



8-6-2010

A Perspective on the Relationship Among Authenticity, Values Congruence, Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

Amy Arrigo

University of Pennsylvania, arrigoamy@hotmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.upenn.edu/od_theses_msod

Arrigo, Amy, "A Perspective on the Relationship Among Authenticity, Values Congruence, Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction" (2010). *Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics Theses*. 35.
http://repository.upenn.edu/od_theses_msod/35

Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics in the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the University of Pennsylvania Advisor: Virginia Vanderslice

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/od_theses_msod/35
For more information, please contact libraryrepository@pobox.upenn.edu.

A Perspective on the Relationship Among Authenticity, Values Congruence, Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

Abstract

This paper examines three variables important to understanding the drivers and impacts of job satisfaction. These include how authenticity relates to job satisfaction, how person-environment fit relates to job satisfaction and how job satisfaction relates to life satisfaction. I first present what the literature says about these variables and their relationship with job satisfaction. I then present a series of four assumptions that I explore through a series of eight qualitative interviews.

Based upon my analysis there was limited support for three of my assumptions regarding the relationship between authenticity and job satisfaction, person-environment fit and authenticity and person-environment fit and job satisfaction. My findings showed support for the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. A key finding from the analysis was that for those individuals most satisfied with their jobs, the factors driving job satisfaction were consistently reported as the same factors individuals used to describe the role work played in their lives. Overall it appeared that a key driver in finding job satisfaction was the ability to align the factors most important about work in one's life with one's current job situation.

Comments

Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics in the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the University of Pennsylvania Advisor: Virginia Vanderslice

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG AUTHENTICITY,
VALUES CONGRUENCE, JOB SATISFACTION AND LIFE SATISFACTION

by

Amy. B. Arrigo

Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics
in the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the
University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2010

A PERSPECTIVE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VALUES CONGRUENCE,
JOB SATISFACTION AND LIFE SATISFACTION

Approved by:

Virginia Vanderslice, Ph.D., Advisor

Dana Kaminstein, Ph.D., Reader

Steven M. Horner, MS, MPhil, Reader

ABSTRACT

This paper examines three variables important to understanding the drivers and impacts of job satisfaction. These include how authenticity relates to job satisfaction, how person-environment fit relates to job satisfaction and how job satisfaction relates to life satisfaction. I first present what the literature says about these variables and their relationship with job satisfaction. I then present a series of four assumptions that I explore through a series of eight qualitative interviews.

Based upon my analysis there was limited support for three of my assumptions regarding the relationship between authenticity and job satisfaction, person-environment fit and authenticity and person-environment fit and job satisfaction. My findings showed support for the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. A key finding from the analysis was that for those individuals most satisfied with their jobs, the factors driving job satisfaction were consistently reported as the same factors individuals used to describe the role work played in their lives. Overall it appeared that a key driver in finding job satisfaction was the ability to align the factors most important about work in one's life with one's current job situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank Professor Virginia Vanderslice, Ph.D, my Capstone Advisor, for her professional expertise, thought-provoking questions and feedback, guidance and overall encouragement throughout this process. I would also like to express my appreciation to both of my Readers, Professor Dana Kaminstein, Ph.D. and Steven M. Horner, MS, MPhil. I am grateful for the time they invested providing careful and specific feedback. Their input helped me continuously improve my Capstone. This was a challenging and rewarding journey. I learned a lot from my research as well as from the process. I feel proud of the end result and truly have my Capstone Committee to thank for their support along the way.

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
1	Types of Person-Environment Fit	10
2	Key Findings of Person-Organization Fit and Mediating Variables Studies	13
3	Key Findings of Multi-Dimensional Person-Environment Fit Studies	17

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
1 Assumptions	22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER	
1	Introdu
ction	1
2	Literat
ure Review	5
Authenticity	
Person-Environment Fit	
Person-Organization Fit and Mediating Variables	
Summary of Person-Organization Fit and Mediating Variables	
Literature	
Multi-Dimensional Person-Environment Fit Studies	
Summary of Multi-Dimensional Person-Environment Fit Studies	
Summary of Person-Environment Fit Literature	
Life Satisfaction	
Assumptions	
3	Metho
dology	23
4	Results
Assumption A	26
Assumption B	
Assumption C	
Assumption D	
5	Conclu
sion	37

Summary of Interview Findings and Learnings
Future Research
Personal Learnings

REFERENCES

41

vii

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

Definitions

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My personal journey to find job satisfaction started when I was twenty-one years old and accepted my first job in Human Resources. Three companies, four jobs and eight years later my journey to find job satisfaction continues. I have made a lot of changes in my work life for someone my age and at the point I am in my career. All of these changes were with the intent to find greater fulfillment and satisfaction in my job and in my life. After all I am a hard and diligent worker. I dedicate many hours a week of my time beyond the standard forty hour workweek because I have a drive for excellence and enjoy proving my competence and being recognized for strong performance. Work is an important part of my life because I believe it reflects who I am. I ask myself, does my work reflect that I am compassionate? Creative? Smart? Influential? I have always wanted to feel proud to explain to others who I work for and what I do. Therefore my jobs have always been a central part of my life and continue to be a major source of overall ups and downs.

My early work experiences in Human Resources were full of excitement, anxiety and learning. I took advantage of every new opportunity I could and stretched myself beyond my comfort zone. It was my first boss that said to me that an excellent way to develop talent was to place a person in an uncomfortable situation. The first few years of my career were full of these situations. I led a cross-functional team of Human Resources professionals and partnered with an external vendor to implement an employee engagement survey. I also was asked to be part of a core team implementing a new payroll and benefits outsourcing solution. I led a significant component of that project,

working with senior Human Resources leaders and key stakeholders from our partnering consulting firm. I had limited functional knowledge when embarking on projects such as these but through dedicated preparation and relationship building I was not only successful in completing them, but also became more competent as a result.

As I progressed beyond those first few years in the workforce and began to feel more confident in my knowledge and skills I began to clarify the elements of my work experience and environment that were important for me to feel fulfilled. Every new opportunity was not necessarily appealing to me anymore as I had a better sense of the kind of work I wanted to challenge myself with to broaden my exposure to the Human Resources field. As a result I went from focusing on Corporate project-based Human Resources work to an Operations role in order to get more exposure to line Managers and employee issues. In addition to narrowing my focus on the type of work I wanted to do, I began to pay more careful attention to the dynamics and impacts of my relationships not only with my co-workers and supervisor, but also with my organization, its strategy, vision and leadership. It became more important to me to be surrounded by leaders and managers within the organization that understood or were open to understanding the value of Human Resources. I wanted to know that the organization I worked for valued investing in and developing their people.

I chose to pursue the Organizational Dynamics degree at the University of Pennsylvania because throughout my work experiences I had uncovered a strong interest in organizational culture and leadership. My coursework in the program proved to be influential and enlightening. It complemented my on-the-job experiences as I was able to apply and share my learnings from my courses with the leaders, managers and colleagues

with whom I worked. What I did not expect was for my learnings from the courses, professors and classmates to sharpen my self-awareness and instigate important personal reflection regarding why and when I felt satisfied or dissatisfied with work and the impacts it had on my overall life satisfaction.

