

The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction And Life Satisfaction: Empirical Evidence From Logistics Practitioners In A South African Steel-Making Company

Chengedzai Mafini, Vaal University of Technology, South Africa

ABSTRACT

There has been an explosion of research interests centered upon the job satisfaction-life satisfaction nexus within organizations. Be that as it may, there is a relative paucity of research on the job satisfaction of logistics practitioners in general and limited evidence of studies that specifically address the issue of job satisfaction in the steel-making industry in developing countries. The aim of this study was to investigate the structural relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The study followed a quantitative survey approach in which a three-section questionnaire was administered to 192 purposively selected logistics practitioners in a South African steel-making company. The Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale and the Satisfaction with Life Scale were adapted for this study. Data were analysed through Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation, nonparametric correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics. Five job satisfaction factors, namely, skills utilisation, workplace flexibility, autonomy, teamwork, and remuneration were extracted. The five factors attained high Cronbach Alpha values above the recommended 0.70, which indicates high internal consistencies among the sub-scales. Positive, significant relationships were found between life satisfaction and two factors, namely, skills utilization and remuneration. Weak relationships were found between life satisfaction and three job satisfaction factors, namely, teamwork, workplace flexibility, and autonomy. Mean score rankings showed that among the job satisfaction factors, skills utilisation was more important to logistics practitioners. The study is important in that it provides further verification of the patterns in the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. By examining the structural interplay between job and life satisfaction variables among logistics practitioners, organizations may be better equipped to initiate strategies of meeting the needs of their logistics workforce, thereby facilitating improved organizational performance as measured through the ability to deliver the right product to the right place at the right time, which is the mission of logistics.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction; Life Satisfaction, Logistics Practitioners, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, job satisfaction and life satisfaction have emerged as preeminent issues in the field of organizational behaviour (Eskildsen & Dahlgaard, 2000). This could be attributed to the fact that employees who possess high levels of job satisfaction and life satisfaction tend to be highly motivated and work more efficiently, which improves organizational performance in today's global unpredictable operating environment (Ghiselli, La Lopa, & Bai, 2001). This has compelled many organizations to initiate programs that improve the job satisfaction and life satisfaction of employees (Cummings & Worley, 2005). Steel making companies are not immune to these pressures and are therefore obligated to implement such programs in order to survive.

Zhao, Qu, and Ghiselli (2011) concluded that both work that interferes with family as well as family roles that interfere with work have a negative association with an individual's job satisfaction and life satisfaction. This signifies that individuals who have a positive perception of their jobs will evaluate their quality of life better and are likely to be more satisfied with their life in general. Ghiselli et al. (2001) also opine that low life satisfaction scores have been found to be significantly correlated to high inter-role conflict and low job satisfaction. This paper seeks to establish the inter-connection between job satisfaction and life satisfaction as key dimensions towards the effectiveness of logistics practitioners in a steel-making firm.

JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction has received extensive empirical research attention over the past several decades of organizational research (Matzler & Renzl, 2007). This has culminated in a diversity of perspectives on the topic. Upon defining the variable, Chi and Gursoy (2009) suggest that job satisfaction is the extent to which employees like their work, whereas Koys (2003) defines job satisfaction as the employees' perception and evaluation of the job. Bernhardt, Donthu, and Kennett (2000) define job satisfaction as a personal evaluation of the present conditions of the job as well as outcomes that arise as a result of having a job. It may also be perceived as a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering (Wangenheim, Evanschitzky, & Wunderlich, 2007).

Other scholars refer to the relationship between the individual and the specific job environment in which one operates from, to explain job satisfaction (Mottaz, 1985; Kristof, 1996; Brief, 1998). The person-environment fit paradigm upholds that the individual's job satisfaction is likely to be higher when the job environment fulfils the needs, values, or personal characteristics. However, regardless of the theoretical approach used to study job satisfaction, most studies have identified at least two general classifications of precursor variables, namely environmental factors and personal characteristics (Judge et al., 2010). Environmental antecedents of job satisfaction relate to factors that are associated with the job itself as well as the work atmosphere, and personal factors focus on individual attributes and characteristics. In this paper, job satisfaction is taken to be the attitude of employees toward various components of their job.

