Recruitment and Retention of International School Teachers in Remote Archipelagic Countries: The Fiji Experience

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Abstract: In current school environments, teacher recruitment, turnover, and retention present significant problems, particularly for rural and remote international schools in archipelagic countries. Employing the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), this study analyzed international school teachers with teaching experience at a Fijian international school about their career development, retention ideas, and the decision of teaching service. As there is not a large population of international school teachers in archipelagic countries due to the unique environment of the school and country, the researcher employed the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to better understand six international school teachers who have taught and are teaching at one of the Fijian international schools. The study categorized two directions for leaving and staying at a remote location. Participants indicated that the managerial styles, negative leadership, and limited social networking were the most significant challenges while respectfulness and simple living style were the most significant advantages of their Fijian teaching experience. As this study mainly focused on the issues for rural, remote, and archipelagic countries, the result of this study serves as one of the first blueprints for organizational leaders in those regions to improve their management styles in order to recruit and retain their skillful professionals.

Keywords: archipelagic countries; employment; international school; remote school district; rural schooling; school human resources; school management; Social Cognitive Career Theory; teachers' career development; teachers' professional development

1. Introduction

The purpose of this research study is to explore three research questions: (1) why do international school teachers decide to teach in remote archipelagic states in Melanesia at the South Pacific Ocean, which in this case is Fiji; (2) why do international school teachers decide to leave Fiji after their teaching service; and (3) why do international school teachers decide to stay in Fiji for their long-term teaching career after they share their life experience and lived stories. Although the current educational database contains a significant number of research studies about teacher retention [1–4], there are few works in the field that focus on the retention of international school teachers, particularly in Fiji and the surrounding Pacific regions. It is worth noting that, besides financial, family, and career development factors, individuals also take their previous life experience and lived stories as considerations when choosing to teach internationally [5–7]. There is no one single factor that can guarantee the retention of in-service teachers, attract potential pre-service teachers, or cause post-service teachers to leave international schools. However, it is essential to explore long-term solutions and management strategies for retaining teachers in remote archipelagic states [8,9].

The frequent departure of teachers from a school negatively influences the learning experience and outcomes of students [1–3]. For more than two decades, research studies have indicated that high

turnover rates are a significant issue in the international school environment as these schools may not find appropriate and qualified replacements immediately when teachers leave. A reasonable rate of employee turnover in the organization, including international schools, is considered to be healthy, as some issues such as retirement cannot be avoided [2,10]. However, in the field of education, and particularly in international schooling, the significant degree of turnover rates has caused damage to the system. From a financial perspective, international schools need to invest massive resources in recruiting appropriately qualified teachers, provide training to teachers without local experience, provide additional benefits such as return flight tickets and family reimbursement, and replace departed teachers with the vacancy [11,12]. Although some research studies argue that the departure of school teachers can have positive outcomes because those who leave tend to perform poorly, most reports indicate a net negative impact [13]. International school teachers often decide to work in developed states or even in their homeland. This research study focused on why some decided to teach in Fiji, a remote archipelagic state. As most of the research studies on international school teaching and learning have tended to focus on locations on one of the major continents, the explorations of Oceania and remote islands are limited. As these limitations persist, they could negatively impact leadership and management for international schools. It is essential to understand why international school teachers decide to serve in a particular location or school and why they sometimes choose to leave [14–18].

The Theoretical Framework and its Application

In order to understand the vocational directions and orientations of individuals, it is important to locate a theoretical model for the application. Researchers [19] developed the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) [19–22] based on the theoretical framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. The SCCT aimed to explain and explore the decisions of academic and career choice chances, as well as performance and persistence in education and career goals. This theoretical framework aims at how individuals employ personal agency in the occupational and career development procedures and the directions in which personal factors increase or influence personal agency. SCCT also aims at the significant element of Social Cognitive Theory and triadic reciprocal causality [20]. The triadic reciprocal causality is an interconnected element which acknowledges the connections among individuals, behaviors, and environmental factors. Both Bandura and Lent et al. [19–22] argue that human behaviors are not the results and outcomes of the interactive activities between individuals and the environmental factors but rather that behaviors serve as the interactive models by influencing the outcomes thereby influencing the thinking, feeling, emotions, and follow-up behaviors of individuals. SCCT has three significant elements in career decisions and developments: the formation and elaboration of career-related interests, the election of academic and career choice options, and the performance and persistence in educational and occupational pursuits [19,20]. More importantly, SCCT categorized the differences between the intentions (individuals' beliefs and intended goals) and behaviors (practice and behaviors) as individuals tend to exercise what they believe in [18]. SCCT extends the connections among cultural, social, and economic elements for individuals' self-knowledge and opportunity outcomes [21,22].

