1. Introduction

Job satisfaction and professional satisfaction are variables that are not only measured in the context of journalism, but also in many other professions. The studies within journalism are notable because on the one hand journalists complain about the working conditions, on the other hand they still seem to be happy with their job. This obvious contradiction has already been discovered in the late 1970s (Neverla, 1979; Roegele, 1981) but researchers did not go deeper into the matter due to the lack of data and a lack of theoretical explanation. Considering the fact that the job satisfaction of journalists in Germany is usually analyzed descriptively and not explained causally by other factors, this paper aims at the research of variables that influence the job satisfaction. Therefore, we look at the following research question: Which factors determine the job satisfaction of journalists in Germany? For this purpose I carried out a secondary analysis of the two “Journalism in Germany” studies (Weischenberg, Löffelholz, & Scholl, 1993, 1994; Scholl & Weischenberg, 1998; Weischenberg, Malik, & Scholl, 2006).

Job satisfaction is defined as the attitude a person has towards his or her job in general or towards various aspects of his or her job (Neuberger & Allerbeck, 1978; Spector, 1997). Research literature distinguishes between job satisfaction and professional satisfaction. Professional satisfaction focuses “primarily the right choice of profession respectively the choice of the proper job training, whereas job satisfaction targets the specific circumstances of the current job situation” (Fischer, 1989, p. 17). Determinants of job satisfaction can be divided into factors of working environment and personal factors (Beam, 2006, p. 171; Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2012, p. 237). Following the system theoretical approach of the primary study, the present paper does not distinguish between working environment and personal factors. Instead, it distinguishes between systemic variables and context variables (Scholl & Weischenberg, 1998, p. 86). Systemic variables include the media type, editorial departments, the size of the company and the range of the medium, the employment relationship, the position within the hierarchy, work experience, the degree of occupational orientation, the political difference between journalists and editors, the number of qualifying job trainings, the weekly hours of work and journalistic operations such as the daily workload.
brought up for investigation, decision making, editing or writing. Socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, origin and income are considered context variables.

2. Method

To test the influence of these variables on the job satisfaction of journalists in Germany, a secondary analysis of the two “Journalism in Germany” studies was carried out (Weischenberg, Löffelholz, & Scholl, 1993, 1994; Scholl & Weischenberg, 1998; Weischenberg, Malik, & Scholl, 2006). These studies collected representative data in 1993 (N = 1,498) and 2005 (N = 1,536) about the professional field of journalism. The questionnaire was very similar in both studies and included questions about the professional career, journalistic activities, job satisfaction and professional satisfaction, role perceptions, perceived influences on journalists, ethics of reporting, image of journalists’ audience, political leanings, and socio-demographic characteristics (Scholl & Weischenberg, 1998, pp. 322–324; Weischenberg, Malik, & Scholl, 2005, p. 228).

In the analyses that follow, job satisfaction is the dependent variable. With the help of a five-point rating scale (1 = “very satisfied” and 5 = “very dissatisfied”) journalists were asked how satisfied they are with various aspects of their job. A principal component analysis (PCA) was used to summarize the various aspects of job satisfaction in order to reduce the number of different facets of job satisfaction. These principal components variables (factor scales) were explained by multiple regression models. In the multiple regression analyses, the systemic variables and context variables serve as independent variables.

To measure the professional satisfaction, the questionnaire included a list of five statements. The extent to which journalists agreed or disagreed with the statements was measured by a five-point scale (entirely agree, mainly agree, partly agree, less agree, do not agree at all). These various items were also reduced to a small set of dimensions by using a principle component analysis. The relationship between job satisfaction and professional satisfaction was analyzed by means of a correlation analysis.

3. Results

The results show that job satisfaction is structured multidimensionally. Four different dimensions of job satisfaction can be determined by the data of the first “Journalism in Germany” study (economic conditions, working conditions, working atmosphere, and job training and advanced vocational training); the second study allows to extract three dimensions of job satisfaction (economic conditions, working conditions, and working atmosphere).

These dimensions of job satisfaction can be explained by several predictors, which vary according to the dimensions (principal components variables). In 1993, the satisfaction with the economic conditions can be explained by the income (β = 0.36, p < .01), permanent employment (β = 0.22, p < .01) and the size of the company (β = 0.11, p < .01). The overall model explains almost a quarter of the vari-
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ance of the dependent variable (adjusted \( R^2 = .22 \)). Satisfaction with the working conditions is especially found among journalists with a high income, those who work as freelancer and those who grew up and learned their journalistic craft in the German Democratic Republic. By contrast, journalists who often have to edit news and texts of colleagues, tend to be less satisfied with the working conditions (overall model fit adjusted \( R^2 = .13 \)). The satisfaction with training and advanced vocational training depends on the range of the medium (\( \beta = 0,10, p < .01 \)), the number of qualifying job trainings (\( \beta = 0,12, p < .01 \)), the political difference between journalists and the editorial policy (\( \beta = -0,17, p < .01 \)) and the origin of birth (\( \beta = -0,15, p < .01 \)). The model explains 10 percent of the variance. In 1993, especially those journalists who work a lot in smaller media companies, and are politically consistent with the editorial policy of their publisher, are more satisfied with the working atmosphere. Members of a labour union or trade union tend to be less satisfied with the working atmosphere (overall model fit adjusted \( R^2 = .10 \)).

Multiple regression analyses that used the data of the second “Journalism in Germany” study show slightly different results. Income (\( \beta = 0,15, p < .01 \)), the permanent employment (\( \beta = 0,26, p < .01 \)), but also job experience (\( \beta = 0,14, p < .01 \)) and working for a radio station (\( \beta = 0,15, p < .01 \)) respectively for a television station (\( \beta = 0,13, p < .01 \)) were significant predictors of the satisfaction with the economic conditions. Freelancers and journalists in magazines are satisfied with the working conditions, whereas local journalists and journalists of news agencies show more dissatisfaction. The same can be measured among journalists who spend a lot of time with the selection of incoming material. Another reason for dissatisfaction is a high number of weekly workload (overall model fit adjusted \( R^2 = .14 \)). In 2005, the satisfaction with the working atmosphere can only be explained by the political distance between journalists and the editorial policy of their publisher (\( \beta = -0,35, p < .01 \)) (overall model fit adjusted \( R^2 = .12 \)).

Finally, a principal component analysis yielded two dimensions of professional satisfaction (professional autonomy and professional image) and these dimensions do not correlate with job satisfaction.

4. Discussion

Although there is a high number of factors that determine the job satisfaction of journalists in Germany, the findings indicate the dominance of those which characterize the journalistic system over context variables. Job satisfaction can be explained notably by the size of the company, the mode of employment, the weekly workload, the political distance between journalists and editorial policy, and journalistic activities (editing, selecting texts). Only the income and origin of birth (West Germany vs. East Germany) are context variables that have explanatory power. Yet, the present paper did not consider all potential predictors of the job satisfaction (e. g. achievement or recognition) because some variables have not been ascertained in the primary study. This points out one of the key limitations of the present study. In addition, it is also notable that job satisfaction and professional satisfaction do not correlate. Therefore, job satisfaction does not necessarily have an impact on the professional satisfaction. A journalist who is dissatisfied with his job does not di-
rectly query his profession. Journalism research should no longer understand job satisfaction and professional satisfaction as a single construct, but rather change the perspective and consider them two different constructs.

References