Organizational success hinges on the participation of all its employees and hence job satisfaction is a priceless dimension towards organizational performance (Judge et al., 2010). For people to participate in organizational programs, they have to be satisfied with their jobs (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Furthermore, increasing the job satisfaction of employees is an essential responsibility of management, since employee satisfaction has a ripple-effect on the loyalty and confidence of employees in addition to improving the quality of outputs and increasing productivity (Yee, Yeung, & Cheng, 2008). Employees with higher job satisfaction tend to believe that the organization will be more satisfying in the long term, are committed to higher quality of work, are more dedicated to the organization, stay longer in the organization, and are more productive on the job (Fraser, 2001). Satisfied workers also tend to engage in selfless behaviors that exceed the formal requirements of a job, have higher retention rates and are more productive (Goslin, 2005). On the other hand, dissatisfied employees exhibit an increased inclination towards counterproductive behaviours, including withdrawal, burnout, and workplace aggression (Faragher, Cass, & Cooper, 2005). This will result in the loss of production since dissatisfied employees are likely to take more work leave (Shields, 2006). This suggests that improving job satisfaction enhances the overall success of the organization. This perspective captures the significance of employees as instruments of increased organizational performance.

LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction refers to the cognitive element of the subjective well-being of employees (Rode, 2004). It reflects an individual's evaluation about his or her quality of life (Ye, Yu, & Li, 2012). Life satisfaction is a measure of one's appraisal of life in general (Graves, Ohlott, & Ruderman, 2007). Judge et al. (2001) define life satisfaction as an individual's conscious, cognitive appraisal of the quality of his or her life. It is a lasting indicator towards the employee's triumphant adjustment to changes in life (Lent et al., 2009). It may be described as an emotional reaction of an individual to life consisting of work-time, spare time, and time after work as well as expressing individual's satisfaction about life (Heller, Judge, & Watson, 2002).

Buetell (2006) suggests that life satisfaction may primarily be attributed to a family of personality, genetic, and social-cognitive factors such as goal-directed activity, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental support. Both resilience as well as perceived positive stress are positively related to life satisfaction (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010). This demonstrates that life satisfaction increases with an increase in resilience and a decrease of stress. Other conditions that influence life satisfaction include demographic, environmental, and interpersonal factors (Koohsar & Bonab, 2011). Saari and Judge (2004) add that factors such as taking pleasure in life, finding life meaningful, consistency at the matter of reaching goal satisfaction, positive individual identity, physical fitness, economical security, and social relationships are all important life satisfaction indicators.

Life satisfaction may be higher in males than in females in contexts where males are more involved in physical activities than females (Bastug & Duman, 2010). This supports the notion that physical activity enhances an individual's life satisfaction. In addition, those who experience intellectual difficulties have lower life satisfaction than those who don't (Ozer & Saçkes, 2011). People with high life satisfaction levels exhibit the ability to motivate themselves when they encounter challenges, do not allow adversity and negative developments in preventing them from thinking, are always assisting others, and are seldom pessimistic (Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough, 2002). Therefore, organizations may benefit by nurturing high levels of life satisfaction among their human resources.

Research findings suggest that attachment security leads to a higher job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005). On the other hand, people who have avoidant attachment show a lower life satisfaction and are prone to mental health problems (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992). Guney, Kalafat, and Boysan, (2010) found a negative correlation between life satisfaction and psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety, and hopelessness. This suggests that life satisfaction is a facet of mental health and has an impact on an individual's satisfaction with life. Zhang and Howell (2011) compared the relationships between personality traits (PT), time perspectives (TP) and life satisfaction and concluded that there is a positive association between these three constructs. This implies that an individual's disposition and their life satisfaction may be attributed to their personal as well as social experiences to time.

