

# **A new insight into the gender-job satisfaction paradox in the Netherlands: extrinsic motivation as a mediator.**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into why the poorer working conditions of women do not lead women to be less satisfied with their job compared to men. It was examined if this gender-job satisfaction paradox could be explained by extrinsic motivation. Using data from the European Values Study, three multiple regression analyses were done to indicate if the relation between being a woman and job satisfaction is mediated by extrinsic motivation. It was discovered that women are not more satisfied with their job compared to men and that extrinsically motivated people are not less satisfied. The results also revealed that women are less extrinsically motivated than men. The principal conclusion was that extrinsic motivation can not explain why women are not less satisfied with their job compared to men.

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## Table of contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction   | 3  |
| Theory   | 6  |
| <i>Women and job satisfaction</i>                            | 6  |
| <i>Women and extrinsic work motivation</i>                   | 9  |
| <i>Extrinsic work motivation and job satisfaction</i>        | 12 |
| Data and methods   | 14 |
| <i>Data</i>  | 14 |
| <i>Operationalization</i>                                    | 15 |
| <i>Methods</i>   | 18 |
| Results  | 20 |
| <i>Women and job satisfaction</i>                            | 20 |
| <i>Women and extrinsic work motivation</i>                   | 21 |
| <i>Women, extrinsic work motivation and job satisfaction</i> | 22 |
| Conclusion and discussion                                    | 24 |
| References   | 28 |

## **Introduction**

In the last decades the number of women participating in the labour market has grown. In 1996 44.6% of the Dutch women between the age of 15 and 65 had a job, in 2012 this was increased to 60.6%. For comparison, 73.7% of the Dutch men between those ages was employed in 2012 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2013). Most of the research about job satisfaction focuses on men (Souza-Poza & Souza-Poza, 2000). However, due to the increasing participation rate of women, it is also important to focus on the determinants of job satisfaction for women.

In general, women have poorer working conditions compared to their male counterparts (Souza-Poza & Souza-Poza, 2000). They earn less compared to men who are doing the same type of job (Clark, 1997). Women also have fewer opportunities in their choice of employment. The chance to be hired is smaller compared to men, while the chance of being fired is bigger (Clark, 1997). Last, women have a smaller chance to be promoted (Souza-Poza & Souza-Poza, 2000). If we take a look at the Netherlands, we see that female employees often have high job demands compared to men, for example working under time pressure combined with low control (Verdonk, Hooftman, van Veldhoven, Boelens & Koppes, 2010). Also, high educated women more often face adverse working conditions such as higher emotional demands, lower autonomy and workplace violence compared to high educated men (Verdonk et al., 2010). All of these differences are examples of extrinsic job characteristics, which are tangible rewards that are not related to the work tasks (Kaasa, 2011). Despite these disadvantages in their jobs compared to men, it is found that women are more satisfied in their jobs than men (Clark, 1997). Also in the Netherlands, Kaiser (2007) found in a cross national study that women are more satisfied with their job compared to men, despite of their worse working conditions.

Trying to clarify this gender-job satisfaction paradox, Clark (1997) came up with three explanations. First, women might have lower expectations of a job compared to men, second, dissatisfied women might be more likely to quit their job than dissatisfied men, and last there could be a difference in the importance given to extrinsic job characteristics between men and women (Clark, 1997). This study will focus on the third explanation.

A distinction can be made between extrinsic work values and intrinsic work values. Extrinsic work values are values which are not part of the content of a job, but are working conditions which are discussed with the employer at the start of the job (Groeneveld, 2009). Intrinsic work values refer to characteristics which are part of the job. Earlier research has revealed that an extrinsically orientated work motivation has a negative influence on job

satisfaction (Sheldon, Gunz, Nichols & Ferguson, 2010; Vansteenkiste, Neyrinck, Niemiec, Soenens, de Witte & Van den Broeck, 2007). Women are less extrinsically motivated than men (Clark, 1997; Harris & Earle, 1986; Lindsay & Knox, 1984; Schwarzweiler, 1960). Resulting from this, when men and women have a job with the same extrinsic characteristics, women might indirectly have a higher job satisfaction compared to men. This would clarify the paradox explained above.

This study will investigate the relation between gender and job satisfaction in the Netherlands. The research question which will be answered in this study is *To what extent is the influence of gender on job satisfaction mediated by extrinsic work values?* In this study we will first look to what extent women are more satisfied with their job than men. Second, we will investigate to what extent women are less extrinsically motivated than men in their job. Third, we will look to what extent extrinsic motivation has a negative effect on job satisfaction. Last, there will be given attention to the possible mediation effect of extrinsic motivation.

The outcome of this research may give an explanation of why women are not less satisfied in their jobs than men despite of the disadvantages they have in their jobs compared to men. Therefore, this research provides a look into the relations between gender, work values and job satisfaction. The importance of this research is that it gains insight into the gender-job satisfaction paradox that was described earlier. Past research has shown indeed there is a paradox between gender and job satisfaction (Souza-Poza, 2000; Kaiser, 2007). Other research has focused on different reasons that may explain why women are more satisfied with their job compared to men. Lambert (1991) studied the contribution of value and expectancy hypotheses in the described paradox. Clark (1997) and Bender (2005) studied different explanations, but they did not focus on differences in extrinsic work motivation between men and women. Our study distinguishes itself because we take a specific look at extrinsic motivation and investigate if extrinsic motivation may be a mediator that could explain the gender-job satisfaction paradox described above. To our knowledge this has not been researched before.

This research is also important for a more practical reason. Earlier research has shown that people with a lower job satisfaction are more frequently absent from their work (Mangione and Quinn, 1975). People with a higher job satisfaction in contrast, are more productive at work (Mangione and Quinn, 1975). If employees are more satisfied in their job they will be less absent, which reduces costs for the employer. Also, job satisfaction of individual employees affects the performance of the organisation as a whole (Souza-Poza &

Souza-Poza, 2000). For this reason it is important for employers to know which work values lead to a higher job satisfaction, so they can focus on these kinds of values and the differences in these values between men and women.

