

**JOB SATISFACTION IN SELECTED NEW ZEALAND SPECIAL NEEDS  
SCHOOLS: AN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE**

by

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DECLARATION

Student number: **30670616**

I declare that *Job satisfaction in selected New Zealand special needs schools: an educational management perspective* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to investigate, from an educational management perspective, the factors that influence job satisfaction amongst special needs educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools. A qualitative research method was utilised to investigate the educational management strategies that influence the job satisfaction of special needs educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools. This dissertation presents the findings from a questionnaire on participants' geographical details and data from related interviews.

The findings from this study indicate that the job satisfaction of special needs educators is mainly influenced by factors such as management support, adequate resources, collaborative working relationships, ability of students with special educational needs to progress, and communication, among others. The study makes certain recommendations to help special needs educational managers effectively manage factors that influence job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction for special needs educators.

### **Key terms:**

Job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, special needs education, special educational needs, educational management, special needs schools, attrition, staff turnover, educational management, retention, administrative support, monetary rewards.

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**Job satisfaction in selected New Zealand special needs schools: an educational  
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

A large number of special needs educators abandon the teaching profession every year (Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:1; Houchins, Shippen, McKeand, Veil Roma, Jolivette & Guarino, 2010:623; Maniram, 2007:4; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258; Thornton, Peltier & Medina, 2007:234). Stempien and Loeb (2002:258) have boldly stated that the special needs education sector in particular has been susceptible to losing its well trained educators. Duesbery and Werblow (2008:1) concur that retaining special needs educators is particularly crucial (Houchins et al., 2010:624). Thornton et al. (2007:234) acknowledge that the reasons special needs educators leave the profession are intricate and multifaceted. The shortage of special needs educators is described as an international phenomenon that cannot easily be resolved (Houchins et al., 2010:623, Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258; Thornton et al., 2007:233). There is presently a global focus on inclusion and schools' accountability measures to close the achievement gap for children with special education needs (Chambers, 2008:1; Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:1). This focus adds to the challenges that face the special needs education sector.

Educators who teach students with special needs are overwhelmed with the changes and unknown demands that occur simultaneously and quickly (National Clearinghouse for professions in Special Education, as cited by Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258; Ingersoll, 2003:5; Richards, 2007:49; Thornton et al., 2007:233). The demands and culture of the special needs education sector have changed dramatically over the past decade and necessitate reflection on existing educational management practices (Maforah, 2004:1; Richards, 2007:49). Results from a survey by Richards (2007:48) in the general-education sector affirm: *Principals can benefit from knowing which of their behaviours or attitudes are most valued by teachers.*

The high turnover rate of educators in the special needs sector has a negative impact on: effective functioning of special needs facilities; providing high-quality programs; special needs students' progress and development; and effectively managing these facilities (Chambers, 2008:1; Maniram, 2007:4; Thornton et al., 2007:234).

Data from various studies (Chambers, 2008:1; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119; Maniram, 2007:4; Thornton et al., 2007:234) indicate that special needs educators are not satisfied with their jobs. It also points out that the consequences of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction are not effectively handled by special needs education managers (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119).

Stempien and Loeb (2002:258) share the views of other researchers, highlighting the fact that retaining and satisfying special needs educators emerged as a major challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Ingersoll, 2003:5; Thornton et al., 2007:237). Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:62) state:

*Those of us who undertake educational leadership roles in the twenty-first century will need a complex mix of skills relating to leadership of people and enabling colleagues to perform effective educational management skills.*

The authors place emphasis on the fact that, the higher the management quality of educators and their tasks, the higher the quality of education at all levels of the system (Kruger & Steinmann, 2005:16). Smith (1994:19) explains: *Knowledge of the factors that promote satisfaction may assist the principals and other managers in their management style and thus contribute positively to job satisfaction of the personnel.*

Managers should address the root causes of special needs educator shortages by deploying contemporary, effective, and evidence based management practises. These practises need to be supported by recent research regarding the causes of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of special needs educators. A growing advocacy for effective educational management and leadership necessitates more rigorous, current research. This will allow special needs education managers to ascertain and understand the reasons for educators' job dissatisfaction. From this, educational managers can provide evidence based recommendations, strategies, and actions (Nesane, 2008:5; Sikhwivhilu, 2003:2; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:259; Thornton et al., 2007:233) to effectively manage factors that influence special needs educators' job satisfaction. Evidence from various research projects indicates that educators from all settings recognise the pivotal value of administrative support and effective educational management (Chambers, 2008; Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:1; Ingersoll, 2003:160). This led to the

question: *Which specific management strategies will improve job satisfaction levels among special needs educators?*

### 1.1.1 Rationale to the study

A major impetus behind this study is to identify and understand effective management strategies to influence job satisfaction for special needs educators in New Zealand. This study will build on previous research findings and explore effective strategies and procedures used by educational managers in New Zealand special needs schools. Data from the proposed research can built the capacity of educational managers, special needs schools, and educational districts to design, implement, and evaluate effective policies and national curriculums. Findings may also address the unique needs of special needs educators and students in New Zealand.

Recommendations can be shared with all special needs stakeholders in the New Zealand Ministry of Education, as well as special needs education providers in other parts of the world.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A preliminary literature review was conducted to assess existing material regarding educators' job satisfaction and management principles for job satisfaction in different educational settings. It is clear that research data from both the mainstream and special needs education sectors will bring greater understanding of educators' job satisfaction and the effective management of the factors that influence job satisfaction in different educational settings. Conclusions and evidence based recommendations from this research study may ultimately lead to the integration of effective educational management strategies with previous research and relevant theory regarding this issue.

Numerous studies and research projects have been conducted on: teachers' job satisfaction in special-needs and mainstream schools (Houchins et al., 2010; Maforah, 2004; Sikhwivhilu, 2003; Smith, 1994; Stempien & Loeb, 2002); teacher retention (Duesbery & Werblow, 2008; Ingersoll, 2003; Thornton et al., 2007); lowering staff attrition or turnover (Thornton et al.,



2007); effective management of principals (Butt & Lance, 2005; Richards, 2007); and challenges in special needs and mainstream education (Chambers, 2008).

A survey conducted by Duesbery and Werblow (2008:1) revealed nine retention factors that were consistently endorsed: administrative support; atmosphere; salary; student behaviour; material; personal issues; facilities, student skill; and student background). This is also supported by the Golden Ten, mentioned by Richards (2004:43), which refers to the top 10 behaviours that support principals in effectively managing school demands. Data from the survey by Duesbery and Werblow (2008:1-2) that identified the largest contributing factors to retaining special needs educators revealed a profound difference in the perceptions of the participants. The data furthermore provided insight into the misperceptions of principals and the specific needs identified by the educators. This survey resulted in four main factors that influence special needs educators' job satisfaction and retention: Administrative support, competitive salaries, strong and positive school climate, and access to appropriate high-quality classroom material (Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:2). Educational managers can use this survey data to develop specific, differentiated, and effective management strategies to support special needs educators based on their individual needs.

Chambers (2008:1) discusses the different factors and challenges the special needs education sector faces:

*As leaders in our education system, all too often, we make well-intentioned decisions that have unintended consequences. We ask ourselves what we can do to address the teacher shortage crisis, and yet we increase the requirements for earning special education teacher credentials while at the same time offering enhanced incentives to experienced teachers to elect early retirement. We are directly contributing to the severe teacher shortage we are facing in special education.*

These factors are all challenges special needs educators face and directly contribute to educator shortages. Administrative support is singled out as one of the key requisites for supporting special needs educators (Chambers, 2008:3). Chambers provides practical suggestions for managing job satisfaction for special needs educators. These management strategies will ultimately lead to educator retention.

Stempien and Loeb (2002:258) drew a comparison between the differences in job satisfaction among general (mainstream) and special needs educators. They investigated sources for job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction, reasons for departure from the field of education, and variables that influence attrition among educators (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258-266). The results made it clear that special needs educators were not as satisfied with their jobs as their colleagues in mainstream education settings. Special needs educators were mostly dissatisfied. Data and results from similar studies were discussed, specifically focusing on a large scale study, in which there was greater role uncertainty and less job involvement, but no significant difference in job satisfaction between the two sectors, were found (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:259). Stempien and Loeb (2002:259) state: *Given the retention problems with special education teachers, this pattern of findings is puzzling.* Needs and concerns of inexperienced teachers were different from those of more experienced teachers. The data from this survey (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:265) exposed a number of factors that contribute to job dissatisfaction for special needs educators. The researchers made the following recommendations on effective management strategies:

- Help teachers deal with their stress, but also try to avoid and/or reduce stress prior to onset
- Provide individualised administrative support for inexperienced teachers
- Support teachers in fostering and establishing supportive collegial relationships
- Promote creativity and the challenge of special needs education
- Provide opportunity for variety

Thornton et al. (2007:233-237) identified the challenges that arise for special needs education and educational managers by the changing demand and high levels of attrition. Managers are faced with growing shortages of highly qualified special needs educators. The authors discuss systemic improvements and positive changes to special needs educators' job satisfaction (Thornton et al., 2007:233). The authors provide an in-depth discussion regarding the factors that affect teacher attrition. They propose proactive recommendations to address these factors that negatively impact on educator shortages and level of job satisfaction. Thornton et al. (2007:233-238) identified several reasons why special needs educators abandon their positions: Employment issues, work conditions, personal issues, support, and students.

Thornton et al. (2007:234) furthermore stress that attrition has been extensively researched in recent years. The authors suggest some strategies to increase the number of educators in special education: Troops to teacher programs, grow your own special education teachers, and develop proactive marketing strategies. In the same study, the authors make valuable suggestions regarding teacher certification, induction, mentoring, professional development, working conditions, and administrative support (Thornton et al., 2007:235-237).

Ingersoll (2003:1-27) reveals that data from the Schools and Staffing Survey, and its supplemental Teacher Follow-up Survey, point at reasons for attrition and retention challenges, although it contradicts previous research data: *An organisational source for low teacher retention needs to be addressed and that retirement of educators has a minor effect on the staff turnover*. Ingersoll (2003:1-27), in this article, therefore contradicts previous research findings and provides evidence to support previously mentioned claims in his research report. This contradiction strengthens the need for further investigation into job satisfaction of special needs educators. It may lead to effective management strategies to retain special needs educators, as retirement is not the main reason for leaving the special needs sector. The shortage of qualified teachers in special needs education is evident throughout the different disability groups (visual, hearing, behavioural, physical and mental), (Thornton et al., 2007:233). An insufficient number of teachers in the special needs education sector graduate from colleges and universities world wide each year (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258; Thornton et al., 2007:233).

Butt and Lance (2005:402) stress:

*The urgency of finding practical solutions to excessive workload problems have been increased by perennial concerns about poor teacher recruitment, loss of a high percentage of new teachers from the profession in their first years of teaching and an increasingly aging population of teachers nationally.*

These authors maintain that the answer does not lie in merely recruiting and training more special needs teachers. They state that there are more profound issues of teachers' work-life balance to be addressed.

It is evident in the literature that there is an increasing need to investigate and manage factors that impact on special needs educator's job satisfaction.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The previous discussion leads to the problem statement of the proposed study: Educational managers can effectively address factors that influence job satisfaction among educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools. There are four sub-problems that emanate from the general problem:

- What generally entails job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction?
- Which specific factors influence job satisfaction for New Zealand special needs educators?
- What are the consequences for New Zealand special needs educators who are not satisfied with their job?
- Which effective strategies and recommendations can be made to managers to improve job satisfaction levels among educators in New Zealand special needs schools?

## **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to investigate and understand strategies that enable effective management of factors that influence job satisfaction among educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools. The sub-problems derived from the general aim of the study determined the following objectives for this research:

- First, to establish the meaning of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction by means of a literature study (addressed in Chapter 2)
- Second, a focus on literature related to the specific factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators in New Zealand schools (addressed in Chapter 2)
- Third, the study investigates consequences for special-needs educators in selected New Zealand schools who are not satisfied with their job (addressed in the empirical study)
- Finally, the last chapter offers recommendations on effective management strategies for improving job satisfaction levels among New Zealand special needs educators

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.5.1 Research approach**

Both the qualitative and quantitative research techniques will be used in this research study. The qualitative research approach will lead to the most suitable method to collect data through unstructured interviews, document analysis and focus groups. Vander Stoep and Johnson (2009:8) propose that the qualitative method would provide the researcher with a better narrative understanding of the population under study. The quantitative research method is also used to collect interview data from the participants and a questionnaire is administered to draw their demographic profile for succeeding data analysis. The data gathered through the questionnaire is presented in the form of statistics. A case study was conducted of a small number of knowledgeable participants in three selected special needs education facilities on Auckland North Shore and Henderson in the North West district in New Zealand. Eight

educational managers (three principals, four deputy principals, and one assistant principal) were approached to participate in this study because they were able to provide answers to the research questions.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:397) and Vander Stoep and Johnson (2009:7-8) state that qualitative studies show relationships between events and meanings as perceived by the participants, in order to increase understanding of the phenomena. In this case, it may increase understanding of effective management strategies to increase job satisfaction levels for special needs educators. The quantitative research method is also used to collect interview data from the participants and a questionnaire is administered to draw their demographic profile for succeeding data analysis.

### **1.5.2 Population and sampling**

There are 36 special needs schools in New Zealand that provide support and education to students with high and/or special educational needs (Ministry of Education [www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation?Forms](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation?Forms) on 12/04/11). Twenty-eight of these facilities are special day schools that offer support to students with high needs. The remaining eight schools are special residential schools that provide services for students who are hearing or visually impaired; students with severe behavioural needs; students with severe educational, social, and emotional needs, and/or slow learners. The three special needs schools selected to participate in this study were all within an 18-km radius. The sample group represents 8.3 per cent of the population of 36 special needs schools in New Zealand.

Eight special needs education managers in three selected New Zealand special needs schools were purposefully sampled. This process helped the researcher identify knowledge-rich participants who would be able to provide information for this study (Morgan, 2009; Vander Stoep & Johnson, 2009:14 and 26). The sub set of people from the population who will participate in this study will be referred to as the *sample* (Vander Stoep & Johnson, 2009:26). Participants selected to take part in the study were interviewed face-to-face in their natural settings. The target population in this study was educational managers in New Zealand special needs schools. Vander Stoep and Johnson (2009:26) describe these eligible members of the population as the *sampling frame*. The researcher focused on a sample size of eight

educational managers in three special needs schools out of the population of 36 special needs schools in New Zealand. The educational managers were selected based on their geographical location in the North Island, North West District, North Shore City, and Henderson, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:404) propose that a qualitative sample size can range from one to 40 or more.

All educational managers served on the senior management teams of the three selected schools. The three schools were selected because of geographical location and accessibility. All the schools were within 18 km of the researcher. Eight educational managers indicated they would be interested to take part in the proposed research project. Educational managers of other special needs facilities in the area indicated they were not interested in taking part in this research. The managers who were interviewed represent diverse age and religious groups, languages, teaching experience, socio-economical statuses, and ethnicity. The three selected facilities provide education for students with a diverse range of special educational needs. They are multicultural and represent the variety of cultural groups in New Zealand.

### **1.5.3 Instrumentation and data collection techniques**

This research project necessitated a combination of instruments and data collection techniques to gather data on effective management strategies to improve job satisfaction of special needs educators. Interactive data collection methods allowed for field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

The interview comprised 12 open-ended questions that focused the interviewee's attention on effective management strategies that affect job satisfaction for special needs educators in New Zealand. Participants were encouraged to investigate their points of view. All interviews were recorded (audio-visual) with consent from participants. These one-on-one interviews may provide insight into understanding, perception, and needs regarding effective management strategies of factors that affect job satisfaction among special needs educators, both in New Zealand and internationally.

Special needs school principals were approached to take part in the planned study. Four principals supported the proposed study. Only three principals verbally committed to participate. The next step was mailing them information and details regarding the proposed study. The letter included: the researcher's personal background; background and introduction to the study, research plan, and time frames. The letter was followed by a scheduled meeting to discuss the research plan, study purpose and benefits, obtain informed consent, and develop strategies for executing research and schedule interviews. One-on-one interviews were arranged and scheduled to suit the participants' preferences and schedules. More than one visit was arranged if participants at the same facility preferred different dates and times. Interviews were carried out at the participants' schools where they worked as part of the senior management team. Arrangements for use of an appropriate private office or boardroom were made. The interview room was agreed upon prior to the interview appointment. This ensured that the room was distraction-free and guaranteed privacy.

#### **1.5.4 Data analysis and interpretation**

All the recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed to identify and group common themes from participants' descriptions of experiences. Patterns amid the grouped categories were then identified. A qualitative analysis was described as a fairly systematic process of selecting, grouping, evaluating, synthesising, and understanding the specific topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:461-462; Vander Stoep & Johnson, 2009:3-6).

### **1.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF RESEARCH**

Reliability and validity are important criteria in qualitative research. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:402) describe validity as the degree to which the explanations of the phenomena match the realities of the world. This includes both internal and external issues, and issues of objectivity and reliability. Vander Stoep and Johnson (2009: 59) suggest that validity is about truthfulness. Thus actually measuring in the research what the study claims to measure. All research questions in the current study were directly and closely linked to the research topic and questions. In order to adhere to reliability criteria, the aim was to be transparent, consistent, and dependable in all research activities so as to minimise bias. All study results were shared and validated with participants to certify that data interpretations and concepts had similar meanings for all. Reliability is described as the consistency in the



study (Vander Stoep & Johnson, 2009:62). Vander Stoep and Johnson (2009:62) describe reliability as: *the extent to which a measure yields the same scores across different times, groups of people, or versions of the instrument.*

The following strategies were used to indemnify and enhance validity, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407):

*Multiple method strategies to collect data, participant language and verbatim accounts, low-interference descriptors, mechanically record data (DVD recordings), member checking, participant review, and negative cases and/or discrepant data.*

Interpersonal subjectivity will also be used when collecting data. Reflex strategies and triangulation will also be utilized to improve the validity and credibility of this study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:424).

### **1.6.1 Limitations to the study**

The study was limited to special needs education settings and did not include mainstream facilities. The study had a small sample group, due to the small population numbers in New Zealand. The study did not include any male participants and the results will only be representative of female responses. This research study will be limited to female educational manager participants from the selected New Zealand special needs schools.

## **1.7 DEFINITONS OF KEY TERMS**

### **1.7.1 Educational manager**

*Educational manager* is described in literature as somebody who works in collaboration with human, physical, and financial resources to effectively achieve educational objectives and outcomes (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2005:65-77).

### **1.7.2 Effective management**

Bush (2000:43) states: *Effectiveness refers to the satisfactory achievement of objectives. Effective management is that which contributes to the achievement. Effective managers develop structures, processes and behaviours which facilitates success.*

### **1.7.3 Job satisfaction**

*Job satisfaction* is an individual's positive experience of satisfaction, when their work is in accord with their needs and principles (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258-262).

### **1.7.4 Job dissatisfaction**

*Job dissatisfaction* can be described as when there is not accordance between an individual's morals and the capacity of the work to satisfy the needs associated with those morals (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258-262).

### **1.7.5 Special needs schools**

Special needs schools are facilities where education programs for special needs students are delivered by specialist educators. Special needs facilities predominantly cater for a specific disability or need (i.e., visually/hearing impaired, physical/intellectual disabilities, behavioural challenges). Those students with specific special educational needs cannot be fully integrated into a mainstream setting. (Ministry of Education on 12/04/11).

### **1.7.6 Attrition or staff turnover**

*Attrition* is used in place of *staff turnover*. It describes the wearing down of an opponent, making them weaker by repeatedly attacking him or withholding resources (Thornton et al., 2007:234).

