Supervisor and Employee Perceptions

EMPLOYEES’ PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SUPERVISORS’ THOUGHTS ON THEM

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has linked quality of the supervisor-employee relationship with job satisfaction. However, what employees perceive their supervisor thinks of them has not been examined. Quality of supervisor-employee relationships has also been associated with life satisfaction, but the role life satisfaction may play when considering all of these associations is unclear. Using a Qualtrics survey with Spector’s (1994) Job Satisfaction scale, Rubin’s (1970) Liking Scale, Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin’s (1985) Life Satisfaction scale, and Weimann’s (1977) Communication Competence scale, this study looked at potential relationships between employee perceptions of supervisor liking and job satisfaction and tested whether life satisfaction moderated the relationship between the two. This study tests the self-fulfilling prophecy theory (Merton, 1948) to examine whether employees’ perceptions of relational realities are associated with outcomes important to individuals and organizations, thereby opening a potential avenue for improving the supervisor/employee relationship.

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

• 186 participants with a majority being between the ages 18-25 and 46-54.
• 70% of participants were female.

MEASURES

• 81 question survey distributed via email and social media to individuals who have had a job or currently have a job.
• Survey included four scales that related to liking, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and communication competence.

Job Satisfaction Scale (Spector, 1994)

• Sample Item: I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work that I do.
• Scale was reliable, α = .90, M = 89.58, SD = 17.88

Liking Scale (Rubin, 1970)

One 18-question scale measuring Employee-Supervisor liking (Rubin, 1970) with responses ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

• Sample Item: I believe my supervisor thinks that most people would react positively to an encounter with me.
• Scale was reliable, α = .92, M = 81.73, SD = 12.96

Communication Competence Scale (Weimann, 1977)

One 36-question scale measuring perception of supervisor communication competence with responses ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

RESULTS/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Are employees’ beliefs about their supervisors’ perceptions of them associated with employee job satisfaction?

• Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employees’ beliefs of their supervisors’ perceptions of them, r = .47, p < .001.

RQ2: Does life satisfaction moderate the relationship between employee beliefs about their supervisors’ perception of them and job satisfaction?

• Using a regression analysis there was no evidence of moderation
• A regression model showed life satisfaction and liking predict 26% of the variance in job satisfaction.
• Liking significantly predicts job satisfaction scores, β = .36, t(184) = 5.11, p < .001. Life satisfaction significantly predicts job satisfaction scores, β = .24, t(184) = 3.45, p < .001.

DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS

• Previous research on how employees view their supervisors but not how employees think their supervisors view them.
• Employees’ beliefs about supervisors’ perceptions of them job satisfaction.
• Supervisors could use information from this study to build positive relationships with their employees and increase harmony in the workplace.

FURTHER RESEARCH

• Further research should be conducted on life satisfaction impacting job satisfaction, because the results from this study suggest life satisfaction had no moderation on perception and job satisfaction.
• Further research could be done to focus on the effects of gender, race, and culture to observe how perceptions differ to more or less satisfied with the communication competence.
• Supervisor communication competence and satisfaction is another area that needs further research and could be influential in this field of study.