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# Job Satisfaction Among Paraprofessionals in Israel

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*This study deals with paraprofessional job characteristics, motivation and satisfaction. The subjects represented two paraprofessional groups—street corner workers, who enjoy a relatively high status, and homemakers, whose status is relatively low. The purpose of the study was to examine job characteristics that influence the level of job satisfaction and motivation. Analysis of responses to the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) indicates that different variables contribute to and explain the level of job satisfaction and motivation of each group. The results are discussed in the light of the effects of job characteristics on the satisfaction obtained from work, and consideration is given to what is to be done to improve the working conditions of paraprofessionals in the human services.*

The term paraprofessionals is used to describe groups of workers who carry out a variety of duties alongside professionals in the human services. Each paraprofessional group performs a particular job, and has its own characteristics and perceived status. This article is concerned with the job characteristics, motivation, and satisfaction of two paraprofessional groups: street corner workers and homemakers. Paraprofessionals currently perform many roles in the human services, and the range of their responsibilities is growing (Sherer, 1986). However the nature of their work has as yet to be adequately defined, and we have no clear notion as to which aspects of their jobs motivate them in their work or, for that matter, inhibit their job motivation and performance. In an earlier report which dealt with the actual performance of street corner workers and homemakers, we concluded that paraprofessionals are inclined to broaden the scope of their job when they are given greater responsibility, which would suggest that they aspire to job

enrichment rather than to job enlargement (Sherer, 1986). An investigation of the responses of paraprofessionals to the characteristics of their job may help us to order their work in a way that would improve their performance, and the quality of service they offer to clients. To this end, the study examines the attitudes of paraprofessionals toward the characteristics of their job, and the effects of these attitudes on the levels of job satisfaction and motivation.

The growing number of paraprofessionals in the field and their rising seniority, coupled with the absence of clear guidelines concerning their employment, have created many problems on both a personal and organizational level pertaining to role division between professionals and paraprofessionals (Gidron & Katan, 1985; Schindler & Brawley, 1987). Paraprofessionals have in many ways become an integral part of the human services. However, for reasons having to do with the unique characteristics of their status and their neglect by professional colleagues, the system has not as yet been properly adjusted to meet their organizational needs, most particularly in regard to promotion and tenure. The situation is fraught with potentially undesirable consequences. Thus the ambiguities that are inherent in their position may cause paraprofessionals to lower the level of their job performance (Adams, 1975.) Since paraprofessionals tend to remain on the job for long periods it can be assumed that they will eventually pursue personal advantage at the expense of the interests of their clients. Developments along these lines have taken place in other occupations whose circumstances are similar (Ritzer, 1974).

Motivation, or the desire and efforts of a person to achieve a specific level of performance at work, is a construct which describes the fundamental psychological processes that account for an individual's behavior on the job. Attitudes toward work and the work place are subject to constant change in a process in which they are shaped by, and in turn themselves influence, other people's norms and behavior at work (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Generally speaking, paraprofessionals begin their careers with high levels of motivation. However this initial level may decline with accumulating seniority, as is often the case among other workers (Riley, Wagenfeld, & Robin, 1981; Ritzer, 1974;

Wagenfeld & Robin, 1981). We assume that the attitudes of paraprofessionals toward their jobs are at least in part the result of the same factors that motivate other workers and account for the satisfaction they derive from their jobs.

Job satisfaction is a related issue that has been of concern to managers and students of management because of its presumed association with performance and production (Packard, 1989). It can be defined as the overall feeling one has about one's job (Arnold & Feldman, 1986). As in the case of motivation, many theories have been put forward to define job satisfaction, and a variety of ways have been suggested by which it might be promoted. Lawler and Porter (1967) have proposed that high levels of performance usually result in intrinsic rewards consisting of feelings of accomplishment, as well as in extrinsic rewards in the form of higher pay and promotion. We can thus expect that people who perform well are more satisfied with their jobs, given that they also value their work and the rewards they receive. Job satisfaction is also influenced by the worker's expectations as compared with what the job actually offers. Accordingly, satisfaction is a function of the interaction of an individual and the environment (Lawler, 1973). Like other workers, paraprofessionals may develop high job expectations; and since they are offered low rewards, the level of their job satisfaction may also be low. Moreover life satisfaction is closely related to job satisfaction. Stating the case in terms of a general system view, we can say that people's experiences on the job and their general environment affect their life satisfaction, and that the reverse is true as well (Lawler, 1973).

