

The Ideology of Job Evaluation – A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

Both the importance and value of this paper lie in that its primary objective is to address job evaluation ideology rather than job evaluation itself (although inevitably there is a degree of overlap). This is an area which, to date, has been largely overlooked. Hence, the factors that promoted the researcher's interest in commenting on job evaluation ideology emanate from the point that (to the researcher's knowledge) there is little or no reference in existing literature on this important subject. This paper provides a detailed scrutiny and clarification of job evaluation ideology. It operates from the premise that job evaluation comes with its own ideology rather than paying homage to a broader ideology. In so doing it evaluates how this premise can be supported both in theory and practice. This paper provides and establishes a sufficient understanding of the meaning, concept, elements, dimensions and usage of the term ideology and its application when associated with job evaluation and this is the scope and purpose of this paper. Data collected and statistics used in this work are based on selective and scrutinized literature, including various studies and surveys in respect of job evaluation. The paper concludes with a statement that job evaluation ideology stems from what the philosophy of job evaluation requires and from the base or criterion upon which this philosophy can be translated or converted into practical application. To this end, the paper will enable the reader to establish an informed judgement on the theory and practice of job evaluation ideology.

Key Words: Ethical Vision, Ideology, Job relativities, Organization's system, Pay, Universal recognition.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 What is Ideology?

The word ideology was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy as 'the science of ideas' (*Eléments d'idéologie*, 1817-1818) – through combining the parts *idea* and *logy* which are of Greek origin (wikipedia). Today, the term has taken broader, almost contradictory meanings ranging from, "a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy" (*Oxford Dictionaries Online*) to "...visionary speculation, especially of an unrealistic or idealistic nature" (*ibid*).

For the purpose of this paper we will maintain that *ideology* is thus a set of principles which form the theory, and hence provides the framework of, in our case, Job Evaluation. The author firmly believes that the aims and objectives that derive from its ideology are attainable. It is for the reader to decide if the ideology of job evaluation proposed here lends itself to such practicable attainment or whether it falls within the realm of 'visionary speculation'.

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1.2 Ideology and Job Evaluation

The ideology of job evaluation underpins the theory that **anomalies** in salaries and wages (and the considerable difficulties that these cause with respect to employer / employee relations within the employment marketplace) can be resolved through formulaic application. The need to apply this should be clear. It avoids arbitrary decision-making and introduces fairness through an ordered, rational approach. As a consequence it seeks to pre-empt industrial unrest and maximise morale within the work-force through the provision of a pay-system seen to be fair and acceptable to all. Addressing salary and wage issues in this way, therefore, are recognised as being of primary importance. These are complicated and sensitive areas of concern which come with their own philosophy and theory. It is through this that pay can be systematically and fairly formulated and structured. It follows that the purpose of developing procedures and techniques that flow from job evaluation ideology has a vital role to play within business management.

In short, through appealing to job evaluation ideology the employer will, as far as is practicable, introduce systems and techniques that dispense with prejudicial bias. Instead, objective, depersonalized processes with fair and just outcomes will be developed which will be based **upon** systematic, rational and formulaic approaches to job comparison and job relativities.

2.0 Factors that trigger the ideology of job evaluation

An ideology of any discipline and / or activity is driven, in the first instance, by the vision and concept of that discipline or activity. Its philosophy and theory evolves from this which, in turn, translates into procedure and practice. In this sense an ideology does not own the discipline or activity it underpins. Rather it emanates from the concept, aims and objectives of the discipline itself. Hence if, for example, the aims and objectives change, then so will the ideology. In this sense a discipline's ideology is not a static phenomenon (although it could be if, in the rare event, the discipline itself does not evolve). Instead it remains open to develop and renew itself in accordance with the direction that discipline takes. It would be reasonable to assume that any new direction a discipline takes would always be a positive one, incorporating a refreshing, innovative sense of purpose (to the benefit of all concerned). On a note of caution, however, it should be understood that this is not necessarily the case. For example, an ill-considered strategic plan may well change the direction of a given discipline but with an outcome that risks being regressive rather than progressive. All of the above applies equally to the ideology of job evaluation as it does for any other discipline.

