

EXAMINING JOB SATISFACTION THROUGH FIVE JOB FACETS OF PUBLIC-SCHOOL
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

Abstract

The study's purpose was to investigate relationships among five identified job facets of a speech-language pathologist's job and general job satisfaction as identified, organized, and measured by the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Bowling Green State University, 2009a) and the Job in General scale (JIG; Bowling Green State University, 2009b). The study included an examination of the effects on job satisfaction of people, work, pay, opportunities for promotion, and supervision. Participants were speech-language pathologists licensed and employed by public school districts within Indiana, and the study included analysis based on participants' years of experience.

Keywords: job satisfaction, speech-language pathologist, workload

Introduction

Humans have an innate love of learning (Dweck, 2006), yet a person's motivation and mindset develop continually, changing with life's exposures, experiences, and opportunities to learn. Researchers may consider intrinsic and extrinsic motivation when studying the relationships between job satisfaction and various facets of a specific job. Both intrinsic drive and extrinsic motivation determine how individual interests, goals, and career path choices feed the innate human need for autonomy, self-determination, and connectedness (Pink, 2009).

Public schools in Indiana struggle to recruit and retain speech-language pathologists. High caseload numbers, increased workload, and growing responsibilities are contributing to speech-language pathologist stress and burnout (Coordinating Committee of the Vice President for Speech-Language Pathology Practice, 2009). Because of diverse work environments and job aspects, speech-language pathologists respond to various intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, which influence the career, work setting choices, and retention of speech-language pathologists at various stages of their career paths. Speech and language skills correlate closely to academic success and achievement, yet the demands on speech-language pathologists continue to increase without solutions for preventing burnout and promoting job satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

Few researchers have investigated speech-language pathologist job satisfaction in relation to specific job facets. Even fewer researchers have focused specifically on public school-based speech-language pathologists. No data specific to Indiana have been collected. A detailed understanding of speech-language pathologists' initial career decisions, the reasons for their subsequent employment choices, and the facets with the strongest correlation to job satisfaction may inform employers about important recruitment, job satisfaction, and retention information.

Purpose of the Study

The quantitative study purpose was to investigate relationships among five identified job facets of an individual speech-language pathologist's job and job satisfaction as identified, organized, and measured by the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Bowling Green State University, 2009a) and the Job in General scale (JIG; Bowling Green State University, 2009b). The research aimed to determine the effects on job satisfaction of people, work, pay, opportunities for advancement, and supervision. A more accurate understanding may help schools develop recruitment, hiring, and retention practices for school-based speech-language pathologists.

Research Question

The question specific to this study was, 1) Do the people, work, pay, supervision, and opportunities for promotion explain a statistically significant amount of variance in the JIG score for speech-language pathologists?

Literature Review

ASHA (2004) stated *career satisfaction* is the level of satisfaction based on career choice, while *job satisfaction* depends upon a current work situation and aspects of a specific employment situation. Career satisfaction and job satisfaction may contribute in separate ways to overall work-life balance. Early speech-language pathologists were likely to serve homogenous communities, but today speech-language pathologists serve diverse populations across a variety of settings (Leonard et al., 2016).

Researchers have linked job satisfaction to improved performance; increased work ethic and motivation; and decreased employee absences, turnover, and burnout (Begley & Czajka, 1993). Studying multiple definitions of job satisfaction reveals various factors that may affect a person's feelings toward a job. Berry (1998) stated that measuring job satisfaction has gained

scientific and practice-based relevance, resulting from evidence that a relationship exists among job satisfaction and an organization's employee attendance, work performance, and work-related stress.

Job satisfaction researchers have named two aspects: facet satisfaction and overall satisfaction (Cherrington, 1994). Facet satisfaction is an employee's tendency to feel varying degrees of satisfaction depending on distinct facets of a job (Johns, 1988). Overall satisfaction is a general satisfaction or dissatisfaction from within a person (Suma & Lesha, 2013). The most widely used tool for measuring job satisfaction is the JDI (Smith et al., 1969).

