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FROM DECENT WORK TO WELL-BEING: A FILM ANALYSIS OF "SORRY WE MISSED YOU"

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ABSTRACT

The concept of "decent work", which was officially introduced to the literature by the ILO in 1999, aims to increase the decent job opportunities of employees whose working conditions are deteriorating day by day due to globalization. Although it is seen that many issues related to employment are examined through film analysis in the literature, it is noteworthy that there is no study that examine decent work via film analysis. It is believed that this study will fill this gap in the literature. In this context, first, the concept of decent work has been examined within the framework of the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT). Then, elements of decent work and their effects on well-being are evaluated within the scope of PWT through selected scenes from the "Sorry We Missed You" film. As a result, it has been revealed that the courier service of the main character of the film is insufficient in terms of each of the decent work elements. Accordingly, it has been determined that the psychological and physiological well-being of the character deteriorates over time. It can be stated that "indecent work" has negative effects on psychological and physiological well-being.

Keywords: Decent Work, Well-Being, Film Analysis, Psychology of Working Theory.

DÜZGÜN İŞTEN İYİ OLUŞ HALİNE: "SORRY WE MISSED YOU" FİLM ANALİZİ

ÖZET

ILO tarafından resmi olarak ilk kez 1999 yılında dile getirilen "düzgün iş" kavramı, küreselleşme nedeniyle çalışma koşulları gün geçtikçe kötüleşen çalışanların insan onuruna yakışır iş olanaklarını artırmak amacını taşımaktadır. Literatürde istihdam ile ilgili birçok konunun film analizi yoluyla incelendiği görülmesine karşın, düzgün iş konusunu film analizi yoluyla ele alan bir çalışmanın olmadığı dikkat çekmektedir. Bu çalışmanın literatürdeki bu boşluğu dolduracağına inanılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda öncelikle konu, Çalışma Psikolojisi Teorisi (Psychology of Working Theory — PWT) ele alınmıştır. Sonrasında düzgün iş unsurları ve iyi oluş hali üzerindeki etkileri, "Sorry We Missed You" filminden seçilen sahneler aracılığıyla PWT çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir. Yapılan incelemeler sonucunda, filmin baş karakterinin yaptığı kuryelik işinin, düzgün iş unsurlarının her biri açısından yetersiz olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna bağlı olarak karakterin psikolojik ve fizyolojik iyi oluş halinde zaman içerisinde bozulmalar meydana geldiği saptanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda "düzgün olmayan işin" psikolojik ve fizyolojik iyi oluş hali üzerinde negatif etkileri olduğu söylenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Düzgün İş, İyi Oluş Hali, Film Analizi, Çalışma Psikolojisi Teorisi.

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1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, a growing amount of policy and scholarly attention has been paid to various elements of employment quality. Analysts have noticed that having a job alone may not be sufficient to secure even a minimum quality of life for many people (Burchell et al., 2014:459). In this respect, the concept of decent work was introduced as a target at the 87th Labor Conference held by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1999. According to ILO (1999), decent work is not only a vital contributor to sustainable development, but also a worthwhile goal in and of itself. Decent work is unquestionably an important aspect of one's overall life quality, since work is considerable feature of life regarding time, socialization, and self-esteem (Anker et al., 2003:147). According to the researches decent work links with employee engagement (Graça et al., 2021), life satisfaction (Chen et al., 2020) and well-being (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019; Kozan et al., 2019).

In this study, the elements, and consequences of (in)decent work are examined through the film analysis of "Sorry We Missed You" directed by Ken Loach and written by Paul Laverty. Ken Loach is a well-known British director who is recognized by connecting art and left-wing politics. Since the 1960a, he has been dedicated to socialist politics and his films frequently highlight the flaws of contemporary economic and social structures (Goodall & Cook, 2021:1). Poverty, financial hardship, unfair labor practices, family breakdowns and other issues are address in the film (Dang, 2019). The main character of the film is a "delivery driver" who are pushed to his limits as he tries to keep his family alive in a world of zero-hours contract (BBC, 2019). It is considered appropriate to review this film because every single element of decent work is mentioned in the film.

