

Work Alienation and Its Influence on Employees' Performance Among a Sample of the Industrial Sector in Jordan

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Abstract

Work alienation is one of Karl Marx' theories that examines the feeling of estrangement among employees. The current research study examines the influence of work alienation on the employees' alienation with its elements (autonomy of decision making, variety and diversity of the tasks, feeling of alienation and managerial support) in the industrial sector in Jordan. Through the quantitative approach, and by utilizing the questionnaire as a tool, the researcher distributed the questionnaire on a total of (100) individuals in the industrial sector in Jordan. The results of the study indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between work alienation and job performance. The study recommends organizations to improve work environment as it is one of the most important sources of work alienation.

Keywords: Alienation, Performance, Drivers of Work Alienation, Industrial Sector in Jordan, Diversity, Environment

1. Introduction

All kinds of developments that are invading our world such as technological booming, globalization, cultural openness, economic and social changes are dragging us to the big debate that tackles our life. The influence of these developments, and the consequences of these changes whether these developments appeared to be either positive or negative.

One of the most famous results of cultural and social changes is the concept of alienation, and the tendency of an individual to feel alienated.

The term alienation in that sense refers to the relation that forms between an individual and himself, the individual and his relation with others, with nature, and with human work.

According to BinZahi (2007) the sensations of helplessness, isolation, lack of standards and being lost are the most prevailing feelings in our world. Add to that the vague perspective of the future, the lack of belonging and alienation are results of the changing world that we are living in.

2. Statement of the problem

Recent studies are trying to either build or identify the perfect and most suitable work environment for the employees which may have the ability to increase their performance and save them the burden of being exposed to many feelings that might not be good for their good performance. Among these feelings are the feelings of unappreciation, alienation, and disappointment.

In the this study; we try to investigate the influence of the work alienation on the performance of the employees within the industrial sector in Jordan. The researcher borrowed the problem of the current study from Tummer and Dulk (2011; 2013) who argued that there is a relationship between the work alienation and the performance of the employee from one side, and the commitment of the organization to elevate that alienation from the other side.

From that point, the author seeks to understand the nature of the relationship between work alienation and the performance of the employees in the industrial sector in Jordan.

3. Questions of the Study

The study launches from the fact that a lot of researches are being done on the allegations of the influence of work alienation on the performance of the employee.

The author tries to answer the following questions:

Is there a statistically significant influence of work alienation on the performance of the employees in the industrial sector in Jordan.

Is there a statistically significant influence of autonomy of decision making on the performance of the employee.

Is there a statistically significant influence of task variety and identity on the performance of the employee.

Is there a statistically significant influence of managerial support on the performance of the employee.

Is there a statistically significant influence of feeling of alienation on the performance of the employee.

4. Hypotheses of the study

The main hypothesis of the study is:

There is a statistically significant influence of work alienation on the performance of the employees in the

industrial sector in Jordan.

As for the sub-hypotheses:

H1: There is a statistically significant influence of autonomy of decision making on the performance of the employee.

H2: There is a statistically significant influence of task variety and identity on the performance of the employee.

H3: There is a statistically significant influence of managerial support on the performance of the employee.

H4: There is a statistically significant influence of feeling of alienation on the performance of the employee.

5. Model of the study

The researcher developed the following model which states independent and dependent variables of the relation between work alienation and job performance. The drivers of work alienation were borrowed from a study by Shantz, Alfes and Baily (2015).

