

Demographic Variables as Moderators in the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Task Performance

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ABSTRACT

Jobs provide a sense of accomplishment and identity. Job satisfaction has an impact on task performance and both are important to industries and organizations because their performance and productivity depend on the employees' satisfaction and performance. The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance among 450 employees of Behzisty organization in Central Provinces of Iran. The study also looked at the influence of gender, age, education, and tenure on the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. Instruments used to collect data were Job Description Index (JDI), Task Performance (supervisors' ratings) and the Demographic questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results found that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. It was also shown that gender and education moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance while age and tenure did not moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. The results have significant implications on the policies of human resource as well as organizations in Iran.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, task performance, industrial psychology, organizational psychology

INTRODUCTION

Our jobs take more than eight hours of our time daily. Jobs provide a sense of accomplishment and identity. Most people identify themselves with their jobs. As such, to be happy and satisfied with one's job is very important. Job satisfaction has an impact on task performance. Job satisfaction and task performance are also important to industries and organizations because their performance and productivity depend on the employees' satisfaction and performance. Hence, industrial and organizational psychologists have started studying job satisfaction decades ago. One of their major tasks was to assess employees' attitudes about their jobs particularly

their job satisfaction. Psychologists concluded that some of the organizational behaviors are a consequence of either job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Job satisfaction is the attitude an employee has toward her or his job (Aamodt, 2007). Smith *et al.* (1969) view job satisfaction as positive attitude of an individual toward his job. Mitchell and Larson (1987) describe job satisfaction as reflection of view points and positive feelings of staff of their jobs. Spector (2000) defines job satisfaction as people's feelings toward their jobs. Hulin and Judge (2003) asserted that an employee's affective reaction to a job is based on a comparison of the actual outcomes derived from the job with those outcomes that are

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deserved or expected. Dawis (2004) added that feelings of job satisfaction can change with time and circumstances.

Task performance on the other hand relates to specific job requirements and includes all activities that are directly related to the organization's technical core, for example, closing a sale or contributing to sales unit revenue (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997; Motowidlo *et al.*, 1997). Task performance can be viewed as an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish successfully the task assigned to him or her, subject to the normal constraints of the reasonable utilization of available resources (Jamal, 2007).

Studies have shown that job satisfaction is positively related to job performance (Rehman and Waheed, 2011). A review on the relationship between job satisfaction-job performances by Judge *et al.* (2001) concluded that job satisfaction was an effective predictor of job performance. Meta-analyses by Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran (2005), Harrison *et al.* (2006), Meyer *et al.* (2002) and many others have shown that positive job attitudes, such as satisfaction, are accompanied by better work outcomes. Ricketts's (2008) meta-analytic regression analyses on 16 studies had also demonstrated relationship between job performance and job attitudes (i.e. job satisfaction). Humphrey *et al.*'s (2007) and Wright *et al.*'s (2007) studies indicated modest effects of job satisfaction on performance. Jacobs *et al.* (2007) also found that job satisfaction predicted performance. Pei-Ling Shih's (2007) study showed positive effect of job satisfaction on job performance.

Van Scotter (2000) studied effects of task performance and contextual performance on turnover, job satisfaction, and effective organizational commitment on two samples of Air Force mechanics. It was found that the relationships between task performance, contextual performance, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment were very consistent across the two samples. Employees whose contextual performance was higher also reported being more satisfied with their jobs and more committed to the organization.

Schleicher *et al.* (2004) studied the moderating effect of affective and cognitive components (ACC) on the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. Employees with high ACC showed significantly stronger job satisfaction-performance relations than those employees lower in ACC. Sned (1991) conducted a research on the moderating effect of job and organization tenure on the job satisfaction-job performance relationship. The moderating effect was evident when performance was viewed as the criterion. In addition, job tenure moderated the performance to satisfaction with growth relationship, performance to satisfaction with supervisor relationship, and performance to overall job satisfaction relationship.

There are many studies about job satisfaction but unfortunately a small number of those studies look at job satisfaction among Asians (Hagerty, 2000) and most of the studies were done in North America (Judge and Watanabe, 1993). The lack of research and valid data in non Western countries makes it difficult for organizations in these countries to base their decisions on. Hence, this research aimed to ascertain the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. This study also sought to determine the moderating effects of gender, age, educational level, and tenure on the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance.

METHODS

This research is a correlational study. It was conducted among employees of Behzisty Organization, which is a Welfare Organization in Iran. This organization offers social welfare services to the disabled and needy people, who are not covered by insurance system or benefit protective services. This is a government financed organization. Other financial public resources are special funds, public donations, and charities.

A total of 530 employees of Behzisty organization were randomly selected for this study out of which 450 agreed to be participants of the study. There were 230 women and 220

men whose age ranged from 18 to 57 years old. Majority of the participants (91.1%) had at least a diploma level of education and 66.5% fell within 34-49 age group. More than 50% had more than 13 years of work experience.

