



Examination of Factors Affecting Workplace Satisfaction amongst Different Cultures

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Abstract

Workplace satisfaction has been a topic of interest for employees, managers, and researchers for decades. Even though a large body of literature exists, there is still much to learn regarding the relationship between burnout, organizational commitment, internal locus of control and their association to individual workplace satisfaction. A 53 question self-report survey was administered through SurveyMonkey to 164 subjects, of which 53 were males and 111 were females. The majority (53%) of subjects held a professional occupation and identified as Hispanic/Latino (64%). Studies in this field have been conducted globally to analyze and also expand knowledge regarding factors that are positively correlated with workplace satisfaction and the subsequent employee outcomes. This study proposed that internal locus of control and organizational commitment are positively correlated with workplace satisfaction and that burnout is negatively correlated with workplace satisfaction. Significant positive correlations were found between internal locus of control and workplace satisfaction, workplace satisfaction and organizational commitment, and workplace satisfaction and burnout. These results indicated several things— that when an individual experiences workplace satisfaction, it will be positively correlated with organizational commitment; when individuals feel that they are in control of their successes and failures their workplace satisfaction will be positively correlated; and high levels of burnout were positively correlated with workplace satisfaction.

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There were no significant differences found regarding internal locus of control and workplace satisfaction between different occupational sub-groups. These results provide organizations useful data to build a framework that fosters organizational commitment, work/life balance, and advances the importance of implementing recognition programs that reinforce intrinsic rewards.

Keywords: Industrial organizational psychology; workplace satisfaction; internal locus of control; burnout; organizational commitment.

1. Introduction

The topic of workplace satisfaction has been a subject of discussion in the field of Organizational Psychology and among organizations that want to retain skilled experienced employees. Employees are an important aspect of a company's growth due to the critical role they play in human resources, if they are happy in the organization they will be more committed to their job and stay long term in the company. Therefore, dynamic organizations are surveying workplace satisfaction in order to remedy discontent that employees experience in their work environment [1].

Furthermore, constructs that may be related to workplace satisfaction are burnout, organizational commitment, and internal locus of control [2, 3]. Burnout has been taken into consideration because of the implications it has with psychological stress; it has attained attention as a problem when employees perform their work, as it may lead to workplace dissatisfaction [3]. According to authors in [3] there have been many studies, [4, 5], that have discovered a negative correlation between workplace satisfaction and burnout. Workplace satisfaction may also be correlated by organizational commitment, for example, an employee who remains in a company for many years will feel an emotional attachment towards the company, and this emotional attachment could influence their satisfaction [2]. Authors in [2] stated that one of the strongest variables found to be associated with organizational commitment was workplace satisfaction. Employees that experience workplace satisfaction are more inclined to be engrossed in their work which in turn causes organizational commitment [2].

Internal locus of control also plays quite an imperative role in our behaviors, since it has to do with the belief that destiny and behavior can be controlled. Therefore, the way employees react to a job in terms of behavior may affect workplace satisfaction. Authors in [3] found that internal locus of control affected how employees reacted towards their job. The employees that practiced internal locus of control felt more responsible for mistakes that impacted their job [3]. Hence, workplace satisfaction is an important factor that may affect whether the employee decides to commit to a job, take ownership, and be part of the growth of an organization.

2. Literature Review

The commitment an employee feels could be a great advantage to the organization in terms of the work the employee performs and how that success will impact the company. The degree to which an employee is committed to an organization influences the way he or she functions at work and the organization's accomplishment [2]. In the study conducted by authors in [2], two constructs were measured to determine their impact on organizational commitment: workplace satisfaction and work engagement. It was found that in order

to improve workplace satisfaction, companies need to enhance the work environment and have the proper resources so that employees may execute their work [2]. They also found that repeated feedback and appraisals from management are paramount to attaining solid development for the employee [2]. Concerning work engagement, management needs to have more communication that relates to the company's principles and future destination; likewise, human resources managers need to concentrate on employing people who both admire and enjoy their job [2].

