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Decent work in France: Context, Conceptualization, and Assessment.

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DECENT WORK IN FRANCE

Abstract

The first aim of this study was to validate a French version of the Decent Work Scale (DWS) proposed by Duffy, Allan, Blustein, England, Douglass, Ferreira, and Santos (2017). Our second aim was to gain insight into French people's representations of decent work using a qualitative approach. A representative sample of 300 French employees completed the DWS, as well as measures of life satisfaction, work satisfaction, work-family conflict, meaningful work, and withdrawal intentions. Participants also responded to an open-ended question asking them to define decent work. Confirmatory factor analyses, as well as correlation and internal-consistency analyses, indicated satisfactory internal and convergent validity for the French version of the DWS. The qualitative results showed that French representations for decent work only partially overlapped with the initial conceptualizations of decent work in the United States. These findings are discussed in reference to notions of decent work in vocational psychology and to the cultural context of work within French society.

Keywords: Decent work; work satisfaction; meaning of work; life satisfaction; withdrawal intentions; work-family conflict

Decent Work in France: Context, Conceptualization, and Assessment

The notion of decent work is at the heart of the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) proposed by Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, and Autin (2016) and takes into account the effects of economic constraints and marginalization experiences on career development processes. Based on the indicators of the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2008, 2016), the PWT defines five criteria for decent work: “(a) physically and interpersonally safe working conditions (e.g. absent of physical, mental, or emotional abuse), (b) working hours that allow for free time and adequate rest, (c) organizational values that complement family and social values, (d) adequate compensation, and (e) access to adequate healthcare” (Duffy et al., 2016, p. 130). When all of these conditions are fulfilled, work is deemed decent. Access to decent work is contingent on such factors as the labor market and public employment policies. According to the PWT, the effect of these factors on people’s lives is mediated by decent work. People benefiting from decent work have greater chances of satisfying three fundamental human needs: survival and power, social connection, and self-determination (Allan, Autin, & Duffy, 2016; Blustein, Kenna, Gill, & DeVoy, 2008; Duffy et al., 2016).

The Decent Work Scale (DWS), developed and validated by Duffy et al. (2017) on an American adult working population, assesses each of the five dimensions of decent work proposed by Duffy et al. (2016). To our knowledge, there is no research specifically aimed at understanding the concept of decent work in the French population. The aim of this study was twofold. First, we sought to validate Duffy et al.’s (2017) scale in a French context. Second, we wanted to examine the qualitative representations of decent work among workers in the French context in order to identify the similarities and differences between decent work in France and the United States.

The French context

The job market and economic context of France

Since 1975, the end of the “Glorious thirty” that began in 1945 and lasted 30 years, France has seen increasing diversity in types of employment. Although the permanent employment contract is still the most common form of employment contract, standard employment setups and contracts are slowly decreasing. Employment situations are diversifying, employment conditions are becoming multiple, and workers are being met with growing difficulties to gain social protection. Like in most countries, career paths can now be described as a succession of transitions, unlike in the past when French people seldom changed careers, jobs, or employers.

In 2012, even though 90% of employees benefited from a permanent employment contract, 91% of new positions were temporary and most of the people hired with these contracts were young or had few or no professional qualifications. In 2017, 15% of the workforce was employed with a temporary, fixed-term employment contract, the highest level ever reported (Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Économiques [INSEE], 2018), while the percentage of employees benefiting from a permanent employment contract fell to 84.6%.

The use of full-time versus part-time contracts has also significantly evolved. In 2012, 15% of people with permanent employment contracts were part-time employees. In France in 2017, 4.4 million people (19.3% of employees) were employed part time and 1.6 million people were underemployed (6.1% of the workforce). In 2011, 68% of people (mainly women) chose part-time employment, whereas imposed part-time employment stood at 32% and mostly involved men.

Shift work and schedule variability are practices that have also become more common over the last thirty years (Conseil d’Orientation pour l’Emploi [COE], 2014). According to INSEE (2018), a substantial number of French people who work full or part-time have atypical

schedules: 35% of all employees work on Saturday, 24% work late into the evening, and 19% work on Sunday. Among these employees, managers and professionals increasingly work from home in the evening after a full day of work; white collar workers work more often on weekends; and blue-collar workers work more often at night and with alternating schedules. Self-employed people, even more than salaried employees, have atypical hours. Over the last several decades, firms have adopted flexible scheduling in order to meet economic market demands. This has led to increasingly unpredictable and constraining schedules that have impacted the health and social well-being of workers (Lallement, 2018).

Additional changes are taking place in the work contexts. More and more French employees are digital nomads or are working from home and travel often (COE, 2014). Also, within the last 40 years, multiple circumstances have encouraged people to start businesses or work independently. In 2008, a new fiscal status called “auto-entrepreneur” (one-person firms with simplified accounting and tax laws) was created. In 2015, more than one million French people had signed up to have this status. However, 90% of them earned less than the French annual minimum income and 30% had no additional professional activities. Two years later in 2017, INSEE revealed the figure had jumped to 2.8 million “auto-entrepreneurs”.

Additional figures for 2017 show 25 million salaried employees out of a total 27.8 million workers. France’s activity rate was 71.5%, and the unemployment rate was 9.4%. Even though unemployment saw its most significant drop since 2008, a French national employment survey (INSEE, 2018) explained that more and more people were facing constraining conditions in the job market. Picart (INSEE, 2018) estimated the percentage of people who were underemployed, or unemployed but looking for work, to be 18.7%, meaning that approximately one person in five was facing employment-related difficulties, this figure represents a rise of three percentage points since 2008. INSEE (2018) indicated that underemployment was most problematic for women

and younger generations. The current situation in France is new, due to the increasingly varied types of employment and work-related job changes linked to the economic climate. These changes have impacted how French people relate to work, and have increasingly blurred the lines between a worker's personal and professional lives.

In sum, the job market in France is characterized by relatively high unemployment and underemployment rates. Moreover, at least two-thirds of employees have variable schedules. In this context, young people, women and unqualified workers are likely to be subjected to frequent difficulties finding full-time, properly paid jobs with a work schedule that enable them to reconcile their personal and professional lives.

