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Relationships Between Self-Efficacy and Work Engagement and the Effects on Job Satisfaction: A Survey on Certified Public Accountants

Mustafa Yakın^a, Oya Erdil^{b*}^a*Certified Public Accountant*^bGebze Institute of Technology, Kocaeli, 41400, Turkey

Abstract

The basic aim of this research is to examine the relationships between self-efficacy, work engagement and job satisfaction. In accordance with this aim, general self-efficacy scale, work engagement scale and Minnesota job satisfaction scale were applied to a sample of financial advisors in the survey. The relationships between self-efficacy, work engagement and job satisfaction were investigated using correlation and regression analyses. The associations sought are hypothesized in the research model and the findings are discussed. Based on social cognitive theory and work engagement events and using regression modelling, results indicated that both self-efficacy and work engagement affect job satisfaction. Job satisfaction of certified public accountants was directly predicted by self-efficacy and work engagement.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, self-efficacy, work engagement.

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1. Introduction

Social cognitive theory was originally designed to help explain interest development, choice and performance in career and educational domains. If goal-setting and progress are key agent routes to work and work satisfaction then

* Corresponding author, Tel. + 90-262-605-1422, Fax. +90-262-654-3224

Email address: erdil@gyte.edu.tr

obviously, it is important to consider the variables that foster them (Lent and Brown, 2006). From the perspective of social cognitive theory, goal-oriented behavior is affected by self-efficacy, outcome expectations and environmental supports and resources (Bandura, 1986). Self efficacy is a critical predictor of adjustment and the degree to which employees use affective behavioral strategies. According to self-efficacy theory, individuals judge their ability to successfully cope with new challenges, thus developing domain-specific self-efficacy beliefs (Raghuram et al., 2003).

Work engagement is a relatively new concept of “positive psychology” referring optimal functioning and positive experiences at work (Mauno et al, 2007). Engagement refers to energy involvement and professional efficacy which can be considered to be the opposite of burnout. Core motivational dimensions of work engagement given as attention and absorption in a role imply intensive involvement in an activity that nothing else seems to matter (Schaufeli et al., 2004). Research has shown that work engagement affects work related outcomes such as job satisfaction (i.e., Harter et al., 2002). Research has also confirmed that self-efficacy is associated with educational satisfaction as well as job satisfaction in employees. In their study, Pinquart and his colleagues (2003) reported that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy experienced higher levels of job satisfaction. They found that individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs were less likely to become unemployed and more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Pinquart et al., 2003).

In this study, self-efficacy dimension of goal-oriented behavior is considered as an affective state to predict job satisfaction. A survey on a sample of certified public accountants was conducted in order to analyse the relationships between self efficacy, work engagement and job satisfaction. The nature of accountants' work has some difficulties related to tasks performed. They work long hours and hard; they interact with people intensively and they must be focused and disciplined when working. Self-efficacy and job satisfaction can be considered among key factors for maintaining success and performance of certified public accountants. In this study, a research model investigating relationships between self-efficacy, work engagement and job satisfaction of certified public accountants was developed and tested using correlation and regression analyses.

2. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to people's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance (Niu, 2010). Self-efficacy is defined as an 'individual's confidence about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context' (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998:66). In another study, it is defined as a person's perceived capability to perform or a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to attain a goal (Niu, 2010). From the perspective of social cognitive theory, goal-directed behavior is affected by self-efficacy, outcome expectations and environmental supports and resources (Bandura, 1986, Lent and Brown, 2006). Self-efficacy perceptions provide the foundation for human motivation, and personal accomplishment. People are likely to be generally satisfied with their jobs when they feel competent to perform their work-tasks or attain their work goals (Lent et al., 2011). Self-efficacious individuals hold stronger beliefs in their ability to successfully perform task situations, set more challenging goals for themselves, invest more, persist longer and are better in dealing with failing experiences than persons low in self-efficacy (Heuven et al., 2006). Highly efficacious individuals are expected to make better use of and generate resources in their work environment to deal with demanding tasks. Researchers found that persons with high levels of self-efficacy are better able to solve difficult situations than low-efficacious individuals (Heuven et al., 2006).

