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Do Individual Cultural Values Influence What Drives Job Satisfaction, and to What Extent?

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Abstract

The importance of finding appropriate ways to drive job satisfaction is paramount. Satisfied employees have been found to perform better and, consequently, contribute to organizations' success. With growing globalization, multinational organizations increasingly struggle to find effective ways to deal with workforces in highly diverse cultural contexts. Using a field survey, the impact of three job characteristics – opportunities to grow within the company, achievement recognition and interpersonal trust (with regards to management) – on job satisfaction was measured, along with the moderating effect of cultural values, specifically individualism/collectivism and power distance. First, confirming past studies, a moderated multiple regression analysis showed that all three aspects of the job have a positive effect on job satisfaction, irrespectively of individual cultural values. Second, results presented evidence of an interaction between power distance and achievement recognition, showing that power distance negatively moderates the relationship between achievement recognition and job satisfaction. These findings have implications for modern-day managers and human resource practitioners who should consider power distance when dealing with multicultural teams, acknowledging that an approach such as achievement recognition will be more effective in increasing satisfaction in individuals with lower levels of power distance. The study integrates the culture factor with job satisfaction theory shedding light on how each job characteristic affects job satisfaction. This dive into cross-cultural variations extends existing research since cultural values are measured at the individual level rather than through a country- or regional-level generalization. Moreover, it analyses the effect of cultural values on the relationship between *specific* job characteristics and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Job satisfaction; achievement recognition; promotion opportunities; trust in management; cultural values; multinational organizations.

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Content

1. Introduction	1
2. Literature overview and theoretical framework	6
2.1 Context and key concepts	6
2.2 Model and hypotheses formulation	11
3. Empirical Strategy	18
3.2 Measures	19
3.3 Demographics	20
4. Results and interpretation	26
5. Discussion and conclusion	30
5.1 Implications	32
5.3 Limitations and future research	34
5.4 Conclusion	35
6. References	37
7. Appendix	46
7.1 Variables	46
7.2 Item list	47
7.3 Demographics	48

1. Introduction

It is intuitive to presume that there are certain aspects of the job that play a role in employee satisfaction. But are these the same for every employee? And if they are, do they affect satisfaction to the same extent? It is not a straightforward relationship. All individuals are different, and with that come different preferences, inclinations, and attitudes towards the job.

The world market is progressively becoming a harder place for businesses to operate, making creativity an increasingly important asset, and causing a shift in corporate focus, from financial resources to intellectual ones (Eskildsen & Nüssler, 2000). Organizations have now to adapt to the market working towards remaining competitive (Azanza, Moriano & Molero, 2013), and the ones who can create work environments that attract, motivate, and retain hard-working employees, will be better positioned to succeed (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). Among the existing management literature, it is consensual that human resources are the key to an organization's success, making it important for employers to care about, and ensure, the satisfaction of all employees (Gregory, 2011).

Employee satisfaction has been acknowledged to be essential to the success of any business. For organizations and managers, the interest in satisfaction comes from its relationship with work-related behaviours and job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Riketta, 2008), having been found to have a significant effect on employee performance (Sabuhari, et al., 2020). Numerous previous studies highlight that employees are the firms' drivers of excellence (Eskildsen & Dahlgaard, 2000) and that satisfied employees are more committed, motivated, productive, and work more effectively (e.g., Pfeffer, 1994; Weiss, 2002; Matzler & Renzl, 2006; Aziri 2011; Gregory, 2011; Tessema et al., 2013; Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). Furthermore, the rate of absenteeism or turnover due to unhappy, unsatisfied employees is extremely high (Gregory, 2011;

Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013; Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). Modern-day managers should thus pay additional attention to employees' satisfaction and how to cultivate it, acknowledging how it can affect worker performance and, ultimately, the one of the company. The study of what promotes satisfaction (or dissatisfaction), as well as how it differs from individual to individual, becomes therefore relevant for managerial practices.

Even though overall employee satisfaction is important, it is a rather broad and subjective concept. Accordingly, the focus of this study will be on employees' *job* satisfaction explicitly, as well as the aspects of the job that affect it. There are many drivers of job satisfaction, as well as drivers of dissatisfaction or discouragement. Examples of the latter can be stress, unethical perception of employers, lack of communication within the workforce, no achievement recognition by supervisors, no effort compensation and lack of opportunities to grow within the company (Gregory, 2011); while good communication, achievement recognition and opportunities to progress, as well as, for example, interpersonal trust (Matzler & Renzl, 2006), drive job-related employee satisfaction. Nonetheless, every individual is different. Particularly in multinational organizations, with international and multicultural workforces, managers are required to handle an array of individual, cultural and national differences and, as different individuals, it is likely that the causes and drivers of satisfaction differ from worker to worker.

A fundamental focus of the international management literature is on national differences in culture, namely in cultural values (Hofstede, 1980; Gerhart & Fang, 2005). The impact of cultural differences on what affects job satisfaction, however, has been highly neglected. As described by Abdulla et al. (2011), cited in Ahmad et al. (2021), the analysis of job satisfaction across countries provides evidence to suggest that national cultural norms and values strongly affect job satisfaction. There are many factors driving job satisfaction, both financial and non-financial, and

different aspects of job satisfaction may be more salient for individuals with different cultural values (Arzu Wasti, 2003), i.e., it is likely that one's culture helps define which factors have a greater impact, and to what extent.

Even though there has been increasing research exploring cross-cultural differences in this manner, a considerable share of its focus is on other job-related outcomes such as job commitment or willingness to cooperate (e.g., Wasti, 2003; Yang, 2019). Regarding the existing focus on job satisfaction, cultural values are predominantly measured at the country or regional level (e.g. Andreassi et al., 2014; Hauff & Richter, 2015), other independent variables such as leadership or empowerment are examined (e.g. Walumbwa et al.; 2007, Ahmad et al., 2021), or job characteristics, when analysed, are divided into broader categories and not specified (e.g. Huang & Van de Vliert, 2003). Moreover, as argued by Martin (2014), cultural diversity in organizations has grown with internationalization, increasing the importance of studying cross-cultural – rather than cross-national – differences and how these affect job-related attitudes. The aim of this study is then to help fill in the gap in the existing literature regarding the moderating effect of cultural values on what drives job satisfaction, by scrutinizing the relationship between three job characteristics – achievement recognition, opportunities to grow within the company and interpersonal trust (towards management)¹ –, and employee job satisfaction, along with the moderating effect of cultural values; i.e., **how do cultural values affect the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction?** The model is depicted in Figure 1.

¹ It may be argued that interpersonal trust is not a job characteristic. However, since it derives from aspects of the job like management quality and communication, it will also be mentioned as one throughout this paper.

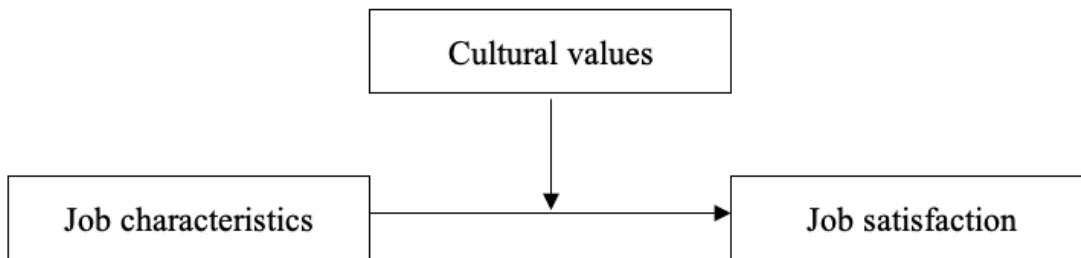


Figure 1. The relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction, and the moderating effect of cultural values.

