An Overview of Work Contentment: A Social Analysis of Lebanese and US Workers

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Abstract
This paper studies and investigates workers in USA and Lebanon, their observed mood of work satisfaction as well as their occupation in both service and manufacturing businesses. The outcomes demonstrate unanticipated divergences and resemblances in the workers' replies. Hypotheses, founded on Hofstede's Individualism (IDV), foresees that national variances in Lebanon and USA would lead to a greater insight into work contentment of workers in USA vs. their counterparts in Lebanon.

Keywords: Work contentment, Culture, Lebanese, American, Workers

Introduction

In this study, 'Work' means the total relationship between the individual employee and his employer (organization) and with the actual task for which he gets compensated. The term 'Contentment' refers to the simple sentiment/status that accompanies one's attainment based on a stimulus of their goals.

The term 'Work Contentment', therefore, refers to the favorableness with which workers perceive their work; while the term 'Work Dissatisfaction', on the other hand, refers to the un-favorableness with which they take their work.

However, there are some assumptions in business concerning certain key personality traits of managers. Researchers claim such personal characteristics play an important role in enhancing the organization's performance and increasing its profitability levels. Hence, profitability can be explained using measures that are related to concepts, such as the organization's culture, leadership, work place communication, job satisfaction, and other factors as well.

Job satisfaction appears to be important in many fields. Indeed, according to Cranny et al. (1992), work contentment has an influence on the

bodily and psychological condition of employees. This is because it affects job-related behaviors, and influences productivity and profitability in organizations.

Moreover, according to Smith, et al. (1969) and Jewel1 and Siegall (1990), increasing satisfaction is of humanitarian importance and should, therefore, be a goal in itself.

Work contentment (which will be used interchangeably with job satisfaction) and organizational commitment were considered to be inversely connected to some withdrawal behaviors such as lateness, nonattendance, and turnover (Youssef, 2000). Furthermore, they were in addition associated to greater efficiency and organizational usefulness (Buitendach & de Witte, 2005).

Workplace satisfaction concerns have been a significant subject to American executives for numerous years. Thus, it has currently transformed into a global work anxiety, as the economies of diverse nations became intertwined in the international economy.

Officially defined, work contentment is the amount or level at which employees sense their job circumstances, whether constructively or undesirably.

Supervisors are required to be wise at identifying work satisfaction amidst their subordinates. This they do by observing how they perform at work as well as what they mention about their organization. Frustrated employees are susceptible to leave their work more than fulfilled employees (Staw, 1980).

An individual's choice to stay with the association is affected by work satisfaction, likewise impelling absenteeism or ultimately quitting completely is affected by the same (work satisfaction).

The study of work satisfaction with its relationship to performance has been a continuous arguable subject. Thus, satisfaction leads to performance, performance leads to contentment, and gratifications will in turn be triggered by contentment and performance (Green, 1985). After revising numerous issued papers, a slight relationship seems to exist between satisfaction and performance (Iaffaldano, 1985). Studies and facts propose that gratifications probably lead to satisfaction and not performance (Caudron, 2001). The notion suggested that maintaining workers' happiness may be "the path of least resistance" (Caudron, 2001). The propensity for supervisors to consider satisfying workers' needs is the best way to have efficiency at the workplace (Fisher, 2003).

Management concept

Furthermore, Rozonwski and Hulin (1987) stated that the best significant data to have concerning a worker is a validated measure of their

level of work contentment. Work contentment has been considered as an element of organizational commitment (Kovach, 1977). It is assumed that work contentment "is a feeling of happiness gained from implementing one's values to a job" (Locke, 1969).

Spector (1997, p.2) considers that work contentment "can be considered as a global feeling about the job or as a related constellation of attitudes about various aspects or facets of the job."

Subsequently, scholars have discovered that work contentment is correlated with turnover, but not to the level of a predictive model establishment (Kraut, 1975; Mobley, 1982; Mobley Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979).

The concept of the worker in their environment has transformed significantly. In the past 20 years, with the industrial renaissance in USA, the majority of management concepts were focusing on productivity with minimum or no attention to the worker. In 1911, Frederick Taylor established the "Scientific Management Theory" which have the singular goal of enhancing productivity. Taylor's concept was founded on precise dimensions and detailed control of the actions of the employee. However, translating Henry Fayol's "General and Industrial Management" from French to English in 1916 redefined management as being a definite clerical stages.

