Contextual and Dispositional Influences on Job Attitudes and Behaviours: The Role of Organisational Climate, Affect and Personality in Predicting Job Satisfaction, Organisational Commitment and Turnover

Wolfgang Wittwer and Dr Elisabeth Wilson-Evered

Department of Psychology, Monash University, Caulfield Campus, Melbourne, Australia

Email: wwittwer@iprimus.com.au
This study set out to examine the influence of environmental and person variables on important job attitudes and behaviours within a single path analytical model. Organisational climate was included as an exogenous environmental variable. Affectivity and dimensions of the Big-Five model of personality were included as exogenous person variables. Data were collected in a large Australian hospital and divided into a calibration sample ($n = 259$) and a cross-validation sample ($n = 247$). The hypothesised model was generally supported in both samples. Context (organisational climate) emerged as the main predictor of job attitudes (job satisfaction and organisational commitment) and of subsequent turnover intentions. Person characteristics (conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness) were the chief predictors of contextual performance. Practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: organisational climate, personality, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, performance, turnover.

Employee attitudes and behaviours impact considerably on work performance, productivity and other organisational outcomes (Koys, 2001: 101; Cropanzano and Wright; 2001: 183, Patterson, Warr, & West, 2004: 210). In order to identify reliable predictors of job attitudes and behaviours, researchers have looked at a broad range of person and context variables, albeit, typically, in discrete combinations, leading to fragmented findings. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to integrate those person and context variables that have shown consistent links with job attitudes and behaviours, and to examine their usefulness in predicting work attitudes and outcomes within a single path-analytical model.

Following a review of the extant literature(s), affectivity (positive and negative affect) (Diener & Emmons, 1985) and personality characteristics (McCrae & Costa, 1987) were included as exogenous person variables. Job satisfaction, organisational commitment (OC), performance, and turnover were included as endogenous variables. In line with previous reports (Brown & Leigh, 1999; Williams & Hazer, 1986), it was also expected that job attitudes would mediate the impact of person and climate characteristics on job behaviours.

The Empirical Evidence

Antecedents and Consequences of Job Satisfaction: Empirical support for the link between affectivity and job satisfaction was reviewed by Connolly and Viswesvaran (2000: 265) and Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, and de Chermont (2003: 914). Both analyses obtained moderately strong corrected correlations between positive affect (PA) (corrected $r=.49/-0.34$ respectively) and negative affect (NA)
Contextual and Dispositional Influences

Similar support for the link between job satisfaction and the Big-Five dimensions of personality was provided in a meta-analysis by Judge, Heller, and Mount (2002: 530), who reported moderate true correlations between neuroticism (corrected r = .29), conscientiousness (corrected r = .26), extraversion (corrected r = .25), and job satisfaction. Regression analyses in all three studies intimated that each person characteristic was a significant and independent predictor of job satisfaction. Two meta-analytical reviews (Carr, Schmidt, Ford, & DeShon, 2003: 404; Parker, Baltes, Young, Huff, Altman, & Lacost, 2003: 611) reported moderate corrected correlations between aspects of organisational climate and job satisfaction (corrected r ranging from .33 to .46). Job satisfaction was also significantly correlated with withdrawal (corrected r = -.46), however only weakly correlated (corrected r = .16 to .05) or unrelated to performance. Primary support was provided by Patterson and colleagues (2004: 202 pp) who found climate variables among the strongest predictors of future productivity. All three studies suggested that job satisfaction mediated the influence of organisational climate on job outcomes.

