

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & CRIME, LAW AND JUSTICE

CONSTRUCTING JOB SATISFACTION THROUGH WORKPLACE FACTORS

JONATHAN BRETT HOYER
Fall 2011

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for baccalaureate degrees
in Marketing and Sociology
with honors in Sociology

Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Samar Farage
Senior Lecturer in Sociology
Thesis Supervisor

Jeffrey Ulmer
Associate Professor of Crime, Law and Justice and
Sociology
Honors Adviser

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to examine the relationships between job satisfaction and various workplace factors. The 2006 General Social Survey (GSS) is utilized to compose a series of multivariate regression models. As firms continue to seek increases in productivity, through faster pace and longer work hours, employees are finding themselves particularly tied to their jobs. Through a series of hypotheses dealing with variables connected to autonomy and social support in the workplace, this thesis seeks to determine whether the degree of decision-making one has in his or her job is significantly more important than personal income, in determining job satisfaction. Moreover, certain workplace factors have also been found to be significant in determining self-reported happiness. It is in response to these findings that organizational changes, as well as grassroots efforts, have recently been instituted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Review of the Literature	2
Data and Methods	8
Regression Analysis	14
Discussion	19
Conclusion	23
References	24

INTRODUCTION

There is extensive evidence that work plays a significant role in determining life satisfaction in our society. In fact, this relationship yields a strong correlation of .44, according to a meta-analysis conducted by Tait et al. (1989). This should not come as a surprise, since the majority of people work 8 hours or more per day (Argyle, 2001). Some researchers have found that work and non-work have a great deal in common. Rice et al. (1980) found that both are closely linked to life satisfaction, and to each other.

With trends toward longer working hours in the United States, job satisfaction is a pertinent issue. In fact, from 1973 to 2000, the average American worker added 199 hours to his or her annual schedule (Schor, 2003). This additional time spent at work can put a strain on other aspects of life. Many organizations have begun to address these issues, though workplace programs, as well as initiatives to help improve work-life balance.

Due to the strong relationship between job satisfaction and overall life satisfaction, it is important to evaluate which workplace factors significantly effect contentment in the workplace. This study seeks to analyze these factors through a series of regression analyses, aiming to predict job satisfaction. While many scholars have created satisfaction models in the past, confirming past results based on current data is essential to understanding the present-day work environment.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Money and Happiness

Happiness has been a central theme of philosophy for centuries. Recently, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, and economists have also employed the topic of happiness in their research. Economists began to publish detailed empirical analyses of the determinants of happiness in the late 1990s. Ever since, happiness research has excelled in its interdisciplinary approach. Scholars in various disciplines seem to emphasize different determinants of happiness in their findings (Frey, 2008).

Most people have heard the common axiom that money doesn't buy happiness. However, day in and day out, many American workers set out to achieve the American dream. With relative success, Americans have seen strong growth in the nation's total income for well over three decades. In fact, from 1972 to 2004, the national income per capita rose from \$25,000 (in today's dollars) to \$38,000. This increase, although quite large, did not greatly effect levels of self-reported happiness. In 1972, 30 percent of Americans said they were very happy, as opposed to 31 percent in 2004 (Brooks, 2008). Although the national income proportion per capita increased by over 50 percent during this period, this statistic could be very misleading. A widening gap between the poor and wealthy could be to blame for a lack of change in subjective well-being. Although the United States achieved great economic success, these effects have not been felt by American citizens. For instance, from 2000 to 2003, corporate profits improved by over 80 percent, while workers' wages only rose 5 percent (Gavin et al., 2004). Real wage stagnation has perpetuated throughout economic booms, contributing to the great income and wealth disparity in the United States. Although many scholars, such as social

scientist Arthur Brooks (2008), use national income statistics to indicate a rise in per capita wealth, this does not account for wage inequality. Drago (2007) contends that in 1975, 4.3 percent of income went to the poorest 20 percent of the population, while 43.6 percent of income went to the wealthiest 20 percent of the population. He found that this trend continued through 2004, in which the poorest quintile received 3.4 percent of income, while the richest quintile received 50.1 percent of income.

