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Sociology 389 (The Meaning of Work)
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Love Your Job: How Meaning is Created in Work

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Introduction

When I was in pre-school, I wanted to be a doctor and a smoothie maker. While this silly answer to what I wanted to be when I grew up, something in my toddler mind found these two occupations to be significant and meaningful to me. Maybe I loved the idea of helping people and these two occupations provided medical aid and food, or maybe I had just seen these occupations in the last episode of Sesame Street. Since the first-time kids are asked, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" they are encouraged to find something that they are passionate about. Odds are that kids don't always grow up to be their versions of doctors and smoothie makers, but none the less they may just find another job that is meaningful to them. Having a job that is meaningful and personally important is what motivates hard workers. By understanding how workers create meaning, it can allow workplaces to create meaningful work for their employees and help people find work that is meaningful for them. To examine this, I ask: How do workers find meaning in their own work? How is this meaning related to their occupation, their workplace, and their own values and beliefs?

Background

Previous research has been done to examine the way that meaning is created in work. Bailey and Madden (2016) examined what factors create or destroy a sense of meaning in the workplace. Through their interviews with 135 people in 10 very different occupations, Bailey and Madden found components of meaningful work. While they found that meaningful work is

associated with a sense of pride in a job well done, a sense of fulfilling one's potential, finding

work interesting, and receiving praise from others, they also found five unexpected features of

meaningful work. Bailey and Madden found that meaningful work is self-transcendent, meaning

that workers found work meaningful when it mattered to others more than themselves.

Interviewees, when discussing meaningful work, often talked about the impact it had on others

(54). Meaningful work is also poignant. Meaningful work isn't always positive, it can be

associated with mixed, or even negative emotions. In their interviews, Bailey and Madden found

that the most profound moments were those that were challenging and difficult (54-55).

Meaningful work is also episodic; none of Bailey and Madden's participants found their work

consistently meaningful, but rather meaningful in peak instances during strong experiences (55).

Bailey and Madden found that meaningful work is rarely experienced in the moment, but rather

in reflection on the experiences. The reflective nature of meaningful work means that when

looking back on the work, people were able to make a connection between their work and

meaning (55). Lastly, Bailey and Madden found that meaning is personal. Meaningful work is

such because it is meaningful in the broader context of their life. For example, work is

meaningful to a person because it makes their parents proud (55-56).

　　While the meaningfulness of work is more connected to the individual's conception of

work, meaninglessness is more often connected to the ways workers are treated. Bailey and

Madden found seven ways in which meaningfulness is destroyed. The ways meaninglessness

occurs is through disconnect between the work and a person's values, employees being taken for

granted, employees being given pointless work, employees being treated unfairly, overriding

people's judgement or a feeling of disempowerment, disconnecting employees from supportive

relationships, and putting people at risk of physical or emotional harm (56-57). Research from

Bailey and Madden segues into my research by creating a framework for the ways in which my participants find meaning in their work while allowing me to expand on the ways in which personal values and cultural context contributes to a sense of meaning.

When thinking about work that is meaningful, passion is a frequent synonym. Research from Khazan (2018) digs into the concept of passion to see how interests are created and pursued. Khazan's research examines the idea that there are two primary mindsets about interests or passions. The fixed mindset is the idea that interests are there from birth and just need to be discovered. The fixed mindset is at the basis of the commonly used phrase, "find your passion" meaning that everyone has a passion that just needs to be discovered (1). On the contrary, the growth mindset is the idea that interests are something that anyone can cultivate over time (2). These mindsets have consequences in the ways people approach new topics. Through five experiments, Khazan found that those that have a growth mindset are more likely to take interest in new topics and understand that following a passion would come with setbacks. Those with the growth mindset are more likely to take interest in new topics and persevere through challenges (3). Khazan's research shows the precursor to research from Bailey and Madden to show the ways in which people discover careers that have the potential to be meaningful. Khazan's findings also connect to the poignant and episodic nature of meaningful work, as these aspects of meaningful work connect with the growth mindset of passions that include setbacks and negative experiences in conjunction with positive experiences.