Three sets of questionnaires were used to collect data: Job Description Index (JDI), Task Performance (supervisors' ratings) and the Demographic questionnaires. Both the JDI and Task performance were translated into Persian language using back translation technique by Brislin *et al.* (1973).

1. *Job Description Index (JDI)*: The JDI was used to measure job satisfaction. This scale assesses five facets and many users of the scale have summed the scale into an overall job satisfaction score (Spector, 2006). This instrument contains 72 items categorized into five dimensions. Three dimensions, work, supervision, and co-worker contained 18 items and two dimensions opportunities for promotion and pay contained 9 items. The questionnaire uses a three-point Likert scale with response option of "yes", "no" or "undecided". High scores indicate high satisfaction and low scores indicate low satisfaction. For each of the dimension a score will be obtained and sum total of the obtained score will be considered as job satisfaction. In this study Cronbach's alpha for reliability coefficient were used. The reliability coefficient of JDI is acceptable. Also, in this study the validity's coefficients have been computed by correlating the results of JDI with the results of another questionnaire of job satisfaction (15-degree scale from very agree to very disagree). The result showed that there was acceptable coefficient at level of significance of $p < 0.001$
2. *Task Performance*: The supervisors' ratings of performance questionnaire suggested by Kobe-steel company of Japan in 1993 as a tool for evaluation of task performance of staff by directors and supervisors was employed. This questionnaire was completed by supervisors rating the respondents. The

questionnaire elicits answers from the supervisor to appraise the merit of personnel in the last year based on a merit item that contains one question. Each of these items was measured using a five-point scale ranging from (1) very weak to (5) very good. The correlation between questionnaire of task performance (supervisors' ratings) and scale of merit is acceptable at level of significance of $p < 0.001$ and the correlation between questionnaire of task performance (supervisors' ratings) and questionnaire of task performance (self-assessment) is acceptable at level of significance of $p < 0.05$. In this study reliability's coefficient of questionnaire of task performance (supervisors' ratings) were computed by Cronbach's alpha (0.93) and split half (0.95).

3. *Demographic assessment*: The questions developed by the researcher were used to assess demographic variables which were gender, age, education level, and tenure.

The researcher arranged a meeting to coordinate with Behzisty Organization to carry out the research, followed by meetings with 450 employees who were participants in this study. The meeting also involved all the supervisors who were supposed to rate the subjects task performance. The task performance questionnaires were completed by the supervisors while JDI and demographic questionnaires were completed by the employee's sample in order to determine the scale of their job satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result of multiple regression analysis as seen in Table 1 showed that there was significant relationship between job satisfaction and task performance ($R^2 = 0.85$, $p < 0.01$). The results showed that 85% of the dependent variable (task performance) variance is due to the independent variable (job satisfaction). As shown in Table 1 the computed power of prediction is ($\beta = 0.92$, $p < 0.01$).

In the second analysis also shown in Table 1, age moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance (R Square change=0.85, $p<0.01$). As shown in Table 2, the prediction of task performance through age was (Beta=-0.01, $p>0.05$) and job satisfaction was (Beta= 0.92, $p<0.01$). In this stage age did not moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance.

In the third analysis, gender along with age moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance (R Square change=0.88, $p<0.01$). As shown in Table 2, the prediction of task performance through gender was (Beta= -0.16, $p<0.01$), age was (Beta=-0.03, $p>0.05$) and job satisfaction was (Beta= 0.91, $p<0.01$). In this stage gender moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. In the fourth analysis, education along with age and gender moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance (R Square change=0.88, $p<0.01$)

(Table 1). As shown in Table 2, the prediction of task performance through education was (Beta=0.10, $p<0.01$), gender was (Beta=-0.17, $p<0.01$), age was (Beta=-0.05, $p>0.01$) and job satisfaction was (Beta= 0.83, $p<0.01$). In this stage education moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. In the fifth analysis, tenure along with age, gender and education moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance (R Square change=0.88, $p<0.01$) (Table 1). As shown in Table 2, the prediction of task performance through tenure was (Beta=0.10, $p>0.05$), education was (Beta=0.13, $p<0.01$), gender was (Beta=-0.18, $p<0.01$), age was (Beta=-0.06, $p>0.05$) and job satisfaction was (Beta= 0.82, $p<0.01$). In this stage tenure did not moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. Gender and education moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance but age and tenure did not moderate this relationship.

