

The Impact of Big Five Personality Traits and Positive Psychological Strengths towards Job Satisfaction: a Review

Chandrasekar Therasa¹, Chidambaram Vijayabanu^{1*}

Received 14 July 2014; accepted after revision 02 December 2014

Abstract

Human resource can be a dynamic asset or a debilitating liability depending upon how well it is harnessed. Many progressive organizations around the world have begun to internalize this reality and keeping the human resource satisfied is considered one of the key factors for the success of any organization. Dispositional base of job satisfaction has gained renewed interest since job satisfaction is a mixture of beliefs and feelings. With an eye toward research and practice, the current study consolidates various literatures and examines the relationship between Big Five Personality, Positive psychological strengths towards job satisfaction. The study also takes into consideration the demographic impact towards job satisfaction. It provides acumen and a different magnitude for predicting job satisfaction apart from conventional variables like work itself, pay, promotion, supervision, co-workers.

Keywords

Big Five Personality, Positive Psychological strengths, Dispositional base of Job Satisfaction

1 Introduction

The inter-relationship between personality factors and job satisfaction has been a periodic study in industrial psychology in the past century (Judge et al., 2002). Job satisfaction is one of the core constructs in management and is the most extensively studied variable in industrial psychology and organization behavior. It is not uncommon to see any research journal on management that does not contain at least one study that is related to job satisfaction (Sarwar and Abugre, 2013), and it has become a worldwide reality in the human behavior studies, that satisfaction and productivity are significantly related.

Employee satisfaction plays a vital role in success of any organization, and banks are no exception. For the bank to emerge as a globally competitive financial entity, satisfied workforce becomes inevitable. The motivated employees are satisfied employees who have greater morale, oneness and promote cohesiveness among the members of the organization (Vijayabanu et al., 2013). Hence to sustain in the competitive environment, it is very much necessary to understand the employee's perception towards the job and to measure the level of satisfaction with various aspects of job satisfaction. Efficient Human Resource management and a highly satisfied workforce not only enhance the performance of the bank, but also boost the entire economy. For the accomplishment of best banking services it is innate to manage the human resource effectively by gauging the job satisfaction level of employees in a periodic basis. The success of an organization (Vijayabanu and Amudha, 2012) depends on the appropriate use of manpower which will be an auxiliary to all other assets.

If they are highly satisfied, they engage themselves progressively and in turn the organization will also develop and reach the pinnacle. A case study has thrown a light which focuses on job satisfaction of banking employees revealed that a win-win environment should be created amidst banking scenario which in turn promotes the economic growth (Ahmed and Uddin 2012). In Service sector, "companies have to increase their customers' satisfaction to keep their competitiveness" (Koltai and Kalló, 2010). Service process performance (Vijayabanu and Amudha, 2012) of the organization should be measured

¹ SASTRA University, Thanjavur
Tamil Nadu, India

*Corresponding author, e-mail: vijayabanu@mba.sastra.edu

continuously to retain the core competency which is possible by understanding the personality aspects also. A Job Satisfaction model proposed by (Agho et al., 1993) concentrated on three dimensions namely environmental, job characteristics, and personality. The result of their research articulated that job satisfaction was strongly influenced by these three dimensions and 57% of the variance with respect to job satisfaction has been demonstrated by the model proposed by the researchers. Initially the research conducted by them neglected the above said dimensions and the percentage of variance in job satisfaction was 49%. Job Satisfaction can be an abstract function of situational conditions, personality characteristics, and job characteristics which has been defined as a vital element of job satisfaction, and neuroticism also plays a major role (Cohrs et al., 2006). Even though several researchers have concluded that situational factors are powerful predictors of job satisfaction, it is mandatory to study the other aspect because organizational behavior is affected by both situational and dispositional factors. A person's thinking, feeling, behavior is influenced by both personality and situational factors and hence it is essential to give importance to both aspects in predicting recognizable organizational behavior. The personality of the employee is inevitable in determining the level of job satisfaction when he was equipped with job description (Vijayabanu and Therasa, 2014). If an employer understands employee's personalities and their unique abilities then he will motivate the employees to perform their best and in turn, it will enhance individual job satisfaction. To understand and predict the job satisfaction, it is necessary to determine personality characteristics which become necessary to render superior quality of service in banks. The study has the following objective:

- To study the impact of Big Five Personality traits, positive behavior strengths towards job satisfaction.