The literature on management studies, functions / activities and practices, reveal that the philosophical and theoretical development of job evaluation was effectively placed on the map through Frederick Winslow Taylor. The self – taught American engineer, in his work on studying time, motion and effort, outlined the concept of scientific management on work efficiency and cost reduction. In particular, his search to improve the productivity of the Midvale Steel Company led to a formal and systematic study of assigning pay to jobs. The contemporary researcher and writer, Richard I. Henderson concludes that the outcome of Taylor's study subsequently '*...became known as job evaluation*' (1989: 169). This has since been echoed by H. John Bernardin (2007:255) where he states that Taylor's methodology on assigning pay to jobs "*came to be called job evaluation*". Through Taylor, therefore, we are introduced not just to the notion of job evaluation itself but to something of its ideology as well. For it is evident that his systematic, methodological approach to evaluate jobs is nothing less than the essence of that outcome (as opposed to merely a tool). Berger and Berger (2000: 81) and Alan Price (2004: 536) separately state Taylor's position, emphasizing that it is a management responsibility to:-

- (a) Use scientific methods of observation and planning to define and organize a job's tasks, and
- (b) Recruit people who are able to carry out those required tasks.

Although Taylor is seen by many as the forefather of Job Evaluation the literature shows that the earliest evaluation systems can be traced back to the U.S Civil Service Commission in 1871, just 6 years after the birth of F. W. Taylor (**20, March 1865 – 21, March 1915**). The origins of “Modern” job evaluation likely originated in 1912 with the Civil Services Commission of Chicago, followed by Commonwealth Edison Company of Chicago (see Figart, et al., 2002: 121). Note, however, that the British Institute of Management (BIM, 1961- Introduction) puts this date a little earlier at 1909.

Between 1900 – 1926, four formal methods of job evaluation had been developed, particularly using evidence drawn from Analytical / Quantitative job evaluation methods between 1924 – 1926. It was not long before psychologists turned their attentions to industry. Academicians followed these, and both began to take a serious interest in the matter. Since then, an enormous number of papers, articles, journals, books and empirical research have been devoted to and conducted on job evaluation.

In Plato’s *Republic* Socrates asks, “Having torches, will they pass them one to another?” (Part 1, Bk.1 para. 328). For Plato, simply passing the torch of knowledge on to others is insufficient. Those that see the light need to demonstrate its value through practical example rather than through theoretical explanation alone (see *ibid; Parable of a Cave Dweller, Part VII, Bk. VII, paras. 513-521incl*). From the early beginnings, Taylor and others not only lit the torch and passed it down to the psychologists and academics but demonstrated what it was capable of by applying it in the workplace itself. These in turn handed it to exponents of job evaluation in an ever widening circle of industries and professional bodies. As pioneers, they have all contributed to the philosophy and theory of job evaluation *and* its application. Consequently, job evaluation has become increasingly popular as more and more businesses seek to implement it.

3.0 The relevance of job evaluation ideology: an analytical view

The concept of “ideology”, to some, may appear inappropriate in the context of job evaluation. Ideology and its application is generally considered in the broad-based terms of the political, theological, economic and social sciences rather than the constituent parts of those sciences. [For examples, refer to:- Leach, R., 1991: 10-5; Jones, B., et al. 2001: 76; Haywood, A. 2002: 41; Ponton & Gill. 1992: 26 (political science); Jones, R. K., 1984: 55; Ponten & Gill, op. ct, p.78 (theology); Miliband, R., 1984: 67 & 73; Thompson, N., 2003: 23-4; Walsh et al., 2000: 86 (economics); Fitzpatrick, T., 2001: 8; Lam, A. C. L., 1992: 9, 23-4; Walsh et al., op. ct, pp.12 & 198 (social sciences and social welfare doctrine).

The point being made here is that the constituent parts will not (and cannot) come with their own ideology but will be informed by the ideology of the **‘whole’**. Unfortunately, this is far too simplistic and, in any event, creates problems of its own.

In the first instance one would have to ask just what, exactly, the **‘whole’** is. For it is evident that politics, religion, economics and social welfare do not (and, again, cannot) operate in a vacuum. Rather they are inter-dependent upon each other. This in turn means that the respective ideology of each must be informed by and complement the ideologies of the rest. The logical conclusion is that the **‘whole’** now becomes a combination of all of the above and, individually, each becomes a constituent part of that whole which will, itself, be under-pinned by a single, all-encompassing ideology.

The problem with this approach is that it is fundamentally flawed because it fails to acknowledge that whilst the above may be inter-dependent upon each other, at the same time they also compete with each other. In short there is no ideological universal back-stop. Which should come as no surprise since when one examines, say, political ideology we discover that there are competing claims upon how those ideals may be achieved (eg through capitalism or communism to name but two). Then we discover that **both** come with competing claims on how **they** may each be achieved.

