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WHAT JOB WILL BRING SATISFACTION? AN ANALYSIS BASED ON RESPONSES OF STUDENTS STUDYING BUSINESS IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract

This research sheds a light on an under-researched topic of job satisfaction in Kazakhstan. Young people, who today are pursuing their bachelor degree, but tomorrow will start working, were chosen as a sample. This article should be especially interesting to employers because it reveals which factors – among those that potentially contribute to job satisfaction – will bring the expected effect in Kazakhstan and thus are worthy of investments. The study is based on the survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in the years 2005-2012 among U.S. employees. The results of the study suggest that rating list of factors that mostly contribute to job satisfaction, which was compiled on the basis of the answers provided by the respondents from Kazakhstan, is quite different from the rating lists of factors mostly contributing to job satisfaction of U.S. employees.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Kazakhstan, Students, Business, Accounting Major, Management Major

1. Introduction

Work plays a prominent role in our lives, occupying more time than any other single activity (Mehta, 2012). A well-managed organization sees workers as the main source of quality and productivity, trying to promote a sense of commitment and satisfaction in its employees (Patrick and Sonia, 2012) because organization can perform at their best only when their employees are satisfied (Jha and Bhattacharyya, 2012). Job satisfaction impacts many important work-related aspects, such as voluntary turnover (Dong *et al.* 2012; Swider, 2011; Chen *et al.* 2011; Nyberg, 2010), perceived customer importance (Bradford *et al.* 2009), customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality (Pansoo and Jang-Hyup, 2013), firm value, corporate social responsibility (Edmans, 2012), organizational commitment (Mahantra, 2012; Nagar, 2012; Dirani and Kuchinke, 2011), engagement (Rodriguez-Munoz *et al.* 2009), emotional intelligence, communication effectiveness (Jorfi *et al.* 2012), desire for empowerment (Gill *et al.* 2012), work performance in general (Nyberg, 2010; Pantouvakis, 2011), and even short sickness absence due to the common cold (Roelen *et al.* 2011).

An important issue in job satisfaction analysis is to discover the most important drivers of the workers' overall satisfaction and to investigate whether they are different for subjects belonging to different groups (Zuccolotto, 2010). For instance, research of Al-Zoubi (2012) and Marin-Garcia *et al.* (2011) was aimed directly toward exploring working conditions and

generating benchmarking indicators and determinants of job satisfaction. In bulk, recent literature review reveals that the following factors may influence employee job satisfaction:

- *Mindfulness:* Mindfulness is positively related to job satisfaction (Hulsheger *et al.* 2013).
- *Core Self-evaluations:* Core self-evaluations contribute to higher job satisfaction and growth of job satisfaction in the following years (Wu and Griffin, 2012; see also Ferris *et al.* 2013).
- *Proactive Personality:* Having a proactive personality is associated with employees establishing a high-quality exchange relationship with their supervisors; in turn, the quality of leader-member exchange is associated with greater job satisfaction and more organizational citizenship behavior (Li *et al.* 2010; see also Volmer *et al.* 2011).
- *Job Insecurity:* Job insecurity is negatively related to job satisfaction (Reisel *et al.* 2010).
- *Social Cynicism:* A negative view about people and social institutions was found to show a negative correlation with job satisfaction (Leung and Leung, 2010).
- *Work-family Conflict:* Work-family conflict has a negative association with job satisfaction for stress-predisposed male employees and stress-resilient female employees (Ergeneli *et al.* 2010; see also Darrat, 2010).
- *Work-family Support:* Informal work-family supportive practices have an indirect effect on job performance through work-family conflict and job satisfaction (Ahmad and Omar, 2012). Work-to-family enrichment mediates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction, even after controlling for gender, age, marital status, education, number of children, and hours worked: the availability of flexible work arrangements such as flextime and compresses workweek help employees experience greater enrichment from work to home, which, in turn, is associated with higher job satisfaction (McNall *et al.* 2010).
- *Burnout:* All three factors of burnout (depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion) lead to decreased job satisfaction (Nagar, 2012).
- *Justice Perceptions:* Perceived justice (procedural and distributive) is significant predictors of both pay and job satisfaction (Javad and Premarajan, 2011; see also Kumar *et al.* 2009).
- *Moral Stress:* Moral stress is a significant predictor of decreased job satisfaction, as well as increased employee fatigue and increased turnover intentions (DeTienne *et al.* 2012).
- *Unionization:* Job satisfaction increases significantly for first-time union workers, decreases as workers accumulate experience in the union, but recovers after leaving the union jobs as the time since unionization grows (Artz, 2010). Moreover, the accumulation of union experience has more severe negative effect on women's job satisfaction than it does on men's (Artz, 2012).
- *Promotion and Promotion Expectation:* Promotion received in the last 2 years leads to increased job satisfaction, even while controlling for the worker's current wage, wage rank within their peer group, and wage growth; workers who believe a promotion is possible in the next 2 years also report higher job satisfaction; additionally, past promotions have a lingering, but fading impact on job satisfaction (Kosteas, 2011).
- *Subjective Well-Being (SWB):* There are positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect, and the absence of negative affect; in addition, the causal relationship from SWB to job satisfaction is stronger than the causal relationship from job satisfaction to SWB (Bowling *et al.* 2010).

