

3

Attitudes and Job Satisfaction

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Contrast the three components of an attitude.
2. Summarize the relationship between attitudes and behavior.
3. Compare the major job attitudes.
4. Identify the two approaches for measuring job satisfaction.
5. Summarize the main causes of job satisfaction.
6. Identify three outcomes of job satisfaction.
7. Identify four employee responses to job dissatisfaction.

★ Chapter Warm-up

If your professor has chosen to assign this, go to the Assignments section of mymanagementlab.com to complete the chapter warm-up.

ATTITUDES

Attitudes
Evaluative statements or judgments concerning objects, people, or events.

Attitudes are evaluative statements—either favorable or unfavorable—about objects, people, or events. They reflect how we feel about something. When you say “I like my job,” you are expressing your attitude about your work.

Attitudes are complex. If you ask people about their attitudes toward religion, Lady Gaga, or an organization, you may get simple responses, but the underlying reasons are probably complicated. To fully understand attitudes, we must consider their fundamental properties or components.

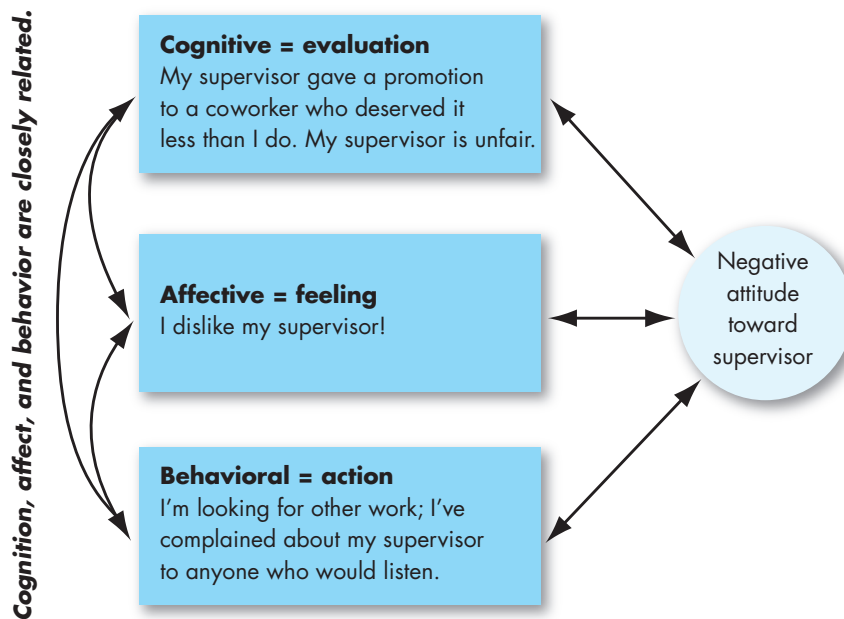


EXHIBIT 3-1
The Components of an Attitude

Typically, researchers assume attitudes have three components: cognition, affect, and behavior.¹ The statement “My pay is low” is a **cognitive component** of an attitude—a description of or belief in the way things are. It sets the stage for the more critical part of an attitude—its **affective component**. Affect is the emotional or feeling segment of an attitude reflected in the statement “I am angry over how little I’m paid.” Affect can lead to behavioral outcomes. The **behavioral component** of an attitude describes an intention to behave a certain way toward someone or something—as in, “I’m going to look for another job that pays better.”

Viewing attitudes as having three components—cognition, affect, and behavior—helps us understand their complexity and the potential relationship between attitudes and behavior. For example, imagine you just realized that someone treated you unfairly. Aren’t you likely to have feelings about this, occurring virtually instantaneously along with the realization? Thus, cognition and affect are intertwined.

Exhibit 3-1 illustrates how the three components of an attitude are related. In this example, an employee didn’t get a promotion he thought he deserved. His attitude toward his supervisor is illustrated as follows: The employee thought he deserved the promotion (cognition); he strongly dislikes his supervisor (affect); and he has complained and taken action (behavior). Although we often think cognition causes affect, which then causes behavior, in reality these components are difficult to separate.

In organizations, attitudes are important for their behavioral component. If workers believe, for example, that managers, auditors, and engineers are in a conspiracy to make employees work harder for less money, we should try to understand how this attitude formed, how it impacts job behavior, and how it might be changed.

Cognitive component

The opinion or belief segment of an attitude.

Affective component

The emotional or feeling segment of an attitude.

