

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AND JOB SATISFACTION IN MIDDLE-AGED ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to investigate the predictive relationship between psychological wellbeing, its 6 dimensions and job satisfaction in a purposive sample of 250 (125 male, 125 female) adults of ages between 35-45 years. The sample belonged to a number of professions (like doctors, teachers, bankers etc.). Psychological wellbeing scale (Ryff et al., 1995) and generic job satisfaction scale (McDonald et al., 1997) were administered on the sample. Pearson product moment correlation scores indicate that correlation between job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing was not significant. Also the correlations between various dimensions of psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction were not significant, except for environmental mastery that has a significant positive predictive relationship with psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: Job satisfaction; Psychological wellbeing; Environmental Mastery.

INTRODUCTION

Evidence suggests that when an employee is satisfied at a workplace, he will put his all into giving the best outcomes (DiMaria et al., 2020). It is human nature to yearn to satisfy basic psychological needs, the satisfaction of which is requisite for all human beings, and the lack of which could lead to distress and psychological disorders.

Psychological wellbeing is an evaluation of a person's performance along multiple significant but interlinked extents and includes global, physical, and mental health (Ryff et al, 1995). Wellbeing is a state in which individuals can actualize their own abilities; are able to cope with the normal stresses of life; are able to work fruitfully and productively; can contribute to their community. All of these factors act as motivation at work and are strongly linked to job satisfaction at one's workplace. This suggests that any organization, in order to enhance an individual's contribution towards the job, can satisfy these self-centered needs of the individual and achieve that outcome.

Literature reveals a trend of higher job satisfaction levels among the age group of middle adulthood (Easterlin, 2006). Among several reasons which support this finding include the gain of experience with time, familiarity, and the establishment of a comfort zone in some cases but in more cases, this satisfaction is a result of increased pay and higher status in the workplace. According to Tangri et al., (2003) a major factor influencing this peak in satisfaction levels among the middle-aged is the gradual lowering of goals and expectations among them. Most middle-aged employees refuse to switch places and stay consistent and fulfilled in one place as compared to younger adults resulting in great productivity and lower absenteeism (Easterlin, 2006).

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Job satisfaction is a fundamental feature to be managed properly by an organization to ensure better behavior and performance results for employees (Kundi et al., 2021). To the plethora of studies suggesting the interdependence of psychological wellbeing of an individual and their job satisfaction, this paper adds the factor of age and disputes the idea of middle-aged people being more satisfied with their workplaces as compared to other age groups.

Employee job satisfaction has gained a lot of traction from researchers and practitioners because of its constructive influence on employees' productivity and performance. Current study has following hypotheses,

1. Job satisfaction will be positively correlated with overall psychological wellbeing
2. Job satisfaction will be positively correlated with autonomy
3. Job satisfaction will be positively correlated with environmental mastery
4. Job satisfaction will be positively correlated with personal growth
5. Job satisfaction will be positively correlated with positive relationship with others
6. Job satisfaction will be positively correlated with purpose in life
7. Job satisfaction will be positively correlated with self-acceptance

METHODOLOGY

Participants

For current research, purposely sampled 250 participants (125 males, 125 females) with age ranges from 35-45 years (Mean age= 38.43, SD=5.80) was selected. They belonged to middle and upper middle classes and none of the participants were currently unemployed. They belonged to a number of professions (like bankers, teachers, accounts officers, sales managers, etc.), having different levels of education (from intermediate to PhD) and serving in different capacities from officer grade to lower management.

Table No. 1 Educational level wise distribution of sample

Educational levels	Degree/Certificate titles	Count	Percentage
Certificates	CA	2	2.4%
	CMA	1	
	ACCA	3	
12 years of education	Intermediate	17	7.2%
	D.A.E.	1	
	Dars-i-Nizami	1	
14 years of education	B.Sc.	4	17.6%
	B.Com.	16	
	B.A.	23	
	MLIS	1	
	MA	52	
	MBA	24	
	MBBS	9	
	M.Com.	4	
	M.Sc.	16	
	D.P.T.	1	
16 years of education	B. Tech	2	63.6%
	B. Pharm.	2	
	BS	17	
	BE	5	
	BDS	6	
	BBA	14	
	BE	2	
	B.Ed	4	
	MS	5	
	M.Ed.	1	
	ME	1	
	M.Phil.	9	
M.Phil./MS			6.4%

Doctorate	PhD	5	2.8%
	D. Pharm.	2	

Measures

Demographic Data Sheet: The questionnaire included a demographic data sheet that covered the participant's basic information like gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, designation/post and years of employment etc.

The Generic Job Satisfaction Scale (MacDonald et al., 1997): It measures employees' emotions and effects towards different aspects of their jobs. Each item of the generic job satisfaction scale is based on answers ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree" on a Likert Scale. The original study of this measure reports strong reliability and validity (MacDonald et al., 1997).

