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Subjective Well-being as a Moderator between Job Satisfaction and Job Performance: A Conceptual Framework

S. Pavan Kumar

*Assistant Professor, School of Management, National Institute of Technology Karnataka, Surathkal
E-mails: pavankumar@nitk.ac.in; saraf_pavan@rediffmail.com*

Abstract: The model proposed in this paper is based on the premise that “an attitude predicts behaviour”. Following this logic, the attitude considered for present study is job satisfaction and the behaviour is employee job performance. Previous studies have either provided minimal or no relationship between job satisfaction and employee job performance. Enough research has been conducted to understand direct relationship, however literature suggests that there exist influence of other variables such as organizational tenure, cognitive ability, need for achievement, career stage, and pressure for performance on the proposed relationship. It can be drawn from the existing literature that an employee satisfied with his/her job situation is expected to demonstrate better job performance. However, a well-being employee is more likely than those less well-being strives to foster and facilitate increased level of job performance. As a result, recent research has increasingly come to recognize the importance of possible moderator variable, leading to expressive and meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. To that expiration, it has been proposed that subjective well-being moderates the relation between job satisfaction and job performance relationship. Possible managerial implications and scope for further research have been placed in the paper.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Job performance, Moderator, and Subjective well-being

1. INTRODUCTION

Today the worldwide impact of globalization has energized all the countries of the world including India to fix their priorities, strengthen the core activities, plug the loopholes, and carve out space for them to remain economically viable and competitive. In order to successfully survive, it is essential for sector to adopt changes in the global business environment and continually prepare the workforce to meet these challenges. It is a well established and recognized fact that workers are the lifeline of any organization and play very crucial and significant role in achieving organizational goals as they are directly involved in its operational activities.

Organizations always investigate and search for ways and means to keep their employees motivated and spirited to ensure their performance. In this context, the increasing global spread of business and the greater participation of multinational corporations in the developing markets call for focused attention towards management practices (Budhwar, 2003; Napier & Vu, 1998). Behaviours like job satisfaction, performance, subjective well-being are a few emerging perspectives in business environment. The study of the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance has attracted much attention throughout the organizational psychology discipline. Many researchers believe that a causal relationship exists between satisfaction and performance. Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton (2001) found that the theoretical basis for a job satisfaction and job performance relation is implicitly grounded in the broader attitudes literature in social psychology. Previously, research by Edwards, Bell, Arthur, and Decuir (2008) has studied job satisfaction as the antecedent of job performance and job satisfaction was considered as one of the key factors for the intensification of performance (Hanan, 2009). However, the meta-analytic data suggested that the satisfaction performance relationship was partially eliminated after controlling for general personality traits (Bowling, 2007). Such findings motivates the researchers' to investigate the influence of demographic or status variables on satisfaction and performance relationship, which could be the potential addition to the existing knowledge base. Moreover, the truthfulness of the statement "satisfied employees are productive employees" can also be tested empirically.

The other side of the coin tells us the contradictory story. Brayfield and Crockett (1955) found "minimal or no relationship" (p. 405). Basically there exist certain shortcomings in their findings. Firstly, their review was limited to only nine studies that are available for review during that time. Secondly, the review was qualitative in nature. In spite of these shortcomings, their article was one of the frequently cited review preceding to 1985. The idea of the above two reviews (Hanan, 2009; Brayfield and Crockett, 1955) is to indicate the need for theory driven investigation of the satisfaction-performance relationship. Hence, in response to these reviews, the researchers get on to consider the nature of the relationship, giving special consideration to factors that might moderate or mediate the relationship.

One of the most common means of investigating the job satisfaction-job performance relationship has involved the use of moderator variables (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001). Based on the pay-performance contingency, Locke (1970) had hypothesized that value attainment as a moderator between the performance and satisfaction relationship. Whereas Korman (1970) had proposed that the relationship between satisfaction and performance would depend on self-esteem based on self-consistency theory. Judge et al. (2001) identified numerous other moderators in the relationship between Job satisfaction and Job performance, including attributions and organizational tenure, cognitive ability, need for achievement, career stage, pressure for performance, time pressure, job fit, dyadic duration, similarity in problem-solving styles, perceived appropriateness of supervisory task allocation decisions, affective disposition, and situational constraints. Even so, identifying other possible moderators would definitely help in expanding the phenomenon that explains the job satisfaction-job performance relationship.