Give the relative ideas about how SCCT, individuals, behaviors, and environmental factors may influence the career decisions of individuals, including international school teachers, this study explored factors that may be related to their career decisions. The SCCT serves as a valuable guide when trying to address gaps in the literature and research studies relevant to the situation of recruitment, turnover, and retention of international school teachers. One of the reasons that SCCT provides a useful guide in this field is because it is a career-oriented theory, designed to explore the career decision, employment, and turnover problems. SCCT described career development and decisions through complex relationships between personal influence, contextual influences, and behaviors. Furthermore, SCCT provided a practical theoretical framework for the exploration of factors related to the decisions and career developments of international school teachers who had served or being served in one of the remote regions. SCCT could explore career decisions and career developments

for teachers, school administrators, school staff, school workers, and educators in different setting and situations. Lastly, SCCT included constructs that are appropriate to the procedures of changing, including the opportunities to stay or leave their current schools and the recommendations to improve the educational management and system. SCCT [19–22] was selected to guide this research study because of this theory's directions, aims, focuses, and empirical supports surrounding SCCT's abilities to make meaningful relationship regarding international school teachers' career development and decisions in Fiji.

2. Methodology

The current research study was guided by three research questions:

1.　Why do international school teachers decide to teach in remote archipelagic states in Melanesia at the South Pacific Ocean, which in this case is Fiji?
2.　Why do international school teachers decide to leave Fiji after their teaching service?
3.　Why do international school teachers decide to stay in Fiji for their long-term teaching career?

The current research study employed the SCCT [19–22] to understand the career development models, cognitions, and behaviors guiding individuals' to develop.

2.1. The Application of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Recruitment of Participants

The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) would be appropriate in understanding how life experiences and lived stories associated with financial concerns, families, and career development influence the decisions of international school teachers in Fiji [23–25]. The IPA studies how individuals and people made sense of their personal and social world [24]. Unlike other qualitative research methods, under the directions of the IPA methodology, the researchers may recruit no more than ten participants for in-depth understanding, lived stories sharing, and understanding of a set of targeted topics according to the handbook of IPA studies [24]. Although some researchers argued that a large number of participants might increase the validity and reality of the research studies, IPA research studies aim to collect in-depth and rich lived stories from a small-size of sampling. In-depth sharing and lived stories usually contain rich information, which focus group activities when interviews may not occur. As the aim of this research study tended to collect in-depth understanding and rich lived stories from the participants, the IPA would be appropriate as the methodology [23–25].

According to the application and the guideline from the IPA handbook, this research study explored six participants, two of whom were in-service teachers at one of the international schools in Fiji, and four of whom were post-service teachers who had departed from Fiji [24]. All of the participants were Australian and received a professional teacher training education in one of the Australian provinces. All six participants had participated in a conference on international education and schooling. The researcher met these participants individually in three different conference sections. The researcher invited each participant individually for an interview about their international teaching experience in Fiji. In other words, the purposive sampling strategy [26,27] was employed as the researcher aimed to interview the participants based on their background about international schooling in Fiji. All of them agreed to be interviewed, so their stories could be shared at the international level.

Participants tend to withhold lived stories and sensitive information from strangers (the researcher in this case). In order to overcome these limitations, the researcher decided to conduct two face-to-face, one-on-one interview sessions to collect meaningful data [28]. More importantly, hosting two interview sessions was thought to assist both the researcher and participants in establishing a positive relationship [29]. Therefore, the participants may reveal further life experience and lived stories. The life experience and lived stories the researcher gathered were rich and colorful. The researcher decided to employ open-ended interview questions as semi-structured and structured interview questions may potentially limit some lived segments [27–30]. In terms of the interview directions of each interview section, the researcher aimed to capture data for three stages of career decisions,

focusing on why they decided to become an international school teacher, why they chose Fiji, and why they decided to either depart or stay in Fiji for their career development. The general inductive approach was employed to analyze the interview data [31]. During the first session of the interview activities, both in-service and post-service teachers were asked about the reasons why did they decide to become teachers, the reasons why did they decide to teach at international school environments, and the reasons why did they decide to teach at one of the Fijian international schools. During the second session of the interview activities, the status of employment could determine their interview protocol questions. For in-service teachers, the researcher tended to collect information about the reasons why do they stay in international school environments, why do they decide to stay in Fiji, and their understanding about their career development. For post-service teachers, the researcher tended to collect information about the reasons why did they leave the international school, why did they leave Fiji, and their career development after this Fijian experience. Researchers [23,24] did not indicate a particular time of interview sessions. However, for this research study, each individual interview lasted 100–120 min due to the rich lived stories sharing.

