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## THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK GOALS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract.** The paper probes into the basic question of what individuals seek from working. Results from a representative sample of the labor force in seven countries ( $n=8192$ ) showed that the two most dominant work goals are “interesting work” and “good pay.” These were consistent internationally, across different organizational levels, between the genders and among different age categories.

That the role of work in one's life is of enormous importance throughout the industrialized world is demonstrated by the sheer amount of time that people commit to work, by the social and economic consequences of work to organizations and society, and by the efforts of individuals and groups to restructure their jobs and the institutions that employ them [MOW 1987]. An empirical investigation of the sort of goals sought by individuals from work may shed light on the fundamental question of why people work. The vast literature relevant to the operationalization of work goals covers the subjects of job satisfaction, work values, work needs, and incentive preference. Herzberg et al. [1959] reviewed sixteen studies in which employees were asked to rate in terms of importance various facets of work. The samples in these studies varied markedly although there was some dissimilarity in terms of the sets of job facets investigated and the particular types of ratings or rankings employed. On the basis of the results of the sixteen studies, Herzberg and his colleagues drew a detailed composite of the ranking of the importance of fourteen job facets. The ranking had been provided by 11,000 workers, who were heterogeneous in education, sex, occupation, and level of skill, among other things. These facets consisted

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of the following items: security, interest, opportunity for advancement, appreciation, company management, intrinsic aspects of job, wages, supervision, social aspects of the job, working conditions, communication, hours, ease (from intrinsic aspects of the job), and benefits.

Several years later, Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist [1964] constructed the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ), which was designed to measure twenty vocationally relevant need dimensions (to accompany the MSQ). Referring to specific reinforcing conditions found to be important to job satisfaction, these needs are: ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, authority, company policies and practices, compensation, coworkers, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, security, social service, social status, supervision-human relations, supervision-technical, variety, and working conditions.

Data collected by Porter [1964] from over 1,900 managers sampled, showed that the high-order needs (social, esteem, autonomy and self-realization) are the most important. Managers were found to be most satisfied with the lower-order needs (security, pay). It follows that these should be the least important; however, other data suggest that pay and certain lower-level needs are rated as being more important by workers than by managers [Porter and Lawler, 1965].

Lawler [1971] reviewed forty-three studies that rated pay importance, and found that its average ranking was third. Quinn [1971] found that the importance ratings of twenty-three job facets (including twelve of the fourteen ranked by Herzberg et al.) provided by a national probability sample of 1,533 American workers indicated that no single facet was preeminently important. According to the mean scores on five summary indices, the most important general aspect of the workers' jobs was having sufficient resources to perform adequately. This was followed, in order of decreasing importance, by receiving adequate financial rewards; doing challenging, self-enriching work; having pleasant coworkers; and having an undemanding job. Vroom [1964] established a connection between how important employees say job facets are, and how much job facets influence overall job satisfaction. Pay satisfaction with supervision seems to have a particularly strong influence on overall satisfaction for most people [Lawler 1973].

Most studies comparing occupational groups have shown systematic differences in the importance rating of various job facets [Friedlander 1965; Hinrichs 1968; Hofstede 1972]. Substantial agreement among diverse employee groups has also been found [Ronan 1970; Stracevich 1972]. Occupation seems to be an important predictor of an employee's intent to stay with an organization [Kraut and Ronen 1975].

Since Haire, Ghiselli and Porter's [1964] study of national differences in managerial thinking, a flurry of cross-national comparative studies have focused on work goals, values, and attitudes (e.g., England [1978]; Hofstede [1976]; Kelley and Worthley [1981]; Kraut [1975]; Ronen and Shenkar [1985]). For example, both Haire et al. [1966] and Sirota and Greenwood

[1971] found similarities in the order of the importance of job facets among different nationalities. Kraut and Ronen [1975] also concluded that relatively little difference exists in the importance of various job facets from country to country. Bigoness and Hofstede [1987], who collected data on work goals from thirteen national groupings at two points in time, fourteen years apart, showed that the importance rankings of ten work goals remained highly similar over the interval. Both samples listed job challenge, job freedom, good relations with one's superior, and advancement opportunities as the four most important work goals.

