



The Role of Personal Control in the Experience of Work Satisfaction among Higher Education Teachers

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Abstract

Received: 30 Aug 2014
Revised: 18 Oct 2014
Accepted: 22 Dec 2014

Keywords:

Personal Control, Job Satisfaction, Higher Education Teachers

A sense of personal control has been defined as a feeling of having some measure of control over the things that happen in one's life and the belief in one's own ability to change them in desired direction. The present study has attempted to explore how and in what manner the personal control influences job satisfaction of higher education teachers. The sample consisted of 120 higher education teachers who belonging to different levels of educational institutions (higher secondary, colleges and universities) situated in Malappuram and Calicut Districts of Kerala. Their age ranged between 25 and 59 years and among them 81 males and 39 females was included. The Personal Control Inventory (Firdousiya & Jayan, 2010) and The Job Satisfaction Scale (Jayan & Dharmangadan, 2002) were administered. Results revealed that personal control shows significant correlation with different dimensions of the job satisfaction. Apart from this one-way analysis of variance shows that personal control has a significant impact on the dimensions of job satisfaction.

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A solid foundation for exploring the importance of personal control has been developed by researchers in both management and psychology. Numerous psychological studies indicate that a range of undesirable consequences can result from low or less than desired levels of personal control. These consequences include withdrawal (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1987); decrease in performance (Bazerman, 1982); stress (Averill, 1973); reactance (Brehm, 1966) and depression (Seligman, 1975).

People generally like the feeling of having some measure of control over the things that happen in their lives, and they take individual action when they want to influence events directly. In doing these things people strive for a sense of personal control – the feeling that they can make decisions and take effective action to produce desirable outcomes and avoid undesirable ones (Rodin, 1986).

Personal control is “an individual's beliefs, at a given point of time, in his or her ability to affect a change, in a desired direction, on the environment” (Greenberger & Strasser, 1986). The need for personal control varies across time within the same individual and among individuals at any point in time, but there remains some basic ongoing desire for control.

To understand personal control, some researchers have attempted to differentiate conceptually among its various components: Averill (1973) define three types of control (behavioral, cognitive and decisional); Miller (1979) add informational control to these three types described by Averill as fourth type of control; Bazerman (1982) distinguishes between activity and outcome control; Rothbaum (1982) suggest that there are four types of control (predictive, illusory, vicarious and interpretive).

The individuals' control perceptions may be a consequence of direct reactance, changes in cognitions, feed-back seeking behavior, non-veridical perceptions, or even vicarious events. The precise source of particular control perceptions, although relevant, may not be as important as the magnitude and direction of these perceptions and the opportunities provided by the organization for increasing personal control. Greenberger (1982) suggested that there are two

critical components of control perceptions – the control desired and the control possessed. Greenberger and Stasser (1986) maintain that a person's control perceptions and resulting responses can be understood in terms of the individual's overall level of drives and the attainment of personal control.

Thus, efficacy or sense of personal control is a person's belief in his or her ability to perform competently in whatever is attempted – as an indicator of well-being, it is considered as sense of one's competence, ability to cope, to manage and to master. Personal control, or belief that one is an instrumental force in one's life outcomes, has long been considered as an important correlate of psychological well-being. In fact, there has long been substantial evidence that indicates the senses of being in control related directly to psychological well-being (eg., Lefcourt, 1982; Phares, 1976; Strassberg, 1973). Feeling of control over one's life and circumstances is important for physical and psychological health. Internality and perception of personal control over positive outcomes were positively correlated with job commitment, involvement and satisfaction (Furnham, 1994). Levels of job uncertainty and personal control have a direct relationship with emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction (Paulson, 2005). Tangri, Thomas, Mednick, and Lee (2003) found that personal control had significant correlation with physical well-being, role quality and psychological distress.

Job satisfaction is the mental feeling of favorableness which an individual has about his job. Job satisfaction is generally defined as the amount of overall positive affect that individuals have toward their jobs. It is the amount of pleasure or contentment associated with a job. Job satisfaction is the result of various attitudes the employees hold towards their job, towards related factors and towards life in general. Lock (1976) defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from appraisal of one's job or job experiences". High job satisfaction may lead to improve productivity, decrease turnover, improved attendance, reduced accidents, lesser job stress and lower unionization. Job satisfaction is not simply a function of the job or the organizational characteristics, but rather reflects more broadly enduring individual differences in personality, affectivity, values and preferences. Personal control had identified as a significant contributor of work satisfaction by Tangri, Thomas, Mednick, and Lee in a research conducted among African American Women in 2003.

