



Determinants of Job Satisfaction among Working Caregivers of People with Disabilities: The Roles of Self-Efficacy, Job Autonomy, and Outcome Expectancy

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction remains a critical concern in human resource development (HRD) as it influences employee well-being, organizational commitment, and workforce sustainability. However, limited empirical attention has been given to employees who simultaneously perform caregiving roles for people with disabilities. This study addresses this gap by examining the determinants of job satisfaction among employed caregivers of people with disabilities in Selangor, Malaysia. Drawing upon the model of work satisfaction (Brown and Lent, 2006) and the model of proactive behavior (Crant, 2000), the study investigates the effects of self-efficacy, personality traits, outcome expectancy, perceived organizational support, job autonomy, and learning goal orientation on job satisfaction. Learning goal orientation was also examined as a mediating mechanism linking individual and organizational factors to job satisfaction. A quantitative correlational research design was adopted, and data were collected from 325 working caregivers. The data were analyzed using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM). The findings reveal that self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, and job autonomy significantly influence job satisfaction, with self-efficacy emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings contribute to discussions on decent jobs, inclusive economic growth, and economic productivity by highlighting the importance of sustainable employment conditions for working caregivers. The study contributes to HRD literature by extending existing models of work satisfaction to a caregiving context and provides practical implications for organizations seeking to create inclusive and supportive workplaces aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Caregivers, People with Disabilities, Human Resource Development, Self-efficacy, Job Autonomy

JEL Classifications: J

1. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction refers to a positive emotional state resulting from an individual's appraisal of their job and work experiences (Locke, 1976). It is a central concern in HRD and organizational psychology due to its strong association with employee performance, retention, and organizational effectiveness (Judge et al., 2017). While job satisfaction has been extensively studied across occupations, limited research has focused on employees who simultaneously act as caregivers for people with disabilities—a group facing distinctive personal and professional challenges.

Caregivers of people with disabilities often experience heightened stress, financial pressure, emotional strain, and work-family conflict. These challenges may negatively affect their workplace experiences, motivation, and satisfaction. Despite this, caregivers frequently remain employed due to financial necessity and personal responsibility, making it crucial to understand the factors that sustain their job satisfaction and employee well-being, organizational commitment, and turnover intention (Bernarto et al., 2020).

This study integrates the model of work satisfaction (Brown and Lent, 2006) and the model of proactive behavior (Crant, 2000)

to examine how individual differences and work-related factors influence job satisfaction among caregivers. By focusing on caregivers in Selangor, Malaysia, this research provides empirical insights into an underexplored population and offers implications for HRD practices in inclusive workplaces.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Model of Work Satisfaction

The Model of Work Satisfaction (Brown and Lent, 2006), rooted in social cognitive career theory, explains job satisfaction as a function of personal attributes (e.g., self-efficacy), environmental conditions, and outcome expectations. This model emphasizes the interaction between individual beliefs and workplace conditions in shaping job satisfaction, particularly through self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997). In this context, perceived organizational support, which reflects employees' beliefs about how much the organization values their contributions, plays an important role in influencing employee attitudes and well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986)."

2.2. Model of Proactive Behavior

Crant's (2000) Model of Proactive Behavior focuses on self-initiated and goal-directed actions that shape work outcomes. Learning goal orientation, which reflects an individual's desire to develop competence and acquire new skills, represents proactive behavior that may influence job satisfaction directly or indirectly.

2.3. Research Framework

Based on the integration of Brown's and Lent (2006) model of work satisfaction and Crant's (2000) model of proactive behavior, this study proposes a conceptual research framework to examine job satisfaction among caregivers of people with disabilities. In the framework, job satisfaction is positioned as the dependent variable, while individual differences (self-efficacy and personality traits) and work condition and outcome factors (outcome expectancy, perceived organizational support and job autonomy)

support, and job autonomy) are specified as independent variables. Learning goal orientation is incorporated as a mediating variable to explain the mechanism through which individual and work-related factors may influence job satisfaction. This framework provides a structured basis for testing both direct and indirect relationships among the study variables within the unique context of employed caregivers. Figure 1 show the research framework.