Against these works, other studies have reported divergence and national differences among work goals. Bass and Eldridge [1979] found that successful managers in Denmark emphasized societal concerns in decision-making, whereas successful American, British, and German managers strongly valued a profit motive. Hofstede [1980], surveying a multinational company's employees in forty countries, reported significant national difference across four dimensions of culture. These were labeled power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. British managers, according to Kannungo and Wright [1983], placed much greater importance on individual achievement and autonomy than did French managers. The French valued competent supervision, sound company policies, fringe benefits, security and comfortable working conditions. Dowling and Nagel [1986] found that Australian business majors placed great emphasis on extrinsic values, whereas their American counterparts stressed self-fulfillment, responsibility and other intrinsic factors. Regarding sex differences, results apparently support the frequently quoted generalization that women are more oriented than men to the interpersonal aspects of their jobs [Centers and Bugental 1966; Hardin et al. 1951; Herzberg et al. 1957; Kilpatrick et al. 1964].

The literature on work goals or work aspects is, as mentioned, voluminous, and covers such topics as work values, work needs, work outcomes, job satisfaction, and reward preference. Most of these studies have identified elements or facets that are important to the individual, such as expressive, instrumental, ameliorative, and comfort goals [Herzberg et al. 1959; Lock 1976; Quinn 1971; and Weiss et al. 1964]. It also seems that the importance or preference allotted to a work goal is considered a function of its centrality, prominence and importance in relation to other work goals. The present study, which adds to this literature, is unique in its variety and comparison of countries, in its sample size, and in the cross-section of populations employed. The information on the work goals of workers in different countries may shed some light on the basic question of what aspects of work are more esteemed by people. This information may also be used to indicate why some work situations are attractive while others are repulsive.

### PROCEDURE

The data analyzed in this paper form part of a larger, multinational, comparative project on the meaning of working (MOW). All aspects of the project,

such as objectives formation, analytical framework, conceptualization, and strategies for data analysis, were conducted collectively by the research team. The scope of the present paper is too limited to allow for an elaborate account of the development and theoretical conceptualization of the project. For a detailed description of the MOW research design, instrumentation, procedures and so on, the reader can refer to MOW International Research Team [MOW 1987]. The data were collected between 1981 and 1983 from random samples of the labor force in each of the following countries: Belgium, Great Britain, West Germany, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands and the United States. Respondents ( $N=8,192$ ) selected by various random methods (stepwise random selection according to random household identification, random choice among those who fell within prescribed categories, and random quota sampling) were interviewed individually by professional interviewers from national opinion survey agencies or by other highly trained interviewers. Comparisons with census data in each country show a high degree of representativeness in the samples [MOW 1987]. Distribution of the five major industries/professions in each country are presented in Table 1. These were: (a) professionals (teachers, engineers, all professional, technical and other related workers); (b) administrative and management; (c) clerical and related workers; (d) services (sales workers, wholesale/retail trade, catering and lodging services, and other services); (e) production (construction, equipment operators, tool-makers, machine-tool operators, blacksmiths, spinners, weavers, etc., agriculture, and other production-related workers).

Participants in the present study received an elaborate questionnaire, among whose items were included eleven facets of work or work goals whose importance had to be evaluated. All but one of these facets—the exception was variety—were similar to those employed by Quinn [1971], and most were similar to the facets reported by Herzberg et al. [1957]. A procedure for measuring the importance of work goals was adopted following experimentation with several formats in each country (except for Great Britain). In the pilot study, the questionnaires were evaluated with respect to their applicability for the populations in question, their reliability, and other required

**TABLE 1**  
**Distribution of Major Industrial/Professional Categories**  
**Participating in the Study (in percentages)\***

Type of Work	Belgium <i>n</i> =450	Germany <i>n</i> =1278	Israel <i>n</i> =973	Japan <i>n</i> =3226	Netherlands <i>n</i> =996	U.S.A. <i>n</i> =1000
Professionals	18.0	0.9	18.1	16.8	23.3	25.6
Administrative & Management	5.6	20.0	6.2	11.6	13.1	14.7
Clerical	15.1	29.3	21.0	21.8	18.8	16.7
Services	23.8	12.9	18.0	33.8	14.2	21.1
Production	31.3	32.1	18.6	10.5	29.8	16.8
Other	6.2	4.8	18.1	5.5	0.8	5.1

