

Sri Lankan Novice Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Merilyn Meristo¹

INTRODUCTION

While the expectations society has of teachers expand fast, many novice teachers experience difficulties starting their careers at school; many of them fail to adapt and leave the teacher's demanding profession (Eisenschmidt et al, 2010; Feiman-Nemser 2003). Deriving from this, many educational innovations in many regions globally have been instituted to support novice teachers during their first years at work (Villegas-Reimers 2002; Britton, Paine, Pimm & Raizen 2003; Huling-Austin 1990; Tickle 2000). This study attempts to identify predictors of job satisfaction of two novice teacher groups who have different historical, social and cultural background. Although both countries, Estonia and Sri Lanka share something in common – they face teacher shortage problem (EHIS, 2012; Dharmadasa et al, 1996). The international TALIS (2009) research has led to the conclusion that Estonian teachers are unsatisfied with their work, mainly with the salary and low reputation. On the contrary, Sri Lankan teachers are highly respected and valued by the society (Dharmadasa et al, 1996). According to a UNESCO's cross-national study (2008) Sri Lankan teachers, in contrast to Estonian teachers are generally satisfied with their work, especially with working conditions and salary.

PURPOSE

Different aspects of job satisfaction emerge when faced with the decision of staying or quitting the profession. Hence, these aspects should already be studied at the level of novice teachers, with an aim of helping them cope with their first and later years as a teacher.

The main aim of this research was to study which factors predict novice teachers' job satisfaction. The following research questions were posed:

RQ1 What kind of relationships emerge among novice teachers' sense of community, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and job satisfaction?

RQ2 Which factors (sense of community, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy) predict novice teachers' job satisfaction?

RQ2 Whether the predictors of job satisfaction among novice teachers differ between a culture with lower levels of job satisfaction (Estonian teachers) and a culture with higher levels of job satisfaction (Sri Lankan teachers)?

One additional question addressed in this study is whether the predictors of job satisfaction among novice teachers differ between a culture with lower levels of job satisfaction (Estonian teachers) and a culture with higher levels of job satisfaction (Sri Lankan teachers).

METHODOLOGY

The current research is a quantitative study.

Sample

The sample consisted of Estonian novice teachers working in all regions of the country, in rural schools who participated in the Induction Year Programme 2010/11 (N=44). Sri Lankan novice teachers served as a comparative group working in rural and urban schools in western, central and north-eastern parts of the country who have not participated in the Induction Year Programme (N= 30).

Data Collection, Instruments and Analysis

The data for this study were collected with the use of four questionnaires (BASRC Teacher Survey; Teacher Efficacy Scale; Teacher Follow-up Survey; Intrinsic Motivation Inventory)

that have been translated into Estonian and Sinhala and adapted to the Estonian and Sinhala contexts.

In analysing our data we computed means and standard deviations; performed correlations and conducted multiple linear regression analysis. The limited sample size did not allow us further multistatistical analyses.

RESULTS

The current study revealed that both Estonian and Sri Lankan novice teachers' sense of community is the most powerful predictor of job satisfaction. This finding was somewhat surprising as both countries are historically, culturally and socially so different from one another that we would have expected to see different kind of relationship between sense of community, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Surprisingly novice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are not predictive of job satisfaction. The self-efficacy beliefs of novice teachers tend to be low because of their relatively limited experience, and the feeling of not having mastered one's skills to the maximum may not give them full job satisfaction.

Intrinsic motivation among novice teachers is rather high but is not predictive of job satisfaction. This can be explained by the fact that novice teachers might be more inclined to perceive job satisfaction aspects through extrinsic motives, such as salary, workload, feedback, etc., although their intrinsic motivation, when measured separately, is high.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the fact that the sample of both countries was rather small and that we cannot draw strong conclusions we can still suppose that similar pattern could be found in other studies as well and assume that sense of community is for novice teachers a universal need that helps them to get used to the teaching profession and leads to job satisfaction.

The findings emphasise the role of not only a positive sense of community, but also a communicative and collaborative teacher community during the beginning of a novice teacher's career. A positive and supportive working environment creates healthy conditions for the professional development of novice teachers.

REFERENCES

- [1] Britton, E., Pine, L., Pimm, D., & Raizen, S. (2003): *Comprehensive teacher induction. Systems for early career learning.* Kluwer Academic Publisher: Boston
- [2] Dharmadasa, Kiri H. et al (1996): Sri Lankan teachers' development. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, (Tuscaloosa, AL).EHIS (2012). <https://enda.ehis.ee/avalik/avalik/pedagoog/YldTooOtsing.faces>, last visited 9th May, 2012.
- [3] Eisenschmidt, E., Oder, T., Meristo, M. (2010): With Five Years of Teaching Experience: Professional Aims and Tenure. In J. Mikk, M. Veisson, P. Luik (Eds.). *Teacher's Personality and Professionalism. Estonian Studies in Education:* 159-174. Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main, et al
- [4] Feiman-Nemser, S. (2003): What new teachers need to learn. *Educational Leadership*, 60 (8), 25-29.
- [5] Huling-Austin, L. (1990): Teacher Induction Programs and Internship. – W. R. Houston (ed). *Handbook of Research in Teacher Education.* New York: Macmillan, 535–548.
- [6] Tickle, L. (2000): *Teacher Induction: The Way Ahead.* Open University Press: Philadelphia
- [7] Villegas-Reimers, E. (2002): Teacher Preparation, International Perspective. - J. W. Guthier et al (eds). *Encyclopedia of Education 2*, (7). USA: Macmillan Reference, 2470–2475.
- [8] TALIS: Õpetaja professionaalsus ning tõhusama õpetamis- ja õppimiskeskkonna loomine. (2009). [Teacher professionalism and creation of efficient teaching and learning environment]. Eds. K. Loogma, V.-R. Ruus, L. Talts, & K. Poom- Valickis. DOI: <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?048181> (Accessed on 20 April, 2010).
- [9] UNESCO (2008). Cross-national study. [www]. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/wei/sps/Report.pdf>, Last visited Feb 15, 2010

KEYWORDS

Novice teachers, job satisfaction, sense of community

¹School of Humanities, Tallinn University, Estonia. merilyn.meristo@tlu.ee