Motivation factors of Blue collar workers verses White collar workers in Herzberg's Two Factors theory

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Abstract
Herzberg et al. (1959) developed “Two Factors theory” to focus on working conditions necessary for employees to be motivated. Since Herzberg examined only white collars in his research, this article reviews later studies on motivation factors of blue collar workers verses white collars and suggests some hypothesis for further researches.

Keywords: White/Blue collar employee, Herzberg’s Two Factors theory, Motivation

Introduction
Extremely competitive and globalized business environment today demands a strategic approach to direct and elevate the organization in a right path. Human resources improvement is one of the major fields which require concentration in successful organizations. One of the chief factors in human resource improvement is “Motivation”. The motivation has been one of the most significant subjects in management studies and theories in past decades. Different levels of human resources have different types of motivational demands. Considering this difference is mandatory to motivate different levels of organizational structure nests. One of these classifications is the collar distinction. In this paper the motivation theories and different collar classifications have been introduced. However, the theoretical framework of the study is Herzberg’s Two Factors theory, which has taken collars into consideration. Complementing his studies, couple of later researchers examined blue collars beside white collars. The purpose of current study is to compare results of later researches, based on Herzberg’s Two Factors theory, to figure out probable differences in white and blue collar employees’ motivational factors. To finish, couples of hypothesis are suggested for further studies.

Working Class
Social class, based on work places differences, is defined by nature of the work, which can be manual labor verse skilled one, level of remuneration, which can be wage verse salaried, access to resources like capital, education and land. After studying many researches associated with work class distinction, some different classification has been recognized such as White (Wikipedia, 2013), Blue (Wikipedia, 2013), Pink (Fontenot, 2007), Green
Despite the importance of White and Blue Collar workers among others, and being limited use of the other collars in scientific researches, in this paper, the authors have reviewed only the main two White and Blue collar categorization.

**White Collar**

The term white collar worker refers to a person who performs professional, managerial, or administrative work. Typically white collar work is performed in an office or cubicle. The term refers to the white dress shirts of male office workers common through most of the nineteenth and twentieth century’s western countries as opposed to the blue shirts, uniforms or coveralls of manual or service workers (Wikipedia, 2013). Mascull in 2002 has defined white collars as employees who perform tasks which are less “physically laborious” yet often more highly paid than blue collar employees, who do manual work (Saithep, 2008). White collar workers are the people who are working in an office or in a professional environment and traditionally, they were wearing “white collars” (Kirkegaard & Larsen, 2011). The term "white collar" is credited to Upton Sinclair, an American writer, in relation to modern clerical, administrative and management workers during the 1930s, though references to "easy work and a white collar" appear as early as 1911. (Wikipedia, 2013).

**Blue Collar**

A blue collar worker is a member of the working class who performs manual labor. Blue collar work may involve skilled or unskilled, manufacturing, mining, construction, mechanical, maintenance, technical installation and many other types of physical work. Often something is physically being built or maintained, in contrast, the white collar worker who typically performs work in an office environment and may involve sitting at a computer or desk. Blue collar work is often paid hourly wage labor, although some professionals may be paid by the project or salaried. There is a wide range of pay scales for such work depending upon field of specialty and experience (Wikipedia, 2013). Dr. Renée J. Fontenot has listed the distinctive elements of blue collar work as following: lesser requirements for formal academic education, training is often learned on the job, time clock used to calculate pay hourly rate, paid weekly, after "punching out" it is understood worker has no further duties; generally, pay is lower than white collar counterparts (Fontenot, 2007). According to Oxford American dictionaries and MacMillan English dictionary, a blue collar worker is a person who is a member of the working class and performs manual labor typically at an hourly wage. The name “blue collar” originally derives from the overalls worn by shop floor workers in some US factories (Kirkegaard & Larsen, 2011).