\*Data in this category was missing in Britain.

or desired properties. Items difficult to understand because of language or other difficulties, were changed and adaptations implemented (MOW 1987). Respondents were presented with the following question:

What about the nature of your working life? How important to you is it that your work life contains the following:

- A - A lot of opportunity to *learn* new things
- B - Good *interpersonal relations* (supervisors, co-workers)
- C - Good opportunity for upgrading or *promotion*
- D - *Convenient* work hours
- E - A lot of *variety*
- F - *Interesting* work (work that you really like)
- G - Good *job security*
- H - A good *match* between your job requirements and your abilities and experience
- I - Good *pay*
- J - Good physical working *conditions* (such as light, temperature, cleanliness, low noise level)
- K - A lot of *autonomy* (you decide how to do your work)

All eleven items were to be ranked, in order, from the most important item to the least important.

The importance of certain work goals will be evaluated here among three organizational levels in each country—employees, supervisors, and managers. In addition, differences in two subcategories will be explored: (a) between men and women; (b) among three age categories: 30 and under, 30-50, and 50 and over. Except for the data on the relative importance of work goals in each country, none of the results presented in this paper have been published previously.

### THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF WORK GOALS

Each work goal was considered separately to determine its relative importance. The basic data for the analysis consists of the mean rank in each country for each of the eleven work goals (see Table 2).

The paramount work goal by a wide margin is that of “interesting work.” Respondents in four countries ranked this goal as the most important aspect of their work lives (Belgium, Britain, Israel and the U.S.); those in the remaining three countries ranked it second or third (Japan, the Netherlands and West Germany). A similar trend was generally revealed when type of work and educational level were controlled for. Only in Germany and Israel significant differences were found regarding type of work and only in Britain, Israel and the U.S. regarding educational level. The goals of “good pay” and “good interpersonal relations” followed in order. As shown in Table 2, the mean rank for “good pay” ranged from a high of 7.80 in Britain to a low of 6.27 in the Netherlands. The range for “good interpersonal relations”

was from a high of 7.19 in the Netherlands to a low of 6.08 in the United States.

Next in respective order came the three work goals of "good job security," "a good match between you and your job," and "a lot of autonomy." These showed large differences between countries, the mean ranks ranging upward from 4.69 to 7.83.

A "lot of opportunity to learn new things" and "a lot of variety" followed, and the ranking of these items, too, varied considerably among the seven countries. Next in line were "convenient work hours" and "good physical working conditions." The major difference with these two was that British workers rated the former considerably more important than did workers in the other countries.

"Opportunity for upgrading or promotion" was insignificant by a wide margin among this set of work goals. It consistently ranked tenth or eleventh in all countries except Israel, where it ranked eighth in order of importance.

#### **WORK GOALS ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS**

In order to consider work goals from an organizational perspective, respondents were divided into three organizational levels: employees, supervisors, and managers. Germany was omitted from this analysis, since relevant data were unavailable. Results for the analysis by organizational level are presented in Table 3.

"Interesting work" was revealed to be the single most important work goal, its importance cutting across all levels and all countries. (Slight variations were observed for Dutch and Japanese managers, who ranked this goal fourth and second, respectively.)

"Good pay" was ranked second by employees and supervisors in all countries. Managers, however, ranked it only fifth in importance. A consistent trend regarding pay was observed across all participating countries: this goal assumes increasing importance as one moves down the organizational level. Thus for employees, it is obviously a much more important goal than it is for managers.

Another highly rated work goal was "good interpersonal relations," which ranked second among managers, third among employees, and fourth among supervisors. In the Netherlands, this item was ranked first overall among employees and second among managers. Israel ranked this goal second at all organizational levels. As a nation, the United States deviated from the rest of the countries in regard to this item, which received only seventh place in the national sample (although U.S. employees ranked it in sixth place).

