

Investigating the mediating role of job motivation in the relationship between job characteristics and job procrastination

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Keywords: <i>Job burnout, organizational culture, job motivation</i>	Abstract Background and purpose: Recruiting, training, and maintaining human resources often impose high costs on organizations. Therefore, the loss of human resources due to factors such as death, illness, leaving the job, absenteeism, and low productivity can cause irreparable losses to organizations. Therefore, the current research's purpose was to determine the mediating role of job motivation in the relationship between job characteristics and job procrastination in employees of Islamic Azad University, Arsanjan branch. Methodology: The research design is of the descriptive correlation type, and the statistical population of the current research consists of the employees of the Islamic Azad University of Fars province. The sample members were evaluated using relevant questionnaires. SPSS software was used to analyze the research data. Results: Based on the research hypothesis, the results showed that: all dimensions of job characteristics are significant predictors and reverses of job procrastination. In other words, with the increase of these characteristics, occupational procrastination shows a decrease. Also, among the dimensions of job characteristics, only the job identity dimension was able to predict job motivation, and vice versa. Conclusion: In the end, the research findings did not confirm the mediating role of job motivation in the relationship between job characteristics and job procrastination. This finding indicates the disconfirmation of the primary hypothesis of the research regarding the relationship between the constructs of job characteristics, job motivation, and job procrastination.
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Introduction

A prominent feature of globalization that profoundly affects today's organizations is the major trend toward greater cultural diversity. Globalization involves processes of social interaction on a global scale in which people of many nationalities are connected and work in a culturally different environment, both inside and outside their organizations. Organizations are increasingly involved in interactions among diverse sets of cultures and perspectives (Thomas, 2006). This fact has caused great dynamics of relations in multicultural environments. In such a way, differences in language, ethnicity, policies, and many other characteristics can emerge as sources of potential conflict and make it challenging to develop appropriate working relationships (Dean, 2007).

For a long time, many organizations have expanded the scope of their activities. This scope of activity is not limited to commercial and economic organizations but also includes political, social, scientific, sports, cultural and religious organizations (Zahedi, 2000).

In other words, this wide range of activities has caused organizations to face cultural diversity both in their workforce and in those who refer to them as customers and clients. In fact, diversity is a fact of life today, and no organization can ignore it. Organizations deal with employees and clients who have different cultural and functional backgrounds and also have assumptions about how to communicate and how to make decisions (Zahedi, 2000).

Among the required capabilities of the 21st century, the ability to continuously adapt to people from different cultures and to manage intercultural communication are important. The global work environment needs people familiar with different cultures and can communicate appropriately with people from other cultures. For this purpose, people need cultural intelligence. A person's ability to adapt to values, traditions and customs different from what he is used to and to work in a different cultural environment is an indicator of cultural intelligence (Jan Nesar, Ahmadi, and Fayazi, 2006).

To create effective relationships and overcome the problems caused by cultural diversity, people need special abilities in communicating and interacting simultaneously with people from different cultures. One of these abilities is cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence refers to a person's ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. Cultural intelligence is the most important tool that can be used to deal with multicultural situations. Cultural intelligence helps to understand the various cultural components correctly and quickly and show a behavior appropriate to each of them (Abbasali Zadeh and Naeiji, 2007/2016).

Cultural intelligence helps people to be sensitive to different cultures, to be able to communicate appropriately with people from different cultures and to be able to analyze new cultures that they encounter. According to Eng and Early, cultural intelligence includes

four metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions. Each dimension explains certain aspects of cultural intelligence (Imai, 2007).

Ang et al. (2004) presented a four-dimensional model of cultural intelligence including cognition, metacognition, motivation, and behavior. The four dimensions of cultural intelligence are qualitatively different aspects of comprehensive abilities to operate and manage effectively and efficiently in culturally different environments. Cognitive, cultural intelligence refers to acquired knowledge about a specific culture (Imai, 2007). Metacognitive cultural intelligence reflects the mental processes people use to acquire and understand cultural knowledge, including recognizing and controlling people's mental processes related to culture (Ang et al., 2007). Motivational cultural intelligence is defined as the degree and level at that people are confident in their abilities to engage in intercultural interactions and the extent to which they feel inner satisfaction from these interactions (Logo, 2007). Finally, the behavioral component of cultural intelligence reflects an ability to express and display appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures. Behaviors are outward manifestations or overt actions that a person takes, although they are separate from what they think (Dean, 2007).