Hutchins, Howard, Prelock, and Belin (2010) established as fact the growing national school-based speech-language pathologist shortage. Harris, Prater, Dyches, and Heath (2009) found that stress and burnout affect speech-language pathologist retention and job satisfaction in public schools. Blood, Thomas, Ridenour, Qualls, and Hammer (2002) asserted that job stress is a major problem confronting school professionals. Despite the consensus that stress and burnout are a problem, few researchers have studied factors contributing to public school professionals' stress and burnout (Harris et al., 2009).

Pezzei and Oratio (1991) found job satisfaction is defined by intrinsic and extrinsic components, including professional growth, personal job interest, and job responsibilities. Wisniewski and Gargiulo (1997) found that one extrinsic factor especially, high caseloads, increased stress, increased burnout, and decreased school-based speech-language pathologist job satisfaction. Increased stress due to high workload demands can cause burnout, defined as "debilitating psychological condition brought about by work-related frustrations that result in lower productivity and morale" (Veniga, 1979, p. 45). The negative impact may affect both the well-being of the speech-language pathologist and the progress of students served.

Theories of Vocational Development and Satisfaction

Two theoretical constructs have framed the research of job satisfaction, occupational stress and burnout, and speech-language pathologists' future vocational decisions. The theoretical constructs include the expectancy theory of motivation and social cognitive theory.

Expectancy Theory of Motivation

Identification of the components related to the career and job decision-making process may provide a framework for public school districts in Indiana to design an effective recruitment plan and improve the public school-based speech-language pathology shortage in Indiana. In addition, understanding the motivation of individuals to remain in public school-based speech-language pathology positions may assist with retention strategies. Motivation and expectations may change in relation to employer management and a healthy work environment.

Expectancy theory of motivation outlines three concepts: valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. The premise of Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation is that individuals will exert a level of effort to meet performance expectations if the effort will result in a positive outcome and avoidance of pain. The potential for misalignment of experiences, expectations, and personally desired outcomes may be a contributing factor to the shortage of speech language pathologists in Indiana public school settings.

Social Cognitive Theory

In addition to researching Vroom's (1964) individual expectancy, it is important to investigate research related to the effect of cognition on decision making. In 1961 and 1963, Albert Bandura expanded the social learning theory. Bandura showed a direct relationship between perception and behavioral change. Bandura suggested that self-efficacy comes from

personal accomplishments, experiences and opportunities, verbal persuasion, and physiology (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura further expanded the theory, now social cognitive theory, to include the role of cognition in human behavior and the cognitive results of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences (Bandura, 1986). Bandura (2001) promoted the use of social cognitive theory for analyzing the influence of communication on human thoughts and actions. Social cognitive theory may help in discussions of career choice, classroom motivation, and learning.

Research Methodology

The study's purpose was to examine how the predictor variables, coworkers on present job, work, pay, opportunities for promotion, and supervision, relate to the criterion variable of speech- language pathologists' general job satisfaction when employed full- or part-time in the public-school setting. Understanding relationships between the predictor variables, people, work, pay, supervision, and promotion opportunities, and the criterion variable, job satisfaction, may provide a foundation to assist with developing recruitment, hiring, and retention practices for school-based speech-language pathologists. Given the high demand for speech-language pathologists and a supply that likely will not sufficiently fill the need, information about relationships between specified job facets and overall job satisfaction may help public school employers compete in a highly competitive speech-language pathologist job market.

Procedure

To study the relationship between the JDI job facets and job satisfaction, administration of the JDI and the JIG was invited for each participating public-school speech-language pathologist currently employed in the public-school environment. JDI and the JIG information was entered in Qualtrics with no modifications or adaptations to the survey instruments except

for the use of an online platform for survey administration and data collection purposes. All components were entered and administered fully.