Equally important to the preservation of employees in an organization is the connection between work-life balance, burnout, and workplace satisfaction [6]. Authors in [6] found that in private sector banks in Vijayawada, India, a majority of the employees expressed a stable work-life balance with limited exhaustion. The results showed that the demographic variables studied such as gender, age, qualification, experience, nature of job, work status, nature of family, income, and number of dependents all altered work-life balance [6]. The only variables that remained constant throughout the study were designation and marital status. Many respondents reported low levels of burnout, but when demographics such as designation, age, marital status, qualification, and experience were tested this changed burnout. Chiefly, authors in [6] found that if work life balance was abundant it would induce workplace satisfaction. They also found a correlation between burnout and workplace satisfaction, as burnout may reduce workplace satisfaction or vice versa, if workplace satisfaction is raised it could reduce burnout [6]. Based on the results both work life balance and burnout induce workplace satisfaction [6].

In a similar study, authors in [3] studied police officers in China and analyzed the connection between stress, workplace satisfaction, burnout, and locus of control. These researchers found that each factor made an impact on basic-level police officers. They found that job stress adversely impacts workplace satisfaction on police officers [3]. Likewise, job stress is firmly correlated with job burnout [3]. These results reflected the idea that job burnout operates as an arbitrator for the stress-satisfaction association [3]. In addition, locus of control was found to be an intermediary for stress-burnout and burnout-satisfaction alliance [3]. To improve the conditions these officers were facing in their job the researchers proposed some solutions: implementation of relaxation rooms in police stations; regulation by managers of working hours; officers' participation in stress management instruction; and human resources managers administering psychological tests to future candidates to ascertain whether they can handle on-the-job conditions associated with being a police officer [3].

Additional conclusions were formulated in a study conducted by authors in [7] that analyzed workplace satisfaction and burnout levels of primary health care workers in Malatya, Turkey. Regarding variables such as gender, age, profession, and department, the results showed that workplace satisfaction scores were not altered; no significant difference was detected [7]. In contrast, workers who disclosed discontent in their job, had not selected their department, and believed their monetary condition was low had a lower workplace satisfaction score [7]. It was also found that variables such as burnout score, gender, marital status, age, and profession did not have any effect on the outcome [7]. However, individuals who did not want the department they worked currently in and considered themselves underprivileged had a high burnout score [7]. Additionally, health care workers who were not content in their position had high depersonalization and burnout scores [7]. Although, gender, marital status, age, and profession did not modify burnout scores in this study [7].

Correspondingly, researchers in [1] observed how work-life balance and burnout modifies workplace satisfaction on employees involved in informational technology (“IT”) and IT enabled service industries (“ITES”) in New Delhi, India. This study of IT and ITES industries showed a positive correlation between work-life balance and workplace satisfaction [1]. It was found that in the ITES, a work-life balance was a prevalent prognosticator of workplace satisfaction. The researchers also showed that work life balance is diversely affected by the extent of burnout being experienced [1]. At the same time, burnout altered workplace satisfaction, specifically, the more burnout increases for the employee it will create a decrease in workplace satisfaction [1]. Interestingly, the gender most affected by elevated workplace satisfaction were the male participants [1].

Are there certain characteristic differences that cause an individual to value intrinsic rewards over extrinsic rewards? Perception plays a significant role in how an individual reacts to a reward. When an individual perceives that reinforcement is not entirely contingent upon his or her actions, but rather is a result of some external force (luck, chance, fate, etc.) they are known as having an external locus of control [8]. An individual who perceives reinforcement as being contingent on his or her actions is known as having an internal locus of control [8]. These individuals are more likely to be attentive to their environment to utilize useful information for future behavior, as well as fix their environment, value achievement/ skill reinforcements, and resist influencing attempts [8]. Having an internal locus of control orientation is critical in valuing intrinsic rewards, as individuals are able to see the direct link between their effort and the resulting reinforcement.