## **1.8 PLANNING THE STUDY**

### **1.8.1 Chapter 1: Introduction**

Chapter 1 contains the motivation and the background behind the study, problem formulation and research methodology, study aims and objectives, reliability and validity of the study, definitions of key terms, and an outline (plan) of the study.

### **1.8.2 Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter includes a theoretical background with a review of related literature. The meaning of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction is addressed. There is a focus on literature linked to the specific factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators. A further study will investigate the consequences for special needs educators in New Zealand who are not satisfied with their job.

### **1.8.3 Chapter 3: Research design**

The research design includes the qualitative research design, quantitative research design and an explanation of the theory underpinning the methodology, as well as the research planning. This chapter also includes an in-depth account of how the data was collected and analysed.

### **1.8.4 Chapter 4: Findings and discussion of results**

Chapter 4 sets out the results of the research. This chapter provides a presentation, analysis, and explanation of the data collected through the questionnaire on biographical information and the open-ended, semi-structured interview questions. The researcher will formulate graphic presentations of the data and analyse participants' biographical data regarding age, gender, mainstream teaching experience, special needs teaching experience, special needs educational management experience, highest academic qualification, and ethnicity.

### **1.8.5 Chapter 5: Summary, findings and recommendations**

A summary of the research will be presented first. This chapter will then present the study findings. It will then offer recommendations for effective strategies to improve job satisfaction levels among special needs educators in New Zealand schools. The chapter will close with recommendations for further research.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the background and purpose of this study regarding job satisfaction among special needs educators in New Zealand. A preliminary literature review was conducted, including international studies. Definition and discussion of job satisfaction of educators in special needs and general education, factors affecting job satisfaction, attrition, retention, and effective management will add to the reader's understanding of the issue. A new set of education management skills are needed to restore the culture of learning in special needs education. These management skills could contribute to increased job satisfaction for special needs educators.

Ambiguities and current inadequacies regarding job satisfaction of special needs educators need to be identified and addressed. Educational managers should effectively handle factors causing job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among special needs educators (Houchins et al., 2010:624; Richards, 2007:49). The consistent findings of international studies, indicating the need for awareness effective management of these job satisfaction factors authenticate the need for more information on specific management strategies.

Educational managers play an integral role in creating an environment that supports and facilitates job satisfaction and motivation among special needs educators. Maforah (2004:2) states: *I wish there was something that could be done by our principals to improve our morale.* Principals are not always aware of educators' needs, which inhibits effective school functioning. Principals play an important role in constructing an atmosphere to promote job satisfaction (Maforah, 2004:2 and 11).

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study as the most appropriate method. It would provide the most valid and accurate answers to the exploratory and explanatory research questions:

- to establish the meaning of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction by means of a literature study (addressed in Chapter 2)
- a focus on literature related to the specific factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators in New Zealand schools (addressed in Chapter 2)

Chapter 2 will present an in-depth literature review on management of job satisfaction for special needs educators.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ISSUE OF JOB SATISFACTION IN NEW ZEALAND SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS: LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 incorporated the background to the research project, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, the research design and methodology, and provided the layout of the chapters. Chapter 2 will give a theoretical background to the study, including a review of related literature. A preliminary literature review was done to gather information and evaluate materials on the subject of understanding educators' job satisfaction and management principles of job satisfaction in mainstream and special needs educational environments. This provided the researcher with a preliminary outline to focus the interviews and observations. Chapter 2 enclosed this full literature review.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:140) explicitly state how a literature review is judged: *The quality of the literature review is evaluated according to whether it furthers the understanding of the status of knowledge of the problem and provides a rationale for the study.* The meaning of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction will be addressed. There will be a focus on literature linked to specific factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators. The chapter will investigate the consequences for special needs educators in New Zealand schools who are not satisfied with their jobs. Several questions will be addressed:

- What entails job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction in general?
- Which specific factors influence job satisfaction for special needs educators?
- What are the consequences for special needs educators who are not satisfied with their jobs?

In her analysis of job satisfaction for special needs educators who instruct students with emotional/behavioural disorders, Adkins (2009:1) states it is an overwhelming task to identify what constitutes job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. She explores and comments on some of the main theories on the different factors that influence how we feel about our jobs. She reports that Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (Adkins, 2009:1 as cited in Herzberg et al. 1959)

provided relevant insight into understanding job satisfaction: *One popular theory that has been around for a long time purports that influences for liking and disliking a job, work independent of each other (as cited in Herzberg et al., 1959).*

Educator turnover rates are related to job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. The high turnover rates of teachers in special needs education continue to influence that sector. These chronic shortages persist and contribute to the challenges for special needs schools and educational departments (Adera & Bullock, 2010:5; Cancio & Conderman, 2008:30; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119-121; Ingersoll, 2003:6; Leko & Smith, 2010:231; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258; Stephens & Fish, 2010:581; Thornton et al., 2007:233). Stempien and Loeb (2002:258) describe the special needs education sector as particularly susceptible to losing highly qualified educators. They are in agreement with other researchers in the field of special needs education (Adera & Bullock, 2010:5; Butt & Lance, 2005:401-405; Cancio & Conderman, 2008:30; Ingersoll, 2003:6; Leko & Smith, 2010:231; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258; Stephens & Fish, 2010:581) and emphasize that it will not be an easy task to resolve educator shortages.

According to research studies in the field of job satisfaction (Maniram, 2007:4; Butt & Lance, 2005:402), results indicate that the same high turnover rate of educators is present in both the mainstream and the special needs education sectors. Other researchers (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258) are in accord and put forward that there are different factors from inside and outside the classroom that contribute to the high turnover rate of special needs educators.

Ingersoll (2003:9) draws attention to the shortcomings of the conservative wisdom on educator shortages:

*The data shows that the demand for new teachers and subsequent staffing difficulties are not primarily due to student enrolment and teacher retirement increases, as widely believed, but they are largely due to teacher turnover – teachers moving from or leaving their teaching jobs – and most of this turnover has little to do with a greying workforce.*

A fairly steady yearly turnover rate was evident in the results of the Teacher Follow-up survey carried out (Ingersoll, 2003:1-28). Data from 1988 to 2001 showed yearly turnover rates varying from 13.2 per cent to 15.7 per cent. Ingersoll (2003:1-28) describes two types of turnovers: movers (those who migrate to other schools), and leavers (those who leave the education sector altogether). The latter is referred to as *educator attrition*.

Ingersoll (2003:11-12) suggests that not all educator turnover is disadvantageous. It can be essential and valuable for educational organisations. Educator turnover can combat stagnancy in an organisation and help schools to do away with “low-calibre performers”. Educator turnover can result in the appointment of “new blood” and make positive improvements in an organisation or educational setting.

By contrast, a large body of data (Butt & Lance, 2005:402; Ingersoll, 2003:13) indicates that high educator turnover rates are concerning. These high turnover rates can be disruptive and point out the core problems in school functioning.

Job satisfaction/dissatisfaction of special needs educators has significant financial implications for facilities and departments (Adera & Bullock, 2010:5; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258). Great costs are involved in recruiting and training teachers to replace those who choose to leave their positions (Adera & Bullock, 2010:5; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258; Stephens & Fish, 2010:581). A minimal amount of research has been carried out to investigate the costs and consequences of educator turnover compared to the high number of studies carried out in the corporate sector (Ingersoll, 2003:13).

Leko and Smith (2010:321-322) highlight data from their study on how managers can positively influence retention of new special educators. They provide a break-down of the retention figures:

*Recent data indicate that of the total number of special education teachers who leave teaching, 36.7 per cent leave to escape teaching, 7.7 per cent leave for professional development (PD), 31.8 per cent leave for personal reasons, and 16.5 per cent retire (as cited in Boe et al., 2008). Additionally, roughly 10 per cent of special education teachers transfer out of special education to another teaching field,*



*with 46 per cent of these teachers switching to elementary education (as cited in Boe et al., 2008).*

## **2.2 JOB SATISFACTION IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT**

Maniram (2007:14) defines job satisfaction as:

*The definition of job satisfaction can therefore be summed as a collection of attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviour one has towards his or her job. For the purpose of this study it can also be concluded that job satisfaction is a work related attitude that symbolizes an emotional feeling of accomplishment that can be either quantitative or qualitative.*

Butt and Lance (2005:404) are of the opinion that it is difficult to carry out research on educators' job satisfaction, especially if *job satisfaction* has not been clearly defined (as cited in Evans, 1998 by Butt & Lance, 2005:404). Their study of secondary teachers' workload and job satisfaction did not include a definition of job satisfaction on the participant questionnaire. They acknowledged, in retrospect, that their study could be criticised for only providing two sets of declaration for job satisfaction. The one declaration focused on the individual's own job and the other focused on their perception of the impact of organisational issues on their job satisfaction. Butt and Lance (2005:405) come to the conclusion that incorporating a clear definition of job satisfaction might have indicated to participants that the study focus was on "satisfying" rather than "satisfactory" components.

Bailey and Dowrick (2001:15) find that the challenges facing Australian special needs educators considerably influence their level of job satisfaction and morale. Stempien and Loeb (2002:259) report that the distinctive needs of students contribute to the level of job satisfaction of special needs and general educators. Adkins (2009:1) proposes that the challenging work, responsibility, and recognition are motivating factors create higher levels of job satisfaction.

In contrast to the majority of studies reporting on low job satisfaction levels, Stephens and Fish (2010:581-594) and Butt and Lance (2005:402-416) report that most of the special needs educators in their studies reported high levels of job satisfaction. These educators felt they made positive contributions in the lives of their students. In Stephens and Fish's (2010:581-594) research into motivational factors for pursuing a career in special education, the interviewees' expressed high levels of job satisfaction:

*Definitely, the children contribute towards the job satisfaction.*

*Watching them make progress, while very slow progress, is very rewarding and satisfying to watch;*

*The positives are always the kids;*

*I love my job! I love working with students with all sorts of disabilities*

(Stephens & Fish, 2010:285-286).

The study highlights that seeing a special needs student show academic progress contributed most to the overall satisfaction of the special needs educators. They stated they would not leave the special needs education field because they felt it was rewarding, and the work provided them with a feeling of professional accomplishment (Stephens & Fish, 2010:587). It is palpable that these educators experienced job satisfaction in working with children with special educational needs.

Leyin and Wakerly (2007:36) conducted a study on staff support and stress, and job satisfaction in working with people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviours. Sixty per cent of staff rated their job satisfaction from "mostly moderately satisfied" to "mostly very satisfied." These findings correlate with those from other studies (Stephens & Fish, 2010:587; Butt & Lance, 2005:401-418) that report high levels of job satisfaction for special needs educators. The study focuses attention on the fact that the specific staff group that experiences job satisfaction and stress perceive them as two independent entities. This is likely to place these special needs educators in a susceptible position. Leyin and Wakerly (2007:38) suggest that this specific staff group is: *Likely to be highly committed and soldier on through all adversity. This is not likely to have effects if the situation is short-lived and contained, but if it is persistent there may well be adverse personal consequences.*

In addition, the authors propose that it is beneficial for special needs managers to identify staff who may have high levels of job satisfaction and high stress. This will help educational managers put intervention strategies and support in place.

Three main factor groups affect job satisfaction: internal, external, and individual (as cited in Drafke & Kossen, 1998:329 by Steyn, 2001:52). Steyn (2001:52) classifies internal factors as: the work itself, job variety, autonomy, and recognition/feedback. External factors include: achievement, role ambiguity and conflict, opportunity, job security, social interaction, supervision, and reward. Individual factors encompass: commitment, expectations, effort and reward ratio, direct influences of colleagues, comparisons, and personal outlook.

According to Steyn (2001:53), it is possible to feel satisfaction in one part of the job but dislike other aspects of the job. The level of an educator's job satisfaction will increase when they have more control over their job and experience more freedom. She describes recognition as: *The perceptible acknowledgement of an educator's high-quality work*. This can be given in a variety of forms: verbal recognition in a staff meeting, written recognition in a news-letter, higher scores in personal appraisal, or a promotion. Specific, timely, and frequent individual feedback can have an escalating positive effect on an educator's job satisfaction. Steyn (2001:53) stresses the value of specific feedback on an educator's progress:

*If all staff members are told they are doing well when some are not, the effect on motivation and job satisfaction can be negative and the value of feedback decreases. Those who are performing well may get the message that there is no reason to try harder if everyone receives the same feedback regardless of performance.*

Social interaction is an important factor that influences job satisfaction (Steyn, 2001:54). Maslow's hierarchy of needs also points out the significance of social interactions under the *need to belong*. It is characterized by effective relationships and the need to belong to a group. Confirmation from the group and positive social interactions lead to a greater sense of belonging (Steyn, 2001:35).

### 2.3 JOB DISSATISFACTION IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Job dissatisfaction can be caused by extrinsic hygiene factors (Adkins, 2009:1; Maforah, 2004:26). They are not directly responsible for job dissatisfaction, but if one or more of these factors is lacking, it can lead to job dissatisfaction. In her study of factors that promote job satisfaction among school educators, Maforah (2004:26) describes extrinsic factors as the circumstances under which educators work. In the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, extrinsic factors are lower-order needs. Maslow's needs, ranking from lowest to highest include: physiological needs; security and safety; belonging; status and self-esteem, and self-actualisation (Prinsloo, 2005:150). Maslow's theory affirms that lower-order needs must be satisfied before higher-order needs can be satisfied.

Lack of satisfaction with hygiene factors can lead to an educator's decreased motivation and lack of performance, and negatively impact on the education profession. Adkins (2009:1) describes job dissatisfaction as the result of hygienic factors such as salary, fringe benefits, and job security. An educator's lower-level needs should be met in order for that individual to feel motivated by higher-level needs.

Butt and Lance (2005:405) report that *de-professionalization* and *de-skilling* directly impact on mainstream educators' job dissatisfaction. Professional independence of mainstream educators is replaced with ready-made national curriculums developed by others (as cited in Campbell & Neill, 1994:159, by Butt & Lance, 2005:405). *De-skilling* implies that specific skills and activities that formed part of the workload conventionally carried out by mainstream educators are now carried out by other workers employed at lower wages (Butt & Lance, 2005:406). *De-professionalization* relates to the systematic removal of educators' professional autonomy, which directly influences job dissatisfaction (Butt & Lance, 2005:406; Maniram, 2007:25).

Stempien and Loeb (2002:258) establish that special needs educators experienced more job dissatisfaction than mainstream educators. For special needs educators, job dissatisfaction was associated with stressors from inside and outside the classroom.

According to results of Maniram's (2007:12) study of mainstream educators in the mainstream sector, managers were found to be alarmed by the consequences that of job dissatisfaction have on educators' performance. These educational managers realised that job dissatisfaction can manifest as high turnover rates, poor productivity, high absenteeism, and an increased in union involvement.

Stephens and Fish (2010:586) document that most participants in their study felt that excessive demands and lack of support contributed to their job dissatisfaction. Prolonged role overload, in addition to the school climate (Billingsley, Carlson & Klein, 2004:333), contribute to special-needs educators' dissatisfaction and their decision to leave the field (Adera & Bullock, 2010:6). Billingsley et al. (2004:344) provide an explanation in their article, regarding the specific problematic work factors that can cause job dissatisfaction and lead to attrition:

*Limited access to appropriate materials, difficulty in managing their jobs, paperwork that interferes with teaching, feelings of not being included in their schools, and having principals who do not understand what they do.*

Ingersoll (2003:15-17) presents self-report data from mainstream and special-needs educators on their reasons for leaving the field. Educators reported that the most important reasons for job dissatisfaction included: poor salaries; poor administrative support; student discipline problems; lack of faculty influence and autonomy; poor student motivation; no opportunity for professional advancement; inadequate time to prepare; intrusions on teaching time; and class size too large. Nearly half the educators in this study reported that the main reason for leaving were job dissatisfaction, the desire to look for a better job, or changing their career path. Data consistently demonstrate that educators leave their positions for many reasons.

## 2.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING JOB SATISFACTION

### 2.4.1 Introduction

Factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators vary greatly. Job satisfaction relates to the level of success that a person experiences in their work (Steyn, 2001:53). A large body of evidence (Adkins, 2009:1; Bailey & Dowrick, 2001:15; Butt & Lance, 2005:404-405; Maforah, 2004:26; Maniram, 2007:14-16) indicate that job satisfaction is the result of intrinsic motivating factors such as challenging work, achievement, recognition, autonomy, responsibility, involvement, and the opportunity for independent thought. Maforah (2004:27) states that these intrinsic factors are directly related to the work itself and described these factors as motivators. She also states: *The higher-order needs have higher motivational potential and increased performance.*

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was employed by Maforah (2004:27) to provide meaningful insight into the phenomenon that contributes to the experience of higher levels of job satisfaction for some educators than for others. This theory also provides a framework for understanding the underlying processes in relation to people's experience of job satisfaction. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is perhaps one of the most instinctively appealing theories used to elucidate how needs influence job satisfaction (Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2004:105). Maslow put forward that motivational pressure increases if a need arises and the increased pressure is directed towards the fulfilment of that experienced need (Grobler et al., 2004:105). There are five levels of needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs namely: Physical needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs. These needs are ordered from lower order needs to highest order needs. The physical needs are described as the prime needs for food, clothing and shelter that can be directly fulfilled through the remuneration package a person receives. After the educators' primary needs are satisfied the educators' need for safety and security shall become their motivational factor. Only now can their need to form social relationships in and outside the organisation be satisfied. Later they will focus their motivation on the need for self-esteem, this can include a better job title, status perks or higher levels of responsibility. Maslow's need for self-actualisation is the ultimate need that needs to be fulfilled by chasing challenging and exciting jobs (Grobler et al., 2004:105).

### 2.4.2 Role related issues

The roles assigned to special needs educators differ from school to school and/or classroom to classroom (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Stephens & Fish, 2010). The needs of the student population in the specific special needs facility predict and prescribe roles assigned to educators. Assigned roles can include a variety of activities, including: teaching academic, vocational, life, or social skills, and implementing and monitoring individual educational plans (IEPs) and behaviour intervention plans (BIPs) (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Stephens & Fish, 2010).

Adkins (2009:7) reports that the roles of mainstream and special needs educators were significantly influenced over the past two decades by legislation and inclusion practises. Consequently, these influences are stretching educators to the limit (Butt & Lance, 2005:401). Steyn (2001:54) recognises the importance of job descriptions to ensure educators can concentrate and focus on their core role of teaching. In contrast to other data, Steyn (2001:53) proposes that job variety can increase educators' job satisfaction because there is an increase in educators' skills and knowledge base. Achievement or performance levels can be improved by training, education, and improving resources.

Billingsley et al. (2004:344) found that special-needs educators had to teach students with different disabilities in the same class. The majority of special needs educators had to support students from three or more of the disability groups, in the same class. These classes are described as noncategorical or, at best, multi-categorical. This results in a mismatch between the educators' training and their actual working conditions. At the beginning of their careers, teachers are not academically prepared and do not have the necessary experience to serve students from diverse disability groups (Billingsley et al., 2004:344; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119).

Cancio and Conderman (2008:30), Ingersoll (2003:20), and Butt and Lance (2005:416-417) independently document evidence that special needs educators found it challenging to work in classes with large numbers of students with behaviour problems. It became increasingly more difficult for these educators when large groups of students displayed demanding behaviour at the same time. Ingersoll (2003:19) names student disciplinary problems as the second largest factor that former educators identified as strongly linked to turnover. Results from the

previously mentioned study and other studies (Butt & Lance, 2005:416-417) furthermore suggest that increased educator influence on decision-making is linked to higher retention levels.

