Secondary Physical Education Teachers’ Job Satisfaction in Japan, South Korea, and the United States
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ABSTRACT
Physical education (PE) teachers have high attrition rates worldwide, yet little cross-cultural research exists exploring the factors contributing to their job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. The purpose of this study was to qualitatively assess cross-cultural factors contributing to job satisfaction/dissatisfaction among secondary school PE teachers in Japan, South Korea, and the United States (U.S.). Nine secondary school PE teachers, three in each country, were observed during a full day of teaching in their respective schools, while researchers compiled field notes of their observations. After each class period, participants indicated their satisfaction on an 11-point visual analog scale. Afterwards, participants completed a semi-structured interview, in their native language, consisting of 16 core questions and additional questions relevant to the observed day. Four primary themes surrounding job satisfaction emerged: 1) student relations, 2) workload, 3) teaching, and 4) administration relations. The main theme of job satisfaction was student relations and job dissatisfaction was workload in all three countries. The U.S. teachers reported more satisfaction than dissatisfaction in their teaching, whereas the opposite relationship was observed among South Korean and Japanese teachers. Results of our study highlight the importance of understanding cultural values that constitute job satisfaction/dissatisfaction in finding ways to reduce attrition of PE teachers.

INTRODUCTION
Using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (Teacher Follow-up Survey (SASS/TFPS), Ingersoll and Smith (2003) discussed rates of attrition (switching positions within the same career or leaving the career altogether) within the first several years of teaching and found that between 25-50% of all beginning teachers leave the teaching profession after just five years, citing poor compensation, student misbehavior, and lack of administrative support as primary attrition factors. Per the Wisconsin Budget Project report (2017), school districts in Wisconsin currently face extreme teacher shortages, with 46% of openings (1,153 job openings) including physical education teachers.

Brief & Roberson (1989) defined job satisfaction as an attitude based on the positive and negative disposition toward an employee’s work. According to Carson, Hemphill, Richards, & Temple (2016), peer support greatly influenced job satisfaction, yet physical education teachers experience greater isolation from the other teachers in the school. Also, while PE teachers preferred less administrative oversight, Carson et al. (2016) also noted that this decreased oversight reduced their involvement in school decisions, which PE teachers also desired. Per Skalková (2012), the majority of teachers experience substantial disruptive behavior from students, which directly correlates with work-related stress and emotional exhaustion. Day, Simmons, Stohl, Kingon, and Gu (2007) contended that understanding how daily experiences in schools can help relate to teachers’ feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and can also help physical education teachers remain engaged and effective in their work with children.

While job satisfaction among teachers has been well researched, few studies have specifically examined physical educators’ (PE) satisfaction, and even fewer have examined this cross-culturally. The goal of this study, therefore, was to obtain a greater cross-cultural understanding of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors among PE teachers.

METHODS
PARTICIPANTS
Using a purposive sampling (Patton, 2015), nine secondary physical educators (<30-80 years-old) in Wisconsin, Japan, and South Korea were recruited. These teachers varied in years of teaching experience (3-25 years), and taught PE in either middle or high school.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS
• The main theme of job satisfaction was student relations and job dissatisfaction was workload in all three countries.
• Colorful and value differences in three countries may have influenced participants’ perceptions on their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
• The implications of this study for administrators would be to continually evaluate teachers’ needs for healthy workplace, provide support for their professional development, and advocate for employee wellness to decrease attrition rates and minimize burnout.

RESULTS
"Most of my interactions are very positive with the kids. I try to get a feel for what their home life is like and what their challenges are so I can help them and they have a story to tell every day, and just trying to listen to that the best we can." (Mike, US)

"I have 5 classes on Tuesday and I need to know in advance. In some cases I have 6 hours of classes, and on a special occasion there can be 8 hours of classes." (Chico, S. Korea)

"The majority of teachers at this school are in charge of supervising at least one club activity...I always work after I get back home. Some of the teachers have been questioning the balance between their workload and salary." (Yutaka, Japan)

"I have 5 classes on Thursday and I need to know in advance. In some cases I have 6 hours of classes, and on a special occasion there can be 8 hours of classes." (Chico, S. Korea)

"There are many students who cannot concentrate and are distracted. It is hard psychologically for me to make them concentrate in the class. I always feel a big burden before the classes." (Sam, S. Korea)

"We have a couple of students in here that the interaction is very difficult with, and it’s more about managing behaviors than it is about teaching the classes...we give out a lot of Ds - disciplinary referrals - in this class." (Taylor, US)

"I think the job, teachers' self-identity changes something...I have a lot of difficulties in the process such as feeling disappointed when I cannot do things the way I want to." (Yuki, S. Korea)

"I believe my job, as a PE teacher, shapes students’ social, collaborative skills, group norms or mannerisms as a people with group actions." (Bailey, Japan)

"There is a national level curriculum, then it comes to Education Office." (Aron, Japan)

"It is hard to attend the training by Education Office." (Chico, S. Korea)

"The implications of this study for administrators would be to continually evaluate teachers’ needs for healthy workplace, provide support for their professional development, and advocate for employee wellness to decrease attrition rates and minimize burnout.

STUDY PROCEDURE & ANALYSIS

OBSERVATION (1-full day)
Field Notes  Job Satisfaction Graph

Interview
Semi-structured questions

Data analysis

Transcription
Thematic coding

"I have 5 classes on Tuesday and I need to know in advance. In some cases I have 6 hours of classes, and on a special occasion there can be 8 hours of classes." (Chico, S. Korea)

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