Job satisfaction, flexible employment and job security among Turkish service sector workers

İşik U Zeytinoglu
McMaster University, Canada

Gözde Yılmaz
Marmara University, Turkey

Aşkın Keser
Uludag University, Turkey

Kıvanç Inelmen
Bogazici University, Turkey

Duygu Uygur
Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey

Arzu Özsoy
Kocaeli University, Turkey

Abstract
This article examines the association between job satisfaction, flexible employment and job security among Turkish service sector workers. Data come from a survey of workers in banking and related sectors’ call centres, frontline five-star hotel staff and airline cabin crews (N = 407). Results show that flexible employment involving fixed-term contract, paid and unpaid overtime, on-call work and mismatched contract and hours are not associated with job satisfaction. Perceived job security is positively associated with job satisfaction. The study provides evidence...
that the perception of job security rather than flexible employment is an important contributor to job satisfaction for Turkish workers in the sample.

**Keywords**
Flexible employment, job satisfaction, job security, Turkish workers

**Introduction**

With the globalization of product and labour markets, flexibility is now considered a core element of change occurring in workplaces and is essential for companies and workers to adopt in order to survive and succeed in the work world (ILO, 2003; OECD, 2006). Globally a substantial number of workers are working in a variety of flexible employment forms. With flexibility, insecurity is being created for workers (Standing, 1997) affecting their attitudes towards work. In this study we focus on the job satisfaction attitudes of workers in three service sectors in Turkey.

The purpose of this study is to examine the associations between job satisfaction, flexible employment and perceived job security. Data come from our survey of 407 service sector workers in Turkey employed in banking and related sectors’ call centres, as front-line staff in five-star hotels and airline cabin crews.

Studying job satisfaction, flexibility and job security issues in the Turkish labour market is important for several reasons. First, as the 15th largest economy in the world (Government of Turkey, 2010) and an increasingly competitive country in the global economy (Vos, 2008), employment issues in Turkey should be important for the international academic and practitioner audience. Second, with a large percentage of young working-age population (TurkStat, 2009), a high and persistent unemployment rate (Burchell, 2009; Nichols and Sugur, 2004; TurkStat, 2009) and flexibility supported in the labour legislation (Bakirci, 2004; Ozdemir and Yucesan-Okdemir, 2006), those in the labour market are concerned about their job security (Blanchflower and Lawton, 2009; Tangian, 2007). Workers’ attitudes, particularly after the introduction of flexibility in labour legislation, have not been studied (Gundogan, 2009). To our knowledge, there are no studies focusing on job satisfaction, flexibility and job security issues in Turkey’s service sector, and there is limited internationally accessible academic literature on management issues in Turkey (Usdiken and Wasti, 2009). This study contributes to the knowledge on work attitudes and employment issues in Turkey. The results can assist employers, union leaders and policy-makers in Turkey as well as in intergovernmental organizations and international trade unions and employer organizations. Third, the study contributes to the knowledge on job satisfaction by focusing not only on overall job satisfaction but also on its two distinct facets: satisfaction with financial rewards and satisfaction with work and the work environment.

**Definitions**

In this study job satisfaction refers to overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with financial rewards and satisfaction with work and the work environment. Flexible employment includes fixed-term contract, paid and unpaid overtime and on-call work. These are the
common flexible forms of employment in the Turkish labour market. Part-time employment is not common in Turkey and although asked about in our survey, there were few in part-time employment, and therefore it is not included in this study. We also examine mismatched contract and hours, with mismatched contract defined as a mismatch between preferred and current contract, and mismatched hours referring to a mismatch between preferred hours of work and current hours of work.

Job insecurity is an ongoing research interest for academics (see, for example, recent special issues edited by Reisel and Probst, 2010; Sverke et al., 2010). Job insecurity and job security both refer to people’s perception of their future in the current job but from different perspectives: positive and negative. In the Turkish context, using job security rather than job insecurity terminology is more appropriate. Job insecurity is so prevalent in the society and ingrained in the work culture that among Turkish workers it is considered the norm and job security the deviance. In communications, workers, employers and the public at large use the positive terminology of job security rather than the negative – job insecurity. Thus, we use job security terminology in our study.

The job satisfaction, flexibility and job security relationship

Job satisfaction is studied extensively in behavioural sciences and has received attention in economics and industrial relations literature. As the behavioural literature discusses, job satisfaction is an attitude that can be best described as a person’s response to what happens to them at work (Lawler, 2005). Lawler’s job satisfaction model states that job satisfaction is affected by the rewards provided by the organization and workers’ feelings about the value of those rewards for them (Lawler, 1973). Workers expect rewards, particularly tangible rewards, as part of their contractual agreement with the employer (Rose, 2003) and when there is a good match between workers’ expectations of their job and working conditions provided in the employment contract, job satisfaction occurs. The economics and industrial relations literature show that job satisfaction depends on the concept of a reference level of income against which an individual compares him or herself (Clark and Oswald, 1996). As relative deprivation theory states, the comparisons an individual makes against others in her/his group, such as comparison of income, are significantly correlated with job satisfaction (Clark and Oswald, 1996), and empirical research shows that the norms and expectations of respondents affect reported job satisfaction in surveys (Brown et al., 2007; Clark, 1997; Green, 2006). Low earners report being satisfied with their jobs because they have a low benchmark level of norms and expectations, and middle income earners have unmet expectations of the quality of their jobs resulting in low levels of job satisfaction; those at the high end of the earnings level are the ones that show matched norms and expectations with the quality of jobs, resulting in high job satisfaction responses in surveys (Brown et al., 2007). This study uses the attitude model (Lawler, 1973) and relative deprivation theory (Clark and Oswald, 1996) in examining the job satisfaction experiences of Turkish workers.