### **2.4.3 Role ambiguity and role conflict**

Special-needs educators' state that insufficient time is allocated to complete program components besides teaching (Adera & Bullock, 2010:6; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:259-264). Delegating more tasks to administrative support staff or teacher aides will give educators more time to focus on preparation and teaching (Butt & Lance, 2005:415-418). Both special needs and mainstream educators highlighted the need and importance for additional, better-deployed, well-trained support staff and teaching assistants. Educators strongly voiced their need for clerical, administrative and curriculum support, and allotted time slots for collaborative planning with teacher aides and/or support staff.

Participants in the study carried out by Stephens and Fish (2010:586) echoed the findings of a large body of previous literature that the paperwork overload is unrealistic and takes attention away from the core work of teaching children with special educational needs (Billingsley et al., 2004:344, Butt & Lance, 2005:201-217; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119). Butt and Lance (2005:215) asked mainstream educators to share their views on the causes of disproportionate workload and ideas to negate excessive workloads. The amount of non-teaching tasks was the biggest contributor to an excessive workload. These non-teaching tasks include: photocopying, money collection, paperwork, filing, completing forms, social support, and typing. The second most important cause for the huge workloads includes: monitoring, assessments, recording, reporting, and accountability.

Chambers (2008) strongly advocates for special needs educators in need:

*I believe that we fail our teachers and subsequently fail to retain them when we repeatedly remove them from instruction and assign them to conduct assessments, attend meetings, complete paperwork, and work with other educators and the community. Although these assignments are important and necessary, they should not consume the significant portion of a special education teacher's time that they do today.*



Butt and Lance (2005:402) reinforce the need for further research to look for solutions for the workload-job satisfaction conundrum within the educational arena:

*The data upon which this article is based provides a unique overview of the workload issues facing the teaching workforce at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but more importantly provides an initial (if somewhat tentative) indication of the effectiveness of different measures designed to shift, but not necessarily reduce, teacher workloads.*

Results from the research carried out by Butt and Lance (2005:417) provide comprehensible evidence:

*Across all the schools there is a call for more teachers but also there is an apparent need for the roles and responsibilities of teachers to be clarified. Teachers want to be trusted to know their job and to be able to exercise their professional judgement.*

#### **2.4.4 Hours of work**

Butt and Lance (2005:411) provide confirmation that special needs and mainstream educators' job satisfaction related to their hours of work (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:264). A comparison was made between Butt and Lance (2005:411), the Price Waterhouse Coopers Report (2001), and the Office for Manpower Economics (OME) for the STRB (2000). Butt and Lance (2005:412) found that their results were broadly comparable with the other reports. Special needs educators reported spending an average 10.3 additional hours per week on work during evenings. Mainstream secondary educators spent 9.7 additional hours per week, and primary school educators spent nine additional hours per week, significantly lower than for special needs educators. However, results also show that special needs educators spend less time than mainstream educators providing one-on-one support to learners. This may be a result of the fact that special-needs educators have more support staff and teacher aides (Butt & Lance, 2005:413). Another contributing factor may be the lower educator-child ratio in special-needs classes, which varies from 1:1 to 1:5 (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:264). Interestingly, Butt and Lance (2005:420) contradict their initial findings: *Interestingly, there is no systematic relationship between job satisfaction and hours worked – findings which*

*emphasize that job satisfaction is dependent on a more complex set of factors than hours worked.*

#### **2.4.5 Pay/Monetary rewards**

The correlation between job satisfaction and financial rewards has been documented in a variety of studies (Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:2; Maniram, 2007:23; Grobler et al., 2004:105). Maniram (2007:23) acknowledges that financial rewards or pay usually have different meanings for different people, depending on their needs. These can be basic needs to satisfy their physical and security needs. The monetary rewards may also be viewed as a status or recognition symbol. It was documented as early as 1977 that if people perceive their salaries as not competitive or market-related, they are less satisfied in their jobs (as cited in Chung, 1977:23 by Maniram, 2007:23; Grobler et al., 2004:105).

Competitive salaries for educators are also a factor that influences decisions to leave the education arena (Ingersoll, 2003:19). Departing teachers reported that increasing educators' salaries would positively influence retention levels and reduce turnover rates. However, increasing educator salaries has wider consequences for organisations because of the large number of educators and the amount of funding they would need. Contradicting evidence provided by Billingsley et al. (2004:341), from their study investigating working conditions and induction support of new special needs educators, shows their salary was not associated with an objective to remain in special needs education.

#### **2.4.6 Adequacy of administrative support**

Numerous studies (Adera & Bullock, 2010:6; Chambers, 2008:1; Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:2; Leyin & Wakerly, 2007:35; Stephens & Fish, 2010:587) report on special needs educators' need for adequate support from educational managers. Stephens and Fish (2010:588) quote a special needs educator's strong opinion on the need for managerial support:

*One thing that has always been a kind of thorn in my side is when we as teachers do not feel that we have the administrative support we need when dealing in the trenches with the assortment of students we have in our special-education programs today.*

The previously mentioned study reports that a number of interviewees deemed that special needs educational managers did not understand the special demands placed upon educators (Billingsley et al., 2001). Cancio and Conderman (2008:30) note that one of the participants in their study deemed the lack of administrative support to be her biggest challenge as a special needs educator: *I don't think my administrator understands students with Emotional and Behavioural Disabilities (EBD) or the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) process.*

Administrators need to be more available to special needs educators. Results indicate that administrators need to provide immediate support (Cancio & Conderman, 2008:30). Duesbery and Werblow (2008:1-2) feel that the findings from their study provide clear evidence that administrative support is the most important contributing factor for retaining special needs educators.

#### **2.4.7 Teacher characteristics**

Butt and Lance (2005:407) state that a definite correlation exists between teacher characteristics and their level of job satisfaction. Professional caring is a core value most educators possess. Special needs educators' innate professional caring characteristic adds to their workload. Data from earlier studies (as cited in Woods et al., 1997:153 by Butt & Lance, 2005:407) unmistakably point out that a group of educators found their caring values did not align with their employers' viewpoints. This resulted in lower job satisfaction when they realised that the organisation did not fully value and appreciate their contributions.

Job satisfaction is a complex relationship between the special needs educator's experiences in their personal and professional lives (Adkins, 2009:2). Butt and Lance (2005:402) describe it as *work-life balance*. When educators believe that possibilities and opportunities exist for personal growth and job progression, they will have more job satisfaction (Steyn, 2001:54). Maniram (2007:24) notes that factors such as recognition and achievement do not have the

same impact on an educator's job satisfaction as the level of promotion. Financial gains, independence, and better supervision opportunities will accompany the promotion.

Educators, who experience job security, may also experience job satisfaction. Both decrease when educators are not reassured and valued. Steyn (2001:54) accentuates the effect that redeployment has on the education corps. Data show that redeployment has a negative effect on educators' job satisfaction.

#### **2.4.8 Ability of students to progress academically**

Leyin and Wakerly (2001) identify two areas of work associated with high levels of job satisfaction: teaching, and going on excursions with children. Other studies found that students' academic progress and achievement levels are associated with special needs educators' job satisfaction levels (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:120; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:259 as cited in Lobosco & Newman, 1992; Thornton et al., 2007:234). Thus, the higher the level of achievement of the special needs student, the higher the level of satisfaction experienced by the educator. Chambers (2008:3) and Maniram (2007:5) make a positive connection between student achievement levels and educators' feeling of making a difference in the lives of their students. Thornton et al. (2007:234) draw attention to the fact that the student demographics in special-needs education groups have transformed notably over the past few years.

#### **2.4.9 Working conditions**

Maniram (2007), and Duesbery and Werblow (2008) emphasize educators' preferences for optimal working conditions as a contributing factor to level of job satisfaction. Advantageous working conditions result in greater physical comfort and ease, which leads to enhanced job satisfaction (Billingsley et al., 2004:333). Butt and Lance (2005:420) note that educators reported improvements in resourcing, staffing and working conditions influenced their level of job satisfaction. Optimal working conditions can include: a comfortable physical work environment, temperature, lighting, hygiene, noise, ventilation, and availability of resources (Maniram, 2007:25). Billingsley et al. (2004:339) found that special needs educators' choices to leave their positions are influenced by their working conditions. There are perceptible discrepancies between the commitments expected from special needs and mainstream

educators. Special needs educators are expected to do much more, and do not receive any additional compensation for these commitments and tasks requiring additional expertise and skills (Billingsley et al., 2004: 339; Thornton et al., 2007:237).

Maniram (2007:25) warns (as cited in Arnold & Feldman, 1996:90-91):

*If workers conditions are too favourable or to the extreme, this could be taken for granted or ignored by most employees. In such a case, the employee does not really appreciate his good working conditions, or if it the contrary, this may not bother or affect him. Moreover, the employee may use poor working conditions as an excuse to get back at management because they may feel that management does not appreciate or acknowledge their efforts or work done.*

#### **2.4.10 Trust between professionals**

Trust between professionals, both top-down and bottom-up, plays a significant part in the formation of a collective understanding in complex educational settings (as cited in Hargreaves, 2002, by Butt & Lance, 2005:405). Restructuring and introducing performance indicators led to the further breakdown of trust in the mainstream educational sector. Butt and Lance (2005:405-407) outline the importance and role of trust as a noteworthy factor in relation to job satisfaction of educators in the mainstream setting.

#### **2.4.11 Summary**

The factors that impact on the level of job satisfaction of special needs educators is a concern for most educational managers because of the effect it has on the special needs educational sector (Maniram, 2007:11-32). A sufficient body of evidence exists to indicate that the level of job satisfaction of special needs educators has an impact on the employees and educational organisation. A range of factors exist that influence job satisfaction, but not all factors affect educators to the same extent. Results from a number of studies on the topic were contradicted by results from studies on the same topic (Billingsley et al., 2004:341; Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:2; Maniram, 2007:23-25). Evidence suggests that there are a few factors impacting on the retention of special needs educators, which show a discrepancy (Duesbery & Werblow,

2008:2). The authors caution that a retention strategy on its own will be too simplistic. A combination of strategies will increase the retention of special needs educators.

As a result, educational managers need to be vigilant in controlling factors that affect job satisfaction for special needs educators. They need to be committed to retaining qualified special needs educators and using data and evidence to develop strategies to do so (Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:2). Their study on how to retain special needs educators reveals:

*In general, the needs of early- and late-career teachers are similar. Teachers of special education from all levels of experience need administrative support, fair salary, and a positive school atmosphere to stay on the job. To put it in practical terms, the four most important strategies for retaining special education teachers, according to our survey, are: provide administrative support; pay teachers a fair salary; foster a strong and positive school climate; and provide access to sufficient and high-quality classroom material, especially for new teachers.*

## **2.5 CONSEQUENCES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATORS WHO DO NOT EXPERIENCE JOB SATISFACTION**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

Special needs educator shortages, created by extreme turnover, impede the development of a qualified teacher workforce (Adera & Bullock, 2010:5; Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:1; Maniram, 2007:28). Adkins (2009:1-2) proposes that when employers and educational managers neglect to guarantee high levels of job satisfaction for educators, it will lead to high turnover rates, absenteeism, rebellion, transferring to other positions, and lack of interest in the job. Maniram (2007:26) concurs and reports that managers should be apprehensive about the effect that educators' job dissatisfaction may have on the organisation. Researchers (Adera & Bullock, 2010:6; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258) put forward that factors from inside and outside the classroom contribute to the high turnover rate of educators.

### **2.5.2 High levels of attrition**

Cancio and Conderman (2008:30) affirm that teacher attrition is one of the largest contributing factors that lead to educator shortages. The authors report that the American Association for Employment in Education, provide evidence that attrition rates were significantly higher amongst teachers of students with emotional and behavioural disabilities than among educators of students with other disabilities:

*Research investigating the longevity of teachers of students with EBD (emotional and behaviour disabilities) is not a recent area of study. In fact, the special educational attrition literature has referenced teacher shortage and burnout among such teachers since the 1980's.*

Maniram (2007) found evidence that teachers' low morale and low job satisfaction are some of the main issues that contribute to high levels of attrition. Emery and Vandenberg (2010:119) agree with other researchers:

*Special educators are a high risk group, prone to low job satisfaction, low self-efficacy, and increased stress and burnout. The attrition rate of special educators is particularly high, contributing to the overall shortage of qualified teachers throughout the United States.*

### **2.5.3 Low retention rates**

According to Stempien and Loeb (2002:258): *The retention rate after one year was significantly lower for special education teachers (89 per cent) than it was for general education teachers (94 per cent).* Duesbery and Werblow (2008:1) agree with Thornton et al. (2007:233), and report that low retention rates for special needs educators is a critical issue that needs to be addressed. The authors gathered information that led them to identify those factors that positively influence retention rates in the special needs education sector. They collated information from principals and special needs educators (early- and late-career) on the factors perceived as most important for low retention rates. Four strategies for improving retention rates became evident:

- Providing effective educational management (administrative) support
- Paying fair and competitive salaries
- Generating a positive school climate
- Making available high-quality classroom material

Thornton et al. (2007) advise educational leaders and policymakers to boost the supply of special needs educators and lower attrition rates if they are planning to meet the needs of students with special educational needs and meet the terms of legislation.

Stempien and Loeb (2002:264) found that job dissatisfaction is strongly linked to retention problems. Special needs educators who voice their dissatisfaction are particularly at risk for leaving the special needs education sector.

Various researchers found that shortages of qualified special needs educators are not a result of the fact that not enough educators qualify. Rather, it is the result of the large number of special needs educators leaving the field (Adera & Bullock, 2010:6; Billingsley et al., 2004:333-347; Butt & Lance, 2005:401; Cancio & Conderman, 2008:31; Ingersoll, 2003:5). Ingersoll (2003:8) puts forward that the data from his research in relation to teacher shortages clearly indicates a sufficient amount of potential U.S. educators qualify in U.S. every year. The limitations to these results are recognised and a break down of this numbers is projected. Data from numerous studies (Cancio & Conderman, 2008:30-31; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119; Ingersoll, 2003:6; Leko & Smith, 2010: 231, Stephens & Fish, 2010:581) indicate that the special needs education sector has more difficulty than the mainstream sector with recruiting educators, low retention levels, and high attrition rates. Most researchers agree that special needs and mainstream educators are an at-risk group (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119), especially during their first few years (Chambers, 2008:2; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:264) and the mainstream education sector (Butt & Lance, 2005:417). Billingsley et al. (2004) outline the need to place greater focus on retaining special needs educators, specifically during the first few years of their careers, based on data from their exploration of the working conditions and induction support of early career special educators.



Ingersoll (2003:6) gathered data from the School Staffing Survey (SASS), the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) and from the National Centre for Education Statistics on the turnover rates of 53,000 educators. These are representative of all types of educators, schools, (including special needs facilities), and districts. Results indicate that most schools reported great difficulty recruiting educators to fill their vacancies. Three quarters of the 45 per cent secondary schools reported they had special needs educator vacancies to fill, but they experienced difficulty filling these positions. They are representing 34 of all the secondary schools.

#### **2.5.4 Absenteeism**

Maniram, (2007:29) suggests a direct connection between absenteeism and special needs educators' level of job satisfaction. Feelings of decreased job satisfaction can often result in high rates of worker absenteeism. She recognizes that there are legitimate reasons for workers for being absent (as cited in Robbins, 2001:200 by Maniram, 2007:29; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:120). She also documents that all absenteeism should be taken into account, since it may be the result of an employee's poor work relationships, or the job itself (as cited in Baron & Greenberg, 2003:156 by Maniram, 2007:29).

#### **2.5.5 Increased levels of stress**

Emery and Vandenberg (2010:121) conclude that there is more than two decades worth of data documenting the prevalence of stress and burnout, and predicting its ongoing perseverance. These publications made recommendations for reform, but neglected to focus on special needs educators' job stress and burnout. Stempien and Loeb (2002:259) concur that there is a strong correlation between job stress and dissatisfaction among special needs educators. They document that special needs educators who left the profession had higher stress levels than those who stayed (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:259 as cited in Miller et al., 1999).

Leyin and Wakerly (2007:38) found that the staff in their study experienced high levels of stress and reported job dissatisfaction. These special needs educators are intensely conscious of their circumstances, and are more likely to take action and seek other employment. Unsuccessful people may not experience job satisfaction and can have high levels of job dissatisfaction (Steyn, 2001:54).

### **2.5.6 Increased levels of union activity**

Maniram (2007:29) document (as cited in Arnold and Feldman, 1996:90-91):

*In an important study of union organisations, researchers concluded that workers will join a union mainly based on their dissatisfaction with working conditions and their perceived lack of influence change to those conditions.*

There is an alarming increase in the number of education workers joining union organisations. This can be seen as an indication that a large number of mainstream educators experience job dissatisfaction (Maniram, 2007:29).

### **2.5.7 Intent to leave the special-needs education sector**

Stephens & Fish (2010:587) gathered information from interviewees, who clearly specified factors that might cause them to leave the special needs education field. Interviewees felt that existing special needs education legislation, additional demands, and lack of support can influence their decision to leave the profession. Special needs educators posed strong views that included their questioning “ridiculous and uninformed” demands from the federal government. Other interviewees articulated that increased demands and expectations imposed upon them might influence their decision to leave special needs education. These educators experienced feelings of being overwhelmed because of testing requirements and the increasing amount of paperwork that they need to manage on a daily basis (Stephen & Fish, 2010:588).

### **2.5.8 Low levels of professional commitment**

In a study on special education teacher burnout, Emery and Vandenberg (2010:120) learned that there is a correlation between burnout, diminished job satisfaction of special needs educators and intent to leave the sector. These special needs educators lost their professional motivations, which led to feelings of ineffectiveness and disillusionment. Reduced job commitment and decreased job performance were identified as negative outcomes of low job satisfaction and burnout.

### **2.5.9 Summary**

Maniram (2007:30) describes other ways in which educators in the mainstream convey their job dissatisfaction:

*Steal from, or act negligent towards the organisations property or assets. Avoid or perform their duties in a haphazard manner. They may be insubordinate. They may influence others very negatively, thereby decreasing the general morale of the institute.*

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

Adkins (2009:7) clearly sets, that it is important that special needs educators and their mainstream counterparts experience fulfilment in teaching, school administration, and learning. She stipulates:

*It is necessary, therefore, that these areas be examined again to ascertain what is satisfying or dissatisfying to teachers who are challenged to assist students with learning different areas, as well as how to manage their own behaviours.*

She recommends that strategies need to be developed to improve the working conditions of newly recruited professionals in the special needs sector, in order to improve retention. This will result in improved job satisfaction for special needs educators (Adkins, 2009:8).

Ingersoll (2003:21) concludes that data from his study do not indicate that it would be easy on the pocket or effortless to implement any of the strategies or steps the study revealed. The data suggest:

*Schools are not simply victims of inexorable demographic trends and that there is a significant role for the management and organisation of schools in both genesis of, and the solution to school, staffing problems.*

Chapter 3 will give a detailed account of the research methods and designs used in this study. It will also concentrate on the qualitative sampling techniques, population selection, research instrumentation, and data collection procedures. Data analysis, processing, and presentation will be examined and outlined. The rationale for choosing a qualitative research methodology will be explored. Finally, validity and reliability in qualitative research are explained, in an attempt to provide the readers with a clear understanding.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 provided the theoretical background to the study on effective management of factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs and mainstream educators. In the literature review, the existing body of evidence were closely examined. The chapter focused on literature related to the specific factors that cause job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction for special needs educators.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are implemented in this research study. This chapter will present a detailed account of the research method and design. The research aim and method, and the design of qualitative and quantitative research methodology will be explained. In addition, this chapter will address the qualitative sampling techniques, population selection, research instrumentation, quantitative questionnaire method and data collection procedures. Data analysis, processing methods, and presentation will be examined and outlined.

