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## Uncovering the Pre-Dispositional Roots of Job Satisfaction

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*"He who lives in harmony with himself lives in harmony with the universe"*

*Marcus Aurelius*

### 1. Introduction

Understanding the determinants of Job satisfaction has long been the main focus of academic research in various business fields including; marketing, human resource management and organizational psychology. Business managers consider job satisfaction as one of the most important employee attitudes because of its positive work-related outcomes such as enhanced employee's job performance, organizational commitment and citizenship behaviour. In service-oriented firms, a satisfied employee may be the facilitator of customer-orientation implementation. A number of studies have found a positive relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. In this context, the positive emotions and attitudes towards an organization motivates the employee to kindly treat customers simply because they are the ultimate source of organization success.

The vast majority of satisfaction studies has focused on work characteristics which may induce positive attitudes towards the organization such as organizational culture, structure, leadership style and pay. This research stream assumes that employee attitudes are influenced by a number of environmental stimuli in which managers have to carefully embody within the organizational system. Although many of the assumptions of the job characteristic model has been empirically proven, I believe that the causes of job satisfaction are also rooted deeply within the psycho-cultural fabric of the individual. This belief is motivated by the findings of recent dispositional research which emphasize that job satisfaction is a stable individual attitude which continues, at the same level, for a long period of time even when the nature of the job slightly changes. Dispositional studies also suggest that job satisfaction correlates with specific personality traits such as extraversion. However, the dispositional research stream has not yet explained the cultural background upon which the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction occur. In other words, it ignores the role of cultural values in shaping personality traits which, in turn, affect employee attitudes and behaviours. This is possibly due to the shortage in organizational behaviour studies which focus on geographical areas other than North

America. Thus, the dispositional perspective of job satisfaction deserves more attention whilst focusing on the cultural dimension of the society under examination.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it provides a theoretical examination of the concept of job satisfaction, its antecedents and consequences. The study also theoretically examines the personality psychology literature in general, and the big five model of personality in particular while emphasizing the relationship between personality and job satisfaction. The study provides a theoretical analysis of the Egyptian culture as an example of a distinctive Middle Eastern culture based on Hofstede's analysis of cultural values (1980). Second, the study conducts an empirical analysis of the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction in the context of the Egyptian pharmaceutical salesforce. The study, hopefully, sheds a light over the cultural differences which explain the way personality traits may relate to satisfaction in a cultural context that differs in many respects from that of the United States. The cultural analysis of Egypt is conducted to add more depth in the reasoning of the hypothesized relationship between personality and job satisfaction.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Job satisfaction defined**

An individual's attitude represents his affective and cognitive evaluation of the entity in question. The affective component of an attitude describes the feelings (e.g., love and hate) a person forms towards a specific object. On the other hand, the cognitive aspect of an attitude represents the set of beliefs and values upon which the individual forms his evaluation to the object. For example, wine may not generate positive attitudes in conservative Islamic countries because of the religious teachings which prohibit drinking. In this context, the affective and cognitive aspects of attitudes have been found to significantly relate to many individual behaviours (Fisher, 1998). However, the attitude-behaviour relationship is a complex phenomenon to explain. An attitude does not necessarily lead to a specific behaviour unless the individual's intention to do this behaviour is relatively high. A satisfied employee may not choose to improve his productivity level if he does not intend to do so. In this context, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) emphasize that researchers can detect the attitude-behaviour relationship if they can adequately measure the individual's attitude in question and the set of expected behaviours that may result accordingly. Thus, when evaluating a specific attitude-behaviour relationship, a researcher should indicate the exact focal object in which the attitude is directed to and the correspondent set of expected behaviours. The argument emphasizes that attitudes are deep and multi-faceted concepts. For example, employee commitment is a personal attitude that may be directed towards the organization, co-workers or the supervisors. Besides, organizational commitment can be affective, transaction-based or normative (Meyer and Allen, 1991). This explains the difficulties associated with measuring attitudes and their associated behaviours.

Job satisfaction is an attitude which represents a positive emotional reaction to a particular job (Brief *et al*, 1995). The positive affectivity towards the job results from the cognitive assessment of the actual job outcomes in comparison to those expected (Oshagbemi, 1999 and Locke, 1976). The degree to which the worker perceives that the work environment

fulfils his needs and aspirations influences his emotions towards the organization (Tsigilis et al, 2003 and Dawis and Lofquist, 1984). The definitions of job satisfaction agree that the cognitive element of such an attitude precedes and influences the emotional element.

Job satisfaction can be evaluated from both a holistic/general perspective and a multi-faceted perspective (Cranny et al, 1992). General job satisfaction demonstrates the employee's emotional reaction to the overall work environment. On the other hand, the multi-faceted perspective emphasizes that an employee can be satisfied with certain aspects of the work environment. For example, an employee may feel satisfied with pay, co-workers, leadership style and promotion packages (Friday and Friday, 2003). The multi-faceted perspective implies that job satisfaction is a complicated attitude which may positively or negatively change according to modifications in some work-related characteristics (Baran, 1986). However, dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the job may not ruin the employee's overall job satisfaction when there are other aspects in the job that can still please him (Kalleberg, 1977). In this sense, the maintenance of balance between what satisfies and dissatisfies an individual at work can help him maintain an overall job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction can also be considered a highly personal job attitude (Scott and Judge, 2006). It reflects the emotional and cognitive evaluation of the activities which constitute a man's self-identity. People are defined by what they do. A high level of job satisfaction may imply that the individual strongly feels that the job does not only fulfill his needs, but also clearly defines him in the way he wishes the world to know him.

## **2.1.1 The outcomes of job satisfaction**

### **2.1.1.1 The behavioural outcomes**

It has been emphasized that attitudes can direct an individual to commit certain behaviours provided that he strongly intends to do these behaviours. The business and psychology literature have reported significant relationships between job satisfaction and many constructive work-related behaviours. Hereunder is a theoretical examination of the potential behavioural outcomes of job satisfaction;

#### **1. Job Performance**

The relationship between job satisfaction and performance has been extensively investigated in organizational psychology. However, there is a controversial debate over the variable which influences the other (Brown and Peterson, 1993 and Bagozzi, 1978). An extensive line of research proposes the classical attitude-behaviour consequence and provides an evidence that satisfaction is an antecedent to performance. The underlying logic is that a satisfied employee may be motivated to improve his work performance in order to continuously control the factors which keep him satisfied such as pay and rewards (Gu and Siu, 2009). This line of thought is deeply rooted within the premises of the human relations movement which attempts to increase employees' productivity by satisfying their needs (Vroom, 1964). In contrary, another line of research emphasizes that individual performance causes individual satisfaction (Petty et al, 1984). Their underlying logic is that the conscientious employee derives satisfaction from his internal motivation to work and the successful implementation of work objectives (Christen et al, 2006 and Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Judge et al (2001) have portrayed multiple models which explain the potential nature of the satisfaction-performance relationship. They have pointed to research that investigate the potential reciprocal relationship between both variables. In this context, high performance leads to job satisfaction which, in turn, motivates the employee to enhance his work performance. This research model has been criticized for the lack of theoretical explication of the dynamics upon which this reciprocal relationship occurs. Besides, Judge et al have presented a different model which assumes that the satisfaction-performance relationship is moderated by other variables. For example, pay has been regarded as a strong moderator which strengthens the impact of performance on satisfaction. Performance will not influence satisfaction unless performance is linked to pay and rewards. In a different context, self-esteem has also been found as a strong moderator. Job performance can influence satisfaction when the performer enjoys a high level of self-esteem. In the absence of self-esteem, hard work may not be a source of job satisfaction.