For organizations in the service sector, job satisfaction is particularly important since it can affect the quality of service delivered to customers and may affect customer retention (Lawler, 2005). Call centre workers, frontline staff in hotels and cabin crews are the
first contact for customers in their organizations and they represent the image of their organizations. If workers are satisfied with their jobs, this contributes to their quality of work and life, and affects their organization’s success.

Empirical research on job satisfaction in Turkey shows that workers tend to be relatively satisfied with their jobs though not as highly satisfied as the EU15 countries (Cerdeira and Kovacs, 2008). The same data reveal that job stability and job security are the two most important indicators of job satisfaction for Turkish workers (Tangian, 2007). Research from other countries on the associations between job satisfaction and flexible employment gives mixed results. For fixed-term contract and job satisfaction, negative association is found in a longitudinal data analysis (Clark, 2005), though an absence of a relationship is found in other studies (De Witte and Näswall, 2003; Guest et al., 2006). Paid overtime is an important source of income for many workers (Freyssinet and Michon, 2003) but the long hours in overtime work might not be desirable for some workers (Campbell, 2002). Empirical research on the topic is mixed. Some show no association between paid and unpaid overtime and job satisfaction (Mohr and Zoghi, 2008), others (Rose, 2003; Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2007) show that long hours, presumably including overtime, are negatively associated with job satisfaction, and another study (Green, 2006) shows workers who work long hours express greater levels of job satisfaction. The relationship between unpaid overtime and job satisfaction has been studied less, though one study reports a lack of association between the two factors (Zeytinoglu et al., 2006). For on-call work, De Graaf-Zijl (2009) shows that lower satisfaction with job security negatively affects overall job satisfaction.

Although the literature shows mixed results or no associations between flexible employment and job satisfaction, noting that the recently relaxed legislative environment allows employers flexibility to create fixed-term contracts, extended work weeks and on-call jobs (Bakırcı, 2004; Özdemir and Yücesan-Özdemir, 2006), and acknowledging that stability at work is important for Turkish workers’ job satisfaction (Tangian, 2007), we hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 1a:** Fixed-term contracts will be negatively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 1b:** Paid and unpaid overtime will be negatively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 1c:** On-call work will be negatively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction.

**Employment contract mismatch, hours mismatch and job satisfaction**

Wooden et al. (2009) found that it is not the hours of work but whether the hours worked are consistent with workers’ preferences that matter for job satisfaction. We also argue that, similar to Wooden et al.’s (2009) conclusions, a mismatch between Turkish workers’ current employment type and work hours, and preferred employment type and hours are negatively associated with their job satisfaction. Thus, we hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 2a:** A mismatch between preferred employment contract and current employment contract will be negatively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction.
Hypothesis 2b: A mismatch between preferred hours of work and actual hours worked will be negatively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction.

Job security and job satisfaction

According to expectancy theory, workers will exert the greatest effort if they expect that effort to lead to performance that will be rewarded in a desirable way (Campbell et al., 2001 [1970]). The reward, in turn, contributes to job satisfaction (Lawler, 2005). As discussed in Lawler’s (1973) job satisfaction model, job security is an important extrinsic reward positively affecting job satisfaction. In the economics and industrial relations literature, there is a strong foundation that there has to be an interdisciplinary interpretation of employee responses to subjective survey data (Green, 2006).

Subjective concepts such as job satisfaction and job security are affected by the norms and expectations of the respondent (Brown et al., 2007) comparing themselves to others as relative deprivation theory states (Clark and Oswald, 1996).

Empirical research shows that perceived job security positively contributes to job satisfaction (Clark, 2005; Rose, 2005), and conversely, perceived job insecurity is negatively associated with job satisfaction (Cheng and Chan, 2008; Chirulombolo and Hellgren, 2003; Reisel et al., 2010; Sverke et al., 2002). Many workers in Turkey experience job insecurity or know others who have experienced layoffs or dismissals. Job security is important for them (Tangian, 2007) since unemployment may have dire consequences. Conceptually similar to Sora et al.’s (2009) notion of the job insecurity climate in organizations, we argue that there is a job insecurity climate in the labour market in Turkey. With a large labour supply and high unemployment rates (TurkStat, 2009), workers observe the insecurity in the labour market and in their immediate work environment. They learn from the unemployment experiences of those they know, and they, themselves, may have experienced unemployment. Within this context, we argue that they develop their perception of security (or lack of it) in their job. Similar to the arguments in Brown et al. (2007) and Green (2006) that norms and expectations shape job satisfaction, in Turkey workers develop their norms and expectations based on the comparison of their situation with others similar to them. Job insecurity is so prevalent in the Turkish labour market that when workers perceive job security, they are satisfied. Applying relative deprivation theory (Clark and Oswald, 1996) and the empirical knowledge to our study, and considering the labour market conditions in Turkey, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3: Job security will be positively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction.

