



HOW DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AFFECT AMERICANS' JOB SATISFACTION

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Abstract: This paper studies the relationship between Americans' job satisfaction and their demographic factors based on General Social Survey (known as GSS) data set conducted by The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in 2010. The purpose of this research is to examine, to an extent, how demographic factors including age, gender, education, religion, race, marital status, and accommodation status influence job satisfaction. The findings from this paper reveal that three of the seven Americans' demographic factors have statistically significant effects on their job satisfaction including educational attainment, religion, and house ownership. Whereas, the paper does not find statistically significant effects of age, gender, race, marital status on the American's job satisfaction. Also, some conclusions and suggestions for further discussion of the role of these demographic factors in association with job satisfaction are released.

Keywords: job satisfaction, demographic factors

1 Introduction

Job satisfaction has been emerging as one of the most principal research topics across the fields of management, organizational science, behavioral science, and the like. In fact, job satisfaction is the utmost vital issue for both managers and organizational academicians (Locke & Latham, 2013). Both behavioral scholars and practitioners always inquire why some people report that they are extremely satisfied with their job and the others do not. Satisfied workers tend to highly exhibit organizational citizenship behaviour (Schnake, 1991; Organ & Ryan, 1995).

Reviewing literature on job satisfaction from this paper points out that there have been diverse ways to define the concept of job satisfaction (Kalleberg, 1977; Saif-ud-Din, Khair-uz-Zaman, & Nawaz, 2010). The definition proposed by Locke (1976), however, receives most researchers' approval. Thereby, job satisfaction is defined as "a pleasurable positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one job or job experiences" (Locke 1976, p. 1300).

Undoubtedly, irrespective of the approach of theory employed to study job satisfaction, most of academicians posit that there exist at least two principal categories of predictor variables: environmental factors of work - Herzberg's (1973) motivation-hygiene theory and employees' individual characteristics relating to Maslow's theory (Saif-ud-Din et al., 2010). The environmental factors of work relating to work itself or work environment consist of payment, promotion, supervision, etc. Whereas, the individual characteristics of employees imply employees' personal attributes and characteristics like age, gender, race, educational attainment and the like.

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In terms of age - job satisfaction relationship, while many studies point out that age might affect or positively influence job satisfaction (Oshagbemi, 2000), Khan's study (2015) on the effect of age on job satisfaction unearths that the higher the respondents' ages, the more satisfied they are with their job. Nonetheless, a highly influential study by Kacmar and Ferris (1989, p. 201) generates assorted and commonly "inconclusive" results on the pattern and importance of the relationship between age and job satisfaction. Explanation for Kacmar and Ferris's aforesaid results, Kacmar and Ferris (1989) point out that these ambiguous results are largely due to theoretical nature of research in this field and the inconsistent application of suitable statistical and methodological controls as well.

Regarding gender - job satisfaction relationship, Chiu (1998) uncovers a significant paradox that though females' jobs are often regarded lower than males' in terms of pay, autonomy, and opportunities for promotion, women are at a higher level of job satisfaction than men. Also, a study by Clark (1997) is in line with Chiu's (1998) finding. In contrast, many other researches, especially in education sector, do not support Chiu's (1998) finding which pertains to the aforesaid paradox. Thereby, many papers state that the impact of gender on satisfaction at work is on the favour of males (Aydin, Uysal, & Sarier, 2012; Duong, 2014).

Surprisingly, in regard to the relationship between educational attainment and job satisfaction, recent studies announce that when working conditions (e.g. pay, promotional opportunities, etc.) do not pertain to educational attainment, the impact of education on levels of job satisfaction is negative (Martin & Shehan, 1989). This finding is in line with Jurik et al.'s (1987). Nonetheless, Martin and Shehan's (1989) study exhibits the non-significant finding of the relationship between educational attainment and job satisfaction.

The other demographic factors in relation to job satisfaction such as religion, race, marital status, and so on have been investigated. Nayak and Nayak (2014) reveal that married people are more satisfied with their job than unmarried people. Nevertheless, some studies on the effects of religion and race on job satisfaction release opposite findings (Bedeian, Ferris, & Kacmar, 1992; King, Murray, & Atkinson, 1982).