Hence the constituent parts of say Marxism or Leninism have different concepts and a different ideology to each other, this, despite the fact that they both strive to operate within the framework of communism and its ideology. All roads may indeed lead to Rome but, clearly, they are different roads nonetheless.

The second point is that some concepts (perhaps all to a greater or lesser extent) rely on parts of more than one ideological system. For example, Cavadino, M and Dignan, J (2008: 43-9 & 50-61) refer to the ideology of justice, courts and penal systems (or jurisprudence). Yet the ideology of jurisprudence requires philosophical reference to political, social and religious thinking. So, on the one hand, jurisprudence (by way of example) is not ‘the whole’ whilst on the other it requires its own philosophy and underpinning ideology in order to distinguish it from the other components of those broader sciences.

Change and development are inescapable Acts of life and, by definition, are on-going, evolving processes. **They** are inevitable phenomena and thus can be neither ignored nor circumvented. **They** touch upon all aspects of life’s activities. Where those activities have under-pinning ideologies it follows that if the one changes and develops then so does the other. Consequently, we find various scholars, writers, officials, and speakers of different tendencies, backgrounds and industries referring to the term “ideology” in almost all aspects and activities, including business & organization (e.g. Hassard and Parker, 1993: 148; Hatch, M. J., 1997: 344; Daft, R. 1998: 506; Huczynski, A. 1996:296; George and Wilding, 1994: 1-14; Mintzberg, 1983: 29, 30, 139 & 235 – all of whom apply it in various contexts). Similarly, Robbins and Decenzo, 2000: 174, use ideology in a culture context; Donald and Rattansi (1997: 4, 29, 52, 79, 93) used it in racism, antiracism, culture, political and economic structure, class and ethnicity setting; Claire Capon (2004: 427) used ideology in organizational culture and structure; Laurie, J. Mullins (2005: 150/1) use it in relation to organization’s mission / goals / principles and culture; John Naylor (2004: 474) used it in relation to employee relations; Farnham & Pimlott (1995: 52) and Roger Bennett (1995: 7) use it in the field of industrial relations; Fiona Wilson (2007: 165) extended the use of ideology to managing diversity and equal opportunity context in relation with the issue of race and gender; Reskin & Padavic (1994: 113) used it with reference to gender ideology and pay discrimination and as sets of beliefs shared by, or penetrating in, all societies (i.e. culture); while Ralph Stacey (1994: 76-7 & 97) uses ideology both in connection with his concept of ‘vision’ (i.e. a visionary / ideological strategic management approach) and in a culture setting. Likewise, Michael Salamon refers to the ideology of organizational culture, leadership and management strategy as a model for HRM (1992: 236).

Patrice Rosenthal et al. (in Christopher Mabey et al. 2002: 172, 285) used ideology with reference to organizations & management norms, management control & QM, and as a means by which managers try to shape the beliefs & values of the others; Torrington & Hall (1998: 547) employed ideology in connection with obedience/ authority/ supervision at workplace. John Adams (1992: 199) mentions ideology in the philosophical and abstract context **as well as** in an economic context (**p.64**), while Paul du Gay (1996: *passim*) used it in more than eight various settings and activities; similarly John Story (1998:2-6) produced five various definitions for the term ideology as a crucial concept in the study of culture and popular culture **and also** he used it in reference to the mass / multinational culture (PP. **227/8**).). Once again, this emphasizes that the term Ideology has a whole range of various and useful meanings cover so many subjects, fields, activities, interests and expectations. Not all are combatable to each other – a good example for this in Terry Eagleton (1991:1) where he produced **more** than fifteen different definitions of the term ideology. In short, it follows that any author commenting on management studies will be hard-put to avoid making reference to the under-pinning ideology that accompanies it.

Accordingly, however, **it is interesting to note that** whilst reference to ideology is invariably made, nonetheless it is almost never central to their writings and, as a consequence, the ideology of management studies has not, of itself, been fully addressed.

The exception is Professor/ Dr Deborah M. Figart, Ellen Mutari and Marilyn Power *Living Wages, Equal Wages: Gender and Labor Market Policies in the United States; Routledge 2002*) who devoted chapter 7, 'Job evaluation and the ideology of equal pay' to this very topic; also Figart in: (*Wage-setting under Fordism: the rise of job evaluation and ideology of equal pay, 2001*) and (*Equal Pay for Work of Equal Work: The Role of Job Evaluation and the Ideology in an Evolving Social Norm, 2000*) . As such they may be considered pioneers in the field. However, the emphasis on this work (Figart's) concerns the historical development of the ideology of equal pay rather than a study of the philosophy of job evaluation ideology itself.