The study aims to analyze the importance of Big-Five personality dimensions and positive psychological strengths in predicting the job satisfaction of employees in banking sector.

2 The role of personality in predicting job satisfaction

The Five Factor model (FFM) of personality served as one of the flagships for the examination of trait-occupational criteria relationships over the past fifteen years (Salgado, 2005). The FFM of personality provided a new and massive impetus to personality research for different applications in Industrial, Work and Organizational Psychology.

Although numerous studies have been done on identification of antecedents of job satisfaction over the past few years, dispositional sources are given less importance and the association of the Big Five personality on job satisfaction is much less studied (Gelade et al., 2006). A few case studies have also dealt with understanding the importance of job satisfaction and how it is perceived as an influential factor in determining employee

loyalty and performance. A case study was developed based on the data collected from employees in an organization regarding job satisfaction and employee engagement (Medlin, 2010). It mainly concentrates on three aspects namely promotional opportunities, maintaining relationships and rewards. The crucial nature of the dispositional approach is that, individuals have a set of stable traits which are inflexible and that significantly influence affective and behavioral aspects of individual in organization setting. Various studies have accepted that the dispositional nature influences job satisfaction of an individual and its correlation with individual differences variables like Positive and negative affectivity (Connolly and Viswesvaran, 2000; Thoresen et al., 2003), core self-evaluations (Dormann et al., 2006; Judge and Bono, 2001; Judge et al., 1998), Big five personality factors (Judge et al., 2002; Tokar and Subich, 1997). There are various literatures in field research case studies which concentrate on various domain areas like personality, Job performance, Loyalty and Engagement. A case study for car sales personnel in Ford-Right Co Ltd, a Ford car dealer in Taiwan (Chen, 2013) revealed that the competence and personality are the most important factors which exhibit positive relationship with job performance and customer loyalty. Therefore gauging job satisfaction level through personality as a factor is a new facet in envisaging Organizational Behavior.

The current study analyzed the impact of Big Five personality Model in predicting Job Contentment is studied from the perspective of the five-factor model of personality.

3 The Five Factor model of personality

Many researchers have concluded that traits are responsible for one's personality and it can be organized into a hierarchy (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993; Hampson et al., 1986; Pausonen, 1993). Through factor analysis, five general personality traits are found and placed at the top of the trait hierarchy which has been developed as a Big five model of Personality which has strong valid empirical support (McCrae and Costa, 1996). Research also showed that the Big Five personality model and their facets have a genetic basis (Digman, 1989) and that they are probably inherited (Jang et al., 1996). The five general traits are: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience.

4 Extraversion

Extraversion represents the individuals who are high in positive emotions, excitement seeking. Extroverts are more prone to positive emotions and they will be strong in developing interpersonal relationship with others. Extraversion and neuroticism appears to be predictors of burnout (Bakker et al., 2006). Extraversion was significantly related to positive affectivity (Judge and Illies, 2002). It would be cogent to presume that extroverts have higher job satisfaction levels than introverts because of the influence of positive thoughts that acts as a stimulant which

helps increase their performance and these findings are also supported by (Connolly and Viswesvaran, 2000).

5 Neuroticism

Opposite to Extraversion, an individual high in neuroticism is prone to get affected with negative events. They tend to exhibit traits like, fear, anger, depression, easily inclined to stress, not able to control impulses. To predict job dissatisfaction level, neuroticism plays a crucial part (Clark and Watson, 1991; Cropanzo et al., 1993; Tokar and Subich, 1997). A Study by (Tanoff, 1999) in an international organization concluded that neuroticism is a primary factor, in determining job satisfaction. Further, (Connolly and Viswesvaran, 2000) asserted that neuroticism, which is a primary input of negative affectivity badly, influences job satisfaction.

