

# Job Satisfaction, Flexibility, and Autonomy

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## **Abstract**

In this thesis, the relationship between job satisfaction, flexible working hours and job autonomy is examined. The purpose of this thesis is to test whether the gender or the children in the family, change in a way the relationship between job satisfaction and flexible working hours. Are women more satisfied with their job than men when working flexible working hours? Are people who are parents more satisfied with their job when they can enjoy flexibility at work? Is this different for men and women? In addition, a second aim of this study is to test whether the personality of the individual influences the relationship between job satisfaction and job autonomy. I focus on specific personal characteristics which I consider important :creativity, independence and recognition pursuit. Data from the fifth round of European Social Survey is used from 2010 including 28 countries and 12052 observations. I find that there is not a significant influence of the gender nor the children in the relationship of job satisfaction and flexible hours. Furthermore there is not a significance influence of the personality on whether someone needs autonomy to be satisfied at work.

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Research Motivation and Relevance**

Job satisfaction has been studied by many researchers for many years. Being satisfied about one's job is related with life satisfaction and total wellbeing of a person. (Judge, Bono & Locke, 2000, Wright 2005). Some studies also claim that when someone is satisfied with his job, performance is also better. (Laffaldano, Muchinsky, 1985, Wright and Russell Cropanzano, 2000, Judge et al. 2001, Clark et al. 2015) Nowadays, many people are working long hours, as a result they face conflicts between family and work. Especially women do not have the time that they would like to have for their families due to the long and not convenient working hours. (Jeffrey Hill 2005). Working in flexible working hours allows people to organize better their everyday life and reduce the work-family conflict. As it is proven by previous studies, working in flexible hours influences positively the opinion that someone has about the job. (Rothausen (1994)). People who are allowed to choose what time they can start and finish working tend to be more satisfied with their job. In this study I want to examine whether men or women consider flexible working hours more important in order to be satisfied with their job, as well as whether there is any difference between people who have children and those who do not, concerning flexible working hours and job satisfaction. I expect women and also people who have children to consider flexible working hours more important for their job satisfaction than men and people who do not have children.

Furthermore, many people face a monotonous routine at work. Some people do not have the opportunity to choose how their working day is organized. This is referred as Job autonomy and according to past studies, the more autonomous someone is at work, the more satisfied he/she is with his/her job in general.(Thompson, Prottas 2006) People who are free to choose how to organize their working day, - meaning what task they have to do, when they are going to do it and how it is going to be done-, feel more confident, relaxed and successful so they are more satisfied than those who follow particular rules every working day and have no influence to the way they organize their work. In this study I would like to examine which kind of people are more satisfied with their job when they are able to be autonomous. For this reason I choose to test for some personal characteristics which may influence the relationship between Job autonomy and Job

satisfaction. The first characteristic is creativity. I expect that the more creative one is the more satisfaction he gets by being allowed to have autonomy at work. A creative person usually has innovative ideas and invents new ways to perform tasks. The fact that a creative person is allowed to adapt his ideas in the everyday working life may make him more satisfied with his job. Secondly, the next personal characteristic is independence. I expect that independent people want to be independent at work as well. They cannot compromise easily with rules, doing the same task every day and not be allowed to take decisions about how they are going to organize their own day. Finally, I examine whether the recognition that somebody can get from others plays a role on whether he needs autonomy to be satisfied about his job. I expect that the more important someone perceives recognition, the more satisfied will he be about his job by being allowed to have autonomy. People who like their work to be recognized and try their best to achieve that, may find the opportunity through autonomy to prove to the co-workers how good they are.

## **1.2 Research Questions and Methods**

Summarizing, the purpose of this study is to examine at first whether the gender and the children influence somehow the relationship between flexible working hours and job satisfaction. Consequently, the first research question is:

1. *Is the relationship between flexible working hours and job satisfaction different for women and men and for those who have children and those who do not?*

Secondly, I examine whether some personality characteristics influence the relationship between job autonomy and job satisfaction. So the second research question of this study is:

2. *Is the relationship between job autonomy and job satisfaction affected by the personality of the individual?*

In order to answer these questions, I used data from the European Social Survey which includes questions about job satisfaction and general working conditions. First I use OLS to test whether flexible working hours and job autonomy are correlated with job satisfaction, and subsequently I add into the regression controls and interactions effects.

