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The Impact Of School Heads' Support On Novice Special Education Teachers' Stress, Job Satisfaction, And Intent To Stay In Teaching

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of school heads' support on novice special education teachers' stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching. Recognizing the critical role of support in the professional development and retention of teachers, particularly in the demanding field of special education, this research aims to address a notable gap in the literature. A sample of 262 novice junior special education teachers participated in the survey, employing a correlational research design. The study utilized a survey method to collect data, with a self-designed questionnaire demonstrating high internal consistency reliability (Coefficient Alpha = .860). The sample was selected using random sampling techniques. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) summarized participant characteristics and key variables. Correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between school heads' support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching. Additionally, independent samples t-tests examined gender differences in perceived school heads' support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers. Furthermore, moderation analysis explored differences in the relationship between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching among novice JSETs working in rural and urban areas. The findings suggest that increased support from school heads is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and intent to stay in teaching, as well as lower stress levels among novice junior special education teachers. The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the impact of support in special education and offers insights for educational leaders and policymakers to enhance support mechanisms for novice teachers. Recommendations include fostering supportive leadership practices and tailoring support initiatives to address the unique needs of special education teachers.

Keywords: school heads' support, novice special education teachers, correlational study, job satisfaction, stress levels

Introduction

In the field of special education, novice teachers face multiple challenges as they navigate their duties in meeting the different needs of students with disabilities. The multifaceted nature of special education settings, along with the responsibilities of the job, puts novice special education teachers at risk of feeling stressed and unsettled. In this scenario, school heads support emerges as a key factor that may possess a considerable impact on novice teachers' stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in the teaching profession.

Many studies have demonstrated the significance role of supportive leadership in promoting positive teacher outcomes in various kinds of educational contexts (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Supportive leaders, particularly school heads, have an important role in establishing the work environment positive and smooth in their schools jurisdiction, influencing teachers' job satisfaction, motivation, and dedication (Sindelar et al., 2006). However, the exact influence of school heads' support on the well-being of novice special education teachers is relatively understudied. Novice special education teachers frequently face the challenges of customized education plans, unique learning requirements, and the execution of specific methods of instruction (Billingsley et al., 2004). As a result, sufficient support from school heads is critical in assisting novice teachers to negotiate these hurdles and build the confidence and competence required for success in special education settings.

Support provided by school heads transcends outcomes directly associated with job performance and may impact the willingness of new educators to remain in the educational field. Within schools and educational settings, the turnover of teachers, particularly those lacking experience, presents significant challenges, including leave the job, loss of expertise, and escalated costs related to hiring and training (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). School heads can reduce turnover intentions and increase teacher retention by creating supportive work environment that increases novice teachers' job satisfaction.

Despite increased understanding of the value of supportive leadership in education, there is still an absence in the literature discussing its effects on novice special education teachers. While previous research has looked at the influence of mentoring programs and peer collaboration on teacher outcomes, fewer research investigations have focused on the importance of school heads' support in special education contexts. Addressing this gap is critical for developing an extensive understanding of the process by which support from school heads' effects novice special education teachers' encounters, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in the profession.

Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the effects of school heads' support on novice special education teachers' stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching. By examining these relationships within the context of special education settings, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the role of leadership support in promoting the job satisfaction, and retention of novice special education teachers, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of educational practices and policies in special education contexts.

Review of the Literature

Supporting novice special education teachers is essential for their effectiveness and well-being within the challenging realm of special education. These teachers confront different challenges due to the diverse requirements of their students and the complex educational settings they work in. Consequently, providing support, particularly from school leaders, is critical in assisting these teachers in successfully navigating their positions. When investigating the effects of school heads' support on novice special education teachers' stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching, it is critical to draw on previous literature to create a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Importance of Support for Novice Special Education Teachers

Research has over and over shown that school heads' support improves novice teachers' experiences and performances. The literature clearly shows that novice special education teachers require support. Billingsley et al. (2004) stressed the importance of assistance and mentoring programs in reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction in novice special education teachers. Similarly, Sindelar et al. (2006) found that supportive heads' improves novice teachers' experiences and dedication to the profession. This shows the considerable impact that supportive heads' may have on novice teachers' well-being.