The French and their relationship to work

The European Social Survey (ESS), the European Value Study (EVS), the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS, Eurofound, 2016) and in-depth interviews in the framework of the Social Pattern of Relation to Work Survey, all provide information on the way French people perceive and experience their work (Méda & Vendramin, 2016). In particular, Méda and Vendramin (2016) repeatedly referred to the ways in which the French differ from other European countries.

French people more often report that work is very important, but takes up too much time, with many French workers citing a substantial imbalance between their work and their private lives. Reducing hours in the work week is generally positively perceived by French workers because it frees up time for other things such as family activities (Méda & Orain, 2002). Compared with other Europeans, the French more frequently state that they would like to spend more time with their family (Davoine & Méda, 2008). Garner, Méda, and Sénik (2006) also revealed that French people put work far behind family (irrespective of social class, age, or

status) when they were asked “what defines you the best” or “what most clearly defines who you are.” Work-life balance therefore appears essential for most French people. In addition, the ESS shed light on the fact that work-related anxiety can have negative effects on life outside work: 44% of French workers stated that they “often” or “always” worry about work outside of working hours. The opposite effect has not been observed (Méda & Vendramin, 2016).

Work’s instrumental, expressive, and intrinsic characteristics in France are embedded in contemporary French culture (Davoine & Méda, 2008). Instrumental aspects such as social protection, job security, and compensation are less often referred to as important. Seventy percent of French people believe that interesting work is important and a majority of them consider work to be necessary for personal development and fulfilment (Davoine & Méda, 2008). Age, education, and wage play a role in the expressive dimensions of work and its importance: younger, more-educated workers with the highest incomes place more importance on the need for work to be interesting, to empower them, and to give them the opportunity to be useful to society and to other people.

In summary, a balance between work life and home life is essential for French workers and they grant more importance to the expressive dimensions of work than to its instrumental side. Consequently, we suspect that the Free Time and Rest and Complementary Values components of decent work will be particularly important in French representations of decent work.

Correlates of Decent Work

Given the following known characteristics of the French – the importance of meaning in their work, self-fulfillment in the workplace, as well as the predominance of home life over work life (e.g., Davoine & Méda, 2008; Méda & Vendramin, 2016), we consider the following

constructs to be important correlates to decent work among French populations: work satisfaction, meaningful work, withdrawal intentions, work-family conflict, and life satisfaction.

Currently, only a few studies have highlighted the relations between these constructs and decent work in France or elsewhere in the world. For example, work satisfaction, a global indicator of work adaptation (Ngo, Foley, Ji, & Loi, 2014), has been correlated to decent work and all five dimensions of decent work (Duffy et al., 2017). Meaningful work has also been positively and significantly related to decent work and its five dimensions, and more specifically to Adequate Compensation and Complementary Values components (Duffy et al., 2017). Life-satisfaction refers to the assessment of the quality of life according to the individual's own criteria (Shin & Johnson, 1978). Moreover, life satisfaction was found to be positively related to decent work in a previous study among American workers (Autin et al., 2019). In addition, some studies have found positive relations between life satisfaction and some domains associated with decent work, such as work satisfaction (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Bowling, Eschlema, & Wang, 2010; Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1992), adequate compensation (Schyns, 2000; Judge & Locke, 1993), occupational safety (e.g., Silla, De Cuyper, Gracia, Peiró, & De Witte, 2009), and good relations with co-workers (Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, & Baltes, 2009).

By contrast, some dimensions are negatively related to decent work. Withdrawal intentions (Blau, 1985, 1989) have been negatively associated with the perception of decent work and its other dimensions (including Adequate Compensation and Complementary Values) (Duffy et al., 2017). Work-family conflict refers to an incompatibility between personal life and professional life due to tensions engendered by the need to respond to the constraints of social roles in and out of work (Frone, 2003; Geurts, Rutte, & Peeters, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz & Butler, 2008; Netermeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). To our knowledge, there are no studies associating decent work and work-family conflict. Clearly, some working conditions, such as the

atypical work schedules and the presence of physical or psychological constraints at work (Burke, Weir, & Duwors, 1980; Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980) create psychological tensions that invade the family sphere (e.g., Greenhaus, 1988; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). The same relations may exist when connecting decent work to work family conflict.

The Present Study

Building off prior research and an understanding of the French world of work, this study had two primary aims. The first aim was to validate a French-language version of the American DWS scale by analyzing its psychometric properties on a representative sample of French workers. Confirmatory factorial analysis was conducted to verify the five-factor model structure described by Duffy et al. (2017); the internal consistency of each subscale as well as the entire scale and various inter-correlations, were also examined.

Finally, the correlations between the overall scale of decent work, its subscales, and five other likely related constructs made it possible to assess the convergent validity of the French model. We expected decent work to be positively associated with the following scales: Life Satisfaction, Work Satisfaction, Meaning of Work, Positive Effects of Work Life on Family Life, and Positive Effects of Family Life on Work Life.

We also expected decent work to be negatively associated with withdrawal intentions, Negative Effects of Work Life on Family Life, and Negative Effects of Family Life on Work Life. In addition, two subscales of Decent work, Safe Working Conditions and Free Time and Rest, were expected to be negatively related to Negative Effects of Work Life on Family Life, and Negative Effects of Family Life on Work Life.

The second aim of our study was to understand how French working adults conceptualized decent work through qualitative methods. We analyzed participants' responses to an open-ended

question about work, in order to identify the specificities of these representations. We expected to find factors similar to those in the Duffy et al. (2017) Decent Work Scale, as well as additional factors related to interest in work, fulfilment through work, and work-life balance that are relevant to this French population.

