

A Study of Gender, Culture, and Job Satisfaction in Mexico: Implications for Organizations in Emerging Economies

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The purpose of this research was to examine the issue of job satisfaction in Mexico through psychological and sociological lenses. This research was conducted over 14 different Mexican states via the survey method. The results yielded interesting patterns. First, gender does not affect job satisfaction. Second, perceived collectivism, work flexibility, and interpersonal harmony positively influence job satisfaction in Mexico, with interpersonal harmony identified as the strongest predictor. This research found that professionals in Mexico have strong collectivism values; however, they had weakened gender differences in work settings. Implications are offered based on the findings.

INTRODUCTION

According to Cranny, Smith, and Stone (1992), job satisfaction is a worker's expressive attitude toward a job being performed in contrast with the employee's desired outcomes. Operationally speaking, job satisfaction can be referred to as meeting or exceeding a worker's expectations with the different dimensions/attributes of job (Porter & Steers, 1973). Previous research suggested that employees' job satisfaction dimensions can be any or a combination of the following: pay, promotion, supervisor, benefits, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication (Spector, 1985; 1997). It was suggested that culture significantly affects job satisfaction (Chang, 1985; Griffeth & Hom, 1987; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1985).

One particular factor that differentiates the collectivists from the individualists is precisely the need for harmonious relationship (Hui, 1988; Hui & Yee, 1994). This particular collectivistic feature affects an individual's job satisfaction in various ways. First, the probability that collectivists would tolerate the following company's work environment – unfair policies, supervisor's autocratic leadership styles, and coworker's disagreeable behaviors/personalities – is high only if teammates appear to accept the previously stated work conditions (Hui & Yee, 1994). Second, collectivists are well-known to collaborate and compromise for in-group actions and to share in-group outcomes (Hui, Triandis & Yee, 1991), whereas individualistic members choose to attain their own goals and are more independent (Hui & Villarreal, 1989). Finally, when the collectivists' friendly and non-confrontational inclinations correspond to their coworkers' inclinations, satisfying feelings will likely occur (Hui, Triandis & Yee,

1991). Thus, these three differences between collectivism and individualism can make individualists more likely to confront conflict and result in lower job satisfaction.

This research attempts to utilize the construct of Collectivism-Individualism (CI) developed by Warner and Moch (1986), interpersonal harmony developed by Farh, Earley, and Lin (1997), work flexibility conceptualized by Rothausen (1994), and the gender paradox described by Clark (1997) in examining job satisfaction in a collectivistic culture, Mexico.

This study aims to make several incremental contributions in the study of job satisfaction. First, this research is focused on the cultural dimensions of Collectivism-Individualism (CI) as a predictor of job satisfaction. Second, the research links job satisfaction with work flexibility and interpersonal harmony which are contextually specific in a Latin American setting. Third, the theoretical investigation is built upon equity theory to explain how job satisfaction is positively influenced by factors such as work flexibility and interpersonal harmony. Fourth, this research empirically tests whether job satisfaction can be predicted by collectivism, interpersonal harmony, and work flexibility, using a sample collected in Mexico.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture's Role

According to Namenwirth and Weber (1987), culture can be defined as “a system of values and norms that are shared among a group of people and that when taken together constitute a design for living” (p. 8). Lu, Rose, and Blodgett (1999) argued that individuals from different cultures are defined by different traditions, heritages, rituals, customs, and religions. Each of these factors predicts significant variations in norms, morals, standards, beliefs, and behaviors. Schmeling (2001) concluded that collectivism-individualism (CI), one of Hofstede's (1980) five cultural dimensions, is found to differentiate most of the national cultures across the world. Some Western societies that are being categorized mainly by individualistic preferences are the following countries: United States, England, and Australia. On the other hand, other regions of the world, which include Asia and Latin American cultures, tend to involve individuals with high collectivistic tendencies (Hofstede, 1980; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Triandis, 1995).