The fundamental variance among Taylor's and Fayol's perceptions of management was that Taylor viewed the company down up, while Fayol viewed it up down (George, 1968).

Max Weber elaborated the concepts of Frederick Taylor with his notion of bureaucracy and the dissimination of management into hierarchy classes maintaining upon dominant shapes of power and authority. Upon establishing powerful unions in the 1930s and the backing of officials, various concepts began to diverge into the Human Relations trend. "Theory X and Theory Y" by McGregor in the 1960s and Elton Mayo's Hawthorn experiment transformed the notion of which the employee was not taken for granted anymore, but rather a very essential ingredient of the outcome (George, 1968).

Work contentment

Job satisfaction is one of the most researched fields of organizational behavior.

It is recognized as "an attitudinal variable measuring the level to which employees like their jobs and the diverse features of their jobs" (Spector, 1996; Stamps, 1997). Work contentment has been targeted by research for almost one hundred years. The source of these studies goes back to at least 1911, when Taylor started to inspect workers and their job responsibilities to establish improved ways to train employees (Taylor,

1911). After seven years, the concern on work contentment was evidently attained when Edward Thorndike observed the relationship between job and contentment in the Journal of Applied Psychology in 1918.

Satisfaction theorists emphasize on the form of objectives and motivations that persons attempt to attain in order to be satisfied and successful in their work.

Scientific management considered in the beginning that financial gratification was the sole motivator. Afterwards, other incentives also became widespread such as organizational setting, safety, and an increasing democratic style of management.

Some specialists in the field propose that the study of work contentment can be found almost 200 years ago, when the industrial revolution had begun to flourish in the US. Nevertheless, those original studies were dedicated to exploiting employee productivity. Also, the information was frequently scrambled with ambiguous concepts such as "morale" which conveyed slight abstract precision and outcomes that were slightly valuable. Frederick Taylor presented the notion and denoted the employee as an economic person. He elaborated the concept of minimum salary and commission.

The indication that the single stimulus or satisfier for the employee is financial gratification was apprehended back then (Taylor, 1911).

Henry L. Gantt maintained Frederick Taylor's notion that financial gratification was a stimulus and suggested a minimum salary. He was a visionary man, and he promoted the significance of the human factor in the organizational aspect. In addition, he did not mention work contentment, but he did support the human relations trend (Gantt, 1913).

Therefore, the notion concerning the significance of the human factor in the organizational setting was maintained with the "Human Relations Movement". For a long time now, most of the studies were about financial stimulus. The more financially rewarded the employees are, the better fulfilled the employee will become. Subsequently, the common extrinsic remuneration serves as compensation (Beatty, 2004).

Work expenditures affiliated to labor take around two thirds of the overall working expenditure (Cooper, 2001). Various tools were put forward to quantify work satisfaction: focus groups, surveys, and systematic computer databases (Winner, 1992).

The concept suggested by the historical scholars discussed that financial gratification was a substantial stimulus and motivator of the employed person. A misconception of linking salary to contentment at work might be discussed in comparing individual salaries in Lebanon with those of the American employee. The usual individual hourly rate of the US employee is $21.97, while the Lebanese employee gets approximately $5 per

hour. Thus, there is a necessity to have a traditional viewpoint or norm in comparing wages for the American employee in contrast with the Lebanese employee.

A paper in the 1998 on American workers shows that manager's support was an influential element affecting job satisfaction (Hickins, 1998).

Education, ethnicity, disability, age, and gender have been recognized as obstacles to improvement of employment in Lebanon and USA.

Such situations in the work setting cause rejection of entrance to the job. Also, poor salary, random layoff, and absence of chances for progress are all elements of work frustration. The age of employees also has an effect on work satisfaction. The usual employment age in Lebanon is lower than that of the United States. Midlife crisis or breakdown is the status of fatigue caused by duties from the job and stressors leading to tiresome job circumstances.

In USA, the midlife crisis that influences work contentment should be related to people in their fifties, and has been stated to be even arising at the age of 44 (ABC, 2008). Subsequently, majority of papers on office frustration emphasize on inequalities in precise illustration of demographics. These offer substantial measures for current circumstances.

