

Methods of Measuring Job Satisfaction: A Review of Standardized Scales and Techniques

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Introduction

Job satisfaction seems to be a psychological concept that would in fact appear difficult to measure. It is hard to find a unifying scientific measure. Measuring job satisfaction allows organizations to evaluate workforce morale, identify operational friction, and improve employee retention. Because job satisfaction spans both emotional perception and tangible workplace conditions, human resource professionals and organizational psychologists rely on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Job satisfaction is typically measured through a mix of quantitative surveys, qualitative techniques, and indirect behavioral indicators. This research paper studies the various methods of measuring job satisfaction. Aldaky stated that job satisfaction might be determined through personal interaction or through other available information in an institutions registers, with regard to resignations, productivity, absences, lateness, reports by employees who had been interviewed and talked about leaving their job, accident reports, and suggestions and training registers. Ivancevich and Donnelly³¹ in 1968 stated that, since Hoppock's monograph was presented in 1935; many attempts have been made to measure job satisfaction. According to Lock, thousands of studies have been conducted to explain the phenomenon and to identify the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among workers because of the numerous methods that were used to measure job satisfaction, different results were obtained.

Keywords

Job satisfaction, Herzberg, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, Job Descriptive Index

Methods of Measuring Job Satisfaction

In order to measure and investigate job satisfaction, several methods can be adopted, some of which will be dealt with in more detail below.

Herzberg's Way Story Approach

Herzberg measured the level of job satisfaction among his groups of engineers and the accountants by asking them to remember a time when happy or not during work days and the reason for that. The study concluded that the factors that lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction may differ. Researcher adopts the Herzberg's way story approach to study the job satisfaction of employees.

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed by Wesis in 1967. It covers 20 facets, such as ability, utilization, activity, compensation, creativity, moral values, responsibility, social service, social status, achievement, advancement, authority, company policies and procedures, co-workers, independence, job security, recognition, working conditions, supervision-human relation and supervision-technical variety. The advantages of this method are that it obtains an individual picture of employee job satisfaction, as well as providing an accurate measurement of job satisfaction with numerous workplace factors. In additions the short - form of the MSQ is recognized as a well-known scale that is easy to complete. However, it seems that the MSQ, like other questionnaires, takes a long time to prepare. This can also be separated into two subscales for intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction.

Job Descriptive Index (JDI)

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI), which was developed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin in 1969, has probably been one of the most popular facets scales in organizational research. It is also described as one of the most carefully developed and validated. It measures one's satisfaction in five facets. They are:

1. Work,
2. Co-workers,
3. Pay,
4. Supervision and
5. Promotion.

The whole scale contains 72 items, with 9 to 18 items per subscale. Responses are 'Yes', 'Uncertain', or 'No'. Each facet scale includes a brief illustration and is followed by the items that concern that facet. This measurement was described as the most carefully developed and validated method and has very good reliability. However, there has been some criticism of this method, such as the limitation of the scale only to five facets.

Interviews and Questionnaires

Face to face formal or informal, structured or unstructured, interviews are used to measure job satisfaction. This kind of method is effective with a small sample. It is also a flexible and appropriate way to gather more information. However, an interview has some disadvantages, such as being time consuming and expensive. Observation is another way to study job satisfaction; however its problem is in translating behavior into usable information. Therefore, each way has its advantages and disadvantages.

An alternative is the questionnaire, with a rating scale approach carefully developed with reliability and validity established by many previous studies. These also have advantages and disadvantages. In terms of advantages, many of the existing scales cover the major facets of satisfaction and have an acceptable level of reliability. In addition, this measurement saves considerable cost and is less time consuming. On the other hand, the major disadvantage of using existing scales is that they only cover limited facets that the developer chooses to focus on in their instrument. The facets of most scales tend to be general, so they will not include more specific areas that might be covered in interviews or other methods.

Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)

The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) scale was developed by Spector in 1985. Its aim is to assess nice facets of job satisfaction: Pay, promotions, Supervision, fringe benefits, Contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, nature of work and communication. JSS also assesses overall satisfaction; the scale includes 36 items and uses a rating scale format, which is the most popular for job satisfaction scales. The advantages of this method are that the format of the JSS makes it relatively easy to modify, however, it seems that this method is like other surveys, in that it gives descriptive results without providing any feel for the data.