Role of School Heads' Support

School heads play an important role in giving assistance and direction to novice special education teachers. Blase and Blase (1999) stressed the role of school leaders in creating a friendly workplace and improve teacher well-being. Furthermore, Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) found that school heads had a significant impact on teacher job satisfaction and overall effectiveness. Supportive heads has been associated to higher job satisfaction rates among novice special education teachers. Cheng et al. (2021) discovered that teachers who perceived more supported by their school heads reported higher satisfaction with their jobs and dedication to their career. This means that when school heads provide support and resources to novice teachers, they feel ore satisfaction and motivated in their responsibilities.

Relationship between Support and Stress Levels

Researchers have investigated the relationship between support and stress levels among novice special education teachers. Cohen et al. (1983) revealed that support from school heads linked to reduced levels of stress among teachers. Furthermore, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) emphasized the need of school heads support in reducing teacher intent to leave the job, which is frequently associated to stress. The level of support from school heads' has an impact on novice special education teachers' intentions to stay in the profession. Novice teachers' who feel supported and valued by their school heads are more likely to stay in the teaching profession, resulting in better stability and consistency in special education programs.

Impact on Job Satisfaction

Support from school heads has consistently been associated to higher job satisfaction among novice special education teachers. Spector (1985) found several dimensions of job satisfaction, notably satisfaction with heads of institution and support from the organization, that are influenced by leadership approaches. Furthermore, Hallinger and Heck (1998) found a positive relationship between support from heads and teacher satisfaction. Prior research studies has shown the importance of school heads' support for several dimensions of teacher well-being and job satisfaction. Cheng et al. (2021) discovered that school heads' support strengthened special education teachers' professional dedication, with work engagement stabilizing this relationship. Similarly, Wang, Zhang, and Wang (2021) found that school heads' support was positively connected with teachers' well-being, as influenced by teacher efficacy and teacher-student interactions.

Influence on Intent to Stay in Teaching

The level of support received from school heads influences novice special education teachers' intent to remain in the teaching profession. McCarthy et al. (2014) emphasized the significance of teacher retention and the importance of school heads' support in developing a commitment to teaching. Similarly, Hall and Hord (2006) highlighted the relationship between school head support and teachers intent to stay in teaching. Furthermore, Luo and Wang (2022) evaluated the effect of leadership and colleague support on special education teachers' job satisfaction, finding that teacher efficacy mediated this connection. Li and Zhang (2021) investigated the impact of school heads support on the well-being of new teachers, resulting in a moderated mediation model. Furthermore, Cai et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between school heads'

support and teachers' engagement in their job place, emphasizing the mediating function of teacher efficacy and the moderating effect of job demands and resources.

Gaps in the Literature

While existing research has provided valuable insights into the importance of support for novice special education teachers, there remains a need to specifically examine the impact of school heads' support on stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching within special education settings. By addressing this gap, the current study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which leadership support influences novice special education teachers' experiences and outcomes.

In short, the literature underscores the critical role of support, particularly from school heads, in shaping the experiences and outcomes of novice special education teachers. By drawing upon existing research, this study seeks to further explore the relationship between school heads' support and novice teachers' stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching, ultimately informing efforts to enhance support structures within special education settings.

Objectives of the Study

This study intended to:

1. Investigate the relationship between school heads' support and stress levels among novice special education teachers.
2. Examine the relationship between school heads' support and job satisfaction among novice special education teachers.
3. Assess the impact of school heads' support on the intent of novice special education teachers to stay in the teaching profession.
4. Identify the differences in the perceived level of school heads' support among novice special education teachers based on their gender.
5. Examine the differences in the relationship between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching among teachers working in rural and urban areas?

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between school heads' support and novice special education teachers' stress levels?
2. How does school heads' support influence novice special education teachers' job satisfaction?
3. Does school heads' support affect novice special education teachers' intent to stay in teaching?
4. Are there differences in the perceived level of school heads' support among novice special education teachers based on their gender?
5. Are there differences in the relationship between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching among teachers working in rural and urban areas?

