

## EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF TURKISH SMES

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**Abstract:** This study scrutinizes job satisfaction factors of employees working at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Beylikduzu Organized Industrial Zone (OIZ) in Istanbul, Turkey. It is debated that reliance on a single construct may fail to get a peripheral picture of the job satisfaction, and therefore a multi-construct approach was facilitated by involving multiple related instruments. This peripheral picture is also reinforced by emphasizing all such enterprises in any sector to overarch the reliance on sector-specific job satisfaction data. The initial findings point out that there are four factors that totally constitute job satisfaction; job characteristics, contentment, support and treatment, and materiality. Further evidence reveals that technical and financial aspects of job satisfaction go on before psycho-social aspects.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction, employee, small and medium-sized enterprises, organized industrial zone, Turkey.

### 1. Introduction

There is a vast amount of research done in many fields regarding countless issues in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Despite variety of these issues, there is a general consensus that SMEs are vital actors in every economy. They indeed are found out to provide an important portion of employment, help protect resilience during economic downturns, become the foremost agents of economic development, and account for one of the largest tax-payer groups.

This vitality brings forth an important point to be considered; organizational performance that is a key factor of SME success. It is evident in the literature that this performance depends on work context attitudes of two sets of actors when the internal environment is in question. One of these sets involves owners or managers, and the other set contains employees. Various studies posit that regardless of their positions, business members' attitudes are the results of their work-related contentment, that is job satisfaction. This situation makes job satisfaction an important subject to be scrutinized. There are studies in the international (e.g., Cegarra-Leiva et al., 2012) and the Turkish (e.g., Ayranci, 2011) contexts that elaborate SME managers' or owners' job satisfaction, but the predominant need for employee labor in SMEs (Robertson, 2003) prioritizes the focus on employee job satisfaction.

This study regards the mentioned priority, and thus unveils job satisfaction factors of employees in SMEs that reside in one of the largest organized industrial zones (OIZs) of Turkey, Beylikduzu OIZ. While each of the similar studies facilitates specific constructs to detect these factors, it is argued that the reliance on a specific construct could exclude some factors of job satisfaction. Therefore, a peripheral and integrative approach is implemented by combining multiple job satisfaction instruments together.

The results of the preliminary research reveal that these employees have a total of four job satisfaction factors and two of these are related to technical and financial aspects of the job whereas the remaining two factors are psycho-social in their nature. The main research phase further proves that these factors could be confirmed within a second-level factor model and that the participants tend to emphasize those technical and financial aspects more in comparison to the psycho-social factors. A final outcome is that the participants are inclined to consider job satisfaction as an individualistic issue.

## 2. Importance of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

SMEs are truly vital actors within all economies. The literature reveals that the central feature of these businesses is their contribution to economic sustainability (Valaskova and Nagy, 2023) and development (Drucker, 2009) by many means, involving but not limited to providing a noteworthy portion of employment in the EU (Juznik Rotar et al., 2019), the USA (Audretsch, 2002) and many other countries (Ekechi et al., 2024; Muriithi, 2017; Ntiamoah et al., 2014); promoting intra industry (Shaik et al., 2024) and cross industry (Faeroevik and Maehle, 2024) innovativeness; and utilizing their own strategic agility for adaptation in case of contextual changes (Budiono and Bongso, 2024; Zahoor et al., 2024). It is moreover intriguing that this central feature is expected to become more prevalent as SMEs are pursuing digitalization (Cong et al., 2024; Opoku et al., 2024; Raji et al., 2024).

This key contribution is expectedly achievable through SMEs' dominance in their share of economies. Research suggests that SMEs account for 90% of all businesses and contribute to almost 60% of employment worldwide (Munro, 2013) while very similar figures, such as occupying more than 90% of all businesses and providing roughly 60-70% of all employment in case of developed economies (World Trade Organization, 2016). On a smaller scale, almost 95% of all businesses in the member countries of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are SMEs (Lukacs, 2005) while this ratio has changed to "almost the totality of the business population" lately (OECD, 2017a) as these businesses contribute to 70% of employment (OECD, 2017b). The case with the European Union (EU) resembles the OECD as SMEs constitute more than 99% of all businesses with a weight of 65% in employment (European Commission, 2003). The case with Turkey is also very identical, SMEs account for 99.8% of all registered businesses whilst providing 73.8% of employment (The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkiye, 2020).

