# Models of Variables Predicting Job Satisfaction of Clothing Salespeople

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#### Abstract

This study explores the variables that predict the job satisfaction of clothing salespeople. A total of 270 questionnaires obtained from clothing salespeople were submitted for analysis. The results show that job stress was a negative influence whereas customer-orientation and self-efficacy were positive influences on the job satisfaction of clothing salespeople. The relationships were repeatedly investigated by the groups divided by personal and store characteristics. Job stress was not different by job experience, job position, and the price level of the products for sale; however, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction were different by those factors. In the case of more experienced salespeople with high positions, job stress would not be a predictor of job satisfaction. The study findings confirmed variables predicting job satisfaction, as well as revealed some personal and store characteristics that can affect the relationships of the variables.

Key words: Job satisfaction, Job stress, Customer-orientation, Self-efficacy, Personal characteristics

#### I. Introduction

Salespeople have been getting a great deal of attentions of practitioners and researchers in the field of retailing as salespeople's customer services become one of the most important competences resulting in good performance of the retail company. More pressures are being placed on improving customer service and selling effectiveness of salespeople. Rapid and turbulent changes make a salesperson's job incredibly stressful (Moncrief et al., 1997). Coping with job stress of salespeople has become a current research topic and has an obvious importance in this field.

Salespeople's job satisfaction has been considered as an important antecedent of the performance of salespeople (Churchill et al., 1985). When salespeople are satisfied with their jobs, they may be able to provide better customer service (Schneider, 1980). Atti-

tudes and behaviors of contact service employees can influence customers' perceptions of the service (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). More satisfied employees are more likely to engage in behaviors that assist customers (Locke & Latham, 1990; Weatherly & Tansik, 1993).

Diverse factors predicting job satisfaction of salespeople have been investigated. According to prior findings, job stress was considered as a crucial predictor of job satisfaction (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Moncrief et al., 1997). Some researchers indicated customer orientation as another important influencer on job satisfaction (Jung et al., 2008), but the relationship between customer service and job satisfaction was rarely tested in other research. In addition, some researchers paid their attentions on self-efficacy as another factor impacting job satisfaction. However, the empirical results (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Jung et al., 2008; McDonald & Siegall, 1992) testing this relationship were inconsistent.

In this study, all these three factors are considered as influencers on job satisfaction. The integrative research model would be tested with data obtained from clothing salespeople. Clothing salespeople are

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one of the groups suffering a high level of job stress due to requests for good customer service and pressures for good sales performance. Clothing is one of the product items, indicating a high level of return and customer claim. Also, department store is the retail site where the best customer service is expected by customers. Reflecting all these aspects, clothing salespeople working in the department stores are explored to figure out the relationships among job stress, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. In addition, it is further explored whether the segmented groups, divided by personal characteristics of salespeople and characteristics of stores where salespeople work, are different in means or in the relationships among research variables. The study results are expected to contribute to the existing research on the relationship among job stress, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. The results would be able to provide a basis on this issue for generating marketing implications.

Research questions are as follows.

- 1) Explore the mean difference of job stress, customer orientation and self-efficacy, and job satisfaction, according to personal characteristics (years in work, position, marital status) and store characteristics (price level of products in sales, sales volume) of clothing salespeople.
- 2) Explore the effect of job stress, customer orientation and self-efficacy on job satisfaction of clothing salespeople.
- 3) Explore the differences by personal characteristics (years in work, position, marital status) and store characteristics (price level of products in sales, sales volume) in the effect of job stress, customer orientation and self-efficacy on job satisfaction of clothing salespeople.