3. Self-efficacy and job satisfaction

Researches have demonstrated significant positive relationships between self-efficacy and motivational, affective and behavioral outcomes in organizational settings (e.g. Wood and Bandura, 1989). One of the outcomes is job satisfaction and it is defined as the extent to which people like their jobs either on the whole or with respect to particular conditions or rewards (Spector, 1997). A large number of theoretical models which integrate multiple factors have been developed in the job satisfaction literature. Lent and Brown (2006) conceptualized job satisfaction as key classes of variables that compose the model including a) work-educational satisfaction, b) personality and affective traits c) goals and goal-oriented activity d) self-efficacy e) work conditions and outcomes and f) goal-oriented environmental supports, resources and obstacles. General self-efficacy would effect job satisfaction through its association with practical success on the job (Judge and Bono, 2001; Luthans et al, 2006). Individuals with high self-efficacy deal more effectively with difficulties and are more likely to attain valued outcomes through persistence, and thus derive intrinsic satisfaction from their jobs. It, then, follows that those with higher general self-efficacy are

more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Luthans et al., 2006, p.122). Research has confirmed that self-efficacy is associated with job satisfaction and it predicts job satisfaction in employed workers (e.g. Lent and Brown, 2006; Caprara et al, 2003).

Therefore, our first hypothesis proposes that;

H1: Self-efficacy of certified public accountants are positively and significantly related with job satisfaction.

4. Work engagement

Work engagement represents positive work experience and affect in organizational life which produces various benefits to the organization. (Park and Gursoy, 2012). Engagement with work involves high levels of energy and identification with one's work. As a rather new concept work engagement reflects the recent trend towards "positive psychology" where attention is paid to employees' well-being (Tim et al., 2011). Kahn (1990) defines personal work engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles (Kim et al., 2009). Kahn conceptualizes engagement with three dimensions namely physical, cognitive and emotional engagement.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) defined job engagement as "a positive, affective and motivational state of fulfillment in employees, a kind of work-related state of mind" and identified three unique dimensions of engagement; vigor, dedication and absorption (Kim et al., 2009). Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy, willingness to invest effort into the work and is viewed as the opposite concept of exhaustion. One example of items used to measure vigor is "During my work I feel full of energy". Thus, engaged employees are energetically and effectively connected to their work. Dedication is assessed as a sense of significance, enthusiasm and pride. It is measured with such items as "I am enthusiastic about my job". Lastly, absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated in one's work, whereby time passes quickly. One sample item in measurement is "When I am working intensively, I feel happy" (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Previous research has shown that work engagement affects work-related attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, such as job satisfaction, intention to leave and job performance (e.g., Harter et al., 2002; Park and Gursoy, 2012). As employees become more engaged, they find their work more meaningful, self-fulfilling and inspirational and in turn, become more dedicated and concentrated in their jobs (Menguç et al., 2012) leading to superior job performance (Park and Gursoy, 2012).

Personal traits (e.g., self-efficacy) due to their motivational potential are, considered to be important antecedents of work engagement (Tim et al., 2011). To give an example, Bakker and his colleagues (2012) investigated the role of conscientiousness on the relationship between work engagement, performance and active learning. They found out that work engagement was positively related to job performance and active learning, particularly for employees high in conscientiousness. They claim that active learning gives the feeling of self-efficacy and results in job performance due to positive emotions and good physical health.

Our second hypothesis relates to work engagement.

H2: Self-efficacy of certified public accountants is significantly and positively related with work engagement.

There are research studies that investigate the effect of work engagement on job satisfaction. In their studies, Saks (2006) and Park and Gursoy (2012) have found that work engagement had a positive relationship to employees' job satisfaction.

Lastly, our research model proposes that;

H3: Work engagement of certified public accountants is positively relate with job satisfaction.

5. Method

The research was conducted on certified public accounts who work in Kocaeli, Gebze and Dilovası region in Turkey. The data were gathered through the use of questionnaires distributed either via e-mail or face-to-face contacts. Randomly selected 200 respondents were contacted and a total of 161 completed the survey.

The questionnaire was clearly divided into four sections. The first section was designed to include the demographics of respondents and the second section was designed to investigate self-efficacy of the respondents. The third section includes items to measure organizational engagement and lastly the fourth section was designed to measure job satisfaction. Respondents used a five-point Likert scale (1"strongly disagree"to 5"strongly agree").