TABLE 1
Model summary of regression analysis on the moderating role of gender, age, educational level and tenure

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	.923 ^a	.852	.851	3.43394	.852	2568.852	1	448	.000
2	.923 ^b	.852	.851	3.43627	.852	1282.878	2	447	.000
3	.937 ^c	.878	.877	3.12220	.878	1067.787	3	446	.000
4	.940 ^d	.883	.882	3.05189	.883	843.612	4	445	.000
5	.941 ^e	.885	.884	3.03584	.885	683.187	5	444	.000

1. Predictors: job satisfaction

2. Predictors: age, job satisfaction

3. Predictors: age, gender, job satisfaction

4. Predictors: age, gender, education, job satisfaction

5. Predictors: age, gender, education, tenure, job satisfaction

TABLE 2
Multiple regression analysis results of
standardized beta coefficients of the
moderating role of gender, age, educational
level and tenure

Variables	Standardized coefficients beta	t	P level
1 Job satisfaction	.923	50.684	.000
2 Job satisfaction	.917	45.332	.000
Age	.013	.626	.532
3 Job satisfaction	.911	49.508	.000
Age	.029	1.595	.111
Gender	-.162	-9.770	.000
4 Job satisfaction	.833	33.957	.000
Age	.053	2.842	.005
Gender	-.172	-10.503	.000
education	.104	4.668	.000
5 Job satisfaction	.825	33.474	.000
Age	-.063	-1.206	.228
Gender	-.176	-10.737	.000
education	.127	5.255	.000
Tenure	.105	2.391	.067

a. Dependent variable: task performance

Results of this study showed that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. On the basis of social exchange theory, researchers often expect employees who are satisfied with their jobs to perform better in these jobs. One reason for the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance is because the employees who are satisfied are more likely to attend work, stay with an organization, arrive at work on time and perform well. Also people who like their jobs tend to work harder and perform better (Spector, 2006). Thus when they perform better they are likely to benefit from the performance such as bonuses, promotion, and recognition which could enhance satisfaction. On the other

hand, job satisfaction is positively correlated with motivation, job involvement, organizational commitment, life satisfaction and physical and mental health, working environment, economic development, and is negatively related to absenteeism, turnover, and perceived stress.

This finding is supported by previous research findings done by Judge *et al.* (2001) and Rehman and Waheed (2011) that found significant relationship between job satisfaction and performance. Numerous meta-analyses (e.g. Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran, 2005; Harrison *et al.*, 2006; Riketta, 2002; 2008) have demonstrated that positive job attitudes, such as commitment and satisfaction, are accompanied by better work outcomes.

This finding is in line with findings of a number other studies, the results of which are as follows: the correlation between satisfaction and performance was $r = .36$, indicating a modest effect (Wright *et al.*, 2007). Across two separate studies, using several different measures of job satisfaction, Schleicher *et al.* (2004) found that worker satisfaction modestly predicted job performance. In addition, a few social-cognitive theories predict that attitudes toward the job (e.g. job satisfaction) would influence behaviors on the job (e.g. reflected in job performance) and this prediction has been supported by Judge *et al.* (2001), and is also supported by a meta-analysis (Riketta, 2002; 2008). Organ *et al.* (2006) concluded that it is reasonable to think that the more positive a person's job attitude is the more positive the person's behavior will be with respect to the job.

Result of multiple regression analysis showed that the variables of gender and education moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance but age and tenure were not significant moderators in this relationship. This finding is consistent with the findings of Williams (2000) and Koustelios (2001) who found that women were more satisfied with their working conditions. This according to Spector (2006) is because women may be happier with lower pay and responsibility than men, thus perhaps because of their lower

expectations. Hartman *et al.* (1988) indicated that gender is a strong predictor of task performance. He suggested that gender could be considered as a determinant of the task performance. As for education, the research found that it moderated the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. Okpara (2004) and Gürbüz (2007) found that participants with higher education seemed to be more concerned with performance and productivity. This may be so because usually those with higher education hold higher posts and thus have more responsibilities than those with lower education. Thus this describes why gender and education could be considered as a determinant of job satisfaction and task performance.

On the other hand, age and tenure were not significant moderators in the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance. This finding is inconsistent with Clark *et al.* (1996), Siu and Cooper (1999), Karatepe *et al.* (2006) and Robbins *et al.* (2004). This is because majority of the respondents were in the 34-49 age group. Previous studies such as Barefoot *et al.* (1993) observed significant difference because of the difference in age gap in which individuals over the age 60 exhibit much less hostility and anger than younger adults and thus better able to regulate their moods and display higher levels of emotional intelligence (Siu and Cooper, 1999). A possible reason why tenure did not moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and task performance is because majority of the respondents have more than 13 years of work experience. Other studies that found significant relationship between job satisfaction and task performance was because performance was observed to improve with experience (Hall and Mansfield, 1975; Schmidt *et al.*, 1986). Karatepe *et al.* (2006) posited that job satisfaction was positively correlated with organizational tenure in which employees who have been working for more than twenty years would be more satisfied with their jobs than those who have been working for a shorter period of time.

CONCLUSION

Based on results of the present study it can be concluded the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance was moderated by gender and education. The findings have significant implications on the policies of human resource in public organizations in Iran. It would be very meaningful to study the difference in the relationship of the two variables, job satisfaction and performance between Iran, which is an Islamic country and a western or non Islamic country so that one can see how cultural and religious factors influence the relationship.

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