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Effectively Leading the New Normal for Higher Education in a Post Pandemic World

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EFFECTIVELY LEADING THE NEW NORMAL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN A POST PANDEMIC WORLD

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Abstract: *The worldwide coronavirus pandemic that erupted in 2020 accelerated the already exponential growth of online course delivery (Twist, 2021; Martin, Budhrani, Kumar, & Ritzhaupt, 2019). Educational leaders struggled to cope with effectively guiding faculty through the crisis (Thornton, 2021). Though many studies have analyzed the nature of satisfaction for students in online learning settings, none have examined the satisfaction of the educator. This study aimed to fill the gap in the academic literature pertaining to job satisfaction for online instructors. A phenomenological study was undertaken to examine the job satisfaction of a group of online instructors at a private university in the United States. We found that participants experienced issues with barriers in communication, difficulties ensuring student success, a lack of student readiness and difficulty forming meaningful relationships with students online. Participants noted that they planned to continue teaching online indefinitely despite the overwhelming evidence of dissatisfaction. The single factor indicating job satisfaction - scheduling flexibility - was the primary reason participants overlooked the significant amount of dissatisfaction.*

Keywords*: online education, leadership, job satisfaction, effective teaching*

Introduction

The shift to online delivery as a primary method of education is pervasive and will last beyond the end of the pandemic. This was not something that sprang entirely from the need to social distance in the face of a worldwide deadly virus. As far back as 1990, online education became part of the vocabulary in many universities. Online education itself was a logical extension of the correspondence, radio, and television courses that universities offered to remote students going back as far as the late eighteenth century (Gayton, 2007; Holmberg, 2005). Online education has now spread to all levels of education. This has been facilitated by changes in technology, widespread use of computers, and a significant increase in high speed Internet availability (Falowo, 2007). Information technologies as well as computer literacy are notably increasing and the ease of Internet access is offering many opportunities for distance education. The ground was laid for a quick transition to 100% online delivery for primary, secondary, and university level institutions when the Coronavirus lockdown happened in the United States during March of 2020.

Despite the serendipitous nature of this happenstance, this transition did not happen without a host of problems and issues. Students and faculty alike were quick to report burnout, loneliness, and disengagement (Mheidly, Fares, & Fares, 2020). The technology worked well but the people using this technology were not prepared for the reality of working from home. As the pandemic

stretched into 2021, this reality has been a continuing problem for those in the education field. There are a host of reasons why this continues to plague those that work from home including the social orientation of humans, lack of daily structure, increased difficulty in separating work from home, and increased expectation of constant contact with supervisors and work expectations (Mheidly, et al., 2020).

It is highly likely that even as the pandemic winds down, the convenience afforded by online delivery will be a force that pressures its continued prevalence. In addition to bridging the divide between the learner and the institution, distance education provides many benefits to students in the online environment. Learning via distance in general, allows students access to class materials on a 24 hour basis, seven days a week (Moore, Winograd, & Lange, 2001). These students can access materials and complete their class assignments at any time. Distance education also provides student to student and teacher to student communication at the students'/teachers' convenience (Moore, et al., 2001). Students are provided the opportunity to learn and explore class materials at their own pace, but ultimately meeting the deadlines set by the instructor. Many students seeking distance learning degrees are not traditional college students (Moore, et al., 2001). These students tend to be professionals with busy lives, nine to five jobs and a need for flexibility. Obtaining a degree via distance education offers these students a large amount of flexibility. Some students cannot take on campus courses because of conflicts with other courses or with their work schedule, so they opt to take online courses to fulfill degree requirements (Cartwright & Fabian, 2017).

With this in mind, it is imperative that leaders in educational environments have an understanding of the nature of the variables that affect teachers and professors who engage in increasing amounts of online teaching. While there has been substantial research in the area of student satisfaction in online delivery, there has been very little research on the instructor's satisfaction. Understanding what influences the satisfaction of their staff can help them best provide a working environment that maximizes their productivity and emotional well-being. This not only benefits staff but also the multitude of students that are the primary benefactors of the teaching. If the content is delivered by a satisfied teacher, this satisfaction ought to reflect in their teaching itself. This study analyzed the phenomenon through the lens of Hertzberg's (1968) Motivator-Hygiene Theory in order to drill down the elements that drive an educator's satisfaction in this environment. This leads to two primary research questions that will be addressed in this research and one secondary research question:

1. What affects an instructor's job satisfaction in online teaching?
2. What comparisons do instructors make between online and face-to-face teaching?
    a. What do instructors perceive as the challenges involved in teaching online?