Methods and Materials

A correlational research design was employed in this study to investigate the relationship between school heads' support and the stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers. Correlational research aims to examine the extent to which variables are related to each other without necessarily implying causation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A correlational design is a type of research design commonly used in quantitative research to examine relationships between variables. Survey method was used for gathering the required information from the JSETs as it is more appropriate, authentic, economical and time-saving. Numerous researchers have described the advantages of survey research (Leedy, & Ormrod, 2005; Aldridge, 2001; Babbie, 1990; Pickard, 2007). The surveys are widely used in research as reliable and authentic information can be gathered timeously at generally minimal effort and cost.

Population

The population of this study comprises novice Junior Special Education Teachers (JSETs) who are currently employed in government special education schools/centers located within the premises of Punjab, Pakistan. Specifically, the study focuses on special education teachers who were recruited between the years 2018 and 2023, thus meeting the inclusionary criterion of being novice teachers with less than six years of teaching experience in special education settings.

Sample and Sampling Technique

In this correlational study, the sample was selected through simple random sampling technique. From each category (Hearing Impairment, Physical Impairment, Visual Impairment and Intellectual Impairment), 10% of the total population were taken as a sample through Goldfish Bowl Method. According to the sampling outcomes, a total of 262 JSETs were selected from 684 JSETs, who were recruited during the period of 2018 to 2023. (see Table 1).

Table 1 Characteristics of Surveyed Novice Junior Special Education Teachers in Frequency and Percent

Demographic feature	Category	n(262)	%
Gender	Male	105	40.1
	Female	157	59.9
	Less than 25 year	47	17.9
Age (Year)	25-30 year	68	26.0
	31-36 year	93	35.5
	More than 36 year	54	20.6

Marital status	Single	153	58.4
	Married	107	40.8
	Divorced	02	0.8
Educational qualification	M.A/M.Ed.	163	62.2
	M.Phil.	99	37.8
	Doctorate	0	0
	1 to 2 year	79	30.2
Teaching experience	3 to 4	87	33.2
	More than 4 year	96	36.6
	Rural	112	42.7
Geographical location	Urban	150	57.3
	Suburban	0	0

Table 1 indicates the demographic profile of the respondents. Results reveal that females are the dominant figure at 59.9% than the male participants, who accounted for 40.1% of the study population. A great number of respondents 35.5% fall under the age group (31-36) year; followed by 26.0% classified in the age group (25-30) year and 20.6% with more than 36 years of age. Only 17.9% of the subjects fall within the category (less than 25 years of age). The minimum age of the participants found 26 and the maximum is 44 years. Obtain results evince that a substantial proportion of respondents, comprising 58.4%, identified as single; followed by 40.8% of respondents reported being married. A smaller proportion of the sample, accounting for only 0.8%, reported being divorced. A significant majority of respondents, comprising 62.2%, possess a Master's degree, either M.A or M.Ed. Following this, 37.8% of respondents reported having an M.Phil. Notably, there were no respondents in the sample who reported having a Doctorate degree. Afterward, a considerable portion of respondents, accounting for 30.2%, reported having 1 to 2 years of teaching experience. Following this, 33.2% of respondents reported having 3 to 4 years of teaching experience. Additionally, 36.6% of respondents reported having more than 4 years of teaching experience. A majority of respondents, comprising 57.3%, reported residing in urban areas. Conversely, 42.7% of respondents reported residing in rural areas. Notably, there were no respondents who reported residing in suburban areas.

Development of Instrument

The development process began with a comprehensive review of existing literature related to the study topic. This literature review aimed to identify key constructs, theoretical frameworks, and validated measures relevant to school heads' support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers. Based on the literature review, the researchers identified the primary constructs of interest and conceptualized how these constructs would be operationalized in the Likert scale instrument. Items/questions were generated to assess each construct. This instrument consists of two parts. Part one is on the respondents' profile. Part two is on the 25 items. It was subjected to a content validation by a panel of experts and was pilot tested for reliability. Using Cronbach Alpha, the said instrument was found to be highly reliable as indicated by the value of 0.860.

Procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from the heads of government special education schools/centres of Punjab, prior to data collection to ensure the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality. Recruitment efforts involved contacting educational institutions and organizations involved in special education to solicit participation from novice junior special education teachers meeting the eligibility criteria. Information about the study objectives, procedures, and confidentiality measures was provided to potential participants, and informed consent was obtained from those willing to participate.

Data Collection

Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires that assess various variables of interest, including school heads' support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching. Participants were instructed to respond honestly and accurately to the survey items. The data collection process was initiated on September 10, 2023, and ended on December 10, 2023. Researchers personally visited selected schools/centers in Punjab, where they met with school/center heads to request formal permission for data collection. Upon receiving permission, researchers briefed Junior Special Education Teachers (JSETs) about the investigation's purpose, potential implications, facts, and consequences. Verbal informed consent was obtained from each teacher before distributing the research instrument to gather necessary information on the impact of school heads' support. Through diligent efforts and follow-up, a 100% response rate was successfully attained from randomly selected sample subjects.

Data Analysis

The first step in data analysis involves cleaning and preparing the collected data for analysis. This includes checking for missing values, outliers, and inconsistencies in the dataset. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using statistical software (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) was calculated to summarize participant characteristics and key variables. Correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationships between school heads' support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching. Additionally, Independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in perceived school heads' support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching among novice

special education teachers. Further, a moderation analysis was conducted to examine the differences in the relationship between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching among novice JSETs working in rural and urban areas.

Results and Discussion

In order to address research question 1 to 3, to determine the linear relationship between variables, a Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated the school heads support, and stress levels; between the school heads support and job satisfaction; between the school heads support and intent to stay in teaching. Means and standard deviations are also calculated. The results are provided in Table 2.

Table 2 *Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Matrix of School Heads Support, Stress Levels, Job Satisfaction, and Intent to Stay in Teaching*

Variables	<i>n</i> (262)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. School heads support	262	20.67	3.45	–			
2. Stress levels	262	20.66	3.44	-1.000**	–		
3. Job satisfaction	262	25.01	3.80	.323**	.323**	–	
4. Intent to stay in teaching	262	18.89	3.42	.568**	.568**	.322**	–

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 2 shows that a Pearson's correlation coefficient test was computed to determine the linear relationship between the school heads support and stress levels; between the school heads support and job satisfaction; between school heads support and intent to stay in teaching. Results show that the correlation coefficient between school heads support and stress levels is ($r(262) = -1.000, p < .001$). This indicates a statistically significant perfect negative correlation between the school heads' support and the stress levels among novice junior special education teachers. As the school heads' support increases, the stress levels among teachers tends to decrease.

Similarly, the correlation coefficient between school heads' support and job satisfaction is ($r(262) = 0.323, p < .001$). This indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between the school heads' support and the job satisfaction among novice special education teachers. Higher levels of perceived support from school heads are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction among teachers.

The correlation coefficient between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching is ($r(262) = 0.568, p < .001$). This indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between the school heads' support and the intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers. Increased levels of perceived support from school heads are associated with higher levels of intent to stay in teaching among teachers.

The correlation coefficient between stress levels and job satisfaction is ($r(262) = 0.323, p < .001$). This indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between the total score of stress levels and the total score of job satisfaction among novice special education teachers. Higher levels of stress are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, although the strength of the relationship is moderate.

The correlation coefficient between stress levels and intent to stay in teaching is ($r(262) = 0.568, p < .001$). This indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between the stress levels and the intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers. Higher levels of stress are associated with higher levels of intent to stay in teaching, with a moderately strong positive relationship observed.

The correlation coefficient between job satisfaction and intent to stay in teaching is ($r(262) = 0.322, p < .001$). This indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between the job satisfaction and the intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers. Higher levels of job satisfaction are associated with higher intent to stay in the teaching profession, although the strength of the relationship is moderate.

Overall, the results suggest significant associations between school heads' support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers, highlighting the importance of supportive leadership in influencing teacher well-being and retention.

In order to address the research question 4, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in perceived school heads' support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers. (see Table 3).