2.4. Hypotheses

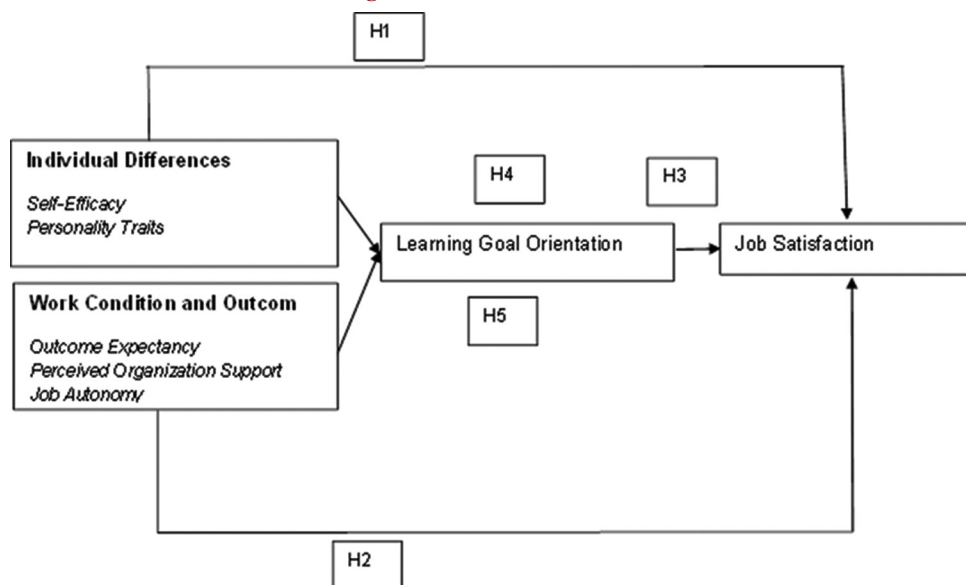
- H₁: Individual differences is positively related to job satisfaction
- H_{1a}: Self-efficacy is positively related to to job satisfaction
- H_{1b}: Personality traits is positively related to job satisfaction
- H₂: Work conditions and outcomes is positively related to job satisfaction
- H_{2a}: Outcome expectancy is positively related to job satisfaction
- H_{2b}: Perceived organizational support has relationship to job satisfaction
- H_{2c}: Job autonomy is positively related to job satisfaction
- H₃: Learning goal orientation relationship with job satisfaction
- H₄: Learning goal orientation mediates the relationships between individual differences and job satisfaction
- H₅: Learning goal orientation mediates the relationships between work conditions and outcomes and job satisfaction.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational design, which is commonly used to examine relationships between variables in organizational research (Sekaran, 2003), using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM). The approach allows for simultaneous testing of multiple relationships and mediation effects and advanced statistical techniques were applied to test relationships, including approaches suitable for moderation and categorical analysis (Aguinis, 2004).

Figure 1: Research framework



3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The population comprised employed caregivers of people with disabilities in Selangor, Malaysia. A two-stage cluster and purposive sampling technique was used. Of 752 distributed questionnaires, 416 were returned (55% response rate). After data screening and outlier removal, 325 valid responses were retained for analysis, which is considered adequate for SEM analysis (Kyriazos, 2018).

3.3. Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of established and validated measurement scales. Job satisfaction was measured using the Job Satisfaction Scale developed by Macdonald and Macintyre (1997). Self-efficacy and outcome expectancy were measured using scales adapted from Riggs et al. (1994). Perceived organizational support was assessed using the short version of the survey of perceived organizational support developed by Eisenberger et al. (1997). Job autonomy was measured using the work autonomy scale developed by Breugh (1985). Personality traits were assessed using a short-form personality measure based on the big five framework proposed by Gosling et al. (2003). Learning goal orientation was measured using the scale developed by VandeWalle (1997).

All measurement items were rated using a Likert-type scale. Based on prior studies, all instruments demonstrated acceptable reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Measurement Model

Prior to testing the structural model, the measurement model was assessed to establish the reliability and validity of the latent constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the relationships between observed indicators and their respective latent variables, namely job satisfaction, self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, perceived organizational support, job autonomy, personality traits, and learning goal orientation. After removing items with low factor loadings, the refined measurement model demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties. Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated good model fit (CFI = 0.951, TLI = 0.944, RMSEA = 0.062). Convergent and discriminant validity were established, with construct reliability (CR) values exceeding 0.70 and average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. Figure 2 presents the finalized measurement model, illustrating the standardized factor loadings and error terms for all constructs included in the study.