Literature Review

There are at least three types of interaction in the online learning classroom: student to student, student to instructor and student to content (Bernard, et. al, 2004). Different modes of interactions that support teaching, learning and communication in the online environment exist - collaborative, blended, asynchronous and synchronous, for instance. These modes allow students to keep the lines of communication open during the learning process and to feel part of a learning community.

Collaborative learning is one process of the online learning environment that can help prevent isolation. Collaboration can be understood as the process of students working and learning together on an authentic endeavor, and building mutual understanding and knowledge (Robinson, Kilgore, & Warren, 2017). For example, students may work on a project online and provide input

to one another during the process of the assignment. This differs from cooperative learning where individuals work on an aspect of a project independently and then report back to one another once the assignment has been completed. Collaborative learning involves many aspects such as providing and giving help and feedback, exchanging information, resources and existing knowledge, encouraging group members' contributions, and engaging in debate.

Blended courses, which are also called hybrid courses or mixed mode-instruction courses are a mix of face-to-face learning and online learning (Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal, 2004). Students attend lectures in a university classroom and follow up with subsequent online learning tools or vice versa. Blended learning is claimed to be one of the more successful types of online learning (Hiltz, 1998; Dziuban, et al,. 2004). Students are said to learn more with this type of teaching and learning because they have the benefits of face-to-face interaction with the instructor and other students, and they reinforce their learning after/before the class in the online environment.

Most online learning is carried out in an asynchronous manner (Hwang, 2019). Asynchronous communication is communication that does not occur in real time. One benefit to asynchronous learning is that students can learn and communicate within the course, at their convenience, 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Hiltz, 1998). Universities use a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Blackboard to assist with the course management of online teaching. Students and instructors communicate via email, discussion board postings, and access course documents via the LMS. Online learning can thus be conducted in both an asynchronous and a synchronous manner.

Synchronous communication occurs during real time. In online learning, students and instructors use a variety of methods to communicate such as video conferencing and course chats. In synchronous learning instructors have the benefit of interacting "live" with students and students have the ability to interact with their classmates. This allows students to ask questions, learn from their peers, and interact with the instructor. Many accrediting bodies, (such as Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - SACS), require synchronous methods of teaching for all online courses for minimum periods such as, at least one hour per week.

There is a perception that many academics are skeptical about the quality of online teaching (Conrad, 2004; Association, 2000). Online learning may be viewed as a lesser form of education by some academics. Faculty members concerned with quality have noted that students should have access to various sources pertaining to course materials such as a "library, labs and faculty" (Bower, 2001). Instructors have also asked that students be exposed to "affective development and student socialization" through student-to-student contact (Bower, 2001).

Though there are skeptical views about the use of online learning, many steps have been taken to ensure/increase quality. Starting in the 1990s there were three major initiatives established to ensure the quality of online learning. The five pillars of online education, 24 benchmarks for online education and the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education were established (Bourne, Harris, & Mayadas. 2005). Many researchers use the five pillars of online education as a building block for their studies (Bourne, et al. 2005; Zhao, 2003).

Technology and pedagogy are both critical training areas for online instructors (Martin, et al., 2019). Instructors who teach online need to be familiar with the technology that they are utilizing. Not surprisingly, many faculty members have voiced concerns about the lack of training for online instructors (Martin, et al., 2019). Faculty feel they are pushed into the virtual educational world before they are ready, and are afraid that they will not receive the proper training and support (Martin, et al., 2019). Thus training instructors to teach online and become familiar with the technology of the online learning environment are the first steps in creating a successful online

learning course. If instructors are familiar with the learning environment they can create meaningful learning experiences for their students.

Methodology

Though qualitative and quantitative methods are both viable ways to conduct research this study was intended to be exploratory in nature. Exploratory studies are best executed through qualitative methodologies as the constructs do not have to be reduced to single variables. Qualitative research describes and analyzes people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). Qualitative research is important for such things as theory generation, policy development, and improvement of educational practice. Qualitative research is exploratory in that it assumes the value of the setting and searches for a deeper understanding for the participants' lived experience of the phenomenon (Bogdan, 2003).

There are many different types of qualitative studies (Bogdan, 2003), and a phenomenological approach was chosen for this research study because the research was most concerned with personal experience of the participants and their perception of job satisfaction in the online environment (Introna and Ilharco, 2004). Unlike case studies, which focus on the organization as a whole, phenomenological studies allow the research to focus on the individual and their understanding of life experience (Introna and Ilharco, 2004). This study was undertaken a little more than one semester at the targeted site. A standard term at the site lasts 16 weeks and there are two per year. Contact with the Associate Dean of the college that offers the online program was established and permission was granted to conduct the study. The primary impedance involved both finalization of the study plan and Internal Review Board (IRB) approval.