Bruno Frey, professor of economics at the University of Zurich, finds that income does significantly effect happiness. He states that richer people, on average, report higher levels of subjective well being. This is evident across both simple regression analyses, as well as those controlling for a large number of factors. However, differences in income only account for a low proportion of the differences in happiness among persons. Various other life and personality factors play a large role in determining satisfaction (Frey, 2008). Many researchers have concluded that objective factors, such as income, are of little importance in the study of well-being. Campbell et al. (1976) found that “financial situation” ranked 11th out of 12 possible sources of life satisfaction in their Quality of American Life study (Argyle, 2001). Diener and Oishi (2000) reported a correlation coefficient of 0.13 between life satisfaction and income amongst Americans. These results came from surveys conducted from 1981 to 1984, which also found the relationship with income to be much stronger at the lower end of the income distribution. This weak positive relationship indicates that increases in income only effect life satisfaction to a remarkably small degree. The very poor are certainly found to be very unhappy. However, rises in income are highly insignificant in predicting life satisfaction, outside of those living in extreme poverty (Argyle, 2001). Mullins (1992) found that

using different economic indexes, such as economic assets and total family income, produced a stronger correlation with life satisfaction. This is well justified, as these factors are a greater indication of total wealth and disposable income. However, the correlation reported of 0.23 is still not very strong, indicating that other social factors must play a larger role in determining happiness (Argyle, 2001).

Working Hours

Each and every society has jobs that must be performed in order to ensure the survival of its citizens. Accordingly, work greatly contributes to peoples' well-being. Unfortunately, recent surveys have shown that over 25 million Americans work 49 hours or more per week. More than 10 million workers report working 60 hours or more per week (Gavin et al., 2004). A recent study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development shows that Americans worked far longer hours than their counterparts in other countries in 2002. In fact, Americans worked an average of 107 hours more than their closest national competitors, the United Kingdom (Gavin et al., 2004). Some estimates go as far as to say that Americans are working 350 hours more than their European counterparts (Honoré, 2004). Juliet Schor (2003) echoes these findings in *The Overworked American*. She finds that American workers have incurred an additional 5 weeks of work per year, in the period from 1973 to 2000 (assuming a 40 hour workweek). Among married-couple households, with the head of the household within the 25 to 54 age range, total hours of paid work increased by 388, between 1979 and 2000. These figures were even greater for the middle class, who saw a rise of 660 hours, more than a 20 percent increase. Many have argued that people overstate their

hours worked in the Current Population Survey, which was employed by Schor in her analyses. Robinson and Godbey (1997) even reported that Americans are realizing an increase in leisure time. Nonetheless, Schor contends that the trends toward longer working hours are undeniable. She finds that almost all sub-groups have experienced an increase in working hours, with the exception of the partially-unemployed. The Economic Policy Institute seems to agree, and numerous critics have begun to accept the fact that working hours are steadily on the rise (Schor, 2003).

Opponents to a longer working day often feel that it has destroyed their participation in community life. Along with the increased time spent at work, comes the increased time spent recovering from a longer working day. This puts serious constraints on participation in activities and voluntary associations (Walsh, 2005). Robert Putnam, political scientist and professor of public policy at Harvard University, argues that the American society has become more isolated. In his article, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital" (Putnam, 1995), Putnam alludes to the decrease in political affiliation and participation in the United States. He finds that from a relatively high point in the 1960s, voter turnout had declined by nearly a quarter in 1990. Putnam remarks that with the addition of women to the workforce, individual working hours should have diminished substantially. Unfortunately, this has not been the case, and social participation has declined considerably as a result.

