches and in this regard researchers have most often measured job satisfaction from one of two vantage points. The first approach measures job satisfaction at the 'global' level, i.e., employees evaluate their satisfaction with the job overall (in its entirety) without considering any specific facets / features of the job. The second approach does the opposite and directs attention specifically to the facets or features of the job.

Employees or respondents are asked whether they are satisfied with a range of specific facets / features of their jobs e.g. supervision, pay, the work itself, promotion, autonomy and co-workers etc. Both of these measurement approaches have been used extensively to research employee job satisfaction (Moè, Pazzaglia, and Ronconi 2010, Noordin and Jusoff 2009, Toker 2011). Indeed, the literature is replete with studies that confirmed the positive or negative influence of numerous factors on employee job satisfaction. These include, for example, the effect of administrative support and satisfactory social interactions with co-workers on job satisfaction (Tickle, Chang, and Kim 2011, Tillman and Tillman 2008). Additionally, studies have shown that a lack of recognition leads to low motivation, low self-confidence and ultimately job dissatisfaction (Ali 2008, Pearson and Moomaw 2006). In a similar vein various extrinsic motives such as monetary compensation and career advancement have also been shown to contribute to job satisfaction (Goetz et al. 2012).

The influence of job satisfaction on an employee's intention to leave the *occupation* or *profession*, as opposed to the intention to leave the *job* or *organisation*, has been suggested, but has not received any meaningful research attention. In this instance the intention to leave the occupation or profession is used most often to refer to the employee's departure from employment in a specific occupation or profession.

Against the background of (costly) turnover intention and the role of job satisfaction, and potentially occupational satisfaction, the position has been advanced that workforce shortages in various economic sectors is a symptom of low levels of job satisfaction (Ingersoll 2002). Such research has placed a major emphasis on the belief that job satisfaction leads to employees' *intention* to leave the profession and which consequently results in shortages within an occupation or profession. To reduce this intention to leave the occupation/profession it has been suggested that managers need to determine the potential reasons that inform employees' *job dissatisfaction* (Ingersoll 2002). In this regard empirical research has examined and demonstrated the contributions of various aspects of the job and organisation to the employee's intention to leave the occupation or profession (Andrews and Dziegielewski 2005, Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen 2008). This implies an expanded conceptual frame and research scope (beyond the domain of job satisfaction) when attempting to clarify such intention to leave an occupation or profession (as opposed to a job or organisation).

## **1.2 Research context and focus**

Within the field of education, the intention of educators to leave the profession has been reported consistently as a serious concern, with several studies indicating that many educators do not intend to remain in the teaching profession for the duration of their working lives (Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin 2007, Brown and Wynn 2009, Ingersoll, Merrill, and Stuckey 2014 , kardos and Johnson 2010, Watkins 2005). It is generally acknowledged that educator shortages can cause enormous problems for any educational system. Apart from the costs of recruitment, training and the loss of general productivity associated with workforce shortages, there is the added issue of the potential disruption of programme planning and continuity in educational settings (Carroll 2005, Ingersoll 2002, Watlington et al. 2010). Moreover, educator shortages may lead to substandard instruction and reduced learner performance (Ingersoll and Smith 2003). Educator shortages have now become a prominent focus both in Australia and internationally and warrant greater attention. The number of educators' leaving the profession is further complicating the attainment of the required educator workforce for meeting the needs of Australian educational institutions. Approximately 21, 404 educators left the occupation in 2014 and it is reported that between 30-50% of Australian educators leave the teaching job within their first five years of employment (Buchanan et al. 2013). Viewed in the context of annually escalating student enrolments, these reports suggest the magnitude and severity of the educator turnover / retention challenge for Australia. Unfortunately Australian educational institutions often use out-of-field teaching as a strategy to ensure a teacher in front of every class (Owen, Kos, and McKenzie 2008), but this solution is fraught with difficulties and in effect create more challenges. There is also evidence that Western Australia (WA) in recent years has experienced an undersupply of teachers (QCT 2013 ). For example, an experienced shortfall of 3000 educators across both public and private school sectors were reported recently - a shortage that may impact negatively on the next generation (Shine 2015). Despite previous shortfalls, it seems likely that WA may experience a more serious educator shortage in the future (ABS 2014), particularly within secondary school sectors (Shine 2015).

In view of the relationship between job satisfaction and student learning and performance (Liu and Meyer 2005) and in particular, the recently reported lowered ranking of Australian education compared to international benchmarks (Gurrí 2016),

the possible incidence of dissatisfied teaching staff does not bode well for Australian educational institutions. From this perspective it is vital that the Australian educational system takes cognisance of the origins and causes of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction at the level of the educator. Without this the management of educator intention to leave the profession may prove ineffective and turnover could reach critical proportions, requiring drastic and costly short-term remedies.

### **1.3 Statement of the research problem**

Although research in general has supported the effect of job satisfaction on the intention to leave the occupation or profession, most studies have been undertaken from the perspective of organisational administrators. This resulted in findings that illuminated variables associated with the employee's job experiences in a particular work setting. While valuable, these studies do not explain why educators who left the job also left the profession. Usually significant levels of job dissatisfaction are assumed to lead to a change of jobs *within* an occupation and not necessarily leaving the occupation. Job satisfaction research consequently provided no understanding of employees' satisfaction with the occupation or profession ('profession satisfaction') and its potential effect (in isolation or in combination with job satisfaction) on the educator's intention to leave the profession. Other factors beyond satisfaction with the job are therefore likely to influence a decision to leave the profession and these may potentially include the employee's satisfaction with the occupation or profession in a more holistic sense. The nature of 'satisfaction with the profession' or 'profession satisfaction' has not been examined by prior research, firstly, as a construct in its own right; and secondly, its potential relatedness to the intention to leave the profession (e.g. a moderator or predictor variable). The heightened attention directed at turnover intention and consequently employees' intention to leave a job and, in education, also the profession, necessitates understanding and leveraging the role of 'profession satisfaction'. More research is consequently needed to understand the turnover decisions of educators and this implies adopting a broader perspective (i.e., beyond the *job* satisfaction – turnover argument) on the considerations and dynamics that influence educators to leave not only the job, but also the profession.

Theoretical justification for the existence of a 'profession satisfaction' construct is suggested by multidisciplinary and multidimensional studies of work attitudes and

behaviours. As an example consider the employee's commitment to the organisation, which is suggested to be different from his/her commitment to the profession (Meyer, Allen, and Smith 1993). Studies that have examined predictors of the intention to leave the nursing job and profession similarly point to such a construct (De Milt, Fitzpatrick, and McNulty 2011, Simon, Müller, and Hasselhorn 2010), while support is also suggested by research that examined the employee's satisfaction with his/her *entire* career and its relationship with turnover intention (Joo and Park 2010).

*In summary:* The growing importance of employee turnover and then, in particular, turnover intention, and the demonstrated central role of job satisfaction in these phenomena, do not adequately account for the dual and simultaneous decisions by educators to leave both the education job and the education profession. On the premise that job dissatisfaction plays a central role in leaving a job, the simultaneous leaving of (also) the profession then would imply a degree of profession dissatisfaction. The latter, however, has not received any meaningful research attention to date and its potentially influential role, either independently or in combination with job satisfaction, in shedding light on explaining costly educator turnover is unknown. If known, the situation may potentially contribute to more effective strategies for managing educator retention than has been the case to date. This situation and research need consequently inform the current study. While theoretical justification for the difference between job satisfaction and profession satisfaction as independent constructs is suggested, empirical evidence in support of this position is non-existent. With this in mind the current study was approached from the perspective that theoretical justification for the existence of 'profession satisfaction' precedes empirical exploration of its presence. Secondly, given the ambiguous nature of the variables and their roles in this study, an exploratory, i.e., a qualitative research design focusing on educators' experience of their jobs would be more appropriate. In the last instance, and following from the preceding, the empirical study would not make reference to the concepts of interest, but allow empirical data to surface the constructs and their interrelationships, if they were indeed present. On this basis the fundamental and supporting research questions for this study were formulated and translated into research objectives (section 1.4).

## **1.4 Research questions**

The overarching aims of this study were to empirically explore the notions of job and profession satisfaction among educators and to advance a theory, grounded in such empiricism, which accounts for the existence, interdependencies and influence of these concepts in relation to educators' intention to leave the profession.

### **1.4.1 Major questions**

Can the notion of *satisfaction with the profession* (profession satisfaction) be differentiated from *job satisfaction* on theoretical and empirical grounds? If so, how does satisfaction with the profession, in addition to job satisfaction, assist in clarifying educators' intention to leave the profession?

### **1.4.2 Minor questions**

1.4.2.1 Can the **distinction between satisfaction with the profession and job satisfaction** be justified on **theoretical** grounds?

1.4.2.2 On the assumption that profession satisfaction is theoretically distinct from job satisfaction, can these constructs be observed **empirically** in an **educational setting**? If so, what primary factors contribute to, or influence educators' satisfaction with the education profession, compared to their satisfaction with the education job?

1.4.2.3 What influence and/or role, if any, does educator (**dis**)satisfaction with the profession, in addition to job (dis)satisfaction, perform in respect of the educator's intention to leave the profession?

### **1.4.3 Objectives of the study**

The following objectives were formulated in response to these research questions, which will guide the focus and design of the empirical study:

1.4.3.1 Investigate the theoretical basis for differentiating between profession satisfaction and job satisfaction.

1.4.3.2 Empirically explore the nature and meaning of former and current educators' experienced reality of (dis)satisfaction in the workplace (i.e., with the job and profession).

1.4.3.3 Determine the relationship of educators' satisfaction in the workplace (job satisfaction and profession satisfaction) with the intention to leave the profession.

1.4.3.4. Construct a Grounded Theory framework to clarify educators' experienced satisfaction in the workplace and its relatedness to the intention to leave the profession.

## **1.5 Contribution and significance of the research**

Generally speaking, the study will contribute to existing knowledge in the broad domain of organisational behaviour and management. This contribution, more specifically, will be to advance 'new' knowledge and understanding in terms of the fundamentally important job satisfaction construct in relation to satisfaction with the profession and intention to leave the profession. Reigning job satisfaction constructs, especially operational definitions, date back several years and have not kept abreast with changing notions of work and workplace. At the same time *satisfaction with the profession* is a novel, under-researched construct that to date was not consciously researched and likely to be confounded with job satisfaction. The theoretical contribution of the study consequently will be to advance a conceptual frame incorporating contextually appropriate and contemporary relevant constructs of *job satisfaction* and *satisfaction with the profession* in relation to *intention to leave the profession*. In the process more crystallised and circumscribed definitions will be advanced for the satisfaction constructs, providing a clear basis for conceptually differentiating these constructs in future management but also education research. The empirical contribution of the study resides in the fact that multiple pre-existing conceptual and operational definitions of the *job satisfaction* construct will be 'tested' empirically, while the theoretical and empirical existence of the *profession satisfaction* construct will be explored concurrently. The conceptual boundaries of these constructs will be investigated and firmed up on the basis of empirical results. On the assumption that the *profession satisfaction* construct can be justified on theoretical grounds, it will be empirically investigated (and tested) in an indirect manner. During the course of this process the research will generate not only a valid theoretical, but also an empirically substantive definition of the construct where none existed before. This would bring a totally different and expanded perspective to the study of job satisfaction and turnover intention, with potentially significant ramifications for future research in

this domain. In the final instance a plausible, contemporary and above all empirically-informed model of educator intent to leave the profession, based on various ‘satisfaction’ constructs and their correlates, will be advanced. This should prove useful in ongoing research, but also suggest new and potentially more effective avenues for intervention in educational management. The study, in general, will allow the advancement of a context-specific theory of educator satisfaction in and with their work settings and will differentiate between job and profession, which previously has not been undertaken.

At an applied level the findings of the current study may serve as an important input to high-level educational management and policy-makers – functionaries who are confronted on a daily basis by the issue of employee job satisfaction and intention to leave. The findings of the study, if appropriately acted on, in the medium to long term may significantly influence the retention of future educators and impact positively on labour shortages in the sector.

## **1.6 Design and methodology in brief**

From a methodological perspective, a Grounded Theory research design is not novel, but the use of this design in the current study may demonstrate the superior utility value and contribution of such an approach when researching ambiguous satisfaction constructs. This is especially true when researching these constructs in different and often rapidly evolving work settings. From a philosophical perspective, an interpretivist research paradigm will guide the design and methodology of a qualitative empirical study – being more appropriate to addressing the research questions of the study. In a similar vein the use of Grounded Theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and an enhanced open, axial and selective coding analysis procedure (after Strauss and Corbin 1994) will be opted for. This research ‘strategy’ appears most suitable for ensuring a rigorous, verifiable ‘answer’ to the major research question. Purposive and snowballing sampling strategies similarly should ensure access to groups of former and current educators. The former refers to those educators who have left the teaching profession prior to retirement, in order to follow a different or new career path. This is an important distinguishing feature of the study as the majority of previous research has examined job satisfaction from the perspective of

those who are currently working as educators. Very few studies have attempted to include former educators.

Research participants will be engaged through semi-structured interviews that will comprise a few open-ended questions and it is expected that this will generate rich data from the two groups of educators. Key in this regard will be to obtain data that will shed light on educators' decisions to leave or intention to leave the profession (after investing substantial resources in qualifying for, and working in, the profession). Multiple considerations contribute to the intention to leave and generally people leave their jobs/occupations for a number of considerations. Naturally, and acknowledging this complexity, some consideration was given to probing for multiple causes, which in this instance could influence and contaminate participant responses. Consistent with the exploratory qualitative design of the study, data gathering attempts to avoid informing, in any way, the participant's frame of reference and thought patterns. For this reason questions of an open-ended nature is generally employed to prompt the participants to nominate that which is most salient and most important in his/her way of thinking and so provide that which is 'top-of-mind'). This is a consistent and recognised challenge of qualitative research... How much structure should be provided without influencing the direction and content of the participant's thinking on the subject. In this instance: whatever the participant nominates is regarded as the most prominent and important aspect of his/her intention to leave – it being top of mind and readily recalled in response to the open-ended question.

Once obtained, interview data will be transcribed and subjected to analysis using an inductive and *a posteriori* coding approach (using an evolving codebook). Following Strauss and Corbin's 1994 systematic analysis of data in three stages, i.e., open, axial and selective coding, the overarching 'story' of educators' job satisfaction and presumably profession satisfaction, in relation to leaving or the intention to leave the education job and profession, should emerge. This will be 'tested' and contextualised in terms of prevailing knowledge, where after this will constitute a theory 'from the ground' which will provide an explanatory response to the main research question of the study. It is expected that the obtained data will also suggest areas in the educational environment in which adjustments may be required to ensure the retention of teachers in the profession.

## **1.7 Outline of the thesis**

### **Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 introduces the study and orientates the reader to the background of the study. This addresses the role of job satisfaction, generally, in research on employee intention to leave. The existence of a construct ‘profession satisfaction’ is introduced as potentially shedding further light on the decision of educators to simultaneously leave the job and the profession of education. The significance of this conceptualisation for the education profession, notably in terms of educator shortages in Australia, is briefly indicated. The statement of the research problem serves to inform the fundamental research question, subordinate questions and the research objectives of the study. The chapter concludes with the potential contribution of the research and the structure of the study.

### **Chapter 2**

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a representative account of the existing knowledge base in respect of the key constructs identified in the research questions. To this end it provides a review of the extensive research into job satisfaction and its relationship with various workplace-related variables including more specifically employee intention to leave (or ‘quit’). Pertinent research about this relationship in the context of educator turnover and shortages is then reviewed. As a result of the diversity of definitions advanced for job satisfaction, the equally ambiguous construct of a ‘job’ is reviewed and redefined as a grounding construct for providing an appropriate, contemporary definition of job satisfaction. In the absence of a formal ‘profession satisfaction’ construct and the need to establish whether theoretical justification for such a construct exists, relevant literature mentioning or alluding to this construct is reviewed. On the basis of such justification (objective 1 of the study), the somewhat contested notion of a ‘profession’ is reviewed, again as a grounding construct for a valid and relevant definition of ‘profession satisfaction’. The chapter concludes with a focused consideration of factors influencing educator satisfaction in the workplace.

### **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 gives effect to the research intentions of the study. The discussion considers and justifies methodological decisions commencing with a consideration of the research paradigm that would guide and inform choices about design and

methodology. On the basis of ontological and epistemological considerations an interpretive research paradigm and philosophy is adopted. This leads to a decision to employ a qualitative research design, with a Grounded Theory approach and design considered as being most appropriate to give effect to the study's objectives. This is followed with a review of research practices associated with the specific version of Grounded Theory that was opted for. These include participant identification, data gathering, analysis and interpretation, and ethical considerations.

## **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 essentially reports the results of the empirical study as outlined in chapter 3. It commences with a brief description of the sample secured (comprising 20 and 18 former and current educators). Consistent with the Grounded Theory version adopted, results of the analysis of transcribed interviews are presented in accordance with the three stages of analysis. This comprises open coding, which addresses emergent themes following an overarching analysis of educator narratives for the two cohorts; axial coding, focusing more pertinently on the relationships of various variables with the key variables of job satisfaction, profession satisfaction and intention to leave; and selective coding, which is discussed in chapter 5. The chapter concludes with a consolidation of the main findings in terms of job satisfaction, profession satisfaction and intention to leave among educators.

## **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 is concerned with the discussion of the study's findings following the third stage of analysis (selective coding). This entails reporting the final integrated results of the study. The 'Grounded Theory' emerging in this manner is firstly embedded in the 'story' of former and current educators, where after all the categories and codes are considered in relation to the extant knowledge. This is followed with an outline of the main propositions that emerged from the study. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

## **Chapter 6**

Chapter 6 provides a concluding and summary perspective on the study in its entirety. It commences with a brief overview of the research project, the original need and problem statement that prompted the study, and summarises the main findings. It also considers the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research and

practice, reviews the contribution of the study, and concludes with an extended summary.

The literature relating to the phenomena of interest is reviewed in the next chapter (Chapter 2).

# **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

## **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter 1 provided an outline of the background, need for, and research questions and objectives of this Grounded Theory study. It was pointed out that the purpose of this study is, more specifically, to empirically explore the notions of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction among educators and to advance a theory, grounded in such empiricism, which accounts for the existence, interdependence and influence of these concepts in relation to educators' intention to leave ('quit') or remain in the occupation/profession. The purpose of Chapter 2, in turn, is to provide a representative overview of the relevant knowledge in respect of the three primary constructs and to briefly consider the more specific context of the educator occupation or 'profession'. Importantly, it also has to shed light on the first subordinate research question (see section 1.4), which enquires whether the distinction between satisfaction with the profession and job satisfaction can be justified on theoretical grounds. In this regard, Chapter 2 will assist in addressing the first objective of the study, which is a prerequisite for considering the empirical substance of the 'profession satisfaction' construct (in addition to the existing knowledge and understanding of 'job satisfaction').

The literature review is divided into three main areas of which the first considers the literature on job satisfaction and includes a discussion of key definitions, the relevance and hence importance of the concept, the theories that have informed his concept, and educators' job satisfaction more specifically. The second main focus is the introduction and discussion of satisfaction with the profession or 'profession satisfaction'. The logic of attending to this additional form of workplace satisfaction is provided, followed by a consideration of the basic differences between a 'job' and a 'profession' as a basis for clarifying and confirming the differences between job satisfaction and profession satisfaction. The last section of the literature review focuses on educator job satisfaction as the main cause of employee (educator) turnover and its role in reported educator shortages at a state and national level. This discussion commences with a consideration of the concept of job satisfaction.

## **2.2 Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is still regarded as one of the most researched concepts in the field of management (e.g. Fila et al. 2014) and a significant amount of research has been published on the topic. The discussion of job satisfaction will firstly consider its definition and measurement, its relevance and continued importance, and the primary theories that provide some clarity around the construct.

### **2.2.1 Definition of job satisfaction**

Defining the notion of job satisfaction has been a challenge for researchers, even though it has been a topic of extensive discussion and research. The literature is characterised by multiple, differing definitions and a commonly, supported definition is elusive. This may explain the second observation, which indicates that the measurement of an employee's job satisfaction has been a major challenge for researchers, even though measurement is widespread. The job satisfaction construct comprises different elements and deals with various features and components of the employee's job – all of which mean different things to different people. For this reason it is now largely recognised as a multifaceted construct (Aziri 2011).

To the uninformed the idea of 'job satisfaction' may well be translated into workplace morale or happiness, even though this is not the case... "*Morale refers to group wellbeing while job satisfaction refers to the individual's emotional reaction*" (Gruneberg 1979, 3). Moreover, job satisfaction is argued to be part of the individual's happiness at work (Fisher 2010). The emotion dimension captured in Gruneberg's (1979) definition is consistent with earlier definitions of job satisfaction, which viewed it largely as a job-related emotional reaction. Basically, job satisfaction was viewed as the employee's emotion and feelings towards the job. One of the very first definitions of job satisfaction by Robert Hoppock (1935), viewed it as simultaneously embracing psychological, physiological and environmental dimensions. He was of the view that job satisfaction was indicated when the job circumstances prompted an employee to truthfully to say: "*I am satisfied with my job*" (Hoppock 1935, 47). This holistic view of job satisfaction was characteristic of Hoppock's position (his "*holistic status of mind*" (Wang, Lee, and Ho 2012) and incorporates the different (internal and external) features or dimensions of a job (Hoppock 1935). From his position job incumbents

can simultaneously be satisfied and dissatisfied with the features of the job and the workplace (Hoppock 1935).

Locke (1976) provides a similar classical and popular definition of job satisfaction, but one that views satisfaction more as a psychological construct. He defined it as: “*a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience*” (Locke 1976, 1304). As pointed out by Saari and Judge (2004), Locke’s definition of satisfaction conveys the “*importance of both affect, or feeling, and cognition, or thinking*” (Saari and Judge 2004, 396). Job satisfaction from this perspective incorporates both a cognitive and an affective dimension, where the former is reflected in the *appraisal* of the job. In this sense job satisfaction involves an overall evaluation of how the job ‘measures up’, i.e., meets or exceeds these job dimensions that are viewed as important to the individual. The affective dimension on the other hand is about the incumbent’s emotional experience of the job experience (i.e., in the form of an emotional response) resulting from the (cognitive) evaluation of his or her job. For Locke, then, job satisfaction is the outcome of the interaction of cognitive and affective elements in which the individual contrasts his/her desired job experiences to that actually experienced: As explained by Lock: “*job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction is a function of perceived relationship between what one wants from one’s job and what one perceives it as offering or entailing*” (Locke 1969, 316). Important dimensions or facets of the job, for Locke, included pay, promotions, recognition, benefits, working conditions, supervision, co-workers, company and management.

This affect-based definition of job satisfaction remained popular and subsequent researchers continued and elaborated this line of thought, for example Cranny and colleagues who described job satisfaction “*as an affective reaction (that is, emotional) to one’s job, resulting from the incumbent’s comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired (expected, deserved, and so on)*” (Cranny, Smith, and Stone 1992, 1). Consistent with the earlier definition of Locke, these scholars similarly viewed job satisfaction as an affective reaction to the person’s views of what s/he desires and what is actually received. As pointed out by Judge, Hulin, and Dalal (2009, 6), this definition of job satisfaction “*appears to assume that comparisons of actual outcomes with those desired from a job will reflect variance due to emotional reactions and that*

*these emotional reactions can be captured using structured, paper and pencil measures of judgments and evaluations”.*

However in contrast to this affect-focused view of the construct, scholars such as Hulin and Judge (2003) viewed job satisfaction primarily as cognition-based... “*as judgment-based, cognitive evaluations of jobs on characteristics or features of jobs*” (Hulin and Judge 2003, 255). This composite view, i.e., job satisfaction consisting both of a cognitive appraisal and an affective reaction, remained prominent with scholars such as Brief defining job satisfaction “*as an internal state that is expressed by affectively and/or cognitively evaluating an experienced job with some degree of favour or disfavour*” (Brief 1998, 86). This multidimensional view of the concept over time gave rise to the school of thought that viewed job satisfaction as an ‘attitude’.

An attitude, initially, was viewed largely as a behavioural pattern: “*anticipatory set or tendency, predisposition to specific adjustment to designated to social situations, or more simply a conditioned response to social stimuli*” (LaPiere 1934, 230). Social psychologists subsequently refined the view of an attitude to include affective, cognitive, and behavioural components (Franzoi 2003). One of the more popular examples of such ‘attitudinal’ definitions of job satisfaction was provided by Spector (1997) who views it as an attitudinal variable that measures the degree to which individuals like their jobs and the different aspects of their chosen jobs (Spector 1997). The emphasis on different job elements or facets in this view of job satisfaction suggests the complexity of the construct. Spector essentially views job satisfaction as the result of the incumbent’s evaluation of the job in relation to its elements or features. People accordingly assess their jobs on the basis of those features that are important to them (Buitendach and Witte 2005). The incumbent’s overall job satisfaction consequently results from a summation of those features of the job that the individual ‘likes’ and weighed against the summation of the job features that s/he dislikes. For this reason Spector suggests that researchers who wish to understand the incumbent’s job satisfaction should focus on exploring the interrelated facets of job satisfaction (Spector 1997). He describes a *facet* of a job as any feature of a job that is able to generate a feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Spector 1997). A focus on the job facets, consequently, will allow researchers to explore which parts of a job are influencing satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It follows that this view of a job

satisfaction is likely to be more beneficial to employers who wish to understand the specific areas that lead to turnover and retention in their organisations (Saari and Judge 2004). Spector (1997) has proposed that pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, the nature of work, and communication are common facets of a job. It is noteworthy that Spector acknowledged several issues associated with job satisfaction, which included among other inconsistency and variation in definitions and measurement tools (Spector 1997).

A review of additional definitions of job satisfaction affords similar prominence to the view of job satisfaction as an attitude. As Brief and Weiss (2002) indicate, the concept of job satisfaction has been studied largely as an attitude that an individual has towards his/her job and which involves a cognitive and affective evaluation of how well the job meets the basic considerations which are important to the individual (Brief and Weiss 2002). Stated simplistically, people who have positive attitudes are satisfied with the job, and those who have negative attitudes are dissatisfied with the job. This ‘attitudinal’ view as illustrated by Weiss, describes job satisfaction as a “*positive (or negative) evaluative judgment one makes about one’s job or job situation*” (Weiss 2000, 175).

Job satisfaction more specifically refers to an individual’s perception and evaluation of the job, influenced by the extent to which the incumbent’s specific, personal needs, values and expectations are fulfilled in the workplace (Buitendach and Witte 2005). This multidimensional (and attitudinal) view of job satisfaction is common but emphases and foci of researchers differ. Lambert, Hogan, and Barton (2002) argue that job satisfaction is “*a subjective individual-level feeling reflecting whether a person’s needs are or are not being met by a particular job*” (Lambert, Hogan, and Barton 2002, 116). The three basic elements of the job satisfaction construct are however clearly captured in Isen and Baron’s (1991) definition of job satisfaction as the “*specific beliefs about one’s job, behaviour tendencies (intentions) with respect to it, and feelings about it*” (Isen and Baron 1991, 35).

From this review of the literature it is concluded that job satisfaction is an attitude held by the job incumbent – a composite of different elements - of which the cognitive appraisal of the job and emotional / affective experience of the job are centrally important. Drawing on the contributions of, among other, Spector (1997), Cranny et

al. (1992) and Isen and Baron (1991), job satisfaction for the purpose of this study will be viewed as:

**2.2.1.1** “*A job-related attitude, i.e., the degree to which the job incumbent ‘likes’ or is satisfied with the job (and/or conversely ‘dislikes’ or is dissatisfied with the job), as a result of his/her (cognitive) appraisal of the extent to which the actual job characteristics (the experienced job) are ‘measuring up’ to his/her desired and/or anticipated job experience; accompanied by his/her affective experience of the job (i.e., feelings about the job experience); which result in a (behavioural) predisposition to act in specific ways, consistent with the his/her beliefs and feelings about the job (e.g. indicating a specific ‘rating’ on a job satisfaction scale).*”

Apart from acknowledging the interrelatedness of cognition, affect and behaviour, this view of job satisfaction recognises the job incumbent's personal views, beliefs and values about working and jobs generally (however acquired). It implies that:

- Job satisfaction is person-specific and substantially influenced by variables associated with the incumbent. Job satisfaction is therefore a very personal phenomenon and consequently measures of job satisfaction should reflect variation across incumbents e.g. for the same job and job level.
- People, and therefore job incumbents, are susceptible to change when it comes to their views, beliefs and values and consequently with time may change in what they value and desire in a job. Therefore, job considerations that contribute to the person's job satisfaction are likely to change over time.

The job satisfaction construct consequently is susceptible to influence and change.

Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969, 1) state that “*measurement and theory should go hand in hand*”, and draw attention to the importance of alignment between theory and scientific practice. One of the key implications of this view is that a researcher must adequately and accurately define a construct before measurement is attempted. The measurement of job satisfaction is the subject of section 2.2.2.

## **2.2.2 Measurement of job satisfaction**

From the review of the literature it appears that the measurement of job satisfaction is the second major challenge facing the researchers. Researchers generally approach this task from one of two different perspectives. In the first instance job satisfaction is measured from the perspective of the individual having a single and general feeling towards his job – commonly referred to as *global job satisfaction*. Secondly, and alternatively, researchers may concentrate on various job factors that can influence an individual's job – referred to as the *facets approach* (Saari and Judge 2004). Both these measurement approaches enjoy substantial academic support (Moè, Pazzaglia, and Ronconi 2010, Noordin and Jusoff 2009, Toker 2011). When used in conjunction, these measurement approaches provide a greater understanding of employees' job satisfaction (Saari and Judge 2004). It is generally argued that both approaches should be used simultaneously in research (Oshagbemi 1999).

Spector (1997) is of the view that the global approach to measuring job satisfaction is relevant when “*the overall bottom line attitude is of interest*” (Spector 1997, 2). Global job satisfaction scales often consist of a single item or at most a few items that directly ask the job incumbent about their feelings in respect of a particular job (Ironson et al. 1989, Kunin 1995, Thompson and Phua 2012). Measuring job satisfaction in a global manner has the benefit that it provides the incumbent with an opportunity to decide which job elements have the most significant role in influencing his/her overall level of job satisfaction (Lambert, Hogan, and Barton 2002). As such it aims to measure the incumbent's general evaluations and/or affective reactions in respect of his or her job. It has been suggested that the ‘global’ approach accounts for a greater proportion of the overall variance of the construct when compared to the ‘facets’ approach (Oshagbemi 1999, Scarpello and Campbell 1983). However, the benefit of the global approach extends only to research that has a descriptive purpose as it is unable to account for the specific features of a job e.g. comparing the overall job satisfaction of employees in different occupations (Oshagbemi 1999).

The ‘facets’ approach by contrast is generally considered when the researcher aims to identify the specific elements of the job that contribute to (dis)satisfaction (Spector 1997). It examines different aspects or ‘facets’ of a job such as pay, promotion, administration and co-workers and allows researchers to determine the level of job

satisfaction associated with different aspects of employment, or examine the job facets that most interest them (Spector 1997). In such measures the assumption is that each of the facets is equal to every other job facet (Ironson et al. 1989). From this perspective overall job satisfaction then is most commonly calculated as the sum of the various job facets or dimensions (Saari and Judge 2004). Several instruments have been developed and validated by different scholars over time, in an effort to measure this concept. One of the earlier instruments that are illustrative, is the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969) and which focuses on five areas of people's jobs, i.e., compensation, co-workers, promotion, supervision, and the work itself. Indeed, as stated by the developers of the instrument, these (five) aspects are not the only features of a job. This has been borne out subsequently by scholars who have identified several other features such as activity, ability utilisation, creativity, security see for example the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, and England (1967), but also fringe benefits, operating procedures and communication (e.g. Spector's 1985 Job Satisfaction Survey).

Criticism of both these approaches abound. Part of the reasoning for this comes from social psychologists that stress that attitudes are complex and multifaceted constructs (Eagly and Chaiken 1993, Potter 1998, Potter and Wetherell 1987). The advocates of the facets approach base their criticism of the *global* approach mainly on the complexity of the job satisfaction construct (Weiss 2000). From their perspective the global measurement approach is incapable of determining the potential territories of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace. This is justified from the position that many elements and considerations contribute to the incumbent's job satisfaction as a whole (Locke 1976, Spector 1997). The *facets* approach similarly has been the subject of criticism, for several reasons. The first major criticism against this approach resides in its ability to adequately measure *all* potential aspects or features of a job - again implying that the complexity of the job satisfaction construct is underestimated (Nagy 2002). Part of this difficulty stems from the lack of agreement among job satisfaction researchers on those facets of a job that are common and need to be assessed. The facets approach implicitly assumes that all aspects of job satisfaction in a given workplace are addressed, which is unlikely. The probability of ignoring a particular aspect or 'facet' of a job is quite high. A second consideration is that the relative importance of each and any job facet may be perceived in an entirely different manner

by successive incumbents, which complicates the measurement of job satisfaction (different job facets may not contribute evenly to overall job satisfaction - (Rice, Gentile, and McFarlin 1991, Williamson 1996). Earlier research by Scarfello and Campbell have indicated that individual responses to questions dealing with selected aspects of a job did not correlate perfectly with the assessment of overall job satisfaction (Scarfello and Campbell 1983). While both these measurement approaches have merit depending on the purpose and context of measurement, the facets approach generally appears more appropriate for the functional advantage of pinpointing specific sources of satisfaction / dissatisfaction and for comparing the relative influence of different job facets of the same job (Oshagbemi 1999). This preceding consideration of the definitional and measurement parameters of job satisfaction are important for several reasons, but in particular because of the perceived importance and value of the job satisfaction phenomenon in the workplace.

### **2.2.3 The relevance and importance of job satisfaction**

Management generally recognises the value and importance of employees deriving satisfaction from their job. This is a consequence of several major employee and organisational outcomes which are associated with the job satisfaction construct and which range from employee wellbeing to organisation productivity. These outcomes contribute to overall organisational productivity, profitability and ultimately sustainable competitive advantage. In this regard effective human capital is a crucial differentiating capability when it comes to separating high performing from low performing organisations (Armstrong and Taylor 2014, Guest 2011, Huselid, Jackson, and Schuler 1997, Wood 1999). In this context it is the employee that experiences a high degree of job satisfaction that contributes meaningfully towards organisational outcomes such as productivity. The value of satisfied employees are crucial when pressures for performance is substantial (Ahmad, Ahmad, and Shah 2010). The relative value of the job satisfaction phenomenon is briefly considered in terms of its relatedness (causally) to organisational productivity, organisational commitment, turnover intention and employee wellbeing.

#### **2.2.3.1 Job satisfaction and employee productivity**

Job satisfaction in the workplace has received significant attention because of the assumption that *happy workers are more productive*. The underlying logic of this

argument is that people who experience job satisfaction will feel good about their jobs and consequently demonstrate higher work levels, which in turn would ultimately contribute to improved productivity at the level of the company or organisation.

Job satisfaction is generally associated with the broader family of *happiness* constructs (Fisher 2010). Research maintains that job satisfaction is a particularly important concept when it comes to organisational success, simply as it is concerned with employees' performance, which in turn determines organisational profitability (Judge et al. 2001). Any form of surplus value generated for the organisation (e.g. through satisfied employees) translates into improved productivity (Izquierdo 2006). Employee performance, i.e., behaviour, in this context is viewed as part of the employee's proficiency and consequently outputs (Armstrong 2006, Landy and Conte 2010).

Many scholars have argued in support of a link between job satisfaction and performance. Vandenabeele (2009) for example has suggested that job satisfaction, being a positive emotion, is capable of bringing about higher job performance. Research suggests that 'happy' employees derive more rewards from the job when compared to less happy co-workers (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade 2005). The benefits of a (job) satisfied employee is believed to extend beyond the immediate (individual) performance gains, and the effects of such an employee to transfer to co-workers and other people in the workplace, where it could ultimately create a strong sense of belonging, friendship and collaboration within the organisation (Lambert and Hogan 2009). The impact of job satisfied or dissatisfied workers however is not only applicable to job incumbents and co-workers, but is closely intertwined with the greater organisation's functioning. Bruce and Blackburn (1992) for example indicate that both the employee and the organisation stand to benefit. At the same time they also argue that if the relationship between satisfaction and performance is compromised in any direction (either too satisfaction focused or too performance focused), that this could have adverse consequences for either or both.

However, the converse appears to be equally valid in that dissatisfied employees are likely to be unhappy. Such employees may not perform maximally, which then could prompt negative 'spill over effects' in terms of the performance of co-workers (Böckerman and Ilmakunnas 2012). Moreover, dissatisfied employees are less likely

to commit to additional duties; endorse, support, or defend the organisation's goals, or engage in other contextual behaviours, i.e., would convey reduced organisational citizenship behaviour (Edwards et al. 2008).

In general though, the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance is not as conclusive as it may appear and several previous studies have produced mixed results. While the majority of studies have found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance (Abbott 2003, Judge and Bono 2001, Miller, Erickson, and Yust 2008, Pitts 2009, Riketta 2008, Sarmiento, Beale, and Knowles 2007, Zeffane, Ibrahim, and Al Mehairi 2008), other studies have reported a weak relationship (Ahmad, Ahmad, and Shah 2010). In addition, some researchers have found reversed causality with employee performance enhancing job satisfaction (Lawler and Porter 1967, Macky and Boxall 2007). Notwithstanding these findings, the balance of evidence seems to point to the existence of some form of causal relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance, with the caveat that the prevailing job circumstances and context may influence the strength of the relationship.

In essence, employee job satisfaction is an important performance factor and is acknowledged for its contribution to overall organisational effectiveness (Judge et al. 2001). An important consideration, however, is that the pursuit of job satisfaction by the employee and the organisation, is informed by different motivations. Employers are generally focused on improving productivity, while employees are concerned with the workplace's ability to enhance their functioning, self-esteem, social status, personal development and quality of life. For this reason employee job satisfaction could result in several outcomes such as personal rewards for the employee and/or contribute to greater profitability for the organisation. The outlined relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance then has extended benefits beyond the employee, but it has to be cultivated, which implies that management need to pertinently attend to this (Bruce and Blackburn 1992). From this perspective it is highly desirable to have satisfied employees in the workplace. The converse, that is, dissatisfied employees, are likely to compromise individual performance and result in a decline in other organisational performance indicators such as productivity and profit.

### **2.2.3.2 Job satisfaction and employee commitment to the organisation**

*“Commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets”*(Meyer and Herscovitch 2001, 301). Research confirms the importance of commitment in enhancing work attitudes and outcomes such as job satisfaction (Park and Rainey 2007). Furthermore, research suggests that commitment is an important work attitude because it is associated with variables such as cognitive withdrawal and turnover (Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010, Klein, Molloy, and Brinsfield 2012). Although researched extensively, the relationship between job satisfaction and organisation commitment is a challenging one. Both constructs are regarded as job-related attitudes (Harrison, Newman, and Roth 2006) and are associated with individual and organisational outcomes (Shore and Martin 1989, Wang, Lee, and Ho 2012). The two constructs are closely related to one another and reveal several similarities. It consequently becomes difficult to determine which construct is more influential and in what role and sequence when contemplating the employee’s behaviour in a given situation. This challenge is evident when Testa’s (2001) definition of *organisational commitment* as “*an emotional response to a positive appraisal of the work environment*” (Testa 2001, 228) is compared with, for example, Weiss’ (2002) definition of job satisfaction a “*positive (or negative) evaluative judgment one makes about one’s job or job situation*” (Weiss 2000, 175). To bring some clarity to this situation, Rayton (2006) has argued that organisational commitment is all about the employee’s loyalty to the organisation. Therefore, as with job satisfaction, commitment impacts on intention to leave or remain (Allen and Meyer 1996). However, note Porter et al.’s (1974) earlier definition of commitment as a “*a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisational goal and values, willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and a definite desire to maintain organisational membership*” (Porter et al. 1974, 604). From this perspective committed employees will continue their association (e.g. the employment relationship) with the organisation when they share the values, objectives and vision of the organisation. This will eventually result in increased benefits for the organisation such as higher quality work produced by committed members (Muthuveloo and Rose 2005, San Martín 2008, Van Dyk and Coetze 2012).

While both the constructs are argued to contribute to individual and organisational performance, their foci are different: job satisfaction is concerned with the more

narrowly focused tasks and work setting and the satisfaction derived from this, while organisation commitment reflects on the employee's relationship (and identification) with the organisation more generally. Research recognises commitment as a multi-dimensional construct. Affective, continuance and normative are the three key components or dimensions of workplace commitment (Meyer and Allen 1991). These three components propose that commitment characterises employees' relationships with their organizations, and that it has effects on their decision of remaining with an organization (Meyer and Allen 1991). Generally speaking, affective commitment refers to one's emotional attachment to an organisation and his or her identification with the organisation (Akdogan and Cingöz 2009, Meyer and Allen 1991). It reflects a desire to remain with a company (Jackson, Meyer, and Wang 2013). Researchers attribute affective commitment to intrinsic motivation and self-interests (Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010, Maertz and Boyar 2012).

Normative commitment is similarly affected by intrinsic motivation and defined as one's feeling of obligation and a belief to remain with one's organisation (Akdogan and Cingöz 2009, Meyer and Allen 1991). It conveys a sense (feeling) of the employee that he or she *should* remain with the company (Jackson, Meyer, and Wang 2013). Normative commitment has been shown to have a strong relationship with turnover intention and is suggested as the contractual force that drives individuals to feel obligated to repay their organisations by 'staying' (Maertz and Boyar 2012). Despite this felt obligation, which may impact the employee's commitment, continuance commitment (the third component) proposes that the associated costs of discontinuing or departing will influence commitment. It effectively entails remaining with the organisation on the basis of "a cold calculation of costs and benefits" (Jaros et al. 1993, 954).

From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between the two constructs follows from their likely impact on employee turnover (Aydogdu and Asikgil 2011, Brunetto et al. 2012, Gaertner 2000, Lambert and Hogan 2009, Tnay et al. 2013, Williams and Hazer 1986, Yücel 2012). Researchers have often focused on measuring the employee's emotional attachment to the organisation, in order to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and commitment. In this regard research has demonstrated that job satisfaction is a strong antecedent of organisational commitment (Aydogdu and Asikgil 2011, Gunlu, Aksarayli, and Percin 2010, Meyer and Allen

1984, Mohamed, Taylor, and Hassan 2006, Rayton 2006, Suma and Lesha 2013, Yew 2008). Apart from this multiple studies have been reported that found that job satisfaction and commitment are positively related, indicating that high levels of job satisfaction correspond with high levels of organisational commitment (Aydogdu and Asikgil 2011, Morrison 2008). Equally, when employees are highly committed to the organisation, they are also likely to be highly satisfied with the job (Yücel 2012). However, several studies have also failed to observe a significant relationship between job satisfaction and commitment (Curriwan 2000) or found that organisational commitment was an antecedent of job satisfaction (Imran et al. 2014). While these results may relate to research design and contextual considerations and signify different types of relationships between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, they have nonetheless all found a positive relationship between these constructs.

#### **2.2.3.3 Job satisfaction and employee turnover intention**

When it comes to the prediction of *turnover intention*, job satisfaction remains the most frequently researched attitudinal variable and predictor. Employee turnover intention is generally recognised as a potential indicator of actual quitting behaviour and hence its importance. Understanding the behavioural intention of quitting is necessary if the negative consequences of actual turnover are to be avoided (Alam and Mohammad 2010, Firth et al. 2004). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) are recognised as the originators of the concept of turnover intention. Their work indicated that a “*specific behaviour (e.g., turnover) should be better predicted by behavioural intentions or attitudes toward such an act, as compared to more general attitudes toward the organization or job*” (Kopelman, Rovenpor, and Millsap 1992, 271). From a different vantage point Holtom et al. (2008, 232) also point out that turnover is “*a variable that conceptually connects the experience of individuals in organisations to critical measures of success for those organisations*”. Turnover intention then is about the likelihood of an individual leaving his/her current employment in the near future (Cotton and Tuttle 1986, Mowday, Porter, and Steers 1982). This concept has emerged as the main antecedent of turnover (Bluedorn 1982, Mobley 1982, Steers and Mowday 1981) and has been incorporated into several models of employee turnover. Those who have developed these turnover models have confirmed the existence of a holistic relationship between the intention to leave and actual quitting behaviours.

From this perspective, the intention to leave/quit potentially give rise to search behaviour, which in turn could result in actual turnover – in particular when alternative job opportunities are available (Michaels and Spector 1982). Turnover intention is argued to be a better predictor of actual turnover than *thinking* of quitting or the *intention to search* for another job (Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth 1978, Tschannen, Kalisch, and Lee 2010). From a behavioural perspective the intention to leave is the most proximal action to actual turnover. For this reason its importance is elevated for managers, simply as a better understanding of intention to leave would assist in identifying the likely sources of actual turnover and pre-empt the negative consequences of actual turnover. Understanding employee's behavioural intentions consequently would be a prerequisite for understanding actual turnover. It is commonly acknowledged that organisations cannot function effectively if employees contemplate leaving. From a rational perspective administrators would prefer to know their workforce's intention to leave rather than the actual turnover rates – as this would enable the introduction of measures to prevent employees from leaving (Feng and Angeline 2010). The reality is that once employees have set the process of leaving in motion, there is limited opportunity to gain insights from them (Firth et al. 2004).

Turning to the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, a substantial number of studies have concluded that employees who experience low levels of job satisfaction are more likely to leave (Ali 2008, Blaauw et al. 2013, Hussein et al. 2014, Lee et al. 2008, Mahdi et al. 2012, Mathieu et al. 2016, Mobley 1977, Yang 2010, Zopiatisa, Constanti, and LTheocharous 2014). The direct and indirect influence of job satisfaction on turnover intention have been demonstrated by several previous studies (Amah 2009, Shahnawaz and Jafri 2009). Research conducted from different disciplinary perspectives, for example, have shown that employees who conveyed an intent to leave, reported lower job satisfaction (Alam and Mohammad 2010, Liu et al. 2012b).

Bright (2008) has suggested that the link between job satisfaction and turnover intention is derived from employee perceptions about their jobs, which in turn, are influenced by the extent to which employees' role expectations are met in the workplace, i.e., job satisfaction. When the employee's job expectations are met, s/he will demonstrate a higher level of satisfaction and reduced intention to leave (Bright

2008). Conversely, employee intention to leave is maximised when individual job satisfaction is reduced (Kazi and Zadeh 2011). In this regard, Applebaum et al. (2010) have reported that those aspects that are considered satisfactory or dissatisfactory are the most likely to directly impact quitting behaviour. Moreover, the literature indicates that a work environment, which attracts, meets or exceeds employees' expectations will theoretically increase employees' satisfaction, thereby dissuading employees from leaving (Lee and Way 2010). Numerous studies have attempted to identify to answer the question of what determines people's turnover intention by investigating the facets of a job that leads to job satisfaction. Factors reportedly influencing decisions to leave a job are dissatisfaction or satisfaction with intrinsic and extrinsic values such as work content, decision-making activities, relationship with management, pay and benefits, recognition (Coomber and Barriball 2007, Delobelle et al. 2011, Heijden, Dam, and Hasselhorn 2009, Hofaidhllaoui and Chhinzer 2014, Liu et al. 2012a, Mahdi et al. 2012). Employee dissatisfaction has been linked also to emotional exhaustion and feelings of belonging, which can affect the motivation and prompt leaving the job (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011).

It is consequently reasonable to conclude that employees will harbour intentions to leave when their job expectations are not met and they perceive opportunities elsewhere, where their expectations are more likely to be satisfied. Conversely, employees can be expected to remain within a role when their job expectations are met or exceeded.

#### **2.2.3.4 Job satisfaction and employee well-being**

The relevance and importance of job satisfaction, in the last instance, are also confirmed by the relationship between job satisfaction and employee well-being. Adequate levels of job satisfaction remain a critical factor for employee well-being, logically because employment constitutes such a sizeable segment of the employee's life.

Well-being is viewed as a context-free construct (Lent and Brown 2008) and, not unlike job satisfaction, also relates to the broad notion of happiness (Lucas and Diener 2008). The effects of a job on the employee's overall well-being is well documented (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005, Van der Doef and Maes 1999). It is logical that satisfaction or otherwise with the job, will relate to well-being. Schultz and Schultz (2002)

maintain that job satisfaction has a pronounced effect on employees' emotional health simply because they could become frustrated, dissatisfied and unhappy at work, which is transferred to their lives. Employee well-being is reflected among other in overall life satisfaction and refers to the extent to which the person experiences positive and negative feelings (Diener et al. 1999). In this regard a substantial number of studies have indicated that job content and work context factors impact employee well-being (de Jonge et al. 2000, Feng, Lu, and Siu 2008, Harter, Schmidt, and Keyes 2003, Mäkikangas, Feldt, and Kinnunen 2007, Ryan and Deci 2000, Uncu, Bayram, and Bilgel 2007). Despite this, research on the direction of causality between job satisfaction and well-being remains inconclusive, largely because this relationship is sensitive to changes that can occur in the employee's perceptions of job-related factors – in particular when the job occupies centre stage in the employee's life (Lent and Brown 2008).

#### **2.2.4 Theories on job satisfaction**

A number of theories on job satisfaction have been introduced and empirically tested over the years. These generally provide guidance to researchers and practitioners on how to create a work environment in which employees can be enthused about the job and perform it effectively and efficiently. It is important to recognise that the majority of job satisfaction theories are embedded in theories of motivation. As both constructs influence work-related attitudes (cf. Spector 2003) and motivation is often influenced by job satisfaction (Aziri 2011, Oraman 2011), these constructs may appear to overlap conceptually. There is however, a major difference between a satisfied and a motivated employee. As previously indicated, job satisfaction represents the employee's feeling about a job and its various facets (Locke 1969), while motivation is concerned with the employee's need fulfilment (Ramlall 2004) or willingness to act or invest energy to satisfy his or her desires or needs (Beach 1985, Ramlall 2004). Consistent with conventional motivation theory, a motivated person will demonstrate *movement* towards fulfilling his or her needs in a job, while the employee's satisfaction with a job is an emotional state, reflecting an affective response to his/her experience of the job (Locke, 1976). Drawing on Locke and Latham (2004, 388) it would seem that motivation is concerned with the internal factors that drive action and "*the external factors that can act as inducements to action*". The close relationship between job satisfaction and motivation is influenced workplace factors and circumstances that

have an effect on the employee's willingness to work and which will ultimately lead to enthusiasm for his/her job (Furnham, Eracleous, and Chamorro-Premuzic 2009). Motivation accordingly describes how human behaviour is energized and directed in the *workplace* (Hannula 2006, Porter and Steers 1973), while job satisfaction is behaviour that is specific to the work setting only and indicative of the employee's experience (which may or may not contribute to energising and directing his/her work behaviour).

Theories that address or have implications for job satisfaction essentially reside in one of two categories, namely content and process theories. Content theories focus on the attributes of a job and the specific needs that are capable of motivating employees. Process theories, in turn explain how managers can employ situational considerations to contribute to the employee's motivation. Since this study is not approached from a specific theoretical position the discussion that follows provides a brief explanation of some of the more prominent theories residing in each of these categories.

#### **2.2.4.1 Content theories**

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's (1968) two-factor theory Alderfer's (1969), modified hierarchy of ERG needs and McClelland's (1987) need theory are most often discussed in respect of theories of job satisfaction. Proponents of content theories assert that employees satisfy various personal needs in their jobs and that this leads to job satisfaction (Locke, 1976). The underlying assumption of these theories is that employees have similar needs, which direct workplace behaviour. Such needs vary over time and place and can be influenced by factors in the work setting.

##### **2.2.4.1.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow's (1943) needs hierarchy proposes that a person's behaviour will be motivated by five progressively more sophisticated needs, i.e., physiological needs (e.g. food, water, air, shelter), safety and security needs (e.g. a stable environment), social and belonging needs (e.g. social interaction, group identity, friendship and interpersonal contacts) self-esteem and ego needs (e.g. respect from others) and self-actualization needs (e.g. the person's desire to optimise his/her potential). According to Maslow (1943), need satisfaction occurs in a specific sequence commencing with the more basic and lower level needs (i.e., physiological) and progresses to successive and higher levels of need (e.g. self-actualization). Motivation, i.e., energising the

employee to act, is conditional on lower order needs being satisfied before higher-order needs become influential... “*Higher unsatisfied needs usually appear after the satisfaction of those on the lower level*” (Whittington and Evans 2005, 114). An illustrative example is the employee who observes that his / her job is secure (security, but also physiological needs are fulfilled), which then prompts the next higher level of need, i.e., of social engagement and belonging. Once these needs are fulfilled, self-esteem and eventually self-actualisation needs will successively drive employee behaviour. However, once “*The needs are satisfied, they are no longer motivators*” (Greene and Burke 2007, 116). Unmet needs consequently serve to motivate the person. In the example of an organisation, it can be inferred that those employees who appear to be most satisfied, will be those who have satisfied these needs.

Even though Maslow’s theory is recognised for its focus on human development, it has been criticised for viewing human needs as static when they are in fact dynamic (Whittington and Evans 2005). Moreover, it is argued that needs “*vary constantly as a function of the situations in which individuals are involved*” (Whittington and Evans 2005, 115). There is limited empirical evidence in support of the applicability and practicality of Maslow’s need theory in contemporary work contexts (Duncan and Blugis 2011, Duncan 2011, Zalenski and Raspa 2006).

#### **2.2.4.1.2 Alderfer’s Existence-Relatedness-Growth (ERG) Needs Theory**

Alderfer’s (1969) ERG theory essentially simplified and expanded on Maslow’s theory and grouped his hierarchy of needs into Existence (E), Relatedness (R) and Growth (G) needs. Existence needs are the most basic human needs and are similar to physiological, survival and safety needs. If not met, they can potentially threaten the “*survival of an organisation*” (Alderfer 2001, 102) Relatedness needs correspond with Maslow’s social and esteem needs and refer to the need for human companionship and relationships, and the person’s willingness to engage in interpersonal interaction and exchange opinions and thoughts with others at work. Growth needs in turn are aligned with Maslow’s self-actualisation needs and comprise the person’s desire to develop his/her personal capability and skills. In contrast to Maslow’s theory, Alderfer does not accentuate the needs hierarchy, but has indicated that ERG needs can occur simultaneously and that frustration of needs could result in regressing to a lower-level of need (Alderfer 1969). Most people have ERG needs, but since people are different

they may experience different levels of these needs in their lives (Alderfer 1969). ERG theory appears to have more pronounced implications for managers and is more directly applicable to employee job satisfaction than Maslow's theory – apart from enjoying more empirical support (Arnolds 2005, Yang, Hwang, and Chen 2011).

#### **2.2.4.1.3 McClelland's Theory**

McClelland's theory similarly introduced the three need categories namely the need for achievement, affiliation, and power respectively (McClelland 1967, 1987, 1988). From this theoretical perspective achievement is viewed as behaviour that is directed towards competition and the attainment of high (outstanding) standards, while the need for affiliation is viewed as the desire to have social interaction and relationships with colleagues at work. The need for power is described as the readiness to exercise control over others and to influence their behaviour. McClelland (1988) proposed that individuals may be more predisposed to a specific need, but generally will be driven by all three.

#### **2.2.4.1.4 Herzberg's Two-factor Theory**

In 1959, Frederick Herzberg and his colleagues introduced a theory comprising two clusters of factors that direct employee behaviour in the workplace namely hygiene and motivational factors. Motivational factors (motivators, satisfiers, intrinsic motivation – cf. Herzberg 1964) are similar to Maslow's higher order needs and are related to job content and consequently will impact on job satisfaction. These include factors such as the job itself, recognition, achievement, personal development and growth, and the degree of responsibility. Hygiene factors are comparable to Maslow's lower order needs and are related to the job context (the environment within which the tasks are performed). Hygiene factors (also termed 'dissatisfiers' or extrinsic motivation) include, for example, supervision, company policy, working conditions and job security, and can either increase or decrease job dissatisfaction (Herzberg 1968). Motivation factors are also known as motivator, satisfier or intrinsic.

Herzberg's basic premise is that both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction 'exist' in the workplace and originate from employees' opinions of their jobs. Employees may view the different features and facets of a job quite differently, i.e., the same features considered by some as satisfactory and by others as dis-satisfactory (Furnham, Eracleous, and Chamorro-Premuzic 2009). The presence of motivators in the

workplace contributes to job satisfaction, while the absence of hygiene factors leads to job dis-satisfaction. Moreover, Herzberg's theory does not imply that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are bipolar opposites (Herzberg, Nausner, and Sunyderman 1959). Rather, it merely indicates that 'satisfiers' differ from 'dis-satisfiers' in the workplace (Furnham, Eracleous, and Chamorro-Premuzic 2009). While there is some discussion about the ability of hygiene factors to contribute to satisfaction, researchers commonly acknowledge that adequate attendance to hygiene factors can prevent job dis-satisfaction. Herzberg's theory effectively demonstrated the need to provide employees with a job that is meaningful to them.

#### **2.2.4.2 Process theories**

Process theories are referred to in this manner because they attempt to clarify the process through which a state of job satisfaction or motivation comes about. This is unlike content theories that argue that job satisfaction and motivation is a consequence of specific content areas (e.g. needs). In terms of job satisfaction, more specifically, these theories do not focus on the job as the main source of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Rather, they draw attention to the cognitive process involving opinions, beliefs and values, which employees use to arrive at an assessment of the job and its elements, and the workplace more generally. Process theories accordingly emphasise the process, i.e., evaluation of the job from the perspective offered by the person's needs (an input into the process). The section that follows will briefly address the three most prominent process theories of job satisfaction: Adam's (1963) Equity theory, Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) and Locke's (1968) goal-setting theory.

##### **2.2.4.2.1 Equity Theory**

Equity theory, first introduced in 1963 by Stacy Adams, essentially posits that employees are driven to secure a state of equity or fairness in their dealings with others in the workplace and the organisation (Adams 1963). Equity theory does not consider the employee's job satisfaction only, but also takes into account the employee's opinions of how s/he is treated and does so in comparison to other staff. It proposes that people weigh up the inputs invested in the job and workplace (e.g. qualifications, tenure, time, energy, effort, and commitment to the job) and outcomes obtained (e.g. respect, title, sense of belonging, monetary and non-monetary compensation), in relation to that of co-workers, in order to judge their situation (Blakely, Andrews, and

Moorman 2005, Rohm 2011). A sense of equity or fairness results when the employee perceives the outcome of the input over output ratio as fair or equal compared to that of others. When this occurs job satisfaction may result. However, if the ratio is interpreted as conveying inequity, a sense of unfairness and likely job *dissatisfaction* may result, leading to tension and employee action to restore a sense of equity (Bolino and Turnley 2008). Reducing work effort may be one strategy to secure this. Importantly, equity theory suggests the importance of consistency in practices (e.g. rewards, treatment generally) across a group of employees to avoid experienced unease and inequity. It implies also that job satisfaction, potentially could be influenced (to a degree) by managerial practices. Equity theory has prompted substantial research and helped to provide a basis for examining the relationship between perceived fairness/unfairness and organisational citizenship and effectiveness behaviour (Al-Zawahreh and Al-Madi 2012, Blakely, Andrews, and Moorman 2005, Wat and Shaffer 2005).

#### **2.2.4.2.2 Expectancy Theory**

Expectancy theory, often referred to as '*Valance, Instrumentality, and Expectancy*' (VIE) theory, was introduced by Victor Vroom in 1964. Its relevance, especially in terms of organisational behaviour, is reflected in its incorporation in many studies and behavioural models (Porter and Lawler 1968). Vroom (1995) defined an expectancy as "*a momentary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will be followed by a particular outcome*" (Vroom 1964, 20), or alternatively as "*an action-outcome association*" (Vroom 1995, 18). Action in this instance would refer to the employee's job performance and the outcome to his/her job satisfaction (Chou and Pearson 2012). One of the fundamental premises of this theory is that employees expect to receive something in exchange for performing a job. It consequently views job satisfaction as the result of a conscious process and attempts to demonstrate why employees commit to specific actions in the workplace. Employees, accordingly, invest time and energy into those activities that they believe will lead to desired outcomes (Nyberg 2010). In expectancy theory, three key concepts are employed to explain employees motivation (i.e., to act): "*valance (anticipated satisfaction), instrumentality (the belief that performance will lead to rewards), and expectancy (the belief that effort will lead to the performance needed to attain the rewards)*"(Locke and Latham 2002, 706). Lunenburg (2011) expressed this in the formula:

$$MF \text{ (Motivation force to act)} = Valence (V) \times Instrumentality (I) \times Expectancy (E)$$

The employee is committed to action when the three factors simultaneously come into focus: The likelihood of performance (action) is dependent on the employee's analysis of the overall attractiveness of the activity, the perceived association between a 'gain' and executing the activity, and the expected rewards as the outcome of the completed activity. Expectancy theory suggests that the route to job satisfaction is a function of meeting the cognitive conditions captured by 'valence', 'instrumentality' and 'expectancy'.

#### **2.2.4.2.3 Goal-Setting theory**

The third process theory is Edwin Locke's (1968) 'Goal-setting theory' or 'Goal-Directed theory'. Central to the theory, is the prominent and influential role of goals or objectives, such that enhanced performance can be attained. Latham and Locke (2007) for example argue that the theory reveals a clear relationship between demanding goals and high levels of task performance. From this perspective the employee's intention to act or perform is influenced by the objectives they commit to, which they strive to attain (Locke 1968). Employees with demanding goals would perform better than those who have lesser goals... "*High, or hard, goals are motivating because they require one to attain more in order to be satisfied than do low, or easy, goals*" (Locke and Latham 2006, 265). Two important inferences arise from this theory: the first is that it suggests how managers could utilise incentives to drive employee behaviour. Secondly, job satisfaction is likely to be experienced when goals are met (Latham and Locke 2007).

Each of the mentioned job satisfaction theories contributes towards an understanding of the concept of job satisfaction. For example, needs theories suggest that one's behaviour is influenced by highly individualised innate desires and administrators should ensure that they invest adequate effort to investigate the individual needs of their employees, and tailor jobs and the conditions of work accordingly. Herzberg's theory highlights the importance of providing individuals with tasks that are meaningful to them and proposes that the factors that contribute to job satisfaction are distinct from those that contribute to job dissatisfaction. On the other hand, process theories such as Equity theory provide the basis for investigating the effect of

perceived unfairness in the workplace. It suggests that people at work make judgements of and comparisons between their inputs and the outcomes they receive. The total sum of an output / input ratio is then the key issue in terms of job satisfaction. The Expectancy theory reveals that job satisfaction in the workplace occurs when people receive the outcomes they expected for performing a job, while Goal Setting theory suggests that job satisfaction is experienced when people achieve what they consciously set out to attain.

### **2.2.5 Conclusion and Summary: Theoretical portrayal of Job Satisfaction**

The theoretical frame briefly introduced in the preceding review of content and process theories, shed light on the considerations that may give rise to, or influence, the employee's experienced job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction, embracing both an evaluative judgement and an affective response to the experience of a/the job represents an outcome and is a 'result' of performing work. Working in a job requires the sustained investment of energy (of a fair intensity) towards,, i.e., in the direction of specified job outcomes. For this fact work behaviour is considered motivated behaviour. From this position job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, though different from motivation, is nonetheless closely related to motivation and likely to be influenced substantially by the fundamentals that drive motivated (work) behaviour. This is clearly illustrated for example by Herzberg's argument that some job considerations will contribute to satisfaction, while others will minimise dissatisfaction...or that job satisfaction hinges on meeting / fulfilling personal needs (Maslow, Alderfer, McClelland and others). Process theories (Adams, Vroom, Locke and others) in turn provide a plausible logic that explains how job (dis)satisfaction could result from a specific sequence of events. This then suggests that motivation, or varying degrees of motivation, have a strong possibility of impacting on job satisfaction. It also implies and suggests the existence of some level of job satisfaction, and that the employee's state of job (dis)satisfaction is likely to also comment on motivational circumstances.

## **2.3 Beyond job satisfaction: Satisfaction with the profession**

Job satisfaction has been researched extensively and today is a construct of significance. However, various considerations (e.g. changing notions of work, criticism against the measurement adequacy of instruments) have prompted

consideration of additional avenues to enhance understanding of workplace behaviour, especially the intention to leave a job or organisation. In the ensuing discussion the need for a ‘satisfaction’ construct beyond ‘job satisfaction’ is outlined and satisfaction with an occupation or profession more broadly (, i.e., ‘profession satisfaction’) is introduced. Drawing on the (limited) literature available and by exploring the fundamental features of jobs and professions, the theoretical relevance of profession satisfaction (or satisfaction with the profession) is considered.

### **2.3.1 Introduction: The need for satisfaction constructs beyond job satisfaction**

The review of the job satisfaction literature (previous section) sensitised the reader to the nature, relevance and theories of job satisfaction in the workplace. This construct has been widely researched and its particularly strong relationship with the intention to leave/remain in a job has been researched extensively – also in respect of educators (see sections 2.4 and 2.5). This knowledge has not assisted in stemming the flow of educators from the occupation despite many attempts and interventions to prevent this from happening. The discussion concerning the measurement of job satisfaction (section 2.2.2), suggests that different theoretical conceptualisations may serve different purposes and that any single measure of the construct in and of itself may be inadequate to capture the complexity of this ‘experience’ for a given situation and person. It may of course also suggest that researchers may be guilty of 'novelty seeking', thereby creating difference instruments while those in existence may suffice to a large degree. This raises questions about what considerations, more precisely, give rise to educators leaving the occupation (profession).

When an educator leaves his/her job to work in an entirely different occupation, that is, not only leaving the job but also leaving the occupation (or ‘profession’) it suggests that factors related to other aspects - beyond those that influence job satisfaction – may be involved. An occupation or profession is substantially different from a job. In the given example, a decision to leave not only the job but also the occupation/profession implies dissatisfaction not only with the job but also dissatisfaction with the profession – sufficiently so to warrant moving out of the profession. Dissatisfaction with a job does not necessarily imply leaving the organisation or division and often employees apply for ‘transfers’ or ‘promotions’, suggesting that their dissatisfaction is contained within the job and does not extend to the division or organisation. This logic suggests

the existence of a broader and multidimensional notion of workplace satisfaction that relates to workplace and/or occupational factors beyond the job, and which impact on the satisfaction of the employee.

If an educator consequently decides to leave his or her job to work in another field (a change in occupation or profession) it simultaneously implies a decision to leave the current occupation or profession. It can be assumed, accordingly, that satisfaction with the occupation or profession may have a potential role in influencing the educator's views and could inform the intention to leave or remain in the profession.

The impact of educator shortages would suggest support for exploring potential sources of workplace satisfaction and dissatisfaction beyond those currently known (and captured by the construct of job satisfaction). Mckenzie (2008), for example, has indicated that current concerns about workforce shortages necessitate empirical evidence about employees' plans to leave their professions prior to retirement.

In the next section this reasoning (or logic), pointing to the relevance and need for a construct such as 'profession satisfaction', is firstly considered from the perspective of available literature, followed by a consideration of the often 'taken-for-granted' concepts of 'job' and 'profession'. The latter performs an important function in grounding and focusing the constructs of 'job satisfaction' and 'profession satisfaction'

### **2.3.2 The logic of satisfaction with the profession (profession satisfaction)**

To date research has almost invariably focused on the individual's satisfaction with his or her job. Little if any attention has been directed at investigating the employee's satisfaction with his/her occupation or profession and the factors that may influence the latter. This is because studies concerned with employee turnover are often pursued from the perspective of organisational administrators, which would reflect their interest in variables that are demonstrably related to the job rather than the profession. It is however necessary to gain an understanding of the individual's perceptions and sentiments of the occupation or in this instance *profession*, to appreciate the dynamics and the interplay between job and profession satisfaction. The logic underlying this view is displayed among other in the *commitment* literature. Research in this field

often distinguishes between commitment to the organisation and commitment to the profession. Furthermore, it suggests that the behaviour of people in a job is impacted by both commitment to the organisation and to the profession (Meyer, Allen, and Smith 1993). An individual's commitment to his/her organisation refers to the "*strength of the person's identification with, and involvement in, the organisation*" (Harrell, Chewning, and Taylor 1986, 110). On the other hand, "*an individual's commitment to his/her profession is reflected by the strength of the person's identification with, and involvement in, the profession*" (Harrell, Chewning, and Taylor 1986, 110). Meyer, Allen, and Smith 1993 showed that commitment to job and commitment to profession are relatively independent construct. They regard commitment to the organisation as "*a psychological state that (a) characterises the employee's relationship with the organization and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organisation* and commitment to profession *as an affective to the profession*" (Meyer, Allen, and Smith 1993, 539). Scholars in this domain argue that some employees tend to be more committed to the values of their professions than to their jobs or workplace (Meyer, Allen, and Smith 1993, Meyer and Herscovitch 2001, Mowday, Porter, and Steers 1982). Consistent with the findings in respect of organisational commitment, it has been shown that occupational commitment also predicts turnover intention (Gambino 2010, Wang et al. 2012)...though less is known about the latter relationship. It is plausible that a similar distinction may apply in the instance of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction: An employee may for example be highly satisfied with his/her job, but not necessarily with the profession in its entirety - a situation which may influence his or her intention to remain or leave the profession.

This logic seems to be conveyed also by the findings of studies that have attempted to examine predictors of the intention to leave the job, and those that have focused on the predictors of the intention to leave the profession. For example, in a study examining employee turnover, Flinkman et al. (2008) indicated that the main attractions of an alternative profession were better career prospects, better rates of pay and less work demands. Psychologically taxing and stressful conditions are significantly related to the intention of leaving a job (Grunfeld et al. 2005). McCabe, Nowak, and Mullen (2005) in turn have indicated that the key reasons for choosing (entering) and remaining in the nursing profession were the intrinsic attractions of the profession.

These included interesting and challenging work, the ability to help others and the ability to work closely with people who are in need of care. More recently Simon, Müller, and Hasselhorn (2010) reported that the intention to leave the profession is highly associated with the work/family interface, while the intention to leave the job is related to the organisational context in which the job is performed e.g. leadership and the work setting. Internal career advancement, similarly, have been shown to impact the incumbent's intention to leave the current position, while the non-alignment of personal and professional goals were cited as a reason for leaving the profession (De Milt, Fitzpatrick, and McNulty 2011) are consistent with earlier research that found that the availability of opportunities for professional growth and/or career advancement are correlated with the intention to remain in, or leave a profession (McCabe and Garavan 2008, Webster, Flint, and Courtney 2009).

Support for the premise (or logic) that job satisfaction and satisfaction with profession are different is also found in the domain of career satisfaction. Traditionally a career is defined as "*a meaningful progression through a series of related jobs*" (White 1995, 5), or "*a sequence of role-related experiences accumulated overtime*" (Louis 1980, 330). In fact, the concept of career is related to "*the totality of work activities over one's lifetime*" (Shim and Rohrbaugh 2011, 264) and consequently career satisfaction can develop over a person's life. Career satisfaction or career success, which is often viewed as a criterion for measuring or evaluating a person's entire career, has been equated by researchers to 'personal accomplishment' (Judge and Bretz 1994) and is defined as the "*outcomes or achievements one has accumulated as a result of one's work experiences*" (Judge and Bretz 1994, 47). Researchers frequently study career satisfaction as a subjective feature of the person's career and have shown that the latter is most likely influenced by the work environment (Joo and Park 2010), support and career development (Belinda and Bradley 2007), work-life balance (Laschinger 2012), burnout (Keeton et al. 2007), personality profiles (Boudreau, Boswell, and Judge 2001), and age and gender (Gerson et al. 2007). A causal (predictive) relationship between career satisfaction and turnover intention was for example also demonstrated by Joo and Park (2010) who found that organizational learning culture and performance goal orientation influenced career satisfaction, which, in turn, affected turnover intention. A similar relationship was observed between career satisfaction and intention to remain, among older warders (Keeton et al. 2007).

Research to date, however, has not significantly or purposefully investigated satisfaction with the profession as a construct in its own right. A few studies focused on job satisfaction, have mentioned or introduced the notion of satisfaction with the profession, in a cursory manner – generally as an element that contributes to an understanding of employees' perceptions of job satisfaction, and consequently their intention to leave their current employment. As a case in point, Perrachione, Rosser and Petersen (2008) examined various factors influencing job satisfaction and employee retention, which included the term 'satisfaction with the profession' as an element (item) that contributes to participants' perceptions of job satisfaction. They found that individuals who experienced satisfaction with the profession are more likely to remain in their current jobs, although their study found no relationship between job satisfaction and the intent to remain or leave. They suggested that future studies should differentiate between 'satisfaction with the job' and 'satisfaction with the profession' (Perrachione, Rosser and Petersen 2008). The results of Perrachione et al.'s (2008) study are consistent with earlier research by Whitener and Gruber (1997) and by implication provide support for distinguishing between a person's satisfaction with a/the 'job' and a/the 'profession'.

### **2.3.3 Job and profession as grounding constructs**

Scholarly literature consistently regards a 'job' and 'occupation' or 'profession' as distinct constructs, suggesting firm grounds for assuming and treating 'job satisfaction' and 'satisfaction with an occupation' or 'satisfaction with a profession' as distinct constructs. The preceding discussion however revealed limited acknowledgement of the existence of other forms of workplace satisfaction beyond job satisfaction. In their current form and use the concepts of job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession (profession satisfaction) reveal substantial conceptual overlap (ambiguity) and indistinctiveness. While it is generally accepted and hence assumed that a job is distinct from a profession (and that these concepts are not necessarily limited to the same domain), conceptually differentiating between job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession hinges on clear and distinct definitions of 'job' and 'profession' respectively. Yet, neither of these fundamental (and grounding) constructs has been clearly and consistently defined in the literature. As these constructs undergird the implied different forms of satisfaction, a clear conceptual distinction between them becomes a prerequisite for differentiating

unambiguously between ‘job satisfaction’ and ‘satisfaction with the profession’ (or stated differently ‘profession satisfaction’). To this end, the essential nature of a ‘job’ and a ‘profession’ are reviewed.

### 2.3.3.1 A Job

Although the notion of a job is largely taken for granted, defining it has proved more challenging to researchers (Brief and Nord 1990). This would explain why scholars have circumscribed it differently over time. In general researchers have tended to view employees essentially as those who regularly perform the tasks and duties of a job (Holthaus 1999). The term ‘job’ consequently is largely referred to as the specific set of tasks and activities that constitute the job (cf. Rose 2003). A definition that seems to hold across different settings views a job as “*a set of established task elements, grouped together under one job title and designed to be performed by a single individual*” (Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1992, 173). In contrast to Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1992) definition, which takes the ‘job title’ as the boundary parameter for including and/or excluding tasks and activities, some researchers focused on the incumbent and viewed the job “*as a collection of production tasks assigned to the worker who holds it*” (Rosen 1978, 235). These established tasks and activities are regarded as the core activities that people perform on or in the job and have been referred to as ‘job characteristics’ (Hackman 1976, Oldham and Hackman 2010). For their narrow and contained focus on tasks and activities to the exclusion of other elements or considerations, these definitions can be classed as narrow, lean or exclusive definitions of a job. More inclusive and embracive definitions abound. As an example, Kahn (1972) incorporates the effects associated with performing specific job activities, such as pay or rewards, when he argues that a job is a group of activities that occur repeatedly and for which people are rewarded. Similarly, Wooden (1998, 187) describes a job as “*employment as a wage or salary earner by a particular employer, in a particular locality, or self-employment in a particular locality*”. Several researchers, however, have introduced more encompassing definitions of a job, which extend beyond the condition of ‘paid employment’. These include for example the different reasons for working, or the setting or context of the job. Consider for example the definition by Wallman (1980, 301) who defines a job as “*the expenditure of human energy, to accomplish ends, with some sacrifice of comfort and leisure*” and “*human work is energy directed to more or less explicit goals*” (Wallman 1980, 301). This

view accentuates the multiplicity of purposes ('ends') for which a job is undertaken, and that it entails sacrifice in a direction at odds with the notion of 'leisure'. This view of a job, moreover, is supported by researchers who similarly argue that a job entails more than activities that lead to economic outcomes for individuals (cf. Weiss and Kahn 1960, Friedmann 1992). For these researchers the act of performing a task is associated with a sense of contributing to society accompanied by a sense of obligation at the level of the individual employee (Friedmann 1992, Weiss and Kahn 1960). Karlsson (2004) in turn views a job as a set of activities that are performed within a social system e.g. a particular labour market such as service, education, and production. Nurses, educators, lawyers and engineers, for example, are working in a 'job' when they are performing their roles in a social environment. In essence, this view asserts that a job takes place within a social setting.

