Article

Job satisfaction in African public administrations: a systematic review

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Abstract

In this study, we present a review of public agents' job satisfaction in Africa between 1990 and 2014. Using the systematic review methodology, we analyse and put in perspective 22 English and French publications on this subject. Results suggest that work environment attributes are the most important antecedents of job satisfaction among African public servants, whereas the effects of personal and work characteristics are marginal. We also found that most of the research dedicated to job satisfaction in Africa relied primarily on theoretical frameworks developed in Western countries. This leads to unexpected results, indicating the need to fit the research models to local specificities. The consequences of job satisfaction in Africa and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Points for practitioners

This contribution allows practitioners to obtain an overview of the factors that promote the satisfaction/dissatisfaction of public sector employees in Africa. It helps them identify factors on which to act for the implementation of effective personnel policies geared towards the officials' performance and welfare. The results suggest paying attention to factors related to the working environment (such as the atmosphere at work, organisational support and working conditions) in order to enhance effectively job satisfaction in African public organisations. However, practices such as the establishment of clear objectives and procedures, autonomy, work content, and the recognition of effort are not to be overlooked.

Keywords

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Introduction

Over the past few years, research into job satisfaction has reached new peaks in terms of both quantity and quality. In quantitative terms, it appears that job satisfaction is the most-studied topic in the field of organisational behaviour (Clark, 1997; Judge and Klinger, 2007; Judge et al., 2001; Spector, 1997). The number of studies devoted to it is constantly increasing. From 1,100 between 1960 and 1970 (Locke, 1976), the average number of publications per decade on the subject in the PsycINFO database has increased to 2,400 in the period 1970 to 2000 (Judge et al., 2001).

A sharp growth was recorded in the 2000s. A classic search in the PsycINFO database using the keyword 'job satisfaction' yields about 4,700 results for the decade 2001–2010.[1] If the trend continues, over 6,000 articles on job satisfaction will be found in this database for the decade 2011–2020.[2] In October 2014, a search by keywords in the 42 English-language journals on public administration that are integrated in the 2013 list of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) Journal Citation Reports (© Thomson Reuters) identifies 249 articles containing the words 'job satisfaction', 'work satisfaction' or 'employee satisfaction' (Cantarelli et al., 2015: 2).

In qualitative terms, the debates are also very exciting, despite the lack of consensus on the definition of job satisfaction (Iglesias et al., 2010; Mignonac, 2004; Ravari et al., 2012). This craze for job satisfaction is justified for several reasons. The first is the cross-disciplinary nature of the concept. Job satisfaction is at the crossroads of several disciplines: psychology, social sciences, economics, management and even health sciences, as evidenced by the large number of publications on job satisfaction published in journals specialising in health sciences.[3] The second reason is probably related to the fact that work is today a central component of any modern society. The third reason is the connection between job satisfaction and various performance indicators. Proof of this is offered by the fact that many studies show that satisfied workers come to work on time, are more productive, are happier in their lives and are healthier, whereas dissatisfied workers come in late, intend to leave and develop antisocial behaviour (Cantarelli et al., 2015; Judge and Klinger, 2007; Judge et al., 2001; Organ and Ryan, 1995; Spector, 1997; Spector et al., 2004; Taylor and Westover, 2011).

However, a closer examination reveals that this literature comes mainly from developed countries. Very few results are available about job satisfaction in developing countries and, more particularly, in public administrations in Africa (Abugre, 2014; Asiedu and Folmer, 2007; Mafini and Dlodlo, 2014; Yoder and Eby, 1990). Starting with the cultural differences between African countries and Western countries (Bollinger and Hofstede, 1987; Bourgoin, 1984; Hofstede et al., 2010; Levesque et al., 2004), we postulate that there is a difference in the production mechanisms and consequences of job satisfaction in Africa compared to Western countries. It is to test this hypothesis that we conducted this systematic review of the literature. Its main goal is to take stock of 25 years (1990–2014) of

research into job satisfaction among African public sector employees and to compare the results with international research. To do this, we adopt a plan structured around four axes. We start off by presenting the chosen methodology, and then go on to the results obtained. Thereafter, we discuss the key findings before touching on the implications for future research and proposing a conclusion.

