THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITATIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN PROCESS OF IMPROVING TEACHERS JOB SATISFACTION

Aija Peršēvica  
Departament of Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art, University of Latvia

Abstract
The focus of this research is the importance of qualitative school management in assuring a high teacher job satisfaction level and therefore a high level of quality of education.
In the first part of the research data were collected at 5 schools with high achievements of the pupils in the mandatory centralised national examinations and at 6 schools with low results demonstrated by the pupils. In the second part of the research, high school headmaster and teachers, who were interviewed, participated in the research.
As a result of the research, it was concluded that teachers are mostly satisfied with the chosen profession. Analysis of the identified correlations showed that there is a significant correlation between school management and teacher job satisfaction and between several levels of interpersonal relationships and various aspects of quality of education. The analysis of obtained interview showed that school management in schools with high achievements pay significant attention to teacher job satisfaction. Results are discussed in terms of an opportunity to improve level of teacher job satisfaction using qualitative school management.
KEYWORDS: quality of education, school management, teachers job satisfaction.

Introduction
Quality of education can be viewed as an aggregate of three components: quality of the school management, quality of the teacher professional work, and high achievements of the pupil. (Coate, 2009; Sammons, Hillman, Mormore, 1995). Quality of teacher professional work is closely related to teacher job satisfaction which can be influenced by school management.
Management of school and teacher job satisfaction are closely interrelated, and teaching personnel is the most essential resource in assuring quality of education. Therefore, it is particularly important to ensure a high job satisfaction among teachers.
In psychology, it has been for quite a long time that discussions are on-going about the role of the employee job satisfaction in their efficiency at work (Vroom, 1964). Besides, studies conducted so far have demonstrated (Petty, McGee, Cavender, 1984) close correlations between job satisfaction of the employee and their performance at work. There is an assumption that employee job satisfaction not only closely relates to their efficiency at work, but also has direct impacts on their efficiency at work (Furnham, 2005). Theoretically, this leads to a conclusion that teacher job satisfaction is closely related with their professional practice and, thereby, also with quality of education.

Aim of the research
The aim of this research is to study correlations between the job satisfaction of teachers and quality of education, thereby showing the importance of educational management in the process of assuring quality education.

Object of the Research
Efficient school and its management are among the key criteria for quality in education. In various discussions on education, the concept of quality is understood as the concept of efficiency, and these terms are often used as synonyms. (Harris, 1999)
In highlighting the key indicators of efficient school, emphasis is put on the quality of organisation, quality of the teaching and learning process, and quality of the environment. When describing the sector of school management, it is viewed through a successful performance of the functions of the manager or principal of the school, such performance being based on targeted management of the personnel by the managerial staff of the school. Efficient school management implies the principal’s ability to understand the needs of the school and involve the rest of the staff into the operation of the school without external control. (Kangro, 2000; Sammons, 1999)
Operation of a school is also characterised by aspects more attributable to improvement and development of various resources.
One of the most essential resources in the operation of an educational institution is the human, especially the teaching personnel. Development and improvement of human resources are closely related
to teachers’ satisfaction with work. Principal preconditions have been established for development and improvement of job satisfaction in the context of efficient operation of the school.

- **Public respect** towards the teacher and the profession in general, which manifests not only in the attitudes of pupils, parents and the surrounding public, but also in the attitudes of school’s own administration. (Kangro, 2000)
  
  A study conducted in several countries, including Latvia, in year 2004 to research the Teacher’s profession and the tendencies and risks in Europe revealed that only 19.1% of the teachers of mathematics in Latvia believe that their work is appreciated by the society. (The teaching profession in Europe, 2004)

- **Involvement of teachers into decision-making** regarding the entire educational institution (Sammons, Hillman, Moromore, 1995), which not only creates awareness of influence on determination of own working environment, but also a higher degree of responsibility during the performance of the job. (Kangro, 2000) Important decision, especially in large enterprises or, in this case, educational institutions, are often carried within closed elite groups, which prevents sharing of ideas and debate with other employees, and thus reduces the levels of teacher job satisfaction (Motivation of Employees, 2007). Teachers’ involvement in decision-making also facilitates solidarity between individual goals of teachers and those of the school and alignment of such goals to improve motivation at work.