Though these figures point out SMEs' vitality, a lack of standardization is noted when the issue is the definition of an SME. It is debated that differences among countries and industries are one of the challenges that prevent from arriving at a common SME definition (Yoruk and Ban, 2003), and that the use of specific criteria could be fruitless as these criteria could also be relative in terms of the content and extent of each criterion (Soomro and Aziz, 2015).

The attempts to overcome this problem have led to a general approach; formation of multiple, quantitative and simultaneous criteria that usually involve the number of employees, sales and production amount, and asset value (Cunningham and Rowley, 2008). This approach is indeed helpful to overcome the "content" problem as long as the same set of criteria is used to define SMEs, nevertheless it is not fully beneficial to solve the "extent" problem. The literature clearly points out that different studies, even with the exact same criteria, could consider different thresholds to name a business as an SME. For instance, SMEs in Sweden could have fewer than 250 employees whereas SMEs in Indonesia have 99 employees at the most (Kartiwi and MacGregor, 2007).

A further step, taken by the governmental bodies in many countries and international organizations, has provided a better choice: setting the contents and extents of SME definition criteria officially. This step not only provides a commonality for SME definition for official operations such as tax classification, but also enables scholars to use this commonality in their research. It is nevertheless notable that there is no global consensus on the definition of SMEs. Accordingly, the EU formally describes SMEs as the enterprises having fewer than 250 employees with either an annual turnover of less than 50 million Euros or a balance sheet total of less than 43 million Euros (Di Bella et al., 2023). Many official definitions solely emphasize the number of employees with different limits such as 200 for Colombia, and 250 for Estonia and Switzerland; some prefer the use of employee number and financial criteria simultaneously at different levels i.e., Thailand with less than 200 employees and fixed capital less than 200 million THB, and Israel with the limits of 100 employees and an annual turnover of 100 million NIS (OECD, 2019). This complexity further intensifies due to varying multiple official SME definitions for different sectors within some specific countries such as the USA (Hammer et al., 2010), and Japan and Malaysia (Hironaka et al., 2017). Turkey officially uses a unified single definition of SME that considers the employee and revenue criteria simultaneously, and thus an SME is an economic unit with fewer than 250 employees and that either has an annual net sales revenue or financial balance sheet of less than 125 million TLs (The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkiye, 2020).

### 3. Employee Job Satisfaction Research: A Brief History and Antecedents

Job satisfaction is one of the profound subjects of business studies, a brief Google scholar search with the phrase “job satisfaction” returns more than 2.4 million results. This variety gives rise to many different definitions inevitably but the common use of the words “emotion”, “feeling”, and “attitude” hints that these definitions have a shared point. The early scientific interest in job satisfaction suggests that it is the feeling of employee towards own job under the combination of psychological, physiological and contextual effects (Hoppock, 1935). This similarity in feeling is also shared by Hulin and Smith (1965), who posit that job satisfaction is actually employee’s feelings towards tasks, income, promotion opportunities, and relationships with co-workers and supervisors. Vroom (1964) facilitates a broader perspective and considers that job satisfaction is not only employee’s emotions but it also involves employee’s emotional reactions towards own role in work-related issues.

A noteworthy point is that job satisfaction is heavily scrutinized in different fields of science in 1970s while the emphasis on employee’s emotions is preserved. Examples involve the study of Freeman (1977) that focuses on the possible use of job satisfaction as an economic variable, Blume’s (1973) debates that job satisfaction is an integral part of trade union political actions, and Kalleberg and Griffin’s (1978) study in the field of sociology that integrates social inequality with job satisfaction. 1970s also see vast efforts to create multi-factor job satisfaction constructs, albeit there are some earlier attempts (Goldberg, 1968) and insists on one-dimensional approaches (Kalleberg, 1977). Though there are differences in indicators used, the general approach noted in these efforts is the consideration of some indicators as independent variables (antecedents) that integrate to form an overall job satisfaction index; thus, in return complexing definition of job satisfaction further. For instance, Mobley and Locke (1970) consider that multiple job indicators combine to form an overall feeling of job satisfaction and that these job indicators are personal as each employee could perceive different job indicator to be more or less important than the others. With these personal perceptions in mind, Quinn and Mangione (1973) use a bi-partite approach, they setup many indicators and require participants to rate job-related indicators. The indicators involve both neutral issues such as job-specific characteristics and general job-related preferences, and negative issues like job-related tensions, quitting likelihood and negative mental health. This approach also has an important assumption that a non-work issue, negative mental health, could be used within job satisfaction analysis. Hackman and Oldham (1976) detail these job-related perceptions and non-work issues and construct a model with groupings of multiple positive and negative dimensions that stem from current job experience, perception of own workplace reality, perception of the match between job characteristics and own’s fit with these characteristics, reciprocity of others in work context, and own negative attitudes due to personality.