This investigation is an attempt to study the impact of personal control on job satisfaction of higher education teachers.

Objectives

1. To study the nature and extent of relationship between personal control and the dimensions of job satisfaction of higher education teachers.
2. To identify the impact of personal control on job satisfaction of higher education teachers.

Hypotheses

1. There will be significant relationship between personal control and job satisfaction of higher education teachers.
2. There will be significant impact of personal control on job satisfaction of higher education teachers.

Method

Participants

The participants for the study consists of 120 higher education teachers who belonging to different levels of educational institutions (higher secondary, colleges and universities, N=40 for each level) situated in Malppuram and Calicut Districts of Kerala. Their age ranged between 25 and 59 years and among them 81 males and 39 females was included.

Instruments

1. Personal Control Inventory (Firdousiya & Jayan, 2010): this inventory was designed to assess the degree of personal control perceptions of individuals, especially in occupational settings. This inventory measures two dimensions namely, occupational self-efficacy and

internal locus of control. The personal control inventory consists of 32 items among which 19 items belongs to the occupational self-efficacy dimension and the rest denotes the internal locus of control dimension. The split-half reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.89. Besides face validity the scale has high content validity.

2. Job Satisfaction Scale (Jayan & Dharmangadan, 2002): the scale was developed for measuring the level of job satisfaction of organizational personnel's. This scale consists of 50 items which measure 10 sub-factors of job satisfaction. Reliability of the job satisfaction scale was calculated by split-half method and is found to be 0.91. the scale has content and concurrent validity.

Procedure

The needed data were collected from the teachers of different higher secondary schools, colleges and universities situated of Kerala. Teachers of the selected institutions were contacted by prior appointment and had a discussion about the purpose of the study as well as the importance, nature, application of the study and the nature of information required for the study.

The instruments for the present study namely, Personal Control Inventory and Job Satisfaction Scale were administered in a uniform manner. The said instruments were distributed to the subjects individually, with an oral instruction of how to respond to each scale. Instructions for responding to the statements were printed in the tools itself very clearly. The style of responding varied from one scale to the other.

Results and Discussion

An individual enters into the job with many qualities and capabilities. The organizations today increasingly have recognized the importance and value of human resources in the development of the organizations. It is well understood that the success of an employee is strongly associated with certain personal qualities and skills of the employees. This is one of the reasons why the present study has focused the influence of personal control on job satisfaction.

In order to study the relationship between personal control and the job satisfaction, Karl Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was calculated. The results are summarized in table 1. It can be observed that personal control has shown significant correlation with the overall job satisfaction of the employees and its dimensions like security, salary, status, working condition, co-worker and the company policies and management. It means that the level of personal control and job satisfaction were related to each other and can influence each other. These results support the findings reported by Allen and Greenberger (1980) indicating that there is a direct relationship between personal control and affect.

Table 1

Relationship between Personal control and Job Satisfaction

Variables of job satisfaction	Security	salary	status	promotion	Working condition	Co-worker	Other benefits	supervision	Intrinsic aspects	Company policies and management	Job satisfaction
Personal control	.38**	.19*	.26**	.12	.41**	.42**	.13	.13	.17	.18*	.37**

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Another objective in the present investigation is to know the impact of personal control on job satisfaction and its dimensions. One-way analysis of variance in each case was carried out in order to understand how job satisfaction is get affected by the levels of personal control beliefs. For this purpose, the whole sample is grouped into three on the basis of personal control scores. Those who have scored (a) 77 and below on the personal control constitute

group I (low), (b) between 78 and 87 constitute group II (moderate), and (c) 88 and above constitute group III (high) on the basis of mean and standard deviation. The results of each ANOVA were summarized in the table 2 and the corresponding mean and the standard deviation in table 3.

Table 2

Results of One-way ANOVA of Personal Control on Job Satisfaction

Variables	Between Group		Within Groups		F
	Sum of Square	Mean Square	Sum of Square	Mean Square	
Security	297.38	148.69	1700.21	14.53	10.23**
Salary	121.26	60.63	2034.33	17.39	3.49*
Status	102.65	51.32	1002.52	8.57	5.99**
Promotion	22.78	11.39	793.34	6.78	1.68
Working Condition	284.27	142.13	1073.03	9.17	15.50**
Co-worker	169.75	84.87	914.24	7.81	10.86**
Other Benefits	21.42	10.71	964.57	8.24	1.30
Supervision	81.23	40.61	1262.07	10.79	3.76*
Intrinsic aspects	51.61	25.81	1101.71	9.42	2.74
Company policies and Management	114.21	57.1	1362.92	11.65	4.9**
Job satisfaction	10378.96	5189.48	47826.36	408.77	12.69**