From a theoretical standpoint, this paper contributes to the literature as it progresses the understanding of what drives employees' job satisfaction, expressly advancing the literature field on cross-cultural human resource management (HRM). More importantly, it is relevant from a real-life (managerial) perspective since the findings have important implications for managers, advancing the knowledge on how to maintain a motivated, productive and efficient team, deriving from happiness and satisfaction in the workplace. Furthermore, with growing worldwide integration and country differences within the organizations' environment (Dowling, 1999; Wasti, 2003), the complexity of the relationship between HRM practices and employee outcomes is increasing due to cultural diversity (Andreassi et al., 2014). The effectiveness of (global) managers thus depends on their capability to operate in culturally mixed interpersonal networks (Smith & Peterson, 1988), which provides international relevance to this study.

The remainder of the paper will be structured as follows: Firstly, key concepts will be defined and the existing literature regarding this topic, as well as the context in which the research question stands, are described. Proceeding from this, relationships are examined, six hypotheses are formulated, and a model is proposed. The approach taken in collecting data and analysing it is explained next. Following the data analysis, the results are presented and interpreted, and

conclusions are drawn. Finally, findings are portrayed in the light of previous research, practical implications of the present study are discussed, as well as its limitations and potential for future research.

2. Literature overview and theoretical framework

2.1 Context and key concepts

Employee satisfaction, performance, retention, and turnover have been focal areas in the literature on employee and human resource management, as well as organisational performance. Part of the managerial relevance of the linkages analysed throughout this paper stems from the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance which, in turn, is expected to increase organizations' performance. Despite its complexity, numerous previous studies (e.g., Judge et al., 2001; Gu & Chi, 2009; Ziegler, Hagen & Diehl, 2012; Dugguh & Dennis, 2014; Schmailan, 2016) have dove into this relationship and findings show that a more satisfied (or *happy*, Wright & Cropanzano, 2000) employee performs, indeed, better at his job. The beneficial consequences of a satisfied employee are manifold and have been extensively studied. According to Dugguh & Dennis (2014), satisfied employees are more likely to be more committed, creative and productive. Previous literature also found that job satisfaction predicts absenteeism, the increase in satisfaction being a good strategy for its reduction, and of employee turnover (Aziri, 2011; Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). Moreover, Schmailan (2016) also found that other studies have shown customer satisfaction, profitability and fewer work accidents within several business units were due to a higher satisfied and engaged staff, while according to Woodruffe (2006) engaged and satisfied employees tend to be top performers and committed to the organization. Schmailan (2016), as well as Judge et al. (2001), also examined the relationship between job satisfaction and performance, finding literature confirmation that satisfied employees do perform better and contribute to the overall success of organizations, while dissatisfied individuals become an obstacle to success. Companies able to promote job satisfaction among their employees will thus have a more productive and effective workforce, wherefore modern-day organizations should actively seek to

fulfil employees' expectations creating an impact on their performance which, in turn, affects the organization's success (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2013).

Employee satisfaction has, as addressed above, been acknowledged to be essential to the success of any business, having been defined in numerous ways by various scholars (e.g., Hoppock & Spiegler, 1938; Locke, 1976; Fisher, 2000; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Weiss, 2002; Ilies & Judge, 2004). The central idea coincides across studies: a positive feeling toward one's job, resulting from different factors and characteristics (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013). Job satisfaction can be defined as *the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception that one's job fulfils or allows for the fulfilment of one's important job values* (Locke, 1976). Different factors have been shown to affect it: working conditions, co-workers and managers, career prospects (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014), financial and non-financial rewards (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013), as well as other underlying aspects of the job. Specifically, and according to Locke (1976) cited in Sempene et al. (2002), the elements most commonly generating job satisfaction are working conditions, promotion, recognition, benefits, supervision, co-workers, company, and management.

Given the already underlined importance of job satisfaction for performance (and ultimately organization success), it is crucial that an effort is put into trying to better understand what drives satisfaction in order to induce and maximize it. It is likely that the extent to which particular features of a job affect employee satisfaction depends on his/her values and motives, differing from individual to individual. In fact, a consistent number of studies have identified differences in levels of satisfaction across cultures (e.g. Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1985; Luthans, McCaul & Dodd, 1985; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001; Ahmad et al., 2021) and reviews of the cross-cultural literature indicate that cultural values play an essential role on employees' attitudes to various aspects of their job (Hauff & Richter, 2015). The attempt to comprehend what is behind job satisfaction

becomes therefore additionally challenging when operating in a multicultural environment, dealing with different individuals with different cultural values.

Culture can be defined as a system of values, beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural meanings shared by members of a social group (Thomas, Au & Ravlin, 2003). Of the national culture dimensions identified by Hofstede (1980, 2001), power distance and collectivism/individualism have received substantial empirical and academic attention and will be the points of focus of this study. According to Yang (2019), these two cultural dimensions have been strongly used across studies to explain differences in individual work value and work motivation, as well as social exchange (e.g., Taras et al., 2010; Ahmad & Gao, 2018; Arshad et al., 2019). Furthermore, and according to Hauff & Richter (2015), the moderating role of cultural values has not been examined in *comprehensive* job satisfaction models. Table 1 presents the main relevant studies as well as the respective keywords, findings, and key takeaways for the purpose of this study.

Table 1. *Literature overview*

Authors	Methodology	Key words	(Relevant) findings	Main takeaways
<i>Job satisfaction and drivers</i>				
Matzler & Renzl (2006)	Survey	Interpersonal trust, employee satisfaction, employee loyalty, Partial Least Squares (PLS)	Interpersonal trust is a strong predictor of job satisfaction which, in turn, affects employee loyalty.	Literature review; data collection and methodology; findings
Danish & Usman (2010)	Survey	Work motivation, Job satisfaction, Reward, Recognition	Promotional opportunities and recognition positively affect satisfaction.	Literature, measures and methodology; findings
Tessema et al. (2013)	Survey	HR practices, employee recognition, pay, benefits, job satisfaction, culture, Vietnam, Malaysia	Employee recognition, pay and benefits were found to have a significant impact on job satisfaction regardless of culture; the impact of benefits on job satisfaction varies by country.	Importance of job satisfaction; importance of employee recognition and its effect on satisfaction; measures and methodology