As is usual in phenomenological studies (Introna and Ilharco, 2004), the sole source of data were semi-structured interviews. These interviews were grounded in a conceptual framework and the research questions. This conceptual framework was based on Herzberg's (1968) Motivator-Hygiene Model. Other theories such as Affect Theory (Locke, 1969), Dispositional Theory (Judge, et al., 1998), and Job Characteristics Model (Hackman and Oldham, 1976) were considered. The most widely used and most vetted was the Motivator-Hygiene Model (also called the Two Factor Model). The Dispositional Theory and Characteristics Model were both quantitatively based thus were rejected due to lack of compatibility with the approach taken for the study.

To ensure proper ethical guidelines were being followed, the authors followed the necessary protocols. Before data collection began, approval by the Internal Review Boards (IRB) of both the authors' home university as well as the university under study were obtained. As proposed in the IRB documentation, informed consent was secured for every participant before any interviews were conducted. The participants in the study were dispersed throughout the world and taught remotely from 18 different states and 11 countries. Because of this, the interviews were conducted via telephone, the consent form was made available online prior to the interview and were received via fax and email from the participants. The medium for communication was voice over Internet Protocol (voIP) using Skype software. This software allowed for the recording of the interviews to mp3 files and thus allowed a convenient storage method for transcription and analysis. After the interview were conducted and recorded, software called Dragon Speak was used to transcribe spoken words into written words.

After the interviews were complete and transcribed, data analysis began. The data analyses involved three connected subprocesses: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Huberman and Miles, 1994). With data reduction, the data were reduced in an anticipatory way based on the conceptual framework. Data display referred to the compressed presentation of data

that permitted conclusion drawing. These took the form of structured summaries or synopses that linked the major topics that were revealed during data reduction. Conclusion drawing involved extracting meaning from the data where the researcher was the agent of interpretation. The tactics used for this final step involved noting patterns or themes, clustering, comparison and contrast.

The majority of the processes described above were a method for categorizing data into manageable units. The substantive portion of the analysis process was the area where meanings were drawn from the data. In the tradition of constructivist research (Denzin, 1994), the researcher is the tool of interpretation and this interpretation is substantiated within a defined conceptual framework. As Herzberg (1968) formed the basis for this research, it was also utilized as the theory by which the data analysis was rooted.

Theoretical Framework

The positive emotional state about the fulfilment of values from the job is the primary component of job satisfaction (Locke, 1976). This emotional state contains affective and cognitive components (Organ & Konovsky, 1989). Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of workplace motivation has evolved from Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs to McClelland's (1961) achievement motivation theory, to Alderfer's (1969) modified needs hierarchy theory, to Herzberg's (1968) Two Factor Theory. Though the theoretical evolution does not necessarily imply a repudiation of prior theory, the collection of empirical evidence would steer a researcher towards a particular theoretical context. Furthermore, the domain of research would have an influence on a researcher's decision in theoretical grounding. As Two Factor Theory has been used extensively in education and higher education research, this was evidence of its appropriateness and effectiveness.

Herzberg's (1968) Two Factor Theory (also known as the Motivator-Hygiene Theory) has been applied directly in the study of job satisfaction among college level faculty (Onen and Maicibi, 2004; Moore and Hoffman, 2004) as well as in the post-analysis of the findings (Lacy and Sheehan, 2004; Ssesanga and Garrett, 2005). With rare exception (Ssesanga and Garrett, 2005), the extant literature supports the predictive value of the theory. Despite its wide use, criticisms exist of Two Factor Theory. Indeed, Locke (1976) rejected the premise that the sources of job satisfaction were restricted to the constructs described in motivator-hygiene theory. Furthermore, the relationship was not restricted to the two constructs as individual, psychological constructs can interact. Another criticism on Herzberg's two-factor theory is that it disregards the individual differences (Wiley, 1997). The model is claimed to be applicable regardless of gender, age, occupational level and so on. Despite this criticism of Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, it has remained widely accepted and a topic of great interest among researchers in the decades since its inception (Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Given this, and the fact that the theory is widely used in the study of job satisfaction within the specific context of the paper, we felt it was the optimal theoretical base to use for our framework.

The following conceptual framework was developed from Herzberg's (1968) Motivator-Hygiene theory. The general idea perpetrated by the theory states that lower level needs do not lead to job satisfaction. This is in line with Maslow's (1943) classic theory of motivation which describes a layered set of needs. The lower levels, which include psychological, safety, and love and belonging, form the basis of this framework. The higher-level needs include esteem, self-actualization, the desire to know and understand, and aesthetic needs.

