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Satisfaction, professional development, and professionalism of overseas South African teachers: The application of social cognitive career theory

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For almost 2 decades South Korea has been 1 of the popular destinations for English teaching. Due to the development of globalisation, a great number of qualified and experienced South African teachers decided to invest their career development and personal goals in 1 of the schools in South Korea. However, due to the social and cultural differences, many teachers decided to leave their position within the first few years of their contract. The frequent departure of teachers may negatively influence the students' achievement and the reputation of the school. The purpose of this study was to understand why South African teachers decided to stay in the same school for more than 10 successive years in South Korea. With the application of the phenomenological analysis, 37 participants were invited. Based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory, the results indicate that both the workplace and the social environment were positive for both career and personal development and growth. Government departments, policymakers, school leaders, non-profit organisational leaders, human resource planners, and researchers should regard the findings from this study as support to reform and improve their current regulations and plans for teachers' professional development and teachers' recruitment, particularly regarding school teachers' recruitment and foreign teachers' plans.

Keywords: English teacher; professional development; social cognitive career theory; South African overseas teacher; South Korea; teacher retention; teacher turnover

Introduction

Teaching overseas is a meaningful and life-changing mission, as teachers may provide a home-country educational system, curriculum, and instruction for students in the host country. Also, local students can enjoy international teaching and learning experiences from teachers with international backgrounds and knowledge. However, due to various reasons, such as location, cultural differences, misunderstanding, organisational conflicts, and environmental factors, previous studies indicate that nearly 20% of in-service teachers decide to leave the schools (Weiner & Jerome, 2016) after the first few years of their teaching service.

Overseas teachers' satisfaction, retention, and long-term professional development are important issues along with the academic issues of school system development and students' academic concerns. However, for more than two decades, teachers' professional development and enhancement have not been discussed (Bunnell, 2017). Although teachers' initial license training (i.e. qualifying programmes) and professional development (i.e. continual professional development) exist, teachers' satisfaction, retention, and long-term professional development have been neglected (Anthony & Ord, 2008). While several studies on the recruitment and satisfaction of teachers exist, only a few of these studies pertain to international schools (Poole, 2018). The issues of teacher satisfaction, retention, and long-term professional development in international schools are unique from those in local school systems, as are the research interests of scholars in improving them (e.g. international school teachers' mobility, international school leadership, expat students' learning and behaviour, etc.) (Dos Santos, 2019b).

Reports have focused on two issues, namely, teacher retention (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018) and teacher turnover (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teacher retention refers to whether or not teachers decide to leave the teaching profession. For example, in some previous studies (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006) teachers reported that they would quit the teaching profession after their current contract. In other words, the teachers said that they would leave the profession permanently due to discontent and conflicts (Ingersoll, 2001). On the other hand, teacher turnover is when teachers transfer between schools and school districts. An example of teacher turnover is if a teacher leaves the current school district but seeks other teaching and related career opportunities and development with a similar background (e.g. promotion, switching subjects) (Cornelli Sanderson & Richards, 2010). Based on the direction of this study, I reviewed both issues.

The frequent departures and changes of teachers and professional staff negatively impact students' performance, experience, and achievement (Ingersoll, 2003). Some studies (Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013) have indicated that if a teacher can follow and cover the subject matter for a group of students as a cohort for at least 1 academic year, students will have better achievement and self-efficacy due to the year-long ongoing development and feedback (Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). Some (Ronfeldt et al., 2013) indicate that in many subjects and courses, summative assessment is a popular evaluation tool for understanding students' continual development. The turnover of teachers and educational professionals, however, terminates the established trust and understanding between teachers and students (Dos Santos, 2019b). Although new teachers and educational professionals may match the previous overall performance immediately, the teacher-student relationships and trust need to be rebuilt (Dos Santos, 2020d).

However, it is not uncommon for teachers to leave their teaching careers for various reasons. Firstly, at the school level, Yang, Fan, Chen, Hsu and Chien (2018) indicate that a positive teaching and learning environment highly influenced the career decisions of both teachers and students. These authors also indicated that the respectfulness of the school leadership, co-workers, parents, and students are some of the key elements influencing teachers' career decisions and development (Dos Santos, 2019b). Also, the leadership style and cooperation between staff play important roles in turnover decisions. Dos Santos (2020d) indicates that teachers' retention and career decisions are highly influenced by the managerial style of their school leadership. The study collected data from 51 international school teachers who had taught in international school environments in China. International school teachers believed that acknowledgement from their schools' upper leadership, classroom authority, and teaching and learning environments influenced their career decisions. As most countries and regions are facing human resource shortages of qualified and experienced teachers (Cornelli Sanderson & Richards, 2010), it is important for schools to secure this personnel in order to maintain their professional development (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006).

