

Understanding the Impact of Rejection Sensitivity on Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Work engagement and Job satisfaction are critical determinants of employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. While extensive research has explored these constructs, the influence of rejection sensitivity—a cognitive-affective disposition characterized by heightened anticipation and reaction to perceived social rejection—remains insufficiently examined within occupational contexts. This study investigates the relationship between rejection sensitivity, work engagement, and job satisfaction, with a particular focus on the potential adverse effects of rejection sensitivity on these workplace outcomes. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from employees across various industries and analyzed using correlation and regression techniques. The findings reveal a statistically significant negative association between rejection sensitivity and job satisfaction, indicating that individuals with elevated rejection sensitivity are more likely to misinterpret workplace interactions as rejection, thereby experiencing heightened emotional distress and diminished job satisfaction. On the other hand, Rejection sensitivity does not exhibit a statistically significant relationship with work engagement, suggesting that additional factors, such as intrinsic motivation and organizational support, may mediate or moderate its effects. However, a strong positive correlation is observed between job satisfaction and work engagement, underscoring the interdependence of these constructs in fostering positive workplace experiences. These findings contribute to the existing literature by elucidating the psychological mechanisms through which rejection sensitivity influences workplace dynamics and highlight the necessity of fostering inclusive and supportive organizational environments to mitigate its detrimental effects on employee well-being.

Keywords: *Rejection Sensitivity, Job Satisfaction, Work Engagement*

Two significant factors that play a major role in influencing an employee's well-being and organizational success are work engagement and job satisfaction. Employees who are highly engaged in their work exhibit greater commitment, resilience, and productivity (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), while job satisfaction remarkably contributes to organizational loyalty and reduced turnover rates (Locke, 1976). Although, these outcomes related to work do not account on their own. Individual's psychological predispositions,

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such as rejection sensitivity, may profoundly shape how employees perceive and interact with their work environment.

Rejection sensitivity, a cognitive-affective disposition to anxiously perceive, expect, and overreact to social rejection, is a phenomenon that can significantly impact an individual's emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Individuals with high rejection sensitivity may interpret ambiguous social cues as rejection, leading to emotional turmoil, irrational responses, and maladaptive behaviors. While rejection sensitivity has been extensively studied in romantic relationships and immediate environmental contexts, its implications in the workplace dynamics remain underexplored (Romero-Canyas et al., 2010).

A highly social place like a workplace has social and professional interactions because socially people share information and have informal or formal expectations. These interactions provide avenues for individuals to experience rejection either by way of exclusion, broken expectations, or negative evaluations. People with high rejection sensitivity may find it challenging to work optimally resulting in low motivation and engagement (Ayduk et al., 2000). Consequently, this distress, in turn, might impact job satisfaction and lower an employee's overall appraisal of their work environment.

Research reports that work engagement consists of dedication, vigor and absorption, employees utilize their energies (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Performance and the results of a business are positive. As opposed to this, people suffering from high rejection sensitivity withdraw from social situations so they cannot engage with others as easily (Ayduk et al., 2008). This tendency can cause an individual to be more disengaged, alienated, socially isolated with the feelings of hurt.

Job satisfaction, defined as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences (Locke, 1976), is another critical outcome influenced by rejection sensitivity. Studies indicate that individuals who frequently perceive rejection are more likely to report lower levels of job satisfaction due to the emotional toll of perceived social exclusion (Downey et al., 1998). Moreover, rejection-sensitive individuals may experience increased workplace stress, further contributing to dissatisfaction (Romero-Canyas & Downey, 2005).

This study aims to investigate the impact of rejection sensitivity on work engagement and job satisfaction. By examining these relationships, the research seeks to address the following questions:

- 1) What is the relationship between rejection sensitivity and work engagement?
- 2) How does rejection sensitivity influence job satisfaction?
- 3) What is the correlation between job satisfaction and work engagement?

