

The moderating effect of human resource flexibility on the relationship between autonomy or feedback and faculty satisfaction¹

El efecto moderador de la flexibilidad de recursos humanos sobre la relación entre la autonomía o la retroalimentación y la satisfacción docente

O efeito moderador da flexibilidade de recursos humanos sobre a relação entre a autonomia ou a retroalimentação e a satisfação docente

Robert Daniel Jijena-Michel.²
Carlos Eduardo Jijena Michel.³

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to explore the relationship between autonomy and feedback with respect to faculty's job satisfaction, as well as the moderating effect of human resource flexibility on the previous relationships. The research problem is posed in the following question: will the moderating effect of human resource flexibility affect on job satisfaction of university teachers? Data to test our hypotheses were collected through questionnaires administered to university professors in the Faculty of Economics and Finance at Juan Misael Saracho Autonomous University (Tarija, Bolivia). Results indicate that both autonomy and feedback are positively related to job satisfaction, which has a positive impact on organizational commitment. Furthermore, human resource flexibility does not affect the relationship between autonomy and faculty satisfaction, but it has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between feedback and faculty satisfaction. Then human resource flexibility is compatible with feedback, this combination is recommended considering its benefit for organizational management, in terms of the positive impact on job satisfaction. These findings could be important inputs for the designing and implementation of human resource policies and flexible work practices, in order to improve the satisfaction of teachers at work and their contributions to the optimal organizational performance.

Key Words: job satisfaction, autonomy, feedback, human resource flexibility, faculty management.

Resumen

Nuestro objetivo es explorar la relación entre la autonomía y la retroalimentación con respecto a la satisfacción laboral de los profesores universitarios, así como el efecto moderador de la flexibilidad de recursos humanos en dichas relaciones. El problema de investigación planteado es: ¿afectará el efecto moderador de la flexibilidad de recursos humanos en la satisfacción docente? Los datos fueron recolectados a través de cuestionarios administrados a profesores de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Financieras de la Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho (Tarija, Bolivia). Los resultados indican que tanto la autonomía como la retroalimentación están positivamente relacionadas con la satisfacción, que a

Resumo

Em um mundo com impostos, há uma pequena discrepância entre o WACC Deflacionado e o wacc real. Isto se deve ao fator (1-T) que se encontra na expressão padrão para o WACC aplicado ao fluxo de caixa livre (FCF). Comparamos diferentes enfoques para a valoração dos fluxos de caixa nominais e reais com o 1) Custo Nominal Médio Ponderado de Capital, WACC, 2) com o WACC real, wacc, 3) com o WACC sem deflacionar, WACCInf e 4) com o WACC deflacionado, WACCDef. Os fluxos de caixa se derivam dos estados financeiros que foram construídos com os preços nominais. Como conclusão geral ou consistência na valoração, temos que usar o WACC deflacionado em vez do WACC real

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1. Artículo de investigación realizado en la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Financieras de la Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho (Tarija, Bolivia).
2. Licenciado en Administración por UAJMS, Bolivia. Máster en Economía por la Universidad de Los Andes (Colombia) y Maryland University (USA) (Becario BID-CAF-UNIANDES-Maryland University). Máster en Gestión de la Organizaciones y Doctorando por la Universidad de Zaragoza, España (Becario del Gobierno de España) / 587135@celes.unizar.es / Fernando El Católico 51-6to Izq., Zaragoza 50006, España.
3. Licenciado en Administración por UAJMS, Bolivia. Postulante a Máster en Ciencias de la Educación Superior por UAJMS. Ejecutivo Mutual La Primera, Tarija, Bolivia / e21832@uajms.edu.bo / Avenida Horacio Aramayo Nro. 1212, Tarija, Bolivia.

su vez presenta un efecto positivo sobre el compromiso organizacional. Además, la flexibilidad de recursos humanos no influye en la relación autonomía-satisfacción, pero si posee un efecto moderador positivo sobre la relación retroalimentación-satisfacción. Entonces, la flexibilidad de recursos humanos es compatible con la retroalimentación, esta combinación es recomendable considerando su beneficio para la gestión organizacional, dado el impacto positivo sobre la satisfacción. Estos resultados podrían ser importantes insumos para el diseño e implementación de políticas de recursos humanos y prácticas de trabajo flexible, con el fin de mejorar la satisfacción docente y su contribución al óptimo desempeño organizacional.

