Article

Career Advancement, Job Satisfaction, Career Retention, and Other Related Dimensions for Sustainability: A Perception Study of Qatari Public School Teachers

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Abstract: The lack of teacher retention directly impacts the sustainability of a nation's educational goals and educational system. There are several influences on the retention of teachers, such as career advancement opportunities, job satisfaction, and other dimensions of being an educator. This survey research examines one hundred and sixty-seven Qatari teachers' perceptions about Qatar's current career advancement system and several related dimensions, such as professional development, professional competency, professional licensure system, and career advancement standards essential for sustainability. The findings demonstrate that Qatari teachers are dissatisfied with the current career advancement system, significantly influencing job satisfaction and career retention. In contrast, the influence on professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, and career advancement standards were insignificant. It is recommended that Qatar establish an improved career advancement system with career advancement initiatives that meet the needs of Qatari teachers to improve job satisfaction and retention.

Keywords: teachers; Qatar; career advancement; job satisfaction; career retention; professional development; professional competency; professional licensure

1. Introduction

It can be argued that the most important factor affecting student achievement is the quality of their teacher [1,2]. High-quality teachers are needed for students to succeed academically, but retaining and developing teachers is critical for effective schools [3,4]. However, teacher retention and quality teaching are global concerns [5,6], vital for the teaching workforce's sustainability and educational reforms [7]. There are a multitude of reasons for teachers leaving the profession, such as a lack of support for teachers [7,8], challenges with student discipline [9,10], low salaries [8,11], a lack of respect for the profession [12–14], unsatisfactory working conditions [15,16], and a lack of opportunities for career advancement [17–19].

According to current research, teachers worldwide are less satisfied with their careers and often leave due to a lack of advancement opportunities [4,20]. Borman and Dowling (2008) suggest the most effective and qualified teachers are the ones who leave the classroom because there are no career advancement opportunities [21]. In a 2017 study, McConnell III found that opportunities for career advancement are significant factors in teacher retention. Furthermore, scholars report that teachers who were satisfied with the opportunities for career advancement reported higher teaching satisfaction [22] (e.g., see [23–27]). For example, Rhodes et al. (2004) conducted a study of teachers in the UK and found that good career advancement prospects were among the top ten factors that led to teacher satisfaction and retention [25].

Traditionally, in many countries, there are delineated roles for teachers and administrators. According to Taylor et al. (2011), the profession of teaching "offers a relatively flat career trajectory" that lacks satisfactory leadership roles for experienced teachers who demonstrate expertise in the field" [28] (p. 85). Consequently, a robust system designed to develop and advance teachers is required to foster and retain quality teachers and maintain the sustainability of the teaching profession [29,30]. With that in mind, this study aims to determine the effect of current advancement systems and related dimensions of professional development (PD) opportunities, professional competency, career advancement standards, and licensure requirements on teachers' retention and job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher Job Satisfaction

Gkolia et al. (2014) suggest that there is no accord concerning job satisfaction since meaning is contingent upon the individual's priorities [31]. Nevertheless, scholars define job satisfaction as individuals' positive or negative judgments, emotional reactions, and attitudes toward their job [32,33]. Donald and Siu (2001) view job satisfaction as a strong connection between employees' feelings at work and their overall mental and physical health [34]. Specifically for teachers, job satisfaction is often conceptualized as teachers' affective responses to or judgments of their job or teaching role and their relationship with this environment [35–38].

The research divides job satisfaction into two main categories: intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Factors the organization influencing job satisfaction cannot control are intrinsic factors [39]. For example, intrinsic factors may include self-growth and motivation [39], relationships with coworkers [40], positive relationships with students [41], teachers' empowerment [42], and level of self-efficacy [43], among other factors. Extrinsic factors include but are not limited to promotion and supervision [40], the workload and extra-curricular assignments [44], a lack of administrative support [45], salary [46], and PD opportunities [47]. It is important to note that both factors influence job satisfaction, intrinsic and extrinsic [48,49]. For this study, the extrinsic factors of career advancement and PD-related dimensions include PD, professional competency, the professional licensure system, and career advancement standards.