This chapter will include a segment on the rationale for choosing both the quantitative and qualitative research methodology. Finally, validity and reliability in research are explained, in an attempt to provide the readers with a clear understanding.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Empirical research encompasses two types of designs: quantitative and qualitative. This study uses a qualitative research approach to investigate management strategies to effectively address factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators. The qualitative research approach attempts to establish relationships and clarify reasons for the changes in measured social pieces of evidence by developing an understanding of participants' perspective on the event.

The research design is the plan or the blueprint that is followed to obtain evidence and provide explanations for the research problems in the study. It is the general plan of the research, as well as stating who, when, where, and how the data should be collected. The researcher was guided by this plan to decide on suitable participants, research sites, and data-gathering strategies to answer the research questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31) define the purpose of a research plan (design) as the tool that is used to present legitimate and accurate responses to research questions, by implementing the most suitable mode of enquiry. Different types of research designs exist, and it is paramount that the researcher matches the appropriate research design with the research questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31) propose that the research design prescribes data-analysis procedures.

### **3.2.1 Qualitative research design**

For this study, the qualitative research method was regarded as the main and most appropriate research method. Qualitative researchers endeavour to ascertain relationships and elucidate reasons for changes in measured social pieces of evidence (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:15; Vander Stoep & Johnson, 2009:26-45) by understanding the participant's point of view of the occurrence. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:393) state that qualitative research can be interactive or non-interactive. Interactive research methods, where a researcher interviews participants in selected natural locations, include ethnographic, phenomenological, case studies, grounded theory, and critical studies. The researcher described and analysed the communal and individual social actions, values, thoughts, and views of participants in this study. The qualitative researcher identified eight information-rich participants to take part in this study. The researcher's interpretation of the phenomena was based on the meaning that participants attached to the occurrences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:35). As a consequence the researcher construes the participants' experiences in terms of the meaning they attached to the occurrence under investigation.

Analytical research includes non-interactive research, which focuses on the study of documents and artefacts related to the research topic. Analytical research covers topics related to earlier events, legislation and law, and policies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:35; Vander Stoep & Johnson, 2009:4). There was significant analytical research in this study, since it provided information about the past, explained current legislation and policies through interpretation of the past, and created unification in accordance with the educational goals of

special needs schools in New Zealand. The qualitative research design was flexible and gradually developed as more information was gathered through investigation of the phenomenon. This enabled the researcher in this study to make adjustments to the research strategies as information become more clear and available.

Five different interactive modes of inquiry can be utilized in the qualitative research design: ethnographic, phenomenological, case study, grounded theory, and critical study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:35). A combination of these modes of inquiry supported this research. Ethnographic modes of inquiry involved field work where the researcher observed and interviewed participants in their natural setting. The researcher made use of the phenomenological modes of inquiry to gather data on how participants gave meaning to their experiences. The researcher made certain that all prejudgements were put aside, to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Eight educational managers, in three selected special needs schools in New Zealand, were studied. The case study mode of inquiry was incorporated to examine these educational managers, bounded in time and place. Purposeful sampling was employed. All participants serve on senior management teams in special needs educational facilities, in different positions ranging from assistant principals, to deputy principals, to principals. The case study helped the researcher build up a detailed description, analysis, and interpretation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:37) of management strategies that influenced job satisfaction of special needs educators.

### **3.2.2 Rationale for choosing the qualitative research method**

Ethnographic research was implemented in this study, in addition to the interactive research described previously. It required observations and interviews, and gathering artefacts. Ethnography is an analytical description of social events in correlation to a participant's, or groups of participants', feelings, views, practises, artefacts, knowledge, and behaviours. The research participants had to reflect on their experiences of management strategies that influenced job satisfaction of special-needs educators and link it to their own life experiences and understanding.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:11) listed the characteristics of a qualitative research approach:

- *Objectivity – Explicit description of data collection and analysis procedure*
- *Precision – Detailed description of phenomenon*
- *Verification – Extension of understanding by others*
- *Parsimonious explanations – Summary generalizations*
- *Empiricism – Sources, evidence*
- *Logical reasoning – Primarily inductive*
- *Conditional conclusions – Tentative summary interpretations*

The above characteristics strengthen the fact that it is the most logical and appropriate method for this research design. The researcher's objective was to understand participants' opinions and views regarding effective management strategies that influence job satisfaction of educators in selected special needs schools in New Zealand. Qualitative research methodology will make it possible for the researcher to put forward alternative, evidence-based strategies that will explain, describe, and influence these strategies. This study is concerned with exploring and describing the relationships between events and meanings, as observed and experienced by participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:397). McMillan and Schumacher (2001:395) assert: *Qualitative studies are important for theory generation, policy development, educational practice improvement, illumination of social issues, and action stimulus.*

### **3.2.3 Aims of the research**

The key aim of this study is to describe, explain, and provide evidence-based strategies that will support educational managers to effectively address factors that influence job satisfaction for special-needs educators in New Zealand. This will ultimately increase special needs educators' level of job satisfaction. In addition, the researcher endeavours to add to the existing body of literature regarding effective management of special needs educators' job satisfaction by providing explanations and descriptions of these educators' experiences. This



will positively impact on the practices of special needs facilities and policymakers, who promise to improve educational outcomes for special needs students.

### **3.2.4 Research problem**

The research problem, formulated and stated in Chapter 1 (section 3), was documented and set out in the following question: How can educational managers effectively address factors that influence job satisfaction among educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools?

### **3.2.5 Research sub-problems**

The following four sub-problems, derived from the main research problem, are:

- What generally entails job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction?
- Which specific factors influence job satisfaction for New Zealand special needs educators?
- What are the consequences for New Zealand special needs educators who are not satisfied with their job?
- Which effective management strategies and recommendations can be made to managers to improve job satisfaction levels among educators in New Zealand special needs schools?

## **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The target population in this study consists of managers in New Zealand special needs schools. The researcher focused on a sample size of eight educational managers in three special needs schools out of the 36 special needs schools in New Zealand. The educational managers (three principals, four deputy principals, and one assistant principal) were selected and approached to participate in this research based on their geographical location.

The participants were purposefully selected based on the following criteria:

- Full time employment at a special needs school in New Zealand
- Currently in an educational management role in one of the selected schools
- Information-rich informants, who are expected to be knowledgeable and informative about the area of interest in this study.
- Willingness of educational management teams to participate and contribute to this research project.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:433) note that purposeful sampling is a strategy to help select a small group of individuals expected to be knowledgeable and have information to contribute and shed light on the research problem under investigation. They also propose that a qualitative sample size can range from one to at least 40.

### **3.3.1 Informed consent**

The purpose, aim and objectives of the proposed study were presented to a number of special needs school principals during an informal conversation, as the first step towards obtaining informed consent. Principals who indicated that they were interested in participating and contributing to this study was given time to discuss it with their senior management teams (who also participated in the research). All participants were given free choice of participation, as required with all qualitative research studies.

The second step was to acquire written permission from the Ministry of Education-Special Education, Northwest District Manager to enter the selected special-needs schools. Permission was obtained to conduct this research study (Appendix C).

Formal informed consent letters, which outlined the proposed study, were sent to all participants. These formal consent letters contained and delineated the following information (Appendix D):

- The researcher's background, credibility, and capabilities on the research topic
- Introduction and background information on the proposed study
- Purpose and aims of the planned research
- Benefits of the study for the particular school and the wider special needs education sector in New Zealand
- Research plan, procedures, and scope of investigation. Special attention and focus was placed on outlining the procedures for recording the proposed interviews
- Researcher's and participants' roles

Participants were requested to confirm their informed consent by returning the signed document (Appendix D). The researcher scheduled meetings with all participants who gave informed consent. These meetings provided opportunity to form trusting relationships, discuss the content of the letter, investigate any concerns, and schedule interview dates and times. Participants received copies of their signed informed consent letters for their own records and as proof of their participation in the research.

### **3.3.2 Anonymity and confidentiality**

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421) state that it must not be possible to identify participants and/or sites. The researcher guaranteed participants anonymity and confidentiality during and after this research project. No personal names or sites were disclosed in writing.

### **3.3.3 Ethical measures and consideration**

Interactions between the researcher and participants took place during individual face-to-face interviews. Eight participants were interviewed in their natural setting at three New Zealand special needs schools. This qualitative research study was based on intimate and personal

encounters between the researcher and participants. As a consequence, all observed/heard information was considered confidential.

### **3.4 INSTRUMENTATION**

#### **3.4.1 Literature review**

The literature review continued through the entire investigation as a research focal point. A large number of different sources were reviewed: journals, electronic documents, reports, government documents, dissertations, articles, books, and newspapers. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:134) suggest that it is common for qualitative researchers to complete an extensive literature review at the end of their research. However, they propose that the extensive literature review simply reveal the discovery direction and inductive approach of qualitative research.

A preliminary literature review was done to gather information and evaluate materials on the subject of understanding educators' job satisfaction and management principles of job satisfaction in mainstream and special needs educational environments. This provided the researcher with a preliminary outline to focus the interviews and observations. Chapter 2 enclosed this full literature review.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:140) explicitly state how a literature review is judged: *The quality of the literature review is evaluated according to whether it furthers the understanding of the status of knowledge of the problem and provides a rationale for the study.*

#### **3.4.2 Questionnaire**

The researcher developed a questionnaire to gather information on participants' geographical details, before conducting the interviews (Appendix A). The seven questions focused on participants' age, gender, experience in mainstream education, special needs education experience, management experience, ethnicity, and highest academic qualification. Participants were requested to complete these seven questions by marking the most suitable answer. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete (Appendix A).

### **3.4.3 Interviews**

Interviews were the primary data collection strategy. The face-to-face interviews will allow a wider channel of communication according to Vander Stoep and Johnson (2009:88). Thus allowing the interviewer to ask participants to clarify or repeat answers. Follow up questions that relate to answers on previous questions can also be asked during one-on-one interviews - allowing deeper examination of the research issue. The researcher interviewed eight purposefully selected educational managers – three principals, four deputy principals and one assistant principal, which are working in three selected special needs schools in New Zealand. Field observations, artefact analysis, and questionnaires were used as supplementary data collection techniques to validate the most important findings from the interviews. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:443) define in-depth interviews as open-ended questions to gather data from interviewees on how they envisage the world around them and interpret the important events in their lives.

In this study, the researcher asked 12 open-ended questions on the subject of: effective management strategies that influence job satisfaction among special needs educators in selected New Zealand schools, nature of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and consequences for special needs educators who are not satisfied in their jobs (Appendix B).

## **3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The researcher followed these steps during the interview process at each participating special needs school:

- Audiovisual recording equipment was set up and tested to minimise the possibility for equipment failure during the interview process
- A second set of recording equipment, charger, batteries, and electrical leads were checked and placed as back up if equipment failed
- Audiovisual recording equipment was introduced and tested by both the researcher and participant
- The researcher established a relationship with each participant, based on mutual trust, respect, and reciprocal co-operation

- Interviewees were given a comprehensive account of the purpose and focus of the study
- Participants were assured that all information was confidential and the researcher guaranteed anonymity
- Participants received an overview of the interview content and context and highlighted the importance of the data
- Twelve open-ended questions were asked only after interviewer was satisfied that the interviewee was relaxed. All responses were recorded (Interviewee's non verbal cues and tacit modes of communication were noted during the interview to be analysed with the recorded material)
- A debriefing session after the interview was conducted, to provide opportunity to clarify and clear up misinterpretations that may have occurred during the interview
- The process was concluded by thanking the participant for their time
- The researcher noted any disturbances and interruption before leaving the field

The researcher scheduled one-and-a-half to two-hour sessions for conducting each interview. Interview timeframes varied, depending on the situation and personal schedules of participants.

## **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

### **3.6.1 Data analysis**

Data collection and analysis strategies consist of five phases: planning, beginning data collection, basic data collection, closing data collection and closing. These phases can be differentiated but do not follow in a set sequence. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:405) describe the qualitative phases of data collection and analysis as an interactive research processes that occurs in overlapping cycles. The data collection and analysis strategies are flexible and depend on each of the prior strategies and the data acquired from that strategy.

The researcher started to gather data and simultaneously analyse participants' particular views, which had a bearing on research processes that followed. The phases of data collection and analysis can be utilised for any one of the different qualitative research modes.

The researcher was led by the 12 interview questions during the planning phase. The research questions depicted special needs schools in New Zealand as appropriate settings to carry out this particular research study. Educational managers would be able to provide information and a better understanding of the research problem. The researcher obtained consent from Ministry of Education-Special Education, North West district, District Manager to carry out the research in the selected special needs facilities. Written informed consent was gained from eight special needs educational managers in special needs facilities in New Zealand, North West district, North Shore City and Henderson.

During phase two, the researcher met with the participants in small focus groups and built relationships based on mutual respect and respect. The researcher used focus groups as a confirmation technique. Morgan (2009) states that focus groups are a well established research method. Focus groups are frequently used in applied research. Establishing relationships required consistent effort in maintaining trust and positive relationships between participants and the researcher. The researcher toured each of the facilities where interviews were conducted. The participating schools provide education to different disability groups and posed different challenges to the researcher. The challenges cannot be disclosed, as it may identify facilities.

The researcher began the first interview while continually improving the interview and recording actions. Different options for organising, coding, and retrieving collected data were already considered and tested during phase two, to be used for formal data analysis during phase five (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:406). The basic data collection in phase three is described by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:406): *In the basic data collection phase, the inquirer begins to "hear," "see," and "read" what is going on, rather than just listening, looking around, or scanning documents.*

Data collection drew to a close during phase four, after the last interview was conducted. Time was spent at this stage to give interviewees opportunity to review the data, and make comments and changes where needed. The researcher determined that data saturation was reached and moved on to phase five.

The researcher moved into phase five when all eight of the interviews were completed and interviewee reviews were done. Ways of presenting the data were investigated.

### **3.6.2 Data presentation**

The researcher transcribed the interview recordings and typed all handwritten records of observations, questionnaires, field notes, and artefact notes. The interviews provided the evidence-based data on effective management of special-needs educators' job satisfaction in selected New Zealand schools. The typed drafts were edited to eradicate transcriber errors.

The final record included:

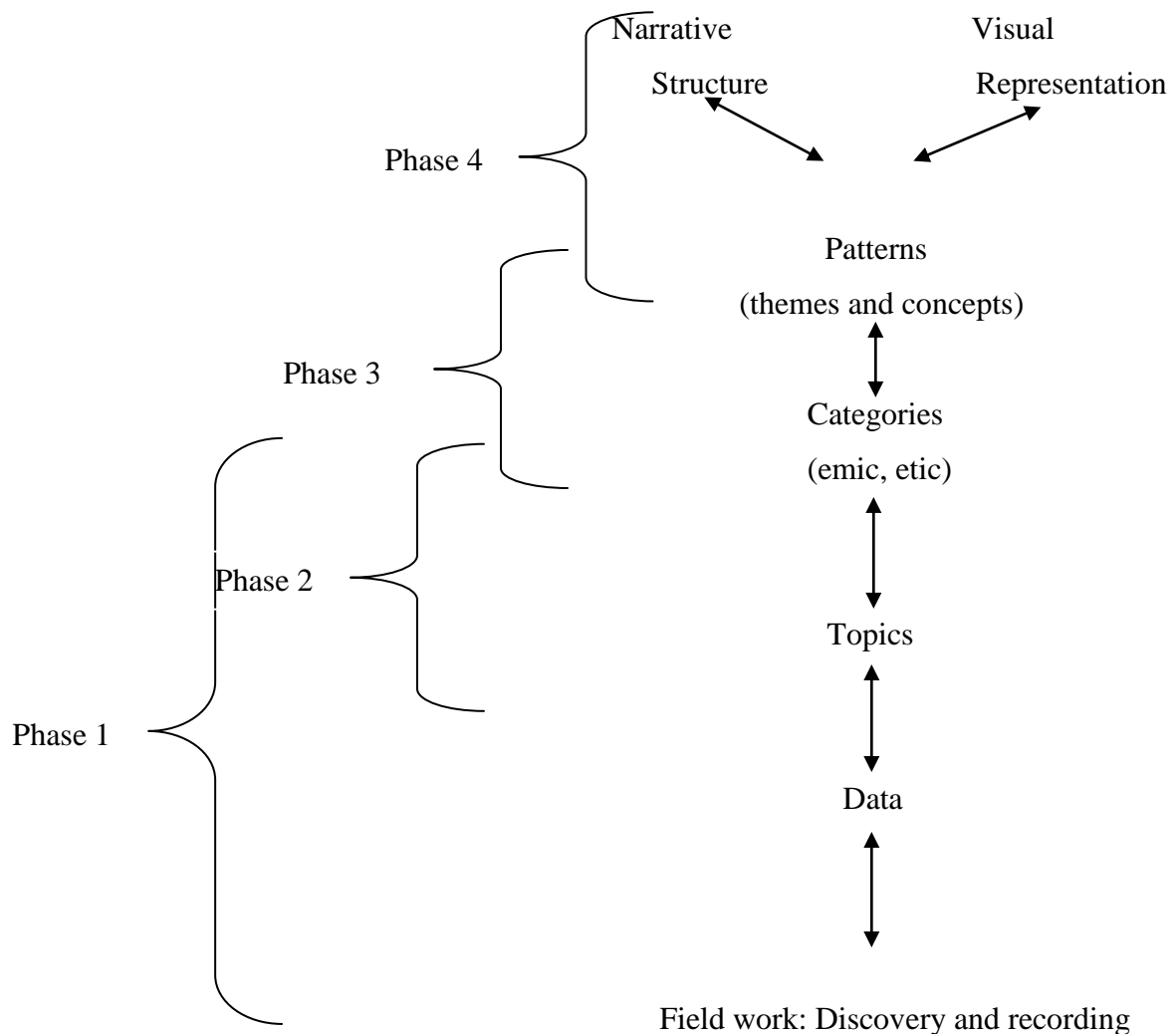
- Precise verbatim accounts of interviews
- Details of interviewees' nonverbal communication, identified by the researcher's initials
- Preliminary insights and comments to augment the search for meaning
- The final document was dated and contained information regarding the setting and informant codes: (P) Principal, (DP) Deputy Principal, (AP) Assistant Principal, (EB) Elda Botes (interviewee/researcher)
- Additional elaborations of each interview session
- Researcher's reflections on their role
- Researcher's reflections on interviewees' reactions

Data were stored manually and on a computer to organise them in one place and make it easy to accurately retrieve them. File cards manually stored data. An electronic version of this system was also created. The researcher organised the data into categories and identified relationships among them (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:461). The data were selected, categorised, compared, synthesized, and interpreted in a reasonably systematic process.



The inductive data analysis process is a cyclic progression integrated throughout all stages of this research. It included continuous discovery to identify tentative patterns; data distribution into specific categories; evaluation of data trustworthiness to refine and establish emerging patterns; and documentation of all emerging patterns and categories. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:462) state that categories and patterns are not forced before data are collected, but rather appear once collection is complete.

