

The Study of Job Alienation Concept and its Relationship with Some Within-Organization Approaches of Human Resources System

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Abstract

One of the important organizational complications in recent decades that its upward trend is obvious for staff and administrative staff management in the third millennium, is the problem of job alienation. This problem is rooted mainly from a lack of sustainability and extreme environmental instability, the appearance of stressful and distressed factors and its devastating effects, such as lack of motivation, despair, anxiety, depression, physical and mental diseases and hundreds of other complications which even the employees' families are not immune, suffered thousands of staff of different levels, especially in large organizations. These problems and complications will escalate when a rough, hard and inflexible structure with together a poor corporate culture as an aggressive / defensive culture, and poor leadership like a toxic leadership completed the drawing of job alienation triangle and complete dimensions of organizational dysfunction. In such cases, the requirements, situation and internal conditions of organization will be at its worst and turns to an eddy which destroys all values, ethics, innovation and effectiveness of individual, group and organizational, while the society will suffer these organization's long-term injury and experience serious multiple disruption and hardship, therefore, important issues such as culture, structure, leadership and occupational alienation are not issues that do not concern organizational researchers and easily ignore them. (Alodary, 2010, 107)

Key words: job alienation, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction

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Introduction

Alienation is a concept that influenced on the works of a large number of thinkers in organization and management science. Among them , three experts discussed the highlights of the above concept, including: Karl Marx, Max Weber and Karl Mannheim that each of them enjoyed the weighty ideas about job alienation and has extensively discussed individual , social and organizational effects of it. Both Marx and Weber point out that job alienation means a feeling or state that personal job is considered as external factor in the mind of person and he don't feel internal independence at work. However, because of the difficulty of defining this state of alienation exactly, since then many different interpretations of this concept has been offered (Soros and others, 2002). Many people satisfied in jobs that give them the opportunity to service to others, if they feel that their effort not count any type of service to colleagues, other people and society, they feel frustrated and worthless (Lawson, 1998). Studies show that managers of the third millennium need to rethink strongly about their value orientation and match them with new models which encourage the successes, learning, development and their personal improvement (Soros et al., 2002) . As well as (Schweitzer, 1981, 1987 and Ericsson Wallace 1996) argue that the interpretation and evaluation of job alienation is difficult and full of ambiguity and therefore multiple varied words and concepts were created to measure its dimensions. Today, the feeling of powerlessness, feelings of emptiness and alienation are the three main aspects of job alienation that managers can take appropriate style and organizational structure adjustment, to reduce level of occupational alienation.

Job alienation dimensions and elements:

As briefly mentioned, yet many interpretations of this important organizational construction and various dimensions of its constituent have been done. One of the most important terms and descriptions of this concept has done by Seaman. He first wrote about it in 1959 and his early attempts to make sense of this structure through the use of the following five dimensions:

1. The feeling of powerlessness: This means that employees feel no work independence and no any control over their activities, so that their freedom is severely restricted in this area. (107).
2. The feeling of emptiness and meaninglessness: this psychological/ mental mood occurs when a person feel powerless in understanding the relationship between his business activities with the goals of the organization and do not know what his role in relation to meeting the objectives and the mission of the organization and how is his participation in this area.
3. The feeling of Normlessness
4. The sense of isolation, separation and withdrawal: this state of mind comes when the behavioral norms and laws, rules and operating instructions could not lead behaviors effectively towards personal goals.
5. The sense of self- alienation: Finally, according to Seaman, this mental condition comes to person when his job rather than a means for the expressing potential is, only a way and means to meet the minor, extrinsic needs of him.

