

## Jobs, Careers, and Callings: People's Relations to Their Work

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We present evidence suggesting that most people see their work as either a Job (focus on financial rewards and necessity rather than pleasure or fulfillment; not a major positive part of life), a Career (focus on advancement), or a Calling (focus on enjoyment of fulfilling, socially useful work). Employees at two work sites ( $n = 196$ ) with a wide range of occupations from clerical to professional were unambiguous in seeing their work primarily in terms of a Job, Career, or Calling. Differences in respondents' relations to their work could not be reduced to demographic or occupational differences; an homogenous subset of 24 college administrative assistants were, like the total sample of respondents, distributed evenly across Job, Career, and Calling. © 1997 Academic Press

Work constitutes more than one-third of waking life for most human adults, and there is a substantial psychological literature devoted to the study of work. Satisfaction with work varies widely across individuals (Staw & Ross, 1985) and seems to constitute a substantial part of the subjective qual-

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ity of life (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991). In a measure of general life satisfaction, work satisfaction was found to account for 20% of the variance of the entire measure (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). Quality of life, in turn, can have a major effect on life stress and on health (Adler & Matthews, 1994). There is strong evidence for the belief that dispositional factors are related to job attitudes (Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986; Staw & Ross, 1985). This suggests that the way individuals view work may be a function of stable traits, not just reflections of the work itself. It is possible that these traits interact with the objective characteristics of the work (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Hulin & Blood, 1968; Schneider, 1983). For these reasons, we believe it is important to understand the subjective experience of work: how individuals differ in their experience of the work they do.

The inspiration for our approach came from *Habits of the Heart*, in which Bellah *et al.* (1985) argue that there are three distinct relations people can have to their work: as Jobs, Careers, and Callings (see also Schwartz, 1986, 1994). The distinctions, drawn starkly, are these: People who have Jobs are only interested in the material benefits from work and do not seek or receive any other type of reward from it. The work is not an end in itself, but instead is a means that allows individuals to acquire the resources needed to enjoy their time away from the Job. The major interests and ambitions of Job holders are not expressed through their work. In contrast, people who have Careers have a deeper personal investment in their work and mark their achievements not only through monetary gain, but through advancement within the occupational structure. This advancement often brings higher social standing, increased power within the scope of one's occupation, and higher self-esteem for the worker (Bellah *et al.*, 1985, p. 66). Finally, people with Callings find that their work is inseparable from their life. A person with a Calling works not for financial gain or Career advancement, but instead for the fulfillment that doing the work brings to the individual. The word "calling" was originally used in a religious context, as people were understood to be "called" by God to do morally and socially significant work (see Weber, 1956, 1963). While the modern sense of "calling" may have lost its religious connection (but see Davidson & Caddell, 1994, for evidence that the religious connection still matters), work that people feel called to do is usually seen as socially valuable—an end in itself—involving activities that may, but need not be, pleasurable.

The Job–Career–Calling distinction is not necessarily dependent upon occupation. Within any occupation, one could conceivably find individuals with all three kinds of relations to their work. Although one might expect to find a higher number of Callings among those in certain occupations, for example, teachers and Peace Corps employees, it is plausible that salespersons, medical technicians, factory workers, and secretaries could view their work as a Calling. Such people could love their work and think that it contributes to making the world a better place.

Although this tripartite set of relations to work has not been explored by psychologists, it is related to some aspects of work that have received considerable attention. One is work satisfaction, which has been found to be sensitive to many different conditions of work, including actual work tasks, work organization, pay, supervision, benefits, promotional structure, and co-workers (Locke & Latham, 1990). While we expect that work satisfaction would be highest for Callings and lowest for Jobs, we do not believe that the Job, Career, Calling distinction is defined entirely by its potential relation to job satisfaction. For example, a successful career in business or bureaucracy might be just as satisfying as a calling.

