

A STUDY OF WORK VALUES AND RELATED JOB SATISFACTION OF TWO WORK CATEGORIES IN THAILAND

by

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Abstract

Effectiveness requires speed and accuracy of information, prompt decisions, and responses in business with intense competition. Employees are a key factor in accomplishing the organizational goals and job satisfaction is one of the most important factors influencing employees' effectiveness. Task status, rewards, etc. are essential factors in job satisfaction and are important dimensions related to work values. A total of 208 sales personnel and 209 manufacturing personnel were subjects in this study. A significant relationship between work values and job satisfaction in manufacturing personnel was found but the results were inversed in sales personnel. Also, there was a significant difference in job satisfaction between the two work category groups but not in work values.

INTRODUCTION

Business conditions in a competitive world require speed and accuracy of information and prompt decisions. However, effective responses at the operational levels are also a crucial factor to success in businesses with intense competition. Over time, many studies have been conducted in identifying factors that influence employees' effectiveness in meeting organizational needs. Hackman and Oldham (1975) suggested that a set of factors existing in the work situation influenced employee effectiveness. On the other hand, work values possessed by the workers have been shown to be a major factor that affects motivation and worker performance (Hoy and Miskel, 1991). McAllister (1995) indicated that task status, monetary rewards, and social relationships are essential factors in job satisfaction and are also important dimensions related to work values. Considering possible negative outcomes, Decker, Borg and Riding (1993) inferred that lowered levels of job satisfaction arising from the interaction between the workers and their work are related to absenteeism and turnover behaviors. Therefore, in many respects, job satisfaction, which can be regarded as an employee attitude, is of great concern to organizations.

Wollack et al. (1971) defined work values as general behavioral orientation in terms of which an

individual evaluates her or his work role. Pine and Innis (1987) added that work values result in individual needs with respect to work and are affected by society, economy, and economic status. For a business to be effective in a dynamic environment, work values become an important force. Extending such considerations in managing employee performance is the need to understand the demographic factors which influence work values and resulting job satisfaction.

Work values and employee satisfaction

According to Wollack, Goodale, and Wijting (1971) job satisfaction has been defined simply as the attitude one has toward his or her job. An attitude is an emotional response toward something which, when related to one's job, predisposes one to action. Positive and negative aspects of a job are adjudged together so that job satisfaction "on the whole" can range from relatively high to low. Job satisfaction, therefore, largely depends upon the extent to which the job that a person holds meets his/her felt needs.

Workers depend upon their employer for a certain type of work or work situations in which they can play an appropriate kind of role. Satisfaction can result from a job that meets their needs today or may promise to meet their needs in the future (Lawler, 1973).

Therefore, two employees may hold the exact same job, yet their respective levels of satisfaction can differ. Since the features of the job are the same for both, the difference in satisfaction may stem from each employee's evaluation of factors in and surrounding the job.

Super (1962) argued that work values are important factors in determining individual behavior and choices. Work values appear to provide the basis for this evaluation in terms of the status of the job, preference for types of activity, upward striving, pride-in-work, etc. Bartol (1976) referred to these values as the worker's job orientation. Accordingly, in a job setting, work values serve as a basis for judgments about the situations that then lead to both job performance and job satisfaction. It has been proposed that values are formed by 1) pre-employment socialization experiences and 2) work and occupational experiences (Beutell and Brenner, 1986). Work values directly affect behavior in that they encourage individuals to act in accordance with them in the workplace (Rokeach, 1973). Because value-inconsistent behavior produces negative feelings, individuals who fail to act, or are prevented from acting in accordance with their values, exhibit lower levels of satisfaction. Work values also have implications for interpersonal interactions in the workplace. Individuals with similar work values tend to experience greater satisfaction in their interpersonal relationships. Some researchers viewed this as a major factor and strongly associated with effective job performance (Mitchell and Larson, 1987).

As attitudes towards work and the rewards associated with work vary among countries, understanding these issues becomes a valuable asset in the management of people. In most of the countries reviewed, interactions, cooperation, team-play, and social factors were suggested as important components contributing to job satisfaction (Schnider, Locke, 1971); and Locke (1973). Pay, benefits, and advancement opportunities quickly follow on the list of satisfiers in some countries, while working conditions and physical surroundings were more important in others (Shaw, Duffy, Jenkins, and Gupta, 1999). However, a current review of theory and research on job satisfaction and work values indicates that they have been investigated in the Western world and have not yet been addressed in other cultures (Martin, 1991).