Modifications in a worker's performance probably are not related solely to alterations in work contentment, but also on the employee himself/herself. Job performance is dependent by almost fifty percent on who you employ (fifty percent related to personal dissimilarities) and fifty percent not related to personal dissimilarities. Thus, recruitment and selection are crucial factors in this matter. This paper, however, studies workers in USA and in Lebanon whether they distinguish between organizational work contentment and to what extent. Hofstede's concepts of cultural dimensions maintain an anticipation of bigger consciousness of organizational contentment by workers in USA than in Lebanon.

Job satisfaction and performance

A great amount of research has been carried out in an attempt to connect worker's attitudes with job consequences.

Previous study used to emphasize on work contentment as the significant attitude related to worker's behaviors such as work performance and turnover (Locke, 1976).

Brayfield and Crockett (1955) issued a descriptive review of the satisfaction-performance relationship where they determined that the relationship was minimal or nonexistent. Nonetheless, this issue was partial due to the minor amount of primary studies that existed in the era where the satisfaction-performance relationship was studied. Also, these reviews have varied in their observations of the satisfaction-performance relationship. The

most insightful of these reviews is that of Herzberg et al. (1957). Thus, they have conveyed assurance in a relationship between work contentment and work performance, but propose that preceding correlations have been little. This is because scholars were not adequately assessing satisfaction and performance. Engagement or an engaged workforce emphasizes motivation, satisfaction, commitment, finding significance at work, pride and support of the organization in terms of job promotion and career growth within the firm. (Zaraket and Halawi, 2015)

However, a mutual subject between these reviews is a requirement for conceptual effort on satisfaction, performance, and their relationship (Locke, 1970; Schwab & Cummings, 1970).

Cultural variances

All the Arab countries are influenced either by the French culture (Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) or by the Anglo-Saxon culture (Emirates, Kuwait, Iraq, etc.). In this context, Lebanon has an exceptional feature within the Arab world. This is because it is affected by the two cultures. The French language is the first spoken language after Arabic.

As such, more than half of the Lebanese population is French educated. Therefore, this dual Lebanese culture is based on two points:

Lebanon remained under the French mandate from 1918 until 1943 (year of the independence); This French mandate left cultural traces in Lebanon. Thus, the Lebanese constitution is based mainly on the French constitution; the official Lebanese schooling system is French.

The Lebanese people who live in the US, Canada, and Australia are numerous and constitute a second source of influence. When they return to their native country, they bring with them the culture of these countries. All these diversities (political, cultural, geographical, and religious), contribute to the originality of Lebanon.

Furthermore, Lebanese diversity will make it very hard to reach a perception of a uniformed Lebanese culture. The dialects and the accents, the nutritional habits and the traditions, and the gathering places are all a testimony of this diversity. Hofstede's concepts of cultural dissimilarities led this study. Precisely, Hofstede's ratings of the Individualism (IDV) for nations sustain estimates of variances in workers' opinions of their work contentment and the chances phenomena. As mentioned on Hofstede's website (n.d.), Individualism (IDV) emphasizes on the level of collectivism or the level that individuals are interconnected in their culture or group; hence, on the contrasting side, the individualist cares only for themselves (Hofstede, 2004). In harmony with Hofstede's IDV's, Lebanese workers would not have as great hopes for equivalent opportunities as American workers (81% IDV). This variance elaborates the subsequent hypotheses:

Hypothesis # 1

Workers in US service establishments will account for a greater awareness of job contentment than Lebanese workers in service establishments.

Hypothesis # 2

Workers in US production industries establishments will account for a greater awareness of job contentment than Lebanese workers in production industries.

To tackle these issues, workers in USA and in Lebanon, working in a range of magnitudes and categories of production and service businesses, were asked about their insights of work contentment.

Methodology

In USA, 213 questionnaires were collected; 151 were collected in Los Angeles and 62 in Las Vegas; and questionnaires were collected in Lebanon. The overall number of respondents was 364. The gender dispersal between the two sets was equal with 110 male and 103 female American respondents. Also, 76 male and 75 female of Lebanese respondents were also involved.

A questionnaire with Yes or No reply selections was established and transformed into Arabic to inquire workers' insights of numerous work related topics. Authorization was granted from top administration before conducting the onsite questionnaires.

