A Conceptual Analysis on Career Satisfaction and its bearing on the Employee and the Organization

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Abstract

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to provide an understanding on career satisfaction and its bearing on the employee and the organisation. Career satisfaction as a variable is an important aspect to the employee because this factor decides the professional satisfaction, inherent satisfaction and work satisfaction of an employee on the whole. Satisfied employees perform well in their job and achieve better productivity. Employee satisfaction and its contributing factors are very significant to most organisations because higher productivity will ensure better revenue to the organisation.

Key words: Conceptual analysis, Career Satisfaction, Employee, Organization.

Career is an artifact that has emerged within the broader frame work of human activity called work. Work is as old as the history of mankind; career on the other hand is a relatively newer construct whose emergence coincides with changes that characterize the evolution of work. These changes throw up new work roles that require specialization in a particular skill-set along with a commitment to meet the demands of these specialized work roles for a certain duration of time. When people make vocational decisions, they often consider the extent to which their values and attitudes match those of a prospective organization and the degree to which they see themselves as similar to a typical individual performing certain jobs. People's careers can change and develop in several ways, including vertical movement, horizontal movement or radial movement (Arulmani & Nag Arulmani, 2004). Career is the evolving sequence of a person's work experience over time, and the overall satisfaction an individual derives, based on his or her chosen occupation is referred to as career satisfaction.

Research by Judge et al, indicated "Career satisfaction is the positive psychological outcome and achievements one has accumulated as a result of experiences over the span of a working period like designation, salary, promotion, subjective career success and one's own appraisal of career attainment, also job tenure and total time in one's occupation are positively related to career satisfaction." Career satisfaction and occupational success are major contributing factors in personal satisfaction, professional satisfaction, career involvement, inherent satisfaction, self-respect, self-esteem and self-development (Judge *et al, 1998*).

To the employee, career satisfaction brings an intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction that often leads to a positive work attitude and emotional state. For the organization, career satisfaction implies commitment, high quality work performance and self-motivated involvement by the employee in his chosen career. Tangible ways in which career satisfaction benefits the organization include reduction in complaints and grievances, reduction in absenteeism and termination; with a rise in improved employee morale and better productivity. Employers have found that satisfying or delighting employees is a prerequisite to satisfying or delighting customers.

According to Raudan Che Rose et.al (2006) career satisfaction is also influenced by the employee's personal characteristics, the manager's personal characteristics, management style and the nature of the work itself. Managers who want to maintain a high level of career satisfaction in the work force must try to understand the needs of each member of the work force, when creating work teams, managers can enhance employee satisfaction by placing people with similar backgrounds, experiences or needs in the same work group. Also, managers can enhance job satisfaction by carefully matching employees with suitable work profiles. For example, a person who does not pay attention to detail would hardly make a good inspector, and a shy worker is unlikely to be a good salesperson. Managers who are serious about the career satisfaction of employees can also take other deliberate steps to create a stimulating work environment. One such step is job enrichment. Job enrichment is a deliberate upgrading of responsibility, scope, and challenge in the work itself. Job enrichment usually includes increased responsibility, recognition and opportunities for growth, learning and achievement (Kerlinger,1973).

Organisations that have used job-enrichment programs to increase employee motivation and job satisfaction include AT&T, IBM, and General Motors (Daft). Good management has the potential for creating high morale, high productivity, and a sense of purpose and meaning for the organization and its employees. Empirical findings by Ting (1997) show that job characteristics such as pay, promotional opportunity, task clarity, skills utilization as well as organizational characteristics such as commitment and relationship with supervisors and co-workers have significant effects on work satisfaction. Of course, an employee who takes some responsibility for his or her career satisfaction will probably find many more satisfying elements in the work environment. Employees action can contribute to the effective functioning of the organisation, it is therefore important to understand what cause this behaviour has and how this behaviour can be encouraged and promoted in an organisation (Sonali Kumar, 2004).

The above questions are those that employees ask themselves to understand their satisfaction with their career as a whole and its other related factors. Both the extrinsic and intrinsic factors of work like personal satisfaction derived out of dealing with their occupation, and the professional satisfaction derived out of position, salary and inter personal relations are included in this. Satisfaction derived out of task accomplishment is called Performance satisfaction. The fulfillment one experiences being involved in one's career the chances or opportunity for greater success and further advancements in the career are great motivating factors. If career satisfaction is an employee's benefit, surely he/she must be able to contribute to his or her own satisfaction and well-being through their chosen career path.

To be able to see the value in one's work and appreciate the significance of what one does can lead to inherent satisfaction with the work itself. Assuring career satisfaction in the long-term requires careful planning and effort both by the management and by the employees. Managers are encouraged to consider theories of Hertzberg (1968) and Maslow (1945), in the process of creating a good blend of factors that contribute to a stimulating, challenging, supportive and rewarding work environment is vital. So, in essence, occupational satisfaction is a product of the events and conditions that people experience on their jobs. Brief (1999) wrote: "If a person's work is interesting, her/his pay is fair, prospects of promotional opportunities are good, the supervisor is supportive and co-workers are friendly, then a situational approach leads one to predict correctly if she/he is satisfied with her/his career.

Conclusions

The following are a few suggestions that can help employees find career satisfaction within the organisation:

- Seek opportunities to demonstrate skills and talents - this often leads to more challenging work and greater responsibilities, with increase in pay and recognition along with appreciation.
- Developing effective communication between employer and employee would contribute to improving employee morale, job satisfaction, professional engagement and organizational success in many ways.
- Acquire new job specific knowledge that helps perform tasks more efficiently and effectively.
- Enhance other related skills like developing strategies for better teamwork and staying abreast with the latest updates in related technology.

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