

Teacher Job Satisfaction: A Framework for Analysis

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The topic of job satisfaction is one that has always had personal and organizational relevance to educators. But recent reports of increased occupational stress and burnout in early childhood education indicate that the issue merits increased attention. This article first provides a brief overview of some of the diverse approaches that have evolved to define and measure work attitudes. It then presents a conceptual framework for understanding how the many facets of job satisfaction interrelate. The model builds on a social-ecological perspective of human behavior and stresses the dynamic, interactive nature of person-environment variables.

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely researched topics in psychology. Over 4,000 articles have been written on the subject. This popularity is not difficult to understand: The topic has strong appeal because it has immediate relevance to our own lives. Because we spend so much of our time in work environments, understanding the factors involved in achieving fulfillment can certainly affect our personal well-being. But the bulk of the research on the issue has focused on the quality of work life as it relates to the world of business and industry. Only moderate attention has been paid to the topic as it relates to teacher education, and the unique concerns of early childhood educators at the preschool level remain largely unexplored. It is possible, however, to draw from the vast literature in the fields of behavioral psychology and organizational management to develop a framework for analyzing job satisfaction as it specifically relates to early childhood education.

The concept of job satisfaction is particularly intriguing because, by definition, it is an end in itself—a positive outcome that is highly valued. But the study of job satisfaction also takes on special significance when viewed from an organizational standpoint. Even though a direct causal link between teachers' feelings of satisfaction and their productivity on the job has yet to be firmly established, many school administrators feel that job satisfaction (and particularly job dissatisfaction) can have a strong impact on organizational effectiveness.

The factors that influence work attitudes take on an urgency when we read statistics indicating that staff turnover in child care centers averages 30% a year, far greater than for other human service professions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1984). Child care work is among the country's top 10 job categories having the highest turnover. This high rate puts a tremendous strain on programs that must search out and retrain new staff. Low morale, stress, and job burnout are not uncommon among early childhood teachers (Hyson, 1982; Jorde, 1982; Maslach & Pines, 1977; Whitebook, Howes, Darrah, & Friedman, 1982). Indeed, understanding issues related to quality of work life may well have a direct impact on organizational survival at the preschool level.

Knowing that job satisfaction has personal as well as organizational relevance does not make the job of untangling the network of complex relations between work and worker any easier for the social scientist. One inherent difficulty is defining and operationalizing the construct. Is job satisfaction the absence of job dissatisfaction? Does the absence of "satisfiers" in the environment create dissatisfaction? Although there is considerable confusion in the literature as to sources of satisfaction and the ways satisfaction can best be measured, general agreement exists that job satisfaction is a "composite" of the attitudes, evaluations, or emotional responses an individual has about the many facets of a particular job.

This article provides a brief overview of some of the diverse approaches that have evolved in an attempt to define and measure work attitudes and presents a working model, a conceptual framework, to illustrate how the many variables of job satisfaction interrelate. The paradigm builds on the social-ecological conceptualization proposed by Rudolf Moos (Moos, 1979; Moos & Insel, 1974). This perspective stresses the dynamic, interactive nature of person-environment variables. Such a model should have heuristic value both for the preservice training of early childhood teachers and for the professional development of practitioners.

DEFINING AND MEASURING JOB SATISFACTION

The most common approach to understanding job satisfaction has been to apply the principles of various motivation theories. A quick perusal of the literature on motivation shows that there is certainly no shortage of explanations to interpret human behavior in work settings (Beck, 1978; Warr, 1976). As early as 1935, Hoppock applied survey methods and attitude scales to assess job satisfaction in teachers. His work typifies what has been called the "traditional" approach because it evolves out of the assumption that if the presence of a variable in the work environment leads to satisfaction, then its absence will lead to job dissatisfaction. Hoppock also asked teachers questions about nonwork factors such as their level of satisfaction

in their marriages and in other relationships. His findings suggest that job and life satisfaction are intricately related and that personal factors outside the school often determine satisfaction on the job.

