Factors Influencing Overall Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment in Early Childhood Work Environments

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Abstract. This research sought to clarify how certain personal and organizational factors influence the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of early childhood educators who work in center-based programs. Several important conclusions emerged. A fairly stable set of job clusters were identified as contributing sources of satisfaction and frustration: co-worker relations; supervisor relations; the nature of the work itself; pay and opportunities for promotion; and general working conditions. These five facets differed, however, in the extent to which they were bipolar. While several of the background variables (age, education, experience, salary, and professional orientation) did achieve statistically significant relationships with facets of satisfaction and organizational commitment, the correlation coefficients themselves were rather low. The facets of satisfaction had strongest relationships with level of organizational commitment and congruence with ideal. A surprising 83% of the respondents said they would choose a career in early childhood if selecting a career again. Statistically significant differences in work attitudes were found to exist between administrators and teachers in one area, the nature of the work itself. Finally, employees of nonprofit and for-profit programs were significantly different in only one facet of satisfaction, supervisor relations.

The topic of teacher job satisfaction has been studied extensively over the past several decades. With the latest wave of educational reform initiatives, however, the issue has taken on a heightened sense of importance. Considerable research has shown that satisfaction with work and the conditions of teaching are indices related to commitment to teaching (Coughlan & Cooke, 1974; Goodlad, 1983; Lortie, 1975, 1986; McLaughlin, 1986). Thus, understanding the factors influencing job satisfaction is central to attracting and keeping good teachers in the work force.

The bulk of the research relating to teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment has focused on elementary and secondary education settings. To date, only scattered attention has been given to the situation-specific demands of early childhood work environments. The funding structure, decision-making hierarchy, methods of supervision, delineation of roles and the nature of the work in preschool and child care programs are quite different than other work environments. This has diminished the practical utility of generalizing findings from studies conducted in other educational settings to the early childhood setting.

McClelland (1986) recently reviewed the few studies that have investigated caregiver work attitudes in the early childhood setting. She criticized much of the research for its lack of clarity in the definition and measurement of key concepts. She called for additional research

grounded in a theoretical framework and using occupationally sensitive instruments.

McClelland's recommendation is well-timed. Understanding the factors that influence work attitudes at the early childhood level takes on a sense of urgency when we read statistics indicating that staff turnover in child care centers averages well over 30% a year, far greater than for other human service professions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1984). Child care work is among the country's top ten job categories having high turnover. Elucidating the factors that influence work attitudes may help reduce turnover and improve program stability.

The purpose of this study was to explore the range of personal and organizational factors that are related to employee satisfaction and job commitment in center-based early childhood programs. The objectives of this study were several:

1. To develop a profile of early childhood workers regarding level of commitment to the field of early childhood education and their specific sources of job satisfaction and frustration.

2. To assess the relationship between a range of personal and organizational factors (age, level of education, years on the job, salary level, professional orientation and center size) and workers' level of facet satisfaction, organizational commitment and degree of congruence between their current and ideal job.

3. To note differences between workers' level of satisfaction, commitment and congruence with ideal for individuals holding different roles in the organization (teachers and administrators), and for individuals working for programs with differing legal structures.

Conceptual Framework

The Person-Environment Fit
From a theoretical perspective, job satis-

faction fits nicely into a social-ecological explanation of human behavior (Barker, 1968; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; French, 1982; Lewin, 1951; Moos, 1976; Murray, 1938). Workers in early childhood settings bring certain experiences, values and expectations with them to their respective roles. This, of course, influences the collective norms, values and work orientation of the group. But the transaction is not one way. While individuals play an important role in shaping their environment, their attitudes and behaviors are also influenced by the environments in which they work. This social-ecological framework stresses the dynamic, interactive nature of the person-environment variables (Jorde-Bloom, 1986). This perspective is particularly useful when looking at job satisfaction because research shows that vocational satisfaction, stability and achievement depend on the congruence between one's personality and the environment in which one works (Arney, 1984; Holland, 1973; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1984; Stern, 1970).

Job satisfaction is operationalized as one's evaluative reaction to the organization (satisfied/not satisfied, good/bad, just/unjust). It is a kind of "psychological contract" between the worker and the demands of the workplace that is influenced by personal needs, values and expectations (Jones & James, 1979; Mumford, 1972). The "fit," or degree of congruence, is conceptualized as the discrepancy between real conditions and ideal conditions. When job satisfaction is high, the discrepancy between existing and ideal conditions will be small (Mumford, 1972; Porter, 1961). Locke (1969) emphasizes that it is the perceived discrepancy that is important, not the actual discrepancy. Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and

what one perceives it offers.

