

**BIOPGRAPHICAL SKETCHES**

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**MAJOR DETERMINANTS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG POLICE MANAGERS**

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**Abstract**

This research examines the levels of job satisfaction among police managers. The findings indicate that police managers have higher levels of job satisfaction than the research on their line level counterparts indicates. Years of service, feedback on the job, and involvement in COP and/or Compstat programs were significant predictors of job satisfaction among this sample of police managers. It appears that involvement in COP and/or Compstat programs has the ability to enrich the jobs of police managers.

**Key Words:** Job Satisfaction, Compstat, Community Oriented Policing

One significant aspect of public sector organizations that has been addressed in recent years is job satisfaction. It has drawn this interest because of the complex issues that face governmental agencies in the coming years due to limited funding and the need for stability. Job satisfaction has an influence on productivity in different ways. As defined by Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a positive state originating from the appraisal of someone’s work or work experiences. Positive changes in working groups, supervision, incentives, and the work itself can increase the productivity and the quality of services in organizations (Argyle, 1972). However, job dissatisfaction can lead to lower productivity, efficiency, effectiveness and poor employee morale (More, et.al. 2006).
LITERATURE REVIEW

Police Job Satisfaction

Although the concept of job satisfaction has been extensively investigated in other professions, empirical research conducted on job satisfaction among police officers has been limited (Bennett, 1997; Dantzker, 1994; Zhao et al., 1999). As Bennett maintained, job satisfaction is a “neglected but important and timely topic in police studies” (1997, p. 296). Buzawa et al. (1994) stated that research on job satisfaction in policing is newer than similar research involving other professions: only about 20 published articles treating job satisfaction as a dependent variable pertain directly to policing.” Dantzker (1994) argued that police job satisfaction literature is methodically and topically limited. Griffin, Dunbar, and McGill noted that “job satisfaction, which has long been recognized in private industry as a prerequisite for successful job performance, has been merely a slogan in police organizations” (1978, p. 77). Even a decade later, most criminal justice researchers agree that research on job satisfaction among police officers is subject to further investigation.

There are several reasons why job satisfaction is important to police organizations. First, negative attitudes toward work can adversely affect job performance in both the quantity and quality of services provided. Thus, poor performance can impact police-community relations by adversely affecting public attitudes toward the police (Buzawa, Austin, & Bannon, 1994). In addition to a moral obligation to demonstrate concern for its employees and promote positive work-related attitudes, job satisfaction promotes lower stress levels and, accordingly, fewer symptoms of stress (e.g., absenteeism, burnout, and alcoholism) (Hoath et al., 1998: 338). Police officers can experience high rates of employee turnover due to their low job satisfaction (Zhao et al. 1999). Loo’s (2004: 162) study of 135 male Canadian police mangers determined that a substantial portion of the respondents (34.1%) fit the profile of high burnout “distressed police managers” that warranted some significant type of organizational intervention. As a result of high employee turnover, increased recruitment and training expenses for new police applicants may harm the limited budgets of law enforcement agencies, thus endangering the effectiveness of public safety. Consequently, research on job satisfaction among police officers may provide valuable information that can improve the quality of police services.

According to Herzberg (1959), different factors combine to create job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among employee. He identified these as either motivators or hygiene factors. Motivators promote job satisfaction. They include: (a) achievement, (b) responsibility, (c) the work itself, (d) recognition, and (e) advancement/promotion. Hygiene factors do not directly lead to job satisfaction among employees. However, their absence may lead to job dissatisfaction. They consist of: (a) organizational policies, (b) supervision and leadership, (c) pay or salary, (d) work conditions, (e) communication with supervisors/work partners. Herzberg contended that employees need to reach an acceptable level of hygiene factors to feel neutral about their jobs. Therefore, employers should seek ways of eliminating dissatisfaction resulting from hygiene factors and focus on improving the motivators in the work environment to increase job satisfaction. Zhao and his colleagues (1999: 154) stated that Herzberg’s (1968) two-factor theory of job satisfaction “provides a useful theoretical framework for empirically assessing officers’ job satisfaction.” They further suggested that a comprehensive examination of job satisfaction not only should cover organizational (work environment) variables but also certain job characteristics and employees’ demographic characteristics.