Herzberg (1966) questioned this traditional view, arguing that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction should not be conceptualized as occurring on a single continuum. He put forth a two-factor theory suggesting that the causes for satisfaction and for dissatisfaction are quite separate. According to Herzberg's view, "motivation" factors—including achievement, recognition, and the intrinsic nature of the job itself—are associated with psychological growth and lead one to job satisfaction. "Hygiene" factors, on the other hand, are associated with the context of the job. These include such things as pay, security, supervision, and physical working conditions. When deficient, these hygiene factors lead to dissatisfaction; however, their presence cannot be a source of job satisfaction and motivation.

Perhaps the most well-known of the motivation theories is Maslow's needs hierarchy theory (Maslow, 1970). Maslow contends that only after basic needs such as safety and security are fulfilled is it possible to pay attention to higher order needs such as self-actualization and the establishment of individual worth. Maslow did not devise his theory to account specifically for job satisfaction, but his conceptions have been used to account for satisfaction in the stratification of occupations. Gruneberg (1979) points out the drawbacks of Maslow's theory, stating that, as intuitively appealing as the idea seems, there is no empirical evidence for a hierarchy of needs.

An additional cluster of theories also relates to teacher job satisfaction. These—known as equity, expectations, and reference group theories (Adams, 1971; Gruneberg, 1979)—attempt to account for the process by which individuals decide whether the characteristics of a particular job are satisfying or not. Job satisfaction is related to the perceived differences between what is expected or desired as a reasonable return for effort and what is actually received, particularly in comparison with others having similar roles.

Several approaches have been used for measuring levels of teacher job satisfaction. With satisfaction as the dependent variable, many studies have focused on different indicators to measure relative strength of career satisfaction or the difference between the teacher's present position at his or her ideal job. Chapman (1980) reviews three common measurements: (a) the discrepancy between people's expectations of reward and their actual accomplishment; (b) the relative frequency of satisfiers and dissatisfiers for different groups of teachers; and (c) teachers' global feelings of fulfillment on Likert-type scales, without reference to any specific facet of the job. The most widely used instrument has been the Job Descriptive Index developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1975). This instrument focuses on five facets of satisfaction: type of work, pay, opportunities for promotion, supervision, and relationship with coworkers.

One of the shortcomings of much of the research done on job satisfaction is that many studies take a static view, looking at a teacher (or group of teachers) at one point in time rather than examining how work values and attitudes change over the course of a teacher's career. Research needs to incorporate this temporal component. Another problem is that most studies have relied on self-report questionnaires. Teachers may feel obliged to give socially acceptable rather than truthful responses to questions. Teachers' altruistic self-perceptions, for example, might prompt them to give less than honest responses to probing questions about salary and other extrinsic incentives (Sergiovanni, 1980). Gruneberg (1979) cautions that questionnaires should be regarded as instruments for approximating the truth rather than as infallible means of measuring attitudes.

In sum, theories of motivation may be helpful in clarifying the needs, drives, and aspirations of the "collective identity" of workers, but job satisfaction ultimately rests on the nature of the individual's values as well as on the nature of the job and work environment itself. Any model of job satisfaction must capture this dynamic interaction between work and worker. In essence, job satisfaction is a complex, fluid relationship of mutual influence; people create their social milieu and are in turn created by it.

A SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

A social-ecological model for understanding job satisfaction rests on the assumption that a teacher's attitudes about work are highly individualistic and cannot easily be explained by broad generalizations about human behavior. Satisfaction in teaching depends on the nature of the individual's values and needs as well as on the nature of the job. Such a model highlights the "reciprocal causation" of the various dimensions. It also accounts for the cognitive processes and coping responses that people use to mediate the demands of their work environment.

The proposition that behavior evolves as a function of the interplay between person and environment is not new. This assertion was expressed symbolically in Kurt Lewin's (1935) classic equation, $B = f(P, E)$. Lewin stressed the need to view behavior (B) as an outcome of the relationship between the person (P) and his or her environment (E). Yet studies growing out of this psychological tradition have not given equal emphasis to both sides of the equation by investigating the person *and* the environment as well as the dynamic interaction between the two. Rather, studies have tended to focus either on enduring personality traits as determinants of behavior or on the environmental forces that shape human behavior.