People with occupations that are assigned higher status tend to be more satisfied with their work than those employed in low-status jobs (U.S. Department of Labor, 1974). Since street corner work and homemakers are low-status occupations, we might again expect low levels of satisfaction among these two paraprofessional groups. Additionally, two variables which have been found to influence job satisfaction are of special relevance to this study—namely, the sex and age of workers (Hodson, 1985; Glenn, Taylor & Weaver, 1977). It has been found that female workers tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction than do males. This is usually explained as being the result of

downgraded expectations (Hodson, 1985; Summers & Decotiis, 1988). Regarding age, it has been found that job satisfaction tends to rise with age (Glenn, Taylor & Weaver, 1977; Lee & Wilbur, 1985; Lawler, 1973).

This study is concerned with some of the issues set forth in the foregoing discussion. Although paraprofessional job attributes are on the whole similar, there are some differences that may influence the relative levels of job motivation and satisfaction of the different groups in this category (Barber, 1986). In order to reveal these differences we examined the motivation and satisfaction of street corner workers and homemakers in Israel. These two groups were chosen because of contrast in their perceived status among paraprofessionals in the country—being regarded, respectively, as relatively high and low status occupations (Sherer, 1986; Kraus, 1976).

Street corner workers are characteristically young adults from neighborhoods and backgrounds similar to these of their clients. The latter usually consist of street corner youth aged 14–24 who are usually unemployed school dropouts with a history of delinquency. Workers in this group undergo a two-year training program; in the field they receive backup from the local agency for which they work. Their job is to reach out to their clients, and to rehabilitate them by employing the methods of case work, group work, and community work (Kerem, 1977; Klein, 1971; Sherer, 1986, 1988; Spergel, 1966). They spend many hours out in the field each day in making direct contact with clients as well as with social and community services in behalf of their clientele. As members of a welfare staff, they are expected to perform their duties within the domain that has been assigned to them, much in the same way as are their professional colleagues (Sherer, 1986).

Israeli homemakers are usually women whose age ranges from 20 to 40 years. Their clientele consists of elderly people who have to be nursed or otherwise assisted in their own homes. They provide direct aid to their clients, inform the social welfare staff about their client's needs, mobilize community resources in order to improve their clients circumstances and enable them to remain living in their own homes. They advise their clients about available social services, and act as mediators

between the client and the welfare agencies (Barasch, 1985; Etgar, 1979; Haz, 1987; Kuperman, Meiri & Chernijovsky, 1980; Nisim, 1976). Homemakers undergo a short training program lasting for a period of two to six months (Barasch, 1985; Etgar, 1977; Kestenbaum, Shebar & Bar-On, 1987). They are subject to stricter supervision than are street corner workers, and their status is lower (Sherer, 1986).

According to Sherer (1986) both groups carry out many more tasks than they were originally expected to perform, while at the same time there are a number of expected tasks that they tend not to perform. Differences in job status, role and tasks, as well as in the personal characteristics of workers in the two groups, would lead us to expect variations in levels of job satisfaction and motivation. Our hypothesis anticipated differences between the groups in job characteristics, job satisfaction and motivation: job satisfaction among street corner workers would be higher than among the homemakers; concerning the variety of personal and job characteristics, we hypothesized that they would result in different levels of job satisfaction between the two groups.