Behavioral component

An intention to behave in a certain way toward someone or something.

WATCH IT

If your professor has assigned this, go to the Assignments section of mymanagementlab.com to complete the video exercise titled **Gawker Media: Attitudes and Job Satisfaction**.

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Early research on attitudes assumed they were causally related to behavior—that is, the attitudes people hold determine what they do. However, one researcher—Leon Festinger—argued that attitudes *follow* behavior. Other researchers have agreed that attitudes predict future behavior.²

Did you ever notice how people change what they say so that it doesn't contradict what they do? Perhaps a friend of yours consistently argued that her apartment complex was better than yours until another friend in your complex asked her to move in with him; once she moved to your complex, you noticed her attitude toward her former apartment became more critical. Cases of attitude following behavior illustrate the effects of **cognitive dissonance**,³ contradictions individuals might perceive between their attitudes and their behavior.

People seek consistency among their attitudes, and between their attitudes and their behavior.⁴ Any form of inconsistency is uncomfortable, and individuals will therefore attempt to reduce it. People seek a stable state, which is a minimum of dissonance. When there is dissonance, people will alter either the attitudes or the behavior, or they will develop a rationalization for the discrepancy. Recent research found, for instance, that the attitudes of employees who experienced emotionally challenging work events improved after they talked about their experiences with coworkers. Social sharing helped these employees adjust their attitudes to behavioral expectations.⁵

No individual can avoid dissonance. You know texting while walking is unsafe, but you do it anyway and hope nothing bad happens. Or you give someone advice you have trouble following yourself. The desire to reduce dissonance depends on three factors, including the *importance* of the elements creating dissonance and the degree of *influence* we believe we have over those elements. The third factor is the *rewards* of dissonance; high rewards accompanying high dissonance tend to reduce tension inherent in the dissonance (dissonance is less distressing if accompanied by something good, such as a higher pay raise than expected). Individuals are more motivated to reduce dissonance when the attitudes are important or when they believe the dissonance is due to something they can control.

The most powerful moderators of the attitudes relationship are the *importance* of the attitude, its *correspondence to behavior*, its *accessibility*, the presence of *social pressures*, and whether a person has *direct experience* with the attitude.⁶ Important attitudes reflect our fundamental values, self-interest, or identification with individuals or groups we value. These attitudes tend to show a strong relationship to our behavior. However, discrepancies between attitudes and behaviors tend to occur when social pressures to behave in certain ways hold exceptional power, as in most organizations. You're more likely to remember attitudes you frequently express, and attitudes that our memories can easily access are more likely to predict our behavior. The attitude–behavior relationship is also likely to be much stronger if an attitude refers to something with which we have direct personal experience.

Cognitive dissonance
Any incompatibility between two or more attitudes or between behavior and attitudes.

JOB ATTITUDES

We have thousands of attitudes, but OB focuses on a very limited number that form positive or negative evaluations employees hold about their work environments. Much of the research has looked at three attitudes: job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment.⁷ Other important attitudes include perceived organizational support and employee engagement.

Job Satisfaction and Job Involvement

When people speak of employee attitudes, they usually mean **job satisfaction**, a positive feeling about a job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics. A person with high job satisfaction holds positive feelings about the work, while a person with low satisfaction holds negative feelings. Because OB researchers give job satisfaction high importance, we review this attitude in detail later.

Related to job satisfaction is **job involvement**, the degree to which people identify psychologically with their jobs and consider their perceived performance levels important to their self-worth.⁸ Employees with high job involvement strongly identify with and really care about the kind of work they do. Another closely related concept is **psychological empowerment**—employees’ beliefs regarding the degree to which they influence their work environment, their competencies, the meaningfulness of their job, and their perceived autonomy.⁹

Research suggests that empowerment initiatives need to be tailored to desired behavioral outcomes. Research in Singapore found that good leaders empower their employees by fostering their self-perception of competence—through involving them in decisions, making them feel their work is important, and giving them discretion to “do their own thing.”¹⁰

Organizational Commitment

An employee with **organizational commitment** identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to remain a member. Emotional attachment to an organization and belief in its values is the “gold standard” for employee commitment.¹¹

Employees who are committed will be less likely to engage in work withdrawal even if they are dissatisfied because they have a sense of organizational loyalty or attachment.¹² Even if employees are not currently happy with their work, they are willing to make sacrifices for the organization if they are committed enough.