- **Receiving feedback** is essential in teachers’ work, as it allows to see the appreciation of the work performed by teachers. (Kangro, 2000)

  Spector (Spector, 1997) defines job satisfaction as feelings of an individual towards their work and various conditions at work. Job satisfaction is the degree to which the individual likes or dislikes their job. In general, job satisfaction is assessed as varying feelings towards the job in general or towards individual condition at work.

  The level of job satisfaction is determined by the conflict between the individual’s expectations and what the job actually offers. (Arnold, Feldman, Hunt, 1992)

  Authors A. Furnham (Furnham, 2005) and L.J. Mullin (Mullin, 1996) have identified several aspects which influence the level of job satisfaction. These aspects are related to individual, social, organisational, cultural, job-specific, and environmental factors.

  - Individual factors – personal traits, age, level of education, intelligence and skills, material standing. (Mullins, 1996) Self-evaluation, ability to cope with stress, overall life satisfaction. (Furnham, 2005)
  - Organisational factors – size, type, formal structure of the organisation, personnel management policy and procedures, type of work, technologies and organisation of work, management and management styles, management systems, working conditions. (Mullins, 1996) Salary system, management of work, and decision-making procedures. (Furnham, 2005)
  - Environmental factors – economic, social situation and influences of the management.
  - Social factors – relationships with colleagues, opportunities for cooperation, norms of organisation.
  - Cultural factors – principal attitudes, values and trust. (Mullins, 1996)
  - Job-specific factors – workload, skills, diversity at work, autonomy, feedback, and working environment.

  There is a view that job satisfaction is not only closely linked with productivity of work, but job satisfaction actually causes productivity. (Furnham, 2005)

  Ololube, (Ololube, 2006) when researching teachers’ job satisfaction and motivation in Nigeria, came to conclusions about close correlations between performance and job satisfaction. The study lead to conclusions that all needs mentioned by A. Maslow (Maslow, 1954) are highly essential to assure efficient work of a teacher.

  A teacher’s satisfaction with their profession may have direct impacts on pupils’ education. It may have particularly strong impacts on the level of education provided at school and the stability of the knowledge acquired by the pupils.

  There are several significant and insignificant factors that have impacts on teachers’ satisfaction with their profession, such as demographic factors, teacher’s and school’s individual characteristics etc.
Authors Sharma R.D. and Jyoti J. (Sharma, Jyoti, 2006) mainly discuss internal and external factors related to teachers’ satisfaction with their profession, but, at the same time, they mention additional factors, such as demographic factors, specifics of the school:

- The internal factors are determined by the peculiarities of the class. The interrelations between pupils and teachers, the individual peculiarities and perceptions of pupils. Teachers’ internal job satisfaction, which may arise out of in-class activities. Daily interaction with pupils allows the teacher to be aware of whether the pupil has or has not acquired the taught material as result of the teacher’s teaching effort. A large part teachers opt for this profession because of the internal factors. (Perie, Baker, 1997)

- External factors determine teachers’ satisfaction with their profession, including salary, cooperation with colleagues and the administration, safety in the school, and availability of school resources. (Sharma, Jyoti, 2006) There are very few teachers who work in this profession for the external factors. Most of teachers opt for this profession specifically because of the internal factors. However, while the internal factors determine the person’s choice of becoming a teacher, the external factors influence the teacher’s job satisfaction and possible change of career. (Perie, Baker, 1997)

Authors M. Zembylas and E.C. Papanastasiou (Zembylas, Papanastasiou, 2005), when speaking about teachers’ job satisfaction, identify factors which facilitate job satisfaction and factors which, on the contrary, facilitate teachers’ dissatisfaction with work:

- insufficient motivation, poor discipline among pupils, insufficient support and cooperation from colleagues and administration, poor opportunities for development, low salary are the most significant of the factors contributing to teachers’ dissatisfaction with their profession.

- The factors facilitating teachers’ satisfaction with their profession include opportunities for trying new ideas, involvement in decision-making and testing of reforms, improvement of social relations, development of skills, challenge, demonstration of creativity. (Zembylas, Papanastasiou, 2005) Members of UNESCO International Committee particularly emphasise teachers’ cooperation with the administration of the school to establish a community where the teacher has equal opportunities for expressing their opinions and can feel the target set by the school as their own target (Stephens, 2003).