It was through the combination of classroom learning and work experience that I selected the topic for this capstone paper. The role that authenticity and values alignment play in the work environment coupled with questions about job and life satisfaction make a complex, yet fascinating and deeply personal topic. As I reflect on my own career history I have struggled to answer the question, 'am I satisfied with my job?' Early on I believed any lack of satisfaction was about the type or content of my job. More recently I have come to believe that job satisfaction results from something deeper. Things like feeling authentic at work, caring about what the organization does and stands for, feeling as though what is important to me, my values, are not disconnected from those I work with everyday. Looking back I can say that each job transition I made over the past eight years was because one or more of these things were missing. Most recently, in my last job I experienced a significant disconnect between what was important to me and the work I was doing and what the leadership of the organization valued. I remember proposing the use of an employee engagement toolkit to one leader within the organization. The purpose was to share the toolkit with Managers to help them focus on and engage their employees during a difficult economic period. The leader told me he didn't think focusing on engagement was necessary and in fact, the people in our organization should feel lucky to still have a job. This disconnect led to lack of job satisfaction, but also had an impact on my life satisfaction. I felt less satisfied

outside of work hours because of the disconcerting feelings I had about my job.

Ultimately these disconcerting feelings drove me to leave the organization.

Overall based on my personal interest and experience with this topic I feel it is natural for me to explore the role of authenticity and values congruence in job and life satisfaction. It intrigues me as a student and is important to me as a job holder still navigating my own career.

In Chapter 2 of this paper I will provide a review of the literature as well as my own assumptions pertaining to the topic of job satisfaction and its relationship to the variables of interest including authenticity, person-environment fit and life satisfaction. I will raise key questions that form the basis for my exploration into this topic. I will review what the literature says about each variable and its connection to job satisfaction. I will also analyze where there is opportunity for further investigation. These opportunities form the basis of the four assumptions that I will explore in this paper and that I will outline at the conclusion of Chapter 2.

In Chapter 3 I will outline my methodology for exploring my assumptions. I will explain why I chose to conduct open-ended interviews as my exploratory research method as well as how I solicited and collected data.

In Chapter 4 I will share my results. I will first share my experience from my data collection process and will then discuss overall insights from the results. I will then provide a detailed account of how my results related to my initial four assumptions.

I will conclude this paper in Chapter 5. I will first summarize my overall findings and then share my remaining thoughts and learnings on this topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout this literature review I will share my perspective and raise important questions regarding the relationship between jobs and careers. I will then examine the literature on three variables I believe are important to understanding the drivers and impacts of job satisfaction. These include how authenticity relates to job satisfaction, how person-environment fit relates to job satisfaction and how job satisfaction relates to life satisfaction. While the literature on each topic and set of relationships is to a large degree separate, I will suggest how these topics are in fact related. What are the factors about a person's job that create satisfaction? What impact does job satisfaction have on life satisfaction? It is through my assumptions, which I will outline at the conclusion of this Chapter, that I will raise the opportunity to further investigate these questions and the relationship between these variables and job satisfaction in a holistic way.

A career is more than a single job. A career represents a sequence of work experiences over time (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Historically careers were defined by the organization in which individuals worked. Often your career was achieved through a well-defined path which involved a linear, vertical movement within a single organization (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Employees were rather highly dependent on their organization. Arthur and Rousseau (1996) describe the meaning of this organizational career as "getting along meant doing what the firm wanted; getting ahead meant being grateful for opportunities the firm brought your way" (p.4). More recently this concept of the organizational career has changed. Literature on the boundaryless career suggests that individuals commit to employment contexts that are consistent with and supportive of, their personal identities, thus carving their own career path across

multiple employers and/or employment contexts (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996). Overall, according to Derr (1986), career success is no longer marked by climbing a single organizational hierarchy; rather it is being able to live out the subjective and personal values one believes in. Baker and Aldrich (1996) said:

People whose job tasks fit in with their sense of core identity, and who are able to take a lead role in setting and accomplishing challenging goals, will develop careers that are high on the identity scale (p.142).

If, for individuals in non-manual labor, or white collar professions, a core component of finding career success is based upon internal measures, meaning individuals define and pursue their personal aspirations over time, then the path to success is created one job at a time. Each job individuals have either drives them towards or away from internal career success. What then is it about the landscape of each job individuals hold that allows the pursuit of personal aspirations? What are the factors about each job that creates satisfaction? How does job satisfaction or the lack thereof, impact overall satisfaction with our lives?

Authenticity, person-environment fit and job-life satisfaction are three topics with correlating frameworks or theories in the literature that provide insight into these questions. I will discuss the literature relating to each of these topics and what it reveals about their relationship to job satisfaction. I will then summarize my interest in furthering the research in these areas.

Authenticity

There is a considerable amount of literature whereby authenticity is identified as a relevant factor when describing parameters and/or conditions for positive work environments, career decision making and career satisfaction. Sullivan and Mainiero

(2007) in their article “Kaleidoscope Careers,” define authenticity as “the parameter that describes being genuine and true to oneself, knowing one’s strengths and limitations and acting on the best information at the time” (p. 48).

In their career model called The Kaleidoscope Career, Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) address what they describe as the evolving needs of employees in the work landscape. This model was an outcome of a five-year research study that demonstrated individuals careers were dynamic and based upon personal values and life choices. Authenticity was one of three core components in this career model that was found to be a key decision making factor in shaping individual career choices.

Offering a related perspective yet based upon existential theory, Cohen (2003) created a career decision making model where the search for authentic existence was a key component. He suggests that:

Career satisfaction and stability is obtained when there is a correspondence between the vocation and the meaning and opportunities for authentic existence that the vocation provides (p.195)

When discussing existentialism and the search for the authentic self, Cohen (2003) explained the importance of work as a domain where individuals can express themselves and strive towards their potential (as cited in Kierkegaard, 1950).

Like Cohen (2003), Richards (1995), in his book *Artful Work* presents his perspective on the importance of authenticity, or self-expression, as he calls it, in the workplace. Richards (1995) theorizes that we need to engage ourselves artfully in our work in order to achieve our goals. Work, he writes, is “something we perform in order to survive” and art is “something we suspend from our walls or perform at our leisure” (Richards, 1995, p. 8). The creation of artful work, Richards (1995) suggests, centers on

four elements, one of which is self-expression. In the artistic sense self-expression is not about expressing what others want to hear. Rather self-expression is unselfconscious, “it means giving voice to those aspects of the self that are not immediately apparent: an idea, a feeling, a spiritual longing, or a belief” (Richards, 1995, p. 34).

Authenticity as presented in the literature above has been described as a driver of personal potential, goals and aspirations. It has, however, only been discussed in the context of career models or frameworks, those that focus on helping individuals make decisions about their career direction. I am interested in authenticity in the context of a point in time job for white collar workers. The literature does not directly look at the relationship between feeling able to be one’s authentic self in the workplace and job satisfaction. When an individual is able to interact with his or her peers, supervisor and clients in an authentic way, is he or she more likely to be satisfied with his or her job? I know that when I feel comfortable to speak from the heart, express my opinions freely and ask for assignments I am interested in I feel more positive about my job. Just as authenticity has been shown to be an important variable in career decisions I believe it will prove to be an important variable in job satisfaction. What is it though about one’s work environment that would allow an individual to be his or her authentic self? Is the alignment of values with the organization and those with whom an individual works important to being authentic? Is it important to finding job satisfaction? I will explore these questions in the next topic on Person-Environment fit.

Person-Environment Fit

Being able to express who you are in the workplace in part is the responsibility of the individual to identify his or her personal aspirations and have the willingness and skills to strive for those every day. It is the employment environment, however, including the organizational structure and setting as well as the people, that provides the context for employees to be themselves every day and to carry out their personal aspirations.