**Motivation Theories**

The word “motivation” has its roots from the Latin words Motio, Moveo, Movere, Movus, and Motivus, which in English can be translated into motion, to move, set into movement, or a motive power (Kirkegaard & Larsen, 2011). Motivation refers to “the reasons
which are underlying behavior” paraphrasing Gredler, Broussard and Garrison (2004) broadly define motivation as “the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something” (Lai, 2011). At the beginning of the 21st century, the framework of contemporary work motivation research integrates all the theories addressing the needs, personality, values, cognition, affect, the environment, and behavior. In the pertaining literature, motivation has been variously defined. Using Hind’s criteria for concept clarity, Moody and Pesut proposed the following successful definition for motivation: “motivation is a values-based, psychologically stimulus driven inner urge that activates and guides human behavior in response to self, other, and environment, supporting intrinsic satisfaction and leading to the intentional fulfillment of basic human drives, perceived needs, and desired goals” (Story, Hart, & Stasso, 2008). Intrinsic motivation is motivation that is animated by personal enjoyment, interest, or pleasure. Researchers often contrast intrinsic motivation with extrinsic motivation, which is motivation governed by reinforcement contingencies. Traditionally, educators consider intrinsic motivation to be more desirable and to result in better learning outcomes than extrinsic motivation (Lai, 2011). Herzberg et al. in 1959 found that employees often cited intrinsic related reasons for being satisfied with work, whereas extrinsic related reasons were reported as sources of dissatisfaction with work. McGregor in 1960 recommended that managers motivate employees based on whether the worker is either externally or intrinsically motivated. Vroom (1964) stated that one’s motivation to work is a multiplicative function of three factors: expectancy, instrumentality, and outcome valence. The distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors becomes especially meaningful for outcome valence, as some people focus on extrinsic outcomes (e.g., money), whereas others focus on intrinsic outcomes (e.g., satisfaction from mastering a task). These classic motivation theories are consistent with Two Factors approach (Story, Hart, & Stasso, 2008). Motivational theories have their root in behaviorism that was founded in 1913 by psychologist John B. Watson (Kirkegaard & Larsen, 2011). The question about employee motivation has played a central role in management practice and theory since 20th century. People have certain needs and their goal is to satisfy those needs. Work motivation concentrated mainly on the importance of creating a job environment that would facilitate self-motivation and devising motivational strategies that would directly increase or decrease productivity. Work motivation is an extremely relevant factor which influences the quality and content of work-related outcomes (Suominen, Routasalo, & Toode, 2010). These notions of work motivation are firmly grounded in theories of motivation such as theory of Needs (McClelland, 1961), Equity theory (Adams, 1963), Goal Setting theory (Locke, 1968), and Job Characteristic model (Hackman and Oldham, 1976) where references to specific features of work that are motivating to the employees have been given. Early studies alluding to work motivation was given by Taylor through scientific management and then later by Weber, Foller, and Benedix in the 1930’s. Work motivation was well-researched in content based theories of motivation through the works of Maslow (1943), Herzberg et al. (1959), and McClelland (1961) (Dwivedula & Bredillet, 2009). When reviewing the literature, there are two main types of work motivation theory that have been used to explain motivational issues like levels of work motivation, job satisfaction and what effects these aspects have on work behavior. These theories are called need theories and process theories. While Needs theories concentrate on the emotional aspects of motivation, process theories of motivation emphasize the role of cognitive processes (however emotional factors are not ignored). Process theories are suitable for in-depth case-studies whereas we believe that need theories provide a more suitable approach in order to