Consequently, when it comes to the ideology of job-evaluation it appears that, this paper apart, there is nothing **specifically (in name)** written on the subject. This may be for the reasons stated above and / or that, for some, the **overall ideology** of business management and organization is extended to include **job evaluation** through human resource management (and where, consequently, job evaluation is seen as but one of the constituent components of HRM). By contrast, this author (whilst not denying that job-evaluation is contained within the concept of HRM) would **nonetheless** (and again for the reasons stated above) maintain that the concept of job-evaluation comes with its own ideology.

3.1 Ideology is reflected through the minds of those who drive the product but may conflict with those affected by it

It might seem to be something of a tautological truism that the ideology of any concept (in this case job-evaluation) is borne out of the vision of the person or persons who devise that concept in the first place. This would certainly remain consistent with the fact that ideology is the under-pinning philosophy of the concept and is informed by its broad purpose, aims and objectives. The vision of the concept must come from somewhere. Consequently, someone somewhere invents the concept. In inventing the concept it follows that, by definition, they 'invent' the ideology. The greater the depth of thinking that goes into the development of the concept, the clearer will be its ideology.

However, this is only part of the story. There are many factors (both positive and negative) that will affect the way the ideology of a concept develops. For example, whilst Taylor may be seen as the forefather of job-creation others have since built upon the idea. It has thus been an evolving process and therefore, so has its ideology. Job evaluation theory and ideology as it stands today cannot therefore be ascribed to the creation of just one person.

On top of this it is one thing to develop the theory and ideology of job-creation but *may* be quite another to implement it in practice. This is particularly the case in circumstances where the persons (or team) who implement the job evaluation scheme locally have adopted it from the 'creators' (as opposed to Taylor who applied it directly). The question then lies in how faithfully the adopted job evaluation scheme mirrors the theory and ideology. The further removed the former is from the latter, the more distorted the ideology will become.

Much of the literature points to the fact that the theory and **purpose** of job evaluation is to provide an equitable, scientific **approach** to rating given jobs to given worth (nb: we are not suggesting that job evaluation analysis is a science in itself, simply that a scientific approach is and has been used to determine such analysis). Where this **purpose** is retained, the ideology will reflect that. However, if those implementing the scheme chose a different purpose – say, to drive down the company's expenditure on salaries and wages, then the ideology will change accordingly.

Consequently, ideology is driven more by those at the front end of application than those such as Taylor et al who had the vision in the first place.

Meanwhile, ideology (and in this is included other cognitive processes of the mind such as ideas, assumptions, theorising, philosophising etc) all reflect the personal and professional values and backgrounds of both the producer (employer/manager or management) and the recipient or the receiver (employees who convert and implement the ideology – it having been framed - into action). In this way, any of these products or forces of the mind have the potential to bring about a clash or conflict of values and vision in respect of (in our case) job evaluation ideology. This *could* mean that ideology MAY carry with it a conflict of values and vision between the initiator(s), planner(s) or designer(s) (management) and the doers (employees / performers). Figart et al (p. 123; also Figart (2001:410) makes this very point:- *“This entailed a conscious rejection of labour’s efforts to base wages on living standards...”*

In the final analysis the organization has ‘the right to manage’ in the light of the ‘prerogative management principle’ – **taking into consideration** the importance of cordial work relations and a healthy work climate between all the parties involved. At this point, the ideology becomes practice and reality where (supposedly) members of organization live by it and work for it, rather than (for ideology) to stay merely as a vision or manifesto; in order to reach desired targets.

It is important, however, to note that the job evaluation’s ideology alone (in the broader meaning described above) would be pointless and without value. At best these become no more than a set of intellectual exercises, based on (perhaps) well-meant thoughts and assumptions unless they are systematically and rationally translated into a plan or programme which is subsequently converted into meaningful action. This demands both of management and employees to share the thoughts, visions and values that the ideology of job evaluation embraces, with a sense of responsibility for both parties to translate them into reality. An organization can claim the credit and realize rewards **only** if the installation of the plan or the programme of job evaluation is successively implemented and employees have accepted its outcomes. For only then can one say with any degree of confidence that the job evaluation scheme and its under-pinning ideology is applicable, implementable and workable.

