



Predictors of Satisfaction with Life among People Working and Studying Extramural Simultaneously

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Abstract

The role of satisfaction with job as a factor of satisfaction with life was the main aim of this research. Data from 148 employees were collected. They were studying and working simultaneously. The research also contains other factors as partners relationships, some of personal resources as self-efficacy, the dominant mood and Causative and Community Orientations. Regardless of gender, age and family situation the main predictors of life satisfaction turned out to be self-assessment and job satisfaction.

Key words: *life satisfaction, job satisfaction, causative orientation, community orientation, self-assessment, self-efficacy*

Introduction

One of the more and more frequent phenomena observed in the society's activities is undertaking studies or post-graduate training courses in order to obtain new knowledge, skills and professional perspectives hoping to achieve more satisfying job position, higher income, or personal growth. The most generally undertaken educational activity is to affect the quality and satisfaction with life understood by Czapiński as „emotional and/or cognitive balance of life in the dimension valuing good-bad, pleasant-unpleasant” [2, p. 25]. According to Zalewska [2], satisfaction with life remains in a close, but ambiguous relationship with satisfaction with life and means a well-thought-out overall assessment based on cognitive processes, reflection on one's life, and value judgements. E. Diener [3] recognises satisfaction with life as the result of an individual comparing their life situation with the standards they adopted.

An important component of human activity realised over many years of life is work. Its effect is to secure existence, but also to ensure the possibility of realising individual predispositions, abilities, sometimes an important element of self-realisation, as well as a plane of social relations. An important factor affecting the quality of life is job satisfaction. It is a cognitive work evaluation, expressed in the form of value-cognitive judgements, referring to overall job satisfaction (assessment of work as a whole) or satisfaction with individual work components, e.g. work content or colleagues [2]. Among the important individual factors determining job satisfaction are age – there is an increase in satisfaction with age. According to Helen Bee [5], professional satisfaction reaches the highest level in the period of average adulthood, which is associated with professional experience and the pursuit of work relevance, i.e. a greater matching of work abilities and requirements, which results in higher satisfaction. The family environment is also an important factor determining job satisfaction. Employees who experience an intense conflict of professional and family roles reveal less job satisfaction. This is confirmed by studies by Zalewska [6] and Lubrańska [7].

Aim of the research

The main aim of this research was to investigate what factors serve as predictors of satisfaction with life. In general, it is believed that the level of satisfaction with life depends mostly on the conditions of existence and events in life. However, numerous studies by Czapiński [1] and Diener [4] indicate a short term effect of these factors and a significant relation between satisfaction with life and certain individual properties of a person, genetically determined or arising in the course of life. The former includes personality variables, e.g. extroversion expressed by the individual's need for relationships with others and skilful coping in them. Another important resource, based on predispositions acquired in the course of life, is a sense of self-efficacy. These variables are treated as individual's resources. According to the individual and social orientation [8], each person strives for efficacy, that is effectiveness in meeting their needs, possibilities and ambitions, but also, in accordance with the community orientation for the close ones, the satisfying relations with certain people.

The presented research includes three groups of variables hypothetically affecting positively or inhibiting the sense of satisfaction with life. These are: selected individual resources, social relations and indicator of self-efficacy. In adult life, an important manifestation of efficacy is job satisfaction due to the fact that it is an indicator of the relationship between individual possibilities and their optimal implementation available during work to varying degrees. The mobilising roles of job satisfaction are indicated, among others, by Łaguna's research [9].

According to Zalewska [6], job satisfaction evaluation is based on cognitive processes using thoughts and assessments regarding various aspects of our intrapsychic functioning (easy or difficult, interesting, engaging or boring, giving joy or anxiety) and interpersonal (relationships with other employees, comparison).

Subjects of the research

The presented research was conducted among students of various extramural studies of University of Social Sciences. The original group consi-

sted of 148 people, including 90 women and 58 men. Due to the significant dominance of young people, i.e. less than 30 years old, it was decided to perform a comparative analysis within two relatively homogeneous age groups. The first group consisted of young people aged 19-28, the second group was aged 29 to 54. Distinguishing the above-mentioned groups was dictated by the age of the respondents, but also their specificity. The younger of these groups was characterized by three common parameters: work, most often taken up recently, undertaking extramural studies suggesting the need to obtain greater professional skills, or plans for radical change of professional functions as well as young age and marital status (maiden/bachelor), which allows to conclude about relatively initial experience in the field of partnerships. This group consisted of 112 people, including 71 women and 41 men, only 6 women and 1 man in this group were in a relationship and only 4 people reported having a child. To sum up the presented data, this group was young, with no family obligations, all people had secondary education and worked. The average seniority was 3 years, $s = 2.23$.

