

Working Conditions and Worker Satisfaction
Student's Name
University

Correlation between Working Conditions and Worker Satisfaction with Longevity

As a concept, job satisfaction is influenced by a number of factors. The aim of the paper is to find the correlation between working conditions and worker satisfaction with longevity. In particular, the paper interrogates whether workplace conditions has a relationship with worker fulfillment. Basically, job satisfaction reflects the extent to which a worker likes his/her work based on his/her preoccupation with work. In a general sense, job satisfaction shows the level of comfort or positive experiences at the workplace. As Rollinson et al. (1998) found, job satisfaction has an impact on organizational performance on longevity. Other researchers such as Brill and Weidemann (2001) have shown that job satisfaction is related to working conditions. Thus, this paper aligns with the findings of Rollinson et al. (1998) and Brill and Weidemann (2001) in assessing the relationship between working conditions and worker satisfaction with longevity.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), about two million people die each year, because of occupational diseases or accidents. Similarly, about 270 million people are inflicted serious although non-fatal injuries at the workplace. Further, the organization indicates that about 160 million people become ill for short or long spells, because of work-related working conditions. Without doubt, these statistics present a grim picture about global workplaces. Moreover, the ILO estimates that the total cost attributable to workplace ill-health and accidents amounted up to 4% of the world's Gross Domestic Product. The enormous figures are corroborated by findings of the European Commission, which estimated that the cost of occupational health hazards in 15 EU countries have stood at \$55 billion in 2000 (ILO, 2006).

For the ILO, working time is an important issue. This happens because the organization sets limits either on a daily or weekly the number of hours that people should work. Following the recent economic crises, the issue of working time seems to have entered the agenda of ILO. In addition, advancements in information technology have altered working times and transformed work to a 24-hour business. In particular, technological advancements, which allow workers to work from virtually anywhere, have contributed to blurring the difference between working and non-working hours. Similarly, there has been a shift away from the standard to non-standard work. Put differently, work schedules have been altered significantly, because of technological advancements. Thus, the 21st century where economies appear leaning strongly towards the capitalist mode of production, workplaces are encountering working trends, which were unanticipated in the previous centuries.

Literature

It appears that a big percentage of existing literature on the topic do not indicate how working time arrangements affect the productivity of employees, either in a direct or indirect way (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991). Early studies were guided by sets of hypotheses ingrained in theoretical models. Particularly, the studies were rooted in psychology since they focused on job demands such as work adjustment, work stress, person-job-fit and job characteristics.

Job Satisfaction and Employee Health

It has been reported that working conditions, especially at factories, expose workers to various health problems such as anxiety, sleep disturbance, depression and other related health

complications. Moreover, studies such as the one done by the International Labour Office (2000) have found that, in the United States and Europe, prevalence rates of health problems vary from 15% to 20%. The statistics are more damning when reviewing cases from the developing world since the rates of health problems rise up to 35%. In the developing world, factory workers who often work long hours have the following health problems: sleep disturbance, depression, anxiety, somatic complaints and other related conditions. Researchers such as Andrews and Bassett (1976) reported that the impact of work on workers also extend to their personal lives. This explains why the relationship between emotional wellness, mental health and work is a continuous study area. The Department of Mental Health (2009) conducted a study in Thailand revealing that people who suffer from work-related stress considered being most influential in mental health cases.

The need to pay special attention to the state of health of workers cannot be overemphasized. As the Mental Health Foundation (2010) observed, mental illness or health-related problems were major contributing factors to poor productivity since workers were either absent from work or were unable to deliver high quality services. The same scholars also went further to indicate that poor health translated to underperformance since it facilitated a high turnover rate. Based on results from a meta-analytical study conducted by Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005), it was concluded that work influence physical as well as mental health of workers. In particular, the study alleged that long working hours led to exhaustion, which in turn led to low-self esteem, anxiety and despair. All these effects have a bearing on job satisfaction as well as organizational performance. Another study conducted by Faragher et al. (2005) established that there was a significant association between health of workers and organizational performance in terms of employee satisfaction and commitment. Similarly, a study by Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005) found that there was a close connection between health, job satisfaction and organizational outcomes. Thus, health and satisfaction among workers have a bearing on the economic expectations of an entity. There are a number of other studies that report an association between worker health, job satisfaction and organizational performance. Loscocco and Roschelle (1991) indicate that poor quality jobs, which particularly demand workers to dedicate long working hours, cause distress leading to low job satisfaction, high rates of absenteeism and employee turnover.