Methodology

This systematic literature review covers 25 years of research on job satisfaction in Africa (1990–2014). We chose this period not only because it is interesting to take stock of the accumulation of knowledge in this field, but also for historical and institutional reasons. The 1990s were marked in much of Africa by democratic transitions and the roll-out of economic liberalism. These political, institutional and economic changes ushered in a new era in the management of government affairs. In addition, the beginning of the period was notable in almost all African countries for the implementation of government modernisation reforms under the leadership of the Bretton Woods institutions. Known as 'structural adjustment programmes' (SAPs), these reforms were primarily intended to reduce public spending and to 'insert Africa into a liberal world economy' (Coussy, 2006). Although criticised today in light of their failures, these policies, coupled with democratic renewal, are a turning point in public management in many African countries. Thus, this review focuses on publications discussing the job satisfaction of African public sector employees from this time (1990) to 2014.

To identify these publications, we performed a search by keywords in the titles in the ABI/INFORM Global and PsycINFO databases using the themes 'job satisfaction' or 'work satisfaction' and 'Africa'. A search was also conducted of the online version of the 'Africa Bibliography'[4] and in the database of 'African Journals OnLine'[5] using the themes of 'job satisfaction', 'work satisfaction' or 'satisfaction at work'.

We also determined inclusion criteria. This means that the theoretical or empirical scientific publications must be written in English or French, relate to African public or para-public organisations, and be published between 1990 and 2014. Studies that do not make it possible to clearly identify the 'public' or 'para-public' nature of the samples were excluded. On the other hand, studies on mixed samples by sector (public or private) where more than 50% of the sample is made up of public sector employees were selected.

The research allowed us to retain 80 articles meeting the aforementioned criteria. However, not all these publications involved public organisations; some studies were conducted in private companies or on mixed samples. A more in-depth analysis, by reading the summaries and sometimes the methodology (to ascertain the target audience) of all 80 articles collected, allowed us to retain 25 papers. In particular, we excluded studies relating to the private sector, to mixed samples (public and private) consisting mainly of private sector employees and to

undifferentiated mixed samples. After a complete reading of the 25 articles, three did not meet all the specified criteria and were excluded. Thus, we selected 22 articles to be part of this literature review.

Presentation and analysis of the results

This section discusses the main results of the synthesis of this African literature on job satisfaction in public administrations. We shall approach, in turn, the theoretical frameworks of research into job satisfaction in Africa, the methodologies generally used and then the results obtained. However, we start with some points about the selected articles.

General information on the selected articles

The final sample is comprised of 22 publications, two of which are written in French (9%) and 20 in English. About 73% of the articles were published between 2007 and 2014 and 20% in 2014. This points to a new dynamism in this field in Africa. All geographic regions of the continent are represented but in different proportions. Western Africa is the region most represented, with 10 articles or about 45% of the sample; it is followed by Southern Africa, with eight articles or about 36% of the sample. Fewer than 10% of the articles are from Eastern Africa, represented by two articles. The other parts of Africa, Central Africa and Northern Africa, have one paper each in this literature review.

Regarding the distribution of items by country, we see that South Africa and Nigeria share the lead, with six articles each. Table 1 provides more details on the origin of the other papers. We will now explore the theoretical frameworks of these publications.

Theories on job satisfaction in Africa

Researchers who have addressed the issue of job satisfaction in Africa draw on different theoretical frameworks. That said, job satisfaction is generally seen as an attitude or a feeling. Thus, Locke's (1976) definition of job satisfaction as 'a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences' is the most cited.

One of the few definitions from researchers on the African continent is that of Asiedu and Folmer (2007: 1782), who define job satisfaction as 'well-being at work and well-being as a consequence of one's job'. In Africa, job satisfaction is therefore viewed as a positive state resulting from one's work situation. In short, job satisfaction during this quarter-century of research on the African continent is mostly considered as a positive emotional feeling that an individual develops towards their work.

The theoretical frameworks adopted to explain job satisfaction in Africa are also borrowed from the available Western literature. For Mulinge and Mueller (1998),

the sociological or socio-psychological process that produces job satisfaction is the same in all contexts. These authors believe that Western theories on job satisfaction could well be applied to the African context. Thus, they apply social exchange theory (stipulating that individuals enter into a relationship with an organisation expecting compensation in return for their investments) in their study of a sample of Kenyan agricultural technicians. This study produced some unexpected results, such as the negative influence of fringe benefits on job satisfaction and the lack of relationship between job satisfaction and wages. The authors justify these results by the influence of African customs. According to them, in African culture, work was not, originally, paid monetarily. Consequently, a monetary payment for work may not have an effect on the job satisfaction of African public sector employees.