Job Facets in Early Childhood Education
Lawler (1973) defines facet satisfaction as workers' affective reactions to different aspects of their jobs. He distinguishes this from overall job satisfaction; an individual's affective reaction to the total work role. There are a number of studies (Gruneberg, 1979; Holdaway, 1978; Kahn, 1981; Lawler, 1973; Lester, 1985; Mac-Queen & Ignatovich, 1986; Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis, & Cammann, 1983; Sergiovanni, 1967; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1975) that underscore the importance of assessing facet satisfaction rather than relying on a single global assessment of one's overall job satisfaction. The number and nature of these facets vary considerably from study to study, but the results do consistently support a multidimensional approach. As Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1975) state, a summary of one's overall satisfaction "may well mask the relationships which involve only one aspect of the employee's feelings" (p. 4). They caution, however, that while workers can discriminate among various facets of their work, their extreme dissatisfaction (or satisfaction) with one aspect of their jobs may have a strong effect on their feelings about other aspects of their jobs.

Through a review of the research on the topic and interviews with early childhood workers, five facets were identified as being most important in the early childhood setting: (a) co-worker relations; (b) supervisor relations; (c) the nature of the work itself; (d) pay and opportunities for promotion; and (e) general working conditions. Table 1 summarizes these job facets and related research. A more thorough description of each of these job facets is provided elsewhere (Jorde-Bloom, 1987).

Organizational Commitment
Organizational commitment measures the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) suggest that commitment is characterized by at least three related factors: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

Assessing organizational commitment is important because several studies have shown that an employee's expressed intention to leave is a better predictor of turnover than level of job satisfaction (Hom, Katerberg, & Hulin, 1978; Kraut, 1975). In studies specifically focusing on organizational commitment within an educational context, Reyes and Keller (1986) found that gender and experience were significantly related to the organizational commitment of public school teachers. In an early childhood setting, Berk (1985) found that the education level of child care workers was positively related to their level of commitment to the center. Finally, Kreuger, Lauerman, Graham, and Powell (1986) found commitment to be strongly related to overall job satisfaction of care givers but felt further exploration of the relationship between different job facets and organizational commitment was needed.

Method

Sample
This study involved 629 early childhood workers representing 65 randomly selected public and private, nonprofit and for-profit center-based programs in 25 states. The sample included 32 males and 597 females. It included 94 individuals who held administrative positions (supervisor, director or assistant director)

TABLE 1

Job Facets and Related Research

Satisfaction with	Definition	Related Research
Co-worker relations	The extent to which a worker has formed close relationships with colleagues. The degree of mutual trust and respect.	Friesen, Holdaway, & Rice, 1983; Holdaway, 1978 Maslach & Pines, 1977 Whitebook, et al., 1982
Supervisor relations	Perceived quality and quantity of feedback, encouragement and helpful support from supervisor. The worker's assessment of supervisor's overall competence.	Goodlad, 1983 Coughlan & Cooke, 1974 Fleischer, 1985 Robinson, 1979 Ross, 1984
The work itself	Includes various job components as they relate to the nature of the work experience (degree of challenge, variety, autonomy and control) as well as the sheer quantity of tasks to be done and the time frame in which to do them. Extent to which job provides intrinsic enjoyment and fulfills the worker's needs for recognition, creativity and skill building. Also includes task identity (the perceived importance of the work).	Adams & Macht, 1976 Holdaway, 1978 Jorde, 1982 Kahn, 1981 Lortie, 1975, 1986 McLaughlin, 1986 MacQueen & Ignatovich, 1986 Mumford, 1972 Seashore, et al., 1983 Whitebook, et al., 1982
Pay and opportunities for promotion	Concerns the adequacy of pay as well as the perceived equity and fairness of policies regarding the distribution of pay, fringe benefits and opportunities for advancement. Also includes the worker's perceived job security.	Adams, 1971 Kahn, 1981, Lawler, 1971 Ochsner & Solmon, 1979 Stern, 1986 Whitebook, et al., 1982
Working conditions	Includes both the structure of the work experience (flexibility of hours, teacher-child ratio, adequacy of breaks, substitutes and teaching materials) as well as the context in which the work is performed (the aesthetic quality of the physical environment, overall noise level, heat, ventilation, light and spatial arrangement).	Gruneberg, 1979 Herzberg, 1966 Jorde, 1982 Kahn, 1981 Kontos & Stremmel, 1988 Maslach & Pines, 1977 Phyfe-Perkins, 1980 Prescott, 1981 Seashore, et al., 1983 Whitebook, et al., 1982