Production in a Capitalist Society

Based on the work of Marx (1977), production is a process, which allows for the monetization of people's labor. For a worker to participate in the production process, they are required to expend their efforts. Their efforts are rewarded with wages in the form of money. Similarly, the products produced out of their labor are sold for money. In this regard, labor is seen as money. It must be noted, however, in the production process, labor occupies a disadvantageous position since it has a low bargaining power. The bourgeoisie, which is in charge of the production process, controls what is paid to labor in addition to the amount of time that must be worked. In such an unequal association, employee satisfaction has no place. On the contrary, in the capitalist society, product volume is what matters. However, based on the above literature on health, job satisfaction and organizational performance, an approach that ignores the plight of workers does not support high levels of productivity.

According to Engels (2005), capitalists clamored for free trade. However, free trade became prone to economic cycles and crises as experienced in England. In particular, Engels

(2005) claims that every ten years any progress could be washed away by the economic cycles. As capitalists clamored for free trade, the working class was calling for more power so that they could influence decision-making. After the capitalists managed to have their way, they went ahead to do away with all impediments on industrialization. Thus, the rights of workers were relegated since they were not pro-industrialization.

According to Durkheim (1965), men are always seeking ways to become happier. The scholar further opines that specialization is an integral component when pursuing an increase in job satisfaction. Whereas workers want specialization for purposes of job enrichment, employers see it as a mechanism to improve their returns on investments.

Literature Conclusion

Based on the above literature review, there is a strong case supporting the position that job satisfaction, health and organizational outcomes have a relationship. However, the literature is inconclusive, thus, requires additional work to establish the dimensions of job satisfaction, health and the direction of their association with job performance. Such a discovery would enrich the topic and allow stakeholders take advantage of information in their decision-making activities with particular reference to how they treat or influence working conditions.

Although some scholars such as Faraghe, Cass, and Cooper (2005) found a relationship between job satisfaction and employee health, few studies concentrate on the association between job satisfaction and factory workers' longevity of working hours. Hence, a study of this nature would illuminate the association between working hours, job satisfaction and organizational performance.

Annotated Bibliography

Andrews, Frank and Stephen Bassett. *Social Indicators of Well-Being: Americans' Perception of Life Quality*. New York: Plenum Press, 1976.

Andrews and Bassett (1976) have also studied work, workplaces and employee concerns. The study is particularly useful since it touches on effects of workplaces that extend beyond workplaces. Focusing on mental illnesses, the study proves that mental illness is a factor in the overall health of people.

Brill, Michael and Sue Weidemann. *Disproving Widespread Myths About Workplace Design*. Jasper, IN.: Kimball International, 2001.

Brill and Weidemann (2001) are other scholars who have contributed towards illuminating the topic under review. In their study, Brill and Weidemann (2001) found that working conditions influenced job satisfaction. Thus, the work is significant in understanding working conditions, job satisfaction, and their association.

Department of Mental Health. *The Survey Report of Mental Health State during August, 2008 and February, 2009*. Web. 3 Feb. 2014.

The work done by the Department of Mental Health (2009) is important since it reinforces the findings of the study done by Andrews and Bassett (1976). Based on the findings of the Department of Mental Health, work-related stress had a bearing on workers' overall health.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: Free Press, 1965.

The work of Durkheim explores the structuring of work. In particular, the writer focuses on division of labor and specialization. Based on the analysis of work and society, Durkheim believes that workers prefer specialization, because of the attendant benefits associated with the strategy. For this reason, the work by Durkheim is significant in informing the study about structuring of work and how it affects job satisfaction since happiness is an important factor in workplaces.

Engels, Frederick. *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844 with a Preface Written in 1892*. UK: George Allen & Unwin, 2005.