## Method

### *Instrument*

The short version of the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) was employed to determine the job attributes and the job motivation and satisfaction of the subjects who participated in this study (Hackman & Oldham, 1974; 1975). The short version of the JDS was chosen because it has used with paraprofessionals, and for reasons of its relative simplicity, and high levels of reliability and validity (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Teare, 1981). The JDS is based on a theoretical model which stresses the connection between job design, motivation, and productivity. The theory behind the instrument is that five job dimensions create a critical psychological state which determines personal and work outcomes, and that these relationships are mediated by personal growth needs. Three of these job dimensions lead to a psychological state of experiencing meaningfulness of the job: Skill Variety or the degree to which a job enables a person to use

different skills and talents; Task Identity or the degree to which a job enables the worker to start and complete a particular piece of work; and Task Significance, or the perceived significance of the job. The dimension of Job Autonomy—or the degree to which a job offers freedom, independence, and discretion at work—produces a psychological state of experiencing responsibility for work outcomes. Finally, the dimension of Feedback from Job—or the degree to which the job provides workers with clear and direct information about their effectiveness—creates a psychological state of knowing the actual results of one's work activities.

Not all people respond alike to jobs with potentially higher motivational characteristics: those who desire accomplishment and growth will respond positively, whereas those who score low on this dimension will respond negatively. Individual Growth-Need strength is therefore identified in the theory as a moderator of the relationship between core job dimensions and both personal and work outcomes. According to this theory, the JDS enables measurement of the separate entities as much as integrated scores. A quantitative score which is used to indicate an overall measure of job motivation potential can be obtained by the JDS. The Motivating Potential Score (MPS) of a job is obtained by in the following way:

$$\text{MPS} = \frac{\text{skill variety} + \text{task identity} + \text{task significance}}{3} \times (\text{autonomy}) \times (\text{feedback})$$

In addition, two other measures are obtained by the JDS: Feedback from Agents, or the extent to which workers receive feedback regarding their performance from supervisors and co-workers; and Dealing with Others, or the extent to which workers are required to work with others while doing their jobs. These two dimensions were found to be helpful in understanding relationships on the job and employee reactions to them.

Regarding personal outcomes, the JDS provides measures of General Satisfaction, or the overall degree of satisfaction with one's job; Internal Work Motivation, or the extent of personal motivation to perform effectively; and Work Context Satisfac-

tion from (a) pay and other compensation; (b) job Security; (c) peers and coworkers (Social Satisfaction)]; (d) Supervision; and (e) opportunity for Personal Growth.

Finally, we used the JDS job choice section to measure the worker's Growth Need Strength which is the mediator between specific job dimensions and a given worker's desire for accomplish and growth.

Various levels of validity and reliability have been indicated for this instrument; and while there is some evidence of weakness, the instrument has been generally accepted as valid and reliable (Aldag, Barr & Brief, 1981; Cook, Hepworth, Wall & Wall, 1981; Lee & Klien, 1982).

### Sample and Procedure

From a total of 250 street corner workers who were employed at the time of the study by the Israel Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, a sample of 50 workers was randomly selected. Our population of homemakers consisted of 150 workers also employed at the time by the Ministry. From among these we randomly chose 50 workers for the sample. The questionnaires and a stamped self-addressed envelop were mailed out to both groups. Thirty-seven street corner workers (74%); and 31 homemakers (62%) returned valid questionnaires. There were 36 males and 1 female among street corner workers; all 31 homemakers were female. We found significant differences between the two groups on: Age, the mean score of the street corner workers was 29.18 ( $sd = 4.41$ ), and for the homemakers 40.6 ( $sd = 10.52$ ) ( $t = 5.59$ ;  $df = 65$ ;  $p < .05$ ); on Education we found that the mean score of the street corner workers was 15.43 ( $sd = 1.25$ ) and for the homemakers 12.32 ( $sd = 2.56$ ) ( $t = 7.55$ ;  $df = 65$ ;  $p < .05$ ); street corner workers had higher seniority 5.06 years ( $sd = 3.35$ ) compared with 3.28 years for the homemakers ( $sd = 3.07$ ) ( $t = 2.37$ ;  $df = 60$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The results were analyzed using the SPSSX program.

### Results

We began by examining the intercorrelations and the internal reliability of the JDS subscales (see Table 1).



Table 1  
Intercorrelations among the Subscales of the Job Diagnostic Survey.