Another analysis of work that is related to the present one contrasts intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to work. An ambitious recent study on this issue includes the formulation of a scale, the Work Preference Inventory, to assess intrinsic versus extrinsic work motivations. Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe (1994) analyzed the extrinsic orientation into two subfactors: compensation and outward orientation. Correspondingly, intrinsic motivation is analyzed into challenge and enjoyment. We presume that intrinsic motivation is most associated with Callings, and extrinsic motivation is most associated with Jobs, with Careers somewhat closer to extrinsic than intrinsic motivation. However, we do not see the distinction between Careers and either Jobs or Callings as neatly falling on the intrinsic–extrinsic dimension. For example, a Calling might be neither challenging nor enjoyable and a Career might be both.

We believe the Job–Career–Calling distinction has not previously been explicit in the psychology of work. Amabile *et al.*'s (1994) Work Preference Inventory, Hall's (1968) "sense of calling" sub-scale, and some work on work involvement and identification (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965) all relate to issues raised by the tripartite work classification, but none of these research directions proposes or accounts for the three distinct relations to work that are the focus of the present study.

The questionnaire developed and reported on in this paper was designed to provide initial evidence of the usefulness of the Job–Career–Calling distinctions. We asked how easy it is for people to classify themselves along these lines, what features of each dimension may be most significant, what objective and psychological features of occupations or persons are related to each dimension, and what the correlates of viewing one's work as a Job, Career, or Calling might be, in terms of measures of work and life satisfaction and physical health.

## METHOD

### *The Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was titled the "University of Pennsylvania Work–Life Questionnaire" and the terms "job," "career," and "calling" did not appear in it (except for a job satisfaction question—see below). On the first page of the questionnaire appeared three separate para-

TABLE 1  
 Paragraphs Describing Job, Career, and Calling

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*Job*

Mr. A works primary to earn enough money to support his life outside of his job. If he was financially secure, he would no longer continue with his current line of work, but would really rather do something else instead. Mr. A's job is basically a necessity of life, a lot like breathing or sleeping. He often wishes the time would pass more quickly at work. He greatly anticipates weekends and vacations. If Mr. A lived his life over again, he probably would not go into the same line of work. He would not encourage his friends and children to enter his line of work. Mr. A is very eager to retire.

*Career*

Mr. B basically enjoys his work, but does not expect to be in his current job five years from now. Instead, he plans to move on to a better, higher level job. He has several goals for his future pertaining to the positions he would eventually like to hold. Sometimes his work seems a waste of time, but he knows that he must do sufficiently well in his current position in order to move on. Mr. B can't wait to get a promotion. For him, a promotion means recognition of his good work, and is a sign of his success in competition with his coworkers.

*Calling*

Mr. C's work is one of the most important parts of his life. He is very pleased that he is in this line of work. Because what he does for a living is a vital part of who he is, it is one of the first things he tells people about himself. He tends to take his work home with him and on vacations, too. The majority of his friends are from his place of employment, and he belongs to several organizations and clubs relating to his work. Mr. C feels good about his work because he loves it, and because he thinks it makes the world a better place. He would encourage his friends and children to enter his line of work. Mr. C would be pretty upset if he were forced to stop working, and he is not particularly looking forward to retirement.

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graphs describing Job, Career, and Calling according to the definitions offered by Bellah *et al.* (1985) and Schwartz (1986, 1994) (Mr. A, Mr. B, Mr. C; Table 1). The instructions were first to read all three paragraphs and then to indicate how much the respondent was like Mr. A, Mr. B, and Mr. C. on a scale ranging from "very much," "somewhat," "a little," or "not at all like me" (scored 3-0).<sup>1</sup>

On the second page of the questionnaire appeared 18 true-false items asking about specific aspects of relations to work that are relevant to the Job, Career, Calling distinction (Table 2). Almost all of the true-false items appeared in the prose of at least one of the paragraphs. Of the true-false items, 5 were intended to probe *behaviors* related to work, while the other 13 examined *feelings* about work.