Secondly, at the social-environmental level, Allensworth, Ponisciak and Mazzeo (2009) indicate that school location can affect teachers' motivation, turnover decisions, and mobility. Some scholars believe (Somerville, Plunkett & Dyson, 2010) that a large number of teachers, particularly teachers with family responsibilities and child-rearing duties, tend to work in suburban school districts instead of urban school districts. Cornelli Sanderson and Richards (2010) indicate that urban school districts, regardless of their financial resources, usually have larger student populations and student-teacher ratios. Teachers, therefore, may not be able to contribute enough to identify the problems and issues for each student. As a result, teachers may move to another school district or leave the teaching profession altogether due to personal reasons.

However, foreign teachers at schools and academies are more likely to leave their teaching positions within the first few years of service. Dos Santos (2020c) indicates that foreign teachers may face both school-level and environmental-level stress, pressure, discrimination, and bias from their co-workers and members of the public (Ullman, 2020). In addition, many international school teachers have expressed that members of the public in host countries discriminated against them due to their gender, skin colour, nationality, and language. Dos Santos (2020c) investigated the stress, burnout, and turnover issues of Black educational

professionals in the international school environment in South Korea. The Black international school teachers experienced extremely discriminatory and biased behaviour from the community members, co-workers, parents, and students due to their skin colour, nationality, and spoken language. It is worth noting that international school professionals, particularly teachers of colour (e.g. Black South African teachers), face stress and burnout at the school level. Discrimination and bias from local community members also play important roles in their career decisions (Poole, 2020), as skin colour played a role in their daily activities.

Theoretical Framework

I employed the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) to guide this study. The SCCT (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994) was developed to understand and explore career-oriented issues, such as the motivation for and reasons why individuals decide to select particular jobs and occupations for long-term development. More importantly, SCCT may be employed to explore why a group of individuals decides to remain in their current profession for long-term development, even if there are other attractive offers and opportunities beyond their current position (Kwee, 2020).

SCCT focuses on different cognitive-individual elements and how these elements connect with each other and with environmental considerations to help shape career decisions. Based on the theory, four factors influence individuals' career decisions, decision-making process, and sense-making process: 1) financial decisions, 2) career goals, 3) personal development, and 4) academic achievements.

Over the years, different researchers and scholars (Kwee, 2020, 2021) have drawn various conclusions and have developed various elements and aspects of SCCT. Bocanegra, Gubi and Cappaert (2016) employed the SCCT to investigate the career decisions and decision-making process of recruitment in school psychology. Thompson, Dahling, Chin and Melloy (2017) also employed the SCCT to understand the recruitment, career decisions, and job satisfaction of individuals who faced stress and challenges in an uncertain workplace environment. However, only a few studies employed the SCCT to understand overseas South African teachers' experiences and behaviour. Therefore, the SCCT was regarded appropriate to use as lens in this study.

Purpose of the Study

For decades, South Korea has been a popular location for international teaching, particularly for South African English teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to explore why South

African teachers decided to stay in the same school for more than 10 successive years while residing in South Korea. Employing a qualitative research method, I collected and analysed data and information through overseas South African teachers' responses in interview sessions. A teacher's decision to remain at or leave an institution is the result of a combination of factors, and the best way to understand this is to ask teachers about it directly. Unlike other research into the reasons why teachers decided to leave, in this research I focused on success stories in order to better understand how to increase the retention rate and how to reduce the turnover rate of teachers in an East Asian environment. In short, one research question guided this research study.

- 1) Why do overseas South African teachers decide to stay in the same school for more than 10 successive years in South Korea?

Methodology

The Application of the Phenomenological Analysis
Based on the nature of this study, I employed phenomenological analysis as the research design. The application of phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994) allows researchers to understand how individuals and groups describe their experiences, thinking, and feelings of a social problem or social issue under a similar social background. Unlike case study design, which may limit the site and population of the individuals and groups (Yin, 2012), phenomenological analysis encouraged the researchers to collect information from a broader population at regional or national level.

South Korea is a country with both domestic personnel and international expats. Participants (i.e. overseas South African teachers) may have different ideas, thinking, experiences, expectations,

and lived stories due to the location, school environments, and even the people. Therefore, instead of selecting a single site or single city for the research study, I collected qualitative data from participants in various cities, regions, and schools, which allowed me greater understanding of and information about participants in different geographic locations. As a result, the application of the phenomenological analysis was employed to exercise a wider study and understanding.

