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## ABSTRACT

The assumption that as teacher empowerment increases in restructuring schools teacher job satisfaction will increase was explored in a study using a large sample of classroom teachers working in schools initiating self-designed restructuring efforts. Study participants were 10,544 classroom teachers working in 307 Venture Capital Schools funded to implement restructuring by the state legislature in Ohio. Six dimensions of teacher empowerment were measured: decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. Teacher job satisfaction measured teachers' satisfaction with salary, opportunities for advancement, degree of challenge of the job, autonomy, general working conditions, interaction with colleagues, and interaction with students. Analysis of the data revealed room for growth in both empowerment and job satisfaction. A high positive linear correlation was found between teacher empowerment and teacher job satisfaction; the common variance was 49 percent. Although a high correlation between the two constructs was found in this study, at least half of the variance in teacher job satisfaction was not explained by teacher empowerment. Results of the study suggested that in depth, within school, qualitative studies of teachers' dissatisfaction with overall working conditions may be the best place for Venture Capital School planning teams to focus their restructuring efforts. Contains 31 references. (ND)

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Running head: TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

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Exploring the Relationship Between Teacher Empowerment  
and Teacher Job Satisfaction

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Teacher empowerment, defined in terms of "new roles" for classroom teachers, is described by educational reformers as essential to the success of school restructuring efforts (Holmes, 1986, 1990; Lieberman & Miller, 1990; Sarason, 1992; Griffin, 1991; Fullan, 1993). Teacher job satisfaction has been identified in educational literature as a factor in both the stability of the teaching force (Harris, Kazay, & Leichenko, 1991; Harris, 1992), and teachers' organizational commitment (Shin & Reyes, 1991; Kushman, 1992). A positive correlation between teacher empowerment and teacher job satisfaction is assumed, that is, as teacher empowerment increases in restructuring schools, teacher job satisfaction will increase. This assumption was explored in this study using a large sample of classroom teachers working in schools initiating self-designed restructuring efforts. Data for this study were collected February and March, 1995.

#### Context for the Study

"If states are serious about improving the quality of education and striving for excellence," Timar & Kirp (1989, p. 511) stated, "they must create a context in which organizational competence at the school level can develop." In the state of Ohio, this context was created through funding by the state legislature. Grants were offered to serve

as "sparks" for local schools to redesign their internal structures and were made available to individual schools for a period of five years on a renewable basis. Schools, nominated by their districts, submitted proposals describing the nature of their proposed reforms. As a condition for applying for funding, the schools had to provide evidence that at least 80% of the school staff was supportive of the ideas contained in the proposal as well as evidence that the building staff was poised and ready to undertake the proposed changes. Eight factors were identified by the State Department of Education as being essential to continuous school improvement. Using these eight factors as evaluative criteria for proposals, three hundred and seven schools were funded by the state legislature in rounds I and II. These schools began their restructuring efforts in Fall 1993, and Spring 1994. The focus for this study was evaluative criterion 6, "Evidence that teachers are given expanded roles in planning and implementing change," (Ohio State Department of Education, July, 1993, p. 10).

#### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to examine and describe the relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher job satisfaction in the 10,544 classroom teachers working in the 307 Venture Capital Schools funded to implement restructuring by the state legislature in Ohio.

### Definitions of Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Job Satisfaction

Thirteen dimensions of teacher empowerment were identified in the literature. These were: (1) accountability, (2) authority/leadership, (3) curriculum planning/design, (4) collegiality/collaboration, (5) decision-making, (6) impact/causal importance, (7) professional growth, (8) professional knowledge, (9) responsibility, (10) self-efficacy, (11) self-esteem, (12) status, and (13) training new teachers (e.g., Maeroff, 1988; Lightfoot, 1986; Lieberman & Miller, 1990; Lichenstein, McLaughlin, & Knudsen, 1991; Short, 1991; Sprague, 1992; Sizer, 1992; Morris & Nunnery, 1993; Comer, 1993).

The School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short & Rinehart, 1992b) was grounded in both the literature and Short's empirical work in, "The Empowered School District Project," in nine school districts across the country from 1989 to 1992 (Short, 1991). Further, the School Participant Empowerment Scale was the only instrument identified in the literature (Short & Rinehart, 1992a) that measured as many as six dimensions of the construct.