Figure 2: Measurement model

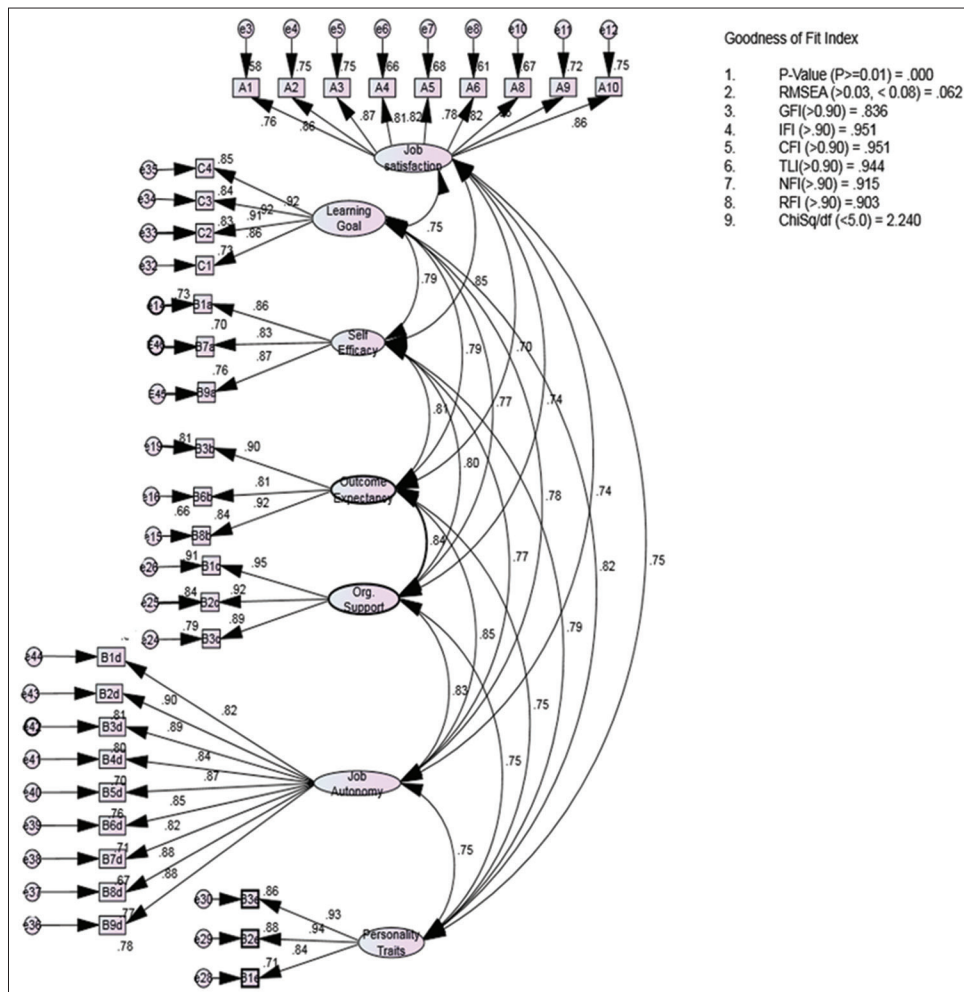


Table 1: Construct reliability, average variance extracted (on the diagonal) and squared correlation coefficients (on the off-diagonal) for study instruments

Construct	CR	JS	GDA	SE	WCO	OS	AU	PT
Job satisfaction (JS)	0.951	0.685						
Learning goal orientation (GLO)	0.946	0.557	0.813					
Self-efficacy (SE)	0.891	0.681	0.626	0.731				
Outcome expectancy (OE)	0.910	0.490	0.618	0.664	0.772			
Perceived organizational support (POS)	0.943	0.540	0.598	0.642	0.709	0.847		
Job autonomy (JU)	0.963	0.542	0.607	0.593	0.723	0.687	0.741	
Personality traits (PT)	0.931	0.557	0.674	0.618	0.564	0.569	0.566	0.818

4.2. Assessment of Reliability and Validity

Prior to evaluating the structural model, the reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed to ensure the adequacy of the study instruments. Construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to evaluate internal consistency and convergent validity, while discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

4.2.1. Construct reliability

Construct reliability was assessed using CR and AVE values. Following established guidelines, CR values of 0.70 or higher and AVE values of 0.50 or higher indicate acceptable reliability and validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010; Ramayah et al., 2010). As shown in Table 1, the CR values ranged from 0.891 to 0.963, while the AVE values ranged from 0.685 to 0.818. These results confirm that all constructs demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency and reliability.

