

Predicting Job Satisfaction through Situation-Based and Person-Based Variables

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to predict job satisfaction through some organizational factors and personality traits. Participants were 546 employees randomly selected from one of Iranian Industrial Company. Correlation coefficients showed that interpersonal conflict at work and trait anxiety and anger were negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Moreover interpersonal justice, distributive justice, and conscientiousness were positively correlated with job satisfaction. Moderated regression analyses, showed that trait anxiety and anger moderated the relationship between interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction, but conscientiousness did not. Trait anxiety and conscientiousness moderated the relationship between distributive justice and job satisfaction, but trait anger did not. Trait anxiety moderated the relationship between interpersonal justice and job satisfaction, but trait anxiety and conscientiousness did not.

KEY WORDS: Job satisfaction, Interpersonal conflict at work, organizational justice, trait anxiety, trait anger, conscientiousness.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of our investigation was to explore the simple and joint relationship of perceptions of the work situation and personality traits with job satisfaction. When studying job satisfaction, researchers tend to focus on either situational perceptions or personal characteristics, but like Sackett and DeVore (2001, cited in Colbert, Mount, Hurter, Witt, and Barrick, 2004); we believe that a full understanding of outcome variables requires both domains. Thus, consistent with past research (e.g. Robinson, 2004; Colbert, et. al. 2004; Hashemi Sheykhabani, Shokrkon, Nessi, Shehni, & Haghighi, 2008; Henle, 2005; Mount, Illis & Johnson, 2006) we proposed that positive perceptions of the work situation (such as perceived organizational justice and low interpersonal conflict at work) may lead to outcome variables such as job satisfaction. That is, when employees have favorable perceptions of their situation at work, they are more likely to accept and follow organizational norms. However, constraints may reduce the likelihood that a given situational perception is related to job satisfaction (Robinson, 2004). Specifically, we proposed that employees' personality traits (trait anxiety, trait anger, and conscientiousness) may serve to constrain or suppress this relationship. Employees are likely to demonstrate job satisfaction in response to positive perceptions of the work situation only if job satisfaction is consistent with their personality traits. Following hypotheses were developed:

- 1- There is a negative relationship between interpersonal conflict at work, and trait anxiety and anger with job satisfaction; and a positive relationship between distributive justice, interpersonal justice, and conscientiousness with job satisfaction.
- 2- Relationship between organizational justice (distributive and informational) and job satisfaction is stronger when conscientiousness is high than when it is low.
- 3- Relationship between interpersonal conflict at work and job satisfaction is stronger when conscientiousness is high than when it is low.
- 4- Relationship between organizational justice (distributive and informational) and job satisfaction is stronger when trait anxiety (and trait anger) is high than when it is low.
- 5- Relationship between interpersonal conflict at work and job satisfaction is stronger when trait anxiety (and trait anger) is high than when it is low.

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METHOD

Participants: Five hundred forty six employees of one Iranian industrial company in Khozestan province participated in the study and completed research questionnaires. The age of participants was ranging from 26 to 55 years (\bar{X} =37.43, SD=5.12). Job tenure of participants was ranging from 3-29 years (\bar{X} =36.14, SD=4.25). No more personal information was asked, because of making trust in participants to complete questionnaires, honestly.

Instruments

Conscientiousness: We used the conscientiousness subscale of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1992), which is among the most widely used brief inventories representing the FFM. This factor is measured by 12 items. For this research, a Farsi version was used.

Trait Anxiety and Anger: Spielberger’s (1979) State-Trait Personality Inventory was used to measure trait anxiety and anger. The 10-item Trait Anxiety scale measures a generalized tendency to experience anxiety across time and situations. The 10-item Trait Anger scale assesses the likelihood of perceiving a wide range of situations as anger provoking. Four response choices range from 1=almost never to 4=almost always, with high scores representing high levels of trait anxiety or trait anger. Spielberger (1979) reported alpha coefficients ranging from .80 to .92 for Trait Anxiety and .82 to .92 for Trait Anger across different ages and genders (cited in Fox, Spector, and Miles, 2001). Hashemi sheykhabani and his colleagues (2008) found trait anxiety and trait anger to be among the strongest predictors of counterproductive work behavior (r = .36 and .59, respectively ;).

Distributive and Interpersonal Justice: These variables were measured using four-factor organizational justice questionnaire developed by collquitt (2001). Based on seminal work regarding to organizational justice, he developed this questionnaire with good content and criterion-based validity. Each of these variables is measured with four items.

Interpersonal Conflict at Work: Conflict was assessed with Spector and Jex’s (1998) four-item Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale (ICAWS), which measures how often the employee experienced arguments, yelling, and rudeness in interactions with co-workers. For the conflict scale (ICAWS), Spector and Jex (1998) reported a mean Cronbach’s alpha of .74 across 13 samples. Predictive validity was demonstrated with mean correlations of .26 with physical symptoms across 7 studies and .32 with job satisfaction across 10 studies.

