

Individual Differences in Adaptation to Work Dissatisfaction

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of various personological traits on individuals' reactions to job dissatisfaction at differing levels of intensity. Our results indicate that the more dissatisfied an individual becomes at work, the more likely he or she is to engage in impulsive reactive behaviors, such as quitting, disengaging, or retaliation, rather than adaptive behaviors, such as problem solving or adjusting expectations. In addition, a relatively small number of individual differences were found to have a noticeable impact on reactions to dissatisfaction at work. Among the most prevalent of these traits are conflict management styles, individual work ethic, and proactive personality.

Job dissatisfaction matters. It matters to organizations, to managers, to customers, and perhaps most of all to employees. Job dissatisfaction is by definition unpleasant, and most individuals are conditioned, probably even biologically-driven, to respond to unpleasant conditions by searching for mechanisms to reduce the dissatisfaction. This drive towards *adaptation* is as natural and inevitable in workplaces as it is in any other environment. But for better or worse, it has gathered particular attention among organizational researchers because employees' adaptive mechanisms may operate in such a way as to affect organizationally-relevant outcomes, ranging from changes in job performance to such withdrawal behaviors as absence or turnover. Thus it is not surprising that a rich literature

concerning job satisfaction and dissatisfaction exists in the Organizational Behavior domain.

What is less prevalent in this domain is agreement about the strength of the relationship between individual and organizational outcomes and job (dis)satisfaction and related states. Empirical associations between job satisfaction and various behavioral outcomes have been inconsistent and generally modest in size (Blau, 1998). More seriously—and perhaps at the root of the problem—the processes underlying the associations have remained a black box for the most part. Rosse and his colleagues (Miller & Rosse, 2002a; Rosse & Noel, 1996), among others, have suggested that one potential avenue for improving our understanding of this adaptive process among employees is to explore personological factors that may help explain why different employees respond

differently to similar sources and levels of dissatisfaction. The primary purpose of this study is to begin systematically exploring this possibility.

A Theoretical Approach to Employee Adaptation

There is substantial agreement that job satisfaction is negatively related to employee behaviors that represent withdrawal from, or avoidance of, unpleasant work conditions. This can be seen most clearly in associations between job satisfaction and intent to quit or actual turnover, as well as with voluntary absenteeism and, tentatively, with lateness. However, as meta-analytic reviews have shown, these relations are modest in magnitude and consistency (Farrell & Stamm, 1988; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000).

Faced with these results, a group of researchers began to reconsider the nature of the relationship between job satisfaction and employee behaviors. Based on an extensive social psychological literature on the relations between attitudes and behaviors, theorists argued that it made little sense to expect strong correlations between general attitudes (such as job dissatisfaction) and specific behaviors (such as turnover or absenteeism). Rather, one should expect far better explanatory power if such broadband attitudes were used to predict comparably broadband measures of the behaviors of interest (Hanisch & Hulin, 1991; Hanisch, Hulin, & Roznowski, 1998; Rosse & Hulin, 1985; Roznowski & Hanisch, 1990; Roznowski & Hulin, 1991).

This insight led to substantial attention to the behavior side of the job attitude—behavior equation, in the search for underlying behavioral

families. For example, Hanisch and her colleagues (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990, 1991; Hanisch, Hulin, & Roznowski, 1998) showed that behaviors such as being late or absent, quitting, thinking about retirement, and reducing work effort may fit into two broader families of job withdrawal and work withdrawal. They defined *job withdrawal* as a set of behaviors intended to remove the worker completely from both the organization and the job; examples include quitting or deciding to retire. *Work withdrawal* includes more short-term means of escaping from noxious work conditions, such as by arriving late or leaving work early, being absent, or minimizing time spent on task. They have shown that both behavioral families are related to job dissatisfaction at levels that exceed typical correlations with specific withdrawal behaviors.

Other theorists have made similar arguments for broad-based responses to job dissatisfaction. Beehr and Gupta (1978) suggested a two-fold taxonomy behavioral or psychological withdrawal behavior. Rosse and his colleagues (Rosse, 1983; Rosse & Miller, 1984) added the categories of attempts to make constructive changes (also mentioned by Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982), retaliatory behavior, and cognitive readjustment. Henne and Locke (1985) suggested a distinction between “action alternatives” (changes in job effort, protest, and physical withdrawal) and “psychological alternatives” (e.g., modifying one’s view of the job or of one’s value preferences, use of defense mechanisms to alter reactions to dissatisfaction). Perhaps the most widely known taxonomy of responses has been Farrell’s Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect

(EVLN) model, based on Hirschman's (Hirschman, 1970) theory of how societies and organizations cope with decline. Others have suggested adding a category of Retaliatory behaviors to this set, to incorporate research showing a link between job dissatisfaction and aggressive or violent behaviors in the workplace (Glomb, 1999; Rosse, 1983).

The approach used in this study is based on behavioral families, but is also informed by Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory, which suggests that job satisfaction should be thought of as a primarily *cognitive* (rather than affective) evaluation. Because it involves a cognitive appraisal, they argue that job satisfaction should lead to purposive adaptive behaviors, such as deciding to change employers or careers. They contrast this cognitive appraisal process with a more purely affective or emotional response process that is likely to produce less thought-out reactions, such as impulsively quitting, or yelling at a coworker or customer. Building on this notion, Miller and Rosse (2002) hypothesized that work events serve as triggers for both satisfaction evaluation and emotional reaction. Evaluating work as dissatisfying prompts a search for an adaptive or coping response, but it also results in the experience of negative emotion. Miller and Rosse hypothesize that negative emotions and dissatisfaction will lead to qualitatively different families of employee behavior. In order to test this hypothesis, we used a taxonomy of behaviors that builds on both the prior work on adaptive (i.e., dissatisfaction-driven) behavior and Weiss and

Cropanzano's notions of emotion-driven, or impulsive, behaviors.

Adaptive Behavior Families

Problem-Solving represents "constructive" (from the point of view of the actor) attempts to fix, reduce, or remove the source of dissatisfaction. These activities were called "attempts at change" in the original Rosse and Miller (1984) model, and are frequently referred to as "Voice" (Farrell, 1983; Withey & Cooper, 1989). They include such behaviors as presenting problems to a manager, working with a supervisor or coworkers to change working conditions, making unilateral changes in how you do work, or joining a union.

Planned Exit corresponds to the category of "job withdrawal", and includes decisions to quit, transfer, or retire in order to avoid the source of dissatisfaction. It is similar to what is generally referred to as "Exit", but in this paper is distinguished from a separate category of exit behaviors that are more impulsive in nature.

Avoidance represents more short-term strategies for avoiding dissatisfaction, such as coming to work late or leaving early, avoiding meetings or duties while at work, or deciding to take a day off. It corresponds to Hanisch et al.'s "work withdrawal" category or to the Neglect category proposed by Farrell (1983) and by Withey and Cooper (1989).