Participants

The snowball sampling strategy (Merriam, 2009) was employed for recruitment. In fact, the population of overseas South African teachers is not high. Therefore, it is hard to gather a group of overseas South African teachers who have been teaching in South Korea for at least 10 successive years. Therefore, the snowball sampling strategy based on referral from other participants could be appropriate.

Initially, based on my personal connections, five participants in Seoul were invited. The participants referred at least one potential participant with a similar background (i.e. overseas South African teachers) currently working in South Korea. After several rounds of invitations and recruitment, a total of 37 ($N = 37$) participants were invited to take part in the study. Table 1 refers to the background of the participants. Based on the purpose of this study, the participants were required to meet all of the following criteria for inclusion in the study:

- 1) Having taught for at least 10 successive years in South Korea;
- 2) Being a South African citizen;
- 3) Currently working in the school environment;
- 4) Bring at least 18 years old and a non-vulnerable person.

Table 1 Participants' demography

Name	Current city	Highest qualification
P#1	Seoul	Bachelor
P#2		
P#3		
P#4		
P#5		Master
P#6		
P#7		
P#8		
P#9	Busan	Bachelor
P#10		
P#11		
P#12		
P#13		
P#14		Master
P#15		
P#16	Daegu	Bachelor
P#17		
P#18		
P#19		
P#20		Master
P#21		
P#22	Daejeon	Bachelor
P#23		
P#24		
P#25		Master
P#26		
P#27	Gyeonggi-do	Bachelor
P#28		
P#29		Master
P#30		
P#31		
P#32		Doctorate
P#33		
P#34		Bachelor
P#35		Master
P#36	Jeolla-do	
P#37	Jeju-do	

Data Collection

Qualitative data collection tools and methods were employed. According to Seidman (2013), in-depth and rich interview data may be collected from multiple interview sessions. Therefore, I followed Seidman's (2013) guidelines. Two sessions of interview activities/sessions (a total of 74 interview sessions) were employed for data collection (from May 2020 to November 2020). As South Korea has different regions and provinces, participants were living and working in different regions. Also, due to the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the South Korean government recommended the social distancing regulation. Face-to-face meetings

and chats were discouraged due to the global pandemic. Therefore, the face-to-face interview sessions and arrangements were not applicable. As a result, the researcher only employed distance-based (i.e. online) interview sessions through social media applications (i.e. WhatsApp).

The distance-based interview sessions (Kwee, 2021) with the 37 participants were done using face-to-face video interview session. I used a digital recorder for voice message recordings. During the interview sessions, only voice messages were recorded. No visual images were recorded during any sessions. All participants agreed with this arrangement. Each interview session lasted from 67 to 98 minutes. After I had collected and arranged the data, I invited the participants for a member checking interview to confirm the data captured (Creswell, 2014). All participants agreed with the data and further analysis could be done.

Data Analysis

As for the data analysis, I employed the open-coding and axial-coding techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). After the data collection procedure, I analysed the data for themes and subthemes. Firstly, I employed the open-coding technique (Thomas, 2006) to categorise different groups and themes based on sharing. After the open-coding technique, I grouped data into 12 themes and 23 subthemes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

However, based on the recommendations of different qualitative researchers (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2012), I conducted the axial-coding technique (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to narrow down the first-level themes and subthemes to influential groups. Therefore, after the procedure of the axial-coding technique, I eventually categorised one theme and three subthemes discussed in the following section.

Human Subject Protection

In this study, which was supported by the Woosong University Academic Research Funding 2021/2022, I followed the Declaration of Helsinki for privacy and data protection.

Findings and Discussions

All 37 participants engaged in sharing regarding internal workplace experiences and external environmental feelings about their teaching experience in South Korea. It is surprising that, according to the data collected, no one expressed significant negative experiences during their time teaching. Based on their sharing, none of them planned to leave South Korea or switch their working environment. These findings are indicated through the presentation of themes and subthemes in Table 2.