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) is the degree to which employees believe the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. An excellent example is Research and Development (R&D) engineer John Greene, whose POS is sky-high because when he was diagnosed with leukemia, CEO Marc Benioff and 350 fellow Salesforce.com employees covered all his medical expenses and stayed in touch with him throughout his recovery. No doubt stories like this are part of the reason Salesforce.com was the eighth of *Fortune*’s 100 Best Companies to Work For in 2015.¹³

People perceive their organizations as supportive when rewards are deemed fair, when employees have a voice in decisions, and when they see their supervisors as supportive.¹⁴

Job satisfaction

A positive feeling about one’s job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics.

Job involvement

The degree to which a person identifies with a job, actively participates in it, and considers performance important to their self-worth.

Psychological empowerment

Employees’ belief in the degree to which they affect their work environment, their competence, the meaningfulness of their job, and their perceived autonomy in their work.



Organizational commitment

The degree to which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization.

Perceived organizational support (POS)

The degree to which employees believe an organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being.



Power distance

A national culture attribute that describes the extent to which a society accepts that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally.

Employee engagement

An individual's involvement with, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for the work he or she does.

POS is a predictor of employment outcomes, but there are some cultural influences. POS is important in countries where the **power distance**—the degree to which people in a country accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally—is lower. In low power-distance countries like the United States, people are more likely to view work as an exchange than as a moral obligation, so employees look for reasons to feel supported by their organizations. In high power-distance countries like China, employee POS perceptions are not as deeply based on employer demonstrations of fairness, support, and encouragement. The difference is in the level of expectation by employees.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an individual's involvement with, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for the work he or she does. To evaluate engagement, we might ask employees whether they have access to resources and opportunities to learn new skills, whether they feel their work is important and meaningful, and whether interactions with coworkers and supervisors are rewarding.¹⁵ Highly engaged employees have a passion for their work and feel a deep connection to their companies; disengaged employees have essentially checked out, putting time but not energy or attention into their work. Engagement becomes a real concern for most organizations because so few employees—between 17 percent and 29 percent, surveys indicate—are highly engaged by their work. Employee engagement is related to job engagement, which we discuss in detail in Chapter 7.

Engagement levels determine many measurable outcomes. Promising research findings have earned employee engagement a following in many business organizations and management consulting firms. However, the concept generates active debate about its usefulness, partly because of the difficulty of identifying what creates engagement. The two top reasons for engagement that participants gave in a recent study were: (1) having a good manager they enjoy working for; and (2) feeling appreciated by their supervisor. However, most of their other reasons didn't relate to the engagement construct.¹⁶ Another study in Australia found that emotional intelligence was linked to employee engagement.¹⁷ Other research suggested that engagement fluctuates partially due to daily challenges and demands.¹⁸

There is some distinctiveness among attitudes, but they overlap greatly for various reasons, including the employee's personality. Altogether, if you know someone's level of job satisfaction, you know most of what you need to know about how that person sees the organization. Let's next dissect the concept more carefully. How do we measure job satisfaction? How satisfied are employees with their jobs?

MEASURING JOB SATISFACTION

Our definition of job satisfaction—a positive feeling about a job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics—is broad. Yet that breadth is appropriate. A job is more than just shuffling papers, writing programming code, waiting on customers, or driving a truck. Jobs require interacting with coworkers and bosses, following organizational rules and policies, determining the power structure, meeting performance standards, living with less-than-ideal working conditions, adapting to new technologies, and so forth. An employee's assessment of satisfaction with the job is thus a complex summation of many discrete elements. How, then, do we measure it?



Approaches to Measurement

Two approaches are popular. The single global rating is a response to one question, such as “All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job?” Respondents circle a number between 1 and 5 on a scale from “highly satisfied” to “highly dissatisfied.” The second method, the summation of job facets, is more sophisticated. It identifies key elements in a job, such as the type of work, skills needed, supervision, present pay, promotion opportunities, culture, and relationships with coworkers. Respondents rate these on a standardized scale, and researchers add the ratings to create an overall job satisfaction score.

Is one of these approaches superior? Intuitively, summing up responses to a number of job factors seems likely to achieve a more accurate evaluation of job satisfaction. Research, however, doesn’t support the intuition.¹⁹ This is one of those rare instances in which simplicity seems to work as well as complexity, making one method essentially as valid as the other. Both methods can be helpful. The single global rating method isn’t very time consuming, while the summation of job facets helps managers zero in on problems and deal with them faster and more accurately.