JOB SATISFACTION AND LIFE SATISFACTION

There are three traditional paradigms that address the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction, namely (1) the spillover model, which maintains that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction; (2) the compensatory model, which maintains that the two constructs are negatively related; and (3) the segmentation model, which sustains that there is no correlation between the two factors (Bamundo & Kopelman, 1980). However, most contemporary research tends to consistently support the spillover model (Ilies, Wilson, & Wagner, 2009).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The segmentation theory posits no linkage between job and life satisfaction as represented by a zero correlation between the two constructs (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991). This theory assumes that job-related variables experienced by employees tend to be kept separate from other non-work activities (Iverson & Maguire, 1999). Thus, no significant relationship exists between job experiences of different employees and their overall well-being. Furthermore, it becomes thought-provoking to establish that most of the previous studies on the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction have not linked these two factors within the context of logistics practitioners in the steel-making industry. This paper aims to provide empirical evidence to occupy this gap. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyse the interconnection between drivers of job satisfaction and life satisfaction within the milieu of logistics practitioners in a South African steel-making company. The study is significant in that its findings may have managerial implications in providing strategic direction through the improvement of working conditions for other logistics practitioners in similar settings.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was adopted in which 192 logistics practitioners from a large steel making company based in the Gauteng Province of South Africa were purposively recruited as participants. Data were

collected through the use of a three-section self-administered questionnaire. Section A requested the respondents to provide their demographic information. In Section B, respondents were requested to indicate their level of job satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). The validated Minnesota Satisfaction Scale (Spector, 1997) was adapted for this section. Section C used the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) to elicit responses regarding the respondents' perceived level of wellbeing and happiness. Life satisfaction can be assessed within a specific context; in which case work (job) has been used for this study.

To enhance the content validity of the questionnaire, the instrument was reviewed by three experts in the field of industrial psychology. A pre-test was conducted using 15 logistics practitioners. Consequently, the questionnaire was modified such that it validly captured the required information (Sudman & Blair, 1998). A contact established at the steel making company was trained and further assumed the role of a research assistant by conducting the data collection process. Participation in the study by respondents was strictly voluntary. In addition, respondents were assured that the information they provided would be strictly used for research purposes only and they would remain anonymous at all times.

Out of the 350 questionnaires that were initially distributed, 229 questionnaires were returned. Among these, 37 questionnaires were eliminated because they were either incomplete or spoiled, which culminated in an eventual sample of 192 respondents.

Data Analysis

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction, using evidence obtained in a steel making company. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0). Person's correlation was used to determine the relationship between the two variables and thus identify the direction and magnitude of statistically significant relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Categories	N	n	%
Gender	Male	192	113	58.85
	Female	192	79	41.15
Age Group	≤25	192	28	14.58
	26-35	192	53	27.60
	36-45	192	68	35.42
	46-55	192	31	16.15
	≥ 56	192	12	6.25
Duration of Employment	≤ 2 years	192	66	34.38
	2-5 years	192	54	28.13
	6-9 years	192	39	20.31
	≥ 9 years	192	33	17.19
Nature of Work	Procurement	192	17	8.85
	Inventory Management	192	31	16.15
	Transportation/Distribution	192	57	29.69
	Packaging	192	63	32.81
	Materials Handling	192	22	11.46
	Other (e.g. production)	192	2	1.04
Current Position	Executive Manager	192	2	1.04
	Senior Manager	192	7	3.65
	Middle Manager	192	7	3.65
	Line Manager/Supervisor	192	39	20.31
	Specialist staff	192	79	41.15
	Clerical/Administrative	192	58	30.21

Table 1 indicates that 113 (59%) respondents were male and 79 (41%) were female. Approximately 81 (43%) respondents were aged below 35 years. A majority of the respondents (62%: n = 120) had been employed in the organization for a period of less than 5 years. In terms of the nature of work, 57 (30%) respondents were employed in the field of transportation and approximately 63 (33%) respondents were employed in packaging. Furthermore, 2 (1%) respondents were executive managers, 7 (4%) were senior and middle managers, 39 (20%) were line managers, 79 (41%) were specialist staff, and 58 (30%) occupied clerical or administrative positions.