Skill Variety (1)																			
Task Identity (2)	.09																		
Task Significance (3)	.27 <sup>a</sup>	.17																	
Autonomy (4)	.48 <sup>c</sup>	.14	.06																
Feedback—Job (5)	.20	.18	.27 <sup>a</sup>	.10															
Motivating Potential Score (6)	.50 <sup>c</sup>	.46 <sup>c</sup>	.44 <sup>c</sup>	.60 <sup>c</sup>	.74 <sup>c</sup>														
Feedback—Agents (7)	.24 <sup>a</sup>	.38 <sup>c</sup>	.18	.21 <sup>a</sup>	.53 <sup>c</sup>	.55 <sup>c</sup>													
Dealing—Others (8)	.14	-.17	.03	.06	.04	-.00	-.12												
General Satisfaction (9)	.34 <sup>b</sup>	.17	.26 <sup>a</sup>	.25 <sup>a</sup>	.48 <sup>c</sup>	.51 <sup>c</sup>	.56	-.09 <sup>c</sup>											
Internal Motivation (10)	.40 <sup>c</sup>	-.11	.16	.06	.12	.14	.15	-.06	.35 <sup>b</sup>										
Job Security (11)	.14	.35 <sup>b</sup>	.36 <sup>b</sup>	.13	.24 <sup>a</sup>	.38 <sup>c</sup>	.38 <sup>c</sup>	.04	.50 <sup>c</sup>	.04									
Pay (12)	.04	.23 <sup>a</sup>	.01	.15	-.00	.14	-.04	-.03	-.09	-.13	.35 <sup>b</sup>								
Social Satisfaction (13)	.39 <sup>c</sup>	.30 <sup>b</sup>	.29 <sup>a</sup>	.31 <sup>b</sup>	.33 <sup>b</sup>	.50 <sup>c</sup>	.50 <sup>c</sup>	.01	.70 <sup>c</sup>	.36 <sup>c</sup>	.52 <sup>c</sup>	.06							
Supervision (14)	.04	.01	.27 <sup>a</sup>	-.21 <sup>a</sup>	.43 <sup>c</sup>	.21 <sup>a</sup>	.38 <sup>c</sup>	-.06	.42 <sup>c</sup>	.32 <sup>b</sup>	.16	-.05	.23 <sup>a</sup>						
Opportunity For Growth (15)	.61 <sup>c</sup>	.21 <sup>a</sup>	.44 <sup>c</sup>	.38 <sup>b</sup>	.41 <sup>c</sup>	.58 <sup>c</sup>	.42 <sup>c</sup>	.06	.68 <sup>c</sup>	.45 <sup>c</sup>	.45 <sup>c</sup>	.07	.76 <sup>c</sup>	.29 <sup>a</sup>					
Growth—Need Strength (16)	.08	-.15	.22 <sup>a</sup>	.08	.01	.11	-.23 <sup>a</sup>	.07	-.17	.07	.04	.05	-.21 <sup>a</sup>	-.07	-.06				

<sup>a</sup>= p < .05

<sup>b</sup>= p < .01

<sup>c</sup>= p < .001

<sup>d</sup>= Coefficient Alpha scores.

Some reliability scores of the JDS subscales were found to be relatively low as compared with results obtained in other studies (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Teare, 1981). We believe this to be the consequence of the considerable variance in the nature of the work performed by the subjects, as well as the differences among them in matter of personal skills and expectations. Another factor involved in this may be the inconsistency in job components; in other words, some jobs are more structured, formal and demanding than are others, so that we cannot expect similar relationships among job characteristics.

Only moderate correlation was found for the job dimensions of Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Authority, and Feedback from Job. Similar results were obtained by Hackman & Oldham (1975), although our correlation scores are much lower. While this may be due in part to the small size of the sample, it is logical to assume that the results reflect a real difference between the two groups—certainly with regard to the job attributes and personal characteristics of the workers, particularly in terms of their satisfaction at work.

#### *Differences between the Groups on the JDS Scales*

According to the theory of Hackman & Oldham (1975), general satisfaction and internal work motivation are dependent on the five job dimensions of Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy and Feedback from Job—these being moderated by the influence of the employee's personal Growth-Need strength. To examine for possible differences between the two groups on the five job dimension scales a MANCOVA test was employed, with control for the influence of Growth-Need strength. The test revealed a significant main effect for Group Association (Wilks = .60,  $F(5,47) = 6.05$ ,  $P < .001$ ). Univariate analysis indicated significant differences for Autonomy ( $F(1,51) = 4.89$ ,  $P < .03$ ). Differences showed up, as well, for Feedback from job ( $F(1,51) = 17.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Analysis of the mean scores (see Table 2) indicates that street corner workers scored higher on the Autonomy scale, while homemakers had a higher mean score for Feedback from Job.

