Work-life conflict and intention to leave among teachers: The role of working time arrangements

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ABSTRACT

Attrition is a salient issue in the teaching profession, which also observes important work-life conflict. This paper assesses the influence of working time arrangements on teacher work-life conflict and intention to leave. Our descriptive results indicate that teachers experience high levels of work-family conflict and indicate moderate intention to leave. We ran ordinal logistic regressions to assess the impact of various working time arrangements onto teacher work-family conflict and intention to leave. After adjusting for sociodemographic variables, effective use of flexible hours was associated with lesser odds of experiencing conflict, while unavailability of reduced working time and study leaves was associated with greater odds of experiencing conflict. Access to, and effective use of personal/family leaves was associated with less intention to leave. However, not being able to reduce one's work hours or to access a study leave was associated with increased intention to leave. Overall, our results point to a need for more control over the amount of hours they work, to attend to non-work needs. Our findings shed light on the reasons behind teacher attrition with regards to work-life conflict. These findings reinforce the necessity for a greater access to leaves, voluntary reduced working time and flexible hours for teachers. Investing in these key resources may reduce teacher work-life conflict and intention to leave, and thus contribute to teacher retention in the profession.

Keywords: *Conservation of resources theory, Flexible work arrangements, Intention to leave, Job demands and resources, Teachers, Work-family conflict; Working hours; Work schedules.*

Highlights of this paper

- This paper assesses the influence of working time arrangements on teacher work-life conflict and intention to leave and our results show that teachers experience high levels of work-family conflict and moderate intention to leave.
- Our findings reinforce the necessity for a greater access to leaves, voluntary reduced working time and flexible hours for teachers.
- Investing in these key resources may reduce teacher work-life conflict and intention to leave, and thus contribute to teacher retention in the profession.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher attrition is a world-wide problem constituting an important aspect of the global shortage of qualified teachers (Fontaine, Kane, Duquette, & Savoie-Zajc, 2011; See, Morris, Gorard, Kokotsaki, & Abdi, 2020). Studies around the world have shown that an important proportion of teachers, ranging between 25% and 50%, leave within the five first years of employment (eg. (Dupriez, Delvaux, & Lothaire, 2016; Sims & Jerrim, 2020)). In Quebec, about one in four employed teachers think about leaving the profession (Kamanzi, Tardif, & Lessard, 2015; Sirois, Dembélé, & Morales-Perlaza, 2022). This disengagement of qualified teachers predicts alarming consequences for the future of education if nothing is done to counter this phenomenon. Amplified by the aftermath of the global pandemic, the shortage has led to hiring unqualified personnel, amounting to 25% of the teacher population in Quebec (Mukamurera, Tardif, & Borges, 2023).

Unions have recently voiced a few areas of concern regarding teacher attraction and retention in the profession, including the improvement of their work-life balance. Work-life balance is at the center of recent union claims, suggesting that it "is crucial to make the teaching profession more attractive" by augmenting the number of leaves, making them more accessible, as well as enforcing the right to disconnection, among others (FAE, 2023). Indeed, teaching is a physically and emotionally demanding work, with a degree of encroachment on family times.. Teachers have atypical schedules and are required to deal with increasingly demanding students and parents, on top of bringing a lot of work home (Montano, 2023). The teaching profession is primarily composed of women who are the main caretakers of children and the elderly, and therefore, need significant resources to help them manage the reconciliation of their work and nonwork lives. Moreover, today's younger generations do not necessarily center their lives around childrearing and may devote themselves to other activities which are important to their own well-being or communities (Nogues & Tremblay, 2019). In this context, supporting and protecting teachers' work-life balance is of paramount importance. To what extent do their working conditions allow them to reconcile their work and private lives, and what measures are likely to retain them in the profession? As pointed out by Sims and Jerrim (2020) despite the evidence accumulated, there are still gaps in research as to why so many teachers leave the profession.

1.1. Antecedents to Teachers' Intention to Leave

Intention to leave the organization has been defined as "a person's cognitive, deliberate and conscious process of leaving the organization voluntarily in the near future" (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Steil, Floriani, & Bello, 2019). While intention to leave is distinct from actual turnover, it tends to be associated with withdrawal behaviors which are negatively related to performance and well-being (Takase, 2010). In Canada, difficult relationships with students, dissatisfaction with working conditions, changes in educative policies, and feelings of incompetency were found to be the main causes of teacher disengagement from their profession (Kamanzi, Da Costa, & Ndinga, 2017). Québec data also confirm the importance of working conditions in intention to leave (Géraldine. Farges & Diane-Gabrielle, 2016; Géraldine Farges & Tremblay, 2017; Hansez, Bertrand, De Keyser, & Perée, 2005; Montandon, 2004; Sirois et al., 2022). In Belgium, Dupriez et al. (2016) indicated that working conditions are influential on teachers'

intention to leave. This study indicates that in secondary schools, the variables primarily associated with the risk of leaving during the first year of teaching are qualification, the number of months worked and the monthly working time. Therefore, working times are important antecedents to intention to leave.

1.2. Job Demands and Resources

The literature highlights numerous aspects of working conditions that are likely to influence employees' intentions to leave their jobs. Drawing on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory developed by Arnold B Bakker and Demerouti (2014) research has shown that certain job characteristics contribute to employee stress through a strain pathway. Conversely, job resources—defined as aspects of the job that help reduce the psychological costs of demands or promote personal and professional development—affect employees through a motivation pathway. The JD-R model thus posits two distinct mechanisms through which job characteristics influence employee outcomes: a health impairment pathway (e.g., stress, work-life conflict, burnout) and a motivational pathway (e.g., job commitment, job enrichment). Importantly, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) note that "different types of job demands and job resources may interact in predicting job strain."