The focus of the study is not only on aiding understanding of the subject while providing some added value. The importance of this investigation extends beyond theoretical understanding; it also offers practical implications. From a theoretical standpoint, the study aims to fill a significant gap in organizational psychology by positioning rejection sensitivity as a crucial variable influencing workplace outcomes. Practically, the findings can guide the development of workplace interventions that foster inclusive and supportive environments, helping to alleviate the negative impact of rejection sensitivity and ultimately enhance employee well-being.

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While research on rejection sensitivity's influence in the workplace has gained substantial attention in Western contexts, there remains a notable gap in exploring this phenomenon within the Indian corporate environment. Indian corporate structures are traditionally hierarchical, with a focus on top-down decision-making and respect for seniority (The Economic Times, 2007). However, there is a growing trend in India towards flatter organizational structures that encourage collaboration and open communication (In Focus India, 2024). This study aims to address this underexplored area, providing valuable insights into how rejection sensitivity may shape employee experiences and organizational outcomes in India, where cultural and organizational dynamics may differ from those in Western settings.

The current research contributes to the growing body of literature on employee well-being and organizational behavior by addressing a critical yet underexplored psychological factor. The findings have the potential to shape future interventions aimed at improving workplace experiences for rejection-sensitive individuals, ultimately enhancing overall organizational productivity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the dynamic landscape of workplace interactions, individuals with heightened sensitivity to rejection often face distinct challenges. This literature review critically examines the constructs of rejection sensitivity, job satisfaction, and work engagement, with a particular focus on how rejection sensitivity influences workplace experiences. By integrating empirical and theoretical studies, it elucidates the mechanisms underlying these relationships between these constructs.

The concept of rejection sensitivity (RS) and its relevance

Rejection sensitivity (RS) refers to a cognitive-affective disposition that makes people anxiously expect, detect, and overreact to rejection or rejection-related stimuli (Downey, Khouri, & Feldman, 1997). While originally located in early trauma to the self, this construct has been built into a hypothesized explanation that connects negative early life experiences with maladaptive social behaviors later in life. The Rejection Sensitivity Model (Levy, Ayduk, & Downey 2001) suggests that individuals with high RS tend to be in a hypervigilant state concerning social stimuli, which leads to diminished social self-efficacy and poorly developed relationships. This expectation leads to what is termed heightened sensitivity to socially stressful situations involving new people or high stakes, leading to an expectation of rejection which provokes withdrawal in social contexts. These behaviors are especially detrimental when meeting new colleagues in work settings associated with heightened stress (Downey & Feldman, 1996).

The relationship between a high level of rejection sensitivity (RS) and negative psychological consequences has been reported numerous times in empirical studies. Further support for these claims stems from neuroimaging studies which show that high RS individuals demonstrate greater activation in brain regions associated with social pain (Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2007). RS is further exacerbated by early parental or peer rejection, causing difficulties in sustaining professionally constructive relationships (Downey, et al., 1997). Moreover, the frequent experience of rejection tends to increase sensitivity to social ambiguity which, in turn, reduces social competence as defined by the Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg, & Reis, 1988), thus threatening to create an enduring cycle of suboptimal performance and isolation (Rosenbach & Renneberg, 2014; Gao et al., 2017; Downey et al., 1998).

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Apart from the impacts of RS on an individual's psychological well-being, its detrimental implications stretch into the work-related areas. Research studies grounded within the diathesis stress model suggest that high RS increases the likelihood of experiencing stress-related declines in work performance and satisfaction (Monroe & Simons, 1991). Genetic influences (Bouchard et al., 1990; Gillespie et al., 2001) and disruptions in early life attachments (Khoshkam et al., 2012) have also been associated with the development of RS, highlighting the origin's complexity. At the workplace, individuals with high RS are likely to suffer from impaired communication, reduced collaboration, and diminished trust and have severe consequences on their productivity and overall satisfaction at work.

