

Role of Life Events Stress & Individualism-Collectivism in Predicting Job Satisfaction

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The present study was conducted on 210 managerial personnel to examine the role of life events stress and individualism-collectivism in job satisfaction. The results indicate that person positive and total positive stresses were found to be significantly and positively correlated with satisfaction (job&total). Correlation coefficient of job positive stress was found significantly and positively correlated with satisfaction (management & total). Collectivism was found to be significantly negatively correlated with satisfaction (management & total). Individualism-collectivism was found to be significant predictors of satisfaction (job, management & total). Managers who scored high on positive life events stress and individualism were found to have higher job satisfaction than those who scored high on negative life events stress and collectivism.

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Job Satisfaction

A satisfied, happy, efficient, dedicated and hardworking employee is the biggest asset of any organization. Satisfied employees would seem more likely to talk positively about the organization, help others and go beyond the normal expectations in their job. Job satisfaction is often considered to be the most interesting variable in industrial and organizational psychology research (Smither, 1994). Job satisfaction can be defined as an individual's general attitude towards his or her job (Robbins, Odendaal&Roodt, 2003). Job satisfaction is employee reactions towards their work experiences (Berry, 1997), emotional state or reactions towards the job (Gruneberg, 1979; Landy& Conte, 2004), how positive people feel about their jobs, aspects of their jobs (Spector, 1997) and work situations (Wood, Wood& Boyd, 2007). Satisfaction on the job reflects important employee attitude towards their job (Spector, 1997), indicating what makes a job enjoyable and a satisfying working environment (Smither, 1994). Loyal, satisfied and consistent human resources can be a very important factor in making the organization effective. Having this

kind of human resources can result in increasing performance levels. But having less satisfied human resources results in producing different problems for organization and its staff. High job satisfaction will decrease occupational stress and create a positive working environment (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003), promote psychological well-being (Limbert, 2004), reduce turnover intention (Dupre & Day, 2007) and ultimately affect the intention to leave the workplace (Harrington, Bean, Pintello & Mathews, 2001). Therefore, maintaining and enhancing job satisfaction is important in order to establish quality worker, workplace and work itself.

Life Events Stress & Job Satisfaction

Extra organizational sources of stress have also been suggested as a major contributor of personal stress which affects the physical and mental well-being of the managers at work. Life events stressors interact between life inside and life outside of the organization. It can lead managers to feel pressure. Family problems (Pahl & Pahl, 1971) and life crisis (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1973) of managers are the prominent sources of life events stress. A life event is indicative of or requires a significant change in the ongoing life patterns of the individual. According to Settersten and Mayer (1997), "A life event is a significant occurrence involving a relatively abrupt change that may produce serious and long lasting effects". Events such as the death of a loved one, divorce or a son or daughter leaving home are often referred

to as critical life events because they require a major transition in our lives.

Life events stress model hypothesized that it is possible to make prediction about stress and susceptibility to much wider array of diseases by determining the magnitude of critical life changes taking place within a limited span of time. There are several studies which indicated that stress has been associated with important occupational outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee withdrawal behavior (Naumann, 1993; Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992; Tett & Meyer, 1993; William & Hazer, 1986). Studies also show that burnout and higher job related stresses are most responsible factors for job dissatisfaction, decision to leave work field and reducing the number of hours worked (Bennet, Plint & Clifford, 2005). Another study showed that stress is directly related to health and inversely related to global constructive thinking and job satisfaction (Staccianni & Torres, 2004). It is imperative for organizations to recognize common sources of distress and to practice effective management principles or organize such type of activities which may create some positive changes within individuals and energize them.

Individualism-Collectivism & Job Satisfaction

The term individualism-collectivism was coined by Hofstede (1980). Individualism-collectivism is a dimension of culture at both the societal and organizational levels, although most of the research has focused on societal or national

culture. Countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia are examples of individualistic cultures. In contrast, collectivistic cultures are those where people have stronger bonds to their groups and group membership which forms a person's self-identity. Asian countries such as China, India and Japan, as well as countries in Latin America are higher in collectivism.