According to Earley and Gibson (1998), a collectivistic culture is associated with conformity, obedience, and dependability. Therefore, the study of the cultural dimension of the CI construct is very important because it helps to predict and differentiate how members of a society view themselves, how they treat others either in-group or out-group, and how they behave in a variety of situations (Gudykunst, 1998). Van Dyne, Vandewalle, Kostova, Latham, and Cummings (2000) suggested that collectivistic societies put their personal interests behind group interests to the point of sacrificing personal interests in order to contribute to the welfare of the group even though such help might not directly relate to their individual benefit. Wheeler, Reis, and Bond (1989) conclude that one of the identifying attributes of collectivists is that members distinguish strongly between the in-group and the out-group. By the same token, Steers and Sanchez-Runde (2002) argued that national cultures which encourage collectivism over individual interests do affect how individuals think and behave in different scenarios such as at work and in their personal life environment. For instance, Leung (1988) found that the Chinese were more prompt than Americans in engaging in conflict with a stranger but very unlikely with an in-group member. That is, harmonious relationships with in-group individuals are crucial, but the out-group can be provoked. Some of the reasons explained by Farh, Zhong, and Organ (2004) are that “Individuals have less latitude of unilateral action; relatively more of what they contribute would hinge on approval by higher status figures and group acceptance. Interactions with the group would diffuse organizational and personal roles, and preservation of harmony would be critical” (p. 250). Thus, people in a collectivistic culture are usually encouraged to pursue interpersonal harmony and identify themselves as interconnected with others. On the other hand, there is a presumption by some Western countries that interpersonal conflict can be viewed as “constructive, bounded, and task focused” (Farh, Zhong, & Organ, 2004, p. 244). This belief is reasonable because the U.S. culture is identified as high on individualism, and this type of

society tends to identify with many small groups; whereas members of a collectivistic society will feel an association with the overall group. As a result, there is generally only a small risk of interpersonal conflict expanding among individuals in small groups. Therefore, conflict will not grow to the point that it endangers the capability of the entire organization (Farh, Zhong, & Organ, 2004).

In terms of avoiding conflict, it has been consistently cited that persons in individualistic cultures choose to use active, aggressive, and confrontational tactics for dealing with conflicts in working environments; whereas collectivistic cultures are expected to use passive, participating, and avoiding tactics in order to avoid conflicts (Ting-Toomey, Gao, Trubisky, Yang, Kim, Lin & Nishida, 1991). Furthermore, according to Leung (1987), collectivistic societies would choose harmony-enhancing environments over confrontational actions. In addition, Leung (1988) and Ting-Toomey, Trubisky, and Nishida (1989) concluded that people in individualistic cultures prefer the direct communication approach, whereas people from collectivistic cultures tend to prefer a conflict-avoidance approach such as mediation methods. A study carried out by Ohbuchi, Fukushima, and Tedeschi (1999) concluded that an individualistic society is more likely to justify the causes of conflict because of the pressure to attain justice, but a collectivistic society would rather focus more on relationships goals than initiate conflict. Thus, in general, collectivistic societies tend to perceive avoidance of conflict as functional and appropriate, whereas individualistic societies tend to recognize avoidance of conflict as dishonest and ineffective (Kirkbride, Tang & Westwood, 1991). Previous studies have shown that members from collectivistic cultures tend to believe that social harmony and positive interpersonal relationships are more important outcomes than monetary rewards and wealth (Bolino and Turnley, 2008; Chen, 1995; Chen, Meindl & Hui, 1998; Deutsh, 1975; Leung & Bond, 1984; Leung & Park, 1986).

Job Satisfaction and Culture

The relationship between CI and job satisfaction in regard to interpersonal relationships in the workplace showed a positive outcome (Hui, Yee & Eastman, 1995). Later, Hui and Yee (1999) replicated the above results, and reported a higher degree of job satisfaction among collectivist employees than among individualist workers. They added that, in the workgroup where coworkers promptly encouraged and helped each other, the satisfaction link was much stronger in collectivistic societies than other cultures where there is no such mutual support and collaboration (Hui & Yee, 1999).

More recent research has concluded that role conflict has been related to a range of negative job attitudes (Beehr & Blazer, 2005). Spector et al. (2007) concluded that collectivistic society places more support on social connections and networks that, in turn, causes its members to be more susceptible to interpersonal conflict. Additionally, Spector and his colleagues argued that collectivistic individuals become more stressed with problems that develop in the workplace when there is internal conflict related to the job. Spector et al. (2007) emphasized that collectivistic societies strengthen the relationship between job satisfaction and social relationships more than individualistic cultures.