The perception-based approach for multi-dimensional job satisfaction constructs is preferred by some scholars in the relevant literature. Davis (1985), in this sense, suggests a two-dimensional approach that points out job satisfaction to be the extent of match or mismatch between employee’s work-related expectations and perceived actual results. Locke and Latham (1990) focus on the necessity of high employee performance expectations, and consider the match between these expectations and actual performance to give rise to high employee rewarding expectation. The extent to which this rewarding expectation is met could cause job satisfaction. In this sense, job satisfaction is based on performance and expectation realization. Christen et al. (2006) propose a model that involves two primary components of job satisfaction. One such is employee’s perception of job-related factors and the other is employee’s role perceptions. These two partial perceptions combine to get a total picture of how employee sees oneself in the work context. An important claim of the model is that these two partial perceptions can affect job performance and how this performance is perceived by employee could affect own job satisfaction as well. Specific job-related expectations could be about the degree of job empowerment (Cicolini et al., 2014), task challenges (Goetz et al., 2019), work context social interactions (Tumen and Zeydanli, 2016), work context roles (Belias et al., 2015), and side benefits (Tessema et al., 2013).

Non-work issues are also fully or partially integrated within the perception-based job satisfaction constructs. Arvey et al. (1991), for instance, find out that employee’s job expectations are formed via many issues, one of which is own personality and even genetical characteristics. Staw et al. (1986) likewise posit that employee’s current and childhood habits play an important role in job expectations. Schmitt and Pulakos (1985) debate that life satisfaction could be one of the antecedents of job satisfaction. Davis (1988) argues that aging brings forth more realistic life expectations that could also affect job expectations. Other demographic characteristics such as gender (Garcia-Bernal et al., 2005) and education level (Verhofstadt and Omey, 2003) are also found out to be

effective on job satisfaction.

#### 4. Research on Job Satisfaction Factors of Employees in SMEs in the Istanbul Beylikduzu Organized Industrial Zone

##### 4.1 Purpose, Scope, Significance, and Data Collection Method of the Research

As the previous sections confirmed, job satisfaction is actually a complex and multi-factor construct that also requires some non-work issues to be considered. This research pays regard to the aforementioned fact and aims to find out possible pillars of employees' job satisfaction, who are the members of SMEs in the Istanbul Beylikduzu Organized Industrial Zone (OIZ). An investigation of the OIZ's official web site on December 2, 2024 points out that there are 770 active businesses (Istanbul Beylikduzu Organized Industrial Zone, 2024). The details of these businesses do not involve any SME indication, and thus each reachable business is e-mailed or telephoned to check two important aspects; whether it is confirming with the official SME definition in Turkey, and the number of current employees in case of a confirmation. The research is described in details to motivate feedback. This step leads to 83 confirmations, 268 non-confirmations, and 419 no-answers. Those confirmed businesses (SMEs) report that they have a total of 978 employees.

The research is significant due to two main reasons, the foremost reason being the scope. Though there are numerous similar studies, most tend to scrutinize job satisfaction issue in specific sectors. On the contrary, this current research overarches this limitation as the targeted businesses are members of a mixture of different sectors. A quick check of the active business list indeed unveils sectors such as textile, food, chemistry, education, metallurgy, electrics, electronics, and energy (Istanbul Beylikduzu Organized Industrial Zone, 2024). This variety is believed to provide an aggregated picture of the subject rather than results biased on specific sectors. Although an unlimiting approach regarding the sector with the limitation of the business type could seem to be perplexing, this limitation is deliberately chosen as SMEs are predominantly in need of employee labor (Mahmood, 2008; Robertson, 2003). This, in turn, necessities a stronger emphasis on employee job satisfaction as this satisfaction could affect employee performance and therefore, organizational outcomes profoundly (Hadi et al., 2020). Finally, the current scope is also a noteworthy contribution to the Turkish literature as there are few studies with similar scopes, and yet contain the sectorial limit (Attar et al., 2020; Kabak et al., 2014; Yetim and Yetim, 2006).