Dugguh & Dennis (2014)	Literature review	Job satisfaction, employee performance, traceability, organizations, Nigeria	Unveils the factors that should be included when further investigating job satisfaction.	Theory and definitions of job satisfaction; different drivers of job satisfaction, including achievement recognition and opportunities to grow within the company
<i>Culture</i>				
Kirkman & Shapiro (2001)	Survey	Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, cultural values, self-managing working teams (SMWT), employee resistance	Collectivism, power distance, doing orientation and determinism are significantly related to organizational commitment but only collectivism and doing orientation are related to job satisfaction.	Literature review; measures, data collection approach and methodology; findings
Huang & Van de Vliert (2003)	Multilevel modeling	Intrinsic job satisfaction, national characteristics, intrinsic motivation	The link between intrinsic characteristics and job satisfaction is stronger in more individualistic countries and ones with lower power distance.	Literature review; cultural perspective; relationships; findings
Tessema et al. (2013)	Survey	HR practices; employee recognition; pay; benefits; job satisfaction; culture; Vietnam; Malaysia; USA	Pay, recognition and benefits were found to affect job satisfaction positively.	Literature on human resources, rewards (specifically, recognition) and job satisfaction; measures and methodology; findings; relevance
Andreassi et al. (2014)	Use of previous survey	Job satisfaction, Culture, Employee attitudes, Human resource practices	Significant differences in the relative importance of job characteristics for job satisfaction, consistent with Hofstede's cultural dimensions.	Literature on human resource management, job satisfaction and culture; model; findings
Hauff & Richter (2015)	Use of previous survey	Culture, Job characteristics, Job satisfaction, Power distance	In low power distance cultures, employee empowerment is more important to increase job satisfaction; employees seek better positions in countries high in power distance.	Why the importance of aspects of the job should differ across cultures; literature review; gap in the literature; moderating effect of power distance; relevance
Jen-Shou Yang (2019)	Information integration theory	Collectivistic orientation, Extrinsic motivator, Intrinsic motivator, Power distance orientation, Reciprocal motivator	Power distance and collectivism entail divergent moderating effects on the effectiveness of three motivators in promoting employees' willingness to cooperate for organizational interest.	Literature review; cultural values play an important role on employees' attitudes towards work; why collectivism and power distance; findings

Collectivism vs. Individualism

Individualism can be seen as a propensity to perceive one's self as independent of others and to be more concerned about personal goals. Behaviours are determined by a focus on attitudes and personal needs, while rights and relationships are managed by rational reasoning (Thomas, Au, & Ravlin, 2003). Collectivism, on the other hand, is viewed as the tendency to perceive the self as interdependent with others ("we" identity) and be concerned about the consequences of behaviour on the goals of the in-group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995; Thomas, Au, & Ravlin, 2003), being more prone to give up personal interests for the general welfare. Behaviours are thus determined by a focus on duties, norms and obligations and there is a clear priority for relationship formation (Thomas, Au, & Ravlin, 2003). In-group collectivist cultures are then more dependent on society and highly value group needs and goals (Fu et al., 2004).

Power distance

Power distance can be defined as the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is unequally distributed (Hofstede et al., 2010) - the central issue being how a society deals with inequalities among people. In cultures with high levels of power distance, strict compliance to the leader's requests is expected (Furst & Cable, 2008), and there is a distinction between people of differing power status, existing a tendency to create *hierarchical organizational relationships* (Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018). Low power distance cultures, on the other hand, create less distinction flattening hierarchical relationships.

As described by Hauff & Richter (2015), the importance of job characteristics, specifically ones related to status and power, should differ across cultures. In fact, they suggest that the degree of power distance moderates the impact that these situational aspects of the job have on job satisfaction. They found that in low power distance cultures employee empowerment is more

important to increase job satisfaction. Similarly, while analysing intrinsic sources of job satisfaction, Huang & Van de Vliert (2003) found that intrinsic job characteristics (including recognition) positively affect job satisfaction to a greater extent in countries with lower levels of power distance, but also in more individualistic ones, arguing that the results are attributed to cultural norms within these countries. Moreover, in a study on the effectiveness of work motivators, Yang (2019) dove into the moderating effects of collectivism and power distance, finding that extrinsic motivators, such as promotion or bonus, proved to be more effective on employees with high collectivism rather than ones with low degrees of collectivism. Another finding was that extrinsic motivators could work better for employees with high levels of power distance rather than for ones with lower levels. When measuring extrinsic rewards, however, the author mentioned recognition was excluded due to lack of concreteness, leaving only income and promotion.

There is great subjectivity in dividing job characteristics into intrinsic or extrinsic since several aspects of the job can be considered both, or perceived differently by different scholars: Huang & Van de Vliert (2003) consider recognition an intrinsic characteristic whereas Yang (2019) mentions recognition as an extrinsic motivator. This limits the practical implications of findings due to a lack of specificity and objectivity on how managers should approach employees. Accordingly, this study will focus on specifying (three) job characteristics and analysing their relationships with job satisfaction, along with the moderating effect of cultural values.

2.2 Model and hypotheses formulation

Two of the primary factors driving job satisfaction are achievement recognition and opportunities to grow and progress within the company (Locke, 1976). Both are likely to have a different effect on job satisfaction depending on one's values (particularly, cultural ones) and, since these factors

are relatively under companies' control, it makes them relevant from a managerial perspective. Despite not being so straightforward, another aspect affecting satisfaction is interpersonal trust (Matzler & Renzl, 2006), namely towards managers. Its effect on job satisfaction is also likely to vary from individual to individual and, even though trust is not as much in the company's hands, there are behaviours and actions that can be considered by managers in order to increase it. Strategies and methods that are successful in one environment, however, may be viewed as inappropriate in another (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013). It is thus suggested, throughout this study, that one's cultural values affect what causes job satisfaction and to what extent, having a moderating effect on the relationship between these factors and employee job satisfaction; a moderator, by definition, influences the level (strength), direction, or presence of a relationship. It has been found in previous research that, affecting social exchange in general, culture is a primary determinant in choices people make as to how exchanges occur (Fiske, 1991) and that attitudes, behaviours and performance of individuals can be deeply affected by their cultural values (Fu & Yukl, 2000), in particular attitudes towards one's job.

The effect of the mentioned cultural dimensions on the factors considered to drive job satisfaction will be analysed next.

Opportunities to grow within the company

Career development (i.e., career growth) is defined as *the process of learning and improving your skills so that you can do your job better and progress to better jobs* (Cambridge Dictionary, 1995).

Even though it seems like there is no evidence of previous studies testing how the perceived growth opportunities within the company affect employee job satisfaction, the relationship between growth opportunities and employee turnover has been analysed (e.g., Nouri & Parker, 2013; Adeniji et al., 2018), indicating that the perception that the firm provides career growth

opportunities leads to lower employee turnover through increased organization commitment (Nouri & Parker, 2013). With regards to job satisfaction, for the development of the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985), a literature review was conducted on job satisfaction dimensions and, in order to measure it, a list of different subscales was made containing the nine most common and conceptually meaningful dimensions, one of them being *promotion opportunities*. Having been used as a direct measurement of satisfaction before, it is then presumable that there is a positive relationship between this factor and job satisfaction *per se*.

It is natural to expect that the perception of existing opportunities to grow/progress within the company increases the employee's job satisfaction. The level to which it does, however, may vary. Since individualistic cultures are more focused on their own interests and personal goals, it is likely that the relationship between growth opportunities and job satisfaction will be stronger for an individualistic employee than for a collectivist one. This is in line with evidence found by Yang (2019) on how extrinsic motivators such as promotion or bonuses would be more effective for employees with low degrees of collectivism as opposed to ones with higher degrees. Moreover, and according to Boyacigiller & Adler (1991), employees from individualist cultures tend to commit to firms due to the job content or the promotion plan while, as suggested by Pelled & Xin (1997), collectivist employees differ from individualistic ones in having a greater desire to associate with co-workers and less concern about their personal progress.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived growth opportunities within a company are more likely to positively affect job satisfaction for individualistic employees than for collectivist ones.