The JDI (Bowling Green State University, 2009a) and the JIG (Bowling Green State University, 2009b) measured speech-language pathologists' satisfaction with their job related to the specified job facets. The JDI asks participants to think about and identify the words or phrases describing the specific facets of their current job and relate the identified facets to job satisfaction. The instrument consists of five facets, including satisfaction with people on present job, work on present job, pay, opportunities for promotion, and supervision. The instrument consists of 72 items, separated into nine specific items for each job facet of promotion and pay, and 18 items individualized for work, supervision, and co-workers. Each participant responded to each item within a specified facet with Y for "Yes," N for "No," or ? for "Cannot decide" according to the participant's perception of the given item.

Data Sources

The study measured job satisfaction based on participant responses on the JDI (Bowling Green State University, 2009a) and the JIG (Bowling Green State University, 2009b). All participants were employees of public-school districts in Indiana. The study sample population consisted of a convenience sample of a minimum of 60 speech-language pathologists surveyed for data collection using the Qualtrics online survey platform.

Speech-language pathology students, speech-language pathology assistants and aides, and unemployed speech-language pathologists did not participate in the study. Clinical Fellowship Year (CFY) speech-language pathologists were able to participate in the research study. Participating speech-language pathologists were required to hold an Indiana license with the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency (IPLA) but did not need to hold a Certificate of Clinical

Competence. Participants who did not complete both the JDI (Bowling Green State University, 2009a) and the JIG (Bowling Green State University, 2009b) were excluded from the study. The participating licensed and employed school-based speech-language pathologists were all 18 years of age or older and had the ability to read and write in English.

Data Collection Methods and Data Procedures

Surveys were distributed using an invitation email to potential participants. Eligible participants had two weeks to complete the survey. The survey was closed, and data was exported from Qualtrics to SPSS version 24. Coding was checked to ensure accuracy of demographics and survey response. Composite scores were created for each predictor variable found with inferential testing, including people, work, pay, supervision, opportunities for promotion, and job in general. After the composite scores were created, descriptive and inferential testing were run.

Results

The study's data were analyzed using simultaneous multiple regression for determining relationships between predictor variables, people, work, pay, supervision, and opportunities for promotion, and a criterion variable, job satisfaction. Simultaneous multiple regression was used to determine if the people, work, pay, supervision, and opportunities for promotion facets explained a statistically significant variance in the JIG score. Multiple regression, a correlation statistic, analyzed relationships among multiple variables. A regression statistical analysis was used to determine the relationship between the combination of predictor variables and the criterion variable, the multiple correlation coefficient (Ary et al., 2010). Linearity, homogeneity, normality, independence, and multicollinearity were checked to avoid Type I errors,

overestimation resulting in rejection of a null hypothesis that is true, and Type II errors, resulting in not rejecting a null hypothesis that is false (Field, 2013).

Model summary statistics were interpreted to determine the relationship strength. Linear combination of the predictor variables was analyzed to determine if the combined predictor variables explain significance of variance in the criterion variable. If significance was not found, it was concluded the predictor variables explain the variance. A *t*-test was used to determine which predictor variables were significant. An unstandardized partial regression coefficient was used to determine change predicted in the criterion variable with a one-unit increase in the specific predictor variable while holding all other variables constant. Additionally, a standardized partial regression coefficient determined the rank order of the predictor variables if two or more of the predictor variables were significant. The following null hypotheses was tested, H_01 : The people, work, pay, supervision, and opportunities for promotion do not explain a statistically significant amount of variance in the JIG score for speech-language pathologists.

The study examined whether the specified facets, including people, work, pay, supervision, and opportunities for promotion, explained a statistically significant variance in the JIG score. The null hypothesis was tested using a simultaneous multiple regression statistical test and used the regression statistical analysis to determine the relationships among the combined predictor variables and the criterion variable (Ary et al., 2010). The assumptions within a multiple regression statistical test, including linearity, homogeneity, normality, independence, and multicollinearity, were examined to ensure all assumptions were met or correction was made if violations occurred (Field, 2013).