Next appeared three items taken from Campbell *et al.* (1976) that asked for self-rating of satisfaction with life (SATLIFE), health (SATHEALTH), and job (SATJOB) on a seven-point scale (1 = completely dissatisfied to 7 = completely satisfied). Next was a self-rating of health (HEALTH; 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = excellent) and a self-rating of occupational status (SOCSTAND; 1 = bottom social standing to 9 = top social standing). In order to gauge work satisfaction in another manner, respondents were asked to rank hobbies, work, and friends based upon the amount of satisfaction they received from each (WORKRANK).

<sup>1</sup>Future versions of this scale should be in terms of "A" rather than "Mr. A," and so forth.

TABLE 2  
 18 True-False Items, with Percent Answering "True" and Relations to Job,  
 Career, and Calling Paragraphs ( $n = 196$ )

Item	% True	Correlations with paragraph scores		
		Job	Career	Calling
I find my work rewarding. (REWARD)	84	-46*	-13	33*
I am eager to retire. (RETIRE)	36	49*	-01	-41*
My work makes the world a better place. (BETTERWORLD)	62	-35*	-04	28*
I am very conscious of what day of the work week it is and I greatly anticipate weekends. I say, "Thank God it's Friday!" (TGIF)	62	40*	08	-41*
I tend to take my work with me on vacations. (VACATION)	15	-20*	05	42*
I expect to be in a higher level job in five years. (HIGHERLEVEL)	49	-11	58*	-06
I would choose my current work life again if I had the opportunity. (CHOOSEAGAIN)	50	-47*	-19	48*
I feel in control of my work life. (INCONTROL)	68	-27*	-16	20*
I enjoy talking about my work to others. (TALKWORK)	68	-48*	05	40*
I view my job primarily as a stepping stone to other jobs. (STEPPINGSTONE)	26	06	55*	-13
My primary reason for working is financial—to support my family and lifestyle. (FINANCIAL)	64	54*	0	-58
I expect to be doing the same work in five years. (SAMEWORK)	54	-05	-47*	22
If I was financially secure, I would continue with my current line of work even if I was no longer paid. (STILLWORK)	25	-32*	-11	47*
When I am not at work, I do not think much about my work. (THINKWORK)	51	24*	-19	-33*
I view my job as just a necessity of life, much like breathing or sleeping. (NECESSITY)	50	48*	01	-29*
I never take work home with me. (TAKEHOME)	31	21*	-05	-32*
My work is one of the most important things in my life. (WORKIMPORTANT)	48	-41*	-04	59*
I would not encourage young people to pursue my kind of work. (NOTENCOURAGE)	25	39*	02	-31*

Note. Decimal points omitted from tabled correlations. Item abbreviations appear in parentheses.

\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed. Job and Calling items coded "1" for responses indicating Calling and "0" otherwise; remaining items coded "1" for response indicating Career.

Finally, several demographic items appeared at the end of the questionnaire, including occupation, age, sex, years of education (SCHOOL), income, years in current position (JOB-YEARS), hours worked per week, days missed per year excluding vacation (DAYSMISS), marital status, and number of children. Income was divided into five categories (from under \$25,000 to over \$75,000) and age was recorded in years. Respondents were assigned to occupa-

tional levels based upon the occupational prestige score given to their occupations by the Nakao & Treas (in press) 1989 General Social Survey (OCCSTATUS). The occupational prestige scale ranges from 0–100, and respondents were divided into levels by increments of 10; therefore, a respondent with an occupation that scores 26 was assigned to the third occupational level.

### *Respondents*

The respondents were 76 (out of 130) employees of a major state university student health service, and 162 (out of 283) non-faculty employees of a small liberal arts college (total 238 out of 413 employees) who volunteered to complete the questionnaire. Only respondents reporting working at least 35 or more hours per week were retained, leaving a total of 196 respondents for analysis.

The two work sites were surveyed at different times. Some minor additions and deletions of questions were made after the first site (student health service) was surveyed, but all questions reported in this study were identical in the two samples. The questionnaires were completed anonymously.

