

Investigating the Effects of Demographic Factors on Well-Being of Professional Accountants

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Abstract

Today the accounting department in every organization is regarded as the very heart of that organization, where all intra-organizational events such as productive activities, official tasks, and unexpected events must be converted into digits and numbers and must be recorded and reported as the information of the commercial unit. Since accountants and financial managers are responsible for recording and keeping financial information and for analysis of financial statements, considering their mental well-being and the factors effecting on it is of great significance. Therefore, this research intends to investigate the effect of demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, experience, and education on well-being of professional accountants. Questionnaires were used as the tool for data collection. The research population includes all active accountants and auditors working in various companies in Yazd Province, and 210 acceptable samples were selected using random sampling. Data analysis was performed using SPSS18. Findings show that job experience and level of education have significant effects on well-being of professional accountants.

Keywords: *professional accountants, life satisfaction, well-being, demographic variables*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Well-Being

There are abundant statements about human suffers, to analyze which, many books and papers have been written. In the past, negative excitements such as anxiety and depression were more emphasized in comparison with positive excitements such as happiness and life satisfaction. Even the contents of some scientific books and articles are concentrated on human suffer rather than life satisfaction (Myers, 2000). However, during the several past decades, many researchers and authors have been attracted to life satisfaction. Therefore the trend of attention is being shifted from human suffers to life satisfaction. This has led researchers to present definitions for life satisfaction and conduct studies on factors affecting it and ways to improve this concept. Life satisfaction is considered as an important aspect for welfare. Psychology encyclopedia defines this concept as ‘general perception or feeling concerning life quality’ (Corsini, 2002). Today the accounting department in every organization is regarded as the very heart of that organization, where all intra-organizational events such as productive activities, official tasks, and unexpected events must be converted into digits and numbers and must be recorded and reported as the information of the commercial unit. Since accountants and financial managers are responsible for recording and keeping financial information and for analysis of financial statements, considering their mental well-being and the factors effecting on it is of great significance. Therefore, this research intends to investigate the effect of demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, experience, and education on well-being of professional accountants.

Life satisfaction is one of the most comprehensive assessments of individuals concerning their life conditions. Studies show that life satisfaction is, up to a great extent, hereditary. However, people can adapt themselves with changes of life conditions and incidents, and this leads to a temporary decrease or increase in life satisfaction (Diener, 2000). Life satisfaction is an individual’s whole contentment of his life (Mcintosh, 2001).

There are two theoretical approaches concerning life satisfaction. The first one considers life satisfaction as a structure with several dimensions, and the second regards it as a simple variable.

Life satisfaction as a structure

In this viewpoint, life satisfaction is a multi-dimensional structure. However, this approach is also based on a kind of diversity. In some respects, aspects of life satisfaction are non-satisfaction

components such as life propensity, fitness of accomplished goals and wishes, being happy and optimist, perseverance, patience, and social-mental-biological self-image.

1.2 Life Satisfaction As A Simple Variable

In this viewpoint, life satisfaction does not have dimensions, and whenever in studies various items are used to measure it, the researcher intends to optimize the measurements from ordinal to spatial. However, in some studies, only one item has been used for measurements. It appears that since the concept of love is too general and subjective, life satisfaction has been developed with unique characteristics (Dish et al., 2002).

1.3 Effective Factors On Life Satisfaction

Factors affecting life satisfaction have been studied in two respects; pleasure-oriented and felicity-oriented. Pleasure-oriented approach divides the factors into two groups of process variables and structural variables. Process variables include age, marriage, health, and wealth. Longitudinal studies indicate changes resulting from age. The diagram for this change is curve-like. This means that up to some age (45-65), life satisfaction increases, and after that this decreases.

Structural variables include extroversive and introversive traits and neuroticism behaviors. Researches findings show that eccentric individual are more satisfied with life. There is no or little evidence showing the opposite (Argyle, 2000).

Life satisfaction is measured with rather subjective criteria. Therefore, identifying the variables affecting life satisfaction is very important in planning for it. Factors such as age, income, physical and mental health, education, interpersonal relations, genome and personality are known to be very effective in determining life satisfaction. Another effective variable is gender and its functions. Also other variables may affect life satisfaction. For example, Gibson (1986) regarded social interaction as a determining factor. Amones and Dinner (1985) recognized personality traits as affecting life satisfaction; George (1981) reported the level of income and social class to be significant; and Villits and Cryder (1988) identified religion as being important (Cameron, 2001). Here we will explain social factors affecting life satisfaction

independent variable	dependent variable	Reference	independent variable	dependent variable	Reference
educational success	Well-Being	Ryan, Lisa. & Dziurawiec,2000[8]	Feeling of discrimination	Well-Being	Lackland ,2000[9]
unemployment		Ryan, Lisa. & Dziurawiec,2000	number of friends		Lackland ,2000
physical health		Ryan, Lisa. & Dziurawiec,2000	financial satisfaction		Lackland ,2000
materialism		Ryan, Lisa. & Dziurawiec,2000	previous information concerning university		Lackland ,2000
education	Well-Being	Inglehart. Ronald,2002	feeling of social Well-Being inequality		Lackland ,2000
optimism	Well-Being	Mcintosh,2000	life expectations	Well-Being	Turksrer ,2000