In light of the above discussion, some important questions emerge. What are the major areas of work values that impact employees in Thailand? What are the most important job satisfaction factors that impact the employees of Thai companies? And, how do job satisfaction and work values vary in relation to individual demographic variables? Finally, do differences exist in employees' job satisfaction and work values across job categories?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the most important work values that impact Thai workers, and to investigate the differences that exist in employee job satisfaction across job categories. Further, to measure the relationship between employees' work values and employees' job satisfaction as related to specified demographic factors.

Theoretical Foundation

This study is grounded in established conceptualizations of work values and job satisfaction. The work value model adopted was *The Survey of Work Values (SWV)* by Wollack et al., (1971) which focuses on six issues. They are pride in work, social status of job, attitude toward earnings, activity preference, upward striving, and job involvement. The second model focuses on job satisfaction which was adopted from *The Job Descriptive Index (JDI)* by Smith et al., (1969). It considers six scales comprised of satisfaction with work on present job, present pay, opportunities for promotion, supervisor, co-workers, and job in general.

Work Values

Wollack et al., (1971) operationalized work values as consisting of six components defined as:

- Social status of the job: The effect the job alone has on a person's standing among friends, relatives, and co-workers, in his or her own eyes, and/or in the eyes of others.
- Activity preference: A preference by the worker to keep himself or herself active and busy on the job.

- Upward striving: The desire to seek continually a higher level job and a better standard of living.
- Attitude toward earnings: The value an individual places in making money on the job.
- Pride-in-work: The satisfaction and enjoyment a person feels from doing the job well.
- Job involvement: The degree to which a worker takes an active interest in co-workers and company functions, and desires to contribute to job-related decisions.

Each component is comprised of nine sub-issues for a total of 54 sub-variables. The instrument measures each sub-variable of work value on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree).

Job Satisfaction

Smith et al., (1969, [revised 1985]) developed The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) to measure job satisfaction that is comprised of six scales. The first four scales include Work on Present Job, Supervision, Co-workers, and Job in General; each of which area is assessed in terms of 18 subvariables. The other two, Present Pay, and Opportunities for Promotion, are assessed in terms of 9 sub-variables. Each scale contains statements words or phrases describing the respondents' work, using the answers "Y" for "Yes" if it describes their work, "N" for "No" if it does not describe their work, and "?" if the respondents cannot decide. The meanings of each scale are defined as follow:

- Work on the present job: Concerns the employee's satisfaction with the work itself.
- Satisfaction with pay: Assesses attitudes toward pay, based on the perceived difference between actual and expected pay, both on the value of perceived inputs and outputs of the job, and the pay of other employees holding similar jobs or possessing similar qualifications.
- Opportunities for promotion: Measures the employee's satisfaction with the company's promotion policy and the administration of that policy.

- Satisfaction with supervision: Reflects an employee's satisfaction with the supervisor(s), the greater the supervisor's perceived competence on the job, the greater the satisfaction with supervision.
- Satisfaction with co-workers: Assesses satisfaction with fellow employees, concerned with people on the present job.
- Job-in-general: Provides an overall evaluation of how individuals feel about their jobs.

The Linkage between Work values and Job satisfaction

Many empirical researches support the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model developed by Scheider (1987). The researchers found that employees are more likely to choose organizations with values that match their own values or they are satisfied to work with organizations that fit with their values. Chatman (1989) who applied the ASA model in his research concluded that the employees will not be satisfied to work with organization that set different work values against their own work values. Also, there are many conceptualizations of linkage between work values, needs, and job satisfactions. Locke (1976) implied that job satisfaction relates to important work values that will support an individual's basic and independent needs. Work values based on Maslow's (1943, 1954) conceptualization of higher order needs reflect a correspondence between need and satisfaction (Zytowski, 1970). Also, Pine and Innis (1987) defined work values as individual needs orientation to work roles. Hales and Hartmann (1978) stated that personality is related to values, desires, and needs. Work values and their variables derive from employees' personalities and attitudes to work (Kalleberg, 1977).

According to the linkage between work values and need, Adler (1956) argued that values come from human behavior, physical and psychological needs. Values are related to human needs and desires, and should be a key factor in harmony with personal feelings and satisfaction (Zytowski, 1970). Super (1970) stated that values are the element of personal orientation which include the meaning and specific beliefs that guide action, attitudes, standards, and judgment (Rokeach, 1973). Also, Wollack, Goodate, and Wijting (1971) defined employees' work values

as employee's intrinsic values for the accomplishment of work, seeking higher positions, needing social status from work, and attitudes toward salary that can affect work. Finley and Pritchett (1973) and Yankelovich (1978) conceptualized that work values are of a personal nature, designed to meet the need for a sense of self-esteem, of identity as defined through the work role and, in an existential sense, an assurance of worth as an individual.