Palabras clave: satisfacción laboral, autonomía, retroalimentación, flexibilidad de recursos humanos, gestión docente.

Introduction

The objective of this research is to propose an empirical model to estimate the level of faculty satisfaction with their teaching role, through the link with autonomy and feedback. We also analyze the moderating effect of human resource flexibility on the relationship of autonomy and feedback with respect to job satisfaction. The research problem is posed in the following question: will the moderating effect of human resource flexibility affect on job satisfaction of university teachers? Additionally, we check the influence of job satisfaction on organizational commitment in order to figure out the organizational relevance of job satisfaction. This study is based in the organizational behavior approach with emphasis in job satisfaction, as one of the main dependent variables of this organizational theory¹.

The limited resources of the system, the demanding expectations of society and the possible mismatch between such claims and the results of the educational system, justify the need for research on human resources into this sector². Considering the central role of teachers in achieving educational and social purposes of the University, Simo et al. (2008) highlight the importance of influencing specific university policies to ensure high levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, in order to improve the performance of teachers and reduce costs associated with staff turnover.

1. ROBBINS, Stephen P. *Comportamiento Organizacional*. 10th ed. México: Pearson, 2004.
2. MAÍLLO S., Antonio; RIESCO GONZÁLEZ, Manuel; DE FRUTOS, José Antonio.; PEÑA DELGADO, José Ignacio and GONZÁLEZ RUBIO, Patrocinio. "Condiciones de trabajo y satisfacción laboral de los docentes en las escuelas católicas de Madrid". SEMST – Revista de la Sociedad Española de Medicina y Seguridad del Trabajo. 2008, vol. 3, nº 3, p. 106-119.

para descontar os fluxos de dinheiro real e o WACC nominal aos fluxos nominais de desconto por pagamento rápido.

Palavras chave: custo médio ponderado do capital, WACC, valoração de empresas, rçamento de capital, WACC deflacionado, WACC real, inflação.

Gargallo and Freundlich (2010) mentioned that currently there is a relatively recent interest in the organizational context for developing the corporate social responsibility, taking into account the need to properly manage human resources. This justifies the importance of the efforts made so far to know the factors that define and determine job satisfaction³. The practical utility of this study in the organizational area, influences in the management of the decision making process at the sector of public higher education. This contribution represents an input for designing human resource policies that involve job characteristics and organizational flexibility, in order to increase the satisfaction of teachers. To identify important factors that determine faculty satisfaction, allows university directors to define strategies that optimize human resource management, thereby facilitating the achievement of the academic and social goals of the University.

However, there is a lack of studies on job satisfaction in social economy enterprises, such as higher education institutions⁴. In the extent that satisfaction and commitment of stakeholders and competitiveness in this kind of organizations are guaranteed, then exists a contribution to the economic and territorial development⁵. Anyway, there is little research on job satisfaction in developing countries, although the literature mentions that the components of job satisfac-

3. GARCÍA-BERNAL, Javier; GARGALLO-CASTEL, Ana; MARZO-NAVARRO, Mercedes and RIVERA-TORRES, Pilar. "Job satisfaction: empirical evidence of gender differences". *Women in Management Review*. 2005, vol. 20, nº 4, p. 279-288.
4. GARGALLO CASTEL, Ana and FREUNDLICH, Fred. "Percepciones de los socios y no socios cooperativistas sobre la satisfacción laboral". *REVESCO*. 2010, vol. 103, p. 33-58.
5. BEL DURÁN, Paloma and AUSÍN GÓMEZ, José Manuel. "Contribución de las sociedades cooperativas al desarrollo territorial". *REVESCO*. 2007, vol. 2, p. 41-71.

tion are consistent in all countries⁶. However, different elements associated with job satisfaction differ in their importance according to the educational context. In that sense, it is important to be cautious when generalizing results of theories and models applied to a particular culture or society. Experts urge to research on faculty job satisfaction in the international context, particularly in developing economies, so that comparisons can be made to contribute to the empirical generalization⁷. The analysis of the moderating effect of human resource flexibility is a contribution in the analysis of the relationship between autonomy or feedback and faculty satisfaction.