For the current research study, two groups of participants, in-service teachers and post-service teachers in one of the Fijian international schools. Based on the current research questions, the researcher decided to interview these groups of participants for four reasons. First, both in-service and post-service teachers may provide in-depth and personal lived stories for international school teaching regardless of their status. Teaching at international schools in remote regions is one of the most challenging occupations in the field of education. The understanding and sharing of these groups of teachers would be beneficial to potential readers. Second, both in-service and post-service teachers in Fiji may have different understanding, experience, peers, and personal stories about staying or leaving a country, a school, or even a region. Although the results and sharing from in-service and post-service teachers in Fiji may be different due to the timeframe, the results would be meaningful as rich stories and experience may be found during the interview sections. Third, for in-service teachers, the motivations and reasons for staying or planning to leave would be different from those who have already left. Moreover, in-service teachers may plan to leave international schools or even the regions sooner. Therefore, capturing the data information from these groups of participants would be beneficial. The voices from post-service teachers were meaningful. For example, the reasons why leaving the country and international schools could be varied from different people. Understanding the reasons and motivations would be beneficial to potential school leadership to improve their managerial styles.

After the researcher completed the data collection procedure, the researcher sent the related transcripts back to the participants for the member checking procedure. All the participants agreed with the transcripts and approved to process the data information. The data were further analyzed using the MAXQDA v.11 (VERBI GmbH, Berlin, Germany) qualitative analysis software.

2.2. Background of the Participants

The following section briefly introduced the background of each participant. Table 1 outlined brief information of the participants. Due to the nature of the IPA study, detailed demography of participants was listed for an in-depth understanding of the background [21–24].

Table 1. Brief demography of the participants.

Name	Gender	Age	Subject Matter	Years of Experience	Current Location
Amy	F	Mid-30s	English and Literature	10+	Left Fiji
Betty	F	Late-20s	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	5	Left Fiji
Charles	M	Mid-20s	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	2	In Fiji
Davis	M	Late-20s	English and Literature	3	Left Fiji
Emma	F	Late-20s	Creative Arts	6	In Fiji
Forest	F	Mid-40s	Computer Science	11	Left Fiji

Amy is an experienced international school teacher in the English and Literature subject with more than 10 years of teaching service experience. She is an Australian-born teaching professional who completed her Bachelor of Education degree at one of the groups of eight research-based universities in Melbourne, Victoria. Teaching at one of the international schools in Fiji is her first teaching position and even the job of her life. She is a single woman in her mid-30s and is currently teaching in a Singaporean international school.

Betty is a mid-level international school teacher in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subject with five years of teaching service experience. Like the other three participants, Betty is an Australian-born teaching professional who completed her Bachelor of Education degree at university with open enrolment policy as she needed to study as a part-time student to cover her tuitions and fees. Teaching was not her first full-time job and career pathway as she had worked in the food and beverage industry for five years during her university enrolment. She is a single woman in her late 20s and is currently teaching at a Thai international school.

Charles is a junior international school teacher in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subject with two years of teaching service experience. Charles is an immigrant to Australia who came to Sydney with his parents when he was six-month-old. As his parents were skilled immigrants in the field of STEM, he experienced a significant number of STEM conversations and topics at home. During his teenage years, he decided to become a STEM teacher and thus enrolled in the Bachelor of Education degree at one of the groups of eight research-based universities in Sydney, New South Wales. Before he came to Fiji, he had taught at an Australian grammar school (primary school section) for a year. He is a single man in his mid-20s and currently teaches at an international school (primary school section) in Fiji.

Davis is a junior international school teacher in the English and Literature subject with three years of teaching service experience. Davis is an Australia-born teaching professional who had completed his Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary) in Western Australia and completed the Master of Teaching (Secondary) directly after his bachelor's degree program. Therefore, he has obtained the teaching qualification from the primary school level to the secondary school level of Western Australia. He had served in one of the Fijian international schools for a year after he completed his Master of Teaching (Secondary). One year later, he decided to leave Fiji and continue his teaching pathway in a Chinese international school (secondary section) in the Province of Guangdong, China. He is a single man in his late 20s.

Emma is a mid-level international school teacher in the Creative Arts subject with six years of teaching service experience. Emma was born and raised in an immigrated family from France who had completed her Bachelor of Primary Education (Creative Arts) in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). After she completed her teachers' training program, she came back to Europe to teach the subject matter in creative arts in one of the primary schools in France. However, she disliked the overall teaching and learning environment under the French educational system and so decided to return to the Asia Pacific region for teaching career development after three years of teaching service in France. Currently, she is teaching at an international school in Fiji. She is a single woman in her late 20s and recently completed her third years of teaching service in Fiji.

Forest is an experienced international school teacher in the secondary school section with 11 years of teaching service experience. Forest was born and raised in Greece with his parents until the completion of primary school. After primary school education, his family immigrated to South Australia. Unlike the other teaching professionals, Forest completed his bachelor's degree in the field computer technology of at one of the groups of eight research-based universities in Adelaide, South Australia. After the completion of this bachelor's degree, he has worked in the industry for nearly six years. However, as he believed teaching youth and children is his purpose of career development, he decided to come back to one of the South Australian universities for the Master of Teaching (Secondary). Because he is a career-changing teacher, he is already in his mid-40s. He has taught in a South Australia secondary school for five years. Afterwards, he decided to go to Fiji as

an international school teacher for three years. Currently, he is teaching at a Taiwanese international school as a secondary school (computer science) teacher. Forest is the only married participant with two children in the secondary school level.

