

Job Satisfaction in the Social Care Sector in Greece: A Public - Nonprofit Sector Comparison

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Abstract

Although job satisfaction research has been carried out for many decades (Locke, 1976, Quarstein et al, 1992), understanding what affects the job satisfaction of employees and the differences across sectors is a very timely research topic. Social care in Greece comprises a very complicated system, where public, private and nonprofit actors coexist and function in parallel on an ad hoc basis and without institutional coordination. Job satisfaction is undisputedly connected with success in any type of organization, and comparative approaches are ideal tools for the deepest understanding of this topic. We use the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985) to measure job satisfaction among professionals working in social care in Greece, and we compare data between sectors. Data analysis show that these professionals are generally more satisfied than their colleagues in both the private and the public sectors. The standard methodology used could enable further cross-national comparisons.

Key words: Job satisfaction, social care sector, Greece, public sector, nonprofit sector

1. Job satisfaction: Easy to conceive, difficult to measure

There is a lack of consensus as to what job satisfaction is, yet differences in definition may be “more apparent than real” (Hale, 1986). Porter and Lawer (1973) define job satisfaction as the emotional reaction of the worker to his job as the result of the comparison between the real and the desired outcomes. According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction is the result of the perception that one's job fulfils or allows the fulfillment of one's important job values. It is a pleasant or positive emotional situation that derives from the evaluation of job positions or work experience. (1983). Pilkington and Wood (1986) describe job satisfaction as the extent of positive affective orientation to the job, a definition also adapted by other scholars.

Bush (1998) adopts the definition of Locke (1976), adding “providing and to the degree that those values are congruent with one's needs”. Smith et al. (1975) define job satisfaction as the sum of the emotions one has for his or her job in general, while for Price and Mueller (1981), it simply reflects the degree to which workers like their job, a point of view later adopted also by Stamps (1997) and Spector (1997), who defines it as the degree to which people like or dislike their job. Adams and Bond (2000) claim that job satisfaction could be defined as the degree of positive influence towards a job position or its components.

There are different attributes that determine job satisfaction, which can lead to different outcomes. Rewards may be both economic and noneconomic (Borzaga, 2003, as referred to in Borzaga et al, 2006). The non-monetary factors may be extrinsic, such as greater opportunities for training and greater worker flexibility, and intrinsic, such as involvement in the organization's activity and management or the sociality of work (Almond and Kendall, 2000). Salary (French et al., 2007; French et al., 2004; Janus et al, 2007), career opportunities (Crawford and Gressley, 1993; Lamberth and Comello, 2005) and recognition (Van Ham et al., 2006; Takase et al., 2005) are crucial factors of job satisfaction. Workers driven by economic attitudes appear less satisfied, whereas intrinsic and relational attitudes are crucial factors in increasing worker satisfaction (Borzaga et al, 2006).

Herzberg et al. (1959) claim that a fair salary is not enough to guarantee satisfaction but that its absence (or inadequate salary) causes dissatisfaction. The match between education and job leads to equity with compensation, puts the knowledge and skills acquired by the workers to right use, and enables workers to perform at a higher level, consequently increasing their satisfaction with their occupation (Allen and Van der Velden 2001;

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Vila and Garcia-Mora 2005). Overqualification may have the opposite effect. Non-voluntary and especially unpaid overtime work also negatively affects job satisfaction, regardless of whether it is forced implicitly or explicitly.

Traynor and Wade (1993) observe five dimensions of job satisfaction: personal satisfaction, satisfaction with workload, satisfaction with professional support, satisfaction with pay and prospects and satisfaction with training. While developing their "Job Diagnostic Survey", Hackman and Oldham (1975) identify a number of factors that determine job satisfaction. According to their theory, the main factors are skill variety (the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involve the use of a number of different skills and talents of the employee), task identity (the degree to which the job requires the completion of a "whole" and identifiable piece of work) and task significance (the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people).

