

A Study of Constructive Factors in Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Paying little attention to the job satisfaction and studying it generally in administrative and service organizations and centers lead to conducting a study which aims to investigate the constructive factors of job satisfaction. In this study, it is tried to discuss about the most important constructive factors of job satisfaction and in this way, some researches done by Azkamp, Rawlinson, Korman and Human and others were used. In this study, it can be concluded that the issue of job should be looked from a broader view and should be studied in detail and it should be noted that many factors are involved in its making which should be carefully investigated in order to provide its efficiency and effects in all governmental, servicing and manufacturing offices and centers, and organizations.

Keywords: organization, job satisfaction, employees

Introduction

One of the first divisions of constructive factors of job satisfaction is presented by Lokeh (1979). According to him, a major school of thought exists about the factors of job satisfaction:

- Physical - economic factors: This has more emphasis on the suitable physical conditions for working.

- Social factors: with the greater focus on the importance of effective supervision, working relationship and continuous group working.

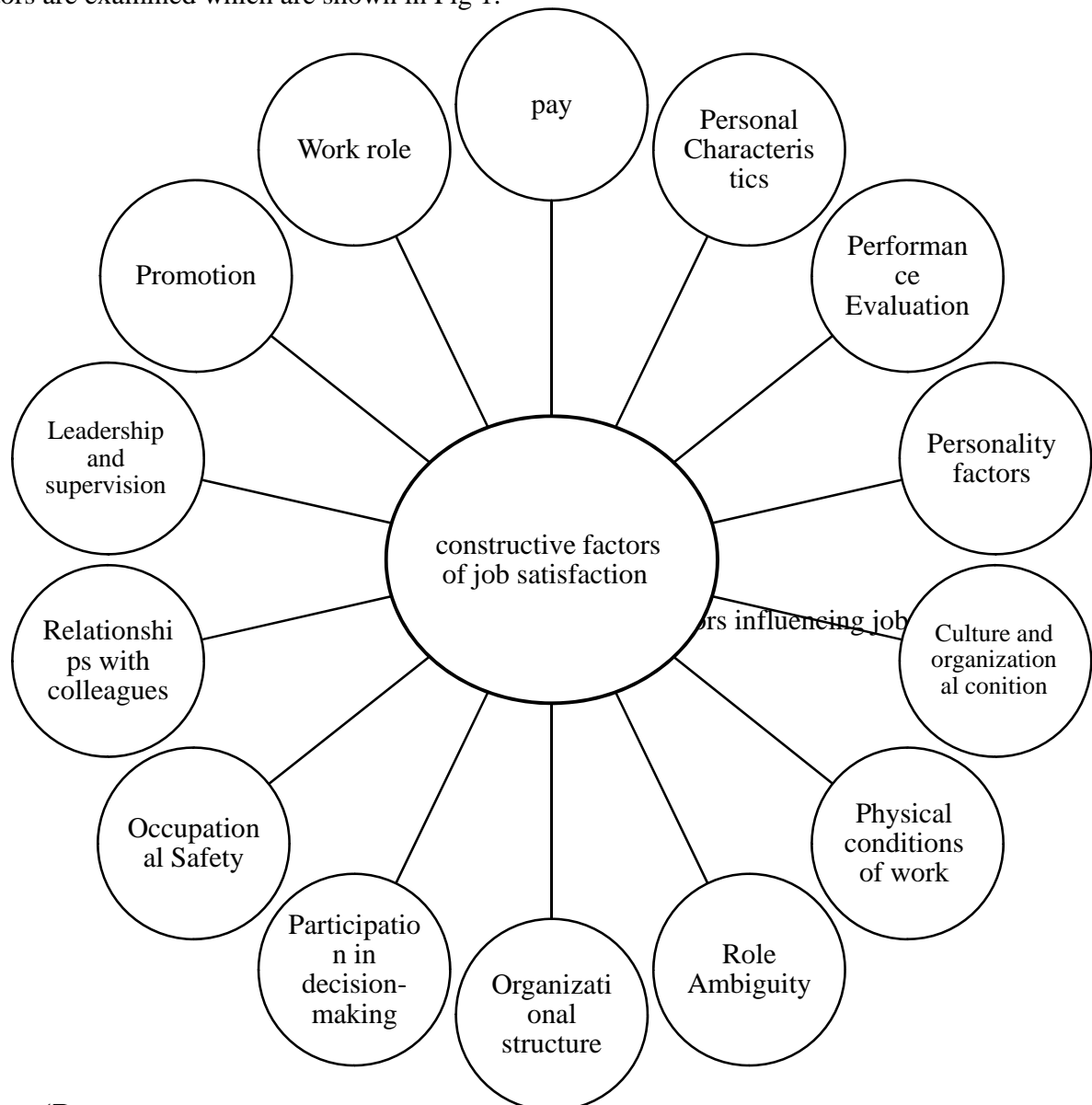
Nature of Work

It Emphasizes on the employees' feeling that will be satisfied through the tasks that are mentally challenging. Another classification on infrastructure factors of job satisfaction is done by Azkamp (1990). He believes that although the absolute levels of job satisfaction should be interpreted with caution, its relative levels in relation to the conditions and factors that may increase or decrease job satisfaction includes some information. Thus, the factors that have an impact on job satisfaction can be divided into two main categories of intrinsic-content factors and extrinsic-context factors. In this classification, the intrinsic-content factors which are considered as the nature of work include job, application, skills, and suchlike while extrinsic-context factors include impersonal working conditions (wages, job security, role ambiguity, organizational structure, financial condition of work, and environmental factors) and personal ceremonies (relationships with colleagues, supervising and participating in decision making) (Human, 2002).

Korman (1977) believes that job satisfaction correlations can be divided into two classes of environmental factors (including job level, job content, thoughtful leadership, payment and promotion opportunities, social interaction and working in a group) and personal factors (age, education level and gender and experience, and suchlike) (Korman 1977, trans: Shekarkan, 1997). One of the newest theories about the constructive factors of job satisfaction is presented by Rawlinson and colleagues (1988). They believe that job satisfaction is a work- related attitude which

is very important for different organizations. However, this concept has long been one of the coolest concepts for research and study while now, employees' commitment is considered more (Human, 2002).

In this section, according to the various theories and divisions on job satisfaction, its known factors are examined which are shown in Fig 1.



