

Encyclopedia of
**Industrial and
Organizational
Psychology**

1
Volume

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theories of absence. In part, this weaker relationship reflects the fact that people are absent for many reasons (e.g., illness, sick children), and it also reflects methodological challenges (e.g., often there are a few employees with very high absence rates, which affects the statistical distribution of absence). Recent evidence shows that job satisfaction is most likely to predict withdrawal when the various behaviors are considered together as part of a pattern, rather than when focusing on any single indicator of withdrawal.

SUMMARY

How much we like our jobs—our job satisfaction—is a critical concept in the study of work. Job satisfaction is likely to result in a number of positive benefits, both for individuals (their well-being, mental health, and life satisfaction) and for organizations (better performance, more citizenship, less counterproductive behavior, and less withdrawal). Importantly, job satisfaction can be changed. Even though our job satisfaction is in part a product of who we are, regardless of our job or work situation, our job satisfaction is also significantly affected by the work situation. In many instances, the work environment can and should be changed, such as by reducing excess workload, increasing levels of job autonomy, or introducing practices to reduce home–work conflict. Such change initiatives are especially likely to be successful in raising job satisfaction if one takes into account individual values and personality in this process.

—Sharon K. Parker

See also Attitudes and Beliefs; Job Design; Job Performance Models; Withdrawal Behaviors, Absenteeism; Withdrawal Behaviors, Lateness; Withdrawal Behaviors, Turnover

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JOB SATISFACTION MEASUREMENT

Job satisfaction may be measured for a variety of reasons. For example, a company may measure job satisfaction over time to assess trends in employee attitudes or reactions to a new policy or organizational intervention. Assessing job satisfaction might also serve a diagnostic purpose, identifying those aspects of the job with which employees are dissatisfied. As a last example, companies might measure job satisfaction to predict other important attitudes or behaviors (e.g., job turnover). In all instances, a useful measure is important.

WHAT MAKES A MEASURE OF JOB SATISFACTION USEFUL?

Is It a Good Measure?

Good measures are reliable (i.e., levels of job satisfaction that are in fact consistent over time demonstrate similar satisfaction scores), valid (i.e., the measure provides a pure measure of job satisfaction), discriminating (i.e., the measure of job satisfaction is equally sensitive to low and high reported levels), and comparable (i.e., the measure allows you to compare job satisfaction scores across groups). Developing a good measure requires significant expertise and

resources and should be undertaken by individuals with strong backgrounds in psychometrics and statistics. The unfortunately common strategy of writing a few items and assuming they provide a measure of job satisfaction is inappropriate. Without evidence of quality, homegrown measures may yield erroneous interpretations and conclusions.

Is the Measure Appropriate for Your Purposes?

Multiple good measures of job satisfaction are available, so the choice depends in part on purpose. For example, is the measure of job satisfaction easy to administer, score, and interpret? Does it support the types of interpretations needed (e.g., overall job satisfaction versus different areas or facets of job satisfaction)? Is the reading level appropriate? Is the measure available in different languages so that organizations can assess satisfaction in the first languages of employees throughout the world? Finally, how much does it cost? Answers to these questions will be very helpful in selecting the best possible measure of job satisfaction for the purpose at hand.

VARIATIONS IN MEASURES OF JOB SATISFACTION

Quantitative Versus Qualitative Measures

Quantitative measures of job satisfaction, based on numerical ratings assigned to closed-ended response items, are by far the most commonly used types of measures (and are preferred, given the characteristics of a good measure identified above). Structured interviews, content coding of open-ended response items, and other qualitative measures of job satisfaction offer an enriched interpretation of findings obtained from quantitative measures. They are not recommended in place of quantitative measures, because they do not lend themselves to drawing comparisons across groups of employees or organizations.

Overall Versus Facet

Given the different purposes for measuring job satisfaction, both overall and facet measures have been developed. *Overall* measures provide a global assessment of job satisfaction and may require the summation of several general items, the summation of items measuring a broad set of facet areas of satisfaction, or

both. *Facet* measures focus on the assessment of satisfaction with different aspects of the job, which typically include dimensions such as supervision, pay, coworkers, and the work itself. Unlike an overall rating, facet measures yield a diagnostic profile of satisfaction so that one may identify particular areas that might be high or low.

Single Versus Multiple Item Measures

It is appealing to think that a well-written single item will be a good measure of overall job satisfaction (e.g., "Overall, I am satisfied with my job") or different facets of job satisfaction (e.g., "My level of pay fails to meet my needs and expectations"). They would be short and easy to complete, score, and interpret. Unfortunately, they typically have low reliability and validity. Reviews of published measures of job satisfaction (see Further Reading) commonly include multiple items.

General Versus Occupation-Specific Measures

Most measures of job satisfaction are developed for use across occupations. These general measures are useful for most organizations. However, measures of satisfaction have been developed for specific employee populations (e.g., nurses, human service employees). Although such measures may be more sensitive to the particular issues of a profession or job grouping, they are not available for many occupations and prohibit cross-occupational comparisons.

LOCATING MEASURES OF JOB SATISFACTION

Mental Measurement Yearbook

The Mental Measurement Yearbook (MMY) is a serial publication available in most libraries and provides a somewhat comprehensive listing of a broad range of tests and measures. The MMY solicits external reviews by established researchers who critically evaluate new measures. However, with its broad range, it does not provide an all-inclusive listing of established measures of job satisfaction.

Compendia of Satisfaction Measures

There are compendia of job attitude measures, a number of which are included in the Further Reading

section at the end of this entry. Although some are dated and may not include recently developed measures of job satisfaction, compendia often provide summaries and recommendations that may help one choose among the many published measures.

