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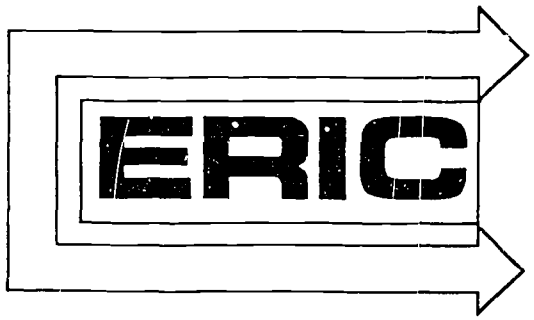
ABSTRACT

Research conducted to determine whether two-year college faculty members are satisfied with their jobs is discussed. Following a review of studies made by other researchers, data collected in three different locations in the summer of 1973 are presented and discussed. The study population was comprised of 57 instructors from a small college in southern California, 19 instructors from nine colleges in an eastern state, and 146 instructors from a larger college in northern California. The three groups of instructors were asked to respond to questions on satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The responses showed that more than two-thirds of the California faculties and more than a half of the Eastern faculties revealed that their gaining satisfaction was related in some way to their students. Only about one-third of the instructors suggested that dissatisfaction was related to their students. The results suggest that interaction with students should be the chief intrinsic motivation. Thus, satisfaction can best be enhanced by removing obstacles to this interaction. This can be accomplished by providing for smaller classes, allocating aides to assist instructors with routine management chores, and providing economic security so that they are freed from concern in this area. (DB)



WORK SATISFACTION AMONG JUNIOR COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBERS

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Personal satisfaction with one's work is a familiar topic in industrial psychology. For decades researchers have tried to understand employee morale and to establish relationships between job satisfaction and productivity, absenteeism, and other output indices. But a parallel line has not been pursued in the study of higher education. Professors do not tend to characterize themselves as "workers"; hence, they do not look to the literature of business and industry for models or theories to use in describing their activities. And indices of productivity--the dependent variable typically applied in industry--are weak in higher education. The number of research studies and scholarly publications produced by professors can be counted along with the number of hours per week they spend in teaching but the quality of the product in both cases is difficult to ascertain and nearly impossible to attribute to any characteristic of the organizational environment.

Still, job satisfaction in higher education seems important to study and the problem of imprecise dependent variables should not dissuade the researcher. One could say that a college with an enthusiastic, personally satisfied staff is more likely to enhance student development than is one with an apathetic group of time-servers going through the motions of information transmittal in their teaching and little more. But students are not the only people on the campus. The recent high level of interest in worker satisfaction in other contexts suggests that a shift in social outlook is occurring with employees becoming more concerned with their immediate working environment, and expecting more from their jobs than mere subsistence (see Work in America for an extensive treatment of this thesis). As they realize the importance of the job to their own sense of well-being and personal identity, they become unwilling to submit to less than convivial conditions in the workplace. As Gibson and Teasley (1973) put it, the feeling is spreading that "a primary function of an organization should be the satisfaction of member needs." Along with workers in other contexts--and not withstanding the institutional-level rhetoric about selfless dedication to students--college faculty members are becoming increasingly attentive to their work milieu.

The acceleration in number of college faculty members working under contracts derived through collective bargaining processes points to this growing concern for the work environment. Invariably these contracts include more than statements of wages and fringe benefits; throughout, they address working conditions, particularly supervisory and grievance procedures, and provide specification as to the types of institutional assistance to be afforded the professors. There is more to these agreements than a mere shift in locus of control from

administrators toward faculty members; they reveal a concern for teacher welfare in the broadest use of the term.

Collective bargaining has made its greatest inroads in higher education among community college faculty members. If the experience of negotiated contracts in other industries is any guide to the pattern, concern for worker satisfaction as evidenced by bargaining for changed working conditions will come rapidly to the fore in these colleges. Representative groups will move quickly past negotiating for wages and fringe benefits toward patterns of supervision, space allocation, and other characteristics of the work environment.

But how will the impending changes in institutional milieu affect the community college instructor? Little is known now about the motivational aspects of his job. In two-year colleges, instructors are not expected to engage in intrinsically motivated research. And yet they are not quite like public school teachers because they have a greater measure of control over their own daily activities and are more responsible for the design of curriculum and instructional forms.

More to the point of this paper: Are two-year college faculty members satisfied now? Some evidence has been gathered. More than 85% of the Minnesota instructors surveyed by Eckert and Williams (1972) and 95% of the Florida faculty studied by Kurth and Mills (1968) voiced satisfaction with their career. These figures are somewhat higher than those obtained in two studies done during the late 1950's (Medsker, 1960; Eckert and Stecklein, 1959). Although comparisons must be made with caution because the data were compiled differently, some increase in satisfaction in the past decade seems evident.

