# 3

# Attitudes and Job Satisfaction

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

1. Contrast the three components of an attitude.
2. Summarize the relationship between attitudes and behavior.
3. Compare and contrast the major job attitudes.
4. Define *job satisfaction* and show how we can measure it.
5. Identify four employee responses to dissatisfaction.

### ⭐ Chapter Warm-up

If your professor has chosen to assign this, go to **www.mymanagementlab.com** to see what you should particularly focus on and to take the Chapter 3 warm up.

We seem to have attitudes toward everything, whether it's about our leaders, our college or university, our families, or ourselves. In this chapter, we look at attitudes, their link to behavior, and how employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their jobs affects the workplace.

### ⭐ WATCH IT

If your professor assigned this, sign in to **mymanagementlab.com** to watch a video titled Gawker Media: Attitudes and Job Satisfaction to learn more about this topic and respond to questions.

Essentials of Organizational Behavior, Thirteenth Edition by Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge.
Published by Prentice Hall. Copyright © 2014 by Pearson Education, Inc.

## ATTITUDES

**Attitudes** are evaluative statements—either favorable or unfavorable—about objects, people, or events. They reflect how we feel about something. When you say "I like my job," you are expressing your attitude about work.

Attitudes are complex. If you ask people about their attitude toward religion, Miley Cyrus, or the organization they work for, you may get a simple response, but the underlying reasons are probably complicated. In order to fully understand attitudes, we must consider their fundamental properties or components.

### What Are the Main Components of Attitudes?

Typically, researchers have assumed that attitudes have three components: cognition, affect, and behavior.[1] Let's look at each.

The statement "My pay is low" is the **cognitive component** of an attitude—a description of or belief in the way things are. It sets the stage for the more critical part of an attitude—its **affective component**. Affect is the emotional or feeling segment of an attitude and is reflected in the statement "I am angry over how little I'm paid." Finally, affect is often an immediate precursor to behavior. The **behavioral component** of an attitude describes an intention to behave in a certain way toward someone or something—to continue the example, "I'm going to look for another job that pays better."

Viewing attitudes as having three components—cognition, affect, and behavior—is helpful in understanding the complexity and potential relationship between attitudes and behavior. Keep in mind that these components are closely related, and cognition and affect in particular are inseparable in many ways. For example, imagine you realized that someone has just treated you unfairly. Aren't you likely to have feelings about that, occurring virtually instantaneously with the realization? Thus, cognition and affect are intertwined.
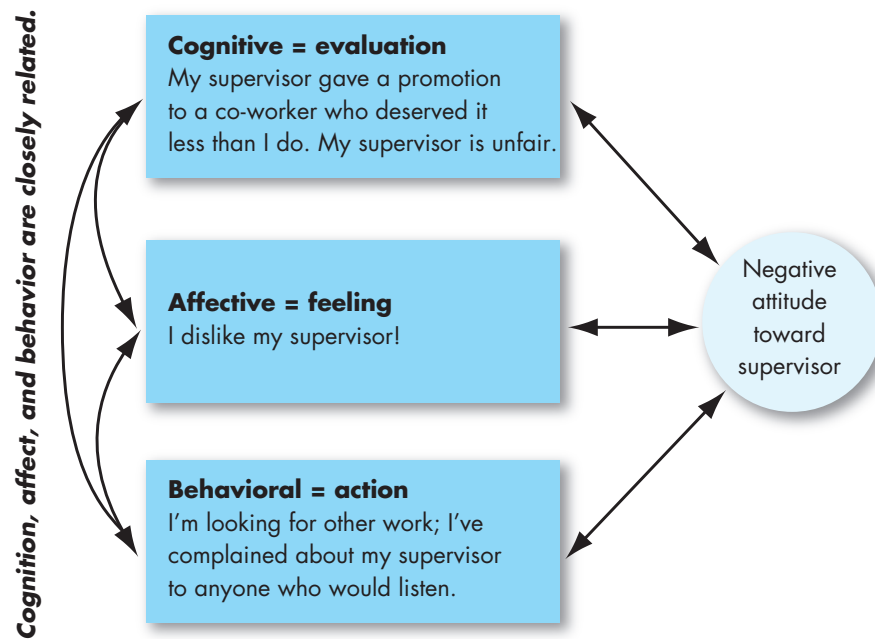
Exhibit 3-1 illustrates how the three components of an attitude are related. In this example, an employee didn't get a promotion he thought he deserved; a coworker got it instead. The employee's attitude toward his supervisor is illustrated as follows: The employee thought he deserved the promotion (cognition), he strongly dislikes his supervisor (affect), and he has complained and taken action (behavior). Although we often think cognition causes affect, which then causes behavior, in reality these components are difficult to separate.

