

JOB DESIGN: THE BRAIN BEHIND EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE (A THEORETICAL EXPOSITION)

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Abstract

This paper critically examined how job design can effectively determine the attitude of employee to work. Job design plays a vital role in the employee attitude. A well designed job brings motivation and satisfaction to the employees and they perform well by employing all their energies in the work. Job design remains a valued issue among the researchers for its importance and effectiveness. A well designed job, according to psychological perception and attitude of employees, motivate workers towards task performance, and such employees become highly productive and loyal to the organization. This study is based on a review of the published literature and personal observation in the workplace to analyze the impact of job design on employee attitude. Furthermore, this study considered job design as the brain behind employee attitude to work as a theoretical exposition. A conceptual framework has been proposed to show the construct of job design by job autonomy, job rotation, and modified work schedule and relationship of job design with employee attitude.

Keywords: Job design, Employee attitude, Job autonomy, Job rotation, Modified work schedule, Motivation, Job satisfaction.

Introduction

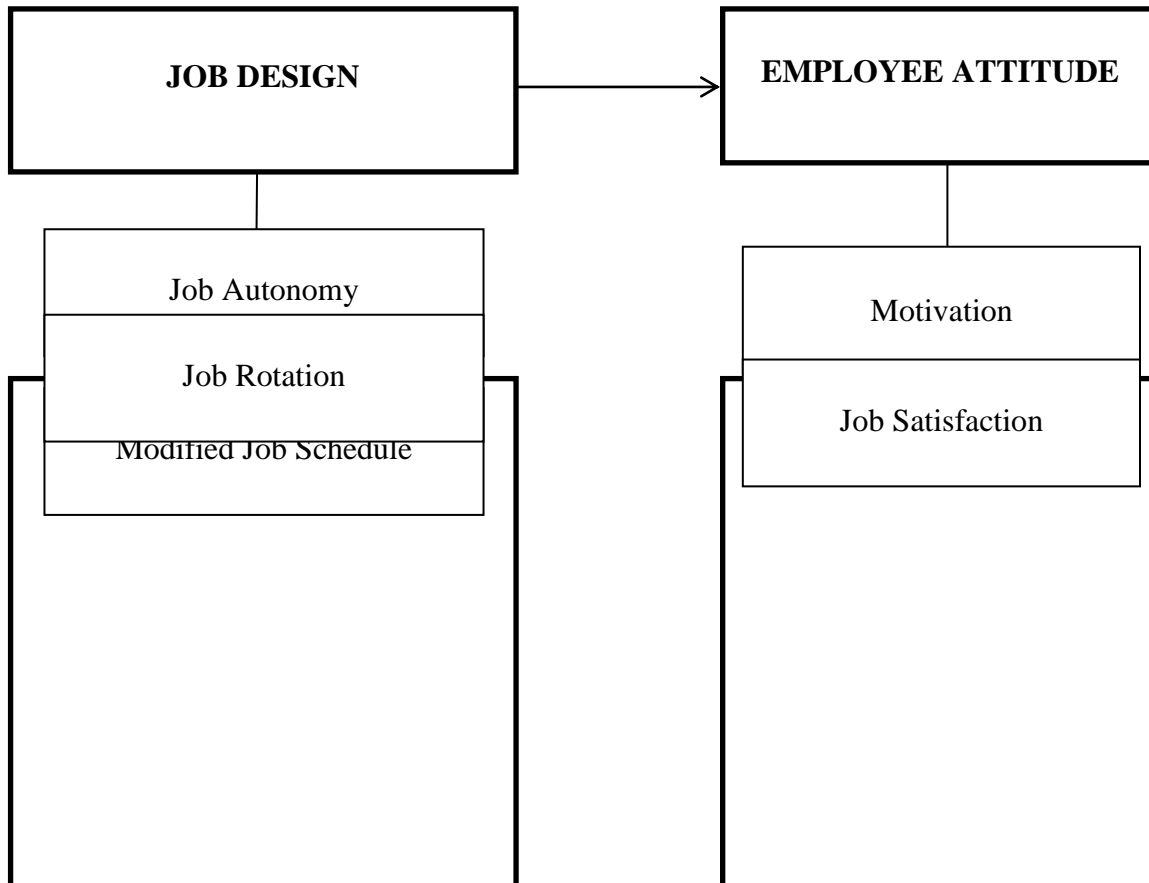
Job design has been one of the most effective tools used for optimizing an employee's attitude to work. It can be defined as changing the content and processes of a job to increase an employee's satisfaction, motivation and productivity (Knapp & Mujtaba, 2010). Effective Job design is measure of the degree to which the employee is involved in his tasks and assignments. Job design is not a new concept, it has been discussed in early 20th century by Fredrick Taylor and then by his predecessors a lot of work has been done on the role of job design and employee attitude to their assigned work or role, but this concept failed to attain much attention from managers. This led to a decrease in the productivity of many organizations facing opportunity cost and productivity below optimum level. It is believed that now-a-days most of the employees are not happy with their job design or not assigned with the tasks that they feel encouraged and motivated to perform. An effective job design brings involvement of an employee in work related activities which clearly forecasts employee output, departmental productivity and organizational success (Bates, 2004; Harter, 2002; Baumruk, 2004). The purpose of this study is to emphasize on the role of an effective job design in determining the attitude of employees in carrying out their assigned work or duty. Also, giving an initiative to managers on how the psychological perception of employees about an effective job design can help to involve them in their work and leads them towards higher performance. Employees' get motivated and performance increases if the job design is aligned with the employee psychological requirements and perceptions. An effective job design for the employees can increase their job motivation; they enjoy performing tasks and exert all cognitive, emotional and physical energies to achieve goals (Khan, 1992). Employees with a job design due to their determination, invest their hand, head and heart to job (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). A job is more than just shuffling papers, writing programming code, waiting on customers, or driving a truck. Jobs require interacting with co-workers and bosses, following organizational rules and policies, meeting performance standards, living with less than ideal working conditions, and the like (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997).