Method

Background on the study sectors

Total employment in Turkey is 21,162,000 (TurkStat, 2009). This number is distributed in the different industrial sectors as follows: agriculture 24%, manufacturing and related industry 20%, construction 6% and service sector 50%. We focus on the service sector
because of its large size in the country’s labour market and the accumulated expertise of
the research team on the three sub-sectors chosen. Our sampling strategy is to focus on
sectors where we knew individuals who are key people in their organizations to enable
us to collect primary data.

Employment and job quality in the service sector, particularly in call centres,
hotels and air transportation, has received vast attention in the literature. Depicting
call centres as ‘the new sweatshops’ of the 21st century (Fernie and Metcalf, 1998),
the literature shows constant electronic monitoring of workers in highly standard-
ized, prescribed (Houlihan, 2001), repetitive and low-skilled jobs (Taylor and Bain,
1999; Taylor et al., 2002) demanding continuous emotional labour (Callaghan and
Thompson, 2002; Zapf et al., 2003). There is extensive management control over call
centre workers (Bain and Taylor, 2002; Bain et al., 2002). The work is stressful
(Holdsworth and Cartwright, 2003) affecting workers’ job satisfaction. High turno-
ver rates and high absenteeism are common given these working conditions and
stresses (Bain and Taylor, 2000; Zapf et al., 2003). Call centre employers’ commit-
ment to workers in long-term employment is weak (Shire et al., 2009) and union
power plays a significant role in the quality of work for call centre workers (Batt
et al., 2010). These findings are confirmed by many studies from western countries
and outsourced countries (Batt et al., 2009). Call centre employment is new in Turkey
and, similar to other countries (Batt et al., 2009), national-level statistics for call
centre workers are not available. However, for banking and related sectors’ call cen-
tre employment, the Turkish Association of Banks (2009) provides reliable data. It
shows that there are 4872 call centre workers in the banking sector, of which 96% are
full-time and 4% part-time. A large majority are female (73%) and young (average
age is 25), and close to half (48%) have a university degree or higher. Almost all
(91%) are in Istanbul, the area where our study was conducted.

In the hospitality sector job quality is poor due to low wages, irregular shift schedules
and insecure jobs with a high level of turnover (Cho et al., 2009). Globally migrant work-
ers, women and workers from the lower economic classes are increasingly employed in the
low-quality service sector jobs of the hospitality sector (McDowell et al., 2008). However,
in the luxury hotels segment the quality of jobs are better due to good wages, the higher
skills characterizing the work, good work environments provided by the establishments
and the high social acceptability of jobs in luxury hotels (Okumus et al., 2010). The tourism
sector in Turkey ranks 8th in the world with respect to tourist numbers and 9th with respect
to tourism revenue (World Tourism Organization, 2009). The tourism sector employs about
1.7 million workers and this represents 7% of total employment in Turkey (Government of
Turkey, 2010). In 2009, the tourism sector’s share of the gross national domestic product
was 10% (Government of Turkey, 2010). Within the sector, frontline hotel employment,
particularly in the five-star hotels that we focus on, is desirable. A study of close to 1300
workers in 28 hotels in various regions in Turkey, including Istanbul, the area where our
study was conducted, shows that employees are somewhat satisfied with their jobs and that
those with less than a university education and between the ages of 31 and 40 are more
likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Yorgun et al., 2009). Another study focusing on five-
star hotels shows a higher percentage of female employment in these hotels, a younger and
more educated workforce than the overall hospitality sector (Bas-Collins, 2007).
For the airline industry, research shows high levels of stress in the emotional work of aircrews (Sonntag and Natter, 2004), a gendered organizational culture (Mills, 2006) and work–life balance concerns due to irregular schedules (Whitelegg, 2007). With the deregulation of the industry there is a continuous downgrading of the job quality in the sector. The air transportation sector in Turkey is a vibrant sector with US$8 billion in revenue and 35 million domestic and 43 million international passengers (Özsoy, 2009). The sector is expanding due to investments in new airports throughout the country and the entry of new low-cost carriers to the market. There are currently 14 passenger carriers in air transportation. Nearly 100,000 workers are employed in the air transportation sector (Ministry of Transportation, 2009). The biggest and the only unionized carrier in the sector reports 3668 cabin crew (THY, 2009).

Data and data collection process

Data were collected from these three sectors in Istanbul, Turkey. Data collection started in 2008 after ethics approval was received from each project coordinator’s university ethics board. Pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted in June 2008. There were only minor changes in the wording of the questionnaire. Data collection was completed early autumn 2008 and the process for data collection was slightly different for each sector.

For banks and related organizations’ call centres, data were collected from workers in four banks and related sector companies. The questionnaire was distributed to call centre workers (N = 233). Each questionnaire included a Letter of Information explaining the research project, ensuring the participants confidentiality of individual responses and providing instructions for return of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed in sealed envelopes at the workplaces (on site) at the end of the working day. We requested workers to respond to the questionnaire at home, seal it in the enclosed envelope and bring it back to their office the next day. If a worker did not wish to respond to the questionnaire, they were asked to indicate this on the questionnaire and return it in the sealed envelope. Depending on the call centre manager’s preferences for returning surveys, they were either dropped off at a sealed box by the respondents or were collected by us at the beginning of the workday. This approach provided us with 162 usable call centre surveys with a 70% response rate.