It was found that, in Turkey, the most collectivistic country in Europe, the workers' job satisfaction and the cultural dimension of collectivism are positively correlated at a moderate level. That is, the more an individual identified with the collectivistic orientation, the more satisfied the worker will feel about his or her work (Yetim & Yetim, 2006). Furthermore, Kozan (1989) corroborated the fact that collectivism repudiates rivalry among peers in Turkish firms and instead, advocates avoiding conflict. Thus, individuals with a collectivistic orientation can transform the job satisfaction of other employees he/she values into group harmony in the organization.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Yang (2005) connected cultural differences in CI to the level of family conflict. The author came to the conclusion that individualistic cultures such as the U.S. perceive jobs as a way to personal success and professional advancement. He further explained that the extreme amount of time spent for job accomplishment in individualistic cultures is viewed as being more dedicated to self and carelessness toward the family. However, in collectivistic cultures, such as China, where individuals identify a person

in terms of social networks, work roles are perceived as attending to the needs of the in-group rather than the individual (Yang, 2005). In other words, collectivistic societies viewed its individuals who are putting too much time and effort into their job as making sacrifices for their in-group (e.g., family members) and have positive support from the family and close relatives. In accordance with the arguments made by Yang (2005), Spector et al. (2007) concluded that collectivistic cultures view work demands as serving family needs. As a result, family members tend to view work as fulfilling family tasks, thereby supporting the person's efforts at work instead of having time for the family.

According to Spector et al. (2007), families in collectivistic cultures are more likely to involve family members with more than one generation than individualistic countries in which families usually include a couple with dependent children. Glaser et al. (2006) concluded that the majority of the elderly in Asia and Latin America reside with their children or live near them. Glaser and colleagues further argued that elderly family members who dwell with their children are expected to help with home chores. That is, women in collectivistic cultures may experience less of a burden in work involvement with family chores because they have domestic help from extended family members such as elderly relatives (Glaser et al., 2006). Finally, according to Beehr and Glazer (2005), role stressors in general are directly related to role conflict both at work and at home. They further suggest that role stressors lead to a range of job attitudes, in particular negative job satisfaction. Thus, this study will test the "gender paradox" which claims that job satisfaction is found to increase with age, income, and to be higher for women (Clark, 1997). This paradox suggests that females give higher answers to job satisfaction questions when there are unfavorable working conditions than when compared to males in similar situations. Thus, the gender paradox implies that women have greater job satisfaction than men, and women have higher job satisfaction because they appreciate more job flexibility at work than men do.

Hypothesis 1: Mexican professional women have higher job satisfaction than Mexican professional men.

Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) argued that satisfaction with coworkers or the work itself contributes to job satisfaction. Fassina, Jones, and Uggersleve (2008) concluded in their job satisfaction meta-analysis that more satisfaction with their tasks was due in part to positive job aspects or other conditions of the employees' work environment that are mostly unrelated to fairness, and thus, workers may feel higher job satisfaction.

In reference to the perception of unfairness, there is an assumption that a strong collectivistic tendency is believed to be able to lessen an individual's attitude toward organizational unfairness (White, Tansky, & Baik, 1995). White and his colleagues concluded that the stronger the collectivistic tendencies the member exhibited, the less negative the effect of organizational unfairness of the worker's job satisfaction. Thus, there is considerable support for the relationship between collectivism with conflict, and job satisfaction. In general, there are some theories that help to integrate job satisfaction with the literature concerning the cultural dimension of CI and conflict. This research utilizes Adam's (1965) Equity Theory, which argues that the relationship between job satisfaction and interpersonal harmony is influenced by the cultural dimension of CI and at the same time reveals different intensities of conflict and harmony.

