

history of problems they disclose, though they may be advised as to whether they should continue diving.

This survey is designed to create a data bank and there is no assumption made or implied that present medical standards lack validity, only that they now require scrutiny. The lack of data of this type has produced the present situation where rigid criteria of fitness have produced a group of divers who have either evaded recognition of their asthma, diabetes etc. when they were examined by a doctor, or are diving without a pre-training medical examination. This project offers an opportunity to begin remedial action for this state of affairs, with information based on actual dive histories rather than morbidity reports as the basic data input for the first time. This project will not be limited to Australia and will be ongoing. Success requires the participation, interest, and dedication of many people. Please enrol.

If you are interested in becoming involved in this Project you are invited to write to:

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JOB SATISFACTION IN QUEENSLAND SCUBA INSTRUCTORS

Jeffrey Wilks

Introduction

To many people, work in the tourism industry is perceived as both glamorous and exciting. According to McMillen and Lafferty:¹ "Tourism interests explicitly cultivate a "youthful" image to attract young workers, with notions of a relaxed lifestyle and a variety of career opportunities".

For some workers, especially those employed in marine tourism, it is possible to enjoy a special type of lifestyle along with paid employment. In one study, Volard surveyed employees of two north Queensland island resorts and found what they most liked about working at the resort was the natural beauty of the island, followed by the low cost of living. Ranked third was the type of work they did.² An interesting finding from this study was that most staff did not intend to make a career of working at the resort. They saw their present employment as an enjoyable working holiday, a chance to save money while on the island, and an opportunity to live and work with like-minded people. This transient aspect of employment is

fairly typical of the tourism industry, with a large portion of the workforce periodically moving from one location to another.³⁻⁵

While employment at an island resort or a large hotel chain may provide unique job opportunities for some workers, the reality is that most tourism and hospitality operators in Australia are small businesses, defined as having less than 20 employees.⁶ A good example of small business in the marine tourism area is that of the scuba diving operation. In Queensland many dive operators are sole traders or work in partnerships. They employ a limited number of staff, and there is a high turnover rate among their employees. One reason offered for this high turnover is that employees do not see diving as a career. Rather, their work is an extension of their hobby, which often ceases to be fun when it is pursued for a living.⁷

In order to achieve their desired lifestyles, scuba instructors are prepared to forgo many standard employment benefits. These include overtime pay, holiday pay loading, and superannuation. At the same time, instructors report enjoying some fringe benefits from their jobs, including discounts on meals and accommodation, and special staff prices for equipment and services.⁸

While a majority of scuba diving instructors, both in Australia,^{8,9} and overseas,^{10,11} say they generally enjoy their work, there is currently no information available on specific aspects of job satisfaction within the diving industry. This information is important if staff turnover is to be reduced, and a stable career path developed for workers in this area of marine tourism. In addition, previous Australian studies have found that workers with low job satisfaction tend to report more physical health problems, greater levels of stress, and more accidents travelling to and from work.^{12,13} Since workplace health and safety has recently become a major issue for the recreational diving industry,^{14,15} it is timely to examine workers' job satisfaction and job characteristics in greater detail.

Method

A total of 202 registered Queensland scuba diving instructors participated in the study. The sample contained 57% full-time and 43% part-time instructors. Most respondents reported that they were married or in a permanent relationship. Average age was 33 years, with a range from 21 to 55 years. The various employment categories were 19% business owners, 48% salaried staff, and 33% independent instructors. Figures obtained from the training agencies show that there were 616 certified instructors in Queensland at the time of the study. The sample therefore represented 33% of all Queensland instructors.

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGES, ROUNDED TO NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER, OF SCUBA INSTRUCTORS' SATISFACTION WITH JOB FACETS

| | Dissatisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Satisfied |
|---|--------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 Having a say about the way I do things in my job | 12 | 10 | 78 |
| 2 Being able to change the things I don't like about my job | 24 | 14 | 62 |
| 3 The chance to use my abilities in my job | 12 | 15 | 74 |
| 4 The people I talk to, and work with in my job | 4 | 17 | 80 |
| 5 The chance to get to know other people in my job | 3 | 18 | 80 |
| 6 The chance to learn new things in my work | 14 | 17 | 70 |
| 7 The amount of change and variety in my job | 20 | 22 | 58 |
| 8 The chance to do different jobs | 15 | 23 | 62 |
| 9 Being able to do my job without a supervisor worrying me | 7 | 5 | 88 |
| 10 Having enough time to do my job properly | 27 | 21 | 52 |
| 11 Chances of really achieving something worthwhile | 16 | 23 | 62 |
| 12 The amount of pay I get | 46 | 26 | 28 |
| 13 Promotion opportunities | 36 | 36 | 28 |
| 14 Quality of supervision | 12 | 34 | 54 |
| 15 Physical conditions at work (cleanliness, noise levels) | 12 | 19 | 69 |
| 16 The amount of pressure or stress | 17 | 36 | 47 |
| 17 Opportunities to do challenging and interesting work | 16 | 27 | 58 |
| 18 Opportunities to grow as a person and be yourself | 12 | 17 | 71 |

TABLE 2
SATISFACTION REPORTED FOR EACH FACET OF THE JOB: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY GROUP

| Job Facet | Adelaide workers | Rank | Scuba instructors | Rank |
|--|------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| Able to do job without supervisor interfering | 81.7 | 1 | 87.9 | 1 |
| Co-workers | 80.2 | 2 | 79.8 | 3 |
| Chance of getting to know people | 76.5 | 3 | 79.8 | 2 |
| Having a say about way of doing job | 75.6 | 4 | 77.8 | 4 |
| Chance to use abilities | 74.1 | 5 | 73.7 | 5 |
| Enough time to do job properly | 71.4 | 6 | 52.0 | 15 |
| Amount of change and variety | 69.4 | 7 | 58.1 | 12 |
| Opportunities to grow as a person | 69.3 | 8 | 71.2 | 6 |
| Chance to learn new things | 67.9 | 9 | 69.7 | 7 |
| Amount of pay | 66.9 | 10 | 27.8 | 18 |
| Chance to do different jobs | 64.5 | 11 | 61.6 | 11 |
| Physical conditions | 62.9 | 12 | 68.7 | 8 |
| Chance of achieving something worthwhile | 62.5 | 13 | 61.6 | 10 |
| Quality of supervision | 61.9 | 14 | 54.0 | 14 |
| Pressure or stress | 60.0 | 15 | 47.5 | 16 |
| Opportunities for challenging and interesting work | 58.6 | 16 | 57.6 | 13 |
| Able to change disliked features of job | 57.2 | 17 | 62.1 | 9 |
| Promotion opportunities | 48.8 | 18 | 27.8 | 17 |

All participating instructors completed a 16-page confidential questionnaire covering a range of topics related to their work in the dive industry. Full details of the development, pilot testing and administration of the measure are reported in an earlier paper.¹⁵ In relation to job satisfaction, instructors completed a standard 18-item Australian scale measuring various job facets.¹² Responses to each item or facet of job satisfaction were made on a 5-point scale (1 = very dissatisfied; 5 = very satisfied). The items had previously been used and validated with a 0.5% household sample drawn from metropolitan Adelaide using the technique of multi-stage cluster sampling to obtain adequate representation of occupations and socio-economic status. A total of 1383 employed people were included in the Adelaide sample.

Results

Table 1 (page 25) presents the various amounts of satisfaction Queensland scuba instructors reported for each facet of their jobs. For ease of reporting "very satisfied" and "satisfied" have been collapsed into one category. Similarly, "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" are reported together.

Table 1 shows that a majority of the sample (> 50%) were satisfied with 15 out of 18 facets of their jobs. Least satisfaction, and greatest dissatisfaction, was reported for the amount of pay received and promotion opportunities. Less than half the sample were satisfied with the amount of pressure or stress they experienced on the job, though a third of the sample gave a neutral response to this aspect of their work. Other areas of dissatisfaction that emerged from the analysis were having enough time to do the job properly, changing disliked features of the job, and the amount of variety provided by the job.

To test whether job satisfaction reported by scuba instructors was similar to, or different from, that of other workers a comparison was made with the 1383 Adelaide employees on which the original job satisfaction items were developed. Table 2 (page 25) presents these results.

