



Measuring job satisfaction in surveys: Portugal

Comparative analytical report

Questionnaire

Editorial disclaimer

This report has not been subjected to the standard Foundation editorial procedures

This Portuguese national report is part of a comparative overview ([EF/06/55/EN](#)) of how job satisfaction is measured in national working conditions surveys based on 16 national contributions for the [European Working Conditions Observatory](#) (EWCO).

Aim and structure of the comparative analytical report questionnaire

This document is the Portuguese contribution to the Comparative analytical report on ‘How job satisfaction is measured in surveys’ for the European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO) of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Job satisfaction is not a theme much explored in the Portuguese national surveys. Only one representative national survey assessing job satisfaction and scarce data were found. Therefore, the answers to the first and second sections of this questionnaire are somewhat short.

However, some pieces of research regarding, directly or indirectly, job satisfaction are available. Most of these studies are based on non representative surveys but they have quite interesting approaches and findings, which are briefly mentioned in the third section.

Section 1: Survey sources and questions

1 – Is job satisfaction an issue addressed in your national working conditions surveys? Do other national surveys include any questions on job satisfaction?

Please identify sources and survey methodology (also mention first year of implementation, regularity (periodicity), time frame (e.g. over the last twelve months), population, sample size and frame, data collection methodology, etc.).

Job satisfaction is not an issue addressed by the Portuguese Survey on Workers' Working Conditions, applied only once between 1999 and 2000 by the [Departamento de Estatística do Trabalho, Emprego e Formação Profissional](#) (DETEFP) of Ministério do Trabalho e da Solidariedade (MTS).

However, there are two surveys addressing job satisfaction: the European Community Household Panel (ECHP), a national representative survey; and the Survey on Portuguese companies of the information and communication technologies and retail sectors, a non representative survey.

Painel de Agregados Domésticos Privados da União Europeia (European Community Household Panel - ECHP)

The European Community Household Panel (ECHP) is a sample-based panel grounded on a standardised questionnaire that involves annual interviewing of a representative panel of households and individuals in each country, covering a wide range of topics: income, health, education, housing, demographics and employment characteristic, etc. It was applied to the population of Continental Portugal and the autonomous regions of Azores and Madeira.

The job satisfaction information is obtained with the detailed individual questionnaire, applied to people of 16 years and older.

The data collection methodology: face-to-face interviews.

This survey was conducted annually with a total duration of eight years, running from 1994 to 2001.

Survey on Portuguese companies of the information and communication technologies and retail sectors

Even though this is not a representative national survey, the survey used in a research project carried out in Portuguese information and communication technologies (ICT) and retail sector companies included some questions regarding job satisfaction.

This survey was conducted in the sub-sectors of the information and communication technologies sector (namely, telecommunications, computers and software, audio-visual, communication and imaging, and call centres), and of the retail trade sector (including large stores). The survey includes the following occupations: managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerks, service workers and shop and market sales workers, craft and related trades workers, elementary occupations, and call centre operators. Some 187 persons were surveyed - 82 men and 105 women, 44% and 56% respectively -, and 20 in-depth interviews (life histories) were also carried out with female workers in these sectors.

2 – The questions regarding job satisfaction in national surveys are single-item questions? Or multi-facet questions? Are there ‘indirect’ job satisfaction questions in the survey, e.g. scale questions of the type ‘Your job gives you the feeling of work well done’?

- **Please specify how questions are formulated (i.e. the text of the questions used in the surveys) and, if applicable, identify different facets used.**
- **If possible, briefly mention the evolution in questions used in national surveys: which questions were added, which questions were removed, etc.**
- **Is there a scale being used? What kind of scale?**

The question regarding overall job satisfaction used in the ECHP is included in a broader question, as follows:

‘How satisfied are you with your present situation in the following areas?’

Please use a scale of 1 to 6, position ‘1’ meaning you are not satisfied at all and ‘6’ meaning that you are fully satisfied.