From 1969 to 2000, the overall index of labor productivity per hour has increased by approximately 80 percent in the United States. This index represents economic progress, indicating that the average American worker could produce almost twice as much in 2000 as in 1969. This increased productivity could have cut working hours

considerably, provided a stabilized standard of living. However, as of 2003, real consumption expenditures per person had doubled over a thirty year period (Schor 2003). This rise in consumerism has prevented individuals from scaling back their time spent at work.

Job Satisfaction and Happiness

The correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction has been found to be remarkably high. Data from the 2002 General Social Survey (GSS) shows that of those reporting being very happy in their lives, 95 percent are also satisfied with their jobs. While controlling for income, education, age, sex, family situation, religion and politics, a respondent reporting being satisfied with his or her job is found to be 28 percentage points more likely to say he or she is very happy in life (Brooks 2008). This should not come as a shock. With more time spent at work, and less time for civic engagement, it is reasonable to assume that there has been a shift in interpersonal relations. Relationships and self-actualization, which had previously been satisfied outside of the work environment, are now being pushed inward. Work is now a major outlet for individuals to exercise their creativity, and to provide meaning to their lives. Recognition and other human elements in the workplace are strong predictors of job satisfaction, whereas objective factors such as income and benefits are relatively weak (Brooks 2008).

There is much debate regarding the effectiveness of compensation initiatives that aim to enhance work-life balance. These innovations are directly intended to increase job satisfaction, and to ensure that employees will not bring their external difficulties to the workplace. A study utilizing data from the 1991 Survey of Federal Government

Employees found that providing flexible schedules to employees did not increase job satisfaction. Additionally, flexible schedules were found to have no effect on work-family balance (Saltzstein et al., 2001). These findings have been challenged in a recent study, which purports that the interaction effects of scheduling control and work-life balance initiatives are positively associated with job satisfaction (Jang et al., 2011). These contradictory findings are often seen in the study of work-life balance, as different statistical methods are employed in analyses.

Research pertaining to employee independence and job satisfaction seems to draw a greater consensus. Work gives people a sense that they are in charge of their lives. Furthermore, control within the workplace has been found to significantly increase job satisfaction. Likewise, business practices designed solely to increase efficiency and productivity, while sacrificing worker individuality, greatly diminish satisfaction (Head, 2003). A workplace should be designed and managed to create meaning for its workers, in order to create a positive symbiotic relationship (Gavin et al., 2004).

DATA AND METHODS

The data for this research are from the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS), collected by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). The GSS is an annual survey collected across the continental United States, which samples both English and Spanish speakers, age 18 or older. For the purpose of this analysis, a sample of 1721 respondents will be utilized. Variables rated on a likert scale were recoded to ensure that all measures could be interpreted consistently. The dependent variables being employed has been segmented into three groups, based on their theme. The following sections will outline the variables of interest.

Dependent Variables

Job satisfaction (SATJOB1) is the dependent variable for this study. Respondents were asked, “All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job?” This question was scored on a likert scale, with 4 being “very satisfied” and 1 being “not at all satisfied”. Of the respondents, 45.7% (786) rated being “very satisfied” with their job, 44.7% (770) were “somewhat satisfied”, 6.4% (110) were “not too satisfied”, and 3.2% (55) were “not at all satisfied”.

Table 1. Job Satisfaction (n=1721)

Very satisfied	45.7%
Somewhat satisfied	44.7%
Not too satisfied	6.4%
Not at all satisfied	<u>3.2%</u>
	100%

Independent Variables: Autonomy Group

Workplace factors establishing the degree of individuality exhibited by the respondent make up the independent variables for the autonomy group. The first variable in question is workplace decisions (WKDECIDE). Respondents were asked, “In your job, how often do you take part with others in making decisions that affect you?” This question was scored on a likert scale, with 4 being “often” and 1 being “never”. Of the respondents, 39.2% (669) rated “often” making decisions, 36.0% (615) rated “sometimes”, 15.2% (260) rated “rarely”, and 9.6% (164) rated “never”.

