

Harmonious passion as an enabler of motivation for the teaching profession: Insights from a small-scale qualitative study

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Abstract

Current statistics in the UK and internationally continue to indicate concern with teacher retention. This small-scale qualitative study explores how harmonious passion can contribute to continued teacher motivation, adopting the duality of passion model. Two teachers participated in a semi-structured interview, within a primary school in South-East England. Harmonious passion enabled teachers to maintain motivation due to the increase in job satisfaction and wellbeing. Results suggested that a lack of teacher autonomy and pressures placed upon teachers by government and school policies resulted in a declination of harmonious passion and subsequently lowered teacher motivation.

Keywords

Teacher retention obsessive harmonious passion motivation.

Introduction

Teacher retention is an ongoing concern in the United Kingdom as well as internationally (Perryman and Calvert, 2020; Sutcher, Darling-Hammond and Carver-Thomas, 2019). Educational research has identified concerns related to the initial expectations of teachers on entering the profession, the subsequent declination for teacher working conditions and the impact these pressures have on teacher retention (Barmby, 2006, Gonzalez et al., 2008, Sulis et al, 2022). These concerns inform teacher retention research, providing an insight into the issues that teachers face (Webb and Vulliamy, 2006). According to both international and United Kingdom (UK) research, teachers enter teaching for similar reasons and leave at alarming rates (Perryman and Calvert, 2020, Sulis et al., 2022). This research offers an argument relating to how 'harmonious passion' can contribute to continued teacher motivation, thereby preparing a sustainable future for teachers. This small-scale research carried out in one school in the South-East of England, reports on findings where teachers interviewed offer their insights into how they maintain their motivation within the profession.

The most recent statistics reported by the School Workforce Census in England for state schools identify that 31.3 percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of their career (School Workforce Census, 2023). The pattern of approximately 30 percent of UK teachers leaving within five years of qualifying has been consistent over the last 5 years. Research carried out with potential teacher training candidates in 2021 indicated that intrinsic factors such as wanting to give back to society and sharing subject knowledge were motivating factors (Morris, Huat See and Gorard, 2020). This research suggests that it is not the lack of passion or motivation of early career teachers (ECTs) but the realities of the teaching profession which bring careers to a premature end (Barnes, 2019; Glazer, 2018).

Despite the challenges of a teaching career, it is possible to remain in the profession long term (Perryman and Calvert, 2020; Mackenzie, 2012). By understanding teacher motivations, solutions to obstacles can be addressed, establishing an approach to teaching which is sustainable and harmonious to other aspects of

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a teacher's life. Passion is a 'major motivational force' in teaching (Vallerand et al., 2008, p. 377), building the work ethic and inclination to invest time and energy (Vallerand et al., 2003). Therefore, this research aims to understand the passion which many teachers experience during their career and how this can be established in such a way which can be maintained and motivating for teachers.

Literature Review

Research investigating low teacher retention considers issues ranging from policy impact, personal teacher attributes, to general ideas of motivation (Bruinsma and Jansen, 2010). Generally, teacher retention research tends to offer a negative outlook on teacher retention, outlining the potential factors which result in low retention (Geiger and Pivovarova, 2018). Research appears to lack insight on *how* to address these issues, with minimal ideas on how to *solve* the challenges that teaching brings in everyday life (Huat See et al., 2020).

Teacher retention concerns those who are Early Career Teachers as well as established educators (Hayes, 2004). Approximately a third of teachers in the UK leave the profession within the first five years of starting (Foster, 2019). Twenty one percent of early careers teachers who entered teaching in 2017 were no longer employed in the education sector two years later (Long and Danechi, 2021). Some Early Career Teachers (ECT)s feel there is a mismatch between what they have trained to be and the everyday life of a teacher (Barnes, 2019), with ECT motivations and priorities of policy makers conflicting (Cooper, Gibson Research/ DfE, 2018). Teachers construct a sense of identity in the workplace, because of the 'personal resources' employed in teaching (Nias, 1999, pp. 236).

The decline in teacher retention has been a persistent concern for many years, for which different UK governments have responded with several initiatives, including financial incentives to encourage new teachers (Boyd et al., 2011). Retention bonuses and bursaries have been employed to instigate a rise in teacher applicants, but this does not directly target the challenges that teachers face, instead making teaching a more accessible profession to people (Boyd et al., 2011). Moreover, See et al. (2020), in their systematic review of research into teacher retention, concluded that financial incentives had little influence. The Government claim they are re-evaluating existing 'accountability systems', in an effort to create a culture within the teaching sector which considers teacher wellbeing (Long and Danechi, 2021, p32). Ultimately, it is the recognition of individual needs and motivations that can be informative in understanding how to keep teachers in the profession.