Concept of Job Design

Job design is the division of work tasks assigned to an individual in an organization that specifies what the worker does, how, and why (Adjemian, Brorsen, Hahn, Saitone & Sexton, 2015). Parvin (2011) stated the purpose of job design is to increase the level of employee attitude in executing their roles which shall ultimately cause the good performance of the employee. Job design may include job rotation, job enlargement and job enrichment. Job design is defined as specifying the contents or methods of any job in such a way that various requirements of the job holder can be effectively satisfied (Zareen, Razzaq & Mujtaba, 2013). These requirements may include social, technological, personal and organizational desires. However, Job design is defined as the way tasks are combined to form complete jobs (Tahiri, Kovaçi, Bushi & Meha, 2021). Job design is related to the process of transformation of inputs to outputs and it also takes into consideration the human factors as well as organizational factors which are of very much importance in the achievement of desired performance. When employees get involved and are familiar with the job design they become more motivated to take active part in the achievement of organizational goals and as a result performance of employees increases which positively impacts the outcomes. As Campion and Thayer examined the misconception that poor performance on the job must be the fault of the worker, they were able to identify that job design problems were to blame (Campion & Thayer, 1987). Once identified as an ineffectively designed job, which approach to implement becomes the question. Campion and Thayer immersed themselves in

investigating "rules" on many aspects of jobs, and were then analyzed and divided into distinct areas based on theoretical orientation (Champion & Thayer, 1987).

Conceptual Framework showing the Relationship between Job Design and Employee Attitude



Source: Researcher's framework, 2022

Dimensions of Job Design

Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is defined as the degree to which the job offers considerable liberty, proving free hand and choice to the individual in scheduling the work and also defining the means to achieve the tasks (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Marchese & Ryan, 2001; Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger & Hemingway, 2005; Parker, Axtell & Turner, 2001). More specifically it can also be defined as the choice and freedom inborn in the job to perform numerous tasks (Brey, 1999). Autonomy involves responsibility for the outcomes of the work which results in outcomes like high work efficiency and higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Langfred & Moyer, 2004). Finnigan (2010) emphasized that autonomy has an impact on work methods, work pace and goal setting. Individuals with autonomy have the liberty to control the pace of work and to regulate work processes and evaluation procedures. Job autonomy allow individuals to limit their exposure to stressors and able to choose their task or allow individuals to limit the more stressful tasks, thereby reducing feelings of threat and encouraging positive coping behaviors (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003).

