Man's Search for Meaning: The Case of Legos Revisited

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Man’s Search for Meaning: The Case of Legos Revisited

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Introduction
• Affinity for labor considers the extent to which one’s labor is successful (Norton et al., 2012)
• Increased effort and the desire to seek out challenges is associated with the development of self-efficacy and resilience (Dweck, 2002)
• Repetitive tasks have been associated with: decreased alertness, impairment of muscular coordination, and daydreaming. Job rotation will keep the person from suffering the negative consequences of low activation (Hackman, 1980)

Research Question & Hypothesis
• What are the effects of perceived meaning, levels of resilience, and job-rotation on productivity and labor supply?
• I hypothesize that greater perceived meaning, levels of resilience, and job-rotation will have a positive effect on productivity and labor supply.

Methodology
Participants
• 40 male Andrews University students
• 18 years of age or older
• Convenience sample of volunteers from the behavioral sciences research subject pool

Measures and Materials
• Demographic questionnaire
• 14-Item Resilience Scale (Wagnild, 2010)
• Ewar, Leonidas, and Gorzan Chima Lego models

Procedure
• Replication and extension upon Man’s search for meaning: The case of Legos (Ariely et. al., 2008)
• Subjects randomly assigned to one of four conditions
• 20 minutes to build as many Legos as they can or want to, receiving $2 for the first one they build, and $0.11 less for each one thereafter

Results

Results contd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Spearman’s rho</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sisyphus</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>-1.52</td>
<td>.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisyphus X</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful X</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 6. Spearman’s rho correlation between Labor Supply and Resilience

Discussion
• Perceived meaning has no significant effect on productivity or labor supply
  • Time-limit – functional stress and Parkinson’s Law (Latham & Locke, 1975)
  • Job-rotation has a positive effect on productivity, and a negative effect on labor supply
  • Specialized assignment strategy (Staats & Gino, 2012)
  • No relationship between resilience and productivity or labor supply
  • Future research possibilities with female subjects, autonomy, and contingent rewards

Selected References