In 2018, the UK Government instigated research into the underlying influences on teacher attrition using workload review groups (Cooper Gibson Research/ DfE, 2018). They sought a deeper understanding of how to enable a manageable work-life balance, including facing the issues of high workload and the support systems within schools (Long and Danechi, 2021, pp.32). Workload is a recurring theme in identifying push factors in leaving the profession; (Lande, 2017; Mayer, 2021). Despite knowing the 'realities' of teaching prior to entering the profession, workload tends to result in teacher's leaving the profession – a conclusion from research with a 'broad' sample of teachers who have left and who are considering leaving (Perryman and Calvert, 2020). The teacher wellbeing index (2018) calculated that 29 percent of teachers work more than fifty-one hours per week with 74 percent unable to relax outside of work hours (Education Support partnership, 2018). If teachers feel as if their life is *consumed* by their job, they are at risk of experiencing obsessive passion – with the harmony between work and life becoming compromised (Houlfort et al., 2012).

Although there is expansive research exploring *why* teachers may leave the profession, there is little evidence on how we can ensure that teachers *remain* in the profession (Arther and Bradley, 2023).

Teacher motivation is a key factor in retaining teachers. Work motivation is the energy that influences someone to continue to carry out work-related activities, impacting 'direction, intensity and duration' (Pinder, 1998, pp.11; Han and Yin, 2016). Work motivation within the teaching profession, relates to teacher actions, teaching practice, as well as innate qualities, such as wellbeing and satisfaction (Han and Yin, 2016). Initial motivations not only inform us of why students enter teaching but suggest how durable their motivations may be, depending on whether it keeps them in the profession (Heinz, 2015).

Arthur and Bradley (2023) carried out case studies with nine schools and found that intrinsic factors sustain the motivation of teachers, whilst extrinsic factors can hinder it. Their analysis identifies the inter-connection between the intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors, demonstrating that both can contribute towards a teacher's motivation and intention to stay in the profession. By nurturing these qualities and this 'sense of purpose' within teachers, the motivation can be maintained that trainee teachers initially feel (Acker, 1999, pp.4). Furthermore, research carried out by Proudfoot and Boyd identified how motivation to engage in professional learning relates to internal and external motivation. Notably, teachers associated a sense of internal professionalism with a sense of vocation, autonomy, trust, collegiality and professional wellbeing. Whereas their experience of managerialism was reflected externally in their view of managing the class, judgement and the burden of proof (Proudfoot and Boyd, 2022; Proudfoot and Boyd, 2024). Knowledge of teacher motivations, therefore, is an essential component to understanding teacher retention. Understanding why teachers enter teaching and what keeps teachers passionate, *whilst* overcoming the predominant challenges of teaching, could provide insight into how to better support teachers.

Research on why teachers have chosen to leave dominates this field with minimal focus on those that remained in teaching long term (i.e. exceeding ten years; Mackenzie, 2012). Typically, these research projects recruit participants who have left or considered leaving teaching within the first five years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003; OECD, 2005; Burghes et al., 2009). Day and Gu (2009) argue that this reveals little regarding teacher commitment and motivations (Chiong, Menzies and Meenakshi, 2017). This research aims to decipher the *positive* aspects of teaching which retain teachers. Although, a small contribution to research on this matter, these efforts to understand teacher motivations can begin to offer some insight which may further inform policy makers and impact future decisions in schools (Manning and Patterson, 2005).