Measured Job Satisfaction Levels

Are most people satisfied with their jobs? Generally, yes, to the tune of 49–69 percent of employees worldwide.²⁰ Job satisfaction levels can remain quite consistent over time. For instance, average job satisfaction levels in the United States were consistently high from 1972 to 2006.²¹ However, economic conditions tend to influence job satisfaction rates. In late 2007, the economic contraction precipitated a drop-off in job satisfaction; the lowest point was in 2010, when only 42.6 percent of U.S. workers reported satisfaction with their jobs.²² Thankfully, the job satisfaction rate increased to 47.7 percent in 2014,²³ but the level was still far off the 1987 level of 61.1 percent.²⁴ Job satisfaction rates tend to vary in different cultures worldwide, and of course there are always competing measurements that offer alternative viewpoints.

The facets of job satisfaction levels can vary widely. As shown in Exhibit 3-2, people have typically been more satisfied with their jobs overall, the work itself, and their supervisors and coworkers than they have been with their pay and promotion opportunities.

Regarding cultural differences in job satisfaction, Exhibit 3-3 provides the results of a global study of job satisfaction levels of workers in 15 countries, with the highest levels in Mexico and Switzerland. Do employees in these cultures have better jobs? Or are they simply more positive (and less self-critical)? Conversely, the lowest levels in the study were from South Korea. Autonomy is low in South Korean culture, and businesses tend to be rigidly hierarchical in structure. Does this make for lower job satisfaction?²⁵ It is difficult to discern all the factors influencing the scores, but exploring how businesses are responding to changes brought on by globalization may give us clues.



WHAT CAUSES JOB SATISFACTION?

Think about the best job you’ve ever had. What made it the best? The reasons can differ greatly. Let’s consider some characteristics that likely influence job satisfaction, starting with job conditions.

EXHIBIT 3-2
Average Job Satisfaction Levels by Facet

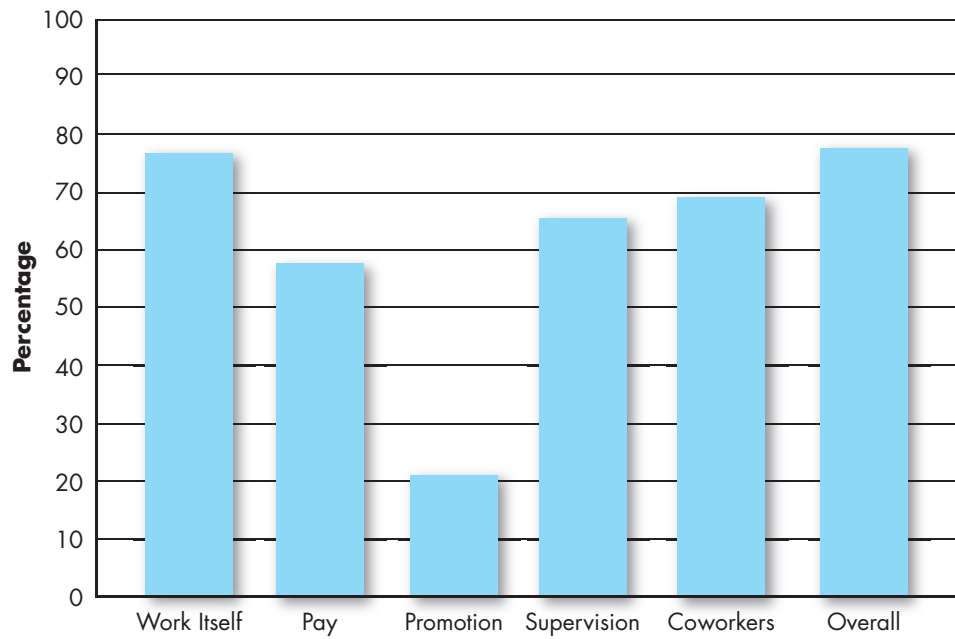
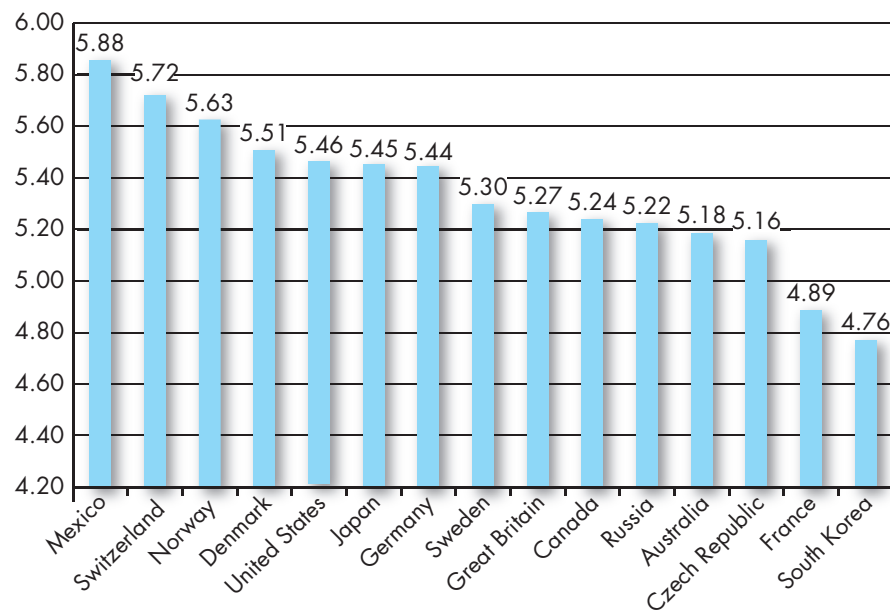