Karlsson's (2004) view of the social and systemic nature of the job context is particularly important as it brings awareness to the systems nature of organisations (cf. Katz and Khan, 1978) and by implication the job as a social subsystem within the organisation.

A review of the *meaningfulness* literature similarly indicates that the notion of a 'job' is much more than 'paid work'. It draws attention to a job being more about living 'life' and performing work with integrity (Chalofsky and Krishna 2009, 198). Kahn (1990) for example points out that the job incumbent's perception of his or her job is associated with a sense of worth, value and usefulness to others. The *meaningfulness* literature further indicates that those who believe, to a greater extent, that their jobs are meaningful, will experience greater psychological adjustment (Steger, Dik, and Duffy 2012), but also increased psychological engagement at work (Kahn 1990, Saks 2006) and simultaneously benefit the organisation and society.

### *Conclusion*

Taken as a whole, tasks, activities and economic and noneconomic outcomes appear to be important basic elements of a 'job'. The job construct undoubtedly is complex and multi-dimensional. Except in scholarly debate, a *job* and *jobs* are seldom purely or absolutely described - as evidenced in some of the definitions entertained here. A job does not exist in isolation and is generally embedded (and exists) in a more

encompassing institutional structure, characterised by varying degrees of interdependence with other surrounding jobs (to which it may/may not be related).

Moreover, there would be no reason for a job to exist if its tasks and activities are not performed. Job incumbents consequently reify and enact jobs and as a consequence, bring a social dimension and context to both the job and the structure in which the job is embedded. The complexity of human nature, by implication, is weaved into the job tasks and activities e.g. through the incumbent's purpose(s) for expending energy, i.e., do the 'job'; the perceptions and beliefs people hold in respect of the job, or the values they attach to the job; and, in particular, the meaning that job incumbents/job enactors inject into and extract from the job.

Given the preceding discussion of various definitions, a 'job' for the purpose of this study could be legitimately viewed as:

- A structurally embedded element and sub-system of a larger social system such as a department, organisation or institution, where it is characterised to varying degrees by structural and social relationships, and interdependence, with this surrounding context (e.g. jobs, departments, organisations);
- Comprising a series of allocated and circumscribed tasks and activities within an open, social setting, and with accompanying economic and/or noneconomic outcomes; and
- Which is interpreted, and acted upon (performed), by the person occupying the job (the job incumbent).

Katz and Kahn (1978) view of organisations as social systems implies that the various dynamic principles of open systems (e.g. feedback or entropy) will also apply to a job or jobs, which are then regarded as subsystems within the organisation. From this position, it follows that job effectiveness and efficiency will be determined by the appropriateness, quality, quantity and timely application of inputs, transformation or throughput processes, and outputs as they apply to the job. This however will be influenced by the job occupant/ employee.

*In essence, a job is a structurally embedded accumulation of tasks and activities, performed within a social context (and system) by an employee who interprets and*

*attaches meaning to the job and consequently performs it for various reasons including economic and/or noneconomic reward.*

As such, this definition of a ‘job’ has important implications for defining *job satisfaction* (refer section 2.3.4.2.1). However, as argued, a prerequisite for clearly differentiating between job satisfaction and profession satisfaction requires a consideration of the defining character of a ‘profession’ – as a form of occupation. This is considered in section 2.3.3.2.

### **2.3.3.2 A Profession**

As an underpinning concept, the notion of a ‘profession’ performs a vital function in bringing an important and reifying perspective to the meaning and boundaries of the theoretical construct ‘satisfaction with the profession’ or ‘profession satisfaction’. It should be clear then that the focus in this study is not directed at the much entertained and often controversial debate concerning the ‘professional’ status of teaching. However, it is important to note that the definitional parameters of the concept, ‘profession’, are equally if not more ambiguous than that observed for a ‘job’ - a situation arising from scholars’ diverse vantage points and their use of equally diverse terminology to describe the concept. In the ensuing discussion, the origins of the term are briefly outlined, followed by a brief consideration of the different schools of thought (‘perspectives’) evident in the literature. This is done to arrive at a valid and pragmatic contemporary perspective on the concept of a ‘profession’, with which to guide interpretation of the notion of ‘profession satisfaction’.

#### *Origins of the word Profession*

The term ‘profession’ is generally acknowledged to be derived from the Latin *professio* and was first used in reference to any person entering into a ‘calling’ or ‘profession’ (Brewer 2001, Kimball 1996). With time it became associated with an ‘occupation’ and during the mid-18th century its meaning was constrained even more, when it was used to refer only to ministry, law and medicine. With only a few professions in existence at the time, and with limited similarities among these occupational groups, these three professions gained substantial prestige and power – to the extent that they were regarded as the only ‘true’ professions (Abel 1979). At the time these ‘true’ professions were associated with university education and a particular

dignity, and consequently were accorded greater social status (Cogan 1955, Olesen and Etzioni 1970, Wilensky 1964).

### *Definitions and theories of a profession*

The primary focus of ‘the sociology of professions (Münte and Scheid 2017) has been to determine “*definitional criteria by which professions can be distinguished from non-professions*” (Klegon 1978, 260). Apart from this focus giving rise to various competing theoretical perspectives and definitions, the debate also took many turns consistent with societal changes, which has not and is unlikely to reach a point of logical conclusion. Debating the definitional properties of a profession was, for example, already considered a meaningless act in the ‘70s (‘sterile’ - Johnson 1972, cited in Saks, 2012). Contemporary scholars, however, are re-igniting this debate. Saks (2012), in counterpoint, for example argues that the fundamental nature of a profession and how it operates cannot be understood unless attention is directed at the definitional parameters of a profession. This position informs the ensuing discussion.

From an overarching perspective the literature concerned with the subject reveals at least two main thrusts when it comes to the subject of 'professions' and 'professionalisation'. The first, and most prominent, relates to the scholarly discourse that is concerned with the fundamental nature of the phenomenon and its relatedness to societal life. Within this stream the definition of a profession, professions and the process of professionalisation occupies centre stage. The second thrust is concerned largely with application, i.e., the more pragmatic debate of different occupations' aspiration, pursuit of, or status in achieving professional status. The latter invariably draws on the conceptualisations and theories generated by the more philosophical discourse on the nature and practice of professions.

In the outline that follows, the taxonomic perspective is presented as the original approach to conceptualising ‘a sociology of professions’, but this in itself comprised two movements, i.e., the trait and functionalist perspectives. The ‘process’ and ‘power’ perspectives are introduced briefly as reactions to criticisms of the trait and functionalist perspectives.

### *Variation in perspectives on the nature of a ‘profession’*

#### *The taxonomic perspective*

The central and most pronounced (also substantially criticised) school of thought on the nature of the profession has been referred to as the taxonomic approach (cf. Klegon 1978, Saks, 2012), which emerged strongly during the ‘50s and ‘60s. As implied, scholars who pursued this line of thinking attempted to categorise (define) occupations as professions or non-professions on the basis of the defining features or traits of the occupation (the so-called ‘trait-based approach’) or the functional role that the occupation performed in and for society (the so-called ‘functional approach’).

The trait-based approach in essence entailed theorists identifying “*a consistent set of traits of professions*” (Klegon 1978, 260) and it was argued that the “*absence or presence of these characteristics positioned an occupation along a professional - nonprofessional continuum*” (Burns 2007, 70). It consequently resulted in many attempts by different scholars to identify the range of features a profession can or should have, and how and why an occupational group becomes a profession. According to Burns (2007) an occupation, for example, will be classed a profession on grounds of it complying with a list of defining traits or characteristics (cf. Flexner 2001, Greenwood 1957). In this sense a profession is different from and more than an occupation. It is characterised by a set of specific features (traits/attributes) that extends beyond the usually implicit social contract and output or work control (service or product) that characterise any occupation.

Earlier researchers such as Greenwood (1957) for example suggested that all professions present with the following attributes: “(1) *systematic body of theory*, (2) *professional authority*, (3) *community sanction*, (4) *regulative ethical codes*, and (5) *a professional culture*” (Greenwood 1957, 45). In *Attributes of a Profession*, he argues that “*the true difference between a professional and a nonprofessional occupation is not a qualitative, but a quantitative one. Strictly speaking, these attributes are not the exclusive monopoly of the professions; nonprofessional occupations also possess them, but to a lesser degree*” (Greenwood 1957, 46). Wilensky (1964) more pertinently argued that the traits that distinguish occupations from professions should be discrete and measurable. As such, these characteristics embody an implicit ‘model’ of a profession and included 1) skill based on theoretical knowledge, 2) training and education, 3) demonstrated competence through testing, 4) adherence to a code of conduct, 5) altruistic service, and 6) formal organisation (Wilensky 1964). A

professional association customarily oversees and regulates these considerations. Moreover, these traits are not too dissimilar from Millerson's (1964) six essential features of a profession, namely "*1) the profession involves a skill based on theoretical knowledge; 2) the skill requires training and education; 3) the professional must demonstrate competence by passing a test; 4) integrity is maintained by adherence to a code of conduct; 5) the service is for the public good; and 6) the profession is organized*" (Millerson 1964, 4). However, Millerson (1964) also acknowledged that viewing a profession in this manner is likely to be flawed, as it fails to account for, among other, the context in which the profession is situated. Consistent with the traits approach, Downie (1990) some two decades later asserted that the (measurable) traits that distinguish a profession from an occupation, empower the profession to perform "*a unique and socially valuable function, distinct from business or commerce*" (Downie 1990, 147)". His notion of an ideal profession includes the ideal characteristics of: substantive skills and knowledge; control (monopoly) over claimed professionals; external recognition from customers/clients as well as associations and stakeholders; a degree of organisation where professional members are endowed with a sense of identity; share common attitudes and value; and are able to exert power over its professional members (Downie 1990).

Most of the identified traits are still current, judging by the characteristics of modern day professions. Distinctive knowledge and expertise has been a central consideration in the definition a profession as distinct from other occupations. Abbott (1988, 8) for example stated that professions "*are exclusive occupational groups applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases*". This consideration, however, has been the subject of extensive debate and criticism (see for example the other perspectives on the nature of a profession). Interestingly, though contemporary arguments continue to recognise the crucial role of idiosyncratic, profession-specific knowledge and expertise. The 'Neo-Weberian' view of a profession argues that these competencies are not a central consideration, but insist that such knowledge and expertise are necessary for the purpose of credentialing (see Saks' 2012), i.e., a functional requirement to enable boundary regulation. The 'Neo-classical' perspective (cf. Münte and Scheid 2017) reframes the 'knowledge and expertise' as a more than 'specialised knowledge'...as a continuously evolving discourse within the professional association and between the professional body and its membership. This

gives rise to a dynamic internalised body of theory, methods and practices that enables the members (professionals) to develop unique solutions in response to the case- and situation specific ‘challenges’ they encounter and have to resolve.

Generally, models of the profession, based on specific characteristics (the trait approach), were plentiful (Pavalko 1988) and logically invited substantial criticism. The latter ranged from being ideological (“*presuming professional goodness*” – Burns, 2007, 70) and reducing a profession to a static checklist of definitional criteria (e.g. Abbott and Meerabeau 1998, Abbott and Wallace 1990, Moore 1970); to being too narrow in its conceptualisation of a profession. So, for example, proponents of the trait approach, exclude influential considerations such as the process of becoming a profession, i.e., professionalisation (Roth 1974) and the role of social, economic and other contextual factors, especially the “*political, economic and legal circumstances that have supported and constrained its [the profession’s] development*” (Willmott 1986, 556).

#### *The Functionalist perspective of a ‘profession’*

In reaction to the criticism levelled against the trait approach, scholarly attempts to differentiate professions from occupations increasingly directed attention to the reasons why a profession would come into existence. The functionalist approach, as it was labelled, focused on explaining the existence of professions in relation to “*the function that they were thought to provide to society*” (Suddaby and Muzio 2015 ,26). Quigley (2011, 23) for example indicates that “*trait models provide a means for description whereas functionalist models provide a means for explanation*”. The functions (tasks that are characteristic), structure and in particular the role of a profession in society, were regarded as crucial to the well-being and effective functioning of society and consequently became focal points for defining professions (Suddaby and Muzio 2015 ). In this sense a profession is integrated into the society in which it operates and consequently is inseparable from societal structure, culture, morals and ethics (among other). The functionalist approach accordingly extends the conceptualisation of a profession beyond specific traits to accentuate the interrelatedness of a profession with the society in which it is embedded. This recognition of the social dimension of society and hence the profession’s relationship with society also meant that proponents of the functionalist approach placed a strong

emphasis on the social functions that professions by implication should render (e.g. altruism, service or a social orientation). Durkheim's (1957) description of a profession in terms morals and ethics as an important foundation for social structure, is illustrative. In a similar vein Barber (1963, 672) asserts that a profession has "*a primary orientation to the community interest rather than to individual self-interest*". The significance of this position is conveyed by Parsons' earlier writings in which he acknowledges the crucial contribution of professions to society...that the "*most important features of our society are to a considerable extent dependent upon the smooth functioning of the professions*" (Parsons 1939, 457). The taxonomic approach, comprising both the trait and functionalist perspectives, in effect then is concerned with a description of the characteristics and roles of professions in society.

#### *The Process perspective of a 'profession'*

The process perspective represents a slight variation of the taxonomic perspective (and trait theory). Proponents are at odds with the rigid, divisive position of trait theory and argue that many of the traits of professions are in fact also displayed by non-professional occupations (Moore 1970, Popple 1985, Wilensky 1964) - a point illustrated in Brante's (2010) comparison of auto mechanics with doctors and lawyers. Instead, the process perspective shifts the focus to the evolutionary and developmental process through which an occupation becomes a profession, i.e., professionalisation. It considers the continuum of phases through which an occupation has to transition to attain professional status. This process has been referred to variously as the "*strategies used to secure higher occupational status*" (Moore 1970, 7) and more recently "professional action", that is, how professional status in a given field would be achieved (Münte and Scheid 2017). A key point of criticism is the ambiguity surrounding the nature and sequence of the professionalisation phases through which an occupation has to transition, to secure professional status (Popple 1985). Professionalism, the outcome of professionalisation processes, as a result is similarly vague (Münte and Scheid 2017). This perspective however resonates naturally with managers, practitioners and employees at an applied level, as it speaks to the essence of career and job identities and career maintenance.

### *The Power perspective of a ‘profession’*

The *power* perspective is a subsequent and more narrowly focused evolution of the *process* perspective, as it draws attention to a specific mode of attaining professional status. Considered “*the major paradigm in theories of professions*” (Edman 2001, 44) this perspective stresses the actions, in particular power and interests as mechanisms, through which professions negotiate and maintain their special position (relationship) with society, consumers, government and other occupations (cf. Freidson 1988, Larson 1979). Freidson (1988, xvii) for example defines a profession as “*an occupation which has assumed a dominant position in a division of labour, so that it gains control over the determination of the substance of its own work. Unlike most occupations it is autonomous and self-directing*”. Freidson’s definition illustrates the salience of power and control (e.g. through regulation, credentialing and licensing) and consequently autonomy, in differentiating professions from occupations. The creation of “*rigid entry standards, coupling extensive education with several levels of examination prior to formal entry into the profession*” (Abbott 1988, 84) is a primary instrument through which the profession accomplishes control. Professionals, as a consequence, are the result of their professions, i.e., ‘products’ of particular bodies of knowledge (Freidson 1986). It is understandable that professionals then would play a significant role in shaping social policy, by virtue of “*the professions’ claim to schooling in knowledge of an especially esoteric, scientific, or abstract character that is markedly superior to the mere experience*” (Freidson 1974, 61). This ‘superior knowledge’ consequently is one of the considerations that differentiate a profession from a non-professional occupation. The professions accordingly are able to control the division of labour through their monopolisation of the education and training required for entering and succeeding in the specific professions (Freidson 1974).

Larson (1977, 9) for example defines professions as “*those occupations in which caveat emptor cannot be allowed to prevail and which, while they are not pursued for gain, must bring to their practitioner income to such a level that they will be respected and such a manner of living that they may pursue the life of the mind*”. Furthermore, “*professions were and are a means to earning an income on the basis of transacted services*” (Larson 1977, 9). Apart from justifying the protection of the professional’s livelihood, the author draws attention to the nature and quality of the relationship between the profession and the public/society (reference to ‘respect’). It is this societal

recognition that differentiates a profession from an occupation. A second consideration emerging from this definition, is the ‘control’ that a professional exercises over the quality of the work rendered... that this is not simply a judgement by a consumer of the service. The specialised knowledge and expertise of the profession(al) is effectively commodified through which the profession attains considerable market power. The process of professionalisation, consequently, is “*an attempt to translate one order of scarce resources - special knowledge and skills - into another - social and economic rewards*” (Larson 1977, xvii). The ‘power’ perspective is pertinently illustrated by Randall and Kindiak (2008, 343), who argue that “*professionalisation is the successful outcome of a power struggle between the evolving profession and the state and society, with the specialized knowledge of the profession as its main weapon*”. The power perspective in essence argues that, through the process of professionalisation, professionals create particular (special) services, regulate and control the nature of such services (i.e., control the professional knowledge and expertise base) and entry into the profession, and control the market in respect of their particular service, i.e., expertise and knowledge.

### *Contemporary views*

Contemporary developments such as the neo-Weberian (cf. Saks 2012) and neo-classical views (cf. Münte and Scheid 2017) appear to draw on and re-invigorate earlier functionalist views on the nature of the profession, but present a more evolved, nuanced and contextually-relevant view of professions. To illustrate: The neo-Weberian view for example still incorporates knowledge and expertise as a feature of the profession, but does not regard this as the substantive criterion (as typically argued by trait scholars). Instead, they consider this necessary for credentialing, i.e., the process through which entry is regulated and the boundaries of the profession maintained and controlled (the notion of 'social closure' - cf. Saks, 2012). The neo-classical view in turn focuses on professional action, which embodies a societally-valued function and from which the specific features or traits ascribed to a profession, originates. In this sense the modern (evolved) versions of earlier functional positions actually cut across several of the earlier perspectives and appear more relevant. In essence nature of professions are not as narrowly and singularly defined as was the case with any of the earlier views with their selective emphases.

### *Diversity in the conceptualisation of the 'profession'*

The diversity in the existing knowledge base is particularly evident when consideration is given to the different perspectives from which the discourse on the nature of professions was waged. Evetts (2014, 31) suggests the scope of this divergence when she argues that the “*concept of profession is much disputed*”.

At the level of defining ‘profession’, diversity is also reflected in the terminology that scholars employed to refer to *shifts* in this discourse and which largely parallel the perspectives briefly outlined. As a case in point Saks (2012), in discussing ‘*interactionism*’ or the interactionist perspective, indicates that a profession was viewed from this perspective as a ‘socially negotiated label...’. Focussing on this dimension, the perspective corresponds with the functionalist perspective’s emphasis on the social interrelatedness of a profession with the society in which it operates. Yet, it also touches on the manner and process through which professionalisation occurs (i.e., the ‘process’ perspective). Münte and Scheid (2017) in turn refer to the functionalist perspective or view as the ‘*classical*’ view. In much the same way Saks’ (2012) reference to e.g. the *Foucauldian* approach (but also his reference to the positions of the ‘Marxist’ and ‘Discourse of Professionalism’ approaches), to varying degrees characterise the philosophy and foci of the postmodern era (cf. Berner and Van Tonder, 2003) - especially the prominence accorded to ‘power’, but also power acquired through influencing knowledge dissemination, language and the narrative of the discourse. This variation in the framing and articulation of intellectual perspectives on the nature of the/a profession is extended when contemporary practice perspectives are considered.

### *In practice:*

As indicated the second major thrust observed in the general literature is concerned more with the application of concepts and theories of professions to work life. Rather than exploring and developing the discourse on professions, these contributions tend to employ constructs and theories emanating from the discourse. These are employed to analyse and diagnose an occupation’s pursuit of professionalisation and attaining the status of profession; or argue for the conferral of such status. The brief outline that follows, illustrate how the concept of ‘profession’ is employed from the perspective of a few different professions. Generally the public tends to use the term ‘profession’ to refer to “*the work that an individual does for a living*”(Davidson-Shivers and

Barrington 2004, 250). In some quarters it is viewed generically as referring to different occupational groups (Cruess, Johnston, and Cruess 2004), but it also has a universal interpretation in terms of which considerable consensus exists across the globe, typically on the degree of knowledge, expertise and training required. Professions are usually regarded as occupations that promote their distinct skills and expertise (Abel 1979). Pellegrino (2002) argued that occupations differ from professions in that they do not comply with the norms of a ‘profession’ – where compliance is attained through the process of professionalisation. The latter is itself a much-debated construct, but essentially relates to the process of meeting a series of standards and requirements posed in respect of ‘professions’, typically through legislation. Self-regulation is one such standard (cf. Schultze, 2007, Wise, 2005) that requires of the occupation to develop an accreditation and licensing system through which knowledge, skills and expertise levels for the profession can be regulated.

Linguistic or dictionary definitions are regularly used as commencement point to illustrate the commonly understood meaning of a word or phrase, i.e., not within a specific scientific context. In the case of a ‘profession’ a quick review of a few indicate it to mean: “*A vocation or calling, especially one that involves some branch of advanced learning or science*” (The Australian concise Oxford dictionary of current English 1997, 1072), “*a: a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation; b: a principal calling, vocation, or employment; c: the whole body of persons engaged in a calling*” (Webster 1981, 1811). These definitions convey the common and central role of knowledge and training, but they would not reveal the complexities and considerations that scholarly analysis would do, simply as they are focused on providing a minimum description of the meaning of a term or word (and not to account for the precise, rigorously researched phenomenon, implied by the term).

A more considered perspective is revealed when the term’s use by various professions is reviewed, but recognise that a comprehensive definition of a ‘profession’ is not provided. Such definitions are usually the starting point for stipulating the broad parameters within which the profession will render its service. For this reason such definitions are very important, not least because it empowers or disempowers those

guiding the profession. To illustrate, consider for example the following definitions of a ‘profession’:

- From a legal perspective, a profession is described as “*a self-selected, self-disciplined group of individuals who hold themselves out to the public as possessing a special skill derived from education and training and who are prepared to exercise that skill primarily in the interests of others*” (Wright 1951, 748).
- A ‘profession’ is defined by the American Psychological Association as “*an occupation requiring specialised knowledge in which guidelines and rules of conduct have been established governing such matters as minimal qualifications for entrance into the profession, training, performance criteria, fees and general business practices, and ethical relations between members of the profession and their colleagues and clients*” (APA Dictionary of Psychology 2007, 737).
- Schultze (2007) in a brief overview of the history of self-regulating professions in Canada, point out that Canadian Law, which was premised on British Law, incorporated this idea of autonomous (self-regulating) professions from the British system. From an extensive review of Court rulings and various professions he concluded that “*Self-governing professions exhibit three essential characteristics: a unique combination of knowledge and skills, a commitment to duty above self-interest or personal gain, and self-governance free from external interference*” (Schultze 2007, 52). The author usefully clarifies that such self-regulation is granted by the Canadian legislature when it is clear that *the public interest is protected*. This is evident when the profession regulates and maintains strict standards of entry, competence and conduct e.g. through required qualifications, licensing, certification, continuing professional development of the members, and maintaining effective disciplinary functions in accordance with codes of ethics and professional conduct. Continuing in this line of reasoning, Duska (2005, 28) for example concluded that “*The public believes that companies that purport to exist for the sake of servicing the public have a sacred duty to do so, and if they fail in that duty, they need to be punished. The public expects no less from*

*the individual agent.*” This view emphasises the intertwined relationship of the (autonomous) profession, its individual members (professionals) and the public or society.

Schultze (2007, 47) defines a profession as “*a learned calling requiring specialised knowledge and skills applied with acquired experience and judgment.*” The author however also outlined a number of basic principles and responsibilities that are associated with (recognition of) the concept ‘profession’. These responsibilities, which relate to the established, legislated or self-governing professions such as medical doctors, lawyers, or accountants, include:

- “*A profession’s knowledge, skill, and judgement are accepted by the public on trust.*
- *A profession has an obligation to the public to render services in the public interest.*
- *A profession is bound by a code of ethics that governs its relationships with the public, its clients, and its colleagues.*
- *A profession is entrusted with the responsibility to regulate its own members and the services they provide.*
- *A profession and its members agree to abide by minimum standards of ethical conduct and standards of practice.*
- *Professionals are accountable for their own actions, the actions of those they supervise, and the practice of the profession in general.*” (Schultze 2007, 47-48).

In contrast to the view of a profession from the standpoint of established, statutory professions (Schultze 2007), those authors who wrote about occupations desiring or in pursuit of ‘profession’ status, appeared to focus on a variety of often-divergent criteria (see Table 2.1). These criteria would distinguish ‘professions’ from other occupations without such status.

**Table 2.1 Examples of practice perspectives on the defining elements of a ‘profession’**

<b>Kahnweiler (2009) – drawing on Freidson (2001), to assess field of Human Resource Development’s status<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>In respect of Teaching (cf. Ingersoll &amp; Merrill, 2011)<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>In respect of Military officers (cf. Mandache &amp; Cosma, 2013)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of a defined body of knowledge</li> <li>• Entry through completion of standardised education/training</li> <li>• Certified/Accredited University programmes</li> <li>• Licensing that requires continued professional development</li> <li>• Existence of at least one association with members</li> <li>• Institutional structures and ethical code to ensure compliance / punish violators</li> <li>• Systems to protect profession against non-qualified or those claiming to be professional (usually legal)</li> <li>• Compliance with strong cultural norms</li> <li>• Areas of practice/competence clearly differentiated between profession and closely related occupations (e.g. doctor, nurse)</li> <li>• Protection of the public against incompetence (through structures &amp; processes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous training</li> <li>• Licensing requirements,</li> <li>• Positive working conditions,</li> <li>• An active professional organisation or association,</li> <li>• Substantial workplace authority,</li> <li>• Relatively high compensation,</li> <li>• High prestige.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profession-prescribed minimum level of theoretical knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Socially recognised</li> <li>• Has a legal status</li> <li>• Permanent character (ensuring continuity)</li> <li>• Embodies a professional identity</li> </ul>

*Notes:* <sup>a</sup>Kahnweiler (2009, 221) summarised these (10) borrowed attributes essentially into three (3) namely: sophisticated systems, operational infrastructures and regulatory processes, and concluded that HRD does not have these elements and cannot hold itself out as a ‘profession’ - although many HRD practitioners often refer to themselves as such. <sup>b</sup>According to Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) these attributes are from the traditional “professional model – a series of organizational and occupational characteristics associated with professions and professionals” (2011, 185-186). The indicators with which they assess the professionalization of teaching derive from these attributes and reflect minor semantic variations.

The authors referenced in Table 2.1 argue that the listed attributes distinguish professions from occupations that do not possess this status. These elements serve also to “*Maintain and enhance the status of a profession.*” Kahnweiler (2009, 221). Inspection of Table 2.1 reveals the divergent and selective foci from which proponents argue their understanding of the nature of professions. Kahnweiler (2009) takes his cue from the scholarly work by Freidson and consequently demonstrates a more complete alignment with the scholarly discourse. Ingersoll and Merrill (2011) assessment, however, includes elements that are in effect outcomes of established professions and professional work (high pay and status) and omits important and commonly included elements such as a clear ethical stance (e.g. a code of ethics), serving but also protecting the public’s interest, and recognition of the necessary trust relationship between the profession and the society (apart from their inclusion of vague and likely peripheral considerations such as ‘positive work conditions’). Although recognising the defined interface with society and the public, Mandache and Cosma’s (2013) criteria also omit several important and commonly included elements. Their articulation of the need for continuity in existence and service rendering, and a profession identity (which would translate into professional identity for its members), however, sensitise to other, valid considerations. From the three examples of occupations aspiring to become professions (Table 2.1) it is clear that the understanding of what a profession is, in many respects deviate from that outlined for established professions (cf. Schultze 2007 in particular). Although these examples reveal a more pragmatic approach, they also reflect the ambiguity observed in the discourse on professions and consequently the difficulty in clearly distinguishing between ‘professions’ and ‘jobs’. Evetts’ (2014) more recent work appears to indicate that scholars are increasingly abandoning the focus on defining the nature of professions. While they no longer perceive clear value in defining professions precisely, or in clearly differentiating between occupations and professions, this evidently matters at a practice level for many professions and their members, but also for occupations aspiring to be classed as professions. Moreover, it is also clear that the earlier taxonomic approach (the trait perspective) still exercises a pronounced influence on how a profession is viewed at the practice level. Differentiating between professions and jobs on the basis of distinctive features seems more prominent at this level than in the scholarly discourse on professions.

### *Consolidation and conclusion*

A review of the different definitions of a ‘profession’ indicates that a definitive answer to the question of what a profession is cannot be found. Moreover, several scholars are questioning the sensibility of pursuing such a definition.

It is evident that scholars representing different schools of thought approached the subject of ‘professions’ from different vantage points. They tended to argue their positions in an absolute sense without adequate acknowledgement of the validity of points raised by those advocating alternative or competing perspectives. The nature of professions is sufficiently complex and multifaceted (Lammers and Garcia 2009) to warrant this and seems to suggest support for those arguing that it is an exercise in futility to pursue a ‘final’ definition. Variation in scholars’ choice of terminology to describe common features, considerations and/or arguments, or trends, further obscures the extraction of a minimal, essential description of what a profession is. This is not helpful at the level of practice where clearly distinguishing between recognised professions and those wishing to attain this status, obviously matters. At this level a reasonably clear account of what a profession is, and how such status can be attained and maintained, is desirable. Beyond this, for empirically driven research such as the current study with its focus on job and profession satisfaction, it is important to provide a degree of descriptive clarity, even though theoretical closure is elusive and the concept of ‘profession’ remains vague.

As a starting point consider Evetts’ (2014) summary perspective on the nature of professions in which she indicates, “*For most researchers, professions are regarded as essentially the knowledge-based category of service occupations which usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience. A different way of categorizing professions is to see them as the structural, occupational and institutional arrangements for work associated with the uncertainties of modern lives in risk societies. Professionals are extensively engaged in dealing with risk, with risk assessment and, through the use of expert knowledge, enabling customers and clients to deal with uncertainty*” and “*sometimes professional groups are also elites with strong political links and connections, and some professional practitioners are licensed as a mechanism of market closure and the occupational control of the work*” Evetts (2014, 33).

While the scholarly literature suggests that the notion of ‘profession’ is not amenable to definition, a degree of description is desirable and possible. In general terms, and focusing on the common essence, a profession can be regarded as:

*A specialised, knowledge-based and legally self-regulating occupation that renders its services to the public and society through a complex, reciprocal relationship based on competence, recognition and trust.* At its core, a profession is characterised by several essential and common attributes. These include:

- A profession-specific body of knowledge and regulated training and credentialing.
- Legally established professional authority enabling autonomy, self-regulation and governance.
- A complex, transactional and reciprocal relationship with the public and society-at-large, characterised by professional competence, public recognition and trust; a strong service orientation in which public interest is paramount, but also susceptible to contextual influence.
- Regulative codes of ethical and professional conduct, with membership conditional on acceptance and adherence to these.
- A Professional culture and identity with common values, norms and attitudes
- A degree of formal organisation (at least one professional organisation or association) with functional structure, infrastructure, policy framework, systems, regulatory processes, defined areas of practice and professional standards, and regulatory policies that give effect to the functions of the organisation (e.g. investigative and disciplinary functions).

The nature of a ‘profession’ as outlined here, differs in focus and content from that of a ‘job’ (for a brief comparison see Table 2.2) and consequently has important implications for defining *profession satisfaction* (refer section 2.3.4.2.2).

**Table 2. 2 Comparison of the essential character of a ‘job’ and a ‘profession’**

<b>Nature of a ‘Job’</b>	<b>Nature of a ‘Profession’</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A structurally embedded element of a larger department, organisation or institution, characterised by structural and social relationships, and interdependence with surrounding jobs, departments, organisations);</li> <li>• A series of tasks and activities within a social setting with accompanying economic and/or noneconomic outcomes; and</li> <li>• Interpreted, and acted upon (performed) by the person occupying the job</li> <li>• Job effectiveness and efficiency is determined by the appropriateness, quality, quantity and timely application of inputs, transformation or throughput processes and outputs.</li> <li>• <u>Summary:</u> A structurally embedded accumulation of tasks and activities, performed within a social context (and system) by an employee who interprets and attaches meaning to the job and consequently performs it for various reasons including economic and/or noneconomic reward”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A specialised, knowledge based occupation with a profession-specific body of knowledge, regulated training and credentialing.</li> <li>• Legally established professional authority enabling autonomy self-regulation and governance</li> <li>• Stands in a complex, transactional and reciprocal relationship with the public and society-at-large, characterised by professional competence, public recognition and trust; strong service orientation; Public interest is paramount but also susceptible to contextual influence</li> <li>• Regulative codes of ethical and professional conduct, with membership conditional on acceptance and adherence to these codes.</li> <li>• Professional culture and identity with common values, norms and attitudes</li> <li>• A degree of formal organisation (at least one professional organisation or association) with functional structure, infrastructure, policy framework, systems, regulatory processes, defined areas of practice and professional standards, and regulatory policies that give effect to the functions of the organisation (e.g. investigative and disciplinary functions).</li> <li>• <u>Summary:</u> A specialised, knowledge-based and legally self-regulating occupation that renders its services to the public and society through a complex, reciprocal relationship based on competence, recognition and trust, and characterised by several common attributes.</li> </ul>

### **2.3.4 Consolidation: Job satisfaction and profession satisfaction**

Table 2.2 provides a summary perspective of the discussion that aimed to clarify the constructs of ‘job’ and ‘profession’ and it does indeed indicate meaningful differences between these constructs. Moreover, while job satisfaction has been defined extensively and a consolidating definition of the construct is provided in section 2.2.1.1, satisfaction with the profession has not been formally defined. The review of the relevant literature that touched on the concept of profession satisfaction revealed that the concept has not been regarded in substantive terms (receiving cursory mention only), let alone being defined formally. The need for and existence of ‘*profession satisfaction*’ as distinct from job satisfaction, has been justified on theoretical grounds (see section 2.3.2). The analysis of the constructs ‘job’ and ‘profession’ as base / input and focal constructs for job and profession satisfaction, further underscores this difference. The satisfaction construct in a general and context-free sense is assumed to be consistent in character, i.e., satisfaction is satisfaction. However when the concept becomes focused e.g. job, life, career or profession satisfaction, satisfaction is more narrowly framed in terms of the meaning of the focal concept e.g. **job** satisfaction, which would be informed differently compared to **life** satisfaction. As a consequence of the obvious and fundamental differences between a job and a profession, job satisfaction and profession satisfaction, from this vantage point will unquestionably be different. Stated differently: To the extent that a ‘job’ differs from a ‘profession’, to this very same extent satisfaction with the job and profession will differ.

To crystallise the content areas encapsulated by job satisfaction and profession satisfaction respectively, the definitions of a ‘job’ and a ‘profession’ are taken as points of departure and briefly restated. This is followed by a restatement of ‘job satisfaction’, now in terms of the content parameters of a job (as defined). For profession satisfaction, which, up to this point, has not been defined, a formal definition is advanced. This is done from the platform provided firstly by the essential nature of the satisfaction construct and, secondly, the conceptual area demarcated by the concept ‘profession’.

#### **2.3.4.1 Job and profession as points of departure**

Drawing on the preceding discussions and for the purpose of this study, the concepts of a job and a profession will be defined as follows:

In section 2.3.3.1 a **job** was essentially defined as:

*“...a structurally embedded accumulation of tasks and activities, performed within a social context (and system) by an employee who interprets and attaches meaning to the job and consequently performs it for various reasons including economic and/or noneconomic reward”.*

A **profession**, in turn was defined in section 2.3.3.2 as *a specialised, knowledge-based and legally self-regulating occupation that renders its services to the public and society through a complex, reciprocal relationship based on competence, recognition and trust*. It is also commonly associated with the following distinguishing characteristics:

- A profession-specific body of knowledge and regulated training and credentialing.
- Legally established professional authority enabling autonomy, self-regulation and governance.
- A complex, transactional and reciprocal relationship with the public and society-at-large, characterised by professional competence, public recognition and trust; a strong service orientation in which public interest is paramount, but also susceptible to contextual influence.
- Regulative codes of ethical and professional conduct, with membership conditional on acceptance and adherence to these.
- A Professional culture and identity with common values, norms and attitudes
- A degree of formal organisation (at least one professional organisation or association) with functional structure, infrastructure, policy framework, systems, regulatory processes, defined areas of practice and professional standards, and regulatory policies that give effect to the functions of the organisation (e.g. investigative and disciplinary functions).

### **2.3.4.2 Revisiting the constructs of job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession**

Following from the preceding, job satisfaction and profession satisfaction is accordingly revisited and restated

#### **2.3.4.2.1 Job satisfaction**

In section 2.2.1.1 **Job satisfaction** was defined as “*A job-related attitude, i.e., the degree to which the job incumbent ‘likes’ or is satisfied with the job (and/or conversely ‘dislikes’ or is dissatisfied with the job), as a result of his/her (cognitive) appraisal of the extent to which the actual job characteristics (‘experience’) are ‘measuring up’ to his/her desired and/or anticipated job experience<sup>1</sup>; accompanied by his/her affective experience of the job (i.e., feelings about the job experience); which result in a (behavioural) predisposition to act in specific ways, consistent with the his/her beliefs and feelings about the job (e.g. indicating a specific ‘rating’ on a job satisfaction scale).*”

Drawing on section 2.3.3.1 in which a *job* was defined more pertinently, this definition of job satisfaction then implies that the researcher who seeks to further investigate the job satisfaction phenomenon needs to consider the following:

- The job incumbent attaches a specific interpretation and meaning to the job and its facets, and consequently has specific reasons for performing (and/or remaining in) the job - including economic and/or noneconomic reward.
- The preceding considerations will influence the specific evaluative thoughts (cognitions), feelings and behavioural inclinations (e.g. intention to quit or remain) that the job incumbent may harbour;
- In respect of the range of job tasks and activities, and the social context and system (organisation and broader) within which the job is performed.

#### **2.3.4.2.2 Satisfaction with the profession**

**Profession satisfaction** is regarded (defined) as “*an attitude in respect of the specific profession (professionalised occupation) that expresses the member’s degree of*

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<sup>1</sup> The desired and anticipated job experience is informed by the incumbent’s personal values, needs and beliefs – especially about what is ‘good’, ‘right’, ‘appropriate’, ‘probable’ in a job and therefore the current job, but then also (and related to these considerations), those job features that are personally meaningful to the incumbent, to a greater or lesser extent.

*satisfaction with the profession, based on the member's appraisal of the extent to which the central features of the profession are, firstly, experienced; and secondly, aligned with the member's idealised concept of the profession; together with the member's feelings about this experience of the profession, which then result in a predisposition to act in a manner consistent with the member's beliefs and feelings about the profession”.*

Drawing on the definition of a profession as defined in section 2.3.3.2 profession satisfaction more specifically would convey the satisfaction of the member with the profession's salient and central features such as its:

- Specialisation focus and core purpose;
- Body of knowledge (and training and credentialing);
- Service orientation;
- Relationship with society-at-large and the public, and the recognition, respect and trust it enjoys from these stakeholders;
- Autonomy and self-regulation in its affairs;
- Ethical orientation and conduct;
- Professional identity and culture (e.g. values and norms); and the effectiveness and efficiency of the professional body (association) governing the profession on behalf of the members.

With this statement of job and profession satisfaction an affirmative response to the first research question (section 1.4.2) on the theoretical distinctiveness of job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession (profession satisfaction) can be provided. Objective 1(section 1.4.3) therefore has been attained. These theoretical definitions can now serve as a platform and theory frame for empirical exploration of the role of these concepts. Section 2.4 provides necessary context on the shortage of educators, and the role of job satisfaction and intention to leave / remain in this state of affairs

## **2.4 Educator shortage and its impact**

There is general agreement that the educator is the most influential school-related factor impacting the quality of a nation's education – a position borne out by extensive research (Hattie 2008). A major challenge though is that many educational systems

across the globe are confronted with a shortage of educators. Extensive research that investigated the reasons for this situation found that it is not the difficulty in sourcing and hiring educators, but instead the retention of educators in the profession that is the main challenge for schools and educational systems (Buckley, Schneider, and Shang 2005, McLeskey and Billingsley 2008, Steele, Murnane, and Willett 2010).

The teaching profession is viewed by educational researchers as a “revolving door” because educators either leave for better teaching jobs or they leave the profession altogether (Ingersoll 2001, 499). From this perspective the educator shortage is considered a function of educators’ ‘turnover intention’ (Ingersoll 2001, Ingersoll and Smith 2003). This is the underlying concern of researchers investigating the educator shortage...if the scarcity of educators is due to them exiting the profession (as opposed to an inadequate supply through universities), this would create numerous issues for education at a national level. As educators perform a crucial underpinning role in the success of an educational system, the loss of qualified, experienced and committed educators can be ill afforded and for this reason it is necessary to examine the considerations impacting on the retention of educators (Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer 2007, Carroll 2007, Guin 2004, Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff 2013). Traditionally, researchers have attributed issues associated with student learning and achievement to the scarcity of educators. Apart from the costs associated with the recruitment, training and the general loss of productivity due to an understaffed educator workforce, there is the added concern of disruption to the teaching and learning practice with its accompanying erosive impact on quality and coherence in the teaching community (Carroll 2005). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) have stressed that a high educator turnover will adversely impact on the school environment generally and student performance more specifically. Effective education relies extensively on collaboration (Guin 2004, Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff 2013), which is a function of collegial relationships and cohesive teams. As stated by Riney et al (2006, 5)*“without the continuity of the same group of educators working together over an extended period of time, the implementation of potentially effective programs is truncated”*. The development of cohesive and effective teams takes time to develop, but is severely disrupted when turnover occurs (Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff 2013). When focus is shifted to recruitment and rebuilding teams and relationships, other considerations such as the planning and delivery of educational programmes suffer.

In some quarters it is however also argued that educator turnover is not necessarily undesirable and may even be beneficial, as it may result in less involved, unmotivated and/or ineffective educators leaving. It also offers the possibility of appointing more motivated and effective educators, perhaps with better ideas and skills levels (Allensworth, Ponisciak, and Mazzeo 2009). However, in contrast to the conventional wisdom that more effective people are more likely to leave, several recent studies reported that, on average, the more effective educators are *less* likely to leave their schools, when compared to less effective educators (Boyd et al. 2010, Boyd, Lankford, et al. 2011, Goldhaber, Gross, and Player 2007, Hanushek and Rivkin 2010). Considering these results, the negative consequences of educator turnover are likely to be more pronounced. This is because educators that leave are likely to be replaced by educators who are, on average, less effective (Hanushek, Rivkin, and Kain 2005, Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger 2008, Marinell and Coca 2013, Rockoff 2004) and because of the low probability of finding suitably qualified educators to replace those who have left (Boyd et al. 2009). This process sets a ‘vicious cycle’ in motion because the turnover (loss) of educators invariably contributes to lower student performance, which in turn leads to increased turnover among educators (Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer 2007). Educator effectiveness essentially develops during the first few years after completing training (Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin 2004, Hanushek, Rivkin, and Kain 2005, Rockoff 2004, Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff 2013). However, even experienced practitioners (e.g. educators) take time to adapt, settle in and optimise performance e.g. following transfers or changing jobs. Where educational settings are characterised by the continuous arrival of new educators, this will unavoidably compromise efforts to develop and align programmes and eventually lead to declining educator effectiveness (Hanushek and Rivkin 2010). Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) have pointed out that inexperienced educators are less capable of implementing unfamiliar instructional programmes, simply because they lack essential knowledge and skills and this, according to Boyd et al. (2009), will show up in recurring mistakes rather than improvement and the implementation of reforms. From this perspective schools would be more successful in improving the quality of education if they directed more attention at the retention of their current educators.

Apart from the issue of educator effectiveness (experienced and inexperienced) as a consequence of turnover, replacing staff in itself sets back school functioning and may

adversely harm the development of school social resources (e.g. compromising trust among staff members, morale). The negative impact of instability in the educator cohort is such that institutional resources such as capacity, goal, morale, trust, social ties, educator knowledge and so forth, are substantially eroded (Holme and Rangel 2012). The re-establishment and development of social relationships take time as “*replacing one individual staff member with another necessarily entails replacing a series of existing social relationship (those that involve the leaver) with a set of brand new social relationships (those that involve the replacement)*” (Hanselman et al. 2016, 51). As Smethem (2007, 466) observed...“*It is, perhaps, no surprise then that retention rather than recruitment of teachers has become a pressing concern in many countries.*”

In general, research evidence concerning educator turnover is unambiguous. While some benefits could accrue from ‘replenishing’ demotivated and demoralised educators, these are largely negated by a great many adverse consequences associated with turnover. Retaining current staff remains the most sensible and productive strategy.

#### **2.4.1The Educator shortage in WA**

Consistent with the trend in other developed countries, Australia has been struggling to recruit and retain adequate numbers of educators (Shine 2015) – more so in regional and remote areas compared to their metropolitan counterparts (Weldon 2015). Over the past decade all Australian states and territories have experienced both an educator shortage and a shortfall of qualified educators (Shine 2015, Weldon 2015). For example, over the period July 2001 – July 2005 Australia lost a significant number of trained educators of which 5,819 were to the United Kingdom alone (Miller, Ochs, and Mulvaney 2008). The educator shortage, however, varies over time and from state to state: For Queensland and New South Wales, the shortage was most pronounced in 2008 and 2009. Victoria experienced a state-wide educator shortage from 2008 to 2011, while Western Australia experienced an extreme shortfall from 2006-2008.

More recent (national) data suggests that approximately 21,404 educators left their jobs in 2014, which highlights a severe educator shortage across the country (Willett, Segal, and Walford 2014). Of particular importance and quite alarming, is that approximately 30-50% of Australian educators intend to leave their jobs within their

first five years (Buchanan et al. 2013). To overcome the educator shortage, the Australian Educational Department applied ‘out-of-field teaching’. In 2012, for example, 40% of Year 7 to 10 mathematics classes were taught by ‘disqualified’ mathematics educators (Scientist 2014). Despite this, out-of-field teaching has been used widely to fill vacancies in fields where educator shortages were observed (QCT 2013 ). As a result this has been suggested as an indicator of educator shortages (Buchanan et al. 2013). The issues facing the educational system do not end here. The population boom and growth in immigration increased school enrolments, which when coupled with the educator shortage, posed additional challenges to the Australian education system. Nationally, the growth in student numbers is projected to increase by 26% by 2022, with the implication that the ratio of educators to students will continue to decrease (QCT 2013 ). Increases of 32% and 18% in student enrolments are estimated for primary and secondary schools respectively, which suggest supplementing the number of educators to respond effectively to this demand (QCT 2013 ). These estimates imply that the educator shortage will continue to increase and is expected to reach alarming levels in respect of specialist educators and specific fields (QCT 2013 ). In this regard (Hare 2012) has noted that an additional 46,000 educators will be required for the period 2016 to 2020.

A shortage of educators is also a serious problem in Western Australia, where this issue first emerged in 2006 - 2008 with a shortfall of 264 educators in the public sector. In Western Australia this challenge is more evident among secondary school educators in subjects such as English, Mathematics, Design, and Technology (QCT 2013 ). At the beginning of 2007 and 2008 for example, 80% of educator vacancies were observed for secondary school educators in public schools (QCT 2013 ). Consistent with the practice in other states, Western Australia has also applied out-of-field teaching as a strategy to cope with the educator shortage (McConney and Price 2009). McConney and Price (2009) observed that 123 or 24% of a sample of 529 educators had been teaching out-of-field from 2007 to 2008. However, no recent data is available to shed light on the pervasiveness of this strategy in Western Australian teaching (McConney and Price 2009).

More recently reported that Western Australia required an additional 3000 educators by the end of 2014, which in itself serves as an indicator of continuing educator

shortages in the State - especially in the secondary school sector (Shine 2015). A 2014 survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics predicted that the educator shortage will reach 314 154 by 2020, which represents an increase of 351 (additional) classes per year for the next 10 years (ABS 2014).

## **2.5 Job satisfaction and educators' intention to leave the profession**

Establishing why educators leave the teaching profession is difficult, due in a large part to the complexity of turnover intention, which relates to many different variables. Many researchers have invested significant time and energy in an attempt to answer the question of what prompts educators to move out of the profession. Initially it was reported that the educator shortage stemmed from the compounded effect of increasing student enrolment, an increasing rate of educator retirement and the undersupply of replacement educators. Even though these trends are part of the equation, some educator turnover is normal and expected (Flynt and Morton 2009). Subsequent, more fine-grained examination of the issue led researchers to conclude that educator shortages are more associated with educator job satisfaction than other factors. Following a series of turnover analyses Ingersoll and colleagues for instance found that many qualified educators abandon their teaching careers primarily because of job dissatisfaction and not due to retirement as has been argued by some (Ingersoll 2001, 2002, Ingersoll and Smith 2003). Their studies also indicated that several organisational factors contributed to low retention. Santoro (2011) similarly examined educator retention, but did so in relation to morale and educator satisfaction. Her study was concerned with the issue of what experienced educators, who were inspired by the moral dimension of teaching, do when they become demoralised and are unable to reap the moral rewards of the work (e.g. as a consequence of excessive demands). Her conclusions included that educators are responsible for their 'passions' and implied that avoidance of burnout would require moderation of their passions, but also that educators need to take responsibility for rebuilding their personal resources and capacities (Santoro 2011). A review of other studies focusing on educator job satisfaction and retention have demonstrated that educators' opinions about their jobs can influence their intention to leave / remain in the job (Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen 2008, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011). Moreover, it is also evident that educators who have left the profession because of low job satisfaction, are less likely

to return to teaching (Latham and Vogt 2007). Retention however is not only a challenge among established / experienced educators, but also a source of particular concern among novice educators. In this regard novice educators enter the field with significant enthusiasm but tend not to remain educators and after several years of teaching opt out of the occupation (Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin 2007, kardos and Johnson 2010, Watkins 2005, Wynn, Carboni, and Patall 2007). These ‘new’ educators often leave the profession within the first few years of teaching - in the USA within the first five years (cf. Ingersoll, Merrill, and Stuckey 2014), reportedly because of job dissatisfaction (Mau, Ellsworth, and Hawley 2008).

Research into educator turnover generally reveals job satisfaction as the primary contributor (Kazi and Zadeh 2011, Komal 2012, Mau, Ellsworth, and Hawley 2008, Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen 2008). When educator satisfaction levels decrease, an increase in educators’ decisions to leave the profession is observed (Komal 2012). Conversely, increased job satisfaction levels result in lower educator turnover rates. Furthermore, research findings also indicate that the teaching performance of satisfied educators are better than that of their discontented colleagues, since satisfied educators invest more time and energy into educating their students (Ali 2008, Bogler 2001, Bright 2008). Bogler (2001, 2002) has argued that educator job satisfaction enhances academic achievement, improves educator quality and has a significant impact on student outcomes. However, it has also been argued that educator job dissatisfaction causes stress and burnout (Pearson and Moomaw 2005, Peltzer et al. 2009). In general the literature on educator job satisfaction indicates that the majority of educators who conveyed intent to leave their jobs also reported a diminished level of job satisfaction (McCarthy et al. 2010, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011). Dissatisfaction has a high likelihood of manifesting in employees (mentally) withdrawing from the job, with an accompanying reduction of effort (Hom and Kinicki 2001) that, ultimately, could lead to reduced performance (Judge et al. 2001). Moreover, dissatisfied educators fronting up to classes is likely to negatively impact on students’ learning and eventually on the school. It follows logically that if dissatisfaction levels among educators are high, that schools and the education system will experience difficulty in accomplishing their student learning and achievement goals. Consistent with the gist of the literature on job satisfaction in general, advance knowledge of educators’ perceptions of their jobs

and consequently turnover intentions, will assist managers (system and school level) in gaining an understanding of required changes to prevent educator turnover.

### **2.5.1 Factors affecting educator satisfaction in the workplace**

Educators' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job depend on many factors, which could be as diverse as the location of the school, the support from colleagues, pay, a sense of self-fulfilment and many more (intrinsic rewards (e.g. Ghazi, Shahzada, and Shah 2012, Smethem, 2007). Mackenzie (2007), for example, drew attention to the multilayered social context in which educators engage in a range of tasks e.g. organisational, institutional and community entities - all of which are capable of impacting on educators' job satisfaction. A particularly prominent and influential factor is the working conditions at the school or facility where the educator renders his/her services (Simon and Johnson 2015). This is a consideration that has been demonstrated to play a significant role in educators' decision-making to change schools or leave the teaching profession (Bang et al. 2007, Crossman and Harris 2006) - more so than salary or pay considerations (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, and Luczak 2005). In this regard it has been reported by Buckley et al. (2005) that many educators might be willing to sacrifice salary levels in favour of enhanced working conditions. Ingersoll (2003) goes as far as to say that educators' dissatisfaction with various elements of working conditions are at the root of nationally observed educator shortages (Ingersoll 2003). Not unlike other socially responsible occupations (cf. Sachs 2003) the work (educational) setting comprises a multitude of factors and features that could potentially influence the educator's job satisfaction.

According to Grissom (2011) the most frequently cited characteristic of the educator's working conditions, which could impact job dissatisfaction and turnover intention, is a lack of administrative (or managerial) support. Where educators have more favourable perceptions of the school principal, higher levels of job satisfaction are reported (Grissom 2011). Consistent with this finding researchers have also demonstrated that educators are more likely to leave when they experience a lack of administrative support in their schools (Achinstein and Ogawa 2011).The underlying rationale is that where the administrators/managers are supportive, educators experience the job as less stressful, which contribute to higher levels of commitment to the organisation (Boyd, Grossman, et al. 2011) . For Billingsley (1993) the link

between administrator support and turnover/retention is to be expected as the former directly influences the educator's work conditions. Administrative support however spans a sizeable area and includes considerations such as educators' participation in school-level decision making, personal development, attending to educators' needs and several more. For example, educators who felt they were valued by their principals reported higher levels of job satisfaction and were more likely to remain in the profession (Grissom 2011, Leithwood and McAdie 2007). The converse is equally applicable: Where strained relationships with the principal were reported, educators were more likely to leave (Achinstein and Ogawa 2011). More specifically, when principals were viewed as supportive, effective and encouraging, higher levels of educator satisfaction were observed (Grissom 2011, Leithwood and McAdie 2007). Being educated, educators are perceptive and once they sense that they are excluded from decision making and / or have less autonomy in their jobs, will commence looking for opportunities where they may be more valued and respected (Pearson and Moomaw 2005). Administrative support practices, however, can also significantly facilitate the retention of 'new' educators (Boyd, Grossman, et al. 2011, Gonzalez, Brown, and Slate 2008) and it has been argued that induction programmes for new educators such (e.g. regular meetings) similarly contribute to an increase in new educators' job satisfaction (Brown and Wynn 2009, Hewitt 2009). For 'low income' schools with strained resources this may prove difficult and exacerbate the challenges to retain and maintain their new educators (Ingersoll 2001, Inman and Marlow 2004, Johnson et al. 2004). These findings suggest a strong relationship between effective (e.g. supportive) administrative practices and reduced turnover among educators.

The notion of support, however, is not limited to principals and managers, and extends in particular to peer support, which, in the form of collaboration is reported as being an effective method of enhancing educator job satisfaction, retention, effectiveness and student learning and achievement (Abdallah 2009). Several studies have indicated that educators who reported having positive colleagues and enjoyed cohesive teamwork, experienced higher levels of job satisfaction and reduced intentions to leave the profession (Klassen and Anderson 2009, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011, Stockard and Lehman 2004, Zembylas and Papanastasiou 2006). Collaborative relationship on curriculum and instructional matters, similarly, have been shown to reduce turnover among new educators (Stockard and Lehman 2004).

Of several other factors reported to influence job satisfaction and educator turnover, ‘school climate’ is quite salient (Allensworth, Ponisciak, and Mazzeo 2009, Johnson, Kraft, and Papay 2012). Gruenert (2008) characterises school climate as the attitude of people, but student misbehaviour and discipline problems are known to impact on the school climate and class management (Klassen and Chiu 2010). In educational settings where the rates of student misbehaviour are high, educators were less satisfied with their jobs and, because of the frustration experienced, more inclined to leave (Allensworth, Ponisciak, and Mazzeo 2009, Liu and Meyer 2005). Educators have also reported a lack of support with discipline issues (Gonzalez, Brown, and Slate 2008), while some researchers have reported that unmanageable discipline issues are some of the main reasons for educators becoming frustrated and stressed (Cothran, Kulinna, and Garrahy 2009). Importantly, student misbehaviour not only contributes to educator dissatisfaction, but has been demonstrated to contribute also to dissatisfaction with *teaching profession* and prompting decisions to leave the profession as opposed to the job (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011). Of particular significance is the observation that student misbehaviour has the potential to negatively affect the wellbeing of educators (Spilt, Koomen, and Thijs 2011). This is more pronounced in rural areas that are geographically isolated. Educators are likely to experience difficulty in adjusting to the culture, and may feel socially isolated (Maranto and Shuls 2012). Such circumstances, combined with a lack of parental support (e.g. in dealing with student misbehaviour) and lower pay levels, make teaching in rural schools a major challenge, which leads to job dissatisfaction and turnover (Cowen et al. 2012).

Educator workload is similarly prominent as a contributor to educators’ job satisfaction and their decisions to leave the profession. Numerous studies have demonstrated the consequences of high workloads and work pressure on educators’ job satisfaction and their intention to leave the profession (Chughati and Perveen 2013, Liu and Onwuegbuzie 2012). Workload usually results in educators working outside school hours (Philipp and Kunter 2013) with typical factors contributing to workload being preparation, marking, curriculum implementation, and writing reports (Dibbon 2004, Naylor and White 2010, Philipp and Kunter 2013). In such workplaces and circumstances, educators are likely to experience lowered morale and a higher level of pressure, which could facilitate their movement out of the profession (Troman and Woods 2000). Research generally indicates that educator workload is a significant

contributing factor to low levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of stress, burnout, depression, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention (Collie, Shapka, and Perry 2012, Ferguson, Frost, and Hall 2012, Klassen and Chiu 2010, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2009).

A widely reported factor that could influence educator job satisfaction and retention is compensation and benefits. Educator salary is reported to be an influential contributor to job satisfaction (Abdullah, Uli, and Parasuraman 2009, Akiri and Ugborugbo 2009, Kearney 2008, Mora, Garcia-Aracil, and Vila 2007, Muquongo, Muguna, and Muriithi 2015, Tickle, Chang, and Kim 2011). In this regard some educators have indicated low salary levels as the foremost reason for leaving the profession (Liu and Ramsey 2008) and it follows logically that educational researchers would suggest improved pay structures to increase retention of educators (Abdullah, Uli, and Parasuraman 2009, Tickle, Chang, and Kim 2011).

Of the many other factors that could influence educator job satisfaction, self-efficacy is also one of the more recognised contributors to educator job satisfaction. The concept of self-efficacy generally refers to a person's belief in his or her ability to be successful in a particular situation (Bandura 1993). Within the education field, self-efficacy would refer to the extent that an educator feels s/he is able to influence the success of his/her students (Mojavezi and Tamiz 2012, Tschanen-Moran and Johnson 2011). Educators who believed that they could influence students' achievements, reported higher levels of job satisfaction (Caprara et al. 2006, Moè, Pazzaglia, and Ronconi 2010). Moreover, researchers also report that self-efficacy is a potential factor in determining the educator's turnover intention (Bruinsma and Jansen 2010, Chesnut and Burley 2015).

These observations about the research on educator job satisfaction and turnover intention is consistent with the extant knowledge on job satisfaction more generally. The circumstances within which the educator performs his/her work however embody multiple factors which individually, but more so in combination, could reduce levels of job satisfaction to the extent that educators will develop and harbour intentions to leave the job and the profession. These constructs account primarily for the experienced educator shortages reported at state, national and international levels.

## **2.6 Summary and conclusion**

Against the backdrop of the research questions and objectives justified in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 aimed to provide a review of the relevant, existing knowledge that would frame this research focus. As such it provides the context for also considering the subsequent findings of the empirical study.

In essence the literature review offers insights into the existing knowledge on job satisfaction more generally, and job satisfaction among educators more specifically. The review, in particular, considers the relationship of job satisfaction with the very important indicator variable, ‘turnover intention’.

More specifically, this review provided an overview of the body of knowledge in respect of job satisfaction and focused on different operational definitions and their significance, but also the different theories that have provided the platform for research into the construct. Apart from observing that employee motivation and employee job satisfaction are closely related, the literature indicates that job satisfaction materially influences employees’ decisions to leave or remain in a job. On the basis of the extant literature, *intention to leave* is argued to be a better (stronger) predictor of actual turnover. This is so because the intention to leave is the last event or step that precedes the employee’s decision of physically and permanently leaving his/her current employment. Moreover, the literature review indicates that the link between job satisfaction and intention to leave relates to employees’ perceptions about their job. When their expectations are not met in their workplace, they are likely to leave.

Although the impact of job satisfaction on the intention to *leave* the profession has been studied extensively, little attention has been given to an investigation of an employee’s satisfaction with his/her occupation or profession and the impact of such satisfaction on intention to leave the occupation / profession.

The discussion, directed by the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, consequently considered the notion of educator satisfaction with the profession or ‘profession satisfaction’ more specifically. Although some of the literature on occasion made reference to satisfaction with the profession, such references had no bearing on the specific meaning implied if the phrase were to be used as a stand-alone or context-free concept. As a result a section of the discussion also set about to review pertinent

literature that would allow a conclusion about the theoretical distinctiveness of ‘profession satisfaction’ when compared to ‘job satisfaction’. It was argued that satisfaction with the occupation or profession (i.e., profession satisfaction), as with job satisfaction, influences people’s intention to leave the profession. This argument is based on the logic that a decision to seek employment in an entirely different field, not only constitutes a decision to leave a job (and therefore a degree of job dissatisfaction) but also a decision to leave the occupation or profession (and therefore a degree of dissatisfaction with the profession). Satisfaction with the profession (profession satisfaction) has not been examined by prior research, but evidence for the existence of this construct is embedded in the occupational commitment and career satisfaction literature as well as in the findings of studies that reported the predictors of intention to leave the profession. Extending this discussion, the grounding concepts of a ‘job’ and a ‘profession’ were then subjected to closer scrutiny as input for considering differences in job satisfaction and profession satisfaction. Apart from establishing theoretical legitimacy for the existence of the two concepts, this research also ensured a more considered review of the conceptual boundaries of these two concepts and resulted in the re-specification of the ‘job satisfaction’ concept and the specification of the ‘profession satisfaction’ concept. In so doing, the review of the relevant literature also enabled the completion of research objective 1(section 1.4.3), which creates a theoretical frame with which to empirically explore job and profession satisfaction.

In the second part of the review, the concept of job satisfaction and turnover intention were considered in the context of the education profession and more specifically the reported educator shortages – as also observed in Western Australia. The review revealed that the intention to leave the profession is the main cause of the observed shortage of educators in Australia (nationally), but also at the State (Western Australia) level. The intention to leave the profession stems from low levels of job satisfaction, which in turn contributes to the reported educator shortages. The reviewed research further suggested that attention be directed at job satisfaction (the factors that contribute to low job satisfaction) in order to reduce turnover intention among educators. This study, however, will explore both the job and profession satisfaction constructs in relation to educators’ turnover intentions.

Chapter 3, will detail the design and methodology for an empirical study through which to give effect to the research objectives of the study and respond to the posed research questions.

# **Chapter 3: Methodology**

## **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 1, in providing an overview of the focus, fundamental research question and related considerations of this study, serves as context for Chapter 3. This chapter aims to establish a process through which answers to the research question(s) can be obtained. It consequently focuses on the design and methodology, and hence execution of an empirical study. To this end the study more broadly aims to gain an understanding of the presence (and role) of notions such as job satisfaction and profession satisfaction in educators' experience of teaching, and to determine whether this relates to their intention to remain or leave the occupation ('profession'). While job satisfaction is extensively researched, mostly through quantitative methodologies, a singular focus on this construct would assume that there are no other 'satisfaction' constructs applicable to the work situation of employees. It was proposed that satisfaction with the profession, as distinct from the job, might also have a role in explaining why educators leave (or remain) in the profession. This notion, however, is substantially under-researched and was previously regarded as being synonymous with job satisfaction. To establish whether this is the case, an exploratory study was envisaged to reveal the existence or otherwise of the different satisfaction constructs and what role (if any) they perform in the experiences and turnover of educators. The study accordingly attempts to generate a theory grounded in empiricism that provides clarity on the differences between educators' job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession, but also the dynamics associated with educator turnover in the workplace. The interpretive research paradigm (and the constructivist tradition more specifically) with an implied qualitative research design and method, were indicated by the nature of the research question(s) and the prevailing state of knowledge on profession satisfaction. Such an approach will enable the Researcher to respond confidently to the major research question posed by the study and will require the gathering of rich, detailed descriptions of educators' views and experiences of the teaching job and profession. A Grounded Theory design relying primarily on open-ended interviews for data gathering purposes ensures an inductive approach that would culminate in an empirically-derived theoretical 'product' (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The ensuing discussion outlines the design and methodological choices and considerations that will

give effect to the study and commences with an introduction to the relevant scientific worldview and guiding research paradigm.

### **3.2 Scientific worldview and guiding research paradigm**

A paradigm, viewed simplistically, is a worldview characterised by theories, practices, concepts, beliefs and assumptions – all concerned with the nature of reality (ontology), knowledge of this reality (epistemology) and the particular ways (i.e., methodology) of knowing or understanding this reality (Crabtree and Miller 1992, Guba and Lincoln 1994, Guba and Lincoln 2005). Paradigms are implicit and, usually unbeknown to the beholder, exert a powerful influence on how a person would view and act on the world. A researcher's beliefs and assumptions about science will similarly influence how s/he views, approaches, designs, and interprets research (Guba and Lincoln 1994). In this manner unconscious bias could transfer to research. To minimise such threats to the credibility of the research, the researcher's scientific worldview or guiding paradigm is usually clearly stated. Apart from contributing to a coherent and logical research approach, an explicit stance will guide design considerations and direct methodology decisions (Guba and Lincoln 1994). The scientific worldview or guiding research paradigm of the researcher will usually provide a clear statement of (aligned) ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Ontology, defined as the “*science or study of being and existence*” (Blaikie 1993, 6), is regarded as one of the most significant concepts in the philosophy of science. It is concerned with (assumptions about) the form and nature of reality (Guba and Lincoln 1994). How reality is viewed and defined, i.e., the *ontological assumptions*, will determine the nature of information or knowledge about this reality.

Burrell and Morgan (1979, 21-37) analysed an extensive range of social theories from which they developed a ‘meta-framework’ consisting of four mutually exclusive sociological paradigms. Each of these research paradigms holds a distinct view and set of assumptions about the nature of the social world, science and by implication research. Of the four fundamental sociological research paradigms outlined by the authors - the *Functionalist* (also referred to as the *positivist* paradigm), the *Interpretive* or *phenomenological*, the *Radical Humanist* and the *Radical Structuralist*, it is mostly the first two that give rise to predominantly quantitative and qualitative research designs. The *functionalist* research paradigm maintains an objectivist point of view

(i.e., separate from the researcher... ‘out there’) and is characterised by the rational explanation of phenomena, and attempts to find practical, logical solutions to challenges. By contrast the *interpretive* research paradigm embraces a view of the world as originating from within the individual participant’s consciousness (not that of the researcher) and is therefore fundamentally subjective (e.g. inseparable from the person..., i.e., ‘in here’). According to the authors these paradigms convey the researcher’s personal stance with regard to social theory and clarifies why specific theories and perspectives have selective appeal (Burrell and Morgan 1979).

Although many different and alternative systems for categorising research paradigms have since emerged, the broad positivist and interpretive (meta-) paradigms, still prevail in one way or another (with many more micro-focused ‘paradigms’ advanced – cf. Denzin and Lincoln 2005, Guba and Lincoln 2005). Researchers still most commonly locate their research in either of the broad positivist or the interpretive (meta-) paradigms, which, because of their opposing beliefs and assumptions, often led to extensive debate and controversy (e.g. the so-called ‘paradigm wars’ - see Anderson and Herr 1999, Denzin 2008, Gage, 1989).

This is because of the very different and deeply opposing ontologies they embody – concerned with how natural phenomena are identified within the social sciences e.g. does a ‘physical’ world truly exist? This is illustrated, for example, with (Porta and Keating 2008, 21) distinction between realist and nominalist approaches, which restate the basic functionalist and interpretive orientations. Realists view reality as being objective, independent of human reality, i.e., existing outside an individuals’ perception (“*the categories are there to be discovered*” - (Porta and Keating 2008, 21). Phenomena under examination are consequently described as “hard”. Nominalists align with the interpretive paradigm, believe that reality is subjective and that phenomena being examined are ‘soft’ and, because this is dependent on human observation and experience, is contextually informed - “*categories only exist because we arbitrarily create them*” (Porta and Keating 2008, 21).

**Epistemology** On the other hand, defines what can be known and how it can be known and, by implication, addresses the nature of the relationship that exists between the inquirer and the known (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, Guba and Lincoln 1994).

It is concerned with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge (Carter and Little 2007) and essentially captures the researcher's philosophy of knowledge. The latter refers to the rules and directives by which the researcher decides how phenomena or philosophical issues are to be discovered (Krauss 2005). When social reality is viewed from an interpretive frame, i.e., subjectively, the researcher's theory of knowledge will regard people's interactions, experiences and understandings as sources of knowledge. The researcher's epistemology is inseparably linked to his/her ontology – in this instance that people interact and develop or 'construct' social reality through the meanings that they create about the events in their social context. Stake (1995, 22) exemplifies this position when he states "*the world we know is a particularly human construction*". Meaning, consequently, is largely built upon individuals' interpretations rather than awareness of an external reality (Stake 1995).

For the current study the application of a functionalist, realist frame is inappropriate. This relates to the constructs of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction, which are not objectively discernable and are uniquely personal to the educator. In this instance the Researcher does not believe that human experience is observable or categorical and measureable, and accepts Carr and Kemmis' (1986) premise that individual experience is unique and only exists within the context of the individual's experience of it. The interpretive paradigm, however, is clearly applicable because of the personal and subjectively lived and experienced nature of educators' views and sentiments about teaching as a job and profession.

Constructivism, which is subsumed under the interpretive meta-paradigm, was consequently selected for this study, to gain an understanding of participants' viewpoints and intuitive knowledge, which are embedded in their personal feelings, attitudes, beliefs and experiences (Crotty 1998). This will allow the researcher to generate a theory or pattern of meanings (Creswell 2003). Guba and Lincoln (1994) furthermore have argued that constructivism subscribes to a relativist ontology because it acknowledges the existence of "*multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature*"(Guba and Lincoln 1994, 110). Crotty (1998) defined constructivism more elaborately as "*the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their*

*world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context*" (Crotty 1998, 42) . From this definition it is clear that the multiple realities to which Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer, are person-specific and constructed from each person's (or participant's) multitude of varied experiences (Guba and Lincoln 1994, Guba and Lincoln 2005). However, because they are changeable (being associated with specific *impermanent* realities in a vast sea of experiences) and, secondly, extensively shared among individuals and cultures (Guba and Lincoln 1994, Guba and Lincoln 2005), collectively held constructions of social reality come into existence.

It is through interaction between the researcher and the study's participants that an understanding of the phenomena will be secured (Guba and Lincoln 2005). The methodology of a study, in principle, is inextricably dependent on the epistemological and ontological position adopted by the researcher: When the world is viewed as subjective and socially constructed, knowledge of this reality assumes a subjective, personal and intangible form – embedded in experiences, thoughts, memories and feelings of the participants. Such knowledge can only be accessed, logically, through methodologies that are traditionally regarded as 'qualitative' in nature, i.e., observation, interviewing, etc.

In this study, reality is highly dependent on the participants' views and interpretations, which are influenced by their experiences. To arrive at a theory then that explains how educators' experience of teaching relates to their behaviour e.g. to remain in the job and or profession of teaching, implies that their (subjective) individual perspectives and experiences need to be accessed and understood. Reality consequently is viewed as subjectivist, social, pluralistic and contextualised, and resides in the individual educator's mind (Schwandt 1994). This in turn means that a chosen methodology should be capable of extracting and capturing participants' unique perspectives and experiences - acknowledging that a group of educators would construct meaning in a variety of ways, including commonly experienced situations (Crotty 1998). The choice of an appropriate design and methodology is the subject of discussion in the remainder of this chapter.

### **3.3 Choice of a qualitative design and method**

The interpretive research paradigm informing this study, will allow the researcher to gain a new and rich understanding of the core social-psychological processes within

the educator cohort (Morse et al. 2009) and as a result explain the differences between educator satisfaction with their job and profession respectively. This in turn will make it possible to advance a conceptual framework incorporating contextually appropriate and contemporary, relevant constructs of satisfaction. The choice of a qualitative method means that a descriptive and interpretive picture (Leedy and Ormrod 2010) of participants' perceptions and sense of satisfaction with their job and profession will be obtained. In this manner the study is exploratory and observations will be emergent – consistent with Creswell's (1998, 18) position. Qualitative methods are appropriate when research seeks answers to questions about how meaning is created (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). In this study the qualitative method will allow the researcher to investigate the meaning of teaching... what it means to the participants and how their teaching experiences shape their perceptions about teaching as a job and a profession. The literature review in Chapter 2 concluded that job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct that is imperfectly measured and understood, suggesting further (deeper) exploration of educators' perceptions of it. The choice of a qualitative method in this study should make the phenomenon of satisfaction in the workplace more visible. It will do so by "*attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them*" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, 3).

Case studies, phenomenological and ethnomethodological methods, Grounded Theory, biographical and autoethnographic, historical, action and clinical methods represent some of the "*strategies of inquiry*" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, 21) that are commonly employed to operationalise a qualitative design. Of these, Grounded Theory was selected to analyse the latent structure in the narrative data that will be obtained from prospective participants (Glaser 2008). This will reveal new patterns of behaviour in the area of employee satisfaction. Apart from Grounded theory being an effective method for comprehending unfolding processes such as job satisfaction, it will contribute significantly to knowledge about educators' satisfaction with their profession - an area in which limited empirical evidence exist. Grounded Theory scholars concur that it is an appropriate method for exploring novel territory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), i.e., when "*all of the concepts pertaining to a given phenomenon have not yet been identified ... or, if so, then the relationships between the concepts are poorly understood or conceptually undeveloped*" (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 40-41). Profession satisfaction resides firmly in this category and hence this study. The

appropriateness of Grounded Theory as methodology for this study then is also because it allows the researcher to explore and explain the meanings, nature and boundaries of profession satisfaction as an unknown conceptual territory (Glaser 2002).

The study's 'fit' with Grounded Theory is also evidenced from (Grbich 2007, 70) position, namely, it is appropriate "*when there is a need for new theoretical explanations built on previous knowledge to explain changes in the field*". Although substantially researched (mostly quantitative methodologies) the organisational context of job satisfaction but also the nature of the job itself have been undergoing continuous change (Grant and Parker 2009, Humphrey, Nahrgang, and Morgeson 2007, Oldham and Hackman 2010). This suggests that the use of Grounded Theory in this study could provide an updated 'picture' of employee job satisfaction in today's workplace. It follows that the next generation of job satisfaction scholars must begin to offer theoretical frameworks that account for the increasing complexity as a result of constant change in the structure of work and organisations, and consequently employees' attitudes toward their jobs. The nature and methodological considerations of Grounded Theory are further elaborated in section 3.4.

## **3.4 Grounded Theory**

### **3.4.1 The nature of Grounded Theory**

Glaser and Strauss have stated that Grounded Theory, defined as "*the discovery of theory from data*" Glaser and Strauss (1967, 1) has substantial exploratory power and allows researchers to generate theory from systematically gathered data Glaser and Strauss (1967). It is a qualitative method commonly employed in social research, which enables researchers to investigate the social processes that give rise to peoples' behaviours in a particular social setting. At the same time it also provides a framework that will allow the emergence of theories about the origins and causes of such behaviour. As Creswell states, Grounded Theory "*attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in the study*" (Creswell 2003 14). Similarly, Fassinger outlines that Grounded Theory research aims to produce a new theory that is grounded in data obtained from participants on the basis of their experiences (Fassinger 2005). The central focus according to (Morse et al. 2009) is to develop an understanding of the

“core social and social-psychological processes” that determine a phenomenon in a research field. It is a method that allows theory to emerge “*from the data and that account for the data*” (Charmaz 2008, 157). Grounded Theory has the ability to empirically explain ‘what is going on’ in the world of a phenomenon (Glaser 2010), yet at the same time generate theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon being researched (Fassinger 2005).