Psychological Wellbeing Scale (Ryff et al., 1995): It measures 6 dimensions of psychological wellbeing i.e. autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Items of this scale can be rated on a Likert scale how true each statement is for the person responding to it. Strong reliability validity and temporal stability of the scale are reported (Ryff et al., 1995). It is widely used measure for psychological wellbeing.

RESULTS

Table No. 2 Correlation between job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing and its dimensions (N=250)

	1.	M	SD
1. Job satisfaction	--	37.48	7.25
2. Psychological Wellbeing	.084	70.23	12.09
3. Autonomy	.113	11.15	2.67
4. Environmental Mastery	.177*	11.68	2.86
5. Personal Growth	.017	12.26	3.47
6. Positive relationships with others			2.76
	.044	11.30	
7. Purpose in life	-.072	11.87	3.05
8. Self-acceptance	.097	12.00	3.36

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level.

Results show a positive correlation between environmental mastery and job satisfaction which aligns with and supports the 3rd hypothesis of this research. The overall psychological wellbeing and the remaining dimensions do not show a significant correlation; hence disproving the remaining hypotheses.

DISCUSSION

Current study was an attempt to explore the relationship between job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing among middle-aged individuals with different occupations (banking, teaching, engineering, etc.). Not only correlation was investigated between job satisfaction and overall psychological wellbeing, but correlations between job satisfaction and all six dimensions of psychological wellbeing were explored.

Job satisfaction was hypothesized to have positive correlations with psychological wellbeing and its six dimensions. According to the first finding of the study, an insignificant correlation was found between job satisfaction and overall psychological wellbeing. Similar is the correlation with most of the dimensions except for environmental mastery that was significantly correlated positively with job satisfaction as hypothesized. This implies that job satisfaction and environmental mastery have a positive predictive relationship.

Similar findings are reported in 2 studies i.e., Harwood et al. (2015) and Ntoumanis et al. (1999) who claimed that individuals who perceive themselves as competent at work and have a sense of mastery of the environment--i.e., have a mastery over their work environment, experience positive feelings and are more likely to be engaged, creative, proactive, contented, have a sense of trust, and are unlikely to leave their jobs. Thus it can be said that, individuals who feel master and competent over their environment may be more satisfied with their jobs.

As for other correlations, consistent with the findings of this research is Wright et al (2007), who demonstrated in their study that even though psychological wellbeing had a predictive effect on job performance, psychological wellbeing did not predict job satisfaction. That is consistent with the findings of the current research.

A theory known as 'segmentation hypothesis' claims that there is no relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction and as psychological wellbeing is strongly related to life satisfaction (Heizomi et al., 2015) and is a predictor for each other, an insignificant relationship between job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing is also expected within the context of the segmentation hypothesis. In the literature, there is evidence in favor of the segmentation hypothesis. According to Gupta et al. (1981), job satisfaction and life satisfaction load on separate, different factors. It is even suggested that individuals may compensate for life satisfaction by finding more satisfaction in the job and vice versa (Iris et al., 1972) so even a negative correlation between job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing wouldn't be too surprising. Similarly, Aazami et al. (2015) were also not able to find any significant relationship between psychological distress and composite job satisfaction opposed to the prediction of negative correlation between the two.

Moreover, other reasons for the findings could be the use of participants with various occupational backgrounds. This could account for such non-significant relationships between job satisfaction and the other five facets (self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, personal growth, and purpose in life) of psychological wellbeing. İşgör et al (2016) observed in their findings that, as they also used participants from different occupations in their study, a significant difference was observed between psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction scores among them. They found the psychological wellbeing of police officers, engineers, health staff, justice employees, and teachers to be significantly higher than the psychological wellbeing of the public workers which could be because of the difference in salaries of these employees. Findings were similar for job satisfaction scores also (İşgör et al, 2016). In perceiving work environments, significant differences exist based on occupation, age and gender. Usually employees above 45 have highest innovation, perceived autonomy and control in the workplace (De Frias et al, 2001). A study on medical professionals demonstrated that older medical professionals have higher psychological wellbeing and work motivation, compared to the younger medical professionals (Rehman et al., 2006). Clark et al. (1996) who also found a U shaped graph between job satisfaction and age demonstrating that the 59.06 percent of the youngest employees (16-19 year) were overall highly satisfied. Satisfaction levels dropped after 19 years of age before increasing to its maximum of 75.52 percent at 60 years or above. Thus many factors such as age are found to be playing a role in the experience of job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. Also, according to Smith et al. (1997) people's subjective levels of experiencing satisfaction vary with several aspects of their employment such as regular salary, workplace conditions, promotions, co-workers etc. Aazami et al. (2015) also claimed that the relation between job satisfaction and physical and psychological health varies across the nine dimensions of job satisfaction.

Lastly, such unexpected relationships between the facets of psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction, as well as differences in their strength of significant relationships, must probably be the outcome of demographic factors such as the age ranges of the participants and differences in occupations of all the participants. According to Dolan et al. (2000), social demographic variables exert considerable influence on both job satisfaction and life satisfaction individually and also on the interrelation between both.

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