Equity Theory is frequently recognized as one of the most important theories in organizational behavior (Miner, 2003). There are two important policies: the equity rule and the equality rule. According to the equity rule, valued resources should be allocated based on an employee's contribution on performance. On the other hand, the equality rule suggests that valued resources should be allocated equally to everybody regardless of performance. Triandis (1995) concluded that collectivistic societies are inclined to utilize the equality rule mainly because members desire to avoid any conflict and to create and maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, Bolino and Turnley (2008) argued that members from more individualistic societies tend to be less preoccupied with group harmony and, thus, they have less hesitation about engaging in attempts to restore actual equity. In contrast, members from collectivistic societies are encouraged to engage in the cognitive restoration of equity in order to

maintain interpersonal harmony. Bierhoff, Buck, and Klein (1986) argued that in order to avoid the actual restoration of equity that creates interpersonal tension and disagreement, individuals who appreciate relations with other group members may often face his/her inequity cognitively instead.

Therefore, in high collectivistic cultures, there will be a tendency of more appreciation for spontaneous signs which would help to safeguard harmony and avoid possible conflict. Wolfson and Norden (1984) argued that collectivistic societies use passive strategies (i.e., avoiding conflict), while individualistic societies use more active strategies (i.e., confrontational) in conflict situations. Leung (1988) concluded that individuals in collectivistic societies would rather choose the equity rule (conflict negotiation) for the well-being of the group and to undertake the cognitive restoration of equity in order to preserve harmony. In contrast, people in individualistic cultures would rather choose the equity rule (conflict arbitration) for expectations and tend to have less doubt concerning creating interpersonal tension and disagreement in order to restore actual equity. A foundation for the level of job satisfaction is the answer to the awareness of unfairness that would trigger different reactions from Adam's (1965) Equity Theory, that is, different cultures have a unique response to reducing inputs in order to effect equity.

As noted in earlier sections, an exchange between individuals is presumed to be caused by expected reciprocity. Thus, the relationship between job satisfaction and interpersonal harmony in a collectivistic society should be stronger for employees higher in collectivism based on Equity Theory. Moreover, collectivistic cultures perceive its members to identify themselves to social networks and to serve the needs of support family and close relatives. Thus, this study hypothesizes that the cultural dimension of collectivism, interpersonal harmony, and work flexibility influence job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived collectivism positively influences the job satisfaction of Mexican professionals.

Hypothesis 3: Work flexibility positively influences the job satisfaction of Mexican professionals.

Hypothesis 4: Interpersonal harmony positively influences the job satisfaction of Mexican professionals.

Hypothesis 5: Interpersonal harmony is the strongest predictor of the job satisfaction of Mexican professionals.

METHODOLOGY

Measures

Collectivism, interpersonal harmony, work flexibility, and job satisfaction scales were utilized in this study. The construct of work flexibility is measured by using a four-item scale developed by Rothausen (1994). This scale captures the employees' opinion of how he or she feels in doing flextime job duties, and in balancing work and family responsibilities. The construct of interpersonal harmony was measured utilizing a four-item scale by Farh, Earley, and Lin (1997). The construct of participants' collectivistic-individualistic (CI) values was borrowed from Wagner and Moch's (1986) scale. Wagner and Moch (1986) recognized the following three structural dimensions of CI: beliefs, norms, and values. These structural cultural dimensions are intended to measure the level of participant's collectivistic work behaviors. The construct of job satisfaction was assessed by measuring three out of nine different job satisfaction facets disclosed by Spector (1985). The following features were chosen to further analyze the employee's relationships: coworker satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, and work satisfaction itself. The construct for job satisfaction consisted of a four-item scale for each of its three facets. The participants were asked to rate their own perceptions of other employees in their company, on each of the scales listed below, by using a six-point Likert-type scale which ranges from "Extremely Likely" (1)

to “Extremely Unlikely” (6). All scales were first written in English and subsequently translated into Spanish with a back-translation technique to ensure cross-cultural equivalence, as suggested by Werner and Campbell (1970). Furthermore, back-translation was used to minimize translation error (Brislin, 1980).

Sampling Procedure

Sampling procedure was based on a web-based survey. We selected a large-sized Mexican company that has 23 national branches for the help of survey. The head of HR sent the first participation e-mail to all potential participants informing them about the survey. Second, a friendly follow-up e-mail was sent after a week to all participants. In both e-mails, the participants were given a link to the website where the web-based survey can be found.

