

Literature Review of Job Description: Meta-analysis

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ABSTRACT

A job description document is a formal document that exists in the organization that usually has a formal social structure. Whether it is a small-scale organization to a large-scale organization, every formal organization usually has this document. The study presented in this paper tries to present the summary of the research related to the job description document. In the previous research, there is less attention has been given to explore the role of a job description in the various aspects of decision making in the company. Therefore, the importance and the role of the job description to the company, especially in supporting decision-making in the company, is explored in this study. In this study, we reviewed 43 papers published between 2001 and 2021. Several aspects related to job description such as 1) Definition of the job description; 2) Development of job descriptions; and 3) Benefits of job descriptions based on four reviewed papers are explained. The selected articles are taken from the article database engine: Emerald Insight, Semantic Scholar, Proquest, Science Direct, Elsevier, Springer Link with the keyword "Job Description". The intention of this review is to address the following questions related to (i) in what aspect the research related to job descriptions are conducted; (ii) what the contribution of job descriptions document to the decision-making in the company.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The word job description may be familiar to most people, especially those who work in a formal organization. A formal organization, whether large or small, usually has several divisions. Each division is related to certain business processes within a company. In addition, each division within a business entity or community has different duties and responsibilities. With these differences, the duties and responsibilities of each division are not enough just to be described verbally. It needs to be documented into a written document that explicitly summarizes the duties and responsibilities of each division. By doing this, it is easier for the employee to work. In general, that document is called a job description document.

A job description is a written description of a particular job that is expected to be done, how they should do it, and the reasons for the work procedures required (Jacobson et

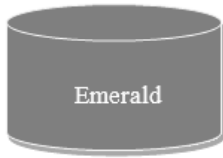
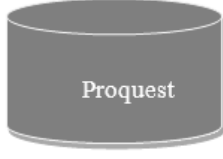




al., 2012). Considering that the job description is one of the formal documents owned by the company, several studies were conducted to explore the potential for developing a job description. In this article, the summary of previous research related to job descriptions consisting of the definition and development along with the benefits of the job description itself is explained. In addition, a discussion on how job descriptions can be used for decision-making in companies is discussed.

By providing the summary of previous research related to the role of a job description and its importance to the company, the specific objectives of this study are:

- 1) In what aspect the research related to job descriptions are conducted.
- 2) What is the contribution of job descriptions document to the decision making in the company.

The organization of this paper is as follows: Section 1 discusses the introduction, followed by article collection

Table 1. The results of the search for articles using the keyword "Job Description"

No.	Article DataBase Engine	Results
1		10 articles found
2		147 articles found
3		1820 articles found
4		67 articles found
5		142 articles found
6		21 articles found

in Section 2. Section 3 discusses a review of the research related to the job description document in terms of the development and the benefits of the job descriptions for the company, followed by an explanation in Section 4 that discuss the previous research that has been done related to the role of the job description in decision making. Section 5 provides the conclusion.

2. REVIEW METHODOLOGY

To collect the articles, article databases are utilized, namely Emerald Insight, Semantic Scholar, Proquest, Science Direct, Elsevier, Springer Link. The keyword used for searching the appropriate articles is "Job Description". The result is shown in Table 1.

Based on Table 2, the type of industries where the research related to job description was conducted are 1) hospital sector, 2) education sector, 3) manufacturing sector, and 4) farming sector. According to the previous researches, it was found that all types of industries use job descriptions for recruitment purposes. In addition, all of the researchers agree that job description is the result of the job analysis process. In service industries that offer services such as hospitals and the education sector, job

descriptions are used to determine the position and relation among employees. Based on the results presented in Table 2, only the articles published in the year 2001-2021 are selected for further analysis in this paper. Therefore, for this study presented in this paper, there are 43 articles used.

3. REVIEW RESULT

After getting the articles according to the keywords "Job description," the next step is to synthesize. The synthesis is carried out to obtain an overview of research on job descriptions, including 1) Definition of the job description, 2) Development of job descriptions, and 3) Benefits of job descriptions. In addition, the role of job descriptions related to the decision-making in the organization is also discussed.

