

MEASURES OF JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, MENTAL HEALTH AND JOB-RELATED WELL-BEING

A Benchmarking Manual

Second Edition

Chris Stride, Toby D. Wall and
Nick Catley



John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this manual is to provide benchmarking information for four widely-used measures of employee affective reactions at work. Although psychologists and others have been very industrious in developing such measures and establishing their reliability and validity, they have fallen short in supporting those instruments with adequate comparative data.

The paucity of benchmarking information is not difficult to explain. The development of a measure is a relatively self-contained task that can be accomplished by an individual or small group of people within a short period of time. Indeed, it is often undertaken as part of a larger substantive study. To obtain comparable information from a wide range of different settings, however, is a much more demanding (and intrinsically less interesting) task, which typically requires the collection of responses from large numbers of users over longer periods of time. Such data do not accumulate naturally as a function of the subsequent use of measures, be this for practical or research purposes, because authors rarely include sufficient detail in their publications.

Nonetheless, gathering information on identical instruments across samples can be almost as important as developing a measure in the first place. This is because scores on scales of employee emotional reaction have no natural or absolute meaning. A mean score of 4.15 for Job-related Anxiety–Contentment for one group of employees, for example, is of limited value by itself; but when set against a score of, say, 3.41 for another group engaged on similar work, it becomes much more interpretable. Such comparisons can be used by the practitioner or researcher for diagnostic or benchmarking purposes. Many organisations now routinely carry out employee opinion surveys incorporating such measures to inform their development plans, but in the absence of systematic comparative data they do not gain the degree of benefit from those exercises that they otherwise might.

The importance of such comparative data is firmly established in measurement theory, and is well-catered for in many areas of research and practice. Intelligence test scores, for instance, are firmly anchored in normative data, as are those for leading personality scales. Equivalent progress is needed for measures of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, mental health and

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well-being, if the full potential of the scales that have been constructed is to be realised. This manual represents one small step towards meeting that need.

MEASURES COVERED

The four measures, including their subscales and/or alternative versions, are:

1. **Job Satisfaction:** A 15-item scale (Warr, Cook & Wall, 1979) yielding both an overall scale score and two subscale scores, thus providing three measures:

Overall Job Satisfaction (15 items)

Intrinsic Job Satisfaction (7 items)

Extrinsic Job Satisfaction (8 items)

2. **Organisational Commitment:** A 9-item overall scale (Cook & Wall, 1980), which has also been used in a shorter 6-item form. The original 9-item scale had three 3-item subscales, namely Organisational Identification, Organisational Loyalty and Organisational Involvement. Of these, however, only Organisational Identification has shown the level of internal consistency reliability expected for all samples, and hence we omitted benchmarking data for the other subscales. Thus we present information for three measures:

Organisational Commitment (9 items)

Organisational Commitment (6 items)

Organisational Identification (3 items)

3. **Mental Health:** The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12; Goldberg, 1972), a 12-item scale designed to detect minor psychiatric disorder (sometimes referred to as strain), which has been scored in two main ways:

GHQ-12 original 'case' scoring method

GHQ-12 Likert scoring method

4. **Job-related Well-being:** Two scales (Warr, 1996), each of which has three main variants depending upon the number of items and the response scale used:

Job-related Anxiety–Contentment (6 items, 5-point response scale)

Job-related Anxiety (3 items, 5-point response scale)

Job-related Depression–Enthusiasm (6 items, 5-point response scale)

Job-related Depression (3 items, 5-point response scale)

Job-related Anxiety (3 items, 6-point response scale)

Job-related Depression (3 items, 6-point response scale)

CHOICE OF MEASURES

The identification of instruments to include in the manual was determined largely by their frequency of use. This is partly because the extent of use of

instruments is indicative of their theoretical and practical value. More pragmatically, however, it is also because benchmarking data become available only after instruments have been used with a large number and variety of respondents for whom there is also information about characteristics such as their age, gender and job.

To the data sets used for the original manual, we have been able to find a further 54 meeting our criteria (see below), which had data for at least one, but more usually two or more of the measures covered here. As befits this far larger and wide-ranging sample, this second edition includes a further measure (of Organisational Commitment), and for each measure features additional tables giving descriptive data broken down by the Office for National Statistics' systems for classifying organisations and individuals' occupations (see below and overleaf respectively).

INTENDED USES

The manual is intended for use by occupational and organisational psychologists, management consultants and in-house practitioners who are involved in auditing, monitoring or evaluating organisations through the use of attitude surveys. Individuals in managerial or trade union positions involved in organisational audits of employee attitudes will also benefit. The provision of benchmarking data should lead to better diagnosis of organisational problems and, by implication, better solutions.

THE COMBINED DATA SET AND ORGANISATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The 82 data sets from which the benchmarking data were obtained are described in Table 1.1 (see pp. 6–11). Collectively, those data sets include in excess of 57300 respondents from more than 170 different organisations.

To specify an organisation's industrial sector we used the 2003 UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC 2003; Office for National Statistics, 2003). This distinguishes 17 Major Industrial Sectors, ordered from A to Q; of these, 13 appear in our sample, namely:

- C Mining and quarrying
- D Manufacturing
- E Electricity, gas and water supply
- F Construction
- G Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods
- H Hotels and restaurants