The next item in general importance, "a match between job requirements and one's abilities," was basically evaluated more by the higher organizational

**TABLE 2**  
**Mean Ranks and Intra-Country Ranking of Work Goals**

Work Goals	Belgium	Britain	Germany	Israel	Japan	Netherlands	U.S.A.
Opportunity to Learn	5.80* 7 **	5.55 8	4.97 9	5.83 5	6.26 7	5.38 9	6.16 5
Interpersonal Relations	6.34 5	6.33 4	6.43 4	6.67 2	6.39 6	7.19 3	6.08 7
Opportunity for Promotion	4.49 10	4.27 11	4.48 10	5.29 8	3.33 11	3.31 11	5.08 10
Convenient Work Hours	4.71 9	6.11 5	5.71 6	5.53 7	5.46 8	5.59 8	5.25 9
Variety	5.96 6	5.62 7	5.71 6	4.89 11	5.05 9	6.86 4	6.10 6
Interesting Work	8.25 1	8.02 1	7.26 3	6.75 1	7.38 2	7.59 2	7.41 1
Job Security	6.80 3	7.12 3	7.57 2	5.22 10	6.71 4	5.68 7	6.30 3
Match between Person & Job	5.77 8	5.63 6	6.09 5	5.61 6	7.83 1	6.17 6	6.19 4
Pay	7.13 2	7.80 2	7.73 1	6.60 3	6.56 5	6.27 5	6.82 2
Working Conditions	4.19 11	4.87 9	4.39 11	5.28 9	4.18 10	5.03 10	4.84 11
Autonomy	6.56 4	4.69 10	5.66 8	6.00 4	6.89 3	7.61 1	5.79 8

\*Mean ranks are shown in the upper left corner of each cell.

\*\*The rank of each work goals within a given country is shown in the lower right corner of each cell. Rank 1 is the most important work goal for a country, and rank 11 is the least important.

**TABLE 3**  
**Mean Ranks and Intra-Country Ranking of Work Goals by Organizational Levels**

Country and Organizational Level <sup>(1)</sup>	N	Opportunity			Convenient			Match			Physical Working Conditions	A Lot of Autonomy
		to Learn	Good Interpersonal Relations	for Up-grading & Promotion	Work Hours	Variety	Interesting Work	Job Security	Person & Job	Good Pay		
<i>Belgium</i>												
Employee	(N=267)	6.18 <sup>2</sup>	6.94	4.70	5.27	6.41	8.85	7.40	5.78	8.09	4.60	6.95
		7 <sup>3</sup>	5	10	9	6	1	3	8	2	11	4
Supervisor	(N=118)	6.00	6.17	4.80	5.21	5.86	8.28	6.68	6.05	6.96	4.28	6.52
		7	5	10	9	8	1	3	6	2	11	4
Manager	(N=62)	6.84	8.47	6.10	4.43	5.90	9.97	7.26	8.03	7.85	5.29	8.05
		7	2	8	11	9	1	6	4	5	10	3
<i>Britain</i>												
Employee	(N=496)	5.98	6.78	4.91	7.09	6.07	8.47	7.69	6.00	8.51	5.78	4.84
		8	5	10	4	6	1	3	7	2	9	11
Supervisor	(N=140)	6.01	6.91	4.86	5.86	5.75	8.46	7.86	6.23	7.68	4.69	5.56
		6	4	10	7	8	1	2	5	3	11	9
Manager	(N=97)	6.33	5.87	4.63	5.06	6.04	8.42	6.90	6.42	7.85	3.57	6.64
		6	8	10	9	7	1	3	5	2	11	4
<i>Israel</i>												
Employee	(N=433)	7.71	8.64	7.36	8.23	7.15	8.50	7.59	7.61	8.66	7.74	7.93
		7	2	10	4	11	3	9	8	1	6	5
Supervisor	(N=298)	8.29	8.59	7.61	7.44	7.42	8.89	7.43	8.16	8.41	7.26	8.27
		4	2	7	9	10	1	8	6	3	11	5
Manager	(N=171)	7.86	8.61	7.32	7.09	7.25	8.71	7.59	8.06	8.31	7.27	8.47
		6	2	8	11	10	1	7	5	4	9	3
<i>Japan</i>												
Employee	(N=2084)	10.30	10.52	9.13	9.41	10.00	10.69	10.14	10.49	10.30	9.74	10.03
		4	3	11	10	8	1	6	2	5	9	7
Supervisor	(N=276)	7.69	8.28	7.85	8.13	7.88	9.35	8.60	9.51	8.69	7.41	7.92
		10	5	9	6	8	2	4	1	3	11	7
Manager	(N=841)	9.49	10.03	9.29	9.00	9.98	10.03	9.68	10.04	9.95	9.28	9.82
		8	3	9	11	4	2	7	7	5	10	6



echelons, particularly Japanese managers and supervisors, who ranked it in first place. In contrast, the item was rated only of medium importance in the Netherlands and Belgium.