Passion and commitment are two examples of teacher attributes (Moè, 2016). However, overwhelming pressures with the profession can shift passion towards obsessive passion, enhancing feelings of guilt amongst teachers due to pressures to meet unattainable self-imposed and/or externally imposed expectations (Braun, Roeser & Schonert, 2020, Houlfort, *et al.*, 2012). Psychological research has labelled *passion* with positive connotations of liking (or love) where a person is committed and values an activity (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand, 2010). Passion is complex, it formulates part of one's identity and leads motivation. The dualistic model of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003; Bélanger et al., 2011) offers a novel model of passion, that addresses the limitations of established models which define passion as one drive towards an activity which is valued and invested in (Gilal et al. 2019). The 'dualistic model of passion' establishes a continuum between healthy and consuming levels of passion, harmonious and obsessive respectively (Houlfort et al., 2012; Marsh et al., 2013). These two forms of passion are often used to categorise teacher motivations and actions, in attempts to distinguish whether teaching works in harmony with other aspects of life (Moè, 2016). To summarise, harmonious passion is 'positively related' to an activity where (in this instance teaching), a person can fulfil their role harmoniously in their life (Bélanger, 2011, pp.541). In contrast, obsessive passion is experienced when a teacher is consumed by their work, feeling guilty when they are doing activities unrelated to their job (Moè, 2016; Houlfort et al., 2012). The

influence of harmonious passion is one of many factors identified as influencing teacher retention (Moè, 2016). Other factors include self-efficacy, job-satisfaction, motivation, and well-being (Rosa and Vianello, 2020; Moè, 2016). Elements of harmonious passion are negatively related to job burn-out and intention to leave (Moè, 2016; Høigaard et al., 2012). With the resources to face challenges and experience job motivation, a longer, fulfilled career in education can be achieved (Barnes, 2019). This small-scale study focuses on one component of teacher retention; the influence harmonious passion has on teacher motivation. The research was particularly focused on understanding factors which supported teacher's in maintaining harmonious passion and motivation. If teachers invest themselves into their job due to their inherent passion for teaching by 'intensifying' their work, it challenges their identity and intention to remain in teaching (Smethem, 2007). Harmonious passion is achieved when teaching fits in harmony with other aspects of life, however, this can only occur when external conditions allow for this. By providing a work environment which seeks to prevent obsessive passion and instead nurtures harmonious passion, it may be possible to reduce the mental toll on teachers (Bélanger, 2011). The dual model of passion could appear binary and adopting the model might obscure some of the grey areas, where a teacher may experience both harmonious and obsessive passion. However, Box and Draper noted, 'all models are wrong, but some are useful' (Box and Draper, 1987, pp.424). By understanding the extremes of the continuum, the dualistic model of passion can offer insight into the experiences of teachers within the grey areas as well.

The research was carried out at an academy converted primary school, situated in the Southeast of England. It is a primary school which caters for children aged two to 11 years old, due to the additional nursery setting available.

Methodology

The research consisted of a small qualitative research project investigating the question, 'how might harmonious passion enable teachers to maintain motivation?', applying an interpretivist approach (O'Donoghue, 2007; Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Qualitative methodology was selected due to the nature of the research; the sample was small scale due to the availability of participants in the setting and the focus on personal accounts of the topic.

A qualitative and interpretivism paradigm was selected so a variety of 'social, realities' could be analysed deeply, using qualitative data which was thematised (Clarke, Braun and Hayfield, 2015, pp.223). Interpretivism assumes that a participant's response is personal to their own reality of experiences and values, and it is not to be taken as a consensus. The interpretivist paradigm views the 'human experience' of each participant as a unique, valuable contribution to the research (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Qualitative research gave participants 'voices' and allowed the researcher to undertake 'naturalistic enquiry' which established an understanding deeper than what could be shown through actions (Gonzales et al., 2008, pp.3). Although data was unlikely to be representative due to the small-scale and subjectivity of individual experiences, it offered an insight into a teacher's experiences (Alsaawi, 2014). Thematic analysis is a systematic approach which aims to identify key themes, such as trust and relationships, challenges and support, motivations and expectations and authority. Inductive thematic analysis was used, establishing themes from the recurring ideas that emerged in the data (Proudfoot, 2023). Descriptive codes then summarised the key themes and strands found, that built the general feelings and ideas of the two participants. This approach to thematising data was flexible and subjective with the researcher's lens evolving throughout the research process (Braun et al., 2018; Clarke, Braun and Hayfield, 2015). A subjective view involves the researcher consistently considering the context of the data and the role of the researcher in the data collection (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Clarke, Braun and Hayfield, 2015).

The research question focused on how harmonious passion can benefit teachers in maintaining motivation, thereby addressing emerging issues of teacher retention. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted, enabling participants the opportunity to 'elaborate' after prompts and share narratives (Alsaawi, 2014, pp.151). The questions were therefore decided before the interview, selecting open-ended questions which were piloted in advance, to ensure they allowed the participant to expand on their experiences as much as possible (Alsaawi, 2014).