reach our objective. Need theories stress the identification of different needs which motivate behaviors. By identifying the needs and by fulfilling them, it is assumed that people will become motivated at work. Herzberg’s influential need theory of the 1960’s, the Two Factors theory, suggests that humans have two different sets of needs and that the different elements of the work situation satisfies or dissatisfies these needs (Lundberg, Gudmundson, & D, 2009). Herzberg and his colleagues proposed a new theory of job satisfaction that was to have both theoretical and practical consequences reviewed the early job satisfaction research literature and found no relationships between job satisfaction and work performance. They concluded that there were systematic relationships between workers attitudes and their behavior, but that these relationships had gone unnoticed because researchers had confused job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. They agreed that job satisfaction depends upon a certain particular set of conditions, whereas job dissatisfaction is usually the result of an entirely different set of work related conditions. Therefore, although it is possible to think of satisfaction and dissatisfaction as two extremes on a single continuum, they are themselves determined by two different factors (Furnham, Forde, & Ferrar, 1998). According to the theory, people have two major types of needs. Hygiene needs, which are influenced by the physical and psychological conditions in which people work and Motivator needs, which Herzberg described as being very similar to the higher order needs in Maslow’s hierarchy theory. Hygiene needs were said to be satisfied by the level of certain conditions called hygiene factors or dissatisfies supervision, interpersonal relations, physical working conditions, salary, company policies and administrative practices, benefits and job security. These factors are all concerned with the context or environment in which the job has to be done. When these factors are unfavorable, according to the theory, job dissatisfaction may result. Conversely, when hygiene factors are positive, like when workers perceive that their pay is fair and that their working conditions are good, barriers to job satisfaction are removed. However, the fulfillment of hygiene needs cannot in itself result in job satisfaction, but only in the reduction or elimination of dissatisfaction (Furnham, Forde, & Ferrar, 1998). Unlike hygiene needs, motivator needs are fulfilled by what Herzberg called motivator factors or satisfiers. Achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement, whereas hygiene factors are related to the context of work motivation factors are concerned with the nature of that work itself and the consequences of work. According to the theory, the factors that lead to job satisfaction are those that satisfy an individuals’ need for self-actualization "self-fulfillment in their work and it is only from the performance of the task that individuals can enjoy the rewards that will reinforce their aspirations. Compared to hygiene factors, which result in a neutral state neither satisfied nor dissatisfied when present, positive motivator factors supposedly result in job satisfaction, when recognition, responsibility and other motivator factors are absent from a job, however, the result will not be dissatisfaction, as with the absence of hygiene factors, but rather the same neutral state associated with the presence of hygiene factors (Furnham, Forde, & Ferrar, 1998). In addition, the Two Factors theory has been criticized for not taking individual differences of needs and values into account when explaining work motivation. Method dependency is another problem and variation in methodology, such as variation in questionnaires, interviews or behavioral observations, implies that different results are obtained. Also, when respondents answer critical incident questions, they may selectively recall situational factors and projecting failures to external factors. Evidence also questions how well the theory applies to individual variations like gender, culture and age categories not to mention organizational differences.
Robbins in seventh edition of “Organizational Behavior” in 1996 discussed one major criticism on Herzberg’s Two Factors theory which declares even if a worker is not motivated by one of his current work related factors, but his work might be motivating him generally. However, according to Furnham, Forde, and Ferrari (1999), the theory and its applications remain influential within the domain of organizational theory (Lundberg, Gudmundson, & D, 2009).

