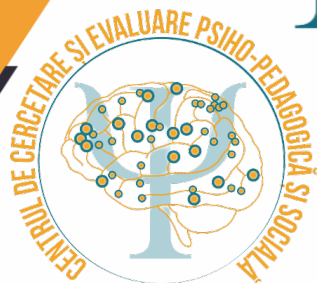




Faculty of
Psychology and
Educational Sciences
"Ovidius" University
of Constanta, Romania



BLACK SEA JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY



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9 772068 464001



The impact of job satisfaction on employee productivity at work

Cima Mihaela-Gabriela¹, Gîgă Maria², Călin Mariana Floricica³

^{1,2}Independent Researcher, Romania, ⁴Ovidius University of Constanta, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Romania
mihaela.cima@yahoo.com¹, maria.giga01@yahoo.com², fmarianacalin@gmail.com³

Abstract. Job satisfaction plays an essential role in determining organizational climate and employee performance within an organization. Given that people spend a significant part of their lives at work satisfaction levels must be high for them to perform. Thus, in this paper we set out to explore the complex relationship between job satisfaction and productivity ti highlighting how employee satisfaction impacts employee performance at the organizational level. The study sample consisted of 20 women and 16 men between the ages of 20 and 65. The study investigated 3 hypotheses that established a positive correlation between employee satisfaction and employee productivity at work.

Keywords. Job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, counterproductivity



1. Theoretical basis

1.1. Productivity

In order to understand the relationship between the two concepts it is necessary to first define them individually. Thus, productivity is a ratio to measure how well an organisation (or individual, industry, country) transforms input resources (labour, materials, machines, etc.) into goods and services. In some cases, productivity is measured by considering performance growth as when there is less absenteeism, fewer employees leaving early and fewer breaks during work; while performance growth can be measured by the number of units produced per employee per hour (Leblebici, 2012).

There are different definitions of productivity in the literature. Rolloos (1997) defined productivity as „what people can produce with the least effort”. Productivity is also defined by Sutermeister (1976) as „output per employee hour, quality considered”. Dorgan (1994) defines productivity as "functional and organisational performance growth, including quality".

1.2. Job satisfaction

Regarding job satisfaction, it refers to various aspects, including: salary and material benefits, promotions, recognition, work climate, supervision, colleagues and organizational politics. PP Neveanu, in „Dictionary of Psychology” (1978, p. 633), defines job satisfaction as a „complex psychological configuration, not always fully conscious, consisting of a set of positive attitudes of the person towards the work performed. This has the value of an important qualitative index of productive organizations and, at the same time, represents one of the major objectives of these organizations: in addition to economic performance, obtaining various products, social performance is also pursued, i.e. providing society with people satisfied in their work, professionally fulfilled, enjoying consideration, integrated and stable in the workplace”.

1.3. The relationship between job satisfaction and productivity

The relationship between productivity and job satisfaction is complex and interdependent, significantly affecting organisational performance. Understanding this link is essential for employers and leaders in their efforts to create and maintain a productive and healthy work environment. Here are some aspects of the relationship between productivity and job satisfaction.

1.3.1 Relationship and communication with supervisor

Employees' job satisfaction is significantly influenced by the type of relationship they have with their superior. The supervisor's management style defines the work atmosphere and “can direct the workforce” (SHRM 2012, 15).

Stable leadership, focused on supporting employees, has a positive impact on both job satisfaction and productivity. Leaders who communicate effectively, set clear expectations, provide guidance, and recognize employee contributions create an environment where individuals feel valued, which leads to greater job satisfaction and increased productivity.

Management focuses primarily on maximizing employee productivity. Thus, according to Sekar (2011), it focuses on two main areas of interest: personal motivation and the structure of the work environment.

Management, which dictates the exact way to maximize employee productivity, focuses on two major areas of interest: personal motivation and the structure of the work environment (Sekar, 2011). According to Pardee (1990, cited by Dumitru, 2015), motivational factors are related to aspects of work itself and through feelings of achievement and recognition of work,



work itself, a sense of responsibility and the possibility of professional development and advancement. Thus, it is important for leaders to take into account these aspects that determine workplace motivation, thereby increasing employee satisfaction and productivity.

Using a participative management style has been shown to have a positive effect on employee job satisfaction (Kim 2002, 232). Participative management practices involve managers and their subordinates participating together in information processing, decision making, and problem solving (Kim 2002, 232).

Singh and Pestonjee (1974, 408) point out that subordinates involved in decision-making processes have more positive attitudes, less absenteeism, lower staff turnover and are more productive. Thus, these engaged employees are more satisfied.