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables are presented at Table1.

As seen at table 1, all correlations between variables are significant, except for correlation between interpersonal conflict at work and conscientiousness. As hypothesized the correlations between interpersonal conflict at work, and trait anxiety and anger with job satisfaction are negative; and correlations between distributive justice, interpersonal justice, and conscientiousness with job satisfaction are positive.

A series of moderated regression analyses were conducted to reveal if personality characteristics (conscientiousness, trait anxiety, and trait anger) moderate relationship between environment (interpersonal conflict at work and organizational justice) and job satisfaction. Table 2 show the moderated regression analyses regarding the relationship between interpersonal conflict at work and job satisfaction with moderating role of personality characteristics.

Table1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-Interpersonal conflict	7.18	2.69						
2-Interpersonal justice	13.65	3.41	-0.416**					
3-Distributive justice	11.09	4	-0.144**	0.37**				
4-Conscientiousness	37.42	5.65	-0.07	0.144**	0.12**			
5-Trait anxiety	18.77	3.91	0.284**	-0.254**	-0.247**	-0.394**		
6-Trait anger	15.65	4.29	0.296**	-0.21**	-0.184**	-0.21**	0.45**	
7-Job satisfaction	45.21	7.61	-0.28**	0.284**	0.438	0.244**	-0.321**	-0.228**

** Significant at p<0.01

Table 2 presents the results of the moderated hierarchical regression analyses. Separate regression analyses are presented. First three regression analyses tested the interaction of interpersonal conflict with personality traits, and the second three analyses examined the interaction between interpersonal justice and personality traits. Final three analyses examined the interaction between distributive justice and personality traits. For each regression

analysis in step 1, the main effects of two independent variables were entered, and in the second step, interaction between them was entered.

As seen in Table 2, interaction of interpersonal conflict and trait anxiety, Interpersonal conflict and trait anger, Interpersonal justice and trait anger, distributive justice and trait anxiety, and distributive justice and conscientiousness, are significant. Graphs of the significant interactions are shown in Figures 1–5. Five of the nine hypothesized interactions were significant.

Figure 1. Interaction of interpersonal conflict(IC) and trait anxiety

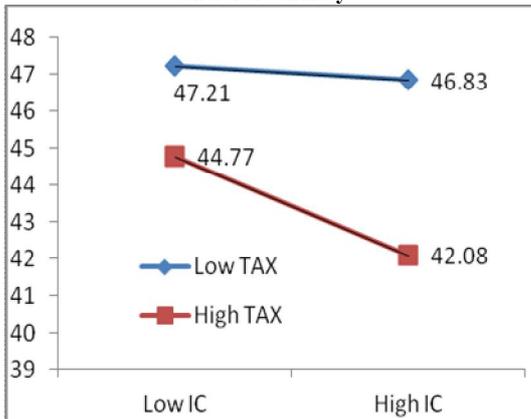


Figure 2. Interaction of interpersonal conflict (IC) and trait anger (TAG)

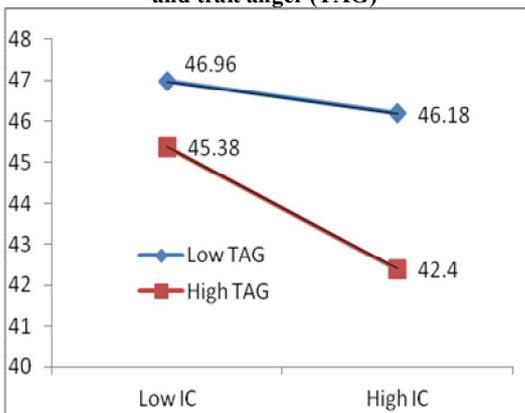


Figure 3. Interaction of interpersonal justice (IJ) and trait anger (TAG)

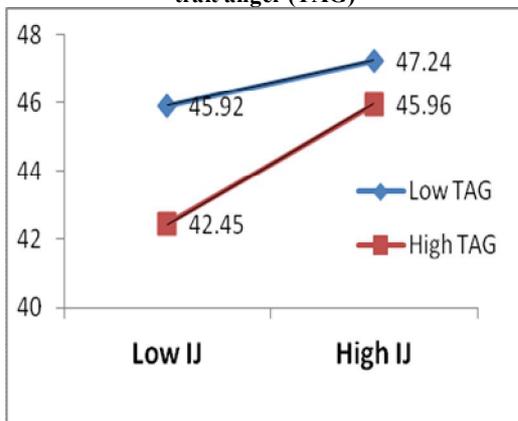


Figure 4. Interaction of distributive justice (DJ) and trait anxiety (TAX)