2.2. Job Satisfaction and Career Retention for Career Advancement

The literature on teachers' career advancement or development is a complex interplay of multiple factors within diverse systems, often interconnected with job satisfaction and PD, among other aspects of the teaching profession [50]. Career advancement is progressing through training and development programs leading to promotion and increased pay [51]. Career advancement can also be described as a change in job roles that often results in increased status, responsibility, and sometimes pay [52]. Research demonstrates that the lack of career advancement opportunities significantly influences job satisfaction and career retention [23,26,53].

For example, Kelly et al. (2019) used data from 2144 Australian early-career teachers [54]. Their findings indicated that job satisfaction is strongly associated with leaving the profession, including satisfaction with opportunities for career advancement. Mwiti et al. (2021) surveyed 129 teachers in a region in Kenya, revealing that career advancement moderately impacted job satisfaction positively and had a strong positive correlation with job satisfaction [55]. These results suggest a positive and significant relationship between career advancement and job satisfaction. Other research has found that lack of opportunity for career advancement is a critical factor in the high turnover rate of teachers globally [46,56]. Furthermore, to retain capable teachers, schools must provide opportunities for career advancement, such as PD and promotion [57].

In the GCC region, Chapman et al. (2012) surveyed teachers in Oman concerning their perspective on their commitment to teaching, perceptions of their current work, and future career plans [58]. The findings indicated that participants believed there were limited

opportunities for upward career mobility within education. Most respondents did not think that their current employment provided opportunities for advancement, and only half wanted to stay in their current occupation for the foreseeable future. Al-Thani et al. (2021) interviewed teachers to learn about their experiences, desires, and career journeys in Qatar [59]. The study's results showed no clear career roadmap and noted the importance of having a promotion system available to all teachers.

2.3. Professional Development and Career Advancement

Villegas-Reimers (2003) suggests that PD broadly refers to enhancing one's abilities and skills [60]. Li et al. (2014) define PD as the "systems of training, development programs, promotion, incentives and salary of an organization" [51] (p. 55). Professional development refers to formal or informal learning experiences that can help teachers grow their professional knowledge and abilities. According to Dwivedi and Alam (2011), teacher PD is an ongoing process in which teachers are expected to keep learning and improving their skills to advance their teaching careers [61].

Career advancement for teachers is a complex issue depending on many factors. In most schools, PD can be linked with prospects for career advancement [62]. In theory, the relationship between PD and career advancement aligns with opportunities for education professionals to move forward. As education professionals gain more experience and expertise, they should have more opportunities to advance their careers.

Professional development enables teachers to move up the career ladder in terms of income and prestige [63]. According to Tantawy (2020), teachers highly engaged in PD are more likely to be promoted and stay in their jobs [64]. This commitment has a positive impact on their careers. However, teacher PD is typically limited to workshops and seminars focused on improving teaching skills rather than career advancement. This focus on improving teaching skills is based on the belief that these traits are necessary for successful careers as teachers but may not necessarily lead to promotion [52].

Previous research has indicated that teachers consider PD essential for their profession [65–67] to provide professional competencies [67,68] and is necessary for career advancement or promotion [52,59]. Regarding teachers' perceptions and PD in the GCC region, limited research addresses teachers' views. Nasser and Romanowski found that teachers found the PD they received helpful, but they found it repetitious and essential for novice teachers. PD programs are also often filled with too many PD activities. In addition to the benefits mentioned above of PD, teachers also felt that it helped them develop essential skills such as organization, time management, and communication. They believed PD was necessary to improve their teaching practice and increase job satisfaction [67].

Abu-Tineh and Sadiq (2017) surveyed approximately 1000 teachers in Qatar public schools to examine effective PD models. The findings indicated that effective PD could improve teachers' content and pedagogic knowledge, promote collegiality and collaboration, and help with individual and school improvement [69]. Al Thani et al. (2021) examine teachers' views on PD (PD) in Qatar. The study found a lack of PD opportunities and that current PD approaches lack direction, purpose, or progress. The study's results suggest that using objective and customized assessment methods and having a clear and robust career roadmap would help increase teachers' motivation to develop themselves and their students [59].

2.4. Professional Competencies and Professional License for Career Advancement

Most teachers experience a discord of standards and competencies during their careers aimed at what and how they teach [70]. In the teaching profession, professional standards define the current competencies of teachers and those they will need in the future. However, few studies investigate teachers' perceptions regarding competencies and professional licenses as avenues for career advancement. Qatar requires teachers to possess a professional license to practice in all government, private, Arabic, and International schools in Qatar [71]. Teachers must provide evidence of meeting Qatar's National Professional

Standards for Teachers and School Leaders. Various competencies are embedded in these professional standards [72]. Therefore, it is helpful to address teachers' perceptions of professional standards.