Also for the employee him- or herself it is important to know what causes high job satisfaction, because it is found that job satisfaction has a big influence on life satisfaction (Judge & Watanabe, 1993). In other words, the way someone feels at his or her job has influence on the satisfaction in daily life (Judge & Watanabe, 1993). If there is more insight into the causes of job satisfaction, employers can draft policy to keep their employees satisfied in their work and life. For example, if a high degree of job satisfaction is reached differently for men and women, employers can use this knowledge to set up different protocols in case an employee is dissatisfied in his or her job.

In the next section theories about women and job satisfaction, women and extrinsic work motivation and extrinsic work motivation and job satisfaction will be outlined to set up hypotheses to answer the research question. Following up, the dataset we use, the European Value Study, will be outlined and the methods we use will be discussed. In the section that follows, the results will be shown. Last, the conclusion and discussion will be given.

## Theory

In this section theories will be outlined to set up hypotheses which help to answer the research question. First, some possible reasons will be given why women may have a higher job satisfaction than men. Second, the differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation will be outlined and reasons will be given why women would value extrinsic work characteristics less compared to men. Last, the relation between extrinsic work motivation and job satisfaction will be discussed. Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the relations which are studied in this research.

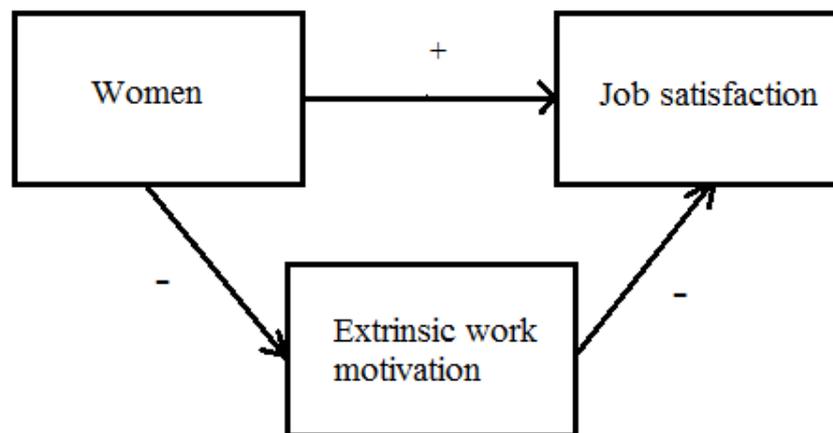


Figure 1

### *Women and job satisfaction*

There are different reasons why women in general have a higher job satisfaction compared to men. Before we give these reasons it is important to give a definition of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the pleasant emotional state that arises from attaining the job values which you have through your job (Locke, 1969). On the other hand, if your job does not facilitate the achievement of your job values you will be dissatisfied with your job (Locke, 1969). Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction result from the discrepancy between what you get from your job and what you want from your job. The bigger this gap, the more dissatisfied a person is with his or her job. In other words, job satisfaction results from the discrepancy between what is expected and what is perceived by someone. If someone perceives higher standards than he or she expected the job satisfaction rises. Vice versa, if the expectations are higher than what someone gets, the job satisfaction reduces (Locke, 1969).

Some reasons for the higher job satisfaction of women are already mentioned in the introduction, these reasons are sample selection at work and expectations of the job (Clark, 1997). Sample selection means that the differences in job satisfaction between men and

women can be found in the participation rates in the labour market (Clark, 1997; Souza-Poza & Souza-Poza, 2000). Women who are dissatisfied with their job are more willing to quit their job compared to dissatisfied men. This may be caused by the different economic positions of men and women. Men are, most of the time, breadwinner (Biddlecom & Kramarow, 1998). Due to this, they cannot quit their job as easily as women, because they have to take care of their families (Biddlecom & Kramarow, 1998). Most of the time women work to have some extra income, but if this is omitted there is still enough money to take care of the family.

The second reason can be found in the differences in expectations of the job between men and women (Lambert, 1991; Bender, 2005; Clark, 1997). Since women started working, they are over-represented in jobs with less promotion and career opportunities (Groeneveld, 2009). Due to traditional hierarchies and segregation, women have been under-represented in jobs which are higher in social ranking compared to men (Groeneveld, 2009). This may be a reason why women are more satisfied with their jobs than men. Due to the worse labour position of women in the past, nowadays they have lower expectations about their jobs (Clark, 1997). Lower expectations are easier to satisfy than the higher expectations of men (Clark, 1997). Another explanation for lower expectations of women deals with work centrality (Groeneveld, 2008). Work centrality is concerned with the importance of work in someone's life. For women, a job does not have such an important position as it does for men. Because of this lower work centrality work is a small part of their life, which allows women to have lower expectations of work (Groeneveld, 2008). Men, on the other hand, have a higher work centrality, they see their job as a big part of their life. Because their job is a big part of their life they have higher expectations (Groeneveld, 2008). Like mentioned before, higher expectations are harder to satisfy than lower expectations. So if men have higher expectations in their work than women it is likely that they will be more dissatisfied in their work compared to women.