and 535 individuals who held teaching positions (head teacher, teacher or assistant teacher). The sample included 234 subjects who worked part-time (20 - 35 hours per week) and 395 who worked full-time (35 or more hours per week). Program size ranged from 20 to 329 students with a mean size of 86 students.

Instrumentation
The Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey (ECJSS) was used to assess work attitudes as they relate to different facets of the job: (a) co-worker relations; (b) supervisor relations; (c) the nature of the work itself; (d) pay and opportunities for promotion; and (e) general working conditions. The ECJSS demonstrates adequate psychometric characteristics — subscales that are reliable, measure different though somewhat interrelated facets, and reflect change when it occurs (Jorde-Bloom, 1987). Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for the facet subscales ranges from .65 (the work itself) to .86 (co-worker relations). Overall internal consistency for the instrument is .89. Subscale intercorrelations range from .16 to .44 suggesting that the facets measure different though related characteristics of an individual's job. The subscale intercorrelations provide additional empirical support for the utility of assessing five separate facets of a person's work rather than one global construct. Background on the construction of the instrument regarding content validity as well as convergent and discriminant validity is provided elsewhere (Jorde-Bloom, 1987).

The ECJSS includes ten questions for each facet subscale. Questions were evaluative in nature and presented in a yes/no (true/false) format. For each item, subjects were asked to indicate agreement with a specific statement. The possible range of scores for each subscale was 0 to 10. For unfavorable statements, the scoring was reversed. Thus, a low score on any subscale represented negative attitudes toward that job facet; a high score represented favorable attitudes.

A similar format was used to measure each worker's commitment to the center. Ten questions, five of which were worded positively (e.g., "I take pride in my center") and five were worded negatively (e.g., "I often think of quitting") assessed individuals' loyalty and degree of commitment to their job and the center. Scores could range from 0 (low commitment) to 10 (high commitment).

The survey also measured the congruence between existing and ideal conditions for each job facet. Individuals were asked to rate on a Likert-type scale the degree to which their existing job resembled their ideal. Ratings for each facet ranged from 1 (not at all like my ideal) to 5 (just like my ideal). The possible range for the congruence score was 5 to 25.

Additionally, subjects were asked to complete questions eliciting information about their level of education (scored 0 - 8, from less than high school diploma to doctorate), years of experience in the field of early childhood education, number of years (or months) in their current position, hours of employment, salary range (scored 1 - 9, depending on level) and the size of the center (total enrollment) in which they worked.

Another section of the survey focused on workers' professional orientation. This section included questions regarding their involvement in professional organizations, how frequently they attended workshops and conferences, the number and type of educational journals they read and if they considered their current position "a career" or "just a job." The possible range of scores for this section was 0 to 20, with a low score indicating minimal involvement in professional activities and

a high score indicating a strong professional orientation.

Finally, responses were elicited from subjects using two open-ended questions designed to tap other sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction ("What are the two most satisfying things about your present job?" and "What are the two most frustrating things about your job?"). This method has been used elsewhere (Friesen, Holdaway, & Rice, 1983) and is a variation of Herzberg's (1966) critical incident approach to assessing work attitudes. Subjects were also asked, "If you could do it all over again, would you choose a career in early childhood education?"

Data Collection Procedures

Copies of the ECJSS were mailed to participating centers in the fall of 1985. A staff representative at each site was selected to distribute a survey and a return envelope to each employee. Anonymity of individual responses was ensured. The average response rate within centers was 87% of the total number of employees.

Results

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations and range of scores for all variables. The portrait of the child care worker that emerged in this study is consistent with previous research on this occupational group (Abt, 1979; National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 1985; Washtenaw County Association for the Education of Young Children (WCAEYC), 1985). Ninety-four percent of the early childhood workers were female. The average age was thirty-two years. Thirty-eight percent of the teachers and aides and 73% of the program directors were college graduates. They averaged five and one half years in the field of early childhood education and slightly over three years in their present position. The mean salary for the 311 full-time employees who held a teaching role was slightly over $8,000 for 1985. The mean salary for the 84 administrators who worked full-time was approximately $16,000 for 1985.

