



IMPACT OF JOB DESIGN ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A THEORETICAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

In Today's competitive environment, the challenge is not just retaining talented human resources, but truly engaging them, capturing their minds and hearts at each stage of their work lives. A well designed Job can foster employee well being and engagement. While designing jobs, individual employee's motivational needs should be taken into consideration, so as to help employees experience sound social interactions, scope for personal development which can further lead to Job satisfaction and engagement. However, for this, it is necessary to understand how the construct employee engagement is defined and to study the major job design factors that influence engagement at work. The study of concerned literature review aims to understand how the construct of Job design and Employee engagement can be applied at organizations for improved productivity, profitability and employee turnover.

Keywords: Job Design, Employee Engagement.



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1. Introduction: Manpower or Workforce of an organization is the only resources that can help organization achieve competitive advantage. Employees' performance at work can determine the overall productivity and profitability of an organization. However, employees' job performance depends on the characteristics of Job that they perform or how Job / Work is designed in the organizational settings. These Job designs and characteristics affect employees' orientation towards their work. The researcher aims to study major Job Design Characteristics that have positive impact on employees' work performance and work engagement. One of the most important components of human resources management is job design or work design, where the focus is on the specifications of the job that will satisfy requirements of the organization and the person holding the job. Hackman and Oldham, both organizational psychologists, developed the job characteristics theory (JCT) and first introduced it in 1976. This theory provides the

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framework for management to identify how certain job characteristics affects the outcomes of the job. Traditionally, while studying workers' well being, main focus was on Job Satisfaction Construct. However, recently this well being has been complemented by the more systematic form referred as Employee engagement. Engaged employees are those who give full discretionary effort at work, and are highly vigorous and dedicated to their job, while disengaged employees are who are motivationally disconnected from work and are not enthusiastic at work. (Bakker et al. 2008, Towers Perrin 2009). Hence, the way jobs are designed and specific job characteristics affects the outcomes of the job and has strong impact on the performance of the employee, thereby leading to improved employee engagement.

2. Theoretical Framework:

Job Design: Job design is defined as the process of putting together a range of tasks, duties and responsibilities to create a composite for individuals to undertake in their work and to regard as their own. It is crucial: not only is it the basis of individual satisfaction and achievement at work, it is necessary to get the job done efficiently, economically, reliably and safely.' (Torrington et al., 2011: 84)

Job Characteristics Theory: Hackman and Oldham developed the job characteristics theory (JCT). According to this theory, Job Design has an effect on motivation, work performance and job satisfaction. This theory has served as a framework for management to identify how certain job characteristics affect the outcomes of the job.

Skill Variety: It refers to the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, involving the use of a number of different skills and talents of a person. Therefore, it follows that the individual will be required to develop a variety of talents and skills

Task Identity: It refers to the degree to which the Job requires completion of a whole, identifiable piece of work. i.e. doing a job from beginning to end with final outcome. It involves being able to work on an entire work process rather than just a part of work.

Task Significance: It refers to the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives of other people, whether those people are in the immediate organization or in the world at large.

Autonomy: It refers to the degree to which job provides substantial freedom, independence, and authority to the job holder in scheduling the work and in determining the procedure to be used in carrying out the job.

Feedback: It refers to the degree to which after carrying out required work activities, the job holder is provided with direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his/her job performance.

Employee Engagement: The term 'Engagement' was coined by Kahn and defined it as " the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active full role performances."

Engagement Model by Kahn: Kahn (1990) concentrated on how people's experience of themselves and their work contexts influenced moments of personal engagement and disengagement. He analyzed conditions of each reported moment of engagement and induced three psychological conditions that generalized across the moments, namely – psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability.

Psychological Meaningfulness: Psychological meaningfulness means feeling worthwhile, useful and valuable, typically

When work is challenging, varied, creative and allows autonomy. Meaningfulness is defined as the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; May, 2003; Renn & Vandenberg, 1995).

Psychological Safety: Psychological Safety is defined as 'feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career' (Kahn 1990, p.708).

Psychological Availability: Psychological Availability is defined as an individual's belief that he/she has the physical, emotional or cognitive resources to engage the self at work (Kahn, 1990).

3. Literature Review:

While reviewing the literature, following three main questions are focused:

1. How has Job Design and Employee engagement been conceptualized?
2. What roles do Job Design and various job characteristics play in promoting employee engagement at individual as well as team level?
3. What key aspects or characteristics of Job Design should be focused in the organization to improve engagement level?

Professor Katie Truss, University of Kent et al, “Job Design and Employee Engagement- An ‘Engage for Success’ White Paper. (January 2013)

In this literature review, the researcher has identified evidences demonstrating the impact of job design on engagement, and provided employers with insight into how to design jobs that will maximize the levels of engagement. The researcher through this paper has pointed out that job design matter a great deal for engagement. Through various academic researches, and theories , the writer suggested that engagement represents the energetic, cognitive and emotional investment of the self into work and these personal investments can only take place where individuals are in roles designed to enable them to use their skills, and that they perceive to be meaningful. Ultimately, Job design is central to this. The writer through this paper suggested that examining the work orientations' of shop floor employees represents a new and much needed dimension to contemporary job design research. This focus arises from developments in manufacturing where, to attain a competitive advantage, organizations are increasingly introducing various new initiatives. Successful implementation of these initiatives, collectively referred to as 'Integrated Manufacturing' (IM), is deemed to require change in employee work orientations. According to the author, the four elements namely, Job Content, Job Context, Work Relationships and Line Managers need to be considered when determining how to design Jobs optimally.

Maria Tims and Arnold B. Bakker, “Job Design and Employee Engagement” Through this literature revise, the writer evaluates various implications about how to design Jobs effectively to raise levels of engagement. It includes overview of various job design theories that focus on the effect of job design on employee well-being. Theses theories includes Socio technical Systems Theory by Eric Trist, Two Factor Theory by Herzberg , Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham, Job Demand- Resources Model by Demerouti et al.This model provides useful guidelines on how to design a job in such a way that employee engagement increases. The writer thorough this literature explains how increasing employees' job resources, providing them with challenging job demands and building their personal resources is important for engagement at work. Employees may also craft their own job demands and resources. Employee engagement is highest when organizations provide necessary preconditions for engagement in which employees are also allowed to craft those specific job characteristics that they value or prefer.

Job Characteristics Theory: A Review, Article (ISSN 0854-7108). This article reviews Job Characteristics Theory by Hackman and Oldham, which describes the relationship between Job characteristics and individual responses to work. The theory specifies the task conditions in which the individuals are predicted to prosper in their work. There are five job dimensions prompting three psychological states that lead to some beneficial personal and work outcomes. The theory also includes individual; difference variables as moderator of the relationship between the characteristics and outcomes variable. The five job characteristics defined through this theory are namely Skill variety, Task identity, Task significance, Autonomy and Job feedback. The first three job characteristics lead to the psychological state of experienced meaningfulness of the work. Job Autonomy leads to the psychological state of experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work and Feedback from the job leads to Knowledge of the actual results of the work activities. However, the article critically reviews the application of theory and finds that the dimension of job characteristics is supported if the instrument could be modified and a big number of samples are used. Also, the relationship between job characteristics and outcomes is supported for psychological outcomes and not for objective outcomes such as productivity and absenteeism.

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