It was the lack of attention to the interplay between person and environment that led Rudolf Moos (1974, 1979) to formulate his theory of social ecology. He sought to determine why individual behavior often differs sub-

stantially in different settings or milieus. Moos believes that the variance accounted for by consistent differences among settings and by the interaction between environmental and personal characteristics is generally as great or greater than the variance accounted for by consistent differences among persons.

Moos' conceptualization has been used predominantly to study the social climate of different environments and not specifically as a heuristic method for understanding teacher job satisfaction. However, the basic elements in his model provide a good beginning for analyzing the complex variables involved in assessing job satisfaction. Figure 1 represents a reformulation of Moos' social-ecological model, modified to illustrate the important dimensions of job satisfaction.

This person-environment, interactionist model incorporates motivation as a thinking process that mediates between individual and environmental considerations. It recognizes that jobs differ in their demands and opportunities and that teachers differ in their needs and abilities. One teacher's stress is another's welcomed challenge. The model also recognizes that environments shape and are shaped by human behavior; its meaning is as variable as the number of individuals affected. Thus, the various components should be viewed not as independent but rather as synergistic. Change in any one component may well bring about change in others.

Congruity between the teacher's needs and the demands of the work environment leads to a state of harmony and satisfaction. Disparity leads to tension and dissatisfaction. This "goodness of fit" concept draws on the work of several theorists, most notably Henry Murray (1951). Stern (1970) expanded Murray's need-press theory and looked at the difference between anabolic press (conducive to self-enhancing growth) and catabolic press

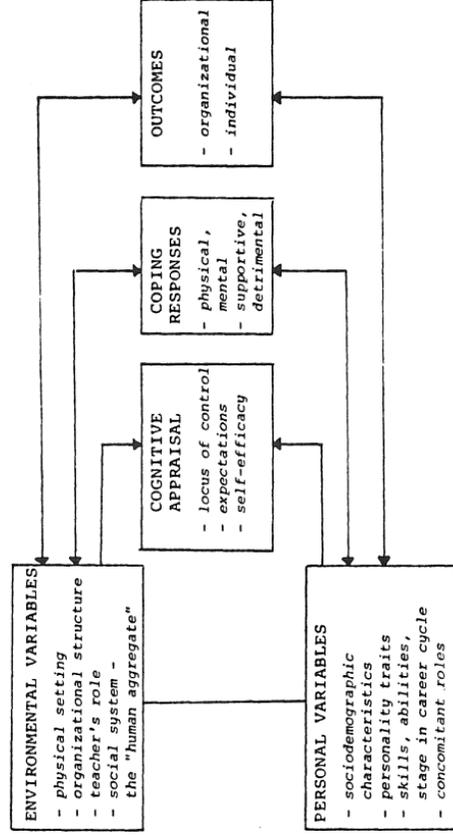


Figure 1. A Social-Ecological Model of Teacher Job Satisfaction

(antithetical to personal growth). The research of Bronfenbrenner (1979), French (1982), Ivancevich and Matteson (1984), and Kendall (1976) also provide support for this theoretical perspective.

Environmental Variables

The environment of the early childhood setting in a social-ecological conceptualization includes several different dimensions. All dimensions interrelate to create the ecological climate of the center, and the climate or milieu is unique to that particular center.

The Physical Setting. Over the years, a vast literature in environmental psychology has emphasized the subtle yet powerful impact of our physical surroundings. Researchers have stressed that the physical design of work environments can influence psychological and physiological states as well as social behavior (Barker, 1968; Hall, 1966; Sommer, 1969; Weinstein, 1979). Environmental psychology in the context of early childhood education looks predominantly at selected environmental variables (such as density—the number of children per activity—noise level, ventilation, light, color, form, texture, and the spatial layout of the facility) in order to measure their effect on children's behavior, the teacher's level of stress, or teacher-child interaction patterns (Gump, 1978; Phye-Perkins, 1980).

The Organizational Structure. Organizational aspects of the early childhood work environment cover a range of administrative issues relating to how the center operates. These administrative components include written and unwritten policies, routine procedures, salary structure, job security, pay and reward systems, opportunities for advancement, staff size, staffing ratios, available support services, and the center's formal and informal decision-making hierarchy. Each center, for example, differs in the degree to which it emphasizes order, conveys clear expectations, maintains control, and responds to change. Organizational structure is closely tied to the leadership style of the administrator and to the effect that various styles have on teacher performance and work attitudes (Coughlan & Cooke, 1974; Silver, 1984).