‘Payment

Rawlinson and colleagues (1998) found two relationship factors between job satisfaction and pay. First, the job income appears enough or not. Second, income is equal to what others receive or not. Since most people require a certain minimum income for life, so it seems the relationship between pay and job satisfaction is considerably more complex. For some people, the pay represents the amount of their efforts. It means pay is an intrinsic component, although its net extrinsic effects are very common. In addition, many of the rewards, such as fringe benefits (treatment) are financially equivalent. Hence, pay is not just a simple and objective factor. According to psychologists, individual differences play an important role in giving meaning to money. These

differences are altered with variation of the living level, personal experiences, gender, economic status and individual characteristics. Thus, any single formula can not determine job satisfaction with respect to pay (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). Hence, the salary and pay could be a pattern for development and understanding and recognition source because employees consider their salary as the ability to do work to participate in the organization (Arnold and Fellman, 1986). Despite what was said, recent researches increasingly show that the wage factor is very important. Finally, it can be concluded that in most studies, salary and pay is at least one of the important factors of job satisfaction so that sometimes its importance include 97% of participants' opinion (Sofia, 2000).

The work itself

As salary, the concept of the work itself plays an important role in job satisfaction. Generally, people want to work where there is competition, not do a continuous work every day. Two very important aspects of the work itself that influence job satisfaction are variety and investigating the methods and instructions of working. In general, jobs with average level of diversity increase job satisfaction. Jobs that have low diversity and mobility lead to the impatience and fatigue, and jobs with more diversity and mobility increase stress and nervousness of workers (Arnold & Fellman, 1986). Many scholars believe that the work itself includes many factors and in order to increase satisfaction and also employees' performance, jobs should intrinsically be developed or enriched (Human, 2002). According to Korman (1977) this is achieved by considering the following factors.

- Diversity: the degree to which employees engage in a wide variety of tasks.
- Freedom of action: the degree to which individual influences the scheduling, planning and performing work related activities.
- Strengthening the job: the degree to which a job requires performing a complete unit of work and can be identified as the return or product of a specific person.
- Feedback: the degree to which employees in addition to do work can be aware of their good performance.
- Being meaningful: the degree to which job includes meaningful duties.
- Contact with others: the degree of job that require the interaction with others.
- Opportunities for evaluation: the degree to which job permits to interact with others and will lead to the establishment of informal and friendship relationships (Korman, 1977, trans: Shekarkan, 1997).