Method

Participants

Three hundred working individuals (50% men), between 25 and 64 years of age ($M = 46.11$, $SD = 8.88$) participated in the study. They came from the following five French regions: 23% from the Northeast, 17% from the Northwest, 37% from the Paris region, 13% from the Southeast, and 10% from the Southwest. Salaried employees (42%) were the largest socio-professional category, followed by managers and professionals (25%), intermediate occupations (23%), manual workers (8%), artisans, tradesmen, and small employers (2%), and one participant was a farmer making up just 0.33% of the total. In our sample, a large majority had a permanent employment contract at the time of the survey (89%), less than 9% had a temporary fixed-term contract, approximately 2% were self-employed, and 1% had subsidized contracts (contracts for which the employer receives financial subsidies). Eighty-four percent worked full time and 94% had only one occupation. Approximately 20% had studied four years after graduating from secondary school, and approximately 13% had studied for five years after graduating. These percentages are representative of the French labor force (INSEE, 2018).

Measures

Decent Work Scale (DWS). The Duffy et al. scale (2017) was translated into French by the authors. According to cross-cultural translation procedures (Brislin, 1986; Vallerand, 1989), the French translation of the Decent Work scale was then back translated into English by a

professor who is an expert in the field and a bilingual native speaker of English. It was also checked for accuracy and correct meaning. The five subscales of the DWS seemed suited to the French context, including the Access to Health Care dimension, so the translation remained faithful to the original items. All French people benefit from access to healthcare, at least partially covered by the national health insurance system. However, a number of disparities exist across types of employment (unemployed job seekers, self-employed individuals, etc.) and also between health-care plans proposed by employers.

The DWS has five subscales with three items each, making 15 items in all (see Table 1): Safe Working Conditions (e.g., “At work, I feel safe from emotional or verbal abuse of any kind”), Access to Health Care (e.g., “I have a good health-care plan at work”), Adequate Compensation (e.g., “I am not properly paid for my work”), Free Time and Rest (e.g., “I don’t have enough time to rest during the week”), and Complementary Values (e.g., “My organization’s values align with my family values”). Participants answered using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). In the Duffy et al. study (2017), the content validity of the scale was strong. Compared to the higher order and correlational models, the bifactor model fit the data the best and internal consistencies were high, ranging from .79 to .97 for the subscales. In the current study, the estimated internal consistency reliability of the subscales was high, ranging from .70 to .93 (see Table 3).

Work-family conflict. Conflicts between work and family were measured using 22 items from the French adaptation of the SWING scale, initially developed by Geurts et al. (2005) and validated by Lourel, Gana, and Wawrzyniak (2005). The SWING is made up of four subscales: Negative Effects of Work on Family Life (8 items, e.g., “Your work takes up time you would like to spend with your spouse/family/friends”) ; Negative Effects of Family on Work Life (4 items, e.g., “Problems with your spouse/family/friends have an impact on your job

performance”); Positive Effects of Work Life on Family Life (5 items, e.g., “You manage your time at home more efficiently because of the way you work”); Positive Effects of Family Life on Work Life (5 items, e.g., “After spending a pleasant weekend with your spouse/family/friends, you enjoy your work more”). For each item, participants responded using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). The French adaptation of this scale has strong internal consistency reliability, with alpha values ranging from .73 to .84 for each of the four subscales (Lourel et al., 2005). This scale was related to job and home characteristics (pressure, control, and support), to indicators of health and well-being (fatigue, organizational commitment, perceived stress), and to work satisfaction (e.g., Geurts et al., 2005; Lourel et al., 2005).

In order to verify the presence of the four factors in the present sample, a factor analysis was performed followed by a promax rotation. The initial structure was not identified. Positive effects of Family-Life on Work-Life and of Work-Life on Family-Life were combined into a single subscale called Positive Reciprocal Effects between Family and Work. The three-factor solution accounted for 95% of the total variance. The Negative Effects of Work on Family Life explained 43.2% of the variance; the Negative Effects of Family on Work Life and the Positive Reciprocal Effects between Family and Work explained 36.7% and 40.3% of the total variance, respectively. For each subscale, Cronbach’s alpha reached .94, .92, and .90, respectively. Three scores, corresponding to each of the three factors, were calculated. For each subscale, a high score indicates a high positive or negative conflict between work and family.

Meaningful work. The meaning of work was measured using the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI), a ten-item list created by Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012). The original version of the WAMI was back-translated (Arnoux-Nicolas, 2015; Arnoux-Nicolas, Sovet, Lhotellier, & Bernaud, 2017). First, the items were translated from English to French by psychology

researchers (the authors of the French version) and discussed with the original author of the WAMI until agreement was reached between the author of the original version and the French authors. The meaningfulness of work has three sub-dimensions: positive meaning (4 items, e.g., “I have a good sense of what makes my job meaningful; a precise idea of what makes my work meaningful”), meaning-making through work (3 items, e.g., “My work helps me make sense of the world around me”), and greater good motivations (3 items, e.g., “I know my work makes a positive difference in the world”). For each item, participants responded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely false*) to 5 (*completely true*). In the previous French study (Arnoux, 2015), the alpha values of the French WAMI ranged from .75 to .82 for each subscale and was .89 for the total score. A high total score means a high level of meaning was attributed to work. Cronbach’s alpha was .91 for the total score in the current study. Work meaningfulness was related to career commitment, life meaningfulness, and work satisfaction (Steger et al., 2012).

Life satisfaction. Life satisfaction was assessed with a French-Canadian version of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin, 1985), adapted by Blais, Vallerand, Pelletier and Brière (1989). This scale was composed of five items (e.g., “In general, my life closely corresponds to my ideals”). Participants answered using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). In the two studies by Blais et al. (1989), the alpha values for the total scores were .80 and .84. SWLS was positively and moderately correlated with the subjective well-being scales and health scales, and predicted suicide attempts (Jang et al., 2017). Internal consistency was high on this sample, with a .89 alpha coefficient.

Work satisfaction. The work-satisfaction dimension was measured using five items from a translated version of the Brayfield and Rothe scale (1951) validated by Judge, Locke, Durham,

and Kluger (1998) (e.g., “I am quite satisfied with my current job”). The French translation of this scale was back-translated into English by a professor who is a bilingual native speaker of English and expert in the field. Participants responded using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The total score is correlated with career commitment and work meaning (Duffy et al., 2017). The average internal consistency reliability of the total score was .80 or above in previous studies (see for a review, Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, et al., 2001). For this sample, Cronbach’s alpha was .82, indicating high internal consistency.