The facet of "autonomy" at work placed fifth in the overall ranking. A clear trend could be observed here. The item was very important for managers, less so for supervisors, and least for employees in all of the countries. It was ranked particularly high among Dutch managers and supervisors, who assigned it first and second place, respectively; among American managers, it ranked second in importance.

"Convenient work hours" and "opportunity for upgrading and promotion" were the least important work goals for most respondents, regardless of organizational level.

### **GENDER DIFFERENCES IN WORK GOALS**

The results of the analysis of work goals according to gender and organizational level are presented in Table 4.

"Interesting work" emerged as the leading work goal, without exception, for both sexes and at all organizational levels. "Good pay" received a higher overall ranking among men than among women. It ranked as the second most important work goal among male employees and supervisors, and only third and seventh, respectively, among female employees and supervisors. At the managerial level, this facet was of equal importance for both sexes. The observed trend was that pay assumed decreasing importance as a person advanced in the organizational hierarchy. Even so, this item was much more important for men than for women at every level.

"Good interpersonal relations" received an overall ranking of second in importance among women, although female managers ranked it third. It was, however, of only average importance to male supervisors and managers. "Good match between job requirements and one's abilities" revealed itself to be significantly more important for women than for men. For both sexes, a clear trend obtained: the item assumed growing importance with ascent in organizational level. Only small differences between the sexes were demonstrated with regard to "job security." Overall and at each level, this item was slightly more important for the male population, which tended to assign it more value the lower down in the hierarchy a man was. "A lot of autonomy" was significantly more important for men than for women at each organizational level. With both genders, it was of greater importance for persons occupying higher organizational positions. Finally, the female population found the facet of "convenient work hours" significantly more important, imparting to it greater importance with every advance in organizational level; whereas for men, the reverse was true.

### **AGE DIFFERENCES IN WORK GOALS**

Table 5 displays the relative importance of work goals according to age categories.

**TABLE 4**  
**Ranking of Work Goals by Gender and Organizational Level**

Work Goals	Male				Female			Total		t value
	Employee (N=2414)	Supervisor (N=935)	Manager (N=1224)	Manager (N=242)	Employee (N=2089)	Supervisor (N=405)	Manager (N=242)	Male (N=4573)	Female (N=2736)	
Opportunity to Learn	8	3	7	7	5	4	7	7.83@	8.33	-2.97**
Interpersonal Relations	3	6	5	3	2	2	3	8.37	8.91	-2.56**
Opportunity for Promotion	11	9	9	11	11	11	11	6.97	6.74	
Convenient Work Hours	9	10	11	5	8	6	5	7.25	8.08	-2.68**
Variety	6	8	6	6	7	9	6	8.06	8.07	
Interesting Work	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9.01	9.41	-2.27*
Job Security	4	7	8	9	5	8	9	8.23	8.17	
Match between Person & Job	7	5	4	2	4	3	2	8.16	8.43	-2.44*
Pay	2	2	3	3	3	7	3	8.76	8.47	
Working Conditions	10	11	10	10	10	10	10	7.18	7.61	-2.30*
Autonomy	5	4	2	4	9	5	4	8.34	7.95	-2.28*

Note: Mean ranks are shown in the upper left corner of each cell. Rank 1 is the *most* important work goal for a gender, and rank 11 is the *least* important.  
\*= $P < .05$ ; \*\*= $P > .01$

“Interesting work” was the most salient goal across all age categories. A slight deviation was observed for employees and managers in the oldest age group (50 and over), among whom this item ranked third and eighth, respectively.

