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Abstract

The present study aims to examine how job satisfaction rests on confidence in Asia. A total of 914 employees who participated in this study consisted of Japanese, Chinese, Hong Kong's, Malaysian, and Thai managers who work as parent or host country nationals for a Japanese multinational corporation expanding Asian markets. This study initially confirmed that a level of each key variable: job satisfaction and confidence, significantly differed in those countries. As the entire managerial group, by controlling age, gender, tenure, past work experience, and management positions, results of regression analysis showed that confidence powerfully increased job satisfaction. Further, with regard to five different area groups, results also illustrated the strong effect of confidence on job satisfaction in each country. Consequently, the study results have led to a conclusion that this relational aspect between the two psychological variables tends to be universalistic rather than a culturally contextual specific phenomenon. Theoretical and practical implications will be discussed.

Keywords

Job satisfaction; confidence; dispositional approaches; Asian managers; Japanese multinationals

Introduction

Job satisfaction is one of the most important topics and widely studied in the area of management and organizational psychology (Dormann and Zapf 2001; Judge, Parker, Colbert, Heller and Ilis 2001; Mueller, Hattrup and Hausmann 2009; Sanches-Runde, Lee and Steers 2009). Many job satisfaction studies were conducted in the United States and have proposed pivotal job satisfaction theories and principles (Judge et al. 2001). On account of accelerating globalization, its investigation beyond a country needs the cross-national research, which has become more crucial among organizational researchers and practitioners (Liu, Borg and Spector 2004). Although cross-national studies of job satisfaction have been continually done for nearly half a century, many studies, not all but particularly early cross-national job satisfaction research, tended to compare simply mean differences in job satisfaction among a few countries (Ryan Chan, Ployhart and Slade 1999; Mueller et al. 2009) without making sufficient efforts to explain about why job satisfaction differs with countries (Sanches-Runde et al. 2009). Therefore, the cross-national generalizability of job satisfaction from one country to the others needs to be established more firmly and it has become a key issue to be importantly investigated in the contemporary management world (Judge et al. 2001; Mueller et al. 2009).

Cross-national job satisfaction

Earlier comparative studies began with the focus on Maslow's (1954) needs theory together with job satisfaction among different countries. Firstly, Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966) compared 14 countries that included over 3600 managers. In their study, employees from Argentina, Chile, India, Spain, and Italy exhibited relatively low job satisfaction, while Swedish employees displayed the highest one. By utilizing the results of Haire et al. (1966), Clark and McCabe (1972) compared Australian employees with the 14 countries and showed

a middle level of the needs satisfaction, while Blunt (1973) also compared South African managers, concluding that they were highly dissatisfied among the other countries' managers. Slocum and Topichak (1972) also examined Maslow's hierarchical needs and job satisfaction difference between Mexican employees ($N = 94$) and their American counterparts ($N = 83$) in a glass company, reporting that Mexicans exhibited a greater satisfaction than Americans. Krant and Ronen (1975) investigated 8700 employees working for an international firm about their job satisfaction among five countries. Their study dealt with job situations and job characteristics and showed that higher order job facets contributed to job satisfaction. Lincoln, Hanada, and Olson (1981) studied 522 employees working Japanese MNCs to compare Japanese, Japanese-Americans, and Americans about how they reacted to work organizations including job satisfaction. Their results showed that Japanese and Japanese-Americans were less satisfied with their job than American employees. Spector and Wimalasiri (1986) compared ten facets of job satisfaction between Singaporean employees ($N = 182$) and American employees ($N = 3442$) from various organizations using Job Satisfaction Survey developed by Spector (1985), and found a significant difference in 5 satisfaction items but insignificance in overall job satisfaction between them. Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) examined over 8000 factory workers in the United States and Japan, and found that American employees were more satisfied with their job but less committed to their firm than their Japanese counterparts. Their job satisfaction difference may be attributed to their cultural distinctions (Lincoln & Kalleger, 1990). The forgoing studies were acknowledged due to contribution to the development in international job satisfaction studies, showing that job satisfaction tends to differ with countries. However, there was little explanation why such a difference in job satisfaction exists according to countries.

