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## Understanding music pre-service teachers' vocational satisfaction

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### Abstract

People's job satisfaction depends partly on the degree to which their needs and desires are met. People whose needs and values are not met in their job are, in general, are not satisfied and have low motivation and performance. According to Equity Theory (1963), job satisfaction depends on the balance between what a person puts into his job and what he/she receives from it. This theory served as the theoretic framework for the current study to investigate satisfaction. Participants were 10 senior pre-service music teachers enrolled in Balikesir University's Necatibey Faculty of Education, Turkey. Qualitative research method was used to examine the participants' responses to interview questions and results were discussed. The results revealed that the equity theory offers a useful framework for understanding the pre-service teachers' satisfaction.

*Keywords:* Pre-service music teacher, job satisfaction, theories of vocational satisfaction, Adam's Equity Theory, Motivation

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### 1. Introduction

Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) is one of the theories used to examine people's satisfaction and behavior in the workplace. According to this theory, there are two important variables: **Input** (People's effort, experience, education that they bring to their job) and **Output** (people's salary, prestige and rewards that they receive from their job). If I is equal to O ( $I = O$ ), there is balance which makes people to be satisfied with their job. If I is bigger than O ( $I > O$ ), there is unbalance which makes them to be dissatisfied with their job. In such situations, people may lessen their Input (e.g. decreasing their effort) or make an effort to increase their Output (e.g. talking to their boss to increase salary) to have balance between Input and Output ( $I = O$ ). If O is bigger than I ( $O > I$ ), people tend to increase their Input (e.g. working harder on their job) so that I becomes equal to O ( $I = O$ ).

People also examine their social environment by observing their colleagues in their job. If a person believes that his Input is bigger than Output ( $I > O$ ) and his colleagues' Input is bigger than their Output ( $I > O$ ) there is balance. On the other hand, if his colleagues receive more than they deserve ( $O > I$ ), there is unbalance. In such situations, this person may decrease their Input by working less to have balance between him and his colleagues.

The main purpose of the current study was to examine pre-service music teachers' vocational satisfaction and behavior in light of Equity theory. Two research questions were addressed to meet the purpose.

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- 1) Does Equity Theory offer a useful framework for understanding music pre-service teachers' vocational satisfaction and behavior?
- 2) How do pre-service music teachers tend to behave if there is unbalance between Input and Output?

## 2. Method

The participants were 10 senior pre-service teachers enrolled in the department of Music Education, Balikesir University's Necatibey Faculty of Education in Turkey. Data were gathered using the semi-structured interview technique. To examine the satisfactions of the pre-service teachers, a semi-structured interview form including three open ended questions have been prepared based on Adam's Equity theory. The interview questions included:

- 1) You have put a great effort to become a music teacher, spent your time and received education. In other words, you put some Input (I) to become a teacher. Suppose that you finished your school and were assigned as a music teacher in a public school. Being a teacher will offer you some opportunities (e.g. you will receive a salary, recognition, health insurance). In other words, you will have some Output (O) for the work you do. Please indicate your Inputs (I) and Outputs (O) separately.
- 2) Please indicate your I/O ratio. How do you think your I/O ratio will impact your motivation in the workplace, vocational satisfaction and job performance?
- 3) Imagine the I/O ratio of your future colleagues. How could their I/O ratio possibly affect your motivation, vocational satisfaction and job performance?

## 3. Findings

In relation to the occupation they will enter, all the pre-service teacher candidates handle the things they give for this job (inputs) as the labor and the time they spend, economical costs and expenditures, work and the activities they do to develop themselves in their field. However, the big majority of the pre-service teachers mention of the afford they make for their education due to the negation about their family and the afford they make to be successful in their lessons, physical fatigue health problems and also negative situations because of the fact that they have to study and work at the same time. According to the pre-service teachers for the conditions they are recompensed (Output), it is focused on regular salary, social facilities the government offers, health insurance, chances of promotion, physical facilities of schools, prestige and status in society, love and respect students show, relationships with colleagues and the right to retire.

