

Short report

Perceptions of future and current teachers on the organization of elementary schools: a dissonance approach to the investigation of job satisfaction

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Summary

The study compares the satisfaction ratings of future and current elementary school teachers with respect to the main aspects of school organization and administration. Data were collected from 66 in-service teachers and 79 pre-service teachers in Cyprus. The application of factor analysis on the data resulted in the identification of the following main dimensions of school organization: headmaster's role, school organization, school climate, teacher incentives/work conditions, inspector's role and teachers' role. The comparison of the satisfaction ratings of future and current teachers on the above factors produced the following findings: first, the ratings of the two groups differed significantly for the first four factors. Secondly, future teachers reported lower satisfaction ratings than their in-service counterparts in the headmaster's role, school organization and school climate factors and higher ratings on the teacher incentives/work conditions factor. These discrepancies are considered to constitute causes of concern for educational policy-makers. The high expectations of future teachers on the teacher incentives/work conditions factor are viewed as a probable subsequent cause of cognitive dissonance and job dissatisfaction. On the other hand, the low expectations of future teachers with respect to three factors (headmaster's role, school organization, school climate) are likely to reduce their initial enthusiasm for their job. The implications of the findings for teacher training programmes are discussed, and suggestions are made on ways of reducing discrepancies between the expectations of future teachers and the realities of the workplace.

Keywords: organization, teachers, elementary schools, cognitive dissonance, job satisfaction

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Introduction

A substantial body of research has shown personal perceptions, beliefs and expectations to play a key role in career development (Bandura, 1997). New teachers' experiences are, in many cases, affected by perceptions and expectations formed during teacher training. Any incompatibility between future teachers' expectations and the realities of the workplace can lead to job dissatisfaction and turnover. According to Murmane *et al.* (1991), teachers are more likely to leave the profession in their early years due to a high incidence of job dissatisfaction.

In the literature, there are basically two lines of research regarding the development of the professional status of teaching. The first focuses on teacher education programmes and the second on school factors associated with the attractiveness of the teaching profession such as the rewards of teaching and the school climate (Shen and Hsieh, 1999). The present study relates to both research areas through the investigation of the evaluations of school organizational variables by future and current teachers and the examination of the relevant implications for teacher training programmes. It is believed that the comparison of current and future teachers' evaluations of the workplace can provide valuable information on the levels of job satisfaction likely to apply to the latter group after their entry into the profession.

The context

Since the mid-1920s and early 1930s, when the Hawthorne studies¹ were conducted, there have been several approaches to the investigation of job satisfaction among workers. One approach to the study of the topic is based on the concept of discrepancy between the initial expectations of workers and the actual conditions and incentives offered by organizations. According to one discrepancy theory of job satisfaction, that of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), individuals will experience anxiety and psychological tension (i.e. dissonance) when the benefits or rewards associated with a certain position do not meet their expectations. Thus job dissatisfaction will occur when the expectations of an individual based on his/her perceptions of the work environment are not realistic.

In an educational context, studies of the motivation of teachers have found support for the dissonance approach to the explanation of job satisfaction (see e.g. Miskel, Glassnapp and Hartley, 1975). Some of these studies have shown that dissatisfaction is especially likely in the case of pre-service teachers who often form unrealistic expectations of the school environment during their training. Weinstein (1988), for instance, reported that pre-service teachers often underestimated the problems they were about to face as first-year teachers. Johnston (1994) found a sense of disillusionment among pre-service teachers with respect to the experience of teaching. Labaree (2000), on the other hand, pointed out that pre-service teachers tended to mistakenly regard teaching as an easy job, a perception that was likely to cause them major disappointment upon entry into their chosen profession.