While passion can create a meaningful work experience, the culture created by employers also impacts the ways workers experience work. Van Maanen (1991) uses Disneyland to examine the way that worker culture is created. Through participant observation and interviews, Van Maanen observes the way that culture is curated and communicated to employees and, in

turn, how that is interpreted by the employees. On the organization level, the culture is created through The Disneyland Mission, The Disneyland Look, and The Disneyland Personality. The Disneyland mission as the "Happiest Place on Earth" is communicated through rules and training to ensure that individual employees (or cast-members) reinforce this image and reinforced by leadership and management being committed to this mission. The Disneyland Look is created through recruitment of people that fit the specific "clean cut" look that gives cast members their uniform appearance. This look is maintained through rules in the Disney handbook. The Disneyland Personality is created through training called "Traditions" at University of Disneyland. "Traditions" includes skills training for the job but has the primary goal of communicating the values of Disney as the "The Happiest Place on Earth". This is ingrained in cast-members through pep talks and inspirational videos. The Disneyland Personality is maintained throughout the Disney experience through language; for example, customers are referred to as guests and employees are cast members. The Disneyland Personality is enforced and socialized through rules and hierarchy. The internal organization of Disney leaves little room for divergence with supervisors being a constant watchful eye and an abundance of rules (Van Mannen 58-75)

Van Maanen (1991) found that Disney does an impressive job of having cast members adhere to the work culture they set forth. Even in interviews outside of the park, workers maintained the language as trained by Disney (70). While, overall, Disney's work culture is conformed to, the real-world experience varies from the training. Guests aren't always pleasant, supervisors are every present, and the script can be draining. In response to the reality of work, subcultures form. Van Maanen uses ride operators to demonstrate a subculture in Disney. Ride operators, aware of the constant supervision, band together against the supervisors and see them

as out to get cast members. Because guests aren't always pleasant, ride operators have their own responses to manage the emotional work of being on the job. This includes fun insults while they remain in character, fastening seatbelts too tight, or separating people in the same group on rides. The sub-groups are self-enforced through negative sanctions for those that go against the norms of the sub-group. Van Maanen's research connects to Bailey and Madden as it shows the way that cultures are created in work. The work culture is what has the potential of making working meaning-less, and Disney shows an example of a work culture that is accepted by employees, while also being manipulated to conform to the day to day needs of employees.

Khazan provides the pre-curser to work as it shows how passions are created, found and maintained and how different mindsets have the potential to impact the ways in which people find positive job experiences. Bailey and Madden show the ways in which individuals find meaningfulness in occupations and touches on how meaninglessness is created through the work environment. Finally, Van Maanen provides an example of a work culture that is widely accepted by employees while also showing the natural way in which sub-cultures are created to cope with the realities of job and, in turn, allow them to cope with negative aspects of the job. Based on this research, I ask: How do workers find meaning in their own work? How is this meaning related to their occupation, their workplace, and their own values and beliefs? This research provides a useful background to how I approach my own research as I can examine my participants view on how their passions relate to their current job, the way they find meaningfulness or lack there of in their occupation, and the role of the workplace culture on the meaning in their work.

Methods

Examining how people create meaning in work is a complex topic. It examines beyond surface level feelings about work to examine deeper sentiments that are more difficult to pinpoint is other research methods. In-depth interviewers are the best method for this research as the open flow of conversation that allows complex themes to emerge that are more likely to be decoded by researchers than by the participant. Because the ways in which work is found to be meaningful is largely unknown, in-depth interviews allow participants to give their own answers rather than pick from an array of options, such as what would be given in a survey.

