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JOB SATISFACTION OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

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Abstract:

In the knowledge-based society, knowledge workers ares the most important resource for organisations, and they are increasingly striving to attract and retain them. One of the tools that organisations are using more and more frequently lately is growing job satisfaction. Studies in recent years have shown that, companies with a high level of job satisfaction tend to have higher profitability and productivity and reduced knowledge worker turnover. All this justifies the growing interest of management of modern organizations in identifying the level of employee satisfaction and methods of increasing it. The aim of the paper is to present to readers with all these concepts, to determine to what extent the concept of job satisfaction is known by knowledge workers and what elements are taken into account to measure the level of job satisfaction and the frequency of their use. We are aware that it is not enough to present only the theory of a complex economic concept, therefore we have carried out and present in the paper the second part of our research addressing these issues.

Keywords: *knowledge worker, job satisfaction, knowledge socity, modern economy,*

„Pick a job you love and you won't have to work a day in your life."
Confucius (Annabele Parr, 2020)

1. Introduction

The concept of knowledge worker has been extensively discussed in the paper *Stimulating The Productivity Of The Knowledge Workers*, an article published in the journal Studies in Business and Economics (volume 17 issue 2) in which we presented partially the results of our research, therefore in this material we will focus on the definition of the concept of job satisfaction, its importance and role in retaining human capital in the organization and in achieving performance, the second part of our research.

It is a fact that nowadays the labour market has undergone major changes and people do not stay twenty years in one job. Some of them are stable, working for the same company for a few years, others are job-hopping. Certainly today, an important element in

retaining employees in organisations is job satisfaction. Even though it is quite researched and is a topic of interest, there is no unanimously accepted definition by specialists.

For example, Hoppock stated that job satisfaction is a combination of environmental situations, psychological and physiological factors that lead a worker to say that he or she is happy at work (Bidisha Lahkar Das , Dr. Mukulesh Baruah, 2013).

2. Theoretical framework

A subjective response to work, job satisfaction has been studied extensively. The answer is extremely simple: job satisfaction is important in itself. If work is the primary adult activity for most people, then if they are satisfied, what they do is important. People's well-being at work is just as important as people's well-being outside of work. Another characteristic of job satisfaction is that it is an emotional response people have to their jobs. When we talk about job satisfaction, we are not talking about satisfaction with specific aspects of the job (e.g. pay, working conditions, the possibility of using a skill, etc.); we are talking about a general attitude about the job as a whole. It is a function of the correspondence between the closed system of the work environment and individual needs.

The concept of job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from the employee's evaluation of the work done or the experience of the work performed (Locke, 1976).

In 1997, Spector listed three characteristics of job satisfaction and defined it as the extent to which a person feels positive emotions about their job. First, organizations should be driven by human values. If they do so, respect and fairness towards employees will emerge having the ability to measure employee effectiveness (Spector, 1997). Secondly, the organization's business activities will be affected by employee job satisfaction. If employees are dissatisfied, they will behave undesirably and vice versa (Spector, 1997).

Third, organizational activities can be identified by measuring job satisfaction. Therefore, after identifying organizational units where changes can be made, performance will increase (Spector, 1997).

Hulin and Judge (2003) noted that job satisfaction includes an individual's multidimensional psychological responses to their job. These in turn have cognitive, affective or behavioural components. Yalabik,Rayton, Rapty, (2017) argue that satisfaction integrates multiple aspects and is important for employees to become active, engaged and absorbed in their work. The first aspect of job satisfaction is the nature of work. Employees who perceive their work as appropriate turn out to be more engaged. Job satisfaction is measured in the form of overall job satisfaction which is positively related to employee engagement in the job (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011) Overload or overload occurs when demands exceed individual capabilities; therefore workload is seen as a challenging stressor (Van Den Broeck et al., 2010).

3. Factors influencing job satisfaction

In 1959, Frederick Herzberg published the results of a study in "The Motivation to Work" which showed that certain factors contribute more to moments of intense satisfaction

than others. According to this theory, the individual has two groups of basic needs, which are made up of two different categories of factors: a) hygiene factors (extrinsic factors associated with the work environment) and b) motivational factors (intrinsic factors related to the nature of work). The need to avoid distressing situations and discomfort is related to hygiene factors (or conditioning factors), comprising company policy and management, technical supervision, pay, working relations and working conditions. The needs for professional development, self-fulfilment and recognition are linked to motivation factors. They include achievement, consideration, working for oneself, responsibility and advancement (Herzberg, 1959, in Aziri, 2011).

According to Waqas (Waqas et.al., 2014, p.1148), there are four factors that influence an employee's job satisfaction.