Withdrawal intentions. Withdrawal intentions were measured using three items (e.g., “I am considering changing occupations”). Participants responded using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). These items, drawn from Blau’s 1985 study, were translated into French by a professor who is an expert in the field and a bilingual, native speaker of English. Across several studies, the internal consistency values of this scale were satisfactory, ranging from .70 to .87, as was test-retest reliability with a coefficient of .60 (Blau, 1985, 1989, 2000). In previous studies, withdrawal intentions were related to several aspects of career and work, such as organizational context and work satisfaction (Blau, 2000). The estimated internal consistency reliability score for the scale in the present study was .84.

French representations of decent work. French representations of the dimensions of decent work were assessed using the following open-ended question: "Decent work refers to employment that meets a minimum number of acceptable conditions for a good quality of life. Given this definition, in your opinion, what does a job need to offer to be considered ‘decent’ or ‘acceptable’?" This question was introduced at the beginning of the online survey, for at least two reasons. First, the participants' responses would not be influenced by the items on the decent

work scale. Second, answers to open-ended questions are usually more extensive when they are located in the beginning of a questionnaire rather than after a series of closed questions.

Procedure

The data for the study were collected on AREYOUNET, an online survey platform used in France. It has advantages similar to the American platform called Mechanical Turk (Mturk), in that it offers the possibility of gathering data from diversified panels of adults all over France within reasonable time periods (Casler, Bickel, & Hackett, 2013; Mason, & Suri, 2012). The surveys conducted by this organization are generally done with men and women from various occupations, socioeconomic levels, regions of France, and age groups. This online survey organization is well-known and has been utilized by large groups, institutes, and agencies.

For the present survey, a 75-item questionnaire containing the above items was made available online. The surveys are carried out with panels of individuals whose representativeness is based on criteria defined by the survey creators. Our 300-participant sample represents the French working population in terms of gender, age, region, and socio-occupational categories. The survey organization ensured that the participants recruited were not obtaining regular remuneration as survey takers. Our participants declared they had no conflicts of interest and were committed to giving honest answers. They were awarded points that could be exchanged for gift coupons worth five euros.

Results

Quantitative data results

The data was analyzed using SAS 9.4 and structural equation modeling (SEM) was done in IBM SPSS Amos 23.0 (Arbuckle, 1983-2014).

Internal validity. Like Duffy et al. (2017), we assessed the factor structure of the DWS using the Amos SEM for three separate models: a five-factor correlational model, a higher-order model, and a bifactor model. To evaluate and compare the fit of the models, the chi-square test (χ^2) was conducted. We also calculated the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root-mean residual (SRMR), and the Bayes information criterion (BIC) – which penalizes badness of fit and model complexity (Arbuckle, 2014, p. 628-629) (see Table 1). As the χ^2 test is very sensitive to sample size, some authors (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008; Kline, 2016; Tazouti, Flieller, & Vrignaud, 2005) use χ^2/df and consider a value between 2 and 3 to be an acceptable fit. For a good fit to the data, CFI and TLI values must be greater than .95, although .90 is also considered an acceptable cutoff point. The RMSEA value should be less than .06 and the SRMR should be less than .08.

In the correlational model, each item is loaded on its respective factor and each factor can correlate with any other factor. All factor loadings were above .60 and this model fit well with the data (see Table 1).

The higher-order model regressed the five first-order factors onto a general second-order decent work factor. All first-order factor loadings were significant and above .60. The factor loading for Adequate Compensation was very weakly loaded on the general second-order factor (.14, $p = .05$), but the other four factors had significant ($p < .001$) loadings above .29. This model had a slightly lower fit (Table 2) which was significant ($\Delta\chi^2(5) = 23.75, p < .001$). But the CFI change was not greater than 0.01 ($\Delta CFI = .01$), so these two models practically did not differ (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). However, the lower BIC indicates goodness-of-fit and less complexity for the higher-order model.

In the bifactor model, each item loaded onto a general decent-work factor and onto a group factor corresponding to its respective subscale. The three item loadings for the group factor Safe Working Conditions were lower than they were on the general factor. The other twelve items had a higher load on their own group factor than on the general factor. Three of them were not significant, and five loadings were under .30 (items of Adequate Compensation and Free Time and Rest) on the general factor. This model does not have a better fit than the correlational model (see Table 2). The χ^2 difference was significant ($\Delta\chi^2(5) = 20.21, p < .01$), but the change in CFI was not great ($\Delta\text{CFI} < .01$). In the same manner, the improvement between the higher order model and the bifactor model obtained a significant χ^2 difference significant ($\Delta\chi^2(10) = 43.96, p < .001$), but no longer improved in CFI ($\Delta\text{CFI} = .01$). Among the three models, the BIC was the highest for the bifactor model.

Only about one-third of the common variance extracted was explained by the general factor ($\text{ECV} = .34$) obtained with the loadings from the results of the confirmatory analysis of the bifactor model (Dueber, 2017; Wolff & Preising, 2005). The ω_H coefficient for the general factor (percentage in the variance of the observed total score attributable to the general factor) was 62%. This can be compared to the ω_{HS} subscale coefficients – percentage of the subscale-score variance attributable to the latent sub-dimension), after removing the reliable variance due to the general factor – (Rodriguez, Reise, & Haviland, 2016b). Except for Safe Working Conditions ($\omega_{HS} = .19$), once the common variance associated with the general factor was removed, the reliability estimated for the other subscales was still high: Access to Health Care ($\omega_{HS} = .57$), Adequate Compensation ($\omega_{HS} = .84$), Free Time and Rest ($\omega_{HS} = .72$), and Complementary Values ($\omega_{HS} = .57$). As such, the subscales still explained the common variance, independently of the general factor, even more than the general factor did.

The Omega coefficients (ω), which are a factor analytic model-based estimate of score reliability (Rodriguez, Reise, & Haviland, 2016b), were calculated for the general and group factors. They were high, with $\omega = .93$ for the total score of Decent Work, $\omega_S = .84$ for Safe Working Conditions, $\omega_S = .89$ for Access to Health Care, $\omega_S = .85$ for Adequate Compensation, $\omega_S = .81$ for Free Time and Rest, and $\omega_S = .94$ for Complementary Values.