Participants were interviewed to gain a deeper narrative and understanding of their experiences of maintaining their passion and motivation in the profession. Interviews posed a possible ethical challenge in which interviewees may feel disinclined to share personal information and may withhold the true extent of their feelings and experiences (Alshenqeeti, 2014). It is with this in mind that the ethical considerations of this research were made clear with anonymity and confidentiality highlighted on multiple occasions, throughout the research process. Although this potential uncertainty to share information could not be fully eliminated, with participant rights made clear, this possibility decreased. Therefore, when answering personal questions, for example, questions relating to wellbeing, participants may not be fully honest. They may not trust the researcher enough to share this information when it is recorded. To reduce the risk of 'misleading answers', the confidentiality of the research was emphasised to keep participants at ease as well as their right to withdraw or refuse to answer specific questions (Adoma Asante, 2009, pp.16; BERA, 2019).

Two interviews were conducted and transcribed. The participants consisted of two teachers who worked at the same Primary School, located in the Southeast of England. Participants were recruited on a voluntary basis. All teachers in the premises were informed of the research project and participants came to the researcher with interest in taking part. Two of the teachers were especially interested in sharing their views, both fitting the criteria of being employed at the school as full-time primary school teachers. Both teachers had been in the profession long term and were therefore able to reflect upon a range of experiences and changing personal circumstances. The researchers particularly wanted to gain a deeper understanding of how these teachers experienced their long careers in the field of education. Participant 1 had been linked to this school for approximately six to seven years, completing training following an apprenticeship model at this setting, then continuing to work there. Participant 2 had been at this school setting for one and a half years, with it being their third employment in a school setting. Participant 2 spent eighteen years at their first setting and then proceeded to have a couple of months out of teaching between posts. Participants were encouraged to discuss their experiences overall as teachers, not limiting discussion to their time at their current primary school alone. Interviews offered 'subjective accounts' which informed the researcher of narratives and personal feelings of the participant, regarding teacher motivation and wellbeing (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, pp.289).

Ethical permission was granted by Canterbury Christ Church University, and followed BERA guidelines (BERA, 2019). Interviews were audio recorded, rather than using field notes to avoid bias relating to the researchers' perception of relevance. When arranging suitable times for interviews, it was discussed with the participant where they would feel most comfortable to answer questions (Alsaawi, 2014). For one participant this was in their classroom after school hours to minimise disruptions and the other interview was carried out over an online video call. Both scenarios ensured that information was confidential, and they remained anonymous to other staff members. From this, interviews were transcribed and along with the results from the questionnaires, themes were identified. To analyse, open coding was adopted. Initially, open codes identified broader themes within the transcription, using singular words and colours/ codes as labels (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Parameswaran, Ozawa-Kirk and Latendresse, 2020). Following this, an axial and analytic code was established for each topic, before identifying themes. These themes

were selected by analysing the transcription to see ongoing topics and ‘regularly occurring textual material’ (Moser & Williams, 2019, pp.48).

Findings

Data collected through semi-structured interviews were thematically analysed; to explore the question, how might harmonious passion enable teachers to maintain motivation? (Braun, *et al.*, 2018). Underpinning the notion that harmonious passion may retain this initial teacher motivation, is the concept that passion may support or increase motivation of teachers. Stating this draws a central focus on passion and its relevance to motivation, indicating how passion influences teacher retention. The following four interwoven key themes emerged during the analysis: trust and relationships, challenges and support, motivations and expectations and finally, authority.

Table 1. Motivations and Expectations.

Initial Codes		Analytic Codes	Themes	Participant Examples
Passion	P	<u>Motivations</u> for remaining in teaching and its link to teacher expectations.	Motivations + Expectations	‘reached the point of can’t do this anymore’ ‘ <u>you</u> are passionate, you know if I’m not the one fighting for the kids then who is’ ‘I don’t think as a profession it is realistic’
Self-efficacy	SE		<i>Passion, self-efficacy and job satisfaction are all important contributions to motivation. Nurturing these aspects may contribute to teacher retention. These personal motivations may be neglected by disharmony conducted by ‘unrealistic’ expectations, which create an unmaintainable work-life.</i>	
Job	JS			
satisfaction				
Boundaries	B			
Appreciation	A			
Recognition	R			
Unrealistic	UR			