Table 2

*Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the JDS Scales*

Variable	Street Workers (n=37)		Homemakers (n=31)	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Skill Variety	5.93	.93	5.31	1.42
Task Identity	4.40	1.25	4.53	1.68
Task Significance	5.82	.97	5.84	1.14
Autonomy	5.72	.94	5.03	1.31
Feedback From Job	4.18	1.00	5.46	1.01
Motivating Potential Score	132.90	50.95	154.08	62.58
Feedback From Agents	4.29	1.53	5.17	1.43
Dealing With Others	5.97	1.00	5.53	1.11
General Satisfaction	5.16	1.11	5.89	.84
Internal work Motivation	5.91	.80	6.22	.65
Pay	3.45	1.60	2.54	1.46
Job Security	4.43	1.21	4.68	1.05
Social Satisfaction	5.51	.74	5.90	.73
Supervision	4.65	1.38	5.67	.81
Opportunity for Growth	5.56	.70	5.74	1.07
Specific Sources of Motivation	4.96	.69	5.24	.64
Growth Need Strength	2.81	.37	2.81	.40

A regression test was used for each group separately to reveal the influence of each of the five job dimensions on general satisfaction and on internal work motivation. Regressing the five job dimensions on general satisfaction in the case of street corner workers, Skill Variety was the only significant variable accounting for 30% of the variance ( $\beta=.55$ ). As regards internal work motivation, Skill Variety explained 29% of the variance ( $\beta=.50$ ), and Task Identity explained an additional 10% ( $\beta=.31$ ). In the case of Homemakers, Feedback from Job explained 34% of the variance in regard to general satisfaction ( $\beta=.53$ ), while Task Significance accounted for an additional 12% ( $\beta=.35$ ); additionally, Feedback from Job explained 48% of the variance for

internal work motivation ( $\beta=.69$ ). Concerning the two additional measures of Feedback from Agents and Dealing with Others, a significant difference between the groups was found in regard to the first. The homemakers scored higher on Feedback from agents (5.17) than did the street corner workers (4.29):  $t=2.31$ ,  $df=56$ ,  $p<.02$ .

A MANCOVA test was also used to examine for differences between the two groups in regard to affective reactions to the job, in the areas of general satisfaction, internal work satisfaction, and specific satisfaction i.e., Job Security, Pay, Social Satisfaction, Supervision, Opportunity for Growth. Here, too, we controlled for the influence of personal Growth-Need strength. The test revealed a significant main effect for Group Association (Wilks = .72,  $F(7,46) = 2.49$ ,  $p<.03$ ). Univariate analysis indicated differences approaching significance in the spheres of general satisfaction ( $F(1,52) = 3.25$   $p<.07$ ) and on internal work motivation ( $F(1,52) = 3.03$   $p<.08$ ). Significant differences were found in regard to the factors of Pay ( $F(1,52) = 4.35$ ,  $p.04$ ) and Supervision ( $F(1,52) = 7.84$ ,  $p<.007$ ). Analysis of the mean scores indicates that homemakers scored higher on General Satisfaction, internal work motivation, and Supervision; on the other hand, street corner workers scored higher on Pay, which only partly supports our first hypothesis (see Table 2).

A separate regression analysis was employed for each group in order to find possible influences of the personal characteristics of Age, Education, Seniority, and Growth-Need strength. The same was done for affective reaction to the job as reflected in General Satisfaction, Internal Work Motivation, and the five specific satisfaction measures. The only significant difference was found in the case of street corner workers for whom age explained 17% of the variance in General Satisfaction. Thus job satisfaction declines with increase in age ( $\beta = -.41$ ). For the homemakers, no variable reached the required level of significance. No differences were found between the two groups in regard to Internal Work Motivation and the five specific satisfaction measures; no single variable passed the required level of acceptance.