All three models fit well to the data, but with some slight differences. The goodness-of-fit index did not indicate the same best model. Despite a better χ^2/df ratio for the bifactor model, the BIC gave the highest penalties to badness of fit and model complexity. The higher-order model got the higher χ^2/df ratio but the BIC was the lowest. For the correlational model, the SRMR value was the smallest, with high GFI and TLI values, and the χ^2/df ratio and BIC were close to the best values. The bifactor model, which provides details on the size of the impact of factors on the items and the reliability of the scale and subscales (Wolff & Preising, 2005), helps to decide upon the dimensionality of the Decent Work Scale and subscales and interpret them. Regarding the factor contributions to the variation of the observed scores, the common variance associated with the decent-work general factor (ECV=34%) was much lower than that attributed to the five subscales (66%). Comparing the proportion of total-score variance attributed solely to the decent work factor (ω_H) with the reliability of the composite total score ω (.93), the values of ω were not enough and ω_H was weaker (.62), suggesting that 31% of the reliable variance in the total Decent-Work score can be ascribed to the multidimensionality caused by the group factors (Rodriguez, Reise, & Haviland, 2016b). With the criterion that ω_H must be greater than .80 and that ECV must be above .70 to conclude the unidimensionality (Rodriguez, Reise, & Haviland, 2016a), it seems that there is some complexity in the interpretation of the general factor. This was also the case for the higher-order model. Thus, the correlational model seems preferable and the total score of decent work should be interpreted with caution.

An analysis of the relations between all of the dimensions was then conducted on the 300-workers sample. Table 3 indicates very weak or small positive correlations (Cohen, 1988) between Safe Working Conditions and Adequate compensation, between Access to Health Care and Adequate Compensation, and between Adequate Compensation and Free Time and Rest as well as Complementary Values. Positive correlations of average size were found between Safe Working Conditions and Access to health Care or Complementary Values. Lastly, all of the subscales were positively, significantly, and strongly correlated with the overall decent work score, ranging from .49 (Adequate Compensation) to .72 (Safe Working Conditions).

Convergent validity. As stated above, all participants in our sample filled-out the decent-work questionnaire and the other questionnaires testing five supplementary dimensions (life satisfaction, work satisfaction, work-family conflict, meaningful work, and withdrawal intentions). The correlations between these dimensions, the scales and subscales, and the complete Decent Work Scale are presented in Table 4.

The various decent-work subscales and total scale exhibited positive and negative correlations with the other five dimensions. As expected, the total DWS score was negatively correlated with the Negative effects of Work on Family Life subscale, Negative Effects of Family Life on Work Life, and Withdrawal Intentions, and was positively correlated with Work Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, and Meaningful work. Safe Working Conditions, Complementary Values, and Access to Health Care were positively correlated with Work Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, and Meaningful Work, and negatively with Withdrawal Intentions, Negative Effects of Work Life on Family Life, and Negative Effects of Family Life on Work Life (except Access to Health Care for this last scale). Free Time and Rest was strongly and negatively correlated with Negative Effects of Work Life on Family Life, positively and moderately correlated with Work Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction, but was not linked to Meaningful Work and Positive

Reciprocal Effects between Family and Work. The Adequate Compensation subscale exhibited the weakest correlations. In addition, it was only negatively correlated with Withdrawal Intentions and Negative Effects of Work Life on Family Life, and positively correlated with Work satisfaction and Life satisfaction.

Qualitative Data Results

A thematic content analysis was performed on the answers to the open-ended question. Out of the total sample, 272 people provided a usable answer. The other responses were unusable because they were missing or without meaning. The results of the analyses are described below. Each participant provided several elements in response to the question. The thematic analysis focused on the first criteria in the participants' narratives. The first criterion is generally considered to be the most salient in the respondents' representations (Bardin, 2013). The aim of the content analysis was to compute the frequency of a specific topic in the narratives of all participants. The importance of the topic is related to its frequency in decent-work representations (Bardin, 2013). A topic corresponds to a meaningful unit. Based on guidelines for analyzing qualitative data (Bardin 2013), for our first step, aimed at familiarizing us with the information contained in the narratives, two authors (the first and the fourth) repeatedly read the first criterion of each response. The meaningful units were then isolated, coded, and grouped into specific subcategories on the basis of a common element. Subcategories were given a specific name corresponding to their content. These subcategories were grouped into a broader category according to the common elements that defined them. The final step involved calculating the number of occurrences of the items in each subcategory and category for the whole sample. These steps were performed separately by each of the two authors. Categorizations and subcategorizations were compared to find any discrepancies and make adjustments.

From the steps described above, four main categories and eight subcategories were identified based on the topics mentioned in the participants' narratives (Table 5). The first main thematic category referred to salary and pay. Less than half of the participants mentioned this topic. This category was separated into two subcategories. In the first, people specifically mentioned the importance of receiving enough money to be able to afford more than just vital needs, as in “Earning enough money to live while being thrifty but without having to deprive oneself”, “Being able to indulge in small pleasures from time to time”, “Having a salary enabling one to live and not just survive”, “Being able to live and be happy”, and “Having a job that pays enough to have a few leisure pursuits”. This subcategory was mentioned the most. The second subcategory was mentioned by eighteen other people who said that having decent work means receiving adequate and fair pay, “To be rewarded for one’s true worth in relation to the work done”.

The second main thematic category referred to the quality of life on the job. It was mentioned by about a third of the participants. This main category was divided into four subcategories. The first subcategory corresponded to comfortableness and safety of the working environment. About one-seventh of the participants brought up this topic, as in “A good working environment is necessary, and provides services and access to adequate working tools”; “Being protected from noise, cold, unhealthy materials and heavy workloads”, “Safety, hygiene, and cleanliness”, and “to have a pleasant and comfortable place to work”. The second subcategory referred to respect and recognition at work, which was mentioned by a similar number of people. They used phrases such as “Respect for the employee”, “Respect for people”, “Employees should be respected by management”, and “the work done should be acknowledged in the company”. The third subcategory focused on relational safety at work or a good atmosphere at work. It was mentioned by nine participants. People spoke about labor relations (“Good atmosphere”, “A job

where there is a climate of trust and not mistrust, where one values employees”, “Work where we exchange with other people”), relations with co-workers (“Communication between co-workers”). The fourth subcategory referred to limited stress at work (“Work without stress”, “Not stressful”).

