JOB SATISFACTION AND LIFE SATISFACTION: ANALYSIS OF A RECIPROCAL MODEL WITH SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC MODERATORS[1]

By

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[2] This paper was based on the doctoral dissertation of the 2nd author, supervised by the 1st author at the University of Montreal.

Abstract

The general objective of the study was to empirically test a reciprocal model of job satisfaction and life satisfaction while controlling for some social demographic variables. 827 employees working in 34 car dealerships in Northern Quebec (56% responses rate) were surveyed. The multiple item questionnaires were analysed using correlation analysis, chi square and ANOVAs. Results show interesting patterns emerging for the relationships between job and life satisfaction of which 49.2% of all individuals have spillover, 43.5% compensation, and 7.3% segmentation type of relationships. Results, nonetheless, are far richer and the model becomes much more refined when social demographic indicators are taken into account. Globally, social demographic variables demonstrate some effects on each satisfaction individually but also on the interrelation (nature of the relations) between life and work satisfaction.

Concern for the quality of working life preoccupied social scientists for the past 50 years. It is no wonder that thousands of studies revolved around the concept of job satisfaction as a core concept of it (Cranny, Smith et Stone, 1992). Job satisfaction has been studied as an independent variable explaining such outcomes as direct performance, indirect performance (absenteeism, lateness, accidents, turnover and alike) as well as physical and mental health (Auerbach and Dolan, 1997, Baba and al., 1998). Job satisfaction was also examined as a dependent variable which becomes an explicit objective for many of the human resource policies in modern organizations (Dolan and Schuler, 1995). However, as organizations are struggling to survive and to become more efficient, an accrued interest has evolved into the concept of work-life relationships. Researchers examine why people behave the way they do, how does these behaviors effect their health and performance, and how to manage these behaviors so that the organization can achieve better economic results and survive in an increasingly competitive business environment. These interests gave rise to many organizational innovations of which individuals' life outside work becomes an important concern for the organization; it gave rise to organization sponsoring such programs as Employee Assistant, Recreational Activities, and many more.

Nonetheless, while the generic logic for connecting life at work and outside work has become popular amongst managers, organizational consultants and social writers (e.g. Dunn, 1998), only a few scientific studies examined the real nature, direction and intensity of the relationships between job satisfaction and the concept of life satisfaction (i.e. off the job satisfaction). In fact, the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction is quite controversial (Judge and Watanabe, 1993; Rain, Lane and Steiner, 1991). However, as both

concepts are critical to our understanding of whether organizations should really invest in furthering work-life programs, and in enhancing employees quality of life, it is important to understand their structure and psychometric properties.

Thus far, the scientific literature suggests that the relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction can be viewed in three alternate forms: Spillover, compensation or segmentation. Early studies concentrated on the spillover effect, propose that «*attitudes and practices developed in one sphere of life can spill over into another – killing time at work can become killing time in leisure, apathy in work place can become apathy in politics, alienation from one, alienation from the other*» (Wilensky, 1960; 545). By and large, to test the spillover effect a simple correlation analysis was used (Judge and Watanabe, 1993). Nonetheless, the later did not permit conclusions about the nature or the direction of the relationships.

As of the 1970s, researchers advanced hypotheses about compensation and segmentation links between job and life satisfaction. For example, Mansfield and Evans (1975) and Kabanoff (1980) concluded that groups of workers who experienced deprivation at work aspired to seek compensatory rewards outside work. Thus, the general conclusion emerging from these studies is that either high job satisfaction or high life satisfaction compensates for lower satisfaction in the other area. That is to say that compensation posits a negative relationship between the two satisfactions (Rain et al., 1991).

In the 1980s, yet another approach emerged, where a segmentation theory was proposed. It has been suggested that things that people choose to do in their free time are unrelated to the nature

of their occupational experiences (Gupta and Beehr, 1981). When no correlation were found between these two spheres of life, the researchers concluded that a segmentation effect is observed.

Efforts to confirm or disconfirm these different models or even to replicate same studies failed to yield consistent results. This gave rise to a more contemporary approach suggesting that it is improper to argue that any of the above-mentioned models are either correct or incorrect, but a contingency model would be more appropriate (Judge and Watanabe, 1994). The nature and direction of the relationships might be contingent on a host of moderating factors (individual and organizational) as well as factors exogenous to the situation.