6. Measures

Self-efficacy is measured by the 12-item scale developed by Scherer (1982) including three dimensions, namely confidence, focused effort and activeness. Confidence was measured with four items, focused effort with five items and activeness with three items. An example item is "I trust I can handle sudden events effectively". Another example item is "My job is well within the scope of my abilities". Cronbach Alpha values for three dimensions have been 0,756; 0,718 and 0,765 respectively which are higher than acceptable level of 0,70. Total variance explained for the dimensions have been 21,5%, 20,5% and 18,1% respectively.

Work engagement was measured with an 18-item scale developed by Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010) consisting of three dimensions; emotional, physical and cognitive engagement. Emotional engagement was measured with six items, physical engagement with six items and cognitive engagement with five items. Cronbach's Alpha values for three dimensions have been 88,7%, 86,5% and 87,5% respectively. (Total variance explained accounting 65,9%).

Job satisfaction was measured with Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire consisting of twenty items. 2nd and 18th items were taken out of the questionnaire and remaining 18 items were used in the survey. Intrinsic job satisfaction was measured with 11 items and extrinsic job satisfaction was measured with 7 items. A few example items are "It gives chances for advancement on this job", "The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job". Cronbach Alpha values for the two dimensions have been 0,90 and 0,80 respectively. Total variance explained for the scale has been 54,96%.

The results of reliability analyses showed that the internal consistencies (Cronbach's Alpha) of all study variables were above the level of 0,70 for all multi-item scales indicating that all scales had an acceptable level of internal consistency.

7. Analyses

Statistical analyses were performed by use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows 17.0). First, demographics of the sample and descriptive statistics were presented. Then, correlation and regression analyses were held in order to test the hypotheses proposed in the research model.

8. Findings

8.1. Demographics and Means

Demographics of respondents are given in terms of age, sex, marital status, education and work experience. As for the ages of respondents, 39,8 percent were between the ages of (31-40) followed by the second highest group with 36 percent whose age was less than 30 years. 62,7 percent of respondents were men and the remaining 37,3 percent were women. As for the marital status of respondents, 62,1 per cent were married and 37,9 percent were single. Majority (86,3 percent) of the certified public accountants included in the survey were university graduates holding Bachelor's degree. Lastly, 50 per cent of respondents had work experience less than 5 years, followed by 28,6 percent having 6 to 10 years of work experience.

Table 7.1. Mean Values of Self-efficacy

Dimensions	N	Ort.	S.s	Min.	Max.
Self-confidence	160	3,891	0,780	1,750	5,000
Focused effort	161	3,865	0,637	1,400	5,000
Entrepreneurial behavior	161	4,286	0,711	2,000	5,000

Mean values for self-efficacy of certified public accountants have been found to be 4,286 for entrepreneurial spirit; 3,891 for self-confidence and 3,865 for focused-effort dimension.

Table 7.2. Mean Values of Work Engagement

Dimensions	N	Ort.	S.s	Min.	Max.
Emotional engagement	161	3,988	0,633	2,167	5,000
Physical engagement	161	4,190	0,647	1,833	5,000
Cognitive engagement	161	4,105	0,571	1,600	5,000

Means of work-engagement dimensions have been found to be 4,190; 4,105 and 3,988 for physical engagement, cognitive engagement and emotional engagement respectively representing very close values for the three dimensions.

Table 7.3. Mean Values of Job Satisfaction

	N	Ort.	S.s	Min.	Max.
Intrinsic satisfaction	160	3,742	0,662	1,727	5,000
Extrinsic satisfaction	160	3,680	0,632	2,000	4,857

Means of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction of certified public accountants have been 3,742 and 3,680 respectively. Intrinsic job satisfaction of respondents has been higher than their extrinsic job satisfaction.

8.2. Correlational Analysis

Table Hata! Belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..1. Correlational Analysis for Self-Efficacy, Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(1) Self-confidence		0,130	0,440**	0,193*	0,199*	0,036	-0,098	-0,144
(2) Effort			0,214**	0,443**	0,555**	0,505**	0,202*	0,163*
(3) Entrepreneurial behavior				0,304**	0,104	0,004	0,049	-0,035
(4) Emotional engagement					0,460**	0,616**	0,695**	0,499**
(5) Physical engagement						0,486**	0,111	0,053
(6) Cognitive engagement							0,461**	0,379**
(7) Intrinsic Job Satisfaction								0,806**
(8) Extrinsic Job Satisfaction								

Table 7.8 exhibits correlations between self-efficacy, work engagement and job satisfaction dimensions. Self-confidence was significantly and positively correlated with entrepreneurial spirit, emotional engagement and physical engagement (at level of significance <0,05). However, self-confidence was not significantly correlated with focused effort, cognitive engagement, and intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction.

