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Factors that Contribute to Work Satisfaction of Master Students and Graduates

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INTRODUCTION

- Global mobility, technological advancement and current labour market challenges are driving young people to study even more, in order to be qualified and well adapted to the demands of the labour market.
- Higher Education, associated with better pay, more professional success and greater satisfaction with ones job. This also means that unfulfilled high expectations can lead decreased work satisfaction.
- Work satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences
- Previous studies among working students and graduates have demonstrated a favorable relationship between certain job characteristics and work satisfaction, which then leads to psychological satisfaction and the motivation to perform well.

AIMS OF OUR STUDY

- (1) Analyze the relationships between Work Satisfaction (WS), psychosocial job aspects, general and psychological quality of life and socioeconomic characteristics

- (2) Identify which of them contribute to Work Satisfaction among Masters students and graduates.

METHODOLOGY AND POPULATION

- Master students who received financial aid from the government (regardless of their financial situation) Between 2012 and 2013, were contacted by post to participate in an online survey
- 644 postgraduates completed the questionnaire, among whom 137 met the inclusion criterion (i.e. They answered the “Job aspects” items, available only to those who were working)
- The two groups compared consisted of:
 - Masters students (N=66)
 - Masters graduates (N=71)

MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

- *Work satisfaction* (single item from 1 to 10=very satisfied) DV
- *General Quality of Life* (single item – from 1 to 10=very satisfied)
- *Psychological Quality of Life Subscale of WHOQOL-bref* (6 items – from 1 to 5=extremely)
- *Job aspects* (6 items – from 1 to 5=extremely satisfied)
- *Socioeconomic characteristics*: Age, gender, household type, types of contract, working hours per week and perceived financial situation (1 to 6=very good).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

- All scales were calculated on a range from 1 to 10.
- Student's t-tests and bivariate correlations were used to explore the associations between *work satisfaction* and the *other variables*.
- A regression model was fitted for each variable that was significantly ($p<0.05$) linked to WS, for at least one of the two groups.

RESULTS – DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION

		Master		
		Students	Graduates	
		% or Mean(SD)	% or Mean(SD)	p*
Work satisfaction	[1-10]	7.7 (1.54)	7.9 (1.42)	0.553
Age		29.2 (7.68)	28.2 (4.41)	0.363
Gender	men	36.1	66.2	0.001**
	women	63.9	33.8	
Household type	alone	25.0	19.1	0.138
	with parents	18.3	33.8	
	with other adults or children	56.7	47.1	
Type of contract	indeterminate	34.4	57.4	0.027*
	fixed term	39.1	27.9	
	other	26.6	14.7	
Working hours per week	until 20h/week	39.6	14.0	0.008**
	21-40h/week	45.3	51.2	
	more than 40h/week	15.1	34.9	
Financial situation	[1-10]	6.6 (2.24)	7.5 (2.34)	0.035*