The methodology of Grounded Theory is inductive (Corbin and Strauss 2008). It starts with the empirical world and finishes with an inductive understanding of it...it describes the issue and its solution (Charmaz 2008). This methodology assists researchers to advance a theory that is grounded in the data, through an approach that is inductive rather than deductive and is derived from interacting with the data (Bryant and Charmaz 2007, Charmaz 2006, Creswell 2013). According to Glaser (1998, 27) the Grounded Theory methodology enables researchers to “*enter the field and collect and analyse whatever data is available in a way that transcends particularistic detail, thereby enabling the emergence and conceptualization of the latent patterns*” and it focuses on participant perspectives, providing “*opportunities to articulate their thoughts about issues they consider important, allowing them to reflect on these issues of concern to gain understanding and acquire new insights*” (Glaser 1998, 32).

The central focus for the Grounded Theory researcher when entering the field to investigate a substantive area of research interest, would be to explore the main concerns to participants (Glaser 1998). The researcher should not be influenced by any preconceived ideas during the process of data collection and analysis. This practice will minimise bias and ensure that the researcher remains “*open to what is actually happening*” (Glaser 1978, 3) in the population. Moreover, researchers “*remain sensitive to the data by being able to record events and detect happenings without first having them filtered through ... pre-existing hypotheses and biases*” (Glaser 1978, 3). The researcher essentially should aim to explore and clarify what is actually happening, rather than reverting to pre-existing ideas. Grounded Theory consequently focuses on exploring behaviours in a particular social context and generates a substantive theory, i.e., an “*integrated set of conceptual hypotheses that account for much of the behaviour seen in a substantive area*” (Glaser 1998, 3).

Generally, to minimise bias or pre-existing perceptions in respect of the research focus, the researcher should not start with a review of the literature on the topic prior to doing the research. Grounded Theory scholars suggest non-adherence to this procedure will threaten the credibility of the product of the research (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Rather, the review of the literature commences after the final phase of the study. In so doing the research will avoid “*being constrained and even stifled in terms of creative efforts by our knowledge of it*” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 50). At the same time, this will allow researchers to explore what is really going on, based solely on participants’ data (words). It is only when the research is at an advanced stage when grounded theorists should conduct an extensive review of the literature to “*relate the theory to [to the literature] through the integration of ideas*” (Glaser 1978, 31). This, however, does not preclude an initial review of the literature prior to the commencement of data collection and analysis to provide a point of departure for the research. Nevertheless; “*a critical tenet of grounded theory is to minimize, not encourage, preconceptions*” (Simmons 2011, 26). Generally, the Grounded Theory researcher does not seek to address research objectives, hypotheses or any predetermined ideas (Glaser 1978, Simmons 2010). Rather, they are interested in discovering the participants’ views and concerns about a particular phenomenon (Simmons 2011).

The current study adapted this approach in minor ways. Apart from the customary and initial dive into the literature to establish valid research needs and questions – in particular given the extensive research on the topic of job satisfaction – a narrowly focused review on the nature of ‘jobs’ and ‘professions’ was required. This was necessary to develop an analysis frame for advanced phases of coding the educator data. Because of the generic focus of this topic, this will not contaminate subsequent empirical work.

### **3.4.2 The Historical origins and development of Grounded Theory**

#### **3.4.2.1 Glaser and Strauss**

Grounded Theory came into existence in the late 1960s, through the collaborative research of Glaser and Strauss in the area of sociology. Hailing from different methodological backgrounds, Glaser and Strauss’ focused on “*developing a theory grounded fully in data rather than speculation or ideology*” (Simmons 2010, 15). At

that time, qualitative research had received less attention from researchers, when compared to quantitative research. In developing Grounded Theory, Glaser and Strauss enhanced the standing of qualitative research from being viewed only as a descriptive approach to that of a method that could uncover social processes and construct substantive theories (Charmaz 2006, 2014, Glaser and Strauss 1967) . In their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), they state “*we address ourselves to the equally important enterprise of how the discovery of theory from data – systematically obtained and analysed in social research – can be furthered*” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 1). Their core objective in developing Grounded Theory was to “*close the gap between theory and empirical research*”, to improve the “*capacity for generating theory ... relevant to their research*”, to “*develop canons more suited to the discovery of theory*” and to “*help release energies for theorizing that [were] frozen by the undue emphasis on verification*” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, vii- viii). The fundamental requirements for the use of Grounded Theory were that “*(1) it should fit the substantive area in which it will be used; (2) it should be generalisable to other situations or circumstances of the phenomenon; (3) it should be understandable by laypersons and practitioners concerned with the area or phenomenon; and (4) it should allow for control as the phenomenon changes over time*” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 237).

### **3.4.2.2 Strauss and Corbin**

With time Grounded Theory has evolved through several iterations, the onset of the first following from Strauss distancing him from the original philosophy of Grounded Theory and linking up with Juliet Corbin. Conceptualisation versus description was the core of the debate and split between Glaser and Strauss, predominantly in areas of methodology and the role of the researcher during data analysis. This methodological split between these two approaches led to two versions of Grounded Theory: the Glaserian paradigm and the Straussian paradigm. The latter is more closely aligned with the positivist paradigm and places a strong emphasis on exploring a specific and detailed description of an individual’s experiences. It accepts the existence of an objective external reality and favours a technical data analysis approach and procedure which includes open, axial and selective coding methods (Strauss and Corbin 1994). Glaser rejected Strauss’s approach and argued that this version of Grounded Theory deviated from the original version and embraced a methodology that was incompatible

with the nature of Grounded Theory, which he labelled a “*full conceptual description*” (Glaser 1992, 22) . Glaser further argued that Strauss’s approach is prescriptive, in particular the data analysis procedure and the imposition of this onto different forms of empirical material and research contexts. In this regard Strauss’ focus on axial coding was criticised for being too fragmented and forcing a predetermined theoretical framework onto the data (Glaser 1992). Glaser (1992) encouraged a focus on open and selective coding only and placed a greater emphasis on the theoretical concepts emerging from the data. A central concern in this debate was the fact that axial coding was not part of the original Grounded Theory. With the addition of axial coding to the coding procedure Strauss and Corbin attempted to introduce greater rigour into the methodology. They argued that axial coding offered a more in-depth examination of the codes and their properties largely because it is more iterative and requires the researcher to conduct multiple rounds of evaluation, notably of the relationships across the categories. This would result in a better ‘picture’ of the theoretical story behind the data. Glaser on the other hand believes that axial coding is unnecessary, since the world is socially construed, in latent patterns that will be explored when Grounded Theory is applied, and the common patterns existing in the culture of the participants, have been explained by the Generated Theory. Glaser suggested that participants in Grounded Theory studies are key members of the research and that the theory should be developed predominantly from the data analysis, while the researcher retains a minimalist role (e.g. passive and unbiased). This is in contrast to the Straussian position which views researchers “*as a participatory interact*”(Strauss and Corbin 1994, 278).

### **3.4.2.3 Constructivist Grounded Theory**

Researchers have since introduced other versions of Grounded Theory e.g. Clarke 2003. Noteworthy, (Charmaz 2000, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2014) developed the so-called ‘Constructivist Grounded Theory’, which is known as the contemporary version of Grounded Theory. Constructivist Grounded Theory has its roots in pragmatist philosophy, which “*assumes society, reality and self are constructed through interaction*”(Charmaz 2006, 7). In contrast to the original Grounded Theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), constructivist Grounded Theory affords greater attention to *both* the participant’s and the interviewer’s views, rather than the actual method (Charmaz 2006). Charmaz argued that Glaser’s Grounded Theory is unconcerned with

*“the social context from which the data emerge”* (Charmaz 2006, 131). From a Constructivist perspective, the researchers endeavour to build a feeling of reciprocity (Mills, Bonner, and Francis 2006) and have an influence on the process of interviewing and consequently the outcomes that emerge from the interview (Charmaz 2006). Charmaz in essence views the theory generated from a Grounded Theory study as the outcome of the interaction between the researcher, the interviewees and the social context within which the study is being conducted (Charmaz 2006). In this approach the researcher has to account for his/her involvement in the process of interviewing and consequently the outcomes of the study (Ahern 1999, Gearing 2004). The researcher in a constructivist Grounded Theory study is therefore a reflexive interactant and a variable in the process of data analysis (Charmaz 2008, 2009, Clarke 2003, Heath and Cowley 2004). This position, however, goes against the tenets of the original Grounded Theory.

Glaser also rejects Constructivist Grounded Theory because he believes this version of Grounded Theory *“depends on the researcher’s view”* (Charmaz 2006, 130). He has also critiqued this version for not truly meeting the criteria of Grounded Theory methodology and has published several articles to explain and defend the original model of Grounded Theory, as well as distinguishing and categorising his original methodology from the newer versions of Grounded Theory (Glaser 2007, 2009, 2010, Glaser and Holton 2007). Although Glaser does not view the social context within which the research is conducted as unimportant, he believes that it is only the participants’ opinions that must be explored in Grounded Theory - not the researcher’s opinions or experiences. The researcher should maintain an objective view of the phenomena under research (Glaser 2007), i.e., that which is important to explore does not equate to that which is important to the researcher. Instead, the researcher should focus on that which is relevant to the participants, in order to *“generate a theory that is systematically grounded in data at all stages”* (Simmons 2011, 21). The original version of Grounded Theory became known as the ‘classic’ or ‘Glaserian’ grounded theory. As Simmons notes, many researchers have “misrepresented, misconstrued, [and] distorted” *“the original methodology to the point that much of what is called grounded theory has become a bit alien to classic grounded theorists who still honor its primary purpose, intent, and origins”* (Simmons 2010, 16). Notwithstanding the differences in approach, Grounded Theory remains *“a way of thinking about data -*

*processes of conceptualization - of theorizing from data, so that the end result is a theory that the scientist produces from data collected by interviewing and observing everyday life*” (Morse et al. 2009, 18). Researchers who use Glaser’s version of Grounded Theory often label this methodology in their research as ‘Classic Grounded Theory’ or ‘Glaserian’ in order to differentiate their work from that of others who are using different versions of Grounded Theory.

### **3.4.2.4 The current study**

For its focus on participant perspectives, Grounded Theory was considered an appropriate approach for this study - especially because of the complexity and confusion that exist in the area of job satisfaction research.

Following scrutiny of the dominant Grounded Theory approaches, it was concluded that an approach that largely draws on the classic or Glaserian version (Glaser and Strauss 1967) elaborated with Strauss and Corbin’s coding and analysis procedure, would best suit the focus of the study. The reasoning for this position is:

- The central tenets of Grounded Theory as originally outlined and emphasised by Glaser and Strauss (1967) apply,
- Secondly, the coding methodology of Strauss and Corbin (1994) is particularly suited to explore the relationships between satisfaction constructs and turnover intention – some of which have been described in fair detail (e.g. job satisfaction); and
- Thirdly, the researcher role in the research process is acknowledged beyond Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) allowance for this. However, this role is not viewed with a similar emphasis as found in Constructive Grounded Theory Charmaz 2006 largely for the same reason that axial coding is considered beneficial.

Constructing a theory from educators’ responses - their experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, emotions, reactions – extend beyond a description of the events that will be captured. While Strauss’ approach of conceptual description compared to Glaser’s approach seems to offer an inclusive explanation of Grounded Theory, its utilisation as the only method would impact emergent theory. On the other hand, Glaser’s approach tends to over emphasise abstract conceptualisation with categories being based on indicators only and not enabling the more focused exploration and

interpretation of the ideas, actions, and experiences of participants as the axial coding process would. As Morse et al. (2009, 131) explain: “*We interpret our research participants’ actions and interpretations and try to locate their situations in the relevant circumstances. We try to get it right in the sense of trying to understand our research participants’ beliefs, their purposes, the actions they take, and reasons for their actions and inactions from their perspective*”. Incorporating both Glaserian and Straussian approaches in this study therefore ensures a systematic procedure (structure) combined with a theoretical product.

### **3.5 The Grounded Theory methodology**

The methodology of Grounded Theory is specific and follows a systematic approach that involves several rounds of analyses. It generates theory through the simultaneous procedural steps of data collection, constant comparison, coding, theoretical sampling, memoing, sorting and writing up. The Researcher engaged in all of these steps, but not sequentially as the method involves frequently moving back and forth between the data and the evolving analysis (Charmaz 2006). The researcher continually and systematically compares and analyses, among other through constant reflection and conceptualisation – with the aim of discovering patterns in the social reality of the phenomena under study (Glaser 1978, 1998, 2005). “*Reality as found and collected shapes an emergent theory*” (Glaser 2003, 82).

In the following section the various though non-sequential procedural steps in the Grounded Theory method are briefly explained, commencing with data collection.

#### **3.5.1 Data collection and theoretical sampling**

According to Glaser (2001), in a Grounded Theory study everything can be considered data... anything that indicates an initial point at which to start data collection can be considered suitable and as contributing to the discovery of theory. This can be interviews, researchers’ observations, field notes and any other accessible data sources that can be used for the purposes of analysing and building theory. Conducting interviews with participants is the most common source of data in qualitative research, including the Grounded Theory method.

Researchers use a theoretical sampling process in Grounded Theory studies to collect data from which to develop theory (Robson 2002). Theoretical sampling is a type of

purposive sampling (Patton 1990, Robson 2002). In contrast to selective sampling, theoretical sampling “*cannot know in advance precisely what to sample for and where it will lead*” (Glaser 1978, 37). Theoretical sampling “*is a process of data collection for generating theory where the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop theory as it emerges*” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 45) . Theoretical sampling is a back-and-forth process that happens several times throughout the research. Data is collected and analysed (simultaneously) and further data collection is guided by the analysed data. When some primary codes are detected, the researcher returns to the field to collect more data with the intention of achieving code saturation.

Theoretical sampling is very important to Grounded Theory for two main reasons. The first is that theoretical sampling controls the procedure of data collection through the concepts being generated out of the gathered data—not principally based on a preconceived framework or hypothesis (Glaser 1978). Although this does not mean that researchers cannot target a specific population to investigate, the idea is that the researchers may not be completely certain of where the theoretical sampling will lead, in order to reduce the probability of bias towards a specific area of interest (Glaser 1978). The second reason is that theoretical sampling allows the researcher to do a comparison between different subcategories in order to discover the relevant categories for a specific theme (Glaser, 1978). It allows researchers to “*compare ideational characteristics of groups that in turn delineate behavioral and attitudinal patterns*” (Glaser 1978, 44). The researcher can advance and improve tentative categories of findings when reaching code saturation. Saturation occurs when all data has been coded into categories and no new properties emerge as the researcher codes and analyses the data (Charmaz 2006, Glaser 1978).

### **3.5.2 Constant comparative analysis**

Constant comparative analysis refers to a specific method of analysing data in Grounded Theory studies (Charmaz 2006, Glaser and Strauss 1967). The analysis “*combines systematic data collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling in order to generate theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing*” (Conrad 1982, 241). It is considered the heart of data analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1998) and enables the researcher to produce a

theory Glaser (1978), through development and refinement of the theoretical categories and their properties. In practice the researcher constantly reviews the data to identify the key ideas and concepts that are grounded in the data. This process is considered to be central to the successful emergence of a theory... “*we revisit our ideas and perhaps our data and recreate them in an evolving process*” (Charmaz 2000, 515).

During constant comparative analysis the researcher breaks down the data, identifies the behavioural patterns and give them names in order to create the codes. As this process unfolds, common concepts emerge on a recurring basis that are constantly compared to identify relations among them, which in turn leads to the identification of conceptual codes (and their properties and dimensions), and their grouping into categories. Once this is done the researcher should detect the “*variable that accounts for the most variation in the data, the thing to which most everything in the data relates, the issue or problem [participants] are processing, or in more vernacular terms, ‘what people are working on’*” (Simmons 2010, 28). To arrive at this core category the researcher should identify the differences between categories, along with their properties and dimensions, and integrate them into a single core category or variable (Glaser, 1978). The latter will guide the remainder of the data analysis. However, note that researchers may detect more than one core variable at this stage. For the purpose of selective coding a single core variable that explains all the variables and behavioural patterns in the data, must be identified - “*usually one will stand out more than others ... in that particular data*” (Simmons 2010, 28). Many considerations however weigh in on this position: the maturity of the research field, the nature of the problem, the problem statement and fundamental research question, and whether multiple seemingly context-free constructs are part of the research focus. These considerations may result in more than one core variable.

### **3.5.3 Coding: Open, Axial and Selective**

Most methods of qualitative data analysis entail some form of coding procedure, which in essence refers to the process of sorting and categorising data (Basit 2003). It is an important element of effective analysis and or a tool with which to “*label, separate, compile, and organize data*” (Charmaz 1983, 111) and to “*summarize, synthesize, and sort many observations made of the data*” (Charmaz 1983, 111). “*Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information*

*compiled during a study*" (Miles and Huberman 1994, 56). Although a firm set of guidelines for conducting coding is non-existent, many scholars have concluded that the success of qualitative data analysis depends largely on the coding process (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). These authors argue that employing an analytical coding process would improve the validity of qualitative studies (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Miles and Huberman (1994) have indicated that such coding procedures are either developed inductively (emergent from the data) or driven by the research questions (pre-established list). Typically researchers create codes from interview transcriptions, field notes, or any other form of gathered data. The coding process can be conducted in various ways, but most often involves a term, sentence, paragraph and a number or symbol associated with each identified code and normally results in a list of codes/terms accompanied by an explanatory transcript (Böhm 2004). During the coding process the researcher reads through interview transcripts, file notes, or any other form of verbal data, in a systematic manner with the purpose of allocating codes. In this regard (Miles and Huberman 1994, 58-62) for example have distinguished between two principal approaches to creating codes.

- An *a priori* approach is one in which the researcher develops a series (list) of codes prior to commencing with data analysis proper – referred to as a ‘start list’ or ‘pre-coding’. The researcher’s conceptual framework, informed by considerations such as the literature review, the research problem, research questions and / or hypotheses etc., essentially the researcher’s pre-existing knowledge of the subject, provides the input for developing the initial codes and code list.
- More emergent or *a posteriori* coding – often referred to as an ‘evolving codebook’ approach - entails inductively deriving codes from the observed facts (data). As Miles and Huberman (1994, 58) point out: “*a more inductive researcher may not want to precode any datum until he or she has collected it, seen how it functions or nests in its context, and determined how many varieties of it there are. This is essentially the ‘grounded’ approach originally advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967)*”.

The choice of a specific approach is determined by the researcher’s view of various research considerations. In this instance the choice of an inductive (*a posteriori*) approach to coding is premised on Miles and Huberman’s (1994, 62) argument that

such “*codes emerge progressively during data collection. These are better grounded empirically...*” and because “*the researcher is open to what the data has to say, rather than determined to force-fit the data into pre-existing codes*” (Miles and Huberman 1994, 62). The inductive development of codes consequently aligns better with the underlying philosophy of Grounded Theory because of its emphasis on the codes emerging from the ‘ground’ and reducing the likelihood of contaminating categories / codes with the researcher’s knowledge and subject expertise (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

In Grounded Theory studies, codes are the conceptualisation of “*the underlying patterns of a set of empirical indicators within the data*” (Glaser 1978, 55). Coding is a basic technique of Grounded Theory and data analysis relies largely on coding. The main purpose of coding in such studies is to discover what is happening in the data conceptually rather than descriptively. Researchers for example code each data segment, such as an interview transcription, individually and with every new interview that is conducted and coded, codes are constantly compared with all previous codes. This further clarifies and expands upon the emerging list of codes (concepts), but also detects variations and patterns in the codes Corbin and Strauss (2008) argued that the key to coding is to dissect the raw data and elevate it to a conceptual level, or as Charmaz explained coding: “*moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic interpretations*” (Charmaz 2006, 43). Researchers create codes from the collected data, name and compare the emerging patterns, determine what is really happening in the data and to which category a pattern may point (Glaser 1978). The coding process can commence as early as when the researcher takes down notes from the collected data (Glaser 1978).

From within a Grounded Theory framework data analysis conventionally involves three layers (and phases) of coding, i.e., open, axial and selective coding. This step-wise coding procedure, which is briefly explained below, assists the researcher in systematically analysing the data and linking it to the development of a theory that effectively explains the underlying patterns in the data.

### **3.5.3.1 Open Coding**

Open coding, also referred to as ‘initial coding’ (cf. Charmaz (2006), is the first phase of coding in Grounded Theory. Strauss and Corbin described *open coding* as the

“process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 61). In open coding, researchers read and code each line of data with the intention of determining the participant’s intended meaning by breaking down the empirical data into different units of meaning (Fassinger 2005). These meaning units are labelled on the basis of the specifics in the data, i.e., the content (objects, events, activities, etc.) that are nominated by respondents. A crucial consideration is that the names of the codes (or labels) correctly capture the essential meaning of the observed patterns. For this reason it is likely that the researcher may rename codes on several occasions during the data analysis process in order to obtain the best ‘fit’ between the data pattern and the concept used to describe. This is an important prerequisite to eventually develop a ‘theory’ from, and which closely aligns with the data (‘ground’). According to (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 160) this phase of coding “*opens up the data to all potentials and possibilities contained within them*”. Generally speaking, line-by-line coding allows the researcher to identify the ‘action’ reflected by the data and researchers usually look for the particular incidents, events and actions that are of concern to the participants. As the researcher reads through the participants’ statements, s/he notes their thoughts and impressions. This process continues until the higher-level categories are identified from the data and which allow the researcher to determine the core variable(s) in the *selective coding* phase (Glaser 1978). Miles and Huberman (1994, 62) shed light on this process when they indicated that “*actual coded segments then provide instances of the category, and marginal or appended comments begin to connect different codes with larger wholes*” and “*Gradually the structure, as revised, will include codes that are ‘larger’ (more conceptually inclusive) and ‘smaller’ (more differentiated instances), but it will need to maintain a relational structure.*”

### 3.5.3.2 Axial Coding

Axial coding usually, but not always, follows the completion of the open coding phase. During this phase codes are developed from the process of searching for links among codes, and connecting codes, which then result in “*a conceptual web, including larger meanings and their constitutive characteristics*” (Miles and Huberman 1994, 63), i.e., more encompassing categories. Strauss and Corbin (1998, 124) explain that open coding and axial coding are not ‘*necessarily sequential analytic steps*’ because they are different in terms of purpose. The purpose of axial coding is to reassemble the data

dissected during open coding, but with the intention to organise the data into different categories and subcategories, ultimately to construct a coherent, holistic view or picture of the findings (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998). During axial coding the researcher analyses how the categories are related to each other, and attempts to link categories to their subcategories together with their properties and dimensions (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

### **3.5.3.3 Selective Coding**

The process of *selective coding* further reduces the data at the researcher's disposal. During this process, researchers only code with the purpose of determining important core variables. As a consequence, data collection is selective and with the intention of reaching theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Strauss and Corbin (1990, 116) describe selective coding as "*the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development*". Coding is undertaken to identify those categories that are related to the core variables and which then become the basis for the Grounded Theory. Researchers investigate the interrelationships among all categories (i.e., previously established during axial coding), but now search for relevant *theoretical* dimensions that exist among related categories, leading to their integration into, and the development of, one variable or "*an explanatory whole*" (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 146). This core variable is not "*a preconceived sociological interest or professional concern*" (Glaser 1978, 94), rather, it is the main theme of the Grounded Theory process and represents "*the point of view of the actors*" (Glaser 1998, 115). The selective coding process continues until the researcher feels no further category can be fitted under the umbrella provided by the core variable(s).

## **3.5.4 Supporting methodological considerations**

### **3.5.4.1 Memo-writing**

Throughout the research process Grounded Theory researchers document their ideas or thoughts that come to mind. This is known as 'memo-writing' or 'memoing' and is defined as the "*write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically related relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analysing data and during memoing*" (Glaser 1998, 177). Memoing often commences during the constant comparative analysis process, although they can be developed at different times and stages and from different aspects of the research endeavour. It is generally advisable

that researchers commence with memo-writing as soon as possible - preferably during the open coding process, after coding the first bits of data, and continue with this practice throughout the research process (Charmaz 2006, Corbin and Strauss 2008).

Memoing performs an important role in the analytical process as it assists researchers when converting the raw data into codes, codes into categories and, ultimately, categories into a theory (Charmaz 2006, Corbin and Strauss 2008). It also ensures that researchers engage with the data and generate a record of their ideas, thoughts and observations in respect of the data, which adds to the transparency of the data analysis process (Charmaz 2006, Corbin and Strauss 2008). In general, memoing provides informal notes that help researchers to generate the theory, as the researchers use them to: “(1) *raise the data to a conceptual level*; (2) *develop the properties of each category, which begins to be defined operationally*; (3) *develop hypotheses about the connections between categories and/or their properties*; (4) *integrate these connections with clusters of other categories to generate the theory*; and (5) *relate the emerging theory to other theories of more or less relevance* ” (Glaser 1978, 84).

Memoing enables researchers to capture the meanings of the conceptual codes that emerge from the data. As noted by Charmaz (2006, 72), “*memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue ... [this] makes the work concrete and manageable – and exciting*”. Memos, however, are not used to describe the data, but instead provide examples with which to outline the conceptualised ideas (Montgomery and Bailey 2007). Since the constant comparison process requires researchers to constantly review the data, memo-writing ensures that the researchers do not miss insights highlighted by the data. More importantly, memo-writing provides “*a more thorough process that leads to theoretical sampling*” (Glaser 1998, 177), since memos are able to capture the meanings of ideas. As Locke explains, memoing is “*a reflective process for engaging the data*” that prompts researchers to think inductively about the data (Locke 2001, 51).

### **3.5.4.2 Sorting**

During sorting the researcher predominantly focuses on organising all the memos, which entails sorting the ideas/concepts grounded in the data, but at the same ensuring that the research will produce an explanatory theory (Glaser 1998). When sorting

memos, researchers look for and carefully study the contents, connections and theoretical relationships between memos. For this reason sorting “*challenges the researcher’s creativity*” (Glaser 1998, 187). Memos need to fit theoretically and align or integrate with other, theoretically similar, memos and the data (Charmaz 2006, Glaser 1998). Sorting is necessary to create a hierarchical structure for the theory (a theoretical outline), which would be “*the key to formulating the theory for presentation or writing*” (Glaser and Holton 2007, 64).

In contrast to coding, which breaks the data down into different concepts, sorting aids discovery of emerging concepts by collating and organising the previously deconstructed (fractured) data into a conceptual outline. The latter guides the process of writing up the theory and allows researchers to gain an overview of how the different conceptual elements can be interrelated and fitted together. Although some researchers skip this step (Simmons 2010) and may still create a theory, such a theory is likely to be a “*thin and less integrated theory*” (Glaser 1978, 116). Sorting, instead, assists in generating a “*rich multi-relation, multi-variate theory*” (Glaser 1978, 116).

### **3.5.4.3 Write-up**

The findings of a Grounded Theory study are presented in the form of a theoretical write-up - an action following the sorting of memos and which shapes the theory conceptually. It is also the last stage in a Grounded Theory study. The main purpose of the writing-up stage is to create a theory that will be understood by readers and will be viewed as useful by others in the field. In this regard memos serve as the basis of the theoretical write-up. Researchers consequently commence with writing-up when the theoretical outline emerges during the sorting process. The researchers are now able to craft a theory that conceptualises and explains the social behaviour in the area of interest. Writing-up is a challenging and ambiguous process, but an important part of data analysis (Charmaz 2006, Corbin and Strauss 2008) and for this reason should be trusted (Charmaz 2006). Continuous reflection and evaluation, and writing and rewriting are prerequisites for a theory to take shape. Glaser (1978, 134) points out that researchers “*write about concepts not people*” and are essentially focused on the core variable. The latter is continuously elaborated with supporting concepts, although this may lead to the creation of additional memos that require resorting and/or modification of the theoretical outline. As a consequence the emerging theory “*is an*

*integrated set of hypotheses, not of findings*" (Glaser 1978, 134) while the credibility of the theory is embedded in its "*integration, relevance, and workability, not by illustration used as if it were proof*" (Glaser 1978, 134).

With the preceding discussion as a guiding framework, the specific method and procedure of the study is outlined in section 3.6.

## **3.6 Procedure for the empirical study**

### **3.6.1 Overview**

The fundamental research questions (section 1.4) were central in considering the procedure for executing an empirical study. As the field of job satisfaction has been researched extensively to date, but not that of professional satisfaction, substantial care was exercised to minimise bringing preconceived ideas to bear on the study. The supervisors and other third parties, whose views were obtained and incorporated, aided this process. ‘Allowing the data to speak for itself’ was a challenging, but strict parameter upheld by the supervisors and the Researcher. Broadly speaking, the study was conceptualised, debated and finally presented to a candidacy committee, followed by an ethics approval process and systematic implementation. With only the initial knowledge of the problem statement and supporting literature and, pertinently, the research questions, a short semi-structured interview schedule was compiled. Interviews were conducted with recruited participants who were either former or current educators. The data so obtained was transcribed and analysed by means of constant comparative analysis, in accordance with the stages of open, axial and selective coding, i.e., through multiple passes through the data (repeated analyses). The behavioural patterns in the area of study emerged from the participants’ descriptions of what was happening in their worlds. Apart from relying on, among other, memo-writing to assist analyses, the principle of conceptual saturation was adhered to. This ultimately resulted in the emergence of a substantive ‘picture’ and significant clarity around the focal (core) variables. The emerging theory was contextualised in terms of the existing literature and the viewpoints and findings of relevant studies, which enabled a firm and clarifying response to the research questions and elaborated the existing knowledge on job satisfaction. The data collection and analysis procedures are discussed in more detail in section 3.6.2

### **3.6.2 Data collection**

#### **3.6.2.1 Interviews**

Interviewing, being the most common data collection method that Grounded Theory researchers use, was also the most rewarding part of this study. In general an interview “*attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations*” (Kvale 1996, 1). In Grounded Theory, interviewing is regarded as a method that allows researchers to explore participants’ perceptions, notably through moving from broader to more detailed questions during the interview (Corbin and Strauss 2008, Strauss and Corbin 1998) Importantly, it offers researchers initial statements that can guide them to specific questions which will further reveal the underlying / emerging theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998(Strauss and Corbin 1998)).

This Grounded Theory study has used minimally structured open-ended interviews as the method of choice for data collection. This is an intensive interview that is “*open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted*” (Charmaz 2006, 28). In contrast to structured interviews, semi-structured or open-ended interviews grant participants more control over the direction of discussion and hence more freedom in the interviews, which serves the underlying purpose of Grounded Theory. The use of such interviews is preferred, as these minimise constructivism (Simmons 2011).

Open-ended interviews generally, and minimally structured interviews in particular, were considered as being suitable for this study. It allowed the Researcher to explore what was considered important and relevant by participants, but within a broadly framed context, rather than that which might be important to the Researcher (Simmons 2011). The focus of the conversation in each interview was the perceptions and experiences that participants had about teaching. The research pilot-tested the interview questions with a few former and current educators to maximise the validity of the data collected from the study participants. No pilot-tested participants reported difficulty in understanding the questions and there was, consequently, no need for modifying the interview questions. Each interview commenced with a general ‘tour’ or ‘spill’ question, which allowed interviewees to share the things that “*are relevant to them (not the researcher)*” (Simmons 2011, 23). The first tour question was “Tell

me about being an educator”. The initial question was followed up with several questions as discussion prompts. These asked participants to discuss their personal experiences as an educator and different aspects of their job. An example would be a question such as: “Tell me about the things that attracted you to become an educator” or “Tell me about the things you like about teaching” etc. These questions helped the Researcher to uncover meanings and enhance understanding. Beyond these questions, the data emerging during the interviews prompted additional, relevant questions – apart from a few demographic questions (see Appendix A1 and A2). The use of this ‘interview schedule’ resulted in a largely unguided and rich educator narrative – open to exploration.

### **3.6.2.2 Participants: Recruitment, inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The target population for this study was educators in Western Australia (WA). To ensure the emergence of a robust theory on job satisfaction, profession satisfaction and educator turnover intention, the study focused on two different participant categories, namely former and current WA educators. Current educators were still actively employed in the teaching profession. To be included in the study they had to have a minimum two years of teaching experience and be currently working as an educator. ‘Former educators’ were those prospective participants who had been educators and had left the teaching profession within the previous seven years, to work in a different profession. Key in this regard was to obtain data that would shed light on educators’ experience as an educator. The literature indicates that the majority of studies examined educator job satisfaction from the perspective of currently working educators. Few studies have examined it from the perspective of those who have left the teaching profession. Incorporating both these perspectives (and participant groups) offer a more complete approach to explore the potential factors that play a significant role in influencing educators’ job satisfaction. Understandably, those who have left teaching and experienced work in different occupations will bring a different perspective to the teaching profession. The prevalence of the intention to leave teaching, among educators, and its associated costs and consequences, argued for a robust approach. Investigating the factors that influence job satisfaction from both perspectives will substantially strengthen conclusions.

The recruitment of participants was the most challenging undertaking of the study, particularly the former educators who were no longer involved in the teaching profession, who had to be traced to the different occupations in which they were now employed. As a result different methods were relied on to recruit participants. This included purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods to recruit participants, but also a degree of theoretical sampling to direct the data collection process towards the development of the theoretical framework (Locke 2001). In line with the tenets of Grounded Theory, theoretical sampling was used by the Researcher to gain entrée to the phenomenon under study (Glaser 1978). The main reason for selecting purposive sampling was to recruit former educators who had left the teaching profession. Snowballing, in turn, was valuable for identifying other respondents in this specific category. Purposive and snowball sampling methods were also used to recruit the current educators.

The Researcher did not focus on any specific educator or school. As noted earlier, Robson (2002) pointed out that Grounded Theory researchers often do not have certainty as to what their final sample will look like. This is because theoretical sampling informs the direction the data collection should take. This does not, however, prevent the researcher from having a potential sample in mind. As Glaser proposes, in a Grounded Theory study the researcher should determine a sample that will provide the opportunity to enter the phenomenon of interest and enable the commencement of data collection from that point (Glaser 1978). In line with this approach the initial intention was to focus on a fairly homogenous field of secondary public schools, from which current educators could be recruited. This however did not materialise and securing research participants proved to be substantially challenging. The Researcher initially posted a recruitment advertisement in schools, libraries and shopping centres located in Perth. This helped start the data collection process. In addition, access to some participants (particularly former educators) was obtained through volunteers who agreed to help source participants. An information sheet (see Appendix A3) explaining the study in more detail was given to the volunteers and they were asked to forward this to potential participants. Individuals who were happy to participate in the interviews were then sent a follow-up contact to schedule their interview. The snowballing method was then used to recruit more participants into the study. Overall, this study secured and interviewed 20 former educators and 18 current educators. The

data collection began once the first interviewee agreed to participate. All interviews were conducted in person by the Researcher. On average interviews lasted 45 minutes and all were audio-recorded after participants granted permission for the recording. Following telephonic liaison for a location and a time of their choice, interviews were scheduled with participants. Prior to commencing with the interview proper participants were given a letter describing the nature of the study and the confidentiality agreement. Participants had to provide written consent for the interviews to continue (see Appendix A4). Field notes were taken during and after each interview and consisted of what the interviewee said as well as the observations of the interviewer. They helped to capture the concerns and ideas mentioned by participants. The Researcher continued with the interviews until the theoretical saturation of categories was reached, a process characterised by a “*constant interplay (or dialogue) ... between the data and the ideas that they generated*” (Dey 1999, 6). The dynamic nature of theoretical sampling occurred on several occasions throughout this study and is consistent with the cyclical nature of a Grounded Theory study. Overall saturation was generally reached through the repeated review of transcribed notes and the repeated use of coding practices.

### **3.6.3 Data analysis**

The constant comparative method was the primary vehicle through which the data was analysed. This method enabled the detection of similarities and differences in the patterns observed in the data. It however also allowed the Researcher to use one (the first) interview as a basis for informing subsequent interviews. The main purpose, essentially, of using constant comparative analysis was to allow the Researcher to move from specific to more general themes and to categorise them as they arise throughout each interview (Strauss and Corbin 1998). As noted by Glaser and Strauss (1967) the data analysis in a Grounded Theory study commences early. In this study, the analysis process began when the first interview was transcribed, with the first step of data analysis being the process of open coding. Apart from the Researcher being the primary coder, supervisors were engaged to review, clarify, confirm, resolve and advise in terms of the detail codes, coding categories and structures. NVivo 10 qualitative software, in addition, was used as a basis for all forms of coding.

### *Coding practice in general*

After the transcribed data was entered into NVivo, coding practice was engaged in earnest, as this was the single-most important element of the data analysis. Coding followed the open, axial and selective coding practices. During the first round of coding ('open coding') the *phrase* viewed within the context provided by the *sentence* was taken as the basic unit of meaning. These considerations were necessary to ensure that line-by-line analysis and especially coding was meaningful (and not fragmented) and fitted coherently with the narrative context and underlying storyline. Line-by-line coding of the data was then done by allocating (numbered) codes inductively, i.e., with the aid of an 'evolving codebook' methodology (e.g. '7 - The profession of teaching'). Initially the two different data sets (former and current educators) were analysed separately (open and axial coding phases), but were subsequently combined in the selective coding phase. Initially data from one interview was compared with that from every other interview as the interview transcriptions became available, essentially to identify variations and commonalities in the data. Notes were transferred to NVivo as and when they were made during the analyses, and were similarly compared from interview to interview (cf. Strauss and Corbin 1998).

### *Open coding*

To aid the development of an initial overarching perspective of the data, a frequency count of the terminology most frequently used by the educators (all participants) was conducted with the use of NVivo. This terminology was then categorised to reveal the broad conceptual domains (or 'meta-categories') most frequently touched on by the educators during the course of the interviews. With this as basic context, the constant comparative method of analysis was then used more purposefully in conducting the line-by-line analyses. This meant that the narrative was repeatedly reviewed by moving forward and backward through the dataset in search of similar phrases or to confirm different ('new') phrases. For similar phrases, the same code (and number) was allocated, while every 'new' meaning phrase was allocated a new code and number (the 'evolving' nature of the coding practice). With repeated passes through the data, similar phrases and concepts began to cluster together and suggested categories, which were then named. Making sense of the data, i.e., 'coding', is an iterative process. This meant that with the emergence of new codes, categories regularly had to be revised and reconstituted (and renamed). In the end the codes were

re-categorised as often as this was indicated by the data (especially with the emergence of ‘new’ meanings). In the final instance, the overall category structure was reviewed to match the coherence of related terminology and where necessary, renumbered. The outcome was a series of (labelled) categories that resembled Miles and Huberman’s (1994) notion of a ‘conceptual web’ and provided a logical structure to which any subsequent coding and the discussion of results can be matched. Throughout this process the Researcher attempted to remain open-minded (assisted by the commentary and feedback of supervisors) and focused on the emerging process, instead of mere description (Charmaz 2006). Maintaining this focus on the process helps the researcher to build a relationship between “*implicit process and structures visible*” (Charmaz 2006, 54).

### *Axial Coding*

Having completed the open coding process and the identification of initial codes, the analysis progressed to the *axial coding* phase. The focus during this second ‘round’ of coding was on surfacing and exploring the specific relations and/or linkages that exist among categories (constructs) that are of central interest to the study. This would for example include the conditions that led to or gave rise to the phenomenon (construct of interest) and its consequences. In this study the focal constructs are ‘job satisfaction’, ‘profession satisfaction’ (satisfaction with the profession) and ‘intention to leave or quit’. One of the challenges emerging at the onset of this study was how to discern and differentiate between manifestations of latent job satisfaction and latent profession satisfaction in educator data (narrative), considering that:

- Data gathering interviews were not addressing these constructs but focused (broadly) on participants’ views and experiences of teaching;
- These (focal) constructs were purposefully excluded from, and avoided in, the interview questions and the interview itself. If they were significant or relevant to participants, they should surface in a spontaneous (unprompted) manner in narrative nominated by the participant;
- ‘Profession satisfaction’ was technically and scientifically a non-existent concept, which meant that educators in all likelihood would not have any knowledge of this concept. They would consequently be unable to distinguish

- between phenomena labelled as job and profession satisfaction respectively; and
- Indicators of the presence of job and profession satisfaction occur in the same workspace and may overlap conceptually.

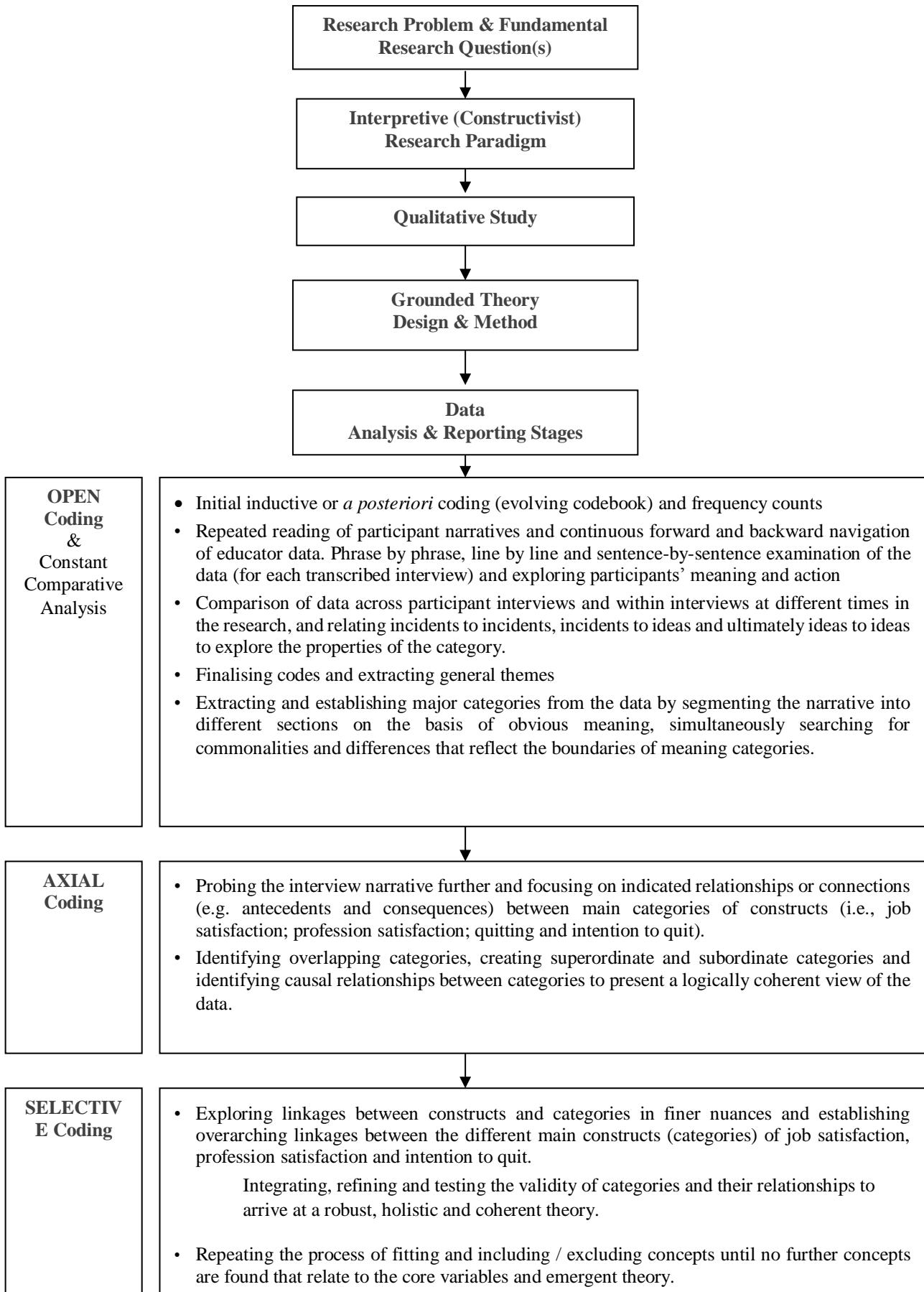
To assist with this challenge, theoretical templates were developed from valid definitions of the job satisfaction and profession satisfaction constructs. These were then overlaid onto the open coded educator narrative, acting as broad screens that enabled differentiating between and further classification of codes, as either the one or the other. Following this the examination of the data became more focused and probing. It entailed revisiting the (open) coded data and searching out specific incidences of educator narrative that demonstrated linkages and cause-and-effect relations with, and among, *job satisfaction*, *profession satisfaction* and *intention to leave/quit the profession* (the study's focal constructs and phenomena of interest). Again, following Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommendation, constant comparative analysis was used to compare and relate: subcategories to categories, to newly identified data, to the properties of categories and their dimensions, and to explore dissimilarities in the data. Where necessary, categories and their interrelationships were reconceptualised (Glaser and Strauss 1967). In axial coding in particular, the data was carefully interrogated for the recurrence of patterns (linkages, causality) raised by the participants (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

#### *Selective coding*

*Selective coding*, the third and last round of coding, aims to refine and synthesise the data, i.e., draws together the findings of the different analyses and eventually yields the 'explanatory scheme' or the essential theoretical 'narrative' (or 'theory'). It entails the careful construction of the consistent *meaning* 'thread' that characterises the dataset in its entirety – what is described as the development of a storyline between categories (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998). Selective coding produces a 'core category' or theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990) that should address the fundamental research question of the study in unambiguous terms.

In this study, the connections between the categories were inductively investigated, relying on the processes of constant comparison and incorporation of analytical memo-writing. Practically, coding in this phase is concerned with the linking of the

core category(ies) or variables with other categories (variables). The different relationships observed with and among the categories of central interest (the central constructs) during axial coding are interrelated in an iterative manner. Coding practice similarly employed the methods of constant comparative analysis and constant back and forth navigation of the dataset. However, in this phase the relationships, more particularly, were contextualised in terms of the relevant, existing knowledge, i.e., knowledge pertaining to the constructs that have been integrated into the final explanatory scheme. In this regard the. Researcher attempted to achieve a depth and richness in the data by elaborating the theoretical properties and dimensions of the different related categories. The selective coding process was concluded when no more concepts (codes and categories) could be related to the core variables (see also the summary in Figure 3.1).



**Figure 3. 1 Design, methodology and data organisation for the empirical study**

### **3.6.4 Practices in support of analysis**

#### *Memo-writing*

In this study memo-writing commenced after coding of the first transcribed interview and continued throughout the study. Memos were prepared in Microsoft Word and subsequently transferred into NVivo software for ease of access when working with the data (and coding). The processes of clustering and diagramming / visually depicting data (Charmaz 2006, Corbin and Strauss 2008) similarly proved useful in compiling reflective memos (for examples see Appendix A5). In this study memos were used to assist with the sequencing of the narrative and not so much to describe the data. During the initial stages they assisted with the grouping of the identified codes and interpretation of their meanings. During the latter stages they assisted with the detection of theoretical links between codes and the categories, but also prompted reflection when comparing data sets.

#### *Saturation*

An important and continuing consideration in Grounded Theory is how saturation is to be determined and achieved. Saturation is “*a point of theoretical saturation*” (Glaser 1978, 71) and, generally speaking, occurs when novel categories cease to emerge during data analysis. Glaser (1998) has pointed out that the theory will lack consistency if the categories are not saturated. As Charmaz (2006, 113) explains, “*categories are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of these core theoretical categories*”. However, establishing the point of saturation is more challenging than these perspectives may suggest. Some researchers use repetition as an indicator of theoretical saturation, but Glaser (1978) argues against this – even though he does not provide a better understanding alternative of approaches to ensure saturation. In this study, the Researcher used theoretical sampling to determine the dimensions and properties of categories. Saturation was deemed to be achieved when the Researcher concluded that no new data was found and a point of redundancy had been reached. Moreover, the process of constant comparative analysis allowed the researcher to explore the similarities and differences among the categories, which, once determined, enabled the Researcher to cluster the saturated categories. From the latter the ‘Grounded Theory’ was constructed.

### *Sorting*

Once the core variables were identified and all the memos were organised, sorting commenced. The purpose of the latter was to outline a written representation of the integrated theory. From a process perspective memos were first clustered on the basis of conceptual similarity (accomplished with simple ‘cut-and-paste’ routines in Word) and regrouped as often as memos were added and theoretical fit suggested this. Printing the sorted memos and reordering where necessary assisted with the conceptualisation of the theoretical categories, subcategories and properties of the emerging theory. This continued up to and including theoretical write-up stage.

### **3.6.5 Literature integration**

As previously noted a review of the literature is not conducted until completion of the final stage of data analysis, primarily to avoid preconceived ideas or bias (Glaser 1992). This however, did not preclude an initial engagement of the literature, prior to data collection. The reasons for this were twofold: firstly to determine whether theoretical justification for the research questions existed, more specifically to gain an understanding of the research areas that confirmed or supported the view that ‘profession satisfaction’ is under-researched and that its nature and characteristics need to be discovered and distinguished from job satisfaction; and secondly, to establish a point of entry into the data. The main literature review was undertaken when the core variables, the related constructs and the relationships among them, became clear during the final stages of coding (axial but mostly selective coding), i.e., when the essence of the emergent theory became clear. Contextualisation of the emergent theory framework and constructs, in relation to prevailing knowledge, followed. This meant that observations were ‘fitted’ or ‘matched’ with relevant theory and research to make ‘sense’ of the observations and entailed a review of a wide range of theoretical perspectives – not only those obviously concerned with the ‘core variables’ in this study (job satisfaction, profession satisfaction, turnover intention). With the objective of establishing relevance and credibility, the constant comparison procedure was again employed, but in this instance to mesh ‘science’ with the data analysis and observations. Through this process the emergent theory with its core variables were tested and linked to other relevant work (Glaser 1978) and support for the theoretical categories established.

### **3.6.6 The credibility or trustworthiness of the research**

As pointed out previously, the ontological and epistemological assumptions giving rise to qualitative research of this nature, are consistent with an interpretive and constructivist research paradigm. This stands in direct opposition to that of quantitative research, which is based on positivism or functionalism (Maxwell 1992). As a result conventional notions of judging the quality of scientific work such as validity and reliability, in the strict sense do not apply. In qualitative research the quality of scientific work, instead, is assessed in terms of relevance, credibility, trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, consistency, applicability, confirmability, representativeness, and related concepts (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, Glaser and Strauss 1967, Wolcott 1990).

The ‘validity’ of a qualitative study, consequently, is associated with the degree to which the study is able to produce *credible* findings from participants’ meanings and assumptions (Maxwell 1992). Credibility in this sense implies that the reality reported by the researcher is one that is discovered, i.e., emerged from participants (their narratives) and was not imposed or prescribed by the researcher. Maxwell (1992) draws attention to the fact that a specific method for doing research in and of itself is neither valid nor invalid, but the knowledge that is obtained from its use could be valid or invalid depending on the circumstances of its use. Perspectives such as these prompt scholars to conclude that in qualitative research *understanding* (cf. Wolcott 1990) and the *representativeness* of the description and the *justifiability* of the findings (cf. Winter, 2000) are more meaningful than notions of ‘validity’.

Proponents of the Grounded Theory approach and (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 22) in particular, assert that “*the most powerful way to bring reality to light*” is through the development of (a) theory. Theory derives its validity primarily from the systematic approach inherent in the constant comparative technique, which requires researchers to continuously move back and forth between the data and categories (Glaser 1978). Rigour in Grounded Theory studies is derived from this systematic methodology, but also from criteria such as fit, relevance and modifiability (Glaser 1978). As criteria for establishing rigour, these considerations at the same time convey standards of practice, which are applied to judge the emergent theory in this study.

Briefly, the criterion of ‘fit’ was applied when finding codes on a phrase-for-phrase, line-by-line and interview-by-interview basis, clustering, sorting and re-clustering categories of codes, but also when constructing hierarchies of codes and links (and relationships) between categories and with the central constructs of interest – apart from ‘fitting’ the emergent theory to the extant knowledge base, especially prevailing theory. The criterion of representativeness was applied in the overall design – especially in the sampling and recruitment of participants, when perspectives of both former and current educators were sought. However, this was also employed to ensure that all viewpoints of educators (similar and opposing) are amply reflected in the excerpts used as evidence in the detailing of findings. The extent to which ‘evidence’ characterise the reporting of results and the extent to which the final emergent theory reflects the breadth and depth of educators’ narratives and the scope and number of codes and categories observed, similarly provide evidence of representativeness. The criterion of relevance applies from as early as discerning the inadequacies in the satisfaction literature, through to the final emergent theory, which had to account for and reflect the core concerns of participants. The structure and systematic procedural nature (e.g. the constant comparative method) of a Grounded Theory methodology ensures that *modifiability*, as with the *fit* criterion, was a continuous consideration. With every interview transcription completed and every bit of data added, with every new code, category or field note created, and every new or additional quote considered or incorporated, interpretation and ‘meaning’ were altered. The final ‘Grounded Theory’ was subject to repeated modification – a consequence of repeated review of the findings and the continuous writing-up (re-writing) of the research.

Finally, the visibility that the study brings to, and the understanding it conveys of, the phenomena and participants’ perspectives, and the justifiability of the emergent theory should enable an assessment of the quality of this scientific endeavour.

### **3.6.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethics in research is of paramount importance and a constant consideration.

Following prescribed processes and procedures, the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee granted ethics approval for this study prior to its commencement (Reference Number: SOM-25-2012- (see Appendix A6). Information about the project was prepared in a user-friendly manner in both hard copy and

electronic form. This 'briefing pack' included an information sheet and a standard consent form, which detailed how the study will be conducted, how data will be processed and employed, and how anonymity and confidentiality of participants and their views, will be ensured. The 'agenda' or structure of the interview ('interview schedule') ensured that the objectives, procedures and implications of the study were described clearly to the interested potential participants *before* proceeding. Informed consent forms were signed off prior to commencing with the interview proper. Former and current educators were allowed to make a rational, independent, i.e., voluntary decision as to whether they wished to participate in the study or not. Where prospective participants agreed to participate, they were informed that they could withdraw at any time.

Interview recordings were transcribed where- after the transcripts were stored separately from the signed statements of informed consent. All interview transcripts were de-identified and neutral pseudonyms were used to identify interviewee data (e.g. F7 or C12), and which could not be traced to participants by name. De-identified electronic data was stored on a computer, i.e., without identifiers, and was accessible only to the Researcher. As per university policy, this data will be kept for a minimum of seven years following publication, after which it will in all likelihood be destroyed. The paper (hard copy) records are kept in a secure filing cabinet in the Researcher's office in the Business School Graduate Research Hub, Curtin University (Bentley, WA). The Hub has lockable filing cabinets and password-protected computers, with the same level of security applicable as with the rest of the University. This can only be accessed by the Researcher and through using valid student-specific identification.

### **3.7 Chapter summary**

In contrast to the vast literature base on job satisfaction, there is scant research exploring educators' feelings about their professions – potentially a factor that could co-influence their intention to remain or leave their occupations. In Chapter 1 it was indicated that this study aimed to empirically explore the notions of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction among educators. Ultimately it wishes to advance a theory grounded in such empiricism that accounts for the existence, interdependencies and impact of these in relation to educators' intention to leave or remain in the profession.

The decision to use Grounded Theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss 1967 and an enhanced open, axial and selective coding and analysis procedure (after Strauss and Corbin 1994) was informed by several considerations:

- The limited understanding, firstly, of the notion of profession satisfaction and, secondly, its relatedness to job satisfaction, and their collective influence on educators intention to leave the profession, pointed to more exploratory research.
- Secondly, the personal and subjective nature of satisfaction phenomena and the diversified work context of educators, firmly located the prospective study within an interpretive (constructivist) research paradigm, with its elegantly logical conversion of ontology into a subjectivist epistemology and hence qualitative methodology.
- Grounded Theory as inquiry strategy, in particular, was preferred because of its systematic and rigorous engagement of phenomena and because it generates a theory product at the same time.

The chapter then detailed the various and simultaneous procedural steps of data collection, constant comparison, coding, theoretical sampling, memoing, theoretical coding, sorting and writing up (Glaser 1978). Methodological and procedural choices and practices for this study were briefly indicated in respect of each of these considerations. The chapter concluded by drawing attention to the manner in which quality in this study was viewed and pursued, and how ethical considerations were incorporated. This outline of the design, method and procedures conceived and followed during the empirical study, provides the platform for reporting observations and findings in Chapter 4 and the final emergent theory in Chapter 5.

# **Chapter 4: Results**

## **4.1 Introduction**

### **4.1.1 Context**

The purpose of this study, in the first instance, was to empirically explore the notion of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction among educators. Secondly, it aimed to advance a theory, grounded in empiricism, that accounts for the existence, interdependencies and impact of these constructs in relation to educators' intentions to leave or remain in the profession (in a Western Australian context).

Adhering strictly to the principles of classical Grounded Theory, a semi-structured interview schedule structured around an open-ended grand-tour question and a few follow-up questions were posed to 38 interviewed participants (20 former and 18 current educators). Questions were phrased to elicit responses that will best assist in answering the research questions proposed in Chapter 1. The terms 'satisfaction', 'job satisfaction' and satisfaction with the profession, were purposefully avoided. During the interviews participants did however occasionally (and spontaneously) mention some of these constructs and/or variations of them.

Following the design and methodology outlined in Chapter 3, all interviews were transcribed and the data was coded and analysed. Constant comparative analysis of the data, along with coding, continued until saturation of the conceptual codes and consequently categories occurred. The interviews with the two groups of participants were then coded and analysed separately, where after the data (and codes and categories) for the two groups were combined into a single dataset, which was further analysed. These analyses, but also the reporting of results in this chapter, are consistent with the open, axial and selective coding framework (see Chapter 3).

### **4.1.2 Chapter focus**

This chapter builds on Chapter 3 in that it systematically reports the findings that were generated by the empirical study (detailed in Chapter 3) and assists in responding to the subordinate research questions 1.4.2.2 and 1.4.2.3, as outlined in Chapter 1. The findings were obtained by applying conventional Grounded Theory analysis methods as elaborated by Corbin and Strauss, which also provides the structure and broad

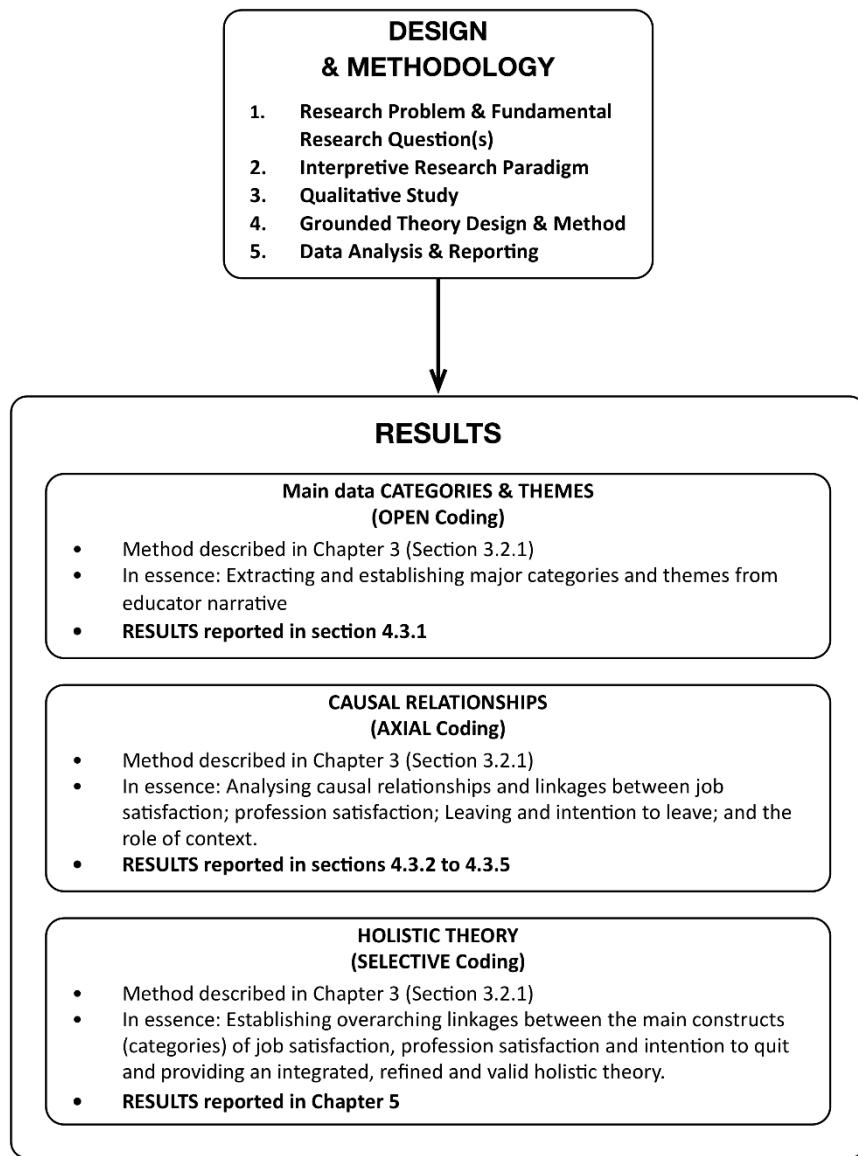
framework for reporting the findings of the study (see Figure 4.1 for an outline of the reporting structure).

The presentation of results commences with an overview of observed ‘emergent themes’ for the different educator groups (section 4.3.1). These themes represent the findings of the initial ‘open coding’ phase. This is followed by a review of educators’ satisfaction with the job and profession respectively (sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3), while observations in respect of actual quitting behaviour and the intention to quit and the role of context in this behaviour are discussed in sections 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 respectively.

The presentation and discussion of results in sections 4.3.2 to 4.3.5 represent the ‘axial coding’ phase and focus on the elements that comprise the constructs of job satisfaction, profession satisfaction and intention to quit. The main focus however is on the relationships that exist between these constructs and their ‘sub-categories’, as revealed by educators. With the aid of Grounded Theory methodology, an in-depth understanding of the phenomena of job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession for the two participant groups were obtained. It simultaneously shed light on the contextual factors that influence job and profession satisfaction and contribute to educators’ intention to leave or stay in the teaching profession. The chapter concludes with a consolidating perspective and a chapter summary, which leads into Chapter 5. The latter, in turn, is primarily concerned with the ‘selective coding’ phase in Grounded Theory analysis and represents the overall sense making and integration of findings reported in Chapter 4.

The observations and discussion in Chapter 5 is an integral part of the overall results of the study and is an extension of Chapter 4. It will present the final, contextualised ‘Grounded Theory’ that explains educator job satisfaction and profession satisfaction and the relationship of these phenomena with the educator’s intention to quit.

The methodology that directed the data analyses and guided the reporting results in this chapter is summarised in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4. 1 Structure for reporting findings**

Before discussing the observations from the study, a brief overview of the participant demographics is provided.

## 4.2 Participant demographics

The final participant sample secured for the empirical study comprised 20 former educators and 18 current educators. It was expected that saturation of data themes would be achieved with a sample size of 20 respondents per group, but practical challenges in the end meant that the final sample (former and current educators) simply comprised those that were willing and available. As the results reported in this chapter will demonstrate, the final samples (20 and 18 respectively) proved adequate and saturation in themes within and across these two cohorts was achieved. The profiles

of the two samples / cohorts are briefly outlined and compared as a precursor for presenting the results.

#### **4.2.1 Former educators**

Twenty (20) *former* educators participated in this study. Table 4.1 provides an overview of former educator's socio-demographic characteristics and profile. Inspection of this table will reveal almost half of the participants were female. Participants ranged in age from 27 to 46 with a median age of 34 years. A sizeable majority of the participants were married. Most participants described themselves as secondary school teachers and the median years of teaching was seven (7) years (range: 3 to 14 years). Being former educators, it is notable that more than half of participants were currently employed in office or administrator jobs.

**Table 4. 1 Socio-demographic data of *former* educators**

Participant	Gender	Age	Marital status	School level	Years in teaching	Current position
F1	F	30	Single	Primary	4	Admin Assistant
F2	F	34	Married	Secondary	8	Librarian
F3	F	29	Single	Secondary	4	Receptionist
F4	M	42	Married	Secondary	12	Business owner
F5	F	46	Married	Secondary	14	Admin
F6	F	37	Married	Secondary	9	Admin
F7	F	35	Married	Secondary	8	Librarian
F8	F	30	Married	Secondary	4	Librarian
F9	M	41	Married	Secondary	12	Admin
F10	F	31	Married	Secondary	5	Admin Assistant
F11	M	36	Married	Secondary	7	Business owner
F12	M	34	Married	Secondary	6	Admin
F13	F	27	Single	Primary	3	Office Assistant
F14	F	32	Married	Secondary	7	Librarian
F15	F	28	Married	Primary	4	Office Assistant
F16	F	34	Married	Secondary	6	Admin
F17	M	38	Married	Secondary	10	Admin
F18	F	32	Married	Secondary	6	Admin
F19	F	37	Married	Secondary	10	Bookseller
F20	F	34	Married	Secondary	8	Bookseller

#### **4.2.2 Current educators**

Eighteen (18) current educators also participated in this study. Table 4.2 similarly provides an overview of the socio-demographic characteristics and profile of the current educators that participated. Female participants (14) substantially outnumbered their male counterparts (4) and the median age for this group was 30 years – with age ranging between 36 and 46. A large minority of participants (8 of 18) were single, with the remainder being married. Years of teaching, i.e., experience, ranged between 6 and 21 years, with the median being 6 years.

**Table 4. 2 Socio-demographic data of *current* educators**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>School level</b>	<b>Years in teaching</b>
C1	F	26	Single	Primary	2
C2	F	39	Married	Secondary	14
C3	F	30	Married	Primary	6
C4	F	28	Married	Primary	4
C5	F	33	Single	Secondary	8
C6	F	27	Single	Primary	3
C7	F	46	Married	Secondary	21
C8	M	29	Married	Secondary	4
C9	F	43	Married	Secondary	19
C10	F	31	Single	Primary	6
C11	F	28	Single	Primary	4
C12	F	30	Married	Primary	6
C13	M	41	Married	Secondary	16
C14	M	37	Married	Secondary	11
C15	F	27	Single	Primary	4
C16	M	36	Single	Secondary	9
C17	F	39	Married	Secondary	6
C18	F	26	Single	Primary	2

### 4.2.3 Comparison: Former and current educator profiles

The demographic profiles of the former and current educators engaged in the study are contrasted in Table 4.3. Gender and age distribution appears comparable with the greatest number of educators being female and the median age for the two groups being 34 (former) and 30 years (current) respectively. The obvious difference between the groups is the nature of current employment, with former educators relinquishing their educational roles in favour of a range of occupations. With the exception of possibly the two business owners, 18 former educators have taken on positions of bookseller, librarian, administrative assistant or office assistant. These roles firstly appear to be less socially and intellectually challenging and, secondly, appear to be more contained in their demands on time (pre-work preparation and taking work home appear to be more discrete and limited when compared to educator roles). The proportion of single to married educators, however convey notable discrepancies with the *former* educators mostly married (18 of 20). Proportionally, more *current* educators were single or not married (9 or 50%). The former educators are by and large secondary school educators while approximately 50% (9) current educators reside in this category.

**Table 4. 3 Summary profile of *Former* and *Current Educator* samples**

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Former Educators</b>		<b>Current Educators</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
• <i>Male</i>	5	25	4	22.2
• <i>Female</i>	15	75	14	77.8
<b>Median age</b>	34 (27-46)		30 (26-46)	
<b>Marital Status</b>				
• <i>Single</i>	2	10	8	44.4
• <i>Married</i>	18	90	10	55.6
<b>Years of teaching</b>	7 (3-14)		6 (2-21)	
<b>School level</b>				
• <i>Primary</i>	3	15	9	50
• <i>Secondary</i>	17	85	9	50

The remainder are employed at primary schools. Both these demographics are noteworthy and could potentially reflect differences in educators' sentiments about work and living conditions and general satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job and

profession. With the two samples not perfectly similar, a fine-grained review of observations is implied. As a consequence the narrative for former and current educators were initially coded separately and analysed independently. In Chapter 5 the independent data patterns and findings for the different participant cohorts are integrated into a single model and theory.

The obtained results are presented against this backdrop and commence with an overview of general themes extracted during the initial open coding phase, i.e., after several ‘passes’ through the data.

## **4.3 Presentation of results**

Data and results of the empirical study are presented in accordance with the outline provided in Figure 4.1. This follows the conventional open, axial and selective coding conventions that are characteristic of the Grounded Theory approach as elaborated by Corbin and Strauss (1990).

In section 4.3.1 results of the open coding phase are presented firstly in the form of a frequency count of the terminology most frequently used by the participants during the research interviews. Drawing on the narrative context of these terms, the terminology is then categorised to reveal the broad conceptual domains most frequently engaged by educators during the interviews. Consistent with the outlined procedures in section 3.5.3 an evolving codebook approach was used to inductively arrive at codes (categories) for the terminology. In the final instance categories were renumbered to match the coherence of related terminology. This resembled Miles and Huberman’s (1994) notion of a ‘conceptual web’ and provided a logical structure to which the discussion of results could be matched. The results of this open coding phase, secondly, is expanded and presented as general themes that emerged from the narrative of former and current educators respectively.

### **4.3.1 Emergent themes**

As introduction to the general themes surfaced from the respondent narratives, a basic frequency count of the most commonly used terminology in the combined dataset (educator interview transcriptions) was conducted. This is summarised in Table 4.4, which provides the 15 most frequently used terms – the meaning of which needs to be gauged in terms of the complete list of *meaningful* terms (presented in Table B.1,

Appendix B). At a very broad and unrefined level the indicators in Table 4.4 suggest the conceptual domains that were top of mind for educators (both former and current) during the interviews. The value of these observations, however, is limited unless it is recognised that several terms on the face of it, are closely related and often used in very specific meaning contexts. As a result simple categorisation of the terminology most frequently used by the former and current educators was undertaken (see Table 4.5).

**Table 4. 4 Educator Narratives: Most frequently used terminology**

No	Word	Frequency Count <sup>a</sup>	Former Educators (FT) <sup>b</sup>	Current Educators (CT) <sup>c</sup>	Total: All Educators (AT) <sup>d</sup>
<b>1</b>	Teaching	1620	20	18	38
<b>2</b>	Think	1178	20	18	38
<b>3</b>	Kid(s)	827	18	17	35
<b>4</b>	Work	812	20	17	37
<b>5</b>	School	673	20	18	38
<b>6</b>	Time	672	15	12	27
<b>7</b>	Year	558	19	17	36
<b>8</b>	People	537	20	17	37
<b>9</b>	Teachers'	517	20	18	38
<b>10</b>	Job(s)	453	20	18	38
<b>11</b>	Leave	400	20	18	38
<b>12</b>	Student(s)	334	15	14	29
<b>13</b>	Parents	296	17	16	33
<b>14</b>	Wants	295	4	3	7
<b>15</b>	Class	275	18	17	35

*Notes:* <sup>a</sup>Frequency with which the indicated term occurred in the combined narrative of all respondents. <sup>b</sup>Number of former educators that used the term. <sup>c</sup>Number of current educators that used the term. <sup>d</sup>Number of respondents (former and current) who used the term.

Drawing on the narrative context and the specific meanings with which educators used these terms, the categorisation process became more detailed and specific. This revealed several patterns in the narrative of the group, which then suggested different levels of nested and related categories. On the basis of meaning and simple logic, major or meta-categories consisting of several categories and sub-categories, were identified. These categories suggested a broad frame and structure for the educator

dataset and provided a point of departure for deeper and more meaningful exploration of the data. Inspection of Table 4.5 indicates the broad major or meta-categories of the dataset (coded from 1 to 19) with a summary description of the categories and/or sub-categories that combine to form the meta-categories; together with the meta-category word counts. Table B.2 (Appendix B) provides the complete category structure and word counts.

**Table 4. 5 Core categories (concepts) emerging from educator narratives following open coding and categorisation of terminology (see also Appendix B, Table B.2)**

Category code <sup>a</sup>	Major or meta-categories <sup>b</sup>	Categories /sub-categories <sup>c</sup>	Word count <sup>d</sup>
<b>1</b>	Teaching as essential nature of the occupation	Teaching	1620
<b>2 - 4</b>	Cerebral, cognitive character	Thought, knowledge, learning	1829
<b>5</b>	The child as central focus	Child, student	1762
<b>6</b>	The job of teaching	General, work, workload, tasks, demands, health, bureaucracy, outcomes	2560
<b>7</b>	Teaching as profession	Profession, calling	178
<b>8</b>	Context of the job	General, job-specific, institutional, society	1796
<b>9</b>	Time perspective in the role	Time, hours, weeks	1366
<b>10</b>	Challenges of the role	Problems, concerns	254
<b>11</b>	Educator expectations	Needs, expectations	619
<b>12</b>	Support in the role	Support	271
<b>13</b>	People (social interface and context of the job)	General, dynamics, partners, co-workers, parents, friends, family	1916
<b>14 - 15</b>	General and emotional experience of the role	General, emotional	1156
<b>16</b>	Educator value orientation	Value, respect, opportunity	161
<b>17</b>	Recognition and reward	Remuneration, (intrinsic) reward	408
<b>18</b>	Work-Life balance	Life, home, personal time, balance	498
<b>19</b>	Actual or intention to leave/ quit	Leaving, quitting	416
TOTAL Frequency counts			16810

*Notes:* <sup>a</sup>Codes with which the major theme categories emerging from open coding were numbered. <sup>b</sup>Brief description of major categories. <sup>c</sup>Numbering and descriptive labels of sub-categories – where applicable. <sup>d</sup>Total frequency with which relevant category terminology and phrases were encountered in the combined narrative of respondents.

The coded concepts and meta-categories outlined in Tables 4.5 and B.2 provide an all-encompassing perspective on the narrative world that the educator associates with the notion of a ‘job’, which then provides a broad framework for considering the detailed narratives (refer Figure 4.2). Considering the frequency counts per meta-category:

- The ‘job’ of the educator and more specifically the **work** and **work characteristics** (see Table B.2 in particular) understandably occupies the most prominent position. This was the primary focus of the interview and educators (former and current) were substantially forthcoming when talking about their former and current educator jobs.
- Similarly prominent, are the dominant features of the occupation or profession such as
  - Its core ‘technology’, i.e., **teaching**;
  - The dominant cerebral or **cognitive** character of the job and occupation – being concerned with information, knowledge, thinking and learning;
  - The central focus on working with and helping **children**; and
  - The significant social (**people**) dimension, with people in general, teachers and the principal, colleagues, and parents being influential elements of this social interface, but also the job’s social context in general;
- As conveyed by the frequency counts, the **context** within which teaching occurs (e.g. the classroom, the school, the Department of Education, society) has a very strong presence when educators discuss their jobs and suggests its substantial influence in the educators’ world of work.
- Two features of the education ‘job’ and occupation that show up more prominently in the remaining categories, are the manner in which ‘**time**’ in the role is viewed and used; and educators’ **experience** of the role, which surfaced from the narrative as strongly emotional in nature.
- Remaining meta-categories and / or categories largely relate to the ‘job’ and work of the educator, but are generally not viewed as part of the ‘job’ or role:
  - **Support** (emotional and social) in the role is generally expected, but not viewed as a feature or facet of the job itself (rather an element of the immediate work context).

- The educator's **experience** (and **emotional** experience in particular), perception of **challenge(s)**, **expectations** and **value orientation** are person-specific, and not regarded as features or facets of the job or role. These considerations do influence the educator's views of the job and so forth. **Recognition** and **reward** are external to the 'job' and are provided to the educator as a consequence of performing the role / 'job'. These typically include tangible rewards in the form of salary or 'pay'. An important element of this category though, is the educator's sense of reward and recognition and his/her estimation of the perceived fairness of remuneration (e.g. from an equity perspective).
- **Work-life balance / imbalance** is a consequence of performing the role/job and contingent on job-specific characteristics, the job context and person (educator) attributes.
- Narrative referring to teaching as **profession** (Category 7) was considered a separate category because of the distinction between a 'job' and an occupation or profession and the study's interest in distinguishing between job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession.

#### **4.3.1.1 Emergent themes: *Former* educators**

Of the eight (8) most frequently mentioned categories (Table 4.5), the first six (6) are concerned with the job and profession of teaching (categories 1, 3, 5, 6) and its context (categories 2 and 4), followed by educators' time perspective (9) and their experience of the role (14 – 15).