Regardless of the causal direction between satisfaction and performance, a considerable body of research has found a significant positive association. Moreover, the strength of association between both variables is substantiated when the measurement of performance includes behaviours that are not usually reflected in performance appraisals such as citizenship behaviours (Organ, 1988). This argument opens the door for the inclusion of other productive work behaviours which may enrich the employee's contribution to improved organizational effectiveness.

## 2. Employee Citizenship Behaviour

According to Organ (1988, P.4), organizational citizenship behaviour OCB is an "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization". The employee devotes extra unpaid time and effort in order to successfully implement organizational objectives. This productive behaviour is expected to improve organizational effectiveness, although empirical research is still needed to uncover the nature of the relationship between OCB and organizational effectiveness.

A number of research studies has found a positive association between job satisfaction and employee citizenship behaviour (Wagner and Rush, 2000; Kemery et al, 1996 and Moorman, 1993). In this context, Murphy et al (2002) have found that job satisfaction strongly correlates with the three behavioural components of OCB, namely; time devoted to the fete, number of committees joined and attendance at staff socials. Thus, a satisfied employee will be glad to commit extra effort to maximize the efficiency of organizational operations. Their findings agree in substance with that of Organ (1988) which emphasize that human resource managers should look beyond traditional job descriptions and performance appraisal contents in order to uncover the actual effects of satisfaction on employees' constructive activities inside the organization.

## 3. Employee Turnover

A wide research body has empirically found that job satisfaction is negatively associated with employee's intention to leave the organization (Lambert et al, 2001; Kohler and Mathieu, 1993 and Williams and Hazer, 1986). Singh and Loncar (2010) have found that satisfaction with pay level, structure and raises is negatively related to employee turnover. Further, the study



indicates that the overall employee satisfaction with work environment is a stronger influencer on employee's intention to leave than pay satisfaction. Their findings recommend that managers should put into consideration pay and other work-related stimuli in order to better keep their employees inside the organization. However, in their analysis of salesforce withdrawal behaviours, Futrell and Parasuraman (1984) emphasize the role of employee performance in moderating the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover. In the context of low performing salesmen, job satisfaction appears to have a strong effect on the employee's decision to leave the organization. On the other hand, satisfaction appears to have a less impact on high performers' decision to leave. Their findings imply that low performers may not quit the organization if they are satisfied with the work environment. In this sense, job satisfaction motivates low performers to keep working in the organization which, in turn, may have adverse impact on organizational effectiveness. The findings emphasize the importance of classifying employees according to performance levels when investigating the effects of employees' attitudes on work behaviours.

Job satisfaction has also adverse effects on different withdrawal behaviours including; lateness, absenteeism, grievances and decision to retire (Zeffane et al, 2008 and Saari and Judge, 2004). Less satisfied employees are more prone to lateness and absenteeism than those satisfied.

#### **2.1.1.2 The attitudinal outcomes**

An extensive line of research has empirically proven the significant impact of job satisfaction on different constructive work-related behaviours. Interestingly, job satisfaction can also initiate new positive employees' attitudes towards their organizations. The argument agrees in substance with studies which focus on the analysis of satisfaction-commitment relationship.

Organizational commitment is defined as 'the relative strength of an individual's identification with or involvement in a particular organization' (Porter et al, 1974; P. 604). Accordingly, the committed employee strongly believes in the organization's values and shows a high level of loyalty to its objectives. He is willing to exert an extended effort in order to serve and implement organizational strategies. It should be noted that Porter et al's definition focuses on the affective dimension of organizational commitment. Further commitment studies have emphasized the multi-dimensionality of the organizational commitment construct (Jaros *et al*, 1993; Mayer and Schoorman, 1992; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986). In this context, the most popular conceptualization of organizational commitment is that of Meyer and Allen (1984). They view organizational commitment as a complicated psychological state which develops through three main dimensions. The affective dimension emphasizes the extent to which the organization represents a great personal meaning to the individual. This dimension corresponds in meaning to porter et al's conceptualization of organizational commitment. Second, the continuance commitment dimension shows the extent to which an employee prefers to stay at work because of the scarcity of available job choices. Commitment is the result of the economical calculation of job-related profits and losses. In this sense, Continuance commitment is an artificial organizational commitment that does not involve positive affective attitudes toward the organization. This, in turn, can negatively influence employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Hawass, 2011). Third, normative commitment is the degree to which an individual prefers to stay as a return of favour to the organization which has

contributed to his overall well-being (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). From the employee's perspective, staying in the organization is the right thing to do (Marsh and Mannari, 1977).

The causal direction of the satisfaction-commitment relationship is a controversial topic in organizational behaviour research. An extensive line of research demonstrates that job satisfaction boosts an employee's commitment to the organization (Jernigan et al, 2002; Feinstein and Vondrasek, 2001 and Gaertner, 1999). In their analysis of a group of American sales people, Boles et al (2007) note that different aspects of job satisfaction have varying relationships with affective commitment. Interestingly, satisfaction with work better predicts affective commitment than satisfaction with pay and promotion. Their findings reveal that relationships differ according to gender responses. Moreover, Yilmaz (2002) conducted a mail survey on sales men in 1181 new-car automobile dealerships and found that both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction positively affect job satisfaction, although the intrinsic dimension plays a stronger role in this context. The findings also reveal that the relationship between satisfaction and commitment is moderated by career stage.

On the other hand, a number of studies has revealed an inversed causal direction of relationship between organizational commitment and satisfaction (Bateman and Strasser, 1984). Their underlying logic is that organizational commitment contains positive emotionality towards the organization which may reinforce an individual's sense of satisfaction with various work-related aspects.

### **2.1.2 The antecedents of job satisfaction**

The valuable behavioural and attitudinal outcomes of job satisfaction have motivated scholars in diverse academic disciplines to uncover the determinants of job satisfaction. The extant research has, generally, attributed job satisfaction to two main groups of factors, namely; personal/demographic characteristics and work-related characteristics.

#### **2.1.2.1 The personal characteristics**

The relationship between age and job satisfaction has received a wide academic interest. Research in industrial psychology has consistently found that older workers tend to be more satisfied with their jobs than younger ones (Bilgic, 1998; Rhodes et al, 1983; Wright and Hamilton, 1978 and Siassi et al, 1975). Mottaz (1987) attributes the positive relationship between age and satisfaction to the fact that older employees develop more work experience which enables them to get more satisfying jobs. Besides, older workers who spent more time in their organizations are better able to internalize organizational values than younger employees. The internalization or accommodation of work values enables the individual to accept work conditions and be more satisfied. However, Luthans and Thomas (1989) emphasize a curvilinear relationship between age and satisfaction. At a specific point of time, older workers may be overwhelmed with increasing job duties and responsibilities which cause stress and fatigue. In this context, Oshagbemi (2003) calls for more attention to the type of job while analyzing the age-satisfaction relationship. Indeed, one may wonder about the nature of the relationship between age and satisfaction in creativity-based jobs versus physical jobs. Creativity-based jobs usually require ground-breaking cognitive abilities and an extended work experience from which intuitive thinking is derived. On the other hand, logic may tell that jobs which require an appropriate level of physical fitness may not be satisfying for elders. Further research is needed to solve this dilemma.

The analysis of the effects of gender differences on job satisfaction has also received an equal attention (Mason, 1995). However, the nature of the relationship is complicated and confusing. There is no general consensus over which sex is usually more satisfied than the other at work. Some studies have even found no significant association between the two variables (Smith and Plant, 1982 and Bledsoe and Haywood, 1981). Testa and Mueller (2009) argue that the differences between males and females about job satisfaction is due to differences in socialization orientation. Women usually value concern for others and selflessness which, in turn, motivate them to happily accept jobs that promote supportive and constructive interaction with colleagues. On the other hand, the socialization orientation of men is generally directed towards the value of self-expansion and assertion. Accordingly, work-related characteristics such as pay and leadership style may be valued differently by men and women which causes differences in their levels of job satisfaction.