Promotion

One of the reasons that many employees are more concerned about the future is that usually among the important factors of job satisfaction they give high rating to the possibility of advancement (Sherzer, 1990, trans: Zandi Pour, 1370). The promotions' satisfaction measures the employees' satisfaction with the policy governing the promotion and how to implement these policies in the organizations. The satisfaction can be considered as an action of frequency of promotions and being desirable. Rawlinson and colleagues (1998) know promotion as indicator of necessary facilities to enhance the status and occupational level. According to them, the desired promotion is not at the same level for all employees and therefore, its consent is greatly affected by the correlation between expectations and receipts. Although, the promotion of the organization usually brings a wage increase, and this makes a source of satisfaction for some people, for many it is only related to "ego" and "the self-image" (Human, 2002).

According to Tshikororo, organizations can implement the following steps to increase individuals' satisfaction and the impact of promotion factor in its improvement:

- Developing clear and realistic criteria for job performance and promotion way.
- Training managers to evaluate and promote employees.
- Considering the information only related to the job for promotion.
- Providing measurable scales for employees' evaluation and promotion process.
- Establishing these promotion committees for all organizations.

Although, these procedures and strategies can improve the organizational promotion process and provide the background for job satisfaction, it should also be noted that in this process both affective and contextual factors play an important role (Goodale, 1993).

Leadership and supervision: this dimension expresses the consent that the person gained from the relationship with his direct supervisor. The job satisfaction caused by this relationship usually associated with two aspects of the supervisor's behavior.

- Interpersonal support, which refers to the supervisor's interest in the welfare of the employees.
- Technical support, which refers to the area that the supervisor provide to lead employees in the technical area and task related affairs (Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998). Generally, the supervision level indicates employees' satisfaction with the supervisor. Whatever the supervisor to be more circumspect and employee-oriented (For example, prefers good performance, shows personal attention to their employees, provides opportunities to receive feedback and listens to the opinions of their employees) the satisfaction level with supervisors will increase (Vroom, 1974 and Ash, 1978). Moreover, whatever the supervisor shows more competencies in the work; the levels of satisfaction with supervision will improve (Human, 2002). According to Fiedler (1967) supervisors who have a positive orientation toward their subordinates, usually show more sensitivity towards them and increase their job satisfaction by interacting with their workgroup. While the duty-oriented supervisors, namely those with negative orientation towards employees, try to achieve the organizational goals only through law enforcement. Therefore, they provide unfavorable conditions for subordinates which may decrease job satisfaction (Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998). According to Rawlinson et al (1998) generally, job satisfaction is a very personal matter which is largely associated with the correspondence between expectations and receipts of activity. Therefore, any person likes close and personal interest with a supervisor and respects more to the skills and technical strength of the supervisor, while some other consider high level of technical guidance as the sign of supervision that do not trust people in his working environment (Human, 2002).

Relationships with colleagues

Many researchers know the relationships with colleagues as the most important factor in determining job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). Group size and quality of personal interactions in the group has an important role in employees' satisfaction. Group work as a community is considered the feeling and spirit supporting system for employees. If individuals in the group have had similar social characteristics, such as similar attitudes and beliefs, they can create a space that provides job satisfaction (Mahdavi & Rohi Azizi, 2000). The satisfaction caused by working with colleagues is somewhat similar to supervision and indicates that the group members that person is its member socially support and complement work tasks of each other (Human, 2002). According to Maslow (1954), most people enjoy the sense of belonging, attachment and love and this is satisfied only through social interaction (Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998). This is the inner need of everyone to be a part of a group, because it gives opportunity to him to establish meaningful relationships with others and receive support from

others, or support them. According to Lawson and Shen (1998), communicate with colleagues has two structural indicators of norms and roles. Roles refer to the patterns of inner relations among members of organizations that are formed based on the situations of people in the group, while norms are informal rules and expectations for working behavior and relationships that exist within the group. According to these two researchers, in order to enhance the appropriate relationships with colleagues and gain satisfaction from these relationships, it is better different people to play various roles so that, they feel a sense of structure and predictability exist in relations which could be served for team work in very clear shape (Human, 2002).

Occupational security

Most likely, after pay occupational security is the most important aspect of working conditions (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). Therefore, it is often said that the job satisfaction has the highest rating. People want to be assured that their job will continue for how many years. In fact, security means working on a certain job that won't lose it by an accident or incident. So many people prefer less salary that is guaranteed for a longer period than the high income that is not very durable (Sherzer, 1990, trans: Zandi Pour, 1991). Maslow believed that occupational security is one of the safety cases and examples that after physiological needs is the most powerful human motivational level. This need in the workplace is satisfied through the certain conditions of work, pension increases and suchlike, which actually helps to preserve the physiological needs (Lussier, 1996). In general, the concept of safety is to release from danger, and any factor that can eliminate or minimize the workplace risks (both physical and mental), increases the job satisfaction. Therefore, factors such as predictability, order, fairness and the emotional security can guarantee job security (Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998). On the other hand, factors such as favoritism, camaraderie, external pressures of the work environment and suchlike which damage to the certain organizational conditions, they can create insecure feeling and ultimately job dissatisfaction (Lawson and Shen, 1998).