The definition of job satisfaction (JS) and its significance

Job satisfaction is conceptualized as an individual's comprehensive emotional assessment of their job that involves the evaluation of different features of the role and the general scope of work. This evaluation stems from both internal and external determinants. Internal determinants are those that include the significance one ascribes to work, independence, and opportunities for person development, while external determinants are those that include tangible rewards, payments, remuneration, benefits and favorable working conditions (Judge, Thorsen, Bono and Patton, 2001). According to Kaliski (2007), job satisfaction is said to exist when the when individuals engage in tasks, they find enjoyable and receive recognition for their contributions. In the same way, George et al. (2008) contends that satisfaction encapsulates the attitudes and feelings that an individual has about his or her workplace and especially regarding the relationships with other colleagues, and supervisors, as well as their overall remuneration.

Spector's (1985) creation of the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) which measures employee satisfaction on various levels, has greatly improved the assessment of job satisfaction in every aspect. Spector's work, which was later extended in Spector (1997), indicates that job satisfaction is an outcome of a blend of surrounding factors and individual traits. More recent academic studies have underscored the importance of job satisfaction in organizational success. For instance, Pratibha (2024) showed that human resource management activities have a positive relationship with job satisfaction and organizational performance in the Information Technology industry. Equally, an article from the Human Resource Management International Digest (2023) along with a report by WorkL (2024) reported on the strategic significance of employee satisfaction in maintaining competitiveness, while a study in the International Journal of Services and Operations Management (2021) highlighted employee loyalty and job satisfaction as crucial components of organizational performance.

Given its significance, understanding the factors that undermine job satisfaction is essential. High rejection sensitivity has been found to be a key factor that can have a negative influence on an employee's overall perception about their job, in particular. Those with highly elevated RS are likely to perceive neutral social exchanges and even constructive feedback as personal rejection, which results in diminished sense of value and their accomplishments. This negative assessment, as is often the case, is worsened by the negative impact on work productivity that tend to accompany reduced interpersonal interactions and lower engagement rates.

The definition of Work Engagement (WE) and its significance

As noted in earlier, Work engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker, 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Vigor implies high levels of energy and mental stamina which enable an employee to expend a substantial amount of effort even in difficult situations. Employees who experience a strong sense of purpose, enthusiasm, and pride in one's work, which is referred to as dedication. Absorption describes the state of mind where employees concentrate so deeply on their tasks that they are so immersed in it that they do not notice time passing. Bakker and Demerouti (2007; 2008) offered an extensive explanation of an employee's work engagement through the Job Demands–Resources model (JD-R model) by stating that job resources, social support, feedback on performance, and having a personal development plan, are fundamental to an employee's engagement and stress management related to work.

Research has validated the JD-R model by demonstrating that work-related and personal resources (including self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience) significantly establish work engagement levels (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Alessandri et al., 2018). Through a seminal study, Fredrickson and colleagues (2008) also demonstrated that interventions such as loving-kindness meditation increase the experience of positive emotions, enhancing personal resources such as mastery and self-acceptance. These improvements were associated with increased work engagement. It should be noted, however, that the advantages of work engagement are only possible in the presence of these personal resources. When personal resources are depleted, as is often the case with high rejection sensitivity, the ability to sustain energy, enthusiasm, and concentration at work is compromised. Research suggests that employees with heightened RS tend to experience lower self-efficacy and optimism, resulting in decreased work engagement (Mäkikangas et al., 2013; Garg et al., 2017; Rayton & Yalabik, 2014; Park & Gursoy, 2012).

The multifarious interaction of RS, WE, and JS.

The interrelations among rejection sensitivity, work engagement, and job satisfaction are complex and critically important in understanding the behavioral concern of employees. An individual with high rejection sensitivity is highly predisposed to consider even neutral or ambiguous feedback as an affront. Ghufraan Ali Khan (2020) explains that such interpretations result in defensive attitudes and a decreased tendency to collaborate with colleagues which, in turn, reduces overall productivity at work. This withdrawal from collaborative endeavors can precipitate a cascade of negative spirals including decreased energy (vigor), decreased focus (absorption), eroded engagement, lower satisfaction, and higher discontent within one's work.