Length of service has also been found to positively relate to job satisfaction (Okpara, 2004). The extended length of service provides an emotional support from which employees feel protected against job loss (Abraham and Medoff, 1984). The employee's feeling of job protection contributes to job satisfaction. In this context, Oshagbemi (2000) compared between British academics who usually move from one university to another and those who prefer to stay for longer periods at their current universities. The findings reveal that academics who stay at their universities for longer periods are more satisfied than those who frequently change universities. An extended length of service in a particular location may also allow employees to adapt to the current organization's values and accept its norms and traditions. On the other hand, the continuous change of locations may not enable the employee to get accustomed to the organization's traditions and social networks which might cause less satisfaction.

A number of research studies has also found different other personal determinants of job satisfaction such as rank (Holden and Black, 1996), educational level (Rogers, 1991) and the quality of the employee's marital status (Bures et al, 1996). These demographic studies have provided an empirical evidence that job satisfaction may be attributed to differences in the personal characteristics of the employees. However, further studies have empirically revealed that work-related characteristics are more influential determinants of job satisfaction than the personal characteristics (Carlan, 2007). Their findings imply that the nature of the job context itself deserves more investigation than the personal characteristics of the employee while predicting job satisfaction (Abdulla et al, 2011).

#### **2.1.2.2 The work-related characteristics**

The job characteristics model (Hackman and Oldham, 1976) is one of the earliest attempts to investigate the environmental determinants of job performance and satisfaction. It is built on the assumption that improved work conditions and enriched job contents can influence the employee's positive responses to the job and the organization as a whole. The model defines five job characteristics. First, skill variety represents the extent to which a job requires a collection of different skills and talents to effectively implement its objectives. Second, task identity is the degree to which a job consists of an identifiable piece of work with determined outcomes. Next, task significance reflects the extent to which the job has a profound impact on the lives of others inside or outside the organization. Fourth, autonomy is the degree of freedom that a job grants for an employee in terms of scheduling the work and determining the procedures required to implement the work objectives. Finally, job



feedback is the degree to which a job allows the employee to get an immediate response concerning his work performance and the relevant accomplishments.

The job characteristics model considers three psychological states as moderators between job characteristics and the expected outcome variables. In the absence of any of the three psychological states, the relationship between job characteristics and satisfaction and effectiveness is weakened. The first psychological state is to feel that the work is meaningful and worthwhile. Secondly, the employee should also accept the fact that he is responsible for the activities and outcomes of his work (i.e., personal responsibility). Finally, the employee should develop an appropriate knowledge concerning the results of his own job.

According to Hackman and Oldham (1976), skill variety, task identity and task significance affect the individual's feeling of meaningfulness of work. Whereas autonomy affects the individual's experience responsibility. Finally, job feedback is found to influence the employee's knowledge of the results of his job-related activities. These relationships are presented in the following motivating potential score formula:

$$\text{MPS} = (\text{skill variety} + \text{task identity} + \text{task significance} / 3) \times \text{autonomy} \times \text{feedback}$$

The job characteristics model has been empirically tested and proven in multiple job contexts (Faturochman, 1997; Fried and Ferris, 1987 and Loher et al, 1985). Further research has also identified several environmental characteristics which influence employee's attitudinal responses to the organization. Hereunder, is a categorization of other work-related characteristics;

#### 1. Organizational Culture

According to Kilmann et al (1985; P. 5), organizational culture is the 'shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and norms that knit an organization together'. The degree to which the employee's values correspond to the premises of the organization's culture predicts his attitudes towards the organization (O'reilly, 1989). For example, a creative employee who works in an organization which encourages a culture of innovativeness is more likely to be satisfied with his job than that who works in a bureaucratic organizational setting. A number of studies has found a positive association between organizational culture and job satisfaction. In an analysis of three Taiwanese companies, Silverthorne (2004) investigated the relationship between three cultural orientations, namely; bureaucratic, innovative and supportive cultures, and job satisfaction. He found that bureaucratic organizations have a great problem with maintaining job satisfaction than the other cultural orientations. In a similar context, Lund (2003) adopted Cameron and Freeman's (1991) typology of organization cultures to investigate the type of culture which affects job satisfaction. According to Cameron and freeman, organizational cultures are usually located within one of four main categories. First, the clan culture is one which encourages participation, team work and interpersonal cohesion. Second, the adhocracy culture stresses on the values of creativity, flexibility and adaptability. Third, the hierarchical culture emphasizes the importance of order, rules, regulations and uniformity. Finally, the market culture is a goal-oriented culture which opts for the creation of competitive advantage and market superiority. It should be noted that both clan and hierarchical cultures are more oriented towards smoothing activities and functional integration (i.e., internal maintenance) whereas adhocracy and market cultures

are externally positioned for competition and market differentiation. The findings reveal that clan and adhocracy cultures are more strongly linked to job satisfaction than those of market and hierarchy. The clan culture is strongly associated with job satisfaction because it stresses on the importance of employee interdependence and spreading an environment of mutual help and assistance. On the other hand, the market culture is found to be less associated with job satisfaction because it encourages a sense of individuality and independence. Interestingly, the study was held in the U.S.A whose culture embraces individualism (Hofstede, 1980). Gounaris (2008) surveyed a sample of employees in large Greek hotels to uncover the relationship between internal market orientation and job satisfaction. In this sense, internal market orientation is a cultural value which emphasizes the importance of satisfying employee needs first in order to effectively satisfy the end customers. This cultural orientation is found to positively relate to job satisfaction and, also, moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and empowerment and participative management.

Business ethics studies have also found an association between the organization's emphasis of an ethical culture and job satisfaction. Koh and Boo (2001) found that job satisfaction is positively related to top management support for ethical behavior and the organization's ethical climate. Further, Vitell and Singhapakdi (2007) found that the strong institutionalization of an ethical climate should strongly lead to employees who are committed to their organization, satisfied and co-operative.

## 2. Leadership Style

A leader is a manager who is efficient at managing people and directing them through social interactions to successfully implement organizational goals (Skansi, 2000). The organizational leader can adopt several types of leadership styles. Leadership styles may include the participative, strategic, charismatic, transformational, transactional or ethical styles. However, it should be noted that the right leadership style depends on the organizational setting in which the manager works within. Lok and Crawford (2004) also emphasize the role of national cultural differences in determining the right leadership approach. They compared between management leaders in Australia and Hong Kong and found differences in their styles which are considered successful in their respective cultures.

Numerous studies have found a positive relationship between the leadership style and employee satisfaction. Their findings are logically justified because the successful implementation of organizational objectives largely depends on the leader-member relationship. A good leader is one who can efficiently get the maximum work output from his workers by exercising motivation, encouragement, providing honest job feed back and careful goal-setting. In this sense, the constructive relationship between leaders and their employees motivates employees to be better performers and contributors to their organizations and thus, affect their attitudes towards the organization. Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006) empirically investigated this relationship in the context of Iranian university hospitals and emphasized that employee dissatisfaction may be caused by leadership's lack of respect and recognition of employee performance. Moreover, Iverson and Roy (1994) noted that the transformational leader's orientation toward employee empowerment and careful vision crafting often lead to an increased level of employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

2.2 National cultural differences and personality effects: Missing key words

Figure 1 summarizes the key antecedents and outcomes of job satisfaction which have been empirically examined in relevant research. The main research stream attributes the causes of job satisfaction to both personal and work-related characteristics. However, these research studies have not considered the cultural context within which employees form their work-related attitudes. They assume that culture is a constant variable which mistakenly implies that the antecedents of job satisfaction in one geographical area are the same in another. In this sense, I do not argue that there are no similarities between nations in terms of the causes of job satisfaction, but, I believe that these causes may differ in terms of relative importance for employees across the globe.