**Theoretical Frame Work**

The author has chosen to use theory is Herzberg’s Two Factors theory. This theory is chosen because it specifically focuses on the factors that are necessary for a person to be motivated, in addition to the fact that it is highly recognized. Furthermore, Herzberg’s theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic factors, which might be evaluated differently depending on the type of work performed. The basic premise of the Two Factors theory is that if an employer or manager is trying to increase job satisfaction and ultimately job performance for an employee or coworker, they need to address those factors that affect one’s job satisfaction. The most direct approach is to work on the intrinsic, job content factors. Giving the employee encouragement and recognition helps them to feel more valued within the company, as well as giving a sense of achievement and responsibility. Herzberg says, that “the only way to motivate the employee is to give him [her] challenging work in which he [she] can assume responsibility” (Riley, 2005). That is mainly because Herzberg’s Two Factors theory was based around interviews with 203 American accountants and engineers (white collar employees) in Pittsburgh (Wikipedia, 2013). Achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, possibility of growth, company policy or administration, personal or working relationships, working conditions, salary, personal life, and feeling a job security are the defined motivation factors according to Herzberg’s Two Factors theory (Riley, 2005).

**Literature Review**

The extent to which an employer is able to motivate employees is important for the overall success of the organization on its markets. One of the most important challenges facing managers is the creation of a context within which employees feel motivated and will act in order to achieve the goals of the organization. Managers may, by influencing the context, affect the degree of work motivation among the employees. The individual differences of employees have important implications for managerial practice. Motivational theories are useful when studying the range of human motives to explain how the motives affect human behavior. However, the theories do not provide an insight of what motivates a particular individual or group. Therefore, when searching for the specific work motivators of a particular individual or group of individuals, there is no other way than finding out what actually motivates that particular individual or group. In the last twenty five years, there has been an increasing interest in defining work motivation through the identification of constructs for work motivation such as challenging nature of work, feedback on performance, enjoyable nature of work, task identity, task significance, and job autonomy. In the last seven years, issues of work motivation in relation to groups and teams came to fore. Importance of
documented information that will help the employees to perform their tasks effectively has also been discussed. Dwivedula and Braille’s study was over a sample comprised of 187 participants of the various training programs conducted by the authors’ university. It is necessary to be clarified that, according to definition of blue collars, we categorize this sample as basically white collar employees (Dwivedula & Bredillet, 2009). Dwivedula states that conceptual understanding of work motivation later gave rise to the job characteristic model. The Process based theories of work motivation gained prominence in the 1960’s. These theories view motivation as being dynamic across time (during the tenure of the individual’s employment), looking for causal factors pertaining to time (tenure), and events (job content, and job context). Most notable contributions came from Vroom’s Expectancy theory (1964), Porter and Lawler (1968), and Locke (1968). Through these theories, we know that work motivation has been characterized by dimensions such as secured and interesting job, ability to perform the job, recognition from superiors and colleagues, adequate pay, and feedback on performance (Dwivedula & Bredillet, 2009). What declared in Vroom, Porter, Lawler and Locke’s studies as work motivation factors, is only a small portion of other researches to find out the effect of other pre-assumed factors on motivation of employees. However, according to the theoretical framework of the current review, in continue only the related studies based on Herzberg Two Factors theory, which have collar classification as well, will be discussed. Armstrong’s system was based on Herzberg’s (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959) content-context dichotomy. The engineers generally ranked job content factors (recognition, responsibility, achievement, promotion, and work itself) higher and the job context factors (salary, security, status, supervision, peer relations, company policy, and working conditions) lower than the assemblers. Within the content category, however, the largest differences in ranks were for achievement and the work itself and the smallest for recognition, responsibility, and promotion. Friedlander (1965) based on Herzberg et al (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959) used direct ratings of importance on a 5-point scale to compare white and blue collar employees at one location of a branch of the United States Government. White collar employees rated social-environmental factors like security, work group, and co-workers as significantly less important and intrinsic task factors such as achievement, challenge, and use of abilities as significantly more important than blue collar employees. There were no marked differences between these two groups with respect to what Friedlander called recognition through advancement which included recognition, responsibility, and promotion (Locke, 1973).