Within this framework, Human Resource Management (HRM) practices—such as working time arrangements and work-life balance initiatives—are considered key job resources. They also align with the concept of "resource caravan passageways," (Mansour & Tremblay, 2018a) a central construct in Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2011). According to this theory, individuals tend to accumulate resources over time, and those with greater resources are more likely to invest them in proactive behaviors to recover from resource loss, acquire new resources, or prevent further depletion (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018). Hobfoll (2011) expanded COR theory by introducing the idea of resource caravan passageways—defined as "environmental conditions that support, foster, enrich and protect the resources of individuals, sections or segments of workers, and organizations in total, or that detract, undermine, obstruct, or impoverish people's or groups' resource reservoirs." Creating such favorable environments within organizations is essential to promoting employee well-being (Mansour, 2023). Figure 1 illustrates the Job Demands Resources model as suggested by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) with mental, emotional, physical and other Job demandes leading to strain, while Job resources such as support, autonomy and feedback lead to motivation and to organizational outcomes.
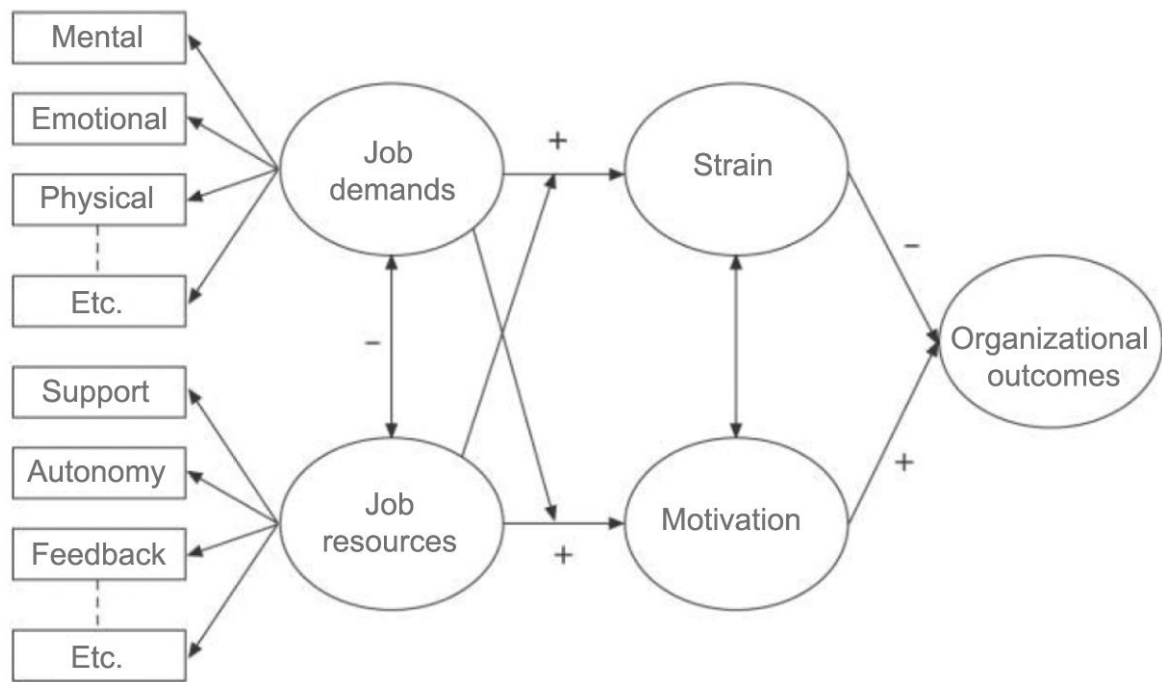
Figure 1. The Job Demands-Resources model.

Job Demands-Resources model, figure taken from Bakker and Demerouti (2007).

1.3. Work-Life Conflict

As put by Kossek and Lee (2017) "Work-family and work-life conflict are forms of inter-role conflict that occur when the energy, time, or behavioral demands of the work role conflicts with family or personal life roles". Traditionally, work-family conflict has been explained by "role theory which predicts that multiple roles lead to role stress that in turn leads to strain" (Fiksenbaum, 2014). This conflict has two possible directions: family demands conflicting with work demands, or work demands conflicting with family demands. It is this latter direction that we are interested in, given the high demands of the teaching profession. Furthermore, the literature indicates that conflict is generally either strain-based (eg. emotional demands from difficult students) or time-based (eg. imposed number of work hours), such that different types of job demands can lead to conflict. Other studies have rather focused on the possibilities of enrichment between the two domains, such that instead of creating strain, activities in one domain offer positive resources to individuals that they can reinvest positively in the other domain (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Studying work-family conflict matters because it is one of the most important predictors of job burnout (Rajendran, Watt, & Richardson, 2020). In an Austrian study, work–family conflict was the strongest predictor of emotional exhaustion (ie. burnout) for male and female teachers (Rajendran et al., 2020). In a recent meta-analysis, Madigan and Kim (2021) showed that burnout and job satisfaction together explain 27% of teachers' intention to leave. Teachers are vulnerable to burnout as they tend to experience demands at work that surpass their capacities (Montano, 2023). With too many teaching hours (ie. time demands), teachers have considerable difficulty managing their time as they often must allocate daily hours at home for tasks such as lesson planning, grading and such, encroaching upon family and recreational time (Montano, 2023). In this context, boundaries between the work and home spheres must be taken into account where individuals will either tend towards segmentation or towards integration of these two spheres (ie. boundary theory, Bulger, Matthews, and Hoffman (2007)). A bulk of research has shown that the more people implement segmentation strategies (eg. workplace separate from home, mindfulness

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techniques), the less conflict they experience (eg. Althammer, Reis, van der Beek, Beck, and Michel (2021)). However, teachers are prone to high integration because of the tasks and mental load they bring home (Montano, 2023). Finally, studying work-life conflict is important as some have indicated that it may play a direct role in teacher attrition (Li, Chen, & Gao, 2022; Rhee, Park, & Lee, 2020).

