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THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND HEALTH-RELATED FITNESS OF SPORT ORGANIZATION EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between various components of health-related fitness and employees' job satisfaction. 123 employees in different zones of sport organization in Tehran completed a fitness assessment measuring percent body fat, cardio respiratory endurance, flexibility, and muscular strength. The participants were sent questionnaires to determine the relationship between fitness levels and job satisfaction. Stepwise regression analyses using backward elimination were utilized to determine which health-related fitness components predicted job satisfaction. An alpha level of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine statistical significance. It was found that Job satisfaction was influenced by the employees' level of cardiovascular endurance, ($p < 0.001$), this study has identified higher levels of independent components of fitness may positively influence employees' job satisfaction. Conclusively, these findings still add valuable insight into the benefits of instituting exercise programs within the work-site.

Keywords: *Physical Activity, Health, Job Satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

There has been considerable emphasis on human resource management in recent past. In an organization, productivity and quality of service depend entirely on the organization's ability to manage the human resource. Human resource management encompasses organizational development, human resource development, and industrial relations.

Human resource functions in an organization include everything that has to do with 'people', i.e., their recruitment, induction, retention, welfare, appraisal, growth, training, skill development, attitudinal-orientation, compensation, motivation, industrial relation and retirement (Anspaugh *et al.*, 1995). The ability of an organization to reach its goals depends in part on the talent and effort of its executive workforce.

The work attitudes of executives can have considerable influence on their behavior in organizations and thus could have implications for organizational capabilities. The foundation of job satisfaction theory was introduced by Maslow with a five-stage hierarchy of human needs, now recognized as the deprivation/gratification proposition. However, much of the job satisfaction research has focused on employees in the private sector. Work-site fitness programs are gaining in popularity because of the potential to increase job productivity and morale (Anspaugh *et al.*, 1995).

The percentage of work-sites offering activities to promote exercise and physical fitness in the U.S. has increased from 22% in 1985 to 42% in 1992 (Department of Health and Human Services, 1992). Management hopes these programs will have a positive effect on the physiological and the psychological variables that may positively influence worker performance (Altchiler *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, companies hope to reduce direct expenditures as a result of aforementioned potential benefits of work-site fitness services (Rudman, 1987).

Positive relationships between regular exercise and worker productivity have been indicated in past studies (Rudman, 1987), but the results were subjective and only identified exercise adherence levels by self-evaluation rather than fitness levels via objective assessment (Rudman, 1987). Another aspect related to employee productivity is to increase job satisfaction. If employees feel better about their job, it may be

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assumed that they will want to be more productive in their position. A number of investigations of employee fitness programs attest to possible changes of mood and worker satisfaction that have resulted from the introduction of fitness programs (Faragher, 2005).

Cost savings within an employee fitness program can be derived from the reduction of costly behaviors such as job-related injuries (Ohta, 2006). Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between various components of health-related fitness (i.e., body composition, cardio respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength) and employees perceived job satisfaction. Employees' overall rating of fitness was assessed independently against job satisfaction.

The main reason for this study was that very few studies on exercise and employee job performance have actually measured employee fitness levels and compared them to job satisfaction.

This study was unique in the fact that it determined the subjects' level of fitness and related it to their perceived job satisfaction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Subjects

123 individual employees in different zones of sport organization in Tehran completed a fitness assessment which measured percent body fat, cardio respiratory endurance, flexibility, and muscular strength.

The participants were sent questionnaires to determine the relationship between their fitness levels and job satisfaction.

Measures

Participants were assessed on job satisfaction and four health-related components of fitness: body composition, cardio respiratory endurance, flexibility, and muscular strength. A three-site skin fold test was used to assess body composition.

The physical work capacity (PWC) was used to assess cardio respiratory endurance. From this assessment predicted maximal oxygen consumption (VO_2max) was calculated for each employee.

The VO_2max was the score that was used for the subjects' cardiovascular endurance assessment. A sit-and-reach test was used to measure hamstring and low back flexibility. A bench press test was used to assess muscular strength.

Instrument

A cover letter was sent to 192 employees to explain the purpose of the study, to encourage a quick return, and to guarantee complete confidentiality.

In order to increase the number of returns, follow-up questionnaires were sent at approximately the first and the second week after the initial questionnaires.

Job satisfaction questionnaire data based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" was used (Faragher *et al.*, 2005).

Information on test reliability and validity is contained in the study by Brayfield and Rothe (Eliason, 2006).

Statistical Analyses

Stepwise regression analyses using backward elimination were utilized to determine which health-related fitness components predicted job satisfaction. The probability level was set at $p < 0.05$ to reach statistical significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Means and standard deviations of study variables are presented in Table 1.

