

# Teaching motivational profiles related to intention to leave the teaching profession

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** Studies show that teacher motivation is related to the intention to leave the teaching profession, but there is a lack of studies that to research the relationships according to latent motivational profiles. Therefore, the objective of the study is to determine the influence of teaching motivational profiles on the intention to leave the teaching profession in a sample of Chilean school system teachers.

**Method.** 310 teachers who graduated from a Chilean university participated in the study. Latent profile analysis and one-way ANOVA test were used to assess the motivational profiles and differences in intention to leave.

**Results.** The results support the fit of a model of four teacher motivational profiles: low quality ( $n = 16$ ), high quantity ( $n = 89$ ), low quantity ( $n = 82$ ) and high quality ( $n = 123$ ). Furthermore, teachers grouped in the profiles with the highest degrees of autonomy for teaching presented the lowest levels of intention to leave the profession.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** It is inferred that teacher motivational profiles influence the intention to leave the teaching profession. More specifically, it is concluded that the teachers grouped in the motivational profiles with greater degrees of autonomy to carry out teaching work show less intention to leave the teaching profession.

**Keywords:** autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, intention to leave, latent profile analysis, self-determination theory

## Resumen

**Introducción.** Los estudios muestran que la motivación docente está relacionada con la intención de dejar la profesión docente, pero faltan estudios que investiguen las relaciones según los perfiles motivacionales latentes. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de la investigación es determinar la influencia de perfiles motivacionales del profesorado en la intención de abandonar la profesión docente en una muestra de profesoras y profesores del sistema escolar chileno.

**Método.** En el estudio participaron 310 profesores egresados de una universidad chilena. Se utilizó el análisis de perfil latente y la prueba de ANOVA de una vía para evaluar los perfiles motivacionales y las diferencias en cuanto a la intención de abandonar la profesión docente.

**Resultados.** Los resultados apoyan el ajuste de un modelo de cuatro perfiles motivacionales docentes: baja calidad ( $n = 16$ ), alta cantidad ( $n = 89$ ), baja cantidad ( $n = 82$ ) y alta calidad ( $n = 123$ ). Además, los docentes agrupados en los perfiles con mayores grados de autonomía para la docencia presentaron los niveles más bajos de intención de abandonar la profesión.

**Discusión y Conclusión.** Se infiere que los perfiles motivacionales docentes influyen en la intención de abandono de la profesión docente. Más específicamente, se concluye que los docentes agrupados en los perfiles motivacionales con mayores grados de autonomía para ejercer la enseñanza evidencian la menor intención de abandonar la profesión docente.

**Palabras clave:** motivación autónoma, motivación controlada, intención de abandono, análisis de perfiles latentes, teoría de la autodeterminación

## Introduction

Leaving the teaching profession has become a relevant research topic in the field of education, as multiple consequences associated with the weakening of the school system and the quality of teaching and learning processes have become evident (Carlotto et al., 2019; Kafumbu, 2019). Among the reasons that guide the intention to drop out, research highlights “geographic locations, school and student characteristics” (Quin, 2020, p.80), the de-professionalization of the teaching profession, work overload, salary issues and job dissatisfaction (Gaete et al., 2017, Horvath et al., 2018, Mérida-López et al., 2020). However, studies also emphasize the importance of teacher motivation, as it constitutes a determining factor for the performance of different activities, especially those that developed from personal commitment, free choice and from one’s own will, leaving aside any type of external pressure that may exert any influence (Imran et al., 2017).

In the case of the Chilean school system, there is great concern regarding the abandonment of the teaching profession, as “a dropout rate of around 40% has been observed during the first 5 years of professional practice” (Gaete et al., 2017, p.124; Delgado-Bello et al., 2021). From this context, it is important to pinpoint that the teaching profession has been marked by a series of milestones influencing the initial training development and the trajectories of practicing teachers. These include: a) scholarships for entry into teacher training (Alvarado et al., 2012); b) changes in the orientation of initial, intermediate and professional practices; c) lack of systematic regulation in training (Bellei & Valenzuela, 2010; Cisternas, 2011); d) changes in curricular orientations and the incorporation of new styles of school governance, and; e) the application of national standardized exams (Ruffinelli, 2016).

On the other hand, the implementation of supervision and performance evaluation systems has generated a limited possibility of development and permanent deterioration of work (Cavieres-Fernández & Apple, 2016; Roa-Tampe, 2017). In addition, the implementation of new educational policies, such as the national system of teacher professional development, has had a marked influence on initial teacher training and in-service training (Jarpa-Arriagada & Castañeda-Díaz, 2018). Based on this scenario, it seems that measures such as the accountability policy and the measurement of the quality of education have direct effects on the identity of the profession and the type of social and economic recognition of the teaching profes-

sion (Carrasco-Aguilar et al., 2019), and maybe factors that influence the decision to leave the profession early.

