

## **Career Choice Influences and Job Satisfaction for Early Career Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers**

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*Family and consumer sciences (FCS) education has continued to experience teacher shortages. Maintaining the current teaching force will help alleviate the shortages by providing longevity among practicing teachers. The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons why early career FCS teachers choose to teach, why they chose FCS as their teaching discipline, and their current job satisfaction with their chosen career. An online survey was conducted in a southern state with 26 early career FCS teachers. Implications for those who recruit and prepare FCS teachers are shared.*

Research has suggested that the number of colleges and universities offering career and technical education teacher training programs declined by about 10 % between 1991 and 2001 (Bruening, Scanlon, Hodes, Dhital, Shao & Liu, 2001). Yet during the same time frame, the number of students in high school career and technical education courses grew by 17.9% (Levesque, 2004). In 1990, over 50% of all technology teachers were over the age of 50 (Dugger, French, Peckham & Starkweather, 1991; cited in Gray & Daugherty, 2004). By 2000, one out of 15 schools did not fill their career and technical education vacancies (Gordon, 2008). Miller (2011) documented 14 states that listed family and consumer sciences specifically as a teacher shortage area for 2011-2012.

The National Center for Education Statistics (as cited by the National Education Association, undated) estimated that “6% of the nations’ teaching force leaves the profession yearly, and more than 7% change schools. Additionally, 20% of all new-hires leave teaching within 3 years, and in urban districts, close to 50% of all newcomers leave the profession during their first five years of teaching” (McCaslin & Parks, 2002, p. 88). According to research by Ingersoll (2001), there are many reasons for the teacher shortage in the United States. These often stemmed more from personal reasons than retirement or staffing actions taken by a school district. Many early career professionals left the profession of teaching due to pregnancy, child rearing, health problems and family moves. Other leading factors influencing teacher shortages include job dissatisfaction or the desire to attain other professional goals (Ingersoll, 2001).

There is documented research asking FCS teachers why they are teachers. The same three altruistic reasons were found in two studies of FCS teachers (Mimbs, Stewart, Heath-Camp, 1998; Mimbs, 2002): enjoying working with young people, helping people, and being influenced by their own teacher’s example. As for choosing FCS as their teaching discipline, these same two studies found that interest in the subject matter of family and consumer sciences, and family values were strong influences (Mimbs, et al., 1998; Mimbs, 2002).

Job satisfaction is greatly affected by career choice (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Naturally, we would assume that people would be more satisfied with jobs they chose, rather than ones they fell into, or were forced to take because of a lack of other options. According to Sarason (1993) teachers truly do want to make a difference in the lives of children. Individuals

choose to become teachers because they care about the overall development and well-being of students. Thus, this is the driving force for many teachers because they want to touch student lives so that the students can become prosperous adults. Most FCS teachers enter the field because they want to make a difference in the lives of young people

The first few years of teaching are extremely difficult ones, regardless of the assignment. New teachers typically work in the least desirable schools, with the least desirable students, in the least desirable rooms, and in the least desirable teaching assignments. Seniority usually dictates that the more experienced teachers get the best positions and teaching conditions. Teaching is a career choice that requires significant educational preparation, so it should not be entered into lightly. Keller- Ritter (2004) found in a study of FCS teachers with graduate degrees, that their job satisfaction was a mean of 3.97 on a scale of 1-5 and was predominately within intrinsic scales related to variety in their job, using their unique skills, and helping others. To maintain teachers in the profession, it is imperative that FCS teachers are satisfied with their current teaching positions.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine why early career FCS teachers in Kentucky chose teaching as a career, why they chose FCS as their teaching discipline, and their level of job satisfaction with this career choice. The following research objectives guided the study.

1. What values influenced early career FCS teachers decision to become teachers and to choose FCS as their teaching discipline?
2. What other factors influenced career choice for early career FCS teachers?
3. How satisfied are early career FCS teachers with their career choice?
4. How do teaching situational work factors influence job satisfaction?