The variable "need" was a major content for many theories which are related to job satisfaction such as the concept of work-related needs as derived from the Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis and Lofquist, 1984; Dawis, Lofquist, and Weiss, 1968).

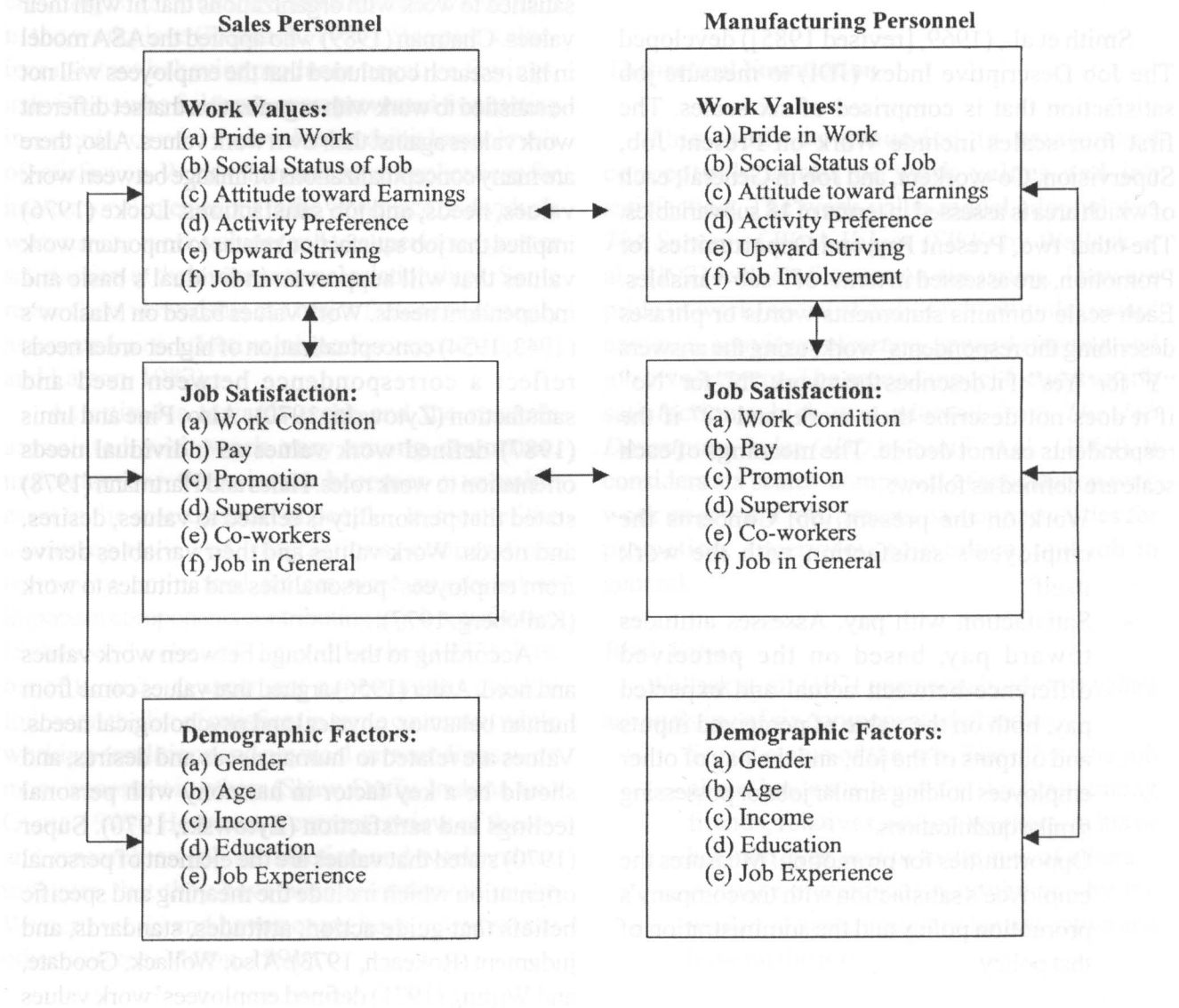
Also, many other definitions of job satisfaction focus on the concepts of values and need

fulfillment. In 1978, Andrisani, Applebaum, Koppel, and Miljust, defined job satisfaction as a function of the degree to which a job provides a worker with positively valued outcomes. Locke (1976) suggested that job satisfaction may be defined as the perception that one's job fulfills or allows the fulfillment of one's important work values, providing and to the degree, that those values are congruent with one's needs.