The source by Engels details the effects of capitalism on the production process. It is also noted that Engels' work is an important addition to the history of production and the relationship between capitalists and the working class. Thus, this is an important source for the study.

Faragher E. Brian, Monica Cass, and Carry L. Cooper. The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Health: A Meta-Analysis. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 62.2 (2005):105-112.

Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005) also studied the association between employee satisfaction and work outcomes. Based on the researchers' conclusion that health and satisfaction among workers had a bearing on the economic expectations of an entity, the resource becomes useful for the current study.

International Labour Office. *Occupational Safety and Health: Synergies between Security and Productivity*. 2006. Web. 3 Feb. 2014.

In practice, the ILO concentrates on labor issues. For this reason, ILO sources of information are critical in highlighting how working longevity relates both to job satisfaction and overall performance. In particular, the ILO literature is significant as it gives important statistics that border on worker welfare and job satisfaction.

The Mental Health Foundation. *Mental Health in the Workplace; Tackling the Effects of Stress*, 2010. Web. 3 Feb. 2014.

The issue of working conditions relates to virtually of all workplaces. However, the issue is more pronounced when factories take centre stage. The article by the International Labour Office (2000) adds clarity on such effects as anxiety, sleep disturbance, depression, and their association with employee welfare. The article also offers important statistics relevant to the study.

Loscocco, Karyn and Anne Roschelle. Influences on the Quality of Work and Nonwork Life: Two Decades in Review. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 39. 2 (1991): 182-225.

When reviewing literature, the focus is on accessing relevant information as much as possible. The study by Loscocco and Roschelle aids this study since it is based on an extensive literature review touching on both direct and indirect influences of working conditions on employees. The researchers also contribute to the study by capturing past trends in similar studies.

Marx, Karl. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. (David McLellan, ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

The material by Karl Marx focuses on the aspect of production. Focusing on ancient production practices, Marx is able to bring out various aspects regarding the production. In particular, the issue of the pursuit of high levels of production is underlined as major concerns of those in charge of the capitalist system. The source also gives important information on how labor is monetized, an aspect that undermines the need to ensure job satisfaction.

Rollinson, Derek, Aysen Broadfield, and David Edwards. *Organizational Behavior and*

Analysis: An Integrated Approach. Pearson Education, Prentice Hall, 1998.

The literature provided by Rollinson, Broadfield, and Edwards (1998) is of great significance as far as job satisfaction levels of comfort or positive experiences at the workplace are concerned. Since the current study focus on the relationship between working conditions and worker satisfaction with longevity, the literature is highly insightful.

Conclusion

Based on the paper, there exist some gaps in the topic. In particular, the position held is similar to Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005) who observed that despite a relationship between job satisfaction and employee health, few studies have paid attention to the association between job satisfaction and factory workers' longevity of working hours. Thus, the study would address the correlation between working conditions and worker satisfaction with longevity. Moreover, it is expected that the study would elucidate the association between working hours, job satisfaction and organizational performance.

Outline

- I. Introduction: Brill and Weidemann (2001), ILO (2006) and Rollinson et al. (1998).
- II. Literature
 - A. Job satisfaction and Employee Health: Andrews and Bassett (1976), Department of Mental Health (2009), Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005), International Labour Office (2000), Loscocco and Roschelle (1991), The Mental Health Foundation (2010)
 - B. Production in a Capitalist Society: Engels (2005), Durkheim (1965), Marx (1977)
 - C. Literature Conclusion: Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005)
- III. Annotated Bibliography
 - A. Relationship between job satisfaction and health: Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005), Department of Mental Health (2009), Andrews and Bassett (1976), Rollinson, Broadfield and Edwards, (1998), ILO. (2006).
 - B. Working conditions: Engels (2005), Marx (1977), Loscocco and Roschelle (1991), International Labour Office (2000), Brill and Weidemann (2001).
- IV. Conclusion: Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005)

Bibliography

- Andrews, Frank and Stephen Bassett. *Social Indicators of Well-Being: Americans' Perception of Life Quality*. New York: Plenum Press, 1976.
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