We have some indirect measures of junior college faculty satisfaction as well. A study conducted by the American Association of Junior Colleges in 1971 (Bushnell, 1973) asked a national sample of faculty to rank the goals of the community college in accordance with the way those goals were treated "at the present time" and also to rank them in accordance with the faculty's "preference." The difference between the "present" and "preferred" listings is instructive. Several of the goals showed wide variation between the lists indicating that faculty would prefer their institutions adopted different policies. This suggests some measure of dissatisfaction with institutional goals.

The generalized satisfaction revealed in the Minnesota and Florida studies or generalized dissatisfaction as manifest in the AAJC national sample presents one kind of picture of faculty satisfaction. However, this level of satisfaction is not necessarily related to the instructor's daily activities. A more fruitful line of study seems to involve the instructor's immediate work space. What pleases him in his own work? What are the intrinsic rewards he attains? What brings discomfort or tends to frustrate him?

In the literature of industry, the "traditional approach" in studying job satisfaction is to identify the characteristics of the job that

are satisfying to the worker and to hypothesize that if these characteristics are enhanced, the worker will become more satisfied, while if they are reduced, he will tend toward dissatisfaction (Carroll, 1969). Thus if money is seen as contributing to satisfaction, more money should lead to greater satisfaction and less money to dissatisfaction. But this approach has been challenged because it fails to take expectations into account. For example, if one anticipates a 6% increase in salary but receives only a 2% increase, he may be pushed toward dissatisfaction even though he has received more pay. The traditional approach has also been criticized as too simplistic; i.e., perhaps satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not polar opposites and the same factors do not propel the worker in one direction or the other.

The idea of satisfaction and dissatisfaction as two different dimensions was postulated by Herzberg and others (1959) who claimed that those elements leading to satisfaction were related to the actual content of the work whereas the qualities of the job leading to dissatisfaction were associated with the environment surrounding the worker. Thus, those things that the worker himself does tend toward satisfaction, while dissatisfaction is ascribed to company policy, administration, supervision, and working conditions. The "two factor theory," then, separates satisfaction and dissatisfaction by relating the first to "intrinsic factors" or "motivators" and the second to "extrinsic factors" or "hygienes."

The two-factor theory stimulated a number of studies, many of which used the critical incident technique that Herzberg had employed in his own studies. Some studies supported Herzberg's conclusions but others failed to replicate his findings. His thesis has been challenged by some researchers; Beer, for example, states, "The problem...is extremely complex and cannot be explained by global theories and oversimplified models." (1966, p. 68) Gibson and Teasley (1973) review several studies and conclude, "The range of findings run from general support for the two-factor theory...through the finding that subjects were equally satisfied with motivator and hygiene aspects of their jobs... to a vigorous condemnation of Herzberg's methodology...and finally to the conclusion that the two-factor theory is 'grossly over-simplified' and should 'be laid to rest'...."

Nevertheless, although the "traditional approach" and the two-factor theory both have their detractors, it does seem useful to test them in the community colleges as a means of learning more about faculty members and the college as a work environment. If the "traditional approach" to studying worker satisfaction holds, that which dissatisfies the community college faculty member should be the opposite of that which satisfies him and any characteristic of the job may prove to be pertinent. If the two-factor theory holds, then satisfaction should be related to intrinsics while dissatisfaction should be associated with aspects of the environment extrinsic to the instructor.

Data collected in three different settings in the summer of 1973 tend to support the two-factor theory. The population was comprised of 57 instructors from a small college in southern California; 19 instructors from nine colleges in an eastern state; and 146 instructors

from a larger college in northern California.

The first two groups of instructors were asked to relate one incident that made them pleased with their work; one thing that happened in the previous year which made them satisfied or comfortable with their jobs. As soon as they had completed that task they were asked to write down one incident that tended to displease them; one thing that had happened related to their work which had made them dissatisfied or discontent. The third group was randomly divided into two subgroups with one asked to respond to the question on satisfaction, the other to respond to the question on dissatisfaction.