Methods and Methodologies

The study consists of two stages – the quantitative, which is aimed at researching the correlations between job satisfaction and quality of education, and the qualitative, which is aimed at finding out what should be done practically to improve teachers’ job satisfaction and quality in education.

During the quantitative stage of the study, data were gathered at five Latvian secondary schools with the highest and six with the lowest achievements of the pupils in the mandatory centralised examinations. To select the schools, the data published for the results of the centralised examinations by the National Centre for Content of Education and Examination for year 2009/2010 established by the Cabinet of Ministers for academic year 2009/2010 (Cabinet Regulation No. 1339), the levels achieved in each of the centralised examinations were calculated individually, and the schools were ranged in descending order. After that, the schools appearing in all three lists were selected. In all these schools, a survey was conducted among the teachers (49 in total) who prepare the upper secondary school pupils for the mandatory centralised examinations and the upper secondary school pupils (402 in total) who passed the centralised examinations in study year 2010/2011.

In the selected schools, the teachers preparing pupils for the centralised examinations were asked to fill in two questionnaires: Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by P.E. Lester in 1984 (Lester, 1984.) and Education Quality Questionnaire.

The pupils were to fill in the Education Quality Questionnaire to evaluate the work of one teacher of their free choice who prepares pupils for the mandatory centralised examinations at the end of the year.

The qualitative stage of the study included a semi-structured interview among school principals (4 in total) and upper secondary school teachers (8 in total) in schools with high achievements of the pupils in the centralised examinations which participated in the first stage of the study.

The quantitative data pooled during the study were processed using data processing program SPSS, which was used to perform the Spearman range correlation analysis (Spearman’s rho).

The qualitative data were processed using the AQUAD program to perform the frequency analysis.
Results of the Research

Teachers’ job satisfaction

The P.E. Lester’s (Lester, 1984.) Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire used in the study includes questions about several areas of job satisfaction to enable individual analysis of each of the teacher job satisfaction scales. Figure No. 1 reflects the job satisfaction scales evaluated by teachers. Since the focus of the study is the management of the school, the article includes analysis of the scale of satisfaction with the direct supervisor only.

Figure 1. Teacher Job Satisfaction Scales 2011

In general, the teachers have provided rather high ratings for their satisfaction with the supervisor. As can be seen in the Figure, 69% of the surveyed respondents are satisfied with their direct supervisor, with 4% of them being entirely satisfied. 29% have provided neutral ratings for their satisfaction with their direct supervisor, and only 2% are not satisfied with their supervisor.

Satisfaction with the supervisor also partially shows the positive mutual relationships within the school. Furthermore, satisfaction with the direct supervisor also reflects the high levels of competence of the management, ability to manage the educational institution efficiently, and to provide the necessary support to the teachers, which is what the teachers appreciate.

To attain the target and to find potential correlations between quality of education and teachers’ job satisfaction, Spearman’s rho was performed. Correlation was performed separately for the teachers of the schools with high achievements of the pupils in the centralised national examinations and separately for the teachers of the schools with low achievements of the pupils in the centralised national examinations.

Separate analyses of these two groups lead to conclusions that schools with high achievements of the pupils in the centralised national examinations have statistically more significant and higher numbers of correlations between teacher job satisfaction and quality of education than in the schools with low achievements of the pupils in the centralised national examinations. This allows to conclude that there are close correlations between teachers’ job satisfaction and quality of education.

Since the target group in this article is schools with high achievements of the pupils, correlations in schools with low achievements of the pupils are not considered in this article.

