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Abstract

The current research was an attempt to explore the association between Job Satisfaction (JS) and Locus of Control (LOC). The gender difference in JS and LOC was also explored. For this study a sample of 421(211 males, 210 females) mid-career employees was drawn from Karachi, Pakistan. It was hypothesized that (1) Internal LOC will be positively correlated with JS. (2) There will be gender difference in JS, and (3) there will be gender difference in LOC. The first hypothesis of the study was proved. Results indicated that there is positive correlation between JS and internal LOC however the gender difference is insignificant in both, JS and LOC in the sample under study (i.e., mid-career employees of Karachi, Pakistan). The findings of current study offer valuable insights into the factors that impact JS, providing practical recommendations for organizations looking to enhance employee engagement and productivity.

Keywords: Gender Differences, Locus of Control, Job Satisfaction, Mid-Career Professionals

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Introduction

When it comes to one's employment, the level of satisfaction experienced in their job is a complex and multi-faceted concept considering various factors. Research has shown that JS is closely interrelated with employee motivation, engagement, productivity, and overall job performance (Judge & Bono, 2001).

LOC is an individual's perception of his ability to control the outcomes and events (Rotter, 1966). This perception can be divided into two orientations, namely, external and internal. The concept that individual controls his actions and their consequences is internal LOC. Whereas,

external LOC is the leaning to attribute outcomes to external factors beyond their control.

Career is a long journey which according a theory goes through 5 stages (Lowe-MacAuley, 2024). The first stage is exploration, 2nd is establishment, 3rd is mid-career, 4th is late career and 5th is retirement. Although the age ranges may vary, usually 35-45 year of age or 7 to 10 years of service is called mid-career (Lowe-MacAuley, 2024) Many studies show that a person's LOC can significantly impact his behaviour, decision-making, and coping strategies (Latham & Pinder, 2005). For instance, usually a person with internal LOC would take responsibility for his/her actions, on the other hand, a person with external LOC would feel powerless, which can lead to a sense of helplessness and anxiety.

Although, there are not much studies about the gender difference in this variable a met analysis by Sherman et al. (1997) found that there is gender difference in perceptions of control across behavioral domains.

A large sample scale study conducted in China by Liu et al. (2021) found that were no significant gender differences in JS and work

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life balance in physicians of tertiary care hospitals. No such studies have been conducted in Pakistan till date.

A number of studies have been conducted on the JS of mid-career employees in Pakistan. A study by Masood et al. (2018) focused on the causes that affect JS levels among mid-career employees. This study indicated that, salary, promotion opportunities, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance are main factors that significantly impact JS levels. A research by Malik and Danish (2016) revealed a positive correlation between JS and organizational commitment among mid-career employees in Pakistan. These were some examples of researches on JS in Pakistan. Now this paper will explore the concept of LOC.

There is limited research on the LOC of mid-career employees in Pakistan. Some studies suggest that people who think they have control over their work and outcomes tend to experience higher levels of JS. A meta-analytic study (Judge & Bono, 2001) found a positive association between JS and internal LOC. The literature review indicated that there is no study on the correlation between JS and LOC among mid-career employees in Karachi, Pakistan. The current body of research emphasizes the importance of these factors in shaping individuals' workplace experiences and satisfaction.

By reviewing the available literature, it can be concluded that there is more research needed on LOC and JS among mid-career workers in Karachi, Pakistan. The available researches emphasize the importance of these factors in shaping people's experiences at work. Further research could provide valuable knowledge for organizations and

enhance the happiness and contentment of mid-career employees in Karachi, Pakistan. Apart from the investigation of LOC and JS current research aims also to investigate the gender difference in the variables of JS and LOC. This will add more to the understanding of these constructs in context of the job environment of Karachi, Pakistan. This research aims to understand better the mid-career workforce in Karachi, Pakistan - the country's largest city and a significant economic hub. For current study following hypotheses are formulated,

1. Internal LOC will be positively correlated with JS.
2. There will be gender difference in JS.
3. There will be gender difference in LOC.