The high attrition rate among new teachers (see e.g. Wise, Darling-Hammond and Berry, 1987, for the turnover rate of new teachers in the USA) is often viewed as a direct result of the dissonance experienced by them in relation to their workplace conditions. However, as noted by Weiss (1999), research on difficulties faced by new teachers has mostly focused on the practical problems they encounter and

has not considered the role of other factors, such as school organization, in their decision to stay in the profession. This is also borne out by an examination of the relevant literature: even though there is a great deal of research on the problems likely to be faced by new teachers in the areas of teaching and learning (Ball and Feiman-Nemser, 1988; Bullough, 1992; Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Feiman-Nemser, 1983), much less work has been carried out on school organization factors as sources of dissonance among new teachers and, hence, as factors related to job dissatisfaction and turnover. This is despite the fact that surveys of dissatisfied teachers or teachers who left the profession have repeatedly found school administration factors to be associated with job frustration. For instance, a study of American leavers from the teaching profession concluded that the main reasons for turnover were problems in the areas of school administration, student motivation and discipline (Whitener *et al.*, 1997). Likewise, a study of job satisfaction among American teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997) found administrative support and leadership, school atmosphere and teacher autonomy to be strongly associated with teacher satisfaction.

The present study attempts to investigate the perceptions of current and future teachers on several primary school organization factors in the framework of cognitive dissonance theory. Specifically, the main aims of the study are defined as follows. First, an effort is made to isolate the main factors associated with current and future teachers' perceptions of school organization and administration variables. In this context, the underlying dimensions of the perceptions of teachers in this area are identified. Secondly, the study aims at investigating the extent to which current and future teachers differ in their satisfaction levels on each of the identified school organization and administration dimensions. In the case of current teachers, the indicated levels of satisfaction are considered to be based on their experience in the actual work environment. In the case of future teachers, on the other hand, satisfaction ratings are seen as the product of expectations about future school organization and administration.

A comparison of the perceptions of future and current teachers is considered important in the attempt to determine the extent to which the pre-service group has an accurate assessment of the real-life workplace situation, as this is defined by the perceptions of their in-service counterparts. In this context, it is hypothesized that the beliefs and perceptions of pre-service teachers on school organizational factors, such as leadership, climate² and pay, will determine the extent of future job satisfaction on their part. If these beliefs prove to be realistic, and in agreement with current teachers' views, it is likely that new teachers will not experience any major disappointment, making their transition from the university to the workplace a smooth one. On the other hand, if pre-service teachers are found to have unrealistic perceptions of the nature of the school environment, dissonance will, in all probability, occur. The experience of dissonance at an early stage of an individual's career can, in turn, be expected to have a major impact on his/her future motivation and commitment to teaching. It is thus considered important to measure pre-service teachers' beliefs and expectations before the beginning of their careers.

The background

The study was conducted in Cyprus, a small eastern Mediterranean country. A notable feature of the Cyprus education scene is the strong demand for higher

education among young Cypriots, with more than 60 per cent of secondary education graduates opting to continue their studies in 1998/99 (Department of Statistics and Research, 2000). Unlike the case in many Western countries, elementary school teaching is a very popular destination for higher education entrants as a large number of candidates compete every year in the effort to secure a position in teacher education schools. Moreover, the turnover rate among both new and experienced primary school teachers is virtually non-existent as the lack of alternative employment opportunities encourages practically all appointed teachers to remain in their profession.

The reason for the high demand for teaching jobs is widely held to relate to the employability of primary school teachers and the terms and conditions offered to them by the government. At present, primary education graduates are offered an appointment immediately after the completion of their studies while, in contrast, a significant waiting period is necessary for appointment to a secondary teaching post. At the same time, there is strong competition in the labour market for white-collar non-teaching jobs, especially in the public sector, which generally offers better terms than the private sector to higher education graduates. Consequently, the fact that primary education training is associated with immediate placement in a secure public-sector job is considered responsible for the popularity of elementary education studies in Cyprus. However, at the same time and despite the low turnover among Cypriot elementary school teachers, studies of teacher motivation have shown primary school teachers to be dissatisfied with several aspects of their job. One commonly studied aspect is that of evaluation and promotion, with teachers frequently expressing their frustration with the current evaluation system (Pashiardis, 1996). It is also important to note that teacher dissatisfaction with terms of employment has recently led to a number of strikes, with teachers demanding higher salaries. The matter was temporarily resolved after the intervention of the Minister of Education and Culture, who submitted a set of proposals on the matter. It thus appears that, in the case of Cypriot primary school teachers, low attrition may be due to the lack of more promising career opportunities outside teaching rather than to high levels of satisfaction with their current job.

