

Factors Influencing the Retention of Secondary Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The impact of teacher retention on quality education has inspired a great deal of research. Although many factors have been identified as contributors, few have been specific to the career and technical education (CTE) area and the diversity of CTE programs demands a more specific approach. The purpose of this study was to identify specific factors affecting the retention of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) teachers in Kansas. Major findings include that administrative support and gaining student respect are important for the social integration of teachers. As evidence of the desire to be successful in their teaching role, FACS teachers strongly agreed with their commitment to improve student performance, student engagement, accessing resources, school reputation, incorporating new ideas, and adolescent issues. Additionally, institutional factors that were found extremely important to their willingness to continue teaching were inner sense of knowing they were doing a good job, adequate time to complete job responsibilities, and administrative support for program development.

Introduction

Staffing classrooms with quality teachers has always been a high priority for schools and is no less important today. In addressing the No Child Left Behind mandate for highly qualified teachers for every child, Berry (2002) commented that the definition of highly qualified was unclear and posed a problem in building the profession of teaching. Research is needed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teachers remaining in the profession to assist in defining the attributes of highly qualified in relation to CTE teachers with the purpose of determining possible retention factors.

Ruhland (2001) found that nearly twenty-two percent of all teachers left the teaching profession within the first three years of teaching. Many studies have addressed this teacher turnover problem. However, specific reasons for leaving the teaching profession related to CTE areas have been and continue to be more difficult to define. Over one-fourth of the problems that beginning CTE teachers experience were unique to the career and technical area (Camp & Heath, 1989). Career and technical education areas are extremely diverse and identifying retention factors requires a specific approach to each of the technical areas. In the state of Kansas, there was a total of 1,558 career and technical programs with 346 of these being approved Family and Consumer Sciences programs (KSDE website, 2006). There is an effort in many if not all of these programs to employ highly qualified teachers.

Ruhland (2001) made recommendations for further research on the long-range impact of turnover and retention of teachers as well as a comparison of the perception of the level of importance of skill levels between those choosing to leave and those remaining in teaching for

each of the CTE areas. Identifying and understanding the factors influencing retention of quality teachers are vital for the continued sustainability and growth of CTE programs.

Reliable teacher supply and demand data directly related to career and technical education have not been readily available; however, it was noted that in some regions of the country, there were reported shortages of family and consumer sciences teachers and technology education teachers. (McCaslin & Parks, 2002, p. 28)

“Teacher shortage is in large part a demand problem that can be solved only if we decrease demand by increasing retention” (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 390). Increasing retention affects all CTE areas. “Teacher turnover is particularly critical in career and technical education because many CTE teachers come to classrooms directly from industry and are very difficult to replace if lost to attrition” (Song, 2011, p. 3). However, this study looks specifically at factors influencing the retention of teachers in the Family and Consumer Sciences area.

Problem Statement

Retention of Family and Consumer Sciences teachers in Kansas is important in staffing classrooms with quality teachers. However, factors influencing teachers in Family and Consumer Sciences to either leave or remain in the profession are unknown. As such, this study initiated a census of all the secondary FACS teachers in the state of Kansas with the ends sought of identifying influenced factors related to retention.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to collect data on specific factors that may have an influence on the retention of FACS teachers in the state of Kansas. The following research question guided the instrument development and data collection efforts:

1. What factors influence Kansas Family and Consumer Sciences teachers to stay in the profession?

Theoretical Framework

Chapman (1984) tested a model of the influences on teacher retention grounded in social learning theory with a more specific application to teaching careers.

The model suggests that to understand teachers’ decisions to persist in or leave teaching, it is necessary to take into account (a) the personal characteristics of the teachers, (b) the nature of teacher training and early teaching experiences, (c) the degree to which the teacher is socially and professionally integrated into the teaching profession, (d) the satisfaction teachers derive from their careers, and (e) the external environmental influences impinging on the teachers’ career. (Chapman, 1984, p. 646)

Ruhland (2001) employed items from the Chapman model and used the six functions of teacher retention as a basis for developing the survey questions for her research.

Conceptual Framework

Subsequently, it was determined that the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) developed for this study based upon the Chapman (1984) functions and the additional developments of Ruhland's (2001) research provided a stable and substantive platform on which to base the current study. The model which was used in this study suggested that secondary Family and Consumer Sciences teachers' retention was influenced by (a) educational preparation, (b) teacher commitment, (c) social integration, (d) first year teaching experience, (e) skills and abilities, and (f) institutional factors.

