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The Effect of Performance Pressure on Employee Well-Being: Mediator of Workplace Anxiety and Moderator of Vocational Delay of Gratification

Ting Wen¹, Sainan Mao¹, Xiaoqian Fan^{2,*} and Jiayi Wu³

¹School of Business Administration, Nanjing University of Finance & Economics, Nanjing, 210023, China

²Department of Social and Ecological Civilization, Hebei Provincial Party School of the CPC (Hebei Institute of Administration), Shijiazhuang, 050000, China

³Intellectual Property Department, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, 210023, China

*Corresponding Author: Xiaoqian Fan. Email: xiaoqianfxq@126.com

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ABSTRACT: Background: In the field of organizational behavior, various aspects that have an impact on employee well-being gradually become a focus of attention. Among them, performance pressure, which is a component of workplace stressors that has a great influence on employees' job performance as well as well-being, has been little studied. Therefore, this paper constructs a research model, which uses workplace anxiety as a mediating variable and vocational delay of gratification as a moderating variable, to explore the impact of performance pressure on employee well-being. **Methods:** Reliable data were collected by questionnaire method and data analysis was conducted with the help of SPSS 26.0. In this paper, the data statistics are carried out by correlation analysis, mediation effect analysis, and moderating effect analysis, and the regression analysis is further studied. **Results:** The finding shows that performance pressure impacts employee well-being negatively, and workplace anxiety has a significant negative impact on employee well-being. When the workplace anxiety variable is added, the negative impact of performance pressure on employee well-being is still significant. Therefore, it can be verified that workplace anxiety plays an intermediary role in the influencing mechanism of performance pressure on employee well-being. While high vocational delay satisfaction weakens the influence of performance pressure on employee well-being. It's interesting that under the adjustment of low delayed gratification, low-performance pressure will lead to higher employee well-being, and the organization's conscious reduction of performance pressure is conducive to improving employee well-being, and under the adjustment of high delayed gratification, low-performance pressure leads to higher employee well-being, and high-performance pressure leads to lower employee well-being, which shows the weakening effect of high delayed gratification, that means vocational delay gratification plays a negative regulating role in the influencing mechanism of performance pressure and employee well-being. **Conclusion:** Under the mediating role of workplace anxiety, performance pressure has a significant negative impact on employee well-being, and in this influence mechanism, vocational delay gratification plays a significant negative moderating role.

KEYWORDS: Performance pressure; employee well-being; workplace anxiety; vocational delay of gratification

1 Introduction

In the current workplace environment, performance pressure has become a widespread source of stress [1], which has attracted great attention from the academic community, and it has an important impact on both organizations and employees [2]. In the field of enterprise human resource management, performance management is crucial. With the evolution of The Times and the further development of the



economic situation, in recent years, in order to occupy a dominant position in the market competition, while dealing with the instability and uncertainty of the market, enterprises have put forward more stringent requirements on the performance of employees to ensure their own steady development. Therefore, many companies take measures to improve the performance level of employees, such as linking performance goals to employees' promotions, salary increases, and vacation benefits [3]. However, this method often cannot achieve the expected effect but will make employees have psychological resistance, resulting in their resignation or job satisfaction, and loyalty to reduce [4]. Although this measure has played a positive role in promoting work performance, it has also brought great psychological pressure to employees. The pressure on employees to perform is different from the pressure of heavy work tasks and to speed up the completion of tasks. Mitchell et al. [5] believe that performance pressure is an urgent need for employees to improve their performance to achieve ideal results and avoid negative results, which affects employees' psychological emotions, motivation, happiness, and other aspects.

Khalid et al. [6] drew on a review of 341 studies, which mentioned at the organizational level mental health and well-being affect job performance, workplace deviance, organizational citizenship behavior, employee engagement and commitment, reduced absence, and turnover intentions, and at the individual level, which affects knowledge sharing attitude, creativity, reduced work-family conflict, and resilience, etc. It can be seen from the previous research literature that employee well-being will have a great effect on the overall benefit of the enterprise. Employees who have a strong sense of happiness are more relaxed when completing a given task, more able to obey the instructions and arrangements of their superiors, and less prone to job burnout. Employee well-being, as the psychological experience of employees' subjective psychological emotion, and material and spiritual satisfaction in the work and life of enterprises, will be influenced by many aspects, especially by the pressure employees may get, and performance pressure is one of them. Therefore, it is of great benefit to the organization and management of enterprises to figure out the influence mechanism and boundary conditions of performance pressure on employee well-being. At the same time, factors related to employees' psychological status may play a mediating or moderating role, so this paper chooses two variables related to workplace environment and employees' mentality, hoping to contribute to the advancement of the research.

