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The relationship between learning levels and job satisfaction among hospital employees with the job class as a moderator variable

Mohammad Ali Jahani,[1] Vahid Rahimi,[2] Shahrbanoo Mahmoudjanloo,[3] Ghahraman Mahmoudi,[4*] Mohammad Amin Bahrami[5]

ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: Knowledge develops in an organization with applying learning processes and it promotes employees' job satisfaction as well as increases the organization's potential in applying and understanding the appropriate learning procedures. This study aimed at investigating the relationship between employees' organizational learning and their job satisfaction with the moderating role of their job class (therapeutic vs. non-therapeutic) in the selected hospitals located in Lorestan State, Iran.

Method: This descriptive study was an applied correlational research conducted in 2016. The study population included all 2,162 employees working in two teaching hospitals, one social affairs hospital and one private hospital, both located in Lorestan State, Iran. As many as 339 therapeutic and non-therapeutic employees were selected proportionally by using Cochran's sampling formula. Two questionnaires were administrated: Watkins and Marsick's Learning Organization Questionnaire and Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22.

Findings: Among non-therapeutic staff, the mean rate of the variable "learning" was 2.80 0.81 and the mean rate of the variable "job satisfaction" was 3.240.74. Among therapeutic staff, the correlation coefficient between learning and job satisfaction was $r = .615$ and among non-therapeutic it was $r = .725$ ($p < .01$). There was a significant relationship between learning and job satisfaction in both job classes.

Conclusion: Among both therapeutic and non-therapeutic employees, the relationship between learning and its component and job satisfaction had a similar trend, but the degree of relationship or proximity varied. It is proposed that hospital managers try to promote employees' learning capacity in individual, group, and organizational levels along with job satisfaction and its components among all job classes, especially among non-therapeutic staff.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, organizational learning, employee, hospitals, Iran

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[1]Social Determinants of Health Research Center (SDHRC), Health Research Institute, Faculty of medicine, Babol University of Medical Sciences, Babol, Iran
[2]Master of Science of Health Services Management, Lorestan University of Medical Sciences, Khorram Abad, Iran
[3]Master of Science of Health Services Management, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Mazandaran, Iran
[4]Hospital Administration Research Center, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran
[5]Associate professor, Healthcare Management Department, Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences, Yazd, Iran

*Correspondence to: Ghahraman Mahmoudi, Hospital Administration Research Center, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, organizations need productive, committed, satisfied, and skillful employees who are more likely to achieve their performance targets.[1] The increasing consideration of organizational learning is attributed to the need for more innovation in the ever-changing environment.[2] As a result, an organization that prefers to create an effective innovating environment needs to encourage learning activities among its employees.[3] Many organizations attempt to provide workspaces that promote and enrich learning.[4] Leaders and managers well know that organizational learning is worth noting and at work in making satisfied employees.[5]

Job satisfaction has a direct influence on work performance and consequently on the quality of healthcare and hospital service; therefore, job satisfaction is given considerable attention among healthcare specialists and researchers.[6] Job satisfaction results in positive work traits that enhance organizational performance.[7] In addition, in the healthcare section, the quality of healthcare services directly depends on employees' job satisfaction and their better use of learning results for providing better services.[8] Healthcare staff with low job satisfaction may suffer from different medical conditions and this in turn may badly affect the total quality of health-related services that they provide.[9] In contrast, high job satisfaction results in patients' satisfaction as well as low costs for medical treatment provided in hospice.[10]

Job satisfaction is an employee's positive sense of, or attitude toward, their work[11] and conceived as some pleasure achieved by one's realizing their work value.[12] Many studies have been done that focused on organizational learning levels and job satisfaction. For example, Maleki studied the relationship between organizational learning culture and customer satisfaction using job satisfaction as a mediator variable in the insurance industry.[5] Chiva and Alegre considered emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and the role of organizational learning capability.[7] Mirkamali, Thani, and Alami

Table1 The state of Study Variables (Learning and Job Satisfaction) among Subjects Based on One-Sample *t*-Test Results

Variable	Mean ± *SD*	*t*-Test	*df*	*p*-Value
Individual learning	2.82 ± 0.80	–4.13	338	.000
Group learning	2.80 ± 0.87	–4.24	338	.000
Organizational learning	2.75 ± 0.79	–5.84	338	.000
Learning	2.79 ± 0.75	–5.19	338	.000
Organizational factors of job satisfaction	3.19 ± 0.76	4.56	338	.000
Environmental factors of job satisfaction	2.81 ± 0.90	–3.82	338	.000
Work-related nature factors of job satisfaction	3.06 ± 0.69	1.73	338	.085
Job satisfaction	3.10 ± 0.66	2.72	338	.007

Table 2 The State of Study Variables (Learning and Job Satisfaction) among Non-therapeutic Staff

