The Complexities of Demographic Properties, Personality Differences and Incentives: A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT This paper undertakes a review of literature for two major reasons namely to critically examine the complex interrelationship of personality, demography and incentives; and to describe how personality traits and demographic properties shape ones perception of incentive elements which result in high or low levels of job satisfaction. Two significant managerial and organisational behaviour implications emerge, which stress the urgency of a continuous engagement of these concepts – personality, demography and incentive – in order for firms to be better placed to structure their incentive plans accordingly for reasons of organisational effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Reading through Ken Costa's (2008) *God at Work*, it was interesting to learn that the issue of cash exchange for 'stay at home' during holidays was not exclusive to organisational behaviour researchers. Costa had referred to a conversation he had with the owner of a large multinational French-based spirit company who said he offered his employees the opportunity to exchange the notoriously long French holidays for a lump sum in cash. While those in their forties accepted the offer at once, those in their twenties rejected it. What came out clearly in Costa's narrative was that the younger generation was increasingly seeking a lifestyle that balances life in the workplace with that which is outside it. However, beyond this was also the emphasis on the role of individual difference, which according to Evans (2001) calls for attention by organisations because of the common tendency to make crude and simplistic generalisations of individual differences. Employees seem to respond differently to workplace incentives (Pillay 2009: 7) as a result of their own individual experiences, demographic properties, personality, as well as physical, psychosocial, emotional and economic factors (De Beer et al. 2007; George et al. 2008). A worker may be unhappy with his wages, promotional opportunities, and fringe benefits, but be satisfied with his environmental conditions, co-worker behaviour and supervision. In short, an individual typically experiences different incentive elements across different sectors and situations (Spector 2003). In her analysis of staff turnover rates in the op-

tometric industry, Slabbert (2008) even noted that reasons for wanting to stay or leave an optometric practice differed from person to person. Considering the varied results achieved by numerous studies, it is safe to assert that humans differ in their expectations, values and rewards (Evans 2001), thus requiring organisations to tailor incentives suitably.

Problem Statement

Costa's (2008) narrative extends the impact of personality and demography on employees' response to incentives. While the concepts of personality and demography have been the focus of several empirical examinations, their complex relationship to incentives has received little attention.

Research Objectives

The paper therefore aims:
· To critically review the complex interrelationship between personality, demography and incentives.
· To describe, on the basis of reviewed literature, the extent at which personality traits and demographic properties shape ones perception of incentive elements which result in high or low levels of job satisfaction.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the author utilises the following conceptual framework (Fig. 1) to examine the

complex relationship among personality, demography and incentives.

The author argues that, a need exists for an understanding of the influence of demographic properties as well as an employee's personality on the kinds of choices employees make with regard to and their perception of incentives. This paper thus argues that personality traits and demographic properties influence an employee's perception of incentives, thus impacting employee job satisfaction.

Drawing from a platoon (though not exhaustive) of selective published and unpublished materials, the author collated information on general themes central to the subject matter. In some instances, the author relied on references to consulted works (snowballing). This methodology helped to generate perspectives as well as provide evidence on which to formulate ideas about the relationship among demographic properties of an employee, employee's personality and incentives.

Theoretical Outline

The following sections present an overview of the concepts – personality, demography, and incentives. There is also a section on perception, which aims to elucidate the connectivity of all the other concepts. Following the section on perception are the discussion, research implications and conclusion sections.

Personality Variables

The word personality is used to describe the qualities that form a person's character (Waite and Hawker 2009) and individuality (Haslam 2007: 5). According to Bergh and Theron (2006)

there is no universally accepted definition of personality. However, a common ground prevails which gives impetus to certain aspects which influence personality. These aspects or *traits* must serve to properly situate an individual.

Literature is replete with several models which are deployed in describing personality and its impact on human behaviour. According to Berg and Theron (2006: 291), no single definition of personality can be possible unless one considers the interaction of aspects such as the uniqueness of each individual, the observable physical appearance, traits of a person, and the non-visible or covert behaviours or emotions. Other criteria to consider in defining personality include patterns of behaviour and their consistencies such as identifying when one is shy and the dynamic intensity of such an emotion, which may not be easily captured, but would indicate a change in behaviour. These, Berg and Theron insist, amount to wholeness; yet differentiated personality with all its separate and integrated functions.