To perform in-depth interviewers, I used convivence sampling to find five, college educated individuals that all are in the working world. The first participant, referred to by the pseudonym Adam, is a 56-year-old male from rural Idaho. He works in commercial real estate and in recent years has begun to transition into more personal trading and investment. Adam was a personal connection and I connected to him through text message to arrange the interview. The second participant, referred to by the pseudonym Amy, is a 23-year-old female who is working as a science teacher in a boarding school in Connecticut. Amy was recruited through text message. The third participant, referred to by the pseudonym Dr. Marks, is a female professor at an elite university in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Marks was contacted through email to arrange the interview. The fourth participant, referred to by the pseudonym Jack, is a 30-year-old male from the Chicago suburbs. He runs a hedge fund with about 20 employees working beneath him. He was contacted through text message to arrange the interview. The final participant is referred to by the pseudonym Margaret, a 54-year-old female. Based out of San Francisco she currently runs her own life coaching business. Because of time restraints for Margaret, her interview did not include all intended questions.

Based on current environmental restraints, all interviews were performed on the online platform, Zoom where all interviews were recorded with the consent of participants. Each interview ranged from lasting 30 minutes (with Margaret) to 60 min. While all of the participants remained in their homes, I hosted the Zoom calls from Atlanta, GA. While Zoom transcribes the speech from the calls, I also took notes in order to guide my later coding of the interviews.

An interview guide with guiding questions was used for consistency among all five of the interviews. The questions fell under eight broad topics: Background, overview of work path, description of work, satisfaction with work, work culture/environment, meaning in work, beliefs/values and work, and closing questions. Within each topic there were questions and follow up questions to ensure that respondents thoroughly answered each prompt. For example, a question about meaningfulness in work is, "Can you tell me about a time when your work has felt <u>meaningful</u>?" This Is followed by the probe, "Have you had other times at work like this? Can you tell me about them?" The probe is to ensure the participant fully answers the question. Questions included general questions about the participants background and current job, transitioned into likes, dislikes, what made their jobs meaningful or meaningless, with further questions on the work culture, the participants belief or value system, and ending with open ended questions that allowed the participant to elaborate if desired.

After the interviews were completed, the data was analyzed through cross referencing my notes and the transcripts. Based on my notes, I created different themes that I noticed throughout the interview. These themes included: discussion of having control over work/autonomy, being good at something/interest since childhood, working with others, negative aspects of other people, making a difference in other's lives, and learning/challenging. When reading through the

transcripts, these themes were noted through highlighting instances when the participant spoke about one of these topics.

Results

Through my interviews, I found common themes that connected what created meaning for workers among a wide range of occupations. The seven aspects of meaningful work for my participants are, (1) having a long standing interest or passion that was adapted, (2) work being for or about other people, (3) working with positive others, (4) work being challenging or having a learning aspect, (5) work providing autonomy, (6) receiving feedback, often in the positive form, and (7) work being a balance of positive and negative experiences. These seven aspects applied to at least two of the participants with most themes applying to most of the participants. While the interview questions differentiated between aspects that participants liked about work and what made work meaningful for them, I found that what participants liked and what was meaningful was often the same thing.

The first aspect or meaningfulness in jobs that I found was a long-standing interest of passion that often came from childhood. This interest often wasn't linear as the participants adapted the interest to fit into their current occupation. Participants described career aspirations or interests that have been long standing and explained how these interests adapted to fit into their current occupation. For example, Adam, who currently works in commercial real estate, when asked about if his work is meaningful to him responded by saying:

> If you go back in my scrapbook books that my mom put together, I listed for what I wanted to be when I grew up to scoop ice cream at 31 flavors, take toll at the Golden Gate Bridge or be an architect. So, I mean, it better be meaningful it. That's what I wanted to do... So, I, I felt really fortunate, if not spoiled, that I was able to kind of actually have that calling, if you will.

