

Secondary Physical Education Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Japan, South Korea, and the United States

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ABSTRACT

Physical education (PE) teachers have high attrition rates worldwide, yet little cross-cultural research exists exploring the factors contributing to their job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. The purpose of this study was to qualitatively assess cross-cultural factors contributing to job satisfaction/dissatisfaction among secondary school PE teachers in Japan, South Korea, and the United States (U.S.). Nine secondary school PE teachers, three in each country, were observed during a full day of teaching in their respective schools, while researchers compiled field notes of their observations. After each class period, participants indicated their satisfaction on an 11-point visual analog scale. Afterwards, participants completed a semi-structured interview, in their native language, consisting of 16 core questions and additional questions relevant to the observed day. Four primary themes surrounding job satisfaction emerged: 1) student relations, 2) workload, 3) teaching, and 4) administration relations. The main theme of job satisfaction was student relations and job dissatisfaction was workload in all three countries. The U.S. teachers reported more satisfaction than dissatisfaction in their teaching, whereas the opposite relationship was observed among South Korean and Japanese teachers. Results of our study highlight the importance of understanding cultural values that constitute job satisfaction/dissatisfaction in finding ways to reduce attrition of PE teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey/Teacher Follow-up Survey (SASS/TFS), Ingersoll and Smith (2003) discussed rates of attrition (switching positions within the same career or leaving the career altogether) within the first several years of teaching and found that between 25-50% of all beginning teachers leave the teaching profession after just five years, citing poor compensation, student misbehavior, and lack of administrative support as primary attrition factors. Per the Wisconsin Budget Project report (2017), school districts in Wisconsin currently face extreme teacher shortages, with 46% of openings (1,153 job openings) including physical education teachers.

Brief & Roberson (1989) defined job satisfaction as an attitude based on the positive and negative disposition toward an employee's work. According to Carson, Hemphill, Richards, & Templin (2016), peer support greatly influenced job satisfaction, yet physical education teachers experience greater isolation from the other teachers in the school. Also, while PE teachers preferred less administrative oversight, Carson et al. (2016) also noted that this decreased oversight reduced their involvement in school decisions, which PE teachers also desired. Per Skaalvik (2012), the majority of teachers experience substantial disruptive behavior from students, which directly correlates with work-related stress and emotional exhaustion. Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington, and Gu (2007) contend that understanding how daily experiences in schools can help relate to teachers' feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and can also help physical education teachers remain engaged and effective in their work with children.

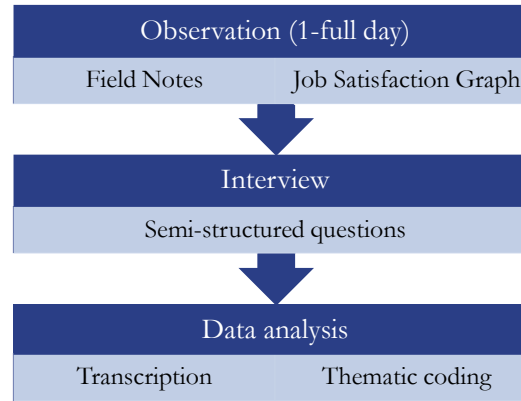
While job satisfaction among teachers has been well researched, few studies have specifically examined physical educators' (PE) satisfaction, and even fewer have examined this cross-culturally. The goal of this study, therefore, was to obtain a greater cross-cultural understanding of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors among PE teachers.

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

Using a purposive sampling (Patton, 2015), nine secondary physical educators (<30- >40 years-old) in Wisconsin, Japan, and South Korea were recruited. These teachers varied in years of teaching experience (3-25 years), and taught PE in either middle or high school.

STUDY PROCEDURE & ANALYSIS



RESULTS

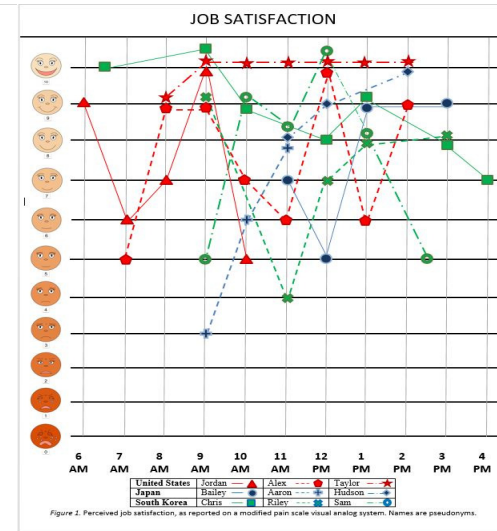
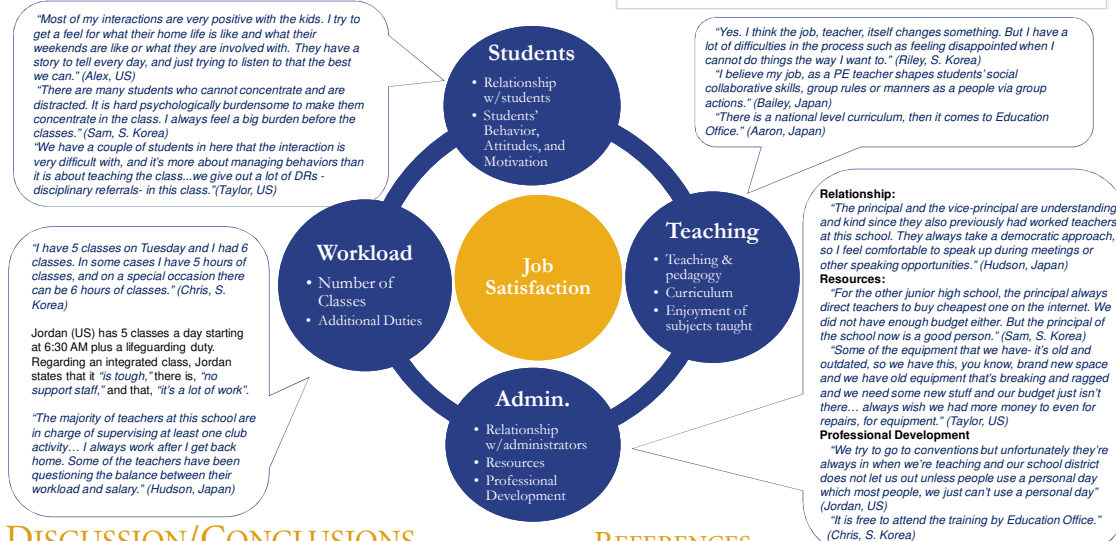


Figure 2. Perceived job satisfaction, as reported on a modified pain scale visual analog system. Names are pseudonyms.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

- The main theme of job satisfaction was student relations and job dissatisfaction was workload in all three countries.
- Curricular and value differences in three countries may have influenced participants' perceptions on their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
- The implications of this study for administrators would be to continually evaluate teachers' needs for healthy workload, provide support for their professional development, and advocate for employee wellness to decrease attrition rates and minimize burnout.

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