Respondents were inquired for demographic data and numerous Yes or No reply questionnaire queries. One inquiry pursued workers' insights of contentment at work by using a Likert scale, which requests ranks of satisfaction at 5 levels: very good, good, fair, poor, and very poor. Other inquiries provided an additional component related to the type of industry: service or production.

Results

A two-way contingency table analysis was directed on both American and Lebanese workers' information to assess whether a statistically significant association occurs among work contentment and business type.

The two (2) variables were work contentment with 5 group ranks (very good, good, fair, poor, and very poor) and business type with 2 group ranks (service and production). Thus, this is mentioned in the following figures.
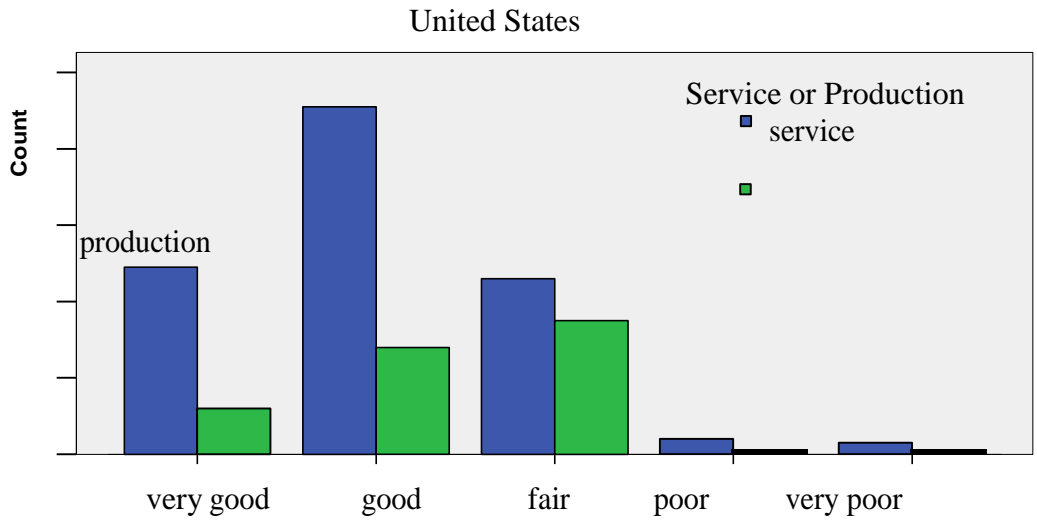
United States

Figure 1. Work contentment vs. Service or Production for American Workers

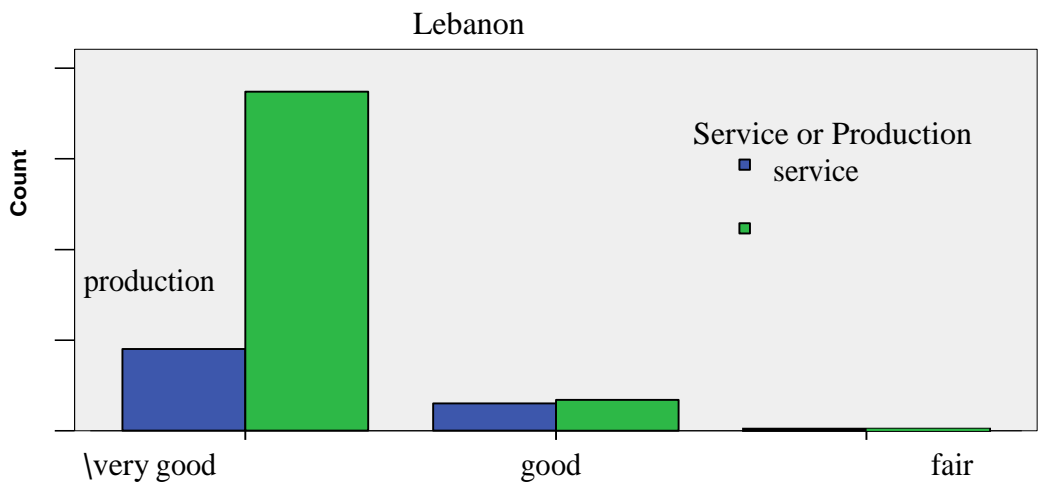## Job Satisfaction

Lebanon

Figure 2. Work contentment vs. Service or Production for Lebanese Employees

Job Satisfaction

For Lebanese workers, work contentment vs. service or production was considered to be considerably linked.