Theoretical background and research model

Job Satisfaction

Lopez et al. (2007) indicate that today we can understand job satisfaction as a subjective state of the individual, which is characterized by cognitions (beliefs, opinions and thoughts) and feelings (emotions) in relation to different elements of his work. As a component of the quality of working life, job satisfaction is conceived in many ways, but most definitions are subscribed to the Theory of Herzberg. This means that derives from the extent to which intrinsic (labor challenges, professional responsibility, work-family enrichment, etc.) and extrinsic motivators (salary, environmental conditions, organizational flexibility, etc.) meet their objectives⁸. However, the assessment of Herzberg factors varies with the different business cultures and the development level of countries, in that sense, it is important to contrast these factors in different contexts. Desselle and Conklin mentioned that management strategies to create an academic department or an institutional environment conducive to satisfaction, commitment and retention of teachers, require evidence-based approaches. That's why the study of faculty satisfaction and its factors is a prerequisite for positive change in an institution or university. These authors indicate that the evidence suggests that job satisfaction of faculty members is an important mediator of organizational commitment, staff turnover and productivity.

6. GUI, Li; BARRIBALL, K. Louise and WHILE, Alison E. "Job satisfaction of nurse teacher: a literature review. Part II: effects and related factors". *Nurse Education Today*. 2009, vol. 29, p. 477-487.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 477 – 487.
8. DESSELLE, Shane P. and CONKLIN, Mark H. "Predictor of pharmacy faculty work satisfaction". *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*. 2010, vol. 2, p. 20-30.

Kovach (1977) mentions that job satisfaction is considered an antecedent of organizational commitment.

According to Lopez et al.⁹, job satisfaction has become the basic objective for human resources management, since its influence has been noted in areas such as productivity, absenteeism, turnover and customer satisfaction. The provision of services is usually easily imitated by competitors, so that customer loyalty has to be supported by anything other than tangible attributes of the service. One of these intangible factors is job satisfaction, an issue which in turn significantly influences on productivity, affecting the organizational performance. Considering that human resources are a key factor in the competitiveness of organizations, then it is very important that the employee is satisfied with his work, as this will lead to carry out his functions with higher quality¹⁰. It is therefore essential to study faculty's satisfaction at work, so that educational institutions would be able to achieve optimal service delivery levels.

Autonomy and Feedback

Autonomy at work is defined as the extent to which employees have voice and vote in scheduling their work, and freedom to do what they want at work¹¹. Hackman and Oldham (1975) indicated that autonomy at work is a job characteristic that refers to the extent that work provides freedom, independence and discretion to the employee for programming his tasks and determining the procedure to be used in those tasks, in order to achieve organizational goals. Hackman and Oldham also define feedback as the extent to which employees receive information that reveals how well they are doing at work. Feedback is the job characteristic that provides information about the results of work activities and the effectiveness of the means used to achieve the goals, clarifying then, the connection between means and purposes¹².

Robbins (2004) highlights the influence of job characteristics (depending on the context of study) in overall

9. LÓPEZ-GUZMÁN GUZMÁN, Tomás J.; SÁNCHEZ CAÑIZARES, Sandra María and NASCIMENTO JESUS, María Margarida. "La satisfacción laboral como valor intangible de los recursos humanos: un estudio de caso en establecimientos hoteleros". *Teoría y Praxis*. 2010, vol. 7, p. 35-53.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-53
11. CORNELIBEN, Thomas. "Job characteristics as determinants of job satisfaction and labour mobility". Discussion Paper - Institute of Quantitative Economic Research-University of Hannover-Germany. 2006, vol. 334.
12. VAN PRAAG, Bernard and FERRER-I-CARBONEL, Ada. *Happiness quantified: a satisfaction calculus approach*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004.

job satisfaction. Acuña et al. (2009) assess the autonomy, as the main characteristic in tasks that involve interaction and relationship with others (coworkers and/or customers). Autonomy is considered by social psychologists as the most important of the characteristics in this kind of work, as Molleman et al. (2004) state in their research. Although there are other job characteristics, such as feedback, several research papers have revealed that the main characteristic that influences this kind of work is the autonomy¹³.

