

The analysis of job characteristics leading to high job satisfaction in Romania¹

Анализа карактеристика радног места који доводе до високог нивоа задовољства запослених у Румунији

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Abstract: Job satisfaction is one of the most analysed job attitudes which may have significant positive consequences on the individual-level and organizational-level performances, too. This is why companies have to analyse the antecedents of job satisfaction. Work design and work characteristics have compelling impact on employees' job satisfaction. The aim of this paper is to identify the work characteristics with the highest impact on job satisfaction across various occupations and positions in Romania. The empirical research had been carried out within the Global Work Design Project initiated by the Academy of Management HR Division, based on the work design questionnaire (WDQ) developed by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006). The Romanian sample consisted of 394 employees from 69 organizations. In our paper we identify the job features and characteristics which lead to high job satisfaction. The findings may have empirical implications on companies' HR strategies not only in Romania, but also in other countries from the Central and Eastern European region.

Keywords: work design, job characteristics, job satisfaction, employee turnover, WDQ, Romania

JEL classification: M54, J81

Сажетак: Задовољство послом је једна од најчешће анализираних ставова запослених који могу да имају значајне последице на индивидуалне и организационе перформансе. Због наведеног разлога је битно да компаније анализирају узроке задовољства запослених. Дизајн посла и карактеристике посла имају значајан утицај на задовољство запослених радним местом. Циљ овог рада је да утврди карактеристике посла који имају највећи утицај на задовољство послом у оквиру разних занимања и радних места у Румунији. Емпиријско истраживање је реализовано у оквиру Глобалног пројекта дизајна рада покренутог од стране Одсека за људске ресурсе Академије за менаџмент, на бази Упитника за дизајн посла (WDQ) развијеног од стране аутора Моргенсон и Хамфри (2006). Узорак из Румуније се састоји од 394 запосленог и 69 организација. У овом раду аутори су идентификовали димензије и карактеристике који

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доводе до високог нивоа задовољства радним местом. Резултати могу да имају практичне импликације на ХР стратегије предузећа не само у Румунији него и у регији Централне и Источне Европе.

Кључне речи: дизајн посла, карактеристике посла, задовољство послом, флукуација запослених, WDQ, Румунија

ЈЕЛ класификација: M54, J81

Introduction

There are numerous definitions of job satisfaction, but it is generally defined as a positive emotional state that is derived from an individual's experience at work (Locke, 1976). Job satisfaction is associated with a range of positive outcomes such as increased motivation, engagement, commitment, performance and productivity, and it has a significant impact on reducing the employees' turnover intention (Spector, 1997). As such, it is important for organizations to take measures to ensure that employees are satisfied with their job roles. Work design may be one of such measures, as it refers to the way tasks, roles, responsibilities and activities are created, organized and structured in the workplace to achieve an organization's goals.

Nowadays, in the era of automatization, use of artificial intelligence and other innovations in the work processes, work design and redesign are vital elements of human resource management activities. Among the five core job characteristics defined by Hackman and Oldham (1975), i.e. skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from the job itself gets more important. The data from the European Union confirm it, as in 2021 altogether 42% of workers across the EU27 reported a high level of engagement at work, while in high-involvement organizations, where employees had more control over their work and felt more involved in decision-making processes, this percentage increased to 51% (Eurofound, 2022). Results shows that poor-quality work design (low discretion and task complexity, high timing constraints) continue to be prevalent even when new jobs are introduced. Even in modern workplaces workload and physical load had intensified, while the cognitive demands of the position and job discretion declined. It may be emphasized that in 2021, almost half of the employees in the EU27 worked at high intensity (high speed and tight deadlines) and almost a fifth of the workers experienced emotionally disturbing situations. At the same time, around half of the workers had the autonomy to change the order of their tasks or the speed of their work, and to determine their work methods (Eurofound, 2022).

The aim of this paper is to identify the work characteristics with the highest impact on job satisfaction across a wide range of occupations and positions based on the research data from Romanian companies, obtained within the Global Work Design Project initiated by the Academy of Management HR Division.

The paper consists of four parts. In the first part the authors present the main theoretical findings related to the impact of work design on job satisfaction, the second part of the paper is devoted to the presentation of the research methodology, while the results and discussion are given in the third part, finally conclusions are presented in the last chapter of the paper.