EXHIBIT 3-3
Average Levels of Employee Job Satisfaction by Country

Source: J. H. Westover, "The Impact of Comparative State-Directed Development on Working Conditions and Employee Satisfaction," *Journal of Management & Organization* 19, no. 4 (2012), 537-554.



Job Conditions



Generally, interesting jobs that provide training, variety, independence, and control satisfy most employees. Interdependence, feedback, social support, and interaction with coworkers outside the workplace are also strongly related to job satisfaction, even after accounting for characteristics of the work itself.²⁶ As you may have guessed, managers also play a big role in employees' job satisfaction. Employees who feel empowered by their leaders

experience higher job satisfaction, according to one study of a large Hong Kong telecommunications corporation.²⁷ Research in Israel further suggested that a manager's attentiveness, responsiveness, and support increase the employee's job satisfaction.²⁸

Thus, job conditions—especially the intrinsic nature of the work itself, social interactions, and supervision—are important predictors of job satisfaction. Although each is important, and although their relative value will vary across employees, the intrinsic nature of the work is most important.²⁹ In other words, you have to like *what* you do.

Personality

As important as job conditions are to job satisfaction, personality also plays an important role. People who have positive **core self-evaluations (CSEs)** (see Chapter 5 for further discussion)—who believe in their inner worth and basic competence—are more satisfied with their jobs than people with negative CSEs. Additionally, in the context of commitment to one's career, CSE influences job satisfaction. People with high levels of both CSE and career commitment may realize particularly high job satisfaction.³⁰

Core self-evaluation (CSE)

Believing in one's inner worth and basic competence.

Pay

You've probably noticed that pay comes up often when people discuss job satisfaction. Pay does correlate with job satisfaction and overall happiness for many people, but the effect can be smaller once an individual reaches a standard level of comfortable living. As a corollary, money does *motivate* people, as we discover in Chapter 8. But what motivates us is not necessarily the same as what makes us happy.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Would you be as happy to work for an organization with a stated social welfare mission as you would for an organization without one? An organization's commitment to **corporate social responsibility (CSR)**, or its self-regulated actions to benefit society or the environment beyond what is required by law, increasingly affects employee job satisfaction. Organizations practice CSR through environmental sustainability initiatives, nonprofit work, charitable giving, and other globally attuned philanthropy.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

An organization's self-regulated actions to benefit society or the environment beyond what is required by law.