1.4. Working Time Arrangements

It is crucial that teachers access certain job resources (Arnold B Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) likely to mitigate the experience of work-life conflict and the formation of turnover intentions. Flexible work arrangements, also known as "family-friendly benefits", have attracted scholarly attention in the past years regarding their ability to enhance employee performance outcomes. These measures are "work options that permit flexibility in terms of 'where' work is completed (often referred to as telecommuting or flexplace) and/or 'when' work is completed (often referred to as flextime or scheduling flexibility", Rau and Hyland (2002) and Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, and Shockley (2013). These include, but are not limited to: choice over the moment one starts and ends the work day, choice over the total number of hours worked, paid/unpaid leaves for various reasons, workweek compressed into 4 days, choice of the place for work (ie. working from home). In a widely cited meta-analysis, Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, and Baltes (2011) indicated that while job stressors such as work time demands increase work-family conflict, organizational support and family-friendly characteristics of the organization such as flexible work arrangements, reduce conflict. Another meta-analysis by Allen et al. (2013) across various kinds of professions showed that there is only a small effect of flexible work arrangements on work-family conflict. However, a recent study suggested that flexible work arrangements play a significant role in reducing turnover intentions by decreasing work-family conflict and improving job satisfaction (Rhee et al., 2020). Similarly, Buruck et al. (2020) recently found that job resources such as work flexibility reduce emotional exhaustion through reduced work-family conflict. Thus, it seems that flexible work arrangements may be important in reducing work-family conflict and burnout, but there should be more research on this as some authors suggest it may not be such an important effect (Allen et al., 2013).

With regards to turnover intentions, Tsen, Gu, Tan, and Goh (2021) indicated that flexible work arrangements combined with a job design allowing control over the work content contribute to retaining employees. Tsen, Gu, Tan, and Goh (2022) further showed that flexible hours decreased turnover intentions, both directly and through enhancing organizational commitment. Berber, Gašić, Katić, and Borocki (2022) found a direct negative effect of flexible work arrangements on turnover intentions, as well as through job satisfaction. Marx et al. (2021) found flexible hours to significantly decrease the odds of voluntarily exiting the workplace, controlling for job quality factors and accounting for the moderating impact of organizational, supervisor and coworker support. Therefore, there is evidence that flexible work arrangements can possibly reduce teachers' intention to leave, but the evidence is not totally conclusive, calling for more research.

1.5. Research Hypotheses

Scholars have brought to attention that distinctions should be made when analyzing the effects of family-friendly benefits on employee outcomes. In their meta-analysis, Allen et al. (2013)) differentiated between use and availability of these measures, since they are "different constructs with potentially unique relationships with work-family conflict" (Allen et al., 2013). In that sense, the authors recall that the mere availability of flexible work arrangements was associated with more positive job attitudes (eg. (Allen et al., 2013; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Grover & Crooker, 1995). Hobfoll (1989) Conservation of resources theory (COR), which posits that individuals seek to preserve and acquire resources likely to lead them to a pleasurable life, can help us further understand these processes. The perceived

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availability of certain working time arrangements, although not used by the employee, can be appraised by the latter as a resource that they anticipate might help them in the future if/when needed (Hobfoll, 1989) and reduce stress over the reconciliation of work and family lives. In that sense, working time arrangements can act in an "ecology of resources" (Hobfoll, 2011) that alleviate employee stress. We thus expect with Hobfoll's conservation of resources (COR) theory (1989; 2011) that teachers perceiving the availability of working time arrangements experience less conflict as they perceive these measures as important resources that they anticipate needing in the future, whether it be for parenting or elder care for example. Therefore, we expect that:

Hypothesis 1: Teachers' perceived availability of working time arrangements is negatively associated with work-family conflict.

Through a motivation pathway based on a principle of social exchange (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) the perception of options offered by the employer to invest in one's growth and nonwork times may influence employees towards staying in an organization that provides an ecology of resources aimed at ensuring their well-being (Hobfoll, 2011). In other words, the perceived availability of flexible work arrangements sends a signal to employees that their organization cares about their welfare, a concept known as perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Therefore, we expect that:

Hypothesis 2: Perceived availability of working time arrangements is negatively associated with intention to leave.

As for employees' use of such measures, in an analysis of the effect of family-friendly benefits on work-family conflict, Fiksenbaum (2014) insisted on the need for fit between employee needs and these measures. The consideration of employees' need for work-family measures was also taken into account by Mansour and Tremblay (2018b) whose study in the hospitality sector showed that the relationship between work-family conflict and intention to leave was moderated by employee needs, pointing out the necessity to consider specific job resources rather than "the more the better" or one-size fits all solutions (Mansour & Tremblay, 2018a). In that sense, according to Fiksenbaum (2014) studying work-family measures as an undifferentiated whole rather than considering specific measures "overlooks the concept of fit" (2014, p. 668). The author calls for further research about work-family measures that would examine availability and use but also fit of these benefits on employee outcomes.