Kahn (1990) conducted a study that investigated the psychological conditions in the workplace that influenced individuals to either personally engage or disengage in their roles at work. Personal engagement and disengagement refer to “behaviors by which people bring in or leave out their personal selves during work role performances” (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). Kahn (1990) proposed a three-pronged framework that explained how people inhabited their roles at work. This framework included meaningfulness, safety and availability. Meaningfulness occurred when people felt, “worthwhile, useful, and valuable – as though they made a difference and were not taken for granted” (Kahn, 1990, p. 704). Psychological safety occurred when individuals could be themselves in interpersonal, group and managerial relationships without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career. Psychological safety occurred when individuals operated within the context of organizational norms, or shared and acceptable ways of working among members. The last component of Kahn’s (1990) framework, availability, occurred when individuals had a sense of physical, emotional or psychological resources to personally engage. Availability was characterized by physical energy, emotional energy, individual security and outside lives.

As Kahn (1990) found, the presence of several factors within the work environment were critical to individuals' personally engaging in their job roles. Therefore it appears reasonable to suggest that the successful or unsuccessful marriage of an employee and his or her work life begins with the fit between an individual and his or her work environment. The next question then is, what impact does the fit between an individual and his or her work environment have on job satisfaction?

Person-environment fit (PE) is a multi-dimensional concept in the literature. There is a vast amount of research on the different types and combinations of fit and their relationship with a variety of behaviors, attitudes and outcomes, including job satisfaction. Defined as "the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched" Person-Environment fit has been broken down into smaller units of analysis (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005, p. 281). The types of fit most commonly referenced in the literature and used to evaluate impacts on organizational and job outcomes include Person-Job, Person-Organization, Person-Group and Person-Supervisor fit.

Table 1. Types of Person-Environment Fit (Kristof-Brown et.al, 2005)

Fit Type	Definition
Person-Job (PJ)	Relationship between a person's characteristics and those of the job or tasks that are performed at work
Person-Organization (PO)	Compatibility between people and entire organizations, commonly referred to as value congruence
Person-Group (PG)	Interpersonal compatibility between individuals and their work groups
Person-Supervisor (PS)	The dyadic relationship between supervisors and subordinates

Adding to the complexity of research in this domain are the different methods used for measuring these types and combinations of fit. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) has

synthesized the various naming conventions and definitions for measuring fit into three terms. Perceived fit is when an individual makes a direct assessment of the compatibility between Person and Environment variables. Subjective fit is when fit is assessed indirectly through the comparison of Person and Environment variables reported by the same person. Objective fit is when fit is calculated indirectly through the comparison of Person and Environment variables as reported by different sources.

Of the vast amount of literature on Person Environment fit there are two main categories of research that pertain to my area of interest regarding the relationship between Person-Environment fit and job satisfaction. The first includes studies looking at the relationship between Person-Organization fit and job satisfaction using mediating variables. The second includes studies looking at the relationship between multiple types of Person-Environment fit and job satisfaction.

Person-Organization Fit and Mediating Variables

The first category of research includes studies that utilize mediating variables to examine the relationship between Person-Organization (PO) fit and job satisfaction. In his study of value congruence among nurses and their surgery wards, Verplanken (2004) looked at the relationship between value congruence and nurses' ward attitudes, such as feelings about working at the ward and likeliness to stay, as well as the direct impact of nurses' ward attitude on job satisfaction.

Using subjective fit and four categories of values reflective of Quinn's Competing Values Framework (as cited in Kalliath et.al, 1999; Quinn, 1988), Verplanken (2004) found that human relations values congruence was a direct predictor of nurses' attitude toward their work unit. Human relations values include those concerning empowerment,

participation, open discussion and sensitivity for employee ideas, loyalty and trust.

Verplanken (2004) also found nurses' ward attitudes were the most direct predictor of job satisfaction. Verplanken (2004) summarized his findings by saying "those who adhered to human relation values and perceived those values to prevail at their ward held positive attitudes toward the ward and showed high levels of job satisfaction in general" (p.603). This research demonstrates that when employees find congruence between the personal values that are most important to them and those of their organization, that this congruence can directly affect how they feel towards their work environment which then directly affects how they feel overall about their job.

In a related, yet broader and more complex study by Edwards and Cable (2009) the authors built a theoretical model to explain the effects of Person-Organization fit (value congruence) on multiple outcomes including job satisfaction. The four mediating variables included in their study were communication, predictability, attraction and trust. Using a heterogeneous sample of employees across four water treatment agencies, Edwards and Cable (2009) used subjective fit to look at the relationship between Person-Organization fit (value congruence) and these four variables. They then looked at the direct relationship between the four variables and job satisfaction.

With regard to the relationship between Person-Organization fit (value congruence) and the four mediators, the authors found moderate support for a value congruence effect and its relationship to communication as well as trust. They found little support for a value congruence effect and its relationship to predictability or attraction. Interestingly, the authors found a stronger value congruence effect and its relationship to both communication and trust when individuals rated their individual

values and the presence of those same values within their organization at equally high levels of importance. This means that values congruence enhanced trust and communication when individual and organizational values were both viewed as having high levels of importance.

As it pertained to the direct relationship between the four mediators and job satisfaction, Edwards and Cable (2009) found significance among all mediators except predictability. Overall, in terms of their theoretical model Edwards and Cable (2009) recap their findings to suggest:

The value of Person-Organization fit (value congruence) is primarily the enhancement of communication and trust, with the caveat that the effects of values should be viewed in terms of congruence only when individual and organizational values are both high (p. 670).

Table 2. Key Findings of Person-Organization Fit and Mediating Variables Studies

Author	Key Findings
Verplanken	Found person-organization values congruence among a nurse population had a significant relationship to nurse attitudes (i.e. feelings toward their nurse ward) which in turn had a positive impact on job satisfaction.
Edwards and Cable	Found person-organization values congruence, when both were of high importance, had a significant relationship to employee communication and trust which in turn had a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Summary of Person-Organization Fit and Mediating Variables Literature

Verplanken (2004) and Edwards and Cable (2009) found that the relationship between Person-Organization fit and job satisfaction was mediated by key variables. These findings, while different in their subjects, measurement vehicles and variables, largely lend insight to the common theme that employee attitudes and feelings about their work environment are a central component in the Person-Organization fit and job satisfaction relationship.

While these studies strive to show that Person-Organization fit (value congruence) impacts job satisfaction via key variables, it is also useful to explore whether other key Person-Environment fit measures commonly reviewed in the literature may relate to job satisfaction. Person Supervisor (PS), Person Group (PG) and Person Job (PJ) fit are other ways in which Person-Environment fit is measured and have also been shown to impact job satisfaction. In their meta-analysis of individuals' fit at work Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) reviewed the relationships between all of these fit dimensions and their relationship to a series of outcomes, including job satisfaction. Based on their results all fit types had a positive correlation with job satisfaction with the strongest correlation being Person-Job fit followed by Person-Supervisor and Person-Organization fit and finally Person-Group fit as the weakest of all four measures.

Kristof-Brown et al.'s (2005) results coupled with a review of the studies by Verplanken (2004) and Edwards and Cable (2009) suggest it is important to consider these additional dimensions of Person-Environment fit to understand the complete picture of how these variables overall impact job satisfaction.

Multi-Dimensional Person-Environment Fit Studies

The second category of research pertaining to my area of interest regarding the relationship between Person-Environment fit and job satisfaction includes two studies that are multi-dimensional, covering multiple types of Person-Environment fit together, and their impact on job satisfaction. These studies are important to my research interests as they combine additional dimensions of Person-Environment fit to understand how they together affect a person's job satisfaction.