CSR is good for the planet and good for people. Employees whose personal values fit with the organization's CSR mission are often more satisfied. In fact, of 59 large and small organizations recently surveyed, 86 percent reported they have happier employees as a result of their CSR programs.³¹

The relationship between CSR and job satisfaction is particularly strong for millennials. "The next generation of employees is seeking out employers that are focused on the triple bottom line: people, planet, and revenue," said Susan Cooney, founder of philanthropy firm Givelocity.³² CSR allows workers to serve a higher purpose or contribute to a mission. According to researcher Amy Wrzesniewski, people who view their work as part of a higher purpose often realize higher job satisfaction.³³ However, an organization's CSR efforts must be well governed and its initiatives must be sustainable for long-term job satisfaction benefits.³⁴

Although the link between CSR and job satisfaction is strengthening, not all employees find value in CSR.³⁵ However, when managed well it can also significantly contribute to increased employee job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations need to address

a few issues in order to be most effective. First, not all projects are equally meaningful for every person's job satisfaction, yet participation for all employees is sometimes expected. Second, some organizations require employees to contribute in a prescribed manner. Pressuring people to go "above and beyond" in ways that are not natural for them can burn them out for future CSR projects³⁶ and lower their job satisfaction, particularly when CSR projects provide direct benefits to the organization (such as positive press coverage).³⁷ People want CSR to be genuine and authentic.

Lastly, CSR measures can seem disconnected from the employee's actual work,³⁸ providing no increase to job satisfaction. In sum, CSR is a needed, positive trend of accountability and serving.

OUTCOMES OF JOB SATISFACTION

Having discussed some of the causes of job satisfaction, we now turn to some specific outcomes.

Job Performance

As a general rule, happy workers are more likely to be productive workers. Some researchers used to believe the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance was a myth, but a review of 300 studies suggested the correlation is quite robust.³⁹ Individuals with higher job satisfaction perform better, and organizations with more satisfied employees tend to be more effective than those with fewer.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

It seems logical that job satisfaction should be a major determinant of an employee's organizational citizenship behavior (known as OCB or citizenship behavior, see Chapter 1).⁴⁰ OCBs include people talking positively about their organizations, helping others, and going beyond the normal expectations of their jobs. Evidence suggests job satisfaction *is* moderately correlated with OCB; people who are more satisfied with their jobs are more likely to engage in citizenship behavior.⁴¹



Why does job satisfaction lead to OCB? One reason is trust. Research in 18 countries suggests that managers reciprocate employees' OCBs with trusting behaviors of their own.⁴² Individuals who feel their coworkers support them are also more likely to engage in helpful behaviors than those who have antagonistic coworker relationships.⁴³ Personality matters, too. Individuals with certain personality traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness, for example; see Chapter 5) are more satisfied with their work, which in turn leads them to engage in more OCB.⁴⁴ Finally, individuals who receive positive feedback on their OCBs from their peers are more likely to continue their citizenship activities.⁴⁵

Customer Satisfaction

Because service organization managers should be concerned with pleasing customers, it's reasonable to ask whether employee satisfaction is related to positive customer outcomes. For frontline employees who have regular customer contact, the answer is "yes." Satisfied employees appear to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.⁴⁶

A number of companies are acting on this evidence. Online shoe retailer Zappos is so committed to finding customer service employees who are satisfied with the job that it offers a \$2,000 bribe to quit the company after training, figuring the least satisfied will take the cash and go.⁴⁷ Zappos employees are empowered to “create fun and a little weirdness” to ensure that customers are satisfied, and it works: of the company’s more than 24 million customers, 75 percent are repeat buyers. For Zappos, employee satisfaction has a direct effect on customer satisfaction.

Life Satisfaction

Until now, we’ve treated job satisfaction as if it were separate from life satisfaction, but they may be more related than you think.⁴⁸ Research in Europe indicates that job satisfaction is positively correlated with life satisfaction, and our attitudes and experiences in life spill over into our job approaches and experiences.⁴⁹ Furthermore, life satisfaction decreases when people become unemployed, according to research in Germany, and not just because of the loss of income.⁵⁰ For most individuals, work is an important part of life, and therefore it makes sense that our overall happiness depends in no small part on our happiness in our work (our job satisfaction).



THE IMPACT OF JOB DISSATISFACTION

What happens when employees dislike their jobs? One theoretical model—the exit-voice-loyalty-neglect framework—is helpful for understanding the consequences of dissatisfaction. The framework’s four responses differ along two dimensions: constructive/destructive and active/passive. The responses are as follows:⁵¹

- **Exit.** The **exit response** directs behavior toward leaving the organization, including looking for a new position or resigning. To measure the effects of this response to dissatisfaction, researchers study individual terminations and *collective turnover*—the total loss to the organization of employee knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics.⁵²
- **Voice.** The **voice response** includes actively and constructively attempting to improve conditions, including suggesting improvements, discussing problems with superiors, and undertaking union activity.
- **Loyalty.** The **loyalty response** means passively but optimistically waiting for conditions to improve, including speaking up for the organization in the face of external criticism and trusting the organization and its management to “do the right thing.”
- **Neglect.** The **neglect response** passively allows conditions to worsen and includes chronic absenteeism or lateness, reduced effort, and an increased error rate.