Another feature of African culture that must be taken into account is collectivism (Bollinger and Hofstede, 1987; Hofstede et al., 2010). Levesque et al. (2004), quoting Hofstede, believe that collectivist values are not taken into consideration in Western theories. They experimented with this by applying the motivational model of burnout based on self-determination theory (SDT), developed in North America, to the African context. Their work in Gabon produced results contrary to their expectations.

As a brief reminder, according to the SDT (Deci and Ryan, 2000, 2008), people who have a 'self-determined' motivation act by free choice, without coercion, or out of pleasure ('autonomous motivation'). On the other hand, individuals with a 'non-self-determined' motivation act either in return for rewards or to avoid external sanctions, or because of a pressure that they feel do to so ('controlled motivation'). According to previous studies, 'self-motivation' has a more positive effect on productivity, organisational commitment and the adoption of organisational

Table 1. Summary of the general information on the articles.

Geographical region	Country	Number of articles	Language of the publication
North Africa	Egypt	1	English
Southern Africa	South Africa	6	
	Namibia	1	
	Swaziland	1	
Eastern Africa	Kenya	2	
Western Africa	Nigeria	6	
	Ghana	3	
	Senegal	1	French
Central Africa	Gabon	1	
Total		22	

citizenship than 'controlled motivation' (Deci and Ryan, 2008: 27). Thus, Levesque et al. (2004) expected employees who act out of pleasure or because their jobs are in harmony with their values to develop altruistic and conscientious behaviour. However, in this sample from Gabon, it is rather the employees who act as a result of pressures that they impose on themselves who tend to develop such organisational citizenship. They conclude that African public sector employees act more out of duty. Thus, this form of 'non-self-determined' motivation is regarded as arising from the sense of duty peculiar to African culture.

Religion also plays an important role in Africa. Mostafa and Gould-Williams (2014) consider, for example, that religion plays a fundamental role in the daily lives of Egyptians, and that Islam, practised by 95% of the population, determines the beliefs, values and workplace behaviour of employees and managers. However, these authors believe that organisations in the Arab world, particularly in Egypt, most often apply management practices borrowed from the world of Western companies because of economic pressures and cost-reduction goals. The results of the study built on this theoretical consideration give the impression that, to some extent, there is no difference between the West and the Arab world, Egypt specifically, when it comes to the relationship between the most efficient human resource management practices and positive behaviour in the workplace (job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviours).

On the whole, most publications postulate a Westernisation of African workers due to colonisation, or to the introduction of Western values into the education system and companies (Mostafa and Gould-Williams, 2014; Mulinge and Mueller, 1998). This premise prompts the application within African research of a theoretical framework borrowed from the Western context. After going through the theories, we will outline the tools used to measure job satisfaction in Africa and some of the research methods adopted.

Research methods on job satisfaction in Africa

All the selected publications used primary data collected through questionnaires. Access to data, in general, is a major challenge for research in Africa. In Egypt, for example, Mostafa and Gould-Williams (2014: 282) point out that data collection is very difficult and that 'Egyptians are not used to filling questionnaires and returning them back'. However, the rates of return for all the articles studied were between 56% and 97%, with an average return rate of 72% (standard deviation (SD) of 12%). These particularly high return rates can be explained by the fact that the questionnaires are usually self-administered directly in the workplace.

Sample sizes range from 50 to 21,307 respondents. The study by Peltzer et al. (2009) was the most extensive in terms of sample size. This study raises the average sample size to 1,406 (SD 4,463.026). However, if this study is removed from the base, the average size of the samples is 458 (SD 410.368).

In terms of measuring job satisfaction, all forms of scales were used, whether scales measuring overall satisfaction with one or more items or multifaceted scales.

Nevertheless, the scales measuring satisfaction in various aspects of work are those most commonly used. These multifaceted measurements were applied in more than 70% of the studies, against about 20% for overall satisfaction measurements with several items and 10% for overall satisfaction measures with a single item. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) is the most widely used measurement.

This inventory of the scales used to measure job satisfaction in Africa shows that the instruments used are derived from Western literature. This massive use of measuring instruments developed in Western countries on samples of African workers often proves ineffective. In any case, this strategy can be seen as ethnocentric. Therefore, a 'contextualisation' of these measurements and research models is necessary to take account of local realities. Construction of job satisfaction models congruent with African realities is thus desirable. We will now examine the outcomes of these research models and theories.

