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Teachers' motivation and satisfaction for professional activity

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Abstract

This study aims to test if are differences in the levels of job satisfaction varying with the gender, the professional position given by the level of continuous training held (through tenure and teaching degrees) and the dominant needs. The sample consisted of 122 Romanian teachers from primary, secondary and high schools. Results did no indicate differences between men and women in overall job satisfaction and its dimensions, but satisfaction is affected by the level of continuous training. Also, job satisfaction is influenced by the intensity of the needs of achievement and affiliation.

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1. Introduction

Work motivation is a relevant construct, both theoretical and practical, due to its association and direct implications on performances at individual and organizational levels. Theories regarding job motivation did not exhaust this issue yet, but are rather starting points in trying to optimize the job motivation in organizations. McClelland's model of motivation (1958) supports the idea that organizations offer to their members the opportunity to satisfy three important needs: achievement (individual's need for significant accomplishment, high standards or mastering of skills), affiliation (need of friendship, cooperation and interpersonal relations), and power (desire to be important, to have influence on people). The Alderfer's ERG Theory (1969) states that are three groups of core needs gradually be satisfied by work: existence (the survival needs concerned with providing our basic material existence requirements), relatedness (maintaining interpersonal relationships with the social environment), and growth (personal development). A different concept but closely related to work motivation is job satisfaction. Motivation

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and satisfaction are intimately related. Job satisfaction is one of the overall efficiency work factors. The “Dual Structure Theory”, also known as “Motivation-Hygiene Theory” (Herzberg, 1959) explains job satisfaction starting from the premise of a discontinuity between the factors which cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace. Thus, job satisfaction is determined by a certain type of factors who arising from intrinsic conditions of the job itself and refer to the work content: performance, work itself, assigned or assumed responsibilities, promotion, recognition of contribution and effort, personal growth, career development. Motivation factors give positive satisfaction. Instead, dissatisfaction results from the absence of “hygiene” factors which are extrinsic and refer to the work environment and organizational context (salaries, different benefits, safety, work conditions, social status, personal policy, managerial competences, relationships with superiors, peers and subordinates). Intrinsic rewards surrounding a job are more satisfying and motivating (Herzberg, 1964, 1968).

Studies have shown that teachers are motivated more intrinsic than extrinsic. Many other factors have been examined in attempts to find which ones promote teachers’ motivation and satisfaction. The factors associated with teachers’ job satisfaction are intrinsic, extrinsic and demographic. Gender, length of service, education, age, responsibility levels, teaching experience are among the demographic variables which significantly affect job satisfaction. The findings regarding the role of the gender differences in job satisfaction are contradictory. Studies reported either higher levels of job satisfaction on women (Hodson, 1989; Oshagbemi, 2000), which are more satisfied with their teaching career than men (Chapman, Lowther, 1982), or women were significantly less satisfied with their incomes than men (Bishay, 1996), or the absence of gender differences in overall job satisfaction level (Clark, 1997). A study conducted on 36,000 elementary and secondary public school teachers demonstrated that female teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction than male teachers and teachers’ job satisfaction showed weak correlations with salary and benefits (Perie and Baker, 1997).

2. Purpose of study

The main objectives of this study are the following: 1. to investigate if are gender differences in teachers’ job satisfaction; 2. to verify if professional position given by the level of continuous training held (tenure or teaching degrees) influences job satisfaction; 3. to test if the level of job satisfaction is influenced by the dominant needs for work, namely whether are or not differences in teachers’ job satisfaction depending on the intensity of the four types of important needs.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 122 participants, selected randomly, Romanian teachers in primary, secondary and college schools, aged from 22 to 65 years (mean= 41.05 years, median=40, s.d.=10.36 years) and a length of service in educational system from 1 to 46 years (mean=16.84 years, s. d.=10.48, median=14 years). The distribution of the sample by gender criterion is 97 female (79.5%) and 25 male (20.5%), and by the work environment is 106 urban (86.9%) and 16 rural (13.1%). 75 (61.5%) are teachers in high schools, 32 (26.2%) are in secondary schools and 15 (12.3%) in primary schools. The distribution by the criterion of teaching degree graduations is: 6 beginner teachers (4.9%), 26 tenured teachers (21.3%), 40 teaching second degree graduated (32.8%), 50 first teaching degree graduated (41%). 110 are full teachers (90.2%) and 12 are substitute teachers (9.8%). 21 teachers (17.2%) have leading positions and responsibilities (15 managers, 6 school inspectors). All participants are qualified for teaching job.