1. Theoretical background

The relationship between workers' happiness and productivity has been widely acknowledged for a long time (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000), and several studies focus on how organizations can ensure happy and productive workers. Work design theory also hypothesizes a relationship between work design and job satisfaction (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

Work design, defined as “the content and organization of one’s work tasks, activities, relationships, and responsibilities” (Parker, 2014, p. 662), is a “key determinant of employee well-being, positive work attitudes, and job/organizational performance” (Parker, Van den Broeck & Holman, 2017, p. 267). Work design is created and sustained both by managers through formal decision-making processes, and by the employees themselves, through informal or social processes, but research results point to the fact that managerial choices have a key role (Parker, Morgeson & Johns et al., 2017).

One of the most popular job design theory, the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) of Hackman and Oldham (1975, 1976) identifies five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from the job itself) that can create three psychological states of employees (experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for the outcome of the work and knowledge of the actual results of the work activities) which may lead to personal and work outcomes such as high internal work motivation, high satisfaction with the work, high quality work performance, low absenteeism and turnover.

As a development of the abovementioned job design theory, Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) grouped work characteristics as follows: *motivational work characteristics* – including task characteristics (autonomy, task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback from job) and knowledge characteristics (job complexity, information processing, problem solving, skill variety, specialization); *social characteristics* (social support, interdependence, interaction outside the organization, feedback from others) and *contextual characteristics* (ergonomics, physical demands, work conditions and equipment use).

Jobs within broad occupational categories would differ on certain work characteristics, i.e. knowledge characteristics and autonomy would be higher for jobs in professional occupations than jobs in nonprofessional occupations, while jobs in nonprofessional occupations would have higher levels of physical demands and less positive work conditions than jobs in professional occupations (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

The effect of job characteristics on employees' attitudes may depend on national culture and economic situation, too. A study conducted in Serbia by Ćulibrk and his colleagues (2018) showed that job satisfaction in Serbia is affected by work characteristics but, contrary to many studies conducted in developed economies, in Serbia organizational policies and procedures do not significantly influence job satisfaction. Dramićanin et al. (2021) got similar results, as they found that in Serbia the most important factors of job satisfaction are communication, nature of work, relationships with co-workers and

supervision. Considering the employees' level of education, Cúlibrik et al (2018) proved that the more educated the employees are, they seem to care more about the characteristics of their work. On the other hand, Hauff et al. (2015) found that dimensions of job characteristics (income, independent work, and good relationships with colleagues), have similar effects on job satisfaction and it do not vary significantly across countries.

Work redesign process may have some challenges. Individuals charged with work design or redesign may encounter several problems. Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) state that if a job already has high level of motivational characteristics, additional increases simply are not feasible or will lead to negligible effects on satisfaction. The Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ) enables assessing the different work characteristics; therefore, a wide range of options can be considered in order to achieve different redesign goals. Other redesign problems may appear because of the costs of increased training and compensation requirements, and the impossibility to change the task characteristics without producing job overload or job complexity. The authors suggest focusing on the job's social characteristics, as by increasing employees' social support, the work becomes more interesting to perform with lower training requirements (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

Morgeson, Garza and Campion (2012) concluded that work characteristics may influence various attitudinal, cognitive, behavioural and well-being outcomes. Autonomy, task identity, task significance, task variety and feedback from the job have an impact on subjective performance, while autonomy, task identity, feedback from the job and social support are negatively related to absenteeism. The research of Zhao et al. (2016) pointed to similar results. They have found that skill variety was negatively associated with job satisfaction, but positively associated with job stress. Besides, the results of Zhao et al. (2016) showed that high autonomy reduced job stress but did not increase job satisfaction, while feedback improved job satisfaction but did not decrease job stress. Ali and Anwar (2021) got interesting research results. They found that job redesign is significantly and inversely related to employee performance. Meanwhile job satisfaction is found to be positively and significantly related to employee performance. They also suggest that any proposed job redesign will be an effective HR strategy to significantly mobilize employee performance only when firms ensure that the implementation of job redesign involves the concerned employees and enhances their job satisfaction.