## RESULTS

### *Characteristics of the Respondents*

Of the 196 respondents, 79% were female, with a mean age of 42 years (range 21–69). This sample included individuals in a range of occupations, including physicians, nurses, administrators, pharmacists, health educators, librarians, supervisors, computer programmers and analysts, medical technicians, administrative assistants, and clerical employees. The income distribution of the respondents was: <\$25,000/year, 39%; 25,000–34,999, 28%; 35,000–49,999, 18%; 50,000–74,999, 13%; >75,000, 3%. The distribution of occupational status (OCCSTATUS), as defined above, was level 3 (3%), level 4 (19%), level 5 (12%), level 6 (34%), level 7 (29%), level 8 (2%), and level 9 (2%).

### *Categorization of Respondents*

A respondent was placed into the category corresponding to the paragraph to which the respondent gave the highest rating. A small number of respondents misunderstood the instructions and rated only one paragraph, presumably the one that was most like them. Others rated two or more paragraphs as being equally like them. These two groups of respondents (total  $n = 61$ ) were not included in the analyses in which respondents are categorized by the highest rated paragraph, but were included in analyses of correlations of particular paragraph scores with the various outcome variables and in analyses focusing on responses to the true–false items.

As shown in Table 3 (top), respondents are clear in expressing how they view their work. Mean relevance ratings for the highest rated paragraph are 2.5, 2.4, and 2.4 for Job, Career, and Calling respondents; the mean ratings for the other paragraphs range from .23 to .70. The standard deviations indi-

TABLE 3  
Means of Characteristics of 135 Respondents Viewing Work as Job, Career, or Calling

	Job ( <i>n</i> = 44)	Career ( <i>n</i> = 43)	Calling ( <i>n</i> = 48)
Paragraph ratings			
JOB	2.5 (0.7)	0.7 (0.6)	0.2 (0.4)
CAREER	0.5 (0.7)	2.4 (0.6)	0.5 (0.7)
CALLING	0.2 (0.4)	0.6 (0.7)	2.4 (0.6)
Demographics			
AGE	43.0 <sup>a</sup> (8.0)	37.1 <sup>b</sup> (10.0)	44.9 <sup>a</sup> (10.7)
INCOME	1.9 <sup>a</sup> (1.1)	1.8 <sup>a</sup> (0.9)	2.5 <sup>b</sup> (1.3)
SCHOOL	14.8 <sup>a</sup> (2.4)	15.1 <sup>a</sup> (2.3)	16.6 <sup>b</sup> (2.4)
SOCSTAND	4.5 <sup>a</sup> (2.0)	5.2 <sup>a</sup> (1.7)	6.0 <sup>b</sup> (1.4)
OCCSTATUS	5.5 <sup>a</sup> (1.2)	5.2 <sup>a</sup> (1.3)	6.5 <sup>b</sup> (1.2)
JOBYEARS	6.7 <sup>b</sup> (4.5)	4.8 <sup>a</sup> (3.7)	8.1 <sup>b</sup> (7.4)
Well-being			
SATLIFE	4.5 <sup>a</sup> (1.1)	4.7 <sup>a</sup> (1.1)	5.5 <sup>b</sup> (1.0)
SATHEALTH	5.3 (1.4)	5.4 (1.4)	5.6 (1.2)
SATJOB	4.2 <sup>a</sup> (1.5)	4.6 <sup>a</sup> (1.4)	5.7 <sup>b</sup> (1.2)
WORKRANK	2.6 <sup>a</sup> (.54)	2.4 <sup>a</sup> (.66)	1.6 <sup>b</sup> (.74)
HEALTH	3.2 (0.7)	3.3 (0.7)	3.3 (0.6)
DAYSMISS	3.2 <sup>a</sup> (2.1)	4.3 <sup>a</sup> (2.9)	2.0 <sup>b</sup> (2.1)

*Note.* Table includes only respondents who rated all three paragraphs, and rated no more than one dimension as most like them. Some means are based on 1–4 fewer respondents than column *n* because of missing data. Standard deviations appear in parentheses. Means in the same row that do not share the same superscript (*a* or *b*) differ at  $p < .05$  two-tailed.

cate that there is practically no overlap in relevance ratings: essentially all those viewing work as a Job, for instance, rated the Job paragraph as “very much” or “somewhat like me” and rated Career and Calling as “not at all” or “a little like me.”