Equity-enhancing Retaliation broadens most conceptions of withdrawal/adaptation to include aggressive behaviors that redress perceived inequities by either increasing the employee's outcomes (e.g., stealing), reducing his or her inputs (e.g., sabotaging the production process), or reducing the outcomes of other

employees (e.g., gossiping/backstabbing or otherwise making life miserable for others).

Miller and Rosse (2002) and Levin and Rosse (Levin & Rosse, 2001) also suggested a behavioral category they called Capitulation, which encompasses those situations in which employees do not respond actively to dissatisfaction, at least in the short run. In this study, we propose that this category may include three distinct dimensions: (1) *Loyalty*, after Farrel's description of individuals who wait patiently for things to improve; (2) *Adjusting Expectations*, based on early work by Mowday et al. (1982) and Rosse (1983), both of whom noted that it may be adaptive to reconsider one's situation (and thus decrease dissatisfaction); and (3) *Disengagement*, in which employees essentially give up. It is a more extreme form of adjusting expectations; in this case expectations are dismissed rather than just being recalibrated. It shares some aspects in common with learned helplessness (Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993) or what Rosse and Miller (1984) and Gupta and Jenkins (Gupta & Jenkins, 1980) referred to as psychological withdrawal.

Impulsive Behavior Families

Impulsive behavior is presumably different from "adaptive" behavior, in that is not driven by an attempt to ameliorate the dissatisfying situation. Rather it is hypothesized to be a "hot" reaction to the experience of strong negative emotions, relatively unaffected by evaluation and judgment (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). We propose two important categories of such impulsive behavior in reaction to unpleasant working conditions. *Impulsive Exit*

behavior includes turnover behavior that is relatively spontaneous, with little or no prior search for or evaluation of alternatives. *Cathartic Retaliation* includes violent or aggressive behavior that is similarly spontaneous, emotion-driven, and enacted without significant consideration of consequences. Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory suggests that such behavior is more likely to be driven by emotions than by job satisfaction.

H1a: Correlations of job dissatisfaction with the various forms of adaptive behavior will be positive, and significantly greater in magnitude than correlations of job dissatisfaction with Impulsive Behavior or Cathartic Retaliation.

H1b: Impulsive Exit and Cathartic Retaliation will be positively correlated with negative emotions, and these correlations will be stronger than the correlations of the behaviors with job dissatisfaction.

Personological Factors in Employee Responses to Dissatisfaction

Historically, when attention has been given to variables affecting the variance in reactions to job dissatisfaction, the focus has been on situational moderators, most typically labor market conditions. As important as situational constraints undoubtedly are, the focus of this study is on personological factors that influence responses to dissatisfaction. Rosse and Noel (Rosse et al., 1996) note that surprisingly little attention has been given to the role of individual differences in understanding employee withdrawal and adaptation. For this study we explored a comprehensive set of

individual differences that plausibly explain differences in reactions to job dissatisfaction.

Locus of Control refers to beliefs about personal control over events in life. Because individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they can influence their fates, they are expected to adopt more proactive adaptive strategies, whereas externals are more likely to resort to either passive withdrawal or disengagement (Rosse et al., 1996). Four studies have reported associations, either direct or moderating, between perceived control and exit behavior (Blau, 1987; Griffeth & Hom, 1988; Parker, 1993; Spector & Michaels, 1986); Withey and Cooper (Withey & Cooper, 1989) failed to find a relationship with turnover, but did report a negative association with neglect behaviors. Parker (1983) also found that locus of control was positively related to voice behaviors.

H2: *External locus of control will be positively associated with Avoidance, Loyalty, Adjusting Expectations and Disengagement responses and negatively correlated with Problem-Solving and, to a lesser degree, Exit responses.*

In their review of the work-related correlates of the Big Five personality model, Barrick and Mount (Barrick & Mount, 1991) found that Openness to Experience was a stable, if modest, predictor of turnover ($p = .11$). Rosse and Noel (1996) suggested that this may represent the “pull” of alternative opportunities more than “push” due to dissatisfaction. As a result, Openness to Experience is not hypothesized to relate to any of the adaptive behaviors, but it is expected to be positively associated with impulsive turnover.

H3: *Openness to Experience will be positively related to Impulsive Exit, but not to Planned Exit.*

Barrick and Mount (1991) reported that Conscientiousness is negatively related to turnover ($p = -.12$), a conclusion also reached by Bernardin (Bernardin, 1977) for both turnover and absence. Given that individuals who are high on Conscientiousness are characterized as dependable, reliable and achievement-oriented, we would also expect them to be more likely to use Problem-Solving approaches to dissatisfaction, and less likely to engage in Avoidance or Retaliation.

H4: *Conscientiousness will be positively related to Problem-Solving and negatively related to Exit, Avoidance, and Cathartic and Equity-Enhancing Retaliation.*

Neuroticism was not related to turnover in Barrick and Mount’s meta-analysis, although there is some reason to believe that it may be related to various adaptive behaviors (Rosse & Noel, 1996). Bernardin (Bernardin, 1977) found that anxiety was related to both turnover and absence, and suggested that it may play a particularly important role in explaining “job hopping” behavior (similar to Impulsive Exit). Neuroticism is also a key factor in stress tolerance; therefore we expect that it (or its Angry Hostility sub-factor) will be positively related to retaliatory behavior.

H5: *Neuroticism and Angry Hostility will be positively related to Impulsive Exit behavior, Cathartic Retaliation and, to a lesser degree, Equity-Enhancing Retaliation.*

Agreeableness was reported by Barrick and Mount to be weakly but significantly related to turnover ($p = -.09$), although the reasons for

this association are not clear (Rosse & Noel, 1996). Instead of using the overall domain, we chose to include two sub-facets—Cooperation and Trust—that seemed theoretically related to other behaviors of interest. Based on the violence and aggression literature (Glomb, 1999), we expected that each would be negatively related to retaliatory behavior. We also expected that the Cooperation facet would be positively related to Loyalty, since this behavior family involves patience and a willingness to work with the company while waiting for things to improve.

H6a: *The Cooperation facet of Agreeableness will be negatively related to Cathartic and Equity-Enhancing Retaliation and positively related to Loyalty.*

H6b: *The Trust facet of Agreeableness will be negatively related to Cathartic and Equity-Enhancing Retaliation.*

Impulsiveness, as a personality trait, was expected to relate to impulse-, or emotion-, driven behaviors. Impulsive people seem to have lower inhibitory processes, and thus to act more readily on impulses. Impulsiveness may also include a sensation-seeking aspect, in which individuals are more likely to choose risky or deviant behavior patterns.