The limited amount of research conducted on the correlates of job satisfaction in the early childhood work setting suggests that these structural components may play a critical role in shaping worker attitudes. Staff-child ratios, hours of direct contact with children, break and substitute policies, mechanisms for input, and flexibility of center policies have been found to be correlated with staff perceptions of job dissatisfaction and the tendency to suffer burnout (Jorde, 1982; Maslach & Pines, 1977; Whitebook et al., 1982). Additional research is needed to determine the strength of the association between variables and to discover any possible causal connections.

Teacher's Role and Responsibilities. Most studies of teacher job satisfaction consistently reveal that the psychic rewards derived from the teaching task and the pleasure of working with children are far more important to teachers than extrinsic rewards (Lortie, 1975; Sergiovanni, 1967). But the job of teaching is a complex one and not easily defined by a set of specific duties characteristic of all teachers at the preschool level. There are often important differences between what one teacher does in one setting and what another does in a different setting. As a result, teachers' on-the-job responsibilities vary in significant ways.

To be sure, much of the teacher's role includes mundane 'housekeeping' responsibilities like taking attendance, mixing paint, and cleaning up after snack. But teaching is also complicated work, involving intense interpersonal interactions with many students more or less simultaneously. The work entails diagnosis, evaluation, interpretation, and decision making. Also, in many preschools, teaching and administrative roles often overlap, with directors spending a portion of their time working directly with children in addition to supervising other staff. It is not surprising that concerns about role conflict and role ambiguity are expressed by many teachers (Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982). An analysis of role and responsibilities includes such factors as degree of autonomy, control, task content, task complexity, variety, and challenge (Kahn, 1981).

Social System. The quality of interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators and the positive value and recognition that teachers receive from their coteachers are particularly important in teacher's self-reports of job satisfaction as well as in their overall effectiveness in their role (Coughlan & Cooke, 1974; Little, 1982). But the nature of the teaching experience does not often support this kind of collegiality. In many settings, time pressures put interactions between teachers at the margin of their daily work.

The social system of the school refers to more than just the network of relationships among individuals, however. Moos and Insel (1974) refer to the "human aggregate" as an important aspect of the environmental system. This term implies that the character of the environment depends in part on the collective identity of its members. The aggregate characteristics include prototypical age, ability level, socioeconomic background, and level of educational attainment. This kind of group identity may also influence group efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1982; Little, 1982).

Personal Variables

Sociodemographic Characteristics. Teaching at the preschool level has always been a predominantly female occupation. The National Association

for the Education of Young Children estimates that approximately 95% of all child care workers are women (NAEYC, 1986). A majority of the caregiving work force is white and under the age of 35 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1984; Jorde, 1986). It also appears that the socioeconomic background of workers varies considerably. Some workers whose early childhood teaching salary constitutes their entire household income live in near-poverty conditions. Other teachers, however, work part-time, and their teaching salaries contribute to only part of their total household incomes. In a survey of over 3,800 early childhood workers, NAEYC (1984) found that 40% of all respondents indicated that only one-quarter of their household income came from their child care salary.

Considerable research has been conducted on the relationship between the various sociodemographic characteristics of workers in other occupations and their job satisfaction. The correlation between age and job satisfaction is an interesting one. Herzberg (1966) found, for example, that job satisfaction starts high, declines, and then starts to improve again with increasing age. It would be erroneous to draw broad conclusions from these findings, however. The curvilinear relationship Herzberg reported may not be so much a function of age per se but result from the increased opportunity older workers have to find jobs that most suit them. Dissatisfied teachers may simply choose to leave teaching rather than stay in the profession.

Personality Factors. Personality factors refer to those aspects of the individual teacher that describe his or her propensity to behave in certain ways. This includes attitudes and values, sensitivities and fears, time orientation, overall level of self-esteem, and so forth. Personality factors act as conditioning variables as well as determinants of differential reactions to job conditions (Kahn, 1981).