4.0 Can job evaluation ideology be equitable in practice?

It is maintained here that applied Job Evaluation ideology can be equitable in practice but, as described above, this depends upon the intentions of those implementing it. It will likely apply where the purpose is to attract and influence organizational practice towards an impartial, systematic wage structure for the company’s employees (as opposed to a loosely structured, arbitrarily reasoned assumption of estimates and guesstimates, with a bit of cosmetic negotiation and bargaining thrown in for good measure). For this to work certain key factors need to come into play:-

1. Management need to be geared towards a job evaluation strategy, philosophy and ideology that seeks equitable outcomes as a primary objective
2. Management must believe in the job evaluation strategy, philosophy and ideology that they seek to apply
3. Management must work towards outcomes that benefits both the organization and its workforce alike
4. Management must seek to create a culture in which the perceptions of the workforce mirror those of their own, thus maximising cordial working relations within the organization.

On this last point it follows that whatever applies to management and managers needs also to apply to the employees. If they do not acknowledge any benefit from an implemented job evaluation scheme and its ideology then discord will be the likely outcome.

Therefore, ideology will also be shaped by the outcome of employer-employee relationships and whether these are generally positive or negative.

The philosophy and ideology of an equitable job evaluation scheme, therefore, must not only *aim* to achieve a “win – win situation”, but must also be *seen* (by all) to strive towards this. That will only happen provided people believe in it and apply it correctly and professionally through all the stages of its implementation and maintenance

To look at job evaluation through its “ideology” takes us to dig into the core meanings and essential features of the term ideology. “Ideology”, in Collins dictionary, reflects the nature and origin of ideas, imagination, vision, speculation, interests and beliefs. For us, we have used the word “ideology” in job evaluation mainly in terms of job evaluation’s nature, philosophy, theory, and idea with an abstract or a brief description of the way to achieve the desired purpose. (We acknowledge that these terms of philosophy, theory, vision and idea are not necessarily synonymous or interchangeable with each other, though they are all interrelated to each other to varying degrees).

Of course, ideology as such, cannot physically (tangibly) be seen or touched; but yet it “*infuses life*” into the organization (see Henry Mintzberg, p. 151). Once an organization believes in it and commits itself to it, it will then become centrally part of the organization’s mission and objective. In turn it will then be incorporated into the organization’s policies, practices and activities. Ideology, then, needs an open-minded managerial leadership approach who should deliver full explanation and feedback to all staff within the organization. . This would be a very prudent approach for paving the way to translate the ideology – as a map of thoughts or assumptions and thinking - into action. It follows that job evaluation ideology cannot be excluded from this approach.

To this end, the concept of job evaluation is based on the “relative value theory” where the value of a job depends on and is influenced by the value of all other jobs. Therefore, the calculation, setting of job differences and wage differences are based on this philosophy (i.e. job relative value) – using job factors, compensable factors, comparable worth and relativities. The purpose behind this is to establish a job value hierarchy in relation to the requirements of each job and its contributions or importance to the organization (and in so doing create a job pay rate hierarchy). This establishes an internal wage consistency borne out of internal pay equity (where essentially the focus of job evaluation is on the latter). In this way job evaluation ideology informs the decision to erect or establish job relativities on an objective basis.

5.0 How the link between the relative value and equal value enhances and upgrades the ideology of job evaluation

Looking carefully and in-depth at the above illustration of the “relative value” concept, imagine that in measuring the relativities of jobs we have found job “A” placed on the same level as job “B” in terms of importance. It therefore follows that the two jobs (A & B) would be classified or categorized alongside each other within the hierarchical relativities of jobs. Strictly in this context, the “relative value” concept in its broad meaning, embraces (implicitly) just such a philosophy of “equal pay for work of equal value” even though the idea was not explicitly stated within the concept of relative value in the first instance.

Only through this under-pinning philosophy does the concept of “equal pay for work of equal value” subsequently become formulated as an explicit key principle. Where employers (generally) have shown no interest in including this idea in their job evaluation programmes, workers are more likely to react unfavourably against the proposed practices of their employers. However, the Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963 in the USA and the EPA’s Amendment of 1983 in the UK have come to “dot the i’s and cross the t’s”. Since then, the idea of “equal pay for work of equal value” has become an essential element in job evaluation theory as well as in law.

It has furthered job evaluation and has enriched its philosophy.

This in turn represents or reflects the view that job evaluation philosophy under-pins the accommodation of fluidity by driving new developments and concepts as they arise. Thus the ideology of job evaluation is a flexible and open domain which embraces and welcomes newly related ideas, thoughts and concepts under its umbrella. This in turn furthers its existence, fosters greater belief and increases its effectiveness, thus giving it more vitality. The ideology of job evaluation **MUST** be like this, simply and precisely for the two following factors:

- (a) the pay issue has proved itself to be a dynamic factor that has never settled in one form over a period of time; and
- (b) job evaluation is a systematic technical process designed, in a dynamic socio- politico-economic context or environment, to achieve fair pay.