3.1. The definition of job decription

In a company, whether it is a small-scale company or a large-scale company, a written guideline that everyone can use in carrying out their duties and responsibilities is required. There may be some people who think that there is no need for written guidelines because everyone who

Table 2. The classification of the previous research according to the type of industry and its focus of study

No	Industry	Focus of Study
1	Hospital	Position and relation among employees; Recruitment; Job analysis; Performance.
2	Education	Position and relation among employees; Job analysis; Recruitment; Quality; Performance; Job satisfaction.
3	Manufacturing	Recruitment; Quality; Performance; Position and relation among employees; Job satisfaction.
4	Farming	Recruitment; Position and relation among employees; Job analysis.

works must have their initiative in doing something based on the direction of the business owner or superior. This opinion may not be wrong, especially if it is applied to small-scale companies. In a large-scale company, it is more difficult to monitor and measure the performance of the company if there are written guidelines of what the employees are supposed to do. Therefore, a written guideline, namely a job description, is needed as a measuring tool for employee performance.

A job description is a formal document designed by an employer that aims to determine the nature of an employee's job, the tasks that are expected to perform, and a position in an organizational hierarchy (Krumer-Nevo et al., 2011). In addition, a job description also describes the relationship between positions in a hierarchy (Jerabek, 2003) and task elements (Lee et al., 2014). According to Lee et al., 2014 tasks are divided into 2, namely individual and community levels.

In addition, according to Dayal (1969), job descriptions are used to identify job duties and responsibilities, job specifications, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics to complete a job. Pennell (2010) also evaluates the job and sets a performance plan (Carliner et al., 2015).

Besides that, another opinion says that a job description is *"a unit oriented to the internal talent management process consisting of recruitment, succession planning, coaching, training, and compensation"* (Pavur, 2010); (Stybel, 2010). Based on some of these opinions regarding job descriptions, it can be concluded that job descriptions are a pillar of Human Resource Management. Job descriptions make it is easier for companies to recruit and to select employees (Hawkes & Weathington, 2014), as well as perform performance management, identification processes and provide opportunities for getting training and development, planning, measuring rewards, and many other aspects of Human Resource Management (Baker, 2016). Using a job description enables the company to make employees available at the right place, time, quality,

situation, and cost, based on the right company information (Pató, 2015).

3.1.1. Task force for creating job description

Not everyone in a community or company can make a job description document. In a company, for example, certain divisional positions are allowed to participate in making job descriptions. Or, the company may have a consultant in helping them create job description documents.

According to (EL-Hajji, 2011) in making job description documents, representatives from management and staff unions are needed by involving job analysts whom job evaluation experts supervise. Besides that, participation from supervisors and job performers is required.

3.1.2. Job description writing stage

These stages for writing a job description are the goal, process, and product (Jerabek, 2003). To set the goal, according to (Pató, 2015) several criteria must be met. The company needs to set up the goal in such a way that the company may get the right employees, with the right competencies, in the right conditions, in the right place, at the right time. At the right cost, to the right employer. Based on the stages previously mentioned, it can be seen that the purpose of the goal stage is to find the rationale why writing a job description is needed. In addition, the usefulness of making a job description is also stated in goal stage.

The following process after goal stage is the process stage. In this process, preparations are made before preparing written documents, namely job analysis (Ashraf, 2017; Kang et al., 2016). Job analysis is the process of comparing jobs by identifying similarities and differences and measuring the relative value of jobs (EL-Hajji, 2011).

After the process stage, the following process is the product stage. In the product stage, the elements that are comprised the job description is identified. In addition, at

Table 3. Detail of the elements contained in the job description

No.	Author(s)	Elements contained in the job description
1	Al-Marwai & Subramaniam (2009)	Job identification: 1. Job title 2. Preparation data 3. Preparer Job summary: 4. General nature of the job 5. Major functions/activities Responsibilities and duties 6. Major responsibilities and duties (essential functions) 7. Decision-making authority 8. Direct supervision 9. Budgetary limitations Relationships: 10. Reports to: 11. Supervises: 12. Works with: 13. Outside the company Standards of performance and working condition: 14. What it takes to do the job successfully
2	Bednarek-Michalska (2002)	1. Job title 2. Location in the organizational structure 3. Duties, area of responsibility 4. Decision making 5. Profesional interdependence 6. Interaction 7. Substitutions 8. Participant in committees 9. Working conditions, and office equipment
3	Carliner et al. (2015)	1. Job title and other general information 2. Job responsibilities 3. Job requirements

the product stage, the available resources to develop and write job descriptions are also considered (Jerabek, 2003). Usually, there is no specific or absolute standard format that is agreed upon for writing job descriptions. Each format is different, even for each job within the same organization/company (EL-Hajji, 2011). However, the creation of job descriptions is often underestimated, so that it is not structured with the right structure (Pató, 2015; Pató, 2017), the right content (Pató, 2015; Pató, 2017), and proper division of tasks (Pató, 2015).