Then between 1967 and 1991, Seaman modified the above five indices and eventually eliminating two indicators of normlessness and isolation, he continued his work by using the remaining three indices , the feeling of powerlessness, the feeling of emptiness and alienation which considered them comprehensive in his opinion. It should be noted that the above-three mentioned indicators are sufficient to assess the job alienation, so after a few

decades of their invention by Seaman, most organization researchers and practitioners is still used them (Mendoza, et al, 2007). According to Shepard, the alienation arises in the light of the knowledge of the existence of a conflict and discrepancy between natural tendencies and desires and demands of real environment (Lee, 2005 & Muntaner et al, 2006). But unlike Sheppard, Simon does not consider just the facts in this case, but the mental impressions and ideas of people is also considered effective. According to Seaman, in most studies related to the alienation, the words of discrepancy and heterogeneity in work environment have been used, that some researchers who traced it to a gap of people perception of status quo. In other words, the alienation is occurred of a gap between the perception of the circumstances and interests of people like something tangible needs, values, ideals, inclination and expectations, which results in problems in relation to issues such as employee goals, how to express themselves and self-expression (expression his ideas and features) and their control, ultimately, how to organize and manage the devastating feelings and triple of powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-alienation (Ferguson and Lavalette, 2004). Generally, in terms of job alienation, employees, according to three above components strongly feel that they have not necessary freedom of action, they cannot express their opinion when perform the tasks and roles without any control over how to do tasks, no authority to take decision, their job is nonsense and no role in the success of the organization, so he is not worth to spend time for his work and in fact his job is marginal that has nothing fit with the whole of the organization. And over time it creates the impression that his work is no challenging, dynamic and thought-provoking and cannot make use of all his mental, intellectual and emotional power, because his job is routine and boring and is no aperture of creativity, initiative and innovation in it. Since in this current situation, there is no possibility of using his real skills and abilities, he feels the sense of despair and frustration, and he reaches to devastating outcome that the current organization, no possibility of progress, excellence and personal development and the low-value wages is his only happiness that the organization pays him against his deterioration (Jesus, 2007).

Job alienation and philosophy of life

The relationship between these two components has been studied by a handful of researchers in recent years. They discussed the issue of alienation in the ontological perspective in their studies and have concluded that this effect was mainly alter their opinion towards colleagues, fellow human being, groups and communities and shaken their inner beliefs and values of their faith. The end result is that the negative impact of non-functional on the philosophy of life, where they feel no one think them throughout the world and they are really lonely and forlorn, so they questioned their existence and in isolation think and wonder how they still are living in spite of all this nostalgia and loneliness and growing problems. They believe the attachment ring between men become weaker and less every day, and people do not understand each other's true feelings, so they become more and more lonelier and forgotten, so they are leaving by their fellows. They concluded that their daily activities does not reflect their true value and interests, so they face to daily tasks into a painful and boring experience, reluctant to change their lives and are hesitant for helping others, because they think that all humans are self-centered and only realized themselves, and hundreds of false thoughts that make dark their lives sky and undermine their philosophy foundations of life and spread the emptiness and meaninglessness in their lives, which if not treated, severely hurting their body and soul (Banai& Weisberg, 2003).

Job alienation and organizational citizenship behavior

Before studying the effects of job alienation effect on citizenship behavior, it is necessary to briefly explain this behavior in organizations, Organ was among the first ones who consider beneficial advantage of this type of behavior in 1988, while mentioned it as voluntary & discretionary individual behavior that can improve the efficiency of the entire organization. Both prominent and visible aspects of organizational citizenship behavior include:

1. Defend and support the organization (OCB- O): When other employees criticized it severely.
2. The support of the employees (OCB- I): When other colleagues need to help and support in carrying out their duties.

Maria Jesus et al studied the effect of job alienation on organizational citizenship behavior and came to the conclusion that the Person - Organization Fit is superiority or reference for Organizational Citizenship Behavior- Organization, Organizational Citizenship Behavior- Individual (Co- Workers) or Organizational Citizenship Behavior- Individual (Students or Clients). so if there is not the Person - Organization Fit, all three above Citizenship Behavior will be declined, and the employees just work their duties without any support of their superior, organization, co-workers and clients more than what is described in their organization chart. And mediatory role of job alienation among the relationship between person - organization fit and organizational citizenship behaviors is so important and job alienation plays the role of connective ring between them. Negative sentiment as incontinence, emptiness and alienation among employees aggravate citizenship behavior and their absence will strengthen this type of behavior. However, since the German philosopher Karl Marx explore the roots of alienation job, and stated that this problem born of a kind of obvious contradiction between the nature of the job and human nature, and when this assumes a serious case that people have no control on their by-products, job process, their job improvement and as well as flourishing themselves. There are many researches in this regard which can be mentioned to the study about the relationship of job alienation and low morale damaged self-esteem and increased fear and insecurity at work, and the like (Dunlop & Lee, 2004; Henle, 2005 and Henle et al, 2005).