2 Hypothesis and Theoretical Model

Based on the goal theory, managers will impose performance goals on employees who are aimed at achieving the value goals in the organization as well as make them act based on the goals. Therefore, the organization will expect employees to continuously improve their performance through performance management and assessment. Employees with high performance will get promotions and salary increases, while employees with low performance will face dismissal and salary reduction. Employees will experience performance pressure.

With the continuous development and change of The Times, under the pursuit of performance and profit, the pressure on employees will continue to rise. As an individual in the enterprise, all kinds of emotional factors are affected by enterprise performance pressure and work intensity. One of these is employee well-being, an increasingly important subject of research in the field of organizational behavior. Kausto et al. [7] believed that employee well-being is an individual's positive emotional state in the work environment, and it can be measured by relevant concepts such as job satisfaction, work pressure, job burnout, and emotional exhaustion. Schaufeli et al. [8] believed that employee well-being can be evaluated through positive and negative emotions. Bakker et al. [9] found that employees' work happiness is affected by two factors: employees' work needs and organizational resources. In human resource management events, the match between individuals and organizations and the organization's prediction of individuals can also

positively predict employee well-being. Mensah [10] selected employees in European countries as research samples to study the effect of work pressure on employee well-being, and concluded that work pressure has a significant negative impact on employee well-being at work.

2.1 The Relationship between Performance Pressure and Employee Well-Being

According to the “China Workplace Social Report 2019,” reference [11] released by Pulai Union CRT and Groupm Media Investment Management Group, 50% of employees’ workplace pressure comes from performance pressure, which shows that performance pressure has an extraordinary influence on employees. Previous studies have found that enterprises with high performance will have higher performance pressure, because the more the pursuit of high goals, the more pressure will be exerted on employees [3]. In addition, organizational vision, organizational strategy, and other factors will also have an impact on performance pressure. Eisenberger et al. [2] found a significant positive correlation between employees’ expected remuneration for high performance and performance pressure.

In the existing studies, performance pressure has a double-edged sword effect, which has positive effects and negative effects at the same time. Zhang et al. [12] found that performance pressure attenuated the positive relations between job autonomy and three dimensions of engagement; Ye et al. [13] found that when the performance pressure of a team exceeds a certain limit, such pressure will pose a threat to the psychology of team members, and then lead to an increase in the anxiety of team members in the workplace. The latest research by Mitchell et al. [5] showed that in modern times, performance pressure exerted by organizations on employees is one of the key factors affecting employee well-being. According to the study of Zhang et al. [14], excessive performance pressure on employees will lead to psychological overload and negative emotions as well as behaviors such as cheating, etc.

In this paper, the main effect hypothesis is based on the working conditions-emotion-happiness model. Rubino et al. [15] put forward the working conditions-emotion-happiness model, that is, working conditions will stimulate the emotional response that individuals want to enjoy and affect individual happiness. At the same time, job resources will have a contingent effect on the relationship between job demands and emotions. According to goal theory, the individual’s self-pursuit to achieve the goal can guide the individual’s behavior. The work tasks assigned to individuals by the organization can encourage employees to take the initiative to make behaviors, and there will be corresponding emotional responses in the process. The performance pressure mainly studied in this paper is generated by the performance objectives imposed on employees by the organization, which is closely related to the work requirements and work resources, and will also change due to the change of work tasks, so it belongs to the working conditions. Therefore, this model can provide a basis for explanation: performance pressure will affect individual happiness through emotional response.

McCarthy et al. [16] showed that performance pressure would force employees to make efforts beyond the limit to achieve the high-performance goals set by the organization, and in this process, it would lead to negative emotions and emotional consumption, and negative emotions would affect employee well-being. As to the individual level of employees, when employees suffer from negative emotions, they will have negative evaluations of the working environment and work experience, which will sharply reduce their happiness at work. From the perspective of an enterprise organization, it will make employees lose enthusiasm and enthusiasm in the work process, and treat work tasks and interpersonal relationships with a negative attitude, which will harm the working atmosphere of the organization and the work happiness of other employees.