Professional standards are often at the center of licensing procedures for teachers [73–75]. The research on teachers' perceptions of professional standards is wide-ranging and mixed. On the one hand, scholars have reported that teachers viewed standards of high importance, offering substantial support for PD and career growth [76,77], helpful in reflecting on their work [74,78], aiding in planning professional learning goals [74,79], and playing a pivotal role in increasing the credibility of the teaching profession [75,80,81] among other issues. On the other hand, research has indicated that teachers consider professional standards challenging to implement [77,82], not recognized for promotion or remuneration [74], narrow teaching practices [75,76], and reduce teacher autonomy [76,81].

Limited studies provide insight into teachers' thoughts about using professional standards in the GCC region. Abu-Tineh et al. (2017) examined how educators in Qatar perceive professional standards in education. The investigation found that many teachers thought professional standards must be revised [83]. The standards were unclear and included details that were not needed. Additionally, the standards helped identify required knowledge and skills and improved teachers' performance. The professionals mentioned that professional standards helped them develop over time, were an effective guide for teaching, and incentivized teachers to improve their practices throughout their careers. Some teachers used the standards to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

In their study of teachers' views on the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Qatar, Romanowski and Amatullah (2014) found that 37% of respondents believed that the standards provided a practical framework for improving the quality of teaching and learning [84]. However, 50% of participants disagreed with the initial statement. The respondents who were optimistic about the standards viewed them as an effective way to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This was completed by organizing the role of the teacher, improving professional practice, and encouraging teachers to focus on the main factors of the educational process: family, school, and society.

Finally, Abu-Tineh, et al. (2017) examined educators' views of the Qatar teacher licensure system [83]. The findings from the survey showed that participants think that the licensure system is essential for improving their performance and that using professional standards is necessary for professional growth and development. They also believe it is crucial to refine the professional portfolio to make it more authentic and reliable.

2.5. Context: Qatar's Education System and Teachers

Nasser (2017) points out that Qatar experienced several educational reforms in the 1970s and 1980s, including the current reform that began in the mid-2000s [85]. The new education reform, Education for a New Era, was sparked by poor academic performance and reports from the RAND Corporation [86]. Although many areas of education need improvement [86], the essence of the reform and its relevance to this study was to improve the quality of teaching [85]. RAND identified teacher PD as a significant school weakness [85]. Hence, the newly developed Supreme Education Council (now the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, MEHE) became responsible for providing PD for teachers and school leaders [69,87]. The reform initiative significantly invested in PD [67,69].

Furthermore, Nasser (2017) points out that teachers' need for PD produced opportunities for numerous educational companies to flock to Qatar to support teachers [85]. In 2009, Qatar was one of the world's most active importers of foreign education providers [88], demonstrating the amount of outside influence and assistance used by Qatar to reshape and improve its education system. All this educational consulting and support resulted in the implementation of professional standards [85,87], the use of new teaching methods [67,89], and navigating the licensure process [59,85,90], among other frequent changes in education.

For Qatari teachers, there is no clear map for career advancement. Still, it appears to be a haphazard movement into positions such as section coordinator, deputy head

of academics, principal, and educational mentor in the ministry [59,91]. Therefore, it is pertinent to examine teachers' perceptions in Qatar's K-12 school system regarding the opportunities for career advancement available to them in schools and how this might affect their careers as teachers.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are Qatari teachers' perceptions of the career advancement system and other related dimensions?
2. What is the overall effect of the current career advancement system and other related dimensions on Qatari teachers' job satisfaction?
3. What is the unique effect of the current career advancement system and other related dimensions on Qatari teachers' job satisfaction?
4. What is the overall effect of the current career advancement system and other related dimensions on Qatari teachers' career retention?
5. What is the unique effect of the current career advancement system and other related dimensions on Qatari teachers' career retention?

3.2. Research Design

This quantitative study utilized the survey method as its research design. Based on the related literature [69,83,92–95]. The present researchers developed the Career Advancement Survey (CAS) utilized in this study. The developed survey has seven dimensions and 44 questions that range from "not true at all" (0) to "very true" (4) on a five-point Likert scale (the survey is provide as Supplementary Materials). Five of the survey dimensions measure Qatari teachers' perceptions of the current career advancement system (8 items), PD offered for career advancement (6 items), professional competencies enhanced for career advancement (8 items), obtaining a professional license for career advancement (5 items), and career advancement standards (5 items). However, the other two survey dimensions were developed to measure the effect of the previous dimensions on career retention (7 items) and job satisfaction (5 items).