Table 2 Themes and subthemes

Themes and subthemes
Workplace and social factor: Positive environment
Positive managerial style and leadership
Enjoy the intercultural teaching and learning environment
The respectfulness from co-workers, parents and students

Workplace and Social Factor: Positive Environment
 Many participants indicated that when they first arrived in South Korea, their co-workers became their first friends. Poole (2020) indicates that a positive environment in co-workers' informal groups always increased the overall experiences of new employees. If individuals received negative feedback during their first few months in a host country, they are more likely to leave the country after their contracts expire. In this case, I did not capture significant feedback about negative experiences with co-workers. On the contrary, most felt that their "co-workers, particularly the local Korean staff, were friendly and helpful" (P#9). One participant explained:

People in Korea are very friendly and helpful ... this is the first country where I started my teaching career ... my co-workers helped me to buy furniture, supplement and so ... I enjoyed my time in Korea and I cherished my decision of coming.... (P#28)

Positive Managerial Style and Leadership

At the interpersonal-level, all participants expressed positive experiences regarding the managerial style and leadership at their workplace. Many asserted that without these positive teaching and learning environments, they would have left the school and the country. However, due to the positive school environment, none decided to leave. According to a previous study (Ingersoll, 2003), teachers are more likely to stay at their school or workplace if the school and leadership met their expectations. Firstly, when asked about their overall feelings towards and satisfaction with the teaching and working experience, all participants said that they had a positive attitude towards the openness of the school leadership because they were allowed to teach what they believed. I captured one significant experience:

Although we have to follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum as the guideline, we can use our own ways, strategies and materials ... the school leaders believed us and supported us ... some schools, however, always challenge the teachers and doubt their ways of teaching ... in fact, if you do not believe in the teacher, don't hire them ... once you believed in, trust them.... (P#29)

In addition, freedom of classroom management was another important factor for teachers to stay at the same school. Although, at some schools, school administrators require of teachers to set up some Korean-oriented guidelines and regulations in order to meet the expectations of society. Based on the

sharing of these participants, I captured many positive experiences:

Our school follows the Canadian standard of teaching and certification. But unlike the schools in Ontario, we can adjust the learning materials based on the actual needs of learners. The school leadership also provided many supports, such as IT [Information Technology] materials, textbooks, and equipment to the classroom. (P#36)

Aside from the provision of classroom hardware, many believed that their schools' organisational behaviour also increased the overall satisfaction and engagement of the school staff. According to some previous studies (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006), teachers tend to stay at a school for long-term development if the school has a positive teaching and learning environment. Unlike with many business organisations, many of the participants considered their schools as their life-long employers in which they would develop their careers. Many participants thus contributed much energy to the school, students, co-workers, and activities. Some maintained that their schools organised a lot of social and cultural activities in order to engage all people together:

Our Principal and department leaders treated us [teachers] as family members. We go to each other's living units for Korean New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, Labour Day and else ... we also manage different activities based on both Korea and Westernised festivals, the Thanksgiving in the United States ... I think we are not a number, we are really a part of the school.... (P#14)

In short, in light of previous studies (Dos Santos, 2020b), employees always care about the managerial style and leadership at their workplace and consider it when making decisions regarding their career development. In this case, many believed that the positive working environment increased their satisfaction and sense of belonging. Through the lens of SCCT (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent et al., 1994), personal developments and career goals guided their career development and decisions.

Enjoyable Intercultural Teaching and Learning Environment

At the school-level, many averred that both local and international schools always encouraged intercultural teaching and learning strategies and environments. Firstly, both schools and teachers always encouraged out-of-classroom education, such as community learning, field trips, community service, and experiencing fine art from the

community. Many indicated that their schools managed at least one out-of-classroom activity and learning opportunity each semester for community-based learning:

... we learnt visual arts in classroom ... but at the same time, I could bring my students to some local museums, famous points and establishments for drawing ... history ... community learning ... it is very uncommon in many local schools in East Asia ... more importantly, our school encourages this outdoor curriculum as a part of our learning experience.... (P#15).

Besides this out-of-classroom education, many expressed intercultural experiences being merged into their school environment. With the reflection of previous studies (Dos Santos, 2020a), teachers may have a higher level of encouragement and motivation if their teaching can engage the local communities (Pang, Wang & Leung, 2016). A large group expressed that their schools always engaged with the local community and residents for intercultural learning and exchange to establish connections beyond the school campus. School members (i.e. staff, students, and parents) coordinated volunteering services with local communities and senior housing. Also, local community members contributed workshops and services back to the schools during traditional Korean festivals, such as Korean New Year. Many participants explained that they had never experienced such community connections at other school districts outside of South Korea; several meaningful experiences were captured:

I think the local government and the school always like to establish the connections between each other ... both the local community and school leaders do not view us [staff] as workers but members of the community and the school family ... this is the reason why I don't want to leave.... (P#22)