### **Methodology**

#### **Subjects**

The subjects for this study were certified FCS teachers who were listed as currently teaching in one southern state and had taught less than six years. The names and e-mail addresses of these persons were obtained from the state certification files at the Department of Education in the state. Seventy-four teachers met the early career qualifications for this study. Permission was granted by the FCS Program Consultant in the state to contact subjects by sending them an email invitation to take part in this study.

#### **Survey Procedures**

The current study employed a mixed method approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The questionnaire contained four sections: personal and work demographic characteristics (such as age, gender, teaching preparations, scheduling, etc.) Likert scales on values and career choice and job satisfaction factors, and open-ended questions that asked subjects to elaborate on their reasons for job satisfaction and job retention. A panel of experts, comprised of department faculty, was used to establish face and content validity. The instrument was deemed reliable based on previous published use of the value and career choice scales (Mimbs, Stewart, & Heath-Camp, 1998; Mimbs, 2000; Mimbs 2002). The directions for respondents on some of the questions from Mimbs et al. 1998 instrument that were used in this study have been modified for ease of use based on data collection experiences regarding the published studies (Mimbs,

personal communication, April 23, 2009). Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from the university where this study was conducted.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The program Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) was used to collect the data in the fall of 2008. A total of 74 contacts were made with early career FCS teachers and after three email reminders over a period of several months, a total of 31 surveys were received (41.9%). Five surveys were incomplete and therefore were not used. As a result, a total of 26 (35%) surveys were used in the current study. The data was analyzed quantitatively using frequencies and percentages, mean and standard deviations, and cross tabulations. The open-ended responses were reviewed by multiple readers and key findings were shared to add context to the quantitative analysis.

## Findings and Discussion

### Demographics

There were a total of 26 respondents, all females between the ages of 23 to 59 years of age (Table 1). The majority (71%) were 30 or younger ( $n = 18$ ). Of the 26 participants, 57.7% ( $n = 15$ ) were currently married, 38.5% ( $n = 10$ ) were single, and one was widowed. None were separated or divorced. There were seventeen of these teachers (65%) who had children living at home, eight of which had children under the age of six.

Table 1  
*Age of respondents (n = 26)*

| Age   | <i>F</i> | %   |
|-------|----------|-----|
| 20-25 | 6        | 23  |
| 26-30 | 12       | 46  |
| 31-35 | 3        | 12  |
| 36-40 | 3        | 12  |
| 41+   | 2        | 7   |
| Total | 26       | 100 |

The largest percentage of respondents worked in a town or city with a population of 10,000-50,000 (38.5%). However, more of the respondents lived in a central city of over 50,000 people (28%) than those who actually worked in those larger cities (19.2%). This indicated that several of the respondents commute from one area to another for their employment. When asked when they initially decided to pursue teacher certification in FCS, 26.9% said they made their decision when they were still in high school. A total of 46.2% made this decision when they were undergraduate college students. Specifically, 30.8% decided during their freshmen and sophomore years and 15.4% during their junior and senior years of college. The data shows that the remaining 26.9% decided after they completed their bachelor's degree or after they worked in another occupation.

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of program through which they completed their teacher certification. The majority of the participants (69.2%) received their certification in a traditional program with a Bachelor's degree, while 23.1% received theirs as part of a Master's

degree, and 7.7 % received certification from either a Post-Bachelors program or a five year program with credits towards a Master's degree. The teachers also indicated the number of years they had been teaching FCS. This ranged from one to six years. The majority of the teachers had been teaching three to four years. One of the teachers has actually been teaching for thirty-one years in math and now had been teaching FCS for five years.

