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 C. Gail Hepburn

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the compulsory revisions

Reviewer Response to Author's Comments.

Response to number of variables in the analysis

This is not a case of different disciplines having different approaches to data analysis. I have taken the opportunity to discuss your analysis with colleagues who have backgrounds in epidemiology and believe that rephrasing my concern in terms of outcome events may make my point clearer. To avoid overfitting (or underfitting) and unreliable risk estimates you need a minimum of 10 outcome events per independent variable (see Concato et al 1993). This ratio is based on the 'smaller number of the two complementary outcome events' (p. 203). Therefore, for each site, you need to provide the number of individuals in each of your satisfied and unsatisfied groups, and ensure that the smaller of the two groups has a ratio of 10 outcome events per independent variable. For example, in order to enter 19 independent variables into a logistic regression analysis you require 190 individuals in your smallest group. Several of your sites will not meet this criterion. The wide confidence intervals in your results are consistent with overfitting. I recommend removing variables from the analysis for theoretical reasons, or combining items to create more scale scores and thereby reducing the number of variables in your analysis. Alternatively, can you combine sites?


Response to Clarification of QWL & satisfaction
I believe room for confusion still exists, especially for a naive reader. My understanding is that you are using a job satisfaction item to operationalize individuals’ general perception of QWL, yet, you discuss the two constructs as if they are separate constructs in paragraphs one and two of your 'Background' piece. Indeed, you talk about a correlation between the two constructs in Blegan (1993). How did they operationalize QWL? A clearer definition of the two constructs and how they relate to one another must appear in the background section.

Response to psychometric properties.

It is unfortunate that the psychometric properties were not part of the development phase of the project. It is important to state this.

Response to descriptions of the questionnaire

I was happy to see efforts to clarify the questionnaire. Please make the link to Table 3 earlier (on p. 6). You are still not entirely clear about which items are used to create scales and which are not. For example, on p. 6 you are not clear that the 3 questions on supervisory support are used to create a scale, and on p. 7 you make reference to 'a 2-item scale which reflected the demands of one's work', but the two items appear separately in Table 3. Please include the psychometric properties of all scale scores. I am not asking for the reliabilities of the original scales, rather for the reliabilities (alphas) of the scales you actually have used in this study.

Response to implementation of questionnaire

I recognize that describing the implementation procedures would add to the length of your document—however, based on the different response rates across organizations, some assurance is needed that these differences in implementation did not affect response rates.

Response to comment on having inside knowledge.

Some of this response should be included in the paper—readers will wonder what 'inside knowledge' means.

Competing interests:

None declared.