Determinants of job satisfaction: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

Promoting job satisfaction is essential in today's market due to a greater appreciation of human talent and the growing interest in attracting and retaining it. For this study, a literature review was carried out following the PRISMA methodology with the intention of identifying the determining factors of job satisfaction. To do this, a total of 31 publications obtained from Scopus (19) and SciELO (12) were compiled, of which 21 were selected for analysis. Research positions job satisfaction not as an objective in itself, but as a predictor of productivity and commitment to the organization. In addition, the importance of meeting workers' expectations from an emotional level was highlighted, through their empowerment and promotion of well-being.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, empowerment at work, productivity, determining factors.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, job satisfaction has become a prominent area of study due to its significant impact on a range of employee outcomes, including commitment, performance, effectiveness, and absenteeism or turnover rates (Chiang et al., 2024). A decline in resources relative to the level of demands can lead to employee well-being and satisfaction issues, resulting in psychological distress. This can be mitigated through the implementation of integration and motivation strategies, ensuring that productivity is not compromised (Arauco et al.). Most importantly, the accelerated implementation of new ways of working due to the pandemic has revealed the fragility of many working conditions, which have had to improve in recent years to cope with burnout and job uncertainty (Yeves et al., 2024).

It is not uncommon for workers to be employed in environments that fail to meet their expectations. These environments are often characterized by monotony, inadequate compensation, unfavorable hiring practices, and insecure conditions, all of which contribute to a sense of dissatisfaction (Cortez, 2024). In the public sector, job dissatisfaction is primarily attributed to inadequate recognition, limited autonomy and development opportunities. Conversely, in the private sector, the primary causes are the physical environment, remote relationships with leaders and a lack of recognition (Chiang et al., 2024). Similarly, a lack of career growth opportunities can result in demotivation and dissatisfaction among employees, leading them to seek opportunities elsewhere (Wang et al., 2020). Consequently, employee dissatisfaction is manifested in high turnover and low organizational commitment.

The concept of job satisfaction has traditionally been understood from a psychological perspective. Wright and Copranzano (2000) proposed that it is an emotional response to an individual's experience in their workplace and the result of comparing these perceptions with their expectations. In this sense, the organizational culture is of paramount importance in establishing an optimal work environment, characterized by satisfied and committed employees (Cortez, 2024). This encompasses the entire organizational structure, including managerial practices, compensation structures, organizational culture, and leadership styles.

Consequently, it is imperative for organizations to regularly assess the well-being of their employees, as negative outcomes may become evident in-service delivery and customer service if this is not done (Sibanyoni et al., 2024). A satisfied workforce is likely to result in satisfied customers. Similarly, employee retention is contingent upon employee satisfaction, which is in turn linked to the theory of motivation. As outlined by Alrawahi et al. (2020), this concept is based on Herzberg's 1966 theory and comprises two factors: satisfiers (e.g., job promotion, recognition, achievement, and responsibility) and dissatisfiers (e.g., working conditions,

policies, supervision, salary, and peer relations). These elements must be aligned to foster a sense of professional and personal fulfillment, a state of happiness contingent on the quality of work-life balance, and thus, job satisfaction (Nguyen Thanh et al., 2024). In the contemporary work environment, it is challenging to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Extended work schedules, demanding consumers, and power distances have contributed to the prevalence of occupational stress (Maharni& Tamara, 2024).

Recent studies have focused on the sense of reward as a means of achieving this state, emphasizing the locus of control with regard to the recognition of employee good deeds (Binh Tran, 2021). Moreover, it is crucial for employees to have a voice within the organization to develop a sense of belonging and value. Artz et al. (2022) further suggest that the formation of unions is associated with higher job satisfaction and, consequently, reduced rates of employee turnover. Nevertheless, it is also important to assess the satisfaction of employees with higher occupational status, as this tends to decline more in times of crisis compared to those of lower rank despite having more advantages. This is because their position is threatened (Weiss et al., 2022; Korma et al., 2022). The relationship between career status and occupational well-being is subject to fluctuations and ambiguity in the context of volatile circumstances and uncertainty.