For teachers, measures relative to working times, rather than the place of work, are more "fitting" to their reality, as in their case working from home is most often associated with extra workload (Montano, 2023). This idea of fit is the reason why we choose to focus on a certain number of working time arrangements relevant to teacher's particular time demands as identified by the literature, namely: voluntarily reduced work hours, flexible hours, leaves for study reasons and leaves for family reasons. A qualitative study among English school teachers indicated that many teachers would like to benefit from such working time arrangements, however, these were rarely allowed by their employer because of organizational issues perceived by the management (Sharp, Smith, Worth, & Van den Brande, 2019). Therefore, the current literature indicates that it is particularly difficult for teachers to access desired working time arrangements. In view of these considerations, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 3: Most teachers cannot access desired working time arrangements.

Hypothesis 4: Teachers who want to use certain working times arrangements but are not able to do so will experience higher work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 5: Teachers who want to use certain working times arrangements but are not able to do so will have higher intention to leave.

2. METHODS

2.1. Study Design and Sample

This study is part of a research project investigating the factors leading to teacher attrition and retention in the profession. Its design is non-experimental and descriptive, so as to determine the characteristics of a specific phenomenon, or explore relations or correlations between two or more entities (Mohajan, 2020). Our research design is cross-sectional, providing a picture of a situation or group at a given time (Mohajan, 2020).

2.2. Participants and Procedure

Following an agreement with the provincial Federation of teacher unions, an online questionnaire was sent to 35 local unions. In turn, the questionnaire was sent by union representatives to randomly selected members in their listings[1]. Each invitation contained a presentation of the research project, its aims, and ethical aspects. A total of 405 valid questionnaires were returned. The data was collected in Quebec amongst teachers in various sectors between mid-September 2021 and mid-December 2021. Although this was during the Covid period, we asked respondents to refer to the previous 5 years, and not only to the Covid context[2].

2.3. Measures

Teachers' intention to leave was measured with the following item on a 5-pt Likert scale: 'I will leave this organization as soon as I get the chance to do it', and this was based on previous research on constructs measuring intention to leave (Mansour & Tremblay, 2018b) For work-life conflict, the following item was used: 'The demands of my job interfere with my personal life'. Demographic variables were also taken into account: age, seniority, gender, but also sector of employment, and children's age (if any). Four types of flexible work arrangements were investigated: flexible hours, leaves for family reasons, study leaves, and voluntarily reduced working time. Participants could choose between different answers reflecting their use and perceived availability of these measures: it exists but I don't use it; I would like to use it but it doesn't exist; I would like to use it but my employer wouldn't allow it; I use it but it's not enough; it exists, I use it and it works.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

We wanted to answer three basic questions: is there any relationship between the variables (ie. working time arrangements, work-family conflict, intention to leave)? If yes, what is the nature of these relationships? Finally, what is the coefficient of the relationships? To test our hypotheses, we created a model, adjusting for certain sociodemographic factors. Our first model includes workplace-related and sociodemographic factors (model 1). Our second model includes the following working time arrangements: flexible hours, leaves for family reasons, leaves for study, voluntarily reduced working time (model 2).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Analyses

Our sample of 405 respondents was composed of a majority of women (86.7%). About two thirds of the respondents were between 31 and 50 years old, and a similar proportion of them had at least 10 years of tenure in the school. Therefore, most participants were in their mid to end of career. The majority lived with a partner and had at

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[1] The Federation is unable to disclose the exact total number of teachers that were contacted.

[2] "Considering the situation for the past five years, and not only since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, to what extent do you agree with the following..."

least one child. Half the respondents (51.1%) worked as primary school teachers, the rest worked in secondary schools (24.4%), preschool (7.7%) or in other sectors (ie. adult teaching, professional teaching, and adaptation, 16.8%). As shown in Table 1, respondents reported high levels of work-life conflict, but moderate to low levels of intention to leave. This hesitation to leave may be partly because the School system is mainly composed of the public sector, and there are thus few other employers available, which implies that leaving the organization might mean leaving the profession altogether. Work-life conflict was experienced in similar proportions by teachers with children (80%) and without children (80%). A linear slope is observed when comparing age group and intention to leave, where the latter increases as age increases. Most often, working times arrangements were perceived as unavailable. The most available measure was voluntarily reduced working time (36.0%) and the least available flexible hours (9.6%). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is validated as most teachers cannot access desired working time arrangements, which can be understood given their tasks as teachers.

Table 1. Results of descriptive analyses.