Objectives of the study

The larger study examines a reciprocal (bi-directional) model of job and life satisfaction while controlling for personality, individual needs, career progression, and social demographic variables (Gosselin, 2000) . In this study, however, only a partial model was tested. It reports on results pertaining to the moderating effects of only the social demographic characteristics included in the study (see Figure 1). Only social-demographic variables that were previously reported to have an impact on either job satisfaction or life satisfaction, and that was considered relevant to the population studied, were included:

Gender (Bamundo, 1977; Hulin, 1969; Kavanagh & Halpern, 1977; Schmitt & Mellon, 1980)
Age (Bamundo, 1977; Bamundo & Kopelman, 1980; Gechman & Wiener, 1975)
Civil Status (Bamondo, 1977; Champoux, 1981)
Education (Bamondo & Kopelman, 1980; Kornhauser, 1965; Near, Rice & Hunt, 1987)
Job Category (Bamundo, 1977; Champoux, 1981; Kavanagh and Halpern, 1977; Near & al., 1987)

Salary Range (Bamundo ,1977; Bamundo & Kopelman,1980; Kornhausser ,1965)
Job Tenure (Bamundo, 1977; Bamundo & Kopelman, 1980)

Insert Figure 1 about here
Job satisfaction, Life satisfaction and social demographic moderators

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The more specific objectives of the study are:

1st Objective: To examine the relationships between Job and life Satisfaction

2nd Objective   To empirically test the influence of the selected social demographic variables on work satisfaction and life satisfaction.

3rd Objective : To identify the key social demographic variables which may explain variation in the nature of the relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction

Methods and Procedures

Sample

827 employees working in 34 car dealerships in Northern Quebec received a mail questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-validated and tested. 459 questionnaires (about 56% responses rate) were returned. Further verifications were made to consider the representativeness of the sample; no noticeable difference was observed between the sample and the general population.

Measures

Most constructs/measures were of multiple items, which required the respondent to rate items on a scale. Reliability coefficients for all measures was very satisfactory (Cronbach alpha

.70 and above). While the original measures for the larger study were designed to tap both facet free and facet specific satisfaction, only two scales are reported here concerning the global life and work satisfaction. They are: the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) with 5 items and an homogeneity coefficient of .85, and a modified version of the *Global Job Satisfaction Scale* (Dolan, 1979; Arsenault & Dolan 1983) with 3 items and an homogeneity coefficient of .73. The social demographic variables such as gender, age, civil status, job category, education and income were ascertained directly from the questionnaire.

Procedures to identify individuals in the Spillover, Compensation and Segmentation groups

A methodology used by Judge and Watanabe (1994) which in itself is based on techniques elaborated previously by Ghiselli (1960) and Zedeck (1971) was employed. Ghiselli proposed that the higher the correlation between predictor and criterion scores, the smaller this difference is expected to be; the same logic was applied to differentiating individuals based on the relationship between job and life satisfaction. While Ghiselli technique applies to the concept of spillover (i.e. positive relationship), Zedeck made a logical extension by computing algebraic differences which consider underpredicted, overpredicted and predicted individuals. The later can be used to attribute compensation and segmentation effects. However, Judge and Watanabe (1994) refined these techniques by proposing a two-step procedure that provided further enhancement of the understanding of the psychological composition of groups in terms of positively predicted, negatively predicted and non-predicted

individuals. They assert that if one simply use the absolute value of the difference between job satisfaction and life satisfaction, inverse relationships between the two would receive the highest difference value even though job and life satisfaction would be related, albeit negatively. In order to remove this confound score, the following difference score was computed by them:

$$D1 = ôôZLSô – ôZJSôô$$

Where ZLS = standardized life satisfaction score and ZJS = standardized job satisfaction score.

This formula, according to Judge and Watanabe (1994) separates those for whom job and life satisfactions are related (spillover and compensation) from those for whom they are unrelated (segmentation). High D1 scores indicate that for these people, job and life satisfaction are unrelated; low scores indicate that there is some relationship, positive or negative, for those individuals.

Consistent with the logic advanced by Judge and Watanabe (1994) ,similar analysis was conducted to separate spillover versus compensation, while the following equation was used, where ZIS and ZJS are as before:

$$D2 = ôZLSô – ôZJSô$$

More details about these procedures can be found in Judge and Watanebe (1994).

