

Viktoria Ritter

Job Love

An empirical Analysis of the Concept of Love
for a Job, its Measurement and its Antecedents

Imprint

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Foreword

Since I started my psychology studies, I have questioned myself what drives people, especially what drives people at work. What makes people get up in the morning, give their best at work, fully engage with what they do, and remain loyal to the company which they work for? Research as well as business practice have been interested in this question, mainly focusing on topics such as employee attachment, commitment, and employee happiness. Yet, one driving force of human behavior has been widely passed over in employer-employee relationship research: *love*. Love can be described as the most intense form of a relationship. When love is present, usually people experience a number of desirable outcomes: people who love and feel loved in return feel more energized, are more willing to invest in their partners, and feel more fulfilled by and satisfied with their relationships. In the context of employer-employee relationships, job love is suggested to have similar outcomes that are beneficial for both – for those who love their jobs and for employers with employees who love their jobs. Although ‘Job Love’ may sound like a win-win situation for both, employers and employees; when starting to research the topic of love in the context of work, many critical voices arose, stating love not to be suitable for a job relationship. It is an interesting question to ponder: Is a job to be loved? What does it mean when a person loves a job, and what leads to love or hinders people from loving their jobs?

Over the course of the years while writing this dissertation, one of the first questions I asked most people I met – whether at dinner parties, in late Berlin bar evenings, on work conferences, or family gatherings – was: “Do you love your job?”. Interestingly, regardless of whether the answer to my question was ‘yes’ or ‘no’, or whether people thought that a job *should* be loved or should not be loved, most people stated: ‘I think, one *can* love a job’. This dissertation therefore does not discuss whether a job should be loved or not, but why people love their jobs and what companies can do to foster job love to create this win-win situation. When I think about my own job of writing this dissertation, I come to the conclusion that I *loved* my job. The dissertation was written during my time as a research assistant at the Deutsche Post Endowed Chair of Marketing and Dialogue Marketing at Steinbeis University. Having the possibility to read interesting

books on (love) relationships and researching what drives people at work was a great joy and passion for me. Writing this dissertation was also one of the best things I did in life, while also being one of my biggest challenges so far.

This work would not have been possible without the great support of my supervisor Prof. Dr. Dr. Schneider, one of the most inspiring people I had the pleasure to meet and work for. Not only was he the one pointing to the topic of love, but his constant ideas and out-of-the-box thinking helped to change perspectives and to see the big picture as well as the details to focus on. Therefore, I first want to thank him for his great supervision, for the interesting discussions and fruitful exchange that brought this dissertation to a successful finish. Second, I want to thank my team at Steinbeis University: Thank you, Markus, Ann-Kathrin, Frederick, Anja, and Claudia for being there for me and giving your great ideas to this dissertation. Third, I like to thank my second reviewer Prof. Dr. Kirchgeorg for his opinion and valuable view on this dissertation. Fourth, I want to thank all those that contributed to the dissertation taking part in my qualitative as well as quantitative studies, whether as interview partners, focus group participants, or study respondents: without you, this research would not have substance.

Finally, I want to thank all my family and friends. I thank my parents, who always encouraged me to go for my dreams and to not give up, and my sisters and my grandparents who always had an open ear for me and believed in me. I also want to thank my friends and partner who I see as my second family and who were there for me to build me up when I was down and who were there for me celebrating the successes in life. Thank you for your interest in my work, our uncountable discussions, your inspiration and advice, and your support. I am grateful for each person I am blessed to share life with. Not only have I received so much love, but I was also constantly reminded that life is nothing without love and that you always gain by giving *love*.