The seven CAS dimensions were translated from English to Arabic. When translating the developed survey items, the researchers followed a three-step protocol recommended by Blaschko and Burlingame [95]. First, a fluent research assistant proficient in both languages translated the survey from English to Arabic. Furthermore, a second bilingual research assistant translated the survey from Arabic to English. In the last step, a third fluent research assistant in both languages compared and evaluated the original English and translated backup copies to ensure the translation was accurate and valid. Finally, ten professors in the education field reviewed the survey. Based on their feedback, necessary changes were made.

To ensure the psychometric properties of the survey, internal consistency measures of reliability were computed by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficients for CAS and its dimensions. As a result, the reliability of the CAS's dimensions ranges from a low of 0.86 to a high of 0.94. The Cronbach's α for CAS overall was (0.91).

3.3. Sampling and Demographics

The data collection method was a paper-based, self-administered survey. Convenience sampling was used to select schools based on the school's geographical proximity and willingness to participate. The schools in this study were located in an urban setting. After securing IRB (QU-IRB 1754-E/22) approval from Qatar University, surveys were distributed to schools by two research assistants. Participants were selected from a voluntary sample. Schools were given surveys to complete, and all Qatari teachers were given the surveys, informed about the study, and then decided if they would participate by completing the surveys at their convenience and returning them to the principal upon completion. The

two research assistants collected the surveys, and each survey missed demographic data considered unusable or incomplete and excluded. The same survey was used with all teachers, and each participant's name was not included in the completed survey.

One hundred and sixty-seven Qatari teachers participated in this study by voluntarily completing and returning usable surveys. Data from the returned surveys indicated that most participants were females (129 out of 167). The teacher attributes, such as gender, teaching experience, and the level they teach, include 31 participants with less than five years of teaching experience, sixty have between five and fifteen years of teaching experience, and 75 have more than fifteen years of teaching experience. Last, 22 teachers teach preschool, 59 teach elementary school, 55 teach prep school, and 31 teach secondary school.

4. Findings

A variety of statistical techniques were employed in this study. The main statistical techniques were the means, standard deviations, and the multiple regression model.

4.1. Qatari Teachers' Perceptions of the Career Advancement System and Other Related Dimensions

The first research question addressed Qatari teachers' perceptions toward the current career advancement system and other associated dimensions (obtaining a professional license for career advancement, career advancement standards, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, and PD offered for career advancement). To answer this question, the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of each dimension and the M and SD of the five dimensions together were computed. According to the findings in Table 1, Qatari teachers perceived the five dimensions moderately (M = 2.23; SD = 0.85). Furthermore, Qatari teachers perceived the current career advancement system dimension to be the least dimension to be satisfied with and placed it at the lowest extreme of the moderate range (M = 1.85, SD = 1.12), followed by obtaining a professional license for the career advancement dimension (M = 1.86, SD = 1.16). Furthermore, results indicated that Qatari teachers' satisfaction with career advancement standards (M = 2.17, SD = 1.11), professional competencies enhanced for the career advancement dimension (M = 2.28, SD = 1.15), and PD offered for the career advancement dimension (M = 2.46, SD = 1.05) were perceived to be moderate.

Table 1. Perceptions of career advancement system and other related dimensions.

Dimension	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Career advancement system	1.85	1.12
Professional license	1.86	1.16
Career advancement standards	2.17	1.11
Professional competencies	2.28	1.15
Professional development	2.46	1.05
Overall	2.23	0.85
N = 167		

4.2. The Overall Effect of the Current Career Advancement System and Other Related Dimensions on Qatari Teachers' Job Satisfaction

The second question measured the overall effect of the combination of the current career advancement system, PD offered for career advancement, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, and current career advancement standards on Qatari teachers' job satisfaction. To answer this question, a multiple regression model was used.

The coefficient of determination, R^2, was utilized to evaluate the overall relationship between the independent variables of the current career advancement system, professional development offered for career advancement, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, and career advancement standards, and the dependent variable, which is teachers' job satisfaction.