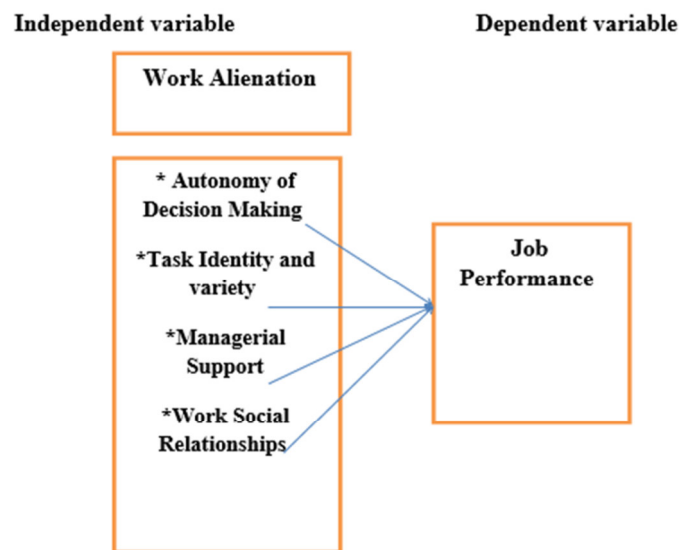


Figure (1): Model of study

6. Literature Review

Till today, significant research has concentrated on the impacts of work alienation on uninvolved occupation performance, for example, work fulfillment and authoritative responsibility. Detached performance markers point basically at the working of the association as it is at that present minute, where errands are given. On the other hand, dynamic occupation execution concentrates on self-beginning and proactive conduct, going past given undertakings. Latent execution markers are just a single part of execution (Tummers and Dulk, 2013). For example, a latent execution marker is employment fulfillment. A worker can be extremely fulfilled, yet can do just what he or she is gathered to do, not 'going the additional mile'. The impacts of work alienation on dynamic execution -, for example, star movement or work exertion - are understudied. This could be tricky, given that birthing assistance is regularly observed as a calling requiring high work exertion and proactivity (Sarros et al, 2002).

According to Ceylan and Sulu (2011), work alienation is viewed as a multidimensional idea. However, two principle measurements of work alienation are considered: powerlessness and meaninglessness. Powerlessness at work is the sentiment the representative that he or she doesn't have control over the way things are done at work. Meaninglessness is the impression of representatives that their work is not essential or beneficial, for example since it has no an incentive for society or for their own particular customers.

The Concept of Work Alienation

Over the course of time, there appeared many definition for the concept of work alienation, as a start, the word alienation was defined by Farahpod et al (2012) as "*the state of isolation*" while John Locke defined alienation as "*the fraud of human in social contract*" (Farahpod et al, 2012: p. 8904). However, Shantz et al (2015) defined the concept of work alienation as the state of "*estrangement, or disconnection from work, the context, or self*" (p.6).

Work alienation was first coined by Karl Marx who utilized this idea with the end goal of scrutinizing free enterprise social orders. The most well-known plumes of alienation are four factors, i.e. powerlessness, meaninglessness, social estrangement and self-hatred. A blend of hierarchical elements and efficiencies, social relations and mental elements has prevailing force on person and work freely and make individual to be a long way from his/her ordinary embodiment and to wind up noticeably a component which is left without personality.

The absence of efficiency is the primary pointer of work alienation.

Drivers of Work Alienation

There appeared many studies which took into perspective the aim of finding a set of drivers that contributes to the feeling of alienation among employees. However, it would be impossible for a certain study to be able to identify a static group of drivers that can help in forming a state of alienation for an employee in a certain job as these drivers may differ according to the person, their nature, the nature of the job and the psychological stream of this individual.

However, Shantz et al (2015) noted that there are many drivers for work alienation but the most apparent are (Variety, Autonomy, Social relationship, and task identity) while Ali, Rasheed and Hussain (2015) reported almost the same drivers as Shantz with minor differences including (decision making autonomy, task variety, task identity and social support). On the other hand, Amirkhani and Safikhani (2015) found out that the physical, mental and emotional abilities of an individual are the main drivers of work alienation, the more the work suits a person the less likely it is for them to feel alienated from their job.

However, many researchers appeared to be adhered to the set of drivers which were presented by Shantz et al (2015) which included Variety, Autonomy, Social relationship, and task identity including (Banai and Reisel, 2003; (Chiaburu, Diaz and De Vos, 2013; O'Donohue and Nelson, 2014). In that since, task variety refers to the degree of the task variation that is found within the job description of an individual, as for the Autonomy it refers to the unity of the orders and decisions sources, while task identity refers to the nature of the work that the individual is doing and the Social relationship refers to the social interaction that takes place between the individual and people around them at work.

Work Alienation and Performance

In a study by Clark et al (2010) about the concept of work alienation and temporary workers, coworkers, and supervisors, the study noted that there appeared no relationship between the feeling of alienation and the temporary workers, and it also showed that there were no relations between the self-rating ideas and the feeling of alienation, however, the study noted that there might be some relations between supervisors' ratings and the feeling of alienation among temporary workers.