Frontline hotel staff were comprised of employees of 10 five-star hotels in Istanbul. For the sampling process, first a list of all five-star hotels operating in Istanbul was obtained and then 15 such hotels were selected by random sampling. Hotel management was then approached for permission to distribute the survey, receiving permission to distribute in 10 hotels. In total, 300 questionnaires and self-seal envelopes were left with the human resource departments to be distributed to frontline staff. Each questionnaire included a Letter of Information, which provided overall information about the research project, ensured the participants confidentiality and included instructions to seal the questionnaire in the envelope after responding, or to return the blank questionnaire in the same envelope if they chose not to respond. In coordination with the human resource departments, the sealed envelopes were collected approximately three weeks after their distribution. There were 183 returned surveys and after eliminating those that...
were blank as well as questionnaires completed by others outside the frontline staff, 167 questionnaires were found usable giving a 56% response rate.

The cabin crews in the sample were reached with the help of the civil aviation union representing flight crews. Four hundred questionnaires and self-seal envelopes were given to the union officials for distribution to cabin crews at their staff lounge. For security reasons, the questionnaires had to be delivered by union representatives as the researchers were prohibited from entering the staff lounge area at airports. The union representatives placed the surveys with self-seal envelopes and a drop-off box in the lounge area. Completed questionnaires, placed in sealed envelopes, were dropped into the box and picked up after three weeks. One of the unionized staff also volunteered to distribute the questionnaires and envelopes to cabin crews working for another carrier (a large non-union company). Many of those workers were transferees from this individual’s company, and as ex co-workers they socialized at the airport staff lounge. A total of 78 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 20%. The response rate was lower among cabin crews compared to the other two sectors because we were unable to enter their workplace to distribute and collect the survey. As noted, security at the airport did not allow us to enter the workplace. Thirty-six of the respondents were unionized cabin crew, 30 were non-unionized cabin crew and the rest (12) did not give union membership information.

These efforts yielded a total of 407 usable questionnaires. The article is based on this new primary data set that we collected for this study. In the multivariate analysis, 305 of these were used due to missing variables in some responses.

**Instrument**

The Work Life Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was the translated and shortened version of the New Health Care Worker Questionnaire (Zeytinoglu et al., 2007). Some of the questions were adopted from other studies (as referenced below). The questionnaire was originally written in English and was first translated by a professional translator into Turkish and then by a different professional translator back into English to control for the accuracy of the terminologies used. For the validation of the items used in the questionnaire, the research collaborators met and reviewed each question carefully and decided on the wording and the meaning of each item. Five of the six research team members were deemed as expert validators since, all native to and having lived in Turkey, they knew the country, its workforce and the culture in addition to Turkish being their native language and having a very good comprehension of the English language. Only the first author, having lived outside Turkey for an extensive period, was not involved in this process.

**Measures**

All variables that were on Likert-type scales were measured with responses ranging from ‘1 = strongly disagree’ to ‘5 = strongly agree’. To create scores for each scale or sub-scale responses to each item were summed. In creating the scales some of the items were reverse-scored as suggested by the scale developer. Confirmatory factor analyses with
'varimax' rotation were conducted for all scales, and Cronbach’s alphas were conducted for reliability testing.

For the dependent variable of job satisfaction Spector’s 1985 Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) (Spector, 1997) is used. The JSS assesses nine facets of job satisfaction consisting of 36 items. A sample item for the scale is ‘I feel I am paid a fair amount for the work I do’. Similar to Spector’s findings, the ‘overall job satisfaction’ scale and the eight job satisfaction sub-scales had high reliabilities in our data (α above .70) except for the satisfaction with rules and procedures sub-scale, which had a very low reliability and was excluded from the study. Thus, the JSS scale in our study consisted of 32 items. Since there might be differences between factors affecting one or the other component of job satisfaction we created two sub-scales as done in other studies (Zeytinoglu et al., 2007), and examined ‘overall job satisfaction’, along with its two components, ‘satisfaction with financial rewards’ and ‘satisfaction with work and work environment’. The Cronbach’s alphas for the scales showed good reliability (α = .94, .87 and .91, respectively).

Flexible employment and job security were independent variables in the study. Flexible employment variables of fixed-term contract and on-call work were each coded as ‘1 = yes’, ‘0 = no’, and paid and unpaid overtime were number of hours. The contract mismatch variable was derived from two variables of preferred contract and current contract, and coded as ‘1 = mismatched contract’ if preferred and current contract did not match, and ‘0 = matched contract’ if preferred and current contract matched. For hours mismatch, respondents were asked to indicate whether they would prefer to work more, same or fewer hours with ‘1 = prefer more or fewer hours’ indicating mismatched hours and ‘0 = same’ indicating matched hours. The job security scale was the reversed items from Zeytinoglu et al.’s (2007) seven-item scale that was originally based on the 10-item job insecurity scale of Cameron et al. (1994). A sample item of the scale was: ‘I feel I am likely to be laid off (reversed)’. The scale showed good reliability with high Cronbach’s alpha (α = .86). Following Klandermans et al.’s (2010) suggestion of using a multidimensional measure of job insecurity, we included the importance of income for the family as a proxy for the severity of job loss (coded as ‘1 = not important’ to ‘5 = very important’).