Champoux (1999:206) stated that movie scenes can provide a visual representation of the theories and concepts, which can help individuals to better assess their situations, observe alternative solutions and the possible outcomes of these solutions. Accordingly, the concept of decent work has been examined within the framework of Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) through a film analysis. From this point of view, it is believed that this study will fill the gap in the literature by revealing the real-life reflections of decent work.

2. Decent Work and Psychology of Working (Pwt) Theory

Decent work was introduced to the literature by ILO in 1999 defined as "opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity" (ILO, 1999:3). Decent work is critical not just for the individual's career development, but also for the long-term competitive advantage of companies and society's welfare (Haiming & Yan, 2020:11).

ILO attaches importance to decent work in order to increase the opportunities for appropriate work for the labor force, whose working conditions have deteriorated and become even weaker in the face of globalization and neo-liberal policies. In fact, the principle of decent work was first recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to this, everyone has the right to choose their own job freely, just as they have the right to work. Equal pay for equal work without any discrimination, and social protection rights that will ensure that the employee and his/her family can lead a life worthy of human dignity should be provided (Ciğdem, 2019:183).

The concept of decent work consists of four basic elements: increasing employment opportunities, protecting fundamental rights related to working life, social protection and developing social dialogue (ILO, 2013). Decent work is outlined in 11 substantive factors in its revised version, which are also called the Decent Work Agenda (ILO, 2013). Each of the 11 substantive aspects (employment opportunities, work-life balance, safe work environment etc.) of decent work related to the ideas underlying the notion (Ferraro et al., 2015:31). Decent work elements can also be considered as hygiene factors in Herzberg's (Herzberg et al., 1959) theory of motivation. Thus, it will not be possible for employees working in conditions deprived of hygiene factors to be motivated.

Work has long been recognized as an essential component of people's lives by vocational psychologists. Work is firmly related to one's self concept, thus the work experience is associated with psychological and physical forms of well-being (Wang et al., 2019:1). Understanding the significance of work in individual's life has been a major topic of counseling psychology from its start in the 1900s, according to Duffy et al. (2016:127). A variety of ideas have been proposed to clarify how people make career choices and what makes them happy at work (Malan, 2019). Researches have shown that people who work in environments that are a good fit with their interests, values and talents are more likely to feel job satisfaction and other indicators of work well-being (Nauta, 2013:63; Stoermer et al., 2018:852).

Psychology of Working Framework (PWF), (Blustein, 2001; 2006) was created to add to current occupational theories by emphasizing the importance of social class, privilege, and freedom of choice in job choice and fulfillment. Research based on the PWF has clearly demonstrated how social class affects job experience, notably for the poor and labor force (e.g. Blustein et al., 2016). Duffy et al. (2016) developed a theoretical statement called as the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT), which attempted to pinpoint the key antecedents and outcomes of decent work. The PWT proposes a model based on the principles stated in the PWF that places decent work at the heart of all individual's work experiences. This model incorporates psychological characteristics such as proactivity, as well as social and economic aspects such as social class (Blustein et al., 2016).

PWT's major goal is to determine key components in the process of winning decent work and define the mechanism how decent work leads to needs satisfaction, work fulfillment, and well-being (Duffy et al., 2016). This theory explains the link between the ILO's decent work description and the psychological approach to work. Based on the theory Duffy et al. (2016:130) argued that, decent work includes a) physically and interpersonally safe working conditions (e.g., the absence of emotional or mental abuse), b) hours that allow for free time and adequate rest c) organizational values complement that family and social values, d) adequate compensation, e) access to sufficient healthcare.

PWT can be categorized as two components, the first of which consists of antecedents of decent work and the second of which includes consequences of having decent work (Duffy et al., 2019). In this study, the above elements in PWT's decent work description will be used to determine whether the job of the main character in the film is a decent work. PWT argued that, psychological and physical well-being occur when decent work satisfies individual needs. In this context, the outcomes of the character's work in the mentioned film in terms of well-being will also be examined.