Table 2. Workplace Decisions (n=1708)

Often	39.2%
Sometimes	36.0%
Rarely	15.2%
Never	<u>9.6%</u>
	100%

The next dependent variable to be reviewed is workplace freedom (WKFREEDM). Respondents were asked to rate the statement “I am given a lot of freedom to decide how to do my own work” on a likert scale, with 4 representing “very true” and 1 representing “not at all true”. Of the respondents, 55.9% (951) rated “very true”, 30.9% (525) rated “somewhat true”, 9.3% (159) rated “not too true”, and 3.9% (66) rated “not at all true”.

Table 3. Workplace Freedom (n=1701)

Very true	55.9%
Somewhat true	30.9%
Not too true	9.3%
Not at all true	<u>3.9%</u>
	100%

Work variation (WORKDIFF) is the next dependent variable to be examined through regression analysis. Respondents were asked to rate the statement “I get to do a number of different things on my job” on a likert scale, with 4 representing “strongly agree” and 1 representing “strongly disagree”. Of the respondents, 42.3% (726) rated “strongly agree”, 45.5% (780) rated “agree”, 11.0% (188) rated disagree, and 1.2% (21) rated “strongly disagree”.

Table 4. Work Variation (n=1715)

Strongly agree	42.3%
Agree	45.5%
Disagree	11.0%
Strongly disagree	<u>1.2%</u>
	100%

Independent Variables: Humanity Group

Variables exhibiting the degree to which respondents feel appreciated by, and connected to, fellow employees make up the humanity group. Employer praise (WKPRAISE) is the first such variable. Respondents were asked, “When you do your job well, are you likely to be praised by your supervisor or employer?” This question was scored from 1 to 3, with 1 representing “no”, 2 representing “maybe”, and 3 representing “yes”. Of the respondents, 55.5% (926) rated “yes”, 27.0% (451) rated “maybe”, and 17.5% (291) rated “no”.

Table 5. Employer Praise (n=1668)

Yes	55.5%
Maybe	27.0%
No	<u>17.5%</u>
	100%

Supervisor empathy (SUPCARES) is the next variable to be examined in the humanity group. Respondents were asked to rate the statement “My supervisor is concerned with the welfare of those under him or her” on a likert scale, with 4 representing “very true”, and 1 representing “not at all true”. Of the respondents, 49.6% (809) rated “very true”, 33.7% (550) rated “somewhat true”, 9.1% (149) rated “not too true”, and 7.5% (123) rated “not at all true”.

Table 6. Supervisor Empathy (n=1631)

Very true	49.6%
Somewhat true	33.7%
Not too true	9.1%
Not at all true	<u>7.6%</u>
	100%

Co-worker interest (COWRKINT) is the last variable to be included in the humanity group. Respondents were asked to rate the statement “The people I work with take a personal interest in me” on a likert scale, with 4 representing “very true”, and 1 representing “not at all true”. Of the respondents, 41.7% (699) rated “very true”, 43.4% (728) rated “somewhat true”, 10.3% (173) rated “not too true”, and 4.6% (77) rated “not at all true”.

Table 7. Co-worker Interest (n=1677)

Very true	41.7%
Somewhat true	43.4%
Not too true	10.3%
Not at all true	<u>4.6%</u>
	100%

Independent Variables: Monetary Group

The third and final set of independent variables encompasses two variables related to employee pay. The respondent income variable (RINCOM06) is rated on an interval-ratio scale, with 1 representing “UNDER \$1000” and 25 representing “\$150,000 or over”. There were 2914 valid responses for this variable, with the highest percentage (10.3%) falling into the “\$40,000 to 49,999” range. The median income fell into the “\$30,000 to \$34,999” range.

The second variable in the monetary group is monetary reward (WKBONUS). Respondents were asked, “When you do your job well, are you likely to get a bonus or pay increase?” This question was scored on a likert scale, with 3 representing “yes”, 2 representing “maybe”, and 1 representing “no”. Of the respondents, 23.8% (400) rated “yes”, 17.1% (288) rated “maybe”, and 59.1% (996) rated “no”.