More recently, several studies applied some distinct approaches to examination of job satisfaction differences across countries and cultures. For example, Huang and Van de Vliert (2004) investigated a relationship between job satisfaction and job level (blue color vs. white color worker) moderated by cultural differences (individualism vs. collectivism), using 129,087 employees in an MNC from 39 countries. Their study showed that job types were positively related to job satisfaction in individualistic countries but not in collectivistic countries. As another, Pichler and Wallace (2009) paid much attention to socio-institutional factors of countries in relation to job satisfaction and documented the influence of country level institutional, economic factors on job satisfaction in 27 European countries when considering wage, unionization, unemployment, and inequality. Furthermore, with regard to organizational psychology in the management, Mueller et al. (2009) concentrated on individual disposition that differentiates national positivity, demonstrating that the positive trait difference across over 40 countries related to job satisfaction. Their study is noticeable by using many different countries in a job satisfaction model of dispositional approaches to international job satisfaction. However, due to complexity of job satisfaction determinants that include other significant variables derived from dispositional approaches, international job satisfaction study needs to explore into various aspects of such determinants in contexts of different countries and cultures (Judge et al. 2001).

Dispositional approaches to job satisfaction

By examining clinical and social psychology in relation to dispositional approaches, Judge, Locke and Durham (1997) proposed the construct of core self-evaluation that consists of four traits such as self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and generalized self-efficacy—the academician’s terminology for self-confidence (Hollenbeck and Hall 2004). Most studies of relationships between core self-evaluations and job satisfaction have been

done in the United States; while very few studies have dealt with those in other countries and particularly much fewer studies have been conducted about link between general self-efficacy and job satisfaction in there (see Judge et al. 2001). Exceptionally, the research by Luthans, Zhu, and Avolio (2006) examined a relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction in international contexts; however, their study compared between the United States and Southeast Asia as one whole group, rather than individual Asian countries. Besides, their study results showed a strong connection between them in US employees but its marginal association in Southeast Asian employees, whose result is inconclusive. Therefore, the effect of confidence as an individual disposition on job satisfaction remains still undefined or unclearly understood across different detail countries. Accordingly, it seems that cross-national studies of the influence of confidence on job satisfaction among various countries will be beneficial to contribute to understanding of the cross-national generalizability, which is an important issue to be investigated in international job satisfaction studies through dispositional approaches.

International human resource management

Moreover, from a view point of international human resource management, job satisfaction and confidence research across countries has also practical benefit to multinational corporations (MNCs) requiring to understand their valuable human resources (Mueller et al. 2009), particularly about their main local employees–host country nationals (HCNs) worldwide. HCNs have been becoming increasingly competitive and effective (DeNisi, Toh, and Connelly 2006) in performing at not only non-managerial but also managerial positions (Briscoe, Schuler, and Claus 2009). The management of HCNs is thereby strategically important for MNCs to become strong competitors in the race for global talents (Beamish and Inkpen 1998). In fact, the workforce management of MNCs is a key

factor of their success or failure (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1989; Doz and Prahalad 1986), suggesting that MNCs need to effectively manage and retain their competent HCNs by understanding their job satisfaction. However, because of the limitation of multinational research about international job satisfaction (Mueller et al. 2009), MNCs may suffer from understanding why the job satisfaction of HCNs differ from one country to another. Moreover, international HRM research trend that centers on expatriates constraints to understand important aspects of HCNs (see Tarique, Schuler and Gong 2006; Collings Morley and Gunnigle 2008; Tarique and Schuler 2008; Vo 2009). Therefore, by investigating an issue of HCNs' job satisfaction in MNC subsidiaries, this study will provide useful insight for the management of MNCs. To sum in this section, the present study aims to examine a relationship between confidence of HCNs and their job satisfaction in MNCs by employing a dispositional approach to job satisfaction across countries.