The possibility now exists is based on Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build framework, which suggests that the job satisfaction and subjective well-being approaches to worker "happiness". Thus, it is proposed that the subjective well-being would act as a moderator to job satisfaction when considering job performance as an outcome variable.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE, THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Job Satisfaction

Numerous studies have argued that job satisfaction is one of the oldest concepts in the area of organizational behaviour and yet is one of the most controversial. The majority of the studies conducted on job satisfaction are primarily built upon job motivation theory. Job satisfaction expresses the relationship between human experiences and emotions with work and work environment. Job satisfaction refers to a collection of attitudes that workers have about their jobs (Johns & Saks, 2001). These attitudes may derive from a facet of satisfaction or as an overall aspect of the job. Job satisfaction has been characterized as “positive emotional state resulting from the self-appraisal of one’s job experiences” (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). Widespread aspects of job satisfaction comprise “work, pay, promotions, recognition, benefits, working conditions, supervision, co-workers, company and management” (Locke, 1976, p. 1302).

2.2. Job Performance

The interest and concern of industrial psychologists, managers, and administrators have escalated significantly in the area of job performance of employees in recent years. Despite the rapid progress in the field of organizational behaviour, knowledge about human problems and poor performance in work continues to be the major challenge faced by the managers today. A systematic research and analysis is required to identify the poor performance of employees. Lack of skills, competency, and motivation are the prime causes of poor performance. Some other factors like lack of proper delegation, poor communication, and inefficient or obsolete HRD system and practices contribute for poor performance.

Organizational effectiveness mainly depends on employee job performance (Peng, 2014) and hence a modest attempt has been made in this study considering employees’ job performance in the organizations as a valuable construct.

2.3. Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to how people evaluate their lives. This evaluation may take the form of cognitions when a person makes a conscious evaluative judgment about his or her satisfaction with life as a whole. Subjective well-being consists of life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood, together often summarized as happiness. Life satisfaction is a measure of subjective well-being, which results from the combination of other factors such as job satisfaction and family satisfaction (Akerele, Osamwonyi, & Amah, 2007; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). Subjective well-being has important implications for workplace issues; therefore, human resource practices have greater linkage to subjective well-being of employees. It was surprising that very little attention has been observed in literatures that how occupational groups can enhance the subjective well-being of workers.

2.3. Job Satisfaction, Job Performance and Subjective well-being

In the field of organizational psychology, one of the most researched areas is the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Morrison (1997) conducted a study between the relationship of job satisfaction and employee performance and reported there was a strong relationship between these two variables but it depends on specific circumstances such as mood and employee level within the organization.

Subjective well-being, known colloquially as happiness, is described as a positive state of mind that involves the whole life experience (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). Evidence of a comprehensive data-based analysis indicates that job satisfaction is strongly and consistently related to subjective well-being. Further, significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction was found (Judge, Klinger, Simon, & Yang, 2008). Further study indicates that job and life satisfaction are moderately correlated (Tait, Padgett, & Baldwin, 1989). Given that job is a significant part of one's life, the positive correlation between job and life satisfaction makes sense.

Russell (2003) discussed the impact of positive forms of subjective well-being on job performance and explained positive forms of subjective well-being is a combination of high pleasure and high activation, which is needed for optimal job performance. Spector (1997) found that employees who reported more satisfied with life and their jobs were found to be more cooperative and more helpful to their colleagues, were more punctual and time efficient, showed up for more days of work, and stayed with company longer than dissatisfied employees. All these factors show high performance of employees. Employees who reported experiencing a greater balance of positive emotional symptoms over negative emotional symptoms received higher performance ratings from supervisors than employees who reported feeling more negative than positive symptoms of emotion (Wright & Bonett, 1997; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Further previous empirical studies have found strong association among job satisfaction, job performance, and life-satisfaction (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Morrison, 1995).