According to Tate [96] (p. 80), "when a regression model has multiple IVs [independent variables], the coefficient of determination R^2, represents the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable and all of the IVs [independent variables] and is interpreted as the portion of Y variability explained by the model".

As observed in Table 2, the overall effect of the five mentioned dimensions on Qatari teachers' job satisfaction as measured by the coefficient of determination (R^2) was found to be 0.504. In other words, the current career advancement system, which includes PD offered for career advancement, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, and career advancement standards overall, accounted for more than 50 percent of the variance in Qatari teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 2. Strength of the relationship between job satisfaction and overall dimensions.

R	R^2	Adjusted R Square	SE of the Estimate	£ Change	ρ
0.710	0.504	0.501	0.71	163.84	0.001
N = 167					

R = coefficient of multiple correlation, R^2 = coefficient of determination, SE = standard error, % change = Change in R^2, ρ = probability value.

Furthermore, the adjusted R^2, which accounts for the positive bias in R^2, was 0.501, indicating that the relationship was positive, moderate, and significant at the 0.001 level. The adjusted R^2 also revealed that about half of the variation in Qatari teachers' job satisfaction was explained by the current career advancement system, professional development offered for career advancement, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, and career advancement standards. According to Tate (1998) [96] (p. 34), "the R^2 estimate itself should not be used in judging the strength of the relationship because it is positively biased, tending to overestimate the true value".

4.3. The Unique Effect of the Current Career Advancement System and Other Related Dimensions on Qatari Teachers' Job Satisfaction

The third question investigated the dimension that has the most significant effect on Qatari teachers' job satisfaction as perceived by them. A hierarchical entry of the independent variables was used to answer this question, controlling for other independent variables.

This technique aimed to extract the variance of the variable included first and continue to build up the regression solution by adding portions of the variances of other independent variables that were uncorrelated with the independent variables already included. An estimated regression coefficient was used to describe the effect, including a significant test, an interval estimate, and an assessment of the practical importance of the effect. Moreover, Tate (1998) [96] (p. 86) suggests the unique contribution to R^2 (ΔR^2) was utilized to describe each effect. (ΔR^2) is "the increase in R^2 due to adding the IV [independent variable] of interest to a model already containing all of the other IVs".

As shown in Table 3, the current career advancement system had the highest significant effect at the 0.001 level and accounted for ΔR^2 = 0.320 of the variances in job satisfaction. Furthermore, professional development offered for career advancement was significant and predicted (ΔR^2 = 0.068) job satisfaction variances at the 0.001 level. However, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement (ΔR^2 = 0.002: ρ = 0.423), obtaining a professional license for career advancement (ΔR^2 =0.001: ρ = 0.718), and career advancement standards (ΔR^2 = 0.002: ρ = 0.512) were found to have less effect on job satisfaction and were insignificant.

Table 3. The unique effect of each dimension on job satisfaction.

Dimension	R	R^2	ΔR^2	$\Delta£$	ρ
Career advancement system	0.566	0.320	0.320	75.88	0.001
Professional development	0.623	0.388	0.068	17.69	0.001
Professional competencies	0.625	0.390	0.002	0.646	0.423
Professional license	0.625	0.391	0.001	0.131	0.718
Career advancement standards	0.627	0.393	0.002	0.432	0.512
N = 167					

R = Coefficient of multiple correlation, R^2 Coefficient of Determination, ΔR^2 Change of Coefficient of Determination, $\Delta£$ Percent Change. ρ probability value.

4.4. The Overall Effect of the Current Career Advancement System and Other Related Dimensions on Qatari Teachers' Career Retention

The fourth question sought to clarify the overall effect of the current career advancement system, including PD offered for career advancement, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, and career advancement standards together on Qatari teachers' career retention. The coefficient of determination, R^2, was used to answer this question. The model, R^2, of 0.355, reflects the overall effect of the five mentioned dimensions on Qatari teachers' career retention. Furthermore, the model R^2, of 0.355 reflects a positive, moderate, and significant overall effect of the five dimensions on career retention at the 0.001 level. Lastly, model R^2 indicated that the current career advancement system explained about 35 percent of the variability of Qatari teachers' career retention, PD offered for career advancement, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, and career advancement standards overall as an independent variable (see Table 4).

Table 4. Relationship strength between teachers' career retention and overall dimension.