Results

All in all, Job and Life satisfaction have a relatively moderately/high correlation (r = .37,

p=.00). This result is similar to those found by Rice, Near and Hunt (1980; r=.31) and Tait, Padgett and Balwin (1989; r=.44). On the onset, this may suggest a spillover effect. Nonetheless, a further inspection of this correlation via the scatter diagram , suggests that a contingency model might be more appropriate as the spread of the relationship is rather large and may merely represent an artifact.

Spillover, compensation or segmentation: repartition of the three hypothesis

The differentiation techniques proposed by Judge and Watanabe (1994), explained earlier, sheds more light on the actual distribution of individuals to being a member of a specific group (spillover, compensation or segmentation). Table 1 summarizes the results. This exhibit shows that the relative majority of individuals have a spillover effect between job and life satisfaction (49.2%);   a compensation effect is non–negligible (43.5%), and a small percentage is segmented individuals (7.3%).

Insert Table 1 about here
Determining spillover, compensation and segmentation groups

Those results pointed out two interesting facts. First, Near and Sorcenelli (1986) assert that "studies who's confirming the spillover hypothesis are in fact underestimate de real power of the relationships between life and job satisfaction". By using general correlation, without considerations for the presence of sub-population, the correlation coefficient is low simply because other relationship (i.e. compensation with a negative correlation and segmentation

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with a absence of correlation), are present. Thus, our results shows that the spillover is much more important (r=.62) when individuals with compensation and segmentation relationships are excluded. This result is similar to the one found by Judge and Watanabe (1994); they found a correlation of r=.77.

Second, albeit some similar tendencies, the repartition of relationships between work and life satisfaction in our sample is quite different from those reported by Judge and Watanabe (1994). They estimated that 68% of the subjects in their sample had a spillover relationship, 17% was compensation oriented and than 15% lived in a segmented world. Such differences in results may suggest not only sample differences, but may point out to the presence of exogenous variables which have considerable influence on the determination of the nature of the relationship. For example, it is possible to identify key variables, at a individual level (eg. social demographic, personality, career progression), or social level (eg. economy, culture, political system) level, which may explain why a person is developing and maintaining a specific relations.

Influence of the social demographic indicators on life and work satisfaction

A series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) examining the relationships between the social demographic variables and job and life satisfaction respectively, has been performed. Results are displayed in a synoptic form in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

ANOVA'S results

Results suggest that there is no difference in gender life satisfaction, but female are more satisfied in their jobs than male. These findings may be attributed to the fact that most female occupy office and sales positions and do not work in technical support (i.e. possible co-linearity between gender and job category). In fact, while no significant difference for job category are reported for life satisfaction, it appears that sales, administrative and clerical employees are significantly more satisfied from their jobs than people in the technical category.

An interesting finding pertains to civil status. While the latter does not explain differences in job satisfaction, it is highly effecting life satisfaction; married (i.e. couple situation) are significantly happier in life (higher life satisfaction) than singles of all kinds.

The only variable that really influence simultaneously the two spheres of satisfaction is income. By and large, the higher the salary, the higher levels of reported satisfaction on the job and off the job .

Lastly, job tenure have an influence on work satisfaction but not on life satisfaction. It seems that this relations are curvilinear, where newest workers and oldest worker seem to be the most satisfied.

Influence of the social demographic indicators on the nature of the relation

The Anova's analyses (above) provide interesting information about variations in Job and life satisfaction and may hint on the "real" moderator effect of social demographic indicators. However, to test the influence of these variables directly on the nature of the relationships, we used Chi-square analyses. Results are presents in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here
CHI-SQUARE'S results

All in all, results proposed that social demographic variables have limited influence on the determination of the nature of the relation between life and work satisfaction. Only two variables yield significant results, namely civil status and de salary range.

Concerning the civil status, the analysis of the contingency table shows that married people have more probability to have a spillover relation. (Adjusted Residual=2.5). On the other hand single people seem to be more oriented toward a segmentation relationship (Adjusted Residual=3.3). The civil status does not have any influence on the compensation hypothesis.

This reality, though, could easily be explain by the apparent flexibility characterising the life of single people. In that logic, the concrete characteristics of the work environment or the specific elements of personal life, does not alter others spheres of activities. It is possible for singles to effortlessly adjust to any kind of situation and to nourish a segmented perspective.

On the other hand, married people, especially with children, do not have such facility. So, for them, any problem in either spheres of life will contribute to create dissatisfaction in all aspects of their lives. For instance, long working hours will definitely influence personal life and sick children at home will create some limitations and problems at work. Note that the same logic could be applied in the case of a positive spillover.

