



## Relationship between Personality Traits and Job Stress with Job Satisfaction

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Job satisfaction is one of the important topics discussed in maintaining human resources in an organization. Several internal and external factors could be found that are effective in increasing job satisfaction.

**Methods:** A sample of 482 employees of some governmental organizations in Tehran was selected by cluster sampling. The five factors inventory of personality, job satisfaction and job stress questionnaires were used.

**Results:** There is a relationship between personality characteristics of employees and job satisfaction. Specifically, it was found a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and neuroticism and positive relationship between other components of personality with job satisfaction.

**Conclusion:** If there is a fit between environment and environmental patterns with personality characteristics, then job satisfaction and achievement in organizational settings would be increased, job stress would be decreased and elevated productivity for employees and the organization will arise.

**KEY WORDS:** Job satisfaction; Personality characteristics; Job stress.

### INTRODUCTION

Efficient human resources are the important capital of every organization. Almost, all experts regarded sources as the basic organizational resource. For example, Maslow believes that utopia of organizations is provided when the organization is running by self-actualized staffs (Soltan Hosseini, Naderian, Homai, 2009). A successful organization is the one that maintains human resources and mostly focus on job satisfaction of employees. Job satisfaction has been an important fact in the organization. This issue was taken into consideration for the first time in 1935 by Happak (Thompson, 1997 cited in Azkia and Tavakoli, 2006) and it has been the topic of the discussion of many researchers as by 1980, more than 4000 articles were published about this topic. So, it can be said that job satisfaction is one of the important issues in maintaining human resources of an organization. It should be considered that not focusing on job satisfaction disturbs social system of the organization in long-term and reduces responsibility and finally service leave (Mohsenpour, Navipour, Ahmadi, 2005). Most of the researchers define job satisfaction as a set of positive feeling of a person to his/her job (Locke, 1976; Weiss, 2002). If an individual is satisfied with his job, his motivation is high and his absence from work is less and he likes to help his co-workers and is more committed to the organization (Miller, Mire, Kim, 2009) and if an individual is not satisfied with his job, some issues such as absence, job leave, events of the job and the lack of productivity are occurred more (Azad-Marzabadi & Tarkhorani, 2007). Lau, Au & Ho (2003) also believes that job leave shows dissatisfaction and pessimism toward the performance of employers. There are various factors affecting job satisfaction as internal factors such as personality traits and external factors such as environmental stress. The recent studies showed that individual and personal characteristics are associated with job satisfaction and personality traits can be predictive in job satisfaction (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000; Watson, Suls & Haig, 2002; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004; Hallberg, Johansson & Schaufeli, 2007; Shimizutani, et al, 2008; Gaither, et al, 2008; Chen & Silverthorne, 2008; Acuña, Gomez & Juristo, 2009). Personality traits affect job satisfaction by behavioural, emotional and cognitive processes (Meeusen, Mohoney, Dam, Zundert, Knape, 2010). High coordination between personality and job is one of the increasing factors of job satisfaction. Holland believes that if an individual can find a job that is consistent with his personality, it is highly probable that he is satisfied with his job and can stay for a long time with this job. Connolly & Viswesvaran (2000) and Watson (2002) in their studies found that personality traits such as Conscientiousness, Extraversion and emotional stability are associated with job satisfaction the employees who have these characteristics are satisfied with their job. Acuña et al (2009) stated that Agreeableness and conscientiousness are associated with job satisfaction. Andreassen, Hetland & Pallesen (2010) in a research investigated the relationship between 3 organizational components enjoying work, job involvement and drive (internal motivating force) and