- Your work or main activity
- Your financial situation
- Your housing situation
- Your amount of leisure time’

The question regarding multi-facets of job satisfaction is:

‘How satisfied are you with your current job (or business) in the following areas? Answer accordingly to the following scale:

1 - totally unsatisfied; 2 – quite unsatisfied; 3 – mildly unsatisfied; 4 – mildly satisfied; 5 – quite satisfied; 6 – totally satisfied

- Pay
- Security in job
- Kind of work
- Working hours
- Working time
- Working conditions and environment
- Distance between home and working place’

The survey on Portuguese companies of the information and communication technologies and retail sectors used a multi-facet question regarding job satisfaction that has some innovative aspects. The text of the referred question is:

‘To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects of your job? (Give a value, according with its importance, to the following aspects within the scale from 1 to 5 (not satisfied at all:1, not satisfied:2, more or less satisfied:3, satisfied: 4, very satisfied: 5).’

Table 1 - Satisfaction with aspects of job (scale from 1 to 5: 1=not satisfied at all, 2=not satisfied, 3=more or less satisfied, 4=satisfied, 5=very satisfied: 5).

	1	2	3	4	5
Relationship with colleagues, subordinates and superiors					
Remuneration level					
Working conditions (premises, equipments and work tools)					
Contract of employment					
Stability and security of your occupational future					
Autonomy, i.e., the possibility to decide the best way to do your job and to have initiative					
Involvement in decision making					
Level of interest of the job and the possibility of using your capacities					
Prestige and recognition of your merits					
Promotion opportunities					
Opportunities to learn new things and for occupational development					
Enough spare time					
Utility of your work to society					
To be able to choose working schedule/working days					

Source: Casaca, 2005.

On the one hand, this question includes both extrinsic (remuneration level, contract of employment, promotion opportunities, etc.) and intrinsic (relationship with colleagues, subordinates and superiors, autonomy, involvement in the decision making, etc.) facets related to job satisfaction. On the other hand, one must highlight the fact that this question includes two, in some way, innovative aspects: the workers' satisfaction with 'spare time' and the possibility to 'choose working schedule/working days'. According to the author, these aspects were considered as intrinsic aspects as long as they refer to post-materialistic factors, i.e., the individuals degree of satisfaction with these aspects is connected with the possibility (or its absence) of transferring the free time from work to other spheres of life such as: family, education/training or leisure.

3 – If definitions of overall job satisfaction/job satisfaction facets are used in questions in national surveys, please give them.

No definitions were used in the referred surveys.

Section 2: Survey data and trends

4 – Provide data, including trends if possible, on general job satisfaction.

As it can be seen in the table below, most part of workers are satisfied with their work or main activity. In 1994, 73.5% of workers were satisfied with their work, percentage that increased to 77.7%, in 2001 (with a maximum of 77.9%, in 2000).

Table 2 - Satisfaction with work or main activity (%)*Satisfaction with work or main activity*

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
not at all satisfied	2.6	1.9	2.3	2.4	1.6	1.4	1.1	1.1
largely unsatisfied	5.5	7.0	6.8	6.3	5.3	5.0	4.7	5.7
mildly unsatisfied	18.4	22.5	22.3	21.3	17.5	17.1	16.3	15.6
mildly satisfied	45.8	44.6	45.0	49.3	50.3	50.9	52.3	53.9
largely satisfied	21.9	19.2	18.7	17.7	22.1	22.0	22.6	20.9
fully satisfied	5.8	4.9	5.0	3.0	3.3	3.7	3.0	2.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N=	6420	6722	6711	6714	6646	6680	6624	6548

Source: ECHP data used in the project 'Pobreza e Exclusão Social em Portugal', developed by CESIS.

However, one must underline the loss of importance of the top and bottom categories to the middle categories. On the one hand, in 1994, 8.1% of workers were largely unsatisfied or not at all satisfied, percentage that fell to 6.1%, in 2001. On the other hand, the 27.7% of workers stating that they were largely or fully satisfied, in 1994, fell to 23.7% in 2001.