In what would seem like an agreement with Bergh and Theorn (2006), Nel et al. (2008: 36) have posited that 'personality refers to the way in which the biological, physical, social, psychological and moral *traits* of an individual are organised into a whole, and also the relatively stable patterns of behavioural patterns that flow from the dynamic interaction between the individual and his or her environment in a particular situation'. Taking Bergh and Theron (2006) as well as Nel et al.'s (2008) positions together, the understanding therefore is that various personality traits are discernible, essentially indicating a relatively stable characteristic responsible for some form of consistency in behaviour.
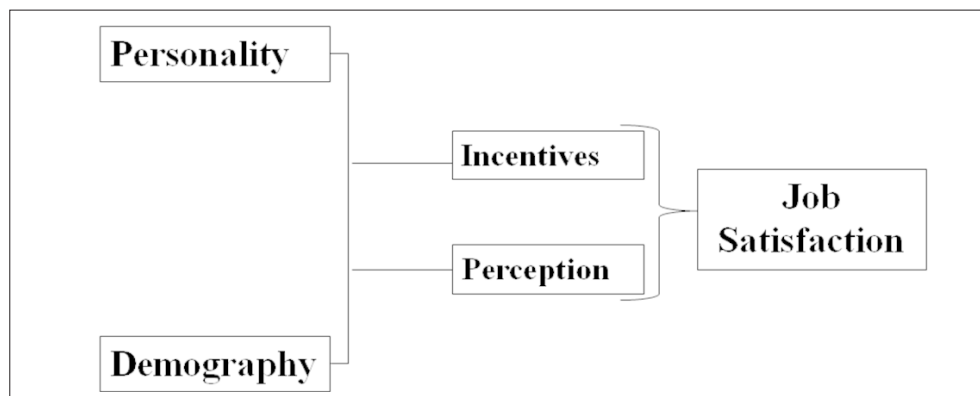

Fig. 1. Research framework

In an attempt to show the challenges that organisational behaviourists have had in pigeon-holing personality, Mullins (1999: 302) present the example of two individuals who share similar characteristics; same age, residence and same academic qualification. In the course of their work lives, these two individual's attitudes and performance would be predicted differently on the basis of their interactions and relationships with others. If one of these were female, again a further set of assumptions about their personality would emerge.

In spite of the lack of a universally accepted definition of personality (Bergh and Theron 2006: 291) and a long and confusing list of personality traits (Schultz et al. 2003: 41), studies (Saari and Judge 2004; Nel et al. 2008; Azalea et al. 2009) have indicated that there is a close relationship between the personality of an employee and the manner in which incentives are perceived. Different personality traits bring about different emotions. Several of these personality traits have been condensed into what McShane and von Glinow (2003: 85) and Robbins et al. (2009: 94-95) refer to as the big five personality model. This model has five personality dimensions namely: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience.

Extraversion dimension captures an individual's comfort level with relationships (Robbins et al. 2009: 94). The opposite of this personality dimension is introversion (McShane and von Glinow 2003: 86). Introverts are shy, quiet and cautious. Extraverts tend to be happier in their jobs and in their lives as a whole (Robbins et al. 2009: 94). An agreeable personality connotes a courteous, good-natured, emphatic and caring personality (McShane and von Glinow 2003: 86), while a conscientious personality brings greater effort and performance, more drive and discipline, better planning and organisation (Robbins et al. 2009: 95). Robbins et al. (2009: 94) explain further: *although conscientiousness is the Big Five trait most consistently related to job performance, the other traits are related to aspects of performance in some situation. Emotional stability is the most strongly related to life satisfaction, job satisfaction and low stress levels.*

Robbins et al. (2009) report a positive relationship between the Big Five Personality Dimensions and productive organisational behaviour, which they claim is a function of the positive presence of incentive elements. They argue that since those who are emotionally stable bring with them a much more relaxed life orientation, they tend to have greater positive influence on an organisation than those who are not emotionally stable. A person who scores high on extraversion will have better interpersonal skills, enjoy co-worker relations and can contribute more to team performance than those who score low on extraversion. Those who are open to experience are more apt to learn, are creative and will enjoy the flexibility that comes with dynamic work environments. Agreeable persons are less deviant, more cooperative and easier to conform to an organisation's culture than a less agreeable personality. Conscientious employees are better leaders – good at organizing, are dependable and persistent.

Another model used to describe personality is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI measures how people prefer to focus their attention (extroversion versus introversion), collect information (sensing versus intuition), process and evaluate information (thinking versus feeling), and orient themselves to the outside world (judging versus perceiving) (McShane and von Glinow 2003: 87).

The Big Five Personality dimensions and the MBTI do not capture every personality trait (McShane and von Glinow 2003: 88). Other aspects of personality that are important in the workplace include locus of control, self esteem, and goal orientation (Hellriegel and Slocum 2004). Locus of control refers to a generalized belief about the amount of control people have over their lives (McShane and von Glinow 2003: 88). Those who believe that they are able to control their destinies are said to have internal locus of control, while those who tend to attribute situations in their lives to outside forces are said to have external locus of control (Robbins et al. 2009: 96). People perform better in most employment situations when they have a moderately strong internal locus of control (McShane and von Glinow 2003: 88). Self esteem or as Robbins et al. (2009: 97) call it, self-monitoring, refers to an individual's continuous self-evaluation, based on an assessment of one's abilities, successes and failures, looks, ability to respond to situations and other people as well as the opinions of others (Werner et al. 2007: 56). Individuals who are high in self-monitoring show con-

siderable adaptability in adjusting their behaviour to external situational factors (Robbins et al. 2009: 96). People with a learning goal orientation focus on learning new competencies and mastering new situations, while those with a performance goal orientation demonstrate competencies that will attract the approval of others (Werner et al. 2007: 56).