As for power distance, Hauff & Richter (2015) found that employees seek better positions in countries with higher levels. Besides focusing on individual cultural values rather than ones at the

country level, this study follows a different line of reasoning. Individuals with higher levels of power distance tend to have more respect for authority and hierarchy (Lee, Scandura & Sharif, 2014), making an opportunity for promotion seem less likely or even fair. Furthermore, individuals from lower power distance cultures are expected to be more positively affected by the prospect of career progression since they don't see themselves as inferior when compared to higher positions (the expectancy of being promoted is higher given the lower consideration given to hierarchy in general). For these reasons, the perception of growth opportunities is more likely to be considered a job requirement for individuals with lower levels of power distance, representing, therefore, a stronger source of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived growth opportunities within a company are more likely to positively affect job satisfaction for employees with low power distance cultural values than for ones with higher power distance.

Achievement recognition

Rewards and recognition have proved to have an impact on employee motivation and performance, as well as on job satisfaction. According to Bowen (2000), cited in Akafo & Boateng (2015), reward and recognition are critical factors in boosting morale and creating goodwill between employees and managers. A reward provides a clear promotion of quality behaviour and efforts, signalling to the employee these are valued by the organization (Evans & Lindsay, 2003). Even though a reward can be a form of recognition, as recognition can also be a type of reward, the prime difference denoted in the literature between them is that, even though rewards can be both extrinsic or intrinsic, these tend to be in the form of money, benefits or promotion, while recognition is more of a form of praise. Employees don't only seek attractive pay or benefits, they

also expect their efforts to be valued, appreciated, and recognized (Akafo & Boateng, 2015), which is also a way of showing an employee respect. According to Gostick & Elton (2007), recognition consists of praise or a personal note acknowledging achievements and including small gestures that have some importance to the employees. Yet, according to Brun & Dugas (2008), recognition does represent a reward, experienced primarily at a symbolic level, but that may also take on emotional, practical, or even financial value. Recognition can then be categorised as formal or informal, cash or noncash and individual or collective (Long & Shields, 2010).

One can then assume that employee recognition, besides boosting productivity, can increase satisfaction (Gostick & Elton, 2007; Tessema et al., 2013). Satisfaction reached with recognition or rewards, however, is a complex process; it derives from the comparison between what one thinks he or she deserves and expects from the organisation, with what is actually being given, and presumably differs from individual to individual. Extrinsic personal rewards will generate more commitment in individualistic employees than in collectivist ones (Palich et al., 1995) since, in collectivist cultures, the definition of the self is interdependent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995), rather than independent. Even though collectivist employees are thus more likely inclined to satisfy others and have behaviours that will benefit the organization as a whole (so it may be they are more regularly praised or have their efforts recognized), it is likely that the relationship between recognition and satisfaction is stronger for individualistic employees since they seek personal recognition to a greater extent than collectivists do.

Hypothesis 3: Achievement recognition is more likely to positively affect job satisfaction for individualistic employees than for collectivist ones.

Given the greater respect for authority and hierarchy, individuals from cultures with higher levels of power distance will likely prefer to keep social distance from supervisors (Kirkman et al., 2009) possibly not expecting much feedback and acclamation in the first place, or even not finding some form of praise or recognition appropriate. In fact, frequent recognition has shown to be interpreted by individuals in high power distance countries as unnecessary or even undesirable (Earley & Stubblebine, 1989). Additionally, individuals from lower power distance cultures tend to have a preference for direct forms of communication at work (Ting-Toomey, 1995) and, once more, will not find recognition as unexpected since they don't see themselves as inferior.

Hypothesis 4: Achievement recognition is more likely to positively affect job satisfaction for employees with low power distance cultural values than for ones with higher power distance.

Interpersonal trust: trust in management

Previous studies (e.g., Dirks & Ferrin, 2001) have analysed how interpersonal trust at work plays a role in generating satisfaction. Rich (1997) motivates this by explaining that managers are the ones responsible for many tasks that, in turn, affect job satisfaction, such as training or guidance on job responsibilities. Interpersonal trust has been defined, in the context of social learning theory, as an *expectancy held by an individual that the word, promise, oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon* (Rotter, 1967). According to Matzler & Renzl (2006), when employees believe their leaders are trustworthy, they will feel safer and more positive about them, while low levels of trust, on the other hand, can lead to the development of psychological stress. It is, therefore, crucial to ensure employees feel trust towards managers.

Even though it can be assumed to affect job satisfaction, trust does not mean the same to every individual, which is why it is possible that one's cultural values moderate the relationship between

interpersonal trust and job satisfaction. Collectivist cultural values cause individuals to be more relational- and people-oriented (Hofstede, 1980; Arzu Wasti, 2003) and with great emphasis on the interdependent self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995; Thomas, Au & Ralvin, 2003), giving greater importance to the in-group and interpersonal relations. Moreover, employees from collectivist cultures tend to commit to firms due to their ties with colleagues (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991). Thus, it is likely that trust in the working environment, namely trust in management, causes a higher degree of satisfaction for collectivist employees than for ones from individualistic cultures.

Hypothesis 5: Interpersonal trust, specifically with regards to management, is more likely to positively affect job satisfaction for more collectivist employees than for individualistic ones.

As for power distance, cultures with lower levels are more likely to see more benefits in higher levels of interpersonal trust. In cultures with higher levels of power distance, individuals tend to carry out instructions in a more unquestioning way (Lee, Scandura & Sharif, 2014), with trust playing a smaller role since they give greater relevance to hierarchy than individuals from low power distance cultures. It is therefore expected that trust in managers has greater value for employees with lower levels of power distance, producing higher levels of job satisfaction when compared to ones with higher levels of power distance.

Hypothesis 6: Interpersonal trust, specifically with regards to management, is more likely to positively affect job satisfaction for employees with low power distance cultural values than for ones with higher power distance.

3. Empirical Strategy

Following the context placement of the research question and hypotheses development, this section now lays out the variables measured, the approach taken for data collection and analysis, as well as its motivation, and the respective methodology to test the hypotheses.

3.1 Sample and procedure

A wide variety of disciplines have previously examined the topic of job satisfaction, typically collecting data through self-report surveys using rating scales (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013). Thus, in order to examine the linkages between the contemplated job characteristics, job satisfaction, and cultural values, as well as to test the proposed hypotheses, surveys were conducted on employees from different multinational firms, from different sectors, for generalizability and contextualization purposes. Even though previous research on cross-cultural differences has been simply conducted across different countries, it was important, for the international management relevance of this study, that respondents belonged to multinational organizations, with multicultural environments, using a non-probability sampling technique (Danish & Usman, 2010). The question of whether the individual belonged to a multinational organization was asked at the beginning of the survey so that, if not the case, participants were immediately redirected to the ending page.

The initial aim was to target at least three multinational companies – of comparable size but from different sectors – willing to collaborate and share the questionnaire with the employees. This strategy, however, turned out unsuccessful and, alternatively, the survey was widely spread, aiming towards individuals working in a multinational company, regardless of which one. Respondents were informed about the survey via various social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, as well as contacted privately, via email or on the same platforms. The questionnaires were

conducted in English since, for multinational purposes, it is expected that employees are fluent in the language. Subjects participated on a voluntary basis and both anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. The survey was active for one month.