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personality traits and basic requirements of satisfaction and found that satisfaction basic requirements are associated negatively with drive and is positively associated with work enjoy. Other results showed that conscientiousness is associated with three factors of the research, extraversion and openness are associated with work enjoy and neuroticism is associated with drive. Narimani, Khanbabazade & Farzaneh (2007) in a study used Bernreuter Personality Inventory and found that aggressiveness and dominance and submission can predict job satisfaction. The other factor effective in job satisfaction is job stress. The investigation of job stress is done in the context of the person with environment and 3 factors are at the center of attention. Personal characteristics of an employed person, work condition and the result of their interaction have critical role on job stress. This view is consistent with Lazarus's transactional model and there is association between personality trait and job stress. It means that the more a person has negative views about his job, the more he experiences stress (Hallberg *et al.*, 2007; Shimizutani *et al.*, 2008; Samari and Lali faz, 2004). Organizational factors such as work volume, bad working conditions, unfair payment, management role, relationship with co-workers, role ambiguity, work and life interference are associated with job stress (Vinokur-Kaplan, 1999; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Grunfeld *et al.*, 2005; Ahsan, Abdullah & Gun Fie, 2009). The researchers believe that job satisfaction and job stress are associated and job dissatisfaction can be an important source for job stress, while high job satisfaction can reduce the effects of stress (Fletcher & Payne, 1980; Saterland & Cooper, 1992; \* Elangovan, 2001; Lu, While & Barriball, 2007; Lambert & Paoline, 2008; Gaither *et al.*, 2008; Ziauddin, 2010; Abedi, Zare, Barkhordari & Halavani, 2009). Raisi and Tavakoli (2003) in a study found that job stress reduces the performance of staffs and managers and they had adverse effect on the quality of their work.

Azad-Marzabadi & Tarkhorani (2007) in a study found that there is significant association between stress and work satisfaction, satisfaction with the employer and satisfaction with pay. Generally, job satisfaction both can affect job stress as a variable and job stress can cause job dissatisfaction and this relationship is bilateral. However, most of the studies showed that job environment and job stress have negative effects on physical and mental health as it can cause job dissatisfaction, low performance and efficiency (Kuper & Marmot, 2003; Kang *et al.*, 2005; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005; Sheena *et al.*, 2005; Virtanen *et al.*, 2007; Kopp, Stauder, Pureb, Janszky & Skrabski, 2008; Peltzer, Shisana, Zuma, Wyk & Zungu-Dirwayi, 2009; Kawakami & Tsutsumi, 2010).

Thus, one of issues attracting the attention of researchers is adjusting environment and environmental models with the personality characteristics of people that is with satisfaction of internal needs of an individual and provides progress in job and social activities. So, this research attempts to investigate the role of two effective factors in job satisfaction, one is related to internal factors and other is related to environmental factors, it means that personal characteristics and job stress are investigated in determining job satisfaction.

## METHOD

The study is a correlation study. Population of this study is including all governmental organizations of Tehran. Ten organizations among governmental organizations were selected by cluster random sampling method. Then of the employees of the organizations, 482 persons (186 women and 296 men) were selected randomly as the study sample. The average age of these people is 37 years, they have diploma or higher degree and 64% of them are married and 36% are single.

### Measures

In this research 3 measures were used:

**1- Five factor NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-FF1)** is including 60 questions extracted from NEOPI-R, measure of the five factor model: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. In this inventory the Participants were asked to indicate their response to each item on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree.

The scores of the scale are obtained by adding 12 items for each dimension and after inversed scoring of some items according to the instruction. Regarding the validity of this test, the results of some studies show that its subscales are of good internal consistency. For example, Costa & McCrae (1992) reported Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.68 for agreeableness to 0.86 for Neuroticism. The results of the Mooradian & Nwzlek (1995) study indicates that Cronbach's alpha of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness are 0.84, 0.75, 0.74, 0.75 and 0.83, respectively. NEO-FF1 inventory in Iran is normalized by Grossi (1998). The validity of this inventory by test-retest method for coefficients was obtained as 0.83, 0.75, 0.80, 0.79, 0.79, respectively (cited in Fathi Ashtiani, 2009).

**2- The Job Descriptive Index (JDI):** This inventory for the first time was made by Smith, Kendall, & Hulin (1969) and is consisting of the: pay, promotions and promotion opportunities, coworkers, supervision, and the work itself.

Scoring is in a way that the answers based on Likert scope are as 1 to 5. The studies done by Smith, Kendall, & Hulin (1969, 1972) reported its reliability coefficient ranging from 0.62 to 0.89 and for subtests in the first study from 0.59 to 0.92 and in the second study, 0.62 to 0.93.

For the first time in Iran, Arshadi(1990) in their study reported the total reliability 0.71 and for the sub tests ranging from 0.73 to 0.85 and in the study of Ghani (1994) the coefficient of total validity 0.46 and the coefficient of subtests is ranging from 0.42 to 0.59 (Cited in Fathi- Ashtiani, 2009).

