

**Job Flexibility and job satisfaction among Mexican professionals:
Do gender, dependents, and age matter?**

Track: Culture, Social and Ethical Issues

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Generations, and Dependents

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Abstract

We study how job flexibility influence overall job satisfaction among Mexican professionals, and focus on the role of key demographic moderators relevant to the Mexican culture. We explore how this relationship may be more important for women, employees with dependents such as children and elder parents, and younger generations of professionals. We found that job flexibility was related to job satisfaction. This relationship was stronger for employees without dependents, as well as for younger generations of professionals (e.g., Millennials). Surprisingly, this effect did not differ by gender. These results imply that age has a strong role in the importance of job flexibility, which is more important for younger generations of workers.

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Job flexibility is an important aspect of people's job as the potential to influence a number of significant work-related attitudes and behaviors. Job flexibility refers to employees' ability to determine and change their work schedule to manage and balance life responsibilities (Rothausen, 1994). Job flexibility has been described as a facet of job satisfaction, but the role between these attitudes can differ across individual and contextual factors. Some scholars argue that job flexibility is more important for the job satisfaction and organizational well-being of women workers than for male workers. One reason may be that, in many cultures, women are more involved in family responsibilities than men are. For instance, family duties represent about twice the work for women than for men in Latin American nations (Jian, 2013), most of which is also unpaid. The importance of job flexibility may also differ by age, culture, family status, and life stage (Rothausen, Gonzalez, & Griffin, 2009).

Scholars should understand why job flexibility matters and assess how individual factors shape how job flexibility influences job satisfaction. One problem, however, is that many of the demographic and cultural factors that shape job flexibility are interrelated. For instance, job flexibility may vary across gender, but one reason may be that women have more family responsibilities—caring for young children and for elderly, disabled or sick family members—than men do. This

suggests that the moderating effects of having dependents and gender are conflated. Job flexibility may also matter more for older than younger workers (Chao, 2005; Eisner, 2005; Gursoy, Maier, & Chin, 2008; Kooij et al., 2010). Similarly, this reasoning implies that job flexibility matters to older individuals because they need to take care of dependents. The literature on global generations suggests one alternative by arguing that younger generations around the world (e.g., Millennials) value job flexibility more than other age groups do (Susaeta et al., 2013). Thus, it is important to assess this difference in a nuanced matter, minding potential confounding effects.

Like other organizational behavior themes, most job satisfaction studies have been conducted in Western societies. Although job satisfaction is a heavily researched topic (Judge et al., 2001), it is actually understudied in developing economies (Karimi, 2009). The manner in which professionals assess the importance of job flexibility may vary across the world with a pattern different from the West. For example, cultural femininity (Hofstede, 1980) or gender egalitarianism (House et al., 2004), and institutional factors such as the economy and family structure (e.g., patriarchal norms) could influence the importance of job flexibility (Therborn, 2014). Professionals/employees across nations differ in family responsibilities and obligations, size of their families, age when having children, societal norms about the elderly, and number of working hours. Understanding why people around the work are happy, content, or satisfied with their jobs can help managers and organizations fully reap the rewards of job satisfaction.

Accordingly, our objective in this study is to examine how job flexibility influences overall job satisfaction, taking into consideration the moderating effects of gender, dependents (e.g., children and elderly, disabled, and sick family members), and age. We begin with a nuanced theoretical look at the relationship between job flexibility and these demographic drivers. Furthermore, we discuss the cultural and societal context of our setting—Mexico—which is important in our theoretical development (Tsui, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007).

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a work attitude that denotes how people feel about their jobs in general (Spector, 1997). Its importance lies in that it reflects an overall sentiment about an employee's well-being, and its relationship to important outcomes such as work engagement and performance (Judge et al., 2001). One perspective on job satisfaction research emphasizes distinct facets or dimensions, and global or overall job satisfaction can be understood as the sum of workers' satisfaction with distinct aspects of facets of their jobs, such as its pay, benefits, opportunities for promotion, supervisor, coworkers, and the nature of work itself, among others (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983).