A third possible reason is concerned with gender segregation in jobs. Women choose other jobs than men (Moore, 1985; Mason, 1995; Bender, 2005). Often, women have jobs with high flexibility so they can combine their job with the care of their household and children (Moore, 1985). Oprea (1981) has found that flexibility in a job increases job satisfaction. To put it differently, women have jobs with high flexibility and this may cause high job satisfaction. Although flexibility is an extrinsic work characteristic it still may cause higher job satisfaction for women. Also, women who work in female dominated jobs have a higher level of job satisfaction compared with women in male dominated jobs (Moore, 1985;

Bender, 2005). A possible reason for this is that jobs where women dominate have other working conditions compared to the places where men dominate (Moore, 1985; Bender, 2005). According to the value hypothesis it is possible that women value these working conditions differently compared to men (Lambert, 1991). Resulting from this, it is possible that women are not in the same degree concerned about traditional rewards of a job compared to men (Moore, 1985). Examples of traditional rewards of a job are a high wage and economic mobility. Another cause is that women in male dominated work spheres have higher expectations (Bender, 2005). The reason for this may be that working conditions in male dominated work spheres are higher than in places where women dominate, these higher working conditions lead to higher expectations and therefore lower job satisfaction. Resulting from all possible reasons for differences in job satisfaction given above, the first hypothesis will be: *Women are more satisfied with their job compared to men.*

Past research indicates there is indeed significant evidence for the paradox. Kaiser (2007) found that European women in general are more satisfied with their job compared to European men. Per country there are differences in job satisfaction, this is also what Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000) found. Both found that in Anglo-Saxon countries, like the United States of America and Great Britain have the biggest differences in job satisfaction between men and women, whereby women are more satisfied in their jobs.

The first explanation we mentioned for the higher job satisfaction of women is sample selection at work. Clark (1997) found no evidence for this explanation in his study. The second explanation, about differences in expectations between men and women, has been investigated by different researchers. D'Arcy, Syrotuik, & Siddique (1984), Murray and Atkinson (1981), Lambert (1991) and Clark (1997) have found evidence that expectations may be the reason why women have higher levels of job satisfaction than men. Lambert found that women receive fewer extrinsic and intrinsic rewards compared to men, but their level of job satisfaction does not decrease compared to their male counterparts (Lambert, 1991). Women's working positions have improved, but their expectations did not (Clark, 1997). This leads to higher job satisfaction for women. The third explanation focused on job segregation between men and women. Bender (2005) found in his research that in traditionally female dominated work places the job satisfaction of women is the highest, in those places women have the most accurate expectations (Bender, 2005). He also found that women indeed care less about traditional rewards. Studies of Lambert (1991), Clark (1997), Groeneveld (2008) give results in the direction of differences in valuing different aspects of work. They all find

that women give more value to intrinsic working conditions, while men think extrinsic working conditions are more important.

#### *Women and extrinsic work motivation*

Like mentioned in the section above, women care less about traditional rewards. These rewards are examples of extrinsic outcomes of a job. In this second part the relation between women and extrinsic work motivation will be explained. Before giving definitions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation it is important to first figure out what motivation is. When a person is motivated, it means this person is moved to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The level of motivation and the orientation of motivation are different for every person (Ryan & Deci, 2000, Matei & Abrudan, 2011). The level of motivation deals with how much someone is motivated to do an action. The orientation of motivation is about what type of motivation a person has.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the most basic distinction in types of motivation is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is motivation to do something because it leads to a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Someone who is extrinsically motivated will undertake the action only for the outcome, without this outcome there is no reason for this person to undertake this specific action. Applied to the work environment, this means that an extrinsically motivated person works because of tangible outcomes of work that are not related to the work tasks this individual has to do (Kaasa, 2011). Examples are good working conditions which are discussed with the employer at the start of the job, like wage or rewards (Groeneveld, 2007). If someone is intrinsically motivated the outcome of the action is not important, the action itself is important for its inherent satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). An intrinsically motivated person acts for fun instead of external incentives, pressures or rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Groeneveld (2007) intrinsic motivation refers to the content of the job. Not everyone has the same motivation for an action. It is possible that one person acts a certain way because of extrinsic motivation, while another person acts exactly the same because of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation are not equal to each other. Intrinsic motivation can be a subordinate of extrinsic motivation, but this is not always the case (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Every expected tangible reward can undermine intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). To put it differently, a person may shift from intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation if a tangible reward is provided. To maintain intrinsic motivation someone must experience satisfaction in competence and autonomy (Ryan &

Deci, 2000). If this is the case the tangible reward has no influence on the intrinsic motivation. So, it is possible to be extrinsically and intrinsically motivated at the same time, if the intrinsic motivation is strong enough.

The type of motivation someone has is developed by the values someone has learned in childhood (Groeneveld, 2007). According to Folbre (2012) and Greene and Debacker (2002) sociocultural factors like sex role prescription, social norms, cultural values preferences and expectations are shaping someone's motivation. Social norms and cultural values are partly shaped during the socialization of children (Folbre, 2012). Socialization is the way in which an individual is assisted in becoming a member of one or more social groups (Grusec & Hastings, 2007). Socialization continues across the whole life span of a person and has a variety of outcomes, such as standards, roles, rules and values across social, personal, emotional and cognitive domains. Different people take part in the socialization of a person, for example siblings, peers and teachers. Parents have the biggest influence on someone's socialization (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Grusec & Hastings, 2007). Using the socialization theory, differences between men and women in work motivation could be explained. Boys and girls receive a different socialization in their childhood. Girls are socialized into attitudes, values and behaviours that are communal in nature. This means that girls are taught to be concerned with others, to be selfless and to have a desire to be at one with another (Mason, 1995). They are more people-oriented and will place higher value on friendship and working with nice people instead of high rewards (Schwarzweiler, 1960). Women focus more on regulating interpersonal relationships due to social norms or self-selected values (Karshdan et al., 2009). This focus on others is also well-known as the "other-orientation" (Helgeson, 1994). Due to the communal attitudes and values of girls they are more focused on other people, this may be a reason why women think it is important to have good relationships with their colleagues. Boys, on the other side, are socialized with an agentic orientation. This orientation is manifested in self-expansion, self-assertion and the urge to master (Mason, 1995). Their most valued priorities are, according to Schwartz and Rubel, power, achievement, hedonism, novelty and stimulation (Karshdan, Mishra, Breen & Froh, 2009). Due to these different orientations in which boys and girls are socialized there may be differences in their motivation. Boys learn to focus on themselves and to achieve as much as possible. This may lead to extrinsic motivation in adult life, because it is easier to only focus on yourself if you are extrinsically motivated. Girls, on the other hand, learn to be more people orientated. This may lead to a lower extrinsic motivation compared to boys, because

girls think it is important for other people feel good. Therefore they focus less on themselves and are less driven to control than boys.