Job alienation and person - Organization fit

A number of Spanish researchers, such as Maria Jesus Suarez Mendoza, Pablo Zogby Mandrake DeLauro (2005) studied the relationship between three important variables of job alienation, person - organization fit and the individual and organizational citizenship behaviors and found that job alienation plays the mediatory role between two other variables, so check their assumptions, such as the impact of employee perception of the presence or absence of person - organization fit on the three core components of job alienation, that means the

feeling of powerlessness, emptiness, meaninglessness and self-alienation and also this connection with multiple organizational citizenship behavior, and determine the mediatory role of job alienation which is provided on the next page model.

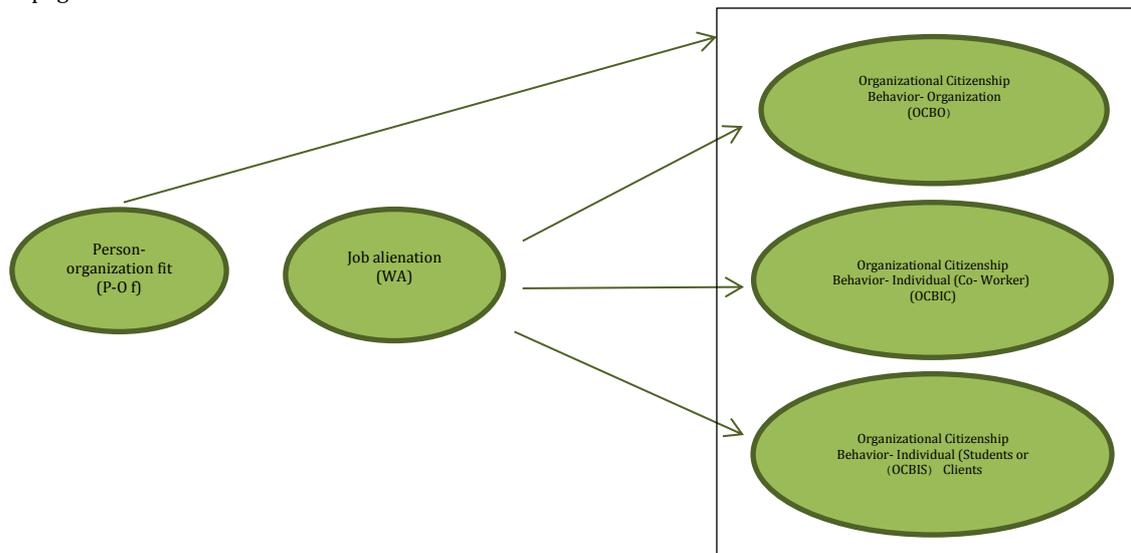


Figure1: the mediatory role of job alienation among citizenship behavior variables and person-organization fit

As the above figure shows, person - organization fit is one of the important factors that effects on every citizen behavior through job alienation directly and indirectly, and so it is necessary organizational leaders take attention this variable in the recruitment and training programs .The person - organization fit and organization - person fit (staff) consider by other organizational practitioners and they contend when the staff beliefs and their values are fit to the organization's beliefs and values , they interact more effectively and reduce conflict and uncertainty to its minimum (Pandey and Welch. 2005). As you can see, person - organization fit represents the most consistent expression of ideas, values, beliefs, character and cultural identity of organization and personnel and this value, belief and character unity not only reduces job alienation but also develop different types of citizen behavior that involved the benefits of the entire organization, employees, co-workers and even customers and clients.