Job flexibility

Job flexibility is an antecedent to overall job satisfaction (Rothausen, 1994) and an important predictor of employees' perception of the way job interferes with personal life (Hill et al., 2010). Although job flexibility once was not

considered an important job satisfaction facet (Scarpello & Cambell, 1983), it has been discussed as central to satisfaction (Rothausen, 1994). Job flexibility is different from the actual number of hours worked (Rothausen, 1994). People in different jobs and industries are subject to distinct formal and informal norms about work hours. The actual number of hours worked may also be tied to culture, work centrality, and the economy. This distinction is important. Although jobs with lower work hour requirements tend to be more flexible, job flexibility actually relates to independence and ability to modify working hours and time spent in the office (e.g., flextime), and could even allow people to work longer (Rothausen, 1994). Some workers may not have the flexibility to choose how much or when they work, but some do have job flexibility even when they work long hours.

Culture's Role

Work-family demands are an important determinant of job satisfaction that is related to job flexibility and culture (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Bruck, Allen, & Spector, 2002). If unmet by available resources, such demands may lead to work-family conflict, a role stressor that incites dissatisfaction (Beehr & Glazer, 2005). Past research has shown that work-family interrelation is practiced and rationalized differently by collectivistic cultures, such as that of Mexico, from individualistic cultures (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; Yang et al., 2000).

Researchers must develop and implement theories appropriate to accommodate both cultural and socioeconomic trends (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). Our hypotheses are relevant to a Mexican context. From an international management perspective, this is a context-dependent or single-country study that seeks to consider locally relevant and endemic organizational phenomena, rather than compare across nations (Tsi, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007). By focusing on Mexico, we seek to provide a rich contextualized description of the national context and paying deep attention to the nation's cultural, demographic, and institutional environment, including those related to gender, dependents, and age. Relative to the USA and many other rich, developed countries, Mexico is high in uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and collectivism (Hofstede, 2006; Kirkman, Lowe, & Gilbson, 2006). This implies that Mexican workers, may be prone to struggle with work-family conflict (Joplin et al., 2003). Emphasizing groups and collectives drives people to spend more time with their close circle of people, such as the family (Steers & Sanchez-Runde, 2002).

Taking collectivism into consideration may help predict how members of a society view themselves as part of a group or collective, and how they treat others in such group or collective (Gundykunst, 1998), including the pursuit of interpersonal harmony (Farh et al., 2004). Early (1998) stated that collectivism is related to conformity, obedience, and dependability. Yang and colleagues (2000) related the differences in collectivism and individualism to family interaction. Individualistic cultures such as the U.S. see work as a way to achieve personal and professional realization, and the amount of time spent for job accomplishments is perceived as being more devoted to self. On the other hand, in collectivistic

societies such as China, people recognize an individual in terms of social networks, and work is seen as meeting the duties and obligations of the group (Yang et al., 2000).

Rothausen and colleagues (2009) examined the importance of job flexibility in a collectivistic society (the Philippines) with individualistic society (U.S.) and found that job flexibility affects job satisfaction above and beyond the effects of traditionally-measured facets. Other scholars also paid attention to familism, a form of collectivism that emphasizes family identification, loyalty, solidarity, and attachment (Sabogal et al., 1987; Gaines et al., 1997; Spector et al., 2004). The work-family interface may well depend on individualism and collectivism and differ across nations, and Individualists are more likely to emphasize self-achievements through work, while collectivists may be more concerned with family obligations and demands (Triandis et al., 1988). For instance, relatively more individualistic Spain and collectivistic Latin American differ in the existence and application of work policies that facilitate balancing work, family, and personal life (Carrier, Llorente, & Grau, 2012). People in collectivistic societies tend to be more sensitive on non-work issues (e.g., family and personal aspects), including job flexibility (Poelmas, 2005).