Participation in decision-making. Giving employees involvement in decision making will increase employee satisfaction (Cotton et.al. 1988, in Waqas, 2014). Richie and Miles stated that if employees participate in decision making, they will feel fulfilled and cooperate more in setting organizational goals and objectives (Richie & Miles, 1970, in Waqas, 2014). Luthans (2005) and, Moorhead and Grifcin (2004) in in Waqas, (2014) showed that there is a strong link between participation in decision making and absenteeism, job performance and organizational commitment. On the contrary, company turnover is decreasing as employees increase company loyalty (Luthans, 2005, Moorhead &Grifcin, 2004 in Waqas, 2014).

Empowerment. Nowadays, employees can easily change jobs. For this reason, companies are investing more in the employee to develop their job involvement, level of empowerment (Waqas, 2014) aspects that will implicitly lead to increased job satisfaction (Green, 2010). According to Waqas (2014), employee empowerment means that companies provide them with knowledge, facts and authority (Waqas, 2014).

Rewards and recognition. Rewards can be given by companies in many forms: money, products, promotion or public recognition. According to Bowen, a reward is offered formally or informally when a particular task is successfully completed (Bowen, 2000 in Waqas, 2014). The influence of remuneration on job satisfaction can vary depending on the type of work performed. Torrent et al. (2016), in their study of Spanish workers, found that net monthly income was a positive and highly significant variable in explaining job satisfaction only among Other Workers OWs and was not significant for Knowledge Workers KW. And, in their study of employment flexibility and job security in Poland, Wilczyńska et al. (2016) found income to be more important for job satisfaction among OWs than among KWs.

The workplace environment. Waqas also brings up the environment in which the employee works. Herzberg 1966 (Waqas, 2014) named these conditions as the tools, place, light, ventilation, facilities provided by the organization and the amount of work. In 2001, Brill stated that if all the factors of the work environment were summed up, they would account for 24% of job satisfaction (Brill et. al, 2001 in Waqas, 2014). Job security can come from knowing that you work for a viable company with long-term goals, while also developing a belonging behavior for that company (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010). Organizational success and job satisfaction are also related to employees' perceptions of adequate pay and benefits (Edwards, 2008). Analysis from the Glassdoor Survey (2019) found that 73% of

adults surveyed would not commit to a company unless its values aligned with their own personal values; work-life balance being important to employees. 77% of adults surveyed from (United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany) would consider a company's culture before applying for a job, and 79% would relate to a company's mission and purpose; over 50% of the 5000 respondents said a company's culture was more important than salary when considering job satisfaction.

Studies carried out in recent years have also identified other important factors influencing kw's job satisfaction, such as:

The working conditions offered by the employer are important for most employees who want to work in pleasant, airy premises with all the necessary infrastructure, where they feel comfortable. Flexible working hours, continuous and constructive feedback from employees, effective, open communication at work also contribute to increased employee job satisfaction.

Complexity, flexibility and variety of tasks, involvement in various challenging projects, real opportunities for career development, support offered by the organisation in developing new skills and accumulating new knowledge, considering/treating employees as the most important intangible asset of the organisation are also at the top of the list of job satisfaction factors.

4. The importance and benefits of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a function of complex economic, social, and psychological interactions that are subject to three major areas of measurement: professional characteristics of the profession, organizational attributes and effects on patient outcomes, and quality of care. Occupational characteristics of employees include factors associated with work, such as staffing, working hours or workload that correlate significantly with job satisfaction. Organizational attributes appear to be an important group of factors for job satisfaction, in particular, lack of organization, support, especially managerial, had a pronounced effect on healthcare dissatisfaction and burnout (Chanyeong Kwak Bok,Yae Chung, YuXu, ChoEun-Jung, 2010).

In addition, supervisor support, work group cohesion, and promotion of opportunities are important factors in job satisfaction (Chanyeong Kwak Bok,Yae Chung, YuXu, ChoEun-Jung, 2010) and individuals with low job satisfaction exhibited several types of counterproductive behaviors (Lau, Au, & Ho, 2003). Displaying desired emotions is an integral part of work interactions. Various studies have demonstrated that prolonged surface action leads to emotional dissonance, which causes dysfunctional emotional and psychological reactions, including stress, burnout, and fatigue (Lee & Ok, 2012).

It can be said that an employee's level of effort in each work meeting depends on their own emotions, the organization's emotional display rules, and the nature of the meeting. Deep action visibly supports employees to present sincere emotions to customers and appreciate customers' perspectives (Lee et al., 2016). Positive emotional transformation (Lee et al., 2016) makes customers perceive employees' sincerity and good faith and

enhances employees' professional sense of efficacy, personal achievement (Lee & Ok, 2012) and job satisfaction (Lee et al., 2016).