4.2.2. Convergent validity

Convergent validity was evaluated based on AVE values, standardized factor loadings, and CR values. According to Hair et al. (2010), convergent validity is established when AVE values exceed 0.50, standardized factor loadings are >0.50 (preferably above 0.70), and CR values exceed 0.70. The results presented in Table 1 show that all constructs met these criteria, with statistically significant factor loadings above 0.70. These findings indicate that the measurement items adequately represent their respective latent constructs, thereby confirming convergent validity.

4.2.3. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the AVE values of each construct with the squared inter-construct correlations (SIC), as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). Discriminant validity is supported when the AVE of a construct exceeds its corresponding SIC values. As shown in Table 1, the AVE values for all constructs were greater than the squared correlations with other constructs, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity.

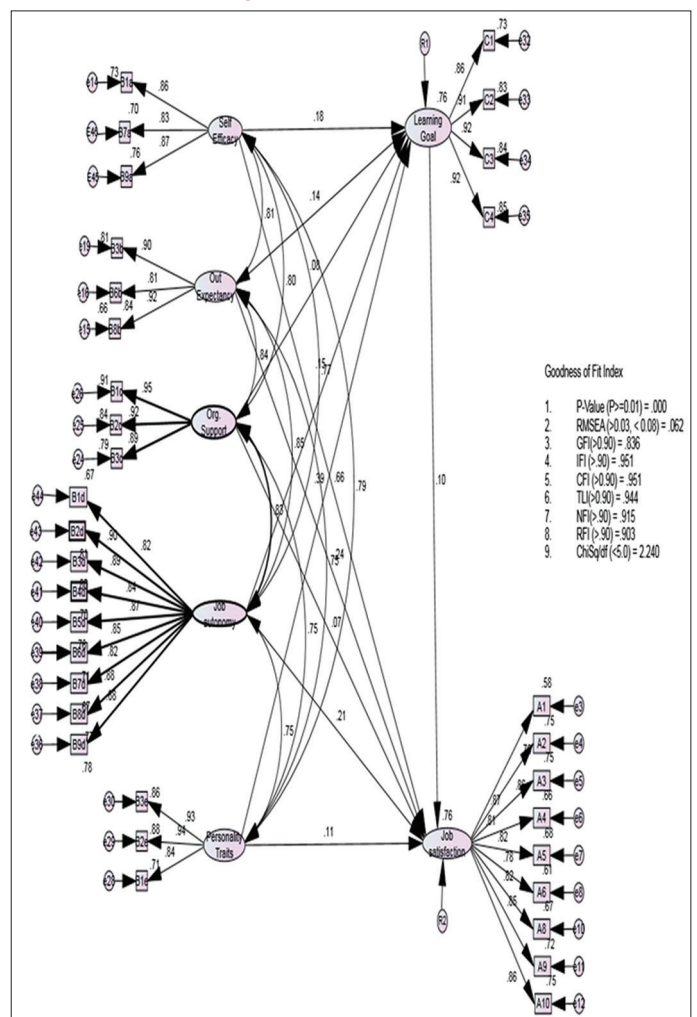
4.3. Multicollinearity Test

Table 2 presents the multicollinearity diagnostics for all predictor variables. All tolerance values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.19, and all VIF values were below 5.3, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in the present study. These results confirm that the regression estimates are stable and that the assumptions of linearity and variance were adequately met.

Table 2: Summary of multicollinearity statistics

Construct	Tolerance	VIF
Self-efficacy	0.330	3.028
Outcome expectancy	0.249	4.021
Perceived organizational support	0.246	4.071
Job autonomy	0.325	3.076
Personality traits	0.264	3.788
Learning goal orientation	0.300	3.329

Figure 3: Structural model



4.4. Structural model

The structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships among the study variables. The model explained

76.1% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.761$), indicating strong explanatory power. The results showed that self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.36, P < 0.001$), outcome expectancy ($\beta = -0.13, P < 0.05$), and job autonomy ($\beta = 0.12, P < 0.05$) had significant effects on job satisfaction. In contrast, personality traits, perceived organizational support, and learning goal orientation did not exhibit significant effects on job satisfaction. Figure 3 illustrates the structural model with standardized path coefficients for all hypothesized relationships.