Methodology

Surveys were used to gather primary data for this investigation. Questionnaires were administered to a sample of pre-service and in-service elementary school teachers in the Spring term of the year 2000. The pre-service students were enrolled at the Primary Education Department of the University of Cyprus. A sample of 79 pre-service teachers was selected. In the selection of the sample, an effort was made to include students who were in the final two years of their studies as it was expected that these students had by this time formed certain expectations in relation to their future work environment. In the case of in-service teachers, there were 66 completed questionnaires. In-service teachers came from 11 different public schools, with both urban and rural areas included in the sample.

Both pre-service and in-service teachers were asked to provide information on demographic/background characteristics such as year of studies (for pre-service teachers), gender, school (for in-service teachers) and years of service (for in-service teachers). For both groups of teachers, a 35-item self-report instrument

developed by the authors was used to measure the satisfaction level associated with school organizational variables. Specifically, current and future teachers were given 35 aspects of school organization such as school planning, opportunity for advancement, pay, teacher participation in decision-making, leadership abilities of the headmaster, communication with colleagues, etc. They were then asked to rate the extent of actual or expected satisfaction with each aspect using the following scale: 1 = Extremely high level of satisfaction, 2 = High level of satisfaction, 3 = Average level of satisfaction, 4 = Low level of satisfaction, 5 = No satisfaction. Moreover, respondents were given the option of a 'Don't know' category as it was considered possible that some in-service teachers had not yet formed satisfaction expectations on several items.

In correspondence with the purposes of the study, there were two major steps in data analysis. First, factor analysis was conducted to collapse the 35 original items into factors which depicted the major categories of organizational variables evaluated by respondents in relation to their current or future job satisfaction. Thus a simplified data set with 'new' variables was generated from the original statements. Secondly, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine whether pre-service and in-service teachers were different in the mean scores of each factor. If the MANOVA indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups, t-test comparisons were employed to find out the specific organizational aspects in which the two groups differed.

Results

Background characteristics

In the case of pre-service teachers, respondents were equally divided between third-year enrolment (49.4 per cent) and fourth-year enrolment (49.4 per cent). Only one respondent was in the second year of his/her studies (1.3 per cent). As regards gender, 13.9 per cent of the sample were male and 86.1 per cent were female.

Of in-service teachers, 20.7 per cent were male and 79.3 per cent were female, a proportion that roughly corresponds to the increased representation of women in elementary schools. About one in three in-service teachers (34.8 per cent) had between four and ten years of service. They were followed by those with 11–20 and 21–30 years of service (both at 21.2 per cent). Teachers with more than 30 years of service were also represented in the sample (16.7 per cent). Finally, only 6.1 per cent of respondents had less than four years of service.

The underlying dimensions of school organization

The data were subjected to principal components factor analysis, which allowed for the identification of six factors accounting for 67 per cent of the variance. Table 1 presents factor loadings for the items included in each factor.

Items loading on each factor were examined to interpret their meaning. The first factor was termed the Headmaster's Role factor as all the items included in it concern the abilities and the practices of the headmaster in several areas of school organization and administration (see Table 1). Specifically, this factor includes the following aspects of the headmaster's role: cooperation with the

teachers, the undertaking of initiatives for the improvement of the school, provision of support to teachers, abilities in the areas of supervision and control, equal treatment of all teachers, the ability to communicate with teachers, leadership qualities and, finally, abilities in the area of teacher supervision and control.