The most recent research in the field of education indicates that the key factors influencing teacher satisfaction and retention are the promotion of their involvement in decision-making processes and the provision of managerial support (Oyarzún et al., 2024). In the domain of social assistance, the provision of workplace support from leaders, colleagues, and supervisors was identified as a crucial element, as was the degree of autonomy afforded to the employee. These factors were found to constitute the foundation of job satisfaction, which in turn plays a pivotal role in reducing turnover rates (Zhang et al., 2024). In the health sector, additional factors were considered, including heavy workload, staff training, and a supportive environment. It was also determined that a plan of job satisfaction strategies, tailored to the employee's level of experience, was essential (Fung, 2024).

The optimal quality and working conditions have been increasingly prioritized in recent years to generate and maintain job satisfaction in the workforce, particularly in light of the need for employees to demonstrate adaptive responses to transitions occurring in the market, including those related to technology, globalization, and high market competitiveness (Dias & Morais, 2020). This article is of great significance as it provides an up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of the key factors that contribute to job satisfaction in organisations, the challenges that organisations face in this regard and the main trends that organisations are adopting in order to create value for their employees.

METHODOLOGY

The present systematic review on the determinants for job satisfaction was carried out guided by the parameters of the PRISMA methodology, which allowed identifying and analyzing the most appropriate documentation for this research that is subsequently shown in a visual flow of bibliography (Tricco et al., 2018).

As inclusion criteria, only a number of studies published in the last five years, addressing the research variables and in English or Spanish languages were considered. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria left out duplicate articles, not within the range of years of publication or without relevance.

This search was carried out in Scopus and Scielo to guarantee relevant and updated information. The following terms were considered among the search terms: "Job satisfaction", "Benefits of job satisfaction", "Job satisfaction factors" and "Increase job satisfaction". Likewise, time limits were applied to obtain recent and valuable bibliographic evidence.
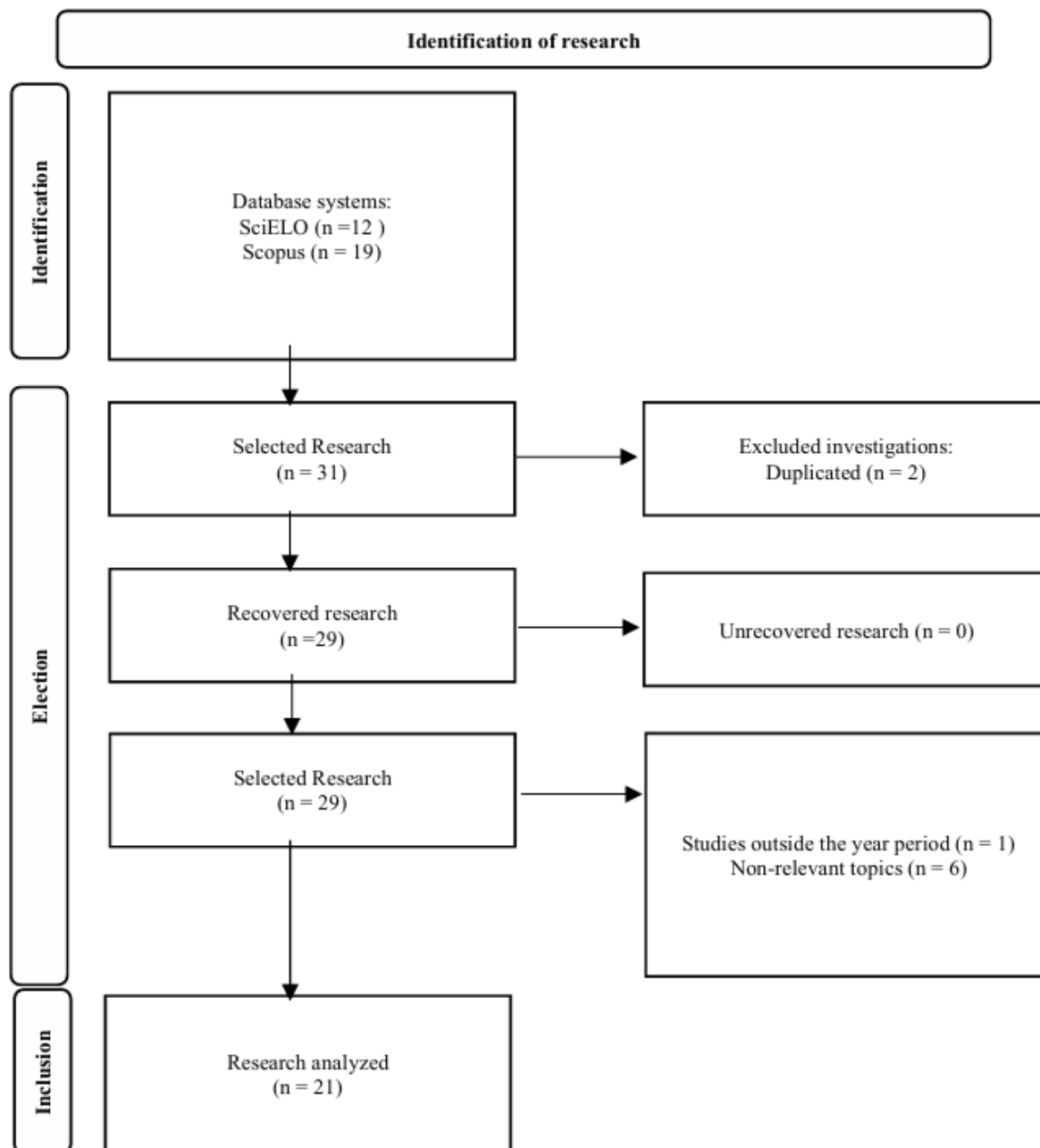
Figure 1: Selection flowchart