There is evidence of a strong association between job satisfaction and professional autonomy (Iliopoulou and While, 2010), which has been studied from social (Batey and Lewis, 1982), feminist (McKay, 1983), moral (Wilkinson, 1997), ethical (Keenan, 1999) and professional perspectives (McDonald, 2002). Autonomy, as the right to exercise discretionary decisions in the context of an interdependent working team in accordance with the socially and legally granted freedom of the profession (Wade, 1999), has been identified as a central theme in the concept of autonomy (Ballou, 1998). Other scholars (Begat et al, 2005, Laschinger et al, 2003) also consider autonomy and control to be crucial factors of job satisfaction. The quality of facilities and equipment may also affect the concept of autonomy, which, in combination with low stress, can boost job satisfaction (Aiken et al., 2002; Blegen, 1993; Bratt et al., 2000; Upenieks, 2003; Wells et al., 2002).

It can be hypothesized that various job characteristics, such as greater fairness in wage structures and, more generally, in the incentive structures of nonprofits affect employees' job satisfaction (Leete, 2000; Levine, 1991). Some have stressed the importance of workers' attitudes and motivations (Mirvis, 1992), while others have investigated the presence and importance of participation, task significance, job specificity, feedback, and career development support (Wright and Kim, 2004). Miller (1980) suggests that primary factors in job satisfaction are occupational self-direction, job pressures and organizational structure and positions. Perry and Porter (1982) express the opinion that various work conditions, including the nature of the job or the collection of tasks that comprise the job, influence job satisfaction. Bach et al. (2009) define welfare-oriented practices as the procedures that are designed to ensure that disputes and grievances are dealt with fairly and that provide high levels of job security, a variety of equal employment opportunities and universal pension provision, as opposed to performance-oriented practices that are designed to maximize the performance of employees.

2. The need to measure Job satisfaction

The assessment of job satisfaction is relevant to both organizations and employees. Organizations cannot succeed without the efforts and the engagement of their staff. Job satisfaction and the derived devotion to the employer are among the most decisive factors of organizational effectiveness (Lok and Crawford, 2003). When three critical psychological states, experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work, and knowledge of the results of the work activities, are simultaneously present, positive personal and work outcomes (such as high internal motivation, high work satisfaction, high-quality performance, and low absenteeism and turnover) are obtained (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). If the job satisfaction in an organization is low, interventions can be implemented that may improve the quality of the employee's work life. In this way, negative influences in the workplace, such as turnover and health-related problems (for example, occupational stress), can be prevented (van Saane et al., 2003). Job satisfaction is negatively associated with mortality due to heart disease and fatigue, while it is positively associated with longevity (Locke, 1976).

The attention paid to job satisfaction has been found to have a significant influence on the motivation to stay in or leave an organization and other membership-related behaviors, and thus, decoding factors that affect employees' satisfaction across sectors is an essential task (Williamson and Anderson, 1991; Wright and Davis, 2003). Job satisfaction may prevent staff shortages and may even cut costs, as it can function as a buffer against conditions favoring a high turnover. Several scholars (Lance, 1991; Irvine and Evans, 1995) detect a small but significant relationship between a low level of job satisfaction and turnover. Job satisfaction could also protect against other negative influences in the workplace, such as occupational stress or conflict (van Saane et al., 2003). Satisfied workers are more loyal to their organizations. Job satisfaction is equally important for all three sectors: public, private and nonprofit. Cunningham's (2010) "voluntary sector ethos" describes how employees often commit to an organisation to be able to serve a social cause or mission; he argues that the employment relationship is therefore characterised by a "high level of mutuality between management and labour". In the nonprofit sector, the staff play the most important role in delivering the organization's mission (Kendall, 2003;

Ridder and McCandless, 2010), while labor costs represent a significant proportion of total costs (Passey et al., 2000). Many voluntary sector organisations typically experience an irregular and unpredictable stream of funding (Armstrong, 1992), a fact that renders the treatment of staff turnover more difficult. The detection of the intentions and emotions of the employees leads to efficient planning. It is impossible to understand the problems of a social sector without knowledge about the behaviour of the staff. For instance, it would be impossible to introduce positive changes in medicine without changing the way doctors are treated (Qian and Lim, 2008).