According to the literature review of Katsikea et al.¹⁴, research in this area is mainly focused on the implications of job characteristics on the results of employee behavior, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Particularly, higher levels of autonomy and feedback, improve the level of intrinsic motivation of employees, by increasing their sense of achievement and self-realization at work¹⁵. Disch et al. (2004) and Barrett et al. (1992) also identified autonomy and feedback, as job characteristics that determine faculty's satisfaction. Therefore:

H1: Perceived autonomy is positively related to faculty's job satisfaction.

H2: Perceived feedback is positively related to faculty's job satisfaction.

Human Resource Flexibility and its moderating effect

Given that the flexibility of human resources is one facet of organizational flexibility, it is therefore an organization's specific skill to deal appropriately and timely manner to competitive and dynamic environments, situations or experiences related to the management of people that work in the organization¹⁶. Human resource flexibility refers to the manage-

ment and use of the work force and can be defined as the ability of the organization to change the use of labor factor (in terms of volume, qualification and time), against fluctuations and changes in the levels and structure of demand (Blyton and Morris, 1992). Human resource flexibility is derived from a series of flexible policies and practices that are managed in the human resource area (Kalleberg, 2001). It provides a context of high corporate performance in a dynamic environment by managing employee's behavior at the individual, group and organizational level¹⁷.

Organizations manage many work policies and practices (formal or informally) in the human resource area in order to help their employees manage the demands of their work and personal life¹⁸. These kinds of policies or practices create a sense of security on employees that their organization cares about their welfare, needs and problems (Lewis, 2003). According to the Theory of Perceived Organizational Support and Social Exchange Theory, this feeling of supporting increases positive attitudes toward the organization and promotes innovation, participation and a felt obligation to give extra effort in exchange of such benefits (Lambert, 2000). These approaches suggest that when a party perceives a favorable treatment, the other party feels obliged to reciprocate¹⁹. Human resource flexibility is a strategic tool that helps to meet individuals and organizational goals, because it can be useful for employees and employers. In this case, when employees perceive that their organizations promote human resource flexibility, combined with feedback or autonomy in their work, the rule of reciprocity requires returning the favorable treatment, usually translated into positive attitudes and feelings toward the job and the organization. Then, we also pose that:

H3: Faculty's perceived human resource flexibility positively moderates the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction.

H4: Faculty's perceived human resource flexibility positively moderates the relationship between feedback and job satisfaction.

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The proposed model based on the problem, objective, literature review and research hypotheses is depicted in Figure 1. We have introduced three control variables: number of dependents and income (as demographic variables) and organizational commitment (as a result of job satisfaction).

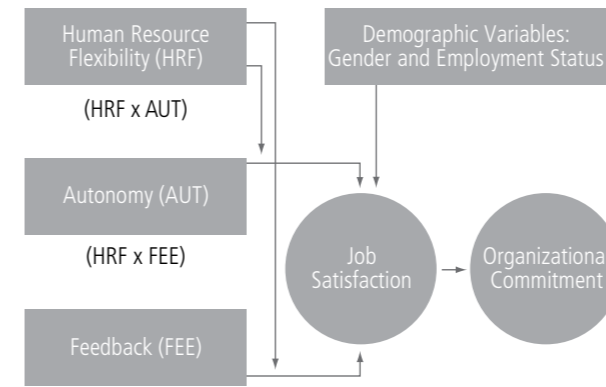


Figure 1. Research Model: Autonomy-Feedback and Job Satisfaction

Methodology

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Economics and Finance of Juan Misael Saracho Autonomous University from Tarija, Bolivia. A questionnaire was developed and contextualized to the research context, based on measurement scales scientifically tested and validated in order to measure the variables of the model. The scale of Sims et al. (1976) was used to measure autonomy and feedback, with six and five items respectively. For example: "to what extent there is an opportunity to perform independent thought and action" (autonomy) or "to what extent I perceive the feeling of knowing if I'm performing my job well or poorly" (feedback). The flexibility of human resources was captured by four scale items from Ketkar and Sett²⁰, a sample item is: "good performance is always recognized and rewarded in our Faculty". We used four items from the scale of Agho et al. (1992) to assess job satisfaction, for example: "I like my job more than the average person". Finally, organizational commitment was measured using three scale items from Meyer et al. (1993), a sample item is: "I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to the Faculty".