Taking job satisfaction as the dependent variable and flexible working hours as the independent, I control for “female” and “children”, as well as the interaction effect between the flexible working hours and these two variables. In this way, I am going to see whether females or parents need more the flexible hours to be happy about their job or not. Then I run another OLS regression adding the interaction effect of “flexible working hours”, “female” and “children” to see whether there is a difference between men and women that have children. Then I consider job autonomy as the independent variable and I control for some personal characteristics, as well as the interaction effect between job autonomy and each of the personality characteristics, to see whether personality finally plays a part in the relation between job autonomy and job satisfaction.

### **1.3 Main Findings**

From the results of the OLS regressions, it seems that flexible working hours are equally important for men and women as well as for people who have children and those who do not. Similarly, being creative, independent or recognition seeking, does not change the relationship between job autonomy and job satisfaction. The interaction effects are not significant and close to zero.

### **1.4 Structure**

The second chapter of this study gives a brief overview of the past literature on job satisfaction, flexible working hours, and job autonomy and how these are related to each other. Afterwards, in chapter 3, the data and the methods that were used to analyze them are presented. Next, the fourth chapter displays the interpretation of the results and finally the last chapter presents the main findings and a discussion of them.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is considered to be a very important factor that influences the total well-being of a person. Since the early twentieth century, many researchers have tried to define job satisfaction and determine its parameters. Locke (1976) defines job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences", while according to Schermerhorn (1993) job satisfaction is an affective or emotional response towards various aspects of an employee's work. Dawis (1994), Cranny, Smith and Stone (1992) defined job satisfaction as an affect- or feeling and emotion- resulting from one's evaluation of the situation. However, several other authors define job satisfaction as an attitude instead of an affect, feeling or emotion. Brief (1998) for example, states that job satisfaction "is an attitude towards one's job". Similarly, Wiener (1982) defines job satisfaction as an attitude toward work-related conditions, facets, or aspects of the job.

According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, job satisfaction can be caused by certain factors of the workplace. He distinguishes intrinsic (recognition, achievement, or personal growth) and extrinsic conditions (company policies, supervisory practices, or wages/salary) of the job itself that cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding one's overall image about his/her job.

Previous surveys have found that there are many different objective and subjective factors that may influence job satisfaction. According to Sousa-Poza (2000), the interest that someone has in the job, the relationship with the boss, colleagues, independence, security, whether the job is useful or helpful, are parameters positively correlated with job satisfaction. In addition, employee's well-being and workplace happiness have been found to be closely correlated with job satisfaction. (Wright 2005). According to Igalens and Roussel (1999) employees are more satisfied with the compensation they get for what they have done, the more satisfied the employees are with their job (internal equity). Similarly, the more satisfied they are with their own compensation compared to other employees, the more satisfied they are with their job (external equity)

## **2.2 Job satisfaction and flexible working hours**

Many studies indicate that flexible working hours can improve job satisfaction. The extent to which someone can decide the time to start and finish working is positively correlated with how satisfied he is with his job (Orpen 1981; Clark 2001). Scandura and Lankau (1997) have stated some reasons for this positive relation between flexibility of working hours and job satisfaction. The employees consider this opportunity of flexibility as a concern for work and family by their companies so this increases their positive feeling about the company and generally their job. Moreover, flexibility provides workers with control as they can plan their working day and the hours that suit their personal needs. Finally, social comparison processes can lead to an increase in job satisfaction for those who enjoy flexibility. (Adams 1965)

Flexibility in working hours is considered to be a greater benefit for those employees who have a family and face work-family conflict. Higgins, Duxbury, Irving (1992) argue that conflict between work and family diminish employee's perception of quality of job. It has been also found that - regarding job satisfaction- flexibility is more important for women than men (Scandura and Lankau(1997), Greenhaus (1989)) and for people who have family responsibilities. Teresa Rothausen (1994) found that flexibility plays a more important role in overall job satisfaction for parent workers than those who have no children. According to Tammy D. Allen (2001), employees who perceived that the organization is less family supportive, experienced more work family conflict and less job satisfaction than those who perceived that the organization is family supportive.