Respondents that did not work in a multinational company were deleted, and all remaining numeric data, containing 132 responses, was exported. After the data was cleaned, all incomplete answers had to be deleted since all relevant questions and items were placed towards the end of the survey: 18 respondents completed under 63% of the survey, 27 completed 63% of the survey (all background and workplace data, but no items on cultural values or job satisfaction), and 10 completed 75% (answering to items on collectivism and power distance, but none on job characteristics or job satisfaction, not providing any value to the study). Additionally, when looking at the control items included, six more responses were removed. The final sample size was 71 respondents.

3.2 Measures

A list of items is provided in the Appendix.

Job characteristics. In measuring the three aspects of the job considered – opportunities to grow within the company, achievement recognition and interpersonal trust –, a version of the scale by Spector (1985) was used for the first two, respectively from subscales 2 (promotional opportunities) and 5 (contingent rewards). Examples of each are, correspondingly, “Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.” and “I feel that the work I do is appreciated.”. With respect to the latter, negative-related items were adapted to positively describe achievement recognition, i.e., the initial item was “I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated”. Regarding interpersonal trust, trust in management was measured using Cook & Wall’s (1980)

interpersonal trust at work scale since, even though it was one of the first ones, it is widely used and has been extensively tested (Matzler & Renzl, 2006). One example is “Our management would be quite prepared to gain advantage by deceiving the employees.” (reverse coded).

Job satisfaction. A six-item scale reflecting overall job satisfaction (Homburg & Stock, 2004) was used, rather than separate dimensions like is the case for the Job Satisfaction Survey. “I like my job.” is an example of the items used.

Cultural values. Both dimensions – power distance and collectivism/individualism – were measured by employing Yoo et al. 's (2011) *CVSCALE*, which assesses Hofstede’s cultural dimensions at the individual level with six measure items for collectivism and five measure items for power distance. The scale, besides being fairly recent, allows the usage of cultural orientations at the individual level. Examples of items are “People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.” and “Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group.” for power distance and collectivism, respectively.

Additionally, each respondent was asked to provide personal information such as age, gender, marital state, ethnicity, education, country, sector and tenure.

3.3 Demographics

After removing every unfit response, the demographics (detailed table in the Appendix) of the final relevant sample were then examined, taking a closer look at gender, age groups, marital state, education, ethnicity, country, industry, and tenure. Any missing values, specifically regarding country and tenure in one case, were replaced by the mode within that category.

71 usable surveys from 13 different countries were returned, with greater predominance in the Netherlands and secondly in Portugal. Respondents belonged to a wide variety of (17) different sectors – mainly business, management and consultancy (28.17%), accounting, banking and

finance (14.08%) and computing and IT (12.86%) – providing generalizability to the study. The sample comprised 43 females (60.56%) and 28 males (39.44%), and the modal age category was 25 - 34 years (52.11%) with the second most frequent being 18 - 24 years (23.94%). The respondents were rather educated, with 57.7 per cent having completed a Master's degree, 36.6 per cent having a Bachelor's degree, and the rest having at least completed high school. A significant share of the respondents was single (66.20%), only 2.8 per cent were divorced and the rest were married or in a domestic partnership. The modal tenure category was 0 - 3 years (71.83%).

3.4 Reliability and Validity

All constructs were measured using existing and tested scales, and responses were based on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Regarding the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985), from which two subscales were used (to measure growth opportunities within a company and achievement recognition), previous reliability tests (Spector, 1985) have proved internal consistency reliability for each of the items: every alpha coefficient was above or equal to the 0.60 *minimum* suggested by Nunnally (1978), with all but two above 0.70, having a value of 0.91 for the total scale. With respect to Cook & Wall's (1980) interpersonal trust at work scale, it is still the most widely used scale despite having been one of the first ones, and it has been extensively tested, showing good reliability (Matzler & Renzl, 2006). The items used to measure job satisfaction, as shown by Homburg & Stock (2004), not only presented an individual item reliability of over 0.76 in every case, but also a more than satisfactory composite reliability of 0.98, above the 0.60 considered desirable (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Finally, with regards to the items used to measure the cultural values analysed, the scale is rather recent and shows

decent validity, reliability and generalizability (Yoo et al., 2011), with every cultural value showing a composite reliability estimate above 0.60. Additionally, previously tested relationships are included in this study (like is the case for the (positive) effect of each job characteristic on job satisfaction), further increasing its reliability.

Since almost all answers were mandatory and all incomplete responses (with progress under 100%) were deleted, there were virtually no missing values (*country* was not included as a control given the large diversity in responses) except for one tenure category, which was not in line with the respective age and was replaced by the modal tenure category. Moreover, three control items were included in different stages of the survey (such as “Please select ‘strongly agree’ here”) to assure respondents were following. All respondents who wrongly selected all three – or two, likely having randomly selected one right – were deleted. Regarding a few respondents who wrongly selected one control item only, the analysis was conducted with and without them, since such may have happened due to mistyping or distraction (f.e. selecting ‘Strongly disagree’ instead of ‘Strongly agree’). The (almost) lack of missing values, as well as the inclusion of control items, both contribute to the internal validity of the study. Furthermore, despite the strong predominance of females and lack of diversity ethnicity-wise in the final sample (compromising its representativeness), the considerable variety in country and sector grants generalizability to the present study, contributing to its external validity.

3.5 Data analysis

The multiple items of each measure were firstly added in order to obtain a single variable for each (taking into consideration that one reverse coded item). The descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and minimum and maximum values taken) for each of the dependent and independent

variables (not controls) are shown in Table 2, as well as the correlations between them. It is worth noting that, at their limit, collectivism and job satisfaction could range from 6 to 30 (6 items), power distance from 5 to 25 (5 items) and growth opportunities, achievement recognition and trust in management from 3 to 15 (3 items). As shown in Table 2, respondents showed fairly high levels of collectivism ($M = 19.91$), low levels of power distance ($M = 8.08$), considerably high ratings for each job characteristic (always above 10, with 15 being the upper limit) and, overall, respondents indicated quite high levels of job satisfaction ($M = 20.98$). The table also reveals several significant relationships between the different job characteristics and job satisfaction. Consistent with past research on job satisfaction, all three aspects of the job – growth opportunities, achievement recognition and trust in management – are positively related to job satisfaction ($r = .320$, $r = .571$ and $r = .383$, respectively, with $p < 0.01$). Additionally, it is interesting to note that trust in management and achievement recognition are positively related ($r = .319$, $p < 0.01$), possibly indicating that interpersonal trust relies on recognition (and communication) to some extent, or vice-versa. Given the observation of several significant correlations between variables, statistical checks were used to test for multicollinearity. Having found a high Variance Inflation Factor ($VIF > 10$, a commonly accepted rule of thumb in the scientific community) for the marital status variable, new regressions were run without this control variable. The new results presented no notable differences and new statistical checks suggested that multicollinearity was no longer a significant concern: $VIF \leq 2.50$ for all variables.