Job Satisfaction Theories

Job satisfaction is defined as pleasurable emotional state of individuals who evaluate their job or job experience (Locke 1976). According to Judge et al. (2001), the determinants of job satisfaction were proposed by many theories that can be largely categorized into three classifications: situational theories, dispositional approaches, which are a central focus for this study, and interactive theories. For many years, situational theories have been disseminated as the widespread view of job satisfaction (Houghton and Jinkerspn 2007). They illustrate the nature of job characteristics or the work environment that is a key determinant of job satisfaction, exemplified as Herzberg's (1966; Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman 1959) two factor theory and Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristic model as a typical theory in this categorization (Judge et al. 2001). As a second view, dispositional approaches were advocated by Staw and Ross (1986) who argued that job satisfaction is founded on individuals'

personalities. According to this perspective, job satisfaction reflects from stable individual's characteristics so that it is independent of the job and its situation (Judge et al. 1997). To wit, if individuals are generally inclined to be satisfied with their life, they will be also satisfied with their job, despite positive or negative job characteristics as well as work situations (Houghton and Jinkerson 2007). Although dispositional approaches received criticism (Gerhart 1987; Cropanzano and James 1990), most of them pertained to methodological issues (Judge, 1992). Nonetheless, many empirical studies on dispositional approaches lead to making a reasonable belief of a relationship between individual dispositions and job satisfaction (Judge et al. 1997), and it has thereby supported its perspective (Houghton and Jinkerson 2007). The third categorization represents interactive theories. They explain about job satisfaction as a result of interaction between the situation and the personality, exemplified as Cornell model, value-percept theory (Judge et al. 2001), and the O'Reilly-Chatman person organization fit model (Judge et al. 1997). The view of the interactive theory may be built on the work of Hulin (1991) assuming that personality influences job satisfaction through affecting work situation (Dormann and Zapf 2001). The essential feature of the interactive theory describes consideration of both situation and person variables as an important role by which to influence job satisfaction (Judge et al. 2001).

Research on dispositional approaches to job satisfaction started with individual affection. Much research of dispositional approaches mainly concerns positive and negative affectivity (Judge et al. 1997). Positive affectivity is associated with extraversion and displays general degrees of enthusiasm and energetic feelings (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988; Watson and Slack, 1993), whereas negative affectivity tends to involve relatively introversion and strongly reflects a level of neuroticism (Watson and Clark, 1984; Watson and Slack, 1993). Past studies supported such dispositional approaches to job satisfaction. For example,

Agho, Muller and Price (1993) used a sample of employees in a US medical center and illustrated that both positive and negative affectivities are significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Watson and Slack (1993) also found a constant relationship between both affectivities and job satisfaction over two years in a longitudinal study including US university employees.

As theoretical development of dispositional approaches, Judge et al. (1997) conceptualized a dispositional model of job satisfaction by introducing a concept of core evaluations, which were built on the work of Packer (1985) and various clinical and social psychologists. According to Judge et al. (1997), core evaluations applied in dispositional approaches are characterized as being evaluative, fundamental, and wide in scope of individual traits. Because of those characteristics, such a model encompasses the function of the forgoing affective disposition of positive and negative affectivities on job satisfaction. In this model, generalized self-efficacy (i.e., confidence) is considered the core evaluation of the self on account of the property of its broad scope and fundamental trait, as well as its function of individuals' evaluations of their capabilities for course of action required to effectively deal with challenges (Judge et al. 1997).

Hypothesis Development

Self-efficacy is defined as individual's beliefs that he or she can organize and carry out the courses of action for given attainments by mobilizing his or her cognitive, social, and behavioral abilities (Bandura, 1982; 1997). Similarly, Stajkovic and Luthans (1998b) describe self-efficacy as individual's confidence about his or her capabilities to marshal his or her own resources of motivation, cognition, and courses of action required to complete a specific task effectively. Self-efficacy of those definitions can be applied to perform a specific task or domain. However, general self-efficacy, including a global sense of self-efficacy to apply for

general situations rather than specific situations, presents an overall judgment that people can successfully perform in given situations for their achievement (Eden and Zuk, 1995). Those situations require effectively coping with difficult environments (Luthans, Zhu, and Avolio, 2006) and managing a wide variety of stressors (Schwarzer and Born, 1997). General self-efficacy (i.e., confidence) thereby tends to be applicable to explain a larger range of human behaviors and activities for a less specific context (Luszczynska, Gutierrez-Dona, & Schwarzer, 2005).

