

ALIENATION AT WORK: A STUDY OF TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to comprehend Alienation at work and study its relationship with demographic factors – gender, age, and marital status. The data for the study were collected from the teaching professionals of various organisations (n = 50) using self-administered questionnaires. The results demonstrated that 26 percent of the total respondents were alienated at work. Furthermore, the results demonstrate while marital status significantly influences the level of alienation at work among employees, gender and varied age doesn't. Organisations working to survive the competitive surroundings cannot afford to have to have alienated workforce. Hence, organisations must give alienation at work the much attention it deserves, so that it can be minimised among their workforce.

Keywords : alienation at work, organisation, age, gender, marital status

Introduction

A work that lacks creativity tends to alienate humans (Marx, 1932). The very idea of alienation captured notability owing to the work of Hegel. In Phenomenology (1808), Hegel explained his musings on alienation through two German terms '*Entfremdung*', meaning a state of separation and, '*Entäußerung*' meaning surrender/divesture (Tummers, 2013). Karl Marx extensively explored and studied the relationship between economy and workers and is renowned for considerable ideation of alienation, especially in social and work situations (Chiaburu *et al.*, 2014). Marx originally described alienation as the ruination of the natural interconnectedness of species being (Ritzer and Walczak, 1986). According to Marx, there are four forms of alienation –

- Alienation from the product his or her labour,
- Alienation from the production process,
- Alienation from oneself, and
- Alienation from others.

In a pioneering study done by Blauner (1964) of blue-collar workers in four different industries. It was learned that alienation was minimal among craftsmen and chemical workers owing to craft freedom and non-manual control respectively; on the other hand, it was the maximal in assembly line production of automobile industry owing to monotonous work.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- To study the level of Alienation at work among teaching professionals.
- To study the impact of various demographic factors (gender, marital status, and age) on Alienation at Work.

Relevance of the Study

For a long period of time, alienation has troubled the mankind, but the construct didn't get the scrutiny it needed. Organisations are battling hard everyday to run their businesses and they cannot risk to have alienated employees. There is scarcity of contemporary researches studying and addressing alienation at work. The extant studies have rarely worked on alienation in workplace, which makes this very study relevant.

Review of Literature

Alienation is a thoughtful construct with unique and isolated existence, deserving sizeable recognition because of its widespread presence (Hirschfeld and Field, 2000; Nair and Vohra, 2012; Boora and Singh, 2017**). Alienation may result into unwanted consequences (Seeman, 1967) and reduces the productivity of workers (Pestonjee *et al.*, 1982). It is needful to investigate alienation to remove the vagueness clouding its conceptualization (Nair and Vohra, 2012). First, there is dearth of agreement regarding dimensionality of alienation (Boora and Singh, 2017**). Second, there is presence of numerous elucidation of the construct (Nair and Vohra, 2012). Third, there is substantial overlap of Alienation with other constructs (Seeman, 1959; Mottaz, 1981; Nair and Vohra, 2012).

There are several causes of Alienation at work: Individual Characteristics, Organisational Structure, Job Design, Income, and Leadership (Boora and Singh, 2017**).

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypotheses in conformity with the second objective are as follow:

H1: There is no statistically significant difference in the level of Alienation at work based on gender.

H2: There is no statistically significant difference in the level of Alienation at work based on marital status.

H3: There is no statistically significant difference in the level of Alienation at work based on age groups.

Research Methodology

Sample

The questionnaire was provided to 76 teaching professionals. After proper screening of the questionnaires, it was found out that few questionnaires were incomplete and therefore, they were excluded. 50 respondents completed the questionnaire, providing a 66percent response rate. The respondents were teaching professionals in various organisations.

Procedure

Data for the study was collected over a month period. Potential participants were provided with the hard copy of questionnaires and were asked to fill the questionnaire in person.

Measures

All items, other than demographics, were captured using a seven-point likert type scale with responses raging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).The construct of Alienation at work was measured with the scale developed by Lang (1985) and Nair and Vohra (2009) consisting of 10 items.