The second reason of significance is the data collection instrument formed. It is evident that the relevant studies generally prefer to use a specific construct that depends on a specific instrument to snapshot job satisfaction (Mapuranga et al., 2021; Mustafa et al., 2021; Yetim and Yetim, 2006). While a construct could involve multiple factors, it is still possible for the used construct to exclude some dimensions of job satisfaction. The better case, in this sense, would be to combine multiple instruments to have a peripheral job satisfaction picture. This is the exact approach followed in this current research, and therefore gives rise to the combination of items that belong to the instruments used in these studies: Baycan (1985), Bilgic (1998), Hackman and Oldham (1974), Houston et al. (2006), Jamal and Baba (2000), and Roznowski (1989).

A survey, containing a sole job satisfaction section is used to collect data. Each item of the combined instruments is checked and translated to Turkish. Every item is later checked for clarity in meaning and grammar by a language professional. Items are also revised to comply with five-point Likert scale format. The research involves two phases, the preliminary research to find out the statistical structure of the job satisfaction and the main research to confirm this structure with the entire data. As the surveys are physically applied, a professional survey firm is contacted to deliver, administer, and collect the surveys.

Those 83 confirmed SMEs are contacted again to get their consent for survey application. 79 SMEs containing a total of 944 employees are positive, and therefore it is decided that 144 of these employees should take the survey for the preliminary research phase. In this case, the main research phase could involve 800 employees, who are required to take the revised survey based on findings of the preliminary research phase. Data collection for the first phase takes two weeks between December 9, 2024 and December 22, 2024. The data for the main research are gathered between December 30, 2024 and February 9, 2025.

4.2 Preliminary Phase: Emerge of Factors

The original survey form to be used in this phase of research involves 21 items that are answered by 144 employees. A check on each item’s reliability reveals that three of these items should be removed from the further steps of the research due to very low reliability scores. The rest (18 items) have an overall Cronbach’s alpha score of 0.795. As there is a combination of items from multiple instruments, an exploratory factor analysis is performed in order to reveal the possible statistical structure of job satisfaction.

Table 1 indicates the overall results of the mentioned exploratory factor and reliability analyses. The results point out the emerge of four job satisfaction factors. The data could be factorized successfully (KMO: 0.711 and the Bartlett’s test value is significant [ $p < 0.05$ ]). The factors aggregately account for 64.113% of the total variance.

Table 1. Results of Exploratory Factor and Reliability Analyses regarding Job Satisfaction Items

Job Satisfaction Factor (Named by the author)	Number of Items Involved	Reliability Score (Cronbach’s Alpha)	Variance Explained (%)
Job Characteristics	7	0.873	20.588
Contentment	4	0.811	17.231
Support and Treatment	4	0.799	15.982
Materiality	3	0.771	10.312
<i>Total number of items</i>	18		
<i>Total Variance Explained</i>			64.113
<i>Overall Reliability Score (Cronbach’s Alpha)</i>		0.795	
<i>KMO Value</i>		0.711	
<i>Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity</i>			X <sup>2</sup> : 2026.338; Sig: 0.001

Table 2 reveals the contents of each job satisfaction factor with the respective factor loadings.

Table 2. Factor Details with Factor Loadings

	Job Characteristics (JC)	Contentment (C)	Support and Treatment (ST)	Materiality (M)
In my business, work is the top priority (JC1).	0.879			
My business workload is acceptable (JC2).	0.866			
Most of my work in my business consists of activities that must be done quickly and correctly (JC3).	0.821			
Most of my time is spent on activities that are required by my job (JC4).	0.762			
I am competent to do a good job with all the responsibilities I have (JC5).	0.755			
In my business, I am encouraged to participate in activities that improve my work skills (JC6).	0.681			
In my business, I believe that promotion depends on work competence (JC7).	0.667			
I am happy with my work in my business (C1).		0.891		
I am free to set aside time for non-work activities (C2).		0.845		
In my business, I can take care of my personal tasks when needed (C3).		0.758		