- *Job-worker Mismatches:* Even though both educational and skill mismatches decrease job satisfaction, skill mismatches decrease job satisfaction even more than educational mismatches (Badillo Amador *et al.* 2012). Dik *et al.* (2010) examined the relationship between Holland type (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional) congruence and incongruence and concluded that incongruence and congruence are distinct constructs; and that beyond congruence, incongruence did not predict variance in overall or intrinsic job satisfaction. Pseekos *et al.* (2011) examined Holland's person-environment fit, workplace aggression, interpersonal conflict, and job satisfaction. See also Warr and Inceoglu, 2012.
- *Organizational Culture:* Organizations with different types of organizational culture differ in the level of job satisfaction of employees: market culture mainly creates the conditions for the satisfaction of self-affirmation needs, hierarchic culture for the satisfaction of cooperation and safety needs, clan culture for the satisfaction of respect needs, and adhocratic culture for the satisfaction of self-actualization needs (Zavyalova and Kucherov, 2010).
- *HR Practices:* Male and female employees have different perceptions of HR practices and job satisfaction (Verma *et al.* 2012).
- *Migrant Status:* The study of the banking industry in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) revealed that domestic bank managers expressed a higher level of satisfaction than their expatriate counterparts (Elamin, 2011). The study of call centers in Canada also revealed that job satisfaction varies according to the origin (i.e., immigrant or nonimmigrant) of the call center employees (Echchakoui and Naji, 2013). Also, the relationship between loneliness, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of migrant workers in China, controlling for age, gender, and marital status was examined by Chan and Qiu (2011).
- *Other Factors Impacting Job Satisfaction* include: bonus intensity (Pouliakas, 2010), individual and gain-sharing incentives (Pouliakas and Theodossiou, 2009), equity sensitivity (Ahmad, 2011), equal opportunity climate (Walsh *et al.* 2010), ethical climate (Wang and Hsieh, 2012), perceived managerial support (Sawang, 2010), organizational context (Parzinger *et al.* 2012), previous job perception (Badillo Amador *et al.* 2012); occupational position (Kawada and Otsuka, 2011); years of tenure (Boswell *et al.* 2009), stress (Kawada and Otsuka, 2011; Singh and Ashish, 2011; Anton, 2009), locus of control (Singh and Ashish, 2011), personal and organizational values (Kumar, 2012), personality variables (Srivastava, 2013), interaction of individual and structural temporalities (Agypt and Rubin, 2012), engagement (Alarcon and Lyons, 2011), emotional intelligence (Jorfi *et al.* 2012; Narayanan and Zafar, 2011), balanced scorecard characteristics (Burney and Swanson, 2010), job characteristics (Morris and Venkatesh, 2010); job complexity and autonomy (Chung-Yan, 2010), and even gender (Grissom *et al.* 2012) and serotonin genes (Song *et al.* 2011).

Researchers study both *mediating and moderating roles of job satisfaction*. For instance: the mediating role of job satisfaction in relationship of sleep and organizational citizenship behavior (Barnes *et al.* 2013); the mediating role of job satisfaction in relationship of personality and citizenship behavior (Ilies *et al.* 2009); job satisfaction and organizational structure as moderators of the effects of empowerment on organizational citizenship behavior (Jiang *et al.* 2011); and the moderating effects of job satisfaction and absence in relationship of burnout and depression (Tourigny *et al.* 2010).

Researchers study *job satisfaction by industry and occupation*. For instance: various aspects of job satisfaction in health-care organizations and factors contributing to a relatively low level of job satisfaction of medical teachers (Bhatnagar and Srivastava, 2012; 2013); factors affecting employees' job satisfaction in public hospitals (Miryala and Thangella, 2012; 2013 and Rad and De Moraes, 2009); factors influencing job satisfaction amongst doctors in corporate

and private hospitals (Miryala and Thangella, 2012; 2013); relationships among internal marketing perceptions, organizational support, job satisfaction and role behavior in healthcare organizations (Yang, 2010), determinants of job satisfaction and intentions to quit of offshore workers in the UK North Sea oil and gas industry (Dickey *et al.* 2011), job satisfaction of university teachers (Sharma and Jyoti, 2009); job satisfaction of municipal clerks (Gordon *et al.* 2010); job satisfaction of knowledge workers (Bakotic, 2012); role of stress and locus of control in job satisfaction among middle managers (Singh and Ashish, 2011); organizational learning capability and job satisfaction in the ceramic tile industry (Chiva and Alegre, 2009); relationship between college quality, earnings, and job satisfaction among recent college graduates (Liu *et al.* 2010); ministry clergy burnout and job satisfaction (Miner *et al.* 2010); job satisfaction in the public service (Taylor and Westover, 2011); relationships among transformational leadership, job satisfaction, commitment foci and commitment bases in the public sector (Yang *et al.* 2011b, p.265-278); impact of management reform on employee job satisfaction in federal agencies (Yang and Kassekert, 2010); job satisfaction in the home health care context (Morgan *et al.* 2010); and even individual and environmental factors related to job satisfaction in people with severe mental illness employed in social enterprises (Villotti, 2012).

