Job Satisfaction of NGO Managers: An Australian Study

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Background – Global

- About 450 million people across the world suffer from mental health problems (World Health Organisation, 2013).
- About 25% of worlds' population will experience an episode mental health during their lifetime (United Nations, 2010)
- 3-4% of GNP is predicted to be expended on issues related to workplace mental health (World Health Organization, 2003).
- Global costs associated with mental health are anticipated to reach US$6 trillion during the next 15 years (Bloom et al, 2011).
- 1-in-10 employees suffer from depression, anxiety, stress or burnout in the EU, US, Canada and Australia throughout their working lives (Gabriel and Liimatainen, 2000).
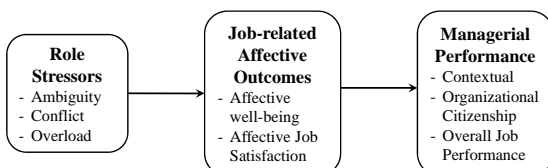
Background - Australia

- Mental health disorders are the third largest cost of disease in Australia (Begg et al., 2007).
- About 20% of Australians are estimated to suffer from depression (Beyondblue, 2008; Rosenberg and Hickie, 2013).
- Mental illness related compensation claims in Australia averaged 96.1 days of lost productivity, compared to only 28.9 days recorded for other health claims (Goldie, 2004).
- Work-related stress claims for compensation in Australia rose from 1.7% in 1985-86 to 5.1% in 1997-98 (Brammall, 1999).
- Estimated claims doubled during 1992-97, costing the economy annually in excess of $AUD200 million.

Background - Australia

- Expenditure on mental disorders was almost $6.9 billion (or $309 per person) for the 2010-11 period, an increase from $238 per person since 2006-7 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013).
- An estimated 1.9 million Australians (9% of population) received mental health services, including 15 million mental health related general practitioner visits in 2011-12 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013).
- In addition, the hidden costs of mental health in the workplace are likely to be far greater in terms of lost individual performance and organizational productivity.

Research Objectives

- Study the impact of role stressors on the job-related affective outcomes (well-being and satisfaction) on the performance of West Australian managers in three types of organisations (private, public and NGO sectors).

Role Stressors	**Job-related Affective Outcomes**	**Managerial Performance**
- Ambiguity - Conflict - Overload	- Affective well-being - Affective Job Satisfaction	- Contextual - Organizational Citizenship - Overall Job Performance

Role Stressors - Types

- Roles stressors consist of those constraints, demands and events that affect an employee's role fulfilment and performance (Beehr & Glazer, 2005)
- **Role ambiguity (RA):** Lack of clarity about the definition, expectations, responsibilities, tasks, and behaviours needed to perform one's role effectively (Singh & Rhoads, 1991)
- **Role conflict (RC):** Incompatibility among the different types and levels of expectations of employees' supervisors, customers and co-workers (Walker, Churchill & Ford, 1975)
- **Role overload (RO):** Perception that cumulative role demands exceed an employee's ability and motivation to perform a task (Singh, 1998)

Role Stressors - Impact

- Higher levels of job stress (Bolino & Turnley, 2005)

- Lower levels of job satisfaction (Jones et al., 2007)

- Lower organizational commitment (MacKenzie et al., 1998)

- Lower in-role behaviours Bettencourt & Brown, 2003)

- Poorer employee performance (Singh, 1988)

- Reduced extra-role behaviours and higher negative emotions (Eatough et al., 2011)

- Higher employee turnover and burnout (Singh, Goolsby & Rhoads, 1994)

Job-related Affective Outcomes

- **Job-related Affective Well-being**
  - How individuals feel about themselves in relation to their jobs (Warr, 2002)
  - Generally measured as an emotional trait (how one feels at work generally) or state (how one has felt at work recently or is feeling currently)

- **Affective Job satisfaction**
  - Overall feeling that individuals have about various aspects of their job e.g., pay; colleagues; supervisors; working conditions; job security; promotion prospects; training opportunities (Thompson & Phua, 2012)

