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Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model to Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study examined to give the picture about the application of Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model to job satisfaction from the viewpoint of fast food outlet managers. The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction among managers at fast food outlets and to determine which of the five dimensions of the job characteristics model contribute most to job satisfaction among fast food outlet managers. For this research, the population of 212 respondents who are from the managerial level from fast food outlet involved was being surveyed. 122 questionnaires were distributed to all the respondents. The five points likert -scales were used to the statements based on job characteristics and job satisfaction. The researcher asked the respondents to rate the series of statement that evolve from their viewpoints of job characteristics and job satisfaction. Meanwhile the factors that contribute to job characteristics are autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task identity and task significance. The five main factors may become the strong or weakness factors that contribute to the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction. Then, the strongest relationship may be as the primary factor that should consider in ensuring the job satisfaction among manager at fast food outlet.

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1. Introduction

The success of any organization depends upon the collection of individuals, including leaders and subordinates, and their feeling towards their job. Ketchain (2003) pointed out that workplace are more productive when people are happy with their work. It enhanced the decision making ability since happiness reduced stress and uncertainty. In addition, new customers got attracted to happy employees because these employees treat customers substantially better. Ketchain (2003) further stressed that happy employees will have high level of job satisfaction because they feel comfortable with the organization. Hackman and Oldham's (1974) job characteristics model suggested that five core job dimensions affect certain personal and work related outcomes, including job satisfaction. The five core job dimensions identified are autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task identity, and task significance. It is important to recognize the job characteristics and how they affect the employees' job satisfaction in an organization. The positive effect created by the presence of the job satisfaction is believed to be reinforcing and serves as an incentive for an employee to continue to carry out the task assigned, thus contributing towards organizational effectiveness.

1.1. Literature Review

Job satisfaction is generally defined refers to person feelings of satisfaction on the job, which acts as a motivation to work. (Brief & Weiss (2002); Price (2004; Roa, (2005); Robbins (2005)). It is not the self satisfaction, happiness or self-contentment but the satisfaction of the job. Job satisfaction is generally recognized as a multifaceted construct that includes employee feelings about a variety of both intrinsic and extrinsic job elements (Howard & Frink, (1996); Wayne, (2006). Lyord (2000) defined as an employee's general attitude toward the job. It is the extent to which people like (satisfied) or dislike (dissatisfied) with their jobs. Betts (2000) defined job satisfaction as a perception of the job by the job holder, who determines level of satisfaction based upon physiological and psychological need.

For decades, organizational researchers have been intrigued by employee satisfaction with work. Job satisfaction describes how content an individual is with his or her job (Rajat, 2009). Gupta & Joshi (2008) concluded in their study that Job satisfaction is an important technique used to motivate the employees to work harder. Gupta and Joshi (2008) agreed that job satisfaction is very important because most of the people spend a major of their life at their work place. Employees have more positive perceptions about the organization's products and services, when they achieved satisfaction in their job and therefore deliver a better service. (Bontis, Richards & Serenko, 2011).

Most research has supported the validity of the Job Characteristics Model (JCM), (Price & Muller (1986)) as the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involved the use of a number of skills and talents of the employee. Coelho and Augusto (2010) stated that task identity encourage the feeling that the job is meaningful and worthwhile thus motivating the employee to work smart. Task significance has been defined by Hackman and Oldham (1974) as the degree to which a job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people whether in the immediate organization or in the external environment. Hackman and Oldham (1974) further explained that autonomy is the degree to which a job provides freedom, independence and discretion to the employees in scheduling his or her work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out. It is the vertical expansion of responsibility, the amount of decision making and independence allowed for employee. According to Coelho and Augusto, (2010) autonomy can motivate

and enable employee to try new ideas and learn from consequences, and expend their domain- relevant skills. Hackman and Oldham (1974) defined feedback as the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the employee obtaining information about the effectiveness of his or her performance. Top management need to give feedback to the employee so that they know which areas that need to be improved and it can lead to better understanding of their work nature. (Coelho & Augusto, (2010)