Higher level needs in the Two Factor Model revolve around the internal needs of the employee. They include such areas as recognition, achievement, and personal growth. Not realizing these in

an organizational setting would lead to the lack of job satisfaction. This is not the same as job dissatisfaction though; rather it is the absence of job satisfaction. These higher level needs are known as Motivators (Herzberg, 1968).
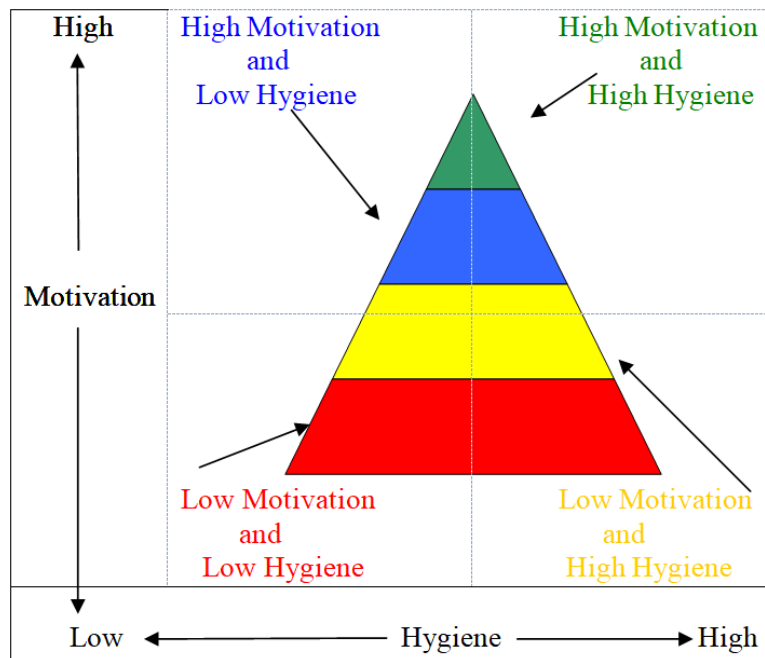

Figure 1: Two Factor Theory Relationship Model

The base premise of the theory is that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction act independently of each other. However, they both play a role in the overall job satisfaction of an employee. For example, Figure 1 represents the relationship between the variables. Hygiene factors are those which when adequate in a job, pacify staff and do not make them dissatisfied. High hygiene and high motivation is the ideal situation where employees are highly motivated and have few complaints. High motivation and low hygiene means that the employees are motivated but they have many complaints about salary and work conditions, thus making it second from the top of the pyramid. Low motivation and high hygiene means that the employees have few complaints but are not highly motivated, making this the third item from the top of the pyramid. Finally, low motivation and low hygiene is the worst situation, employees are not motivated and they have many complaints. Essentially, there are a set of causes to job satisfaction in the work place and a separate set of causes to job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968).

A conceptual framework was constructed based on Herzberg's (1968) Two Factor Theory. In Table 1 below, there is a condensed version of the conceptual framework which outlines the theoretical aspect. The framework was built from the factors that Herzberg identified in his research. As can be seen in Table 1, the factors are grouped into the two major areas: Motivators and Hygiene factors. The expanded version of the table and how the motivators and hygiene factors relate to online job satisfaction can be found in Tables 2 and 3 which are located in appendix A and appendix B, respectively.

Major Grouping	Areas identified by Two Factor Theory {Herzberg, 1993 #149}
Factors Leading to Satisfaction (Motivators)	• Achievement • Recognition • The Work Itself • Responsibility • Advancement
Factors Leading to Dissatisfaction (Hygiene)	• Policy and Administration • Supervision • Salary • Interpersonal Relations • Working Conditions

Table 1: Theoretical Framework

The Study

The site for the research was a small, private university in the southeastern United States, hereafter referred to as South Eastern University (SEU). At this site, there are approximately 39 instructors who taught online. Note that this data was collected prior to the Covid-19 pandemic so it was notable for a faculty member to be teaching predominantly online. Given that the recommended amount of participants to select for a phenomenological study is 10 (Moustakas, 1994), this was a sufficient population from which to gather data.

A demographic survey was sent out to the 39 individuals and once the survey was returned participants were selected for the study based on their demographic information. The objective was to try to find ten participants out the 39 online instructors that taught at SEU who were willing to participate in the study. The selection process aimed to target individuals who were new to the online learning environment, had prior teaching experience in a face-to-face setting, had a variety of comfort levels with technology and were from several different age brackets. The participants returned the consent form and the informational questionnaire to the researcher and in total, ten participants agreed to participate in this study.