H7: *Impulsive Exit and Cathartic Retaliation will be positively related to Impulsiveness.*

Proactive Personality refers to a dispositional tendency to effect environmental change (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Individuals who are high on this trait are more likely to initiate changes, regardless of situational factors that might inhibit or encourage such changes. Bateman and Crant argue that Proactive

Personality is distinct from Locus of Control because it is an instrumental trait (focusing on behavioral tendencies) whereas Locus of Control is a cognitive trait (focusing on thought or information processing). Nevertheless, our hypotheses follow the same pattern as with locus of control (except for a reversal of direction):

H8: *Proactive Personality will be negatively associated with Avoidance, Loyalty, Adjusting Expectations and Disengagement responses and positively correlated with Problem-Solving and, to a lesser degree, Exit responses.*

Judge and his colleagues describe Core Self-Evaluations as a basic, fundamental appraisal of one's worthiness, effectiveness and capability that underlies and gives expression to such specific traits as neuroticism, self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, and locus of control (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, in press). They suggest that it can be used to predict job satisfaction, job performance, as well as job coping mechanisms. Although it shows conceptual overlap with other variables in this study, it was included in the hope that it may prove both more effective and more efficient than use of the surface traits it produces.

H9: *Core Self-Evaluations will be positively correlated with Problem-Solving and, to a lesser degree, Exit responses and negatively associated with Avoidance.*

Attitudes toward Vengeance refers to a tendency, likely dispositional, to view revenge as an appropriate response towards being harmed by others. Such responses are emotional, with an intent to provide relief to the avenger (Stuckless & Goranson, 1992). We expect

individuals with a predisposition towards revenge to be more likely to engage in retaliatory responses when feeling dissatisfied.

H10: *Vengeance scores will be positively correlated with Equity-Enhancing and Cathartic Retaliation.*

Work Ethic may be defined as a commitment to the value and importance of hard work (Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth, 2002b). Work ethic is widely assumed to relate to job performance, absenteeism and turnover, as well as counterproductive behavior (Sheehy, 1990; Shimko, 1992; Yandle, 1992), although actual empirical relations have been inconsistent (Miller et al., 2002). Based on prior theory, we expect individuals who are high on work ethic to be more likely to respond to work dissatisfaction by either loyally waiting for things to improve or by trying to improve the situation themselves. Because work is so highly valued by them, we would not expect these employees to respond by being absent, quitting, retaliating or giving up.

H11: *Work Ethic will be positively correlated with Problem-Solving and Loyalty and negatively correlated with Avoidance, Planned Exit, Impulsive Exit, Equity-Enhancing Retaliation, and Disengagement.*

Miller and Rosse (2002) suggested that impulsive behaviors are more likely among individuals who are emotionally arousable or who lack emotion control. Bryant, Yarnold and Grimm (Bryant, Yarnold, & Grimm, 1996) refer to these dimensions of affect intensity as emotional intensity (how strongly emotions are experienced once aroused) and emotional reactivity (how readily emotions are aroused, including the inability to avoid or suppress

emotional reactions). Individuals who are higher on either trait should be more likely to respond to stimuli in emotion-driven ways.

H12: *Emotional Intensity and Emotional Reactivity will be positively correlated with Impulsive Exit and Cathartic Retaliation.*

Our final set of hypotheses pertains to Conflict Management styles. Most theories of conflict resolution describe five different conflict management styles, representing the confluence of two basic dimensions: concern for self and concern for the other party. Individuals who are exclusively concerned about their own outcomes and who are willing to impose their solution on the other party are said to have a Dominating style. Those who are willing to ignore their own interests and acquiesce to those of the other party are described as having an Obliging style. An Avoiding style of conflict resolution is characterized by a low concern for either party's interest and a tendency to ignore the presence of a conflict. Individuals who place equal emphasis on both party's interests and seek a solution that will maximize both party's interests are said to have an Integrative approach to conflict. Finally, those who place an equal, but lower, value on both party's interest are likely to adopt a Compromising approach to conflict. (The terms for these strategies vary across writers; we have adopted the terms used by Rahim, 1983, whose scale we used in this study.) Although the various approaches can be seen as learned strategies (Lewicki, Litterer, Minton, & Saunders, 1994), there is also a basis for concluding that preferences for particular strategies may represent relatively stable individual differences (Antonioni, 1998; Terhune,

1970). Since work dissatisfaction—and its resolution—often involves interpersonal conflict, we expect that differences in characteristic styles of conflict management will manifest in different forms of adaptive response.

H13a: *An Integrative conflict management style will be positively correlated with Problem Solving.*

H13b: *An Avoiding conflict management style will be positively correlated with Avoidance behaviors.*

H13c: *A Dominating conflict management style will be positively correlated with Equity-Enhancing, and to a lesser extent, Cathartic Retaliation.*

H13d: *An Obliging conflict management style will be positively correlated with the Capitulation responses of Loyalty, Adjusting Expectations and Disengagement.*

H13e: *A Compromising conflict management style will be positively correlated with Problem Solving, Loyalty and, especially, Adjusting Expectations.*

METHODS

Samples

This paper is based on two different sampling strategies. The first sample consisted of 130 business undergraduate students who participated in the study as part of a research participation requirement for an introductory core course in Marketing. Data from students were collected in five group sessions in Spring of 2003. Student participants received subject pool credit (whether or not they completed the survey).

The second sample consisted of 123 respondents to an online survey. These

respondents were recruited through a variety of means, including advertisements in newspapers in Cleveland, San Francisco, Phoenix and Dallas; direct mail inserts; in response to news stories that originally appeared in the Denver Post and were then picked up by other newspapers; and in response to web search engines that happened to find our survey (probably in response to a search that included “job dissatisfaction”). Online participants were offered an opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate (they could sign up for the drawing independently of the survey so that the anonymity of their responses would not be breached).

Descriptive statistics for both samples are included in Table 1. As intended, the second recruiting strategy resulted in a sample that was older and had more work experience. But it was not as diverse as we had hoped. Like the college student sample, online survey-takers were well-educated; 68% had 4 or more years of college, while an additional 24% had completed at least some college. Non-white employees were clearly under-represented in both samples.

Although a substantial number of the student respondents were not employed at the time they completed the survey, all had prior work experience to which they could refer. On average, student participants had held 2.4 different full-time and 2.7 different part time jobs in their lives. Thus all the participants had an adequate basis on which to complete the survey.

Participants were asked to describe a situation in which they became dissatisfied with their work situation, and to describe the type of

job they had at the time. The open-ended descriptions of the jobs were coded by the second author, using the Standard Occupational Classification System (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1999). Jobs are reported in Table 1 according to major occupational classification; those comprising less than 5% are reported as "Other." The student sample included 34 different jobs, with the majority in the Food Service (31%), Sales (25%) and Office and Administrative Support (20%) categories. The online sample included 39 job codes; the predominant category was Office and Administrative Support (36%).

 Insert Table 1 about here

The two samples were combined for most analyses. Although there are evident differences between the groups, this heterogeneity is desirable in order to ensure that the results are as generalizable as possible. Where important differences exist, results are reported separately for each group.

Procedures

Participants first read informed consent documents that emphasized that their responses would be anonymous and that participation was voluntary. They then began the survey, the first section of which asked them to describe a specific example of a time at work when they were dissatisfied. These responses were content-coded by both authors. The content-coding was based primarily on the 20 job satisfaction facets included in the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). We also added five

additional factors that were commonly mentioned by respondents: Covering for Coworkers who were slacking, Customers, Discrimination, Training, and Workload.