According to Nielsen et al. (2017), employee well-being and performance may be successfully improved through interventions focused on developing resources at following levels: *individual level* (self-efficacy, competence, hope, optimism, resilience and job crafting), *group level* (social support, good interpersonal relationships between employees, teamwork), *leader's level* (good quality relationship between leader and employees, transformational leadership) and *organizational level* (the way work is organized, designed, and managed, autonomy and HR practices).

The Gallup's engagement survey demonstrated that the relationship between engagement and work performance is substantial and highly generalizable across organizations. To improve employees' productivity managers can meet the following needs: job clarity, proper equipment and resources, work that aligns with one's talents, consistent

feedback, being cared about as a person, encouragement received for one's development, interest in one's progress, opportunities to learn and grow, opinions being asked for and considered, an organizational mission which makes the job important, co-workers commitment to quality work and having a best friend at work (Gallup, 2020).

Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2016) show that job design may have an impact on life satisfaction, too. They indicated that autonomy, task identity, and task significance reduced job stress, feedback increased job satisfaction, while task significance enhanced life satisfaction. Otherwise, high job demands combined with low decision latitude (also called as job strain), had been associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and mental health issues. Han et al. (2020) found that high levels of job demands can evoke chronic stress, over-fatigue and emotional exhaustion, leading to decreased job satisfaction. Other psychosocial work factors, such as long working hours, job insecurity, effort–reward imbalance, workplace bullying, organizational injustice, and work–family conflict also negatively influence employees' well-being (Niedhammer, Bertrais & Witt, 2021).

Indirectly, job characteristics may have a significant impact on employees' turnover intention, too. Zaharie, Kerekes & Osoian (2019) found a rather strong negative relationship between burnout and the turnover intentions and a moderate negative relationship between job satisfaction and the turnover intentions of the employees in the healthcare sector, while job satisfaction weakly moderates the relationship between burnout and turnover intentions.

Job characteristics have an impact on job quality as well. The Eurofound (2022) survey examined the following dimensions of job quality: physical and social environment (exposure to physical risks and demands, support from their colleagues and managers, intimidation, discrimination at work), job tasks (work intensity, emotionally disturbing situations, autonomy), organizational characteristics (ability to influence decisions that were important for their work, involvement in improving work organization, processes, and in setting work objectives), working time arrangements (flexibility, work at night, work in free time, short notice calls into work), job prospects (career advancement, opportunities for learning), and intrinsic job features (recognition, usefulness, opportunities to use one's knowledge and skills). An index of job quality was constructed by comparing the job demands (which affect workers negatively) and the job resources (which affect workers positively) of an individual. The results show that in 2021 about 30% of EU workers were engaged in strained jobs, where they experienced more job demands than job resources. Despite the changes workers experienced in their work due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global crisis emerging afterwards, the link between job quality and the core indicators of the quality of working life remained unbroken: job quality is positively associated with well-being, good work–life balance, fewer work–life conflicts, better ability to make ends meet, better work engagement and greater trust within the workplace. Working conditions and quality of jobs influence the engagement of employees with their work: workers satisfied with their experience at work are also more likely to engage with their work. Autonomy to work leads to learning at work, increases creativity in the workplace and supports organizational performance, as it encourages workers to increase their discretionary effort (Eurofound, 2022).

In relation with COVID-19 pandemics and current energy crisis it is important to analyse the impact of remote work on job satisfaction, too. Bellmann and Hübler (2021) found no clear effects of remote work on job satisfaction are revealed, but the impact on work–life balance is generally negative. If the imbalance is conditioned by private interests, this is not corroborated in contrast to job conditioned features. Employees working from home are happier than those who want to work at home, job satisfaction is higher and work–life balance is not worse under a strict contractual agreement than under a nonbinding commitment. Remote work may lead to job instability and insecurity. The research of Nemțeanu, Dinu and Dabija (2021) conducted in Romania found that job insecurity negatively correlates with satisfaction concerning supervisor support and promotion opportunities, and perceived job instability has a significant negative impact on individual work satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisor support and promotion opportunities. Taboroši et al (2023) have found that in Serbia teleworking employees are generally more satisfied with their job than the conventionally employed.

Based on the abovementioned theories and research results it is evident that job characteristics have a significant impact on job attitudes, especially on job satisfaction. The empirical part of the paper has the aim to show research results on the impact of job satisfaction.