R	R^2	Adjusted R Square	SE	£ Change	ρ
0.596	0.355	0.351	0.67	88.56	0.001
N = 167					

R coefficient of multiple correlation, R^2 Coefficient of Determination, ΔR^2 Change of Coefficient of Determination, $\Delta£$ Percent Change, ρ probability value.

Furthermore, the adjusted R^2, which represents the unbiased strength of the relationship between Qatari teachers' career retention and the five dimensions, was 0.351, reflecting a somewhat moderate, positive, and significant relationship at the 0.001 level. The adjusted R^2 also revealed that about a third of the variation in Qatari teachers' career retention was explained by the current career advancement system, professional development offered for career advancement, professional competencies enhanced for career advancement, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, and career advancement standards.

4.5. The Unique Effect of the Current Career Advancement System and Other Related Dimensions on Qatari Teachers' Career Retention

The fifth question described the unique effect of each independent variable on Qatari teachers' career retention. A hierarchical entry of the independent variables was used to extract the variance of the variable included first and continue to build up the regression solution by adding portions of the variances of other predictors that were uncorrelated with the predictors already included. Results in Table 5 indicated that there were significant positive effects of the current career advancement system ($\Delta R^2 = 0.225$: $\rho < 0.001$) and PD offered for career advancement ($\Delta R^2 = 0.033$: $\rho = 0.008$) on Qatari teachers' career retention. This positive effect reflected an estimated change of 0.225 and 0.033 in Qatari

teachers' career retention units for every unit change in the current career advancement system and PD offered for career advancement separately, controlling for other independent variables. However, the effects of professional competencies enhanced for career advancement ($\Delta R^2 = 0.013$: $\rho = 0.091$), obtaining a professional license for career advancement ($\Delta R^2 = 0.002$: $\rho = 0.562$), and career advancement standards ($\Delta R^2 = 0.005$: $\rho = 0.300$) were found to be insignificant.

Table 5. The unique effect of each dimension on teachers' career retention.

Dimension	R	R^2	ΔR^2	$\Delta£$	ρ
Career advancement system	0.474	0.225	0.255	46.63	0.001
Professional development	0.508	0.258	0.033	7.15	0.008
Professional competencies	0.521	0.271	0.013	2.88	0.091
Professional license	0.522	0.273	0.002	0.33	0.562
Career advancement standards	0.527	0.278	0.005	1.08	0.300
N = 167					

R Pearson Correlation, R^2 Coefficient of Determination, ΔR^2 Change of Coefficient of Determination, $\Delta£$ Percent Change, ρ probability value.

5. Discussion and Implications

Based on the research and analyses conducted by the authors, there was no need for rigid adherence to a predetermined perspective among Qatari teachers about the current career advancement system. However, the current findings offer an affirmative picture of their perception. This perception, along with their perceptions of PD, professional competency, professional license, and career advancement standards, provides a degree of comparability regarding Qatari teachers' satisfaction with these dimensions. We conclude from the comparative results that Qatari teachers are unsatisfied with the current career advancement system and other supporting professional efforts (PD, professional competency, professional license, and career advancement standards). However, as evident, Qatari teachers placed the current career advancement system at the lowest extreme of a moderate range and perceived it as the least dimension among other dimensions to be satisfied with.

As previously mentioned, unlike other careers, teaching has limited opportunities for career advancement, providing a flat career trajectory with few leadership roles for teachers with verified expertise [28]. The academic literature indicates that career advancement is predominately limited to developing teacher expertise, confidence, and self-efficacy and not necessarily as an avenue for promotion [52]. More importantly, with its flat or narrowly linear structure, the traditional teaching career path is not compatible with the expectations of today's workforce [57]. Teachers seek more career development and career path opportunities because flat organizational structures have made it harder for them to move up the ranks [97]. One could argue that this is the primary reason for dissatisfaction with career advancement systems.

In response to the ineffectiveness of the current career advancement system, as clarified by Qatari teachers' perspectives, a new framework for a comprehensive career advancement system should gain prominence in the MEHE's reform agenda in Qatar. It is important to note that the key to the successful development of a new comprehensive career advancement system often depends on how different actors (policymakers, university researchers, and other stakeholders) perceive the meanings and opportunities of their roles in the development process of this system to maximize its potential benefit [98].