Hackman and Oldham (1975) suggest that changes in intrinsic work environments lead to higher levels of motivation and satisfaction among employees. Their theory includes three constructs: (1) core job characteristics, (2) critical psychological states, and (3) outcomes. Core job characteristics include: (a) skill variety, (b) task identity, (c) task significance, (d) autonomy, and (e) feedback. If employers adequately provide these five job characteristics, employees will experience three critical psychological states: (1) meaningfulness of the job, (2) responsibility of outcomes of work activities, and (3) knowledge of work outcomes. These three critical psychological states then lead to positive outcomes, such as: (a) higher internal motivation, (b) higher growth job satisfaction, (c) higher general job satisfaction and d) increased productivity and less absenteeism and turnover. They also argued that employees experience satisfaction when they have autonomy and discretion on the job. Timely and/or positive feedback regarding their job activities as well as the knowledge that their work outcomes are helpful for others also promotes job satisfaction. In addition, job challenges that require a variety of skills enrich and enlarge the job and elevate job satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham (1980) developed a measurement scale, the Job Diagnostic Scale (JDS) to measure job satisfaction levels of employees using the five core job characteristics.

Prior research regarding the major determinants (demographic and organizational variables) on police job satisfaction is inconsistent. Consensus has not been reached about which demographic variables significantly predict job satisfaction. Zhao et al. (1999) pointed out that there has been very limited research on the relationship the work environment has on police and their job satisfaction levels. The most commonly used demographic variables in police job satisfaction are: age, gender, race, educational attainment, rank, and length of service (Zhao et al., 1999). For example, while some researchers maintained that age is significantly correlated with job satisfaction among police officers (Dantzker, 1994), other researchers offered mixed findings (Buzawa et al., 1994). Similarly, researchers reported inconsistent findings with gender (Aremu & Adeyoju, 2003; Bennett, 1997; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2004; Buzawa et al., 1994; Dantzker, 1994; Grant, Garrison & McCormick, 1990).

Dantzker’s (1994) job satisfaction survey of twelve police departments in six states (N = 552) indicated that police officer participants had low overall job satisfaction levels. They reported the greatest dissatisfaction with the pay and the least dissatisfaction with supervisory support. Police officers between the ages of 20 and 25 were more satisfied than other age groups. The male police officers had higher job satisfaction levels than female police officers. The men were more likely to change police departments, while the women were more likely to accept a job offer different from policing. Police officers with the rank of sergeant had the lowest job satisfaction level compared to other police officers. While the education level of police officers did not have a significant impact on job satisfaction levels, the findings indicated a weak relationship between education and job satisfaction. Finally, ethnicity/race and age had the greatest impact on the police officers’ perceptions of job satisfaction. Black officers reported greater satisfaction than did their white colleagues.

Other studies found that education had an inconsistent affect upon police job satisfaction. Some researchers found a positive correlation between education level and job satisfaction.
among police officers (Dantzker, 1992; Carlan, 1999). Lefkowitz (1974) reported a negative relationship between job satisfaction and education level of police officers. Other researchers reported that education level did not have a significant effect on job satisfaction among police officers (Griffin, Dunbar, & McGill, 1978). The same inconsistent pattern was present for rank and length of service. Some researchers reported a negative relationship between rank and length of service and job satisfaction among police officers (Buzawa et al., 1994; Dantzker, 1992, 1994; Hoath, Schneider & Starr, 1998; Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2003) while others reported the opposite (Burke, 1989) or no relationship (Bennett, 1997).

Organizational psychologists have investigated job satisfaction and its influence on different organizational factors, such as absenteeism, employee turnover, productivity, pay, skill variety, task identity, autonomy, supervision, and promotion. Commonly used organizational variables to measure job satisfaction perceptions among police officers: a) equipment, b) pay, c) promotion, d) work environment (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback), e) supervisor relations, f) work-family conflict, g) stress, and h) management policies (Dantzker, 1994).