#### **II. Literature Review**

## 1. Variables affecting Job Satisfaction

#### 1) Job Satisfaction

According to Locke (1969), job satisfaction is "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achieve-

ment of one's job values". Job satisfaction is salesperson's present feelings about the job, which may range from favorable to unfavorable (Moncrief et al., 1997). The level of job satisfaction has been considered as an important predictor for the salespeople's possibility to provide better services to their customers. Antecedents of job satisfaction of salespeople have been explored in previous studies (Moncrief et al., 1997; Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992). In this study, job stress, customer orientation, and self-efficacy are considered as important antecedents of job satisfaction of salespeople. The relationships among those variables would be studied in this study.

#### 2) Job Stress

Productivity pressures and growing competition in the market have generated unprecedented levels of job stress of salespeople. Stress of salespeople can be considered to be generated by the incongruity between their desired job expectations and actual perceived conditions (Edwards, 1992). Job stress can lead to physical and mental illness including heart disease, depression, and so forth (Eckles, 1987). Job stress has been thought as a crucial sign to assess salespeople's physical and mental state.

However, causes and effects of job stress have been pooly understood (Dewe & Guest, 1990). Prior researchers (Michaels & Dixon, 1994; Sager, 1994) have explored the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. In results, the salesperson's overall job satisfactions have primarily been found to be negatively related to stress (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Moncrief et al. (1997) also found the negative but modest relationships (t=-2.27) between the two variables. Based on the literature, a direct and negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction of clothing salespeople, was assumed.

#### 3) Customer Orientation

Customer orientation of service workers is employees' traits or tendency to focus on understanding customers' needs and providing services that customers may want (Brown et al., 2002). Customer orientation is the level of involvement on marketing activities to achieve the long-term relationships with customers

through providing good customer services in the process of interactions between employees and customers (Saxe & Weitz, 1982). Customer-oriented sales would be activities helping customers' decision making in order to satisfy customers' needs. More customer-oriented salespeople tend to enjoy providing good customer services and easily overcome negative factors in the job environments, therefore, their job satisfaction tends to be higher than less customeroriented workers (Jung et al., 2008). Customer-oriented workers experience job satisfactions while they take a role delivering customers' needs to the company (Hoffman & Ingram, 1991). However, research focusing on the relationship between customer orientation and job satisfaction has been scarce. In this research, the relationships would be empirically tested with clothing salespeople data.

## 4) Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is an important factor to understand attitude and behaviors of employees in the work environment (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy on a certain task would be a self-belief on good completion of works that were given to them (Mitchell et al., 1994). Self-efficacy is an ability to selectively adopt and use behavioral, cognitive, and emotional resources for the successful performance (Bandura, 1986). In the prior findings, self-efficacy was related to the level of goal and performance (Harrison et al., 1997; Wood & Locke, 1987). Successful performance in jobs would reinforce their self-efficacy, therefore, people who have a high level of self-efficacy would believe they have a certain level of abilities to work successfully (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1997), people who have a high level of self-efficacy made more efforts on difficult tasks but less efforts on easy tasks. It indicates that people who have a high level of self-efficacy may wan to have more challengeable goals and make more consistent efforts to achieve the goal (Bandura, 1997).

People who have a high level of self-efficacy may have a positive self-concept, therefore, they tend to positively translate most of external stimulations that they have experienced (Earley & Lituchy, 1991). Therefore, people who have a high level of self-efficacy may be able to better overcome difficulties in their jobs and they might have less stress from their jobs (Jex & Bliese, 1999). On the other hand, other researchers (Jung et al., 2008) insist that people who have a high level of self-efficacy might have a high level of goal and expectations on their job and performance, therefore, they might have negative feelings on their jobs. Accordingly, there was a finding to support that self-efficacy negatively affects job-adaptability of retail salespeople (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996).

As discussed above, the positive and negative relationships between self-efficacy and job satisfaction were proposed. Empirical findings on this relationship were not consistent either. Jung et al. (2008) expected the negative relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction since people who have a high level of self-efficacy might have more challengeable goals to achieve so that they may have low job satisfaction in spite of fair performance they might achieve. However, in Jung et al.'s (2008) empirical findings, self-efficacy did not affect job satisfaction of call-center service employees. Hartline and Ferrell (1996) found a negative effect of the self-efficacy on job satisfaction of hotel employees. Nevertheless, McDonald and Siegall (1992) found a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and job satisfaction since the feelings of competence and confidence based on self-efficacy make the job more enjoyable. The contradictory results in this literature might call for further research on this issue.