In organizations, attitudes are important for their behavioral component. If workers believe, for example, that supervisors, auditors, bosses, and time-and-motion engineers are all in conspiracy to make employees work harder for the same or less money, it makes sense to try to understand how these attitudes formed, how they relate to actual job behavior, and how they might be changed.

### Does Behavior Always Follow from Attitudes?

Early research on attitudes assumed they were causally related to behavior—that is, the attitudes people hold determine what they do. Common sense, too, suggests a relationship. Isn't it logical that people watch television programs they like, or that employees try to avoid assignments they find distasteful?

**EXHIBIT 3-1**
**The Components of an Attitude**

*Cognition, affect, and behavior are closely related.*

**Cognitive = evaluation**
My supervisor gave a promotion to a co-worker who deserved it less than I do. My supervisor is unfair.

**Affective = feeling**
I dislike my supervisor!

**Behavioral = action**
I'm looking for other work; I've complained about my supervisor to anyone who would listen.

Negative attitude toward supervisor

However, in the late 1960s, a review of the research challenged this assumed effect of attitudes on behavior.[2] One researcher—Leon Festinger—argued that attitudes *follow* behavior. Subsequent researchers have agreed that attitudes predict future behavior and confirmed Festinger's idea that moderating variables can strengthen the link.[3]

Did you ever notice how people change what they say so it doesn't contradict what they do? Perhaps a friend of yours consistently argued that his apartment complex was better than yours until another friend in your complex asked him to move in with him; once he moved to your complex, you noticed his attitude toward his former apartment became more critical. Festinger proposed that cases of attitude following behavior illustrate the effects of **cognitive dissonance**,[4] any incompatibility an individual might perceive between two or more attitudes or between behavior and attitudes.

Research has generally concluded that people do seek consistency among their attitudes and between their attitudes and their behavior.[5] As Festinger argued, any form of inconsistency is uncomfortable and individuals will therefore attempt to reduce it. People will seek a stable state, which is a minimum of dissonance. They either alter the attitudes or the behavior, or they develop a rationalization for the discrepancy.

No individual, of course, can completely avoid dissonance. You know texting and driving is unsafe, but you do it anyway and hope nothing bad happens. Or you give someone advice you have trouble following yourself. Festinger proposed that the desire to reduce dissonance depends on three factors, including the *importance* of the elements creating it and the degree of *influence* we believe we have over them. The third factor is the *rewards* of dissonance; high rewards accompanying high dissonance tend to reduce the tension inherent in the dissonance (the dissonance is less distressing if accompanied by something good, such as a higher pay raise than expected). Individuals will be more motivated to reduce dissonance when the attitudes are important or when they believe the dissonance is due to something they can control.

## Moderating Variables

The most powerful moderators of the attitudes relationship are the *importance* of the attitude, its *correspondence to behavior*, its *accessibility*, the presence of *social pressures*, and whether a person has *direct experience* with the attitude.[6] Let's review each of these in turn.

Important attitudes reflect our fundamental values, self-interest, or identification with individuals or groups we value. These attitudes tend to show a strong relationship to our behavior.

Specific attitudes tend to predict specific behaviors, whereas general attitudes tend to predict general behaviors. For instance, asking someone about her intention to stay with an organization for the next six months is likely to better predict turnover for that person than asking her how satisfied she is with her job overall. On the other hand, overall job satisfaction would better predict a general pattern of behavior, such as whether the individual was engaged in her work or motivated to contribute to her organization.[7]

You're more likely to remember attitudes you frequently express, and attitudes that our memories can easily access are more likely to predict our behavior. Discrepancies between attitudes and behaviors tend to occur when social pressures to behave in certain ways hold exceptional power, as in most organizations. Finally, the attitude–behavior relationship is likely to be much stronger if an attitude refers to something with which we have direct personal experience.

## WHAT ARE THE MAJOR JOB ATTITUDES?

We each have thousands of attitudes, but OB focuses on a very limited number of work-related attitudes that tap positive or negative evaluations employees hold about their work environments. Much of the research has looked at three attitudes: job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment.[8] Other important attitudes include perceived organizational support and employee engagement.