3.2. Instruments and procedure

Were applied two standardized instruments: DM Questionnaire and SP Questionnaire, developed by Romanian psychologist T. Constantin (2004). DM Questionnaire measures four types of needs: power, achievement, affiliation, and existence. Corresponding them are the following dominant motivational factors: “leadership” (need to influence others, to mobilize them to success, to be chief, to lead and independent decision-making), “expertise” (need to excel in activities, to be considered an expert, to perform, to have professional expertise), “relationship” (need to establish harmonious relationships with others, to work with pleasure in a teamwork) and “survival” (basic needs of rest, stability, money, food, security). The overall Alpha Crombach coefficient is 0.941. Based on general standard were established three levels of intensity for each factor: 1-low intensity (deciles 0-30 inclusively), 2-moderate intensity (deciles 40-60 inclusively) and 3-high intensity (deciles 70-100). SP Questionnaire assesses the job satisfaction by a general factor as overall job satisfaction and three secondary factors as attitudes towards: 1. pay and promotion, 2. leadership and interpersonal relations, 3. work organizing and communication. Alpha Crombach coefficients are 0.82, 0.76, 0.73 and 0.872 (Constantin, 2004). Instructions for the two questionnaires were applied regarding the professional activity.

4. Results

Hypothesis 1

The proportion of female and male respondents was 4:1. Descriptive values for the two groups for: Overall Job Satisfaction (male: mean=4.47, s.d.=0.63; female: mean=4.59, s.d.= 0.68); Pay-promotion (male: mean=3.69, s.d.=0.82; female: mean=3.46, s.d.=0.84); Leadership-interpersonal relations (male: mean=4.99, s.d.=1.06; female: mean=5.27, s.d.=0.94); Work organizing-communication (male: mean=5.02, s.d.=0.79; female: mean=5.35, s.d.=0.82). Results revealed no differences between men and women in overall job satisfaction ($t=-0.79$, $p=0.42$), and in all its dimensions: Pay-promotion ($t=1.25$, $p=0.21$), Leadership- relationship ($t=-1.28$, $p=0.20$), Work organizing- communication ($t=-1.79$, $p=0.75$).

Hypothesis 2

Were excluded cases of beginner teachers who have not yet graduated any form of continuous training.

Table 1. Descriptive values for the three groups

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall	tenure	26	4.44	0.69
Job Satisfaction	2nd graduation	40	4.42	0.51
	1st graduation	50	4.77	0.73
Pay-promotion	tenure	26	3.26	0.73
	2nd graduation	40	3.49	0.67
Leadership-interpersonal relations	1st graduation	50	3.63	0.99
	tenure	26	5.03	1.04
Work organizing-communication	2nd graduation	40	5.00	0.95
	1st graduation	50	5.51	0.90
Work organizing-communication	tenure	26	5.27	0.86
	2nd graduation	40	5.01	0.82
	1st graduation	50	5.58	0.71

One-way ANOVA results indicated significant differences in overall job satisfaction ($F=3.88$, $p=0.02$), and in attitudes towards Leadership-relations ($F=3.83$, $p=0.02$) and Work organizing-communication ($F=3.63$, $p=0.004$). Bonferroni test revealed significant differences in levels of overall job satisfaction between second degree and first degree graduated teachers ($t=-2.70$, $p=0.04$). The r squared coefficient of determination (0.06) indicates a medium effect of the influence of the level of continuous training on overall job satisfaction ($d=0.5$). The job satisfaction of tenured teachers no differs by second degree graduated ($t=0.11$, $p=1.0$) and first degree graduated teachers ($t=-2.2$, $p=0.11$). Also, are significant differences in attitude towards Leadership-interpersonal relations between second and first degree graduated teachers ($t=-2.52$, $p=0.04$), with a higher level in first degree graduated teachers. The size effect is small to medium (r squared=0.05). Tenured teachers no differ by second degree graduated ($t=0.12$, $p=1.0$) and first degree graduated teachers ($t=-2.04$, $p=0.12$). Significant differences between second and first degree graduated teachers ($t=-3.55$, $p=0.003$) were found in satisfaction towards work organizing-communication too. The size effect is increased (r squared=0.1). Tenured teachers no differ by second degree ($t=1.36$, $p=0.57$) and by first degree graduated teachers ($t=-1.57$, $p=0.32$).

Hypothesis 3.

