

THE ROLE OF SELF-CONCEPT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF JOB SATISFACTION AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

*Dr. Ayla Zehra Öncer**

Abstract: *This study aimed to examine the relationship between employees' perception of job satisfaction and work engagement and find out the mediating role of self-concept on this relationship. In this context, the study begins with a literature review of job satisfaction, work engagement and self-concept, then goes on to methodology. The hypotheses are tested if job satisfaction affects engagement to work and if self-concept mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement. For the measurement of the dependent, independent and mediating variables; The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) developed by Weiss, Davis, England, and Lofquist (1977), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) and Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) developed by Fitts and Warren (1996) were conducted to the employees of a five star hotel located in İstanbul. Multi regression method is conducted for the analysis. According to the results it is emerged that there is a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and the three factors of work engagement as vigor, dedication and absorption. Furthermore, it is displayed that self-concept has a mediating role on the relationship between job satisfaction and all the factors of work engagement which means that when employees feel positive about themselves, their satisfaction increases their engagement to work. Consequently the results of the analyses are discussed in conclusions.*

Keywords: *Self-concept, Job satisfaction, Work engagement, Vigor, Dedication, Absorption.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely researched topics in management and organization literature and has been studied for decades. The number of articles and books examining job satisfaction has increased from over 3000 in 1976 (Locke, 1976) to over 5000 in 1992 (Harwood, Rice, 1992). Today business and psychology literature both displays that over 10,000 publications on job satisfaction are available. Job satisfaction is also an important concept because of its organizational related affects and consequences (Hackman, Oldham 1980).

On the other hand, work engagement is another extensively researched topic in organizational behavior and management literature. Rewards (Saks, 2006),

* Business Administration Department, Marmara University, Bahçelievler İstanbul, 34180 Turkey,
E-mail: oncer@marmara.edu.tr

autonomy (Lloren *et al.*, 2006), feedback (Schaufelli, Bakker, 2004; Llorens *et al.*, 2006) and support (Hakanen *et al.*, 2005) are some topics that increase engagement to work displayed in several researches.

In this study the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement is examined and the possible mediating role of self-concept, which means individual's perceptions of him or herself, is investigated. Self-concept has chosen as a mediating variable because it is known that our concept of who we are has extensive significance on our paradigm and perceptions and also because of its importance to explain other outcomes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Job Satisfaction

Different researchers have different approaches towards defining job satisfaction. Hoppock defined job satisfaction as any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that cause a person truthfully to say I am satisfied with my job (Hoppock, 1935). Vroom focuses on the role of the employee in the workplace and defined job satisfaction as affective orientations on the part of individuals toward work roles which they are presently occupying (Vroom, 1964). According to Arnold and Feldman (1986) job satisfaction is the amount of overall positive feelings that individuals have towards their jobs. They stated that, when the employee has high job satisfaction, he generally likes and values his job highly and feels positively towards it. Smith (1998) asserted that the more a worker is satisfied the happier and more motivated he/she is.

Job satisfaction can be defined as the pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experience (Locke, 1976). Schermerhorn Jr. *et al.* (2005) define job satisfaction as the degree to which individuals feel positively or negatively about their jobs. Job satisfaction is a combination of cognitive and affective reactions to the differential perceptions of what an employee wants to receive compared with what he or she actually receives (Robie *et al.* 1998). It refers to an individual's general attitude about the job (Rue, Byars, 1986). According to Croham (1989) job satisfaction is an attitude of contentment, enjoyment and fulfillment felt on one's job.

Positive and favorable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction, conversely negative and unfavorable attitudes towards the job indicate job dissatisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). When the employee thinks that his expectations are not met in the job environment, job dissatisfaction emerges and leads to the decreasing of productivity and organizational commitment (Payne, Morrison, 2002; Sagie, 1998). According to Herzberg's two-factor theory; employees at their early stages of their employment usually experienced low job satisfaction due to

unfulfilled work expectations and these employees when advanced in their careers, gain maturity and work experience that led them to a more realistic level of work expectations (Herzberg, *et al.*, 1959).

Schneider and Snyder (1975) claimed that job satisfaction is consisted of individual's intrinsic responses that they develop as a result of their understanding of the job. Other researchers have viewed job satisfaction as a bi-dimensional concept consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction dimensions. Intrinsic sources of satisfaction depend on the individual characteristics of the person, such as the ability to use initiative, relations with supervisors, or the work that the person actually performs. Extrinsic sources of satisfaction are situational and depend on the environment, such as pay, promotion, or job security. As a result several studies in literature classified the components of job satisfaction differently, but it can be summarized as; the job itself, pay, supervision, co-workers, promotion, support, advancement, customers and company policy (Churchill *et al.*, 1976; Smith *et al.*, 1969). In this study, job satisfaction is measured as a whole instead of dividing in variables.