“Good pay” was the second most important work goal in every age category, although it was generally of less importance for managers (apart from those aged 50 and over) and more important for employees of all ages. With respect to “good interpersonal relations,” the youngest and oldest age groups ranked it third overall and the middle age category (30 to 50) fifth. This aspect was of particular importance for employees and managers in the age category of 50 and over, who ranked it in first place.

“Good match between job requirements and one’s abilities” was considered more important by the middle age category than by the two other age groups. At the supervisory level, persons aged 50 and over tended to assign it greatest importance, and those 30 years of age and under least importance. “A lot of autonomy” was most important for young respondents, and least important for the oldest. Analyzed by organizational level, the importance of this facet increased among employees and managers the younger they were. Finally, “job security” was held to be of more importance for older respondents, while “opportunity to learn” was considered to be more important for the younger workers.

## DISCUSSION

“Interesting work” was by far the most preeminent work goal identified in this study. With slight variations, it appears as the most salient facet among all participating countries. Following closely behind in overall ranking was “good pay,” an indication of this item’s worldwide importance for workers. The predominance of both these work dimensions suggest that the typical orientation of people toward their work may be quite complex. What is revealed is a picture of workers who are neither exclusively expressive nor completely instrumental in their attitudes, but highly concerned with both aspects of work. This intricate, compound image of the worker gained from our multinational sample compares with findings of earlier studies, such as those by Herzberg et al. [1957] and by Quinn [1971] (who found that “interesting work” ranked first and that “good pay” came fairly close behind although not in second place).

The dominant place of “interesting work” in the lives of workers receives further testimony in an analysis of our sample by organizational level. With only minor exceptions, this facet was ranked first—the most important work goal—at every organizational level in all participating countries. A similar trend characterizes the facet of “good pay” although managers ranked this item as having only moderate importance. Apparently managers who enjoy higher pay probably perceive this work facet to be less important than do their subordinates and, consequently, rank it lower. Lawler [1971] reported a similar trend for managers, and also cited other studies with comparable

**TABLE 5**  
**Ranking of Work Goals by Age and Organizational Levels**

Work Goals	30 Years and Under			31-50 Years			Over 50 Years			Total Years			F Value			
	Employee	Super-visor	Manager	Employee	Super-visor	Manager	Employee	Super-visor	Manager	30 & Under	31-50	Over 50				
	N=1435	N=311	N=151	N=1896	N=671	N=796	N=651	N=216	N=418	N=2326	N=3987	N=1596				
Opportunity to Learn	5	3	7	7	8	6	8	5	7	7.23	5	8.07	9	8.53	10	5.44*
Inter-personal Relations	2	2	4	4	5	4	1	3	1	7.75	3	8.53	5	9.70	3	14.81***
Opportunity for Promotion	11	9	5	11	11	9	11	11	11	6.01	11	7.10	11	8.17	11	10.67***
Convenient Work Hours	9	10	9	9	9	11	10	9	10	6.81	9	7.70	9	8.73	9	10.55***
Variety	7	7	3	8	7	5	7	8	3	7.10	7	8.19	7	8.99	6	10.15**
Interesting Work	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	8	8.39	1	9.27	1	10.19	1	6.35*
Job Security	8	8	8	3	6	8	6	7	4	7.09	8	8.64	3	9.57	4	20.84***
Match between Person & Job	6	6	10	5	4	2	5	2	6	7.11	6	8.57	4	9.11	5	16.97***
Pay	3	4	6	2	3	7	2	4	2	7.79	2	8.85	2	10.02	2	16.69***
Working Conditions	10	11	11	10	10	10	4	10	9	6.03	10	7.44	10	8.80	8	19.19***
Autonomy	4	5	2	6	2	3	9	6	5	7.25	4	8.50	6	9.96	7	11.83***

Note: Mean rank are shown in the upper left corner of each column. Rank 1 is the most important work goal, while rank 11 is the least important.

\*= $P < .01$ ; \*\*= $P < .001$ ; \*\*\*= $P < .0001$

results. He concluded that distinctions in the eminence of pay at different organizational levels may stem from job factors, such as pay level and other rewards related to higher-level positions.