The other significant variable emerging from these analyses is the salary range. Results show some significant differences in the nature of the relationship between low wage earner and high wage earner. Individuals whose annual salary range is under $30,000 are much more compensation oriented than any other salary range category. By contrast, high salary workers ($40,000 and more) have more probability to be spillover than any other alternative hypothesis. It also seems than the middle range salary workers ($30,000-$40,000) represent the demarcation point; the distribution on each of the three alternate forms (spillover, compensation or segmentation), is random.

There is a simple and common sense explanation for these results; low salary workers who are habitually less satisfied at work will look outside that sphere to satisfy their needs and justify their efforts. They will compensate poor work conditions with more important investment in their personal life sphere. The situation is quite different for those who are higher wage earners; higher work satisfaction spills over personal life.

Insert Figure 3 about here
Result Pertaining to Job satisfaction, Life satisfaction and social demographic moderators

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As mentioned before, the moderating effect of the social demographics indicators is humble. Nevertheless, results show that the nature of the relation between work and life satisfaction is structured by some personal variables. Of all the social demographic variables studied, two particular (civil status and income) play an important moderating role on the nature of the relationships.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings suggest that we can no longer talk about a single type of relationships between job and life satisfaction. Although the appearance of spillover effect is noticed based on the magnitude and sign of the product moment correlation, further analyses shows that no generalisation can possibly be made, as the relations are more complex. As a matter of fact, all three type of relationships (spillover, compensation and segmentation) exists simultaneously but are different for various people and subgroups. The findings are consistent with previous results reported in the literature in so much as the general tendency is concerned (Tait et al., 1989; Judge and Watanabe, 1994). In that way, results tend to complete and confirms propositions made by Judge and Watanabe (1993, 1994). Although our findings are a bit different (i.e. which could be attributed to differences in the sample used), it can provide an ammunition to managers who advocate a more holistic approach to understanding employees behaviour in a global perspective (i.e. work-life perspective). Thus, investing in either Employees Assistant Programs or in any other off the job programs, to remove or to reduce the impact of either job or life "satisfiers", can be of mutual benefit to the individuals and to the organisation. It can be argued that in the vast majority of cases, life and job

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satisfaction can be viewed as reciprocal (i.e. spillover).

The ANOVA results, on the other hand, complements the above conclusions by illustrating the effects of some social demographic variables. Finding are most revealing. It may also suggest that the structure of the relationships between work and non work satisfaction depends to a large extent on different subgroups of the sample. In particular it is noticeable that female are significantly more satisfied than male at work, yet this is not the case in non/work situation. This indicates that female employees have either lower expectation in working for an industry that traditionally is dominated by male, and thus ended more satisfied. Or, alternatively, female are occupying within the car dealership white collar positions that allow for more discretion and autonomy, and in turn, these intrinsic factors increase their level of satisfaction at work.

Results for the job category indicates a wide spread of relative job dissatisfaction amongst the rank and file of the car dealership industry; technicians report the lowest level of satisfaction in comparison with other categories of employees. The fact that no such differences were found for life satisfaction, can lead to the conclusion that it does not have an adverse (i.e. spillover) effect on their lives.

One should also notice that of all the social demographic variables studied, in the vast majority of the cases, significant differences were found for job satisfaction but not for life (off the job) satisfaction. There were however, two exceptions. In the case of civil status, significant differences were reported for only life satisfaction, and income seem to have equal

effect on both life and job satisfaction. In the case of civil status, married individuals are significantly more happier in their life (i.e. report of higher levels of life satisfaction) than single individuals of all sorts. These findings are consistent with many sociological results reported for North America. In the case of income, one can conclude that it is really the only variable that can be characterised as spillover, as it effects can be noticed to the same extent in the two spheres of satisfaction. By and large, the higher the income, the higher the levels of reported satisfaction on the job and off the job. The chi-square results show that for lower income, however, compensation effect is more evident.

Finally, results pertaining to the moderating influence of the social demographic variables on the nature of the relationships produced mixed results. Only two variables, the salary range and civil status emerged significant. These may suggest that social demographics indicators are not the key variables that explains the fluctuation of the nature of the relationships among subgroups. It can also be argued that the fluctuation can be explained by other variables which should be studied in future research.