Haynes (2008) analyzes how behavior within the work environment influences productivity. It has been observed that in various work models, interaction contributes significantly to increased productivity, while distraction factors have a negative impact. Given that human resources constitute an essential asset of organizations and that the management style adopted can determine company performance, Patterson et al. (1997) identify several key elements for enhancing productivity:

Primary in ensuring employee motivation is goal setting. They fulfill a dual role within organizations: they guide the behavior of employees and stimulate them to achieve a higher level of efficiency (Richards, 1978). Transparency and openness in communication are vital to job satisfaction and increased productivity. Employees who are properly informed about the goals, expectations and changes in the organization feel a stronger connection to their work.

According to London et al (1999, 8), employee satisfaction is maximized when superiors support them, encourage them to voice their concerns, provide constructive feedback and help them develop their skills. Feedback is a two-way exchange of information and a means of conflict resolution between employee and supervisor. Although the process is formal in nature, it can be approached in a more informal manner by cultivating a close relationship between the two parties (Chandrasekar, 2011).

Support from superiors is crucial for employees to accomplish their tasks. Their interpersonal role is essential for developing positive relationships and strengthening employees' self-confidence (Chandrasekar, 2011). Experienced professionals are mentors for employees, aiming not only to increase their performance, but also their professional development and preparation for future roles. The most effective leaders in promoting employee satisfaction are those who cultivate an environment conducive to innovation, encourage finding innovative solutions to accomplish tasks, and initiate the necessary steps to effectively implement changes within the organizational framework (Fernandez 2008, 197).

1.3.2. Organisational climate and working group

When employees feel comfortable, supported and connected with their colleagues, they are more likely to enjoy their work and collaborate effectively. A positive atmosphere contributes to increased job satisfaction and improved productivity.

Employees spend a large amount of time at work and therefore organizations should take steps to ensure that the work environment is conducive for employees to be productive, satisfied and engaged (SHRM 2012, 32). Kalleberg (1977) and Emmert and Taher (1992) found that the work environment could have a positive effect on employee satisfaction.

Specifically, employees who perceive the environment positively and relate well with their colleagues display higher job satisfaction. Given that employees typically spend eight



hours a day at work interacting with colleagues, it is not surprising that the work group is a significant determinant of job satisfaction.

The quality of the work-group relationship identifies the degree to which co-workers are competent, helpful, friendly, and personally interested in the worker (Lambert 1991, 350). This psychological climate also includes "cooperation and friendliness among work group members, the perception that group members produce work of higher quality and quantity than other groups in the organization, and the existence of open lines of communication and trust among all members of the department" (Ellickson and Logsdon 2001).

Ellickson and Logsdon (2001, 175) stress the importance of removing all organisational barriers to improve employee attitudes. According to a survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management, 47% of respondents indicated that feeling safe at work was very important to their job satisfaction. This means that employees have certain expectations of the organization they work for in ensuring their safety.

From the perspective of Steers and Porters (1988, p.303-305), organizational climate (supervisory style, participation in decision making, size of group of individuals, relationships with colleagues, working conditions) is the second most important determinant of job satisfaction. At the same time, extensive scientific research by Roelofsen (2002) has provided information suggesting that improving the work environment results in reduced complaints and absenteeism and increased productivity. The indoor environment has the greatest effect on productivity relative to job stress and job dissatisfaction. It is evident in the results of Patterson et al. research (1997) that the more satisfied employees are with their workplace climate, the better the company is in terms of subsequent profitability and, in particular, productivity.

1.3.3. Training programmes

Lockley (2012) highlights that the development and implementation of training and development programs, which make a significant contribution to the personal and professional evolution of the individual, is an effective method for motivating employees. Furthermore, Lockley (2012) emphasizes the importance of these training and development initiatives being designed and implemented by third-party entities with appropriate skills and experience to enhance motivational elements.

Lehman (2014) also recognizes adequate training opportunities as an essential component of the job satisfaction model. Training is described as „a series of activities planned by an organization to increase job-related knowledge and skills, or to adjust the attitudes and social behavior of its members in ways aligned with organizational goals and specific job requirements” (Landy 1985, 306; Schmidt 2007, 483).

A rigorous training and development program benefits both the employee and the employer. The positive implications for organizations that implement effective training programs are varied and significant. Such organizations will find that they have better trained and satisfied employees, which contributes to increased productivity. Employees satisfied with training show greater loyalty to the organization, are more willing to embrace its goals and values, are motivated, willing to put in extra effort in their tasks, and are more inclined to stay with the organization (Schmidt 2007, 494).

