








“Job satisfaction in the light of gender in the engineering sector in Slovakia”

AUTHORS	Eva Živčicová 
	 Tatiana Masárová 
	 Monika Gullerová 
	
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Eva Živčicová, Ph.D., Faculty of Social
and Economic Relations, A. Dubcek
University in Trenčín, Slovakia.
(Corresponding author)

Tatiana Masárová, Ph.D., Faculty of
Social and Economic Relations, A.
Dubcek University in Trenčín, Slovakia.

Monika Gullerová, Ph.D., Faculty of
Social and Economic Relations, A.
Dubcek University in Trenčín, Slovakia.



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Eva Živčicová (Slovakia), Tatiana Masárová (Slovakia), Monika Gullerová (Slovakia)

JOB SATISFACTION IN THE LIGHT OF GENDER IN THE ENGINEERING SECTOR IN SLOVAKIA

Abstract

Job satisfaction covers all factors affecting a particular work activity. Gender is one of the internal job satisfaction factors. The purpose of the paper was to find job satisfaction differences related to gender in selected characteristics of employees working in the engineering sector. A questionnaire method was used to conduct the survey. Questionnaire items were selected from the questionnaire developed by Paul E. Spector (1994) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). The respondents were employed in a Slovak engineering company, and the sample consisted of 60 respondents with balanced basic and specific characteristics. Paper questionnaires were distributed to the respondents while observing all the ethical rules of the survey. The results are expressed in means, standard deviations and p-values. In addition, a two-sample t-test was used. It was found that job satisfaction is perceived differently by male and female workers in the areas examined. Statistically significant differences were established in the areas of remuneration, recognition, and use of one's abilities at work. Statistically insignificant areas of job satisfaction include meaninglessness of work, experiencing happiness at work more than others, and satisfaction with the relationship with supervisors.

Keywords

career advancement, gender differences, internal factor,
pay satisfaction, questionnaire, relationships with
superiors, two-sample t-test

JEL Classification

M51, M54

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction covers all the factors affecting a particular work activity. There are external and internal job satisfaction factors. External job satisfaction factors cover workplace environment, occupational health and safety, type and nature of work, remuneration, social environment, management style, etc. Internal job satisfaction factors are those related to employee age, length of employment with a company, marital status, and gender. The paper addresses gender, and the correlation between gender and job satisfaction. The ways employees deal with everyday job-related tasks and situations are reflected in their level of satisfaction. Therefore, it is necessary to be familiar with the basic factors affecting job satisfaction. The studies on gender differences in job satisfaction fall into the following three categories:

1. Research studies on women having higher average levels of job satisfaction compared to men. They include research studies by Bartol and Wortman (1975), Clark (1996, 1997), Sloane and Williams (2000), Wharton and Rotolo (2000), Kim (2005), Okpara et al. (2005), Bender and Heywood (2006), Kaiser (2007), Miao et al. (2017), Zou (2015), Lacic (2019) and others.

2. Research studies on women having lower levels of job satisfaction compared to men, such as the studies by Forgionne and Peeters (1982), Mora and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2009).
3. Research studies with no differences or just a few differences of significance between women's and men's job satisfaction, such as the studies by Brief (1975), Smith and Plant (1982), Eskildsen et al. (2004), Frye and Mount (2007), Yukawa (2014), Meyerding and Lehberger (2018) and others.

The theory of women's higher job satisfaction is explained in several ways. First, women's higher job satisfaction is due to their lower work expectations deriving from their weaker position in the job market. Thus, women tend to be satisfied with lower pay and rewards, and less opportunities for career advancement (Hodson, 1989).