In summary, researches on the impact of demographic factors on job satisfaction release various findings. This paradox motivates the authors of this paper again to try to address and seek the inquiries about the relationship between job satisfaction and its determinants.

2 Research question

This paper tries to answer the following research question:

How do demographic factors affect job satisfaction?

The findings from the paper are extremely pivotal for managers and scholars because they help them give solutions to enhance staffs' job satisfaction so as to improve their institutes' productivity and performance.

3 Hypotheses

The above section has just released a brief literature review on job satisfaction and demographic factors. It is essential that there should be some hypotheses to test the literature review combined with the paper. The hypotheses for this paper are presented as follows:

- The higher the people's age is, the more satisfied they are with their job.
- Women are more satisfied with their job than men are.
- The higher educational attainment people hold, the more satisfied they are with their job.
- The non-Protestant and non-Catholic are more satisfied with their job than the Protestant and the Catholic.
- The white Americans are more satisfied with their job than the black Americans are.
- Married people are more satisfied with their job than the people who are widowed, divorced, separated, or never married.
- People who own or are buying a house are more satisfied with their job than the ones renting a house.

4 Data

This paper employed The General Social Survey (known as GSS) data set conducted by The National Opinion Research Center (NORC). This study was based on a sample of 3,418 respondents nationwide surveyed in the United States in 2010 with 2,044 completed case and the response rate reached 70.3 percent¹.

5 Variables

5.1 Dependent variable - job satisfaction

In order to investigate the relationships between job satisfaction and its determinants, this paper took job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The respondents were asked a question on their job satisfaction: *"All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job?"* (GSS, Codebook, p. 1513, 2010). The answers to this question are coded as 1, which stands for "not satisfied at all", 2 for "not too satisfied", 3 for "somewhat satisfied", and 4 for "very satisfied". The invalid responses are "don't know" or "no answer", and the answers such as "unemployment", "laid off", "retired", "school", "keep house", and "other" are designated as missing values. Also, this paper excluded the respondents whose age ranges from 66 and above. It is treated as a missing value.

¹ Source: "General Social Surveys, 1972- 2010: Cumulative Code Book", p.3106

5.2 Independent variables

Age: This variable ranges from 18 to 65. Also, the responses reported as “don’t know” or “no answer” are treated as missing values.

Gender: The respondents’ gender is coded as 1 for males and 0 for females.

Educational attainment: The respondents’ educational attainment is divided into four groups with 1 standing for those holding a less-than-high-school degree; 2 for the respondents possessing a degree of either high school or junior college; 3 for the respondents having a degree of bachelor; and 4 for the ones having a graduate degree. Then, this variable is changed into four dummy variables namely, “Less than high school”, “High school and college”, “Bachelor”, “Graduate”, with 1 standing for each of them and 0 for the remainder. Also, among these dummy variables, the “high school and college” variable is designated as the base category.

Religion: The respondents’ religion is divided into three groups and recoded as 1 for Protestants, 2 for Catholics, and 3 for neither of them. Then, this variable is transformed into three dummy variables that are “Protestant”, “Catholic”, and “Other relig” with 1 standing for each of the them and 0 for the other variables. Besides, the “Other relig” dummy variable is treated as the base category.

Race: The respondents’ race is grouped into three categories and recoded as 1 for the White, 2 for the Black, and 3 for neither of them. Because this variable has three categories, then it is changed into three dummy variables namely, “White”, “Black”, and “Other race” with 1 standing for each of them and 0 for the rest. The base category of race for this paper is “Other race”.

Marital status: This variable is divided into two groups and recoded as 1 for those being married and 0 for those not being married (including the widowed, the divorced, the separated, and the never married).

House ownership: For this variable, those who possess or are buying a house are coded as 1, and 0 for those who are renting a house.

6 Findings and discussion

According to Table 1, educational attainment, religion, and house ownership have statistically significant (at the 0.05 level) effects on job satisfaction. The Americans holding a degree of either bachelor or graduate are more satisfied with their job than those having high school or junior college education. On average, the people with a bachelor degree are 0.154 more satisfied with their job than the people holding either high school or junior college education. In particular, the Americans with graduate degree are 0.345 more satisfied with their job than the ones only having high school or junior college education. The results support the hypothesis of the paper that the higher educational attainment the people hold, the more satisfied with their job they are. Also these results contradict the findings of Martin and Shehan (1989) and of Jurik et al's (1987).

