Teacher Motivation and Satisfaction: Impact on Participatory Management

By Larry E. Frase and Larry Sorenson

What factors influence teacher motivation and satisfaction, and how do those factors relate to participatory management? That's the question these writers looked at in the study discussed here.

There has been a proliferation of literature on teacher motivation and satisfaction in the last 20 years. Recently, the focus has shifted to participatory management. We know that motivation and satisfaction are prerequisites to participatory management, yet very little research has been advanced to deal with specifics.

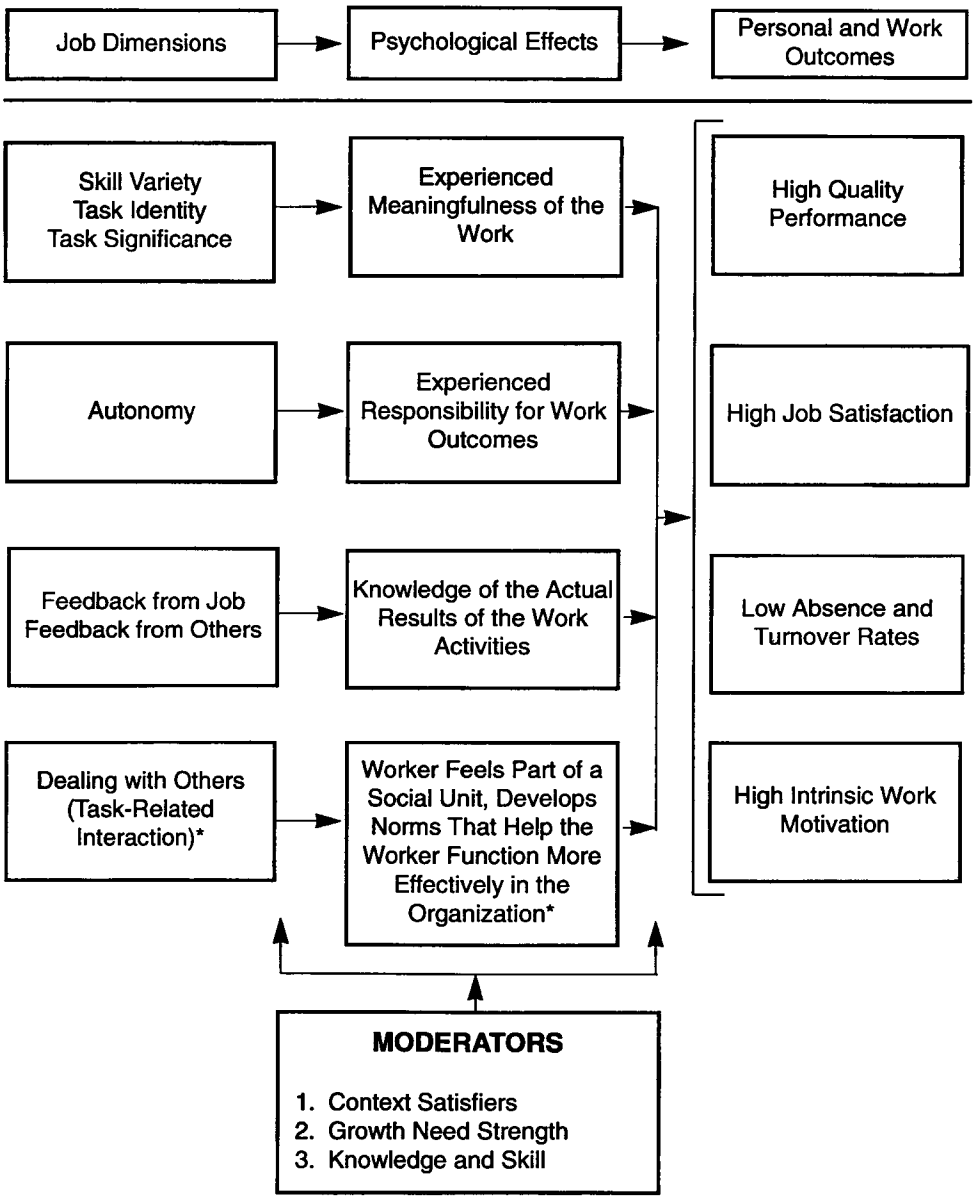
What research we do have on participatory management is atheoretical and of little assistance to practicing administrators. This has left practitioners vulnerable to faddism, pronouncements from "gee-whiz" articles, and nostrums from the ever-present education bandwagon of solutions to teacher motivation and satisfaction problems (Slavin, 1989).