Intrinsic rewards are also associated with the job itself and can be derived from feelings of autonomy, achievement, utilization of skills, etc. Extrinsic rewards can come from the organization (pay, promotion, benefits) or from interaction with others (supportive supervisors) [9]. Based on researcher in [8] findings, individuals with internal locus of control will identify greater value on intrinsic rewards, versus externals who are more likely to generate greater value on extrinsic rewards. The significance of these three types of rewards were examined along with their impact on overall workplace satisfaction. The researcher in [9] collected data across different levels of the professional hierarchy— professional, managerial, clerical, service, and blue-collar— allowing for direct comparison. This data is important to compare because it allows managers to have a clear understanding on which rewards are most effective across these different groups. Their study resulted in three important findings: first, among all occupational sub-groups, intrinsic rewards ranked as the top determinant of workplace satisfaction, followed by extrinsic social rewards, and it was only the lower-level occupation groups that identified extrinsic organizational rewards as a powerful determinant of workplace satisfaction. Second, employees within lower-level occupation groups place high importance on intrinsic rewards initially but; as job longevity increases, this importance shifts to organizational rewards. Third, greater availability of intrinsic rewards was found among higher-level occupation groups, and these same groups also rated considerably higher levels of workplace satisfaction [9]. These findings show that individuals prefer to be reinforced intrinsically, and those who have greater access to intrinsic reinforcement will be more satisfied with their jobs. In contrast, individuals who have limited access to intrinsic reinforcement will begin to place more value in extrinsic reinforcement.

In a study by researchers in [10], similar results were found. Taiwanese male accountants in management

positions rated higher levels of workplace satisfaction than their counterparts in non-management positions. The Taiwanese accountants that possess an internal locus of control reported considerably lower stress, greater satisfaction, and were higher performers compared to those with an external locus of control [10]. These results are somewhat surprising, as Taiwan is known to be a strong collectivist society assigning greater value to the goals of the group rather than the individual [11, 12]. The average locus of control score was 11.57 across the entire sample [10]. In other words, on average, the Taiwanese sample has more of an internal than external control, showing that an internal locus of control orientation is beneficial across different cultures and belief systems.

These findings have been produced across a number of different studies. In the first meta-analysis of the relationship between internal locus of control and workplace satisfaction, 135 studies were examined to determine the strength of the correlation between several attributes, including internal locus of control, and workplace satisfaction [13]. Regarding workplace satisfaction and internal locus of control, there was a positive correlation of $p = .32$ [13]. As stated earlier, this strength is seen across cultures as well. Researchers in [14] established that internal locus of control is precisely linked to satisfaction with the job and with life in both a US sample and Israeli sample. This was the first study to compare two cultures at identical times together with equivalent measures on core self-evaluations (composed of self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and non-neuroticism) in relation to workplace satisfaction [14]. In South African call center agents, researchers in [15] found a significantly stronger positive correlation between internal locus of control and workplace satisfaction versus the correlation between external locus of control and workplace satisfaction. Based on the aforementioned studies, there is substantial evidence to support the positive correlation between workplace satisfaction and internal locus of control. This study will build upon the previous work done to evaluate the correlation among internal locus of control and workplace satisfaction across different occupational sub-groups.

2.1. Hypotheses

The researchers in this study proposed that H1: a significant difference exists regarding internal locus of control ratings between the professional, administrative, and technical occupational sub-groups; that H2: a positive correlation between internal locus of control and workplace satisfaction would be found in these occupational sub-groups. This study also proposed that H3: workplace satisfaction is negatively correlated with burnout; and that H4: workplace satisfaction is positively correlated with organizational commitment.

3. Methodology

Convenience sampling was used to recruit the 164 subjects who participated in this study. Social media websites such as Facebook, GroupMe, and LinkedIn were used as recruitment tools. In addition to social media websites, methods such as snowball sampling were used in which subjects shared a link to the online survey with their friends and family. Subjects were separated into three employment status categories; full-time employees, part-time employees, and unemployed. An online informed consent form was provided to all subjects explaining the nature of the study before the survey was completed via the online survey system, SurveyMonkey. All subjects

were assured that their participation was voluntary; they would remain anonymous, and were not required to provide a name to participate in the survey. The demographic variables measured were age, gender, ethnicity, education level, income level, occupational class, marital status, annual income, years of experience in current job and industry, and household size.