Virtually all comments from workers in response to the two open-ended questions regarding sources of job satisfaction and frustration fell into one of the five job facet categories. A preliminary estimate of coding reliability was derived by examining the degree of agreement by two different coders. This was arrived at by the number of agreements divided by the total number of codes assigned. The overall agreement for the final content analysis was .95. Table 3 summarizes the frequency and percentage distribution of job facets mentioned by workers as contributing to their overall satisfaction and overall frustration. As can be seen in this table, the nature of the work itself is mentioned as both the leading source of satisfaction (70% of the responses) and as the leading source of frustration (41% of the responses).

Further analysis of this facet revealed an interesting pattern. Responses were coded depending on whether they referred to a general attribute of the work (challenge, autonomy, time pressure, etc.) or referred specifically to children or their parents. Responses referring to general job characteristics were noted 25% of the time as a source of satisfaction and 26% of the time as a source of frustration. Comments specifically noting some aspect of work with children accounted for 39% of the comments contributing to satisfaction and only 8% of the comments to frustration. Specific references to work with parents were mentioned 6% of the time as a source of satisfaction and 7% of the time as a source of frustration.

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TABLE 2

Means, Standard Deviations and Range of Scores
for All Variables (N=629)

Variable	M	SD	Possible Range	Actual Range
Worker Background				
Age	31.62	10.58	-- --	16 - 68
Education level*	3.07	1.65	0 - 8	0 - 8
Years in ece	5.59	5.14	-- --	0 - 40
Years on the job	3.34	3.63	-- --	0 - 26
Salary level**	3.67	1.67	1 - 9	1 - 8
Prof. orientation	4.68	3.50	0 - 20	0 - 20
Organization				
Size (enrollment)	85.62	58.44	-- --	20 - 329
Job Facets				
Co-worker relations	8.53	1.80	0 - 10	0 - 10
Supervisor relations	7.82	2.21	0 - 10	1 - 10
The work itself	7.34	1.91	0 - 10	1 - 10
Pay/Promotion	5.07	1.99	0 - 10	0 - 10
Working conditions	6.86	1.99	0 - 10	0 - 10
Total Job Satisfaction	35.64	6.85	0 - 50	12 - 50
Commitment	6.79	1.71	0 - 10	1 - 10
Ideal Congruence	5.17	2.15	0 - 10	0 - 10

Note:
* education level 3 = Associate degree, level 4 = Bachelor's degree
  mean education level for administrators = 4.49
** salary noted for full-time employees only (n = 395).
  level 3 = 8,000 - 10,999, level 4 = 11,000 - 13,999,
  level 5 = 14,000 -16,999, level 6 = 17,000 - 19,999
  mean salary level for full-time administrators (n = 84) was 5.67
  mean salary level for full-time teachers (n = 311) was 3.1

TABLE 3

Frequency and Percentage of Job Facets Identified by Workers
as Contributing to Their Overall Job Satisfaction and Frustration

Job Facet	As a source of satisfaction (n = 1107) f	%	As a source of frustration (n = 1084) f	%
Co-worker relations	177	16	122	11
Supervisor relations	45	4	109	10
Work itself	769	70	441	41
general work attributes	279	25	280	26
children	426	39	90	8
parents	65	6	71	7
Pay/promotion opportunities	70	6	214	20
Working conditions	21	2	168	15
Other*	25	2	30	3

* Ambiguous responses - unable to code

In response to the open-ended question regarding their commitment to the profession, fully 83% of the respondents involved in this study said they would select a career in early childhood education if they were to make a career decision again.

As seen in Table 4, the data show significant relationships between several of the background variables and level of facet satisfaction. This table represents the pooled data ($N = 629$) except for level of professional orientation. In this one area, the correlation coefficients for administrators and teachers were worthy of separate notation.