While he doesn't work as an architect, he interprets his current work as meaningful as a it connects to the long-standing interest he developed as a child. His current career provides a

current adaptation of was once his dream job to provide a career that is currently meaningful to him. In addition, Jack had a similar narrative. Jack currently runs a hedge fund and describes how his history of interest in math and numbers in conjunction with his athletic background contribute to he decided on his current occupation:

> I've always been interested in numbers and interested in data. But also, I've been A competitive tennis player competitive martial artist. And I think that there's a nice overlap between those kinds of interest because I think that if you're interested in competition, you're interested in sort of the puzzles that data brings then there's so many opportunities to kind of go in that direction.

In a similar way, Jack adapted interests and passions from his past into his current career.

Regardless of if the connection between childhood dreams and current occupation is tangible, it provides a sense of meaning to have a connection between previous interests and current occupations for my participants. While other participants reported their previous aspirations being very different than their current occupation, there is also a connection between values that are long standing and current roles. Other participants (Dr. Marks and Amy), when asked about their values, reported that it had always been important for them to have a job that allowed them to help people. Both of these participants were teachers and while it was neither of their original plans to be teachers, this long-standing value connects to their current positions.

The second way that work was meaningful for my participants was through doing work that was meaningful for others. This aspect was true for all of my participants in some capacity regardless to if it was making a difference for people by working for them one of one or in a more removed manner. For Margaret, Amy, and Dr. Marks, they found meaning through

working directly with people and creating change in their lives. For Dr. Marks and Amy this was done as teacher by teaching them information that is useful for their academic and personal lives as well as being a mentor to students when necessary. For Margaret, she finds immense meaning in creating change in her client's lives. She said, "I'm on this planet to be of service. That is literally why I wake up every day is how can I coach my students and help them get unstuck and create the lives they dream of that they can't do on their own." For Margaret, when asked what motivates her to work hard, she sees her purpose in life as to help people and make changes in their lives. Her work, and life, has meaning through helping others. In a more removed manner, Jack and Adam both find meaning in creating things that help people but in a less hands-on sense. Adam described a moment when work was meaningful for him. At the start of his career, he was hired to build a hotel in Squaw valley for a high-profile client. He said:

> It was cutting edge. It was a hotel, which is like, oh my god, that's the high profile in that it had great advertising after that people got to physically people got to enjoy it. Anybody stayed in the hotel, as opposed to like a, you know, different commercial project where it's just that one company or something… that was probably the, the height of my career in terms of satisfaction.

What made this particular project so important for Adam was that the hotel was able to be enjoyed by other people. His work was beyond just him and the hotel was able to be enjoyed and experienced by other people. For all of my participants, their work was meaningful because they had the ability to impact other people.

My participants also found meaning through working with other positive people. This came in the form of coworkers of people in different industry in which they have frequent interactions with. Having good people surrounding a worker is what created a positive work

environment that contributes to having meaningful work. Jack discussed that having a strong team working for him is what makes him love his job so much. He said. "As much as I love the data and analysis, I really do love working with people and having those individuals around. Their creativity. It's kind of feeds on each other you know we grow from each other's energy and I think we learn a lot of things together." For him, the work was important, but without a positive community around him, the job loses some of its enjoyment. Even in more autonomous jobs like Adam who worked alone in his business, the people he interacted with were the first thing he noted in what he likes most about his job. He said, "I love the interactions with people in that industry…I like working with architects and most contractors and real estate brokers doing leasing and sales." For Adam, part of what made his job so fulfilling was his ability to interact with other interesting people in the industry. For Adam and Jack, meaning was derived from enjoyable interactions with other people.

Meaningful jobs, for many of my participants, had an aspect of challenge or an opportunity to continuously be learning. Their jobs were not stagnant but provided challenges and allowed for continues improvement. For Jack, when asked what he liked most about his job, the first thing he mentioned was that his job challenged him. He said, "I like that it's a challenge. I like that it is dynamic. It's changing all the time that requires that we develop new ideas and You know that it's exciting. It's not It's not repetitive at all. And so, I think that those are very attractive characteristics." For Jack, it was important that his work allowed constant growth. He connected this aspect to his interest in tennis as both sports allow for constant improvement and new ways to approach challenges. For Dr. Marks, she liked that her position as a professor allowed her to continue to learn while also challenging her. She said, "Well, you know, I like the learning part I like I like the intellectual challenge. It's really challenging to put together a course,

especially because I don't use standardized courses, I developed them myself." Dr. Marks found the challenge to be meaningful and even created her own course material to ensure that her job remained challenging and encouraged her to continue to learn.