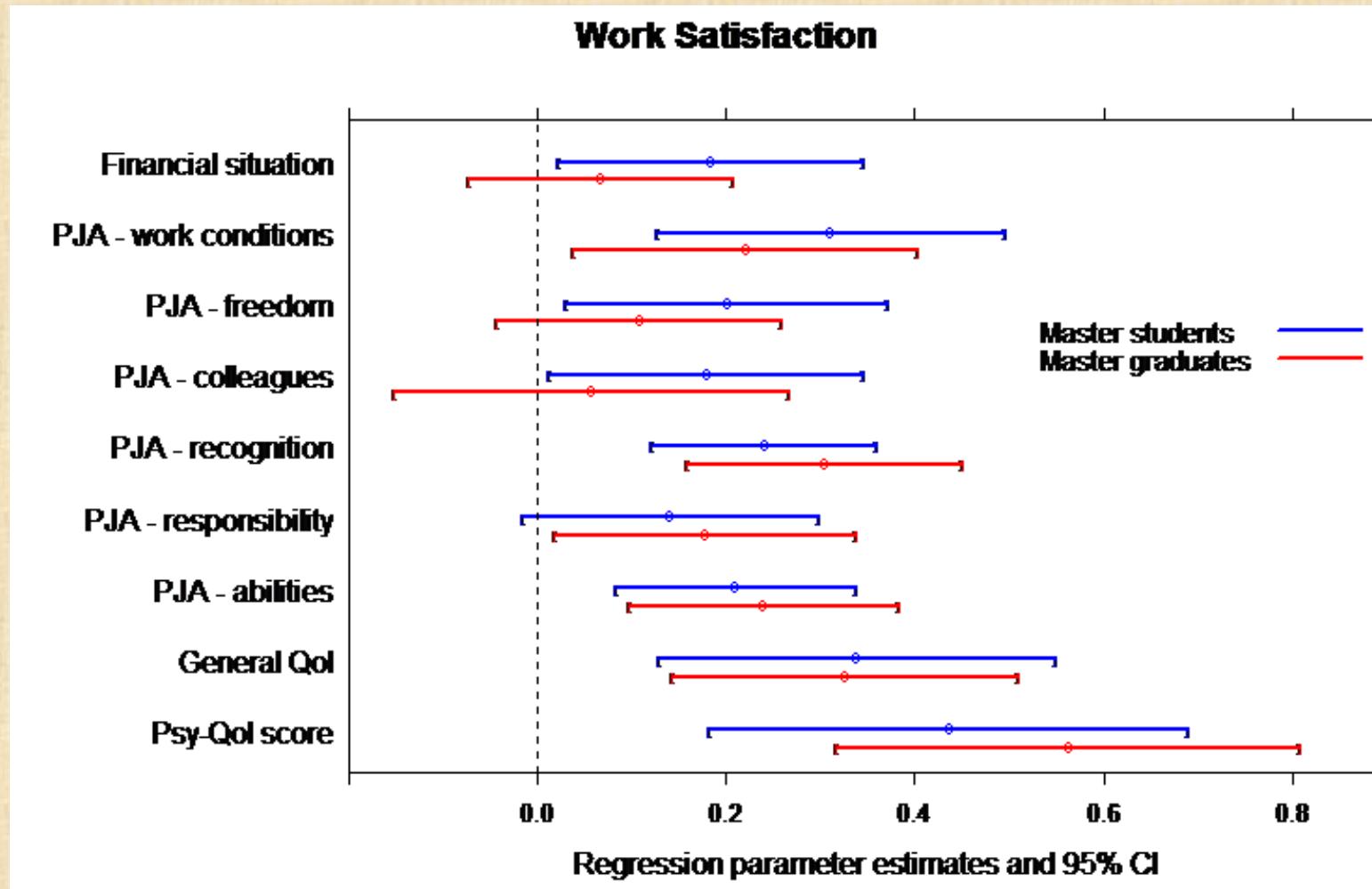
- Postgraduates' WS indicator was 7.8/10
- The two groups differed in *gender, type of contract, working hrs/week and perceived financial situation*

RESULTS-RELATIONSHIPS WITH WORK SATISFACTION

		Work satisfaction [1-10]			
		Master			
		Students	Graduates	Students	Graduates
		Correlation coefficient	p*	Correlation coefficient	p*
Financial situation	[1-10]	0.306	0.022*	0.111	0.362
Psychosocial job aspects	work conditions [1-10]	0.392	0.002**	0.284	0.018*
	freedom	0.284	0.028*	0.176	0.150
	colleagues	0.263	0.042*	0.069	0.574
	recognition	0.445	0.000***	0.466	0.000***
	responsibility	0.216	0.097	0.274	0.023*
	abilities	0.378	0.003**	0.392	0.001***
General Qol	[1-10]	0.368	0.004**	0.413	0.000***
Psy-Qol score	[1-10]	0.380	0.003**	0.514	0.000***

- For both groups, no sociodemographic characteristics were linked to WS
- For **students**, all variables except responsibility, were related with WS
- For **graduates**, work conditions, recognition, responsibility, abilities and general and psychological quality of life were related with WS

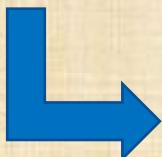
RESULTS-FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO WORK SATISFACTION



DISCUSSION

For both groups:

- Psychological quality of life was the strongest determiner to WS. This is in line with previous studies, in which postgraduates' psychological quality of life was shown to contribute to adaptive behaviors such as career planning
- Job aspects associated with WS:
Working conditions
Recognition for good work
Opportunity to use ones abilities



The better employees feel about each aspect of their jobs, the more cohesive and harmonious the workplace atmosphere is and the more willing and motivated they will be to perform

Higher retention

DISCUSSION

For Students

- WS is influenced by their financial situation
- Freedom and autonomy in their work, seems to foster motivation.
- Good relationships with colleagues can enhance the feeling of belonging, which is especially important for new recruits

For Graduates

- The amount of responsibility given enhanced their WS. We can argue that they need to feel competent and qualified enough for the job. Therefore they are looking for jobs which correspond to their level of education, which is in turn a reflection of their professional expectations.

Thank you for your attention!

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