My work contributes to the goals of my business (C4).		0.721		
I can get support from my managers and co-workers for work-related situations (ST1).			0.728	
I believe that my managers and co-workers are honest and fair towards me (ST2).			0.701	
My ideas are valued in my business (ST3).			0.683	
My interests are cared in my business (ST4).			0.657	
My business provides me with enough income to maintain my general desired standard of living (M1).				0.734
My job income is very effective in avoiding financial problems (M2).				0.668
I earn exactly on par with my efforts in my business (M3).				0.626

A summary of Tables 1 and 2 reveals that the participants emphasize their job characteristics (such as work priority, workload, timing, competency, improvement, and promotion possibilities) as well as their work-related contentment (overall happiness, possibility of engaging in non-work activities and personal tasks in business, and meaningful work). Moreover, the participants underline the importance of support and treatment they get from other business members and the sufficiency of their job income.

### 4.3 Main Phase: Confirmation of the Overall Job Satisfaction Construct

A second-level confirmatory factor analysis is done in order to confirm the statistical structure of job satisfaction emerged in the prior phase. This model is depicted in Figure 1. There are 800 participants involved.

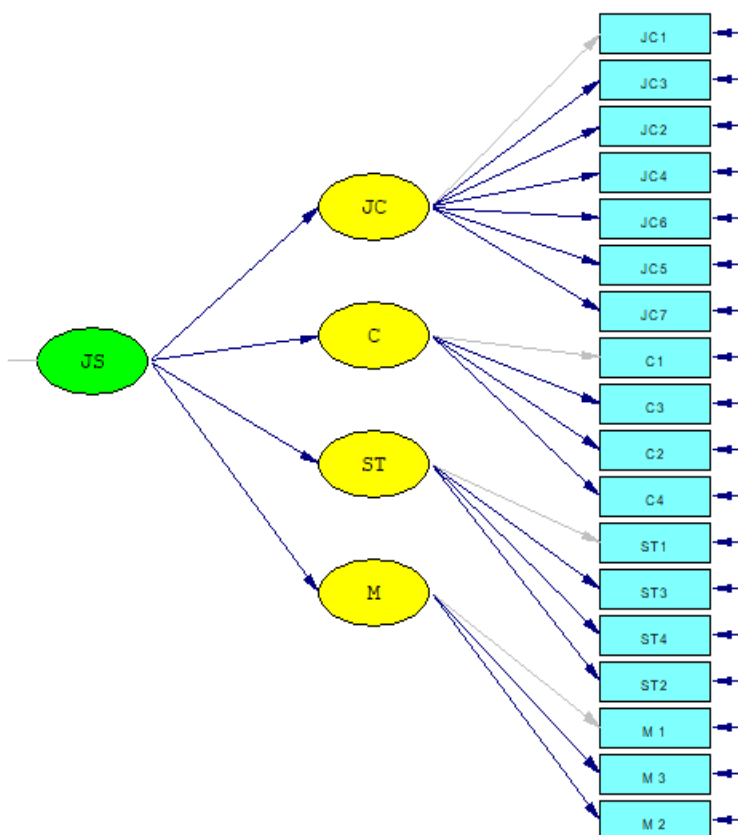


Figure 1. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model for Job Satisfaction (JS: Job Satisfaction, please refer to Table 2 for other abbreviations)

An overall analysis of the model in Figure 1 indicates that the model is realistic as its fit indices are within the limits that are posited in the literature (Hooper et al., 2008; Schermelleh-Engel and Moosbrugger, 2003). Table 3 presents these limits and the fit indices.

**Table 3. Fit Indices of the Job Satisfaction Model**

Fit Indice	Upper and Lower Limits (For Good and Acceptable Fit Levels)	Model's Fit Indice	Result
RMSEA	RMSEA < 0.05 0.05 ≤ RMSEA ≤ 0.1	0.086	Acceptable fit.
GFI	0.95 ≤ GFI ≤ 1.00 0.9 < GFI < 0.95	0.93	Acceptable fit.
AGFI	0.95 ≤ AGFI ≤ 1.00 0.9 < AGFI < 0.95	0.91	Acceptable fit.
CFI	0.90 ≤ CFI	0.90	Acceptable fit.
Standardized RMR	Standardized RMR < 0.05	0.04	Acceptable fit.