In an article written out by Bryner (2007), the findings indicated that across all occupations, on average 47 percent of those surveyed said they were satisfied with their jobs and 33 percent reported being very happy. Research has shown that there is a significant relationship between the situational variables of autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task identity and task significance, and job satisfaction (Noor Azzah & Rudzi, 2007). Spector and Jex (1991) found that perception on job characteristics and job satisfaction was moderately related, a value of 0.32 to 0.46. Control over decision making and job autonomy has both been found to be linked with social work job satisfaction (Arches, 1991; Poulin, 1994). Research conducted by Katsikea, Theodosiou , Perdikis & Kehagias, (2011) also agreed that there is a strong the positive influence between job autonomy, job variety and job feedback with sales managers' job satisfaction by using this model.

In the context of this study, the independent variable of this study is job characteristics and the dependent variable is job satisfaction. The conceptual framework for this study is motivated by Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model (1974). The theoretical framework indicates the related variables to be studied as shown in Figure below.

Research has shown that there is a significant relationship between the situational variables of autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task identity and task significance, and job satisfaction (Anderson, 1984; Colarelli, Dean & Konstans, 1987). Futhermore, Noor Azzah & Rudzi (2007) has also found that there is a significant relationship between the situational variables of autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task identity and task significance, and job satisfaction (Noor Azzah & Rudzi, 2007). Hence, the discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

- H₁: Autonomy is positively related with job satisfaction
- H₂: Skill variety is positively related with job satisfaction
- H₃: Task significance is positively related with job satisfaction
- H₄: Task identity is positively related with job satisfaction
- H₅: Feedback is positively related with job satisfaction

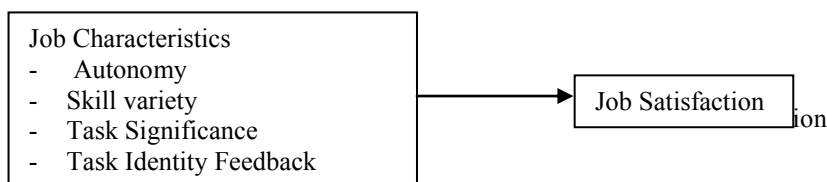


Figure 1. Conceptual framework on The Application of Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model to job satisfaction: view point from fast food outlet managers.

The research used non-experimental research that was correlational research. The sampling frame for this study was obtained from the company's website. The website is used as one source of reference as it produces list of fast food outlets operating in Shah Alam, Selangor. In ensuring the validity and reliability of the sampling frame, the respective managers were personally approached to reconfirm the total number of fast food outlets. The population for this study was the total number of managers in fast food outlets located in Shah Alam. It was found that there were a total of 53 fast food outlets and it was estimated that each fast food outlet employs on the average 4 managers. This estimation was based on random calls made to about 5 fast food outlet in Shah Alam. Therefore, there were a total number of 212 managers employed by these fast food outlets. A random sampling was adopted where every unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected.

1.2. Findings and discussion

Table 1 indicated that 58% female and 42% male participated in this study. The table also illustrated the age of the respondents. Most of the respondents (59.8%) were from the age group of 30 to 39 years old. The majority of the respondents (59.8%) hold a diploma as compared to 33.6% with a bachelor degree. In the context of the respondents experience in their current position at the workplace, it was found that 59.8% of them had an experience of between 1 to 5 years and 19.7% with an experience of 6 to 10 years. Another 17.2% had an experience of less than one year as compared with 3.3% had an experience of 11 to 14 years.