The prominent themes emerging from the *former* educator dataset (20 educators) broadly aligned with this focus. In brief, former educators indicated that ...

1. A passion for teaching and the opportunity to work with children was the main reason for entering the profession;
2. Contributing to the development of children was generally experienced as highly rewarding (intrinsically);
3. With time the passion for teaching declined and the occupation was increasingly associated with negative feelings;
4. A heavy workload, multiple roles and responsibilities and constant change to work content made teaching a tiring occupation;

5. A lack of time meant continuous pressure and sacrificing after hours and weekend time for work;
6. Workload impacted on educators' private lives and compromised their work-life balance. This alters the effort-reward relationship for the educator;
7. Teaching was experienced as stressful and adversely impacted on educators health and well-being;
8. Collaboration and support from colleagues and the principal, but also parents and the Department of Education, influence the experienced difficulty of, and satisfaction with the teaching job;
9. Society in general undervalued the teaching occupation and educators' work.

Themes 1 to 3 and 9, from a definitional perspective, align with characteristics of the teaching occupation or profession, while themes 4 to 7 relate to the facets or features of the teaching job. Theme 8 is concerned with the context and social interface of the teaching role. These themes are briefly outlined and elaborated with excerpts from the former educator narratives.

**Theme FE-1: The passion for teaching was grounded in the opportunity to work with children and the main reason for entering the profession**

It became clear, early on during the interview process that former educators' passion for teaching was the central consideration that motivated them to pursue this occupation. Interaction with children was the undergirding factor: "*I found the best thing about teaching is the relationship with the students. You can have a positive impact on their lives*" (*F17, male, 38 years*). **Fifteen** (15) participants indicated that the key reason they were educators, was their desire to work with children and prepare them for the future. As an example, one of the former educators said, "*I think it was based on the fact that I liked little kids and I thought that would be a good career path to go into*" (*P2, female, 34 years*). In fact, the majority of former educators had chosen teaching because they viewed it as a profession where they would contribute to the development of students. For example, one female former educator mentioned that she became an educator because she "*wanted to help people or help kids*". It was also mentioned by another "*I became a teacher because I wanted to be with kids. I think as a teacher you make them [kids] ready for the future. I think teaching is important*

*and I very much value students and my interaction with students... I do miss to this..."* (F7, female, 35 years).

For former educators, working with children represented the core of the teaching profession, while at the same time providing an opportunity to contribute to society.

**Theme FE-2: Contributing to the development of children was generally experienced as highly rewarding (intrinsically)**

The data furthermore indicated that former educators found teaching to be intrinsically rewarding which provided a sense of job satisfaction. **Thirteen** (13) participants, for example, spoke about the role of student achievement and how this contributed to their positive feelings and sentiments toward the teaching occupation... “*Having an influence on kids was satisfying, like teaching them how to deal with their lives. A bunch of kids coming to you and looking for direction... I really enjoyed that*” (F10, female, 31). Or, as one of the participants stated: “*I just loved the creativity of teaching and passing on information to children. It was rewarding to see your kids are doing really well. There is a satisfaction to that, I guess*” (F1, female, 30). Another indicated, “*I enjoyed watching them develop and grow. It was a great satisfaction to see what they could do in the beginning of the year and what they had achieved and could do by the end of the year. I was very happy with their achievements*” (F20, female, 34 years). And as one commented, “[it was] so rewarding to see an entire school turn around and make all that progress as a result of my influence” (F8, female, 30 years).

Former educators’ experience of student achievement is well conveyed by the following comments: “*When you see a kid or you can see your class has progressed from doing something they couldn't do to something they can now do, you feel really proud, like, ‘wow, we've done this’*” (F11, female, 36 years). Another participant (a chemistry educator) stated: “*I liked teaching them and if the kid doesn't get it at that time, explaining it again until they get it... and to watch them go from not getting it, to getting it*” (F17, male, 38 years). The extent of the intrinsic reward derived from teaching and helping children develop and achieve is illustrated by a male participant who compared his current job with his former teaching job: “*In my current job I do not feel I am contributing to the society and I do not have that overwhelming feeling that I am doing something really good. I mean... I do not feel I am having a positive impact on the future generation, which sounds corny, but that is how I really feel.*

*When you teach you are rewarded emotionally by the students and their achievements. They come to you to say ‘thank you, it is a great lesson’. It is a good feeling. You think you have done something good” (F17, male, 38 years).*

**Theme FE-3: With time the passion for teaching declined and the occupation was increasingly associated with negative feelings**

A review of the narrative data, however, revealed that former educators’ *passion* towards teaching declined after several years of teaching. This loss of passion, which was mentioned by seven (7) former educators was clearly noted and felt by the Researcher during the interviews - especially when they verbalised their negative feelings towards teaching. One for example, said: “*I think the last few years, probably five years of teaching, I wasn’t as motivated as I should have been, and I wasn’t as passionate about it as I should have been. I just wasn’t delivering very well*” (F4, male, 42 years). Others used strong terminology (e.g. “*hate*” and “*something was broken*”) in expressing their negative feelings towards teaching: “*I just felt like something is broken... I was getting to the stage where I was starting to hate it, I didn’t want to go to work, I was thinking, “Oh, why am I doing this?”*” (F5, Female, 46 years). Several features of the teaching role (job) prompted this shift in attitude towards teaching. These are captured in the discussion that follows.

**Theme FE-4: A heavy workload, multiple roles and responsibilities and constant change to work content made teaching a tiring occupation**

Probably the most salient theme emerging from former educators’ sentiments about the **job of teaching** was the consistently high workload experienced – an issue raised by all 20 former educators as a major source of dissatisfaction... “*There is a huge workload in teaching*” (F6, female, 37 years). Another former educator indicated “*The whole day you work in the class and after that outside the class, you have to work on the weekends, every day you come home with a pile of marking*” (F11, female, 36 years). Typical comments that further suggest the pervasiveness of workload concerns were: “*I would say workload is huge for people in teaching*” (F15, female, 28 years), or, as another educator indicated, “*It was all consuming. Took up not only your day and then you would come home and work...*” (F16, female, 34 years) and “*It’s a never-ending workload. I found it took more of your time...*” (F20, female, 34 years). One participant aptly captured the demands and complexity that workload posed to the educator... “*The job swallows your brain for 10 weeks at a time. You know, Monday*

*to Friday you are on tasks around the clock. You have to keep preparing for class, I loved the kids but the workload was getting me down*" (F2, female, 34 years). The seldom-acknowledged reality as pointed out, remains that "*People do not know how much work teachers do inside and outside schools*" (F17, male 38 years).

Educators indicated that they were required to complete a great number of varied tasks and activities that were often stressful. These included daily lesson planning and class preparation, instructional time, presentation preparation, assessments and assessment reports, other paperwork, school meetings, improvement programs, school excursions and others, illustrated by participant F10:

*"I think schools expect too much, to do some activities with the kids outside school time... school socials. It was too much time. You needed your own time as well. I was just workload stressed..."* (F10, female, 31 years).

And...

*"I was working to deadlines that were unrealistic. Meetings that were inconsequential, you know, just wasting your time. The reports are part of your job. You've got the children all the time and they're coming and going and, you know, you go camping on the weekends with the children"* (F20, female, 34 years).

**Workload**, however, is not only a function of the teaching role *per sé*, but the result of the many roles the educator performs in the teaching job. Narratives indicated that the latter would often also include the roles of counsellor and parent. As one commented,

*"You are not only dealing with subjects, you are not a teacher just portraying information, but you are dealing specially with teenagers that are at a very fragile point in their development as well. So you are dealing with their emotional response. You are sometimes a psychologist, sometimes you feel like a mother or a parent, for guys, like a father, sometimes you feel like a guidance counsellor because they come to you and they ask what you would do in this situation"* (F2, female, 34 years).

Former educators, in particular, bemoaned the fact that workload is significantly compounded by many other non-teaching tasks - often referred to as 'Duties Other Than Teaching' (or DOTT), for example "*I understood, as a teacher you go home and you do another 2, 3 hours after the school day. That is just normal, that is expected... marking, preparing. In the school I remember they called it DOTT... Duties Other*

*Than Teaching” (F18, female, 32 years).* Examples of this would be “...you are doing lots of coaching sports, you are going on camps, you are organising camps, you are doing lots of after-school extra curriculum work as well, all the administration to go with it. It was really too much” (F10, female, 31 years) and “...you have to organise an excursion or you have to write up letters to parents, writing newsletters...duty other than teaching” (F15, female, 28 years).

**Bureaucracy** was often raised as a key feature of the workload, with its accompanying impact on the educator... “*I had to do so many reports and by the end of each class you are just exhausted. Some nights I had to take home 5 hours of marking*” (F14, female, 32 years). This same educator observed that “*...as the years went on the bureaucracy increased, and when you have to dedicate as much time to bureaucracy, being accountable, writing reports about students and your own teaching, when that started to take more and more hours, your energy and enthusiasm for actual teaching started to go down*” (F14, female, 32 years).

One former educator similarly mentioned, “*You were having to fill out more forms. For example, if you wanted to take the kids away on an excursion or just go for a visit somewhere, the sheer number of pieces of paper you have to fill in...* (F4, female, 42 years), or as another pointed out: “*It's getting very, very red tape and that's not the best bit. All the policies and regulations that start coming into it and the cutting of budgets... and that just adds stresses to everything, so that's not the best about teaching*” (F17, male, 38 years).

#### **Theme FF-5: A lack of time meant continuous pressure and sacrificing after hours and weekend time for work**

As is evident, the workload that participants had to deal with, specifically the additional duties, apart from teaching in the classroom, were a major challenge. These expectations from their schools were experienced as overwhelming and stressful because of the lack of time. In addition to the unwritten expectations, they felt pressured into tasks that, from their perspective, went beyond the responsibilities and duties for which they were hired and remunerated. Participants felt it was impossible to eliminate tasks from their jobs and argued that it was impossible to develop and improve their teaching and remain in control of marking, reporting and other tasks *and* complete all of these within

the school day. An unavoidable consequence of this was devoting ‘private’ or after hours time to work, in an attempt to remain in control of the workload. **Time**, being a scarce resource, understandably emerged as a central concern. It came up frequently in the discussions...

*“It was all consuming. Took up not only your day and then you would come home and work right through... your preparation for your classes and the marking” (F16, female, 34 years).*

*Or, as other participants expressed it,*

*“...you have to work on the weekends, every day you come home with a pile of marking (F11, female, 36 years);*

*“took up not only your day, and then you would come home and work right through... (F16, female, 34 years);*

*And...*

*“It was too much time, you needed your own time as well” (F10, female, 31 years).*

The issue of time in relation to workload, however, was most clearly captured by one educator with the following statement ...

*“It’s a never-ending workload. I found it took more of your time. I was feeling like I was working to deadlines that were unrealistic. Meetings that were inconsequential, you know, just wasting your time. The reports are part of your job. You’ve got the children all the time and they’re coming and going and, you know, you go camping on the weekends with the children. So you’re taking on this much work and you only think... in the time you’ve got you can only complete a small amount of that. I did not feel I had enough hours and days sometimes to complete the tasks I needed to do as a teacher” (F20, female, 34 years).*

Consider also participant F2’s assessment:

*“There is a lot of after-hours work. You are performing the whole time. There’s a lot of times you used your holidays to do some work. You know, everyone says, “Oh, you get so many holidays and stuff.” But your holidays are, you know, you got two weeks off and you’re preparing what you’re gonna be doing for the next 10 weeks of kids. So it’s not... you know... there’s a lot of work to be done outside of your nine ‘til three, that everybody perceives you to be working” (F2, female, 34 years).*

However, see also the earlier observation by participant F14 in relation to bureaucracy (above), which “*started to take more and more hours*” and the effect this had on her energy and teaching.

**Theme FE-6: Workload impacted on educators’ private lives and compromised their work-life balance. This alters the effort-reward relationship for the educator**

The narrative indicated that teaching impacted on educators’ time and personal lives regardless of the age, gender, experience or marital status of participants. Fourteen (14) former educators during the interviews related their accounts of how the educator’s personal life is inseparable from the teaching job. These narratives convey the difficulty (for educators) to have a life outside of work with all the activities that teaching involved, as one explained: “*I found it hard to have that comfy balance of work and having a life*” (F6, female, 37 years). Another expressed a similar view... “*the quality of life as opposed to work was not really balanced. I feel teaching is a lifestyle, not a job*” (F17, male, 38 years). Because of the prominence of the teaching role and load in their lives, educators unavoidably had to funnel their private time to teaching-related tasks. One participant, for example, said: “*when you are a teacher you don’t have your own life, you are totally tied up with teaching. I think teaching is too much; it is all consuming, all your life*” (F6, female, 37 years). Or, as another stated: “*I wanted to have my weekends for my family and my friends, but I could not. I could not commit the time and effort that is needed when I have my own life. I did not have a life. Teaching was just not viable for me*” (F11, female, 36 years).

Other educators regularly echoed this perspective...

“*Teaching influences your whole life. You don’t have a social or personal life. I have worked the whole day at school and I come home and I have to work again, like marking at night, and then on Sunday afternoon sometimes you have to work. Teaching is not like going to school from 9 to 5. You bring work home. It is all encompassing. I was just becoming almost a workaholic*” (F19, female, 34 years);

And...

“*I did not like taking home the work and do the marking. I hated working at home. I think I just got to that level that I thought more of time is being spent on work than any other part of my life*” (F20, female, 34 years).

Turning to the reward component in the equation, the majority of participants (14 former educators) were of the view that remuneration was important recognition (reward) for what a person does in a job. While most former educators felt that educator pay in itself was probably not particularly poor, they related their remuneration to the actual work they do and the time required (hours invested) – to the point that some educators actually do the calculations. From this perspective educators were substantially underpaid...

*“I think the pay is fine, and the pay I get in my current job is lower than the pay can get in teaching.... It’s kind of the workload for pay trade-off. I mean, it’s not pay and it’s not workload individually but when you put those together... I think, yeah, exactly, that’s something that squeezes people out”* (F17, male, 38 years).

Another added:

*“Teaching is reasonably well paid but nothing like what... you don’t get paid adequately for what you do, but then in a service profession not many people do. So nurses, teachers, policemen, people that don’t get paid particularly well for what they do”* (F14, female, 32 years).

This imbalance between salary and workload is clearly conveyed by participant F4...

*“Actually the pay was not too bad. I was quite happy with it. It is just you do work out of your hours, at home, before school, after school and on weekends. So if you added up all that and divided by the amount of pay you get, you earn 8 dollars or 6 dollars an hour, which is not huge”* (F4, male, 42 years).

Furthermore, evidence emerged from the narrative that indicated that participant views of remuneration differed depending on marital-status. Single men and women tended to describe their income as adequate, whereas married men and women were more likely to report it as inadequate, for example, one married male participant stated that:

*“The pay was not great. If you want to provide a little bit more for your family and you are a single-income person, which generally most teachers are, then you have to move out and find somewhere else where you can earn more. I think married educators leave, in particular, for more money. They probably walk into any job, I suppose, for twice the money”* (F5, male, 46 years).

Or, as it was stated by an unattached female participant:

*“My income was enough and sufficiently covered my living costs. I did not leave because of money. Honestly, I left because I didn’t want to teach anymore. I know teachers complain about money, but for me it was good pay”* (F13, female, 27 years).

Another single participant indicated:

*“The pay was good. I got paid properly for the first time in my life. I was single and it was my first full-time job; that was mind blowing. Basically I think teachers are underpaid, but for me, coming out of uni and getting a pay cheque every fortnight was an incredible thing”* (F3, female, 29 years).

Two participants indicated that pay is poor if the educator is the primary source of income in the household, but might be sufficient for educators who are the second-income earners in their families. They also argued that educator income fails to meet the family-related expenditure of a single-income earner. This position is outlined by a single-income earner with family responsibilities, who left teaching because of the level of income: *“My opinion is that teachers who are single-income earners, their families are on the borderline, on the borderline really. It’d be so difficult for a teacher as a single-income earner to support a family these days. I mean, really hard, still really hard”* (F5, male, 46 years). This is echoed by a participant with similar circumstances, and who mentioned that he had left teaching for a better salary...

*“Well, pay is the reason that I left. I think there would be other people like me who do like teaching and, you know, where they went through it and they did leave. They went into a better-paying job, which might be not satisfying – the job may not satisfy them, but they’re getting the dollar support. With my new job I’m pretty well, financially, I don’t worry about money any more. Financially, I’m fairly secure now. I can support my kids. I’m better off financially now”* (F9, male, 41 years).

#### **Theme FE-7: Teaching was experienced as stressful and adversely impacted on educators health and well-being**

Consistent with these observations about workload, participants generally portrayed the teaching job as difficult, demanding and **tiring** (“It is really a tiring job, you are performing the whole time” – F6; or “It is very exhausting” - F2). Six (6) participants described it as difficult and demanding, in particular when compared to their current jobs. It was for example said:

*“It was an exhausting job. It was demanding. I felt very much like I was bled dry in everything. I felt when I was getting on top of the workload, they were dumping more stuff on me. There is a huge workload in teaching, you have to be organised from 7:30 and be there until 5. It is really a tiring job, because you are performing the whole time, you are doing many things” (F6, female, 37 years).*

Other educators added: “*in my current job I have flexibility, I can shut my computer down and I am sure I will not be affected by students*” (F19, female, 37 years); and “*Teaching is difficult. You have to do lots of work. It is really tiring. In my current workplace the workload is a lot less. There is no workload in my current job. I’ve eased my workload and I’ve eased my after-hours work*” (F20, female, 34 years).

Former educators’ **experience** of the teaching job appears to be dominated by ‘stress’, which, for many former educators, also contributed significantly to them exiting from the profession. As educators related their specific experiences or situations, several aspects of the teaching job emerged as sources of stress. These typically included stressors such as excessive workload, a lack of time, extensive duties, and changes in the curriculum. Participant F16 for example, illustrates the link between workload, sacrificing personal time, and stress “*You got too much work at home. It was too much and really stressful*” (F16). Nine (9) of the former educators said that the **stress** they experienced was a determining factor in quitting teaching. One former educator for example indicated...

*“When I did quit... without having a job to go and we had mortgage and everything like that... So it was a big decision to make... to resign from teaching, in terms of a financial perspective, but my husband and I decided that was the best decision. We needed the money but it was not worth the emotional stress that’s why I left. Quitting for me was a huge decision from a financial perspective, we needed to pay the mortgage but I still made the decision, it was more about not having the stress of teaching” (F18, female, 32 years).*

A significant source of stress, in addition to those mentioned, is the challenge of dealing with **misbehaving children** in the classroom. Nine (9) participants identified student misbehaviour and discipline as an issue in the classroom. Consider for example the impact on this educator:

*“I really did not enjoy teaching. It is just... there was always potential for conflict because, you know, kids are kids. I had a constant knot in my stomach every single day starting the day. A child could do something in the classroom when they misbehaved. I always had to hope the class went well, kids behaved well and nothing went wrong. I think it was very stressful even though I was doing it for 10 years” (F19, female, 37 years).*

Or, as another former educator indicated:

*“Dealing with kids who are troublesome is stressful. When I was a teacher, I had to be very, very strict straightaway because it was hard work initially but meant a lot less problems in the long run, because you got the class how you wanted it to be. But I did not like the discipline side of it, even though I think I did it really well. It was a very stressful aspect of the job” (F2, female, 34 years).*

Acknowledged by some as an inevitable part of the work setting, participants reported that students' misbehaviour can be intolerable and requires a great deal of energy to manage. Seven (7) participants argued that the consequences of student misbehaviour are often serious and can impair teaching effectiveness and learning. Participant F5 stated in this regard:

*“I worked in three schools and kids always misbehaved and that just let me down. You cannot teach when they misbehave, I just found that exhausting. A little misbehaviour is fine, but some behaviours are ridiculous and you have to kick them out of class every day, and this just gets you down after a while and it is not enjoyable and not fun, and in the end you get very tired of that. It was emotionally draining and it took my energy. It really made it a very difficult environment” (F5, female, 46 years).*

This view is supported by another, who indicated: *“I had kids in class who were disruptive and made the actual passing on of knowledge difficult. I found that really frustrating. I found it defeated the purpose of what you were there for” (F20, female, 34 years).* Much of this behaviour originated outside the classroom, but still required the educator to deal with this – notwithstanding the stress induced by such behaviour...

*“I had become very frustrated with the children themselves, in that they were bringing so many of their social problems into the classroom. There are some children that don't want to be at school and they disrupt the class if they can, sort of thing. I remember there was a kid who told me, ‘My dad works in a mine and earns three–four times more than you do, so why do I have to listen to you?’” (F17, male, 38 years).*

The impact of teaching on educators' also became apparent when participants' commented on the **lack of balance** in their lives. All 20 former educators described experiences of doing job-related tasks beyond the limits of the school day, the magnitude of their workload and a lack of time to complete tasks – all of which influenced their personal time. As one educator indicated, most of the time they took work home...

*"I have found it a bit... really hard work. It was all consuming. There was workload. Took up not only your day and then you would come home and work right through your preparation for your classes specially" (F16, female, 34 years).*

Evidence of the impact of the teaching job (workload) on the **health** of the educator was also provided and five (5) educators, apart from indicating that the job was tiring and exhausting, voiced burnout and health issues, for example

*"I just think a lot of teachers burn out and then we put report writing on top of all that, sometimes you end up on your holiday, sometimes you get sick because your body wants you to stop, you just feel you can't do this anymore" and "To me it was like that, I was beginning to think 'do I really need to keep doing this? Because my health is suffering', so for me it was kinda my health" (F12, male, 34 years).*

Participant F14 conveyed the workload-health relationship very clearly:

*"The first years were fantastic, but I burned out and I think that happens to a lot of teachers, because you can be a natural teacher and be very enthusiastic. I was just getting fatigued... chronically... and have a very poor immune system. I was getting sick a lot. I saw a lot of people like that, but as the years went on the bureaucracy increased, and when you have to dedicate as much time to bureaucracy, being accountable, writing report about students and your own teaching, when that started to take more and more hours, your energy and enthusiasm for actual teaching starts to go down" (F14, female, 32 years).*

#### **Theme FE-8: Collaboration and support from colleagues and the principal, but also parents and the Department of Education, influence the experienced difficulty of, and satisfaction with the teaching job**

Part and parcel of the teaching role is the significant influence of the immediate work -, social and institutional **contexts** on the educator. Interview data from the former school educators illustrates that educators' interaction with those in roles in their

immediate work setting, emerged as an influential consideration in their experience of the teaching job. Twelve (12) former educators viewed relationships with colleagues, the principal and administrative staff of the school as having a direct impact on the quality of teaching in the school. Of these, nine (9) educators talked about the importance of **support** received from the school generally and during the early years of teaching in particular. Support reduces the experienced difficulty and stress in the role, as illustrated by participant F13 when she states

*“As a graduate teacher, I did not feel supported either. I needed help and the head of department did not help me. I was really struggling. When I look back at it, I feel they let me down by not offering me support. They did not actually help me. I had to organize everything from scratch. They did not come to me and ask ‘do you need help?’ You’re just kind of left to it. I mean... the principal just kind of leaves you to it. We were just kind of on our own” (F13, female, 27 years)*

Or, as another pointed out:

*“A lot of people leave in the first few years. Principals, deputy principals and higher areas are usually so busy with administration issues with the school and school is actually their business, and so they cannot really offer time with you” (F6, female, 37 years).*

Eleven (11) former educators mentioned the importance of **colleagues**. They described how collaboration with, and support from, colleagues enhanced satisfaction with teaching, for example, one commented:

*“Teaching can be fun... you can have a good time with teachers. It is like a family. The teachers, the school, we had a lot of collaboration, a lot of help and support. I got a lot of support from other teachers, so that made the job more interesting and exciting for me” (F2, female, 34 years).*

A similar view was provided by another...

*“I really enjoyed the teachers I was working with, particularly in the first school with my colleagues. I enjoyed that relationship. They helped me in lesson planning a lot. They gave me all the lesson plans and talked me through lesson-by-lesson, almost... they were fantastic” (F5, female, 46 years).*

And:

*“If I had not had good colleagues, it would have been horrendous. Because when I look back, they were aware that I was a first year out teacher and I was new, and they were very experienced, and they really nurtured me with their experience and that was very positive” (F15, female, 28 years).*

As is evident from these comments, colleagues were regarded as a vital resource that provided support and mentoring when it came to mastering the complexities of the teaching role. However, in educators' consideration of support, the role of the **principal** similarly emerged as a determining factor...

*“School is only as good as its principal. So if you've got a strong, caring principal who has the managerial skills and respects the educators, then you have a good school. I've worked in a few schools and that varied of course. One principal was... he never... in the morning before school or during recess time or lunch time, when the children were out of the classrooms, he would never be around mingling with them, knowing the tone of his school, knowing what the kids were doing really. Or the kids didn't know him. I've gone to another school where it was the principal's belief that he would be on duty every morning before school and he would be – as the kids were coming to school either with parents or bus, he was out there mingling with them and getting to know his kids (F5, female, 46 years).*

Consider also this educator's experience...

*“The principal I worked with was fantastic. I think if I had a bad head of department it would have been terrible. I got a lot of support from him so that made it great and made the job more interesting and exciting for me.” (F11, female, 36 years).*

Beyond colleagues and school leadership, other stakeholders in the broader social context such as parents, the Department of Education, and society in general, all emerged as contributors to the educator's experience of the teaching job.

Seventeen (17) of the 20 former educators talked about their interactions with **parents**. One commented: *“You might see parents every morning, every afternoon and sometimes during the day, they're the ones that you've got to impress really” (F11, male, 36 years).* Another said: *“I found relationships with parents quite difficult. I was always worried about whether they were happy with what I was doing. What was even more dangerous was when parents talked to other parents – and then all the gossip started” (F20, female, 34 years).* Fifteen (15) participants mentioned the *expectations of parents* and the *lack of parental support* as the main factors that impacted on their

views, while 14 participants were of the view that parents hold unrealistic expectations of what educators should be doing for their children. From their perspective parents' limited understanding of the educator's role is at the root of this problem. The complexity introduced by this situation is illustrated by the views expressed by the following participants:

*"Parents can be as tricky as children. You get parents who want you to do everything. They have expectations that you're going to go above and beyond. They send their children to school and they expect the school to raise the children. I think probably the main thing is a lack of understanding of what you do as a teacher. I thought they never understood how much work I did. They always talk about their expectations. They think their child is the only one in your classroom. They don't appreciate you've got 30. They never realise that a lot of things are things they should be teaching their kids at home, not expecting teachers to do. We still have the same number of days or same number of hours per day in our teaching day. And so you can't dedicate as much time to the basics. I had one or two kids that were nuisances in the classroom. I needed to deal with those two, but still have plenty of time to give to the other 30 students. And it was getting to the end – to the stage where, you know, you wouldn't have two or three, you might have six, or seven, or eight. And of those kids there, they might have behaviour problems or learning problems. Some of them could have emotional problems" (F19, female, 37 years).*

Participant F16 conveys this challenge in the following manner:

*"To me, being a teacher is only one part of the child's upbringing. It is right to teach all the manners where, really, a lot of manners and things come from the home and you expect the parents to perhaps stick up for the teachers if the children are misbehaving, when now it just seems to be that the child's always right. Kids are productive at home and parents are not always supportive, most of the time they are, but occasionally they are not. Some of them, they didn't mind that their kids were acting up and that makes it really tricky" (F16, female, 34 years).*

And another illustrates the undesirable manifestations of inadequate support:

*"You have a set of parents who don't turn up to meetings, but who will happily come in if you tell their kid off. You disciplined their child, so they'll happily come into the classroom and abuse you and have a go at you in front of the kids. You send them letters and you get nothing back. They are not very supportive. They don't come in and help out" (F14, female, 32 years).*

Nine (9) former educators regarded *parental support* as important, especially when a child misbehaved or his/her circumstances involved special needs. When this does not occur, educators lose confidence in the parent and the relationship between the educator and parent is eroded. This adversely impacts on the educator's experience of the teaching job.

The Department of Education (**DoE**), i.e., the broader institutional context, in which the teaching role is embedded, emerged regularly during the interviews with educators. This was mostly in relation to change imposed on schools and the teaching roles. Fifteen (15) former educators indicated that the DoE was a determining factor in their views and their enjoyment of teaching. Several educators conveyed the significance of these frequently introduced changes. As an example, one said: "*Every ten years there seems to be a turnaround of ways to present or the content has changed or the philosophy of the style of teaching*" (F19, female, 37 years); while another shared: "*things changed a lot for a couple of years in terms of ticking the boxes, and writing, and more paperwork, and retyping, that kind of thing, which takes away from teachers' ability to actually teach*" (F9, male, 41 years).

Consider also, for example, "*I think there was too much change at that time. We had to develop new tests, worksheets, curriculum for many subjects from scratch and it was just hard work and stressful, and you had to make things up all the time, develop new things, it was hard work*" (F5, female, 46 years).

Educators indicated how these constant changes (e.g. revised curricula) added extra work to their teaching role and expressed frustration (and stress) about the increased workload. One of the educators who left teaching after 14 years complained:

*"It was getting harder; there were so many changes, so many changes in the structure of the expectations from above. There was a lot more reporting you had to do, there was less time for actually preparing for teaching. They just kept piling things on more and more, and where do you have the time to do that? And I found it really frustrating. It was becoming so stressful"* (F5, female, 46 years).

Another said:

*"I think the Education Department expects us to fit too much into an academic year. They keep bringing programs, adding maths, adding a self-esteem*

*program, and you just eventually feel you can't do anything completely because there is not enough time. You always try to integrate everything, a bit of maths in your reading, or adding a society graph in the society environment. You need to decide what is really important" (F17, male, 38 years).*

External influences were not always as direct, and the general society also surfaced in the interviews with former educators.

### **Theme FE-9: Society in general undervalued the teaching occupation and educators' work**

This open coding phase also revealed the indirect but pervasive influence of society. This surfaced in particular in the form of an undervaluation of teaching and the educator's role, which can influence educators' feelings towards teaching. These (former) educators strongly believed that teaching is an important and valuable profession, but argued that educators today have less status than they used to have. From their perspective society has a negative view of teaching and people in general do not regard it as a high-status career. One former educator said "*a teacher doesn't feel like in society they have much worth*" (F5, female, 46 years), while another stated: "*I would say the whole time I was teaching, I was not appreciated and valued at all by society*" (F14); or "*I think teaching is such an important job and yet it's not given the respect it seems to have. It's as if teaching is a job now that people do if they can't do anything else just about and that was not the case when I went into teaching*" (F11, male, 36 years).

These considerations seemed to have prompted these (former) educators to reconsider the value proposition offered by the teaching profession in that they started questioning the value of working in teaching ("*I didn't think teachers were rewarded for what they did. I don't think it was fair*" - F19). This is probably best illustrated in the earlier observation by participant F5, who concluded... "*I didn't want to go to work, I was thinking, 'Oh, why am I doing this?'*" (F5, Female, 46 years).

All 20 participants eventually left the profession (refer Table 4.1).

#### **4.3.1.2 Emergent themes: Current educators**

The *current* educator narrative dataset (18 educators) revealed several prominent themes, which aligned with prominent categories in Table 4.5. These themes, which are outlined in the ensuing section, are ...

1. Current educators had a passion for becoming educators and positively impacting the lives of children, which is experienced as intrinsically highly rewarding;
2. A significant workload and pressure characterise the teaching role, resulting in substantial after hours work;
3. Remuneration is poor considering the effort required and hours worked;
4. Educators experience teaching as demanding and stressful, which is further worsened by student misbehaviour;
5. The Department of Education constantly introduces changes in the curriculum, which increases workload and demands on educators' time;
6. Educators collaborate or deal extensively with various stakeholders, including staff, parents and the community;
7. Society does not respect or appreciate educators and the teaching profession.

These themes are briefly illustrated with excerpts from the former educator narratives.

**Theme CE-1: Current educators had a passion for becoming educators and positively impacting the lives of children, which is experienced as intrinsically highly rewarding**

The 18 current educators who participated in the study characterised their experiences very similar to that of the former educators. They generally pointed out that a passion for teaching prompted them to enter the occupation, while 13 participants more specifically stated that they entered the teaching profession because they had a strong inclination for working with children. During the coding process it became clear that current educators were motivated to contribute to children's lives and success, by preparing them for the future. As an example one stressed:

*"I always wanted to be a teacher and have not lost my passion. I think I was attracted by being able to make a difference in people's lives. You help them in some way and even to kind of make their life a little bit more fun and you've made a difference. To make a difference in someone's life is really why you're here. It's not financial" (C7, Female, 46 years).*

Fifteen (15) educators viewed teaching as a worthy and (*intrinsically*) **rewarding** profession. Their influence on their students' achievements and success is illustrated in the following example:

*"Teaching is rewarding. The reward is in the classroom. The reward is through more face-to-face with the kids. Seeing the progress, and seeing kids sort of that might not have been able to do it at the very beginning of the year, sort of wherever it is somewhere through the year if they finally go 'oh'... It's that light bulb moment. You can see things start to click for some kids. That's the reward. That's what's good about teaching... seeing progress in your kids"* (C13, Female, 41 years).

Another educator stated, "*I found teaching very rewarding actually*" (C15) and "*It is very rewarding. I feel very good, I feel rewarded about what I am as a teacher. You would see how much they would change over 12 months*" (C7, female, 46 years). Yet another indicated... "*You put a huge amount of energy into planning, and it is great to see they are learning*" (C9, female, 43 years) and "*You enjoy it when you see your students are learning*" (C5, female, 33 years).

Educators however also expressed the view that they contribute to students' development in ways that go beyond the academic curriculum for example...*It is not just teaching academically, but it is also helping them grow socially and personally. I think as a teacher you are developing them socially, emotionally, physically and even creatively, so I think it is really exciting* (C7, female, 46 years). Or, as stated by another: "*It is not only teaching them the subject. We also make a difference in kids' lives. We really help them out and teach them things about the world. We are teaching them many things*" (C16, male, 36 years).

### **Theme CE-2: A significant workload and pressure characterise the teaching role, resulting in substantial after hours work**

Current educators' views of the **teaching job**, however, are less positive when they draw attention to the **workload** and the lack of **time** to attend to this e.g. "*Teaching, you're always working to deadlines. The time, you're always watching the clock*" (C10, female, 31 years). Of particular interest, is that all (18) current educators voiced great concern about the demands of their teaching roles. Their narratives generally accentuated the never-ending nature of teaching work, the extensive range of tasks

(not limited to classroom-based activities) that spills over into their private (non-work) time and which are taxing and exhausting:

*“Teaching is a very big job. There’s a lot of – many, many different things you have to deal with. It’s not just the classroom. You’ve got to build a relationship with the parents and you have to communicate what you’re doing in the classroom with the parents, you have to have a relationship with the other staff members, your education assistants and the other teachers and your admin staff. You have to deal with all of whatever they want to do, so it’s all of that. And then there’s the bigger – not just the students in your class, it’s, like, whole-school programs, often they’ll have afterschool sorts of things or breakfast clubs and so on” (C9, female, 43 years).*

Consider also...

*“It’s a never-ending workload. It’s an enormous amount of work. You could work non-stop and still never be done with it. You have to reach a cut-off point where you just go, ‘I’ve done enough for today. I’m over. I’m done’ ... But, seriously, you could just keep going, and going, and going. There is... because there are always kids in your class who aren’t where they should be, so you should be putting extra work into them” (C10, female, 31 years).*

The pressure associated with job-related activities such as lesson plan preparation, teaching, documenting of portfolios, marking, paperwork, meetings and parent communication was regularly experienced as overwhelming and often contributed to frustration:

*“Sometimes it’s really frustrating. It’s really demanding physically if you do the job. You’re constantly on the move. I was amazed when I first started full-time how exhausted I was, because you teach a subject, but you have to handle all the people and the dynamics. If you’re in most professions you have a break, so if I was a counsellor, for example, I would have a five- or ten-minute break to do my notes, to debrief and to go to my next client ... It’s a lot of work. I would come early to school and I would finish quite late. There’s a lot of paperwork involved with teaching, so having to write programs and then record all the results and that sort of thing about the children. Also, pretty much any interaction you have with parents or with the other teachers or your principal or deputy and that sort of thing... you have to make sure you write it all down - just to cover yourself legally in case something happens in the future” (C5, female, 33 years).*

And, as voiced by another:

*“Teaching never gets easy. It doesn’t get easier. Easier in the sense that you probably do your classroom management a little bit quicker and faster than if you were first year out. The problem is it’s very exhausting. It’s long hours. I think people don’t realise – they think teachers, you work 9 to 3 and that’s it ... It’s demanding because when you’re a teacher, you’re a teacher 24/7. So it’s kind of a lifelong thing. It’s not possible to develop and improve your teaching as well as keeping on top of marking, reporting and all that kind of stuff, and do all these within the day. That is why I have to work at holiday times. You get school holidays, but some time you’re supposed to do lesson plans. You’re not free, you’re employed 12 months a year... you spend your holidays on preparing for class” (C14, male, 37 years).*

The mentally and physically demanding nature of teaching is evident from these comments. Apart from being demanding and exhausting, educators are often left with little time and energy for attending to their personal commitments. Eight (8) current educators, varying in age, gender and marital status, found balancing teaching and their personal lives (and families) a challenge. Work overload and a lack of time meant completion of these tasks after hours, often compromising time with family or friends.

Consider for example:

*“Teaching is a big factor in your life ... it is just such a huge time commitment to being a teacher ... when you go home you need to set up activity. You don’t have freedom... you are locked into performing. Inside and outside the school, you have to work. Your whole day is completely dictated by the time frame and by the timetable “(C3, female, 30 years).*

And...

*“You have to work six days a week to do the job properly and a lot of them should be done at evenings or over weekends. My family sort of realise now that ‘oh gee she’s spending the whole time’. I’ve sort of said ‘no, I’m out of bounds now, its report writing, I’ll see you in three to four weeks’. It’s like ‘why?’ I said I’m writing reports. I’ve put messages through for my teacher friends ‘happy report writing’. For those that aren’t teachers ‘I’ll get back to you, I’m not ignoring you’, but that’s it. That’s the life of teachers... because you’re constantly busy doing reporting and marking. I mark every night” (C5, female, 33 years).*

And:

*“I think as a teacher you’re working 60 hours a week at least and working inside and outside school and all those things. I don’t think it’s fair. You still*

*need to work when you get home. It's the frustration when I go home and I have to write reports. My husband complains sometimes because you work through the holidays sometimes. I have done a lot of work in the holidays. I think it is not fair" (C17, female, 39 years).*

It follows that this situation cannot continue indefinitely and invariably will result in diminished wellbeing and for some educators a decision to leave teaching, for example, “*One of the teachers said she does not want to be a teacher anymore because she wants a life. She said she wants to have her time on weekends for her family and friends. She is at the moment so burnt out and so tired*” (C17, female, 39 years). Participant C12 also conveys the severity of this experience...

*“My family ideal... and having spent time with my family... is not in teaching. I have been diagnosed with anxiety ... I think that if life outside of school is hard, then it's very hard to do teaching, and if teaching is hard, it's very hard to have a happy life, if you know what I mean? So a lot of people think of leaving because it's too hard emotionally and it's affecting them in other ways like that” (C12, female, 30 years).*

### **Theme CE-3: Remuneration is poor considering the effort required and hours worked**

In contrast to the higher levels of intrinsic reward enjoyed, some educators felt that conventional rewards e.g. pay were not comparable with that of other occupations e.g. “*I had ...other people I knew, who worked in the public service, with the same qualifications, who were getting paid a lot more than what we were as teachers*” (C13, male, 41 years). Although salary was generally characterised by participating educators as low, the majority (14 of 18) reported that at the time of choosing an occupation, they were fully aware that it was not known as a high-paying profession. This is evidenced for example by the comment... “*I think teachers get paid a lot less than other professions. Teaching is famous for not paying particularly well. It's something we're doing because it's a good thing to do. So I didn't get into teaching for the money, I knew the pay is less than others who have earned the same degree*” (C12, female, 30 years). Another reiterated this position... “*To me pay was not really important, it's all just for the love of it and if I didn't love it, I wouldn't do it. I'm sure I could go and get more money in other jobs*” (C17, female, 39 years).

Although most participants (regardless of age, gender or marital status) did not view remuneration as a major concern, their comments nonetheless conveyed an implicit

link between low levels of remuneration and reduced satisfaction. This was largely a function of educators recalculating income in terms of actual workload and hours worked, which of course extends significantly beyond the normal workday, for example “*You don't get paid overtime in teaching. We are not rewarded monetarily for the amount of work we do. It's all just for the love of it and if I didn't love it I wouldn't do it, but I just see pay as a reward for the job that you do*” (C3, female, 30 years). And, as pointed out:

*“I think a lot of teachers feel they are underpaid. I'm not a greedy person, but I think you should be remunerated for the work you do. You don't get a lot of money when you are teaching. I think pay is a big factor because of all the extra hours you do. I don't think in teaching you get rewarded. I've got a few friends working in IT and they get paid overtime. When they finish work, if they stay back to do some extra work, they're clocked on... they get paid extra for that time. Someone said, 'you don't get paid enough for what you do'” (C13, male, 41 years).*

Pay and related benefits have been singled out as a ‘push’ factor contributing to educator attrition. Conversely, as five (5) participants pointed out, it impacts on the attraction and retention of educators’. However, it was also mentioned that poor pay levels are experienced as demeaning and affect people’s respect for teaching. In this regard they provided accounts of colleagues who had left teaching to pursue a better salary:

*“I've worked with some guys who left because of money. They thought there wasn't enough money in the profession. I think teachers can earn more money by working in industry, especially science and maths teachers. You can financially earn more driving a truck up north in the mines than any other job, but teachers are underappreciated in society. I think, on that level, it doesn't attract the best people. It attracts the people who are predisposed to go towards it anyway” (C16, male, 36 years).*

Or, as another explained:

*“When you're a teacher, you have got skills. You could probably walk into any job, I suppose, for twice the money. A lot of the younger ones leave because they don't feel they're getting enough money, they don't feel the pay is good enough. I've been told about teachers who have left the profession to work in a labouring-type role in the resources industry. I think, in general, the teaching profession needs a huge overhaul and I think it will attract the right people once there is respect, maybe when there is a little bit better pay. I think it is*

*reflected in the pay that our society does not hold schoolteachers in great respect” (C14, male, 37 years).*

#### **Theme CE-4: Educators experience teaching as demanding and stressful, which is further worsened by student misbehaviour**

Current **educators’ experience of the teaching** occupation, however, conveys strain, which is associated with **workload** and task demands. Twelve of 18 participants mentioned that educators are working twenty-four hours a day. Tasks such as marking, preparation, writing reports and designing class activities are most often done at home. From their perspective the demands of the job are such that they do not enjoy quality leisure time, as stated by one of them, it’s “*Much harder than people think. Much more demanding because when you’re a teacher you’re a teacher 24/7*” (C17, female, 39 years). The role is quite diverse... “*Lots of different things that schools will have that teachers usually get involved with as well*” (C8, male, 29 years) and involves pressure and stress, “*It is such a high level, high stress, and high achievement type of job where you simply have to produce*” (C4, female, 28 years). The extended working hours appeared to be associated with more negative educator attitudes:

*“Sometimes I do dislike the workload and that at certain times there is quite a lot of pressure to get things done and you don’t always have the time that you would like to do things. It is very stressful, the workload. There is pressure to get a lot done in the timeframes that we have, so to teach the children lots of different art techniques and contexts in a short amount of time is very stressful. Pressure to meet reporting deadlines, exhibition deadlines. I think too, at some schools I’ve worked at, there is pressure to get good results. Whereas at some schools there’s pressure in terms of behaviour management as well” (C12, female, 30 years).*

The emotionally demanding nature of the role is evidenced in the typical comment...

*“It’s really demanding emotionally. In teaching you can go from an absolutely crazy, aggressive, awful class into a lovely, relaxed, easy class and it’s in an instant and you have to be able to shift your consciousness instantly. That’s really demanding because we’re human, so sometimes you don’t make it. You don’t make the shift and you suddenly find halfway through the lesson that you’ve been exceptionally grumpy or something. So those kinds of things are demanding, that constant need to self-regulate when you’re exhausted and stressed and at the end of a long day or a long week” (C7, female, 46 years).*

In this instance the educator's comment also reveals the need for educators to manage emotional expression, which in itself is taxing.

Stress, however, is further exacerbated by incidents of **student misbehaviour** - reported by 13 current educators as a particularly challenging part of job. Some of the educators were of the view that the learner profile has changed over time with more disrespect shown to educators now:

*"Some kids are horrible to you. I think kids have changed. If I can look back, the respect for teachers is quite different. I remember myself as a student; I wouldn't dare say some of the stuff that you get. You wouldn't say anything like that to your teacher. But you get everything these days. I've taught at quite a few challenging schools where there's a firm procedure in place purely because of the nature of the kids and the students that you have. If you don't have a good stepwise process, then there's no way that you can actually try and contain those kids" (C9, female, 43 years).*

Nine (9) participants felt that the challenge arises from the disruption it creates in the classroom. For various reasons this is a source of dissatisfaction to educators, but mostly because it detracted from learning. For example, it was mentioned:

*"You cannot teach when they misbehave, I just found that exhausting. Mentally, you're constantly thinking, particularly when you have a really horrible group of students, you're constantly thinking, what are they going to do? You're making sure that you cut them off before they do it. You're constantly thinking, what are they going to ask you, what are we going to do, what are we doing today? And you're in class and then suddenly someone throws you a hairball question, you're like, oh okay. So your mind's constantly going what am I doing, what am I doing, how am I going to do this? And last year, for instance, I had two students getting ready to have a fight in class and the whole time my mind was going, okay, so if this happens, what am I going to do with them? And your mind's just going at a million miles an hour, saying, what am I going to do here, how am I going to sort this out? So when you walk away from that, you're kind of like, oh God, exhausted. Your mind's just like, oh, I'm a bit frazzled because I've just had to go and think, think, think, and sometimes it's hard to slow back down after that. It takes a while to calm down" (C17, female, 39 years).*

As is evidenced in this previous educator's (C17) account, student misbehaviour has a pronounced impact on the educators – often described in terms of *feelings of*

exhaustion, and frustration. During the interviews this was clearly conveyed by their body language, expression and voice quality when they discussed the subject...

*"In teaching you can go from a lovely, relaxed, easy class into an absolutely crazy, aggressive, and awful one... and it's in an instant and you have to be able to shift your consciousness instantly. That's really demanding because we're human so sometimes you don't make it" (C6, female, 27 years).*

It is understandable that student misbehaviour is often a contributing factor to educators leaving the profession...

*"You just find behaviour management too hard. You just cannot deal with it every day. A lot of the younger teachers that leave... so, if they're still young and they've only been teaching for a short amount of time when they leave, that's usually what it's for. Some older teachers that leave before retirement age, some of them it's because of the behaviour. If they've been teaching for a long time, the behaviours have got a lot worse as time has gone by. One of my aunties, she's left teaching prior to retirement because she just was fed up with it. Because she's one of the more experienced teachers in the school and so the admin will be putting the most difficult kids in her class every single year and she just got sick of it and left" (C2, female, 39 years).*

As evidenced in the commentary of five (5) current educators, the causes of such behaviour was ascribed to students in most cases not being interested in learning. This in turn is viewed as a consequence of the students' home environments e.g. an unsettling incident at home will affect the student's behaviour in class.

*"I don't enjoy teaching so much because the students are not motivated, they're not interested, so their behaviour is quite bad. So it's quite a stressful job. Some kids have got big problems at home, so when they go to school they don't know how to behave. You can get a kid that's disrespectful, tries to always buck the system, there's fights, their whole behaviour and so on is quite different at school. Going back into their home life, you see this is pretty – pretty horrific, it can be. If you've got a great family life with these kids, they're respectful to teachers, you delve further and you know that the mum and the dad are both equally interested in their kid and their schooling" (C5, female, 33 years).*

A large part of this challenge for the educator is the absence of sufficient support from the administrators / managers for effective disciplinary policies, which also emerged as a contributor to educators' frustrations. As a result their influence in the classroom is eroded... and students appear to be aware of their greater power and freedom to act.

The educator narrative seems to convey a loss of faith in the school leaderships' commitment to solving student misbehaviour issues:

*"The teachers feel they're not supported by the administration staff, the principal and the deputy principals. They seem to have a very knee-jerk reaction. So if a parent complains about something, they will act immediately even if it's a very small thing. Whereas we're dealing with very bad behaviour on a daily basis and nothing's done about it. And yet if a parent rings up and says, oh this happened in the class', whereas I think, well yeah, it did, so what? That's the least of my problems. So it's a real 'hide the truth and sweep it all under the carpet', which is – that's also very frustrating" (C14, male, 37 years).*

Another stated:

*"It's horrible. You're given the responsibility to control the uncontrollable and then when you can't control them, you're criticised, and you're always risking being criminally prosecuted. So if something goes wrong in the class, somehow it's my fault, when I have no power to prevent it from happening. So it's very stressful" (C9, female, 43 years).*

#### **Theme CE-5: The Department of Education constantly introduces changes in the curriculum, which increases workload and demands on educators' time**

For current educators the **context**, in which the teaching job is performed, occupies a prominent position in their thinking, primarily because of its influence in their day-to-day tasks. The different contexts that exert an influence on educators include the classroom and immediate school environment, the institutional context – most prominently the Department of Education – society in general, and overlapping with these, the social context with its many stakeholders.

Student misbehaviour, which relates to the classroom learning climate and the school as immediate context for teaching, was highlighted under the previous theme. An equally, if not more, pervasive contextual influence on the educator is the lack of stability in the educational framework, which they ascribe to the Education Department. This surfaced notably as a source of constant change in the workplace, with 14 current educators reporting that the education department is constantly changing the curriculum. This has the consequence of creating more work for educators and placing greater demands on already scarce resources (e.g. educator time and energy):

*“There's constant change. What's the constant challenge of teaching? More work! For example, this year I've had to probably bring out another probably four different programs doing the same sort of thing, but I've had to re-change it, because everyone wants a different structure. So it's the same thing but they want it structured in a different way. So you are redoing things, which essentially are the same programs, they want the programs structured in a different way or stated in a different way” (C12, female, 30 years).*

Or as another stated:

*“There's consistent change and that's one of the reasons I just thought that's it, yet another curriculum change. How many? Three or four within 20 years. Oh for god's sake. And how you do things and what you can teach and can't teach. You know, changes increase workload. Doing the same thing, but just you had to be seen to be working so you were so busy getting the documentation and the procedures put in to be seen to be working that you weren't actually working because you were too busy doing that stuff and not actually doing your job” (C7, female, 46 years).*

Eleven (11) participants highlighted the scope and magnitude of the educational reform introduced by the Education Department. This required continually spending time on modifying or adding new material to the current curriculum. This resulted in frustration, for example...

*“I can't stand the continual change. It's outside factors and it is frustrating. You constantly need to add new subjects to the curriculum. The curriculum at the moment is so full and it is full of every subject... it's full of everything else. I just find you just don't have the time to do it, fit everything in. It's a nightmare. Trying to fit everything in that's got to be done, plus you've got all the other bits and pieces that go in” (C2, female, 39 years, ).*

And...

*“There's definitely a sense that there's a lot of changes that constantly happen for us, as in curriculum and the expectations from the Education Department as to what we're supposed to be doing. They always want different changes and it is so frustrating ... frustrating. They just want it in a different format, so they constantly change the way they want it. That's really annoying” (C9, female, 43 years).*

**Theme CE-6: Educators collaborate or deal extensively with various stakeholders including staff, parents and the community**

Apart from the preceding perspectives, current educators' narrative clearly indicated that teaching is essentially **social** in nature and entails constant interaction with different stakeholders including those outside the school. Collaborating or dealing with other teachers, principals, and parents, are significant aspects of the educator's job. Of particular significance is the sense of 'family' or community that educators experience in some schools, which tend to influence their views about the teaching job:

*We teachers have to take part in other activities, called extra-curricular. We have to do extra-curricular activities outside school time and at the same time we have a lot of interaction with families. You get to know the family of the students. I really like work groups in the classroom and I believe socialisation has an enormous impact on how you learn. It allows students to motivate one another" (C15, female, 27 years).*

Another educator conveyed it in this manner:

*"School is your own community. There's definitely a very delicate relationship web going at schools. You see principal, teachers, and parents every day. You actually work with them every day, but you may work more with the principal and colleagues. But, I say parents are part of the school as well. You see them, you phone them, you talk to them about their kids, yes they are" (C9, female, 43 years).*

And...

*"It is a great time at school, it is like a family ... it's like a community, it's good to feel part of a community. The teachers, the school, the parents and admins. We have a lot of collaboration, a lot of help and support" (C16, male, 36 years).*

### **The Principal**

The pivotal role of the **school principal** in providing support, direction and guidance, and creating a positive school climate and culture, emerged in the narratives of 14 current educators. The different experiences of educators in this regard are highlighted with the following excerpts:

*"I think who the principal is and what the values are, that's really important. Your principal at a school is god. I say the principal can support you or make*

*the job much more difficult and stressful than it is. Having a good and supportive principal makes the job easier” (C7, female, 46 years).*

And...

*“The job depends where you are and some schools are hard to staff because you don’t get the principal’s support. Support, I think, is very important for teachers and, to be honest, I was quite lucky I had some good ones. I have got to say I wasn’t coping in my first years of teaching. I wasn’t coping at all, I was really out of my depth, and I think perhaps having more of that open...” (C12, female, 30 years).*

In addition...

*“I think we need to see more of principals and the leadership teams need to be given more time to work with teachers in these meetings to make progress... just to make it more clear what is expected, what we should be doing. We sometimes need direction; give us parameters, clear parameters, a clear framework. When we start a new curriculum, the program is just too broad sometimes and we have people coming to tell us how to do it... and we get told about two or three different ways, so how we are meant to understand what is required of us?” (C10, female, 31 years).*

### **Colleagues / Peers**

Teamwork and *collaboration* with colleagues appeared to surface regularly as key concepts in educators’ reflections, which relate to the sense of family or community commented on earlier...

*“I think teaching today encourages you to collaborate with others. There is lots of direct collaboration. You’re working in an environment where you’re teaching people where you have to make a connection with people. So, of course, you make connections with peers, parents and the principal as well. Sometimes we do workshops with people from the local community” (C7, Female, 46 years).*

Consider also the view of participant C5:

*“I like working with other teachers. I like making friends with them. But I think some teachers do like the teamwork and working together with teachers ...do things... and some teachers just like to do it themselves and not worry about other people. I like working collegially but if it doesn’t work out then - if people aren’t interested or aren’t participating in that ideology that it’s no - it gets really bad. I’ve got some teachers at school and just they will shoot teachers down. If you have an opinion or if you want to put something in that they don’t*

*like, they will shoot you down. They will not hesitate. It can get quite nasty”* (C5, female, 33 years).

However, most current educators (12 participants) conveyed satisfaction with sharing, collaborating, supporting and team-oriented work practices, especially getting together informally or formally to share ideas or insights (e.g. the effective use of teaching methods, how best to prepare for, or organise teaching in a new subject or class). This, ultimately, made the job of teaching easier:

*“Teaching is a collaborative profession, there’s a great team atmosphere in teaching. We have a lot of collaboration, help and support. I spent a lot of time working collaboratively with other teachers. It’s, you know, before school, after school with the teachers, during lunch and the like, hearing what they’ve got to say. I guess that you’re in a bit of a club, you know, where you share your problems, and your ‘goods’ and your ‘bads’. Some informal or even formal meetings or gatherings and spending time with teachers going over the lessons and materials helped me learn a lot and particularly, to stick through the difficult early days of my teaching. It also helped me to perform better in class”* (C12, female, 30 years).

And another remarked...

*“You do lots of work together. If you’re working in a school that is quite well-organised, then all of the same year-level teachers will do a lot of planning together and often will do lessons together or they’ll be teaching the same – you will share the preparations. So somebody will prep for science and everybody will take the same lessons, or you have it that you rotate classes through so that you teach the same lesson a few times and, yeah. So yeah, it’s sharing the workload and also just getting ideas from other people and that sort of thing”* (C3, female, 30 years).

## Parents

All 18 educators acknowledged the importance of parents, being a critical social interface and contextual element of their teaching jobs and conveyed mixed feelings about this stakeholder:

*“I found a very close community and engagement among the teachers and between parents and teachers. It is a wonderful working experience. You deal with staff, and you’re dealing with parents quite often coming in. You work with parents. They come in, you talk to them. You let them know how the students are going, so there’s a lot of contact usually with parents”* (C11, female, 28 years).

One expressed the view that parents can be regarded as ‘clients’:

*“You could almost look at it like the parents are the clients and you’ve got to make clients happy. And sometimes that can be difficult and sometimes it’s easy, just like any business venture. Clients can be varying” (C14, male, 37 years).*

However, relationships with parents also provided the opportunity to share and exchange information about their children.

*“I’ve found the more you know the parents, the more you understand the child. Also the more you know the parents, the better the children perform at school because the parents get invested. Whereas if the parents are just drop at the gate and go, then they won’t sit down and do their homework, whereas the parents that I speak to, they do the homework with their kids and they do put in more of an effort” (C4, female, 28 years).*

Against the backdrop provided by the preceding, nine (9) or 50% of the current educators indicated that they have experienced **difficult** and **unsupportive parents**. For some this was the hardest part of their jobs, mostly because of parents’ unreasonable expectations. Consider for example:

*“I think the frustrations that I have are essentially with the things that are additional to the teaching, the things that run side-by-side with it. I think the sort of nature of the fact that there is a group of parents who are very much overprotective and demanding. If the parents were a lot more supportive, it would be an easier job for us. Parents should not expect us to be the parents of their children. They should trust us when we talk about their children and be more supportive, rather than questioning us about why their child should be punished or have seat detention. They should be supportive, which they are not. The demands from parents are enormous and unreasonable” (C5, female, 33 years).*

And as another remarked:

*“Maybe society is evolving in a different nature but years ago, if you called up a parent and you said, ‘okay, your son or your daughter is getting low marks or your son and daughter is misbehaving’, the parent would actually go back, reflect and talk to their kids or however a mother or a father would handle their child. Nowadays it’s different. It’s the teacher’s fault” (C2, female, 39 years).*

The profound impact of educator-parent relations is conveyed by participant C13's reaction:

*"I can remember one kid. I called meetings with his mum so many times. She just never turned up, never turned up. And I can remember on the third meeting, going to the deputy and just going, 'I'm done. Seriously, this is the third meeting she's not turned up for, with no phone call, no nothing.' I said, 'I'm more concerned about her kid than she is.' I said, 'I'm over it. I'm done.' I said, 'I'm not making another meeting with her if she doesn't give – doesn't care? I don't know why I'm caring this much about it,' I said. I found that really depressing. I found that aspect of things really, really depressing" (C13, male, 41 years).*

In addition to often difficult and unsupportive parents, educators experienced less than welcoming perceptions and sentiments from the broader public and society.

#### **Theme CE-7: Society does not respect or appreciate educators and the teaching profession**

One of the particularly prominent themes emerging from the narratives of current educators related to the current image and status of teaching in society. ***Fourteen of the 18 current educators*** conveyed dissatisfaction with the (perceived and felt) low status of teaching - when compared to other occupations. Educator commentary clearly conveyed the discouraging impact of this situation:

Participant C9 (female, 43 years):

*"If you are a teacher, you are just a teacher, it is not valued. I don't think it's got as high a status as a lot of other jobs. So it's not as high a status as being a doctor or a lawyer, all those sorts of things, which I don't agree with. People think teachers are low standard, not very well educated" (C9, female, 43 years).*

Participant C13 (male, 41 years):

*"I don't think it's a highly valued profession. I think there's a smaller proportion of people who think that teachers do an amazing job. People think that maybe it's a bit of a slack profession and view us as quite lazy. The first thing that everybody says is 'you get so many holidays'. That's always it, because they don't know how much work you do outside of your set hours. You*

*actually work quite hard during term time... and you work most nights and most weekends as well" (C13, male, 41 years).*

Participant C2 (female, 39 years):

*"I think it's devalued in the community. There's a lot of people out there who I think don't have a lot of respect for teachers because they don't understand what we do... or they just think 'oh you just sit there and it's easy and you just look after them'. They don't get what you do when you walk into a class and all the different roles you have to play" (C2, female, 39 years).*

Another educator expressed it in this manner...

*"I don't think we teachers are held in a great deal of esteem, generally, across the community. I think we're seen as sort of a necessary evil in a lot of cases... and 'necessary' being the key word" (C3, female, 30 years).*

Or, as mentioned by another:

*"When I was at high school and I was thinking about being a teacher, I was getting quite high grades... I was fairly academic... and I had a lot of people who were trying to say 'stop, don't be stupid, don't be a teacher. You should go get a decent job'. The thing that got me was that it was the teachers saying that to me... and it was the teachers at high school who were saying 'go get a decent job', which I thought was a bit crazy, but anyway..." (C10, female, 31 years).*

The disappointment voiced by educators in respect of people's views of the teaching profession revealed the potential impact of **societal views** on educators' opinions. Seven (7) current educators mentioned that there is less *respect* for teachers and teaching in the society now, compared to previous years. For these educators society does not appreciate or value teaching, while people in general view it as an easy job. These opinions are reflected by the following comments:

*"It was quite a good profession to get into. It was a good profession to be in. People looked up to teachers. But I think it is dramatically changed now. There are not a lot of people that revere teachers. A lot of people now comment to me just from outside, they said... 'Why are you a teacher? Why on earth would you do that?' Because, I think, they see us as glorified babysitters really" (C9, female, 43 years).*

And...

*"It is very disappointing; it's a bit of a thankless field. There are some people who are wonderful, who are lost in the profession. A lot of factors are involved,*

*but definitely you are not appreciated and valued in teaching" (C17, female 39 years).*

Or, it was said:

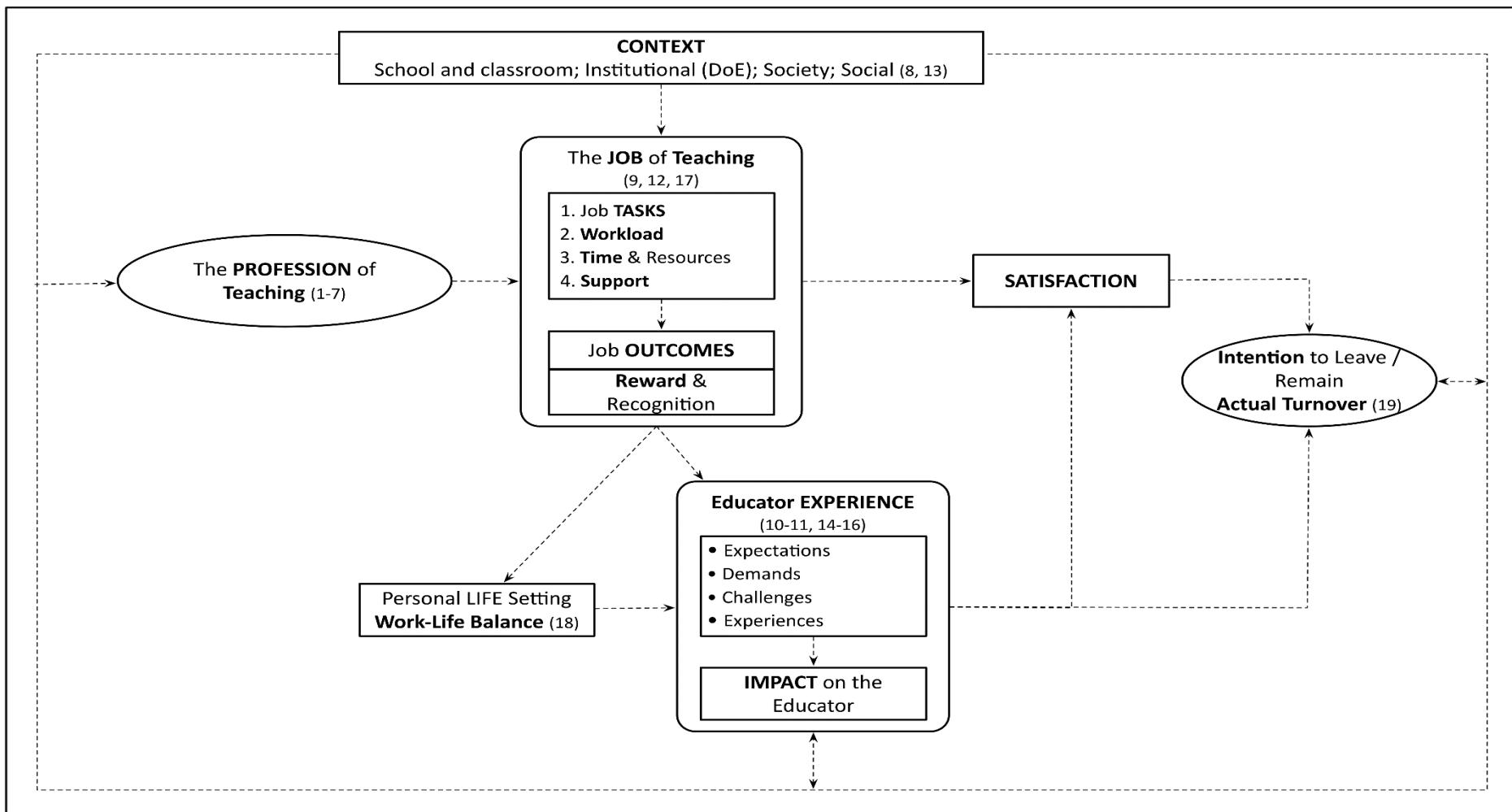
*"I think we're pretty expendable. I think we're seen as it's an easy way out. There's a perception that somehow we're not very bright. People think you could pretty much walk into teaching if you were breathing, we don't think that way. But you live with those comments. I don't think it's a highly valued profession" (C12, female, 30 years).*

#### **4.3.1.3 Conclusion and summary: Emergent themes**

The themes arising from the datasets for the two educator cohorts provide a more detailed perspective on the codes and categories outlined in Table 4.5, as well as the interrelationships between these categories. For the two educator groups these themes are essentially similar with only minor, mostly nuanced differences:

- Both educator groups highlighted passion, working with children, excessive workloads, pressure and stress, after hours work, compromised work-life balance and context-induced change (mostly constant curriculum-related changes).
- Former educators differed from current educators in that they commented on the decline in passion they experienced and the greater prominence of the stress and health impacts of the teaching job, which gave rise to them leaving the profession.
- Current educators' themes differed from that of former educators in the salience afforded to the constant curriculum changes introduced by the Department of Education; a seemingly greater emphasis on society's low estimation of the teaching profession; and the perceived prominence and breadth of educators' work-related social relations (multiple stakeholders).

This further 'coding' evidenced in the 'emergent themes' is broadly displayed in Figure 4.2, with the original category codes from Table 4.5 indicated in each textbox. The frequency counts reported in Table 4.5 provided a clear account of the difference constructs and how they clustered together into larger categories (reflected by the primary 'boxes' in Figure 4.2. The emergent themes and the narrative provided by respondents, in the preceding section, indicated the links and cause-and-effect relations between category codes, and provided the rationale for the 'arrows' in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4. 2 Framework of educator narrative associated with the teaching job and profession**

Satisfaction (dissatisfaction) in the workplace has not been commented on, but is implied by educators' narratives. This is the focus of further rounds of coding and analysis, and is reported in sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3.

### **4.3.2 Educator job satisfaction**

Consistent with the axial coding phase, the focus of this section is:

- The relationships that exist between codes and categories and, in particular,
- Relationships with the categories of central interest, i.e., job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Both job satisfaction and profession satisfaction are satisfaction constructs that differ only in terms of focus. Being attitudes, both share the same basic character and structure, i.e., they simultaneously comprise beliefs or evaluations, feelings and behavioural inclinations towards a specific object or 'target'. The basic differences between the 'targets' will determine the focus of the different forms of satisfaction. Job characteristics ('job facets'), for example, will be the focus of job satisfaction, while features or characteristics of the profession will determine the focus of profession satisfaction (discussed in section 4.3.3). On this basis educator evaluations, feelings and behavioural predispositions conveyed in their narratives were differentiated and analysed for job satisfaction and profession satisfaction.

In addition, even though a 'job' (per definition) is performed in a specific context, these contextual considerations are not considered to be an element of the job itself. Moreover, while educator narratives shed light on the constituting elements or **facets of job satisfaction**, the purpose of the axial coding phase extends beyond establishing the elements perceived by educators to comprise 'job satisfaction'. It is also concerned with participants' views of the **sources of job satisfaction** or **dissatisfaction** and the **impact** of this on the educators and their intention to remain in or leave (quit) their jobs. The Researcher consequently repeatedly read the interview transcripts and field notes for specific comments that conveyed these considerations.

Neither 'job satisfaction' nor 'profession satisfaction' was mentioned by the Researcher/interviewer and only on rare occasion did a participant nominate or introduce the phrase 'satisfaction' or 'job satisfaction' (in both the former and current

educator cohorts). Job satisfaction or dissatisfaction nonetheless is implicit in the narrative world of the participants. This is suggested by the fact that former educators **left** the job and ‘profession’, but it is also embedded in their comments about their *experience of teaching*. When the definitions of a ‘job’ and ‘job satisfaction’ are used as a guiding template, indications of job satisfaction become more specific and visible, and can be searched for in the narrative of the participants. For this the concepts of a ‘job’ and ‘job satisfaction’ need to be revisited.

In Chapter 2 section 2.2.1.1 **job satisfaction** was defined as:

*“A job-related attitude, i.e., the degree to which the job incumbent ‘likes’ or is satisfied with the job (and/or conversely ‘dislikes’ or is dissatisfied with the job), as a result of his/her (cognitive) appraisal of the extent to which the actual job characteristics (‘experience’) are ‘measuring up’ to his/her desired and/or anticipated job experience; accompanied by his/her affective experience of the job (i.e., feelings about the job experience); which result in a (behavioural) predisposition to act in specific ways, consistent with the his/her beliefs and feelings about the job (e.g. indicating a specific ‘rating’ on a job satisfaction scale)”.*

Educator narratives that fit and directly or indirectly point to the presence of job satisfaction and / or the intention to quit or leave the job, was the focus of this phase. The search concentrated on **evaluative thoughts** or beliefs concerning the meaningfulness and value of doing the job, **expressed feelings** that convey or suggest likes and dislikes in relation to specific tasks and/or activities and ‘rewards’, but also **behavioural indicators** (predispositions to act) such as indicating a commitment to leaving the job.

#### **4.3.2.1 Job satisfaction among former educators**

This section uses the observations of the previous section (‘emergent themes’) supplemented with data from interview transcripts as point of departure for further analysis. The focus of this section is directed at indicating/revealing relationships of various job facets / features with job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. It is concerned specifically with the causal links between various job features considerations and the educator's experience of the job (i.e., satisfaction) and how this influences the educator to act e.g. contemplate leaving the profession. The educator narratives from which these relationships are extracted have been discussed in further detail in section 4.3.3.1

for the former educators; and 4.3.3.2 for current educators. Diagrams illustrating the cause and effect relationships between job satisfaction/dissatisfaction and various job features rely on this evidence and only briefly indicate educator sources in parentheses within the diagrams.

### **Evidence of job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction**

In this study educators talked freely about their jobs and how they experienced it in response to a few broad open-ended questions. Because of this approach narrative accounts that illustrate job satisfaction in its totality therefore were rare (job satisfaction is defined essentially as the educator's evaluation of the job elements, his/her expression of a feeling or emotion in respect of those job elements/aspects, and an inclination to act on this). To illustrate the structural components of job satisfaction a few educator comments that appeared 'more complete' (but still 'incomplete') are provided. Even these 'more complete' statements were limited, because educator 'likes' or 'dislikes' tended to be more specific at a job characteristic or facet level.

A few illustrative examples (excerpts) that provide an indication of educator experience and therefore satisfaction, but also the structure of more focused 'satisfaction statements' are provided below. The superscript numbers in the narrative indicate:

**1** - an evaluation or judgment often conveyed by an implied decision;

**2** - an associated emotion or feeling; and

**3** - an action (behaviour), behavioural inclination or tendency.

### **Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction**

Former educator, F19, states:

*"I'm happy<sup>2</sup> to have open nights and have parents meetings. I'm happy to do anything that's involved with the child, I'm happy to do. And, I believe<sup>1</sup> that it's part of your job as a teacher. I went into it. I was not happy<sup>2</sup> to give up<sup>1</sup> my free time and do those things<sup>3</sup>. I wasn't happy<sup>2</sup> to use my time<sup>3</sup> to complete what I deemed<sup>1</sup> as unnecessary" (F19, female, 39 years);*

Educator F19's beliefs (1) about open nights and meetings imply a positive assessment / evaluation of the appropriateness of including such activities as part of the job, while '*happy to*' (2) conveys the associated positive feeling with this facet of the job. '*Wasn't happy to*' indicates the negative feeling associated with that part of the job that is concerned with working after hours and over the weekend. Not as strong, is the resistance (and reluctance) on the side of the educator to commit personal time (3) to doing this work. This statement therefore indicates elements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with different job facets or features.

The following statements similarly provide an indication of job satisfaction / job dissatisfaction:

Educator F18...

*"One day you wake up and then realise you don't teach anymore<sup>1</sup>, you're not feeling<sup>2</sup> like you're teaching, you're just feeling you're meeting all these requirements because you have to<sup>2</sup>, because that is policy, and then you look<sup>3</sup> for something else" (F18, female, 32 years);*

And indirectly commenting on his previous experience of teaching (educator F9)...

*"I am happy enough<sup>2</sup> doing what I'm doing<sup>3</sup> at the moment. I'm not thinking about going back to teaching<sup>1</sup>" (F9, male, 41 years);*

And in a rare example where the 'job' in its entirety is referenced (educator F11)...

*"I was really happy<sup>2</sup> to leave<sup>3</sup> the profession because I really didn't like<sup>1</sup> the job" (F11, male, 36 years).*

These statements indicate that compliance with requirements, commonly work demands (workload), and the accompanying stress, were instrumental in these educators' decisions to quit the profession or search for alternative work. In a similar manner all former educators (20) expressed 'likes' and dislikes' that prompted them to leave the occupation or profession. These tended to be specific in terms of their focus on job features or facets. Given this narrative by different educators to the same interviewing format, structure and sequence of questions, and that all former educators left the occupation, it must be concluded that...

- Dissatisfaction with the nominated elements or facets of the job, for the educator, weighed heavier than satisfaction with other job elements (as all former educators left the occupation); and
- The job elements nominated by educators (compared to those not mentioned) must be regarded as most prominent in their final decision to leave the occupation. Most, however, have generally indicated the reasons for leaving.

**Specific job characteristics give rise to positive/negative teaching experiences (job satisfaction / dissatisfaction)**

To gain an overarching perspective on the job satisfaction / dissatisfaction of the cohort, all educator comments that revealed the specific elements of job satisfaction (were sought and these are presented in the form of tables or figures to indicate the relationships and dynamics between these elements. Drawing on the observations reported in the previous section (4.3.1.1 - ‘emergent themes’) a more detailed and ‘full’ perspective on job satisfaction / dissatisfaction emerges when the many job characteristics or facets giving rise to former educators specific experiences of the teaching job are considered. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 outline positive and negative educator experiences in response to various job features.

**Table 4. 6 Former educators' experience of job satisfaction**

<i>Participant<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Educator Experience of Teaching Excerpts of illustrating narrative<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Job Facets<sup>c</sup></i>
F2	<i>Teaching can be <b>fun</b>, you can have a good time with <b>teachers</b>. It is like a family. The teachers, the school, we had a lot of collaboration, a lot of help and support<sup>d</sup></i>	<i>Support from Teachers / colleagues</i>
F11	<i>The principal I worked with was fantastic. I think if I had a bad head of department it would have been terrible.</i>	<i>Support from Principal</i>
F4	<i>Actually the <b>pay</b> was not too bad. I was quite <b>happy</b> with it.</i>	<i>Pay/Salary</i>
F14	<i>It was an <b>enjoyable</b> experience. I learned a lot. And hopefully there are some kids that learned something as well... you'd learn from them [students] because you learn how they learn<sup>e</sup></i>	<i>Teaching in general</i>
F6	<i>It was a very <b>happy</b> part of my life when I first went into teaching. I did get <b>good</b> holidays and I did have <b>job satisfaction</b> in terms of I was really <b>happy</b> with what I was doing...</i>	<i>Teaching in general; holidays</i>

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.1 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added. <sup>c</sup>The sources of satisfaction indicated by the statement. <sup>d</sup>Technically the participant indicates the job context and not the job tasks, which may vary from school to school. <sup>e</sup>This participant expresses enjoyment in a general sense, but ultimately left teaching – refer also Table 4.7 in which she outlines her dissatisfaction with aspects of the job, which then weighed more heavily than the sources of satisfaction.