Luthans, Luthans, and Luthans (2004) discuss that confidence is a positive psychological capital, which has a great effect on organizational performance. Employee confidence is important for the success of organizations (Luthans, et al., 2004) and for the effectiveness of individuals, especially strong work-related performance (Bandura, 1997; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998a, 1998b; Luthans et al. 2004). Because self-efficacy makes a difference to how individuals feel, think, and act (Luszczynska, et al., 2005), it affects to work attitudes (Judge & Bono, 2001; Luthans, Zhu, & Avolio, 2006; Ayupp & Kong, 2010; Landau, & DeCarlo, 1996). That is, individuals with strong confidence may lead to performance efforts by using skills for the effort demanded for optimal performance (Bandura, 1982). They also take and perform more challenging tasks and establish higher goals and persist with them (Schwarzer & Born, 1997). The meta-analysis by Judge and Bono (2001) showed a positive relationship between general self-efficacy and job performance. Then, performance efforts of individuals with confidence would increase the probability of individual's attainments that are thought to evoke the feeling of satisfaction with jobs in relation to the effort.

Judge et al. (1997) argue in their core evaluation dispositional model of job satisfaction that general self-efficacy has an effect on job satisfaction via its relationship with the successful achievement of the job. The meta-analysis by Judge and Bono (2001) strongly

supported this association. The empirical study by Luthans et al. (2006) also showed the significant correlation between general self-efficacy and job satisfaction in US organizations and the partially significant relationship between them in Southeast Asian contexts, whose result might be attributed to the Asian samples that consisted of four countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, though their demographic test of four countries demonstrated insignificance in general self-efficacy (Luthans et al. 2006). Comparative research in 42 countries by Mueller et al. (2009), however, showed that the scores of positivity, which is closely related to positive affectivity, made a large difference between Malaysia and Thailand, suggesting that each of their dispositions may be distinct. Additionally, although their comparative study was made to examine how positivity is related to job satisfaction across countries, their results indicated a significant relationship between them. It seems that core evaluations are related to job satisfaction in international contexts. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is generated.

Hypothesis: Confidence positively affects job satisfaction.

Methods

Research site

In this research, a Japanese MNC cooperated and participated in a series of studies that contained the data collection of the present study. The Japanese MNC runs their business mainly in Asian emerging markets because the Asia-Pacific region has become strategically crucial for its global expanding business. This international organization is one of the biggest and most successful firms in retail service industries, whose line of business is operating shopping centers, supermarkets, home centers, convenience stores, drugstores, financial services, and so forth. It has over 4,000 stores in Asia, where it uses the same corporate mission across countries, and similar HR policies and practices, and working conditions. For

this study, all research participants were placed at a management position and commonly belonged to shopping centers or supermarkets among five geographical areas in the Asian region that includes Japan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Samples and procedures

The research sample consisted of 914 managers of the forgoing Japanese MNC. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the Asian managers from five areas. The Japanese managers were the oldest, followed by the Hong Kong, Thai, Chinese, and Malaysian managers. The Japanese managers were male dominant, while the other Asian managers held a comparatively balanced composition about gender. Among the research participants of this Japanese MNC, Japanese managers had the longest work experience of its firm, followed by Hong Kong, Thai, Chinese, and Malaysian managers. However, Japanese managers had the least work experience in other organizations, followed by Malaysian, Thai, Chinese, and Hong Kong managers. Finally, the distribution of hierarchical positions differed slightly among the Asian managers.

