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Relationship between self-compassion and job satisfaction in white collar workers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between self-compassion and job satisfaction and to observe whether job satisfaction scores vary in view of certain demographic variables. 300 white-collar workers from four different companies in Istanbul, operating in telecommunication, chemicals, security technologies and insurance sectors, participated in this study in 2011-2012. The study was conducted on a voluntary basis.In this study, Self-compassion Scale, Job Satisfaction Scale and Personal Information Sheet were used. SPSS 16.0 was used for data analysis. Results demonstrated moderate positive correlation between self-compassion and job satisfaction. The results also showed that job satisfaction scores vary by age, level of education and position but do not vary by gender, department, tenure, company's sector and capital structure.

Keywords: White-collar Workers, Self-compassion, Job Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction has a positive impact on productivity, presence and competitive performance, resulting in a decline in employee turnover rates and withdrawal behaviors. Job satisfaction has a positive impact on the employee's well-being and overall life satisfaction as well. As a result of recent interest in Eastern philosophy, some new concepts are shown to have a positive impact on an individual's overall well-being and life satisfaction. Self-compassion, defined by Kristin Neff, is one of these concepts (Neff, 2003b). Self-compassion involves being discerning and gentle towards oneself in the face of hardship or perceived inadequacy and entails acknowledging that suffering, failure and inadequacies are part of the human condition.

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Neff proposed that self-compassion involves three main components: Self-kindness versus self-judgment, common humanity versus isolation and mindfulness versus over-identification (Akın and others, 2007). Self-compassion has been found to be positively associated with psychological well-being, life satisfaction, happiness, optimism and positive affect. Positive relationship between these concepts and job satisfaction has already been shown. Other studies have shown that mindfulness is positively associated with job satisfaction (Hollis-Walker &Colosimo, 2010; Neely, Schallert, Mohammed, Roberts & Chen, 2009; Neff, 2004; Neff, 2011; Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007; Neff &Vonk, 2009).

2. Purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between self-compassion and job satisfaction. In this study we hypothesized that there will be a positive relationship between self-compassion and job satisfaction.

3. Method

3.1.Participants

This research involves 300 white collar workers (35% females, 65% males) working in telecommunication (25%), chemicals (25%), security technologies (25%) and insurance sectors (25%).in Istanbul. Instruments used for data collection in this study were Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003), Job Satisfaction Scale (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951) and Demographics Questionnaire. Of the participants, 34 (11,3%) were graduated from high school, 234 (78%) were graduated from college, and 32 (10,7%) were graduated from post-graduate / doctorate. Their average age was 33.59 years (SD = 1.09) ranging from 21 to 50 years.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Capital Structure	Frequency	%
Foreign partnership	150	50
Foreign capital	150	50
Department		
Finance / Accounting / Legal / IT	65	21,7
Human Resources / Admin / Personnel Affairs	35	11,7
Sales / Marketing / Business Development	163	54,3
Production / Quality Control / Purchasing / Logistics / Planning / Product Development	37	12,3
Total Tenure		
1-10 years	176	58,7
11-20 years	86	28,7
21-30 years	38	12,7
Position		
Technician / Clerk	31	10,3
Assistant Specialist / Specialist / Senior Specialist	210	70
Supervisor / Assistant Manager / Manager / Director / Executive	59	19,7

3.2 Procedure

This research was conducted in 2011-2012. Participants received an email with a link to the online survey including the Self-Compassion Scale, Job Satisfaction Scale and Demographics Questionnaire. The survey page included explanations about the purpose of the study. Responses to the survey were recorded anonymously and confidentiality was guaranteed for the participants. Participants had to respond to each question in order to complete the survey.

4. Findings

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Inter-correlations of the Variables

Variables	1	2
1.Self-compassion	1	.446
2.Job satisfaction	.446	1

Results showed a moderate positive relationship between self-compassion and job satisfaction in white collar workers. (r=0,446; p<0.01).

Table 3. White Collar Workers' Job Satisfaction Levels in Terms of Total Tenure

Source	Ss	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	5,21	2	2,61	2,16	0,12
Within Groups	358,35	297	1,21		
Total	363,57	299			

According to the ANOVA results, there is no significant difference between white collar workers' job satisfaction levels in terms of total tenure (F=2,16; p=0,12>0,05).

Table 4. White Collar Workers' Job Satisfaction Levels in Terms of Position in the Company

Source	Ss	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	12,729	2	6,365	5,388	0,005
Within Groups	350,837	297	1,181		
Total	363,57	299			

According to the ANOVA results, there are significant differences between white collar workers' job satisfaction levels in terms of position in the company (F=5,388; p=0,005<0,05). We used Post Hoc Tests to find which positions cause differences in job satisfaction levels.