Job Rotation

Rotation can be defined as working at different tasks or in different positions for set periods of time (Jorgensen, Davis, Kotowski, Aedla & Dunning, 2005). Esmaili, (1998) posited that Job rotation is a process by which employees laterally mobilize and serve their tasks in different organizational levels; when an individual experiences different posts and responsibilities in an organization, ability increases to evaluate his capabilities in the organization. Job rotation is an aspect of training undergone in an organization involving both managers and non-managers. Meyer (1994) identified job rotation as learning role in firms as employees get a chance to accomplish various task and changing roles. Job rotation is also identified as an applied approach and aggrandizes job related tasks. That is the reason job rotation is planned in the job training phase because it proves helpful while transferring employees from one job to another in order to learn more and increase their knowledge by doing various jobs. It occurs when an employee is moved from one job, department, or task to another after spending sometime in a particular job, task, assignment, or department with a view of enabling the employees to acquire more skills, talents and knowledge. In a way, job rotation is influenced by coordination and is meant to broaden ones outlook, knowledge, skill, and contact. In defining job rotation, Nwachukwu (1988) says it is a training device that makes it necessary to move the trainee from one department or unit to another. Although employees moving from one task to another for set periods are based on a simple logic, the value to the employees is considerably high. Job rotation, especially when focused on ‘functional flexibility’ is an important technique (Friedrich & Kabst, 1998). Job rotation is particularly the product of Japanese companies’ employment policies to ensure the acquisition of knowledge and skills which will help employees adapt to changes in technology (Whittington, Goodwin & Murray, 2004).

Modified Work Schedule

A modified schedule may involve adjusting arrival or departure times, providing periodic breaks, altering when certain functions are performed, allowing an employee to use accrued paid leave, or providing additional unpaid leave. An employer must provide a modified or part-time schedule when required as a reasonable accommodation, absent undue hardship, even if it does not provide such schedules for other employees. According to informal guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a modified work schedule can involve adjusting arrival or departure times, changing shift assignments, providing periodic breaks, altering when certain work functions are performed, allowing an employee to use accrued paid leave, or providing additional unpaid leave (Brennan, 2013). A modified work schedule may include a part-time work schedule. However, changing a full-time position to a part-time position is not reasonable if the change would require the elimination of an essential job function.

Concept of Employee Attitude

In organizations, attitudes are important for their behavioral component. If workers believe, for example, that supervisors, auditors, bosses, time and motion engineers are all in conspiracy to make employees work harder for the same or less money, it makes sense to try to understand how these attitudes formed, how they relate to actual job behavior, and how they might be changed. However, in the late 1960s, a review of the research challenged this assumed effect of attitudes on behavior (Wicker, 1969). Important attitudes reflect our fundamental values, self-interest, or identification with individuals or groups we value. These attitudes tend to show a strong relationship to our behavior.

Measures of Employee Attitude

Motivation

Motivation is simply define as “the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something” (Broussard & Garrison, 2004). Motivation involves a constellation of beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions that are all closely related. As a result, various approaches to motivation can focus on cognitive behaviors (such as monitoring and strategy use), non-cognitive aspects (such as perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes), or both. However, Turner (1995) considers motivation to be synonymous with cognitive engagement, which he defines as “voluntary uses of high-level self-regulated learning strategies, such as paying attention, connection, planning, and monitoring”. Maslow (1954) postulated the following five levels ranging from the lowest, subsistence level to the highest of self-awareness and actualization. These are the hierarchical levels Maslow postulated; physiology needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, self-actualization needs. However, the movement from one level to the next was termed satisfaction progression. Ryan and Deci (2000) studied human behavior and proposed that individuals are motivated when their behaviors are reinforced.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a positive feeling about a job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics is clearly broad (Hodson, 2019). According to Aljinović Barač and Tadić (2011), Job satisfaction can be defined as the collection of feelings and beliefs in a current job, as a positive attitude that is believed leads to high performance or as a reflection of an employee’s feelings about various aspects of a work. Job satisfaction is not just about job conditions. Personality also plays a role. Research has shown that people who have positive core self-evaluations who believe in their inner worth and basic competence are more satisfied with their jobs than those with negative core self-evaluations. Interdependence, feedback, social support, and interaction with co-workers outside the workplace are strongly related to job satisfaction even after accounting for characteristics of the work itself (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007). Job satisfaction should be a major determinant of an employee’s organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff ,MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). Satisfied employees would seem more likely to talk positively about the organization, help others, and go beyond the normal expectations in their job, perhaps because they want to reciprocate their positive experiences.

