



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Institute
for Educational Planning

Lucy Crehan

Exploring the impact of career models on teacher motivation

Exploring the impact of career models on teacher motivation

by Lucy Crehan

2016, 140 p.

ISBN: 978-92-803-1405-2

Print copy: €7

Download publication free of charge: www.iiep.unesco.org

About the Book

If a qualified and motivated teaching force is key to achieving the Education 2030 goals, teacher career structures may represent a powerful leverage to improve teachers' motivation.

What is the relation between teacher motivation and organization of careers? What models of teacher career organization exist around the world? Which are most successful according to available research? What lessons can be drawn for the design and implementation of career ladder systems?

Drawing on the experience of a wide range of countries, this book explores the links between career structures and teacher motivation, identifying different models of teacher career organization and related implementation challenges. It offers valuable guidance to educational planners and human resource managers seeking ways to make the teaching career more attractive to potential candidates and to motivate those already on the job.

About the Author

Lucy Crehan is an education researcher and consultant. She is the author of *Cleverlands*, based on research in schools in some of the top-performing education systems, including Canada, Finland, Japan, Shanghai, Singapore, and New Zealand. She has a background in Science teaching and holds a Masters' degree in Education from the University of Cambridge (UK).

Executive summary

The Education for All movement has resulted in a rapid expansion in primary school places across the developing world. However, this expansion has not been accompanied by an equally rapid increase in the number of qualified teachers. It has led, instead, to the recruitment of increasing numbers of unqualified teachers, lowering the status and worsening the working conditions of teachers in many countries. Some authors have been prompted to talk of a crisis in teacher motivation.

This literature review explores the contribution of teacher career models to this motivational crisis, and asks whether a change in their administration could improve the quality of teaching in schools by motivating teachers to improve, and increasing the appeal of the profession. This is in line with the suggested post-2015 education goal that 'By 2030, all governments ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers'.

The most common career structure in both developed and developing countries is the single salary structure, in which teachers' pay increases yearly, irrespective of teaching quality. The only other factors taken into account in calculating pay are additional qualifications, and promotions to administrative positions. Problems with this structure include: a lack of correlation between the factors used for promotion (certificates and experience) and teacher effectiveness; a lack of accountability for quality of teaching; the demotivating effect on colleagues of less-dedicated teachers receiving automatic promotion; a flat salary structure that makes the profession less attractive to the most able; a lack of career progression opportunities for teachers who do not wish to leave the classroom; and the limited sense of self-determination among teachers.

In a search for alternative structures, this report addresses the following research questions by reviewing psychological research on motivation, and examining the models of teacher career structure used in different countries:

1. How are motivation and the organization of careers linked?

2. What are the specific problems linked to the organization of teacher careers in developing countries?
3. What are the different models of teacher career organization around the world?
4. Which are the most successful, according to the available research?
5. What are the lessons for the design and implementation of career ladder systems?

Herzberg's dual factor theory of motivation suggests that the factors which cause dissatisfaction in a job differ from the factors that motivate us and cause satisfaction. The former tend to be related to the job environment (including salary), while the latter are things related to the job itself, such as recognition, responsibility, and growth. This theory implies that improving salary and working conditions is important in that it reduces job dissatisfaction, but beyond a certain point it is not money but job-related factors which motivate. This is tentatively borne out by research in developing countries, though it requires further research.

Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory contends that motivation can be classified along a scale, from controlled (where actions result from external pressure) to autonomous (where actions are the result of an intrinsic desire for a certain outcome). Extrinsic incentives, such as monetary bonuses for specific behaviours or outcomes, can undermine autonomous motivation when perceived as controlling. This should be avoided since autonomous motivation can have positive effects on problem solving, persistence, and creativity. The task for any career structure, therefore, is to support autonomous motivation through the creation of an environment that encourages competence, autonomy, and good interpersonal relations, while, at the same time, holding teachers accountable for the quality of their teaching. This can be achieved by including extrinsic incentives and disincentives for those that remain unmotivated in a way that is not perceived as controlling by those who are already autonomously motivated.

Despite psychological research suggesting that extrinsic incentives undermine autonomous motivation, performance-related pay for teachers has received a lot of attention as an alternative to the single salary schedule. Some simple programmes reward teachers for

certain behaviours, such as attendance, but most use student results as a proxy for teacher quality. The evidence on performance-related pay is mixed, with some programmes finding an improvement in exam results, but many identifying no positive change. Payment based on student results has also been roundly criticized for being unfair to teachers in challenging schools and being an unreliable way to judge teacher quality, as well as for disincentivizing collaboration between teachers and incentivizing ‘teaching to the test’ and cheating.

An approach that avoids the problems associated with using student results as a proxy for teacher quality is summative teacher appraisal. Summative appraisal seeks to determine the current level or standard of a teacher for the purposes of bonuses or promotions, and can be contrasted with formative appraisal, which exists solely for the purpose of helping teachers improve. Methods used to summatively appraise teachers include lesson observations, interviews, tests of subject knowledge and pedagogy, portfolios of evidence, and parent and student surveys. As each method has its strengths and limitations, the most sensible approach is to use a combination of approaches to appraise teachers.