The process of inductive data analysis is clearly demonstrated by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:463) in the following diagram:



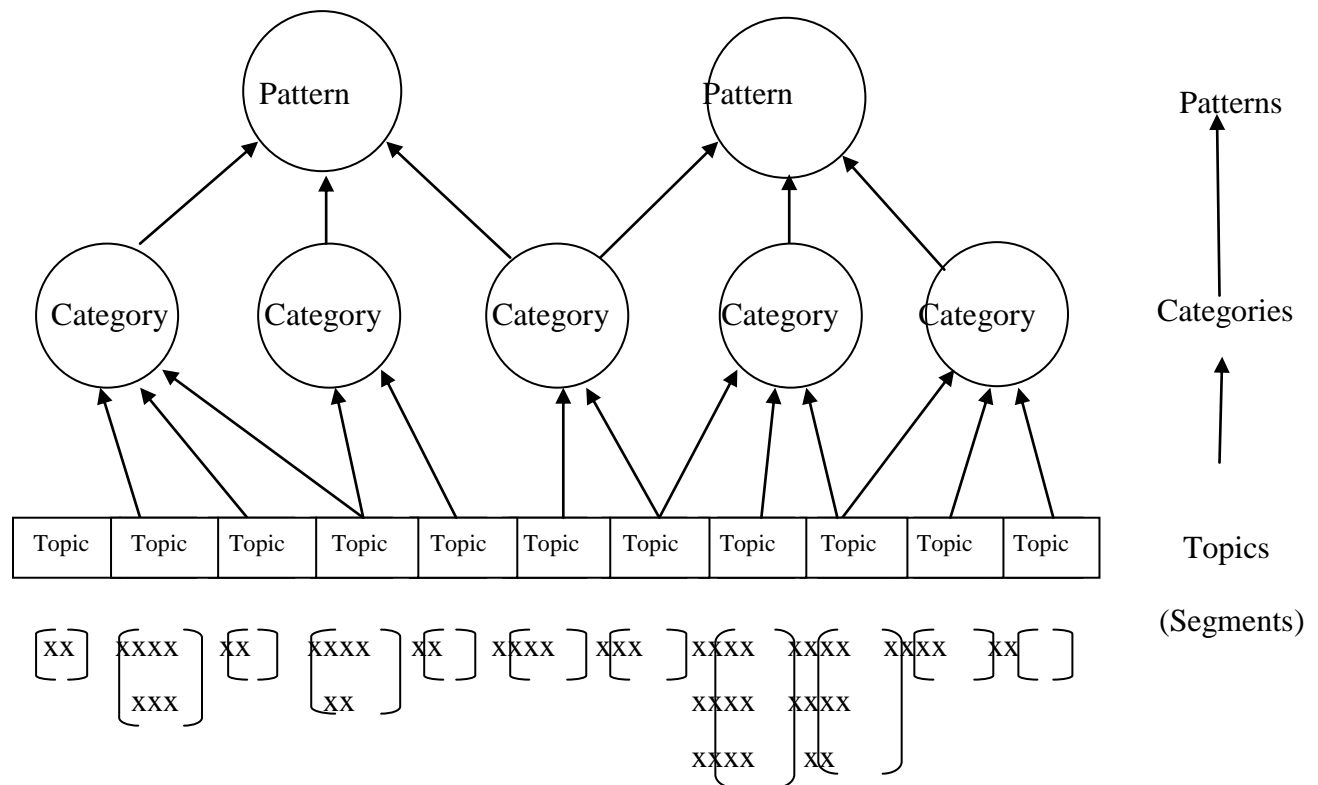
(McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:463)

The four phases overlapped during the process and allowed the researcher to return to prior phases while moving to more abstract phases in the data analysis process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:462-464). The researcher could evaluate and refine the data analysis and interpretation to gain better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The researcher organised the data by implementing a classification system that separated them into smaller pieces of data that contains a chunk of meaning, called *segments* or *analysis units* (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:268). The subject matter of the segment was portrayed as a topic. These topics were investigated, categorised, and coded in tabular format. The category captured different topics that had the same meaning. The researcher engaged in pattern-seeking by ordering the categories. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:476) describe the pattern-seeking process:

*It demands a thorough search through the data, challenging each major hunch by looking for negative evidence and alternative explanations. Researchers now shift to a deductive mode of thinking: moving back and forth among topics, categories, and tentative patterns for confirmation. Part of this phase is to evaluate the data for information adequacy, usefulness, and centrality.*

The major patterns that emerged from the pattern-seeking process provided the structure and outline for reporting the data that came out of the research investigation. The schematic representation developed by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:477) captures the analysis process:



(McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:463)

### 3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A combination of data collection strategies were used to enhance the validity of the study: multi-method strategies, accurately documenting participants’ language, audio recording, data scrutiny by participants, and final review by participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:407-408). In-depth interviews with participants were the core data collection technique.

The researcher interviewed eight purposefully selected, information rich participants at their workplace in selected special-needs schools in New Zealand. This was done to gather accurate information and data providing true expression of the occurrence under investigation. Prolonged and persistent fieldwork provided the researcher with the opportunity to consider

interim data and make initial associations and verifications (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:408). Subsequently, the researcher verified that there was a correlation between gathered data and participant views. Seven of the interviews were recorded on camera to provide precise audiovisual recordings to augment data validity. One interview was not recorded but captured by note taking. Several other secondary data collection strategies (participant observation, open observation, questionnaires, and artefacts) were used to triangulate data.

Triangulation of data enhanced the findings' credibility. The researcher acknowledged and incorporated different viewpoints of the various data collection strategies. The data gathered through the main interactive strategy were supported and confirmed by the secondary strategies. Documents and artefact collection were non-interactive strategies that provided additional data to corroborate findings from interviews and observations.

The researcher used well known terminology, regimented subjectivity, and expanded results to strengthen the validity, thus enhancing the degree to which the explanations and ideas had joint meaning among the participants and researcher. "Cultural translators" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:409) were taken into consideration during the study. Terms and concepts were first discussed and clarified, and then meanings agreed upon.

All participants agreed, during the informed consent process, that the researcher could use the following descriptive terms to refer to the schools and interviewees: (SNS) Special needs school, (SNF) Special needs facility, (P) Principal, (DP) Deputy Principal and (AP) Assistant Principal. The type of special needs school would not be disclosed to provide further protection for participants' privacy. A large number of direct quotations are present in the study to clarify and validate participants' viewpoints. Low-inference descriptors, as used by the participants, guided the researcher to identify patterns, which emerged through the data. McMillan & Schumacher (2001:409) report: *Verbatim accounts of conversations, transcripts, and direct quotes from documents are highly valued as data.*

Participants were given the opportunity to review the collated data to make sure they represented their viewpoints as they intended and communicated during the interview sessions. All participants were invited to make changes and suggestion to data, to ensure that their view points were accurately captured, before the data analysis began.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) define validity of qualitative research as:

*In other words, validity of qualitative research designs is the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher. The researcher and participants agree on the description or composition of events, especially the meanings of these events.*

A variety of presumptions, plans (designs), and modes are utilised in qualitative research to build up in-depth understanding about the research topic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:411). The authors suggest the use of all, or a combination of, the following strategies to enhance the validity in qualitative research: Prolonged and persistent fieldwork, multi-method strategies, participant language: verbatim accounts, low-inference descriptors, multiple researchers, mechanically recorded data, participant researchers, member checking, participant review, and negative cases or discrepant data.

### **3.7.1 Researcher role and competencies**

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:16) suggest that the role of the researcher in qualitative research is to be fully engrossed in the situation and the event that is being explored. The researcher in this study took an interactive social role during interviews when observations were recorded. Qualitative researchers are renowned for self reflection and regimented subjectivity of their role all the way through the research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:16). The researcher was ethically obliged and demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Proficient and sufficiently trained to embark on the planned enquiry
- Adequately up to date with the pertinent area of study
- Capacity and capability to carry out the research
- Understanding of the morals and standards of participants
- Culturally responsive and sensitive
- Knowledgeable of research methodology
- Compliant and accommodating toward all participants and all settings

- Non-invasive and non-judgemental in all research situations

### 3.7.2 Maintaining objectivity and interpersonal subjectivity

The researcher maintained objectivity throughout the research by being impartial and neutral during observations and interviews. Trustworthiness, positive relationships, being non judgemental, and sensitivity to ethical issues are interpersonal skills pertinent for interactive researchers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:411). They advise researchers to relate to participants as people, since interpersonal skills are so important during face-to-face interactions for data collection. The researcher demonstrated active, patient, and thoughtful listening skills while having empathetic understanding and respect for the views of participants during the study.

### 3.7.3 Reflexivity

Seven different strategies can be implemented by a qualitative researcher to observe and assess the impact of subjectivity and point of view during the research project (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:412-413). Personal and social changes were promoted by continuously re-evaluating the researcher's role and activities during this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:412) compiled the following table to describe the different strategies to enhance reflexivity by monitoring and evaluating research subjectivity and perspective:

STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION
Peer debriefer	Select a colleague who facilitates the logical analysis of data and interpretation, frequently done when the topic is emotionally charged or the researcher experiences conflicting values in data collection.
Field log	Maintain a log of dates, time, places, people, and activities to obtain access to informants for each data set collected.
Field (reflex) journal	Record decisions made during the emerging design and the rationale. Include judgements of data validity.
Ethical considerations recorded	Record ethical dilemmas, decisions, and actions in field journal, and self-reflection.

Audibility	Record data-management techniques, codes, categories, and decision rules as a “decision trial.”
Formal corroboration of initial findings	Conduct formal confirmation activities such as survey, focus groups, or interviews.
Critical reflexivity	Self-critique by asking difficult questions. Use of positionality

(McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:412)

The validity of the study was further enhanced by using all seven strategies, as tabled by McMillan & Schumacher (2001:412).

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on the research design, aim planning, and execution. The researcher provided a detailed description regarding the sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Chapter 4 will present the results of the research on effective management strategies that affect job satisfaction of special-needs educators in New Zealand.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented a detailed description of the research method and design. It described the research method and design. The research aim and method, and the design of qualitative research methodology were explained. In addition, it addressed the qualitative sampling techniques, population selection, research instrumentation, and data collection procedures. Data analysis, processing methods, and presentation were examined and outlined. It included a segment on the rationale for choosing a qualitative research methodology. Finally, validity and reliability in qualitative research were explained.

Chapter 4 will provide a presentation, analysis, and explanation of the collected data. It will show graphic presentations of the data and provide an analysis of the participants' biographical data regarding age, gender, mainstream teaching experience, special needs education teaching experience, management experience in special needs education, highest academic qualification, and ethnicity. The research focuses on data obtained from the open-ended semi-structured interviews. The data are presented and analysed to provide in-depth explanations and answers to the research questions posed in Chapters 1 and 2.

Eight participants completed the questionnaire on their geographical details and participated in the one-on-one interviews. The sample population consisted of three principals, four deputy principal and one assistant principal from three selected New Zealand special needs schools. The sample group represents 8.3 per cent of the population of 36 special needs schools in New Zealand. Interviews with seven of the participants were video-taped. One principal (P8) did not give consent to audio-visual recording. The researcher took notes during this interview.



## 4.2 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

### 4.2.1 Introduction

Data from the eight participants of this study will be analysed and presented. The questions were designed to elicit information about participants' age, gender, mainstream teaching experience, special needs teaching experience, special needs educational management experience, highest academic qualification, and ethnicity. All eight participants from the research sample completed and returned their questionnaires on their biographical details. Figures 1 through 7 illustrate the findings from the data.

### 4.2.2 Graphical presentation discussion and analysis of biographical findings

#### 4.2.2.1 Participants' age

Figure 1 - Educational managers' age

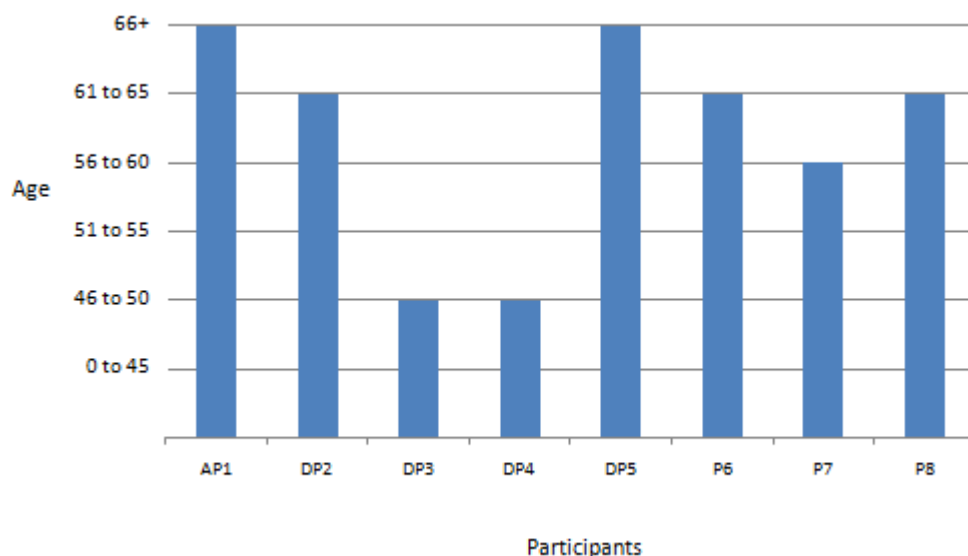


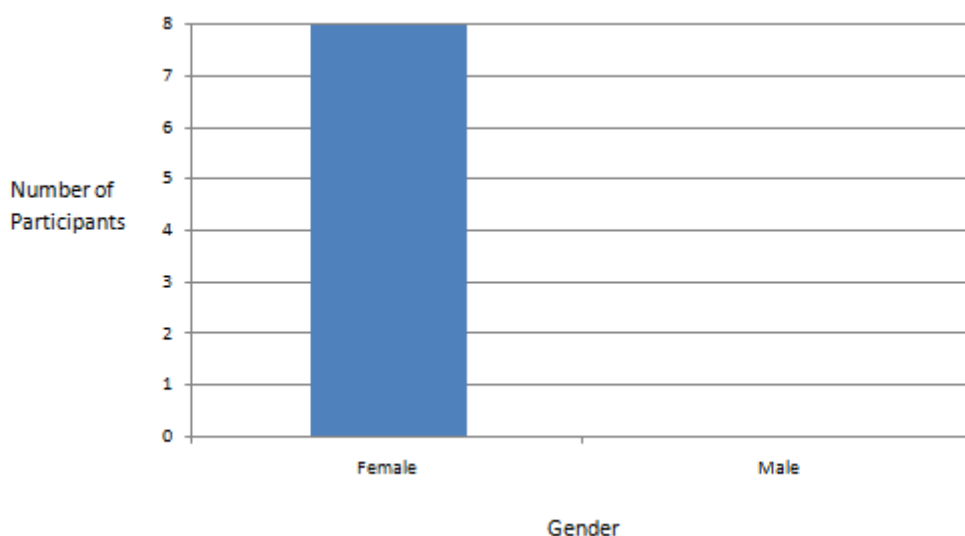
Figure 1 gives a clear graphical indication of the age-range distribution of the participants in this study. The age range is between 45 and 66 years of age. It is conspicuous that all the educational managers were 45 years of age or older. It is evident they are an aging workforce, as more than half the sample group was 56 years of age or older. Those educational managers older than 56 years of age were all within eight years of retirement age. The retirement age in

New Zealand is 65. Five of the eight participants will soon have to retire and leave the special needs education sector.

Ingersoll (2003:9) documents that teacher shortages are not mainly influenced by retirement increases (see par. 2.1 in this regard). The above graph indicates there is a greying workforce in New Zealand special needs schools. This contradicts what Ingersoll (2003:9) proposes. The evidence points out that four of the participants (AP1, DP2, P6, and P8) are retiring within the next four years. DP5 is retiring at the end of this year. New Zealand special needs schools are losing their well-trained and experienced educational managers. There is clearly a need to prepare younger special needs educators to fill these management positions in the near future.

#### 4.2.2.2 Gender

Figure 2 - Educational managers' gender



The sample's gender representation is shown in Figure 2. It is clear that the population that took part in this research study consisted of only female educational managers. It was unexpected that no male educational managers took part in the study. Women accounted for a large majority of educational managers in selected New Zealand special needs schools. The graphical data on gender representation depicts that senior management teams (SMTs) of New Zealand special needs schools consist mainly of female educational managers. In the

face of these facts, it can be concluded that male educational managers prefer to work in the mainstream setting.

#### 4.2.2.3 Experience in mainstream education field as an educator

Figure 3 - Mainstream educational experience

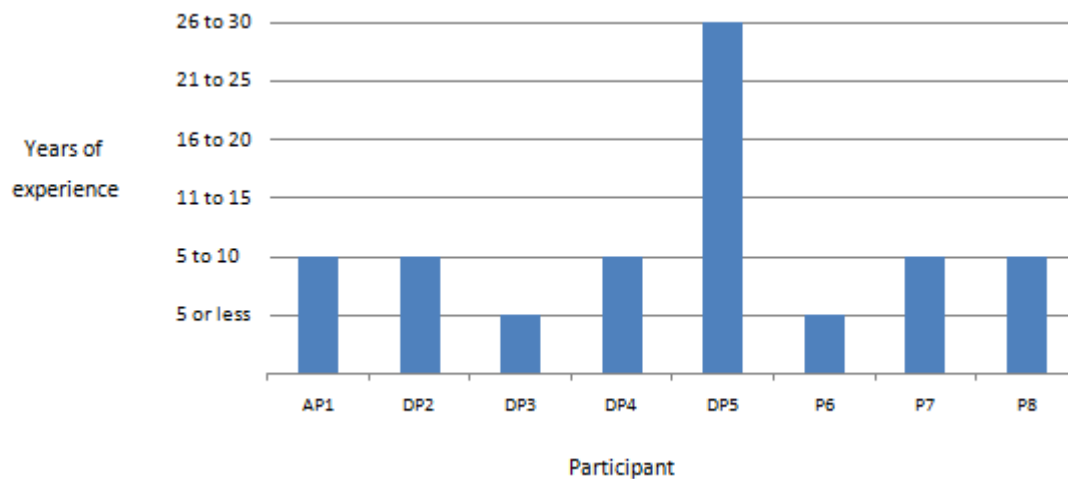


Figure 3 illustrates that all educational managers on SMTs who participated in this study have mainstream experience. DP3 and P6 reported they had between one and five years' experience as educators in the mainstream sector. AP1, DP2, DP4, P7, and P8 had between five and 10 years' experience as educators in a mainstream setting. DP5 reported between 26 and 31 years' mainstream teaching experience. The assumption is that participants started their teaching careers in the mainstream sector and then went on to complete special needs qualifications. It is a requirement to complete a two year mentor program in the mainstream sector to gain Full Teachers registration, before beginning studies towards special needs certification. This certification allows teachers with specialist training to work in the special needs schools. The assumption is that all participants had an interest in special needs education. They pursued this interest by completing further studies and applying for a special needs teaching position within the first five years of their teaching careers.

It is required by law for teachers to register with the New Zealand Teachers Council to begin a teaching career or accept a position as an educator. The New Zealand Teachers Council is the professional body of teachers. Educators obtain an Initial Teacher Registration and then begin an induction and mentoring program for their first two years in teaching. They can

apply for Full Teachers Registration if they meet the Registered Teacher Criteria after the mentoring program is completed. This explains why educational managers in special needs schools started their careers in the mainstream sector. Teachers who aspire to pursue a career in special needs education must gain an additional qualification in the special needs educational field after they acquire their full teacher registration. The career path of these special needs education managers is long and taxing.