To avoid this dilemma, we have chosen to examine teacher motivation and satisfaction and important factors in the teaching workplace from a research perspective. The Job Character-

Larry E. Frase is professor, San Diego State University, and Larry Sorenson is principal, SpringBank Middle School, Calgary, Alberta.

Downloaded from bul.sagepub.com at PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIV on September 18, 2016

Figure 1
Modified Job Characteristics Model



Downloaded from bul.sagepub.com at PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIV on September 18, 2016

istics Model (Hackman and Oldham, 1980) was selected as the theoretical model for guiding the study. Its companion instrument, the Job Diagnostic Survey, reveals relationships between teacher motivation and satisfaction and key factors such as teacher autonomy, feedback on teaching, collegial relationships and need for professional growth, called growth need strength in the Job Characteristics Model (JCM).

While the JCM has been used extensively in business and industry (Kopelman, 1985), we know of only a few cases where it has been employed in education (Gorsuch, 1976; Pastor and Erlandson, 1980; Spangler, 1985). Fortunately, these studies suggest that the JCM has merit as a diagnostic tool for the teaching profession. The amended version of the Job Characteristics Model used in our study is presented in Figure 1.

The theory undergirding this model proposes that positive personal and work outcomes, such as high internal work motivation and work satisfaction, are obtained when the appropriate psychological states are present, and that these states are created by the presence of the core job characteristics.

Since individuals react differently to job dimensions (Hackman and Oldham, 1980), three moderating influences are acknowledged: growth need strength, knowledge/ skill, and job context factors. The model relies heavily on a basic assumption of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory: that the job itself is a powerful motivator. This is certainly the case in teaching (Frase, Hetzel, and Inman, 1987; Frase, 1989; and Johnson, 1986).

A questionnaire derived from the model was administered to 73 teachers in a San Diego School District to gain insight into the relationships between:

- Teachers' job satisfaction and feedback from principals and peers
- Teachers' job satisfaction and autonomy and isolation
- Growth need strength and desire for collegial relationships.

The findings revealed important relationships in each of these areas. Principals should consider these relationships and the personal characteristics of each teacher before implementing participatory management on a schoolwide basis.

- *Feedback from co-workers and supervisors*

Feedback is strongly related to job satisfaction (more than all other core job characteristics), yet teachers typically receive very little accurate and helpful feedback regarding their teaching.

The message is clear: Principals must establish structures in their schools to ensure that teachers are receiving adequate and regular feedback. This can mean clinical or peer supervision, various forms of mentoring or collegial arrangements, informal correspondence, training, school visits, or whatever form of feedback best meets a particular teacher's needs.

Downloaded from bul.sagepub.com at PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIV on September 18, 2016

Teachers want feedback, and if it is as strong a predictor of job satisfaction as this study suggests, principals are remiss if they ignore the implications.

Nowhere is this more important than in the early, formative years of a teacher's career. Fledgling teachers are too often placed in isolated classrooms and expected to learn to teach by trial and error. They need and welcome support and helpful feedback regarding their performance. This study suggests that experienced teachers also thrive on feedback.

Principals with an "office-management" orientation must expand their practices to leadership in classrooms and with teachers. They must spend more time with teachers so that the feedback given is accurate, and they must establish both formal and informal dialog with teachers about teaching.