For work to be meaningful, it was also important for participants to have a sense of autonomy. Many of my participants chose their positions because it allowed them to have control over the way they worked. For Dr. Mark, she chose her job as a professor because it allowed her to be autonomous. When speaking about her career development, being autonomous and having control played a large role in her enjoyment of her job. Dr. Marks describes her current position:

> I'm really autonomous I get to decide what my courses, I mean it has, you know, has to meet some requirements, but I get to determine the content, the syllabus. I get to develop the classes and what we do in the classes… And I don't have any kind of supervision in the sense that you do it at a corporate job…I've got no set hours. I have no timecard, no set vacation days, nothing. I get to determine how I work and when I work and what I do, basically, and that part is really important to me now.

For Dr. Mark, this autonomy was very important to her job and has made her job very meaningful. Being autonomous allows her to be accountable and make decisions for herself. Having freedom and autonomy also allows people to make decisions that are fulfilling for them. For Adam, this was integral to his work being fulfilling. He said, "If you're working for yourself like I was in real estate and now I am in the stock market and other stuff, it better have fulfillment, because I'm making the choices to do it. So pretty much, I'm gonna have to say everything I do is fulfilling because I won't do it other-wise I'll just shift gears." His freedom and control allow his work to be fulfilling because it gave him control to abstain from anything that did not serve him.

Work was also meaningful in the moments that people received positive feedback from others about what they were doing. This feedback, for my participants, provided clarity that the

work they were doing was meaningful and productive. For Dr. Mark's this comes in the form of feedback from students. She said:

> So, one of the things that's really great is when I get an email from someone that I have had no idea what they think. And it's saying all these things that are like, Oh, you've changed my life and it doesn't happen that often, but I, I had one last year at the end of the year. It's probably one that I, I've never had anything quite like it and it was somebody who was really quiet class never said anything. I had no idea. And she basically said that that every class. She felt like helped her in terms of her personal development and like it was, it wasn't like a gushy thing as much as it was like these are the ways that you helped me and all these things I want you to know about it, and it was it was fascinating. And it was really amazing. So that part, you know, that part is really when it's most meaningful is basically the feedback from the students.

This experience for Dr. Marks was impactful to her because in moments she is uncertain about a student, feedback provides positive affirmation that the work she is doing has meaning outside of her personal experiences; it gave her reassurance that she was making a difference in someone's life (another aspect of meaningful work). For Adam, this meaning came from his coworkers giving him affirmations that the business deal he just did was positive. He said, "And I love nothing more like with Shane or the people I work with, they go, wow, that was a fantastic deal we just did. When a lease being signed or selling a building or buying a building and it's just, that's a really satisfying any accomplishment in your industry." For Adam, this meaning came from his coworkers assuring him that his decisions were positive and the celebrations that came with a communal sentiment of a job well done. Outside affirmations gave workers meaning as it showed them that other's also saw their work as meaningful.

Lastly, an important part of meaningful jobs is that the jobs don't always feel positive. The meaningfulness in jobs is not always felt and this was acknowledged with two of the participants. For Margaret, she felt that her work was always fulfilling, even in the negative moments. She said:

> There's no less meaning for me in my work ever. I love the hard. I love it. The easy. I love the discomfort. I love the fun. I love the joy. It's all of it is to me, I look at the balance of work, it's always going to be. It's just like life, it's always going to be 50/50.

It's always going to be hard but the hard stuff to me is just as meaningful and fills me up just as much as the easy stuff.

