

## Job Characteristics and Employee Work Attitude: A Theoretical Literature

Imaga Benjamin Ebube<sup>1</sup>, Amah Edwinah<sup>2</sup>, Okocha Belemenanya Friday<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Candidate, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>(PhD), Professor of Entrepreneurship & Management, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>(PhD), Researcher, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

### \*Corresponding Author

**Okocha Belemenanya Friday**  
(PhD), Researcher, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study theoretically examined the relationship between job characteristics and employee work attitude. The desk research method of inquiring was adopted in this study. In this manner research method is concern with gathering secondary data and basing conclusion on the retrieved information. A detailed empirical review was completed in the study based on the review, it was observed that the job characteristics in relation to autonomy, feedback and task significance relates significantly with employee work attitude. Hence, the research found that the degree to which an organization is able to design the characteristics of employee job to enhance the degree of work autonomy, feedback and task significance will help boost the employees' level of commitment and satisfaction within the company. According to the study, allowing employees to complete their task independently of their boss will help them feel more committed to the company and raise their sense of job autonomy.

**Keywords:** Autonomy, Employee Work Attitude, Feedback, Job Characteristics, Task Significance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Any organization that must endure a difficult time depends on the mindset of the staff members in charge of running its activities for overall success. Because employee attitudes affect performance at different levels of the business, it is essential for organizations to have a thorough awareness of these attitudes (Deal, Stawiski, Ruderman & Gentry, 2010). Employees' attitude is important mostly in this era of economy melt down because the positive attitude of employee help to take every advantage of opportunity in order to improve organizational performance. This is so because the measures of employee attitude (organizational support, organizational commitment and job satisfaction) leads to reduced absenteeism,

reduced turnover, and better performance all of which are critical factor in enhancing organization's bottom line and organization benefit (Deal, Stawiski, Ruderman & Gentry, 2010).

However, attitude is the neurological and mental state of readiness that is organized via experience, dynamic impact, or exerting a direction onto the person's response to a variety of situations or objects that he or she is associated to (Srivastav & Das, 2013). Attitude is a personal disposition which can either be positive or negative, favorable or unfavorable to events, people or external stimuli. Following this, Robbins (2003) cited in Srivastar and Das, (2013) defined attitude as an evaluative statement which are favorable or unfavorable relating to things, events or people. Base on his

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definition, attitude can be favorable which produce positive behavior regarding the person, object or events. But when it became sun favorable, it results in negative effect which could have an adverse effect on the effectiveness of the entire organization. Robins (2003) asserted that employee with high job satisfaction level, exhibit positive mentality toward the company. While those dissatisfied with their job holds attitudes which are negative about the job. However, employee attitude in the office are not always stable but dynamic and at such, a staff with a right attitude today may exhibit negative attitude going forward.

At the job place, the attitude of employees is influence by various factors like the activities of organization, the style of leadership, the rapport or relationship which exist in the workplace, recognition in the workplace and the rate of stress in the workplace. The attitudes of employee displayed at work can help predict who will leave the organization or stay with a given period of time. The engagement of the workers in firm can also be determined by the attitude of the employee; this is to say that when employees have a right or positive attitude, they tend to get more engaged with the activities in the workplace more than those with negative or wrong attitude. Attitude of employees influences their performance. Performance which at large put the bottom line of the organisation at stake if not properly and urgently handled. According to Luu (2011), the relationship between attitude and performance has over time been studied in social sciences.

Although studies have been done in the advance nations of the world to ascertain the relationship between job characteristics and employee attitude, like that of Slattery, Selvarajan, Anderson and Sardessai (2010), research has revealed that scanty empirical work has been done in the Nigerian context. It is this gap that has informed this study. This study differs from other empirical work on employee attitudes because it attempts to seek explanation empirically into the relationship between job characteristics and employee work attitudes of firms.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **Job Characteristics Theory**