2.2. Work Engagement

According to Kahn (1990), engagement is the "harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles" so that they employ and express their selves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances. He claims that people can use varying degrees of their selves physically, cognitively and emotionally, in the roles they perform and when people bring more of themselves to a role the more stirring are their performances (Hermsen, Rosser, 2008). Engagement can be described as involving positive feelings towards work and the job (Macey, Schneider, 2008). It is a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values (Robinson *et al.*, 2004).

Research on work engagement improved from research on its opposite, the construct of burnout (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). By focusing on engagement, researchers are able to attend to the positive aspects of work as opposed to the negative aspects as in burnout (Ravichandran *et al.*, 2011). According to Maslach *et al.* (2001) burnout and work engagement are their opposites while burnout refers the negative side and engagement is the positive. They defined work engagement in terms of opposites of the components of burnout such as involvement, energy and efficacy.

Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) defined engagement as persistent, positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness and ability to invest effort in work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, pride, inspiration and challenge.

Absorption refers to being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in work which is characterized by being unable to detach from the job (Schaufeli, Bakker, 2003).

2.3. Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to the knowledge that individuals may have about themselves, particularly about thoughts and feelings (Felker, 1974). It also refers individuals' awareness of their beliefs, attitudes, and self-perceptions (Mischel, 1969).

Fromm (1956) described self-concept as "life being aware of itself". According to Purkey (1988) self-concept can be defined as the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence. Self-concept is different from self-esteem-feelings of personal worth and level of satisfaction regarding one's self- or self-report -what a person is willing and able to disclose.

Shavelson *et al.* (1976) defined self-concept as an individual's perceptions of him or herself formed through experiences of the individual's environment and reinforced by the influence of significant others (family members, neighbors, teachers, friends, etc.). It refers to an informational summary of self-perceived facts about oneself, including one's roles, characteristics and personal history (Baumeister, 1995). According to Huitt (2004) self-concept is a conscious reflection of one's own being or identity, typically involving learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that a person holds to be true about his or her personal existence.

Self-concept has three major qualities; it is learned, organized and dynamic. First self-concept is learned. As known, no one is born with a self-concept. It gradually emerges in the early months of life and is shaped and reshaped through repeated perceived experiences, particularly with significant others. Second, self-concept is organized. Most researchers agree that self-concept has a generally stable quality that is characterized by orderliness and harmony. Each person maintains countless perceptions regarding one's personal existence, and each perception is orchestrated with all the others. It is this generally stable and organized quality of self-concept that gives consistency to the personality. Finally self-concept is dynamic. It is like a compass: a continuously active system that dependably points to the true north of a person's perceived existence. This guidance system not only shapes the ways a person views oneself, others, and the world, but it also serves to direct action and enables each person to take a consistent stance in life. Rather than viewing self-concept as the cause of behavior, it is better understood as the compass of human personality, providing consistency in personality and direction for behavior (Purkey, 1988).

Self-concept is the way how individuals think about or evaluate themselves. It includes physical, moral, personal, family, social situation dimensions and influenced by individuals' sense of identity.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Objective and Hypothesis

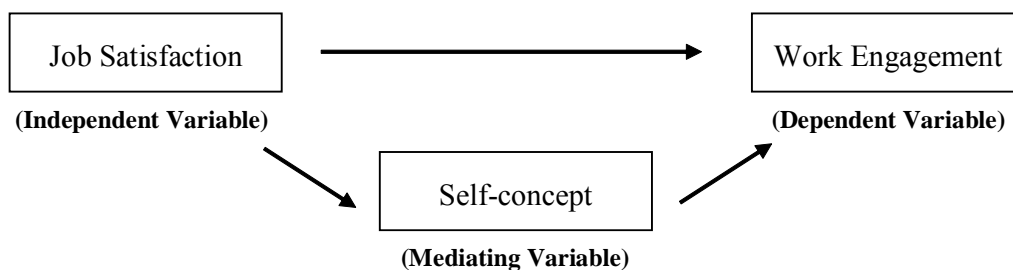
The aim of this study is to identify the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement and emerge the role of self-concept on the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement. Investigated by several disciplines such as psychology, sociology, economics and management sciences, job satisfaction is a frequently studied subject in business and organizational literature. This is mainly due to the fact that job satisfaction trends influence work productivity, work effort, employee absenteeism and staff turnover. It is considered a strong predictor of overall individual well-being (Singh *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, Kahn's (1990) findings in the engagement study indicate that work contexts influence engagement. Thus, this study tries to explore the relationships among job satisfaction and work engagement.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement.