3. Method

In this study, document analysis, which is one of the qualitative research methods was adopted, and the "Sorry We Missed You" film was chosen to be a case study. Decent work specifically examines jobs that require relatively low qualifications and offer low wages. In this respect, it is considered that the film is an appropriate choice since the main character of the film is the "delivery driver", and there are heavy working conditions. In the document analysis, it includes the analysis of written and visual materials that provide information about the cases that are investigated. In this analysis, not only written material but also visual materials such as films, videos, and photographs are used (Love, 2013:83).

The film, which was came out in 2019 was directed by Ken Loach and the main role in the film is played by Kris Hitchen as Ricky. His wife Abby, the character played by Debbie Honeywood is a care giver, and he has a son named Seb (Rhys Stone), which is dealing with various youth issues, and a daughter named Liza (Katie Proctor), Seb's younger sister. A UK delivery man and his wife striving to raise a family end themselves stuck in the vicious loop of this modern-day type of labor slavery, hoping that self-employment via the gig economy will cure their financial troubles is discussed in the film (IMDB, 2019).

After the above information about the movie, various selected scenes from the movie will be examined in terms of decent work. In this regard, the antecedents and outcomes of decent work will be discussed in the framework of PWT. The research was carried out in four phases: a) The literature is reviewed, b) The film is watched, c) Scenes with the main character are itemized, d) The scenes are analyzed in detail accordance with the literature.

4. Results

The scenes analyzed in the movie and their relationship to decent work are given in the table below. Decent work elements are presented as "safe working conditions", "enough free time", "values fit", "adequate compensation", and "sufficient healthcare". In addition, the relevant scenes are also classified regarding their relationship with "physical" and "psychological well-being", which are the outcomes of decent work.

The first scene opens with Ricky and his job interviewer. Ricky says he does whatever work he can find, like digging out, concreting, roofing etc. Thus, we understand that Ricky usually does a variety of physical labor-based jobs. Now he is bored with this situation and wants to be his own boss. The interviewer states that thanks to this job, he can be the boss of his own business, and that he can do the job with his own transporter. Ricky, on the other hand, states that he has been waiting for this chance for years and they finally agreed a deal.

Table 1: Scene Analysis in the Film

Scenes	Time	Scene Context	Relationship with Decent Work
1	5"	Ricky and Abby talk	Enough free time
2	11"	Ricky's and his colleague talk	Enough free time Safe working conditions
3	25"	Argument at work	Enough free time Values fit Safe working conditions
4	41"	Ricky mad at Seb	Values fit
5	1'01"	Ricky cannot attend the meeting	Enough free time Psychological well-being (stress, anger)
6	1'08''	Ricky asks permission to leave work	Safe working conditions Values fit Adequate compensation
7	1'14"	Ricky and Abby argue	Psychological well-being (exhaustion, anger)
8	1'24"	Liza's confession	Values fit Psychological well-being (sadness, desperation)
9	1'25"	Ricky falling asleep while driving	Physical well-being (fatigue)
10	1'29"	Ricky and Abby in the hospital	Sufficient healthcare
11	1'31"	Maloney calls Ricky	Adequate compensation Values fit
12	1'36"	Ricky goes to work	Safe working conditions Values fit Psychological well-being (financial worries, stress) Physical well-being (fatigue, unable to rest)

The first scene opens with Ricky and his job interviewer. Ricky says he does whatever work he can find, like digging out, concreting, roofing etc. Thus, we understand that Ricky usually does a variety of physical labor-based jobs. Now he is bored with this situation and wants to be his own boss. The interviewer states that thanks to this job, he can be the boss of his own business, and that he can do the job with his own transporter. Ricky, on the other hand, states that he has been waiting for this chance for years and they finally agreed a deal.

Scene 1: Ricky (R) and his wife Abby (A) talk about the new job. While Ricky eagerly dreams of the money he will earn, Abby worries that they may not get to see each other often.

R: Henry's doing 200 quid a day.. And I can be just as quick as him.. That's £1200 a week, not a month.