Antecedents and Consequences of Organisational Commitment (OC): A quantitative review showed climate characteristics are also linked to organisational commitment (OC) (corrected r = .34 to .45) (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). In addition, strong correlations between OC and turnover intentions were found (intention to search, corrected r = -.59; intention to leave, corrected r = -.46). In contrast, like with job satisfaction, links between OC and performance were inconsistent. Dunham, Grube, and Castaneda (1994: 379) and Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002: 34) reported similar patterns of results. While there is scant evidence that personality traits play a role in the formation of OC (Meyer & Allen; 1997: 44), support for a link between OC and affectivity (PA, corrected r = .35; NA, corrected r = -.27) was provided by Thoresen and colleagues (2003). Extant research also offers little support for a link between OC and traditional measures of job performance. Nonetheless, relationships between OC and what has been termed contextual performance (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997) have been reported (Organ &

(Further) Antecedents of Performance: A number of studies have supported a link between contextual performance (or comparable constructs) and the Big-Five personality traits of conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness (Beaty, Cleveland, & Murphy, 2001: 141; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001: 331; Miller, Griffin, & Hart, 1999: 14; Organ & Ryan, 1995: 787; Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996: 529). Other studies provided evidence for the unique contribution of job satisfaction (LePine et al., 2002: 59; Organ & Lingl, 1995: 347; Organ & Ryan, 1995: 787) and OC (Griffin, 1996: 6; Meyer et al., 2002: 34) to contextual performance.

Antecedents of Turnover: Evidence for the influence of job attitudes on turnover comes from Hom, Carnikas-Walker, Prussia, and Griffeth (1992: 897), who reported moderate to high corrected mean correlations between job satisfaction and progressive turnover cognitions (thoughts of leaving, r=-.60, intention to search, r=-.47, intention to leave, r=-.49). Subsequent path analysis confirmed a mediating role of withdrawal cognitions in the relationship between job satisfaction and actual turnover decisions. These patterns were replicated in a meta-analytical review, where job satisfaction and OC emerged as significant correlates of turnover intentions and actual turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993: 271, 277 pp). Additional support for a link between OC and turnover comes from Mathieu and Zajac (1990: 177), who found moderate to high relationships between OC and intention to search (r=-.59) and intention to leave (r=-.46).

The Present Study

Emerging from the review, the following variables were included in the statistical model. An aggregate of various climate facets was used as a single indicator of organisational climate and exogenous context variable. Positive and negative affect (operationalised as state affect), neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness were included as exogenous person variables. Job satisfaction and OC (operationalised as affective commitment) were included as indicators of job attitudes. Performance (operationalised as contextual performance) and turnover (operationalised as past and future turnover
intentions) were included as job outcome variables. A graphic representation of the statistical model including directionality of hypothesised relationships among variables is shown in Figure 1.

METHOD

Participants

Data were collected in a large Australian hospital as part of a general climate survey, with a response rate of 61%. An initial sample of N = 506 was split randomly into a calibration sample of n = 259 (Sample 1) and a cross-validation sample of n = 247 (Sample 2). Both samples were similar in relation to gender-split (87% female; 13% male; both samples), age (Sample 1: $M = 39.67$, $SD = 10.43$, range = 20-65; Sample 2: $M = 39.74$, $SD = 10.98$, range = 18-64), and their spread across different workgroups (nursing 30% / 27%; administration 26% / 27%; technical support staff, 21% / 22%; medical and allied health professionals 17% / 19% for Sample 1 / 2 respectively).

Measures

**Affect:** The Occupational Positive and Negative Work Affect Scales adapted by Hart, Griffin, Wearing and Cooper (1996), were used to assess affectivity. Participants indicated the degree to which they had experienced positive (7 items) and negative (7 items) emotions at work over the past month.

**Personality:** Extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were assessed using the 60-item NEO Five –Factor Inventory (NEO- FFI) (Costa and McCrae, 1992).

**Organisational Climate** was assessed using an aggregate of five subscales from the Queensland Public Agency Staff Survey (QPASS) developed by Hart et al. (1996). Subscales included role clarity (4 items), supportive leadership (5 items), appraisal and recognition (6 items), growth opportunities (5 items), and participative decision-making (4 items).