1.3.4. Nature of work

When work itself is not stimulating, employees find it difficult to stay engaged, motivated and satisfied. Fifty-two percent of respondents to the Society for Human Resource Management survey indicated that "work itself" was a very important factor in determining



their job satisfaction. Lawler and Hall (1970) propose that jobs that allow employees more control, a chance to be creative, and are appropriate to their abilities are more satisfying than jobs that have low characteristics.

Turner and Lawrence (1965) developed the following six task attributes that are positively related to worker satisfaction: (1) variety; (2) autonomy; (3) required interaction; (4) optional interaction; (5) required knowledge and skills; and (6) responsibility.

The more workers experience these six task attributes, the greater their overall job satisfaction will be; whereas employees who routinely perform a task are more likely to feel unfulfilled and dissatisfied (Durst and DeSantis 1997). According to research by Stinson and Johnson (1977, 319), task repetitiveness, the extent to which an individual perceives himself or herself as performing the same task over and over again in a short cycle of time, consistently negatively affects satisfaction.

1.3.5. Opportunity for promotion

Furnishing avenues for skill enhancement and career progression is pivotal to augmenting both job satisfaction and productivity. Personnel perceiving prospects for advancement within the corporate structure are inclined to exhibit elevated levels of contentment and drive. As they refine their competencies and aptitudes, their contributions to the organization's triumph become more substantive. This dimension of career progression delineates a transparent trajectory for advancement, engendering a sentiment of purpose and commitment amongst employees.

Lehman (2014) identifies the prospect for advancement as the primary facet in the discourse on employee job satisfaction. This component encompasses various dimensions: the adequacy of promotional opportunities, the propriety in managing promotions, and the employer's commitment to ensuring equitable access to advancement for all personnel (Kalleberg 1977, 128).

In essence, the opportunity for promotion mirrors the degree to which promotional avenues are accessible and equitably distributed among the workforce (Lambert 1991, 350). One of the most disheartening experiences an employee may encounter is the perception of stagnation in their role, coupled with a lack of visible pathways for growth or elevation. Employees aspire to perceive that their efforts are directed towards a definitive objective and that their diligence and commitment will culminate in recognition and advancement through promotion.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research objective

The objective of this study is to identify the impact of job satisfaction on employee productivity.

2.2. Hypotheses

In the present research we started from the following hypotheses:

1. It is assumed that there is a correlation between job satisfaction and productivity.
2. It is assumed that there is a difference between the age groups 20-29 and 30-44 in terms of job satisfaction.
3. It is assumed that there is a difference between the age groups 20-29 and 30-44 in terms of productivity.



2.3. The group of participants

The work was carried out on a sample of 36 subjects, who received the necessary instruction to successfully complete the 2 questionnaires. The group of participants consisted of 20 women and 16 men, aged between 20 and 44, employed in organisations, coming from the same background, i.e. urban.

The sampling method we opted for is non-probability, i.e. convenience sampling, whereby we selected available participants, who volunteered to contribute to this work.

2.4. Choice and description of instruments

2.4.1. Job Satisfaction Evaluation Questionnaire

The Job Satisfaction Assessment Questionnaire was constructed by Spector, P. E. (1997) with the aim of assessing the relationship between job stress, job satisfaction and job involvement.

It was translated into Romanian by Horia Pitariu, with a cultural level 2 and is part of the ResearchCentral project. The questionnaire is composed of 36 items and subjects have to rate the extent to which the statements agree with them, through a 6-step Likert scale rating where 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Moderately disagree, 3-Slightly disagree, 4-Slightly agree, 5-Moderately agree, 6-Strongly agree.

This questionnaire has two types of scoring, direct and indirect. Direct scoring is done by assigning a value of 1 to the response with a low degree of agreement, i.e. when the individual does not identify with the statement. In the case of indirect rating, this is reversed, and the lower value will be given to the question that the subject feels strongly about and takes as such. At the end, the odds are summed to obtain the final value.

2.4.2. Counterproductive Behaviour Questionnaire

The Counterproductive Behaviours Questionnaire was constructed by Spector, Bauer and Fox (2010) in order to assess counterproductive workplace behaviour and organisational citizenship behaviour.

It was translated into Romanian by Coralia Sulea and Dragoş Iliescu, with a level 1 cultural adaptation and is part of the ResearchCentral project. The questionnaire consists of 10 items and the subjects have to assess to what extent the statements fit them, through a 5-step Likert scale rating where: 1 = Never, 2 = Once or twice a year, 3 = Once or twice a month, 4 = Once or twice a week, 5 = Daily.