As is evident, former educators rarely expressed satisfaction with the job elements or facets they nominated, but they did indicate satisfaction with the core tasks or functions most indicative of the profession e.g. working with children, teaching itself. These job elements or facets are more central to the identity of the profession and are further discussed in section 4.3.3.1. The limited positive commentary received on job features *other than* working with children, or the act of teaching itself, addressed aspects that could more accurately be considered as representing the context of the teaching job. A notable source of satisfaction was co-workers/colleagues, especially collaboration with and support from them, although not in all instances. A lack of support was also indicated by respondent F13 as a ‘let down’ (see also Figure 4.3).

For this group of educators the specific job facets that appeared to be a source of satisfaction were the actual task of teaching, holidays, pay or salary, and contextual considerations such as the collaboration and support of co-workers. It is also evident that this was not widespread.

For relevant examples that illustrate how educators typically presented their accounts of the teaching job and how they experienced it, see especially theme FE-7 in section 4.3.1.1 and note in particular former educator F14’s telling account of the dynamics. For her the teaching load, increasing bureaucracy and excessive demands eventually transformed a ‘fantastic’ initial experience of teaching into chronic fatigue, burnout, poor health and a decline in enthusiasm. Inspection of themes FE-4 to FE-7 (section 4.3.1.1) suggest a pattern in how the teaching job is engaged, experienced and how, over time, it changes educators’ enthusiasm and satisfaction. This is also illustrated by respondent F12

*“I just think a lot of teachers burn out and when we put report writing on top of all that, sometimes you end up on your holiday, sometimes you get sick because your body wants you stop, you just feel you can’t do this anymore. To me it was like that, I was beginning to think ‘do I really need to keep doing this? because my health is suffering’, so for me it was kinda my health” (F12, female, 34 years).*

In contrast to the limited evidence of satisfying job facets, indicators of job dissatisfaction were more abundant, with many statements provided by former educators that indicate less satisfaction. From these accounts it was possible to map educator experiences to specific characteristics or facets of the teaching job, which are

indicated in Table 4.7. From the latter it is clear that former educators commented abundantly on those specific facets of the job that tended to be sources of exhaustion, frustration and stress. These were essentially workload, after hours work, other duties apart from teaching, regular changes in the manner in which the teaching job is to be performed and child misbehaviour. The workload challenge appears to have had two major consequences with the first being that tasks spilled over into educator's private time and, secondly, started impacting their experience of teaching, and eventually health. Moreover, judging by the words containing emotion that educators used to describe their job experiences, i.e., demanding, exhausting, frustrating and stressful, educators' experience of these job facets seems quite severe (including also indicators of intense experiences such as 'hate' and burnout). It is also clear that educators rarely commented on job elements without simultaneously indicating how this was experienced or how it impacted them.

**Table 4. 7 Former educators' experience of job dissatisfaction**

Participant <sup>a</sup>	Educator Experience of Teaching Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>	Job facets / features <sup>c</sup>
F4	<i>I left because of workload. I really enjoyed it, but it was too much and really stressful. I suppose because of stress my passion had gone out of it. It was just the workload.</i>	Workload
F6	<i>It was an exhausting job. It was demanding. I felt very much like I was bled dry in everything. I felt, when I was getting on top of the workload, they were dumping more stuff on me.</i>	Workload
F16	<i>You got too much work at home. It was too much and really stressful</i>	Workload; After hours
F14	<i>It wasn't just sitting down kind of teaching in a classroom situation. There was a lot of stuff outside. I had to do so many reports and by the end of each class you are just exhausted. Some nights I needed to take home 5 hours of marking.</i>	Workload; After hours
F10	<i>I think schools expect too much, to do some activities with the kids outside school time... school socials. It was too much time. You needed your own time as well. I was just workload stressed...</i>	Workload: DOTT <sup>d</sup>
F2	<i>Dealing with kids who are troublesome is stressful. When I was a teacher, I had to be very, very strict [...]. I did not like the discipline side of it, even though I think I did it really well. It was a very stressful aspect of the job.</i>	Classroom behaviour
F5	<i>I worked in three schools and kids always misbehaved and that just let me down. You cannot teach when they misbehave, I just found that exhausting.</i>	Child Misbehaviour
F20	<i>I had kids in class who were disruptive and made the actual passing on of knowledge difficult. I found that really frustrating.</i>	
F17	<i>I had become very frustrated with the children themselves, in that they were bringing so many of their social problems into the classroom</i>	Child Misbehaviour
F5	<i>It was getting harder; there were so many changes, so many changes in the structure of the expectations from above. There was a lot more reporting you had to do, there was less time for actually preparing for teaching. They just kept piling thing on more and more, and where do you have the time to do that? And I found it really frustrating. It was becoming so stressful.</i>	Work Changes Workload
F7	<i>I felt extremely stressed by the work. I think the stress level for me was pretty high. As a teacher, I had change and new things happening around me. I had become very frustrated with changes because more and more things were coming into the curriculum.</i>	Workload Work Changes
F15	<i>I was just feeling really stressed not sleeping properly, feeling like I hated going into work</i>	Work in a general sense
F12	<i>I just think a lot of teachers burn out and when we put report writing on top of all that, sometimes you end up on your holiday, sometimes you get sick because your body wants you to stop, you just feel you can't do this anymore. To me it was like that, I was beginning to think 'do I really need to keep doing this? Because my health is suffering'. So for me it was kinda my health</i>	Workload, administration
F18	<i>We needed the money but it was not worth the emotional stress that's why I left.</i>	Stress

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.1 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added. <sup>c</sup>Features or facets of the teaching job described in negative experiential terms and indicating dissatisfaction. <sup>d</sup>Duties Other Than Teaching

Focusing on the causal links indicated by the former educators in their narrative accounts of their teaching jobs, Figure 4.3 maps former educators' job experiences to job features or facets. This provides an overarching perspective on the balance of educators' experience and therefore satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction with the job. For a detailed perspective on the constructs, see section 4.3.1.1 that details the 'emergent themes' from former educators' interviews.

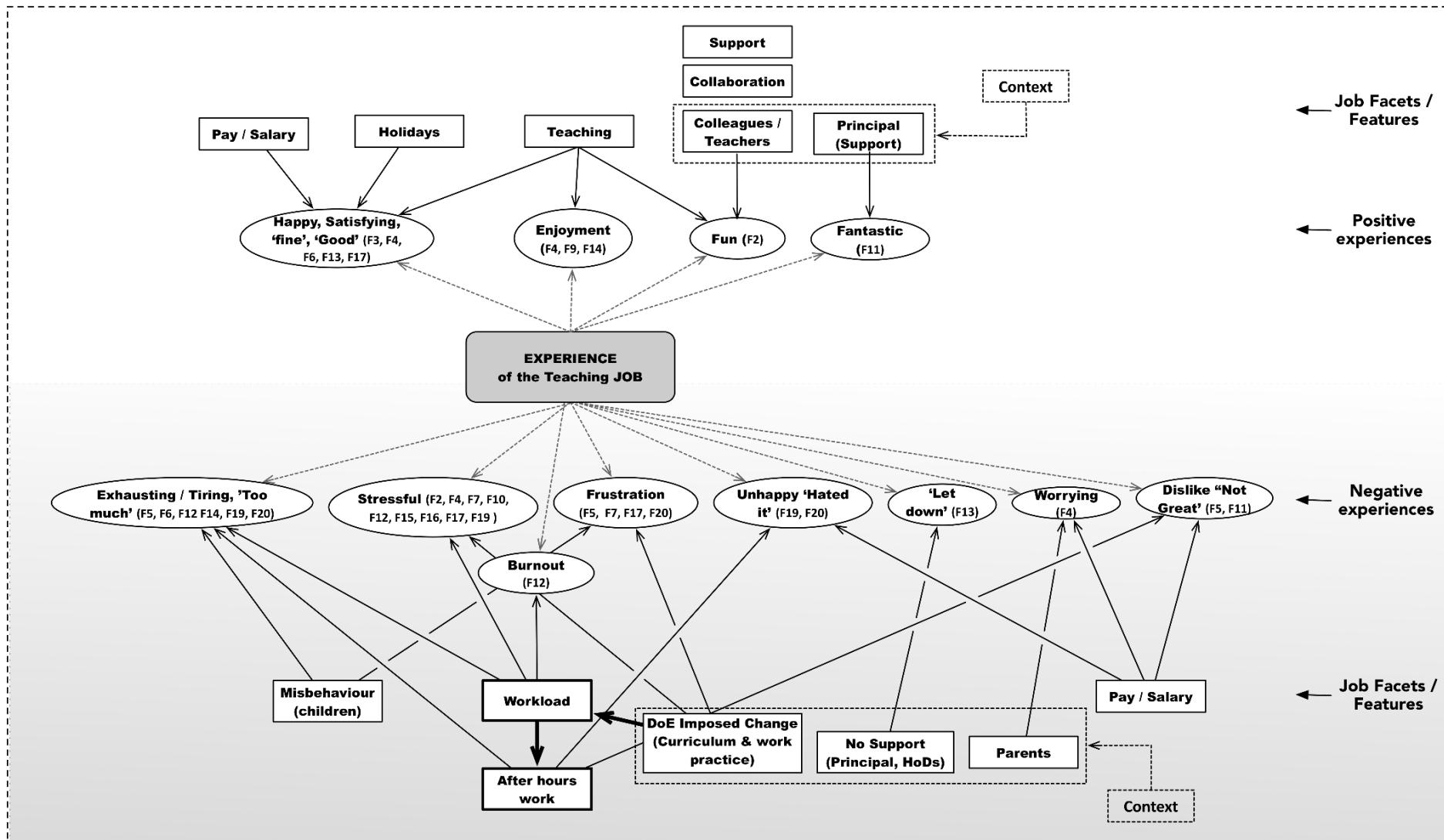


Figure 4.3 Former educators: Sources of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction (job facets) mapped to educator experiences

Figure 4.3 simultaneously indicates both positive and negative experiences - as reported by former educators. These are linked to the specific job facets of features that were causally indicated by educators as giving rise to their experiences. It also provides a representative view of the distribution of sentiment within the cohort of 20 former educators and the relative incidence of more satisfying compared to less satisfying job experiences.

Figure 4.3 conveys several important patterns or dynamics in the former educator narrative:

- The sources of enjoyment and hence satisfaction for former educators underestimate the job and its specific features. The social context and especially the immediate work environment comprising colleagues and co-educators, but also the leadership, including the principal, conveyed the most positive experiences. Pay/salary and holidays were sources of satisfaction, but somewhat muted with several educators simply stating that this was 'fine' or 'good' (but not 'very good'), 'fun' and the like. Note, also, the central role of actual teaching, as suggested by the three educators who reported 'enjoyment'.
- The negative experiences of educators, mapped to specific causes, are consistent with the patterns observed in Table 4.7 and noted earlier as part of the 'emergent themes'. In this regard it is apparent that the most prominent experiences are that of exhaustion, stress and frustration. These are not experiences emerging from single sources or job facets, but rather the compound emotional reaction to several job facets over time. The main cause for the situation is workload, which extends into substantial after-hours work and consequently also impacts work-life imbalance. Continuous changes introduced by the Department of Education appear to be an important facilitator of the felt work overload and reported work life imbalance. As indicated earlier in several statements, misbehaviour by children – disrespectful and unruly behaviour in the classroom – similarly contributes to frustration and exhaustion.
- Although only a single causal link to 'burnout' was indicated, five former educators mentioned this consequence of prolonged exposure to stress.

- Figure 4.3 also suggests that the general experience of the teaching job is likely to be more negative and therefore dissatisfying than positive and satisfying – on grounds of the unequal distribution of positive and negative commentary and the number of respondents commenting on these job features. The role of parents and that of the school principal, previously indicated as important sources of support or stress, is again highlighted by this analysis. The prominence of these considerations furthermore suggests that educators in their day-to-day tasks enjoy limited protection or buffering against external influences.
- It is also worth noting that the often discussed subject of educator pay or salary, which was viewed favourably by some, for others is a source of discontent and in some instances a major contributor to indicators leaving the profession (see section 4.3.4).
- Former educators' descriptions of the teaching job and how they experience it were sufficiently clear to allow a more detailed understanding of some of these key dynamics to emerge.
- In general, negative experiences in the role, on balance, outweigh positive experiences. Significant job dissatisfaction therefore is a logical consequence.
- A pronounced dynamic at work in this setting, is the influence of contextual considerations, in particular the Department of Education. These influences add to an already 'tiring' workload through regular changes in a range of teaching related areas. This in turn prompts more after-hours work and any additional or developmental work then occurs on top of the existing load. Intensified stress – also at home – has many undesirable consequences and typically adds to already negative emotional experiences. The latter leads to several behavioural outcomes of which impacts on health, and contemplating to leave the occupation, are most prominent.

This, particularly taxing, cycle of an already heavy workload that is adversely impacted by regular changes in curriculum and teaching practice and which contributes to even more overtime work, is detailed in Figure 4.3.1. The latter was extracted from verbatim narrative evidence (of which a summary is provided in section

4.3.1.1 – ‘emergent themes’). Arrows indicate the direction of causality and were obtained from the causal relationships pointed out by respondents (respondents whose narratives were utilised, are indicated in brackets within the diagram).

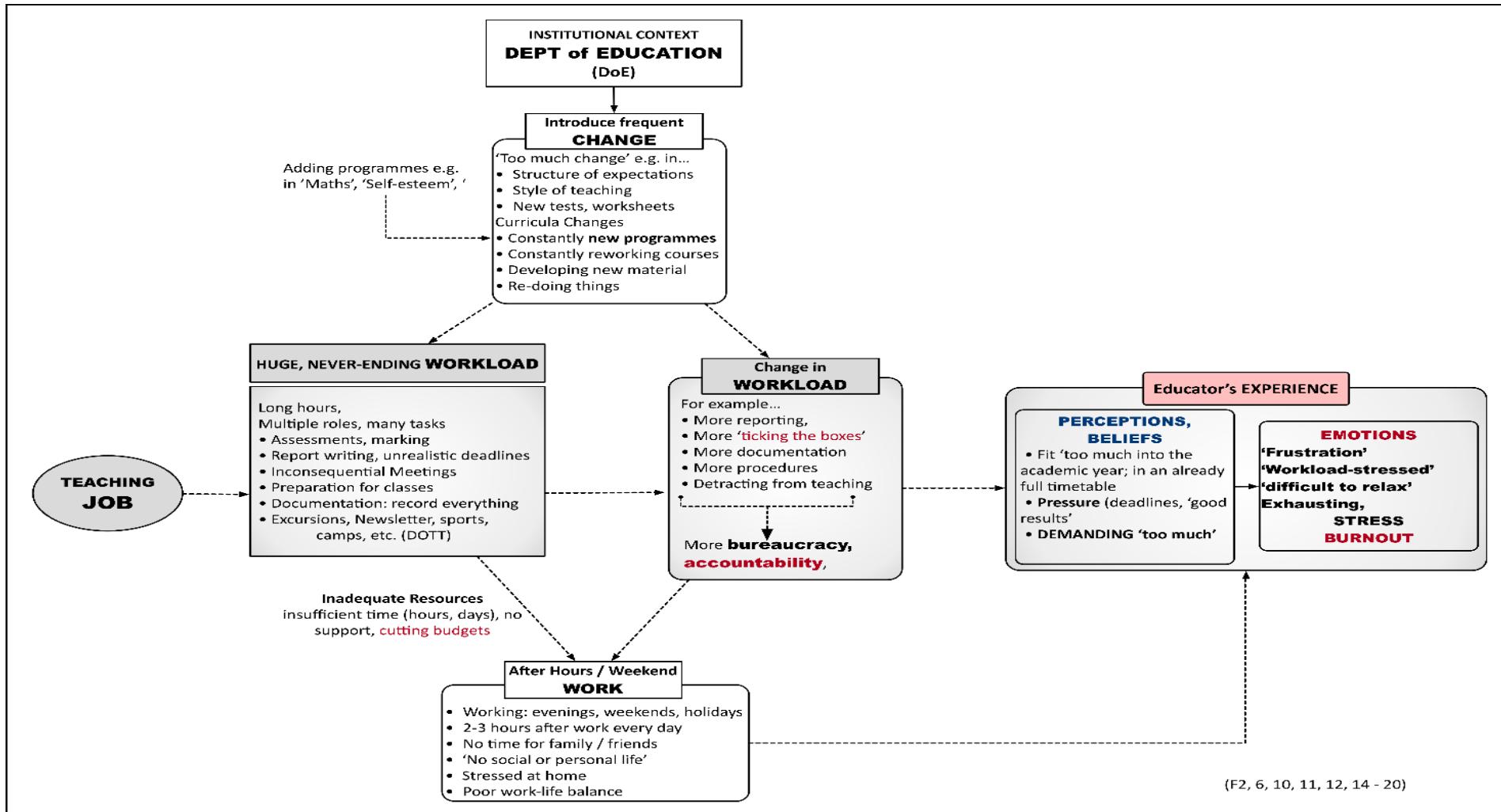
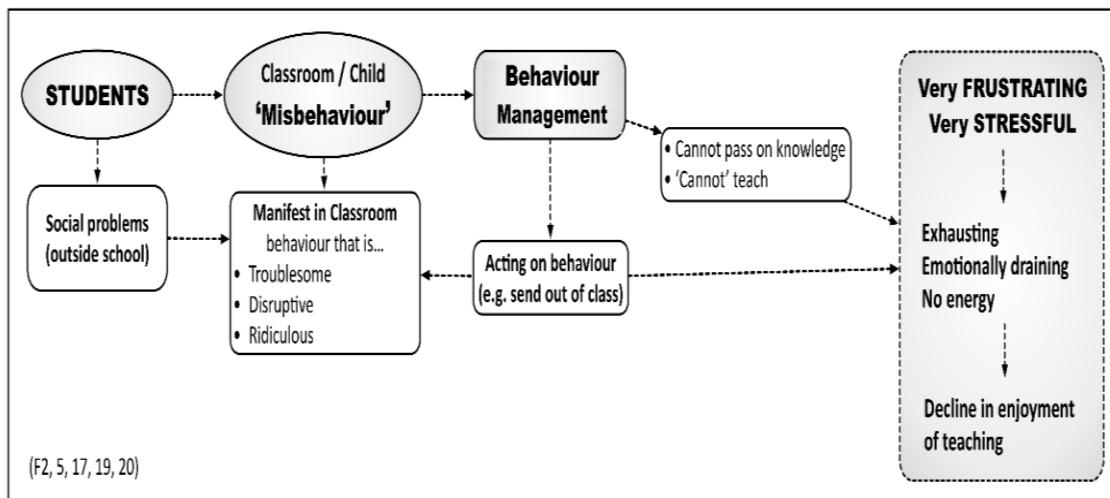


Figure 4.3.1 Former educators: Workload-related dynamics and job satisfaction

Figure 4.3.1 illustrates the specific actions that give rise to and compound former educators' perceptions, in fair detail. From the narrative it is evident that the teaching job is seen as excessively demanding, accompanied by intense experiences of emotions such as frustration, emotional exhaustion, stress and burnout. Contributing to this situation is the multiple roles and a vast range of job activities with which they engaged e.g. record keeping, report writing and other forms of documentation, duties other than teaching (DOTT) and various other administrative tasks. These consume a significant amount of time, while the actual task of teaching represents a declining component of the job. A continuous stream of changes in curriculum and various facets of teaching practice further exacerbate the load, leading unavoidably to the educator investing more and more private time in order to cope with continuously increasing demands. These demands translate into a continuous exposure to high levels of stress. Indeed, even 'after hours' when at home, educators cannot be escape the experience of stress, which results in a progressively more negative assessment of the teaching job. This in turn leads to serious health issues and educators ultimately leaving the profession (see also section 4.3.4 on the 'intention to leave').

While the workload and the continuous demands of various stakeholders, including parents, surfaced unquestionably as the most prominent and pervasive stressor for former educators, the pathways to experienced stress originate from several sources. Classroom dynamics represent such a compounding factor.

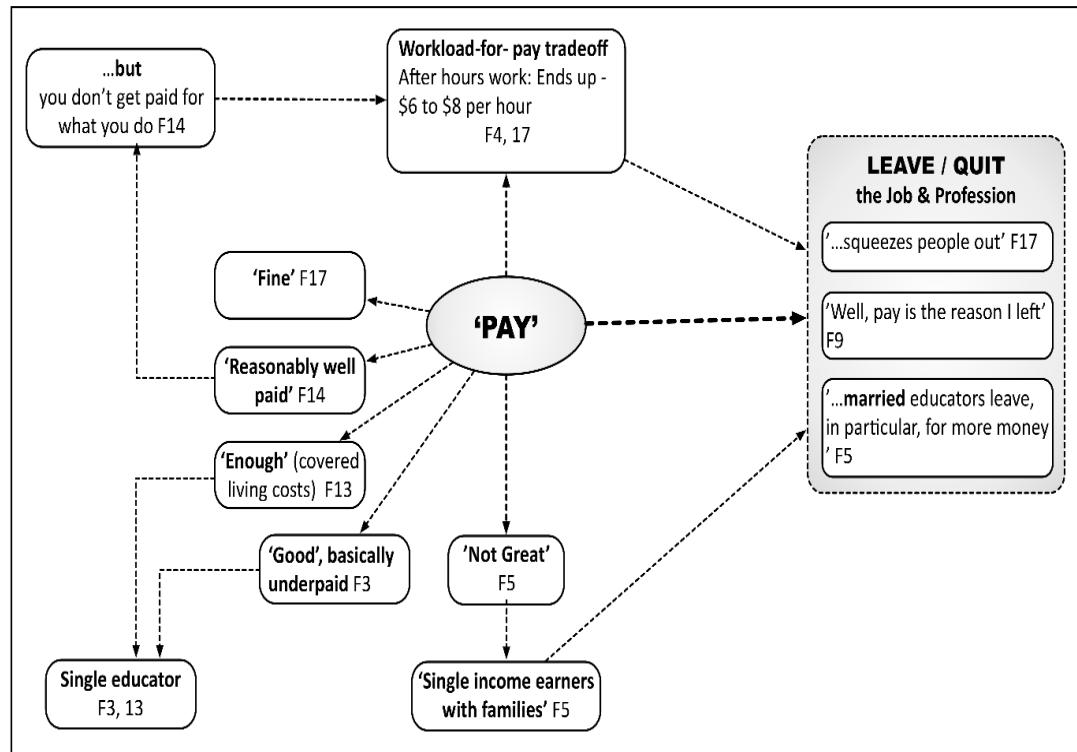
Educators regularly raised misbehaviour as a source of stress. It is clear that the classroom as the immediate work setting has become a source of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction for the educator. The opportunity of contributing to the child's development is offset by difficult to manage student misbehaviour and occasionally parental intrusion (see theme FE-7). The cause-and-effect pattern revealed by educators' comments are indicated in Figure 4.3.2.



**Figure 4.3. 2 Former educators: Child behaviour**

Some educators have argued that the higher incidence of student misbehaviour in class is systemic and part of a progressive decline over time, which they perceive to be a consequence of social issues and challenges outside the school (at home). Such behaviour is experienced by the educator as extremely taxing and substantially disruptive to attempts to teach and facilitate learning. This job feature similarly contributes to very high levels of frustration and stress and consequently a decline in the enjoyment of actual teaching. Former educators in addition highlighted that inadequate policies for dealing with ill-disciplined students, unreasonable expectations in terms of behaviour management and often limited support from the school leadership and principals (in particular) leave educators vulnerable. In this regard they feel exposed to possible threats, which include potential criminal prosecution when acting on misbehaving students.

Against the preceding context of work overload and various other stressors, educators have generally argued that remuneration is not commensurate with the time invested and work done in the job. This, conventionally, has been viewed as a significant cause of educator intention to leave, but as the causal chain illustrated in Figure 4.3.3 demonstrated, this position is not as clear-cut.



**Figure 4.3. 3 Former educators: Remuneration**

While several educators have indicated that remuneration ('pay') is 'fine', 'reasonable', 'enough' and 'good', this has to be qualified further. Several educators have for example also indicated that remuneration is a significantly influential consideration that has prompted educators to leave the profession. The perceived adequacy of 'pay' appears to be applicable to single (not married) educators, recent graduates and to educators in dual-income relationships who are likely to be the second income earner in the relationship. Those with families were unambiguous in indicating the inadequacy of 'pay' levels. Even for those educators who feel that the remuneration levels are acceptable, given their demographic status, the value proposition as it manifests in 'pay' loses any form of acceptability when hourly wages are calculated (educators take actual hours, including after-hours work for which they are normally not compensated and divide their income by this). With several sources of dissatisfaction noted, the inclination to act on these sources of disenchantment appears plausible. Further analysis reveals this to be the case - indicated in Table 4.8. Statements by former educators indicate multiple behavioural changes and outcomes as a result of their experience of the main job features / facets (Table 4.7) of the teaching job.

**Table 4. 8 Former educators: Behavioural indicators and outcomes**

Participant <sup>a</sup>	Behavioural indicators and outcomes of the teaching experience Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>	Indicators <sup>c</sup>
F13	<i>I did not feel supported either. I needed help and the head of department did not help me. I was really <b>struggling</b>.</i>	Energy
F19	<i>Teaching is not like going to school from 9 to 5. You bring work home. It is all encompassing. I was just <b>becoming</b> almost a workaholic.</i>	Motivation
F5	<i>It was emotionally <b>draining</b> and it took my <b>energy</b>.</i>	Passion
F14	<i>...being accountable, writing reports about students and your own teaching, when that started to take more and more hours, your <b>energy</b> and <b>enthusiasm</b> for actual teaching start to go down</i>	
F20	<i>I think I <b>lost motivation</b> because of mental tiredness, because the demands became so great. I started to lose value.</i>	
F4	<i>I <b>left</b> because of workload. I really enjoyed it, but it was too much and really stressful. I suppose because of stress <b>my passion had gone out of it</b>. It was just the workload.</i>	
F5	<i>I was getting to the stage where I was starting to hate it, I <b>didn't want to go to work</b>,</i>	
F6	<i>...maybe changes are good, but you <b>cannot do everything</b> and do it properly</i>	Performance
F17	<i>They keep bringing programs, adding maths, adding a self-esteem program, and you just eventually feel you <b>can't do anything completely</b> because there is not enough time.</i>	Teaching
F20	<i>I had kids in class who were disruptive and made the <b>actual passing on of knowledge</b> difficult.</i>	
F9	<i>...ticking the boxes, and writing, and more paperwork, and retying, that kind of thing, which <b>takes away</b> from teachers' ability to <b>actually teach</b></i>	
F11	<i>I wanted to have my weekends for my family and my friends, but I could not. I could not commit the time and effort that is needed when I have my own life. I did not have a life. Teaching was just not viable for me.</i>	Relationships
F2	<i>I did not like the person I was <b>becoming</b>. It influenced my <b>relationships</b> because I was so busy with teaching. I was working so much and I was so stressed by work. I was married and I thought my husband could not put up with me. I felt I was, like, being a bitch because I was so stressed at home.</i>	
F15	<i>I would say the workload is huge for people in teaching. I personally found it very <b>hard to relax</b> ... and I was just feeling really stressed <b>not sleeping</b> properly, feeling like <b>I hated going into work</b></i>	Wellbeing and Physical Health
F12	<i>...Sometimes you get sick because your body wants you to stop, you just feel you can't do this anymore. To me it was like that. I was beginning to think 'do I really need to keep doing this? Because my health is suffering', So for me it was kinda my health...</i>	
F4	<i>I <b>left</b> because of workload. I really enjoyed it, but it was too much and really stressful.</i>	Leaving
F13	<i>I did not leave because of money. Honestly, I left because I didn't want to teach anymore.</i>	Education
F17	<i>We needed the money, but it was not worth the emotional stress that's why I left.</i>	
F19	<i>One of the reasons I quit... I looked around and everyone said it will become easier, but I looked around me and saw everyone is stressed... everyone was pulling long hours to do reports and to do something like that.</i>	

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.1 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added. <sup>c</sup>Indicators of behavioural change and the origin of educators' decisions to leave the profession.

From Table 4.8 it is evident that educators' adverse experiences of the teaching job (summarised in Table 4.7) not only had a significant impact on former educators (ranging from constant fatigue and a loss of energy to a decline in motivation and passion, reduced efficacy and compromised teaching), but also impacted relations with partners, friends and families, and seriously jeopardised their health and wellbeing. The magnitude of these outcomes was instrumental in prompting educators to leave the profession.

In general, the analysis of former educators' narratives indicates a significant imbalance in all former educators' experiences of the teaching job. On the basis of the provided narrative, it seems that leaving the profession was a logical and predictable outcome – as has been the case for the 20 educators engaged in this study. In this regard the several other behavioural indicators in Table 4.8, in a sense, point to the former educators' ultimate departure from the occupation. Current educators' experience of the teaching job may indicate whether the job satisfaction / dissatisfaction situation as provided by former educators is essentially historical or whether the job dynamics persists at this point in time. Their experiences of the job of teaching are discussed in section 4.3.2.2.

#### **4.3.2.2 Job satisfaction among *current* educators**

Generic statements of job satisfaction were less common among current educators who, similar to the former educators, also expressed their 'likes' and 'dislikes' in terms of more specific job features or facets. The following statements suggest a degree of job (dis)satisfaction. Superscript numbers again indicate the different elements in the 'job (dis)satisfaction statements as follows: 1) an evaluation or judgment often conveyed by a decision or an action implying a judgement, 2) an associated emotion or feeling, and 3) a behavioural inclination or tendency, or actual action (behaviour):

*When you have those bad days<sup>1</sup>, you just feel<sup>2</sup> really exhausted and you're just not feeling up to it<sup>2</sup>. You sit and you think<sup>3</sup>, 'oh god, what am I doing?<sup>1</sup> Why am I doing this, what have I done?<sup>1</sup> (C5, female, 33 years);*

Or...

*When teachers talk<sup>3</sup> to each other about why they leave<sup>3</sup> or what frustrates<sup>2</sup> them, it is about constant change for the sake of change<sup>1</sup>(C14, male, 37 years);*

Or...

*One of the teachers said she does not want to be<sup>3</sup> a teacher anymore because she wants a life<sup>1</sup>. She said she wants to have her time on weekends<sup>1</sup> for her family and friends. She is at the moment so burnt out<sup>2</sup> and so tired (C16, Male, 36 years).*

Although none of these statements explicitly indicate that the educator is dissatisfied with the job, they all embrace experiences that are unpleasant to (disliked by) the educator and convey disenchantment. In these examples ‘bad days’ (children misbehaving in class), the constant introduction of change into the curriculum, and work demands that encroach on educators’ private lives are associated with emotional depletion, frustration, stress and burnout. At the behavioural level they respectively convey that the educator ponders and questions the sensibility of continuing with the work s/he is doing, or leaving employment, or talking about reclaiming his/her weekends (which can only happen out-of-role). Examples that convey satisfaction with the job in general were not found in the narratives. A few more direct statements about satisfying elements of the role were observed and these generally related to the core tasks, which are also most indicative of the profession (section 4.3.3). Relevant narrative that indicates *job facets* or features in terms of which educators expressed a ‘liking’, i.e., satisfaction, are indicated in Table 4.9.

**Table 4. 9 Current educators' experience of job satisfaction**

Participant <sup>a</sup>	Educator Experience of Teaching Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>	Job Facets /Features <sup>c</sup>
C5	<i>I like working with other teachers. I like making friends with them.</i>	Teachers/ Colleagues
C7	<i>I love the staff at my school at the moment. At all the schools I've been at, I've always gotten along really well with a lot of the staff and I find teachers are always a very interesting group of people. They're great fun to be around. Saying that, I think usually you have to be a teacher to understand some of the teacher weirdness, but they're always good fun and the school I'm at as well makes it quite an interesting place to work. It's quite fun. It's quite social. So all of that sort of ties in and makes it a really great job</i>	Colleagues
C15	<i>I found a very close community and engagement among the parents and even the teachers. It is a wonderful working experience.</i>	Colleagues, Parents
C16	<i>It is a great time at school, it is like a family ... it's like a community, it's good to feel part of a community</i>	'Team', sense of community
C12	<i>Teaching is a collaborative profession, there's a great team atmosphere in teaching.</i>	Collaboration, 'Team'

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.2 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added. <sup>c</sup>The sources of satisfaction indicated by the statement. <sup>d</sup>Technically the participant indicates satisfaction with an element of the immediate job context and not job tasks, which may vary from school to school.

As can be seen from Table 4.9 *none* of the considerations that were viewed as positive, related to job facets proper, but addressed elements of the immediate context in which the work/job is performed. Teachers/colleagues, and specifically collaboration and support, the team atmosphere and a sense of community, indicated that the social context is a meaningful source of satisfaction for some current educators. However, and as indicated by quotes in section 4.3.1.2 ('emergent themes' for current indicators), this type of work setting is not a not predictable or common occurrence across schools. Apart from this no meaningful statements of positive job experiences were provided (other than relating to features that are more central to the notion of the profession e.g. contributing to the upliftment and development of children which were generally experienced as rewarding and satisfying – discussed under 'profession satisfaction'). Negative experiences of the teaching job, however, proliferated... see in this regard Table 4.10.

**Table 4. 10 Current educators' experience of job dissatisfaction**

Participant <sup>a</sup>	Educator Experience of Teaching Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>	Job Facets / Features <sup>c</sup>
C5	<i>The problem of teaching is it's very <b>exhausting</b>, I find it particularly mentally exhausting, because your mind's just constantly sitting there and working out what the students are doing.</i>	Teaching in general; student misbehaviour
C7	<i>It's really <b>demanding emotionally</b> [...] So those kind of things are demanding, that constant need to self-regulate when you're <b>exhausted</b> and <b>stressed</b>... and at the end of a <b>long day</b> or a <b>long week</b>.</i>	Workload
C12	<i>So a lot of people think of leaving because it's <b>too hard emotionally</b> and it's affecting them in other ways like that</i>	Teaching in general
C10	<i><b>Teaching</b> is really hard and <b>exhausting</b> ...</i>	Teaching in general
C14	<i>Teaching never gets easy. It doesn't get easier. Easier in the sense that you probably do your classroom management a little bit quicker and faster than if you were first year out. The problem is it's very <b>exhausting</b>. It's <b>long hours</b>.</i>	Workload
C5	<i>I <b>don't enjoy</b> teaching so much because the <b>students</b> are not motivated, they're not interested, so, their behaviour is quite bad. So it's quite a <b>stressful job</b>.</i>	Student behaviour
C2	<i>I can't stand the <b>continual change</b>. It's outside factors and it is <b>frustrating</b>. You constantly need to add new subjects to the curriculum.</i>	Constant change
C9	<i>There's definitely a sense that there's a lot of <b>changes</b> that constantly happen for us, as in curriculum and the expectations from the Education Department as to what we're supposed to be doing. They always want different changes and it is so <b>frustrating</b> ... <b>frustrating</b>.</i>	Constant change
C14	<i>When teachers talk to each other about why they leave or what <b>frustrates</b> them, it is about <b>constant change</b> for the sake of change.</i>	Constant change
C5	<i>I find the <b>changes</b> a little bit <b>frustrating</b> and <b>tiring</b>. I've been teaching... the upper school courses have changed numerous times in the time frame. I have found that, I guess, tiring in a way to be constantly reworking</i>	Constant change
C9	<i>It worries me the number of young people that we're losing from the profession. Some find it too hard and <b>stressful</b> because of <b>workload</b> and that sort of thing.</i>	Workload
C4	<i>I think I need to do something else. Teaching is <b>long hours</b> and very <b>stressful</b>. I think stress is a big reason for leaving for many teachers. I think there are many teachers who are planning to leave due to stress. That's also a lot of paperwork that yes it is necessary but also it's not necessary at the same time. Honestly I do not want to teach because of the <b>stress</b> and the <b>workload</b></i>	Workload, administration
C15	<i>I know I have lost my passion for teaching and I know that I don't do the extra things that I used to do, because you simply <b>burn out</b>. You simply cannot do everything that's required. I always wanted to be a teacher, but teaching is not what I expected. To be honest, I do not want to teach next year. <b>Teaching</b> is very <b>stressful</b>.</i>	Teaching in general

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.2 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added. <sup>c</sup>Features or facets of the teaching job described in negative experiential terms and indicating dissatisfaction.

The job features or facets observed by the current educators and indicated in Table 4.10 are not unlike that of former educators. These give rise to more negative and less satisfying experiences of the teaching job for current educators.

Job facets that are associated with dissatisfaction include constant changes in the curriculum and teaching practice, a demanding workload and long hours, and student misbehaviour. A few educators, in addition, also commented more holistically on the teaching job (e.g. C10, C12, C15). While 'fun' and 'great' characterised the more positive experiences of, especially, the immediate social context of the job (Table 4.9), emotion terminology such as 'demanding', 'exhausting', 'frustrating', and 'stressful' dominate educators' experience of the teaching job. In general though, differences between former and current educators are negligible and convey a difference in emphasis rather than degree. No pertinent *job* facets such as 'pay' were raised as in the case of former educators. The immediate social context of the job however seems more pronounced for current educators and received more comments.

Negative experiences reveal a similar pattern, but continuous changes in work policy and practices appear to be more pronounced, but this does not contribute to a marked difference in their experience of the job. Current educators essentially experience the teaching job as exceptionally demanding, exhausting and stressful.

The relationships suggested in Table 4.10 are more explicitly illustrated in Figure 4.4. The various job facets or features (but also contextual facets and features) that give rise to educators' experiences are mapped to these experiences (Figure 4.4).

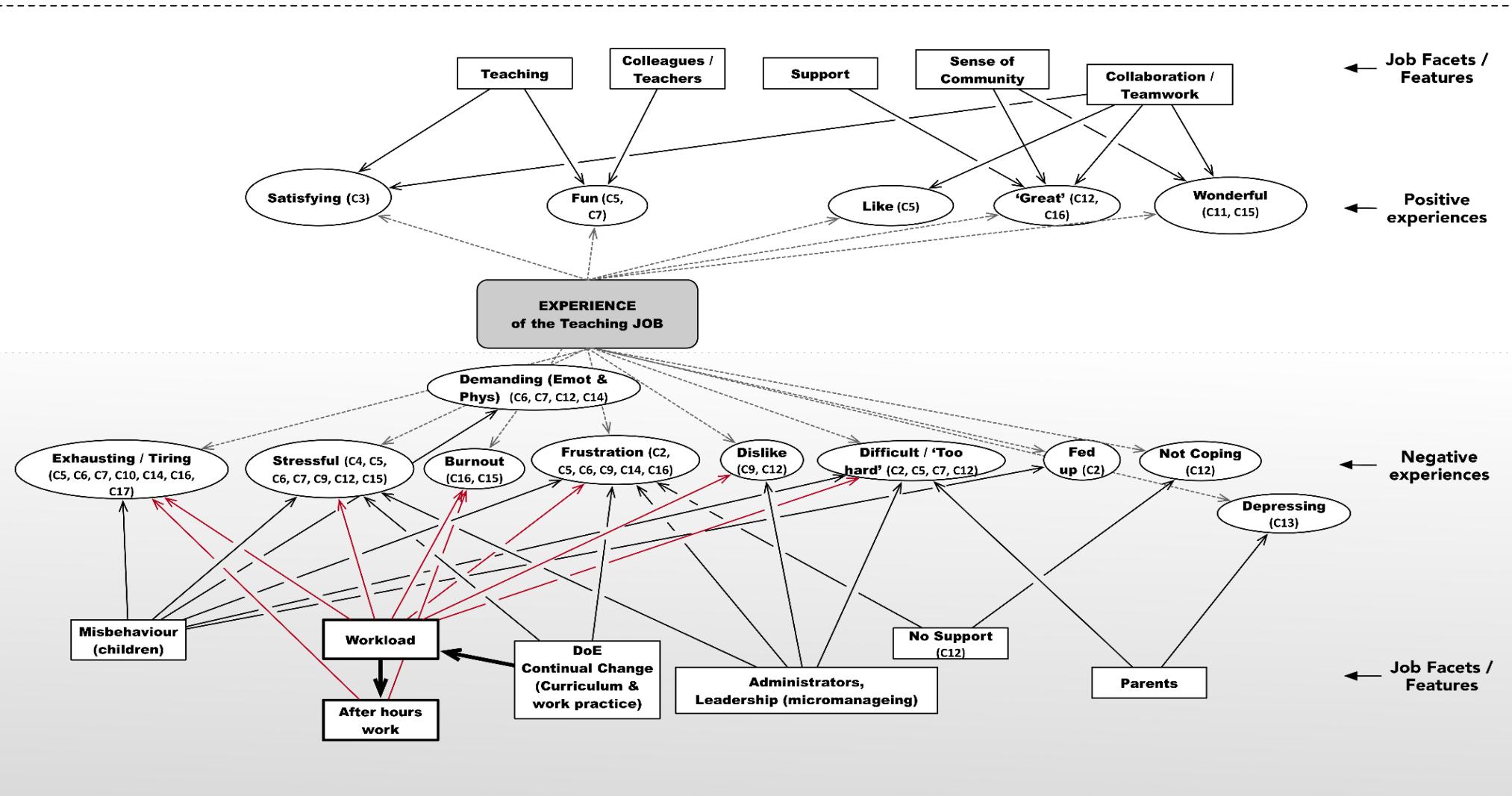


Figure 4.4 Current educators: Sources of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction (job facets) mapped to educator experiences

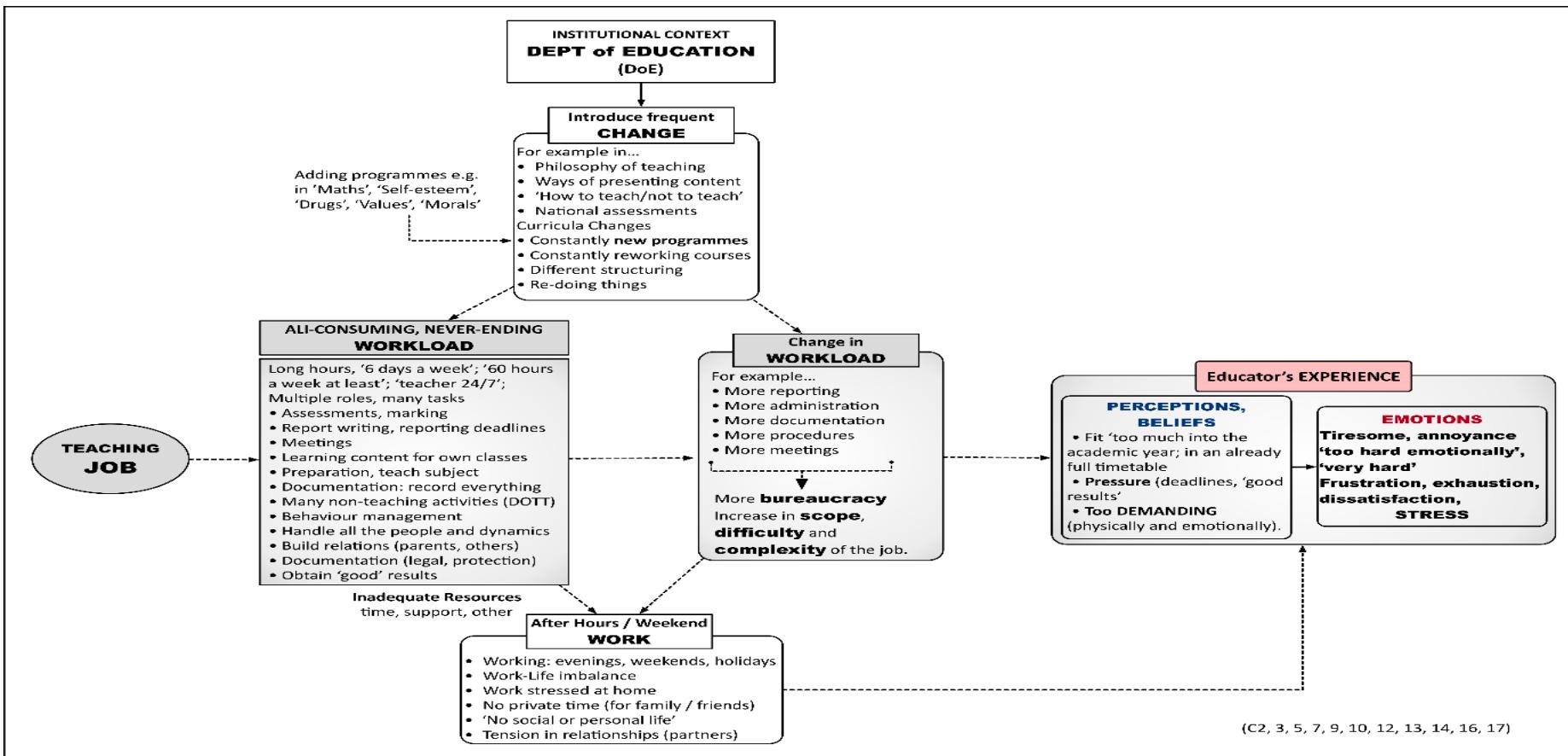
The observations made in respect of Tables 4.9 and 4.10 are visually confirmed in Figure 4.4, which indicates that negative experiences substantially outweigh positive experiences of job facets and the teaching job context. It is also evident that there are seldom single sources of job discontent, but instead multiple sources (job facets) that contribute simultaneously to the experience of the educator – as is evidenced with the multiple cause-and-effect arrows (Figure 4.4) leading from the facets to the reported educator experiences. To illustrate this point consider for example participant C5 (female, 33 years), who at various times in the interview indicated:

*"I think the frustrations that I have are essentially with **the things that are additional to the teaching**."*

*"I find the **changes** a little bit frustrating"*

*"Sometimes it's really frustrating. It's really **demanding physically** if you do the job. You're constantly on the move. I was amazed when I first started full-time how exhausted I was, because you teach a subject but you have to **handle all the people and the dynamics**."*

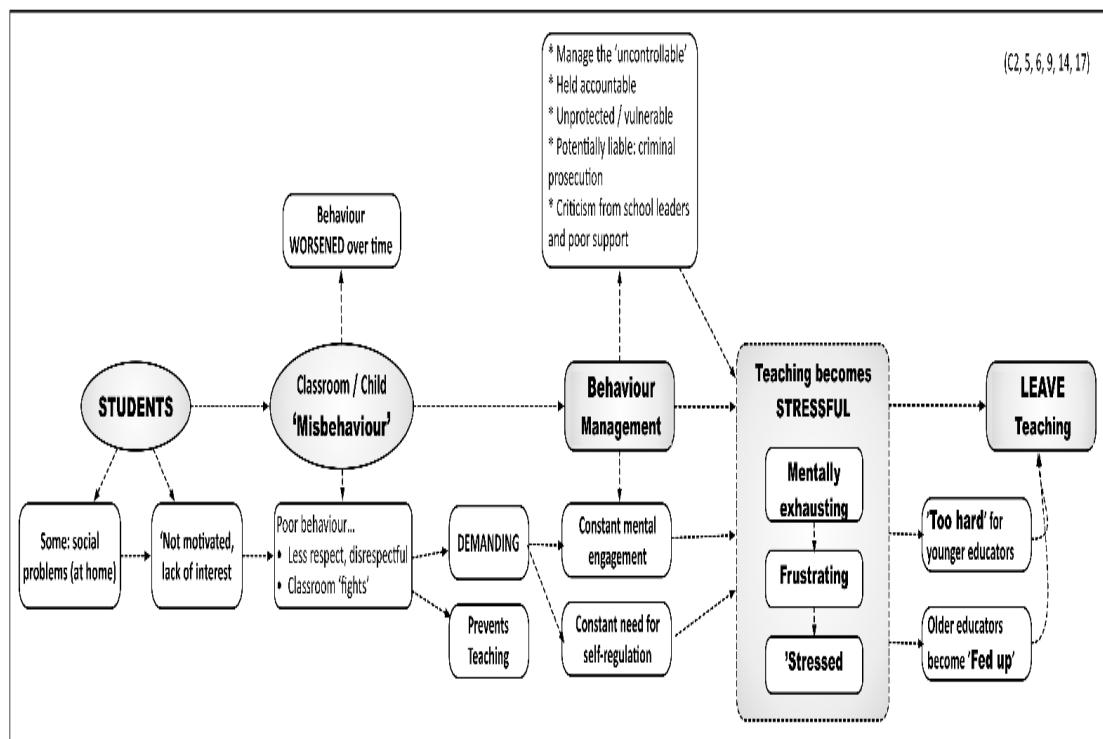
It is noteworthy that negative emotions and experiences characterise the experiences of current educators in a similar manner to that observed for former educators, with perhaps the 'demanding nature' of the teaching job accentuated to a greater extent. The role of school leadership and administrators similarly appears to be more pronounced and contribute to frustration to a greater extent than observed for former educators. This is somewhat in contrast to the voiced 'support' received from co-workers/teaching colleagues. The dynamic of externally imposed changes (Department of Education), which enlarge an existing, demanding workload and consequently contribute to significant 'over time' or after hours work, is similarly confirmed by current educators. This is detailed to a greater extent in Figure 4.4.1.



#### **Figure 4.4. 1 Current educators: Workload dynamics and job satisfaction**

From Figure 4.4.1 it is evident that the micro dynamics observed for the former educators, recur in the current situation experienced by the current indicators. Demanding changes remain major contributors to current educators' adverse experiences of the job. Frequently introduced changes in programs, curriculum structuring and the like, add to an otherwise demanding workload, which is perceived to be characterised by greater bureaucracy, difficulty and complexity (mostly of an interpersonal nature) apart from the increase in load and scope. The spillover effect of workload into the private lives of educators, outlined in section 4.3.1.2 (theme CE-2, theme CE-five) has multiple consequences apart from being substantially invasive and disrupting work-life balance. Of concern, in this instance, is that educators point out how workload is infringing on social relations and fostering a degree of withdrawal, in order to attend to the workload and reduce continuous stress. Again, this dynamic contributes to a view of the teaching job as excessively pressurised and demanding, which in turn leads to a range of negative affective experiences culminating in stress and burnout. These observations suggest that current educators do not differ from former educators in terms of the nature of the job (facets and features) and the reality they are confronted with on a day-to-day basis.

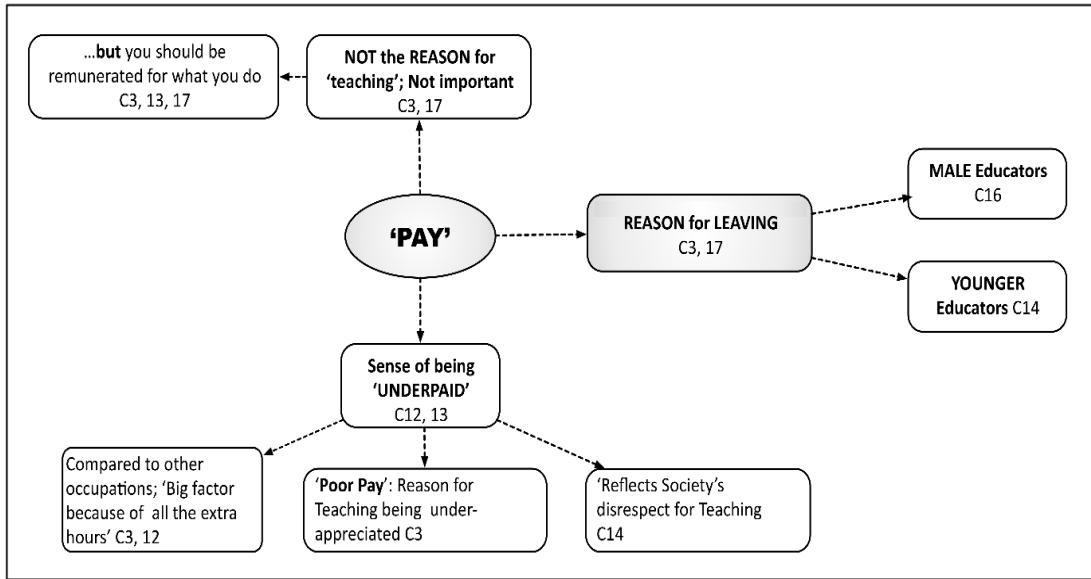
Beyond the workload-stress relationship, in-class misconduct and ill-disciplined behaviour by students contribute significantly to educators' stress. From the interview transcripts of several educators, the cause-and-effect dynamic of this feature of the teaching job was constructed and confirmed – see Figure 4.4.2.



**Figure 4.4. 1 Current educators: Child behaviour**

Some educators were of the view that student behaviour deteriorated over time, but there appears to be consistency in recognising extra-school social circumstances as contributing to student disinterest and poor classroom behaviour. Disrespectful conduct and even 'fighting' are mentally exhausting, frustrating and stressful to the educator, and as indicated ('emergent themes') is accompanied by perceptions of inadequate support from the school leadership. From the commentary e.g. managing the uncontrollable and being exposed to criminal prosecution if educators' conduct crosses a threshold, compounded by the perception of a lack of adequate policies and procedures, it follows that educators would find the job 'too hard' or become 'fed up' and leave the profession (as indicated also in section 4.3.4).

It is doubtful whether excellent, market-leading remuneration packages would prevent educators from leaving the profession (and contending or tolerating classroom misconduct and excessive workloads). This is not the case as is evidenced in Figure 4.4.3.



**Figure 4.4. 2 Current educators: Remuneration**

Current educators' sentiments in respect of 'pay' are less ambiguous in the sense that none have indicated that 'pay' is acceptable or reasonable, as has been the case with former educators. Unlike former educators, current indicators are clear about the inadequacy of their remuneration. They appear to be quite aware of the salaries that similarly qualified staff outside the education setting is receiving and how educator salaries contrast with that of other occupations. While several indicated that 'pay' is not a primary consideration (not the reason for teaching), the same awareness that remuneration should be fair is observed, when compared to former educators. Noteworthy, is the emphasis placed on remuneration performing a symbolic role in that it represents the respect and dignity with which educators are viewed and hence treated. Again, remuneration surfaced as a strong enough consideration to prompt current indicators and their associates to contemplate leaving and/or actually leaving the profession. In this instance it is notably the younger educators and male educators who have left purely on grounds of remuneration.

The considerations of workload, contextual influence, student behaviour and general support from colleagues and the leadership were experienced at a 'sufficiently' intense level to prompt specific behavioural predispositions or actions, which are detailed in Table 4.11.

**Table 4. 11 Current educators: Behavioural indicators and outcomes**

Participant <sup>a</sup>	Behavioural indicators and outcomes of the teaching experience Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>	Indicators <sup>c</sup>
C16	<i>You do have to have lots of energy on a day-to-day basis and if it's hard to get that energy for it and if you've <b>lost that passion</b>, it's not really something you can coast along with. You do have to put a lot into it. So perhaps if you don't have the energy for that anymore, then you're <b>looking for something else</b>.</i>	Energy Passion
C9	<i>But she <b>lost the drive</b>. She was very stressed with the work. She not could cope with this anymore, just <b>wanted to do something else</b>.</i>	
C7	<i>You know, changes increase workload. Doing the same thing, but you just had to be seen to be working, so you were so busy getting the documentation and the procedures put in, to be seen to be working, that you weren't actually working because you were too busy doing that stuff and <b>not actually doing your job</b>.</i>	Performance Teaching
C17	<i>You <b>cannot teach</b> when they misbehave, I just found that exhausting.</i>	
C16	<i>I think a lot of people <b>do not want to be teachers</b> because they think teaching is affecting their lives or their <b>relationships</b> or something like that. One of the teachers said she <b>does not want to be a teacher anymore</b>, because she wants a life. She said she wants to have her time on weekends for her family and friends.</i>	Social Relations
C12	<i>So a lot of people <b>think of leaving</b> because it's too hard emotionally and it's <b>affecting them</b> in other ways like that.</i>	
C10	<i>... when you're a teacher you're always working to deadlines. The time, <b>you're always watching the clock</b>.</i>	Stress Wellbeing and General Health
C15	<i>To be honest, <b>I do not want to teach next year</b>. Teaching is very stressful. I want to have a job that has stressful moments, but not always.</i>	
C4	<i>I think I need to do something else. Teaching is long hours and very stressful. I think stress is a big reason for leaving for many teachers. I think there are many teachers who are <b>planning to leave</b> due to stress. That's also a lot of paperwork that... yes, it is necessary, but also it's not necessary at the same time. Honestly, <b>I do not want to teach</b> because of the stress and the workload.</i>	
C17	<i>...and sometimes it's hard to slow back down after that. It takes a while to <b>calm down</b>.</i>	
C7	<i>...it ends up with people that are putting up with things like that and <b>affecting their own health</b> or <b>leaving</b> the profession and going somewhere else.</i>	
C2	<i>It is very disappointing to see lots of young teachers <b>leave</b> because of stress and pressure...pressure from the work.</i>	Leaving Education
C7	<i>I think people are <b>leaving</b> teaching because they are not very satisfied in the environment that they teach in.</i>	
C14	<i>I've been told about teachers who have <b>left</b> the profession to work in a labouring-type role in the resources industry.</i>	

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.2 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added. <sup>c</sup> Indicators of behavioural change and the origin of educators' decisions to act on their experiences.

Inspection of Table 4.11 indicate that current educators' experiences of the teaching job range from a loss of energy, motivation and passion to compromised performance and teaching; compromised relationships with significant others; and significant impacts on well-being and health. In addition, several educators conveyed awareness of colleagues that have left for reasons such as those highlighted. The intensity with which many educators communicated that they *did not want to teach*, and indeed, that some contemplated leaving, does not bode well for educator retention. With significant parallels observed in terms of educator experiences in the job (job dissatisfaction outweighing job satisfaction) and with intent often clearly conveyed, it can be concluded that current educators' experience of the teaching job is essentially similar to that of former educators. The only difference is that the current educators are currently employed in education. However, with the pattern clearly repeated, it is plausible that the negative experiences of the job will contribute to many of these educators leaving the profession.

#### **4.3.2.3 Conclusion and summary: Job satisfaction among educators**

In general, limited evidence of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job, in a holistic sense, was observed. This in itself suggests that educators do not, as a general rule, reflect on the complete, holistic job when they comment on their experiences of it. Instead, as the narrative indicated, educators express judgements and feelings in respect of specific elements or facets of the education job. Multiple examples of satisfaction, but especially dissatisfaction, with specific elements or facets of the educator job, were in evidence. In some regards, these could differ from educator to educator e.g. 'pay'. In other regards across the board satisfaction and dissatisfaction with specific job elements have been tangibly visible e.g. workload (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4 relating to sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction).

As suggested by the data conveyed in the preceding analyses, job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, in this study is the result of accumulating assessments and feelings in respect of various job features (recall participant F17 indicating "...*it's not pay and it's not workload individually, but when you put those together... I think, yeah, exactly, that's something that squeezes people out*""). This evolving sentiment over time leads to a strengthening or weakening of specific intentions or inclinations to act, which ultimately may result in leaving the job and profession.

### **Comparison of former and current educators in terms of job satisfaction**

The sheer magnitude of the experienced demands from various quarters is consistent across both the former and current educator cohorts and include a demanding workload coupled with insufficient resources of time and energy, but also budgets. A continuous stream of work practice changes that intensifies and expands the scope of the teaching job, exacerbates this. From the accounts of both former and current educators the spill over of work into private time (e.g. marking, report writing, preparation for lectures after hours, over weekends and during school breaks/holidays) has become an institutionalised feature of the job. The notion of healthy stress has been supplanted by prolonged, unhealthy stress and hence the frequent referrals to burnout by members in both cohorts. The frequency with which 'burnout' is mentioned is a source for concern. The adverse impact/consequences of this on the educator, also impact on those in the immediate workspace of the educator such as the students and co-workers. The demands from the Department of Education via the school leadership, in the form of policies and procedures, also unavoidably facilitate further bureaucracy. Parents have direct access to both the educator and school leadership and pose intense, significant demands in terms of their specific child (not appreciating the compounded effect of multiple parents acting as if their child is the only focus of the educator).

At the same time, the incidence of disruptive classroom behaviour has escalated from occasional incidents to multiple children and incidents – reportedly reflecting a broader, societal tendency. This is attributed by some educators to unininvolved parents who are not attending to their obligations in terms of their children (e.g. values). Review of both cohorts data indicate that multiple pathways lead to and exacerbate the educator's experience of negative affect and consequently stress in the teaching. Accounts of both former and current indicators indicate a practically non-existent boundary between the educator (who is tasked with teaching and facilitating learning) and various external sources. These external factors continuously pose demands that appear to detract from this core focus. From provided commentary some educators appear to feel vulnerable in that they do not receive adequate support from school leadership and are increasingly held accountable at a personal level. It is understandable that the presence of co-educators in similar circumstances would appear to be a source of (therapeutic) comfort, and that support and collaboration would be highly valued among stressed educators. However, this is not an implicit

feature of the teaching job and a variable contextual consideration that is determined by many factors including managerial style and competencies.

In general the evidence appears to suggest that those who are most instrumental in facilitating the intense demands experienced by both former and current educators, appear to be unaware of these larger systemic dynamics – in particular the seamless flow of demands into the system.

It is furthermore noteworthy that members of both cohorts have raised the much-discussed subject of educator remuneration as a source of moderate satisfaction *and* significant dissatisfaction. Educators are drawn to the occupation because of the opportunity to impact and contribute positively to the development of children and for this reason ‘pay’ often does not feature as a primary job attractor. However, it became clear from both former and current educators that they constantly compare the excessive workload and demands of the job with that of other occupations. As a consequence moderate satisfaction with ‘pay’ is a very selective experience - most often indicated by single educators (no partners, no families) or where the educator is in a relationship, but as the second source of income in a dual-income relationship. In such circumstances remuneration is regarded as sufficient, but primary breadwinners and those responsible for families do not harbour the same sentiments. Several educators have for example indicated that remuneration is a sufficient reason to quit (see also section 4.3.4). In addition, dividing income earned by the hours worked (also adding in afterhours work) has become a common practice, prompting educators to conclude that they are significantly under remunerated. While educators’ calculations are unverified and probably inaccurate, it nonetheless suggests that the workload-for-pay ratio (e.g. effectively working for \$6.00 to \$8.00 dollars per hour) is illogical. For educators this raises basic questions about remaining in this job.

The boundaries between educators and contextual influences, most notably the DoE and parents, suggest limited boundary management or regulation. Both of these contextual factors are major sources of demand that directly impact on educators’ existing (heavy) workload and available time, but also their experience of the teaching role. Both these considerations significantly contribute to and increase educators’ experienced stress. This observation further leads to the conclusion that the ‘buffering’

that should prevent extraneous influences from compromising day-to-day educator effectiveness, is often ineffective.

### **4.3.3 Satisfaction with the profession**

In this, the second major focus of the axial coding phase, empirical evidence was sought in respect of:

- Profession satisfaction (per definition) as the central category of interest; and
- Any relationships that exist between this primary category and other, surfaced codes and categories; but also
- Relationships with other categories of central interest, i.e., job satisfaction and turnover intention.

It is also important to note, as previously pointed out, that both job satisfaction and profession satisfaction are attitudes that share the same fundamental ‘satisfaction’ character and structure. Both, accordingly, are concerned with evaluations, feelings and behavioural inclinations towards a ‘target’ (or focus). The basic differences between the targets determine the focus of the different forms of satisfaction, i.e., job characteristics and profession characteristics respectively. On this basis evaluations, feelings and behavioural predispositions conveyed in educator narratives are differentiated for job and profession satisfaction.

Moreover, as previously indicated, profession satisfaction was never mentioned by the Researcher/interviewer or raised / introduced by any participant (in either the former or current educator cohorts). Unlike job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, it was unclear as to whether profession (dis)satisfaction could be observed, even though its existence is theoretically justified. Again, the fact that former educators not only left their jobs, but left the teaching profession altogether, suggests the presence of profession dissatisfaction. Detecting it, however, is complicated. For this purpose definitions of a ‘profession’ and ‘profession satisfaction’ were used as a guiding frame to detect indicators embedded in educators’ narratives about their experience of teaching. These are briefly restated:

A **profession** was previously defined as “*...a specialised, knowledge-based and legally self-regulating occupation that renders its services to the public and society*

*through a complex, reciprocal relationship based on competence, recognition and trust”* (see section 2.3.3.2). Several important distinguishing characteristics are commonly associated with a ‘profession’ that need to be considered simultaneously (see section 2.3.3.2). **Profession satisfaction**, consequently was defined as “*an attitude in respect of the specific profession (professionalised occupation) that expresses the member’s degree of satisfaction with the profession, based on the member’s appraisal of the extent to which the central features of the profession are, firstly, experienced; and secondly, aligned with the member’s idealised concept of the profession; together with the member’s feelings about this experience of the profession, which then result in a predisposition to act in a manner consistent with the member’s beliefs and feelings about the profession*”.

From the perspective provided by this definition and the common features of a profession outlined in section 2.3.3.2, evidence of profession satisfaction or dissatisfaction would be found in educator commentary that indicated satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the following features of the profession:

- (1) Specialisation focus and core purpose (in this instance teaching and working with children);
- (2) Body of (specialised) knowledge (and training and credentialing) (specialised knowledge of education, learning, child development, and so forth);
- (3) Service orientation;
- (4) Relationship with society-at-large and the public, and the recognition, respect and trust it enjoys from these stakeholders (e.g. recognised, respected, valued);
- (5) Autonomy and self regulation in its affairs;
- (6) Ethical orientation and conduct;
- (7) Professional identity and culture (e.g. values and norms); and
- (8) The effectiveness and efficiency of the professional body (association) governing the profession on behalf of the members.

The focus of examining educator narratives in this phase was to further probe for any evidence that fit and directly or indirectly point to the presence of profession satisfaction and the intention to quit or leave the job and profession. The outcome of

this analysis is reported for former educators, in section 4.3.3.1 and current educators in section 4.3.3.2. The analyses indicated in these sections, again, rely on the transcribed interview narratives of the two cohorts. The 'emergent themes' reported in section 4.3.1 provide supporting evidence for the ensuing discussion.

#### **4.3.3.1 Satisfaction with the profession among *former* educators**

The *current* non-education roles of former educators (see Table 4.1) indicate that sufficient levels of profession dissatisfaction were present for these educators. This was confirmed by analyses. A few examples of profession satisfaction as opposed to job satisfaction are provided to illustrate the presence of this attitude. This is followed by the identification of narrative that reveals and illustrates features of the profession (see Figure 4.5). In Figure 4.6 educators commentary that convey their experiences of the profession are mapped to the detected features of the profession.

##### **Profession satisfaction**

The following examples convey satisfaction with those features of the profession that are central to its identity (teaching, working with children and contributing to their development):

*"It was rewarding to see your kids are doing really well. There is a satisfaction to that, I guess" (F1, female, 30).*

and

*"Having an influence on kids was satisfying, like teaching them how to deal with their life. A bunch of kids coming to you and looking for direction... I really enjoyed that" (F10, female, 31).*

and

*"I enjoyed watching them develop and grow. It was a great satisfaction to see what they could do in the beginning of the year and what they had achieved and could do by the end of the year. I was very happy with their achievements" (F20, female, 34 years).*

##### **Profession dissatisfaction**

Respondent F9 reports dissatisfaction with the lack of respect and recognition observed from society and which were advanced as reasons for leaving the profession:

*"There are teachers who leave because of the status, you know... the fact that they don't get enough respect from parents; they don't get enough respect from society. It's a question of feeling valued" (F9, male, 41 years).*

Respondents F11 and F17 similarly convey levels of dissatisfaction with the status and recognition of the profession. Respondent F17 argues this on the basis of the symbolic meaning of the reward facet of the job (a form of poor treatment of educators – ‘pay’ in its own right is also a source of discontent for some educators).

*“I could see that a teacher’s job was losing respect, you didn’t have that something to be proud of in terms of respect. I was going to hate teaching, you know, I was going to hate it because respect wasn’t there anymore. You know, respect comes from society. So, you know, that was playing on my mind, mucking around with my head about, you know” (F11, male, 36 years).*

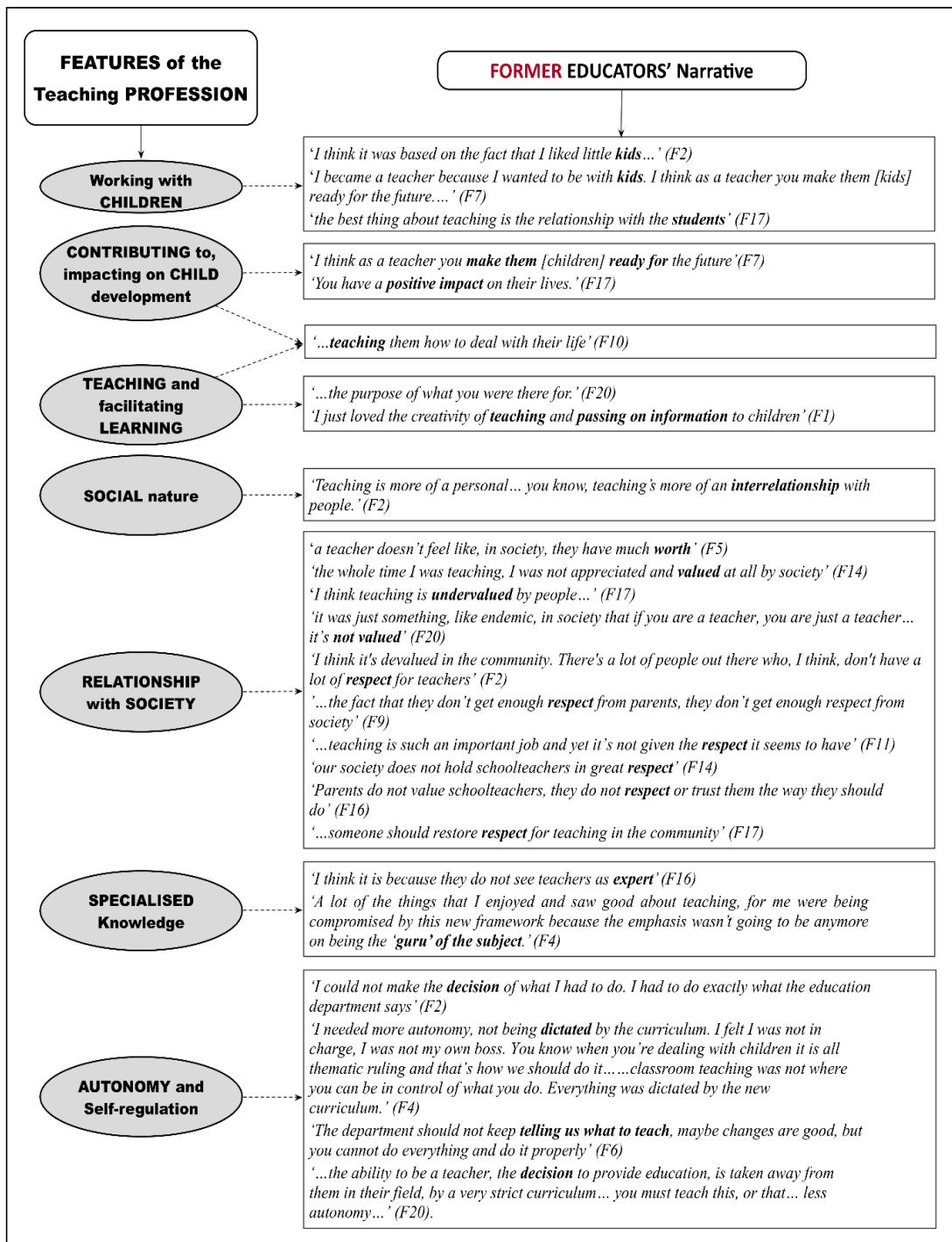
*“I think teaching is undervalued by people and it is because of pay. Pay is embarrassing. I was a bit disenchanted with the way teachers were being treated” (F17, male, 38 years).*

Evidence of the shift that educators make from a position of satisfaction to dissatisfaction with the profession (while employed), is indicated by this statement from respondent F4:

*“A lot of the things that I enjoyed and saw good about teaching, for me were being compromised by this new framework because the emphasis wasn’t going to be anymore on being the ‘guru’ of the subject. I needed more autonomy, not being dictated by the curriculum” (F4, male, 42 years).*

The preceding statements indicate that respondents were selective in their ‘likes’/‘dislikes’ in terms of the profession - the exception being F11’s first quote, which addresses the profession more generally. The specific features of the profession observed in the narratives of former educators are presented in Figure 4.5. ‘Working with children’, ‘contributing to their development’, ‘teaching and learning’, and ‘social nature’ are embraced by the core characteristic of a profession per definition (*specialisation focus and core purpose*). The only other features (per definition) that

have been detected are '2' (*Body of (specialised) knowledge*), '4' (*Relationship with society-at-large and the public*), and '5' (*Autonomy and self-regulation*).



**Figure 4.5 Former educators: Sources of profession satisfaction/dissatisfaction**

Inspection of the examples indicated in Figure 4.5 indicates that educators see the profession as essentially centring on 'teaching/helping children' (and not, for example, as duties other than teaching). The basic dynamic for educators is that through teaching

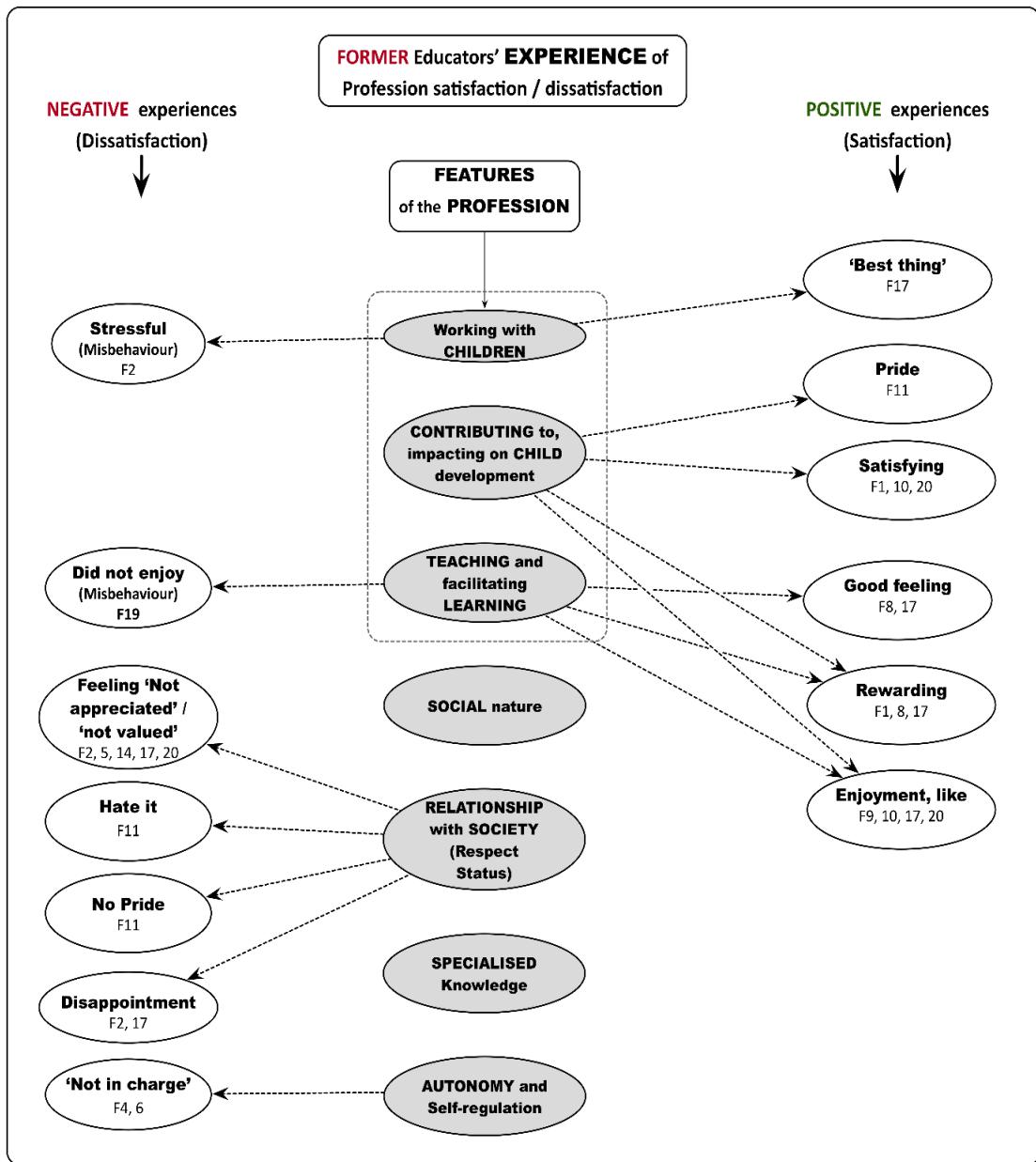
they assist and advance students / learners' prospects for advancement in the future. This translates into a deep intrinsic satisfaction, enjoyment and pride for the educator.