Therefore, this paper believes that performance pressure will effectively weaken employees’ happiness at work when it accumulates employees’ negative emotions.

Accordingly, this paper proposes **Hypothesis H1:** Performance pressure affects employee well-being negatively.

2.2 The Moderating Effect of Workplace Anxiety

With the rapid development of the economy and society, the level of employees' professionalism is also improving year by year or even leap, and the competition in the workplace is becoming more and more fierce, which makes workplace anxiety a normal and hot topic in today's society. The connotation of workplace anxiety is not only a psychological problem but also reflects the adverse impact on employees in the workplace environment. Costa et al. [17] believed that workplace anxiety is not only affected by individual differences but also by environmental factors, which hurt employees' physical, psychological, and behavior. According to a report released by the Pulse Data Research Institute in 2021, 89.3% of working people think they are in anxiety, and the three main factors that produce anxiety are the first is work, the second is savings, and the third is the epidemic. Jex [18] found that workplace anxiety is an adverse reaction caused by stressors on physical, psychological, and behavioral aspects. Based on the attention-control theory, Eysenck et al. [19] believed that the root cause of workplace anxiety lies in the differences among individuals, which will lead to employees feeling nervous and uneasy when facing various work tasks and working environments, and such emotional state is often a negative emotional experience.

According to social cognitive theory, the environment and behavior of an individual will have an impact on their emotional changes, thus affecting their autonomous behavior. When an individual is subjected to a stressful environment, he will make a psychological assessment of the threat or challenge he has been subjected to, resulting in positive or negative emotions. The pressure environment here includes performance pressure. According to Harris et al. [20], performance pressure can motivate anxiety at work, and situational pressure influences appraisals of the probability and cost of failure, which subsequently predicts the onset of anxious states. Therefore, this paper believes that the increase in performance pressure levels will lead to a significant increase in employees' workplace anxiety.

Accordingly, this paper proposes **Hypothesis H2a:** performance pressure affects workplace anxiety positively.

According to the self-determination theory, there is a relationship between basic psychological needs and individual happiness. Especially in the workplace environment, if the basic psychological needs of employees are not met, the happiness of employees will be inhibited. The unmanageable anxiety makes the basic psychological needs of employees cannot be satisfied. Pugliesi [21] believed that Emotional Labor will not only affect their happiness in life but also affect their happiness at work. Employees' anxiety and anxiety about their work performance and professional level inevitably lead to job insecurity, which may affect their work happiness.

Accordingly, this paper proposes **Hypothesis H2b:** Workplace anxiety impacts employees' well-being negatively.

2.3 The Mediating Role of Workplace Anxiety

According to the above scholars' views and assumptions, this paper initially established the mediation effect model of workplace anxiety. According to the working conditions-emotion-happiness model, certain emotions are an important factor in the transmission mechanism between stressors and happiness. Among them, individual negative emotions have a stronger conduction ability to stress and happiness. Therefore, this study believes that as a typical source of work stress and working conditions, performance pressure will

enhance employees' workplace anxiety, destroy the balance and stability of individual emotions, and reduce employees' happiness.

Therefore, **Hypothesis H2c** has proposed: that workplace anxiety is an intermediary factor in performance pressure and employee well-being.

The moderating effect of occupation on delayed gratification

Reynolds et al. [22] defined vocational delay of gratification as the tendency of employees to prolong gratification and give up immediate enjoyment and short-term gratification in the face of the temptation of long-term welfare.

According to the dual-system model of cold and hot, stress will exert an impact on delayed job satisfaction through the dual-system of cold and hot. When individuals feel high pressure, they will inhibit the cold system and stimulate the hot-blood system, thus inhibiting delayed job satisfaction, that is, stress will hurt delayed job satisfaction. Also, the vast majority of studies on delayed job satisfaction show that delayed job satisfaction will have a positive effect on employee psychology and behavior, and organizational performance. Zang et al. [23] showed that vocational delay of gratification was positively correlated with work engagement, and vocational delay of gratification played a mediating role between job satisfaction and work engagement.