Table 2 shows a generally similar pattern in the proportion of workers who were satisfied with each job facet, with the exception of scuba instructors showing much lower ratings for amount of pay, promotion opportunities, and pressure or stress. While these three job facets were ranked lowest in the list by instructors, and differed from the rankings made by the Adelaide sample, both groups of workers shared a similar pattern of agreement on the five most important facets of the job (autonomy, co-workers, getting to know people, having a say in the job, and a chance to use abilities).

As an empirical test of the similarity between the two groups of workers, a Spearman's rank-order

correlation coefficient (r_s) was calculated.¹⁶ The high correlation ($r_s = .71$; $p < .01$) shows a strong similarity in the overall rating of job facets. Table 3 confirms the similarity across groups, with the scuba instructors' overall mean on job satisfaction (66.35) being closest to that of clerical and services staff from the Adelaide sample, and slightly higher than workers in the transport or trade sectors.

TABLE 3

MEAN JOB SATISFACTION LEVELS BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

| Occupational group (Adelaide sample) | Number | Mean job satisfaction | Standard deviation |
|--------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Professional | 213 | 69.92 | 10.03 |
| Administrative | 94 | 70.14 | 8.90 |
| Clerical | 251 | 66.80 | 11.30 |
| Sales | 130 | 69.41 | 11.28 |
| Transport | 90 | 65.59 | 10.85 |
| Trades | 415 | 63.69 | 12.92 |
| Services | 143 | 66.79 | 11.68 |
| Total | 1383 | 66.71 | 11.73 |
| Scuba instructors | 202 | 66.35 | 12.58 |

Finally, a series of exploratory analyses was conducted to identify relationships between job satisfaction and other work-related measures for the sample of scuba instructors. In contrast to the findings of many other studies, there were no significant relationships between job satisfaction and age, sex, or length of time working in the industry. However, job satisfaction was positively correlated with intention to remain in the dive industry during the next 12 months ($r = .40$; $p < .0001$) and with intention to remain in the present job during the next 12 months ($r = .51$; $p < .0001$).

Discussion

After reviewing the international literature, Mitchell and his colleagues concluded that job satisfaction levels in Australia have remained relatively stable in recent years.¹³ This finding is supported by the present study, where comparisons between a sample of Adelaide workers surveyed during the late 1970's, and a sample of Queensland scuba instructors sampled in the 1990's, revealed a similar pattern of job satisfaction overall. Both groups reported most satisfaction with their autonomy on the job, co-workers, the chance of getting to know people, having a say about how they do their jobs, and the chance to use their abilities.

Scuba instructors, however, differed most from the Adelaide workers in expressing particular dissatisfaction with the pay they receive. The topic of fair remuneration has been a long-term issue for instructors in the United States,¹⁷ and while Australian instructors are currently paid salaries at least at the level required by the union award,⁸ an independent study by James Cook University showed that few financial incentives were currently available for scuba instructors.⁷ Indeed, the authors of that study suggested that in order to overcome the extended hobby attitude to dive employment, instructors should be made to feel part of the business. This might involve inclusion in decision-making processes, and some form of incentive, bonus or commission structure as an essential business practice in the recreational diving industry. These suggestions have not been acted upon by the dive industry to date, though they clearly have the potential to address most of the areas of job dissatisfaction identified in this research.

One of the most notable findings of the present study is the positive correlation between job satisfaction and intention to remain both in the dive industry, and more specifically, in the present job over the next 12 months. The correlation means that the more satisfied an instructor is in their current job, the more likely they are to remain in that job. This finding is really common sense, but combined with the other results highlighting the main areas of dissatisfaction (salaries and career opportunities), it gives employers some solid ground on which to make changes so as to ensure they do not lose their current staff.

While employment as a diving instructor in marine tourism may appear to be glamorous and exciting to those outside the industry, in reality it is a job much the same as any other job. Admittedly, the work environment is more attractive (the ocean, sun, and meeting new people who are in a holiday mode), but this is off-set by lower salaries and few opportunities to develop a career.

In order to advance the degree of professionalism in the industry, it is necessary to provide incentives that will encourage long-term, stable employment. This will have important and positive implications for customer satisfaction and safety, as a result of instructors staying in the one geographical area and being familiar with their company's equipment, local dive sites, weather conditions, and available emergency services.

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