Variable	M *(SD)*	Range	Median	*n* (%)
Work-family conflict	4.24 *(0.91)*	1–5	4	405 (100%)
Intention to leave	2.59 *(1.33)*	1–5	2	405 (100%)
Gender				
Woman				351 (86.7%)
Man				52 (12.8%)
Rather not answer				2 (0.5%)
Age range (years)				
Less than 30				43 (10.6%)
Between 31 and 40				139 (34.3%)
Between 41 and 50				143 (35.3%)
More than 50				80 (19.7%)
Tenure (years)				
Less than 5				58 (14.3%)
Between 5 and 10				65 (16.0%)
Between 10 and 20				163 (40.2%)
More than 20				119 (29.4%)
Partner				
Yes				313 (73.3%)
No				92 (22.7%)
Children				
Yes				293 (72.3%)
No				112 (27.7%)
Teaching sector				
Preschool				31 (7.7%)
Primary				207 (51.1%)
Secondary				99 (24.4%)
Other				68 (16.8%)
Perso/Family leave				
Available				146 (36.0%)
Unavailable				232 (57.3%)
Study leave				
Available				45 (11.1%)
Unavailable				271 (66.9%)
Flexible hours				
Available				39 (9.6%)
Unavailable				271 (66.9%)
Vol. reduced time				
Available				146 (36.0%)
Unavailable				169 (41.7%)

3.2. Statistical Analyses

Regression results indicate a significant association between work-life conflict and intention to leave (p= >0.001) after adjusting for sociodemographic factors, with R=335. Pearson correlation indicates r= 293 at 99% confidence interval after adjusting for sociodemographic variables. Therefore, it is safe to assume that work-family conflict partly explains intention to leave.

3.2.1. Working Time Arrangements and Work-Life Conflict

Table 2 presents the results from two models concerning predictors of work to family conflict by sociodemographic variables and flexible work arrangements. Model 1 observed a significant fit at p=0.039 and Model 2 at p= >0.001. Model 2 had a goodness of fit of p= >0.001 for Pearson correlation, indicating that the data was continuous. The null hypothesis in the Test of parallel lines was rejected in both models, with p= 0.286 for Model 1 and p= 0.055 for Model 2. After adjusting for sociodemographic variables, significant associations were found between certain working time arrangements and teachers' work-to-family conflict, namely: study leave, flexible hours and voluntarily reduced working time. More precisely, teachers who wanted to use a study leave but could not do so were more likely to experience work-life conflict, and the same was observed for those who wanted to reduce their work hours. The odds of reporting work-family conflict was even stronger when teachers already had reduced their working time, but reported that it was not enough. Finally, teachers who reported an effective use of flexible hours were significantly more likely to indicate lower levels of work-to-family conflict. Thus, hypothesis 4 is validated. However, perceived availability of any of the tested working time arrangements did not impact the odds of experiencing work-life conflict, therefore invalidating hypothesis 1.

Table 2. Significant predictors of work-to-family conflict by sociodemographic variables and flexible work arrangements.

		Model 1				Model 2			
		CI : 95%						**CI : 95%**	
	Variable	**Estimates**	***p***	**LL**	**UL**	**Estimates**	***p***	**LL**	**UL**
Threshold	WFC = 1	-3.010	0.000	-4.657	-1.364	-3.395	0.000	-5.228	-1.563
	WFC = 2	-1.065	0.131	-2.447	0.317	-1.405	0.085	-3.003	0.192
	WFC = 3	-0.026	0.970	-1.383	1.332	-0.363	0.652	-1.939	1.214
	WFC = 4	1.761	0.012	0.392	3.130	1.609	0.047	0.023	3.195
Location	Sector	-0.010	0.903	-0.162	0.143	0.013	0.870	-0.148	0.175
	Age	0.013	0.927	-0.260	0.286	0.056	0.706	-0.234	0.345
	Gender	0.384	0.158	-0.150	0.918	0.351	0.235	-0.228	0.930
	Tenure	0.301	0.017*	0.055	0.546	0.227	0.092	-0.037	0.491
	Fam. Situ.	0.029	0.805	-0.202	0.260	-0.016	0.897	-0.259	0.227
	Nb. children	-0.011	0.932	-0.255	0.234	0.052	0.698	-0.209	0.312
	Stud.leave =3					0.489	0.043**	0.016	0.963
	Flex.hrs = 5					-0.878	0.037**	-1.705	-0.052
	Red.hrs = 2					1.284	0.040**	0.056	2.512
	Red.hrs = 3					0.660	0.021**	0.100	1.221

Note: CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit, UL = upper limit; ITLorg = intention to leave the organization.
The ordinal dependent variable contained five categories: (1) completely disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, and (5) completely agree.
The independent variables were categorized as : (1) It exists but I don't use it, (2) I use it but it's not enough, (3) I would like to use it but it doesn't exist, (4) I would like to use it but my employer won't allow it, (5) It exists, I use it, and it works.
* < 0.05. ** < 0.01.

3.2.2. Working Time Arrangements and Intention to Leave

Model 1 was significant at p=>0.001 and Model 2 at p= 0.027. Regarding the test of parallel lines, the null hypothesis was rejected in both models, with p= 0.381 for Model 1 and p= 0.286 for Model 2. After adjusting for sociodemographic variables, our multivariate ordinal logistic regression indicates a significant association between two types of leaves (ie. leave for personal/family reasons and study leaves) as well as voluntarily reduced working

time, with teachers' intention to leave. More precisely, access to and effective use of personal/family leaves significantly reduced the odds that teacher would think about leaving the organization. Perceived availability of study leaves also appeared to decrease the odds of thinking about leaving the organization. The impossibility to reduce one's work hours, and especially not being able to reduce them *enough*, increased the odds that teachers would think about leaving the workplace. We found that age was also significantly associated with teachers' intention to leave, such that an increase in age increased the odds of intention to leave. In other words, the more teachers advanced in age, the more likely they were to think about leaving the organization. Therefore, hypotheses 2 and 5 are both partially validated, where both the perceived availability and use of some of the tested working time arrangements were associated with lower odds of intention to leave the organization. Table 3 presents the significant predictors of intention to leave the organization according to sociodemographic variables and flexible work arrangements.

