

Global Job Satisfaction and Facet Description: The Moderating Role of Facet Importance

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Keywords: Locke, job satisfaction, facet importance, facet description

Summary: Recent research supports Locke's (1976) model of facet satisfaction in which the "range of affect" of objectively defined facet descriptions is moderated by subjective evaluations of facet importance (McFarlin & Rice, 1992). This study examined the utility of Locke's moderated model of facet satisfaction for the prediction of organizationally important global measures of job satisfaction. A large dataset of two groups of workers allowed testing over different time periods and across a broad range of satisfaction measures. The hypothesis derived from Locke's model, that global satisfaction would represent a linear function of facet satisfactions (i.e., facet description \times facet importance), was not supported. Instead, a simple (have-want) discrepancy model (operationalized as facet description) provided the most consistent set of predictors. The results suggest that workers, when providing global measures of job satisfaction, may use cognitive heuristics to reduce the complexity of facet description \times importance calculations. The implications of these data for Locke's model and directions for future research are outlined.

Several models of job satisfaction have been proposed and investigated over the past 30 years. Attention has been directed to global job satisfaction measures (e.g., Blood, 1971; Ewen, 1967; Jackson, Potter, & Dale, 1998; Mobley & Locke, 1970; Quinn & Mangione, 1973), as well as to satisfaction with individual facets of the job (e.g., Butler, 1983; Locke, 1976; McFarlin & Rice, 1991; McFarlin & Rice, 1992; Pulakos & Schmitt, 1983; Rice, Gentile, & McFarlin, 1991; Rice, Markus, Moyer & McFarlin, 1991; Rice, McFarlin, & Bennett, 1989; Wanous & Lawler, 1972). However, the relationship between facet and global measures of job satisfaction are still in need of clarification.

Locke's (1976) model of job satisfaction postulates that facet satisfaction (FS) is determined by two components: facet description (FD), which is an affect-free as-

essment of the facet; and facet importance (FI), which is the subjective evaluation of the importance of the facet. This model predicts that facet description is moderated by facet importance, with the latter variable determining the "range of affect" that delineates the causal influence of facet description upon facet satisfaction: Only those facet descriptions that are considered important by workers are hypothesized to have the power to lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Facet description can be measured in three distinct ways, for example, by using direct reports of facet amount or by a comparison of facet amount versus an established standard (with the latter sometimes entailing the calculation of a difference score, representing the subtraction of facet amount from the standard of comparison). Rice, Gentile, and McFarlin (1991) noted

that direct reports of facet amount are closer in meaning to an affect-free perception of facet description than are other methods. Facet importance is usually measured by asking workers to provide subjective evaluations of the importance of particular facets (e. g., amount of pay).

The analytical procedure used to test Locke's theory has two stages:

- 1) The two independent measures (facet description and facet importance) are entered into a regression model.
- 2) Then the cross-product of facet description and facet importance is entered.

If the interaction term is significant, after having partialled out the main effects of description and importance, it is concluded that facet importance moderates the relationship between facet description and facet satisfaction (Zedeck, 1971).

The moderated regression model of facet satisfaction was proposed in response to the flaws identified in the simple discrepancy (have-want) model of job satisfaction, which despite its "seductive face validity" (Johns, 1981, p. 443) has been discredited on both theoretical and statistical grounds (Cronbach & Furby, 1970; Evans & Ondrack, 1991; Johns, 1981; Wall & Payne, 1973). This moderated regression approach is now widely accepted as a valid model of facet satisfaction (e. g., Butler, 1983; Rice, Gentile, & McFarlin, 1991; McFarlin & Rice, 1992; Rice, McFarlin, & Bennett, 1989), despite some limited criticism on statistical grounds (Morris, Sherman, & Mansfield, 1986).

Although empirical studies have yielded results in favour of a strong interpretation of Locke's theory of job satisfaction at the facet level, the relationship between facet description and facet importance in determining global measures of job satisfaction (i. e., broad measures of overall job satisfaction) is still open to debate (McFarlin & Rice, 1992; Rice, Gentile, & McFarlin, 1991).