As hypothesized, the results clearly indicate various differences between the two groups on some scales. Most of the mean

scores are high, reflecting relatively high levels of job motivation and satisfaction. The lowest mean scores were on Growth Need strength and Pay. The standard deviation scores of the two groups on the various subscales were similar and relatively high, which is indicative of the variability within the groups—a circumstance that was also found in regard to job attributes and job conditions.

### Discussion

Street corner workers scored significantly higher on the Autonomy scale than did the homemakers. The considerably greater degree of Autonomy experienced by street corner workers derives from the nature of the job, much of which is performed in the afternoon and evening hours, when they are unlikely to be interfered with by other social service personnel (Sherer, 1988). Homemakers, on the other hand, are more closely supervised by social workers. The results obtained on this variable corroborate earlier findings (Sherer, 1986).

A significant difference also showed up in regard to Feedback from the Job, although this time in another direction. Feedback from the Job represents the degree to which a worker receives direct evidence of effectiveness at work. Homemakers felt that they obtained greater feedback from the job than did street corner workers. This is not an unexpected result, since homemakers have greater opportunity to receive an immediate response from their clients regarding the effectiveness of their services (such as providing meals on wheels), than do street corner workers, who sometimes have to wait weeks and even months before knowing whether their clients have benefited from their efforts (Sherer, 1988).

The results on the Feedback from Agents scale deserve some elaboration. This variable involves the extent to which support for one's performance on the job is obtained from supervisors and coworkers. Feedback from agents derives from different intentions where extremes consist of (a) positive intentions whose effect is to encourage a worker, and (b) negative intentions whereby support is withheld. This variable was covered by two items. The first of these related to feedback from supervisors and coworkers that was unsupportive. On this item no

difference was registered between the two groups. The second item related to feedback from supervisors that offered positive reinforcement, and in regard to which a significant difference was found between the two groups. In the case of the latter item, the mean score of homemakers was higher than that of street corner workers ( $t=2.27$ ;  $df=52.39$ ;  $p<.024$ ). It seems clear from this finding that homemakers do receive positive feedback from supervisors on their performance at work. The results for this variable coincide with those of Hatfield, Huseman and Miles (1987), who found that positive verbal recognition is related to employee satisfaction whereas negative verbal recognition is unconnected with either satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Moreover, it is reasonable to expect that social workers should offer positive reinforcement to a group that poses no threat to their own position. By contrast, the relatively high status of street corner workers among paraprofessional groups, may place them in a position that approaches that of peers, so that they may even be perceived by social workers as potential competitors (Sherer, 1986). This, too, may account for the lower level of support experienced by street corner workers as opposed to homemakers.

Regarding affective reactions to the job, the street corner workers indicated that Skill Variety influenced the general satisfaction they derived from work. Skill Variety is a measure of the extent to which the job enables one to make use of the full range of one's abilities. According to McNeely (1988), the second best predictor of workers' satisfaction is the degree to which their various abilities are engaged on the job. Street corner work demands the use of a broad variety of skills which are applied to situations ranging from hazardous encounters in the streets to working in concert with professionals at the agency in solving the problems of individual clients (Sherer, 1988). In the matter of internal work motivation (the extent of self-motivation in performing on the job), street corner workers indicated that both Skill Variety and Task Identity (starting and completing a particular piece of work) had a positive influence, on the level of their motivation. This result coincides with the findings on the autonomy scale: street corner workers preferred work which offered them discretion and scope in the performance of their

tasks, enabled them to start and complete a job, and gave them an opportunity to put their skills to use.

The general satisfaction of homemakers is influenced by the feedback they receive about their performance, and by the perceived significance of the job. Feedback is the factor which also explains their internal motivation. Homemakers seem to receive tokens of warm appreciation from their clients, and they are influenced to a greater extent than are street corner workers by the significance of their work. A possible explanation for this difference may be the attitudes of the public toward the clients served by the two paraprofessional groups. The sick and elderly are usually regarded by the public as "deserving" of help, whereas street corner youth are perceived as being "undeserving". This may affect the disparity in levels of satisfaction experienced by each group from working with their respective clients. Or perhaps the situation has to do with workers of the two groups deriving their job satisfaction and motivation from quite distinct sources. So, street corner workers obtain their satisfaction and motivation from variables that depend on their own performance on the job and their personal estimation of success on the job, while the satisfaction of homemakers depends more on external factors.