Job in General Scale (JIG)

The previously referred to scales are all aimed at assessing facets, while JIG's aim is to assess overall job satisfaction. This scale was developed by Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson and Paul in 1989. JIG is similar to JDI in terms of format. It contains 18 Items, each one having a phrase that is concerned with the job in general rather than facets of it. The advantage of this method is that the JIG has good internal consistency reliability and the JIG correlates well with other global measures of job satisfaction. The JIG is a good method for assessing overall job satisfaction, but it may not exactly match the global satisfaction of individuals.

Global Job Satisfaction

Global job satisfaction was developed by Warr, Cook, and Wall in 1979. This measure includes 15 items to determine overall job satisfaction. Two subscales are used for extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of the job. The extrinsic section has eight items and the intrinsic has seven items.

Job Satisfaction Relative to Expectations

Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley was developed this measure in 1991. It assesses the degree of agreement between the perceived quality of broad aspects of a job and employee expectations. It is most effective to determine how job stresses, role conflicts, or role ambiguities can hinder an employee from meeting job expectations.

Job Satisfaction Index

Schriesheim and Tsue was developed job satisfaction index in 1980. It consists of six items that form an index which determines overall job satisfaction. The items are the work, supervision, co-workers, pay, promotion opportunities, and the job in general.

Job Diagnostic Survey

Hackman and Oldham was developed this survey in 1974 which measures both overall and specific facets of job satisfaction. There are three dimensions of overall job satisfaction which includes general satisfaction, internal work motivation, and growth satisfaction, which are combined into a single measure.

Career Satisfaction

Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley was developed this measure in 1990. This is a measure of career success, as opposed to job satisfaction. It assesses general satisfaction with career outcome, but also satisfaction with career progress.

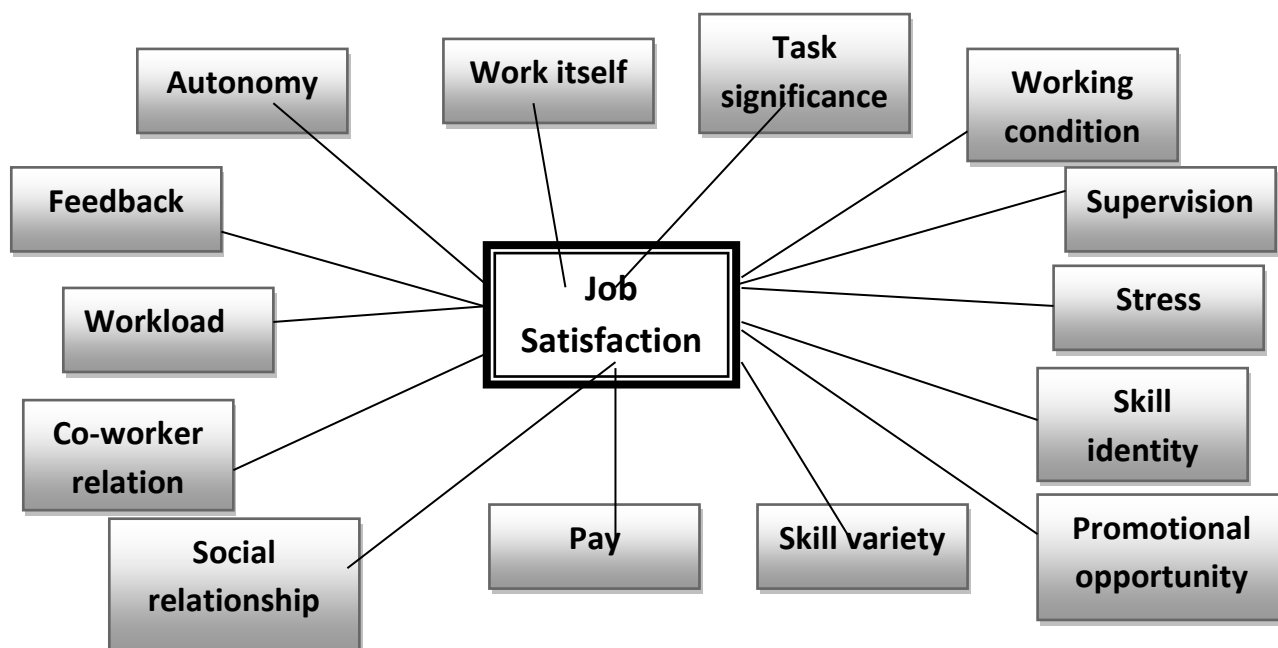
Although there is wide use of such scales in many studies, the researcher believes that there is no best way to measure job satisfaction as each method has advantages and disadvantages.

