

Research Article

The Influence of Spirituality in Hospitals on Job Satisfaction

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Abstract: Based on the assumption that religiosity and Christian values can affect employee satisfaction, this study examines how job satisfaction differs between secular and confessional hospitals. In addition, the study analyses whether there are differences in job satisfaction between Catholic and Protestant leadership in confessional hospitals. A total of 280 valid data sets from nine Austrian hospitals were collected using a questionnaire. The results show no significant difference in overall job satisfaction between secular and denominational hospitals. However, the participants are more satisfied with development opportunities in secular institutions. Furthermore, Catholic hospitals show a significantly higher overall job satisfaction than Protestant hospitals, especially with regard to organization and management.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, confessional hospitals, spirituality, religiosity, corporate culture, values.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Groskurth (1974) defines job satisfaction (JS) as a relatively small difference (or no difference) between an actual value of characteristics and satisfaction possibilities of the work situation and its target value (entitlements, expectations, and status of the individual).

According to several hypotheses, job satisfaction has an impact on absenteeism, fluctuation, and accidents, as well as on participation in operational projects and the frequency of customer complaints (Hans Böckler Foundation, 2002), which, however, cannot be confirmed unequivocally. Furthermore, positive effects on quality and customer satisfaction are assumed.

The corporate culture and the physical-structural environment (e.g., working hours and conditions) are two relevant input dimensions of JS. Furthermore, the appreciation of superiors plays an essential role in ensuring a better JS in the organization (Gaurav, 2012; Machado et al., 2018). The relationship between JS and leadership, culture, and success can be demonstrated through various studies (Wicht et al., 2017; Zaugg, 2009).

The relevance of values for JS is increasingly perceived and addressed. Values make it possible to ask

the question of meaning and can positively influence the corporate culture as well as JS. It can, therefore, be assumed that active Christian value work serves the corporate culture and, consequently, JS.

Starting from corporate culture as an essential factor influencing JS, we first follow the hypothesis that confessional hospitals (c.) have a "positive" influence on corporate culture due to their Christian-oriented value orientation. Therefore, confessional hospitals (c.) have higher job satisfaction potential than secular institutions (s.). This leads to the following research question: *How does the JS in confessional managed hospitals differ from those with secular sponsorship?* Besides, the question is investigated, which differences are evident in JS between Catholic and Protestant denominational hospitals.

2. METHOD

The JS can be measured with different standardized questionnaires. The study uses the work description sheet (ABB) due to its high distribution and validity (Neuberger et al., 1978). The ABB is a German variant of the *Job Descriptive Index* (JSI). The JSI (Smith et al., 1969) is the most commonly used method for measuring JS in English-speaking countries (Kinicki et al., 2002). Initially, the JSI surveyed five categories (activities, colleagues, development opportunities, payment, and supervisors). Neuberger (1976) expands

these by the two parameters working conditions and organization & management. The degree of satisfaction with the individual categories (individual satisfaction) is measured on a seven-level Likert scale from "1 - completely dissatisfied" to "7 - very satisfied". The total satisfaction can be calculated by combining the individual satisfactions of the categories (Neuberger et al., 1978). Although the items of the Likert scales are ordinal scaled in principle, they can be described as quasi-metric and treated as an interval scale in the present study due to the symmetrical formulation and design of the scales and scale points (Völkl et al., 2017). For this reason, the arithmetic mean value (AM) is used as the position measure and the standard

deviation (SD) as the scattering measure for data evaluation. The investigation of significant differences is carried out using a T-test. The significance level is defined as 0.05 and the Cohens-d (d), as the effect strength measure.

3. RESULTS

Of the 300 surveys sent out, 280 came back from a total of nine hospitals, four from s. and five from c. institutions. This corresponds to a response rate of 93.3%. In total, 103 originate from s. houses (36.79%) and 177 (63.21%) from c. Houses. Table 1 shows the distribution of questionnaires per hospital.

Table 1: Response rate per hospital

No.	federal state	confessional	N	%
1	Styria	Y	26	9,29
2	Vienna	N	21	7,50
3	Styria	N	27	9,64
4	Upper Austria	Y	57	20,36
5	Styria	Y	33	11,79
6	Lower Austria	N	25	8,93
7	Vienna	Y	36	12,86
8	Upper Austria	N	30	10,71
9	Upper Austria	Y	25	8,93
			280	100

The data sets of the s. and c. hospitals are tested for statistically significant differences in overall satisfaction across all seven satisfaction categories and individual satisfaction in the separate headings.

