

**Job Quality:
A Perspective from Organisational Psychology**

David Holman
Institute of Work Psychology
Sheffield University Management School

Overview

- Outline nature of job quality
- Theoretical, empirical and methodological issues with current research
- Conclusions

Definition of Job Quality

The extent to which a job has factors that promote beneficial outcomes for the employee, organisation or society

(Green, 2006; Sen, 1993)

- Job Factors
- Outcomes
- Value of job factor derives from extent to which it promotes beneficial outcomes

Outcomes of Job Quality

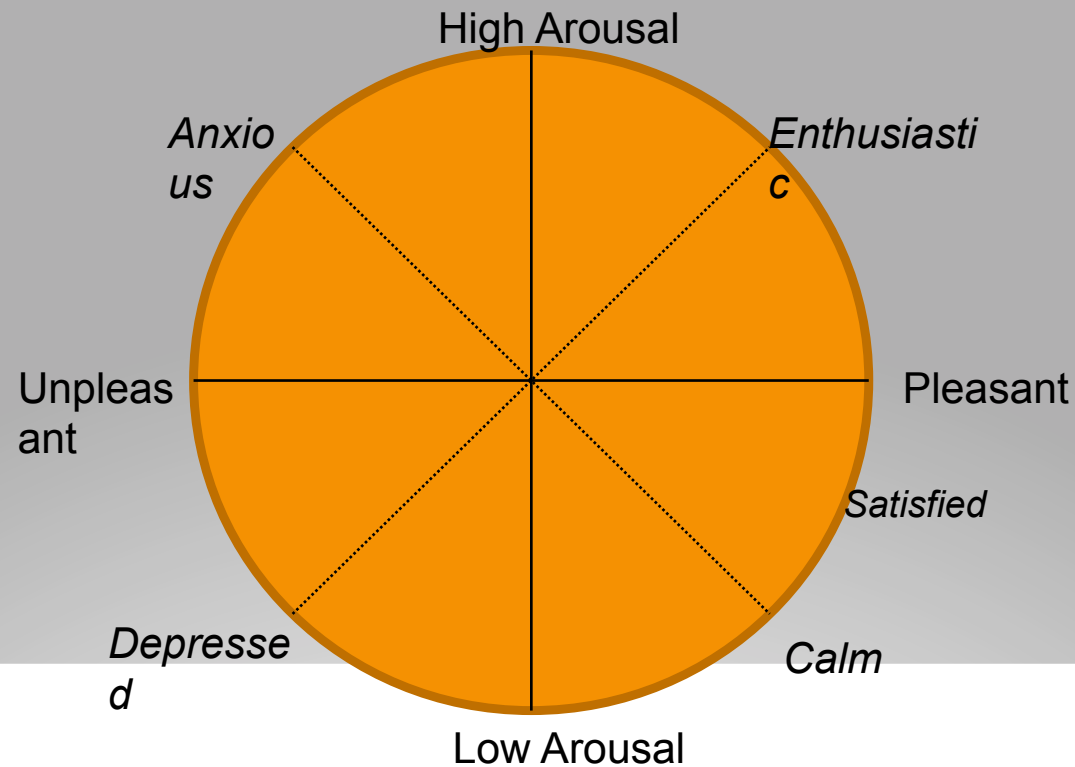
<i>Outcome Level</i>	Well-Being		Performance
	Psychological Well-Being	Physical Well-Being	
<i>Individual</i>	Hedonic Eudemonic	Physical health MSD	Task Performance Innovation
<i>Organisational</i>	Sickness rates Quit rates	Sickness rates Safety rates	Productivity
<i>Societal</i>	Mental Health Rates	Morbidity and Mortality Rates	GDP?