As can be seen in the table, focused effort was significantly and positively correlated with all dimensions of engagement and with the two dimensions of job satisfaction (at <0,05 level of significance).

There exists significant and positive relationships between entrepreneurial spirit and emotional engagement and cognitive engagement. However, no significant relationship exists between entrepreneurial spirit and physical engagement. Similarly, no significant relationship exists between entrepreneurial spirit and job satisfaction.

Emotional engagement is found to be related to physical engagement, cognitive engagement and intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction (level of significance <0,05). Physical engagement is significantly and positively related with cognitive engagement but it is not related with job satisfaction. Cognitive engagement has been found to be positively related with intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction.

Lastly, extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction has been found to be related .

8.3. Regression Analyses

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..2. Regression Analysis for Testing the Effects of Self-efficacy on Intrinsic Job Satisfaction

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	t	p	F	Model (p)	R ²
Intrinsic job satisfaction	Coefficient	3,174	7,345	0,000	2,985	0,033*	0,036
	Self-confidence	-0,129	-1,675	0,096			
	Focused Effort	0,205	2,401	0,018*			
	Entrepreneurial behavior	0,065	0,768	0,444			

The first regression model tests the effects of self-efficacy on intrinsic job satisfaction. The regression model is statistically significant ($F=2,985$; $p=0,033 < 0,05$). Focused effort dimension of self-efficacy has an impact on intrinsic job satisfaction. However, other two dimensions, confidence and entrepreneurial behavior have not been found to be related to intrinsic job satisfaction.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..3. Regression Analysis of Self-Efficacy on Extrinsic Job Satisfaction

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	t	p	F	Model (p)	R ²
Extrinsic Job Satisfaction	Coefficient	3,557	8,592	0,000	2,606	0,054	0,030
	Self-Confidence	-0,128	-1,747	0,083			
	Focused Effort	0,170	2,087	0,039			
	Entrepreneurial Behavior	-0,008	-0,095	0,925			

In the second model, extrinsic job satisfaction is taken as dependent variable. As indicated in the table, the model has not been found to be significant statistically. ($F=2,606$; $P=0,054 > 0,05$).

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..4. Regression of Self-Efficacy on Emotional Work Engagement

Dependent variable	Independent Variables	β	t	p	F	Model (p)	R ²
Emotional Work Engagement	Coefficient	1,569	4,295	0,000	16,156	0,000**	0,222
	Self-confidence	0,047	0,737	0,462			
	Focused Effort	0,389	5,437	0,000**			
	Entrepreneurial behavior	0,172	2,440	0,016*			

In the third regression model, emotional engagement has been taken as the dependent variable in order to test the effects of confidence, focused effort and entrepreneurial behavior. The regression model is statistically significant ($F=16,156$; $p=0,000 < 0,05$). Focused effort and entrepreneurial behavior has been found to be related to emotional engagement. However, confidence has not been related to emotional engagement.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..5. Regression Analysis of Self-Efficacy on Physical Work Engagement

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	t	p	F	Model (p)	R ²
Physical Engagement	Coefficient	1,880	5,362	0,000	24,525	0,000*	0,307
	Self Confidence	0,140	2,311	0,022*			
	Focused Effort	0,551	8,028	0,000**			
	Entrepreneurial Behavior	-0,085	-1,254	0,212			

In the fourth regression model, physical engagement has been taken as dependent variable and the effects of self-efficacy dimensions have been investigated. The model is significant statistically ($F=24,525$; $p=0,000 < 0,05$). Confidence and focused effort have been found to be associated with physical engagement whereas entrepreneurial behaviour has not been related to physical engagement.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..6. Regression Analysis of Self-Efficacy on Emotional Work Engagement

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	β	t	p	F	Model (p)	R ²
Cognitive Work Engagement	Coefficient	2,627	8,090	0,000	18,562	0,000**	0,249
	Self-Confidence	0,014	0,257	0,798			
	Focused Effort	0,473	7,437	0,000**			
	Entrepreneurial Behavior	-0,095	-1,515	0,132			

The fifth regression model tests the effects of self-efficacy dimensions on cognitive engagement. The model is statistically significant ($F=18,562$; $p=0,000<0,05$). Focused effort has a significant impact on cognitive engagement whereas confidence and entrepreneurial behavior have not been associated with cognitive engagement.