Table 2: *Descriptive statistics and correlations*

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Collectivism	19.87	4.46	8	30	1.000					
2. Power distance	8.07	2.93	5	23	.107	1.000				
3. Growth opportunities within the company	11.15	2.36	5	15	-.260**	-.111	1.000			
4. Achievement recognition	10.63	2.53	4	15	-.084	-.078	.580***	1.000		
5. Trust in management	10.63	2.51	3	15	-.096	-.138	.319***	.486***	1.000	
6. Job satisfaction	20.97	4.60	8	30	.068	-.145	.320***	.571***	.383***	1.000

Note. N = 71.

** p<0.05, ***p<0.01. Tests for correlations are two-tailed.

A four-step moderated multiple regression (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Walumbwa et al., 2007; Furst & Cable, 2008) was conducted using STATA - due to its ease of use, speed and accuracy - to analyse the survey data and test the hypotheses. Since previous research (e.g., Bedeian, Ferris & Kacmar, 1992) has found age, education and tenure as predictors of job satisfaction (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001), these controls, along with gender and marital status, were included as a first step in all regressions in order to take into account the demographic differences between the several respondents. Each category within each control variable was dummy coded, leaving one base category of each control out of the regression in order to avoid the dummy trap. In the first step job satisfaction was regressed on the controls only, the second step introduced the cultural values, the job characteristics were included next and, finally, interaction terms between the examined cultural values and each job characteristic (see list of variables in the Appendix) were added. Any variable used as a component of an interaction term was mean-centred (Aiken & West, 1991) in order to reduce problems associated with multicollinearity. In addition, a Breusch-Pagan test was performed after each regression to check for the presence of heteroskedasticity. For each test, the

p-value (Prob > chi2) was above 0.10 (and, naturally, 0.05), which means the null hypothesis (that there is constant variance among the residuals) was not rejected in any case, and the output of each original regression could be safely interpreted. As mentioned previously, the same regressions were also run without the respondents who did not answer correctly to all three control items, but the outcome did not show improved results, which is reasonable given the significant reduction in the sample size.

4. Results and interpretation

Results of the four-step multiple regression analysis can be observed in Table 3. Even though results show a significant negative relationship between the *Black/African American* ethnicity category and job satisfaction, this corresponds to one respondent only, wherefore no conclusions can be drawn, due to lack of representativity. With regards to the age groups, results suggest that younger respondents – within the 25 - 34-year-old age group – have a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction. This may be an indication that job satisfaction tends to decrease with age, or rather that contemporary job search is more selective, and thus more prone to generate satisfaction. Since achievement recognition seemed to explain a large part of the model, an additional regression – Step 3.2 – was run without it. Interestingly, both job characteristics now showed a positive significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that there is a positive relationship between the perception of growth opportunities within the company and job satisfaction, and that it would be stronger for individualistic employees (i.e., that it would diminish as collectivism increases, but strengthen as collectivism decreases). Hypothesis 2 predicted that the same relationship would be stronger for individuals with lower power distance. The nature of the relationships presented in Table 2, namely the positive relationship between growth opportunities and job satisfaction, is consistent with both Hypotheses 1 and 2. Table 3 indicates no evidence of a significant effect of growth opportunities on job satisfaction when achievement recognition is included, nor does it indicate evidence of a significant interaction effect for growth opportunities and each cultural value. When removing achievement recognition, however, results show a significant positive effect of growth opportunities on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.60$, $p < 0.05$), partially supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Table 3: *Four-step regression results on job satisfaction.*

Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3.1	Step 3.2	Step 4					
25 – 34 y.o.	1.71	1.56	2.49*	2.32	2.70**	2.53*	2.50*	2.39*	2.32*	2.48*
35 – 44 y.o.	2.12	1.63	2.28	2.48	2.63	2.32	2.28	2.18	2.61	2.09
45 – 54 y.o.	1.46	1.20	2.64	2.51	3.03	2.74	2.69	2.82	3.25	2.67
55 – 64 y.o.	5.09	4.75	3.21	4.17	3.99	3.22	3.27	2.96	2.82	3.15
65 – 74 y.o.	6.87	6.80	2.98	3.32	3.34	3.13	2.91	2.65	2.19	3.10
Gender	-0.67	-0.67	-0.29	-0.48	-0.19	-0.28	-0.27	-0.17	0.06	-0.31
High school	-2.62	-2.21	-3.63	-0.85	-4.00	-3.71	-3.62	-3.93	-3.64	-3.72
Master's	-1.54	-1.46	-0.73	-1.11	-0.84	-0.80	-0.73	-0.63	-0.64	-0.76
Black/African American	-11.19**	-11.24**	-7.65*	-9.54**	-7.45*	-7.80*	-7.54*	-7.60*	-7.29*	-7.64*
Hispanic/Latino	3.95	3.73	5.49	4.94	5.73	5.46	5.49	5.45	5.57	5.44
White	1.33	0.99	1.79	1.15	1.96	1.75	1.78	1.73	1.99	1.80
4 – 8 years tenure	-1.81	-2.31	-0.62	-1.85	-0.74	-0.57	-0.69	-0.65	-0.55	-0.80
9 – 15 years tenure	-1.29	-1.34	-1.13	0.09	-1.19	-1.15	-1.13	-1.15	-1.56	-1.06
16 – 25 years tenure	-0.88	-0.43	-0.30	-0.59	-0.84	-0.38	-0.30	-0.22	0.24	-0.85
Over 25 tenure	0.74	1.05	0.27	2.33	0.60	0.27	0.24	-0.36	-0.59	0.27
Collectivism		0.06	0.07	0.12	-0.04	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.07
Power distance		-0.14	-0.06	-0.07	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06	-0.03	0.02	-0.04
Growth opportunities within the company			-0.05	0.60**	-0.07	-0.06	-0.06	-0.05	0.02	-0.05
Achievement recognition			0.98***		0.96***	0.98***	0.98***	1.01***	1.01***	0.98***
Trust in management			0.18	0.47*	0.23	0.20	0.20	0.17	0.13	0.19
Collectivism x growth opportunities					0.04					
Collectivism x achievement recognition						0.01				
Collectivism x trust in management							-0.01			
Power distance x growth opportunities								-0.04		
Power distance x achievement recognition									-0.14*	

Power distance x trust in management										0.04
Constant	20.02***	20.27***	5.68	5.32	6.15	5.88	5.71	5.14	3.90	5.42
R ²	0.221	0.229	0.508	0.378	0.514	0.509	0.508	0.510	0.537	0.510
Adjusted R ²	0.008	-0.018	0.3117	0.147	0.306	0.299	0.298	0.301	0.339	0.299

Note: N = 70. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that there is a positive relationship between achievement recognition and job satisfaction, and that this relationship would strengthen as collectivism decreases but diminish as collectivism increases, being stronger for more individualistic employees. Hypothesis 4 predicted that the same relationship would strengthen (be *more positive*) as power distance decreases. Table 2, in particular the positive relationship between achievement recognition and job satisfaction, is in line with both Hypotheses 3 and 4. Moreover, Table 3 indicates that achievement recognition has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta \cong 1.00$, $p \leq 0.01$). Regarding the interaction between achievement recognition and collectivism, no indication of a significant effect was found, so Hypothesis 3 was only partially supported. On the other hand, results show evidence of a significant interaction between achievement recognition and power distance ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.10$) in Table 3, indicating that power distance negatively moderates the relationship between achievement recognition and job satisfaction. Specifically, for employees with low power distance, achievement recognition relates positively to job satisfaction to a greater extent than for employees with high power distances. This relationship, illustrated in Figure 2, supports Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 5 predicted that the positive relationship between trust in management would be stronger for more collectivist individuals, increasing as collectivism increases. Hypothesis 6 predicted that the same relationship would be stronger for individuals with lower power distance, decreasing as power distance increases. Once again, the nature of the relationships presented in Table 2, particularly the positive relationship between trust in management and job satisfaction, is

consistent with both Hypotheses 5 and 6. Table 3 indicates no evidence of a significant effect of trust in management on job satisfaction when achievement recognition is included in the regression, nor does it indicate evidence of a significant interaction effect for growth opportunities and each cultural value. Nevertheless, after removing achievement recognition, results show a significant positive effect of trust in management on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.10$). Hypotheses 5 and 6 were, therefore, partially supported.