Reyes et al. (2024) further emphasized that repeated feelings of rejection significantly worsen employees' overall job evaluations of their work and of the organization. Accompanying these findings, it is documented that high rejection sensitivity correlates with lower self-efficacy and optimism which are adversely affected, which happens to be the key personal resources that underpin effective work engagement (Mäkikangas et al., 2013). According to the JD-R model, when employees are provided with sufficient job resources—such as clear communication channels, constructive feedback, and opportunities for professional growth—the adverse emotional impact of RS can be buffered, leading to improved productivity and job satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2013).

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Neuroimaging research further offers different perspectives into the devastating role of RS in the organizational environment. Burklund, Eisenberger, and Lieberman (2007) postulated that individuals with heightened rejection sensitivity have significantly large numbers of neural responses to social rejection. These biological underpinnings help formulate that the observed behavioural patterns, including impaired collaboration and communication among individuals with elevated RS. With time, this chronic anticipation of rejection increases and results in not only emotional distress but also undermines effective teamwork—a critical component of work engagement and overall job satisfaction.

Moreover, the internalization of perceived rejection can lead to a generalized negative self perception, further reducing an individual's sense of competence, autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey and subsequent work (Spector, 1997) have long underscored the multifactorial nature of job satisfaction, influenced by both personal attitudes and environmental conditions. In environments where rejection sensitivity is high, negative self appraisal, self-criticism and diminished interpersonal competence significantly compromise the intrinsic satisfaction derived from work, thereby lowering an employee's overall job satisfaction.

Hypotheses Development

Following the theoretical groundwork and gathering insights from the literature review, this study attempts to assess the impact of rejection sensitivity on job satisfaction and work engagement. Prior studies have persistently established the counterproductive outcomes of increased rejection sensitivity on an individual's well-being, relationships, and career progression. This reveals that individuals suffering from heightened levels of rejection sensitivity are likely to have profound cognitive and emotional difficulties that disengage them from productive work, resulting in constricted work engagement and satisfaction levels.

Taking into account the evidence in the literature, this study intends to empirically test these relationships by proposing the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Higher levels of rejection sensitivity exhibit a significant negative association with job satisfaction and work engagement.
- **H0:** Rejection sensitivity demonstrates no statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction or work engagement.

METHOD

Sample

The sample constituted employees with varying demographics such as gender, age, educational background, occupation, hierarchical position, and organizations they work for, to analyze how these factors might influence perceptions of rejection sensitivity and engagement. The approach adopted in the study ensured a wide range of perspectives, offering valuable insights into the role.

Participants

The present study utilized a conveniently drawn sample of 120-150 employees from various industries and organizational levels. Only private sector organizations were included since they maintain a similar level of competitiveness within the market. With the intention of collecting data, a survey link was created, which was shared with around 180 people via social media and sent to HR heads who distributed the survey to employees from various sectors and organizational levels. Both managerial and white-collar participants were

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recruited to capture a wide variety of opinions and responses, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness of the findings.

Tools

The present study's core variables, Rejection Sensitivity, Job Satisfaction, and Work Engagement, were measured using extensively validated and well-established instruments. All of these tools have undergone sufficient validation and are commonplace in psychological and organizational studies.

The **Adult Rejection Sensitivity-Adult Questionnaire (A-RSQ)** developed by Berenson et al. (2009), is designed to measure an individual's tendency to anxiously expect, readily perceive, and intensely react to rejection. This scale consists of 9 items that assess rejection sensitivity in adults across different social contexts. The general structure includes first an estimation of Rejection Expectancy which is calculated for each of the nine situations with the formula of $7 - \text{Acceptance Expectancy}$ (Answer to question b). Then Rejection Sensitivity is calculated by multiplying Rejection Expected Value with Rejection Concern (Answer to question a). By carrying this calculation out for all nine scenarios, a total score of sensitivity is determined via mean of the nine rejection sensitivity scores ($\text{Sum of Rejection Sensitivity Scores} / 9$). Its reliability is evidenced through the Cronbach's alpha from 0.79 to 0.87 showing a good internal reliability. For construct and predictive validity, the score especially correlates to emotional triggering and social anxiety concerning social interaction which poses a risk to sensitivity.