Armstrong (1971) compared engineers with assemblers using the same type of importance ratings as Friedlander, but a somewhat different method of classification. He surveyed task activity, amount of work, smoothness of work, achievement, promotion, responsibility, verbal recognition, money, interpersonal context and physical context. Schneider and Locke (1971) developed a new classification system based on the event agent dichotomy. Their study proved the same classes of events produced both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in both blue collar and white collar employees. These events were mainly what Herzberg et al on 1959 called motivator events. The results showed that white collar employees placed more importance on task factors and less importance on reward and/or context factors than blue collar employees (Locke, 1973). In few researches being done during 1946, 1981 and later on 1986, considering gender affection, a large sample of industrial employees has been studied by Gellerman, Amacom and Aggarwal. These
researchers divided the respondents into workers and supervisors and asked them to rank ten identified effective factors on motivation. They analyzed this data for gender, job type (collar), income level, age and organizational level. They found out the response for male and female workers were not significantly different, however women put factor “full appreciation of work” on the top. They divided the age of responder to under 30, 31-40, 41-50 and over 50 years old. They noticed that there is a significant difference between the ranks of the motivation factors for the workers who are less than 30 years’ old and the other age groups. These young group, (younger than 30 years old), preferences were good wages, job security, and promotion, because they have not fulfilled their basic needs according to Maslow as older ages. Un-skilled blue collar and white collar workers responses in motivation factors ranking was significantly different. Blue collars selected full appreciation of the work done, interesting work, and good wages as the most important motivation factors while white collars showed interest in interesting work, good working conditions and appreciation of work done. For skilled blue collars and white collars fewer differences emerged. The skilled blue collar workers did not seem to place as much value on full appreciation of work done. In organizational level category, lower organization level employees rated good wages first and job security second, while middle and higher levels rated interesting work first and appreciation of work done second. From income perspective, low income group, like young employees rated good wages, job security and promotion in primary positions while the other income groups rated these mention factors in middle of their list (Kovach, 1987). Beecham et al in 2008 investigated software engineers (considered as white collars) to realize their motivation and demonization factors. They considered rewards and incentives, development needs addressed, variety of work, career path, empowerment/ responsibility, good management, sense of belonging/supportive relationships, work/life balance, working in successful company, employee participation/involvement/working with others, feedback, recognition, equity, trust/respect, technically challenging work, job security/stable environment, identify with the task, autonomy, appropriate working conditions, and sufficient resources as motivating factors. To recognize de-motivating factors, on the other hand, they tested risk, stress, inequity, interesting work going to other parties, unfair reward system, lack of promotion opportunities/stagnation/career plateau/boring work/poor job-fit, poor communication, uncompetitive pay/poor pay/unpaid overtime, unrealistic goals/phony deadlines, bad relationship with users and colleagues, poor working environment, poor management, producing poor quality software, poor cultural fit/stereotyping/role ambiguity, and lack of influence/not involved in decision making/no voice. The results introduced general aspects of the job which motivate software engineers such as problem solving, working to benefit others and technical challenge. Their key finding was that the published models of motivation in software engineering are disparate and do not reflect the complex needs of software engineers in their career stages, cultural and environmental settings. Furthermore, they came to conclusion that that surveys are often aimed at how software engineers feel about ‘the organization’, rather than ‘the profession’. Overall, their findings indicated that there is no clear understanding of the software engineers’ job, what motivates them, how they are motivated, or the outcome and benefits of motivating them (Beecham, Baddoo, Hall, Robinson, & Sharp, 2008). Suominen et al. in 2010 reviewed nurses’ work motivation from the perspective of staff nurses. Based on the definition of collars, because of their tough work description, the authors have sorted them as blue collars. The findings were based on the perspectives of 16,073 staff nurses employed by different hospitals, nursing
homes and home healthcare services in 13 countries. Their researches concluded that workplace characteristics, working conditions, personal characteristics, individual priorities and internal psychological states are the main motivation factors for the nurses (Suominen, Routasalo, & Toode, 2010). Kristina in her study on 2011, tested whether there is a difference in what motivates the blue collar and white collar groups or not. Her study was done based on Herzberg’s Two Factors theory by implementation of quantities methods and she compared two different companies. She took her sample from blue and white collar workers in first one and only white collars in second one. Kristina has measured 14 factors for comparing motivation in blue collar and white collar workforce in her research including salary, job security, relationship with peers, status, company policy, relationship with supervisor, working conditions, work life balance, personal growth, sense of achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement. She used SPSS to analysis the data and she found out that blue collars prefer the need for affiliation while white collars employees preferred the need for achievement. This means social interaction is more valued for blue collar employees while white collars value challenging job and responsibility. According to Herzberg’s Two Factors theory, which says blue collars value generally hygiene factors, where white collars value sense of achievement, work itself, and recognition higher. Answers made it very clear that the most important factor for the blue collar workers was salary. Based on her research, blue collar employees were motivated by hygiene factors like salary and company policy higher than white collars and white collar workers valued the motivators of sense of achievement, work itself, and recognition higher than blue collars. She found that job type influences some factors of work serve to motivate employees which depends on each company and its management system (Kirkegaard & Larsen, 2011).