Unlike USA, in Lebanon, it seems that production workers present greater stages of work contentment than workers from service establishments.

Argument
Hypothesis # 1

US service companies' workers will state a greater awareness of work contentment than Lebanese workers in service establishments.

The first hypothesis was not sustained by the data. In service groups, the US workers only accounted for 0.35% vs. Lebanese workers, who made 0.64% of their corresponding groups to be "very satisfied" with their work.

Hypothesis # 2

Workers in US production companies will state a greater awareness of work contentment than Lebanese workers in production companies.

This hypothesis was not sustained by the data. In production categories, the US workers only accounted for 0.26% in contrast with Lebanese workers who made 0.81% of their corresponding groups to be "very satisfied" with their work. In order to respond to these inquiries, American and Lebanese workers working in a diverse range and forms of production and service industries inquired about the insights of work contentment. The Lebanese workers in the two groups (service and production) stated greater or "very satisfied" with their work.

Constraints

Consequently, the examination of further demographic pointers comprising age and religion may add value to comprehending the resemblances of insights. Future inspections may discover variances in categories of workplace, i.e. major or minor, service or production, and public or private segments.

Work contentment and personal insight of advancement prospects could similarly affect the observations of office behavior.

Conclusion

The subject of family and acquaintances, colleagues, and friends bond the Lebanese nation collectively. The individualistic sentiment held by US groups them separately and pushes them to take care of themselves.

This could be a 100 year old notion initiated by Horace Greely, as he mentioned in the New York Times, "Go west young men and strike out for yourselves."

This paper introduced an inspection of office discernment from the worker's viewpoint instead of the typical dimensions of depiction and wage achievement. Thus, these outcomes indicate that the administration must tackle views of discrimination in addition to salary inequalities.

The cultural variances foreseen by Hofstede's cultural dimensions model were not supported by the data collected in this paper. Almost half of the Lebanese and American workers considered that there is office discrimination related to gender, age, or religion.

Nevertheless, the 47% of American and Lebanese workers who do recognize office discrimination are considered as a considerable figure and they deserves inspection. Problems of gender, age, and religious discrimination in the office permit additional inspection from the worker viewpoint. Hofstede's concepts of cultural variances steered this inspection of Lebanese and American workers. Explicitly, Hofstede's assessments of the Individualism (IDV) for each nation sustain likelihoods of variances in workers' perceptions of their work contentment and the opportunities phenomena.
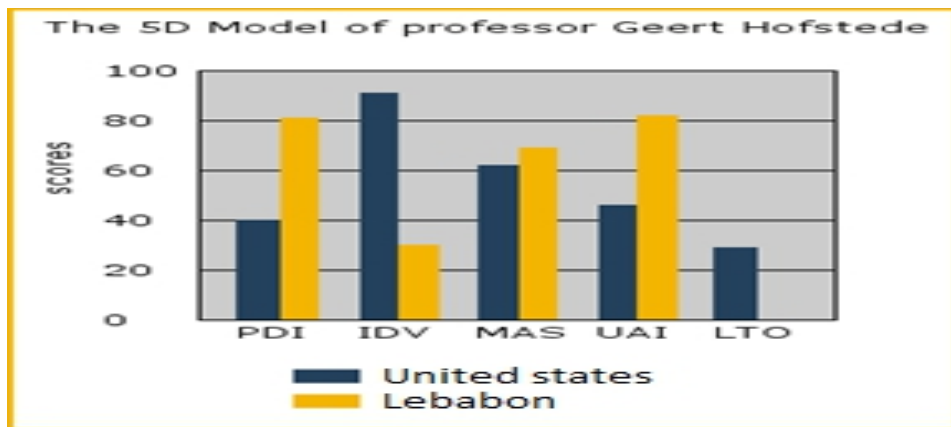

Figure 3. U.S. vs. Lebanon on all Cultural Dimensions. (Geert, n.d.).

Therefore, some studies suggest a substantial correlation between the Lebanese and business establishments' cultures, and how this correlation affects the development of groups within them.

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