In their study of the role of individual differences in influencing the job satisfaction level of Indonesians and Malaysians, Azalea et al. (2009: 505) found that only two personality traits influence ones perception of the value of an incentive. These traits are agreeableness and openness. According to the study, one of the main reasons why agreeableness interacted positively was due to the different individualistic dispositions of Indonesians and Malaysians. Referring to Hofstede and Bond (1988), Azalea et al. report that Indonesia is a more collective country than Malaysia, where one of the descriptions of a collective society is that individuals have to feel that they belong to a group and that decisions have to be made as a group. Therefore, Indonesians have a higher need to be agreeable to their surroundings in order to be successful in their job, which could somewhat translate to satisfaction with one's job. However, Malaysians, being of a more individualistic culture have less of a need for the approval of others while making decisions, consequently to feel satisfied with their job. Therefore, agreeableness was found to relate to positive perception of incentives by Indonesians, unlike Malaysians.

Individual differences do make a difference. This is the finding of Rosse and Saturay (2004: 16) in their investigation of various personological traits on individual's reactions to incentives at differing levels of intensity. Their study revealed that their subjects responded in a variety of ways when confronted with dissatisfying working conditions. In some cases, the subjects considered planned exit and disengagement while some others considered problem solving and loyalty. De Witte (2005) also wrote about the relationship between job insecurity and personality traits. Her review of empirical works disclosed that individuals with 'especially the traits of locus of control and negative affectivity are associated with perceived job insecurity.' She however warned that job insecurity should not be reduced to mere perception. It could be real too, based on objective conditions in which peo-

ple work. Schultz et al. (2003) agree. According to them, a person's personality is partly contingent upon situational factors. These factors can include a person's environment, culture, social standing, values, attitudes and beliefs, family and heredity (Nel et al. 2008: 37). This means that each employee's personality is unique; essentially differing from others. A consequence of this is that each employee would have a different expectation from others and this is normally obvious in the way they pursue personal goals in organisations. In practice one finds that some individuals are happy if they can satisfy their basic needs and the minimum needs of the organisation (Nel et al. 2008:38).

Werner et al. (2007) utilised the cognitive dissonance theory of Festinger (1962) to stress the above point. Festinger suggests that even when an individual hates his job, he could still perform well in it. Festinger, they say, attributes this to the significance of the variables that pertain positively to the individual, the control the individual believes he has over the elements and the rewards that may be involved. Simply put and borrowing the words of Nel et al. (2008: 239), "the problem in selection is to predict accurately which applicants in the pool will become capable, productive, and loyal employees." This statement cements the opinions of several researchers that individual personality cannot be precisely determined because of the various influences each individual confronts. The critical thing to note is that 'people flourish in their work environment when there is a good fit between their personality type and the characteristics of the environment. A lack of congruence between personality and environment leads to dissatisfaction' (Holland 1996: 397).

Demographic Properties

Demographic variables are characterised in several forms namely age, gender, family size, family life cycle, income, occupation, religion, race and education (Cronje et al. 2006: 303); the variables used to explain organisation's diversity (Smit et al. 2007: 240); characteristics of work groups, or organisations that play a role in human resources management, reflecting the degree of mix of characteristics of the people who make up an organisation's workforce (Hellriegel et al. 2006: 94, 368). Grobler et al. (2006: 76) have divided these variables into two – primary and

secondary dimensions. Primary dimensions include age, gender, ethnicity, race, physical abilities/qualities and sexual orientation. They are those human differences that are inborn and exert a major impact on human beings. Secondary dimensions add depth and individuality to our lives and they include education, geographical location, income, marital status, military experience and parental status.

The different demographic properties interact differently with regard to how incentives are perceived. This perhaps explains why Rutherford et al. (2009) caution against a global measure of incentive elements. In their paper, they suggest instead, an examination of individual incentive elements against other factors namely demographic factors and or other antecedents of job satisfaction (organisational commitment and propensity to leave). Martin and Roodt (2008: 28) found a significant relationship between some demographic variables and organisational commitment. Commitment to the organisation, they say, increases as age increases. This finding enjoys the support of previous works such as Tester and Mueller (2009) and Sarker et al. (2003). They argue that job satisfaction increases with age, which suggests a more realistic adjustment to the work situation or even less mobility: the longer a worker stays with an organisation, the better his promotional opportunities as well as income and if this is the case, then it can be argued that he will be more satisfied with his job. Smerek and Peterson (2007:245) also found a positive and significant correlation between length of service and the work itself.

