

# LIFE SATISFACTION OF MEN AND WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES : A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Palompon, Daisy; Gonzaga, Joni Inocencia and Hilot, Julianne  
*College of Nursing, Cebu Normal University, Philippines*

## ABSTRACT

Every individual differ on his or her perception of what makes them feel satisfied, much so between men and women. There are many factors which play roles in the attainment of life satisfaction in men and women and as such they should be considered in order to understand them better. The study sought to determine the difference of the life satisfaction of male and female employees in selected government agencies in Cebu City and this further examined the relationship of objective (age, marital status, educational attainment, economic status) and subjective factors (locus of control, family values, career values, coping skills) with the respondents' life satisfaction. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design, the study had 131 subjects (47 males, 84 females) and data were gathered using adopted questionnaires. Findings show that males have higher mean life satisfaction and coping skills significantly correlated with life satisfaction for both male and females while marital status correlated significantly for females. Men and women life satisfaction is a deeply rooted behavior which is influenced not by gender but by internal factors such as coping skills. Women life satisfaction is also influenced by civil status which also compliments the development of their coping skills having significant others who can help them out in protecting themselves in times of challenges.

*Keywords: life satisfaction, life satisfaction and gender, coping skills*

## INTRODUCTION

Every individual differ on his or her perception of what makes them feel satisfied, much so between men and women. There are many factors which play roles in the attainment of life satisfaction in men and women and as such they should be considered in order to understand them better. There is also a need to determine the factors that influence men and women's life satisfaction so that those which can be modified will be provided anticipatory interventions. One of the interesting populations to consider one's life satisfaction are employees in the government agencies such as that in state universities and colleges. It is noted that these employees are inadequately compensated

and are subjected to heavy workloads specially those in the academe. Moreover, it is observed that there is already a significant number of government teachers who worked abroad to acquire better income and there are still many more aspiring to work abroad. This study was undertaken since in the nursing field, it is part of the professional competence to care for individuals whether sick or well in a holistic manner thus, the focus should also include the social and mental well-being of every individual in the community. Thus, this study was undertaken to determine the difference of the life satisfaction of male and female employees in selected government agencies in Cebu City and this further examined the relationship of objective age, marital

status, educational attainment, economic status) and subjective factors (locus of control, family values, career values, coping skills) with the respondents' life satisfaction.

The measurement of the life satisfaction of men and women with due consideration to the objective and subjective factors that may influence life satisfaction in the two population. This concept is anchored on Adaptation Theory which assumes that people initially react strongly to new life events or circumstances but over time habituate and return to baseline (*Diener, 1984*). It exemplifies the different life experiences that men and women underwent in their daily life activities which may influence their perceived satisfaction with the current stage in life they are in. Another theory which lend support to this study is the Telic Theory which explains that life satisfaction is gained when goals and needs are reached (*Diener, 1984*). Thus, it is assumed that factors that influence life satisfaction are not universal but differ depending on people's values and desires. *Cantor & Kihlstrom (1989)* states that individual's life tasks or goals are influenced by developmental phases, cultural goals and individual needs.

For men, life satisfaction is explained positively by age, income, and perceived control, and negatively by recall errors, illness, and functional limitations. For women, life satisfaction is explained positively by age, education, income, social support, perceived control, and physical activity, and negatively by illness and functional limitations. Gender differences in marital satisfaction and life satisfaction were found to have significant influence for both men and women (*Johnben, 2007*). However, in a study done by *Valley (2007)*, it was revealed that women's satisfaction comes from having purpose and meaning, while men's satisfaction comes from success at work. On educational attainment, *Vang (2000)* reported in her study that it is positively associated with self-control which mediates the effect on life satisfaction while

correlating significantly with locus of control and coping (*Simons, Aysan, Thompson, Hamarat & Steele, 2002*).

## METHODOLOGY

A descriptive-correlational and comparative design was utilized in the study in which data were gathered from two academic institutions: Cebu Normal University (CNU) and Cebu State College of Science and Technology (CSCST); tertiary hospital: Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center (VSMMC) and Department of Health (DOH) Regional Office. The study population was groped according to gender. The number of all male and all female employees were identified per institution. The main consideration in selecting probable samples of the study is that he or she should be a regular, permanent or temporary position employed in the four government agencies mentioned. The total number of respondents who were provided with a self-administered questionnaire was 131 (47 males, 84 females).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the respondents shows that majority of them are in the middle adulthood stage, married and are Bachelor's degree graduate. Moreover, most of them have very high internal locus of control which indicates that they believe in their capability to work things out by themselves. Both men and women respondents put more value on career than family, with high coping and high life satisfaction level.

The findings revealed that men have higher mean life satisfaction than women (Table 1) which supports the findings of the study of *Bourque (2005)* that life satisfaction differs in terms of gender. Men's high level of satisfaction could be attributed to their high coping abilities which provide them a better control of their selves.