Each of the coders independently coded each response, using up to three satisfaction categories. For example, one participant's answer, "My boss was mean to me and I didn't get paid well," was coded as reflecting both the Supervision-Human Relations and Compensation categories. Initial inter-rater agreement was 77.5% for the primary source of dissatisfaction. The two raters discussed any items on which they did not agree and reached consensus on all but 11 cases. A third rater then evaluated these 11 cases; when that rater agreed with either of the original raters, that code was used.

Table 2 summarizes the frequency with which each category was mentioned as the cause of dissatisfaction. The most common source of dissatisfaction was supervisors, with a total of 60 instances in which respondents described a lack of human relations skills in their supervisor and an additional 39 instances in which respondents felt their supervisor lacked the technical skills to do their jobs correctly. Dissatisfaction with supervisors' human relations skills was also the most common primary source of dissatisfaction, by a substantial margin. Supervisors were probably also a primary reason for the 34 complaints dealing with lack of recognition.

 Insert Table 2 about here

The next most common sources of dissatisfaction had to do with company policies and practices (47 instances) and compensation (43 instances). These were often related, and in many cases had to do with putting up with other problems while being paid at a minimal rate. The fourth common source of dissatisfaction was coworkers; 24 comments related to coworkers in general, while 15 comments described situations in which the respondent complained of having to cover for coworkers who were not carrying their own weight. Other common sources of dissatisfaction had to do with the work: having too much work to do (27 instances), or not being able to utilize their abilities (26 instances) being particularly common. Surprisingly, neither job security nor advancement opportunities were common sources of dissatisfaction.

Participants were also asked to rate their level of dissatisfaction at the time of the event, using a 1 (Slightly Dissatisfied) to 4 (Extremely Dissatisfied) scale. Eighty-four percent of respondents indicated that they were very or extremely dissatisfied; fewer than 3% reported being only slightly dissatisfied.

In the second section of the survey participants were asked to describe their initial response to the dissatisfying situation, as well as their subsequent response if they still felt dissatisfied. The measure of responses to dissatisfaction is described in the next section of this paper. In the third part of the survey, respondents used the same scale but with a slightly different response scale to describe their typical responses to feeling dissatisfied at work. In the next section, participants completed a set

of individual differences measures (described in the next section of this paper). The final section of the survey asked for basic demographic information.

Measures

The surveys included two basic types of information in addition to demographic questions. One type of information was a Responses to Dissatisfaction scale developed for this study, the other was a set of existing scales previously developed and validated to measure individual differences variables hypothesized in this study to be related to responses to dissatisfaction.

The Responses to Dissatisfaction scale included 23 items intended to measure nine categories of response: Problem-Solving, Planned Exit, Impulsive Exit, Avoidance, Equity-Enhancing Retaliation, Cathartic Retaliation, Loyalty, Adjusting Expectations, and Disengagement (see Table 3). The Responses to Dissatisfaction scale was developed especially for this study by reviewing existing measures of similar constructs (see prior sections of this paper) and adding additional items where necessary. This resulted in an initial item pool of 55 items. A group of 96 undergraduate business students (similar to those recruited for the main study) was asked to evaluate how well each of the items measured the construct it was developed to assess, using a 1 – 5 scale. The constructs were described using the definitions shown in Table 3. The initial measure used in this study included the three items from each construct having the highest average fit rating. Average fit scores

ranged from 4.67 for Problem Solving to 4.30 for Loyalty (overall average fit rating was 4.47).

 Insert Table 3 about here

The items in Table 3 were randomly ordered and no construct labels or definitions were included. Respondents indicated how well each item described their response to the dissatisfying situation they had previously described, using a 1 (“Not at all”) to 5 (“Completely, this is exactly how I handled the situation”) scale. Later in the survey they were asked to complete the same scale to describe (1) their subsequent reactions to the situation (if it had not been resolved) and (2) “how you react generally to dissatisfying work situations”; in the latter case the response scale ranged from 1 (“Not at all typical”) to 5 (“Very typical”).

Factor analysis and inspection of item-total correlations resulted in some adjustments to the scales. The most significant modification was to the Planned Exit measure, which ultimately was formed from a single item. Cronbach’s Alpha estimates of internal consistency for the final scales, shown in Table 3, ranged from .43 to .76. These results were expected, based on both theory and prior work (Rosse, 1988). For example, Loyalty has traditionally resisted measurement, although the strategy in this study of splitting Loyalty into the three components of Loyalty, Disengagement and Adjusting Expectations seems to have improved measurement of the latter two. Low internal consistencies are not surprising for those categories that include low base rate behavior; indeed, the correlation between mean

frequency of the behaviors and alphas was $r = .67$. Moreover, in many cases it seems unlikely that an individual would simultaneously enact all the behaviors in a category (for example, cutting back on how hard you work, stealing supplies, and taking pay for hours not worked); not only would one or two likely provide an adequate adaptive strategy, doing all three might make it likely one would be fired. Given these considerations, we placed primary emphasis on the prior scaling study in which respondents placed the items into categories on the basis of judgments rather than empirically observed covariance.

Five Factor Model (FFM) dimensions of personality were measured using subscales of the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; (Goldberg, 1999). This is a collaboratively developed, public domain measure of FFM personality traits; validation data are provided by Goldberg (1999) and are updated on the IPIP website (<http://ipip.ori.org/ipip/>). For this study, we included two 10-item domain measures: Conscientiousness and Neuroticism. For the online sample, we used the measure of Conscientiousness from the NEO-Five Factor Inventory <cite>. We also assessed the following traits using 10-item facet scales: Anger (corresponding to the Angry Hostility facet of Neuroticism); Adventurousness (corresponding to the Actions facet of Openness to Experience); and Cooperation and Trust (corresponding to the Compliance and Trust facets of Agreeableness). Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 4; all internal consistency estimates were nearly identical to those reported by Goldberg (1999).

 Insert Table 4 about here

Impulsiveness was measured using the Excitement-Seeking (corresponding to the Excitement-Seeking facet of Extraversion) and Immoderation (corresponding to the Impulsiveness facet of Neuroticism) scales of the IPIP (Goldberg, 1999). Unexpectedly, the two scales were uncorrelated ($r = .03$) and were therefore not combined into a composite measure. For the online survey, we instead used the 19-item Impulsive and Sensation-Seeking Scale (IMPSS) from the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Teta, Joireman, & Kraft, 1993).

Proactive personality was measured with the 17-item scale developed by Bateman and Crant (Bateman et al., 1993), who reported an internal consistency of .88. Consistent with their findings, Proactive scores were uncorrelated with locus of control and the FFM measures of Adventurousness, Cooperativeness, Trust and Neuroticism. Contrary to their findings, proactive personality was negatively related to Conscientiousness in this sample.

Locus of Control was assessed using Spector's (Spector, 1988) Work Locus of Control Scale. It has been used in numerous studies, and may have a more appropriate focus for workplace studies than more general measures of locus of control. The measure consists of 16 items; high scores indicate a more external locus of control. The internal consistency estimate in this study was nearly identical to those reported by Spector.