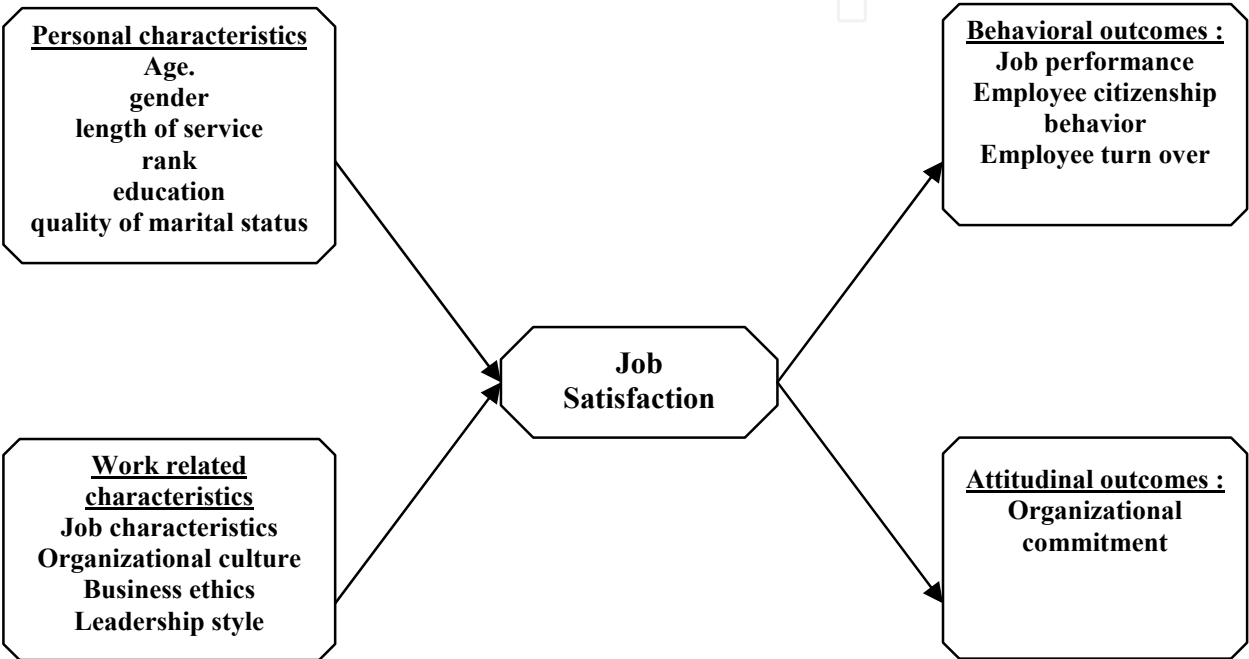


Fig. 1. A graphical summary of the determinants and consequence of job satisfaction

Few studies have provided an evidence that national cultural values play an important role in shaping individuals’ attitudes toward work. Money and Graham (1999), compared between the determinants of job satisfaction in the context of American and Japanese sales men. They found that satisfaction, in the American context, is mainly driven by the level of pay. On the other hand, satisfaction, in the Japanese context, is strongly influenced by the individual’s relationship with his colleagues and happiness at work. This clearly agrees with the collectivistic nature of the Japanese culture that supports value congruence among group members and social participation. In a similar context, Noordin and Jusoff (2010) compared between middle level managers in Malaysia and Australia. Their study reveals the existence of differences between the two groups on the level of individualism and collectivism and that Australian managers appear to be more satisfied than their Malaysian counterparts. Eskilden et al (2010) provided a comprehensice analysis of the cultural correlates of job satisfaction across 22 nations based on Hofstede’s theory of cultural dimensions. Their findings emphasize the impact of cultural differences on the levels of job satisfaction across the tested nations. The dimensions of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance were found to be the strongest predictors of job satisfaction. Westover and Taylor

(2010) explored the relationship between job satisfaction and its key intrinsic and extrinsic determinants in West Germany, Great Britain, the USA, Hungary, Norway and Israel. They used non-panel longitudinal data which cover a wide span of time (1989-2005). Their findings indicate clear differences in the determinants of job satisfaction across the examined nations. However, they found that intrinsic rewards and work relations with management explain the most variance in the respondents' job satisfaction, whereas work relations with co-workers has a weaker impact on job satisfaction.

The previously discussed research findings call for more attention to the analysis of the cultural background of the tested samples because Job satisfaction is a universal attitude with culture specific determinants that vary across nations.

The main research stream in satisfaction has also been criticized for not considering the dispositional aspects of personality traits which could affect employee attitudes, Although a growing body of research in personality psychology has found an evidence that satisfaction can be partially explained by several personality traits. Judge and Larsen (2001) provided a detailed theoretical review on the dispositional aspects of job satisfaction. They found that job satisfaction is influenced by the individual's positive and negative affectivity levels. In this context, positive affectivity represents the extent to which the individual consistently enjoys high energy, and enthusiasm whereas negative affectivity represents the individual who is deliberately distressed and nervous. Logically speaking, An individual with high positive affectivity is highly likely to perceive job conditions in a more positive manner and enjoy higher levels of job satisfaction than those who suffer from generally dark affection. Besides, they found that job satisfaction can also be affected by the individual's core self-evaluations. Core self-evaluations are the premises that individuals hold about themselves (Judge and Bono, 2001). The construct consists of four main dimensions. First, self-esteem refers to the individual's self-acceptance and self-respect. Second, generalized self-efficacy represents the extent to which an individual thinks he can perform specific courses of action in different situations. Third, neuroticism refers to the degree to which a person generally feels depressed, nervous and anxious. Neurotics are usually more prone to negative affects than others. Finally, locus of control represents the perceived degree of control in life. Internally controlled individuals are those who believe that success in life is the result of one's perseverance at work. On the other hand, externally controlled individuals are those who believe that success or failure in life is attributed to external powers and luck.

A number of research studies has also found an association between emotional intelligence and positive work attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chiva and Alegre, 2008). Emotional intelligence is defined as 'the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thoughts, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth' (Mayer and Salovey, 1997; P. 5). It is considered a personality trait (Schutte and Malouff, 1999) which consists of three mental abilities. First, the ability to appraise and express emotions in the self and others. Second, the ability to manage one's emotions and the emotional reactions of others. Third, the ability to use emotions in adaptive ways such as in flexible planning, creative thinking and motivating others. In this sense, Carmeli (2003) found that emotionally intelligent managers are more emotionally committed to their organizations and satisfied with their job because of the three mental processes that keep them tolerant with themselves and others.



A growing research trend has also focused on the big-five model of personality traits to predict employee attitudes toward organizations. The big five model is the product of successive research work that originated in the early years of the last century (Hawass, 2011). Allport and Odbert (1936) have used an unabridged English dictionary to make a list of personality-relevant attributes. They have listed 18000 terms which could define the personality attributes of individuals. Following the work of Allport and Odbert, several researchers have attempted to develop an organized categorization of these terms to obtain a comprehensive taxonomy of personality traits (Tupes and Christal, 1961 and Fiske, 1949). Their great efforts have yielded a five-factor structure of personality traits; a) extraversion, b) agreeableness, c) conscientiousness, d) neuroticism and e) openness to experience which is considered representative for the personality traits of human beings across the universe. Each factor or dimension of personality includes a large number of distinct personality characteristics.