These six dimensions were defined by Short (1991) as:

Decision-making relates to the participation of teachers in critical decisions that directly affect their work. In many cases, this means participation in decisions involving budgets, teacher selection, scheduling, curriculum, and other programmatic areas...

Professional Growth refers to teachers' perceptions that the school in which they work provides them with opportunities to grow and develop as professionals, to learn continuously, and to expand one's own knowledge and skills through the work life of the school...

Status refers to teachers' perceptions that they have professional respect and admiration from colleagues. Teachers feel that others respect their knowledge and expertise...

Self-Efficacy refers to teachers' perceptions that they have the skills and ability to help students learn, are competent in building effective programs for students, and can effect changes in student learning...

Autonomy refers to the teachers' sense of freedom to make certain decisions that control certain aspects of their work life. These aspects may be scheduling, curriculum, textbooks, and instructional planning...

Impact refers to the teachers' sense that they have an effect and influence on school life. They feel that what they are doing is worthwhile, they are doing it in a competent manner, and they are recognized for their accomplishments...

(p.9-14).

The 38-item School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (Short & Rinehart, 1992b) used a five-point Likert-type rating scale for each of the 38 items (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliabilities for the data used by Short & Rinehart (1992a) to create the subscales were: decision-making, .79; professional-growth, .66; status, .84; self-efficacy, .83; autonomy, .83; impact, .91; total scale, .94.

Teacher job satisfaction was measured by The Follow-up Survey of Teacher Education Graduates, developed by Freeman, Loadman, and Kennedy (1991). This instrument has been used by thirty-six teacher education institutions to collect follow-up data from their graduates . These data (N=2,225) comprise The National Database of Teacher Education Graduates. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability of the Job Satisfaction Subscale with these data was .76 (Loadman & Klecker, 1993). Content validity of the instrument was addressed by Brookhart, Loadman, & Freeman (1989). The Job Satisfaction subscale used a 7-item, 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from very negative (1) to very positive (7). The seven items measured teachers' satisfaction with: 1) salary, 2) opportunities for advancement, 3) degree of challenge of the job, 4) autonomy, 5) general working conditions, 6) interaction with colleagues, and 7) interaction with students.

## METHODOLOGY

Sample

The population for the study was 10,544 classroom teachers working in the 307 Venture Capital Schools in Ohio. (The 307 schools comprise approximately 10% of all schools in the state). As the goal of the restructuring effort was to involve all of the classroom teachers, a census survey, including the total population, was chosen for the study. This was done to reflect the "total involvement" desired in each school.

Data Collection

As responses were sought from all classroom teachers within each school (and the building principal for the larger study), a metaphor, "a snapshot in time," was used in the cover letter sent to each restructuring school coordinator (Klecker & Loadman, 1995). A packet containing the cover letter and a questionnaire for each classroom teacher (and building principal) was mailed February 13, 1995, to each restructuring school coordinator with a self-addressed postage-paid return envelope. An envelope was attached to each instrument with instructions to the respondents to complete the survey, seal the envelope, identify the envelope with his or her initials only and return it to the restructuring school coordinator. (This minimal identification was required to aid the restructuring school coordinator with data collection). The "total picture" of the school requested in the cover letter was



defined as responses from at least 80% of the classroom teachers. The cover letter was headed by a small color reproduction of a "primitive" style painting of an early school in the state. An 8 x 10 signed, limited edition, color reproduction of the painting was promised to each school returning a "total picture." An original 16 x 20 acrylic "primitive" painting of the school with the highest return rate was promised in the cover letter. Follow-up phone calls the week after the mailing found that the restructuring school coordinators had received a request for extensive information from the state's evaluators the same day they had received the questionnaires for this study. Further follow-up phone calls were considered to be counter-productive. Returns were received in February and March, 1995.

### Return Rates

Fifty-six schools responded with 100% of the classroom teachers; 48 schools responded with between 80-99% of the classroom teachers; 47 schools had a classroom teacher return rate between 50-79%; 23 schools had a classroom teacher return rate between 30-49%; 6 schools responded with 29% or fewer classroom teacher responses. Overall return rates were: schools (N=180) 58.6%, and teachers (N=4084) 38.7%. Statistical analysis found few differences in responses by return rate subgroups and the data were aggregated for further analysis.

