

# TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION IN CYPRUS: THE RESULTS OF A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH

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## Introduction

Recent studies carried out in a number of countries have drawn attention to the degree of job satisfaction among teachers and have shown that teachers' work "intensification" (Hargreaves, 1994) mirrors societal trends toward overwork (Naylor, 2001). Imposed and centralized system accountability, lack of professional autonomy, relentlessly imposed changes, constant media criticism, reduced resources, and moderate pay all relate to low teacher satisfaction in many developed countries around the world (e.g., Dinham and Scott, 1998b, 2000a; Scott et al., 2001; van den Berg, 2002; Vandenberghe and Huberman, 1999).

The effects of these trends include declining job satisfaction, reduced ability to meet students' needs, significant incidences of psychological disorders leading to increased absenteeism, and high levels of claims for stress-related disability (Farber, 1991; Troman and Woods, 2000). Most importantly, though, teacher dissatisfaction appears to be a main factor in teachers leaving the profession in many countries (Huberman, 1993; Woods et al., 1997). Thus, research into teacher satisfaction is becoming more and more important given not only that a growing number of teachers leave the profession but also that dissatisfaction is associated with decreased productivity (Tshannen-Moran et al., 1998).

In terms of definitions, there is no generally agreed upon definition of teacher job satisfaction or of what constitutes *teacher satisfaction* although there might be some international trends such as, the notion that teachers are most satisfied by matters intrinsic to the role of teaching: student achievement, helping students, positive relationships with students and others, self growth and so on (Dinham and Scott, 2002; van den Berg, 2002). In general, though, it is argued that *context* seems to be the most powerful predictor of overall satisfaction (Dinham and Scott, 1999, 2000a, 2000b). As Cherniss points out: "People can make their lives better or worse but what they think, how they feel and what they do are strongly shaped by the *social contexts* in which they live" (1995, p. 166, added emphasis).

In this paper, we examine job satisfaction and motivation among teachers in Cyprus. Although past research has shown motivation to be related to job satisfaction (Friedman and Farber, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1991; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990) in the context of developed countries, research linking motivation to teachers' satisfaction in developing countries does not exist (Garrett, 1999). Therefore, we have conducted two studies—one study using quantitative methodology and another one using qualitative methodology—to explore the effect of some of the trends identified earlier—e.g., imposed and centralized system accountability, lack of professional autonomy, relentlessly imposed changes etc.—on the satisfaction and motivation of teachers and administrators in the social context of Cyprus.

The paper is divided in five parts. In the first part, an overview of research on teacher satisfaction is provided and the need for empirical studies in developing countries is highlighted. The second part of the paper considers the background of the educational system in Cyprus. In the third part, the methodologies of the two studies are described. In the fourth part, the findings from both studies are discussed and then compared and contrasted; in the fifth and concluding part, attention is called to the consequences of the present analysis for future research.

### **Research on Teacher Satisfaction**

Over the last two decades, many studies have attempted to identify sources of teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction by elementary and secondary school teachers (e.g., Farber, 1991; Friedman and Farber, 1992; Kyriacou, 1987; Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1979; Mykletun, 1984). According to the majority of these studies, teacher satisfaction is clearly related to levels of intrinsic empowerment, i.e., motivation. The main factor found to contribute to the job satisfaction of teachers is working with children. Additional factors included developing warm, personal relationships with pupils, the intellectual challenge of teaching and autonomy and independence. In contrast, teachers viewed job dissatisfaction as principally contributed to by work overload, poor pay and perceptions of how teachers are viewed by society. In general, though, studies have found variations in the job satisfaction levels of teachers, depending on certain individual and school characteristics (Spear, Gould and Lee, 2000).

It can be argued that teacher satisfaction refers to a teacher's affective relation to his or her teaching role and is a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from teaching and what one perceives it is offering to a teacher (e.g., see Lawler, 1973). In general, Morse (1953) views the strength of an individual's "desires, or his/her level of aspiration in a particular area" to be an important factor in job satisfaction (p. 28). Those with the strongest desires or highest aspirations are least happy with their job if the environment does not facilitate satisfaction of their needs. Along these lines, Maeroff (1988) described teachers' "sense of empowerment" as a major way "to make teachers more professional and to improve their performance" (p. 4). The power Maeroff referred to is "the power to exercise one's craft with confidence and to help shape the way that the job is to be done" (p. 4).

Norton and Kelly (1997) and Shann (1998) identified the following factors that contribute to increased teacher dissatisfaction and to teachers leaving the profession: Problems/frustrations with the variety of administrative routines and accompanying paperwork; concerns about the evaluation of student performance and school grading practices; problems relating to student behavior and handling of student discipline; problems related to teacher load and expectations for assuming extra-curricular assignments; concerns about relationships with peers and administrative personnel, including supervisory relationships and communication channels; low pay; few possibilities for career promotion or growth; and the declining respect for the profession.

A large-scale study conducted by the US Department of Education (1993) showed that 40% of American teachers were strongly dissatisfied with their workload, the

resources available to them, the support received from school administrators, and the procedures used to evaluate their work. The report identified “more administrative support and leadership, good student behavior, a positive school atmosphere, and teacher autonomy” as the working conditions that were associated with higher teacher satisfaction (US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Favorable workplace conditions were positively related to teachers’ job satisfaction regardless of whether teachers were employed by a public or private school, an elementary or secondary school, and regardless of the teachers’ background characteristics or school demographics. The study also found that teachers in any school setting who receive a great deal of parental support were more satisfied than teachers who did not. In addition, a weak relationship was found in the same study between teacher satisfaction and salary and benefits.