Of particular interest in Table 4 was the fact that the level of an individual's salary failed to show a significant association with any of the facets of job satisfaction. Salary did demonstrate a significant relationship with an individual's degree of commitment to the organization, however ($r = .11, p < .01$). Size of the organization, as well, failed to demonstrate a significant relationship with the five facets of satisfaction. Length of time on the job showed a negative relationship with satisfaction with pay and opportunities for promotion ($r = -.14, p < .001$). Age showed a significant association with satisfaction with supervisor relations ($r =$

TABLE 4

Correlations of Background and Organizational Variables with
Job Facets, Organizational Commitment and Congruence with Ideal

	Co-worker	Super-visor	Work itself	Pay promot	Work condit	Total job sat	Commit-ment
Age	.07	.13*	.14*	-.07	.07	.10*	.13*
Education	.05	.14*	.04	-.15*	-.08	.01	-.02
Years - current job	.02	.01	.04	-.14*	.04	-.01	.08
Salary	-.07	.04	-.05	.04	-.09	-.04	.11*
Prof orient-teacher	-.01	.05	.14*	-.06	-.05	.01	.10
Prof orient-admin	-.27*	-.23	.03	-.28**	-.12	-.29**	-.25
Center size	.03	.05	.05	.01	-.01	.03	.05
Commitment	.34**	.33**	.53**	.37**	.27*	.55**	—
Ideal congruence	.36**	.35**	.45**	.38**	.44**	.60**	.43**

n = 629 except for professional orientation (administrators n = 94,
   teachers n = 535)

* p < .01
** p < .001

.13, $p < .01$), the work itself ($r = .14$, $p < .001$), and commitment to the organization ($r = .13$, $p < .01$). Level of education showed significant relationships with both satisfaction with supervisor relations ($r = .14$, $p < .001$) and satisfaction with pay and opportunities for promotion ($r = -.15$, $p < .001$).

Administrators and teachers appear to differ in the extent to which their professional orientation is associated with the various facets of job satisfaction. For administrators, the greater their involvement in professional activities, the more they expressed dissatisfaction with their co-worker relations ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$) and with pay and opportunities for promotion ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$). For teachers, the more they were involved in professional activities, the greater their satisfaction with the work itself ($r = .14$, $p < .01$).

Even though many of the correlations noted in Table 4 achieve a level of statistical significance ($p < .01$), the coefficients themselves remain quite low, suggesting the explanatory power of background variables in predicting level of facet job satisfaction is small. These background characteristics do not even show a strong association with level of commitment to the organization.

While the correlation coefficients between the various background variables and levels of facet satisfaction were generally quite low in this study, the facets of job satisfaction did, however, show a moderate to high association with level of commitment to the organization and with the congruence between real and ideal conditions. As depicted in Table 4, one's total job satisfaction (the composite of the facet scores) is also significantly related to both level of commitment to the center ($r = .55$, $p < .001$) and the extent to which current conditions are congruent with the worker's ideal ($r = .60$, $p < .001$).

Analysis of variance procedures were employed to test the effects of role and program type on level of facet satisfaction, organizational commitment and congruence with ideal. As shown in Table 5, significant differences were found in administrator/teacher ratings of overall job commitment ($F = 26.50$, $p < .0001$) and job satisfaction in one facet, the nature of the work itself ($F = 9.80$, $p < .002$). It is interesting to note that the mean scores for the administrators were slightly higher in all categories. With respect to program type, a significant difference in level of job satisfaction was detected between individuals who work for profit as compared to nonprofit programs in only one area of satisfaction, supervisor relations ($F = 4.7$, $p < .02$).

Discussion

Despite the methodological complexities of measuring work attitudes, it is possible to tap the essential elements of job satisfaction as they relate to the early childhood setting. The results of the data analysis provide support for the contention that early childhood workers do respond differently to specific facets of their jobs. The results of the data analysis support the proposition, as well, that the differentiation of attitudes toward the five job facets is not solely an artifact resulting from the structure of forced-choice questioning. The results of this study underscore the importance of assessing work attitudes using both a free-response format and a structured-response format.

MacQueen and Ignatovich (1986) believe that many of the previous studies attempting to determine whether teachers are satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs have overstated the rate of dissatisfaction because they have relied on too few questions. For example, one cannot necessarily conclude that just because teachers answer "no" to the question of whether or not they would choose teach-

ing as a career again that they are necessarily dissatisfied with their jobs. Discriminate analysis procedures may be useful in detecting important patterns between different groups of workers (e.g., those that would or would not choose a career in early childhood again). Additionally, future research needs to explore the interactive effects of the person-environment variables over time as well as assess which factors may be antecedent to satisfaction and which may act in a mutually reinforcing interactive manner.