Usually, the elements contained in the job description consists of position, reporting relationship, a summary of responsibilities, job range (for example, budget, staff), main accountability and responsibility; decision-making authority; and recruitment requirements (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities, certifications, degrees) (Stybel, 2010). Meanwhile, according to Butler (2009), every job description must have several elements of the position title, the position of the person reported by the employee, and a description of the responsibilities and duties of the position being written.

According to O'Rourke (2015), every job description document contains at least six elements, namely 1) job title; 2) job summary; 3) job qualifications; 4) job duties/tasks; 5) work relationships, and 6) time of work

description. Other content may be added to the job description document where it depends on the company's needs. Based on the literature study carried out, some of the elements contained in a document vary, but all these documents have one thing in common: there is always a job title for each job detail. Detail of the elements contained in the job description can be seen in Table 3.

It is also necessary to consider the duties and responsibilities for each position in an organization or company so that the performance of each employee can be optimal (Gan & Kleiner, 2005; Lee et al., 2014; Carliner et al., 2015; Lewis et al., 2015; Park et al., 2016; Whisenant et al., 2005) and the relationship between an employee at work (Kieserman, 2007). However, it should be noted that in writing a job description, there is a need to understand that every position and section contained are connected to each other (Dayal, 1969). A visualization tool may be needed to find out the connections and interactions in an organization (Pató, 2015). Visualization tools are enabled to attract the attention of human resources (Pató, 2017), which can be used as a basic assessment of an organization. According to Pató (2015), visualization using 3D is helpful to gain the attach and attention of human resources (Pató, 2015).

The job description also needs to be updated to meet

Table 3. (Continued)

No.	Author(s)	Elements contained in the job description
4	El-Hajji (2011)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job title 2. Purpose (or its overall objectives) 3. Location 4. Conditions 5. Special knowledge, skills, and qualifications required 6. Tasks and duties 7. Authority 8. Responsibility 9. Upward and downward relationship within the hierarchy, and 10. The performance standards that the job holder needs to meet
5	Farajpahlou and Danesh (2009)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job title 2. Place of work 3. Brief description of the job 4. Supervisor or subordinate 5. Job requirements of the systems librarian 6. Qualification requirements for systems librarians 7. Recommendation
6	Moskwa (2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job title 2. Department 3. Reports to 4. Position type 5. Location 6. General responsibility 7. Key responsibilities 8. Qualifications 9. Skills 10. Characteristics 11. Physical demand and work environment 12. Career path outline
7	Jerabek (2003)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Title 2. Job summary 3. Duties/responsibilities 4. Requirements/relationship

current job requirements (Al-Marwai & Subramaniam, 2009) and new skills for employees (Fitsimmons, 2012). Adjusting the job description document to keep up with the times is needed to cope with the environment's changes. Thus, taking into account the number of departments and positions in an organization, to make it easier to create a job description, data from previous job descriptions are needed (Gan & Kleiner, 2005) as well as by conducting interviews. To shorten the time needed for making an adjustment, text mining on pre-existing job description documents can be performed (Chopra et al., 2018), while the data obtained through interviews can be represented using the graph mining method (Chopra et al., 2018).

3.2. Development of job description

Initially, the job description document describes tasks and activities carried out by an employee. That is the first generation of the job description which only focuses on work tasks/activities ((Hawkes & Weathington, 2014); (Baker, 2016)). Job descriptions continued to grow so

that in the late 1960s, job analysis included employee characteristics and competency information (Hawkes & Weathington, 2014).

In the next generation of the job description, the focus lies on work competence. Compared to the first generation job description with a task focus, the second generation job description has the advantage that it provides criteria that can provide differences between various levels of work. Therefore, it can be linked to the performance of the employee. According to Baker (2016), the second generation of the job description can increase flexibility in workforce planning and can take advantage of a skilled workforce. More adaptable by recruiting, selecting, and training individuals with the skills needed for successful performance. Although the second-generation job descriptions have a broader perspective than previous-generation job descriptions, the main concern is still on a series of job duties, not non-job roles.