Table 1: Previous research

Cod	Author	Country	Title	Summary	Datebase
1	Aktaruzzaman, K. et al. (2023)	Bangladesh	Factor-bridging algorithm for the prediction of job satisfaction: Developing country perspective.	To generate job satisfaction, you first have to know the employee's perception of the job, only then can you identify opportunities for improvement and strengths.	Scopus
2	Arauco, K., Enríquez, P., y Huachaca. A. (2024)	Perú	Satisfacción laboral y productividad en el área de negocio de una entidad bancaria.	Currently, there is a need to create motivation and retention strategies to encourage employee productivity, which benefits the company and is rewarded with incentives that generate	SciELO

				staff satisfaction.	
3	Arawahi, S. et al. (2020)	Omán	The application of Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation to job satisfaction in clinical laboratories in Omani hospitals.	The study delves into the theory of motivation to apply it to job satisfaction, recognizing "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory" factors.	Scopus
4	Artz, B., Blanchflower, D., y Bryson, A. (2022)	Estados Unidos	Unions increase job satisfaction in the United States.	The importance of the worker having a voice in the activities and decisions of the organization as a driver of job satisfaction is highlighted, for which the formation of unions is often necessary, a common phenomenon after the Great Recession.	Scopus
5	Bezdrob, M, y Sunje, A. (2021)	Bosnia	Transient nature of the employees' job satisfaction: The case of the IT industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina.	The value of human talent in the industry is highlighted, in addition to the issue of job satisfaction, its durability, extrinsic and intrinsic factors.	Scopus
6	Cheung, T., Graham, L., y Schiavon, S. (2022)	Estados Unidos	Impacts of life satisfaction, job satisfaction and the Big Five personality traits on satisfaction with the indoor environment.	A determining factor of job satisfaction is the work environment in terms of infrastructure and conditions, however, staff satisfaction with this aspect also varies according to sex and age. Low levels of job satisfaction in the public and private sectors have one thing in common: lack of recognition.	Scopus
7	Chiang, M., Escalona, K., y Rivera, M. (2024)	Chile	Compromiso organizacional y satisfacción laboral, análisis de clases latentes en trabajadores de administración pública y privada.	Building an adequate organizational climate allows for corrective and preventive strategies to achieve corporate goals and generate job satisfaction.	SciELO
8	Cortez, N. (2024).	México	Clima organizacional en satisfacción laboral: una revisión sistemática.	The intention to remain in the organization is highly influenced by the degree of satisfaction felt by employees, especially related to the salary factor.	SciELO
9	Elsahoryi, N. et al. (2022).	Jordania	Association of salary and intention to stay with the job satisfaction of the dietitians in Jordan: A cross-sectional study.	This study also addresses the relationship of job satisfaction with occupational status, adding gender obstacles and professional mobility.	Scopus
10	Georgellis, Y. et al. (2022)	Reino Unido	Occupational status and life satisfaction in the UK: The miserable middle?	The main factors that are usually measured within job satisfaction scales are addressed, studying different	Scopus