Berlin, 2021

Viktoria Ritter

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	analysis of variance
AD	Anno Domini (in the year of the Lord)
Art.	Article
BL	brand love
BLS	Brand Love Scale
C	Commitment
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
DV	dependent variable
e.g.	exempli gratia (for example)
Ed.	edition
Eds.	editors
EFA	exploratory factor analysis
engl.	English
et al.	et alii, et alia, et alteri (and colleagues)
etc.	et cetera (and so on)
Exp(B)	exponentiation of the B coefficient (odds ratio)
H	hypothesis
i.e.	id est (which means)
IV	independent variable
JL	job love
JLS	job love scale
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
NIV	New International Version
NPS	net promoter score
nr.	number
OCA	Organizational Commitment – Affective Commitment (subscale)
P	passion
p.	page
PLS	Passionate Love Scale
Sig.	Significance
SD	standard deviation
Std.	standardized
SPSS	Statistical Product and Service Solution
SRMR	standardized root mean square residual
TLI	Tucker-Lewis-Index

V	Verbundenheit (Connection)
VIF	variance inflation factor
Vol.	volume
Wald	Wald test
WOM	word of mouth

List of Symbols

α	Cronbach's Alpha (probability of error)
β	regression coefficient
&	and
d	Cohen's d (effect size)
df	degrees of freedom
F	test variable in the F-test
lv	latent variable
M	mean
n	sample size
p	probability of error
r	correlation coefficient
R^2	coefficient of determination
SD	standard deviation
SE	standard error
t	test variable in the t-test
χ^2	chi square
-	negative relationship
+	positive relationship
\neq	unequal

A INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this dissertation discusses the significance and relevance of the chosen research topic. It identifies people as a central factor in organizations and emphasizes the importance of considering the factors that motivate people in organizations to commit to their jobs and to stay loyal to their employer. It analyzes concepts that have already been researched and defines a new concept for research: job love. Based on these arguments, insights are presented into how this dissertation can contribute to the scientific world, as well as business practices, through empirical research.

1 People as a Central Factor for Organizations

Problem Description

In today's economy, it is difficult for companies to both attract employees and to develop and retain them – in order to maximize and maintain a competitive advantage. The ongoing competition for talented and highly skilled workers, described as a “war for talent” by Bartlett and Ghoshal (2002), has forced companies to think more intensely about employer attractiveness and how to gain and keep high-potential employees (Kirchgeorg & Günther, 2006; Kirchgeorg & Müller, 2013). Moreover, industrial development has produced an enormous change in the workplace, with a growing portion of the workforce now occupying the role of “knowledge workers” (Drucker, 1959) – employees who must be capable of handling multiple, complex tasks and remain intellectually motivated and engaged in the workplace. Stotz (2007) argued, “The ability of a company to use its *human capital*, its *intangible assets*, efficiently and effectively, distinguishes more and more successful from less successful companies” (p. 1). It is, therefore, only a matter of time before the human capital of a company is counted as a component of its assets, with motivation and performance of the workforce as key criteria (Stotz, 2007). A meta-analysis published by Gallup in 2019 showed that employees who are highly engaged in their work and who feel connected to their employer are more likely to come to work every morning, generally take fewer sick days, and are more productive. Moreover, engaged employees display a greater commitment to the quality of their work,

The ongoing competition for talented and highly skilled workers has forced companies to think harder about how to attract and retain highly skilled employees. While research in employer-employee relationships has primarily focused on characteristics such as employee retention, commitment, and happiness, one driving force of interpersonal relationships has been largely overlooked: *love*. People aspire to more than just a job to earn a living, and many long for work that fulfills them and gives them meaning, work they *can* love. Yet we still do not know what it means to love a job. Therefore, this dissertation attempts to clarify the question of what loving a job means. It also introduces the Job Love Scale (JLS), which provides an easy-to-use measurement concept. Furthermore, this dissertation identifies the key drivers of job love and provides recommendations for companies on what they can do to foster job love among their employees.

Viktoria Ritter is an HR professional with a background in psychology and marketing research and a passion for developing people through training and coaching. After high school, she volunteered in the social sector in São Paulo, Brazil, which fostered her interest in human behavior. In 2014, she graduated with honors from Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, specializing in organizational psychology. Viktoria Ritter continued to work as a researcher for the Deutsche Post Endowed Chair of Strategic Marketing at Steinbeis University, designing and implementing training programs together with her team under the direction of Prof. Dr. Dr. Helmut Schneider. She finished her dissertation in 2021.