**Table 1. Respondents' Profile**

PROFILES	Men (N=47)		Women (N=84)	
	F	%	F	%
Civil Status:				
Single	17	36.2	24	28.6
Married	29	61.7	57	67.9
Separated	1	2.1	2	2.4
Widow/er	0	0	1	1.2
Educational Attainment:				
College Level	7	14.9	8	9.5
BS Graduate	16	34.0	25	29.8
With master's units	10	21.3	24	28.6
Masters' Graduate	3	6.4	11	13.1
Masters Grad. w/ doctorate Units	5	10.6	8	9.5
Doctorate degree holder	6	12.8	8	9.5
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Age	42.5	10.1	42.1	11.2
Locus of Control	3.0	1.7	3.1	1.7
Family Value	2.9	0.9	3.1	0.9
Career Value	3.5	1.1	3.9	0.9
Coping Skills	4.0	0.5	3.7	.7
Life Satisfaction	25.1	5.2	24.3	5.9

**Table 2. Correlations of Life Satisfaction with Objective and Subjective**

Factors Among Men and Women	N= 47	
	Men	Women
Age	r = 0.19	r = 0.05
Civil Status	X <sup>2</sup> = 0.14	X <sup>2</sup> = 0.16* Cr = 0.43
Educational Status	X <sup>2</sup> = 2.88	X <sup>2</sup> = 4.13
Economic Factor	X <sup>2</sup> = 5.84	X <sup>2</sup> = 1.49
Locus of Control	r = 0.11	r = 0.08
Family Value	r = 0.07	r = 0.04
Career Value	r = 0.06	r = 0.18
Coping Skills	r = 0.33*	r = 0.34*

*r* = Pearson's coefficient ; X<sup>2</sup> = chi-square; \* correlation is significant @ 0.05

With the objective and subjective profiles of the respondents, life satisfaction was correlated to determine whether these influence the satisfaction which men or women experience in life. Coping skills emerged as the only factor that correlate significantly with life satisfaction among males. This findings is due to the fact that an individual who finds something to resolve his conflicts and able to maintain an intact ego

despite problems or challenges in one's capability finds happiness and satisfaction in life. He treats problems as something which can be overcome, thus maintains a happy disposition and takes problems lightly, thus making one person less burdened.

Objective factors like age, civil status, economic and educational status do not influence ones life satisfaction, likewise with locus of control and the value placed on family and career. Objective factors as extrinsic motivators for life satisfaction do not influence life satisfaction which is a personal and internal feeling of contentment, happiness an well-being. Objective factors may have superficial influence in life satisfaction but the happiness one feels are not deeply rooted. Locus of control is only a perception of who is in control of oneself whether it is oneself or external forces and the value placed on family and career are attributed to outside factors, thus it is implied that men's satisfaction focuses more on the internal process of adjustment towards whatever is happening in ones life among them.

Among women respondents, life satisfaction is significantly correlated with civil status and coping skills. Women are known to be social individuals who

value company or relationship with others. This has been demonstrated on the significant influence of civil status to their life satisfaction, such that, this implies that women considers having a life partner through their spouses an important ingredient to happiness and satisfaction because of their need to connect with somebody whom they can confide with and depend with as they struggle through the challenges in life or that single women considers marriage as the ultimate fulfillment of being a woman.

Coping skills, on the other hand, is a strong asset of most women since they are known to have better coping than men. This has been observed that most women cope through confiding problems to others and resorting to prayers among others. These findings confirmed that ones coping in life helps women attain peace in life and satisfaction therein.

It is noted that coping skills of individuals significantly contribute to their perceived life satisfaction. *Simons, et al. (2002)* states that individuals who have high coping skills are expected to have better satisfaction with life. The findings are also explained by Adaptation Theory (*Diener, 1984*) which exemplifies that ones life satisfaction changes according to life cycle and is dependent on how well the person copes or adjust to his life situation.

**Table 3. Difference in Life Satisfaction Between Men and Women N=131**

Sex	Life Satisfaction			X <sup>2</sup>	P
	Low	High	Total		
Male	5	42	47	0.14	0.84
Female	8	76	84		
TOTAL	13	118	131		

Comparing the life satisfaction between men and women, it is noted that there is no significant difference in their life satisfaction based on its categorical interpretation. This indicates that life satisfaction is not dependent basically on gender but other factors can help them attain life satisfaction. This could be

attributed to the fact that Filipino men and women are known for their happy disposition whether in times of abundance or scarcity. Filipinos are typically lighthearted and still finds hope in whatever crises that come to their lives. It is the inner self that influences ones perception of their life satisfaction and is not just influenced by external and physical factors.

Studies have shown that life satisfaction is not mainly influenced by gender but by the other factors that is perceived to be meaningful by men or women (*Valley, 2007*); attainment of life goals (*Diener, 1984*); work and marital satisfaction (*Johnben, 2007*) among others. Demographic variables such as gender do not strongly contribute to differences in the life satisfaction of individuals since these are considered superficial or labelling factors and do not have an internal drive or impact over a person's life satisfaction (*Diener, 1997*).

### CONCLUSION

Men and women life satisfaction is a deeply rooted behavior which is influenced not by gender but by internal factors such as coping skills. Women life satisfaction is also influenced by civil status which also compliments the development of their coping skills having significant others who can help them out in protecting themselves in times of challenges.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion identified, it is recommended that the findings of this study be utilized as database in considering the well-being of men and women employees in the workplace such that activities that will enhance coping skills among employees should be initiated by the Human Resource Office so as to address the need for life satisfaction among employees thereby producing contented and committed employees.

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