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Thesis

Title: PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION, PERCEPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE
BEHAVIOR, AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS

by

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PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION, PERCEPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE
BEHAVIOR, AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS

BY

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the general hypothesis that administrative behavior in an educational setting influences the relationship between professional orientation and job satisfaction among teachers. In order to consider this problem, a conceptual framework, based on reference group theory, is developed. Ordinarily, reference group theory, in studies considering job satisfaction, has been used to investigate the relationship between reference groups and job satisfaction. However, this study does not consider direct effects of reference groups on job satisfaction but rather, it is proposed that in the case of teaching, administrative behavior in the school is an intervening variable influencing the relationship between teacher reference groups and job satisfaction.

In order to test the general hypothesis, two specific hypotheses are adduced. The first specific hypothesis predicts that teachers' professional orientations are related to satisfaction with aspects of the work situation. The second specific hypothesis predicts that the relationship between professional orientation of teachers and satisfaction with aspects of the work situation is significantly influenced by the teachers' perceptions of administrative behavior. To test these hypotheses a secondary analysis

of data was undertaken. The data were generated through the use of a questionnaire administered to teachers in the St. Boniface School Division, Winnipeg, Manitoba. The results of testing the operational hypotheses suggested partial acceptance of the first specific hypothesis and rejection of the second. The general hypothesis was rejected. It was concluded that for the sample studied, perceived administrative behavior does not affect the relationship between professional orientation and job satisfaction among teachers.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The tendency toward professionalization is commonly seen as one of the characteristics of the occupational structure in advanced industrial societies (Larson 1977:178). Professionalization represents, among other things, an occupation's drive for status through identification with the values and goals associated with professionalism toward the goal of public recognition (and legal support) for such things as control over occupational entry and modes of practice. Teaching as an occupation has also shown this tendency (Corwin 1965). However, the consequences of such a development for job satisfaction among teachers are not clearly understood. Further, the extent to which the influence of professionalism on job satisfaction is mediated by administrative behavior in an educational setting is also unclear. It is the intent of this study to explore the effects of professionalism upon teacher perception of administrative behavior and the consequences of this for job satisfaction among teachers.

Professionalism in the Literature

Professionalism is not the focus of the present study, but rather "professional orientation"* with the concept of "professionalism" used to establish different kinds of reference groups among teachers. However, an understanding of the idea of professionalism will be important to a grasp of the nature of professional orientation in the contemporary context of complex society.

Many studies have been concerned with the problem of defining a profession. In reviewing the literature, considerable variation in the definition of a profession is apparent. To some, professionalism is merely "a label used by occupations to win power and prestige" (Ritzer 1971:59), while to others professions are conceptualized as occupations with core characteristics. These characteristics subsequently become important in distinguishing professions from other occupations. However, there is also considerable variation among those authors who contend that professions are defined by certain core characteristics. From a review of the many conceptualizations of professionalism there appears to be sufficient consensus to justify the assertion that there is an agreed upon ideal type

* The concept "orientation" used in this discussion refers to "...the theme underlying the complex of social roles performed by an individual. It is the (tacit or explicit) theme which finds expression in each of the complex of social roles in which the individual is implicated." (Merton 1968:446 fn.) The underlying theme of a professional orientation would be one involving the adoption of attitudes assumed to be held by the well-established professions.

of professionalism which includes three major criteria: 1) an esoteric knowledge base 2) a service ideal, and 3) autonomy.¹ Since these criteria represent the ideal type of professionalism several authors have suggested that to be made more useful for purposes of empirical research, the attributes of professionalism should be viewed as a set of continua or dimensions on which a given profession may have different values (Hall 1968; Pavalko 1971). According to this conception, professionalism is regarded as a matter of degree. The criteria are then seen as comprising a professional model with each attribute being a component of a continuum with professionalism at one end and non-professionalism at the other. Hall (1968:92) and other authors have referred to the movement of an occupation toward correspondence with the professional model as the process of professionalization. A variety of occupations (including teaching) have progressed only so far on one or more of these continua, but are steadily attempting to improve their position -- that is, to become professionalized.