One may expect that working less hours may more common in collectivistic societies, so that employees are able to spend more time with their families. However, many collectivistic societies work longer hours than individualistic societies. This includes Mexico, where employees work an average of 50 hours a week, the second highest in all Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (OECD, 2015). Spector and colleagues (2004) found that people in Latin American worked the most hours and had the largest families, but reported the highest job satisfaction. Although this seems counter-intuitive, it is consistent with research on collectivism and duty to the family. A combination of cultural and economic factors may drive Latin American workers to view working long hours as a way for provide for the family, rather than conflicting with family (Spector et al., 2004). Scholars studying family embeddedness and collectivism have argued that people in collectivistic societies perceive working long hours legitimate to meet family duties and achieve social bonds (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). Collective workers who investing energy in their work may be making sacrifices for their in-group (e.g., friends and colleagues) and may be backed by close family and relatives rather than resented from spending time away from the family (Yang, 2005).

Therefore, job flexibility may help prevent work-family conflict in collectivistic societies. While workers and their families in individualistic societies may view work as competing with family, workers and families in collective societies may support employee efforts and justify working long hours. More importantly, this suggests that job flexibility may be very important to employees in collectivistic societies who work long hours in order to meet such demands. Drawing from domestic and international research (Scarpello & Cambell, 1983; Rothausen, 1994; Hill et al., 2010), we expect that job flexibility is positively related to job satisfaction in a Mexican context.

Hypothesis 1. Job flexibility is positively related to overall job satisfaction.

Individual differences can shape the impact of job flexibility on job satisfaction for people who have to balance distinct work and life responsibilities (Bellou, 2010). Based on previous research showing that work-life interface is influenced by demographic factors (Bellou, 2010; Karimi, 2009), we explore the role of gender, dependents, and age. We first examine the role of gender. Mexico is a traditional society high in masculinity (Hofstede, 1989) and familism (Sabogal et al., 1987) and low in gender egalitarianism, and where caring for children and other dependents falls more on women relative to men. Second, we examine the role of family dependents, such as children and aging parents, with the rationale is that job flexibility should matter more to employees who have family dependents. Third, we explore the role of age, as job flexibility may be either desired or needed resource by the younger generations. This is more important in Mexico, which has an average age of 27.3, lower than that of developed economies such as the U.S. (37.6), Germany (46.1), and Japan (46.1) (CIA, 2015).

Gender

Traditionally, work and family duties were considered independent domains (Voydanoff, 2014), and managers used to consider employees' family obligations as irrelevant to their work lives. Men were considered the primary source of income and to have major obligations at work, while women were considered responsible for children, family care, and domestic chores (Frone, 2003). Nonetheless, recent social, economic, and demographic trends have induced change (Therborn, 2014). Work-life balance policies are an essential antecedent of job satisfaction (Van Praag & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2004). Women employees in particular are expected to welcome work policies that alleviate family-to-work interference (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Family-friendly programs such as flexible working hours could benefit women employees more by helping them manage their work and family duties. By the same token, this has a positive impact on their well-being and attitudes toward work and life. According to Skinner and Pocock (2011), women tend to desire greater job flexibility than men, and this includes women who are not mothers. Although childcare is the main reason, women also tend to have other non-work obligations such as unpaid domestic work and eldercare, especially in masculine societies with low gender egalitarianism (Graig, 2006).

Traditional gender role is a prevalent cultural aspect of Latin America. According to the Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL, 2012), over 94% of women and 88% of men stated that care for dependents should be endured by women, while only 6% of men and 1% of women perceived that men should assume dependent care responsibilities. Recently, Latin America women have experienced more educational and career opportunities, weakening the male-breadwinner model. According to Arriagada (2014), 42% of urban women in Latin America contributed to the labor force in 1990, and this reached 52% in 2010. These socio-economic changes have increased the need of dual-income

providers to balance work and family duties. Due to ingrained cultural mandates, women's life tends to be affected by work-family conflict during this transition, especially mothers with dependents (Vassolo, De Castro, & Gomez-Mejia, 2011).

