

JOB SATISFACTION OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS IN SPAIN ACCORDING TO GENDER AND AGE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which sport and physical activity instructors are satisfied with their working conditions and performance, and how levels of job satisfaction varied across different genders and ages of sport and physical activity instructors. Sport and physical activity instructors (N=600) (ultimately N=545; males=356, females=189), from Spain formed the target group for the survey. Key results indicate that sport and physical activity instructors experienced job satisfaction due to their relationship with their colleagues, the feeling that their occupation was valued by their peers, the job itself, the level of autonomy and the level of their performance. However, they experienced dissatisfaction with the lack of training and promotional opportunities, the financial remuneration, the environmental conditions and lack of personal safety. A major finding was that sport and physical activity instructors who experienced higher levels of job satisfaction were males aged 45 years or older. Despite the fact that the results revealed that sport and physical activity instructors were generally satisfied with their jobs, further research needs to examine ways to increase job satisfaction by reducing negative elements.

Key words: Job satisfaction; Physical activity; Sport instructor; Gender; Age.

INTRODUCTION

Each year, a considerable number of sport and physical activity instructors leave the teaching scene (Raedeke *et al.*, 2002). This could be because they become dissatisfied with their jobs and feel stressed or burnt out and opt to leave (Singh & Surujlal, 2006). Continuous employment of sport and physical activity instructors is important.

The influence that a sport and physical activity instructor has, is crucial not only in terms of the quality of a child's first sport experience, but because they help to lay the foundation of the child's development as future sportsmen or -women and as a person. They inspire them to continue participating in physical activities (Sallis *et al.*, 2000). The availability of sport and physical activity instructors is essential for elderly participants as well (Campos-Izquierdo *et al.*, 2010). Sport organisations recognise that the continuous employment of instructors is important in order to maintain quality sport programmes (Raedeke *et al.*, 2002).

In Spain, instructing sport and physical activities is considered an occupation and a function of sport and physical activity (Campos-Izquierdo, 2010). It differs from teaching physical

education because it happens outside the education system and they can instruct people of all ages. It also differs from coaching, because they do not compete. Sport and physical activity instructors can teach all the sport and physical activities in an academic setting, which differs from extracurricular activities because the classes can be performed by all types of people and in any facility, not only in a school.

Campos-Izquierdo *et al.* (2006) and Martínez *et al.* (2008) wanted to know how many people work in every occupation and function of sport and physical activity. The results of their studies revealed that 20 and 18.5% of all people in Spain work as sport and physical activity instructors respectively. As such, it could be concluded that sport and physical activity instruction can be regarded as one of the occupations most practised in Spain.

In the light of sport and physical activity instructors being a highly sought after occupation, research related to job satisfaction of employees as a means to achieve better results in society, needs further investigation. If sport and physical activity instructors are satisfied with their jobs, they produce better and active sportsmen and -women and contribute more to the success of the organisation (Raedeke *et al.*, 2002). They also increase the productivity of athletes and influence their commitment (Moodley & Coopoo, 2006).

Over and above the preceding advantages of job satisfaction, overall job performance is also affected (Dixon & Warner, 2010). Campos-Izquierdo (2010) contends that the job satisfaction of the human resources in the field of sport and physical activity is a fundamental factor in their job performance and service quality. In brief, better job performance and service quality could thus ensure the educational, social and health benefits for the society.

Many factors contribute to job satisfaction. Oshagbemi (1997) claim that personal achievement, supervisors, responsibilities, the job itself, compensation, personal safety and working conditions are some of these factors. On the other hand, Koehler (1998) found that sport employees experience job satisfaction with respect to their employment, social services, moral values and personal achievement, but they were not as satisfied with their supervisors, opportunities for promotion and sufficient compensation.

Howell and Higgins (2005) explain that male administrators employed in American and Canadian recreation programmes report higher job satisfaction than females. To the same degree, Moodley and Coopoo (2006) conclude that male personal trainers were more satisfied with their jobs than female personal trainers were. A study by Barrett *et al.* (2002), on the job satisfaction of sport employees, found that older employees were the most satisfied.

