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ROLE CONSENSUS AND JOB SATISFACTION IN THE
EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION

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requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
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ABSTRACT

A theory of social exchange was used as the framework for investigating role consensus between the Head Teacher and his staff on expectations of teacher and Head Teacher role and relating consensus to teacher job satisfaction. Association between job satisfaction and a number of personal variables was also hypothesised.

The sample consisted of 147 intermediate school teachers in the ten intermediate schools in a New Zealand city. Only one of two central hypotheses proved significant. Role consensus between the Head Teacher and his staff on expectations of Head Teacher behaviour was positively related to job satisfaction, in that the greater the role consensus the greater the job satisfaction. No relationship was found between role consensus on expectations of teacher behaviour and job satisfaction. Only one of the personal variables, sex, proved to be related to job satisfaction, in that female teachers expressed greater job satisfaction than male teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Research into job satisfaction continues to reveal that there is a wide variety of determinants. Over time, these determinants have become polarized into psychological and sociological factors, with the result that studies tend to adopt one orientation or another. The reasons for this polarization are not difficult to find in that job satisfaction as a causal factor can have a considerable effect both on the personal adjustment of the individual as well as on the maintenance of the system within which he works. In adopting a sociological perspective, the present study attempts to consider job satisfaction as being indicative of system cohesion.

This orientation has potential usefulness in as much as job attitudes of teachers presumably effect morale and consequently the holding power of the profession. Furthermore an investigation of teacher job satisfaction is timely in that not only is there a dearth of information on the New Zealand teaching profession, but also an understanding of the nature of teacher job satisfaction may well lead to control over deleterious influences.

However, some practical difficulties are apparent. Although job satisfaction has received much attention within economic organizations, scales have rarely been developed or administered within educational organizations. New scales are required. But for any scale to be of use, its theoretical legitimacy must be made explicit. The present study is an initial attempt to develop such a scale, which on the one hand incorporates a theoretical framework, and on the other hand focuses at the empirical level on the educational organization.

The task requires that a number of issues be dealt with, for example: the cooperation and communication in the organization; the degree of consensus on organizational goals; the possible relationship between job satisfaction and consensus on the roles of various system members. In an effort to deal

with these issues, the present research attempts to measure job satisfaction in the teaching profession and the relationship between the job satisfaction and role consensus of its members.

In the thesis, Chapter I reviews ways of measuring job satisfaction, and elaborates some of the determinants of job satisfaction. Chapter II discusses the development and language of role theory, while Chapter III considers empirical studies completed within the role theory tradition and more specifically those relating to teacher role expectations and role consensus. In Chapter IV a theoretical basis for the investigation is presented and a number of hypotheses listed. The methodology and scope of the study are detailed in Chapter V, along with a description of the sample characteristics. Chapter VI reports role behaviour expectations, role consensus and job satisfaction findings. Chapter VII sets out the results of the hypotheses testing. The final chapter discusses the findings and documents their implications.

CHAPTER I

JOB SATISFACTION

Most of the research completed on job satisfaction has been carried out within industrial organizations or small experimental groups. Comparatively speaking, few studies have been completed in educational institutions, and these have tended to treat job satisfaction as incidental rather than central. It is difficult and possibly dangerous to endeavour to relate industrial findings to the educational situation, but perhaps in this instance some tentative guidelines for educational research can be established.

This chapter is in two sections with the first section describing ways of measuring job satisfaction, and the second section elaborating some of the determinants of job satisfaction.

The Measurement of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been equated with a variety of concepts including morale, and job attitude. For example, Likert and Willits (1940) defined job morale as an individual's, 'mental attitude toward all features of his work and toward all of the people with whom he works.'

Alternatively, Vroom (1964) maintained that,

'the term job satisfaction ... is the conceptual equivalent of the valence of the job or work role to the person performing it.'