A lack of work-family balance may affect women's well-being and productivity. Two major gender role viewpoints explain different perspectives on this (Karimi, 2009). First, the rational view considers that more hours spent on the roles related to work and family domain causes interference in the other domain. That is, men experience more work-to-family interference because they are more involved in work than family. Second, role expectation theory suggests gender roles to influence perceptions of work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW).

Women are said to become more preoccupied about family obligations, whereas men become more involved to needs of their work duties. For instance, women usually experience more role overload from family duties than men do due to women's combined work and family burdens are greater; this is mainly because women spend more time on family duties than men (Pleck, 1977; Rexroat & Shehan, 1987). The main antecedent in this association may be role assumption and role overburden rather than the amount of hours put in at either domain, that is, work is for men and family is for women (Karimi, 2009). Therefore, work-life issues may in fact be more important to women in paternalistic societies such as Mexico. For this reason, we examine the following.

Hypothesis 2. Gender moderates the relationship between job flexibility and job satisfaction such that the relationship will be stronger for women than for men.

Dependents

As mentioned earlier, many of the arguments behind gender differences in the role of job flexibility on job satisfaction focus on having children of rearing age. These perspectives, however, fail to acknowledge changing gender roles or pinpoint specific reasons, and even to consider other family responsibility. It is important to assess the effects of the presence of dependents independently of gender. Employees who are parents, particularly those with young children, may face more work-family conflict than employees without children (Byron, 2005; Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000).

Individuals in collectivistic and familistic societies, such as in Latin America, may have broader conceptions of family (John, Resendiz, & De Vargas, 1997; Triandis et al., 1988). Previous research found that Hispanic people desire work and life balance to maintain their important close relationships (Blancero, Del Campo, & Marron, 2008). Latin Americans are expected to take care of immediate and extended family members, and are more likely to co-reside with extended family members and close friends than other cultures (Garcia-Gonzalez, 2002; Greenwood et al., 2012; Spector et al., 2007). According to Zavala (2009), a fourth of all Mexican families co-reside with parents, and 13% of households dwell with at least three generations. A large part of the elderly in Latin America dwell with their offspring or live close by and employees may be concerned with both childcare and eldercare (Glaser et al., 2006; John, Resendiz, & De Vargas, 1997).

Individualistic societies minimize their caregiving to elder relatives or look for formal institutions to do so (Pyke & Bengtson, 1996). On the other hand, collectivistic societies regard taking care of a relative (e.g., children, disabled, elderly, and the sick) as a way to strengthen family bonds (Pyke & Bengtson, 1996). Consequently, having dependents such as children or older parents causes work-family conflict, which in turn demands job flexibility. Dealing with work and life conflict generally requires concessions between these domains, but job flexibility may help alleviate related concerns and meet care demands. Therefore, job flexibility may be a substantial necessity in order to balance long work hours, career advancement, and the opportunity to in order to spend time with loved ones.

Hypothesis 3. Having dependents moderates the relationship between job flexibility and job satisfaction such that the relationship will be stronger for those who have dependents.

Age

Age is a potential confounding factor with having dependents because people tend to have more caregiving responsibilities before and around mid-life. This may lead to the notion that valuing job flexibility increases with age. On the other hand, older professional workers tend to be more established in their careers and have more access to job resources, while younger workers tend to face greater needs to start or advance a career and to need time and flexibility for educational and personal development. Gray and Tudball (2003) concluded that job scheduling flexibility tends to be more accessible for valued workers in higher-level positions, who tend to be relatively older.

Previous research on age and job satisfaction describes complex relationships, but the findings are inconclusive. While some scholars depict a curvilinear relationship between age and job satisfaction, others support a downward U-shaped relationship (Clark, Oswald, & Warr, 1996; Metle, 1997; Ghazzawi, 2011; Sawar et al., 2013). Nonetheless, prior studies have gone beyond a career-stage perspective to support the idea that job satisfaction differs across generational cohorts (Jurges, 2003; Kooji et al., 2010). Generational effects have been found to be present even when demographic variables such as gender, marital status, and children are controlled (Jurges, 2003; Kooji et al., 2010).