Furthermore, in a cross-cultural study of teacher enthusiasm and discouragement that included teachers from the U.S. and six other developed nations, “teachers clearly identified students as the primary and central factor that has an impact on both their professional enthusiasm and discouragement. [...] Teachers almost universally treasure student responsiveness and enthusiasm as a vital factor in their own enthusiasm, and conversely list low motivation in students as a discourager” (Stenlund, 1995). Because of their relative isolation from other adults, teachers have little opportunity to share their successes with colleagues and administrators (Lumsden, 1998). This results in greater reliance on student responsiveness for the teachers’ professional satisfaction (Goodwin, 1987 in Lumsden, 1998).

As it seems from the discussion so far, several factors have been examined in an attempt to find the ones that promote teacher motivation and how these factors are related to teacher satisfaction. Such factors are those of having opportunities to try new ideas, participation in decision-making and reform efforts, social relations, self-esteem, use of valued skills, freedom and independence, challenge, expression of creativity, and opportunity for learning (Barnabe and Burns, 1994; Bishay, 1996; Borg and Riding, 1991; Dinham and Scott, 2000b; Evans, 1998, 2001; Odell and Ferraro, 1992; Zigarelli, 1996). In addition, though, as it has been recently emphasized by some researchers, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the factors that influence teacher satisfaction are no longer confined to the microcosm of the school, as argued by Sergiovanni (1967) and others in later decades.

Researchers of the International Teacher 2000 Project—an international study on teacher satisfaction, motivation and health—argue for the existence of a “third domain” (Dinham and Scott, 2000) that has a major influence in determining how teachers feel about their work. Specifically, it is emphasized that whereas older models of teacher satisfaction posited two domains for discussing satisfaction and dissatisfaction—the actual work of teaching and the conditions under which work must be performed—their new theory proposes a three-domain model. The “third domain”, encompasses factors at the system level, as well as wider social forces, such as teacher status, imposed educational change, and the portrayal of teachers in the media (Dinham and Scott, 1998b, 2000a, 2000b). According to Dinham and Scott, a key outcome of their project has been the development of a “three domain” model of teacher career satisfaction which highlights “the growing yet variable influence and importance of societal based factors and forces which are acting to influence teacher and school executive career satisfaction, dissatisfaction and stress” (2000, p. 1).

Nevertheless, as predicted from previous research (e.g., Herzberg et al., 1959; Sergiovanni, 1967), the International Teacher 2000 project has shown very clearly that teachers are motivated more by intrinsic than by extrinsic motivation.<sup>1</sup> This series of studies found that teachers obtain their greatest satisfaction through a sense of achievement in reaching and affecting students, experiencing recognition, and feeling responsible, as well as a sense of personal power and motivation. Results have been remarkably consistent in the four Anglophone countries (Australia, England, New Zealand and the USA) in which this project has been implemented. Teachers were found to be motivated by a desire to work with and for people, and to “make a difference” (Dinham and Scott, 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Scott, Stone and Dinham, 2001), by assisting children and young people to reach their potential, experience success, and grow into responsible adults.

On the other hand, an overemphasis on standards, a lack of participation in decision-making, a failure to provide essential instructional resources, a lack of administrative support, and a lack of trust in the professional expertise of teachers seem to increase the degree of teacher dissatisfaction (Kelchtermans, 1999; van den Berg, 2002). Dinham, Scott and their colleagues reported that teachers rated their overall satisfaction as low, and many found themselves more dissatisfied later in their careers than when they began teaching; however, levels of dissatisfaction were not uniform across all aspects of the work. Further, it was found that the more turbulent, difficult and demanding the “third domain”, the more it “eroded” teachers’ satisfaction with both their conditions of work and what they saw as their “core business” (Dinham and Scott, 1999, 2000a).

Given, however, that most of these international studies on teacher satisfaction have been conducted in developed countries, one realizes the need in the available literature for similar research in developing countries as well. The evidence available from educational systems in developed countries identifies a complex picture in which job satisfaction is closely related to the other key factors of the complexities of work and life in general within a particular social context. We believe, though, that teacher satisfaction is produced, manifested, and coped with differently in different societies. What little research had been done in developing countries was based on a set of theoretical assumptions that had been developed from findings in developed countries (Garrett, 1999). The role played by satisfaction in the normal working life of teachers in developing countries (such as Cyprus) is a little-understood area thus the necessity for such research is evident.

### **The Social Context of Our Study: Background on the Educational System in Cyprus**

Cyprus is a country with a centralized public educational system. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the “administration of education, the enforcement of educational laws and, in cooperation with the Office of the Attorney

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<sup>1</sup> Teachers, like all professionals, require both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Herzberg (1964) distinguishes between extrinsic rewards surrounding a job (such as salaries, fringe benefits, and job security) and intrinsic rewards of the job itself (such as self-respect, sense of accomplishment, and personal growth). Intrinsic rewards, according to Herzberg, are more satisfying and motivating.

General, [for] the preparation of educational bills” (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1996, p.5). This includes the responsibility for the formulation of the curriculum, as well as the prescription of the syllabi, curricula, and textbooks.

The educational system in Cyprus was gradually transformed through a series of reforms after the independence of the island from the British in 1960. These reforms included the establishment of a compulsory, nine-year comprehensive school (legislated in 1981), followed by a non-compulsory three-year high school (grades 10-12). The reforms were launched under the ideals of equality of opportunity and the formation of citizens for a modern democratic society. The nine-year comprehensive school is divided into two levels: elementary (grades 1-6) and gymnasium (7-9). All students are taught the same subjects and use the exact same books in the nine-year comprehensive school.