Organizations must reach group goals through employees, so employees work effectively to achieve goals. As a result, reviewing and identifying how human resources work and developing the necessary programs to improve performance is an important part of the organization's management functions. This is important through the process of evaluating the performance of human resources (Zarei, 2019). Performance evaluation is one of the important approaches for managers to achieve success. Rapid environmental changes, intensifying the competitive environment, increasing society's expectations, etc., have made the need for performance evaluation management inevitable (Yadollahi Farsi, 2005). Since organizations are looking to increase performance and optimize things, in the first stage, they should increase the performance of employees. Performance is a set of actions and activities carried out by employees to achieve the predetermined goals of the organization. Considering that performance is also a function of knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation, and considering that cultural intelligence is an important ability and capability in the current conditions of organizations, which has significant behavioral and motivational manifestations; moreover, since the management center of seminaries, which is one of the important centers of science and knowledge with the important task of deepening, expanding, expanding and teaching Islamic sciences, and is one of the most important influential centers in the formation, growth and development of Islamic and Iranian culture and civilization; in addition to the fact that its employees interact and communicate with people from different cultures, this research aims to answer this question:

Is there a relationship between cultural intelligence and the performance of seminary management center employees?

Methodology

The current research method is descriptive and correlational, and the researcher is trying to find the mediating role of job motivation in the relationship between job characteristics and job procrastination. The statistical population of the current research consists of the employees of Islamic Azad University of Fars province, Arsanjan Branch. 150 people were selected as the research sample using available sampling method. In order to increase the participation rate of employees in the research, since the number of samples was small and the nature of the structure of procrastination was negative. Therefore, collecting demographic information related to the sample people was avoided.

Materials

1- Occupational procrastination scale: This scale was created in 2011 by Majid Safarinia and Zahra Amirkhani Razlighi. The primary purpose of this scale is to measure the amount of procrastination and procrastination of employees in office work. This form has 25 items that evaluate the subject's procrastination on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5. The theoretical framework used in preparing this scale combines psychoanalytical and cognitive-behavioral approaches. In Safarinia and Amirkhani Razlighi's research, two retest methods and Cronbach's alpha coefficient were used to estimate the scale's reliability. The validity of the 25-question set of occupational procrastination scale in the total sample of 50 employees in Tehran province was obtained using the test-retest method equal to 0.75 for the whole test. Also, the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) in the total sample of 503 employees working in Tehran province was reported as 0.89 for the entire scale. Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale is 0.75; the skill variety subscale is 0.98; task identity is 0.98; the importance of the task is 0.92; independence is 0.97; and feedback is 0.78.

2- Job Motivation Questionnaire: this tool includes 20 items in the field of employee motivation (Fahli, 2018). In a study that was conducted with the presence of 137 nursing personnel, including supervisors, nurses, formal and experimental nurses, and technicians in a general hospital, 70 engineers in a developed laboratory, and 46 graduate students, the averages and standard deviations were as follows for three groups: nurses (6.52 and 43.37), engineers (7.83 and 46.62) and students (9.56 and 48.6). The reliability estimate of the whole test was calculated through the method of halving the test, and the results for the students was 0.89, for engineers was 0.80, and for nurses was 0.72.

Implementation

In order to implement the questionnaire and collect information by referring to the university staff, while stating the purpose of the research and expressing the initial

discussions and gaining their support and cooperation as well as presenting the way of answering, the questionnaires were distributed among them and were brought after a certain period.

Results

Due to the non-significance of the zero-order correlation of the dimensions of skill variety, task importance, independence, and feedback with job motivation, only the regression of the task identity dimension on job motivation was calculated. The results of table (1) show that the job characteristic of task identity is a significant and inverse predictor of job motivation. This means that job motivation increases with increasing task identity. This predictive variable explains 9% of the variance of job motivation.

Table 1: Correlation index of research variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1- Career procrastination	1						
2- Variety of skills	-0/21	1					
3- Task identity	-0/37	-0/01	1				
4- Importance of duty	-0/33	0/06	0/22	1			
5- Independence	-0/26	-0/07	-0/03	0/13	1		
6- Feedback	-0/20	0/00	0/02	-0/80	0/14	1	
7- Career motivation	0/06	0/14	-0/31	0/00	0/11	-0/04	1

As you can see in table (2), the indicators of the descriptive statistics of job burnout and job motivation variables are reported according to the indicators of the organizational culture variables (hierarchical, rational, ideological, and agreement and participation). For example, the mean and standard deviation of job motivation for people with rational organizational culture styles are 87.1 and 11.8, respectively. At the same time, the numbers of the interval estimation column indicate that with 95% confidence, the average job motivation for people with a rational organizational culture style is between 1.85 and 89 of the average of the society. Also, these averages are drawn in the form of a bar chart.