From Locke's theoretical model, and from the empirical finding of an interaction of facet description and facet importance in facet satisfaction, it may be inferred that global job satisfaction measures are a simple linear function of individual facet satisfaction scores. The intuitive appeal of this model rests in the simple decomposition of global job satisfaction measures into combined facet satisfaction measures and by inference to facet description \times facet importance interactions. Despite its intuitive appeal, this model has not been adequately tested and is open to challenge on theoretical grounds. Principal among these challenges is the supposition that workers actually engage in a complex process of facet description \times facet importance calculations when giving global measures of job satisfaction. In contrast to this position, it could be supposed that when workers give global satisfaction measures, they employ some form of processing

heuristic designed to reduce the complexity of calculating a linear equation of multiple facet description \times facet importance interactions. Accordingly, they may not behave in a manner consistent with the moderated regression model of facet satisfaction. Workers may adopt a simple model that relates facet description (or Locke's have-want discrepancy) to global job satisfaction measures. Confirmation of this hypothesis would suggest that the moderated regression approach is applicable to the facet satisfaction level only, whereas the facet description approach may be more applicable to broader measures of job satisfaction. Such a possibility has not been previously tested, although Jackson et al. (1998) did report evidence in favour of the facet description model.

The present study set out (1) to test the validity of the moderated regression approach of facet description \times facet importance in determining global job satisfaction measures, and (2) to examine the predictive power of a more parsimonious model of global job satisfaction based upon facet description alone (i. e., the have-want discrepancy). This study was conducted in a large sample of workers selected from a UK military organization, where the availability of a large number of facet description/importance measures, along with several global job satisfaction measures, allowed a powerful test of the moderated regression approach and the simpler discrepancy model of global job satisfaction.

Method

Subjects

Randomly selected subjects from a large military organization were sent questionnaires at quarterly intervals between 1988 and 1993. The response rate varied, but was approximately 75% (average number returned per quarter was 959). In total, 6003 officers (mean age = 35 years, $SD = 7.2$) and 13,721 ranks (i. e., nonofficers; mean age = 27 years, $SD = 6.5$) were available for cross-sectional analysis over the whole time period. Ranks comprised mainly technical and support personnel, but also included some noncommissioned officers. Officers represented commissioned officers who were long serving and senior personnel within the organization.

Design

Samples of officers and ranks were divided into three roughly equal time periods, chosen to ensure approximately equal numbers of subjects in the samples (sample sizes are shown in Table 1; note that the sample sizes do

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for measures of overall job satisfaction for officers and ranks.

Officers									
	Overall		T1		T2		T3		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. ENJ JOB	3.98	.98	3.97	.98	3.94	.99	4.01	.97	
2. ENJ OD	4.04	.84	4.09	.84	4.07	.85	4.10	.82	
3. ENJ ORG	4.42	.60	4.42	.59	4.38	.64	4.47	.58	
4. FURSUR	2.01	.67	1.87	.68	1.96	.64	2.26	.64	
N	6003		1456		2037		2510		
Ranks									
	Overall		T1		T2		T3		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. ENJ JOB	3.53	1.11	3.57	1.13	3.52	1.11	3.52	1.11	
2. ENJ OD	4.20	0.82	4.29	0.78	4.15	0.84	4.19	0.82	
3. ENJ ORG	4.08	0.69	4.12	0.68	4.07	0.70	4.07	0.69	
4. FURSUR	2.11	0.77	2.20	0.78	2.09	0.78	2.07	0.76	
N	13721		1456		2037		3590		

ENJ JOB = Enjoyment of job

ENJ OD = Enjoyment of off-duty life

ENJ ORG = Enjoyment of organization

FURSUR = Intention of further service

For ranks: T1 = Samples collected in 1988, T2 = Samples collected in 1989 and T3 = Samples collected in 1990/1

For officers: T1 = Samples collected in 1988/89, T2 = Samples collected in 1990/1, T3 = Samples collected in 1992/93

Note. That total sample sizes do not necessarily match numbers used in any particular analysis is due to missing numbers.

not always correctly indicate the number of subjects in a particular analysis because of occasionally missing data).

Satisfaction Measures

Facet Description

Facet description has often been operationalized as a single variable representing a (have-want) discrepancy or as the difference between the two variables separately (McFarlin & Rice, 1991; McFarlin & Rice, 1992; Rice, McFarlin, & Bennett, 1989; Rice, Peirce, Moyer, & McFarlin, 1991). Facet description can also be measured as a direct report of facet amount; Rice, Gentile, and McFarlin (1991) believe that this is conceptually closer to the idea of an affect-free perception than other available methods. The direct question "How possible is it for you to achieve ..." is therefore an appropriate method of operationalizing facet description and was the preferred choice in this study.