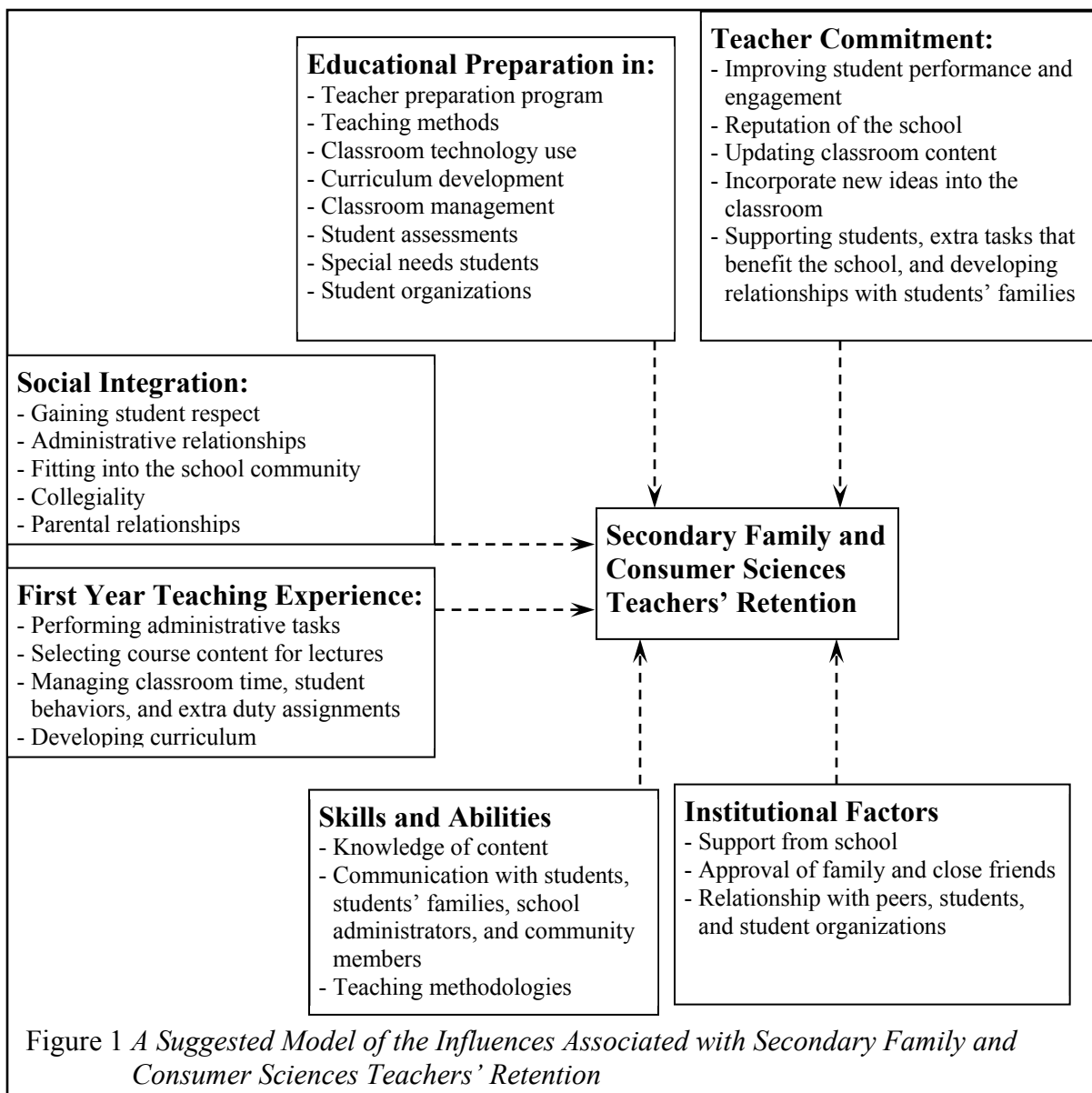


Figure 1 *A Suggested Model of the Influences Associated with Secondary Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers' Retention*