The mediation effect was conducted by comparing the direct effect model and the full mediation model. The results indicated that both models demonstrated acceptable fit to the data. The direct effect model showed satisfactory fit indices ($\chi^2 = 2.974, GFI = 0.809, CFI = 0.928, IFI = 0.928, TLI = 0.920, RMSEA = 0.078$). Similarly, the full mediation model also demonstrated acceptable model fit ($\chi^2 = 2.787, GFI = 0.798, CFI = 0.927, IFI = 0.928, TLI = 0.919, RMSEA = 0.074$). Overall, the fit indices for both models were comparable, supporting their suitability for testing the mediating role of learning goal orientation.

4.5. Influence of Predictors on Job Satisfaction

A Correlation Coefficient analysis was performed on the influence of predictors on job satisfaction using a measurement model with a good model fit. Furthermore, Hair et al. (2010) recommended that at least three to four fit indices be used. CFI, IFI, and TLI were all >0.9 , and RMSEA was 0.062, all of which were above the acceptable range of acceptability of not more than 0.08 (Hair et al., 2010). Besides that, the measurement model was validated through convergent and discriminant validity, which was discussed earlier in Chapter Three. This analysis was used in testing the following research hypotheses: $H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{2c}, H_3$.

Table 3 indicates that self-efficacy ($r = 0.85; P < 0.05$), personality traits ($r = 0.75; P < 0.05$), outcome expectancy ($r = 0.70; P < 0.05$), perceived organizational support ($r = 0.74; P < 0.05$), job autonomy ($r = 0.74; P < 0.05$), and learning

Table 3: Coefficients of relationships between the predictors and job satisfaction

Correlation	r	P-value	Level
Self-efficacy	0.85	0.00	High
Outcome expectancy	0.70	0.00	High
Perceived organizational support	0.74	0.00	High
Job autonomy	0.74	0.00	High
Personality traits	0.75	0.00	High
Learning goal orientation	0.75	0.00	High

Table 4: Effect of predictors on job satisfaction

Construct	β	SE	Beta	CR	P-value
Self-efficacy	0.36	0.05	0.66	6.82	0.00
Outcome expectancy	-0.13	0.05	-0.24	-2.25	0.01
Perceived organizational support	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.91	0.37
Job autonomy	0.12	0.48	0.21	2.53	0.01
Personality traits	0.07	0.04	0.12	1.55	0.12
Learning goal orientation	0.05	0.05	0.10	1.32	0.18

$R=0.872, R^2=0.761$

goal orientation ($r = 0.75; P < 0.05$) were each positively and highly correlated to job satisfaction. Based on the critical ratio test ($> \pm 1.96, P < 0.05$), these patterns of findings across the objective measure predictors (self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, perceived organizational support, job autonomy, personality traits, learning goal orientation) positive relationship to job satisfaction.

The influence of the predictors on job satisfaction was examined using the structural model, and the results are presented in Table 4. The model demonstrated strong explanatory power, accounting for 76.1% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.761$), with an overall correlation coefficient of $R = 0.872$, indicating a strong model fit according to Guilford’s Rule of Thumb.

The findings indicate that self-efficacy had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.36, P < 0.001$), suggesting that caregivers with stronger beliefs in their capabilities are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction. Outcome expectancy was also found to significantly influence job satisfaction, with a negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.13, P < 0.05$), indicating that lower outcome expectancy is associated with higher job satisfaction among caregivers. In addition, job autonomy demonstrated a significant positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.12, P < 0.05$), highlighting the importance of flexibility and control over work arrangements for caregivers.

In contrast, perceived organizational support, personality traits, and learning goal orientation did not exhibit significant effects on job satisfaction ($P > 0.05$). These results suggest that, within the context of caregivers of people with disabilities, job satisfaction is primarily influenced by personal efficacy beliefs and job-related autonomy rather than broader organizational support perceptions or individual personality characteristics.

4.6. Mediation Analysis

Specifically, the standardized indirect effect of learning goal orientation on the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction was not statistically significant ($SIE = 0.01, P > 0.05$), as the bootstrap confidence interval included zero. Likewise, no significant mediation effect was observed for the relationships between personality traits and job satisfaction ($SIE = 0.04, P > 0.05$), outcome expectancy and job satisfaction ($SIE = 0.02, P > 0.05$), perceived organizational support and job satisfaction ($SIE = 0.01, P > 0.05$), or job autonomy and job satisfaction ($SIE = 0.02, P > 0.05$). These results indicate that learning goal orientation does not mediate the effects of either individual differences or work-related factors on job satisfaction among caregivers of people with disabilities.