Job characteristics theory which was propounded by Hackman and Oldham (1975), shows the relationship between job characteristics and the response of individual to work. This theory specifies the task condition in which a worker or staff are predicted to succeed in their given job or work. Harckman and Oldham (1975) identified three psychological states that lead to individual advantages and successful work outcomes in their

job characteristics hypothesis. These psychological factors include awareness of the real outcomes of the work activities and familiarity with the task's significance and responsibility. These psychological states are a result of job characteristic aspects, which improve internal work motivation, lead to high levels of satisfaction, and increase work effectiveness, according to Harckman and Oldham (1975). According to Hackman and Oldham's (1975) idea, employees must believe that the work they are doing for the company has value or is useful. It should also be significant, particularly to the organization's acceptable values and the individual's personal beliefs. The theory further asserts that there should be a good fit or match between a person's skills and the requirements of the job. The second psychological condition in the theory, "experienced responsibility for work outcomes," requires employees to accept personal responsibility for the outcomes of their job or the tasks they are performing for the company. This theory contends that for an anticipated or desired outcome to materialize, each of the three psychological states must be experienced by the worker or employee.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

The social exchange theory was first developed by Homans. The social exchange theory has been regarded as a wide concept paradigm that cut across various management discipline and social psychology. The process of this theory begins when an enterprise actor which could be a co-worker or supervisor, treats a target employee in a positive or negative manner (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage & Rohdieck, 2004). The positive initiating actions may involve behavior such as willingness to provide organizational support, while the negative initiating action include abusive supervision. Consequently, the theory, when such action is taken by supervisor in the firm towards the target, co-workers or subordinate, in return, such subordinate often reciprocates such treatment whether positively or negatively depending on the initiating action received by the worker. Social exchange theory argues that, in reaction to positive initiating actions, the employee will likely reciprocate in kind by engaging in a more positive reciprocating responses.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Job characteristics**

Job characteristics are mainly concerned with how the work itself is accomplished and the range and nature of tasks related with a specific job (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). The degree to which a job is structured to offer regular feedback, as well as a sense of task accomplishment, and for individuals to track or monitor their own behavior and gain an increased sense of personal control, according to Greenberger and Stasser (1986), is

what they meant by work characteristics. The personal control depicts a worker belief that he/she can influence a change in a desired direction. Work characteristics, according to Chiu and Chen (2005), are the many aspects of occupations that inspire employees to perform well. The feeling of accountability and embeddedness is increased by a thorough grasp of how an employee's work contributes to interdependent outcomes, and awareness of job results (feedback) can produce a high sense of reciprocal responsibility (Nwosu, Chiamaka & Tochukwu, 2013).

A Job characteristic refers to a job or task inherent attribute. In broad sense, any attribute or factor relevant with a job could be referred to as work characteristics.

The task itself is considered to be the primary driver of employee motivation in the job characteristics model. Particularly, a demanding job boosts motivation, but a boring and monotonous job stifles motivation to perform effectively. According to Nkume (2014), job enrichment and job rotation are the two methods for increasing diversity and challenge in the workplace. Variety, autonomy, and decision power are the other three methods. As per

Hackman and Oldham (1976), work characteristics shows the way work are perceived as regarding its five dimensions which tend to impact the three specific psychological states in employees which include;

- Had valuable work experience
- Felt responsibility
- Knowledge of result

According to the Hackman and Oldham (1980) model, when a worker has knowledge of the results and realizes they have performed well in the job, they receive intrinsic rewards from a motivational point of view. In meaningful work, employees regard the task as being important, valuable, and worthy.

Negbu (2014) argues that this is because the job characteristics model assumes that employment would be restructured to give workers higher levels of intrinsic motivation and performance. He added that there is a good chance that employment features will affect psychological responses like commitment and contentment. Hackman and Oldham (1980) model is given as;