For Margaret, she didn't see the positive and negative as separate, but all a part of what made her work meaningful and fulfilling. She noted that nothing in life is entirely positive, but life is a balance with both the positive and negative. This sentiment was echoed with Jack as he notes that although he gets frustrated with work being delayed by personal factors, but that it is a part of his business. He said, "You can't do one without the other. I don't think you can say, oh, I will only to be the meaningful pieces and not do the other stuff. So, you have to. It's a cost of doing business to deal with it. It's a cost of doing business the way that we wanted to business. But that's how it goes." Jack noted that although he does not like the less-meaningful parts as much, those parts of his business were essential to run his business the way he wanted to. Jobs that are meaningful don't always feel meaningful or positive, but this aspect is intrinsic in jobs.

Having a long standing interest or passion that was adapted, work being for or about other people, working with positive others, work being challenging or having a learning aspect, work providing autonomy, receiving feedback, often in the positive form, and work being a balance of positive and negative experiences are all aspects of what made work meaningful for my participants. On the other end of the spectrum, there are also aspects that made work less meaningful. These aspects were external factor such as bureaucratic rules and dealing with people that are complex or unpleasant.

Adam, who in recent years is starting to retire, discusses the frustrations that made his job less enjoyable for him. He said, I was just tired of the constant long conference calls. We didn't get anywhere thing just trying to plug holes in a ship you know that's got bullet holes all over it. I just got tired of some of that stuff." For Adam, it was frustrating having to be dealing with business in a bureaucratic system that was often inefficient. He felt that his time was not being

used productively with long meetings and complicated rules. This sentiment is echoed by Dr. Marks. She said, "Yeah, the less meaningful stuff is a bureaucratic stuff and some of the kinds of things that are at a higher level, that have been extremely frustrating for me over the last few years". For her, she didn't like all the rules and regulations in some of her previous positions; this work was less meaningful and felt more like jumping through hoops.

In addition, work is less meaningful when working with unpleasant people. Jack described the challenges of trying to balance his employees' personal lives as what makes his work less meaningful. He said:

> There are some things that are challenging, just in terms of dealing with so many lives, you know, so many different people and people have personal lives. They have things come up and it's difficult, because I think as a person I want to be doing the right thing all the time and as a as a leader of a business I also want to be doing the right thing all the time… that those two personas would come up with are sometimes different and that's a little bit of tension.

Jack is addressing the conflicts that come up when dealing with people and how to properly treat employees. This internal conflict is what makes work not as meaningful for Jack. Adam's work also becomes less meaningful when dealing with other people. While others can provide meaning and fulfillment, difficult people subtract from meaning and fulfillment. Adam described the frustration he felt when people he was working with were not performing. He said, "I was working with some people were hired and some people were subcontracted meaning I just paid for their services where they were attorneys, brokers or property managers and when they failed me it really, I really affected me…I got tired of some of the lenders and just greed out there." The frustration with other people is what took away from his work feeling fulfilling. Dealing with other people in a negative manner is what made work less meaningful.

My findings address my research questions, how do workers find meaning in their own work? How is this meaning related to their occupation, their workplace, and their own values and

beliefs?, through finding seven main ways that impact meaningful work and the ways that their values (doing work for others) impacted their occupations as well as the impact of their workplace (through the people they work with). In addition, my findings show how meaninglessness is created through occupations with bureaucratic work as well as coworkers in the workplace.

