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Jobs and Job Satisfaction

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT

In this article, following an emphasis of the significance of work in person's life allusion is done to the global problem of unemployment. Then the topic of satisfaction with the job is taken up, whereby related theories are considered and examples are supplied along with related clarifying grounds.

INTRODUCTION

The individual's job comprises a large portion of his time and shapes his all life style and mentality. One's job is thus tremendously important for him. Nevertheless many young people with opportunities of some choice, actually choose their path of career without sufficient previous knowledge. Mostly, it appears that a nearby role model [1] represents the path to be taken. In Turkish society being a humble government official (functionaries) winning his life with his pen is usually more praised than a higher-paid blue-collar position. Even the work-psychology of the two distinct positions develops differently, along the course of time. The white-collar man feels an inner responsibility while the blue-collar, by nature of his location, is motivated essentially by money and other tangible fringe benefits. When ordered to prevent a danger; a laborer may object and say "it is not part of my duty" or negotiate for an extra pay; while the official would feel himself as a heroic figure when compelled to do something extra painful for the sake of the mother-land. It is interesting to note that [1] mentions about the abuse of occupational incompatibility especially (but not exclusively) under dictatorial rule. It is a meticulously calculated moral torment to ensure (with various lies, slanders and aggressions) that a talented individual (a great artist, scientist, author, bureaucrat) will work at a job at a very low level for him. Thus, he is treated as if he was nobody and prevented from proving his capabilities. Then the person the person falls into the assigned level of nothingness. When he wants to prove his true value he is labeled as "insane" (a megalomaniac or a paranoid). Ideally-speaking; choice of a job is an issue of human rights. Item number 23 specifies that every human being has a right to work and choose his profession freely. The same item refers to protection from unemployment as well as equal pay for equal labor and dignified wages. The actual situation; however; is far from ideal conceptions, almost universally. One extreme example would be abuse of child labor [2] in distressing conditions for absurdly small wages. Other examples are underpaid ethnical immigrants in low-status tasks.

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[1]In our high school senior class, the school administration arranged a conference for future Professional guiding. The invitee, Dr. Şahap Kocatopçu, was the general manager of a glasswork plant. He stressed the critical choice of field of study and thereby the profession. He specified that an equally critical choice later on would be the choice of a spouse for wedding.

[2]One of Harold Robbin's novels, Memoires of another Day, is about a union leader who starts his working life as an adolescent in West Virginia coal mines in 1920s. The novel mentions about child labor, insufficient safety measures, billing the accidents to a scapegoat, and all that.

UNEMPLOYMENT, A SOCIAL WOUND

The tragedies encountered by Turks in the shrinking economic arena [3] of West Germany in 1980s are vividly depicted by Günther Wallraf, in his superb work based on participant observation. An excerpt from the English translation under the title The Lowest of the Low, is provided below

I've been putting off playing this part for almost ten years. Probably because I knew what it would be like. I was quite simply afraid. "From what friends told me, and from the many publications I had read, I could visualize the life of immigrants in West Germany. I knew that almost half of the young immigrants suffer from mental illness they can no longer digest the countless impositions. They have little chance on the labor market. Having grown up here, there is no real possibility of a return home for them. They are homeless. The limitations on the right to political asylum, the racism, the increasing ghettoization. I knew about it but I had never experienced it. "In March 1983, I placed the following advert in several newspapers: "Foreigner, strong, seeks work of any kind, including heavy and dirty jobs, even for little money. Offers to 358 458" Years ago Dr. Kyle Smith, a visiting instructor at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of a Turkish university, was once assigned with a mission of recruiting American instructors from a conference. Before the departure, he expressed his hopeful attitude since the great majority of social scientists were jobless in America. (Later red-tape complications rendered the attempt fruitless). Many university senior students get frustrated with the vision of a dismal future ahead of them. Opportunities before the technical personnel, even though a bit better, are also shrinking. In Istanbul, up to 1960s government technical cadres were far from being saturated. Elderly engineers relate with delight their golden days. Public enterprises like Water Works or Highways used to arrange cocktail parties at Hotel Hilton one of the few luxury hotels available at the times in honor of engineering students on the verge of graduation. Contacts were established candidates were determined promises were issued. A specific anecdote goes as follows. In Kütahya the construction of artificial fertilizer plant was (in cooperation with German industrialists) nearing completion. The management gave announcements for experienced chemical engineers who had completed their military service. It turned out that the prerequisites were too unrealistic. Concessions came one by one. The field was a pioneering one. Let alone experience and military service completion, there were no jobless chemical engineers around. Finally incentive approaches were affected to students close to graduation. Golden days were those times.