Another study by Tummers and Dulk (2013) examined the influence of work alienation and the commitment to the organization along with the work efforts. The study employed the two dimensions of work alienation which are powerlessness and meaninglessness. The author used a self-administered questionnaire among 790 midwives in Netherlands. The results of the study indicated that when people have no control over their work and they feel that they are not needed within the work environment and their work doesn't worthwhile then this can lead to a deep feeling of alienation which in its turn can influence the level of their commitment to their organization and their performance would go lower than expected.

Another study which was carried out by Guo, Dai and Yang (2016) which aimed at examining the influence of work alienation on the job performance through the mediating factors of social relationships behavior and the variety of the tasks. The study concluded that there appeared a relationship between the variety of the tasks and the social behavior and culture within the organization on increasing the level of work alienation among employees.

7. Research Methodology

The current study is based on the quantitative approach in which the author utilizes the questionnaire to be the tool of the study. The questionnaire is divided into two sections, the first takes into perspective the demographic variables of the sample of the study including (gender, age, qualifications, experience) while the second section presents paragraphs related to the problem of the study and its variables which are (autonomy of the decision making process, task identity and variety, managerial support and the feelings of alienation).

8. Population and Sample

The author chooses industrial organizations within the sector in Jordan to be the population of the study, as for the sample of the study, the researcher has chosen a convenience sample of employees from different industrial organizations within the sector in Jordan. The sample reached (125) individuals of employees who are working in different positions within those organizations.

The tool employed within this study was the questionnaire; the researcher used SPSS 21v in order to analyze the gathered data from the sample of the study. The sample in its final result came up to be (100) individuals as per the questionnaire which were retrieved from the application process and was found to be properly filled for the analysis.

Reliability

A Cronbach Alpha test has been used to ascertain instrument reliability. The value of α was 0.932, and it is accepted because it is more than 0.60.

9. Statistical Analysis

The current section presents the statistical processing of the gathered data from the tool of the study. The section is divided into two parts; the first part takes into perspective the demographic variables of the study while the second parts take into perspective the analysis of the questionnaire paragraphs.

A. Demographic variables

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	69	69.0	69.0	69.0
Female	31	31.0	31.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table (1): Frequency and percentage of the sample of the study according to gender

Table (1) shows that the frequency of the sample answered the questionnaire came for the benefit of males with 69 and a percentage of 69% compared to females who answered the questionnaire with a frequency of 31 individual making 31% of the total sample, this indicates that the higher percentage of the sample were males.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2-7	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
8-13	20	20.0	20.0	65.0
14-19	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
+20	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table (2): Frequency and percentage of the sample of the study according to Experience

As for table (2) it shows that most of the sample had an experience of 2-7 years within their position with a percentage of 45% while 35% of the total sample has an experience of 14-19 years with a percentage of 35% and individuals who had an experience of 8-13 years appeared in a percentage of 20%.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
22-27	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
28-33	18	18.0	18.0	44.0
34-38	40	40.0	40.0	84.0
+39	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table (3): Frequency and percentage of the sample of the study according to Age

Table (3) highlights the fact that most of the sample who answered the questionnaire were from the age range of 34-38 years making a percentage of 40% followed by individuals within the age range of 22-27 years with a percentage of 26% and individuals within 28-33 came with 18% and the least percentage goes for people above 39 years with a percentage of 16%.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelor	75	75.0	75.0	75.0
MA	18	18.0	18.0	93.0
PhD	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table (4): Frequency and percentage of the sample of the study according to Educational level

The table above shows the answers of the sample of the study in regard to the educational level, it was found out that most of the sample had a bachelor degree in an associated field with a percentage of 75% while people who had an MA degree formed 18% of the total sample and individuals with a PhD formed 7% of the total sample.