The antecedents of job satisfaction in the African context

We present, on the first hand, the individual characteristics of the public sector employees and, on the other hand, the characteristics related to work and the working environment.

The employees' individual characteristics. In many studies, individual factors do not seem to be the determinants of the job satisfaction of African public sector employees. Chirdan et al. (2009) found no relationship between job satisfaction and variables such as gender, age and the seniority of employees of public hospitals in Nigeria. These results are similar to those of Evy et al. (2008) on a sample of Namibian teachers. Sempane et al. (2002) found the same results on a sample of South African officials. Similarly, Asiedu and Folmer (2007) point out that in Ghana, level of education and gender have no effect on the satisfaction of public sector employees. In a sample of secondary school administrators in Kano State in Nigeria, Jaiyeoba and Ado (2008) found that there were no significant differences between men and women in terms of job satisfaction, although the sample women appear, on average, slightly more satisfied than the men.

Some studies, on the other hand, report the existence of a relationship between individual factors and job satisfaction. Asiedu and Folmer (2007) diagnose a U-shaped curvilinear relationship between age and the satisfaction of public sector employees in Ghana. In a study evaluating the effect of demographic (i.e. individual) characteristics on job satisfaction in Kenyan universities, Kipkebut (2013) shows that men are much more satisfied than women, and that the less educated the public sector employees are, the higher their level of satisfaction. Moreover, employees aged over 50 are much more satisfied than their younger colleagues. However, public sector employees who have been in their job for less than a year are more satisfied than those in the job for over a year. Also, Yoder and Eby (1990), in a survey conducted in Swaziland, note that the lower hierarchical

categories of workers, earning lower wages, are more satisfied than the public sector employees of higher hierarchical categories with higher wages.

Overall, the empirical results show that individual characteristics have a weak or contradictory relationship with job satisfaction. We deduce that individual factors have a minor impact on the job satisfaction of public sector employees in Africa. These results are, to some extent, similar to those found in Western countries (Cantarelli et al., 2015; Judge et al., 2001; Westover and Taylor, 2010), in China (Yang and Wang, 2013) or in the United Arab Emirates (Abdulla et al., 2011). However, among the variables related to the individual, whereas the personality traits of public sector employees (e.g. positive affectivity, negative affectivity) are the most serious determinants of job satisfaction in international research (Spector, 1997), these variables are largely unexplored in the research on job satisfaction in public administrations in Africa.

Variables related to the work and the working environment. The influence of organisational variables on the job satisfaction of African public sector employees has been investigated in several studies. Levesque et al. (2004), investigating a sample of Gabonese workers, note that job satisfaction is related to the supervisor's support. Autonomy at work, the opportunity to use their skills and being able to make friends with colleagues are also positively associated with the job satisfaction of the public sector employees in this study.

In South Africa, Mafini and Dlodlo (2014) show that extrinsic motivators, such as pay, quality of life at work, supervision and teamwork, are positively and significantly correlated with the job satisfaction of public sector employees. Similarly, Munyeka (2014) shows that perceived organisational support is positively associated with the job satisfaction of South African officials. Pillay (2009), meanwhile, shows that public sector nurses in South Africa are satisfied with the rewards they get in return for caring for patients, with their relationships with colleagues and doctors, and with the sense of belonging to the communities in which they work.

In Nigeria, Chirdan et al. (2009) found that factors related to freedom of expression, good interpersonal relations in the organisation, adequate (material) conditions of work, managerial support for staff welfare and the development of the careers of public sector employees were associated with job satisfaction. Moreover, Olorunsola (2010) considers that supervision, opportunities for career advancement, the work itself, interpersonal relationships, self-fulfilment, wages and recognition are the main factors of satisfaction of public sector employees. These factors are similar to those found by Tasie (2012), who classifies the satisfaction factors as: relationship with colleagues, nature of the work, work procedures, communication, supervision, salary, benefits, promotion and rewards. Oyewobi et al. (2012) found similar results.

The results of Abugre (2014) show that, in general, the satisfaction of public sector employees in Ghana is positively correlated with: the potential to help people in the organisation, the decision-making skills of their superiors and possibilities to perform activities requiring the investment of their skills and abilities. No feature of

the work identified by Asiedu and Folmer (2007) has a significant effect on the job satisfaction of the public employees of that country. Ghanaian officials in Abugre's (2014) sample are dissatisfied with their wages, working conditions, workload, stability of employment and the autonomy granted to them. Agyepong et al. (2004) also identified these factors as demotivating and unsatisfactory for public sector employees in Ghana's health sector. They also cite delays in obtaining promotions, recruitment, housing difficulties, overtime pay, training and skills development, family issues, and the education of children.