Upon completing high school, students are encouraged to continue their education. It was estimated, for example, about 66 per cent of high school graduates continued their studies in 2003/04 (Department of Statistics and Research, 2005). Unlike the case in many Western countries, teaching in general and elementary teaching, in particular, are popular destinations for high school graduates. The main reason for the popularity of teaching is considered to be the good job benefits: immediate employment after completion of studies (for elementary teachers); attractive working schedule with short working days and long vacations; competitive salary with comparable occupations in the civil service; high status of the teaching profession (Menon and Christou, 2002; Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou, 1997, 1998).

Consequently, the selection procedure for elementary teacher training in Cyprus is very competitive. It should be noted that at the same time and despite the low turnover among Cypriot elementary school teachers, previous work on teacher motivation has shown elementary school teachers to be dissatisfied with several aspects of their job such as the highly centralized system and the frustrating evaluation system (e.g., see Menon and Christou, 2002). It is also interesting to point out that pre-service teachers give more emphasis to the factor of “job benefits” and less to the factor of internal motives when asked about the reasons that influenced them to choose the teaching profession (Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou, 1998).

### **Methodology**

The research upon which this paper focuses was carried out over two years, from 2002-2004, and was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the data were collected through a survey sent to elementary and secondary school teachers and administrators in the five districts of Cyprus; overall, there were 449 respondents who took part in this phase. In the second phase of the study semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 52 teachers and administrators. In each school that we initially distributed the survey, we asked principals to identify one or two teachers and/or administrators who wished to be interviewed. The 52 participants we selected for in-depth interviews were broadly representative of the larger sample out of which we conducted the first phase of the study—in terms of the school level in which they taught, their status, and their sex. The reason for using different methodologies was that we wanted to see whether different data collection methods would shed light on different aspects of teacher job satisfaction in Cyprus.

## **Quantitative Study**

The main objectives of this study are the following: (a) To investigate the extent to which in-service teachers and school administrators differ in their satisfaction levels on a number of background variables such as age, gender, years of experience etc.; (b) to describe the relationship between teacher satisfaction and motivation in Cyprus. To achieve the objectives in this study, a pre-existing questionnaire created for the Teachers2000 project by Dinham and Scott (1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2002), and Scott and Dinham (2001) was adapted to identify some key issues that seem to influence teacher satisfaction around the world. To date, this instrument has been utilized with samples of teachers in schools in Australia, England, New Zealand and the USA (Scott, Stone and Dinham, 2001) and more recently in Malta (Dinham and Scott, 2002). Prior publications have explored the quantitative measures of discontent including the development of the scales used to assess satisfaction and dissatisfaction with facets of teaching and its context (e.g., Scott and Dinham, 2001) or the teachers' experiences from a qualitative perspective (e.g., Scott, Stone and Dinham, 2001). Validity issues in relation to this questionnaire can be found in the work of Dinham and Scott (1996a, 1996b, 1998a, 1998b, 2000a, 2002).

Thus, for the purpose of this study, an adapted version of the questionnaire developed by the "Teacher 2000 Project" was translated into Greek. However, certain parts of the original questionnaire were omitted from this study. That included the third part of the original questionnaire (see Dinham and Scott, 1996a, 1996b), which referred to emotional/physical health, and asked the respondents if they had recent problems with lack of concentration, lost sleep, stress, depression or inability to make decisions. In addition, the open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire were also omitted. These sections were removed for two reasons: first, to ensure the brevity of the questionnaire that could produce a higher response rate by the participants, and second to ensure that all questions were relevant to the culture and background characteristics of Cyprus.

The first part of the questionnaire that was administered to teachers in Cyprus, included background questions related to the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire asked questions related to factors that have influenced them to follow the teaching profession. To these questions, they had to respond with a 'yes' or a 'no', based on if they were influenced by these factors to follow this profession or not. The third part of the questionnaire asked the respondents questions related to their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the teaching profession, including their ability to influence students success and attitudes; their contribution to the school and education system; current work hours and salary; opportunities for promotion and involvement in school decision making; the amount of recognition teachers receive; the status of teachers; achievement of professional goals; and the current procedure for selection, hiring and transfer of teachers. The questions on this section of the questionnaire were measured on a 7-point likert scale that ranged from 1=highly dissatisfying, to 7= highly satisfying. Finally, the last part of the questionnaire included general questions where the respondents were asked to indicate how important the achievement of certain goals were to them. Such goals included having a close and satisfying relationship, obtaining rewards and recognition, being committed to a cause, retaining or achieving financial well-being, avoiding stress, influencing others and establishing a career. The responses to these questions were also measured on a 7-point likert

scale, that ranged from 1=not at all important to 7=extremely important. For each question on the questionnaire, the educators had to respond by selecting only one option on the likert scale.

A preliminary version of questionnaire was originally pilot tested in September 2002, while the final version was administered to teachers in October 2002. A total of 461 teachers from all the parts of the Republic of Cyprus participated in this study. Of the sample, 29.4% were male and 70.6% were female. The average age of the sample was 37.04 years old, with a standard deviation of 11.22. The average number of years during which this sample has been teaching is 13.08 years (sd=10.51), while the average number of years teaching in the same school was 2.69 (sd=2.68). In addition, 80.8% of the sample included teachers, 13.1% included vice-principals, and 6.0% of the sample included principals.

### Qualitative Study

The qualitative study was designed to shed light to the following research questions:

1. What are the critical factors influencing job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among Cypriot teachers?
2. What is the impact of these factors on teachers' work and their sense of empowerment?

The study provided the opportunity to explore two additional research questions, as a result of our findings from the first phase of the study.

3. To what extent do the external motives of "the salary, the hours and the holidays" influence teachers' feelings of satisfaction?
4. What is the influence of teachers' views about the existing promotion and evaluation system on teacher satisfaction?