The abundance of commentary on the teaching profession's relationship with society suggest that professional respect and value is important and 'top of mind' for former educators. Although perhaps not recognised formally by the professional association, union or major employers, the notion of autonomy and self-regulation, which reflects the mutual trust between a profession and its membership, and society, elicited a few comments from educators. This is mostly in reaction to the absence of such professional autonomy and in the face of substantial constraints. The professional ethos is probably best illustrated by the former educator, F4, (Figure 4.5), who touches on the inability of the system to recognise specialised knowledge and expertise.

Dimensions of professions (per definition) not raised by educators include...

- The sense of a professional identity and culture that not pertinently raised or addressed, is implied when educators speak of their self-esteem and confidence issues - a consequence of the poor perceptions of teaching as conveyed by the public, society and government.
- Ethics, ethical codes and ethical conduct have not been raised and were only indirectly alluded to with comments about the perceived 'fairness' (justice issues) of educational practices. This being a very prominent feature and hallmark of professions generally, is both illuminating and troubling. Undoubtedly educators act with great integrity and within ethical parameters – as evidenced by their strong sense of care and helping (see theme FE-2, section 4.3.1.1).

The absence of these considerations from the educators' narrative world (as accessed in this study) suggests limited awareness and / or non-existence of these functions or constructs. It may also may be indicative of the efficacy of those entities representing the profession in different spheres of the occupation (e.g. in training and accreditation and in advancing the profession), i.e., statutory bodies, government, professional associations and unions).



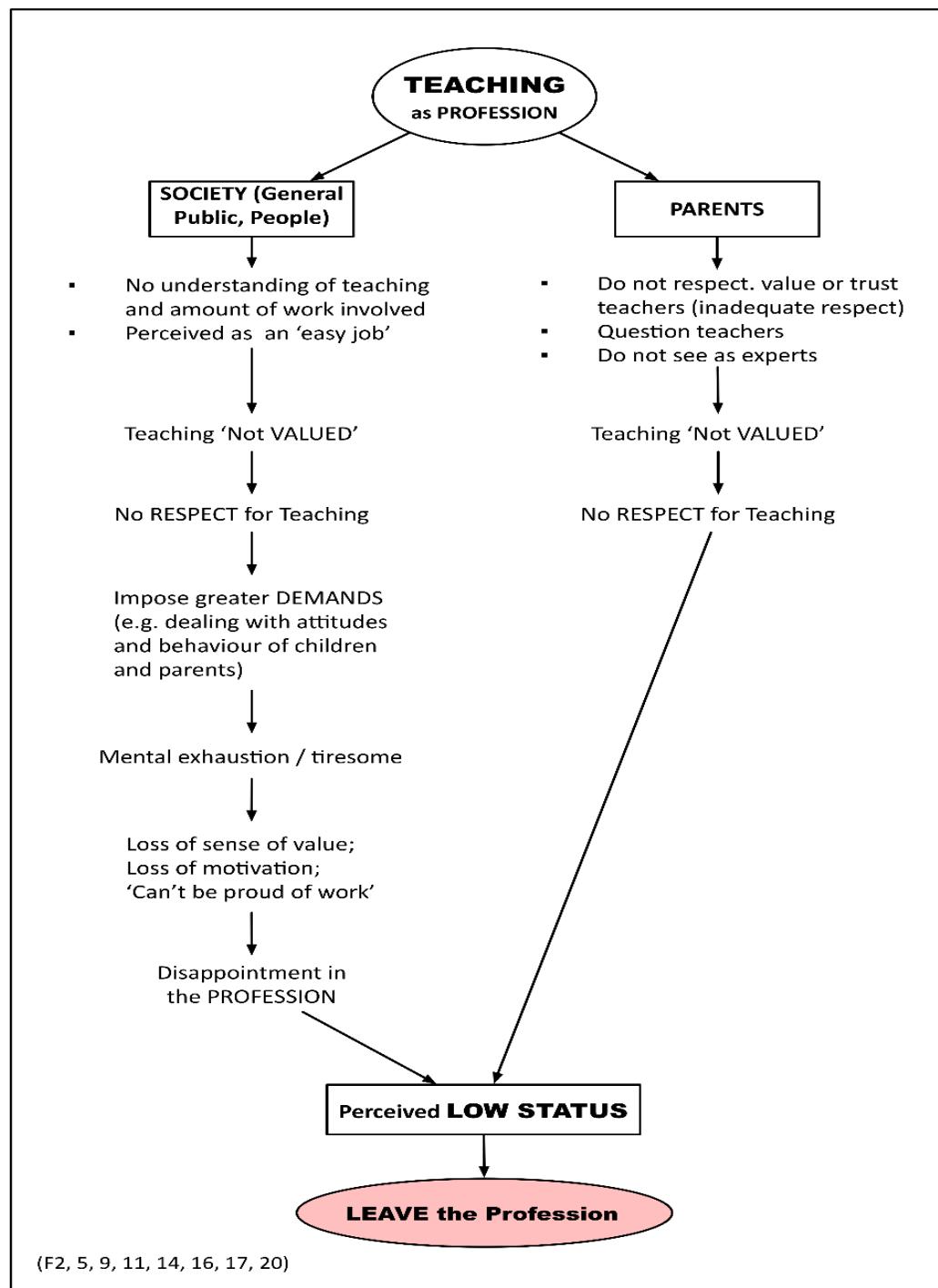
**Figure 4.6 Former educators' experience of the profession (satisfaction/dissatisfaction)**

Insofar as they relate to the features of the profession, all commentary that reflects a feeling or emotion component has been incorporated in Figure 4.6. While educators provided ample *descriptive* and *explanatory* narrative, emotion-laden commentary about the detected features of the profession was significantly less. Fewer comments were also made when compared to the more concrete, here-and-now *job* of teaching. As with Figure 4.5, not all the profession features outlined in section 4.3.3 have been incorporated in Figure 4.6 as educators did not introduce or comment on these features. Features included in Figure 4.6 were all those nominated and commented on in Figure 4.5. However, while most of the commentary in respect of these features was

descriptive and explanatory, not all of them were stated with accompanying feelings or emotions. For this reason these features are listed, but without related experience data.

While former educators mentioned the ‘enjoyment’ of, for example, working collaboratively with co-workers, these comments (in this instance) were in relation to specific features of the job or job context. These comments were incorporated in the discussion of job satisfaction. Very few, if any, educators commented in a holistic sense on the ‘social nature’ of the teaching profession. Moreover, as indicated by respondent F2, working with children was experienced as stressful. This comment has to be qualified: the vast majority of educators experienced classroom behaviour and child misbehaviour as exceptionally demanding and stressful, but hardly any referred to working with children in general as being stressful (again as a holistic, general feature of the profession). As a result, the emotional experience of this specific facet of the job has been captured in former educators’ experience of the job in section 4.3.2.1.

The core character of the profession as conveyed by the features of working with, contributing to, and teaching children, were the most central and enjoyable components of the profession. In contrast the relationship with society, specialised knowledge and professional autonomy (or self-regulation) – important features of recognised professions – were sources of substantial dissatisfaction. The limited commentary on these profession features, however, does not convey the significance and intensity accorded to these features by the former educators (see in particular ‘emergent themes’ in section 4.3.1, the tone conveyed by narrative in Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.7 below). Whereas educators can exert meaningful influence through teaching style and working with children, they have no control over these profession-related considerations. At a glance, Figure 4.6 provides a sound, representative view on the gist of the former educators’ interview narratives. Their enjoyment of working with children and being engaged in their teaching/education, however, is largely offset by the diminished status the occupation enjoys. This latter consideration shows up in the behaviour of both parents and children. The cause-and-effect sequence underlying the impact of societal perceptions on former educators is presented in Figure 4.7 (extracted from the narratives of educators F2, F5, F9, F11, F14, F16, F17 and F20).



**Figure 4. 7 Influence of societal perceptions on former educators' satisfaction with the profession**

When the 'weight' of the predominantly negative experience of the job (job dissatisfaction discussed in section 4.3.2.1) is 'combined' with this 'negative' experience (reputation and status), the passion and 'positives' experienced are reduced to a negligible level. This dynamic is clearly illustrated when participant F2 states, "*I loved the kids, but the workload was getting me down*" or as participant F4 indicated:

*“I left because of workload. I really enjoyed it, but it was too much and really stressful”.* These comments indicate the linked role and influence of job and profession satisfaction in prompting educators to act. All former educators left the profession and the reported reasons for exiting the profession (e.g. section 4.3.4 and Table 4.12 below) indicate this compounding effect.

While Figures 4.5 to 4.7 portray former educators’ experience of those features of the profession (and job) that tend to be more generalised and holistic, Table 4.12 indicates educators’ behavioural responses or inclinations to act as a result of these experiences.

**Table 4. 12 Former educators: Behavioural indicators and outcomes related to profession satisfaction**

Participant <sup>a</sup>	Behavioural indicators and outcomes of the teaching experience	Features of the profession <sup>c</sup>
	Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>	
F4	<i>I think the last few years, probably five years of <b>teaching</b>, I wasn’t as motivated as I should have been, and I wasn’t as passionate about it as I should have been. I just wasn’t delivering very well.</i>	Teaching, performance
F9	<i>Well <b>pay</b> is the reason that I left. I think there would be other people like me <b>who do like teaching</b> ...</i>	Remuneration, Teaching,
F9	<i>There are teachers who leave because of the <b>status</b>, you know... the fact that they don’t get enough <b>respect</b> from parents; they don’t get enough respect from society. It’s a question of feeling valued</i>	Respect / Status / standing
F11	<i>I did not have a <b>life</b>. <b>Teaching</b> was just not viable for me.</i>	Teaching
F11	<i>I think one of the things that ultimately caused me to leave education was the <b>flexibility</b>...I have a lot more flexibility to design what my job looks like in my current job. I don’t have a curriculum to align with and I don’t have people from outside to tell me how I should do my job.</i>	Autonomy, self-regulation
F13	<i>I did not leave because of money. Honestly, I left because <b>I didn’t want to teach anymore</b>.</i>	Teaching
F18	<i>One day you wake up and then realise <b>you don’t teach anymore</b>, you’re not feeling like you’re teaching, you’re just feeling you’re meeting all these requirements because you have to, because that is policy, and <b>then you look for something else</b></i>	Teaching, Compliance-autonomy

*Notes:* <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.2 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added. <sup>c</sup>The features of the profession and / or facets of the job that are core to the profession, and therefore sources of satisfaction / dissatisfaction prompting the behaviour or predisposition.

From Table 4.12 it emerges that the teaching component of the occupation became a source of dissatisfaction and non-alignment between the educator and the profession – to the point that educators took the first step towards leaving e.g. deciding on leaving or initiating a search for alternative employment. For these educators different reasons contributed to this state:

- Job-related factors that frustrate the core passion of teaching e.g. workload demands and stress (F4 – see Table 4.7) and remuneration ('pay') in the case of respondent F9;
- A lack of respect for the profession (from parents and society) and the resultant impact on the self-worth of the educator, prompting departure from the profession (see F9's comments);
- Workload and after hours work, but also prescriptive work practices (a lack of flexibility and self-regulation), which eroded participant F11's commitment to the occupation;
- A recognition that teaching as occupation and profession is demanding too much (F13 – see earlier quote that indicated that she was not coping / struggling with the teaching job amidst a lack of support); and
- Cluttering up the teaching job with 'duties other than teaching' (DOTT) to the point of marginalising the core passion of teaching for respondent F18 (see earlier quote).

In general these indicators show that former educators reached a stage of disenchantment with the occupation (profession) because of their intense experience of 1) several job facets that overshadow the core features about which they are passionate, and 2) features of the profession in the broader context e.g. poor occupational status and a lack of professional self-regulation. The discussion in section 4.3.3.2 will consider whether the sources of profession satisfaction for former educators have changed for current educators.

#### **4.3.3.2 Satisfaction with the profession among *current* educators**

Guided by the features of a profession in general, the analysis of *current* educator narrative is introduced with a few illustrative examples of profession (dis)satisfaction. These show evidence of *profession* satisfaction as opposed to *job* satisfaction. Following a similar structure and analysis frame, narrative that relates to the features of a profession is considered (see Figure 4.8). Current educators' experience of the profession is mapped to the detected features of the profession and presented in Figure 4.9.

#### **Profession satisfaction**

As previously indicated, satisfaction with teaching, working with children and contributing to their development, provide evidence of satisfaction with a central feature of the identity of the education profession. In the following examples, satisfaction with these core features that extends beyond the confines of any specific job or school, is indicated:

*"It is just really satisfying, I suppose, to have people interested in what you want to say, have satisfaction when they learn, it is quite satisfying" (C5, female, 33 years);*

and,

*"Generally, I think I've enjoyed teaching. I love teaching and engaging with students" (C18, female, 26 years);*

and,

*"I am actually one of those that is doing teaching because it's what I like doing. I love teaching, I love the kids, I like helping them, I like seeing them regurgitate the results that I can see. I think I really get great satisfaction out of students' learning, out of younger people's enthusiasm and being in the school environment" (C2, female, 39 years).*

Participant C16's comment distinguishes between this form of satisfaction and that derived from more concrete job facets (e.g. 'money'):

*"As a profession, I see it as important. I find teaching very rewarding, actually. I am not rewarded as much by money as I am by position and success in my own mind, but I very much value students and my interaction with students. I actually like going into the classroom, engaging with the students, even kids that have changed a little bit, but not much. It's the best feeling when a kid who can't write their name all of a sudden can write their name. It's great and that's what I like best" (C16, male, 36 years).*

### **Profession dissatisfaction**

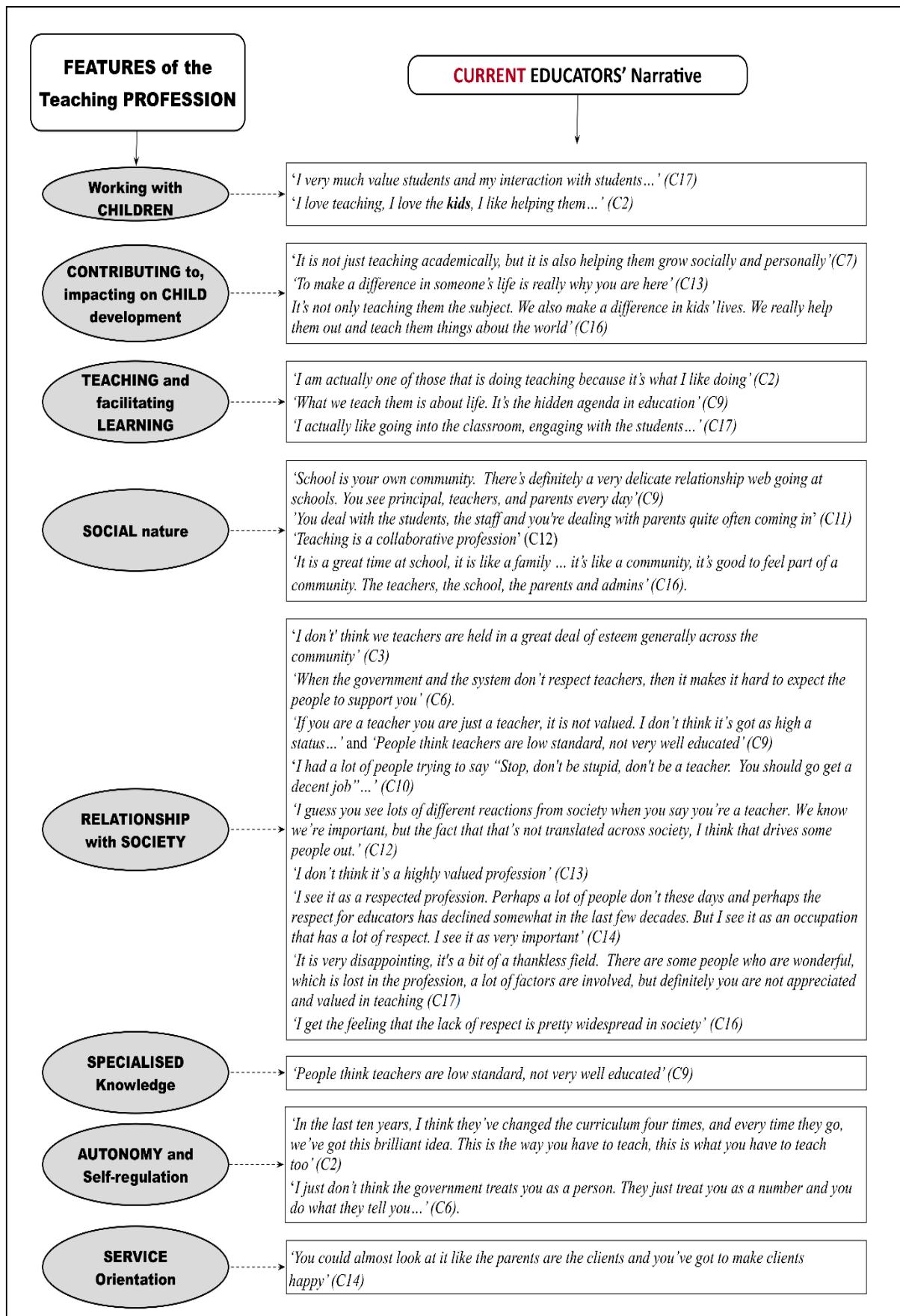
The example provided by participant C12 comments on the value and importance of the profession at a societal level, but also indicates the significant influence of this on some educators (e.g. prompting them to leave the profession):

*“The perspective people have of teachers is often quite wrong. I guess you see lots of different reactions from society when you say you’re a teacher. We know we’re important, but the fact that that’s not translated across society, I think that drives some people out” (C12, female, 30 years).*

Participant C5’s comment reflects on the absence of professional autonomy...

*“You feel your hands are tied. There is little flexibility on an official level... [...] ...I don’t like that feeling of being owned by anybody or, you know, owing anybody anything. I do not have that degree of freedom to do what I want when I think its time to do it” (C5, female, 33 years).*

Figure 4.8 indicates the profession features detected in the narrative of current educators.

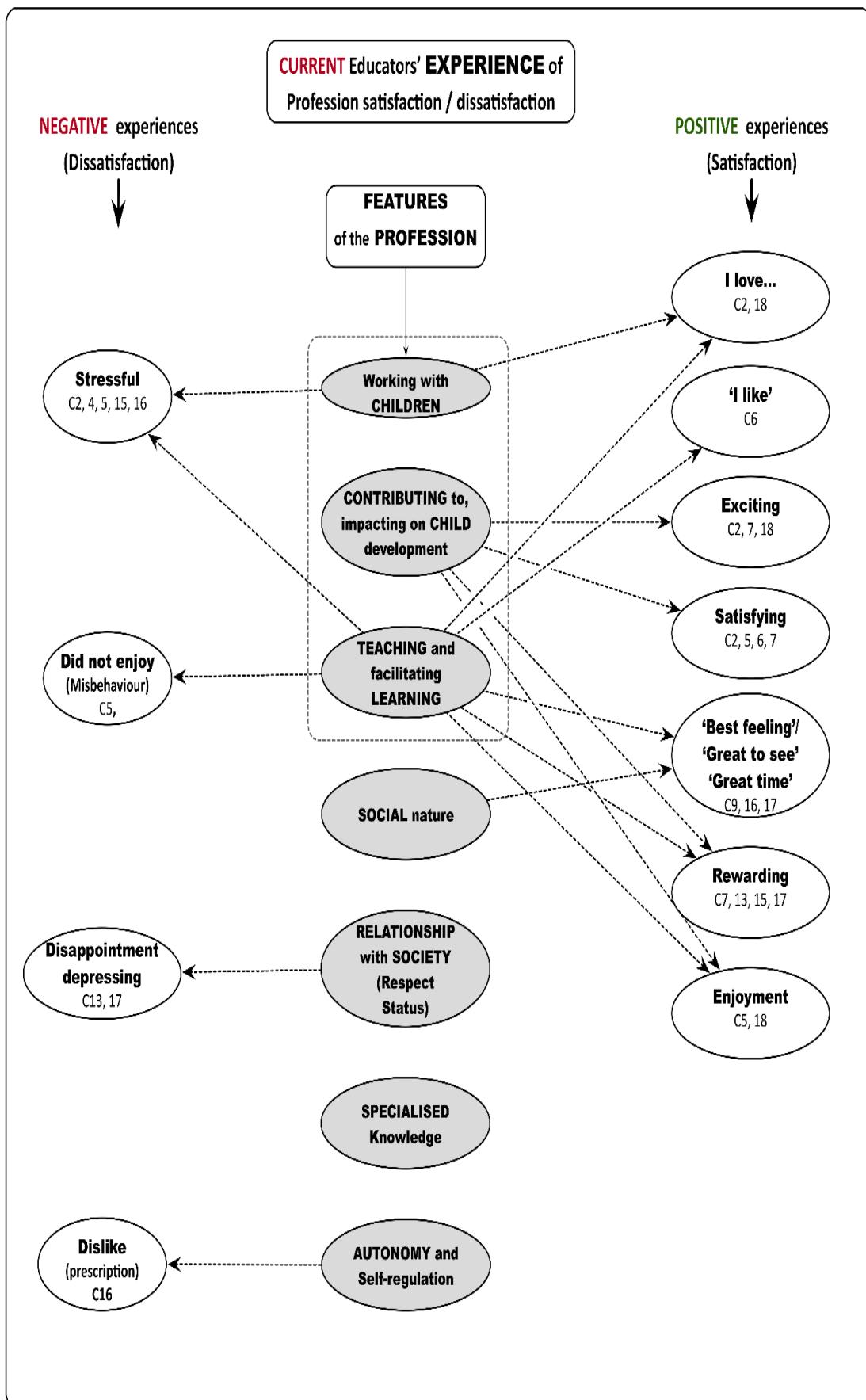


**Figure 4. 8 Current educators: Sources of profession satisfaction/dissatisfaction**

Figure 4.8 reveals those profession features that could be detected in the narratives of current indicators. With the exception of the education profession's relationship with society and its social character (the single comment by C12), educators do not convey awareness of these features. This in itself is a comment on 'professional schooling' in general and a consideration beyond the scope of this study. Descriptive commentary provided in respect of the specialisation focus and core purpose of the profession (teaching, working with, and contributing to child development) indicates an internalised understanding of why this profession attracted current educators (and why it is experienced as intrinsically rewarding).

The social character of the occupation/profession is, effectively, only acknowledged by participant C12 and indirectly affirmed by the comments of other participants (as indicated). By contrast, the relationship between the education profession and society-at-large is experienced at a level of greater conscious awareness. This is indicated by the abundance of observations about the perceived importance, value, respect and status of the profession. Commentary, again, only indirectly acknowledges the presence (or absence) of the specialised nature of the teaching profession, the feature of professional autonomy and a service orientation. These features of a recognised profession are only indirectly and often pre-consciously commented on by educators and not recognised at a conscious, collective level. This suggests substantial scope for improvement and advancement of the profession by those entities that act as custodians for it.

Although not the focus of the analysis reported in Figure 4.8, the narrative examples in several instances convey evidence of current educators' experience of the profession. The most obvious examples are those voiced in respect of the core features of the profession. This is also indicated in Figure 4.9 (and mapped to the different detected profession features). The profession's standing in society enjoys a marked prominence among current educators (as evidenced in Figure 4.8), suggesting the personal significance of this consideration for current educators. In addition, the cited comments about the profession's standing, in several instances convey a tone of disaffection or imply such a sentiment. The personal experience of these features is indicated in Figure 4.9.



**Figure 4. 9 Current educators' experience of the profession (satisfaction/dissatisfaction)**

Current educators' experience of the teaching profession does not differ in any material way from that of former educators. A similar dynamic to that of former educators is conveyed with the core features of the profession experienced as enjoyable, satisfying and rewarding (teaching, working and contributing to children's development). The *relationship with society* (respect, status of the profession), which was extensively commented on by current educators (see Figure 4.8) and (the lack of) *autonomy* to a lesser extent, detract from this experience.

*Specialised knowledge* and the *social character* of the occupation (profession) were voiced in descriptive and non-emotional terms by current educators (see Figure 4.8) and as a result no experiences have been indicated in Figure 4.9. In the same way, the lean commentary indicated in respect of the profession's standing in society, under-represents the actual sentiment of educators. As a case in point, consider the comments by current educator, C6, who provides a descriptive account of this aspect of the profession, devoid of emotion-laden terminology, but nonetheless conveys a clear tone and sentiment:

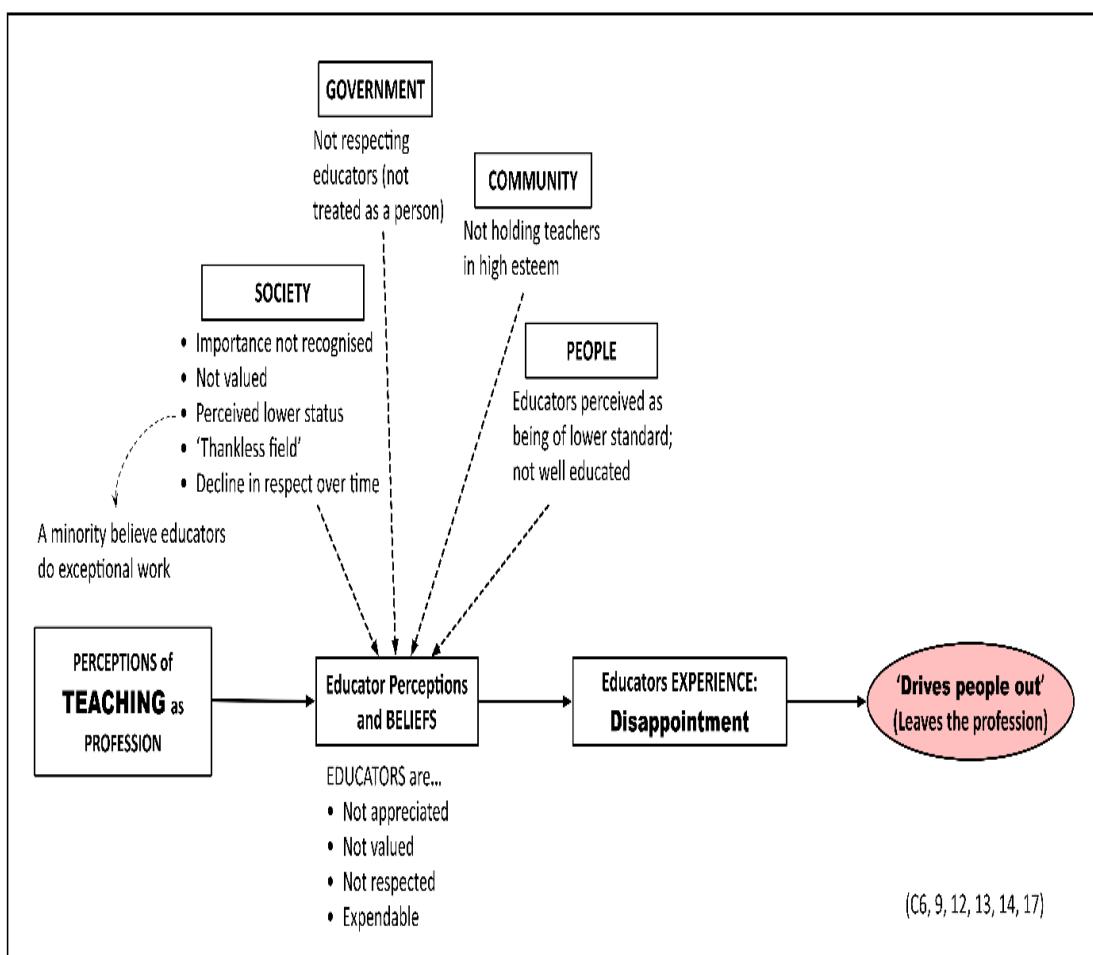
*"When the government and the system don't respect teachers, then it makes it hard to expect the people to support you. I just don't think the government treats you as a person. They just treat you as a number and you do what they tell you ... we're pretty much made political punching bags. If you look at the way education is debated in public, it's never using teachers' voices. It's using the media and politicians, never, never the voices of teachers themselves. I think we need a revolution in the attitudes towards education, to see education as something holistic and not just marks and academic achievement orientated" (C6, male, 36 years).*

This, similarly, explains the lean commentary in respect of the other indicated features of the profession. The principle applies equally to the more conventional '*service orientation*' evident in recognised professions. Although the '*helping orientation*' underlying educators' choice of occupation is evident in their accounts of why they pursued the teaching profession, this feature was not as obvious, with only one current educator (C14) suggesting this. It would be fair to conclude that this is not a conscious focus of training and admission to the '*profession*'.

Despite the lean commentary generally extracted, the essence of Figure 4.10 nonetheless suggests the general experience of current educators as heard and felt

during the interviews. While the central features of the profession, as pointed out, are a major source of excitement and satisfaction, other attributes of the profession erode this positive sentiment. Notable in this regard is the perceived standing of the profession, as enacted by parents and society-at-large, but also through disrespect and classroom misbehaviour of children. The impact of these considerations significantly compromises the effect of more positively experienced attributes of the profession.

From dissecting the narratives of current educators C6, C9, C12, C13, C14 and C17, the causal sequence of events associated with a lack of professional recognition and which leads to educators' disillusionment with the profession, could be constructed. This is illustrated in Figure 4.10.



**Figure 4. 10 Influence of societal perceptions (relations) on current educators' satisfaction with the profession.**

The essence of Figure 4.10 can be summarised by two educator observations: “...the lack of respect is pretty widespread in society” (C16) and the earlier statement “The perspective people have of teachers is often quite wrong. I guess you see lots of

*different reactions from society when you say you're a teacher. We know we're important, but the fact that that's not translated across society, I think that drives some people out" (C12).*

The parallels observed across former and current educators' experiences of the profession suggest that the situation that prevailed at the time of former educators' employment, have not changed materially. The same pressures and stressors still continue to operate on current educators.

While all former educators have left the profession, all of the current educators were still employed at the time of this research. However, the fairly abundant commentary that indicates early 'signs' and more explicit intentions of leaving the profession (see Table 4.13) are somewhat alarming (but see also the discussion of turnover intention in section 4.3.4). However, and in contrast to the situation of the former educators, these indicators of action or potential actions are quite limited.

Several of the behavioural outcomes or consequences of profession satisfaction and dissatisfaction have been indicated (simultaneously) when highlighting the educators' experiences of the teaching job in Table 4.11. This is logical because displeasure with a facet of the work will always be a comment *also* on the occupation or profession. It also indicates the closely intertwined relationship between the job and the profession of education.

A few selected examples that illustrate the behavioural outcomes of profession *dissatisfaction* are indicated (or restated) in Table 4.13. Behavioural indicators of profession *satisfaction* are not provided... educators did not indicate any specific behavioural intentions on the basis of e.g. satisfaction derived from 'teaching' (apart from commenting on 'teaching' and 'working with children' in positive terms and remaining in the profession).

**Table 4. 13 Current educators: Behavioural indicators and outcomes related to profession satisfaction**

Participant <sup>a</sup>	Behavioural indicators and outcomes of the teaching experience Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>	Features of the profession <sup>c</sup>
C16	<i>You do have to put a lot into it. So perhaps if you don't have the energy for that anymore, then you're looking for something else.</i>	Teaching
C14	<i>When teachers talk to each other about why they leave or what frustrates them, it is about constant change for the sake of change. They don't see how it links to educational outcomes for children or even just actually for welfare of children.</i>	Working with children
C15	<i>You simply cannot do everything that's required. I always wanted to be a teacher but teaching is not what I expected. To be honest, I do not want to teach next year. Teaching is very stressful.</i>	Teaching
C16	<i>I think a lot of people do not want to be teachers because they think teaching is affecting their lives or their relationships or something like that. One of the teachers said she does not want to be a teacher anymore, because she wants a life. She said she wants to have her time on weekends for her family and friends.</i>	Teaching
C12	<i>...if life outside of school is hard, then its very hard to be teaching... and if teaching is hard, its very hard to have a happy life... if you know what I mean? So a lot of people think of leaving because it's too hard emotionally and it's affecting them in other ways like that.</i>	Teaching
C15	<i>To be honest, I do not want to teach next year. Teaching is very stressful. I want to have a job that has stressful moments, but not always.</i>	Teaching
C4	<i>I think I need to do something else. Teaching is long hours and very stressful. I think stress is a big reason for leaving for many teachers. I think there are many teachers who are planning to leave due to stress. That's also a lot of paperwork that... yes, it is necessary, but also it's not necessary at the same time. Honestly, I do not want to teach because of the stress and the workload.</i>	Teaching
C7	<i>...it ends up with people that are putting up with things like that and affecting their own health or leaving the profession and going somewhere else.</i>	Teaching
C2	<i>It is very disappointing to see lots of young teachers leave because of stress and pressure...pressure from the work.</i>	Teaching

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.2 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added. <sup>c</sup>The features of the profession and therefore sources of satisfaction / dissatisfaction prompting the behaviour or predisposition.

From Table 4.13 it is evident that the majority of current educators who have voiced intent to leave, or commented on educators who are contemplating this, are doing so in response to their intense experience of specific facets of the teaching **job**. These experiences, for example, include excessive demands and stress due to workload, long (after) hours of work, child misbehaviour, constant changes in work practices, and compromised work-life balance and social relations. For current educators such experiences are supplanting the enjoyment and passion of the *core task* of teaching. In addition to these considerations, participant C14 raises the *meaningfulness* and *relevance* of constantly imposed changes. In this instance the educator's sentiments about the profession are eroded because of *job facets* that compromise the key focus of *working with* and *helping children*. During the course of these experiences, the educators' perceptions of the profession are affected and, consistent with observations for the former educators, this affects the commitment of the educator to the profession. As a result educators contemplate leaving the profession or engaging in search behaviour (alternative jobs). The impact of these adverse experiences of the teaching job is such that several educators state categorically that they do not want to teach anymore.

The statements reflected in Table 4.13 suggest that current educators, as with former educators, are reaching a stage of dissatisfaction with the profession because of their intense experience of *job features / facets* that outweigh the influence of core features about which they are passionate. This is compounded by their experience of *other features of the profession* described in Figure 4.8 such as the poor societal view of the profession and the lack of (professional) autonomy as a consequence of the prescriptive influence of the Department of Education.

#### **4.3.3.4 The relatedness of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction**

From the discussion of job and professional satisfaction it is evident that the roles of, and relationship between these satisfaction constructs are anything but simplistic or clear. Multiple examples of job and / or profession satisfaction *and* dissatisfaction, often voiced by the same educators, were observed. This distinction between job and profession satisfaction is best illustrated when educators indicate that 'pay' (salary) was not the reason for entering into or remaining in the profession, suggesting dissatisfaction with 'pay' (see example 4 below). Or consider the statement by

educator F4 again: “*I left because of workload. I really enjoyed it, but it was too much and really stressful*”. In this instance workload, a facet of the job, is sufficiently dissatisfying to result in the educator leaving the profession, yet the educator indicates that she enjoyed teaching (a job facet indicative of profession satisfaction).

The following random examples taken from the narratives of both current and former educators are illustrative of the different dimensions of the relationship between job and profession satisfaction:

Example 1 is not clear about (dis)satisfaction with the profession, but implies **profession dissatisfaction** as a consequence of **job dissatisfaction**:

“*I was very happy to leave the profession because I really didn't like the job*” (F11, male, 36 years).

Example 2 conveys **initial job satisfaction and profession satisfaction**, but suggests that **job satisfaction** was impacted by **eroded profession dissatisfaction** (the latter as a result of non-recognition of professional status):

“*It was a very happy part of my life when I first went teaching. I did get good holidays and I did have job satisfaction in terms of I was really happy with what I was doing... But, yeah, when you're... when you're sort of not even really considered a teacher 'cause you're not even sort of recognised by the education department...*” (F6, female, 46 years).

Example 3 illustrates how a continuous and excessively demanding job experience (implying **job dissatisfaction**) could compromise **profession satisfaction** (the passion for teaching and working with kids):

“*A lot of the day-to-day grind of the job can kill the passion a lot. I think I am losing a little bit of passion for it [teaching] due to stress. You do have to have lots of energy on a day-to-day basis and if it's hard to get that energy for it and if you've lost that passion, it's not really something you can coast along with. You do have to put a lot into it. So perhaps if you don't have the energy for that anymore, then you're looking for something else*” (C16, male, 36 years).

Example 4 indicates that **job dissatisfaction** (with the job facet: ‘pay’) and **profession satisfaction** were simultaneously experienced until job dissatisfaction prompted the educator to leave the profession:

*“Well, pay is the reason that I left. I think there would be other people like me who do like teaching and, you know, where they went through it and they did leave. They went into a better-paying job, which might be not satisfying – the job may not satisfy them, but they’re getting the dollar support” (F9, male, 41 years).*

Examples 5 and 6 reveal how a shift from **profession satisfaction** to **profession dissatisfaction** occurs through external influences. The statement by educator F2 demonstrates the impact of a lack of professional recognition, while the previously used statement by educator F4 indicates the influence of externally imposed constraints on professional autonomy:

*“I have a lot of respect for teaching, but there are a lot of people out there who have no respect for teaching whatsoever. They even work in the industry but they have no respect for teaching, and that was the start of feeling a little bit disappointed in the profession as a whole” (F2, female, 34 years).*

*“A lot of the things that I enjoyed and saw good about teaching, for me were being compromised by this new framework because the emphasis wasn’t going to be anymore on being the ‘guru’ of the subject. I needed more autonomy, not being dictated by the curriculum” (F4, male, 42 years).*

These examples indicate:

- Job dissatisfaction as a consequence of the salary-to-effort relationship (inequity) has caused educators to leave the profession.
- Profession-related considerations such as poor public and societal recognition can and do lead to educators leaving the profession.
- The emotionally and physically taxing experience of the job of teaching, notably workload and resultant stress, not only moves the educator from job satisfaction to job dissatisfaction, but because of the intensity and invasiveness of this experience (totally disrupting work-life balance and social relations), also brings about a shift in the educator’s appraisal of the profession. This then results in a shift from profession satisfaction to profession dissatisfaction.

In essence: educators leave the profession because of job dissatisfaction or profession dissatisfaction, or both. In many instances profession dissatisfaction is a result of a too intense / overwhelming experience of those job facets that give rise to job

dissatisfaction.

The evidence, in summary, has indicated that job experiences erode profession satisfaction. Moreover, profession dissatisfaction (e.g. as a result of inadequate reputation, respect and status) raises questions in the mind of the educator about the meaningfulness and sensibility of pursuing the occupation, especially when encountering facets of the job that are profoundly dissatisfying. Dissatisfaction with job facets that impact on the core or identity-specific features (facets) of the job, i.e., those which are most 'true' to the identity of the profession such as 'teaching' and 'working with children', will erode profession satisfaction. In this study it was noted that the DoE imposed changes added to educators' workload and to bureaucracy in particular. This is experienced by both former and current educators as detracting from the perceived primary task of teaching (the reason for entering the profession). In such instances educators' profession satisfaction is impacted adversely.

#### **4.3.3.5 Conclusion and summary: Satisfaction with the profession among educators**

The analyses performed in this section were concerned with the concept of profession satisfaction and employed a formal definition and central features of a profession as a guiding frame to detect evidence of profession satisfaction in educator narratives. Procedurally, all narratives that related to the features of a profession (per definition) were identified and further 'coded' and categorised. In the first instance educator narrative was scanned to establish which profession features were in evidence. This was followed by a detailed analysis of the 'qualifying' educator statements in terms of the elements of 'satisfaction', i.e., evaluative beliefs, related feelings, and associated behavioural predispositions or inclinations.

In this manner it was observed that not all dimensions of a profession were in evidence (i.e., not 'top of mind' for educators). It was secondly observed that the features giving rise to profession satisfaction and dissatisfaction were essentially similar for the two cohorts. In both these groups educators expressed satisfaction with 'teaching', 'working with' and 'contributing to' the development of children and facilitating 'learning'. Current educators in addition appeared more aware of the social context and marginally more aware of the social character of the teaching profession when compared to former educators.

The relationship of the profession with society-at-large (and various embedded stakeholder constituencies) is the second major feature of professions that received meaningful commentary from both cohorts. In this regard a negative perception of the profession, derived from contact with the public, parents and others, has been internalised by educators and reported in the interviews. Educators in both cohorts consistently reported a lack of recognition and respect and limited appreciation of education and educators. While the core features of the profession (its specialised focus on children and core teaching technology) was a source of substantial professional satisfaction, the lack of recognition and status (relationship with society-at-large) was a source of substantial disappointment for educators. This in turn has also led to educators leaving the profession.

Occasional comments were noted in respect of 'service orientation' and 'autonomy and self-regulation', while several features of a profession such as 'specialised knowledge', ethical orientation (ethical code, conduct), professional identity and culture, and an efficient and effective professional body, were not raised in the interviews. In general, educators were unaware of these dimensions and, at best, conveyed an indirect awareness of some of these profession features. This suggests insufficient attention to these considerations at point of training, licensing, working in the profession, but also by those entities that act as custodians of the profession.

The analyses also revealed that job and professional satisfaction interact and have a mutual influence where job dissatisfaction could lead to profession dissatisfaction and vice versa. Educators may also be satisfied with the job, but less so with the profession. Most common and more likely among current educators, is dissatisfaction with the job (specific job facets), while still being reasonably satisfied with the profession.

From the narrative provided it is clear that educators' profession satisfaction declines over time as a consequence of their experiences of job dissatisfaction. Ample evidence has been provided to show that educators leave the profession for reasons such as job dissatisfaction, profession dissatisfaction, or both (but see also section 4.3.4). The findings, firstly, suggest, that the retention of educators is a function of considered management of the job content and parameters of the teaching job (tasks, facets). The effective promotion of the profession, secondly, is necessary to retain educators in the profession. Judging by the prevailing perceptions of education among parents, the

public and society-at-large, and the serious impacts on, among other, educator wellbeing and health, neither of these considerations is effectively managed at present.

#### **4.3.4 Turnover intention (the intention to leave / remain)**

The analyses and discussion of 'emergent themes' (section 4.3.1), educator job satisfaction (section 4.3.2) and educator profession satisfaction (section 4.3.3) frequently referred to educators that left or contemplated leaving the profession. Further analysis of these narratives revealed the pathways leading out of the profession (former educators) or indicated the sequence of actions for those contemplating to leave (current educators). The evidence demonstrated that a state of job dissatisfaction, profession dissatisfaction, or both, invariably preceded this stage of detachment from the job and profession. The narratives relating to the latter were converted into cause-and-effect sequences and portrayed in diagrams to reveal both the antecedents and the dynamics giving rise to these states of dissatisfaction (various Figures in sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). Although the cause-and-effect sequences leading to these states of dissatisfaction stopped short of specifying actual 'leaving' or the *intent* to leave, the educator narratives in many instances clearly indicated this link in the process of withdrawing from and/or exiting the profession. To illustrate this point, consider the example of respondent F20 in which the reason for leaving is indicated:

*"I think I reached the point that I needed to do something else... it was too stressful. I knew I had great, sort of, skills and capabilities to do whatever I wanted to do and so felt confident to leave, but it was not an easy option. You have always wanted to be a teacher; yeah, I think I left it because of stress. When I left, I felt such a relief of leaving" (F20, female, 34 years).*

Educator narratives that similarly indicate or clearly suggest 'exiting' the profession, but also the causes for doing so, were sourced for former and current educators respectively. These are briefly considered in the discussion that follows. In general note that the pseudonyms used to identify respondents throughout this dissertation (e.g. F7 or C10) are indicated in the various diagrams and tables. Through the search function, this designation can be used to track a specific participant's situation and data (narrative) as utilised in the various analyses.

#### **4.3.4.1 Leaving/quitting among former educators**

The background to former educators leaving the profession has been documented in fair detail in sections 4.3.1.1, 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.3.1. In this section the focus is narrowed to evidence concerned specifically with the dynamics and decisions to leave ‘teaching’ for the former educators’. This is presented in Figure 4.11.

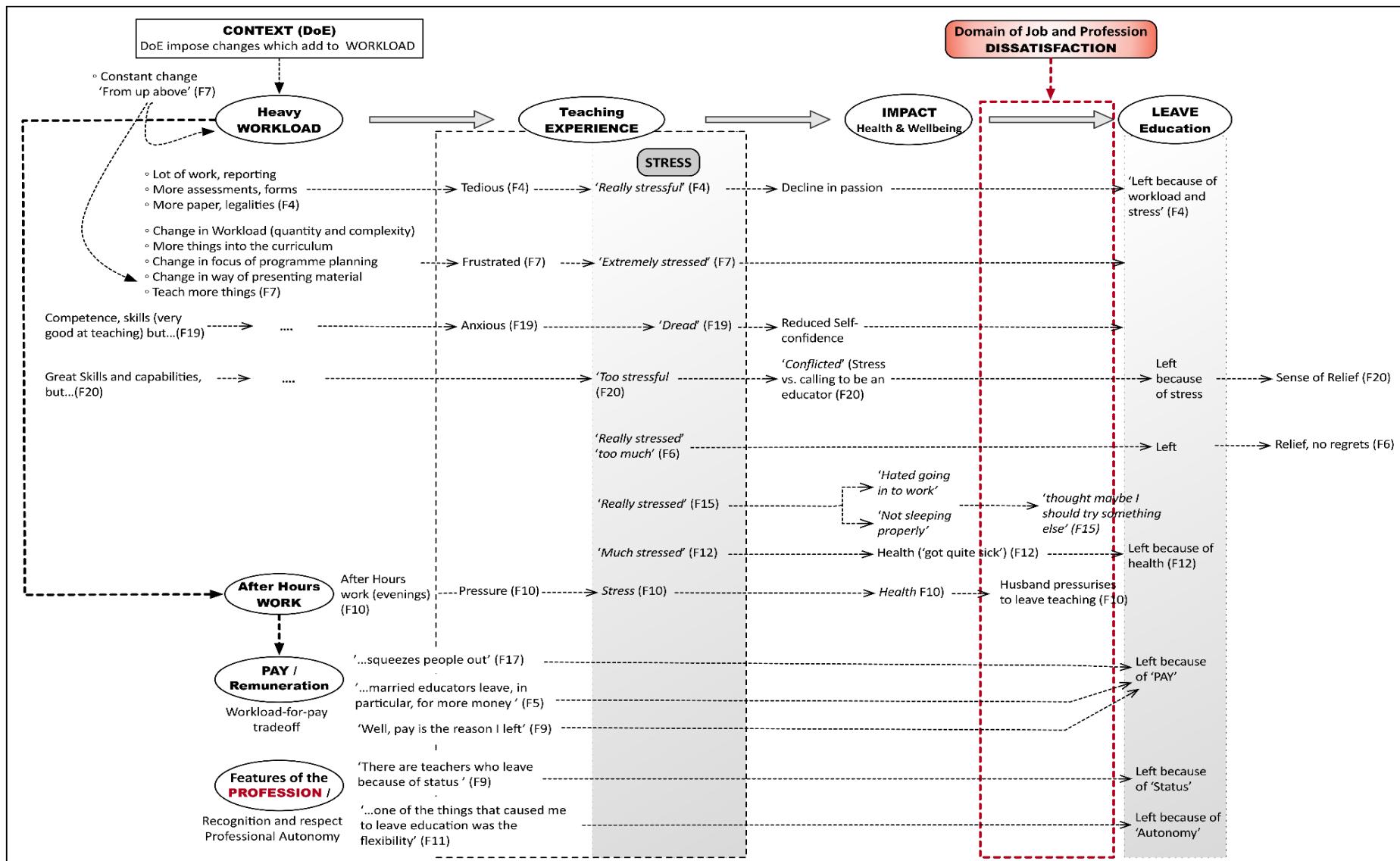


Figure 4. 11 Former educators: Reported dynamics for leaving the education profession

Figure 4.11 reveals the dynamics for the majority of former educators, which ultimately resulted in them leaving the profession. A challenging workload occupies a central position in these dynamics. The existing and demanding workload is further compromised by a constant flow of changes in curriculum and teaching practice - introduced by the Department of Education (the impact of this was illustrated in Figure 4.3.1). These work demands require significant additional work and sacrificing of private time (after hours) to cope with the workload.

This demand-dynamic has two major consequences:

It substantially alters the educators' experience of the teaching job, which was originally pursued and entered with excitement and passion (this passion erodes over time). Continuous pressure coupled with frustration and occasionally anxiety, amounts to a 'very stressful' or 'extremely stressful' teaching experience (F4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 19, 20) - excessive levels of stress being the most salient characteristic of the teaching experience. Continuous exposure to high levels of stress will unavoidably impact on the health and well-being of the educator and, for former educators in this instance, a range of undesirable impacts are noted. A decline in passion (a comment on motivation), eroded self-confidence, burnout, but also psychosomatic consequences such as disrupted sleep patterns and a greater susceptibility to health issues, apart from disrupted social relations and pressure from family members, were reported.

The second major consequence is that educators pay more attention to their remuneration as it represents a 'return' on the time and effort they have invested. This prompts them to conclude that the workload-for-pay trade-off is unsatisfactory, which then does not justify continuing in the job – giving rise to a state of dissatisfaction and ultimately the prospect of leaving the profession. Remuneration, however, appears to be a sufficient cause on its own for educators to leave the profession. Although several indicated that they were comfortable with the remuneration they received, others were not and actually left the profession for this reason (in Figure 4.11: see participant F9 and the comments by F5 and F17).

The primary causes of former educators leaving the profession, in effect, amount to a single, encompassing cycle in which the various reported causes collectively compound the educator's experience of teaching - essentially as excessively demanding and stressful, with health and mental well-being consequences. The act of

leaving the profession effectively means that educators' experience of teaching reached a stage of dissatisfaction, such that it became intolerable, resulting in their departure. The reports of excessive stress and its adverse impact on health and well-being indicate that these educators have been exposed for too long to, what appears to be, a generally destructive work situation and job.

Stress, being the most significant experience contributing to the educator's dissatisfaction, is further compounded by difficult classroom situations and in particular student misbehaviour. The latter is viewed as originating outside the classroom - most likely in the home setting. However, this is not the only contextual consideration 'carried into' the workspace of the educator. The role of parents and society-at-large, especially through the limited value and recognition they assign to education and educators have also been shown to significantly affect the educator's experience of 'teaching' (see F9, below). The lack of professional autonomy and 'self-regulation' – the ability to influence the design and delivery of teaching and learning experiences - similarly have an impact on the educator's professional satisfaction (see F11). These considerations impact professional satisfaction and as indicated have and could facilitate leaving the profession. Consider for example...

*"There are teachers who leave because of the status, you know... the fact that they don't get enough respect from parents; they don't get enough respect from society. It's a question of feeling valued" (F9, male, 41 years).*

*"I think one of the things that ultimately caused me to leave education was the flexibility. I have a lot more flexibility to design what my job looks like in my current job. I don't have a curriculum to align with and I don't have people from outside to tell me how I should do my job" (F11, male, 36 years).*

In summary, a heavy, taxing workload; exacerbated by the continuous imposition of changes in teaching and work practice; significantly infringe on educators' lives, resulting in extensive after hours work. This is aggravated by a perceived poor workload-to-pay relationship, and a very intense, most often negative, experience of the teaching job (especially the demands). This in turn culminates in adverse health and well-being consequences, a state of dissatisfaction with the teaching job and profession, and ultimately leaving of the profession.

#### **4.3.4.2 Intention to leave among current educators**

Although the majority of the current educators who participated in this study held positive attitudes towards the teaching profession, their interviews and the narratives that were analysed, revealed that several have contemplated leaving the profession. The pathways that lead educators to a point of considering the prospect of leaving, emerged clearly from the analysis of relevant educator narrative. The cause-and-effect sequences that combine to bring about this state of mind, is outlined in Figure 4.12.

Not unlike the dynamics observed for former educators, current indicators also clearly relate 'pay'/salary to the teaching workload. Disenchantment with the effort-to-reward ('pay') relationship once again surfaced as a powerful disincentive to remain in the teaching profession. Remuneration itself appears to be sufficient cause for educators to leave the profession (see commentary by current educators C14 and C16).

In addition to these main 'drivers' of dissatisfaction and turnover intent, current educators have indicated that classroom behaviour (misbehaviour) significantly intensifies educator stress and is often a contributing factor to educators leaving the profession...

*"You just find behaviour management too hard. You just cannot deal with it every day. A lot of the younger teachers that leave... so, if they're still young and they've only been teaching for a short amount of time when they leave, that's usually what it's for. Some older teachers that leave before retirement age, some of them it's because of the behaviour. If they've been teaching for a long time, the behaviours have got a lot worse as time has gone by. One of my aunties, she's left teaching prior to retirement because she just was fed up with it. Because she's one of the more experienced teachers in the school and so the admin will be putting the most difficult kids in her class every single year and she just got sick of it and left" (C2, female, 39 years).*

Profession-related considerations such as the lack of recognition and respect for education and educators, perceived as coming from society-at-large, parents and other stakeholders, elicited extensive commentary from current educators (see theme CE-6 and CE-7, section 4.3.1.2).

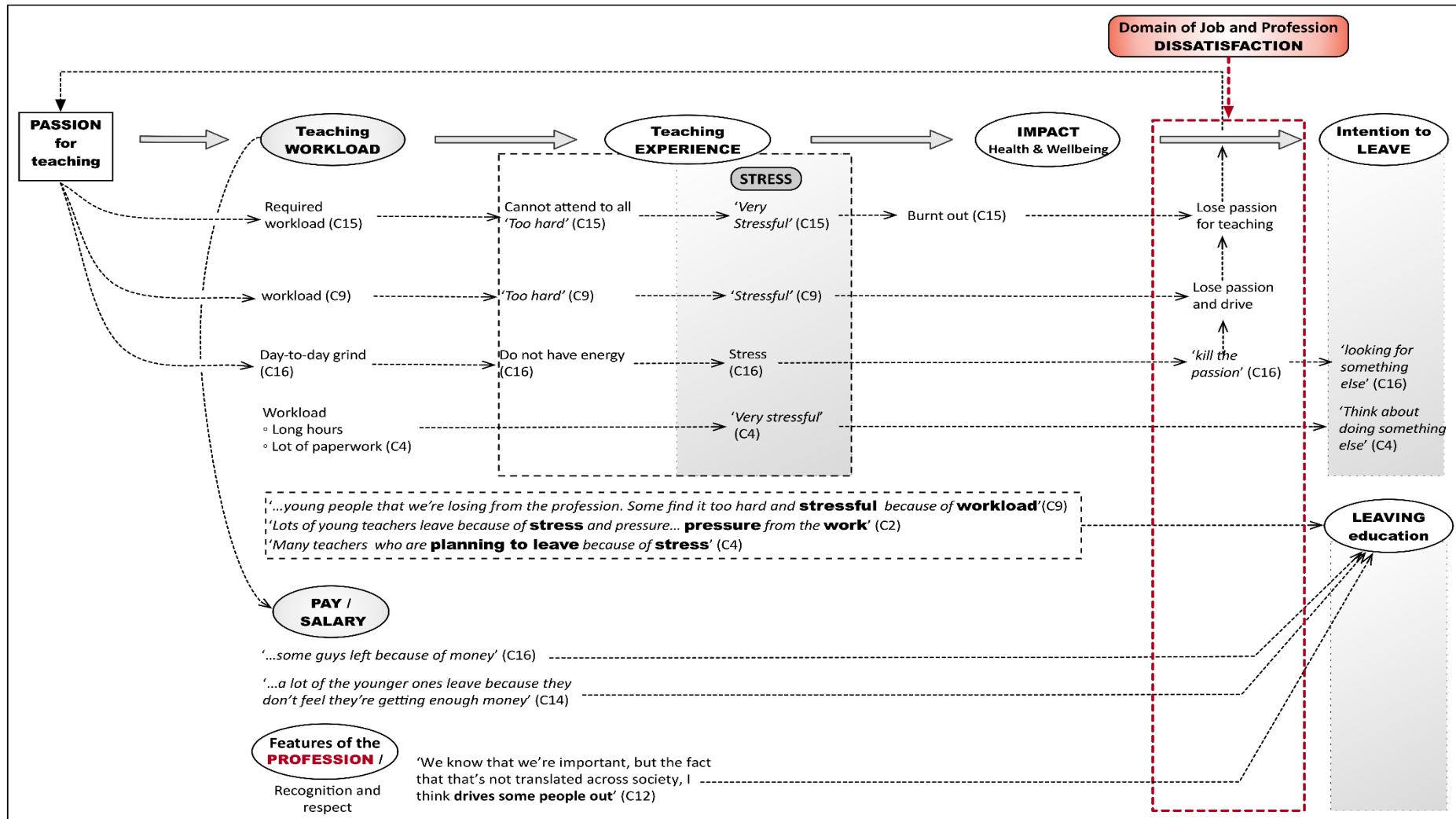


Figure 4. 12 Current educators' intention to leave the education profession

Professional recognition and respect emerged as a pronounced source of dissatisfaction with the profession (e.g. Figure 4.8). However, no educator indicated this as a pertinent consideration that prompts him or her to consider alternative employment. That it has a meaningful impact in turnover intention, is suggested by educator C12:

*“The perspective people have of teachers is often quite wrong. I guess you see lots of different reactions from society when you say you’re a teacher. We know we’re important, but the fact that that’s not translated across society, I think that drives some people out. If they’re not a teacher themselves, they don’t really get what’s happening, and a lot of them actually don’t really care, I find” (C12, Female, and 30 years).*

In general terms the dynamics outlined in Figure 4.12 resemble that portrayed in Figure 4.11 (for former educators), with the exception that the actual 'departure' from the profession is not stated, or understated by those who did mention this. At this level of analysis the observed parallels suggest that the primary factors and situations that have prompted former educators to leave the profession, have not changed materially since then. Similarities in former and current educators' experiences then further suggest that several of the interviewed current educators are likely to leave the profession.

The pervasive influence of extraneously imposed change (Figure 4.11) is less prominent in Figure 4.12, but this does not mean this is not a significant consideration or factor in educators' intention to leave. On the contrary, as revealed in previous analyses (see Figure 4.4.1) the influence of the Department of Education as a source of an expanded workload and intensified work demands was clearly identified as a prominent source contributing to their discontent. The teaching workload is also, for this cohort, the most prominent source and starting point for the cycle leading, successively, to a negative teaching experience, states of dissatisfaction and the intention to leave. The latter has been shown to correlate with a strong probability of actually leaving the profession (see Chapter 5).

Excessive workload and its accompanying demands on current educators bring about a significant change in educators' experience of teaching. For these educators the demanding nature of the job similarly creates virtually intolerable levels of stress – to the point that educators regularly mentioned burnout. Most important is that several

current indicators clearly stated that this experience directly influences and compromises their passion for teaching. As illustrated in the narrative of former educators, this is an indicator suggesting the onset of a process of detachment that is likely to be characterised by 'search behaviour' (for alternative employment). Indeed, this has been the case with educators C16 and C4 who both indicated that they were '*looking for*' or '*thinking about*' doing something else. Workload and stress, essentially, reside at the root of educators' experienced dissatisfaction.

*"My family ideal... and having spent time with my family... is not in teaching. I have been diagnosed with anxiety ... I think that if life outside of school is hard, then it's very hard to do teaching, and if teaching is hard, it's very hard to have a happy life, if you know what I mean? So a lot of people think of leaving because it's too hard emotionally and it's affecting them in other ways like that" (C12, female, 30 years).*

While multiple sources appear to cultivate an intention to leave among current educators, it seems such intentions are more likely the consequence of the combined effect of several job facets (features) of features of the profession. A highly demanding workload and work setting is the single-most important dynamic at the centre of current educators' highly stressful experience of teaching. It significantly impacts on educators' private time and work-life balance and is aggravated by poor student behaviour and at times a lack of support. This brings pay regimes into perspective and highlights the workload-to-pay ratio (factoring in after-hours work), which educators perceive as unacceptable. When inadequate respect for and recognition of educators' work is encountered from various stakeholders, dissatisfaction escalates. Undesirable outcomes of the latter are continuous, high levels of stress, burnout, a significant decline in passion (a sign of detachment) and thoughts of leaving the profession in search of 'something else'.

#### **4.3.4.3 Conclusion and summary: Leaving and intention to leave among educators**

Former and current educators did not differ markedly in their reasons for leaving or their intention to leave the profession. Both groups emphasised the exhausting nature of the teaching job and being overworked in the face of the substantial demands that are placed on their time. From the analyses it is clear that both former and current educators reached a stage of significant dissatisfaction with 'teaching' because of demands on time and personal resources (health, well-being, relationships). Prolonged

exposure to high levels of stress, for both groups, have adverse consequences and is a key indicator of turnover intention and actual departure from the profession. The circumstances giving rise to former educators leaving the profession appear to be largely similar to those that prompt an intention to leave among current educators. This suggests that unless pertinent changes are introduced, turnover intention among current educators is likely to translate into actual turnover.

### **4.3.5 The role of context**

During the course of the analyses outlined in sections 4.3.2 (educator job satisfaction) and 4.3.3 (educator profession satisfaction) the role of contextual influences on the educator's experience of the teaching job and profession emerged prominently from the narratives. Context in this study can broadly be conceptualised in terms of two primary settings, the first being the immediate work setting, located within the confines of a school. The second embraces the setting beyond the school and comprises several layers, i.e., the institutional context of which the Department of Education is the central entity, and society-at-large and the general public, which consists of multiple stakeholder constituencies in the broader social setting, including parents. The impact of these different settings on the educator's satisfaction with the teaching job and profession and his/her intention to remain / leave the profession are briefly indicated. This is done against the background of earlier analyses that have demonstrated the prominent role of such contexts.

#### **4.3.5.1 The immediate job setting and school environment**

A sample of representative views extracted from both former and current educator narratives, indicated in Table 4.14, reflects the variability and influence of the immediate school context and job setting in which the educator performs his/her work. It is an established and recognised context in which school leadership (Principal, Heads of Departments), co-educators and administrative staff, for educators, occupy a continuous and more immediate presence.

Educators' views (Table 4.14) indicate that student behaviour vary depending on considerations such as the type of school (e.g. public or private, religious or otherwise) and geographical location. At the same time the profile of the school leadership and the principal in particular (previously described in section 4.3.1), will similarly impact student behaviour (e.g. through policies and practices that determine how and to what

extent misbehaviour will be tolerated). At the same time educators indicate that needed ‘support’ from principals and school leadership vary (e.g. between private and state schools). ‘Support’ similarly has been demonstrated to significantly affect educators’ experiences of the challenges in the job (e.g. workload, misbehaviour, parents confronting educators – often in class).

**Table 4. 14 Role of the immediate job setting in educator job and profession satisfaction**

Educator <sup>a</sup>	Educator experience of contextual factors Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>
C2, female, 39 years	<i>How you experience behaviour problems, depends on the type of school you are in. I am currently working at a really high multicultural population school and the behaviour issues there are very different. It's quite a challenging school. That's what I find generally. I've found completely different behaviour problems in this school... there are different problems there.</i>
C7, female, 46 years	<i>I think people leave teaching because they're not very satisfied with the environment that they teach in. We have schools where there are classes that are hard to staff because of the socio-economic area that the school sits in. It depends on where you work as to what types of behaviour problems you have.</i>
F9, male, 41 years	<i>I'm sure there's a whole lot of difference in the way of support. It depends on which school you are in, whether they're a money-making enterprise or if they're a religious school... sometimes that would be quite different. Some schools are a lot more supportive. Some schools just care about parents and want them to be happy. There are some schools that back you up when parents complain.</i>
C5, female, 33 years	<i>It depends on the school you're at. You may have a principal who does not listen to their teachers. At a school like this that I'm currently at there are a lot of hard cases for educators. Most teachers feel a considerable amount of stress. We don't get as much support as we should have. It is too hard. So, I think it depends on the structure of the school and who's in administration and what their values are that's really important. If the person doesn't like... doesn't respect you, if you have a difficult situation, say for instance with a parent, with another teacher, you can get into a lot of difficulty if you're not supported by that person, and to me support depends on who is the principal... that the job of principal is to be strong to guide the school and to support the teachers in difficult situations.</i>
F17, male, 38 years	<i>I've taught in the government system and the private system. Principals at a private school are 'God' whereas at a state school your principal lives in another place. Principals at private schools are a lot more supportive, but then I think the workload for teachers in private schools can be higher because they've got a lot more expectations for the extra-curricular stuff.</i>
F19, female, 37 years	<i>Parental support varies. It is typically dependent on the school. I have taught private and public... I enjoyed working in private schools. The parents are different. For instance, in a private system there is a lot more parental support, mainly because they're paying a lot of money – a totally different attitude. There is an investment, a financial investment, by the parents at a private school. Instead, parents tend to distance themselves from their kid's education at state schools more than they do in private schools. They are not involved in their kid's education.</i>

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.1 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added.

This suggests that schools, while generally similar (and all teaching jobs fundamentally similar), are in effect also uniquely different settings that exert a direct influence on educators' job experience and hence job satisfaction. This is illustrated by educator F19's enjoyment of private schools and educator C7's comments that reveal that educators would leave the job because of setting and are unwilling to work in certain settings. Commentary in Table 4.14 extends observations reported in section 4.3.1 (themes FE-8 and CE-4), which revealed that support from the principal is a significant determining factor in how educators experience and hence enjoy the job and profession. It is evident that the immediate context has the potential to powerfully influence the educator's experience of the challenges that are encountered in the job, previously indicated to affect job satisfaction (see section 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2).

#### **4.3.5.2 Institutional context: Department of Education**

In this study the primary entity representing the institutional context is the Department of Education (DoE). The Department emerged prominently in educators' accounts of their teaching experiences. Table 4.15 provides a representative sample of comments from both former and current educators about the perceived role of the Department of Education.

**Table 4. 15 Role of the institutional context (e.g DoE) in educator job and profession satisfaction**

Educator <sup>a</sup>	Educator experience of contextual factors Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>
F5, female, 46 years	<i>It was getting harder; there were so many changes, so many changes in the structure of the expectations from above. There was a lot more reporting you had to do, there was less time for actually preparing for teaching. They just kept piling things on, more and more, and where do you have the time to do that? And I found it really frustrating. It was becoming so stressful.</i>
F17, male, 38 years	<i>I think the Education Department expects us to fit too much into an academic year. They keep bringing programs, adding maths, adding a self-esteem program, and you just eventually feel you can't do anything completely because there is not enough time.</i>
F4, male, 42 years	<i>A lot of the things that I enjoyed and saw good about teaching, for me were being compromised by this new framework because the emphasis wasn't going to be anymore on being the 'guru' of the subject. I needed more autonomy, not being dictated by the curriculum.</i>
C12, female, 30 years	<i>There are so many rules around. You have to deal with all of whatever the Education Department wants to do. So it's all of that. The <b>Education Department</b> dictates which subject or reading materials should be used. We have to follow their curriculum. They want teachers to sit down and write a report about why their students achieved or didn't achieve. They dictate. I have a big problem with them [The Education Department].</i>
C2, female, 39 years	<i>I can't stand the continual change. It's outside factors and it is frustrating. You constantly need to add new subjects to the curriculum. The curriculum at the moment is so full and it is full of every subject... it's full of everything else. I just find you just don't have the time to do it, fit everything in. It's a nightmare. Trying to fit everything in that's got to be done, plus you've got all the other bits and pieces that go in.</i>
C9, female, 43 years	<i>There's definitely a sense that there's a lot of changes that constantly happen for us, as in curriculum and the expectations from the Education Department as to what we're supposed to be doing. They always want different changes and it is so frustrating ... frustrating. They just want it in a different format, so they constantly change the way they want it. That's really annoying.</i>
C3, female, 30 years	<i>I do not like the <b>bureaucracy</b> we have to deal with... you know... the rules and regulations. I think everyone, in schools, is constrained by rules. You know, the <b>education department, government</b> or whatever groups that were making these rules clearly don't know how to work with children or how schools work.</i>
C6, female, 27 years	<i>I just don't think the government treats you as a person. They just treat you as a number and you do what they tell you...</i>
F2, female, 34 years	<i>I could not make the decision of what I had to do. I had to do exactly what the education department says.</i>
F6, female, 37 years	<i>The department should not keep telling us what to teach, maybe changes are good, but you cannot do everything and do it properly</i>

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.1 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added.

From these comments it is evident that the DoE exerts influence through changes that are introduced in teaching philosophy, curriculum and teaching practice, but also in stipulating regulating frameworks with which educators need to comply. This is consistent with the cause-and-effect sequences extracted from educator narratives and outlined in Figures 4.3.1 and 4.4.1. These indicate that the DoE, through school management, has a powerful, indirect impact on educators through additional, significant demands posed to educators. These translate into an aggravated workload situation that impacts their experience of the teaching job and profession. In the discussion of educator job satisfaction and profession satisfaction in sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 respectively, the DoE surfaced as a significant influence in educators' *experienced satisfaction* with the job and profession.

The comments by educators included in Table 4.15 are consistent with earlier analyses and apart from highlighting the specific nature of demands and introduced changes also convey substantial concurrence among educators about the prescriptive nature of such demands and changes and the lack of autonomy experienced. The latter, described as 'constraining', 'frustrating', 'stressful' and dehumanising (see comment by C6 – treated as a 'number'), have been demonstrated to adversely impact educators' job satisfaction (section 4.3.2) and their profession satisfaction (section 4.3.3). In this manner the DoE inadvertently strengthens the intention to leave the profession and facilitates actual departure from the profession.

Contextual influences on educators, however, extend beyond the major role of the DoE. The broader societal context through both indirect and direct means similarly exert a meaningful influence on educators' experience of both the job and the profession.

#### **4.3.5.3 Broader societal context and the general public**

The broader societal context, generally, is experienced directly by educators when they interface with members of the public - also on every other occasion outside formal work time. A second and more confronting encounter with societal views about the profession is encountered *in* the classroom and the school. Children 'carry' sentiments and attitudes about teaching and educators, as transmitted by their parents, into the classroom where this manifests in the interaction between the educator and the student. Parents, in addition, interface on a constant basis with educators...every morning,

every afternoon and sometimes during the day (see educator F11, Table 4.16). As educator F14 points out: there are parents who would '*happily come into the classroom and abuse you and have a go at you in front of the kids*' if their child had to be disciplined.

**Table 4. 16 Role of the broader societal constituencies in educator job and profession satisfaction**

Educator <sup>a</sup>	Educator experience of contextual factors Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>
<b>Parents</b>	
F11, male, 36 years	<i>You might see parents every morning, every afternoon and sometimes during the day, they're the ones that you've got to impress really.</i>
F20, female, 34 years	<i>I found relationships with parents quite difficult. I was always worried about whether they were happy with what I was doing. What was even more dangerous was when parents talked to other parents – and then all the gossip started.</i>
F14, female, 32 years	<i>You have a set of parents who don't turn up to meetings, but who will happily come in if you tell their kid off. You disciplined their child, so they'll happily come into the classroom and abuse you and have a go at you in front of the kids.</i>
C14, male, 37 years	<i>You could almost look at it like the parents are the clients and you've got to make clients happy. And sometimes that can be difficult and sometimes it's easy, just like any business venture. Clients can be varying (C14, male, 37 years).</i>
C5, female, 33 years	<i>If the parents were a lot more supportive, it would be an easier job for us. Parents should not expect us to be the parents of their children. They should trust us when we talk about their children and be more supportive, rather than questioning us about why their child should be punished or have seat detention. They should be supportive, which they are not. The demands from parents are enormous and unreasonable</i>
<b>Society in general and the public</b>	
F9, male, 41 years	<i>There are teachers who leave because of the <b>status</b>, you know... the fact that they don't get enough <b>respect</b> from parents; they don't get enough respect from society.</i>
F11, male, 36 years	<i>I think teaching is such an important job and yet it's not given the respect it seems to have.</i>
F14, female, 32 years	<i>I would say the whole time I was teaching, I was not appreciated and valued at all by society</i>
F19, female, 37 years	<i>I could see that a teacher's job was losing respect, you didn't have that something to be proud of in terms of respect. I was going to hate teaching, you know, I was going to hate it because respect wasn't there anymore. You know, respect comes from society. So, you know, that was playing on my mind, mucking around with my head about, you know.</i>
C9, female, 43 years	<i>If you are a teacher, you are just a teacher, it is not valued. I don't think it's got as high a status as a lot of other jobs.</i>

Educator <sup>a</sup>	Educator experience of contextual factors Excerpts of illustrating narrative <sup>b</sup>
C17, female, 39 years	<i>It is very disappointing; it's a bit of a thankless field. There are some people who are wonderful, who are lost in the profession. A lot of factors are involved, but definitely you are not appreciated and valued in teaching</i>
C16, female, 34 years	<i>I get the feeling that the lack of respect is pretty widespread in society.</i>
C3, female, 30 years	<i>I don't think we teachers are held in a great deal of esteem, generally, across the community. I think we're seen as sort of a necessary evil in a lot of cases... and 'necessary' being the key word</i>
C12, female, 30 years	<i>I think we're pretty expendable. I think we're seen as, 'it's an easy way out'. There's a perception that somehow we're not very bright. People think you could pretty much walk into teaching if you were breathing,</i>
<b>The media and politicians</b>	
C2, female, 39 years	<i>People think teachers are greedy. People just see what the <b>media</b> tells them and then they think 'Oh, teachers are striking over money again'. The last two strikes haven't been over money, they've been over supporting education for your students. ...making sure that these cutbacks don't happen so that your students get to have the education they deserve.</i>
C13, male, 41 years	<i><b>Media</b> reports are not positive toward us. People only see what they see from the media.</i>
C16, female, 34 years	<i>I get the feeling that the lack of respect is pretty widespread in society and I think at a <b>political</b> level that's something that's taken advantage of all too often, so that, you know, we're pretty much made political punching bags.</i>
C5, female, 33 years	<i>I think <b>politicians</b> at high levels are the reason why education is not valued in the society. You know we have some politicians who are very institutionalised with very narrow minds. Often - it's a terrible thing - its the politicians who don't like teaching. I think they tend to treat teachers like children. I think they're very punitive in their approach. I really think that they don't value teachers as professionals. They have little interest in education.</i>

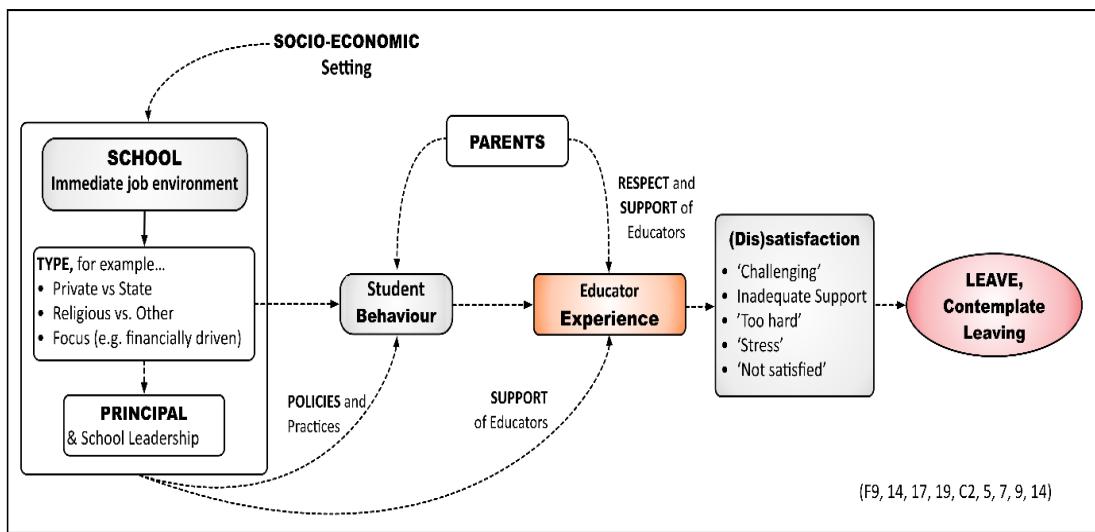
Notes: <sup>a</sup>Refer Table 4.1 for participant profiles. <sup>b</sup>Bold emphases added.