### **Influencing Factors and Values on Selecting Teaching as a Career**

Participants were given a list of several factors and asked to determine the level of influence of the factors on their current career choice, using a five- point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, and strongly agree. All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they *like helping people* ( $m = 4.69$ ), and that they *like working with young people* ( $m = 4.62$ ). These were the top influences on their decision to choose teaching as a career. There was also a high level of agreement with the statements, *the schedule is attractive* ( $m = 4.23$ ), *the example of my own teacher inspired me* ( $m = 4.15$ ), and *teachers can bring about social change* ( $m = 4.12$ ). The security of teaching as a job and teaching as a calling also were a fairly strong influence. Another factor that influenced the career choice of these early career teachers was that most of them felt that teaching was their life calling. Of the 26 respondents, 9 or 34.6% of them agreed with this statement and 8 or 30.8% strongly agreed ( $m = 3.77$ ) (Table 3).

Table 2

*Level of influence of factors on selecting teaching as a career (n = 26)*

| Factors                                   | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|------|--------------------|
| I like helping people                     | 4.69 | 0.471              |
| I like working with young people          | 4.62 | 0.496              |
| The schedule is attractive                | 4.23 | 0.815              |
| The example of my own teacher inspired me | 4.15 | 1.008              |
| Teachers can bring about social change    | 4.12 | 0.864              |
| Teaching is a relatively secure job       | 3.88 | 1.033              |
| I feel that teaching is my life calling   | 3.77 | 1.142              |
| Family members were teachers              | 2.27 | 1.511              |
| Teaching is a job to fall back on         | 2.19 | 0.981              |
| My fellowship/scholarship required it     | 1.62 | 0.804              |
| I need a major and this way was available | 1.73 | 1.313              |

The respondents were given the following list of values and asked to select the level of influence that these values had on their decision to choose teaching as a career: *creativity, professional satisfaction, religion/spiritual/fulfillment, social justice/equality, friendship, working for peace/reconciliation, family, helping other people, pleasure/new experience, recognition from others and material comfort* (See Table 4). Based upon a five-point Likert scale the highest mean score was for the value *helping other people* ( $m = 4.69$ ) with *family* ( $m = 4.5$ ) close behind. According to this research, the value that had the least impact on their decision to choose teaching as a career was *recognition from others* ( $m = 2.69$ ). According to a study of practicing FCS teachers, Mimbs (2002) found that the most often chosen influences for their career choice from a given list of factors were “*I like working with young people* (60%), *I like helping people* (52%), and *the example of my own teacher inspired me* (43%)” (p. 51). Although several years have passed since Mimbs’ 2002 study, according to these early career FCS teachers, they choose teaching based upon similar beliefs and ideals. The only difference was the practicing teachers reported in Mimbs’ 2002 study were older and had more education than those in this current study. Data from this small sample of early career FCS teachers is similar to results from the Mimbs, et al. (1998) study of pre-service FCS teachers with regard to predominant influences *helping other people* and *family* as two values that influenced their decision to choose teaching as a career and least often chosen influence as *recognition from others* and *material comfort* (Table 3).

Table 3  
*Influence of values on selecting teaching as a career (n = 26)*

| Values                            | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Helping other people              | 4.69 | 0.471              |
| Family                            | 4.50 | 0.510              |
| Pleasure, new experiences         | 4.35 | 0.485              |
| Religion, spiritual, fulfillment  | 4.23 | 0.815              |
| Social justice, equality          | 3.85 | 0.834              |
| Creativity                        | 3.77 | 1.070              |
| Working for peace, reconciliation | 3.62 | 1.023              |
| Friendship                        | 3.31 | 1.123              |
| Material comfort                  | 3.00 | 1.095              |
| Recognition from others           | 2.69 | 1.158              |

### **Career Choice Influences for Selecting FCS as Teaching Discipline**

In addition to factors that influenced the choice of teaching as a career, respondents were also asked what factors influenced their choice of FCS as a discipline. There was a very high agreement with *Interest in the FCS subject matter* ( $m = 4.73$ ), followed closely by *I want to help families* ( $m = 4.69$ ). *My college instructors influenced me* ( $m = 3.46$ ) and *My secondary FCS teacher(s) influenced me* ( $m = 3.42$ ) were additional moderately strong influences for choosing the FCS discipline. The data demonstrated that 10 of the 26 participants strongly agreed and six agreed that their *secondary FCS teacher influenced their decisions* to be FCS teachers for a total

of 61.5%. There was also a modest influence of *Participation in FCCLA* (the Family Career and Community Leaders of America student organization) ( $m = 2.96$ ). However, it was interesting to note that there was low agreement with the statement, *My high school counselor influenced me* ( $m = 1.62$ ) (Table 4).

