

PERSONAL LIFE FACTORS AS RELATED TO EFFECTIVENESS AND SATISFACTION OF SECONDARY AGRICULTURAL TEACHERS

Thomas H. Bruening, Assistant Professor
Tracy S. Hoover, Assistant Professor
The Pennsylvania State University

The quality of education being delivered is a critical issue in American society. Teachers who are satisfied with their work and have a strong sense of purpose tend to have programs which produce successful students. Researchers have found that the quality of education being delivered is a function of the teacher's level of job satisfaction (Bowen, 1981) and degree of teacher effectiveness (Miller, Kahler & Rheault, 1989). Because the performance of secondary agricultural teachers is important to the success of agricultural education programs, factors that influence teacher effectiveness and satisfaction must be identified. Consequently, several important questions must be asked. How satisfied and effective are teachers currently? What factors influence the satisfaction and effectiveness of secondary agricultural education instructors? What conditions must exist for teachers to be more satisfied and effective?

Many current research efforts attempt to relate job satisfaction to extrinsic factors such as increased salaries, investment in the profession, and improved teaching status. The most common hypothesis being tested is that such factors have a direct impact on the job satisfaction of the teacher which indirectly leads to a more effective educator. Satisfaction derived from teaching, marital status, and teaching fulfillment are defined as personal intrinsic factors. These factors are rarely considered as important elements affecting a teacher's professional role enactment (Pajak & Blase, 1989). Additional research by Rusbult and Farrell (1983) suggested that job commitment is a multi-faceted phenomenon too complex to be explained by knowing only an individual's level of job satisfaction.

According to Pittman and Orthner (1983), the potential for conflict between work and family roles is great among employed persons. Conflict arises when individuals seek to differentiate between personal and professional roles. Unresolved intrinsic and extrinsic factors lead to job dissatisfaction. From an educational perspective, this disruptive relationship between a teacher's personal and professional life is defined as role conflict (Burden, 1982). Hange (1982) found that child care and occupational demands of teachers are often in conflict. In addition, Freedman, Jackson, and Boles (1983) found that high demands in the workplace lead to personal role conflict. Other researchers, however, have found that personal and professional roles can be complementary. Zimmerman, Skinner, and Birner (1980) reported that married home economics teachers were more satisfied with their jobs than unmarried teachers. Lightfoot (1983) found that female teachers were more effective than male teachers in integrating personal and professional roles. Krupt (1986) found that teachers with children were more tolerant and understanding of their students than teachers without children. Chusmir (1986) found that women rated gender-role conflict and perceived family pressures higher than men. Cochran et al. (1989) found that a significant proportion in the variance in the job satisfaction of secondary agriculture teachers could be predicted by teacher salary and the presence of children at home. Additionally, these researchers found that the job satisfaction of agricultural teachers can be predicted by the marital satisfaction of the spouse.

In 1989, Pajak and Blase conducted a qualitative study of the impact of teachers' personal lives on their performance as teachers. They identified 13 personal life factors that positively and negatively affected teachers' professional performance. Pajak and Blase (1989) found that teachers perceived aspects of their personal lives to positively influence their professional lives. Teachers indicated that personal life factors tended to have beneficial effects on their ability to relate and change student behavior. Teachers perceived that aspects of interpersonal relationships such as parenting and marriage had both positive and negative effects on their professional role enactment. These interpersonal relationships lead to feelings of guilt, fatigue, and frustration by some teachers, while feelings of caring, compassion, and dedication were viewed by some teachers as important attributes of marriage and parenting. Ultimately, teachers perceived that a multidimensional definition of "self" enriched their performance on the job (Pajak & Blase, 1989).

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine if factors Pajak and Blase (1989) identified can be used to explain the effectiveness and job satisfaction of secondary agricultural instructors. The three objectives of the study were to determine if the factors Pajak and Blase identified can:

1. determine how secondary agriculture teachers and teachers in the Pajak and Blase study compare in their rankings of personal life factors,
2. explain the effectiveness of secondary agricultural education teachers, and
3. explain the job satisfaction of secondary agricultural education teachers.

Procedures

The population for the study consisted of all secondary agricultural education teachers in the United States. A stratified random sample was chosen for the study. To ensure a geographical representation of teachers, eight states, two from each AATEA region, were randomly selected for the study, 363 teachers were randomly selected to reflect a 5% margin of error (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

An instrument was developed which consisted of three scales to measure teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and the teacher's perceptions of how the Pajak and Blase personal life factors influenced their performance as teachers. A panel of five faculty and graduate students in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at The Pennsylvania State University judged the instrument for content and face validity. The instrument was then pilot tested with 30 teachers not chosen for the sample.

