

The Relationship between Employee Gender, Age, and Veterans Status and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

It is known there is a positive relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee performance, employee retention, and other variables which are beneficial to the employee and employer. Utilizing the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and Self-determination Theory this study sought to understand if a relationship exists between employee satisfaction, and employee gender, employee age, and employee veterans status. With a sample of $N = 129$ employees of Fortune 500 companies within the United States of America a Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to evaluate employee extrinsic, intrinsic, and general job satisfaction. This study found male employees are slightly more satisfied than female employees in general and over age. There is a slight negative relationship with employee job satisfaction and age of the employee. Finally, this study discovered there is a positive relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee being a military veteran.

Keywords

Employee Job Satisfaction, Employee Motivation, Employee Performance, Age, Gender, Military, Veterans Status, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, Msq, Theory of Work Adjustment, Self-Determination Theory

1. Introduction—The Relevance of Employee Gender, Age, and Veterans Status

This article discusses the data and findings seeking to understand if employee gender, age, and veterans status have a relationship with employee job satisfaction. It is known, satisfied employees tend to be more motivated, more productive, and less likely to leave (Deci & Flaste, 1995; Herzberg, 1987; Krishnan et al.,

2018; Lee & Chen, 2018; Watkins & Fusch, 2022). Leading to higher organizational performance, lower organizational costs, and higher rates of employee retention (De Winne et al., 2019; Kiernan, 2018). Employees, employers, and employment are complex topics with what seems to be endless concepts affecting each other. The benefits of employee job satisfaction are significant and require further research to understand (Watkins & Fusch, 2022). This article reviews the background of the problem, the known benefits of a satisfied employee, the relationship between employee gender, age, veterans status and employee job satisfaction of $N = 129$ employees of Fortune 500 companies within the United States of America, and the implications of the findings.

2. Review of the Literature

Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides the understanding for basic human needs. The most basic of these needs start with physical or extrinsic needs. Extrinsic needs are the foundation and are required to be achieved prior to intrinsic needs coming into play (Ghatak & Singh, 2019; Maslow, 1943). Maslow illustrated that every person has basic physical needs. The most core or basic needs are the need for food, shelter, and safety (Ghatak & Singh, 2019; Maslow, 1943). While Deci et al.'s (2017) work in self-determination theory demonstrated workers are motivated to a greater extent by intrinsic motivational factors assuming that basic physical needs are being met.

An employee's satisfaction is based upon extrinsic and intrinsic factors thereby affecting an employee's relationship with the job, workplace, coworkers, supervisors, and the overall organization (Herzberg, 1987; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Weiss et al., 1967). Dawis et al. (1968), Haddad (2017), and Richard (2018) agreed finding an employee's correspondence or interaction with the place of work leads to higher rates of employee satisfaction. With the understanding employee satisfaction leads to benefits for the employer and employee Watkins and Fusch (2022) stated the need for further research related to the many variables related to employees including age, gender, and veterans status and employee job satisfaction. Walker and Kono (2018) also recommend the need for research evaluating other variables affecting employees and employee satisfaction. While Deci et al. (2017) stated more research is needed to understand aspects affecting employee satisfaction within the workplace.

The formation of research into worker satisfaction started in the late 1950s with the work adjustment program funded by the United States government (Dawis et al., 1958; Weiss et al., 1967). The Work Adjustment Program focused on worker satisfaction and motivation resulting in the Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis et al., 1968). The Theory of Work Adjustment recognized workers have a need to be fulfilled by the work and or place of work with many variables affecting a worker's satisfaction and motivation (Weiss et al., 1967).

Fields and Blum (1997) conducted a study seeking to understand if the mix of genders within a workplace has an effect on employee satisfaction. The study

found there is a positive relationship between a mixed gender work group and employee satisfaction. Peccei and Lee (2005) found the relationship of gender at work to have a very weak relationship with males being slightly more satisfied. While Mascarenhas et al. (2022) found no correlation between gender and employee satisfaction. Creating the need for further research to confirm if there is or is not a relationship between gender and employee job satisfaction.