Signed, limited edition, color prints were sent to 104 schools. One of the fifty-six schools responding with 100% of the classroom teachers was chosen at random and an original acrylic painting was painted (by the researcher) for that school's teachers' lounge. A summary of the study--with data for the individual school--was sent to each of the 180 responding schools.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The subscales identified by Short & Rinehart (1992b) were found to be unstable with the large dataset of this study. New subscales were developed through factor analysis and the content validity of the newly-created subscales was reviewed (Klecker & Loadman, 1996). The autonomy subscale was renamed "autonomy in scheduling" as the three items loading on this subscale measured teacher responses to questions about scheduling. Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliabilities for the newly-created subscales with the data of this study were: Status (6 items) .84; Professional Growth (4 items) .70; Self-Efficacy (12 items) .89; Decision Making (8 items) .80; Impact (5 items) .83; and Autonomy in Scheduling (3 items) .83.

Teacher demographic frequencies and percentages were calculated. Means and standard deviations for the School Participant Empowerment Scale (total scale score and six subscale scores) and National Follow-up Survey of Teacher Education Graduates Job

Satisfaction Subscale (seven items and total subscale score) were calculated. Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability for the subscale with the data of this study was .80. Correlations (Pearson's  $r$ ) were computed between the subscales and total scale score of the School Participant Empowerment Scale and the National Follow-up Survey of Teacher Education Graduates Job Satisfaction Subscale.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Characteristics of Teachers in the Sample

Seventy-two percent of the teachers responding were female, 28% were male. The gender proportions of the sample were the same as proportions in the national population of teachers in 1991 (Snyder & Hoffman, 1994). The modal age of the sample of teachers was 40-49 (43.1%). The 40-49 age category was also the national mode with 38% of teachers in the United States in 1991 in this category (Ibid). Ninety-two percent of the teachers responding to the survey were Caucasian, 6% were African-American, fewer than 1% were Asian, and 1% responded to the "other" category of the item. This number of Caucasian teachers in the sample (92%) was slightly higher than the national proportion (87%). Nationally, in 1991, 8% of the teachers in the teaching force were African American, 1% were Asian, and 4% were reported as "other" (Ibid).

The teachers were divided almost equally in their responses to the "Academic Degrees" question. In the sample, 49% had Bachelors Degrees, 50% had Masters Degrees, and 1% had Doctoral Degrees. Nationally 51.9% of the teachers had Bachelors Degrees, 42.1% had Masters Degrees, 0.5% had Doctorates, and 4.6 had Educational Specialists Degrees. In the population of teachers in the state, 54.5% of the teachers had Bachelors, 41.3% had Masters Degrees, 2.4 had Educational Specialists Degrees, and 0.6% had Doctorates. The restructuring school teachers were similar to both the national and state statistics.

The distribution of teachers within "Years of Teaching Experience" categories was relatively flat; twenty percent had been teaching 16-20 years and 20% had been teaching 21-25 years. Eighteen percent of the teachers had been teaching fewer than five years, 15% had 6-10 years of teaching experience, 14% had taught 11-15 years, and 12% had been teaching longer than 26 years. The national median for years of teaching experience in 1991 was 15 years (Snyder & Hoffman, 1994). The teachers in the restructuring schools had proportionately more years of teaching experience than the teachers in the national census.

Most of the teachers had been working in their current position for 5 years or fewer (39%). Twenty three percent had held their current

position 6-10 years, 13% responded to the 11-15 years category, 9% had held their current position 21-25 years and 5% had been teaching in their current position for more than 26 years. Most of the teachers were teaching in elementary schools (42%); twenty percent were middle school/jr. high school teachers; thirty-four percent were high school teachers, and 4% were teaching in "other" schools, that is, vocational and magnet schools. Statistics available on the national teaching population were available only as elementary (52%) and secondary (48%) (Ibid).

#### Measures of Teacher Empowerment

The overall means and standard deviations of the responses of the 4,084 teachers for each of the six subscales and the total scale are presented in Table 1.