As with other social processes, professionalization may be better understood by taking into account certain aspects of the larger society in which it takes place. Professionalization began

1. The distinguishing attributes of a profession have been studied by numerous authors. Though varying, the many definitions of a profession available in the literature do not contradict one another. In their studies of professionalism Corwin (1970:44), Elliott (1972:94), and Goode (1966:36) have in common the three criteria given here.

to advance rapidly as a concomitant of increasing industrialization in the western world (Larson 1977; Vollmer 1966). The occupational structure of modern industrial societies is generally characterized by the expansion of professional occupations. The professions are regarded as the most rapidly growing occupational category and according to Friedson "post-industrial society can be regarded also as the professionalized society" (Friedson 1971:467). And Parsons (1966) has emphasized the degree to which characteristics which are considered to be "professional" in nature permeate much of the occupational sphere in modern society. To a degree then, the history of occupations is a recounting of change and attempted change in the direction of greater professionalization (Pavalko 1971:28). Increasingly, occupational groups are claiming and demanding to be recognized as having professional status. The common theme running through many of these claims seems to be that a high degree of technical competence provides the bases for the occupation. According to Pavalko (1971), a high degree of technical competence, sophistication, and complexity are becoming characteristic of the majority of occupations in modern industrial societies. Work that is already technical and specialized is becoming even more so. If technical competence is a criterion of

professionalism, it is likely that the term "profession" will apply to an increasing number of occupations. However, Wilensky (1964) argues that in terms of the distinctive features which characterize the established professions (medicine, law and the clergy) very few of the occupations aspiring to professional status will become fully professionalized, and many others will never achieve this position. Indeed, several authors argue, given that professions are increasingly experiencing bureaucratization, that rather than professionalization, "deprofessionalization" (the loss of professional status) is a more relevant focus of study (Haugh and Sussman 1969; Toren 1975). While the sociology of professions has devoted considerable attention and effort to identification of what it takes to be or to become a "full" profession, fewer studies have been concerned with the idea of deprofessionalization. The idea of deprofessionalization is based on the assumption that the qualities of professionalism are threatened by the expansion of bureaucratic organizations in almost every sphere of life (Toren 1975:326). Accordingly, Hall (1968:103) concludes that of the professional attributes, autonomy is most strongly inversely related to bureaucratization. (The other attributes are not as strongly inversely related.)

Thus, since professions are increasingly experiencing bureaucratization, autonomy may soon no longer be a major criterion of professionalism. Indeed, according to some authors, as professional performance becomes susceptible to standardization and routinization, many times not much is left to warrant a distinct professional status wherein situations are handled by extraordinary expertise and judgment (Elliott 1972:94; Toren 1975:330). However, a variety of reasons apart from bureaucratization may account for this state of affairs. For example, as an increasing number of occupations attempt to claim professional status, the standing of traditional professions is threatened (Elliott 1972:151). Hence, some authors have been led to question the future of professionalism as an occupational ideal. Nevertheless, while some may argue that the professional ideal will soon be a myth, the ideal itself is, today, a real phenomenon. And for purposes of comparative analysis occupational groups can best be seen as ascending and descending a professional scale.

Professionalism and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to "an individual's affective reactions or feelings toward his job" (Hackman and Suttle 1977:9); in

other words, to positive or negative feelings toward one's work. Research concerning job satisfaction can be classified into two broad categories -- a one-factor approach and a two-factor approach. The one-factor approach conceives of job satisfaction as unidimensional. That is, feelings toward the job are classified as either positive (satisfaction) or negative (dissatisfaction), and a particular job variable could be identified as a source of either (Russell 1975:300). This idea of job satisfaction assumes that if the presence of a variable in the work situation leads to job satisfaction, then its absence will lead to job dissatisfaction and vice versa. However, Herzberg, et al (1959) hypothesized that factors associated with positive and those associated with negative feelings toward the job would differ. Thus, instead of unidimensionality, Herzberg's approach conceives of job satisfaction in terms of two sets of mutually exclusive factors. This two-factor theory (also known as the "motivator-hygiene" theory) proposes that separate and distinct factors are involved when considering job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction; the absence of job satisfaction does not imply dissatisfaction with one's job and vice versa. However, research aimed at determining the validity of Herzberg's theory has resulted in inconclusive findings and the theory remains