The **Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)** developed by Paul Spector is an instrument that measures job satisfaction in a wide variety of occupations. This scale is composed of 36 items, which are scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). Some of the items are negatively worded (items 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 31, 32, 34, 36) and need to be reverse scored: $\text{Reversed Score} = 7 - \text{Original Score}$. The total score for job satisfaction corresponds with the sum of the 36 item scores, resulting in a possible total between 36 and 216. A higher score indicates increased job satisfaction. Concerning reliability, the JSS shows a good level of internal consistency, with the individual subscales range in Cronbach's alpha values from 0.60 to 0.91, with an approximate overall reliability of 0.91. There is also good reliability over time. In terms of validity, the JSS has undergone various validations through correlations with other job satisfaction assessments and holds strong construct validity. It has been tested in numerous jobs, which strengthens its criterion validity by demonstrating its effectiveness in predicting behavior, performance, and intent to leave the company.

The **Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)** was created by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker in 2002 as a 17-item scale measuring work engagement. This scale gauges work engagement through a construct that integrates both vigor and energy metrics. As a result, the entire engagement scale has exhibited a strong degree of internal reliability as shown by ordinal alpha values commonly exceeding 0.80 and approaching 0.90 for the full scale and its subscales. The scale has strong construct validity, it helps to understand the interrelationships of how deeply employees are invested in and energized through immersion in their activities. The scale is composed of **three components**: Vigor (items 1,4,8,12,15,17), Dedication (items 2,5,7,10,13), Absorption (items 3,6,9,11,14,16). Each item is rated on a **7-point Likert scale** (0 = Never, 6 = Every Day). The **subscale scores** are obtained by averaging the item scores within each subscale. The **total work engagement score** is computed as the mean of all **17 items**. Increasing scores demonstrates

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positive work engagement while the values demarcate scores of 0-1.99 (Very Low), 2-3.99 (Low), 4-4.99 (Moderate), 5-6 (High), 6+ (Very High).

RESULTS

Table 1.1 Correlation Matrix with Statistical Significance (p-values) of ARSQ, JSS, UWES

Variable	Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire	Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS)	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (WES)
Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire	-	-.020*	-0.09
Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS)	(.026)	-	-.84**
Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (WES)	(.306)	(.000)	-

(Correlation is significant at the $p < .01$ level ())

The correlation matrix (**Table 1.1**) provides insights into the strength and direction of relationships between the Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (ARSQ), Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS), and Work Engagement Scale (WES), while the significance values (**Table 1.2**) determine whether these relationships are statistically meaningful. Negative correlations, such as -0.196 between ARSQ and JSS, indicate an inverse relationship, meaning that as rejection sensitivity increases, job satisfaction tends to decrease. Conversely, positive correlations, such as 0.839 between JSS and WES, suggest a strong direct relationship, where higher job satisfaction is associated with greater work engagement. These findings imply that rejection sensitivity negatively impacts job satisfaction, which in turn significantly enhances work engagement. However, rejection sensitivity does not directly influence work engagement, indicating that job satisfaction may serve as a mediating factor in this relationship.

Table 1.2 Anova Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1172.515	1	10304.923	1172.515	.000
Residual	29482.262	128	230.330	-	-
Total	30654.777	129	-	-	-

(Assessing the overall significance of the regression models)

Table 1.3 Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	136.800	3.983	-	34.350	.000
Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire	-0.081	0.036	-0.196	-2.256	.26

(Higher rejection sensitivity is significantly associated with lower job satisfaction, although the strength of the effect is modest)

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The simple linear regression analysis in (Table 1.3-1.4), further confirmed the weak negative relationship between RS and JS with an R value of -0.196 which is indicative of a negative correlation, while the R^2 value of 0.038 shows that RS explains only 3.8% of the variance of JS. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.031 confirms this lack of predictive ability. The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 5.091$, $p = .026$) albeit having a negligible effect size.

The unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.081$, $p = .026$) portrays that with every unit rise in RS, JS declines by 0.081 units, and the intercept ($B = 136.800$, $p < .001$) is the expected RS score JS would have in the devoid context of RS. The standardized beta coefficient (-0.196) alongside the t-statistic (-2.256) deepen the argument for a weak negative relation between RS and JS. The results underscore the importance of other psychological and occupational dimensions that impact JS and WE pertaining to organizational behavior.

Interpretation

Recent empirical studies highlight the multifarious interplay between rejection sensitivity, job satisfaction, and work engagement, significantly impacting employees' coping strategies and psychological health regarding workplace dynamics. Both correlation and regression analyses in different studies suggest that rejection sensitivity maintains a significant negative relationship with employees' satisfaction with their work and a more complex and indirect relationship with work engagement. At the same time, the strong positive relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction highlights the important role of employees' positive satisfaction in work engagement and their overall productivity. This elaborate analysis as a whole examines the complex relationships between these constructs, offering evidence-based insights into their mechanisms and implications for organizational practice.

The Negative Nexus: Rejection Sensitivity and Job Satisfaction

The empirical evidence consistently illustrates a considerable negative association between rejection sensitivity and multiple indicators of workplace well-being, including job satisfaction. Those with high levels of rejection sensitivity, which is marked by anxious anticipation and readiness to detect rejection in ambiguous social situations, tend to have lower professional satisfaction. Brauer and Proyer's (2020) study demonstrates that rejection sensitivity negatively affects psychological well-being. This relationship carries over to the workplace context. This relationship extends to the workplace context, where rejection-sensitive employees often misinterpret neutral or constructive feedback as personal criticism, leading to increased workplace stress and diminished job satisfaction.

The workplace repercussions resulting from rejection sensitivity are especially acute in interpersonal dynamics. Khan et al. (2020) postulated the connection between rejection sensitivity and workplace outcomes and concluded that rejection sensitivity negatively impacts job performance as a result of increased workplace loneliness. This hypervigilance towards potential social threats common to these rejection-sensitive individuals leads to self-protective behavioral patterns that, paradoxically, damage interpersonal relationships and integration within the workplace.

These individuals might socially withdraw from participating in group exchanges, reduce verbal interactions with the workforce, and avoid seeking necessary guidance because of the fear of being evaluated negatively, thus shutting themselves out from social support networks that usually mitigate the detrimental effects of stressors in the workplace and increase job satisfaction. In addition, the negative linkage between rejection sensitivity and

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self-esteem discussed by Brauer and Proyer (2020) found means that rejection sensitive employees are likely to hold unfavorable self-views further worsening their experience and satisfaction at the workplace.

Rejection Sensitivity and Work Engagement: An Indirect Relationship

This building sensitivity, as a form of rejection demonstrates a clear negative association with job satisfaction, but when compared with work engagement, rejection sensitivity exhibits a more complicated relational dynamic. The findings suggest that rejection sensitivity is rather indirectly related to work engagement through mediators such as workplace loneliness and psychological health and well-being. Rafiq M. et al. (2023) examined the work engagement components and found that multidimensional work engagement comprised vigor, dedication, and absorption, each of which relates to different workplace outcomes. The differential functioning of these engagement dimensions indicates that there are certain areas of work engagement which rejection sensitivity may impact other areas might remain relatively undisturbed.

The link between rejection sensitivity and work engagement is not direct which may indicate the presence of other workplace factors which may compensate. Resilience, for example, is a personal resource that buffers against rejection sensitivity on work engagement and has been shown to correlate significantly with work engagement (Agmapisarn, 2024). Group and organizational identities have also been shown to significantly predict work engagement, which suggests that rejection sensitivity might be less detrimental to employee engagement because of increased social interaction and organizational identification (Hazelton & Suzanne, 2014). These results suggest that even employees with high rejection sensitivity can engage with their work to some degree because, in addition to personal resources such as resilience, the organizational support received is sufficient to foster identity development and social integration.

