Seeing a More Complete Worker: Religiosity, Income, & Job Satisfaction

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Introduction

- Can activities unrelated with work affect how people feel about their jobs?
- A test: How can frequency of religious attendance affect job satisfaction?

Job satisfaction is typically considered to be the outcome of employer-level decisions such as paid time off, meaningful job tasks, and high wages (Kalleberg 1977). Virtually all major studies of job satisfaction have similarly been confined to the within-organization context. However, a more holistic approach to job satisfaction may be warranted. The purpose of this study is to begin to examine how extra-organizational activities, such as religious attendance, which has been shown to be associated with higher life satisfaction (Zulig, Ward, and Horn 2006) may also have an effect on how satisfied employees are with their jobs. Though it may seem counterintuitive, my hypothesis centers around the concept that factors external to the organization may in fact play an important role in how employees feel about their work within the organization. Specifically, I hypothesize that employees who attend religious services more frequently will be more satisfied with even low paying jobs. It is proposed that such a finding, if supported, could be the result of the availability of an external source of validation, separate from wages, possibly acting as a “buffering” mechanism limiting the negative affective response to otherwise less satisfying pay and work.

Results

- Religiosity has a negative association with job satisfaction.
- The effect is uniform across all income brackets.

The results indicated that there was support for the broader hypothesis that outside factors, in this case religiosity, do in fact exert a significant impact on the job satisfaction of employees. They results however found evidence to support the direct opposite of the specific hypothesis that those exhibiting greater religiosity would be found to have higher job satisfaction. In fact, the results suggest the exact opposite, that religious attendance is actually negatively associated with job satisfaction, with the results being statistically significant beyond the .001 level. When the results were tested for interaction effects between income, religiosity, and job satisfaction, there were found to be none. The relationship was uniformly negative.

References