*Individuals have many kinds of attitudes about their jobs. Of the main job attitudes, organizational commitment and job satisfaction are the most widely studied.*

### Job Satisfaction

When people speak of employee attitudes, they usually mean **job satisfaction**, which describes a positive feeling about a job, resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics. A person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive feelings about his job, while a person with a low level holds negative feelings. Because OB researchers give job satisfaction high importance, we'll review this attitude in detail later.

### Job Involvement

Related to job satisfaction is **job involvement**,[9] which measures the degree to which people identify psychologically with their jobs and consider their perceived performance levels important to self-worth.[10] Employees with a high level of job involvement strongly identify with and really care about the kind of work they do. Another closely related concept is **psychological empowerment**, employees' beliefs in the degree to which they influence their work environments, their competencies, the meaningfulness of their jobs, and their perceived autonomy.[11] Research suggests that empowerment initiatives need to be tailored to the culture and desired behavioral outcomes. One study of nursing managers in Singapore found that good leaders empower their employees by fostering their

self-perception of competence—through involving them in decisions, making them feel their work is important, and giving them discretion to "do their own thing."[12] Another study found, however, that for teachers in India, the self-perception of competence does not affect innovative behavior.[13]

As with job satisfaction, high levels of both job involvement and psychological empowerment are positively related to citizenship behavior, discussed later in this chapter, and job performance.[14]

## Organizational Commitment

An employee with **organizational commitment** identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to remain a member. Most research has focused on emotional attachment to an organization and belief in its values as the "gold standard" for employee commitment.[15]

A positive relationship appears to exist between organizational commitment and job productivity, but it is a modest one.[16] A review of twenty-seven studies suggested the relationship between organizational commitment and performance is strongest for new employees and considerably weaker for more experienced employees.[17] Research indicates that employees who feel their employers fail to keep promises to them feel less committed, and these reductions in commitment, in turn, lead to lower levels of creative performance.[18] And, as with job involvement, the research evidence demonstrates negative relationships between organizational commitment and both absenteeism and turnover.[19]

Theoretical models propose that employees who are committed will be less likely to engage in work withdrawal even if they are dissatisfied because they have a sense of organizational loyalty or attachment. On the other hand, employees who are not committed, who feel less loyal to the organization, will tend to show lower levels of attendance at work across the board. Research confirms this theoretical proposition.[20] It does appear that even if employees are not currently happy with their work, they are willing to make sacrifices for the organization if they are committed enough.

## Perceived Organizational Support

**Perceived organizational support (POS)** is the degree to which employees believe the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. An excellent example has been related by R&D engineer John Greene. When Greene was diagnosed with leukemia, CEO Marc Benioff and 350 fellow Salesforce.com employees covered all out-of-pocket costs for his care, staying in touch with him throughout his recovery. No doubt POS stories like this are part of the reason Salesforce.com is on *Fortune*'s 100 Best Companies to Work For list.[21]

Research shows that people perceive their organizations as supportive when rewards are deemed fair, when employees have a voice in decisions, and when they see their supervisors as supportive.[22] Employees with strong POS perceptions have been found more likely to have higher levels of citizenship behaviors, lower levels of tardiness, and better customer service.[23] This seems to hold true mainly in countries where the power distance, the degree to which people in a country accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally, is lower. In low power-distance countries like

the United States, people are more likely to view work as an exchange than as a moral obligation, so employees look for reasons to feel supported by their organizations. In high power-distance countries like China, employee POS perceptions are not as based on demonstrations of fairness, support, and encouragement. POS can be a predictor anywhere on a situation-specific basis, of course. One study found POS predicted the job performance and citizenship behaviors of Chinese employees who were untraditional or low power-distance in their orientation.[24]

## Employee Engagement

A relatively new concept is **employee engagement**, an individual's involvement with, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for, the work she does. To evaluate engagement, we might ask employees whether they have access to resources and the opportunities to learn new skills, whether they feel their work is important and meaningful, and whether their interactions with coworkers and supervisors are rewarding.[25] Highly engaged employees have a passion for their work and feel a deep connection to their companies; disengaged employees have essentially checked out—putting time but not energy or attention into their work. Engagement becomes a real concern for most organizations because surveys indicate that few employees—between 17 percent and 29 percent—are highly engaged by their work.