Table 5. Post Hoc Test Results

Position I	Position J	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p

Technician, Clerk	Assistant Specialist, Specialist, Senior Specialist	-0,002	0,2	1
	Supervisor, Manager, Director, Executive	-0,52	0,24	0,08
Assistant Specialist, Specialist, Senior Specialist	Technician, Clerk	0,002	0,21	1
	Supervisor, Manager, Director, Executive	-0,52*	0,16	0,004
Supervisor, Manager, Director, Executive	Technician, Clerk	0,52	0,24	0,08
	Assistant Specialist, Specialist, Senior Specialist	0,52*	0,16	0,004

* The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

According to the Tukey HSD test results; job satisfaction levels of Supervisor, Manager, Director and Executives significantly higher than job satisfaction levels of Assistant Specialist, Specialist, Senior Specialists (Mean Difference=0,52; p=0,004).

Table 6. White Collar Workers' Job Satisfaction Levels in Terms of Department

Source	Ss	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	6,1	3	2,03	1,68	0,17
Within Groups	357,47	296	1,21		
Total	363,57	299			

According to the ANOVA results, there is no significant difference between white collar workers' job satisfaction levels in terms of department ((F=1,68; p=0,17>0,05).

Table 7. White Collar Workers' Job Satisfaction Levels in Terms of Education Level

Source	Ss	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	8,17	2	4,084	3,413	0,034
Within Groups	355,4	297	1,197		
Total	363,57	299			

According to the ANOVA results, there are significant differences between white collar workers' job satisfaction levels in terms of education level (F=3,413; p=0,034<0,05). We used Post Hoc Tests to find which education level cause differences in job satisfaction levels.

Table 8. Post Hoc Test Results

(I) Education	(J) Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
High School	College	0,26	0,2	0,4
	Post-graduate / Doctorate	-0,24	0,27	0,65
College	High School	-0,26	0,2	0,4
	Post-graduate / Doctorate	-0,50*	0,21	0,04
Post-graduate / Doctorate	High School	0,24	0,27	0,65
	College	0,50*	0,21	0,04

* The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

According to the Tukey HSD test results; job satisfaction levels of workers at Post-graduate / Doctorate significantly higher than job satisfaction levels of workers at College education level (Mean Difference=0,50; p=0,04).

Table 9. White Collar Workers' Job Satisfaction Levels in Terms Gender

Source	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df
Job Satisfaction	Male	196	3,31	1,13	298
	Female	104	3,35	1,06	

According to the T-Test results, there is no significant difference between white collar workers' job satisfaction levels in terms of gender (t=-0,33; p=0,738/2=0,37>0,05).

Table 10. White Collar Workers' Job Satisfaction Levels in Terms of Age

Source	Ss	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	14,29	5	2,858	2,406	0,037
Within Groups	349,27	294	1,188		
Total	363,57	299			

According to the ANOVA results, there are significant differences between white collar workers' job satisfaction levels in terms of age (F=2,406; p=0,037<0,05). We used Post Hoc Tests to find which age groups cause differences in job satisfaction levels.

Table 11. White Collar Workers' Job Satisfaction Levels in Terms of Age

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
21-25	26-30	0,78	0,2	0,99
	31-35	0,39	0,21	0,47
	36-40	0,25	0,23	0,89
	41-45	0,12	0,25	0,99
	46-50	-0,4	0,26	0,64
26-30	21-25	-0,08	0,2	0,99
	31-35	0,31	0,18	0,53
	36-40	0,17	0,2	0,96
	41-45	0,04	0,23	1
	46-50	-0,47	0,23	0,31
31-35	21-25	-0,39	0,21	0,47
	26-30	-0,31	0,18	0,53
	36-40	-0,14	0,21	0,98
	41-45	-0,27	0,24	0,87
	46-50	-0,78*	0,24	0,02
36-40	21-25	-0,25	0,23	0,89
	26-30	-0,17	0,2	0,96
	31-35	0,14	0,21	0,98
	41-45	-0,13	0,25	0,99
	46-50	-0,64	0,25	0,12
41-45	21-25	-0,12	0,25	0,99
	26-30	-0,04	0,23	1
	31-35	0,27	0,24	0,87
	36-40	0,13	0,25	0,99
	46-50	-0,51	0,27	0,42
46-50	21-25	0,4	0,26	0,64
	26-30	0,47	0,23	0,31
	31-35	0,78*	0,24	0,02
	36-40	0,64	0,25	0,12
	41-45	0,51	0,27	0,42

* The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

According to the Tukey HSD test results; job satisfaction levels of workers at 46-50 age group significantly higher than job satisfaction levels of workers at 31-35 age groups (Mean Difference=0,78; p=0,02).

5. Discussion

Individuals with high self-compassion levels tend to feel less depression, anxiety and burnout, thus feel more satisfied with their life and are more prone to positive affect. They also tend to evaluate the circumstances with a more balanced and optimistic point of view. As a result, these individuals tend to have higher job satisfaction levels.

This is believed to be the first study in Turkey examining the relationship between self-compassion and job satisfaction. However, it is limited to white collar workers in four different sectors operating in Istanbul. Replication of this study in blue collar workers, other regions and government institutions can generate additional data. Variations in self-compassion levels according to demographics can also be explored.

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