Commitment to Early Childhood

Perhaps the most startling (and encouraging) finding of this study was that fully 83% of the subjects responding to the question "If you would do it all over again, would you choose a career in early childhood education?" did so affirmatively. Only 15% said "no" (in almost all cases citing inadequacy of pay and benefits) and the remaining 2% responded "it depends."

This finding was surprising in light of previous research on the topic that has shown that at the elementary level, fully one-third of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (Schlechty & Vance, 1983). A National

TABLE 5

Means, Standard Deviations and Analysis of Variance by Role
for Five Job Facets, Total Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment*

Subscale	Admin (n=84)		Teachers (n=311)		MS Bet	MS within	F	Significance
	M	SD	M	SD				
Co-worker	8.56	1.60	8.33	1.98	3.32	3.63	.92	.34
Supervisor	8.14	2.20	7.48	2.34	27.78	5.33	5.21	.02
Work itself	7.84	1.52	7.10	1.97	34.81	3.55	9.80	.002
Pay/promotion	5.40	1.90	4.98	1.96	11.53	3.84	3.00	.08
Work Condit	7.10	2.31	6.60	2.42	16.20	5.73	2.83	.09
Tot job sat	37.01	5.97	34.52	7.01	396.33	46.38	8.55	.003
Commitment	7.61	1.43	6.64	1.71	76.69	2.89	26.50	.0001
Ideal congru	5.23	1.87	4.87	2.19	8.45	4.53	1.87	.17

* full-time employees only (n = 395)
  df ranged from 1,378 to 1,391 depending on missing data

Teacher Opinion Poll in 1983 found that 43% of teachers "probably" or "certainly" would not become a teacher if they started again (Feistritzer, 1983). But those studies involved teachers at the elementary level. Additional research in this area is needed to discern if there are indeed differences between elementary and early childhood teachers with respect to their overall commitment to the field. It may be possible, for example, that early childhood workers have more realistic expectations about job outcomes. They may be more fully aware of the low wages, benefits and general working conditions before accepting a position thereby matching their expectations to reality more accurately than do new graduates of elementary teacher training programs. On the other hand, one might also hypothesize that different levels of commitment may instead be related to perceived career options. Since elementary school teachers tend to have higher levels of training, they may also perceive themselves as having greater job mobility.

Sources of Job Satisfaction and Frustration
The key finding from the data analysis concerning responses to the open-ended questions eliciting information about sources of satisfaction and frustration was the substantial overlap that occurred between these two categories. Each of the facets was mentioned as both sources of satisfaction as well as sources of frustration, although to differing degrees. Some facets of a person's job are clearly bipolar, possessing the potential to contribute to both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Sergiovanni (1967, 1980) calls this a "blurring" across the motivation-hygiene boundaries proposed by Herzberg.

Co-worker relations. Lortie (1975) found that teacher-teacher interactions did not seem to play a critical part in the work life of teachers at the elementary level. He believed the cellular form of the school organization discouraged interactions between teachers. Holdaway (1978), on the other hand, found that relationships with other teachers were a common source of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Principals involved in a study by Friesen, et al. (1983) noted the relationships with their co-workers as the most frequent source of satisfaction. Both Whitebook, Howes, Darrah, and Friedman (1982) and Maslach and Pines (1977) also note co-worker relations as a source of satisfaction for caregivers at the early childhood level. The results of this study indicate that co-worker relations may well serve as both source of satisfaction (16% of the responses) and as a source of frustration (11% of the responses). The physical environment of early childhood programs often necessitates a team approach to teaching and a sharing of space and resources. This may contribute to the bipolarity of this facet.

Supervisor relations. The results of the data analysis show that supervisor relations was more likely to surface as a source of dissatisfaction for the workers included in this study than as a source of satisfaction. The overall mention of supervisor relations was small, however, surfacing in only 14% of the total responses. These results support the conclusions drawn by Ross (1984) but contradict previous work by Robinson (1979) and Fleischer (1985) where supervisor issues surfaced as strong determinants of employee satisfaction.