Previous research on generation builds on the idea that age cohorts are shaped by common events occurring in people's formative, impressionable years (Rhodes, 1983; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Schewe & Meredith, 2004), when they develop enduring values, preferences, attitudes, and common outlooks toward life and institutions (Ryder, 1965; Meredith & Schewe, 1994; Giuliano & Spilimbergo, 2009). According to Therborn (2014), events such as economic performance, cultural development, and political changes affect family dynamics. For instance, in the U.S., Generation X was characterized by economic recessions, inflation, downsizing, and high divorce rates. As a consequence, they value work-life balance more than their predecessors (Strauss & Howe, 2000; Chao, 2005; Eisner, 2005). Generational differences have been linked to work values and attitudes, including job flexibility (Twenge & Campbell, 2012; Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012). Younger

generations such as Millennials placing a high value on job flexibility due to the need of time devoted to their career and personal development (Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012).

Furthermore, different generations have differed beliefs about the relative appeal of numerous facets of work such as pay, autonomy, and work conditions, prestige, and fulfillment (Lyons, Higgins, & Duxbury, 2010). In general, younger generations (e.g., Millennials) value intrinsic values such as lifelong learning, personal time, work-life balance, and leisure, while older generations value extrinsic rewards such as pay and job security (Gursoy et al. 2008; Cardenas, Lopez, & Fraire, 2012; Becton, Walker, & Jones-Farmen, 2014). In the U.S., Baby Boomers and Generation X favored quick gratification for good performance and promotions (Gursoy et al., 2008), while Millennials value leisure opportunities (Snipes & Pitts, 2012).

Studies comparing generations have been carried primarily in the U.S., which is dominated by Baby Boomers, who now have established careers. Although age demographics differ around the world, generational tensions and differences in values, job satisfaction, and job flexibility have been addressed globally (Squires & Juárez, 2012). There is little research combining both generational and cultural differences (Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012), but there are similarities within an age cohort across the world. Although certain historical events, environmental trends, changes, and circumstances are unique to specific nations, many are global. Millennials have been dubbed the global youth generation due to the ubiquity of their values around the work (Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012). Some events are diffused around the world. For example, the feminist movement in the U.S. influenced Brazilian women, (Gorney, 2011). Moreover, some generational differences are stronger in Latin America than in European countries (Susaeta et al., 2013).

Clear generations in Mexico have not been established in the literature. Research on generations holds that people who live common important historical events from a delineated generation (Giuliano & Spilimberg, 2009). Political, social, and economic changes impact people's values, preferences, and attitudes, which marks them for life (Meredith & Schewe, 1994; Ryder, 1965), creating imbedded "cohort effects" (Schewe & Meredith, 2004). Mexico does not have specific recognized generations as the U.S. or Brazil (Schewe & Meredith, 2004; cf. Susaeta et al., 2003). Nonetheless, global cohorts, as well as important major events with social, political, and economic implications can be associated with generational rifts, particularly when they occur in people's young and impressionable years. In the case of Mexico, these major historical events include the arrival of democracy, when the ruling government party in Mexico lost presidential and parliamentary control after more than 70 years in power (from 1929 to 2000), the economic crises of the 1994 and 1982, and the recent intensification of the drug war (around year 2006). For example, using these events, young Mexican professionals have similar cohort grouping as millennials, who came of age at the turn of the century.

Based on this evidence, we expect that job flexibility will be more conducive to job satisfaction among younger generations of professionals.

Hypothesis 4. Generation moderates the relationship between job flexibility and job satisfaction such that the relationship will be stronger for younger than older generations.

Methods

Data and Sample

We collected data from a leading Mexican company that operates 25 shopping centers in 14 Mexican states (out of 31 states and the federal district). We randomly selected 300 employees across all the shopping centers to participate in an online survey. The Human Resources (HR) department of the company informed the selected employees about the study with an e-mail invitation to participate in the survey and then a follow-up reminder. We received 215 responses, which yields a 72% response rate. We deleted 15 responses with substantially incomplete data and found three outlying cases, which gave us a final sample of 197 cases.