Job satisfaction, job attitudes and morale can all be referred to in a general or specific sense, although most investigators have tended to treat the concepts as a rather complex set of variables. Such an approach gives rise to the problem of what combination of variables can be taken to represent a level of job satisfaction. As early as 1935, Hoppeck pointed out the problem of gaining an equitable satisfaction score, by emphasising the difficulty in assigning proper weights to each of the variables involved,

'Because of the high probability that these weights differ greatly from one person to another; and the possibility that some single item may for one subject outweigh all of the others, while a different item may be the all-important one for another subject, it

seems inevitable that any scoring key would be seriously misleading in some cases. We suspect that this may be the reason for the reliability of our own item score, based upon about a hundred items, being only four points higher than the reliability of the satisfaction index, based upon only four responses; and that it may likewise account for the correlation between the two being .67 In other words, the mere summation of satisfaction with various aspects of the job, is not equivalent to satisfaction with the job as a whole.'

In multi-variable instruments, because of the relative salience of specific items, one item might provide better predictive power than all the others either singly or together. Against this, it may even be more meaningful to have the employee himself assess his general job satisfaction. This latter procedure allows the employee to give to each aspect of his job a relative weighting, which may be more accurate for him than any objective computation. The disadvantage is that a temporary state of elation or depression may overshadow the subject's estimation, so that his expressed satisfaction is somewhat different from his usual feelings.

Despite this, many job satisfaction scales have taken a number of variables and, in considering them to be of equal importance, have given each equal weighting. The scales have tended to include either a large number of separate items or a series of grouped items. Examples of the former are provided by the Kerr Tear Ballot (Kerr, 1948) and the Brayfield-Rothe Scale (Brayfield and Rothe, 1951), while a scale incorporating a series of grouped items is the instrument of the Survey Research Studies (Katz, Maccoby and Morse, 1950; Katz, Maccoby, Gurin and Floor, 1951; Morse, 1953) which gave equal weighting to four dimensions of employee satisfaction (in contrast to Hoppock's 100 single items). These four dimensions were: intrinsic job satisfaction, financial and job status satisfaction, company involvement, and pride in group performance.

A more recent scale and one that has undergone extensive validity and reliability checks is the Job Description Index, compiled by Smith and her associates (Hulin, Smith, Kendall, and Locke, 1963; Macaulay, Smith, Locke, Kendall, and Hulin, 1963; Kendall, Smith, Hulin and Locke, 1963; Locke, Smith, Hulin and Kendall, 1963; Smith and Kendall, 1963; Smith, Kendall and Hulin,

1969). Like the Survey Research Centre Studies scale, the J.D.I. includes also dimensionalised items. There are five aspects: type of work, pay, opportunities for promotion, supervision and people on the job.

Aspects of Job Satisfaction - Many investigators have endeavoured to determine the amount of association between job satisfaction measures. By intercorrelations, factor and cluster analysis, the number and nature of the dimensions needed to account for the results have been determined. While the results have invariably shown measures of different aspects of satisfaction, more specific factors which have frequently emerged from such studies have been: attitudes toward the company and its management (Wherry, 1954; Ash, 1954; Dabas, 1958; Roach, 1958; Twery, Schmid and Wrigley, 1958; Kahn, 1960; Harrison, 1961), promotional opportunities (Harrison, 1961; Kendall, Smith, Hulin and Locke, 1963), the content of the job (Baehr, 1954; Ash, 1954; Roach, 1958; Kendall, Smith, Hulin and Locke, 1963), supervision (Baehr, 1954; Ash, 1954; Dabas, 1958; Roach, 1958; Twery, Schmid and Wrigley, 1958; Kahn, 1960; Harrison, 1961; Kendall, Smith, Hulin and Locke, 1963), financial rewards (Wherry, 1954; Ash, 1954; Dabas, 1958; Roach, 1958; Kahn, 1960; Harrison, 1961; Kendall, Smith, Hulin and Locke, 1963), working conditions (Wherry, 1954; Dabas, 1958; Harrison, 1961), and co-workers (Roach, 1958; Twery, Schmid and Wrigley, 1958; Kendall, Smith, Hulin and Locke, 1963).

Vroom (1963) has suggested that this tendency for different measures of satisfaction to be positively interrelated may arise from the possibility that work situations providing one type of reward may also provide other types of rewards, e.g. he notes that jobs which are highly paid often tend to offer a greater variety of stimulation and higher status. Vroom further suggests that various measures of satisfaction may be associated through being functionally interdependent. Changes in satisfaction with one aspect (e.g. supervision), may result in changes in satisfaction with another aspect (e.g. the content of the work.)