In their study of nearly one thousand employees across more than one hundred bank branches, Ostroff, Shin and Kinicki (2005), assessed multiple fit dimensions including Person-Organization and Person-Person fit to determine their impact on different outcome variables including job satisfaction. Ostroff et al. (2005) looked at Person-Organization fit from two angles: subjective and objective fit. They first looked at subjective fit whereby the individuals assessed their own values which were then compared with their perceptions of what was valued in the organization. They also looked at objective Person-Organization fit, where the authors compared an individual's personal values with the manager's or workgroup's perception of organizational values. The final fit dimension in their study was Person-Person fit which is the assessment of fit between individual personal values and manager or co-worker personal values. These two fit dimensions align with Kristof-Brown et al's (2005) definition of Person-Supervisor and Person-Group fit respectively.

Overall Ostroff et al. (2005) reported the following findings. First, they found the strongest relationship between person-organization value congruence and job satisfaction when using subjective fit. This, according to Ostroff et al. (2005) demonstrated the strength of assessing values congruence through the perception of the individual. Second, when testing objective fit between individual personal values and the manager and workgroup perception of organizational values, Ostroff et al. (2005) found that the value fit for the rational goal dimension (i.e. values including professionalism, good reputation, client convenience and client service) was strongest and was most significant between the individual and the workgroup's perception versus the individual and the manager's perception. Third, with regard to Person-Person fit, in the end the authors

were only able to test the relationship between individual and manager. They found weak results for value congruence and the relationship to job satisfaction. These overall results indicated that it would be more important to the outcome of job satisfaction that a person's own values fit within the work environment than with another person. These results lend notable insight into my research interests regarding the relationship between Person-Environment fit and job satisfaction. Ostroff et al.'s (2005) findings suggest that when multiple dimensions of Person-Environment fit are investigated together, through the perception of the individual, that Person-Organization fit has a stronger impact on job satisfaction than does the congruence of values with co-workers or a supervisor.

Similar to Ostroff et al. (2005), Cable and DeRue (2002) sought to understand the effects of three types of fit and their relationship to outcome variables, including job satisfaction. Different from Ostroff et al. (2005), Cable and DeRue (2002) did not include Person-Person fit in their three factor conceptualization. Instead they looked at Person-Organization fit as well as two components of Person-Job fit: Needs-Supplies and Demands-Abilities. Needs-Supplies fit measures the congruence between employees needs and the rewards they receive in return for their work. Demands- Abilities is the congruence between an employee's skills and the demands of the job.

Gathering data from employees and managers in two sample populations, the first a small telecommunications firm and the second, a heterogeneous sample of MBA graduates in the Southeast, Cable and DeRue (2002) used perceived fit to test the relationship between these fit dimensions and job satisfaction. They found Needs-Abilities fit to be the strongest predictor of job satisfaction. Cable and DeRue (2002) also uncovered a relationship between Person-Organization fit and job satisfaction, suggesting

the importance of perceived value congruence between person and organization and its impact on job satisfaction. This relationship however was not as significant as the Needs-Supplies fit relationship. Overall Cable and DeRue's (2002) findings suggest that employees judge satisfaction with their job primarily based on the fit between their needs and the rewards they receive, not on the basis of shared organizational values or ability to do the job.

Table 3. Key Findings of Multi-Dimensional Person-Environment Fit Studies

Author	Key Findings
Ostroff, et al.	Found positive relationship between subjective person-organization value congruence and job satisfaction, objective person-organization value congruence, primarily between person-workgroup, and job satisfaction and weak relationship between person-supervisor and person-workgroup value congruence and job satisfaction.
Cable and DeRue	Found strongest relationship between Needs-Supplies fit (employee needs and rewards) and job satisfaction as well as a significant, but weaker, relationship between person-organization values congruence and job satisfaction. Found no relationship between Demands-Abilities fit (employee skills and demands of job) and job satisfaction.

Summary of Multi-Dimensional Person-Environment Fit Studies

While these multi-dimensional fit studies include different combinations of fit constructs, they both demonstrate that there is a differential relationship with job satisfaction when multiple fit factors are introduced. It is clear in both Ostroff et al. (2005) and Cable and DeRue's (2002) studies that Person-Organization fit remains an important contributing factor to job satisfaction. Overall these two studies have fundamentally different outcomes. Ostroff et al. (2005) included Person-Person fit in their conceptualization and determined that it was more important that a person's own values fit within the work environment than with another person. Cable and DeRue (2002), on the other hand, included the two dimensions of Person-Job fit in their study

and determined that satisfaction was primarily based on the fit between needs and rewards.

Summary of Person-Environment Fit Literature

Summarizing the two categories of research presented above there is no doubt that employee fit with the work environment, from several dimensions, is critical to analyzing job satisfaction. As it pertains to my research, it is the combination of person-environment fit dimensions that focus on values alignment that are of most interest to me. How does values congruence within the work environment impact job satisfaction? And, as discussed in the section on authenticity, does values congruence impact authenticity as a mediating variable of job satisfaction? Upon review of the literature throughout this chapter, there are two areas lacking as it relates to these questions. First, none of these studies offer a holistic combination of the related values-alignment fit measures, namely Person-Organization, Person-Supervisor and Person-Group fit, and a single measurement strategy for assessing their impact on job satisfaction. Second, those that did take a multi-dimensional approach to their research treated job satisfaction as a direct outcome, overlooking the possibility that the relationship is mediated by specific attitudes or feelings which in turn may affect satisfaction with their job.

It is my belief that to truly understand the impact of values congruence, all three values alignment fit dimensions, Person-Organization, Person-Supervisor and Person-Group fit, should be considered together. Only when these three dimensions are explored together can we really understand how influential values congruence is not only to job satisfaction, but also, as discussed earlier, to the ability to be one's authentic self in the workplace.

Life Satisfaction

Understanding what influences a person's job satisfaction is not the complete story. Rather, it is interesting to ask, how does a person's job satisfaction relate to their life satisfaction? It is plausible to expect that job satisfaction or the lack thereof has the potential to affect other areas of life. If the work we choose is an important avenue for finding meaning in life and expressing oneself, it is reasonable to assume that satisfaction with work will affect satisfaction with overall life (Ciulla, 2000; Cohen, 2003). This relationship between work and nonwork has been the subject of many research studies. Chacko (1983) discussed two basic theories in the work and nonwork literature, the spillover and compensatory models (as cited in Wilensky, 1960). The spillover model suggests congruency whereby experiences at work spill over into or affect life experiences. This model suggests that when an individual feels positive about his or her work experience he or she will feel positive about his or her life. The contrary model, referred to as the compensatory model, suggests a negative relationship between job and life satisfaction whereby individuals with negative work experiences will compensate by finding fulfillment in their life outside of work. In two of the most recent studies on this topic, both call out the inconclusive outcomes of which model prevails and thus the uncertain directional relationship between work and nonwork satisfaction (Chacko, 1983; Judge & Watanabe, 1993). In Chacko's (1983) longitudinal study his results generally supported the notion that job satisfaction had a greater influence on life satisfaction. In contrast however Judge and Watanabe's (1993) longitudinal study results suggested a reciprocal relationship whereby life satisfaction influenced job satisfaction and vice versa.

While the causal results may still remain inconclusive, I am interested in further investigating the possible job-life satisfaction relationship in the same study with the person-environment fit and authenticity variables.

Assumptions

Based upon the literature presented throughout this chapter there are opportunities remaining for further exploration pertaining to the intricate relationship among authenticity, person-environment fit and job satisfaction as well as the job-life satisfaction relationship. As a result I have four assumptions I am interested in exploring.

Assumption A

First, it is my assumption that when individuals feel they can be their authentic selves in the workplace that these feelings will be positively related to their feelings of job satisfaction. The literature presented throughout this Chapter demonstrates that authenticity, or the ability to express one's authentic self is a key component for career decision making. It lacks however the exploration of the direct relationship between authenticity and job satisfaction.