Method

As a cross-sectional study to investigate the relationship between JS and LOC among mid-career employees in Karachi, Pakistan, a quantitative route was used. Current study also explored the gender difference in the variables of LOC and JS. This research seeks to provide a more detailed and insightful analysis of the experiences and viewpoints of mid-career professionals in the Pakistani workforce.

Sample

A sample of 421 mid-career professionals (211 males, 210 females) was purposively drawn from Karachi-Pakistan. The ages of the participants were between 35 to 45 years ($M_{age}=38.71$, $SD=2.98$) and they belonged to a wide range of industries, including manufacturing, services, and technology sectors, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by mid-career professionals across different sectors.

Table 1
Occupation wise Distribution of the Sample (N=421)

Occupation	N	%
Accountant	21	4.98
Administrator	20	4.75
Advocate	7	1.66
Assistant	2	0.47
Assistant manager	6	1.42
Banker	22	5.22
Businessman	24	5.70
Call center agent	3	0.71
Cashier	2	0.47
Clerk	8	1.90
Content writer	2	0.47
Civil servant	4	0.95
Data scientist	2	0.47
Doctor	10	2.37
Engineer	2	0.47
Fashion designer	2	0.47
Finance manager	3	0.71
Human resource manager	9	2.13
Information technologist	6	1.42
Librarian	3	0.71
Manager	24	5.70
Nurse	4	0.95
Public relation officer	2	0.47
Pharmacist	6	1.42
Physiotherapist	3	0.71
Property dealer	3	0.71
Receptionist	6	1.42
Research associate	2	0.47
Sales manager	12	2.85
Supply chain officer	4	0.95
Teacher	173	41.09
Technician	5	1.18
Others*	19	4.51

*Professions that have frequency less than 2 in the data that include, Actuary, Aircraft technician, Architect, Computer operator, Coordinator, Graphic designer, Gym Trainer, Interior designer, Judge, Neuro technician, Online business, Personal assistant, Police officer, Project manager, Psychologist, Quality controller, Radiographer, Social worker and Travel agent.

Table 1 indicates the diversity of the sample in terms of the occupation.

Measures

Locus of Control Scale

The 20 item LOC scale is rated as true or false by the participants. In the original study, the authors have indicated a high internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) and various validities (Levenson, 1973).

Generic Job Satisfaction Scale

This scale has 10 items and is designed to measure the different aspects of JS, that covers the intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The scale can be rated on 5 points from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This is a widely used measure of JS and strong reliability and validity are reported in the original study (McDonald et al., 1997).

Procedure

The data was collected in Karachi from a number of public and private sector workplaces. The institutions were contacted through proper channel and after getting consent. The subjects filled the questionnaires in the presence of the researchers.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly followed in this research as the researcher sought consent from all the participants. The institutions also gave consent for the research. Participants were aware that they can leave this research if they feel uncomfortable. Strict standards of confidentiality were applied as participants' details were only used for research purposes.

Results

Table 2

Correlation between JS and Internal LOC (N=421)

Variable	1.	2	M	SD
1.Internal LOC	--		55.98	16.95
2. JS	0.12*	--	35.00	6.99

**p*<.05

Table 2 indicates a significant relationship between internal LOC and JS.

Table 3

Gender Differences in JS & LOC (N=421)

Variable	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
JS	35.30	6.90	34.70	7.88	.87	.38	0.08
LOC	56.77	17.13	55.19	16.78	.95	.33	0.09

Table 3 indicates no significant difference in the mean scores of participants belonging to

male and female genders in terms of JS & LOC.