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

In today's turbulent business environment, attracting and retaining valuable human resources have become one of the primary means of competitive advantage. The job satisfaction of current employees is an essential element of organizational success (Staniec & Kalińska-Kula, 2021). Job satisfaction is perceived as a psychological category, an individually variable, widely conditioned, yet a universal phenomenon, which expresses the degree of psychological adjustment of an individual with their work, its features and characteristics. Locke (1976) and Nakonečný (2005) described job satisfaction as a pleasurable or generally positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. It is about having positive attitude to work. Job satisfaction is linked to many variables and is related to absenteeism, turnover and pay. Job satisfaction level can be expressed as a difference between an expected and actual work situation multiplied by the significance level of the identified difference (Locke, 1976; Nakonečný, 2005, p. 112). Nakonečný (2005) argues job satisfaction to be a broad concept covering all the factors affecting a particular work activity. The factors range from employee's personality, such as, for instance, his/her values, needs, degree of integration with informal norms to physical factors of the working environment. Job satisfaction also includes satisfaction with the work one is performing. Drawing on the works by Kollárik (1979, 1986, 2002), Výrost and Slaměník (1998), Hodson (1989), Fecková and Kopaničáková (2015), external and internal job satisfaction factors can be distinguished. The former encompasses workplace environment, occupational health and safety, type

and nature of work, remuneration, social environment, management style, etc. The latter includes employee age, length of employment with a company, marital status, and gender. The factors range from employee's personality such as, for instance, his/her values, needs, degree of integration with informal norms, as well as physical factors of the working environment. Job satisfaction also includes satisfaction with the work one is performing. Drawing on the work by Xiaohua et al. (2020), the relevant factors for job burnout and job satisfaction were as follows: the nature of the work, pay, benefits and communication affected job satisfaction and job burnout. A variety of tasks, working conditions, workload, and career perspectives determine a large part of job satisfaction (Roelen et al., 2008). It was found that higher job levels go hand in hand with job satisfaction (Robie et al., 1998).

There is an extensive body of literature on gender differences in job satisfaction. Works by Clark (1997), Sloane and Williams (2000), Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza (2003), Long (2005), Gazioglu and Tansel (2006), Kollárik (1979), Katzell et al. (1961) point to gender differences in job satisfaction. Most of the authors conclude that women on average exhibit higher job satisfaction levels than men. It is also believed that these may be misleading conclusions when taking into account the gender pay gap or occupational segregation by gender.

Research studies have produced several findings. Fecková and Kopaničáková (2015) found that male workers reported higher levels of job satisfaction than their female counterparts. The authors believe that women's dissatisfaction can mainly be attributed to pay discrimination. Other studies

link the job satisfaction of female workers to their parenting role. Fecková and Kopaničáková (2015), however, compared two studies with contradictory findings. Crosby (1982) found single female workers and married female workers without children to be less satisfied with their jobs relative to married women with children. Hodson (1989), on the other hand, found that working women with children under the age of six show greater job dissatisfaction than those without young children.

Different expectations of men and women seem to have a significant impact on the level of job satisfaction. Kollárik (1979) argues that male workers strive to get on at work, be recognized and paid competitively. Moreover, they try to use all their abilities to achieve and be everything they possibly can, influence and manage the work of others, and support the family. In general, these goals are not easily achievable. For women, on the other hand, the main sources of satisfaction or motivation are the social aspects of work, which are not that difficult goals to achieve, such as, for instance, flexitime, good workplace relationships, and the like (Jurgensen, 1978).

Concerning personal expectations, peer comparisons play a major role. In this case, women's higher levels of job satisfaction may be due to their using different comparisons groups. Crosby (1982) reports that most workers compare themselves to someone of the same sex when evaluating their jobs. Thus, higher levels of job satisfaction in women are linked to comparing themselves with other working women rather than men. Moreover, they compare themselves with additional reference groups, such as sisters, other friends, housewives or other working women. Married women, however, do not include their spouses in the reference or comparison groups, even though they might. Hodson (1989) says that wives with a better-educated and higher-earning husband do not consider that a reason for being dissatisfied. Husbands with better-educated or more goal-oriented wives find this situation highly stressful. That is why they will always strive to catch up with or even outperform their wives.