The self-perceived teacher effectiveness scale consisted of 36 items measured on a 5-point Likert type scale. The rating scale for self-perceived teacher effectiveness ranged from: 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (usually), and 5 (consistently). The 36 statements were classified under five teacher effectiveness categories. The categories were (a) productive teaching techniques, (b) class management, (c) positive interpersonal relationships, (d) professional responsibilities, and (e) personal teacher characteristics. This scale was found to have a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .82. The self-perceived teacher effectiveness scale was developed using research-supported teacher effectiveness criteria Blackmer, Brown, Pickney, & Walker, (1981) and Manatt (1982).

The Brayfield-Rothe Job Satisfaction Index (1951) as modified by Warner (1973) was used to measure job satisfaction. Fourteen individual statements were designed to measure the respondents' interest in their job, enjoyment found in their work, and overall satisfaction derived from their employment. A rating scale of: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (undecided), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree) was used. The index was found to have a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .85.

The Pajak and Blase personal life factors were measured on an 11-point scale which sought to differentiate teachers' negative and positive responses to 10 items. This scale included both intrinsic and extrinsic teacher commitment factors as identified by Pajak and Blase. This scale had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .85.

The data were collected using the self-administered instrument over a 9-week period during the spring 1990. An initial and three follow-up mailings yielded 279 usable responses (an 81% return rate). Early and late respondents were compared and found to be not significantly different ($p \geq .05$) on teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and sociodemographic characteristics (Miller & Smith, 1983). Descriptive statistics and stepwise multiple regression were used to analyze the data. The .05 alpha level was used in the study.

Results

Objective 1: The mean age for the sample was 38 years. Slightly over 90% of the teachers were males. Over 87% were married and 76% had children. Nearly 49% of the teachers had a master's degree. These findings are in contrast with the Pajak and Blase (1989) study which found that 67% of the teachers were female, 76% were married and 65% had children. Agricultural educators reported 12 years of teaching experience, while the Pajak and Blase sample had nine years of experience. More than 37% of the agricultural education teachers reported having another job in addition to teaching. Agriculture teachers who had a job other than teaching spent an average of 16 hours a week during the school year and almost 30 hours a week during the summer employed in those jobs. Over 55% of the agricultural education respondents indicated that they have 11 or 12 month teaching contracts.

As shown in Table 1, factors indicated by the teachers in the Pajak and Blase (1989) study were ranked from one to ten (high to low) on positive factors (negative factors were compared in a similar way). These positive and negative rankings were paired to the agriculture teacher's positive/negative

rankings. As seen in Table 1, being a parent and being married had the most positive impact on the performance of teachers. Agricultural education teachers ranked their fulfillment from teaching and satisfaction from teaching as being most influential. Conversely, in the Pajak and Blase study, being a parent and fulfillment from teaching had the most negative influence. However, agricultural education teachers indicated their financial situation and being married had the most negative influence on their performance as teachers.

Table 1
Ranking of Personal Life Factors That Impact the Lives of Teachers in General and Secondary Agricultural Education Teachers

Life Factor	Positive Factors		Negative Factors	
	Pajak/Blase**	Ag Ed**	Pajak/Blase**	Ag Ed**
Parenting	1	8	1	3
Marriage	2	10	3	2
Teaching Satisfaction	3	2	9	5
Teaching Fulfillment	4	1	1	6
Spiritual Belief	5	7	7	8
Experiences Outside Teaching	6	3	9	10
Influence of Family & Friends	7	6	3	9
Financial Situation	8	9	7	1
Sound Health	9	4	6	4
Community Visibility	10	5	3	7

** No agreement found between rankings of positive and negative factors when agricultural education teachers were compared with teachers in the Pajak and Blase study.

Objective 2: Table 2 (See page 40) presents Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the personal life factors and teacher effectiveness. Significant positive relationships were found between teacher effectiveness and all of the personal life factors.

Objective 3: Table 3 (See page 41) presents Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the personal life factors and teacher satisfaction. Significant positive relationships were found between the dependent variable, job satisfaction, and all personal life factors except parenting, marriage, and spiritual beliefs.

Two stepwise regression models were developed to assess the influence of the Pajak and Blase (1989) personal life factors on the effectiveness and job satisfaction of secondary agricultural education teachers. As shown in Table 4, the regression model yielded two variables that explained 22% of the variance in teacher effectiveness. This analysis indicated that satisfaction derived from teaching was the best indicator of teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness increased as satisfaction derived from teaching increased. Likewise, as positive personal experiences outside of teaching increased, so did teacher effectiveness.

Table 4
Stepwise Regression of Teacher Effectiveness on Pajak and Blase Personal Life Factors

Variable	Multiple R	R ²	Beta	F
Satisfaction derived from teaching	.47	.19	.37	38.12*
Personal experiences outside of teaching	.51	.22	.21	11.56*

* For Model F = 33.60 (2,232); only factors explaining significant amount of variance ($p < .05$) included in the Model.