Responses were collected and tallied with the following results:

SATISFACTION	Southern California College (N= 57)	Eastern College Group (N= 19)	Northern California College (N= 79)
Students expressed approval of the instructor	16	2	13
Students learned	15	5	19
Students were apparently motivated	10	4	27
Other	15	8	15
No response	1	0	5

DISSATISFACTION	(N= 57)	(N= 19)	(N= 67)
Students failed to achieve or were otherwise unresponsive	20	4	21
Administrative interference	8	0	8
Organizational problems	7	7	15
Difficulties with colleagues	10	7	5
Other difficulties (inability to get materials, physical plant, personal)	8	0	17
No response	4	1	1

Most of the instructors found satisfaction in some sort of feedback from their students. When the responses having to do with student learning are combined with those indicating student approval of the instructor, more than two-thirds of the faculty in the two California colleges and more than half the Eastern group revealed their gaining satisfaction from something to do with students. On the other hand, only about one-third of the instructors suggested that dissatisfaction was related to their students. Instead, extrinsic variables such as lack of support or interference from administrators or colleagues, and institutional red tape, were noted as prime annoyances.

These results are not surprising. Work satisfaction for a professional group should come from ministering to clients, a process Sanford (1971) calls, "The most elementary satisfaction of professional activity...." Community college instructors are professional teachers and see interaction with students as their main purpose. Garrison (1967) interviewed nearly 1,000 instructors and found "genuine enthusiasm for teaching undergraduates, and for working with them often on a person-to-person basis...(p. 18)." Park (1971) reported this same type of commitment to students among faculty in three California community colleges. Interaction with students should be the chief intrinsic motivation.

What can be done to enhance satisfaction? If the variables leading to satisfaction in one's work are intrinsic and--in the case of community college instructors--related to faculty-student interaction, then satisfaction can best be enhanced by removing obstacles to this interaction. This can be accomplished most readily by mandating smaller classes, allocating aides to assist instructors with routine management chores, and providing economic security so that they are freed from concern about lower-order needs--just the things for which instructors, through their professional associations, have been clamoring for years.

There are obvious implications for community colleges. The rapidly expanding unions are demanding that the institutions be, in effect, more satisfying places in which to work. Further, the colleges are in an era of low growth. Few new staff are being employed and, with jobs hard to find, few are leaving. It has become nearly impossible to dismiss the disgruntled instructor, to "encourage" him to resign, or to shunt him to a quiet corner while handing over his responsibilities to a new staff member. Whether or not community college leaders feel their institutions should strive to enhance faculty satisfaction, the issue is before them and must be addressed.

But what of that elusive factor, student learning? The assumption that satisfaction leads to better job performance is based on the belief that the worker is intrinsically motivated to produce that which he is employed to produce. Do community college instructors feel they are employed to cause student learning?

A point about definitions is in order. To an instructor, "teaching" may mean anything from "arranging a sequence of events deliberately so that learning occurs" to "interacting with students and hoping something useful results." On one end of the continuum is a process that exists only to the extent it is successful in attaining its

purpose; on the other is an activity which may or may not lead to definable effect (i.e., with no presumption of learning necessary).

These variant definitions of teaching are revealed in the data, with statements about student learning ("class grade average higher than anticipated;" "students created a high quality product") and student expressions of approval of the instructor ("student told me he liked the course;" "student brought me roses") each receiving an approximately equal number of responses (39 vs. 31). Both seem to satisfy. The instructor's choice of one or the other probably depends on the definition of teaching to which he subscribes.

The large number of responses in which students expressed approval of the instructor, with no evidence of learning indicated, tends to support the findings of a prior study of three California community colleges (Cohen, 1970): Most instructors thought the students looked first for "instructors' personality" when they entered a class and felt students would like them to "Be available for individual conferences." There is some question as to whether this pattern of self-centeredness is related to instructors' desire to see students learn or whether it is a separate dimension.

One might hope that "interaction with students" as an intrinsic motivator would be supplanted in the mind of the instructor by "student learning." This would lead the faculty to support better testing procedures and student follow-up studies in order to gain more precise data on their actual effects. What better way to gain satisfaction than to have a broad range of information on student development! But many faculty *seem* to think that if students learn, they--the instructors--contributed to the learning, while the faculty member rarely blames himself if students fail to learn (in that case students are seen as "unprepared," "uninterested," or "unmotivated,"--variables beyond his control). To this extent, faculty have not attained the truly professional status exemplified by a group that understands and accepts responsibility for its effects on its clients--positive and negative.

Faculty evaluation, in-service training, and similar administrative attempts to influence instructor behavior, are of little effect unless combined with institutional support for that which faculty members value. Any extrinsic index of productivity is meaningless. Counting the hours instructors spend on the job or "evaluating" them by observing them in the classroom may satisfy the external auditors, but it does not directly affect instructor motivation. It is more important to understand what faculty themselves feel they are producing. Only this factor can be related appropriately to the instructors' satisfaction with their work--or with the pattern of work itself--because it is the only one they truly consider.

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