The latest data available provide figures regarding job satisfaction by sex, age, marital status, level of education completed and sector.

Table 3 - Satisfaction with work or main activity, 2001 (%)*Satisfaction with work or main activity, 2001*

	not at all satisfied	largely unsatisfied	mildly unsatisfied	mildly satisfied	largely satisfied	fully satisfied	Total	N
Total	1.1	5.7	15.6	53.9	20.9	2.8	100	6548
Sex								
Men	0.7	5.1	15.3	54.1	21.6	3.2	100	3592
Women	1.6	6.2	16.7	53.1	20.0	2.4	100	2956
Total	1.1	5.7	15.6	53.9	20.9	2.8	100	6548
Age								
16-24	3.1	8.2	13.4	59.0	14.7	1.6	100	912
25-34	0.7	4.5	14.0	55.7	22.7	2.4	100	1736
35-44	0.4	6.0	14.3	54.9	22.8	1.6	100	1635
45-54	0.8	4.4	16.0	50.2	24.7	3.9	100	1308
55-64	2.0	6.8	22.0	49.0	15.1	5.1	100	643
More than 65 years old	1.0	5.4	22.6	50.6	15.0	5.4	100	314
Total	1.1	5.7	15.6	53.9	20.9	2.8	100	6548
Marital Status								
Married	0.7	5.1	15.3	54.1	21.6	3.2	100	4164
Separated		2.9	22.1	30.9	42.6	1.5	100	68
Divorced		8.1	22.3	44.6	19.6	5.4	100	148
Widowed	1.8	7.1	37.9	40.8	9.5	3.0	100	169
Never	2.0	6.7	13.4	56.3	19.8	1.8	100	1998

	not at all satisfied	largely unsatisfied	mildly unsatisfied	mildly satisfied	largely satisfied	fully satisfied	Total	N
married								
Total	1.1	5.7	15.6	53.9	20.9	2.8	100	6547
Level of education completed (ISCED)								
Less than 2 nd level of basic education (0-2)	1.3	6.1	18.5	55.4	15.9	2.7	100	4794
2 nd level of basic education (3)	0.8	5.5	9.7	55.2	26.9	1.8	100	873
3 rd level of education (5-6)	0.6	3.2	5.5	44.6	41.9	4.2	100	878
Total	1.1	5.7	15.6	53.9	20.9	2.8	100	6545
Sector								
Agriculture	1.2	9.7	27.8	45.7	11.5	4.0	100	801
Industry	0.5	6.3	17.1	57.9	16.0	2.2	100	2308
Services	1.5	4.3	11.7	53.1	26.4	3.0	100	3418
Total	1.1	5.7	15.6	53.9	20.9	2.8	100	6527

Source: ECHP data used in the project 'Pobreza e Exclusão Social em Portugal', developed by CESIS.

According to these figures, men are more satisfied with work than women: while almost 79% of male workers are satisfied with their work, only 75.5% of female workers stated the same.

Workers aged from 25 to 54 seem to be more satisfied than their counterparts, recording high percentages of satisfied workers – around 80%. However, it should be noticed that the workers with 55 to 64 and 65 years old and more are those who have higher proportions of fully satisfied workers - 5.1% and 5.6%, respectively – and that the younger workers recorded high levels of dissatisfaction – 11.3% were largely unsatisfied or not at all satisfied.

The proportion of satisfied workers is higher among married workers (78.9%) and workers who never married (77.9%) than in other categories of marital status and among workers with at least a university degree (tertiary level of education, i.e., ISCED levels 5 and 6).

Regarding the activity sector, the proportion of satisfied workers reaches its lower level in the agricultural sector (61.2%) and its higher level in the services sector (82.5%). Some 76.1% of industry workers stated they are satisfied with their work. However, it should be noticed that the higher proportion of fully satisfied workers can be found in the first sector, i.e., 4% of agricultures workers are fully satisfied with their job compared to 2.2% of industry workers and 3% of services workers.