This has the effect of ensuring a process of continuous, technological development that will inevitably affect the existing job design (of any given job). As a consequence, safeguards are thus put in place to ensure that job evaluation ideology will **NOT** be described as being too rigid and unable to accommodate new changes or developments in the terms of job content.

6.0 Who is the main player in job evaluation philosophy?

Accordingly, job evaluation, upon its philosophy, should divorce or isolate itself from the individual worker's attributes, irrespective of their individual character traits and factors such as race, creed, religion, gender and age etc.. This is an inevitable feature of job evaluation philosophy and theory. Basically, job evaluation is a depersonalized process in which the basic element and the main player is the job itself. Hence, through its theory and philosophy, which again drives its practical application, job evaluation cannot be anything but an egalitarian process. This is essential if job evaluation is to be characterised with fairness and objectivity (nb in practice discrepancies *may* occur but this should not detract from an underpinning aim to strive towards equitable outcomes).

7.0 The importance of consistency between the organization's system and ideology

Significantly, it must be borne in mind that in order (for the organization) to translate or convert job evaluation philosophy and ideology into reality, the structure of the organization concerned should be ready to undertake such practices at all levels. This includes the will and the means to formally pre-plan and implement processes to oversee such things as the development of the organizational system and its procedures, the inclusion of the employees (e.g. through open dialogue and discussion), the identification and provision of any necessary training, the establishment of an ad hoc committee on job evaluation, the provision of an appeals system etc. By so doing, the organization adopts some features of the so-called "strategic fit".

However, as to a systemized and fair pay process, the pay or compensation strategy in relation to the human resources strategy reflects the ideology of job evaluation, which in turn, represents an essential part within the overall ideology of the organization. At this point, an ideology of job evaluation is reflected within the organization's wage and salary administration.

At this point it is perhaps salutary to emphasize that the ideology of an organization can be related to the idea of ethical vision and foundation, which (in the context of job evaluation) embodies some basic elements designed to regulate the internal – external wage consistency (i.e. it will govern or at least colour the standards or rules of fair / equitable wages in terms of ethical consideration).

8.0 Job evaluation as a hybrid technique of evaluation

Job evaluation is a means to measure, assess, compare and define the relative value of jobs in an organization- whether the organization is a single plant or spread across multiple sites.

In fact, the philosophy and theory of job evaluation are not limited or constrained to specific job(s) or business(es) or to the size of an organization. Both the philosophy and theory of job evaluation address both similar jobs and dissimilar jobs with different ancestries and of different nature. In this way, job evaluation can be looked at as a hybrid technique of evaluation. As mentioned above, the focus of job evaluation is placed upon achieving internal wage consistency (internal equity) as its ultimate objective. Thus its focal point is not on the work volume of the employee or the number of people needed to carry out the job, or the ability of the job occupier, the doer's specifications and credentials, or the marketplace rates; for these things do not fit with the ideology of job evaluation.

9.0 Ideology of job evaluation: The ethical vision and moral values

This may invite us to look at ideology, in the above sense, in relation to moral values and characters or ideas that form central and fundamental issues which its ethics (in practical terms) reflect or expose them to. This is particularly so when it comes to ensuring that, consistent with genuine job evaluation ideology, the employee is granted a fair and objective evaluation of the job elements and the scores assigned to that job.

For this to happen, job evaluation ideology must under-pin the techniques and procedures that arrange jobs hierarchically based upon the job relativities according to its features, specifications and demands or requirements. Work is thus paid for **in** direct relation to its worth, importance and contribution rather than in relation to the individual worker's features and characteristics or merits (person's specifications) [In this context see also Figart et al (op.ct, pp.120/1)].

Consequently, we see that Job Evaluation ideology does not operate in its own vacuum. Instead it must consider and comply with inter-related practices such as job recruitment and principles of non-discrimination and their corresponding ideologies. If equity and fairness for all is placed at the heart of job evaluation then it complements and provides more meaning to job recruitment ideology. It will do this by, for example, enabling it to embrace the principles of non-discrimination where any person irrespective of race, creed, colour, age, gender and mental or physical disabilities etc has the (lawful) right to apply for a given post (with the only proviso being that they meet the job specification criteria. In the past such criteria was not uncommonly influenced by, for example, nepotism or the preference to employ males over females in certain jobs, etc.. Job evaluation ideology which reinforces the value of a job according to its worth, coupled with recruitment ideology of fair and equal access to that job thus binds the under-pinning principles of both.