#### 4.2.2.4 Experience in special needs education field as an educator

Figure 4 - Special needs educational experience

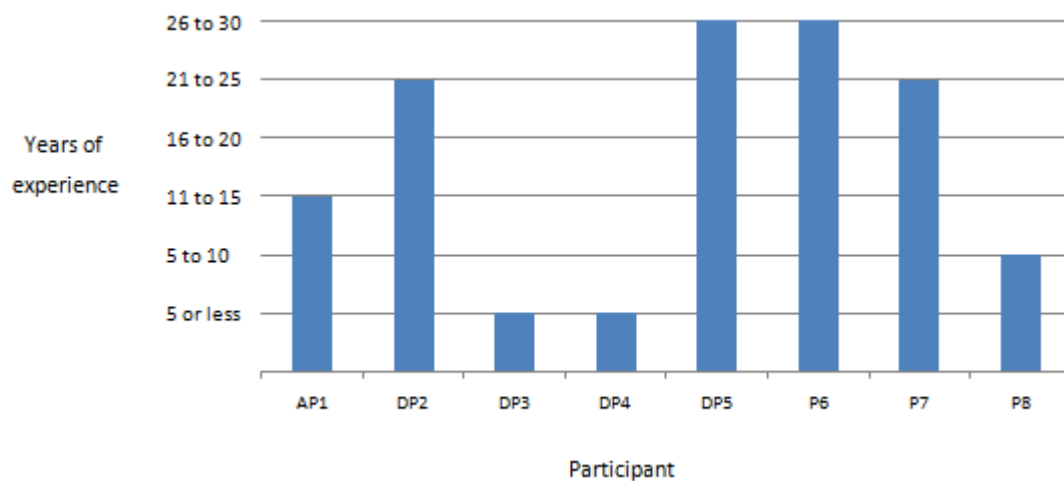


Figure 4 represents each participant's number of years of special needs teaching experience. It is apparent that all the educational managers taught in special needs schools for more than five years. AP1 had between 11 and 15 years of special needs teaching experience. P8 reported between 16 and 20 years of experience as a special needs educator. DP2 and P7 both had between 21 and 25 years of special needs educator experience. DP5 and P6 had the most special needs teaching experience. They both had more than 25 years of experience as special needs educators. All the SMT members who participated in this study reported extensive experience as special needs educators before they were appointed educational managers. This can be attributed to the fact that experience as a special needs educator is a prerequisite to being promoted to a managerial position. Participants' experience as special needs educators ranged between 10 and 31 years.

DP5 has the most years of experience (31) as a special needs educator. They listed having 26 to 31 years of experience as a mainstream educator (Figure 3), which seemed to contradict data provided in Figure 4. If their total years of experience is accurate (mainstream educator, special needs educator, and special needs manager), it would add up to between 78 and 93 years' experience. This is clearly inconsistent with DP5's reported age of 66 or older.

**4.2.2.5 Management experience in special needs education**

Figure 5 - Management experience in special needs educational sector

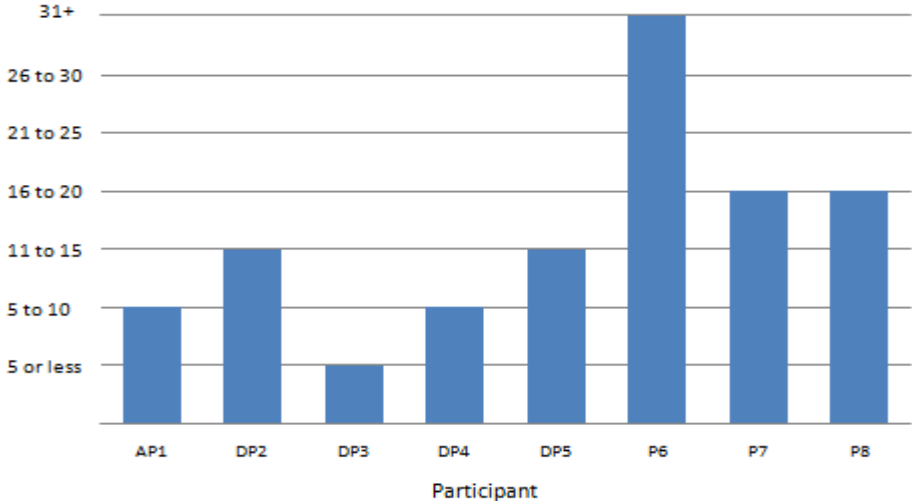


Figure 5 shows the amount of special needs educational management experience. The educational managers had an average of 16 years' educational management experience. DP3 had the least number of years' experience in educational management, with five or less years' experience.

**4.2.2.6 Highest academic qualification**

Figure 6 - Highest academic qualification

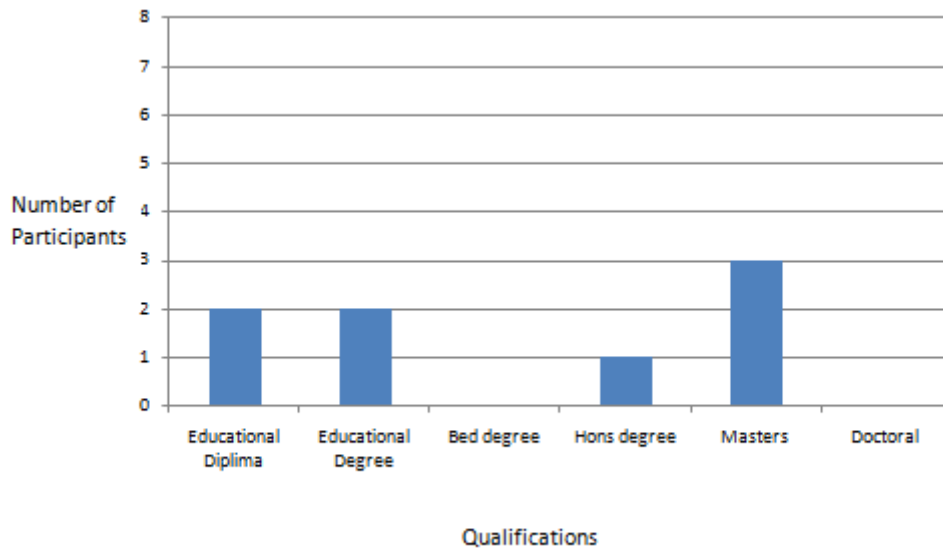
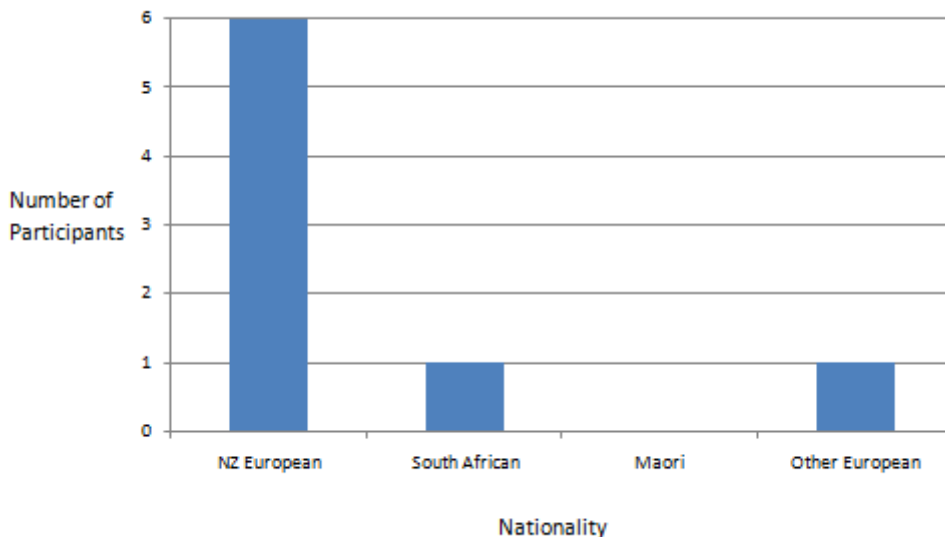


Figure 6 portrays participants’ highest level of academic qualification. It is apparent that the educational managers are all highly qualified. Three participants held masters degrees. None held doctoral degrees. Two held educational degrees, and two held educational diplomas.

**4.2.2.7 Ethnicity**

Figure 7 - Participants’ ethnicity



Participants represented a variety of cultural groups in New Zealand. The largest group of educational managers are representative of the New Zealand European cultural group. This is the majority cultural group in New Zealand. The other participants represented two of the largest immigrant culture groups in New Zealand: South African and “other” European. There was no Maori cultural representation in this study.

### **4.2.3 Summary**

Data gathered through the questionnaires yielded valuable information on the backgrounds of managers in special needs education. The special needs education sector in New Zealand has an aging work force and is dominated by female managers. Special needs educational managers in New Zealand are highly qualified and have sufficient experience in the mainstream and special needs educational sectors. It is concerning that there were no Maori participants available to take part in this study.

## **4.3 PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW DATA**

### **4.3.1 Introduction**

The researcher conducted eight one-on-one interviews with SMT members of three selected New Zealand special needs schools. Because all participants served on the SMTs of their schools, they can be regarded as educational managers. The focus of this chapter is to report their opinions. The participants will be referred to as Assistant principal one (AP1), Deputy principal two (DP2), Deputy principal three (DP3), Deputy principal four (DP4), Deputy principal five (DP5), Principal six (P6), Principal seven (P7), and Principal eight (P8).

### **4.3.2 Interviews with educational managers**

The responses will be presented according to identified themes and answers given during the interview phase (Appendix D). Questions were formulated in order for the researcher to get different perspectives and deeper understanding of the issues under investigation. The researcher analysed the data by implementing a qualitative data collection technique, by developing units and categories and then searching for patterns. Analysis of the data and a

discussion of the responses will now be discussed. The researcher construed participants' experiences in terms of the meaning they attached to the occurrence under investigation.

#### **4.3.2.1 Data regarding the general understanding of special needs educators' job satisfaction**

Eighty-seven per cent of the respondents strongly believed that the special needs educators in their schools demonstrated "high" to "quite high" levels of job satisfaction. AP1, DP2, DP3, DP4, and DP5 were all in accord with this. P7 and P8 reported that their special needs educators experienced "very high" levels of job satisfaction. AP1 stated: *I would say that, well, we all have job satisfaction.* DP3 supported AP1's view point by adding: *If I give a percentage out of a hundred, I'd probably say 80 per cent to 85 per cent. That would be my perception.* It was clear that DP4 shared the previous views when stating: *I would say pretty good.* DP5's opinion was strongly voiced: *I would say at this stage it is quite high.*

This is not surprising. These responses of high job satisfaction for special needs educators, correspond with data from studies carried out by Stephens and Fish (2010:581-594), Butt and Lance (2005:402-416), and Leyin and Wakerly (2007:36). They all reported that special needs educators experienced and reported high levels of job satisfaction.

P6 provided the only ambiguous response: *I get very few complaints or suggestions from teachers that they are not happy I read once that you measure the satisfaction in a school by the level of complaint.* This view supports comments by interviewees in Billingsley et al. (2004) and Cancio and Conderman (2008:30) regarding the lack of understanding that some managers demonstrate about special needs educators' level of job satisfaction (see par.2.4.6 in this regard). One question asked about the teacher turnover rate at the manager's school. P6 reported a high educator turnover rate. This may suggest core problems in the functioning of this according Butt and Lance (2005:402) and Ingersoll (2003:13), (see par 2.1 in this regard).

In the light of the responses from the interviewees, it is clear that the special needs educators in the selected facilities, experience high levels of job satisfaction. In addition it is also evident that special needs education managers know what entails their educators' job satisfaction. These managers are able to accurately gauge their teachers' level of job satisfaction and clearly report on this. The responses show correlations with the data from



previous studies (Stephens & Fish, 2010:581-594; Butt & Lance, 2005:402-416; Leyin & Wakerly, 2007:36) that suggested special needs educators experienced and reported high levels of job satisfaction (see par.2.2 in this regard).

#### **4.3.2.2 Data regarding the understanding of the main factors that influence special needs educators' job satisfaction**

Respondents identified at least two of the main factors that influence their teachers' job satisfaction, as recognized by researchers in the field (Adera & Bullock, 2010:6; Billingsley et al., 2004:339; Butt & Lance, 2005:407; Chambers, 2008:1; Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:2; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:120; Leyin & Wakerly, 2007:35; Maniram, 2007:25; Stephens & Fish, 2010:587; Steyn, 2001:54), (see par 2.4.6 in this regard). Participants are unanimously of the opinion that management support (Adera & Bullock, 2010:6; Chambers, 2008:1; Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:2; Leyin & Wakerly, 2007:35; Stephens & Fish, 2010:587) and adequate resources (Billingsley et al., 2004:339; Butt & Lance, 2005:420) are the most important factors that influence levels of job satisfaction (see par 2.4.9 in this regard).

P7 added that collaborative working relationships are related to special needs educators' need for administrative support:

*They are given ownership. We're very inter-independent. I need the input from the people I work with at all levels to enable me to do my job and for them to do their job well.*

DP4 linked the professionalism of the management team to adequate support: *The school's functioning and the staff's level of job satisfaction is determined and influenced by the leadership and management style of the senior management team.*

There is a clear indication that respondents were in accord with the views of Duesbery and Werblow (2008:1-2) that effective educational management is an important factor that influences the job satisfaction levels of special needs educators (see par 2.4.6 in this regard).

AP1 notes that proper resources are important:

*I know we are talking specifically special needs but I actually think it is important for all education sectors. The most important is the resources because those are most important to actually make it, it is all very well planning a great programme or having wonderful ideas or understanding the student's needs. But if you haven't got the resources to implement those programmes they you can't do it.*

P8 agreed and describe resources as an incredibly important factor:

*Educators can only do their work if they have access to appropriate and adequate resources. They need to use a variety of resources to support the individual educational programmes of individual students. Students have distinctive special educational needs that require different programmes and educators are compelled to make use of assortment of resources to address these individual needs.*

The influence of resources on special needs educators' levels of job satisfaction is supported by Butt and Lance (2005:401-420), (see par 2.4.9 in this regard). Research evidence and respondents' responses substantiate the fact that administrative support or management support and adequate resources are key factors that contribute to the level of job satisfaction of special needs educators.

More than half of respondents listed students' academic progress as the third most significant factor that influences educators' job satisfaction (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:120), (see par 2.4.8 in this regard). AP1 asserted: *I think most people would be getting a lot of job satisfaction from what they do in their classrooms.* DP2 concurred: *I believe that job satisfaction comes from meeting the needs of our students.* P8's response echoed the opinions of other interviewees: *A lot of satisfaction is in finding ways in which the teachers are able to measure their input and how they are able to measure the progress which the child is making.* Stephens and Fish (2010:581-594) and Butt and Lance (2005:402-416) note that special needs educators' high job satisfaction was related to the contributions they made to the lives of their special needs students and their success in teaching these students (see par 2.4.8 in this

regard). Steyn (2001:54) also pointed out the importance of job descriptions to enable educators to concentrate and focus on their core role of teaching (see par 2.4.2 in this regard). It is clear that the special needs educators thrive on the students' achievements and *making positive contributions to the lives of students with special needs* (P8).

Communication is another noticeable factor that influences job satisfaction for special needs educators. Half the sample group felt that "good," "clear," "open," and "honest" communication are "essentially important" and influences educators' level of job satisfaction. According to AP1: *Communication is important in any aspect of life, but especially when you are working with groups of people and working with peoples' lives. Which is what we are doing! Problems can arise when people aren't informed.* DP5 agreed: *They feel they've been heard...I think they're treated like professionals and so their ideas are listened too and implemented when they're good.* In light of these responses, it became understandable that communication was one factor that contributes to job satisfaction of educators in selected New Zealand special needs facilities.

Only two respondents identified professional development as a factor that influences educators' job satisfaction. DP3 felt: *Professional development, so been* (special needs educators) *given ideas of what will work in a classroom.* P7 notes that educators' achievement and performance levels can be improved by offering professional development (Steyn, 2001:54), (see par 2.2 in this regard):

*The constant development in the field of special education necessitates the demand for continuous up-skilling of staff. Educators need to be abreast of these developments in special needs education to enable them to provide world-class education to students with special educational needs.*

From these answers, it can be concluded that professional development influence the level of job satisfaction of special needs educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools.

P7 only briefly mentioned intrinsic motivating factors as contributing to educators' job satisfaction. However, strong evidence was put forward by various researchers (Adkins, 2009:1; Bailey & Dowrick, 2001:15; Butt & Lance, 2005:404-405; Maforah, 2004:26; Maniram, 2007:14-16) indicating that job satisfaction is the result of intrinsic motivating factors (see par 2.4.1 in this regard). P6 did not define it as such, but provided a rationale related to intrinsic motivating factors:

*The fact is that motivation, appreciation, and recognition influence the level of job satisfaction of teachers and specialists in the school. I think that's not something you leave until appraisal time. I think that the random recognition is something which I try to practise.*

This implies that intrinsic motivation is believed to be an influencing factor, even if only two respondents alluded to the fact.

It can be deduced that factors which influence special needs educators' job satisfaction vary greatly. Data from the respondents do indicate some universal factors. All managers mentioned management support and the availability of adequate resources as the two main influencing factors. More than half of participants viewed students' ability to progress academically as the third most significant factor. Other factors mentioned included communication, professional development, and intrinsic motivating factors.

#### **4.3.2.3 Data regarding the understanding of the consequences for special needs educators who are not satisfied in their jobs**

All interviewees except DP3 reported that special needs educators who are not satisfied in their jobs will leave their teaching positions. AP1 stated: *I would think that they would leave teaching. I would think, yes. They would leave and find another job in another establishment or at another school.*

DP4, P6, and P7 all agreed. P6 explained:

*The consequences, I think that...not so much now, but occasionally it can still happen though. People who are professionally inept think that they'll be all right in a special school. But if you can't hack it in the mainstream, there's no way you can make it in a special school. They don't stay in special education for long.*

DP2 claimed: *They burn out-they become very cynical and frustrated. If you didn't experience job satisfaction, you get stressed and you would leave.* DP5 commented: *Well if you're not having fun in your job, you have to look for something else.* Emery and Vandenberg (2010:120-121) report that the problems of burnout and stress have been shown in the literature for more than two decades (see par 2.5.5 in this regard). Stempien and Loeb (2002:259) indicate that a relationship exists between job stress and job satisfaction for special needs educators (see par 2.5.5 in this regard).

DP3's response was out of the ordinary:

*I think it impacts a lot on student outcomes. But also on student behaviour and how they cope in class. I think that's the biggest thing. You can always tell if a child is not engaged and they're not motivated in the classroom because of the teacher that is not.*

It is surprising that only one educational manager reported the effect of educators' job satisfaction levels on the progress of their students. Various data indicate that job dissatisfaction clearly has an adverse effect on the sector (Arnold & Feldman, 1996:95; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:120-122; Maniram, 2007:30; Stephens & Fish, 2010:587; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:259), (see par 2.4.8 in this regard).

The consequences of job satisfaction for educators have far-reaching effects. High attrition levels (Cancio & Conderman, 2008:30; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119; Maniram, 2007), (see par 2.5.2 in this regard), low retention rates (Adera & Bullock, 2010:6; Billingsley et al., 2004:333-347; Butt & Lance, 2005:401; Cancio & Conderman, 2008:31; Duesbery & Werblow, 2008:1; Ingersoll, 2003:8; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258; Thornton 2007:233), (see

par 2.5.3 in this regard), increased stress (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:121; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:259; Leyin & Wakerly, 2007:38), (see par 2.5.5 in this regard), intent to leave the field (Stephens & Fish, 2010:587), (see par 2.5.7 in this regard), and burnout are the most important consequences identified in the literature and by respondents. These responses need to be addressed to enable managers to built and develop a strong workforce for the special needs education sector.

