



Motive congruence moderation: The effects of dependence and locus of control on implicit and self-attributed affiliation motive congruency and life satisfaction

Janice Langan-Fox*, James M. Canty, Michael J. Sankey

Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 September 2009
Received in revised form 7 January 2010
Accepted 9 January 2010
Available online 1 February 2010

Keywords:

Implicit and explicit motives
Affiliation motive
Thematic Apperception Test
Reward dependence
Locus of control
Life satisfaction

ABSTRACT

The current study presents a conceptual framework for the moderation of the relationship between implicit and self-attributed motive congruency and psychological well-being. Consistent with this framework, we found evidence for such moderation effects for predicting life satisfaction in a secondary data analysis of a sample ($N = 441$) drawn from the Eugene-Springfield Community Sample longitudinal dataset. First, we found that, compared to low/low affiliation motive congruence, the positive effects (i.e., high life satisfaction) of high/high congruence were neutralized at high levels of dependence. Second, compared to low/low congruence, the negative effects of either type of affiliation motive incongruence (i.e., high/low, or low/high) were ameliorated at high levels of locus of control. The proposed conceptual framework not only offers a better predictive model of motive congruence moderation, it also directs our attention toward targeted interventions for increasing psychological well-being in the normal population.

© 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The satisfaction of a high implicit affiliation motive – i.e., the desire “to establish and/or maintain warm and friendly interpersonal relations” (French & Chadwick, 1956, p. 296) – that operates outside of conscious awareness is positively associated with psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; McClelland, 1985b). Moreover, frustration of a high affiliation motive causes such well-being impairments as anxiety and somatization (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2000). Recent research has further demonstrated that the combination of a high implicit affiliation motive and a corresponding high consciously accessible, self-attributed motive is positively associated with life satisfaction (Schuler, Job, Frohlich, & Brandstatter, 2008). This follows the general finding that motive congruence leads to positive well-being outcomes (Brunstein, Schultheiss, & Grassmann, 1998; Hofer & Chasiotis, 2003; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995) and motive incongruence leads to negative outcomes (Baumann, Kaschel, & Kuhl, 2005; Brunstein et al., 1998). Whereas in the domain of the achievement motive – i.e., the need for accomplishing something difficult and attaining a high standard (Murray, 1938) – moderators have been found that neutralize the positive effect of motive congruence (Langens, 2007) and mitigate the negative effects of motive incongruence (Langan-Fox, Canty, & Sankey,

2008; Langan-Fox, Sankey, & Canty, 2009a), research has failed to uncover corresponding moderators of affiliation motive (in)congruence (with the notable exception of Langan-Fox, Sankey, and Canty (2009b)).

The current paper aims to address this issue by: (a) advancing the literature on dual motive systems with a proposed conceptual framework of motive congruency; (b) providing a preliminary test of this framework by examining dependence and locus of control (LOC) as potential moderators of the relationship between affiliation motive congruence and life satisfaction; and (c) increasing our understanding of how psychological well-being can be promoted.

Implicit and self-attributed motives represent discrete motivational systems (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989). *Implicit motives* have been conceptualized as associative networks connecting situational cues with basic affective reactions and implicit behavioral tendencies that energize, select, and direct behaviour towards motive congruent goal states (McClelland, 1985a), whereas *self-attributed motives* are linked to individuals' conscious goals and expectations (McClelland et al., 1989). Implicit motives are assessed by fantasy-based methods such as the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Murray, 1943); self-attributed motives are assessed directly via self-report questionnaires.

The positive effects of implicit and self-attributed motive congruence may be due to a reduction in anxiety caused by motive incongruence (Brunstein et al., 1998). Recently, Langens (2007) found that activity inhibition (AI) – the degree of restraint an individual exercises over emotional and motivational impulses

* Corresponding author. Address: Faculty of Business and Enterprise, Mail H25, Swinburne University of Technology, P.O. Box 218, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122, Australia. Tel.: +61 3 9214 4619; fax: +61 3 9214 5296.

E-mail address: jalanganfox@swin.edu.au (J. Langan-Fox).

(McClelland, 1979) – neutralized the beneficial effects of achievement motive congruence. Complementing this finding, Langan-Fox et al. (2009a) found that low external LOC counteracted the negative effects of achievement motive incongruence. This mitigation effect occurred particularly in comparison to low implicit and low self-attributed achievement motive congruence. However, research is yet to empirically substantiate motive congruence moderation effects based on *a priori* theoretical distinctions between the types of motive (in)congruencies (e.g., Bing, LeBreton, Davison, Migetz, & James, 2007; Borstein, 1998, 2002; Langens & McClelland, 1997; see Table 1).

Langens and McClelland's (1997) framework of implicit and self-attributed motive systems predicted negative effects for motive incongruence (see e.g., Baumann et al., 2005; Brunstein et al., 1998). Furthermore, high implicit and high self-attributed motive congruence (i.e., “congruent present”, Bing et al., 2007) theoretically leads to more favourable outcomes than low/low congruency (i.e., “congruent absent”, Bing et al., 2007). These hypotheses are yet to be empirically substantiated, particularly with the inclusion of moderating variables. For example, the neutralizing effect of AI on motive congruence demonstrated by Langens (2007) was not differentially tested for high/high versus low/low congruence. Whereas Langan-Fox et al. (2009a) demonstrated the significance of using congruent absent as a reference set for motive incongruence moderation, these relationships were not specified *a priori* based on theoretical predictions.