There would be obvious advantages if a scale could be

developed in which all of the above job satisfaction work role variables were included. The Job Description Index is one attempt towards this, but although the scale has been tested among 952 people in seven different organizations, it does not appear particularly suited to professional groups, in that neither the wording nor many of the actual items are entirely applicable. For example, the J.D.I. includes a dimension relating to aspects of job supervision. Most of these items are not appropriate to professional people, for characteristically they enjoy a considerable amount of autonomy and responsibility. Furthermore, terms such as 'smart', 'simple', and 'bad' are seldom used to describe aspects of the professional person's job.

Another limiting factor in the usefulness of the job satisfaction scales is that few, if any, have evolved from a theoretical framework. Most appear to have originated in the comments of workers and to have then undergone empirical validation. This again reduces the usefulness of the scales to the group of workers from whom the comments were drawn. The incorporation of a theoretical framework in the development of job satisfaction scales could well allow greater comparison of job satisfaction between various groups.

Determinants of Job Satisfaction

One of the problems confronting the researcher of any organization is that people differ in the extent to which they report satisfaction. It is often assumed that the explanation of these differences lies in the nature of the task situation. It is argued that individuals express different amounts of job satisfaction because they have different colleagues or different supervisors, or because they have different responsibilities, and so on. Essentially the different degrees of job satisfaction are expressed as a response to the behaviour of the others with whom the individuals work, the conditions in which they work and the rewards they receive.

For the purpose of this present review, it seems appropriate now to consider the literature on job satisfaction according to the various kinds of job or work variables which have been thought to effect job satisfaction. Aspects which

appear to have been substantiated by a considerable body of research, include: influence on decision making, promotional opportunities; supervisory consideration; similarity of attitudes; interaction; size of work group; supervision; goal interdependence; pay. (1) These aspects are now elaborated in anticipation of their incorporation in the current investigation.

(a) influence in decision making - There is a reasonable amount of evidence to show that people who are satisfied with their jobs tend to report that they have greater opportunity to influence decisions which have effects on them. Baumgartell (1956) noted that in a three-fold typology of leadership behaviour (similar to Lewin, Lippitt and White's authoritarian, laissez-faire and democratic leadership types, 1939) those working under participative leadership exhibited significantly more positive attitudes towards their director than those working under directive leadership. Similar evidence has been found among workers in an automobile manufacturing plant (Jacobson, 1951); among 2,680 female skilled workers in 48 sections of a large company (Ross and Zander, 1957); and among white collar workers (Morse, 1953). With the exception of the last, all of the above studies were based on reports of subordinates and thus may have been subject to the tendency to ascribe favourable practices to favoured supervisors. In Morse's experiment (1953), use was made of the supervisor's reports of the white collar workers' behaviour as the basis for distinguishing between those giving close supervision and those giving general supervision. No great difference was detected among the attitudes of the workers under the two types of supervisors, for while those workers under general supervision showed a strong degree of identification with their division and described their supervisors as being effective in personnel matters, they manifested less positive attitudes toward overall company policies than did the employees receiving close supervision.

(1) The author is indebted to Vroom (1964) whose discussion of the Determinants of Job Satisfaction has been drawn upon for this review.

Three field studies in which the amount of influence was treated as the independent variable and its effects on satisfaction measured, have also produced mixed results (Morse and Reimer, 1956; French, Israel and As, 1960; Kay, French and Meyer, 1962). In Morse and Reimer's study (1956), there was an increase in satisfaction under an autonomy programme, and a decrease under the hierarchially controlled programme. The study of French, Israel and As (1960), yielded a difference in satisfaction between a participative and a control group that was, on the whole, not significant. Similarly Kay, French and Meyer's field study (1962) showed little difference in attitudes among workers in high or low participation groups in an aircraft manufacturing plant.

It would seem that the amount of satisfaction obtained from participation in decision making might vary considerably with the nature of the decisions involved, the expectations of the persons involved, and the nature of the social situation in which the decision is made. It would also appear that job satisfaction is further determined by the expectations that group members hold for the amount of influence they are allowed in decision making. The difference between the expected and actual amount of influence would seem to influence job satisfaction directly.