## **2.3 Job Satisfaction and Job Autonomy**

Job autonomy is the ability to decide when, where, and how the job is to be done (Bailyn, 1993; Clark 2001). The past literature claims that the degree of employee's autonomy at work is positively related with the total well-being and job satisfaction. Thompson and Prottas (2006) found that employees with higher levels of job autonomy were more likely to be satisfied with their job. Furthermore, Parker, Axtel and Turner (2001) states that autonomy at work plays an important role in promoting job safety and therefore job satisfaction.

Heller and Mount (2002) tested how the Big Five traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience and Agreeableness) are correlated with job satisfaction. They found that Neuroticism, Extraversion, Conscientiousness demonstrated moderate correlations with job satisfaction, while Openness and Experience demonstrated comparably weak correlations with job satisfaction.

However, other studies such as Hundley (2001) find that the personality of the employee does not play a significant role to the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction. Thomas Lange (2009) and Benz and Frey (2004) claim that the potential differences in personality cannot account for job satisfaction differences for self-employed individuals. The former study, uses data from European Social survey as the present study. However, the purpose of this study is to explain why the self-employed people are more satisfied with their job than the salaried workers. It is found that the relationship of self-employment and job satisfaction is explained largely by autonomy and independence and less by the personality. Regarding the personal characteristics, he tests for creativity and recognition as well but also for optimism, depression and positivity. Benz and Frey (2009) also test whether the personality has any influence on the relationship between the job autonomy, that a self-employed person can have, and the satisfaction he gets from job. They use data from European countries (the German Socio-Economic Panel Survey, the British Household Panel Survey and the Swiss Household Panel Survey). In contrast to the present study, they do not test for personal characteristics but the way employees perceive their job. (helpful to the society, possibility of helping others, income, etc.)



## **3. Methodology and Data**

### **3.1 Data**

The data used in this study comes from the European Social Survey which is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted every two years across Europe since 2001. ESS focuses on changes in attitude and behavior regarding political, social and moral issues. The specific data have been taken from Round 5, from the survey conducted in 2010 in 28 European countries. The overall sample size of this survey was 52000 units. After removing answers -to at least one question of interest- with values: “Not applicable”, “Refusal”, “Don't know” and “No answer”, the sample size was reduced to 12053 units.

The key variables of this study are: job satisfaction, job autonomy, flexible working hours, gender, children, and some personality characteristics (creative, recognition, independent)