Participation in decision making

Participation in decision making can be considered a personal factor and somewhat organizational factor. Results of many studies show that employees want to be involved in the decision making and their job position. Those who have experience of participation in their organization usually have favorable and more positive attitude towards their work and are willing to repeat that experience (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). According to Herzberg (1974), if the employees' career to be enriched by giving the amount of autonomy and their participation in decision making, job satisfaction will increase largely (Rawlinson et al, 1998). Also, according to the theory of Vroom (1964), if a person has had satisfaction and participation in choice of goals, he becomes more committed towards it and makes double effort to reach them (Lawson and Shen, 1998). Lorsch and Morse (1974) found that participation is more effective in those working groups that are mostly involved in the creative and research activities and groups that work in the automated production and assembled lines are not brought tangible results (Korman, 1977, trans: Shekarkan, 1997). Finally, according to Hersey and Blanchard (1993), participation in decision making gives employees the opportunity to feel that they are a part of the organization and they are considered an important factor in planning and decision-making processes. Therefore, their link-seeking and self-esteem needs are met and they will be satisfied. However, researchers remind that self-actualization may not be met through participation. They believe that the needs of higher levels are often satisfied when the working environment gives advancement, growth and challenging opportunity to individuals (Human, 2002).

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure includes several aspects that the size of organization and leadership structure are the most important of them. Job satisfaction is often influenced by the interaction between the size of organization and the employees' personal values (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). On the other hand, according to another belief, in large organizations, it is more difficult to predict the behavior of individuals who have less interaction with them. Hence, employees feel mental stress and occupational dissatisfaction (Korman, 1977, trans: Shekarkan, 1997). Furthermore, bureaucratic and hierarchical structures can lead to poor communication, alienation and dissatisfaction among employees. Rawlinson and colleagues (1998) consider two major indicators of organizational structure namely, horizontal and vertical differentiation effective on the job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Horizontal differentiation divides organizations to very specific activities. In other words, whatever the activities become more specific and separate, more people are likely to think of their personal views and want to impose their goals to others. On the other hand, the general differentiation has other different effect. In this type of index, a hierarchy of organizational authority is created. Although, this can theoretically regulate the activity of the different units of organization and prevent the occurrence of inconsistency, this can also be a source for employees' dissatisfaction. This type of organizational authority usually causes decisions to have negative effects on subordinate people and create a lot of limitations for their authority (Human, 2002).

Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity is another aspect of working conditions that basically contribute to job dissatisfaction (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). Occupational ambiguities make turbulence in individuals' responsibility for performing a particular activity and cause they feel that other people are doing their job, and this job belongs to someone else. This kind of ambiguities often leads to unfavorable attitude toward the organization and colleagues and ultimately oneself (Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998). Role ambiguity can be known as the major source of role conflict. Role conflict occurs when a person has strong beliefs about a subject, but is forced to act contrary to them. Many studies indicate a positive relation between role conflict and anxiety, tension, and job satisfaction (Roos and Starke, 1981). Finally, most experts believe that employees should understand their limitations and possibilities, however, only a few major benefit of this opportunity. Finally, most experts believe that employees should understand their limitations and possibilities, however, only a few of them benefit from this opportunity. Knowing how long and how much work must be done and how is the role of individuals in this process in a certain way and in relationships with others, can prevent the occurrence of causes of job dissatisfaction. What can be done in this case is to clarify expectations and reveal the existing realities in the organization. According to Katz and Kahn (1978), role ambiguity often occurs when people do not know what duties and how can do them and what is expected of them (Human, 2002).

Physical working conditions: usually when the physical conditions of the working environment result in job satisfaction which to be often comfortable and away from danger. Moderate levels of temperature, humidity, ventilation, lighting and sound are very effective in creating the material conditions of work (Human, 20002). Studies show that employees often feel more satisfaction in circumstances (such as proper working equipment and tools) that facilitate the achievement of goals. Generally, six major factors may affect the level of job satisfaction and employees' performance in physical working conditions which include: location, amenities, shifts, security, paying attention to the quality of life and noise (Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998).