Table 1: Factors Affecting Life Satisfaction

Results of a study conducted by Young (1992) on 142 individuals in San Francisco under the title of “Predictive Variables of Life Satisfaction” showed that demographic variables such as job, health, marital status, friendship, and being multicultural define 37% of the variance of life satisfaction. However, the role of job was the most significant (Ying, 1992).

Through a poll from the Africans living in the US, Adams (1997) showed that despite the reduction of standards of welfare such as health, education, and income, life satisfaction has increased (Adams, 1997).

Soza and Labomirski (2001) indicated that there is a minor relationship between life satisfaction and education (Soza and Labomirski, 2001).

Argile (2001) concluded that with increasing the age, satisfaction increases and dissatisfaction decreases, and both are more significant in men (Argile, 2001).

Piro (2002) showed that marital status and health are related with life satisfaction (Piro, 2002).

Ingleheart (2002) concluded that educated people are more satisfied with their life, but this difference is very minor (Ingleheart, 2002).

Findings of studies by Campbell et al. (1976), Countril (1965), and Dinner et al. (1993) confirmed a minor but significant relationship between education and life satisfaction (Dinner et al., 1993).

2. Methodology

This study is an applied research in terms of objective, and a correlation research in terms of analyzing the variables. Also in terms of method, this is a descriptive-survey research.

With regard to what discussed before, the following hypotheses have been compiled and examined

- H1: Gender affects well-being of professional accountants.
- H2: Marital status affects well-being of professional accountants
- H3: Age affects well-being of professional accountants
- H4: Experience affects well-being of professional accountants
- H5: Education affects well-being of professional accountants

The research population consists of active accountants and auditors in Yazd Province. Random sampling was applied and 265 questionnaires were distributed, from which 210 acceptable questionnaires were re-collected. Data was analyzed using SPSS18, and examination of the hypotheses and confirmation of the relationships were done through confirmatory factor analysis and structural equations technique using SPSS18

3. Data Analysis

Since the data were normal in this research, parametric statistical methods were used for data analysis, t-test was used to determine the difference between two groups of variables, ANOVA analysis was used to show the difference between three or more groups of variables. Also Scheffe pairwise test was used paired comparison between the averages of the groups. EXCEL and SPSS18 were used for classification and analysis of the data.

- H1: Gender affects well-being of professional accountants.
- H2: Age affects well-being of professional accountants

Two tests are conducted for two independent samples in T-test. The first one, known as Levin, examines the equality of the variances. The null hypothesis of this test is that the variances of the two groups are equal.

	Gender	N	mean	
Well-Being of Professional Accountants	f	131	3.3313	.65434
	m	79	3.3063	.72807

Table 2: Two Tests Are Conducted For Two Independent Samples In T-Test

		Levin test for equality of variances		examining two independent sample					
		F	sig	t	df	sig	mean difference	95%	
								min	max
Well-Being of Professional Accountants	the hypothesis of variance equality	1.195	.276	.257	208	.798	.02497	-.16682	.21675
	the hypothesis of variance inequality			.250	150.999	.803	.02497	-.17240	.22234

Table 3: Examining Two Independent Sample

If the significance level of Levin test is smaller than 0.05, the equality hypothesis will be rejected, and t is reported in the second line. But if it is larger than 0.05, the equality cannot be rejected and t is reported in the first line. Also in the second test, T-test is conducted to examine the equality of the means.

In respect with the first hypothesis, since t-statistic is 0.257 and the significance level is 0.798, which is larger than 0.05, in reliability level of 95%, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that the difference between the two groups is not significant. Therefore, gender does not have any significant impact on well-being of professional accountant. In respect with the first

hypothesis, since t-statistic is 0.186 and the significance level is 0.852, which is larger than 0.05, in reliability level of 95%, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that the difference between the two groups is not significant. Therefore, marital status does not have any significant impact on well-being of professional accountant

H3: Marital status affects well-being of professional accountants

H4: Experience affects well-being of professional accountants

H5: Education affects well-being of professional accountants

H	Levin test	Df1	Df2	sig
H3	.562	4	205	.691
H4	.536	4	205	.709
H5	.338	3	206	.714