When it comes to the role of self-concept, there is growing awareness that of all the perceptions we experience in the course of living, none has more profound significance than the perceptions we hold regarding our own personal existence - our concept of who we are and how we fit into the world. Shavelson *et al.* (1976) emphasized that self-concept is important both as an outcome and as a mediating variable that helps to explain other outcomes. Therefore it is proposed that;

Hypothesis 2: Self-concept mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement.

Figure I: Conceptual Model of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement and the Mediating Role of Self-Concept



3.2. Sample and Data Collection

Data gathered from the executive and non-executive employees of a five star hotel located in Istanbul. Survey questionnaires were distributed to 160 employees, and a total of 115 usable questionnaires from employees were returned (n = 115).

The return rate of the questionnaires was 72%. Random sampling technique was used to distribute the questionnaire in order to determine the employees' perceptions regarding job satisfaction, work engagement and self-concept. The collected data analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program version 16.00. Reliability tests, factor analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis used to determine the relationship between variables of the research model.

3.3. Research Measures

The survey consisted of four sections. In the first section participants are asked to give demographic information regarding their gender, age, academic qualification, job position and work experience. The next three sections included job satisfaction, work engagement and self-concept scales.

The dependent variable job satisfaction was measured by The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) developed by Weiss, Davis, England, and Lofquist (1977). It includes 20 statements like; "The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities", "Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience" and "The chance to try my own methods of doing the job". It is the short version of the 100 item inventory earlier developed by the authors (Weiss *et al.*, 1967). It is designed to evaluate the intrinsic, extrinsic and general satisfaction of employees both separately and as a whole. The items in the questionnaire were accompanied by a 5-point rating scales from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.

The shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) was conducted to measure work engagement as an independent variable. The scale consists of 17 statements and was designed to measure the three components of engagement; vigor, absorption, and dedication. It includes the 7-point response scale ranged from never to always/ every day. Sample items included; "I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose", "When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work", and "It is difficult to detach myself from my job".

For measuring the role of self-concept among dependent and independent variables, Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) developed by Fitts and Warren (1996) was applied. The scale is a widely used self-report measure consisting of 100 statements and six self-concept scales; physical, moral, personal, family, social and academic/work that yield a total summary score for total self-concept. Participants were asked to indicate how true each statement is about them using a 5-point scale ranging from always false to always true. Sample items of the scale are; "I am very careful about my self-appearance", "I am very satisfied with my manners and behaviors" and "I will work on changing when I realize that I have made a mistake".

To ensure the reliability of the scales, internal consistency analysis was made and the Cronbach's alpha (α) scores was obtained. As seen in Table I the scores are bigger than 0,70 in all the scales which indicates that they have internal consistency and are reliable.

Table I
Internal Consistency Analysis of the Scales

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)	20	,893
Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)	17	,877
Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS)	100	,941

Job satisfaction and self-concept scales were not factor analyzed; only reliability of the scales was examined. The reason for that is to insert job satisfaction variable as a one independent variable and self-concept variable as one mediating variable into regression analysis. The construct validity of the work engagement scale was explored with confirmatory factor analysis. Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO- MSA) was ,853 and significance of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 0,000. KMO value was more than ,50 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant. So, factor analysis was conducted. Based on the results, 3 items were deleted according to the factor loadings and eventually 3 factors of work engagement were found as vigor, dedication and absorption. The factor analysis results are shown in Table II.

In the original scale there are 6 items for measuring the vigor factor of work engagement but in this study it includes 5 items according to the factor loadings and this factor's Cronbach's alpha score was $\alpha = 0,813$, which indicates that the factor is reliable. There are 5 items in the original scale for dedication and this factor includes 4 items in this study and Cronbach's alpha score was $\alpha = 0,784$ that indicates the second factor is reliable too. The last factor of work engagement is absorption with 6 items in the original scale. In this study it contains 5 items and Cronbach's alpha score was $\alpha = 0,766$. It indicates that the last factor is reliable as well. Consequently, three factors of work engagement stood out in this study consistent with the literature.