Job Satisfaction Factors

The job satisfaction factors extracted in the study consisted of five dimensions that accounted for 61% of the variance explained by the factors. These factors were computed through the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using Varimax rotation. Table 2 illustrates the labeling of these factors, their description as well as the internal consistencies of the scales as measured through the Cronbach alpha coefficient.

Table 2: Job Satisfaction Dimensions and Operational Descriptions

Factor	Label	Cronbach Alpha	Operational Description
1	Workplace Flexibility	0.872	This refers to the ability of the employer to make changes to when, where, and how a person will work to better meet individual and business needs. It includes such aspects as flexible work schedules, working from home, leave and retirement plans.
2	Skills utilisation	0.853	This refers to the individual's opportunity to do something in the organization that makes use of his/her abilities.
3	Teamwork	0.758	This refers to the way the individual gets along and performs tasks with other individuals in the organization.
4	Remuneration	0.804	This refers to the rewards for employment in the form of pay, salary, or wage, including allowances, benefits.
5	Autonomy	0.703	This refers to the level of freedom and discretion an individual enjoys in his or her job. It also refers to an individual's ability to make decisions regarding the tasks allocated to him or her.

Table 3 illustrates the summated means of the job satisfaction dimensions and life satisfaction. The means were computed in order to establish the mean ranking of the dimensions of job satisfaction in terms of importance rating.

Table 3: Mean Scores for Job Satisfaction Factors and Life Satisfaction

Factor	N	Mean	Position in Rank Order
Workplace flexibility	192	2.786	5
Skills utilization	192	3.845	1
Teamwork	192	2.933	4
Remuneration	192	3.612	2
Autonomy	192	2.427	6
Life Satisfaction	192	3.175	3

Correlations: Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

Correlation analysis was used to establish the existence of any relationships between job satisfaction factors and life satisfaction. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) which assesses the degree to which quantitative variables are linearly related was adopted for use in this study (Maxwell & Moores, 2007). The results are reported in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlations - Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

Variables	Factor 1 Workplace Flexibility	Factor 2 Skills Utilization	Factor 3 Teamwork	Factor 4 Remuneration	Factor 5 Autonomy	Life Satisfaction
Factor 1	1.000					.162*
Factor 2	.051	1.000				.379**
Factor 3	.620**	.044	1.000			.240**
Factor 4	-.006	.297**	-.064	1.000		.612**
Factor 5	.511**	-.206**	.462**	-.296**	1.000	.152*
Life Satisfaction	.162*	.379**	.240**	.612**	.152*	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

The summated means for the five job satisfaction sub-scales (Table 3) indicate that logistics practitioners ranked skills ability ($\bar{x} = 3.845$) highest, followed by remuneration ($\bar{x} = 3.612$), life satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 3.175$), teamwork ($\bar{x} = 2.933$), workplace flexibility ($\bar{x} = 2.786$), and autonomy ($\bar{x} = 2.427$) in that order of importance. The ranking of skills utilization as the most important factor in determining the job satisfaction of employees is consistent with previous research in which skills utilization is regarded as a predominant factor in determining job satisfaction (Waskiewicz, 1999). Furthermore, there was a significant positive correlation ($r = .379$; $p < 0,01$) between skills utilization and life satisfaction. This finding illustrates that enhanced opportunities for logistics practitioners to apply their abilities at work may result in higher levels of life satisfaction, which is in line with the findings of a study conducted by Liu and White (2011).

Remuneration ($\bar{x} = 3.612$) was ranked as second in terms of importance on the mean score ranking. A positive and significant correlation ($r = .612$; $p < 0,01$) was also found between remuneration and life satisfaction. These findings suggest that logistics practitioners regard remuneration as an important factor in their level of happiness and well-being in general life. Consistently, the findings of Clegg and Birch (1998), Martins and Martins (2002), and Mafini, Surujlal, and Dhurup (2011) divulge that remuneration leads to better performance and productivity among employees, resulting in higher job and life satisfaction and that this important dimension stimulates organizations to place a heavy reliance on salaries as an important contributor towards employee growth and sustenance. Therefore, well compensated logistics practitioners are more satisfied with life and ultimately, this enables them to perform better in their respective areas of responsibilities.