A: Yeah, but it'd be like 14 hours a day, six days a week. I never see you. We never see each other.

- **Scene 2:** When Ricky is just starting out the job, his colleague (C) hands him a plastic bottle and says he'll need it. This indicates that Ricky will not have enough time even for his basic physical needs.
 - C: You're gonna need this.
 - *R*: What's that for?
 - C: That's for p...g in.
 - R: You're f....g winding me up.
 - C: You'll see.
- In the 24" of the film, we see the husband and wife falling asleep in front of the TV and their daughters tidying the house. Again, this is an indication that they are not able to spare time for themselves due to the tiredness of their work.
- **Scene 3:** An argument ensues between another employee (W) and manager Malory (M), who is late for work at Ricky's workplace.
 - W: Someone smacked into the mirror, into my wing mirror. Clean off. On the floor.
 - M: So why didn't you bloody fix it last night?
- W: It happened outside the house first thing this morning. What am I meant to do? It's not my fault, is it?
 - M: Well, get a replacement driver.
 - W: Just give us two hours, that's all I'm asking for.
 - M: You get down here first thing, or you get a replacement.
- W: Howay, man! I've worked 14 days in a row! Just give us a bit of slack. Two hours! You never give us an inch.
- M: Well, I can sort that out for you. I'll give your route to somebody else. Somebody who doesn't moan every two minutes, who hits their numbers.
- Here, it is seen that the manager has no tolerance for the slightest mistake and can insult his employees. There is an organizational climate in which the necessary time is not given to the employees to fix the problems and organizational culture does not fit with social values.
- **Scene 4:** Ricky is angry because Seb (S) often skips school. He worries that Seb will not be able to have a decent job in the future because of these behaviors.
 - R: But it don't have to be like that, does it? There's good jobs out there.
 - *S: Good jobs? What good jobs?*
- R: Well, there is if you just knuckle down. Give yourself some options. Otherwise, you're just gonna end up like...
 - *S:* What, like you? Do you really think I want that?
- R: Yeah, going from s..t job to s..t job, working 14 hours a day, having to put up with everyone else's s. You're just gonna end up a skivvy.

From these dialogues, it is understood that Ricky thinks that he is doing a job that does not match his preferences and values and is not considered respectable in society.

In the 43" of the film, Ricky and his daughter Liza are jovially running. Liza is there to help her father in his business (to spend time with him). When they can't find the consigne at the apartment, they went to deliver the cargo, Liza writes a note on the card that gives the film its name: "Sorry we missed you".

In the 51" scene, Abby suddenly has a shift, and the whole family gathers and drives off in Ricky's car to drop Abby off to work. It is understood from this scene that the family actually has a strong bond and they try to spend time together whenever possible.

Scene 5: Due to Seb's problematic behavior at school, Ricky and Abby are invited by the school principal for an interview, but Ricky cannot attend this meeting due to his workload.

R: There's no way he's gonna be doing his work at home, is there? So we need to get it changed so that he goes into school and does it. Abby!

A: I don't know.

R: I can't believe you were face to face with him and you didn't even bother to ask.

A: I can't believe you didn't turn up and ask the questions yourself!

R: I've been running around like a blue a.s fly all day! I've not even had anything to eat! Do you know how much work I've had on?

Abby feels that Ricky doesn't take enough responsibility. On the other hand, Ricky is angry because he cannot show interest due to his work and thinks that feels that his family doesn't understand his situation well enough.

Scene 6: While at work, Ricky learns that his son Seb was caught stealing and is in the police station. He tells his manager Maloney that he has to leave immediately.

R: Maloney, I'm gonna have to go.

M: What? You having a laugh? How am I meant to get a replacement driver now? I can't even share the parcels out. There's you and only Henry left. Everyone else has gone.

R: I know, I'm sorry. But it's ... it's personal.

M: Personal? Do I look like a f...g counsellor? Get those parcels out of your van and that's you landed with a sanction. You will pay through for this.

