Abstract

The negative consequences of job dissatisfaction has been linked to anxiety, depression and emotional fatigue. Given these consequences, along with reduced productivity, absenteeism and burnout, identifying factors that influence and increase employee job satisfaction has become essential. One of the important factors that has been linked to job satisfaction is job autonomy. The current study aims to further explore the relationship between job autonomy and job satisfaction and investigate the intervening role of self-efficacy in this relationship. Job autonomy and its facets which are work method autonomy, work scheduling autonomy and work criteria autonomy along with job satisfaction and self-efficacy beliefs was measured for 71 executives working in the ITeS (Information Technology enabled Services) Sector in Chennai City. Statistical analysis revealed self-efficacy moderated the relationship between Job autonomy and Job satisfaction. The level of Job satisfaction was higher for Employees with higher level of self efficacy and higher levels of job autonomy but not for employees with lower self-efficacy and high job autonomy.

I. INTRODUCTION

In organisations the degree or level of freedom and discretion allowed to employees over their jobs impact their positive and negative feelings towards their job. This rings especially true in the case of companies in the Information Technology enabled Services
(ITeS) sector where a large part of the work force is young and educated and attrition rates are high. The ITeS sector is man-power heavy and it also heralded the entry of India as a global economic super power. As such there is a heavy significance placed on increasing employee engagement and organisational commitment and maintaining job satisfaction among its workforce.

1.1 Job Satisfaction
Job Satisfaction is operationally defined as the extent to which people like their jobs either on the whole or with respect to particular conditions or rewards [1]. It is simply the contentment (or lack of it) arising out of interplay of employee's positive and negative feelings toward his or her work.

1.2 Job Autonomy and Job Satisfaction.
Hackman and Oldham [2] defined autonomy as ‘the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out’. Studies [3] indicate that high job autonomy or self-determination enhances employee feelings that job outcomes are a result of their own efforts. Higher level of autonomy is anticipated to be associated with higher level of job satisfaction because employees have more autonomy to make work related decisions and also feel more responsible for their decisions and their work. For the purpose of the study, job or work autonomy is operationally defined as Breaugh [4] explained it- "Involving exercising of control over the methods used to perform work activities, the scheduling of those activities, and the standards used to judge performance ".

1.3 Facets of autonomy
Breaugh [4] hypothesized that Work or job autonomy had three facets: Work method autonomy, work scheduling autonomy and work criteria autonomy. Work method autonomy was defined as the degree of discretion/choice that individuals have regarding the procedures/methods to use in going about their work. Work scheduling autonomy is the extent to which employees feel they can control the scheduling or timing of their work activities. And work criteria autonomy is the degree to which workers can chose to modify the indicators/standards used for evaluating performance. In the ITeS sector, employees undergo performance reviews more frequently than employees in other industries [5] this makes work criteria autonomy especially important.

1.4 Job Autonomy and Self efficacy beliefs
Ormrod [6] defined "Self-efficacy as the extent or strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals". In the work place, employees with higher level of self efficacy believe that they are capable of finishing the job assigned to them and do not need a lot of direction and supervision, while employees with low level of self efficacy might feel more confident, knowing that they are supervised and following the directions of their team leaders. Low autonomy might feel restrictive to individuals with
self efficacious beliefs, while it might feel like a safety net for workers with lower self-efficacy.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study was to ascertain the relationship between Job Autonomy and its three aspects, and Job Satisfaction among ITeS employees and the moderating role of self efficacy.

III. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The current study has an ex-post facto research design. The sample consisted of 71 employees (31 male and 30 female) working in different KPOs (Knowledge Process Outsourcing) in Chennai city. The age of the sample ranged from 30 years to 40 years (mean age was calculated as 34 years). The mean work experience of the sample was 7.8 years. Work tenure of each individual here is calculated based on the individual’s experience in the ITeS sector rather than in just their current company.

IV. TOOLS USED

For the purpose of the study the below mentioned tools were used.

- Job autonomy was measured using the Work Autonomy scale developed by Breaugh [4], which measures facets of work autonomy; method autonomy, scheduling autonomy, and criteria autonomy. The scale consists of 9 items, and sample items includes, “I am allowed to decide how to go about getting my job done” and “I have the control over scheduling my work.” The scale is measured on a 7-point Likert scale, (1 = strongly disagree, to 7 = strongly agree). High score indicates a high degree of autonomy at work.

- Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) Short Form [7] developed by Weis, Dawis, England and Lofquist was used to measure job satisfaction. It scale consists of 20 items with 5 point Likert scale.

- Self efficacy was measured using the General Self-efficacy scale developed by Schwarzer, and Jerusalem [8] for adolescents and adults. It is a 10 item scale created to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy. It is a 5-point Likert scale with 1= Not at all true to 4= Exactly True. Sample items for the scale include “When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions” and "I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities."

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Regression analysis on Job Satisfaction from Job Autonomy and self efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self efficacy</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>-.086, .221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Autonomy</td>
<td>.266</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.149, .456</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self efficacy x Job autonomy</td>
<td>-.106</td>
<td>.048*</td>
<td>-.290, -.001</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 1, Job autonomy was significantly related to satisfaction and self efficacy significantly moderated the relationship between the two variables.

Table 2: Effect of Job Autonomy on Job satisfaction at different levels of self efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self efficacy</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>.448</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.236, .661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>-.053, .367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*p ≤ .05

Self efficacy was divided into high and low self efficacy using the median score (32.5) of the study participants on the General Self-efficacy scale. The moderating effect was analysed with low level of Self efficacy and high level of self efficacy. As shown in Table 2, Job Autonomy was significantly related to Job satisfaction for high self efficacy but not for lower level of self efficacy.

Denton and Kleiman [9] argued that job autonomy as a singular concept is one of the highest contributors to job satisfaction. However, the results of the current study only partially collaborate with their findings, as there self efficacious beliefs were not taken into account in their study.

VI. CONCLUSION

Employee retention is of primary importance because organizations, particularly IT-adjunct organizations, invest significant resources in training and developing their employees. Autonomy at the work place gives employees the opportunity to work to their best strengths and choose working methods that are most suited to them personally.

VII. REFERENCES