Engagement levels determine many measurable outcomes. A study of nearly 8,000 business units in 36 companies found that units whose employees reported high-average levels of engagement achieved higher levels of customer satisfaction, were more productive, brought in higher profits, and experienced lower levels of turnover and accidents than other business units.[26] Molson Coors, for example, found that engaged employees were five times less likely to have safety incidents, and when an accident did occur it was much less serious and less costly for the engaged employee than for a disengaged one ($63 per incident versus $392). Caterpillar set out to increase employee engagement and recorded a resulting 80 percent drop in grievances and a 34 percent increase in highly satisfied customers.[27]

Such promising findings have earned employee engagement a following in business organizations and management consulting firms. However, the concept is relatively new and still generates active debate about its usefulness. Part of the reason for this is the difficulty of identifying what creates job engagement. For instance, two top reasons for job engagement that participants gave in a recent study were (1) having a good manager they enjoy working for and (2) feeling appreciated by their supervisor. Because both factors relate to work relationships, it would be easy to conclude that this proves the case for job engagement. Yet, in this same study, individuals ranked "liking and respecting my coworkers" lower on the list, below career advancement concerns.[28]

One review of the job engagement literature concluded, "The meaning of employee engagement is ambiguous among both academic researchers and among practitioners who use it in conversations with clients." Another reviewer called engagement "an umbrella term for whatever one wants it to be."[29] More recent research has set out to clarify the dimensions of employee engagement. For instance, a study in Australia found that emotional intelligence is linked to job satisfaction and well-being, and to employee

engagement.[30] Another recent study suggested that engagement fluctuates partially due to daily challenge-seeking and demands.[31]

It is clear that the debate about the determinants and dimensions of job engagement are far from settled, but it is also clear that job engagement yields important organizational outcomes.

**ARE THESE JOB ATTITUDES REALLY ALL THAT DISTINCT?**   You might wonder whether the preceding job attitudes are really distinct. If people feel deeply engaged by their job (high job involvement), isn't it probable they like it, too (high job satisfaction)? Won't people who think their organization is supportive (high perceived organizational support) also feel committed to it (strong organizational commitment)? Evidence suggests these attitudes *are* highly related, perhaps to a troubling degree that makes one wonder whether there are useful distinctions to be made among them.

There is some distinctiveness among attitudes, but they overlap greatly for various reasons, including the employee's personality. If you as a manager know someone's level of job satisfaction, you know most of what you need to know about how that person sees the organization. Recent research suggests that managers tend to identify their employees as belonging to one of four distinct categories: enthusiastic stayers, reluctant stayers, enthusiastic leavers (planning to leave), and reluctant leavers (not planning to leave but should leave).[32]

## JOB SATISFACTION

We have already discussed job satisfaction briefly. Now let's dissect the concept more carefully. How do we measure job satisfaction? What causes an employee to have a high level of job satisfaction? How do dissatisfied and satisfied employees affect an organization? Understanding the inputs and outcomes of job satisfaction is an important tool toward managing your best organizational asset, your employees.

### Measuring Job Satisfaction

Our definition of **job satisfaction**—a positive feeling about a job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics—is clearly broad. Yet that breadth is appropriate. A job is more than shuffling papers, writing programming code, waiting on customers, or driving a truck. Jobs require interacting with coworkers and bosses, following organizational rules and policies, meeting performance standards, living with less than ideal working conditions, and the like.[33] An employee's assessment of his satisfaction with the job is thus a complex summation of many discrete elements. How, then, do we measure it?

Two approaches are popular. The single global rating is a response to one question, such as "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job?" Respondents circle a number between 1 and 5 on a scale from "highly satisfied" to "highly dissatisfied." The second method, the summation of job facets, is more sophisticated. It identifies key elements in a job such as the nature of the work, supervision, present pay, promotion opportunities, and relationships with coworkers.[34] Respondents rate these on a standardized scale, and researchers add the ratings to create an overall job satisfaction score.

Is one of these approaches superior? Intuitively, summing up responses to a number of job factors seems likely to achieve a more accurate evaluation of job satisfaction. Research, however, doesn't support the intuition.[35] This is one of those rare instances in which simplicity seems to work as well as complexity, making one method essentially as valid as the other. The best explanation is that the concept of job satisfaction is so broad, a single question captures its essence. The summation of job facets may also leave out some important facets that are encompassed in the broader question. Both methods are helpful. The single global rating method isn't very time consuming, thus freeing time for other tasks, and the summation of job facets helps managers zero in on problems and deal with them faster and more accurately.