B. Analysis of Questionnaire paragraphs

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Performance					
The performance of the institution is deeply influenced by the behavior of the workers	100	1.00	5.00	4.0900	1.00599
Job performance influences the market value of the organization	100	1.00	5.00	4.1000	1.13262
Emotions influence the performance of the employees in a way that influences the performance of the organization	100	1.00	5.00	4.0400	1.12744
The performance of the employees is influenced by the work environment	100	1.00	5.00	4.4200	.97628
Well-built work environment enhances the job performance	100	1.00	5.00	4.3200	.98350
Job performance of employees influences the value of the organization	100	1.00	5.00	4.1400	1.03494
Job performance is influenced by the employee satisfaction	100	1.00	5.00	4.1800	1.04813
Drivers of Work Alienation					
Autonomy of Decision Making					
Mono decision is always better for the work	100	1.00	5.00	4.0900	.94383
Employees are always irritated by the diversity of the decisions	100	1.00	5.00	4.1900	.97125
Different sources of decision can depress the employee	100	1.00	5.00	4.3600	.95896
Multiple sources of decisions suggests a form of chaos	100	1.00	5.00	4.0900	.97540
Different sources of decisions means there is a lack of managerial support	100	1.00	5.00	3.9500	1.12254
Task Identity and Variety					
Multiple tasks are good for employees	100	1.00	5.00	4.1100	1.08148
Different and multiple tasks suggests a form of chaos	100	1.00	5.00	4.1700	.99549
Only multi-tasking employees can perform varied tasks	100	1.00	5.00	4.2900	.97747
It is important to choose the right employee for the right task	100	1.00	5.00	4.1800	1.06723
Employees feel alienated when they are excluded to only one type of tasks	100	1.00	5.00	4.1100	1.00398
The management should expose employees to different tasks	100	1.00	5.00	4.2800	.99575
Task identity refers to a certain type of employees	100	1.00	5.00	4.1100	.96290
Managerial Support					
alienation is negatively associated with self-ratings of job performance but unrelated to supervisors' ratings of job performance	100	1.00	5.00	4.4000	.98473
a gap exists between supervisors and workers with regard to perceived alienation	100	1.00	5.00	4.3500	.94682
The management should be aware of the employees' problem and should work on solving them	100	1.00	5.00	3.9600	1.17138
The management is the only source of support for employees	100	1.00	5.00	4.2200	1.03064
The lack of managerial support can lead the employees to the feeling of alienation	100	1.00	5.00	4.1900	1.07961
Feeling of Alienation					
When an employee feels alienated their performance gets influenced too	100	1.00	5.00	4.2900	.95658
Alienation gives a feeling to the employee that they don't belong to the organization	100	1.00	5.00	4.0800	.91762
Alienation is a great source for depression and disappointment for employees	100	1.00	5.00	3.7300	1.36222
Work environment is the only source of alienation	100	1.00	5.00	4.1600	1.03201
Alienation is accompanied by the lack of managerial support and a bad work environment	100	1.00	5.00	4.2900	.90224
Employees who don't feel alienated usually enjoy a good performance	100	1.00	5.00	4.1100	1.02391

Table (5): Descriptive Statistics

According to table (5) it was found out that there is a positive attitude towards the paragraphs of the study as their means were above the mean of the scale (3) which was seen to be a positive tendency of the analysis given that individuals had positive attitudes towards these questions. According to the analysis, it was seen that the highest ranked paragraph the first one within the managerial support variable articulated " alienation is negatively associated with self-ratings of job performance but unrelated to supervisors' ratings of job performance" (mean=4.4000) which is seen to be logical given that most individuals answered that their feeling of work alienation is not necessarily associated with their performance and they are willing to show a better performance even though they feel alienated. On the other hand, the least answered paragraph of the questionnaire was the 3rd paragraph from the 'feeling of alienation' variable articulated "Alienation is a great source for depression and disappointment for employees" (mean=3.7300), this paragraph appeared the least one in which the individuals agreed with.

Table (6) indicates that there are positive attitudes toward the above variables because their means are

above the mean of the scale (3). The most influential variable was the managerial support, while the least influential variable was feeling of alienation.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Jon Performance	100	1.00	5.00	4.1843	.96149
Autonomy of Decision Making	100	1.00	5.00	4.1360	.87796
Task Identity and Variety	100	1.00	5.00	4.1786	.92968
Managerial Support	100	1.00	5.00	4.2240	.90622
Feeling of Alienation	100	1.00	5.00	4.1100	.89211
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table (6): Descriptive Statistics

Hypothesis testing

The following section presents the hypotheses testing according to the analysis of the study.

There is a statistically significant influence of work alienation on the performance of the employees.

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.913 ^a	.834	.827	.40017		
ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	76.309	4	19.077	119.130	.000 ^a
	Residual	15.213	95	.160		
	Total	91.522	99			

Table (7): Testing of the Main Hypothesis

Multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses. It is found that R (0.913) is the correlation of the independent variables and the dependent variable. Also it was found that the F value of (119.13) is significant at (0.05) level. Thus, there is a statistically significant influence of work alienation on the performance of the employees.