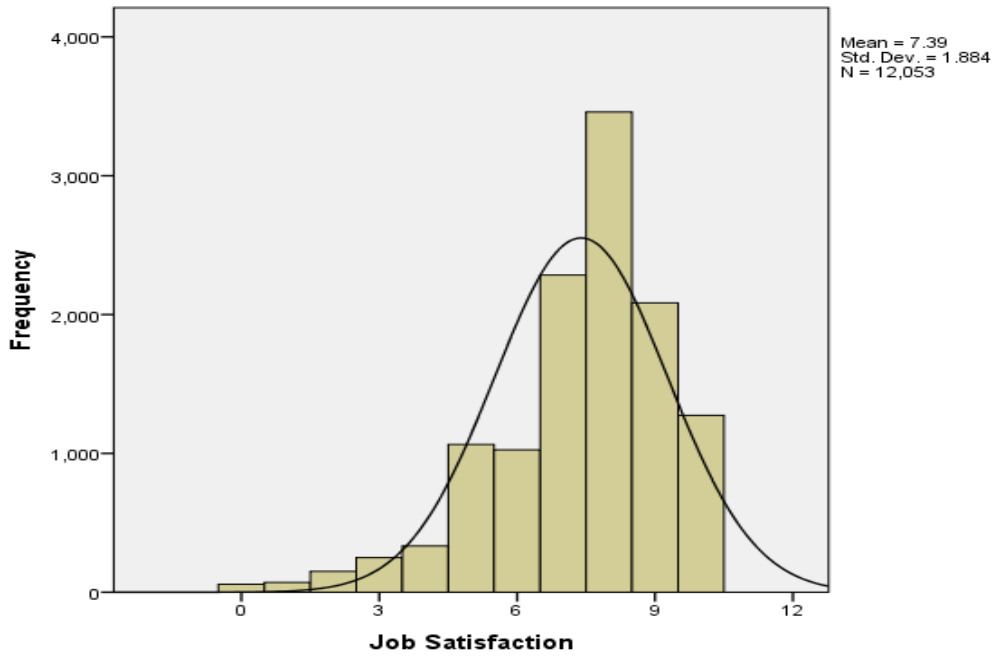
### **3.2 Measures of the data**

Regarding job satisfaction, the responders had to answer the question: “*How satisfied are you with your main job?*” They had to answer at a scale from 1 to 10 where answer “1” means “extremely dissatisfied” and answer “10 extremely satisfied” . About the flexibility of the working hours the responders had to answer: “*Current job: Can you decide what time to start/finish work?*” The answers are in a scale of 1(not at all true) till 4 (very true). Job autonomy is measured by asking “*how much the management at your work allows/allowed you to decide how your own daily work is/was organised?*” The answers can take values from 1 (I have no influence) till 10 (I have complete control).

The dummy variable female takes the value 0 if the respondent is male and the value 1 is she is female. Furthermore, individuals were asked whether there are children living in the household or not. Value 1 implies yes and value 0 implies no.

Figures are provided below examining the distribution of job satisfaction for the whole population as well as for men and women separately.

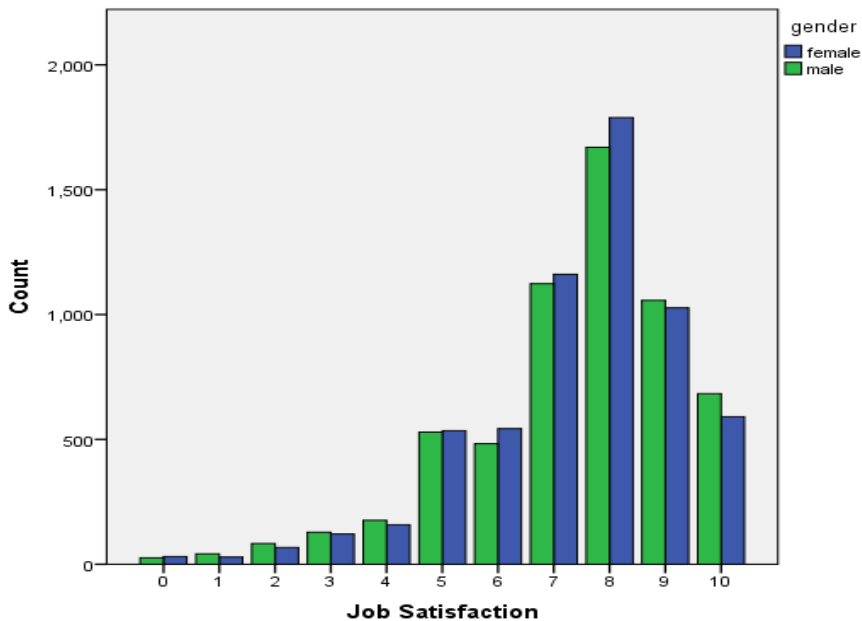
**Figure 1:** Distribution of Job satisfaction. (Histogram)



The histogram in Figure 1 shows that the data are skewed to the left. This means that the median (8) is larger than the mean (7.39). So most of the people are quite satisfied with their jobs.

Next, figure 2 below shows the distribution of job satisfaction for males and females separately.