A total of 26 job facets were rated in terms of how possible it is to achieve each (1–5 rating scale). The categories of each scale were: 1 = no possibility at all; 2 = less than average possibility; 3 = average possibility; 4 = better than average possibility; 5 = very good possibility. The subjects were asked the following questions: "How

possible is it for you to achieve ... [followed by the facet]." The facets were as follows: (1) Adequate job security; (2) Work under consistent and intelligent personnel policies; (3) Have a say in what happens to you; (4) Feel that you are accomplishing something; (5) Do a great deal of travelling; (6) Become proficient in specialized type of work; (7) Be in a competitive situation; (8) Obtain a good salary; (9) Have a definite work schedule; (10) Settle down in a certain area; (11) Be promoted on the basis of ability; (12) Advance at a fairly rapid rate; (13) Spend a lot of time with your family; (14) Be able to retire at an early age; (15) Have competent supervisors; (16) Make a lot of money; (17) Be given recognition for work well done; (18) Fly or continue flying; (19) Do work which your spouse and family can be proud of; (20) Have prestige or social status; (21) Keep very busy; (22) Variety in job activities; (23) Achieve leadership in your field; (24) Have access to and be able to participate in a wide range of sporting and adventurous activities; (25) Have a say regarding postings; (26) Develop further skills.

Facet Importance

The 26 facets listed above were also rated in terms of importance on a (1–5) rating scale. The verbal anchors attached to each category were: 1 = not important at all; 2 = somewhat below average importance; 3 = of average

importance; 4 = somewhat above average importance; 5 = extremely important. The subjects were asked the following questions: "Show how important each factor is to you regarding your life in the (name of organization) ... [followed by the facet]."

Global Satisfaction Measures

The following measures of global satisfaction were taken: (1) "How much are you enjoying your present job?"; (2) "How much are enjoying your off-duty (social, recreational, sporting) life?"; (3) "To date, how much have you enjoyed your life in the (name of organization)?" These scales were rated with categories labelled: 1 = not very much; 2 = not at all; 3 = a little; 4 = Quite a lot; 5 = a great deal. Finally, (4) "Intention of further service" was rated on a 3-point scale: 1 = no; 2 = perhaps; 3 = yes. Summary statistics of these measures are shown in Table 1 (in all cases, high scores indicated positive outcomes and low scores indicated negative outcomes).

Statistical Analysis

First, in order to minimize spurious findings resulting from multiple analyzes of correlated facets, a principal components analysis (PCA) was performed on the facet description scores. Separate PCAs were performed on the total samples of officers and ranks. These principal components provided the composite measures of facet description and importance.

Second, all scores were standardized prior to regression analysis. Moderated multiple regression (MMR) was performed on each facet component and the computation of the facet description \times importance term. Facet description and facet importance were simultaneously entered into the model (Step 1), followed by the facet description \times importance interaction term (Step 2). Regression analyzes for each time period *and* for the whole sample were carried out. In each regression, facet importance, facet description, and facet importance \times facet description were regressed against each of the four global satisfaction variables.

Results

The average correlation between the facet descriptions of officers was 0.15 (min. = $-.11$, max. = $.64$) and for ranks the average correlation was $.23$ (min. = $-.08$, max. = $.68$). The average correlation between a facet description and its respective facet importance was $.15$ for offi-

cers (min. = $-.07$, max. = $.61$) and $.13$ for ranks (min. = $-.04$, max. = $.51$).

Tables 2 and 3 display the varimax-rotated PCA results for the facet components separately for officers and ranks. Both factor structures were reasonably clear with each facet loading on only one component. The communalities suggested an acceptable fit between each facet and the components (most values of h^2 were above 0.4). The first five factors explained 45% of the variance and were named Personal control, Achievement, Prestige, Personal development, and Extrinsic rewards. With regard to ranks, the first five factors explained 49% of the variance and were named Career progression, Achievement and prestige, Structured work schedule, Extrinsic rewards, and Excitement. Although there were many components with eigenvalues greater than 1 in both samples, five factors were rotated because they provided simple and interpretable solutions that were meaningful in terms of the job.

We calculated the final MMR results for the first five components against each of the four criteria described in Table 1, respectively, for officers and ranks (overall and for the three time periods). We then determined standardized beta weights and levels of significance. The degrees of freedom and resulting F value of the moderated regression ANOVA were also reported together with the resulting squared multiple correlation, after adjustment for number of variables. Tables of these results are available from the first author.

In all cases, the regression ANOVAs were significant. The value of adjusted R^2 varied between 0.03 and 0.24. In general, there were no major fluctuations for adjusted R^2 over time for a particular dependent variable and factor. The overall values provides a reasonable summary of the values over time. If just these values of adjusted R^2 are considered, then the highest are associated with Enjoyment of the job and Enjoyment of the organization with regard to the ranks (especially the first two factors). With regard to the officers, the situation is more complex. Enjoyment of the organization and Likelihood of further service are most associated with factor 1, whereas Enjoyment of the organization and Enjoyment of the job are most highly associated with factors 2 and 3.