As for the sub-hypotheses:

H1: There is a statistically significant influence of autonomy of decision making on the performance of the employee.

H2: There is a statistically significant influence of task variety and identity on the performance of the employee.

H3: There is a statistically significant influence of managerial support on the performance of the employee.

H4: There is a statistically significant influence of feeling of alienation on the performance of the employee.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.155	.197		.788	.433
	Autonomy of Decision Making	.426	.129	.389	3.301	.001
	Task Identity and Variety	.710	.138	.687	5.130	.000
	Managerial Support	.131	.174	.124	.755	.452
	Feeling of Alienation	-.305	.143	-.283	-2.135	.035

Table (8): Testing of sub-hypotheses

According to table (8) it can be seen that t values for (Autonomy of decision making, task identity and variety, and feeling of alienation) are significant at (0.05) level so and according to that:

- There is a statistically significant influence of Autonomy of Decision Making job performance.
- There is a statistically significant influence of task identity and variety on job performance.
- There is a statistically significant influence of Feeling of Alienation on job performance.

10. Results

According to that analysis above, and based on the commentary which was provided on each table; the influence of the work alienation on the job performance is apparent along with most of the chosen variables.

Basically, the results of the study indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between work alienation and job performance. This was also indicated through arguing about the influence of the work alienation on the performance of the employee through the degree of commitment that this individual have for their organization, in that sense, we argue here of the work environment which may influence the level of

alienation that an employee may feel according to the nature of work environment that they might find themselves in. the work environment must be based on justice so as not to develop alienation for the employees, in that sense, Ceylan and Sulu (2011) noted that justice implies the degree to which representatives are dealt with legitimately and whether the results acquired and the procedures done are reasonable at work environment. It characterizes the social communication quality between representatives at work. Early hierarchical equity writing recognized three sorts of equity as distributive, procedural and interactional equity. Afterward, it was suggested that between interactional equity has two subcategories, in particular educational equity and relational equity, and these subcategories ought to be considered independently. Based on that, justice within the work place may develop the sense of importance among employees and decrease their ability to develop feelings of alienation within the work place.

On the other hand, the results indicated that the managerial support plays an importance role in increasing the level of work alienation, meaning that the idea of alienation – psychologically- is based on the feeling of powerlessness and meaninglessness, those can be created easily through the level of the managerial support that an individual gets (Tummers and Bulk, 2011). In addition to that, and along with the managerial support, there can appear the diversity of the decision making process, which may increase the level of alienation among the employees and deepen their feeling of not belonging to their communication based on their feeling of helplessness and meaninglessness in their job. This can deeply influence the level of work performance through lowering the level of job satisfaction and influence the commitment of the employee to their organization.

However, Shantz et al (2015) noted to the concept of task diversity and variety, they argued that different tasks and varied job description can be seen as something frustrating for many employees, on the other hand, some employees found the variety of the tasks they are given may help them change their mood at work and have a better attitude towards it, based on that, the variety of the task and the level of differences between the tasks employees are given may not be that much influential on their level of alienation but rather as a driver for developing such a feeling.

11. Recommendations

The current study aimed at examining the influence of work alienation on the employees' performance within the organization in the industrial sector in Jordan. the sample of the study consisted of 125 individuals through answering a self-administered questionnaire. The final sample after the application process reached 100 individuals who answered the questionnaire properly for SPSS analysis.

The results of the study indicated that there is a statistically significant influence of work alienation on the performance of the employees. The most influential variable of the work alienation appeared to be task identity and variety and the autonomy of decision making. Based on that, the study recommends the following:

- Organizations should pay more attention to bettering the work environment in a way that supports the job satisfaction of the employees.
- Management has the biggest role in increasing the level of the work alienation, in that sense; the management should pay more attention to empowering employees in order to increase their feeling of meaning and importance, that way, the feeling of powerlessness and meaninglessness of the tasks that employees work.
- Organizations should hold seminars, workshops and conference for their employees in order to support their existence in the organization and be aware that what they do in the organization had a meaning and they have to feel proud of themselves.
- Courses and trainings are important in order to increase the self-esteem and confidence of the employees.

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