Research has shown that job satisfaction is affected by gender, age, marital status, education (Armstrong, 2006; Clark, 2005), union membership (Clark, 2005; García-Serrano, 2009), sector, support at work (Jex and Crossley, 2005) and stress (Jex and Crossley, 2005; Rose, 2003). These were included as control variables. They were coded as: gender (‘1 = female’, ‘0 = male’), age (years), marital status (‘1 = married or cohabit’, ‘0 = single or divorced’), education (‘1 = university degree [including two-year college degree]’, ‘0 = high school or lower’), union membership (‘1 = yes’, ‘0 = no’) and sector (each coded as dummy variables ‘1 = yes’, ‘0 = otherwise’). The support at work scale was from Denton et al. (2002) and organizational support and supervisor support were six-item scales and peer support was a four-item scale. Sample items for each scale were: ‘My workplace supports me in time of personal crisis, illness or needing time off to help care for other family members’; ‘My supervisor appreciates my work’; ‘The people I work with take a personal interest in me’. The scales showed a good reliability with high Cronbach’s alphas (α = .77, .94, .91, respectively). The ‘symptoms of stress’, from Denton et al. (2002), was a 14-item scale and a sample item for the scale was ‘not being
able to sleep through the night’. Respondents were asked how often they felt this way during the past month. The Cronbach’s alpha was high (α = .90).

Analysis

Descriptive statistics, correlations and hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. In the hierarchical regression first control variables, then flexible employment variables were entered. In the third step the job security variable was entered, followed by entering the importance of income for family variable in step 4. The equal interval assumption was used for Likert scale measurement of the dependent variable. In the regression analyses hotels was the reference sector. To reduce missing data in the analyses, missing variables were coded to the mean for variables on a scale. Missing data were at the statistically acceptable level in scale items (5% level), except one item each in the job satisfaction, job security, symptoms of stress and peer support (where missing values were at the 6% level). In the paid and unpaid overtime variables, missing responses were coded to the value of ‘0’, meaning no overtime was worked. To show the variance explained by the factors in the study, $R^2$ and adjusted $R^2$ were provided. Since the subjectively assessed variables may not be completely independent of each other, collinearity diagnostics were also conducted. Collinearity was not found.

Results

Descriptive statistics

As presented in Table 1, referring to overall job satisfaction respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their jobs ($M = 103.19$, $SD = 19.28$). The satisfaction with financial rewards scale showed slightly more dissatisfaction than satisfaction ($M = 47.81$, $SD = 11.01$). However, the satisfaction with work and work environment scale showed slightly more satisfaction than dissatisfaction ($M = 69.67$, $SD = 13.25$). In terms of flexible employment, 31% of respondents were in fixed-term contracts, the average hours of paid overtime per week is about 5 hours, while unpaid overtime was 1 hour per week, and only 2% worked on-call. Thirteen percent had mismatched contract and 51% had mismatched hours. For job security the respondents perceived neither security nor insecurity in their jobs ($M = 24.41$, $SD = 5.75$). Their income from the job was somewhat important for their family ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.24$).

Referring to control variables, 42% of the respondents were male and the rest were female. Average age was 28, close to three-quarters (71%) were single (or divorced), and 80% had a university degree or a two-year college degree. Only 15% were unionized and most of these were among the cabin crews. A comparison of a few demographic characteristics (age, gender and education) between the respondents and earlier studies and available statistics showed that respondents were similar to the sector averages (Bas-Collins, 2007; Turkish Association of Banks, 2009; TurkStat, 2009; Yorgun et al., 2009). Forty percent of the respondents were employed in the banks and related sectors’ call centres, 41% were frontline staff in five-star hotels and 19% were cabin crews in airlines. In terms of support at work, respondents were somewhat in agreement that their
Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlations between dependent and independent variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall job satisfaction</td>
<td>103.19</td>
<td>19.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Satisfaction with financial rewards</td>
<td>47.81</td>
<td>11.01</td>
<td>.917**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Satisfaction with work and work environment</td>
<td>69.67</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>.886**</td>
<td>.748**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Contract type</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>–.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Paid overtime</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>8.39</td>
<td>-.150**</td>
<td>-.147**</td>
<td>-.111*</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Unpaid overtime</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>.109*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. On-call work</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mismatched contract</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-.077</td>
<td>-.068</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>.222**</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.221**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Mismatched hours</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-.359**</td>
<td>-.379**</td>
<td>-.327**</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>.182**</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Job security</td>
<td>24.41</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>.532**</td>
<td>.499**</td>
<td>.599**</td>
<td>-.073</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>-.123*</td>
<td>-.237**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Importance of income for family</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>-.096</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>-.134**</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01.
organization and supervisor supported them at work, and agreed that their co-workers supported them at work ($M = 10.22$, $SD = 3.15$; $M = 21.73$, $SD = 6.14$; $M = 15.91$, $SD = 3.43$, respectively). Respondents reported an average level of stress ($M = 34.38$, $SD = 10.03$).