#### **4.3.2.4 Data regarding the identification of the most vulnerable group of educators who are not satisfied in their jobs**

Half the participants agreed that support staff were the most vulnerable group of educators who were not satisfied with their jobs. Their reasons included a comment from DP2: *They don't get the support that they need. They're not recognised for the job they do.* DP3 claimed: *There's a lot expected of them and they have to work with educators' and students' quite different personalities.* P7 emphasised: *Support staff have to deal with the students' diverse needs directly on a one-on-one basis.* Opinions of these educational managers are deemed valid when acknowledging their supporting statements for identifying the support staff as the most vulnerable group of educators that do not experience job satisfaction. Educational managers clearly viewed the support staff as part of the special needs educator corps of their schools. The responses from the managers showed they are sensitive to the needs of support workers.

AP1 and DP5 identified contrasting groups of educators as vulnerable. AP1 stated: *Oh I think, probably the least experienced maybe, but it's not really fair to say because some people are such fast learners.* Numerous studies (Billingsley et al., 2004; Chambers, 2008:2; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010:119; Stempien & Loeb, 2002:264) indicate that special needs educators are at risk, especially during the first few years of their careers (see par 2.5.4 in this regard). DP5 noted: *I think the ones that's been here the longest. They find change difficult.* DP6 was unable to answer the question: *That's a difficult question. I could not say.*

It is indicative that P8's response may be the most accurate:

*It can be anyone working at the school. Staff can be vulnerable because of internal but also external triggers. Their personal lives can affect their ability to deal with the demands at school. Yes, I would have to say anyone can be vulnerable.*

The above responses imply that special needs educational managers will have to be alert and on the lookout to be able to identify vulnerable individuals or groups in the special needs schools. By providing adequate and needed support to the identified vulnerable people or vulnerable groups, SMT's in special needs schools can raise or boost the retention levels of staff in special needs schools.

#### **4.3.2.5 Data regarding visible evidence that special needs educators are satisfied in their jobs**

Participants were all able to provide clear explanations of the evidence that a special needs educator is satisfied in the job. The responses from the various participants aligned and correlated with each other. AP1 suggested:

*They're here a lot, they don't take sick leave. I guess they are confident basically doing the hours and putting in the hard work, happy. They are participating and involved. Putting their hands up for things. I think you would see coherence in the team.*

DP5 agreed: *I think they're innovative, they're flexible, and they're creative. They genuinely want to be here. They genuinely look quite enthusiastic about things.*

Furthermore DP2 provided the following description:

*How do they look? Well they're positive with lots of energy and they are really reflective, working to improve their own practise, and generally they've got patience and tolerance to take people with them, sort of. I don't know if that makes sense to you. Bring people along*

*with them, which sometimes mean mentoring and training, that sort of things.*

DP3 expressed similar views: *They just look like they're enjoying themselves, you know, they are very motivated. They come prepared. They also do a lot of sharing. They're very willing to share. So they share at meetings or they share at school.*

DP4 noted: *I think they're full of energy, full of smiles, always busy and on to it. Looking for creative ways to enhance their everyday programs and new ways of doing things.*

P6, P7 and P8 agreed, adding comments regarding financial implications for paying substitute teachers to fill in for absent staff. P8 strongly commented on the ethical dilemma of regular staff absenteeism: *They have an ethical responsibility towards their students. Students find it challenging to adapt to replacement teachers on a regular basis. The needs of the students should be placed above all else.*

Compelling evidence was heard regarding the positive effect that increased job satisfaction can have on educators, students, and the special needs educational sector as a whole. It is hoped that managers will strive to improve the job satisfaction of special needs educators worldwide. It is evident, that educators' level of job satisfaction tremendously affects the school climate, staff, and students.

#### **4.3.2.6 Data regarding management processes to improve job satisfaction for special needs educators**

Six participants reported they had robust, professional development (PD) programmes to develop strategies to improve job satisfaction for special needs educators. AP1 mentioned: *Well, as much as our budget allows, we have professional development.* DP2 agreed: *Lots of PD, lots of PD!* DP4 added: *I think professional development that is developed through the principal and deputy principals that's deemed first class.* DP5 was also in accord: *We have different forms of professional development.* These views were also supported by P7: *Through professional development.* P8 responded with: *Professional development programs can be developed to address areas of concerns.*



From these responses, it seems that 75 per cent of the managers were not able to identify the processes in place for developing effective strategies to improve job satisfaction of special needs educators. It begs the question: *How do educational managers develop effective strategies to improve job satisfaction for educators in New Zealand special needs schools?*

DP3 and P6 described the processes they have in place to develop such strategies. They used a similar process of regular SMT meetings to discuss factors that contribute to educators' job satisfaction and identify individuals who are not satisfied in their job. According to DP3:

*Generally one of us (SMT) would sort of say there's a problem in this class. It's obvious somebody's having an issue with whatever and it's normally a sit down and talk. If there's something we can do, like support them in some way...*

The SMT will discuss the identified concerns and investigate ways to improve the situation. P6 described the same process:

*The management team has regular meetings to identify areas of concern. We use feedback from staff, discussions, and team meetings to identify the problems. Sometimes we would identify a staff member who is at risk. We try to be proactive and develop strategies and solutions before it becomes a big issue.*

AP1, DP2, and P7 mentioned open-door policies, but clearly the process is not robust enough to capture and identify all needs at the school. Educator job satisfaction is influenced by a diverse set of factors, including staff, property, financial, economy, policies, government, legislation, students, families, communities, resources, systems, curriculum, programs, and transportation.

It is evident through the data that management teams know what generally entails job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. They are able to identify the main factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators, and they understand the consequences for educators who are not satisfied in their jobs. It is clear that a majority of management teams need to develop better processes. Professional development and open-door policies are not robust

enough to address the diverse array of challenges special needs educators face. The senior management meetings alone are not adequate. Senior management teams need to develop processes that will ensure that a variety of effective strategies are implemented to increase educator's job satisfaction.

#### **4.3.2.7 Data regarding the most effective management strategies to increase job satisfaction for special needs educators**

Responses indicated varied opinions regarding the most effective management strategy to increase job satisfaction for special needs educators. The varied opinions might be an indication of the diversity, distinctiveness, and unique character of each school. The needs and demands in each of these schools are inimitable. They provide education and support to a diverse range of students with specific special educational needs, including: visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically disabled, behavioural challenges, autism, and Down's syndrome. It is unrealistic to expect that all special needs schools will use the same management strategy to increase job satisfaction for educators.

DP3, P7, and P8 focused on professional development to increase job satisfaction among educators in their special needs schools. They identified the need to provide programs with different focus areas.

DP3 explained:

*At the moment it's a lot to do with professional point development. Huge, giving the teachers the tools and the strategies to be able to cope in the classroom. That's the biggest thing, that's the most important.*

P7 provided a clarification to the previous statement: *I think the biggest thing is getting everybody up to speed.*

AP1 maintained that communication is the most important strategy:

*It has to be communication. It has to be, that has to be the one (most effective management strategy) because even if you've got all the resources and you're not talking to people, then that's not going to work.*

AP1 asserted: *You can have the best systems in the world, but if people aren't communicating with each other, it's not going to work.* In the light of this, it became clear that AP1's school was focusing on communication as its most effective management strategy to increase job satisfaction for special needs educators.

DP2 maintained: *I think I'll go back to what I said in the beginning. It's about the teacher being able to implement programs by having the resources.* It is not unexpected that DP2's response identified adequate resources as the most effective management strategy for increasing job satisfaction for special needs educators. All respondents identified adequate resources as one of the main factors that contribute to educators' job satisfaction (Billingsley et al., 2004:334-339; Butt & Lance, 2005:420), (see par 2.4.2 and 2.4.9 in this regard).

DP4 substantiated another factor that P6 had mentioned earlier:

*I think that the school, the senior management team, are very good at being particularly positive to the staff and to support staff as well, when they are doing a good job. And it really shows, I think, and they appreciate it.*

Recognition is the perceptible acknowledgement of an educator's good work (Steyn, 2001:53), (see par 2.2 in this regard). She proposes that recognition can be given in various ways: verbal recognition at a staff meeting, written recognition in a newsletter, high scores in personal appraisal. Recognition can lead to increased levels of educator job satisfaction.

DP5 provided a short example of their school's practises: *So we constantly look at if we are being realistic with our expectations. We reflect among us as a management team. What is working? Are we being expecting too much, or are we not?* If the management team reflects on its practises, this would ensure it is constantly updating data and developing effective management strategies.

P6 provided another valid response: *I think, its delegation. And watching them (special-needs educators) develop skills and bloom. And sort of giving them the bullet and saying, you can do it.* Delegating tasks would contribute to special needs educators' development and growth. It is instrumental in creating challenging work activities that can create higher job satisfaction for special needs educators (Adkins, 2009:1; Butt & Lance, 2005:416-417), (see par 2.4.2 in this regard).

Five respondents reported their management teams needed to focus on and develop better communication skills. AP1 claimed: *I would have to say communication again! We are always working on trying to improve our communication.* An interesting comment by DP4 highlighted the importance of open communication: *Lots going on simultaneously, People need to know what's happening.* DP4's statement is augmented by DP5: *For me personally it would be communication. I don't always listen. And I know that's me personally.* This corresponded with P6's view: *So, I suppose that's communication for us. Come and tell us exactly how you're feeling. And we'll look together how we're going to change it.* P7 claimed: *There's an ongoing focus on improving our communication in the management team and between us and the rest of the staff. Communication between the school and families, and to other professionals. This is a constant challenge.*

Half the sample group identified communication as one of the main factors that influence the level of job satisfaction for special needs educators in New Zealand special needs schools. Responses from DP2 and P8 were not very clear. DP2: *If I have to pick one for job satisfaction...I don't know, but nothing comes to mind.* P8 commented: *We've discussed so many different strategies. Let me think. It can be to look at ways of working more collaboratively, I think.*

### **4.3.3 Summary**

The previous section included an analysis of the interviews conducted with three principals, four deputy principals and one assistant principal in three New Zealand special needs schools. Their experiences and viewpoints on effective management strategies that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators were analysed and discussed. Results were presented and explained in terms of the meaning that the participants attached to the phenomenon under investigation.

## **4.4 CONCLUSION**

From the above analysis and discussion, the following key points become clear: The SMT members of the selected special needs schools have diverse biographical backgrounds. Respondents had an age range distribution from 51 to over 66 years of age. Special needs educational management in New Zealand is dominated by females. The respondents' mainstream educational experience ranged from five years up to 31 years. Their special needs educator experience ranged from 10 to 31 years. The participant with the least amount of experience had less than five years experience as an educational manager. Data indicate that SMT members were highly qualified and had extensive experience in both mainstream and special needs education. The sample was not representative of all cultural groups in New Zealand. Only the majority groups were represented (New Zealand European, South African and European other).

Education managers in the selected New Zealand special needs had an in-depth understanding of what job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction entails for special needs educators. Managers identified the two key factors that influenced educators' job satisfaction: management support and adequate resources. They also identified communication, ability of students to progress academically, professional development, and intrinsic motivating factors as factors that influence the level of job satisfaction for special needs educators. These factors were all in line with findings from previous studies.

It is clear that the managers understood that educators who are not satisfied in their jobs will leave their positions. Respondents noted the correlation between job dissatisfaction and high levels of attrition, increased levels of stress, and low retention rates. They described negative consequences of job dissatisfaction for special needs educators. They also portrayed the adverse effects it can have on student outcomes and the wider sector.

Half the participants identified support staff as the most vulnerable group in special needs schools. Beginner teachers and more experienced teachers were two contrasting groups that were also identified as vulnerable. Participants clearly described evidence that special needs educators were satisfied in their jobs. Special needs educators satisfied in their jobs would demonstrate positive behaviours. Furthermore they easily shared their knowledge and experience with their colleagues.

The evidence was overwhelming regarding the lack of sufficient strategies to improve job satisfaction for special needs educators. Professional development programs were not robust. Regular SMT meetings and discussions needed to be further developed, and SMTs needed to incorporate a variety of strategies to improve job satisfaction for special needs educators. Different management strategies were deemed effective according to each respondent's unique experiences. The fact that the special needs educational managers only provided one or two effective strategies seems to indicate they need to expand and develop a wider variety of strategies. The data yielded valuable information that can support educational managers in increasing job satisfaction for special needs educators. Managers can make the special needs educator corps stronger and raise achievement of special needs students.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 4, the research data was presented. Participants' geographical information was investigated, analysed, and presented. The seven graphs depicted the respondents' age, gender, mainstream teaching experience, special needs teaching experience, educational management experience, highest academic qualification, and ethnicity. Graphs were analysed and interpreted to get a better understanding of the geographical background of the sample in this research study.

Data from analysis of the interview transcripts were also discussed. The researcher provided comprehensive rationalizations of the interview data to develop a better perspective of the participants' point of view on effective management strategies that influence job satisfaction of special needs educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools.

Chapter 5 will start by presenting a summary of the study. It will then put forth the research findings regarding the aims of the study, as formulated in Chapter 1. Recommendations will then be made from the data the study yielded. Finally this chapter will present recommendations for further research.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1 provides the introduction and orientation to the study on effective management strategies that influence job satisfaction among educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools. The problem statement was formulated: How can educational managers effectively address factors that influence job satisfaction among educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools?

The researcher also formulated four sub-problems derived from the problem statement in Chapter 1:

- What generally entails job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction?
- Which specific factors influence job satisfaction for New Zealand special needs educators?
- What are the consequences for New Zealand special needs educators who are not satisfied with their job?
- Which effective management strategies and recommendations can be made to managers to improve job satisfaction levels among educators in New Zealand special needs schools?

Chapter 1 stated and clarified the aims and objectives of the research study. In addition, it provided a clear outline of the research methodology. It defined the reliability and validity of the research, and summarized key terms in an attempt to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the meaning of the terms used in the study. This chapter also included the planning of the research study by incorporating a short explanation of the content of each of the following chapters.

Chapter 2 outlined the theoretical background to the study. Chapter 2 also included an in-depth literature review. The literature related to: job satisfaction and dissatisfaction; factors that influence job satisfaction of special needs educators; consequence for special needs educators who are not satisfied in their jobs; and effective management strategies that can improve job satisfaction for special needs educators. The chapter discussed job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the school context and investigated factors that influence job satisfaction in the mainstream and special needs education sector. The end of Chapter 2 examined consequences for special needs educators who are not satisfied in their jobs.

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology. It included a detailed account of the research design, population and sampling, and the instrumentation and procedures used to collect the data. Data analysis strategies were clearly defined and included the five phases of data collection and analysis as explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:405), (see par.3.6.1 in this regard). The research incorporated data presentation strategies, put into practice for this



study, to inform the reader of the processes followed during inductive data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:463), (see par 3.6.2 in this regard). At the end of Chapter 3, validity and reliability in qualitative research were examined and applied to this study.

Chapter 4 presented, analysed, and discussed the research data collected from the SMT members in the three selected New Zealand special needs schools. First, a questionnaire was administered to gather participants' geographic and background information. Second, one-on-one, open ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the eight SMT members. The geographical data was presented (Figures 1-7) and included an expanded, comprehensible analysis. The interview data was then presented, analysed, and discussed.

Chapter 5 gives an inclusive summary of the previous four chapters' focal points. Study limitations are outlined and followed with a comprehensive layout of the findings, including interpretations and conclusions from the collected data. Chapter 5 further includes clearly defined recommendations from the study. The chapter closes with recommendations for future research

### **5.3 STUDY LIMITATIONS**

The research had some limitations:

- A small sample size (eight SMT participants from three schools)
- Availability and accessibility of data
- One school withdrew from the study at a critical stage of the research, due to reasons outside its control
- P8 did not give consent for the interview to be recorded on tape and the researcher was forced to take handwritten notes during the interview
- Unanticipated interruptions during interviews (e.g., fire drill and one participant's health issue)

These limitations did not affect the data and were negated by the valuable information gathered from the other respondents in this research study.

## **5.4 STUDY FINDINGS**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

This study focuses on effective management of job satisfaction for educators in New Zealand special needs schools. Data were generated from the results of a questionnaire and interviews, which substantially reflects respondents' answers. The interpretation and conclusions will be presented in an attempt to corroborate the results.

### **5.4.2 Findings regarding participants' biographical information**

Educational managers working in New Zealand special needs schools are an aging workforce (see par.2.1 in this regard). Evidence disclosed that 63 per cent of the managers in the sample will retire within the next eight years. Their retirement will leave a huge gap in the SMTs of these special needs schools. The evidence also shows that only two of the managers are in an age group (46 to 50 years of age) that can continue to serve as managers for the next 15 to 20 years.

All participants in the sample were female. The data suggest that women dominate the management field in New Zealand special needs schools. It can be deduced that male educational managers prefer to serve in mainstream education settings. Gender equality has long been a major concern in the educational sector. There is clearly an unbalance in gender equality, on a management level, in the New Zealand special needs educational sector.

Results indicated that the managers in the selected schools had at least five years' teaching experience in mainstream settings. They fulfilled requirements set by the New Zealand Teachers Council by completing a mentor and guidance program during their first two years of teaching. Once they successfully completed the mentoring program, they received Full Teacher registration. They all progressed through the different sectors in the educational system to become managers in special needs schools. They had the necessary experience,

educational background, and knowledge of special needs and mainstream education to equip them for their management roles.

Experience as an educator in a special needs school, is a prerequisite for progressing into a management position. All the study participants advanced through the mainstream sector, gained Full Teacher Registration, and acquired an additional qualification in the special needs field. This was followed by five to 10 years' educational experience in the special-needs sector, before becoming special needs education managers. This leads to the conclusion that the career path of a special needs educational manager in New Zealand contribute to their high age ranges. It takes a person at least seven years to gain a qualification in teaching, get Full Teachers Registration, gain an additional qualification in the special needs field, and start working in a special needs school.

Managers stay in their roles for extended periods of time. These long service records indicate that these managers are committed and dedicated about promoting learning and teaching in the special needs education sectors.

Educational managers' qualifications are all comparable to Level 7 (Bachelors Degrees, Graduate Diplomas), Level 8 (Postgraduate Diplomas, Bachelors with Honours) and Level 9 (Masters), as registered on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications (NZQA). These managers not only have the necessary experience, but are also sufficiently educationally qualified for working in the special needs field (see par.2.4.2 in this regard).

Evidence attests that most participants are representative of the majority New Zealand European group. The Maori population is underrepresented.

### **5.4.3 Findings regarding the general understanding of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of special needs educators**

Educational managers have a bona-fide understanding of what entails job satisfaction for educators in New Zealand special needs schools (see par.2.4.6 in this regard). It can be deducted from their responses that educational managers have a sound judgement to gauge the level of job satisfaction among the special needs educators in their schools, (see par.2.4.6 in

this regard). They are alert to the signs that an educator is either satisfied or dissatisfied in their job (see par.2.3 in this regard).

The managers reported a turnover rate for educators in their schools (see par.2.5.1 in this regard). This account of low turnover rates challenges findings from previous studies. Studies and research data provided evidence that special needs educators have low retention levels and high attrition rates (see par 2.5.3 in this regard).

The managers identified support staff as the most vulnerable group to experience job dissatisfaction. The least-experienced and the most-experienced educators were also recognized as susceptible to job dissatisfaction (see par.1.2 in this regard).