Human resources are the most important factor for organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Job satisfaction is a crucial attribute for hiring and retaining high quality staff (Mosadeghrad et al., 2008; Mosadeghrad & De Moraes, 2009). On the other hand, job dissatisfaction is a powerful indicator for the prediction of quitting (Hellman, 1997; Sourdif, 2004), although Lum et al. (1998) claim that job satisfaction has only an indirect influence on the intention to quit, while organizational commitment has the strongest and most direct impact. Organizational efforts are necessary to retain front-line professional staff (Ito et al, 2001). According to Irvine and Evans (1995), satisfied employees are more likely to be productive and remain in their job position. This suggestion does not support that of Borgazza et al. (2006), who claim that workers are more loyal when they are satisfied mainly with the economic and process-related aspects of their jobs, whereas intrinsic motivations do not significantly affect their loyalty.

3. Measuring methods of Job satisfaction

There are several models used to measure job satisfaction, such as global or multidimensional instruments, multi-item or single-item instruments and instruments designed for jobs in general or for a specific workforce, but there is no unique tool that covers all aspects of job satisfaction (Kremeti, 2008). Hale (1986) suggests that the instruments used to measure job satisfaction across different types of settings are often neither valid nor reliable. According to Mueller and McCloskey (1990), occupation-specific scales can better delineate the components most relevant to the satisfaction of particular occupational groups. The meticulous work of van Seene et al. (2003) is a valuable contribution that shows which tools are reliable. They observed that there was no overview of the different job satisfaction instruments in which the adequacy of their psychometric characteristics was assessed, and so they reviewed the psychometric quality of 35 existing job satisfaction instruments to determine which of them fulfil the criteria of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951)), test-retest reliability (Pearson correlation) and construct validity (convergent, discriminant and content validity). They concluded that only seven instruments meet the psychometric quality criteria.

For the purpose of our study, we have chosen the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985) for three reasons. It is one of the tools that fulfills the criteria set by van Saane et al. and is applicable specifically to human service, public, and nonprofit sector organizations. It is a generally accepted tool that can help further cross-sectoral and cross-national comparisons. The latter reason is why we did not add or modify questions (even though this implies some limitations, which we discuss later) and why we think that our approach could be interesting for an international audience. The only adjustment is that we use the five- instead of the six-point Likert scale, following the trend in statistics that provides responders with the option of a neutral choice when there is no face-to-face contact (Garland, 1991). The five choices were "strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree".

The Job Satisfaction Survey uses a 36-item, nine-facet scale. Each scale is assessed with four items, and a total score is computed from all items. A summated rating scale format is used, with five choices per item, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Items are written in both directions, so approximately half must be reverse scored. The nine facets are salary, promotion, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, supervision, co-workers, nature of job, communication, rules and procedures.

A questionnaire based on the Job Satisfaction Survey was sent electronically to 1,000 email addresses of social care organizations during the period September - October 2018. Next to "sector of activity" (public, private, nonprofit), seven more questions were added regarding sex, age, experience, educational level, main field of activity (homeless, disabled, prisoners, adolescents, aged, domestic violence, migrants/refugees, children, Roma, addictions, poverty/social exclusion, other), specialty (social worker, psychologist, medical staff, administrative support, auxiliary staff, other), and type of employment (full time, part time, contract).

Face-to-face contact was not an option because of the personal nature of the data requested. The cover letter included full information about the researchers, the aim of the study, and the guarantee of data security and anonymity, and links were provided for further reference. No automatic sending application was used, and each dispatch was personal, including the name of the receiver, when it was known. A percentage of 0.028% of these addresses proved to be inactive.