Fig. 1 presents a proposed conceptual framework of motive congruence moderation in which implicit and self-attributed motives interact with moderators to predict psychological well-being. For each of the four combinations of implicit and self-attributed motives pathways lead to one of three outcomes: increased well-being; no change; and decreased well-being (see Fig. 1). A synthesis of the results of a series of previous studies (Langan-Fox et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b) implies that psychological well-being remains relatively unchanged across levels of moderators for low/low congruence. This suggests that the “no change” pathway for low/low congruence (see Fig. 1, pathway 4) is useful as a reference set for comparisons of moderation effects for other motive (in)congruencies, whereas the “no change” pathways for high/high, high/low, and low/high are, at this stage, less compelling.

This leaves nine interesting, possible moderation effects predicting well-being outcomes (labeled (a) through (i), see Fig. 1). Theoretically, the following “increase” pathways are unlikely: (a) high/high increases, due to a “ceiling” effect – moderators are unlikely to further enhance the positive effect of high/high congruence; and (c) low/low increases (see above). Likewise, the following “decrease” pathways are theoretically unlikely: (e) low/low decreases; (g) high/low decreases; and (i) high/low decreases, the latter two both due to “floor” effects – moderators are unlikely to further exacerbate the negative effects of either type of motive incongruency. Recent research has indirectly supported these claims (Langan-Fox et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b). Therefore, the following three pathways are plausible: (b) high/high decreases; (f) high/low increases; and (h) low/high increases. It is along these three pathways that the search for moderation effects most plausibly should continue.

In the present study, we aim to elucidate Langens' (2007) *inhibition-hypothesis* by delineating high/high from low/low congruence, and testing this hypothesis more specifically for high/high individuals – i.e., the *congruent present inhibition-hypothesis* (see Fig. 1, pathway 1). With respect to motive incongruence, we hypothesize that individual difference moderators can protect from the otherwise negative effect of incongruence (see Fig. 1, pathways 2 and 3) – i.e., the *incongruent denial and overclaiming mitigation-hypotheses*. To consolidate these predictions, the present study tests the *congruent present inhibition-hypothesis* by proposing

dependence as a moderator of affiliation motive congruence (for guidance in selecting from a vast array of candidate moderator variables, see Thrash & Elliott, 2002). Building upon previous findings (Langan-Fox et al., 2009a) in the achievement motive domain demonstrating an *incongruent mitigation* effect of LOC, we further test the *mitigation-hypotheses* by proposing LOC as a moderator of affiliation motive incongruencies.

Dependence is a subset of the broader temperament facet of reward dependence, which describes individuals as warm and sociable versus cold and aloof (Cloninger, 2006). Individuals who score highly on the dependence subscale are dependent on emotional support and approval from others. Thus, high dependence may be a liability for congruent present individuals, since high dependence individuals may be reluctant to make their own decisions (Cloninger, Przybeck, Svrakic, & Wetzel, 1994). Therefore, we propose that: *Hypothesis 1: nAff*, self-attributed affiliation motive (SAM) and dependence will interact such that, relative to congruent absent (i.e., low/low) individuals, congruent present (i.e., high/high) individuals will demonstrate a negative relationship between dependence and life satisfaction (see Fig. 1, difference 1–4).

As an extension of the work of Langan-Fox et al. (2008, 2009a, 2009b), we further propose that LOC will mitigate the detrimental effects of motive incongruence. LOC represents the extent to which people believe that they have control over their own fate (Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2006). External LOC negatively predicts life satisfaction (Diener & Lucas, 1999). Langan-Fox et al. (2009a) found that, relative to congruent absent individuals, achievement motive incongruent individuals were more likely to report high life satisfaction as they increased in levels of self-directedness, self-disclosure, and decreased in levels of external LOC. Following Langan-Fox et al. (2008, 2009a, 2009b), we propose that LOC will mitigate the detrimental effects of motive incongruence by relieving the anxiety and tension caused by motive incongruence. More specifically, we propose that this buffering effect for motive incongruent individuals will occur in comparison to congruent absent individuals (see Fig. 1). Therefore, we propose that: *Hypotheses 2 and 3: nAff*, SAM and LOC will interact, such that, relative to congruent absent (i.e., low/low) individuals, high/low incongruent individuals (H2) and low/high incongruent individuals (H3) will demonstrate a positive relationship between LOC and life satisfaction (see Fig. 1, differences 2–4, and 3–4, respectively).

2. Methods

2.1. Participants and procedure

The first author was given access to the Eugene-Springfield Community Sample (Goldberg, 2008, see Acknowledgments). For the sub sample ($N = 441$) used in the present analyses, the age ranged between 18 and 83 ($M = 51.31$, $SD = 12.65$). Approximately 96% were Caucasian, 60% were female, and 59% had college degrees.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Predictor variables

nAff was measured via the administration of a standard set (Langan-Fox, 1991; Langan-Fox, Deery, & van Vliet, 1997; Langan-Fox & Grant, 2006, 2007) of five picture cues from the TAT (see Smith, 1992) in the spring of 2000: (1) a ship captain talking to a passenger; (2) a man sitting in an office; (3) a couple sitting on a bench by a river; (4) two women in a laboratory; and (5) two trapeze artists. Stories by participants were content coded for *nAff* and reflected according to Winter's (1991) approach. Interscorer agreement has been shown to be high (.85, see Winter, 1973). As the secondary data analysis performed in the present

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/892053>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/892053>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)