

Effects of Gender and Income on Job Satisfaction and Happiness

Brandon Kang, Maya Karri, Emma Klein, & Adanze Nnyagu · The University of Georgia

INTRODUCTION

Through the spillover effect, organizational theorists have suggested that an individual's career will affect their personal and non-work life (Bowling et al., 2010). To examine this relationship closer, we use the Job Demands-Resource (JD-R) Model, which describes a worker's job performance as being related to the relationship between the worker's job demands and job resources (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Based on this, the JD-R Model suggests that income level, a job resource, could lead to less strain, greater well-being, and better job performance. Thus, we sought to further study this relationship by examining a potential interaction of pay with job satisfaction as it relates to happiness. Similarly, we looked at how gender could potentially interact with job satisfaction and happiness due to an increase of dual-earner households in recent years. In previous years, the relationship between happiness and job satisfaction was higher for men (Tait, Padgett, & Baldwin, 1989), possibly due to societal norms.

BACKGROUND

Job Satisfaction

- The degree to which people enjoy their job and its various facets (Spector, 1997)
- The extent to which a person is satisfied or dissatisfied with their job

Happiness

- The degree to which people find pleasure in life (Veenhoven, 1984)

CURRENT STUDY

The spillover effect suggests that a person's job will impact their personal and non-work life (Bowling et al., 2010). This is to say that a person satisfied with their work life will be satisfied with their personal life as well, and vice versa.

H1: Job satisfaction and happiness will have a positive relationship.

It has been documented that pay level, or income, has a positive relationship with satisfaction (Judge et al., 2010). We believe that higher levels of pay will increase the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness.

H2: Income will moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness, such that increased income strengthens the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness.

As a result of shifting societal norms, gender is expected to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness.

H3: Gender will moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness.

METHOD

Sample:

- The sample used came from the General Social Survey, a nationally representative database which asks about American opinions every 1-2 years.
- A total of 32,743 respondents were collected from 1974 to 2018.

Measures:

Job Satisfaction:

1 item was used to assess job satisfaction on a 1-4 scale (reverse-coded). "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the work you do--would you say you are very satisfied, moderately satisfied, a little dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?"

Happiness:

1 item was used to assess happiness on a 1-3 scale (reverse-coded). "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days--would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?"

Moderators:

Respondents were asked to respond on a 1-12 scale with their level of income. They were also asked to indicate whether they identified as male or female.

RESULTS

In order to determine the relationship strength of job satisfaction on happiness, we used regression to test our first hypothesis.

- Our results indicate a significant relationship between job satisfaction and happiness ($\beta=.266$, $t=49.85$, $p<.001$). Supporting H1, increased job satisfaction predicts higher happiness.

In order to determine whether income or gender moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness, we used multiple regression with the appropriate interaction terms.

- Our results indicate that both income ($\beta=.013$, $t=2.50$, $p=.013$) and gender ($\beta=-.019$, $t=-3.609$, $p<.001$) moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness, supporting both H2 and H3.

DISCUSSION

- Gender and income are significant moderators of the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness.
- Based on our regression, there is evidence that income level can increase the effect of job satisfaction on happiness, though we observe a small effect size. This could be due to the defined intervals of income, i.e. $12 = >\$25,000$
- On the other hand, gender seems to moderate the hypothesized relationship by resulting in women having less of an increase in happiness as their job satisfaction increases compared to men. Though significant, we also observe a small effect size.
- Future research should look into other possible moderators of the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness, such as the location, presence of diversity task forces, and what differentiates the relationship between job satisfaction and happiness for women and men.
- This study included income data from the General Social Survey from 1974 to 2018 but did not account for inflation. This is a limitation of the data available and should be considered in future research.
 - It is also important to recognize the changing social patterns that took place within this time period.
 - In addition, future studies could look at the effect of moderators across time rather than as a single sample.

FIGURE 1