The items loading on the second factor refer to aspects of the organization of the school unit and for this reason it was named the School Organization factor. As seen in Table 1, the items included relate to the effectiveness of the school unit, the evaluation of the work performed by the school, the coordination of school activities, the introduction of innovations, school planning, the general

TABLE 1 Variables included in each factor and factor loadings

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Loadings</i>
F1: Headmaster's Role	• Headmaster/teacher cooperation	0.80
	• Headmaster's initiative for school improvement	0.77
	• Headmaster's support to teachers	0.74
	• Headmaster's ability for control and supervision	0.68
	• Equal treatment of teachers by the headmaster	0.62
	• Headmaster/teacher communication	0.61
	• Headmaster's leadership ability	0.59
	• Headmaster's ability to evaluate teachers	0.58
F2: School Organization	• School effectiveness	0.79
	• Evaluation of school work	0.76
	• Coordination of school activities	0.73
	• Introduction of innovations	0.72
	• School planning	0.69
	• General school organization	0.67
	• Autonomy of school unit	0.66
• Teachers' room for initiative	0.47	
F3: School Climate	• Communication among teachers	0.84
	• Cooperation among teachers	0.82
	• Human relations	0.80
	• Respect of one's abilities by colleagues	0.65
	• General school climate	0.61
	• Assistance from colleagues	0.58
	• Teachers' enthusiasm for their work	0.56
	• Communication with parents	0.34
F4: Teacher Incentives	• Possibilities for promotion	0.81
	• Possibilities for in-service training	0.75
	• Acknowledgement of one's work by superiors	0.68
	• Working conditions (other than remuneration)	0.55
	• Remuneration	0.16
F5: Inspector's Role	• Inspector/teacher communication	0.79
	• Inspector's abilities in teacher evaluation	0.63
F6: Teachers' Role	• Work content	0.71
	• School administration by the headmaster	0.66
	• Teachers' job effectiveness	0.27
	• Teachers' involvement in school administration	0.16

school organization, and the degree of autonomy associated with the school unit. A seventh item included in this factor is the degree of teacher initiative at the school. Unlike other aspects included in this factor, this item relates more to the role of the teacher in the system than to general school organization. However, it must be noted that this item had the lowest loading on the factor (0.47).

The third factor, called School Climate, consists of eight items. These items concern communication among teachers, teacher cooperation, human relations, the degree of respect of a teacher's ability on the part of his/her colleagues, the general school climate, help or assistance from colleagues, the degree to which teachers exhibited enthusiasm in relation to their work, and communication with parents. The fact that all aspects included in this factor are generally considered to be associated with a healthy school climate in the school administration literature is an indication that the new categories generated by factor analysis were highly successful in capturing the important dimensions of the data.

All items loading on the fourth factor refer to the incentives and conditions of a teaching job. This factor, called Teacher Incentives/Work Conditions, includes five items, namely the opportunity for promotion, the opportunity for in-service training, the recognition of one's work by his/her superiors, work conditions (other than remuneration) and, finally, remuneration. All items load heavily on the factor with the exception of one, that of remuneration. Paradoxically, the latter item is not strongly associated with the teacher incentive factor, a finding which is in contrast with the results of previous studies (Shen and Hsieh, 1999).

The fifth factor contains only two items, which relate to the Inspector's Role in the primary school organization. It was initially expected that these two items would load on the first factor (Headmaster's Role) because both inspectors and headmasters are superiors to the teachers in the school system. However, the inclusion of the two items in a separate factor suggests that, in the teachers' mind, the role of inspectors is different from that of headmasters.

Finally, four items are included in the sixth factor, which mostly concerns teacher-related organizational variables, and was thus termed Teachers' Role. The three teacher-related items are teachers' work content, the effectiveness of teachers in their work and teacher participation in school administration. One non-teacher related item was also included, namely the administration of the school by the headmaster. One reason for this may be the fact that teachers considered themselves to be involved in, and affected by, school administration policies and procedures.