**Correlations**

Table 1 shows the correlations for dependent and independent variables. When the correlations between overall job satisfaction and employment flexibility and job security were examined, paid overtime and mismatched hours were significantly and negatively associated with total job satisfaction ($-0.150$, $p < .01$ and $-0.359$, $p < .01$, respectively), and job security was significantly and positively associated with overall job satisfaction ($0.532$, $p < .01$). Other flexible employment variables and the importance of income for family were not associated with overall job satisfaction. The pattern was similar for satisfaction with financial rewards ($-0.147$, $p < .01$ for paid overtime; $-0.379$, $p < .01$ for mismatched hours; and $0.499$, $p < .01$ for job security) and satisfaction with work and work environment ($-0.111$, $p < .01$ for paid overtime; $-0.327$, $p < .01$ for mismatched hours; and $0.599$, $p < .01$ for job security). Correlations for all variables are available from the first author.

**Regression analyses**

The results of the regression analyses are presented in Table 2. Briefly referring to control variables which were included in step 1 of each job satisfaction regression, organizational support ($\beta = 0.379$, $p < .001$) was significantly and positively, and symptoms of stress was significantly and negatively ($\beta = -0.262$, $p < .001$) associated with overall job satisfaction. These variables showed similar significant associations with satisfaction with financial rewards ($\beta = 0.390$, $p < .001$ for organizational support, and $\beta = -0.235$, $p < .001$ for symptoms of stress) and satisfaction with work and work environment ($\beta = 0.361$, $p < .001$ for organizational support, and $\beta = -0.186$, $p < .001$ for symptoms of stress). In addition, supervisor support was significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.225$, $p < .01$) associated with satisfaction with financial rewards, and both the supervisor and peer support were significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.200$, $p < .01$, and $\beta = 0.139$, $p < .01$, respectively) associated with satisfaction with work and work environment. The magnitude of $\beta$ for each variable showed that these variables were significant factors in explaining overall job satisfaction and its two facets. Other variables were not significantly associated with overall job satisfaction and its two facets. These variables in the model explained a substantial proportion of variance in each model (Adj. $R^2 = 0.51$, $p < .001$ for overall job satisfaction; Adj. $R^2 = 0.48$, $p < .001$ for satisfaction with financial rewards; and Adj. $R^2 = 0.61$, $p < .001$ for satisfaction with work and work environment).

Hypotheses 1a to 1c stated that fixed-term contract, paid and unpaid overtime and on-call work will be negatively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction. Step 2 of each job satisfaction analysis showed no significant associations, and these variables did not add much to the variance explained. Thus Hypotheses 1a to 1c
Table 2. Hierarchical regression analysis for factors associated with overall job satisfaction and its two facets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall job satisfaction</th>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfaction with financial rewards</th>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfaction with work and work environment</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st step</td>
<td>2nd step</td>
<td>3rd step</td>
<td>4th step</td>
<td>1st step</td>
<td>2nd step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>-.064</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>-.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union membership</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels (ref.)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call centres</td>
<td>-.130*</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>-.086</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>-.098</td>
<td>-.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air transportation</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>-.134*</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>-.118</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>-.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support</td>
<td>.379***</td>
<td>.376***</td>
<td>.325***</td>
<td>.327***</td>
<td>.390***</td>
<td>.378***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor support</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td>.208**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>-.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of stress</td>
<td>-.262***</td>
<td>-.249***</td>
<td>-.216***</td>
<td>-.217***</td>
<td>-.235***</td>
<td>-.207***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second step</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract type</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid overtime</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.065</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>-.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid overtime</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>-.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-call work</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>-.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatched contract</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>-.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatched hours</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>-.069</td>
<td>-.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third step</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>.161**</td>
<td>.162**</td>
<td>.175**</td>
<td>.175**</td>
<td>.186***</td>
<td>.186***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth step</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of income for family</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>.505</td>
<td>.505</td>
<td>.519</td>
<td>.519</td>
<td>.477</td>
<td>.482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001. Standardized regression coefficients are shown. N = 305.
were not supported. Hypotheses 2a and 2b stated that a mismatch between preferred employment contract and current employment contract, and a mismatch between preferred hours of work and actual hours worked will be negatively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction. In step 2 of each regression these hypotheses were tested. Results showed no significant associations and thus, Hypotheses 2a and 2b were not supported. Flexible employment and mismatch variables did not add much to the variance explained (Adj. $R^2 = .51$, $\Delta R^2 = .010$, $p = ns$ for overall job satisfaction; Adj. $R^2 = .48$, $\Delta R^2 = .015$, $p = ns$ for satisfaction with financial rewards; and Adj. $R^2 = .61$, $\Delta R^2 = .005$, $p = ns$ for satisfaction with work and work environment).