Work-life balance corresponded to the third thematic category. It was mentioned by about one seventh of the participants. This category was separated into two subcategories. One referred to work schedules. The participants associated decent work with reasonable hours, as in “Not working more than 40 hours per week and having days off”, and “schedules allowing for a normal personal life”. Some people also mentioned the need for “regular daytime work” or a “fixed work schedule”. The second subcategory was mentioned less frequently. Six participants referred to this topic of work-life balance by saying things like “Respect for privacy” or “Able to reconcile professional and personal lives.”

Fewer than twenty people linked decent work with several aspects of personal development. This topic defined the fourth category. Its first subcategory referred to self-fulfillment and self-actualization by having work that makes sense and is useful (“Work in which one achieves self-fulfillment”, “One must enjoy working”, “A fulfilling job”, “An interesting job”). The second subcategory focused on self-development through skill development, learning, and job training (“A minimum of training to perform the job”, “Having ongoing training” “Opportunity to progress”, “The opportunity to use skills”).

Eleven people talked about various other topics such as not being ashamed at work, not suffering, having a contract, and benefiting from stability.

Discussion

The first aim of this study was to validate a French version of the Duffy et al. (2017) five-dimensional Decent Work Scale (DWS). The results presented here highlight the satisfactory psychometric properties of the DWS translated into French for assessment in a French context. The second aim was to determine French peoples' representations of decent work through a content analysis. The qualitative results in the French context highlighted the existence of several dimensions, complementary to the five original decent-work dimensions developed by Duffy et al. (2017).

A first-order correlation model, a second-order model, and a bifactor model were tested in the French context in order to determine which one corresponded to the best solution for the DWS. All three models fit well to the data, but results favored a representation of decent work which was multidimensional rather than unidimensional. In practice, it is obviously possible to compute a general decent-work score among French work adults, but it would be difficult to interpret, and would provide little information on the Adequate Compensation and Free Time and Rest factors for which most of the reliable variance was independent of the general factor (Reise, Bonifay, & Haviland, 2013). The total score would be a biased approximation of the latent dimension of decent work (Rodriguez, Reise, & Haviland, 2016a). For these reasons, adopting a multidimensional approach to decent work, which was better represented here by the correlational model, seems preferable in the French context.

As expected, Life Satisfaction, Work Satisfaction, Positive Effects between Family and Work (positive work-family conflict), and Meaningful Work were positively related to the Decent Work Scale and its five subscales, except the subscales Adequate Compensation and Free Time and Rest, which were not or weakly related to these scales. Decent work and its five subscales were also negatively related to withdrawal intentions, Negative Effects of Work Life on Family Life, and Negative Effects of Family Life on Work Life. The significant relations

between decent work and these scales indicate the high convergent validity of the decent-work scale and its dimensions for French participants. These results are consistent with previous findings (e.g., Buyukgoze-Kavas & Autin, 2019; Di Fabio & Kenny, 2019; Duffy et al., 2017; Masdonati et al., 2019; Ribeiro, M.A., Pereira Teixeira, M.A., & Ambiel, 2019).

More specifically, Life Satisfaction, Work Satisfaction and Negative Effects of Work on Family Life were the most strongly linked to decent work. Moreover, as the results showed, the Adequate Compensation subscale was not related (or weakly related) to all other scales. Free Time and Rest was the most strongly related to work-family conflict, especially to the Negative Effects of Work on Family. Safe Working Conditions and Complementary Values were related the most to Life Satisfaction, Work Satisfaction and the Meaning of Work, while Access to Health Care was related the most to Life Satisfaction. These results are in line with previous studies (e.g., Bowling et al., 2010; Burke et al., 1980; Frone, 2003; Silla et al., 2009; Rode et al., 2007; Amstad et al., 2011). Furthermore, they confirm that the French people generally not only perceived work from a utilitarian point of view (e.g., Davoine & Méda, 2008) but were the least concerned with compensation and the most concerned with personal life, work-family balance, and meaningful work (e.g., Davoine & Méda, 2008; Garner et al., 2006; Méda & Orain, 2002). This being said, although compensation was the most important item for French people with little or no qualifications and a low income level, it is worth noting that France's national social protection system (guaranteeing access to health care) and French labor laws (protecting all workers irrespective of salary or pay) undoubtedly contribute to minimizing the importance of this factor (Davoine & Méda, 2008; Ghai, 2003).

The thematic analysis of the answers to the open-ended question allowed us to group the information into thematic categories and subcategories. Some of them were very similar to the dimensions of decent work developed in PWT (Duffy et al., 2017) based on ILO criteria (ILO,

2008, 2016). This was the case for Compensation, Quality of Work Life, and Work-life balance which overlap considerably with Adequate Compensation, Physically and Interpersonally Safe Working Conditions, and Free Time and Rest, respectively. However, the answers enabled us to deepen and further qualify the characteristics of decent work within these categories that are important for French participants.

Accordingly, the compensation category was close to the Adequate Compensation dimension of decent work. However, in the representations of the French participants, sufficient compensation to ensure daily life, a criterion of decent work, was mentioned much more frequently than Adequate Compensation. This subdivision of the compensation category into two categories was found in the first study by Duffy et al. (2017). However, the criterion of Sufficient Compensation was dropped by the authors in favor of Adequate Compensation as the only relevant representation of the construct. The predominance of the Sufficient-Compensation dimension may therefore be a cultural specificity of French representations of decent work. The three subcategories Comfortableness and Safety at work, Good Atmosphere and Safety at Work, and Limited Stress in the Quality of Work Life subcategory underline the importance of a pleasant and comfortable physical and social environment that provides adequate resources to perform occupational tasks. The Work-Life balance category and its subcategories, Work Hours and Reconciling Life at Work and Outside of Work emphasized the importance of organizing work schedules and attempting to avoid their encroachment on personal life. These factors confirmed, for the French, that work schedules must leave time for activities outside of work, including family activities, as pointed out above (Méda & Orain, 2002).