The different items were quantified by measures of perception, using Likert scales from 1 to 7. We also collected demographic data (personal information). Primary information was collected through the direct application of the questionnaire to the total popu-

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lation of teachers, during the months of September and October, 2010. 131 forms were delivered and we recovered 125 fully completed surveys, representing a response rate of 95%. The sampling error is 2% for a confidence level of 95% and 2.2% for 97%.

Exploratory study was conducted using the SPSS 15.0 software. Factor and reliability analyses were performed to identify and validate the constructs that represent the variables of the model. Descriptive analysis of data was also made. Subsequently, the confirmatory study was developed to test the proposed model through structural equation methodology (SEM Structural Equation Model), using EQS 6.1 software. The estimation method applied was robust maximum likelihood, which assumes the normality of the variables and introduces the necessary corrections in cases where this is not met (Bentler, 1995). To analyze the moderating effect of human resource flexibility the Latent Variable Score Approach was adopted²¹. The score latent variables or score factors satisfy the same relations than the latent variables and produce the same mean and covariance matrix than these variables (Jöreskog, 2000). This method provides enough information about the moderating effect and does not require the product of observed variables or the linearity condition (Schumacker, 2002). Therefore it is a useful method to apply in structural equation modeling that may be more complex (Vela, 2007).

The sample consists of 45 women (36 percent) and 80 males (64 percent). The average age is 47 years (standard deviation: 8.897 years). 77 percent of the teachers are from Tarija, 84 percent are married and 88 percent indicated that UAJMS is the university where they have graduated. 78 percent have master's degree as the highest degree of postgraduate training, 52 percent are tenured faculty and 48 percent are full-time teachers. The average length in the institution is 13 years and the average income is Bs. 7.320 (754,32 Euros).

Results

Table 1 contains information from the exploratory study. Results of factor analysis allow the identification of the study's constructs. Reliability analysis allows checking the internal consistency of the scale, i.e., whether the scale is free of random error and is able to provide stable results. So, a scale will be reliable if the individuals have responded coherently and consistently to all its component indicators, and

21. JÖRESKOG, Karl G.; SÖRBOM, Dag; DU TOIT, Stephen and DU TOIT, Mathilda. *LISREL 8: New Statistical Features.* 2nd ed. Chicago, IL: Scientific Software International, 2000. Ver: JÖRESKOG, Karl G. *Latent Variables Scores and their Uses.* Lincolnwood, IL: Scientific Software International Inc., 2000.

in this way, indicators are highly correlated²². There are two instruments widely used in organizational science to analyze the internal consistency of the scale: Cronbach's Alpha statistic and item-total correlation. Cronbach's Alpha statistic is the most often used parameter to analyze the internal consistency of the scale and its reliability²³. In general, it is possible to ensure the reliability of the scale if the value of this indicator is greater than 0,8; although in exploratory studies, a value greater than 0,6 is already considered acceptable²⁴. Reliability indicators of the constructs show acceptable values, the Cronbach's Alphas are greater than 0,8 in all cases.

Variable	# of Items / Scale	Explained Variance	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Correlation with Job Satisfaction (Rho Spearman)
Autonomy	6 / Sims et al. (1976)	57,257%	0,840	4,74	0,916	0,457 ***
Feedback	5 / Sims et al. (1976)	56,414%	0,800	4,47	0,944	0,459 ***
Human Resource Flexibility	4 / Ketkar & Sett (2010)	58,338%	0,757	4,83	1,114	0,323 ***
Job Satisfaction	4 / Agho et al. (1992)	73,365%	0,874	6,03	0,889	----
Organizational Commitment	3 / Meyer et al. (1993)	76,636%	0,845	5,25	1,454	0,204 **

Tabla 1: Exploratory Study Data

*** Correlation is significant at 99% of level confidence

** Correlation is significant at 95% of level confidence

Table 2 presents the statistics of global fit goodness of the model and the recommended acceptance levels (Schumacker and Lomax, 2006). The study of the overall fit for the proposed model is based on analysis of the different and most notable robust indicators in the literature. The statistics are: Robust Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-

Fit Index (AGFI), Robust Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Robust Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Bentler, 1995; Jöreskog, 2000). RMSEA and SRMR are lower than 0,1 and 0,08 respectively; GFI, AGFI and NFI are closer to 0,9 and greater than 0,8. CFI has a value closer to 1 and greater than 0.9. Then, the model fit is acceptable.