TableHata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..7. Regression Analysis of Work Engagement on Intrinsic Job Satisfaction

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	t	p	F	Model (p)	R ²
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	Coefficient	1,230	4,053	0,000	62,100	0,000*	0,535
	Emotional Work Engagement	0,770	10,451	0,000**			
	Physical Work Engagement	-0,300	-4,503	0,000**			
	Cognitive Work Engagement	0,169	2,031	0,044*			

In the table 7.14, regression analysis results for the effects of work engagement on intrinsic job satisfaction are given. The model was significant statistically($F=62,100$; $p=0,000<0,05$). Emotional engagement, physical engagement and cognitive engagement have been associated with intrinsic job satisfaction.

TableHata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..8. Regression Analysis of Work Engagement on Extrinsic Job Satisfaction

Independent Variable	Independent Variables	β	t	p	F	Model (p)	R ²
Extrinsic Job Satisfaction	Coefficient	1,887	5,277	0,000	23,015	0,000*	0,293
	Emotional Engagement	0,496	5,714	0,000**			
	Physical Engagement	-0,260	-3,318	0,001**			
	Cognitive Engagement	0,220	2,240	0,026*			

Lastly, the effects of engagement dimensions on extrinsic job satisfaction have been analyzed.

As shown in the table, emotional engagement, physical engagement and cognitive engagement have been associated with extrinsic job satisfaction.

9. Conclusion

In this study, the relationships between self-efficacy, work-engagement and job satisfaction have been investigated. A survey seeking for the relationships has been conducted on a sample of certified public accountants. The survey results indicated significant relationships between the variables hypothesised in the research model.

The results have been consistent with the previous research findings in the literature. In his studyTurkoglu(2011) outlines significant relationships between organizational commitment, intra organizational communication, salary expectancy, occupational expectancy and job satisfaction. According to the results of this research, the strongest association existed between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Therefore, it is apparent from the literature findings that work engagement is significantly and positively related to job satisfaction (i.e., Han et al., 1995, Hamner and Vardi, 1981).

Another finding in this study is that self-efficacy and job satisfaction has been significantly related which is consistent with existing literature. In her study Baysal (2010) found that nurses with high level of self-efficacy have been more satisfied with their jobs. In another study, Çetin (2011) showed the mediating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between organizational citizenship and job satisfaction. Findings of the study support the suggestion that beliefs regarding one's capabilities influence work related attitudes and motivations which then effect job performance and satisfaction.

Regression analysis results imply that emotional, physical and cognitive work engagement have been found to be related to self-confidence and focused effort. Entrepreneurial behavior has been only related to emotional work engagement. Regression analyses results investigating job satisfaction confirm that intrinsic and extrinsic job

satisfaction have been only related to focused effort. Findings also suggest that intrinsic job satisfaction is explained by focused effort; emotional work engagement is explained by focused effort and entrepreneurial behavior. Lastly, physical work engagement is explained by focused effort, entrepreneurial behavior and self confidence; cognitive work engagement is explained by focused effort.

Results of our study strongly supported a theoretical model grounded in the area. Investments of the self that are reflected in engagement and self-efficacy appear to provide an explanation for relationships with job satisfaction.

10. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The data used in the study were collected from certified public accountants and may have limited transferable value in other settings. Therefore, there is a need for replicate studies from other sectors. It would be of interest to measure self-efficacy as a mediator between engagement and job satisfaction.

In summary, previous research has supported the importance of self-efficacy and work engagement for job satisfaction. Results of this study support the findings indicated in the previous research. The findings in this study may give guidance to managers and consultants who want to maintain job satisfaction and work engagement among employees in their organizations. Although performance related linkages of self-efficacy and work engagement have been widely investigated job satisfaction related surveys have been rather limited.

Future studies need to identify more clearly the causality of the of the relationships between the variables included in the present study and to explore further these relationships in different organizational contexts.

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