Variable	Mean ± *SD*	*t*-Test	*df*	*p*-Value
Individual learning	2.82 ± 0.76	–1.30	28	.204
Group learning	2.79 ± 0.99	–1.13	28	.268
Organizational learning	2.80 ± 0.88	–1.25	28	.222
Learning	2.80 ± 0.81	–1.31	28	.200
Organizational factors of job satisfaction	3.29 ± 0.95	163	28	.115
Environmental factors of job satisfaction	2.82 ± 1.04	–0.95	28	.348
Work-related nature factors of job satisfaction	3.33 ± 0.65	2.73	28	.011
Job satisfaction	3.24 ± 0.74	1.74	28	.092

Table 3 The State of Study Variables (Learning and Job Satisfaction) among Therapeutic Staff

Variable	Mean ± *SD*	*t*-Test	*df*	*p*-Value
Individual learning	2.82 ± 0.80	–3.92	309	.000
Group learning	2.80 ± 0.86	–4.09	309	.000
Organizational learning	2.75 ± 0.78	-5.74	309	.000
Learning	2.79 ± 0.74	–5.02	309	.000
Organizational factors of job satisfaction	3.18 ± 074	4.25	309	.000
Environmental factors of job satisfaction	2.81±.89	–3.71	309	.000
Work-related nature factors of job satisfaction	3.04 ± 0.69	1.02	309	.310
Job satisfaction	3.08 ± 0.65	2.27	309	.024

examined the role of transformational leadership and job satisfaction in the organizational learning of an automotive manufacturing company.[13] Lim investigated the relationships between organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and learning organization culture in one Korean private organization.[14]

Considering the above mentioned points, however, it is clear to the best of our knowledge that there hasn't been any study investigating the effect of organizational learning on job satisfaction with the moderating role of job class in the healthcare section. This study aimed at investigating the relationship between hospital employees' organizational learning and their job satisfaction with their job class as the moderator (therapeutic jobs vs. non-therapeutic jobs).

METHODS

This study was conducted as a correlational survey in 2016. The study population included all 2,162 therapeutic and non-therapeutic employers working in two teaching hospitals (Ashayer Hospital with 350 inpatient beds; Shahid Rahimi with 207 inpatient beds), one social affairs hospital (Tamin-e Ijtemai Hospital with 256 inpatient beds) and one private hospital (Shafa Hospital with 110 inpatient beds), all located in Khoram-Abad City, Lorestan State, Iran. As many as 339 employers were selected proportionally as the study sample by using Cochran's sampling formula with 95% confidence interval.

Two questionnaires were administrated: Watkins and Marsick's Learning Organization Questionnaire[15] and Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire.[16] The former included three learning levels (individual learning level with 6 questions, group learning level with 2 questions, and organizational learning level with 9 questions). Its questions were scored using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never* to 5 = *ever*). The validity of the Persian version of the scale was confirmed by some specialists, and its reliability was a α = .91 as reported in the study by Nadi and colleagues.[17] The latter, Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, included 19 items in 3 dimensions: work nature with 7 items, work environment with 3 items, and organizational environment with 9 items. Again the items were scored using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree*). The validity of the Persian version of the scale was confirmed by some specialists, and its internal consistency was α = .78 as reported in the study by Kakemamand and colleagues.[18]

After receiving the agreement of responsible managers, the researcher entered different clinical and non-clinical departments and distributed the questionnaires to the staff. He explained the aims of the study and answered any questions that subjects posed. The completed questionnaires were analyzed with SPSS 22.

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Table 4 Correlation Matrix of the Variable "Learning" and Its Components vs. the Variable "Job Satisfaction" and Its Components among Therapeutic Staff

Variable	Individual learning	Group learning	Organizational learning	Learning	Organizational factors of job satisfaction	Environmental factors of job satisfaction	Work-related factors of job satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Individual learning	1							
Group learning	.713**	1						
Organizational learning	.774**	.724**	1					
Learning	.910**	.901**	.913**	1				
Organizational factors of job satisfaction	.593**	.460**	.524**	.577**	1			
Environmental factors of job satisfaction	.530**	.463**	.500**	.548**	.743**	1		
Work-related nature factors of job satisfaction	.474**	.377**	.434**	.470**	.572**	.654**	1	
Job satisfaction	.621**	.495**	.565**	.615**	.915**	.868**	.829**	1

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 5 Correlation Matrix of the Variable "Learning" and Its Components vs. the Variable "Job Satisfaction" and Its Components among Non-therapeutic Staff

Variable	Individual learning	Group learning	Organizational learning	Learning	Organizational factors of job satisfaction	Environmental factors of job satisfaction	Work-related nature factors of job satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Individual learning	1							
Group learning	.771**	1						
Organizational learning	.813**	.799**	1					
Learning	.917**	.932**	.936**	1				
Organizational factors of job satisfaction	.613**	.591**	.620**	.654**	1			
Environmental factors of job satisfaction	.541**	.438*	.557**	.546**	.714**	1		
Work-related nature factors of job satisfaction	.579**	.575**	.557**	.613**	.529**	.500**	1	
Job satisfaction	.685**	.650**	.689**	.725**	.942**	.820**	.748**	1

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

FINDINGS

The study sample included 29 non-therapeutic staff (8.5%) and 310 therapeutic staff (91.5%).