This questionnaire has two types of scoring, direct and indirect. Direct scoring is done by assigning a value of 1 to the response with a low degree of acceptance, i.e. when the individual does not identify with the statement. In the case of indirect rating, this is reversed, and the lower value will be given to the question that the subject feels strongly about and takes as such. At the end, the odds are summed to obtain the final value.

2.5. Ethical aspects of research

The ethical aspects of the research were ensured by obtaining the consent of the subjects to participate in the research. The research was conducted online and participants' personal data were secured by encrypting their identity.

For those subjects who wished to know the results, these were communicated only in the form of scores, and not in the form of interpretation/benchmarking. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the results.



2.6. Experimental design

The two questionnaires were distributed to the participants by personal consent in an online version. They were chosen by a non-probability method, i.e. convenience sampling, whereby we selected available participants, who volunteered, with the lower age limit being 20 years old and the upper limit being 44 years old, falling within the status of employees in organisations. The sample comprised 36 participants, of which 20 were women and 16 were participants.

The resulting scores were statistically analysed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics version 20, as follows: correlations were made between the level obtained on different scales of employee satisfaction and productivity.

2.7. Hypothesis testing

2.7.1. Hypothesis 1

It is assumed that there is a correlation between job satisfaction and productivity.

In order to determine which test we need to apply to establish the correlation between the two variables, it is first necessary to establish their normality.

Table 1. Normality test for counterproductivity and job satisfaction

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Counterproductivity	,136	36	,089	,932	36	,030
Job Satisfaction	,089	36	,200*	,947	36	,085

Following the normality calculation, the significance threshold corresponding to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is greater than 0.05 for both satisfaction and counterproductivity. Thus, in the following a parametric method will be used to correlate the two variables.

Table 2. Pearson correlation test for counterproductivity and job satisfaction

Correlations			
		Counter productivity	Job Satisfaction
Counterproductivity	Pearson Correlation	1	-,464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004
	N	36	36
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-,464**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004	
	N	36	36

We note from the Pearson correlation test data that the significance threshold is less than 0.05, i.e. 0.004, which means that the hypothesis is confirmed. Thus, the correlation coefficient having a value of -0.464 means a moderate negative correlation between satisfaction and counterproductivity.



The reason why there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and productivity is that the two are largely influenced by the same factors.

High job satisfaction automatically implies high motivation. When employees feel that they are valued, they are likely to put more effort and resources into achieving both their personal and organisational goals. This leads to increased organisational productivity.

Although job satisfaction and job motivation are often confused or considered synonymous, Gibson (apud. Pertomode, 1991) pointed out that job satisfaction contributes to job motivation. Occupational motivation refers to goal-focused behaviours, while satisfaction refers to a sense of fulfilment.

At the same time, studies (Muogbo, 2013) exploring the relationship between motivation and performance show that motivation strongly contributes to and increases employee productivity in the organization.

At the same time, positive workplace relationships also underpin both concepts. Once the team is cohesive and cooperative, employees support each other and are encouraged to contribute to the team, which directly impacts the productivity of the organisation.

Studies such as Eisenberg's (2013) show that the main reason for keeping the current job is good relationships with co-workers. Thus, once the organization's employees are consistent, its productivity increases because the time spent hiring and training new employees decreases.

Thus, satisfaction and productivity are directly proportional and contribute to the long-term success of the organization.

2.7.2. Hypothesis 2

It is assumed that there is a significant difference in job satisfaction between the 20-29 and 30-45 age groups.

In order to determine which test we need to apply to compare the two samples, it is first necessary to establish their normality.

Table 3. Age normality test for job satisfaction

		Tests of Normality ^a					
Age		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	20-29 years	,15	18	,200*	,920	18	,131
	30-44 years	,167	16	,200*	,883	16	,043

After calculating normality, the significance threshold corresponding to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is greater than 0.05 in both the 20-29 and 30-44 age groups. Thus, a parametric method will be used below to compare the two samples.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test for comparing the two samples in terms of job satisfaction

Independent Samples Test



		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.		df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Job Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	,307	,583	-,680	32	,502	-7,021	10,331	-28,064	14,023
	Equal variances not assumed			-,671	28,706	,508	-7,021	10,470	-28,444	14,402

We note from the Independent Samples Test data that the significance threshold is greater than 0.05, respectively 0.502 and 0.508, which means that the hypothesis is not confirmed.

Some research suggests that there is a significant difference in job satisfaction by age, while others claim that this difference is negligible or non-existent.