The findings may imply that women give priority to family life satisfaction. In such circumstances, the family is an alternative source of satisfaction

for women. Consequently, they will view work-related issues in a softer light (Hodson, 1989).

Moreover, there are also differences in the valued characteristics of the job for men and women. They include major job satisfaction determinants, such as occupational prestige, earnings, education, job competence, level of authority exercised, work pressure, responsibility, control, or level of optimism about the future job prospects, etc. (Hodson, 1989).

As aforementioned, men's higher job satisfaction can be ascribed to the dissatisfaction of women with their inferior position in the labor market (with various aspects of unfair treatment) (Fecková & Kopaničáková, 2015; Kostelná & Búgelová, 2000).

Similar findings have been produced in the study conducted in Islamabad by Nayab Fatima et al. (2015). They claim that women experience lower levels of job satisfaction relative to men, which can be attributed to socio-cultural characteristics of the country. Pakistan is a male-dominated society in which females have less chances for advancement. Women in Pakistan are regarded to have low decision power and confidence. Thus, males are considered a huge obstacle in the way of female professional careers, and hence their lower level of job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction was also researched by Janssen and Backes-Gellner (2011) who looked at job satisfaction in the light of gender and work stereotypes. The results of their work suggest that women in stereotypically male jobs exhibit lower levels of job satisfaction relative to men. On the other hand, they were found to have higher levels of job satisfaction than men in terms of income, which is lower than that of their male counterparts.

The purpose of the study is to find gender differences in job satisfaction. The following hypotheses were set:

H1: There is a difference in the average level of overall job satisfaction between men and women. There is a statistically significant difference in the level of overall job satisfaction between men and women. A higher level of job satisfaction in women is assumed.

H2: *There is a statistically significant gender difference in career advancement. Higher level of job satisfaction among men is assumed.*

H3: *There is a statistically significant difference in pay satisfaction in women.*

H4: *There are statistically significant gender differences in job satisfaction when it comes to relationships with superiors. Higher satisfaction levels are assumed to be identified in male workers.*

2. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

A questionnaire method was used to conduct the survey. The questionnaire items were mostly taken from the questionnaire developed by Paul E. Spector (1994). Only those questions were included that addressed ten areas under the research focus, such as the content and nature of work, remuneration and pay, recognition, career advancement, attitude to work, social environment (co-workers), relationship to superiors, employee benefits, work and work organization, working conditions. In addition, three items from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) were included to achieve the purpose of the study. The questionnaire consisted of 24 closed-ended questions. In each questionnaire item, respondents were asked to express their attitudes on a 5-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

The results are expressed in absolute numbers, weighted score, means, and standard deviations. In addition, a two-sample t-test was used.

Paper questionnaires were distributed to the respondents while observing all the ethical procedures related to conducting surveys.

2.1. Research sample

The respondents are female and male shift workers in a bearing production plant. This Slovak engineering plant has the total headcount of more than 5,000 employees with var-

ious educational attainment and remuneration. A sample of 60 respondents with balanced basic and specific characteristics was selected. The sample consisted of 30 female and 30 male respondents, and was matched in the following: a company, vertical position, duties/responsibilities, and performing comparable jobs. Doing so, this study tried to eliminate or minimize the impact of differences in environment or job assignment on the job satisfaction scores. The female and male respondents work shifts in teams together in a bearing manufacturing company. The respondents perform non-manufacturing tasks, their duties mostly include operating and checking machines.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, selected items from the job satisfaction questionnaire are given to illustrate gender differences in job satisfaction.

As Table 1 shows, women experience higher levels of satisfaction with their pay compared to men. The p -value is less than 0.05, thus gender differences related to pay satisfaction are statistically significant.