Discussion

Although my results are reflective of a small sample size, they do show commonalities with previous research. Bailey and Madden (2016) conclude there are five features for meaningful work (Self-transcendent, poignant, episodic, reflective, and personal) while my research concluded that there are seven factors that made work meaningful (having a long standing interest or passion that was adapted, work being for or about other people, working with positive others, work being challenging or having a learning aspect, work providing autonomy, receiving feedback, often in the positive form, and work being a balance of positive and negative experiences). My results support some of the results that Bailey and Madden found. They found that meaningful work is self-transcendent, and in my research, I supported this in that I found that meaningful work was meaningful was for or about other people. In addition, Bailey and Madden found that meaningful work was poignant in that it was not only associated with positive emotions, my findings supported that with my finding that meaningful work was a balance of positive and negative experiences. Bailey and Madden also found that meaningful work was personal in that work was done with meaning to other people. My results reflected this in that meaningful work includes feedback from others. While my respondents reported more specifically that their work was meaningful in times that they received positive feedback, it shows a more pointed version of the aspect of work being personal. My results had no

conclusion on Bailey and Madden's results that work is reflective and episodic, while my research had additional findings beyond what they found. Bailey and Madden found that meaninglessness was created externally and how employees are treated from the outside. My results reflect this as I found that meaninglessness was created, for my respondents, by bureaucratic rules and working with negative people. The meaninglessness of bureaucratic rules can fall into "give people pointless work," (57) one of Bailey and Madden's seven deadly sins of meaninglessness, while working with negative people was not included in their findings. My findings are similar in the sense that meaninglessness occurred from external factors.

Khazan (2018) examined the way that a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset about passions impacted the ways that people approached new topics. While my research did not directly address the ways that people approached new topics, I did have findings that addressed the new ways that people interpret their passions in the context of their current positions. My finding that meaningful work includes, having a long-standing interest or passion that was adapted follows research from Khazan. My participants had a growth mindset in that they were able to see their original passions change and adapt to fit into their current occupations. Their mental process shows a version of a growth mindset as participants were able to see their passions as adaptable to their current profession. In addition, my finding that meaningful work includes both positive and negative experiences shows a growth mindset as my participants saw their meaningful work, or their passions, to not just include positive experiences, but also challenges and setbacks.

Van Maanen's research on Disney discovered that their strict rules and training created a culture that employees wanted to adhere to while also finding that subcultures are created in order to cope with the realities of working. Because three of my participants were the bosses or

worked for themselves, my results were not able to thoroughly address the ways in which cultures and subcultures are developed and maintained. With that being said, my results to attest to the impact of industry or company culture on meaningfulness in occupations. My results find that working with positive others creates meaningfulness and working with negative others is what creates meaninglessness. Although these results do not directly address the culture of industries, it shows how important the culture is for meaningfulness. A culture of supportiveness or trustworthiness is what made work meaningful for my participants, and this culture is created and maintained in some way that my research was not able to conclude.

My research was able to expand on previous research by examining passion, meaningfulness, and culture in a connected manner to find that passion and culture impact meaningfulness in jobs. By examining passion, meaningfulness, and culture cohesively, previous research from Bailey and Madden, Khazen, and Van Maanen can be connected to show in a deeper sense how meaning is created in work. While my research has interesting findings about meaningfulness in work, further research is needed as my sample size of five is unable to be generalized to the population. Further research is needed to go more in depth on the connection between the growth mindset in passion and culture and how they connect to meaningfulness. Further research could be done on the impact of growth versus fixed mindset on current meaningfulness found in a person's job. In addition, how company culture and sub-culture creates meaning in occupations.

Conclusion

It is easy to think that job satisfaction, or meaningfulness in a job comes from you finding a dream job that is "perfect" for you. Through my research on how meaning in created in work, it is easy to see that meaning in work is impacted by a multitude of different factors beyond you

finding an illusive "perfect" job. Meaningfulness in work comes from a wide array of aspects in life. It comes from the person and how they see the world, it comes from the way the world sees the job, and the way the person interprets the way the world sees the job. Meaningfulness is a complex interaction between personal beliefs, experiences, social groups, status, and the work ethos that is communicated through society. Meaningfulness is a complicated recipe of what society has to offer and what you choose to take. While we may not all find our dream job of being a doctor and a smoothie maker, we can all aim to find meaning and through understanding how meaningfulness is created, get one step closer to finding it.

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