These organizational variables have had differing impacts upon police job satisfaction. Slovak (1978) found that work satisfaction among police officers was multidimensional and was mostly determined by: (a) equipment/preparation, (b) compensation/advancement, and (c) management/organization. Dantzker and Surrette (1996) determined that the police officers were least satisfied with pay and availability of in-service training but they were most satisfied with their present assignment and immediate supervisor support. Dantzker (1997) reported that organizational size had an impact on police officer job satisfaction. Police officers from agencies that employed less than 100 sworn officers had the highest job satisfaction levels among the three groups of agencies. Police officers from agencies that employed more than 500 sworn officers had the lowest job satisfaction levels among the three groups of agencies. Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2002) found that pay, dealing with clientele, and organizational management practices (promotion, appraisal, and other procedures) decreased police officer job satisfaction. Howard, Donofrio and Boles (2004) reported that work-family conflict was a strong predictor of different aspects of police job satisfaction.

Mire (2005) surveyed 87 police officers from Lafayette, Louisiana to determine correlates of their job satisfaction. In addition to demographic variables, organizational (e.g., task identity, skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and feedback), and personality variables (e.g., neuroticism, extraversion, and openness) were considered. Age, years of service, and rank was significantly correlated to job satisfaction. Also, all of the five organizational variables had significant correlations with job satisfaction, explaining 13% of the variance. Personality variables could explain only 10% of the variance in police job satisfaction.

Another organizational variable is the stated purpose of the department. Innovations in policing, such as community policing, have contributed to job satisfaction. The relationship between the two, however, is complex. Some studies have examine the impact of community oriented policing upon job satisfaction. Adams, Rohe, and Arcury (2002) found that community police officers were more positive about their assignments, more accepting of different policing strategies, more optimistic about the impact of COP on police-community relations, and were more satisfied with their jobs compared to traditional police officers.

Halsted, Bromley, and Cochran (2000) reported that deputies with strong orientations for community service had higher job satisfaction levels than deputies with strong crime control orientations. Ford and his colleagues (2003) determined that a sample of Midwestern police officers’ job satisfaction was directly related to their commitment to their organization. Yet, their level of commitment to a community policing strategy was unrelated to their job satisfaction but strongly related to their behaviors in support of the strategy.

Another organizational paradigm is offered by Compstat (Walsh, 2001, p. 352):

At the core of the Compstat process is a computerized information dissemination system, which is expected to process, map and analyze weekly crime and disorder statistics. This information is then sent to operational managers in a timely fashion, usually once a week. These operational managers are empowered and held accountable to focus, manage, and direct their organizational sub-unit’s problem-solving process towards addressing the crime and disorder issues associated with this data.

**THE PRESENT STUDY**

The present study considers the impact of these variables upon police job satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to investigate the major determinants (demographic and organizational variables) of job satisfaction among police managers. The major research questions were:

1. What is the relationship between organizational variables (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) and the job satisfaction perceptions of police managers?
2. What is the relationship between demographic variables and organizational variables explaining the variance in the job satisfaction perceptions of police managers?
3. What is the impact of participation in COP/COMPSTAT programs on the job satisfaction perceptions of police managers?

**METHODS**

**Sample and Procedures**

The data for this study were obtained from police managers attending the Administrative Officers’ Course (AOC) or the Commanding Officer Development Course (CODC) offered by the Southern Police Institute (SPI) under the Department of Justice Administration at the University of Louisville. This convenience sample of 136 officers (91% response rate) represented 24 states. After approval from the Institutional Review Board, the managers voluntarily completed a self-report survey that contains several measures.

**Measures**

**Job Satisfaction**

We used Dantzker’s (1993) job satisfaction scale as the dependent measure for this study. The measure consisted of 23-items, and the respondents indicated their agreement
to the items using a 5-point Likert-type format that was anchored by strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The measure captured job satisfaction information on six dimensions of job satisfaction (i.e., supervision, salary, recognition, equipment, education, and job position). Dantzker (1993) used this version of the measure as a unidimensional measure of job satisfaction. The internal consistency for the measure was appropriate 0.85, and higher scores indicated higher levels of job satisfaction.

Task Identity

We used a measure of task identity. The measure is a subscale that came from Burke’s (2007) version of the job diagnostic scale. The items that comprised this measure were: My job allows me the opportunity to complete the work I started; My job is arranged so that I have a chance and the ability to talk with customers/clients/and users; My job is arranged so that I have an understanding of how it relates to the business mission. The respondents indicated their responses to these items using a 7-point Likert-type scale that was anchored by strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Higher scores indicated more identification with a particular task. The internal consistency for this measure was 0.43, but this is consistent with the Burke’s (2007) use of the measure.