**Job Satisfaction** was assessed using 6 items taken from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967).
Organisational Commitment was measured using Allen and Meyer’s (1990) 8-item scale of affective commitment.

Contextual Performance was assessed using Borman and Motowidlo’s (1993; 1997) 24-item measure of extra role behaviours (subscales: LIST).

Turnover Intentions were measured by a 6 item scale adapted from a state-wide teacher stress survey conducted in the state of Victoria, Australia, by Wearing, Bell, McMurray, Conn, and Dudgeon (1990). Three items each asked about the extent to which respondents had considered changing or leaving their current job over the past month (past turnover intentions), and whether they were intending to seek a transfer, resign, or move into another job within the next three months (future turnover intentions).

All measures were subjected to confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using AMOS 5 (Arbuckle, 2003) with overall satisfactory results. The contextual performance sub-scale measuring volunteering behaviours did not contribute significantly to the higher order factor and was excluded from the analysis. Descriptive statistics and reliability and correlation coefficients for all measures in both samples are presented in Table 1.

The statistical model was assessed using AMOS 5 (Arbuckle, 2003), with raw data as input and maximum likelihood as the method of parameter estimation. Multiple indices were used to evaluate model fit. Critical values were set as follows: ratio of $\chi^2$ to its degrees of freedom ($\chi^2/df$) < 3; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) < .08; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and comparative fit Index (CFI) >.90 (Cunningham, 2004; Hoyle & Panter, 1995; Kline, 1998).

**RESULTS**

Initial testing of the hypothesised model using Sample 1 showed that the overall model fit was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (27, n = 259) = 49.394, p = .005$. At the same time, with a ratio of $\chi^2$ to degrees
of freedom of 1.829, RMSEA = .057, TLI = .934, CFI = .973, and AGFI = .912, all practical fit indices suggested that the model provided a good fit to the data. Cross-validation of the model using Sample 2, again produced an overall model fit that was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (27, n = 247) = 69.199$, $p = .000$. At the same time, the ratio of $\chi^2$ to degrees of freedom (2.563) remained below the acceptable maximum of three (Kline, 1998). Furthermore, with RMSEA = .080, TLI = .879, CFI = .950, and AGFI = .876, the values of the practical fit indices were very close to those specified as critical for adequacy of fit. In order to enhance model parsimony and ease of interpretation, in a revised model, two of the paths that were insignificant in both samples were deleted. The revised model resulted in statistically insignificantly different but slightly improved fit indices in both samples. A summary of the fit indices for the hypothesised and the revised models for both samples is presented in Table 2.

<table>
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A graphic representation of the revised model including standardised path coefficients and proportion of variance explained for both samples is presented in Figure 2.

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**DISCUSSION**

Figure 2 shows a strong link between organisational climate and job satisfaction in both samples. Positive affect also contributed significantly to job satisfaction in both samples. However, the path between negative affect and job satisfaction failed to cross-validate. The hypothesised link between personality (extraversion, neuroticism, or conscientiousness) and job satisfaction was not supported. Thus, the findings suggest that a positive climate and positive workplace affect or individual morale are the main predictors of employee satisfaction.

There was no reliable direct influence of affect and/or climate on OC. Both made significant contributions in one sample but not the other. Nonetheless, the link between job satisfaction and OC was
supported, suggesting that job satisfaction may largely mediate the affects of workplace climate and individual morale on OC.

There was a substantial correlation between job satisfaction and past turnover intentions (-.39/-0.29, Sample 1 / 2 respectively), which in turn influenced future turnover or search intentions. Hence, the results support models of progressive workplace cognitions in the lead up to actual turnover decisions. Since the path between OC and past turnover intentions failed to cross-validate, there was only partial support for a link between OC and turnover.

Finally, Figure 2 shows small to moderate correlations between agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and contextual performance. Contrary to predictions, the link between job satisfaction and contextual performance was not supported. Similarly, the relationship between OC and contextual performance was only partially supported. Accordingly, personality emerged as the strongest and largely independent predictor of contextual performance.