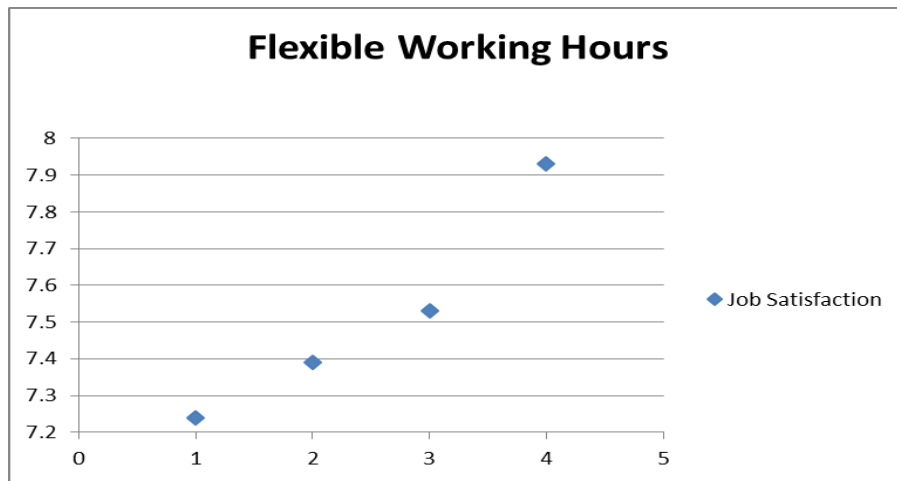
**Figure 2:** Distribution of job satisfaction separately for men and women



As one can see from the figure, there is no notable difference at the levels of job satisfaction between the two genders.

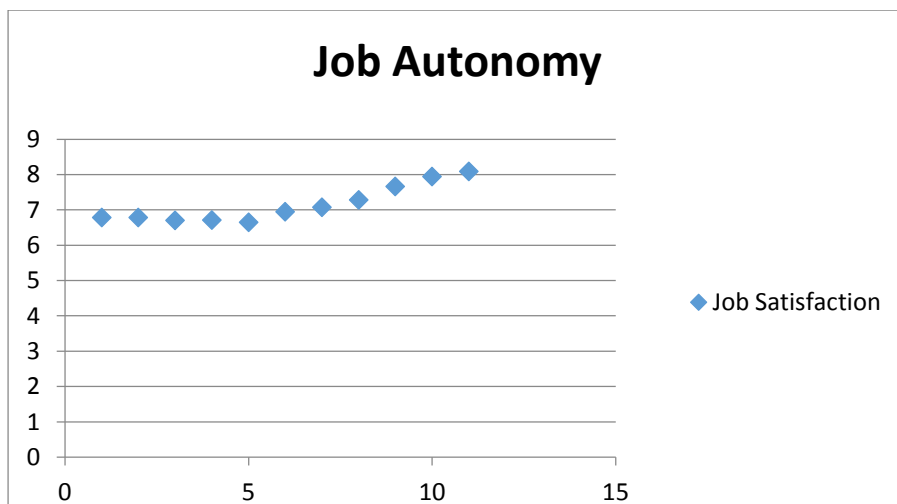
Next, Figure 3 shows the relation between flexible working hours and job satisfaction.

**Figure 3:** Relation of Job Satisfaction and Flexible Working Hours (On the y-axis: the mean levels of Job Satisfaction, on the x-axis: the scale of Flexible Working Hours)



The figure shows a positive relation between job satisfaction and flexible working hours. When flexibility increases, so does job satisfaction.

**Figure 4:** Relation of Job Satisfaction and Job Autonomy (On the y-axis: mean levels of Job Satisfaction, on x-axis: scale of Job Autonomy)



As we can see from figure 4, there is also a positive relation between job satisfaction and job autonomy. However it is not very strong.

Regarding the personality of the responders, I selected some of their answers concerning human values. The respondents had to answer the questions below, from which I deducted some characteristics of their personality:

*“How important is it for you to make your own decisions and be free?”* (Independent)

*“How important is it for you to be successful and people recognize your achievements?”* (Recognition)

*“How important is it for you to think new ideas and being creative?”* (Creative)

Here is a table including some descriptive statistics about the personality characteristics.