Exit and neglect behaviors are linked to performance variables such as productivity, absenteeism, and turnover. But this model expands employee responses to include voice and loyalty—constructive behaviors that allow individuals to tolerate unpleasant situations or improve working conditions. As helpful as this framework is, it’s quite general. We next address behavioral responses to job dissatisfaction.

Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)

Substance abuse, stealing at work, undue socializing, gossiping, absenteeism, and tardiness are examples of behaviors that are destructive to organizations. They are indicators

Exit

Dissatisfaction expressed through behavior directed toward leaving the organization.

Voice

Dissatisfaction expressed through active and constructive attempts to improve conditions.

Loyalty

Dissatisfaction expressed by passively waiting for conditions to improve.

Neglect

Dissatisfaction expressed through allowing conditions to worsen.

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB)

Intentional employee behavior that is contrary to the interests of the organization.



of a broader syndrome called **counterproductive work behavior (CWB)**; related terms are deviant behavior in the workplace, or simply withdrawal behavior; see Chapter 1).⁵³ Like other behaviors we have discussed, CWB doesn't just happen—the behaviors often follow negative and sometimes long-standing attitudes. Therefore, if we can identify the predictors of CWB, we may lessen the probability of its effects.

Generally, job dissatisfaction predicts CWB. People who are not satisfied with their work become frustrated, which lowers their performance⁵⁴ and makes them more likely to commit CWB.⁵⁵ Other research suggests that, in addition to vocational misfit (being in the wrong line of work), lack of fit with the organization (working in the wrong kind of organizational culture; see person–organization fit, Chapter 5) predicts CWB.⁵⁶ Our immediate social environment also matters. One German study suggests that we are influenced toward CWB by the norms of our immediate work environment, such that individuals in teams with high absenteeism are more likely to be absent themselves.⁵⁷ CWB can, furthermore, be a response to abusive supervision from managers, which then spurs further abuse, starting a vicious cycle.⁵⁸

One important point about CWB is that dissatisfied employees often choose one or more specific behaviors due to idiosyncratic factors. One worker might quit. Another might use work time to surf the Internet or take work supplies home for personal use. In short, workers who don't like their jobs “get even” in various ways. Because those ways can be quite creative, controlling only one behavior with policies and punishments leaves the root cause untouched. Employers should seek to correct the source of the problem—the dissatisfaction—rather than try to control the different responses.



According to U.K. research, sometimes CWB is an emotional reaction to perceived unfairness, a way to try to restore an employee's sense of equity exchange.⁵⁹ It therefore has complex ethical implications. For example, is someone who takes a box of markers home from the office for his children acting unethically? Some people consider this stealing. Others may want to look at moderating factors such as the employee's contribution to the organization before they decide. Does the person generously give extra time and effort to the organization, with little thanks or compensation? If so, they might see CWB behavior as part of an attempt to “even the score.”

As a manager, you can take steps to mitigate CWB. You can poll employee attitudes, for instance, and identify areas for workplace improvement. If there is no vocational fit, the employee will not be fulfilled,⁶⁰ so you can try to screen for that to avoid a mismatch. Tailoring tasks to a person's abilities and values should increase job satisfaction and reduce CWB.⁶¹ Furthermore, creating strong teams, integrating supervisors with them, providing formalized team policies, and introducing team-based incentives may help lower the CWB “contagion” that lowers the standards of the group.⁶²

ABSENTEEISM We find a consistent negative relationship between satisfaction and absenteeism, but the relationship is moderate to weak.⁶³ Generally, when numerous alternative jobs are available, dissatisfied employees have high absence rates, but when there are few alternatives, dissatisfied employees have the same (low) rate of absence as satisfied employees.⁶⁴ Organizations that provide liberal sick leave benefits are encouraging all their employees—including those who are highly satisfied—to take days off. You may find work satisfying yet still want to enjoy a three-day weekend if those days come free with no penalties.