Table 4  
*Level of influence on selecting FCS as teaching discipline (n = 26)*

| Factors   | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|------|--------------------|
| I am interested in FCS subject matter                         | 4.73 | 0.452              |
| I want to help families                                       | 4.62 | 0.496              |
| My college instructors influenced me                          | 3.46 | 1.363              |
| My secondary FCS teacher(s) influenced me                     | 3.42 | 1.629              |
| My experience in FCCLA influenced me                          | 2.96 | 1.637              |
| Participation in FCS professional organizations influenced me | 2.46 | 1.392              |
| Members of my family influenced me                            | 2.46 | 1.240              |
| My friends influenced me                                      | 2.12 | 1.143              |
| I was already in FCS major and decided to be a teacher        | 2.08 | 1.354              |
| My high school counselor influenced me                        | 1.62 | 0.898              |
| A family member is/was an FCS teacher                         | 1.31 | 0.679              |

When asked the question: “When you decided to be a teacher, was FCS your first choice of a field of study,” 84.6% said that FCS was their first choice, while 15.4% wanted to teach another field of study before settling with FCS. Four of the respondents indicated that the following areas were their first choice for a field of study: early childhood education, dietetics, elementary education and psychology. The respondents were also asked a few open ended questions. One question was, *Are there any reasons why you would choose to not teach FCS, if so why?* The following statements were given: “Yes, when I have children, I may stay home with them, but then go back.” Another wrote the following:

I spend too much of my life outside of school preparing for each day. All FCS teachers need aides and paid extended days during the year to complete all of their duties. I taught math for many years and I spend much more time outside of school working as an FCS teacher than I ever did as a math teacher. More FCS teachers are needed in schools. We end up being a dumping ground for students who do not want to be in our classes and those who need this class are not able to enroll. We have too many students that need and want the classes we offer.

And another wrote:

Yes. Because I feel CTE teachers are usually overlooked in their profession. Also, I feel the demands of teaching several classes and being an FCCLA advisor takes me away from family and friends which is supposed to be the focus of the program as a whole. Seems a little ironic in a way. I will not work my life away for a program that is supposed to focus on life, family and making a difference.

It appears that most respondents selected FCS as their first choice of a teaching field and that their interest in FCS subject matter had a strong influence on their career choice, but some indicated that the extra duties associated with teaching FCS and balancing teaching with their own family roles is a challenge.

Respondents were asked: “*Did your secondary FCS teacher influence your decision to major in FCS, if yes, how so?*” One wrote:

Yes. She was a major influence on my choosing of FCS education. She enjoyed her job to the fullest and really encourage her students to be involved. She was an outstanding teacher and was highly respected by her peers and students.

Another respondent wrote,

Absolutely. They both told me that they knew I’d be great at it and they were both such strong role models and influences in my life that I knew I would love to have the same profession as them. It was an opportunity to teach something I enjoyed as well as good moral character and strong family values, which I hold very dear to my heart.

Several others responded in the affirmative, with the following statements. “Yes, she called and asked me to take her job so she could retire.” “Yes- great role model, opened so many doors for me- and I want to open doors for future students just like she did.” “Yes- was a role model- took interest in her students, always planned something creative in her classroom, and encouraged participation in FCCLA.” Interestingly, one teacher also responded with: “We did not have FCS courses at my high school. I had never heard of it before my junior year of college.” Another teacher who made her decision while in college wrote “Once I started looking for a new major in college, I remembered how much fun and how much I learned in those classes [in high school].” Two respondents indicated that their FCS teachers did not influence their decision to major in FCS education and two were unsure. In addition to asking respondents what influenced them to choose to be FCS teachers, it is important to assess their current job satisfaction.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Respondents were asked to rate job satisfaction factors from a given list (See Table 5). These were presented on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagrees, disagree, unsure, agree, and strongly agree. There was a high agreement with the job satisfaction factor, *My job is interesting enough to keep me from getting bored* ( $m = 4.35$ ) and also with, *I find real*