From the findings of Ávalos & Valenzuela (2016), who analyzed the trajectories of teachers in their first two years of teaching, the main reasons for leaving the profession were the lack of opportunities for professional development, inadequate working conditions, and dissatisfaction with school leadership. These aspects are closely associated with the levels of motivation to engage in teaching activities (Göktürk et al., 2020). Thus, motivation can be identified as a fundamental factor in carrying out teaching activities, as they activate behavior based on commitment, a sense of choice and personal willingness to engage in teaching activities (Irnidayanti et al., 2020).

Most studies consider motivation as a variable that can explain what energizes a person's behavior and drives them to perform an action in a given context (Author, 2020). In this regard, at least two distinct dimensions of motivation exist: a) the reasons why an individual decides to perform an activity or task and the effort and, b) persistence that he or she is willing to sustain over time to perform that activity (Han & Yin, 2016). Teaching motivation can be understood as the process that attracts a person to study the profession, the dedication and persistence to complete their studies and subsequently the length of time they remain in the teaching profession (Sinclair, 2008); a process that can be affected or interrupted by a number of personal, institutional, social and contextual factors.

A systematic review identified that most research carried out has established a significant and clear relationship between teacher motivation and job satisfaction, directly affecting professional performance. In addition, there is sufficient evidence to link psychological variables, especially positive psychological capital that intervenes as a protective factor for teacher motivation (Viseu et al., 2016). Another study has shown that teacher motivation strongly relates to burnout, commitment, and job satisfaction, especially the type of autonomous motivation that is positively associated with different work factors (Abós et al., 2018). Aspects related to self-efficacy, appraisal, anxiety, and coping may also exert a strong influence on personal well-being and job performance (Collie & Martin, 2017).

Teacher motivation can be considered a good predictor of job satisfaction and performance clearly influencing the promotion of favorable learning environments, even more so

when teachers' basic psychological needs are met (Orsini et al., 2020). These are fundamental for healthy psychological development, independent of individual characteristics and the context in which the person works (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Motivation and discipline knowledge are recognized as two primary characteristics in the teaching profession, particularly when related to self-efficacy, professional autonomy, intrinsic motivation, vocation, and organizational culture (López-Arellano et al., 2017; Viseu et al., 2016; Yuan & Zhang, 2017), but also when teaching motivation is related to students' academic performance (Han & Yin, 2016; Nyakundi et al., 2019). However, more studies are needed identifying and elaborating on the dimensions of teacher motivation (Mahler et al., 2018).

Self-determination theory (SDT – Ryan & Deci, 2000) proposes that human motivation is an internal tendency that stimulates people to perform different behaviors characterized by a sense of choice and commitment to the activities they want to perform, without expecting rewards or receiving external pressures. The conditions that allow an individual to grow and develop in a healthy way and with a high degree of psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017) are an area of further study. Furthermore, this theory posits that there are different sources of motivation that affect the behavior of individuals. Being a multidimensional phenomenon, there are actions and behaviors recognized as people's own will and others that are due to external factors, and which may eventually influence personal decisions depending on the particular context of an individual.

Different works recognize that the activities a person engages in can be intrinsically regulated behaviors that involve higher levels of self-determination, referred to as autonomous motivation. On the other hand, extrinsically regulated activities considered to have a lower degree of self-determination are referred to as controlled motivation (Howard et al., 2017; Vansteenkiste et al., 2018). Depending on the quantity and quality of motivation that individuals have, different types of motivational profiles can be generated, understood as those specific characteristics that constitute, configure, and identify a particular type of motivation, depending on the type of regulation that people have when performing some action or behavior.



In this regard, a study conducted with Australian teachers showed five types of motivational profiles, observing direct effects on job enjoyment and well-being, as well as the possibility of staying at work (Collie & Martin, 2017). However, multiple research studies based on SDT theory have supported a solution of four motivational profiles, the emergence of which has been generated based on the quantity and quality of autonomous and controlled motivation. In relation to the quantity of motivation, a high quantity profile (high scores on autonomous and controlled motivation) and a low quantity profile (low scores on autonomous and controlled motivation) have been identified (Haerens et al., 2010; Ullrich-French & Cox, 2009). Regarding the quality of motivation, a high-quality profile (high scores on autonomous motivation and low scores on controlled motivation) and a low-quality profile (low scores on autonomous motivation and high scores on controlled motivation) have been identified (Franco et al., 2017; Sánchez-Oliva et al., 2015).