Organizational Culture and Climate

Most experts believe that organizational culture has a strong influence on the behavior and mental state of employees which is actually the key component of organizations' success and manpower resources improvement. According to Peters (1982) Organizational culture is a connected and dominant set of shared beliefs that can be transmitted by entities such as stories, myths, legends, slogans and anecdotes (Human, 2002). Organizational climate is another mechanism through which many organizational variables can affect the behavior and performance of employees. Although, there are many similarities between organizational culture and climate, they are different in terms of some characteristics and their impact on behavior and mental reactions of employees (Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998). Organizational climate refers to a space which reflects the perception and reaction method of employees to the organization's area and texture (Lussier, 1998, cited in Human, 2002). According to most experts, organizational climate is something that individuals feel and in other words, it is a way through which individuals mentally describe clear indicators of their organization or interpret what understand (Jones and James, 1979). The major consequence of organizational climate refers to its effect on the employees' membership perception and feeling in the organization and determines whether they psychologically experience organization desirable and rewarding or not and this consequently, have a significant impact on the moral, motivation, satisfaction level of employees and their intention to stay in the organization (Payne, 1971, cited in Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998).

Personality factors

Personality characteristics of employees can provide patterns to predict their behavior and psychological states. Therefore, the concept of personality is very important for organizations. Many organizations have their own culture and acceptable behavioral patterns, meanwhile, individual differences are considered an important factor which shows why some people better than others are compatible with conditions and variables of organization. Furthermore, careers are different based on the required personal characteristics and individuals' personality can affect their accordance with certain roles and finally, it can create different levels of motivation, satisfaction and performance for them (Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998). One of the most important characteristics which has close relation with job satisfaction is self-esteem. According to Korman (1977) some theoretical explanations related to job satisfaction, such as needs satisfaction theory are influenced by self-esteem characteristic of individuals. People with high self-esteem consider circumstances and conditions satisfactory which maximizes their cognitive balance. So, it is unfair to place individuals with low self-esteem in situations that show them competent and satisfy their needs and these circumstances and positions cannot satisfy their needs. Hence, they are not considered worthy and competent (Human, 2002). Another aspect of personality that its relation with job satisfaction has recently been considered refers to the locus of control. This concept which is proposed for the first time in the social learning theory of Rotter states that individuals differ based on their belief about what factors shape and control their environment. Individuals with internal orientation of locus of control feel they are able to have the most influence on the events that happen around them and like to have a predominant role in these events. They believe that what happens is basically the result of their actions. In contrast, those with an external orientation believe that events take them and what happens is affected more by chance and fate (Debralander & Boone, 1990). One of the personality characteristics that its relation with job satisfaction has been approved abundantly is achievement motivation. According to Mc Kelland (1961) people who this feature is very strong in them, often thought of how to do things better (Hersey and Blanchard, 1993).

Performance appraisal

Most people need to be aware of their efforts' results (feedback). Several studies indicate that if the evaluation of employees to be implemented appropriately, it can have a positive effect on performance and job satisfaction (Arts, 1977, cited in Lussier, 1996). If objectives to be clear and accessible, and more importantly, if adequate feedback to be provided on their performance, their learning and progress speed will enhance and they gain more satisfaction (James, 1988). Korman (1977) proposed three suggestions to optimize the evaluation and enhancement of its positive impacts on employees' satisfaction and performance:

- If the manpower and the required time for observation to be possible, it is better to apply more than one evaluation for every specific source to minimize the bias.
- Evaluation should be done at a time which is different from the time recommended to determine the amount of remuneration. Thus, this tendency that the recommendations relating to the amount of reward influence the evaluations is reduced.
- If an appropriate development to be created in the person who is graded, providing feedback by supervisors is an absolute necessity. In spite of this, if feedback to be a part of the evaluation process, the evaluation of supervisor will distort upward. Therefore, it is better that the feedback becomes a daily and continuous process and depend on the behavior, rather than conducting it once or twice a year and with no relevance to the behaviors which lead to the evaluation (Human, 2002).