Most of our responses came from the Northern region (65%), and the rest came from the Northern Border (13%), the Central region (12%), the Yucatan peninsula (5%), and Southern states (5%). Most respondents have a college degree (87%), others have some college or a technical degree (12.5%), and less than one percent has only high school (0.5%). In term of gender, 55.5% of the participants are women. About half (51%) of our respondents are married, 3.5% are divorced or separated, and the rest are single. 65% of the participants have dependents –children or close relatives living at home (e.g., elderly, disabled, or sick). For those with dependents, 61% (40% of the total sample) have children.

Measures

Job flexibility. We measured job flexibility using a four-item scale developed by Rothausen (1994). This measure captures employee's opinion on the extent to which management accommodates family responsibility needs without any negative consequences, difficulties getting time off for family matters when requested, and the opportunity to have flexible work time without penalty.

Job satisfaction. We measured job satisfaction using three job satisfaction facets—satisfaction with coworkers, satisfaction with the supervisor, and satisfaction with the nature of the job itself, all from Spector (1985). We selected satisfaction with people on the job because it is likely to reflect an important aspect of a job in a collective culture. The three facets consists of the original four items, but we omitted the single reverse-scored item in satisfaction with the nature of the job itself (*I sometimes feel my job is meaningless*). The reason is that using a single reverse-coded item is inconsistent with the acquiescent response style of Mexican Spanish (Harzing, 2006). Each individual facet had appropriate reliability: 0.84 for supervisor satisfaction, 0.78 for satisfaction with coworkers, and 0.88 for satisfaction with the job itself. An exploratory factor analysis for these 11 items explained 66.2% of the variance, and loaded on two different factors, a people factor (satisfaction with supervisor and coworkers), and a nature of the job factor. All item factor loadings were above .60.

Overall, all the measures present reliability above .70 based on Cronbach's alpha values. International management research suggests that people in collectivistic societies tend to answer surveys neutrally, if given the choice, due to norms associated with modesty (Triandis, 1995). Latin Americans tend to have an acquiescent response style that makes using a neutral item (e.g. neither agree nor disagree) problematic (Harzing, 2006). To avoid problems (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003), we asked participants to rate their attitudes and perceptions using a six-point Likert-type scales to avoid a neutral item. We translated these measures into Spanish and implement back-translation techniques to ensure cross-cultural equivalence (Werner & Campbell, 1970). Back-translation was performed by using an interactive approach to minimize translation errors, and the accuracy of the translation was confirmed by competent bilinguals external to the research project (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973).

Gender. We measured gender using a self-reported item and a binary code (0 = male; 1 = female).

Dependents. Based on self-reported data, we measured the presence of dependents using a binary code showing whether the respondent had children or dependents other than children (0 = does not have dependents; 1 = has dependents).

Age (generational cohort). We measured age using generational cohorts, and respondents reported the cohort to which they belonged.

Guided by research on generational cohort formation and Mexican historical events, we used five decades cohorts for people over 20 years old and a smaller cohort for younger workers. The age cohorts ranged as follows: 0.5% from 18 to 20; 47% from 21 to 29; 41.5% from 30 to 39; 9% from 40 to 49; 1% from 50 to 59; and 1% were 60 or older. At least 48% of the respondents were born after 1982 and were at least 30 years old. This was a young sample compared with traditional Western samples, but it is representative of the Mexican professionals.

Control variables. We controlled for marital status and hours worked per week because they can influence job satisfaction and the importance of job flexibility. We coded working ours using a scale of five groups (scale: 1 = less than 20 hours; 2 = 21-39; 3 = 40 hours; 4 = 41-50 hours; 5 = more than 51 hours). This showed that 23% of our respondents worked more than 51 hours, 62% between 41 to 50 hours, and 15% worked 40 hours or less. The pattern is consistent with findings that Mexican employees work relatively long hours (OECD, 2015).