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 place Table 1 about here  
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The scale midpoint for the Likert-type five point scale was 3.00, identified as "neutral." Mean responses for each of the six subscales and the total subscale score were all above the scale midpoint (Table 1). That is, each subscale had a positive rating. The subscale with the highest mean was Professional Growth (4.19); the subscale with the lowest mean was Autonomy in Scheduling (3.08). The mean for Autonomy in Scheduling was just slightly above the "neutral" point of the

scale. The means for Decision Making (3.43), Impact (3.57) and Total Scale score (3.82) all fell between the "neutral" midpoint of the scale and scale point 4 "agree." The means for Status (4.07), Professional Growth (4.19), and Self-Efficacy (4.12) fell between the rating scale points of "agree" and "strongly agree."

Measures Teacher of Job Satisfaction

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 place Table 2 about here  
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There were 4084 responses to the School Participant Empowerment Scale, there was no item on the Job Satisfaction subscale that received responses from the total sample (Table 2). The item rating scale range of the Job Satisfaction Subscale was from 1=very negative to 7=very positive, the scale midpoint was 4.00. The mean of the responses on the total subscale (5.00) indicated an overall moderately positive rating of job satisfaction. All of the item responses were above the scale midpoint indicating a positive rating of satisfaction by the teachers for their current job. The highest mean rating (5.83) satisfaction with interaction with students. The lowest rated item was satisfaction with general working conditions (hours, class size, work load, etc.).

The Relationship Between Teacher Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Table 3 is a simple correlation matrix for the subscales and total score of the SPES and the total subscale score of the National Follow-up Survey for Teacher Education Graduates Job Satisfaction Subscale (with the individual teachers' responses as the unit of analysis).

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 place Table 3 about here  
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There were moderate to high positive correlations between the subscales of the School Participant Empowerment Scale (Table 3). These were found between the Status Subscale and: 1) Professional Growth (0.570), 2) Self-Efficacy (0.604), 3) the Decision Making (0.574), and 4) Impact (0.698) Subscales. Additionally, the Professional Growth Subscale had a high positive correlation with the Self-Efficacy Subscale (0.612); and a moderately positive correlation with the Impact Subscale (0.531). The Decision Making Subscale, in addition to the correlation with the Status Subscale, had a high positive correlation with the Impact (0.637), and a moderately positive correlation with the Autonomy in Scheduling (0.510) subscales. The Impact Subscale had moderate to high positive correlations with four of the five other subscales. The Impact Subscale had a moderate positive correlation (0.465) with the Autonomy in Scheduling Subscale. The Autonomy in Scheduling

Decision Making Subscale (0.510). Correlations between each subscale and the total scale score of the SPES were all highly positive (.700 or above) with the exception of the Autonomy in Scheduling Subscale (0.603). Correlations between each subscale of the SPES and the job satisfaction subscale score were all moderately high (above .500) and positive with the exception of the Autonomy in Scheduling Subscale (0.393). The correlation between the total scale of the SPES and the Job Satisfaction Subscale was positive and moderately high (0.699).

#### DISCUSSION

The demographic picture of teachers participating in the Venture Capital Schools in Ohio clearly overlays that of the national population of classroom teachers with two exceptions: 1) there are fewer minority teachers in the Venture Capital Schools than are in the national population and 2) the teachers in Venture Capital Schools have slightly more teaching experience. The 4,084 teachers in the 180 schools in the sample self-rated their overall empowerment as 3.82 on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). This rating was between the neutral midpoint (3.00) and the "agree" point (4.00) of the scale. On the dimensions of Status, Professional Growth, and Self-Efficacy; Venture Capital School teachers rated their sense of empowerment about midway between the scale "neutral" midpoint of 3.00 and the "agree" point of 4.00. On the Autonomy in Scheduling dimensions, the



overall rating by classroom teachers was just above the "neutral" midpoint of the scale.

The teachers' overall job satisfaction mean rating was 5.00 on a 7-point rating scale( range 1=very negative, 7=very positive). This rating indicated only a moderately positive overall rating. The teachers' overall low rating of job satisfaction with "working conditions in the schools." just a few scale points above the "neutral" midpoint of 4.00, should serve as a red flag to Venture Capital School planning teams who see a stable teaching population as a necessary ingredient for success. The relatively high ratings of satisfaction with working with students (5.83) and interaction with colleagues (5.18) are similar to findings of other studies of teacher job satisfaction ( Harris, Kazay, & Leichenko, 1991; Harris, 1992).