The sample of 52 teachers and administrators was distributed across the five districts in Cyprus, serving different kinds of communities (i.e. urban, suburban, rural). The interviewees had two or more years of teaching experience—the mean was 15 years—and 33 were between the ages of 45 and 60 (see below).

Table 1: Selected Characteristics of Teachers Interviewed

| School Level Taught | Status        | Sex       |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Elementary          | Class teacher | 3 M, 6 F  |
| Elementary          | Administrator | 9 M, 7 F  |
| Secondary           | Class teacher | 4 M, 6 F  |
| Secondary           | Administrator | 10 M, 7 F |

The interviews typically lasted between 45 to 75 min, but in every case respondents were given plenty of time and were encouraged to respond freely. Most of the participants were interviewed in their own classrooms or in their offices. The interviews were semi-structured and we worked from a protocol of basic questions on what satisfied (or dissatisfied) them in their job, why they enjoyed (or did not enjoy) their jobs, whether they had always enjoyed (or not enjoyed) teaching, how they

attended to the emotional needs of and their emotional interactions with students and colleagues, and how they would change things to become more satisfied in their job. We also asked questions that utilized some of the findings of the first phase of the project such as why so many Cypriot teachers go for postgraduate studies these days and why there is so much dissatisfaction with the current promotion and evaluation system. The interviews were recorded on cassette tapes and had been transcribed.<sup>2</sup>

We independently read through the interviews several times, searching for important thematic patterns and then returning to confirm and refine the themes we had identified. In many cases, we were able to triangulate, drawing on findings from the surveys we distributed in phase one. Since each one of us was initially working independently it was necessary to test the reliability of our categorizations. This was done by categorizing all the data separately and then coming together to finalize our decisions. Our overall analysis looked for any references teachers made to the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their work such as: working with children, interaction with colleagues, centralized policies, autonomy, etc. Data were marked, coded and grouped into increasingly larger themes like “Satisfaction from working with children” or “dissatisfaction from student failure and the lack of discipline”. Each of these themes contained many quotations. These detailed themes provided the foundation for the interpretations of the findings. Thus, when quoting or paraphrasing teachers in the next section, we also included their gender as well as their status and school level in which they teach to provide a more complete picture of the respondent. While one-time interviews have limitations in terms of making others feel comfortable to disclose their feelings about what dissatisfies them, they do reveal interesting issues to be identified across different kinds of teachers. Although these interviews cannot reveal any frequencies of experiences of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (since that was covered in a previous study), they do highlight what teachers find emotionally satisfying and dissatisfying in their work.

## Results

### Quantitative Study

The questions in the second part of the questionnaire (after the questions on the respondents' background) had to do with possible reasons that might have motivated these teachers to choose the teaching profession. There were 63.3% of the respondents indicating that they always wanted to become a teacher, which was further verified by the fact that 70% denied that teaching was *not* their first choice of a career. At the same time, a lot of the respondents indicated that they entered the teaching profession because of reasons related to the benefits of the profession. For example, 54.6% indicated that they entered the teaching profession because they were attracted by the hours and holidays of the profession, while 40.9% were attracted because of the salary. In addition, 35.7% of the sample indicated that both the salary *and* the teaching hours and holidays were all factors that influenced their choice to follow the teaching profession. Another 51.8% of the respondents indicated that they thought teaching would fit well with their family commitments, while 14.8% indicated that there was pressure from their families to become teachers.

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<sup>2</sup> The interviews were conducted in Greek (the teachers' native language) and then the transcribed text was translated into English for the purpose of this research report.

The results that have been presented above seem to be contradicting. This is especially the case, if one considers that 32.3% of the sample indicating that they always wanted to become teachers also indicated that they were attracted to teaching because of the salary, the hours and holidays of this profession. In addition, what is also alarming is that 61.2% of the sample indicated that they were attracted to teaching either because of the salary, or because of its hours and holidays, or because there was pressure from the family to become teachers. At the same time, there were only 28.3% of the sample indicating that they always wanted to become teachers, and that neither the salary, nor the hours and holidays of the teaching profession attracted them to become teachers.

Based on these results, we hypothesized that the reasons motivating people to become teachers along with some of their personal characteristics might also influence the level of satisfaction that Cypriot teachers might have towards the teaching profession. The level of satisfaction held by the teachers in the sample was based on the overall level of satisfaction that they indicated on the questionnaire that was administered to them. Therefore, a series of multivariate regressions were performed to try to determine the extent of these relationships, if they existed. The first regression that was performed examined whether the satisfaction level of the teachers could be predicted from their gender, their degrees and their age (see Table I). The overall model was not significant ( $F=1.641$ ,  $p=0.179$ ), and it explained 1.2% of the variance of the teacher's satisfaction. The only independent variable in this regression that was marginally significant in predicting the satisfaction of the teachers was that of age. Since the beta coefficient for this variable was positive, this indicated that as the teacher's age increases, their satisfaction levels increase as well. This is rather surprising given the fact that in most countries in which this questionnaire was administered teacher age was negatively correlated with satisfaction. One reason that this might be happening in Cyprus is that as teachers' age increases, their salary rises significantly because of the promotions they receive (due to a major criterion of promotion that is, number of years of service). Another explanation for this result might be that with time, the teachers tend to improve their teaching practices, which in turn helps them increase their satisfaction levels.