Job alienation and administrative restrictive regulations

Administrative red tape and its relationship with other important variables are interesting issues for organizational behavior scholars in the world, which include Pandey and Scott studies on the impact of red tapping (extreme administrative formalities) on interests of institutional clients, Baseman & King Assay studies on the impact of administrative red tape on risk-averse culture of decision-making and the exploration of the Moon and Bert Schneider in relation to the negative impact of this type of administrative regulations on the high tech innovation and finally the adverse effect of laws, rules and cumbersome procedures on organizational performance of management and staff that underlie increasingly pervasive job alienation in the organization and reduce the organization efficiency extremely low (Dehart and Pandey, 2005).The short look to the history of organization behavior found that bureaucratic controls were suspect to fostering Work Detachment by making distance between employees and the official sources of power , decreasing job freedoms (Blauner, 1964) and engender the adverse feeling of non-controlling in the staff (Gouldner, 1952) and as Albero (1970) pointed out, a number of these studies (Gouldner & etc, 1952; 1952; Merton 1952; Selznick 1949) had been a strong rejoinder and response to Weber's concept of the ideal type of bureaucracy, so that they succeed to show the results and consequences of unfavorable and unpredictable bureaucracy. The next empirical studies were revealed the relationship between organizational explicit control of vast administrative regulations and job alienation in this regard that in 1979 ,Kanango discussed modern concept in the field of organization and new structures of job alienation is introduced a general knowledge regarding the psychological disconnection of employees and the work environment.

Job alienation role in the health and ability of employees

Work ability deterioration and ageing unhealthy in the workplace as important drivers of job alienation, include some researches by some of the organization and management. A study has done by a team of researchers from German, Italian, Dutch and French in 2005 with the goal of showing the effect of job alienation mechanisms on physical and mental health and ability to work in a number of nursing staff, it was found that this factor has adverse effects on the fragile condition and deterioration of the ability of individual and group as well as undermine the physical, mental and emotional abilities, and during the time and aging, the continuation of this phenomenon will increase its destructive effects and caused to multiple disorders for people and society because people think they are lack of required information and sufficient time to cooperate in decision making and planning for the well-being of themselves and their families in the organization, or at least with their current job, are (Camerino; Conway, Heijden; Schoot; Pokprski; Behar & Hasselhorn, 2005). In another study was conducted by US researchers in a cross-cultural research in six countries: Cuba, Germany, Israel, Russia, America and

Hungary, proved the positive effect of supportive leadership on job alienation effect, however, according to the global alienation theory, the various job characteristics lead to job alienation in these countries. The factors causing this alienation are different forms, but in sum, different factors such as job features caused to job alienation and supportive leadership role with little change in most cases reduce this alienation (Banai & Reisel, 2007). Jax, blues, Borrell and Prime Yu studies in 2001 showed that people with high self-efficacy feature, that is, those who carry out the duties assigned to his personal ability with strong faith, enjoy more motivation and effort, these factors cause that they feel less pressure and are less affected the mental disorders. In other words, higher self-efficacy improves their performance and enhances their health and well-being. This shows the negative relationship between stress and self-efficacy eventually adjusted job alienation. On the other hand, Adams study of justice theory showed that people who see their situation as unfair, are involved more stressed and emotional dissatisfaction and job alienation. Peter (2001) also knows the full correlation of justice and mental health, so unfair to her, people who know their work environment as unfair are involved more anxiety and depression than those who don't think so.

Job alienation and organization commitment

Organizational commitment as a matter of behavior has been studied in a wide range of management studies in Western countries. And because of the effects of this issue on organizations, leaders of organizations done wide meta-analysis in this area and in this way they could found an increasing role of organizational citizenship behaviors in reducing isolation and withdrawal which the employees show in their daily work in various formats such as absenteeism, intentions to quit and job displacement and turnover (Meyer et al, 2002). Moody and colleagues in 1982 offered the latest concept of the structure of organizational commitment under affective commitment and refer it as a person identification who is deeply involved in its organization. Constructed affective commitment can be identified by the following three factors:

1. Identification: a strong belief helps to adopt the organization's goals and values.
2. Engaging: the same readiness to use maximum effort to convince the organization.
3. Loyalty, which in fact is a strong desire to always stay as a member of the organization.

