

MODERATING EFFECT OF AGE AND GENDER ON LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND JOB ATTITUDE RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Employees are the biggest resource for the organization. All the strategies of the organization are implemented with the help of human resources. Thus it becomes important to ensure that human resources are satisfied and take active participation regarding matters related to their job. Nowadays employees want some autonomy related to their work. If the employee feels powerless they may experience learned helplessness. Learned Helplessness at working environment can leads to disengagement, role stress, and agitated employee. This study aims at analyzing the relationship between learned helplessness and job attitudes. Results indicate that there exists a negative relationship between learned helplessness and job satisfaction and job involvement. Further, gender has a moderating effect on the impact of learned helplessness on job involvement.

Keywords: Helplessness, Satisfaction, Involvement

INTRODUCTIONS

Many times individuals feel that things are

not going the manner in which they had expected and ask themselves - "For what reason does everything terrible happen?" or may let themselves know - "We should not endeavour this, it isn't allowed." This emotion is called Learned Helplessness and the term was coined by psychologist Martin Seligman in 1965 during his study on the behaviour of dogs. Learned Helplessness can be explained as "the giving up reaction or surrendering response that starts from the conviction that whatever you do doesn't have any kind of effect as action and outcome are perceived as independent" (Seligman, 1991). When an individual accepts that a troublesome circumstance can't be avoided, it just begins to accept it. It may be because individuals think that efforts taken earlier did not bring the desired result and feel helpless to change the circumstance. Such a feeling reduces employee productivity, motivation and initiatives.

Job Satisfaction defines the attitude of a person towards their job as a whole. It may be related to pay, promotion, colleagues, training, supervision, etc. When the employee is satisfied with their job, it has a positive outcome for the organization. According to Spector (1997) job

satisfaction is defined as a positive opinion of a person with regard to their job.

Saleh and Hosek (1976) defined job involvement as “the degree to which the person identifies with the job, actively participates in it and considers his performance important to his self-worth”. Similar to job satisfaction, job involvement is also one of the important job attitudes affecting various organizational outcomes. Job involvement is associated with important aspects of work behavior such as absenteeism, performance, and turnover (Baba, 1989; Kanungo, 1982)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Learned Helplessness

Silvet (2013) stated that learned helplessness act as a source of resistance for change and managers find it difficult to adapt with required changes when experiencing learned helplessness. According to Sahoo (1990), helplessness does not show a significant relation with organizational role stress. Shah and Pethe (2006) in their study found a positive relationship between organizational role stress and learned helplessness. Sayeed, Pestonjee and Mukherjee (1997) in their study on job characteristics and learned helplessness found that autonomy and skill variety positively impact learned helplessness.

Job Involvement

Van et al. (2003) found a positive relationship between internal locus of control and job involvement. Bhatiya et al. (2012) stated that job involvement is one of the important factors for enhancing organizational effectiveness. Zhang (2014) found that organizational citizenship behaviour has a positive relationship with job

involvement. Further, gender moderates the relationship between altruism, sportsmanship and courtesy dimension of OCB and job involvement. Varshney (2020) found that when employees think that the company is making efforts to move towards learning organizations they display high job involvement.

Job Satisfaction

Bhatti and Qureshi (2007) found that as the participation of employee increases they tend to show more job satisfaction, commitment, and increased productivity. Abraham (2012) in the study on insurance company employees job satisfaction and employee engagement, found a positive relationship between the two. Sy and O'hara (2006) found that emotional intelligence and job satisfaction are positively related. Egan (2004) found that learning organizations positively impact job satisfaction and motivation of IT employees. Further, the employee who is satisfied with their job show less turnover intention.

Rationale of the Study

Many researchers support that positive job attitudes are imperative for the smooth functioning of the organization. When the employee show satisfaction and involvement in their job, it leads to more employee engagement (Bhatti et al., 2007); improved organizational citizenship behaviour (Zhang, 2014); enhanced organization effectiveness (Bhatiya et al., 2012). However, when an employee feels powerless with respect to their work, their performance tends to decline and they experience learned helplessness. Learned helplessness has a negative influence on job attitude but still, the concepts have not been studied much. This study is an attempt to

analyze the relationship between job attitude and learned helplessness.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Research Objective

1. To analyze the impact of learned helplessness on job attitudes
2. To analyze the moderating effect of gender and age on the relationship between learned helplessness and job attitudes.