Literature Review

Teacher turnover is a dominant factor behind the demand for new teachers and the difficulties schools encounter adequately staffing classrooms with qualified teachers. A teacher's area of expertise or content knowledge and age are strongly related to turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). For example, special education teachers were more likely to depart than other teachers, but math and science teachers were not. Additionally, younger (less than 30 years) and older (greater than 50 years) teachers were more likely to depart than middle-aged teachers. Ingersoll found that teacher staffing problems are not primarily caused by a supply-side deficit of qualified candidates, increase in student enrollment, or increases in teacher retirement. "The data suggest that school staffing problems are primarily due to excessive demand resulting from a 'revolving door'—where large numbers of teachers depart their jobs for reasons other than retirement" (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 499). The overwhelming reason for leaving in Tripp's (2006) study of California's FACS teachers was retirement. Since Universities across the nation are reporting a decline in enrollment in FCS education programs, retention is of utmost importance (Bartley & Sneed, 2004).

Recommendations from Ruhland (2001) included further research to identify program specific job related stress issues, importance of mentoring, assistance from colleagues, time to plan, in-service education, and resources for new faculty. Expanding items pertaining to teacher commitment and first year teaching experience allows for more specific data regarding these areas related to teacher retention. The review of literature revealed that there are six areas related to teacher retention which were of specific interest in meeting the objectives of this study. They are educational preparation, teacher commitment, social integration, first year teaching experience, skills and abilities, and institutional factors. The importance of each is briefly discussed.

Educational Preparation

In Chapman's (1984) test of his model, the single strongest predictor of retention was initial commitment to teaching. Teacher preparation programs were identified as an area where a substantial contribution could be made to the efforts to reinforce and encourage commitment to teaching or to encourage those who are unsure about teaching to seek other career alternatives (Chapman, 1984). Additionally, career and technical teachers need to be prepared to relate to an increasingly diverse student clientele (McCaslin & Parks, 2002) which pre-service experiences can address prior to entering the teaching professions.

Teacher Commitment

Four distinct types of commitment can be identified in recent empirical research: (1) commitment to the school as a social unit, (2) commitment to the academic goals of the school, (3) commitment to students as unique whole individuals rather than as "empty vessels to be filled", and (4) commitment to the body of knowledge needed to carry out effective teaching (Louis, 1998). The study by Louis (1998) found that the strongest relationship to commitment is the ability to "develop and use skills" related to one's work. "This suggests that teachers—like most professionals—require sustained stimulation to remain excited about and committed to

their work” (Louis, 1998, p. 13). A sense of being respected by peers, students, the principal and others outside of the school, and the opportunity to receive feedback from colleagues and the principal had strong relation to commitment (Louis, 1998). Using the identified items in this previous study allowed the researchers within this study to measure the construct of teacher commitment more thoroughly.

Social Integration

In a qualitative study of secondary trade and industrial education teachers, Self (2001) interviewed eighteen trade and industrial education teachers who left the teaching profession voluntarily rather than through non-renewal of their teaching contract. The top four reasons contributing to teachers’ feelings of dissatisfaction and decisions to leave teaching were lack of recognition and support, student discipline problems, poor student motivation, and poor salary. A major recommendation for practice which emerged from the study was that administrators of secondary teachers should be aware that teachers undergo major personal life changes when they become teachers (Self, 2001).

First Year Teaching Experience

Organized induction assistance programs can help to make the transition into full-time teaching less traumatic. They can also help in the retention of promising beginning teachers, many of whom leave teaching in frustration during their first year or so on-the-job. (Camp & Heath-Camp, 1991, p. 30)

Camp and Heath-Camp (1991) found that regardless of the age at which the novice enters teaching, the need for a structured induction assistance program is indicated. Additionally, McCaslin and Parks (2002) found that inadequate induction into teaching during the first year of employment and inequity in the compensation of teachers as compared to other college graduates of the same age cohort are significant factors that may contribute to teacher turnover rate.

Skills and Abilities

Polk (2006) stated that “Effective teaching is not the innate, inborn skill it was once considered” (p. 28). Polk (2006) identified ten basic characteristics of an effective teacher: (1) good prior academic performance, (2) communication skills, (3) creativity, (4) professionalism, (5) pedagogical knowledge, (6) thorough and appropriate student evaluation and assessment, (7) self-development or lifelong learning, (8) personality, (9) talent or content area knowledge, and (10) the ability to model concepts in their content area. This study raises the question that skill development or the lack of such development experiences could affect retention.

