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The Relationship Between Learned Resourcefulness and Job Satisfaction: A Research on Staff of Higher Education in Turkey

Hatice Necla Kelesa*

*Bahçeşehir University, Abidei Hürriyet Tepesi No:2 Sisli, Istanbul 34353, Turkey

Abstract

The independent variable “Learned Resourcefulness” was measured by using the “Learned Resourcefulness Scale” developed by Rosenbaum and the dependent variable “Job Satisfaction” was measured by using the “Short Form Minnesota Satisfaction Questionaire” developed by Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist. It is expected that, this study will contribute to the existing literature through analyzing the relationship between learned resourcefulness levels in higher education staff and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Learned resourcefulness, job satisfaction

1. Introduction

Today's businesses strive to survive in an environment of ever-increasing uncertainties. Being forced to make more effective use of their resources in order to survive and compete in such environment; businesses have had to turn their attention to the irreplaceable "human resource". The emphasis placed on human resources has almost become directly proportional to the success of businesses. Job satisfaction is described as the measurement of an individual's positive or negative feelings about intrinsic and/or extrinsic conditions regarding his/her job (Bhuian, 2002). On the other hand, Vroom, who uses job satisfaction and job attitudes interchangeably (alternately), describes job satisfaction as "an employee's emotional inclination toward the job role he/she currently encumbers" (Green, 2000). While Griffin (1989) states that "an individual who is highly satisfied demonstrates positive attitudes towards

* Hatice Necla Keles. Tel.: +90 212 381 06 41; fax: +90 212 38106 00
E-mail address: necla.keles@bahcesehir.edu.tr

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job, and an individual who has low level of satisfaction or is not satisfied at all, demonstrates negative attitudes towards job", Schultz & Schultz (1997) has said that "if an employee's overall attitude toward his/her job that is positive job satisfaction occurs, and if such is negative, job dissatisfaction occurs. Job satisfaction is important for two reasons. First, what employees think and feel about their jobs is important both for themselves and their jobs. Second, for managers, employees' attitudes toward their jobs have an impact on their performance and productivity. For behaviors affected by job satisfaction is attendance to work, performance, mental and physical health (Feldman & Hugh, 1983). Job dissatisfaction, on the other hand, causes negative outcomes for both individual and organization where employed, and individuals may leave their organizations, or their job productivity may decrease (Akçamete, Kaner & Sucuoğlu, 2001). What is important in job satisfaction is how individual perceives the concept of job. This concept varies from one individual to other. Individual's understanding of and expectations from job, judgment standards, beliefs and attitudes, and job satisfaction determine their measurements (Locke, 1976 ). As employees' social characteristics, such personal characteristics, age and gender, beliefs and values, professional experiences, upbringing, family structure and living standard, and their expectations from job change, job characteristics providing job satisfaction change (Barutçuğil, 2004). While an individual working under the same environmental and organization conditions has a high job satisfaction, another individual under the same may have low job satisfaction level (Yıldırım, 1995). In that case, it may be said that personal factors, while other conditions are the same, can lead to different levels of job satisfaction among individuals (Serinkan & Bardakçı, 2007). The phenomenon of success, which is generally described as the level of achieving determined targets, varies from one individual to another, and factors determining or influencing success level may also vary depending on areas in which individuals function. A possibly important one of such factors is experiences gained, and thereby the "learning" attained, from past to present. The number of the research investigating the relationship between learning, which is one of the variables that distinguishes one individual from another in the literature, and the variables of success and performance, is seen to be rising. When considering the indispensability of human factor in businesses, effects of stress on the organization, and the individual and organization problem of work stress, it is crucially important to cope with stress or learn to be strong. One of the concepts related to how individuals cope with stress-invoking events in life and work effectively is "learned resourcefulness". The learned resourcefulness concept, which was first used by Meichenbaum, was expressed as one of the personal factors explaining human behavior. According to Rosenbaum, skills related to learned resourcefulness are learned from the early years through informal ways and since individuals' learning history differs, their learned resourcefulness levels may also differ. Individuals with high learned resourcefulness levels use problem solving methods, motivate themselves in a positive way, if necessary may postpone activities which give pleasure to them, use problem solving skills and resist in order to cope with the obstacles they encounter instead of surrendering. As for the individuals whose learned resourcefulness is low, they tend to give up struggling, believe they lack talent whenever they experience failure and easily surrender. Based on the idea that individuals' job satisfaction may differ in relation to their learned resourcefulness levels, the aim of the present study is to analyse the relationship between higher education staff’s learned resourcefulness level and job satisfaction.