Table I. Level of satisfaction by age, gender, and degrees

|            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| (Constant) | 5.220                       | .423       |                           | 12.334 | .000 |
| AGE        | 0.009                       | .005       | .091                      | 1.769  | .078 |
| GENDER     | -0.028                      | .118       | -.012                     | -.235  | .815 |
| DEGREES    | -0.058                      | .073       | -.040                     | -.796  | .427 |

The second regression that was performed examined whether the satisfaction levels of the teachers differed based on characteristics related to their position in the school setting (see Table II). This included examining the variables of years of teaching, the teacher's position at the school (teacher, assistant principal, principal), as well as the type of school level (e.g. kindergarten, elementary, middle or high school). This model was significant ( $F=4.957$ ,  $p=0.002$ ) although it explained 3.4% of the variance of teacher satisfaction. However, the only independent variable that was significant in this regression was that of the teacher's position. The beta coefficient for this variable

indicated that the satisfaction level of the teachers increased as the teacher's position in the school increased. This strengthens the hypothesis that promotions which are accompanied by higher salaries are a factor significantly influencing the levels of satisfaction by the teachers.

Table II. Level of satisfaction by position, school and years of teaching

|                | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|                | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| (Constant)     | 4.960                       | .212       |                           | 23.406 | .000 |
| POSITION       | .273                        | .136       | .148                      | 2.007  | .045 |
| SCHOOL LEVEL   | 0.005                       | .008       | .045                      | .603   | .547 |
| YEARS TEACHING | -0.017                      | .069       | -.012                     | -.243  | .808 |

When the average level of satisfaction was measured depending on the positions that the educators held, the position that had the lowest level of satisfaction was that of the teachers, who had an average of 5.24 (sd=1.06). However, as the position of the teachers increased, their satisfaction levels increased as well. Assistant principals had higher satisfaction than teachers ( $\bar{x}=5.54$ , sd=0.83), and principals had the highest levels of satisfaction overall ( $\bar{x}=5.93$ , sd=0.83). However, in order to determine in which of the positions were there significant differences among them in terms of satisfaction, an ANOVA was performed with a post hoc test with the Bonferroni adjustment. The overall ANOVA was significant (F=7.045, p=0.001), as presented in Table III.

Table III. ANOVA of teacher's satisfaction by their position

| Source          | Type III Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F        | Sig. |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|----------|------|
| Corrected Model | 14.667                  | 2   | 7.334       | 7.045    | .001 |
| Intercept       | 4829.527                | 1   | 4829.527    | 4639.767 | .000 |
| POSITION        | 14.667                  | 2   | 7.334       | 7.045    | .001 |
| Error           | 445.505                 | 428 | 1.041       |          |      |
| Total           | 12670.000               | 431 |             |          |      |
| Corrected Total | 460.172                 | 430 |             |          |      |

R Squared = .032 (Adjusted R Squared = .027)

When the post hoc comparisons were examined, the only significant difference between the groups was between teachers and principals, whose amount of satisfaction differed by 0.68 points (p=0.003), with principals having the higher level of satisfaction. In addition, the vice-principals had higher satisfaction than teachers, but lower satisfaction than the principals, although these differences were not significant.

The third regression model examined whether the satisfaction of the teachers depended on factors that might have motivated them to choose the teaching profession (see Table IV). The overall model was significant (F=6.925, p=0.000) and it explained 9.3% of the variance. Although the percentage of variance explained by this regression is relatively small, it is of respectable size in light of the fact that these are

social science data with a sample size of around 460 educators. The independent variables that were significant indicated that the teachers who indicated that they always wanted to become teachers ended up having higher levels of satisfaction ( $t=2.263$ ,  $p=0.024$ ). The teachers who indicated that there was pressure from their families to choose this profession had lower levels of satisfaction ( $t=-2.846$ ,  $p=0.005$ ), while the teachers who indicated that they had a realistic view of teaching before their training also had higher levels of teacher satisfaction ( $t=4.191$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

More specifically, the teachers from the sample that indicated they always wanted to be teachers had a satisfaction level of 5.47 ( $sd=1.001$ ), while the teachers who did not always want to become teachers had an overall satisfaction level of 5.09 ( $sd=1.057$ ). The teachers who indicated that they had pressure from their family to become teachers had a satisfaction level of 4.87 ( $sd=1.157$ ), while the teachers who did not have that pressure had an overall satisfaction level of 5.42 ( $sd=0.986$ ). The teachers from the sample who indicated that they had a realistic view about the teaching profession before they started their training had a satisfaction level of 5.52 ( $sd=0.916$ ), while the teachers who did not have that realistic view had a satisfaction level of 5.08 ( $sd=1.125$ ).

Table IV. Levels of satisfaction by motivating factors towards teaching

|   | Unstandardized Coefficients |      | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|   | B                           | S.E. | Beta                      |        |      |
| (Constant)  | 4.960                       | .126 |                           | 39.315 | .000 |
| I always wanted to become a teacher                               | .248                        | .110 | .116                      | 2.263  | .024 |
| There was pressure from my family to become a teacher             | -.422                       | .148 | -.147                     | -2.846 | .005 |
| I was attracted to teaching because of the hours and holidays     | 0.061                       | .128 | .029                      | .479   | .632 |
| I thought that teaching would fit in well with family commitments | -0.066                      | .110 | -.032                     | -.603  | .547 |
| I was attracted to teaching because of the salary                 | .124                        | .125 | .059                      | .992   | .322 |
| I had a realistic view of teaching before I began my training     | .420                        | .100 | .200                      | 4.191  | .000 |

A final regression model was performed that combined the variables that were significant in the previous models in order to remove any multicollinearity effects (see Table V). The independent variables included in this model were those of age, position, always wanting to be a teacher, becoming a teacher because of pressure from family, and having a realistic view about teaching before beginning their training. Although the variables of position and age appear to be quite similar, it was important to include both of them in the same model in order to show how position is the variable that has a significant effect on the satisfaction level of teachers after all the other variables have been included in the model. The overall model was significant ( $F=10.383$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) although it explained 11.3% of the variance of teacher

satisfaction. The only variable that was not significant in the final model was that of age. Thus this model indicates that teachers who have higher positions in the schools, who always wanted to become teachers, who did not have pressure from their families to follow the teaching profession, and who had a realistic view of teaching before they began their training ended up having higher levels of teacher satisfaction.