## How Satisfied Are People in Their Jobs?

Are most people satisfied with their jobs? The answer seems to be a qualified "yes" in the United States and most other developed countries. Independent studies conducted among U.S. workers over the past thirty years generally indicate more workers are satisfied with their jobs than not. Thus it shouldn't surprise you that recent research found that average job satisfaction levels were consistently high from 1972 to 2006.[36] But a caution is in order. A dramatic drop-off in average job satisfaction levels from the economic contraction began in late 2007, so that only about half of workers reported being satisfied with their jobs in 2010.[37] Early indications are that job satisfaction levels have not recovered well since then.[38]

Research shows satisfaction levels vary a lot, depending on which facet of job satisfaction you're talking about. As shown in Exhibit 3-2, people have typically been more satisfied with their jobs overall, with the work itself, and with their supervisors and coworkers than they have been with their pay and with promotion opportunities. It's not really clear why people dislike their pay and promotion possibilities more than other aspects of their jobs.[39]
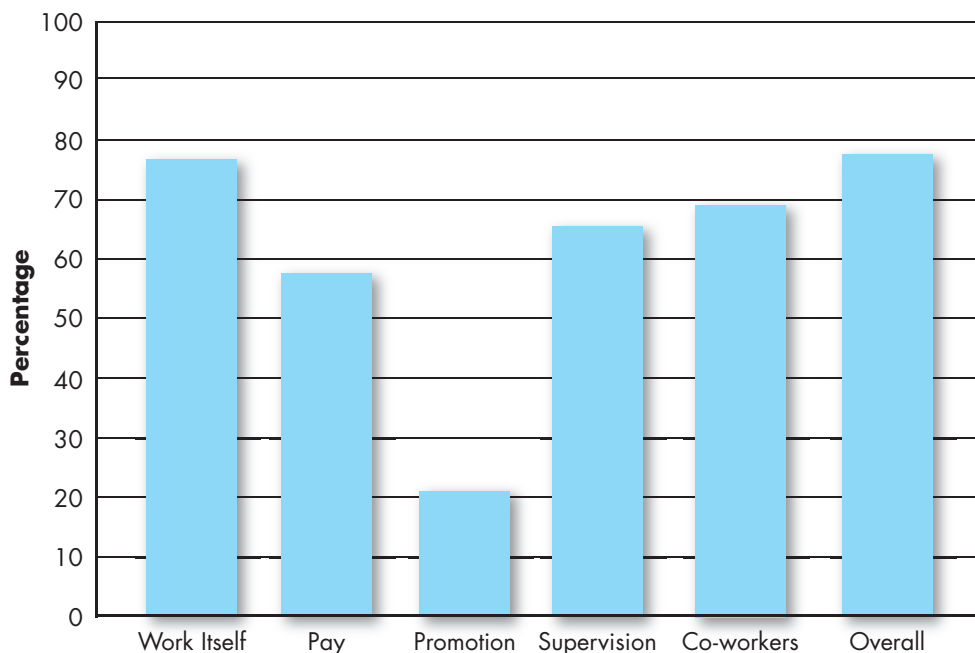


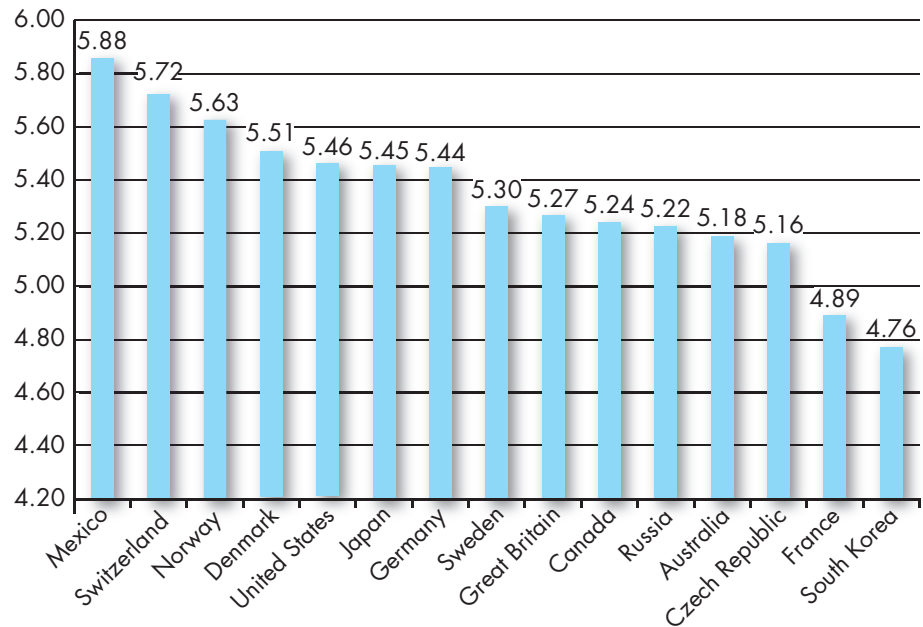**EXHIBIT 3-2**
**Average Job Satisfaction Levels by Facet**