Four teacher candidates put in their belief of happiness due to fact that they love their occupation so much and the satisfaction of the repayments for their efforts into these words: A student, "in return for the effort I make to be a teacher, the time I spend and devotion, I think that the socio-economic conditions I demand, can make my behaviors positive and increase my work motivation. School condition, behaviors of the colleagues and physical sufficiency of the school affect my motivation positively. However as a teacher candidate, I don't disregard the importance of I/O ratio and I am in favor of professional sensitivity. I believe that a teacher who loves his job can make enough effort even in hard conditions (insufficient Output)

Four students stated the balance of inputs and outputs in the following way: A student indicated "I think my inputs and outputs can be balanced. This balance affects my doing job fondly and my motivation, behavior and performance positively. I believe that I will be recompensed for my efforts. Because, I will do my job fondly." Two other students emphasized that the efforts they make are more than the others' efforts. One of these students said that "Actually, my inputs are more than my friends' Input in the same condition and I believe that I spend more effort. However, we will receive the same salary. Probably, I will be assigned to the east part of Turkey and my

friends who make no effort will be assigned to better parts of Turkey. In that case, since our opportunities and salaries are equal, my motivation and performance will be affected negatively”.

Three students believe that they should be equal with their future colleagues in terms of I/O ratio. A student who supports this idea said “the I/O ratio of my colleagues being equal with mine will help me to have a happy professional life if the I/O ratio of my colleagues is equal with mine because justice requires treating each individual equally in equal standards/ treating each individual equal in equal standards results in justice. As for Outputs, it is also important for other colleagues to have sufficient Outputs as we work in the same environment. I wish to be in balance in I/O ratio for every colleague who uses their labor and time at optimum level. I think when the person has sufficient Inputs; the Output would have higher potential accordingly. I believe my colleagues and I will have high motivation and job satisfaction in the environment that the outputs are sufficient, fair, and equal. As a result, we will work in peace.”

Five of the pre-service teachers stressed that it could adversely affect the performance and behavior and as a result decreases job satisfaction if I/O ratio of their co-workers were not equal to theirs. A student said “if I observe any increase or decrease in workload because of the personal relations in the environment of unequal rates of I/O, it will negatively affect my motivation and job satisfaction and my attitude to my co-workers and managers because I can be happy when I do my best in equal conditions. In addition, if I cannot get what I deserve, I might resign from my job, or want a designation to another place, or lose my enthusiasm and I might not do my best.”

Another student said “if everyone does their jobs in equal conditions, my motivation and performance will be high. However, if my co-workers show irresponsible behavior while I am making great efforts, i.e. if it is an issue of injustice, I will contact the authorities. If there are not any amendments, I will change my job environment.” One other student stated that “if my co-workers have higher I/O ratio than mine, it will adversely affect my motivation and job satisfaction but not my performance because I try harder to keep up with them and improve myself.”

Two of the pre-service teachers stated that they would not be affected by the I/O ratio of their co-workers. One student indicated: “Each individual's standard of living is different from each other. Accordingly, the labor, expense (input) and the expected response (output) is different. As long as they are satisfied with the opportunities they have, they will have high motivation and performance. Everybody is responsible for themselves. I will be happy with my own Output. As I love my profession, I will always have an optimum level of motivation and performance”.

#### **4. Discussion**

The main purpose of this study was to examine pre-service teachers' vocational satisfaction, motivation and behavior from the perspective of Adam's Equity Theory. Findings, in general, supported the utility of this theory in understanding the pre-service teachers' vocational satisfaction. Thus, we believe that this theory can be used as a framework to examine people's vocational satisfaction. It is important to note that the current study was conducted with pre-service music teachers. Since they do not work in the workplace, it would not be easy for them to judge their I/O ratio and how this ratio might affect their motivation, satisfaction and behavior. Thus, it would be better to examine the utility of this theory with practicing music teachers in future studies.

#### **References**

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