The prominent role of parents, highlighted in Table 4.16, has been addressed in the themes that emerged during the open coding phase (see themes FE-8 and CE-6 in sections 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.1.2). The *support* that educators experienced from parents, but at the same time also support provided by the Principal of the School is a central theme in the narrative (see also Table 4.16). In some cases principals may tend to accommodate parents when students had been disciplined for misbehaviour. Parents gain undue influence in such circumstances and compound the educator's adverse experience of the job and profession. The discussion of theme CE-4 (in section 4.3.1.2) provided examples of such experiences and are restated for convenience sake:

*"The teachers feel they're not supported by the administration staff, the principal and the deputy principals. They seem to have a very knee-jerk reaction. So if a parent complains about something, they will act immediately even if it's a very small thing... Whereas we're dealing with very bad behaviour on a daily basis and nothing's done about it" (C14, male, 37 years).*

*"It's horrible. You're given the responsibility to control the uncontrollable and then when you can't control them, you're criticised, and you're always risking being criminally prosecuted. So if something goes wrong in the class, somehow it's my fault, when I have no power to prevent it from happening. So it's very stressful" (C9, female, 43 years).*

The influence of the school environment and parents is revealed in the cause-and-effect sequence that was extracted from educators' comments (in Figure 4.13). In a workload-stressed environment the support (or otherwise) of the principal and parents will further exacerbate the experience of educators and prompt thoughts of leaving or actual quitting (as previously demonstrated).



**Figure 4. 13 The role of context (School environment, Parents)**

The role of society, more generally, was discussed in some detail previously (see sections 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.1.2, emergent themes FE-9 and CE-7; section 4.3.3.1, Figures 4.5 and 4.7; section 4.3.3.2, Figures 4.8 and 4.10). The evidence has shown that educators are very much aware of societal views that convey a poor estimation of the profession and accords limited respect to educators. This position is reflected in the sample statements included in Table 4.16. This emerged as an influential factor in profession dissatisfaction and in this manner contributes to educators' intention to leave. A facet of broader society that is infrequently raised, relates to how the teaching profession is viewed and 'traded' among politicians and in the media. From the educators' perspective, the teaching profession is misrepresented in the media and undervalued by politicians. Such negative publicity may be the only source of information on the teaching profession, for those who do not have contact with educators, which then further contributes to poor stereotypes of educators and the profession.

#### 4.3.5.4 Consolidation

Educator commentary confirms that the multilayered environment in which educator jobs are embedded exert a pervasive influence on the educator's experience of the job and directly and indirectly impact their satisfaction with the job and the profession (see also Figure 4.13). The boundaries that exist between the educator role and the context are defined by the job description parameters, formal hours of employment, but also school policies and school management (and management structures). Educator commentary suggests that existing boundaries are highly permeable and do

not adequately shield educators from external, contextual influences that detract from their job focus and objectives. Judging by their comments there is limited or no evidence of ‘boundary management’:

- Hours of work and work activities extend significantly beyond defined work hours;
- Parents access educators at will during the day and could enter classrooms at any stage;
- Minimal buffering between educators and DoE are indicated with educators reporting the introduction of changes and constraining regulations and practices that occur on a regular basis.

Boundary management is necessary to ensure the core objectives of educator jobs are achieved and to ensure that the influence of factors beyond the control of educators, are contained.

#### **4.4 Summary and conclusion**

The focus of Chapter 4 was to report the findings of this study, following a Grounded Theory analysis of the transcribed interviews of 20 former educators and 18 current educators. Through open coding an initial sense of the narrative world of both these educator groups was obtained. A posteriori coding and categorising of this data revealed the conceptual domains that educators associated with their jobs and the teaching profession. Probing further into this data, a number of key themes emerged that, in the final analysis, did not differ substantially for the two cohorts.

The interview data was rich and forthcoming and it was observed that both educator groups emphasised a passion for teaching and working with children, but also indicated excessive workloads, pressure and stress, after hours work, compromised work-life balance and significant, constant context-induced change that was mostly of a curriculum-related nature. Former educators in addition commented to a greater extent on the decline in their passion, the prominence of stress and the subsequent health impacts, which gave rise to them leaving the profession. Current educators furthermore emphasised the constant curriculum changes introduced by the Department of Education and conveyed a greater awareness of society's perceived low

estimation of the teaching profession, but also of the breadth of work-related social relations associated with the teaching job.

During the subsequent axial phase of the analysis, the nature and interrelationships of job satisfaction, profession satisfaction, the intention to leave (turnover intention) and the role of context in these relationships, were further explored. A significantly demanding workload, coupled with insufficient resources of time and energy (but also budgets) emerged as a central consideration in the experienced satisfaction/dissatisfaction of both formal and current educators. A continuous stream of work-related changes (curriculum, teaching practice) significantly intensify the substantial demands on educators, resulting in continuous after hours work and prolonged exposure to unhealthy levels of stress. Burnout was regularly indicated and discussed by educators in both the cohorts engaged in the study. Stress, consequently, is the most prominent feature of most educators' experience of the teaching job and because of the adverse health and well-being consequences that arise from this, also the most prominent overall cause and indicator of job dissatisfaction. Stress due to workload and its contributing factors represent the greatest influence in educators' decision to leave (or contemplate leaving) the teaching profession.

The stressful nature of educators' experience substantially overshadow the more enjoyable components of the job (and profession) such as actual teaching, working with, and contributing to, the development of children. However, educator narrative revealed that several sources of stress combine to inform educators' experience. These include challenges of student ill-discipline and misbehaviour, excessive demands by parents who have little understanding and consequently appreciation of the educator's job, and varying degrees of support from school leadership. Educators often feel exposed and vulnerable in the face of limited or ineffective policies, substantial individual accountability and the constant possibility of legal prosecution should 'behaviour management' in the class not succeed and lead to adverse consequences. By contrast co-workers were generally perceived as a source of support and collaboration and, for educators in this study, in most instances but not all, they contributed to a sense of community.

The widely debated topic of educator remuneration emerged as an important facet of the teaching job that may/may not be regarded by educators as a source of

dissatisfaction. While levels of pay prompted some educators to leave the profession, others, mostly single educators without families, viewed it as adequate. All were nonetheless of the view that remuneration was generally inappropriate given the poor 'workload-for-pay' ratio, i.e., the time and effort they invest (in particular after hours and weekends). In general the analysis of the different sources giving rise to educators' satisfaction and dissatisfaction revealed a skewed distribution towards predominantly unpleasant experiences that prompt dissatisfaction, compared to positive experiences that lead to satisfaction.

The second major focus of the axial coding phase addressed the subject of profession satisfaction, i.e., satisfaction with features that are characteristic of and distinguishes a profession from a job. These profession features were used as a guiding framework with which to detect evidence of the presence of these features in the narratives of the two educator cohorts. Features typically included are the specialisation focus and core purpose of the profession (e.g. teaching and working with children); specialised knowledge (on education, learning, child development); service orientation; relationship of the profession with society-at-large (concerned with recognition, respect and trust in the education profession); autonomy and self-regulation by educators and the profession; ethical orientation and conduct; the professional identity and culture of education; and the effectiveness and efficiency of the professional association/entity that govern the education profession on behalf of its members. The study sought evidence of these features in the narrative world of educators, and attempted to determine whether such profession features were perceived or experienced as sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The obtained evidence was more indicative of educators' awareness of these features, rather than the actual existence or presence of these in the profession itself (when viewed from an objective standpoint). Systematic analyses revealed that the two educator cohorts did not differ materially in their views of those features that were detected (most features were not salient in the evidence). The profession's specialised focus on working with children and its core purpose of teaching and learning were noteworthy sources of educator satisfaction, enjoyment and sense of achievement. The second profession feature that received substantial and meaningful commentary from educators related to professional recognition, respect and standing. In this regard educators consistently indicated that society-at-large (various stakeholders) have a very low estimation of the

profession and of educators. This was a source of substantial disappointment for educators and has in some instances led to educators leaving the profession. Occasional commentary by educators also indicated that they experienced limited autonomy in their teaching practices and styles. Restrictive and constraining policies and practices were indicated on several occasions. Other features of the profession could not be detected in the narratives. This lack of awareness suggests an area for further contemplation by the custodians of the profession.

The findings furthermore revealed that satisfaction with the teaching profession was eroded by negative experiences associated with the perceived standing of the profession. The analyses also revealed that job and profession satisfaction interact and that job dissatisfaction could give rise to profession dissatisfaction and vice versa. Educators may also be satisfied with the job, but less so with the profession, although the more common observation was that educators are likely to experience dissatisfaction with the job (specific job facets), while still being reasonably satisfied with the profession. Evidence, however, also indicated how shifts in educators' profession satisfaction occur. This generally takes the form of a decline in profession satisfaction as a consequence of job dissatisfaction. This situation was reflected in the reasons presented by former educators for leaving the profession and indicated by current indicators as contributing to the intention to leave.

A brief review of the reasons why former educators left the profession and why current educators may contemplate leaving the profession, confirmed the central dynamic of an excessive workload and an adverse, stressful, experience of teaching. Multiple, related considerations however contribute to educators experience of intense stress and hence dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction is, for example also intensified by considerations such as remuneration, and the profession's status, which were cited by some educators as reasons for leaving the profession. A review of the role of context indicated a pervasive, indirect, but powerful influence exerted on educators' experience of teaching and in this regard the Department of Education and parents in particular intensify the demands on educators. These demands feed into the workload-stress-dissatisfaction-leave cycle.

These findings have multiple implications for retaining educators or stemming the flow of educators from the profession and suggest a systemic approach when

addressing sources of dissatisfaction both within and beyond schools. It implies, among other, effective boundary management of those interfaces between educators and contextual entities that intensify and exacerbate demands on, and/or erode and compromise educator efficacy.

From the evidence reported in this chapter an affirmative response to the second and third research questions (see Chapter 1, section 1.4.2) can now be provided. In terms of ...

- Question 2: Both the constructs of educator job satisfaction and educator profession satisfaction were empirically observed and the primary factors that contribute to and influence these constructs were identified.
- Question 3: (Dis)satisfaction with the education profession, either independently or in combination with job satisfaction, appears to influence educators' intention to leave the profession.

The observations reported in this chapter are extended to Chapter 5 in which the outcome of the selective coding process, i.e., the overarching 'story' about the key variables of interest, is reported and contextualised in terms of the extant knowledge base.

# **Chapter 5: Discussion**

## **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 introduced the results of this Grounded Theory study and in particular the observations obtained through a coded analysis procedure as prescribed by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

The results of two of the three main stages in this procedure, the open and axial coding stages, were outlined. As a result themes emerging from the narrative data of both former and current educators were presented. The results of focused analysis, secondly, were reported in terms of the constructs of job satisfaction, profession satisfaction, intention to leave and the role of context (the main variables or categories of interest). Against this background, Chapter 5 is a further extension of this reporting phase. It reports the results for the third and selective coding phase and represents a further, refined and integrated rendition of the results of the study (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

While multiple concepts were surfaced, coded and categorised in Chapter 4, this chapter entails the search for relevant theoretical dimensions that relate to, and or exist among the different concepts and categories. These categories and relationships are consolidated into a coherent, holistic 'account' or 'theory' of the main categories of variables (concepts) previously identified - what Strauss and Corbin refer to as "*an explanatory whole*"(Strauss and Corbin 1998, 146).

Consistent with the selective coding phase, the main focus of this chapter is to demonstrate the contextualised Grounded Theory, which will be referred to as "*The theory of job and profession satisfaction*". The latter explains educators' job satisfaction, profession satisfaction and the relationship of these phenomena with their intention to leave or remain in the profession. In this stage of Grounded Theory research it is customary to search out literature and empirical evidence that is found to be relevant when gathering data and theorising progress. Consequently, as is appropriate to the method of this study, this chapter also seeks to review and examine the theoretical and empirical literature for relevance in terms of the main variables and

categories of interest as presented in Chapter 4. In this manner the findings of this study are related to and integrated with the existing knowledge base.

The chapter commences with a brief consideration of what constitutes a ‘theoretical contribution’, followed by an overview of the ‘story’ as it emerged from the former and current educators and the reasons why educators leave or harbour intentions to leave the teaching profession. The ‘story’ is the vehicle of the emergent theory as it is intertwined with the theory (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). This, in turn, is followed by ‘theoretical coding’, i.e., providing a contextualised view of the results (and ‘theory’) for the main categories of interest (job satisfaction, profession satisfaction, and intention to leave). This is summarised in a visual ‘boxes and arrows’ diagram and an outline of the main theoretical propositions. The chapter ends with the main conclusions.

## 5.2 A theoretical contribution

A great many scholars have defined theory, but Dubin’s (1976) earlier account of theory provides a useful point of departure. He argues that theory tries to “*...make sense out of the observable world by ordering the relationships among elements that constitute the theorist’s focus of attention in the real world*” (Dubin 1976, 26). This view of theory construction is summarized by Weick (1989) simply as ‘sense making’ – a view also expressed by Suddaby (2006) in terms of Grounded Theory. He characterised theory as an attempt at understanding the process through which ‘actors’ construct meaning from their interactions and experiences (Suddaby 2006). The value of employing a Grounded Theory strategy for generating theory is that it is regarded as “*...a strategy that tends to stay very close to the original data and is therefore high in accuracy*” (Langley 1999, 700) more broadly indicated that the story is typically “*intertwined with the theory to demonstrate the close connection between empirical evidence and emergent theory*” (Langley 1999, 29) and that such theory is “*emergent in the sense that it is situated in and developed by recognizing patterns of relationships among constructs within and across cases and their underlying logical arguments*” (Langley 1999, 25).

Drawing on other researchers, Pentland (1999, 711) states that “*explanation is the core of good theory*” and further, “*an explanation is a story that describes the process, or sequence of events, that connects cause and effect*” and consequently “*good stories*

*are central to building better theory*”. In answering the question “What constitutes a theoretical contribution?” Whetten (1989) highlighted several central considerations. Although his focus is essentially on journal papers, the principles apply equally. From his consideration it would seem that a theoretical contribution would embrace at least the following three key principles. In the first instance it has to ensure that ‘all’ relevant variables that are logically required to explain a phenomenon are addressed (i.e., speaks to the comprehensiveness of the ‘explanation’ and theory). Secondly, but more importantly, is the relatedness of the variables and constructs, i.e., the patterns in the data, and these are usually explicitly outlined in diagrams with arrows that connect the ‘boxes’ (“*Relationships, not lists, are the domain of theory*” – Whetten, 1989, 493). A sound theoretical contribution in the third instance will specify the logic that undergirds the model, i.e., the dynamics (e.g. psychological, economic or social) that gave rise to the variables / constructs. The latter is crucial because it speaks to the assumptions of the theory and will suggest the theoretical propositions. Consistent with these arguments Pentland (1999) has proposed that the events sequences (sequential patterns) in a story, which reveals the chain of events that connects antecedents and consequences, are crucial in any theory. Theorists in addition also direct attention to content, context and actors (Pentland 1999). Apart from the more central considerations, an emergent theory will succeed if it is plausible, interesting, believable and real (Weick 1989) and will in all probability comment on temporal and contextual considerations that may limit the extrapolation or generalisability of the theory, but also advance remedies for addressing these considerations (Whetten 1989).

Turning to the presentation of theory, (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007, 29) point out “...there is no ‘sure-to-please’ standard template for writing emergent theory in theory-building research”, but for the final theory they usually recommend a “visual theory summary” in the form of a “*boxes and arrows*” diagram or summary tables (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007, 30).

In essence, a theory emerging from a rich data would first and foremost account for the process character of the study (observed in the data) and the dynamic nature of phenomena that are investigated. It lays bare relationships between constructs situated in a specific context and sheds light on events and action sequences (cause-and-effect chains) accentuating antecedents and consequences. Because of this dynamic nature

and the time frame within which it occurs, scholars appear to concur on the use of tables and visual aids/diagrams as crucial instruments in revealing the process character and dynamics in a specific study.

In outlining the theory, the discussion commences with the ‘story’ of educators and their satisfaction with teaching as job and profession and how it relates to their intention to leave or remain in the occupation.

### **5.3 The Story**

*"Stories help explain the relationships between events in a process or a narrative"* (Pentland 1999, 711).

This is the story of educators’ experience of the teaching job and profession and their satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which contribute to them either remaining or leaving the profession.

The story of educators leaving or remaining with the profession of teaching over the span of their work life, in most cases commences with a strongly felt desire to make a contribution to the development and upliftment of children. They do not enter the occupation arbitrarily. The vast majority of those engaged in this study, upon concluding their studies, enter the occupation with enthusiasm and passion, but many factors rapidly erode this passion. As a consequence many educators leave the profession prematurely and do so for a number of reasons other than or in addition to remuneration. For some educators this is a primary consideration. Educators tend to leave because of a general dissatisfaction brought about mainly by work stress. The latter, and its unhealthy consequences, are due to a particularly heavy workload, compounded by constant changes in their work focus and content.

A passion for teaching and working with children is the greatest driver for prospective educators entering the teaching profession. For them teaching is not only about passing on knowledge to the students, rather, it is more about helping students and preparing them for the future. Making a contribution to the development of students without exception is experienced by educators as one of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of teaching. It is this sense of achievement that contributes the most to educators' sense of job satisfaction.

Educators' concern for people and their altruistic values in a sense are embodied and conveyed by the passion that they display on entering the profession. Yet, despite the powerful, driving influence of these values, their passion wanes rapidly as a result of a range of negative experiences and feelings associated with various aspects of the teaching job.

Teaching, most notably, was experienced on a continuous basis as significantly stressful. The teaching job entails an extensive range of varied tasks, which regularly involves duties other than teaching. The core task of preparing for, and teaching given subjects (often not the subjects which they were trained to teach) is substantially overshadowed by tasks of an administrative or compliance nature. Frequent, externally imposed (DoE) changes in the philosophy and practice of teaching; and curriculum content, design, structure and delivery of subject matter, was widely raised and commonly voiced by both former and current educators as a major source of additional work and demands. This further exacerbated negative experiences of the teaching role and led to intensified negative feelings and emotions such as frustration, stress and ultimately dissatisfaction. Assessments and report writing against a backdrop of multiple meetings at School and with parents, and extracurricular activities, represent the mainstay of the regular infringements on their private time. It is in this context that educators tended to interpret their remuneration as inadequate and unfair. To them the financial reward is not, as formally indicated, in response to formal hours worked, but the reward for all hours worked. When viewed in this sense, i.e., not receiving 'overtime' as is customary in other occupations, they conclude that they work for a dismally low salary. This is experienced as unacceptable and demeaning.

Educators, however, also indicated other forms of time-consuming documentation, designed to record factual details of a situation or procedure, and in which they most often engage as a self-protection measure (several educators have indicated that they feel vulnerable because of increased levels of accountability and insufficient support and protection by Schools). Generally, educators' experience of the workload leaves them with a sense of insufficient time and the inability to attend adequately to these tasks. In this manner their sense of self-efficacy is gradually, but continuously eroded. For many educators the demands associated with a constantly heavy workload and continuous deadlines, reached unmanageable levels, which meant that their work was

more often than not experienced as stressful. Prolonged exposure to stress has resulted in many educators reporting undesirable consequences, most notably in terms of the (negative) impact on their health and well-being. Although educators take enjoyment from teaching, the stress associated with the role, and the resultant undesirable side effects, brought about a situation that compelled many educators to leave teaching. Some left with the clear, explicit intention of finding work in a different occupation where stress levels were more reasonable.

The teaching role, more specifically workload, substantially encroaches on educators' personal time, which they sacrifice to complete the many assessments and reports. Once the daily schedule of work at school has been concluded, they still had to attend to marking, and planning and preparing for the next day's classes, invariably requiring additional time. This occurs on most evenings in the week and takes up a large portion of weekend time. They struggled to maintain a reasonable balance between work on the one hand and personal and family life on the other, and most of the time did not succeed at this. Many educators reached a point where they concluded that the workload is never ending and was damaging to their health and wellbeing. Not only was their confidence and sense of self-efficacy negatively impacted, but several also experienced a conflict between their desire to make a meaningful contribution, but felt that workload compromised the quality of their efforts. This made the work-life relationship difficult to cope with. Some educators consequently left the profession because, as they put it, teaching requires an unreasonable time commitment, which monopolises a greater part of their personal and family time.

The demands they experienced in the role, however, were felt to emerge from several quarters and not simply from the School leadership. Their experience of stress was substantially intensified by the changes introduced in their work and teaching practices – imposed by the Education Department. The constant implementation of changes, reworking content and squeezing in additional teaching subjects into an already overfilled curriculum left them tired, frustrated, and stressed. These changes added to their already heavy workload and introduced more difficulty and complexity into their tasks. As a result of these changes, teaching was becoming more compliance-driven (meeting DoE requirements) and bureaucratic (following procedures and completing paperwork), than stimulating learning in students. As many indicated, this effectively

destroyed the enjoyment and passion they derived from being an educator, and did so irreversibly - to the point that alternative occupations were pursued or contemplated. Many educators in addition felt that their autonomy in designing and delivering learning content was severely constrained by these impositions. To many this signified insufficient acknowledgement of their expertise and capabilities and effectively conveyed a lack of respect for the educator and his/her capabilities. The demands experienced from the Department appeared to be increasing, with little in the line of solutions or remedies being advanced.

The social context, beyond the interface with the Education Department, played a prominent role in educators' experience of the job. For many educators the principal was a deciding factor in whether the job stresses were tolerable or otherwise, and whether teaching was experienced as satisfying or dissatisfying. When they made these comments they mostly referred to the role that principals and the school leadership performed in being understanding and providing support. To the extent that that the principal and school supported and assisted them in easing gradually into the role, to this extent they found that they could cope. A combination of principal support, support and collaboration by peers and experienced educators, effective school policies and procedures, and a generally positive experience of members of the public, parents and the community, made all the difference in educators' experience of the teaching role, even though the stresses were not removed. In practice though very few educators reported such positive experiences. A few educators who have taught at several different types of schools also indicated that the experience of support and the job more generally tended to be more positive in private compared to public schools. For many though, the absence or lack of sufficient support and, in particular, effective policies for example for dealing with classroom misbehaviour, were additional and significant sources of stress and determining factors in their ultimate 'like/dislike' of the teaching job and profession.

Misbehaving students in the class were across-the-board pointed out as an extremely demanding and stressful feature of the teaching job. Some remarked that this appeared to be intensifying and increasing, not only in terms of the incidence of the behaviour but also the numbers of students who presented with such behaviour. Dealing with ill-disciplined students represented an area of severe risk and some educators indicated

that some parents did not respond constructively to such situations. It was not uncommon for parents to enter classrooms and verbally abuse and/or threaten educators in front of children. For many the prospects of possible legal prosecution of the educator in his or her person (as opposed to the school or department of education) were constantly looming in the background. The situation was especially difficult when policies and procedures for dealing with discipline tended to be absent or inadequate, which was often further compounded by a school leadership that was predisposed towards accommodating parents. For most educators parents represented a powerful stakeholder and a significant source of demands in the teaching role. While several indicated the positive effect and contribution of parents that acknowledged the educator's efforts and were supportive, they were in the minority. Parents generally presented a significant source of additional, unrealistic demands and stress.

It was through engagement with parents and members of the public that educators realised that their work is not understood nor appreciated, and that their profession is held in low regard. Some pointed out that this tacit disregard for the profession and educators, gains momentum when the actions and practices of the Department/Government similarly, and mostly in an indirect fashion, are demeaning and disregarding of educators capabilities and roles. Unrealistic parental expectations and the experienced lack of respect from society have left educators feeling undervalued and disappointed, which further eroded their passion for teaching and prompted a search for alternative occupations.

Educators believe they work hard and teaching is an important profession, but society does not appreciate and value educators. Societal views appear to have a meaningful role in facilitating their exit from the profession. Many of the educators that have left the profession have indicated that they valued the opportunity to assist children with their development and education and took great satisfaction from seeing their impact in making a difference in children's' lives. They do not, however, miss the stress and low estimation of their role and indicated that they would never return to the teaching profession.

This 'story' of former and current educators' experience of the teaching job and profession embodies the theory of job and profession satisfaction and how it relates to

their intention to remain in or leave the profession. This is the focus of the following section.

## **5.4 The Theory of Job and Profession Satisfaction**

This part of the discussion is concerned with the ‘theoretical coding’ stage of the analysis and is accomplished by sourcing research that would have a bearing on or provide commentary on the findings of the study. Such contextualisation in terms of the existing knowledge provides the theoretical grounding for the observed constructs and their relationships and further specifies the theoretical propositions emerging from the study. It may also assist in validating the study’s outcomes. The discussion is structured in accordance with the central categories of interest and the various constructs that are related to these (as derived from the axial coding stage): Job satisfaction, profession satisfaction, intention to leave, contextual considerations and the relationship between these constructs.

### **5.4.1 Job satisfaction**

Central in educators’ story of the teaching job and profession is the **workload** that educators have to contend with. As the analyses in Chapter 4 revealed it contributes significantly to educators’ experience of the role and have a significant impact on their satisfaction. It emerged as the least ‘liked’ feature or facet of the teaching job and is associated with the magnitude and diversity of tasks and the general load that an educator has to contend with during set work hours. The latter is experienced as an unrealistic demand and a sense of dissatisfaction develops with the erosion of personal or private time as a result of tasks ‘carried over’ into private / family time (after school, weekends, holidays). Workload consequently emerged as a significant source of prolonged stress for educators. When educators experience stress, motivation to teach and remain in teaching is adversely impacted. A wealth of research confirms this observation about the intensification of educators’ jobs and its negative effects on educators’ job satisfaction (Chughati and Perveen 2013, Collie, Shapka, and Perry 2012, Peters 2013). Most of these studies however approached the subject from a quantitative methodological frame and do not represent the educators’ experiences from their point of view and interpretation of the phenomenon. In this regard the current study provides a rich, account of the unfolding cause-and-effect relations associated with ‘workload’, as educators make sense of it. Generally speaking, the

literature is very clear and consistent when it indicates that workload has been an ever-present concern for educators. Several studies have reported that workload is stressful and educators are expected to deal with excessive and unreasonable workloads (Collie, Shapka, and Perry 2012, Kyriacou 2001, Peters 2013).

The effects of workload on the personal lives of educators, moreover, are extensive. Educators find it challenging to set and maintain boundaries between the teaching role and job and their non-work lives. Demanding deadlines that often cannot be accomplished within the scheduled instructional time (formal work hours) results in an inability to balance conflicting work and personal life demands, and consequently wreaks havoc with their felt satisfaction with teaching. Job satisfaction then rapidly transforms into job dissatisfaction. The majority of former and current educators who participated in this study described the time and hours spent on work during late nights, weekends and holidays as added demands and ‘pressure’. These pressures prompted a reorientation of values with educators choosing to prioritise school-related activities over family, when at home. The serious, negative repercussions of this for educators included restlessness and health issues, both at a physiological and mental well-being level. It similarly impacted on educators’ relationships with their spouses and social networks. In this regard, substantial research in several areas, which included teaching, has focused on investigating the interaction between a person’s work commitments/activities or demands on the one hand, and personal life on the other – generally captured under the auspices of ‘work life balance’. The notion of work-life balance is defined as the “*absence of unacceptable levels of conflict between work and nonwork demands*” (Greenblatt 2002, 179) and focuses on the time issues and the demands of work and home. The literature covering the factors that influence the lives of educators is replete with research that reported the felt need to extend educators’ workweeks and the practice among educators compromising personal and family time to complete tasks. The findings of the current study for example reinforce the results of a survey conducted by Schaefer (2001) that found, on average, educators effectively only use 58% of summer vacation as holidays. In this study educators reported that the preparation of teaching materials for next year consumed most of their summer holiday. Nineteen (19) percent of those educators who did not take summer vacations reported feeling fatigued soon after commencement of the school year; 83% reported a poor (lowered) commitment of time to their family and friends and 78% reported

insufficient time for their own personal interests during the school year (Schaefer 2001). Dibbon (2004) who investigated the work intensification of educators concluded that it is impossible for educators to complete their job demands in the allocated time. This study also concluded that the work of educators are ‘invisible’ in the teaching profession, that it needs to be attended to (performed) outside school hours and that this tended “*to ‘bleed’ into the personal lives of teachers*”(Dibbon 2004, 33). Similarly, a study by MacDonald et al. (2010) involving a survey of 655 Prince Edward Island educators’ work lives found that educators on the average weekend spend 4.1 hours to complete school-related tasks; spend 12.0 hours per week before - and after-school on school activities such as preparation for instruction, assessments, reports instruction, support for extra-curricular activities and modification of the curriculum. Consistent with other research they also found that educators engaged with school activities during the summer break which included preparation for instruction, professional development, support for extra-curricular activities, modification of the curriculum, instruction and work with technology (MacDonald et al. 2010). These observations have been confirmed by Naylor and White (2010) who investigated the working and learning conditions of educators in British Colombia, and found that a substantial amount of the educators’ work occur outside the regular school day and, in particular, before and after school (in the evenings) and over weekends. Of the respondents in this study, 94% reported that they work on school-related tasks beyond formal school time, which confirms that the teaching role is perceived as demanding and exercises a significant influence on the personal life of the educator – an observation unambiguously reflected in the current study. This position is borne out by a more recent study by Parsons (2014) that examined the factors that influence the lives of 221 Alberta educators. This study reported that multiple work demands interfere with educators’ personal time in part a consequence of the limited time available to attend to this during the school day.

A second aspect emerging from the analysis of workload dynamics (in Chapter 4) is the observation that constant changes in the curriculum and curriculum-related tasks, imposed on schools and the teaching roles, by the Education Department, significantly increased workload and intensified demands and pressure on educators’ time. Although, in a general sense, change is inevitable and constantly alters educators’ teaching roles/jobs, in this study educators very clearly outlined the cause-and-effect

sequences that illustrate how continuously imposed change directly and immediately impact on their workload. Department of Education imposed changes intensify demands on educators significantly, mainly because of the need to find new resources, develop and design new lesson plans and assessments – all of which should be aligned with the ‘new’ curriculum or changes to the curriculum. This unavoidably extends into substantial after-hours work and ultimately exacerbates work-life imbalance. The most prominently noted effect of such changes is in educators reporting their experience of the job as one of exhaustion, frustration and stress, and ultimately dissatisfaction with the job. Such changes lead to a break in the educator’s emotional attachment to the job, while at the same time heightening job dissatisfaction. While the constantly imposed changes (by the Education department) emerged as a significant source of stress and dissatisfaction in this study, it has received limited attention in research to date and suggests an important focus area for continued research and also for corrective intervention. Providing some context, are a few studies that have indicated that the implementation of change can increase stress among educators (Fullan 2007, Ragnarsdóttir and Jóhannesson 2014, Vandenbergh and Huberman 1999). Some support for the findings of the current study, however, is provided by a few studies that have indicated that educational reform placed increased pressure, extra work and expectations/demands on educators (Olsen and Sexton 2009, Ragnarsdóttir and Jóhannesson 2014). Moreover, research has also shown that educators leave the profession in reaction to changes that occur in the nature of the teaching job (Troman and Woods 2000). These authors have also suggested that such change engages educators in repeated re-inventions of the self, which, in itself, is viewed as a demanding and stressful process (Troman and Woods 2000).

In this study prolonged exposure to stress emerged as a significant precursor to dissatisfaction among educators, with several job factors of facets contributing to this experience. Ill-disciplined students and consequently classroom misbehaviour was revealed to be significant contributor to stress and consequently job satisfaction. Classroom misbehaviour was described by the majority of the participants as ‘unbearable’ and one of the more salient unpleasant aspects of the teaching job. Misbehaviour, viewed as any behaviour that compromises teaching and the instructional plan, diminishes educators’ effectiveness, interrupts academic activities in classroom and impairs learning processes / the learning of other students. For this

reasons it is prominent as a contributor to educators' sense of dissatisfaction with the job. The impact of misbehaviour is intensified when consideration is given to participants' perception that inadequate administrative support is forthcoming from the school and its leadership. Such support is vital in creating an atmosphere that is safe and conducive to learning. Data presented in Chapter 4 indicated that some educators are acutely aware of the 'risks' and feel exposed and vulnerable because of a lack of school support (leadership, appropriate policies, the need for greater accountability by schools instead of holding educators accountable for consequences of classroom misbehaviour). This has the effect that it places educators in intolerable conflicts and creating despondency. It is insightful to note that multiple studies have indicated that classroom misbehaviour by students is a serious work-related issue in school settings and one about which educators are concerned (Cothran, Kulinna, and Garrahy 2009, Ding et al. 2008, Ewert 2009, Kulinna 2008, Little 2005, Ratcliff et al. 2010). Moreover, such misbehaviour contributes to educators' experience of negative affect, i.e., unpleasant emotions (Chang 2009, Spilt, Koomen, and Thijs 2011, Tsouloupas et al. 2010) and ultimately low job satisfaction (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011, Zembylas and Papanastasiou 2006). Little (2005) for example found that with a perceived increase in student misbehaviour, educators' sense of job satisfaction diminished – a link elaborated and demonstrated in this study. Contrary to reported practice, the literature underscores the importance of school support for educators when faced with misbehaviour (Shen et al. 2012). A central assumption implicit in this suggestion is that educators' levels of (subjectively) experienced pressure may be reduced when they are afforded school support, in dealing with misbehaviour. As evidenced in the data (Chapter 4), the experience of being supported contributes to an increased sense of satisfaction with the job. The powerful role of 'perceived organisational support' (POS) has been borne out by research (Allen, Shore, and Griffeth 2003, Edwards 2009, Eisenberger et al. 2001, Webber, Bishop, and O'Neill 2012) and in relation to increased job satisfaction in particular (Colakoglu, Culha, and Atay 2010).

Beyond the experience of stress, job dissatisfaction was shown to be impacted by salary or 'pay' considerations – a much-researched subject. In this study it emerged with a more specified role, which appeared to be both consistent, and at odds with established research. In this study educators reported that 'pay' issues impacted their

job satisfaction and dissatisfaction and contributed to educators leaving the job and profession. This is consistent with the vast range of general job satisfaction studies reported to date (Al-Zoubi 2012, Card et al. 2012, Ghazanfar et al. 2011, Hayes, Bonner, and Pryor 2010, Parvin and Kabir 2011, Singh and Loncar 2010, Tan and Waheed 2011, Yaseen 2013) but it is also in line with educational studies (Abdullah, Uli, and Parasuraman 2009, Akiri and Ugborugbo 2009, Kearney 2008, Mora, Garcia-Aracil, and Vila 2007, Muguongo, Muguna, and Muriithi 2015, Tickle, Chang, and Kim 2011). It is a generally accepted premise that salary has been introduced and ‘designed’ to energise and direct employees’ behaviour towards their jobs and, as a result, people should feel that their work performance is rewarded by means of salary (Bozeman and Gaughan 2011, Yaseen 2013). In this study educators were very clear about the perceived inequity (and unfairness) of the salaries they received. Particularly prominent in their narratives were the ratio of time and energy invested (inputs) and reward received (outcomes), which they calculated and compared with other occupations. This finding is well demonstrated by job satisfaction and motivation theories that encapsulate ‘job satisfaction’. This observation is, for example, in line with equity theory, which proposes that individuals are likely to experience dissatisfaction with their jobs when they view their ‘pay’ as unfair (Adams 1963). This, similarly accords with Expectancy theory (Vroom 1964). The latter recognises salary as an incentive that relates to people’s expectations, while Herzberg (1957) viewed it as a hygiene factor that is able to reduce people’s job dissatisfaction. Apart from this, support for the observed relationship between salary and attrition / turnover has been provided by several previous education studies that suggest the effect of salary on attrition among educators (Imazeki 2004, Kelly 2004, Steele, Murnane, and Willett 2010).

Emerging more clearly in the current study, is the relationship of educators’ demographic status linked to received salary, and their job satisfaction. Single (not married) educators or educators in a relationship but not the primary breadwinner, i.e., the second income earner of family appeared to be less critical and more accepting of what they deemed a poor salary, when compared with educators as primary breadwinners in families. This proposes that educators’ satisfaction with salary occur when educators recognise their salary is sufficient to manage their lives’ financial circumstances. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to the link between salary

and the educator's financial capability and in particular measuring up to the cost of living (and meeting his/her life-related and standard household expenditures). A tangible lack of empirical evidence exists to inform this observation. Only a few studies not specific to the education sector have focused on the role of marital status in shaping attitudes toward pay valence and finances. As an example, Gorman (2000) found that married individuals, either men or woman, firstly, viewed salary as more important than unmarried individuals, and secondly, tended to be less satisfied with their financial circumstances compared to unmarried individuals. This study clearly suggests the role of demographics and especially marital status in influencing pay valence.

In addition to these constructs and their influences on job satisfaction, the educators' 'story' and narratives indicated the presence of the 'profession satisfaction' construct as a co-contributing primary variable in educators' overall satisfaction and turnover intentions. Section 5.4.2 draw attention to various constructs that influence and impact on this relatively novel form of satisfaction, which previously had not been adequately recognised in the educational setting.

#### **5.4.2 Profession satisfaction**

Profession satisfaction by and large is experienced by educators in relation to the central features of the occupation, which are working with children and contributing to their growth and development and engaging them through teaching and facilitating learning - the core purpose of the profession. These prominent features of the profession are derived from the day-to-day job tasks of teaching and learning in a classroom setting and are regarded as *profession-defining* job tasks and, because they are core to the identity of the profession, also differentiated from other job tasks as *identity-defining* tasks.

Despite teaching being perceived as challenging, both former and current educators entered the profession because they viewed teaching as a unique profession where they can work closely with children. Educators derive a strong sense of satisfaction from seeing themselves as influential and making a difference in students' lives and future success. For educators these are the most pleasing aspects of working with children. It injects significant meaning into their existence and is central to the passion and 'call' to enter the profession. Teaching and interacting with children are viewed as extending

substantially beyond ensuring student learning and the internalisation of academic content. It serves in particular to prepare students for their future success and functioning in society. Educators also recognise that through teaching and working with children and positively impacting their lives, they simultaneously contribute to the enhancement of society. This is consistent with the nature of professions per definition (Chapter 2) and illustrates the link between the act of working with children and rendering a service to society. It is also evident that the sense of contribution and service performs a crucial role in enhancing educators' self-definition and especially those aspects of their personal and occupational identity that is derived from membership of the teaching profession (the notion of social identity). Educators experience a sense of professional worth and value as a consequence of preparing the next generation and through this creating a better society. Although dealing with the misbehaviour and social and emotional needs of some students were experienced as challenging and demanding, educators nonetheless derive a deep sense of satisfaction from seeing their students experience success in or outside the classroom. Empirical results reported in Chapter 4 provided ample illustration of educators' perceptions of teaching, contributing to students' future lives, and the pleasure and pride derived from performing these tasks. These findings align with several (educational) studies that found that the reasons for entering teaching are associated with altruistic motivations, which relate to teaching and working with children, social influence, contributing to society, and the academic development of others (Bastick 2000, Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus 2014, Klassen and Chiu 2011, Roness and Smith 2010, Schutz, Crowder, and White 2001, Tang, Wong, and Cheng 2015). Findings reported by these studies indicate that altruistically-motivated educators recognise teaching as important and socially worthwhile (Bastick 2000, Klassen and Chiu 2011, Kyriacou and Kunc 2007, Thomson, Turner, and Nietfeld 2012); "*have a desire to be part of young peoples' growth and development*" (Roness 2011, 629) and are engaged with the profession (Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus 2014). A moderated relationship between altruistic motivation and planned persistence has also been reported (Eren and Tezel 2010).

The findings of the current study receive support also from a second line of inquiry, which directed research attention to the relationship between educators, students and students' academic outcomes. These studies highlighted the importance of social integration between educators and students as a central consideration in the students'

learning and achievement (Crosnoe, Johnson, and Elder 2004, Frenzel et al. 2009, Klem and Connell 2004, Stronge, Ward, and Grant 2011, Wayne and Youngs 2003). The results of these studies additionally confirm the importance and meaningfulness of the educator's role and characteristics in relation to student achievement and outcomes and, in particular, the importance of educators' sense of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy in the context of educators refers to the beliefs that educators hold in respect of their ability to impact on student academic outcomes. It is often regarded as an element that contributes to motivation and is defined as a person's self-evaluation of his or her ability to perform an action (Bandura 1993). "*This core belief is the foundation of human agency*" (Bandura 1993, 170). It is not about skills, but concerned with the extent of a person's faith or belief in these skills (Gkolia, Belias, and Koustelios 2014). Research has found that self-efficacy is a powerful antecedent to educator's motivation and reported that educators harbouring positive feelings and beliefs about their capabilities, are more likely to behave in a manner that will contribute positively to students' learning and achievement (Mojavezi and Tamiz 2012, Tschannen-Moran and Johnson 2011). Educators, furthermore draw on self-efficacy to predict the future social success of their students (Tournaki and Podell 2005). This premise is borne out in the current study with most participants believing that they contribute positively to, and make a difference in students' lives. Their reported enjoyment and satisfaction at seeing their students grow, learn and achieve, were as a consequence of their efforts and ability to teach them effectively.

Observations of the current study in terms of educators' reasons for entering the profession and their commitment to the teaching profession are consistent with the literature on self-efficacy. For example, in a study that investigated pre-service teachers' motives for becoming teachers, (Bruinsma and Jansen 2010) reported that self-efficacy, as a motivational factor, impacted on pre-service educators' intentions of becoming educators, but also revealed a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the length of time pre-service educators intend to remain in the teaching profession. Moreover, they also observed that educators with a strong sense of self-efficacy tended to have a positive perception of the profession. In this regard Pedota (2015) similarly found that student success or lack of success influences educators' self-efficacy, which in turn, impact their decision to remain or leave the profession. An indirect relationship between self-efficacy and an expectation of being committed

to teaching and remain in the profession, has also been observed (Rots et al. 2007). A meta-analysis by Chesnut and Burley (2015) involving 33 studies for example also concluded that self-efficacy beliefs lead to educators' commitment to the teaching profession.

The results of this study revealed the central position that 'contributing' to children's development and society-at-large, occupies in the mind's eye of former and current educators. This is consistent with the position argued by the trait and functionalist theories of a profession (refer Chapter 2) that professions and professionals are expected to render a 'service' to the public and society. In this regard the point was emphasised that professionals possess specialised knowledge, skills and abilities that correspond with the particular needs and specialised activities that an individual, community or society requires. The social contract existing between a profession (in this instance the teaching profession) and the society is evidenced in this study in educator narratives that conveyed their 'caring' and felt accountability for their students' futures (for example becoming frustrated with parents who are not sufficiently attending to or investing time in their child's schooling).

Satisfaction with the profession in this study was impacted also by the constant changes initiated by the Department of Education. Not only does this add substantially to the workload and reduces job satisfaction, but the nature of the imposed changes (often being prescriptive in terms of teaching methods and curriculum delivery) were experienced by educators as constraining their professional autonomy and ability to influence the design and delivery of teaching and learning experiences. In this manner it contributes directly to educators' (dis)satisfaction with profession. No previous studies have attempted to examine educational changes as a predictor of educators' satisfaction with the teaching profession, but several studies have reported that educational reform and change influence educators' professional roles and their sense of professionalism. Olsen and Sexton (2009), for example, found that educational reform and policy reduce educator control because it centralises and limits the flow of information, and thereby introducing threat rigidity in schools, apart from imposing substantial adaptation pressures educators. In this study it was also revealed that educators' health and wellbeing are impacted by excessive workloads brought about by imposed DoE changes. This dynamic was recently confirmed by Ragnarsdóttir and

Jóhannesson (2014), who reported that the implementation of new curricula contribute to longer working days, extra pressure, workload and stress for educators at school. These authors were very clear in arguing that the prevention of burnout during the implementation of curriculum changes requires an increased investment in educators' well-being. Scholars such as Veen and Sleegers (2006) have investigated educators' perceptions of their professional role when they are confronted with the implementation of educational reforms. They observed that educators expressed positive or negative emotions towards such changes, depending on whether they assessed the change as congruent or incongruent with their professional identity. At an empirical level educator perceptions of, and consequently (dis)satisfaction with, the profession was revealed to be impacted by externally imposed (DoE) changes. The limited literature in this area appears to point in the same direction.

In the previous chapter public perceptions of the teaching profession were found to be an influential and core dimension of satisfaction with the profession. This provided an empirical comment on the relationship dimension of professions, which stresses that a profession is likely to be effective when it is recognised, respected and enjoys the trust of society-at-large and the public (see Chapter 2). Educators in this study, however, consistently articulated a negative societal view of teaching, characterised by a lack of professional recognition, diminishing societal respect and a poor understanding of the role of teaching and the knowledge skills and specialisation of educators. This is consistent with the view from the education literature that in some countries "*teaching has long been viewed as a low status occupation and often the object of public ridicule*" (Morris 2004, 107). Globally, researchers across have suggested that the values and prestige of the teaching profession have declined in most societies (Eacute and Esteve 2000, Hargreaves et al. 2007, Hoyle 2001, Kougioumtzis, Patriksson, and Stråhlman 2011, Veugelers and Vedder 2003). Societal views of teaching in turn have a direct impact on the status of teaching (Fwu and Wang 2002), which are deeply engrained in the character of the society. Negative societal views of the teaching profession are widely held, as are educator concerns about the poor (low) status and perception of teaching, which have been reported for different countries (Hall and Langton 2006). In this sense the current study's observations confirm, but also elaborate existing knowledge. The social status challenges reported by former and current educators in this study fit with the 'power' perspective or model of the

professions, which accentuates the social recognition that professions receive in return for the service they provide (Larson 1977). From this perspective professions are focused on spreading their privilege and social status, and compete for social recognition and position through a pertinent focus on providing professional service. Grappling with issues of recognition and social status, as the educators in this study convey, consequently is an inherent facet of attaining and maintaining status as a profession. This is echoed by Popple, a supporter of the power model, who argues that “*our society identifies certain occupations as professions and accords them power and prestige on the basis*” (Popple 1985, 568). The issue of social status however is also highlighted by Trait theory as being a central characteristic of a profession. Adopting this perspective, some scholars have highlighted prestige and social standing as a salient characteristic of the teaching profession (Ingersoll and Perda 2008). Acquiring social recognition and status according to these profession theories, then often leads to more prestige and respect (Abbott 1988). The findings of this study indicate that members of a profession internalise broader profession-society dynamics, to the extent that this would impact their beliefs and satisfaction with the profession in a holistic sense. The comments of some participants suggest that the impact of this on the self-esteem of educators is severe enough to prompt a consideration of leaving the profession.

#### **5.4.3 Intention to leave**

The reasons why former educators left the profession as reported in Chapter 4 were largely attributed to stress as a consequence of a demanding workload, continuously enhanced through DoE-imposed changes; work-life imbalance as a consequence of workload; the health, well-being and social impacts of this demanding work situation; and considerations such as student misbehaviour, inadequate pay, and profession-related considerations such as recognition and status, and compromised professional autonomy. These considerations are systemically and causally interrelated with most of the reported causes giving rise to a range of negative emotional experiences (stress), and ultimately leading to high levels of dissatisfaction culminating in departure from the profession. For current educators the experience has been largely similar with workload, DoE-imposed changes, pay, professional recognition and respect, giving rise to similar levels of stress and dissatisfaction, which result in the damaging erosion of educator passion, voiced intention to leave and / or actual departure from the

profession. Across both educator groups prolonged exposure to high levels of stress appear to be central to educators' experienced dissatisfaction with the education job and profession. This position is reflected in the literature, which has characterised teaching as a stressful profession for at least the past three decades and attributed this to increased job demands, driven by school-related factors *and* external accountability systems (Otto 1986). The concept of stress is defined for example as "*a condition of disequilibrium within the intellectual, emotional, and physical state of the individual that is generated by one's perception of a situation and results in physical and emotional reactions that can be either positive or negative*" (Gold and Roth 1993, 17). In the current study the disequilibrium felt by educators was induced by sources of stress in both the job and profession domains. From a literature perspective the stressful nature of teaching is not in doubt and substantial evidence to this effect has been forthcoming (Borg and Riding 1991, Chaplain 2008, Dunham 2002, Kokkinos 2007, Stoeber and Rennert 2008, Travers and Cooper 1996). Negative affect such as those reported in this study (e.g. frustration, anxiety) influence employees' perceptions of the stressors that the work environment presents (Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning 1986). The observed pattern of stress that prompts dissatisfaction and turnover intent (in this study) is consistent with the broader satisfaction literature and research in the education domain, which reports that stress predicts job dissatisfaction and the intention to leave the profession (Billingsley and Cross 1992, Fried et al. 2008, Liu and Onwuegbuzie 2012, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011, Weiqi 2008). These studies suggest that the negative feelings experienced by an educator at school, leads to stress, low levels of job satisfaction and ultimately the intention to leave the profession. As a result, many studies have focused on the relationship between stress and job satisfaction, and the impact of this on turnover intention. Fried et al. (2008), for example, have demonstrated the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between stress and the propensity to leave the profession. Many studies have reported that perceived workload is a strong predictor of educators' stress (Butt and Lance 2005, Collie, Shapka, and Perry 2012, Dick and Wagner 2001, Smith and Bourke 1992).

In the current study job demands (workload) and constant changes initiated by the Department of Education - an external factor, which further exacerbates demands - emerged as the more pronounced causes of stress among educators. These findings are

consistent with research that revealed that high levels of stress as a consequence of job demands, are related to job satisfaction and intentions to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011). Constant change, for example taking the form of new teaching and learning standards, assessment systems and practices, new and or modified curriculum content, was regularly imposed by the Department of Education. The latter, which creates instant changes in the school environment and the job activities of educators, highlights the role of external demands on the educator and significantly intensifies the educator's experience of negative affect and stress. This is in line with research that tended to view stress in the teaching profession as a mismatch between internal and external demands (Otto 1986), and which is characterised by negative experiences when educators attempt to deal with these demands (Kyriacou 2001).

Educators experience stress if the external demands do not 'fit' their perceived capacity or resources, especially 'time', to meet the demands. Long working hours, reduced time to prepare teaching materials or a feeling of fear is commonly experienced when a change is introduced. This dynamic of significant job demands and perceived inadequate resources, to date, has been best accounted for by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory developed by Demerouti et al. (2001)—a position borne out by substantial empirical research and more recently affirmed in Bakker and Demerouti's (2016) review of the status of the theory.

Drawing on Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema's (2005) study of the buffering role of job resources in the face of the adverse impact of job demands, Bakker and Demerouti (2016) draw attention to the risk factors for job burnout, which include work overload, coupled to emotional and physical job demands, and conflict between work and home priorities (work-life balance issues). The presence of these risk factors in the work settings of participants, were demonstrated with multiple examples (in Chapter 4). However, while Bakker and Demerouti (2016) indicate that the detrimental effect of excessive job demands can be reduced if adequate job resources are available (e.g. social support, job autonomy, the quality of relationship with the manager, and performance feedback), the current study found that for educators in this study most of these resources were nonexistent or inadequate. The JD-R theory 'fits' the data of

this study very well and indicates why the phenomenon of ‘burnout’, frequently raised by educators in this study, is a plausible outcome.

The vast majority of educators engaged in this study reported prolonged exposure to high levels of stress and many frequently raised the issue of ‘burnout’. For the fact that it is a severely taxing phenomenon with extensive repercussions for those suffering from it, but also for those exposed to people with burnout, it has always been a crucial concern for employees and organisations alike (Tonder and Williams 2009). Particularly pronounced in the educational sector, the likely impact of burnout is such that the importance of attending to sources of enduring stress in the workplace cannot be understated (Tonder and Williams 2009). Recognise that *burnout* was defined by Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) as “*a syndrome of chronic exhaustion, a cynical, negative attitude regarding work, and reduced professional efficacy that could occur in any job*” (Bakker and Demerouti 2016, 1). Evidence of burnout in the workplace is generally conveyed by employees reporting that they are exhausted, depressed and fatigued (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter 2001). Evidence of this behaviour was provided in the narrative of several educators, and happens because “*job demands evoke a stress process, because they lead to energy depletion*” (Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema 2005, 176). This will eventually cause burnout, health impairment and prompt employees to contemplate leaving (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). It is important to note the emphasis (Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema 2005, 170) place on the ‘costs’ and taxing nature of job demands “*as those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs*”. Empirical evidence of the impact of job demands on burnout has been reported in many different work settings (Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke 2004, Brough et al. 2013, Hakanen, Schaufeli, and Ahola 2008, Xanthopoulou et al. 2007), and the school settings of educators who participated in this study are no exception.

All educators in this study viewed teaching as a rewarding and satisfying profession, but most if not all have strong negative sentiments about the demands of the teaching job and the constant changes in job demands, brought about by contextual factors.

#### **5.4.4 Contextual considerations**

As described in Chapter 4, contextual influences played a significant role in educators' job experiences (and job demands), and materially influenced their satisfaction with the job and the profession. Educators for example made extensive reference to the principal and colleagues (in the immediate job context) as influential factors in their experienced satisfaction with the teaching job. This is consistent with job satisfaction theories that accord meaningful influence to the role of work relationships in employees' experience of satisfaction in the workplace. Maslow (1954), for example, incorporated work relationships under the label of 'social needs', while for Herzberg et al. (1959), indicated that the absence of good relationships could cause job dissatisfaction. Reported findings (Chapter 4) similarly, are supported by several (general) job satisfaction studies, which reported that work relationships predict job satisfaction in the workplace (García-Bernal et al. 2005, Harris, Winskowski, and Engdahl 2007, Heijden 2005, Mitrofan and Bulborea 2013, Wall 2008). These studies commonly suggest that the absence of good work relationships pose a formidable challenge to employees, who regard this as the least satisfying aspect of performing work. Reported findings, however, are also in line with empirical research that found that work relationships in a school setting is an important source of job satisfaction for educators (Brunetti 2001, Dinham and Scott 2000, Moore 2012, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2009, Usop et al. 2013), in particular relationships with the principal and co-workers/colleagues (Day et al. 2007, Lee and Nie 2014, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011, Zembylas and Papanastasiou 2006).

The literature pertaining to school settings have accentuated the importance of the principal's role in the provision of support to educators (Price 2012, Shaw and Newton 2014, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011) – especially those who are struggling with teaching responsibilities. Such support acts as a buffer against the perceived difficulty of the job and has a beneficial effect on educators' performance, apart from enhancing educators' experience of enjoyment and satisfaction in the teaching job. By contrast poor collegial and principal support is a major source of job dissatisfaction among educators. At the school level extensive support from school principal is generally recognised as being important (Hulpia, Devos, and Rosseel 2009, Shaw and Newton 2014, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011). Borman and Dowling's definition of 'principal support' as "*the school's effectiveness in assisting teachers with issues such as student*

*discipline, instructional methods, curriculum, and adjusting to the school environment*"(Borman and Dowling 2008, 380), is especially appropriate as it draws attention to job features that emerged prominently in this study. Equally important is the finding that administrative support contributes to educators feeling valued and a sense of belonging, which in turn impact their job satisfaction (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011). When educators' were confronted by teaching challenges, the perceived level of support received from the principal had the strongest influence on their job satisfaction (Gardner 2010), which fits with some of the observations made by educators in this study.

As to co-workers, the job satisfaction literature indicates that collaboration with and support from colleagues contribute to educators' job satisfaction (Klassen and Anderson 2009, Reddy 2007, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011, Zembylas and Papanastasiou 2006) and perform an integral part in educators' satisfaction with the social context of the school. Research suggests that when educators' perceive colleagues as supportive or collaborative, they are more likely to feel positive about their school jobs and motivated to deliver quality performance (Addison and Brundrett 2008, Reddy 2007, Wall 2008). Moreover, when educators' perceived their colleagues as contributing to the school, their satisfaction levels were influenced beyond their teaching roles (Addison and Brundrett 2008, Klassen and Anderson 2009). Educators who collaborated with colleagues tended to gain self-confidence, particularly through teamwork in the school setting (Reddy 2007, Wall 2008). Equally, an increased sense of confidence contributed to educators sense of belonging, self-esteem, and ultimately job satisfaction (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011). It follows that the relationship with colleagues will be a central consideration in work relationships (at schools) and influential in the job satisfaction of educators (Day et al. 2007).

Turning to the institutional context, the Department of Education (DoE) emerged as a prominent external influence in educators' experience of teaching notably through the control it exerts over teaching methods and frameworks that are applied at school level. In Chapter 4 it was found, for example, that the DoE initiated (imposed) changes in education practice at school level, that are beyond the control of educators, yet materially influence educators' satisfaction with the job and profession of teaching. An experienced lack of autonomy in the teaching role was widely reported by

educators and one illustration of the DoE's influence. As educators are often exposed to educational changes originating from and driven by external stakeholders such as the DoE, it is critical to explore the impact of these contextual influences on educators' satisfaction with their profession. A review of the relevant education literature indicates that externally imposed changes could materially influence educators' sense of professionalism and their professional identity. As a case in point, Day and Smethem (2009) reviewed research that provided evidence for the impact of initiated government reforms upon educators' work in England, but also included a few American and Australian studies. They observed that "*what is clear, however, changes in education in all countries are likely to increase rather than diminish and that teachers will, as always, be relied upon to be committed, skilful, resilient and open to change*" (Day and Smethem 2009, 152). They however concluded that government-initiated reforms do not always lead to effective renewal and, in addition, could change the sense of professionalism among educators. In Lasky (2005) study that examined the interaction between teacher identity and new reform mandates (e.g. teaching methodologies), it was found that educators' experiences of reform mandates were intertwined with a sense of professional vulnerability. Educators who participated in this study perceived the expectations implicit in the reform mandates as non-aligned with their professional identity. This relationship between educational reform (changes) and educators' professional identity received further support from a study by Reio (2005) which indicated that educators' emotional reactions to introduced changes are associated with their professional and personal identity. Flores (2005) similarly found that such changes impacted upon educators' sense of professionalism. Collectively these findings provide broad support for the observations reported in Chapter 4, which pointed out that DoE-imposed changes impact on elements of the teaching job (notably workload) and the profession (professional autonomy, status and recognition) and consequently contribute to (dis)satisfaction with the job **and** profession.

In a similar fashion the broader societal context exerts a critical influence on educators' experience of both the job and the profession. A felt lack of respect and recognition and a sense of teaching being undervalued as a profession - emanating from society – were conveyed by educators and reported in Chapter 4. These findings pointed to the different considerations that contributed to educators' negative

sentiments about the profession, eroded their passion and facilitated dissatisfaction with the profession, to the point that some left the profession. Because of a significant interface with parents, this stakeholder group emerged as a major conduit for societal views. Engaging with parents, for educators can be a daunting challenge, especially when educators recognise that there is lack of understanding of what educators do. In this regard several studies have concluded that educators' relationships (work) with parents is a major source of job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction (Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen 2008, Reddy 2007, Wall 2008). Karavas (2010) more specifically, has reported that educators enjoy their relationship with parents when they receive recognition for their efforts from parents – a principle illustrated also by educators in this study. Consistent with this observation and the data of this study, a lack of parental support also has been demonstrated to be one of the least satisfying aspects of the educator's job (Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen 2008).

In general the existing literature provides support for observations about the pervasive role of contextual factors in educator job and profession satisfaction and their intention to leave, as observed in this study.

#### **5.4.5 Job satisfaction, profession satisfaction and the intention to leave**

The findings of this study indicated that job satisfaction is not the only relevant satisfaction construct in the workplace. The existence of profession satisfaction was demonstrated and a multifaceted and complex relationship was observed between job satisfaction and profession satisfaction, and the influence of both these constructs on educators' intention to leave the profession. On the basis of the evidence discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.3.3.4) it was concluded that educators' intention to leave (and actual departure from) the profession could be instigated by job dissatisfaction, or profession dissatisfaction, or both. Moreover, it was observed that in many instances profession dissatisfaction developed as a result of job dissatisfaction and that profession dissatisfaction could alter educators' views of the teaching job and prompt job dissatisfaction. The pattern of job dissatisfaction prompting profession dissatisfaction, however, is likely to be more common.

One of the more closely aligned fields of research that offers some indirect support for the logic of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction's interrelatedness is found in

the *commitment* literature. Researchers in this area have identified the existence of two types of commitment with the first relating to commitment to the organisation (including job or role) and the second concerned with commitment to the occupation or profession (Cohen 2003, Meyer and Allen 1997, Meyer, Allen, and Smith 1993, Vandenberg and Scarpello 1994, Wallace 1993). The structure and relatedness of these different forms of commitment have been observed for different occupations (Kim and Mueller 2011, Lee, Carswell, and Allen 2002, Mathieu and Zajac 1990).

Turning to the relationship of job satisfaction with the *intention to leave the profession*, the current study found that satisfaction with the profession impacts on job satisfaction and is a predictor of the intention to leave the profession (Chapter 4). These findings consequently suggest that job satisfaction and profession satisfaction are interrelated and *co-determinants of the intention to leave*. Research examining commitment to the organisation and the occupation respectively, has revealed a similar relatedness between these constructs even though they are very different in nature (Cohen 2007). Imran et al. (2014) in addition suggested that organisational commitment could act as an antecedent of job satisfaction. Moreover, The impact of job satisfaction on the intention to leave a profession has been demonstrated by several studies (Carmeli and Weisberg 2006, Flinkman et al. 2008, Gieter, Hofmans, and Pepermans 2011) – an outcome also demonstrated in the area of education (Ingersoll 2001, Kosi et al. 2015, Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2011).

Studies concerned with turnover intention, however, are often undertaken from the perspective of organisational administrators, which directs attention at variables aligning with their specific focus and interest and which are demonstrably related to the job and organisation rather than the profession. Only a very limited number of job satisfaction studies have suggested that the intention to leave the profession might be influenced by the employee's satisfaction with the profession (Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen 2008). The '*commitment*' literature in addition appears to point to the possibility of profession satisfaction impacting on the intention to leave the profession, as observed in the current study. These *commitment* studies have shown that a person's *positive feelings* or sentiments about an occupation could have an impact on the his/her decision to remain in the occupation (Lee, Carswell, and Allen 2002), while *occupational commitment* influenced the intention to leave the profession (Nogueras

2006). This influence has been observed also among educators, in the area of education (Klassen and Chiu 2011).

The existence of a notion of profession satisfaction as distinct from job satisfaction was theoretically justified and demonstrated with the findings of the current study. Although a comparable knowledge base is non-existent, the findings obtained appear to be broadly aligned with the research reported in respect of commitment (above).

The preceding discussion provides the basis for summarising the main theoretical propositions and the logic that ties them into a single theoretical account of educators' experience of job and profession satisfaction and the influence of these constructs on the intention to leave the profession.

#### **5.4.6 Main propositions**

The main theoretical propositions advanced for the Theory of Job and Profession satisfaction (below) are rooted in and emerged from the experiences of former and current Western Australian educators that participated in the current study (see Chapter 4). Propositions were extracted from analysed educator narrative and are therefore empirically informed. Propositions account for the phenomena observed in the study and provide specific considerations for further theoretical elaboration and empirical testing (see Figure 5.1 for an overview of the main propositions of the Theory of Job and Profession Satisfaction).

## **Job satisfaction**

Employee (educator) satisfaction experienced in and at the workplace extends beyond conventional notions of 'job satisfaction' and tend to adopt a too lean (exclusive) perspective on the integrated, subjective experiences of educators. Satisfaction in the workplace instead incorporates experiences with multiple features or facets of the job, the occupation (or profession) and the context in which the job or role is performed (Proposition 1.1).

Experienced job satisfaction may be compromised (eroded, destabilised) as a consequence of dissatisfaction experienced with aspects / features of the profession and / or the context of the job (that are simultaneously experienced) (Proposition 1.2). Job satisfaction in and of itself, provides an incomplete predictive model of turnover intention and educators could leave for other reasons even while enjoying job satisfaction (Proposition 1.3).

All experiences that are satisfying (i.e., are 'liked') or dissatisfying (i.e., are 'disliked') contribute to an overall sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, whether these originate in the job itself, the occupation or profession, or the context of the job (Proposition 2.1). To arrive at these tacit conclusions about satisfaction/dissatisfaction, educators *interpret* job experiences / work situations (and the actions of others) they are exposed or subjected to. These personal interpretations confirm, enhance or alter their belief systems and are accompanied by a feeling component, which collectively form an overall predisposition to act on the experience or situation (Proposition 2.2). The degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction experienced, as a result, depends on the strength and intensity of the experience(s) and will determine whether the educator will act on the situation or not, e.g. express intent to leave (Proposition 2.3).

Multiple, accumulated affective experiences (positive and negative) develop a dominant character that dictates the direction of the attitudes of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction. Negative affective experiences contribute significantly to dissatisfaction and in this regard prolonged exposure to excessive levels of stress are likely to rapidly intensify dissatisfaction (Proposition 2.4). The incidence of unpleasant or negative emotional *experiences* that prompt dissatisfaction, are likely to eclipse positive experiences that lead to satisfaction (Proposition 2.5). This will tacitly influence educators' judgements and beliefs, diminish the impact of positive

experiences simultaneously encountered in the job or role; and lead to educators' progressive detachment from the profession (Proposition 2.6).

In the school setting, negative affect and stress, more generally, are induced and intensified by a number of job facets, but also contextual and occupational (profession) considerations (Proposition 3.1). When job demands approach and cross a personal (but unspecified) threshold, negative on-the-job experiences e.g. classroom misbehaviour, lack of support, and/or symbolically demeaning pay structures will all contribute to an overall experience that is increasingly characterised as more dominantly negative than positive (Proposition 3.2). In the case of former and current educators this threshold appears to be approached when job demands, i.e., workload, constantly spills over into private and family time (Proposition 3.3). This heightens the probability of the educator acting on the unpleasant experience and the onset of thinking around leaving the job, but also the occupation/profession (Proposition 3.4).

### **Workload (job demands)**

When educators simultaneously perceive an excessive workload and limited resources e.g. a perceived lack of time and support, and inadequate or ineffective policies, this will enhance their perception of demands, intensify felt pressure and consequently increase stress. While educators' will attempt to attend to all tasks and requirements despite being unable to do so with the available time and support (resources), they will recognise when they reach the point where they feel they are not investing the quality in their work that they would like to. In this situation constant job demands (workload) and deadlines will diminish their sense of self-efficacy and create an unhealthy state for the educator (Proposition 4.1). This becomes a significant influence, especially for early career educators who have not developed the resilience and mastery within the system, and will alter their positive, idealised perceptions of 'teaching' as a job and profession (Proposition 4.2).

The demands on educators are intensified by regular work-related changes resulting in continuous after hours work and an extended exposure to unhealthy levels of stress (Proposition 4.3). An increase in the number, scope and/or magnitude of tasks that are not central to the identity of the profession (e.g. administration) effectively reduce the proportion of time available and actually devoted to the central identity-defining tasks of the teaching job such as teaching and learning facilitation; working with and

contributing to children's development. With increases in regulatory policies and procedures (e.g. through DoE-imposed changes) the administrative burden on educators increases, and through such bureaucratic 'creep' the focus on profession-defining job tasks gradually reduce over time, to a point where the satisfaction generally derived from these actions are no longer a prominent experience in the educator's overall experience of the job, setting and the profession. When this happens job satisfaction, but also profession satisfaction are adversely impacted (Proposition 4.4) – all contributing to an overall sense of dissatisfaction that extends beyond the specific dissatisfying tasks and the job itself, to include the profession/occupation (Proposition 4.5). For educators that entered the profession on the basis of a desire to teach and work with children and contribute to their development, an expanding definition of their job, in the direction of non-core and administrative tasks, will increasingly be perceived and experienced as non-aligned with their original motivation and passion (Proposition 4.6). This creates a platform for leaving the profession.

### **Passion, stress and burnout**

Educator passion is a needs-based, primary driver of educator entry into the teaching profession and stems from embedded beliefs and values associated with working with children and contributing to their development, but also the improvement of society more generally. It acts as a strong motivating force and up to a point buffers the educator against negative experiences in the teaching job and role (Proposition 5.1). Student development, progress and achievement provide deep intrinsic satisfaction that replenishes educator passion, strengthens motivation and generally acts as a positive experience that reinforces educator resolve to remain in the profession (Proposition 5.2). Passion, however, is progressively and permanently eroded by regular, negative experiences associated with multiple stressors in the work environment of the educator. The continuous, stressful experience of job demands (pressure), such as excessive workload, sacrificing personal time and struggling with work-life balance, and constant context-induced change leads to an irreversible decline in educator passion (Proposition 5.3). This is rapidly intensified when job resources such as principal support, effective policies (e.g. dealing with discipline), co-worker support, sufficient time and budgets, are not forthcoming (Proposition 5.4). The health and mental well-being impact of prolonged exposure to stress, accelerates

the educator's shift (in attitude) towards overall dissatisfaction with the features of the job and of the profession, which give rise to them leaving the profession (Proposition 5.5).

Continually *sacrificing personally valued time* and social contact/interaction with significant others is likely to build resentment and, if not managed in a timely fashion, will intensify the educator's/employee's experience of dissatisfaction (Proposition 6.1). Such experiences are compounded by any other events or facets of the job or setting that are experienced as unpleasant ('disliked') (Proposition 6.2), again strengthening the inclination to act, whether this action is of low intensity e.g. imagining themselves in alternative occupations, or actively contemplating resignation (leaving) and searching for other jobs, or actually withdrawing from the job and profession and leaving (Proposition 6.3).

Stress, being the most prominent feature of most educators' experience of the teaching job and because of the adverse health and well-being consequences that arise from this, is the most prominent and influential overall cause and indicator of job dissatisfaction (Proposition 7.1). The workload-stress-dissatisfaction cause-and-effect sequence represents the greatest single influence in educators' decision to leave (or contemplate leaving) the teaching profession (Proposition 7.2). Of those sources of stress that do not directly stem from workload, student ill-discipline and misbehaviour, excessive demands by parents (who have little understanding and consequently appreciation of the educator's job), and varying degrees of support from the school leadership are the most prominent (Proposition 7.3).

Ineffective policies, substantial individual accountability and the lingering (potential) threat of legal prosecution in response to the educator's attempts at 'behaviour management' and discipline in the class, leave educators feeling vulnerable and exposed, and significantly intensify stress and consequently dissatisfaction with the teaching job (Proposition 7.4). By contrast, co-workers are generally perceived as a source of support and collaboration and contribute to the development of a sense of community among educators, which partially buffers the educator against the adverse effects of excessive job demands (Proposition 7.5).

Educator remuneration emerged as an important and influential aspect of the teaching

job. When experiencing excessive demands (e.g. workload) and sacrificing personal time, educators reconsider the implicit fairness of their situation and unavoidably calculate the 'workload-to-pay' ratio, i.e., the time and effort they invest in the role (including after hours and weekends). If unfavourable when compared to other occupations (the most likely outcome), it erodes job satisfaction and may become a significant source of dissatisfaction (Proposition 8.1). The demographic profile of the educator will shape the significance of 'pay' as a source of satisfaction / dissatisfaction and could prompt educators to leave the profession (Proposition 8.2). At the same time remuneration assumes a symbolic role for educators in that it is perceived by educators as a symbolic representation of their worth/value to the system; the extent to which they are regarded as professionals and their work is considered a meaningful contribution (Proposition 8.3).

### **Profession satisfaction**

*Profession satisfaction* arise from features that are characteristic of and distinguishes a profession from a job and include the specialisation focus and core purpose of the profession (e.g. teaching and working with children); specialised knowledge (on education, learning, child development); service orientation; relationship of the profession with society-at-large (concerned with recognition, respect and trust in the education profession); autonomy and self-regulation by educators and the profession; ethical orientation and conduct; the professional identity and culture of education; and the effectiveness and efficiency of the professional association/entity that govern the education profession on behalf of its members (Proposition 9.1). The specialised focus on working with children and the core purpose of teaching and learning are noteworthy sources of educator enjoyment and sense of achievement, and satisfaction with the profession (Proposition 9.2).

Professional recognition, respect and standing of the education profession in society-at-large (various stakeholders) are central to educators' satisfaction with the profession (Proposition 9.3). A very low estimation of the profession and of educators by society-at-large (e.g. parents) is a source of substantial disappointment. Negative experiences associated with the perceived standing of the teaching profession will erode satisfaction with the profession and can prompt educators to leave the profession (Proposition 9.4). More specifically, profession dissatisfaction as a result of

inadequate recognition, respect and status, etc. will erode the educator's perception of the meaningfulness and sensibility of pursuing the occupation / profession, especially when encountering facets of the job that are profoundly dissatisfying Proposition 9.5). Restrictive and constraining education policies and teaching practices imposed on educators similarly diminish perceived professional autonomy and contribute to a sense of profession dissatisfaction (Proposition 9.6).

Job and profession satisfaction are interrelated and interact in determining educators' overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with teaching as a job and profession, and co-determine turnover intention (Proposition 10.1). Substantially unpleasant job experiences, more generally, will erode not only job satisfaction, but also profession satisfaction Proposition 10.2).

- Job satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) could give rise to profession satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) and vice versa (Proposition 10.3).
- At the same time educators could be satisfied with the job, but less so with the profession (Proposition 10.4).
- The most likely relationship pattern would be dissatisfaction with the job (specific job facets), while still being reasonably satisfied with the profession (Proposition 10.5).
- Shifts in profession satisfaction can occur as a consequence of job dissatisfaction only, with a *decline* in profession satisfaction most common (Proposition 10.6).

Dissatisfaction with job facets/features that have an impact on the core or profession-defining job tasks, i.e., those which are most 'true' to the identity of the profession such as 'teaching' and 'working with children' will erode profession satisfaction more rapidly (Proposition 10.7).

### **Contextual influence**

Generally, externally imposed changes (e.g. by the DoE) add to educators' workload in multiple ways and are experienced by educators as detracting from the perceived primary task of 'teaching' (the reason for entering the profession). In such instances

educators' profession satisfaction is adversely impacted and eroded (Proposition 11.1). This is in addition to reduced job satisfaction as a consequence of the negative experience of increased demands (workload) (Proposition 11.2).

Educators' teaching and learning effectiveness is a consequence of (their) focus which is largely determined by the extent to which they are allowed to concentrate on their primary tasks, conversely: shielded from / buffered against external demands and have adequate resources at their disposal (Proposition 12). Such buffering in turn is a function of boundary management, i.e., the effectiveness of school leadership and management (Proposition 13).

### **Key dynamics leading to educators' intention to leave the profession**

A dynamic central to educators' experience of teaching originates in a *demanding workload*, a significant, globally acknowledged feature or facet of the teaching job. When perceived as excessive, it sets a chain of events in motion that commences with work spill over into educators' personal life space and results in educators sacrificing personal time and priorities to complete work and reduce demands. After hours work disrupts work-life balance and social networks, prolongs the experience of stress, impacts on educator health and wellbeing, prompts resentment and ultimately fuels high levels of dissatisfaction, which give rise to, or exacerbates pre-existing intentions to leave (Proposition 14.1). This central dynamic in essence comprises a *workload demands-stress-dissatisfaction- intention to leave cycle* with all other dynamic relationships linking / feeding into this cycle and contributing to overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Proposition 14.2). If workload demands are manageable, stress is limited to 'positive' or 'eustress', dissatisfaction will be minimised, resulting in educators remaining in the teaching profession (Proposition 14.3).

An important dynamic embedded in the main process leading to turnover intention, is concerned with the *stress experience* of educators, which entails the experience of mostly negative emotions as a result of a perceived inability to comply with perceived demands. Multiple, interdependent job-related considerations (job features and/or situations) contribute to educators' experience of continued, intense stress, which in turn has a range of unpleasant consequences (personal and social) that creates or intensifies dissatisfaction and leads to a strengthening of the inclination to act, i.e., turnover intention (Proposition 15).

Contextual influences exercise a pervasive and often indirect, but formidable influence on educators' experience of job demands. The Department of Education and parents intensify demands on educators, which feed into the ***workload demands-stress-dissatisfaction- intention to leave cycle***. School principals and co-workers, by providing support or otherwise, moderate or mediate educators' experience of stress and hence dissatisfaction (the absence of adequate support or the presence of ineffective support intensifies experienced demands and feeds into the workload demands-stress-dissatisfaction-intention to leave cycle) (Proposition 16.1). A supportive and collaborative culture among colleagues is likely to foster a sense of community among educators, and will act as buffer against stress and build resilience (Proposition 16.2).