Overall, the application of factor analysis to the collected data resulted in the identification of the major aspects of school organization and administration. The categories of organizational variables identified in the present analysis correspond to the main aspects of school organization covered in the relevant literature (see e.g. Hoy and Miskel, 1991). This indicates that the extracted factors provide a good basis for comparison between future and current teachers, in that they take into account the most important dimensions of school organization, allowing for a comprehensive comparison between the two groups.

Comparisons of current and future teachers' satisfaction ratings

The main purpose of the study was to investigate whether pre-service teachers have realistic perceptions of the school environment in terms of the satisfaction levels associated with organizational variables as compared to in-service teachers. To this end, we analysed the data using Multiple Analysis of Variance. The factors

extracted by the factor analysis served as dependent variables, while the current teacher's status (pre-service and in-service) was used as an independent variable. The comparisons were based on factor scores obtained using the sum of the ratings of the items included in each factor. The mean scores and the standard deviations of the two groups on each factor, and the results of the MANOVA, are displayed in Table 2.

Multivariate analysis indicates that future and current teachers differed significantly in their reported satisfaction levels with respect to school administration. This was the case for the first four factors, namely the Headmaster's Role, School Organization, School Climate and Teacher Incentives/Work Conditions. As seen in Table 2, the mean scores of the items included in each factor were higher for current teachers in the case of the first three factors and lower in the case of the fourth factor. On the other hand, univariate F-tests did not provide evidence for significant differences between pre-service and in-service teachers in the factors Teachers' Role and Supervisor's Role, indicating that pre-service and in-service teachers held similar beliefs and expectations on these two factors.

Given the significant difference between future teachers and current teachers in the first four factors, independent t-tests were conducted in order to identify the specific items in which the two groups differed in their satisfaction ratings. The aim of this comparison was to isolate those factor items responsible for the significant difference between current and future teachers on each factor. Thus the mean scores of each group on each item were compared for the first four factors.

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of each item included in the factors Headmaster's Role, School Organization, School Climate and Teacher Incentives/Work Conditions, as well as the relevant t-values and the level of significance. As seen in the table, future and current teachers' ratings on the Headmaster's Role factor differed substantially. The two groups differed significantly on all the items included in this factor, with the exception of one item which refers to the headmaster's abilities in evaluating teachers' work. An important finding is that on all items the mean scores of the satisfaction ratings of current teachers are higher than those of future teachers. This discrepancy in the

TABLE 2 Means and standard deviations of current and future teachers' scores on each factor, and the results of MANOVA

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Groups*</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Headmaster's Role	CT**	29.85	6.37	15.17	0.000
	FT**	24.55	8.70		
School Organization	CT	25.81	5.66	7.80	0.006
	FT	22.65	7.00		
School Climate	CT	31.18	5.09	8.60	0.004
	FT	28.25	6.14		
Teacher Incentives	CT	14.18	3.62	11.89	0.001
	FT	16.55	4.10		
Teachers' Role	CT	13.60	2.37	0.93	0.338
	FT	13.05	3.76		
Inspector's Role	CT	6.15	2.24	3.85	0.053
	FT	5.39	2.15		

*Number of subjects in CT group = 60, and in FT = 69.

**CT = current teachers, FT = future teachers.

mean scores of the two groups in this factor indicates that future teachers are not optimistic about the abilities of the headmaster in several areas of school organization. For instance, in the case of the item concerning equal treatment of teachers by the headmaster, there was a difference of almost one scale point between current and future teachers, with the latter expecting greater bias on the part of headmasters than is probably the case in real life. According to the findings, future teachers do not have a lot of faith in the abilities of the headmaster. The comparison of their satisfaction ratings with those of current teachers suggests that this concern is likely to be exaggerated and that it results in an underestimation of the role and ability of elementary school headmasters.