Meanwhile, safeguards such as introducing the right of the employee to appeal against perceived, unsatisfactory results obtained from any given job evaluation exercise further reinforces the equity principle. This, in turn, places a premium upon management to (carefully) choose members of the ad hoc job evaluation committee whose professionalism, objectivity and moral integrity can be trusted.

10.0 The growing culture towards universal recognition of job evaluation ideology: surveys and figures

Despite the fact that job evaluation discipline is still a relatively new concept the importance of its philosophy and ideology has received considerable global recognition and acceptance by organizations of various types, nature and size in countries across the world.

Literature shows a report by the National Board for Prices and Incomes in Britain (NBPI, Sep., 1968) that nearly 40 percent of companies employing over 5,000 people used job evaluation, and about 25 percent of nearly 6,500,000 employees in British manufacturing industry were subject to job evaluation. In a survey of 213 British organizations, it was found that 168 had job evaluation schemes in operation, which means 78.8 percent of respondents (Thakur and Gill, op.ct, p.9).

Lupton and Bowey (1983: 11) mention that the considerable spread of job evaluation occurs in some industries and larger firms with over 10,000 individual employees compared to 25 percent in smaller establishments with fewer than 250 workers. Armstrong (2000: 131) mentions different surveys of job evaluation: a survey of 316 British organizations found that 55 percent used formal job evaluation processes. In a 1989 sample of 376 organizations, 61 percent operated a formal job evaluation scheme and 11 percent were about to introduce such a scheme. Another survey in 1993 covers 164 organizations of which 75 percent used job evaluation (*ibid*). In an IRS survey (1998: 3), it was established that in Britain out of 145 organizations covered, 75% of the employers used formal job evaluation for at least some jobs.

Meanwhile, in the USA, one third of American companies have adopted formal job evaluation plans (Calhoon, 1963: 423). The Bureau of Labour statistics found that nine tenths of the production workers in the machinery industries in Milwaukee, one-half to two-thirds in Baltimore, Chicago and Houston, and three New England areas were covered by job evaluation. Six out of every seven firms covered in a survey by the Bureau of National Affairs used formal job evaluation plans (details in Belcher, 1974: 93; also see Figart et al. *op.ct*, p. 133). By the mid sixties, according to a job evaluation estimate, some 50 million American employees, i.e. about two-thirds of the labour force, were graded under job evaluation schemes of one kind or another (Thakur and Gill, *op.ct*, p. 2).]

The above examples show that job evaluation has been used more widely in the U.S.A. than in Britain but that, in the case of the latter, its use is growing. Europe, too, embraces job evaluation more than Britain, with the Netherlands being a case in point. What is clear is that whilst the degree of job evaluation application varies greatly from country to country, its overall use continues to increase at a considerable rate (Brown et. al., 1972: 7). These exercises, in turn, further demonstrate a growing belief that job evaluation as a systemized and fair pay technique is the right way forward, sound in its application and which, again in turn, serves to enhance the value of its underpinning ideology. To this, many educational institutions and universities now hold special courses on job evaluation. It is no longer exceptional to find people doing M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in this subject. Some professional bodies even provide grants to study and train on job evaluation. Job evaluation is now commonly used and is equally adaptable to positions in both private industry and the public sector services.

11.0 Conclusions

Job evaluation, as an ideology that embraces the incorporation of the procedures and techniques of a fair pay system, and which has a vital role to play, has prove itself as an influential and successful instrument in establishing an equitable wage and salary structure for the organization concerned. This cannot occur unless the ideology of job evaluation (philosophy, theory, and assumptions) has proved to be:-

- (a) workable and useful for both the organizations and the employees, and above all:
- (b) acceptable

This is because under-pinning principle of job evaluation is to achieve an acceptable level of fairness and objectivity. This has the effect of helping to create a cordial work-based atmosphere which is supported by its impersonalized approached to evaluating jobs according to their relative worth. Government agencies, businesses, private sector and industrial enterprises currently maintain a high confidence in the importance and benefits of job evaluation. Once again, this accentuates the success of job evaluation ideology – if it is appropriately framed, professionally translated and performed.

Moreover, the philosophy and theory of job evaluation calls NOT ONLY for pay to be systematically formulated, but also to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate newly related ideas where the principle of “equal pay for work of equal value” is a case in point.

