

## Research Article

# Considerations on Job Satisfaction as a Predictor of Employment Success for People with Severe Mental Illness

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## Introduction

Unemployed people with severe mental illness are on the path of social marginalization [1], will depend on the family or social protection systems. For this reason, labor integratio as a precedent for social integration and constitutes one of the major objectives of psychosocial rehabilitation programs, for people with severe mental illness, given its positive effect on social functioning, the degree of satisfaction, personal autonomy, self-esteem, and mainly, on the quality of life of these people [2].

One of the main difficulties of occupational rehabilitation professionals who work with SMI people is to define the predictors that differentiate good rehabilitation process results from those that are not [3]. For this reason, in order to analyze the existing studies on the variables that influence access and maintenance of employment for people with SMI, scientist have not come to clear conclusions neither evidence on this issue.

Research in relation to SMI people employment has been mainly focused on the study of vocational outcomes (number of people who find a competitive job, hours of work, salary, duration of employment, retention rate, loss of employment and long-term effects). Little research on non-vocational outcomes (symptoms and hospitalization, self-esteem, cognitive functioning, quality of life, social contact, satisfaction, preferences, and social support), in relation to employment and the study population [4].

Current research into job satisfaction are scarce, although the data show that it is a variable with an important effect on the access to their jobs as in their success experiences [5]. The coincidence between

## Abstract

In the psychosocial rehabilitation of people with Severe Mental Illness (SMI), employment plays an important role as ingredient in the recovery process and human rights, as the numerous benefits generated in each of the personal and social dimensions. Existing research has tried to determine the variables that favour or hinder access to the labour market by studying the experiences reported by SMI people in ordinary employment. However, the results obtained do not show a clear consensus on the variables that determine the success of the employment experience. The job satisfaction is presented as a variable to be deeply studied due to the few studies on this topic. This paper provides a review of studies on job satisfaction as a predictor of success in SMI people regular employment, different databases were consulted from 2010 to 2021.

**Keywords:** Severe mental illness; Employment; Employment success; Job satisfaction

employment and personal preferences makes it possible to achieve high levels of satisfaction and longer-lasting jobs than in those cases in which the jobs do not coincide with personal preferences [6]. Likewise, job satisfaction measured during the first 3 months of a job was significantly associated with job tenure. Overall, the findings support the utility of job satisfaction as a tool in vocational rehabilitation [7].

## Materials and Methods

The electronic MEDLINE databases, Scopus, PubMed, EBSCOhost EJS, PsycINFo, PsycArticles were searched from 2010 to July 2021. 2010 to July 2021 have been taken into account for this paper. The keywords that were used are: employment, severe mental illness and job satisfaction. Peer-reviewed journals and studies in English and Spanish were selected. The amount of 155 references were obtained and five of these references were finally chosen due to their connection with job satisfaction. In the search process, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined for the search of the relevant published articles. Once the titles and abstracts had been selected, the full articles were reviewed. Two reviewers carried out the selection of studies and the information analysis and synthesis.

## Results

Individual factors and environmental factors related to job satisfaction of people with mental illness indicate that there is a significant impact of individual (self-efficacy and perceived severity of symptoms) and environmental (workplace) factors on job satisfaction. People who experienced more job satisfaction also expressed high self-efficacy and received workplace accommodations

and employment support [8].

Greece KoiSPE Social enterprises SMI employees are one of the sources of job opportunities.

People with severe mental illness reported satisfaction with working conditions, the job itself, the organization as a whole, and the supervision provided. On the contrary, they were dissatisfied with salary and promotion. Higher-earning employees were significantly more satisfied with their work, and women were significantly more satisfied than men. The high level of job satisfaction confirms the importance of employment for mentally ill people.

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In Malaysia, 2014, examined the rate and predictors of successful employment at 3 months after enrollment in an employment program among patients with severe mental illness. Results showed a high employment rate among SMI patients. Significant predictors of employment were having a good work history and landing a preferred job. Other factors associated with successful employment were having a work history, good family support, lower number of psychiatric admissions, good compliance with medicine, good interest in work, being motivated to work, satisfied with the job or salary, getting a preferred job, have competitive or supported employment, and have higher PANNS scores in positive, negative, and general psychopathology [10].

Cook and Miller, 2015, explored the relative effects of adverse working conditions, job satisfaction, wages, employees features and local labor markets to be able to explain voluntary job separations (resignations) among employees with psychiatric disabilities.

In multivariable analysis, workers were more likely to quit their jobs if they were employed for 20h/wk or less, if they were dissatisfied, low-wage jobs, non-temporary positions, and jobs in the structural (construction) occupations. Voluntary separation was less likely for older workers, members of racial and ethnic minority groups, and those residing in regions with lower unemployment rates. Patterns of job separations for workers with psychiatric disabilities mirrored some findings regarding job leaving in the general labor force but contradicted others. Job separation antecedents reflect the concentration of jobs for workers with psychiatric disabilities in the secondary labor market, characterized by low-salaried, temporary, and part-time employment [11].

Although the idea that employment is beneficial for recovery

is valid, it must be qualified by the personal meanings attributed to these experiences, and the cultural and economic factors specific to each context. The meanings of work experience in people diagnosed with severe mental illness in Andalusia (Spain), a region with a high unemployment rate, show through narratives about work experience that certain obstacles to recovery. As for example, personal conflicts, stress, job insecurity, and meaningless jobs show [12].

## Discussion and Conclusions

Employment is very important in the lives of people with Serious Mental Illness and as a productive activity, it favors cognitive development, interpersonal relationships and is an organizer of daily life [13,14]. Employment as retributive activity allows autonomy and active social role [2,15], increases self-esteem through the role of worker and social recognition [16,17].

Although, most people with SMI want to have a competitive job [18], the truth is that most of them lose it within six months, on average.

The scientific literature provides information on the predictive variables of success in the employment of people with SMI. Based on a systematic review of 22 qualitative studies published between 2000 and 2018, some facilitators employment access of people with SMI were defined personal factors (personality, adaptation, social skills, competences and experience), the network of support (social and institutional) and the characteristics of the work itself (support, connection and interest, environment, adaptations and salary). Likewise, the limitations of access and permanence to employment: personal characteristics (psychological aspects and mental illness), the proper job itself was also determined (limited support, activity, salary and relationships), the social network (scarce resources and negative messages) and aspects of society (politics and stigmas) [19].

Currently, the studies focused on job satisfaction are scarce, although there is a significant relationship between levels of satisfaction and access and permanence in employment for people with SMI. The current nature of work and the productive demands that it imposed on any person, and labor market, act as clear obstacles to the labor integration of people with SMI.

The characteristics of current employment and the productive demands are obstacles to the integration of people with SMI. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate and know the experiences and opinions of these people to define the variables that are related to job satisfaction. The work context will favor the learning of new skills, acquisition of certain abilities, social contact and interpersonal relationships; having a life project and, what is more important, social integration.

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