2.3. Potential Limitation of the Participants

As the participants were all native or near-native English speakers, the interview language was English. The fact that all the participants were from Australia is an element which may limit the research study's outcomes. However, unlike other international schools and states, most of the international schools in the Pacific regions tend to employ the Australian educational system and curriculum. Therefore, the primary focus on Australian teachers is worthwhile in this context. Another point that is worth noting is that all of the participants in this research study were Caucasian Australians. As this research study tends to focus on the contemporary situation in the South Pacific regions, this sampling may able to cover the holistic picture of international education in the South Pacific regions, particularly in Fiji. The researcher employed the pseudonyms and mask some identifying information as some of the participants are still employed in the international school environment inside or outside of Fiji. At the point of the interview sessions, none of the participants had returned to Australia but was employed in international schools around the globe [26,27].

2.4. Protection of Subjects

The protection of human subjects is vital to this study, particularly for teachers at small-size international school environment. One main problem is the protection of participants' identities. Therefore, the researcher made every effort to protect the identities of all participants by masking their names. Protecting participants identities allowed all the participants to remain anonymous to any potential employers in the field, particularly for rural, remote, and archipelagic international schools. Furthermore, all the related documents, such as signed and unsigned documents, digital records, personal information, participants' background, and computers were all locked in a password-protected cabinet. Only the researcher has the key to unlock any of the items. Once the research was finished, the researcher has deleted and destroyed agreements, documents with personal information, signatures, information transcripts, and sensitive information due to privacy. However, unsigned agreements, unanswered research protocol, and unsent invitation letters remained for interested researchers to follow upon request [26–28].

2.5. Data Analysis

Themes and patterns that emerged during the interview sessions were independently categorized. An inductive approach was employed for this study [31]. The inductive approach allows the researcher to understand the feedback and sharing. The researcher followed a general inductive approach to narrow the large-size transcripts into the first-level themes by using the open-coding technique from the ideas of the grounded theory approach [26,27]. Researchers [23–28] advocated that researchers always read through the data information several times and begin to group tentative directions for the large-size data that summarize what the researcher located the directions. As for the first-level themes [32,33], the researcher was able to categorize 20 themes and 21 subthemes based on the information from the participants.

The general inductive approach [31] indicated that the data should be narrowed down for slim categories. Therefore, the axial coding was used to decrease the data into a second-level theme [32,33]. Creswell [26,27] advocated that axial coding consists of categorizing the relationship among all the opening-coding results. Understanding and identifying the connections and relationships among the results [32,33]. In short, after the employment of the axial coding technique [26,27], the researcher eventually narrowed five themes and nine subthemes for reporting. The detailed information about the themes and subthemes are listed in the following chapter.

3. Results and Findings

During each interview section, the participants answered the same general open-ended questions about their educational background [26–33]. Although all participants had a similar educational background in one of the Australian provinces, their sharing, lived stories, and life experience was not the same. Australia is one of the largest states in the Asia-Pacific region with only a few populations; different provinces and territories contain and engage their own unique cultures, norms, and understanding of career developments, particularly in the field of education. Although all of the participants share the same nationality, none of their backgrounds and lived stories were similar to each other.

Although Fiji is one of the largest archipelagic states in Melanesia, it is still considered a remote location as it takes nearly four hours to travel to from Brisbane, Queensland. As remote locations, particularly archipelagic states, are less likely to attract professionals to develop their career pathways, many potential international school teachers may not decide to come due to the limitations on lifestyle and experience. In order to answer these questions in a structured order, the finding part was categorized into five themes and nine subthemes based on the interview transcripts and information from the participants. Table 2 outlined the themes and subthemes of this study. It is worth noting that the following themes and subthemes were the results of the second-level themes from the axial coding technique.

Table 2. A list of themes and subthemes for this study.

Themes and Subthemes
1. The Desire to Teach at K-12 Educational System outsides of Australia
1.1 The desire to share their intercultural experience with the Australian curriculum to international school students
1.2 Unique teaching experience outside of their home state
1.3 Gaining international teaching experience in a state with a similar cultural background
2. Characteristics of International Schools: The Reasons for Leaving
2.1 The managerial style of the leadership
2.2 The requests for classroom improvements were rejected
2.3 The expectations of teachers were not achievable
3. Characteristics of the Fijian Community: The Reasons for Leaving
3.1 Limitations of social networking
4. Characteristics of International Schools: The Reasons for Staying
4.1 Respectfulness from both parents and students
5. Characteristics of the Fijian Community: The Reasons for Staying
5.1 Simple living style and communities

3.1. The Desire to Teach at K-12 Educational System outsides of Australia

Each participant discussed why he or she decided to teach at international schools. All of the participants had different life experiences, lived stories, and backgrounds before starting their career pathways at international schools, but all completed their student teaching or internships at Australian universities. Many pre-service teachers choose to continue their teaching pathway at their interned school after graduating. However, the participants of the research study decided to take the unique teaching career pathway at international schools overseas. The following section outlines the experiences and life stories that caused them to decide to start their teaching career pathways at international schools in Fiji. All participants shared similar opinions about their desire to teach in the K-12 educational system, particularly in locations outside of Australia.