Table 3 *Mean Comparison of Male and Female Teachers in Perceived School heads Support, Stress levels, Job satisfaction, and Intent to Stay in Teaching*

Variables	Gender	<i>n</i> (262)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (260)	<i>p</i>
School heads support	Male	105	3.43	.358	2.556	.011
	Female	157	3.60	.578		
Stress levels	Male	105	3.17	.738	-2.706	.004
	Female	157	3.39	.492		
Job satisfaction	Male	105	4.12	.559	-4.606	.527
	Female	157	4.07	.590		
Intent to stay in teaching	Male	105	3.38	.621	-2.164	.031
	Female	157	3.54	.581		

Table 3 displays the obtained results through an independent samples t-test to compare the mean differences between male and female teachers in perceived school heads support, stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers.

Gender differences were found in perceived school heads' support, with male teachers ($M = 3.43, SD = 0.358$) reporting significantly lower levels of support compared to female teachers ($M = 3.60, SD = 0.578$), conditions; $t(260) = 2.556, p < 0.05$.

Significant gender differences emerged in stress levels, indicating that male teachers ($M = 3.17, SD = 0.738$) reported higher levels of stress compared to female teachers ($M = 3.39, SD = 0.492$), conditions; $t(260) = -2.706, p < 0.05$.

No significant gender differences were observed in job satisfaction, with male teachers ($M = 4.12, SD = 0.559$) and female teachers ($M = 4.07, SD = 0.590$) reporting similar levels of job satisfaction, conditions; $t(260) = -4.606, p > 0.05$.

Gender differences were also evident in intent to stay in teaching, with male teachers ($M = 3.38, SD = 0.621$) expressing a weaker intent to stay compared to female teachers ($M = 3.54, SD = 0.581$), conditions; $t(260) = -2.164, p < 0.05$.

These results highlight significant gender disparities in perceived school support, stress levels, and intent to stay among novice special education teachers, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address gender-related factors affecting teacher well-being and retention. Previous studies have shown that female teachers often perceive higher levels of support from school leaders compared to male teachers (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). The finding of female teachers perceiving higher levels of support is consistent with existing literature.

Research on teacher stress has produced mixed findings, with some studies reporting higher stress levels among female teachers due to workload and interpersonal factors (Luthar et al., 2020). The finding of male teachers reporting higher stress levels aligns with literature suggesting that male teachers may experience unique stressors or challenges in the workplace. Similarly, studies on gender differences in job satisfaction among teachers have yielded inconsistent results, with some research suggesting no significant gender differences (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The finding of no significant gender differences in job satisfaction aligns with literature indicating that job satisfaction levels may not vary significantly based on gender.

Research on teacher retention has shown that male teachers often have lower retention rates compared to female teachers (Ingersoll & May, 2011). The finding of male teachers expressing a weaker intent to stay in teaching aligns with literature indicating that male teachers may be more likely to consider leaving the profession.

In order to address the research question 5, a moderation analysis was conducted to examine the differences in the relationship between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching among novice JSETs working in rural and urban areas. (see Table 4).

Table 4 Moderation Analysis: Relationship between School Heads' Support and Intent to Stay in Teaching Moderated by Demographical Location (Rural vs. Urban)

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	β	SE	B	β	SE
Constant	1.84***		.022	1.83***		.025
School heads support	.015	.040	.025	.010	.027	.027
Intent to stay in teaching	.077**	.209**	.025	.079**	.213**	.025
School heads support x Intent to stay in teaching				.012	.031	.026
R ²	.052			.053		
ΔR^2				.001		

Note. N=262

*** $p < .001$.

Table 4 shows the results obtained through moderation analysis. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the moderating effect of rural versus urban settings on the relationship between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching among novice special education teachers. Model 1 included the predictors of school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching, along with the control variable of rural versus urban settings. Model 2 added the interaction term between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching, allowing for the examination of moderation effects.

The results indicated that in Model 2, the interaction term between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching was not statistically significant ($B = .012, \beta = .031, SE = .026, p > .05$). Therefore, there was no evidence to suggest that the relationship between school heads' support and intent to stay in teaching differed significantly between teachers working in rural and urban areas.