Table 3. Significant predictors of intention to leave the organization by sociodemographic variables and flexible work arrangements.

		Model 1				Model 2			
	CI : 95%								CI : 95%
	Variable	Estimates	p*	LL	UL	Estimates	p*	LL	UL
Threshold	ITlorg = 1	-0.430	0.516	-1.725	0.866	-0.578	0.445	-2.060	0.905
	ITlorg = 2	0.602	0.362	-0.654	1.898	0.570	0.451	-0.913	2.054
	ITlorg = 3	1.536	0.021	0.233	2.840	1.618	0.033	0.128	3.109
	ITlorg = 4	2.698	0.000	1.373	4.023	2.818	0.000	1.309	4.377
Location	Sector	0.027	0.712	-0.117	0.171	0.092	0.227	-0.057	0.241
	Age	0.339	0.010*	0.080	0.598	0.411	0.003**	0.138	0.683
	Gender	-0.069	0.789	-0.576	0.438	-0.049	0.860	-0.593	0.495
	Tenure	0.010	0.933	-0.222	0.242	-0.108	0.392	-0.356	0.139
	Fam. Situ.	-0.110	0.319	-0.325	0.106	-0.094	0.414	-0.318	0.131
	Nb. children	0.012	0.918	-0.216	0.240	0.019	0.874	-0.219	0.258
	Fam.leave =1					-0.588	0.055	-1.733	-0.018
	Fam.leave =5					-1.336	0.002**	-2.181	-0.457
	Stud.leave=1					0.633	0.034**	0.050	1.277
	Red.hrs = 2					1.123	0.026**	0.132	2.115
	Red.hrs = 3					0.737	0.006**	0.209	1.265

Note: The sign * indicates a significant relation, while ** indicates a more significant relation. * < 0.05. **< 0.01.

4. DISCUSSION

In this paper, we sought to understand the way in which certain working time arrangements help employees reconcile their work and private lives, and what measures are likely to retain them in the profession, answering calls for more research about the antecedents of teacher turnover (Sims & Jerrim, 2020) considering that working conditions (Kamanzi et al., 2017; Kamanzi et al., 2015) and working times in particular (Dupriez et al., 2016) are important antecedents to teachers' intention to leave. Our results support recent research indicating that work-life conflict is significantly associated with intention to leave (Li et al., 2022; Rhee et al., 2020). We also contribute to the literature about teacher work-life conflict and intention to leave by showing the differentiated impacts of several working time arrangements on these two outcomes. The ordinal regression allowed us to identify the ways in which flexible work arrangements influenced work-family conflict and intention to leave, specifically in terms of perceived availability and use (Allen et al., 2013) and considering the role of employee need (Mansour & Tremblay, 2018a) or fit between measures and needs (Fiksenbaum, 2014). Our statistical analyses indicate an influence of the use of study leaves, flexible hours and voluntarily reduced work hours on teachers' work-life conflict (p= >0.001). Our results further indicate a significant association between the use of family leaves, study leaves and voluntarily reduced work hours on intention to leave (p= >0.001). Perceived availability of study leaves was also associated with lower odds of having an intention to leave (p= >0.001). Theoretical contributions and practical implications are discussed below.

4.1. Theoretical Contribution

The main salient result of our analysis is that the absence of a needed working time arrangement tends to negatively impact work-life conflict and intention to leave. For instance, the impossibility to reduce one's work hours, and especially not being able to reduce them *enough*, increased the odds that teachers would experience work-life conflict and think about leaving the workplace. This means that the absence of certain job resources can have a distinct negative influence on employee outcomes, on top of the negative effects produced by job demands themselves. In other words, the unavailability or insufficiency of a given needed job resource creates additional stress. This result is well explained by the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) which posits that the actual or anticipated lack of certain needed resources creates stress in individuals. In that sense, while job demands in themselves create strain resulting in psychological costs for employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) we contribute to the Job Demands-Resources theory by showing that job resources should be apprehended in their effective presence but also in their absence or insufficiency, through the consideration of employee needs and fit (Fiksenbaum, 2014; Mansour & Tremblay, 2018b). On the other hand, the absence of flexible hours did not have any negative impact on the tested outcomes, but only a significant positive one on work-life conflict when teachers could use them. Our results thus indicate that some measures will work positively (ie. flexible hours), while others will only work negatively (ie. reduced working time). This could indicate that while flexible hours may not be as needed as other measures such as reduced working time, they still significantly contribute to alleviating the work-life conflict. In that sense, our results bring support to the view that employee need plays an important role in the significance of job resources on employee outcomes (Mansour & Tremblay, 2018a). As the COR theory indicates that negative effects prevail (Hobfoll, 2011) it means that the more an employee needs a certain measure, the more its absence will create strain and negatively affect their motivation. While Bakker and Demerouti (2007) have mostly emphasized the buffering effect of job resources on the relationship between job demands and job strain, we contribute to the literature by showing their direct effect, positive or negative depending on their presence of absence, on job strain (ie. work-family conflict) and organizational outcomes (ie. intention to leave).