2. Methodology

The empirical research had been carried out within the Global Work Design Project initiated by the Academy of Management HR Division, based on the work design questionnaire (WDQ) developed by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006). There were four questionnaires developed altogether: respondent employees and their supervisors completed two questionnaires each, in two rounds. In the first round, employees had to complete a questionnaire referring to job autonomy, task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback from job, job complexity, information processing, problem solving, skill variety, skill specialization, social support, interdependence, interactions outside the organization, feedback from others, ergonomics, physical demands, work conditions and job satisfaction, while the supervisors completed a questionnaire related to the organization and to the performance of the respondent employees. The second round of questionnaires were administered two weeks after the first round. This time, the employees assessed items related to organizational culture, job satisfaction, turnover intentions and burnout, while the supervisors evaluated the employees' behaviour and the organizational structure. Each construct was built of three items (statements) assessed on a 5-point scale (from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree).

To ensure international comparability of the Romanian data, the original English language questionnaires were adapted to Romanian economic and social situation in several steps. At first, members of the research team translated the questionnaire into Romanian, then other research team members checked the Romanian translation and sent the questionnaire to a professional translator to translate it back into English. Both the translated and back-translated questionnaires were sent for approval to the lead team and in the final step the

issues raised by the lead team were resolved by a researcher who did not take part in the previous stages of translation.

The questionnaires were administered between November 2017 and September 2018. The research was based on convenience sampling method. As data collection process implied a considerable effort from the respondent organizations, it was difficult to find organizations that would allow us to complete the whole procedure, so we used personal contacts in order to maximize response rate. The Romanian sample consists of 394 employees from 69 organizations. Almost two thirds (64%) of respondents are women and 36% are men, and 70.2% are university graduates. Most of the respondents (39.5%) belong to the 20-29 years old age group, 27.9% are 30-39 years old, 18.5% are 40-49 years old and 14.1% are over 50 years of age. Regarding the economic sector of the employing organization, 21.5% of the respondents work in healthcare and social assistance, 13.1% in professional, scientific and technical services, 11.0% in construction, 10.7% in manufacturing, 6.6%-6.6% in transportation and warehousing, retail trade and educational services, 18% in other services and 6.6% in other sectors.

In our paper we build up the model of the typical Romanian job (the average values of the work characteristics) and compare it with the ideal one (the average values of the work characteristics for the respondents with high job satisfaction, low turnover intention and low level of burnout). Furthermore, we test for the correlation between the level of job satisfaction (declared by the employees) and task performance (assessed by the supervisor).

3. Results

In order to determine the characteristics of the typical Romanian job, we aggregated the items measuring the following constructs: job autonomy, task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback from job, job complexity, skill variety, social support, feedback from others and work conditions. Results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Values of different work characteristics and the level job satisfaction, turnover and burnout

Construct measured	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job autonomy	389	1.00	5.00	3.3973	0.79511
Task variety	392	1.00	5.00	3.8584	0.95990
Task significance	392	1.00	5.00	3.5306	1.00987
Task identity	393	1.50	5.00	4.0305	0.82299
Feedback from job	392	1.00	5.00	3.8503	0.90983
Job complexity	393	1.00	5.00	2.6113	1.01622
Skill variety	392	1.00	5.00	3.8514	0.81980
Social support	389	1.40	5.00	4.0478	0.63723
Feedback from others	390	1.00	5.00	3.3726	0.93529
Work conditions	387	1.20	5.00	3.6765	0.81485
Job satisfaction average	393	1.00	5.00	4.1433	0.72257
Task performance	394	1.50	5.00	3.9239	0.79493