The overall model accounted for a statistically significant proportion of variance in intent to stay in teaching, $F(3, 258), p < .001, R^2 = .053$. The addition of the interaction term in Model 2 resulted in a negligible increase in R^2 ($\Delta R^2 = .001$), indicating that the moderation effect was not substantial.

Previous studies have shown that supportive school environments positively influence teachers' intent to stay in teaching (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The finding that school heads' support positively correlates with intent to stay aligns with existing literature. There is limited research specifically examining the moderating effect of rural versus urban settings on the relationship between school support and intent to stay. However, studies on other moderating variables (school size, community characteristics) may provide insights. The lack of direct literature on this specific moderation effect, the finding of no significant moderation may align with the absence of conclusive evidence in the literature.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between school heads' support, novice special education teachers' stress levels, job satisfaction, and intent to stay in teaching. Firstly, the results indicate a significant negative correlation between school heads' support and novice special education teachers' stress levels. This suggests that increased support from school heads is associated with reduced stress levels among teachers. This finding underscores the importance of supportive leadership in alleviating stressors and promoting well-being among novice special education teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Secondly, there is a significant positive correlation between school heads' support and novice special education teachers' job satisfaction. Higher levels of support from school heads are linked to increased job satisfaction among teachers. This highlights the pivotal role of supportive leadership in fostering a positive work environment and enhancing teachers' job satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Thirdly, the study reveals a significant positive correlation between school heads' support and novice special education teachers' intent to stay in teaching. Increased support from school heads is associated with higher levels of intent to remain in the teaching profession. This underscores the importance of supportive leadership in promoting teacher retention and ensuring a stable workforce in special education settings (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006).

The findings of this study shed light on significant gender disparities in perceived school support, stress levels, and intent to stay among novice special education teachers. Female teachers reported higher levels of perceived support from school leaders compared to male teachers, consistent with existing literature on gender differences in perceived support (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Moreover, male teachers reported higher stress levels, aligning with studies suggesting that male educators may face unique stressors in the workplace (Luthar et al., 2020). However, there were no significant gender differences in job satisfaction, in line with research indicating minimal variations in job satisfaction based on gender (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Regarding teacher retention, male teachers expressed weaker intentions to stay in teaching, reflecting findings from previous studies highlighting lower retention rates among male educators (Ingersoll & May, 2011). These disparities underscore the importance of targeted interventions to address gender-related factors influencing teacher well-being and retention in special education.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the critical role of school support in shaping novice special education teachers' job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the profession. Addressing gender disparities in perceived support and retention intentions necessitates targeted interventions tailored to the unique needs of male and female educators. Moreover, while supportive school environments positively impact teacher retention, further research exploring the nuanced effects of contextual factors on teacher outcomes is warranted. These insights contribute to the ongoing efforts to promote teacher well-being and retention in special education, ultimately benefiting both educators and the students they serve.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the job satisfaction, intent to stay in teaching and decrease the stress levels of novice special education teachers:

1. Provide leadership training programs for school heads to equip them with the necessary skills to effectively support and mentor novice special education teachers. These programs should focus on fostering supportive and empowering leadership practices.
2. Implement formal support systems within schools or educational institutions to facilitate communication, collaboration, and mentorship between school heads and novice special education teachers. This could include mentorship programs, regular check-ins, and peer support networks.
3. Foster a positive work environment that values the contributions of novice special education teachers and promotes a culture of respect, collaboration, and recognition. Encourage open communication and provide opportunities for professional growth and development.
4. Address workload issues and other stressors that may contribute to high levels of stress among novice special education teachers. This could involve providing resources, such as additional support staff or professional development opportunities, to help manage workload and reduce stress.
5. Promote work-life balance among novice special education teachers by encouraging self-care practices and providing flexibility in work arrangements where possible. This could include offering flexible scheduling options or promoting mindfulness and stress management techniques.
6. Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of support initiatives implemented for novice special education teachers. Collect feedback from teachers to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to support programs.
7. Advocate for policy changes at the organizational or governmental level to prioritize the well-being and professional development of novice special education teachers.

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