We should note however, that both groups indicate satisfaction with their work, as is reflected by their relatively high scores on this variable (see Table 2). At list in the present instance there is more than a coincidental relationship between the job and the variables that accounted for satisfaction and motivation at work. Quite possibly this may be true of other groups of workers as well. It may be a rule that, in one way or another, the job itself brings with it the aspects that underlay work satisfaction and motivation; and that we tend naturally to gravitate to the kind of work likely to offer the conditions under which these responses result. On the other hand, a process of accommodation between person and a job may take place, whereby individuals learn to adapt themselves to the nature and conditions of the work while also shaping the job so it might suit their personal characteristics and needs.

The differences between the groups as regards both general job satisfaction and internal work motivation approached

significance. Homemakers were more satisfied with their work than were street corner workers (see Table 2). The same applies to internal work motivation (see Table 2). This finding may in part have to do with the fact that female workers tend to show higher levels of satisfaction from a given job than do their male colleagues (Hodson, 1985; McNeely, Feyerherm & Johnson, 1986). However, in the present study, sex differences were ignored because each gender was concentrated in a particular work category (i. e., women in homemakers, and men in street corner work). Both groups were satisfied with the kind of work they did, and both were highly motivated on the job. These results coincide with the low scores of both groups on the variable of Growth-Need strength (the lowest mean scores for both groups on all the scales; see Table 2). The weak growth needs of both groups may well account for their high motivation on the job. If this is so, then assignment of lower-status jobs to paraprofessionals which offer no opportunities for growth would coincide with the interests of professional workers to prevent their paraprofessional colleagues from potentially threatening their standing.

Both groups scored very low on the pay variable (satisfaction from the salary; see Table 2). Even so, street corner workers scored better on satisfaction from salary, probably because their pay is higher than that of the homemakers. Indeed at times they may make even more than professional workers because they receive bonuses for working during evening hours (Sherer, 1988)—a circumstance which appears to have been without effect in significantly raising the pay satisfaction level among this group. As a general rule, paraprofessionals generally receive low salaries, mainly in regard to preserve the income advantage of professionals, who have invested far more heavily in qualifying for their work. At any rate, it is a point to be kept in mind that the lowest mean score in our sample was attained on the pay variable (2.54; see Table 2). The standard deviation scores are another noteworthy result on this variable: they are highest for both groups on the scales that yielded significant differences (1.6 for street corner workers; 1.46 for homemakers). It appears to us that this result may be partly attributed to recent policies in some agencies to increase salaries through fringe



benefits such as car maintenance payments which has divided workers into more satisfied and less satisfied groups. Noteworthy, too, is the fact that although these two categories of workers have low Growth Need strength, they have high demands regarding their pay, which may be an index of the respect they have for their work.

Higher levels of satisfaction from supervision were indicated by the homemakers (see Table 2). It may be that as a result of their lower educational levels, lesser training and lower job status, homemakers are inclined to be less demanding, and therefore to have a greater regard for supervision. On the other hand, the finding may also indicate that homemakers more readily accept supervision, which in turn would contribute to the ability of social workers to collaborate with them in servicing the clientele.

Age has been found to be positively correlated with job satisfaction (Lee & Wilbur, 1985). The homemakers in our sample were older than the street corner workers; however we did not find that the age variable accounted significantly for the differences in job satisfaction between the groups. The fact that homemakers are generally women who begin working at a relatively late stage in their lives, and have comparatively less education than the street corner workers, may also make them less demanding and thus incline them to be more satisfied with their work. Paraprofessionals have been found to have low expectations of career advancements (Birenbaum & Ahmed, 1978). Street corner workers, on the other hand, are on the whole better educated and in consequence are likely to have higher aspirations. This is why we found in their case that general satisfaction tends to decline with age. We should take into account, as well that paraprofessional workers have very little chance of promotion, and their positions have been described as dead end jobs (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980).