Although no research closely linked performance pressure and employee well-being as a moderating variable, based on the above studies, it is very likely that there is a certain relationship between vocational delay gratification, stressors, and employee well-being. Therefore, this paper concludes that performance pressure will weaken employee well-being, and when employees have the emotion of delayed career satisfaction, they will tolerate the performance pressure they feel in the moment to pursue career goals and career achievements in long-term, thus promoting employee satisfaction and happiness, and easing the performance pressure and employee well-being relation. In other words, under the condition of delayed satisfaction of a high career, the performance pressure negatively affects employee well-being which will be weakened; Under the condition of low occupation delay satisfaction, the negative influence of low-performance pressure on employees' happiness is strengthened.

Therefore, we propose **Hypothesis H3**: Vocational delay of gratification is a moderator between performance pressure and employee well-being.

2.4 The Present Study

Given the above literature review and the integration of theoretical basis, as well as the research hypothesis proposed in this paper, the independent variable is performance pressure, the dependent variable is employee well-being, workplace anxiety plays a mediating effect in its influence process, and vocational delayed satisfaction is introduced as the moderating variable. This paper holds that performance pressure will significantly negatively affect employee well-being, and performance pressure will have an impact on workplace anxiety, and further impact on employee well-being by inhibiting workplace anxiety, and workplace anxiety will play an intermediary role. At the same time, career-delayed satisfaction is a moderator in the mechanism of the influence of performance pressure and employee well-being. Finally, the research model was established (see Fig. 1).

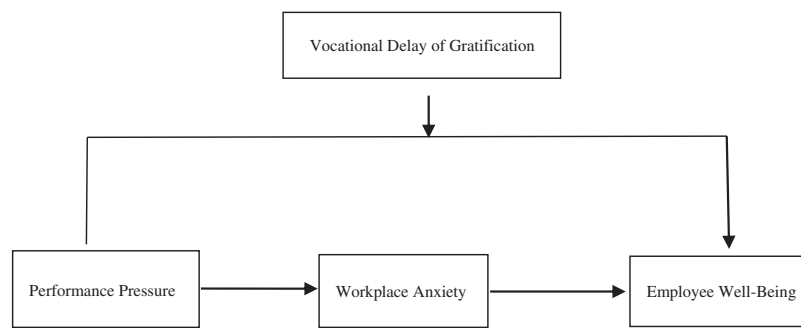


Figure 1: Theoretical model

3 Materials and Methods

This study was carried out for white-collar workers, IT engineers, and staff in other industries. The main method of data collection was to send questionnaires online for 15 days, and a total of 235 data were collected. After sorting and checking the collected data according to personal information, 31 invalid questionnaires were deleted, and a total of 204 questionnaires were collected after statistics. There were 100 valid questionnaires for females, and the questionnaire recovery rate was 86.81%.

3.1 Measures

3.1.1 Performance Pressure Scale

This paper adopts the scale created by Cavanaugh et al. [24] to more accurately study the variable of performance pressure that can cause positive emotions, including six items such as “leaders are very concerned about whether I can achieve excellent performance”, and adopts a 5-point Likert scale for empirical measurement.

3.1.2 Employee Well-Being Scale

The employee well-being scale of Zheng et al. [25] is mainly used to measure employee well-being. This paper mainly adopts the dimension of work happiness, which contains six items, such as “Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with my current job”. All questions were evaluated by using a 5-point Likert scale. The score is positive with the feeling of employee well-being.

3.1.3 Workplace Anxiety Scale

As for the measurement of workplace anxiety, this study uses the workplace anxiety scale designed and developed by McCarthy et al. [16], in which there are a total of eight items, such as “I often worry that I will not be able to complete my job responsibilities within the prescribed time”, which requires respondents to fill in with their real feelings. All items were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale. The score is positive with the perceived workplace anxiety.

3.1.4 Vocational Delay of Gratification Scale

Since there are few targeted job delay satisfaction scales in China and foreign academic circles at present, the scale created by Liu et al. [26] is mainly adopted in combination with the research direction, which mainly includes two dimensions: one is job delay satisfaction. Examples include “I’d rather take on extra work to be popular with my colleagues” and vocational delay gratification such as “It’s worth waiting a few years to

move up to a higher position.” The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale, and the score is positive with delayed job satisfaction.