OBJECTIVES

Job satisfaction has been investigated in many working environments; however, there is an absence of studies regarding sport and physical activity instructors. Therefore, this investigation covers some more ground regarding this issue. The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the extent to which sport and physical activity instructors are satisfied with their working conditions and performance.

2. To analyse and compare the job satisfaction of sport and physical activity instructors in terms of gender and age.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative survey design was employed. The methodology followed in this investigation has been descriptive (Thomas *et al.*, 2011). In developing this methodology, the procedures followed were those of a sectional survey (García-Ferrando, 2002), applied to a sample of people who worked in developing job functions of sport and physical activity in Spain (Campos-Izquierdo, 2010).

Respondents

The respondents in this investigation were sport and physical activity instructors (N=600) from Spain who worked in different types of facilities (gymnasias, swimming pools, sport centres) and different types of organisations (publics, sports association, companies). Of the 600 sport and physical activity instructors, 545 were selected because they were employed by someone else; while 55 were rejected as they were self-employed. The participants' were part of a larger project conducted on 2500 people who work in all functions and occupations of sport and physical activity in Spain (Campos-Izquierdo, 2013).

For this study, only sport and physical activity instructors were selected. Of the 545 sport and physical activity instructors that responded 65.3% were male, 34.7% female and their age ranged from 16 to 70 years. As it was an infinite or very large population, a confidence interval of 95.5% was used for this study, which is most accepted for the social sciences (Cea D'Ancona, 1998). Assuming the population variance in the worst case of p equal to 50%, then q=50%, the margin of error sampling allowed is +2% (Cea D'Ancona, 2010).

Instrument

To capture the necessary information for the purpose of the study, a standardised questionnaire "PROAFIDE: Human Resources of sport and physical activity" was used, which has been validated and has analysed the situation and performance of people working in the different fields of sport and physical activity (Campos-Izquierdo, 2011).

From this questionnaire, items related to the objectives of this study were selected. The items were scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) (Thomas *et al.*, 2011). The 5-point scale was selected to avoid having difficulty finding nuance differences between some answers and others (Cea D'Ancona, 2010). On the question regarding the degree of satisfaction, the reliability index obtained through the calculation of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha=0.900$) showed an excellent internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). In the pre-test, the instrument was administered to 50 sport and physical activity instructors (Cea D'Ancona, 1998; García-Ferrando, 2002; Thomas *et al.*, 2011). Everyone understood the questions and could easily provide answers.

Analysis of data

A univariate and bivariate descriptive analysis was performed and an inferential analysis by contingency tables including Pearson χ^2 value and significance and the Phi correlation coefficient. Data analysis was performed after being tabulated and mechanised as computerised data by using the statistical package SPSS for WINDOWS (19.0 V) (Pardo & Ruiz, 2005).

Procedure

The survey was conducted personally using the questionnaire on all the people selected from a statistically representative sample of various sport facilities (Bryman, 2004). The people selected worked in various fields of sport and physical activity in all provinces and autonomous regions of Spain.

Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance was obtained from the concerned authorities. The commission validated the objective of this project and the methodology. The Law for the Protection of Data was satisfied and fulfilled, not only during the planning, but also during the project.

RESULTS

The respondents (N=545) in this study were sport and physical activity instructors from Spain. The mean, standard deviation and frequency for the 15 facets of job satisfaction are provided in Table 1.

Most of the sport and physical activity instructors expressed moderate to high levels of job satisfaction. The greatest job satisfaction that they experienced - the mean exceeding 4 on a 5-point scale - were with regard to their relationship with colleagues (item 44.12, \bar{x} =4.5) and to the feeling that their occupation was valued by their peers (item 44.14, \bar{x} =4.4). Sport and physical activity instructors also expressed high levels of job satisfaction with regard to the feeling that their occupation was valued by their customers (item 44.15, \bar{x} =4.4) and the job itself (item 44.4, \bar{x} =4.4). Sport and physical activity instructors were also satisfied with the amount of autonomy (item 44.6, \bar{x} =4.3) and the performance expected to be achieved (item 44.5, \bar{x} =4.2).