3.1.1. The Desire to Share Their Intercultural Experience with the Australian Curriculum to International School Students

According to the participants, the current Australian curriculum is one of the most famous teaching and learning curriculum in the Pacific and Oceanian region. However, at the international school environment with the Australian curriculum guideline, some participants believed intercultural and inter-curricular teaching and learning strategies could be beneficial to classroom students. For example,

Amy expressed her understanding of the value of introducing the Australian curriculum to students in the Fijian community. She said, " . . . Australia and New Zealand are the only few developed states in Oceania . . . I want to share the well-established curriculum to students in the developing states . . . "

Forrest advocated that the current Australian English language arts curriculum tended to focus on the teaching and learning materials of Australian literature, saying, "unlike the British system, British students need to read French, German, Italian, Chinese, and Arabic literature in translation . . . literature and reading should be borderless . . . this is the benefit we need to learn from the British system . . . " In addition to the sharing from Forrest, Emma also believed that the French educational system allows students to expand their horizons in creative arts based on their interests and desire. Based on her understanding, Emma advocated that the French creative arts and fine arts educational system could implement the current teaching and learning strategies at her Fijian experience and classroom instructions, saying:

> "Although French creative arts and fine arts education is considered the best in Europe, teachers with international teaching and learning experience are absent . . . I have introduced some of the indigenous fine arts in the Oceania states and ancient Roman fine arts . . . the school leadership also appreciated the fine arts creatures and knowledge outsides of France . . . At least I can transfer my knowledge into a different stage of the world . . . "

3.1.2. Unique Teaching Experience Outside of Their Home State

Another significant factor in teaching at an international school is a unique life experience. Unlike staying in their home province and home state for long-term teaching career development, all of the participants wanted to explore different parts of the world with their internationally-recognized teaching qualifications. For example, Charles said that teaching in Australia is safe for career security. However, he believed young professionals should seek a more challenging life:

> "After a year of teaching service in a primary school in Australia, I decided to come to Fiji. It is not because I dislike Australia. It is because . . . I believe I should gain more international perspectives and life experiences for long-term investment . . . As the living styles in Fiji is pretty like the coastal side of my home province, I think I would like to stay in Fiji for long-term investment."

Davis also suggested that teaching experience at international schools had advanced his skills and ability to adapt to different cultures and locations:

> "Before I went to Fiji . . . and China one year later, I have never left Australia. Going to international schools allowed me to earn money, gain teaching experience, enjoy the various cultural background, and learn how to survive by myself . . . "

3.1.3. Gaining International Teaching Experience in a State with a Similar Cultural Background

Australia is the largest state in Oceania. Although the primarily Australian traditions are significantly influenced by European cultures due to colonization, it is not hard to find a large number of indigenous customs and practices, particularly the cultures of Maori and Pacific Islanders. As the cultures of Pacific Islanders merged with those of European colonizers over decades, potential international school teachers from Australia tend to start their international teaching career development with an awareness of this shared cultural background. All participants advocated this idea and expressed their experience similarly. For example, Betty said this about cultural understanding:

> " . . . the greater regions of my hometown in northern Queensland have a significant number of indigenous tribes, and reserved communities . . . many of my secondary school classmates were from one of the Pacific states . . . Basically, I spent a significant part of my childhood and teenage with people from other Oceania states."

Amy also shared her childhood experience of sharing and living with people from international locations:

" … Melbourne is not only a city with globalization … Melbourne attracts university students, working professionals…all over the world … I spent my university period with mostly Asians and Pacific Islanders. I enjoyed their culture … That was why I decided to start my teaching career first in Fiji and now in Singapore. I wanted to enjoy their culture by teaching in one of the locations."

Forrest shared similar lived stories from his early life. He said,

" … our Province South Australia has a significant number of Indigenous tribes and communities. Many of them are farmers … Our primary and secondary schools always brought us to the farms for outdoor education. One of the nearest farms was operated by a Fijian family. So I understood and experienced Fijian culture in my early childhood already."

3.2. Characteristics of International Schools: The Reasons for Leaving

The second objective of this research study focused on the reasons why international school teachers decided to leave Fiji after the teaching service. This research question yielded two superordinate themes and four subthemes, including characteristics of international schools: The reasons for leaving and characteristics of the Fijian community.