Results also indicate that the inclusion of the interaction terms increased R-squared in all six cases. This measure, however, tends to optimistically estimate the fit of linear regressions and never decreases with the inclusion of a new variable. Adjusted R-squared, on the other hand, is a corrected goodness-of-fit measure which penalizes the addition of variables that do not improve the model. The adjusted R-squared only increases with the addition of one of the six interaction terms, between power distance and achievement recognition, which implies this is the only case in which there is an improvement in the model accuracy.

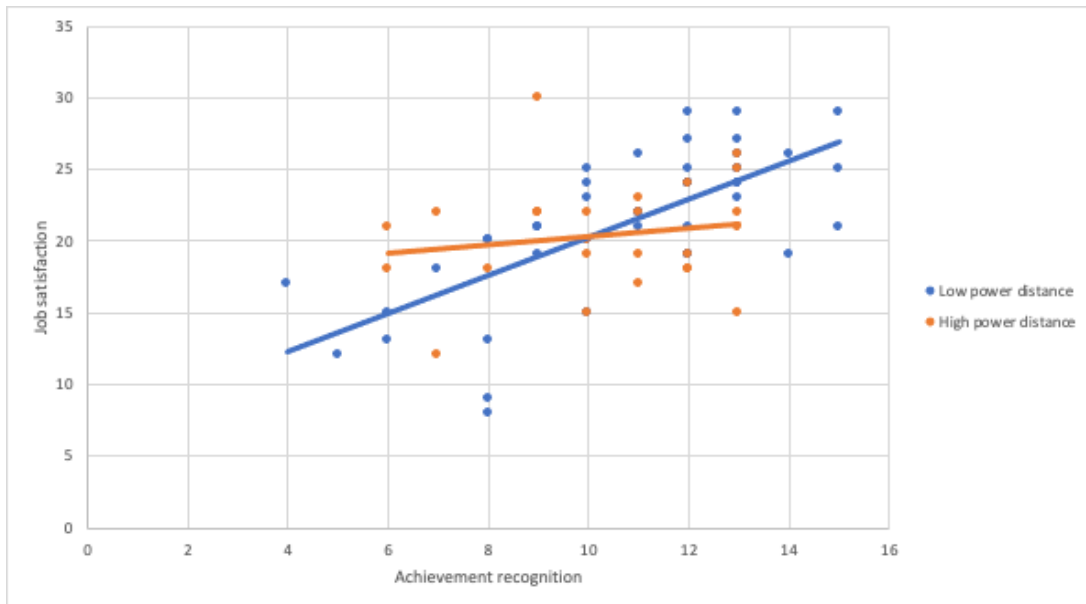


Figure 2. Interaction effect of power distance and achievement recognition.²

² Low and high levels of power distance were determined by comparing values with the mean for this measure.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Even though the present literature on job satisfaction is extensive, no studies have dove into the moderating effect of cultural values, measured at the individual level, on the relationship between specific job characteristics and job satisfaction. Satisfied employees will favourably affect employee and organizational productivity (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013), making this topic relevant from a managerial perspective (particularly one of *global managers*; Smith & Peterson, 1988). Nonetheless, although employee job satisfaction represents a critical role in organizations' performance, most companies are not giving due attention to it.

This study aimed to emphasise that the perception of growth opportunities within the company, the obtainment of achievement recognition, and trust in management, positively affect job satisfaction, and show that the extent to which this occurs depends on one's cultural values. Consistent with previous literature, all three aspects of the job proved to be positively related to job satisfaction. This was expected in the case of growth opportunities and achievement recognition since both these aspects have been previously used to directly measure job satisfaction - *Job Satisfaction Survey* (Spector, 1985), as well as expected in the case of interpersonal trust (specifically trust in management), given previous studies (e.g., Rich, 1997; Matzler & Renzl, 2006; Gill, 2008). Despite the existing correlations, when regressing job satisfaction on all independent variables, only achievement recognition was found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with job satisfaction, partially supporting Hypotheses 3 and 4. The result is in line with Andreassi et al. (2014), who found accomplishment and recognition to have the most significant impact on job satisfaction, irrespectively of culture. This is an important finding since, even though employees are motivated and satisfied by monetary rewards such as pay or benefits, the same happens with recognition – a non-monetary reward –, which is often overlooked by

managers (Tessema et al., 2013). When removing achievement recognition from the model, however, evidence of a significant positive effect of both growth opportunities and trust in management on job satisfaction was found. It can be observed, in Table 2, that there is a significant correlation between all three aspects of the job, which may explain why the removal of achievement recognition has this effect. The significant positive relationship between the two remaining job characteristics and job satisfaction partially supports Hypotheses 1, 2, 5 and 6, ultimately underlining the importance of all three of the examined characteristics in international HRM and job satisfaction generation.

Evidence of an interaction between each cultural value and each job characteristic was found in one case only: achievement recognition proved to have a stronger relationship with job satisfaction for employees with lower levels of power distance rather than for ones with higher levels, supporting Hypothesis 4. Managers should, therefore, take into account employees' levels of power distance when dealing with multicultural teams: an approach such as achievement recognition will likely have a stronger positive effect on employees with lower levels of power distance and alternative strategies may be more effective in the case of ones with higher levels. This finding is consistent with Huang & Van de Vliert (2006), cited in Andreassi et al. (2014), who found that in highly formalized work environments (which is the case for high power distance cultures) managers do not rely on tools like open communication, rather applying procedures and rules to exert control. On the other hand, it somewhat opposes Yang (2019), who found that extrinsic rewards would be more effective on individuals with higher levels of power distance rather than on ones with lower levels. It must be noted, however, that only income and promotion were included when measuring extrinsic rewards, leaving out recognition, which may explain why the findings differ.

The lack of significance observed for five out of the six interaction terms examined should also be discussed. These results indicate that collectivism in nothing influences the relationship between each characteristic and job satisfaction, and that power distance only does in the case of achievement recognition. If this is the case, cultural values barely affect the relationship between the considered job characteristics and job satisfaction. Even though this represents a possibility, a consistent body of literature has shown variations in job satisfaction across cultures (e.g., Huang & Van de Vliert, 2003; Andreassi et al., 2014; Haugd & Richter, 2015; Yang, 2019). Moreover, the size of the sample, as well as some lack of representativity, may have been detrimental to the results, and there might still exist a moderating effect of collectivism and power distance on the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction that was not captured in the present study.