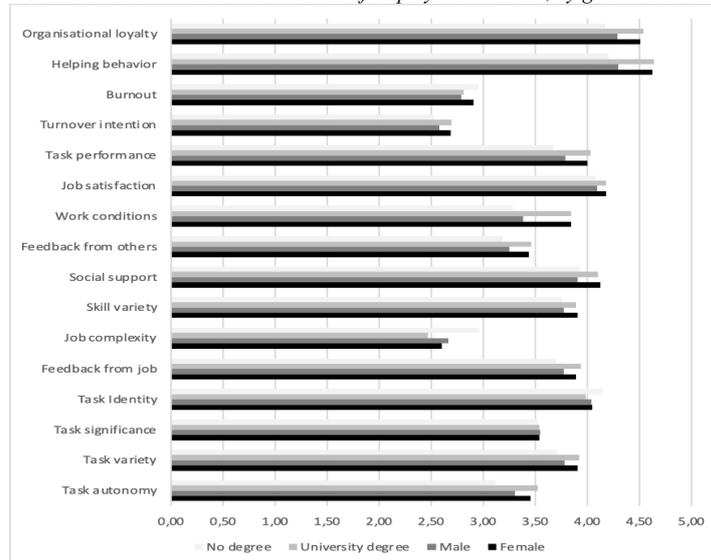
Turnover intention	393	1.00	5.00	2.6431	0.65735
Burnout	393	1.00	6.00	2.8514	1.05478
Helping behaviour	394	1.50	6.00	4.5082	1.06160
Organizational loyalty	391	1.00	6.00	4.4249	1.08647

Source: the authors' research

The job satisfaction of each respondent was calculated by averaging the items related to the job satisfaction construct for both rounds. The overall value of job satisfaction for the whole sample was 4.14 (on a scale from 1 to 5), which can be considered as rather high. The average turnover intention of the respondents was 2.64 (on a scale from 1 to 5), 80.4% of the respondents did not consider leaving the organization (values up to 3.00) and only 3.8% were ready to leave (values 4.00 to 5.00). The average level of burnout was 2.85 (on a scale from 1 to 6), 63.1% of the respondents were extenuated occasionally or even less frequently (values up to 3.00), while 17.6% felt extenuated often or very often at work. The task performance of the respondents was appreciated by their supervisors at the first round of questionnaires. The overall performance of the respondents was described as 3.92 (on a scale from 1 to 5); besides more than half of the employees (55.1%) performed well (values 4.00 to 5.00) and only 17.3% of the employees were described as low performers (values up to 3.00) according to their supervisors. The supervisors also appreciated that the employees have a rather supportive behaviour towards their colleagues (in average 4.51 on a scale from 1 to 6) and they also show loyalty towards the organization they work for (in average 4.42 on a scale from 1 to 6).

Figure 1 presents the research results based on respondents' gender and educational level. For most of the studied constructs gender differences are not significant, except that women perceive more social support (at the 0.01 level) and better work conditions (at the 0.01 level). Supervisors consider that women perform better (at the 0.05 level) and are more ready to help their colleagues (at the 0.01 level). University graduates have jobs which provide significantly higher task autonomy (at the 0.01 level) and more feedback (at the 0.05 level); they also perceive more feedback from others (at the 0.01 level) and more social support (at the 0.05 level), while those without university degree have to face significantly more complex jobs (at the 0.01 level). The supervisors appreciated that university graduates have significantly higher (at the 0.01 level) task performance, helping behaviour and organizational loyalty than those without a degree. However, there is no significant difference between the job satisfaction averages of these two groups, and the turnover intention of university graduates is significantly higher (at the 0.05 level).

Figure 1. Work characteristics and elements of employee behaviour, by gender and education



Source: the authors' research

According to the results presented in Table 2, in the Romanian sample job satisfaction correlates significantly (at the 0.01 level) and positively with the following work characteristics:

- job autonomy (Pearson correlation = 0.378)
- task variety (Pearson correlation = 0.517)
- task significance (Pearson correlation = 0.456)
- task identity (Pearson correlation = 0.403)
- feedback from job (Pearson correlation = 0.379)
- skill variety (Pearson correlation = 0.469)
- social support (Pearson correlation = 0.354)
- feedback from others (Pearson correlation = 0.385)
- work conditions (Pearson correlation = 0.145)

On the other hand, job satisfaction correlates significantly (at the 0.01 level) and negatively with job complexity (Pearson correlation = -0.229).