One personality typology that has received considerable attention with respect to its applicability to understanding the nature of people who have become teachers is based on the work of Carl Jung. Myers (1980) expanded Jung's original three dimensions of personality (extraversion/introversion, sensing/intuition, and thinking/feeling) by adding a fourth (perceiving/judging). The result is a typology that includes 16 different personality types, each interacting with the environment in a distinctly different way. The psychometric instrument developed by Myers (the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) has gained wide popularity as an assessment tool for teacher career counseling and inservice staff development (Keirsey & Bates, 1978).

Skills, Abilities, and Stage in Career Cycle. In recent years, there has been convincing evidence that the measurable academic qualifications of individuals entering the field of teaching as well as of those staying in teaching have declined dramatically (Vance & Schlechty, 1982). There is a certain irony in these statistics, because during the same period the level of educa-

tional attainment reflected in the degrees held by teachers increased (Kerr, 1983). At the preschool level, this trend appears to be true as well. The Final Report of the National Day Care Study (Ruopp, Travers, Glantz, & Coelen, 1977) found that only 54% of child care staff had completed some college work. That percentage has now increased to 72% (NAEYC, 1986).

Just how intellectual ability and academic achievement relate to job satisfaction is an open question, however. It is possible that variables such as intelligence and level of cognitive complexity influence a teacher's ability to use information. Some researchers believe this may affect the way in which classroom teaching activities are organized and the degree of stress teachers experience (Franz & Dembo, 1984). Chapman and Hutcheson (1982) investigated differences in skills and abilities and evaluated the criteria individual teachers use to judge success in their professional endeavors. Results of this study demonstrated that those who did and did not leave teaching differed significantly.

Job satisfaction is also closely related to where individuals are in their career cycle. Katz (1972), Fuller (1969), and others have looked at the different stages and corresponding concerns that teachers have during their professional development. From "survival" to "mastery" level, teachers' anxieties and concerns center on very different needs. McLean (1979) concludes that people experience different kinds of vulnerability to occupational stress because of the different expectations associated with each career phase.

Concomitant Roles. Teachers' professional lives should not be viewed separately from their lives outside the school setting. Blase and Pajak (1985) remind us that teachers also participate in other systems of social relations that may have a strong influence on their performance in the classroom. Satisfaction with life and satisfaction with work tend to go hand in hand. Of particular importance is the network of supportive relationships that teachers develop with others. These networks can buffer or modify some of the stressful demands of the work role and its consequences on the individual.

Mediating Variables: Cognitive Appraisal

Perhaps the most critical dimension in the social-ecological paradigm is cognitive appraisal. Cognitive appraisal explains why people with similar abilities and training react quite differently to the same work load or overall job responsibilities. As a kind of filter for interpreting the environment, cognitive appraisal is the person's perception of the environment as being either potentially beneficial, harmful, or irrelevant (Moos, 1979). In other words, it is not objective truth but what people believe to be true that influences behavior. Three aspects of cognitive appraisal merit special attention.

Locus of Control. Individuals react differently to events that they perceive can be personally controlled than to those perceived not in their control (Gatchel, 1980). A rapidly growing literature has shown that perceived control significantly affects self-report, overt motor responses, and physiological responses to the environment (Lefcourt, 1982). As the social learning theory of Rotter (1966) suggests, internal control is exhibited by individuals who believe that an event or outcome is contingent on their own behavior or on relatively permanent characteristics such as ability. The belief that an event is caused by factors beyond the individual's control (e.g., luck, task difficulty, or the influence of others) has been labeled external control. Locus of control has been found to be related to the level of stress teachers experience (Harris, Halpin, & Halpin, 1984).

Teacher Expectations. Individuals are attracted to teaching for a great variety of reasons, but it is the importance or valance attached to those specific reasons that separates teachers' "collective motivation" from individual perceptions of job satisfaction. Vroom's (1964) needs/fulfillment expectancy theory helps explain why some teachers, given similar incentives for performance, view their respective satisfaction levels differently. Teacher's salaries provide a good example. Money as a motivational factor in job satisfaction has been downplayed in teacher's self-reports and falls into the category of extrinsic "hygiene" factors, as detailed by Herzberg (1966). But the problem with money is that it means different things to different people. To some, it is a powerful motivator, for it can buy status and security. For others, it is a legitimate form of recognition. Money also has a symbolic value beyond its purchasing value because it is an important indicator of equity (Sergiovanni, 1980).