Survey packets were directly sent to the stores of the Japanese MNC in Japan and to the headquarters of the MNC subsidiaries in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand. Potential participants received the packet through the internal delivery service via its HR department. A total of 1,440 packets were distributed, of which 1,111 were returned. Furthermore, 197 questionnaires were eliminated due to incomplete or incorrect responses. As a consequence, there were 914 questionnaires usable for this study (return rate: 63.5%). As described in Table 1, the return rates for the Japanese, Chinese, Hong Kong, Malaysian, and Thai managers were 48.3% (232 of 480), 80.5% (298 of 370), 72.7% (109 of 150), 54.7% (164 of 300), and 79.3% (111 of 140) respectively.

Insert Table 1 about here

Measures

Job satisfaction scale

Judge et al. (2001) discussed measurement of job satisfaction and presented several good job satisfaction scales. Among them, the present study used the scale designed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) which is characterized as a global measure of overall job satisfaction in organizations, to be sensitive to variations in attitudes, and to apply to various kinds of jobs. The original version has 18 items. In order to reduce the overall workload of the survey questions, a shorter version of six items were developed using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*): “I feel fairly satisfied with my present job,” “I am often bored in my current job” (reversed item), “My current assignment is pretty uninteresting” (reversed item), “I am satisfied with my present assignment for the time being,” “I am disappointed that I took this current assignment” (reversed item), and “Most days, I am enthusiastic about my present job.” In this study, the Cronbach’s alpha was 0.79.

Job confidence scale

This study required measuring the level of employee confidence in jobs, which should not be limited to a specific task but needs to be applicable to a more generalized situation about job at workplaces. In the present, a job confidence scale was developed to meet such work settings, including the following four items: I have confidence in my job; I am so confident in myself that I will complete my current job; I don’t have any confidence in my present work (a reversed item); and I am fairly confident of doing my job thoroughly. The measure was designed with a 5-point Likert type of degrees from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

To examine the validity and reliability of the job confidence scale, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was initially conducted. The principal component EFA method was

employed on the data from the sample of 914 participants who completed the survey. Evaluation of the Eigen values and scree plot suggested that there existed only one primary factor that was dominant (i.e., Eigen values greater than one). Those 4 items accounted for 64.9% of the total variance. Next, in order to confirm the one factor which was identified from the EFA, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using the same sample. The CFA results indicated that four items loaded on the factor of the confidence and all loadings were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) with standardized values ranging from 0.51 to 0.89. In addition, the results of the CFA indicated acceptable structure validity ($\chi^2 = 3.888, p > 0.05; df = 2; RMSEA = 0.032; CFI = 0.999; NFI = 0.997; \text{ and } GFI = 0.998$). Most of these CFA indices suggested by Coovert and Craiger (2000) were important to assess model fit (Liu, Borg, & Spector 2004). Those four items were also reliable (Cronbach alpha = 0.81). Table 2 illustrates the job confidence items with their factor loadings from the EFA and CFA.

Insert Table 2 about here

Demographic questions

The participated Asian managers were asked about age (year), gender (male = 1, female = 0), tenures in this firm (months), past work experience (yes = 1, no = 0), and management positions (assistant managers = 1; line managers = 2; store or vice store managers = 3). Those socio-demographic characteristics were applied as control variables to investigate how job confidence has an effect on job satisfaction.

Translation procedures

According to the translation procedures for cross-cultural research proposed by Brislin, Lonner, and Thorndike (1973), this study used the job satisfaction scale, the job confidence scale, and demographic questionnaires in four languages—English, Japanese, Chinese, and Thai. All questionnaires were originally described in English, which was applied

for the investigation of the Malaysian managers. The English questionnaires were translated into Japanese, Chinese, and Thai languages, which were translated back into English. The meanings of the original English versions were compared with those of the back-translated versions from Japanese, Chinese, and Thai versions.

Results

Table 3 presents the correlation matrix and descriptive statistics among all seven variables in this study. The results of the correlation analysis illustrated that job satisfaction was positively and significantly related to past work experience ($p < 0.01$), management positions ($p < 0.05$), and job confidence ($p < 0.01$).