Okpara (2004: 335) found that older managers and those with longer organizational tenure in the work place have higher levels of job satisfaction than younger workers and those with shorter organizational tenure. Several other studies (Okpara 2004, 2006; Okpara et al. 2004;) have shown the closeness of job satisfaction to the education dimension of demography. Education and experience combined contributed significantly to satisfaction with pay, which to some extent indicated that 62 percent of the variance in pay satisfaction could be accounted for by education, and experience among other variables. Well-educated employees tend to lower commitment especially if they perceive that the organisation is not essentially supporting them. Other studies (Mathieu and Zajac 1990; Martin and Roodt 2008) support this submission. A

higher academic qualification resulting in more job opportunities and task diversity tend to promote job satisfaction.

In a study of the perceived gender differences in pay and promotion in the services industry and how these differences affect overall job satisfaction of male and female managers, Okpara (2006: 224) disclosed that a salary differential does exist between male and female managers in Nigeria. Male managers were more satisfied with their salary than their female counterparts. This study also revealed that there were gender differences in promotion. Male managers were overall more satisfied with their company promotion policies than their female counterparts. Govender (2006: 99-100) found to the contrary that there were no significant differences between married and unmarried healthcare providers at a military establishment in South Africa. However, within emergency medical services, Patterson et al. (2009: 86) reported that approximately six percent of their sample indicated that they would not spend more than a year within the profession. This intention to leave was tightly linked to, among other factors, gender.

Jacobs (2005) as well as Martin and Roodt (2008) found a common interaction between gender and turnover intentions. In South Africa, employment laws impacting on employment relations favour women than men. This assertion is derived from the inclusion of women as part of the disadvantaged group in South Africa's Employment Equity Act (Amended) (Department of Labour 2006). It can then be argued that fewer men would like to remain in an environment that openly sees women as supreme and deserving of opportunities. In a study of work satisfaction of medical doctors in the South African private health sector, Pillay (2008: 259) reported a close association between gender, age, group practice and overall satisfaction. Pillay noted that certain female doctors reacted positively or otherwise on the basis of years of practice, group interaction and presence of incentives. Having practiced for twenty years or more in groups of more than six doctors and received incentives, female doctors were significantly more satisfied than their colleagues who have fewer years of practice without a commensurate amount of group practice support, Pillay adds.

Govender's (2006) study also disclosed that concerns were raised by the healthcare workers who had children. Family size and family respon-

sibility reacted negatively to job satisfaction. While the military provides support for families that are separated by their breadwinners, the fact that individuals will be separated from their children for extended periods of time would have a negative impact on family life and thus lead to greater levels of dissatisfaction.

Demographic variables no doubt help in confirming distinctions of correlations amongst employees regarding certain characteristic dimensions.

Understanding the Concept Incentive

The English Oxford Dictionary (online) defines incentive as 'a thing that motivates or encourages someone to do something; a payment or concession to stimulate greater output or investment'. Basu (1966) however breaks the term incentive into two – economic (monetary compensation received by an employee for work done) and non-economic incentive (job security, responsibility, recognition, and opportunity for advancement, participation in decision-making and supportive supervision). These share close association with Churchill et al.'s (1974) seven dimensions of job satisfaction. These dimensions are satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with overall job, satisfaction with policy and support, and satisfaction with promotion and advancement. Others include satisfaction with pay, co-workers, and customers. Incentives therefore are external factors which the individual perceives whether rightly or wrongly as possible satisfiers of his felt needs. One can safely say therefore that incentive elements enhance job satisfaction.

Following is a discussion of some of the cash and non-cash incentives.

Job Security

Job security refers to a workers' ability to retain a desirable job – that is to avoid involuntary job loss (Valletta 1999). Involuntary job loss can result from an economic downturn. Job security can however be perceived positively or negatively depending on a number of factors such as the nature of the perceiver (personality traits), the makeup of the perceiver (demographic properties), and other factors such as income, good supervision, supportive co-workers, role clarity, shared knowledge, equitable performance

management, as well as organisational climate dimensions (De Witte 2005; Mullins 2007; Jacobs and Roodts 2008; Castro and Martins 2010). Workers start to feel insecure in their jobs when some of the above factors interact negatively with either their nature or makeup.

De Witte (2005) argues that one of the reasons for the feelings of job insecurity in South Africa is pay inequality, and these feelings of job insecurity could lead to insecurities regarding the continued existence of valued aspects of the job, such as pay, working hours, colleagues and the job content (for example, autonomy, responsibility). Poor pay and the insecurities (job insecurity, inability to maintain family and social responsibilities, etc.) it attracts have been considered as some of the reasons why nurses and teachers in the South African public service have sought greener pastures outside of public service (Kingma 2001; Bailey 2003; Stern and Szalontai 2006). Feeling insecure in one's job goes against the traditional expectations (psychological contracts) of an employee from his employer (Nel et al. 2008: 41). Psychological contracts consist of an individual's beliefs regarding reciprocal obligations between him and his employers (Rousseau 1990, 1995). When less security is offered, the employee may attempt to restore the imbalance by showing less involvement, less motivation, by lowering his performance or by seeking better opportunities elsewhere (Grobler et al. 2006: 221).