Managerial Performance

- **Contextual Performance**
  - A set of voluntary interpersonal behaviours that support the social and motivational context in the workplace (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997)
  - Persist, Volunteer, Help, Follow, Endorse

- **Organisational Citizenship Behaviour**
  - Discretionary extra-role behaviours by which the employees go beyond the regular expectations from their jobs (Organ et al., 1983)

- **Overall Job Performance**
  - All those regular "in-role" activities that the employees are supposed to accomplish as part of their job

Sample Composition

- **Sector:** Public (47.9%), Private (29.0%) and NGO (23.1%)

- **Gender:** Male (52.4%), Female (47.6%)

- **Age:** Less than 30 years (5.9%), 31-40 (11.1%), 41-50 (17.7%), 51-60 (43.0%), More than 60 years (6.9%)

- **Education:** High school (9.4%), Undergrad (45.9%), Postgrad (23.5%), Doctorate (2.4%)

- **Roles:** Front-line (31.2%), Middle (25.3%), General (18.2%), Senior (25.3%)

- NGO sector has significantly higher ratio of females (71.7%) compared to private (38.8%) and public (40.8%)

Role Stressors

- Managers in NGO sector report much higher levels of role ambiguity, conflict and overload, compared to those in private and public sectors.

Role Stressors	Employment Sectors		
	Private	Public	NGO
Role Ambiguity	2.34	2.24	2.69***
Role Conflict	3.89	4.36	4.43**
Role Overload	3.60	3.86	4.03*

($ * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001 $)

- **Reasons?**
  - Less clear roles, goals and objectives?
  - Greater uncertainty and unstructured work environment?

Affective Well-being (Trait)

- Managers in NGO sector report lower levels of well-being compared to those in the private and public sectors

Employment Sectors	Affective Wellbeing (trait)			
	High Activation Unpleasant	High Activation Pleasant	Low Activation Unpleasant	Low Activation Pleasant
Private	2.75	4.27	2.06	3.88
Public	2.59	4.20	1.86	3.93
NGO	2.88*	4.06*	2.06	3.52*

($ * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001 $)

- **Reasons?**
  - Greater stress levels and unpleasant work environment due to the unique nature of work e.g. dealing with sick or poor people?

Affective Well-being (State)

- Managers in NGO sector report lower states of well-being compared to those in the private and public sectors

Employment Sectors	Affective Wellbeing (state) Dimension			
	Enthusiasm	Comfort	Anxiety	Depression
Private	4.44	3.63	3.01	2.17
Public	4.52	3.77	2.84	1.96
NGO	4.15*	3.35*	3.24*	2.16

(* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001)

- **Reasons?**
  - Poorer working conditions and negative emotional environment?

Affective Outcomes

- Managers in NGO sector report lower levels of affective outcomes than those in the private and public sectors

Employment Sectors	Job-related Affective Outcomes	
	Overall Affective Wellbeing	Affective Job Satisfaction
Private	3.31	5.41
Public	3.27	5.45
NGO	3.13*	5.21*

(* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001)

- **Reasons?**
  - Higher stress levels combined with unstructured working conditions and unclear roles and goals?

Managerial Performance

- Interestingly, no significant differences in the performance levels of the three sectors (Private, Public and NGO)

Employment Sector	Managerial Performance		
	Contextual	OCB	Overall
Private	5.58	5.61	3.94
Public	5.82	5.93	3.90
NGO	5.89	5.74	3.82

- **Reasons?**
  - Earn a living, fight for survival, pressure to perform?

Implications

- NGOs are growing in importance as a viable career option
- Many early or mid-career managers (especially women) are migrating from private and public sectors to NGOs, possibly due to more flexible working hours and work-life balance
- However, our findings show that NGOs are probably not the stress-free workplaces with low or no performance pressures
- High levels of role stressors and low levels of job-related affective well-being and job satisfaction in NGOs compared to the other two sectors alarmed us but not NGO managers!
- NGO management and public policy-makers need to understand and address the root causes for these trends

Thank You!