Insert Table 3 about here

Cross-national difference testing

In order to confirm cross-national variations in job satisfaction as well as job confidence, this study initially examined how the level of job satisfaction and that of job confidence differ with countries respectively before the results of the hypothesis testing. Table 4 shows cross-national differences in job satisfaction, while table 5 describes those in job confidence. The results of ANOVA, as shown in Table 4, indicated that job satisfaction significantly varied among the five geographical areas in Asia ($F = 12.22, p < 0.01$). The Tukey test as a post hoc analysis was applied to find out which country managers differs from others in reference to job satisfaction. Its results illustrated that Japanese managers exhibited their significantly lower job satisfaction than the others. The job satisfaction of Malaysian managers was the second lowest; that of Hong Kong, the third; that of Thai, the fourth; and that of Chinese showed the highest. However, the difference in job satisfaction levels of the other four national managers was insignificance.

The results of ANOVA described in Table 5 indicated that the level of job confidence significantly differed among the five geographical areas ($F = 70.12, p < 0.01$). The results of Tukey test showed that Japanese managers had the lowest confidence in job and significantly differed among the Asian managers. Malaysian, Hong Kong, Thai, and Chinese managers showed the second lowest to the highest job confidence in this order. The level of job confidence of Malaysian managers was significantly different from that of both Thai and Chinese managers; that of Hong Kong managers was significantly distinct from that of Chinese.

Insert Tables 4 & 5 about here

Hypothesis testing

The hypothesis of the present study predicted that confidence has a positive effect on job satisfaction. As earlier shown in Table 3, there was a positive, significant correlation between job confidence and job satisfaction ($r = 0.51, p < 0.01$). To control socio-demographic variables, this study also conducted hierarchical regression analysis, whose results are presented in Table 6. Model 1 included only the control variables, while Model 2 added the predictor of job confidence into Model 1 as a main effect to be estimated. Furthermore, because the cross-national difference in job satisfaction as well as that in job confidence was significant as shown in Tables 4 and 5, this study pursued to examine the impact of confidence on job satisfaction in terms of each of the five geographical areas in addition to an entire group of the Asian managers.

As described in Table 6, Model 2 for all participated Asian managers as the entire group in this study illustrated that the predictor of job confidence had a significant influence on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.52, p < 0.01$), indicating an incremental adjusted R^2 (F change = 302.58, $p < 0.01$) in comparison with Model 1 that produced statistically significant results (F

= 5.67, $p < 0.01$). It is quite obvious that Model 2 accounted for a greater percentage of the variation (R^2 change = 0.24). Furthermore, Model 2 of each of five Asian regions yielded the significance of its result respectively at the critical level of 0.01 (Japanese: $F = 25.58$; Chinese: $F = 8.20$; Hong Kong: $F = 6.58$; Malaysia: $F = 4.10$; Thai: $F = 3.72$). It also revealed that job confidence significantly affected job satisfaction at the critical level of 0.01 (Japanese: $\beta = 0.60$; Chinese: $\beta = 0.37$; Hong Kong: $\beta = 0.45$; Malaysian: $\beta = 0.40$; Thai: $\beta = 0.42$) with controlling the socio-demographic variables. The incremental R^2 change of each of the five areas was statistically significant at the critical level of 0.01 (Japanese: F change = 123.17; Chinese: F change = 43.20; Hong Kong: F change = 27.65; Malaysia: F change = 28.07; Thai: F change = 21.31) in comparison with its Model 1 respectively. Like Model 2 of the entire group, that of all of Japanese, Chinese, Hong Kong, Malaysian and Thai managers' groups explained a greater percentage of the variance, too. Additionally, Figure 1 shows a relationship between job satisfaction and confidence according to the five locations in Asia. Accordingly, all of the aforementioned evidence in this section supported the acceptance of the hypothesis.