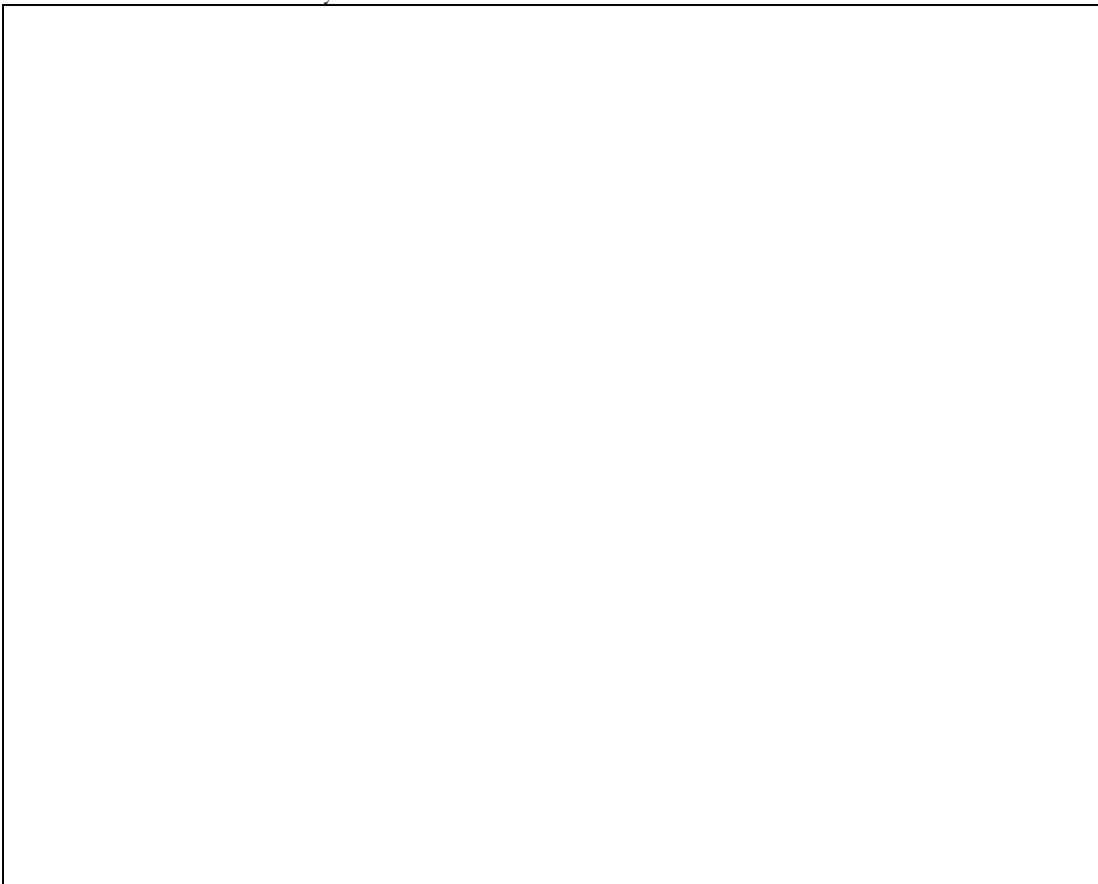
From the remaining 972, a total of 303 responses were received (763 total visits, 395 unique visits, 79% completion rate). The mean age of the participants was $M = 40.81$ years ($S.D. = 9.14$ years). The average work experience was $M = 14.54$ years ($S.D. = 9.38$ years). Of the survey respondents, 68.71% worked in the public sector, 7.74% in the private sector and 23.55% in the nonprofit sector (table 1), proportions that perfectly match the estimations of the Greek Chamber of Social Workers about the composition of the sector.