In this sample of 135 employees, nearly equal numbers of respondents viewed work as a Job, Career, or Calling (44, 43, and 48, respectively). Furthermore, Job and Calling paragraph ratings were strongly and inversely related [ $r(n = 135) = -.52, p < .01$ ], whereas Career ratings were not correlated ( $r_s = -.14$  and  $-.01$ ) with either Calling or Job (correlations not tabled). Consistent with the descriptions of the three dimensions, Calling respondents ranked work as relatively more important in comparison to hobbies and friends (mean rank 1.6) than did Career or Calling respondents (mean ranks 2.6 and 2.4; see Table 3).

#### *Relation of Dimensions to the 18 True–False Items*

All but three of the true–false items appeared in at least one paragraph, and we examined responses to these items chiefly in order to confirm our expectation about the correlation of items with paragraph scores. That is, the true–false items provided the opportunity to test our expectation that

each hypothesized feature of Job, Career, and Calling would individually correlate higher with the rating of the paragraph in which the feature appeared than with ratings of the other two paragraphs.

As shown in Table 2, the correlations of true–false items with their corresponding paragraph ratings were generally significant and substantial (.25 to .55). The significant correlations include the three statements that were not included in any of the paragraphs, “I enjoy talking about my work with others” (positively with Calling and negatively with Job), “My primary reason for working is financial—to support my family and lifestyle” (positively with Job and negatively with Calling), and “I am very conscious of what day of the work week it is and I greatly anticipate weekends. I say, ‘Thank God It’s Friday!’” (positively with Job and negatively with Calling). The only surprise was the extent to which Job and Calling items correlated equally well (in opposite directions) with both Job and Calling paragraph ratings. Career items correlated only with ratings of the Career paragraph. In short, responses to the true–false items give the same picture as the intercorrelations of paragraph ratings already described: Job and Calling are inversely related, whereas Career is independent of both Job and Calling.

A principal components factor analysis of the matrix of intercorrelations of the 18 true–false items revealed four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00: 4.91, 2.09, 1.64, and 1.25. The rotated factors accounted respectively for 27.30, 11.60, 9.09, and 6.92% of the total variance. Of these factors, the first was identified by item loadings as representing the Job/Calling dimension. Because the responses of those who view work as a Job or Calling are often judged to be opposite responses to the same items, it is possible that the same factor can be representing both dimensions. The items with the highest loadings were CHOOSEAGAIN, WORKIMPORTANT, TALKWORK, STILLWORK, FINANCE, AND NECESSITY (all loadings  $>.54$ ; see Table 2 for full items). The second factor was identified by item loadings as probably representing the Career dimension. The items with the highest loadings were HIGHERLEVEL, SAMEWORK, and STEPPINGSTONE (all loadings  $>.55$ ) and the only other item with a loading above .40 was THINKWORK.

### *Relation of Dimensions to Demographic Characteristics*

Table 3 presents the mean scores on demographic variables for those respondents who view work as a Job, Career, or Calling. With the exception of age, with Career respondents younger than Job respondents by an average of 6 years, there were no significant differences between Career and Job respondents. Compared with Job and Career respondents, however, Calling respondents were significantly better paid (INCOME) and better educated (SCHOOL), and had occupations higher in both self-perceived status (SOCSTAND) and objective prestige level (OCCSTATUS).

### *Relation of Dimensions to Well-Being*

We suggested that Callings would generally be associated with greater life, health, and job satisfaction and with better health. Results were consistently in this direction, with Job respondents scoring lowest and Calling respondents highest on all four of these measures (Table 3). Calling respondents reported notably and significantly higher life and job satisfaction than Job and Career respondents. Calling respondents also ranked work satisfaction significantly higher (relative to hobbies and friends) than did Job and Career respondents (WORKRANK, Table 3). In contrast, differences between Job and Career respondents on satisfaction and two health measures were all small and non-significant.