2. Aim of Study

The studies on learned resourcefulness (Rosenbaum, 1980; Rosenbaum & Jaffe, 1983; Kennett & Pettis, 2001) indicate that individuals with high learned resourcefulness are able to cope with preventive stress and problems more effectively. Having a high "learned resourcefulness" to have a successful performance, high job satisfaction and motivation within the organization may prove to be an advantage. It was considered worthy of studying the influence of characteristics of employees with high learned resourcefulness, such as being more successful in adapting to new situations, achieving targets of their choice, and being consistent and industrious, on their job satisfaction (Levesque, Gauvin & Desharnais, 2003). The following is the hypothesis in this research that aims to contribute to the literature by investigating the relationship of learned resourcefulness and job satisfaction levels of the higher education staff.

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between learned resourcefulness and job satisfaction among the higher education staff.
3. Method and Scale

The population comprised a private higher education staff in Turkey. 189 questionnaires were sent to 189 personnel of the organization working in Istanbul, between January - March 2014; however only 68 questionnaires that were fit for analysis were taken into evaluation. As for the gender of the participants in the research, 66.2% of them are female, and 33.8% are male. As for their marital statuses, 41.2% of them are single, and 58.8% are married. 29.4% of them have 0-5 years of service, 35.3% 6-11 years of service, 20.6% 12-17 years of service, and 14.7% 18-23 years of service. One of the data collection instrument was "Learned Resourcefulness Scale" developed by Rosenbaum (1980) and adapted to Turkish by Dağ and Siva (1991). Each participant can attain a score ranging from 36 to 180 from the Likert-type scale consisting 36 statements. High scores indicate that individual is highly able to control himself/herself, i.e., coping strategies represented in the scale are frequently applied (Dağ, 1991). The reliability coefficient for the scale in this research was found .751 (Cronbach’s Alpha .751), which suggests that it is considerably reliable (Foster, 2002). The other data collection instrument Short Form Minnesota Satisfaction Questionaire (MSQ) was used to collect data about the employees' job satisfaction level. MSQ developed by Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967) was adapted to Turkish by Baycan (1985). The reliability coefficient for the scale in this research was found .899 (Cronbach’s Alpha .899), which suggests that it is highly reliable (Foster, 2002). The data compiled in line with the aim of the research was computerized and descriptive analysis and hypothesis analysis were conducted using SPSS program. The data attained in the research was interpreted using various statistical methods and test techniques in line with the aim of the research.

4. Findings

Table 1. Investigation of the Relationship Between Learned Resourcefulness and Job Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction Scale</td>
<td>Learned Resourcefulness Scale</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The regression model we attempted to explain with the Job Satisfaction, Learned Resourcefulness Scale was not found statistically significant (F=0.010 p>0.05) Accordingly, it is understood that there is no statistically significant relationship between learned resourcefulness and job satisfaction. The hypothesis was rejected.

5. Discussion

The point where the concept of competition has come to in today's business world forces businesses to become more productive and effective. Having a valuable work force is no more sufficient for businesses that are forced to use their resources more effectively, and retaining valuable human resource in businesses gives them a competitive edge. This, on the other hand, can only be achieved with employees who are satisfied with their jobs and dedicated to the organization. Personal and biological characteristics of individuals, such as age, gender and marital status, as well as their character traits, such as values, beliefs, attitudes and skills, influence their behavior in workplace. In this respect, the matter of which of the variables influence job satisfaction to what extent have become a focal point for the researchers. While some studies focused on demographic variables taking individual differences, such as age, gender and personal taste, as basis, some other studies focused on organizational variables, such as salary conditions, bonuses, hierarchical structure, education, working conditions. This research has investigated the direction of the relationship, if any, between learned resourcefulness, which individuals start to learn from their early childhood and develop during their lives, which helps them cope with stress, and levels of which may vary based on different learning background of individuals, and job satisfaction. The research findings suggested that there was no significant relationship between learned resourcefulness levels and job satisfaction of the higher education staff who participated in the research. In future studies, models must be tested where the variables of learned resourcefulness and job satisfaction investigated in the current research will be addressed together with other variables they may be related to. Besides the findings attained, the research has some limitations. The major limitation is about the number of samples (n=68). Due to the limited time, the samples were selected among the employees of a single organization. The findings must also be examined taking into consideration the sample
structure and the social structure of the organization where the sampling was performed. In this respect, investigating similar models with larger samples and in organizations with different structures may enable the matter to be interpreted from a broader perspective.

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