Assumption B

Second, when individuals perceive congruence between their personal values and those of their organization, supervisor and workgroup that these feelings will be positively related to their feelings about expressing their authentic selves at work. The Person-Environment fit literature has explored the relationship between Person-Organization fit and specific employee attitudes and feelings about their work and work environment (Edwards & Cable 2009; Verplanken, 2004). Kahn (1990) also found that for individuals to personally engage in their roles, or be their authentic selves, that key

environmental factors had to be in place. The direct relationship however between all three values alignment fit dimensions, Person-Organization, Person-Supervisor and Person-Group fit, and authenticity has not been fully explored.

Assumption C

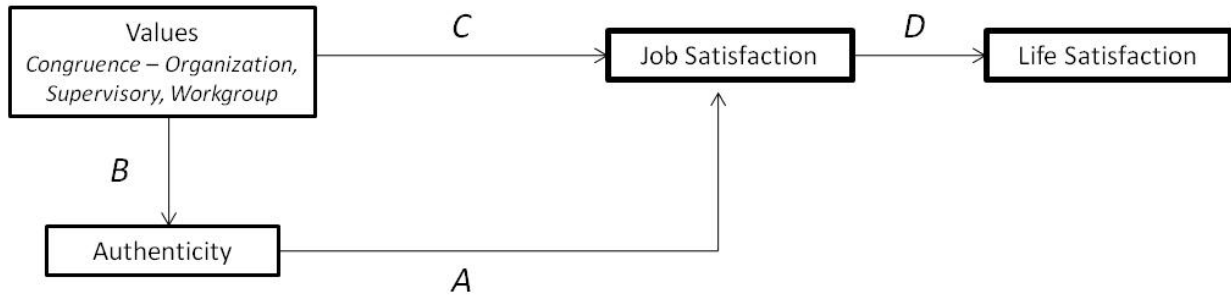
Third, it is my assumption that when individuals perceive congruence between their personal values and those of their organization, supervisor and workgroup that these feelings will be positively related to their feelings of job satisfaction. The literature includes multi-dimensional studies of Person-Environment fit variables and their relationship with job satisfaction (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Ostroff, et. al, 2005). None of the studies presented however include a comprehensive review of all three values alignment fit dimensions, Person-Organization, Person-Supervisor and Person-Group and their differential relationship with job satisfaction.

Assumption D

And, fourth, for those individuals who define work as important in their life, it is my assumption that their job satisfaction will be an influencing factor in their overall life satisfaction. The literature has explored the causal relationship between these two factors and the results remain inconclusive. I am interested in expanding this research, not to uncover a causal relationship between job and life satisfaction, rather to understand whether job satisfaction is a factor in how individual's feel overall about their life.

Figure 1 represents the relationship among these four assumptions.

Figure 1: Assumptions



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In order to explore the four assumptions outlined at the end of Chapter 2, I conducted eight in-depth interviews using a twelve question open-ended interview guide (See Appendix A). I selected open ended interviews as my research method because I wanted the opportunity to explore my assumptions in an in-depth manner. The assumptions I set forth are highly intricate and I believed would require deeper data gathering than is possible with a survey-type instrument.

There were twelve questions included in the interview protocol. Of the twelve, ten questions were framed using a rating scale of one through five with a follow up question asking the interviewees to explain their rating. The other two questions were open ended. The content of the questions focused on career and job choice, importance of the organization and job to the individual, value congruence with the organization, peers, supervisor and clients, ability to be authentic in the workplace and overall job and life satisfaction. All questions were framed based on the perception of the individual. Consistent definitions for values and authenticity were provided during the interviews (See Appendix B).

Participants for the interviews were solicited using a social networking and word of mouth approach to maximize the potential interviewee population with interest in discussing the topics under review. Specific social networking sites used were LinkedIn and Facebook. Since the study was exploratory, it was not necessary to have an unbiased sample of participants. I was more focused on finding interviewees who were willing to

be questioned in depth about their values and their work. I did not offer any monetary or non-monetary reward for participating.

I received thirteen responses from this solicitation approach. Eight individuals were selected from the thirteen based upon three core factors. First, the population of participants had to be mid-career professionals. In his book, *Managing the New Careerists*, Derr (1986) identified five stages employees go through in their careers. Mid Career is the third stage of his model characterized by employees in the age range of early thirties to early fifties. According to Derr (1986) employees in this stage have resolved or postponed any questions about whether they have chosen the right career path and instead have a renewed focus and sense of stability in their chosen area of work. This is an important distinction as it is my argument that individuals in the mid-career category are less likely to be wrestling not only with what career field to select but also with what their values are. Therefore this audience is likely to demonstrate a more grounded perspective on the variables in question as, broadly speaking, they are not addressing the larger life questions regarding what do I want to do and what is important to me in my life.

The second factor was that individuals had to be in non-manual labor or in other words, white collar jobs. It was my expectation that due to the differences in work environment and job and skill –types that individuals in these different categories of jobs would reveal different perspectives pertaining to job satisfaction and its influences. As a result I wanted to focus only on one category to drive consistency of the data.

The third and final factor that was important in selecting interview participants was their heterogeneity across organization and industry. In the literature presented in

this paper the large majority of the studies had target populations that were single-unit groups, either from one organization or within one industry. These studies also had target populations that were largely indiscriminate of career stage. It is of interest to me to have a diverse group of mid-career professionals to understand important patterns regardless of organization or industry.

It is important to note that it was not my intention to select participant based upon pre-defined demographic categories except for age, which is explained above as it relates to career stage. I made this choice because previous research did not indicate that demographics, such as gender or race, played a role in the relationship among the variables of interest in my study. The demographics of the interview population included however, four women and four men. Two individuals were in direct to consumer or retail organizations, one was in a school system and the remaining five in corporate organizations. Seven of the interviews were conducted via phone and one face to face as it was feasible to meet in person. I collected the data by taking detailed notes during each interview and consolidated all notes in order to analyze the results. The interview sessions lasted, on average one hour, and were highly interactive. Interview participants were open and forthcoming and enjoyed talking about a topic that was meaningful to them.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The interview data, although different from what I expected, revealed an interesting set of outcomes and explanations pertaining to job satisfaction, values congruence, authenticity and the relationship among all the variables. As noted in Chapter 3 although there was no basis in the literature indicating the need to conduct a demographic analysis of my results, because I had four men and four women participate in my study I was able to do a preliminary analysis by gender and found no distinct differences in results.

I will begin by discussing the overall themes that the data revealed about how the interviewees thought about job satisfaction. I will then discuss what their attitudes and perceptions mean in the context of my four assumptions. In terms of job satisfaction, six out of the eight individuals interviewed felt satisfied with their jobs. Four themes emerged as reasons that the six individuals felt satisfied with their jobs. These themes included the nature of the job, relationships with others, recognition from others and job flexibility.

The first theme, nature of the job, was represented by comments about job content, task focus and variety as well as autonomy, challenge and excitement about the job responsibilities. Individuals said things like ‘my job appeals to my desire to learn and be challenged’ and ‘the quality and diversity of my assignments and responsibilities makes me satisfied.’ This theme is consistent with Kristof-Brown et al’s (2005) meta-analysis finding that showed the strongest correlation between Person-Job fit and job satisfaction. It is also consistent with Cable and DeRue’s (2002) finding that Needs-Supplies fit, broadly defined as the fit with the types of returns a job provides, including

pay, challenging work, promotion opportunities, recognition and good working conditions, was the strongest predictor of job satisfaction.