Gibson and Klein (1970) conducted a study seeking to understand the relationship of employee age and employee satisfaction and employee tenure and employee satisfaction. The study found a positive relationship between employee age and employee satisfaction. Pasaribu et al. (2022) conducted a study to understand if age had a positive or negative correlation with employee satisfaction and additional variables. The study found while other variables such as leadership or management had a positive relationship with employee satisfaction there was a negative relationship with age and employee satisfaction. While Nyuur et al. (2022) found no correlation with age and employee satisfaction. Creating the need for further research to confirm if there is or is not a relationship between age and employee job satisfaction.

The literature related to veteran employee job satisfaction is muddled by the overwhelming amount of research on the U.S. Department of veterans Affairs and the satisfaction with services provided and the job satisfaction of employees who work for the department. Olmstead (2011) attempted to study and compare veteran and non-veteran employee job satisfaction. While the study made significant errors such as adjusting results for years of service, time in a combat zone, and time with the company the study found veterans to have a higher rate of employee satisfaction. Creating the need for a simple non-adjusted correlational study to understand if there is or is not a relationship between an employee's veterans status and employee job satisfaction.

The literature while not completely silent on these variables demonstrates the need for further research to understand if a relationship exists between the three variables and employee job satisfaction. These variables represent three major demographic characteristics that makeup the workforce. The findings of this study may add to the literature and help employers to understand what to expect when hiring someone of a young or old age, male or female, and or a veteran or non-veteran.

3. Benefits of Employee Satisfaction

The effects of positive employee satisfaction benefit not only the employee but also the employer, customers, and society. It has been demonstrated higher rates of employee satisfaction have many benefits. Including but not limited to; higher rates of employee performance (Krishnan et al., 2018), higher rates of organizational performance (De Winne et al., 2019), higher rates of intention to remain (Lee & Chen, 2018), lower rates of employee complaints (Borritz et al., 2006), and lower organizational cost (Kiernan, 2018). Positive employee satisfaction

rates are also known to increase customer satisfaction (Kurdi et al., 2020) and thereby increases organizational performance (Watkins & Fusch, 2022).

Employers and investors have traditionally been wary about research related to employee satisfaction and motivation with the belief it could increase cost and or lower productivity. Research has shown the benefits of understanding and investing increased employee job satisfaction far outweigh the hesitation by employers and the perceived cost of the possible results. This study adds to what is known about the contributing factors of employee job satisfaction.

4. Purposed of the Present Study

The purpose of this study is to understand if there is a relationship between the gender, age, and or veterans status with employee general, extrinsic, and intrinsic job satisfaction. The need for this study is established by the existing literature. Deci et al. (2017) while discussing autonomous versus controlled motivation stated future research is needed to deepen the understanding of employee satisfaction. While exploring employee managerial needs support and psychological support, Olafsen et al. (2018) stated there is a need for further research to understand factors contributing to employee satisfaction and motivation. In the pursuit of improving customer satisfaction, Kurdi et al. (2020) suggested there is a need to further understand the driving forces behind employee satisfaction. While seeking to understand the relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee monetary compensation Watkins (2020) stated the need for further research evaluating other factors effecting employee job satisfaction including gender, age, veterans status, education, and time with the employer. The gap within the literature investigated by this study is the stated need for further research to understand factors which may have a relationship with employee job satisfaction (Darma & Supriyanto, 2017; Deci et al., 2017; Kurdi et al., 2020; Kuvaas et al., 2018; Olafsen et al., 2018; Watkins, 2020).

5. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study was guided by the following research questions and hypothesis:

RQ1: If and to what extent is there a relationship between employee's gender and employee job satisfaction in Fortune 500 companies?

H10: There is no significant correlation between employee gender and employee satisfaction.

H1a: There is a significant correlation between employee gender and employee satisfaction.

RQ2: If and to what extent is there a relationship between employee age and employee job satisfaction in Fortune 500 companies?

H20: There is no significant correlation between employee age and employee satisfaction.

H2a: There is a significant correlation between employee age and employee satisfaction.

RQ3: If and to what extent is there a relationship between employee veterans status and employee job satisfaction in Fortune 500 companies?

H30: There is no significant correlation between employee level of veterans status and employee satisfaction.