enjoyment in my work ( $m = 4.08$ ). Other factors showing satisfaction were *I consider my job pleasant* and *I feel satisfied with my job*, both with mean scores of 3.85, followed closely by *I like my job better than the average worker does* ( $m = 3.65$ ) (Table 5).

Table 5  
*Job Satisfaction (n = 26)*

| Job Satisfaction Factors                                   | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|------|--------------------|
| My job is interesting enough to keep me from getting bored | 4.35 | 1.018              |
| I find real enjoyment in my work                           | 4.08 | 1.017              |
| I consider my job pleasant                                 | 3.85 | 1.223              |
| I feel satisfied with my job                               | 3.85 | 1.287              |
| I like my job better than the average worker does          | 3.65 | 1.231              |
| My friends seem more interested in their jobs than I am    | 2.15 | 1.008              |
| I am often bored with my job                               | 1.96 | 0.916              |
| Each day of work seems like it will never end              | 1.85 | 1.008              |
| Most of the time, I have to force myself to go to work     | 1.77 | 1.032              |
| My job is uninteresting                                    | 1.46 | 0.811              |
| I am disappointed I ever took this job                     | 1.46 | 0.948              |
| I definitely dislike my work                               | 1.42 | 0.703              |

Participants were also asked to rate their job satisfaction level in a more general way given the following options: very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied. The data shows that all respondents were either very satisfied, 61.5% ( $n = 16$ ) or somewhat satisfied, 38.5% ( $n = 10$ ) with their job.

### **Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction**

Crosstab analyses were run on responses to several questions and respondents' job satisfaction. A total of 25 respondents answered a question regarding how many different preparations they have in their teaching day. The majority of the respondents have three to four preparations each day, which is considerably high, while five teachers indicated a total of five different preparations. Yet, these early career teachers are satisfied as evidenced in the crosstab analysis presented in table 7. It is interesting to note that the majority of these teachers who were very satisfied were teaching 4 or more preparations (Table 6).



Table 6  
*Number of preparations and job satisfaction (n = 24)*

| Number of Preparations | Level of Job Satisfaction |                    | Total |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------|
|                        | Very Satisfied            | Somewhat Satisfied |       |
| 1                      | 0                         | 0                  | 0     |
| 2                      | 2                         | 0                  | 2     |
| 3                      | 3                         | 2                  | 5     |
| 4                      | 9                         | 3                  | 12    |
| 5                      | 1                         | 4                  | 5     |
| Total                  | 15                        | 9                  | 24    |

*Note.* Not all teachers responded to this question.

The more class preparations that a teacher has the more time will be needed to plan creative activities and lessons that will engage all students for the length of the class. Two aspects that affect the number of preparations each day is the number of teachers within the department and the class schedule format. If a teacher works in a single-teacher department, the need of having multiple preparations is greater in order to meet the needs of the student body. If FCS teachers teach seven periods a day they are more likely to have more preparations than teachers who teach on a block schedule with four periods each day. A crosstab analysis on the number of FCS teachers in the department with respondents job satisfaction indicated that 46.2% or 12 respondents are currently working in single-teacher departments yet they are still satisfied with their teaching positions (Table 7).