**Table 1**

personality	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St. Deviation
Creative	12053	1	6	2.52	1.174
Independent	12053	1	6	2.28	1.08
Recognition	12053	1	6	2.99	1.268

The correlation of job satisfaction and the independent variables are shown in Table 2 below. The table shows that Job Satisfaction is positively correlated with flexible working hours and job autonomy and negatively correlated with the rest of the variables. So, creative, independent and recognition seeking people are less satisfied with their jobs. Flexible working hours are positively correlated with job autonomy and female while negatively correlated with the rest of the independent variables. So women and people who have autonomy at work tend to work in flexible working hours as well, while the opposite happens for the rest of the variables. People who have children tend to work less in flexible working hours. That may happens because they are afraid of

a reduction at their salary. Parents usually work long hours to be able to obtain enough resources for their families. So working in flexible working hours may not be their priority. Creative people do not work much at flexible working hours possibly because their type of job does not allow for that. Maybe that is one of the reasons why they are not satisfied with their jobs. The same may apply for independent people. Surprisingly, job autonomy is also negatively correlated with children, creativity and independence. The fact that people are not allowed to decide how their daily work is organized, does not mean that they would not wanted to. Many people compromise with jobs that may not fit perfectly with their personality but provide them other benefits which they consider more important.

**Table 2: Correlation of Job Satisfaction and independent variables**

Correlations calculated using 12053 observations. \* and \*\* indicate significance at the .05, and .01 levels, respectively

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Job Satisfaction							
2.FlexibleWorkingHours	0.115**						
3. Job Autonomy	0.258**	0.352**					
4. Female	-0.005	0.107**	0.003				
5.Children	-0.005	-0.022*	-0.035**	0.015			
6.Creative	-0.095**	-0.049**	-0.103**	-0.032**	0.015		
7. Independent	-0.054**	-0.045**	-0.081**	-0.017	0.019*	0.284**	
8.Recognition	-0.032**	-0.015	0.006	- 0.38**	-0.024**	0.252**	0.288**

### 3.3 Methodological approach

I start this analysis by a linear regression with job satisfaction as a dependent variable and flexible working hours as well as job autonomy as independent variables. My first goal is to examine whether there is a positive correlation between these two variables with the dependent as mentioned in the past literature. My regression specification will be:

$$1) \text{ Job satisfaction} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * (\text{Flexible working hours}) + \beta_2 * (\text{Job autonomy})$$
$$H_0 = \beta_1 = \beta_2 = 0$$

Next, I want to test whether there is an interaction effect between flexible working hours and some other variables (female, children). Thus I would like to see if any of these variables changes the nature and the strength of the relationship between job satisfaction and flexible working hours. For this reason I create new variables with value equal to the product of flexible working hours and each of the other variables. Finally, since I am interested in examining whether some personality characteristics can influence the relationship between job satisfaction and job autonomy, I again created variables with value equal to the product of job autonomy and each of the personality characteristics.

A linear regression will take place with job satisfaction as a dependent variable. flexible working hours, female, children the interaction effect between flexible working hours and each of the two other variables, job autonomy and each of the personality characteristics as well as the interaction between job autonomy and each of the personality characteristics are going to be the independent variables. Here is the regression specification:

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * (\text{Job Autonomy}) + \beta_2 * (\text{Flexible working hours}) + \beta_3 * (\text{female}) + \beta_4 * (\text{children}) + \beta_5 * (\text{Flexible working hours} * \text{female}) + \beta_6 * (\text{Flexible working hours} * \text{children}) + \beta_7 * (\text{creative}) + \beta_8 * (\text{independent}) + \beta_9 * (\text{recognition}) + \beta_{10} * (\text{Job Autonomy} * \text{creative}) + \beta_{11} * (\text{Job Autonomy} * \text{independent}) + \beta_{12} * (\text{Job Autonomy} * \text{recognition})$$

$$H_0 = \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = \beta_5 = \beta_6 = \beta_7 = \beta_8 = \beta_9 = \beta_{10} = \beta_{11} = \beta_{12} = 0$$

Finally, I run a third linear regression to test whether there is a three way interaction between flexible working hours, gender and children. I use all the control and interaction effects of the