Table 1: Sample composition



The majority of respondents (42.12%) hold a postgraduate or doctoral degree, 28.30% hold a bachelor's degree, 22.19% hold a Technological Educational Institute degree, and 7.40% hold a secondary education degree. The majority are social workers (50.50%), 11.98% are psychologists, 5.94% are nurses, 19.80% are administrative staff and the remaining 11.88% are auxiliary staff. The main fields of activity are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Main field of activity



According to the factor analysis of the 36 questions, the KMO index (test for sampling adequacy or Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin index) is 0.887. Nine factors are created. Table 3 shows the Cronbach's alpha reliability index, based on the loading of each question for the respective factor

Factors with their respective Cronbach's alpha coefficient are *Salary* (0.692), *Promotion* (0.678), *Fringe benefits* (0.622), *Contingent rewards* (0.802), *Supervision* (0.834), *Co-workers* (0.756), *Nature of work* (0.724), *Communication* (0.660), and *Rules and procedures* (0.632)

Table 3: Factor loading, Cronbach's Alpha

Items	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Salary</i>	0.692
<i>Promotion</i>	0.678
<i>Fringe benefits</i>	0.622
<i>Contingent rewards</i>	0.802
<i>Supervision</i>	0.834
<i>Co-workers</i>	0.756
<i>Nature of work</i>	0.724
<i>Communication</i>	0.660
<i>Rules and procedures</i>	0.632

4. Data analysis

Tables 4 to 12 present the results in a most simplified way, omitting the option “neither agree nor disagree” and summarizing the “strongly disagree” and “disagree” options on the one hand and the “agree” and “strongly agree” on the other. When dissatisfaction prevails, the results are in **bold** letters.

Table 4 Results (prevailing dissatisfaction marked in bold)

Salary	disagree	agree
I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do	52.1	34
Raises are too few and far between	9.3	66.1
I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me	32.2	48.3
I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases	67.8	33.2

Table 5

Promotion	disagree	agree
There is really too little chance for promotion on my job	21.4	65.8
Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted	68.7	2.9
People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places	31.5	21.5
I am satisfied with my chances for promotion	63.6	13.7

Table 6

Contingent rewards	disagree	agree
When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive	51.2	38
I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated	34.2	50.8
There are few rewards for those who work here	22	50.8
I have too much paperwork	16.9	56.9

Table 7

Rules and procedures	disagree	agree
Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult	25.5	59
My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape	63	21.1
I have too much to do at work	16.7	50.1
I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be	21.1	58.2

Table 8

Fringe benefits	disagree	agree
I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive	26.8	60.4
The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer	20.4	60.1
The benefit package we have is equitable	55.3	38.8
There are benefits we do not have which we should have	22.3	65.2

Table 9

Communication	disagree	agree
Communications seem good within this organization	32.3	16.3
The goals of this organization are not clear to me	40.9	43.7
I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization	44.4	23.7
Work assignments are not fully explained	43.4	41.2

Table 10

Co-workers	disagree	agree
I like the people I work with	14.1	61
I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with	27.8	48.2
I enjoy my co-workers	13.7	40.6
There is too much bickering and fighting at work	39.2	32.2

Table 11

Supervisor	disagree	agree
My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job	37.3	45.7
My supervisor is unfair to me	55.1	12.6
My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates	45.4	43.8
I like my supervisor	14.7	66.1

Table 12

Nature of work	disagree	agree
I sometimes feel my job is meaningless	55.9	31.3
I like doing the things I do at work	9.2	43.7
I feel a sense of pride in doing my job	2.9	75.7
My job is enjoyable	24.6	41.8

As we can see dissatisfaction prevails in 24 out of the 36 variables and 6 out of the 9 factors. It is remarkable that although the majority expresses dissatisfaction for all objective factors (Salary, promotion, contingent rewards, rules and procedures, fringe benefits, communication), they express satisfaction with the more subjective factors, with the variable "I feel a sense of pride in doing my job" showing the highest score (75.7%). As we will see, there are no significant differences between the non profit and the other two sectors.

