

Research Article

INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND JOB SATISFACTION

***Aliakbar Shahri Mejarshin and Nader Bahloli**

Department of Management, College of Management, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

**Author for Correspondence*

ABSTRACT

Nowadays the human resources in all of the organizations are one of the most important factors in achieving the organizational goals. Therefore in order to achieve increased efficiency and productivity should be more motivating factors should be identified and initiated to satisfy these needs in order to increase efficiency. This descriptive study has been performed aimed to investigate the expression and significance of the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction Sepah Bank of East Azarbaijan (Tabriz branch). Research results indicate that there is a negative and reverse relationship between job satisfaction and the variable job characteristics and its components such as skill diversity, job significance, job identity, and job autonomy and job feedback. Also there is a significant difference relationship between each of component job characteristics and job satisfaction.

Keywords: *Job Characteristics, Job Satisfaction, Job Diversity, Job Feedback*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, with the changing pace of social changes that is consistent with the changes of employees' jobs there are some changes in the workplace that makes employees feel alienation which results in certain behaviors in the organization. It is often associated with a loss of motivation in the workplace (Javadin, 2008). Making motivation and maximizing motivation in the organization requires that managers and employees be flexible in the field of their job and realize that people have different goals and personal needs to satisfy that can be challenged by the job (Pourhady *et al.*, 2009). An organization should compromise with incompetent workforce motivate employees to meet organizational objectives, and if it is necessary they should find effective ways to change patterns and direct of organization (Daft, 2006).

In the field of Management and organizational behavior, researchers have proposed theories of job characteristics to identify job characteristics, the combination of these features and the relationship between job characteristics and employee motivation, job satisfaction and performance of the employees (Robbins, 2004). Based on Hackman Richard and George Oldham's theory, job characteristics is evaluated in five dimensions of Skills diversity, job identity, job significance, and job autonomy and job feedback. According to Smith & his colleagues' theory, job satisfaction as a concept in the field of organizational behavior is taken into consideration in five dimensions (self-employment, salary, opportunities for promotion, supervision, and coworkers). When employees join the organization, they will bring a set of desires, needs and experiences or general expectations of their job. Job satisfaction is emerging of new demands associated with rewards that provides job.

Human resources are the most important, most valuable and the biggest capital of an organization, society and country. That is why all of the organizations invest on this precious resource and attempt to empower it. It is believed that those societies which can flourish these potential forces and talents, can finally progress, grow and develop. The employees, who work in a position that has the main characteristics, are more satisfied with their jobs, have high motivation and are more productive. Argued that job characteristics provide great and better psychological conditions for the individuals who can eventually affect their satisfaction and efficiency (Hersey and Blanchard, 2001).

Review of the related literature: Takht (1995) conducted a study among the workers of Esfahan Oil refinery; the findings revealed that there is a correlation between job identity, job significance and job

Research Article

independence variables and job satisfaction, however there is no correlation between skill diversity and job feedback variables and job satisfaction (Faraji, *et al.*, 2009). Rad (1999) conducted a study among employees of Tehran Ministry of Construction; the results showed that there is significant and direct relationship between all variables of job characteristic model (skill diversity, job identity, job significance, job autonomy, job feedback) and job satisfaction. Mohammadi, Nasrabadi, *et al.*, (2005) conducted a study with the title of “investigating the relationship between job nature and job satisfaction among the employees of Esfahan Steel Company”; the results illustrated that there is a positive and significant relationship between job value, self-independence, job opportunities, job facilities, job challenges and job satisfaction.

A study in 1991 by Adler has been done based on Hickman and Oldham's model. In this research he concluded that employees who have greater job satisfaction, skill diversity, duty significance, will, and job feedback would have high intrinsic motivation to do their job. He also concluded that this relation was adjusted psychological growth of employees. Then this relationship decreased with low growth of psychosocial needs. The framework of job had the greatest effect on job satisfaction in proportion to environmental factors.