No identifiable pattern for either officers or ranks was found to explain those times when the facet description \times facet importance interaction was significant compared to when it was not. The levels of significance reached for Step 1 and Step 2 of the MMR are summarized in Table 4. Facet description was significant on almost all occasions, and facet importance was significant most of the time. The facet description \times facet importance interaction was significant on 30% and 40% of occasions for officers and ranks, respectively, when all data are considered. The percentage of significant effects of the facet

Table 2. Varimax rotated principal components analysis (PCA) of facet description scores for officers sample.

Facet	I	II	III	IV	V	<i>h</i> ²
3. Have a say in what happens	.74					.62
25. Have a say about postings	.71					.56
10. Settle down	.61					.47
13. Time with family	.59					.41
9. Definite schedule	.43					.34
2. Intelligent work policy	.42					.42
11. Promotion		.82				.70
12. Advance		.80				.67
17. Recognition		.49				.44
7. Be competitive		.44				.40
15. Competent supervisor		.39				.41
21. Keep busy			.74			.57
22. Variety of job activities			.70			.54
19. Work spouse can be proud of			.50			.47
20. Prestige			.45			.43
4. Accomplish things			.44			.46
23. Be leader			.43			.45
6. Proficient				.68		.51
18. Fly				.68		.48
5. Do travelling				.61		.42
26. Develop further skills				.38		.39
8. Obtain a good salary					.71	.54
16. Make money					.67	.54
14. Retire early					.39	.22
% Variance		20	9	7	5	5
Cum% variance		20	29	36	41	45
Facet descriptions						
Mean		1.6	2.0	2.6	2.1	2.0
SD		.55	.60	.56	.67	.65
Facet importance						
Mean		1.9	1.5	1.3	1.5	0.8
SD		.29	.27	.52	.46	.46

Factor names:

- I = Personal control
- II = Achievement
- III = Prestige
- IV = Personal development
- V = Extrinsic rewards

All factor loadings above 0.35 are displayed.

Facet importance and facet description scores for each factor are derived from the factor loading matrix.

description \times facet importance interaction between T1 and T3 was only 18% and 27% for officers and ranks, respectively.

Discussion

The study tests whether facet description \times facet importance interactions predict global measures of job satisfaction, or whether a simple have-want model (operationalized in terms of facet description; Rice, Gentile, &

McFarlin, 1991) provides a better account of facet influences on global measures of job satisfaction.

The results demonstrate that the moderated regression model of facet satisfaction poorly accounts for global job satisfaction. The facet description \times facet importance term was significant only on an irregular basis, in a low proportion of cases, and inconsistently over time. In contrast, across time and with both groups of workers, ranks and officers, the main effect of the facet description was a predictor on almost all occasions (although the percentage of variance not explained by facet description indicates other, yet unidentified, sources of influence).

Table 3. Varimax rotated principal components analysis (PCA) of facet description scores for ranks sample.

Facet	I	II	III	IV	V	<i>h</i> ²
11. Promotion	.81					.71
12. Advance	.80					.71
17. Recognition	.54					.54
23. Be leader	.53					.53
3. Have a say in what happens	.50					.60
15. Competent supervisor	.46					.42
2. Intelligent work policy	.45					.38
21. Keep busy		.72				.55
22. Variety of job activities		.68				.53
4. Accomplish things		.59				.56
19. Work spouse can be proud of		.56				.46
7. Be competitive		.50				.40
6. Proficient		.48				.42
26. Develop further skills		.47				.53
20. Prestige		.40				.42
10. Settle down			.70			.53
13. Time with family			.67			.53
9. Definite schedule			.54			.47
16. Make money				.74		.69
8. Obtain a good salary				.70		.62
14. Retire early				.54		.40
18. Fly					.69	.51
5. Do travelling					.63	.55
% Variance		27	7	5	5	5
Cum% variance		27	34	39	44	49
Facet description						
Mean		1.8	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.5
SD		.71	.66	.78	.80	.97
Facet importance						
Mean		1.9	1.6	1.5	1.8	0.6
SD		.27	.30	.57	.48	.41

Factor names:

- I = Career progression
- II = Achievement & prestige
- III = Structured work schedule
- IV = Extrinsic rewards
- V = Excitement

All factor loadings above 0.45 are displayed, except for Facet 20, which has a maximum factor loading of 0.40.