Table 2: Simple linear regression of job identity dimension on job motivation

Variable	F	Sig	Beta	B	Sig.	R	R ²
Job Identity	15/35	0/001	0/31	0/16	0/001	0/31	0/09

Discussion and Conclusion

The current research aims to clarify the underlying mechanism through which job characteristics affect job procrastination. More precisely, this research aims to investigate the mediating effect of the construct of job motivation in the relationship between the constructs of job characteristics and job procrastination. The results showed that all dimensions of job characteristics are significant and inverse predictors of job procrastination. In other words, with the increase of these characteristics, occupational

procrastination shows a decrease. Also, among the dimensions of job characteristics, only the job identity dimension could predict job motivation; inversely. Finally, the research findings did not confirm the mediating role of job motivation in the relationship between job characteristics and job procrastination.

In order to verify or disconfirm the research hypothesis based on the mediating role of job motivation structure in the relationship between job characteristics and procrastination, multiple regression was used sequentially and simultaneously, according to the steps of Baron and Kenny (1986). Based on this method, investigating the mediating role of one variable in the relationship between two other variables has four steps. These steps are as follows: In the first step, the direct path between the exogenous and endogenous variables of the model is examined. In the second step, the direct path coefficients from the exogenous variable to the intermediary variable are examined. In the third step, the direct path coefficients from the intermediary variable to the endogenous variable are examined. In the fourth stage, he gives endogenous path coefficients before and after adding that when he comes to work, he pays more attention to personal phones and generally wastes time (Robbins, 1996).

In Kote's (1987) research, the influence of individual aspects of procrastination, job characteristics and the mutual relationship between them showed that: according to the direct supervisors of employees, the difference in the level of procrastination of employees was caused by individual aspects. Job characteristics were another factor that justified these differences according to the employees. In this context, Lonergan (1998) also found that decision-making procrastination has an inverse relationship with all job characteristics except job feedback from others and is directly correlated with the locus of control. It is very clear that reducing employee procrastination requires identifying the factors that cause it, and one way to reduce it is to enrich their jobs. This model states that job characteristics such as skill diversity, job nature, job importance, authority and freedom of action at work, and job feedback are related to procrastination.

This finding can be analyzed so that, if there is a job identity, the employees will realize that they are doing important work in achieving the organization's goals. Thus their satisfaction and positive behaviors will increase. The high average score of the employees' occupational nature index indicates that relatively people do a job from start to finish, and their duties are more than doing part of the work incompletely. They are carrying out a task to the final stage, and finishing it as desired brings satisfaction to people while increasing their motivation to do the work again. Jobs that have much variety and gradually become more and more challenging are more exciting from the employees' point of view because they require extensive skills. On the other hand, this variety gives the employees a sense of competence. As a result, it prevents the emergence of negative job attitudes such as dissatisfaction, lack of attachment, etc.

In justifying the inverse relationship between job characteristics and procrastination, it can be said that since procrastination can be consequence of environmental and organizational factors that a person has touched over time, in addition to individual factors. Also, his previous solutions to this crisis have been ineffective. Therefore, to retaliate and compensate for this organization's action, the person resumes destructive and anti-productive behaviors, including negligence. Therefore, to prevent and cure this problem, one of the organization's solutions is to enrich the duties of each person. As a result, it makes the employees mentally and psychologically healthy and ready to accept responsibility and saves them from experiencing unpleasant emotional states.

Therefore, employees do not only suffer from a series of negative personality and mental characteristics such as feelings of emptiness and worthlessness, low self-confidence, bewilderment and confusion, distraction, impulsiveness, aversion to duty, nervousness, rebelliousness; but they have a set of positive and constructive characteristics. Among them are self-efficacy, conscientiousness, self-control, irritability, people-friendliness, self-confidence and expression of altruistic emotions and feelings, respect for the wishes and needs of others, kindness, affection, and other acceptable social behaviors.