Finally, the feeling that their occupation was valued by the organisation (item 44.13, \bar{x} =4.1) was another item that contributed to the job satisfaction experienced by sport and physical activity instructors. The lowest levels of job satisfaction were experienced with regard to training opportunities offered by the organisation (item 44.11, \bar{x} =3.0). Sport and physical activity instructors also expressed low levels of job satisfaction with regard to promotional opportunities within their organisation (item 44.2, \bar{x} =3.1). Low levels of job satisfaction were also related to the financial remuneration that sport and physical activity instructors

received (item 44.10, \bar{x} =3.2). Finally, general environmental conditions and personal safety (item 44.9, \bar{x} =3.7) were associated with low job satisfaction.

TABLE 1. ITEM MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND FREQUENCIES: JOB SATISFACTION

Item	Item description	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
44.1	Work organisation in your field	3.7	1.1	4.5	8.3	24.8	35.8	26.6
44.2	Promotional opportunities	3.1	1.2	13.4	13.2	39.8	19.8	13.8
44.3	Assessment and support of your superiors of work done	3.8	1.2	6.2	5.7	25.0	28.8	34.3
44.4	The job itself	4.3	0.9	1.3	2.9	11.2	27.9	56.7
44.5	Performance to be achieved	4.2	0.9	2.0	2.0	17.6	34.9	43.5
44.6	Level of autonomy	4.3	0.9	1.2	2.8	12.7	28.6	54.7
44.7	Working hours, holidays and personal days	4.0	1.1	3.3	7.2	22.0	26.2	41.3
44.8	Job security	3.7	1.3	7.9	8.8	20.9	26.6	35.8
44.9	General environmental conditions and personal safety	3.7	1.2	7.3	9.2	14.6	28.4	30.5
44.10	Perception of financial remuneration	3.2	1.2	10.3	15.2	34.1	25.0	15.4
44.11	Training opportunities offered by the organisation	3.0	1.4	20.7	12.8	31.6	17.8	17.1
44.12	Relationships with colleagues	4.5	0.8	1.7	1.3	8.3	22.0	66.8
44.13	Feeling that their occupation is valued by the organisation	4.1	1.1	4.6	4.6	16.1	31.0	43.7
44.14	Feeling that their occupation is valued by their peers	4.4	0.9	1.8	1.8	11.9	27.3	57.1
44.15	Feeling that their occupation is valued by their customers	4.4	0.9	1.3	2.0	11.9	29.4	55.4

N=545

Frequencies as percentages

Job satisfaction and gender

The respondents included 356 males and 189 females. As seen in Table 2, the females experienced lower levels of job satisfaction than the males. There was not a big difference between genders, but the fact was that females were less satisfied than the males on every

item. This could be because they felt less valued or because their salaries were generally lower.

TABLE 2. ITEM MEANS FOR JOB SATISFACTION: GENDER

Item description	Mean	
	Male (n=356)	Female (n=189)
44.1 Work organisation in your field (philosophy and organisational culture)	3.8	3.5
44.2 Promotional opportunities within your organisation	3.2	2.9
44.3 Assessment and support of your superiors of work done	3.9	3.7
44.4 The job itself	4.4	4.2
44.5 Performance to be achieved	4.2	4.1
44.6 Level of autonomy	4.4	4.2
44.7 Working hours, holidays and personal days	4.1	3.8
44.8 Job security	3.8	3.6
44.9 General environmental conditions (lighting, ventilation, temperature) and personal safety	3.7	3.5
44.10 Perception of financial remuneration	3.3	3.1
44.11 Training opportunities offered by the organisation	3.0	3.0
44.12 Relationships with colleagues	4.6	4.4
44.13 Feeling that their occupation is valued by the organisation	4.1	3.9
44.14 Feeling that their occupation is valued by their peers	4.4	4.3
44.15 Feeling that their occupation is valued by their customers	4.4	4.2
Overall	4.0	3.8

Job satisfaction and age

The age of respondents ranged from 16 to 70 years. The ages represented were 334 from 16 to 29 years, 169 from 30 to 44 years, 39 from 45 to 59 years and 3 from 60 to 70 years. According to the results depicted in Table 3, as sport and physical activity instructors get older they experience higher levels of job satisfaction. The most satisfied with their jobs were those who were 60 to 70 years old. A possible reason is that as they get older, the daily tasks of the job become more familiar and routine, making the job easier and creating a better sense of job satisfaction.