Much of the research on job satisfaction has been done in the United States, but it does not mean that job satisfaction is solely a US concept (Robbins and Judge, 2011). Literature review reveals that research on job satisfaction was also conducted in the following countries:

- *Australia:* impact of gender on job satisfaction (Lindorff, 2011).
- *Bangladesh:* organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction among teachers of public and private schools (Rahaman, 2012).
- *Brazil:* job satisfaction among control room operators of electrical systems (Macaia *et al.* 2012).
- *China:* the relationships of perceived organizational support and job satisfaction with organizational citizenship behavior and task performance (Miao, 2011); the moderating effects of demographic factors and hukou status on the job satisfaction – subjective well-being relationships in urban China (Nielsen *et al.* 2011); love of money as a moderator in the relationships between public service motivation and job satisfaction (Liu and Tang, 2011); the impact of job satisfaction and personal values on the work orientation (Lan *et al.* 2013); the impact of social cynicism on job satisfaction (Leung and Leung, 2010); the relationship between loneliness, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of migrant workers (Chan and Qiu, 2011); roles of job satisfaction, burnout, and supervisory support in relationships between emotional labor and performance of hotel employees (Chen *et al.* 2012); the mediating role of job satisfaction in leader-member exchange and employee work outcomes, such as organizational commitment and intention to leave (Cheung and Wu, 2012); gender differences on the job satisfaction in the phase of implementing advanced manufacturing technology in the Chinese manufacturing firms (Yu *et al.* 2012).
- *Dania:* impact of psychological work environment factors (like information about decisions concerning the work place, social support, and influence) and reward maximization on job satisfaction among employees (Sell and Cleal, 2011).
- *Egypt:* impact of equity perception on job satisfaction (Khalifa, 2011); relationship between job satisfaction, motivation, leadership, communication, and psychological empowerment (Abd-El-Salam *et al.* 2013).
- *Ethiopia:* effects of transformational leadership on subordinate job satisfaction in leather companies (Shibru and Darshan, 2011).
- *Finland:* impact of gender and parenting status on the relationship between work-family culture and job satisfaction (Mauno *et al.* 2012); job satisfaction – productivity nexus (Bockerman and Ilmakunnas, 2012).
- *Great Britain:* effects of unionization on job satisfaction (Bryson *et al.* 2010).
- *Honduras:* relationship between part-time work and job satisfaction (Boo *et al.* 2010).

- *India:* impact of job satisfaction on employee engagement (Abraham, 2012); mediating role of employee engagement between perceived organizational support (POS) and person-organization fit (P-O fit) as the antecedents and organizational commitment and job satisfaction as the consequences (Biswas and Bhatnager, 2013); emotional intelligence and job satisfaction as correlates of job performance among women in software industry (Gunavathy and Ayswarya, 2011); impact of perceived recruitment practices on job satisfaction in information computer technology industry (Jha and Bhattacharyya, 2012; Jyothi and Ravindran, 2012); impact of industry background and gender on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intent in information technology and information technology enabled service industries (Kanwar *et al.* 2012); impact of intrinsic and extrinsic job rewards on employees' job satisfaction (Lange *et al.* 2010); impact of the type of an organization (private versus government) and the gender on perception of job satisfaction among teachers (Mehta, 2012); study to identify factors influencing job satisfaction among young software professionals (Narayanan and Zafar, 2011); years of service tenure of managers and their occupational category (executive, technical, or administrative) of a public sector organization on job satisfaction (Natarajan and Nagar, 2011); relationship between the affective commitment and job satisfaction among IT employees (Patrick and Sonia, 2012); emotional intelligence as a predictor of job satisfaction among faculty (Samanvitha and Jawahar, 2012); job satisfaction in power backup industry (Saxena and Vyas, 2011); demographic profiles as determinants of job satisfaction in insurance sector (Singh, 2010); and the impact of mentoring on job burnout – job satisfaction relationship among managers (Srivastava, 2011).
- *Macedonia:* impact of coping strategies and helpful work environment on job satisfaction (Sardzoska and Tang, 2012).
- *Mozambique:* variables influencing job satisfaction in the workplace of a multinational company (Sartorius *et al.* 2011).
- *Pakistan:* impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction (Malik *et al.* 2010).
- *Russia:* relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction in business enterprises (Zavyalova and Kucherov, 2010).
- *Singapore:* life and work values held by managerial employees (Singaporean Chinese, Japanese expatriates and PRC Chinese expatriates) working in large and well-established organizations in Singapore and impact of these values on the job satisfaction level of individuals of different nationalities (Choo *et al.* 2009); whether Big Five personality traits would explain job satisfaction in Singapore as they do in US (Templer, 2012); ambivalent and non-ambivalent relationships between job satisfaction and demographic variables in Singapore (Paul and Seok, 2011).
- *South Korea:* factors (pay, promotion, job itself, supervisor, and coworkers) leading to job satisfaction of correction officers (Yang *et al.* 2011a).
- *Spain:* positive and negative effects of team stressors (i.e., role ambiguity, role conflict, and pressure for performance) on team job satisfaction in innovative firms (Rodriguez-Escudero *et al.* 2010); a mediating role of intrinsic-extrinsic satisfaction in prediction of general job satisfaction (Calvo-Salguero *et al.* 2011); firm size on working conditions, job satisfaction, and quit intentions (Garcia-Serrano, 2011) were studied.
- *Taiwan:* the relationship between leader-member relations, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Liao *et al.* 2009); moderating effect of job satisfaction on the positive relationship between internal marketing and organizational performance in the non-life insurance industry in Taiwan (Shiu and Yu, 2010); effects of individual-level and organizational-level ethical climates on employees' job satisfaction in Taiwan (Wang and Hsieh, 2012); job satisfaction and turnover of public and private employees (Wang *et al.* 2012);