The older group was varied in age, average age was 36.5, $s = 6.5$. This group included 19 women and 17 men, marital status: 16 singles, 17 in a relationship, 3 people after divorce. 23 people were parents. Work experience on average, 14.1 years, $s = 7.6$.

Methods

The following methods were used in the research:

Causative and community orientation by Bogdan Wojciszke. It contains 30 adjectives that identify causative or community properties. The task of the respondents is to determine to what extent a given feature characterises them using a seven-point scale.

GSES – Generalized Self Efficiency Scale by R. Schwarzer and M. Jerusalem in the Polish adaptation of Z. Juczyński. The scale consists of 10 statements comprising one factor. It measures the strength of an individual's general belief in the effectiveness of dealing with difficult situations and obstacles. It has high statistical accuracy parameters.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) created by E. Diener, R. A. Emmons, R. J. Larson, S. Griffin. Adaptation: Z. Juczyński. The scale contains 5 statements and a seven-point scale for their assessment by the examined person. It provides information about cognitive satisfaction assessment.

Satisfaction with Work Scale (SWS) by Anna Zalewska. Similar in form to SWLS. It provides information about the cognitive assessment of job satisfaction.

PFB Partner Relations Questionnaire (Partnerschaftsfragebogen) by Kurt Hahlweg (1996), which is used to diagnose the quality of relations between partners in relationships. The questionnaire contains 30 statements and covers three scales: mutual communication (MC), intimacy (I) and behavior in a quarrel (Q). Each scale contains 10 questions.

The Watson Scale for testing positive and negative moods. It contains 20 words describing different feelings. The task of the examined person is to determine the intensity of experienced emotions using a five-degree scale containing the possibilities from none or slightly to exceptionally.

I scale – prepared for the use of the reported research. The self-assessment contains 8 statements regarding health, skills, self-confidence and assessment of one's life choices. The answers contain four options, from definitely dissatisfied to definitely satisfied.

Work-Family and Family-Work Conflict Scale, in the Polish adaptation of A. Zalewska. The scale consists of 10 items, 5 of which relate to the two types of conflict mentioned above. The answers are marked on 7-step scale (from 1 – strongly disagree, to 7 – strongly agree)

Material analysis

The methods described above used in the study belong to three categories of variables, which hypothetically remain in relation to satisfaction with life.

Personality resources are: causative orientation, self-efficacy, predisposition to experiencing a positive or negative mood, perception and self-assessment (I variable).

Relationships with other people: the scale of partner relations (communication, intimacy, quarrels), community orientation.

Work-related: job satisfaction, work-family and family-work conflict.

The study groups were initially checked for similarities, taking into account within each of them the specificity of women and men. There were some differences in the „young” group: job satisfaction among women amounted to $x = 23.4$ and was significantly higher than among men:

$$x = 20.7, F = 3.99 p = .048.$$

Men more often than women indicated that they perceive family expectations as an obstacle to professional activity

$$K 16.89 < M 20.15 F = 17, 175 p = 000.$$

They also assessed the level of quarrels in partner relations as significantly higher compared to women

$$K x = 16.89 < M x = 20.15 \setminus F = 17.175 p = 000.$$

Finally, men had a more positive mood.

In group II (older age) there were no significant differences when comparing men and women.

Table 1. Relationships between satisfaction with life and other variables, including gender and groups. Spearman correlation coefficient

Satisfaction with life				
	Group 1 women	Group 1 men	Group 2	Both groups sum
Satisfaction with work	.416**	.504**	.485**	.460**
Sense of self-efficacy				.283**
Causative orientation	.330**	.255*		
Community orientation				
Relationships communication	.217*			.186*
Relationships intimacy				.135*
Relationships quarrels	-.235*	-.248	-.361*	-.273**

The specificity of the presented research is based on the common experience associated with the fact that despite work the subjects simultaneously started studying and therefore their current job satisfaction is insufficient. The specificity of the group described above suggests that:

1. Satisfaction with life is significantly related to job satisfaction
2. The role of job satisfaction is modified as the family ties and obligations increase (in this respect both groups differ significantly).
3. Predictors of life satisfaction are personality resources, i.e. a positive assessment of one's own abilities expressed in the I variable, predispositions associated with the dominant mood, causative orientation and a sense of self-efficacy.