Skill Variety

Our measure of skill variety is a subscale from Burke’s (2007) job diagnostic scale. The items that make up our skill variety scale are: My job lets me be left on my own; My job provides me the opportunity of self-directed flexibility of work. The internal consistency for this measure was 0.72 and was acceptable.

Autonomy

We used a measure of autonomy that was a subscale from Burke’s (2007) job diagnostic scale. The items that we used for this measure were: My job by itself provides feedback on how well I am performing as I am working; My job provides me with the opportunity to both communicate with my supervisor and to receive recognition from them as well; I receive feedback from my co-workers about my performance on the job. The respondents indicated their responses to these items using a 7-point Likert-type scale that were anchored by strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Higher scores indicated more feedback. The internal consistency for this measure was low 0.46, but this is consistent with the Burke’s (2007) use of the measure.

Demographics

We used a number of demographic measures in our study. For instance, we used sex (0) female and (1) male. Marital status was captured using (0) not married and (1) married. Ethnicity was captured using (0) non-white and (1) white. We captured education using a 3-point scale: (1) low [some college, HS diploma, or GED], (2) medium [college graduate], and (3) high [some professional and professional graduate]. We captured rank using a 3-point scale: (1) low [sergeant], (2) medium [lieutenant], and (3) high [captain or major]. The age of the officer and years of service was captured using an open-ended format.

ANALYSIS

The analysis plan for this article takes place in a series of steps. The first step is a presentation of the descriptive statistics that will allow us to discuss the distribution of the measures. The descriptive statistics that we use are the mean and the standard deviations. The second step in the analysis is a presentation of the bivariate correlations of the measures. This will allow us to examine the association between the measures. Further, the bivariate correlations will also provide an early indication of multicollinearity. The third step is a presentation of regression analysis. Because the data are cross-sectional, the regression analysis provides information about the link between the job satisfaction (i.e., dependent measure) and the other measures (i.e., independent measures). Because multiple independent measures are being used in this study and many of them come from one diagnostic, multicollinearity is an important issue. To examine for multicollinearity, we will use the tolerance measure. Freund and Wilson (1998) argued that tolerance measures that 0.20 and below indicate multicollinearity.

RESULTS

Step 1: Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for this study are presented in Table 1. The table shows that the average age of the officers is 40 years old, and 85 percent of the officers were male. The officers have 15 years of service. The officers have an average score that indicates that they are college graduates. Eighty percent of the officers that reported were white, and 83 percent of the officers were married. The average scores indicated that the officers agreed with the statements for skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Finally, the average level of job satisfaction was high.
### Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Variety</td>
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<td>Task Identity</td>
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<td>Task Significance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
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<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>82.04</td>
<td>10.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Step 2: Correlations

Table 2 presents the correlations of the measures. The correlations indicate that job satisfaction is associated with skill variety ($r=0.30$), task significance ($r=0.29$), autonomy ($r=0.23$), and feedback ($r=0.34$). This suggests that the scales of job diagnostics have a link with job satisfaction. In addition, COMPSTAT has a correlation ($r=0.18$) with job satisfaction. While these correlations indicate that there is an association between the theoretical independent measures and job satisfaction, we believe that it is important to point out that largest correlation occurs between feedback and autonomy ($r=0.43$). With this being the largest correlation, we believe that multicollinearity is not an issue in these data, but we will reserve our final judgment until the regression analysis.

### Step 3: Regression Analysis

Table 3 presents the regression analysis for the present study. These results indicate that three measures have a link with job satisfaction. To clarify, the more seniority that an officer has the less job satisfaction they have with their job ($b=-0.61$, $\beta=-0.31$). As feedback increases job satisfaction increases ($b=2.86$, $\beta=0.26$). Finally, the use of COMPSTAT increased job satisfaction ($b=8.30$, $\beta=0.23$). This finding is consistent with previous research that COP officers had higher levels of job satisfaction and perceptions of autonomy than traditional officers (Adams, Rohe, and Arcury, 2002).

In addition, the tolerance levels were all above 0.20, suggesting that multicollinearity was a problem with these data.