Another strand of results revealed that the current career advancement system has the highest effect on Qatari teachers' job satisfaction and career retention, among other variables. Findings indicated that the current career advancement system explained about thirty percent of Qatari teachers' job satisfaction variability and twenty percent of career retention. Therefore, it is increasingly evident in this study that the career advancement

system plays a crucial role in Qatari teachers' job satisfaction and career retention and should not be ignored or sidestepped.

Research supports these findings. In a study of Kenyan teachers, Obungu et al. (2021) found that career advancement, specifically promotion, significantly affects the retention of science teachers in public secondary schools [99]. Furthermore, Natale et al. (2016) studied the effects of teacher career advancement in North Carolina, USA [57]. The study found that all districts with career advancement initiatives reported an increase in applicants to teach and increased teacher retention rates, indicating the importance of career advancement for teachers.

Undoubtedly, one crucial implication from these findings is that a decision about altering the current career advancement system and developing a new comprehensive system that considers the other four supporting dimensions should be made. Qatar should develop a clear and well-thought-out career development system. Unlike Qatar, some countries provide a clear career roadmap for advancement. For example, the Ministry of Education in Singapore (2021) established the Education Service Professional Development and Career Plan (Edu-Pac) in 2001 [100]. Edu-Pac has three main components: performance evaluation, financial rewards and recognition, and career development. These three parts work together to motivate and keep good teachers and to give teachers a chance to stay in the classroom or move into specialized areas of education or leadership [101]. Since teachers have different aspirations, Edu-Pac provides three clear tracks for teachers:

1. The Teaching Track provides PD and advancement opportunities for teachers keen to further develop the pedagogical capability of the teaching force.
2. The School Leadership Track provides opportunities for teachers keen to contribute to schools' effective management and leadership.
3. The Senior Specialist Track provides opportunities for those inclined towards more specialized areas in educational development, where deep knowledge and skills are essential for breaking new ground (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2021) [100].

Keep in mind that Singapore has low teacher attrition rates [102], and one could argue that these factors could play a role in teacher satisfaction and retention, particularly with career advancement.

Lastly, a report authored by the World Bank and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Secretariat [103] advised the following elements when designing career ladders:

1. Need for flexible entry-level requirements and professional development.
2. The clarity in the definition of teacher roles and expectations.
3. Clarity and transparency in the criterion for evaluating teachers.
4. Need for information, education, and communication to offer fast policy and procedure information.
5. Need to incorporate a career ladder implementation evaluation.
6. Need for a concise implementation strategy.
7. Connection with PD.

6. Conclusions

There is little doubt that the retention of teachers is a complex issue driven by personal circumstances, job commitment, satisfaction, morale, and self-conception [25]. Based on the research and analyses in this study, we assess career advancement. Based on the research and analyses in this study, we concluded that the career advancement system is inadequate for Qatari teachers. Fifty-five percent (92/167) of Qatari teachers who answered this question were not sufficiently satisfied with the current career advancement system, resulting in lower satisfaction levels than expected and influencing their decision to remain teachers. The study found that the current career advancement system and PD offered for career advancement positively affected Qatari teachers' career retention. Teachers' perceptions of the PD provided for career advancement positively affected Qatari teachers' career retention, as answered by 97% of respondents (162 teachers). In addition, professional competencies

enhanced for career, obtaining a professional license for career advancement, the PD offered for career advancement, and career advancement standards as answered by 54%, 95%, 97%, and 99% of the Qatari teachers who participated in the study, respectively, overall accounted for more than 50 percent of the variance in Qatari teachers' job satisfaction.

On average, teachers who stay in the classroom after their first five years do not experience increased autonomy as their careers progress. Despite their potential benefits, the intrinsic and altruistic motivations to teach are often outweighed by low pay, poor career status, and limited career advancement opportunities [104]. To address sustainability, the limited career advancement framework for teachers requires examining and developing a framework that meets the career needs of Qatari teachers. Thus, these findings should lead policymakers at the MEHE and other key players and stakeholders to urgently consider reforming the current career advancement system. At the same time, attention needs to be paid to other related subsystems, such as providing more efficient PD models, setting strict criteria for career advancement, changing the guiding principles of the licensing system to support career advancement, and defining the skills needed for each stage of career advancement. The idea is to reform other related dimensions, giving teachers a well-established, comprehensive career advancement system. The hope is that by doing this, current Qatari teachers will consider staying in their teaching careers, and more candidates will be motivated to join.

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