**EXHIBIT 3-3**

**Average Levels of Employee Job Satisfaction by Country**

*Source:* J. H. Westover, "The Impact of Comparative State-Directed Development on Working Conditions and Employee Satisfaction," *Journal of Management & Organization* (July 2012), pp. 537–554.

Although job satisfaction appears relevant across cultures, that doesn't mean there are no cultural differences in job satisfaction. Evidence suggests employees in Western cultures have higher levels of job satisfaction than those in Eastern cultures.[40] Exhibit 3-3 provides the results of a global study of job satisfaction levels of workers in fifteen countries. As the exhibit shows, the highest levels appear in Mexico and Switzerland. Do employees in these cultures have better jobs? Or are they simply more positive (and less self-critical)? Conversely, the lowest score in the study was for South Korea. There is a lack of autonomy in the South Korean culture and their businesses tend to be rigidly hierarchical in structure. Does this make for low job satisfaction?[41] It is difficult to discern all of the factors in the scores, but considering if and how businesses are responding to changes brought on by globalization may give us clues.

## What Causes Job Satisfaction?

Think about the best job you've ever had. What made it so? Chances are you liked the work you did and the people with whom you worked. Interesting jobs that provide training, variety, independence, and control satisfy most employees.[42] There is also a strong correspondence between how well people enjoy the social context of their workplace and how satisfied they are overall. Interdependence, feedback, social support, and interaction with coworkers outside the workplace are strongly related to job satisfaction, even after accounting for characteristics of the work itself.[43]

You've probably noticed that pay comes up often when people discuss job satisfaction. For people who are poor or who live in poor countries, pay does correlate with job satisfaction and overall happiness. But that changes once an individual reaches a standard level of comfortable living. A meta-analysis of the research literature found little relationship between pay levels and satisfaction, and subsequent research generally concurs with this conclusion. Satisfaction does rise incrementally with pay, but the effect is very small. People who earn $80,000 are, on average, no happier with their jobs than those who earn closer to $40,000.[44] The job satisfaction—pay relationship is a complex matter of perspective. For example, recent research indicates that job satisfaction may be higher for employees who enter the workforce during lean economic times, even when they earn less pay. This higher job satisfaction appears to last throughout the individual's career, no matter what pay and economic conditions ensue.[45]

Money does motivate people, as we will discover in Chapter 6. But what motivates us is not necessarily what makes us happy. One study found that many factors other than money led to employee job satisfaction, including the nature of the work (employees whose jobs involved caregiving, and those who worked in skilled trades, were more satisfied), structural characteristics of the job (people who worked for companies with fewer than 100 employees, and people whose jobs involved supervising others, were more satisfied), and even demographics (employees were least job satisfied when in their forties).[46] Personality also plays a role. Research has shown that people who have positive **core self-evaluations (CSEs)**—who believe in their inner worth and basic competence—are more satisfied with their jobs than those with negative core self-evaluations.

## THE IMPACT OF SATISFIED AND DISSATISFIED EMPLOYEES ON THE WORKPLACE

What happens when employees like their jobs, and when they dislike their jobs? One theoretical model—the exit–voice–loyalty–neglect framework—is helpful in understanding the consequences of dissatisfaction. Exhibit 3-4 illustrates the framework's four

Most employees are satisfied with their jobs; when they're not, however, a host of actions in response to the dissatisfaction might be expected.