previous regression and I add a variable that is the product of flexible working hours, female and children. In this way I am going to examine whether there is a difference, regarding job satisfaction, between men and women, when they have children and work in flexible hours. . Here is the regression specification:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Job Satisfaction} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 * (\text{Job Autonomy}) + \beta_2 * (\text{Flexible working hours}) + \beta_3(\text{female}) * + \\ & \beta_4 * (\text{children}) + \beta_5 * (\text{Flexible working hours} * \text{female}) + \beta_6 * (\text{Flexible working hours} * \text{children}) + \\ & \beta_7 * (\text{creative}) + \beta_8 * (\text{independent}) + \beta_9 * (\text{recognition}) + \beta_{10} * (\text{Job Autonomy} * \text{creative}) + \beta_{11} * (\text{Job} \\ & \text{Autonomy} * \text{independent}) + \beta_{12} * (\text{Job Autonomy} * \text{recognition}) + \beta_{13} * (\text{Female} * \text{children}) + \beta_{14} \\ & * (\text{Flexible working hours} * \text{female} * \text{children}) \end{aligned}$$

$$H_0 = \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = \beta_5 = \beta_6 = \beta_7 = \beta_8 = \beta_9 = \beta_{10} = \beta_{11} = \beta_{12} = \beta_{13} = \beta_{14} = 0$$

## 4. Empirical Findings and Results

This chapter presents the main research findings. First, the linear regression of job satisfaction on flexible working hours and job autonomy is discussed. Then, the regression of job satisfaction on flexible working hours and job autonomy is presented with control variables and interaction effects with gender, children and personality characteristics. Finally there is a third regression including one more variable which is the interaction effect between flexible hours, female and children.

### 4.1 Without controls and interaction effects

Starting with the first linear regression, I examine whether there is a positive relation between Job satisfaction and Flexible working hours as well as whether there is a relation between Job satisfaction and Job Autonomy. By looking at the first column of the table below, we can see that there is a significant ( $p=0.004 < 0.010$ ), although not very high but positive relation (0.048) of Flexible working hours to Job satisfaction. Moreover, Job Autonomy has a significant ( $p=0.000 < 0.010$ ) and higher positive relation to Job Satisfaction (0.142). So we can conclude that people who work in flexible hours as well as those who can decide how to organize their working day

seem to be more satisfied with their jobs. Finally the Adjusted  $R^2$  is 0.073 which means that 7.3 % of the total variation in Job Satisfaction is explained by Flexible working hours and Job autonomy.

#### **4.2 With controls and interaction effects**

Next, we include controls and interaction effects in the second column of the table below. As we can see, there is still a significant ( $p=0.001$  and  $0.00$  respectively) and positive relation between flexible working hours and job autonomy and job satisfaction (0.047 and 0.137). In order to make the results more interpretable, I mean-centered the interaction terms. The coefficient of “flexible working hours” did not change after including the control variables as well as the interaction effects. The coefficient of job autonomy slightly decreased at the second regression. By putting one control variable per regression, we can see that this decrease of the coefficient of job autonomy is due to the control variable “creative”. By looking at the correlation table (Table 2) we can see that “creative” is negatively correlated with job autonomy and by looking at the coefficients table (Table 3) we can see that it is also negatively correlated with job satisfaction (-0.099). Therefore, the coefficient decreased due to the positive bias, caused by including the variable “creative” at the second regression. The omission of this variable at the first regression caused an upward bias at the coefficient of job autonomy. (Column 1)

The coefficient for the variable “female” is negative (-0.042). This indicates that women are less satisfied with their jobs than men, but this relation is not significant. So the gender does not have an influence on job satisfaction. The coefficient of the interaction between flexible working hours and female is 0.038 indicating that the relation of flexible working hours and job satisfaction is stronger for women than for men. However this relation is not significant, so we can conclude that Job satisfaction does not change differently by being a woman when being allowed to work in flexible working hours. The coefficient for “children” is positive indicating that people who have children tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. The coefficient for the interaction effect of children with flexible working hours is negative, indicating that people who are parents seem to perceive less important the flexible working hours for their Job satisfaction. However, these relations are not significant.

Regarding the personality characteristics, one out of three seems to have a significant effect on Job satisfaction. Being creative seems to have a significant although negative relation to Job



Satisfaction (-0.099), indicating that the more creative someone is, the less satisfied he/she is with his/her job. By looking at the significance level of all the other coefficients, as well as the coefficients themselves, which are very close to zero, we can conclude that being independent or perceiving recognition of the others very important, do not strengthen or weaken the extent to which someone is satisfied with his job. Finally, as none of the coefficients of the interaction effects is significant, we can conclude that job satisfaction does not change differently, while someone is creative, independent, or perceiving recognition of others very important, given the fact that he/she can have job autonomy.