Five of the 10 participants reported having a comfort level of proficient with technology and five of the participants noted that their comfort level with technology was advanced. Based on this self-reporting, all of the instructors spent notable time communicating with their students. While communicating with their students all ten participants used the online classroom chat to discuss class issues and address questions. Nine of the 10 participants also use the class discussion board and email within the LMS to communicate with their students. Finally, five of the 10 participants also use external email clients to communicate with their students.

Findings

In this section, the three research questions in this study will be discussed in light of the data gathered. To recap, the three research questions that used in this study were as follows: 1) What affects an instructor's job satisfaction in online teaching? 2) What comparisons do instructors make

between online and face-to-face teaching? 3) What do instructors perceive as the challenges involved in teaching online? As expected, there was some overlap among the findings within these three primary questions. The context of each question was intended to have a large scope that encompassed large conceptual areas.

R1: What affects an instructor's job satisfaction in online teaching?

In creating this question, the intent was to inquire in order to answer the question of "satisfaction" as an ideal in the workplace. This idealized concept is fraught with many detractors though. This question was seeking to identify what the detractors were from the perspective of the instructor in an online environment.

There are many variables that affect the job satisfaction of the participants of this study. Barriers in communication in the online learning environment, the difficulty of forming meaningful relationships with students and other faculty, the administration limited growth and the inability to spot and help students who are having issues in a course are only some of the issues that affect the participants job satisfaction at SEU.

Nine of the ten participants stated that the lack of face-to-face interaction with their students was the number one hindrance of their positions at SEU. IS 3 noted that the inability to interact with her students face-to-face makes it more difficult to "see" students responses to information. When asked if the lack of face-to-face interaction affected her job as an online instructor in any way she stated:

> "It makes it more difficult in some ways, because I can't get the visual cues. However, being able to e-mail them at any time is a positive. Of course I could have done that with the other students as well. But because the main mode of communication is online it doesn't matter when or where I am online."

MGMT 1 noted that the lack of face-to-face interaction makes teaching more difficult because of the inability to see students' reactions to information. He stated:

> "You know, I think on the online environment you do lose something. I miss that physical interaction that physical presence that face-to-face gives. Some people are engaged in the online environment, but when you're in a classroom you can see that they're engaged because their eyes light up … whole body language shifts. They are leaning forward in their seats, they are physically engaged and you can see that they are into it, understanding what's going on. I do think online has a presence that is somewhat guarded."

The lack of face-to-face interaction appears to have an effect on the participants' inability to form meaningful relationships online. Seven of the ten participants noted that the inability to form meaningful relationships also affected their job satisfaction. MGMT 1 noted that the inability to form meaningful relationships is frustrating. He stated that he prides himself on forming relationships with students and that it makes his job more meaningful when he can build these types of relationships. He noted:

> "I am very much a people person, very focused on relationships, and personally engaging folks in activities or conversation. I pride myself on being able to develop a relationship with folks very quickly, so that we can develop a sort of confident competence level that we can engage in far more than just a superficial level. So for me being online is frustrating in that I don't have the opportunity to develop that level of engagement."

Participants noted that because they did not see students face-to-face they were unable to effectively communicate with students to explain certain concepts. Five of the participants believe

that teaching online creates barriers in communication. Participants noted that trying to explain concepts to students in the online setting is often difficult because they could not "see" if their students understood the concepts. IS 3 noted:

> "I also find that it's more difficult sometimes to explain things in the online environment because you have to write out everything. And if students don't understand you don't get that, you don't see the glazed look, you don't get the feedback from knowing if they understand or they don't understand."

Five of the ten participants noted that it is difficult to spot and help students who were having difficulty in their classes due to the lack of face-to-face interaction. They stated that the lack of face-to-face interaction affects the ability to "see" if students understand the information. IS 4 stated:

> "It's different than having a student that is in class and you give them a look or you pull them aside after class. And it's easy to delete an e-mail and it's harder to delete a face-to-face looking in the eye conversation, but I think overall that we are doing well in terms of addressing the needs of the online population."

Four of the ten participants stated that they had issues with the administration at SEU. These participants stated that they were frustrated by the way the administration ran the undergraduate online program and two of the ten participants received conflicting information from the administration. One participant noted that they contacted the administration to ask how many classes she could teach during one term and no one could give her a straight answer. BA 2 noted:

> "I was unsure about teaching, and I don't think they knew right off the bat, but how many classes you can teach per term if you're doing the undergrad versus graduate-level, so that type of just logistical information. Somehow I didn't get all of it so that was some information that I needed. But when I ask questions they are really good about getting back to me. So they are good at communicating, but they don't always know the information to give me."