The challenge in future research is to test whether individuals have other psychological characteristics that makes them predispose to belong to each one of the group studied. We know that certain characteristics are unchangeable (i.e. gender, genetics) but others are the result of social learning (personality, coping mechanisms, etc.). Another important question to be addressed in future research is whether individuals belonging to subgroups do it intentionally or not? (Near et al., 1987). Until such questions are addressed, the inclusion of individuals in subgroups can not be determined by any forms of causality and thus the model

of the relationships between job and life satisfaction needs to be viewed as circular; there is no causality and no dependent-independent relationships. Consequently, albeit the fact that the data used for this study originates from a single source, which normally pose a methodological limitation (i.e. the possible problem of method-variance), it cannot be invoked here.

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Table 1: Determining spillover, compensation and segmentation groups

Analysis and group	$r_{LS, JS}$	p value	N	Per cent of total
Segmented from related (D1)				
Related group	.42	<.01	407	92.7
Segmentation group	-.44	NS (<.01)	32	7.3
Spillover from compensation (D2)				
Spillover group	.62	<.01	216	49.2
Compensation group	-.19	<.01	191	43.5
Total sample	.37	<.01	439	100.0

Note: D1= ││ZLS│ - │ZJS││; D2= │ZLS│ - │ZJS││; LS= life satisfaction; JS= job satisfaction.

Table 2: ANOVA'S results: Social demographic indicators and life/work satisfactions

VARIABLES	LIFE SATISFACTION			WORK SATISFACTION		
	mean	*F*	*p*	*mean*	*F*	*p*

Personal related variables

VARIABLES	mean	F	p	mean	F	p
Gender						
Male	3.6	1.03	NS	3.7	7.57	.00
Female	3.7			3.9		
Age						
0-30	3.5	.755	NS	3.7	.372	NS
30-40	3.7			3.7		
40-50	3.7			3.8		
50 and more	3.6			3.8		
Civil Status						
Single	3.4	12.9	.00	3.7	.003	NS
Married	3.7			3.7		
Education						
Primary	3.7	.84	NS	3.8	5.01	NS
Secondary	3.6			3.7		
College	3.6			4.0		
University	3.8			3.7		

Job relates variables

VARIABLES	mean	F	p	mean	F	p
Job Category						
Sales	3.7	1.89	NS	3.9	8.5	.00
Service	3.6			3.7		
Office/clerical	3.8			3.9		
Technical	3.5			3.5		
Administration	3.7			4.1		
Salary Range						
$20,000 or less	3.4	4.46	.004	3.7	12.24	.00
$20,000-30,000	3.6			3.6		
$30,000-40,000	3.6			3.7		
$40,000 or more	3.9			4.1		
Job Tenure						
0-2 year(s)	3.6	1.91	NS	3.9	3.45	.00
2-6 years	3.7			3.7		
6-10 years	3.5			3.6		
10-14 years	3.5			3.6		
14 and more years	3.8			3.8		

NS= Not Significant (p>.01)

Table 3 : CHI-SQUARE'S results: Social demographic indicators and the nature of the relationships (Spillover, Compensation, Segmentation)

Variables	*value*	*p*	*Cramer's V*
Gender	1.161	NS	----
Age	8.069	NS	----
Civil Status	13.357	.001	.177
Education	13.730	NS	----
Job Category	9.407	NS	----
Salary Range	19.061	.004	.150
Job Tenure	7.909	NS	----

NS= Not Significant (p>.01)

Figure 1: Model of the influence of social demographic indicators on Work/Life satisfaction
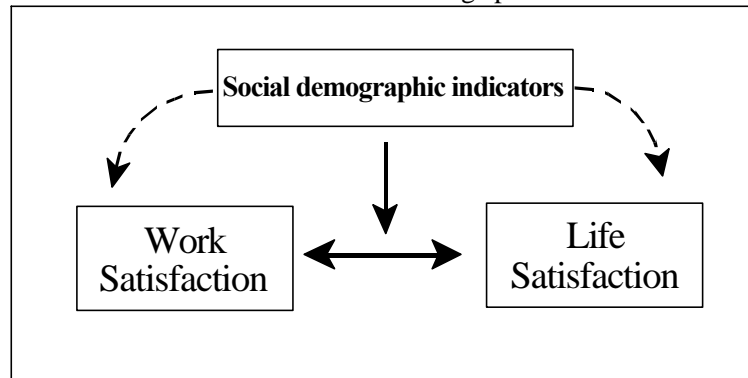
Figure 3: Identification of social demographic indicators influencing Work/Life satisfaction