Richard Hack man and Edward Lawler conducted a study for the first time in 1971 in a telephone company and concluded that when employees recognize job characteristics such as skill diversity, job identity, job autonomy, task identity, and feedback they satisfy with their performance and their presence in the workplace is better. This study provided the background of the job characteristics model of Hack man and Oldham (1975) and they found during their research the more employees have high level of job characteristics the more their satisfaction and performance increase and their absence is reduced (Faraji *et al.*, 2008).

Another study by Golmohammadi (1995) investigated the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction of Saipa Company workers. He concluded that there is no significant correlation between motivation of job and employee's satisfaction.

The present study is a descriptive and practical research. It was conducted in 2012 among the employees of Sepah Bank (Tabriz Branches).

Job characteristics refer to the types of activities, tasks, duties and different aspects of a job. It also includes concepts like skill diversity, job significance, job identity, action independence, job feedback, cognitive elements of job such as occupational communications, information processing, occupational decision making, the high or low amount of task that can be quantitative or qualitative and also the high or low number of connections of job roles that have great influence on job design (Javadin, 2008). The success of a family, organization and eventually a country requires capable and efficient people; this is true for our country as well. In order to reach self-sufficiency and independence we must increase skill, knowledge, awareness, specialty and creativity of human forces. In modern world which organizations are widespread and a great number of people devote themselves for the organizations in order to earn money and offer services, most of the psychological pressures are rooted in organizational factors.

In the field of organizational behavior, the facts that jobs are different and some are more interesting and attracting than others, are considered by the scholars who study organizational behavior. Their reactions toward these two facts come in the form of presenting theories about job characteristics; the aim is to introduce job features and show how these features get combined to create different jobs and also identify the relationships between job characteristics and employees' motivation, job satisfaction and their performance (Robins, 2008).

Job provides many benefits for everyone, for instance it encourages the identification of public aims of life, creates economic security for individuals, offers prestige, credibility and identity, enhances social relationships with others and provides a sense of cooperation and team work (Rezaiyan, 2007). Considering motivational factors of employees and their needs and also paying attention to the individual differences of the employees are among the most important factors that can be accomplished through efficiency of human forces. One of the most important and basic conditions in order to reach a goal in every work is encouraging and creating motivation for the individuals in that work (Hack, 1991).

Research Article

One of the ways for increasing motivation in employees is using the job characteristics model, this model shows how we can design and redesign the jobs; so that the employees can realize themselves and their jobs as important facts and feel safe. Specifically, this model emphasizes that enriching certain elements of jobs are influential in alteration of mental and psychological states and increase the efficiency of their performance. It is worth noting that this model is effective in describing those people's behavior that are highly required for professional development and improvement (Moshabaki, 2006).

Skill diversity is related to the degree of which a job requires various activities and it demands different skills and talents (Moorhead, 2003). Mentioned that skill diversity is the degree or amount of different skills that a job requires and the workers must possess them. Diversity in skill represents different activities that are necessary for doing a certain job and a worker or employee must use his/her special skills, competences and capabilities (Robins, 2000).

Robins (2004) believed that job identity is related to the amount or degree of which a part or type of a job gains identity completely. The aim of job identity is to explain the relationship between the job and other organizational activities to the employees. Some of the employees may feel unsuccessful because they are not aware of the connections of their jobs with other organizational actions during working or at the end of it. If the employees recognize the relationship between their jobs and other works they will realize that their job is important in reaching organizational goals; so their job satisfaction will increase.

Robins (2004) claimed that job identity is the amount or degree of work that can influence other people's lives. The significance of a job is for the life and welfare of colleagues and consumers. For example, a mechanic of airplanes plays a crucial role in the life of other people; so these kinds of jobs are more significant than the job of a clerk in post office.

It is related to the amount or degree of Autonomy and freedom of action for employees and workers, it enables them to work freely and have authority and autonomy during work and determining the work stages (Robins, 2004). According to Davis independence and freedom of action are actually related to the characteristic of job that provides a kind of authority and observation on the decisions related to the job for the employees. It is believed that this freedom and authority has a fundamental impact on creating responsibility for the workers.