For the s. hospitals, the total satisfaction AM was 5.5294 (SD = 1.76). At the c. hospitals, the AM is 5.55 (SD = 1.67). Overall, these are very satisfactory values. However, the difference cannot be shown to be significant by the T-test ($t(1958) = -0.204, p = 0.838$).

The following section analyses the individual satisfaction levels of the categories. Table 2 shows the comparison of AM, SD, and the results of the T-tests.

Table 2: Comparison s. and c. Hospitals

Category	Description	s. AM (SD)	c. AM (SD)	t value	p
1	My colleagues	6,33 (0,85)	6,40 (0,83)	-0,641	0,522
2	Supervisor	6,05 (1,21)	5,97 (1,34)	0,491	0,624
3	activities	6,19 (0,87)	6,18 (0,84)	0,103	0,918
4	Working conditions	5,80 (1,01)	5,69 (1,25)	0,747	0,456
5	Organization & Management	5,49 (1,16)	5,39 (1,37)	0,673	0,502
6	Development opportunities	5,89 (1,06)	5,50 (1,36)	2,547	0,011
7	Payment	5,27 (1,50)	4,99 (1,72)	1,347	0,179

Only "development" differs significantly ($t(236.83) = 2.547, p = 0.011, d = 0.32$). Only "development opportunities" are more highly perceived in s. institutions.

In addition, it is investigated whether there are differences in JS between Catholic (N = 83 / 46.89%) and Protestant hospitals (N = 94 / 53.11%). With an AM of the total satisfaction of 5.70 (SD = 1.52), the Catholic houses show a significantly higher JS than the Protestant houses (total AM = 5.43; SD = 1.78); $t(1235.29) = 2.952; p = 0.003, d = 0.16$). Overall,

employees in Catholic institutions are significantly more satisfied than employees in Protestant institutions. However, a significant difference in favor of the Catholic houses could only be demonstrated in the category "Organization & Management" ($t(163,36) = 2.452, p = 0,015, d = 0,38$). The analysis of individual satisfaction is summarized in Table 3:

Table 3: Comparison of Catholic and Protestant Hospitals

Category	Description	catholic AM (SD)	protestant AM (SD)	t value	p
1	My Colleagues	6,41 (0,77)	6,40 (0,85)	0,082	0,935
2	Supervisor	5,90 (1,44)	6,03 (1,26)	-0,642	0,522
3	Activities	6,18 (0,88)	6,20 (0,80)	-0,100	0,920
4	Working Conditions	5,78 (1,12)	5,64 (1,33)	0,758	0,449
5	Organization & Management	5,66 (1,10)	5,16 (1,53)	2,452	0,015
6	Development opportunities	5,67 (1,29)	5,38 (1,39)	1,373	0,172
7	Payment	5,21 (1,69)	4,83 (1,69)	1,465	0,145

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The evaluation of 280 questionnaires in a total of nine hospitals shows that the JS is generally well perceived (total AM over 5.5 with Max = 7), but that there are no significant differences in the overall satisfaction of employees between c. and s. hospitals. Only "development opportunities" are more highly perceived in s. institutions. institutions to observe higher values. Hence, the hypothesis put forward at the beginning that the Christian framework of values in c. hospitals has a positive effect on the corporate culture and in further consequence on JS, could not be supported by this study.

The result of this work may be a disappointment for Christian hospitals. In their self-image, they often assume that they are closer to people than other legal entities. Based on the bible and the thoughts of the founders of hospitals, they see their task in realizing the Christian image of man (e.g., Leitbild Diakoniewerk, 2019). The missing differences to the s. hospitals could indicate that the institutional representatives of the religion cannot (any longer) make a positive influence on the staff experienceable. This could be due, on the one hand, to growing prosperity and a social trend towards secularization, but also to the fact that there are less effective "translators" of religious scriptures in everyday life. The idea that JS is important for the management of a company is obviously also relevant to the s. hospitals.

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