Institutional Factors

Ruhland (2001) found that five factors were rated as extremely important in determining the degree of impact the work environment has on a teacher’s choice to continue teaching. These factors included positive teaching experience, inner sense of knowing they are doing a good job, administrative support for program development, adequate time to complete job responsibilities,

and perception of job security. Song (2011) found that a supportive learning climate and school leadership are essential to an innovative school climate and turnover reduction of CTE teachers.

Methodology

Population

The population for this study was all secondary Family and Consumer Sciences teachers in the state of Kansas. Although rich data could be gleaned from those who have chosen to leave the profession as a secondary FACS teacher, participant contact would be nearly impossible. Therefore, focusing on those choosing to stay in the profession gave the study focus on retention as opposed to attrition. A list obtained from the Kansas State Department of Education website comprised of 514 teachers from 346 programs. The actual surveyed population was 448 since the 66 participants in the pilot study were not included. A census was conducted and as such, no population sampling techniques were employed. Surveys were distributed electronically using Survey Monkey. Additional information was obtained by calling school districts to obtain new e-mail addresses for the surveys returned as undeliverable. Hard copies were mailed to those individuals with unknown e-mail addresses.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used in this study was developed using items from the three previous studies conducted by Chapman (1984), Ruhland (2001), and Hausman (2001). Chapman's model provided a basis for category selection. The chosen categories are educational preparation, commitment to teaching, first year teaching experience, social integration, and institutional factors. Survey questions relating to educational preparation, first year teaching, and teacher commitment were expanded from Ruhland's (2001) instrument to include additional related items. Items included in the expansion were obtained from the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards (Danielson, 1996). Items used to expand the teacher commitment category were adapted from the study conducted by Louis (1998) concerning the quality of a teacher's work life as it relates to effects of teacher commitment and sense of efficacy. Likert-type scales were used to measure items other than demographics. Educational preparation (9 items) and social integration (5 items) were measured using the following four point scale: 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, and 4=excellent. Teacher commitment (9 items), first year teaching experience (6 items), and skills and abilities (21 items) were measured using the following five point scale: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. Institutional factors (29 items) were measured using the following five point scale: 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important and 5=extremely important.

Validity and Reliability

A panel of experts was used to establish content and face validity for the survey instrument. The panel consisted of eight current secondary FACS teachers, one graduate FACS student, and one college FACS teacher educator. The panel was asked to provide comments and suggestions concerning how questions and statements were written, meaning of questions and

statements, and the need to add or delete items. A change in scale was made to the skills and abilities category as suggested by the panel. In Ruhland's (2001) study, skills and abilities items were measured using a five-point scale from very poor/nonexistent to excellent. An agreement scale to measure respondents' perception of the level of importance of the skills and abilities items in relation to teaching was chosen for this study rather than rating their personal abilities. It was also recommended that teacher involvement in CTE student organizations be addressed and to restate the approach to the social integration factors to address the reality of the respondents' actual experiences rather than their perceptions.

Once revisions were made to the instrument, it was compiled in Survey Monkey to be electronically distributed to 66 Kansas family and consumer sciences instructors for a pilot test. Internal consistencies were measured by calculating a Cronbach's Alpha for each section of the survey. They ranged from $r=.763$ to $r=.899$ and the survey instrument was deemed reliable. Pilot test respondents were not a part of the survey population.

Procedure

A list of family and consumer sciences teachers currently employed in the state of Kansas was obtained from the Kansas State Department of Education website. A search was conducted of school district websites to obtain each instructor's e-mail. A modified Dillman (2000) approach was followed in contacts with the participants. After the first distribution of surveys was sent out, a second distribution was sent one week later to those who had not yet responded. A final reminder was sent two weeks after the first e-mailing to all non-respondents. The responses were tracked in the Survey Monkey program maintaining confidentiality. The respondents without e-mail addresses listed on websites were sent a hard copy through to United States Postal Service. The overall return rate was 52.7%.