In the Chilean educational context, there are studies focused on understanding the trajectories, turnover, tenure, and leaving the teaching profession (Ávalos & Valenzuela, 2016), but no evidence was found of research that studies how the formation of motivational profiles of teachers influences the intention to leave the teaching profession.

Based on the background review, it is considered important to analyze how motivational profiles affect the intention to leave the teaching profession since it will make it possible to show how different groups, made up of a combination of reasons for teaching, show different degrees of intention to leave the teaching profession. Regarding, the estimation of motivational profiles through the person-centered approach allows the integration of the multiple regulations that make up a motivational pattern, which enables “capturing the hypothetical simultaneous complex game or tug of war, of different regulations within the person and how these internal patterns give rise to a specific pattern [of intention to leave the teaching profession]” (Lindwall et al., 2017, p.2). This will allow directing interventions that are better adapted to each specific group, which will facilitate the design and implementation of institutional strategies.

### *Objectives and Hypotheses*

The objective of the study is to determine the influence of teaching motivational profiles on the intention to leave the teaching profession in a sample of Chilean school system teachers. The research hypotheses are: (1) a model of four latent motivational profiles with

adequate levels of fit, and (2) the existence of significant differences in the intention to leave the teaching profession according to the latent motivational profiles.

## Method

### *Participants*

The research sample was composed of 310 teachers from the Chilean school system, who performed in the following types of schools: municipal (37.4%), private-subsidized (48.7%), and private (13.9%). 76.1% of the teachers were women and 23.9% were men. The age range varied between 22 and 53 years, with a mean of 33.65 years ( $SD = 6.60$ ). For the selection of the participants, a convenience non-probabilistic sampling was used (Latorre et al., 2003).

### *Instruments*

*The work tasks motivation scale for teachers* (Fernet et al., 2008). The instrument is composed of 15 items divided into 5 factors that measure different types of motivation to carry out teaching work: (1) intrinsic motivation (3 items, e.g., “Because I find this task interesting to do”), (2) identified regulation (3 items, e.g., “Because this task allows me to attain work objectives that I consider important”), (3) introjected regulation (3 items, e.g., “Because I would feel guilty not doing it”) (4) external regulation (3 items, e.g., “Because my job requires it”), and (5) demotivation (3 items, e.g., “I don’t know, I don’t always see the relevance of carrying out this task”). The items were answered on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “does not correspond at all”; 7 = “totally corresponds”). The autonomous motivation ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ) and controlled motivation ( $\alpha = 0.70$ ) measures were considered in the research, which presented adequate levels of internal consistency. The autonomous motivation was calculated by averaging the scores of the sub-components named intrinsic motivation and identified regulation. The controlled motivation was calculated by averaging the scores of the sub-components named introjected regulation and external regulation. A version adapted to Spanish was used for this research (Ruiz, 2015), whose measurement model showed adequate levels of fit to the observed data ( $RMSEA = 0.06$ ;  $CFI = 0.92$ ;  $TLI = 0.90$ ).

*Occupational Withdrawal Intentions Scale* (Hackett et al., 2001). The instrument is composed of three items (e.g., “I think about quitting the teaching profession”) that were used to measure the intention to leave the teaching profession. The items were answered on a 7-



point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree). The instrument was translated into Spanish using the back-translation method. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient showed high levels of internal consistency ( $\alpha = .85$ ), and the measurement model showed adequate levels of fit to the observed data ( $RMSEA = 0.00$ ;  $CFI = 1.00$ ;  $TLI = 1.00$ ).

### *Procedure*

The instruments were applied in an online format, using the Survey Monkey platform. Informed consent was used that included the aims of the research, voluntary and anonymous participation, as well as the risks and benefits for the study participants. The ethical considerations established by the American Psychological Association (APA) were used.

### *Data Analysis*

Descriptive analysis was performed by calculating the mean, standard deviation, and Z scores. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The values  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  were considered to identify acceptable reliability (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2006). Finally, the measures of asymmetry and kurtosis were calculated, considering a range of  $\pm 2$  to show a trend towards univariate normality.

The motivational profiles were identified using Latent Profile Analysis (LPA). This technique is based on the fit of a model to the observed data, where the cases or people are included in the most probable group, according to the responses obtained for each observed variable. It is considered an analysis tool focused on "similarities and differences between people instead of the relationships between variables" (Berlin et al., 2014, p.174).