Theoretical Review

This paper work was anchored on Hackman and Oldham (1976) Theory, which took the idea of intrinsic motivation further by defining psychological states that must be present in order for workers to be motivated. These states are dependent upon the characteristics of the job and are moderated by an individual’s internal desire for growth (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The Job Characteristics Theory suggests that a well-developed job design can cause the employees to be more internally motivated, satisfied and improve performance with their overall job, as well as personal growth opportunities. The theory was originally intended as a way to evaluate jobs and to see if they should be redesigned to increase employee motivation and production. After creation of this theory, a relationship between job characteristics and the employee's motivation was identified.

The necessity of Job Autonomy in determining Employees Attitude

Job autonomy is linked to greater degrees of decision latitude, job satisfaction, and better work performance (Chua & Iyengar, 2011). Autonomy maybe viewed as the employees’ perception of the amount of control they possess over work-related behaviors which influence

the attitude at work. Job autonomy enhances employees' feelings that job outcomes are a result of their efforts (Wang & Netemeyer, 2002). Actually, very few studies have examined the impact of job autonomy on job satisfaction (Rodríguez, Buyens, Landeghem & Lasio, 2016). Research in the field of organizational behavior suggests a positive relationship between job autonomy and job satisfaction. However, it is believed that more autonomy is expected to be associated with greater job satisfaction. In other words, high levels of work autonomy may lead to high levels of job satisfaction (Naqvi, Ishtiaq, Kanwal & Ali, 2013).

The necessity of Job Rotation in determining Employees Attitude

Job rotation is a very effective policy to develop employee horizons and empower them which is considered as the most important effective factor mediated by job satisfaction and skill diversity on performance and effectiveness of organizations. In a job rotation system, improving intellectual capital and innovation, particularly skill diversion can be considered due to previous and present skills of employees. In this regard, learning is influenced by both aspects of passed courses to perform daily work processes and experiences. Origo and Pagani (2008), consider job rotation system as an effective operational system to improve human capital performance and productivity, they claim that it is an effective option in order to facilitate and accelerate operations, save time and resources. Thus, job rotation system causes enhancing productivity of human resources and improves organizational performance in both organization and individual level by training multi-skilled employees, creating a logical efficient interaction between skill and motivation and providing practical participation for employees whose greatest advantage is increased job satisfaction of employees.

The necessity of Modified work schedule in determining Employees Attitude

A work schedule generally refers to the days per week and the hours per day that an employee works. Modified work schedule method is the one in which work schedule, timing, shift, or routine of the work is rescheduled as per the convenience or demand of workers. A work schedule can also vary based on the time of year. For example, some jobs have work schedules that vary depending on the season. Normally, the jobs which need to be conducted in different shifts on a regular basis can be designed under this method. Shorter work week, flex time, job sharing, homework, etc are common methods of job design under this method that determines employees' attitude. Berkery, Morley, Tiernan, Purtill and Parry (2017), say "modified work schedule has effects on employee attitude, as it is also found that impact of flexi time is also highly dependent on nature of job like low wage workers get waged on daily basis at hour regulation so they could not make full use of flexi timing".

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to consider Job design as the brain behind employee attitude to work. If employees have to perform the job which is aligned to their behavior and get satisfied at the end of the day, then they work effectively and efficiently. Their level of motivation and involvement goes up. These employees become the valued asset for the organization in the long run. Involved employees perform their work task not only physically but emotionally and cognitively as well. Motivated employees focus on their end goals and attempt to achieve them; they never care about the constraints and limitations. An effective job design should be according to the attitude of the employee, because not all the employees will be motivated and satisfied by a specific job design. However, the study concluded that a well-designed job enhances the attitude of an employee to execute effectively and efficiently as he is satisfied and motivated to do his work. A well-motivated and satisfied employee by an ideal job design become loyal to the organization and considers him or herself a part of the

organization and organizational goals becomes his/her personal goals. If the job is designed according to the attitude of the employees their stress level declines. They feel delighted and say “this is my kind of job”. Involved and motivated employees tend to show low absenteeism and spend their time in meaningful pursuits. They remain with the organization for longer tenures and become valued asset for the organization in the long run.

RECOMMENDATION

Base on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Employers and organization should embed the idea of job autonomy, job rotation and modified work schedule to motivate employee attitude to give their best be given opportunity of the flexibility to work according to their needs and their responsibilities.
2. Employees should be given every needed opportunity to enjoy work-life balance and individual satisfaction to manage different roles and activities of their work.
3. Existing job design assigned to employees should also be properly analysed to provide them with better work arrangement to enhance their attitude to work within the organization.

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