Section 3: Secondary analysis of survey data on job satisfaction

5 – Is there any assessment of the relationship between job satisfaction and other variables related to organisational practices/independent work-related practices in national surveys data analysis/reports? Briefly mention the main findings on the cross-tabulation between the following factors and job satisfaction: job autonomy, working time and WLB issues, and worker participation/involvement.

Although there are not national surveys data analyses or reports, an assessment of the relationship between job satisfaction and other variables can be found in a broader piece of research carried out in Portuguese ICT and retail sector companies (referred to above). One of the particularities of this research concerns the analysis of the differences between the levels of satisfaction in a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors of job satisfaction of full-time workers and part-time workers.

According to the results, men working part-time are not satisfied with their current job, particularly due to scarce promotion opportunities, the stability and security about the occupational future and the remuneration level. These are the same work aspects that lead to low levels of job satisfaction amongst female workers but the contract of employment and the remuneration level generates a lower level of dissatisfaction among the female workers.

Table 4 - Satisfaction degree of respondents by working time and sex, according to several work and job dimensions (mean)

Satisfaction degree by working time according to several work and job dimensions

	Full-time		Part-time	
	M	F	M	F
Intrinsic				
Relationship with colleagues, subordinates and superiors	3.9	4.0	3.7	4.1
Autonomy, i.e., the possibility to decide the best way to do your job	3.2	3.3	2.0	2.8
Involvement in decision making	3.0	3.2	2.0	2.5
Level of interest of the job and the possibility of using your capacities	3.4	3.5	2.2	3.1
Prestige and recognition of your merits	3.2	3.2	2.2	3.1
Opportunities to learn new things and to occupational valuation	3.3	3.1	1.9	3.0
Utility of your work to society	3.1	3.0	2.2	3.3
Enough spare time	3.3	2.8	3.8	4.2
To be able to choose working schedule/working days	3.4	2.6	2.1	3.3
Mean	3.4	3.3	2.6	3.4
Extrinsic				
Remuneration level	2.9	2.8	2.2	3.0
Working conditions (premises, equipments and work tools)	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.2
Contract of employment	3.2	3.5	2.8	3.7
Stability and security of your occupational future	3.1	3.3	2.1	3.1
Promotion opportunities	2.9	2.7	1.4	2.5
Mean	3.1	3.2	2.4	3.0
Total Mean	3.3	3.2	2.6	3.1

Source: Casaca, 2005.

Regarding the intrinsic aspects of the current job, part-time male workers are less satisfied than the female workers. Except for the 'relationship with colleagues, subordinates and superiors' and

the 'spare time' allowed by the current job – aspect that satisfies men but particularly women -, men are essentially dissatisfied with the lack of autonomy, the (im)possibility of choosing the working schedule/working days, the absence of possibilities to participate in the decision making, uninteresting job content, reduced opportunities to learn and to evolve in occupational terms and the non recognition of their merits.

On the one hand, women stress the lack of intervention in the decisions and autonomy, the non recognition of their merits and the scarce opportunities to learn and evolve in occupational terms. On the other hand, women are particularly satisfied with their 'relationship with colleagues, subordinates and superiors', the 'spare time' proportioned by the part-time and with the utility of their work to society.

6c – Is there any interesting piece of analysis of job satisfaction and its correlations? Please summarise the main research findings (preferably in relation to one of the job satisfaction correlations identified in 5).

Although job satisfaction is not a research field much explored in Portugal, there are four pieces of research that should be referred. The first is based on an approach that considers job satisfaction as an element of general satisfaction and proposes a composite model to measure job satisfaction. The second refers to the effects of organisational justice on job satisfaction, starting from the hypothesis that it is a good predictor of job satisfaction. The third study examines the determinants of job satisfaction in Portugal and concludes that wages explain a great deal of job satisfaction, but does not explain everything. Finally, the fourth examines the relationship between the type of contract of employment and job satisfaction.