De Witte (2005: 2) argues that job insecurity is not necessarily a perception. It could result from the objective conditions in which people work. De Witte continues by stating that "Job insecurity is a good reflection of an individual's real (or 'objective') chances and position on the labour market, despite its subjective nature". Job insecurity could also arise from ones age (Hank and Erlinghagen 2011), gender, as well as socio-economic circumstances and depression (Meltzer et al. 2010). Burnout, stress, violations of psychological contracts, and downsizing are some of the reasons for job insecurities (Pundit 2006). Burnout can result from work overload, lack of control, insufficient rewards and breakdown in communication. Stress could result from burnout, insufficient information and poor match between an employee and his work environment.

Income

Income as an incentive has constituted a major interest among researchers, employers of

labour, economists, and labour unions. This interest is perhaps because income is both a psychological and economic phenomenon (Grobler et al. 2006; Nel et al. 2008). Arguments vary with regard to the effect of income on job satisfaction. Some studies Slabbert (2008) indicate an indirect association with income and job satisfaction, while Kingma (2001, De Witte (2005, as well as Stern and Szalontai (2006) found a direct positive link to job satisfaction.

Coomber and Barriball (2007), Williams et al. (2008), Green and Heywood (2008), Mbindyo et al. (2009) argue that income has no direct relationship to job satisfaction unless consideration is given to a host of other factors such as the perception of the cash recipient, the recipient's personal values, the work itself and performance pay schemes. Dreher (1981, cited in Williams et al. 2006; Kim et al. 2008; Judge et al. 2010), using a sample of managerial, professional and technical employees from a large oil company, examined the extent to which salary satisfaction can be predicted using company maintained information commonly available to salary administrators. Predictors included years of continuous service, educational level, performance rating, and estimate of career potential, monthly salary, a measure of the most recent salary increase and gender. A variety of hypotheses, derived from Lawler's (1971) model of pay satisfaction were also tested, focusing on the relative contribution of perceived performance, perceived job demand, certain non-monetary outcomes, and external and internal pay equity. The result suggested that without the inclusion of a variety of employee perceptions, only a small proportion of pay satisfaction can be accounted for, with salary and gender representing the primary objective predictors. Perceptions regarding advancement opportunity and the benefit package are also very important. With this finding one could say that the way workers perceive pay satisfaction differs from one another and more importantly differs from company to company and even differ in age, gender and education. The short review here indicates clearly that job satisfaction derived from income is not a specific issue – it is predicated on a number of factors namely the total package of compensation, level of education, gender, the perception of the person receiving the income and a host of other factors.

Responsibility, Recognition, and Participation in Decision Making

Enriching the job that people do in organisations has a way of improving their morale and output. Altered jobs increase the depth and range of jobs thus giving a sense of autonomy to the holder of the job. With autonomy comes task identity, which refers to the extent to which a person is responsible for a completely identifiable piece of work (Nel et al. 2008).

Recognition can take the form of awards, promotion, opportunities for advancement, and opportunities to participate in decision making in the organisation. Allowing employees to participate in reaching decisions that affect them is one of the ways of engendering trust and commitment in an organisation. Communication, an important organizational culture dimension, is justified for its aptness in knowledge sharing and enhancement of trust. Coetzee and Schreuder (2010: 262) submit that leaders should be willing to consult with employees on decisions that affect them. Several avenues exist for interacting with employees. These include informal departmental interactions such as workshops or social activities, which are effective in increasing communication opportunities and enhancing the sense of internal identification with an organization. Increasing communication opportunities also has a way of impacting self-efficacy of workers. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action, which are required to manage prospective situations (Robbins et al. 2009: 504). Belief in ones capabilities (competence-based trust) comes with trust from management and constant communication (Covey and Merrill 2006: 9-10).

Supportive Supervision

Wang and Noe (2010), in an empirical study of individual-level knowledge sharing, found that management and supervisor support were critical for the success of knowledge sharing initiatives. This resonates well with Srivastava et al's study (2006: 1243), which found that empowering leadership fostered knowledge sharing among team members. Today's work environments demand leaders who inspire others with the vision of what can be accomplished (Medley and Larochelle 1995). Inspiration can also come from positive feedback and function-

al systems. Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) insist that it does help for employees to perceive their managers as possessing the right skills and attitudes, which consequently enable an environment of trust (and a perception of competence in the eyes of the employee) in the feedback received by employees.

Providing sufficient and helpful performance feedback to employees helps to boost positive attitudes towards the organization and helps to prevent early intentions to leave the organization (Coetzee and Schreuder 2010: 262). Direct, unambiguous feedback clarifies a group's task. Essentially, there is evidence that demonstrates a positive relationship between effective feedback and worker productivity (Robbins et al. 2009: 282).