Table V. Final regression model

|   | Unstandardized Coefficients |      | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|   | B                           | S.E  | Beta                      |        |      |
| (Constant)  | 4.800                       | .196 |                           | 24.483 | .000 |
| Age   | -0.049                      | .006 | -.052                     | -.821  | .412 |
| Position  | .348                        | .105 | .208                      | 3.302  | .001 |
| I always wanted to become a teacher                           | .216                        | .107 | .100                      | 2.011  | .045 |
| There was pressure from my family to become a teacher         | -.388                       | .149 | -.133                     | -2.613 | .009 |
| I had a realistic view of teaching before I began my training | .370                        | .098 | .176                      | 3.754  | .000 |

### Qualitative Study

The analysis of the interviews deepened and enriched insights about Cypriot teachers' sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and revealed many complexities of teachers' emotions about their work. In analyzing the interviews, we have grouped responses into themes that most clearly captured the emotions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction underlying teachers' work. These themes are included under two broad headings—Sources of Satisfaction and Sources of Dissatisfaction.

#### Sources of Satisfaction

The findings in this study confirmed those documented by many researchers in developed countries, i.e. that the main sources of teacher job satisfaction are the satisfaction of working with children and seeing them grow and achieve, making a contribution to the society, working collaboratively with colleagues, and achieving personal professional growth. In addition, the respondents in the interviews confirmed our earlier findings that the salary, the hours, and the holidays associated with this profession are also significant sources of satisfaction yet, not the most important as one might have thought. On the other hand, this exploration of the sources of teacher job satisfaction in Cyprus also revealed the significance of historical and social aspects that are relevant to the sense of satisfaction.

Working with children. Almost every teacher interviewed stated that she or he liked working with children. Often these statements came in response to the question “What is the most satisfying thing in being a teacher?” but they emerged elsewhere in the interviews as well. It is also interesting to note that several teachers spoke about the powerful feeling of love in teaching and its impact on their work. These findings confirm the results of others (Cockburn, 2000; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1989) which show that the satisfaction of working with children, forming relationships with them, having the opportunity to contribute to the growth and achievement of young individuals, may be common internationally, regardless of country context. The emotional rewards

of teaching affect what teachers do as they adjust their teaching to make sure that they continue to experience these feelings of satisfaction. For example, many teachers talked openly about “the feeling of love” in teaching and explained how they were trying to establish a safe emotional climate in their classrooms. The emotional relationships that teachers built with their students were central to how these teachers taught their students. The importance of the role of the teacher as a contributor to children’s growth and development becomes particularly interesting, if one considers Cyprus’s long-time efforts to develop as a modern democratic society. This becomes even clearer in the next part of the study.

Making a contribution to the society. An important satisfaction variable for Cypriot teachers and administrators is the opportunity to contribute to the society through making a difference in young people’s development. This seems to be an area from which teachers appear to derive a sense of important value and worth. This is their status in, and contribution to, the communities in which they teach and to the wider society. Several Cypriots teachers and administrators emphasized their commitment and social interest, despite the fact that they also acknowledged the negative impact of social problems on their work and the lack of respect for teachers nowadays (see our second theme). The data from the present study indicate that the contribution to the society becomes particularly important for a small developing country, given the challenges for economic growth and democratic development. Teachers feel that through them, a more democratic and economically developed country may develop. This kind of sensitivity is not unique in this context, although it becomes particularly interesting, because it illustrates the utmost importance attached to the contribution by educators in the development of a country that struggled to establish a democratic state. This sense of responsibility and commitment among teachers carries a lot of burden and pride; thus it is no wonder that teachers gain a lot of satisfaction from it.

Working collaboratively with colleagues. Some teachers mentioned collegial relationships as a strong aspect that affects their satisfaction with teaching. Others were highly critical of their fellow faculty members and preferred not to collaborate with them; this created a feeling of dissatisfaction and they wished things were different. In general, both this study and other studies in developed countries show that positive social relationships with colleagues are important sources of teachers’ emotional health, because colleagues are seen as a source of friendship and a source of social and emotional support; when these relationships don’t exist, teachers share deep feelings of dissatisfaction (Cockburn, 2000; Schwarzer & Greenglass, 1999).

Achieving personal professional growth. Many of the interviewed teachers—especially those who taught in the secondary school level—commented on the emotional and intellectual stimulation they had on an everyday basis. Their comments indicate that the teachers’ sense of satisfaction was connected to their own professional growth. As long as teachers found excitement and stimulation in what they did, they loved both working with their students and growing professionally.

The salary, the hours, and the holidays. In their responses to the first phase of our study, Cypriot teachers and administrators gave very high “marks” to the salary, the hours and the holidays as sources of satisfaction in their job. We wanted to further explore this factor because it stood out as a surprising finding compared to other countries, both developed and developing ones. Thus we shared this finding with teachers and asked them to share their reactions with us. Most of the teachers said that their decision to stay in the profession had little to do with this factor. On the other hand, a male elementary principal sounded more skeptical and raised an interesting question: “For better or worse these external motives exist. I wonder how many would

initially *choose* to become teachers, if these motives didn't exist" (added emphasis). This is an interesting issue, because in many developed as well as developing countries, teachers' salaries are a significant factor influencing recruitment and retention. Our study provides important information about the nature of teacher satisfaction and motivation in a social context in which the government provides serious incentives to those who want to become teachers. This does not imply, of course, that by offering these incentives issues of recruitment, retention and satisfaction are necessarily addressed once and for all. In fact, the case of Cyprus indicates that satisfaction and dissatisfaction in teaching involve many more complex issues, as shown below.