Four of the ten participants mentioned that they were frustrated by the lack of student readiness with some students in the online learning environment. They noted that there are some students that thrive in the online sector but it is very difficult to deal with students who are not prepared or cut out for online learning. IS 1 noted:

> "I would say it [the hindrance] still goes back to trying to find ways to take a student who probably does not belong in the online environment and trying to find ways to present the information that so that they can understand it."

Two of the ten participants noted that they were displeased with the stability of the technology platform. They noted that it is difficult to teach students when you don't have a stable system in place. One participant, IS 4, stated that she thinks the program has a lot of ancillary support but the medium has to be stable in order for the students to be successful. BA 1 stated:

> "The technology platform [has been the biggest challenge]. When they brought the first LMS online, Blackboard it was in a beta version and when we went live with it, it took about four semesters to shake it out. Then, they did it again with the new LMS Angel, with what I consider the beta version, even maybe an alpha version. I find it difficult to adapt to platforms that are not really stable."

Two participants noted that they have encountered some negative students in the online environment, many more negative students than in the face-to-face teaching environment. They both noted that students are much more likely to be negative about issues right away in the online learning environment at SEU. BA 2 noted:

> "The students are much more prone to expressing their opinion online and a lot quicker to criticize online maybe because you don't have the face-to-face interaction. I know in a regular classroom, at least on the surface, everything was friendly and nice and happy, whereas students feel freer to express themselves in a negative manner online."

In analyzing all of the data collected, the most reported issue from nine of the ten participants was the issue they had with the lack of face-to-face interaction with their students. Many of these participants noted that it was more difficult for them to explain issues to students because they did not have the face-to-face interaction. Because all ten of the participants have taught in the online learning environment this may have been an indicator as to why the participants had issues with the online communication with students at SEU. These instructors were used to communicating with students face-to-face to explain issues or questions in more detail in a standard classroom setting. The number one complaint among participants in this study was that they were unable to see students' responses when they were explaining issues, concepts or answering questions. Several participants reported that it was difficult because they could not see the non-verbal cues that were associated with communication and understanding.

The lack of face-to-face interaction appeared to be connected to the barriers of communication created by the online learning environment at SEU. Instructors noted that it was very difficult to get inactive students to respond to their emails and their calls. They also noted that students did not ever show up for office hours to ask questions or talk about the course content. The lack of attended office hours and class chat sessions were also concerns that were reported by other online instructors (Preziosi and Gooden, 2003). The participants in this study noted that most of the communication with students was via discussion boards and an occasional email asking a question about course issues.

Communication with students in the online environment was directly linked to the inability to form meaningful relationships. In face-to-face settings instructors have more of an opportunity to form relationships with their students. Students tend to only communicate with instructors if they need to know information directly related to the course and not share personal information that is often shared in face-to-face settings between students and instructors. The lack of communication from students thus made it more difficult for instructors to spot students who were having trouble in class. Participants noted that it was easier to see and help troubled students in the face-to-face setting based on non-verbal cues and the assignments that they turn in personally.

Another area that participants noted was working with students who are not ready for the online learning environment. Although there is very limited research investigating the job satisfaction of online instructors, the number one stressor for the instructors in one study was reported as working with ill prepared students (McLean, 2006). These instructors noted that remediation for these ill prepared students should have been done before they entered into the online learning environment.

R2: What comparisons do educators make between online and face-to-face teaching?

This research question seeks to understand what comparisons online educators made between online and face-to-face teaching. When the participants were asked about the differences of teaching online versus teaching face-to-face, they reported higher levels of autonomy, lower student readiness, lower student involvement, and difficultly in establishing meaningful relationships with students. In the face-to-face setting, participants indicated higher amounts of autonomy with their course content, higher levels of student readiness, a larger amount of student involvement in the classroom, and a greater ease in forming meaningful relationships.

Several of the participants noted that they had encountered students who were not prepared for the online learning environment, stating that students have to be self-motivated and good with time management. IS 4 noted:

> "And there seems to be more of an awareness of the time management for the students in a face-to-face class, because a student who is aware of how much time they have to budget to be in class for homework to get to class and that seems to elude some of the online students."