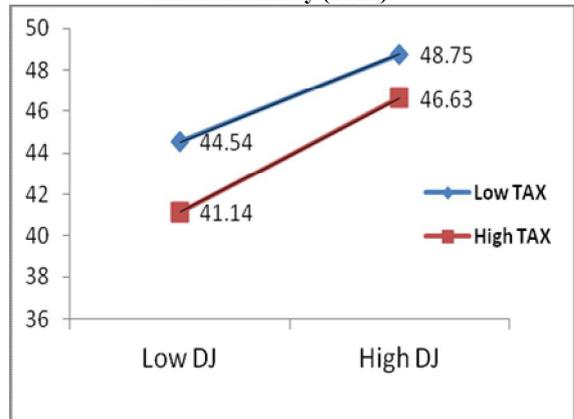


Figure 5. Interaction of distributive justice (DJ) and conscientiousness (C)

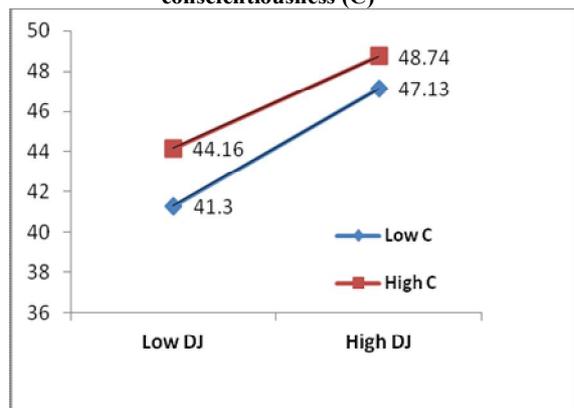


Table2. Moderated regression analyses

Regression step	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Job satisfaction	
			R ²	Δ R ²
1	Interpersonal conflict and trait anxiety		0.142	0.142**
2	Interpersonal conflict * trait anxiety		0.156	0.014**
1	Interpersonal conflict and trait anger		0.101	0.101**
2	Interpersonal conflict * trait anger		0.128	0.027**
1	Interpersonal conflict and conscientiousness		0.13	0.13
2	Interpersonal conflict * conscientiousness		0.13	0.00
1	Interpersonal justice and trait anxiety		0.147	0.147**
2	Interpersonal justice * trait anxiety		0.151	0.004
1	Interpersonal justice and trait anger		0.111	0.111**
2	Interpersonal justice * trait anger		0.123	0.012**
1	Interpersonal justice and conscientiousness		0.123	0.123
2	Interpersonal justice * conscientiousness		0.123	0.00
1	Distributive justice and trait anxiety		0.24	0.24**
2	Distributive justice * trait anxiety		0.246	0.006**
1	Distributive justice and trait anger		0.214	0.214**
2	Distributive justice * trait anger		0.215	0.001
1	Distributive justice and conscientiousness		0.23	0.23
2	Distributive justice * conscientiousness		0.224	0.014**

**p< .01

DISCUSSION

This study contributed to the job satisfaction literature by examining the importance of situation-based and person-based variables and interaction between them in predicting job satisfaction. Specifically, it was found a negative correlation between interpersonal conflict at work, and trait anxiety and anger with job satisfaction; and a positive correlation between distributive justice, interpersonal justice and conscientiousness with job satisfaction. These results are consistent with past research such as Hashemi Sheykhshabani and his colleagues (2008), Elamin and Alomaim (2011), Mansoor, Fida, Nasir, and Ahmad (2011), Murtaza, Shad, Malik (2011), Nadiri and Tanova (2009), McAuliffe, Manafa, Maseko, Bowie, & White (2009), and Sweeney and Quirin (2009). Moreover, it was found that correlation between interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction is higher for those who are high in trait anxiety and trait anger than those who are low; but interaction of interpersonal conflict and conscientiousness did not predict job satisfaction. Other findings revealed that interaction of interpersonal justice and trait anger predicted job satisfaction significantly, but its interaction with trait anxiety and conscientiousness did not predicted job satisfaction. Moreover, the relationships of distributive justice and job satisfaction were higher for those who were high in trait anxiety and conscientiousness than those who were low; but not in trait anger. These results are directly consistent with Robinson (2004) who found conscientiousness moderated the relationship between interpersonal justice and informational justice with job satisfaction; and indirectly with Fox, Spector, & Milles (2001) who found some support regarding to the moderation role of trait anxiety and anger in the relationship of organizational constraints and interpersonal conflict at work with counterproductive workplace behaviors.

Exploring the four components model of organizational justice when considering the interaction of organizational justice and personality traits in predicting organizational outcomes is suggested for future research. More important, if the situational perceptions and personality traits were highly correlated, it is unlikely that we would have found interactions between the two sets of variables. Even so, future research should attempt to examine the joint relationship of objective measures of the situation and personality traits with workplace deviance.

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