The next step is to investigate details of this realistic model. Table 4 clearly proves that the measurement equations of the model imply moderate and significant relationships, and thus the structures of the four factors are preserved. A noteworthy point is that the items of contentment have the highest overall contribution to their respective factor whereas the weakest contribution belongs to those of support and treatment factor.

**Table 4. Measurement Equations of the Job Satisfaction Model**

JC1 = 0.61* <b>JC</b> , Errorvar.= 0.26 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.53 (0.083) 3.12	C1 = 0.71* <b>C</b> , Errorvar.= 0.23 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.61 (0.094) 2.37
JC3 = 0.69* <b>JC</b> , Errorvar.= 0.34 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.51 (0.13) (0.088) 4.94 3.99	C3 = 0.78* <b>C</b> , Errorvar.= 0.32 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.66 (0.13) (0.12) 7.34 2.79
JC2 = 0.57* <b>JC</b> , Errorvar.= 0.19 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.55 (0.093) (0.081) 5.01 2.48	C2 = 0.74* <b>C</b> , Errorvar.= 0.41 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.51 (0.095) (0.100) 6.97 4.88
JC4 = 0.61* <b>JC</b> , Errorvar.= 0.38 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.49 (0.12) (0.085) 5.14 4.57	C4 = 0.63* <b>C</b> , Errorvar.= 0.48 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.38 (0.076) (0.085) 7.41 8.19
JC6 = 0.62* <b>JC</b> , Errorvar.= 0.29 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.55 (0.099) (0.086) 4.73 3.62	ST1 = 0.58* <b>ST</b> , Errorvar.= 0.25 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.56 (0.11) 2.38
JC5 = 0.65* <b>JC</b> , Errorvar.= 0.33 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.59 (0.081) (0.078) 4.22 6.71	ST3 = 0.43* <b>ST</b> , Errorvar.= 0.29 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.44 (0.16) (0.088) 3.22 2.81
JC7 = 0.60* <b>JC</b> , Errorvar.= 0.41 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.43 (0.16) (0.087) 2.82 4.82	ST4 = 0.51* <b>ST</b> , Errorvar.= 0.31 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.48 (0.19) (0.091) 2.96 4.43

M1 = 0.59*M, Errorvar. = 0.47 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.41 (0.083) 5.98	ST2 = 0.46*ST, Errorvar.= 0.49 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.35 (0.17) (0.092) 2.68 6.07
M2 = 0.61*M, Errorvar.= 0.45 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.38 (0.19) (0.091) 2.97 5.94	M3 = 0.64*M, Errorvar.= 0.59 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.32 (0.52) (0.092) 2.31 3.83

(Please refer to Table 2 for abbreviations)

Finally, the structural equations in Table 5 indicate that the participants’ job satisfaction actually involves the mentioned four factors together. In other words, the model in Figure 1 is confirmed.

**Table 5. Structural Equations of the Job Satisfaction Model**

Job Characteristics = 0.41*Job Satisfaction, Errorvar.= 0.41 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.32 (0.27) (0.071) 2.81 6.54
Contentment = 0.25*Job Satisfaction, Errorvar.= 0.48 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.26 (0.033) (0.057) 3.85 11.72
Support and Treatment = 0.18*Job Satisfaction, Errorvar.= 0.49 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.21 (0.043) (0.084) 2.58 10.43
Materiality = 0.31*Job Satisfaction, Errorvar.= 0.41 , R <sup>2</sup> = 0.39 (0.048) (0.037) 6.01 16.35

Table 5, moreover, hints intriguing results. Accordingly, the participants consider technical (job characteristics) and monetary (materiality) aspects of their jobs to be a greater part of their job satisfaction. In other words, they depend on the intrinsic side of their jobs heavily when job satisfaction is in question. A breakdown of this intrinsic side reveals that the job itself is even more leading than the income. The two remaining aspects, namely contentment, and support and treatment, contribute to job satisfaction on a smaller scale and have psycho-social characteristics. A comparison between these two aspects points out that the participants emphasize their job-related contentment more than the support and treatment they get from others in the work context. This outcome, combined with the fact that the intrinsic side of the job being more effective on satisfaction, suggests that the job satisfaction is primarily considered an individualistic issue, albeit work context social interactions play a role.