It appears from these results that the intrinsic factors of work (e.g. the work itself) have a minor influence on the job satisfaction/dissatisfaction of African officials. On the other hand, factors related to the working environment (e.g. the support of superiors, interpersonal relationships, quality of life at work) are more frequently linked to job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. These results are different from those generally obtained in the Western literature, where intrinsic work factors appear to be the main determinants of job satisfaction (Cantarelli et al., 2015; Judge et al., 2001; Taylor and Westover, 2011). Recall, for example, that Herzberg in 1967 (see Judge et al., 2001), in his bi-factorial theory, highlighted the fact that intrinsic (work-related) factors are the drivers of satisfaction, while extrinsic factors (related to the working environment) can, at best, limit or strengthen dissatisfaction.

Consequences of job satisfaction

The consequences of the job satisfaction of public sector employees in Africa have not been deeply explored. Current results show a positive relationship between satisfaction and performance. Mafini and Pooe (2013) point out, for example, that the job satisfaction factors of South African public sector employees are positively and significantly related to the perceived organisational performance. Mafini and Dlodlo (2014) note that job satisfaction has a positive effect on life satisfaction and explains over 60% of its variance. Levesque et al. (2004) also highlight the positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and the discretional organisational behaviour of Gabonese workers.

While satisfaction is recognised as having a positive effect on citizen behaviour, job dissatisfaction promotes the development of antisocial behaviour. The job dissatisfaction of Nigerian teachers leads to increased absenteeism (Ejere, 2010). Pillay (2009), for his part, shows that South African nurses who intend to leave their jobs are less satisfied than those who intend to stay. Job dissatisfaction is also associated with a number of occupational illnesses, such as hypertension, heart disease, stomach ulcers, asthma, smoking and alcohol abuse (Peltzer et al., 2009).

These results are consistent with those of Spector et al. (2004), noting that in Asia, Latin America and Western countries, especially Anglo-Saxon countries, job satisfaction is positively associated with the good mental and physical health of workers, but negatively associated with their intention to leave. The results also correspond to those found in the meta-analysis of Cantarelli et al. (2015). It follows

that regardless of cultural background, job satisfaction is often correlated with job attitudes and behaviour in public organisations.

Discussion of the results

The job satisfaction production process in Africa covers quite different realities. The state of research reveals a number of differences in the satisfaction of African officials, not only because of the diversity of the methods and satisfaction measurements used, but probably also because of the diverse realities in the continent. However, some major trends can be identified.

First, we note that the theories and measurements of job satisfaction used in public administration research in Africa are derived from the Western literature. The results reflect, to some extent, the results of international research. Thus, the association between satisfaction and performance indicators in Western countries is also found in Africa. Second, it appears that in Africa, as in the international literature, the individual characteristics of public sector employees play a minor role in their satisfaction at work.

Our results also reveal some differences in relation to the international literature (see Table 2). In Africa, factors related to the working environment, such as organisational support, good relations with superiors (Chirdan et al., 2009; Levesque et al., 2004; Mafini and Dlodlo, 2014; Munyeka, 2014; Olorunsola, 2010; Pillay, 2009), quality of life at work, teamwork (Mafini and Dlodlo, 2014), the relationship with colleagues (Olorunsola, 2010; Pillay, 2009) and the sense of belonging to a community (Pillay, 2009), are those most strongly correlated with the job satisfaction of public sector employees. These results confirm those of Yang and Wang (2013) in China and Abdulla et al. (2011) in the United Arab Emirates. On the other hand, in Western countries, the factors related to the working environment account only weakly for the job satisfaction of officials. As noted by Abdulla et al. (2011), the collectivist culture particular to China, the United Arab Emirates and most African countries could explain this result.

Table 2. Summary of the weight of three categories of determinants of the job satisfaction of public sector employees in four cultural settings.

	African literature	Western literature	China[a]	United Arab Emirates[b]
Individual characteristics of public sector employees	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak
Characteristics related to the work	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong
Characteristics related to the working environment	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong

Sources: [a] Yang and Wang (2013); [b] Abdulla et al. (2011).