- *Autonomy or Isolation*

Autonomy is strongly related to job satisfaction for many, but not all, teachers. It means different things to different people. Some see it as the chance to have substantial freedom and independence in the classroom, free from any interference or supervision. In contrast, and as demonstrated in this study, the majority of teachers view autonomy as freedom to develop collegial relationships to accomplish tasks that extend beyond the classroom. Most teachers in this study preferred collegial and autonomous environments that extended beyond the classroom.

Principals have the opportunity and the obligation to create autonomous environments for their teachers. To be isolated in a classroom without collegial interaction or meaningful feedback is not the intended spirit of "autonomy." Furthermore, as this study suggests, isolation is seen as a job dissatisfier for many teachers. Autonomy must be seen as shared responsibility for decision making and opportunities to be involved in collegial experiences (Rosenholtz and Kyle, 1984). Principals can make this happen for teachers.

If schools are to attract and retain the best teachers, those aspects of the job that influence teacher satisfaction and motivation must be considered. For those teachers who see autonomy as more than being able to establish their own classroom routines, principals should provide shared decision making and collegial structures that will continue to motivate them in their profession.

This is not a broad brush prescription for teachers, however. Some will thrive on autonomy, while others perceive it as a means for principals to avoid their duties. In these situations, autonomy leads to dissatisfaction. Autonomy can be accomplished in many ways. The principal must determine which forms are appropriate for each teacher.

- *Collegiality and High Growth Needs*

Only those teachers who had a strong desire for professional

Downloaded from bul.sagepub.com at PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIV on September 18, 2016

growth and achievement (high growth needs) welcomed collegial opportunities. This finding is supported by Farber and Miller (1982), who found that job dissatisfaction resulted when teachers' needs for affiliation were not met. Much of teachers' work is carried out in self-contained classrooms that isolate them from the support of their colleagues (Malen, Murphy, and Hart, 1987). Further, Johnson (1986) suggests that collegiality is directly linked to effective schools.

Principals would do well to identify their high growth need teachers and provide them with task-related, person oriented, or collegial opportunities such as the following:

- Experiencing stimulating and challenging work
- Creating school improvement plans
- Exercising independent thought
- Experiencing personal growth
- Learning new teaching techniques
- Chairing committees
- Conducting workshops
- Leading a curriculum development group.

However, not every teacher in the sample was dissatisfied by the lack of collegial interactions at work. Some teachers were quite content to be excluded from collegial relationships, and preferred being left alone in the classroom. Only those identified as high growth need teachers welcomed the opportunity to work with colleagues.

Principals are being besieged with suggestions and mandates to provide teachers with more opportunities to experience collegiality. According to this study, however, not all teachers want more opportunities for collegial relationships, nor will they benefit from them.

Collegial opportunities will have a motivational effect on teachers with high growth needs, not those with medium or low growth needs. Imposition of collegial opportunities on all teachers may cause undue stress and dissatisfaction for some.

Teachers are not trained to make decisions outside their classrooms. Without proper training, participatory management may cause undue stress. Principals can decide with each teacher what his or her needs are for collegial relationships, and then provide appropriate opportunities to experience collegiality and participate in the management of the school.

Reasons for opposing collegial relations vary, and should be determined and assessed by the principal. On the positive side, some teachers who oppose participatory management and collegial relationships do so because they are good instructors, have nothing to hide, and simply do not care to devote time to these activities. The fact that their need to grow is low does not prevent them from being good teachers.

However, others may have something to hide. In addition to having low growth needs, they may also be marginal teachers. Frequent visits from the principal (Frase and Het-

Downloaded from bul.sagepub.com at PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIV on September 18, 2016

zel, 1990), and collegial relations with other teachers (peer observations) represent threats to the autonomy and isolation that protects them and their incompetency. Teacher autonomy must not be construed to mean freedom to practice incompetently.

Conclusion

The findings in this study echo Carl Glickman (1985): "Classrooms are set up so that teachers are difficult to supervise, do not receive feedback from others, and cannot engage in work collaboratively."