6 Openness to Experience

It comprises of traits such as creativity, imaginative, original, willingness to take risks, broad-mindedness, innovativeness, and variety seekers.

A study conducted by (Cohrs et al., 2006) concluded that Openness to experience was associated with higher job satisfaction among mathematics teachers, and their professional qualification also plays a major role in determining the job satisfaction levels. (Schneider, 1999) has highlighted that the association between different personality constructs and job contentment differs based on the job setting and there exists correlation between openness to work experience and job satisfaction with some group of people such as co-workers and job-in-general in Job Description Index (JDI) and further (Judge et al., 2002) concluded that apart from the four facets in the five factor model of personality openness to experience was not significantly correlated with job satisfaction and even the moderators like cross-sectional and longitudinal research design was used in his meta-analysis, openness to experience was not significantly correlated.

7 Agreeableness

The facets of agreeableness traits are helpful, cooperative, caring and nurturing others, being affectionate. People who are high in this trait tend to exhibit positive experiences in social situations (Hayesa and Joseph, 2002). Agreeableness and its facet, honest were good predictors of friend satisfaction and other facet of agreeableness, obedience significantly predicted self-satisfaction (Esmaeili et al., 2013).

Agreeable individuals tend to exhibit and are more likely to experience happiness because they extremely love to have close interrelationships and those who are higher in this trait will have higher life satisfaction also (McCrae and Costa, 1991). (Judge et al., 1999) concluded that agreeableness trait is a good predictor of employees' performance of the jobs that requires teamwork and these findings are also supported by (Neuman and Wright, 1999).

8 Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness, best considered a combination of Achievement and Dependability, has a greater impact on behavior in situations where employees have extraordinary autonomy (Barrick and Mount, 1993). On the other end high Conscientiousness individual may lead to aggravating meticulousness, lack in direction and self-discipline, workaholic. "(Schneider, 1999), who studied the relationship between Conscientiousness and job satisfaction in various occupations, found significant relationships between them". (Maertz and Griffeth, 2004) has highlighted that persons who is having a tendency to quit the organization may ask themselves, "Do I have any responsibility for this organization which I won't be able to fulfill if I quit my job?", and if they possesses higher conscientiousness trait then they will stick on to the work place and they believe that some contractual commitment exists.

There is also evidence that each factor is associated with specific job family and occupation. Extraversion appears to be related to employees high sales performance, openness to experience predicts training to individuals and expatriate success, agreeableness is associated with performance in customer oriented and team-oriented jobs, neuroticism contributes to a wide range of jobs including management positions as well as jobs in the safety/security sector (Barrick et al., 2001; Mount et al., 1998; Vinchur et al., 1998).

9 Impact of Big Five Personality on job satisfaction

A Meta-analytic approach which depicts relationship between Five Factor (Big Five Model) and Job Satisfaction had predicted a good measure for each individual facets (-.29 for neuroticism, .25 for extraversion, .02 for Openness to Experience, .17 for Agreeableness and .26 for conscientiousness) and a multiple correlation measure of .41 with job satisfaction suggesting that individual's personality characteristics have a causal impact on job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002) and has proved that the factor value of Extraversion and Conscientiousness has a positive correlation with job satisfaction and a negative one with Neuroticism, i.e. job satisfaction is higher in the case of higher Emotional Stability. Another study which relates three taxonomies (positive and negative affectivity, the Five-Factor model, and core self evaluations) to job satisfaction found that the three taxonomies were significantly related to job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2008). A Study which collected data from 500 employees of five major banks in Pakistan revealed that except neuroticism, all other facets of Big Five model showed significant positive correlation with job satisfaction and apart from that Age, Education, Salary and Marital Status have exhibited positive correlation with job satisfaction and women showed greater satisfaction level than men (Naz et al., 2013). In the context of an innovative software engineering job a study examined the incremental validity of proactive personality to predict overall job performance over the Big Five. Proactive Personality and the Big Five were measured in a sample of 243 engineers and

overall job performance was assessed through supervisor ratings in a sub-sample of 95 of these engineers. Results showed that even though proactive personality represents a valid and important predictor of performance it does not show a relevant increment on the prediction yielded by extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and organizational tenure (Rodrigues and Rebelo, 2013).