The second theme, relationships with others, included getting along with and enjoying the company of people with whom individuals' work. Interviewees described their relationships with co-workers as important to their job satisfaction by saying things like, 'I enjoy the people I work with, 'I feel accepted by my peers', 'the people I work with are genuinely good people', and 'I have made lifelong friends.' This theme is consistent with the literature on Person-Group fit which identifies the importance of the relationship between an individual and those with whom he or she works and the impact of this relationship on job satisfaction (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

The third and fourth themes, recognition from others and job flexibility, both relate to the literature on Perceived-Organization Support (POS). POS represents the extent to which employees feel their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Edrogon, Kraimer & Liden, 2004). The third theme, recognition from others was described by interviewees as feeling appreciated and/or respected by the people with whom they work. Interviewees said things like, 'the people I work with appreciate how hard I work', 'I feel respected in my work environment' and 'I feel appreciated by my employer.'

The fourth theme, job flexibility, was characterized by individuals saying they valued their generous time off, reasonable or flexible hours and telecommuting capability. One individual discussed his relationship with his employer as 'give and take.' He felt grateful for having flexibility in his work life, to be able to work from home for example, to meet the demands and needs of his personal life. He also believed

in turn, that he delivered what his employer desired, including working late or on the weekends when he needed to get the job done. This reciprocal relationship, as he described it, was very important to him.

As noted, these last two themes are consistent with the literature on POS. Riggle, Edmondson and Hansen's (2009) meta-analysis found a strong correlation between POS and job satisfaction. Their study concluded that companies that invested in POS programs would employ more satisfied employees. Similarly, in my interviews individuals who were satisfied with their job discussed the importance of feeling recognized for their contributions as well as grateful that their organization provided flexibility in their schedules to balance their work and home lives.

In an attempt to understand what might tie together the different reasons that interviewees gave for being satisfied with their jobs, I found there was a common, but unanticipated theme. Overall, the factors driving job satisfaction for the individuals I interviewed were consistently reported as the same factors interviewees used to describe the role work played in their lives. Some examples follow. For one woman work played a very important role in her life. She described work as a big part of who she is and how she views herself. Therefore when she works as hard as she does, she explained, she wants to feel as though what she is doing at work is important and matters. This same individual was satisfied with her current job. When describing why this matters, one of the key things she noted was she felt as though her work has a direct impact on the organization's direction.

Another interviewee who reported feeling satisfied with his job cited different reasons. He described work as a means to drive a secure livelihood. Not surprisingly

then, one of the factors he reported as driving satisfaction with his job was that he felt his job was secure. He also revealed that a key reason he left his prior job was due to the potential impacts of economic uncertainty on his employment.

A third interviewee described work in her life as wanting to love what she does yet be able to balance it with her top priority of family and friends as essential characteristics of what was important to her about work in her life. When she talked about her overall job satisfaction she said she couldn't be happier, that she loved her job, had made lifelong friends at work and actually had learned a lot about being a mom and balancing her home life with her work life.

In summary, it appears the individuals that were most satisfied with their jobs found a way to align what is most important to them about work in their lives with their current job situation. An alternative explanation for this finding is that, according to Cognitive Dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), individuals found a way to eliminate conflicting feelings about what they actually believe is important to them about work to align with their actual job conditions. For example, someone might say, 'Perhaps a more challenging job isn't as important to me because I have great flexibility in my job and that wouldn't be afforded if I had bigger, more complex project work.' This explanation would suggest that individuals don't want to be dissatisfied with their jobs due to the conflicting effect and overall strain the feelings of dissatisfaction can have.

Before discussing the results of my four assumptions I want to point out that of the two remaining interviewees, one of them felt neutral about her job and the other was dissatisfied. While the factors contributing to their job satisfaction ratings were different for each of them, what they had in common was the nature of their jobs affected their

lower scores. The first individual, who felt neutral about her job, reported the significant amount of change going on in her organization as the key issue influencing her neutrality. Her company had been acquired and her department was trying to adapt to new processes and standards which were very different and she believed it was questionable whether the changes would be more effective. This affected how she felt about her job content and day to day work.

For the second individual, who was dissatisfied with his job, it was the lack of excitement, challenge and value-add he felt about his job content and day to day work that drove his dissatisfaction. He not only felt what he was doing was de-motivating, but also believed that the organization's leadership didn't recognize the value his deliverables could offer the organization.

For these two individuals there was a lack of alignment between what they both described as what was important about work in their lives and their current job situation. Essentially, factors important to them about work in their lives were missing from their jobs. Consistent with the theme described earlier, only inverted, it is reasonable to suggest that this lack of alignment may contribute to their lack of job satisfaction.

The themes described above summarize how the interviewees thought about and described their job satisfaction. I, however, set out four assumptions regarding what I thought would be revealed throughout these interviews about the three variables of interest in this study and their relationship with job satisfaction. These included authenticity, person-environment-fit and life satisfaction. Overall the results offered limited support for three of my four assumptions. In the remaining part of this chapter I

will share what I did find as it pertained to each assumption and discuss my thoughts and explanations for these results.

Assumption A: When individuals feel they can be their authentic selves in the workplace these feelings will be positively related to their feelings of job satisfaction.

The data revealed limited evidence that feeling authentic in the workplace was a contributing factor to job satisfaction feelings. The concept of expressing oneself in the workplace did not emerge as a common theme when individuals described why they were satisfied with their jobs. Interestingly, when asked if they could express their full identity at work, seven of the eight interviewees responded favorably to this question. This included interviewees who were satisfied, neutral and dissatisfied with their jobs. One interviewee responded neutral to this question. She explained that she wasn't a pretend person at work; however felt she had to be cautious regarding sharing her opinions with staff members since she was a visiting consultant to her work location. She went on to describe however, that she did not have these same cautious feelings when working with her direct clients, those she consulted with on a daily basis. This neutrality about expressing her full identity at work did not affect her job satisfaction. She still reported feeling satisfied with her job.

For the seven interviewees that responded favorably to the question, when discussing why they felt they could be their authentic selves in the workplace, several participants described feeling comfortable sharing the parts of themselves they wanted to. For example, some reported feeling they could choose comfortably how much of their personal side of life and extracurricular interests to share and they didn't feel they had to pretend to be something other than themselves when interacting with others.

One explanation of these findings could be that the ability to be your authentic self is a basic expectation of the work environment and may not surface as a primary factor driving job satisfaction. This expectation also may be gender, race, sexual identity or social-class specific. Since I did not have this demographic data on all interviewees, I could not reasonably explore this possibility. In any case when the ability to express oneself fully is not afforded within the work environment it could have a very different effect on job satisfaction. Several interview participants commented that it would be difficult to work for an organization where they were unable to be themselves. Herzberg's (1968) Motivation-Hygiene theory states that the factors that drive job satisfaction and motivation are separate from those that lead to job dissatisfaction. In this case, the ability to be authentic in the workplace may not be a driver of job satisfaction. However, if a person were not able to be authentic, it could be a factor driving job dissatisfaction.

Assumption B: When individuals perceive congruence between their personal values and those of their organization, supervisor and workgroup these feelings will be positively related to their feelings about expressing their authentic selves at work.

The data also provided limited evidence to support this assumption. As noted above, overall, interviewees felt they could be their authentic selves at work. There was no consistent pattern however demonstrating that values congruence at the organization, supervisor and/or workgroup levels, specifically, played a positive role in interviewees' feelings about authenticity. For example, some individuals felt their values with either their clients or peers were neither congruent nor incongruent yet those individuals still believed they could express their full identity in the workplace. Other individuals

described a positive congruence with their organization's values due to the way they operate their business with their clients or, in other cases, how they create a family friendly environment. These individuals also felt they could be authentic in their workplace. When describing why they felt they could be authentic, they referred to these same elements of their organization's values that enabled them to express themselves or operate comfortably in their job. Still other individuals simply felt comfortable expressing themselves in the workplace and made no connection to shared values as a contributing reason.