Based on the discussion above, the following propositions regarding *research question 2* were developed.

Proposition 1. There is a direct and negative effect of job stress on job satisfaction of clothing salespeople.

Proposition 2. There is a direct and positive effect of customer orientation on job satisfaction of clothing salespeople.

Proposition 3. There is a direct and positive effect of self-efficacy on job satisfaction of clothing salespeople.

## 2. Personal and Store Characteristics

Personal characteristics have been considered as

imperative factors affecting salesperson's attitude and behaviors (Widmier, 2002), however, little research concerned the effects of personal characteristics and other side factors in the study of job satisfaction. According to job experience, position, and marital status, salespeople might get a different level of job stress, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. Also, there is a possibility that store characteristics, such as the price level of selling product and sales volume, make the difference in job stress, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. For example, O'Hara et al. (1991) found that selling experience positively influence salespeople's customer orientation (O'Hara et al., 1991).

In addition, those personal and store characteristics might be an influencer on the relationships among job stress, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction of salespeople. The differences in the mean and the effect of job stress, customer orientation, and self-efficacy on job satisfaction of salespeople would be empirically studied.

## III. Methods

A total of 270 completed questionnaires were obtained from the convenient sample of clothing salesforce working in the three largest department stores in the Daegu city. All the respondents were females. The sample had a mean age of 32.9, ranging from 19 to 53 years old. About 44 percent of the sample were high-school graduates and 39% of the sample had two-year college degrees. Almost a half of the sample (51%) was married. The sample had a tenure of 1-4 years (81 respondents, 30%), 5-9 years (96 respondents, 36%), 10-14 years (56 respondents, 21%), and 15-19 years (22 respondents, 8%).

Job satisfaction, job stress, customer orientation, and self-efficacy were measured using 6-point Likert scales anchored by "strongly agree" (6) to "strongly disagree" (1). Job satisfaction measures were adopted from Comer et al. (1989) and Kim (2006) while job stress measures were obtained from Parker and DeCotis (1983). Also, Saxe and Weitz's (1982) customer orientation measures were implemented. Self-efficacy measures were made based on Heo (2000) and Churchill et al. (1974).

## IV. Results and Discussion

## 1. Characteristics of Research Variables

Factor analysis was conducted to confirm the validity and reliability of the measure of each variable (Table 1). One factor each for job satisfaction, job stress, customer orientation, and self-efficacy was generated with factor loadings varied from .507 to .888. Cronbach's alpha was ranged from .842 to .874. Based on the result, each variable was assessed as the mean of multiple measures of each factor.

The mean and standard deviation of research variables were examined (Table 2). The mean of job satisfaction was 4.708 while the mean of job stress was 3.506. The level of job satisfaction was much higher than the level of job stress. Relatively much difference between the level of job satisfaction and job stress indicates that other important factors than job stress may be existed in predicting job satisfaction. The means of customer orientation and self-efficacy are 4.949 and 4.542 far above 3.5 which is the midpoint of 6-point scale. It suggests that clothing salespeople in the department stores have a relatively high level of self-efficacy and customer orientation as well as job satisfaction.

Correlations among research variables indicated the negative correlation between job satisfaction and job stress. Customer orientation and self-efficacy were positively correlated with job satisfaction while there is no correlation between job stress and customer orientation. It suggests that salespeople with a high level of self-efficacy would tend to have a high level of customer orientation and job satisfaction. Customer orientation is understood as what sales people need to have regardless of the level of job stress, therefore, it may be reflected in no relationship between these two variables.