Several researchers have acuminated out the correlation between the big five personality factors and job satisfaction. A research by (Judge et al., 2002) indicated that conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness are positively correlated with job satisfaction, whereas neuroticism is negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Openness to experience has a trivial impact on job satisfaction. Conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion and neuroticism have most obvious connections with job satisfaction.

A research conducted by (Mhlanga, 2012) concluded that bank employees who are high in openness, conscientiousness and low in neuroticism tend to be more satisfied with their job. Agreeableness did not have a significant relationship with job satisfaction and employees with high levels of extraversion had negative significant correlation with job satisfaction. Overall, Big Five Personality model explained relatively small percentages in the variance of job satisfaction. This made him to conduct another study on individual facet (neuroticism) to determine its role in predicting job satisfaction. His research among bank employees declared that employees with lower level of neuroticism have higher levels of job satisfaction even though the levels of neuroticism were influenced by some demographic variables (Hlatywayo et al., 2013).

Therefore, the accumulated empirical evidence left no room for doubts concerning the relevancy of the Big Five personality dimensions as tools for predicting job satisfaction.

Apart from the acceptance and applicability of the five factor model for the prediction of job satisfaction and other important work related outcomes, some authors have alleged that the prediction of various determinants of behavior can be enhanced by adding some other personality constructs besides big five (Paunomen and Jackson, 2000). Accordingly Borman (2004) argued that “the rigid adherence to the big five model is probably not wise for our field” (p. 267). In addition to that, the criterion-related validity of personality traits might be appreciated if compound personality variables which are custom-made to the outcome (Viswesvaran et al., 2007).

In order to get a new valid measure for the variance of job satisfaction, positive psychological capital which has been described as “state-like” Positive Organization Behavior, or POB approach which motivates employees and infuse positivity which results in desirable work attitudes, performance and promotes high level of commitment over the employees.

The highlight of studies involving personality and job satisfaction is shown in Table 1.

10 Positive Psychological capital (psycap) and its components

By fusing positive psychology to the work place, (Luthans, 1999) has initiated the positive organization behavior research. It throws light on strengths rather than weaknesses and it lies beyond human and social capital. The exclusive feature of positive psychological behavior is that it is “state-like” and hence it can be developed and measured. This “state-like” and developable feature differentiates psycap constructs from “trait - like” constructs like Big-Five Personality, Core self-evaluations, positive and negative affectivity.

Psychological capital (psycap) is a higher order factor and a phenomenon in which positive psychological state of individuals is exhibited, and it is a representation of four component dimensions such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency (Luthans and Youssef, 2004; Luthans and Youssef, 2007; Luthans et al., 2008). Psycap appears to have a synergistic effect (i.e) the power of psycap as a whole is greater than its individual counterparts.

Luthans et al. (2007b: p. 3) define psychological capital as: “an individual’s positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success”.

Research reveals that psychological capital generally relates to performance (Avey et al., 2010; Rego et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2010; Luthans et al., 2007a). When the performance of the employees increases, this will make them more positive and higher psychological resources to help them cope with challenges in the workplace. Also, when employees perform better, they will have self confidence and attribute more positively about their success now and in the future and their individual motivation will also increase as well. All of these will raise their psychological capital and employees with higher levels of psychological capital will also be more satisfied with their job (e.g. Luthans et al., 2007a).