Personal characteristics

One of the major sources which lead to the formation of attitudes and job satisfaction of employees is individual differences that can be caused by personal characteristics (such as age, work experience, education and suchlike). For some people most of jobs, regardless of particular environmental conditions are not satisfying generally, while for others, again regardless of environmental conditions is satisfying, (Korman, 1977, trans: Shekarkan, 1997). In this section some of the most important personality characteristics that are associated with job satisfaction, are mentioned.

a) Age: generally, the life stages of people have a great influence on job satisfaction. According to Hatchgraf (1998), people cross from three major stages of age. In the stage of 25 to 40 years old the highest concentration is on achieving goals, the means and the ends. People in this age group greatly like to use their abilities to learn new things, achieve to occupational promotion and advancement, and add a new line to their profile page. From 45 to 65 years people pay the most attention to stabilize and protect the things that have got so far and try to build and develop them. At this stage, more job satisfaction comes from working in organizations that are financially more stable, increase wages regularly, and share employees in the pension fund. Finally, in the stage of after 65 years old people need more to do meaningful work; namely, working those places that the job satisfaction derived from them is because of that they generally seem different from others. However, there are some studies that show no relationship between age and satisfaction with pay (Korman, 1977, trans: Shekarkan, 1997).

b) Gender: In general, studies on the role of gender differences in job satisfaction often indicated the minor effect of this factor and the results vary from one study to other. For example, in some studies women and in other studies, men were more satisfied with their jobs (Human, 2002). Nieva and Gotech (1981) believe that gender-related differences are largely due to the job levels that are traditionally occupied by men and women. For example, women in secretarial jobs usually pay more attention to social relations of job. But men in management positions pay more attention to the long-term goals (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). When men and women are employed in

similar occupations, difference in their job satisfaction is minimized. In addition, women are more satisfied in situations that are less competitive and more cooperative (Helgesen, 1990, cited in Lussier, 1996). However, according to many researchers, the existing evidences about the difference in job satisfaction between men and women is not satisfying and it can not be concluded that even if the job level remains constant women with respect to their own serious features are more satisfied than men and if there is difference, there is not adequate certainty about its concept (Korman, 1977, trans: Shekarkan, 1997).

c) Working Experience: According to Taylor and Weaver (1977), the period of job satisfaction during the time matches with a U-shaped bend. Namely, in the early years the job satisfaction is high and then decreases and later increases again. This pattern is the same about male and female employees. But there are also some differences between research findings (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). Some researchers believe that job satisfaction is related to the duration of employment. They define employment period as the number of years a person has been working in a particular organization (Leavit, 1996, cited in Rawlinson, Bradfield and Edwards, 1998). Hatchgraf (1998) believes that each job has three stages of beginning, middle and end. At the beginning and during the first few months, everything seems perfect and both employees and employers feel enthusiasm and satisfaction. In the middle stage, employees learn the system which is dominant over the organization, individuals know more their environment, and feel challenge or work. At this stage, employees reach to this fact that the present job may not be the last job in life. Finally, whatever becomes more close to the final stage, thinks more about the content of their jobs. In this section, they feel they have learned what should be learned previously and there is no challenge in their jobs and now it is the time to begin another movement (Human, 2002).

d) Education: Many researchers (e.g., Schwab and Wallace, 1973, Lawler, 1971) believe that there is a negative relationship between education and job satisfaction (especially satisfaction with income), by assuming a constant level of occupation. On the one hand, this could be due to this matter that people with higher education have more expectations than others and they like organizations consider more points for their education such as organizational post, salary and benefits, as well as special facilities, however, organizations can not quickly do such actions because of numerous reasons like financial problems, therefore, educated people feel less satisfaction (Azkamp, 1990, trans: Maher, 1993). Another interpretation of job dissatisfaction is related to Korman (1977) who believes that the reference group theory can be used to explain the dissatisfaction. This means that whatever a person's education level to be higher, the group level that he considers for guidance and how to evaluate the job rewards will be higher. So, the higher the reference group that he probably looks at that, he becomes the less pleasant towards receiving the certain privileges (Human, 2002).

Conclusion

Maybe among the studies that should be done on job satisfaction, the most important and useful research tries to identify and investigate the constructive factors of job satisfaction and avoid holism about this important issue in job. Therefore, the study of these factors is necessary due to the growing need of organizations and centers to complete recognition of employees, tendencies and their attitudes in the workplace and the success rate of policies and implementing policies to promote and develop the human capitals and qualitative and quantitative increase of products and services and finally, optimum productivity on the one hand and the significant lack of paying attention to these factors on the other hand. About the limitations of the study this issue should be noted that due to the existence of many factors that contribute to job satisfaction and the limitation of page number, it is impossible to mention all of them in the form of a study. So, it is tried to

briefly discuss about the most important factors. If readers would like to get more information, they can refer to the references cited in the study and obtain more detailed information.

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