Table 2: Values and significance of the Pearson correlation coefficients of different work characteristics and job satisfaction

		Variety	Significance	Identity	Feedback from job	Job complexity	Skill variety	Social support	Feedback from others	Work conditions	Job satisfaction
Autonomy	Pearson corr.	.425(**)	.250(**)	.170(**)	.313(**)	-0.070	.302(**)	.260(**)	.334(**)	.229(**)	.378(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.166	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Variety	Pearson corr.	1	.492(**)	.163(**)	.301(**)	-.452(**)	.558(**)	.164(**)	.209(**)	-0.038	.517(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.453	0.000
Significance	Pearson corr.		1	.418(**)	.335(**)	-.180(**)	.536(**)	.283(**)	.258(**)	0.032	.456(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.526	0.000
Identity	Pearson corr.			1	.456(**)	.142(**)	.324(**)	.309(**)	.297(**)	.156(**)	.403(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.000
Feedback from job	Pearson corr.				1	-.108(*)	.250(**)	.304(**)	.513(**)	.207(**)	.379(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					0.034	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Job complexity	Pearson corr.					1	-.307(**)	0.074	0.084	0.095	-.229(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)						0.000	0.146	0.098	0.063	0.000
Skill variety	Pearson corr.						1	.221(**)	.190(**)	0.012	.469(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)							0.000	0.000	0.816	0.000
Social support	Pearson corr.							1	.450(**)	.213(**)	.354(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)								0.000	0.000	0.000
Feedback from others	Pearson corr.								1	.250(**)	.385(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)									0.000	0.000
Work conditions	Pearson corr.									1	.145(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)										0.004

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: the authors' research

Our results (presented in Table 3) confirm previous findings about the positive relationship between job satisfaction and task performance (Pearson correlation = 0.265). Furthermore, the results show that job satisfaction significantly (at the 0.01 level) and correlates positively with the respondents' readiness to help out colleagues at work (Pearson correlation = 0.345) and with the loyalty towards the organization (Pearson correlation = 0.468). Another important research result, which may have an implication for HR management too, is that job satisfaction correlates significantly (at the 0.01 level) and negatively with turnover intention (Pearson correlation = -0.292) and burnout (Pearson correlation = -0.167).

Table 3: The correlation between different work characteristics and job satisfaction

		Task performance	Turnover intention	Burnout	Helping behaviour	Org. loyalty
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.265(**)	-.292(**)	-.167(**)	.345(**)	.468(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000
Task performance	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.009	0.016	.557(**)	.605(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.858	0.751	0.000	0.000
Turnover intention	Pearson Correlation		1	.339(**)	-.140(**)	-.159(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.006	0.002
Burnout	Pearson Correlation			1	-0.022	-0.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.657	0.800
Helping behaviour	Pearson Correlation				1	.748(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					0.000
Organizational loyalty	Pearson Correlation					1
	Sig. (2-tailed)					

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

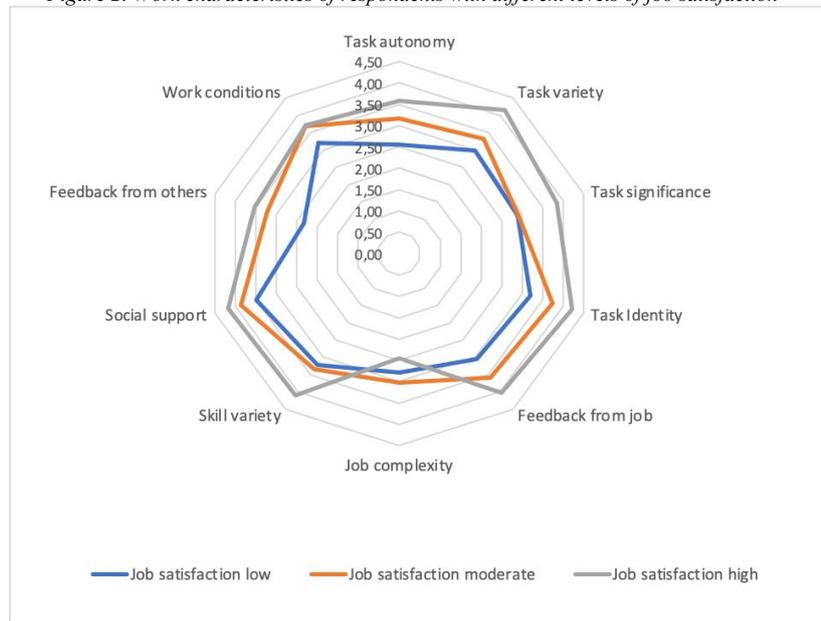
Source: the authors' research

In order to identify the work characteristics which lead to high job satisfaction, the respondents were divided into three groups:

- 263 respondents (67.0%) belong to the group of employees with high job satisfaction (at least 4.00, mean value 4.55),
- 104 respondents (26.4%) belong to the group of employees with moderate job satisfaction (3.00 to 3.99, mean value 3.56) and
- 26 respondents (6.6%) belong to the group of employees with low job satisfaction (1.00 to 2.99, mean value 2.38).