Two work goals that were of particular importance to managers, but of consistently less importance to respondents at the lower organizational levels, were "work autonomy" and "match between job requirements and one's abilities." These findings, too, are in line with what the traditional management literature asserts are important work factors among managers [Huse 1979; Mintzberg 1973].

When it comes to sex, men and women reveal both similarities and differences in their work-goal rankings. Both sexes place the highest value on "interesting work" and "good pay" and regard "good physical working conditions" and "good opportunity for upgrading and promotion" as nonessential. The sexes exhibit major differences in their ranking of "opportunity to learn," "convenient work hours," "match between one's abilities and requirements," and "a lot of autonomy." The first three of these items proved of substantially greater importance for women than for men, while the reverse was true for the last work goal. Again, these general patterns are similar to those that have been reported in the literature; but it should be kept in mind that differences in age, sex, and occupation are probably somewhat confounded both in this presentation and in the reports of many other studies. Some of the explanations for the principal difference here can be related to men's and women's differing orientation to work as a life role. It has been suggested that their socialization to sex roles causes women to regard work as being less central to their lives [Saleh and Lalljee 1969; Ritzer 1972; Saal 1978]. Further, as Presser and Baldwin [1980] have argued, working women may experience a role conflict between their expected role as homemaker and their role as a full-time, career-oriented worker.

Contrary to the contention of some writers, when the effects of such correlates as job level are removed, sex differences in work orientation disappear [Kannungo 1982; Rabinowitz 1975], the present study found that some of the variance between the sexes persists at different organizational levels. Thus "good job security" and "autonomy" are more important for male workers than for women at every organizational level. "Good pay" is more important for male employees and male supervisors; but no significant difference is exhibited at the managerial level. Women, for their part, attribute greater importance than do males on every organizational level to the work goals of "convenient work hours," "match between requirements and abilities," and "interpersonal relations." Regarding the last item, earlier findings have tended generally to support the view that women are more oriented to the interpersonal facets of their jobs [Centers and Bugental 1966; Hardin et al. 1951; Herzberg et al. 1957; Kilpatrick et al. 1964].

The findings point both to similarity in the work-goal rankings made by three age groups and to systematic age effects. Once again, "interesting

work” and “good pay” are preeminent, the first of these facets clearly being the most important for all age categories and at every organizational level. Two major trends emerged when the analysis was carried out by organizational level. On the one hand, young respondents value “autonomy” and “opportunity to learn” more than do their older counterparts. This finding is consistent with reports about the particular interest that young people manifest in expressive goals [Kerr 1979; Yankelovich 1979]. On the other hand, the higher ranking of “job security” by the older age groups (50 years and up) may be an indication of the greater impact that actual and potential unemployment has had for these groups in many industrialized countries in recent years. In sum, overall differences between age groups in the relative importance of work goals are generally moderate in magnitude; nevertheless, the value attached to specific goals does seem to be related to age.

### IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The major findings emerging from this study on work goals in seven countries have some practical implications. The emphasis that workers place on interesting work points to an expressive or intrinsic orientation. Thus, having the opportunity to be employed in a work context that facilitates such aspects may be constructive to those who esteem or have a high need to attain expressive or intrinsic goals. Moreover, when work is interesting and challenging, people are inspired to perform more than is obligated to warrant their instrumental attainments. They exert additional effort in order to experience a sense of fulfilling their potential and accomplishing worthwhile ends. (Among the various studies that have shown the motivational effects of jobs with expressive dimensions, see Herzberg et al. [1959]; Hackman and Oldham [1975].) The subsistence of such job factors affects the psychological state of workers and may influence their affective reactions toward the job. This, in turn, may ultimately affect one’s work motivation and consequently, one’s job performance. Intrinsically motivated employees are concerned with the expressive aspects of work (i.e., interesting work, autonomy, advancement), not necessarily for the purpose of securing more financial rewards, but because these very rewards are associated with intrinsically motivating jobs.