Table 4: Examining Homogeneity Of Variances

H	Groups	N	mean	F-test	sig
H3	Less than 25	40	3.2150	2.312	.059
	Between 26to35	138	3.4101		
	Between 36to45	26	3.1462		
	Between 46to55	4	2.7500		
	More than 56	2	2.8000		
H4	Less than 5	105	3.2705	2.880	.024
	Between 6 to 10	50	3.5600		
	Between11 to 15	33	3.3091		
	Between 16to 20	13	2.9385		
	More than 20	9	3.2000		
H5		24	2.9750	3.166	.025
	BA	87	3.3218		
	MA	95	3.4232		
	PHD	4	3.0000		

Table 5: One-Way Variance Analysis

Results of Scheffe pairwise test for the fourth hypothesis show that well-being of professional accountants is different between the group with 6-10 years of experience and he one with 16-20 years. The fifth hypothesis shows that well-being of professional accountants is different between the group with upper-diploma and the group with M.S.

The above diagram shows that the average of well-being is better in the group with 6-10 years of job experience in comparison with the group with 16-20 years. First, homogeneity of variances is examined. Since in the third hypothesis according to the results of one-way variance analysis, the value of F-statistic is 2.312 and the significance level is 0.059, which is smaller than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected with reliability of 95%, which means that there is a significant difference between at least two means of the five groups concerning well-being of professional accountants. Therefore age does not have any significant impact on well-being of professional accountant.

In the fourth hypothesis according to the results of one-way variance analysis, the value of F-statistic is 2.880 and the significance level is 0.024, which is smaller than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected with reliability of 95%, which means that there is a significant difference between at least two means of the five groups concerning well-being of professional accountants. Therefore, job experience leaves a significant effect on well-being of professional accountants.

In the fifth hypothesis according to the results of one-way variance analysis, the value of F-statistic is 3166 and the significance level is 0.025, which is smaller than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected with reliability of 95%, which means that there is a significant difference between at least two means of the five groups concerning well-being of professional accountants. Therefore, Education leaves a significant effect on well-being of professional accountants

		mean difference		sig		
(I) Experience	(J) Experience	mean difference (I-J)	S.d	sig	95%	
					min	max
Less than 5	Between 6 to 10	-.28952	.11503	.180	-.6471	.0680
	Between 11 to 15	-.03861	.13360	.999	-.4539	.3767
	Between 16 to 20	.33201	.19683	.585	-.2798	.9439
	More than 20	.07048	.23252	.999	-.6523	.7933
Between 6 to 10	Less than 5	.28952	.11503	.180	-.0680	.6471
	Between 11 to 15	.25091	.15015	.594	-.2158	.7176
	Between 16 to 20	.62154	.20842	.068	-.0263	1.2694
	More than 20	.36000	.24241	.698	-.3935	1.1135
Between 11 to 15	Less than 5	.03861	.13360	.999	-.3767	.4539
	Between 6 to 10	-.25091	.15015	.594	-.7176	.2158
	Between 16 to 20	.37063	.21922	.583	-.3108	1.0521
	More than 20	.10909	.25175	.996	-.6735	.8917
Between 16 to 20	Less than 5	-.33201	.19683	.585	-.9439	.2798
	Between 6 to 10	-.62154	.20842	.068	-1.2694	.0263
	Between 11 to 15	-.37063	.21922	.583	-1.0521	.3108
	More than 20	-.26154	.29030	.937	-1.1639	.6409
More than 20	Less than 5	-.07048	.23252	.999	-.7933	.6523
	Between 6 to 10	-.36000	.24241	.698	-1.1135	.3935
	Between 11 to 15	-.10909	.25175	.996	-.8917	.6735
	Between 16 to 30	.26154	.29030	.937	-.6409	1.1639

Table 6: Scheffe Test

Results of Scheffe pairwise test for the fourth hypothesis show that well-being of professional accountants is different between the group with 6-10 years of experience and the one with 16-20 years. The fifth hypothesis shows that well-being of professional accountants is different between the group with upper-diploma and the group with M.S.

The above diagram shows that the average of well-being is better in the group with 6-10 years of job experience in comparison with the group with 16-20 years.

4. Conclusion

The study was conducted to examine the effects of demographic factors on well-being of professional accountants. Findings show that job experience and level of education affects well-being of professional accountants. It was concluded that well-being increases with increasing job experience and education. In respect with age, findings of this study are not in accordance with those of the study by Argyle. In respect with education, findings of this study are in accordance with those of the study by Dinner et al. (1993). With regards to the results of the present research, it should be noted that due to the relation with human who has special behavioral and emotional complications, wholly experimental plans cannot be used in this research. Therefore, this research also confronted with particular limitations including intrinsic limitations of the questionnaire, lack of sufficient control on the part of independent variables and other factors affecting the dependent variable, and inappropriateness of the atmosphere dominating over the employees who mainly have a negative attitude to such studies and do not trust them.

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