Table 1. Multiple regression analysis of job satisfaction

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard Errors	Standardized Coefficients
Constant	2.987**	0.150	
Age	0.004	0.002	0.068
Gender (male)	-0.045	0.055	-0.029
<i>Educational attainment</i>			
Less than high school	0.110	0.099	0.042
Bachelor	0.154*	0.069	0.085
Graduate	0.345**	0.090	0.146
High school and college	-----	-----	-----
<i>Religion</i>			
Protestant	0.145*	0.066	0.095
Catholic	0.079	0.073	0.046
Other relig ¹	-----	-----	-----
<i>Race</i>			
Black	-0.030	0.121	-0.014
White	0.099	0.101	0.057
Other race	-----	-----	-----
Marital status (married)	-0.053	0.061	-0.035
House ownership (pay rent)	-0.202**	0.064	-0.130

* p < 0.05; **p < 0.01 (two-tailed test)

N = 733. Adjusted R²: 0.057 **

¹ "Other relig" means Americans who are neither Protestants nor Catholics.

Also, religion has an impact on job satisfaction. Specifically, Protestants are 0.145 more satisfied with their job than the people whose religions are neither Protestant nor Catholic. The findings do not support the hypothesis that the non-Protestant and non-Catholic are more satisfied with their job than the Protestant. In fact, it must be inverse. Also, the result is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the paper cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the non-Protestant, non-Catholic and the Catholic in explaining variance in their job satisfaction.

House ownership also impacts job satisfaction. Furthermore, the Americans renting a house are 0.202 less satisfied with their job than those possessing or buying a house do. The observed significance level is less than 0.01. Thus, the result supports the hypothesis that people owning or buying a house are more satisfied with their job than the ones renting a house.

Table 1 also reveals that age, gender, race, marital status have no effects on job satisfaction. The results are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the paper cannot reject the null hypotheses that the Americans' age has no effects on their job satisfaction. Also, the paper cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between men and women in explaining variance in their job satisfaction. Similarly, the result points out that there is no dif-

ference among the Americans' race in explaining their job satisfaction. Finally, the result is same to the Americans' marital status. It means the research cannot reject the null hypothesis that no difference exists between married people and non-married people in their job satisfaction. Therefore, the findings from this paper repulse the findings of Oshagbemi (2000); Khan (2015); Chiu (1998); Clark (1997); Aydin, Uysal, and Sarier (2012); Duong (2014); and Nayak and Nayak (2014).

The *Adjusted R*²s equal to 0.057, which means that the independent variables used in the model could explain 5.7 percent of the variance in the dependent variable-job satisfaction.

7 Conclusion

This paper investigates the effects of demographic factors on job satisfaction in the United States. The findings from the present study confirm three of the seven respondent's demographic factors have effects on their job satisfaction, namely educational attainment, religion, and house ownership. For instance, the higher educational attainment the people hold, the more satisfied with their job they are. Yet, the respondent's religion is the factor that affects their job satisfaction. Specifically, Protestants are more satisfied with their job than the people whose religions are neither Protestant nor Catholic. In particular, the Americans whose house ownership status is in rent are 0.202 less satisfied with their job than those who own or are buying a house do. The result is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. However, the results reveal that there is no significant distinction between men and women in their job satisfaction. Similarly, people's religion, age, marital status are other ones that have no impact on their job satisfaction.

The findings from this paper are extremely vital and helpful for scholars, managers and practitioners alike, who are interested in the job satisfaction field. Furthermore, it considerably provides a valuable supplement to the literature on the relationship between demographic factors and job satisfaction. Nonetheless, this study takes the seven demographic factors into consideration of the relationship between them and job satisfaction. Yet, the findings from this paper confirm that only three of the seven demographic factors that have effects on job satisfaction. Thus, the coming research could add more demographic factors along with these seven factors to examine together the relationship between them and job satisfaction. Because this study was conducted in the United States where there are many differences rather than in the Vietnam setting such as race, religion, and so forth; for Vietnamese managers and practitioners, it is extremely substantial to deliberately consider implying the findings from this study in Vietnamese present context.

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