

JOB SATISFACTION AND UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY¹

Abul Fazal Md SALAHUDDIN

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet-3114, Bangladesh

E-mail: salauddinj@yahoo.com

M.M.A. KHAN

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet-3114, Bangladesh

E-mail: muhshin92@gmail.com

Mohamamd Ohid ULLAH

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet-3114, Bangladesh

E-mail: ohidullah@gmail.com

Nasrin JAHAN

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet-3114, Bangladesh

E-mail: ratryecosust@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study was conducted with a view to examine the level of job satisfaction among the administrative staffs of different public universities and determine the significant factors affecting their job satisfaction. To achieve the goals, relevant information were collected using a structured questionnaire. The chi-square test was used to ascertain the association between job satisfaction and other demographic as well as work related factors. The ANOVA and Welch's test were used to check whether the results obtained were biased by the variability of means and sample sizes or not. The Partial Least Squares Path Model was used to detect potential causal relationship between job satisfaction and other work related factors. Results showed that most of the officers working in the universities were satisfied with their job. They usually worked under less stress with no ambiguity in organizational goal and expectation. Job satisfaction was also found to be significantly associated with different age groups, education levels, service length at the current employment and current position. Finally, the path model revealed that job satisfaction was significantly and positively linked with expectations, goal and feedback factors.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Administrative Staffs, University, Causal Relationship, Partial Least Square Path Model

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important factor contributing to the development of the nations for their survival in global competitive environment. Quality education is almost impossible without satisfaction and commitment of the teachers. However, through their timely and essential support, administrative staffs working in the offices of registrar, planning and development, finance and accounts, controller of examination, engineering and facility planning, medical centre, physical education, library, and vice-chancellor contribute indirectly to achieve quality in university education and research. They play constructive roles in arranging necessary financial support for the academicians and researchers; facilitating the academic activities by processing and publishing the semester results on time; implementing various academic and administrative decisions taken by academic council and university syndicate, making ease of building research and teaching facilities through infrastructural development; providing continuous development program for academic and administrative staffs, and so on. Thus the efficient workforce, teaching and administrative, is one of the most important resources in a university. The central core of university activities, in fact, is based on these human resources and the way they are employed to perform different tasks to achieve organization goals.

Management specialists believe that the increase in job satisfaction leads to human resources development, and that satisfaction is directly related to productivity so that higher satisfaction will cause higher productivity and will consequently elevate the organization. In contrast, with reduction in employees' job satisfaction, administrative derelictions increase causing much loss for the organization (Amiri, 2010).

Because of the important functions that the university administrative staffs perform and the importance of their job satisfaction for the achievement of the organization's goals, the level of job satisfaction and its influential factors should precisely be investigated so that the university top management can plan to eradicate the influencing factors and therefore pave the way for employees' satisfaction. Moreover, there is a dearth of research in this particular direction. This study, therefore, aims at investigating the job satisfaction among all those employees involved in administrative duties in the public sector university set up and tries to determine the factors that might influence employees' job satisfaction. This study focuses on:

- measurement of the level of job satisfaction among university administrative staffs,
- association of work (psychosocial job characteristics) and demographic (age, education level, and length of job at job) factors on the job satisfaction amongst university administrative staffs, and
- estimation of the combined causal relationships among the selected work variables and job satisfaction using partial least squares path model.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is considered one of the most prominent attitudinal variables that have been handled by researchers within the field of organizational behavior (Mahmoud, 2012; AL-Hussami, 2008; Astrauskaitė et al., 2011; Borooah, 2009; Byrne, 2010; Paul, 2011; Hasnain et al., 2011; Spector, 1985) especially when it comes to empirical investiga-

tion conducted in the service sectors (healthcare, banking, and education) where service quality is indicated by customer satisfaction (Al-Khalil and Mahmoud, 2012; Demir 2002) refers job satisfaction to employees' feel of contentment and discontentment for a job.

Job satisfaction is found to be either positively or negatively associated with job characteristics that include autonomy (Moyle et al., 2003), workload (Khowaja et al., 2005), professional status (Dunn et al., 2005), task requirements (Campbell et al., 2004), job demands (Moyle et al., 2003) and decision making or job control (Campbell et al., 2004). Moreover, work environmental factors such as organizational system (Campbell et al., 2004); communication with peers (Dunn et al., 2005); chances for a promotion (Tyson et al., 2002); support from managers and relationships with coworkers (Seo et al., 2004); and personal variables i.e. age, race, educational level, and length of time at job (Gleason-Wynn and Mindel, 1999) are found to have significant effects on job satisfaction. Besides, the job stresses (work-related stress) are negatively related to job satisfaction (Noblet and Rodwell, 2009).