4. FINDINGS

The results of the demographic questions related to the participants' gender, age, academic qualification, job position and work experience are summarized in Table III. According to these results 46% respondents were female and 54% were

Table II
Factor Analysis Results of Work Engagement Scale

<i>Factors of Work Engagement</i>	<i>Factor Loadings</i>	<i>Variance Explained</i>
Factor 1: Vigor		
At my work, I feel bursting with energy	,867	21,957 %
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	,754	
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	,701	
I can continue working for very long periods at a time	,627	
At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	,613	
Factor 2: Dedication		23,718 %
I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	,803	22,301 %
I am proud on the work that I do	,789	
I am enthusiastic about my job	,756	
To me, my job is challenging	,602	
Factor 3: Absorption		
I get carried away when I'm working	,785	67,976 %
When I am working, I forget everything else around me	,769	
Time flies when I'm working	,661	
I feel happy when I am working intensely	,570	
It is difficult to detach myself from my job	,524	
KMO = ,853 / Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig.= 0,000		

male. An equal 54% of age group of the respondents was between 31-50 years. In addition, at least 78% of the respondents' were graduated from university. 28% respondents were executives and 72% were non-executives. Finally, of the study participants, 16% have less than 5 years work experience, while 26% have experience between 5-14 years, 39% between 15-24 years and 19% have more than 24 years of experience.

In order to test the first hypothesis indicating "There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement", correlation analysis is conducted. According to the results of the correlation analysis, significant relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement factors is found. As seen in Table 4 there is a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and the three factors of work engagement as vigor (0,768), dedication (0,683) and absorption (0,726). *Therefore, correlation analysis results support hypothesis 1.*

In order to examine second hypothesis, the mediating role of self-concept on the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement, series of regression analyses were conducted. According to the factor analysis results mentioned above, there emerged three factors of work engagement. Based on this result the regression

Table III
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (n = 115)

<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>	<i>Per cent (%)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Gender		
Male	54	62
Female	46	53
Age		
<30	28	32
31-40	34	39
41-50	20	23
>50	18	21
Academic Qualification		
High school degree	11	13
Bachelor's degree	51	59
Master's degree	27	31
Others	11	12
Job Position		
Executive	28	32
Non-executive	72	83
Work Experience		
<5	16	18
5-14	26	30
15-24	39	45
>24	19	22
Total	100	115

analyses were applied separately to the work engagement factors which are vigor, dedication and absorption as dependent variables.

It can be seen in Table V that two step regression analyses were conducted in order to test whether self-concept mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and vigor factor of work engagement. First step examines the relationship between job satisfaction and vigor. It is clear that job satisfaction is significantly and positively related to vigor ($\beta = 0,768$, Sig = 0,001).

Second step emerges the relationship between job satisfaction and vigor while considering self-concept as a mediator. According to the regression analysis results in Model 2, it can be seen that when self-concept included in the regression analysis, the significant effect of job satisfaction on vigor has decreased from $\beta = 0,768$ to $\beta = 0,654$ and the coefficient of job satisfaction remained statistically significant (Sig = 0,004). As a result it can be asserted that self-concept mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and *vigor* factor of work engagement.

Table IV
Correlations between Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement Factors

Variables	1	2	3	4
Job Satisfaction	1	,768**	,683**	,726**
Vigor	,768**	1	,481**	,513**
Dedication	,683**	,481**	1	,527**
Absorption	,726**	,513**	,527**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0,01$)

Table V
Regression Analysis for the Mediating Role of Self-Concept on the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Vigor

Model	Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Stand. Coef.	t	Sig.	R ²	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	β				Tol.	VIF
1	(Constant)	,674	,117	,768	9,705	,000	,616	,800	2,758
	Job Satisfaction	,753	,045		3,652	,001			
2	(Constant)	,322	,121	,654	2,538	,000	,734	,765	1,455
	Job Satisfaction	,642	,044		2,743	,004			
	Self-Concept	,421	,044	,137	3,864	,003		,723	1,389

Dependent Variable: Vigor ($p < 0,05$)

The second two step regression analyses were conducted in order to test the role of self-concept as a mediator on the relationship between job satisfaction and dedication factor of work engagement and the results were summarized in Table VI. First step examines the relationship between job satisfaction and dedication. It is clear that job satisfaction is significantly and positively related to dedication ($\beta = 0,683$, Sig = 0,000). Second step examines the relationship between

Table VI
Regression Analysis for the Mediating Role of Self-Concept on the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Dedication