Next to the socialization children experience in their childhood, they also learn their social roles. A social role contains expectations of behaviour connected to a specific social position (Biddle, 1986). Every social role contains expectations of behaviour for the person himself or herself, but also expectations of the behaviour of other persons. Due to these expectations, social roles are one of the most important features of social life because it guides behaviour patterns (Biddle, 1986). Through these patterns specific behaviour can easily be understood by other people. Most of the expectations associated with a role are learned through experience (Biddle, 1986). In society, different behaviour is expected from girls and boys (Schwarzweiler, 1960; Helgeson, 1994; Folbre, 2012). Therefore, different social roles are prescribed to them. To learn those social roles girls and boys are treated differently in their childhood (Schwarzweiler, 1960; Mason, 1995; Folbre, 2012). Due to these social roles values, attitudes and behaviour may differ between men and women if they have grown up (Mason, 1995). Traditionally, the standards of getting higher on the career ladder and having worldly success are more prescribed to males than to females (Schwarzweiler, 1960) and taking care of the household or childcare to women (Folbre, 2012). So men will place higher value on material rewards and achievements, which are extrinsic values (Schwarzweiler, 1960).

Due to the different experiences in socialization that both sexes have during their childhood and the different sex roles taught to them, it is not a surprise that women are differently motivated than men. Following from this our second hypothesis will be: *Women are less extrinsically motivated compared to men.*

The *emancipatiemonitor*, which is a document about the emancipation of women published by two scientific institutes in the Netherlands, namely Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau and Centraal Bureau voor de statistiek, shows that Dutch women are less extrinsically motivated compared to men. Men give more importance to making a career and achieving a standing in society than women (Emancipatiemonitor, 2012). For example, men agree with the statement *I want to achieve a top position 2.5 times more than women do* (Emancipatiemonitor, 2012). Lambert (1991) also found that women are less extrinsically motivated compared to men. Having good relationships with colleagues is important for the level of job satisfaction of women (Lambert, 1991; Souza-Poza & Souza-Poza, 2000). Also, Clark (1997) and Groeneveld (2007) find comparable results. However, not all researchers find this evidence. Mason (1995) did not find support for the theory that socialization leads to

differences in values between men and women. On the other hand, she finds direct support for the social role theory. Mason's hypothesis regarding the socialization theory was that men and women value different working conditions because of the differences between men and women in their norms, perceptions and values. In her results she did not find any differences in valuing between men and women. Regarding the social role theory, her hypothesis was that respondents value working conditions by structures. Indeed, she found evidence this might be the case. Schwarzweller (1960) did research in two regions that are different in geography, culture and economy. In the urbanized and more prosperous region he found that a significantly bigger proportion of girls placed a higher value on working with people and friendship compared to boys. Boys, in contrast, placed a higher value on achievement and material comfort compared to girls. In the lower-income farming region he did not find any differences between boys and girls and their value orientations. Therefore, these results only partly confirm the socialization theory (Schwarzweller, 1960).

#### *Extrinsic work motivation and job satisfaction*

In this third and last part of the theory section the relation between extrinsic work motivation and job satisfaction will be outlined. People with extrinsic motivations are more likely to overestimate the positive effect of achieving their extrinsic work values (Sheldon et al., 2010). People who are extrinsically motivated often forget their personal interests due to their focus on extrinsic rewards (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). They underestimate the social and interpersonal values that tend to facilitate a greater well-being and believe that achieving extrinsic goals will make them happy (Sheldon et al., 2010). Because of the over-estimated value that extrinsically motivated people attach to their extrinsic work values, it is likely that there will be a gap between what they get from their job and the ideal work values that they would like to achieve with their job. This will lead to job dissatisfaction because they have the feeling their job does not give them what they want (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). The second reason why extrinsically motivated people may be less satisfied with their job is that extrinsic rewards provide people with only a short period of satisfaction. If those people meet their goals they will almost immediately set new extrinsic goals for themselves. This means that these people will feel incompetent and unsatisfied most of the time (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). In short, extrinsically motivated people may never have the feeling that their work values are satisfied, and therefore, they will always feel the discrepancy between their job values and what their jobs give them. This means that the more extrinsically motivated someone is, the more dissatisfied this person will be with his or her job. Leading from this our

third hypothesis is: *People who are extrinsically motivated will be more dissatisfied with their job compared to people who are less extrinsically motivated.*

People who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to stimulate their growth and to achieve their basic psychological needs, while extrinsically motivated people will give more attention to social comparison and are more concerned with their ego (Sheldon et al., 2010; Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). Vansteenkiste et al. (2007) found that people who are extrinsically motivated are less satisfied in their work than people who are not extrinsically motivated. They also had a lower work dedication, lower job vitality and even a lower life satisfaction. Sheldon et al. (2010) found that the positive effect of achieving extrinsic goals is overestimated by extrinsically motivated people. Those people think that achieving their extrinsic goals will give them more satisfaction and a greater well-being, while instead those goals are ineffective at producing happiness.

Concluding from the above, we expect that women are more satisfied in their job than men, that women are less extrinsically motivated compared to men and that extrinsically motivated people are less satisfied with their job. Therefore, we expect that extrinsic motivation can explain why women are more satisfied in their job. If we indeed find these relations this indicates extrinsic motivation mediates the relation between being a woman and job satisfaction. Following from this we formulated a fourth hypothesis about the mediation effect that we expect to find in our data. Our fourth hypothesis is: *The differences between women and men in their job satisfaction can be explained by extrinsic motivation.*

## **Data and methods**

In this section the data and methods of this research will be discussed. First, the dataset that will be used to do the analyses will be introduced. Second, we will discuss the operationalization of the variables that are used in this research. Last, the different analyses that are used to generate the results will be elaborated on.