**3- Osipew Occupational Stress Inventory (1987):** This inventory is consisting of 6 facets: 1- Role overload, 2- role insufficiency, 3- role ambiguity, 4- role boundary, 5- responsibility and 6- physical environment.

The 6 facets are respectively assessed by 10 expressions. Role load investigates individual conditions in comparison with the work environment demands. The coordination of education, skills, educational and experimental characteristics with working environment needs is investigated in role insufficiency dimension. In role ambiguity, a person’s knowledge about priorities, working environment expectations and evaluations are assessed. In role boundary the demands in terms of conscientiousness and his role in working environment, in responsibility dimension, an individual responsibility from efficiency and others time in work environment is assessed and in physical environment, exposure to physical toxins or extremities are assess. For each item 5 choices ranging from “never” to “often” are existing. So, scoring is done from 1 to 5 and in some items it is inversed. Today, this inventory is used in America as a valid test for measuring job stress. This inventory was introduced in 1981 and is revised many times until now. The reliability of this test is calculated by retest method in satisfaction level with Cronbach’s alpha as 0.89 (Cited in Azad-Marzabadi, 2005).

## RESULTS

Mean and standard deviation of job satisfaction, personality traits and job stress are presented in table 1.

As it is shown in table (1), regarding to job satisfaction, the highest mean is for satisfaction with co-workers and the least mean is related to satisfaction with supervisor. Regarding to job stress, the highest mean for job stress components is related to physical environment component and the least mean is related to responsibility. Finally, regarding to personality variables, the highest mean for personality traits is related to conscientiousness and the least mean is related to neuroticism.

**Table 1: Descriptive characteristics including mean and standard deviation of variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>		
Work	30.64	5.03
Supervisor	17.25	3.98
Co-workers	35.72	4.97
Promotions	28.46	3.70
Pay and salary	26.90	8.78
Working environment conditions	34.97	7.68
<b>Job stress</b>		
Role overload	29.25	6.31
Role Insufficiency	28.96	5.65
Role Ambiguity	35.54	4.75
Role Boundary	31.81	5.18
Physical Environment	37.93	6.76
Responsibility	20.93	7.93
<b>Personality Characteristics</b>		
Neuroticism	18.1	4.66
Extraversion	29.57	4.07
Openness	28.29	5.49
Agreeableness	30.9	3.2
Conscientiousness	33.15	4.7

To find the fact that whether there is any association between job satisfaction and personality characteristics as internal factor and job stress as external factor, Pearson correlation coefficient was used and the related results are shown in table 2 and 3.

As it is shown in table (2), there is association between employees’ personality traits and job satisfaction. As neuroticism component has significantly negative association with job satisfaction and other personality components have significantly positive association with job satisfaction.

**Table 2: The correlation between job satisfaction and internal factor of personality traits**

Personality components	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
Neuroticism	-0.187	0.001
Extraversion	0.165	0.001
Openness to experience	0.102	0.012
Agreeableness	0.181	0.001
Conscientiousness	0.179	0.001

**Table 3: Correlation of job satisfaction with external factor of job stress**

Job stress components	Correlation coefficient	Significance level
Role overload	-0.31	0.001
Role Insufficiency	-0.48	0.001
Role Ambiguity	-0.43	0.001
Role Boundary	-0.38	0.001
Physical Environment	-0.39	0.001
Responsibility	-0.33	0.001
Total job stress	-0.54	0.001

As it is shown in table (3), all components of job stress have significant negative association with job satisfaction. Also, to investigate the predictive role of job satisfaction with personality traits as internal factor and job stress as external factor, multiple regression was used and the summary of its results are shown in table 4 and table 5.

**Table 4: Multiple regression analysis of job satisfaction on personality traits**

Predictive variable	Components	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig	B	$\beta$	t	Sig
personality traits	Neuroticism	0.164	13.61	0.05	0.221	0.121	1.84	0.066
	Extraversion				0.248	0.228	1.77	0.078
	Openness to experience				0.021	0.010	0.161	0.872
	Agreeableness				0.352	0.161	2.68	0.008
	Conscientiousness				0.336	0.127	3.03	0.001

**Table 5: Multiple regression of job satisfaction on job stress**

Predictive variable	Components	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig	B	$\beta$	t	Sig
Job stress	Role overload	0.294	36.13	0.05	0.318	0.218	3.35	0.001
	Role Insufficiency				0.168	0.96	10.55	0.01
	Role Ambiguity				0.170	0.098	10.64	0.001
	Role Boundary				0.308	0.155	2.77	0.006
	Responsibility				0.307	0.214	3.81	0.001
	Physical Environment				0.338	0.228	3.45	0.001

As it is shown in table 4, among personality components only agreeableness and conscientiousness components are significant at level  $P < 0.05$  and they can predict job satisfaction.