11 Impact of Positive psychological capital on job satisfaction

A consensus gentium over the years and recent research findings have given a fulcrum to the importance of positivity in the work place. Disparate number of studies have assessed the importance of positive psychological capital in predicting work attitudes such as job satisfaction, and behaviors in the organization (Avey et al., 2010; Avey et al., 2011). Over the past decade, the field of organizational behavior has experienced a metamorphosis in thinking about positive psychological states that

Table 1 Highlight of studies which concentrates on personality and job satisfaction

Study	Subjects	Objectives	Findings
Tokar and Subich, 1997	Diversely employed Adults	To determine whether Personality dimensions in five-factor model predicts job satisfaction beyond congruence	Big five personality dimensions had contributed greatly than congruence model in predicting job satisfaction with extraversion and low neuroticism as unique predictors.
Matzler and Renzel, 2007	Utility Sector employees	To analyze personality traits as predictors of employee satisfaction and its effect on affective commitment.	20% of the variance of employee satisfaction was explained by personality traits.
Julie Pozzebon, 2006	Men and Women in a university setting	To investigate the incremental validity of traits and values in forecasting behaviour for self and peer employees.	The correlations between self and peer reports for personality were high than values and behaviour scales. Personality out predicted values.
SuoHong Gang, 2008	Managers from a bank in Beijing	To scrutinize the relationship between Personality traits and intrinsic career success (Job, career and life satisfaction).	Neuroticism and conscientiousness significantly predicted job and career satisfaction.
Nina Adele Haddad, 1989	Staff nurses	To examine the relationship between demographic variables and personality factors to nurses's job satisfaction and intention to stay. This study uses CPI(California Psychological Inventory) as a tool for personality.	For predicting job satisfaction, Responsibility, Achievement, Psychological mindedness and socialisation from CPI scale were statistically significant.
Rasch, H. R and Harrell, A., 1989	Management Advisory Services(MAS) Personnel	To ascertain whether MAS Personnel possess higher job satisfaction and voluntary turnover.	MAS Personnel who possess high achievement needs, Type A Personality and highly influential tends to experience less work stress, greater job satisfaction and low turnover.

makes an individual, a tremendous super power and to be an imperative asset to the organization.

Since psycap is developable, the psycap levels of individual can be enhanced through training interventions, a study which showed empirical evidence that training on these aspect not only enhance psycap levels but also enhances on-the-job performance (Luthans et al., 2010). A recent meta-analysis of 51 research samples showed significant relationships between psychological capital and employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, commitment and turnover intentions and employee behaviors such as citizenship behavior and job performance (Avey et al., 2011). Two studies conducted by (Luthans et al., 2007) analyzed how hope, optimism, resilience, efficacy individually and psycap as a whole predicted work performance and satisfaction. The results indicated that the single higher-order factor (psycap) may be a better predictor than individual facets. A study which analyzed the individual and team level psycap confessed that job satisfaction can be predicted by individual level psycap with the variance of 9.2% and results for turnover intentions revealed that 13% of variance was explained by individual level psycap only and in the core the effect of individual psycap on job satisfaction is greater when team psycap is high and reduced when team psycap is low (Martin et al., 2011).

A Study by (Bitmis and Ergeneli, 2013), analyzed the intervening effects of psychological capital and trust on the association between individual performance and job satisfaction and concluded that greater individual performance leads to greater psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2007, Walumbwa et al.,

2010, Rego et al., 2010) which in turn increases job satisfaction (Luthans et al., 2007).

A study by (Kaplan and Bickes, 2013) concluded that there exists no significant relationship between self-efficacy and hope sub-dimensions and job satisfaction and a positive and significant relationship exists between resiliency, optimism and job satisfaction. PsyCap may also act as a key to better understanding the perceived symptoms of stress, turnover intentions and job search behaviors (Avey et al., 2009). If employee's stress levels and turnover intentions have been identified then their job satisfaction level will get enhanced. Another research which analyses the importance of understanding person-organization fit, employee engagement, and job satisfaction through psycap revealed that psycap was a good predictor in understanding person-to-organization fit when leader's and employee's psycap levels are same (Larson et al., 2013).

Few studies have been highlighted in Table 2 which supports how psycap is contributing in finding out employee job satisfaction.

12 Demographic impacts on job satisfaction

Researchers have excavated a set of factors or variables that determine the job satisfaction level and plentiful amount of studies have been conducted on job satisfaction which scrutinizes the impact of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, designation, marital status, tenure and education. These factors are found critical in determining job satisfaction (Weidmer et al., 1998).