				models and contexts to verify which ones are most appropriate to the present.	
11	Goncalves, J. (2024)	Brasil	Escala de satisfacción laboral: comparación entre tres modelos estructurales.	Perceptions of well-being in the work environment due to social support, adequate salaries and feedback contribute to employee satisfaction and commitment.	SciELO
12	Hinojosa, J. (2022).	México	El papel mediador de la satisfacción laboral entre la calidad en los factores del trabajo y el compromiso laboral.	Emphasis is placed on the different needs that have to be met in jobs with high physical and mental strain compared to other types of work. This research focuses on the prosperity within the workplace that generates job satisfaction, questioning whether it is more effective to have the constant support of the supervisor or to rely only on the scrupulousness of the employee.	SciELO
13	Hu et al. (2024)	China	Relationship between workplace violence, job satisfaction, and burnout among healthcare workers in mobile cabin hospitals in China: Effects of perceived stress and work environment.	The working conditions of today's world that prevent the adequate balance between work and personal life that generates well-being in human talent are explored.	Scopus
14	Huo,M. y Jiang, Z. (2021)	Australia	Trait conscientiousness, thriving at work, career satisfaction and job satisfaction: Can supervisor support make a difference?	The implementation of servant leadership is recommended, which prioritizes staff development and acts as an example to follow to keep workers satisfied and committed.	Scopus
15	Maharani, A., y Tamara, T. (2024)	Indonesia	The occupational stress and work-life balance on turnover intentions with job satisfaction as mediating.	The work environment is addressed as a determinant of job satisfaction. Being adverse (exhausting, workplace harassment), it produces emotional consequences that force employees to want to leave work.	SciELO
16	Ozturk, A., Karatepe, O., y Okumus, F. (2021)	Turquía	The effect of servant leadership on hotel employees' behavioral consequences: Work engagement versus job satisfaction.	An ethical work environment with fair remuneration, support and an adequate promotion system contributes to employee satisfaction and, therefore, to their retention.	Scopus
17	Rahmar et al. (2023)	Bangladesh	Impact of workplace bullying and burnout	Although there is talk of providing optimal working	Scopus

			on job satisfaction among Bangladeshi nurses: A cross-sectional study.	conditions to satisfy employees, it is vital to consider social inclusion. That is, differentiating the needs of personnel with some disability in order to meet their expectations. A collaborator's job satisfaction, beyond having a personal impact, also impacts the relationship with consumers.	
18	Ramajoe, M. et al. (2024)	Sudáfrica	Is there a relationship between ethical climate, work engagement and job satisfaction in the public sector?	The other affected party is studied, employees with high positions, who show less job satisfaction in times of crisis due to not meeting organizational objectives, facing external factors and not being able to satisfy the staff under their charge.	SciELO
19	Sarabia, T. et al. (2024)	México	Satisfacción laboral en los maestros con algún grado de discapacidad en el sector educativo especial en México.	To generate job satisfaction, you first have to know the employee's perception of the job, only then can you identify opportunities for improvement and strengths.	SciELO
20	Sibanyoni, T.; Tshipala, N., y Venter, D. (2024)	Sudáfrica	Key factors of job satisfaction among the tourism and hospitality employees within national parks.	Currently, there is a need to create motivation and retention strategies to encourage employee productivity, which benefits the company and is rewarded with incentives that generate staff satisfaction.	SciELO
21	Weiss, D. et al. (2022)	Alemania	Tough times at the top: Occupational status predicts changes in job satisfaction in times of crisis.	The study delves into the theory of motivation to apply it to job satisfaction, recognizing "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory" factors.	Scopus

RESULTS

21 articles were selected from a total of 31 publications found in Scopus (12) and SciELO (9) databases, which contain information on the determining factors of job satisfaction in different fields, the main obstacles faced and their impact on other aspects.