Work related emotions, satisfaction with life and job satisfaction

The approach used in this article (Silva, 1998) considers that, in the present society, it is not possible to understand job satisfaction independently of general satisfaction because they are closely connected. Thus, job satisfaction should be considered within general life satisfaction. Referring to the "process of personalisation" theorised by Lipovetsky, that characterises the re-emergence of individualist values in the present society, the author stresses the importance of including aspects such as 'work related emotions', 'satisfaction with life', 'subjective norm' and 'social status' in its model of job satisfaction determination.

The author proposes a composite model of job satisfaction analysis consisting of a single dependent variable – job satisfaction - and a set containing the following independent variables:

- Beliefs and values about the job;
- Control over the job;
- Subjective norm (the product of normative beliefs and motivations);
- Work related emotions;
- Satisfaction with life;
- Social status;
- Importance of job to the social status;
- Relative deprivation (including seniority in company, seniority in job, occupational category and level of remuneration);
- Computing skills;
- Occupational expectations (promotion expectations and occupational category change expectations);
- Occupation identity (includes identity with department, identity with company and identity with occupational category);

The heuristic potential of the model was tested through a survey applied in a large company of the financial sector. Some 250 questionnaires were distributed by four different occupational categories – administrative personnel, branch office managers, technicians and area managers – and 117 completed questionnaires were received.

One of the main findings of this research is that the variables that better correlate with job satisfaction are ‘work related emotions’ and ‘satisfaction with life’, meaning that there is a great interest in using them in studies about job satisfaction. According to this perspective, the traditional models for job satisfaction analysis, focusing on particular job aspects, became less operative, thus might necessary to move the observation point from the work itself to the social context of the actors (workers). Therefore, the need to focus the attention on the social representations of the global relation with work in detriment of the aspects of the job itself to understand job satisfaction is stressed.

The effects of organisational perceived justice on job satisfaction

This field research examines the role of the perceived organisational justice in the workplace using a structured questionnaire (Vala and Caetano, 1999). One of its objectives is to assess the consequence of the organisational perceived justice on the job satisfaction, essentially on three aspects of job satisfaction, namely: organisation functioning, supervision and working environment.

Building on the findings of other research, namely that ‘the perceived organisational justice is a good predictor of some of the job satisfaction dimensions’, this research analysed three organisational justice dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice and relational justice.

The following concepts are used:

Distributive justice: justice of the obtained results by the organisational actors according to their contribution/input to the organisation; how people react to the justice or injustice of the decisions of resources allocation.

Procedural justice: justice of the proceedings used in the determination of the rewards received by the individuals.

Relational justice: justice regarding how individuals are treated when the formal proceedings are applied or explained.

The main findings of this research as follows:

- The procedural justice has influence on all three aspects of job satisfaction.
- The distributive justice has influence on the satisfaction with the organisation functioning and with the supervision but not on working environment.
- The relational justice has influence on the satisfaction with supervision and with the working environment.

Wages and job satisfaction

The main goals of this paper (Vieira, Couto and Borges-Tiago, 2004) is to examine the determinants of job satisfaction in Portugal, analysing the overall satisfaction but also ‘specific job domains’ such as pay, security, type of work and number of hours of work, using data from

the first six waves (1994-1999) of the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) for Portugal.

The panel nature of the data allowed to control for individual unobserved heterogeneity. Since one may suspect that some levels of satisfaction are likely to be recorded because of underlying unobserved characteristics such as the emotional state or mood, which may vary across individuals, the random effects ordered probit model was used.