Although this study was not directed at assessing work performance, we did include one relevant measure: self report of days of work missed. Calling respondents missed significantly fewer days than either Job or Career respondents; Career and Job respondents did not differ significantly in days missed (Table 3).

### *Results from 24 Administrative Assistants*

Since respondents who viewed their work as a Calling did work of significantly higher occupational status than respondents in the other two groups, the data reported here could be taken to make the fairly obvious point that people in relatively high-status occupations think more positively about their work and have more interesting and challenging work than people in relatively low-status occupations. We were able to assess this possibility by analyzing the results from a subset of our respondents. The largest single occupational group represented in our sample consisted of 24 administrative assistants at the college work site. This group was analyzed separately in order to determine both whether the Job, Career, Calling distinction might be made within a single occupation, and if so, whether the dimensions might relate to well-being variables.

Surprisingly, the administrative assistants produced a broad and rather equal distribution of work orientations: 9 respondents saw themselves as having Jobs, 7 had Careers, and 8 had Callings. Table 4 presents a comparison of means for those respondents who view work as a Job, Career, or Calling parallel to the comparison for all respondents in Table 3. Although Table 4 results will not support statistical analysis—given the small total of administrative assistants—nevertheless the results are descriptively quite striking. The Job–Career–Calling distinction emerged just about as clearly for administrative assistants as for the total sample. Respondents with Jobs, Careers, and Callings were very similar in age, income, and education, but may have differed in self-perceived social standing of their occupation (Career highest) and years in present position (Career between Job and Calling).

TABLE 4  
Means of Characteristics of 24 Administrative Assistants Viewing Work as Job,  
Career, or Calling

	Job ( $n = 9$ ) <sup>a</sup>	Career ( $n = 7$ ) <sup>b</sup>	Calling ( $n = 8$ ) <sup>c</sup>
Paragraph ratings			
JOB	2.6 (0.7)	0.2 (0.5)	0.3 (0.5)
CAREER	0.9 (0.8)	2.0 (0.8)	0.5 (0.8)
CALLING	0.0 (0.0)	0.6 (0.6)	2.1 (0.8)
Demographics			
AGE	44.9 (7.8)	47.3 (8.9)	47.1 (12.7)
INCOME	1.3 (1.0)	1.4 (0.5)	1.3 (0.5)
SCHOOL	14.7 (2.0)	14.1 (2.2)	15.0 (1.8)
SOCSTAND	4.6 (1.5)	6.7 (1.4)	5.1 (1.7)
OCCSTATUS*			
JOBYEARS	4.2 (3.3)	6.8 (3.8)	9.2 (8.5)
Well-being			
SATLIFE	4.1 (1.4)	4.9 (1.5)	5.3 (1.6)
SATHEALTH	5.6 (1.7)	6.1 (0.9)	5.6 (1.4)
SATJOB	3.8 (1.8)	5.1 (0.7)	5.3 (1.8)
WORKRANK	2.7 (0.5)	2.0 (0.6)	1.9 (1.0)
HEALTH	3.1 (0.8)	3.6 (0.5)	3.6 (0.5)
DAYSMISS	2.6 (1.6)	1.0 (1.0)	2.1 (2.4)

Note. *p* levels not marked on this table because of small *n*.

<sup>a</sup> *n* = 8 for Career, Calling, and Satjob.

<sup>b</sup> *n* = 5 for Job and Calling.

<sup>c</sup> *n* = 6 for Job and Career; *n* = 7 for Socstand.

\* All administrative assistants shared the same occupational status rating.

Particularly notable is the fact that, descriptively, the difference between Job and Calling respondents was about the same for the homogenous subgroup as for the total group. For SATLIFE, SATJOB, and WORKRANK, the mean difference between Job and Calling respondents was about the same magnitude for administrative assistants (Table 4) as for all occupations together (Table 3).