Conceptual Framework

In order to satisfy the research objectives of this study, a hybrid framework was developed consisting of theory based on work values and job satisfaction which was tested between two different work settings. The model to be tested in this study is shown below:

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework



Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses developed from the research questions are categorized into five groups. The first group, hypothesis one, and two, investigates the relationship between employee's work values and job satisfaction in each work situation. The second group consists of one hypothesis which was developed to compare work values between two work situations. The third group, consists of hypothesis four which was developed to compare job satisfaction between two work situations. The fourth group; hypotheses five through eleven explores the difference between demographic factors and employee's work values in each work situation. The fifth group; hypotheses twelve through eighteen investigates the difference between demographic factors and job satisfaction of each work situation. The research hypotheses for this study are as follows:

Group A. To test the relationship between work values and job satisfaction:

H₁: There is no relationship between work values and job satisfaction of sales personnel.

H₂: There is no relationship between work values and job satisfaction of manufacturing personnel.

Group B: To compare the work values between two situations; sales personnel vs. manufacturing personnel.

H₃: There is no significant difference in employees' work values between the two work categories.

Group C: To compare the job satisfaction between two work category groups.

H₄: There is no significant difference in job satisfaction between the two work categories.

Group D. To test the difference between demographic factors and work values of the two work categories.

H₅-H₁₁: There is no difference in employee's work values in the two work categories when segmented by gender, marital status, age levels, income levels, educational levels, job experience and ethnic basis.

Group E. To test the difference between demographic factors and job satisfaction of the two work categories.

H₁₂ - H₁₈: There is no difference in employee's job satisfaction in the two work category groups when segmented by gender, marital status, age levels, income levels, educational levels, job experience and ethnic basis.

Research Design

This research is a comparative study which compares between two different tasks settings. It was designed to test the differences between work values and job satisfaction in two companies that provide differentiated tasks for employees. Also, this study was designed to investigate the relationship between work values and job satisfaction and to understand demographic factors which correlate to job satisfaction and work values. To insure comparability, respondents were limited to employees of two companies located in Bangkok, Thailand which are under the Saha Group.

Data Collection

The data was collected using three instruments. Each instrument was evaluated and analyzed to compare the differences in work values and job satisfaction between employees of the two companies, and to determine the relationship between the two primary instruments, The Survey of Work Values and The Job Descriptive Index. As presented to a potential respondent, three of the instruments were combined into a single battery and served as the data gathering instrument.

The sampling plan

In the development of the sampling plan, there are two steps. The first step focused on the choice of companies in the Saha Group and the researcher selected two companies based on different work categories; manufacturing and sales. One was a manufacturing company producing and supplying consumer products. The second was a consumer product distribution/sales company. The second step entailed selecting employees from each company. Eligibility for inclusion into the target population required full-time employment with at least two years of work experience in the workplace. This was to

ensure that respondents had achieved a steady state in their work category. A total of 208 sales personnel and 209 manufacturing personnel from both companies was randomly selected.

Data Analysis

The Cronbach alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951) is used to measure reliability of data collected. Also the data was analyzed by factor analysis to ensure the validity of instrument. The relationship between employee's work value and job satisfaction for each company in hypothesis one and two involved the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The researcher used t-test for independent samples to analyze the differences in employee's work values and job satisfaction between sales personnel in hypothesis three and four. The relationships between demographic factors and work values of sales personnel and manufacturing personnel involving segmentation by gender and ethnic basis in hypothesis five and eleven also used the t-test of independent sample analysis. Tests of hypothesis six, seven, eight, nine and ten involved Two-Way ANOVA. The analysis of difference between demographic factors and job satisfaction of sales personnel and manufacturing personnel when segmented by gender and ethnic basis in hypothesis twelve and eighteen employed the t-test of independent sample. Hypothesis thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen used Two-Way ANOVA. For this study, all inferential discussions were based on confidence level at 95% or the alpha test at the .05 level of statistical significance.

Summary of hypothesis testing

The following summarizes the results of all hypotheses testing:

Hypothesis 1: There was no relationship between employee work value and job satisfaction in sales personnel and the null hypothesis (H1_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There was a relationship between employee work value and job satisfaction in manufacturing personnel and the null hypothesis (H2_o) was rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There was no significant difference in work values of employees between the two work categories and the null hypothesis (H3_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 4: There was a significant difference in job satisfaction between the two work categories and null hypothesis (H4_o) was rejected.