Core Self-Evaluations were measured with a 12-item scale recently developed and validated by Judge and his colleagues (Judge et al., in press). The CSE scale was developed to provide a more direct measure of core self-evaluations than the past practice of separately measuring its core dimensions (locus of control, self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, and neuroticism). Although the CSES has conceptual (and partial empirical) overlap with neuroticism and locus of control, it was included because of its documented role in explaining affective reactions to work (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997).

Vengefulness was assessed using the 20 item Vengeance Scale (Stuckless et al., 1992). Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was very high, as also reported by the scale's authors. Vengefulness scores were uncorrelated with the Anger scale, consistent with Stuckless and Goranson's argument that Vengefulness is distinct from simple tendencies toward anger or hostility because of its focus on "getting back at" a particular target.

Work Ethic was measured with the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile developed by Miller, Woehr and Hudspeth (Miller et al., 2002b). It was chosen over other measures of work ethic primarily because it was developed explicitly to measure multiple dimensions of work ethic, as well as its more up-to-date wording of items. For this study we chose the Wasted Time and Hard Work subscales as being particularly relevant to the adaptive behaviors being studied. The Wasted Time subscale includes 8 items measuring attitudes and beliefs reflecting active and productive use of

time. The Hard Work scale includes 10 items measuring belief in the virtues of hard work. Although the scales were moderately inter-correlated ($r = .50$), they were treated as distinct sub-dimensions in hypothesis testing. As was found by Miller et al., both scores were moderately related to conscientiousness, but not to other FFM scores.

Conflict Management Styles were evaluated with the 35-item Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (Rahim, 1983), with item stems written to refer to “people at work” (or similar). The items were scored in terms of five types of conflict styles: integrating, avoiding, dominating, obliging, and compromising. Internal consistency estimates were very similar to those reported by Rahim (1983), except for the Obliging and Compromising dimensions (which were both .72 in Rahim’s study).

Negative Emotions were measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they felt the following emotions at the time of the dissatisfying event: anger, fear, sadness and disgust. Each was measured on a 1 (“Not at all”) to 5 (“Very”) scale; the four were then combined into an overall measure of negative emotions.

Emotional sensitivity was measured with a variant of the Affect Intensity Measure (Bryant et al., 1996). The Affect Intensity Measure was originally developed by Larsen (Larsen, 1984) to measure affect sensitivity, the typical strength with which people experience emotions. Bryant et al. (1996) showed that the AIM is multidimensional, consisting of Positive Affectivity, Negative Reactivity, and Negative Intensity dimensions. Reactivity refers to the

strength of reactions to particular stimuli, whereas intensity refers to how strongly people experience emotions in general. Because we were studying job dissatisfaction, we used only the negative reactivity and negative intensity subscales. Both had internal consistencies in this study that were slightly higher than those reported by Bryant et al.

RESULTS

Our first hypothesis proposed that (a) dissatisfaction would be more strongly related to the Adaptive families of behaviors than to the Impulsive Behavior families and (b) that measures of negative affect would show the opposite pattern. One way to test H1A is to inspect the relative frequencies of the self-reported behaviors, as shown in Table 5. The means, which are ordered in descending order of overall frequency, show that the Impulsive Behavior families (Impulsive Exit and Cathartic Retaliation) are generally the least frequent responses to job dissatisfaction, supporting the hypothesis.

 Insert Table 5 about here

Another way to test Hypothesis 1 is to inspect the correlations between each of the behavior measures and the measures of dissatisfaction and negative emotions. This is a somewhat different test, because it determines whether certain behaviors are more likely when strongly (versus mildly) dissatisfied. The correlations shown in Table 6 provide mixed support for the hypothesis. Although both impulsive behavior family scales (Impulsive Exit and Cathartic Retaliation) are significantly

correlated with dissatisfaction, the correlations are very modest and not as strong as those between dissatisfaction and most of the Adaptive Behavior scales (with the exceptions of Problem-Solving and Equity-Enhancing Retaliation). The pattern for correlations with negative emotions is less supportive of the hypothesis. Although the impulse-driven behaviors are positively correlated with the negative emotions composite, the behaviors are equally strongly related to job dissatisfaction. Moreover, the correlations between negative emotion and impulsive behavior are only modestly stronger than those with the adaptive behaviors (and, in fact, much weaker than the correlations with Disengagement and Planned Exit).

 Insert Table 6 about here

The second set of hypotheses suggested that individuals with an external locus of control would be more likely to use Avoidance, Loyalty, Adjusting Expectations and Disengagement strategies and less likely to respond with Problem-Solving or Exit. In support of the hypothesis, an external locus was positively correlated with Avoidance ($r = .20$) and Disengagement ($r = .41$), and negatively correlated with Problem-Solving ($r = -.19$). But contrary to the hypothesis, it was also correlated positively to Planned Exit ($r = .27$), and negatively to Loyalty ($r = -.25$) and Adjusting Expectations ($r = -.29$). Overall, Hypothesis 2 received mixed support.

The third hypothesis stated that the Adventurousness facet of Openness to

Experience would be related to Impulsive Exit but not Planned Exit. This hypothesis was not supported, as Adventurousness was not significantly related to either form of exit.

As predicted by hypothesis 4, Conscientiousness was positively (and significantly) related to Problem-Solving ($r = .12$) and negatively related to Avoidance ($r = -.29$), Cathartic Retaliation ($r = -.13$), Equity-Enhancing Retaliation ($r = -.18$) and Impulsive Exit ($r = -.16$). Contrary to expectations, Conscientiousness was positively related to Planned Exit.

The fifth set of hypotheses, pertaining to Neuroticism, received little support. Contrary to expectations, Neuroticism was not significantly related to Impulsive Exit ($r = .22$) or either form of retaliation. Angry hostility was positively related to Cathartic Retaliation ($r = .26$), but not Equity-Enhancing Retaliation.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that the Cooperation and Trust facets of Agreeableness would be negatively related to Retaliation and positively related to Loyalty. The predictions for Cooperation were supported for Cathartic Retaliation ($r = -.31$), Equity-Enhancing Retaliation ($r = -.13$) and Loyalty ($r = .14$). Trust showed no relationship with Equity-Enhancing Retaliation, but was related to Cathartic Retaliation ($r = -.24$).

Hypothesis 7, predicting positive correlations between Impulsiveness and the impulse-driven behavior families of Exit and Retaliation received partial support. Impulsive Exit was not related to any of the measures of impulsiveness, but Cathartic Retaliation showed significant correlations with the Excitement-

Seeking ($r = .28$) and Immoderation ($r = .17$) measures used with the student sample, as well as the IMPSS scale ($r = .18$) used in the online survey.

As predicted by hypothesis 8, Proactive Personality was positively related to Problem-Solving ($r = .35$) and negatively related to Avoidance ($r = -.18$) and Disengagement ($r = -.24$). Contrary to expectations, it was unrelated to Planned Exit, and negatively (rather than positively) related to Loyalty ($r = .25$) and Adjusting Expectations ($r = .19$).