factor analysis of workplace learning, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in small to midsize enterprises in Taiwan (Wang *et al.* 2010).

- *Turkey:* effects of information asymmetry, goal commitment, and role ambiguity on job satisfaction and performance (Jermias and Yigit, 2013); and influence of human resource management activities and organizational climate on job satisfaction (Kaya *et al.* 2010).

- *United Arab Emirates:* the influence of nationality of managers (domestic versus expatriates) on work satisfaction (Elamin, 2011).

Researchers are interested in conducting research on job satisfaction not only in a particular culture, but also across cultures. For instance, Mueller *et al.* (2009) investigated cross-national differences in positivity and job satisfaction. Ng *et al.* (2009) wondered whether job satisfaction – job performance relationships vary across cultures. Zhu and Feng (2010) referred to Ng *et al.* (2009) to understand whether the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance depend on culture. Bozionelos and Kostopoulos (2010) tried to understand, by making reference to Pichler and Wallace (2009), what accounts for job satisfaction differences across countries, while Pichler and Wallace (2009) tried to identify reasons for differences in job satisfaction across Europe. Huang (2011) examined motivating work characteristics, job satisfaction, and turnover intention of knowledge workers and blue-collar workers in China and Japan and found significant differences between knowledge workers and blue-collar workers and between China and Japan. Masuda *et al.* (2012) studied the availability and effect of flexible work arrangements on work-to-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions across Latin American, Anglo, and Asian clusters. Gill *et al.* (2012) examined the effect of job satisfaction and work experience on employee desire for empowerment among restaurant industry employees in both Indian and Canadian environments. Pouliakas and Theodossiou (2010) studied differences in the job satisfaction of high-paid and low-paid workers across Europe. Data suggest that low-paid employees are significantly less satisfied with their job than the high-paid in south Europe, but not in the northern countries.

The purpose of this study is to get an insight into under-researched topic of the factors that mostly contribute to job satisfaction in Kazakhstan and to compare those factors with factors that mostly contribute to job satisfaction in the United States of America in order to understand whether the original theories on job satisfaction could be successfully applied in Kazakhstan or they should be adjusted for local context. A supposition that it may be necessary to adjust original theories on job satisfaction for local context is based on the following ground: (1) Taylor and Westover (2011) questioned what satisfied a public servant. They analyzed non-panel longitudinal data from the International Social Survey Program on Work Orientations across different countries for 1997 and 2005 and found that the respondents from different countries share similarities in terms of what satisfies them in their jobs, but emphasis placed on these factors vary for some countries. (2) Sartorius *et al.* (2011) examined variables that influenced job satisfaction in the workplace of a multinational company operating in Mozambique and concluded that to be more successful 'foreign' management practice should be adapted to the local culture.

2. Methodology

The first step in the analysis of factors mostly contributing to job satisfaction was to select an appropriate sample. Young students who are in the process of receiving their higher education were chosen for this purpose. The reason is that employers would probably be interested to know what factors will contribute to job satisfaction of those who study today, and will start working tomorrow so that they could know what factors – that potentially could contribute to job satisfaction – deserve investment of money because they will bring the expected effect and what factors do not.

An idea to conduct this research came after the author did an experimental exercise from *Organizational Behavior* textbook (Robbins and Judge, 2011) with her students during class time in summer semester of 2011-2012 academic year. In the exercise, there was given a list of 21 factors contributing to job satisfaction. Students were asked to rank-order these job

factors from top to bottom, so that number 1 was the job factor they think was the most important to their job satisfaction, number 2 was the second most important factor to their job satisfaction, and so on. In instructor's manual, a list of "very important" aspects of employee job satisfaction was given for comparative purposes. That list was compiled by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in 2005.

For the purpose of her research, the author prepared a questionnaire, which contained these 21 factors contributing to job satisfaction. Students were asked to rate the importance of each factor for their job satisfaction in future using the following Likert-type scale: 5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = of little importance, and 1 = not important. The survey was conducted anonymously outside of class time on a voluntary basis.