As Table 1 shows, the variable "learning" had the mean ± SD of 2.7975 out of 3.00 and was lower than the moderate level ($t = -5.19$, $p < .01$). In contrast, the score for "job satisfaction" was 3.1066 out of 3.00, which was relatively higher than the value ascribed to the moderate level ($t = 2.72$, $p < .01$).

Based on K-S test, we found the research data distribution was normal ($z = 0.74$, $p = .64$ for "learning"; $z = 1.27$, $p = .08$, for "job satisfaction").

As shown in Table 2, among non-therapeutic staff, the mean rate of the variable "learning" was 2.80 ± 0.81 ($t = -1.31$, $p > .05$), and the mean rate of the variable "job satisfaction" was 3.24 ± 0.74 ($t = 1.74$, $p > .05$). As a result, in relation to the scores of non-therapeutic staff', we found that both "learning" and "job satisfaction" have been on moderate levels.

As shown in Table 3, among therapeutic staff, the mean score for "learning" was 2.79 ± 0.74 ($t = -5.02$, $p < .01$), and for "job satisfaction" the score was 3.08 ± 0.65 ($t = 2.27$, $p > .05$). As a result, it was observed with therapeutic staff that rate of learning was less than moderate and job satisfaction was moderate.

Table 4 shows the correlational matrix of the studied variables. Among therapeutic staff, the correlation coefficients of learning and job satisfaction were significantly positive ($p < .01$). In total, the correlation between learning and job satisfaction among therapeutic staff was significantly positive ($r = 0.615$, $p < .01$).

As Table 5 shows, the correlation coefficients of learning components and job satisfaction were significantly positive among non-therapeutic staff ($p < .01$). In total, the correlation between learning and job satisfaction among non-therapeutic staff was significantly positive ($r = .725$, $p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

Among therapeutic staff, the correlation coefficient between learning and job satisfaction was $r = .615$ and was $r = .725$ among non-therapeutic staff. As seen, there was a significantly positive relationship between the components of learning and job satisfaction in both therapeutic and non-therapeutic job categories.

The mean rate of organizational learning among the employees working in the studied hospitals was lower than expected. Cheung found that organizational learning capacity was moderate.[19] In our study, the mean rate of job satisfaction was higher than the moderate level. This accords with the findings of some studies.[13,20]

Based on our findings, it was found that the mean rate of organizational learning and job satisfaction were moderate among non-therapeutic staff. The mean rate of organizational learning and job satisfaction were lower and higher among therapeutic staff, respectively. As organizational learning is being increasingly considered as a main factor in organizational growth, the hospitals studied need to provide their staff with a work environment that promotes, encourages, and sustains learning in order to ensure staff feel motivated to learn more at the job, work innovatively, and perform better, which translates into benefits for both the management and the staff at these hospitals.

The healthcare system cannot work effectively without employees being innovative and motivated.[21] As job dissatisfaction results in absenteeism, employee turnover on account of frequent job changes,[10] the hospitals studied should try to implement specific measures and plans and programs to improve staff's job satisfaction to offset negative effects arising out of job dissatisfaction.

Based on the findings, we found that there was a significantly positive relationship between individual learning, group learning, and organizational learning on one hand and job satisfaction levels on the other hand, with job class as a moderator variable. To our knowledge, there has been no similar study on hospitals. However, in case of organizations other than hospitals, Maleki and colleagues found a significant relationship between organizational learning and job satisfaction. They concluded that encouraging organizational learning culture positively affects employees' job satisfaction and patients' service satisfaction.[5]

We found a significantly positive relationship between organizational learning and job satisfaction. Lim studied the possible relationships between organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and learning organization culture in one Korean private organization and found that organizational culture was a main factor for clarifying the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment and showed that organizational learning has a positive relationship with job satisfaction and organizational commitment.[14]

Mirkamali and colleagues found a significantly positive relationship between transformational leadership, organizational learning, and job satisfaction in an automotive manufacturing company.[13] Chiva and Alegre found a relationship between organizational learning capacities and job satisfaction.[7] In contrast to the findings of our study, Islam and colleagues did not find any significant relationship between employees' organizational learning and turnover intention, as a

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factor for job satisfaction.[22] The possible reason is priorities other than those of our study at work in job satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this study was the low level of interest the subjects had shown to participate in the study and higher workload in some units. However, this problem was effectively addressed by researcher's explanation to the participants as to why this study was important and its aims and repeated references to the hospitals.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that among both therapeutic and non-therapeutic employees, the relationship between learning and its components and job satisfaction had a similar trend overall, but not without differences to some extent. As a result, it is proposed that hospital managers try to promote employees' learning capacity in individual, group, as well as organizational levels so that job satisfaction and its components are given a boost among all job categories, especially for non-therapeutic personnel.

Conflict: The results of this study were completely based on the data extracted from the questionnaires, the participants chosen for this study weren't asked to reveal their identity and their responses were retained anonymous. There was no conflict of interests in relation to the hospitals where we conducted our research.

CONFLICT

There is no conflict of interest

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