Results

The descriptive statistics for our variables are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

We used hierarchical OLS regression to test our hypotheses, following moderated regression procedures (Aiken,

West, & Reno, 1991; Aron & Aron, 1999; Cohen, 2001). The regression analysis results are provided in Table 2. To test hypotheses involving moderation effects, we centered variables before creating product terms to test interactions and plotted interactions at one standard deviation above and below the mean. We included both control variables and job flexibility in the hierarchical regression model. Our first regression model shows that job flexibility has a significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = .37$; $p < .001$). This result supports Hypothesis 1.

We included gender and the interaction product of job flexibility and gender in our second hierarchical model. The results show that the product term of this interaction was not significant ($\beta = -.04$; $p > .05$), which fails to support Hypothesis 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

In the third hierarchical regression model, we included dependents and the interaction product of job flexibility and dependents. Using hierarchical regression allowed us to test this interaction above and beyond the role of gender and its interaction with job flexibility. The results show that the product term of this interaction was significant ($\beta = -.25$; $p < .05$). However, the plot of this interaction showed that job flexibility had a stronger role on the satisfaction of respondents who do not have dependents, which is counter to Hypothesis 3.

In the fourth hierarchical regression model, we included age and the interaction product of job flexibility and age. The product term of this interaction is significant ($\beta = -.17$; $p < .05$), and the plot shows that job flexibility has a stronger role on job satisfaction for younger employees. Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Post hoc analysis. As hypothesis 3 was not supported, we examined the distinct role of having children and dependents other than children in the role of job flexibility in job satisfaction. We tested two additional regression models analogous to our third regression model, but that included the main effects of (a) having children and (b) having dependents other than children, respectively. We included, the interactions of these two variables with job flexibility in both models. Similar to our third model, these post hoc results showed non-significant main effect for children and for other dependents, as well as significant interactions for job flexibility with children ($\beta = -.22$; $p < .05$) and with other dependents ($\beta = -.26$; $p < .05$). These results ratify our use of dependents as a single variable for parsimony and statistical power.

Discussion

The results show that job flexibility is an important antecedent to job satisfaction in a collectivistic and developing economy—Mexico. This echoes past findings in Western countries (e.g., Van Praag & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2004). More importantly, our results imply that the role of job flexibility in job satisfaction does not vary across gender or the presence of

dependents. Instead, both men and women value job flexibility, regardless of whether they care for young children, elders (e.g., aging parents), disabled, or the sick. What does really moderate the impact of job flexibility is age, or in particular, the generation cohorts the employees belongs to. The role of job flexibility in job satisfaction is more important among younger generations of Mexican professionals.

The fact that job flexibility has a stronger impact on job satisfaction for employees without dependents may be somewhat surprising at first. Job flexibility was related to the job satisfaction for employees with and without dependents, but this was stronger for those without dependents. As we controlled for the interaction for job flexibility and dependents in our analyses, the result for age reveals a potential reason. The interaction of dependents and job flexibility disappear once we include age in the regression. People tend to undertake responsibilities to care for dependents at a relatively older age, which is evidenced by the strong correlation of age and dependents in our sample ($r = .45$; $p < .01$). Older professionals are also likely to have established career.

Taken together, our results suggest that age has a stronger moderating effect than that of the presence of dependents. This finding further highlights the importance of age and generational cohort in the value placed on job flexibility and its role in job satisfaction. Younger generations of professionals around the world tend to value job flexibility and are more attuned to the advantages in offers in work-life balance (Ehrhart, Mayer, & Ziegert, 2012). This may apply not only to the opportunity to take care of dependents, such as young children, but also to be able to use this flexibility to engage a wide range of activities ranging from pursuing more education to enjoying their free time, friends, and leisure (Haar, 2013; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Our results show that these characterization of younger generations of workers also apply to young Mexican professionals.