5.1 Implications

This study has implications for both theory and practice. The theoretical elaborations proposed throughout this study create implications for the literature on job satisfaction, (international) human resource management (HRM) and total quality management (TQM). The formulated hypotheses give space for scholars to analyse and scrutinise the linkages proposed, reverting attention to cultural values within the context of job satisfaction. Furthermore, this is believed to be the first cross-cultural study of this nature that measures cultural values at the individual level together with examining the effect of specific job characteristics on job satisfaction.

Findings confirm the positive relationship between achievement recognition and job satisfaction, which confirms previous research and advances practical knowledge as achievement recognition can be used as an extremely beneficial tool for managers: it is free to give, contrarily to other forms

of recognition, and yet priceless to receive (Gostick & Elton, 2007; Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013). Furthermore, results show that the level of power distance moderates the extent to which achievement recognition positively affects job satisfaction, affecting this relationship. Present-day managers should thus take into consideration an employee's level of power distance when handling a multicultural workforce, acting accordingly towards different individuals. This provides societal relevance to the study and research-based guidance to agents and managers in addressing and promoting job satisfaction, improving cross-cultural understandings and managerial effectiveness with regards to power distance and achievement recognition, respectively. Additionally, and because diversity within workforces is growing with globalization, understanding the sources of employee satisfaction, as well as how they vary from individual to individual, is crucial to managers operating in multicultural environments. This finding obtains additional worth when seen in the light of previous research, which has demonstrated the positive link between satisfaction and productivity, as well as performance (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013).

Nevertheless, it must still be noted that the presented results show no evidence of a significant interaction between collectivism and either of the job characteristics, nor do they show evidence of a significant interaction between power distance and growth opportunities or trust in management. As mentioned above, however, it is likely that, in some cases, the lack of significance may be due to other factors such as the data collection approach and consequently limited sample. Moreover, as formerly reviewed, studies have consistently identified differences in levels of satisfaction across cultures (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001) and recognized that some aspects of the job differently affect employees with distinct cultural values (Wasti, 2003), indicating that job satisfaction may not only reflect job-specific aspects but also one's cultural values. This makes culture a crucial variable to take into consideration.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Inherent to studies within this field, and survey-based studies in general, some vagueness and ambiguity will always exist in cross-cultural relationships (Thomas, Au & Ravlin, 2003), and measurement error, as well as omitted variable bias, represent possible limitations. A large number of observations would thus be needed for empirical testing given the variables and academic disciplines involved (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014), which was not the case due to the limited amount of time and the approach taken. Further research should consider taking on alternative approaches for data collection, such as targeting multinational companies willing to collaborate and extensively distribute surveys within their workforce. The present approach resulted in a considerably limited sample, of 71 final usable surveys, with hardly any ethnical diversity, which may have been detrimental to the results.

The exclusive use of self-report measures to analyse the variables should also be noted. Self-reported data contains several potential sources of bias that should be recognized as limitations, such as social desirability and inflation of the observed relationship between the measured constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Self-reporting is exposed to social desirability bias because of respondents' tendencies to give answers in a more *socially acceptable* way (Kim & Kim, 2016), like self-reporting positive characteristics such as helping other people (Noguchi, 2007). This may lead respondents to self-report measures like collectivism/individualism in a more collectivist manner, for example. Moreover, and given the general structure of the survey, respondents enter a mindset in which each measure is positively associated with its respective items, so including a single reverse coded item may have prejudiced the measurement of trust in management.

In addition, even though employee satisfaction has (or should have) importance on its own, part of this study's (managerial) relevance is grounded on the assumption that job satisfaction affects

employees', and thereby organizations', performance, which is not tested in this case. Future studies should then analyse how these relationships have an impact on more objective business goals and indicators of job performance such as absenteeism, and sales, among others.

Finally, as Kirkman & Shapiro (2001) similarly suggested, it might also be relevant to identify other cultural values that may act as moderators, such as uncertainty avoidance, future orientation or masculinity/femininity. In addition, it would be pertinent for forthcoming research to address and study the effect of other relevant common factors affecting job satisfaction such as communication, relationship with co-workers or the unethical perception of employers.

5.4 Conclusion

Employee job satisfaction has become essential in determining the performance of many organizations, wherefore the understanding of how to generate, as well as maximize it, is of utmost importance in business and management. This dive into cross-cultural variations proposes that different aspects of the job may affect job satisfaction differently for each individual, suggesting that cultural values play a moderating role in this relationship. Furthermore, in light of the increasing internationalization undergone by organizations, the growing cultural diversity presents new challenges for human resource practitioners (Hauff & Richter, 2015).

Achievement recognition was found to have a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction indicating that, regardless of one's cultural values, employees should be recognized and praised for their positive contributions to the organization. Evidence of a positive effect of both growth opportunities within the company and trust in management on job satisfaction was also found, reflecting the importance of all three job characteristics for employees. Additionally, the effect of achievement recognition proved to be negatively moderated by power distance; that is, job

satisfaction is more positively affected by achievement recognition for individuals with lower levels of power distance than for ones with high levels.

The framework proposed throughout this paper is of value since, firstly, it contributes to the research on the moderating role of individual cultural values in job satisfaction models. Secondly, it has important practical implications, specifically for modern-day managers and human resource practitioners, when handling multicultural teams and addressing job satisfaction. A satisfied employee, as noted previously, performs better at his/her job. Promoting satisfaction is then a tool that can unlock workforce potential and, ultimately, positively impact organizations' success.

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7. Appendix

7.1 Variables

Dependent variable

- Job satisfaction

Independent variables:

- Age group
- Gender
- Marital status
- Education
- Ethnicity
- Tenure
- Collectivism
- Power distance
- Growth opportunities
- Achievement recognition
- Trust in management
- Collectivism X Growth opportunities
- Collectivism X Achievement recognition
- Collectivism X Trust in management
- Power distance X Growth opportunities
- Power distance X Achievement recognition
- Power distance X Trust in management

7.2 Item list

Below, the items used for measurement are listed.

Variable	Items
Growth opportunities	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted. I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases. I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.
Achievement recognition	I feel that the work I do is appreciated. There are enough rewards for those who work here. I feel my efforts are rewarded as they should be
Trust in management	Management at my firm is sincere in its attempts to meet the employees' point of view. I feel quite confident that the firm will always try to treat me fairly. Our management would be quite prepared to gain advantage by deceiving the employees. (reverse coded)
Collectivism	Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group. Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties. Group welfare is more important than individual rewards. Group success is more important than individual success. Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group. Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer.
Power distance	People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions. People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently. People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions. People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.
Job satisfaction	Overall, I am quite satisfied with my job. I do not intend to work for a different company. I like my job. There are no fundamental things I dislike about my job. I like my job more than many employees in other companies. I consider this employer as first choice.

7.3 Demographics

Variable	Freq. (N = 71)	Percent (100%)
Age group (years)	18 – 24	23.94
	25 – 34	52.11
	35 – 44	5.63
	45 – 54	12.68
	55 – 64	4.23
	65 – 74	1.41
Gender	Male	39.44
	Female	60.56
Marital state	Single	66.20
	Married	30.99
	Divorced	2.82
Education	High school	5.63
	Bachelor's	36.62
	Master's	57.75
Ethnicity	White	83.10
	Asian	12.68
	Hispanic/Latino	2.82
	Black/African American	1.41
Tenure	0 – 3	71.83
	4 – 8	18.31
	9 – 15	7.04
	16 – 25	1.41
	Over 25	1.41