3.1. Measure

A modified version of the Veterans Affairs VHA All Employee Survey was used in this study that included 42 questions. The VHA All Employee Survey is a self-report measure that subjects were able to access through a provided web link. The following criteria were measured: workplace satisfaction, organizational commitment, burnout, internal locus of control, and citizenship/teamwork. A 6 point Likert-scale that ranged from 0 (Strongly Disagree/ Very Dissatisfied) to 6 (Do Not Know) was used for the majority of the survey, and a 7 point Likert-scale that ranged from 0 (Never) to 7 (Everyday) used for questions regarding burnout. The reliability coefficient has consistently produced alpha levels between 0.80 to 0.89, whereas establishing validity is still an ongoing process [16]. Burnout was measured using a rating scale that consisted of 3 statements which asked subjects to choose an agreement rating that correlated with the experienced stated feelings. Organizational commitment was measured using a rating scale that consisted of 9 statements, which asked subjects to choose a rating that reflected their agreement to each individual statement. Workplace satisfaction was measured based on the selected rating that reflected the extent to which subjects agreed with each statement regarding workplace satisfaction. Internal locus of control was measured based on the selected rating chosen by subjects that reflected the degree to which they reported higher levels of control over their success and failures.

4. Results

The demographic data that was collected revealed a diverse group of participants on several variables. The inclusion criteria for this study was; access to internet, had to be 18 years old or older, and having completed some school. The final sample included 164 participants, in which, the majority (48%) were females of Hispanic ethnicity. Females made up 67% of the sample; and Hispanic participants made up 65%. There were 53 males in the total sample and in regards to ethnicity, White/Non-Hispanic participants made up 20%; while Black/African American comprised at 8%. The age of the final sample ranged from 19 years to 74 years of age ($\sigma = 12.95$ years), with the average being 37 years of age. In regards to education level, 79% of subjects reported obtaining at least a Bachelor's degree (Figure 1). The participants described their jobs as follows: 53% described their job as professional, in comparison to, 18% who described their job as administrative and 10% who selected technical (Figure 2). Other demographic variables collected in this study were marital status, number of children, experience in current job ($M = 7$ years of experience; $\sigma = 8.6$ years), experience in current industry ($M = 11$ years of experience; $\sigma = 10$ years), annual income ($M = \$30,000$ - $\$50,000$), and number of household incomes ($M = 1.5$ incomes).

Internal locus of control was first analyzed using key demographic variables to show any potential significant differences. No significant differences were found between males and females regarding internal locus of control ($F(1, 160) = .031, p = .860$). Regardless of gender, both males and females reported having a high

internal locus of control (males $M = 4.04$; females $M = 4.02$). No significant difference was found between participants of different ethnicities for internal locus of control ($F(4, 157) = .487, p = .745$). The average locus of control rating for participants who did not receive at least a bachelor's degree was $M = 3.96$; for participants who did earn at least a bachelor's degree the average locus of control rating was $M = 4.05$ ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that level of education does not have significance regarding whether an individual will have an internalized locus of control.

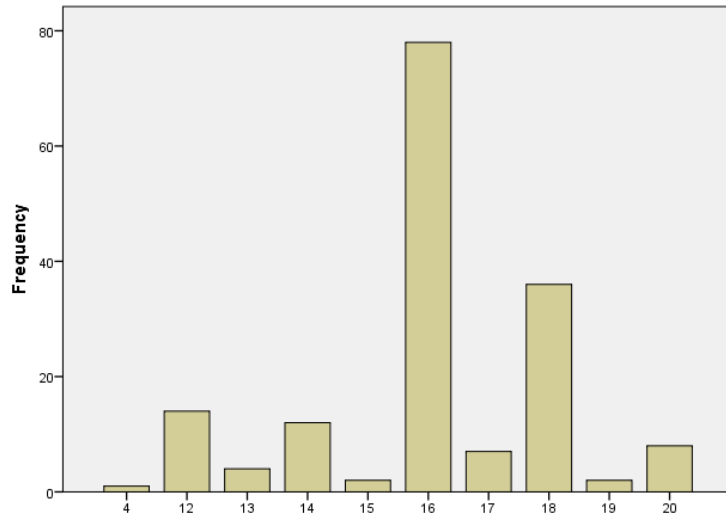


Figure 1: Years of formal education.