On the whole sample, overall job satisfaction variable has a normal distribution (mean=4.57, s.d.=0.67, Shapiro-Wilk $t=0.98$, $p=0.30$) and a “very high” level of intensity (percentile 88). The hierarchy of the motivational factors, in a decreasing order, is: relationship (mean=6.30, s.d.=0.79), expertise (mean=6.21, s.d.=0.74), survival (mean=5.88, s.d.=0.79) and leadership (mean=5.37, s.d.=0.84). Proceeding from standard, the relationship, expertise and survival factors are manifest intensively, leadership is medium. Was applied One-way ANOVA for each motivational factor.

For “leadership” factor concerning the power needs, descriptive values for groups are: group1 ($N=30$, mean=4.39, s.d.=0.55), group2 ($N=50$, mean=4.54, s.d.=0.68), group3 ($N=42$, mean=4.73, s.d.= 0.71). F test value shown an insignificant effect ($F=2.31$, $p=0.1$). For “expertise” factor refers to needs of achievement, descriptive values of the groups are: group1 ($N=14$, mean=4.09, s.d.=0.45), group2 ($N=38$, mean=4.47, s.d.=0.52), group3 ($N=70$, mean=4.72, s.d.=0.73). Test F indicated a significant effect of intensity of achievement need on job satisfaction ($F=6.07$, $p=0.003$). Tuckey test indicated significant differences in satisfaction between groups with low and high intensity of achievement need ($t=-3.29$, $p=0.004$). The satisfaction is higher in teachers with increased needs of achievement. Groups with low and moderate, and with moderate and high needs of achievement didn’t differ significantly ($t=-1.86$, $p=0.16$; $t=-1.91$, $p=0.13$). Eta square (0.09) indicates a small effect. For “relationship” factor concerning needs of affiliation, descriptive values are: group1 ($N=9$, mean=4.01, s.d.=0.56), group2 ($N=44$, mean=4.37, s.d.=0.63), group3 ($N=69$, mean=4.75, s.d.=0.65). F test value indicates a significant effect of intensity of affiliation needs on job satisfaction level ($F=7.43$, $p=0.001$). Tuckey test showed differences between groups with low and increased intensity of affiliation need ($t=-2.85$, $p=0.01$). Job satisfaction is higher in participants with high intensity of relationships needs than those with low needs. Also, are differences between groups with medium and high relational needs ($t=-3.23$, $p=0.006$). Job satisfaction is increased in the group with higher needs of affiliation. Are no differences in satisfaction between groups with low and medium intensity of affiliation needs ($t=-1.09$, $p=0.52$). The effect size is small (eta squared=0.11). For “survival” factor related to basic needs for existence, descriptive values are: group1 ($N=22$, mean=4.35, s.d.=0.62), group2 ($N=44$, mean=4.50, s.d.=0.58), group3 ($N=56$, mean=4.70, s.d.=0.73). The effect of survival needs intensity on job satisfaction is insignificant ($F=2.54$, $p=0.08$).

5. Discussion

The results indicated no differences between female and male teachers in overall job satisfaction and its dimensions and the hypothesis that gender affects job satisfaction is rejected. On the second hypothesis results reveal that a professional variable such as professional position given by the level of continuous training held (tenure and teaching degrees) influences job satisfaction. The overall satisfaction and attitudes of satisfaction towards Leadership-interpersonal relations and work organizing-communication are higher in first degree graduated teachers. It can explain by the fact that the first teaching degree is the last professional position who can be obtain by the teachers from Romanian educational system along their teaching career development. Attaining this professional position means advancement, promotion and recognition of their teaching competences, and increasing the salary after the promotion. All are leading to job satisfaction and to meet their needs of achievement. The finding is reinforced by results of the third hypothesis who confirm that the level of overall job satisfaction is influenced by the intensity of the needs of achievement and affiliation. On the all sample, affiliation and achievement are on the first places in the hierarchy of dominant needs which means that these needs become strongly manifest than other two. The level of overall job satisfaction in teachers is different depending on the intensity of their dominant needs. Satisfaction is highest when need of achievement, as intrinsic factor which causes satisfaction, is increased. Also, satisfaction is highest when need of affiliation, as extrinsic work factor, is increased and didn't cause dissatisfaction.

The findings of the study can have practical implications in school organization to improve teachers' motivation and satisfaction. For this purpose the school managers have several directions of action in their organization: creating of more opportunities to teaching staff for assuming their professional responsibilities, recognition the contribution and effort of each member of organization, achieving self-realization, supporting the development of their professional career and identity as teachers, encouragement of work performance. In the same time the school managers should focus on the social environment from their organization and encourage teamwork and positive interpersonal relations. If for the second hypothesis the effect size is medium, in the third hypothesis is small that limits the practical relevance of the results. Therefore, the findings can be improved by testing and other motivational variables which are able to influence the level of job satisfaction in teachers.

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