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ANALYSIS OF A CONTINGENCY MODEL
WITH SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC MODERATORS**

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**JOB SATISFACTION AND LIFE SATISFACTION: ANALYSIS OF A
CONTINGENCY MODEL WITH SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC MODERATORS¹**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to empirically test a reciprocal (bi-directional) model of job satisfaction and life satisfaction while controlling for some social demographic variables. 846 employees working in 35 car dealerships in Northern Quebec (57% response rate) were surveyed. The multiple item questionnaires were analyzed using correlation analysis and ANOVAs. Results show interesting patterns emerging for the relationships between job and life satisfaction. Results are far richer and the model becomes much more refined when global and dimensional measures are compared and when some of the moderators are controlled for. Insight of the concept of quality of life is broadened.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude s'intéresse à la validation d'un modèle contingent afin d'expliquer la relation unissant la satisfaction au travail et la satisfaction hors travail. Afin de vérifier le cadre conceptuel proposant une interrelation bidirectionnelle entre les sphères d'activité professionnelle et personnelle, nous avons mené une étude empirique à partir d'un échantillon de 846 travailleurs (taux de réponse de 57%) réparti dans 35 petites entreprises du Nord-Ouest québécois. Nous avons principalement vérifié l'influence de trois groupes de variables modératrices soit: la structure de la personnalité, la progression de carrière et un ensemble d'indices socio-démographiques (âge, sexe, ancienneté, scolarisation, etc.) sur la fluctuation de la nature, de la direction et de l'intensité de la relation. Les résultats préliminaires démontrent que certaines caractéristiques socio-démographiques agissent comme modérateurs de la relation et permettent d'expliquer la fluctuation de la nature du lien (effet d'entraînement, effet de compensation ou effet de segmentation) unissant les satisfactions.

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Introduction

Concern for the quality of life preoccupied social scientists for the past 50 years. It is no wonder that thousands of studies revolved around the concept of job satisfaction (Locke, 1976; Cranny and al., 1992). Nonetheless, only a few studies examined the nature, direction and intensity of the latter together with the concept of life satisfaction (i.e. off the job satisfaction). As both concepts are critical to our understanding of the quality of life, it is important to understand their structure and psychometric properties.

Thus far, the 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, 1994; Shaffer, 1987; Near and al., 1987). Nonetheless, the later did not permit conclusions about the nature or the direction of the relationships (Schmitt and Bedeian, 1982).

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 relationships between the two satisfactions (Rain and 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; London and al., 1977; Bacon, 1975). 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, 1998). This study, reports on preliminary results pertaining to the moderating effects of only some social demographic characteristics. The more specific objectives of the study are:

1st Objective: To empirically test the nature, direction and intensity of the relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction

2nd Objective: To identify the key social demographic variables which may explain variation in the nature, direction and intensity of the relationships between job satisfaction and life satisfaction

Methods and Procedures

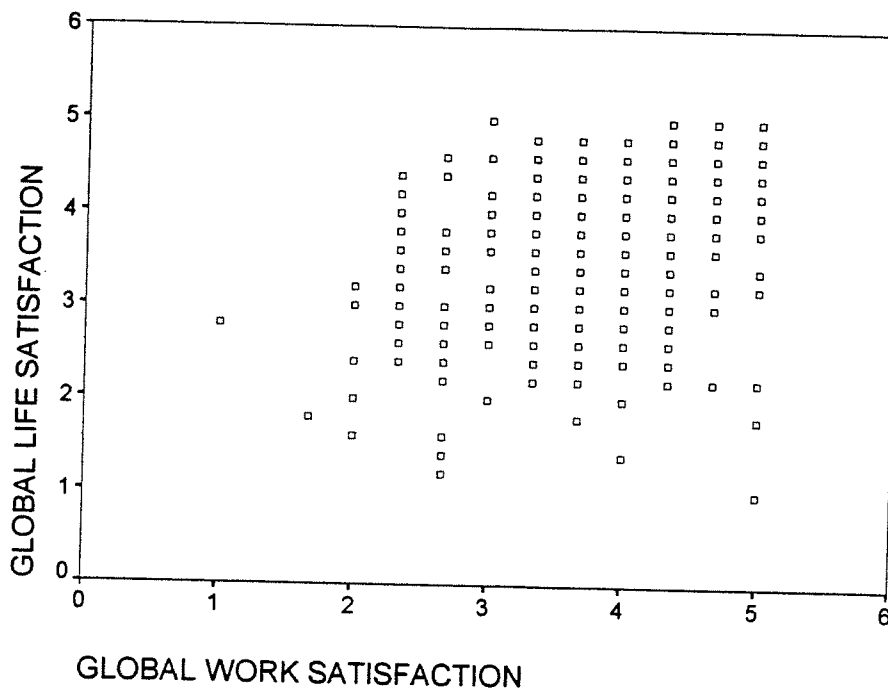
846 employees, working in 35 car dealerships in Northern Quebec received a mail questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-validated and tested, and technical/financial support was provided by the corporation of car dealership of the region. 479 questionnaires (about 57% response rate) were returned. Most constructs measured were of multiple item, and reliability coefficients for all measures were very satisfactory (Cronbach alpha .70 and above). Satisfaction measures were designed to tap both dimensions and global phenomenon. The inventories used included: the Larouche Inventory of Work Satisfaction with 18 dimensions, the Dolan and Arsenault Job Satisfaction Index for a global measure, the Weitz Test of General Satisfaction for measuring facets of life satisfaction, the Satisfaction with Life Scale of Diener and al. (1985) for obtaining global life satisfaction. The moderators, included: Personality assessment (Cattell 16PF), Career progression (Inventaire des préoccupations de carrière), Perceived Stress (Cohen and al., 1983) and a host of social-demographic variables such as gender, age, seniority, civil status, occupational category, education, union affiliation and density of the city.