Table 8. Monetary Reward (n=1684)

Yes	23.8%
Maybe	17.1%
No	<u>59.1%</u>
	100%

Control Variables

Age (AGE) and sex (SEX) will be used in each regression model as control variables. The age variable is rated on an interval-ratio scale, with 1 representing “10-19 years” and 8 representing “80 or over”. The sex variable is simply coded 1 for “male” and 2 for “female”. This study is not intended to determine the differences in job satisfaction between males and females, nor does it wish to explore the effects of age on job satisfaction. By employing these variables in each model, such factors will be controlled.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

For the sake of this study, three regression analyses will be run in order to determine which workplace factors significantly effect job satisfaction. The analysis of past literature leads to various hypotheses regarding workplace contentment. With some noted discrepancy in research methods and findings, it is important to reevaluate older theories based on current data. For the purpose of this study, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. Variables from the Autonomy Group will remain statistically significant across all regression models.
2. Variables from the Humanity Group will have a greater effect on job satisfaction than those from the Autonomy Group or the Monetary Group.
3. Variables from the Monetary Group will not have a statistically significant effect on job satisfaction.

The first regression model encompasses only the variables from the Autonomy Group (Model 1). This model has an R^2 value of .142, meaning that 14.2% of the variability in the data set can be explained using these predictor variables. While this leaves a great amount of variability, this is expected given the small number of variables included in this model. As hypothesized, all variables from the Autonomy Group are found to be statistically significant, along with the control variable age. It is expected that older individuals will report higher levels of job satisfaction, as they have likely had

more jobs, and are more settled in their lifestyle. Control variable sex, however, had a p-value of .941, which makes it a highly insignificant factor in modeling job satisfaction. While all dependent variables were found significant ($p < .001$), it is important to note that workplace freedom has a t-statistic of 10.092. This is a remarkably high value, indicating extremely high significance, or some sort of serial correlation. The t-statistics will be further examined in the subsequent models, to ensure that the effect on the outcome variable is valid.

<u>Model Number</u>	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
1	.377	.142	.139

	B (unstandardized)	Beta (standardized)	t	Sig.
Constant	1.587	-----	13.188	.000
Workplace Decisions	.106	.139	5.799	.000
Workplace Freedom	.214	.236	10.092	.000
Work Variation	.119	.115	4.831	.000
Sex	.002	.002	.074	.941
Age	.007	.124	5.477	.000

The second model includes both the variables from the Autonomy Group, as well as those from the Humanity Group (Model 2). This model accounts for a greater amount of variability in the data, with an R² value of .268. Similar to Model 1, all variables in question are found to be highly statistically significant ($p < .001$). Control variables for age and sex also effect the model similarly, with age having a sizeable effect, and sex being highly insignificant. The addition of the Humanity Group does provide a great deal

of value to the modeling, as the degree of variability explained by the second model improved by 12.6% over the first. In fact, supervisor empathy had a B-coefficient of .185, the highest of all variables in the model. This means that for every increase on the scale of supervisor empathy, job satisfaction will increase by .185 units (on the likert scale from 1 to 4). Evaluating the beta values allows one to see the standardized effects of all variables in the regression, with the Humanity Group nearly surpassing all variables in the Autonomy Group. Workplace Freedom remains highly enduring across both models. However, the t-value decreased from 10.092 to 4.940 with the addition of the variables from the Humanity Group. This explains that the variable's value has diminished by more than half in predicting job satisfaction.