Hypothesis 9, predicting that Core Self-Evaluations would be positively associated with Problem Solving and Exit and negatively associated with Avoidance, received modest support. CSE was related to Problem-Solving ($r = .25$) and Avoidance ($r = -.12$), but not with either form of Exit.

Hypothesis 10, predicting positive associations between Vengeance scores and retaliatory behaviors, was supported for Cathartic Retaliation ($r = .28$), but not for Equity-Enhancing Retaliation.

Hypothesis 11, pertaining to Work Ethic, received substantial support. The Wasted Time measure of Work Ethic was positively related to Loyalty ($r = .33$) and Problem-Solving ($r = .22$), and negatively related to Avoidance ($r = -.28$) and Impulsive Exit ($r = -.13$). The Hard Work measure of Work Ethic showed a similar but somewhat weaker pattern of being positively related to Loyalty ($r = .28$) and Problem-Solving ($r = .15$) and negatively related to Avoidance ($r = -.12$) and Disengagement ($r = -.24$). Contrary to expectations, the Wasted Time measure showed no relationship with Planned Exit or

Disengagement, and the Hard Work measure was unrelated to Impulsive Exit; neither measure showed the expected negative association with Equity-Enhancing Retaliation.

Hypothesis 12, predicting that emotional intensity and reactivity would be positively correlated with the impulse-driven forms of Exit and Retaliation, was not supported. Emotional intensity was unrelated to both behaviors and emotional reactivity was negatively rather than positively associated with Impulsive Exit ($r = -.25$) and Cathartic Retaliation ($r = -.19$).

The final set of hypotheses, dealing with conflict management style, received substantial support. As predicted, an Integrative conflict management style was positively associated with Problem-Solving behaviors ($r = .33$); a Dominating style was associated with Cathartic ($r = .16$) Retaliation; Obliging was associated with Loyalty ($r = .29$) and Adjusting Expectations ($r = .23$); and Compromising was associated with Problem-Solving ($r = .12$), Adjusting Expectations ($r = .16$) and Loyalty ($r = .14$, $p < .10$) responses. Contrary to expectations, an Avoiding conflict management style was not related to the use of Avoidance responses to dissatisfaction, Dominating was not related to Equity-Enhancing Retaliation, and Obliging was not related to Disengagement responses.

Clearly, despite some positive results, our data did not provide strong nor consistent support for our hypotheses. One possibility this suggests is that personality factors—at least those that were included in this study—have limited utility for predicting responses to dissatisfaction. Another possibility, however, is that the personality variables are important, but

in different ways than those specified in our hypotheses. Given the scant theoretical literature in this domain, it would not be surprising if we overlooked or mis-specified some of the possible connections. Thus in a final analysis, we conducted a non-theoretical search for the best predictors of the behavior families. To do so, we selected each of the zero-order personality-behavior correlations that were statistically significant and then entered these into a series of multiple regressions. Three regression equations were computed for each behavior family; the primary focus was on predictors of initial reactions to dissatisfaction, but we also looked at predictors of subsequent reactions as well as general reactions to being dissatisfied (mostly to look for consistency).

The results, shown in Table 7, suggest that individual differences do make a difference. Collectively, the individual difference variables were able to account for 9 to 25% of the variance in the behavior families. Individually, Locus of Control and Conflict Management style had relatively pervasive effects. Dissatisfied employees with an external locus of control were more likely to engage in a number of organizationally undesirable behaviors, including increased turnover intentions, avoidance, retaliation, and disengagement, as well as lower tendencies toward readjusting their expectations and persisting loyally. Positive organizational outcomes (such as problem-solving and loyalty) were more likely among those who used integrative conflict management styles, whereas avoidance of conflict reduced the likelihood of Problem-Solving (as well as reducing the tendency toward cathartic retaliation).

Surprisingly, a Dominating style of dealing with conflict was not associated with increased retaliation, though it was associated with increased impulsive exit.

DISCUSSION

People in this study responded in a variety of ways when confronted with dissatisfying working conditions. Planned Exit and Disengagement were the most common responses to job dissatisfaction, followed by Problem-Solving and Loyalty. However, it is important to note that there were some substantial differences between the two samples. Compared to the older and more experienced online survey sample, students were less likely to planfully quit and more likely to impulsively quit (though that was infrequent in absolute terms). This probably has much to do with the relatively casual nature of student employment. Absent career expectations and with less dependence on part-time income that career workers, it is not surprising that more impulsive forms of quitting would occur. Subjects in the student pool were also more likely to adjust their expectations as an adaptive mechanism, and were less likely to disengage from work altogether. This might reflect the common finding that those new to the employment arena are not prepared for the reality of work, and thus experience “reality shock” and the consequent need to adjust their expectations. The lower levels of disengagement might similarly reflect that students have had less opportunity to “burnout”, while also hoping that their subsequent “career” jobs will better meet their expectations. Thus, these differences probably reflect the effects of

job experience and career attachment that would also apply to many non-students. This hypothesis remains to be tested in subsequent, more heterogeneous samples.

Our results also show the magnitude of dissatisfaction has some effect on the choice of responses to a dissatisfying work event. Highly dissatisfied people are particularly likely to planfully quit or to disengage from work, moderately likely to engage in Avoidance or impulsively quit, and relatively unlikely to adjust their expectations about work or engage in Loyalty. Or to interpret the correlations in another way, those who are least dissatisfied are more likely to loyally wait for change or to adjust their expectations than they are to quit or give up on work. Interestingly, Problem-Solving (and Equity-Enhancing Retaliation) seem equally likely regardless of the intensity of experienced dissatisfaction.

The primary purpose of this study was to explain why these differences in response occur, by exploring a wide range of potential personological factors. In this regard, it was interesting to find that a wide variety of individual differences were related to the behavior families in predictable ways. In the aggregate, these variables were able to predict a substantial amount of behavioral variance. Yet when considered in isolation, relatively few of the individual differences stood out as being either powerful or robust predictors.

Both the hypothesis-testing and the more exploratory analyses suggested that conflict management styles may be important. This may have particularly important implications since styles of conflict management are more

amenable to change than personality traits. Problem-Solving, arguably the optimal approach to job dissatisfaction, is more likely among those with an integrative, or collaborative, approach to conflict resolution. This style of conflict management is also associated with Loyalty responses, perhaps because waiting for things to improve can—at least in the short run—be mutually beneficial for employees and employers.

As one would expect, those with an Obliging style tend to readjust their expectations when they experience dissatisfaction; they are also less likely to impulsively quit. Avoidance of conflict is a less constructive approach to dealing with dissatisfaction, since these individuals with this tendency tended to avoid Problem-Solving (though they also were less likely to spontaneously retaliate against their employer).

There were also some surprises with conflict management styles. Contrary to what one might expect, neither Obliging nor Compromising styles of conflict management were associated with Loyalty. Nor was a Dominating approach to conflict associated with increased reports of retaliatory responses to dissatisfying work conditions.

Another important individual difference may be Locus of Control. Employees who believe in their own agency to effect changes in general, also seem more likely to wait for things to improve or to readjust their expectations. Conversely, those who tend to believe they are at the mercy of forces more powerful than themselves are more likely to give up or decide to quit; they may also be more likely to avoid

unpleasant work situations or strike out at others.