The results expose the factors must be taken into account to satisfy employees in the current context characterized by high competitiveness and the intention of companies to retain the best talent. It was found that having a satisfied worker is evidenced by their good productivity and intention to stay, while the challenges focus on social problems and a rise of the emotional factor over physical.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this review reiterate concept of job satisfaction as the attitude of workers towards the company, encouraged by a psychological atmosphere that is related to intention to stay and perform effectively (Elsahoryi et al., 2022). Thus, the importance of motivational and "hygiene" components (infrastructure, salary, social support) is highlighted, since employees are internal clients of the company, therefore, they are also offered a quality service to perceive their good performance and satisfaction (Hinojosa, 2022; Cheung et al., 2022). This requires policies that take into account staff perceptions, which can be done through surveys, questionnaires or interviews to verify whether aspects such as compensation, recognition, support, security or equity require improvement (Aktaruzzaman et al., 2023).

It is a time of war for talents, companies are more aware of value of human capital and their efforts to generate job satisfaction are along the lines of offering fair salaries, empathetic supervision and optimal conditions. However, as these are points that are already considered the minimum necessary, Bezdrob and Sunje (2021) clarify that intrinsic factors have become more relevant; that is, it is more important to meet the expectations of the worker through their empowerment since "satisfaction cannot be bought". This is reinforced with adequate communication and the formation of healthy relationships not only with managers or colleagues, but with clients (Goncalves, 2024). Both factors (physical and social) must be harmonized, otherwise, they give rise to the emergence of strikes, accidents and unwanted transitions (Elsahoryi et al., 2022).

The literature reviewed suggests a servant leadership style, focused on the well-being and development of employees in charge, to assertively manage complaints and the tedious work of repeating routines. In this way, there is greater openness to delegating authority, being transparent, actively listening to employee expectations, fulfilling promises and leading by example. The implementation of this supervision also increases the sense of prosperity that motivates staff to act scrupulously and acquire new knowledge to grow professionally, in addition to generating trust and increasing retention based on increased job satisfaction (Ozturk et al., 2021; Ramajoe et al., 2024.

When considering and implementing such aspects, it must also be taken into account that satisfaction is not always continuous, so previous satisfaction is not a reliable predictor of subsequent satisfaction (Bezdrob& Sunje, 2021), especially when assessing the great influence of emotional aspects. A hostile work environment where workplace harassment or poor mental health conditions occur is very likely to produce depression or stress in the employee, which is related to low levels of satisfaction (Rahmar et al., 2023). Likewise, the needs of an employee with a high workload and physical or mental exhaustion, as is the case in the health or construction sectors, must be understood differently in order to understand what aspects to improve that can reduce their exhaustion and meet their expectations. (Hu et al., 2024).

Studies mention professional immobility as a cause of employee frustration that limits their job satisfaction. This occurs mostly in employees who have always had a medium occupational status that cannot easily climb. It is true not everyone can hold high positions, which is why an optimal recognition system is key. It is also evident that there is a need to reduce the gender gap that causes women with higher education to not achieve a balance between family and work life (Georgellis et al., 2022). Finally, job satisfaction for workers with disabilities presents different challenges are added to the factors already mentioned. These include suitable infrastructure, equal opportunities, awareness and advice to create an inclusive environment (Sarabia et al., 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

Job satisfaction is essential for the well-being and performance of employees within an organization. It not only improves the staff experience, but also helps build a positive work ecosystem. However, these benefits entail a series of challenges according to needs in different sectors and according to personal situations.

Firstly, it is highlighted that not only material aspects such as financial compensation and infrastructure must be reinforced, but job satisfaction currently values psychological and social factor more. It is more important worker feels supported by their leaders, recognized and empowered to perform effectively and remain in company.

The needs and expectations of employees are known more accurately by talking to them through interviews and surveys, for example. In this way, open and inclusive communication is encouraged, as well as harmonious relationships with supervisors.

It is important to seek sustainable job satisfaction over time through policies and practices that do not lose continuity and that take the employee as an internal client who deserves quality service. In this sense, it is also crucial to know their emotional and social situations in order to carry out strategies accordingly that are equitable and fair.

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