### Sources of Dissatisfaction

As with the sources of satisfaction, there are some sources of dissatisfaction that are well known and have been documented by researchers in developed countries, e.g. the effects of social problems; student failure and lack of discipline; lack of respect, status and recognition from society; the lack of autonomy; and the lack of collegial relationships (Dinham & Scott, 1998, 2000; Thompson, McNamara & Hoyle, 1997; van den Berg, 2002). In addition, there are some significant contextual features that bring to the surface further sources of teacher job satisfaction in Cyprus. These are: the lack of autonomy as a result of the educational system's centralization; and teacher evaluation and promotion prospects. All of the above sources of dissatisfaction are analyzed below.

The effects of social problems. Many consequences of recent social changes in the international arena and especially in the Mediterranean region (e.g. migration of workers, rise of unemployment, growing multicultural societies) have negatively affected Cypriot teachers' satisfaction. There were indeed many teachers who shared with us their intense feelings of dissatisfaction as a result of having to deal with the effects of social problems in schools. Thus it seems that this source of dissatisfaction is not unique to the Western societies in which social changes have seriously affected teachers' work (Dinham & Scott, 2000); the consequences of recent international changes seem to also affect developing countries like Cyprus. This finding confirms earlier results in the countries in which the International Teacher 2000 Project has been implemented (Dinham & Scott, 1998, 2000). According to the researchers in this project, a major influence in determining how teachers feel about their work in developed countries comes from factors at the system level, as well as wider social forces, such as teacher status, centralized policies, and the portrayal of teachers in the media. Our findings seem to agree with Dinham and Scott's (2000) results regarding the existence of a "third domain" in teacher career satisfaction which highlights the growing yet variable influence and importance of societal based factors in teacher job (dis)satisfaction (see also our sub-theme on "lack of respect, status and recognition from society").

Student failure and lack of discipline. A corollary of teachers' feelings of satisfaction with their students' growth and success in society was their feelings of disappointment when their students failed or when they behaved badly. Several principals and vice-principals from both elementary and secondary school levels reported that student failure and bad behavior has become a serious issue in Cypriot schools. Most administrators were reluctant to take personal responsibility for their students' failures; however, some felt that they had a personal responsibility and should do something about it.

Lack of respect, status and recognition from society. It is worthwhile to mention that many teachers complained about parents' indifference or parents' interventions in schools. Most comments indicated that the disillusionment resulting from unfulfilled expectations for respect and recognition gives rise to dissatisfaction and low morale. The lack of respect and recognition of teachers causes a lot of disappointment among Cypriot teachers, a tendency noted in several societies around the world in the last few years.

The educational system's centralization. Many of the interviewed teachers and administrators commented on the lack of autonomy as a result of the educational system's centralization. Amongst the full sample a majority of interviewees were clearly dissatisfied with this aspect; some with the lack of autonomy, others with imposition of authority and rules without any input from teachers, and, some, with the irrationality of this. This issue was intensified by the fact that teachers were trying to accommodate curriculum changes arising from reforms—reforms on which they felt they had not been consulted and were therefore sometimes inappropriate or badly planned. In their efforts to do what they think best in their classrooms and schools, these teachers and administrators appear to lack the kind of autonomy enjoyed by other professionals. This may also reflect a sense that inspectors and impersonal memos sent from above may be ineffective ways to communicate with grassroots, because teachers feel that they have no voice.

Teacher evaluation and promotion prospects. Finally, supervision from inspectors and prospects for promotion were sources of great dissatisfaction for the majority of our interviewees. Many teachers expressed their intense negative feelings about the lack of justice and fairness in the current system of teacher evaluation and their prospects for promotion. It seems that the current evaluation and promotion system in Cyprus has created many negative feelings and has had unfortunate consequences for teachers' work and collegial relations. Factors, which determine how teachers consider the evaluation system, include comparative insights with systems that exist in other European countries. There is a widespread feeling that there is a lot of corruption at all levels of public life in Cyprus. There is an intense bitterness among many teachers and a widespread perception that Cyprus has still a long way to go to establish a truly democratic and objective evaluation system. Thus it is not surprising that this has a negative impact on motivation, as teachers feel that there is no way for them to gain feedback and praise for good performance or to seek honest advice how to improve. Cypriot teachers' resentment for this system indicates a need for professional discourse and positive reinforcement for teachers who work hard.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this work was to use a mixed-methods approach to investigate the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of Cypriot teachers. Both of our studies showed that teachers in Cyprus chose the teaching profession for intrinsic reasons since the majority of them indicated that they always wanted to become teachers. On the one hand, a closer look at the quantitative data we had collected showed that Cypriot teachers were influenced to choose this career because of the salary, the hours and the holidays associated with this profession. On the other hand, however, the qualitative study managed to further analyze some of the previous survey findings and cleared some possible misconceptions from interpreting quantitative measures of teacher job satisfaction without taking into consideration teachers' detailed explanations.

Here we want to offer two possible explanations for the disparity between this qualitative research study and our quantitative findings from a previous project. First, the sample was different in the two studies; therefore, the results of both studies have to be interpreted differently based on their respective samples. Most importantly, though, in our previous research, the respondents were provided with many statements to choose from; these statements were about issues that did not necessarily come up in the teacher interviews during the qualitative study. Our qualitative analysis dealt more with the presence and absence of factors related to teacher job satisfaction rather than with their frequency; therefore, it is understandable that these two studies actually investigate “different” issues—thus, both studies make an important contribution on different terms. If nothing else, though, the need for more research studies—both quantitative and qualitative—is clear in order to shed more light to such “disparities.”