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Current Exercise Level

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Fitness and Work Experience Variables

Variable	Total Group (<u>n</u> = 143)		Males (<u>n</u> = 94)		Females (<u>n</u> = 49)	
	Mean±SD	Range	Mean±SD	Range	Mean±SD	Range
Age	34.9±8.5	19-64	34.3±8.3	24-64	35.2±8.6	19-56
% Fat	23.8±6.4	11-41	22.1±5.4	11-32	27.1±6.9	13-41
VO2	39.9±12.2	19-91	42.2±12.9	22-91	35.6±9.7	19-62
Sit-n-reach	17.4±4.1	4-26	16.5±4.1	4-25	19±33.6	9-26
Bench Press	28.9±14.5	3-82	28.3±12.9	4-68	30.1±17.4	3-82
Job Satisfaction	4.1±0.6	2.36-5.0	4.2±0.6	2.75-5.0	3.89±0.6	2.38-5.0

Job Satisfaction

Table 2 shows the frequency distributions concerning employees’ satisfaction with their jobs. The job satisfaction scale consisted of eight items and had a reliability coefficient of alpha=0.87. A large majority of workers were satisfied with their jobs and their employer. Over 75% of all employees agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their current job. Most employees were enthusiastic about their work (83%) and believe their jobs are interesting (84%). Over 88% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “each day seems like it will never end” (Table 3).

Table 2: Frequency Distributions Reporting Measures of Employee Attitudes Concerning Job Satisfaction.

Exercise and Job Satisfaction	SD	D	UD	A	SA
1. My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored	1.4	5.6	9	53.5	30.6
2. I am often bored with my job	40.3	44.4	9.7	5.6	0
3. I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job	3.5	4.2	13.2	54.2	25
4. Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work	40.3	45.8	4.2	7.6	2.1
5. I feel happier in my job than most other people	0	4.9	25.7	47.2	22.2
6. Most days I am enthusiastic about about my work	0	3.5	13.9	65.3	17.4
7. Each day seems like it will never end in my work	34.7	53.5	7.6	4.2	0

Values Represent Percentages

SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; UD=Undecided; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

To further examine the multivariate relationship, stepwise regression analyses using backward elimination were conducted. Separate stepwise regressions using backward elimination were performed on job satisfaction and the four fitness measures. Employees’ cardiovascular endurance (VO₂max) remained in the equation with a beta weight of 0.28, F(1,133)=10.90, p<0.001 with less than 8% of variance in job satisfaction being explained by oxygen consumption level. Employees’ muscular strength (bench press) remained in the equation with a beta weight of 0.21, F(1,133)=5.36, p<0.01 with less than 8% of variance in productivity being explained by muscular strength level. Employees’ flexibility (sit-n-reach) remained in the equation with a beta weight of 0.16, F(1,133)=3.40, p<0.07 with less than 3 % of variance in absenteeism being explained by flexibility level.

Discussion

The relationship between exercise and job performance has not been widely studied (Brayfield *et al.*, 1951; Leutzinger *et al.*, 1991; Ohta *et al.*, 2006). In this study, it appears that the fitness test itself

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motivated a number of employees to begin an exercise program. It may be interesting to see how fitness testing contributes toward the motivation and adherence of employee fitness programs. Employees' cardiovascular endurance, as assessed through their estimated VO₂max on a physical work capacity bicycle ergo meter test, predicted their job satisfaction. Employees with higher levels of cardiovascular endurance have greater cardiovascular efficiency, tend to feel less tired, concentrate better on their jobs, and may feel more satisfied in their quality of work. Cardiovascular endurance has been indicated to be related to job satisfaction in another study involving employees of the Xerox Corporation. Employees indicated decreased anxiety, increased self-esteem and increased job satisfaction upon completion of a 14-week fitness program (Leutzinger *et al.*, 1991). Jasonski *et al.*, found subjects positive self-perception increased following a 10-week aerobic exercise class (Ohta *et al.*, 2006). This finding illustrates the influence of aerobic exercise to benefit employees' sense of well being and satisfaction. Possible explanations for these findings may include a reduction in physical fatigue due to an increase of work capacity, a reduction of minor illness, and relief from boredom, anxiety or pent-up aggression (Shephard *et al.*, 1981; Shephard, 1992; Pender *et al.*, 1987), or simply a response to the attention given to them by administrators.

Most of the literature on productivity has looked at exercise adherence or membership in an on-site employee fitness center. Very little information is available distinguishing overall levels of fitness and employee productivity. We must develop fitness programs for the employees who do not regularly participate in exercise, for it is the sedentary employee who will attain the most benefit from a structured work-site fitness program. Employees who do not regularly participate in exercise programs will, most likely, have higher health care costs than employees who regularly exercise. If research can show a relationship between exercise and decreased health care costs, corporations would invest a great deal of money to help employees participate in regular exercise programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has indicated that improved levels of fitness may positively influence employees' satisfaction. This research should add valuable insight into the benefits of instituting exercise programs within the work-site. We must develop ways to help employees begin and adhere to exercise programs within our work-sites. Enough research has indicated improvements in employees' fitness levels to warrant investing money to work-site fitness programs (Ohta *et al.*, 2006; Cox *et al.*, 1981). There are important reasons why the researcher should be concerned with job satisfaction. The first is that people deserve to be treated fairly and with respect. Job satisfaction is to some extent a reflection of good treatment. It can also be considered as an indicator of emotional well-being or physiological health. The second reason is that job satisfaction can lead to behavior of employees that affects organizational functioning. Furthermore, job satisfaction can be a reflection of organizational functioning. Differences among organizational units in job satisfaction can be diagnostic of potential trouble spots (Kavita *et al.*, 2012). It should up to the individuals within the exercise science field to develop and implement these programs. .

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