As it is shown in table 5, all job stress components are significant at level  $P < 0.05$  and they can predict job satisfaction.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this research showed that there is significant association between personality traits and job satisfaction as neuroticism has significantly negative association with job satisfaction and other personality components have significantly positive association with job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the results of researches including Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000; Watson et al, 2002; Moscoso, 2004; Hallberg et al, 2007; Shimizutani et al, 2008; Gaither et al, 2008; Chen et al, 2008; Acuña et al, 2009. Also the results showed that only agreeableness and conscientiousness components are important in predicting job satisfaction and other components are not critical and this result is consistent with the previous researches (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000; Watson et al, 2002; Andreassen et al, 2010; Narimani et al, 2007). For example, Acuña et al (2009) found that agreeableness and conscientiousness components are personality traits that are associated with job satisfaction. Also, the results of this research are not consistent with some findings. For example, Bogg & Cooper (1995) stated that job satisfaction is mostly provided by working environment conditions and personality traits have less predictive roles. Miller et al

(2009) believed that personality traits are associated with job satisfaction but among police officers some factors such as age and experience are more important than personality traits in job satisfaction. Miller himself reveals that some jobs as policeman are stressful and as the age is increased in this job and they earn more experience, job satisfaction will increase. So, personality traits are in lower priorities. As Warr (2001) pointed to the role of age in job satisfaction in his research, he believes that personality traits are considerably different among old and young employees. Older employees are more conscientious and they are more satisfied with their job in comparison with younger employees. The other results of this research were that job stress is significantly associated with job satisfaction and it can play critical role in job satisfaction of employees and this finding is consistent with the results of the previous researches (Fletcher & Payne, 1980; Saterland & Cooper, 1992; \* Elangovan, 2001; Lu et al, 2007; Lambert & Paoline, 2008; Gaither et al, 2008; Ziauddin, 2010; Abedi et al, 2009; Raisi and Tavakoli (2002). For example, Azad-Marzabadi & Tarkhorani (2005) in a study found that there is significant association between job stress and satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervisor and satisfaction with pay. As it is seen a part of the lack or low job satisfaction is related to mental pressures and stresses. It means that stress and job satisfaction are correlated and by increasing one, the other is increased and vice versa. Indeed, the study of job stresses in organizations requires understanding all the stressful factors. As each organization is having its own special characteristics, knowing all these factors with the prevalence of stress for employees are of great importance.

Job satisfaction as an effective factor can motivates employees and makes them more committed toward the organization and reduces their stress, increases the organization efficiency and its is associated with mental and physical health of the employees. To make the employees satisfied with their job, job stress of the employees should be taken into consideration. Job stress in addition to economical damages, disturbance in performance and low productivity in employees has negative effects on physical and mental health. Researchers believe that the simplest and most obvious effect of job stress is revealed as job dissatisfaction. Stress by affecting interpersonal relations and mental and physical health of the people, affects their job satisfaction (Jafari , Yazdi & Hosseinian, 2009) and according to the results of the current research, job stress is one of the issues that should be considered by managers and authorities in management and organizational behavior. Also, personality traits of the employees should be taken into consideration. The importance of knowing the personality traits and employing them can have critical role in working process and prevents many problems. Research about personality traits can have important role in satisfaction as personality factors can be a solution for job selection and job satisfaction and the increasing satisfaction with job avoids job stresses and increases productivity of the organization.

The limitations of this research were the restricting the research population to governmental organizations employees, not using valid methods such as interview and long inventory and probably the lack of precision and fatigue of the participants in filling the questionnaires. So, it is recommended to carry out such a research on private companies employees. Also, due to the negative association of

Neuroticism as a personality trait with job satisfaction, educational instructions of the families and authorities are recommended. It is suggested to the organizations to use personality tests in their employment decisions to increase their job satisfaction. Also, according to the previous researches, job satisfaction can be effective in job performance and mental health of the employees, so, it is recommended to the authorities and offices to educate a good coping strategy to control job stresses.

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