This study demonstrates that in addition to the difficulties mentioned by Glickman, teachers are generally dissatisfied by the absence of feedback, autonomy, and task-related interaction. In an era when participatory management, restructuring, autonomy, collegiality, and peer supervision are in vogue, we must remember that not every teacher will respond positively to this new wave of educational reform.

Opportunities for participatory management must be situational, or differentiated for each teacher:

- What is seen as autonomy by one teacher may mean isolation to another.
- Where one teacher may welcome co-worker feedback, another may consider it professional infringement.
- What is welcomed as an opportunity to work with colleagues on related tasks by one teacher, may be viewed as a very stressful imposition by another.

Administrators would do well to consider the growth needs of each staff member and restructure in such a way that there is motivation potential for all. An assessment tool such as that used in this study can provide a good measure of the general state of perceived job characteristics, job satisfaction, and growth need strengths in a school.

Administration of the instrument requires approximately 20 minutes, it is easily scored, and the data are easily interpreted for the entire faculty, subgroups, and individuals. Once this diagnosis is made, principals will be better equipped to proceed with structuring opportunities for participatory management, feedback, autonomy, and collegiality, based on school and individual needs.

References

Blanchard, Ken, and Johnson, Spencer. *The One Minute Manager.* La Jolla, Calif.: Blanchard-Johnson, 1981.

Farber, Barry A., and Miller, Julie. "Teacher Burnout: Psychoeducational Perspective." *The Education Digest,* September 1982.

Frase, L. E. "The Effects of Teacher Rewards on Recognition and Opportunities for Job Enrichment." *Journal of Educational Research* 1(1989): 51-57.

Frase, L. E., and Hetzel, R. *School Management by Wandering Around.* Lancaster, Pa.: Technomics Publishing

Downloaded from bul.sagepub.com at PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIV on September 18, 2016

Co., 1990.

Frase, L. E.; Hetzel, R. W.; and Inman, D. "Is There a Sound Rationale Behind the Merit Pay Craze? *Teacher Education Quarterly* 2(1987): 90-101.

Glickman, C. *Supervision of Instruction: A Developmental Approach.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1985.

Gorsuch, Robert A. "An Investigation of the Relationship Between Core Job Dimensions, Psychological States, and Personal Work Outcomes Among Public School Teachers." *DAI* 38 (1976): 1779A.

Hackman, J. R., and Oldham, G. R. "Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey." *Journal Of Applied Psychology* 60(1975): 159-70.

———. *Work Redesign.* Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1980.

Johnson, S. "Incentives for Teachers: What Motivates, What Matters." *Educational Administration Quarterly* 3(1986): 54-79

Kopelman, R. E. "Job Redesign and Productivity: A Review of the Evidence." *National Productivity Review* 3 (1985): 237-55.

Malen, B.; Murphy, M. J.; and Hart, A. W. "Restructuring Teacher Compensation Systems: An Analysis of Three Incentive Strategies." In *Attracting and Compensating America's Teachers,* edited by Kern Alexander and David Monk. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1987.

Pastor, Margaret C., and Erlandson, David A. "Higher Order Need Strength and Job Satisfaction in Secondary School Teachers." Doctoral dissertation, Texas University, 1980.

Peterson, K. "Secondary Principals and Instructional Leadership: Complexities in a Diverse Role." Madison, Wis.: National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, 1989.

Rosenholtz, Susan J., and Kyle, Susan J. "Teacher Isolation: Barrier to Professionalism." *American Educator* 4 (1984): 10-15.

Slavin, Robert. "PET and the Pendulum: Faddism in Education and How To Stop It." *Phi Delta Kappan,* June 1989.

Spangler W. D. "The Validity of the Job Characteristics Model." Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, 1985.

The United States' Independent Schools

The nation's independent schools are a strong force in the nation's educational system. Members of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) reported in 1990-91:

- One of every 40 students enrolled in NAIS schools in the United States was an international student
- The number of female administrators exceeded male administrators by more than 250.

Downloaded from bul.sagepub.com at PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIV on September 18, 2016