In addition to lower amounts of student interaction, participants also mentioned the difficulty in forming meaningful relationships with students online. Participants stated that it is much easier to form relationships with students when you are in a face-to-face setting. Noting that students often ask questions or stay after class or come to office hours to discuss issues related to class and other aspects of their life. Many participants noted that students seem more apt to share information in a face-to-face setting.

In comparing the two pedagogical approaches, one area examined was what the online instructors perceived as the advantages and disadvantages in teaching online versus teaching face-to-face. The advantages that the participants reported were flexible schedule, students were more focused in the online environment and they liked the dress code. Three of the participants mentioned that they have experienced students with more focus in the online sector versus face-to-face. One participant mentioned that the students were more focused because they more mature, working professionals as opposed to the face-to-face students. MGMT 2 noted:

> "I was an online student and man I like this form of education myself. And I just think that this is a good way to teach people, especially people who are more mature and far more disciplined and can deal with it and so I don't mind teaching it because I got my degree this way."

The list of disadvantages from the participants greatly outweighed the advantages of teaching online. Participants reported students were less prepared, thought online learning was an easy "A" and had issues with time management versus students in the face-to-face environment. Participants also noted that the lack of face-to-face interaction, the inability to form meaningful relationships, spending more time on online classes, the difficulty of explaining concepts online, and the lack of autonomy with class content were disadvantages to teaching online.

A final perspective involved examining what the participants perceived as the struggles involved in teaching online versus teaching face-to-face. Participants noted that it was more difficult to communicate and form relationships with students, ensure students' success, 'read' students, and pinpoint their grasp of the subject matter versus the face-to-face environment.

When the participants were asked to compare teaching online versus teaching face-to-face the only area that was reported as a high level was flexibility. Although all of the participants in the study reported lower amounts of class content autonomy, student readiness, student involvement, the ability to form relationships and spending more time on online preparation and teaching they all intended to continue to teach in the online setting. Therefore, these findings support the idea that the flexibility of online teaching is the number one, highest aspect of job satisfaction for the online sector.

The participants in this study noted lower autonomy, lower student readiness, lower student involvement, and difficultly in establishing meaningful relationships with students when they were asked about the differences of teaching online versus teaching face-to-face. They also stated that there are more communication barriers; it is more difficult to ensure student success, pinpoint students' grasp of the course material, and to read students' reactions to material. These responses address the secondary research question: what challenges do instructors face online? Though these

findings are not statistically generalizable, statistical types of generalizability that inform quantitative research are not applicable to judge the value of qualitative research or claim that it lacks generalizability (Lee and Baskerville, 2003). The transferability of these findings would provide value and insight for institutions shifting towards greater amounts of online course delivery.

Discussion

In this section, we will discuss how our findings relate to existing studies by exploring how the findings contribute to the differentiation, validation, or falsifications of other findings/studies. Given the inductive methodological approach, we also intend to discuss how our findings might lead to theory development.

As stated in the introduction, there are not many studies that analyze satisfaction from the context of the online instructor. Studies have echoed the findings in this paper that found flexibility is a powerful component in job satisfaction for instructors both in the face-to-face setting as well online (Larkin, 2015; Sharma & Jyoti, 2010). Others have found a correlation between satisfaction and making even remote faculty feel a part of the greater whole of this institution thorough regular communication and support (McClean, 2006). With the pandemic continuing to upend higher education, recent studies have highlighted the importance of job satisfaction as a negative predictor of job burnout (Chen, et al., 2020). As constantly mutated variants of COVID-19 continue to cause surges, the reality of burnout is a genuine threat for leaders in higher education to consider.

The findings are indeed a surprising critique of Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory. Based on theory alone, the instructors should at least consider moving to other roles or different employment all together. In every case though, the instructors stated that they had full intention of remaining in the online delivery mode. Another study found an analogous critique of Herzberg's theory whereby instructors pay becomes increasingly influential on job satisfaction and motivation (Evans & Olumide-Aluko, 2010). The context of this study was under the looming pervasive threat of job insecurity and redundancy, exacerbated by rising living costs. None-the-less, the theory was insufficient to describe job satisfaction in that context.

The context of this study, online teaching, is also an interesting examination of the applicability of the Motivator-Hygiene theory. Instead of pay being an overriding factor, flexibility was the single issue that overshadowed the overwhelming evidence of dissatisfaction. Given this, theorists should consider trigger factors that bypass the mechanisms described by Herzberg in future theory development. Would flexibility always overcome significant motivation and hygiene factors in order to encourage employee retention? Would this trigger factor apply in software development, management, accounting, or other remote capable jobs? Are there other trigger factors within the context of online teaching that are outside the scope of Herzberg's theory? Significant work remains to better understand the theory behind job satisfaction and online course delivery.