The existence of differences between the three sectors was tested with the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). We first tested whether the variance is homogenous in all three sectors. We found significance only in the case of fringe benefits (sig = 0.033, at the 5% level of significance), while the homogeneity of variance is valid for all other factors of the three sectors (table 13).

Table 13: Homogeneity and analysis of Variances

Factors	Test of Homogeneity of Variances	Analysis of Variance
Salary	sig = 0.301	$F_{2,303} = 0.781$, sig = 0.459
Promotion	sig = 0.462	$F_{2,301} = 6.521$, sig = 0.002
Fringe benefits	sig = 0.033	$F_{2,303} = 1.239$, sig = 0.291
Contingent rewards	sig = 0.708	$F_{2,302} = 4.021$, sig = 0.019
Supervisor	sig = 0.495	$F_{2,303} = 1.545$, sig = 0.215
Co-workers	sig = 0.176	$F_{2,302} = 4.944$, sig = 0.008
Nature of work	sig = 0.729	$F_{2,302} = 3.031$, sig = 0.051
Communication	sig = 0.855	$F_{2,304} = 1.620$, sig = 0.200
Rules and procedures	sig = 0.078	$F_{2,301} = 11.818$, sig < 0.001

The ANOVA shows statistical significance for the factors of promotion (sig = 0.002), contingent rewards (sig = 0.019), co-workers (sig = 0.008), and rules and procedures (sig < 0.001). We applied multiple comparisons to test the differences between factors of the sectors with statistical significance ($\alpha=5\%$).

Promotion

Regarding the multiple comparison of the promotion factor, we apply Hochberg's GT2 test because there are significant differences in the size of the samples (public N=210, private N=24 and nonprofit N=70) (Field, 2017).

The analysis shows that there is statistical significance (sig = 0.002) between the public and the nonprofit sectors, with the latter being inferior (mean difference (I – J) = 1.516). This means that satisfaction regarding promotion is higher in the public sector than in the nonprofit sector, while there are no differences between the private and the public sectors or between the private and the nonprofit sectors.

This makes sense for promotion (“There is really too little chance for promotion in my job”, “Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted”, “People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places”, “I am satisfied with my chances for promotion”) because the public sector provides a certain hierarchy and a strict institutional framework regarding promotion, attributes that do not exist in the nonprofit sector.

Contingent rewards

Regarding the multiple comparison of the factor of contingent rewards, we also apply Hochberg's GT2 test because there are significant differences in the size of the samples (public N=209, private N=24 and nonprofit N=72) (Field, 2017). The analysis shows that there is statistical significance (sig = 0.015) between the public and the nonprofit sectors, with the latter being superior (mean difference (I – J) = 1.547). This means that satisfaction regarding contingent rewards is higher in the nonprofit sector than in the public sector, while there are no differences between the private and the public sectors or between the private and the nonprofit sectors.

This is very easy to explain. The Greek public sector is notorious for its flattening attitude and its complete lack of flexibility, based on the absence of any kind of performance evaluation.

Co-workers

Regarding the multiple comparison of the factor of co-workers, we also apply Hochberg's GT2 test because there are significant differences in the size of the samples (public N=210, private N=23 and nonprofit N=72) (Field, 2017).

The analysis shows that there is statistical significance (sig = 0.008) between the public and the nonprofit sectors, with the latter being superior (mean difference (I – J) = 1.488). This means that, similar to contingent rewards, satisfaction regarding the co-workers factor is higher in the nonprofit sector than in the public sector. There are no differences between the private and the public sectors or between the private and the nonprofit sectors.

To our knowledge, there is no scientific explanation for this difference. One explanation could be connected with the promotion factor, as explained above. The competition for promotion among employees in the public sector may negatively affect the quality of their collaboration and the social relationships among them.