H3a: There is a significant correlation between employee level of veterans status and employee satisfaction.

6. Method

This study used a quantitative method with a correlational design.

6.1. Sample

This study consisted of a questionnaire composed of participants who are employees of Fortune 500 companies within the United States of America. The samples size was calculated by performing a correlation bivariate normal model test within the G*Power application with a power of .80, an alpha of .05, adding a Bonferroni correction (Weisstein, 2004), and an additional 15% resulting in a sample of $N = 129$.

6.2. Instrument

As part of the Work Adjustment Program the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed in the 1960 (Weiss et al., 1967). Validated with over 50 years of research the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire has proven useful for measuring employee general, extrinsic, and intrinsic job satisfaction (Abedini et al., 2019). Using Cronbach's alpha Saly (2019) validated the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire finding the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire to be consistent with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.939. According to Martins and Proença (2012) the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire has demonstrated a strong alpha overtime. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire has been validated and deemed useful in evaluating a relationship between employee job satisfaction and another variable such as employee age, gender, and or veterans status.

7. Results

The following is the statistical results of this study organized by each research question. The data for this study consists of paired binary and ordinal variables evaluated through the use of a Spearman's rank-order correlation.

RQ1: If and to what extent is there a relationship between employee's gender and employee job satisfaction in Fortune 500 companies? (Tables 1-8)

A Spearman's rank-order correlation shows males are slightly more generally, extrinsically, and intrinsically satisfied.

A Spearman's correlation shows a slight positive relationship as males employees age the employee's general job satisfaction increases while showing a slight decrease in extrinsic and intrinsic male employee job satisfaction as males age. A Spearman's correlation shows a negative relationship as female employees

Table 1. Employee job satisfaction by gender—Spearman’s correlation.

Male Job Satisfaction			Female Job Satisfaction		
General	Extrinsic	Intrinsic	General	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
3.67	3.38	3.78	3.56	3.25	3.69

Table 2. Employee job satisfaction by gender and age—Spearman’s correlation.

Male Job Satisfaction			Female Job Satisfaction		
General	Extrinsic	Intrinsic	General	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
.009	-.013	-.006	-.118	-.131	-.032

Table 3. Employee job satisfaction by age—Spearman’s correlation.

General	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
-.053	-.062	-.030

Table 4. Employee job satisfaction by veterans status—Spearman’s correlation.

Veteran			Non-veteran		
General	Extrinsic	Intrinsic	General	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
3.85	3.59	3.93	3.58	3.28	3.71

Table 5. Gender.

		n	Percent
Valid	Male	68	53%
	Female	61	47%
	Total	129	100%

Table 6. Age.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18 - 24	15	11.6%
	25 - 34	28	21.7%
	35 - 44	32	24.8%
	45 - 54	30	23.3%
	55 - 64	21	16.3%
	65+	3	2.3%
	Total	129	100%

Table 7. Veteran status.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Veteran	16	12.4%
	Non-veteran	113	87.6%
	Total	129	100%

Table 8. Reliability.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Level of Consistency	Scale Standard Deviation	Number of Items
General Satisfaction	.940	High	16.179	20
Extrinsic Satisfaction	.888	High	6.331	6
Intrinsic Satisfaction	.897	High	9.129	12

age the employee's general, extrinsic, and intrinsic job satisfaction decrease.

RQ2: If and to what extent is there a relationship between employee's age and employee job satisfaction in Fortune 500 companies?

A Spearman's correlation shows a slight negative relationship with employee age and employee general, extrinsic, and intrinsic job satisfaction.

RQ3: If and to what extent is there a relationship between employee's veterans status and employee job satisfaction in Fortune 500 companies?

The score of employee veterans status demonstrates a positive relationship with employees who are a veteran and employee general, extrinsic, and intrinsic job satisfaction.

7.1. Descriptive Findings

The sample consisted of N = 129 employees of Fortune 500 companies within the United States of America. The sample included 68 males and 61 females (see **Table 5**), 16 of whom identified as US veterans (see **Table 7**). Fifteen participants were 18 - 24 years old, 28 25 - 34 years old, 32 35 - 45 years old, 30 45 - 54 years old, 21 55 - 65 years old, and three 65+ years old (see **Table 6**).