The differences in the satisfaction ratings of future and current teachers

TABLE 3 Means, t-values and significance levels of the current and future teachers' ratings on the items included in F1, F2, F3 and F4

<i>Variables</i>		<i>Means</i>			
		<i>CT**</i>	<i>FT**</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
F1*	Headmaster/teacher cooperation	3.97	3.51	2.62	0.010
	Headmaster's initiative for school improvement	3.77	3.08	3.75	0.000
	Headmaster's support to teachers	3.80	3.18	3.20	0.002
	Headmaster's ability for control and supervision	3.66	3.03	3.08	0.002
	Equal treatment of teachers by headmaster	3.91	2.99	4.35	0.000
	Headmaster/teacher communication	4.02	3.53	3.04	0.003
	Headmaster's leadership ability	3.69	3.11	2.76	0.006
	Headmaster's ability to evaluate teachers	3.14	2.74	1.67	0.097
F2*	School effectiveness	3.66	3.01	1.80	0.075
	Evaluation of school work	2.97	2.64	1.73	0.086
	Coordination of school activities	3.53	3.25	1.67	0.098
	Introduction of innovations	2.68	2.36	1.61	0.111
	School planning	3.53	3.28	1.51	0.133
	General school organization	3.57	3.05	3.12	0.002
	Autonomy of school unit	2.76	2.36	1.89	0.061
	Teachers' room for initiative	3.32	3.19	0.76	0.448
F3*	Communication among teachers	4.11	3.73	2.55	0.012
	Cooperation among teachers	4.14	3.79	2.50	0.013
	Human relations	4.32	3.87	3.38	0.001
	Respect of one's abilities by colleagues	3.94	3.51	2.52	0.013
	General school climate	3.95	3.47	3.03	0.003
	Assistance from colleagues	3.88	3.34	2.86	0.005
	Teachers' enthusiasm for their own work	3.66	3.33	1.95	0.053
	Communication with parents	3.35	3.62	-1.77	0.080
F4*	Possibilities for promotion	2.42	2.91	-2.39	0.018
	Possibilities for in-service training	3.06	3.54	-2.56	0.011
	Acknowledgement of one's work by superiors	2.85	3.06	-1.04	0.300
	Working conditions (other than remuneration)	2.80	3.39	-2.93	0.004
	Remuneration	3.15	3.77	-3.47	0.001

*F1 = Headmaster's Role, F2 = School Organization, F3 = School Climate, F4 = Teacher Incentives/Work Conditions.

**CT = current teachers, FT = future teachers.

observed in the School Organization factor were due mainly to one item, that of general school organization. As in the case of the previous factor, the satisfaction rating of current teachers ($\bar{x} = 3.57$) was higher than that of future teachers ($\bar{x} = 3.05$), indicating that the latter expected to be considerably less satisfied with the general organization of the school than the former currently are. On the other hand, the satisfaction ratings of future and current teachers did not differ significantly in the remaining factor items, namely school planning, coordination of activities, school evaluation, use of innovations, the autonomy of the school unit and school effectiveness. This suggests that while the same satisfaction ratings applied to *specific* aspects of school organization, the overall picture, as reflected in the item 'general school organization' differed, with future teachers being less optimistic in their expectations on this variable.

As regards the third factor (School Climate), future teachers gave lower satisfaction ratings to most of the items included in this factor in comparison to their in-service counterparts. Specifically, there were statistically significant differences between the two groups of teachers on the following six items loaded on this factor: communication with colleagues, cooperation with colleagues, human relations, respect of one's abilities by colleagues, general school climate and assistance from colleagues. However, future and current teachers had similar ratings on the items of teacher enthusiasm for their work and communication with parents. The pattern of results in this factor is similar to that reported in the first factor (Headmaster's Role), with future teachers expecting to experience a lower level of satisfaction in comparison to current teachers. This, again, serves as an indication of a somewhat pessimistic outlook on the part of the former, this time in relation to school climate.

