

Supervisor-Employee Relationship in Relation to Job Satisfaction

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Abstract: Job satisfaction plays an important role in job performance, positively influencing it. Successful companies should achieve maximal employee job satisfaction and therefore better performance of a company. Although many factors affect job satisfaction, it is needed to mention the supervisor (leader) – employee relationship. This study aims to determine whether the answers of non-supervisory and manager/supervisory employees differ in relation to job satisfaction and how individual groups evaluate the sub-questions focused on information about the relationship with supervisors and communication in the company. The available results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between job satisfaction ratings between non-supervisory employees and manager/supervisory employees ($p = 0.0002$). When rating the supervisor-focused sub-questions, there were statistically significant differences between males and females in both work positions and then between males from non-supervisory and manager/supervisory employees.

Keywords: job satisfaction; employee; supervisor

JEL Classification: J16; J28; O52

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction is a concept that authors have been dealing with for many years and many definitions for job satisfaction were used (Locke, 1976; Cook et al., 1981; Robbins, 2005; Gupta et al., 2014; Lu et al., 2012; Qureshi & Hamid, 2017; Roberts & Meredith, 2020). The job satisfaction concept expresses how much a given person is satisfied with her work. Job satisfaction is then related to performance, motivation, leadership, moral approach, life satisfaction, etc. (Abuhashesh et al., 2019; Parvin & Kabir, 2011). It has a significant place in the efficiency of business organizations because the satisfied employee (usually motivated to work) = happy employee = successful employee (with increased work performance) (Aziri, 2011; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). It was also found that “firms with higher employee satisfaction have a lower cost of equity” (Fu et al., 2023).

Job satisfaction is affected by several factors, in more recent literature e.g., Spector (1997) described extrinsic factors as working conditions (physical and social), job security and remuneration, and intrinsic factors as the relationship with colleagues, recognition, and advancement (Spector, 1997). A few years later other authors mentioned five aspects of job satisfaction (see Figure 1) (Tentama, 2020).

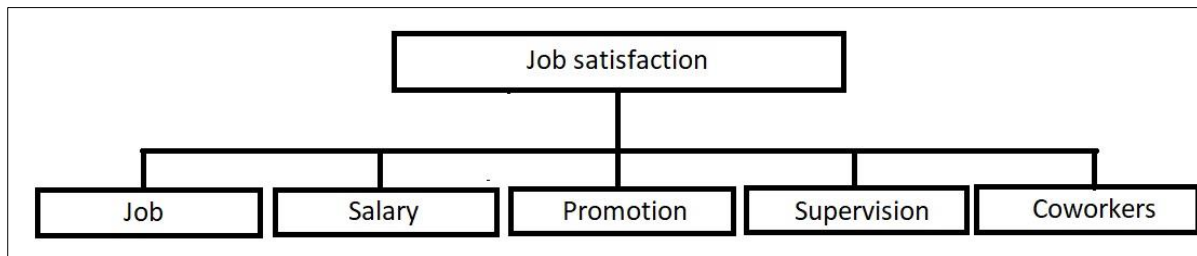


Figure 1. Job satisfaction model (own processing with the use of Tentama, 2020)

Although different authors talk about different aspects of job satisfaction, Spector's (1985) nine aspects of job satisfaction are often used – Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Benefits, Co-workers, Nature of work, and Communication (Spector, 1985).

Each aspect can be specified and if we focused on supervision, it “covers employees’ perception, reaction, and emotion towards the supervision quality and leadership style of their leader” (Tentama, 2020). Supervision also includes a leader’s attention to employees or participation in the decision-making process (Tentama, 2020).

Supervision significantly affects job satisfaction (Mahlangu & Govender, 2015). The direct and indirect effect of supervision on job satisfaction was found, and it could be stated, that the better the supervision, the higher job satisfaction (job satisfaction can be increased by supervision) (Hidayatullah et al., 2020). The supervisor’s behavior needs to be paid attention to in the company because it affects either work engagement and performance but workplace spirituality too (which has positive effects on burnout, well-being, and job satisfaction) (De Carlo et al., 2020).

This study aims to determine whether the answers of non-supervisory and manager/supervisory employees differ in job satisfaction and how individual groups evaluate the sub-questions focused on information about the relationship with the supervisor and communication in the company.

2. Methodology

Based on the literature research, two research questions were stated:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the job satisfaction ratings of the SRE and NSRE groups?

RQ2: Does gender have an effect on the ratings of each supervisor-focused sub-question?

The study was conducted as a questionnaire survey. The survey was conducted between February and April 2021, a total of 1,334 answers were obtained. The paper form questionnaire was distributed among the students of combined study programs of the University of Hradec Králové, who work during their study. Therefore, many different fields of work were approached. The questionnaire was filled out by the students and their work colleagues whom the students approached.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts, the introduction contained questions focused on the organization’s characteristics.