Both job satisfaction and SWB has a reason to relate with employee happiness, to a greater extent there exist research support from Cropanzano and Wright (2001) studies. Despite optimistic results, these two traditional approaches to operationalizing worker happiness have rarely been considered simultaneously. Moreover, those few investigations that simultaneously examine job satisfaction and SWB usually had considered only the main effects. While main effect studies are important, ignoring the moderating effect of SWB is restrictive, since there are good conceptual reasons to think that an interaction might take place. Write and Cropanzano (2000) has found main effect association among the job satisfaction, employee well being and job performance, on the basis of such findings Fredrickson and Losada (2005), in their broaden-and-build model suggested that satisfied and well being employees are more likely to demonstrate better job performance when compared to less satisfied and less well being employees. Fredrickson's model suggest that positive feeling states, such as employee subjective well being, will anyway have positive influence on employee job performance, but can also provides a theoretical support for the moderating effect of SWB. On the basis of the above theoretical arguments the following hypothesis can be proposed:

Hypothesis: Subjective well-being will moderate the relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee job performance, such that this relationship will be stronger when SWB is high and weaker when SWB is low.

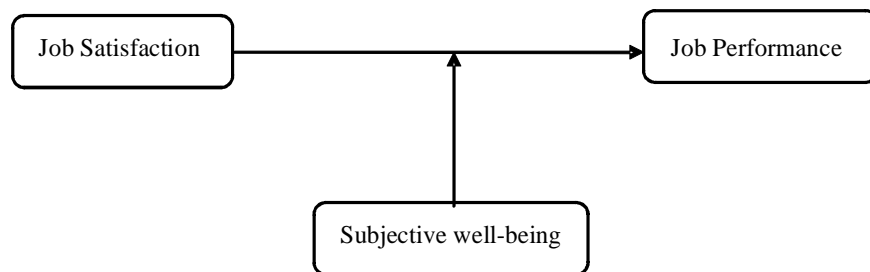


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3. MEASURES

There could be an array of scales available to the researchers. It would be always desirable to check the suitability of the available scales keeping the context and psychometric properties in mind. Moreover, the dimensionality of the available scales will have larger impact on the outcome. Hence, a careful selection of the scale should be prime prerequisite. However for the convenience of the researchers a sample scale is given below:

3.1. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be measured using the scale developed by Jenkins, Nadler, Lawler, and Cammann (1975). The scale consisted of 3 items. Sample item included is, 'I get a feeling of personal satisfaction in doing my job'.

3.2.2. Employee Performance

Employee performance can be measured by using the scale developed by Lynch, Eisenberger, and Armeli (1999). This scale comprised 9 items. Sample items included is, 'Employees perform tasks that are expected of them'

3.2.3. Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being can be measured with 5 item scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). Sample items included, 'In most ways my life is close to my ideal'. Response categories against each item for all the scales included in the study were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5.

4. SCOPE FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

Situational factors could play role between job satisfaction and job performance relationship. Future research should examine this possibility. For example, supervisory support, organizational support, leader behaviour, and empowering employees all might really influence both job satisfaction and job performance. Controlling for these situational variables could provide us different set of results. Moreover, variable like performance has been conceptualized in different ways by different scholars. Considering multi dimensional construct could be an extension to the existing knowledge base on the job satisfaction and job performance relationship.

5. CONCLUSION

Job performance is considered as one of the important construct in human resource management, and organizational psychology domains. In this era of competitive business environment, organizations always wanted to identify the factors that can influence the employee performance in the work place. Apart from identifying the work place environment factors which can play a role in employee performance, identifying the employee strengths and weaknesses has also become a fascinating research domain. Considering situational, attitudinal and behavioural factors would expand our knowledge on the direct relationship between job satisfaction and job performance and also through intervening variables.

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