3.2 Control Variable

A large number of research results show that the psychological response and individual behavior of individuals, that is, employees, are affected by demographic variables. To ensure the accuracy and rigor of statistical data as well as credibility, control variables were set in this study, such as position level and years of work, also gender, age, and education were included.

3.3 Statistical Analysis

SPSS 26.0 software was mainly used to observe the Kluenbach α value. The Cronbach's Alpha values of the Performance pressure scale, Employee well-being scale, and Workplace anxiety scale as well as Vocational Delay of Gratification Scale were 0.913, 0.869, 0.916, and 0.936, respectively. Therefore, the scales had satisfactory results in reliability and internal consistency.

In this paper, SPSS 26.0 was used to test the validity of the scale by factor analysis. The KMO values of the four variables were 0.913, 0.872, 0.937, and 0.950, respectively, all above 0.8. Bartlett spherical test was conducted for these four variables, and $p < 0.001$. Therefore, there is a certain correlation among the questionnaire samples collected in this study, and factor analysis can be used to test the validity. The results are shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1: Results of factor analysis

Item	Performance pressure	Employee well-being	Workplace anxiety	Vocational delay of gratification
Performance pressure 1	0.802			
Performance pressure 2	0.768			
Performance pressure 3	0.743			
Performance pressure 4	0.734			
Performance pressure 5	0.734			
Performance pressure 6	0.711			
Employee well-being 1		0.825		
Employee well-being 2		0.799		
Employee well-being 3		0.799		
Employee well-being 4		0.765		
Employee well-being 5		0.655		
Workplace anxiety 1			0.782	
Workplace anxiety 2			0.762	
Workplace anxiety 3			0.755	
Workplace anxiety 4			0.751	
Workplace anxiety 5			0.747	
Workplace anxiety 6			0.745	
Workplace anxiety 7			0.743	
Workplace anxiety 8			0.709	
Vocational delay of gratification 1				0.808
Vocational delay of gratification 2				0.808
Vocational delay of gratification 3				0.805
Vocational delay of gratification 4				0.805
Vocational delay of gratification 5				0.796
Vocational delay of gratification 6				0.789
Vocational delay of gratification 7				0.779
Vocational delay of gratification 8				0.774

Table 1 shows that the factor loads of the four variables are all greater than 0.500, indicating that performance pressure, employee well-being, workplace anxiety, and vocational delay gratification have relatively good validity. Therefore, the questionnaire samples collected have satisfactory reliability and validity, which is suitable for further research.

4 Result

4.1 Data Collection and Sample Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive statistical analysis was carried out which is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of demographic variables

	Item	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	104	51.0%
	Female	100	49.0%
Age	20–30	54	26.5%
	31–40	71	34.8%
	41–50	45	22.1%
	More than 50 years old	34	16.7%
	Junior school and below	26	12.7%
Education	Senior school	30	14.7%
	Junior college	62	30.4%
	Undergraduate	69	33.8%
	Master degree	11	5.4%
	Doctoral candidate	6	2.9%
Years of working	Less than 1 year	22	10.8%
	1–3 years	32	15.7%
	3–5 years	29	14.2%
	5–10 years	57	27.9%
	More than 10 years	64	31.4%
Position level	Primary-level worker	183	89.7%
	Middle-level staff	14	6.9%
	Senior staff	7	3.4%

The distribution of gender and age levels in this data collection is relatively balanced, and there is no centralized party. In terms of academic qualifications, bachelor's degrees, and college degree account for more. The working life of the respondents shows a relatively long situation, which makes this survey more convincing. At the same time, most of the respondents are in grass-roots positions. To sum up, the survey objects in this questionnaire are widely distributed, and the samples are more diverse and representative, which is conducive to data analysis.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Analyzed the correlation among the four variables studied: performance pressure, employee well-being, workplace anxiety, and delayed career satisfaction. See Table 3.

Table 3: Results of correlation analysis

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender	1								
Age	0.086	1							
Education	0.006	-0.537**	1						
Years of working	0.113	0.894**	-0.421**	1					
Position level	-0.130	0.010	0.322**	0.042	1				
Performance pressure	-0.087	-0.122	-0.096	-0.077	-0.046	1			
Employee well-being	0.137	-0.022	0.064	-0.012	-0.016	-0.493**	1		
Workplace anxiety	-0.132	-0.055	-0.125	-0.078	0.010	0.529**	-0.404**	1	
Vocational delay of gratification	0.012	0.116	-0.011	0.049	-0.022	-0.506**	0.254**	-0.419**	1
Mean	1.490	2.290	3.130	3.530	1.140	4.027	2.099	3.694	2.396
SD	0.501	1.036	1.210	1.359	0.434	0.893	0.857	0.898	0.971

Note: ** $p < 0.01$.