These findings are consistent with my earlier explanation that the ability to be your authentic self may be a basic expectation of the work environment. So, despite a congruence or incongruence of one's own values with values of others or with the organization, some individuals still feel comfortable expressing their full identity. This suggests the possibility that values congruence may be independent of comfort with expressing one's authentic self in the workplace.

Assumption C: When individuals perceive congruence between their personal values and those of their organization, supervisor and workgroup these feelings will be positively related to their feelings of job satisfaction.

The results were inconclusive for this assumption. There was no clear pattern that demonstrated a relationship between shared values with the organization, supervisor and workgroup and why individuals were satisfied with their jobs. The characteristics that people reported important to job satisfaction, discussed earlier, were relationships with co-workers and feeling recognized by those with whom they work. All of the six interviewees satisfied with their jobs perceived a favorable congruence of their own

values with those of their supervisor and clients. Five of six of them reported values congruent with those of their peers.

Despite these results, the interview results do not clearly indicate that liking your peers, clients and supervisor or feeling recognized by them, has any correlation to shared values. Although these same individuals perceived congruence between their own and their organization's values they did not make a clear connection that this congruence was relevant to their positive job satisfaction.

For the two interviewees who were not satisfied with their jobs, one individual felt neutral about her job satisfaction and the other individual was dissatisfied with his job. Their reasons for a lack of job satisfaction had nothing to do with a lack of values congruence with the organization or with others. In fact neither of these individuals perceived an incongruence of values with their organization, supervisor or workgroup.

In summary, individuals may believe they share their values with their organization and with others, but what that truly means to each person and the effect it has on the quality of their relationships, relevance to their job and thus their job satisfaction is unclear. Values are a highly complex topic. Despite providing a definition in the interview process, people likely interpreted the meaning of values differently and made choices about how to respond to congruence questions in unique ways. To further understand whether there is a relationship between values congruence and job satisfaction it would be important to understand the deep personal values of individuals and when and how those people perceive those values as relevant in their jobs and/or their workplace. Some personal values may never reveal themselves in the work environment and therefore the congruence of those becomes irrelevant. In addition the degree to which an

individual's job requires collaboration with others in the work environment reasonably may be expected to effect the importance of the relationship and the importance of sharing values. There is, then, an opportunity for further exploration regarding the types of personal values relevant to the workplace, their importance to an individual and their relevance to specific types of relationships and why. This data would provide the right platform for talking more precisely about how values congruence, or lack thereof, then relates to job satisfaction.

Assumption D: For those individuals who define work as important in their life, their job satisfaction will be an influencing factor in their overall life satisfaction.

I found support for this assumption, although the findings provide additional context requiring explanation. All interviewees rated work as very important in their lives. And, all interviewees responded positively about their overall life satisfaction. Regardless of whether individuals were satisfied (six people) with their job or not (two people), they still reported overall life satisfaction. What is interesting about these results is that five of the six individuals who were satisfied with their job referenced their job as a factor contributing to their positive life satisfaction. The sixth interviewee did not discuss his job as a contributing factor to his positive life satisfaction.

Of the remaining two individuals, the interviewee who was dissatisfied with his job reported job dissatisfaction as a deterring factor from his life satisfaction (even though at the time of the interview he still felt very satisfied with his life). The other interviewee who was neutral with her job also reported the desire for a better job situation as a condition that would improve her life (although she, too, felt very satisfied with her life at the time of the interview).

There are two important learnings from these results that are worth discussing as they add context to the job-life satisfaction relationship and my original assumption. First, job satisfaction is only one factor affecting life satisfaction. Across all eight interviews, individuals first discussed the importance of family, friends, health, pets, and material possessions as it pertained to their life satisfaction. For those individuals who did discuss their job as a factor, it was never the only or the most immediate influencing factor. So, while job satisfaction is a factor influencing life satisfaction, it does not appear to be the most important factor. In addition, based upon these findings, there is no evidence to suggest that job satisfaction causes life satisfaction.

The second learning is that none of the interviewees felt dissatisfaction with their job due to financial instability. Thus the impacts on life satisfaction when an individual feels troubled due to financial challenges are unknown based upon this study. In fact, a common theme when my interviewees explained the importance of work in their lives was the means of financial support it offered them and their families. Therefore my assumption and findings about the role job satisfaction plays in life satisfaction only can be applied to situations in which people feel financially stable.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

There is no one formula for determining job satisfaction. Based on the literature presented in Chapter 2 and through my interview methodology and findings presented in Chapters 3 and 4 it is clear that this is a complex topic with many contributing variables and alternative explanations.

Summary of Interview Findings and Learnings

Upon review of the literature on authenticity, person-environment fit and job and life satisfaction I set out an ambitious agenda for further exploration. I felt the assumptions I set forth however offered a holistic and untested approach to investigating job satisfaction. While I uncovered several interesting themes related to job satisfaction, none of them related to my four assumptions. In fact only one of my four assumptions, the influence of job satisfaction on life satisfaction, proved to reveal any conclusive results. As for the first three assumptions I learned that authenticity didn't appear to have a relationship with job satisfaction and that no obvious pattern existed to demonstrate that shared values was a factor in feeling authentic in the work environment. Nor was it clear whether shared values at the organization, supervisor and workgroup levels played a role in individuals' feelings about their job satisfaction.

I admit that I was surprised at these results. Based upon my personal experience my ability to be my authentic self in the workplace is highly dependent on my relationships with my colleagues and supervisors. Specifically, I feel I can more clearly express myself when I believe my values are in line with those with whom I am interacting. And, my ability to express myself in the workplace, whether that be through humor, frustration, sarcasm or in other ways, has a direct effect on how I feel about my

job. I was also surprised that there was no conclusive information about whether shared values played a role in job satisfaction. Once again, I would have expected to see values congruence directly influence positive relationships with others and positive feelings towards the organization, which together would have directly influenced job satisfaction. Nonetheless values and values congruence remain an important factor in my own work situation. I am cognizant of my own values, how they drive the way I behave and overall where and with whom I feel a strong alignment or misalignment of values. This alignment or misalignment can effect, positively or negatively, how I feel about my job on a daily, weekly, monthly or even longer term basis.

The fact is that respondents reported experiences that did not confirm my original assumptions. I can summarize what I did learn about job satisfaction from the interview analysis into two core areas. First, a key component driving job satisfaction appears to be the alignment of the characteristics that describe what work means to an individual in his or her life, with the characteristics of his or her job. This means to find satisfaction in a job an individual should first define what work means to him or herself within the context of life. Is it the challenge? The power? The helping others? The money? In a 2007 Harvard Business Review article (Erickson & Gratton, 2007), the importance of aligning what an employee cares most deeply about with his or her work situation was discussed. The article stated that in order for employers to successfully hire and retain employees they must understand the characteristics that define their work environment and therefore the type of employee who is likely to fit in. Clearly people work for different reasons. And, it makes sense that what an individual wants from work will impact his or her job satisfaction.

Second, I found what appear to be some common variables that positively impact job satisfaction for the people I interviewed. These include positive feelings about the nature of your job, positive feelings about relationships with others, feeling appreciated and valued for what you do and having job flexibility.

Future Research

Based upon these learnings there are a couple of points I would like to make as it pertains to my original assumptions and the literature.