The optimal number of groups was determined by assessing the fit of a set of latent profile analysis models, by iteratively comparing a model with  $k$  groups with a model with  $k-1$  groups. The goodness of fit was evaluated through the following indices and criteria (Ram & Grimm, 2009): (a) Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Bayesian Information Criterion adjusted for sample size (sBIC). The best model is the one with the lowest AIC and sBIC values; (b) Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMRT) and bootstrapping likelihood ratio test (BLRT). A  $p$ -value  $< .05$  indicates that the model with  $k$  groups has a better fit than the model with  $k-1$  groups; (c) entropy, it used to assess the quality of the classification of people in groups. This measure varies from 0 to 1, where values  $> 0.80$  indicate that the latent classes

are highly discriminating (Wang & Wang, 2020); (d) group size, which is recommended to be  $\geq 5\%$  of the sample (Nylund-Gibson & Choi, 2018).

According to the reviewed background, models of 2, 3, and 4 latent profiles were compared, considering the following variables: (1) autonomous motivation and (2) controlled motivation. Moreover, the one-factor ANOVA test was used to assess significant differences between the motivational profiles in terms of the intention to leave the teaching profession. Finally, the effect size ( $f$ ) was analyzed considering the following criteria: (1) small effect = .10; (2) medium effect = .25; and (3) large effect = .40 (Cárdenas & Arancibia, 2014).

## Results

### *Descriptive analysis*

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of each of the variables analyzed. The results show that the autonomous motivation presented the highest values. On the other hand, the intention to leave the teaching profession presented the lowest values. Regarding the measures of asymmetry and kurtosis, it is observed that the values are within the recommended ranges  $\pm 2$ , which shows a trend towards univariate normality.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Assimetry</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
1. Autonomous motivation	5.97	0.93	-1.03	0.56
2. Controlled motivation	3.20	1.32	0.32	-0.78
3. Intention to leave	2.35	1.06	0.39	-0.74

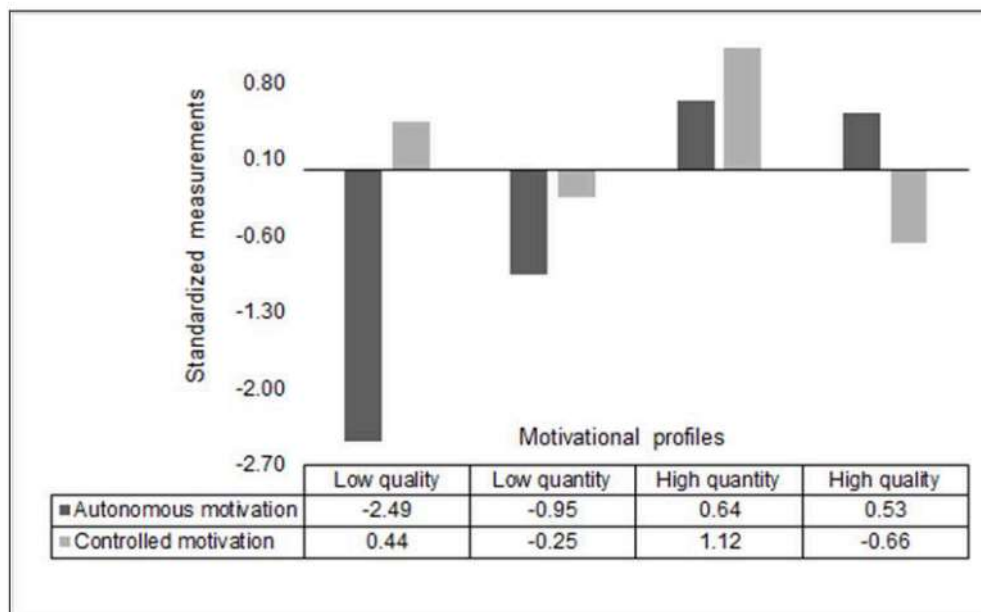
### *Latent profile analysis*

Table 2 shows the values of the fit indices for the models with 2, 3, and 4 classes. The results supported the solution of 4 motivational profiles since they presented the lowest values in AIC and sBIC. Furthermore, the LRT and BLRT values were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), and the entropy value indicates that the model had an 82% probability of accurately classifying people in the model classes, indicating that the latent classes are highly discriminating.

Table 2. *The fit indices of latent class models*

Class	LRT(p)	BLRT(p)	AIC	sBIC	Entropy
2	57.49(.03)	60.83(.01)	1711.08	1715.03	.81
3	48.99(.01)	51.84(.01)	1665.24	1670.88	.90
4	33.74(.02)	35.71(.02)	1635.11	1642.46	.82

Figure 1 shows the latent motivational profiles identified: (a) low quality (5.2%,  $n = 16$ ), with relatively high scores in controlled motivation and relatively low scores in autonomous motivation; (b) low quantity (26.5%,  $n = 82$ ), with low scores in the motivational variables, (c) high quantity (28.7%,  $n = 89$ ), with high scores in the motivational variables, and (d) high quality (39.7%,  $n = 123$ ), with relatively high scores in autonomous motivation and relatively low scores in controlled motivation (see Figure 1). Finally, an adequate size of the groups was observed, since they were greater than 5% of the sample ( $n = 15$ ).