The selection of personnel responsible for summative appraisal varies from country to country. In most cases, the school principal is involved, but assessors can include peers and external experts. The possibility of unreliability or collusion when only one, school-based assessor is involved means that appraisal decisions should be made by at least two people, or made by one and approved by another. For high-stakes appraisals, such as those used to decide on appointments to senior positions, an assessor external to the school should ideally be involved.

The design of summative teacher appraisal also varies across countries, in two main ways. Some countries allocate a certain weighting or point score to different elements of the appraisal process, for example a lesson observation and a test, and combine these to reach a final score (cumulative approach). Other countries use teacher standards, descriptions of what teachers are expected to be able to do or know at different stages of their career. Decisions as to whether or not a teacher has met these standards are based on evidence from the different elements of the appraisal process (holistic approach). The other main point of difference concerns whether teachers are judged

relative to each other (norm referenced), or relative to an independent benchmark (criterion referenced). The former approach has been found to reduce collaboration between teachers, while, with the latter, there is less central control over how many teachers get a bonus or are promoted.

There are three types of response to summative appraisal: bonuses, pay rises, and promotions. In practice, most programmes that use bonuses are based on student results rather than broader appraisal; those that do base bonuses on appraisal do so as part of a broader career structure that includes pay rises and promotions. Another model is a variation on the single salary structure, with staged salary rises (every three years, for example) dependent on passing an appraisal. Sometimes the standards teachers are appraised against become more challenging, the longer they've been in the profession. The final model is that of the career ladder. In this model, rather than simply rising up the pay scale when they pass an appraisal, teachers take on a new status or role, such as 'lead teacher', having met the required standards, and their pay increases to reflect their new position. There are, of course, variations within these three models, concerning who evaluates the teachers, the nature of the standards whether professional development is mandatory, and whether new positions come with additional responsibilities.

According to the literature, the career ladder model is the most promising in that it allows the possibility of linking pay to performance indirectly, and offers teachers a pathway for professional growth. This means that it has the potential to overcome the many problems of the single salary schedule – such as the lack of recognition and lack of accountability for poor teaching – without introducing new problems of reduced collaboration or perceived control, which are inherent in the performance-related pay model.

However, this depends on careful design, and there are significant variations within the career ladder structure used in different countries, leading to different outcomes. Moreover, it is likely that this model requires strong administration to be effectively managed, though more evidence is necessary. Only three career ladder programmes have been quantitatively evaluated. Arizona's model was standards-based, criterion-referenced, and had multiple, external evaluators involved in promotion decisions. It was successful in reducing the drop-out

rate, improving the graduation rate, and improving student scores, compared to districts that did not take part.

Missouri's model included teacher standards, but did not apply different standards at different levels of promotion, while teachers were assessed only by administrators in their own school. Results in maths improved only marginally, and in reading not at all, which evaluators put down to a lack of rigour in the application of the evaluation procedure, due to collusion between administrators and teachers.

Portugal introduced a nation-wide career structure in which teachers had to pass an evaluation to move from a lower pay scale to a higher pay scale. This evaluation was cumulative (points-based), and norm-referenced, putting the teachers in competition with one another. Student scores actually decreased after the introduction of the programme.

Based on the available evidence and countries' experiences of implementing career structures to date, it seems that holistic (standards-based), criterion-referenced designs lead to happier staff and better results. The issue of not knowing how many staff will reach the standards can be overcome through careful design of their difficulty, and initial piloting of the scheme. If further budgetary caution is needed, specific pay increases related to promotion could be set to vary depending on the numbers promoted. Norm-referenced promotion can also be brought in at the highest levels where teachers will be competing with teachers from other schools, rather than their own colleagues.

It is important that teachers 'buy in' to the reform. Without the support of unions, new career structures may never be implemented. Teacher representatives should be involved in the design of the career structure, and, in particular, the design of the teacher standards. However, they should not be solely responsible, and experts in evaluation design should be included in the design team. Other potential obstacles to reform include a lack of financing. Even though the long-term costs of implementing a career ladder need not be greater than a single salary structure, initial funds will be needed for design, training, and implementation. These need to be budgeted for by the appropriate ministry.

Countries considering a change to the administration of their teacher careers would benefit from further evaluation of the career structure models already in existence, as well as reports on the progress made and problems faced by countries in the process of implementing new structures. These evaluations could include quantitative comparisons of key metrics with former structures or similar regions, as well as qualitative comparisons regarding teacher motivation and individual country case studies.

Order form:

- I would like to order..... copy/copies of **Exploring the impact of career models on teacher motivation**: €7 (print copy).
- I enclose a cheque / money order payable to **'UNESCO-IIEP'**
- Visa Card / Mastercard No:
Expiry Date: - / - Signature:.....

Surname:

First name:

Address:

.....

.....

Country:

E-mail:

Please return to:

IIEP, Information Services

7-9, rue Eugène-Delacroix, 75116 Paris, France

Fax: (+33) 1 40 72 83 66 / E-mail: info@iiep.unesco.org

Website: **www.iiep.unesco.org**

IIEP, Information Services

7-9, rue Eugène-Delacroix, 75116 Paris, France

Tel: (+33) 1 45 03 77 70

Fax: (+33) 1 40 72 83 66

E-mail: *info@iiep.unesco.org*

IIEP website: *www.iiep.unesco.org*



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Institute
for Educational Planning