Maloney doesn't even ask Ricky what his "special situation" is, all that matters to him is that things run smoothly. "Am I a psychologist?" it's a sign of his insensitivity. He also states that in this case, he will make a deduction from his pay. So, Ricky goes to the police station and the situation is resolved.

Scene 7: We witness his conversations with Abby at home in the evening.

A: We need to be together. I'm not gonna lose him.

R: No, we need to keep communicating with each other. You should be backing me up. If you don't, then we're done for.

A: I do back you up. And we're done for if you don't watch your temper. You're exhausted. Can you not see it?

R: So it is my fault?

A: It will be your fault if you can't control yourself.

While Ricky's desire to be supported by his wife continues, Abby thinks that he is very tired and states that he should control his anger.

Liza wakes up at night and sees her brother painting the wall with family photos with graffiti. In the morning, the whole family witnesses the same view. Later, they realize that Ricky's car key is missing. Ricky is furious that he can't go to work and is subject to even more financial sanctions and slaps his son. In the evening, Ricky, Abby, and Liza (L) talk about what happened.

Scene 8: Liza's confession comes.

L: I woke up and I heard him but... he was out of the door before I could get there. I just wanted things the way they were. And I wanted Seb back. So I thought that if I took your keys.. things might go back to normal.

A: Oh, darling.

R: (Cries)

Liza sees her father's job as responsible for the problems at home. She believes that her father must quit the job in order for the family to return to the good old days. Ricky, on the other hand, feels helpless.

Scene 9: Ricky drives very tiredly. He falls asleep and escapes at the last moment from an accident. While he was using the plastic bottle that his colleague had given him before, he was attacked by a gang and the valuable devices in his vehicle were stolen.

Scene 10: Ricky is injured, and he and Abby are in the hospital.

R: Just go and find out how long we're gonna be. I hate it here. It's dead boring. I'd rather be at home. Go on.

A: We're not going without your X-ray results.

Görevli: Right, I can see the X-ray result is back, but it does need to be assessed by a GP.

A: It's gonna be about three hours waiting.

R: Three hours?

A: I know.

Scene 11: Maloney calls Ricky and states that he needs to find a replacement employee because he cannot come to work, and that he must pay compensation for the damaged and stolen devices.

- M: Are you OK?
- R: Yeah, I'm just waiting for some X-rays
- M: I've been on the phone to the insurance companies, and we're covered for all the phones... and you had two of them, Ricky. It's £250 for each passport.
 - R: It's a bit of a blow. It's 500 quid, mate.
 - *M:* Have you got a replacement driver for tomorrow?
- R: I've had the s..t kicked out of me and I'm in hospital and you ask if I've got a replacement driver?
 - M: Well, you know that's a grand, right?
 - R: A grand? You're expecting me to pay £1,000?
- A: It's Ricky's wife, Abby. I'm sat in hospital with him. His face has been pummelled, he's waiting for X-rays, he could have a punctured lung. And you're saying about fines and £1,000 devices. How does your company get away with treating people like this?

The organization does not give sufficient value to human health and makes deductions of fines from wage in unfair ways. In this regard, both Ricky and Abby say that they find Maloney's behavior unacceptable. They leave the hospital without waiting for the results to come out. This indicates that there are some problems in accessing sufficient healthcare.

- **Scene 12:** Early in the morning, Ricky starts the car. Seb and Abby try to stop him from going to work despite being injured.
 - S: Dad, where are you going?
 - R: Calm down, Seb. I'm just going to the hospital for the X-ray results.
 - *S:* At 6:30 in the morning?
- R: We're thousands of pounds in debt, Seb. I've got fines coming out of my arse. If I don't pay him and sort it out, we'll end up on the streets. I'm not having that for you and your mum and Liza. So let me go.
- S: You can't go like that, man, Dad. Look at the state of you. You've only got one eye that works. You're gonna kill yourself when you're driving.
 - R: Son, I've got to go to work. I have not got a choice.
 - S: Dad, I just want you back the way you were, the way everything was.
 - R: It'll be different in six months, I promise.
 - A: Get out of your van!
 - R: I'm going to work!
 - A: Ricky, don't go to work!
 - R: (Cries)



Image 1: The Scene When Ricky Tells His Son He Has to Go to Work

Ricky is on his way to work to pay off his debts, even though he is not well physically and mentally, and his family is worried about him.