Employees who struggle with expressing naturally felt emotions have the freedom to express their true emotions professionally without regulating them to fit organisational requirements. This emotional state involves the use of authentic action and employees who seek positive emotions and value positive interactions are more likely to display spontaneously felt emotions at work. The impact of authentic expressions on job burnout and job satisfaction has been highlighted in his studies (Lee & Chelladurai, 2018).

A study by Ingersoll, Olsan, Drew-Cates, DeVinney and Davies (2002) found a strong correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. (Mahmud Al Hussami, RN, 2008). The research results of this study on nurses' job satisfaction indicated that there was a strong correlation between nurses' organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The high correlation indicated that approximately 80% of the variation in job satisfaction was recorded by organizational commitment. Of all the independent variables, organizational support resulted in the highest correlation with job satisfaction.

One of the major implications this study raises is how managers monitor work climate, observe and identify factors that may increase or decrease job satisfaction and employee engagement. The cost associated with leaving is high. Nurses identified behaviors and conditions that promote job satisfaction, organizational support, and organizational commitment. (Mahmud Al Hussami, RN, 2008).They are more likely to be more committed to the organization when the proportionality of job autonomy and workload are equitable. The perception of the organization also to focus on competitive wages may also contribute to employee commitment (Mahmud Al Hussami, RN, 2008).

5. Managing employee job satisfaction from knowledge and ways to measure employee satisfaction.

Methodologically, job satisfaction is measured using questionnaires. When we want to measure job satisfaction we use questionnaires such as JDI (Job Description Index, Smith, Kendall and Hulin, 1969), MSQ (Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquest, 1967) or JSS (Job Satisfaction Survey, Spector, 1997).

The MSQ was designed to measure an employee's job satisfaction and two long forms (1967 and 1977 versions) and a short form can be used in the evaluation. The MSQ provides specific information about aspects of the job that an individual finds more satisfying than the more general aspects of job satisfaction, and is also useful in analyzing vocational needs and generating information about specific job variables.

The JDI (Job Description Index) has been used to examine professionally dissatisfied work groups, diagnose problems and suggest solutions. JDI scores can be used to assess the effects of planned or unplanned changes in work (e.g. The Control scale can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a training programme on control/supervision issues). The facets of satisfaction measured by the JDI are: current job, current salary, promotion opportunities, relationship with boss, relationship with co-workers, job in general.

JSS (Job Satisfaction Survey, Spector, 1997) is a questionnaire consisting of 36 items covering nine facets to assess employees' attitudes about the workplace and aspects

of the job. Each facet is assessed with four items and a total score is calculated from all items. The nine facets described are: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards (performance-based rewards), operating procedures (mandatory rules and procedures), co-workers, nature of work, and communication.

6. Presentation of a study on the concept of knowledge worker job satisfaction and its importance in different countries, companies and fields.

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In the following we will present the second parts of results of our research, the first part of the research being presented in the article *Stimulating The Productivity Of The Knowledge Workers*, article published in the journal SBE (Volume 17, ISSUE 2)

One of the objectives of our research was to determine to what extent the concept of job satisfaction is known by knowledge workers, i.e. which elements are taken into account to measure the level of job satisfaction and the frequency with which companies participating in the research use them.

Objective 1: Identify the level of knowledge on the analysis of the concept of job satisfaction;
Objective 2: Identify a relationship between the elements that are considered for measuring job satisfaction and the frequency with which companies use it;

In the first phase of the research, a 17-item questionnaire in English was constructed and administered to respondents via the Google Forms platform from April to May 2022. The response rate was 74.2%, i.e. 44 companies from Romania and the rest up to 52 from Croatia, Finland, Denmark, Spain, Greece and Belgium. The survey's opening questions collected general information on the companies respondents work for.

The statistical analysis presented is predominantly descriptive.

Research limits

The performance of this analysis was limited by several factors. The main constraints encountered were related to the relatively small size of the target group, which makes it difficult to identify statistically significant correlations between different variables. Thus, the statistics presented in this report are predominantly descriptive. The involvement of respondents when filling out questionnaires is varied, and among the causes we mention: the large number of questions, the time of year when the data was collected, the level of stress of the respondents, the low level of knowledge about knowledge worker, knowledge society and learning organization held.

Results

Objective 1: ***Identify the amount of knowledge people have about job satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is an important element to consider when measuring employee turnover or productivity. In this section the questions focused on the information employees have about the concept of job satisfaction along with the factors that influence it.