Factors influencing Job Satisfaction

There are number of factors which influence one's satisfaction in the job situation. These are the factors responsible for job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction.

Figure No.: 1.3

Facets of job satisfaction



Source: Retrieved from <https://wikispaces.psu.edu/display>

These factors can be categorized under two broad headings.

- (i) Organizational factors.
- (ii) Personal factors.

Organizational factors

Organizational factor includes all the factors which are related to the work place. A major amount of time is spent by individual at a work place and these organizational factor influences how favorably an individual appraises his or her job. The factors are explained as under:

Work

The content of the work is a major source of satisfaction. It includes all aspects of the job which would tend to be constant for the work regardless of where the work was performed. This means the extent to which the job provides the individual with interesting tasks, opportunities for learning, the chance to accept responsibility, supervision, interpersonal relationship, opportunities for promotion and advancement. Some of the most important ingredients of job satisfaction include interesting and challenging work and a job that provides status

Rewards

Rewarding staff appropriately both in financial or non-financial nature is important. Organizations can develop strategic and creative benefits and salary to attract, retain and motivate talented employees who will achieve high performance for the organization and job satisfaction for themselves. Job satisfaction is often achieved where performance is recognized by appropriate and equitable performance related pay supplemented with other perks, benefits and non-financial recognition and rewards, which meets the team member's expectation. Non-financial rewards have more impact than financial recognition in attaining job satisfaction.

Pay

This factor includes all aspects of the job involving present monetary remuneration for work done. Wages and salaries are significant, but a complex and multidimensional factor in job satisfaction. Money not only helps people to attain their basic needs, but also is instrumental in providing upper level need satisfaction. Employees often consider salary as a reflection of how management views their contribution to the organization and also considers that they must receive pay according to the work done. If employees are allowed flexibility in choosing the type of benefits they prefer within a total package, called a flexible benefits plan, there is a significant increase in both benefit satisfaction and overall job satisfaction.

Career growth

This factor includes job aspects which the individual sees as potential sources of betterment of economic position, organizational status, or professional experience. If employees have ample of opportunities for promotion and advancement it brings job satisfaction. Promotional opportunities seem to have a varying effect on job satisfaction. This is because promotions take different forms and include a variety of rewards.

Supervision

Supervision is another moderately important source of job satisfaction. It pertains to the relationship of the employees with his immediate superiors. There are two dimensions of supervisory style that affects job satisfaction. One is employee-centeredness, which is measured by the degree to which a supervisor takes personal interest in the welfare of the employees. The other dimension is participation or influence, as illustrated by managers who allow their employees to participate in decisions that affect their own jobs. This approach, generally, leads to higher job satisfaction. A participative environment created by the supervisor has a more substantial effect on worker's satisfaction than participation in a specific decision.

Colleagues

Friendly, co-operative and supportive co-employees are one of the important factors of job satisfaction. The work group serves as a source of support, comfort, advice, and assistance to the individual. A good work group makes the job more enjoyable. On the other hand, if this factor is not considered with care, then it may have reverse effects, meaning thereby, that the people are difficult to get along with. This will have a negative effect on job satisfaction.

Work environment

Work environment and working conditions are factors that have a modest effect on job satisfaction and it includes those physical aspects of the working environment. If working conditions are good, clean, attractive surroundings-employees find it easier to carry out their job. Most people do not give working conditions a great deal of thought unless they are extremely bad. The physical working conditions like availability of necessary furniture, lighting facilities, work hazard also plays a major role in the factor of job satisfaction. But this is crucial because it has a direct effect on job satisfaction. On the contrary, if working conditions are given importance, productivity and accomplishment of objectives are enhanced.

Security

It includes those features of the job situation which lead to assurance for permanent or continue employment. It means that the opportunity for mobility is absent but continued employment is assured. This security in job leads job satisfaction.

Social aspects of the job

This factor includes interpersonal relationship of the individual employee with other employees within the organization. It includes all contacts among these individuals, whether those contacts are for working and operating purposes, or for more personal reasons.