(b) promotional opportunities - An employees' promotion invariably involves changes in supervisor, co-workers, job content and pay, so that promotional opportunities as a determinant of job satisfaction can rarely be assessed in a systematic manner. Job satisfaction resulting from promotion seems to be largely determined by the amount of promotion expected (if at all) as compared with the amount of promotion gained (if at all). Thus, both Morse (1953) and Sirota (1959) found a positive relationship between individuals' statements of their promotional opportunities, and their satisfaction with promotional opportunities. They also discerned a negative relationship between measures of promotional frustration and measures of attitudes towards the company. Similarly, absenteeism was found to be higher among individuals who, though not promoted, felt that they deserved to have been (Patchen, 1960).

Somewhat conflicting results were reported by Spector (1956) whose laboratory experiment revealed that morale was higher among the subjects who believed they had a low probability of promotion, than among those who believed they had a high probability. Furthermore, those receiving promotion had higher morale than those who did not, regardless of their expectations. Spector concluded that,

'personnel managers might be wise to underplay, rather than overplay, the opportunities for advancement in their organizations' (1956).

The discrepancy between Spector's finding of higher morale among those with low promotional expectations and Morse's (1953) and Sirota's (1959) findings of a positive correlation between promotional expectations and satisfactions, can be reconciled by considering the difference in the experimental methods. Morse and Sirota took measures of promotional expectations and job satisfaction concurrently so that the workers were reporting what they believed to be their chances for a promotion before the actual decision concerning promotions was made. As a result there was a positive association between expectation and satisfaction. On the other hand Spector did not measure satisfaction until after the promotions were made, and so found a negative relationship between the earlier expectations and satisfaction. It might be predicted that had Spector gained a measurement of satisfaction before the decision concerning promotion was made, he would have also found a positive relationship between promotional opportunities and job satisfaction.

(c) supervisory consideration - There is considerable evidence that the satisfaction of subordinates is related to the orientation of supervisors to their employees. The Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire (Hemphill and Coons, 1957), and the Leadership Opinion Questionnaire (Fleishman, 1957), have both identified two major independent dimensions of leader behaviour which have been called respectively, 'Consideration' and 'Initiating Structure'. The former dimension of Consideration includes supervisory behaviour 'indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect and warmth' (Halpin and Winer, 1957), while the latter dimension includes behaviour in which

the supervisor organizes and defines group activities and his relation to the group. The L.B.D.Q. was subsequently modified for use in military and educational institutions, by Halpin (1957) and Halpin and Winer (1957).

Results from the use of these instruments have revealed positive associations between the consideration of aircraft commanders and their crews' satisfaction (Halpin and Winer, 1957; Halpin, 1957); between the consideration of school superintendents and the job satisfaction of elementary school teachers (Seeman, 1957); and between the consideration of foremen and the morale of subordinates (Fleishman, Harris and Burt, 1955). The latter research also showed that the amount of consideration displayed by a supervisor is also negatively related to such behavioural measures as absences, turnover and grievances.

One might conclude from these findings that supervisor consideration of subordinates results in a high level of satisfaction, which is in turn reflected in relatively low turnover rates, grievances and absences. However other possible relationships must also be considered. One such possibility is that the direction of causality may in fact be reversed and that supervisors might display a greater degree of consideration for subordinates whom they perceive to be satisfied. Pelz (1951) further suggested that the effects of supervisor consideration on employee satisfaction depended on the amount of influence exercised by the supervisor on his own superior. He concluded that attempts by influential supervisors to assist their subordinates to achieve their goals will usually succeed and will result in higher employee satisfaction, whereas similar attempts by noninfluential supervisors are less likely to succeed to affect satisfaction.

Most of the research investigating the relationship between supervisory consideration and subordinate satisfaction has involved descriptions of the behaviour of one person by another, a method which tends towards subject bias. Perhaps the association between supervisory consideration and subordinate attitudes merely reflects the assumption that subordinates who like their supervisors will describe them in terms somewhat

different from those used by subordinates who dislike their supervisors. Furthermore, there is mounting evidence to show that subordinates' descriptions of the behaviour of their supervisors are not highly related to such descriptions by respectively: the supervisor himself (Gross, 1956; Vroom, 1960); the supervisor's superior (Besco and Lawshe, 1959; Vroom, 1960); or the supervisor's peers (Vroom, 1960). Nor are they related to observations based on the use of time sampling methods (Gross, 1956). Clearly there is a difference between the expected and actual behaviour of the supervisor, according to the position or biases held by the respondent or observer.