Self-percepts of Efficacy. Efficacy expectations reflect a person's subjective estimation that he or she has the capacity to cope successfully with different situations (Bandura, 1982). Self-efficacy expectations influence thought patterns, actions, and emotional arousal. How people judge their capabilities often determines their motivation and response behavior. Judgments of self-efficacy also determine just how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles. Self-efficacy has been shown to be positively correlated with both productivity and job satisfaction (Ashton & Webb, 1984; Passe, 1984).

Coping Responses

Teachers respond to the various demands of their work environment in a variety of ways. Their coping responses can be either positive or negative. In order to typify teachers' behavior, Feitler and Tokar (1981) have developed a taxonomy of physical and mental, as well as destructive and supportive, coping strategies. Physical coping includes activities such as relaxation exer-

cises, walking, jogging, or engaging in other forms of physical exercise. Mental coping includes meditation, reading, watching television, or doing crafts and engaging in hobbies. Destructive coping includes eating excessively, smoking, drinking, staying home from work, or withdrawing from contact with others. Supportive coping includes talking with friends and colleagues, weighing alternatives, seeking advice, testing new behaviors, or making changes to decrease the stressfulness of environmental stimuli.

Outcomes

Outcomes are all the possible consequences stemming from how teachers respond to their role and responsibilities, given their personal repertoire of skills, abilities, and coping strategies.

Organizational Consequences. Some outcomes affect the organization through teacher productivity, absenteeism, and employee turnover. Several studies have been conducted to investigate the association between overall job satisfaction and teacher morale, absenteeism, and attrition (Chapman & Hutcheson, 1982; Chapman & Lowther, 1982; Pettegrew & Wolf, 1981). It is not surprising that there is a consistent negative relationship between probability of resignation and low job satisfaction, morale, and commitment to the organization. Here again, a causal connection would be difficult to make because teachers also leave their positions to start families, to return to school, or for a variety of other reasons not related to dissatisfaction.

Among educators, the prevailing assumption has always been that higher levels of job satisfaction result in better performance on the job. Studies have generated contradictory results regarding this proposition, however. In reviewing these studies, Coughlan and Cooke (1974) conclude that generalizations are difficult to draw because of the inconsistency in indicators used to measure aspects of productivity and satisfaction. Research is needed that specifically looks at the association between positive outcomes in young children and teacher work attitudes at the early childhood level.

Individual Consequences. Outcomes can also be individual in nature, affecting a teacher's psychological and physical well-being. When a person lacks the ability to meet the requirements of a job, or when the opportunities and rewards of that role are too meager to satisfy needs, stress is a predictable consequence. In both cases, demand exceeds supply, and the objective fit between the person and the environment is less than perfect. A growing body of literature demonstrates the negative consequences of work stress on the teacher's physical and psychological well-being (Coates & Thoresen, 1976; Jorde, 1982; Maslach & Pines, 1977; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979). But teacher anxiety, stress, and burnout are global constructs that have been operationally defined in a number of ways. Further research is needed that takes a performance-oriented approach in directly assessing the response modes in which stress and anxiety are typically experienced.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL FOR RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS

The social-ecological model of job satisfaction described here provides a dynamic, interactional view that emphasizes the reciprocal person-environment processes found in the workplace. As presented, the model has heuristic value for helping educational researchers understand the complex interrelationship between worker and workplace. But the model also has important implications for teacher educators and early childhood practitioners. From a practical standpoint, the "goodness of fit" criteria can serve as a framework for structuring the preservice and inservice professional development of child care workers.

The "goodness of fit" concept rests on the assumption that there are two kinds of congruence between the person and the work environment. The first kind of fit (French, Rogers, & Cobb, 1974) deals with how the individual's skills and abilities match the demands and requirements of the job. This perspective is particularly important to include in preservice training. Vocational counseling that provides a realistic assessment of person-environment variables may help students achieve a harmonious match. Some students entering early childhood education hold occupational stereotypes that are incorrect. Teacher educators can assist these prospective child care workers by providing opportunities for in-depth self-assessment to help them understand how their individual preferences, values, skills, attitudes, and personality predispositions may be better suited for some work environments than for others. The work of John Holland (1973) may be particularly useful in this regard. Holland's Self-Directed Search, a vocational preference measure, assists individuals in matching personality characteristics and work environments and in anticipating certain outcomes, such as vocational achievement, competence on the job, and social behavior.