Hypothesis

H1: Learned Helplessness negatively impact job involvement

H2: Learned Helplessness negatively impact job satisfaction

H3: Gender moderate the impact of learned helplessness on job satisfaction

H4: Gender moderate the impact of learned helplessness on job involvement

H5: Age moderate the impact of learned helplessness on job satisfaction

H6: Age moderate the impact of learned helplessness on job involvement

Data Collection and Instruments

To collect primary data, a structured questionnaire was used. To measure job satisfaction 10 items scale developed by Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997) was used. For job involvement Lodahl and Kejner (1965) six items short version scale was used. 20 item scale developed by Quinless and Nelson (1988) was used to measure learned helplessness.

Sampling

For our study, sample was drawn from IT employees of the Delhi region. Convenience sampling was adopted as a sampling method. The questionnaire was distributed to 380 employees. 282 responses were considered for analysis after cleaning the data.

Statistical Tools Used

AMOS 24 was used check reliability and validity by performing confirmatory factor analysis. Moderating effect of demographic factors was also assessed using the same software.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Validity and Reliability

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	LH	JS	JI
LH	0.945	0.518	0.357	0.946	0.719		
JS	0.921	0.538	0.357	0.922	-0.598***	0.734	
JI	0.926	0.675	0.039	0.928	-0.192**	0.198**	0.822
† p < 0.100			p < 0.050		** p < 0.010		

Validity helps to ensure that the indicators are capable of measuring the construct. In this study convergent and discriminate validity was checked. For convergent validity, CR >0.7 and AVE > 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). To establish discriminant validity, square root of AVE should be more than inter-construct correlations. 4 items from learned helplessness scale were deleted because of low factor loading. Results show that validity is established as all the requirements are met and composite reliability is also more than 0.7.

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN/DF	1.791	Between 1 and 3	Acceptable
CFI	0.934	>0.95	Acceptable
SRMR	0.049	<0.08	Acceptable
RMSEA	0.053	<0.06	Acceptable
PClose	0.193	>0.05	Acceptable

Table 2 presents the model fit indices estimates and all are within the acceptable limit as suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999).

Measurement Path	Regression	Estimate	S.E.	t-value (C.R.)	P	Hypothesis Status
JI <---	LH	-.231	.066	-3.496	***	H1:Supported
JS <---	LH	-.628	.046	-13.761	***	H2:Supported
*** p < 0.05						

From table 2 it is interpreted that learned helplessness negatively impact job involvement (t value=-3.496) and job satisfaction (t value= -13.761). It indicates that when IT sector employees experience more learned helplessness, there job satisfaction and job involvement is reduced.

Table 4: Moderating effect						
Demographic	Groups	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	z-value	Hypothesis Status
Job Involvement						
Gender	G1- Male	-.326	.088	-3.69	(G1 & G2) = 2.26 ***	H4:Supported
	G2- Female	-.026	.103	-.252		
Age	A1-20-35 years	-.343	.108	-3.16	(A1&A2)=-.094 NS (A1&A3)=.805NS (A2&A3)=.877NS	H6:Not Supported
	A2- 35-50 years	-.137	.094	-1.46		
	A3- 50 years and above	-.155	.173	-.899		
Job satisfaction						
Gender	G1- Male	-.605	.064	-9.44	(G1 & G2)=-.571 NS	H3:Not Supported
	G2- Female	-.659	.069	-9.48		
Age	A1-20-35 years	-.646	.070	-9.23	(A1&A2)= 1.43NS (A1&A3)=.922NS (A2&A3)=.922NS	H5:Not Supported
	A2- 35-50 years	-.656	.071	-9.17		
	A3- 50 years and above	-.550	.098	-5.63		
*** p < 0.05						

Multi group moderation test was done and to analyze moderation effect, critical ratio was computed to identify the difference in regression weight between gender group and age group. Z-value of gender group on job involvement is more than 1.96 indicating that gender has a moderating effect on the impact of learned helplessness on job involvement. Age and gender does not act as a moderator for job satisfaction and learned helplessness.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to analyze the impact of learned helplessness on job attitudes. Moderation effect of age and gender was also analyzed. Learned helplessness makes the employee feel that they have no control over the results and thus they give up. Employees not even try when the situation is favourable. Such a feeling reduces the efforts of the employees. Our findings indicate that learned helplessness when experienced by employees negatively impacts

their job involvement and job satisfaction. When the moderating effect of age and gender was analyzed, only gender acts as a moderator on the relationship between learned helplessness and job involvement. Further, no moderation effect was observed for age and gender on the relationship between learned helplessness and job satisfaction. It is important for the organization to address the issue of learned helplessness and take initiatives to increase employee job involvement and satisfaction.

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