Cherrington, Reitz and Scott (1971) propose that the relationship between satisfaction and performance at work depends greatly on the rewards offered by the job. Paraprofessionals work under the reward systems which is customary in the human services; that is, rewards are contingent on position and seniority rather than on performance and achievement. The high

levels of satisfaction found among the subjects of this study indicate that these workers derive satisfaction on the job from sources other than those of salary status, which in their case are in all events low and likely to have the opposite effect. Their satisfaction may be the result of perceiving themselves as doing important work, and of their eagerness to use their abilities in behalf of others. There may be another explanation as well; people who have had to settle for low status jobs tend to welcome the offer of any opportunity for recognition and success. Accordingly, having been given a chance to demonstrate their abilities, our subjects were motivated and felt satisfaction in excess of what the external rewards of the job might lead us to expect. That this situation may apply to the present instance is supported by the demonstration of higher satisfaction from work by the homemakers in our sample, despite the lower status of their job relative to that of street corner workers (see Table 2).

Cherrington, et al, (1971) reported that those of their subjects who were rewarded without any relation to their performance levels expressed higher satisfaction than those who received no reward. The present findings, however, point to the existence of sources of satisfaction other than those of external rewards. Thus satisfaction and motivation at work may depend on the personal experience and aspirations of the individual, as much as it depends on external reward systems both within and outside the job. The view of Perrow (1978) that workers try to use the organizations that employ them to their own advantage can still be applied, but with the understanding that when organizations are used by employees to fulfill their own desires, these fortunately often coincide with the accepted values of society and can contribute to its welfare.

Our results are not conclusive. Although differences were found between the two groups of workers, these data were not the goal of the present study, which was undertaken in the hope of revealing the variables that influence our subjects' level of satisfaction from work. In using subjects from two distinct classes of paraprofessional workers, we showed that paraprofessionals should not be treated as a single undifferentiated group, but rather that this category is divided into subgroups, each of

which has progressed in various degrees toward the acquisition of professional characteristics. Each subgroup has therefore to be studied in its own right, with the aim of improving their services. The results of this study indicate that, like other workers, paraprofessionals experience changes of outlook in the course of their careers. Street corner workers, who have obtained a higher work status, also tend to remain on the job for longer periods, and to be less satisfied with their work and less motivated than homemakers. This difference between the two paraprofessional categories would appear to be the joint result of job and personal characteristics. It is not only the personal needs of the individual which determine job motivation and satisfaction, but the characteristics of the job itself. Paraprofessional jobs offer limited opportunities for promotion and growth. Having a relatively higher status in a job that does not lead to promotion may therefore be much more frustrating than being a low achiever in a more rewarding job category.

The creation in our social services of new occupations, without proper consideration being given regarding their future, has resulted in a growing problem. So, street corner workers, who are a leading paraprofessional group, have indicated that many aspects of their jobs leave them unsatisfied. The main problem however, is that they maintain this attitude while remaining on the job—a circumstance which surely affects their level of performance. Homemakers are less troubled over the issue of job characteristics; but they probably have lower expectations from their work and are therefore relatively less concerned with the benefits they receive. However, we may expect them to develop higher demands over the coming years. There is a possibility that the workers in our sample belong to a group which has relatively little interest in personal and growth achievements (see Growth-Need strength scores in Table 2), but even if this is so, more ought to be done in their behalf.

Although the desires of individuals must be respected, we who are responsible for the paraprofessionals employed in human service organizations have a dual obligation in respect of their welfare in the work place—first in our capacity as managers and coworkers, and second as professionals charged with looking after the well-being of people in our society. We have to

do more for our fellow workers in the paraprofessions. This we can manage in two ways. First we need clearly to define their work domain as well as the tasks that fall within it (Sherer, 1986), and to institute the appropriate organizational measures that would enable them to build a respectable career in the human services. Second, we need to secure those characteristics that lead to or create job satisfaction among paraprofessional workers, by insuring that their tasks should be significant in themselves and involve the exercise of responsibility; that they should have the benefit of adequate feedback from supervision; that they should be treated as colleagues; and finally that they should have sufficient opportunity to grow on the job. The services enjoyed by our clients could only improve as a result.

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