A total of 300 potential respondents were asked to participate and 215 surveys were collected. 72% response rate was achieved. Out of these 215 survey submissions, only 200 were completed and usable questionnaires. The success of the disclosed response rate can be explained mainly because the head of HR was involved. The head of HR sent out the first e-mail to 300 employees through the company’s distribution list, and after the first week, 140 employees had completed the survey (45%). The following week, a friendly reminder e-mail was sent and an additional 75 surveys were received (25%). Thus, each employee received two e-mails from the head of HR inviting them to participate in the study.

Sample

A great majority of the sample consisted of professional employees (87%). That is, most of the participants either had a college degree (71.5%), some graduate course work (7%) or a master’s degree (8.5%). The remaining 13% had not completed their college education. These participants either had some college education (7.5%), an associate’s degree (5%), or a high school diploma (44.5%). In terms of gender, 55.5% of the respondents were female and the rest were males (44.5%). The distributions related to marital status were as follows: 50.5% married; 46% single; 2% separated; and 1.5% divorced. The age percentage ranges as follows: 0.5% from 18 to 20; 47% from 21 to 29; 41.5% from 30 to 39%; 9% from 40 to 49; 1% from 50 to 59; and 1%, 60 or older.

The number of working hours per week was as follows: 23% said that they worked more than 51 hours; 62% between 41 to 50 hours; 14% full-time, that is 40 hours; and 1% between 21 to 39% hours. In terms of tenure, almost half of the employees have worked at least 3 years in their jobs (45.5%). The following were the distribution of percentages: 21.5% of the employees have been working for months; 28.5% between 1 to 2 years; 28% between 3 to 4 years; 11.5% between 5 to 6 years; 5% between 7 to 8 years; and 5.5% for 9 or more years (See Table 1).

Statistical Validity and Reliability

Several types of validity issues were addressed in this research. First, content validity was established mainly by selecting items from well-known studies. Second, the validity of the measures was evaluated using criterion-related validity measures. Criterion-related validity was evaluated by analyzing correlations between the test scores and by theoretically defining a set of relevant variables. For example, the variable job autonomy/work flexibility helps to measure the job satisfaction construct (Agho, Mueller & Price, 1993; Judge et al., 1998; Robie, Ryan, Schmieder, Parra & Smith, 1998).

We also checked the reliability of the constructs being analyzed in this study. As mentioned before, Cronbach’s alphas are recommended to be greater than 0.70, as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The following are the reliability values (See Table 2).

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

		Frequency	Percentages	Cumulative Percentages	Mean	Standard Deviation
Collectivism					4.209	0.563
Work Flexibility					4.174	0.907
Interpersonal Harmony					4.698	1.041
Job Satisfaction					4.916	0.748
Age						
	18 - 20	1	0.5	0.5	2.66	0.733
	21 - 29	94	47	47.5		
	30 - 39	83	41.5	89		
	40 - 49	18	9	98		
	50 - 59	2	1	99		
	60 +	2	1	100		
Education					4.05	0.855
	H.S.	1	0.5	0.5		
	Asso. Deg.	10	5	5.5		
	Some Col.	15	7.5	13		
	Bachelor's	143	71.5	84.5		
	Some Grad.	14	7	91.5		
	Master's	17	8.5	100		
Tenure					2.67	1.361
	<1	43	21.5	21.5		
	1 - 2	57	28.5	50		
	3 - 4	56	28	78		
	5 - 6	23	11.5	89.5		
	7 - 8	10	5	94.5		
	9 +	11	5.5	100		
Gender					0.56	0.498
	Male	89	44.5	44.5		
	Female	111	55.5	100		

TABLE 2
RELIABILITY BY CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Constructs	Items	Alphas
Collectivism	Collect 1 - 11	0.701
Work Flexibility	WorkFlexi 1 - 4	0.699
Interpersonal Harmony	InterHarm 1 - 4	0.826
Job Satisfaction	JobSat 1 - 11	0.882

Correlation Matrix

Table 3 shows the correlations of the following construct used in the statistical tests: age, gender, collectivism, interpersonal harmony, work flexibility, and job satisfaction. The following six sets of constructs have a significant correlating at the 0.01 level. The first and second sets of constructs are work flexibility with job satisfaction and work flexibility with interpersonal harmony. The third and fourth sets of constructs highly correlated are job satisfaction with collectivism and job satisfaction with interpersonal harmony. The last two sets of constructs to have a significant correlation at the 0.01 level were the demographics variables of age with gender and age with tenure. These correlations can be explained because more than 50% of the participants were females and 89% of sample pool was younger than 39 years of age. That is, young professionals have the tendency to stay longer at their jobs and for most of this type of employees they are working in their first or second job. According to the data, almost half of the employees have worked at least 3 years (See Table 3).