SATISFACTION WITH ONE'S JOB

Once a job is somehow acquired, the concept of satisfaction invariably comes into the equation. "Satisfaction is not the same as motivation. Satisfaction is an attitude, an internal cognitive state. Motivation is a process. The content models, especially Herzberg's [4] have more to do with satisfactions than the complex process of motivation" [2]. "Motives are related to attitudes in that the latter, with their directionality and feeling-tone may constitute an important aspect of motives" [3]. As for the attitude itself, "attitude is a predisposition to react to an object such as another person or a given situation" [4]. "Insofar as his needs are met, a person may be satisfied with his work. But his satisfaction indicates little about his motivation to work particularly when his satisfaction does not depend on the amount of effort he puts into his work" [5] what is then job satisfaction? Job satisfaction refers to a collection of attitudes which workers have about their jobs. Facet satisfaction is the tendency for an employee to be more or less satisfied with various facets of the job. The notion is obvious when someone says "I love my work but hate my boss" or "this place pays little but I like my co-workers." We can also conceive of an overall satisfaction which cuts across the various facets. The statement "I like my job on the whole despite such and such problems" would reflect this overall satisfaction **(Figure 1)** [6]. The way [7] "An employee can be assumed to have a component attitude toward each aspect of the job as well as a composite attitude" [8]. Classify the causes of job satisfaction corresponding to the above-mentioned facets into three categories. These are organizational factors (pay, promotion, work's nature, working conditions, organization's policies and procedures) group factors (relations with co-workers, supervisors) and personal factors (an individual's needs and aspirations). Of course, personal factors do change from person to person. For instance some people prefer monotonous and unchanging types of work rather than the kind of work where changes and load increases occur [9]. Work traits like responsibility, challenge and complexity do not satisfy everybody. Those who want such traits in a job and are unhappy when such traits are nonexistent are usually well-educated, intelligent, able and independent-natured people [10]. The research evidence suggests that the best way to explain how job attitudes are determined is by means of an 'interaction-model'. That is, job satisfaction depends jointly on the characteristics of the job situation and the characteristics of the person" [7]. "Krech, Crutchfield and Bellyache indicate that wants and goals change continuously for most individuals because of changes in physiology, experience or learning. Satisfaction also operates to change needs and wants. Generally a want which has been satisfied will not operate to activate an individual's behavior" [11]. A lot of people end up hating their jobs, feeling like work is drudgery or torment, bored silly, not knowing how they fell into what they are doing, and unable to escape from it because they need the money. But some people find themselves with a "life work", a "calling" that gives them endless

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[3]Ever since those times, America and Europe will always miss the former times of prosperity. Jobs used to be relatively abundant, secure and well-paid at the time. Later; steadily down waging and downsizing came to be the general rule. The work force had been losing ground. Contingent jobs had been replacing regular jobs more and more. In other words a lot of working people are employed on the peripheral tier while few are lucky enough to be employed on the core tier.

[4]Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor-Theory differentiates between hygiene factors / dissatisfies and motivators / satisfiers. The former are necessary but not enough. They comprise good physical or even social conditions. It is merely the latter factors which involve real enthusiasm intrinsic delight with the carried-out-task like recognition, promotion and feelings of accomplishment.

satisfaction. They may discover it in childhood or fall into it in school or in adulthood in the course of working. When work is satisfying, it may take up so much of a person's "life space" that interrupting it for long becomes unsettling. The permanent termination of work, moreover, as in retirement, can be devastating [12].

Figure 1: A scholar wondering about job satisfaction of prison guards.

