Reviewer’s report

Title: Organization Specific Predictors of Job Satisfaction: Findings From a Canadian Multi-Site Quality of Work Life Cross-Sectional Survey

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Reviewer: Dr AS Ostry

Level of interest: not specified

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

The best part of the rewrite by Krueger et al. is the tightening of the discussion/explanation about the analysis and increased clarity in general with writing and papers.

My only remaining unease about the paper is the fact that predictors (independent variables) are clearly not independent of the dependent variables. For example, on page 14 the predictors, at site 1, of job satisfaction are satisfaction with the organization's recognition of employee contributions and being satisfied with patient resident care. At site 2, on the same page, an independent predictor is "being satisfied with pay level". This issue is what Tage Kristensen calls the triviality trap. These independent variables are highly predictive because they are in fact part and parcel of the outcome variable. How can satisfaction with patient resident care not be a component of someone's evaluation of their job satisfaction?

This goes to the heart of my previous criticism about lack of theoretical clarity. These 3 supposedly independent variables are satisfaction based. The problem with the way the independent variables were selected (aside from the management bias in the selection committee) is that there is no clear separation between some of these and the outcome variable. This is due to the lack of theoretical clarity here.

While the author has responded in his response to me with a theoretical rationale it is seems that this was not applied in their selection of independent variables.

For their own sake, the authors should re-apply a more rigorous theoretical frame around these many independent variables and exclude those that are clearly related to the outcome variable and re-run the analysis.

Finally, “the variables to be included in the QWL survey were selected by the QWL task force based on
criteria such as relevance, readability, psychometric properties, potential for offensiveness etc and their potential for association with job satisfaction". People usually select independent variables in a slightly more arms length way based on some theoretical model. Was there any theoretical guidance for these people in the focus groups?

Finally, the notion that "it was felt by the Task Force that such issues (meaning the threat of unemployment during this traumatic time of restructuring and downsizing in these institutions) could negatively impact the entire study" is unclear. I don't understand how in an environment where unemployment and restructuring is taking place to the level indicated by the authors that you can conduct a job satisfaction survey ignoring these issues. Are the authors implying that "such issues" i.e. dealing with the downsizing issue were too politically "loaded" to be incorporated into the survey? If so, that is precisely why they should have been included in the survey.

While recommending publication of this article I think that the authors should address the issue of the impact on job satisfaction of the widespread unemployment/restructuring that was occurring during their study with a paragraph of explanation/discussion and devote a paragraph in their discussion to the limitations the that lack of separation between some of their independent variables and the outcome variable in their study.

**Competing interests:**

None declared.