Findings

Table 1
Teacher Ratings of their Educational Preparation (n = 263)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
My academic performance in the preparation program	3.35	0.656
My educational preparation in teaching methods	3.04	0.743
My educational preparation in curriculum development	2.96	0.800
My educational preparation in student learning styles	2.70	0.911
My educational preparation in classroom management	2.63	0.857
My educational preparation in student assessments	2.62	0.748
My educational preparation in addressing student special needs	2.49	0.869
My educational preparation in classroom technology use	2.39	0.907
My educational preparation in student organizations	2.34	0.921

Note. 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent

Teachers rated their academic performance highest with a mean of 3.35 ($SD=0.656$) while teaching methods ($M=3.04$, $SD=0.743$), curriculum development ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.800$), student learning styles ($M=2.70$, $SD=0.911$), classroom management ($M=2.63$, $SD=0.857$) and

student assessments ($M=2.62$, $SD=0.748$) were rated as good. Teachers rated their educational preparation in addressing student special needs ($M=2.49$, $SD=0.869$), classroom technology use ($M=2.34$, $SD=0.907$), and student organizations ($M=2.34$, $SD=0.921$) as fair.

Table 2
Teacher Ratings of their Commitment to teaching (n = 263)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I strive to improve student performance	4.63	0.501
I strive to improve student engagement in classroom activities	4.62	0.509
The reputation of this school is important to me	4.61	0.604
I tend to be sensitive to adolescent issues concerning students	4.61	0.549
I tend to access current resources to update classroom content	4.54	0.613
I tend to incorporate new ideas in the classroom for more effective teaching	4.51	0.638
I spend time on extracurricular activities to help support student	4.29	0.857
I tend to volunteer for extra tasks that will benefit the school	4.18	0.798
I spend time developing relationships with families to better understand individual students	3.76	0.929

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Respondents strongly agreed with the following items: Improving student performance ($M=4.63$, $SD=0.501$), student engagement in classroom activities ($M=4.62$, $SD=0.509$), school reputation ($M=4.61$, $SD=0.604$), adolescent issues ($M=4.61$, $SD=0.549$), accessing current resources ($M=4.54$, $SD=0.613$), and incorporating new ideas ($M=4.51$, $SD=0.638$) when responding to items in the teacher commitment category. Time spent on extracurricular activities ($M=4.29$, $SD=0.857$), volunteering for extra tasks at school ($M=4.18$, $SD=0.798$), and developing relationships with families ($M=3.76$, $SD=0.929$) were rated as agreed by teachers.

Table 3
Teacher Ratings of the Importance of Social Integration (n = 263)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gaining student respect	4.63	0.537
Administrative relationships	4.38	0.675
Fitting into the school community	4.11	0.749
Getting to know my colleagues	4.09	0.845
Parental relationships	4.03	0.810

Note. 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important

Concerning the category of social integration (Table 4), gaining student respect was considered extremely important ($M=4.63$, $SD=0.537$). The remaining four categories of administrative relationships, fitting into the school community, getting to know my colleagues, and parental relationships were considered very important (means from 4.03 to 4.38).

Table 4
Teacher Ratings of their First Year Teaching Experience (n = 263)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I selected valid course content for lectures	4.15	0.686
I efficiently performed administrative tasks (grades, scheduling, purchase orders, etc.)	4.07	0.834
I used classroom time wisely	3.91	0.844
Extra duty assignments were manageable	3.65	0.978
I managed student behaviors effectively	3.64	0.962
I felt confident in curriculum development	3.51	1.064

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Respondents agreed to all items (means from 3.51 to 4.15) pertaining to their first year teaching experience; selecting valid course content for lectures, efficiently performing administrative tasks, using classroom time wisely, managing extra duty assignments, managing student behaviors effectively, and confidence in curriculum development. No items were rated strongly agreed.

Table 5
Teacher Ratings of their Skills and Abilities (n = 263)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I have a solid knowledge of content	4.57	0.606
I feel my written communication skills are clear	4.39	0.578
I feel my oral communication skills are clear	4.37	0.587
I have good communication with school administrators	4.37	0.659
I feel I adequately manage classroom procedures	4.36	0.599
I incorporate questioning and discussion techniques	4.35	0.619
I feel I adequately engage students in the learning process	4.35	0.577
I feel I adequately manage student behavior	4.27	0.630
I have a solid knowledge of resources available for classroom and lab use	4.25	0.648
I have a solid knowledge of teaching methodologies	4.23	0.717
I feel I adequately assess student learning	4.23	0.623
I tend to use reflection on teaching for improvement	4.20	0.755
I feel my instructional preparation is adequate	4.19	0.730
I feel my instructional planning is adequate	4.18	0.753
I have a solid knowledge of student learning styles	4.17	0.744
I feel I have adequate organization of physical space	4.16	0.870
I tend to use instructional goals for the lessons I teach	4.10	0.797
I successfully integrate technology into the curriculum	4.10	0.816
I have good communication with community members	4.05	0.745
I have good communication with students' families	3.96	0.717
I have a solid knowledge of resources available pertaining to students with special needs	3.77	0.887

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Most respondents indicated that they possessed the needed skills and abilities in their current teaching position (Table 5). However, they strongly agreed ($M=4.57$, $SD=0.606$) with having a solid knowledge of content.