The basic method for identifying the significance of relationships between the impact of the studied independent variables on life satisfaction is multiple linear regression using stepwise analysis. This method was used to define predictors within each of the research groups. The research was conducted separately with women and men due to the previously noted differences in the level of some of the variables treated as independent variables.

The basic predictors of satisfaction with life are job satisfaction and self-perception, i.e. I. This system repeats in both groups and does not depend on gender. In the group of examined women of older age and with longer professional experience, there is a variable regarding community orientation, i.e. mindfulness and attributing importance to relationships mainly with close relatives as a predictor of satisfaction with life. Men also have a trace predictor resulting from mood as a factor that positively (positive mood) or negatively (negative mood) affects the sense of satisfaction with life.

Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

Table 2. Multiple step regression results: Dependent variable – satisfaction with life. Independent variables: job satisfaction, partnerships, self-assessment, causative and community orientations, self-efficacy, the dominant mood, conflict between work and family

		R-kw	Corr. R	R Change	Beta stand.	t	p.i.
Group 1 women	Satisfaction with life	.642 .690	.412 .476	.403 .461	.533 .277	5.499 2.860	.000 .006
Group 1 men	Satisfaction with work Positive mood Negative mood	.495 .580 .623 .662	.482 .558 .592 .624	.495 .085 .042 .040	.397 .271 .264 -.247	2.960 2.757 2.381 -2.051	.005 .009 .023 .048
Group 1 sum	Satisfaction with work Relationships arguments	.421 .509 .538	.416 .500 .526	.421 .088 .029	.545 .303 .171	7.900 4.20 -2.564	.000 .000 .012
Group 2 women	Satisfaction with work Community orientation	.510 .733 .802	.480 .697 .759	.510 .223 .069	.637 .478 .268	4.707 3.535 2.202	.000 .03 .045
Group 2 men	Satisfaction with work	.521 .660	.489 .611	.521 .139	.722 .650	3.318 2.39	.005 .031

The next hypothesis contained the supposition of an increase in the predictor's strength related to job satisfaction when comparing both study groups. The change, although insignificant, is towards the strength of this predictor, while the influence of relationships with the loved ones disappears. In the younger group the factor „quarreks” in relationships appeared as a factor reducing life satisfaction, in the older group its impact is not noticeable. Perhaps this is a consequence of adapting with age to the variability of relationships with the loved ones or increasing tolerance, which resulted in minimising the impact of this variable on the sense of satisfaction with life.

The last, third, hypothesis assumed that the satisfaction with life also depends on the varied susceptibility to experiencing a positive or negative mood dominating in personality, focus on causative orientation and a sense of self-efficacy. Although the relationship between life satisfaction and the above variables is important, their role as predictors has not been confirmed.

Discussion of results

The conducted research raises a number of additional questions. The absence of predictors of self-efficacy is surprising, although the increase in this variable is significant when comparing older and younger people. It may be that the impact of this variable falls within the global result of self-perception and self-assessment (I variable) as an assessment of the degree of satisfaction with self-trust and self-confidence. A particularly interesting arrangement of the role of job satisfaction in life satisfaction would be to check the predictors in the group of people who take maximising their professional effectiveness without the intention of changing jobs. A group of young people who are new to work, most likely, are barely looking for a position to implement their usually just realized or acquired resources. They are only building the sense of self-efficacy. On the other hand, in the group of older people, the vast majority of respondents undertake studies in a field different from their professional activity, which suggests that they are consciously looking for a way to fulfil their professional preferences.

Also, the anonymity of the research is a factor conducive to a certain reflectionlessness when completing the tests, which on the one hand is a condition of increasing safety but also reduces the involvement of responders. The described research should be treated as significant empirical preparation for in-depth analysis of the problem.

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