Discussion

This research explored the correlation between JS and LOC in the mid-career employees; it also explored the gender difference in these variables. The prime hypothesis of the research, which was about

a predictive relationship between LOC and JS, was proved. Meaning that the individuals with internal LOC have a greater degree of JS. This result adds more validity to Judge and Bono's meta-analytic research (2001). The first hypothesis suggests that those with

a greater sense of personal agency tend to experience greater job contentment. Individuals who believe they can manage their actions and the results of their work are more inclined to express satisfaction with their job. According to Judge and Bono's (2001) research, possessing high LOC has been linked to increased levels of job contentment. This is because they feel more empowered and capable of influencing their work-related circumstances. This outlook that is positive, leads to higher degree of autonomy and self-efficacy. And this autonomy and self-efficacy can make their work more fulfilling and ultimately resulting in higher degree of JS.

The hypothesis 2 and 3 were exploratory in nature. They attempted to see gender difference in LOC and JS. Results indicate that there is no significant gender difference in either LOC or JS. Meaning that in the given population (that is mid-career employees of Karachi-Pakistan) there is no gender difference in terms of LOC or JS. Both men and women are similar on both variables. These findings contradict with some of the previous studies. For example, some studies (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012; Schneider et al., 1997) have shown significant disparities in JS levels, indicating that gender may be a contributing factor. Societal norms, work-family conflicts, and workplace dynamics can influence these differences.

In current study the insignificant difference in JS indicates that both men and women are equally satisfied (or dissatisfied) with their jobs. This could be due to several reasons. One such reason is the fact that there is less amount of pay disparity in terms of gender in Pakistan (Khan, 2024). Although there exists pay disparity but women are traditionally not expected to work so they are content on whatever amount of salary they get. Also, it is relevant to note here that women who work in Pakistan usually compare themselves with

housewives instead of their male counterparts and feel more satisfied due to their independence financially and otherwise (Arshad et al., 2015).

It is relevant to note here that gender biases and societal expectations can affect JS for both genders. By understanding these differences, companies can create a more inclusive work environment catering to all employees' needs. Although gender differences in JS may depend on individual and situational factors, research indicates such differences exist. Past studies by Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2012) and Schneider et al. (1997) have outlined some gender related factors that influence JS. The research aimed to measure JS levels and explore how individuals perceive their control over events and outcomes, known as LOC. Although each person has their unique perspective, societal norms, cultural expectations, and personal experiences may shape how men and women view their LOC. It is suggested that the beliefs about control over events and outcomes may differ between men and women and it may lead to differences in their perception of their life events. People who are with internal LOC think that internal factors have significant impact on their lives, on the other hand, those with an external LOC stated that extraneous factors and environment have considerable impact on their lives. Personal experiences, cultural expectations and societal norms can shape gender differences in LOC. Women may face unique societal pressures and obstacles related to gender biases and discrimination.

As gender is a very important factor in many psychological constructs it is seen in various researches that gender difference is many a times non-existent or in a completely different direction in different countries. For example, Ali and Kamrani (2011) found that men scored lower on paranoia scale as compared to women. This was opposite to

what was found in previous researches conducted in western countries about paranoia. So, it can be said that gender as a variable is very important but its impacts and associations can differ in various countries and cultures.

However, differences between genders should also be considered, as not all men or women exhibit the same orientation towards LOC. Recognizing gender differences in LOC can provide valuable insights into how individuals perceive their ability to control their lives, make decisions, and manage challenges. These differences may impact various aspects of behaviour and wellbeing, such as career choices, achievement motivation, and responses to stressful situations.

Limitations & Recommendations

Although, the sample was diverse in terms of professions but was limited to only one city (i.e., Karachi) that minimises the generalizability of the findings. It is recommended that the employers utilize psychological testing at the time of recruitment of the employees. This will enable the employer to place the right candidate in the right position in the organisation. Strategies can be applied by the employer to enhance the job satisfaction of employees with any locus of control considering their personality profile.

Conclusion

This study found that there is positive correlation between job satisfaction and internal locus of control. There was no significant gender difference is found in either job satisfaction or locus of control in mid-career employees of Karachi, Pakistan.

Contribution of Authors

Farhan Kamrani: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing, Supervision

Asbah Zia: Conceptualization, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft

Mahwish Mursaleen: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by the authors.

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Data Availability Statement

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [F.K.] upon the reasonable request.

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