2. Mean Difference of Job Stress, Customer Orientation, Self-efficacy, and Job Satisfaction by Personal Characteristics and Store Characteristics

Mean differences of each group divided by personal

Table 1. Factor analysis results of variables

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Variable	Tiem	Factor loading	Eigen value	% of variance explained	Cronbach's alpha				
Job satisfaction	My work gives me a sense of accomplishment.  My job is interesting.  My job is important.  I am confident with my current job.  I think that I can improve my knowledge and techniques through my current job.	.701 .796 .869 .888 .746	3.224	64.486	.859				
Job stress	When I finish my work, I feel nervousness.  Time with families is short because of work.  I feel that my work is more than what I have.  I can't understand my work as a whole since I need to work eagerly.  Sometimes, I don't know what I am doing though I spend so much time on my job.  There is no time to spend on other activities because of work.  I feel tight when I think of my work.  Sometimes, I feel that I got married with my job.  Tough I work a lot, I rarely concentrate on it.  I feel guilty when I leave from my job.  I feel anxious when I get a phone call from the company while I am at home.  I feel I never take a rest from works.  Most of my peers are very busy for works.	.543 .533 .621 .527 .573 .507 .655 .704 .551 .604 .706	4.529	34.842	.842				
Customer	I try to find out the most appropriate products for customers. I do my best to satisfy customers. I do my best to help customers achieve their goals. I try to know which items customers need. I answer customers' questions as clearly and frankly as I can. I provide diverse information about products in a shop.	.810 .800 .814 .826 .644 .707	3.713	28.562	.851				
Self- efficacy	I am confident to perform my job successfully. I am assured that I know a lot about my job. I think I am a specialist in my job. I have confidence in my technology and capability. I can do well though I take works hard to deal with.	.791 .824 .842 .805 .823	3.339	66.772	.874				

Table 2. Means and correlations of variables

. Variable	Mean	S.D.	Job satisfaction	Job stress	Customer orientation	Self-efficacy				
Job satisfaction	4.708	.818	1.000							
Job stress	3.506	.763	193**	1.000						
Customer orientation	4.949	.544	.468**	.014	1.000					
Self-efficacy	4,542	.787	.509**	.122*	.521**	1.000				

<sup>\*</sup>p<.05, \*\*p<.01

characteristics and store characteristics were explored (Table 3). According to years in work, salespeople who worked for ten and more than ten years in work had a higher customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction than salespeople who worked less than ten years. According to position, salespeople who have

a higher position in their jobs tended to have more customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. On the other hand, married women had a higher level of customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction than unmarried women. There is no difference in job stress between the two groups divided

Table 3. Mean difference of job stress, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction by personal characteristics and store characteristics

Independent Variable Grouping Variable		Job stress		Customer orientation		Self-efficacy			Job satisfaction				
		Mean	S.D.	t-value	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i> -value	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Mean	S.D.	/-value
Years in work	Less than 10 (n=177)	3.540	.787	1.267	4.888	.517	-2.948**	4.434	.782	-3.582***	4.602	.807	-3.176**
	10 and more than 10 (n=86)	3.413	.706		5.091	.538		4.791	.706		4.957	.790	
Position-	Low (n=148)	3.499	.825	.052	4.823	.480	-4.299***	4.376	.785	-4.147***	4.590	.785	-3.372**
	High (n=90)	3.494	.658		5.122	.580		4.814	.797		4.954	.754	
Marital status	Unmarried (n=131)	3.529	.801	.403	4.844	.623	-3.138**	4.440	.848	-2.044*	4.576	.804	-2.588*
	Married (n=138)	3.492	.725		5.049	.437		4.635	.715		4.844	.815	
Price level	Low (n=148)	3.550	.751	1.284	4.905	.567	-1.240	4.513	.769	455	4.587	.789	-2.698**
	High (n=117)	3.430	.757		4.989	.513		4.557	.810		4.870	.836	
Sales volume	Low (n=104)	3.619	.694	1.944	4.995	.509	1.307	4.522	.811	437	4.680	.753	827
	High (n=111)	3.416	.828		4.898	.575		4.570	.805		4.771	.783	