The development of the job description then continues to the third generation. In the last generation job description, the concern is on non-job roles, where non-

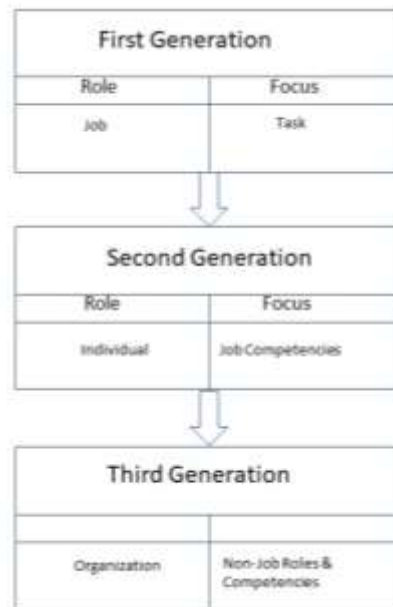


Figure 1. The development of job descriptions (Baker, 2016)

job roles have an important role for organizational and employee performance. Briefly, the job description of the third generation covers the specific roles of the organization, which consists of attitude and enthusiasm, the ability of employees to work in a team, skills development, the contribution of employees in making improvements in the workplace (Baker, 2016).

The development of job descriptions from the first generation to the third generation can be seen in Figure 1.

A job description is a document that must always be modified to adapt to developments that occur, such as the working environment and technology (Raju & Banerjee, 2017). If it is outdated, it also affects the ranking of job values (EL-Hajji, 2011).

3.3. Job description benefits

The existence of a job description in an organization or company is very important because a job description can be used as a first impression of an organization or company. A good job description gives the impression of success in an organization or company. In general, some people only know the benefits of job descriptions, namely as a guide for employees in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. However, the benefits of a job description are not only limited by this. Another benefit of having a job description is as a tool that simplifies the recruitment process (Finkelman, 2010; Jerabek, 2003; Ashraf, 2017; Hawkes & Weathington, 2014; Henson, 2011; Kim & Talbott, 2018; Rohr, 2016; Pavur, 2010; Wolonciej, 2018; Esposito, 1992; Feuer, 2001; Pató, 2017) where applicants' interest can be tested using The Big Five and Love of Learning methods (Hawkes & Weathington, 2014), job advertisements (Hernon & Schwartz, 2015; Qutab & Shafique, 2011), motivating employee performance (Garg & Rastogi, 2006; Goris, 2007), increasing employee satisfaction (Goris, 2007; Ramhit, 2019; Stănescu, 2014), overcoming interpersonal

problems in employees (Jacobson et al., 2012; Kieserman, 2007) and developing the potential of employees (Carliner et al., 2015; Buwembo et al., 2014; Hartmann & Jahren, 2015; Kang et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2014; Moskwa, 2016; Mouza & Taousanis, 2018), and identify the organization's position on the system in the community (Farajpahlou and Danesh, 2009).

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the explanation in the previous section, the job description document is a flexible document, which continues to evolve with the times. Starting from job description documents in the first generation which only focused on tasks, then in the second generation, the focus developed on job competencies, until the third generation of job description documents that began to focus on job roles. The job description is not a document that only functions broadly as a document that assists employees in carrying out their work by what has been written on paper. However, there are many benefits of having a job descriptions document, as was mentioned in Section 3.3.

In this section, the role of job descriptions in making decisions involving human resources is explained. Table 4 shows the role of job descriptions in company decisions related to human resources.

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the job description can cover almost all of the decisions related to activities in the area of human resource management. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, there is little attention has been made by previous researchers to discuss the role of the job description in other areas rather than Human Resources Management. Therefore, this can lead to further research.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the study presented in this paper, it can be concluded that the research related to job descriptions has

Table 4. The role of job descriptions in company decisions related to human resources

Type of decision	Role of Job Description
Personnel requirements for recruitment and selection.	Simplify the recruitment process with a job analysis containing personnel requirements.
Placement of personnel.	Simplify the recruitment process with a job analysis containing personnel requirements so that it can provide the guidance to place the people with the right skill on the right job.
Promotions and Career development.	Help organization to find the potential of employees.
Organizational development.	Help organization for doing organizational restructuring.
Performance appraisal and motivation of personnel.	Provide guidance for employee performance.

been focused on the benefit of job descriptions and the development of job descriptions. The development of job descriptions recently has reached the third generation where the job descriptions also focus on the non-job roles and competencies. The study related to the role of the job description in decision-making has been studied in the previous research especially related to the decision in the area of Human Resource Management. Therefore, further study to explore the role of the job description in decision-making is still needed.

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