3.2.1. The Managerial Style of the Leadership

Four participants suggested that the managerial style of the school leadership had been responsible for high turnover rates. The most significant concern for the participants was the inabilities to manage their own classrooms. The experiences of each participant were different, but similar ideas were shared. Amy said her instructional designs were rejected by the head teacher at her school. She was asked to follow the curriculum and instruction based on the recommendations of the school leadership. She said, "I like to employ vocabulary cards and communicative language approach for my secondary school students … But the department head rejected this instructional design and forced me to follow the old-school way … asked my students to read the article loudly … " Although the researcher could not confirm whether all participants serve the same international school, most of the participants shared similar situations. Betty added, "I believed chatting with each other is the way to learn speaking skills for junior high school level students … The head just asked us to follow the guideline from the textbook." The experiences of Davis and Forrest were more extreme. Both participants recounted negative experiences where their curriculum plans were rejected in front of other teachers. David said, "I designed three sets of curriculum plans for the English literature classes. But the supervisor did not even read through the curriculum plan and threw away my plans into the rubbish bin … in front of other teachers." Forrest recounted a similar experience, "Although my computer lessons may not absolutely follow the guideline from the textbook, the department head should not throw away my teaching materials to the trash can immediately."

3.2.2. The Requests for Classroom Improvements Were Rejected

Three participants said that their suggestions for classroom improvements were dismissed during their teaching service in Fiji. Although participants taught different subjects, their suggestions for classroom improvements, including equipment and internet access, were primarily to improve the learning outcomes for students. Davis shared that once he asked for a projector in his classroom, his department head responded with negative comments: "My department head believed I was a troublemaker … asked me to solve the projector problem by myself." Forrest also echoed a similar situation. He said:

> "My subject matter is computer science; I need to have internet access and some licensed software(s) to teach ... not for my own use ... I have to use the software to teach. But the answer is negative ... my supervisor asked me to pay and buy it."

Amy also shared another instance. Several years ago, she went back to Australia for an urgent operation. After a short period of rest, she returned back to her international school to continue teaching. As the equipment for disabled people at the international school was lacking, she asked the school leadership for a temporary classroom on the ground floor. However, Amy ended up leaving the school in frustration after receiving negative feedback from the school leadership. She said:

> "I had once asked a convenient classroom as I could not climb up the stairs after the operation. I had contacted the teacher who was teaching on the ground floor for a short-term exchange. The teacher actually agreed with that, and even for a permanent switch due to my situation ... the school leadership told me that they could not make this arrangement. The answer was, either stay on upstairs or leave the school after the contract ... the answer was pretty obvious."

3.2.3. The Expectations of Teachers Were Not Achievable

Two participants believed the teaching and learning environment of their international schools could not satisfy their expectations as teachers. Amy proposed this idea after becoming temporarily disabled and witnessing a student face a similar situation:

> "I disliked the school leadership when I requested a temporary classroom switch. But this did not absolutely make me decide to leave. Once ... one of my students needed to use a wheelchair due to a sudden operation ... the school management promised the parents for arrangement ... but when all teachers exchange this situation ... the school leadership told us a lot of negative comments."

Betty shared another situation that had caused her disappointment. Although the situation tended to be a minor instance, the disappointment hurt both teachers and school due to the disrespectful, said,

> "Although my bachelor's degree was not from the best university in Australia, the school leadership always compared the university enrolment among teachers ... several of the teachers received their ... degrees at one of the top-tier universities in their home province. These teachers tended to receive better rewards and a lighter workload."

3.3. Characteristics of the Fijian Community: The Reasons for Leaving

Although some participants shared opinions and experiences about how characteristics of the Fijian community made them reconsider their teaching service, these factors were less significant in determining whether or not they stayed long-term for teaching career development. Only three participants shared life experiences about social networking. However, all three said that they were able to get used to it after a short period of time.

Limitations of Social Networking

Forrest is a computer and information technology lover who needs to update his skills on a daily basis. However, due to the remote location and limited resources available in Fiji, Forrest took several months to get used to it. He said, "The food, living community, people, customs are all fine ... I was surprised by the internet access and the delivery of online retail items ... Since Fiji is a simple community ... I switched my mind and understood it quickly." Betty expressed her concerns about the mailing service between Australia and Fiji, "The mailing costs and fees between Australia and Fiji were pretty high ... I needed to ask my family to mail some medical supplies to me for essential use. The mailing period is too long ... but it is not a big deal."

Most of the participants recounted negative experiences relating to the management style at their host schools. Although some characteristics of the Fijian lifestyle also created some inconveniences, participants could usually acclimatize after a short period of time. The above section outlines the reasons why international school teachers decided to leave their positions in Fiji. However, there were also some significant reasons why international school teachers decided to stay for their long-term teaching career development. The following section explores these reasons.