1.1.2 Job Satisfaction in University

Asl et al. (2013) investigated the job satisfaction rate and its related factors on the faculty members of Semnan University of Medical Sciences (SUMS) in Iran. They reported the nature of the work (work itself) and the lack of encouragement and appropriate feedback system as reasons for the highest and lowest level of job satisfaction respectively. Asgari et al. (2012) studied the level of job satisfaction among the operating room technician of Hamadan University of medical sciences hospitals and found no significant relationship between job satisfaction and factors such as age, background, gender, marital status and shift. Syed et al. (2012) explored the effects of motivation, hygiene and personal life factors on job satisfaction of faculty members of universities in Pakistan. The faculty members were found to be most satisfied with nature of their job (work itself) and more concerned about the issues of dearth in personal security in the campus. Khirade and Baviskar (2012) studied the Job satisfaction among the North Maharashtra University campus teachers and no significant differences were found between the job satisfaction and the factors such as gender and nature of appointment (permanent and contract basis). However, the results obtained from the researches (Islam et al., 2012) revealed that married and female teachers were more satisfied with their institutions and the teachers' job satisfaction increased with the increase in experience. Quinn and Chandan (2012) examined the role of gender and ethnicity of the faculty members' job satisfaction and showed significant difference in subscales of job satisfaction for faculty members between ethnicity: promotion, supervision, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work, and communication. However, they found no significant gender based difference in faculty members' job satisfaction. Ghazi et al. (2010) tried to explore the level of job satisfaction of university teachers in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Teachers were found to be neutral with dimensions: working conditions, organizational policies and practices, recognition, supervision technical and promotion opportunities. However, they were satisfied with work variety, compensation, work itself, colleagues' cooperation, responsibility, ability utilization, authority, job security, and achievement. Alam et al., (2005) examined the relationships between job satisfaction, individual job facets, and socio-demographic variables for in the public universities in Bangladesh. Female employees were found to be more satisfied with promotion, fringe benefits

and supports of teaching but less satisfied with interpersonal relationship with colleagues than their male counterparts. Both the male and female teachers were found to have least satisfaction with pay.

2. METHODOLOGY:

2.1 Questionnaire Construction and Administration

Well-established and validated questionnaires (Söderberg, 1993; Lindström et al., 1997; Vischer, 1996) were used to collect data in this study. For each job characteristic, a 5-point Likert-type scale was used. Depending on the wording of the item, the Likert scale wording ranged from 1 = very little to 5 = very much, or 1 = a minimum amount to 5 = a maximum amount. The internal consistency in this study is measured by Cronbach's alpha. The lower limit of 0.6 is considered acceptable for newly developed scales and 0.7 for established scales (Nunnally, 1978; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Cronbach's coefficient alphas were calculated for the items of each survey construct.

An introductory letter describing the project included information about the voluntary nature of the questionnaire, and confidentiality of responses was assured. The questionnaires were distributed randomly to the participants either directly or by email. The completed questionnaires were collected by the authors in sealed envelopes. The respondents filled in the questionnaires at their workplaces. They were instructed to fill in the questionnaire at a quiet place with no other people around and not to consider the answers too long but always stick with the first spontaneous answer that came to their mind.

2.2 Data Collection

The study includes an Educational Institution. The sample list consisted of individuals working at executive and decision making levels (Registrar, Planning and Development, Finance and Accounts, Controller of Examination, Engineering Office, Medical Centre, Physical Education, Library, and Vice-Chancellor's Office). To test the non-response bias, the responses of those who returned early were compared with those who returned late to determine if there are any statistical differences. There were no statistical differences between the early and late responses. A total of 285 survey questionnaires were sent (interviewed and mailed). Of the 262 returned questionnaires, 258 were usable. The response rate was approximately 91%. The data analysis is based on the 258 useable questionnaires.