In step 3 we tested Hypothesis 3, which stated that job security will be positively associated with Turkish service sector workers’ job satisfaction, and in step 4 we did further analyses examining the importance of income for the family as a proxy for the severity of job loss dimension of job security. Supporting Hypothesis 3, job security was significantly and positively associated with overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with financial rewards and satisfaction with work and work environment ($\beta = .161$, $p < .01$, $\beta = .175$, $p < .01$, and $\beta = .186$, $p < .001$, respectively in step 3). The magnitude of $\beta$ for job security showed that this was an important factor affecting overall job satisfaction and its two facets. Job security contributed to the variance explained (Adj. $R^2 = .52$, $\Delta R^2 = .015$, $p < .01$ for overall job satisfaction; Adj. $R^2 = .50$, $\Delta R^2 = .017$, $p < .01$ for satisfaction with financial rewards; and Adj. $R^2 = .63$, $\Delta R^2 = .019$, $p < .001$ for satisfaction with work and work environment). However, the importance of income for the family was not associated with overall job satisfaction and its two facets, and it did not contribute much to the variance explained (Adj. $R^2 = .52$, $\Delta R^2 = .001$, $p = ns$ for overall job satisfaction; Adj. $R^2 = .50$, $\Delta R^2 = .000$, $p = ns$ for satisfaction with financial rewards; and Adj. $R^2 = .62$, $\Delta R^2 = .000$, $p = ns$ for satisfaction with work and work environment).

We also examined the interaction effects of flexible employment (i.e. fixed-term contract, paid and unpaid overtime and on-call work) and job security on job satisfaction. We conducted similar interaction effects analyses for flexible employment and support at work (organizational, supervisor and peer support), and job security and support at work (organizational, supervisor and peer support) on job satisfaction. Lastly, interaction effects were examined for flexible employment and stress, and job security and stress on job satisfaction. No significant associations were found except for positive association of job security and peer support on overall job satisfaction ($p = .019$) and satisfaction with financial rewards ($p = .014$).

Conclusions and discussion

Using a new data set we collected for this research, we examined the association between job satisfaction, flexible employment and job security. Results for flexible employment show that fixed-term contract, paid and unpaid overtime and on-call work as well as mismatched contract and hours are not significantly associated with overall job satisfaction and its two facets, satisfaction with financial rewards and satisfaction with work and work environment, for Turkish service sector workers in this sample. These results are, overall, in line with findings from other studies conducted in Europe and North America (De Witte and Näsvall, 2003; Guest et al., 2006; Mohr and Zoghi, 2008).
In responding to surveys on job satisfaction, workers compare themselves to others (Brown et al., 2007; Clark and Oswald, 1996) and their norms and expectations shape their views on job satisfaction (Green, 2006). Our results suggest that workers responding to our survey are probably comparing their work environment and conditions to others in the Turkish labour market. Because flexible employment is so prevalent in the Turkish labour market, respondents consider these types of employment an integral part of having a job in Turkey rather than undesirable aspects of a job that can lead to lower job satisfaction. When offered a job, they accept it regardless of working conditions since a job is better than no job at all, particularly in a country where the unemployment rate is high and unemployment benefit is not widely available. Similar to Nichols and Sugur’s (2004) study, compared with the alternatives available in a slack labour market, we argue that workers in our study accept poor working conditions and paid and unpaid overtime for the fear of losing their job. In addition, the individual employment legislation has shifted the power balance towards employers providing them flexibility in managing their businesses (Özdemir and Yücesan-Özdemir, 2006). In the context of this labour market, workers in our sample accept non-permanent contracts, paid and unpaid overtime and/or on-call work to keep their jobs. In addition, most workers in our sample work in their preferred type of contract and, thus, this aspect of the job is not related to their job satisfaction. For the mismatched hours, the negative relationship between this factor and job satisfaction found in the correlation analysis disappeared when, in the regression analysis, the effects of other factors are controlled.

In shedding light on the Turkish context, an important finding of this study is the positive association between perceived job security and job satisfaction. Perceived job security is a significant contributor to job satisfaction for Turkish workers in our sample. Tangian (2007) shows a similar finding using another data set, and our results support studies from other countries (Chirulombolo and Hellgren, 2003; Reisel et al., 2010; Rose, 2005) and the meta-analyses on the topic (Cheng and Chan, 2008; Sverke et al., 2002). As studies on the Turkish labour market show, despite employment protection legislation, in practice, a very high proportion of Turkish workers do not have a contract of employment (Koçer and Fransen, 2009) and job insecurity is severe (Burchell, 2009; Nichols and Sugur, 2004). The unemployment rate is high, and the unemployment insurance system, established recently, covers less than a quarter of the workforce, and when applied, it provides very little compensation for those eligible (Gundogan, 2009). Respondents to our survey are keenly aware of this labour market environment, the endemic unemployment in the country and the consequences of unemployment. In this context, norms and expectations play a role (Brown et al., 2007) and workers make comparisons to others similar to them (Clark and Oswald, 1996), and thus, for respondents in this study who have a job, there is perceived job security contributing to their job satisfaction.