There were 2 items in Table 3 that were interrelated but did not follow the rule as shown before, namely assessment and support of superiors in the workplace (item 44.3, $\bar{x}=3.7$) and the feeling that their occupation was valued by the organisation (item 44.13, $\bar{x}=3.9$). Sport and physical activity instructors aged 45 to 59 years were less satisfied regarding these items than those aged 16 to 45 years. This may be because organisations support new workers, who are usually young, more.

TABLE 3. ITEM MEANS FOR JOB SATISFACTION: AGE

Item description	Mean (years)			
	16-29 (n=334)	30-44 (n=169)	45-59 (n=39)	60-70 (n=3)
44.1 Work organisation in your field	3.7	3.7	4.2	5.0
44.2 Promotional opportunities within your organisation	3.0	2.4	3.1	4.7
44.3 Assessment and support of your superiors of work done	3.8	3.7	3.7	5.0
44.4 The job itself	4.3	4.3	4.5	5.0
44.5 Performance to be achieved	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.0
44.6 Level of autonomy	4.2	4.3	4.6	5.0
44.7 Working hours, holidays and personal days	3.8	4.1	4.2	5.0
44.8 Job security	3.5	3.9	4.4	4.7
44.9 General environmental conditions and personal safety	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7
44.10 Perception of financial remuneration	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.7
44.11 Training opportunities offered by the organisation	3.0	2.8	3.2	3.7
44.12 Relationship with colleagues	4.1	4.5	4.4	5.0
44.13 Feeling that their occupation is valued by the organisation	4.0	4.0	3.9	5.0
44.14 Feeling that their occupation is valued by their peers	4.3	4.4	4.4	5.0
44.15 Feeling that their occupation is valued by their customers	4.3	4.4	4.5	5.0
Overall	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.8

DISCUSSION

Most sport and physical activity instructors expressed moderate to high levels of job satisfaction. This is the key finding that was noted in related studies questioning job satisfaction in the field of sport (Chelladurai & Ogasawara, 2003; Surujlal, 2004). Overall, the relationship with colleagues and the feeling that their peers' value their occupation seemed to be the most satisfactory work factors influencing job satisfaction. Oshagbemi (1997) investigated along the same line with respect to educators and he showed that their co-workers' behaviours, congeniality with colleagues, friendship with colleagues and collaboration with colleagues play an important role in their job satisfaction. Based on the results (Table 1) obtained in this study, it can be said that it is critical for sport and physical activity instructors to have good interpersonal relationships as this could reduce internal conflict and improve job satisfaction (Singh & Surujlal, 2006). This assumes that camaraderie and sense of community may be a distinguishing factor between those who perceive

themselves as having a "good" job and those who identify themselves as having a "great" job (Dixon & Warner, 2010).

Sport and physical activity instructors also expressed high levels of job satisfaction with regard to the feeling that their customers valued their occupation and that the job itself was valued. Koustelios (2001) also found that teachers expressed job satisfaction and according to Chelladurai and Ogasawara (2003) coaches reported that the highest levels of job satisfaction lay within intrinsic elements, such as the occupation itself and their autonomy.

With regard to the factors referred to by Chelladurai and Ogasawara (2003), sport and physical activity instructors in this study were satisfied with the amount of autonomy and the performance expected to be achieved. Li (1985) stated that the sense of responsibility that teachers perceive from their job is important to their job satisfaction.

Another item from which sport and physical activity instructors felt job satisfaction was the feeling that their occupation was valued by the organisation. It is important to have the support of managers. These results imply that sport and physical activity instructors experience the most job satisfaction from situations that they have control over (Singh & Surujlal, 2006), as well as from intrinsic factors, according to Raedeke *et al.* (2002) and Chelladurai and Ogasawara (2003).

When examining job dissatisfaction among the sport and physical activity instructors, the lowest levels of job satisfaction were experienced with regard to training opportunities offered by the organisation. This was a factor of concern in the research conducted by Moodley and Coopoo (2006), in which the personal trainers and self-employed trainers expressed the reality that they did not have the opportunity to enhance their existing skills. By providing workers with ways to improve their abilities, it would enhance their sense of self-pride, competence and self-confidence (Gerber *et al.*, 1998).