### *Data*

In this research the European Value Study (EVS, 2010) will be used. This study is conducted every nine years since 1981 in different European countries. It started with a thousand citizens who were interviewed in 16 European countries. In the fourth wave this number has been raised to 70,000 European citizens in 47 different countries. Representative multi-staged or stratified random samples were drawn from the population aged 18 years and older. Standardized questionnaires were administered by trained interviewers by means of face-to-face interviews. In case of not reaching the respondent at first visit, the interviewers made at least three revisits to maximize the chance of reaching these respondents. The EVS focuses on basic human values and it provides insight into the opinions, ideas, values, preferences, beliefs and attitudes of European citizens. The questions are divided in six different domains; these are life, family, work, religion, politics and society.

In this research, the fourth wave will be used, which was measured in 2008. This research focuses on the Netherlands, so only answers of Dutch participants will be evaluated. In the Netherlands 1554 valid interviews were collected and the response rate was 48.9% (EVS GESIS, 2010). Because this research focuses on job satisfaction, we restricted our sample to people who are employed. After accounting for missing values on the variable '*Are you employed*', 848 valid cases are left which will be used in this research. To indicate if the data set is representative for the Dutch society we compared the dataset with statistics of the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS, 2013), which has statistics about all Dutch citizens. In 2008, 49.4% of all Dutch citizens were men, in our dataset this number is 45.1%. There is a slight difference between the actual division of gender and the division in our dataset, although in both women are in the majority. According to the dataset, 54.6% of the respondents have a job. This statistic deviates only slightly from the 53.2% of the people in the Netherlands that have a job according to CBS (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2013). We are not able to say anything about possible differences in the average age because the dataset contains only respondents with an age of 18 or higher. As a result, the average age in the dataset is higher than the average age of all Dutch people. There are differences between

the statistics of the CBS and our dataset, but these are really small. So we can conclude that, in terms of gender and employment, our dataset is representative for the Dutch citizens.

### *Operationalization*

*Dependent variable.* The variable work satisfaction will be measured by the question ‘*How satisfied are you with your job*’. Participants were asked to give a number on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is dissatisfied and 10 is satisfied. The variable about job satisfaction does not need to be recoded. Of the respondents that are employed 0.2% did not answer this question.

*Mediator.* The variable extrinsic motivation will be computed by using the question ‘*Here are some aspects of a job that people say are important. Please look at them and tell me which ones you personally think are important in a job*’. To answer this question the participants could choose from 18 different characteristics of a job. There was no limit in the number of characteristics a participant could choose. It was also possible to choose the answer ‘*none of these*’.

For this research it is important to distinguish between extrinsic characteristics and intrinsic characteristics, as extrinsic motivation is our mediator and we include intrinsic motivation as a control variable. To make this distinction we have looked at the definitions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and compared different divisions between extrinsic and intrinsic aspects made in earlier research that used data from the European Values Study. Earlier we defined extrinsic motivation as motivation to work because of the tangible outcomes that are not related to the work tasks (Kaasa, 2011). Intrinsic motivation means being motivated by the content of the job (Groeneveld, 2007). Gesthuizen and Verbakel (2011) defined *good pay, not too much pressure, job security, good hours and generous holidays* as extrinsic aspects. They included *use initiative, achieving something, responsible job, interesting job* and *meeting abilities* as intrinsic aspects. Vansteenkiste et al. (2007) used *good pay, job security, not too much pressure and generous holidays* to define extrinsic motivation and *use initiative, interesting job, meeting abilities and responsible job* to define intrinsic motivation. Kaasa (2011) classified *good pay, good hours, generous holidays and job security* as extrinsic aspects and *use initiative, achieving something, responsible job, meeting people, useful for society and interesting job* as intrinsic aspects. While all of these studies used similar definitions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation there are slight differences in the division of the different aspects in extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. An explanation for this might be that these studies all focus on different countries.

Following Vanteenkiste et al. (2007) and Kaasa (2011) we did a factor analysis to determine which components are underlying the data. We used principal components analysis with promax rotation, because we expect the components to be correlated. We found three components using the criteria of eigenvalue  $> 1$ , one extrinsic component, one intrinsic component and one component with other work values. All of the values loaded on one of the three components. The work values *good pay, not too much pressure, job security, good hours, generous holidays* and *family friendly* have loadings between .437 and .736 on the first component. These values clearly match our definition of extrinsic motivation, so we saved these factor scores in an extrinsic motivation scale. The values *use initiative, achieving something, responsible job, interesting job, meeting abilities, learning new skills* and *have a say* all have loadings between .522 and .842 on the second component. These are intrinsic values according to our definition of extrinsic motivation, so we saved them into an intrinsic motivation scale. The four remaining values, *pleasant people, useful for society, meeting people* and *people treated equally*, have loadings between .381 and .630 on the third component, which we saved as a scale named other motivation. We saved the factor scores using the regression method.

To make sure the scales are reliable we looked at the cronbach's alpha of the variables that form a scale together. The extrinsic work values have a cronbach's alpha of .70, which indicates that this scale is reliable as .70 is mostly seen as the cut-off value for being reliable. The intrinsic work values have a cronbach's alpha of .80, which suggests high reliability. The other work values have a somewhat lower cronbach's alpha, namely of .53. However, this scale will only be used as a control variable so the low reliability of this scale should not be a problem. The intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation scales have a significant positive correlation with each other (.37,  $p < .001$ ), which suggests that people who place a higher value on extrinsic work motivation also tend to value intrinsic work motivation more. The other motivation scale is also significantly positively correlated with the extrinsic motivation scale (.34,  $p < .001$ ) and the intrinsic motivation scale (.31,  $p < .001$ ). However, we will control for this by including the intrinsic motivation scale and other motivation scale in the regression analyses. The correlations between the scales are not higher than .85, so it is not likely that multi-collinearity poses a threat (Weston & Gore, 2006).