As individuals are provided with praise and feedback, stronger feelings of loyalty are developed (Coetzee and Schreuder 2010). Bass et al. (2003) opine that leaders invigorate followers' adaptivity and creativity in a blame-free context. Liese et al. (2003) observe that, improving non-monetary incentive frameworks advanced motivation and consequently the productivity and quality of outputs of workers. In fact, Coetzee and Schreuder (2010) add: *leaders should be willing to provide guidance to employees where they need the most assistance. The assistance could be the provision of adequate tools and technologies required for effective customer service*. O'Neill et al. (2009) are of the opinion that functional systems help to achieve an organizations objective and can only be made possible by a creative and innovative leadership team. Robbins et al. (2009: 493) echo this sentiment by stating that organic structures positively influence innovation, which facilitates the flexibility, adaptation, and cross-fertilisation that make adoption of innovations easier. In other words, Robbins et al. suggest transformative leadership, which Iwu and Adeola (2011: 124) describe as the ability of a leader to positively create a change within followership and the environment within which he operates. This means that the transformative character of leadership, therefore, emits from its ability to provide helpful feedback to followers, as well as ensure that resources to achieve high performance, are available. Supportive leadership is perceived as one that cares for and values the contributions of employees.

The Job Itself

The makeup of a job has engulfed the attention of many researchers. Generally, the term, job itself, is used to connote several aspects of a job such as autonomy (capacity to assume responsibility for a task from start to finish), skill variety, growth opportunities and self-fulfilment. These aspects are well situated within Herzberg's intrinsic satisfaction dimension (Motivators) (Hirschfield 2000; Smerek and Peterson 2007). Utilising some of these aspects, Pundit (2006) found varying degrees of relationship between job satisfaction and demographic properties such as gender and ethnicity. It is clear therefore that employees want more than money. As Koch (1998) says 'employees want fair, competitive compensation, recognition for job well done, they want to feel valued, appreciated and sought after'. Govender (2006) agrees. Her study acknowledged the nature of the job itself as a major satisfier. The elements that express the nature of the job itself in her study included skills utilization, self-fulfillment, and autonomy, a sense of value and job enjoyment.

There is no doubt, given the above, that the job itself connotes several elements of both the job content and job context environment and can serve as a strong incentive to remain or not to remain on the job.

Perception

The degree at which one is influenced by a stimulus is dependent upon ones perception of the significance of the stimulus. Robbins et al. (2009) suggest that three factors influence how humans are drawn to things. These are factors in the perceiver, factors in the environment and factors in the perceived object.

Factors in the Perceiver

Factors in the perceiver refer to internal factors that influence the way in which people behave. They include attitudes, motives, interests, experience and expectations. As far back as 1935, Allport considered attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon an individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". According to Eagley and Chaiken (2007), attitude is a psy-

chological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour. This entity could be an object (perceived or real). However, the substance of these definitions stems from one's ability to evaluate a particular entity with some degree of favourability or otherwise based on ones interests, experiences, expectations and motives. Millán et al. (2011) argue that people are satisfied with their occupation when, based on their own *assessment*, they like the work that they do. Assessment and evaluation are synonyms, thus the terms should be broadly used to include not only analytic assessments but also affective reactions (Fazio 2007). Assessment or appraisal of one's circumstance can result from ones experience (Locke 1976). Millán et al.'s (2011) work suggests that (1) individuals are capable of making up their own minds if the circumstance is right; (2) individuals are able to evaluate the suitability or otherwise of an offering; (3) an evaluation of an offering's favourability or unfavourability will depend on a number of factors (motives). These factors, Eagley and Chaiken (2007) concur could be based on beliefs and thoughts, feelings and emotions, intentions and behaviour, which the authors add may not be consciously expressed by the holder of an attitude, although they may be conscious. No doubt therefore that, factors in the perceiver – ones attitude to a stimulus, motives, interests, experiences or expectations - do have an effect on the way humans react to different stimuli.

Factors in the Perceived Object or Target

Motivational theories posit that people are motivated to act in a specific way if they believe that a desired outcome (for the purpose of this paper, an object or target) will be attained.

Within the health services, 'health professionals in both private and public sectors leave to work in more developed countries to obtain higher pay, better working conditions, an overall better quality of life and improved opportunities for them and their families' (Packer et al. 2009: 219). Saving lives may have been a motivating factor for health professionals, but the intricacies of the job may have been perceived differently, thereby leading to dissatisfaction and the desire to go elsewhere for better life. Also promotion comes with additional responsibilities and higher income. Higher income often comes

with additional expenses, which the increased income cannot take care of. This prompts employees to seek greener pastures. With regard to gender, research shows that employees in a number of sectors do not consider the long hours of work conducive enough for their gender, especially those with family as well as the married ones (Yildiz et al. 2009; Okpara 2006). Govender et al. (2012) and Nedham et al. (2010) found that high levels of violence against female EMS personnel discouraged them from a career in the profession. It is clear therefore that outcomes (objects/targets) are usually not looked at in isolation. There are usually other elements that we associate them with.