The survey is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Job satisfaction survey

Most of us probably want a job we think will satisfy us. But because no job is perfect, we often have to trade off job attributes. One job may pay well but provide limited opportunities for advancement or skill development. Another may offer work we enjoy but have poor benefits. Directions: Please indicate how important the following factors will be for your job satisfaction. 5   =   Very important 4   =   Important 3   =   Neither important nor unimportant 2   =   Unimportant 1   =   Absolutely unimportant _____   1.   Autonomy and independence _____   2.   Benefits _____   3.   Career advancement opportunities _____   4.   Career development opportunities _____   5.   Compensation/pay _____   6.   Communication between employees and management _____   7.   Contribution of work to organization's business goals _____   8.   Feeling safe in the work environment _____   9.   Flexibility to balance life and work issues _____   10.   Job security _____   11.   Job-specific training _____   12.   Management recognition of employee job performance _____   13.   Meaningfulness of job _____   14.   Networking _____   15.   Opportunities to use skills/abilities _____   16.   Organization's commitment to professional development _____   17.   Overall corporate culture _____   18.   Relationship with coworkers _____   19.   Relationship with immediate supervisor _____   20.   The work itself _____   21.   The variety of work

Source: Robbins and Judge (2011)

3. Sample

One hundred and fifty four students took part in the survey. All of them were bachelor students of a university of higher education located in Almaty city, Kazakhstan. The students were in their 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year of study with majors in accounting, finance, marketing, management, or social sciences. The majority of them were females.

Demographic data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demograhic data

Gender	Female			Male			Total
Year of Study	**2**	**3**	**4**	**2**	**3**	**4**	
Students majoring in accounting or finance	22	23	31	11	17	13	117
Students majoring in marketing, management, or social sciences	6	6	15	0	1	9	37
Total	28	29	46	11	18	22	154

4. Findings

For all students (irrespective of their gender or major) "career advancement opportunities" and "career development opportunities" are the most important for job satisfaction. These two items (with significant difference from other factors) took the first two places in the rating list of all students.

Percentages of students classified by gender and major who marked "career advancement opportunities" as "very important" are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Factor "career advancement opportunities" marked as "very important"

Student category	Percent of students who marked factor "career advancement opportunities" as "very important"	Mean	Standard Diviation
All	90%	4.88	0.36
Female	95%	4.95	0.22
Male	78%	4.75	0.52
Majoring in accounting and finance	91%	4.91	0.32
Majoring in marketing, management, or social sciences	84%	4.82	0.46

Percentages of students classified by gender and major who marked "career development opportunities" as "very important" are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Factor "career development opportunities" marked as "very important"

Student category	Percent of students who marked factor "career advancement opportunities" as "very important"	Mean	Standard Diviation
All	82%	4.81	0.41
Female	84%	4.84	0.36
Male	76%	4.75	0.48
Majoring in accounting and finance	82%	4.81	0.42
Majoring in marketing, management, or social sciences	82%	4.82	0.39

A comparative analysis of students by majors revealed that "career advancement opportunities", "career development opportunities", and "meaningfulness of job" are the most important factors contributing to job satisfaction for majority (>50%) of all students irrespective of their majors and therefore they took the first three places in their rating lists accordingly. Also, "the work itself" (which is close by its meaning to "meaningfulness of job") and "compensation/pay" are very important to job satisfaction for all students irrespective of their majors. At the same time, however, "flexibility to balance life and work issues" is very important for the majority of students with majors in management, marketing, or social sciences; while for students majoring in accounting or finance, "flexibility to balance life and work issues" is not as important as "management recognition of employee job performance", "job security", and opportunities to use skills/abilities".

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of students majoring in accounting or finance are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of students majoring in accounting or finance

Place	Factor	Percent	Mean	Standard Diviation
1	Career advancement opportunities	91%	4.91	0.32
2	Career development opportunities	82%	4.81	0.42
3	Meaningfulness of job	56%	4.47	0.69
4	Compensation/pay	55%	4.53	0.57
5	The work itself	55%	4.38	0.80
6	Management recognition of employee job performance	53%	4.52	0.54
7	Job security	53%	4.47	0.64
8	Opportunity to use skills/abilities	53%	4.41	0.74

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of students majoring in marketing, management, or social sciences are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of students majoring in marketing, management, or social sciences

Place	Factor	Percent	Mean	Standard Diviation
1	Career advancement opportunities	84%	4.82	0.46
2	Career development opportunities	82%	4.82	0.39
3	Meaningfulness of job	63%	4.55	0.65
4	The work itself	61%	4.58	0.55
5	Flexibility to balance life and work issues	55%	4.42	0.72
6	Compensation/pay	53%	4.42	0.72

A comparative analysis of students by gender revealed that only three factors are very important for majority (>50%) of male students, while for majority (>50%) of female students' job satisfaction, the same three factors plus eight additional are very important.