The distinction that is made between the extrinsic and intrinsic work values corresponds with definitions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, as explained in the theory section. As known, extrinsic motivation has to do with rewards and conditions which are discussed at the beginning of the job. All of the values that are part of extrinsic motivation are

rewards itself or working conditions. Values which are connected with the content of a job are referred to as intrinsic motivation. The values that are classified under 'other motivation' are values that have a lot to do with relations to other people and social relationships. In the theory section it is told that the values about people and social relationship can also be seen as intrinsic motivation, so this component could also be classified as intrinsic motivation. It could be that intrinsic motivation consists of two different dimensions, one with social aspects and a dimension with aspects that reflect self-actualization (Kaasa, 2011). However, we will only use the components with the intrinsic aspects and other aspects as control variables so it is not necessary to address this issue further.

*Independent variable.* The variable about the gender of the participant will be used to make the variable female. This variable will be recoded so the female participants get the value one and the male participants will be assigned with the value zero on this variable.

*Control variables.* We will also include some control variables in the analyses. Following earlier research (Vansteenkiste et al.) we will control for age, educational level, occupational status, and monthly household income. Age is especially important because older people are likely to be more intrinsically motivated and less extrinsically motivated compared to younger people (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). We will also include life satisfaction in all of the regression analyses because we expect this variable to be highly correlated with job satisfaction. The variable age will be computed by using the question about the year of birth of the respondents. The educational level of the respondent is measured by the ISCED-scale, which is an internationally acknowledged classification system that makes it possible to compare different measures of education across countries (Unesco, 2013). We recoded this variable to years of education so it can be treated as a ratio variable. The occupational status of the respondent is measured by the International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status (ISEI) which was constructed using comparable data on education, occupation and income of full-time employed men (Ganzeboom, de Graaf & Treiman, 1992). To measure the monthly household income respondents were asked to choose from a list of incomes in which range their household was, counting all wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes after taxes and other deductions. The range of these groups was not equal so we recoded each category into the mean of that range.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the dependent, independent and control variables that are used in this research. We have also checked the normality of the important independent and dependent variables by looking at the skewness and kurtosis and concluded that both did not pose a threat. While doing the regression analyses we also have looked at the

VIF of all the variables, but they were all below 2. This indicates that multi-collinearity does not pose a threat with our variables. We have also checked the variances of men and women on our dependent and mediator variables and concluded that there is enough variance for both men and women.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables with N = 691**

|                          | Minimum | Maximum | Mean    | Standard deviation | R Job satisfaction |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Job satisfaction         | 1       | 10      | 7.74    | 1.38               | -                  |
| Extrinsic motivation     | -1.74   | 1.94    | 0.01    | 1.00               | .00                |
| Intrinsic motivation     | -1.24   | 2.58    | 0.01    | 1.00               | -.05               |
| Other motivation         | -1.83   | 4.06    | 0.00    | 1.00               | -.00               |
| Female                   | 0       | 1       | 0.50    |                    | -.06               |
| Age                      | 18      | 89      | 45.00   | 11.84              | .18**              |
| Educational level        | 0       | 16      | 12.72   | 2.64               | .03                |
| Occupational status      | 16      | 88      | 50.77   | 15.91              | .02                |
| Monthly household income | 75      | 10000   | 3561.58 | 2158.13            | .11*               |
| Life satisfaction        | 1       | 10      | 8.08    | 1.05               | .30**              |

\*\* Significant with  $p < .001$

\* Significant with  $p < .01$

### Methods

For this research the statistical program SPSS will be used to do all of the analyses. After the variables that are needed in this research are checked and altered, three linear regression analyses will be done to find out if the relation between gender and job satisfaction is mediated by extrinsic motivation. The first regression analysis will only contain the dependent variable, job satisfaction, the independent variable, gender and the control variables. This relationship does not have to be significant to determine a mediation effect (MacKinnon, Krull & Lockwood, 2000). The second analysis regresses the mediating variable, extrinsic motivation, on the independent variable, gender, including the control variables. There must be a significant relationship between these variables as a condition for a mediation effect. The last analysis regresses both the independent variable, gender, and the mediating variable, extrinsic motivation, on the dependent variable, job satisfaction. Again, we will include control variables in this regression. The mediating variable must be a significant predictor of

the independent variable in this analysis to determine a mediation effect. In this case, the variable extrinsic motivation must have a significant relationship with job satisfaction. Also, the effect of gender on job satisfaction should be smaller in this regression compared to the first regression. If these conditions are met we can conclude that the relationship between gender and job satisfaction is mediated by extrinsic motivation (MacKinnon, Krull & Lockwood, 2000).

## Results

In this section the results of our analyses will be outlined. First, we will discuss the regression model that shows the effect of being a woman on job satisfaction. Second, the regression model including the effect of being a woman on extrinsic motivation will be discussed. Last we will show the regression model with both the effect of being female and extrinsic motivation on job satisfaction. We will also look if the hypotheses that we set out in the theory section must be rejected or can be confirmed.

### *Women and job satisfaction*

In the first regression we will look if the effect of being a woman on job satisfaction is significant. We control for age, educational level, occupational status, monthly household income, life satisfaction, intrinsic motivation and other motivation. The results of this multiple regression analysis are shown in table 2.

|                          | B         | Beta | T     | Significance |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|-------|--------------|
| Female                   | -.16      | -.06 | -1.48 | .14          |
| Age                      | .02       | .21  | 5.79  | .00          |
| Educational level        | .01       | .02  | .40   | .69          |
| Occupational status      | -.00      | -.05 | -1.08 | .28          |
| Monthly household income | 364000.00 | .06  | 1.44  | .15          |
| Life satisfaction        | .40       | .31  | 8.48  | .00          |
| Intrinsic motivation     | -.04      | -.03 | -.74  | .46          |
| Other motivation         | .03       | .02  | .58   | .83          |
| <i>Intercept</i>         | 3.43      | -    | 6.88  | .00          |
| $R^2$                    | .14       |      |       |              |
| N                        | 691       |      |       |              |

The independent variables can explain 14% of the variance in job satisfaction ( $R^2 = .14$ ,  $F(8, 682) = 13.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The main effect of being female on job satisfaction is not significant ( $\beta = -.16$ ,  $p = .14$ ), which means that women are not more satisfied in their job

than men. The first hypothesis *Women are more satisfied with their job compared to men* can not be confirmed. However, there can still be a mediation effect if the effect of being a woman on job satisfaction becomes significant in our last model (MacKinnon et al., 2000). We also find that the older a person is, the more satisfied this person is with his or her job ( $\beta = .02, p < .001$ ). If a person is more satisfied with his or her life, this person will also be more satisfied with his or her job ( $\beta = .40, p < .001$ ). The other control variables do not have a significant influence on job satisfaction.