**Practical Implications**

**Increasing Job (Employee) Satisfaction:** Given that climate and workplace mood emerged as the main antecedents to job satisfaction, and job satisfaction was the main predictor of turnover intentions, the study lends empirical support to the notion that a positive work climate enhance workplace morale, which, in turn, boosts job satisfaction and reduces turnover intentions. Considering the specific climate variables included in the study, the results suggest that it is a workplace environment, which provides employees with clear expectations, performance feedback, supportive leadership, input into decisions that affect them, and with opportunities for growth, that is likely to achieve these outcomes. Furthermore, personality emerged as a strong and independent predictor of contextual performance, thus reinforcing the usefulness of personality inventories in helping select people for performance.

**The role of Organisational Commitment:** The paths between OC and job outcomes reached significance in one sample and near significance in the other, suggesting that OC may, indeed, have some impact on turnover and performance. If this is the case, the degree to which employees feel emotionally
attached to their organisation has the potential to decrease their readiness to leave, as well as stimulate additional effort and collaborative behaviours. At the same time, job satisfaction emerged as the stronger predictor of turnover intentions, therefore suggesting that employees may stay with a company even without a strong level of attachment, as long as they perceive their job to be satisfying. Conversely, employees, who feel strongly attached to the organisation, may still decide to leave if they perceive the climate to be poor (i.e. the manager is unsupportive, feedback is inappropriate or insufficient, and opportunities for growth are limited).

**Study Limitations**

A number of factors constrain the inferences from the present findings. Firstly, data on tenure, education, and perceptions of alternate employment opportunities were not available, and their impact remains unclear. Secondly, the exclusive use of self-report measures may have inflated correlations due to common method variance. In addition, the cross-sectional and correlational nature of the data does not allow for causal inferences. Therefore, longitudinal studies, which include relevant demographic data and use outsider as well as self-ratings, are needed to create a clearer more objective picture.

In sum, this study served to substantiate intuitive notions about the interplay between the work environment, personality, job attitudes and job outcomes. Organisational climate and workplace morale were found to be the main determinants of employees' job satisfaction and subsequent turnover intentions. In contrast, personality emerged as the most significant and independent predictor of contextual job performance. As such, the results reinforce the use of climate surveys in diagnosing and correcting organisational functioning. They also lend credence to the use of personality inventories in employee selection and, once more, highlight the role organisational psychology and HR initiatives can play in enhancing organisational effectiveness and outcomes.
FIGURE 1
Path Analytical Model

Note: In order to enhance ease of interpretation, correlations between the exogenous variables and error terms for the endogenous variables have been omitted.
TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations for two Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Sample 1</th>
<th>Sample 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Positive Affect</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Negative Affect</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extraversion</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Neuroticism</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Agreeableness</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organisational Climate</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Affective Commitment</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Contextual Performance</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Past Turnover Intention</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Future Turnover Intention</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Correlations for Sample 1 are listed above the diagonal (n = 259), and correlations for Sample 2 are given below the diagonal (n = 247); Correlations of .17 or above were significant at the .01 level; correlations of .13 or above were significant at the .05 level. Reliability estimates for each scale are listed in brackets along the diagonal (Sample 1/Sample 2).
### TABLE 2

*Results of AMOS Analyses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sample 1 $\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$\chi^2$/df</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesised Model</td>
<td>49.394</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.829</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.934</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td>.973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Model</td>
<td>69.199</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.563</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>.879</td>
<td>.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 1: $n = 259$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample 2: $n = 247$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 2
Final (Revised) Path Model with Standardised Regression Weights and Variance Explained for both samples

Note: (Sample 1/ Sample 2 respectively). Standardised coefficients in bold are significant at p < .05. Correlations between the exogenous variables and error terms for the endogenous variables have been omitted.
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