The findings presented and analyzed in both studies make a significant contribution to the exploration of teachers’ attitudes to their work in the context of a developing country. Cypriot teachers’ perceptions of their satisfaction was intimately connected to the joy from working with children, the growth and well being of their students, and their contribution to the society. This is not a surprising finding because other studies in developed countries have discovered similar things (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Evans, 1998; Osborn et al., 2000; Pollard et al., 1994). Also, studies of Jamaican (Rodgers-Jenkinson & Chapman, 1990) and Chilean (Hean & Garrett, 2001) teachers noted that these were important sources of teacher job satisfaction. Other factors such as working collaboratively with colleagues, achieving personal growth and having a good salary and vacation were important but were not emphasized as much as the joy from working with children and the contribution to the society.

It may often be assumed that teacher job satisfaction in Cyprus is largely related to salary and other benefits. Our work has demonstrated that teachers’ motivation stems from a complex interplay of factors that are linked to their sense of their own worth and value as educators. While salary is certainly one factor in influencing their satisfaction, Cypriot teachers and administrators expressly identified other more importance factors. The Cypriot teachers’ beliefs that they had a positive impact in the lives of their students and made an important contribution to the society—especially in its democratic and economic development—generated a powerful sense of satisfaction among teachers. Given that the joy of working with children is almost a universal motivator for all teachers, we want to draw attention to the significance of the factor of contribution to the society. It is here that the contribution of this work also lies. This factor seems particularly interesting in the Cypriot historical and political context—and perhaps to similar contexts in other developing countries in which foreign invasions have created the need for an education that promotes justice and democracy. The participants in our qualitative study, in particular, seem to get a lot of satisfaction from contributing to the development of a democratic and just society. The power of this source of satisfaction cannot be underestimated as a factor in the teachers’ lives.

The research findings of this study also reveal many aspects of the dissatisfied and disempowered situation of Cypriot teachers and administrators, and the discussion here focuses on how teachers’ motivation is affected by social problems, students’ misbehavior and lack of interest, a decline in teachers’ respect and status, power

relationships with national authorities, and teachers' lack of voice in educational decision-making processes. The increasing economic and social problems that teachers confront, combined with the centralized educational system's efforts to impose solutions to those problems, have brought to the surface strong teacher dissatisfaction (see also Helsby, 1999). Teachers' sentiments tend to show a lack of dialogue among various groups in education. We found that teachers were eager to communicate their perspectives on their own situation, and their views on wider education policy and practice. However, as this work revealed they rarely, if ever, felt that these views were actively sought or welcomed. Teachers' sense of neglect and declining status is also indicated in the shared feeling of alienation from the process of education reform. Teachers were aware that much is expected of them; however, they shared their disappointment for the lack of respect and recognition at what they did.

Overall, we would argue that the profound feelings of dissatisfaction expressed by teachers and administrators in Cyprus are related to the intertwining of two major factors. First, an internal motivation to teach in order to make a difference in the society; and second, a complex set of power relationships at the national level that often take the form of attacks on teachers' work (Hargreaves, 1994; Scott et al., 2001). The clash between these two factors often seems responsible for the erosion of Cypriot teachers' satisfaction and confirms the possibility of the existence of a "third domain" just like Dinham and Scott (2000) have suggested. What is clearly needed, then, is a wider analysis of this "clash" and an exploration of ways to develop a fruitful co-existence of these two major factors. For example, this work points to some specific factors that might potentially improve teacher satisfaction in Cyprus. In essence most factors relate to a lack of understanding and respect for teachers' work (Cockburn, 2000; Osborn et al., 2000). A greater recognition and understanding of teachers' work would enable them to focus on those factors that they enjoy most, that is, working with children and nurturing their learning. This does not mean that inspections and accountability should be completely abolished; rather, if teachers' work were acknowledged, together with the development of a fair evaluation system (that is not simply associated to promotions), then a different spirit could be initiated.

## **Conclusion**

Our work highlights the complexities involved in understanding teacher job satisfaction in a way that has clear potential for implications in policy and practice. What is now needed is serious consideration of how this understanding may be meaningfully applied to efforts to improve teachers' working lives. The findings amply demonstrate that there is an urgent need for policy makers to recognize the fact that educational quality is largely related to teacher job satisfaction. Unfortunately, teacher satisfaction is often a critically ignored factor in education policy-making. However, improving teachers' working lives is not an optional extra, but a central component of effective policy-making (Hargreaves, 1994; Pollard et al., 1994). Teachers are not technicians but rounded professionals with complex and varied needs. It is often assumed that "happier teachers are better teachers" (Hean & Garrett, 2001); thus an objective of any ministry of education should be to maximize teacher satisfaction and minimize dissatisfaction not only for the benefit of teachers themselves but for the sake of students as well. It must also be emphasized that teachers and teachers' organizations have a part to play in claiming their space in education discourse (VSO, 2000).

This research has clearly raised further questions for research: What factors transform some teachers' perceptions from satisfaction to dissatisfaction over time, especially in the context of developing countries? Why do some teachers enjoy their jobs while others, in very similar conditions, do not? How might teachers be encouraged to develop more satisfaction in their job and deal with the existing dissatisfaction? How might policy makers be persuaded to provide more autonomy for teachers and schools? Such research could provide further insight into the nature of teacher job satisfaction both generally and particularly in the context of developing countries.

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