It can be concluded from this table that the correlation coefficient between performance pressure and employee well-being is -0.493 ($p < 0.01$), the correlation coefficient between performance pressure and workplace anxiety is 0.529 ($p < 0.01$), and the correlation coefficient between employee well-being and workplace anxiety is -0.404 ($p < 0.01$). The correlation coefficient between performance pressure and delayed job satisfaction was -0.506 ($p < 0.01$), and the correlation coefficient between employee well-being and delayed job satisfaction was 0.254 ($p < 0.01$). It can be seen from the above analysis that there is a significant correlation between the four variables, and the analysis results are consistent with the above assumptions, which meets the conditions for further regression analysis.

4.3 The Main Effect Test and the Mediating Effect Test of Workplace Anxiety

To test whether the hypothesis and research model set above are valid, this study adopts SPSS 26.0 to adopt hierarchical regression analysis. See [Table 4](#).

Table 4: Multi-layer linear regression analysis results of performance pressure and workplace anxiety on employee well-being

Item	Employee well-being				Workplace anxiety	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Gender	0.227	0.166	0.157	0.144	-0.184	-0.119
Age	0.006	-0.192	-0.033	-0.172	-0.101	0.109
Education	0.052	-0.039	-0.016	-0.053	-0.179	-0.082
Years of working	-0.001	0.078	-0.017	0.055	-0.044	-0.127
Position level	-0.044	-0.023	0.018	0.002	0.162	0.141

(Continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Item	Employee well-being				Workplace anxiety	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Performance pressure		-0.488***		-0.395***		0.518***
Workplace anxiety			-0.381***	-0.181**		
R^2	0.023	0.265	0.173	0.290	0.056	0.304
Adj- R^2	-0.002	0.242	0.148	0.264	0.032	0.283

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Model 1 and Model 2: With employee well-being as the dependent variable, the five control variables of position level, years of work, and gender, as well as age and education as the independent variable, Model 1 is obtained to verify the influence of control variables on employee well-being. Then, on this basis, performance pressure was added to the independent variable for regression analysis, and model 2 was obtained, which showed that performance pressure had a significant negative impact on employee well-being ($\beta = -0.488$, $p < 0.001$), that is, **Hypothesis H1** was established.

Model 3: Based on model 1, the workplace anxiety variable is used to replace the performance pressure variable, and regression analysis is conducted to verify the relationship between workplace anxiety and employee well-being. Model 3 is obtained, and the result shows that workplace anxiety impacts employee well-being negatively ($\beta = -0.381$, $p < 0.001$). So, **Hypothesis H2b** is valid.

Model 5 and Model 6: Workplace anxiety was added to the dependent variable, demographic variables, and performance pressure variables were added to the independent variable for regression analysis, and models 5 and 6 were obtained. The verification results showed that performance pressure had a significant positive effect on workplace anxiety ($\beta = 0.518$, $p < 0.001$). **Hypothesis H2a** was established.

Model 4: Based on Model 1, performance pressure and workplace anxiety were added to the analysis as independent variables. Regression analysis was performed on employee well-being, performance pressure, and workplace anxiety, and Model 4 was obtained. The verification result showed that performance pressure had a significant negative impact on employee well-being ($\beta = -0.395$, $p < 0.001$). Workplace anxiety hurts employee well-being ($\beta = -0.181$, $p < 0.01$).

It can be concluded from the above regression analysis that performance pressure impacts employee well-being negatively, that is, performance pressure can effectively reduce employee well-being. Workplace anxiety has a significant negative impact on employee well-being, that is, workplace anxiety will make employee well-being decline. In Model 4, when the workplace anxiety variable is added, the negative impact of performance pressure on employee well-being is still significant. Therefore, it can be verified that workplace anxiety plays an intermediary role in the influencing mechanism of performance pressure on employee well-being, and **Hypothesis H2c** is assumed to be valid.