The results in Africa thus differ from some results identified in the international literature, in particular, as regards the impact of job characteristics on the satisfaction of public sector employees. Our results indicate that these intrinsic characteristics of work have a weak correlation with job satisfaction in Africa. In the Western literature, these factors are the major determinants of job satisfaction. Although they are not the first in China and the United Arab Emirates, these factors nevertheless have a relatively strong importance there.

This major difference can be explained by the relationship of the employee to work in African culture. Bourgoin (1984: 35) explains, for example, that employed labour 'repels the African because it embodies routine, rejects any notion of gaiety and favours performance and continuity of effort. It also repels him because it is enshrouded with indifference and contempt.' This notion of paid work suggests that it is still a routine and lonely activity carried out without nurturing any relationship to others or in the framework of rather 'cold' relations. What is emphasised in this notion of work is that the African employee is not satisfied in the context of a monotonous occupation without variety, guided only by performance objectives. Satisfying work as part of this African culture has several characteristics: it would ban routine and indifference at work and take into account variety, diversity, a warm working relationship, the zest for life and a good atmosphere at work – conditions that could also be acclaimed by employees worldwide. However, in Africa, the experiences of community life at work appear to have more impact on satisfaction than the nature of the work itself, explaining the importance of the variables related to the working environment in the job satisfaction of African public sector employees. In conclusion, the satisfaction of African employees is higher if their work gives them the impression of living: cheerfulness, social cohesion, good relationships with colleagues and the hierarchy, and quality of life at work. Naturally, these are only preliminary thoughts that need to be understood as research proposals calling for further field studies to verify such interpretations, as it has to be admitted that using culture to explain everything always runs the risk of an excessive 'naturalisation' of certain cultural differences or features.

Future avenues for research

Several authors, including Asiedu and Folmer (2007), have called for more research to understand the underlying mechanisms of job satisfaction. By repeating this call, we put an emphasis on the need for inductive studies that can bring out the local realities of new job satisfaction factors. Such approaches are more than necessary to assess the relationship between Africans in general, and public sector employees in particular, with work. It is also necessary to conduct further research in Africa to determine how and to what extent job satisfaction develops and acts on workplace behaviour. Mixed qualitative and quantitative methods are recommended here for even more relevant results.

The influence of the personality of workers on their job satisfaction in African administrations is also of interest. International studies comparing several African

countries in order to highlight possible differences in terms of job satisfaction are also necessary given that cultural practices are not identical in all regions of the continent.

Conclusion

This contribution was intended to summarise 25 years of African literature on the job satisfaction of public sector employees, to compare it to the international literature and to identify avenues for future research. The results show that research on job satisfaction in Africa today draws on theoretical frameworks developed in industrialised countries. The results also show that characteristics related to the working environment are the major determinants of the job satisfaction of public sector employees in Africa. Individual characteristics and the intrinsic characteristics of the work have a marginal influence. These results are different, to some extent, from those that can be identified in the international literature, where the characteristics related to the nature of the work are usually the main factors of the satisfaction of employees. The results obtained highlight the importance of local culture in the job satisfaction production process in Africa.

That being said, it is important to note that this study does not claim to have covered exhaustively all the research in Africa on the subject between 1990 and 2014. In the keywords used for the selection of articles, we could have taken into account other correlates or synonyms of job satisfaction, such as 'welfare at work', 'subjective well-being at work' and 'pleasure at work'. We have chosen to focus attention only on the keywords used in this article out of a concern for accuracy, as have other writers before us (Judge et al., 2001). In addition, there are probably unpublished studies and research in languages other than French and English that have not been considered and included in this study. As English and French are the main languages of dissemination of research in Africa and as it is generally difficult to have access to unpublished documents (Cantarelli et al., 2015), these limits are not likely to significantly affect the results.

Notes

1. Last accessed on 17 December 2015.
2. As for the period 2011–2014, the average result per annum is 600 (last accessed on 17 December 2015).

3. A simple search using the keywords 'job satisfaction' in the PubMed database generates 23,289 results and 6,095 when the same search is launched for titles and/or summaries (last accessed 17 December 2015).
4. 'Africa bibliography' is a database of scientific articles, monographs, co-edited pieces and other forms of studies published on Africa. This catalogue has been published annually since 1984 by the 'International African Institute' (see: http://africabibliography.cambridge.org).
5. African Journals OnLine is the largest database of African scientific journals according to its website (see: http://www.ajol.info).

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