Fit Index (AGFI), Robust Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Robust Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Bentler, 1995; Jöreskog, 2000).

RMSEA and SRMR are lower than 0,1 and 0,08 respectively; GFI, AGFI and NFI are closer to 0,9 and greater than 0,8. CFI has a value closer to 1 and greater than 0.9. Then, the model fit is acceptable.

22. CHANDLER, Gaylen N. and LYON, Douglas W. "Issues of research design and construct measurement in entrepreneurship research: the past decade". *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*. 2001, vol. 24, n° 4, p. 101-113.

23. *Ibid.*, pp.101-113.

24. GRANDE, Ildefonso and ABASCAL, Elena. *Fundamentos y Técnicas de Investigación Comercial*. 7th ed. Madrid: ESIC, 2003.

Estimated Model (Latent Variables)	df	X ² S-B	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI
Satisfaction = f (gender, employment status, autonomy, feedback) Commitment = f (satisfaction)	167	287,5589	0,076	0,075	0,857	0,867	0,858	0,948
Recommended Acceptance Level				Lower than 0,1	Lower than 0,08	Close to 0,9	Close to 0,9	Close to 1

Table 2: Goodness of Fit statistics of the Proposed Model

df: degrees of freedom

x² S-B: Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-square

Table 3 shows the β coefficients and their robust t statistics of the proposed model emerged through structural equations. Autonomy and feedback have a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction (β : 0,341 and 0,325 respectively), at 99% of confidence level. This means that the variation of one additional unit in the perception of autonomy or feedback positively influences the level of job satisfaction by varying this latter directly in 0,341 or 0,325 perceptual units,

respectively. These results provide empirical information to accept H1 and H2. In addition, feedback has a significant positive indirect effect (β : 0,071) on organizational commitment through job satisfaction, at 90% of confidence level. Gender and employment status are not related to job satisfaction. Finally, job satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment (β : 0,219), at 95% of confidence level.

Structural Equation Model: calculated with latent variables		Gender	Employment Status	Autonomy	Feedback	Satisfaction	R ²
Satisfaction = f (gender, employment status, autonomy, feedback) Commitment = f (satisfaction)	β coefficient robust t	0,020 (0,242)	0,019 (0,224)	0,341 (2,808***)	0,325 (3,838***)	---	0,223
	β coefficient robust t	0,004 (0,240)	0,004 (0,227)	0,075 (1,600)	0,071 (1,819*)	0,219 (2,058**)	0,048

Table 3: β coefficients and robust t statistics of the proposed model

*** Significant at 99% of confidence level

** Significant at 95% of confidence level

* Significant at 90% of confidence level

Note: Indicators in italics refer to the indirect effects

Table 4 presents the fit statistics of structural models based on the moderating scenarios of human resource flexibility for each kind of job characteristic (autonomy and feedback), taking into account infor-

mation of the latent variables and without considering the interaction term (as the Latent Variable Score Approach indicates). The fit statistics are acceptable in both cases of moderation.

Estimated Model (Latent Variables)	df	X ² S-B	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI
Satisfaction = f (autonomy, HR flex)	75	117,0885	0,067	0,073	0,864	0,869	0,887	0,914
Satisfaction = f (feedback, HR flex)	63	95,6342	0,065	0,072	0,875	0,860	0,888	0,913

Table 4: Goodness of Fit statistics of structural equation models: human resource flexibility and autonomy or feedback.

df: degrees of freedom

x² S-B: Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-square

Subsequently and based on the score factors, structural models were raised taking into account the moderating effect (interaction term) and the respective coefficients were obtained (Table 5). According to the

Latent Variable Score Approach, a significant coefficient for the interaction term means that the variable (human resource flexibility) moderates the relationship between autonomy or feedback and job satisfaction. In

other words, at this stage of analysis what matters is the significance of the coefficient that belongs to the interaction term in order to determine the existence or not of the corresponding moderating effect.