Table 2
Interrelationships Among Selected Variables and Teacher Effectiveness

	E	P	TS	M	FS	TF	SB	CV	IFF	OT	SH
Effectiveness (E)	-	.17*	.43*	.22*	.21*	.38*	.21*	.25*	.19*	.31*	.25*
Parenting (P)		-	.13*	.42*	.14*	.10	.17*	.17*	.23*	.20*	.14*
Teaching Satisfaction (TS)			-	.18*	.18*	.71*	.21*	.18*	.16*	.29*	.22*
Marriage (M)				-	.31*	.27*	.36*	.29*	.45*	.29*	.29*
Financial Situation (FS)					-	.31*	.18*	.29*	.32*	.26*	.25*
Teaching Fulfillment (TF)						-	.34*	.29*	.32*	.31*	.24*
Spiritual Beliefs (SB)							-	.40*	.46*	.35*	.34*
Community Visibility (CV)								-	.60*	.45*	.40*
Influence Family & Friends (IFF)									-	.45*	.33*
Exp. Outside Teaching (OT)										-	.56*
Sound Health (SH)											-

Note: n = 235, * significant at the p < .05.

Table 3
Interrelationships Among Selected Variables and Job Satisfaction

	S	P	TS	M	PFS	TF	SB	CV	IFF	OT	SH
Satisfaction (S)	-										
Parenting (P)		.06									
Teaching Satisfaction (TS)			.52*								
Marriage (M)			.13*	.10							
Financial Situation (PFS)				.44*	.14*	.58*	.08	.24*	.15*	.23*	.15*
Teaching Fulfillment (TF)				.18*	.12*	.10	.18*	.17*	.26*	.19*	.14*
Spiritual Beliefs (SB)					.15*	.71*	.21*	.20*	.14*	.28*	.23*
Community Visibility (CV)					.33*	.26*	.38*	.30*	.44*	.30*	.31*
Influence Family & Friends (IFF)						.28*	.18*	.29*	.34*	.28*	.24*
Exp. Outside Teaching (OT)							.31*	.30*	.29*	.31*	.23*
Sound Health (SH)								.40*	.42*	.32*	.37*
									.58*	.43*	.42*
										.36*	.31*
											.52*

Note: $n = 249$, * significant at the $p < .05$.

Table 5 presents the stepwise multiple regression model for job satisfaction. This model yielded two variables that explained 36% of the variance in job satisfaction. As shown in Table 5, the variable personal fulfillment derived from teaching was the best indicator of job satisfaction. Additionally, as job satisfaction increased, teachers received more personal fulfillment and satisfaction from their positions as secondary agricultural education teachers.

Table 5
Stepwise Multiple Regression of Teacher Satisfaction on Pajak and Blase Personal Life Factors

Variable	Multiple <u>R</u>	<u>R</u> ²	Beta	<u>F</u>
Personal fulfillment derived from teaching	.58	.33	.42	34.44*
Satisfaction derived from teaching	.60	.36	.22	9.07*

* For Model F = 68.2 (2,246); only factors explaining significant amount of variance (p < .05) included in the Model.

Conclusions

The personal life factors tended to both positively and negatively explain the performance of secondary agricultural education teachers study. Agriculture teachers indicated that financial rewards of teaching were a negative aspect of the profession. These findings are in sharp contrast to those reported by Pajak and Blase (1989). Agricultural education teachers indicated that teaching fulfillment was the highest ranking positive factor, however it was the highest ranked negative factor in the Pajak and Blase (1989) study. A similar contradiction was found with the life factor entitled parenting. In this study, parenting was the highest ranking negative factor, while Pajak and Blase found parenting to be the highest ranking positive factor for teachers in general.

While there is a difference in the gender make-up between these two studies, Chusmir (1986) found that an individual's gender does not appear to have any effect on job commitment. In another job commitment study Brief and Oliver, (1976) concluded that men and women with similar educational background, age, occupational prestige, work structure, and income are likely to share work-related values, attitudes and preferences.

The effectiveness of secondary agricultural education teachers was best explained by the satisfaction that the teachers derived from teaching. As such, agricultural teachers who are satisfied with their positions perceived themselves to be more effective as classroom teachers. This finding supports Bowen's (1981) contention that the quality of the education being delivered is a function of the level of job satisfaction of the teachers.

How satisfied the secondary agricultural education teachers were with their jobs was best explained by the fulfillment the teachers received from teaching and the satisfaction they derived from teaching.

Recommendations

Teacher educators, state supervisors, and secondary principals should recognize and emphasize personal life factors that appear to make teachers and potential teachers feel positive about the job they are doing in the classroom. Professional educators on all levels should exude the personal rewards of teaching to prospective students.

Agricultural education professionals should review the findings and implement programs and activities to enhance factors that the teachers perceive to be positively impacting their performance. Strategies should be developed to teach beginning teachers how to recognize the importance of teacher fulfillment and self-satisfaction.

Additional research is needed to examine how being married and a parent are negatively influencing the self-perceived performance of secondary agricultural education teachers.

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