

Justina Oliveira (formerly 'Froelich' when I received the award)

Research Summary

The ARC Knickerbocker Award immensely aided in the further progression of my dissertation this summer. In the past, I have had to teach at least one class each summer to make ends meet and thus my heavy teaching loads during prior summers had limited my available time for reading and writing related to my research. However, with this extra gift of time through this award's opportunity of funding in lieu of teaching, my progress has gone from only a basic outline and having read core readings, to being able to read more than 130 research articles and numerous books related to my dissertation along with being able to write over 40 pages of text within my dissertation literature review and method sections.

My work is based on archival data from the Work Orientation Survey III (2005-2007 wave of data) which includes 32 countries and over 40,000 employee participants in numerous industries and hundreds of job roles. I am studying the effects of culture and job type (blue or white-collar) on employees' perceptions of their work. More specifically, different characteristics of jobs such as autonomy, feedback, task significance, job demands, support from supervisors/coworkers, and skill variety seem to play a role in employee outcomes but these are hypothesized to play a larger beneficial role for white-collar jobs than those which are blue-collar, which are inherently more rigidly structured. I have found further support for each aspect and variable included in my dissertation as they relate to employees' satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to stay in the company, and their well-being. The immense amount of reading I have been able to do because of the ARC Knickerbocker Award has allowed me to build very strong arguments for my novel approach of considering job type and culture's roles on how we perceive our jobs, but more importantly what the outcomes are which are based on these perceptions. The importance of this research was made even more evident through my progress this summer in that although the current theories regarding job characteristics hold true in the USA, researchers are often making the assumption that this theory can 'translate' or that it also holds true for employees in other countries due to globalization's presumed effect on the global 'Americanization' effect of work values. However, the assumptions that there is an 'Americanization' or 'Westernization' process occurring for work values is in fact not evident across cultures in general. The existing literature thus far is showing that perhaps 'Americanization' of work values is too extreme of an idea as culture still seems to be playing a role as I hypothesize in my dissertation.

Thus, the time allotted to me for furthering my dissertation work this summer has allowed me to make huge strides objectively (the number of readings I was able to do and pages I was able to write) as well as in a more subjective sense by allowing me to gain a broader and more thorough understanding of my topic as a whole through the time given to me to submerge myself in my project more than I would have been able to otherwise. I now plan to propose my dissertation by May of 2014 or earlier and hope to defend by the following May (2015). I thank you for this opportunity which has produced gains in my personal knowledge as well as for my goal of timely dissertation progress.

~Justina (Froelich) Oliveira

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