Participants reported that passion was a ‘very strong’ reason for remaining in teaching and this idea of passion reoccurred throughout the research. This established the hypothetical stance that nurturing this passion can lead to teacher retention due to it being a key motivator; Participant 2. described teaching as something they ‘love’ and ‘magic... that still hasn’t worn off’. Teachers recognised that this was feelings of passion, explicitly stating that they were ‘relying on passion’ (Participant 2).

in their current place of employment. It was these issues which hindered feelings of harmony in the workplace; one participant felt no or little harmony between their work and other aspects of their life, stating that they felt a pressure to ‘sit straight down’ to complete work with ‘about an hour’ awake not working (Participant 2). The experiences shared by this participant were very concurrent with the obsessive passion model (Gillet *et al.*, 2022). Participants felt that it was the increase in teacher expectations and workload which decreased harmony between their job and personal life.

Table 2. Challenges and Support.

Initial Codes		Analytic Codes	Themes	Participant Examples
Workload	W	Impact of the demands of teaching, in conjunction with the professional support available (concerning management)	Challenges + support <i>Challenges include workload, consumption of time, behaviour management and overall impact on wellbeing. Are these the main drivers of teachers leaving the profession?</i> <i>Support within a school community greatly impacts the harmony that teachers feel within school. It is these sources of support which help teachers overcome challenges and provide needed support to excel towards expectations.</i>	'school offers the opportunity for us all to thrive and be our best staff' 'blood, sweat and tears. You know the school gets the best of me' 'I don't want to be like this anymore... be stressed and not have a life'
Time	T			
Behaviour	B			
Wellbeing	W			
TA/ staff support	T			
Leadership	L			
Mentor support for ECTs	M			

Challenges were apparent in having a significant impact on wellbeing. Participants detailed the profession as 'blood, sweat and tears' and 'draining' their intrinsic resources and motivation (Participant 2); Bukhari, et al., 2023). Participants expressed that a sustainable workload and supportive environment prevented them experiencing 'short term burnout' (Participant 1.), a condition which they felt was subject to the school's expectations. This direct link between workload and support and burnout was also indicated by Participant 2. They expressed they were amid experiencing this high workload and lack of support which was resulting in a negative impact on their motivation. Participant 2. expressed that their teacher training prepared them for the realities of teaching, making it clear 'it's not an easy job' but even with being 'prepared to work hard' they were still experiencing 'burnout' and other indicators of obsessive passion (Austin et al., 2014). This suggests that teachers do not leave the profession due to false realities but because these realities can lead to 'the point of can't do this anymore' (Participant 2.). One participant indicated that with a supportive culture, high workload was less of a hinderance to motivation. This brings forth the two components of this theme; arguably, support and challenge have the potential to balance one another or respectively cause issues of dissatisfaction or satisfaction within the workplace.

Table 3. Authority.

Initial Codes		Analytic Codes	Themes	Participant Examples
Government Policies Leadership	G P L	Attitudes towards systems/ impact on pressures on practice	Authority <i>As discussed above, the authority figures impact teacher practice. These roles of higher power set out the expectations of teachers and thus apply the pressures that teachers may face in the workplace. It is the attitudes of authority which determine some challenges that teachers face.</i>	'expectations of what...schools are putting on you... think some of its due to the government expectations put on them... just got ridiculous' 'culture of fear' 'all too powerful... bit bullying'

When exploring the changes needed to 'revolutionise' the current teaching conditions, participants identified leadership and changes in administration to be a significant factor. All participants generally agreed exactly that 'differences in leadership made an impact on the harmony' they felt. Responses highlighted the impact of leadership – leadership with a 'good attitude to workload' (Participant 1.) were reflected positively and described as supportive. Attitudes to government administration were however, responded to negatively. Interviewees deemed expectations unreachable because of government pressures on schools. Workload issues were put down as wholly dependent on administration expectations, blaming excessive paperwork on lack of trust. Participants discussed 'authority' powers as in terms of school leadership and government policies and how these have a detrimental impact on the overall experiences as a teacher. Government authority set the standards for expectations, consequently setting higher challenges, workload and pressure. They then attempt to provide appropriate support to minimise these issues; resolving the problems which arose as a result of government decisions in the first place (Peters, 2018). Teachers, therefore, must sustain their passion in the face of these pressures, managing the dual stressors of government initiatives including the setting of standards, followed by establishing support systems to manage problems and pressures. In simpler terms, it is arguably the policy problems which are a result of the policy design, then requiring a policy response; it is a cycle of government inflicted issues and responses within the educational sector design (Peters, 2018).