**EXHIBIT 3-4**
**Responses to Dissatisfaction**

|         | Constructive | Destructive |
|---------|--------------|-------------|
| Active  | VOICE        | EXIT        |
| Passive | LOYALTY      | NEGLECT     |

responses, which differ along two dimensions: constructive/destructive and active/passive. The responses are as follows:[47]

- *Exit.* The **exit response** directs behavior toward leaving the organization, including looking for a new position as well as resigning. To measure the effects of this response to dissatisfaction, researchers study individual terminations and *collective turnover*, the total loss to the organization of employee knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics.[48]
- *Voice.* The **voice response** includes actively and constructively attempting to improve conditions, including suggesting improvements, discussing problems with superiors, and undertaking some forms of union activity.
- *Loyalty.* The **loyalty response** means passively but optimistically waiting for conditions to improve, including speaking up for the organization in the face of external criticism and trusting the organization and its management to "do the right thing."
- *Neglect.* The **neglect response** passively allows conditions to worsen and includes chronic absenteeism or lateness, reduced effort, and increased error rate.

Exit and neglect behaviors encompass our performance variables—productivity, absenteeism, and turnover. But this model expands employee response to include voice and loyalty—constructive behaviors that allow individuals to tolerate unpleasant situations or revive satisfactory working conditions. It helps us understand situations, such as we sometimes find among unionized workers. Union members often express dissatisfaction through the grievance procedure or formal contract negotiations. These voice mechanisms allow them to continue in their jobs while convincing themselves they are acting to improve the situation.

As helpful as this framework is, it's quite general. We now discuss more specific outcomes of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace.

## Job Satisfaction and Job Performance

As several studies have concluded, happy workers are more likely to be productive workers. Some researchers used to believe the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance was a myth. But a review of 300 studies suggested the correlation is quite strong.[49] As we move from the individual to the organizational level, we also find support for the satisfaction–performance relationship.[50] When we gather satisfaction and productivity data for the organization as a whole, we find organizations with more satisfied employees tend to be more effective than organizations with fewer satisfied employees.

## Job Satisfaction and OCB

It seems logical to assume job satisfaction should be a major determinant of an employee's organizational citizenship behavior (known as OCB and also discussed as simply citizenship behavior).[51] Satisfied employees would seem more likely to talk positively about their organizations, help others, and go beyond the normal expectations in their jobs, perhaps because they want to reciprocate their positive experiences. Consistent with this thinking, evidence suggests job satisfaction *is* moderately correlated with OCB; people who are more satisfied with their jobs are more likely to engage in OCB.[52] Why? Fairness perceptions help explain the relationship.[53] Individuals who feel their coworkers support them are more likely to engage in helpful behaviors, whereas those who have antagonistic

relationships with coworkers are less likely to do so.[54] Individuals with certain personality traits are also more satisfied with their work, which in turn leads them to engage in more OCB.[55] Finally, research shows that when people are in a good mood, they are more likely to engage in OCB.[56]

## Job Satisfaction and Customer Satisfaction

As we noted in Chapter 1, employees in service jobs often interact with customers. Because service organization managers should be concerned with pleasing customers, it is reasonable to ask, Is employee satisfaction related to positive customer outcomes? For frontline employees who have regular customer contact, the answer is "yes." Satisfied employees appear to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.[57]

A number of companies are acting on this evidence. The first core value of online retailer Zappos, "Deliver WOW through service," seems fairly obvious, but the way in which Zappos delivers exceptional customer service is not clearly prescribed. Zappos employees are directed to "create fun and a little weirdness" and are given unusual discretion in making customers satisfied. Zappos is so committed to finding only customer service employees who are satisfied with the job that it offers a $2,000 bribe to quit the company after training.[58]

## Job Satisfaction and Absenteeism

We find a consistent negative relationship between satisfaction and absenteeism, but the relationship is moderate to weak.[59] While it certainly makes sense that dissatisfied employees are more likely to miss work, other factors affect the relationship. Organizations that provide liberal sick leave benefits are encouraging all their employees—including those who are highly satisfied—to take days off. You can find work satisfying yet still want to enjoy a 3-day weekend if the extra break comes free with no penalties. When numerous alternative jobs are available, dissatisfied employees have high absence rates, but when there are few alternatives, dissatisfied employees have the same (low) rate of absence as satisfied employees.[60]

## Job Satisfaction and Turnover

The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover is stronger than between satisfaction and absenteeism.[61] Recent research suggests that managers looking to determine who might be likely to leave should focus on employees' job satisfaction levels over time, because levels do change. A pattern of lowered job satisfaction is a predictor of possible intent to leave. Job satisfaction has an environmental connection too. If the climate within an employee's immediate workplace is one of low job satisfaction, there will be a "contagion effect." This research suggests managers should consider the job satisfaction patterns of coworkers when assigning new workers to a new area.[62]