Employees whose expressive-oriented work behavior is constantly strengthened are more likely to remain in the organization as productive workers to a longer degree than are those who have high expressive needs but are not continuously challenged in their work situations. When expressive needs are not gratified over a period of time, employees may cultivate negative attitudes, which may result in inexpedient behavior. A review of the literature on the consequences of dissatisfaction led to a classification of effects on three different levels: individual, organizational, and societal [Harpaz 1983]. At the individual level, such factors as frustration, aggression, counter-productive behavior (i.e., sabotage), drug use, withdrawal

from the labor force, physical ill health, and life dissatisfaction are associated with work dissatisfaction. At the organizational level, the factors include turnover, absenteeism, grievances, and low performance; the outcome for the organization may be higher costs, low productivity, poor product quality, and in many instances probably a business failure. Finally, on the societal level, dissatisfaction with work may cause a burden upon society and its resources, effect the underutilization of human resources, lead to low national productivity, bring about the high cost of goods and services, and restrict political activity. Therefore, making jobs more interesting and challenging for those seeking such positions is not only crucial for satisfying workers needs; it is requisite for maintaining productive organizations.

In order for organizations to benefit more from expressive-oriented employees, as well as to instill high motivation among them, various practical measures should be considered. These should mostly focus on diversified methods of structuring, designing, or redesigning tasks, jobs, and work settings in such a way so as to allow meeting expressive needs. Among the methods that may be employed are various approaches to job design, job enrichment, job enlargement, condensed work week, flexitime, participative work methods (i.e., industrial democracy), and goal-setting responsibilities. It is, though, beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate and assess available approaches for enhancing or creating expressive work systems.

The role of pay or income as another major work outcome desired by workers has immediate implications for organizational decisionmakers. Pay is a powerful motivator that can satisfy various subsistence as well as higher-order needs. Discontentment with pay, on the other hand, may lead to a series of negative or dysfunctional behaviors from an organizational perspective. Employees tend to curtail their commitment to organizational objectives when they are not satisfied with what they gain from the organization. If organizations want to utilize pay as a motivator, the following points should be carefully considered. First, the importance of pay varies. It can be of consequence to a person who strives for the satisfaction of lower-level needs, such as physiological or security needs. When one is more fully satisfied with these needs, the prominence of economic rewards may then dissipate, except in situations in which they can be instrumental in furnishing other needs. Higher-level and skilled jobs usually provide more and better opportunities to satisfy higher-order needs; in addition, they usually pay better. This leads to the second variation of pay importance, which has to do with its being contingent upon the amount one receives. The more income one receives, the more one's satisfaction with it intensifies, the less importance one attaches to pay [Lawler 1971]. As the marginal utility of additional income decreases, furthermore, more money will be needed to make an increment significant to high-paid employees. Thus, an important implication for management is the need to develop motivational methods and strategies other than monetary rewards so as continuously to motivate

relatively high-paid employees. This obviously means the expressive rewards, the importance of which has been well established in this study. In sum, organizations may influence the behavior of their employees by identifying and appropriately managing their important work goals. In turn, desirable work outcomes, from the perspective of the organization, may induce and reinforce individuals' motivational behavior.

The non-financial rewards of work seem to be powerful incentives that are currently highly valued by workers around the world. This finding receives additional support from the results of the broader Meaning of Working Project. More than 85% of the respondents in five of the seven participating countries, and close to 70% in the remaining two countries, said they would continue to work even if they had sufficient money to live comfortably for the rest of their lives without having to work [MOW 1987]. Moreover, the expressive dimension of work goals was evaluated as being more important than the economic dimension in six of the seven countries. Nevertheless, the role that income plays in people's lives cannot be overlooked. It can be acknowledged that the main reason that people work is to secure an income, which allows them to purchase the things they desire in either the present or the future.

The reasons and rationales for working are distinctly multi-dimensional and interactive and must be viewed accordingly [MOW 1987]. Moreover, learning about what workers want from their jobs, or what is more important for them in this sphere, may elicit essential information for effective human-resources management. Some light may then be shed on such questions as why some people invest greater effort in their work and others less and why some people are more efficacious workers than others. Additionally, this information may account for why individuals are satisfied with some jobs and occupations but not with others, and why they should find some work situations attractive and others less so [MOW 1987]. Finally, the information gained provides a basis for practical suggestions concerning the ways in which work organization may be optimally designed, or redesigned, for the individual as well as for organizational and societal purposes, both now and in the future.

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