Table 4. Trust and Relationships.

Initial Codes		Analytic Codes	Themes	Participant Examples
Trust Evidencing Autonomy Work relationships Children relationships Parent relationships	T E A WR CR PR	Impact of relationships on job satisfaction; including personal and autonomous relationships	Trust + Relationships <i>Trust in the context that Leadership should trust that teachers are experienced and equipped for the job. There is a growing expectation to prove pupil progress. Minimising the 'paper trail' required means teachers can place more time into children's learning, thus providing greater progress. Relationships in the workplace determine job satisfaction they experience. It is these relationships which motivate teachers, drive passion and provide support.</i>	'like a community' 'kids is what keeps you going' 'needs to be a bit more trust in teachers... rather than having to spend hours and hours having to evidence it'

Despite the challenges that were identified, participants detailed the aspects of teaching which help foster harmony. Trust was a recurring theme during interviews, the idea of giving teachers more autonomy and recognising that teachers are adept without having to prove it in paperwork. Interviewees explained that this would provide them with more satisfaction by lowering the 'ridiculous amount of work' (Participant 2.). One participant explained how their current school focused more on 'achieving rather than evidence' (Participant 1.) which provided a happier work environment. As a result, the participant expressed more harmony between their job and personal life, but this level of harmony was limited due to remaining teacher expectations. Emphasis on support and relationships and their contribution to job satisfaction was evident throughout. This satisfaction generally stemmed from this idea of 'a community' established between staff, children and parents (Participant 1.). This response resulted in the final theme of 'trust and relationships' being identified in the thematic analysis.

Discussion

The definition of harmonious passion used in this research project was constructed by Vallerand (Vallerand *et al.*, 2003). When a person is harmoniously passionate, they experience greater resilience for an activity. The positive emotions associated with this type of passion act as a motivational force in circumstances of stress or difficulty (Pacquette, et al., 2022). A person with harmonious passion also experiences increased levels of job satisfaction, self-efficacy and positive affect (Moè, 2016). Another positive affect of harmonious passion is the increased feelings of 'belonginess' at work (Forest, Spehar

and Stenseng, 2016, pp.17). Participants stressed the positive impact of 'a community' feeling within the school, nurturing their passion (Participant 2.).

This is a qualitative study and the experiences shared are individual to each participant, therefore, not to be generalised. The research was small scale, developing out of an Initial Teacher Education student project, and based on one primary school in Southeast of the UK limiting the scope of data, however, this project does offer an insight into teachers' feelings and opinions of their profession in this context. The dual model of passion was applied to understand whether the teachers maintained their teaching careers harmoniously or obsessively. The aim was to understand how teachers can better experience harmonious passion, a passion which motivate and retain teachers, healthily and long term.

Themes of trust and relationships, challenges and support, motivations and expectations and authority were recurring through the project, showing an agreed consensus amongst participants towards change in creating harmony in the workplace. Overall, participants expressed a need for revision of teacher expectations – suggesting schools need to implement boundaries for teachers so that it is acceptable to put their wellbeing first, alongside other commitments that demand attention. Interviewees implied that there needs to be a general reconsideration of what is realistic of teachers and what is maintainable. Although schools can do their best to implement a culture which prioritises a work-life balance, one which enables harmonious passion, government pressures need to ease along with an increase in support for teachers. Ultimately the themes identified can be summarised in relation to one another: the expectations and challenges enforced by administrators impact teacher wellbeing and motivation (McCarthy, 2019), it is however the relationships, support and trust that influence feelings of motivations. The questions the research propose include how harmonious passion is achieved and why it may lead to motivation, leading to increased teacher retention.

The study suggested that passion was a key motivator to remain in the profession. It was evident that the teachers in this study had the work ethic to endure challenges that teaching brings. The study did not assume that because the participants were able to cope with these challenges, that they must have been experiencing harmonious passion (Vallerand et al., 2003). By not assuming this, we have to consider the possibility that the participants were able to adapt to this, possibly obsessive, lifestyle to have remained in the profession. Coping mechanisms are key to remaining afloat in any stressful situation; any efforts teachers make to minimise stress are a coping mechanism (Hamilton and Vanderjagt, 2022).