Teamwork ($\bar{x} = 2.933$) emerged as the fourth most important factor among logistics practitioners. Consistent with these preliminary results, the relationship between teamwork and life satisfaction was weak ($r = .240$; $p < 0,01$). Effective teamwork could enhance the life satisfaction of employees (Griffin, Patterson, & West, 2001; Kalisch, Lee, & Rochman, 2010). Effective teamwork is also instrumental in nurturing cohesion among employees, which in turn enables individuals to develop a sense of belonging (Turman, 2003). It appears then, that the well-being of logistics practitioners is likely to be improved in the absence of workplace conflict and increased team-ship efforts among members of the organization.

Workplace flexibility ($\bar{x} = 2.786$) emerged as the second least important factor among logistics practitioners. Previous research (Fairbrother & Warn, 2002; van Emmerik, 2004; Kinzl et al., 2006; Turkyilmaz, Akman, Ozkan, & Pastuszak, 2011) established that workplace flexibility is a strong predictor of both job and life satisfaction. Interestingly, the results of the present study indicate that the relationship between workplace flexibility and life satisfaction is weak ($r = .162$; $p < 0.01$), which is in contradiction with the afore-mentioned previous research. The low mean score can be attributed to the fact that many logistics practitioners and supply chain members are not office-bound and spend most of their time on the field (Al-Aameri, 2000; Fang, 2001). As a result, a favorable office atmosphere that might be applicable to many administrative functions may not necessarily be pertinent for the well-being and overall life satisfaction among logistics practitioners.

Autonomy trailed the dimensions' list in terms of importance as indicated by the low mean score ranking ($\bar{x} = 2.427$) and a weak statistical relationship ($r = .152$; $p < 0.01$) with life satisfaction. This finding contradicts

earlier research findings by Stamps and Piedmonte (1986) and Finn (2001) who found autonomy to be an important factor contributing to both life and job satisfaction. The low rank obtained by autonomy on the mean scores may be attributed to the fact that the job of logistics practitioners largely involves working with other people (i.e., they work less independently), since in most cases, the Logistics function is a service provider to other business functions (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2001). Logistics practitioners are highly dependent on the input of other people such as their line manager, suppliers and specialists from other departments in the execution of their duties, which effectively reduces their need for autonomy (Turkyilmaz et al., 2011). Consequently, the decisions they make on the job are usually made in consultation with others, thereby limiting the degree of autonomy involved.

LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study constitute a current source of knowledge and information on issues pertaining to the job satisfaction and life satisfaction officers among logistics practitioners. Nevertheless, the findings of this study are limited in that they relate to a small sample (n = 192) of logistics practitioners, located within a single organizational setting as well as a single geographic region in South Africa. Therefore, it may be difficult to generalize the results of the study to other geographical locations and contexts.

This study is not without implications for further research. The findings of this study can be further refined by examining the relationship between the individual job satisfaction factors and life satisfaction. The job satisfaction-life satisfaction nexus can also be investigated along the dimensions of variables such as gender, employment period, type of employment, level of education, and age group. Further studies can also be conducted to determine the satisfaction and loyalty of other occupations in different organizations and environments.

In this paper, significant and positive correlations were found between the life satisfaction of logistics practitioners and two job satisfaction factors namely skills utilization and remuneration. Though positive, the relationship between life satisfaction and three job satisfaction factors, namely, teamwork, workplace flexibility, and autonomy was weak and insignificant. Among the five job satisfaction factors, skills utilization was found to be the most important to logistics practitioners. These findings imply that organizations are called upon to place more emphasis on improving the life satisfaction of their logistics practitioners by positively adjusting the five job satisfaction factors identified in this study. This will effectively enable logistics departments in organizations to meet their goal of delivering the right materials and services to the right place at the right time.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Dr. Chengedzai Mafini, Vaal University of Technology, Department of Logistics, Vanderbijlpark, South Africa.
E-mail: chengeozaim@vut.ac.za

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