Factors in the Situation

The environment in which humans live is fraught with numerous inconsistencies and complexities. Nel et al. (2008) agree that we are influenced by factors such as heredity, culture, and social circles including family. All these put together determine the effect of human personality on human perceptive tendencies.

The way humans perceive things can be influenced by the time they perceive them and the setting in which they are perceived – within the workplace or outside of it. The expectancy theory of Victor Vroom is commonly used to discuss the impact of the environment on several organisational phenomena including task preference, job satisfaction, work motivation, and work behaviour (Chou and Pearson 2012, Citing Mitchell 1982). If an offer is attractive (valence), it may elicit positive response and vice versa. However, a person's personality may have an influence on the way a particular offering is perceived. For instance, someone who is 'open to experience' and extraverted may embrace new challenges at a workplace, whereas a conscientious employee may want to prudently scrutinise the benefits or dangers of a new challenge before accepting it. The 'spill over' concept of Tait et al. (1989) as well as Judge and Watanabe (1994) can be used to explain the above. An unhappy home front or social setting can spill over into one's job experiences and vice versa. Saari and Judge (2004) speculate on the possibility that the 'spill over' model emanates from personality traits that cause both low job satisfaction and depression. Hardie (1997) reported that female employees experienced high stress, poor health and work impairment across their menstrual cycle.

DISCUSSION

It is clear from the foregoing that human nature is complex; considering the different personality characteristics as well as the different demographic properties. These, together with culture, situation, and many other factors in fact impact the way humans co-exist and perceive the world. Within the world of work, our ability to remain productive hinges on a number of factors such as supportive supervision, good co-worker relations, job and role clarity as well as a conducive work environment. That said, one should not be fooled into thinking that once these are present, workers are satisfied. In some cases, workers perceive these and other job characteristics as satisfying, while in other cases, their perceptions differ. The different demographic properties no doubt interact differently with our different personalities and job characteristics.

While a universally accepted definition of personality does not exist, research is replete with claims of a close relationship between the personality of an employee and job satisfaction. However, it must be noted that individual personality cannot be precisely determined because of the various influences each individual confronts. The sense to make out of this is that different things excite different employees. Every organization must therefore attempt to understand the individual worker and then direct those job satisfaction facets appropriately. In fact, Gilley (2006) insists that a successful organization is built upon the managers' ability to understand workers behaviour and interpret them correctly.

The same can be said for demographic characteristics such as age, educational status, tenure and gender. The findings of several studies on demographic properties and job satisfaction reveal a number of significant points. Firstly it is noteworthy that job satisfaction increases or decreases with age. This is an indication that the longer one remains on the job the more one enjoys the job (perhaps things start to get better; one starts to enjoy better role clarity; one understands the processes and systems a lot better), or if one is consistently unhappy, one then starts a lacklustre relationship with one's organisation and subsequently either seeks greener pastures or loses self-confidence. There is therefore an important point to be made here

about staff retention. The point is that organisations must engage in a consistent development programme with the objective of retaining, exciting and growing the skills of workers (Ross and van Eeden 2008).

It is more profitable for organisations to target their workers with incentives that meet their unique needs. In fact Ken Costa's work referred to at the beginning of this paper indicated that older workers accepted an offer of cash in exchange for work on a public holiday. Older workers have accumulated needs – enlarged families, mortgages – and would rather take on an opportunity to earn extra income. But beyond this, workers who have spent longer time in an organisation seem to be more knowledgeable about their roles and know more about the organisation than their newer counterparts (Tester and Mueller 2009). Workers with longer tenure represent the organisation's knowledge bank and can help to mentor and coach new staff. Organisations have to take cognisance of this and provide the right incentives that keep them motivated and wanting to remain with the organisation. Interestingly, while some studies (Okpara 2004, 2006) found that older workers and those with longer organizational tenure have higher levels of job satisfaction than younger workers, Ferres et al. (2003) found intention to turnover and depleted commitment among older workers because of a feeling that a better opportunity exists somewhere else on the basis of their experience. It is cautious to note here that this paper does not suggest that newer employees are not worth the attention. If anything, it extends the complex relationship between demography and motivation. Newer workers are equally as valuable because they represent the future of the organisation. The needs of the new generation of workers differ though. Therefore managers must be able to distinguish between the needs of older workers and younger ones.

Satisfying workers goes beyond mere incentives because job satisfaction is a complex process and not simply a pleasure-displeasure response (Bateman and Snell 2007: 440). Employees benefit from and enjoy co-worker relations and support from management through knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is the fundamental means through which employees can contribute to knowledge application, innovation, and ultimately the competitive advantage of an organization (Jackson et al. 2006). In a study of

individual attitudes and organizational knowledge sharing, Yang (2008: 352) found that managers had to continually stimulate and facilitate employees towards the highest levels of knowledge sharing, individual and organizational learning. Yang went on to say that knowledge sharing must be seen as a function of organizational culture and leadership roles, as well as individual behaviour. In Yang's view, these were critical because an effective sharing process would enable individuals to think about others' ideas and insights as well as learn from them, resulting in the enlargement of their capabilities. Information sharing and integrated leadership boost coworker intimacy and reduce conflict.