**TABLE 3
CORRELATIONS**

	JobSat	WorkFlexi	Collect	InterHarm	Age	Edu	Tenure	Gender
JobSat	1							
WorkFlexi	0.363**	1						
Collect	0.291**	0.13	1					
InterHarm	0.597**	0.183**	0.127	1				
Age	-0.089	-0.046	0.122	-0.133	1			
Edu	-0.09	0.016	0.062	-0.097	0.041	1		
Tenure	-0.147*	-0.157*	-0.112	-0.088	0.259**	0.144	1	
Gender	-0.004	-0.062	-0.118	-0.037	-0.356**	-0.101	0.006	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data Analysis

This study performed t-test and hierarchical regression analysis for the testing of the hypotheses. The t-test examined whether Mexican professional women have higher job satisfaction levels than Mexican professional men. Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to determine the following: (1) if collectivism, interpersonal harmony, and work flexibility are positively related to job satisfaction, (2) if the above predictors contribute significantly to the prediction of job satisfaction, and (3) if interpersonal harmony is the strongest predictors among the other independent variables.

RESULTS

A t-test was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference in job satisfaction based on the gender of the participants. Job satisfaction showed no significant difference between genders. Overall, there was no significant difference between female and male participants in regard to job satisfaction. In other words, job satisfaction is not affected as a function of gender. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The t-test results are reported in Table 4.

TABLE 4
JOB SATISFACTION BETWEEN GENDERS

Variable	F	Sig	T	df
Job Satisfaction	0.202	0.653	0.057	198

The relationships between the criterion variable of job satisfaction and the following predictor variables: collectivism, interpersonal harmony, and work flexibility, were examined using the hierarchical regression analysis method in two different steps. First, before any variables were entered in any of different steps the variable of job satisfaction was entered as a dependent variable. Then, in the first step, the demographics variables of gender, age, tenure, and education level were included, as recommended by Cohen and Cohen (1983) In the second step, the hierarchical regression analysis included the predictor variables of collectivism, interpersonal harmony, and work flexibility. If results had a significant regression coefficient, this would mean that the independent variables are significant predictors of job satisfaction. Thus, the above variables were entered into the regression formula step-by-step in the order they were described. The results of the hierarchical regression are shown in Table 5.

Predictor variables of collectivism, interpersonal harmony, and work flexibility showed a significant association with job satisfaction. The results were significant at the 0.0001 level ($p < 0.0001$). The dependent variable of job satisfaction only had 3.1% of the variance accounted for by the following control variables: gender, tenure, education and age. This set of variables was not significant ($F(4/195) = 1.55, p > 0.10$). But the inclusion of the predictors mentioned above yielded a 46.6% variance ($\Delta R^2 = 43.5\%$). This 43.5% explanation of the variation in the dependent variable ($F(7/192) = 23.89, p < 0.0001$) indicated a significant prediction power. Thus, explanation of the variance of these three independent variables found to be positively and significantly associated with the criterion variable of job satisfaction. Therefore, the hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 were supported (See table 5).

Finally, interpersonal harmony showed the highest regression coefficient among the other independent variables. This conclusion was reached after analyzing the following unstandardized coefficients: collectivism (0.199), work flexibility (0.239), and interpersonal harmony (0.522). Thus, the independent variable of interpersonal harmony is the strongest predictor to the criterion job satisfaction. Consequently, hypothesis 5 was supported (See Table 5).

The results yielded interesting patterns. First, gender does not affect the construct of job satisfaction; that is, the gender paradox did not apply to Mexican women professionals. Second, all the independent variables identified in Hypotheses 2-4 were positively associated with the dependent variable job satisfaction. These variables predicted 43.5% of the variance of the dependent variable of job satisfaction. The final finding, the independent variable of interpersonal harmony was the strongest predictor for job satisfaction in Mexico. The standardized beta coefficient of this predictor was the highest (0.522) compared to the other independent variables, satisfaction of work flexibility and collectivism, which had beta coefficient values of 0.239 and 0.199, respectively.

