Technology’s Effect on Job Satisfaction as a Function of Self-Respect

Carlos Vigil

Southern Connecticut State University

Abstract

Computers, the Internet, and the culmination of both as the smartphone have brought on profound changes in society and cultures around the world. Using methodology from the study of organizational behavior (OB) we observe the negative business implications of smartphone use. Additionally, this requires various perspectives in order to develop a clearer understanding: a wavering unemployment rate (Canterbery, 2011), caused by a recession and the technology industry displacing workers (Davis, D., & Rubin, B., 2016; Rubin, 2014); the cultural practices of smartphone use (Derks & Bakker, 2014); and, a per-organization consideration. A primary concern of the business case is employees working after-hours, during times of rest. Exploring solutions to the problems soon presented can promote a more positive view of technology and its role in the workplace.

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Modern day employees who are technologically savvy, feel pressured to work after-hours and on vacation through the use of computers (Derks, D., Duin, D., Tims, M., & Bakker, A. B., 2015). To an extent this leads employees to not take vacations and recharge properly. The workloads off-the-clock employees might accumulate, also create a concern.

The potentially unappreciated benefits of vacationing are listed in Dr. Wednesday Martin's article "Gone Fishin': Why You Can't Afford to Skip Another Vacation": increased immune function, reduced risk of disease, and lower suicide rates. Each of these problems has a respective cause.

**The Cause**

A possible cause of employees working past the time they clock-out relates to the person, the group, and the organization OB levels: a lower than ideal sense of security and satisfaction (Derks, et. al, 2015). This topic is discussed in Randy Hodson's *Dignity at Work*,

dignity is the ability to establish a sense of self-worth and self-respect and to appreciate the respect of others... In the workplace, dignity is realized through countless small acts of resistance against abuse and an equally strong drive to take pride in one’s daily work. (2001, p.3)

If sending work related email to coworkers on vacation can be considered abuse, we can explore another host of issues concerning efforts for a more conscientious and empathic group culture. Isolating the issue on the person factors, this drive for pride can be assumed to provide workers with job satisfaction. This can be perceived as a profitable behavior and counter-intuitive to the arguments, but, contrasted to the benefits of not working, management should reconsider. A lack of self-respect, or self-worth, could lead to an employee valuing their work output more than their health and relaxation during time-off (Hodson, 2001). Constantly checking for signs of being needed at work, or complying with the real need could stem from a fear of losing one’s position in a company as Maura Thomas restates in the article for *Harvard Business Review*, "Vacation Policy in Corporate America Is Broken".

Regardless of how passionate and committed, or fearful, a team member presents themselves, the benefit of disconnecting from the workplace and clearing their headspace can help the organization as a whole.

**The Solution**

One possible solution to this issue is increasing employee job satisfaction through the use of company policies that emphasize job security and the value of vacationing, alleviating the person and situational factors that are making employees work more than they should.

A policy should assure employees that their position will remain theirs if a vacation is scheduled and accepted, and, that their workload will be manageable after their return. Another policy would help in communicating the value of time-off, extracting value from vacations (Thomas, 2015).

Employees should feel that their work will be either taken care of on their time off, or that the load will not accumulate beyond a manageable threshold. Also, having employees offload some of their individual processes and instructing those who would be in their need could help ease the transition stages out of and back into work.

**Conclusion**

Overall, in attempting to solve the issues of working smartphone use after-work with the use of organizational behavior it is revealed that OB levels and factors are intertwined in complex ways. Following any one path can be helpful, but the greater challenge and reward is to observe all the connections and sources of an organizational issue.

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