Furthermore, our results give support to previous studies (Allen et al., 2013; Fiksenbaum, 2014) indicating that flexible work arrangements use and availability are two different pathways leading to different results. For instance, the mere availability of having the possibility to reduce their working time did not have any impact on work-life conflict or intention to leave. However, the frustrated need to use this measure negatively impacted these outcomes. Our results indicate that the perceived availability of working time arrangements in general did not have any effect on work-life conflict, but that it is the use, or frustrated use, of these measures that matters. However, the perceived availability of certain measures (ie. study leaves) without using them did reduce the odds that teachers would think about leaving the organization. The Job Demands-Resources model can explain these results in the sense that job demands and resources impact employee outcomes via two different pathways, a health-related pathway and a motivation-related pathway (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Indeed, while the perceived availability of some measures may not affect the strain pathway, they can be effective in affecting outcomes through a motivation pathway. In that sense, perceiving that some resources are available to help them grow (ie. study leave) may reduce intentions to leave, by sending a signal that the employer cares about their employees' well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). However, it is only an effective and satisfactory use of these measured that can reduce the experience of work-life conflict, which in turn, will also have repercussions on intention to leave, as shown by our results as well as previous studies (Li et al., 2022; Rhee et al., 2020). Figure 2 presents, our results bring further clarification about the pathways through which job resources impact employee well-being and organizational outcomes.
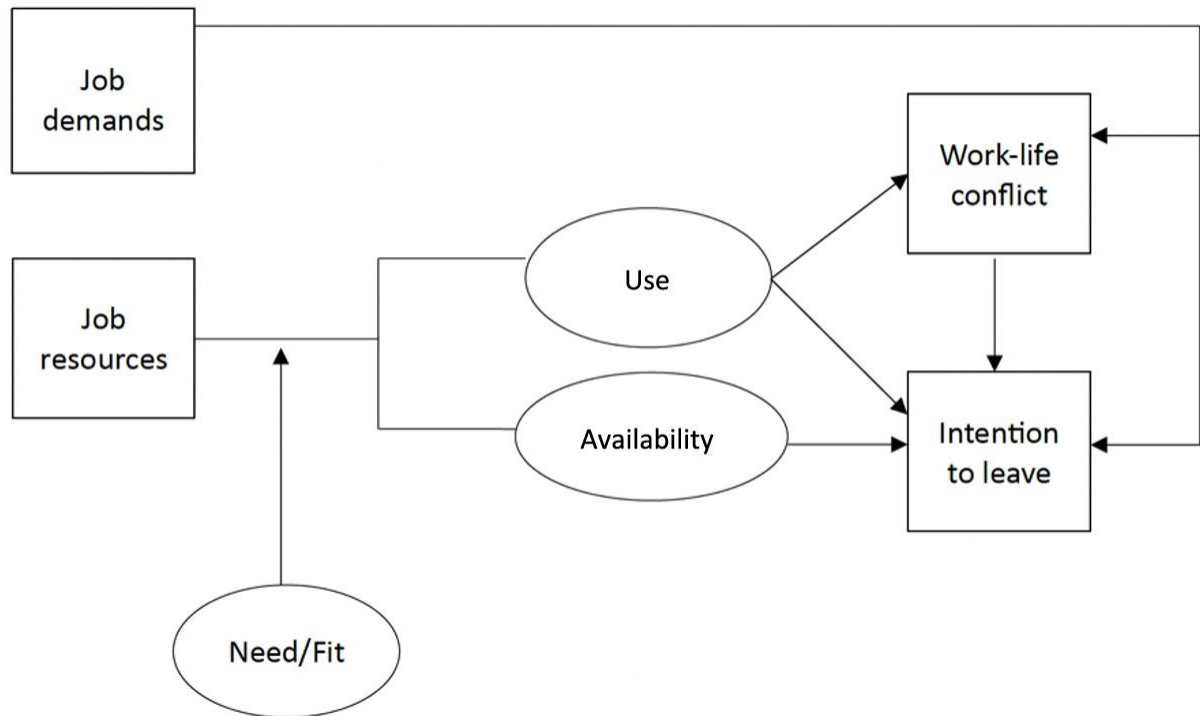
Figure 2. Pathways of influence of job resources on employee outcomes.

4.2. Practical Implications

Our results are concordant with previous studies indicating that about one in four employed teachers think about leaving the profession in Quebec (Kamanzi et al., 2015; Sirois et al., 2022). Moreover, a striking majority of teachers (80%) experienced high levels of work-family conflict, equally amongst teachers with and without children. The importance of attending to teachers' work-life conflict, be it for its effect on employee burnout (Rajendran et al., 2020) or on intention to leave (Li et al., 2022; Rhee et al., 2020) is established. Our results point to the importance of specific working time arrangements for teachers in this matter (ie. reduced working time, study leaves, flexible hours, family/personal leaves). Job resources that both directly reduce work-family conflict and intention to leave would maximize the chances of teacher retention in the profession. This is why our results support the establishment of an "ecology" of job resources that can affect outcomes in several ways and foster "positive spirals" of resources gain for employees (Hobfoll, 2011) particularly through work-life enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Our results confirm that work-life conflict is an important issue in the teaching profession (FAE, 2023) and is not only a matter of reconciling work and family roles: teachers have other important non-work needs and responsibilities that conflict with the demands experienced at work (Nogues & Tremblay, 2019). Teachers may have other responsibilities and interests outside of work and may need some freedom to adjust their hours depending on their nonwork needs. This is consistent with the finding that impossibility to take a study leave was significantly associated with higher work-family conflict. In the current context of crisis of qualified teachers (Mukamurera et al., 2023) developing options for study leaves are important to have teachers in a continuous process of educating themselves, making for better teachers. As much as 30% of respondents indicated that they would like to use a study leave, but could not or that it was not enough. Only 3 participants indicated that they used such a leave with satisfaction. Improving options for such leaves may reduce teacher work-life conflict and intention to leave. More educated teachers will make for better teachers and more able to cope with complex situations arising at school, improving the quality of teaching. In short, this kind of opportunities may positively reflect in their teaching work, in a perspective of work-life enrichment rather than conflict (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This is particularly

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important as there is presently a good number of non- legally qualified teachers in Québec, given the lack of qualified teachers (Harnois & Sirois, 2022).