Finally, a different pattern of results was observed in the case of the Teacher Incentives/Work Conditions factor. The satisfaction ratings of current teachers were lower than the ratings of future teachers. This result indicates that future teachers expect to derive more satisfaction than current teachers from both the extrinsic rewards of the job, such as the teachers' salary and working conditions, and the intrinsic rewards, such as the possibility for promotion and in-service training. The only case where there were no significant differences in the ratings of the two groups was that of the recognition of teachers' work by their superiors. The findings on this factor suggest that future teachers evaluate the terms and conditions of their job in a more positive light than their in-service counterparts. This singles out the Teacher Incentives/Work Conditions factor as a likely future source of dissonance for pre-service teachers, given that current teachers exhibit lower levels of satisfaction in this area. Consequently, any incidence of cognitive dissonance in relation to job satisfaction among new teachers is likely to be the outcome of a disappointment with respect to teacher incentives and work conditions.

Discussion

The first aim of the present study concerned the identification of factors representing the main dimensions of school organization and administration variables. The use of the factor analytical method resulted in the identification of the following six factors: Headmaster's Role, School Organization, School Climate, Teacher Incentives/Work Conditions, Inspector's Role and Teachers' Role. The identified factors covered the main aspects of school administration and formed

the basis for a comprehensive comparison of the relevant satisfaction ratings of current and future elementary school teachers. Moreover, it is important to note that each of the identified factors included several variables commonly associated with the relevant organizational dimension in the literature. For instance, the headmaster factor included various aspects of the head's role, ranging from his/her leadership qualities to his/her undertaking of initiatives for school improvement.

The second aim of the study called for the comparison of the satisfaction levels of future and current teachers on the identified school organization and administration factors. A major finding in this respect is that the two teacher groups differed significantly in their satisfaction ratings for four out of the six factors (Headmaster's Role, School Organization, School Climate and Teacher Incentives/Conditions).

The differences in the satisfaction ratings of current and future teachers on each factor did not follow a uniform pattern: in three cases (Headmaster's Role, School Organization, School Climate), future teachers reported lower expected satisfaction ratings compared to their in-service counterparts. In the case of the Teacher Incentives/Conditions factor, however, the pattern was reversed, with future teachers expecting to derive greater satisfaction from practically all items included in this factor. The discrepancy between future teachers' satisfaction expectations and real-life conditions, as defined by current teachers' evaluations, indicates that future teachers are likely to experience cognitive dissonance in relation to this factor, at least to a certain extent. The fact that primary school teaching is widely held to be associated with good employment terms may be responsible for an overestimation of the actual job rewards and incentives on the part of pre-service teachers. This overestimation may, in turn, lead to major disappointment after entry into the profession, when new teachers discover that their work benefits and conditions are not as attractive as originally anticipated. The resulting frustration is likely to be greater in those cases where the specific employment benefits formed the main reason for the pursuit of teaching studies in the first place. Even though it is not known what proportion of teacher candidates opt for a teaching career primarily because of employment terms, studies of the private demand for higher education indicate that the current labour market situation encourages a large number of young people to behave in this fashion. For instance, a study of secondary school graduates in Cyprus by Menon (1998) showed that one of the main reasons for the choice of higher education among this group was occupational, in that employment opportunities without higher education were not considered attractive by them. In the same study, the most popular choice of fields of study was primary education, due to the employment terms associated with a career in this field. Consequently, given the importance of occupational factors in the choice of higher education among Cypriot students, it is likely that any disappointment in the area of employment terms in the early stages of their career will result in cognitive dissonance. Of course, it must be noted that the relatively low expectations of pre-service teachers on three of the six extracted factors may, to some extent, compensate for this dissonance. However, the incidence of recent strikes by primary school teachers over pay increases suggests that a certain degree of dissonance and dissatisfaction with respect to employment terms can be expected in relation to this group.