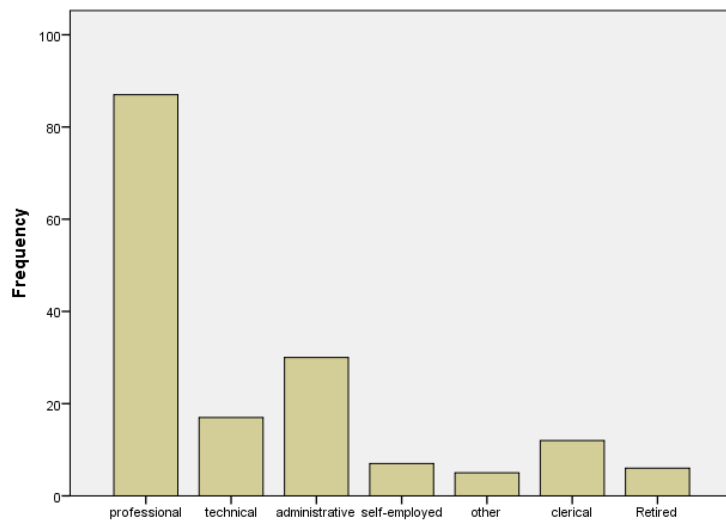


Figure 2: Job

An ANOVA test was used to analyze the results regarding Hypothesis 1. Results show no significant difference between participants in a professional job ($M = 4.05$) versus participants in a technical job ($M = 3.99$) ($F(2, 129) = .357, p = .944$) in regards to internal locus of control. The difference between the professional ($M = 4.05$) and administrative ($M = 3.97$) occupational groups was non-significant as well ($F(2, 129) = .357, p = .828$). These results do not provide support for hypothesis 1, which states— a significant difference exist regarding

internal locus of control ratings between the professional, administrative, and technical occupational sub-groups. See Table 1 for full listing of p values. A significant positive correlation was found between workplace satisfaction and internal locus control among the professional, technical, and administrative occupational sub-groups ($r = .314, p < 0.01$). These results provide support for hypothesis 2 which states— a positive correlation between internal locus of control and workplace satisfaction would be detected in these occupational sub-groups.

Table 1: P value

Occupation	Professional	Technical	Administrative
Professional		0.944	0.828
Technical	0.944		0.999
Administrative	0.828	0.999	

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix among WS and Internal LOC

	Work_Sat_Avg	LOC_AVG	
Work_Sat_Avg	Pearson Correlation	1	.314**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	130	130
LOC_AVG	Pearson Correlation	.314**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	130	130

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

A Pearson’s data analysis was used to examine the relationship between workplace satisfaction and organizational commitment as well as workplace satisfaction and burnout. In hypothesis 3, a relationship between workplace satisfaction and burnout was examined to see if there would be a negative correlation. The outcome of the correlation between workplace satisfaction and burnout was ($r = .499, p < .001$). Regrettably this does not support hypothesis 3 as the correlation was found to be positive rather than negative. Although it should be noted that there is a moderately strong correlation found between these constructs, which suggests a significant relationship between burnout and workplace satisfaction.

The fourth hypothesis examined if there was a positive correlation between workplace satisfaction and organizational commitment. The correlation between workplace satisfaction and organizational commitment was ($r = .799, p < .001$). This supports the hypothesis by showing a significant positive correlation for both

workplace satisfaction and organizational commitment. These results propose that when an individual experiences workplace satisfaction they are likely to have higher organizational commitment.

Table3: Pearson Correlation Matrix among WSTtotal, OCTtotal, and BurnTotal

		WSTtotal	OCTtotal	BurnTotal
WSTtotal	Pearson Correlation	1	.799**	.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	164	164	164
OCTtotal	Pearson Correlation	.799**	1	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.006
	N	164	164	164
BurnTotal	Pearson Correlation	.499**	.480**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	164	164	164

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

5. Discussion

This study proposed that a significant difference would exist between the professional, technical, and administrative occupational sub-groups in their self-reported internal locus of control ratings. The results in this study do not provide support for this hypothesis and conflicts with results reported in prior research. Prior research found a significant difference between non-managers and managers regarding their locus of control has been established [10]. Managers, on average, reported having an internal control whereas non-managers reported having an external control [10].

High level occupations typically have greater availability of intrinsic rewards which leads them to place greater value on this type of reinforcement [9]. The occupational sub-groups compared in this study—professional, technical, administrative—were chosen because of the perceived distinct differences that exist between them. Individuals in professional occupations were expected to report having a significantly greater internal locus of control because these occupations were believed to be “high level” (i.e. managers, lawyers, teachers).