A person who produces a product completely or provides a complete part of the service has a high occupational identity. Job identity is related to the perception of the work process and its relationship with the organization's final product and other activities. This person feels successful while working or at the end of it because he is aware of how his work is related to other organization activities. Such a person understands that he has an important role in achieving organizational goals. It is also natural that a person who is more aware of the results of his work and understands the results of his efforts concretely feels satisfied with his work and evaluates his job capabilities positively. In addition, job autonomy as a source of research shows that internal factors are more important in creating job motivation than external factors (Mahmoudi et al., 2016). In the current study, the analysis results show that only one dimension of job characteristics (task identity) is a significant predictor of job motivation. Thus, it can be concluded that more important factors than job characteristics play a decisive role in predicting job motivation.

It is possible that external factors such as leadership styles, atmosphere, perceived organizational justice, etc., are more important in predicting job motivation than the characteristics of the job itself. As mentioned earlier, this finding is contrary to the dominant line of foreign studies, which show that the nature of work is the most important factor affecting employees' job motivation. It seems that the nature of the job is the primary determinant of employee motivation in environments where external factors encourage their motivation to some extent. However, from another point of view, this finding can be explained as employees having a negative attitude and feeling towards the atmosphere and perceived organizational justice. So they consider the atmosphere destructive and

repressive and do not allow the employees to perform; on the other hand, they do not understand justice and equality in different fields. Therefore, the employees no longer have the desire to have the authority and responsibility to do a job from the beginning to the end, to get their work results from their supervisors and other things, and to try to do the tasks just for the sake of completing the task (Robbins, 1998, translated by Arabi and Parsaeian, 2004). In this way, since justice processes, especially objectively, play an important role in the organization. Moreover, studies have shown that how people are treated in organizations can affect employees' beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors and the desire to receive a fair reward for doing work. In other words, they should benefit from the rewards of doing work as much as their colleagues. Therefore, it can be said that they are not treated fairly, and they do not trust that they will be treated fairly and this behavior continues; they probably judge that there is no social relationship between them and the organization. In healthy organizations, employees remain committed and conscientious; they have a high spirit and performance; communication channels are open and useful, and people like to come to their workplace and are proud to work there (Mahdad, 2006).

The findings related to the regression of job motivation on job procrastination by controlling the role of job characteristics dimensions confirm that the mediating role of motivation variable in the relationship between job characteristics and job procrastination is not confirmed. This finding is inconsistent with some previous studies, such as Steel (2007), Kosari (2011), Ghasemi (2011), and Nikbakht (2012). This research showed that aversion to tasks, self-efficiency, conscientiousness, self-control, distraction, organization, job motivation and impulsiveness are strong predictors of procrastination (Steel, 2007). Kosari (2011) showed a significant negative relationship between academic procrastination and motivation to progress. In this research, the result of regression analysis showed that achievement motivation and exam anxiety predict academic procrastination; but the predictive power of the motivation for progress was greater. Ghasemi (2011) also found a negative relationship between progress motivation and procrastination.

The possible reason for the absence of a mediating role of job motivation in the relationship between job characteristics and procrastination is a general view of procrastination as an outcome that can result from various individual and environmental factors. On the other hand, the general view of motivation is different from procrastination; that is, it is mentioned as both cause and effect.

On the other hand, the previous findings confirm that the relationship between the four job characteristics of task importance, skill variety, work autonomy, feedback, and job motivation is not significant. Among the limitations of this research, due to the nature of the sample, it is difficult to generalize the research findings to all employees working in other organizations. The participants of the present study were employees of a service and educational organization with special education and job conditions. Therefore, the results

should only be generalized to industrial and manufacturing workers with further investigation. More research is needed to determine the generalizability of these findings to workers from different classes and professions. Since the model is designed based on experimental research and previous theories, it is necessary to be careful about the decisive conclusions regarding the causal relationships between the variables. The results are based on correlational data, which makes it impossible to assert causality based on the observed relationships. Because the questionnaires in the research had many questions, some people refused to answer despite having enough time to answer. Few studies have investigated the effective factors in reducing procrastination. Since procrastination reduces the quality of people's personal and work life and also leads to severe or even irreparable consequences, the need to know the factors that reduce the procrastination of this group is felt more than ever. This research can be considered as a starting point for this path. In order to increase the participation rate of employees in the research and considering the harmful nature of the variable of procrastination in the current research, it was decided not to include any demographic questions in the scale.

Ethics

This research observed ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Also, while completing the questionnaires while emphasizing completing all the questions, the participants were free to withdraw from the research at any time and provide individual information. They were assured that the information would remain confidential, which was strictly adhered to.

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Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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