Three subcategories highlighted by qualitative analysis were not taken into account in the decent-work criteria initially proposed (Duffy et al., 2017): Respect for People and Recognition at Work, which belongs to the Quality of Work Life category, and the subcategories Self-

fulfillment through Work and Skill and Use Development, and Training and Progress at Work, which belong to the Personal Development category. The subcategory Respect for People and Recognition at Work fulfills a function of social connection at work (Blustein et al., 2008; Duffy et al., 2016), emphasizes the importance of healthy attachments and reassuring relationships at work (e.g., Blustein, 2011), and underlines the need to be accepted and recognized for one's work. The feeling of being respected, accepted, and recognized for one's work, contributes to feeling successful in an occupation and to a sense of connection with the broader social world (Blustein et al., 2008). The subcategories of Self-fulfillment through Work and Skill Use and Development and Training and Progress at Work are related to work that is meaningful and fosters self-development, and to work that offers opportunities to progress or to develop skills. This last component of work has been emphasized in earlier studies, particularly among blue-collar workers (e.g., Koekemoer, Le Roux, & Jorgensen, 2018). This component provides self-efficacy and increases the employability for workers, and thus responds consequently to the need for individual self-determination (Blustein et al., 2008; Duffy et al., 2016).

In sum, our qualitative results indicated extensive overlap between the decent-work dimensions elaborated in the Psychology of Working Theory and those identified in the French sample. In this sense, they confirm the relevance of the five dimensions of decent work for the French context. The organizational values that complement family and social values dimension was not directly apparent in representations of decent work by French working adults. However, it is possible to assume that some aspects of this dimension were reflected in the topics mentioned. For example, the work-family balance and personal development topics highlighted the fit, or on the contrary the conflicting nature of personal and family values and those of the organization. In addition, several new themes emerged in the decent work representations of the

French workers (Respect and Recognition at Work, Self-Development, and Work-Life Balance) and should be integrated to a broader and deeper assessment of decent work.

Practical implications

In light of these results, career development professionals need to take the dimensions of the multifactor model of decent work into account in their interventions, not only at the organizational level, but also at the individual level. As indicated by the data in this study, the perception of one's work as decent is correlated with many psychosocial indexes pertaining to occupational activity and life outside work. In due course, these different indexes could contribute to occupational engagement or on the contrary, to staff turnover and the desire to change occupations. The Decent Work Scale (DWS) makes it possible to consider the relative weights of working conditions in career choices and potential improvements in the quality of work life. With the help of professionals, workers will be able to identify and become aware of the conditions of their work, whether or not these conditions are decent, and to then consider the factors they could act on to improve their current and future satisfaction within the context of career design and occupational retraining.

In addition to these dimensions, French people's representations of decent work showed that particular attention should be paid by career counselors to respect and recognition at the workplace, to personal development via affirmation of the meaning of work and skill development, and to support efforts to balance work and home life. Whether acting at the individual level outside of the organization, via career development services, or at the collective or individual level within the organization, counselors should take these new dimensions into account. In line with Blustein (2006) and Blustein et al. (2008), counselors could help workers improve their skills, e.g. by giving them access to training programs or skills assessments, thereby contributing to their empowerment. Likewise, counselors' interventions should promote

the establishment of work conditions that enable the development of healthy, supportive relationships at the work place, ones that place priority on respect for employees and the work they do. Such relationships will allow workers not only to face new challenges that arise on the job, but also to make their work meaningful and enhance their degree of personal satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Lastly, the possibility for workers to benefit from a reasonable work pace and manageable work schedules within the organization, which will help them bridge the gap between their work and home lives, and will positively contribute to well-being and job performance (e.g., Chrétien & Letourneau, 2010). Taking these various elements into account in counselors' interventions will help optimize occupational choices, provide greater job security, and promote self-determination and well-being among workers (e.g., Blustein, 2008; Duffy et al., 2016; Masdonati, Schreiber, Marcionetti & Rossier, 2019).

Professionals in public employment bureaus and career counseling agencies could highlight the importance of socio-economic factors in facilitating areas to decent work for the greatest possible number of individuals. Career counselors could make decision makers in firms and human resources consulting agencies aware of the impact of non-decent work conditions, via conferences and documented activity reports. Acting at these institutional and organizational levels (Kozan & Blustein, 2018) would help reduce psychosocial risks and social exclusion, and would enhance job security and access to decent work. In addition, interventions like these would abide by the recommendations of the European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP, 2008) on career development throughout the lifespan in each of life's domains (education, public employment services, workplace, communities).

Limitations and Future Directions

The French version of the Decent Work Scale has satisfactory psychometric qualities, making it a reliable tool for professional practice. The strength of this study lies in the fact that

these properties were established on a representative sample of the French labor force. However, a number of limitations should be mentioned.

First, the results concerning the structure of the initial model should be confirmed on larger and diversified French samples. This would check which model, unidimensional or multidimensional, is better fitted to the data in the French context. Second, the qualitative analysis of decent-work concepts associated with the links between the DWS and other measures pointed out aspects that partially overlap with the initial 2016 model by Duffy et al. (2016). These include Respect and Recognition, Self-Development, and work-family balance. Further studies could focus on the development of a French decent work scale that would take into account these new dimensions. Third, it is worth noting that the English-language DWS version has certain items with very similar wording. It is therefore possible that the French translation diluted the nuances of the language, thereby creating perceived redundancies contributing to biased evaluations (Vallerand, 1989). Consequently, another aim of the potential development of a DWS for the French should be to diversify the wording for some dimensions in order to make the items less redundant. Fourth, the present study focused only on some of the dimensions of decent work described by Duffy et al. (2016). Consequently, other qualitative and quantitative studies could be conducted in order to deepen the analysis of French decent-work representations and their properties, in accordance with each individual's characteristics (young, female, low-skilled workers), career adaptability, work volition, previous training and work-experience quality. This could lead to a better understanding of the processes underlying the consequences of decent work in France, such as work fulfillment and well-being. Finally, data indicating test-retest reliability and the scale's predictive validity are missing from our validation process. Further studies are necessary to assess these psychometric qualities and improve our knowledge of the effects of decent work on people's lives, specifically in the French context.

