The effect of situational constraints on the job satisfaction - job performance relationship and the personality - job performance relationship.

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**Abstract (summary)**

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Based on numerous empirical reviews, job satisfaction (JS) and job performance (JP) appear to be only weakly related (average r =.17; Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell, 1955; Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Vroom, 1964). To explain this counterintuitive result, I investigated a potential moderator of the JS-JP relationship: situational constraints. Situational constraints were defined as goal setting and performance monitoring. I also explored whether situational constraints moderate the relationship between personality and JP. JP was defined as quantity of performance, and personality was specified as Conscientiousness and Agreeableness. In a laboratory experiment using a 2 (low versus high situationalconstraints) x 2 (low versus high job satisfaction) factorial design, 176 undergraduates performed a jobsupposedly being considered for a student work-study program. Support was found for the moderating effects of situational constraints on the JS-JP relationship. JS and JP were significantly related (r =.25; p <.05) only when goal setting and performance monitoring were absent. No support was found for the moderating effects of situational constraints on the personality-JP relationship. In addition to quantity, three other forms of jobperformance were explored: (a) task avoidance, (b) error rate, and (c) performing optional work. Situationalconstraints, JS, and Agreeableness all negatively predicted task avoidance. Task avoidance, in turn, negatively predicted quantity of performance. Situational constraints also led to a higher error rate, and JS resulted in subjects performing more optional work. Conclusions were that JS and JP are related only in the absence of situational constraints, and JS has a positive effect on quantity of performance through reduced task avoidance. This study, therefore, supports the notion that JS can act as a "substitute for leadership" (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2012 APA, all rights reserved)