Table 7  
*Level of job satisfaction and number of FCS teachers in department (n = 26)*

| Number of FCS teachers in the department | Level of job satisfaction |                    | Total |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|-------|
|  | Very Satisfied            | Somewhat Satisfied |       |
| 1  | 6                         | 6                  | 12    |
| 1.5                                      | 0                         | 1                  | 1     |
| 2  | 8                         | 2                  | 10    |
| 2.5                                      | 0                         | 0                  | 0     |
| 3  | 2                         | 1                  | 3     |
| Total                                    | 16                        | 10                 | 26    |

Further analysis of job satisfaction compared with class schedule showed that 50% of the teachers ( $n = 13$ ) are very satisfied with their job despite their schools' class schedule. Four teachers did not share their class schedule; however, the remaining nine participants were still somewhat satisfied. There are no participants who were unsatisfied with their current job choice, which means that regardless of the workload or sharing of departmental responsibilities, teachers were satisfied with their job (Table 8).

Table 8  
*Class schedule and job satisfaction (n = 22)*

| Class Schedule        | Level of Job Satisfaction |                    | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------|
|                       | Very Satisfied            | Somewhat Satisfied |       |
| Four by Four Block    | 1                         | 0                  | 1     |
| Five periods, 1 Block | 3                         | 0                  | 3     |
| Five periods          | 2                         | 0                  | 2     |
| Six periods           | 1                         | 1                  | 2     |
| Seven periods         | 3                         | 7                  | 10    |
| AB Block              | 0                         | 1                  | 1     |
| Block                 | 3                         | 0                  | 3     |
| Total                 | 13                        | 9                  | 22    |

*Note.* Not all teachers responded to the question regarding class schedule.

Survey participants were asked if they would be interested in teaching other courses that they were not currently teaching. Twenty-three of the teachers replied to this question, and almost half of the respondents would prefer not to teach any more courses. This is perhaps because almost half of the teachers are in one teacher departments, already teaching all of the courses alone. This also indicates that this group of teachers is happy with the courses they were teaching. However, the other half of the respondents indicated they are interested in teaching other courses such as relationships, money skills for math, foods/culinary, fashion and interior design, and child development. One teacher answered the question by saying the following: “Child Development, but only if the guidance counselor listens and adds it to the course guide.” This highlights a common problem within many school districts. Many teachers want to change the course offerings or update correct names of courses and it becomes a struggle to make those changes occur and proliferation of different course titles can affect the identity of FCS (Jenkins, Mimbs, & Kitchel, 2009). The 15 teachers in this current study who would like to teach other courses are still genuinely satisfied with their present jobs. Six of the 15 were very satisfied, and the remaining 11 were somewhat satisfied.

A crosstab analysis of job satisfaction with projection of job longevity revealed that 10 of the 16 respondents who were very satisfied with their jobs plan to stay teaching until retirement. Five of the 10 teachers who were somewhat satisfied also plan to teach until retirement (Table 9).

Table 9

*Level of job satisfaction and projection of job longevity (n =26)*

| Projection of job longevity                                  | Level of job satisfaction |                    | Total |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|-------|
|  | Very satisfied            | Somewhat satisfied |       |
| Until retirement   | 10                        | 5                  | 15    |
| Until I have kids  | 0                         | 1                  | 1     |
| Until I complete my masters or another job becomes available | 1                         | 2                  | 3     |
| Until I become bored/unhappy                                 | 2                         | 0                  | 2     |
| Unsure   | 3                         | 2                  | 5     |
| Total  | 16                        | 10                 | 26    |

Job longevity is not uncommon among FCS teachers. Mimbs (2002) found that 40% of the FCS teachers in that study had more than 20 years of experience. Shann (1998) concluded that when determining likelihood of teacher retention, you need to know if they were satisfied with their job and therefore committed to staying in teaching. It appears that although research shows that teacher retention rates were low among new teachers, (McCaslin & Parks, 2002) and as many as a third of FCS teachers do not even go into teaching (Mimbs, et al., 1998) these FCS teachers were satisfied in their jobs. It is interesting to note that none of the early career teachers in this study were dissatisfied with their career choice. Smith and Gritzmacher (1998) also found satisfied FCS teachers in Ohio. Mimbs (2002) also found high levels of job satisfaction of 94 FCS teachers in Missouri attending a professional summer conference where 90% were satisfied with their jobs; two-thirds of whom were very satisfied.