An important simultaneous and recurring micro dynamic is that of excessive and unmanageable workload demands giving rise to stress and diminished self-efficacy, thereby intensifying stress. Despite committing to extensive after hours work, educators acknowledge that they are unable to address and conclude job demands to their satisfaction. Insufficient time to complete assessments and reports, prepare lectures or source learning materials to the educator's standard, not only intensify stress and dissatisfaction, but result in significant dissonance and an erosion of the educator's sense of self-efficacy, leading to a decline in confidence and a lowering of self-esteem (Proposition 17.1). The compounding effect of the latter is that the educator's actual work outputs and accomplishments reduce, resulting in enhanced feelings of stress, and in this manner intensifying the workload demands-stress-dissatisfaction-intention to leave cycle, which recurs (as a 'vicious circle') until the educator experiences burnout or commits to leaving the profession (Proposition 17.2). If the educator elects to remain in the School for some reason or another, the sense of reduced efficacy, emotional exhaustion, and cynicism, i.e., the burnout syndrome, becomes a highly probable outcome. Job, profession and contextual factors in the educator's work setting are systemically interrelated and interdependent, and require effective boundary management to contain unmanageable demands converging on the day-to-day job of the educator (Proposition 18.1). Boundaries between the educator role and various contextual influences are created by the formal job description parameters, formal hours of employment, but also school policies and school management (and management structures and practices) (Proposition 18.2). If

boundaries are too permeable, educators are not adequately shielded against external, contextual influences that intrude into their day-to-day tasks, disrupt their focus and detract from work objectives (boundary management need to ensure achievement of job objectives and contain the influence of factors beyond the control of educators) (Proposition 18.3). If boundaries are ineffectively managed, workload demands will intensify, thereby invoking the workload demands-stress-dissatisfaction-intention to leave cycle and accelerate the departure of educators from the profession (Proposition 18.4).

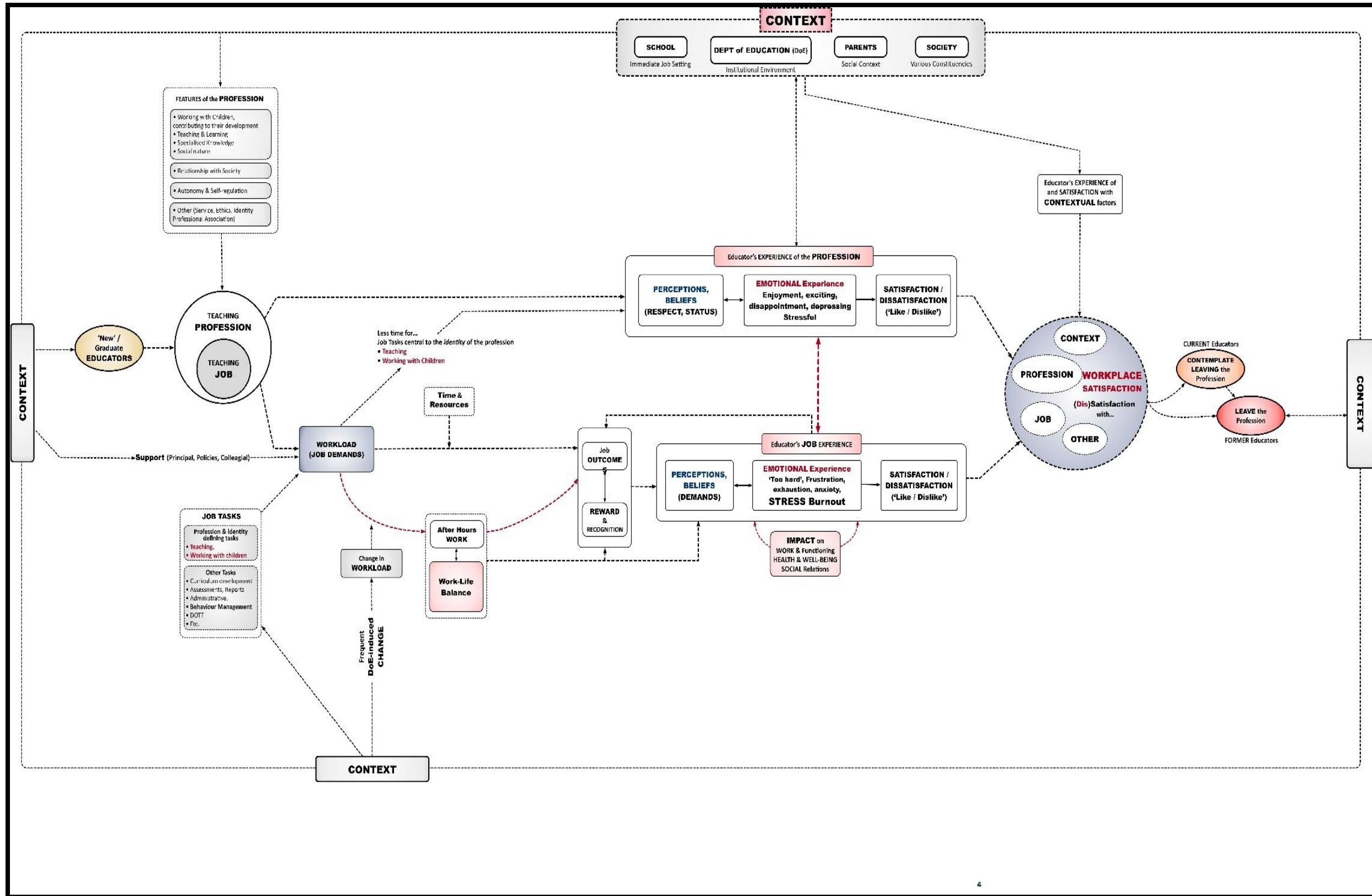


Figure 5. 1 The main elements of the Theory of Job and Profession Satisfaction

## **5.5 Conclusion and summary**

Satisfaction in the workplace (workplace satisfaction) assumes at least two forms: job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession (profession satisfaction). Both these constructs were found to be important in explaining the educator's decision to remain or leave the teaching profession, and a Grounded Theory was extracted and constructed around the empirical observations made in respect of educators' experiences of their satisfaction in their jobs and the profession.

Differentiating between job and profession satisfaction enabled the observation that the character of the 'teaching job', i.e., the relative prominence of the child and his/her learning, is steadily supplanted with a more programmed, routinised and administration driven concept of teaching. This has the effect that it prevents the educator from performing to his/her personal standards. The deeply rewarding (intrinsic) experience of assisting children in the learning journey and observing such growth and change in the child, is significantly satisfying and valued by the educator, but is increasingly countered by the educator's growing awareness of an inequitable and dissatisfying value proposition – embedded in the teaching profession. The cost-benefits of remaining in the education job and profession becomes increasingly unfavourable as educators begin to factor in long hours of work juxtaposed against received remuneration, continuous stress, often difficult and unsupportive settings and several other factors which have an adverse impact on their functioning, health and well-being, and social networks.

The institutional context, i.e., the Department of education, is a significant contributor to the erosion of educators' quality of life, classroom effectiveness (learning facilitation) and, most importantly, satisfaction with the profession (as a more serious impact). For educators, continuous, increasing demands and expectations are constantly eroding their personal time and disrupting their social relations – a state of work-life imbalance that does not contain any benefits for the educator.

'Unchecked' change contributes to an increasing workload, but without increasing allocated resources, i.e., job demands escalate within the pre-existing timeframes and time constraints, which then induce significant pressure, stress, and work-life imbalance, followed by health and well-being issues and eventual abandoning the profession. The boundaries of the school system is not enough of a buffer to shield

educators from disruptive external influences, which impact on teaching and learning generally, educator well-being and effectiveness, and many other aspects. This points to the ineffectual nature of interface- or boundary management and the protection of educator focus and job content against unreasonable demands. In the absence of such management, job and profession satisfaction is materially impacted which give rise to an overarching sense of dissatisfaction which prompts educators to leave. The analysis and discussion also indicated the role of often-unfavourable societal views of the education profession and educators. At a more systemic level this points to the ineffectual functioning of the different institutions responsible for the custodianship of the education profession. Retaining valued educators imply attending to both job and profession satisfaction, which in turn requires effective functioning and management of different entities involved in education.

In summary, Chapter 5 focused on reporting the results of the ‘selective coding’ phase of the study. This entailed the theoretical coding and contextualisation of findings previously revealed and reported in Chapter 4. The chapter’s primary contribution is the final rendering of the ‘Grounded Theory’, which was labelled *The Theory of Job and Profession Satisfaction*. This was presented in the form of the educators’ ‘story’ and an outline of the main theoretical principles or propositions that were generated by the study.

Chapter 5 also concludes the research project in that it advances a Grounded Theory that explains the existence and interdependencies of job and profession satisfaction among educators, and the influence of these constructs on educators’ intention to remain or leave the education profession (the primary purpose of the study). More specifically, the results reported in this chapter assists in ‘answering’ the major and minor research questions outlined in Chapter 1 (sections 1.4.1 and 1.4.2). An affirmative response to specifically the second and third research questions can be provided as both the constructs of educator job satisfaction and educator profession satisfaction were empirically observed and the primary factors that contribute to and influence these constructs were identified (Question 1.4.2.2). Secondly, the role of (dis)satisfaction with the education profession could be circumscribed and in this instance profession satisfaction, independently or in combination with job satisfaction, appears to influence educators’ intention to leave the profession (Question 1.4.2.3).

All objectives outlined in section 1.4.3 (Chapter 1) similarly have been attended to. In Chapter 6 the implications and recommendations following from the findings reported in this and the previous chapter, are discussed. Chapter 6 will also provide a consolidating and summary perspective on the study in its entirety.

# **Chapter 6: Conclusion and Summary**

## **6.1 Overview and introduction**

Chapter 6 provides a brief overview of the research project and continues to outline the limitations, recommendations and contribution of the study, before concluding with a summary of the chapter.

In **Chapter 1** attention was drawn to the national and state level shortages in the supply of educators and the high level of turnover observed in the sector. This provided the context for the research focus of the current study. Generally, job satisfaction has been a stable and reliable predictor of turnover intention, but it does not explain why educators who leave their education jobs (at schools) also leave the education occupation or ‘profession’. The loss of trained educators to other economic sectors compromise the critical function of preparing the youth for future productive citizenship, and does so in many ways, including impacting on the effectiveness and efficiency of classroom-based learning facilitation.

It was argued that departure from the profession, in addition to the job, implies a degree of profession *dissatisfaction*. ‘Profession satisfaction’ as a construct however, was scientifically and practically non-existent, as it has not received meaningful attention in the scientific community. Against the setting provided by this problem statement, the current study aimed to explore notions of job and profession satisfaction among educators and to advance an empirically-Grounded Theory that would clarify the existence, interdependencies, and influence of these constructs in relation to educators’ intention to leave the profession. The major research question driving the study consequently was framed around the existential nature of profession satisfaction, i.e., to determine whether profession satisfaction can be differentiated from job satisfaction on both theoretical and empirical grounds? And if so, how this, in addition to job satisfaction, would assist in clarifying educators’ intention to leave the profession?

In **Chapter 2** the literature relevant to job satisfaction, profession satisfaction, turnover intention and educator turnover was reviewed and the theoretical legitimacy of differentiating between job and professional satisfaction was established. This

consequently enabled an affirmative response to the first subordinate research question of this study, which enquired whether the distinction between satisfaction with the profession and job satisfaction can be justified on theoretical grounds (refer section 1.4.2.1). On the back of this theoretical platform, the nature and meaning of satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the workplace for two cohorts of educators (former and current) were then empirically investigated, using a classic Grounded Theory study (following Glaser and Strauss 1967). The methodology and procedures for this design were detailed in ***Chapter 3***. The elaborated analysis procedure of open, axial and selective coding as advanced by Strauss and Corbin (1994) were adopted for analysing educator data. This procedure enabled an analysis of the nature and interrelatedness of job and profession satisfaction and how these constructs individually or in combination contribute to educators' intention to leave the profession (***Chapter 4***). In the final instance a 'Grounded Theory', i.e., a theoretical framework characterised by key concepts and relationships extracted from empirical observations, together with a set of theoretical propositions, was developed to explain empirical observations about the relationship between educator turnover and job and profession satisfaction (***Chapter 5***).

## **6.2 The findings in brief**

One of the first important findings of the study was the reconceptualization of job satisfaction and the formulation of a definition of profession satisfaction (previously non-existent). This was secured from the platform provided by a review and definition of the equally ambiguous concepts of a 'job' and a 'profession', which were then used to ground the concepts of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction respectively. A job consequently was defined as a "*structurally embedded accumulation of tasks and activities, performed within a social context (and system) by an employee who interprets and attaches meaning to the job and consequently performs it for various reasons including economic and/or noneconomic reward*". A profession in turn was defined as "*a specialised, knowledge-based and legally self-regulating occupation that renders its services to the public and society through a complex, reciprocal relationship based on competence, recognition and trust*". With these constructs as basis, **job satisfaction** was defined as "*a job-related attitude, i.e., the degree to which the job incumbent 'likes' or is satisfied with the job (and/or conversely 'dislikes' or is dissatisfied with the job), as a result of his/her (cognitive) appraisal of the extent to*

*which the actual job characteristics ('experience') are 'measuring up' to his/her desired and/or anticipated job experience; accompanied by his/her affective experience of the job (, i.e., feelings about the job experience); which result in a (behavioural) predisposition to act in specific ways, consistent with the his/her beliefs and feelings about the job (e.g. indicating a specific 'rating' on a job satisfaction scale)". In a similar fashion **profession satisfaction** was defined as "an attitude in respect of the specific profession (professionalised occupation) that expresses the member's degree of satisfaction with the profession, based on the member's appraisal of the extent to which the central features of the profession are, firstly, experienced; and secondly, aligned with the member's idealised concept of the profession; together with the member's feelings about this experience of the profession, which then result in a predisposition to act in a manner consistent with the member's beliefs and feelings about the profession".*

These definitions would provide a guiding template during the axial phase of analysis for identifying and interpreting the educator narrative obtained from the interviews.

Findings obtained from the first stage of analysis (open coding) were presented as salient themes characterising educator narrative. For the 20 **former** educators engaged, the following themes were surfaced:

FE-1: A passion for teaching and the opportunity to work with children was the main reason for entering the profession;

FE-2: Contributing to the development of children was generally experienced as highly rewarding (intrinsically);

FE-3: With time the passion for teaching declined and the occupation was increasingly associated with negative feelings;

FE-4: A heavy workload, multiple roles and responsibilities and constant change to work content made teaching a tiring occupation;

FE-5: A lack of time meant continuous pressure and sacrificing after hours and weekend time for work;

FE-6: Workload impacted on educators' private lives and compromised their work-life balance. This alters the effort-reward relationship for the educator;

FE-7: Teaching was experienced as stressful and adversely impacted on educators' health and well-being;

FE-8: Collaboration and support from colleagues and the principal, but also parents and the Department of Education, influence the experienced difficulty of, and satisfaction with the teaching job;

FE-9: Society in general undervalued the teaching occupation and educators' work.

Prominent themes emerging from the analysis of the 18 **current** educators' narrative were broadly similar:

CE-1: Current educators had a passion for becoming educators and positively impacting the lives of children, which is experienced as intrinsically highly rewarding;

CE-2: A significant workload and pressure characterise the teaching role, resulting in substantial after hours work;

CE-3: Remuneration is poor considering the effort required and hours worked;

CE-4: Educators experience teaching as demanding and stressful, which is further worsened by student misbehaviour;

CE-5: The Department of Education constantly introduces changes in the curriculum, which increases workload and demands on educators' time;

CE-6: Educators collaborate or deal extensively with various stakeholders, including staff, parents and the community;

CE-7: Society does not respect or appreciate educators and the teaching profession.

In general, passion; working with children; excessive workloads; pressure and stress; after hours work; compromised work-life balance and context-induced change (mostly constant curriculum-related changes) were common themes and experiences across the two educator groups. Differences observed between educator groups were more nuanced and a matter of emphasis e.g. for former educators the decline in passion they

experienced and the greater prominence of the stress and health impacts of the teaching job, were more emphasised as conditions giving rise to them leaving the profession. Current educators' gave more emphasis to the constant curriculum changes introduced by the Department of Education; a seemingly greater emphasis on society's low estimation of the teaching profession; and the perceived prominence and breadth of educators' work-related social relations (multiple stakeholders).

During the axial and selective coding stages the data that gave rise to these themes were examined in more detail and the focus was on cause-and-effect relationships (revealing antecedents and consequences) and how this clarified and explained the intention of educators to leave the profession.

The cause-and-effect sequence(s) that prompted *former educators* to leave the profession were, in essence, a heavy, taxing workload exacerbated by the continuous imposition of changes in teaching and work practice. This significantly infringed on educators' lives and resulted in extensive after hours work, which is further aggravated by a perceived poor workload-to-pay relationship. A very intense, most often negative, experience of the teaching job (especially of the demands) was the outcome of this work situation and this resulted in adverse health and well-being consequences, a state of dissatisfaction with the teaching job and profession, and ultimately resulted in educators leaving of the profession.

Current educators did not differ significantly from former educators in their reasons for leaving or their intention to leave the profession. Although multiple sources appear to prompt an intention to leave among *current educators*, these intentions are more likely the consequence of the overall effect of several job facets (features) and/or features of the profession. The single-most important consideration at the centre of current educators' highly stressful experience of teaching is the highly demanding workload and work setting. This impacts profoundly on educators' private time and work-life balance and is worsened by poor student behaviour and at times a perceived lack of support. This situation, for current educators, draws attention to the workload-to-pay ratio (factoring in after-hours work), which educators which they perceive as unacceptable. Moreover, when various stakeholders convey inadequate respect for and recognition of educators' work, dissatisfaction escalates. Continuous, high levels of stress, burnout, a significant decline in passion (a sign of detachment) and thoughts of

leaving the profession in search of ‘something else’ were the undesirable outcomes of this work setting.

As is evident from the data, both groups emphasised the substantial time and workload demands that they are faced with and the exhausting nature of the teaching job (and being overworked). Both educator groups reached a stage of significant dissatisfaction with ‘teaching’ because of the intense demands placed on time and personal resources (health, well-being, relationships), which resulted in continuous exposure to high levels of stress and which had adverse consequences. This stress-dissatisfaction outcome is a key indicator of educator turnover intention and actual departure from the profession. The analyses furthermore revealed that a complex interplay occurs between job features and features of the profession that give rise to overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job and profession. Positive (satisfaction generating) experiences of the profession are powerful, but unable to counter the strong negative experiences of job demands (workload) and resultant stress, which prompt dissatisfaction. These findings confirmed firstly that job satisfaction and profession satisfaction were observed as empirically distinct concepts in this setting. As is evident, the primary factors that contribute to educator profession satisfaction differ from those that contribute to educator job satisfaction. These findings provide an affirmative response to the second (subordinate) research question of the study (see section 1.4.2.2). Beyond this, the analysis of cause-and-effect dynamics and relationships that emerged during the axial and selective coding stages clearly revealed a complex and reciprocal interrelationship between educators’ job satisfaction and profession satisfaction. While both these constructs are influenced by different factors, they both influence the educator’s intention to leave the profession, but do so in distinct ways. With these observations and conclusions the third subordinate research question of the study (see section 1.4.2.3) was answered.

Overall these findings culminated in a theoretical frame (the emergent Grounded Theory) comprising 18 primary theoretical propositions (see Chapter 5) that explain the relationships between job satisfaction, profession satisfaction and educators’ intention to leave the profession (as influenced by contextual factors). The emergent Grounded Theory constitutes a comprehensive ‘answer’ to the major and undergirding research questions of this study as framed in section 1.4.1 (“Can the notion of

satisfaction with the profession (profession satisfaction) be differentiated from job satisfaction on theoretical and empirical grounds? If so, how does satisfaction with the profession, in addition to job satisfaction, assist in clarifying educators' intention to leave the profession?"').

### **6.3 Limitations of the study**

As in all studies, constraints were also present in the execution of the current study. These provide direction for ongoing, future research into the constructs addressed.

Grounded Theory methodology allows the development of rich and detailed theoretical propositions, which are generally acknowledged to remain close to the data. Notwithstanding the validity of the findings obtained through such a design and methodology, these cannot be generalised. This is a consequence of the ontological frame and the resultant epistemological and methodological considerations that guided the design and execution of the study. The generated propositions (Chapter 5) consequently need to be tested through appropriate quantitative methodologies before generalisation may be possible. Moreover, while significant findings and conclusions were recorded about satisfaction constructs in the workplace, and the influence of contextual factors, further theoretical elaboration is possible and needed.

A second key limitation of this study also follows from design and practical considerations, and relates to the focus on the education profession as research context. Consequently, while the context-rich nature of Grounded Theory and qualitative research in general is a salient strength, it simultaneously constrains interpretation scope. Extending the scope to embrace other application domains and occupations would in all likelihood strengthen the findings recorded in this study. The inclusion of two different cohorts of educators, drawn from currently serving educators, but also from former educators no longer employed in the education sector, provided significant interpretation depth and added substantial meaning and clarity. Securing respondents from different professions would have enriched the interpretation and subsequent theory significantly, and enabled more universal application to multiple professions.

Additionally, in the current study broad similarities and differences between the two different groups of participants (former and current educators) were considered and

revealed useful patterns in the resultant data. However, the findings could be further analysed to account to a greater extent for the differences (unique characteristics) of the two educator groups e.g. years of service, age, gender, qualifications, education career history and so forth. Examining the role of these differences in demographic features may reveal more nuanced patterns in terms of those factors that contribute to educators' job satisfaction, satisfaction with the profession and intention to leave the profession. Moreover, as the sample was based on purposive sampling (common in qualitative research) and not random sampling (more common in explanatory, quantitative research), a 'selection bias' argument could be raised by scholars aligning more with the latter research paradigm. However, this is less of a concern in interpretive research that aims to generate authentic ('valid') empirically informed hypotheses. Subsequent research aiming to test the theoretical propositions outlined would need to recruit participants from a greater geographical diversity.

The benefits of including groups of former and current educators in a single study (as in this instance) proved powerful, but comparability of the groups were limited by the fact that the majority of educators *currently employed* in the sector have not had any employment experience in other occupations or professions. At the same time, former educators gave responses based on a comparison of their *previous* educator role with their *current* role in a non-teaching sector. In doing so, they relied on recall and recollections of their past experiences – a common source of data in a vast number of studies (whether they are employing questionnaires or interviews as data-gathering instruments). The reliance on memory functions nonetheless can be viewed as a limitation in some quarters. The impact of this limitation in the current study could have been more pronounced were it not for considerations such as that educators' 'recall' was directed at significant personal and hence memorable experiences (leaving their profession and the reasons for leaving - for former educators; recent work experiences for currently serving educators). The impact of this limitation is also reduced because, regardless of whether the recounted experiences are 'correct' or 'accurate', in qualitative research the respondent's narrative is what is regarded as important... it conveys the participant's convictions and beliefs. Generally a significant proportion of research relies on retrospective recall and all research that aim to research past events or experiences (however recent – even if as recent as the previous day or earlier on the same day) fit this situation.

Notwithstanding these constraints several recommendations can nonetheless be made on the basis of the obtained findings.

## **6.4 Recommendations**

On the basis of findings of generated by this Grounded Theory study, several recommendations can be put forward in respect of future research and institutional management practices. On the one hand these suggest opportunities for advancing science and expanding the existing knowledge base, while on the other, it provides avenues for strategizing and intervention to impact educator retention and reduce educator shortages:

### **6.4.1 Recommendations for ongoing and future research**

1. The theoretical propositions advanced in Chapter 5 (section 5.4.6) suggest an extensive research agenda and consequently provide multiple avenues for continued research and advancing science.
2. In addition to these propositions (section 5.4.6), it is recommended that researchers systematically review and elaborate the conceptualisation of workplace satisfaction constructs and measurement instruments, to establish a more representative and comprehensive account of employee satisfaction in the workplace. This should enable a more accurate account of the influence of this construct in employee and organisational outcomes.
3. The notion of profession and/or occupational satisfaction provides substantial scope for explaining the intention to leave or remain in a job, but also the occupation - in addition to the existing contribution of the job satisfaction construct. Apart from bringing an enhanced understanding to turnover dynamics, profession satisfaction would bring added explanatory and predictive clarity to the issue of satisfaction and turnover intention. Areas of applied science, for example career management, career and vocational counselling, talent (and knowledge) retention and management, and human resources and management more generally, stand to benefit significantly from the added clarity generated by 'profession' or 'occupational satisfaction'.

4. The current study demonstrated how engaging former educators assisted in gaining a better understanding of the intention to leave among educators, and suggests an important area for further research (apart from further exploring the methodological contribution offered by such a strategy). Research concerned with turnover intention will benefit from further exploration of the perceptions' of those who have already left the profession (or occupation). An array of unspecified avenues for future studies of a more positivist leaning are locked up in the observed relationship between job satisfaction and profession satisfaction.

Apart from the preceding, multiple (more specific) recommendations can be made. The following are merely illustrative:

5. Undertaking studies that explore the relative contributions of job and profession satisfaction to the intention to leave the profession (or occupation) and thereby directing attention of policymakers and strategists to areas demonstrated to be most meaningful or impactful.

6. The theory advanced in the current study emerged from the exploration of educators' views, but future research should engage workforces across different professions and occupations to validate and elaborate the theory.

7. The findings similarly draw attention to 'stress' being a significant factor in educators' dissatisfaction, but little is known about the nature of stressors and variations in the pattern of stressors that operate across or in different professions. Even less is known about the various professions' exposure to governmental influence (factors) and their susceptibility to such external influences, and the resultant impact on workplaces.

#### **6.4.2 Recommendations for educational management and management more generally**

Although multiple recommendations can be formulated (given the rich and detailed data generated by the study) a few central and more general recommendations only are provided:

1. Generally, the evidence obtained around job and profession satisfaction and the influence of context on educators' experience of satisfaction suggest the adoption

of a systems perspective and mindset in order to adequately address the factors that give rise to educators leaving or harbouring the intention to leave the profession. A coherent, system-wide strategy that takes account of the various stakeholders and their respective roles and contributions in the experiences of educators is likely to prove more effective. To optimise and improve educator effectiveness and efficiency, the overall system needs to be the focus of corrective action, including addressing the influence of context and the micro situation of the educator.

2. In practice, conventional thinking around job satisfaction tends to consider the scope of job features that contribute to job (dis)satisfaction more narrowly - without adequately factoring in the probability that (dis)satisfaction with occupational features and/or contextual factors significantly contribute to educators' overall experience of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Awareness of this broader concept of workplace satisfaction and the different satisfaction constructs that co-determine an employee / the educator's satisfaction would provide an opportunity to consider different and alternative strategies for creating suitable work environments that would facilitate the retention of educators / employees.
3. A primary focus should be the identification and development of strategies and policies that will reduce the overall stress experience of educators and, more specifically, addressing those factors that have a pronounced negative effect on educators and employees. Factors originating external to the role and focus of the individual educator / employee should be a priority. Cultivating a school or organisational culture that is characterised by collegial and administrative support, helping, sharing, teamwork and collaboration, will strengthen educators resilience and to a degree act as a buffer against adverse demands, but also reduce employees' sense of being overwhelmed by these demands.
4. The boundaries that define the educator's job and hence job performance, should separate and shield the educator from distracting external or invasive influences (in particular contextual factors). This appears to be practically non-existent, because disruptive influences from external contexts passed through the system with apparent ease and enters into the educator's daily world with significant

disruptive force. This situation suggests that 'boundary management' requires more attention, implying:

- Managing and containing potential extraneous influences (e.g. the DoE and parental influences);
  - Managing the job parameters of educators and, if need be, reviewing and reducing functions e.g. through functional analyses that cuts away non-core activities and tasks;
  - Managing the focus and hence energy distribution of the educator job, so that this essentially remains on the core tasks which are also central to the identity of the profession (teaching and learning; optimising student learning, growth and development);
  - Revisiting and revising policy and curriculum in response to the changes in society, the economy and in technology. Innovation, creativity and problem solving abilities consequently must be considered in the curriculum, but balanced with the intent to optimise student learning and educator effectiveness.
  - This also implies consciously and systematically targeting administrative and bureaucratic loads, to ensure that the primary focus of the educator is freed up to concentrate on that which is essential for student development and achievement (educator passion needs to be protected and cultivated rather than allowing it to be eroded inadvertently).
5. Sufficient awareness needs to be established in the broader system and especially at the level of the institutional context (notably the DoE) in terms of its influence and contribution to declining educator performance and increased educator turnover. Again, systemic review (diagnoses and functional analyses) and considered intervention to optimise / streamline the roles, interfaces, contributions and efficiencies of different systems components (functional entities, departments, schools) that would also rationalise and consequently reduce unnecessary work, may prove beneficial over the longer term.

6. In the context of the broader profession and especially those acting as custodians of the education profession, and tasked to advance the interests of the profession, need to recognise their role and accountability for the current perceptions of the profession at various levels in society – notably at the level of the educator, the parent and several other broader societal constituencies (e.g. politicians, the media). Formal strategies and energy investment are required to correct broader societal perceptions of the profession.

## **6.5 The contribution of the study**

The findings of this study revealed the importance of looking beyond job satisfaction to additional and broader notions of satisfaction such as profession satisfaction (or occupational satisfaction) and workplace satisfaction to explain behaviour such as the intention to leave a job and occupation. In this regard the current study contributes not only to the field of Education but also to existing knowledge in the domains of Organisational Behaviour and Management.

A Grounded Theory of job and profession satisfaction was systematically generated and constructed from data obtained in the field of Education (“*The Theory of Job and Profession Satisfaction*”). It advances a conceptual frame that explains how educators’ intention to leave the profession is affected by job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession, which previously had not existed. In this manner it provides ‘new’ knowledge and understanding of the role of workplace-related satisfaction constructs and how these influence educator intention to leave the occupation / profession. More specifically, the study advances a considered (theoretically justified) and empirically substantive construct of ‘profession satisfaction’ (and therefore also occupational satisfaction). This is a novel and under-researched construct, which has not received meaningful research attention before. At an empirical level the influence of satisfaction with a profession (or occupation) historically would have been confounded (conceptually) with job satisfaction, except that the impact of profession satisfaction would not be measured and its influence in behavioural outcomes (such as the intention to leave a job and / or an occupation or profession) not accounted for. During the course of conducting this study, the grounding concepts for job and profession satisfaction were researched and definitions for job and profession satisfaction revisited and more precisely formulated. As a result, a clear basis has been

provided for conceptually differentiating between these constructs in future education and management research.

Generally the study brings a different and expanded perspective to the study of job satisfaction and the relationships of different satisfaction constructs to turnover intention more specifically. The findings of the current study are subject to further research (confirmation of the various posited propositions e.g. through quantitative methodologies), but have potentially significant implications for future research in this domain.

At an applied level the findings of the current study have put forward a contemporary, valid and above all empirically-informed theory of educator satisfaction and educator intent to leave the profession, and did so by developing and drawing on the various ‘satisfaction’ constructs and their correlates. It offers alternative and potentially more effective avenues for strategizing, policy development and intervention in educational management. If appropriately acted on, the findings of the study may significantly influence the retention of future educators in the medium to long term and may facilitate a positive impact on labour shortages in the sector.

## **6.7 Summary**

Prevailing sentiments about job satisfaction generally ruled out the existence and employment of alternative ‘satisfaction’ concepts – a perspective maintained over decades because of a range of different but largely inclusive definitions of job satisfaction. This allowed the incorporation of many features of the job context and broader organisational setting that otherwise would not strictly be considered part of the ‘job’ features giving rise to employee (dis)satisfaction. A diversity of different theoretical definitions, finding their way into different operational measures of job satisfaction, in practice confounds interpretation because of the inability to effectively compare observations. This perspective meant that the notion of satisfaction with an occupation or a profession was not considered by prior research. The literature on occupational commitment and career satisfaction as well as the findings of studies that explored predictors of one’s decision to leave the profession on the other hand supported the idea that satisfaction with a profession / occupation might be an independent construct that could influence e.g. educators’ intention to leave the profession – in addition to the role of job satisfaction.

The problem statement of the current study in essence posed the question as to why so many educators who leave a specific education job (at a school) also opt to leave the occupation or profession? The implication was that they not only experienced job dissatisfaction, but also a measure of dissatisfaction with the profession. In order to understand this situation and potentially influence (ultimately curb) turnover among educators, the current study was conceptualised. As a result the concepts of a *job* and a *profession* were closely reviewed as a point of departure for determining the differences in *job satisfaction* and *profession satisfaction*. The objectives of the study then were essentially to determine whether the differences between the defined constructs of job satisfaction and profession satisfaction could be justified theoretically, and if so, whether this could be observed empirically. In the final instance the study would attempt to generate a theory derived from empiricism that provides clarity on the differences between job and profession satisfaction among educators, but also the relationship of these constructs with educators' intentions to leave the profession. A Grounded Theory methodology incorporating semi-structured interviews with 38 participants (20 former and 18 current educators) were used to answer the fundamental research question and address the various objectives of the study.

Educator data revealed the complex environment in which educator jobs are enacted and influence the educator's experience of job and profession satisfaction. Satisfaction with the teaching job and profession was found to be associated with the specific characteristics or facets of the education job *and* the features of the profession, which gave rise to positive/negative job and profession experiences and consequently job and profession (dis)satisfaction. With reference to job satisfaction, the actual *task* of teaching or working with children was found to be the most enjoyable feature of the teaching job. Educators, however, experienced dissatisfaction as a result of a consistently heavy workload and regular changes in their work content. A heavy workload and changes in job content (teaching content, styles, practices) are the sources of substantial exhaustion, frustration and stress with the teaching job. Constant change in the work content of educators increases the scope of the teaching job and workload consequently spills over into the personal time of educators. Child misbehaviour in the classroom similarly contributes to frustration and exhaustion and ultimately educators' job dissatisfaction. More positive experiences were reported in

respect of the social context of the school, especially experienced support and collaboration from co-educators and the principal. However, experiences are not universal or consistent and the principal performs a determining role in educators' experience of satisfaction. Pay/salary, historically a source of job dissatisfaction, presented with mixed results with some educators indicating a degree of satisfaction, but most expressing dissatisfaction – with sentiments influenced by many considerations (e.g. demographics, perceptions of workload-to-pay rates).

Teaching, working with and contributing to the development of children and facilitating learning were experienced as deeply rewarding by educators and found to be substantial sources of satisfaction with the profession. The social and societal context, in addition, surfaced as an important feature of the profession and in this regard educators expressed disappointment with the teaching profession. This was largely a consequence of the lack of recognition they received for their role and contribution and the perceived low status of the profession. Facets of the profession that influence satisfaction that were observed, included autonomy and self-regulation, specialised knowledge and technology, but these are perceived as diminishing by educators. The latter they ascribe to reigning education policies and practices and as a result tended to convey dissatisfaction with the profession as a consequence. These observations align with the intention to leave, not only the teaching job, but also the profession.

*In closing:*

The idea that job satisfaction and satisfaction with the profession are different constructs that are meaningfully interrelated, was non-existent in scholarly circles at the onset of the study – a consequence of the overarching focus and perspective of scholarly focus. This study has now changed this position. At this very early stage the current study however also extends understanding about the interrelated role of job and profession satisfaction in co-determining educators' intention to leave the profession. This study found that job and profession satisfaction interact in complex and ambiguous ways to contribute to educators job experiences and their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the role. Job satisfaction could give rise to satisfaction with profession and vice versa. At the same time educators could be satisfied with the teaching job, but less so with the profession. Results revealed that over time, educators'

satisfaction with the profession declines as a consequence of their stressful experiences of the teaching job (i.e., job dissatisfaction).

Educators leave the profession for multiple reasons of which most translate into job dissatisfaction, profession dissatisfaction or both. Stress, for example, emerged as a consequence of an excessive workload (a prominent facet/feature of the teaching job) and is a key *indicator* of educators' potential departure from the profession. This conclusion is possible only because of the observed cause-and-effect pattern and cycle of ***workload demands-stress-dissatisfaction- intention to leave cycle*** observed in the data, in which stress occupies a central role. All other dynamic relationships feed into this cycle and contribute to educators' overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction. These findings and the theoretical propositions advanced provide insight into the situation of educators and offer multiple avenues for further investigating the dynamics and considerations that influence educator turnover / retention. It also offers alternative perspectives from which to approach strategies and policies for stemming educator turnover and reducing the steep direct and indirect costs associated with actual educator turnover.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A1: Interview Questions (*Former Educators*)

### SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (*Former Educators*)

#### SECTION ONE

##### **1. Why did you become a teacher?**

*1.1 What were the main reasons?*

**1.2 What about teaching appealed to you at the time?**

##### **2. What is it like to be a teacher?**

**2.1 What do you like about teaching?**

**2.2 What don't you like about teaching?**

##### **3. Why did you leave teaching?**

*3.1 Of the reasons you indicate, which were the most important?*

**3.2 For what other reasons do you think teachers leave teaching?**

**3.3 What would it take for you to go back to teaching?**

##### **4. Do you wish to add any other comments that may assist us with the research?**

#### SECTION 2

##### **Demographic Information**

**Gender:**                           **Age:**

Male

Female

- 5. What was the highest level of education you had completed when you left teaching?**
- 6. What was your type of teaching job?**
- 7. Were you a public schoolteacher or a private schoolteacher?**
- 8. In what type of educational setting did you teach? (primary or secondary school)**
- 9. Were you teaching in area of your expertise?**
- 10. How long before retirement age did you leave teaching?**
- 11. How long after you became a teacher did you leave the teaching?**

*Thank you very much for your participation – your contribution is greatly valued. I also want to assure you that your responses will remain completely confidential and anonymous.*

*Feel free to contact me at 0410571764 or any of the researchers indicated in the information sheet) if questions or observations come to mind at a later stage.*

## **Appendix A2: Interview Questions (*Current Educators*)**

### **SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (*Current Educators*)**

#### **SECTION ONE**

##### **1. Why did you become a teacher?**

*1.1 What were the main reasons?*

##### **1.2 What about teaching appealed to you at the time?**

##### **2. What is it like to be a teacher?**

###### **2.1 What do you like about teaching?**

###### **2.2 What do you dislike about teaching?**

##### **3. Why do you think teachers leave teaching?**

*3.1 Of the reasons you indicate, which were the most important?*

###### **3.2 For what other reasons do you think teachers leave teaching?**

###### **3.3 Do you intent to stay in teaching until retirement?**

*3.4 Why and what are the main reasons?*

##### **4. Do you wish to add any other comments that may assist us with the research?**

#### **SECTION 2**

#### **Demographic Information**

**Gender:**

**Age:**

Male

Female

##### **5. What is the highest level of education you have completed so far?**

- 6. What is your type of teaching job?**
- 7. Are you a public schoolteacher or a private schoolteacher?**
- 8. In what type of educational setting are you teaching? ( kindergarten, primary, secondary or high school)**
- 9. Are you teaching in area of your expertise?**

*Thank you very much for your participation – your contribution is greatly valued. I also want to assure you that your responses will remain completely confidential and anonymous.*

*Feel free to contact me at 0410571764 or any of the researchers indicated in the information sheet) if questions or observations come to mind at a later stage.*

## **Appendix A3: Information Sheet**

### **Information Sheet**

**Title of Project:** Job satisfaction, satisfaction with the profession and intention to leave the profession: the case of educators

**Investigator:** Hossein Ali Abadi    **Supervisors:** Dr Chris Van Tonder

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The aims of this study is to-explore job-related satisfaction among educators in relation to their intention to remain in / leave the profession. By participating in this study you will be providing a valuable perspective on how educators experience teaching

#### **Procedure**

If you decide to be involved in this study, you will participate in an interview that will be digitally recorded. The interview is expected to last between 45 and 90 minutes.

#### **Confidentiality**

The interview, all transcriptions, data analyses and consent forms will be stored in a secure; Curtin University approved location in locked storage for a period of 5 years. After this time, all data will be destroyed. Access to the stored data will be restricted by a password known only by the investigator and his supervisors. The findings from this study will be reported on and published in a doctoral thesis and in scientific journal publications although it will not be possible to identify individual participants as no identification numbers or names will be included in report material.

#### **Refusal or Withdrawal**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are therefore free to withdraw from the study at any time, for whatever reason, with no consequences. If you decide to withdraw from the study please contact Hossein Ali Abadi (Tel: 0410571764; [hossein.aliabadi@postgrad.curtin.edu.au](mailto:hossein.aliabadi@postgrad.curtin.edu.au)) at the earliest possible convenience. You don't have to sign anything to notify your withdrawal and you don't have to say why you decided not to participate. All data provided by you will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw.

#### **Approval**

This study has been approved under Curtin University's process for lower-risk studies (Approval Number SOM—25--2012.). This process complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Chapter 5.1.7 and Chapters 5.1.18-5.1.21).

For further information on this study contact the researchers named above (Hossein Ali Abadi: 0410571764; A/Prof Chris Van Tonder: 08 9266 9151), or the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee. c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth 6845 or by telephoning 9266 9223 or by emailing [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au)

## Appendix A4: Consent Form

<b>CONSENT FORM</b>	
TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE INFORMATION SHEET	
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b> <i>Job satisfaction, satisfaction with the profession and intention to leave the profession: the case of educators</i>	
<b>Investigator:</b>	Hossein Ali Abadi
<b>Supervisor:</b>	Dr Chris Van Tonder

1. I agree entirely voluntarily to take part in an interview of between 45 and 90 minutes as part of the above research project. This study is being undertaken as part of the requirement for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia. I am over 18 years of age.
2. I have been given a full explanation of the purpose of this study, of the procedures involved and of what will be expected of me.
3. I understand that I am entirely free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.
4. I understand that I will not be referred to by name in any report concerning this study.
5. I understand that the information collected will be stored in a University approved secure location in locked storage for a period of 5 years and then destroyed.

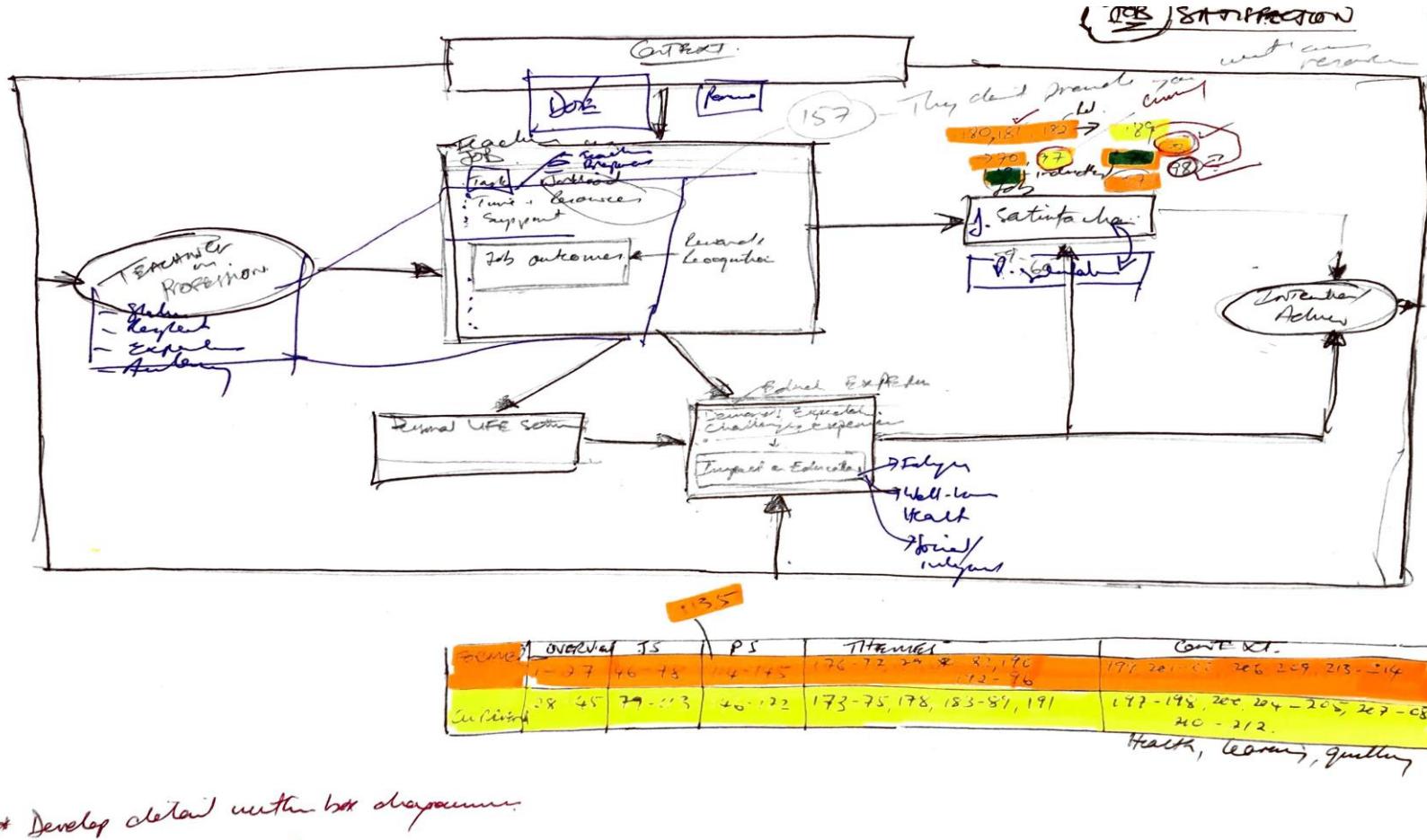
I have been given and read a copy of this Consent Form and Information Sheet.

Name of participant..... Signature and date.....

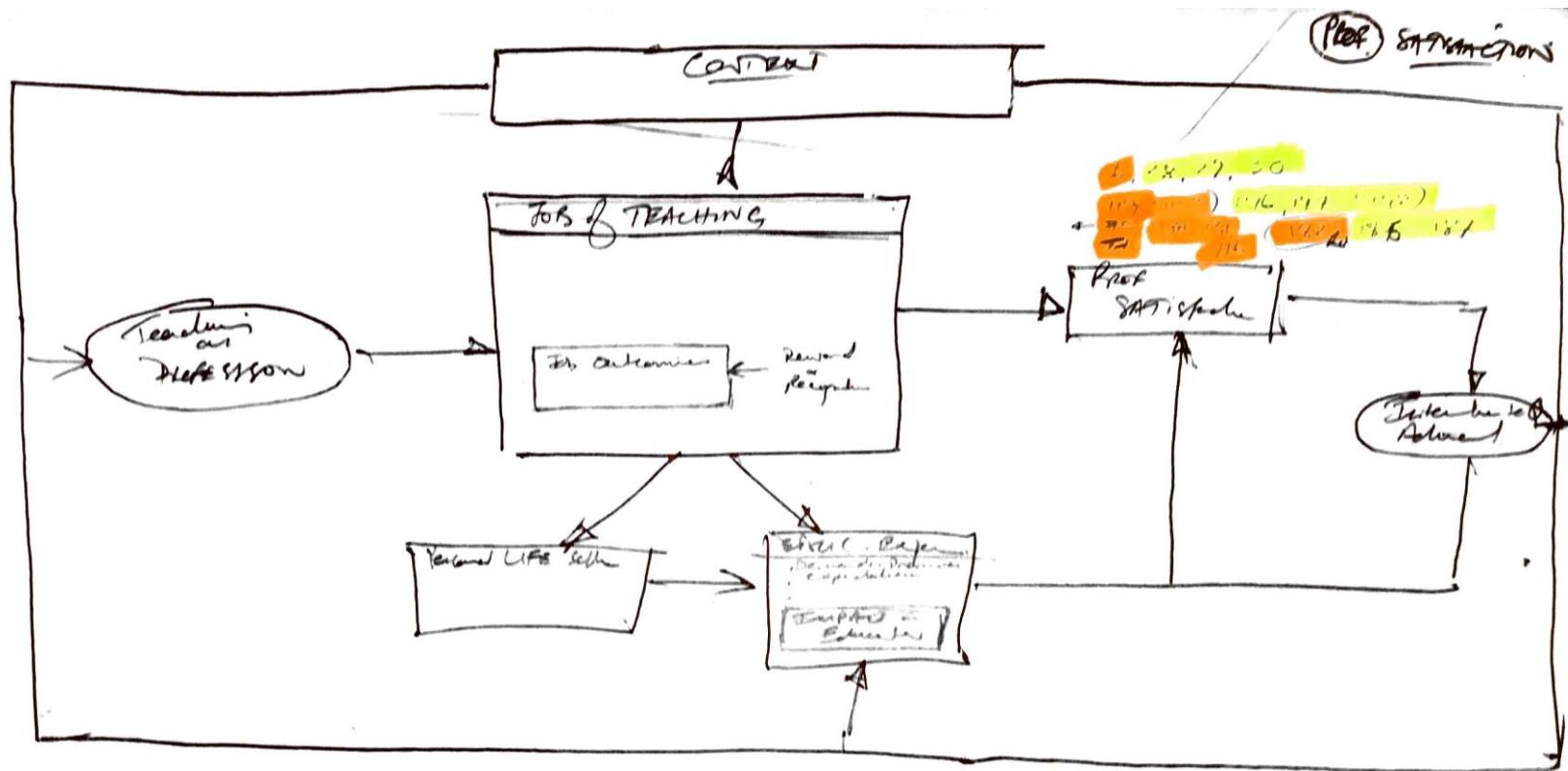
I have explained to the participant the procedures of the study to which the participant has consented his/her involvement and has answered all questions. In my appraisal, the participant has voluntarily and intentionally given informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Investigator..... Signature and date.....

## Appendix A5: Examples of rough notes/memo



\* Develop detail with box diagrams.



\* Develop detailed within-loop diagrams.

FORMS	OVERVIEW	S5	PS	THEMES	Content	
	1-27	1-6 - 7-8	114 - 125	126-132, 133-180, 182-183, 190-192, 196-197, 201-202, 203-204		
CURRENT	28-45	7-9-11-13	146-172	123-125, 178-183-189-191	Health, learning, growth	
					205-208 210-212	

Wood  
After hours

9

ending. You could work non-stop and still never be done with it. You have to reach a cut-off point where you just go, 'I've done enough for today, I'm over, I'm done.' But, seriously, you could just keep going, and going, and going" (F...). Another former educator indicated "The whole day you work in the class and after that outside the class, you have to work on the weekends, every day you come home with a pile of marking (F11, female, 36 years).

15

This workload is not a function of the teaching role *per sé*, but the result of the many roles the educator performs in the teaching job. Narratives indicated that the latter would often also include the roles of counsellor and parent. As one commented,

You are not only dealing with subjects, you are not a teacher just portraying information, but you are dealing specially with teenagers that are at a very fragile point in their development as well. So you are dealing with their emotional response. You are sometimes a psychologist, sometimes you feel like a mother or a parent for guys, like a father, sometimes you feel like a guidance counsellor because they come to you and they ask what you would do in this situation (F12, female, 34 years).

10

WT  
Tiring

Consistent with comments about workload, the teaching job was generally regarded as tiring (It is really a tiring job you are performing the whole time) - F...; or "It is very exhausting" - F12, female, 34 years), while six (6) participants described it as difficult and demanding, in particular when compared to their current jobs. It was for example said: "in my current job I have flexibility, I can shut my computer down and I am sure I will not be affected by students (F19, female, 37 years). Similarly, another stated: "Teaching is difficult. You have to do lots of work. It is really tiring. In my current workplace the workload is a lot less. There is no workload in my current job. I've eased my workload and I've eased my after-hours work (F20, female, 34 years).

Teacher  
W/ money  
All around

contest

stress

Of the job resources available to the educator, only a single (former) educator suggested the role of collegial support: "Teaching is great fun, we always had a good time, it is like a family" (F...). Instead, the issue of 'time' at the educator's disposal, closely associated with the tasks to be performed, came up frequently in the discussions... "It was all consuming. Took up not only your day and then you would come home and work right through your preparation for your classes and the marking" (F18, female, 34 yrs).

W/  
Sacrifice  
work at home

Former educators' experience of the teaching job appears to be dominated by 'stress', which, for many former educators, also appears to be one of the primary reasons that led to them exiting from the profession. As educators related their specific experiences or situations, several aspects of the teaching job emerged as sources of stress. These typically included stressors such as excessive workload, a lack of time, extensive duties, and changes in the curriculum. Participant F..., for example, illustrates the link between workload, sacrificing personal time, and stress: "You got too much work at home. It was too much and really stressful" (F...). Nine (9) of the former educators said that the stress they experienced was a determining factor in quitting teaching. One former educator for example indicated...

Quit

I decided to quit... without having a job to go and we had mortgage and everything like that... So it was a big decision to make... to resign from teaching, in terms of a financial perspective, but my husband and I decided that was the best decision. We needed the money but it was not worth the emotional stress (she left). Quitting for me was a huge decision from a financial perspective, we needed to pay the mortgage but I still made the decision, it was more about not having the stress of teaching (F17, female, 38 years).

P16  
remove  
replan  
relax  
over

The impact of teaching on educators' became apparent when participants' commentary about the lack of balance in their lives is considered. All 20 former educators described experiences of doing job-related tasks beyond the limits of the school day, workload and lack of time to complete tasks – all of which influenced their personal time. As one educator indicated, most of the time they took

(8) Conflict

Job Stress

Exp

misbehaviour  
conflict  
Teaching  
stress

I really did not enjoy teaching, it is just there was always potential for conflict because, you know, kids are kids. I had a constant knot in my stomach every single day starting the day. A child could do something in the classroom when they misbehaved. I always had to hope the class went well, kids behaved well and nothing went wrong I think it was very stressful even though I was doing it for 37 years. (P19, female, 37 years).

57

12

Another former educator added:

children  
stress  
disruptive

Dealing with kids who are troublesome is stressful. When I was a teacher, I had to be very, very strict straightaway because it was hard work initially but meant a lot less problems in the long run, because you got the class how you wanted it to be. But I did not like the discipline side of it, even though I think I did it really well. It was a very stressful aspect of the job. (P2, female, 34 years).

58

13

In fact, former educators regarded student misbehaviour as one of the most challenging aspects of teaching. For some of them, student misbehaviour was mentioned as an inevitable part of the working environment of schools. They reported that students' misbehaviour can be intolerable and educators need to spend a great deal of energy in managing it. It was mentioned by seven participants that a class can have students who bring so many issues that it can be overwhelming to the educators. They argued that the consequences of student behaviours can often be serious. Impairment of the effectiveness of teaching and learning was mentioned as the outcome of having students misbehaving in class. One said:

misbehaviour  
No teacher  
Exhausted  
different environment  
(Classroom)

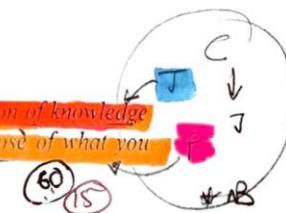
I worked in three schools and kids always misbehaved and that just let me down. You cannot teach when they misbehave, I just found that exhausting. A little misbehaviour is fine, but some behaviours are ridiculous and you have to kick them out of class every day, and this just gets you down after a while and it is not enjoyable and not fun, and in the end you get very tired of that. It was emotionally draining and it took my energy. It really made it a very difficult environment. (P5, female, 46 years).

C class  
↓  
J exp  
F5  
59  
14

Another commented:

disruptive  
picky  
teaching  
classroom

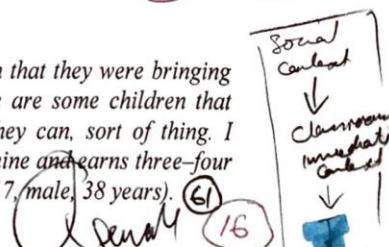
I had kids in class who were disruptive and made the actual passing on of knowledge difficult. I found that really frustrating. I found it defeated the purpose of what you come here for. (P20, female, 34 years).



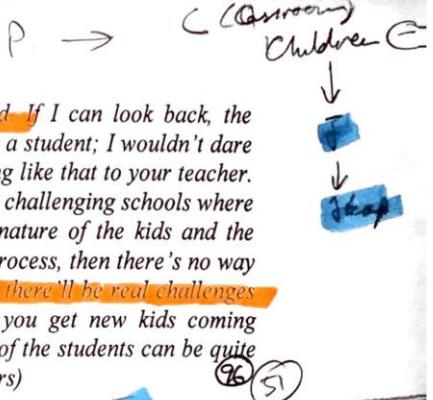
It was also stated:

Frustration  
Social problems  
classroom

I had become very frustrated with the children themselves, in that they were bringing so many of their social problems into the classroom. There are some children that don't want to be at school and they disrupt the class if they can, sort of thing. I remember there was a kid who told me, 'My dad works in a mine and earns three-four times more than you do, so why do I have to listen to you?' (P17, male, 38 years).



Coupled with a lack of support from schools, the former educators believed that student misbehaviour can lead to low educator morale. They believed school support is vital in creating a safe atmosphere that is conducive to learning. The lack of school support in enforcement of rules for



*children*

*perfect  
challenge*

Some kids are horrible to you. I think kids have changed. If I can look back, the respect for teachers is quite different. I remember myself as a student; I wouldn't dare say some of the stuff that you get. You wouldn't say anything like that to your teacher. But you get everything these days. I've taught at quite a few challenging schools where there's a firm procedure in place purely because of the nature of the kids and the students that you have. If you don't have a good stepwise process, then there's no way that you can actually try and contain those kids. Certainly there'll be real challenges that face you every year. Every year is different when you get new kids coming through. You'll always come across a new challenge. One of the students can be quite significantly different to your little plan (P9, female, 43 years)

(26) (5)

Another said:

*Teaching  
exhausting*

The problem of teaching is it's very exhausting. I find particularly mentally exhausting because your mind's just constantly sitting there and working out what the students are doing. Just sometimes as a teacher you have bad days where the kids are really grotty that day and they've given you a hard time. When you have those bad days you just feel really exhausted and you're just not feeling up to it. You sit and you think, 'oh god, what am I doing? Why am I doing this, what have I done?' (P5, female, 33 years)

(17) (52)

*Questioning*

It was reported that dealing with misbehaviour is hard for both young and experienced educators. In addition, it was reported some people leave teaching because of misbehaviour. For example, one experienced current educators participated in this study said:

J

*Behaviour  
management*

You just find behaviour management too hard. You just cannot deal with it every day. A lot of the younger teachers that leave do if they're still young and they've only been teaching for a short amount of time when they leave, that's usually what it's for. Some older teachers that leave before retirement age, some of them it's because of the behaviour. If they've been teaching for a long time, the behaviours have got a lot worse as time has gone by. One of my aunties, she's not teaching prior to retirement because she just was fed up with it. Because she's one of the more experienced teachers in the school and so the admin will be putting the most difficult kids in her class every single year and she just got sick of it and left. (P2, female, 39 years)

(28) (33)

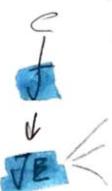
*Health  
wellness*

(9)

It was also discussed by the participants that the classroom becomes difficult when there is student misbehaviour. Nine participants overwhelmingly viewed students' misbehaviour as a challenging part of teaching in terms of disruption to their teaching in class. Misbehaviour was found to be dissatisfaction for different reasons, but the most important was that it took away from instruction. The data shows that disruption to the lessons and learning process was what the educators perceived as most challenging. This was because misbehaviour can divert them in class from being able to perform their roles effectively. Their argument was that they were prevented from doing their jobs when they had difficult students in class. For example, it was mentioned:

*Teaching  
Misbehaviour  
classroom  
children*

I just cannot teach when they misbehave. I just found that exhausting. Mentally, you're constantly thinking, particularly when you have a really horrible group of students, you're constantly thinking, what are they going to do? You're making sure that you cut them off because they do it. You're constantly thinking, what are they going to ask you, what are we going to do, what are we doing today? And you're in class and then suddenly someone throws you a hairball question, you're like, oh okay. So your mind's constantly going, what am I doing, what am I doing, how am I going to do this? And last year, for instance, I had two students getting ready to have a fight in class and the whole time my mind was going, okay, so if this happens, what am I going to do with them? And your mind's just going at a million miles an hour, saying, what am I going



99

54

(4)

Themes	Interview Quotations
Health	<p>It's very difficult and it ends up with people that are putting up with things like that and affecting their own health or leaving the profession and going somewhere else (C7, female, 46 years).</p>
Profession	<p>I think it's a very noble profession. I think it's very well needed (C5, female, 33 years)</p> <p>I think teacher have a sense that they have not proven themselves in a real profession, in the real world (C12, female, 30 years)</p>
Leaving/quitting	<p>I was very happy to leave the profession because I really didn't like the job (F11, male, 36 years).</p>
Stress . long hours	<p>One of the reason i quit I looked around and everyone said it will become easier, but I looked around me and see everyone is stressed everyone was pulling long hours to do report and to do something like that (F19, female, 37 years).</p>
different careers (teachers)	<p>You get a lot of people leaving within the first couple of years of them actually starting teaching and they go and find somewhere else (C2, female, 39 years).</p>
in teaching what is involved / what is involved when you're a teacher	<p>I still think leaving was the right decision for me and surprisingly I had a big range of people said you have not given it enough of a go and other said get out now, get out now before you become entrenched and you got no other option which was a bit sad state when you have got long term teacher they are saying to me (F18, female, 32 years). (179)</p>
Happy <del>surprise</del> outside (life after teaching)	<p>I'm happy enough doing what I'm doing at the moment. I'm not thinking about going back teaching (F9, male, 41 years). (180)</p> <p>I'm happy to have open nights and have parents and meetings. I'm happy to do anything that's involved with the child, I'm happy to do. And I believe that it's part of your job as a teacher. I went into it. I was not happy to give up my free time and do those things. I wasn't happy to use my time to complete what I deemed as unnecessary. (F19, female, 39 years) (181)</p> <p>It was a very happy part of my life when I first went teaching. I did get good holidays and I did have job satisfaction in terms of I was really happy with what I was doing.... But, yeah, when you're.. when you sort of not even really considered a teacher 'cause you're not even sort of recognised by the education department over there then that was the</p>
	(182)

## Appendix A6: Ethics Approval



### Memorandum

To	Mr Hossein Ali Abadi, Management, CBS	Office of Research and Development
From	Dr Htwe Htwe Thein, Coordinator (Research Operations), School of Management, CBS	Human Research Ethics Committee
Subject	Protocol Approval SOM-25--2012	Telephone 9266 2784
Date	18 October 2012	Facsimile 9266 3793
Copy	A/Prof Chris Van Tonder and Dr Leighton Jay	Email hrec@curtin.edu.au

Thank you for your "Form C Application for Approval of Research with Low Risk (Ethical Requirements)" for the project titled "Job satisfaction, satisfaction with the profession and intention to leave the profession: The case of teachers in Western Australia."

On behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee, I am authorised to inform you that the project is approved.

Approval of this project is for a period of twelve months 17/10/2012 to 17/10/2013.

The approval number for your project is **SOM-25--2012**. Please quote this number in any future correspondence. If at any time during the twelve months changes/amendments occur, or if a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs, please advise me immediately.

Please Note: The following standard statement must be included in the information sheet to participants:

*This study has been approved under Curtin University's process for lower-risk Studies (Approval Number xxxx). This process complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Chapter 5.1.7 and Chapters 5.1.18-5.1.21).*

*For further information on this study contact the researchers named above or the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee. c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth 6845 or by telephoning 9266 9223 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.*

## Appendix B: Open coding of educator narrative

**Table B.1: Frequency count: Educator narrative**

Word	Frequency Count	Former Educators (FT)	Current Educators (CT)	Total: All Educators (AT)
<b>teaching</b>	1620	20	18	38
<b>think</b>	1178	20	18	38
<b>kid(s)</b>	827	18	17	35
<b>work</b>	812	20	17	37
<b>school</b>	673	20	18	38
<b>time</b>	672	15	12	27
<b>year</b>	558	19	17	36
<b>people</b>	537	20	17	37
<b>teachers'</b>	517	20	18	38
<b>Job(s)</b>	453	20	18	38
<b>leave</b>	400	20	18	38
<b>student(s)</b>	334	15	14	29
<b>parents</b>	296	17	16	33
<b>wants</b>	295	4	3	7
<b>class</b>	275	18	17	35
<b>children</b>	237	15	11	26
<b>feel</b>	231	16	12	28
<b>needs</b>	227	10	5	15
<b>love</b>	200	11	10	21
<b>learning</b>	199	12	14	26
<b>change</b>	192	14	15	29
<b>society</b>	185	12	15	27
<b>system</b>	175	12	9	21
<b>passion</b>	162	7	6	13
<b>classroom</b>	161	19	17	36
<b>thought</b>	154	18	17	35
<b>life</b>	151	16	14	30
<b>helps</b>	136	8	7	15
<b>support</b>	135	16	12	28
<b>reason</b>	133	15	12	27
<b>personally</b>	130	8	3	11
<b>profession</b>	128	13	9	22
<b>principal</b>	118	12	8	20
<b>pay</b>	114	16	11	27
<b>home</b>	111	18	12	30
<b>family</b>	110	18	15	33
<b>holidays</b>	110	13	14	27
<b>money</b>	107	16	11	27
<b>education</b>	101	9	11	20
<b>expectations</b>	97	6	11	17
<b>interesting</b>	96	9	10	19
<b>stress</b>	96	15	10	25
<b>difficult</b>	95	11	12	23
<b>experience</b>	91	13	8	21

Word	Frequency Count	Former Educators (FT)	Current Educators (CT)	Total: All Educators (AT)
<b>child</b>	89	11	9	20
<b>department</b>	86	10	14	24
<b>knowledge</b>	85	12	8	20
<b>interaction(s)</b>	85	12	10	22
<b>course</b>	82	10	10	20
<b>workload</b>	81	12	8	20
<b>problems</b>	81	12	10	22
<b>respect</b>	81	12	9	21
<b>weeks</b>	80	14	11	25
<b>preparation</b>	76	16	15	31
<b>outside</b>	72	11	12	23
<b>curriculum</b>	71	13	9	22
<b>issue(s)</b>	67	12	8	20
<b>writing</b>	66	12	8	20
<b>happy</b>	66	14	11	25
<b>positive</b>	66	9	5	14
<b>Marking</b>	65	18	14	32
<b>managing</b>	62	3	5	8
<b>environment</b>	62	13	7	20
<b>staff</b>	62	11	7	18
<b>living</b>	60	6	2	8
<b>frustrations</b>	59	3	1	4
<b>reports</b>	57	12	8	20
<b>fact</b>	56	7	8	15
<b>hours</b>	56	15	10	25
<b>community</b>	55	14	10	24
<b>world</b>	55	12	10	22
<b>Relationship (s)</b>	55	11	7	18
<b>behaviour</b>	54	7	9	16
<b>Meeting (s)</b>	53	9	8	17
<b>government</b>	51	8	11	19
<b>call</b>	50	8	9	17
<b>value</b>	48	9	8	17
<b>Salary (ies)</b>	47	6	3	9
<b>Administration</b>	46	5	8	13
<b>fun</b>	45	9	5	14
<b>appreciation</b>	44	6	8	14
<b>activity (ies)</b>	43	15	6	21
<b>Progress</b>	43	5	3	8
<b>Satisfaction</b>	43	7	4	11
<b>emotion</b>	42	8	6	14
<b>rewarding</b>	41	8	7	15
<b>friend(s)</b>	39	8	10	18
<b>bureaucracy</b>	36	8	6	14
<b>development</b>	36	10	5	15
<b>social</b>	35	13	3	16
<b>Tiring (tired)</b>	33	5	4	9

Word	Frequency Count	Former Educators (FT)	Current Educators (CT)	Total: All Educators (AT)
<b>paperwork</b>	33	4	8	12
<b>Demand</b>	32	6	4	10
<b>contribution</b>	32	3	13	16
<b>Opportunity</b>	32	7	6	13
<b>Night(s)</b>	32	6	3	9
<b>exciting</b>	31	6	4	10
<b>planning</b>	29	9	7	16
<b>collaboration</b>	29	9	5	14
<b>reward</b>	29	4	3	7
<b>Flexibility</b>	28	7	3	10
<b>Growth (grow,</b>	28	8	2	10
<b>worry</b>	26	6	5	11
<b>Information</b>	24	4	5	9
<b>Misbehaviour (s)</b>	24	3	5	8
<b>Husband</b>	24	8	2	10
<b>weekend</b>	22	9	7	16
<b>rule(s)</b>	20	8	3	11
<b>performance</b>	19	5	6	11
<b>exhausting/exhaus</b>	18	8	5	13
<b>Mental</b>	18	2	3	5
<b>enthusiasm</b>	18	2	1	3
<b>health</b>	17	6	2	8
<b>wife</b>	17	4	3	7
<b>quit</b>	16	2	4	6
<b>Red tape</b>	15	2	3	5
<b>boring</b>	15	3	6	9
<b>Physically</b>	14	3	4	7
<b>sick</b>	14	7	2	9
<b>Income (s)</b>	14	3	1	4
<b>Success (and</b>	12	3	3	6
<b>balance</b>	12	5	1	6
<b>Earning</b>	12	8	4	12
<b>Concern(s)</b>	11	8	2	10
<b>colleagues</b>	9	11	15	26
<b>confusing</b>	9	3	0	3
<b>partner</b>	7	3	0	3
<b>Overwhelming</b>	7	3	1	4
<b>educator</b>	5	2	1	3
<b>Anxiety</b>	4	3	0	3
<b>Regulation</b>	3	2	1	3
<b>Unhappy</b>	3	1	1	2

**APPENDIX B (continued): Open coding of educator narrative**

**Table B.2: Categorisation of educator narrative and frequency counts**

Theme or meta-category description	Category code	Key words (subject)	Word count	Sub category count	Category count	Meta - category count
<b>1. Essential (distinctive) nature</b>						
<i>Facilitating and transacting learning</i>	1	teaching	1620			<b>1620</b>
<b>2 - 4.Cerebral, cognitive in nature</b>						
Dominant cognitive character of the job and profession						
<i>Thought processes</i>	2.1	think	1178	<b>1465</b>	<b>1829</b>	<b>1829</b>
	2.1	thought	154			
	2.2	reason	133			
<i>Data and knowledge</i>	3	Information	24	<b>165</b>		
	3.1	fact	56			
	3.2	knowledge	85			
<i>Learning</i>	4	learning	199	<b>199</b>		
<b>5 – The child as focus</b>						
	5	children	237	<b>326</b>	<b>1762</b>	<b>1762</b>
	5	child	89			
	5.1	kid(s)	827	<b>827</b>		
	5.2	student(s)	334	<b>334</b>		
	5.3	class	275	<b>275</b>		
<b>6 – Job</b>						
<i>In general</i>	6.1	Job(s)	453	<b>453</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>2560</b>
<i>Work (nature of)</i>	6.2	work	812	<b>812</b>	<b>1849</b>	
	6.201	activity (ies)	43	<b>43</b>		
<i>Workload</i>	6.21	workload	81	<b>498</b>		
<i>Tasks</i>	6.221	curriculum	71			
	6.222	preparation	76			
	6.223	marking	65			
	6.224	writing	66			
	6.225	reports	57			

<b>Theme or meta-category description</b>	<b>Category code</b>	<b>Key words (subject)</b>	<b>Word count</b>	<b>Sub category count</b>	<b>Category count</b>	<b>Meta - category count</b>
	6.226	planning	29			
	6.228	meeting (s)	53			
	6.23	managing	62	<b>62</b>		
	6.231	Flexibility (flexible)	28	<b>28</b>		
	6.236	collaboration	29	<b>29</b>		
<i>(Student behaviour)</i>	6.24	behaviour	54	<b>78</b>		
	6.241	misbehaviour (s)	24			
<i>Job demands</i>	6.25	demand	32	<b>83</b>		
	6.251	tiring (tired)	33			
	6.251	exhausting	18			
<i>Health</i>	6.261	mental	18	<b>63</b>		
	6.262	physically	14			
	6.263	health	17			
	6.2631	sick	14			
<i>Bureaucracy</i>	6.5	bureaucracy	36	<b>153</b>		
	6.51	red tape	15			
	6.52	administration	46			
	6.52	regulation	3			
	6.52	rule(s)	20			
	6.53	paperwork	33			
<i>(Job) Outcomes</i>	6.61	progress	43	<b>107</b>	<b>258</b>	
	6.62	development	36			
	6.62	growth (grow, growing)	28			
	6.63	satisfaction	43	<b>43</b>		
	6.64	fun	45	<b>45</b>		
	6.91	performance	19	<b>63</b>		
	6.92	success (and successful)	12			
	6.93	contribution	32			

<b>Theme or meta-category description</b>	<b>Category code</b>	<b>Key words (subject)</b>	<b>Word count</b>	<b>Sub category count</b>	<b>Category count</b>	<b>Meta - category count</b>
<b>7 - profession</b>	7 7.1	profession call	128 50	128 50	178	178
<b>8 - Context</b>						
<i>General context</i>	8 8.6	environment world	62 55	117	117	1796
<i>Immediate/job specific context</i>	8.1 8.2	classroom school	161 673	834	834	
<i>Broader institutional context</i>	8.3 8.31 8.32 8.33 8.4	department education department system change	86 101 175 192	362	605	
<i>Society and community</i>	8.51 8.52	government society community	51 185 55	240	240	
<b>9 - Time perspective in the role</b>	9 9.1 9.2 9.3	time hours weeks year	672 56 80 558	672 694	1366	1366
<b>10 - Challenges</b>	10.1 10.1 10.2 10.3	problems concern(s) issue(s) difficult	81 11 67 95	254	254	254
<b>11 - Expectations of incumbents</b>	11 11.2 11.3	needs wants expectations	227 295 97	522 97	619	619
<b>12 - Support in the role</b>	12	helps	136	271	271	271

<b>Theme or meta-category description</b>	<b>Category code</b>	<b>Key words (subject)</b>	<b>Word count</b>	<b>Sub category count</b>	<b>Category count</b>	<b>Meta - category count</b>
	12.1	support	135			
<b>13 - People: Social interface and context of the job</b>						
<i>In general</i>	13	people	537	<b>537</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>1916</b>
<i>Dynamic</i>	13.1	interaction(s)	85	<b>175</b>	<b>175</b>	
	13.11	relationship(s)	55			
	13.13	social	35			
<i>Partner</i>	13.2	partner	7	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	
	13.21	husband	24			
	13.21	wife	17			
<i>Co-workers</i>	13.31	teachers	517	<b>522</b>	<b>711</b>	
	13.31	educator	5			
	13.32	staff	62	<b>71</b>		
	13.33	colleagues	9			
<i>Parents</i>	13.4	principal	118	<b>118</b>		
<i>Friends</i>	13.5	parents	296	<b>296</b>	<b>296</b>	
<i>Family</i>	13.6	friend(s)	39	<b>39</b>	<b>149</b>	
	13.7	family	110	<b>110</b>		
<b>14 - Emotional experience</b>						
	14	emotion	42	<b>42</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>1156</b>
	14.01	feel	231	<b>231</b>		
<i>Positive affect</i>	14.11	happy	66	<b>211</b>		
	14.12	exciting	31			
	14.13	enthusiasm	18			
	14.14	interesting	96			
<i>Affective engagement and rumination</i>	14.21	anxiety	4	<b>126</b>		
	14.22	worry	26			
	14.23	stress	96			
<i>Negative affect</i>	14.24	frustrations	59	<b>93</b>		
	14.25	unhappy	3			
	14.26	confusing	9			
	14.27	overwhelming	7			

Theme or meta-category description	Category code	Key words (subject)	Word count	Sub category count	Category count	Meta - category count
	14.28	boring	15			
<b>15 - Experience of the role in general</b>						
	15.1	love	200	<b>362</b>	<b>453</b>	
	15.2	passion	162			
	15.4	experience	91	<b>91</b>		
<b>16 - Value orientation</b>						
	16.2	value	48	<b>48</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>161</b>
	16.21	respect	81	<b>81</b>		
	16.31	opportunity	32	<b>32</b>		
<b>17 - Recognition and reward</b>						
<i>Remuneration</i>	17.1	pay	114	<b>294</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>408</b>
	17.1	salary (ies)	47			
	17.1	income (s)	14			
	17.1	earning	12			
	17.2	money	107			
<i>Recognition and intrinsic reward</i>	17.4	appreciation	44		<b>114</b>	
	17.5	rewarding	41			
	17.5	reward	29			
<b>18 - work-life balance</b>						
<i>Life perspective</i>	18	life	151	<b>211</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>498</b>
	18	living	60			
<i>Home setting</i>	18.1	home	111		<b>275</b>	
<i>Personal time / After hours</i>	18.3	weekend	22			
	18.4	night(s)	32			
	18.5	holidays	110			
<i>Balance</i>	18.2	balance	12		<b>12</b>	
<b>19 – Leaving/quitting</b>						
	19.1	quit	16	<b>416</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>416</b>
	19.2	leave	400			
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>16810</b>	<b>16810</b>	<b>16810</b>	<b>16810</b>