The second type of congruence (French, 1982) is the degree to which the work environment meets the worker's needs. From the perspective of inservice professional development, practitioners can use the "goodness of fit" criteria to structure optimal work environments that promote positive work attitudes. A social-ecological model allows us to shift from an exclusively person-centered or context-centered explanation of job satisfaction to one that recognizes the dynamic interplay between both dimensions. Program administrators who are aware of potential fit-misfit patterns might consider appropriate adjustments within their control; these might concern the physical setting, the organizational structure, the assignment of roles and responsibilities, and the interpersonal relations among staff. Certainly, such intervention requires administrator awareness of the factors that, while promoting positive behaviors and attitudes, do not compromise program goals. Isolating aspects of the interpersonal and nonpersonal environment that

contribute to feelings of job dissatisfaction and stress is the first step in improving workers' attitudes.

McNergney (1980) believes that educators have championed the individual in their educational rhetoric but have shown only minimal concern for teachers as individuals in the way they structure inservice professional development. According to McNergney, prescriptive remedies for enhancing job satisfaction that focus on "teachers" as a group are bound to prove disappointing. Job satisfaction must be approached from the perspective of the individual teacher. A person's cognitive, motivational, value, and sensory orientations should provide the direction for matching environmental support to personal needs (Hunt, 1975).

An investigation of the literature on job satisfaction reveals a number of studies that approach the construct unidimensionally—that is, with an emphasis on causal factors associated with either individual or environmental dimensions. It is no wonder that the results across studies have been inconsistent. If the knowledge of teacher job satisfaction is to be expanded, researchers must be sensitive to the multivariate nature of teacher attitudes and behaviors. Investigating the interactions and complex relationships among and between variables may promote a clear and consistent comprehension of the intricate balance between the individual and the work context.

Two recent studies that take a multidimensional approach and look at the interplay between individual needs and environmental conditions offer some preliminary evidence that individual differences do exist in the effects of congruence and incongruence. Arney (1984) cites evidence that empirical substantiation of the effects of person-environment interaction on behavior is not only possible but can explain more behavioral variance than either situational or individual factors alone. She looked specifically at the interactions among such contextual and personality variables as internal and external locus of control; organizational structure (centralization, formalization, and complexity); and perceived role ambiguity as they related to job stress, concluding that stress behavior can be accurately described as a function of the reciprocity between the individual and the situation.

Ivancevich and Matteson (1984) approached the person-environment conceptualization somewhat differently by looking at specific types of behavior patterns (Type A and Type B behaviors) and specific types of work environments (Type A and Type B environments). Their conceptualization is noteworthy because it makes an important differentiation between the environment as an objective set of events and conditions and the worker's subjective interpretation of those events and conditions. Such variables as perceived controllability, time pressure, and job challenge define this subjective environment.

These studies are not offered as unequivocal support for the person-work environment model, but the methodological approaches they employ

may provide useful information both for understanding the interactions associated with job satisfaction and for predicting level of satisfaction in different environments. In addition, research designs are needed that look at job satisfaction from a longitudinal perspective. It will be important in the future to test the "goodness of fit" concept over an individual's entire working career and to examine the distinction between current fit and expected fit.

CONCLUSION

Lightfoot (1983) reminds us that schools need to be thought of as environments that not only inspire the learning and socialization of young children but also encourage the optimum development of adults. School administrators who respect the teacher's need for a work environment that provides clarity and harmony in roles and expectations, rather than conflict and ambiguity, go a long way in promoting confidence, competence, and overall commitment to pedagogical tasks. An analysis of the intertwining variables that influence work attitudes is a good beginning. We have seen, however, that the job satisfaction riddle defies simple solutions. Being satisfied with one's work is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon that must be viewed with the individual teacher in mind. Future research exploring the important interplay of variables in the person-environment fit may be a step in the right direction to supporting teacher competence and satisfaction.

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