Conclusion

The intent of this study was to examine the perceived job satisfaction of instructors teaching in an online environment. Because the study was focusing on a single phenomenon of sociological origin, job satisfaction, a phenomenological research study was utilized. The phenomenological research focused on the ability to sketch an image for the reader about the real life experiences of the participants while examining one phenomenon: job satisfaction.

During the analysis of the data, many themes emerged such as participant's inability to forge meaningful relationships with their students and the lack of face-to-face interaction that hampered the ability to effectively communicate with students. However, one predominant factor of online teaching was the flexible scheduling. All ten of the participants noted that they intended to continue teaching online for SEU. This was despite overwhelming evidence, in the context of Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, that they were deeply unsatisfied with their job.

This contradiction is the most intriguing finding of this study. The participants noted that despite all of the issues in the online learning sector pertaining to motivators and hygiene factors at SEU, they intended to teach at SEU indefinitely. This is despite the fact that the majority of data points indicated low levels of satisfaction (e.g. low levels of motivation and hygiene). With the one predominant positive finding revolving around flexibility, this points toward this one data point as an overriding factor to the theory at least in the short run. Where these participants might be in terms of job satisfaction two to three years from now is a question other research could pursue. It is hypothesized that the observed high burnout rate (Mheidly, et al., 2020) of online instructors is a possible long-term result of this disconnect.

The limitations of this study primarily involve questions of generalizability based on the methodological approach as well as the limited demographics of the participants. As stated earlier in the paper, statistical generalizability was not the goal of this paper. On the other hand, analytical generalization (Yin, 2003) facilitates this research being utilized in other research. Specifically, the theoretical framework and the interview protocol that were created for the research study can be analytically generalized. Other researchers in the field will be able to use these items to conduct other studies on job satisfaction.

Future research could pursue the contradictory findings discussed above. A longitudinal study of the online instructors could be conducted to see if the hypothesis of the incongruence between the theory and the findings will eventually show some results to the expectations of the theory. Additionally, future research could investigate this from a design science approach and determine the best approach leaders could take to ensure their online instructors are not plagued with the issues that lead to dissatisfaction.

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Appendix A

Major Grouping	Areas identified by Two Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1968)	Issues Specific to Online Faculty
	Achievement	How does teaching online lead to feelings of achievement? • Student success? • Instructor Growth? • Transformational incidents of learning
	Recognition	Do instructors who teach online feel they are properly recognized? • Do the chairs or admins give regular feedback and encouragement? • Are there any organization-wide instances of recognition (professor of the year, etc)? • Do the students ever show recognition for the instructor's efforts?
Factors Leading to Satisfaction (Motivators)	The Work Itself	How would an instructor judge the actual act of teaching online? • Compared to jobs where face-to-face interaction is conducted, how does the online environment compare? • How would an instructor describe online teaching?
	Responsibility	Are there any responsibilities that online instructor's feel are critical to their job? • How would the instructor describe the degree of responsibility they have to the students in their class(es)? • How would the instructor describe the degree of responsibility they have to the school in which they teach? • Does the instructor feel they have a responsibility to the content of the course or to the state of the art in the field?
	Advancement	Do the online instructors feel there are any opportunities for advancement within the organization?

Table 2: Factors Leading to Satisfaction and their Application to Online Teaching

Appendix B

Major Grouping	Areas identified by Two Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1968)	Issues Specific to Online Faculty
Factors Leading to Dissatisfaction (Hygiene)	Policy and Administration	How would the instructor describe the policies (and overhead administration) that dictate their job? • Do the policies help or hinder their work as a teacher in higher education? • Do the administrative personnel make the instructors' job smoother or more difficult?
	Supervision	How does the supervisory role have an impact on online instructors' experiences? • Do the instructors feel that their supervisors are fair in their judgment, prompt in their communication, and easy to get along with? • Do the instructors know the organizational structure and who they report to?
	Salary	Do the online instructors feel that their salary is sufficient as a minimum level?
	Interpersonal Relations	Given the remote nature of online teaching, how do interpersonal relations manifest? • Do online instructors feel that the professional relationships they form are as strong as the relationships they form in face-to-face situations?
	Working Conditions	Considering the fact that online instructors tend to teach from the locale of their choice, are there working conditions related themes that cut across all online instructors? • Does the uncertain nature of the adjunct role impact the perception of working conditions? • Do the instructors feel comforted by choosing where and when they work?

Table 3: Factors Leading to Dissatisfaction and their Application to Online Teaching