Rules and procedures

Finally, regarding the multiple comparison of the factor rules and procedures, we also apply Hochberg's GT2 test because of the significant differences in the size of the samples (public N=211, private N=22 and nonprofit N=71) (Field, 2017).

The analysis shows that there is statistical significance ($\text{sig} < 0.001$) between the public and the nonprofit sectors, with the latter being superior (mean difference $(I - J) = 2.034$) and between the public and the private sectors as well ($\text{sig} = 0.024$), with the latter being superior (mean difference $(I - J) = 1.999$), while there is no statistical significance between the private and the nonprofit sectors ($\text{sig} = 1.000$). This means that satisfaction regarding rules and procedures is higher in both the nonprofit and the private sectors than in the public sector, while there is no significant difference between the first two sectors.

This is also easy to explain. The Greek public sector is notorious for its complex bureaucracy, the existence of a chaotic legislation that is very difficult to apply, and the lack of simple managerial tools, such as job descriptions. In nonprofit organizations, such aspects are much more direct and simpler.

5. Limitations and extensions

As we discussed earlier, several models are used to measure job satisfaction, but there is no unique tool that covers all aspects of job satisfaction. Different models could lead to different results. The Likert scale is a very popular approach, but the question as to the ideal number of scale points is still controversial and varies across different circumstances. Scholars suggest the use of odd or even numbers of options using various arguments and different points of view (see, for example, Carifio and Perla, 2008, Jamieson, 2004; Takafumi et al, 2012).

We use the original Job Satisfaction Survey, which covers many, but not all, options of job satisfaction. As mentioned above, we did not add or modify its facets or single items because we think that it is more useful to have results that are compatible with other approaches to encourage future cross-national and cross-sectional comparisons. However, some aspects worthy of investigation are missing. These options could include overtime working, facilities, equipment, job autonomy, job rotation, secondment, shadowing, health and well-being, psychological support, overqualification, self-reported happiness at work, training opportunities or mobility.

Another point is that the model is static and cannot cover the dynamic character of job satisfaction and its adjustment to structural changes. The only way to record sensitivity to change is to repeat the application, which is not always possible. The model does not facilitate a direct connection to recommendations for job modifications that would improve employee motivation and productivity.

In Greece, there are no official records of the numbers of professionals working in social care, let alone details about sectors, subsectors, specialties, experience, sex, age, educational level, geographical coverage and the like. This lack of information has two disadvantages. First, it is very difficult to locate and access professionals. The question "where did you get my email address?" frequently arises, and it is very difficult to access a reliable sample. Second, the sample equilibration is based on estimations. Even the Chamber of Social Workers (Social Workers Association of Greece), which is the official institution that dispenses the licensure, has no complete records.

6. Conclusions

We compare job satisfaction between the public and nonprofit sectors providing social care in Greece using the method of the Job Satisfaction Survey that measures job satisfaction based on nine factors, each of which is derived by four questions. Analysis of variance shows that the five factors of salary ($\text{sig} = 0.459$), fringe benefits ($\text{sig} = 0.291$), supervisor ($\text{sig} = 0.215$), nature of work ($\text{sig} = 0.051$), and communication ($\text{sig} = 0.200$) have no statistical significance, which means that job satisfaction is more or less equal in the public and the nonprofit sectors regarding these factors. On the other hand, the other four factors have statistical significance, namely, promotion ($\text{sig} = 0.002$), contingent rewards ($\text{sig} = 0.019$), co-workers ($\text{sig} = 0.008$), and rules and procedures ($\text{sig} < 0.001$). To test the sectoral differences between these factors, we applied the method of multiple comparisons and, more specifically, Hochberg's GT2 test, because there are significant differences between the sizes of the samples of the public, private and nonprofit sectors for all four factors. Satisfaction is higher in the public sector only regarding promotion, while satisfaction is higher in the nonprofit sector regarding contingent rewards, co-workers and rules and procedures. These results follow the general picture of these two sectors of social care in Greece according to the respective literature.

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