Not being able to reduce one's work hours to fulfill important nonwork needs seemed to be the main cause of work-family conflict among our sample. Similarly, not being able to reduce their work hours enough significantly increased teachers' intention to leave. Control over the amount of hours worked appeared as a salient issue among teachers, with 41.7% indicating that it was not available or not available enough to them. This is concordant with other studies indicating that it is difficult for teachers to reduce their work hours, despite their need to do so (Sharp et al., 2019). Our results indicate the salience of voluntarily reduced working time as a job resource needed by teachers. However, while teachers may wish to work part-time, "school leaders tend to think that it is 'not an ideal way to relieve workload pressures because it could result in teachers devoting more of their own, unpaid time, to the non-teaching aspects of the job'" (Sharp et al., 2019). Moreover, part-time is not always granted because of perceptions that teachers will be less involved at school, and because it is more expensive for schools to hire two persons instead of one for the same position (Sharp et al., 2019). Yet in the greater picture, given the shortage of qualified teachers (Fontaine et al., 2011; Harnois & Sirois, 2022; See et al., 2020) it seems interesting to offer this possibility, especially as it might contribute to retaining the older teachers who are considering retirement because of difficult work conditions (Géraldine. Farges & Diane-Gabrielle, 2016; Géraldine Farges & Tremblay, 2017). Research indicates that continuous education and training options can contribute to attraction and retention of teachers (Saint-Pierre, Isabelle, & Diane-Gabrielle, 2024).

Sharp et al. (2019) qualitative study, a school leader mentioned supporting one of the teacher's decision to reduce her working time to three days a week so that she could go off to do her master's, a perspective of retaining talented professionals. Part-time options should be democratized and not just a privilege, without hampering full-time options for those who want to work full-time or can't afford to go part-time. According to work-life enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) school leaders should give teachers more time and not fear teacher disinvolvement from school. While it has also been shown elsewhere that working part-time was associated with increased likeliness of leaving the profession within the first year of employment, this relationship was less significant for teachers between 2 and 5 years of employment (Dupriez et al., 2016) indicating that teachers well established in the profession are less likely to leave and that these opportunities will rather translate in work-life enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). School leaders tend to fear that offering part-time options, on top of representing additional charges, may make teachers disengaged from their work and school (Sharp et al., 2019). However, our findings indicate that not being allowed to reduce their hours increases teachers' intention to leave. If the latter does not necessarily result in actual attrition, intention to leave is a symptom of job dissatisfaction which in turn negatively impairs job performance.

Our results also show that allowing teachers flexible hours as much as possible (eg. choosing classes according to one's own personal schedule) will significantly decrease work-family conflict. Flexible hours in the teaching profession are rare because teachers are constrained to a teaching schedule. Still, the very few who benefitted from flexible hours (9.6%) reported significantly less work-family conflict. Finally, 47.4% of teachers indicated that leaves for personal or family reasons were insufficient. Given that women make for the majority of the teachers and also remain the primary caretakers of children and the elderly, they should be able to take the leaves that they need to reconcile their family responsibilities with their work lives. Given the importance of such leaves in relation to both work-life conflict and intention to leave, it is important to develop such leave options for teachers to retain them in the profession (FAE, 2023).

4.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

A main limitation of our research is that it did not test for the complete list of items of work-family conflict and intention to leave. However, we believe that our research yields an important contribution regarding the pathways through which certain types of job resources may impact employee health outcomes and organizational outcomes. Future research should expand on the differential effects of needed job resources, whether they are present, or missed, and how this impacts employee outcomes.

Furthermore, our results indicated that intention to leave increases with age. This result can be surprising given that most estimations suggest that teachers leave in the first five years of employment. Even if intention to leave does not equal actual turnover, we would have expected that younger teachers would be more likely to indicate an intent to leave. However, it can make sense from the view that the more teachers approach retirement, the more they think about leaving the organization, considering working conditions (Géraldine Farges & Tremblay, 2017). The relationship between age and intention to leave should be further examined, especially as concerns gender differences, for which there is a call for more research, given the inequalities observed (Géraldine. Farges & Diane-Gabrielle, 2016). Moreover, young and novice teachers only represented a small proportion of our sample. Therefore, the generalization of our results for this group is limited. Future research should focus on younger and novice teachers specifically to better understand their motivations, needs and behaviors.

5. CONCLUSION

Teacher attrition is a world-wide problem constituting an important aspect of the global shortage of qualified teachers (Fontaine et al., 2011; See et al., 2020; Sirois et al., 2022). Our paper aimed to offer insights regarding the attrition of teachers through work-life conflict and intention to leave. Our study supports union claims that improving teacher work-life balance is important to attract and retain them in the profession (FAE, 2023). Given the high prevalence of work-life conflict among our participants, it appears that current teachers' working conditions do not allow the reconciliation of work and private lives. Working time arrangements such as reduced working time, leaves and flexible hours are important ways to reduce work family conflict and retain teachers in employment. Solutions must be found to make working time arrangements more readily available in order to meet teachers' needs, despite organizational constraints (Sharp et al., 2019).

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