Extraversion represents the talkative, assertive, energetic and enthusiastic individual. Extroverts usually enjoy positive emotions and can effectively develop strong interpersonal ties with others (Bakker *et al*, 2006). Accordingly, they are closely attached to social events in which they can spend more time with friends (Judge and Illies, 2002). It would be logical to assume that extroverts are more satisfied with their jobs than non-extroverts because of the power of positive emotions which affect their reaction to different work stimuli (Connolly and Viswesvaran, 2000).

On the other hand, a neurotic is an individual who is severely affected by negative life events. They are usually depressed, anxious and overwhelmed with thoughts concerning different life situations. In the middle of a problem, a neurotic applies a disengagement coping tactic (Conner-Smith and Flachsbarth, 2007). Disengagement coping refers to the individual's attempt to avoid a problem through withdrawal and escaping from the causes of the problem. Unfortunately, this tactic inflates problems to the degree to which they can not be solved. In this respect, Hawass (2011) found that neuroticism is negatively associated with Egyptian salesmen's commitment to their organizations even if alternative job choice are scarcely available. Further, Connolly and Viswesvaran (2000) emphasized that neuroticism is the prime input of negative affectivity which, in turn, badly influences job satisfaction.

The agreeable are helpful, forgiving and trusting people. They demonstrate acceptable work behaviours and value friendships even more than work and career success (Judge *et al*, 1999). It has been noted that agreeables enjoy greater life satisfaction and happiness than non-agreeables (McCrae and Costa, 1991) because 'they have greater motivation to achieve interpersonal intimacy, which should lead to greater levels of well-being' (Judge *et al*, 2001; P. 531). Job satisfaction can be considered a component of an individual's overall life satisfaction. In this sense, agreeable employees may be satisfied because of their enhanced sense of well being resulted from the social network of colleagues developed through work.

Conscientiousness is considered the strongest predictor of performance across jobs because it refers to the degree to which the individual perseveres until the work is successfully accomplished (John and Srivastava, 1999 and Barrick and Mount, 1991). The conscientious employee is a reliable individual who works hard to get results. In this context, Behling (1998; P. 81) gives a realistic example of a conscientious subordinate who is strongly committed to the organization's work environment:



*"He arrived at our first meeting with a typed copy of his daily schedule, a sheet bearing his home and office phone numbers and addresses. At his request, we established a time table for meeting for the next four months. He showed up on time every time and carefully listed tasks and due dates. He questioned me exhaustively if he didn't understand an assignment and returned on schedule with the completed work or with a clear explanation as to why it wasn't done."*

Based on the conscientiousness-performance relationship, the conscientious employee could also be more satisfied than the non-conscientious because high performance leads to increased intrinsic and extrinsic rewards which, in turn, contributes to employee happiness at work (Organ and Lingl, 1995).

Finally, openness to experience refers to the extent to which an individual is imaginative, creative and original. Creative scientists tend to be more loyal to their professions than their organizations because job-related accomplishments are considered a matter of well-being and pride (Mumford et al, 2000). The relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction is confusing partly because work experiences may not always be positive which may negatively influence the creative individual's well-being and sense of pride (Judge et al, 2002).

In general, it appears that a number of studies has found an association between the big five model of personality and job satisfaction. However, the dispositional research in job satisfaction can be criticized in one respect. Almost all personality-satisfaction studies cover North-American samples. These studies did not explain whether findings may differ in variant cultures. Besides, these studies did not even attempt to explain the cultural values of the society which may affect the personality-satisfaction relationship.

According to McCrae (2000), the relationship between personality traits and culture can be investigated at three levels of analysis. First, the transcultural level is concerned with the universality of traits across cultures. It aims to investigate whether universal age and gender differences do exist. In this regard, research in the big five model of personality traits has enabled scholars to observe differences in traits across national cultures (Costa et al, 2001). Second, the intracultural level explores culture-specific expressions and investigates the operational meanings of specific traits in different cultures. as McCrae (2001) put it, the meaning of openness to experience, for example, in Castilian Spanish reflects the traits of 'extravagant, eccentric and Bohemian) while in other cultures it may emphasize the intellectual interests of the individual. In fact, it would be important to construct culture-specific big-five models that cover different cultures such as the Middle-East, although studies have found consistencies between the Middle East and other nations (Hawass, 2011). These culture-specific models would allow researchers to attain more accurate results concerning the impact of personality on individuals' attitudes in different cultures. Finally, the intercultural level aims to explore the cultural differences in traits by attempting cross-cultural studies. Costa and McCrae (2004) found that cultures may have unique collections of personality traits which might differ from those of other cultures.

The current study aims to investigate the personality-satisfaction relationship based on the context of the Egyptian culture. The next section provides a detailed theoretical analysis about the Egyptian culture based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. This should allow for understanding how and why specific personality traits may relate to satisfaction in a culture that differs, in many respects, from that of North America. It is not a cross-cultural

study, but it theoretically highlights the cultural differences between Egypt and America, as an example of a sax-Anglo culture, which may lead to differences between personality study findings in both countries.

### 2.3 The Egyptian culture: Insights from Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Values

In an analysis of the cultural values that shape the behaviour of employees in 67 countries, Hofstede (1980; 1984) succeeded in exploring the cultural differences among societies. According to Hofstede, nations differ in four major cultural dimensions<sup>1</sup>:

#### 1. Individualism Vs Collectivism

The 'individualism Vs collectivism' dimension measures the extent to which society members are highly dependent on each other (i.e., interdependent). In individualistic cultures, individuals are strongly tied to their direct families and are concerned with their individualistic goals. On the other hand, in collectivist cultures, participation between the individual and other social entities (e.g., the broader family and friends) is considered a life living key word.

#### 2. Large Vs. Small Power Distance

The 'large vs. small power' dimension describes whether a society may accept the unequal distribution of power in their organizations. In large power distance societies, the unequal distribution of power is widely accepted through their job hierarchies. In contrast, in small power distance societies, the unequal distribution of power is highly disregarded especially when it is not legally or reasonably justified.

#### 3. Strong Vs. Weak Uncertainty Avoidance

The 'uncertainty avoidance' dimension describes the extent to which a specific society is capable for adapting to uncertain or ambiguous situations. In strong uncertainty avoidance societies, individuals prefer to work and live within formalized work systems which provide standardized codes of conduct because they do not tolerate deviance. On the other hand, weak uncertainty avoidance societies include people who prefer more flexible work environments and social systems because they depend more on practice than principles.

#### 4. Masculinity Vs. femininity

The 'masculinity vs. femininity' dimension is concerned with the degree to which a society distributes social roles according to gender differences. In this context, masculine societies prefer material success and are considered achievement-oriented whereas feminine societies are more sensitive to the quality of life and are considered relationship-oriented.

Based on Hofstede's theory of cultural values, the Egyptian society inherits a collectivist culture. The supervisor-subordinate relationship is of a parental nature. The Egyptian employee generally obeys his manager's orders out of respect for authority and loyalty to the

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<sup>1</sup> This study does not provide a cross-cultural analysis of personality effects on job satisfaction. Rather, it aims to investigate the relationship between personality and satisfaction in the context of the Egyptian culture. Thus, the study points to the cultural specialties of the Egyptian society and tries to discuss how their values might theoretically affect the hypothesized relationship.

organization (Leat and Al-Kot, 2007). Besides, friendship is considered a key word in the Egyptian organizational behaviour. Parnell and Hatem (1999) emphasize that friendship at business is usually prioritized over the task requirements of the job, simply, because the Egyptian culture stresses on the importance of providing distinctive favours to true friends. Hawass (2011) proposes that these culture-bound behaviours are associated with the concept of agreeableness in personality psychology. The agreeable individual is a trusting, forgiving and easy going person who values friendship more than work and career success (Judge et al, 1999). Although the relationship between agreeableness and collectivism has not been maintained in Hofstede's analysis of cultural values and personality traits (1991), the literature description of The Egyptian employee should motivate further research in this concern.