The discrepancy between the job satisfaction ratings of future and current teachers has important implications for educational policy, most notably in relation to teacher training programmes. The unrealistic expectations of future

teachers regarding work benefits and conditions and the associated likelihood of cognitive dissonance can be expected to have a negative impact on the job satisfaction level of new teachers with far-reaching implications for their subsequent commitment and morale. In the case of Cyprus, this form of dissonance cannot be easily resolved: leaving the job is not an option for primary school teachers for reasons explained previously. On the other hand, the employment terms offered to teachers are unlikely to improve dramatically in the future. Thus the best course of action under the circumstances appears to be the prevention of the formation of dissonance in the first place. To this effect, government planners and policy-makers should ensure that teacher training programmes do not prepare students only for the teaching and learning aspects of their career. Such programmes should also address the future work environment of pre-service teachers and prepare students for the realities of the workplace.

This policy measure is deemed necessary on grounds other than the likely incidence of dissonance with respect to employment terms and conditions. Even though the differences in the satisfaction ratings of current and future teachers on three factors identified in the present study (Headmaster's Role, School Organization, School Climate) do not suggest the likelihood of dissonance upon entry into the teaching profession, they also constitute a source of concern. The fact that future teachers report lower satisfaction ratings than current teachers on all three factors means, on the positive side, that they are likely to be pleasantly surprised at some point after their appointment. However, on the other hand, it also means that new teachers enter the profession with a rather negative outlook in relation to important organizational variables such as the abilities of their headmaster. This negative outlook can, for at least a period of time, cause them unnecessary anxiety, diminishing their enthusiasm and morale. Even though this period is likely to be short since teachers can be expected to soon discover that things are not as bad as they had originally expected, there is no reason for them to undergo this experience even for a brief period of time. It is thus important for teacher training programmes to influence teacher expectations of school organizational variables in order to avoid any major discrepancies between these expectations and the realities of the workplace.

One way of achieving this could be the increased contact between current and future teachers, with the former presenting their views of the work environment to the latter and addressing any relevant concerns. This measure, if effectively implemented, can help reduce the incidence and the extent of anxiety among new elementary school teachers. Moreover, it can also be instrumental in the better and smoother introduction of new teachers to the school unit. New teachers will find it easier to adjust to their new environment if the latter is not found to hold any major surprises for them.

Another measure that can prove effective in the effort to better prepare teachers for the workplace is the inclusion of an Educational Administration course in the programme requirements of the teacher education degree. At present, a course in Educational Administration is offered as an elective to pre-service teachers. If made a requirement, the course can be used to educate *all* future teachers on the main aspects of school organization and administration and prepare them for the current state of affairs with respect to each variable. For this to be possible, it is necessary for the course to extend beyond the theoretical coverage of relevant concepts and theory; the realities and practical difficulties associated with school organization in Cyprus should also be addressed. The involvement of headmasters, inspectors and current teachers in the offering

of the course can help provide future teachers with an accurate picture of the prevalent situation.

Overall, teacher education programmes are likely to be more effective if they lead to an appreciation of the complexities involved in school organization and administration and the associated implications for the teacher's place in the school system. In the case of Cyprus, discrepancies between current and future teacher satisfaction evaluations of school organizational variables serve as a source of concern. On the one hand, the experience of dissonance with respect to employment terms at the early stages of an individual's career can have an impact on job satisfaction and morale; on the other hand, a negative outlook with respect to certain organizational variables, such as the headmaster's role in the system, can reduce initial teacher enthusiasm for their work. The findings of the present study suggest that certain changes in teacher training programmes are necessary if the transition from teacher training to elementary school is to be a smooth one.

Notes

- 1 The Hawthorne studies relate to a series of experiments designed to study the relation between quantity and quality of illumination and worker productivity. The results indicated that worker productivity was not primarily affected by lighting conditions and that increases in output were due to the better treatment of workers by their superiors. The importance of these findings has led management scholars to regard the Hawthorne studies as the foundation for the behavioural approach to management and to study their implications for the job satisfaction of workers.
- 2 In the present study, we adopt Hoy and Miskel's (1991) definition of organizational climate. According to the authors, the school climate refers to the teachers' perceptions of the general work environment of the school.

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