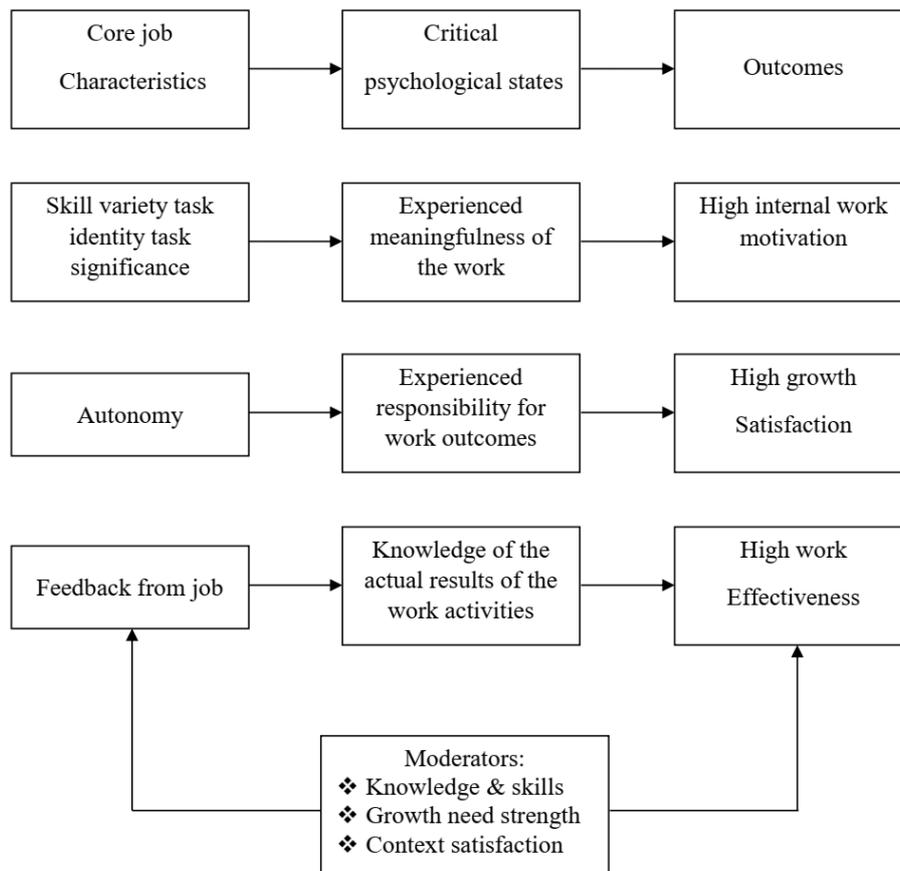


Figure 2.1: Job characteristic model  
**Source:** Hackman and Oldham (1980)

### **Autonomy**

Autonomy refers to the extent to which a position affords the employee a significant amount of discretion, freedom, and independence in planning activities or tasks and deciding how to carry out their duties (Mukul, Rayhan, Hoque & Islam; 2013). A person has autonomous power within the organization when the employee uses his own information to transform his/her self, develops psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. Autonomy denotes an essential measure of freedom from the excessive control of others (Little 2017). Autonomy is the capability to make rational decisions by employee regarding his work.

### **Feedback**

Employees which are indisputable assets carry out activities in firms in method to ensuring the actualization of goals. However, employees may not perform maximally if he/she does not have idea of his previous performance. Feedback is the methodical process of informing the employees about an employee's performance. Feedback is the extent to which a person or group receives clear information regarding their performance, according to Hackman and Oldham (1975). Bassett (1994) asserted that feedback is the best effective way for improving employee performance.

Robbins (2005) opined that incubates will be more concerned and wary about their performance and effectiveness when the job possesses proper feedback. Hackman and Oldham (1975) has further divided feedback into two categories;

- Comments about the work itself
- Feedback from agents

The degree to which carrying out the duties demanded of the employees and completing the job tasks results in learning about his or her performance is referred to as feedback from the job itself. The rate or extent to which a person receives direct and understandable information about his outcome from superiors or coworkers, on the other hand, is the subject of feedback from agents.

### **Task Significance**

Task importance is the extent to which a job has a valuable impact on the lives or work of other people in the immediate company or in the external environment (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Task significance increase satisfaction of employee in the workplace. According to Mukul, Rayham, Hoque, and Islam (2013), task importance refers to how much an individual job affects other people's lives both within the immediate organization and globally.

According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), task significance is the quality that enables workers to understand the significance of their job and the effects it has on others.

### **Concept of Employee Work Attitude**

Employee work attitude is among the oldest, most influential and most popular areas of inquiry in organizations (Judge and Kammeger-Mueller, 2012). Attitudes is a psychological tendency which is shown by evaluating or examining a particular entity with some level of or degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken; 1993). Employee work attitude are evaluations of an employee's job that express his/her feelings towards, beliefs about and attachment to employee's job. This definition covers both the affective and cognitive component of these evaluations while recognizing that those affective and cognitive aspect need not be in exact correspondence with each other (Schleicher, Watt & Gregurasd, 2004).

### **Employee Satisfaction**

Employee satisfaction has attracted several research based on in its indisputable relevance throughout the company. Satisfaction with their work is essential to attract and sustain best effort of employees at work. Fajana (2002) sees employee satisfaction as the general job attitude. He further divided it into five components which are; standard working circumstances, monetary benefit, attitude toward work group, attitude toward organization and attitude toward supervision. Employee satisfaction is high connected with the state of mind of employee regarding their work and life in a holistic manner. Luthan (1998) opined that employee satisfaction is mostly determined by how well result or outcome matches or exceed expectations.