Table 2 Highlights of few studies relating psychological capital and job satisfaction.

Study	Subjects	Objectives	Findings
Larson and Luthans, 2006	Manufacturing Employees	To test the potential added value of psychological capital in predicting job satisfaction and commitment.	A significant relationship exists between Psycap and job satisfaction ($r=.373$) & organization commitment ($r=.313$).
Avey et al., 2009	Two samples from large financial firm	To scrutinize the relationship between psycap and performance.	Psycap is associated with job satisfaction and it is a potential component in a HR Scorecard and it plays like a determinant factor for selecting and retaining candidates if their psycap score is high.
Bitmis and Ergeneli, 2013	Medical staff	To analyze the mediating effects of psycap and trust on individual performance and job satisfaction relationship.	Both psycap and trust acts as mediators for the relationship between job satisfaction and performance.
Luthans et al., 2007	Management students(study1) and employees in both service &Hi-tech manufacturing firms (study2)	To examine how hope, optimism, resilience and efficacy(psycap facets) and psycap as a higher order construct predicts work performance and satisfaction.	Psycap as a higher order construct contributes more in predicting employee's job satisfaction than individual facet contribution.
Larson et al., 2013	Working Adults in U.S	To examine whether employees and leaders psycap level predicts person-organization fit, engagement and job satisfaction	The study earthed out the fact that if both employees and leader psycap levels are similar then assessing person-to-organization fit might get enhanced.

The multifarious nature of employee's demographics changes job satisfaction due to the variations in perceptions and attitudes of employees belonging to different demographic groups (Khan et al., 2009).

Data have been collected by administering a questionnaire for evaluating job satisfaction among drivers and results revealed that the samples in 21-28 yrs old category showed higher job satisfaction levels than 29-39 yrs and above 40 yrs category and females exhibited higher job satisfaction levels than males and in turn males showed higher mean scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and samples who had 1-4 years job tenure obtained higher mean score level in predicting job satisfaction than samples who had 5-8 yrs and 9-upper years and samples who had 9-upper years job tenure showed higher scores on emotional exhaustion than samples who had 1-4 yrs tenure period (Pourghaz et al., 2011).

Lin et al. (2007) showed there is a correlation between job satisfaction and age. According to (De Vaney and Chen, 2003) age has an effect on job satisfaction. Another research also revealed that satisfaction tends to increase towards middle age and marital status has not shown any relationship with job satisfaction (Guha, 1965).

13 Combined effects of Big Five, Positive Psychological Capital and Demographic factors on Job Satisfaction

A study which examined the incremental validity of psychological capital in predicting several important employee

outcomes by suppressing the effects of big-five personality dimensions revealed that employee's psychological capital is related to their perceived performance, turnover intention, work happiness & subjective well being, even after controlling for the Big Five Personality traits (Choi and Lee, 2014). The current study incorporates both

Another research aimed to delve into the relationships of coping strategies with Positive Psychological Capital and Big Five among undergraduate university students which concluded that positive psychological capital and big five were found to be significantly related to coping mechanisms except neuroticism, while high extraversion, openness & conscientiousness individuals engaged in more problem-focused coping and finally concluded that personality factors and positive psychological capital has emerged as important constructs for detecting coping mechanisms (Khan et al., 2011).

14 Conclusion

It is concluded by analyzing various literatures that, few studies have investigated the impact of both big five, positive psychological for predicting individual outcome (Job Satisfaction). Most of the previous studies do not evaluate the combined effects (both psycap and big five) in predicting job satisfaction. Especially in banking sector, the examination of positive psychological capacities with Big Five Personality dimension and studying its impact on job satisfaction levels on employees is a unique dimension. It provides a robust step towards gauging the job satisfaction level and a better understanding of the

relationships between Big Five, positive psychological capital, Demographic differences.

The present study aimed to contribute to this research topic by assessing the combined effects of both Big Five model and positive psychological capital model and whether psychological capital is exhibiting some incremental validity over big five on predicting job satisfaction levels.

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