The Critical Connection – Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement

A positive correlation between work engagement and job satisfaction has consistently been found as a notable trend across multiple studies. Agmapisarn (2024) has documented the existence of a moderate yet significant correlation between these constructs, reinforcing the notion of job satisfaction as an important determinant of employee engagement. This relationship suggests that employees who exhibit greater satisfaction at work are more likely to demonstrate the vigor, dedication, and absorption that is characteristic of high work engagement levels. It is especially interesting to observe the nature of this relationship; while satisfaction seems to give rise to engagement, it is also true that engagement enhances job satisfaction, thus developing a positive cycle for both employees and organizations.

Their underlying shared antecedents further explain the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction. Agmapisarn (2024) identified resilience as a strong predictor of both satisfaction and work engagement. Such shreds of evidence indicates that personal psychological resources are vital in attempting to ensure both satisfaction and engagement, thus justifying their association. Moreover, the mediating role of group identity in the relationship between engagement and job satisfaction indicates that social identification processes constitute an important mechanism linking these constructs (Hazelton and Suzanne, 2014). Employees with strong bonds to their work groups tend to demonstrate enhanced engagement and greater job satisfaction, which underscores the need for cohesive and supportive work environments.

Future Implications and Suggestive Measures

In particular, within the context of workplace experiences, especially concerning job satisfaction, rejection sensitivity is very central to the findings of this study. Organizations need to act quickly to counter the effects of rejection sensitivity because it negatively correlates with a person's job satisfaction. It is suggested that incorporating emotional intelligence, resilience, and workplace support systems could provide moderation or additional mediation for this relationship and should be examined in more detail. Moreover, longitudinal studies can help provide deeper insights to understand the impact of rejection sensitivity on an individual's career over time, as well as how it changes their long-term career trajectories.

Practically, organizations can make informed decisions to plan targeted interventions with employees with elevated rejection sensitivity to support them, and enhance their overall job satisfaction and performance. This includes promoting supportive workplace culture, offering positive constructive feedback, and teaching supervisors to look for signs of rejection sensitivity within their teams and attempt to do something about it. The use of mentoring or peer-support schemes could assist rejection-sensitive staff in improving their workplace relationships, reducing their sense of alienation and increasing job satisfaction. Also, self-perception and social perception of rejection can be better managed by equipping employees with coping strategies through employee wellness programs that integrate resilience workshops and cognitive behavioral exercises.

Later research has a scope to further address cultural differences in rejection sensitivity and workplace outcomes, especially in high-context cultures, such as Indian corporate firms. The role of collectivist values in moderating the impact of rejection sensitivity and promoting workplace harmony needs attention. Understanding the impact of various leadership styles on the engagement of rejection-sensitive employees can also enable organizations to adopt more management strategies to ensure their workplaces are psychologically safer.

CONCLUSION

This research is an attempt to showcase one of many gaps concerning workplace dynamics in the literature, which were significant yet underexplored, particularly job satisfaction and work engagement. While rejection sensitivity has a weak negative correlation with job satisfaction, its direct impact on work engagement is inconclusive, indicating that some factors such as resilience and workplace assistance, help in keeping employees engaged. The strong positive correlation between the two makes it crystal clear that organizations need to work towards forming an enabling environment that guarantees employees' satisfaction and support.

Corporations need to acknowledge rejection sensitivity as a psychological factor linked with workplace well-being and take appropriate strategic approaches to mitigate its adverse effects. Employers can promote unintended positive outcomes at work by creating a culture of inclusion, establishing proper support networks, and proactively encouraging resilience building. This leads to enhanced employee satisfaction and work engagement, thereby improving overall organizational productivity. Further studies should keep looking into the relationships mentioned above to develop well-rounded solutions that fit different workplace environments, especially regarding such multidisciplinary issues.

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Conflict of Interest

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