Hypothesis 5: There was no difference in employee work values in the two work categories when segmented by gender and the null hypothesis (H5_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 6: There was no difference in employee work values of the two work categories when segmented by marital status and the null hypothesis (H6_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 7: There was no difference in employee work values in the two work categories when segmented by age level and the null hypothesis (H7_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 8: There was no difference in employee work values in the two work categories when segmented by income level and the null hypothesis (H8_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 9: There was no difference in employee work values in the two work categories when segmented by educational level and the null hypothesis (H9_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 10: There was no difference in employee work values in the two work categories when segmented by job experience and the null hypothesis (H10_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 11: There was no difference in employee work values in the two work categories when segmented on ethnic basis and the null hypothesis (H11_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 12: There was no difference in employee job satisfaction in the two work categories when segmented by gender and the null hypothesis (H12_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 13: There was no difference in employee job satisfaction in the two work categories when segmented by marital status and the null hypothesis (H13_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 14: There was no difference in employee job satisfaction in the two work categories when segmented by age level and the null hypothesis (H14_o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis 15: There was no difference in employee job satisfaction in the two work categories

when segmented by income level and the null hypothesis (H15o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis16: There was a difference in employee job satisfaction in the two work categories when segmented by educational level and the null hypothesis (H16o) was rejected.

Hypothesis17: There was no difference in employee job satisfaction in two work categories when segmented by job experience and the null hypothesis (H17o) was not rejected.

Hypothesis18: There was a difference in employee job satisfaction in the two work categories when segmented on ethnic basis and the null hypothesis (H18o) was rejected.

Conclusion

From this study, the researcher found a significant relationship between work values and job satisfaction in manufacturing personnel but the results were inversed in sales personnel. Also there was a significant difference in job satisfaction between two work category groups but the finding was contradicted in work values. All findings between work values and demographic factors showed no significant difference when segmented by gender, marital status, age levels, income levels, educational levels, job experiences, and ethnic basis. However, there was significant difference in job satisfaction when segmented by educational levels in sales personnel and there was a significant difference in job satisfaction when determined on the basis of ethnicity in sales personnel. The study also found that respondents with Thai-Chinese ethnicity had a higher job satisfaction than Thais. It was shown that there were no significant difference in job satisfaction when segmented by gender, marital status, age levels, income levels, and job experiences. However, several of the findings were not consistent with studies conducted in other countries.

Recommendations

The results from this study illustrate the need for management team to modify strategies, structures, and processes, which are necessary for an effective organization to reinforce its business and to contribute the maximum abilities to enhance employees' quality, and increase productivity. Those conditions are

conductive to employee job satisfaction which will impact directly on organizational effectiveness to gain a competitive advantage. Also, the basis of the organization's culture develops from work values, beliefs, norms, and behavior.

Further Study

In general, the current study was undertaken to gain insight into the relationship between employee work values and job satisfaction. While this issue has been widely researched, the mixed results in identifying any clear linkages continue to offer opportunities to refine knowledge in this area. Most of the findings varied from expected results and few null hypotheses were rejected. This brought into focus the possibility of the potential for a significant impact of Thai culture on the data collected. In the final evaluation of what has been accomplished, much more research is appropriate to more clearly understand the dynamics that affected the results of this study. The following are suggested issues that deserve clarification:

1. In hypothesis two, only a weak relationship was found between work values and job satisfaction in manufacturing personnel. Rokeach (1973) stated that work values are useful variables in predicting job satisfaction because individuals normally employ work values in evaluating situational characteristics, but, they also assess their attributes and abilities in relation to the work situation. Individual differences may be important in deciding which organizational aspects create or reduce job dissatisfaction.
2. Work values and job satisfaction may be more clearly related to different races in the same organization. Due to a potential uniformity of the "Thai experience", selecting a population who are not all basically Thai nationals may result in clearer differences due to greater ethnic/racial difference.
3. Thailand faced a serious economic crisis beginning in 1997. Due to the economic crisis situation, many Thais may have actually changed individual values, or changed their priorities, and this change may affect work in organization. While research supports that changes took place in organizations relating to management philosophy and re-engineering, it is not clear as to worker reactions over time.
4. Future studies need to consider the instrumentation used to explore the existing work

values of employees in organizations. While the instruments employed in the current study met expectations of reliability, their validity when applied to other societies which include a Buddhist-based culture as in Thailand, offers significant opportunity for understanding.

5. Regardless of the findings in studies related to the current one, the extent and direction of linkages can always be improved. Test of the direction and strength of relationship of organizational values, organizational policies, and job descriptions, work values of employees and the resultant satisfaction deserve consideration.

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