Considering the central role that Conscientiousness is believed to play in predicting work behavior (Barrick & Mount, 1991), it is somewhat surprising how little role it played in predicting responses to dissatisfying work. As one would expect, employees who are higher in Conscientiousness were less likely to engage in deliberative retaliation or in Avoidance of work. On the other hand, they were also unexpectedly more rather than less likely to engage in Planned Exit. Perhaps this reflects a decision that separating from an ill-fitting job is functional for both parties to the employment relationship. At the least, it is presumably less counter-productive than avoiding or disengaging from work, or retaliating against others. It was also surprising to find that Conscientiousness was not related to Problem-Solving adaptive strategies. This might be in part explained by multicollinearity between conscientiousness and a number of other predictors in the Problem-Solving regression equation, in particular proactive personality (which remained marginally significant) and the two work ethic measures (which also dropped from significance).

Limitations

As with all empirical work, our study is subject to limitations. The most obvious limitation has to do with the samples. We were aware that our student sample had limitations due to restricted range on both demographic characteristics and job experience. Although we were partially able to address this through the subsequent recruitment strategies, we were still

left with a restricted range of job types, as well as educational levels and racial composition. The recruitment message should have reached a fairly diverse population, particularly with the use of mail inserts that were targeted to include lower income and more racially diverse neighborhoods. However, the response rate to these strategies seems to have been extremely low, with the more informal methods of hearing about the study in newspaper articles or via web searches having proportionately much higher response rates. Of course, using an online survey also means that only those with access to and comfort with computers are likely to respond. This may explain the bias towards more highly educated respondents, as well as respondents in office jobs where computer access is more readily available. It does not entirely explain why so few racial and ethnic minorities participated, however. Thus, until additional research with more diverse populations is completed, we cannot be confident about how widely these results can be generalized. This may be particularly important for the key variables of conflict management style and locus of control, which may be correlated with education and other socioeconomic status markers.

Conclusion

The study of individual differences in relation to responses to workplace dissatisfaction is an important step towards understanding individuals' behavior when confronted with a dissatisfying situation at work. The purpose of this first study was to reveal which personological characteristics, if any, affect reactions to workplace dissatisfaction.

Now that we have a clearer understanding of the individual differences that do (or do not) affect responses to dissatisfaction, we are able to move forward and examine the situational factors as well as the interaction between individual and situational factors that cause

various reactions to dissatisfaction. The results of this stream of research will undoubtedly prove instrumental in understanding the association between job satisfaction and various behavioral outcomes.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

| | <u>Student Sample</u> | <u>Online Sample</u> |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Age (mean/SD) | 20.5 (2.2) | 39.4 (11.0) |
| Percent Male | 54% | 31% |
| <u>Race</u> | | |
| - White | 83% | 88% |
| - African-American | 9% | 3% |
| - Hispanic | 2% | 6% |
| - Other | 1% | 3% |
| - Multiple/Prefer not to answer | 5% | 6% |
| <u>Current Work</u> | | |
| > 35 hours/week | 6% | 86% |
| < 35 hours/week | 40% | 9% |
| Unemployed | 54% | 5% |
| <u>Standard Occupational Classification</u> | | |
| 11: Management | 1% | 7% |
| 13: Business & Financial | 1% | 10% |
| 15: Computer | 1% | 8% |
| 19: Scientists | 1% | 4% |
| 27: Arts, Entertainment and Sports | 4% | 4% |
| 33: Protective Services | 2% | 3% |
| 35: Food Service | 31% | 2% |
| 39: Personal Care and Services | 5% | --- |
| 41: Sales | 25% | 9% |
| 43: Office & Administrative Support | 20% | 36% |
| 53: Transportation and Material Moving | 4% | 1% |
| Other | 3% | 16% |

Table 2. Sources of Job Dissatisfaction

| <u>Source</u> | <u>Frequency</u> | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| | <u>Student</u> | <u>Online</u> |
| Ability Utilization | 8(3) | 9/6 |
| Achievement | 2(3) | 4/3 |
| Activity | 9(1) | 1/1 |
| Advancement | 2(1) | 4/3 |
| Authority | 0(2) | 1/1 |
| Company Policies and Practices | 14(10) | 8/15 |
| Compensation | 15(8) | 11(9) |
| Co-Workers (General) | 13(5) | 4(2) |
| Co-Workers not Carrying Their Load * | 7(3) | 3(2) |
| Creativity | 2(1) | 0(1) |
| Customers * | 4(3) | 1(2) |
| Discrimination | 0(0) | 4/0 |
| Workload * | 8(6) | 5(8) |
| Recognition | 3(7) | 18(6) |
| Responsibility | 0(1) | 1(5) |
| Security | 0(1) | 2(0) |
| Supervision-Human Relations | 20(8) | 23(9) |
| Supervision-Technical | 12(5) | 15(7) |
| Training * | 5(0) | 0(1) |
| Variety | 2(0) | 0(1) |
| Working Conditions | 2/3 | 3 |

Notes:

First number reflects the frequency at which each category was mentioned as the primary cause of dissatisfaction. Number in parenthesis reflects time of times it was mentioned as a secondary or tertiary source of dissatisfaction.

* Not among the dimensions in the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

Table 3: Responses to Job Dissatisfaction Measure:

Problem solving: Taking constructive action to fix, reduce, or remove the source of dissatisfaction. ($\alpha = .76$)

1. Talked with your boss or other management about how to improve things.
2. Worked with co-workers to improve things.
3. Went to the cause of the dissatisfaction to resolve it.

Planned Exit: Avoiding the source of dissatisfaction by consciously deciding to leave the job by quitting, retiring, or transferring.

1. Began updating resume and looking for a new job.

Impulsive Exit: Avoiding the source of dissatisfaction by leaving the job without careful consideration of other options. ($\alpha = .75$)

1. Quit on the spot.
2. Quit without having another job lined up.
3. Went home and never went back.

Avoidance: Trying to escape the dissatisfaction through absence, lateness, or avoiding duties. ($\alpha = .84$)

1. Began neglecting the parts of your work you don't like.
2. Began coming in late or leaving work early.
3. Started goofing off to avoid work responsibilities.
4. Cut back on how hard you work to make up for low pay or hassles.

Equity Enhancing Retaliation: Aggressive acts intended to "make up" for inadequate pay, benefits, or recognition. ($\alpha = .60$)

1. Took supplies or other things from work to make up for your unfair treatment.
2. Took pay for more hours than you worked.

Cathartic Retaliation: Impulsive, aggressive acts toward the employer, coworkers or customers. ($\alpha = .43$)

1. Began yelling or swearing at work.
2. Spread rumors about co-workers who were responsible for the situation.
3. Sabotaged the work of others.