Test Publishers

A large number of test publishers market measures of job satisfaction that were developed in-house by the publishers' professional staffs or that provide the marketing support for measures of job satisfaction developed by others. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to identify test publishers who specialize in measures of job satisfaction.

World Wide Web

Currently, Internet search engines can be used to locate Web pages that may provide information about measures of job satisfaction. Also, the electronic database PsycINFO includes more than 1,900 behavioral science journals. Unfortunately, current features of the search interface make it challenging to discriminate between articles about measures of job satisfaction and those that simply measure the construct.

Exemplar Measures of Job Satisfaction

Although a large number of measures of job satisfaction are available, and some may be more relevant given the specific purpose, a few measures are discussed here based on their excellent reputations as well-designed and useful.

Faces Scale

The Faces Scale, developed in the 1950s, measures overall satisfaction using a single, nonverbal item. Eleven faces appear along a continuum from a broad smile to a deep scowl, and respondents are asked to circle the face that best describes their overall job satisfaction. Despite the admonishments earlier in this discussion against using single-item measures, the Faces Scale has been shown to be a remarkably good measure of satisfaction with the job overall. It is simple to administer and score. It is unclear whether it is effective in cross-cultural situations. It can be

administered across a broad range of employees, although it may be less accepted by midlevel management or above. Overall, the Faces Scale is a quick and simple measure of overall job satisfaction.

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

The 20-item short form version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was developed in the 1960s to provide a comprehensive assessment of general job satisfaction. Each of the 20 items starts with a common *stem* ("On my present job, this is how I feel about:") and taps into some specific aspects of the job (e.g., "... Being able to keep busy all the time"; "... The working conditions"). Each item is scored on a five-point *very dissatisfied*–*very satisfied* scale and summed in an unweighted fashion for an overall measure of satisfaction. Item subsets can also be summed to provide scores on intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction, but recent research questions the quality of these two submeasures. Decades of accumulated research suggest that the MSQ provides a good measure of overall satisfaction.

Job Diagnostic Survey

The Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) measures job characteristics but also includes a five-item measure of overall job satisfaction. The items include positively worded statements (e.g., "Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job") as well as reverse-scored items (e.g., "I frequently think about quitting this job"). The items are scored on a seven-point *disagree strongly*–*agree strongly* scale and are summed in an unweighted fashion for an overall measure of satisfaction. The JDS job satisfaction scale is easy to administer and score and has been found to provide a good assessment of overall job satisfaction. However, two items focus on quitting, a related but different concept. Therefore, it may not be a pure measure of job satisfaction.

Facet-Specific Job Satisfaction

The Facet-Specific Job Satisfaction (F-SJS) measure includes 33 items to measure six distinct features of the job: comfort (e.g., "The hours are good"), challenge (e.g., "The work is interesting"), financial rewards (e.g., "The pay is good"), relations with coworkers (e.g., "The people I work with are friendly"),

resource adequacy (e.g., “My responsibilities are clearly defined”), and promotions (e.g., “Promotions are handled fairly”). Responses are scored using a four-point *very true–not at all true* scale, providing six distinct scale scores; the items can also be summed to provide an overall measure of job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction Survey

Originally developed for use in human service organizations, the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) includes 36 items that are scored on a six-point *disagree strongly–agree strongly* scale. Scored items are summed in an unweighted fashion for an overall measure of satisfaction. There are also nine facet scores: pay (e.g., “I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do”), promotion (e.g., “I am satisfied with my chances for promotion”), supervision (e.g., “My supervisor is unfair to me”), fringe benefits (e.g., “I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive”), contingent rewards (e.g., “When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive”), operating procedures (e.g., “I have too much paperwork”), coworkers (e.g., “I enjoy my coworkers”), nature of work (e.g., “I feel a sense of pride in doing my job”), and communication (e.g., “Communications seem good within this organization”). Score distributions from previously surveyed employees (primarily from public-sector and medical/ mental health organizations) are available online for comparison purposes.

Job Descriptive Index/Job in General

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI), first published in 1969 and revised in 1985 and 1992, is commonly cited as the most carefully developed and most frequently used measure of job satisfaction. It has been translated into a variety of languages, and national norms have been developed (and are regularly updated) to allow both within- and cross-organization comparisons. The JDI measures five facet areas of satisfaction that have been identified as important across many organizations: work itself, pay, opportunities for promotion, supervision, and the people with whom one works. The scale includes a total of 72 adjectives or short phrases, and respondents are asked to mark a “Y” (Yes, it describes my job), an “N” (No, it does not describe my job), or “?” (Cannot decide). The Job in General (JIG) measure was developed in 1989 to

provide a complementary measure of overall job satisfaction to the JDI. The JIG includes 18 items, using the same item design and response format as the JDI. The JDI and JIG can be completed by individuals with a third-grade or higher reading level and together take no more than 15 minutes to complete. More recently, abridged versions of the JDI and JIG have been developed in response to the desire for shorter measures that still include a broader range of scales and items. The Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI) contains a total of 25 items; the Abridged Job in General (AJIG) measure contains 10 items. Efforts are under way to offer online administration, scoring, interpretation, and report writing that are completely automated, a service that may be particularly helpful for midsized organizations that lack the expertise to do their own survey work.

—William K. Balzer and Jennifer Z. Gillespie

See also Attitudes and Beliefs; Customer Satisfaction With Services; Job Satisfaction; Morale; Organizational Surveys

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