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1. We were concerned about the small sample size and the number of independent variables. We performed a series of simulation studies in an attempt to determine if the parameters (i.e., slopes [b]) and standard errors were biased. We did not find bias in the parameters and standard errors. To operationalize our simulations, we used our results from the regression analysis, and had it replicated across 1000 samples. This allowed us to calculate bias per the suggestions from Muthen and Muthen (2002). We did this in two programs—Mplus and SAS, so our simulations are really 2000 samples from two different programs; thus, we feel confident that bias is not present given the small sample size.
The first research finding was that demographic variables (age, gender, education, rank, and years in the present department) were not significant predictors of job satisfaction. The regression analysis further revealed that years served in the present department, feedback, and Compstat were the major determinants of job satisfaction perceptions of police managers. The results of the study also revealed that the five organizational variables (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) could explain 18% (a medium effect size) of the variance in job satisfaction perceptions of police managers. Feedback (β= 0.257, p < .05) was the only statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction among these variables. This pattern also was also present in Mire’s (2005) study. He determined that organizational variables explained 34% of the variance in job satisfaction, while reporting a much lower effect for demographic variables. Overall, the organizational variables were better predictors of job satisfaction among police managers than demographic variables – another finding that is consistent with the previous studies of line officers (Zhao et al., 1999; Chiu 2004; Mire, 2005).

Finally, the multivariate statistical analyses demonstrated that the job satisfaction perceptions of police managers who are participating in COMPSTAT program were significantly higher than those managers who were not participating in these programs. Compstat programs were positively related to job satisfaction perceptions of police managers. Managers who are involved COMPSTAT are expected to provide leadership and operationally be accountable for these innovations (Kelling and Bratton, 1993). This suggests that the implementation of COMPSTAT programs may lead to job enrichment for police managers. The regression analysis further revealed that years served in the present department, feedback, and Compstat were the major determinants of job satisfaction perceptions of police managers in this study. Of all of the demographic variables, years served in the present department are the only one that made a statistically significant contribution to job satisfaction. New police officers in the department reported the highest levels of job satisfaction, while officers with more years of experience in the present department reported the lowest levels of job satisfaction. This result suggests that the longer the participants worked in the police departments, the more likely they would be to have low job satisfaction perceptions. This finding is consistent with Buzawa’s (1984) and Buzawa et al.’s (1994) studies which revealed that tenure (longevity in each department) was inversely related with job satisfaction levels of patrol officers. A possible explanation for the significant negative relationship between years served in the present department could be related to the loss, over time, of the excitement and ideals that police officers possess at the beginning of their career. Also, departmental procedures, limited promotions, pay, and other work conditions may negatively influence the job satisfaction perceptions of career minded police officers over the years. Command level police managers and city managers should look for ways of keeping their management staffs’ job satisfaction levels high or at least steady, which in turn would provide better services for the community.

Feedback refers to “the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the employee obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance” (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p.162). Police managers who thought their co-workers and supervisors provided adequate feedback reported high job satisfaction perceptions. Finding ways to create work environments to get continuous feedback from their co-workers and supervisors provided adequate feedback reported high job satisfaction perceptions. Finding ways to create work environments to get continuous feedback from their co-workers and supervisors provided adequate feedback reported high job satisfaction perceptions.
their co-workers might increase job satisfaction and in turn encourage better performance from police managers.

The results indicate that feedback and COP and Compstat programs had a positive influence on job satisfaction perceptions of police managers. Similarly, implementing COMPSTAT programs in police agencies can increase the job satisfaction perceptions of police managers. Finally, on a cautionary note, the results indicated that years of service in the present department have a negative influence on the job satisfaction perceptions of police managers.

The results of this study indicate that police managers were generally satisfied with their jobs. It was further determined that organizational variables were better predictors of the job satisfaction perceptions of police managers than demographic variables (with the exception of years of service). The major determinants of job satisfaction were identified as feedback, years of service in the present department, and implementation of COP and/or Compstat programs. It is hoped that these findings will assist police chiefs, city managers, and human resource professionals who are seeking ways to increase the job satisfaction levels and performances of their personnel. By taking these findings under advisement and incorporating these results into decisions being made about how to improve job satisfaction and thus job performance, all law enforcement agency personnel should benefit.

REFERENCES


**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES**

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