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of male students are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of male students

Place	Factor	Percent	Mean	Standard Diviation
1	Career advancement opportunities	78%	4.75	0.52
2	Career development opportunities	76%	4.75	0.48
3	Meaningfulness of job	59%	4.51	0.67

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of female students are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of female students

Place	Factor	Percent	Mean	Standard Diviation
1	Career advancement opportunities	95%	4.95	0.22
2	Career development opportunities	84%	4.84	0.36
3	The work itself	64%	4.53	0.71
4	Compensation/pay	58%	4.54	0.59
5	Meaningfulness of job	57%	4.49	0.68
6	Opportunity to use skills/abilities	57%	4.41	0.79
7	Management recognition of employee job performance	55%	4.50	0.61
8	Feeling safe in the work environment	53%	4.43	0.71
9	Communication between employees and management	52%	4.44	0.68
10	Job security	52%	4.43	0.69
11	Flexibility to balance life and work issues	51%	4.41	0.69

Finally, the least important factors contributing to job satisfaction of all students (irrespective of their major and gender) are "autonomy and independence" and "overall corporate culture".

Percentages of students classified by gender and major who marked "autonomy and independence" as "very important" are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Factor "autonomy and independence" marked as "very important"

Student category	Percent of students who marked factor "career advancement opportunities" as "very important"	Mean	Standard Diviation
All	22%	4.01	0.72
Female	21%	3.97	0.72
Male	24%	4.10	0.73
Majoring in accounting and finance	21%	4.02	0.72
Majoring in marketing, management, or social sciences	26%	4.00	0.74

Percentages of students classified by gender and major who marked "overall corporate culture" as "very important" are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Factor "overall corporate culture" marked as "very important"

Student category	Percent of students who marked factor "career advancement opportunities" as "very important"	Mean	Standard Diviation
All	24%	4.07	0.66
Female	29%	4.15	0.66
Male	14%	3.92	0.63
Majoring in accounting and finance	22%	4.03	0.66
Majoring in marketing, management, or social sciences	32%	4.18	0.65

5. Discussion

List of factors necessary for job satisfaction – according to the opinion of the majority (>50%) of employees in the USA who took part in the survey – contained five items in 2005, 2006, and 2007.

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA to feel that they are satisfied with their jobs are shown in Table 11 for 2005, Table 12 for 2006, and Table 13 for 2007.

The leading positions (i.e. 1st and 2nd places) in all three years were taken by "benefits" and "compensation/pay". Next, the list was followed by "flexibility to balance life and work issues" (3rd place in 2005, 4th place in 2006 and 2007) and "job security" (4th place in 2005, 3rd place in 2006 and 2007). Fifth place was given to "feeling safe in the work

environment" in 2005 and 2006 and "communication between employees and senior management" in 2007.

Table 11. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA in the year 2005

Place	Factor	Percent
1	Benefits	63%
2	Compensation/pay	61%
3	Flexibility to balance life and work issues	60%
4	Job security	59%
5	Feeling safe in the work environment	55%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 2005 Job Satisfaction Survey Report

Table 12. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA in the year 2006

Place	Factor	Percent
1	Compensation/pay	70%
2	Benefits	66%
3	Job security	64%
4	Flexibility to balance life and work issues	58%
5	Feeling safe in the work environment	57%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 2006 Job Satisfaction Survey Report

Table 13. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA in the year 2007

Place	Factor	Percent
1	Compensation/pay	59%
2	Benefits	59%
3	Job security	53%
4	Flexibility to balance life and work issues	52%
5	Communication between employees and senior management	51%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 2007 Job Satisfaction Survey Report

In 2008 (with the beginning of financial crisis), a list of factors necessary for job satisfaction decreased from five to four items. "Job security" came forward to the 1st place. "Benefits" and "compensation/pay" shifted to the 2nd and 3rd places accordingly. "Feeling safe in the work environment" was on the 4th place.

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA to feel that they are satisfied with their jobs are shown in Table 14 for 2008.

Table 14. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA in the year 2008

Place	Factor	Percent
1	Job security	59%
2	Benefits	57%
3	Cmpensation/pay	53%
4	Feeling safe in the work environment	53%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 2008 Job Satisfaction Survey Report

In 2009, a list of factors necessary for job satisfaction increased twice. "Job security" was on the 1st place (as in previous 2008). "Benefits" were on the 2nd place, "compensation/pay" – on the 3rd place. "Feeling safe in the work environment" moved down to the 5th place. "Opportunities to use skills/abilities" took the 4th place. Then, "relationship with immediate supervisor", "management recognition of employee job performance", and

"communication between employees and senior management" followed the list. In other words, in 2009, the relationships with management became especially important for job satisfaction of majority (>50%) of those employees who took part in the survey.

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA to feel that they are satisfied with their jobs are shown in Table 15 for 2009.

Table 15. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA in the year 2009

Place	Factor	Percent
1	Job security	63%
2	Benefits	60%
3	Compensation/pay	57%
4	Opportunities to use skills and abilities	55%
5	Feeling safe in the work environment	54%
6	Relationship with immediate supervisor	52%
7	Management recognition of employee job performance	52%
8	Communication between employees and senior management	51%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 2009 Job Satisfaction Survey Report

In 2010, the list of factors necessary for job satisfaction was – as in 2009 – relatively long. It contained 7 items. "Job security" was again on the 1st place; "benefits" – on the 2nd. "Compensation/pay" moved down to 6th place. 3rd Place was taken by "opportunities to use skills and abilities". Thus, this factor moved up by one line from 4th place in 2009 to 3rd place in 2010. In that year, the following factors were also important: "organization's financial stability" (4th place), "the work itself" (5th place), and "feeling safe in the work environment" (7th place).