**p< .01, *p< .05

Table 3

Cell means of Job satisfaction for various groups formed on the basis of personal control

Variables	Personal Control							
	Group I N=33		Group II N=55		Group III N=32		Total N=120	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Security	16.39	4.06	18.95	8.87	20.63	3.43	18.69	4.10
Salary	17.12	4.26	18.89	3.58	19.78	4.96	18.64	4.26
Status	19.45	3.04	20.15	2.61	21.88	3.30	20.42	3.05
Promotion	16.82	2.60	17.35	2.12	18	3.28	17.38	2.62
Working Condition	16.94	3.04	19.35	2.74	21.09	3.46	19.15	3.38
Co-worker	16.79	2.84	19.64	2.61	21	3.05	19.49	3.02
Other Benefits	16.03	3.03	16.42	2.55	17.16	3.21	16.51	2.88
Supervision	17.52	4.02	19.33	2.60	19.41	3.51	18.85	3.36
Intrinsic aspects	16.91	2.88	17.87	2.58	18.69	3.93	17.83	3.11
Company policies and Management	16.30	3.98	18.36	2.93	18.66	3.56	17.88	3.52
Overall Job satisfaction	171.27	20.84	186.29	16.01	196.28	3.56	184.83	22.12



As a follow-up, Scheffe's multiple mean comparison was done for the variables. It shows a significance of mean difference among different personal control groups in terms of job satisfaction and its 7 variables. In the case of Security Group I differ significantly from both Group II and Group III. i.e., security satisfaction is found to be high in the high personal control group. For the high personal control groups, as they are high on their beliefs about control over their environment they also seems to be high in their feelings of security at work.

The variable Salary satisfaction shows significant difference between the Group I and Group III, which implies that the high personal control group shows a significant difference in their satisfaction with salary than the group with low personal control. In the case of Status, Scheffe's test shows that Group III significantly differs with both the Group I and Group II. It indicates that as in the case of security and salary, the high personal control group's status is significantly higher than that of lower and moderate groups.

The F value for Working Condition implies that different personal control groups differ among them, in which the Group III scores highest on this variable than either Group I or Group II. The working conditions will be more satisfied or appropriate to the people with high personal control in comparison to the lower groups.

In the case of variable Co-worker, the different groups differ among them in their satisfaction with co-workers. Scheffe's analysis indicates significant mean difference among three groups of personal control in their level of co-worker satisfaction at work. The highest mean score is attained by the Group III which is followed by Group II and Group I. this implies that people with high personal control can become highly satisfied with their co-workers than the lower groups.

For the variable supervision, the people show significant difference in their satisfaction with supervision in accordance with the changes in the level of personal control. Here Group I shows a significant mean difference with Group III. High personal control groups scores high on satisfaction with supervision also. Further, the variable company policies and management also has a significant 'F' value which indicates that different personal control groups differ significantly among them in terms of their satisfaction with company policies and management. Scheffe's test shows a significant mean difference between Group I with both Group II and Group III. Satisfaction with company policies and management is observed to be less in the low personal control group and this group significantly differs from those who have high personal control than them.

The 'F' value for the overall job satisfaction denotes that different personal control groups differ among them in their job satisfaction. The mean difference of Group I significantly differs with the other two groups. It is the Group III that scores highest than the Group II and Group I. job satisfaction is found to be high among high personal control groups, and the level of satisfaction decreases as with a decline in the personal control beliefs.

Thus, from the one-way analysis of variance, it can be conclude that the personal control has a significant influence on the level of job satisfaction of the higher education teachers. The research conducted by Tangri, Thomas, Mednick and Lee (2003) has supported this finding. They found that work satisfaction was best predicted by the women's sense of personal control and role quality in a study conducted among the college educated African American women.

Conclusion

An important implication of the present research is that an alternative method for increasing the level of job satisfaction of the employees and there by their performance at work may be for the managers to alter the individual's perception about their sense of personal control. Personal control helps the individuals to make decisions in particular point in life. Individuals in higher positions in organizations should possess a sense of personal control, unless they find it difficult to carry out the functioning of the organization smoothly. Job satisfaction is reflected through one's interest toward a particular job. This article reveals that



the amount of work satisfaction experienced by the person is influenced by the degree of one's control perceptions over his work and life outcomes.

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