DISCUSSION

Overall, four out of five hypotheses were supported. This study tested whether the gender paradox affected the level of job satisfaction, that is, whether Mexican women professionals have experienced higher job satisfaction than men. Also, through hierarchical regression analysis, this research tested the association between the predictors of collectivism, interpersonal harmony, and work flexibility and the criterion of job satisfaction. Finally, this same statistical tool was applied to test if the predictor of

interpersonal harmony was the strongest of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable of job satisfaction.

TABLE 5
REGRESSION RESULTS

		B	SE	β	T	JobSat Sig
Step 1						
	(Constant)	5.571	0.345		16.165	0.000
	Age	-0.066	0.076	-0.068	-0.865	0.388
	Education	-0.067	0.062	-0.077	-1.079	0.282
	Tenure	-0.066	0.041	-0.121	-1.634	0.104
	Gender	-0.055	0.114	-0.037	-0.482	0.63
<i>F</i>	1.551					0.189
<i>R</i> ²	0.031					
Step 2						
	(Constant)	1.413	0.451			0.002
	WorkFlexi.	0.197	0.045	0.239		0.000
	Collectivism	0.264	0.073	0.199		0.000
	Inter. Harmony	0.375	0.04	0.522		0.000
<i>F</i>	23.897					0.000
<i>R</i> ²	0.466					
<i>R</i> ² -Changed	0.435					

As the results showed, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. That is, Mexican professional women did not exhibit higher job satisfaction than Mexican professional men. Spector (1997) found that the relationship between gender and job satisfaction have been remarkably inconsistent across studies. He added, “When results of different studies are combined with meta-analysis. . . men and women have the same levels of job satisfaction” (p. 28). Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza (2000) concluded in their study that the gender paradox by Clark (1997) should not be generalized. The reasons are three-fold. First, the gender paradox vanishes for younger employees, higher-educated employees, and employees in professional or managerial positions among other factors (Clark, 1997). Second, Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza (2000) mentioned in their study “. . . that in most countries there is no gender/job-satisfaction paradox; only in eight of twenty-one countries do women report a higher job-satisfaction level than men” (p. 149). They remarked that the higher job satisfaction rating attributed to women’s role is mainly detected in Great Britain and the U.S. That is, it is an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000). Third, Kaiser (2007) conducted a study covering 14 countries of the European Union, and suggested that the difference in job satisfaction between genders lessens if their job positions are similar or equal (e.g., professional level). Thus, he argued that whatever there is a gender-job satisfaction paradox; it is only a transitory phenomenon because of the gender/modernization of the labor market regime which favors equal conditions and equal opportunities (Kaiser, 2007). A more recent study in Malaysia by Noordin and Jusoff (2009), confirmed the above conclusions. They suggested that, among lecturers/professors, there was no significant difference between genders with concern to job satisfaction. The participants were professionals and have similar job status (i.e., junior and senior lecturers, associate professors, professors, etc.), which is analogous to data collected for the current study (i.e., educated and young professional employees). This leads to a conclusion that Mexican

professionals, for the most part, regardless of their gender, do not have a different perception of job satisfaction at least in a professional environment.

Trandis (1996) suggested that globalization would decrease collectivistic values and strengthen individualistic orientations in traditionally collectivistic societies mainly because capitalism is strongly related to some individualistic tendencies. Earlier studies predicted that young people will have stronger individualistic values than older people do (e.g., Hui & Yee, 1994; Wang, 1992). More recent studies involving cultural transformation argued that in addition to the economic development of countries, the forces of modernization play a very important role in young people (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). The gender similarity found in this study is partially in line with the notion that Mexico is considered one of the major emerging external-oriented economies in Latin America and its population is mainly composed of young people (*The Economist*, 2010). Gender's influence in job satisfaction was not significant mainly because the men and women worked in the same level, both genders were highly-educated, and the employees were relative young (e.g., 88.5% of the participants had an age range between 21 through 29 and 85% had at least a college degree).