Discussion

There is not any boundary in definition of job satisfaction and work motivation in most of data gathering methods. There is an overlap between the borders of these two different concepts and the limit is mainly vague in most of studies. In other words, it is difficult to find a questionnaire, which measures current job motivation with specific focusing on motivation not job satisfaction. It seems there is not an accurate tool to measure motivation, as so, in most of studies both motivation and job satisfaction concepts have not been separated basically. It is concluded that despite of having two different names, work motivation and job satisfaction are still intertwined concepts. On the other hand, Beecham et al in their research on 2008 determined that surveys are often aimed at how workers feel about ‘the organization’, rather than ‘the profession’ itself, which is true (Beecham, Baddoo, Hall, Robinson, & Sharp, 2008).

Conclusion

Based upon almost all the reviewed researches in literature review, white collars valued the challenging nature of work, interesting work (nature of the work), achievement, and appreciation of the work done (recognition) more than other aspects of the job (Locke, 1973), (Kovach, 1987), (Kirkegaard & Larsen, 2011). It conveys this idea to the mind that
white collars, basically professional ones, enjoy the nature of the job. It seems they are motivated, if they use their knowledge in solving the challenging problems at work and if their effort for achievement is recognized. These factors give positive satisfaction, arising from intrinsic conditions of the job itself and are categorized as Motivator factors in Herzberg’s Two Factors theory. It is while blue collar workers, in almost all reviewed studies, are encouraged to work through receiving salary, working condition, peer relations, and job security (Kovach, 1987), (Suominen, Routasalo, & Toode, 2010), (Kirkegaard & Larsen, 2011). It shows how blue collar employees’ motivation is influenced by Hygiene factors. It can be concluded that like the Herzberg’s Two Factor theory suggests, these mentioned aspects may not give positive satisfaction, though dissatisfaction results from their absence.

Suggestions For Future Studies

After going through all the previous studies on motivation of white collars verses blue collars, it seems that there are some gaps in the studies which could be opportunities for future studies. One factor that might affect motivation is age. Since values, beliefs and attitudes Change over time, different age ranges might have more in common than workers categorized only in blue or white collar jobs. Although, in the researches between 1946 and 1986, by Gellerman, Amacom and Aggarwal, the age was considered, the age categorizing was not at the same time with collar categorizing. So, perhaps considering them simultaneously is a chance to examine the effect of age range on collars motivation. The same thing has happened for the gender (Kovach, 1987). In other words, in later researches, that would be better, if the effect of age and gender, separately, on white collar and blue collar workers be examined. For gender effect, for example, testing the following hypotheses is suggested.

1. Female blue collars are more motivated than male blue collars.
2. Female blue collars are more motivated than male white collars.
3. Female white collars are more motivated than male blue collars.
4. Female white collars are more motivated than male white collars.

Conversely, the similar hypothesis for male white and blue collar workers must be developed. However, for age ranges it is important to find the border age where the motivation factors of white and blue collar workers may differ according to age requirements. It determined from Kovach study in 1987 that age 30 is the critical age border to affect the motivation factors for the two groups (Kovach, 1987). Here are a couple of the suggested hypotheses to be tested. The similar hypothesis for white collar workers under and over 30 years old must be developed.

1. Blue collar workers under 30 years old are less motivated than blue collar workers over 30 years old.
2. Blue collar workers under 30 years old are less motivated than white collar workers under 30 years old.
3. Blue collar workers less than 30 years old are less motivated than white collar workers over 30 years old.

The similar hypothesis for white collars under and over 30 years old must be developed.
References