Loyalty: Ignoring your dissatisfaction while waiting and hoping for things to improve. ($\alpha = .49$)

1. Decided to honor your commitment to the company.
2. Encouraged others to "hang in there" for a while longer.

Adjusting expectations: Reducing dissatisfaction by lowering your expectations or by re-evaluating the benefits of the job. ($\alpha = .71$)

1. Realized things weren't as bad as they first seemed.
2. Decided the good times outweighed the bad times.

Disengagement: Surrendering to the dissatisfaction, giving up hope of things improving. ($\alpha = .68$)

1. Gave up trying to improve things.
2. Found out that your situation was common, and decided there was nothing you could do about it.
3. Concluded the situation was hopeless.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Individual Difference Measures

| <u>Scale</u> | <u>α</u> | <u>Student Sample</u> | | <u>Online Survey</u> | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| | | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
| Work Ethic | | | | | |
| - Hard Work | .91 | 3.9 | .65 | 3.3 | .78 |
| - Wasted Time | .81 | 3.6 | .63 | 3.6 | .61 |
| Conflict Management Style | | | | | |
| - Integrating | .83 | 3.8 | .48 | 3.9 | .54 |
| - Avoiding | .86 | 3.4 | .74 | 3.5 | .74 |
| - Dominating | .74 | 3.4 | .56 | 3.6 | .63 |
| - Obliging | .62 | 3.6 | .42 | 3.7 | .41 |
| - Compromising | .65 | 3.7 | .37 | 3.7 | .51 |
| Work Locus of Control | .87 | 2.6 | .54 | 3.2 | .80 |
| Core Self Evaluations | .75 | 3.6 | .46 | --- | --- |
| Vengeance | .94 | 3.3 | 1.0 | --- | --- |
| Emotional Sensitivity | | | | | |
| - Negative intensity | .76 | 3.4 | .93 | --- | --- |
| - Negative reactivity | .70 | 4.2 | .90 | --- | --- |
| Proactive Personality | .89 | 5.2 | .64 | 4.8 | 1.0 |
| Neuroticism | .87 | 3.3 | .67 | 2.9 | .74 |
| Conscientiousness (IPIP) | .81 | 3.5 | .57 | --- | --- |
| Conscientiousness (NEO-FFI) | .85 | --- | --- | 3.9 | .53 |
| Cooperation | .74 | 3.4 | .56 | 3.6 | .61 |
| Adventurousness | .77 | 3.6 | .48 | --- | --- |
| Excitement Seeking | .80 | 3.7 | .55 | --- | --- |
| Immoderation | .72 | 3.1 | .52 | --- | --- |
| Impulsive Sensation Seeking | .85 | --- | --- | 1.6 | .24 |
| Trust | .87 | 3.5 | .57 | 3.2 | .69 |
| Anger | .87 | 2.5 | .57 | 2.8 | .73 |

Table 5. Frequencies of Behaviors

| Initial Response Scale | <u>Student Sample</u> | | <u>Online Sample</u> | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> |
| Exit- Planned * | 2.2 | 1.34 | 3.3 | 1.48 |
| Disengagement * | 2.4 | 1.00 | 3.0 | 1.05 |
| Problem-Solving | 2.6 | 1.08 | 2.5 | 1.11 |
| Loyalty | 2.5 | 0.94 | 2.5 | 1.06 |
| Adjust Expectations | 2.4 | 0.99 | 1.7 | 0.75 |
| Avoidance | 2.0 | 0.89 | 2.0 | 0.96 |
| Exit-Impulsive * | 1.5 | 0.94 | 1.2 | 0.63 |
| Retaliation-Equity | 1.3 | 0.65 | 1.3 | 0.62 |
| Retaliation- Cathartic * | 1.2 | 0.40 | 1.3 | 0.52 |

| Follow-up Response Scale | <u>Student Sample</u> | | <u>Online Sample</u> | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> |
| Exit-Planned * | 2.0 | 1.35 | 3.3 | 1.48 |
| Disengagement * | 2.4 | 1.04 | 3.2 | 1.17 |
| Problem-Solving | 2.5 | 1.18 | 2.3 | 1.2 |
| Loyalty | 2.4 | 0.94 | 2.3 | 0.93 |
| Avoidance | 1.7 | 0.97 | 1.9 | 0.99 |
| Adjust Expectations * | 2.3 | 1.10 | 1.5 | 0.67 |
| Retaliation-Equity | 1.3 | 0.70 | 1.3 | 0.72 |
| Exit-Impulsive | 1.4 | 0.99 | 1.2 | 0.61 |
| Retaliation- Cathartic | 1.2 | 0.46 | 1.3 | 0.55 |

* difference between samples is significant, $p < .05$

Table 6. Correlations between Behavior Families, Dissatisfaction and Negative Emotions

| <u>Scale</u> | <u>Dissatisfaction</u> | <u>Negative Emotions</u> |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Problem Solving | .02 | -.10 |
| Planned Exit | .37* | .25* |
| Avoidance | .17* | .14 |
| Equity-Enhancing Retaliation | .08 | .14 |
| Loyalty | -.22* | -.07 |
| Adjust Expectations | -.38* | -.14 |
| Disengagement | .28* | .35* |
| Impulsive Exit | .13* | .16* |
| Cathartic Retaliation | .19* | .17* |

Table 7. Beta weights for Significant Predictors of Behavior Families

| | <u>Beta Time 1</u> | <u>Beta Time 2</u> | <u>Beta General</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Problem Solving</u> | | | |
| Conflict Mgmt: Avoidance | -.30 | | |
| Conflict Mgmt: Integrative | .21 | | |
| Proactive Personality | .15* | | |
| R = | .50 | | |
| <u>Planned Exit</u> | | | |
| Locus of Control | .22 | | |
| Conscientiousness | .19 | | |
| R = | .33 | | |
| <u>Impulsive Exit</u> | | | |
| Conflict Mgmt: Dominating | .15 | | |
| Conflict Mgmt: Obliging | -.16 | | |
| R = | .31 | | |
| <u>Avoidance</u> | | | |
| Neuroticism | -.22 | | |
| Cooperation | -.22 | | |
| Locus of Control | .15* | | |
| Conscientiousness | -.17 | | |
| R = | .45 | | |
| <u>Equity-Enhancing Retaliation</u> | | | |
| Locus of Control | .11* | | |
| Conscientiousness | -.15 | | |
| R = | .22 | | |
| <u>Cathartic Retaliation</u> | | | |
| Conflict Mgmt: Avoidance | -.17 | | |
| Locus of Control | .17 | | |
| R = | .46 | | |
| <u>Loyalty</u> | | | |
| Conflict Mgmt: Compromising | -.18 | | |
| Conflict Mgmt: Integrative | .18* | | |
| Cooperativeness | .16* | | |
| Work Ethic: Wasted Time | .15* | | |
| Locus of Control | -.15* | | |
| R = | .46 | | |
| <u>Adjust Expectations</u> | | | |
| Locus of Control | -.22 | | |
| Conflict Mgmt: Obliging | .17 | | |
| R = | .40 | | |
| <u>Disengagement</u> | | | |
| Locus of Control | .38 | | |
| R = | .44 | | |

* $p < .10$ (all others are $p < .05$)

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