5. DISCUSSION

This study examined the determinants of job satisfaction among caregivers of people with disabilities by integrating the model of work satisfaction (Brown and Lent, 2006) and the model of proactive behavior (Crant, 2000). The findings indicate that self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, and job autonomy are significant predictors of job satisfaction, with self-efficacy emerging as the

most influential factor, consistent with social cognitive theory which highlights the central role of self-belief in influencing behaviour and outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997). This suggests that caregivers who possess strong confidence in their ability to manage work demands, despite substantial caregiving responsibilities, are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the central role of self-belief in shaping work-related attitudes and well-being.

Job autonomy also demonstrated a significant positive influence on job satisfaction, supporting prior research that highlights autonomy as a key driver of employee engagement and well-being (Ng & Feldman, 2015), highlighting the importance of flexibility and control over work arrangements, which are critical in improving employee performance and attitudes (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2017). The ability to organize work schedules and make decisions related to task execution appears to help caregivers manage competing work and family demands more effectively. This result supports prior research indicating that autonomy functions as a critical job resource, particularly for employees facing high non-work demands.

Outcome expectancy was found to significantly influence job satisfaction, albeit with a negative coefficient. This suggests that caregivers with lower expectations regarding organizational rewards or career advancement may derive satisfaction from employment primarily due to financial necessity, job stability, or intrinsic value rather than anticipated external outcomes. This finding reflects the unique context of caregivers, for whom continued employment often serves as a means of sustaining family well-being rather than achieving long-term career progression.

In contrast, perceived organizational support, personality traits, and learning goal orientation did not significantly predict job satisfaction. These findings diverge from much of the existing literature but may be explained by the distinctive circumstances of caregivers. The persistent demands associated with caregiving may reduce the salience of organizational support initiatives and personal traits in shaping job satisfaction, as caregivers prioritize immediate coping resources over longer-term developmental or relational factors. Recent studies also highlight the importance of sustainable leadership and organizational culture in improving employee performance and workplace outcomes (Vasudevan et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the mediation analysis revealed that learning goal orientation did not mediate the relationships between individual differences, work conditions and outcomes, and job satisfaction. This suggests that job satisfaction among caregivers is influenced predominantly through direct pathways, rather than through proactive or learning-oriented motivational mechanisms. The absence of mediation indicates that caregivers may have limited capacity or motivation to engage in learning-focused behaviors due to time constraints, emotional exhaustion, and perceived stigma associated with caregiving roles.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of practical, immediate job resources, such as self-efficacy enhancement and

job autonomy, in promoting job satisfaction among caregivers of people with disabilities. While learning-oriented environments and organizational support remain important in general workforce contexts, their impact appears to be constrained in caregiving populations unless fundamental work flexibility and psychological resources are first addressed.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study provides empirical evidence on the determinants of job satisfaction among caregivers of people with disabilities by integrating the Model of Work Satisfaction and the Model of Proactive Behavior. The findings demonstrate that self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, and job autonomy significantly influence job satisfaction, with self-efficacy emerging as the most influential predictor. These results highlight the importance of caregivers' confidence in managing work demands and the availability of flexible work arrangements in sustaining positive work attitudes.

In contrast, perceived organizational support, personality traits, and learning goal orientation were not found to have a significant direct effect on job satisfaction. Furthermore, learning goal orientation did not mediate the relationships between individual differences, work conditions and outcomes, and job satisfaction. This suggests that job satisfaction among caregivers is shaped primarily by immediate psychological and job-related resources, rather than by proactive learning motivations or longer-term developmental orientations.

Overall, the findings underscore the need for targeted human resource development (HRD) strategies that acknowledge the dual roles and unique constraints faced by caregivers. Interventions that strengthen self-efficacy and enhance job autonomy are likely to be more effective than conventional development-focused initiatives alone. By addressing these practical and psychological needs, organizations can support sustainable employment for caregivers, promote inclusive workplace practices, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development goal 8: Decent work and economic growth.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study extends the model of work satisfaction and the model of proactive behavior by demonstrating their partial applicability in a caregiving context. It highlights the importance of contextual factors when examining job satisfaction among employees with complex life roles.

6.2. Practical Implications

HRD practitioners should prioritize policies that enhance self-efficacy and job autonomy among caregivers, such as flexible work arrangements and supportive supervision. Organizations should also address stigma and misconceptions surrounding caregivers to foster inclusive workplaces.

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