controversial (Russell 1975:302; Locke 1969:313). Research findings of Russell (1975:319) suggest that factors leading to job satisfaction are not different from those leading to job dissatisfaction. Rather, his findings indicate that the worker's orientation may cause the same factor to be associated with positive or negative job attitudes. Such findings suggest that the orientation which individuals bring to the work situation becomes a crucial independent variable in the study of job satisfaction.

Several studies have found that of all broad occupational strata today, professionals report most often high satisfaction with their work (Larson 1977:59). However, in organizational settings professionally oriented individuals have been found to have a lower level of job satisfaction than those with an employee or organizational orientation (Abrahamson 1956:61). Sorensen and Sorensen (1974) found that, in a bureaucratic setting, CPA's (Certified Public Accountants) with a low professional orientation tended to be associated with high satisfaction. Individuals with a high degree of professional orientation are apparently valued less in the organization and therefore the result tends to be dissatisfaction on the part of these individuals. The CPA in a large organization appears to

resemble other professionals in organizations. Culbertson et al (1960) report findings similar to Sorensen and Sorensen in their study of social workers.

Abrahamson (1967:82) reports that professionally oriented individuals are a major source of frustration to most administrators. The administrative orientation commonly stresses control and professionally oriented individuals appear to strongly resist administrative control. And Robinson (1967:37) reports that organizational members who are professionally oriented tend to resist the impersonal treatment which is common from superiors in the administrative hierarchy. Such factors will affect administrators' attitudes toward professionally oriented workers. Culbertson et al (1960:425) have identified the attitudes that administrators have toward employees, and attitudes of employees to their immediate superiors, as factors which affect job satisfaction.

In summary, with the current tendency toward professionalization of the work force, classification of occupational groups as either professional or non-professional has become both important and problematic. In modern society, professionalism has become a significant factor in determining the nature of many occupational roles at the same time as work is becoming increasingly

organizationally based. While professionalism and bureaucratization are not necessarily antithetical, the preceding studies indicate that professionally oriented individuals in organizational settings appear to be associated with lower levels of job satisfaction.

The following section will consider professional orientations and job satisfaction among teachers in particular.

Professionalism and Job Satisfaction Among Teachers

Teachers today are receiving longer periods of training, professional associations have been formed, and they are demanding a greater degree of control over their work environment (Robinson 1967:30). Among the aims of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, founded in 1919, are those to assert the role of the teacher in developing education and to provide means for teachers to exercise their professional responsibilities (Manitoba Teachers' Society, 1979-80:42). In the same year the Manitoba Teachers' Federation was formed (renamed the Manitoba Teachers' Society in 1940) and the first code of ethics set forth. A major objective of this association is to establish teaching as a major profession and, among other aims, to improve the quality and scope of teacher education and to seek greater responsibility for the certification

of teachers. These professional associations have played a part in bringing about recent increases in teacher involvement in such areas as curriculum development and decision-making. And in some areas in Canada, teacher-training institutions now have advisory boards composed of teachers (Brookover and Erickson 1975:49). Thus, in teaching as in other occupations, the trend toward increased professionalization of the work force is apparent. However, in comparison to "full" professions (of which medicine and law are prime examples), teaching as described by Etzioni (1969) remains a "semi-profession" since it has a shorter period of training, less legitimization, a less specialized body of knowledge, less well established rights to privileged communication, and less autonomy. According to Hall (1968), teaching is an example of a "marginal" profession because teachers lack professional authority and independence -- they do not control recruitment, training or certification, nor do they determine their own practice or conditions of service (they cannot turn away clients or fix fees).

According to Gray (1975:I-7), a major factor that has hindered the "full" development of teachers' professionalism is that their work is entirely within the bureaucratic setting of school systems. According to Corwin (1970:8), "The principle of delegating authority seems inconsistent, especially with the idea