In addition, other factors included to control for their known effects on job satisfaction are significant in this study. Support at work and symptoms of stress are important factors associated with Turkish service sector workers’ overall job satisfaction as well as its two facets. These findings are similar to conclusions in studies from other countries (Denton et al., 2002; Jex and Crossley, 2005). For support at work, we argue that Turkish service sector workers in our study considered organizational and supervisor support as
signals of their value for their organization, and this contributed to job satisfaction. Our study also shows that perceived job security and peer support work together to influence job satisfaction. Turkey is more of a collectivist country (Wasti, 2003), and workers consider supportive relationships with co-workers an important aspect of the job, and, as we found here, that contributes to satisfaction with work and the work environment. Given that the work week is long in Turkey and most workers spend long hours at work, relationships with co-workers are important. Workers depend on each other for emotional support to cope with the demands of the work. It is also possible that they support each other at work by, for example, covering for each other when there are family obligations or an emergency that demands their attendance outside the workplace during regular work hours. Such support from their co-workers contributes to their job satisfaction.

Globally, work and personal lives have become more stressful in the last few decades, and, as our study shows, Turkish service sector workers in our sample are similarly experiencing the negative effect of stress on job satisfaction. We would also like to note that the regression analyses showed that age, gender, marital status, education, union membership and the sector of employment were not associated with job satisfaction for Turkish workers. This is perhaps because we included a number of variables that are behavioural, such as perceived job security, perceived support at work and symptoms of stress, and these behavioural variables affect job satisfaction rather than personal characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, education or union membership, or the sector of employment. Taken together, our models explained a substantial proportion of variance (between 52% and 62%) in job satisfaction for Turkish service sector workers in our study.

It is important to address a few limitations of our study. First, as it is limited to three service sectors in Turkey and has a small sample size, results cannot be generalized to all Turkish workers or similarly situated workers in other countries. Second, respondents to our survey are from large companies that are in the ‘formal’ sector while 96% of Turkish companies are small sized with fewer than 30 employees. These large companies gave us access to survey their employees. However, working conditions are very different in small sized companies. Those with fewer than 30 employees provide reduced employment protection for workers, and workplaces with fewer than 10 employees are exempt from labour law and function in informal labour market conditions, without even being registered under the social security system (Gundogan, 2009). Thus we caution readers in generalizing from our results to all companies in Turkey. Third, it should be stated that the data for the present study were collected before the 2008 global economic crisis, and though Turkey was not as harshly affected by the recession as some mature industrialized countries, it is possible that in the aftermath, workers could be even more concerned about the consequences of losing their job, and their perceived job security could probably show a stronger association with job satisfaction.

In conclusion, generating a new primary data set, this study shed light on the Turkish context of the job satisfaction, flexible employment and job security relationship. Our study of Turkish workers in bank and related sectors’ call centres, frontline hotel staff and airline cabin crews showed that it is the perception of job security rather than a flexible employment contract such as fixed-term contract, paid or unpaid overtime, on-call work or mismatched contracts or hours that affected workers’ attitude of job satisfaction. Unions, employers and policy-makers interested in the effects of flexible employment
and job security on Turkish workers’ job satisfaction are recommended to focus on the perceived job security aspect of work rather than the working conditions of flexible employment. The negative effect of stress on job satisfaction and the positive contribution of supportive work relationships on job satisfaction are also recommended to be taken into consideration in attempts to increase workers’ job satisfaction.

Acknowledgements

An earlier version of this article on call centres was presented at the Industrial Relations in Europe Conference, July 2009, Istanbul, Turkey and the Canadian Industrial Relations Association Annual Meeting, June 2009, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada; an earlier version on hotel staff was presented at the National Management and Organization Congress, May 2009, Eskisehir, Turkey and the Work, Stress and Health 2009 Conference, November 2009, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Funding

This work was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada International Opportunities Fund (#861-2007-3022); Kocaeli University internal research grant (#2008-25); and Bogazici University internal research grant (BAP #08N101).

References


Gundogan N (2009) Can Denmark’s flexicurity system be replicated in developing countries? The case of Turkey. MPRA paper, unpublished. Available at: mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/17470/ (accessed 4 June 2010).


Author biographies

İşik U Zeytinoglu is a Professor of Management and Industrial Relations at the DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University, Canada. She received her PhD from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on non-standard employment and flexible work schedules and their effects on workers and employers, and health human resources.

Gözde Yılmaz is an Associate Professor of Management and Organization at the Faculty of Communication, Marmara University, Turkey. She received her PhD from the Faculty of Business Administration, Istanbul University. Her research focuses on non-standard employment, working conditions of call centre employees and positive organizational behaviour.

Askı̈n Keser is an Associate Professor of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations at Uludag University, Turkey. He received his PhD from Uludag University. His research
focuses on flexible work schedules and their effects on workers, motivation at work, job and life satisfaction, stress at work, burnout and call centre workers’ conditions.

Kıvanç Inelmen is an Assistant Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the Department of Tourism Administration, Bogazici University, Turkey. He received his PhD in Management and Organization Studies from Bogazici University. His research focuses on work attitudes and job security issues, trust in work settings and generational differences.

Duygu Uygur is a PhD candidate in Organization Studies and a teaching assistant at Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey. She is writing an ethnography on human resource management for her PhD dissertation. She is an assistant in the Business Management programme and teaches organizational behaviour and human resource management on Bilgi MBA programmes.

Arzu Özsoy is a PhD candidate at the Labour Economics and Industrial Relations Department, Kocaeli University, Turkey. She is studying stratification in public sector employment. Her research focuses on flexibility, employment status, stratification and non-standard employment in the public sector.