Table 6
Teacher Ratings of Institutional Factors (n = 263)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Inner sense of knowing I'm doing a good job	4.59	0.589
Adequate time to complete job responsibilities	4.52	0.603
Administrative support for program development	4.52	0.660
Pleasant working conditions	4.47	0.622
Positive teaching experiences	4.41	0.622
Potential for salary increases	4.31	0.843
Quality of resources available	4.31	0.701
Safety issues of equipment	4.30	0.829
Adequacy of laboratory facilities	4.26	0.830
Perception of job security	4.26	0.794
Quality of required equipment	4.26	0.771
Safety issues of facilities	4.24	0.865
Quantity of required equipment	4.21	0.805
Adequacy of classroom/lab facilities	4.20	0.821
Chance to contribute to important decisions	4.04	0.846
Community support for program development	3.97	0.845
Recognition by supervisors/administrators	3.90	0.993
Approval of family and/or close friends	3.83	1.018
Recognition by students	3.82	0.924
Professional development opportunities	3.78	0.948
Leadership opportunities	3.68	0.975
Recognition by peers	3.59	1.023
Career opportunities in industry	3.51	1.142
Location of classroom/lab in school	3.44	1.152
Responsibilities related to student organizations	3.38	1.110
Contact with educational preparation program	3.38	1.085
Availability of induction/mentoring program	3.31	1.165
Type of induction/mentoring program	3.25	1.166
Participation in professional associations	3.03	1.197

Note. 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important

When rating the effects of institutional factors on willingness to continue teaching (Table 6), respondents felt that the inner sense of knowing I'm doing a good job ($M=4.59$, $SD=0.589$), adequate time to complete job responsibilities ($M=4.52$, $SD=0.603$), and administrative support for program development ($M=4.52$, $SD=0.660$) were rated as extremely important. Participation in professional associations was the lowest rated item ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.197$) and identified as only important.

Conclusions

Specific factors contributing to retention of FCS teachers surfaced as areas of focus for administrators, teacher education programs, and educational institutions housing FCS pathways. Findings of this population lead to new insight into the administrative support needs for CTE teachers as well as opportunities to incorporate new ideas, access resources and gain student respect.

Educational Preparation

No item pertaining to educational preparation was rated excellent by the respondents. The highest rating indicated by respondents for academic performance in the teacher preparation program was *good*. Items rated lowest were preparation in classroom technology use and student organizations. This is new information that could be beneficial in determining future emphasis in educational preparation coursework in career and technical programs. As the issues surrounding traditional and alternative teacher certification continue to be discussed, the kinds and types of pre-service, in-service, and course and degree requirements will be influenced by the findings discovered by this research in this area of retention. More emphasis may need to be placed on items rated as “fair”, such as addressing student special needs, classroom technology use, and student organizations.

Teacher Commitment

The items respondents strongly agreed with (improving student performance, student engagement in classroom activities, accessing current resources, school reputation, adolescent issues, and incorporating new ideas) reinforces the findings of Louis (1998) regarding a teacher’s desire to develop and use skills related to one’s work. Ruhland (2001) cited job-related stress most often in decisions to leave the teaching profession while those remaining in the profession were extremely committed to the profession. This relates back to conclusions by Chapman (1984) that teacher preparation programs can be influential in reinforcing and encouraging commitment to teaching. Teachers must be armed with the skills needed in the teaching profession which reinforces the importance of educational preparation. The contents and outcomes of career and technical education teacher preparation programs appear to be a vital component of teacher retention, especially in regard to teacher confidence and commitment. In contrast, spending time developing relationships with families to better understand individual students was the lowest rated item. Perhaps more time should be devoted to developing both the attitudes and interpersonal skills which will assist CTE teachers in this area.

Social Integration

Administrative relationships and gaining student respect were considered most important among the social integration factor category. Chapman (1984) identified the importance of positive recognition from administrators in job satisfaction and retention. Relationships with administrators and students are a noticeable factor in a teacher’s integration into the education profession and their decision to remain. Additional research into the types of rewards (e.g.,

intrinsic vs. extrinsic) that may provide the most beneficial motivation for remaining in teaching may also be warranted.