To this end, accordingly, one can state with confidence that job evaluation has become a recognised, specific discipline that, by design, is systematic in its outlook. It is coordinated in its facts and rules, responsive to new demands or needs and has clearly defined means or techniques that require special skills or training. Without faithful appeal to its under-pinning ideology the practice of job-evaluation would simply become one of arbitrary implementation lacking in rigour, meaningful purpose and direction.

All in all, this paper removes the doubt as to whether or not job evaluation has its own ideology at all or it is bound by and contained within the principles of HRM. It suggests that there was value in considering job evaluation ideology in its own right. It critically ties job evaluation ideology to purpose and to the need of its ideology to become variable according to purpose and outcomes and not to remain constant.

1. Proposal

I consider that this article approaches the practice of job evaluation from a position that has not been previously adopted. Many authorities refer to job evaluation in passing without defining, explaining or discussing its ideology. Despite an extensive literature search I can, with the exception of Figart et al (Job evaluation and the ideology of equal pay; Chapter 7, *Living Wages, Equal Wages*, 2002) find no article or book that makes any more than a passing reference on this specific subject. I therefore consider this article to cover new ground (Figart's work concentrates more on the (historical) development of Job Evaluation and its ideology specific to equal pay than focuses on a study of job evaluation ideology *per se*).

Moreover, I feel that there is a need to critically examine the subject of job evaluation ideology and that business managers will be able to gain considerable benefit and insight from it. This is because a fuller understanding of job evaluation ideology and philosophy will, in turn, provide a better understanding of how to implement, maintain and develop a seamless job-evaluation process with consistency (which is generally accepted as a necessary component for its success).

I feel qualified to comment on job evaluation ideology with authority. I have had ten articles on job evaluation published (in International Peer Reviewed and Referred Journals including the AIJCR Vol. 2, No. 1, Jan. 2012.) and I anticipate having more of the same published in the future. I have both a Masters degree and a PhD on job evaluation. Finally I have taught for over 20 years in Higher Education on the length, breadth and depth of Management Studies (including job evaluation)- with a further decade in education and business.

I have extensively informally researched the practice of job evaluation through the literature on this subject. When submitting my Masters Degree Dissertation (Liverpool University, 1981) on *The Theory of Job Evaluation*. And have thus been able to draw conclusions about its ideology in particular.

2. Narrative Outline

The idea behind this article was inspired by Figart et al (in *Living Wages, Equal Wages: Gender and Labor Market Policies in the United States –Chapter 7, Routledge 2002*). This work suggested that there was more to be explored in this area and that there was value in considering the philosophy of job evaluation ideology in its own right.

As its title suggests, this paper considers and critically analyses the philosophy of job evaluation ideology. It is both a description and a prescription of this ideology.

This paper introduces the concept of *ideology* itself – what it is and how it may evolve. Critically, it ties ideology to purpose.

This is important because it emphasises that the ideology underpinning a given subject need not (and often will not) remain constant. Instead it becomes variable according to purpose and outcomes.

Having provided an outline of ideology as subject, the paper then takes these principles and applies them to job evaluation. Like Figart et al (ibid) the scene is set with a chronological overview of job evaluation, its purpose and its ideology. However, this paper breaks new ground because it is essentially a study of the philosophy of job evaluation ideology rather than solely a description of what has been the case to date.

It considers, in depth, such concepts as:-

1. Whether or not job evaluation has its own ideology at all (or whether, for example, it is bound by and contained within the principles of Human Resource ideology)
2. Whether or not its purpose can be satisfied in practice
3. The debate as to whether job evaluation ideology is primarily concerned with implementing and maintaining an equitable salaries and wages system or, by contrast, is no more than a quasi-scientific attempt to keep company wage costs down.
4. The positive and negative factors that may affect the purpose, direction and outcome of job evaluation ideology within a given business or organisation.

The paper consistently cross-references the principles and philosophy of job evaluation ideology with real-life examples. As such it represents more than simply a theoretical debate about job-evaluation ideology alone.

In conclusion the paper is broad-based in its approach. It seeks to examine the *particular* aspects of job evaluation ideology through recognition and an understanding of the general concepts of ideology as subject. As such it lends itself to a critical analysis of job evaluation ideology. The author believes that this in turn will assist those applying job evaluation strategies in the real world. It achieves this by offering a deeper insight and understanding of the mechanics of job evaluation, the underpinning, ideological principles which makes it tick together with a clear sense of purpose towards its practical application.

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