2.3 Partial Least Squares Path Model

Partial least squares path model (PLSPM) (Sanchez, 2012; Lohmoller, 1989) was developed using partial least squares (PLS) (Wold, 1985; Wold et al., 2001) to structural equation modeling (SEM) which is also known as SEM-PLS or soft modeling. The PLSPM does not depend on any distribution pattern and a few cases can suffice (Tenenhaus et al., 2005). Furthermore, it is a components based approach and robust against missing values, misspecification and multi co linearity problems. The maximum likelihood method in SEM is known as SEM-ML or hard modeling. It is a covariance based approach and depends on a specific distribution pattern and need more cases (Joreskog, 1970). Most of our collected data based on Likert scale, i.e., ranged between 1 to 5, therefore, we have applied a well-known non-parametric multivariate approach (PLSPM) in our data to find out the potential causal relationships among the dimensions related with job satisfaction.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Reliability Testing

The analysis of the data is initiated with the determination of instrument's internal consistency. This was found through application of reliability test i.e. Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The scale's reliability was determined through sample of 258 respondents each of them answered 61 questions. The coefficient for the sixty one items in the study was 0.861. This is considerably above the recommended 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978; Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of different factors (dimensions).

| | Mean | (±)SD |
|--------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Job Satisfaction | 2.1293 | 0.76 |
| Stress at work | 2.0466 | 0.82 |
| Work demand | 2.8914 | 1.07 |
| Expectation, goal and feedback | 3.4954 | 0.92 |
| Control at work | 2.3908 | 1.27 |
| Skill in work | 4.0517 | 0.77 |

3.3 Descriptive Statistics

As shown in Table 1, the average rating for 'job satisfaction' by the respondents is 2.13 ('1' = 'very satisfactory'), which shows that the majority of the officers working in the university are satisfied with their job. Again, average rating for 'stress at work', 'expectation, goal and feedback', and 'skill in work' are 2.04 ('1' = 'Never/Rarely'), 3.5 ('5' = 'Very often') and 4.05 ('5' = 'very often'/'always') respectively. These rated values indicate the facts that the officers usually work under less stress with no ambiguity in organizational goal and expectation. Moreover, they are satisfied with the way they are getting the feedback on the quality of their work. However, they have rated their work less demanding and intellectually less stimulating (rating for 'work demand' is found to be 2.89). Besides, the officers are found to have lower control over their work (rating for 'control at work' is 2.39).

Table 2. Frequency distribution of different demographic and service length variables.

| Age group | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 26-30 | 53 | 20.7 |
| 31-35 | 80 | 31.0 |
| 36-40 | 13 | 5.2 |
| 41-45 | 44 | 17.2 |
| 46-50 | 18 | 6.9 |
| 51-55 | 18 | 6.9 |
| 56-60 | 31 | 12.1 |
| Education | | |
| Bachelor | 31 | 12.1 |
| Masters | 214 | 82.8 |
| Others | 13 | 5.2 |

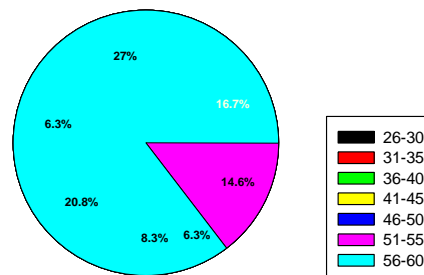
| Marital Status | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|------|
| Married | 214 | 82.8 |
| Single | 44 | 17.2 |
| Service length at current position | | |
| 1 – 5 yrs | 138 | 53.4 |
| 6 – 10 yrs | 18 | 6.9 |
| 11 – 15 yrs | 76 | 29.3 |
| 16 yrs and above | 27 | 10.3 |
| Service length at current employment | | |
| 1 – 5 yrs | 214 | 82.8 |
| 6 – 10 yrs | 18 | 6.9 |
| 11 – 15 yrs | 22 | 8.6 |
| 16 yrs and above | 4 | 1.7 |

An individual's function within the university includes administration and human resources, planning and development, finance and accounts, controlling examination, infrastructure development, medical, physical education, and library facility development. The Table 2 shows that our sample consists of more married (82.8%) than single (17.2%). All the respondents are educationally well qualified: 82.8% of them have post-graduate degree and remaining 17.2% have bachelor and other degrees. Of 258 respondents, 51.7% are identified as young adults (25-35 years), 22.4% as early middle age (36-45 years) and 13.8% as late middle age (46-55 years). Besides, 89.7% of the total respondents have been employed in their organization for an average of 3.31 years with a range of 1 – 10 years wherein 44.8% and 41.4% of them have the work experience in the range of 1 – 3 years and more than 3 – 8 years respectively in the current position.