First Year Teaching Experience

Respondents in this study agreed with all items pertaining to the first year teaching experience. Respondents did not strongly agree with any items in this category. Ruhland (2001) found a significant difference between teachers choosing to leave and those remaining in the profession concerning their own perception of their first year teaching experience. Those choosing to stay rated their first year teaching experience positively. In order to improve retention of FACS teachers, confidence needs to be improved in the area of curriculum development specifically as well as in all the survey items in this category. It is well known by those in and related to the teaching profession that the first year of teaching is often regarded as the hardest. It is during or shortly after this first year that the high stakes decision of whether to persist or leave teaching is made. This is where the information developed by this study will be most valuable in designing interventions for this first year experience which will hopefully increase retention.

Skills and Abilities

Respondents in this study strongly agreed they have strong knowledge of content, in contrast to the study by Ruhland (2001) which indicated that oral communications skills were rated as excellent by the teachers choosing to leave or remain in teaching. Content area knowledge is one of the ten characteristics identified by Polk in an effective, qualified teacher (Polk, 2006). However, improvement of the nine remaining characteristics in the skills and abilities category is essential in developing and retaining effective qualified teachers. “Teachers who rate themselves higher in skills and abilities, values, and professional accomplishments exhibit more career satisfaction” (Ruhland, 2001, p. 12).

Institutional Factors

The findings in Ruhland’s study indicate that a teacher’s work environment can impact their decision to remain in or to leave the teaching profession (Ruhland, 2001). Family and Consumer Sciences teachers in this study felt an inner sense of knowing I’m doing a good job, adequate time to complete job responsibilities, and administrative support for program development were extremely important in their willingness to continue teaching. These factors were also included in the five items rated as extremely important in the research conducted by Ruhland (2001). Respondents rated participation in professional associations as the least important institutional factor. Institutional climate and culture, as well as the perceptions and reactions to these factors by its members, can affect a teachers direct and peripheral experience. The category of social interaction also intuitively plays a part in whether or not the institutional factors become a positive or negative experience for a teacher which could affect retention.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for practice and suggestions further research were developed from the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Overall, FACS teachers in Kansas rated their educational preparation as good. Future research would be beneficial to determine ways to improve educational preparation ratings to excellent. Teacher preparation programs may want to focus on addressing students' special needs, classroom technology use and preparation in student organizations as areas to address due to the lower ratings of these items.

2. Spending time developing relationships with families to better understand individual students is the weakest area identified by the respondents in the area of teacher commitment. Pre-service as well as in-service efforts to improve this item could improve a teacher's commitment to remain in the profession. Additional research specifically addressing the influence of family relationships to CTE teacher retention would be beneficial.

3. FACS teachers in Kansas felt gaining student respect was extremely important and administrative relationships were very important to social integration. Including these two areas in future improvement plans for administrators and teacher preparation programs could improve FACS teacher retention.

4. Kansas FACS teachers did not strongly agree with any items pertaining to their first year teaching experience. Since research has found a connection between teachers remaining in the profession and a positive first year teaching experience, improvements in the teacher's first year can influence teacher retention. Future research could possibly find specific areas to strengthen in order to assist with a positive first year teaching experience to include in-service and professional development activities specifically related to the engagement of first-year teachers.

5. FACS teachers agreed with their current skills and abilities feeling most confident in knowledge of content. The connection between career satisfaction and skills and abilities makes this area a consideration in retention factors. Improving teacher confidence in their professional skills and abilities can possibly improve retention. Developing a teacher's aptitudes and trade skills may be as important as refining their teaching skills. Additional research which helps define the balance of technical versus teaching skills for CTE teachers in relation to the term of highly qualified teacher may yield interesting results.

6. Respondents rated inner sense of knowing I'm doing a good job, adequate time to complete job responsibilities, and administrative support of program development as extremely important in their willingness to continue teaching. This does indicate some additional impetus on the critical role of school administrators in providing supportive and timely feedback to new teachers, designing appropriate first-year teaching loads, and demonstrating qualified program support for those starting their teaching career. Research should be conducted to determine the strength of internal motivators such as personal gratification and self-esteem in comparison to external rewards such as job accomplishment and successful fulfillment of job responsibilities for CTE teachers specifically.

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