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA to feel that they are satisfied with their jobs are shown in Table 16 for 2010.

Table 16. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA in the year 2010

Place	Factor	Percent
1	Job security	63%
2	Benefits	60%
3	Opportunities to use skills and abilities	56%
4	Organization's financial stability	54%
5	The work itself	54%
6	Compensation/pay	53%
7	Feeling safe in the work environment	51%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 2010 Job Satisfaction Survey Report

In 2011, the list of factors necessary for job satisfaction contained 9 items. 1st Place – as in 3 previous years – was taken by "job security". 2nd Place was taken by "opportunities to use skills and abilities" (one more line up: from 3rd place in 2010 to 2nd place in 2011). "Benefits" moved down to 7th place (compare to 2005, when it was on the 1st place and 2006-2010, when it was on the 2nd place). The following factors remained to be important: "organization's financial stability" (3rd place), "relationship with immediate supervisor" (4th place), "compensation/pay" (5th place), and "communication between employees and senior management" (6th place). The following factors started to become important: "the work itself" (8th place) and "autonomy and independence" (9th place).

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA to feel that they are satisfied with their jobs are shown in Table 17 for 2011.

Table 17. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA in the year 2011

Place	Factor	Percent
1	Job security	63%
2	Opportunities to use skills and abilities	62%
3	Organization's financial stability	55%
4	Relationship with immediate supervisor	55%
5	Compensation/pay	54%
6	Communication between employees and senior management	53%
7	Benefits	53%
8	The work itself	53%
9	Autonomy and independence	52%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 2011 Job Satisfaction Survey Report

In 2012, there were 8 items in the list of factors necessary for job satisfaction. "Opportunities to use skills and abilities" broke through to the 1st place. "Job security" moved down to the 2nd place for the first time in the last five years. "Compensation/pay" started to return its leading position back – 3rd place. Relationships with management remained to be important: "communication between employees and senior management (4th place), "relationship with immediate supervisor" (5th place). Also, the following factors kept their importance: "benefits" (6th place), "organization's financial stability (7th place), and work itself (8th place).

Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA to feel that they are satisfied with their jobs are shown in Table 18 for 2012.

Table 18. Factors marked as "very important" by majority (>50%) of respondents in the USA in the year 2012

Place	Factor	Percent
1	Opportunities to use skills and abilities	63%
2	Job security	61%
3	Compensation/pay	60%
4	Communication between employees and senior management	57%
5	Relationship with immediate supervisor	54%
6	Benefits	53%
7	Organization's finacial stability	52%
8	The work itself	52%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) 2012 Job Satisfaction Survey Report

These rating lists differ from rating lists prepared on the basis of answers given by bachelor students in Kazakhstan. For all students without exception the following factors were important: "career advancement opportunities" (1st place) and "career development opportunities" (2nd place).

If we compare students by their majors, then it will turn out that those students who were majoring in accounting or finance were more demanding than those who were majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences. For majority (>50%) of those students who were specializing in accounting or finance, 8 factors were necessary for job satisfaction, while for majority of those who were specializing in management, marketing, or social sciences, only 6 factors were important.

"Meaningfulness of job" was on the 3rd place in the rating lists of all students irrespective of their major. "Compensation/pay" and "the work itself" were also important for all students. However, "compensation/pay" was on the 4th place in the rating list of students majoring in accounting or finance, while it was only on the 6th place in the rating list of those students who were majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences. Accounting/finance students placed "the work itself" on the 5th place, whereas management/marketing/social

sciences students – on the 4th place. It means that for students majoring in accounting or finance, "compensation/pay" was more important than "the work itself", but for students majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences, "the work itself" was more important than "compensation/pay". Also, for students majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences, "flexibility to balance life and work issues" was more important than "compensation/pay". At the same time, "flexibility to balance life and work issues" was not found in the rating list of factors necessary for job satisfaction of students who were majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences.

On the other hand, for students majoring in accounting or finance, the following three factors were also important: "management recognition of employee job performance", "job security", and "opportunities to use skills/abilities". These factors were not found in the rating list of those majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences.

If to compare students by gender, it will be clearly seen that only three factors were necessary for job satisfaction of the majority (>50%) of male students: "career advancement opportunities", "career development opportunities, and "meaningfulness of job". For female students, these three factors were also important. However, there were 8 additional factors in the rating list of female students that were important for majority (>50%) of them: "compensation/pay", "meaningfulness of job", "opportunities to use skills/abilities", "management recognition of employee job performance", "feeling safe in the work environment", "communication between employees and management", "job security", and "flexibility to balance life and work issues".

5. Limitations

This research has certain limitations. First, it is based on responses given by students of one university only. Second, the sample used for analysis was of a relatively small size. Third, the questionnaire required students to put themselves into hypothetical situation and to think about what factors should mostly contribute to their job satisfaction when they start to work.