Model Number	R	R²	Adjusted R²
2	.517	.268	.264

	B (unstandardized)	Beta (standardized)	t	Sig.
Constant	2.840	-----	19.980	.000
Workplace Decisions	.075	.095	4.105	.000
Workplace Freedom	.104	.115	4.940	.000
Work Variation	.095	.091	4.005	.000
Employer Praise	.143	.149	6.190	.000
Supervisor Empathy	.185	.227	9.139	.000
Co-worker Interest	.096	.104	4.130	.000
Sex	-.016	-.011	-.502	.615
Age	.008	.140	6.508	.000

The third and final model is the most important, in the sense that all groups are included and can be scrutinized (Model 3). With the addition of the Monetary Group to the variables included in the second model, the R^2 value has increased by a meager .001. This means that the final model only accounts for an addition 0.1% of the variability in the data set, when compared to Model 2. In fact, the adjusted R^2 value is the exact same for each model, indicating that when adjusting to accommodate the entire population, the final model provides no additional benefit. This being said, the addition of respondent income and monetary reward can be used to analyze the changes in effectiveness of other variables included in the regression. The t-statistics for workplace decisions and co-worker interest both increased, by .281 and .187 respectively. All other variables were slightly diminished, which is expected with the addition of variables to a regression model. Nonetheless, all variables remained highly statistically significant ($p < .001$) from the Humanity Group, as well as workplace decisions from the Autonomy Group. Workplace freedom and work variation still remain quite significant, with p-values of .002 and .001 respectively. As noted, respondent income and monetary reward did not increase the effectiveness of the regression in predicting job satisfaction. Respondent income has a p-value of .110, which is nearly significant (at a level of $p < .10$). However, with a determined significance threshold of $p < .05$, this variable is not statistically significant. Monetary reward is also statistically insignificant, with a p-value of .157. Thus, job satisfaction is not considerably effected by respondent income or likelihood of pay raise or bonus (Monetary Group), when included with variables from the Autonomy Group and Humanity Group. It is important to note that age remains a very important control variable across all models, with a t-statistic of 6.030 in Model 3. This makes

controlling for age highly valuable, as it is the second-greatest predictor of job satisfaction in the final regression, behind supervisor empathy.

<u>Model Number</u>	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
3	.519	.269	.264

	B (unstandardized)	Beta (standardized)	t	Sig.
Constant	2.949	-----	18.791	.000
Workplace Decisions	.084	.108	4.386	.000
Workplace Freedom	.069	.077	3.138	.002
Work Variation	.084	.082	3.403	.001
Employer Praise	.125	.132	5.099	.000
Supervisor Empathy	.192	.237	9.056	.000
Co-worker Interest	.104	.114	4.317	.000
Respondent Income	.005	.038	1.600	.110
Monetary Reward	.029	.033	1.417	.157
Sex	-.013	-.009	-.399	.690
Age	.008	.139	6.030	.000

DISCUSSION

The results of this analysis were predicted with relative accuracy. Hypothesis 1 held true to a high degree, with all variables from the Autonomy Group remaining significant well above the threshold of $p < .05$. Based on evidence that control and variation in the workplace is a strong predictor of job satisfaction, this comes as no surprise. However, one might assume that while controlling for income, these effects might have markedly reduced. Job repetitiveness and lack of independence are often associated with low-income jobs. Given that these factors are significant after controlling for monetary factors, it can be inferred that control of one's work is a strong predictor of job satisfaction.

The second hypothesis was not completely satisfied throughout the regression analyses. The effect of co-worker interest did not surpass workplace decisions in the final model. These values were, however, both statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level. Both employer praise and supervisor empathy were found to be greater predictors of job satisfaction than all variables in the Autonomy Group. This can be explained through the human desire for confirmation and self-worth. Workers want to be praised by their supervisors, in order to achieve self-actualization. Likewise, they want their supervisors to have a vested interest in their well-being. It is reasonable that co-worker interest would have a smaller effect than supervisor empathy, in that caring exhibited by employers provides a sense of security to the employee. While hypothesis 2 was not confirmed in its entirety, human factors do account for a greater proportion of the variability in the data set than do worker independence factors.