<sup>\*</sup>p<.05, \*\*p<.01\*, \*\*\*p<.001

Position (low: below the manager; high: the manager and the higher level), Price level (low: less than 400,000 won; high: 400,000 won and more for a suit), Sales volume (low: less than 40 mil. won; high: 40 mil. won and more in a month).

by years in work, position, and marital status.

According to store characteristics, salespeople selling high priced-products had a higher level of job satisfaction than did salespeople selling low pricedproducts. However, there is no difference in job stress, customer orientation, and self-efficacy according to the level of price of products sold in the store as well as sales volume of the store. The results imply that job stress would not be different regardless of salespeople's work experience, position, marital status, price level and sales volume of the store. Yet, salespeople who have more experiences in work and a higher position, may tend to have a higher level of self-efficacy, customer orientation, and job satisfaction. On the other hand, salespeople selling more expensive clothing would have more job satisfaction than people selling less inexpensive clothing. Salespeople who work in the store selling high-priced products may be able to serve more involved customers, and may work in the better environments in terms of store interior and crowdedness. It may let salespeople selling expensive products be more satisfied with their job. However, whether they sell expensive products or whether the store's sales volume is big, may not lessen job stress or increase customer orientation or self-efficacy.

# 3. Factors affecting Job Satisfaction and Group Difference

Before conducting multiple regression analyses, VIF was checked for each equation. The value of VIF was below 2 for each equation, therefore, all equations are confirmed not to have multi-collinearity problems, so that all equations are testable through the regression analysis. Regression analysis results were summarized in <Table 4>.

Self-efficacy Independent Job stress Customer orientation Variable Adjusted R F-value Grouping Std. B t-value Std. B t-value Std. B t-value Variable .295\*\*\* -.163\*\* -3.070.332\*\*\* 5,304 4,746 41,237 .330 -.193\*\* Less than 10 -2.859 .236\*\* 3.027 .313\*\*\* 4.005 20.594 .265 Years in work 10 and -.086 -.892 .368\*\* .361\*\* 3.421 14.852 .360 3.462 more than 10 Low -.164\* -2.239 .177\* .393\*\*\* 19.622 .290 2.107 4.617 Position High -.056 -.635 .321\*\* 3.063 .403\*\*\* 3.832 18.290 .390 Unmarried -.175\* .358\*\*\* -2.338 .263\*\* 2,909 3.943 21.358 .326 Marital status -.135 Married -1.740 .329\*\* .304\*\* .301 3.842 3.542 17.821 Low -.104 -1.435 .265\*\* 3.080 .365\*\*\* 4.256 20.366 .301 Price level High -.193\* -2.447 .325\*\*\* 3.617 .333\*\*\* 3.631 22,478 .380 Low -.076 .324\*\* .287 -.838 .288\* 2.515 2.822 13.619 Sales volume -.159\* High -1.921 .281\*\* 3.083 .365\*\*\* 4.003 16.514 .315

Table 4. The effect of job stress, customer orientation, and self-efficacy on job satisfaction

First of all, data of 270 salespeople were submitted to the regression analysis. In result, job stress ( $\beta$ =-.163) was negatively affected job satisfaction while customer orientation ( $\beta$ =.295) and self-efficacy ( $\beta$ =.332) positively affected job satisfaction. It indicates that job satisfaction of clothing salespeople tends to increase when job stress decreases, customer orientation increases, and self-efficacy increases. The findings support three propositions suggested in advance.

