

The Relationship between Social Characteristics and Internal Work Motivation Among Academics in Malaysian Public Universities.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between social characteristics variables namely social support, interdependence, feedback and interaction outside organization in predicting internal work motivation. The variables selected were based on Expanded Work Design Model by Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson (2007). Employing cluster sampling procedure, 477 participants completed a set of questionnaire. The set of questionnaire consisting of Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ) newly work design developed questionnaire used to measure social characteristic and Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) was used to measure internal work motivation. All the collected data were analyzed using statistical Package for the Social science (SPSS). The result reported positive findings in relation to the direct correlation between social characteristics and internal work motivation among academics in Malaysian Public Universities.

1 INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of Industrial Revolution, some researchers have inspired the notion on ways work design could motivate employees in enhancing work outcomes. In 1850, Adam Smith made an earliest attempt in how individual job design specialization influence job performance. Later in 1911, Frederick Taylor conducted a research on time and motion study. He studied the design of work system such as arrangement of tools and made significant contribution to organizations with positive work outcomes such as job control, job efficiency and higher performance. These early studies on work design during the Industrial Revolution period assist organizations with their positive work outcomes which give higher performance, efficient worker and greater control. These were the starting point for other researchers in the area of organizational psychology to study the way work design could influence employees to meet with the work outcomes as expected by their organizations (Parker, Wall, & Cordery, 2001). However, most of these studies only focused on the design of workstation, arrangement of work instruments in order to enhance productivity, efficiency and effective workers (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Morgeson & Campion, 2003; Vough & Parker, 2008)

In mid 70's, work design has also been considered and applied as motivational approach. According to Jex and Britt (2008), this approach is concerned with the ideas of how job design could satisfy employees. The motivator design had heightened the need for humanistic element which concerns with success, appreciation, work struggle, responsibility and development (Isfahani, Bahrami, & Toriki, 2013). Herzberg proposed one of the motivator designs in 1968. According to him, humanistic elements of work design were related to the motivator element and it was designed to enrich the content

of people's job. Thus, motivators' elements such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and growth had been incorporated into a job. Furthermore, motivator elements also functioned as a sign of job enrichment as it enabled employees to enhance attitudinal work outcomes such as job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Campion & McClelland, 1991; Jex & Britt, 2008).

The most outstanding and prominent idea in the motivational approach was first proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1976). They had triggered the idea of job characteristics namely job core dimensions. Element of work design in JCM can be identified through the five job core dimensions which include; 1. Task Variety, 2. Task Identity, 3. Task Significance, 4. Autonomy, and 5. Feedback. These five elements could be used in the calculation to identify Motivating Potential Index (MPI). In addition, Hackman and Oldham also suggested that individual differences can act as moderator and Critical Psychological States as mediator through JCM. Hence, the calculation of MPI had to link with the individual differences and critical psychological state variables in order to identify work outcomes, such as internal motivation, job satisfaction, job performance, turnover and absenteeism. In fact, the JCM was one of the regularly used models in work design study and had been extensively used for more than 30 years (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Grant & Parker, 2009)

1.1 Problem Statement

Work design using the job characteristic approach has been widely discussed since 1976. Recently, most of the work design has intensely transformed. This has principal lead to increasing number of workers, enhancing quality of products, sophisticated work instruments, technology change, emerging issue of learning at workplace and social work environment. As a result of this revolution, job characteristic cannot remain as a main predictor in work design study. Indeed, there are several factors which influence work outcomes due to this change at the workplace. Ultimately, there is a considerable need to reflect on other factors as predictor in work design study. For this reason, the purpose of this review is to recognize and ascertain the integrated approach through current literature which develop a multi dimension variable in work design study.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

The integration of work design approach has been identified by reviewing current literature. **Table 1** presents several work design series that predict work outcomes. Based on the varied findings from different studies, work design approach has been integrated in the present study in order to determine a set of work outcomes.