#### *Women and extrinsic work motivation*

The second multiple regression investigates if being a woman has a negative effect on extrinsic motivation controlled for the same control variables we mentioned earlier. The results of the second regression can be found in table 3.

|                          | B         | Beta | T     | Significance |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|-------|--------------|
| Female                   | -.30      | -.15 | -4.35 | .00          |
| Age                      | -.00      | -.04 | -1.27 | .20          |
| Educational level        | .06       | .15  | 3.62  | .00          |
| Occupational status      | .01       | .13  | 3.27  | .00          |
| Monthly household income | 279800.00 | .06  | 1.67  | .10          |
| Life satisfaction        | .03       | .03  | .94   | .35          |
| Intrinsic motivation     | .44       | .44  | 11.73 | .00          |
| Other motivation         | .17       | .17  | 4.85  | .00          |
| <i>Intercept</i>         | -1.14     | -    | -3.46 | .00          |
| $R^2$                    | .28       |      |       |              |
| N                        | 691       |      |       |              |

The independent variables account for 28% of the variance in extrinsic motivation ( $R^2 = .28, F(8, 682) = 33.75, p < .001$ ). The independent variable female has a significantly negative effect on extrinsic motivation ( $\beta = -.30, p < .001$ ), indicating that women are less intrinsically motivated than men. This means the second hypothesis *Women are less*

*extrinsically motivated compared to men* is supported by our data. The regression analysis also shows that the higher someone's educational level ( $\beta = .06, p < .001$ ) and the higher the occupational status ( $\beta = .01, p = .00$ ), the more extrinsically motivated this person is. Also, the more intrinsic motivation ( $\beta = .44, p < .001$ ) and other motivation ( $\beta = .17, p < .001$ ) a person has, the more extrinsically motivated this person is. The other control variables are not significant.

*Women, extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction*

In this last regression we include extrinsic motivation to test if the effect of being female on job satisfaction changes if we include this variable. We will also look if the main effect of extrinsic motivation on job satisfaction is significant. We control for the same variables as in the other regression analyses. In table 4 the results of this regression are shown.

**Table 4: Multiple regression analysis of being a woman and extrinsic motivation on job satisfaction**

|                          | B         | Beta | T     | Significance |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|-------|--------------|
| Female                   | -.16      | -.06 | -1.47 | .14          |
| Extrinsic motivation     | .00       | .00  | -.03  | .97          |
| Age                      | .02       | .21  | 5.78  | .00          |
| Educational level        | .01       | .02  | .40   | .69          |
| Occupational status      | .00       | -.05 | -1.07 | .29          |
| Monthly household income | 364500.00 | .06  | 1.44  | .15          |
| Life satisfaction        | .40       | .31  | 8.47  | .00          |
| Intrinsic motivation     | -.04      | -.03 | -.66  | .51          |
| Other motivation         | .03       | .02  | .58   | .57          |
| <i>Intercept</i>         | 3.43      | -    | 6.81  | .00          |
| $R^2$                    | .050      |      |       |              |
| N                        | 692       |      |       |              |

14% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explained by the independent variables ( $R^2 = .14, F(9, 681) = 12.30, p < .001$ ). The main effects of being female ( $\beta = -.16, p = .14$ )

and extrinsic motivation ( $\beta = .00, p = .97$ ) on job satisfaction are not significant, which implies that both being female and having an extrinsic motivation do not have an effect on job satisfaction. The fourth hypothesis *People who are extrinsically motivated will be more dissatisfied with their job compared to people who are less extrinsically motivated* is not supported by our data. There is also no mediation effect because both being female and extrinsic motivation do not have a significant effect on job satisfaction. This means that the last hypothesis *The differences between women and men in their job satisfaction can be explained by extrinsic motivation* can also not be confirmed. We do find that the older a person is, the more satisfied this person is with the job ( $\beta = .02, p < .001$ ) and the more satisfied a person is with his or her life, the higher the job satisfaction ( $\beta = .40, p < .001$ ). The other control variables do not have a significant effect on job satisfaction.

## Conclusion and discussion

In this research we tried to gain insight into why women are not less satisfied in their job compared to men despite of their poorer working conditions. Using the European Values Study, which contains a large representative sample of the Dutch population aged 18 and older, we examined by means of three multiple regression analyses if the relationship between gender and job satisfaction could be mediated by extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation was defined as being motivated by tangible outcomes in the job that are not related to the work tasks. The research question that was formed at the beginning of this research was *To what extent is the influence of gender on job satisfaction mediated by extrinsic work values?* Based on previous research we expected that women would have a higher job satisfaction than men despite of their lower status. However, our data showed that women are not significantly more or less satisfied in their job compared to men. We also expected that women would be less extrinsically motivated than men. Indeed we found a significant negative effect from being a woman on extrinsic motivation, indicating that women are less extrinsically motivated compared to men. We expected that more extrinsically motivated people are less satisfied in their job and that this would explain why women are not less satisfied with their job than men. In other words, we expected that the effect of being a woman on job satisfaction is mediated by extrinsic motivation. However, we found that extrinsically motivated people are not significantly less satisfied with their job. Consequently, extrinsic motivation can not explain why women are not less satisfied with their job compared to men. The answer to our research question will therefore be that the influence of gender on job satisfaction is not mediated by extrinsic motivation.