Clement (2017) argues that it should not be down to individuals to combat job-related stress, although healthy changes within a teacher's life may address wellbeing needs, it is predominantly the school environment which impacts teacher wellbeing. Participants had made an effort to establish boundaries, whether this be leaving the building by a certain time at the end of the school day or dedicating time specifically to their children, but it had been increasingly difficult to complete the workload in sufficient time. The data suggested a mutual feeling that there was not enough time in a day to keep on top of all the tasks given in their teacher role. Some teachers are unable to maintain harmony between family life and work commitments due to the intensity of workload and the overwhelming responsibilities that come with teaching. This feeling of disharmony suggests that the participants were experiencing obsessive passion, with the feeling that their personal responsibilities and roles were threatened by those they hold at school (Vallerand et al., 2003; Moè, 2016).

Although participants did not display harmonious passion fully, having experienced negative impact from their job on their wellbeing, they described factors which could provide the conditions for harmonious

passion to foster. It is this outcome which could steer changes in the teaching profession to a more maintainable job.

Stress felt by teachers can lead to declination of job satisfaction (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2021). Teachers appear to not be leaving due to a lack of passion but as a result of challenges and unmaintainable expectations, *despite* their love and passion for the job (Clement, 2017). Job satisfaction relates positively to harmonious passion (Moè, 2016) and increased teacher retention due to greater feelings of motivation (Demir, 2020). By administrators and school cultures placing teacher wellbeing as a greater priority, then harmonious passion may be favoured over obsessive passion, nurturing motivation needed to remain in teaching. This would include prioritising achieving rather than evidencing, to reduce workload. This would allow more time being spent on bettering learning, which ultimately could be considered the goal (Participant 1.).

Conclusion

Ideas concerning administrative decisions, challenges and high expectations are key in the understanding of declining motivation. Support, relationships and teacher autonomy are recurring ideas which may contribute to improved wellbeing and subsequent teacher motivation. Passion exhibited was significant from all participants, specifically as a clear motivator to withstand challenges in order to make a difference in children's lives.

The study suggests that harmonious passion enables teachers to maintain motivation by harbouring passion in a maintainable way that positively affluences other aspects of their life. It provides teachers with a better wellbeing and job satisfaction which nurtures their love and passion for teaching, therefore motivating them to stay in the profession. It remains debateable, however whether harmonious passion can be experienced; teachers share concerns over the intensity of workload and subsequent burnout and stress (Houlfort, et al., 2012). This study suggests that teacher's lack of autonomy increases this workload due to excessive evidencing. If administrators placed more trust in teachers and the training they receive, then more focus can be placed on children's achievement in the classroom rather than dedicating time to *proving* this learning. Feeling consumed by work is an indication of obsessive passion, one which would reduce motivation and retention – it is arguably vital to work towards teachers experiencing harmonious passion so that they can sustain a long, healthy career. Instead of focusing on what results in teachers leaving the profession, the aim of this research was to identify what positively impacts teacher motivation. A larger sample and more interviews would allow for a better representation of teacher experiences. Equally, gathering responses from those who have left the profession would provide insight into the conditions which lead to a declination of motivation. Themes of relationships, support and trust all relate significantly to happiness and wellbeing; administrative decisions could establish a supportive environment with expectations that are realistic and achievable.

This research emphasises the importance of establishing boundaries between a profession and personal life. It is critical that schools are supportive communities which strive for a work-life balance. Although passion is a key motivator to remain in teaching, it is important this passion is developed in a healthy, maintainable way, harmonious to all aspects of life. Although it is evident that teaching comes with many challenges and expectations, it is possible to sustain a long-term career with the help of a supportive school environment. A teaching profession which encourages healthy boundaries between work and personal life, is a profession which aims to improve job satisfaction and places needs of individuals above all else. By doing so, student wellbeing and attainment improves as well as teacher motivation which influences the school environment and stability (Roffey, 2012).

This study aimed to explore *why* harmonious passion enhances motivation. The themes of trust and relationships, challenges and support, motivations and expectations and authority offer insight into why harmonious passion can enhance motivation in the profession. Further research is needed to explore how harmonious passion can enhance motivation. This exploration into teacher retention has provided an insight into a small sample of teachers' experiences and the challenges that they feel the teaching profession holds. By identifying these challenges, consideration of how we can revolutionise the teaching profession can begin. This will work towards establishing a profession which allows individuals to take control of learning in a way that allows them to exhibit passion without it being all consuming.

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