Facet importance and facet description scores for each factor are derived from the factor loading matrix.

Whereas Blood (1971) and McFarlin and Rice (1992) point out that, based upon Locke's model, it is not necessary to weight facet satisfaction by facet importance in predicting overall job satisfaction, the present study suggests that it may not even necessary to weight facet description by facet importance in predicting global measures of job satisfaction.

A feasible explanation for the present set of results is that workers in deriving global measures of job satisfaction use cognitive processing heuristics that do not employ a facet description by facet importance moderating term. It would seem much easier to perform a simple linear sum of facet descriptions, expressed in terms of

achievability, rather than multiply facet description and facet importance and then perform a linear summation of resulting facet satisfactions.

The results of this study extend previous findings in other ways. The main effect of facet description was not just a good predictor of global measures of job satisfaction, but also of satisfaction with the organization, satisfaction with off-duty life, and likelihood of further service. There was also little variation in adjusted R^2 over time for each of these dependent variables, for each of the three factors. Therefore, the facet description model of job satisfaction seems to have adequate stability over time. In general, the closer the criteria were related to

Table 4. Number of significant effects (and percentage of instances that the effect was significant) in moderated regression of facet description (FD), facet importance (FI) and FD \times FI for Officers and Ranks samples.

	Officers		Ranks	
	Overall	T1, T2, T3	Overall	T1, T2, T3
FD	19 (95%)	55 (92%)	20 (100%)	60 (100%)
FI	11 (55%)	25 (42%)	15 (75%)	33 (55%)
FD \times FI	6 (30%)	11 (18%)	8 (40%)	16 (27%)
Total comparisons	20	60	20	60

FD = Facet description, entered in Step 1 of moderated regression model

FI = Facet importance, entered in Step 1 of moderated regression model

FD \times FI = Interaction term, entered in Step 2 of moderated regression model

Results are against each of the four criteria for each of the five factors

immediate enjoyment of work, the better the utility of the facet description model. This model was generally better able to predict Enjoyment of the job and Enjoyment of the organization, as opposed to Enjoyment of off-duty life and Likelihood of further service. Since facets of the job are used to predict these dependent variables, these observations are perhaps to be expected. There was an exception to this, however, in that Likelihood of further service was quite highly related to the first factor for officers. The finding that satisfaction at work is related to satisfaction outside of work is consistent with the notion of a spillover effect between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Steiner & Truxillo, 1989; Tait, Padgett, & Baldwin, 1989).

It is interesting to note that the principal components analysis structures for officers and ranks are quite different from each other. Factor 1 for officers was more associated with having personal control at work, whereas ranks was more associated with advancement and promotion. The second and third factor for officers was to do with achievement and prestige, whereas these were combined to form a single factor for ranks. The third factor for ranks was to do with having a sensible work structure. The fourth and fifth factors for officers were to do with personal development and extrinsic rewards, whereas for ranks they were extrinsic rewards and excitement. This suggests that officers put control over their job first, followed by advancement, prestige, development, and money, whereas ranks have less interest over obtaining control over their job and instead are more keen on promotion, prestige, structure, and money.

There are several limitations to the present results and some future lines of investigation. First, facet satisfactions were not measured, which prevented the test of the

facet description \times facet importance model at the level of facet satisfaction. Second, it was not possible to correlate facet and global measures of job satisfaction. Therefore it is not possible to rule out the hypothesis that the lack of consistent effects of facet description \times facet importance were the result of the lack of strong correlations between facet and global satisfaction. Were the second possibility true, this would suggest that the moderated regression approach would be of limited utility in practice because most organizations are more concerned with global measures of satisfaction than with facet satisfaction. Nevertheless, further research should be directed to examining the relationship between facet and global measures of satisfaction and their underlying causal bases.

There is a need to conduct further studies on new samples comparing the moderated regression model with simple facet description models in order to test the robustness of the findings reported here. There are also other dependent variables that should be studied, especially the use of "hard" dependent variables (such as actual turnover, absenteeism, and number of grievances). These may provide an even stronger test of the utility of moderated regression models of job satisfaction. In addition, the putative cognitive processing heuristics used by workers when giving global satisfaction ratings call for sustained theoretical and empirical investigation.

In conclusion, relatively high correlations between facet descriptions and global job satisfaction measures, which were stable over time and similar across occupational groups, point to the validity of facet description (or have-want discrepancy) models in predicting job satisfaction. Little consistent evidence was found to support the facet description \times facet importance moderated regression model.

Acknowledgment

We are grateful to the Defence Research Agency for making this data available for analysis and Sue Dale for preparation of the data.

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