The estimation results of this research indicated a number of conclusions:

- Wages influence job satisfaction in a positive way. This is valid for overall job satisfaction and for specific aspects such as pay, type of work and number of hours of work;
- Job satisfaction follows a U-shaped pattern with age;
- Having a permanent contract has a positive effect on job satisfaction (although the coefficient is not statistically significant);
- Having a good health status and working in the public sector also increases job satisfaction;
- No evidence was found that education influences overall satisfaction. However, more-educated workers (i.e., those with secondary or higher education) are unhappier with pay and with hours of work;
- The study also found no evidence that overall satisfaction reported by female workers is higher than the one reported by men. Nevertheless, female workers are happier with pay than male workers.
- Overall satisfaction increases with company size.
- Overall satisfaction increases with the number of hours of work ('unexpected result which is at odds with the empirical and theoretical evidence on the issue').
- Satisfaction with job security increases with the number of hours of work. However, satisfaction with the number of hours of work decreases as the number of hours increases.
- In the particular case of Portugal, job satisfaction is related with regions. According to the study, the highest levels of satisfaction are reported by those working in the Portuguese islands (Azores and Madeira). This finding is valid for both overall job satisfaction and each of the job satisfaction aspects analysed.

In conclusion, the results indicate that wages matter for job satisfaction but it does not explain everything. Having a good health status, a permanent contract and working in the public sector influences positively the level of job satisfaction.

Contrary to what has been reported in many other studies, this study finds no evidence that female workers are happier at work, except for satisfaction with pay.

Moreover, the study achieved the striking result that the region reporting the lowest level of satisfaction is the one with higher wages in the country – Lisbon and the Tagus Valley.

Job satisfaction and contracts of employment

This research (Casaca, 2005) analysed the influence of the type of contract of employment in the “subjective perception of job satisfaction” and concluded that workers with non-permanent contract of employments are clearly more dissatisfied with the intrinsic aspects of job satisfaction than those with permanent contract of employments.

Table 4 - Satisfaction degree of respondents by type of contract of employment and sex, according to several work and job dimensions (mean)

Satisfaction degree by contract of employment according to several work and job dimensions

	Non Permanent		Permanent	
	M	F	M	F
Intrinsic				
Relationship with colleagues, subordinates and superiors	3.67	3.97	4.26	3.98
Autonomy, i.e., the possibility to decide the best way to do your job	2.64	2.7	3.91	3.53
Involvement in decision making	2.59	2.65	3.57	3.27
Level of interest of the job and the possibility of using your capacities	3.03	3.03	3.61	3.65
Prestige and recognition of your merits	2.78	2.86	3.57	3.35
Opportunities to learn new things and for professional development	2.95	2.81	3.35	3.31
Utility of your work to society	2.89	2.83	2.87	3.19
Enough spare time	3.41	3.31	3.17	2.96
To be able to choose working schedule/working days	2.49	2.97	3.23	2.94
Mean	2.9	3.0	3.5	3.4
Extrinsic				
Remuneration level	2.57	2.79	3.35	2.94
Working conditions (premises, equipments and work tools)	3.38	3.05	3.45	3.49
Contract of employment	2.75	2.97	4.3	4.06
Stability and security of your occupational future	2.47	2.65	4.17	3.69
Promotion opportunities	2.43	2.5	3.22	2.92
Mean	2.7	2.8	3.7	3.4
Total Mean	3	2.8	3.4	3.5

Source: Casaca, 2005, based on data from the survey on Portuguese companies of the ICT and Retail sectors.

Nevertheless, the differences between permanent and non-permanent workers are particularly striking within the extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction: 41% of the non-permanent workers considered that they are 'not satisfied' and 'not satisfied at all' against 10% of the permanent workers being 'not satisfied'.

It is very interesting the conclusion that, according to the survey, in average, permanent workers are more satisfied with the different dimensions of job and work than non permanent workers. According to the author, this means that the objective precariousness (contractual) is associated with a perception of weak quality of the job link (subjective precariousness).

Yet, while male workers with non-permanent contracts are (slightly) less satisfied than their female counterparts, the evaluation is the opposite amongst permanent workers: women are, on average, less satisfied than men.

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