Implications for theory and research

Our findings are important to understanding cross-cultural management for various reasons. Mexico is a collective, patriarchal, and masculine society (Arriagada, 2014; Hofstede, 1989), which implies that family responsibilities are a women's role. However, the assumption that women who experience work-family conflict have lower job satisfaction than men was not supported in our study. Past findings between gender and job satisfaction have been inconsistent across cultures (Spector, 1997). For example, some scholars suggests that the gender paradox (Clark et al., 1996), which implies that job satisfaction is higher for women, is an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000), but our results suggests that it may be becoming more common in Latin America.

People in Latin America are increasingly showing sexual, marital, and reproductive behavior common to developed countries. Women are becoming more educated, earning more money, delaying marriage, and bearing children at later stages of life (Arriagada, 2014). Arriagada (2014) attributed this to individualization and modernity, and stated that family

transformation has brought changes to family structure dynamics, but also to values related to autonomy and self-interest pursuits. This phenomenon has been observed in other emerging economies, such as Brazil, where women increasingly prioritize their education, profession, and lifestyle over having a family (Gorney, 2011).

Our results offer findings that concern millennial employees in Latin cultures. Managers should understand their preference for job flexibility to attend other priorities (e.g., higher education), and how they have different work values attitudes from previous generations (e.g., leisure values vs. work centrality and job security). As such, managers should provide job flexibility to younger generation of employees in Mexico to reap rewards from their job satisfaction.

Limitations and future research

Mexico is a collectivistic society where professional women may receive help from their families (e.g., maternal grandmothers rearing of children, home chores, etc.) or have economic means for nursing care. This could have affected the perception of work-related attitudes and behaviors in professional employees. Moreover, the professional women in our sample may not represent the experience of women who have left or stayed away from work outside the home due to the absence of job flexibility. In the future, it is important to study the attractiveness of job flexibility in potential jobs among women who are currently constrained in their career pursuit.

Modernity affects all people in the world. Future studies should question how gender roles, gender inequality, and patriarchal authority is changing in Mexico and Latin America. They should also address changes in the cultural values that Millennials have. This becomes crucial as more young professionals enter the job market. Lastly, extending this study to other Latin American countries can help assess similarities and differences on work-related attitudes and behaviors.

In conclusion, our study suggests that job flexibility is important in Mexico due to its impact on overall job satisfaction. This relationship does not differ across gender or for people who have or do not have dependents, but it is greater among younger generations of Mexican professionals. Managers should consider the role of job flexibility as a way to increase the satisfaction and engagement of younger generations of Mexican employees.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics

Variables	Mean	sd	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Job Satisfaction	5.00	.75						
2. Work Hours	3.07	.64	-.05					
3. Marital Status	.51	--	-.02	.08				
4. Job Flexibility	4.17	.91	.36**	-.11	-.11	-.70		
5. Dependents	.65	--	-.02	.05	.33**	-.13		
6. Gender	.45	--	-.01	.19**	.30**	.06	.31**	
7. Age	2.66	--	-.10	.08	.34**	-.05	.45**	.36**

Note. N = 197; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Working hours are coded in a scale of 5 groups; marital status is coded 1 = married, 0 = single, dependents is coded 1 = has dependents, 0 = does not have dependents; gender is coded 1 = female, 0 = male; age is coded in a scale of five generational cohorts.

Table 2

Regression analyses on job satisfaction

Variables	Model			
	1	2	3	4
<i>Controls</i>				
Work hours	-.05	-.05	-.08	-.06
Marital Status	.00	.01	.00	.01
<i>Main effects</i>				
Job Flexibility	.37***	.39***	.55***	.41**
Gender		-.01	-.03	.00
Dependents			.06	.08
Age				-.10
<i>Interaction effects</i>				
Job Flexibility x Gender		-.04*	.04*	.09
Job Flexibility x Dependents			.25*	-.13
Job Flexibility x Age				-.17*
R ²	.14	.15	.17	.19
ΔR ²		.01	.02 [†]	.02*

Note. N =197. Results are standardized regression coefficients.

† p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001