Table 3. Association between job satisfaction and different demographic and service related variables

| | Satisfied (%) | Dissatisfied (%) |
|---|---------------|------------------|
| How would you rate your current position in terms of level of satisfaction? | 82.8 | 17.2 |

Fig. 1: Satisfaction with the job in general among the respondents with different age-groups. (Chi-square Test: p- value of linear-by-linear association: 0.006)



Figs 1-4 illustrate the distribution of level of satisfaction among the officers working in the university with their current job positions. As shown in the table 3, 82.8% of the total

respondents have rated their current job as 'satisfactory to very satisfactory', whereas remaining 17.2% are not at all satisfied. As shown in Fig 4, 83.3% of the satisfied respondents are found to have an academic master's degree indicating the fact that respondents with higher academic degree have higher satisfaction with their current job. However, this result is influenced by the variability of means and sample sizes. Fig 3 shows that, even though the young adults have less control at work, they (43.7%) are satisfied with their job more than the early and the late middle age groups (for ANOVA test, $F = 8.33$ and $p = 0.001$; for Welch's test, $F = 7.438$ and $p = 0.002$). This is because every new appointment and/or promotion comes to the university officers as a new challenge and motivates them to perform effectively and enthusiastically as well. Though the respondents (18.7%) working for more than ten years in the same position do their job under less stress with no ambiguity in organizational goal and expectation, they think that their performance is not being properly evaluated. Moreover, they find their job monotonous and less stimulating over time. As a result, they get no motivation to perform their day-to-day functions better resulting in less satisfaction with their job in general. Interestingly 14.6% of satisfied respondents in the range of 56 – 60 years are found to have satisfaction with their job positions. This is because of the fact that they are actively involved in decision and strategy making process, and find their job more demanding and intellectually stimulating. Moreover, they have total control at their work. Taken together, results show that job satisfaction is significantly associated with different age groups, education levels, and different service length at the current employment and at the current position as well.

Fig. 2: Satisfaction with the job in general among the respondents with different service length at the current employment.

(Chi-square Test: p-value of linear-by-linear association: 0.006)

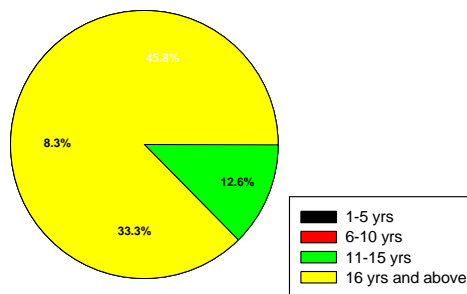


Fig. 3: Satisfaction with the job in general among the respondents with different service length at the current position.

(Chi-square Test: p-value of linear-by-linear association: 0.007)

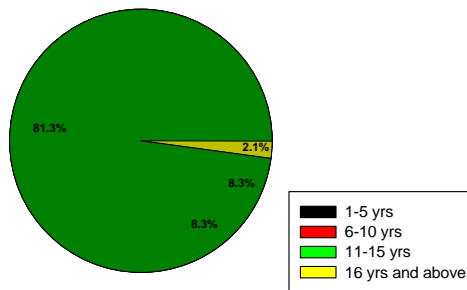
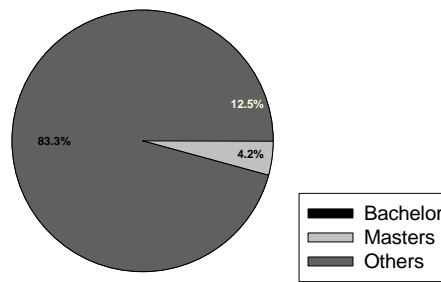


Fig. 4: Satisfaction with the job in general among the respondents with different education level.

(Chi-square Test: p-value of linear-by-linear association: 0.0125)



3.4 Potential Causal Relationship among Different Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

The potential causal relationships have been investigated among the dimensions related with job satisfaction through PLSPM. It is assumed that the latent variable 'Job satisfaction' might be influenced by the latent variables " work demand", "expectations, goal and feedback", "skill", "stress", "control at work". Furthermore, each latent variable is a linear combination of several factors. The influential factors in each latent variable or dimension have been depicted in the Fig. 5.