Insert Table 6 & Figure 1 about here

Discussions

Reviewing results and study contribution

The present study used a dispositional approach to examine the effect of confidence on job satisfaction in cross-national contexts that focused on Asia including Japan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand. Those two key variables of job satisfaction and confidence varied with different countries respectively in this research context. Results of this study suggest that regardless of managers' countries, the managers are likely to be more satisfied with their jobs if they have more confidence in their jobs. The results are largely

consistent with the finding of several previous researches (see Judge and Bono, 2001; Judge et al. 1997; Luthans et al. 2006). Therefore, this study can draw a conclusion that confidence affects job satisfaction no matter which country managers work in. On account of the importance of the cross-national generalizability of job satisfaction (Judge et al. 2001; Mueller et al. 2009), the present study contributed to the development of international job satisfaction research through a lens of the dispositional approach particularly with emphasis of job confidence.

Implications of this study

Job satisfaction is an important predictor to absenteeism (Tharenou, 1993), sabotage (Chen & Spector 1992), or counterproductive behaviors (Gottfredson & Holland 1990). Because of these unfavorable outcomes derived from low job satisfaction, HR managers in any firm would need to select prospective employees who will be satisfied with jobs in future workplaces. Although the level of job satisfaction is also contingent to situational factors and job characteristics, the investigation of candidates' confidence levels of their current or recent jobs may be one useful method as a selection process to predict the job satisfaction of candidates. In this case, however, a comparison among plural candidates within the same country but not between countries is crucial to apply this method for selection due to cross-national differences in confidence, which was illustrated in this study and by another study conducted by Schwarzer and Born (1997) using 13 countries.

Global HR managers of the headquarters may wish to understand why job satisfaction differences will occur with countries even if similar working conditions and common HR practices are applied in overseas subsidiaries. One answer to this inquiry is that job confidence differs across countries, affecting job satisfaction in common. Therefore, in addition to the finding of Mueller et al. (2009) about the impact of positivity in countries on

job satisfaction, the HR managers should understand this effect from the present study and transmit this knowledge to global managers who are moved to different countries as a new assignment. By doing so, the global managers will comprehend with depth and better manage their host country nationals.

Limitations

Although it is believed that this study contributed to the international generalizability of job satisfaction by means of a dispositional approach using the sample of Asian managers, other different research participants across countries with different industries are necessary to strengthen the generalization of view that confidence has an effect on job satisfaction. Because not many studies about this association were conducted in international contexts excepting the United States and Asian countries, promising research sites may include European, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and African countries.

In this study, a new scale was developed to examine the degree of confidence using 4 items under the assumption that confidence is conceptually the same as generalized self-efficacy, which refers to the academician's terminology for self-confidence (Hollenbeck and Hall 2004). A future study may thereby need to confirm whether the developed confidence scale used in this study is identical to scales of generalized self-efficacy.

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Table 1. Demographic characteristics of Japanese, Chinese, Hong Kong, Malaysian, and Thai managers.

	ALL managers		Japanese		Chinese		Hong Kong		Malaysian		Thai	
	(N = 914)		(N = 232)		(N = 298)		(N = 109)		(N = 164)		(N = 111)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Age												
mean	36.2		42.5		31.9		39.4		32.1		37.8	
s.d.	8.1		8.6		5.4		7.7		5.0		6.7	
Gender												
Male	484	53.0%	177	76.3%	146	49.0%	46	42.2%	71	43.3%	44	39.6%
Female	430	47.0%	55	23.7%	152	51.0%	63	57.8%	93	56.7%	67	60.4%
Work experience at this MNC (tenure)												
mean (months)	131.1		219.7		83.3		145.7		85.7		126.7	
s.d.	92.5		107.7		39.9		62.1		64.4		80.3	
Past work experience at other organizations												
Yes	523	57.2%	62	26.7%	223	74.8%	96	88.1%	77	47.0%	65	58.6%
No	391	42.8%	170	73.3%	75	25.2%	13	11.9%	87	53.0%	46	41.4%
Management positions												
Store manager/vice-manager	116	12.7%	21	9.1%	55	18.5%	10	9.2%	17	10.4%	13	11.7%
Line manager	179	19.6%	46	19.8%	39	13.1%	25	22.9%	57	34.8%	12	10.8%
Assistant line manager	619	67.7%	165	71.1%	204	68.5%	74	67.9%	90	54.9%	86	77.5%

Table 2. Results of EFA and CFA for employees' confidence in jobs.