3.4. Characteristics of International Schools: The Reasons for Staying

Besides the experience of working internationally and unique personal enhancements in multicultural teaching and learning, participants also shared a number of critical reasons for staying in Fiji. In order to capture the reasons for leaving the workplace environment, life experiences and lived stories could only be captured from those who had already left. However, on the subject of staying in a workplace, all participants, including in-service and post-service, could share meaningful opinions and stories.

Respectfulness from Both Parents and Students

Although some participants encountered negative experiences when interacting with their school management, most of them stayed and completed their teaching contract. All of them said the respectfulness shown by parents and students convinced them to stay for the next academic year. As Amy has completed nearly 10 years of teaching service in Fiji, her life experience and lived stories are significant, as shared:

> "Some students in Victoria were forced to go to school by the government policy and their parents. But students in Fiji, including international school students and local students, understood high-level of education is not for granted. Many of them enjoyed schools . . . for parents, unlike parents from developed states, parents in the developing states always respected the authorities and decisions of teachers and school . . . "

Forrest also shared similar life experiences as a career-changing teacher. He claimed students in developing states are more motivated:

> "Regardless of the learners from Australia and some other parts of Asia or elsewhere, I believed students in Fiji were motivated . . . they liked to learn more . . . like to understand more knowledge outside of the textbook. Parents also believed us . . . parents did not challenge our planning . . . "

Betty also shared her teaching experiences in Fiji and Thailand as evidence of the positive relationship among students, parents, and teachers:

> "Students, teachers, and parents in Australia usually left the school immediately after school period. Parents in Fiji liked to stay in school to establish a positive relationship with teachers . . . Parents were not looking for creating or what . . . they liked to make friends as they viewed teachers as their family members . . .

Emma also shared a similarly positive story about the positive relationships she has developed during her teaching service in Fiji: " . . . I am a kid of many parents . . . many families and parents consider me as their daughter." In fact, many participants believed the well-established engagements, passions, and the relationship between families and teachers significantly encouraged them to continue their teaching service.

3.5. Characteristics of the Fijian Community: The Reasons for Staying

In the above superordinate theme, most of the participants remarked upon the similar background and living styles of Australia and the Pacific Island states, particularly Fiji. Therefore, it served as the

central reason for coming to Fiji to teach. During the interview section focusing on the reasons for staying in Fiji, most of the participants continued to advocate for the simple lifestyle and strong sense of community as their main consideration.

Simple Living Style and Communities

Besides the similar living styles and communities, most of the participants enjoyed the suburban city planning, as well as the archipelagic environment in Fiji. Amy, Davis, and Forrest suggested the convenient access to the beach was a major consideration as many other international locations do not have such an environmental advantage. Amy said, "I liked swimming and diving . . . We cannot do it in Singapore, China, Hong Kong, and elsewhere . . . Fiji . . . yes, it is the best for the beach lover." Davis shared his lived stories in Western Australia about the beach and aquatic sports, saying, "I was in the swimming team at my university. I always want to continue this sport during my adulthood . . . As Fiji is the best natural state for leisure activities, I can gain working experience and enjoyment of sport at the same time." Forrest said his home province South Australia is not suitable for outdoor swimming due to the temperature of sea water, but Fiji satisfied his desire to participate in aquatic sports: "I can go to the beach in the early morning for some sports . . . after the class in the evening as well. The living style is perfect."

In short, besides the similar cultures and traditional practices in Oceania, participants also cited the respectfulness shown by parents and students, and simple living styles and communities served as significant factors in their decision. It is worth noting that participants believed the collectivism and the established relationship within the community encouraged them to stay as such relationships are not usually found in urban cities and developed states. Although Fiji has experienced rapid development due to the tourism and hospitality industry in recent decades, the residents continue to practice traditional Fijian customs and collective relationships.

4. Discussion

Unlike other research studies with a single aim and focus [34,35], this research study explored three research questions within one single report. When looking at the reasons for coming to Fiji for teaching career development, significant desires for teachers were the international teaching experience and a similar culture that could be adapted to relatively easily. Exploring the reasons for leaving the international teaching position, the researcher found vital connections between the school leadership style, classroom environment, and the expectation of being teachers. Finally, when the researcher analyzed the reasons for staying in international teaching positions, the researcher found that respectfulness from parents and students and the overall tropical living environment were the most significant factors [36,37].

4.1. Long-Term Difficulties for International School Recruitment

Over the last century, educational research studies have attributed the shortage of teachers to two significant trends, including significant turnover rate and retirement, particularly in international schools where the school leadership tended to recruit teachers with the appropriate teaching qualifications based on the educational system and taught curriculum for the school [38]. For international schools in remote regions, such as the archipelagic states in Oceania, school leadership needs to explore solutions to enhance recruitment and teacher retention [39].

