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The Moderating Role of Self Efficacy on the Perceptions of Justice and Turnover Intentions

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Abstract

Previous research in organizational behavior has reported many variables serving as either mediators or moderators in the predictive relationship between justice perceptions and turnover intentions. So far, none of the studies seems to have considered the possible influence of self-efficacy as a moderating variable in that relationship. Positive organizational behavior approach strongly offers usage of individual capacity variables for producing positive organizational outcomes (Luthans, 2002). In this study, we have explored the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between justice perceptions and turnover intentions. Nine-hundred and four employees coming from private companies of Istanbul and Ankara, in Turkey, participated in the study. To analyze the results, we have used confirmatory factor analyses and regression analyses. Our results revealed important findings in relation to the moderating effects of different self-efficacy dimensions. We have found a negative relationship between justice perceptions and turnover intentions. For self-efficacy dimensions, many interaction effects were as expected, except for those high in willingness to expend effort in completing the behavior. We discussed the results in light of certain theoretical assumptions and offered related recommendations for organizational practice and future research.

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1. Introduction

The relationship between organizational justice perceptions and turnover intentions have been a long debate in organizational behavior (OB) research. As in many other organization- related research models, the researchers studied the relationships between justice and turnover again through organization related variables. As an example, commitment (Ali & Jan, 2012; Hendrix, Robbins, Miller, & Summers, 1998; Karim, 2009; Poon, 2012), social support (Soltis, Agneessens, Sasovova, & Labianca, 2013), trust (Bal, de Lange, Ybema, Jansen, & van der Velde, 2011; Farooq & Farooq, 2014), perceived job characteristics (Li & Bagger, 2012), and satisfaction (Hendrix et al., 1998) served as mediators or moderators in that relationship. It seems that the role of individual variables (such as personality, self-esteem, self-efficacy, awareness...etc.) were underrepresented in OB research in general and in justice

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research in particular. Although the reasons and the rationale for this might be discussed at another time, it might be worthwhile to consider an emerging “positive trend” in the field.

2. The Rise of Positive Organizational Behavior (POB): Increasing Awareness of the Role of Individual Strengths

Luthans (Luthans, 2002), in his article on (POB), talked about how OB field had given more concentration on the workplace dysfunctions in terms of theory building and research applications while the popular business books mainly had a strength focus, trying to influence the readers of today’s business toward a more healthy workplace applications, relations and management. This inevitably led those in organizations to follow the bestsellers’ advice and suggestions, especially those who were in the HR and/or management roles. Luthans (2002) therefore suggested that the OB field had to make the necessary shift in perspective towards people’s strengths that actually meant cognitive and emotional resources. Changing this perspective required changes in research variables to be studied, as well as changes in related research models that benefited real-world applications like those of selection methods, training modules, managerial practices and all other kinds of workplace developmental programs. In his thorough attempt to define POB, Luthans (2002) has chosen to include strengths of individuals as having certain psychological capacities that composed of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, subjective well-being, and emotional intelligence (CHOSE). Among these capacities, self-efficacy, although being most recognized and established over the years of theory and research, was considered very little or was even ignored in OB research (Luthans, 2002). More importantly, self-efficacy for Luthans was a remarkable construct mainly for the following: Apart from an individual’s own abilities and skills, the belief in those abilities led to positive choices, motivational effort and perseverance that are all very influential for an individual’s performance. As a result, being a high performer, the manager/employee concentrates on the task, gives all s(he) can to accomplish it, and perseveres when s(he) meets obstacles in the workplace.

2.1. Self-efficacy related research in OB

Self-efficacy as a moderator in job and work-related variables was in a few, if not in many studies. As an example, in a study that tried to understand the relationship between the job demands and work-related psychological responses among Malaysian technical workers, Panatik, O’Driscoll, & Anderson (2011) found that self-efficacy moderated the impact of job demands on psychological strain. When the individual had low self-efficacy, high job demands had higher negative effect on feeling anxiety and depression. However, the researchers failed to find a significant moderator effect related to the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. They attributed these mixed findings to a possible culture effect. In Malaysia, work demands meant serving the in-group needs not the person him or herself. Therefore, having high job demands reflected a form of sacrifice to one’s in-group. Thus, it might not lead to a decision to leave the organization. As a result, an individual variable such as self-efficacy might have played a moderator role concerning those specific variables. Similarly, in a study carried out with middle school teachers in China, Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, and Yang (2014) found a mediating role of self-efficacy while trying to explain the work stress-job burnout relationship.

In an attempt understand the influential role of future time perspective on several work-related outcomes, Park and Jung (2015) came up with the finding that occupational self-efficacy influenced turnover intention through career and organizational commitment. This meant that occupational self-efficacy might be having a role in one’s commitment to his or her career and organization. Apart from attitudinal and emotional variables, others have studied self-efficacy as a predictor for an important outcome variable such as performance. Judge, Jackson, Shaw, Scott and Rich (2007), in their study that looked at the self-efficacy’s contribution to work performance, found a prediction effect especially in tasks that were less complex. Looking at the above studies, we might infer that self-efficacy, whether being measured as a state or a trait, as a general or an occupational construct, seems to be playing some roles in attitudinal and/or outcome variables in OB research. As the original definition implies, self-efficacy relates to one’s judgments about one’s ability to act and manage tasks under many conditions that includes ambiguity, unpredictability, and most naturally, stress (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). In addition, as part of the following definitions and according to the social cognitive theory, self-efficacy related to high effort and persistence, as they are also part of the individual’s motivational behaviors (Chaudhary, Rangnekar, & Barua, 2012). When it comes to the give and take between the employee/manager and the organization, one can naturally wonder the processes and/or outcomes of such relationship especially when an individual has high self-efficacy, meaning that s(he) is giving his/her best to the task at hand, spending considerably high effort, and having a strong belief in what s(he) is able to accomplish no matter how the organizational environment looks like. As well as having a judgment about the personal capabilities, the individual inevitably would be developing judgments about what is going around in terms of organizational rewards, performance incentives, the processes by which those outcomes are attained, and the way organizational actors play roles during

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