Hypothesis 3 was confirmed in the final regression analysis. The monetary factors of income and likelihood of wage increase or bonus do not significantly effect job satisfaction. Based on past results, and present-day workplace trends, this was expected. The third hypothesis is the focal point of this analysis, being that many individuals are not aware of the fact that increases in income do not necessarily provide increases in job satisfaction. While almost all individuals aspire to attain great wealth, factors within the workplace are far better predictors of contentment. With the rise of consumerism and materialism, these results are difficult to comprehend. In fact, they promote the need for further analyses incorporating working hours, wages, and workplace factors. Has the rise in consumerism caused workers to enjoy working longer hours? Does controlling for total wealth and total family income greatly effect regression analyses? These questions need to be definitively answered in future studies in order to understand the shifts in employee perception and job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is a significant factor in predicting self-reported happiness. As noted in the research, many factors influencing job satisfaction are hotly debated. For instance, many researchers have investigated initiatives by employers, intended to improve worker contentment. While beneficial on the surface, some findings indicate that such programs are not statistically effective. This brings about the need examine statistical research with a broad lens, and an open mind. Programs promoting flexible work schedules might not have significant effect on job satisfaction, but certainly the improvement in work-life balance significantly effects happiness as a whole. Stating that such programs serve no purpose is not only factually incorrect, but irresponsible.

This study was developed based on the trend that work hours were (and still are) increasing in the United States. As work hours continue to rise, employees have been forced to find value in their jobs as a function of self-actualization. Work is an avenue for self-expression, individuality, and interpersonal relations. Through regression analysis, it has been determined that such factors contribute to job-satisfaction. However, this study does not directly link such factors to overall happiness. An additional topic for further analysis concerns the attempts employers have made to improve the happiness of their workers. These initiatives, when properly operated, can greatly improve work-life balance, family relations, health, and ultimately life satisfaction. The subsequent initiative provides the framework to reduce working hours, in an attempt to regain a stable lifestyle.

Ostrom (2003) presents the topic of job-sharing, in which two or more people occupy the same position in the workforce. As certain situations arise in life, such as maternity and paternity, caring for elderly relatives, and work burnout, many American workers have begun to approach employers to request a job share. While unusual and seemingly impractical, this concept provides individuals the ability to take considerable breaks from the workforce, without losing all of their income. Ostrom cites numerous examples, in which employees share days of the week, and sometimes even entire months of the year. For some, this break is needed in order to realign one's interests, and to approach the workplace with renewed vigor. Many people enjoy their jobs, and find they provide value to their lives, but simply wish to devote more time to additional responsibilities or passions. While not appropriate for all careers and personal situations, job-sharing can, and should, be utilized to fight rising working hours in the United States.

Surely, this is only one such solution to the many problems caused by overwork. Companies have begun to understand that healthy and happy workers are more productive over the long-run (Gavin et al., 2004). By implementing programs to improve employee teamwork, firms have created positive relations between workers and have fomented collective innovation. Companies are also turning to learning initiatives, through employee training opportunities, which add value to the firm, while providing workers with valuable skills. Such internal programs go hand in hand with the scope of this research study, as employees wish to feel valuable, liberated, and appreciated in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the effectiveness of various workplace factors in predicting job satisfaction. Regression modeling indicates that factors relating to independence, choice, support, and recognition significantly affect the outcome variable of job satisfaction. Income and wage increase factors were found to be statistically insignificant when included with these variables. This indicates that, contrary to popular belief, monetary rewards do not determine one's contentment in the workplace.

The trend towards longer working hours seems, however, to be a major impediment to worker happiness, as it affects other areas of their lives. This is still to be studied more thoroughly in future research, and perhaps linked to the other variables addressed in this thesis. We hope that creative methods designed to limit working hours, as well as to increase individuality and autonomy, will permit individuals and organizations to strike the appropriate work-life balance.