Younger people may experience job satisfaction through the prospect of growing and building a career while developing their skills and gaining satisfaction from achieving goals and career progression.

On the other hand, older people can benefit from the stability and experience gained in their careers and find satisfaction in applying their acquired knowledge and skills more effectively and achieving a better work-life balance.

It is important to stress that there is no direct and universal relationship between age and job satisfaction. Each individual has different needs, preferences and goals and it is therefore essential to provide a fair and inclusive work environment that meets the needs and expectations of all employees, regardless of age.

Ng and Feldman's (2012) study analyzed job satisfaction data from a sample of approximately 3,300 employees in the United States and found no significant differences in satisfaction between younger and older employees.

Barrick et al. (2009) conducted research analyzing a compilation of 92 studies and found that although there was a slight decrease in job satisfaction as people got older, this difference was negligible and the explanation was not age per se, but other factors such as experience and career progression.

Another study by Parkes et al. (2018) claims that after analyzing data from over 6,000 employees and found no significant differences in job satisfaction between employees of different ages. They concluded that individual and environmental factors, as well as organizational context, play a more significant role in job satisfaction than age.

2.7.3. Hypothesis 3

It is assumed that there is a significant difference between the 20-29 and 30-44 age groups in terms of counterproductivity.

In order to determine which test we need to apply to compare the two samples, it is first necessary to establish their normality.



Table 5. Age normality test for counterproductivity

		Tests of Normality ^b					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
Age		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Counterproductivity	20-29 years	,178	18	,138	,860	18	,012
	30-44 years	,219	16	,039	,918	16	,157

Following the normality calculation, the significance threshold corresponding to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is greater than 0.05 for both the 20-29 age group and less than 0.05 for the 30-44 age group. Thus, a non-parametric method will be used below to compare the two samples.

Table 6. Table Ranks by age for counterproductivity

		Ranks		
Age		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Counterproductivity	20-29 yrs	18	17,97	323,50
	30-44 yrs	16	16,97	271,50
	Total	34		

The Ranks table shows the average of both groups on the counterproductivity scale. Thus, we see that for the 20-29 age group, the mean is equal to 17.97, and for the 30-44 age group the mean is equal to 16.97. This reinforces the final result that this difference is not significant

Table 7. Mann-Whitney U test for counterproductivity

Test Statistics ^b	
	Counterproductivity
Mann-Whitney U	135,500
Wilcoxon W	271,500
Z	-,295
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,768
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,772 ^a

We note from the Mann-Whitney test data that the significance threshold is greater than 0.05, i.e. 0.768, which means that the hypothesis is not confirmed.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between age and workplace productivity, it is important to consider multiple perspectives and examine the specifics of the organizational and industry context. It is essential to avoid generalisations and to value diversity and the individual contributions of employees regardless of age.

A study published in American Psychologist in 2017 analyzed data from more than 100 studies and concluded that the relationship between age and productivity is far more complex than age stereotypes suggest. The authors pointed out that factors such as motivation, experience, and health may influence productivity more than age itself.



Another 2018 study, published in the Journal of Business and Psychology, analyzed data from several organizations and found that age was not a significant predictor of job performance or outcomes when other relevant variables, such as level of engagement and resilience, were taken into account.

Haynes, Suckley and Nunnington (2017) argue that workplace productivity does not differ by age and one reason may be that employees receive equal benefits and compensation as well as a pleasant environment where there is no discrimination.

Also, an age mix in the workplace allows older and younger people to benefit from their comparative advantages, with older people bringing experience and knowledge gained over the years, providing different perspectives and guidance. Younger people bring fresh ideas, energy and advanced technological skills. This diversity in teams can stimulate creativity, improve decision-making and solve complex problems, leading to increased collective productivity.

These and other studies highlight the importance of looking at each employee individually and recognising the diversity of skills and experiences. They highlight that age itself is not a significant predictor of productivity and that competency-based approaches and adaptability should take precedence in assessing workplace performance.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of this study highlight the directly proportional relationship between job satisfaction and workplace productivity. The evidence presented strongly supports the idea that job satisfaction serves as a catalyst for increased productivity among employees. As individuals feel fulfilled and satisfied with their work at work, they are more likely to invest their time and efforts with enthusiasm, dedication and commitment. The positive correlation between job satisfaction and productivity highlights the importance of prioritising employee well-being and promoting a work environment that values employee contributions.

The results of the study align with existing literature, highlighting that satisfied employees not only exhibit improved job performance, but also contribute to the overall success of the organization. The significance of motivational factors and workplace relationships is defining for employee performance.

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