Each item	EFA	CFA
I have confidence in my job.	0.86	0.81
I am so confident in myself that I will complete my current task.	0.89	0.89
I don't have any confidence in my present work.	0.66	0.51
I am fairly confident of doing my job thoroughly.	0.80	0.70

Note. $N = 914$; The CFA indices were $\chi^2 = 3.89$, $p > 0.05$, $df = 2$; GFI = 0.99; CFI = 0.99; RMR = 0.01; RMSEA = 0.03.

Table 3. The correlation matrix and descriptive statistics for all key variables.

Variables	mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	36.20	8.11						
2. Gender	0.53	0.49	0.13 **					
3. Tenure (months)	131.07	92.53	0.77 **	0.09 **				
4. Past work experience	0.57	0.49	0.06 †	-0.05	-0.22 **			
5. Management positions	1.45	0.70	0.17 **	0.02	0.11 **	-0.07 †		
6. Confidence	15.61	2.72	-0.13 **	-0.02	-0.20 **	0.25 **	0.06 †	
7. Job satisfaction	21.48	3.80	0.03	-0.05	-0.03	0.15 **	0.07 *	0.51 **

Note. Gender code (male = 1;female = 0); Past work experience code (yes = 1; no = 0); Management positions (assistant managers = 1; line managers = 2; store and vice store managers = 3).

$N = 914$; ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < 0.10$

Table 4. Results of ANOVA and Tukey tests about job satisfaction of Asian managers.

ANOVA test		<i>F</i> values	<i>df</i>
Job Satisfaction		12.22**	4, 909
Tukey test		Sub-groups by $\alpha = 0.05$	
		1	2
	<i>N</i>	mean	mean
Japanese	232	20.15	
Malaysian	164		21.30
Hong Kong	109		21.69
Thai	111		22.08
Chinese	298		22.32
Significance levels		1.000	0.11

Note. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5. Results of ANOVA and Tukey tests about confidence of Asian managers.

ANOVA test		F values		<i>df</i>	
Confidence		70.12**		4, 909	
Tukey test		Sub-groups by $\alpha = 0.05$			
		1	2	3	4
	<i>N</i>	mean	mean	mean	mean
Japanese	232	13.50			
Malaysian	164		15.52		
Hong Kong	109		15.97	15.97	
Thai	111			16.27	16.27
Chinese	298				16.92
Significance levels		1.000	0.46	0.81	0.12

Note. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 6. Results of regression analysis about the effect of confidence on job satisfaction controlling socio-demographics.

	All Asians		Japanese		Chinese		Hong Kong		Malaysian		Thai	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Control variables												
Age	0.04	0.09 [†]	.106	.020	0.00	0.02	0.34**	0.31**	0.20 [†]	0.05	0.06	0.05
Gender	-0.05	-0.05 [†]	.085	-.001	-0.04	-0.07	-0.10	-0.16 [†]	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.09
Tenure	-0.03	0.01	.127	.100	-0.02	0.01	-0.09	-0.08	-0.14	-0.04	0.02	-0.05
Past work experience	0.14**	0.01	-.034	-.011	0.13 [†]	0.06	0.00	-0.05	0.14	0.10	0.03	0.03
Management position	0.07*	0.02	.073	.004	0.05	0.06	-0.12	-0.04	0.05	0.06	0.00	-0.03
Predictors												
Confidence		0.52**		0.60**		0.37**		0.45**		0.40**		0.42**
F values	5.67**	56.72**	3.94*	25.58**	1.05	8.20**	2.42*	6.58**	1.95 [†]	4.10**	0.17	3.72**
Adjusted R²	0.03	0.27	0.06	0.39	0.00	0.13	0.06	0.26	0.03	0.17	-0.04	0.13
R² change		0.24		0.33		0.13		0.19		0.14		0.17
F change		302.58**		123.17**		43.20**		27.65**		28.07**		21.31**

Note. $N = 914$; ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, [†] $p < 0.1$.

Figure 1. A relationship between job satisfaction and confidence among the 5 regions in Asia.