Moshabaki (2001) stated that job feedback is related to the executive amount of work activities that are required for a job; it leads to achieving of direct and explicit information about the efficiency of people's performance, generally, receiving environmental information is called feedback. Job feedback is the amount or degree of giving information to people about the end results of accomplished works and providing information about the efficiency of performance directly to the worker or employee.

This concept is very important in the field of organizational behavior. When employees join an organization they bring demands, requests, past experiences and generally job expectations with themselves. Job satisfaction illustrates accompany of the emerging demands of human with the awards provided by the job. The employees of organizations have different perception and attitude toward these five factors: salary and payment, promotion opportunity, job essence, organizational guidelines, organizational policies and working conditions; their degree of satisfaction from each of these factors is different. For instance, it is possible to find an employee who is not satisfied about his salary but feels satisfied about other factors. In a working team the satisfaction of an individual can be simultaneously influenced by the colleagues, managers and supervisors; the needs and interests of an individual affect his attitude.

Job satisfaction was expressed in organizations during economic downturn in 1970s and 1980s; it was in these periods that most of the employees and workers were unsatisfied about their jobs due to economic recession and downturn. This matter attracts the attention of many managers and organization about job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a complex and multidimensional concept that deals with psychological, physical and social factors. Certain combination of various factors causes the employed person to feel satisfied about his job at a certain moment of time and enjoy his work. During different time periods the individuals have changed amount of concentration on the factors like salary, working conditions, cooperation in decision making and social value; this lead to various ways of satisfaction about the job

Research Article

(Ranjbar and Shahi, 2007). Job satisfaction includes the degree of positive feelings and attitudes that an individual has about his job (Robins, 1999). Job satisfaction is a certain combination of different internal (enjoying the job) and external (salary, facilities and working relationships) factors; these lead to a sense of satisfaction.

Effective Factors on Job Satisfaction

Different studies in the field of job satisfaction revealed that there are various factors linked to job satisfaction; generally, they can be classified into four groups.

Some of the organizational factors that are the sources of job satisfaction include: salary and payment: Luck mentioned that salary is a determinant factor of job satisfaction especially when the employees believe that their salary is fair and reasonable. Promotion: it includes positive changes in payment, being under supervision less than before, more working challenges, more responsibility and freedom in decision making. Promotion reveals the value of the employee for the organization especially in higher levels so it eventually leads to better spiritual conditions. Organizational guidelines: bureaucratic structure is not appropriate for a person who has democratic leadership style. In addition, organizational guidelines are effective in job satisfaction. Inflexible guidelines of organizations create negative feeling in the job and flexible guidelines create job satisfaction.

Environmental factors of job include: supervisory style: when the supervisors behave supportively and friendly with the employees, job satisfaction is increased. Working group: the size of the group and the quality of interactive relationships in the group play a critical role in the satisfaction of employees. The bigger working group the less job satisfaction; because in this case the personal interactive connections are weak and there is a decreased sense of interdependence, eventually, the cognition of all people gets troubled. Also, as a community, working group is considered to be a spiritual-emotional supporting system for the employees. In a group that people have mutual social characteristics (similar beliefs and attitudes) they can create a condition that leads to job satisfaction. The conditions of working environment: the desirable conditions in working environment create job satisfaction, because in desired conditions people have better physical and psychological comfort. Job essence: the job itself plays an important role in determining the level of job satisfaction. The content of job comprises two aspects: the limitation of job that includes the amount of responsibility working practices and feedback. When these factors are extensive they can increase work domain and eventually provide job satisfaction. The second aspect includes working diversity. The studies revealed that the average working diversity is more effective. High diversity leads to stress and distraction and on the other hand low diversity creates monotony and tiredness which eventually leads to lack of satisfaction. Role ambiguity and role conflict has been avoided constantly by the staff, because when the employees are unaware of the work they do and the expectations anticipated from them, dissatisfaction will be generated.

While external environment of the organization and job essence are determining factors in job satisfaction, personal features and attributes are important, as well. People who generally have negative attitudes, will always complain about anything relate to their jobs. It does not matter what is the job, they will always find some excuses to nag and complain. Age, seniority and experience have noticeable influence on job satisfaction. The employees who are older and more experienced in the organization are expected to be more satisfied from their jobs.