Research carried out in Hungary showed that organizational commitment with these three indices is effective in reducing job alienation. Of course in this regard, they used three factors of leadership, job features, locus of control as antecedent variables and the structure of job alienation and organization commitment as stable variables. They concluded all three antecedent variables has negative significant relationship with alienation and positive correlation to organizational commitment variable (Banai; Reisel & Probst, 2004).

Alienation and job satisfaction

According to Wiles, job satisfaction level is related to the adaptation and adjustment of intrinsic, extrinsic and general factors. Job satisfaction depends on the needs of individuals, their ability to adapt and strengthen the external environment. In this regard, Wise and his colleagues looked at some indicators for above three factors, as intrinsic factors include indicators of creativity, moral values, the operation of personal ability, achievement, effort, progress, independence, social services and social position. And extrinsic factors can be divided into two classes: the first class includes security, responsibility and second class includes authority, policies, operations of the organization, the recognition and acceptability. And finally general factors, includes some indicators such as the supervision of the technical, administrative, human relations, diversity and transformation issues at different times and conditions, which with a little reflection, we will find that all the components of Job satisfaction was associated with the element of alienation on both have mutual interaction (Wong, 2007). Today, the behavioral issues have been raised for job satisfaction and three central visions are offered as follows:

1. Environmental view: The main focus of this view is on workplace, that means organizations and their businesses. The proponents of this approach believe that a major factor in job satisfaction and dissatisfaction is their work environment. As factors such as the distribution of justice in the workplace, the level of payments and the type and amount of the duties and obligations of employees and job features are including those issues that can play an important role of stressful situations and job alienation or can reduce them.
2. The personality view: This view concerns on the satisfaction or non-satisfaction in regard to the record of the individual and their personality. As the owners of these ideas are expressed, personality types of employees such as negative affection, the kind of locus of control (intrinsic or extrinsic), age, sex and cultural and ethical differences are determinants in this regard.
3. Interactive view: This view, which is a combination of environmental and personal views, believes that each individual job satisfaction depends on the personal adaption of his own work and his career and therefore also known person - job fit (Mohammadi, 2008). For example, during a survey in Taiwan (Chen & Silverthorne, 2008) was conducted in relation to the control center impact on job stress, job performance and satisfaction, it was found that people with high control experience less stress and thus greater job satisfaction and performance than the people who have low control, which certainly could have a significant impact on the job alienation.

Conclusions

Both psychologists and sociologists viewed alienation as an important condition that requires immediate treatment and remedy. However, treatments and prescriptions are essential differences between the two groups. As psychologists tend to refer alienation as malaise of affect which can be seen in various forms in youth such as rebel and revolt against parents, rebel and defiance of orders and the norms of society and government policies in families and communities (Meares, 2005). A meticulous psychological explanation of alienation is expressed in the form of personal construct theory. This is the theory of alienation is defined as a failure to predict the outcomes of interactions and social confrontation, so the psychologists to deal with this problem should take action to collect documents and evidence to show whether the treating person is an isolated person who cut off

from others or has the emotional bond with others so that if there is isolation and alienation mood, others encourages to accept him. The sociological understanding of alienation as a group phenomenon, same as individual psychological problems requiring intervention was expressed by Merton in 1968. He described alienation in terms of the deviation and placed it against the conformity with others and follows the current customs and beliefs. While collective action is the result of accepting goals and selection means to organizational success. Deviation can be shown in the form of rejection of consensual Goals, refusal mutually agreed goals and refusal to accept tools and means to achieve group goals. Merton believes these same people are forced to interact others within the group and with other group members involuntary. So other members are obligated to help the deviated and retreated person to leave useless rebellion against social norms so that improve the performance level of group. In short, psychologists utilize their conceptions to manipulate and recover a part of people 's feelings and open new windows of universe to them by conceptualizations and modern interpretations .While the sociologists introduce the advantages of team work and disadvantages of isolation and deviation to the deviated persons so that invite them a comprehensive view to inhibit the promotion of job alienation and eradicate its constructive factors. (Fishman, 2006).

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