TURNOVER The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover is stronger than between satisfaction and absenteeism.⁶⁵ Overall, a pattern of lowered job satisfaction is the best predictor of intent to leave. Turnover has a workplace environment connection too. If the climate within an employee's immediate workplace is one of low job satisfaction leading to turnover, there will be a contagion effect. This suggests managers should consider the job satisfaction (and turnover) patterns of coworkers when assigning workers to a new area.⁶⁶ Employees' **job embeddedness**—connections to the job and community that result in an increased commitment to the organization—can be closely linked to their job satisfaction and the probability of turnover such that where job embeddedness is high, the probability of turnover decreases, particularly in collectivist (group-centered; see Chapter 4) cultures where membership in an organization is of high personal value. Job embeddedness also negatively predicts important employment outcomes of OCB, CWB, and absenteeism, and positively predicts job performance.⁶⁷ Embedded employees thus seem more satisfied with their jobs and are less likely to want to consider alternative job prospects.

Job embeddedness
The extent to which an employee's connections to the job and community result in an increased commitment to the organization.

Lastly, the satisfaction–turnover relationship is affected by alternative job prospects. If an employee accepts an unsolicited job offer, job dissatisfaction was less predictive of turnover because the employee more likely left in response to “pull” (the lure of the other job) than “push” (the unattractiveness of the current job). Similarly, job dissatisfaction is more likely to translate into turnover when other employment opportunities are plentiful. Furthermore, when employees have high “human capital” (high education, high ability), job dissatisfaction is more likely to translate into turnover because they have, or perceive, many available alternatives.⁶⁸

Understanding the Impact

Given the evidence we've just reviewed, it should come as no surprise that job satisfaction can affect the bottom line. One study by a management consulting firm separated large organizations into those with high morale (more than 70 percent of employees expressed overall job satisfaction) and medium or low morale (fewer than 70 percent). The stock prices of companies in the high-morale group grew 19.4 percent, compared with 10 percent for the medium- or low-morale group. Despite these results, many managers are unconcerned about employee job satisfaction. Others overestimate how satisfied employees are, so they don't think there's a problem when there is one. For example, in one study of 262 large employers, 86 percent of senior managers believed their organizations treated employees well, but only 55 percent of employees agreed; another study found 55 percent of managers, compared to only 38 percent of employees, thought morale was good in their organization.⁶⁹

Regular surveys can reduce gaps between what managers *think* employees feel and what they *really* feel. A gap in understanding can affect the bottom line in small franchise sites as well as in large companies. As manager of a KFC restaurant in Houston, Jonathan McDaniel surveyed his employees every three months. Results led him to make changes, such as giving employees greater say about which workdays they had off. McDaniel believed the process itself was valuable. “They really love giving their opinions,” he said. “That's the most important part of it—that they have a voice and that they're heard.” Surveys are no panacea, but if job attitudes are as important as we believe, organizations need to use every reasonable method find out how they can be improved.⁷⁰

SUMMARY

Managers should be interested in their employees' attitudes because attitudes influence behavior and indicate potential problems. Creating a satisfied workforce is hardly a guarantee of successful organizational performance, but evidence strongly suggests managers' efforts to improve employee attitudes will likely result in positive outcomes, including greater organizational effectiveness, higher customer satisfaction, and increased profits.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

- Of the major job attitudes—job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, perceived organizational support (POS), and employee engagement—remember that an employee's job satisfaction level is the best single predictor of behavior.
- Pay attention to your employees' job satisfaction levels as determinants of their performance, turnover, absenteeism, and withdrawal behaviors.
- Measure employee job attitudes objectively and at regular intervals in order to determine how employees are reacting to their work.
- To raise employee satisfaction, evaluate the fit between the employee's work interests and the intrinsic parts of the job; then create work that is challenging and interesting to the individual.
- Consider the fact that high pay alone is unlikely to create a satisfying work environment.

★ TRY IT!

If your professor has assigned this, go to the Assignments section of **mymanagementlab.com** to complete the **Simulation: Attitudes & Job Satisfaction**.



★ PERSONAL INVENTORY ASSESSMENTS

Core Self-Evaluation (CSE) Scale

You probably have a general awareness of your CSE, or how you candidly view your capabilities. This PIA can provide you with further insight.

MyManagementLab®

Go to **mymanagementlab.com** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

- 3-1.** Based on your own experiences, can you identify situations in which your job attitudes directly influenced your behavior?
- 3-2. MyManagementLab Only**—comprehensive writing assignment for this chapter.