Sport and physical activity instructors also expressed low levels of job satisfaction with regard to promotional opportunities within their organisation. Likewise, Koustelios (2001) found this item as dissatisfactory among teachers. A lack of promotional opportunities leads to negative feelings and overall dissatisfaction. These negative feelings arise when employees are not promoted when they consider themselves worthy of a promotion (Smucker & Kent, 2004).

In this study, low levels of job satisfaction were also related to financial remuneration. Salary is a key determinant of job satisfaction. Many studies found it to be a factor that decreases job satisfaction of employees (Koustelios, 2001; Surujlal, 2004; Moodley & Coopoo, 2006). Supporting this point, Barrett *et al.* (2002) found that athletic trainers who earn \$50,000 or more are almost 15% more satisfied than those who earn \$49,999 or less. Smucker and Kent (2004), indicate that low levels of job satisfaction go along with low pay, lack of promotion and negative working conditions and support the findings about job dissatisfaction among the sport and physical activity instructors. These findings are similar to those reported by Chelladurai and Ogasawara (2003), Howell and Higgins (2005), Singh and Surujlal (2006) and Sánchez-Alcaraz and Parra-Meroño (2012).

Despite the fact that there was not a significant difference between the genders in this investigation, females experienced lower levels of job satisfaction than the males. This could be ascribed to the females feeling less valued or because their salaries are generally lower than that of the males. Similar to these results, Howell and Higgins (2005) in their study of sport administrators employed in American and Canadian recreation programmes found that males showed higher levels of job satisfaction than females. These results are consistent with the study of Moodley and Coopoo (2006), where the female personal trainers were less satisfied than their male counterparts.

Another interesting finding of this study relates to age. The sport and physical activity instructors in the age range 60 to 70 years were most satisfied with their jobs. Bell (1989) and Barrett *et al.* (2002) support this finding. They posit that age has an impact on job satisfaction, noting that as age increases, so does job satisfaction. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) affirmed that older teachers were more satisfied with their work situation. A reason for this result could be that at some later stage, the daily tasks of the job become more familiar and routine, making the job easier and creating a better sense of job satisfaction. In addition, as you get older you have more experience, so you are more likely to be promoted and your salary and job responsibilities are likely to increase (Barrett *et al.*, 2002). Surprisingly, the sport and physical activity instructors in the age range of 45 to 59 years were less satisfied with these two items, also the feeling that their occupation was valued by their organisation and the support and assessment of their superiors regarding the work done, than the sport and physical activity instructors aged 16 to 44 years. This could be because their superiors need to support younger employees in order to teach them the entity, philosophy and way of working and spend less time in assessing or supporting older employees (aged 45 to 59 years), who have more experience and are accustomed to working in the same organisation.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Job satisfaction is important as it affects sport and physical activity instructors, sportsmen and -women, the organisations and society (Campos-Izquierdo, 2010). It is necessary to know the extent of job satisfaction of the sport and physical activity instructors, because in Spain it is the occupation of the majority of working people. This research could provide directives for improving the sport management profession.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study suggests that sport and physical activity instructors experience job satisfaction because of the relationships with their colleagues, the feeling that their occupation is valued by their peers, the job itself, the level of autonomy and their performance to be achieved. However, they derive dissatisfaction from the lack of continued training and promotional opportunities, unsatisfactory financial remuneration, the inadequate environmental conditions and lack of personal safety. Therefore, these aspects should be taken into account when improving the working situation of the sport and physical activity instructors. The existence of this occupation is important, as it improves the quality and efficiency of services. If sport and physical activity instructors are dissatisfied, they are less productive and could possibly leave this field of work. Although there is not a big difference, male sport and physical activity instructors experience higher levels of job satisfaction than

females. According to age, sport and physical activity instructors that are more senior, feel greater levels of job satisfaction. Despite the fact that the results reveal that sport and physical activity instructors are generally satisfied with their jobs, further research needs to look for ways to increase job satisfaction by reducing dissatisfying elements.

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