Lastly, the third column of Table 3 includes the interaction effect between flexible working hours, gender and children. The coefficient of the three way interaction is negative (-0.1) indicating that women who have children are not more satisfied with their job when they work in flexible hours. However this is not significant as  $p=0.127 > 0.05$ . Moreover there is not a remarkable change at the coefficients of the other variables by including this three way interaction into the regression.

**Table 3**

Column 1: coefficients of first regression, Column 2: coefficients for the second regression. Column 3: coefficients for the third regression (three way interaction) P-values in parentheses

Independent Variable	1	2	3
Intercept	6.419	6.814	6.811
Flexible Working Hours	**0.048 (0.004)	**0.048 (0.004)	**0.049 (0.004)
Job Autonomy	**0.142 (0.000)	**0.137 (0.000)	**0.137 (0.000)
Female		-0.042 (0.210)	-0.043 (0.195)
Children		0.019 (0.586)	0.024 (0.486)
Flexible Working Hours * Female		0.038 (0.236)	0.036 (0.257)

Flexible Working Hours * Children	-0.013 (0.700)	-0.010 (0.758)	
Creative	** -0.099 (0.000)	** -0.100 (0.000)	
Independent	-0.020 (0.216)	-0.020 (0.222)	
Recognition	-0.021 (0.125)	-0.021 (0.128)	
Job Autonomy * Creative	0.002 (0.628)	0.002 (0.641)	
Job Autonomy * Independent	0.006 (0.204)	0.006 (0.201)	
Job Autonomy * Recognition	0.000 (0.954)	-0.001 (0.949)	
Female* children		0.011 (0.874)	
Flexible Working Hours * Female *Children		-0.100 (0.127)	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.073	0.077	0.073
N= 12053			

To sum up, I found that the interaction effects are not significant. So, the gender and the children, as well as both of them together, do not change the relationship between flexible working hours and job satisfaction. Similarly, the three personality characteristics do not change, in a way, the relationship between job autonomy and job satisfaction.

## 5. Conclusions

This paper uses data from the European Social Survey (ESS) to analyze the relation between job satisfaction, job autonomy and flexible working hours, and which factors may change this relation. First I run a linear regression to test whether there is an actual relation between job satisfaction and flexible hours, job autonomy. Then I run a second regression in order to test whether the relationship between flexible working hours and job satisfaction changes differently for men and women and for people who have children or not. Subsequently, I also test whether the relation between job autonomy and job satisfaction changes differently depending on the personality of the individual. According to my expectations, women and those who are parents would be more satisfied with their job if they could work in flexible working hours. However the results of the second regression show that there is no difference regarding the gender and the children on how the relation between flexible hours and satisfaction changes. Moreover, conforming to the results, the personality characteristics do not seem to change the relationship between autonomy and satisfaction at work, which is again in contrast to my expectations. In conclusion, flexible working hours and job autonomy, seem to influence positively the overall image for the job. Nevertheless, the gender, the children and the personality of the participants appear that they do not strengthen or weaken the relations between job satisfaction, flexible hours and job autonomy respectively.

Although the data of this thesis include 12053 observations which is a large enough sample to draw conclusions, there may be some limitations. First of all, the European social survey was conducted in 28 European countries out of the 50. So we cannot conclude that the answers of the participants are representative for Europe. Secondly, the participants had to answer the questions at a face-to-face interview which lasted an hour. Regarding the questions about the personality characteristics, people may feel embarrassed or reluctant to answer honestly. Maybe an anonymous written questionnaire would solve this problem. In addition, there were many unanswered questions. I consider only the cases that all of my relevant questions were answered. When someone failed to answer one question, the specific participant and the rest of his answers were excluded from the sample. Therefore, the sample was greatly reduced. Finally, although the past literature supports my research question about females and flexible working hours, I did not

consider the fact that women nowadays, especially in the most of the European countries, focus a lot on their careers, work as much as men and have almost the same expectations from their job.

For further research I would suggest a similar study focusing on specific labor sector, anonymous questionnaires. One can also extent the study by controlling for age and years of experience of each participant.

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