As already noted, the results for our small sample of administrative assistants cannot have more than heuristic value. Nevertheless, we believe they are important in showing that the Job–Career–Calling distinction can be made clearly even within a group of persons relatively homogenous in occupation and background, and that these orientations may have some interesting correlates even within the homogenous group.

## DISCUSSION

We believe that we have demonstrated that it is easy for most people to assign themselves to one of the three Job, Career, or Calling dimensions, based on degree of agreement with three paragraphs representing the three

work-relations. The differentiation of the three orientations was clearer and easier than we had anticipated. In accord with our predictions, we presented evidence indicating highest life and work satisfaction for respondents who see their work as a Calling—even when income, education, and occupation are at least roughly controlled (the administrative assistants).

Our results offer some support for our suggestion that being in a Calling is related to better health. This suggestion came out of the growing literature relating lifestyle and other social factors to health (see, e.g., Adler, Boyce, & Chesney, 1993, on SES and health). Although respondents in a Calling were not higher than others on self-reported health, they did, in our total sample, report missing fewer days of work. Whether missing fewer days is better interpreted as better health or better motivation for work cannot be established in this initial study.

In addition to the evidence favoring the meaningfulness of the Job, Career, Calling distinction and its linkage to satisfaction and other outcome variables, we note three somewhat surprising results of this study.

1. Although there are no doubt relations between occupation and distribution of people across the Job–Career–Calling dimension, it is clear that all three dimensions can be well represented in at least some occupations. We demonstrated this for the case of administrative assistants.

2. While Job and Calling seem to fall on a single dimension, having to do with work as fulfillment versus work as a boring necessity, self-perception as having a Career seems to be orthogonal to this dimension. A Career, as represented in this study, focuses on promotion and associated change in the kind of work performed. Furthermore, the concern with advancement that seems to mark a Career does not appear to confer much advantage over a Job in the various well-being variables we assessed.

3. Satisfaction with life and with work may be more dependent on how an employee sees his or her work than on income or occupational prestige. Our evidence for this claim is that the absolute size of Job vs. Calling differences is about the same in the homogenous sample of administrative assistants as in the total sample of respondents.

Respondents in lower level occupations are likely to see themselves as having either a Job or a Career. The prevalence of Career in lower status occupations may be at least partially a function of age; Career respondents tend to be the youngest respondents. This interpretation implies that younger employees may be willing to work harder than their older counterparts, in order to advance within their organizations. If true, this would have important implications for managers trying to generate higher levels of productivity. It is possible, however, that the link between youth and Career means not a willingness of younger employees to work harder, but rather an expectation held by younger employees that they will eventually move on to better positions. This interpretation would predict more hope but not harder working

habits for more youthful employees. Indeed it may be that many younger people who think they have Careers later become resigned to having only a Job.

We believe that our results offer initial support for the value of viewing work according to the Job–Career–Calling distinction. But many important questions remain. Because the Amabile *et al.* (1994) paper came out after we had completed our study, we were unable to introduce some of the advances made in that study into our own. Amabile *et al.* (1994) identified “challenge” as an important factor in the intrinsic–extrinsic distinction. Our paragraphs did not represent this concept well, and it might be a critical feature that differentiates both Careers and Callings from Jobs. Our Career dimension has the “thinnest” definition, focusing almost entirely on the single dimension of advancement. Challenge might enrich this dimension, and make Career less unidimensional.

Future work should relate the Amabile intrinsic–extrinsic distinction to Jobs, Careers, and Callings. Future work might also address the relation between Job, Career, and Calling and measures of work performance, as well as the distribution and predictors of Job, Career, and Calling within the steps of a well-marked ladder of Career advancement, such as is found in some large corporations or in the armed forces. Most critically, since we can find people who locate themselves along each dimension in at least some occupations, we can begin to ask how the same work can be a Calling for one person and a Job for another. This issue may require moving beyond the questionnaire methods of the present study; interviews of considerable depth may be necessary in order to develop hypotheses about how an individual comes to understand her work in terms of Job, Career, or Calling.

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