First, while my assumptions regarding the relationship among authenticity, values congruence and job satisfaction proved inconclusive, that does not mean further investigation into these topics is not important. Since my interviewee sample was small I believe these topics are worth investigating with a larger audience not only to broaden the sample size, but also to balance those who are satisfied and dissatisfied with their jobs so that there can be more comparison of responses in these two different situations. In addition it will be important to narrow the interview questions to hone in on specific values and their relevance to individuals in the workplace and to job satisfaction. As noted in my results section specific values may be important under particular circumstances, unique to individuals and unique to particular relationships. It may also be important to explore different demographics in future analyses. Upon reflection, criteria such as size of company and number of employees may influence how important the variables under review are to job satisfaction. I also would expect to find differences in the relationships among these variables for people in white collar jobs versus non-white collar jobs.

Second, the continued investigation of these variables using qualitative studies is necessary. It is interesting to note that the person-environment fit literature I discussed in Chapter 2, were quantitative studies. Authors like Kristof-Brown et al., Verplanken, Cable and Edwards, Cable and DeRue, Ostroff et al., found statistically significant results between one or more person-environment fit variables and job satisfaction. These studies were all based upon questionnaires and quantitative analysis, not qualitative study. There is a difference in analysis when it comes to quantitative versus qualitative data. For the scope of this study and the future extension of this work I believe qualitative data will provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of these variables than data captured quantitatively.

Personal Learnings

When I set out to conduct the research and interviews for this paper I did not anticipate the kind of complexity I would find. The literature was not only robust, but also highly differentiated in the results. And, the qualitative interview process and analysis, while incredibly informative was equally overwhelming. The process of working on this capstone also impacted my personal learning. As someone who has struggled with finding and feeling satisfied with my jobs over the past eight years the interviews and the analysis were personally enlightening. In particular I was fascinated by one of the overall themes I found across the population of interviewees who were satisfied with their jobs. This was the alignment of the characteristics that describe what work means to an individual in his or her life, with the characteristics of his or her job. A personal action for me as a conclusion to this paper is to test this theory on myself to see where there is alignment or misalignment. Overall, while I would not change anything

about the journey I went through to finalize this paper, I certainly have learned a considerable amount about process and content that will influence any future work I do with interviews, research, qualitative analysis and thesis scope and definition.

REFERENCES

- Arthur, M.B., & Rousseau, D.M. (1996). Introduction: The boundaryless career as a new employment principle. In Arthur, M. & Rousseau, D. (Eds.) *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era* (pp. 3-20). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Baker, T., & Aldrich, H.E. (1996). Prometheus stretches: Building identity and cumulative knowledge in multiemployer careers. In Arthur, M. & Rousseau, D. (Eds.) *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era* (pp. 132-149). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cable, D.M., & DeRue, D.S. (2002). The convergent and discriminant validity of subjective fit perceptions. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(5), 875-884. DOI: 10.1037//0021-9010.87.5.875
- Chacko, T.I. (1983). Job and life satisfactions: A causal analysis of their relationships [Electronic Version]. *Academy of Management Journal, 26*(1), 163-169.
- Ciulla, J.B. (2000). *The working life: The promise and betrayal of modern work*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Cohen, B.N. (2003). Applying existential theory and intervention to career decision-making [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Career Development, 29*(3), 195-209.
- DeFillippi, R.J., & Arthur, M.B. (1996). Boundaryless contexts and careers: A competency-based perspective. In Arthur, M. & Rousseau, D. (Eds.) *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era* (pp. 116-131). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Derr, B. (1986). *Managing the new careerists: The diverse career success orientations of today's workers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Edwards, J.R., & Cable, D.M. (2009). The value of value congruence. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 94*(3), 654-677. DOI: 10.1037/a0014891
- Edrogan, B., Kraimer, M.L., & Liden, R.C. (2004). Work value congruence and intrinsic career success: The compensatory roles of leader-member exchange and perceived organization support [Electronic Version]. *Personnel Psychology, 57*(2), 305-322.
- Erickson, T.J., & Gratton, L. (2007). What it means to work here. *Harvard Business Review, March*. Retrieved from <http://www.hbsp.org>

- Judge, T.A., & Watanabe, S. (1993). Another look at the job satisfaction-life satisfaction relationship [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(6), 939-948.
- Kahn, W.A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work [Electronic Version]. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692-724).
- Kierkegaard, S. (1950). *The point of view*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kalliath, T.J., Bluedorn, A.C., Strube, M.J., (1999). A test of value congruence effects. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20, 1175–1198.
- Kristof-Brown, A.L., Zimmerman, R.D., & Johnson, E.C. (2005). Consequences of individuals' fit at work: A meta-analysis of person-job, person-organization, person-group, and person-supervisor fit [Electronic Version]. *Personnel Psychology*, 58(2), 281-342.
- Herzberg, F. (1968). One more time: How do you motivate employees [Electronic Version]? *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, 53-62.
- Ostroff, C., Shin, Y., & Kinicki, A.J. (2005). Multiple perspectives of congruence: Relationships between value congruence and employee attitudes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26, 591-623. DOI: 10.1002/job.333
- Quinn, R.E., (1988). *Beyond rational management: Mastering the paradoxes and competing demands of high performance*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Richards, D. (1995). *Artful work: Awakening joy, meaning, and commitment in the workplace*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Riggle, R.J., Edmondson, D.R. & Hansen, J.D. (2009). A meta-analysis of the relationship between perceived organizational support and job outcomes: 20 years of research [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 1027-1030.
- Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York, NY. The Free Press.
- Sullivan, S.E. & Mainiero, L.A. (2007). Kaleidoscope careers: Benchmarking ideas for fostering family-friendly workplaces. *Organizational Dynamics*, 36(1), 45-62. doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2006.12.003
- Verplanken, B. (2004). Value congruence and job satisfaction among nurses: A human relations perspective. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, (41), 599-605. doi:10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2003.12.011

Wilensky, H.L. (1960). Work, careers, and social integration. *International Social Science Journal*, 12, 543-560.

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your career field. Why did you choose this career field?
2. Tell me about your current job. Why did you choose this job?
3. How would you describe the role of work in your life? What is important/not important to you?
4. On a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 is not important and 5 is extremely important, how important would you say work is to you in your life right now? Please explain.
5. On a scale of 1- 5 where 1 is not important and 5 is extremely important, to what extent would you say the nature of the work your organization does (i.e. its products/services) is important to you? Please explain.
6. On a scale of 1- 5 where 1 is not important and 5 is extremely important, to what extent would you say the nature of the what you do in your job is important to you? Please explain.
7. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not at all consistent and 5 is very consistent to what extent do you believe that your organization's values are consistent with your own? Please explain.
8. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not very much and 5 is very much how much would you say people in each of the following groups value who are and what you contribute: peers, supervisor, clients? Please explain.
9. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not at all consistent and 5 is very consistent to what extent do you believe your values are consistent with the following groups: peers, supervisor, clients? Please explain.
10. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not at all and 5 is completely to what extent do you believe you can express your full identity at work? Please explain.
11. Overall on a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 is not satisfied and 5 is extremely satisfied, how satisfied would you say with your job right now? Please explain.
12. Overall on a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 is not satisfied and 5 is extremely satisfied, how satisfied would you say with your life right now? Please explain.

APPENDIX B

Definitions

Definition of Values:

“A value is an enduring belief that influences a desired specific behavior (s) or end-state of being. This belief goes beyond attitudes toward objects and toward situations, it is a standard that guides and determines action, attitudes toward objects and situations, principles, presentations of self to others, evaluations, judgments, justifications, comparisons of self with others and attempts to influence others.” (Rokeach, 1973, p.25).

Definition of Authenticity:

“Authenticity describes being genuine and true to oneself, knowing one’s strengths and limitations, and acting on the best information at the time. The need for authenticity is the quest to discover one’s true voice” (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007, p. 48)