The Egyptians also score high in terms of the power distance dimension of cultural values. In this sense, the Egyptian employee prefers to tolerate his behaviour according to management orders, partly, because of the Islamic teachings which motivate Muslims to strongly support leaders' decisions (Kabastakal and Bodur, 2002). Hofstede and McCrae (2004) have revealed a positive association between high power distance and conscientiousness. According to McCrae (2001), high power distance societies place heavy emphasis on complying with orders and respecting authority which strongly motivate or direct individuals toward perseverance at work.

Concerning the uncertainty avoidance dimension of cultural values, the Egyptians rank higher than Americans and many Western European societies (Hofstede, 1984). They prefer to work within highly formalized and standardized systems. In this respect, heavy formalized systems provide an immunity against the uncertain future. Hawass (2011) proposes that this cultural dimension is perfectly compatible with Egypt's high power distance values which favour parentalism at work and strict abidance by rules. Further, it should be noted that parts of the Islamic teachings ask the true believers to abide by Quran without reasoning because philosophical questioning might lead to confusion and distortion of the purity of their souls. Thus, working within a highly defined business system is highly favoured in the Egyptian society. Hofstede and McCrae (2004) have noted that neuroticism is positively associated with uncertainty avoidance. Hawass (2011) reveals that "If the Egyptian society scores high in the neuroticism continuum, this may be due to frustrations concerning the bad economic conditions and corrupt political systems which have recently motivated Egyptians to revolt and seek comprehensive change". The Egyptian revolution in January 2011 was a last resort from the side of the Egyptian people to end a political system which had put the country in a state of severe economic uncertainty. Thus, neuroticism arises in uncertainty avoidance societies because of the growing fear from future uncertain events and the escalating need for an organized working system which erases those fears.

Finally, the Egyptian society is characterized by a moderate masculine culture. Masculine societies are more achievement-oriented and prefer richer job contents by which individuals maintain their career status. Although the cultural dimension of masculinity may conceptually relate to the conscientiousness aspect of personality, Hofstede and McCrae did not find a significant association between them.

### 3. Hypothesis development

This study aims to uncover the personality traits associated with job satisfaction in the Egyptian context. Egypt inherits a culture that differs, in many respects, from that of

America, for example. The study hypothesizes that specific personality traits may influence job satisfaction because of the cultural values that differentiate its people from those of other nations. The study does not offer a cross-cultural analysis of personality effects on satisfaction. Rather, it attempts to theoretically explain how a national culture may influence the personality-satisfaction relationship in organizations.

### 3.1 Personality traits and job satisfaction: Expected relationships

According to the big five model of personality traits, agreeableness represents the helpful, forgiving and trusting personality. The agreeable employee prefers active socialization with his own colleagues and often regard friendship a priority of higher importance than that of work achievements. It has also been noted that agreeableness may be positively associated with job satisfaction because melting with social groups and the creation of a friendly work environment provides the agreeable worker a greater sense of well-being and personal achievement (Judge et al, 2001). Thus, the positive attitudes that the agreeable person forms regarding his organization basically stems from his success in building a network of trusted friends at work.

From an Egyptian cultural context, the strict obedience to management orders and compliance with rules and written procedures are considered signs of a good employee who commit respectable work behaviour. Besides, individuals who accept to work within the parental supervisor-employee relationship orientation are considered the good people. In many circumstance, the direct objection of managerial decisions is considered a violation of this cultural value and, in turn, may cause a negative response not only in the side of the managers, but also in the side of one's colleagues. These negative responses may badly affect the employee's self-evaluation unless he accepts the parental orders of the manager. Thus, agreeableness is considered a favourable personal trait in Egyptian organizations because it directs one's behaviour to respect orders, trust leaders and sincerely help them to maintain their objectives which would create a satisfying work environment for the employee.

*H1: Agreeableness is positively associated with job satisfaction.*

The big five model of personality traits emphasizes that the conscientious employee is a hard worker who perseveres until job-related objectives are successfully implemented. The conscientious employee is regarded as a reliable person whose performance records are usually admired by his supervisors. The management appreciation of the conscientious employee's performance is usually interpreted in terms of intrinsic (i.e., emotional appreciation) and extrinsic (i.e., pay and promotion) rewards. Consequently, it is believed that these rewards play an essential role in affecting the conscientious employee's positive attitudes regarding the job (Organ and Lingl, 1995).

From a cultural perspective, high power distance societies, such as Egypt, usually involve employees with higher levels of conscientiousness than those of low power distance societies (Hofstede, 1984). The application of strict organizational rules and formalized systems motivate employees to work hard and enthusiastically implement organizational objectives (Hofstede and McCrae, 2004). Consequently, those employees do naturally deserve rewards for their sincere efforts which, when collected, can lead to enhanced job satisfaction.



*H2: Conscientiousness is positively associated with job satisfaction.*

Neuroticism represents the anxious individual who is generally depressed and worries a lot about negative life situations. In this sense, neuroticism is considered an input for negative affectivity which is inversely related to job satisfaction. Accordingly, it is logical to assume that a neurotic is more affected by negative work situations which would deeply keep him unsatisfied with his job.

From a cultural perspective, neuroticism rates increase in societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance. In the Egyptian organization, neuroticism may be the result of unclear organizational systems that do not properly define jobs or determine career prospects. The organizational injustice and corrupt political relationships inside organizations may also infuse higher levels of negative affectivity in the mind of neurotic employees and consequently cause job dissatisfaction.

*H3: Neuroticism is negatively associated with job satisfaction.*

Finally, extraversion is expected to be positively associated with job satisfaction. The extravert employee enjoys positive affectivity and views the world from a colorful angle. He is an enthusiastic person who enjoys creating friendships. Erdhiem et al (2006) found that extroverts tend to be affectively committed to their organizations because of their general positive emotions which direct them to commit positive attitudes toward their organizations. In this sense, it would be logical to hypothesize that extrovert employees are more likely to experience job satisfaction than non-extroverts.

*H4: Extraversion is positively associated with job satisfaction.*

## **4. Data analysis**

### **4.1 Measurements**

The study applies a questionnaire methodology to investigate the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction. The data are obtained from a questionnaire which was used in an earlier study to understand the relationship between personality traits, commitment and job satisfaction (Hawass, 2011).

The study applies the big five inventory measurement scale in order to define the respondents' dimensions of personality traits (John et al, 1991). The big five inventory scale consists of 44 items or short phrases which describe the trait adjectives that constitute the personality of the respondent. It uses short phrases to eliminate the ambiguity associated with understanding complicated single terms. These items have been accurately translated into Arabic in co-operation with experienced academics in the fields of English linguistics and Psychology. For the purpose of the study, the items have been subjected to minor adaptations to the Egyptian culture. These adaptations were considered important in order to better assist and motivate markers to accurately respond. For example, the term 'talkative' in the Egyptian culture is considered an offence or insult to the reader. Therefore, it has been watered-down by means of a short phrase which conveys the core meaning without inflicting any sense of insult humiliation. The short phrase indicates if the marker 'likes to present his or her ideas in a repetitive manner'. In a similar context, the item 'can somewhat be careless' has been translated into Arabic to indicate if the marker 'sometimes



feels careless about things occurring around him/her'. The item 'tends to be lazy' has been translated into 'I generally tend to be slow in doing things'. In the same context, the item 'tends to be disorganized' has been subject to an adaptation to indicate if the marker 'does not care a lot about 'organizing' issues and the arrangement of things'.