The path diagram illustrated in Fig. 5 reveal that job satisfaction is significantly associated with expectations, goal and feedback (coefficient = 0.47) as well as work demand (coefficient = -0.12). Thus these outcomes indicate that expectation, goal and feedback have a significant positive impact on job satisfaction, whereas increasing work demand results in job dissatisfaction. Moreover, job satisfaction increases with the increase in control at work and skill requirements, whereas job satisfaction decreases with the increase in stress. No significant association is found between job satisfaction and control at work and skill in this path model. This is because, in the path model, the dimensions are interconnected and none has one-to-one relationship with job satisfaction. However, simple linear regression models show the significant association of each of the dimensions (skill, control at work and stress) with job satisfaction. Moreover, the results shown in path diagram indicate the fact that aggregate effect of the dimensions under consideration on the employees' job satisfaction exists and shows a pattern different from individual effects. The most influential variables of each dimension are given in the Appendix-A.

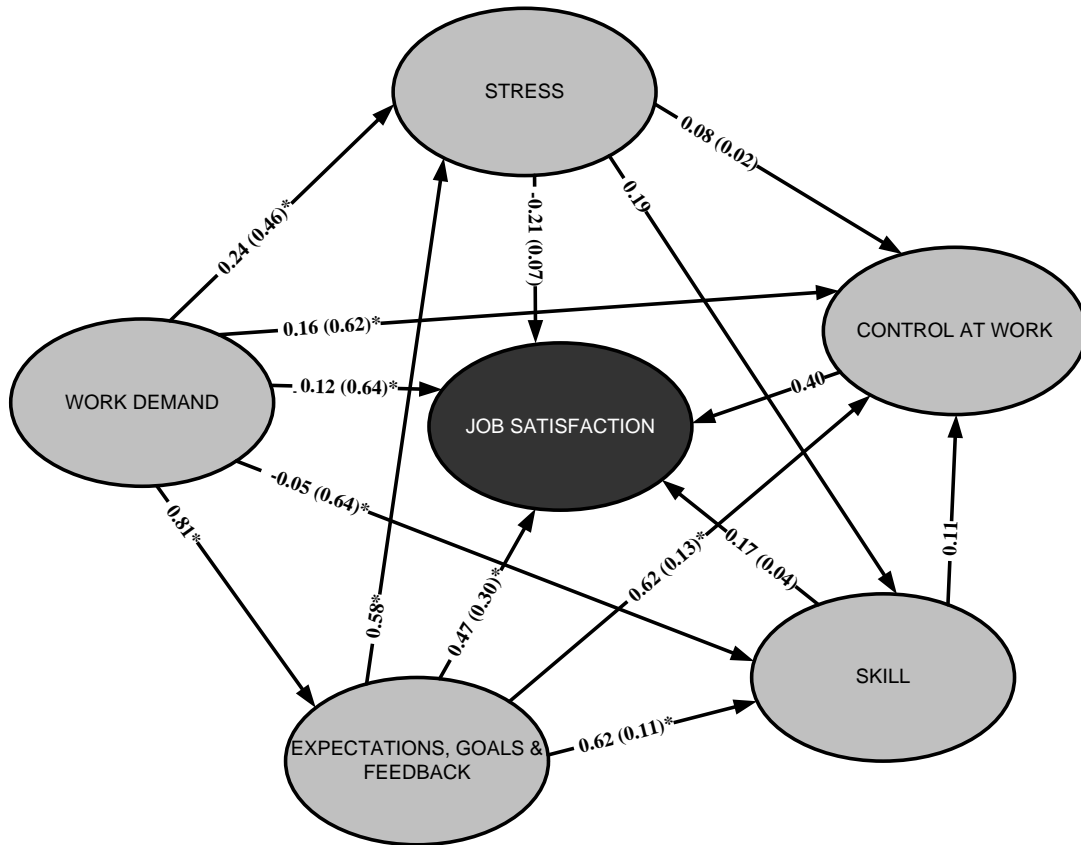


Fig. 5: Path diagram with direct and indirect path coefficients. Indirect path coefficients were presented in the parentheses. Star (*) mark indicates the significant at 5% level. The goodness of fit of this model is: absolute = 0.42, relative = 0.67, Outer model = 0.82 and inner model = 0.82. The results of the path diagram were obtained by using 'plspm' package in R statistical program.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study has examined the level of job satisfaction among the administrative staffs working indifferent public universities and its association with the various psychosocial job characteristics. Based on the results and discussion, following conclusions can be drawn:

- Job satisfaction is significantly associated with different age groups, education levels, service length at the current employment and current position.
- Despite of less control at work, the young adults are satisfied with their jobs more than the early and the late middle age groups.
- Expectation, goal and feedback is the most influential factor affecting the university staffs' job satisfaction positively, whereas work demand has the negative effects on their job satisfaction.
- University staffs working under less stress with no ambiguity in organizational goal and expectation are satisfied with their current jobs. However, negative effect is observed for the staffs working for more than a decade in the same position.