Respondents were divided into two groups according to their personal characteristics as well as characteristics of stores where they are working. In results, the negative effect of job stress on job satisfaction was observed only in the case of salespeople who spent less than 10 years in work, who are in low position, who are unmarried, who work in the store selling high-priced products, and who work in the store with the high level of sales volume. It implies that certain personal or store characteristics may be an influencer on the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. Logically, stress from the job would be negatively affected job satisfaction, however, in the real world, it may not always be as the same. It can be assumed that salespeople would be able to separate the stress of work and satisfactions on their jobs as they have more experiences in their works and lives. In addition, although the stress levels were not different by the price level and sales volume of the store where they are working, the negative effect of job stress on job satisfaction was observed only in the salespeople selling high-priced products and working at the store with much sales volume. As clothing salespeople have more experiences in work and have higher job positions, they might be able to overcome their job stress then it may not be much reflected on job satisfaction. On the other hand, customer orientation and self-efficacy were importance influencers on job satisfaction regardless of years in work, position and marital status of salespeople as well as price level and sales volume of the store.

# V. Conclusions

In the present study, it is explored the relationships among factors predicting job satisfaction of clothing salespeople. Job stress, customer orientation, and self-efficacy were considered as primary factors impacting job satisfaction. In addition, mean difference of these research variables as well as differences in the relationships among the research variables by personal and store characteristics of salespeople were further examined.

In the mean difference analysis, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction were different

<sup>\*</sup>p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

by years in work, position, and marital status of salespeople. More experienced, highly positioned and married salespeople had a higher level of customer orientation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. No difference in job stress were found by personal characteristics, implying that job stress is not reduced though salespeople have more experiences and hold higher positions. However, how to manage job stress and not to transfer it to job satisfaction would be different by their work experience and position. Also, no difference was observed in the level of job stress, customer orientation, an self-efficacy by store characteristics. However, people selling high-priced products had more job satisfactions. It may result from the sense of accomplishment of more challengeable works, which may be obtained through selling expensive products.

In study findings, clothing salespeople perceived job satisfaction higher as they have less job stress, as they are more customer-oriented, and as they have more self-efficacy. These results were consistent with prior findings on job stress-job satisfaction (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Moncrief et al., 1997) and on customer orientation-job satisfaction (Hoffman & Ingram, 1991). In the previous research, the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction was inconsistent over diverse results (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Jung et al., 2008; McDonald & Siegall, 1992). In this study, a positive and relatively strong relationship between those two variables was found.

When the statistical analyses were repeated to the data divided by personal characteristics and characteristics of stores where salespeople are working, the results of these relationships were little bit different. Specifically, the direct and negative effect of job stress on job satisfaction was found only in salespeople who have less job experience, who have low job positions, who are unmarried, who sell high pricedproducts, and who work in the store with high sales volume. The results suggest that certain personal or work environmental characteristics can be vital influencer on the job stress-job satisfaction relationship, therefore, these factors would also be embraced in the related studies. Actually, many researchers ignored the possible existence of an important side factors in empirical tests though they understand the potential impact of some personal characteristics and other side factors.

Based on these results, the relationships of factors influencing and predicting job satisfaction of salespeople were verified. Furthermore, certain personal and job environmental factors that may influence those relationships were found. The results may take a role of filling the void of the literature and provide a good basis for managerial implications. Job satisfaction is a primary reason that service employees deliver good service (Schneider, 1980), therefore, marketers need to be more interested in maintaining a favorable level of job satisfaction of employees. In order to increase employees' satisfaction on job, retail managers may want to develop educational programs to contribute to improving self-efficacy and customerorientation as well as resolving job stress of salespeople.

This research has some limitations. A convenient sample of clothing salespeople working at 3 department stores might limit the generalizability of the findings. Also, all the respondents were females, so some results would be different from results of other research conducted with both the male and female data. In the future studies, other factors than job stress, customerorientation, and self-efficacy can be tested as factors predicting job satisfaction. Also, more samples obtained from diverse retail distributions or industries might be helpful to provide diverse implications.

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