4.4 An Examination of the Moderating Effect of Occupational Delayed Gratification

From the above correlation analysis, it can be concluded that performance pressure has a significant negative impact on employee well-being, and vocational delay has a significant negative impact on employee

well-being. In order to better analyze the moderator of job delay satisfaction between performance pressure and employee well-being, SPSS 26.0 was used in this paper for hierarchical regression analysis and moderating effect test. See [Table 5](#).

Table 5: Multi-layer linear regression analysis results of performance pressure and vocational delayed satisfaction on employee well-being

Item	Employee well-being		
	First step	Second step	Third step
Gender	0.227	0.167	0.157
Age	0.006	−0.196	−0.231
Education	0.052	−0.039	−0.054
Years of working	−0.001	0.080	0.099
Position level	−0.044	−0.021	−0.031
Performance pressure		−0.478***	−0.324***
Vocational delay of gratification		0.018	0.001
Performance pressure * Vocational delay of gratification			−0.186**
R^2	0.023	0.265	0.301
$Adj-R^2$	−0.002	0.239	0.272

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$.

For performance pressure which is the independent variable and delay satisfaction which is the regulatory variable, the interaction term is obtained by multiplying the scores after conversion. Secondly, the control variables remain unchanged, and the relationship between the independent variable performance pressure, regulatory variable delayed job satisfaction, interaction item “performance pressure * delayed job satisfaction” and dependent variable employee well-being is analyzed layer by layer. The interaction item “performance pressure * vocational delay gratification” has a significant impact on the dependent variable employee well-being ($\beta = -0.186$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that vocational delay gratification plays a regulating role between performance pressure and employee well-being.

To better reveal the moderating effect of delayed job satisfaction on the main effect, the simple slope test shows the following analysis according to [Fig. 2](#): When the moderating variable is high, the linear slope is large and performance pressure has a significant negative impact on employee well-being; when the level of delayed job satisfaction is low, the relationship between performance pressure and employee well-being is not significant. Moreover, after adding the moderating variables, the interaction coefficient is smaller than the main effect coefficient. It can be concluded that high vocational delay gratification weakens the influence of performance pressure on employee well-being. Under the adjustment of low delayed gratification, low-performance pressure will lead to higher employee well-being, and the organization's conscious reduction of performance pressure is conducive to improving employee well-being. Under the adjustment of high delayed gratification, low-performance pressure leads to higher employee well-being, and high-performance pressure leads to lower employee well-being, which shows the weakening effect of high delayed gratification. The above verifies that vocational delay gratification plays a negative regulating role in the influencing mechanism of performance pressure and employee well-being, and **Hypothesis H3** is established.

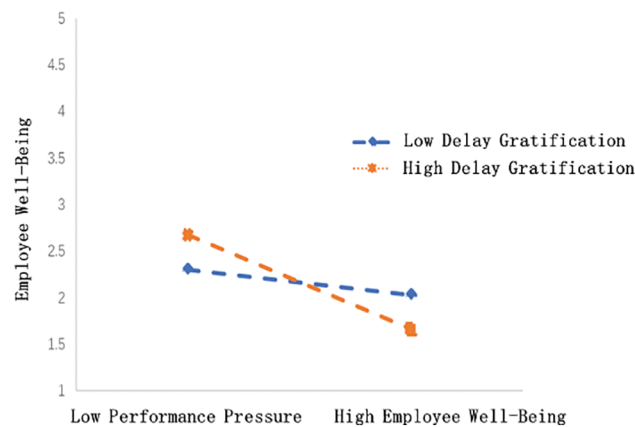


Figure 2: Moderating effect

5 Discussion

This paper mainly discusses the effect of performance pressure on employee well-being, the mediator of workplace anxiety, and the moderator of vocational delayed gratification.

Performance pressure is negatively correlated with employee well-being. This study shows that performance pressure hurts employee well-being, which is consistent with Mensah [10]. It means that a high level of performance pressure is not conducive to the generation and perception of employee well-being, and the lack of employee well-being hurts work behavior. Therefore, reducing performance pressure properly not only has a positive impact on employee well-being but also helps to promote employee work behavior. Management should minimize the negative effects of performance pressure. Timely attention should be paid to the stress situation of employees, reasonable assessment and intervention should be made, and levels of employees' stress perception should be reasonably divided to avoid excessive performance pressure affecting happiness and damaging the long-term development of the organization [27]. Managers are advised to pay attention to the achievement of employees' performance goals. Train or transfer employees who fail to achieve performance goals, and avoid the possible negative effects of performance pressure in time. In addition, managers should also focus on how to improve employees' job satisfaction through performance appraisal, stimulate employees' creativity [28] and enthusiasm, and ensure the efficient operation of the organization.