2.1 Interaction of Social Characteristics

Since 1933, Hawthorne Study had inspired researcher in Organisational Psychology to associate human relation factor as empirical data in determining work model outcomes (Wickström & Bendix, 2000). In the early 1980s, there was no specific work design emphasizing on human relation, even though human has the power to gear strong, harmonious relationship with others (Berscheid, 2003). According to Salancik and Pfeffer (1978), through their Social Information Theory, employees would develop work attitude and work behavior via information processing from the social environment (Timothy G. Pollock, C. Whitbred, & Contractor, 2000)

Thus, it was extremely impossible to ignore the peoples' interaction in the development of work

design study at the workplace (Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson (2007), then decided to construct the work design context by incorporating the elements of social characteristics. Eventually, there were four dimensions in the domain of social characteristics namely interdependence, feedback from others, social support and interaction outside the organization. Consequently, it is predicted through this study, that social characteristic will affect attitudinal outcomes, behavioural outcomes, role perception outcomes and well being outcomes. Subsequently, there were many major contributions from Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson's study in expanding social characteristics in work design study (Grant & Parker, 2009; Kilduff & Brass, 2010). For instance, social characteristics had been found to be significantly related with various work outcomes such as turnover intentions, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and employees performance, psychological well being and intrinsic motivation (Grant & Parker, 2009).

Another extended approach of this study is work context characteristics which emphasizes on three characteristics primarily physical demands, work conditions and ergonomic. However, the work context characteristics found limited support with work outcomes. But this study shows that work condition is positively related to job satisfactions, while, physical demand is negatively related to job satisfaction. Hence, work context characteristics appear to be relevant in work design study.

2.2 Interaction of External and Internal Organizational Factors, Individual-Group Level, Individual Characteristic and Social Characteristics

In order to keep pace with transformation process at workplace, work design model has to consider the role from individual, group and organizational level.

Parker, Wall and Coddery (2001) proposed an elaborated model of work design. This model considered external and internal organizational as a main role which influence work outcomes. The factors involved include policy, labour market, available technology, organizational culture and individual differences. These factors are a new approach to work design. Through this study, researchers explored individual and group level. This model showed that scholars have been interested in how work design could be planned not only for individual but for group of employees (Vough & Parker, 2008). Additionally, this framework brought the interaction element between individual and job characteristic (e.g. Emotional and job demands). At the same time, this model also highlighted the interac-

tion between group level and job characteristic (e.g. Interdependence and autonomy).

2.3 Theories of Integration

According to Torraco (2005), work can be designed through the interaction of several theories. These theories were considered for their contributions in organized and designed work. Rendering to this notion, the different perspective from six different theories described change in today's workplace. The six theories consist of Sociotechnical System Theory, Job Characteristics Model, Adaptive Structuration Theory, Process Improvement, Technostructural Change Models and Activity Theory. Not only each of the six theories emerged from a different time period, but most importantly it provided different perspectives. According to Tarroca's, these theories could be categorized into three different scopes which were job or task specific, intermediate and systemwide. These scopes implied the work design. As a result, this study explained the work design for the new work environment. Table 1 described the difference of each theory and its categorized scope. Eventually, this review suggests that there is a need to form a multilevel work design theory. The terrace has suggested that existing multilevel of work design theory enables to enhance human resource development practice.

2.4 Broader Themes

Hackman (2010) who is the pioneer of Job Characteristics Model revealed that this model should be extended with other themes. He proposed several themes to broad the work design taking into consideration the changed senario in today's work place. Most of the themes were suggested to be explored in future studies. The first theme is job crafting which is the degree of employees participating in change process. This awareness is applicable with the current transformation process at workplace. Besides job crafting, another theme brought into light is the organizational context. Also according to Hackman, organizational context seemed to be the most powerful enhance work design factor. On the other hand, if this factor is not treated well, it can also become a constrain factor (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Therefore, organizational context such as communication and front line work should be flexible and updated through time changing. Based on this issue, in this study, the theme of organizational properties is then introduced due to the reason that properties could contribute something useful to organization such as innovation. The final theme addressed in this review is the cultural context. This theme may play a greater role in shaping individuals' psychological response to work. This theme has

been lengthen to include individual element, job organizational and culture.