Table 1. *Demographic information*

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	51	42
Female	70	58
Age		
25 – 29	33	27
30 – 39	73	59.8
40 – 49	16	13.2
Highest Education Level		
Other	8	6.6
Bachelor	41	33.6
Diploma	73	59.8
Experience		
Less than 1 year	21	17.2
1-5 years	73	59.8
6-10 years	24	19.7
11-14 years	4	3.3

Table 2 show the descriptive value of the variable under investigation. Items for each factor were measured using five point likert scale that range from 1 as strongly disagreed, 2 as disagree, 3 as uncertain, 4 as agree and 5 as strongly agree. The result indicates that all measures are highly scored with minimum value of 3.90. Accordingly the result imply high agreement scores of leadership, task significance, feedback, environment, skill variety, autonomy, monetary, task identity, non monetary and job description.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Item	Mean	SD
Autonomy	4.1742	.51615
Skill Variety	4.2869	.38406
Task Significant	4.3497	.46720
Task Identity	4.1011	.42616
Feedback	4.3180	.37681

As stated in Table 3, it was found that there are a moderate positive relationships between autonomy ($r=0.444$, $p<0.05$), skill variety ($r=0.212$, $p<0.05$), task significance ($r=0.206$, $p<0.05$), task identity ($r=0.192$, $p<0.05$), and feedback ($r=0.343$, $p<0.05$). Thus, the results of this study confirm the findings of Hackman and Oldham's (1974) Job Characteristics Model (JCM) with job satisfaction. This was supported by Spector and Jex (1991) where they found that perception of job characteristics and job satisfaction was moderately related a value of 0.32 to 0.46. However, the result of the study conducted by Katsikea, Theodosiou, Perdikis & Kehagias, (2011) contradict with the current study where they found that there is a strong and positive influence between job autonomy, job variety and job feedback with job satisfaction

Table 3. Relationship between Job characteristics and Job satisfaction

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Autonomy	1					
Skill Variety	0.156	1				
Task Significance	.097	0.224*	1			
Task identity	0.270**	0.107	0.084	1		
Feedback	0.331**	0.198*	0.030	0.268**	1	
Job Satisfaction	0.444**	0.212*	0.206*	0.192*	0.343**	1

Based on the findings it could be concluded that the study confirm the findings of Hackman and Oldham's (1974) with job satisfaction. Fast food outlets should give full responsibility for the employee to complete their tasks. They should create the culture of respect and dignity by both employees and employers. Table 4 shows the hypotheses between job characteristics and job satisfaction. It can be concluded that all hypotheses are supported. Multiple regression analysis was used to identify the dimensions that contribute the most to job satisfaction. Evidence showed that (i) autonomy, (ii) skill variety (iii) skill significance (iv) task identity; and (v) feedback is significantly related. The results in Table 4 show that the skill variety explained about 45% variance in the job satisfaction. ($\beta=0.212$, $p>0.05$).

However research conducted by Biggs (2003) contradicted with the current study where skill variety has a weak relationship with job satisfaction. This is due to the differing backgrounds of the respondents. In addition, managers' satisfaction variance is explained by autonomy (19.7%), skill significance (43%), task identity (3.7%) and feedback (11.8%). The anova table shows all regression models are significant (sig value = 0.05) and it can be used as the predictors. It can be concluded that all hypotheses are supported. The result is supported by the finding of Anderson, 1984; Colarelli, Dean and Konstans, 1987 where it was found that is a significant relationship between the situational variables of autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task identity and task significance, and job satisfaction.

Table 4. Hypotheses and relationship

Hypotheses and relationship	R ²	B	Sig	Hypotheses
H ₁ Autonomy positively relates with job satisfaction	0.197	0.444	0.000	Supported
H ₂ Skill Variety positively relates with job satisfaction	0.45	0.212	0.019	Supported
H ₃ Task Significance positively relates with job satisfaction	0.43	0.206	0.023	Supported
H ₄ Task Identity positively relates with job satisfaction	0.037	0.192	0.035	Supported
H ₅ Feedback positively relates with job satisfaction	0.118	0.343	0.000	Supported

1.3 Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction among managers at fast food outlets. It can be concluded that the five dimensions of the job characteristics model contribute most to job satisfaction among fast food outlet managers. However, this study is subjected to various limitations. First, the sample was small because researcher only targeted on a particular subject group, and it should be extended to all levels of employees. In addition, future research should be carried out to investigate the differences between government and private towards job characteristics and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the role of attitude and personality can also be included as the inclusion of the variables will provide a better interpretation of the studies. In order to further strengthen and validate the findings of the study, interviews can be carried out in addition to the distribution of questionnaires.

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