Workplace anxiety is a mediator of performance pressure and employee well-being. This study shows that performance pressure is positively correlated with workplace anxiety, which is consistent with the study of Xu et al. [29]. Workplace anxiety and employee well-being are negatively correlated, which is consistent with Chung et al. [30]. On this basis, it is concluded that performance pressure hurts employee well-being through workplace anxiety. It is necessary to pay attention to the emotional guidance of employees and relieve their workplace anxiety. Enterprise managers should pay attention to workplace anxiety, which not only affects employee well-being but also affects organizational performance, employee engagement, and attitude [31]. Therefore, managers should set up a workplace anxiety evaluation system for employees and take reasonable measures to improve the performance pressure according to the evaluation results, so that the workplace anxiety felt by employees can be maintained at a low level. At the same time, strengthening the emotional guidance of employees is an essential means. Let employees feel the care brought by the enterprise, and effectively alleviate the negative impact of workplace anxiety [32].

Vocational delay in satisfaction negatively moderates the relationship between performance pressure and employee well-being. Delayed career satisfaction usually leads employees to give up short-term benefits

for long-term benefits. No previous studies have confirmed the negative moderating effect between delayed career satisfaction and performance pressure and employee well-being. Based on existing studies, this study proposed a hypothesis, and the results showed that performance pressure and delayed job satisfaction were negatively correlated with performance pressure, while delayed job satisfaction was positively correlated with employee satisfaction, which to some extent compensated for the relevant studies on delayed job satisfaction. It is necessary to cultivate employees' delayed job satisfaction. The delayed satisfaction of employees can encourage employees to better control their behavior and be able to stand in the long run. When employees feel recognized by the organization and have a long-term plan for their future career development, they will feel happy at work and be more willing to contribute to the organization and create high performance. Therefore, enterprise managers must show employees the long-term development that can be achieved by overcoming the current pressure, and make clear the mature mechanism of promotion and salary increase. At the same time, managers should also assist employees in enriching their career planning, adopt professional training and education to enable employees to achieve delayed job satisfaction and delayed career satisfaction, integrate their career goals into organizational goals, strengthen the cohesion of employees in the organization, and promote the improvement of organizational performance while achieving personal improvement [33].

6 Limitations and Contributions

This study empirically tested the performance pressure and employee well-being relationship, clarified the mechanism of performance pressure's influence on employee well-being, and extended the boundary conditions. Employee well-being is not only a sign to measure employees' emotional perception but can promote employees' enthusiasm for work, maintain a good working attitude, and complete the performance goals set by the organization. At the same time, it can also significantly reduce the turnover rate of employees and improve organizational performance, which has far-reaching significance for organizational management. However, limitations also accompany this study.

The sample sources collected in this paper need to be extended. In the selection of control variables, this paper did not set the working industry of the employee. The uniqueness and diversity of the industry in which employees work are likely to have an impact on the results. At the same time, the age and region of the objects collected in this paper are scattered, which may lack a certain representativeness. In future studies, the number of samples can be expanded, and the industry, age, and region of employees can be collected centrally to reduce the limitations of data.

Conclusions from cross-sectional studies may not be precise enough. The questionnaire survey method mainly adopted in this study was collected at one time, and the collection time was relatively short. Although the research results were supported by theoretical and empirical analysis, there were limitations in the time dimension, and the effect of performance pressure on employee well-being was ignored as a continuous and long-term process. Therefore, longitudinal data should be collected in future studies, and follow-up studies should be collected several times to obtain more accurate and effective research conclusions.

7 Conclusion

This study found that, under the mediating role of workplace anxiety, performance pressure impacts employee well-being negatively, and in this influence mechanism, vocational delay gratification plays a significant negative moderating role.

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Ethics Approval: Not applicable. Our survey is anonymous, and it focuses on general opinions and behaviors, posing no risk to participants. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary, also participants can withdraw at any time without any consequences.

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