The satisfaction–turnover relationship also is affected by alternative job prospects. If an employee is presented with an unsolicited job offer, job dissatisfaction is less predictive of turnover because the employee is more likely leaving in response to "pull" (the lure of the other job) than "push" (the unattractiveness of the current job). Similarly, job dissatisfaction is more likely to translate into turnover when employment opportunities are plentiful because employees perceive that it is easy to move. Also, when employees have high "human capital" (high education, high ability), job dissatisfaction is more

likely to translate into turnover because they have, or perceive, many available alternatives.[63] Finally, employees' embeddedness in their jobs and communities can help lower the probability of turnover, particularly in collectivist cultures.[64] Embedded employees seem less likely to want to consider alternative job prospects.

## Job Satisfaction and Workplace Deviance

Job dissatisfaction and antagonistic relationships with coworkers predict a variety of behaviors organizations find undesirable, including unionization attempts, substance abuse, stealing at work, undue socializing, and tardiness. Researchers argue these behaviors are indicators of a broader syndrome called *deviant behavior in the workplace* (or *counterproductive behavior* or *employee withdrawal*).[65] If employees don't like their work environment, they'll respond somehow, though it is not always easy to forecast exactly *how*. One worker might quit. Another might use work time to surf the Internet or take work supplies home for personal use. In short, workers who don't like their jobs "get even" in various ways. Because those ways can be quite creative, controlling only one behavior such as with an absence policy leaves the root cause untouched. To effectively control the undesirable consequences of job dissatisfaction, employers should attack the source of the problem—the dissatisfaction—rather than try to control the different responses.

## Managers Often "Don't Get It"

Given the evidence we've just reviewed, it should come as no surprise that job satisfaction can affect the bottom line. One study by a management consulting firm separated large organizations into high morale (more than 70 percent of employees expressed overall job satisfaction) and medium or low morale (fewer than 70 percent). The stock prices of companies in the high-morale group grew 19.4 percent, compared with 10 percent for the medium- or low-morale group. Despite these results, many managers are unconcerned about employee job satisfaction. Still others overestimate how satisfied employees are with their jobs, so they don't think there's a problem when there is. In one study of 262 large employers, 86 percent of senior managers believed their organization treated its employees well, but only 55 percent of employees agreed. Another study found 55 percent of managers thought morale was good in their organization, compared to only 38 percent of employees.[66]

Regular surveys can reduce gaps between what managers *think* employees feel and what they *really* feel. This can impact the bottom line in small franchise sites as well as large companies. For instance, Jonathan McDaniel, manager of a KFC restaurant in Houston, surveyed his employees every three months. Some results led him to make changes, such as giving employees greater say about which workdays they have off. However, McDaniel believed the process itself was valuable. "They really love giving their opinions," he said. "That's the most important part of it—that they have a voice and that they're heard." Surveys are no panacea, but if job attitudes are as important as we believe, organizations need to find out how job attitudes can be improved.[67]

## SUMMARY

Managers should be interested in their employees' attitudes because attitudes give warnings of potential problems and influence behavior. Creating a satisfied workforce is hardly a guarantee of successful organizational performance, but evidence strongly suggests that

whatever managers can do to improve employee attitudes will likely result in positive outcomes including greater organizational effectiveness, higher customer satisfaction, and increased profits.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

- Pay attention to your employees' job satisfaction levels as determinants of their performance, turnover, absenteeism, and withdrawal behaviors.
- Measure employee job attitudes objectively and at regular intervals in order to determine how employees are reacting to their work.
- To raise employee satisfaction, evaluate the fit between the employee's work interests and the intrinsic parts of the job to create work that is challenging and interesting to the individual.
- Consider the fact that high pay alone is unlikely to create a satisfying work environment.

Job satisfaction is related to organizational effectiveness—a large study found that business units whose employees had high-average levels of engagement had higher levels of customer satisfaction and lower levels of turnover and accidents. All else equal, it clearly behooves organizations to have a satisfied workforce.

**P  I  A**

**PERSONAL INVENTORY ASSESSMENT**

In Personal Inventory Assessment found in MyManagementLab take assessment: Core Self Evaluation Scale

## ⭐ WRITING SPACE

If your professor assigned this, sign in to **mymanagementlab.com** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing question:

**3-1.** What outcomes do job satisfaction influence? What implication does this have for management?