(d) similarity of attitudes - One might expect that where group members have similar attitudes towards an object or where interaction leads to the recognition of similar attitudes, there would be greater job satisfaction and greater attractiveness of the group to its members. The evidence is however somewhat conflicting.

Newcomb hypothesised that,

'insofar as communication results in the perception of increased similarity of attitude toward important and relevant objects, it will also be followed by an increase in positive attraction.'

Such a perception is assumed to be rewarding because it permits the 'ready calculability of the other's behaviour' as well as the validation of one's own orientation towards the object (1953). Newcomb (1956, 1961) did in fact find significant correlations between a number of different measures of the amount of similarity in attitudes of pairs of college students and measures of the attraction to one another. Other studies, however, have found little or no relationship between attitude similarity and system cohesiveness. For example, no consistent relationship was found between the similarity of group members in age or education and their cohesiveness (Seashore, 1954; Hoffman, 1958).

The differences among these findings may be due to the varying aspects of interpersonal similarity studied. Furthermore, the effects of similarity of attitudes and attraction may be related to the importance of the attitudes to the individuals

and their relevance to interaction between them.

(e) interaction - Homans indicated the importance of interaction in the development of attitudes between individuals when he hypothesised that,

'If the frequency of interaction between two or more persons increases, the degree of their liking for one another will increase, and vice versa.' (1950)

This would suggest that work groups would be attractive to their members to the extent to which the nature of the situations allows or requires interaction. Evidence to support Homans' hypothesis has come from Festinger, Schachter and Back (1950) who found that the frequency of social choices between families was an inverse function of the physical distance between the houses which they occupied. Similarly, propinquity was found to be a major determinant of interpersonal attraction between college students living in the same house (Newcomb, 1956, 1960); to be positively related to sociometric preferences among jury members (Strodtbeck and Hook, 1961); and also to be positively related to the amount of attraction between crew members on Air Force bombers (Kipnis, 1957).

Workers' job satisfaction is also related to their opportunities for interaction with others on the job. Several researchers have found that organizations providing the least opportunity for conversations among workers have lower morale and a higher turnover rate (Kerr, Koppelman, and Sullivan, 1951; Sawatsky, 1951; Walker and Guest, 1952; Richards and Dobryns, 1957).

It would seem that those organizations which isolate their employees for part or most of the day from fellow-employees may find a lowering of job satisfaction. Thus interaction with clients or pupils may or may not be a satisfying substitute for the professionals' isolation from his colleagues.

(f) size of work group - A correlation between the size of work groups and members' job satisfaction has been reported in the sense that larger work groups have been shown to have lower cohesiveness or morale (Worthy, 1950; Seashore, 1954; Hemphill, 1956). While it would appear that the total amount of interaction between any two individuals in a large group might be lessened as a consequence of the larger number of interacting

persons available, it not necessarily follows that the total interaction by any group member would be decreased.

In attempting to reconcile these findings with Homans' hypothesis concerning the relationship between the frequency of interaction between two or more persons and the degree of their liking, it would seem more correct to say that 'interaction may lead to the emergence of both positive and negative attitudes' (Vroom, 1964). A fuller explanation has been suggested by Seashore (1954), when he points out that not only is the amount of interaction an important factor, but also its content. Similarly Cartwright and Zander (1960) maintain that,

'There is no convincing evidence ... that interaction which is unpleasant will make persons better like one another.'

(g) supervision - Of all the research relating to correlates of job satisfaction, studies of supervision completed in industrial organizations are perhaps the least applicable to educational organizations, for whereas in the former the supervision given is from the position of supervisor to that of subordinate, supervision in an educational institution has overtones of professionalism. Supervision is, on the whole, of a general rather than a specific nature. Furthermore with the considerable autonomy allowed in teaching, supervision does not occur to the extent it does in industrial organizations.