**5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

As aforementioned, there is vast amount of research regarding business members’ job satisfaction in the literature. An overall issue is that those members are generally divided into two groups, the decision-makers such as owners and managers, and the employees. This study emphasizes employees in SMEs and scrutinizes their pillars of job satisfaction with the notion that SMEs are very labor-sensitive when business performance is in question, which in turn prioritizes the need to shed light on employee job satisfaction.

Some precautions are taken in order to get the best potential picture of the job satisfaction. Evidence points out that the relevant studies prefer to debate job satisfaction as a construct that depends on a specific instrument. Considering that this approach could fail to get a peripheral picture of the job satisfaction, a combination of multiple instruments is used with the aim of revealing as much satisfaction factors as possible. An expectation is that some of these factors could be general whereas some could be related to the sector of the business. In other



words, sector-specific biases could contribute to the job satisfaction construct, and therefore could hinder the targeted peripheral job satisfaction picture. This potential unfavorable Ness is overarched by getting data from employees in multiple sectors.

The preliminary results indicate a similarity with the findings of the literature and reveal that the employees' job satisfaction has a total of four factors, two of which directly relate to technical and financial issues of the job, while the other two factors involve psycho-social characteristics. Technical issues signal the nature of the job itself, and thus involve items such as workload, task timing, work-related priorities, proficiency, and opportunities for promotion and improvement. For the financial issues, the main drive is the sufficiency of the job income. On the other hand, one of the psycho-social aspects is the contentment related to job that is constituted by the combination of finding meaning in work, overall happiness, and the chance of following through non-work and personal tasks. A final such aspect is the support and treatment exerted by other members of the business towards the research participants.

The preliminary results are further scrutinized by a second-level factor model and the immediate result is that the four factors are still intact in terms of their statistical structures. The model enables a comparison among these factors and yield interesting results. A noteworthy outcome is that the technical and financial factors have a greater priority than those psycho-social ones if the contribution to job satisfaction is in question, and therefore it is evident that the employees mainly regard the intrinsic side of their jobs. It is moreover intriguing that the jobs' technical factors are more dominant than the financial factors, i.e., the nature of the job is the main source of satisfaction when compared to job income. An investigation of the lesser contributing side, made of the psycho-social factors, unearths the reign of job-related contentment; thereby indicating the support and treatment of others to be the least preferred job satisfaction factor. A related ramification is about the heavy focus on the individual side of the job satisfaction; the participants posit that their jobs' intrinsic side involving the two factors and their job-related contentment play a greater role in their satisfaction when compared to the role of others' support and treatment in the work context.

All these results and their implications necessitate some recommendations for future studies as well as business practices. This study takes a general picture of employees' job satisfaction with the combination of multiple instruments and an emphasis on a variety of sectors. Future studies could scrutinize further details of job satisfaction in SMEs via many dimensions. One of these dimensions could be the role. It is possible that some SME members could have other roles along with the role of being an employee and differentiations of the satisfaction due to role variations could be an interesting subject. For instance, there might be different pillars of job satisfaction when employees' satisfaction is compared to that of SME owners, who are also actively tasking with their employees in their businesses. It is also possible to account for any differences of employees' satisfaction, who have roles in different departments or positions. Another dimension might depend on non-work issues. There is some evidence aforementioned in the literature that these issues could partake in job satisfaction. Due to the generalization approach of this study, these issues are predicated very lightly by involving a few items that mention "non-work activities" and "personal tasks". Future studies could aim to unveil if and how these non-work issues dominate SME employees' job satisfaction. A final dimension could be SME characteristics such as the size and sector. Another recommendation is related to peripherality and customization. To this end, this study takes some steps such as combining multiple instruments to identify as much job satisfaction factors as possible, and modifying these instruments' items for better grammar and clarity in meaning. These endeavors could be carried a step further by future studies in order to develop composite instruments for job satisfaction.

Finally, recommendations for business practices should concentrate on two main aspects. An obvious result is that the job characteristics are the main drive of job satisfaction, and thus job redesign applications such as job rotation and job empowerment could be used to escalate the satisfaction. Due to job income being the second most important satisfaction issue and the profound consideration of the satisfaction as an individualistic subject, financial and customized incentives could be provided to employees in SMEs.

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