Collectivism and individualism have been conceptualized as syndromes that include beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles, values, and behaviors in different cultures (Triandis, 1989, 1995). Individualistic cultural values emphasize self-reliance, autonomy, competition, personal control, and individual goals. Behavior is governed primarily by personal calculations of gain and loss. In contrast, collectivistic cultural values emphasize filial devotion, harmony, sociability, and a willingness to put aside personal needs for the good of one's social group. Neither individualistic nor collectivistic values should be considered inherently superior, but rather each is the best functional adaptation to a given set of cultural circumstances (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Individualism and collectivism in the management of remuneration would seem to have both functional and dysfunctional aspects within an organizational setting. Past studies (e.g., Ramamoorthy & Carroll, 1998; Ramamoorthy & Flood, 2002; 2004) also indicated that individualistic cultures emphasize competitiveness and collectivistic cultures emphasize cooperativeness. However, Hui and Yee (1999) found that job satisfaction positively correlated with collectivism, which replicated earlier studies

by Hui, Yee and Eastman (1995). However, it may be that collectivists are only more satisfied in cultures with values congruent with their own (Parkes & Bochner, 2001). Contrast findings are also reported in many studies. Noordin and Jusoff, (2010) in their study found that Australian managers appear to have a significantly higher level of job satisfaction than their counterpart in Malaysia. In the field of cross-cultural studies, it is found that employees in collectivistic countries such as Japan and Taiwan report lower overall job satisfaction (e.g. Griffith & Home, 1987; Lincoln, Hanada & Olsen, 1981).

Objectives & Hypotheses

Keeping in view of the above brief conceptualization and review of literature, the following objectives of the study are proposed:

1. To examine the role of various dimensions of life events stress (job negative, person negative, job positive & person positive) in job satisfaction of managerial personnel.
2. To examine the role of individualism-collectivism in job satisfaction of managerial personnel.

The theoretical and empirical researches have provided the base for the present study which attempted to investigate the stress (life events) and individualism-collectivism in job satisfaction. From the literature and empirical studies of the relationship among stress (life events), individualism-collectivism, and job satisfaction following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Negative stress (life events) would be negatively related to job satisfaction and positive stress (life events) would be positively related to job satisfaction. Managers having negative stress (life events) would have lower job satisfaction than having positive stress (life events).

2. Manager who scored high on collectivism would have higher job satisfaction than managers who scored high on individualism.

Design

In the present investigation we have used a correlation design with ex-post facto research. This is ex-post research because we could not make any effort to change the psychological construct which was used in the present investigation (stressful life events, individualism-collectivism) through intervention. We measured all the psychological constructs of the present investigation only through psychometrics devices.

Sample

Present investigation was conducted on 210 managerial personnel from different private sector organizations of India. Participant's age vary from 22 to 59 years (mean=43.13 and SD=9.109) and have an average of 2 children.

Measures

Stress (life events) was measured by using Life Changes Experiences Survey (Dohrenwend, Krasnoff, Askenasy

& Dohrenwend, 1978). This questionnaire has been frequently used in studies to measure life events stress. Internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) of the different sub scales was found to be 0.53 for job negative stress, 0.70 for negative personal life stress, 0.74 for total negative life stress, 0.58 for job positive stress, 0.73 for positive personal life stress, and 0.77 for total positive life stress. High score on this scale shows high level of life events stress.

To measure the individualistic/collectivism orientation of managers Individualism and Collectivism Scale developed by Singh and Kumar (1997) was used. This scale comprises 10 items with two alternatives. Respondents had to choose one alternative for each item. High score indicates high collectivism.

The Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Employee's Inventory (Pestonjee, 1973) has been used to measure the level of job dissatisfaction of managers. This inventory comprises 80 items which covers four areas, namely job, management, social relations and personal adjustment. Job and management areas constitute 'on the job' dimension while social relations and personal adjustment areas together constitute 'off the job' dimensions of job satisfaction. Five point response categories were used in this scale. The area wise split half reliability was found to be 0.99 for job, 0.99 for management, 0.88 for personal adjustment and 0.98 for social relations. In the present paper only items of 'on the job' dimensions (job and management) were used. High score on this scale shows high level of job satisfaction.

Procedure

All necessary permission for data collection was sought from organizations selected for study. After establishing rapport and providing proper instructions, above mentioned scales were administered. Questionnaires were distributed on a total of 210 managerial personnel of different private sector organizations in India. Participants' were allowed sufficient time to complete the questionnaires. All psychometrics devices were simultaneously administered to the participants involved in this study. Scoring for all the above mentioned questionnaires were done accordingly as instructed in their manual.

Data Analysis

Obtained raw scores on different scales were entered on SPSS in com-

puter. The data analysis encompassed correlation coefficient and step wise multiple regression analysis. To find out the correlation coefficients of job satisfaction with stress (life events) and individualism-collectivism, Pearson correlation is computed. Stepwise or statistical regression is used to identify the subset of independent variables that has the strongest relationship to a criterion variable. Obtained results from the analysis are presented in tables 1-4

Results

In this paper results have been recorded in terms of correlation coefficients and step wise multiple regression analysis by using SPSS. The scores for analysis were obtained on the basis of response of managers on standardized psychometric devices.