### **Employee Commitment**

In this time of increasing labor mobility, it is essential to implement strategies to increase employee commitment. Employee turnover in a firm rise as a result of employees' constant hunt for greener pastures. Engagement lowers turnover. When a skilled employee quits the company, it lowers production, lowers morale, and raises the cost of hiring and training new employees (Ampomah & Cudjor, 2015). Employee commitment, according to Robbins, Judge, and Sanghi (2008), is the degree to which an employee aspires to identify with an organization, aspirations, and goals in order to join and stay with it. Commitment has been an essential issue that has attracted several studies as a result of its link with organizational and individual work outcome like motivation, absenteeism and turnover (Klien, Becker & Meyer 2009). Employee

commitment shows the degree to which a staff of a company get his/her self-involved within the organization. It deals with the willingness of one to give his/her time and energy to prefer duty beneficial to the organization Monday, Porter, Boulian and Steers (1974) described employee commitment as an attitude that serves as a bond with the organization, with the willingness to stay in it, and identify with the beliefs and norms of the organization and intention to give more.

### **Affective Commitment**

Organizational employees have feeling and emotions which they express in varied ways based on circumstances. Affective commitment according to Allen and Meyer (1990) is the emotional identification of individual to a particular firm. It is an emotional tier or bond of a worker to their various organization and it is a determinant of dedication and loyalty (Rhoades, Elsenberger and Armeli, 2001).

### **Continuous Commitment**

Employees are calculative being which are always ready to grab higher opportunities. Employees stays more in the firm when there is lack of alternative opportunity and when the cost of leaving the organization is higher than the cost of staying. Dixit and Bhati (2012) identify the cost associated with learning to include, the threat of time wasting, energy spends acquiring, attractive benefits and disrupt personal relationship. Continuance commitments are the decision to stay with a company due to non-transferable investments made by the employee, such as close working relationships with coworkers, retirement investments, career investments, community involvement, and severe benefits that make it very expensive to look for work elsewhere (Umoh, Amah & Wokocha, 2014).

### **Normative Commitment**

Normative commitment illustrates the sense of duty to continue working. According to Dixit and Bhati (2012), normative commitment is viewed as the result of receiving advantages, which fosters the idea that one should give back. Lee and Chen (2013) opined the normative commitment is related to obligation which employees of organizations feels they owe the firm for been given a job at the time they need it most. According to Wiener (1982), the internalization of normative constraints placed on employees upon entry into the organization may be the cause of the sense of obligation that emerges from normative commitment to remain in the company. He further noted that normative commitment may develop when firms provide the employee with reward in advance.

## **CONCLUSION**

In order for businesses to survive in the current chaotic and unstable climate, employees' work attitudes are essential. As a result of the investigation, it was determined that employee autonomy is essential for any company due to its influence and connection to employee work attitudes. Employee dedication has a moderately positive connection with autonomy. As a result, it may be inferred that organizational autonomy can modestly increase commitment inside the organization. Employees want some degree of autonomy so they can complete tasks at their own choice. As a result, increasing employee autonomy will encourage greater loyalty to the company. When there is autonomy at work, an employee's job happiness might be positively increased. This shows that giving employees accurate and timely feedback about their performance increases their level of loyalty to the company. The employee's degree of devotion likewise rises as feedback does. Additionally, the association between job features and employee work attitude is strongly moderated by corporate culture. As a result, the degree to which a company is able to design an employee's job characteristics to enhance the level of job autonomy, feedback, and task significance can help increase the employee's level of commitment and satisfaction in the business.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

According on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are made:

- i. Employees should be given the freedom to do tasks without the supervision of a manager because this will strengthen their sense of job autonomy and, as a result, their loyalty to the company.
- ii. The tasks performed by employees should be planned so that they feel important in improving the success of the company. This will raise their sense of purpose and, in turn, their level of pleasure.
- iii. To increase employee happiness, business management should make sure that employees receive enough feedback that is free of bias.
- iv. High levels of interfering by co-workers in one's work should be discouraged by management, as this will allow employees to work independently, increasing their level of engagement and satisfaction with the company.
- v. Employee task input should be addressed promptly to improve workers' satisfaction with the company.
- vi. Regular updates from the workplace should be given to employees; this will strengthen their loyalty to the company.

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