This is in comparison to technical and administrative occupations, which were expected to report having more of an external control as they were perceived as “low level” (i.e. secretaries, receptionists, mechanics). Based on

the results in this study, individuals in technical, administrative, and professional occupations have an internal locus of control with no significant difference existing between the occupational sub-groups. A potential explanation for these results could be that individuals in technical occupations are dependent on their technical expertise and value intrinsic rewards such as—development of technical skills, achievement, increased opportunity to utilize skills. Individuals in administrative positions may fill a key role, facilitating and organizing the workflow of an organization and may not fit the “low level” categorization as initially proposed.

Workplace satisfaction was initially proposed to be positively correlated with internal locus of control among the professional, technical, and administrative occupational sub-groups. As expected, this proposal was supported based on the results in this study.

There is a substantial amount of literature establishing the positive correlation between workplace satisfaction and internal locus of control [14, 13, 15, 10]. This study wanted to examine the strength of this correlation across different occupational sub-groups. In accordance to results from prior studies, the correlation between workplace satisfaction and internal locus of control was found to be positive and statistically significant. These results provide further support for the positive relationship that has been empirically shown between workplace satisfaction and internal locus of control.

In the third hypothesis, it was proposed there would be a negative relationship between workplace satisfaction and burnout; results showed there was a positive correlation found instead between both constructs. This may be due to the fact that employees possibly have high social support at work, so even if they experience burnout, it will not decrease their workplace satisfaction. Moreover, it might also be because the employee is devoted to their job even if it causes burnout, so the workplace satisfaction exceeds burnout. This is in contrast to the study of researchers in [1] whom found that employees who experience long term burnout will have a decreased workplace satisfaction and will eventually resign their current position.

The fourth hypothesis implied that there was a positive correlation found between workplace satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results indicated that the positive correlation between these two constructs was statically significant.

This suggests that if employees are happy in their job, they are more likely to be committed to their organization. Researchers have found that constructs such as workplace satisfaction may clearly alter organizational commitment [2]. Although, a positive correlation was found between workplace satisfaction and organizational commitment, there may still be other variables involved such as high salary, supportive job environment, or recognition programs.

5.1. Implications

Organizations can create satisfied employees by driving motivation through continuous training, hiring people with skills and abilities to perform specific tasks, and providing work-life balance. As stated by researchers in [3] when there is not enough training, employees feel unqualified and ineffective at work— which affects workplace satisfaction.

Human Resource management would profit from selecting candidates that have experience with the specific skill sets that are needed for a particular job. Organizations that practice work-life balance have employees with higher self-confidence, participate more on a daily basis, and have insight on the organization [1]. There needs to be greater emphasis placed on intrinsic rewards by managers and organizations as a strong positive relationship has been shown between intrinsic rewards and workplace satisfaction [9].

By reinforcing these types of rewards, individuals may potentially grow to possess more of an internal control. Fostering this type of control in individuals is key for organizational success. This will increase the chances that employees are engaged, taking responsibility for their success and failures, satisfied at work, and striving to obtain more intrinsic rewards.

5.2. Limitations

Using more specific occupational sub-group classifications may have made a difference in the produced results. An overwhelming majority of subjects selected professional as their occupation. This disparity led to significantly uneven sample sizes within each group, which may have affected produced results potentially resulting in Type I or Type II error. In addition, the higher population of females could have also influenced the final results.

This is partly due to the use of convenience sampling in this study, as no steps were taken to ensure randomization. Due to use of convenience sampling, these findings cannot be generalized to a larger population. The use of just a self-report measure also may have increased the chances of social desirability bias playing a role in detected significant results. Future research should continue focusing on the relationship of these variables as it relates to specific sub-groups. Addressing the discussed limitations is key to confidently producing significant results that can be generalized to a larger population.

6. Conclusion

The correlation between important factors such as internal locus of control, burnout, and organizational commitment with workplace satisfaction was the focus of this study. Research has been presented establishing the significant correlation between these factors in Middle Eastern, Asian, European, and American cultures [9, 10, 6, 3, 2, 7].

Being able to show that these factors play a significant role in regards to workplace satisfaction among a predominately Hispanic sample provides further evidence of this relationship among various cultures. These results are significant in a business world that is becoming increasingly globalized, in which multinational companies are comprised of heterogenous ethnicities.

This allows decision makers to develop strategies aimed at improving these factors that is applicable across cultures and ethnicities. Although significant limitations may have skewed produced results, the findings in this study still provide significant value for decision makers generating organizational policies and strategies.

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