Employee dissatisfaction impacts negatively on both the organisation and the employee. Workers, generally, experience major changes regularly in their lives and these changes can lead to severe distress, burnout or physical illness and to a decrease in quality of life. When any of these is experienced, organisations can experience increased absenteeism and turnover. Increased absenteeism and turnover can subsequently lead to increased workload, poor response to organisational goals, as well as organisational problems and conflicts. Management should at all times make attempts to create conducive environments for their workers because employees play a key role towards the functioning of any organisation (Daft and Marcic 2010: 288). A good relationship between employees and management will yield favourably higher levels of productivity, which then create profit. Thus management of any organisation must try to maintain valuable employees in order to build human capital, which would ensure sustainable growth for the business (Hall 2008). Maintaining and retaining valuable employees requires an appreciation of the common fact: workers everywhere are different and would present different needs and expectations.

Nothing beats a satisfying work environment where employees can perform well and continue being productive (Holman et al. 2003). A satisfying work environment connotes an environment that seeks to understand the individual needs of all employees in order to avert a generalization of offerings. Offering random incentives to workers without an understanding of the needs of individual workers may result in employee dissatisfaction.

An organizations competitive advantage can reside among its employees (Cronje et al. 2006: 193). Smit et al. (2007: 49) capture it succinctly in the words of Gratton (2000): "the new source of sustainable competitive advantage available to organizations has people at its centre – their knowledge, creativity, and talent. Both capital and technological advantages can be emulated by competitors, but the human asset is intangible and very difficult to imitate." Granted that employees are a critical source of an organisations sustainable competitive advantage, organisations will not grow without an empowering leadership to drive employee job satisfaction. Empowering leadership means providing an opportunity for all members of an organization to participate in decisions that affect them. Providing opportunities for employees to participate in decisions that affect them create an atmosphere where information is freely shared.

The above factor and many others take away perceptions of job security. To feel insecure at work is in itself a work stressor and will have negative impact on employees health and wellbeing. In this case, employees may experience a range of psychosomatic and physical malaise such as high irritability, anxiety and burnout. It is also safe to note that job security does not necessarily provide total job satisfaction, as De Witte's (2005) study showed; some Belgians who indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs also indicated that they felt insecure. This again suggests that job security does have a relationship with several other factors including our personality. Medical science catalogues evidence, which confirms that our mental state affects not only our physiology but also the way we react to circumstances.

Within the workplace, managers are advised to treat workers with respect, provide workers with the kinds of incentives that will excite them (requires an understanding of individual employees though), as well as jobs that meet with their capability. Sometime back, Maslach and Jackson (1981), and Singh et al. (1994) warned that the absence of well-targeted incentives could result in employee burnout. Employee burnout can manifest in a number of dimensions namely emotional exhaustion, low self-efficacy and low motivation. These impact our mental state and can then affect our physiology resulting in our inability to relate well with others and very importantly relegate the interests of the

organisation. The organisation can then suffer loss of custom and subsequently income.

Self-efficacy comes with a feeling of being valued as employees; receiving meaningful remuneration and feeling that management is fair. Workers who have high self-efficacy will experience lesser stress and burnout (Stander and Rothmann, 2010; Koekemoer and Mostert, 2006). Managers must therefore be able to show care, interest and empathy towards employees. They should also be able to explain what is expected of them, as well as provide regular and positive feedback and recognition for work well done. Managers must also understand that a certain kind of confidence is built in an employee who receives what he or she considers as meaningful remuneration.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

It is important to note therefore that this paper does have several significant managerial and organisational behavioural implications. It has helped in enhancing clarification of the interrelationships between personality, demographic properties and incentives. The other implication is that firms are better placed to structure their incentive elements according to the personality and demography of their employees. In fact Roos and Van Eeden (2008: 54) argue that for reasons of increasing local and global competitiveness, organisations need to understand the different make up of their workers so that they can be consistently developed and retained in order for them to become loyal, committed and able workforce.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is evident that there is a complex relationship between demographic properties and employee personality on one hand and incentives on the other. The almost commonly held view, but most ignored by managers is that *what is good for the goose may not necessarily be good for the gander.* An understanding of the demographic properties of the worker as well as his/her personality may not necessarily deliver the goods for an employer, but will help raise the levels of sensitivity to the needs of employees.

This study has undertaken a global review of literature that leads the author to suggest that future studies can focus on regional (continental) empirical reports to see if any specifics emerge with regard to regions. Furthermore, research efforts must intensify to assist with the understanding of this complex mix of personality, demographics and incentives. A harsh decision that organizations must take is not to compromise the human being at work. They come in different moulds - personality and demography - and must be provided varying resources (incentives) in order to grow the organization.

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