Personal factors

Internal disposition is the basis of the latest method to explaining job satisfaction and hints that some people are inclined to be satisfied or dissatisfied with their work no matter the nature of the job or the organizational environment. Dis-positional affect is the predisposition to experience related emotional moods over time. Accordingly, this approach assumes that an employee's attitude about his or her job originates from mental state. Positive affect is a predisposition favorable to positive emotional experience, whereas negative affect is a predisposition to experience a wide array of negative emotions. Positive affective people feel enthusiastic, active, alert, and optimistic. On the contrary, negative affective people feel anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness. Having favorable and unfavorable feelings towards the job depends upon the individual attitude. An individual with positive attitude feel satisfy even if the conditions are unfavorable. The second important factors in the job satisfaction are the personal factors. These are as follows:

Interest

A personal factor includes personal interest of individual for doing the work. If employees are interested in doing their job, they like it, feel happy and satisfy with the work and if they not interested in their job, they don't like it and this leads to the dissatisfaction.

Personality traits

Negative affectivity is related strongly to the personality trait of neuroticism. Individuals high in negative affectivity are more prone to experience less job satisfaction. Positive affectivity is related strongly to the personality trait of extraversion. Those high in positive affectivity are more prone to be satisfied in most dimensions of their life, including their job. Differences in affectivity likely impact how individuals will perceive objective job circumstances like pay and working conditions, thus affecting their satisfaction in that job.

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction may positively influence job satisfaction, and job satisfaction will also positively influence life satisfaction. Conversely, some research suggests that life satisfaction often precedes and is a good predictor of job satisfaction. Life satisfaction is a teen which is referred to Maslow's hierarchy of need of self equalization. A person wants to establish or reach a goal in his life and it can be accomplished through the work which one is doing. It is other than the monetary part.

Importance of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction plays a significant role for both to the employees and to the organization. It benefited both the groups with different ways. The important are described in the following ways:

Performance

For the organization, job satisfaction of its employees means a work force that is motivated and committed to high quality performance. Job satisfaction brings high quality performance of the employees into their work. There is strong correlation between job satisfaction and job performance and this leads to the idea that a happy worker is a productive worker.

Employee absenteeism

Job satisfaction plays an important role to reduce the rate of absenteeism. When people are satisfied with their job they may be more likely to attend work even if they are sick or have illness, however, if employees are not satisfied with their job, they will be more likely to call in sick even when they are well enough to work. Dissatisfied worker has a high rate of absentee and more likely to miss the work.

Employee turnover

Tangible ways in which job satisfaction benefits the organization include reduction in complaints and grievances, turnover and termination; as well as improved punctuality and worker morale. The employee turnover also depends upon the alternative job opportunities available outside and dissatisfied employees leave the organization for their betterment. Job dissatisfaction is more likely to translate into turnover because they have, or perceive, many available alternatives.

Job satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

It seems logical to assume job satisfaction should be a major determinant of an employee's organizational citizenship behavior. A satisfied employee is more likely to be creative, flexible, innovative, loyal, co-operative, help others and go beyond the normal expectation of the job. Satisfied employees have helpful behavior towards their co-workers and might go beyond the schedule duty hours.

Positive work attitude

Job satisfaction brings a pleasurable emotional state that often leads to a positive work attitude and is also linked to a healthier work force which in turn help the organization to achieve its objective. A satisfied employee helps the co-employees in the organization which helps to create a healthy work environment.

Life satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the strongest predictors of life satisfaction and job satisfaction is strongly related to life satisfaction, or the degree to which employees feel a sense of happiness with their lives. People feel better about their lives when they feel better about their jobs. This link makes sense when you realize how much of our identity is wrapped up in our jobs.

Job satisfaction plays an important role for the happiness and prosperity of the individuals and the organization that has employed them. Satisfied employees do a better job of fulfilling the duties described in their job descriptions, and evidence suggests that positive feelings foster creativity, improve problem solving and decision making, and enhance memory and recall of certain kinds of information. Satisfied employees engage in more frequent extra mile behaviors to help their coworkers and their organization. Positive feelings increase their desire to interact with others and often result in spontaneous acts of helping and other instances of good citizenship. If organization is fail to create job satisfaction it may be suffer many problem from employees like regularly absent on job venue, they may change the job anywhere, negative publicity of organization, improper work etc. For the success of any organization job satisfaction is of vital importance. The organization cannot achieve its goals and targets unless its workforce who constitutes the organization is satisfied with its job.

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