

26 Title	Job satisfaction, working conditions and aspirations
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Source	Journal of Economic Psychology
Pub Date	2010
Keywords	Job satisfaction, Working conditions, Aspirations, Two-tiered stochastic frontier model
Abstract	<p>People's evaluation of objective working conditions (job satisfaction) may be only partially explained by the objective working conditions faced by workers. Individuals are constantly drawing comparisons from their environment, from the past or from their expectations of the future. Workers look both upward and downward when making comparisons and aspirations about working conditions. They fix both lower aspiration bounds (that are, minimum acceptable working conditions) and upper aspiration bounds (representing the best working conditions they can obtain on the labour market). Reality lies between the upper and the lower bounds. Distance between aspiration bounds and reality might create biases in the evaluations of job satisfaction. In this paper, we propose a new approach towards studying the following issues: (i) we analyse the existence and the impact of aspiration biases on workers levels of job satisfaction; and, (i) we analyse whether workers adapt to conditions shedding light on the relationship existing between aspiration biases and working conditions actually experienced in the job place. These issues are empirically studied using the 2005 European Working Condition Survey (EWCS). We find that aspiration biases exist. On average, divergence between individual working conditions and the upper aspiration bounds has stronger effect in reducing job satisfaction than the distance between the lower aspiration bounds and reality in increasing job satisfaction. Finally, aspiration biases seem to be positively affected by good working conditions and negatively affected by bad working conditions.</p>