Table 1. Correlation between teachers job satisfaction and quality of education in schools with high student achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>Work condition</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management of the school</td>
<td>0.551</td>
<td>0.488</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td>-0.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation of the study process</td>
<td>0.479</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>0.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the development and achievements of the pupils</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>0.412</td>
<td>-0.363</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.—Data are Spearman correlation coefficients, with p values in parentheses. Only parameters for which correlations were significant are displayed.
Correlations between teacher job satisfaction and quality of education

The analysis of the correlations between teachers’ job satisfaction and quality of education (Table No. 1) in schools with high achievements of the pupils in the centralised examinations leads to a conclusion that there are several correlations

- between the education quality criterion „school management” and various aspects of job satisfaction: satisfaction with the direct supervisor ($\rho=0.6 \ p=0.001$), satisfaction with the colleagues ($\rho=0.5 \ p=0.004$), satisfaction with the working conditions ($\rho=0.4 \ p=0.02$)

The correlations between the management of the school and the direct supervisor, the colleagues and the working conditions are logical because specifically these factors characterise the management of the school. Positive relationships with the supervisor are the determining factor which influences a positive rating for the management of the school, and, at the same time, successful school management may influence formation of positive relationships between the principal of the school and the teachers as well as also between colleagues; positive mutual relationships help to ensure higher efficiency at work and, thereby, to raise the quality of education.

The management of the school can also influence the working conditions most directly. Working conditions mean the qualitative and aesthetic physical environment, wide and available equipment, organisation of the working process, and assurance of a positive emotional environment.

- It is interesting that there is a negative correlation ($\rho=-0.3 \ p=0.05$) between satisfaction with the salary and education quality criterion „school management”.

Such negative correlation shows that the more dissatisfied teachers are with the salary, the more positive they are in their ratings provided for the management of the school. It is very much likely that such situation might be due to the fact that the teachers do not relate the salary to the management of the school, as teachers’ salary can be influenced by the government only.

- There is a correlation between education quality criterion „organisation of the study process” and satisfaction with the direct supervisor ($\rho=0.5 \ p=0.005$)

The correlation between the organisation of the process of studies and satisfaction with the direct supervisor is natural because for a teacher, when they organise the process of studies, it is essential to receive support from the supervisor, and the more positive this support and also the mutual relationships are, the more efficient is the organisation and the course of the study process.

- There are correlations between teachers’ professional development, which is a criterion of quality of education, and job satisfaction criterion „satisfaction with direct supervisor” ($\rho=0.5 \ p=0.005$)

The close correlation between the teachers’ professional development and the direct supervisor is natural because it is the supervisor who can most largely influence the teachers’ opportunities for improvement of their professional performance.

The obtained results of the study clearly show the school management's significant role in improvement of teachers’ job satisfaction.

Key criteria of job satisfaction

Based on the data pooled during the quantitative study, which reflect the significant role of the principal of the educational institution on facilitation of teachers' job satisfaction and assurance of quality education, the second stage of the study was conducted to find out how to improve teachers’ job satisfaction.

The interviews held with school principals regarding teachers’ job satisfaction reflect the principals’ interest in assurance of positive emotional feelings among teachers.

Absolutely all interviewed principals believe that job satisfaction influences the quality of education, and teachers are not able to isolate their emotional feelings from their professional activity. Furthermore, it is mentioned during the interviews that teachers’ dissatisfaction may have negative impacts on pupils (children suffer from unsatisfied teachers). The interviewed school principals believe that, overall, teachers are satisfied with their job, with a special emphasis being on satisfaction with the specifics of the job.

A large part of the job satisfaction scale used during the quantitative study was highlighted during the interviews with the principals. One of the aspects of job satisfaction most frequently mentioned by the principals is support to teachers. This has been mentioned and emphasised several times by all principals during the interviews.
Another most frequent reply when speaking about assurance of job satisfaction is assurance of quality working conditions and working environment. In the study, working conditions are meant as availability of materials and technical resources, as well as assurance of discipline during the process of studies.

The interviews reflect the fact that school principals think about consolidation of the team and maintenance of positive relationships within the team by organising team events.

The school principals also mention recognition to teachers as an aspect which facilitates job satisfaction. Teachers are praised for pupils’ and their own achievements and success.

During the interviews, the principals emphasise the aspects teachers are satisfied with, but, at the same time, they also mention teachers’ dissatisfaction with the low salaries and their workloads which result in a situation that teachers do not have enough rest.

During the interviews, most of the teachers emphasised that they are satisfied with their job, simultaneously mentioning their dissatisfaction with the salary.

Practically all interviewed teachers believe that job satisfaction influences quality of education. Only one of the interviewed respondents thinks that the teacher is able to isolate their emotional feelings from the professional activities (satisfaction does no influence quality of education), but, at the same time, it is essential to note that, during the interview, this teacher emphasised being satisfied with their job.