On the other hand, job satisfaction is measured using the scale of Jaramillo et al (2006). It measures the extent to which the employee likes the job and prefers to work in the organization. A self-report job satisfaction scale is used in order to figure out what the employee personally feels about the organization.

#### 4.2 Data collection and sample characteristics

Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East (CIA factbook, 2011). It is considered one of the major labour (white-collar and blue-collar) suppliers to Gulf countries (Latowsky, 1984). In this sense, analyzing Egyptian employees helps both local managers and international managers make better decisions regarding applicant suitability.

The study targets Sales representatives mainly because a salesman's effectiveness is deeply influenced by his personality traits. According to Sojka and Deeter-Schmelz (2008), Affectively oriented sales representatives perform better at work than less affective employees. Affective-oriented sales representatives are more capable of managing their emotions through social interactions and judgments. In a similar context, persistence and enthusiasm are considered key personality traits of considerable influence on salesmen performance (Anselmi and Zemanek, 1997).

The study focuses on sales representatives at the Egyptian pharmaceutical industry. Pharmaceuticals heavily depend on personal selling as a direct marketing initiative to attain sales objectives (Hawass, 2011). Personal selling in the pharmaceutical industry is important because products are of complicated scientific nature and require careful presentation to doctors and chemists who form valuable customer segments.

The study uses an in-depth questionnaire to target sales representatives at six Egyptian pharmaceutical companies. The companies are located in three of the biggest cities in Egypt, namely; Cairo, Alexandria and Mansoura. The author asked a group of five postgraduate students to co-operate in handing these questionnaires to respondents at their companies. The group of five postgraduate students managed to collect completed questionnaires from 119 sales representatives which count for approximately 60% of the salesforce size (the overall salesforce size is 205) in these companies. Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of the sample.

#### 4.3 Findings

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities of the examined scales. The correlation matrix provides an initial support for three of the hypothesized relationships. For example, agreeableness is positively correlated with job satisfaction ( $P < .05$ ). Besides, the table shows that conscientiousness is positively associated with job satisfaction ( $P < .01$ ). It also demonstrates that neuroticism is negatively associated with job satisfaction ( $P < .01$ ). However,  $H4$  has not been successfully met in the correlation matrix. A multiple regression analysis would be conducted in order to achieve more accurate findings concerning the way personality traits predicts job satisfaction.

Sample size*	119 respondents
Gender characteristics	
Male	103 respondents
Female	16 respondents
Educational level :	
Bachelor degree	108 respondents
Master degree	1 respondent
Non-university degrees	10 respondents
Age:	
Range	From 23-43 years old
Average age	28 years old

\* The data were collected in the three largest cities of Egypt namely: Cairo, Alexandria and Mansoura.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics :

Variables	$\alpha$	Men	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1- Openness vs extraversion	0.7	14.8	3.6	-	0.19*	0.5**	0.21*	0.2
2- Neuroticism	0.7	14.3	4.1	-	-	0.17	0.07	0.4**
3- Conscientiousness	0.71	12.6	2	-	-	-	0.22*	0.3**
4- Agreeableness	0.7	11.2	2.3	-	-	-	-	0.13
5- Satisfaction	0.69	11.8	2.7	-	-	-	-	-

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. (2-tailed)

Table 2. Means, standard deviation, correlations, and coefficient alphas of study variables.

A principal component analysis has been performed to examine whether the big five inventory of personality traits (BFI) and job satisfaction are multidimensional scales in nature. This is a necessary step that should precede multiple regression analysis in order to further purify the scales by extracting un-important items which would better improve the quality of analysis predictions. Table 3 shows that the BFI construct is replicable in the Egyptian sample but generates only three pure components and one bipolar component (openness Vs. extraversion). The bipolar component implies that the personality traits of openness to experience and extraversion melt together into one concept. This new concept may be of importance to sales management since that effective sales representatives are those who show social intelligence and the ability to experiment creative selling procedures according to the needs of their customers (Stevens and Macintosh, 2002). On the other hand, table 4 shows that job satisfaction is a uni-dimensional component that tests only the employee’s general attitude concerning his job.

A multiple regression analysis has been conducted to better predict the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction. Table 5 shows that the strongest predictor of job satisfaction is neuroticism ( $B=-.374, P< .01$ ) which implies that neurotics are usually non-satisfied employees because of their amplified negative emotions and frustrations about different life situations. The table, also, shows that conscientiousness is positively associated

Construct name	Factor title	Items code	Loading factor (a)	Variance extracted (b)
	(1) Openness vs. Extraversion	origin enthus assevt invent curuous	0.802 0.759 0.688 0.622 0.521	0.1662
	(2) Neuroticism	tense moody worries depress nerous	0.77 0.731 0.633 0.632 0.54	0.144
	(3) Conscientiousness	thoro efficien preserver	0.845 0.621 0.513	0.1233
	(4) Agreeableness	trust forgive help	0.798 0.668 0.603	0.115

(a) Variamax orthogonal rotation and Kaiser normalization converging within 5 iterations  
(b) Factor loading below 0.5 are suppressed.

Table 3. The principle component analysis of the big five inventory scale :

Construct name	Factor title	Item code	Loading factor (a)	Variance extracted (b)
(1) Employee performance	Performance	attract knowserve objective markshar knowneed relation contriibt inform	0.854 0.834 0.831 0.827 0.815 0.798 0.771 0.538	0.623
(2) Employee satisfaction	satisfaction	satisfid dislike prefer	0.895 0.794 0.634	0.611

(a) Variamax orthogonal rotation and Kaiser normalization converging within 5 iterations  
(b) Factor loading below 0.5 are suppressed.

Table 4. The principal component analysis of the job satisfaction scale.

with job satisfaction ( $B= .183, P< .05$ ). The finding clearly supports our hypothesis that conscientious employees are highly likely to be satisfied employees. Hard work usually brings rewards, intrinsic and/or extrinsic, which, in turn, positively influence job

Variable names	The personality – satisfaction model		
	$\beta$	t	VIF
Neuroticism	-0.374	-4.441*	1.04
Conscientiousness	0.183	2.118**	1.87
Agreeableness	0.118	1.3888***	1.081
Overall model coetficient of correlation (r)		0.462	
F-ratio		10.141	

\* significant at  $p < 0.01$   
\*\* significant at  $p < 0.05$   
\*\* significant at  $p = 0.1$

Table 5. The regression analysis of the relationship between personality waits and job satisfaction :

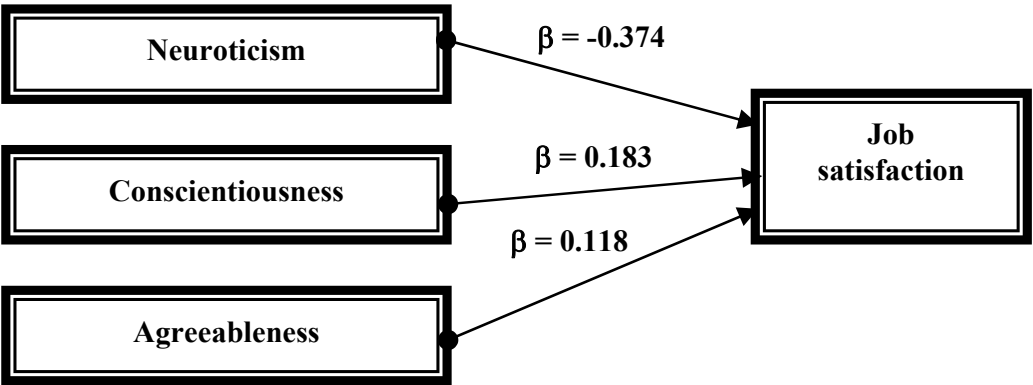


Fig. 2. The personality – satisfaction relationship model :

satisfaction. Finally, the table indicates that the weakest predictor of job satisfaction is agreeableness ( $B = .118, P < .1$ ). In this sense, it should be noted that hypotheses 1,2 and 3 have been met, whereas hypothesis 4 has not been met in congruence with the findings of the correlation matrix (table 2).