The second part of the questionnaire contained items related to organizational culture. Twenty-four-item questionnaire by Walach (1983) was used to determine organizational culture.

The third part was focused on job satisfaction (using 36 items). Spector's (1985) instrument was used, and each of the dimensions: Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Fringe Benefits, Contingent Rewards, Operation Conditions, Coworkers, Nature of Work, and Communication was assessed on a six-point scale (1 – strongly disagree, 6 – strongly agree). Overall job satisfaction is the average overall 36 items. The Czech version of the questionnaire is part of the publication Franěk and Večeřa (2008), this questionnaire is available on the Job Satisfaction Survey website (2018).

In relation to the aim of the study, we decided, among other things, to focus on evaluating five sub-questions (SQ1-5) from the questionnaire focused on the relationship with the superior worker or communication in a company. These sub-questions were:

SQ1: My supervisor performs the function competently.

SQ2: I think communication in our company is good.

SQ3: My supervisor is unfair to me.

SQ4: My supervisor hardly cares about the feelings of his subordinates.

SQ5: I like my supervisor.

For basic data analysis, descriptive statistics in the form of averages and correlation coefficients were calculated, for testing the correlation between the supervisor-employee relationship and the degree of job satisfaction. A t-test at the standard 5% level of significance and level 1% was used.

3. Results

A total of 1,334 answers were evaluated. Respondents were: men and women; aged from 16 to 81 years old; from different work fields; different work positions; from small, medium, and large enterprises. The detailed demographic profile of respondents is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent's demographic profile (n = 1,334)

Gender	No.	%
Male	602	45.1
Female	732	54.9
Age		
Up to 25 years old	407	30.5
26-35 years old	343	25.7
36-45 years old	249	18.7
46-55 years old	271	20.3
56-65 years old	58	4.4
More than 65 years old	6	0.4
Size of organization		
Up to 50 employees	529	39.7
Up to 250 employees	319	23.9
Up to 500 employees	140	10.5
More than 500 employees	346	25.9

Among the areas that were most represented in the survey, we can mention, for example, healthcare, education, construction, engineering, administration, automotive industry, banking, tourism, transport, gastronomy, IT, trade, hospitality, or social work. The broad spectrum of respondents also included many underrepresented work areas, e.g., the tobacco or textile industry, printing, debt collection, fishing, hairdressing, and many others.

In terms of representation of the non-supervisory responsibility employee (NSRE) and manager/supervisory responsibility employee (SRE), there were a total of 308 (23.1%) SRE and 1026 (76.9%) NSRE involved in the study. The distribution of employees by gender and job position is shown in Figure 2.

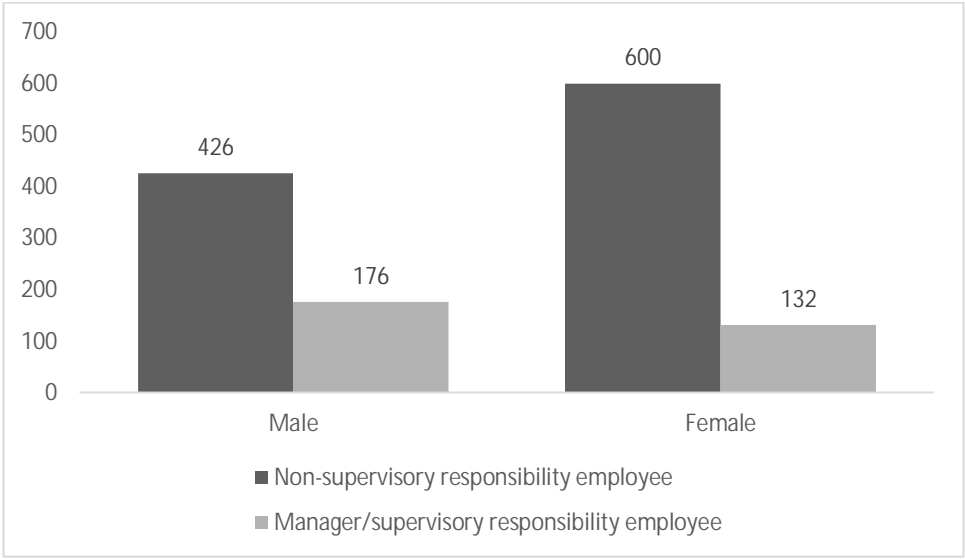


Figure 2. Proportional representation of SRE and NSRE by gender

If we compare the average rating of job satisfaction by NSRE and SRE in the t-test, at the level of significance alpha 0.01, there is a significant difference between the groups (the p-value = 0.0002).

When evaluating the individual sub-questions from the perspective of NSRE and SRE, the average values are in the range of greater than 4 (see Table 2). When comparing the responses of NSRE and SRE, it is evident that there is no significant difference between the two groups of employees. After conducting a t-test at alpha = 0.05 level of significance, there was no significant difference between the groups assessed (p = 0.166).