From the research reported it seems that the satisfaction group members express with the leadership they receive is affected to a large extent by attributes of the person providing the leadership. There appear to be two approaches characteristically taken when attempts are made to explain this focus, viz, the 'personality' of the supervisor, and the person's behaviour in the work situation. It is somewhat easier to investigate personality variables than behaviour variables of supervisors in that a test situation can be established and the responses scored, while obtaining a systematic picture of a supervisor's behaviour in situations involving subordinates is a considerably more difficult task. Reviews of the empirical evidence of the role of personality variables in leadership have been undertaken by Jenkins (1947), Stogdill (1948), and Mann (1959). In general, the correlations between personality

variables, and leadership criterion are shown to be low, with considerable variation in the size and direction of the relationship from study to study. There seems to be little research completed, even in industrial organizations, on the effects of greater or lesser amounts of supervision. Perhaps this is because of the many related factors, such as job level, amount of autonomy, job content, specialisation, etc. It might be that differences in the job content of supervision make it impossible to generalise findings on any specific relationship between supervision and job satisfaction.

(h) goal interdependence - Partially related to the type of supervision provided is the extent to which the goals of the group members overlap. It might be assumed that interactions between two persons would be satisfying to both if interaction enables each person to move towards the attainment of his goals. Deutsch (1940) conceptualised the goals of two persons as being 'promotively interdependent' if entry into the goal region by one person results in entry into the goal region by the other person. Conversely, the goals of two or more persons are 'contriently interdependent' if entry into the goal region by each person precludes entry into the goal region by the other person. In an experiment involving five-person discussion groups, Deutsch (1949) created promotive and contrient interdependence according to the manner in which psychology grades were assigned. He noted that promotively interdependent groups were more productive, and their members exhibited a more favourable evaluation of the group than did the contriently interdependent groups. Jones and Vroom (1964) made a similar finding, also noting that the promotively interdependent persons were more satisfied with their own performance than the contriently interdependent persons.

Research focussing exclusively on goal interdependence in an organization or professional group has yet to be carried out. It would seem that according to the research completed in small group experiments, group goals and incentives invoke higher productivity and satisfaction than individual incentives. It might be predicted that job satisfaction among employees with a considerable amount of autonomy, is less dependent on these

group incentives.

(i) pay - Financial reward has traditionally been considered one of the central concerns of employees. However, many of the findings support the long held contention that satisfaction is dependent on relative rather than absolute wage levels (Helson, 1947; Patchen, 1961). Coupled with this is the view of social scientists that social factors are just as important as economic factors in determining job satisfaction. However, consideration of the correlational information shows a positive relationship between income level and job satisfaction. Several follow-up studies of college graduates (Thompson, 1939; Miller, 1941; Barnett, Handelsman, Stewart, and Super, 1952) provide support for such a relationship, as do: (i) investigations in British factories by Marriott and Denerley (1955) and on a national sample in the United States (Centers and Cantril, 1946); (ii) Terman and Oden's follow-up (1959) of the gifted children whom they had studied thirty-five years earlier; and (iii) Lawler and Porter's (1963) investigation of the level of wages received by almost 2000 managers and the finding that there was a positive relationship between their wages and job satisfaction when managerial level was held constant.

Summary

It would seem that the prevailing assumption guiding investigations of job satisfaction is that the varying degrees of satisfaction reflect differences in the nature of the work situations of individuals. Researchers have thus attempted to establish the effects on job satisfaction of such aspects of work roles as the nature of supervision the individual receives, the amount of interaction that occurs, his chances of promotion, the kind of work group of which he is a member, the amount of his wages, and the similarity of attitudes among the work group. It would seem however that there is a great deal of variance in job satisfaction that remains to be explained not only in the industrial organizations in which most of this research has been carried out, but more especially in other organizations,

such as schools.

Admittedly, research in economic organizations may have some relevance to the teaching profession. However the possibility that there are many unique aspects of teacher satisfaction cannot be ignored. It is with a view to considering the relationship of role consensus and job satisfaction within the educational organization, that the following chapter discusses the development of role theory and more especially a number of terms relevant to the present investigation.