

Job Satisfaction and Gender: Evidence from Australia

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This paper investigates six different aspects of job satisfaction (pay, job security, work, hours, flexibility and overall) by gender over a four year period in the Australian labour market using the HILDA panel dataset. This paper contributes to the literature by building on initial Australian findings by Long (2005), which used HILDA's Wave 1 dataset and concentrated only on overall job satisfaction.

We find females to be more satisfied with five of the six job satisfaction measures, and to be statistically just as satisfied with males for the sixth (flexibility). Running gender separated random effects ordered probit models, we report that gender differences with different aspects of job satisfaction can be partially explained by both personal and labour market characteristics. In particular, job satisfaction for females is far less influenced by past labour market participation compared to males. Differences in workplace characteristics are less pronounced though unionised females are less satisfied at work compared to non-unionised females; a finding far less pronounced for males.

Given that past studies have found younger and more educated females to have comparable rates of job satisfaction with their male peers, we re-ran random effects ordered probit models for both 'educated' and 'young groups. Unlike previous studies, we find that younger females are still more satisfied at work compared to males in four of the six measures investigated. However, higher educated females are a much-different subset of employed females as a whole. They are only more satisfied with higher educated males with respect to pay, and are actually less satisfied with hours worked and job flexibility.

Overall, the use of HILDA's panel dataset has produced results both consistent and inconsistent with previous findings in the literature. Females' higher level of job satisfaction is found, with no econometric (but statistical) evidence that it is being eroded over time. However, we find no evidence that younger females exhibit job satisfaction rates comparable to young males, while highly educated females have satisfaction rates that failed to match initial expectations and deserve further investigation.