The high positive simple correlation ( $r = .70$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with  $r^2 = .49$  (49% common variance) between the total scale score of the School Participant Empowerment Scale and the National Follow-up Survey of Teacher Education Graduates Job Satisfaction Subscale is very similar to findings by Rinehart & Short (1993). Using the total scale score of the School Participant Empowerment Scale and the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ) (Lester, 1987 cited in Rinehart & Short, 1993), they found a high positive correlation ( $r = .73$ ,  $p < .001$ )

and common variance (53%) indicating a statistically significant as well as a practically significant result.

The multicollinearity among the six subscales of the School Participant Empowerment Scale, precluded exploring unique variance contributions of the identified dimensions of teacher empowerment. While this exploration was statistically possible through a Hierarchical Analysis (Cohen & Cohen, 1983), the interpretation of such an analysis would contribute little useful information.

### CONCLUSIONS

The 4084 classroom teachers from 180 Venture Capital Schools in Ohio in the initial stages of restructuring self-rated their overall empowerment on the School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short & Rinehart, 1992b) between the neutral midpoint and the "agree" point of a five-point rating scale. Job satisfaction was rated by 4073 of the teachers using the National Follow-up Survey of Teacher Education Graduates Job Satisfaction Subscale (Freeman, Loadman, and Kennedy, 1991) with a total subscale mean of 5.00 on the 7-point scale (1=very unsatisfactory; 7=very satisfactory). Clearly, there is room for growth on both variables and the restructuring initiatives continue. A high positive linear correlation ( $r=.70$ ,  $p<.001$ ) was found between teacher empowerment and teacher job satisfaction. The common variance was 49%. Although a high correlation between the two

constructs was found in this study, at least half (50%) of the variance in teacher job satisfaction was not explained by teacher empowerment. In depth, within-school, qualitative studies of teachers' dissatisfaction with "overall working conditions" may be the best place for Venture Capital School planning teams to focus their restructuring efforts.

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Classroom Teachers' Responses to the School Participant Empowerment Scale

N	Prof. Status 6 Items	Prof. Growth 4 Items	Self- Efficacy 12 Items	Decision Making 8 Items	Impact 5 Items	Autonomy in Scheduling 3 Items	Total Scale 38 Items
4084	4.07	4.19	4.12	3.43	3.57	3.08	3.82
	0.61	0.63	0.51	0.69	0.78	1.07	0.51

Note: Scale range = 1-5 1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree  
 Top number in cell= mean bottom number in cell= std. dev.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Classroom Teachers' Responses to the National Follow-up Survey of Teacher Education Graduates Job Satisfaction Subscale

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev
SALARY	4067	4.71	1.38
ADVANCE	4065	4.93	1.43
CHALLENG	4058	5.39	1.17
AUTONOMY	4055	4.52	1.42
WKCOND	4065	4.46	1.52
COLLEAG	4073	5.18	1.33
STUDENT	4071	5.83	1.03
Total Scale	4069	5.00	0.90

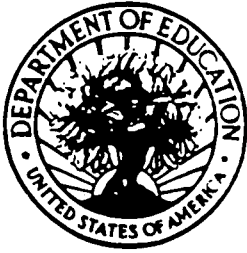
Note: Scale range: 1=very negative to 7=very positive



Table 3 Simple Correlations Among the School Participant Empowerment Scale-6 Subscales and Total Score--and the National Follow-up Survey of Teacher Education Graduates Job Satisfaction Subscale

	Status	Prof. Growth	Self-Efficacy	Decision Making	Impact	Autonomy in Scheduling	Total SPES	Job Satisfaction Subscale
Status	1.000							
Prof. Growth	0.570	1.000						
Self-Efficacy	0.604	0.612	1.000					
Decision Making	0.574	0.419	0.471	1.000				
Impact	0.698	0.531	0.518	0.637	1.000			
Auto. in Sched.	0.373	0.284	0.328	0.510	0.465	1.000		
Total SPES	0.803	0.722	0.830	0.783	0.799	0.603	1.000	
Job Satisfact. Subscale	0.606	0.522	0.506	0.513	0.560	0.393	0.699	1.000

N=4068



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