REFERENCES

- Argyle, Michael . 2001. *The Psychology of Happiness*. New York, Routledge.
- Brooks, Arthur C.. 2008. *Gross National Happiness*. New York, Basic Books.
- Davis, James Allan and Smith, Tom W. General social surveys, 1972-2008[machine-readable data file] /Principal Investigator, James A. Davis; Director and Co-Principal Investigator, Tom W. Smith; Co-Principal Investigator, Peter V. Marsden; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. --NORC ed.-- Chicago: National Opinion Research Center [producer]; Storrs, CT: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut [distributor], 2009.
- Drago, R. W. (2007). *Striking a balance: Work, family, life*. Boston, MA: Dollars & Sense.
- Frey, Bruno S.. 2008. *Happiness: a revolution in economics*. Boston, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Gavin, J. H., & Mason, R. O. (2004). The Virtuous Organization: The Value of Happiness in the Workplace. *Organizational Dynamics*, 33(4), 379-392.
- Head, Simon . 2003. *The New Ruthless Economy: work & power in the digital age*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Honoré, Carl. 2004. *In Praise of Slowness*. San Francisco, Harper San Francisco.
- Jang, S. J., Park, R. and Zippay, A. (2011), The interaction effects of scheduling control and work–life balance programs on job satisfaction and mental health. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 20: 135–143.
- Ostrom, C. (2003). Jobs to share. In J. de Graaf (Ed.), *Take Back Your Time* (pp. 146-159). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Putnam, Robert D. (1995). "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital".

Journal of Democracy 6 (1): 65–78.

Rice, R. W., Near, J. P., & Hunt, R. G. (1980). The Job-Satisfaction/ Life-Satisfaction

Relationship: A Review of Empirical Research. *Basic & Applied Social*

Psychology, 1(1), 37-64.

Robinson, J. (1997). *Time for life : the surprising ways Americans use their time*.

University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Saltzstein, A. L., Ting, Y. and Saltzstein, G. H. (2001), Work-Family Balance and Job

Satisfaction: The Impact of Family-Friendly Policies on Attitudes of Federal

Government Employees. *Public Administration Review*, 61: 452–467.

Schiffirin, Holly H. and S. Katherine Nelson. 2010. "Stressed and Happy? Investigating the Relationship Between Happiness and Perceived Stress."

Journal of Happiness Studies 11:33-39.

Schor, Juliet. (2003). *The Overworked American*. New York: Basic Books.

Tait, Marianne (1989). "Job and life satisfaction: A reevaluation of the strength of the

relationship and gender effects as a function of the date of the study."

Journal of applied psychology (0021-9010), 74 (3), p. 502.

Walsh, J. P., & Zacharias-Walsh, A. (2005). Working longer, living less. In P. Kivisto

(Ed.), *Illuminating Social Life* (pp. 5-37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Academic Vita of Jonathan Brett Hoyer

369 Ramsey Road
Yardley, PA 19067
267-566-4086
jbh5079@psu.edu

Education:

The Pennsylvania State University- University Park, PA
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology
Bachelor of Science in Business Marketing
Honors in Sociology, Graduation Fall 2011

Experience:

- Research Assistant with Immigration Climate Project, Population Research Institute, Pennsylvania State University, Summer-Fall 2011
- Teaching Assistant, Social Problems, Spring 2011
- Volunteer with Las Mercedes Reforestation and Community Project, Spring 2010, Nicaragua
- Volunteer with Cooperativa Spanish School, Elementary English Teacher, Winter 2010, Guatemala
- Volunteer with Intiwawa: Niños del Sol, Community Development Leader, Summer 2009, Peru

Activities:

- Agora Liberal Arts Publication, Co-Founder, Sociology and Diversity Head, Undergraduate Advisor, Fall 2009-Spring 2011
- International Business Association, Co-Founder, Treasurer, Spring 2009-Spring 2011

Awards:

- Phi Beta Kappa
- Beta Gamma Sigma
- Dean's List all semesters