Table 1 Correlation Coefficient of Life Events Stress (Dimensions & Total) and Individualism-Collectivism with Satisfaction Total and Satisfaction (Job & Management)

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable		
	Satisfaction (Job)	Satisfaction (Management)	Satisfaction (Total)
Job Negative	.021	-.044	-.009
Person Negative	.068	-.034	.026
Total Negative	.060	-.048	.014
Job Positive	.095	.152*	.143*
Person Positive	.212**	.131	.201**
Total Positive	.202**	.162*	.212**
Individualism-Collectivism	-.107	-.215*	-.181**

*p< 0.05, **p<0.01

The table indicates that life events stress and individualism-collectivism group scores were correlated with dimension of job satisfaction scores. Correlation coefficients between the dimensions of life events stress and job satis-

faction were also found by using Pearson correlation method. From the dimensions of life events stress, job positive life events stress was found to be significantly and positively correlated with satisfaction (total & management).

Job positive life events stress was found to be significantly and positively correlated with satisfaction (total & management).

Person positive life events stress was found to be significantly positively correlated with satisfaction (total & job). Total positive life events stress was found to be significantly and positively correlated to satisfaction (total, job & management). Individualism-collectivism was also found to be significantly

and negatively correlated with satisfaction (total & management). Other correlation coefficients were not found to be significant.

Table 2 presents the summary of the results of step wise multiple regression analysis where satisfaction with job was used as a criterion variable and life events stress (job negative, person negative, job positive & person positive) and individualism- collectivism were used as predictor variables.

Table 2 Summary of the Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Satisfaction with Job as a Criterion Variable

Predictor Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² change	β	F	P
Person Positive	.212	.045	.041	.045	.212**	9.835	.002
Individualism-Collectivism	.257	.066	.057	.021	-.146*	7.299	.001

Predictors: (Constant), Person positive

Predictors: (Constant), Person positive, Individualism-Collectivism

The results of step wise multiple regression analysis indicate that person positive stress (4.5% of variance, $F_{1,208} = 9.835, p < .002$), and individualism-collectivism (2.1% of variance, $F_{1,207} = 7.299, p < .001$) were found to be significant important predictors of satisfaction with job.

Table 3 presents the summary of the results of step wise multiple regression analysis where satisfaction management was used as a criterion variable and life events stress (job negative, person negative, job positive & person positive) and individualism-collectivism were used as predictor variables.

Table 3 Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Satisfaction Management as a Criterion Variable

Predictor Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² change	β	F	P
Individualism-Collectivism	.215	.046	.041	.046	-.215**	10.044	.002
Person Positive	.273	.075	.066	.029	.171*	8.347	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Individualism-Collectivism

Predictors: (Constant), Individualism-Collectivism, Person Positive

The results of step wise multiple regression analysis indicate that individualism-collectivism (4.6% of variance,

$F_{1,208} = 10.044, p < .002$), and total positive stress (2.9% of variance, $F_{1,207} = 8.347, p < .000$) were found to be significant im-

portant predictors of satisfaction with management.

Table 4 presents the summary of the results of step wise multiple regression analysis where satisfaction total was

used as a criterion variable and life events stress (job negative, person negative, job positive& person positive) and individualism-collectivism were used as predictor variables.

Table 4 Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Satisfaction Total as a Criterion Variable

Predictor Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² change	β	F	P
Person Positive	.201	.041	.036	.041	.201**	8.785	.002
Individualism-Collectivism	.296	.088	.079	.047	-.221***	9.965	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Person Positive

Predictors: (Constant), Person Positive, Individualism-Collectivism

The results of step wise multiple regression analysis indicate that person positive stress (4.1% of variance, $F_{1,208} = 8.785, p < .002$) and individualism-collectivism (4.7% of variance, $F_{1,207} = 9.692, p < .000$) were found significant important predictors of satisfaction total.

Person positive stress was found to be an important predictor of job satisfaction.

Discussion

In the present paper the main objective was to examine the influence of stress (life events) and individualism-collectivism in job satisfaction of managers in different private sector organizations of India. First objective was to examine the role of various dimensions of life events stress in job satisfaction of managerial personnel. The correlation coefficients indicated that the managerial personnel who experience more positive stress (life events) were more satisfied as compared to managers with high negative stress (life events). The step-wise multiple regression analysis also indicated that person positive stress was found to be an important predictor of job satisfac-

tion. It shows that positive stress may increase the level of job satisfaction among managerial personnel. Studies have indicated the positive effects of stress on health and satisfaction. However the type and quality of stress can be either positive or negative. Various change related to our personal or work related life affects the job satisfaction. Negative life events decreases the job satisfaction and may cause various health related problems where as positive life events stress increases the job satisfaction. Since positive life events stress provides positive psychological state within the individual and exerts positive effects on his/her health and performance. Sveinsdotter, Biering and Ramel (2006) reported an employee review that was conducted by Harrish Interactive (Market Research Firm) according to which there was negative correlation between