The purpose of this study was to gain insight in the gender-job satisfaction paradox. Unfortunately, we did not found that women are more satisfied with their jobs compared to men. However, they are also not less satisfied with their jobs despite of their worse working conditions. This indicates there still is a paradox between gender and job satisfaction. A possible explanation for why we did not found that women are more satisfied in their job compared to men could be that women and men are becoming increasingly similar with regard to their job positions. The theory about sample selection, which says that dissatisfied women can more easily quit their job than dissatisfied men, is possibly no longer relevant. Nowadays, more and more women are expected to participate on the labour market because it becomes increasingly difficult for families with one earner to make ends meet (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2013). Therefore, if women are dissatisfied in their job they can not quit their job as easily as before, because the family depends on their income. Also, the theory

about the differences between men and women in their expectations of a job could be outdated. Work is increasingly becoming a central part in the life of women, which means their expectations of their job are becoming higher and therefore they are not as easily satisfied as before. The working conditions of men are also changing, as an increasing number of men are working flexible to make a better division between labour and care in the Netherlands (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2012). As a consequence, work becomes less central in the lives of men, so their expectations of a job might become lower. This would mean that the differences in the expectations that men and women have about their job are becoming more alike. The increasing number of men that are working flexible could also undermine the theory about gender segregation, which says that women often choose jobs with high flexibility and that this might cause a higher job satisfaction. In short, it could be the case that the theories about sample selection, the differences in expectations of a job between men and women and gender segregation in jobs are no longer relevant, which might be a possible reason why we did not find any significant differences between women and men in their job satisfaction.

Our results did show that women are less extrinsically motivated than men, which suggests that our data supports the socialization theory and the social role theory. It is however difficult to make the assumption that the theory is confirmed since we only investigated a hypothesis derived from this theory and not the theory itself. But it is most likely that socialization in childhood and the social roles that boys and girls are learned to take have an influence on motivation later in life. Men are taught to place higher values on material rewards and achievement compared to women and as a consequence, women will be less extrinsically motivated compared to men.

Based on our data we could not confirm that extrinsically motivated people are less satisfied in their job. This could be explained by the slight difference between the question that we used and the definition of extrinsic motivation. The question from the European Values Study that we used to measure extrinsic motivation asks which aspects of a job people think are important. We made the assumption that people are motivated by what they think is important in a job but this may not be as straightforward as it seems. It could be that people think they highly value some aspects but are unconsciously more motivated by other aspects. However, studies done in other countries (e.g. Vansteenkiste et al., 2007) used the same measures for extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction and did find that extrinsically motivated people are less satisfied in their job. Also, we did find that women are less extrinsically motivated than men, which makes it likely that our construct of extrinsic

motivation is valid. Another explanation for why we did not find that extrinsically motivated people are less satisfied with their job could be that our study only examined people from the Netherlands. There could be some cultural differences between the Netherlands and other countries that might cause the differences between what we found in our study and what others found. An example of a cultural difference could be the number of part time workers in a country.

In this research data from the European Values Study was used. Therefore we were limited to the questions asked in this study. However, using the EVS has many advantages. It is a large data set and the respondents were selected randomly from different countries in Europe aged 18 and older. Also, the measures of extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction asked in the EVS are the same as others used in their research (e.g. Gesthuizen en Verbakel, 2011; Kaasa, 2011; Sheldon et al., 2010; Vansteenkiste et al., 2007), thereby making our study comparable to other studies. Therefore we do not see the inability to design our own questions as a limitation of our study, rather we see the use of the EVS as a strength.

A limitation of our research is that it only focuses on the Dutch population. As a consequence, these findings can not be generalized to other cultures or historical periods. This becomes even clearer by our findings since we have other results than similar studies in other countries (e.g. Vansteenkiste et al., who studied the Belgian population). This might be due to cultural differences, which we will elaborate on when we make recommendations for future research. Another limitation of our research is that it is a cross-sectional study. This means that the respondents are questioned only once and at the same time, so nothing can be said about the causality of our findings. It is however not possible that your extrinsic motivation determines your gender so in that case the causality can be ascertained, but the causality between extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction is not so clear. It could be possible that people who are less satisfied in their job think they would be more satisfied if they would get more extrinsic rewards. In this case job dissatisfaction would lead to a higher extrinsic motivation.

Future research might examine whether the different results we found in this study with regard to extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction can be explained by cultural differences. A cultural difference that might be of influence is the number of part time workers in a country. In the Netherlands a lot of people work part time, more than in other European countries. This may be of influence on the central role work plays in the life of Dutch people. It might be the case that work does not play an equally important role for Dutch people as for people in other countries, because Dutch people work less hours. As a result,

other things in life outside of the job could be of greater influence on job satisfaction than the type of motivation someone has in their job. The number of part time workers could also be of influence on the relation between gender and job satisfaction. Dutch men more often work part time compared to men in other countries. If more men work part time, work takes a less central role in the lives of these men. As a consequence, the centrality of work becomes more alike for men and women, which causes them to be more alike with regard to job satisfaction. We expect that in countries with less part time workers the effects of extrinsic motivation and gender on job satisfaction would be higher than in countries with more part time workers. This is why we recommend future research to study the role of the number of part time workers in a country and the effect this has on the relations between extrinsic motivation, gender and job satisfaction.

We also encourage future research to do a longitudinal study regarding the influence of gender on job satisfaction. This way it could be examined if the changes in the job positions of men and women over the years are indeed causing women and men to be more alike with regard to their job satisfaction. By looking at the differences between job positions of women and men in the past and the job positions nowadays, it could be examined if the theories about sample selection at work, differences in expectations between men and women and gender segregation have indeed become outdated.

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