The frequency analysis highlighted one of the most significant aspects of job satisfaction mentioned and emphasised several times by practically all interviewed teachers – satisfaction with the specifics of the job (job itself). And one of the factors mentioned by the teachers as having influence on job specifics is that their job is interesting and satisfaction is created by achievements of their pupils.

Similar to school principals, teachers mention, during the interviews, the significant role of mutual relationships between the colleagues in assuring job satisfaction. It is mentioned that good fellowship is a most essential role in the relationships between the colleagues. Good fellowship is mostly understood as mutual help, sharing of information and various materials.

During interviews about job satisfaction, teachers also mention the essential role of the management. One of the most essential aspects of job satisfaction mentioned by the teachers and closely related with the management is the support provided by the management (management support).

The significance of this aspect is reflected in the fact that all teachers mention management support during the interviews. Furthermore, the teachers who do not receive such support emphasise the lack of it. A significant aspect mentioned as having influence on job satisfaction is also recognition from the management of the school.

During the interviews, when speaking about job satisfaction, teachers also speak about the aspects they are dissatisfied with in their job. Practically all teachers emphasise dissatisfaction with the salary they receive (low salary). One of the interviewed female teachers believes that the prestige of teachers is low.

Another most significant and most frequently mentioned aspect teachers are not satisfied with is shortage of time which is related to the too high workloads.

In the interviews, teachers mention that there are small routine details they are not satisfied with, but this dissatisfaction has no impacts on their overall job satisfaction and quality of education.

Conclusions

The study revealed close and numerous correlations between the management of the school or the direct supervisor and the criteria of quality of education and aspects of job satisfaction specifically in schools with high achievements of the pupils, and this leads to a conclusion that these schools employ very competent school managers who not only are able to maintain a positive and facilitating atmosphere at school, but also can motivate and inspire the teachers for work. Based on these results, it is possible to draw a conclusion that one of the preconditions for quality education is competent and supportive school management.

Having analysed the replies given by school principals and teachers regarding teachers’ job satisfaction, it is possible to identify the common and differing signs. Both interviewed groups emphasise the influence of job satisfaction on assurance of quality education. Furthermore, essential factors mentioned by the respondents as having influence on job satisfaction are support provided by the management and giving/receiving recognition. The fact that these aspects are mentioned as important not only by school management, but also by teachers, allows to draw a conclusion that school management specifically follows that teachers feel support in their work, feel safe, and receive appreciation for their work. Giving such support allows teachers to do their job on higher levels of quality.
Another aspect of job satisfaction, which appears during interviews with teachers and school principals, is satisfaction with colleagues, and this leads to a conclusion that interpersonal relationships and support from the colleagues are important for teachers to do quality job. The fact that the aspect of satisfaction with colleagues appears also in the replies given by principals leads to a conclusion that school management pays special attention to maintenance of positive relationships within the team.

School principals more often mention the importance of satisfaction with working conditions and environment, while teachers do not particularly emphasise this aspect and mention it rarely during the interviews. A very likely reason why teachers do not highlight these aspects as being essential is that teachers perceive quality working conditions and environment as self-evident. At the same time, school principals emphasise these aspects in particular because they spend a lot of effort and time to assure such environment.

All previously mentioned aspects are among the most essential in assurance of job satisfaction and can be directly influenced by school management. And the fact that school principals mention these aspects as being the most essential in facilitation of teachers’ job satisfaction leads to a conclusion that school management uses the resources available to it to try to assure high levels of teachers’ job satisfaction.

The respondents in both interviewed groups highlight satisfaction with the salary as being the aspect of job satisfaction teachers are most dissatisfied with. This aspect of job satisfaction cannot be improved at the institutional level and can be improved on the national level only. This leads to an assumption that teachers’ dissatisfaction with work is mostly related to the aspects which can be influenced at the level of the system of education and not at the school level, and teachers isolate these two levels by separating the aspects of job satisfaction which can be influenced at the institutional level and the aspects which can be influenced on the national level in their assessments.

Acknowledgements

This work has been supported by the European Social Fund within the project «Support for Doctoral Studies at University of Latvia»

List of References

Zusammenfassung