Adverse effects come if the employee is not satisfied

The responsibility of feeding one's family is so important an issue in many cultures and unemployment is such a big national threat that normally nobody (especially no male bread-winner) would ever consider quitting the job due to dissatisfaction alone (unless having found another job, which is very difficult). A job-holder would also avoid unexcused absenteeism or tardiness, through fear of getting fired. The ordinary discontented job-holder would simply persevere even at the cost of jeopardizing his physical and / or mental health in the long run.

It is known that discontentment with the job produces the horrible mental situation first defined as alienation by Karl Marx. The person feels as though he were an insignificant tiny being with no power, no self-expression, no purpose or meaningful mentality. He becomes a stranger towards himself surrounded in social isolation. "The term 'isolation' [5] describes the psychological condition of the individual who has lost the ability to interact meaningfully with others. He feels he cannot understand the attitudes of other individuals, cannot predict their behavior, and cannot explain himself and his feelings to them" [13]. The most horrifying version of alienation or self-estrangement is bound to occur on the moving assembly-line, where one has to keep up with moving parts and has to concentrate on a small portion of the production. Using a metaphor; one can not see the entire elephant but is confronted with an infinitesimal part of the elephant Taylorized or piecewise responsibility, named after Frederick thereby grasping or comprehending no meaning. A complete work is obviously more rewarding. Let us consider a shoe-maker who produces the entire shoe as in former times. Maybe he will daydream about its future use and discuss it with his apprentices like a game. Who will wear those shoes? A young handsome man? Or an old ugly man? Where will he go first in those shoes/ to a mosque for praying? Or to a tavern or gambling-house or a brothel to commit sins? Story-writer Aras Oren's fictive character Bekir Uçal is a guest-worker (Gastarbeiter) in Germany. The man is very similar to the unforgettable Walter Mitty character of James Thurber. He has a fantastic imagination which is always working. Reality is mingled with fantasy in all the steps he takes. He thinks he will be another Eroll Flynn on one hand, he is confronted with the harsh reality of work life the German way, on the other hand. In a cabaret he once watches an improvised game put on scene by German and Turkish players. One of the characters is the typical German foreman (Meister). Meister" Are you two the new-comers [from Turkey]? Come and take position before those machines! Right away and start with work (Albeit) It is forbidden to talk. It is forbidden to look around. It is forbidden to scratch one's skin. It is forbidden to insert your finger into your asshole. It is forbidden to urinate. Otherwise you are fired! Yes, run to work! I do not like talk. I do not like lack of respect. Faster Quicker Ever faster and quicker" [14]. In his unforgettable novel [15] depicts an incident which occurs merely due to the assembly-line's circumstances. On the assembly-line a worker's assignment lingers and he gradually intrudes on the other man's area. The foreman sees this, signals for a helper orders: "Help get this boy's job back in position!" (But the slow man is a black; the word is pejorative) Another black reacts and gives a bruised eye to the "racist pig". The foreman screams "You are fired!" The next day a grievance report lands on the plant manager's table brought by a union committee-man. Confrontation of the sides, negotiations, disciplinary actions follows one after the other. The incident irritates other employees and so forth. Of course any loopholes for avoiding work safely will be made much of by a discontented job-holder, especially in stable government jobs like "goldbricking", influencing doctors and / or "malingering" (feigning sickness) for obtaining a leave of sickness etc.

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[5][Nevertheless] one must distinguish different forms of solitude: There is a seclusion fertile and temporary, which is the effect of a return upon oneself, a sane reaction of the person to worldly dissipations and wastes and to the crushing lack of privacy. There is also a separating loneliness (to which we reserve the name "isolation") which is caused by more obscure defense and distress motives and which often confines the person to a morbid psychology [16].

These things do happen when it is possible to do them. For instance, a scandal broke out in Italy in mid 1980s. "Government official work the Italian way" were the headlines in a Turkish magazine. Big numbers of job-holders on official payrolls were discovered to be working only on paper. Many were doing other jobs or just even loafing around and catering outside of their buildings during work-hours.

CONCLUSION

People work to make a living. Sometimes even if they do not need the wages they still work due to other obligations like prestige in society from leisure itself. At times jobs were available. In recent times jobs or at least core-tier jobs are getting scarce universally. Once a job is acquired, then the concept of satisfaction comes into question. Many factors internal or external are involved. But the mere nature of the work appears to be the Dominant issue.

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