5. Discussion

The findings confirm the pre-dispositional roots of job satisfaction. They reveal that the conscientious and agreeable salesmen tend to be generally satisfied with their jobs. The findings also indicate that neurotics are generally less satisfied with their jobs. These findings agree in substance with those of other dispositional research studies held in the United States.

However, the study has also attempted to investigate the cultural background which may influence the personality-satisfaction relationship. Depending on the psycho-cultural analysis of Hofstede and McCrae (2004), it can be argued that a culture; a) shapes the personality traits of the individual and b) forms a strong basis from which these personality traits can actually influence the individual’s attitudes regarding job and other issues. In the case of Egypt, it is proposed that high levels of uncertainty avoidance and power distance

shape the Egyptians' personality traits and, consequently, influence their attitudes regarding the job. High uncertainty avoidance societies are usually risk-averse and prefer to work under a heavy institutionalized system of rules and written operating procedures. These standardized working systems motivate individuals to work hard according to roles in order to attain the desired benefits and rewards which, consequently, contribute to the employee's sense of happiness. Besides, recent research has found that conscientious employees tend to be less adaptable to rapid work-related changes (Griffin and Hesketh, 2005) which may also explain why an Egyptian 'conscientious' employee is satisfied with a job in a heavy standardized organizational system. In this sense, rapid work-related changes is a condition which might not be tolerated in a society high in uncertainty avoidance.

On the other hand, the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction can also be attributed to the Egyptian cultural values of high power distance and collectivism. In high power distance societies with a collectivist cultural orientation, the individual regards the manager as a parent who deserves respect, commitment and obedience because of his superior skills, qualifications and work experience. In the Egyptian society, agreeableness may be regarded a key personality trait which guarantees success and satisfaction at work. In such cultures, the employee should value friendships at work, develop strong ties with the boss and colleagues and be of sincere help to them, even at the expense of organizational order, in order to gain positive views from the top management. In this sense, it is not preferred to have different point of views, especially, when the opposing employee is at a fairly lower job rank in comparison to the management. Different points of views are not socially tolerated at work and might negatively influence the management's attitudes and evaluations of the employee. Thus, in order to gain social acceptance at work and overall job satisfaction, the employee should consistently show signs of an agreeable personality.

The negative relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction, in the Egyptian sample, is believed to be associated with uncertainty avoidance values. The need for a clearly defined work system that well presents an appropriate career path for the employee is an Egyptian dream. An old Egyptian proverb effectively describes the true risk-avoidant nature of the Egyptian person by emphasizing that 'what we know is much better than what we don't' (Hawass, 2011). In this context, many reasons can inflate the negative emotions of the neurotic employee such as organizational injustice, corruption and damaged manager-employee relationship. These factors keep the Egyptian 'neurotic' employee in a foggy condition where he feels that job security can easily be compromised. This would, certainly, lead to job dissatisfaction.

### 5.1 Research implications

It is widely believed that job satisfaction might be of considerable value to organizational growth and development. Satisfied employees can be highly committed to organizational objectives, perform organizational functions more effectively than others and show higher levels of sincere citizenship behaviours. Earlier research studies have emphasized that personal characteristics and work-related characteristics are the dominant antecedents of job satisfaction. However, recent dispositional research has indicated that job satisfaction can also be partially influenced by the personality traits of the individual. This study confirms the dispositional roots of job satisfaction in the Egyptian context. The results imply that the employee's personality plays an essential role in determining the employee's potential for



future job satisfaction. Thus, it is necessary to conduct in-depth personality-based tests to uncover the applicant's true personality traits and investigate their suitability to the organizational values. Furthermore, the study recommends for HR specialists to critically analyze the cultural beliefs of the applicants. The cultural values of the applicant are believed to influence his personality traits and attitudes towards the job. However, this does not mean that an employee with a collectivist orientation can not work at an individualist-oriented organization. Indeed, human beings differ from other living beings in terms of the ability to adapt and change. However, it is the responsibility of managers to educate the new comers about the cultural values of the organization and the country within which it operates. It is necessary to keep employees from different cultures informed with the new cultural values of the hosting society. The cultural education of new comers should allow them to understand differences in social interaction mechanisms. By carefully learning these new social mechanisms, the new employee would be able to adjust his own work-related expectations, and in turn, form his attitudes according to a newly learned code of work-related values. I believe that the cultural education of new comers is a continuing education system that would effectively lead to results through the careful coaching of these employees. In other words, it is not a two-day session conducted at the organization's training center.

## 5.2 Future research directions and limitations

I strongly suggest that future dispositional research incorporate the concept of cultural values while analyzing the relationship between personality traits and work-related attitudes. National culture differences contribute to the variances in evaluating different life situations among human beings. It is necessary to investigate the dimensions of cultural values that specifically influence the dynamics of personality-attitude relationships among nations. In this sense, future dispositional research should put more attention to cross-cultural analyses to better spot differences in organizational behaviour across nations. Indeed, one of the weakest points in modern organizational behaviour studies is the shortage of having an international focus which deeply affects issues of research generalizability.

The current study is not without limitations. It depends on a convenient sample of a relatively moderate sample size. A bigger sample size is needed with a focus on different types of jobs to better accomplish generalizability. Besides, the study is cross-sectional which may prohibit inferences of causality. However, cross-sectional studies enable readers to effectively predict associations between the examined variables. Finally, the study evaluates the general attitudes of employees concerning the job. It did not analyze intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. However, it should be noted that this research study was part of a larger project that aims to investigate the associations between personality traits and different employee attitudes and behaviours (Hawass, 2011). In other words, the study is constrained by the analysis of the original research project.

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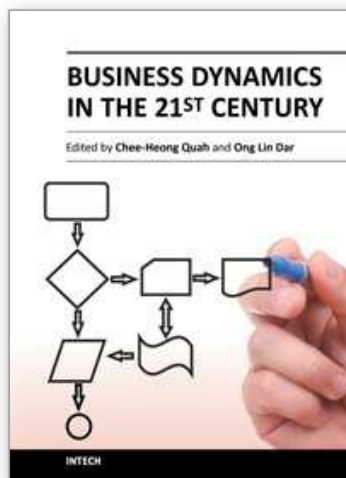
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## **Business Dynamics in the 21st Century**

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In this 21st century of opportunity and turbulence, business firms need to equip themselves with new competencies that were never thought of before. For this reason, this book is timely as it introduces new insights into new problems in the aspects of performance and quality improvement, networking and logistics in the interconnected world, as well as developments in monetary and financial environment surrounding private enterprises today. Readers shall find that reading this book is an enlightening and pleasant experience, as the discussions are delivered in a clear, straightforward, and "no-frills" manner - suitable to academics and practitioners. If desired, the book can serve as an additional piece of reference for teaching and research in business and economics.

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