Nowadays, the importance of human resources in attaining organizational goals are more evident than before, thus, human forces and its management requires special attention; therefore, management of human resources must be considered along with other forms of managements, although with more consideration and sensitivity. The premier art of directors and officials is to maintain efficient human forces in the organizations in order to increase productivity. Job satisfaction is the result of considering human resources and preserving this important resource that lead to productivity and effectiveness. That is to say, considering and preserving human forces are realized in the form of job satisfaction among the employees of the organization. Also, in order to improve organizational efficiency and increase productivity and satisfaction among employees, the congruency of job with employee is one of the most important matters that human forces managers must consider specifically.

Research Article

The obtained results revealed that there is no direct and positive relationship between job characteristics and its aspects with job satisfaction of employees. In other words, there is a reverse, negative and indirect relationship between job characteristics and its components (skill diversity, job independence, job significance, job feedback) and job satisfaction of employees in Sepah Bank in Tabriz city. Also, there is a significant difference between the degree of relationship of each component of job characteristic and employees' satisfaction. The findings of studies conducted by Mohammadi (2005), Taghdis (1995), Iraj Rad (1999), Hackman and Oldham (1971) and Adler (1991) showed positive and direct relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction. The results of the present study are in line with the findings of Nili, Sheltrez and Mohammadi (1995) and are not consistent with the findings of Mohammadi (2005), Taghdis (1995), Rad (1999), Hack and Oldham (1971) and Adler (1991).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering the fact that this research has been conducted among the employees of a financial institute, the results revealed the importance of special consideration of authorities and high rank managers to the concept of job satisfaction more than before. Job satisfaction of human forces in every organization (financial or non-financial) is one of the most determining and influential factors in reaching strategic goals and organizational success. In every society that organizations pay special attention to the satisfaction of their employees, they will have distinctive dynamicity and flexibility and they will show the required reaction against rapid environmental changes and reach their aims straightforwardly. Lack of satisfaction or even low satisfaction in organizations and financial institutes lead to gradual decrease of employees' motivation, human forces crisis and weak organizational performance. This kind of condition prevents the organization from attaining its goals. Therefore, it is important to adopt effective and necessary decisions in order to increase job satisfaction of employees by revising the job design and other effective factors.

The results of this research are serious warnings for senior managers and human resource managers.

REFERENCES

- Daft Richard L (2006).** *Organization Theory and Design*. (Tehran Publications Office of Cultural Research).
- Darani K and Mohammadi T (2005).** The relationship between job characteristics model of Hack man and Oldham and job satisfaction of kermanshah province prisons employees. *Journal of Correction and Rehabilitation* **44**.
- Faraji et al., (2008).** The Role of job characteristics on job satisfaction, *Journal of Hygiene School and Health Research Institute* **2**.
- Jamshidian Takht Taghdis (1995).** Increase intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction among employees of the refinery, the use case model, Hackman and Aldham , *Journal of Educational and Psychological*.
- Hack man JR and Oldham GR (1976).** Motivation through the Design of Work: Test of a Theory, *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* **16** 250-279.
- Hersey P and Kenneth Blanchard (2001).** *Management of Organizational Behavior* (of human resources) Eighteenth Edition, translated by Alageband, A. (Tehran Amirkabir Publication).
- Irajirad A (1999).** Investigation relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction of Ministry of Agriculture employees in Central Bureau of Tehran, M. A.thesis, Tehran Allame Tabatabai University.
- Moshabaki A (2001).** *Organizational Behavior Management*, Second Edition, (published by cashmere), Tehran.
- Poor Hadi S and Kamali M (2009).** Determine the scope of employment incentive motivation in rehabilitation centers in Tehran welfare indicators based on employment potential, *Journal of Health Management* **37** 57-64.
- Rezaiyan A (2007).** *Foundations of Organizational Behavior Management*, Eighth Edition, (publisher) Tehran.
- Robbins S (2004).** *Organizational Behavior*, Fifth Edition (Amirkabir Publication)Tehran.

Research Article

Seyed Javadein, Syed R (2008). *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management*, (Business School Tehran University Publication).