- University staffs with higher academic degree have higher satisfaction with their current jobs. However, this result is influenced by the variability of means and sample size.

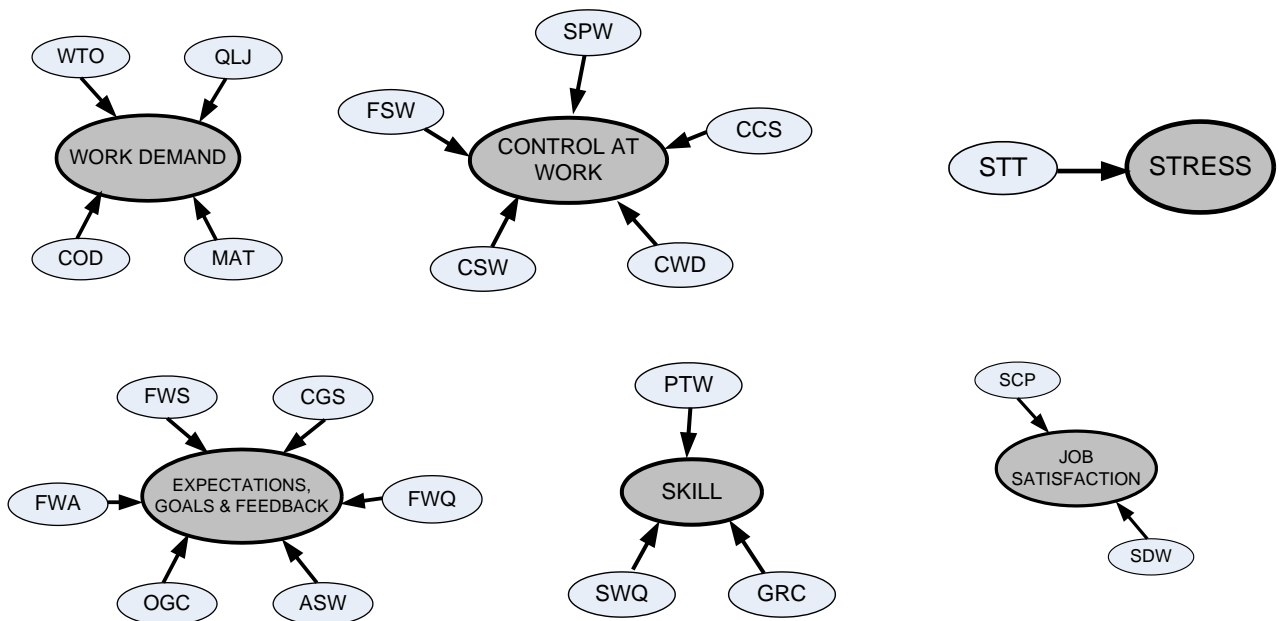
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APPENDIX-A: The influential variables of each dimension





Abbreviation

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| WTO | Work Over Time | STT | Saying Things Without Thinking |
| QLJ | Qualified Job | SWQ | Satisfaction With Work Quality |
| MAT | Maximum Attention | PTW | Provision of Training At Work |
| COD | Complicated Decision | GRC | Good Relations With Colleagues |
| FWA | Feedback: Work Achievement | FSW | Free To Select Own Work Procedure |
| FWS | Freedom For Work Procedure | SPW | Set Pace of Work |
| CGS | Contribution To Goal Setting | CCS | Contribution To Coworkers Selection |
| FWQ | Feedback: Work Quality | CWD | Contribution To Work-related Decision |
| ASW | Access To See The Work Quality | CSW | Contribution To Setting Work Schedule |
| OGC | Organizational Goal Clarity | SCP | Satisfaction With Current Position |
| | | SDW | Satisfaction With Day To Day Work |

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