All assumptions were met, ensuring normal distribution of variables, a linear relationship between predictor and criterion variables, predictor variables not highly correlated, and similar

error variance across predictor variables (Osborne & Waters, 2002). The assumption of linearity was examined to ensure a linear relationship between the X and Y variables. All residuals fell within the 95% confidence bands around zero, meeting the linearity assumption. The assumption of multicollinearity was met with tolerance levels for all predictor variables, including people, work, pay, promotion, and supervision, above the .2 minimum needed for the assumption. The tolerance levels ranged from a low of .717 to a high of .884. Examination of the assumption of independence was met because no systematic pattern was present on the plot of residuals. The distribution of residual data points on the probability plot met the assumption of normality. The residual data points were the same across all values of X, meeting the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

The multiple correlation coefficient showed the linear combined relationship of the predictor variables, people, work, pay, opportunities for promotion, and supervision, to the JIG. A multiple correlation coefficient of .593 indicated a strong relationship between the linear combination of the predictor variables and the criterion variable. The coefficient of multiple determination is the amount of variance within the JIG that can be explained by the linear composite of the five predictor facets. The coefficient of multiple determination value of .352 indicated the linear composite of the five predictor variables explained 35.2% of the variance within the JIG. The adjusted coefficient of multiple determination, adjusted $R^2 = .314$, provided an estimate for the coefficient of determination for the population with a correction based on the number of predictor variables in relation to the sample size. The linear composite of the five predictor variables explained 31.4% of the variance with a correction based on number of predictors and sample size. The 3.8% difference was the shrinkage within the model. The standard error of the estimate measured the average distance each data point fell from the

regression line within the distribution. The model had a standard deviation of 7.36 units of the distance of residuals from the regression line.

The multiple regression indicated the predictor facets (people, work, pay, opportunities for promotion, and supervision) could predict general job satisfaction measured by the JIG. Significant predictor facets included work, supervision, and pay. Work had an unstandardized partial regression coefficient of .221, indicating that for a one-unit increase on the work facet score, the JIG is predicted to increase by .22 points, while holding all other predictor variables constant. With a .26 standardized partial regression coefficient, the work facet score was the strongest of the significant predictors within the model. Supervision had an unstandardized partial regression coefficient of .171, indicating that for a one-unit increase on the supervision facet score, the JIG is predicted to increase by .17 points, while holding all other predictor variables constant. With a .22 standardized partial regression coefficient, the supervision facet score was the second strongest significant predictor within the model. Pay had an unstandardized partial regression coefficient of .210, indicating that for a one-unit increase on the pay facet score, the JIG is predicted to increase by .21 points, while holding all other predictor variables constant. With a .19 standardized partial regression coefficient, the pay facet score was the least significant of the three significant predictors within the model.

The study indicated the combined composite of the areas of people, work, pay, supervision, and opportunities for promotion were related to the job satisfaction of public school-based speech-language pathologists. The study indicated work, supervision, and pay explained a statistically significant amount of difference in the JIG job satisfaction score for speech-language pathologists. Based on statistical analysis, the people and opportunities for promotion facets were not statistically significant in explaining the amount of variance in the JIG job satisfaction

score. The research demonstrated work had the strongest impact on the JIG job satisfaction score. Supervision had the second strongest and pay had the least strength of the three significant predictor variables.

Implications and Recommendations

Perhaps these findings provide insight into the motivating factors of school-based speech-language pathologists. Sahlberg (2011) stated that teachers in Finland find satisfaction in working with people and helping them. Additionally, pay is not the main motivator for working as a teacher in Finland. Analyzing the results of this research led to supporting evidence suggesting the work that school-based speech-language pathologists do make a positive impact on job satisfaction, potentially due to the desire to help people and support the learning and development of children. Pay was not identified as the most significant facet related to overall job satisfaction in this research study. Although pay is a significant factor, there appears to be supporting evidence for an intrinsic motivation.

It is also important to analyze the impact of supervision as a significant facet related to overall job satisfaction. School leaders may benefit from ensuring speech-language pathologists feel school leaders are accessible, supportive, and understanding of the speech-language pathologists' roles and responsibilities regarding assessment and intervention. Although awareness has advanced in recent years, speech-language pathologists continue to educate colleagues, parents, and the wider community about their role linked to curriculum and educating students. Breaking down silos continues to be a challenge and brings increased need for supervisory support.

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