So, the results presented below indicate that human resource flexibility moderates the relationship between feedback and job satisfaction ($\beta: 0,175$), at 95% of confidence level. However, human resource flexibility does

Structural Equation Model: calculated with score factors: SF		Autonomy	Feedback	HR Flexibility (HRF)	Moderator HRF_Aut	Moderator HRF_Fee	R ²
Satisfaction = f (autonomy, HR flex, interaction term)	β coefficient robust t	0,385 (4,090***)	---	0,214 (2,720***)	-0,01 (-0,122)	---	0,194
Satisfaction = f (feedback, HR flex, interaction term)	β coefficient robust t	---	0,074	0,282 (4,297***)	---	0,175 (2,399**)	0,116

Table 5: β coefficients of the structural models that include the interaction term between human resource flexibility and autonomy (Aut) or feedback (Fee)

*** Significant at 99% of confidence level

** Significant at 95% of confidence level

* Significant at 90% of confidence level

Conclusions

The goal of estimating an empirical model was achieved in order to measure the level of faculty satisfaction with their teaching role, through the link with autonomy and feedback. It was also possible to analyze the moderating effect of human resource flexibility in this previous relation. These job characteristics - autonomy and feedback - are intrinsic factors, i.e., they are directly linked to the performance of the task and generate job satisfaction (satisfactors or motivators). In that sense and in order to optimize the scarce resources of the organization, it is recommended to allocate efforts, means and strategies to effectively manage these characteristics which impact on job satisfaction, directly and significantly.

As for the flexibility of human resources, it is an extrinsic factor that revolves around the work activity, such as wages, working conditions, job security, among others. These are hygienic factors that prevent dissatisfaction, but do not generate satisfaction by themselves. However, this organizational flexibility can have a moderating effect and an indirect influence on job satisfaction. In this particular case of academics, human resource flexibility has no effect on the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction, although has a positive and significant influence on the relationship between feedback and job satisfaction.

It is possible that human resource flexibility is minimized by perceived job autonomy, in terms of its moderating effect on the relationship between

not have any moderating effect on the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction. This means that the variation of one additional unit in the perception of human resource flexibility, determines that feedback positively influence the level of job satisfaction by varying this latter directly in 0,175 perceptual units. Then H3 is rejected and H4 is accepted.

autonomy and job satisfaction. Autonomy may be a consequence of policies and practices in human resource management, typical in such academic environments. Therefore, autonomy would be integrated to human resource flexibility for being a result of it; as a result, the moderate weight of such flexibility on job satisfaction would be overshadowed. Empirical results show that university teachers perceive job autonomy, and indeed, it is highly significant to job satisfaction. So if human resource flexibility is just an added benefit and the origin of this job characteristic, then it is understandable that such flexibility is eclipsed when moderates the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction. Rather, autonomy could be a mediating element of human resource flexibility on job satisfaction.

It is observed that human resource flexibility is compatible with feedback. Then, this combination is recommended considering its benefit for organizational management, in terms of the positive impact on job satisfaction. In this specific case, such organizational flexibility is a useful management tool that benefits both - employees and employers - by improving their overall welfare. It could be helpful to align and meet individual and organizational goals, one of the most important dilemmas in human resource management.

Limitations and future research

Our research uses cross-sectional data, helpful to test our model. However, dynamic relationships could

also be studied using longitudinal information. One single organization was analyzed, so larger samples could be considered with overcoming budgetary constraints. Samples with diverse organizations and sectors will allow establishing data comparisons and generalizations. It could be interesting to study organizational culture and values in the perception of autonomy, feedback and human resource flexibility. This is because the assessment of the different factors could change according to the culture and the peculiarities of each context. Future research could analyze more comprehensive models that also include job performance, productivity or profitability, as dependent variables, in order to study the contribution of autonomy, feedback and human resource flexibility on other organizational outcomes.

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