The ANOVA test shows that all differences between the means are significant (at the 0.01 level), except the one regarding work conditions. Figure 2 presents that jobs which ensure high satisfaction have values over 4 (on a 1 to 5 scale) for task variety, task identity, feedback from job, skill variety and social support, and values over 3.5 for task autonomy, task significance and feedback from others, while job complexity is rated only 2.44.

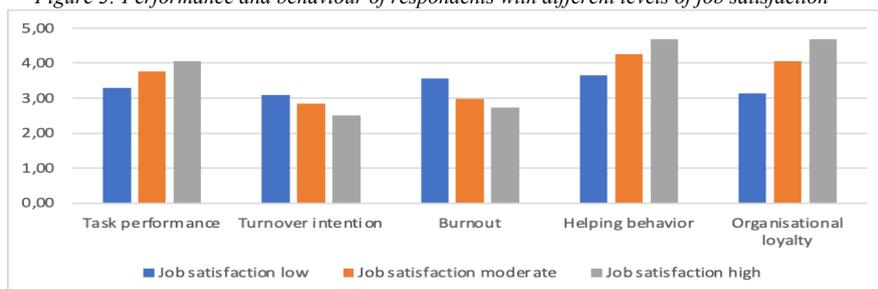
Figure 2: Work characteristics of respondents with different levels of job satisfaction



Source: the authors' research

The benefits of high job satisfaction are given in Figure 3. Respondents belonging to the high job satisfaction group perform better, are more helpful and more loyal to the organization they work for, based on the appraisal of their supervisors. Moreover, the burnout level and turnover intention of those with high job satisfaction is lower. The ANOVA test demonstrates that all these differences are significant at the 0.01 level.

Figure 3: Performance and behaviour of respondents with different levels of job satisfaction



Source: the authors' research

Conclusion

It is essential for organizations to understand the link between work design and job satisfaction in order to ensure job satisfaction of their employees. Studies have shown that work design plays an important role in jobsatisfaction. Work autonomy and job design have a strong influence on employees' satisfaction levels. Our results confirm previous findings that job satisfaction correlates positively with job autonomy, task variety, significance and identity, feedback from the job, skill variety, social support, feedback from others, and workconditions. On the other hand, job satisfaction correlates negatively with job complexity.

Although there is no significant difference between the job satisfaction of female and male respondents, women perceive more social support, benefit from better work conditions, but also perform better and are more ready to help their colleagues. There is no significant difference between the job satisfactions of those with and without a university degree either, but the jobs of university graduates provide higher task autonomy, more feedback, and more social support, while those without university have to face complex jobs. Despite university graduates perform better, have higher levels of helping behaviour and organizational loyalty, their turnover intention is significantly higher than of those without a degree.

An important research implication concerns to HR management. In order to define HR activities and processes it is important to know that employees with high job satisfaction perform better, are more helpful and more loyal to the organizations they work for. Furthermore, the burnout level and turnover intention of those with high job satisfaction is lower. Organizations may increase the job satisfaction and individual-level performances of their employees by increasing the level of control the employees have over their work. Besides, it is important to design and redesign jobs in a manner that they offer a high degree of task variety and identity.

The limitation of the study is the overrepresentation of women, university graduates and employees from healthcare sector in the sample. Therefore, the job characterized by the mean values of the constructs can't be considered the "typical Romanian job". Still, the relationship between the work characteristics and job satisfaction, as well as between job satisfaction and performance, burnout and turnover are clearly demonstrated by our data and the managerial implications are valid. To reveal the implications of the COVID-19 pandemics, the research should be repeated in the coming years, but with a simplified methodology (only one round of questionnaires).

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