Figura 1. *Motivational profiles*

### Comparative analysis

Table 3 shows the results of the comparison analysis between the motivational profiles regarding the intention to leave the teaching profession. The results indicate statistically significant differences between the motivational profiles, observing a large effect size ( $f = 0.58$ ). In this regard, it was identified that the motivational profiles of high quantity and high quality presented the lowest values of intention to leave the teaching profession, while the motiva-

tional profiles of low quantity and low quality presented the highest values. Finally, the results of the Bonferroni post-hoc test indicated significant differences between the low quality and low quantity motivational profiles. Furthermore, these profiles presented significant differences with the high quantity and high quality motivational profiles. Therefore, it was observed that teachers who perceive the lowest degrees of autonomy to develop teaching activities have the highest levels of intention to leave the teaching profession (see table 3).

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics and one-way Anova test*

Variable	Motivational profiles				F, p	f
	1. Low quality	2. Low quantity	3. High quantity	4. High quality		
Intention to leave	3.93	2.89	2.02	2.01	F= 34.60, p <.01**	0.58

Note. Bonferroni post-hoc test = 1 > 2\*\*, 3\*\*, 4\*\*; 2 > 3\*\*, 4\*\*

### Discussion and conclusion

The objective of the study is to determine the influence of teaching motivational profiles on the intention to leave the teaching profession in a sample of Chilean school system teachers. The findings allow supporting four motivational profiles related to the quality and quantity of motivation, as proposed by the SDT theory (Author et al., 2020; Franco et al., 2017; Sánchez-Oliva et al., 2015), which allows confirming the fulfillment of the first research hypothesis. If it is considered that during the development of the academic activities different types of motivation can coexist, the motivational characteristics of the teachers are classified around the quality and quantity of the interest, effort, and persistence to carry out the teaching-learning process. Through the motivational latent profiles identified, it is observed that the teaching profiles characterized by less autonomy and personal initiative for the development of academic activities show the highest levels of intention to leave the teaching profession, which allows confirming the fulfillment of the second research hypothesis.

From the SDT perspective, it is inferred that while the teachers activate their behavior from an internal locus of causality, they experience the initiation and regulation of their own behavior toward teaching activities, facilitating the development of autonomy and the personal will to perform the academic activities, which influences the decrease of the intention to leave the teaching profession. On the other hand, while teachers activate their behavior from an external locus of causality, they experience different types of pressure to perform the

teaching activities, such as lack of choice, external benefits, and a feeling of coercion, which hinders the autonomy and the personal will to carry out the teaching-learning process, which influences the increase of the intention to leave the teaching profession (Katz & Shahar, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

The study findings allow us to conclude that latent motivational profiles influence the intention to leave the teaching profession. More specifically, it is concluded that teacher motivational profiles characterized by low quality and quantity of motivation show the highest levels of intention to leave the teaching profession.

In the case of educational institutions, the findings pose the challenge of promoting work environments that facilitate the development of the autonomy of teachers, since it is a key factor for the development of autonomous motivation and well-being, which increases their involvement in the teaching-learning process and minimizes the intention to leave the teaching profession. "In particular, social-contextual factors related to (perceived) autonomy could be crucial for teachers' well-being, considering that the teaching profession requires professional discretion on the one hand, and strict accountability on the other" (Ebersold et al., 2019, p.923). Therefore, it is important that educational institutions focus on understanding and recognizing teachers' perspectives, promote opportunities for choice and self-initiation, and share meaningful information for teaching practice.

In general, educational institutions have an important challenge in generating the necessary conditions for teachers to perceive the satisfaction of basic psychological needs since while an educational context is perceived that facilitates autonomy, recognizes teaching skills, and promotes links positive affective, teachers will show less intention to leave the teaching profession, which will also contribute positively to the teaching-learning process.

One of the limitations of the research is that it was oriented from a cross-sectional design, which did not allow us to observe the motivational profiles over time. It is important that future research consider the use of longitudinal design. Another limitation refers to the participants were teachers from the Chilean school system. Therefore, comparisons with teachers from other countries could not be made. It is important that future research considers cross-cultural design that allows increasing the validity of the findings.



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