7.2. Reliability

A Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the reliability of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire within this study (see **Table 8**). The variable of employee general job satisfaction consisted of 20 questions. The scale measuring employee general job satisfaction had a high level of internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .940. The variable employee extrinsic job satisfaction consisted of 6 questions. The scale measuring employee extrinsic job satisfaction had a high level of internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .888. The variable employee intrinsic job satisfaction consisted of 12 questions. The scale measuring employee intrinsic job satisfaction had a high level of internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .897. Demonstrating a strong level of consistency, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire has been shown to be reliable within this study.

8. Discussion

Traditionally research has focused on either extrinsic or intrinsic motivation. This has left a need to understand both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations as well as the general overall motivation of employees related to specific variables. Within this study extrinsic, intrinsic, and general motivation have been studied in relationship to the variables of gender, age, and veterans status. The results provided demonstrate male employees are slightly more satisfied than female employees in general and as age increases. The results demonstrate there is a negative relationship with employee satisfaction and employee age with the employee satisfaction decreasing as age increases. While the results show a positive relationship exists between an employee's motivation and that employee being a veteran.

The findings of this study add to what is known by demonstrating male employees tend to be slightly more satisfied in general and over age, both male and female employees become less satisfied over age, and those who are veterans tend to be more satisfied than employees who are not veterans. With employee satisfaction and employee motivation being intertwined (Ahmat et al., 2019; Prasetyo et al., 2019; Watkins & Fusch, 2022) the findings of this study provide further insight for researchers, government leaders, and employers in the pursuit of achieving a satisfied, motivated, and productive workforce.

8.1. Implications

The results of this study provide insight for employers and leaders in working to understand the satisfaction and motivation of employee and the overall workforce. Arguably the most significant challenge an employer must work through is how to motivate and keep satisfied its workforce. Understanding the factors related to employee satisfaction and motivation allows employers and leaders to better understand and make informed decisions to improve satisfaction and motivation. The findings of this study might also inform employers not to prioritize hiring one gender over the other. While males were more satisfied than females the difference was not significant. The same is true for age. While satisfaction decreases with age the decrease is not significant. The findings of this study demonstrate veterans tend to be more satisfied and therefore more motivated. Therefore, employers might consider prioritizing hiring veterans and or increasing recruitment efforts with military career centers and veteran organizations such as the VFW or VA.

8.2. Limitations

As is true of any study there is the potential for sources of error, missing data, and outliers which may affect the results. While the sample size mitigates this as a possible source of error the data were self-reported. Missing data was not filled-in, incomplete questionnaires were removed which likely did not affect the findings of this study. As the instrument measures three items with two only us-

ing part of the instrument the possible impact of removing incomplete questionnaires could result in missing good data for the two items which do not require the entire questionnaire to be completed.

8.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could include,

- A duplicate study to add further validation to the results of this study.
- A study not limited to employees of Fortune 500 companies or employees within the United States of America.
- Examining other variables such as employee education, time with the employer, job position, and or adding a qualitative element.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to understand if there is a relationship between the gender, age, and or veterans status with employee general, extrinsic, and intrinsic job satisfaction. Using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire to examine employee gender, age, and veterans status the general, extrinsic, and intrinsic satisfaction was evaluated. This study found male employees are slightly more satisfied than female employees, male employees are slightly more satisfied than female employees over age, both male and female employees are slightly less satisfied over age, and veterans are more satisfied employees.

The findings of this study demonstrate there are fundamental differences between employees such as gender, age, veterans status and more which affect an employee's likelihood to be satisfied and therefore motivated as an employee. The findings of this study demonstrated employers should not prioritize hiring one gender over the other or young over old. The study demonstrated employers may consider prioritizing hiring veterans to increase employee satisfaction and motivation within an organization.

The findings of this study are a continuation of the research started by the work adjustment program, continued by self-determination theory and the work of Deci and Ryan, continuing to seek a deeper understanding of what satisfies and motivates employees. It is the hope of the researcher that others would continue to add to this topic seeking to improve the work lives of employees and improve organizational performance for those organizations who implement the findings of this research and other studies like it.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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