Model	Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Stand. Coef.	t	Sig.	R ²	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	β				Tol.	VIF
1	(Constant)	,702	,120	,683	7,120	,000	,521	,800	2,758
	Job Satisfaction	,612	,017		4,288	,000			
2	(Constant)	,627	,207	,471	2,890	,002	,611	,765	1,455
	Job Satisfaction	,530	,033		4,032	,000			
	Self-Concept	,287	,029	,260	4,078	,001		,723	1,389

Dependent Variable: Dedication ($p < 0,05$)

job satisfaction and dedication with the self-concept as a mediator. According to the regression analysis results in Model 2, it can be seen that when self-concept included in the regression analysis, the significant effect of job satisfaction on dedication has decreased from $\beta = 0,683$ to $\beta = 0,471$ and the coefficient of job satisfaction remained statistically significant (Sig = 0,000). Thus, it can be displayed that self-concept mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and *dedication* factor of work engagement.

The last two step regression analyses were conducted to analyze the mediating role of self-concept on the relationship between job satisfaction and absorption factor of work engagement. First step displays the relationship between job satisfaction and absorption. It can be seen that job satisfaction is significantly and positively related to absorption ($\beta = 0,726$, Sig = 0,001). Second step indicates the mediating role of self-concept on the relationship between job satisfaction and absorption. As seen from the regression analysis results in Model 2, it is clear that when self-concept included in the regression analysis, the significant effect of job satisfaction on absorption has decreased from $\beta = 0,726$ to $\beta = 0,592$ and the coefficient of job satisfaction remained statistically significant (Sig = 0,000). Therefore, it can be asserted that self-concept mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and *absorption* factor of work engagement.

Table VII
Regression Analysis for the Mediating Role of Self-Concept on the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Absorption

Model	Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Stand. Coef.	t	Sig.	R ²	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	β				Tol.	VIF
1	(Constant)	,590	,153	,726	8,392	,000	,543	,800	2,758
	Job Satisfaction	,689	,038		2,549	,001			
2	(Constant)	,867	,170	,592	2,297	,000	,712	,765	1,455
	Job Satisfaction	,421	,052		9,409	,000			
	Self-Concept	,501	,042	,178	3,310	,001		,723	1,389

Dependent Variable: Absorption (p < 0,05)

In addition, the changes in R square were presented in Tables V-VI-VII and are statistically significant, also according to the tolerance and VIF values there is no collinearity between independent variables.

As a result of the regression analyses explained above, it was emerged that self-concept has a mediating role on the relationship between job satisfaction and all the factors of work engagement, so *it can be displayed that hypothesis 2 is supported.*

5. CONCLUSIONS

On the purpose of investigating the factors that influence work engagement various studies have been conducted. However self-concept has not been analyzed as a mediating variable between job satisfaction and work engagement. The aim of this study is to find out the relationship among job satisfaction, work engagement and self-concept with an application on the employees of a 5 star hotel in İstanbul. Based on the result of this study, self-concept affects the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement. In other words, it can be asserted that self-concept has a significant mediating role on the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement.

Job satisfaction considered as an independent variable of the study while work engagement as the dependent variable. According to the factor analysis three factors of work engagement emerged as vigor, dedication and absorption. This result is consistent with the literature as well (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Schaufeli, Bakker, 2003).

The first result of the explanatory analyses of the study indicates that job satisfaction has strong positive relationship with the factors of work engagement and also job satisfaction has significant effect on work engagement factors, which means the higher employees satisfied with their jobs, the more they engage to their work. In other words, when employees like and value their jobs highly and feel contentment, enjoyment and fulfillment towards it, they feel dedicated, find their job meaningful and feel their selves vigorous and mentally strong. Results show that job satisfaction explains all three components of work engagement and its effect on vigor component of work engagement is stronger than its effect on dedication and absorption components.

Secondly, the results indicate that when self-concept added in the effects of job satisfaction on work engagement factors, the explanatory power of job satisfaction has decreased and the mediating effect of self-concept was observed. In other words, self-concept significantly mediated the relationship between employees' perception of job satisfaction and their engagement to work. When employees feel positive about themselves in terms of physical, moral, personal, family, social and business factors, their satisfaction increases their engagement to work.

Although there are various studies examining the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement in literature, the mediating effect of self-concept is analyzed and revealed for the first time throughout this study. Thus, the findings of the study make a unique contribution to the literature.

Eventually, this study helps to understand the relationship between job satisfaction, work engagement and self-concept by stating that employees' positive feelings and thoughts about themselves affect their engagement to work through their satisfaction.

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