1.1 How would you define job satisfaction?

The approach to the concept varied widely as follows: 3 out of 52 respondents did not know what job satisfaction was, while others offered the following definitions: being satisfied with the work you do, finding pleasure and happiness in doing that work; good pay

compared to your work efforts, letting you do what you are capable of doing responsibility in your hand will help the organization and grow you; an environment where you feel good working, surrounded by supportive and kind colleagues; being fully satisfied when you are appreciated by your managers and colleagues and doing an amazing job at work; being paid enough for the amount of work; when you don't have a bad day just because you go to work. When you find interesting things in your tasks and when you get paid according to your contribution; performing daily tasks with pleasure; win (employee) - win (company).
The answers obtained focused on enjoying the work, doing the task very well and implicitly a material quantification of the task accomplished. There is a gain for the employee, because they feel satisfied, and there is a gain for the company, because the project is working well and profit will increase.

1.2 What factors influence job satisfaction?

This question was one with multiple answers. Respondents mentioned: salary (25 respondents), interpersonal relationships (36 respondents), organizational policy (24 respondents), status (19 respondents), personal life factors (21 respondents), job security (40 respondents), participation in decision making (32 respondents), work environment (40 respondents)
From the above list, it can be seen that the top two factors are work environment and job security/safety. In the analysis of work environment we can also include interpersonal relations, participation in decision making and organisational policy. It is important for an employee to have a pleasant working environment in which they enjoy going to work.

Objective 2: ***To identify whether there is a link between the factors analysed for measuring job satisfaction and the frequency with which companies use them***
To describe this objective, three questions were quantified to identify whether employees are aware of the factors that can determine employee satisfaction.

2.1 What factors do you think are taken into account when measuring job satisfaction?

This was an open-ended question and the respondents' answers were: salary and feedback from the employer; quality of work ; sick leave; responses from questionnaires; quality of work; worker's employment in the organization; participation in decision making; employee's colleagues.

From time to time, companies need to know if their employees are happy with their work, their pay and their working environment. There are companies that ask employees for their opinion on how the company could do better, because no one else can say how conditions could be improved better than an employee.

2.2 Does your company use satisfaction surveys?

Out of 52 respondents, 27 answered that their company does satisfaction surveys, while 25 said that their company does not. This is a sad statistic, but not unexpected. This area is still developing and year by year, the statistics are getting better and better. There is also the possibility for the company to measure employee satisfaction without using methodological questionnaires, i.e. through informal analysis of the work environment.

Regarding the frequency of use of satisfaction measurement questionnaires, 20 companies reported using them annually. In proposing to identify whether there is a link between the lack of use of questionnaires by companies and the stated factors determining employee satisfaction, it was found that there is not. There were employees who knew about the factors that are considered when measuring employee satisfaction, but their company did not offer satisfaction surveys.

7. Conclusions

Knowledge-based organisations realise how important the job satisfaction of knowledge workers is to organisational performance. How beneficial it is for the organisation that knowledge workers are happy, relaxed, engaged, appreciated and motivated. Employees who are satisfied with their role in the organisation will certainly not want to leave the organisation which means saving resources: financial, material and human for the organisation to attract and train new employees. The more fulfilled they are at work, the stronger their attachment to their job, their colleagues and the organisation and the more productive they tend to be at work. In general, employees who are satisfied at work, work longer and better and contribute to the performance of the organisation.

This article has brought into the debate the role of job satisfaction for knowledge workers' knowledge exchange processes. The significant influence of the company and its position on knowledge sharing leads to a question about its influences on the quantification and meaning of job satisfaction. (Wioleta Kucharska, Denise A.D. Bedford, 2019) This is an interesting topic for further research.

The main limitation of this study was the sample. Respondents participated in the study on a voluntary basis using self-assessment questionnaires and their opinions may not reflect the particular situation of the company or even the situation itself. (Wioleta Kucharska, Denise A.D. Bedford,2019)

The aim of the study was to examine how knowledge of what job satisfaction means influences knowledge sharing. It can be assumed that job satisfaction and knowledge sharing are more visible in companies where the meaning and role of satisfaction in working life has been emphasized; knowledge workers are more involved in knowledge sharing processes, job satisfaction significantly increases the willingness of highly skilled employees to share knowledge(Wioleta Kucharska, Denise A.D. Bedford, 2019). It is important for company performance to create an organisational culture that increases job satisfaction and improves knowledge sharing.(Wioleta Kucharska, Denise A.D. Bedford, 2019)

Organizations must make constant efforts to identify the level of satisfaction among employees and the factors that lead to increased satisfaction, taking into account the important benefits that satisfied employees bring to the organization.

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