job related stressful events and job satisfaction. The finding of the present investigation was also supported by Ahmadi and Alireza, (2007) and Swody (2006). They found that eustress or positive stress was positively associated with increased job satisfaction. Positive life events are also self-esteem enhancers and have a stress buffering effect. There are two possible explanations behind this: first, people accept positive changes in life such as job promotion as a challenge because of its perceived skill, gain of knowledge and financial growth, so they accept this challenge with a positive mood. The second one is that mostly positive events such as job advancement, educational and economic success were related to achievement in the past time activity of an individual which enables persons to pursue an interest or participate in a shared activity. This in turn produced a strong feeling of commitment and involvement within individual and also helps them to develop a positive feeling towards work and life that is very useful for the organizations. In this way the results of present study point out the need of positive events for better job satisfaction of employees and improving strategy to cope with negative life events stress.

The second objective of this paper was to examine the role of individualism-collectivism in job satisfaction of managerial personnel. The correlation coefficients indicated that managers with collectivistic orientations were found less satisfied as compared to those with individualistic orientations. The findings of step-wise multiple regression

Individualism-collectivism was an important predictor of its role in job satisfaction of managerial personnel.

analysis also indicated that individualism-collectivism was an important predictor of its role in job satisfaction of managerial personnel. Highly collectivistic managers are more willing to suppress their personal opinions and conform to organizational norms. Since India has collectivistic culture here collectivism may play an important role in job satisfaction. In this study job satisfaction was found higher in individualistic managers as compared to collectivistic managers. Possible explanation is that those results may be due to collectivists having higher expectations from their employment relationships with their organizations but when they are unable to fulfill those expectations they experience dissatisfaction. Another possible explanation is that the collectivists become emotionally dependent on their group and organizations and therefore do not take much initiative themselves. Due to this dependency their personal actions are inhibited and they feel less satisfied with their jobs. Collectivists believe that employees are an essential part of the group, and will readily contribute without concern for advantage being taken of them or whether others are doing their part. They feel personally responsible for the group product and are oriented towards sharing group rewards. Individualistic managerial approach may foster development of an individual's self-concept and self-confidence. Due to their nature

and organizational norms collectivistic managers believe in satisfying their employees. When they are unable to achieve this, they themselves feel less satisfied due to extra burden and higher expectations.

Individualistic managers often like to implement innovative changes and tend to become less emotionally dependent as compared to collectivists. They only believe in the outcomes. Sometimes collectivistic managers have innovative ideas and seek some desired changes in the organizations but due to conformity with others they are unable to implement them and they may feel less satisfied whereas individualistic managers may feel easy to implement innovative ideas necessary for the business's existence and growth. Differences in public and private organizations' culture may be another factor for the negative relation of collectivistic managers with job satisfaction. Our review of literature though have suggested a positive correlation between collectivism and job satisfaction, however the present study shows opposite results. Studies are available which support the contradictory set of findings regarding individualism-collectivism and job satisfaction. In a survey on 5,185 managers from 24 countries, individualism and job satisfaction were found positively related (Spector et al., 2001). Harrison (1995) and Lincoln and Kalleberg (1985) also reported that job satisfaction is higher for employees in individualistic cultures. Since job satisfaction of managers as well as employees is essential for organizational func-

tioning effective strategies are needed to be implemented to satisfy the managers.

Job satisfaction is higher for employees in individualistic cultures.

Conclusions & Implications

It can be said that stress (life events) and individualism-collectivism have significant role in determining job satisfaction among managerial personnel. To understand human behaviors, managers should focus on values and attitudes currently prevailing in the organizations. Positive life events stress may play an important role in improving the job satisfaction. There are number of research implications that can be drawn from this investigation. First, there is a need for more empirical studies to prove the relationship of collectivism with low job satisfaction. Awareness of similarities and differences in different managerial approaches should help managers towards better understanding and improved working relationship. Our findings may contribute to emerging researches that need to take a multidimensional approach to study on individualism-collectivism. The present research may provide guidance to organizations that wish to develop and maintain human resources management procedures on the basis of empirical studies.

Limitations & Future Research

In this study only managers are taken as participants, therefore all the employ-

ees may also be included in future studies because they are also an essential part of the organizations. The present study is on private sector organizations, if data are taken from other organizational sectors it may give better results. We should also take precautions at the time of data collection. Cross-cultural studies should also be conducted to find the results related with these studies. Future research should investigate the mechanisms involved in explaining the role of psychosocial factors in job satisfaction. In future there is the need to take more predictor variables which influence the job satisfaction effectively and there is also the need to take more samples. On the basis of the obtained results it can be suggested that there is need to conduct more empirical studies for confirming the role of individualism-collectivism and life events stress in job satisfaction.

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