#### **5.4.4 Findings regarding the understanding of the main factors that influence job satisfaction of educators in New Zealand special needs schools**

Management support is the most important factor that influenced job satisfaction for educators in the selected New Zealand special needs schools (see par.2.4.6 in this regard). An equally important factor that influenced job satisfaction was adequate resources available to the educators (see par.2.4.9 in this regard).

Special needs educators valued collaborative working relationships with each other and with the SMTs in their schools. This implies they preferred to work inter-dependently and needed input from colleagues and the SMTs to carry out their work. It was furthermore important for them to share and reflect on their teaching practices. It was also important they provided feedback to the SMTs regarding systems and policies in their facilities. The leadership and management style of the SMT in the selected schools affected the job satisfaction levels for special needs educators.

Special needs educators' job satisfaction levels were significantly influenced by their students' ability to progress academically or show improvement with developmental milestones (see par.2.4.8 in this regard).

Open, clear, honest communication was an imperative factor that influenced job satisfaction among the special needs educators. It was evident that communication influenced every relationship in the schools.

Robust professional development programs can significantly improve special needs educators' performance levels and keep their knowledge base current with developments on teaching practices in the field. Professional development programs can address some of the needs that influence special needs educators' level of job satisfaction.

Intrinsic motivational factors contribute to special needs educators' job satisfaction. SMTs can put into operation intrinsic motivational factors that encompass challenging work, motivation, achievement, recognition, autonomy, and appreciation.

Monetary rewards were not perceived to influence special needs educators' level of job satisfaction. No data were available to suggest that respondents believed that educators' level of job satisfaction was influenced by salaries packages.

#### **5.4.5 Findings regarding the understanding of the consequences for special needs educators who are not satisfied in their jobs**

Managers in New Zealand special needs schools have a comprehensive understanding of the consequences for educators. They provided a thorough account of the consequences of job dissatisfaction on educators in special needs schools.

Special needs educators will leave their schools if they experience job dissatisfaction. They will leave to find a teaching position in another school. The teaching position may be in a special needs school, but data show that they most often go back to a mainstream setting (see par.2.5.7 in this regard). In extreme cases, special needs educators will change their career paths entirely (see par.2.5.7 in this regard).

Teacher burnout and elevated stress levels are a result of job dissatisfaction for extended periods of time (see par.2.5.5 in this regard). This means they will have higher rates of absenteeism (see par.2.5.4 in this regard).

A noteworthy consequence of special needs educators' job dissatisfaction is the detrimental effect on student outcomes (see par.2.5.8 in this regard). It affects students' behaviour and their ability to cope in class. Students' academic progress is adversely affected and impedes their capability to educationally advance.

The consequences of special needs educators' job dissatisfaction have an adverse effect on the entire special needs educational sector in New Zealand.

#### **5.4.6 Findings regarding the description of strategies management teams use to increase job satisfaction for special needs educators**

Educational managers in New Zealand special needs schools do not have robust processes in place for developing effective strategies to improve job satisfaction for special needs educators.

Special needs educational managers mainly use professional development programs to improve job satisfaction for their educators.

The SMT meetings are used to identify and discuss factors that contribute to job satisfaction for special needs educators. Plans and timelines for appropriate interventions and solutions are developed during these meetings.

The three special needs schools that took part in the study had distinctive characters and unique opinions regarding effective strategies to influence job satisfaction for educators. Their inimitable views in this regard are equally important.

Effective strategies to improve educators' job satisfaction are supported and enhanced by effective communication skills. The SMTs use strategies such as listening skills, acknowledging staff contributions, and clearly communicating goals and visions. They listen to the staff's points of view and implement good ideas that will improve job satisfaction for special needs educators.

An effective strategy for improving educators' job satisfaction involved giving positive feedback on high-quality work in a consistent and timely manner. This served the managers well.

Educational managers who continuously reflected on the strategies they implemented to influence job satisfaction for their educators experienced escalating successes. They acknowledged strategies that are working effectively. They made adjustments to less-successful strategies, updated their data, and developed alternative strategies on an ongoing basis.

Delegation is used by a minority of special needs educators as an effective strategy to enhance special needs educators' experience of job satisfaction in New Zealand special needs schools. Special needs educators are given the opportunity to broaden their knowledge base and experience by sharing in the responsibilities.

#### **5.4.7 Summary**

The data collected from this study yielded a motivating management perspective on job satisfaction in selected New Zealand special needs schools. Data strongly suggest that effective management strategies positively influence job satisfaction for special needs educators:

- SMTs must have knowledge of what generally entails job satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- Managers must be able to identify the specific factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators
- Managers should understand the consequences for special needs educators who are not satisfied in their jobs
- SMTs need a wide-ranging tool kit of effective management strategies to improve job satisfaction for special needs educators

In the discussion on the study findings, it became clear that they are supported by data and findings from other studies. At the same time, these findings challenge statements and data from previous research. Finally, new data were uncovered. Hopefully, the findings of this study can add to the exciting body of evidence on job satisfaction for special needs educators in special needs schools.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY**

### **5.5.1 Introduction**

The findings of this research study implicate the need for changes to special needs education managers' practises to manage job satisfaction for educators. Managers participating in the study provided data to substantiate the fact that most of their practises are effective and sound. However, they also alluded to areas in need of further development. New innovative strategies are needed.

The subsequent recommendations are appropriate, based on the findings regarding effective management of job satisfaction among educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools.

### **5.5.2 Recommendations regarding participants' biographical information**

Sixty-three per cent of the participants will retire within the next eight years. New initiatives are needed to recruit educators into management positions in New Zealand special needs schools. This will negate the effect of retirement on the special needs education sector. Educators who demonstrate the necessary characteristics and ambition to become educational managers need to be identified earlier. They need to be given the opportunity to take part in leadership development to prepare them for the demands unique to special needs education management. If they are identified early in their teaching careers, exposed to management training, and provided with opportunities to take part in management activities, they will be prepared when these management vacancies are available.



The data suggest that females dominate the special needs educational management arena in New Zealand special needs schools. Only females took part in the study. A goal should be formulated to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes. SMTs should be encouraged to address the imbalance in gender equality in New Zealand special needs education.

The career path for special needs educators needs to be revised. Educators should have the option to specialise in special needs education from the start. Educational qualifications should include the special needs specialisation fields. Teaching students need to have a choice between mainstream education and/or special needs education qualifications. This will decrease the amount of time it would take to become a special needs educator. The New Zealand Teacher Council should also adapt their requirements for obtaining Full Teacher Registration. The two-year mentoring program can be carried out in a special needs school.

The underrepresentation of Maori special-needs educational managers should be investigated. It is concerning that the ethnicity groups represented in this study only included the majority ethnic group (New Zealand European) and two immigrant groups (South-African/Other European). New Zealand supports the Treaty of Waitangi and put forward that there is a bi-cultural symbiotic culture. It needs to practice this in special needs education sectors as well.

### **5.5.3 Recommendations regarding the general understanding of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction**

Data are clear that managers know what entails job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of special needs educators. The SMTs of special needs schools need to focus on developing support strategies for the most vulnerable groups of educators: support staff, the least experienced educators, and the most experienced educators.

Induction programs should be personalized to address the unique learning needs of every special needs educator and support staff member. Refresher training programs can be developed to address the learning and development needs of more experienced special needs educators. Professional development programs should encompass different learning opportunities for special needs educators to develop their knowledge and improve their practise. Special needs educators would benefit immeasurably if they had access to a variety of options for development opportunities, based on their personal growth plan.

#### **5.5.4 Recommendations regarding the understanding of the main factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators**

There is a need to focus on managerial support for educators in special needs schools. Managers should know that their efforts affect job satisfaction for special needs educators. They should strive to provide educators with support by being available and understanding demands placed upon these educators.

Since most respondents alluded that adequate resources have a major impact on a special needs educator's level of job satisfaction, the researcher proposes the following management strategies:

- develop systems to manage existing resources
- develop systems to gather information regarding educators' resource needs
- be knowledgeable about available resources
- develop systems to stay abreast of new resources
- develop a system to evaluate the effectiveness of resources, in collaboration with special needs educators
- listen to recommendations from other staff members
- regularly update resource database
- develop systems to manage resource budget

Communication skills form the cornerstone for effective management of a special needs school. Therefore, educational managers need to continuously develop and improve their communication skills. Special needs educational managers should model good communication skills in all their tasks.

### **5.5.5 Recommendations regarding the understanding of the consequences for special needs educators who are not satisfied in their jobs**

Managers in special needs educational settings must negate the adverse consequences of job dissatisfaction for special needs educators. They need to use available data and evidence to develop robust strategies to retain special needs educators. Strategies should address factors, from inside and outside the classroom, which influence job satisfaction levels. Adverse consequences of educators' job dissatisfaction include: high attrition rates, low retention rates, high absenteeism rates, increased stress, increased union activity, and the intent to leave the special needs education field.

### **5.5.6 Recommendations regarding the description of effective strategies to increase job satisfaction for special needs educators**

Evidence from respondents did not show they knew of effective management strategies to improve special needs educators' level of job satisfaction. Special needs educational managers need to explore an assortment of strategies to raise their educators' levels of job satisfaction.

Effective management strategies need to be evidence based. Special needs educators and schools have unique requirements, based on individual characteristics. As a result, it necessitates a variety of management strategies.

Managers need to regularly gain information regarding special needs educators' requirements. This needs to include a combination of documented strategies: administrative support, professional development, regular catch-up sessions, regular reflections on existing practises, delegation, open communication, positive reinforcement and acknowledgement, making available adequate resources, being available, working collaboratively, and sharing responsibilities.

Managers must find out how educators prefer to receive feedback on their work. This can be given in different ways. Verbal feedback can be given at team meetings or during performance appraisal sessions. Written feedback can take the form of an e-mail, personal note or letter, or a note on the notice board. Participants provided data to acknowledge special

needs educators' good work in a timely, sincere, and consistent manner. It would be beneficial to implement practises and behaviours to provide feedback in a timely manner.

Managers depend on the special needs educator corps to realise the goals and vision in the school. Data point toward educators' need for recognition and words of appreciation from their managers. It became clear that managers and educators depend on each other to work towards better outcomes for their students. This implies that the educational manager should know what motivates each of their educators.

Educational managers should present motivational factors to young people interested in pursuing a career in special needs education. Some of the most effective methods to accomplish this might include: Presenting at Teacher Training Colleges, information days at the special needs schools, opportunities for practicum placements and observations, and information brochures.

Special needs educators' level of job satisfaction is influenced by their students' progress and development. Educators will benefit from management strategies to regularly map students' progress across all curriculum areas.

### **5.5.7 Summary**

The recommendations, derived from the data and findings, offer educational managers the tools to expand on their quest to effectively manage job satisfaction of special needs educators. The diversity of factors necessitates different strategies for different needs. Therefore special needs educational managers should use a combination of the recommended strategies, depending on their unique requirements.

## 5.6 RECOMMENDASIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This literature review and research focuses attention on deficiencies in knowledge. More could be explored pertaining to the following questions:

- Females account for a large majority of special needs educational management teams. Why does gender inequality still persist in the special needs educational sector?
- Do educational managers hold relevant qualifications to provide them with the academic background to be managers, or do they rely on experience alone?
- How can educational managers effectively handle the intrinsic factors that influence job satisfaction for special needs educators?
- Why is the Maori ethnic group not represented on SMTs in New Zealand special needs schools?

## 5.7 CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 5 provided a summary of the key points of the previous four chapters. The limitations of the study were defined before the findings of the study were documented. Analysis of the data from this study revealed that effective management of factors that influence special needs educators' level of job satisfaction can lead to higher retention rates. In addition, the data showed that special needs educators leave their schools if they are not satisfied in their jobs. It was evident from the data that effective educational management practices to elevate special needs educators' job satisfaction are needed.

Recommendations from the study were put forward to provide educational managers with evidence-based suggestions. Ultimately, providing these managers with, evidence-based effective strategies to address factors that influence job satisfaction for educators in their schools will help retain those educators in the special needs field and enable special needs students to academically achieve.

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**APPENDIX A****QUESTIONS ON GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

The intention of this questionnaire is to acquire geographical information on the participants, pertinent to the research topic: *Job satisfaction in selected New Zealand special needs schools: an educational management perspective.*

The information will solely be used for academic research, and will be treated anonymously and privately at all times.

You are requested to answer each question by selecting the most appropriate answer and marking the square provided with an X.

For example, if you are male:

Gender

Male

Female

The questionnaire is completed anonymously and will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. Thank you for your participation.

**Question 1**

What is your age?

<input type="checkbox"/>	20 – 25
<input type="checkbox"/>	26 – 30
<input type="checkbox"/>	31 – 35
<input type="checkbox"/>	36 – 40
<input type="checkbox"/>	41 – 45
<input type="checkbox"/>	46 – 50
<input type="checkbox"/>	51 – 55
<input type="checkbox"/>	56 – 60

		61 – 65
		66 and over

## Question 2

What is your gender?

		Male
		Female

## Question 3

How many years' experience do you have in mainstream education as an educator?

		5 or less
		5 – 10
		11 – 15
		16 – 20
		21 – 25
		26 – 30
		31 and more

## Question 4

How many years experience do you have in special needs education as an educator?

		5 or less
		5 – 10
		11 – 15
		16 – 20
		21 – 25
		26 – 30
		31 and more

## Question 5

How many years' experience do you have as an educational manager in special needs educational setting?

		5 or less
		5 – 10
		11 – 15
		16 – 20
		21 – 25
		26 – 30
		31 and more

## Question 6

What is the highest academic qualification you hold?

		Educational Diploma
		Educational Degree
		Bed Degree
		Hons Degree
		Masters Degree
		D Degree

## Question 7

To which ethnic group do you belong?

- NZ European/Pakeha
- Other European
- Croat/Croatian
- South African
- Maori

Iwi \_\_\_\_\_

- Samoan
- Cook Island Maori

- Tongan
- Niuean
- Tokelauan
- Fijian (except Fiji Indian/Indo-Fijian)
- Other Pacific Peoples
- Southeast Asian
- Chinese
- Indian
- Afghani
- Korean
- Other Asian
- Middle Eastern
- Latin American/Hispanic
- African (or cultural group of African origin)
- Ethiopian
- Somali
- Other
- Not Stated

**APPENDIX B****OPEN ENDED, SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY.**

Topic: *Job satisfaction in selected New Zealand special needs schools: an educational management perspective.*

For the purpose of this research, regarding effective educational management strategies that influence job satisfaction of special needs educators in New Zealand special needs schools, the researcher defined job satisfaction as an individual's positive experience of satisfaction, when their work is in accord with their needs and principles (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258-262). Job dissatisfaction is defined as when an individual's morals and the capacity of the work to satisfy the needs associated with those morals, are not in accord (Stempien & Loeb, 2002:258-262).

Question 1

How would you describe the level of job satisfaction of the special needs educators in this special needs school?

Question 2

Can you identify the three most important factors that influence the level of job satisfaction of educators your special needs school?

Question 3

In your opinion, why do you think these are the biggest contributors (previous answers) to special needs educator's job satisfaction?

Question 4

What, in your experience, are the consequences for special needs educators that do not experience job satisfaction in this special needs school?

Question 5

Who would you identify, as the most vulnerable group of educators in special needs education and how does the management team support these special needs educators?

Question 6

How would you portray educators who experience high levels of job satisfaction in special-needs education? What are the strategies you use to keep them motivated?

Question 7

What is the evidence that one would see if a special needs educator experiences job satisfaction?

Question 8

How does the level of job satisfaction of the special needs educators effect the school climate/ students/ curriculum?

Question 9

How does the management team identify educators that experience job dissatisfaction?

Question 10

What processes does the educational management team have in place to develop effective strategies to improve the level of job satisfaction for special needs educators?

Question 11

Describe the most effective management strategies that the management team uses presently to increase the level of job satisfaction for special needs educators.

Question 12

Can you identify and describe the effective educational management strategies you (educational management team) need to focus on and develop to improve the level of job satisfaction for the special needs educators in this facility?

**APPENDIX C**

10 March 2011

North West District Manager  
Ministry of Education – Special Education  
Level 1, 102 Rosedale Road  
Albany, North Shore City  
Auckland  
New Zealand 0757

Dear District Manager

**Request for permission to conduct research interviews in special needs schools**

It would be appreciated if the Ministry of Education – Special Education grant me permission to conduct research interviews and administer a questionnaire in four special-needs school in the Northwest district. I am currently studying towards a Master of Education – Educational Management degree. My dissertation topic is: *Job satisfaction in selected New Zealand special needs schools: an educational management perspective*.

The aims of this research project are:

- to investigate how educational managers can effectively address factors that influence job satisfaction amongst educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools;
- to investigate what entails job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction;
- to study which specific factors influence job satisfaction for educators in special needs education;
- to examine the consequences for special needs educators that do not experience job satisfaction; and
- to make recommendations to educational managers on effective educational management strategies to improve job satisfaction levels amongst educators in special needs education in New Zealand special-needs schools.



The principals and deputy principals at three selected special needs schools in the North West District will be approached to take part in this research study. A total of eight participants will be interviewed and asked to complete seven questions on their geographical information. An interview schedule will be presented to all purposefully selected participants to allow educational managers to be interviewed without causing any disruption to the school programme.

Informed consent will be obtained from all participants and all data gathered will be held in confidence and be used strictly for research purposes.

Your favourable consideration in this regard would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Elda Botes

**APPENDIX D**

10 July 2011

University of South Africa

Student No: 30670616

Dear colleague

You are invited to participate in a research study that has been approved by University of South Africa. I am currently studying towards my Master of Education–Educational Management. My dissertation topic is: *Job satisfaction in selected New Zealand special needs schools: an educational management perspective*. The Ministry of Education-Special Education, North West District Manager also gave consent and gave me permission to conduct the interviews and administer the questionnaires in three New Zealand special needs schools in the North West District.

My experience include 19 years in the special-needs educational field: Teacher of the Deaf (Deaf School, South Africa); Head of Department in Special-needs school (South Africa); Hearing aid Acoustician (South Africa); Advisor on Deaf Children (Ministry of Education – Special Education, New Zealand); and currently Service Manager (Ministry of Education – Special Education, New Zealand).

I need to conduct interviews and administer eight questionnaires, with educational managers in special needs settings in New Zealand special needs schools, to be able to complete this research study. The aims of this research project are:

- to investigate how educational managers can effectively address factors that influence job satisfaction amongst educators in selected New Zealand special needs schools;
- to investigate what entails job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction;
- to study which specific factors influence job satisfaction for educators in special needs education;
- to examine the consequences for special needs educators that do not experience job satisfaction;

- to make recommendations to educational managers on effective educational management strategies to improve job satisfaction levels amongst educators in special needs education in New Zealand special-needs schools.

I hope you will be interested to participate in this important research study. The study will include the following activities:

- Signing this letter to give informed consent.
- Completing a questionnaire that consists of seven questions, to gather geographical information on the participants, pertinent to the research topic.
- Meet to discuss the research study and to establish a relationship. Schedule interview date and time that suits your program best.
- An interview schedule will be presented to all purposefully selected participants to allow educational managers to be interviewed without causing any disruption to the school programme. Interview sessions will last for one to one and a half hour.
- Interviews will be conducted and taped in a one-on-one situation. Interview consists of twelve open-ended questions.

All information will be solely used for academic research, and will be treated anonymously and privately.

Please feel free to contact me by email at [elda.botes@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:elda.botes@minedu.govt.nz) if you are interested to participate in this research project or need to discuss this project further.

Yours sincerely

Elda Botes

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Please sign if you are willing to participate in the research study as set out in letter.

Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_