For the participants in this study, the most critical factor in convincing them to travel overseas schools to teach was the unique combination of international teaching experience and a similar cultural background to their hometown. This meant different things to different individuals. However, it is worth noting that such similar backgrounds are not exclusive to Fiji as other archipelagic states, island states, and states in the Asia Pacific regions also share similar backgrounds. Therefore, Fiji does not hold any obvious and significant advantages to other states in the region [40].

Second, based on the current statistics [41], although the shortage of qualified teachers from early childhood (pre-primary school) level to secondary school level is mild, over 80% of undergraduates were able to find employment as education professionals four months after graduation (compared with the overall average of 70.9%). Pre-service teachers are more likely to be hired after they have obtained the nation-wide teaching qualification. However, in particular provinces, such as New South Wales, mathematics, science, technological, and applied studies (TAS), special education, and school counsellors are still among the most demanding occupations [42]. Echoing the results of the report [8] about pre-service teachers tending to stay in their interned school for potential employment, recruitment for international schools, particularly in remote regions, is much more difficult. For example, two participants—Charles and Forrest—completed several years of teaching service in their interned school after graduation. Therefore, such trends between interned schools and novice teacher relationship are less likely to be eliminated [8–11].

Third, based on the trend of teaching career development among the six participants, five of the six had international teaching experience outside of Fiji. It is worth noting that none of these international locations is archipelagic states or remote locations. International school teachers tend to select urban metropolitans and regions where a match with their subject matters [9]. For example, Emma started her international teaching career development in France because her subject matter is the field of creative arts. Although remote regions and archipelagic states in Oceania may not have obvious advantages and attractions for recruitments, international schools in Oceania could enhance employee satisfaction and reform the administrative leadership in order to decrease turnover. Nevertheless, international schools in remote regions should continue to host international recruitment in order to attract qualified teachers [14–16].

4.2. Teacher Turnover, Parent-Teacher Relationships, and Effective School Leadership

A large number of international school teachers decided to start their teaching career development in the Asia Pacific region due to the significantly higher salaries and resources on offer. Although high rates of pay are among the most attractive incentives to draw individuals to remote locations to teach, none of the participants expressed any life experiences, lived stories, and desires about salary and wage, particularly in their decision to teach in Fiji [21]. Based on the current data, participants believed that the positive and supportive management style of the school leadership, the positive response of classroom management, as well as the expectations of being teachers are some of the factors that critically influenced their decision of teaching in Fiji. Almost all of the participants said that if any one of those factors cannot be satisfied, they are more likely to seek another workplace to achieve these goals, as Fiji is not the only location where international schools can be found. The researcher found that four of the six participants had left Fiji for these reasons [22].

Besides the administrative conflicts, some participants made reference to the location and simple lifestyle of Fiji due to the tropical climate and community. As indicated by Amy, the tropical environment of Fiji was attractive and unique as most of the urban cities and metropolitan regions do not contain such convenient facilities. This personal dimension might be linked to the international teaching position or location satisfaction of others as well. As Davis said, "Other European cities and even urban cities in Australia, convenient aquatic facilities may not find." Therefore, the researcher found that personal factors are more likely to impact the decision to keep teaching at an international school [14–16].

Although archipelagic states and remote locations do not have significant and unique attractions for international school teacher recruitment and retention, the research study found that positive administrative management styles and supportive classroom improvements served as one of the most influential factors in the field of recruitment and retention. Moreover, as the research study has established, there is no apparent connection between salary and retention. Basically, the satisfaction of both community background and school environment served as another influential factor. Therefore,

international schools should pay particular attention to their administrative and managerial styles in order to retain teachers who start their teaching career in remote regions.

4.3. Limitation and Future Research Directions

Based on the results of this research study, it may be more important to identify a large number of international school teachers in the Pacific and Oceania region, rather than those living in remote regions and countries, as being one of the most important regions in the eastern hemisphere. First, the IPA methodology has been employed in this research study. Therefore, only a small number of participants could be interviewed. In addition, the focus of this research study was on the international school teachers' career decisions in Fiji, which might be too narrow for development. To address these limitations, future studies might employ phenomenological analysis to collect data information from large-size of participants. Additionally, future research might employ quantitative research methods, such as questionnaires and surveys to collect data information from different countries and states within the Pacific and Oceanian regions. Furthermore, there are a large number of colleges and universities instructors in the Pacific and Oceanian regions. Therefore, voices from colleges and universities instructors are also meaningful for future research directions.

5. Conclusion

This research study contributes to the understanding of the career decisions and developments of international school teachers in Fiji through the SCCT perspective. Information from this research study may be used to develop significant models for international school teachers, school leadership, and educators. The sharing from participants indicated some problems, potential implications, leadership styles, and reasons for staying and leaving Fiji and international schools in the remote regions. Based on the current database, this is one of the very first research studies concerned about international school teachers' career decisions and developments in the Pacific and Oceanian regions with the SCCT perspective. Therefore, the results aim to provide the blueprints for interested parties to develop and improve their current school environments.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declared no conflicts of interests.

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