5. Discussion

The approach to employment has changed owing to the change in the workforce profile due to reasons such as the differentiation of the traditional approach attributed to the meaning of work, especially with the changes in the way of doing business in the recent period and increasing immigration. Despite the spread of job insecurity, the persistence of individuals' need to seek meaning in their work brings with it some issues. Thus, the concept of decent work has become a topic of interest both researchers and practitioners.

Undoubtedly, recreating the existence of human and society in the universe by making full use of physical reality through movies is an important function at the social level (Akmeşe & Arda, 2020:2127). The most basic feature of director Ken Loach's films is that they have a stance away from conformism, and the director's favorite character is individuals who are members of the British working class. With all his films, Loach tries to confront the audience with the effects of the rigid structure of the bureaucratic system among individuals and the problems of labor exploitation. (Gümüs & Öztürk, 2019:41). In addition to developing countries, it is seen that many people in developed countries are deprived of many material and nonmaterial opportunities to maintain their lives. Although these issues are experienced by most of the employees or are known by others thanks to globalization, the film analysis method is notable in the sense that reflecting the gravity of the situation. In this study, which is prepared in accordance with research and publication ethics, the phenomenon of "decent work", which has become an important problem today and whose antecedents and results are frequently discussed, is examined through a film analysis within the framework of PWT theory. In this direction, the premises of decent work and its results are examined through the working life of the main character.

Ricky, the main character of the film analyzed in this research, got tired of many low-quality jobs he had been doing for years, and started to work as a courier with his own delivery vehicle, dreaming that he would do his own business and earn a better income. While doing this job, which he started with great enthusiasm, he cannot spare enough time for himself and his

family, there is a constant tension in his workplace and intolerance to even the slightest fault. For this reason, he cannot show enough attention to the problems of his son, who is struggling with youth issues. His wife, who also works in a low-skilled job, complained about not getting the support she expected from Ricky; on the other hand, complains that his family cannot understand the intense and stressful working conditions.

Ricky is constantly scolded by his manager; his needs are ignored. His own values are disregarded, and it is emphasized that they should work constantly instead of being there for their family in difficult times. For the slightest mistake or request for leave, he is punished with unreasonable deduction from his pay. In the single scene related to healthcare system, it is striking that many people with Ricky waited for hours to receive a reasonable service. In this sense, it can be stated that Ricky's work does not meet the basic requirements for each element of decent work.

Companies may establish circumstances that allow such pleasant and healthy conduct more naturally achievable, rather than pushing people to grin and dealing with the humorous costs. Replacing emotional demands with fair, person-centered methods to create "decent work" and thus increasing well-being of the employees, as well as truly happy sentiments that come spontaneously as a consequence of being supported and valued organizational citizens (Grandey et al., 2015:779).

Decent work increases work motivation (Ferraro et al., 2017) and work engagement (Graça et al., 2011) and reduces burnout (Ferraro et al., 2018; Ferraro et al., 2020). Parallel to these results, decent work related with physical health outcomes indirectly via workplace fatigue (Duffy et al., 2021) and subjective well-being (Petrea, 2020). In this direction, Ricky, whose work is not an example of decent work, gradually moves away from both physical and psychological well-being. Feeling intense anxiety and stress all the time, Ricky turned away from his previous optimistic attitude and turned into an angry and unhappy person. Not only does he get enough rest and time for his hobbies, he lacks free time to meet even his most basic needs. Falling asleep while driving due to exhaustion, going to work to pay off his debts despite being injured are indications that he no longer takes care of his health. At the end of the film, we see a tired, unhappy, and financially worried Ricky instead of the enthusiastic Ricky who has started a new job with excitement. In this sense, this study has confirmed that "indecent work" has devastating effects on well-being.

Authors' Contributions

The author confirms sole responsibility for the whole article preparation.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

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