During the weekends, our school campus will open for volunteering workshops which encouraged school staff and community residents to teach some interesting skills and even language workshops ... our school and community encouraged us [staff, students, parents, and local residents] to share their expertise as the intercultural learning ... no limitations, we always share our international expertise to all.... (P#18)

Our school always coordinates with local NGOs [non-profit organisations] for intercultural workshops during the weekends ... and during the teachers' professional development hours ... we hosted those after school activities with local experts for Korean cultural knowledge and we [foreigners] hosted our local expertise to the residents inside and outside the school ... I enjoy the open-learning and open campus ideas.... (P#34)

Besides academic achievements, grading, and exams, international schools in South Korea also focus on social and cultural experiences and learning for both local and foreign students. Previous studies (Poole, 2018) indicate that local

students enrolled in international schools may lose their local identity, in this case, Korean, due to the school environment. At the same time, previous studies (Maeder-Qian, 2018) also indicate that international students should enjoy local social and cultural experiences and environments even if they are enrolled in international schools. As a result, the schools incorporate and balance both Korean and foreign elements into their teaching and learning materials and school environments. Such balances are not only beneficial for students but also for foreign teachers who may not have a Korean background and can thus learn local social and cultural knowledge at the schools. Based on this intercultural teaching and learning environment and arrangement (Cruwys, Ng, Haslam & Haslam, 2021), a large number of participants expressed experiences of positive teaching and learning strategies that highly satisfied their personal goals as teachers:

Not only my students gained their education at the intercultural school and community environment, I also learned the intercultural knowledge ... the Korean and international school experiences ... from our campus and the local Korean community ... Seoul is a unique historical city where we can find different people and rich history in the same city.... (P#2)

Based on the SCCT (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent et al., 1994), both personal developments and career goals continued to guide the career decision and retention of their groups of school teachers in South Korea. It is worth noting that the openness of the teaching and learning environment of their school (i.e. workplace) took a significant role in their career decision and development. Yang et al. (2018) indicate that as long as the teachers had a sense of satisfaction, they were more likely to stay in their workplace for long-term development. In this study, based on the SCCT (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent et al., 1994), many teachers decided to stay due to the workplace environment.

The Respectfulness of Co-workers, Parents, and Students

I used to teach in Malaysia, the parents and students are rude and unpolite ... they always look down people because of my skin colour, my race and my nationality ... but in South Korea, at least I am a person and teacher for their children ... I would never leave South Korea.... (P#8)

Korea is welcoming and open for international professionals ... when I was in Korea 13 years ago, I experienced discrimination, social bias and stigma as a foreigner ... I love South Korea and the Korean people ... I would contribute my energy for the Korean society.... (P#5)

Surprisingly, nearly half of the participants had taught in other Asian educational institution before embarking on their current teaching in South Korea. It is worth noting that all the participants with previous experiences shared negative

experiences of their time there. Previous studies have indicated that foreigners and expats in South Korea always faces discrimination, stigma, and bias due to their skin colour, nationality, and language (Suh, Flores & Wang, 2019). However, all participants expressed positive experiences, particularly regarding respectfulness from co-workers, parents, and students towards school teachers in South Korea. Thus, through the SCCT (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent et al., 1994) lens, discrimination and negative experiences always impact teachers' career decisions and sense of belonging (Dos Santos, 2020b).

Firstly, many participants explained that both local and foreign co-workers respected their (i.e. the participants') personalities, characteristics, and lifestyle. None of the participants was East Asian, so it would be reasonable to assume that they might have experienced discrimination and social bias due to their physical differences (Lalvani, 2015). However, none expressed any experiences of discrimination, stigma, or social bias due to their characteristics in South Korea. As reported in previous studies (Poole, 2020), such positive experiences increased foreign teachers' satisfaction and sense of belonging in South Korea. For example, one teacher expressed how the open-minded attitudes of his co-workers allowed him to stay for more than two decades:

In many Asian countries, for example in the Middle East ... people always discriminate Black people because of our skin colour ... but in South Korea, people are positive and normal ... we are here for teaching and education ... my co-workers are helpful and respect people with different background ... we talked and shared many issues about discrimination ... you cannot see this. (P#31)

Secondly, students highly respected their teachers regardless of their characteristics, such as skin colour and nationality. A number of participants indicated that students could face discrimination against teachers based on their skin colour and nationality. Anthony and Ord (2008) indicate that some students and people liked to give their teachers nicknames based on their skin colour. However, in this case, all participants expressed positive feelings due to their students' attitudes and hard-working behaviour. Two significant conversations were captured regarding this theme:

Both Korean and foreign students in my school environment are very hardworking ... we have intelligent discussions and talks inside and outside the classrooms ... it is uncommon in many public school districts ... the school also encouraged us to establish language lab and experimental groups ... both students and I can contribute our energy and knowledge at the school.... (P#7)

In some rural and small regions, many of us [teachers and students] live close to each other within the same community or district ... we helped each other without any limitations in between ...

many students and I would have after school chats and religious services together. We wouldn't categorise each other because the kindness of the town and their residents.... (P#37)

Thirdly, parents played an important role in the career decisions and sense of belonging of these groups of participants at the Korean schools. Previous studies (Li & Vandenberg, 2020) indicate that positive connections between family and teachers always increase the educational achievement of students and the satisfaction of teachers. In this case, many of the participants' schools hosted seasonal family days to encourage school-family discussion (Alaçam & Olgan, 2019). For example, a large number of participants indicated that due to the notion of filial piety from the traditional Korean practice, many parents showed respectfulness to them as teachers. The respectfulness, however, is not widely shared in many Westernised countries, one said:

I love Korea is because many parents showed the passion and respectfulness for their children, school, and teachers ... the notion of respectfulness and filial piety are excellent in the Korean environment as we are at the same level ... as a teacher, I am motivated because I can see the positive connection for us. (P#17)

In short, based on SCCT (Lent & Brown, 1996; Lent et al., 1994), personal development and career goals take significant roles in individuals' career decisions. In this case, many participants indicated that the openness of the society and their school personnel showed respectfulness and openness to their position and status in the Korean society. More importantly, participants with previous experiences in other Asian countries and regions expressed their experiences and lived stories for significant comparison. Based on all these lived stories and sharing, I can confirm that both personal developments and career goals mainly influences the career decision of these groups of individuals at one of the Korean schools.

Limitations and Future Research

Each study has its own limitations. Firstly, in this study I collected qualitative data from 37 overseas South African school teachers in different geographic parts of South Korea. However, most of the participants were located in large metropolitan and international-based cities. Due to the development of globalisation, residents in these metropolitan and international-based cities should be open to foreigners and non-Korean speakers (Dos Santos, 2019a; Gökdağ Baltaoğlu & Güven, 2019; Rabie & Naidoo, 2016; Weybright, Caldwell, Xie, Wegner & Smith, 2017). However, the experiences and lived stories of foreigners living in suburban and rural communities may be different. Therefore, future research may collect both qualitative and quantitative data from participants

in these particular regions.

Secondly, due to geographic limitations, I could not conduct face-to-face interview sessions. For future research studies, researchers and scholars may employ face-to-face interviews or case studies for a certain group of individuals or sites in order to capture in-depth and rich data and sharing from participants.

Thirdly, as South African teachers may provide teaching in many countries and regions internationally, it is important to capture voices from South African teachers in different parts of the world. Future research studies may capture voices from different countries and regions for a comparative study for greater understanding.

Conclusion and Contribution to the Practice

Based on the SCCT, the elements about career goals and personal development significantly influenced the turnover and career decisions of a group of overseas South African school teachers who worked in South Korea for at least 10 successive years at the same school. Although some indicated that the first few years of their living in South Korea were difficult due to the language and culture differences, all advocated that South Korea and their current workplace offered them the enhancement and satisfaction for career development and personal development.

Contributions to the Practice

Firstly, expats and international professionals face challenges due to various elements and reasons. In this study I outlined the ideas about job satisfaction and retention for overseas teachers, in this case, South African teachers. The findings of this study fill the gaps in the areas of international workers' problems, workplace conditions, and human resource retention in South Korea.

Secondly, government departments, policymakers, school leaders, non-profit organisational leaders, human resource planners, and researchers should take this study as support to reform and enhance their current regulations and plans for teachers' professional development and teachers' recruitment, particularly in the areas of international school teachers' recruitment and foreign teachers' plans. As many countries and regions are in need of qualified and experienced school teachers, different parties should upgrade and improve their plans regularly to satisfy their current teacher population. Otherwise, the frequent turnover may negatively influence both students' achievements and the schools' reputations.

Thirdly, skilled South African professionals and qualified teachers are excellent candidates for teaching internationally. In this study I also provided an outline and background about how other South African teachers reflected and shared their international teaching experiences in different

parts of the world. Therefore, both pre-service and in-service South African teachers may consider international teaching opportunities in order to open their horizons to the global level.

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Notes

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