Individual Psychological Well-Being

- **Hedonic**

- Positive and negative affective states
- Subjective Well-Being (Diener et al., 1999)

Circumplex Model of Affect



Individual Psychological Well-Being

- **Eudemonic**

- More to being well than happiness and satisfaction
- Positive psychological functioning
- Ryff & Keyes, 1995
 - Autonomy, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, self-acceptance, environmental mastery
 - Positive relations & changing nature of work

Summary points on job quality outcomes

- A limited range of outcomes in job quality studies

<i>Outcome Level</i>	Well-Being		Performance
	Psychological Well-Being	Physical Well-Being	
<i>Individual</i>	Hedonic Eudemonic	Physical health MSD	Task Performance Innovation
<i>Organisational</i>	Sickness rates Quit rates	Sickness rates Safety rates	Productivity
<i>Societal</i>	Mental Health Rates	Illness Rates	GDP?

Summary points on job quality outcomes

- A limited range of outcomes in job quality studies
 - Particularly in large-scale surveys of jobs
 - Job satisfaction measures are problematic (Brief & Weiss, 2002)
- A broader range is needed
 - Eudemonic well-being , e.g., Marmot et al., 1998
 - Relationship quality

Job Quality Factors

- Numerous factors proposed

1. Work Organisation

- Job design
 - Job demands: workload, cognitive, physical, emotional, interactional
 - Job resources: job discretion, feedback, social support
- Team design

2. Pay and Performance Systems

- Absolute and relative wage level
- Performance monitoring/appraisal

Job Quality Factors

3. *Skills and Development*

- Skill level
- Opportunity for skill use
- Training provided

5. *Security and Flexibility*

- Permanent contract
- Working hours
- Access to flexible working arrangements

7. *Collective Representation and Voice*

- Collective bargaining
- Employee involvement and participation

Job Quality Factors

- **Basis for factor choice**
 - **Theories for effects of specific factors**
 - Job design theory for work organisation
 - Self-regulation theory and skills and development
 - Organisational justice for wages
 - **Empirical: Independent effects**
 - E.g., Job design: job discretion, social support, feedback (Humphrey et al., 2007)
- **Current strengths**

Job Quality Factors: Future Challenges

Theoretical Challenge

- To develop a theory of job quality
 - Broader range of outcomes
 - Mechanisms
 - What shapes job quality?
 - Institutions, managers etc.
 - Individual differences & agency

Job Quality Factors: Future Challenges

Empirical Challenges

- **Relative effects: What are the most active ingredients?**
 - Within factors
 - Job design and affect: social support, job discretion, constructive feedback (Humphrey et al., 2007)
 - Between Factors
 - No systematic evidence

Job Quality Factors: Future Challenges

Empirical Challenges cont.

- **Synergistic effects**
 - Within factor
 - Work organisation
 - Demand X Control (Karasek & Theorell, 1992)
 - Between factors
 - Job security and social support (Wichert, 2002)
- **Job types**
 - Problematic configurations of job factors
 - Missing ingredient
 - Saturated jobs, e.g., knowledge work

Job Quality Factors: Future Challenges

Empirical Challenges cont.

- **Social and economic context**
 - E.g., life quality, economic inequality

Job Quality: Methodology

Measurement

- Outcomes-based
- Factor-based
 - Singular
 - Aggregated/Global
 - Weighting – theory, preference, outcome-weighted

Methods

- Experienced-based sampling Daniels, 2005; Totterdell et al., 2006
- Longitudinal studies

Job Quality: Interventions

Interventions

- **Job or Organisational Level**
 - Job redesign tools successful in front-line jobs
 - Job redesign in saturated jobs

- **Individual-level interventions**
 - Job Crafting
 - Cognitive Behavioural approaches (Van der Klink et al., 2001)

- Antecedent (Structural) and response-focused interventions

Concluding Thoughts

Current state

- Specific theories
- Evidence for direct effects of job factors
- Job re-design intervention tools are available

Future state

- Theory of job quality
- Broader range of outcomes
- Job types and problematic configurations
- Global weighted aggregate measures
- Methodological variety
- Intervention development and dissemination