The nature of the work itself. The job facet measuring the nature of the work itself was the clearest example of the bipolar characteristic. The nature of the work itself was indicated as both the greatest source of satisfaction (70% of the responses) and the greatest source of frustration (41% of the responses). Secon-

dary analysis of the data revealed an interesting pattern, however, underscoring the importance of differentiating responses within this one job facet. The finding that early childhood workers' interactions with children provide their strongest source of satisfaction (39% of the responses) confirms previous research on the topic at both the elementary and early childhood level (Adams & Macht, 1976; Holdaway, 1978; Lortie, 1975, 1986; McLaughlin, 1986; MacQueen & Ignatovich, 1986; Neugebauer, 1975; WCAEYC, 1985; Whitebook, et al., 1982). As Lortie so poignantly states, "Other sources of satisfaction . . . pale in comparison to the teachers' exchanges with students." (p. 106) McLaughlin (1986) believes having a positive impact on students' lives yields the psychic rewards that teachers seek and need in order to sustain their efforts. But Lortie (1975) found that these psychic rewards are scarce, erratic and unpredictable because they are often tied to student achievement. This appears not to be the case at the early childhood level where teachers indicate they get more immediate feedback for their efforts.

General attributes of the work such as degree of challenge, autonomy and control were also mentioned as important sources of satisfaction in Whitebook's et al. (1982) and Neugebauer's (1975) previous studies. The present study found that these work characteristics are just as likely to be mentioned as sources of frustration.

Pay and opportunities for promotion. Pay, benefits and opportunities for promotion have been the focus of several studies of child care workers (e.g., Robinson, 1979; Rosenfeld, 1979; WCAEYC, 1985; Whitebook, et al., 1982). These studies have consistently underscored the strong role that workers' pay, benefits and opportunities for promotion play in influencing employee job satisfaction and commitment to the field. While the im-

portance of pay as a source of motivation is often downplayed in workers' self-reports of job satisfaction, the extrinsic rewards workers receive are important for their symbolic value. Pay is a means of communicating esteem and, for many, a symbol of the value placed by society on teaching. Wages also constitute a means of comparison, both within and outside the immediate organization. Early childhood workers, for example, compare themselves to others holding similar positions within their own center, as well as to others holding similar positions in other centers. For many workers, questions of internal and external equity may be just as important as questions of adequacy (Adams, 1971; Lawler, 1973).

The results of this study support previous research in this area. Pay, benefits and opportunities for promotion surfaced as the second strongest source of job frustration; fully 20% of the responses. This facet, however, was also noted as a source of satisfaction in 4% of the responses. Holdaway (1978) found salary was identified by 9% of the elementary teachers in his study as source of dissatisfaction and by 5% as a source of satisfaction.

Working conditions. Overall working conditions, and specifically problems relating to the composition of classes, particularly class size, topped the list of sources of dissatisfaction in McLaughlin's (1986) study of elementary teachers. She also reports that approximately half of the teachers she interviewed rated their teaching materials as "poor" or "barely adequate." At the early childhood level, the conditions of teaching including teacher-child ratios, hours, work schedules and the physical environment, have also been the focus of several studies (Maslach & Pines, 1977; Robinson, 1979; WCAEYC, 1985; Whitebook, et al., 1982). The present study provides strong support that the conditions of work seldom

serve as sources of satisfaction. Indeed they were mentioned as a source of satisfaction only 2% of the time, compared to 15% of the time as a source of frustration.

Job Satisfaction and Individual/ Organizational Characteristics
There is some evidence from previous studies investigating correlates of job satisfaction that personal variables have a strong association with the different facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The thinking goes that personal factors affect job satisfaction because they influence perceptions of what outcomes should be. For example, the higher workers' level of education, the more they feel they should receive. In their study of job satisfaction of school principals, Friesen, et al. (1983) found job satisfaction to be substantially associated with several background and organizational variables including years of experience and size of the school. MacQueen and Ignatovich (1986) also report significant satisfaction differences due to the effects of age, career experience and salary level. Additional studies report a variety of other positive and negative associations: educational and organizational commitment (Berk, 1985); job experience and level of job satisfaction (Reyes & Keller, 1986); age and organizational commitment (Ross, 1984). While several of the background variables explored in this study showed significant associations with various facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the correlations, on the whole, were quite low suggesting the explanatory power of the background characteristics in predicting level of facet job satisfaction is small. On the other hand, the correlations between the facets of satisfaction with level of organizational commitment and facets of satisfaction with congruence with their ideal were moderate.