6. Conclusion

Despite of the limitations of the current study outlined above, the study provides a valuable insight into an under-researched topic of factors contributing to job satisfaction of those young people who study today, and will start working tomorrow in Kazakhstan. A comparison of the results of Job Satisfaction Survey conducted by SHRM in the years 2005-2012 among U.S. employees and the results of Job Satisfaction Survey conducted by the author in 2013 among bachelor students in Kazakhstan revealed that:

- "Career advancement opportunities" and "career development opportunities" are two the most important factors contributing to job satisfaction of young people in Kazakhstan, while for majority (>50%) of U.S. employees these factors are not very important.
- "Meaningfulness of job" is also very important factor for job satisfaction of young people in Kazakhstan, especially for male students. This factor is not considered as very important for job satisfaction by the majority of U.S. employees.
- "Job security" was chosen by U.S. employees as very important factor for job satisfaction in all years from 2005 to 2012. It was also chosen as a very important factor for job satisfaction by Kazakhstani female students and students majoring in accounting or finance, but not by male students or students majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences.
- "Opportunities to use skills and abilities" was very important factor for job satisfaction of U.S. employees during 2009-2012. It is also very important factor for job satisfaction of Kazakhstani female students and Kazakhstani students majoring in accounting or finance, but not Kazakhstani male students and Kazakhstani students majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences.

- Relationships with management are important for U.S. employees and for students from Kazakhstan majoring in accounting or finance and for female students. However, U.S. employees emphasized "communication between employees and senior management" and "relationship with immediate supervisor" in the last two years, whereas for female students and students majoring in accounting or finance from Kazakhstan "management recognition of employee job performance" was very important.
- "Compensation/pay" was very important for U.S. employees in all years from 2005 to 2012 and for Kazakhstani students of all majors (i.e. accounting, finance, management, marketing, and social sciences), especially for female students.
- "The work itself" was very important for U.S. employees in 2010-2012 and also for Kazakhstani students of all majors (i.e. accounting, finance, management, marketing, and social sciences), especially for female students.
- "Benefits" were very important for U.S. employees in all years from 2005-2012, but not for Kazakhstani students.
- "Feeling safe" was very important for U.S. employees in 2005, 2006 and 2008-2010. However, this factor was chosen as very important only by female students from Kazakhstan.
- "Flexibility to balance life and work issues" was very important for U.S. employees in 2005-2007. It was also very important for students in Kazakhstan majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences and female students.
- Even though "Autonomy and independence" was not chosen by majority (>50%) of U.S. employees as one of the most important factors for job satisfaction, it is still relatively important for them (11th place out of 21 in 2005; 14th place out of 21 in 2006; 9th place out of 22 in 2007; 12th place out of 24 in 2008; 10th place in 2009; 11th place out of 25 in 2010; 9th place out of 25 in 2011; and 10th place out of 26 in 2012). Kazakhstani students marked this factor as one of the least important factors for job satisfaction (for female students and for students majoring in accounting or finance it is the least important factor; for male students and those majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences it is on 19th place out of 21 places in total).
- "Overall corporate culture" is another not very important factor for job satisfaction of young people in Kazakhstan. It took the last place in the rating list of factors contributing to job satisfaction of male students and the place before last in the rating list of female student. It took the place before last in the rating list of students majoring in accounting or finance, but 16th (out of 21) place in the rating list of students majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences.

The next step that is needed in the research of this area is to find explanation of why some factors contributing to job satisfaction are more important than the others. It will allow employers to develop the most optimal working conditions for their employees.

For instance, the results of this research revealed that students majoring in accounting or finance were more demanding than students majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences. These results are consistent with the results of another research conducted by the author. A comparison of personal values of young people of Kazakhstan by major revealed that, on average, students majoring in accounting rated all 16 items (each of which represented a personal value in one of the following areas: professional, financial, family, social, community, spiritual, physical, and intellectual) higher than did students majoring in management (Frolova, 2013a).

Current research also revealed that "autonomy and independence" was one of the least important factors for job satisfaction of young people in Kazakhstan. Again, these findings are consistent with the results of another research conducted by the author. An analysis of Theory X and Theory Y beliefs of young people in Kazakhstan revealed that, in general, the majority of students who took part in the survey had moderate Theory X beliefs. In particular, students

majoring in accounting as well as students majoring in management were inclined to think that "employees will not do a good job unless you closely supervise them", rather than "employees don't have to be closely supervised to do their job well" and "if the manager is not around, the employees will take it easier than when being watched", rather than "if the manager is not around, the employees will work just as hard" (Frolova, 2013b). All of these suggest that young people in Kazakhstan do not expect to have much freedom from their boss at the workplace and in general would prefer to be watched closely rather than to be empowered.

Taking into consideration that Kazakhstan is high on power distance, this conclusion is also consistent with the results of another research: individuals from high power distance cultures do not perform as well when empowered as when disempowered (Eylon and Au, 1999). However, when compared Theory X beliefs of students majoring in management and students majoring in accounting, it turned out that students majoring in accounting have slightly stronger Theory X beliefs than students majoring in management. That is why, probably, "autonomy and independence" took the last 21st place in the rating list of factors contributing to job satisfaction and 19th place in the rating list of students majoring in management, marketing, or social sciences.

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