Table 2. Average rating of individual sub-questions

	NSRE	SRE
SQ1	4.55	4.49
SQ2	4.05	4.30
SQ3	4.55	4.61
SQ4	4.16	4.23
SQ5	4.27	4.37

When comparing the mean values of responses to the five sub-questions for SRE and NSRE respondents by gender, there is no significant difference between SRE and NSRE females (p = 0.32) after conducting a t-test. A significant difference at the alpha = 0.05 level

was observed between SRE males and females ($p = 0.03$), between NSRE males and females ($p = 0.01$), and also between SRE males and NSRE males ($p = 0.05$). Although statistically significant differences can be noted in the ratings, it must be stated that the individual questions were rated at a relatively high level, with only two cases where the average rating was less than 4. Concrete findings by position and gender are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Average rating of individual sub-questions by gender and position

	Male SRE	Female SRE	Male NSRE	Female NSRE
SQ1	4.47	4.51	4.48	4.59
SQ2	4.29	4.30	3.97	4.10
SQ3	4.54	4.70	4.46	4.62
SQ4	4.18	4.29	3.99	4.28
SQ5	4.33	4.43	4.11	4.38

4. Discussion

Achieving sufficient work performance is very important for companies. At the level of the Czech Republic, job satisfaction, which is directly related to work performance, is measured at regular intervals using a questionnaire study (Frutos-Bencze et al., 2022; Zubr et al., 2016). Performance has then been investigated in the Czech Republic, e.g., by Hedvicakova and Kral (2021).

Many people spend a relatively large amount of time at work compared to the time at home. It is therefore important that employees are happy at work and enjoy their work. A motivated worker then does a better job, which benefits the company. Therefore, the goal of companies should be to provide an environment that leads to the highest level of employee satisfaction.

This study aimed to find out whether the answers of NSRE and SRE differ in relation to job satisfaction and how individual groups evaluate the sub-questions focused on information about the relationship with supervisors and communication in the company. Two research questions were stated.

Overall, 45.1% of men and 54.9% of women were included in the study. The age groups of workers under 25 and 35 were the most represented. Because we focused on NSREs and SREs, it should be noted that 23.1 SREs and 76.9 NSREs participated in the study. According to Weiss, 2018, in most areas are typical staff ratios of approximately 10 employees per manager, in an administrative area, the ratio is 20-to-1 and for direct reports to a senior manager or regional vice president the ratio is 4-to-1 (Weiss, 2018). In our study, there are theoretically approximately 3 NSREs per SRE, this ratio therefore roughly corresponds to the general representation in companies, which links the survey results in more to practice.

Firstly, the relation between the ranking of job satisfaction and the type of employee was tested. Based on the results obtained via t-test, we can answer the first research question:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference between the job satisfaction ratings of the SRE and NSRE groups?

There is a statistically significant difference between the SRE and NSRE groups at the $\alpha = 0.01$ level of significance on job satisfaction. The difference in ratings may be due to many factors, not only the amount of salary or various benefits, but also the fact that the SME

respondents may be members of the company's top management and, unlike regular workers, no longer have to answer to any supervisor. Then there is no one to motivate, task, and control their work performance, which can lead to their greater job well-being, life satisfaction, and job satisfaction than regular employees.

The second part of the Results is devoted to answering the second research question:

RQ2: Does gender have an effect on the ratings of each supervisor-focused sub-question?

Based on the results of this study, gender has a significant effect on the ratings of sub-questions. Previous studies focusing on gender and job satisfaction have had mixed results. E.g., Liu et al. (2021) did not find significant gender differences, Andrade et al. (2019) in their study found, that the same job satisfaction levels were found for both men and women, Miao et al. (2017) found gender differences in job satisfaction and job quality and Muskat and Reitsamer (2020) found out, that for Gen-Y, organizational type and gender influence the relationship between quality of work life-job satisfaction.

4.1. Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study is that we do not know whether the superior employees are employees who report to other superior employees according to the company hierarchy, or whether they are high-ranking employees (e.g., CEO = owner) who do not have additional supervision.

5. Conclusions

Achieving satisfied employees should be the goal for every company, because satisfied employees not only bring benefits to the company and are essential to a company's performance, but also live a satisfied life, which is reflected in their work performance. That is why research into the factors that influence job satisfaction is still relevant. The evaluation of job satisfaction can vary not only across industries but also at different levels of employees in the company hierarchy. In this study, it was found that there is a statistically significant difference between the SRE and NSRE groups in rating overall job satisfaction and gender has a significant effect on the ratings of sub-questions focused on supervisor/communication in the company. In order to clarify the idea of the level of job satisfaction in the context of other countries, it would be beneficial if the survey was compared with the results of studies from neighboring European countries in the future. These results could serve as a basis for further research.

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Conflict of interest: none.

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