The correlations between age and facets of job satisfaction were explored further. Previous research in this area has been mixed with some studies suggesting that there is a steady increase in job satisfaction with age (Ochsner & Solmon, 1979; MacQueen & Ignatovich, 1986) and others reporting a curvilinear relationship (high satisfaction among young and old workers, low satisfaction among middle-age workers). It would be erroneous to conclude that the tendency for older employees to experience higher levels of job satisfaction is a function of age alone, however. The tendency of satisfaction to be high among older employees may well be a function of both the effects of selective turnover and the development of realistic expectations about what the job has to offer (Herzberg, 1966; Lawler, 1973). Additional analysis of the data with respect to this variable needs to be conducted to determine if a curvilinear relationship exists in levels of facet satisfaction and overall commitment to the organization.

Differential Work Attitudes
The final objective of this study was to assess differences in level of satisfaction, commitment and congruence with ideal for individuals holding different roles in the organization (teachers and administrators), and for individuals working for programs with differing legal structures.

Role. The findings of this study suggest that one's level of facet job satisfaction, commitment to the center and congruence with ideal increases as occupational level increases. Overall, program administrators (supervisors, directors and assistant directors) scored higher in satisfaction, commitment and congruence than individuals who were teachers or assistant teachers in the classroom. Their differences achieved statistical significance in one job facet, the nature of the work it-

self, as well as in overall commitment to the center. Drawing conclusions from these results must be done cautiously, however, because mean scores can mask the wide variation that exists in individual workers at any occupational level (Jorde-Bloom, 1988a). The findings regarding the effects of role on work attitudes are understandable. Individuals in higher occupational levels typically have greater autonomy and control over the pace and quality of their work. This in turn may provide increased opportunities for feeling a sense of accomplishment (Trusty & Sergiovanni, 1966). Additional research is needed to discern the effects of role on some of the associated negative outcomes of dissatisfaction such as stress, burnout and employee attrition. It is possible, for example, that the degree of control an employee has and other characteristics that differentiate roles may have a moderating effect on the negative aspects of job dissatisfaction.

Program structure. It has been suggested that the legal structure of an early childhood program as it relates to its nonprofit versus for-profit status may be linked to the quality of work life for child care employees (Abt, 1979; Neugebauer, 1981; Whitebook, et al., 1982). The rationale is that nonprofit programs tend to allocate greater financial resources to program operation than do their for-profit proprietary counterparts. Nonprofit programs tend to pay higher salaries, provide more opportunities for professional growth and have better employee fringe benefits. Consequently, they also have less employee turnover.

The results of the data analysis indicate that statistically significant differences between programs based on structure are evident, but in only one area, satisfaction with supervisor relations. Employees of for-profit programs consistently rate this facet of job satisfaction lower than do their peers working for nonprofit programs. The overall level of commitment of employees working for programs of differing legal structures was not statistically significant, however, nor was employee satisfaction with pay and opportunities for promotion. It is possible that the salaries paid at all centers are so low that what minimal differences may exist between nonprofit and for-profit programs are just not sufficient to result in a differential impact on employee levels of satisfaction.

Conclusion

The results of this study link theory to practice in a very useful and pragmatic way. Assessing facets of job satisfaction can be an important first step toward achieving quality work environments that are personally and professionally satisfying. Center-wide policies and practices need to address the importance of each aspect of the job as it relates to job satisfaction. Examining the interaction between the nature of the work setting and individual attitudes may facilitate effective job restructuring. The goal, of course, is to implement organizational practices that facilitate person-environment congruence. As researchers learn to define and measure what constitutes relevant person-environment interaction and consequences, it will be possible to place, train and motivate workers in environments that enhance overall job satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

This perspective may be useful in the recruitment and the job selection process as well. Expectations of new caregivers are often unrealistic. Administrators interviewing new teachers can specifically ask questions that relate to worker conceptions of their ideal job with respect to each job facet. Such information may help reduce the incidence of mismatch in perceptions of what the role and work set-

ting can offer and thus promote greater professional fulfillment.

The rationale for increasing job satisfaction has traditionally been viewed from the lens of productivity (e.g., increased profits in business and industry and better student outcomes in educational settings). There is evidence to suggest that level of satisfaction is an accurate predictor of several school effectiveness indicators in elementary school settings (Goodlad, 1983) and of child-oriented practices that are indicative of quality in early childhood settings (Berk, 1985; Jorde-Bloom, 1988b). But as Goodlad so forcefully argues, the antiquated factory model of productivity that seeks to establish a causal link between job satisfaction and higher levels of productivity in the workplace is misguided and needs to be replaced. Practices should be humane in their own right. Early childhood work environments need to nurture adults as well as children. Instituting practices that promote quality of work life is a worthwhile end in itself.

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