The results show a predominance of male dissatisfaction and female satisfaction, which is confirmed by Student's t-test, p -value = 0.006. The p -value is less than 0.05, therefore, gender differences on the statements related to a good job recognition are statistically significant.

No statistically significant difference was found in this area work between men and women, p -value is higher than 0.05.

Kollárik (2002) argues that employees are more satisfied when their job suits their abilities. The research findings show women to be more satisfied than men; the difference is statistically significant.

H1: *There is a difference in the average level of overall job satisfaction between men and women. Table 6 shows that female workers experience higher job satisfaction relative to male workers. Thus, H1 is accepted.*

Table 1. I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do

Source: Authors' own research data.

Gender	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	p-value
Men	1	18	2	8	1	2.67	1.03	0.003*
Women	0	9	1	15	5	3.53	1.11	0.003*

Note: * $p < 0.05$.**Table 2.** When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive

Source: Authors' own research data.

Gender	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	p-value
Men	8	8	7	7	0	2.43	1.14	0.006*
Women	4	5	4	10	7	3.37	1.38	0.006*

Note: * $p < 0.05$.**Table 3.** I sometimes feel my job is meaningless

Source: Authors' own research data.

Gender	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	p-value
Men	8	12	4	4	2	2.33	1.21	0.278
Women	13	9	4	3	1	2.00	1.14	0.278

Note: * $p < 0.05$.**Table 4.** My job is enjoyable

Source: Authors' own research data.

Gender	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	p-value
Men	1	4	10	14	1	3.33	0.88	0.899
Women	2	4	10	9	5	3.37	1.13	0.899

Table 5. I have the chance to do work that is well suited to my abilities

Source: Authors' own research data.

Gender	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	p-value
Men	0	6	5	17	2	3.5	0.9	0.043*
Women	0	3	2	18	7	3.97	1.83	0.043*

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

Table 6. Overall job satisfaction and gender

Source: Authors' own research data.

Question No.	Average value for male employees	Average value for female employees
1	2.67	3.53
2	4.17	4.17
3	3.3	4.03
4	2.43	3.37
5	2.37	2.27
6	3.67	4.0
7	3.17	3.7
8	2.47	3.3
9	3.77	3.8
10	2.37	3.1
11	3.33	3.37
12	3.03	3.43
13	3.0	3.63
14	2.57	2.57
15	4.3	4.47
16	2.43	2.9
17	3.8	3.9
18	2.37	3.3
19	2.5	3.07
20	2.63	3.17
21	3.4	3.5
22	3.5	3.97
23	3.03	3.4
24	3.13	4.07
Overall satisfaction	3.06	3.5
Standard deviation	1.21	1.28
P-value	0.038*	0.038*

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

H2: *There is a statistically significant gender difference in career advancement. Higher level of job satisfaction among men is assumed.*

Table 7. Career advancement and job satisfaction

Source: Authors' own research data.

Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	P-value
Men	2.47	1.2	0.015*
Women	3.3	1.37	0.015*

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

Table 7 indicates a statistically significant difference in the assessment of career opportunities between men and women. H2 is, however, not supported, since higher job satisfaction in men was assumed. The mean value shows that men are less satisfied than women. Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

H3: *There is a statistically significant difference in pay satisfaction in women.*

Table 8. Job satisfaction and pay

Source: Authors' own research data.

Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	P-value
Men	2.84	1.15	0.026*
Women	3.26	1.29	0.026*

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

As seen in Table 8, the p-value is less than 0.05, thus hypothesis 3 is accepted. There is a statistically significant gender difference in pay. There is higher pay satisfaction in female workers than in male workers.

H4: *There are statistically significant gender differences in job satisfaction when it comes to relationships with superiors. Higher satisfaction levels are assumed to be identified in men.*

Table 9. Job satisfaction and relationship with superiors

Source: Authors' own research data.

Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	P-value
Men	2.63	1.22	0.307
Women	3.44	1.39	0.307

Regarding the relationship with superiors, the mean value is higher in male respondents, thus their satisfaction is higher than in female respondents. As the p-value is higher than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in the level of satisfaction with supervisor between male and female workers. Hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Statistically insignificant differences in job satisfaction were found in meaningfulness of work (Table 3), experiencing happiness at work more than others (Table 4), and the satisfaction with the relationship with supervisors (Table 8). Statistically significant were the differences in satisfaction with the reward for the work done (Table 1), satisfaction with recognition (Table 2), satisfaction with the abilities used at work (Table 5).

Work motives are driven by psychophysiological and social factors. Women value working conditions, especially good relationships with their peers and superiors. Men, on the other hand, val-

ue the content, nature, creativity and social significance of their work. Fecková and Kopaničáková (2015) say that higher job satisfaction was reported in female workers than in male workers in most foreign studies (e.g., Clark, 1997; Sloane & Williams, 2000; Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2003; Long, 2005; Zou, 2015). The authors consider the outcomes debatable as there is both gender-based and occupational segregation in favor of men (including in terms of pay and promotion). This may be due to women's lower work expectations (in relation to pay, career) as they connect family and work life more than men. They attach more importance to family satisfaction than work satisfaction. Their work expectations are more viable (flexible working hours, good relations at work – with peers, supervisors, recognition). Male workers, on the other hand, strive to get on, to be rec-

ognized and well paid, which is more difficult to achieve. Similar findings are reported by Katzell et al. (1961) and Kollárik (1979). The conclusions by Gazioglu and Tansel (2006) also support these findings (e.g., pay satisfaction was 48.9% in female workers and mere 45.7% in male workers). Various research studies analyzed the relationship between job satisfaction and parental role. Hodson (1989) found that childless women are more satisfied than working women with preschool children (Fecková & Kopaničáková, 2015). In addition, Crosby (1982) concluded that married, employed women were more satisfied with their jobs than single employed women or married employed women without children. Rošková and Poláková (2012) and Fecková and Kopaničáková (2015) also examined the relationship between personality type and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The survey aimed at identifying gender-related differences in job satisfaction. 60 respondents working in an engineering company took part in the survey the purpose of which was to identify the factors of overall job satisfaction, as well as job satisfaction in individual work-related areas. The survey outcomes show that some areas exhibit statistically significant gender-related differences in job satisfaction, while others do not. Statistically insignificant differences in job satisfaction were found in meaninglessness of work, experiencing happiness at work more than others, and the satisfaction with the relationship with supervisors. Statistically significant were the differences in satisfaction with the reward for the work done, satisfaction with recognition, satisfaction with the abilities used at work. Concerning the statistically significant differences, female workers were found to be more contented than male workers with reward and use of their abilities at work. Out of four, two hypotheses were accepted, since statistically significant gender-related differences in pay and overall job satisfaction were established. These findings are rather surprising given the persistent wage gap and unequal working conditions between male and female workers in Slovakia. When interpreting the findings, the social roles of men and women, the position of women in the world of work and their happiness with lower pay and/or their willingness to accept the mindset of society and discrimination should be considered. In addition, the primary social role of women as mothers and their family orientation should be given attention. To make the results of the study more comprehensive, further research should address job-related motivation, expectations, aspirations, and the structure of men's and women's value orientation. It is believed that these findings might provide the reasons for the existence of gender-related differences in job satisfaction.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Monika, Gullerová.

Data curation: Eva Živčicová.

Formal analysis: Tatiana Masárová.

Funding acquisition: Eva Živčicová.

Investigation: Tatiana Masárová.

Methodology: Eva Živčicová.

Project administration: Tatiana Masárová.

Resources: Tatiana Masárová.
Software: Monika Gullerová.
Supervision: Monika Gullerová.
Validation: Eva Živčicová.
Visualization: Monika Gullerová.
Writing – original draft: Eva Živčicová.
Writing – review & editing: Tatiana Masárová.

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