Based on Hofstede's cultural dimension of individualism/collectivism, the results showed that the perceived collectivism influences job satisfaction although this relationship was not the strongest among others. Although the statistical result was significant at $p=0.0001$ level, it was ranked as the smallest in the predictive power. Inglehart and Baker (2000) focused on cultural transformation for several decades, and concluded that the following factors have contributed to the cultural changes to some extent: (1) the cultural heritage of the society, (2) the economic development of countries, and (3) the forces of modernization. These last two changes dominate the field mainly due to economic growth and technological advancements throughout the world (Fang, 2011). Although there are different perspectives on how technologies affect culture, for the most part, the new tendencies are believed to be changing cultures to reflect more gender equality. For example, the tendency toward gender equality is very much influenced by a woman's educational level, which is highly correlated with national wealth and thus indirectly affects the level of individualism in society (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkow, 2010).

Applying the concept of interpersonal harmony, an organizational citizenship behavior dimension recognized in collectivistic cultures is the first of its kind in job satisfaction research. This demonstrates that employees encouraged routine behaviors that would pursue harmony and relationship goals rather than initiate conflict such as engaging in confrontational tactics (e.g., direct communication) (Ting-Toomey et al., 1991). Thus, interpersonal harmony was recognized in this study as the strongest predictors of job satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Even though the participants had a choice of whether or not to participate the survey, they received the e-mail invitation as well as the reminder e-mail from one of their top managers of HR. Thus, respondents might have felt obligated to participate having the request come from a top manager, especially coming from a high-power distance country such as Mexico. Consequently, it was possible that respondents may have been influenced to complete the survey in a socially desirable way, rather than responding honestly. Another limitation was that more than half of the respondents were from the state of Nuevo Leon and its surrounding metropolitan area. Therefore, this specific location of participants might have affected the generalizability of the results to the general Mexican professional population. The state of Nuevo Leon is considered the third largest metropolitan area in Mexico where many significant international corporations are located and is the second richest city in Mexico. Therefore, the findings might not be generalizable to other regions of Mexico. In addition, even though the data included different Mexican states and in different regions, it was gathered from one Mexican company. Thus, the results cannot be generalized without further investigation using other company samples. According to Schnake (1991), since this study relied on employee's answers/self-reported data, this may have created the potential for common-method bias. This type of bias can be lessened by including multiple feedbacks such as from coworkers and immediate supervisors. Finally, Oyserman,

Coon, and Kimmelmeier (2002) carried out a study on meta-analysis of CI, and showed that small-effect size can impact psychological results when cultural dimensions are studied. Kirkman, Lowe, and Gidson (2006) concluded in their article that “. . . a general trend of relatively low amounts of variance [can only be] explained by the cultural values” (p. 313). This study is not the exception because of the relatively low amount of variance explained by collectivism.

Future research in this field of study could include the consideration of exploring a moderating effect of other dimensions of the national culture where the individualistic and collectivistic individuals share opposite scores. For example, power distance (PD) is another characteristic where most developed and individualistic countries such as the U.S. differ from other countries with opposite characteristics such as Mexico. Furthermore, Kirkman, Lowe, and Gibson (2006) urged researchers to include PD whenever CI is being studied. They concluded in their study that PD is an important cultural dimension, and “. . . level analysis is clearly ripe for the inclusion of PD (only two studies at this level) [out of 180 articles]” (p. 310). For example, Fischer and his co-authors’ (2003) meta-analysis confirmed that PD achieved more significance when related to cross-cultural differences in the construct of reward allocation than CI. Thus, including cultural moderator such as PD would offer more evidence concerning how cultural values relate to job satisfaction. Moreover, Brett, et al. (1997) suggested that there is a controversy concerning whether cultures offer “[a] relatively stable system in equilibrium” (p. 78) versus the dynamism view that culture is changing more often than previously assumed (Leung et al., 2005). The finding that the collectivistic values of Mexican professional employees have low scores of coefficients than previously thought is interesting but more research is needed to reach a robust conclusion. Future studies should make an extra effort to use multiple and more reliable scales to measure people’s IC orientation. For example, some methods to utilize improvements of the scale’s psychometrics would be to gather more related details of the different cultural perceptions. This can be accomplished with multiple methods. These methods could include deep interviews, a scenario test, and ethnography using qualitative content analysis to capture additional cultural similarities and/or differences.

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