The responses from the open-ended question, “How long do you plan to teach FCS” ranged from ‘until retirement’ to ‘until I have children’. As the majority of these early career professionals were in their twenties and thirties, many of them have not had children or are still working on their Master’s degree, or plan to change career pathways with their new degrees. Some of them even used responses such as “FOREVER” or “Until I become bored with my job- if I ever become an ill-spirited teacher, I will leave – but right now I am very content.” One FCS teacher wanted to become a principal, while another was pursuing a career in counseling.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

A limitation of this study was the sample size. It is possible, that those early career FCS teachers who did not respond to the survey may not be satisfied with their jobs, may not be planning to stay in the profession for a long time, and may have chosen this career for other reasons than those shared by these respondents. Another limitation was the age of the respondents. As they were early career teachers, and mostly younger in age, life events that can affect job satisfaction and commitment to a career may not have impacted these teachers as they might a group of teachers with more life experience. Smith and Gritzmacher (1998) suggested a need for research to “determine whether teachers who have taught longer enjoy higher levels of job satisfaction” (p. 91). This study could be expanded by posting the survey through the FCS list serve, and/or disseminating a hard copy survey at the summer teacher conference where a larger number of FCS teachers with differing levels of experience are present. Comparing job satisfaction of these early career teachers to mid-career, and near-to-retirement teachers would provide more insight on the long term satisfaction factors of teaching FCS. Additionally, a study

to compare early career FCS teachers across states and regions would be useful. Surveying these teachers again after another five years of teaching experience would be helpful as well to determine if their satisfaction continues over time.

The findings of this study indicate that these early career FCS teachers decision to become teachers was influenced by their interest in helping people, in working with young people, and in family. Recognition from others and material comfort were considerably less of an influence compared to these other more altruistic values and factors. They chose FCS as their teaching discipline because they were interested in the FCS subject matter and they want to help families. College instructor's influence was a little higher than the influence of their secondary FCS teachers. Many of the participants' FCS teachers influenced their decisions to become FCS teachers themselves because they were such good role models and leaders within their schools and communities. One of the participants indicated the following, "Yes- she was a great role model, opened many doors for me- and I want to open doors for future students, just like she did!" FCS teachers and teacher educators should continue their efforts to role model and be a positive influence for students and earnestly encourage them to pursue this career. Teacher educators and others who provide professional development for practicing FCS teachers should inform them of the power their influence has on recruiting future FCS teachers into the profession as evidenced by this study.

For those recruiting within the college environment, targeting students who have an interest in FCS content areas and those who show an interest in wanting to help families may produce positive results. These settings, the FCS secondary classroom and college classrooms where FCS content is taught should be primary targets for strengthening our recruitment efforts as they appear to continue to be an influence for early career FCS teachers as shown here and in the past (Mimbs, Stewart, and Heath-Camp, 1998). Teacher educators should also provide future teachers with preparation for the realities of teaching FCS in multiple teacher departments, with multiple preparations and emphasize that they factors may impact their job satisfaction.

All of these early career FCS teachers are genuinely satisfied with their career choice. The highest mean score ratings were for job satisfaction factors indicating interest and enjoyment in their work. Regardless of situations that could have a negative impact; such as their class schedules, number of preparations, and number of teachers within their departments, these teachers are satisfied with their jobs. This is good news for those who prepare FCS teachers. It is also evident that most of these early career FCS teachers plan to continue teaching for some time which is encouraging in light of the continuing teacher shortages, and loss of teacher education preparation programs to prepare FCS teachers. There is a need for teachers for FCS programs. As noted in the national survey of public schools enrollment in FCS indicated from the 2002-2003 academic year, there were about 5.5 million students taking FCS classes at the secondary level (Werhan & Way, 2006). Building, strengthening, and maintaining family and consumer sciences secondary programs requires satisfied teachers such as these early career teachers.

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