Results

All in all, Job and Life satisfaction have a relatively moderately/high correlation ($r = .37, p = .00$). On the onset, this may suggest a spillover effect; the findings are similar to those found by previous studies. For example, Rice and al. (1980) reported an average correlation between work and life satisfaction around .31 and Tait et al. (1989), using a meta-analysis, showed a correlation of .44. Nonetheless, a further inspection of this correlation via the scatter diagram (see Fig. 1),

suggests that a contingency model might be more appropriate as the spread of the relationship is rather large.

FIGURE 1: Correlation between work and life satisfaction



A series of correlation analyses between job and life satisfaction with such variables as age, seniority, and city density did not yield any significant results. On the other hand, a series of ANOVAs with other variables is reported in Table 1.

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 colinearity 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. Both married and previously married (i.e. divorced employees), are significantly happier in life (higher life satisfaction) than singles of all kinds. Lastly, the only variable that really, spillover 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 .

Finally, analysis of variance based on job satisfaction and the car manufacturer shows that Ford dealership employees are relatively more satisfied at work than all other employees (Hyundai, Chrysler, GM, Honda and Toyota.)

TABLE 1: ANOVA results

VARIABLE	LIFE SATISFACTION			JOB SATISFACTION		
	Mean	F	P	Mean	F	P
Gender		1.02	NS		7.56	.00
Male	3.6			3.7		
Female	3.7			3.9		
Civil Status		3.53	.002		1.28	NS
Single (by choice)	3.2			3.8		
Single (by default)	3.4			3.5		
Single (dating)	3.5			3.6		
Married (cohabiting)	3.7			3.7		
Divorced	3.7			4.1		
Separated	3.0			3.9		
Widow	3.6			3.4		
Education		.83	NS		5.01	.001
Primary	3.7			3.8		
Secondary	3.6			3.7		
J. College	3.6			3.9		
University	3.8			3.7		
Other	3.4			3.3		
Job Category		1.89	NS		8.5	.000
Sales	3.7			3.9		
Service	3.6			3.7		
Office/clerical	3.8			3.9		
Technical	3.5			3.5		
Administration	3.7			4.1		
Salary range		2.8	.01		8.1	.000
\$20,000 or less	3.4			3.7		
\$20,000 – 30,000	3.6			3.6		
\$30,000 – 40,000	3.6			3.7		
\$40,000 – 50,000	3.9			4.0		
\$50,000 – 60,000	3.5			4.1		
\$60,00 or more	3.6			4.1		

NS=Not Significant

Conclusions

The findings suggest that we can no longer talk about 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 generalizations can possibly be made, as the relations are more complex. As a matter of fact, all three type of relations (Spillover, compensation and segmentation) exists simultaneously but are different for various people and subgroups. Employing a methodology similar to Judge et Watanabe (1994), we found, for example, that 50% of all individuals have spillover, 41% compensation, and 9% segmentation (i.e based on statistical elaboration of the scatter diagram which is presented in Fig. 1).

The ANOVA results, complements the above conclusions by illustrating the moderating effects of some social demographic variables are most revealing. It may also suggest that the direction of the relation 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 was 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.

One should also noticed that of all the social demographic variables studied, in the vast majority of the cases, significant differences were found for job/work satisfaction but not for life (off work) 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 life and job satisfaction. It is possible that other social demographic variables affect life satisfaction than the ones studied here.

Results of this study are preliminary and further analyses are underway. Some of the limitations of the study include the possible biases of self reported information (i.e. method-variance), and some possible multi-collinearity between some social demographic variables.

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