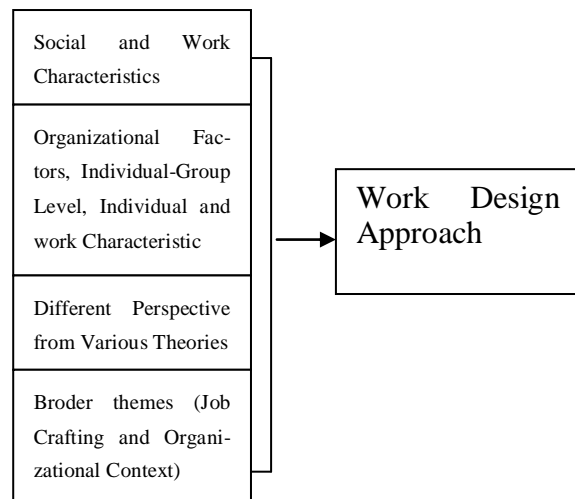
3.0 IMPLICATION

Two central concerns emerge from the discussion. First, the new perspective can initiate and foster future studies. Secondly, the intergration approach in work design study is hope to inspire the development of new scale or instrument. In line with this view, Humprey, Morgeson and Nahgrang (2007) through their study has develop Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ).

4.0 FINDING

The finding of this review can be seen through an integrated approach of work design from a recent trend in literature. It is discovered there are many different variables that form multi dimensional in work design study. The summary of the multi dimension of work design approach is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: Finding of the Multi Dimension of Work Design Approach.



5.0 CONCLUSION

This review is aimed to highlight the integration of work design approach that has been discussed in the present literature. It is found that multi dimension approach from different perspectives can generate various numbers of new work design studies. For instance, the multi dimensions approach has considered either the role of human, social environment, task/job, work characteristics, and existing theories from different perspectives to be studied as a predictor in work design approach. Practically, work design has been used in numerous studies to predict work outcomes specifically attitudinal outcomes and behavioral outcomes. Thus, this paper tries to emphasize that there is a need to consider the multi dimensions approach in work design study.

Table 1: Summary Related Research on Integration of Work Design Approach

Authors (Year)	Key factors/ variables
1.Parker, Wall and Cordery (2001)	<p><i>External Interaction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Environmental Uncertainty, Political and Labour Institutions, labour market and available technology.</i> <p><i>Internal Organizational Factors,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Management Style, Technology Task, Organizational Design.</i> <p><i>Individual-Group Level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proactive personality, efficacy beliefs, interpersonal trust</i> <p><i>Individual Characteristic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Job Control, skill variety, feedback, cognitive demands, physical demands, emotional demands, role conflict, opportunity for skill acquisition, social contact.</i> <p><i>Group Level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Team autonomy, Team feedback, Team Skill Variety, Team Task Interdependence</i> <p><i>Interaction between work characteristics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Individual Level e.g. demand and control</i> • <i>Group level e.g. interdependence and autonomy</i>
2.Torraco (2005)	<p>1.Social Technical System Theory (Intergration of people, technology and work environment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope Job specific. Intermediate and Systemwide <p>2.Job Characteristic Model (Job Core Dimension)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope Job or Task specific <p>3. Process Improvement (An Organization's work through series or process, organizational structural and function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope Job specific. Intermediate and Systemwide <p>4.Adaptive Structuration Theory (any work setting affected by technology change)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope Job specific. Intermediate and Systemwide <p>5.Technostrutural Change (Organizational design by re-configuring the organization's technology and structure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope : Systemwide <p>6. Activity Theory (Purposeful Behaviour by focusing on the structure of the activity. Three level to analyze: motivation, goal directed and operation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope : Full Range of continuum, can be applied as job or task specific, intermediate and systematic.

Author	Key Variables
3. Humprey, Nahrgang and Morgeson (2007)	<p><u>1.Motivational Characteristics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Autonomy -Skill Variety -Task Variety -Significance -Task Identity -Feedback from Job -Information Processing -Job Complexity -Specialization -Problem Solving <p><u>2.Social Characteristics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interdependence -Feedback from Others -Social Support -Interaction Outside the Organization <p><u>3.Work Context Characteristics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Physical Demands -Work Conditions -Ergonomics
4.Oldham, and Hackman (2010)	<p>1.Job Crafting</p> <p>2.Organizational Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Organizational Features -Cultural Context

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