Participants were also asked for demographic details (gender, marital status, and age) using closed-ended questions.

The questionnaires were appropriately coded when they were received and the data was processed using statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) to derive information from it.

Results

In the analysis of data of 50 teaching professionals, 13 of them could be considered alienated at work (average construct score greater than 4 on a scale of 1 to 7). This forms 26 percent of the total sample.

Table 1, 2, and 3 depicts inferential statistics. All analyses were tested at the 0.05 significance level.

The study of results presented in Table 1 indicates, an independent sample t-test showed that the difference in level of alienation at work between male (n = 33, M = 3.76, SD = 0.94) and female (n = 17, M =3.53, SD = 0.91) was not statistically significant, t(48) = 0.84, **p=0.403**, 95% CI [-0.32, 0.79], d=0.27.

Table 1 : Independent Sample t-Test between Alienation at Work and Gender

	Gender				t(48)	p	95%CI	Cohen's d
	Male		Female					
Alienation at Work	M	SD	M	SD				
	3.76	0.94	3.53	0.91	0.84	0.403	[-0.32, 0.79]	0.27

Source: Primary Data (Note: n=50)

The study of results presented in Table 2 indicates, an independent sample t-test showed that the difference in level of alienation at work between single (n = 8, M = 2.82, SD =

0.70) and married (n = 42, M = 3.85, SD = 0.88) was statistically significant, t(48) = -3.12, **p = 0.003**, 95% CI [-1.69, -0.36], d=1.02.

Table 2 : Independent Sample t-Test between Alienation at Work and Marital Status

	Marital Status				t(48)	p	95%CI	Cohen's d
	Single		Married					
Alienation at Work	M	SD	M	SD				
	2.82	0.70	3.85	0.88	-3.12	0.003	[-1.69, -0.36]	1.02

Source: Primary Data (Note: n=50)

The study of results in Table 3 indicates, one way ANOVA showed that the difference in level of alienation at work among age group 21-30 (n = 18, M = 3.37, SD = 0.74), 31-40 (n = 19,

M = 3.66, SD = 0.98), 41-50 (n = 9, M = 3.98, SD = 0.85), and 51-60 (n = 4, M = 4.52, SD = 1.13) was not statistically significant, F(3,46)=2.23, p=0.097.

Table 3 : One way Analysis of Variance Test between Alienation at Work and various Age Groups

	Age Groups								F(3,46)	p
	21-30		31-40		41-50		51-60			
Alienation at Work	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
	3.37	0.74	3.66	0.98	3.98	0.85	4.52	1.13	2.23	0.097

Source: Primary Data (Note: n=50)

Discussions

In this study, we studied the level of alienation at work and relation of alienation at work with demographic factors among teaching professionals. The results demonstrated that 26 percent of respondents were alienated, which is considerable count and cannot be ignored. The results demonstrated that the level of alienation at work is influenced by difference in marital status but not by gender differences and varied age groups. Married individuals were found to be more alienated than single individuals. One possible explanation is that single individual has fewer responsibilities than a married one. Gender was found to have no association with level of alienation at work might be because of changing gender roles where males and females work cooperatively. Similarly, varied age has no influence on level of alienation at work.

Conclusion

Organisations are incessantly striving to survive the increasing competition. The present study tries to bring in light the relationship of alienation at work with demographic factors, which might help organisations to identify the individuals, who are more susceptible to alienation at work. The consequences of alienation at work are harmful for the organisation. Hence, organisations must understand the need to address the issue. A resort to leadership precepts from the Bhagavad Gita shall help leadership of the organisation to strive in the right direction and consequently, pacify the state of alienated workforce (Boora and Singh, 2017*)

Future Researches

To further demystify the construct of Alienation at work, we shall increase the sample size to analyze the pan India and also conduct research across various industries. The research can also be carried out focusing around factors causing Alienation at work. The researches in these areas shall help in giving the construct the attention it deserves.

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