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Table 1Goodness-of-fit models summary ($N = 300$)

Model	χ^2	df	p	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA 90 % CI	SRMR	BIC
5-factor correlated model	165.93	80	<.001	2.07	0.97	0.96	0.06 [.0507]	0.05	394.1
Higher order model	189.68	85	<.001	2.23	0.96	0.95	0.06 [.0508]	0.07	389.3
Bifactor model	145.72	75	<.001	1.94	0.97	0.96	0.06 [.0407]	0.06	402.4

Notes. df : degrees of freedom; CFI: comparative fit index; TLI: Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA: root mean square error of approximation; CI: confidence interval; SRMR: standardized root mean residual; BIC: Bayes information criterion.

Table 2

French and English factors names and items for the Decent Work scale and their standardized regression weights in the higher order model ($N = 300$)

English and French factors names and items		1st order factors	2nd order factor
Factor 1 : Physically and Interpersonally Safe working conditions	Factor 1 : Conditions de travail physique et relationnelles saines		.87
1. I feel emotional safely interacting with people at work	Je me sens en sécurité émotionnelle avec les personnes avec lesquelles je travaille	.86	
2. At work, I feel safe from emotional or verbal abuse of any kind	Au travail, je me sens à l'abri de toutes violences verbales ou psychologiques	.74	
3. I feel physically safe interacting with people at work	Je me sens physiquement en sécurité avec les personnes avec lesquelles je travaille.	.78	
Factor 2 : Access to adequate health care	Factor 2 : Accès satisfaisant aux soins de santé		.61
4. I get good healthcare benefits from my job	J'ai accès par mon emploi à de bonnes prestations de santé	.91	
5. I have a good healthcare plan at work	Je bénéficie par mon emploi d'une bonne couverture santé	.91	
6. My employer provides acceptable options for healthcare	Mon employeur propose différentes options satisfaisantes de couverture santé	.69	
Factor 3 : Adequate compensation	Factor 3 : Rémunération correcte		.14
7. I am not properly paid for my work	Je ne suis pas correctement rémunéré.e pour le travail que je fais	.73	
8. I do not feel I am paid enough based on my qualifications and experiences	Compte tenu de mes qualifications et de mon expérience, je ne m'estime pas assez payé.e	.89	
9. I am rewarded adequately for my work	Je suis convenablement rétribué.e pour le travail que je fais	.81	
Factor 4 : Free time and rest	Factor 4 : Temps libre et repos		.29
10. I do not have enough time for non-work activities	Je n'ai pas assez de temps pour les activités en dehors du travail	.75	
11. I have no time to rest during the work week	Je n'ai pas le temps de me reposer pendant la semaine de travail	.86	
12. I have free time during the work week	J'ai du temps libre pendant la semaine de travail	.65	
Factor 5 : Complementary values	Factor 5 : Complémentarité des valeurs organisationnelles et familiales et sociales		.62
13. The values of my organization match my family values	Les valeurs de mon entreprise/institution correspondent avec mes valeurs	.92	
14. My organization's values align my family values	Mon entreprise/institution a des valeurs en accord avec les miennes	.97	
15. The values of my organization match the values within my community	Les valeurs de mon entreprise/institution correspondent à celles de mon milieu	.84	

Table 3

Intercorrelations, reliabilities, means, standard deviations and ranges for the Decent Work scale subscales and total scale ($N = 300$)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Safe Working Conditions	(.83)					
2 Access to Health Care	.48**	(.87)				
3 Adequate Compensation	.09	.04	(.85)			
4 Free Time and Rest	.23**	.10	.25**	(.79)		
5 Complementary Values	.47**	.33**	.08	.26**	(.93)	
6 Total scale	.72**	.64**	.48**	.59**	.66**	(.83)
<i>M</i>	10.44	9.56	8.27	8.89	9.86	47.03
<i>SD</i>	2.82	3.13	3.00	2.92	2.60	8.97
<i>Minimum-Maximum</i>	3-15	3-15	3-15	3-15	3-15	20-70

Notes. The entries in parentheses on the diagonal are the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients;

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.0001$.

Table 4Correlations of Decent Work scale subscales and total scale with validity scales ($N = 300$)

	Safe Working Conditions	Access to Health Care	Adequate Compensation	Free Time and Rest	Complemen- tary Values	Total Score
Work-family conflict						
Negative effects of work on family life	-.38**	-.20*	-.17*	-.62**	-.32**	-.54**
Negative effects of family on work life	-.21*	-.10	-.05	-.14*	-.12*	-.20*
Positive reciprocal effects between family and work	.18*	.25**	-.03	.08	.27**	.24**
Meaning of work	.25**	.20*	.04	.11	.39**	.31**
Life satisfaction	.39**	.39**	.19*	.27**	.42**	.53**
Work satisfaction	.47**	.28**	.24**	.33**	.50**	.58**
Withdrawal intentions	-.31**	-.15*	-.15*	-.15*	-.31**	-.34**

Notes. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.0001$ (bilateral)

Table 5Number of occurrences of references to Decent Work Topics by French participants ($n = 272$)

Decent Work topics		Number and percentage of people mentioning the topic first	
Category	Subcategory	<i>n</i>	%
1. Compensation		112	41.2
	Sufficient compensation	94	34.6
	Adequate compensation	18	6.6
2. Quality of work life		87	32.0
	Comfortable and safe working conditions	38	14.0
	Respect for people and recognition at work	36	13.2
	Good atmosphere and relational security at work	9	3.3
	Limited stress	4	1.5
3. Work-life balance		44	16.1
	Work hours and schedule	36	13.2
	Reconciliation of life at work and outside of work	8	2.9
4. Personal development		18	6.6
	Self-fulfillment through work, usefulness and meaning of work	10	3.7
	Use and development of skills, training and progress at work	8	2.9