

University Teacher's Perceptions on The Influence of Job Characteristics on Job Satisfaction: A Study on Geography and History Department

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction of geography and history department lecturers at a private and public university in Bandung, West Java. The performance of a lecturer is closely related to his commitment. One of the factors that determine a person's work commitment is his/ her job satisfaction. Organization must understand how a person's job satisfaction is formed. Literatures shows that one of the factors that can explain a person's job satisfaction is the characteristics of the work he/ she does. Data were obtained from 105 geography and history lecturers. The results of hypotheses testing indicate that job characteristics which consisting of five dimensions (job variety, job identity, job significance, job autonomy, and job feedback) have a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of the lecturers. The implication of this study is that education institution management must be able to develop job characteristics that are perceived as appropriate and interesting by lecturers. If the perception of the lecturers is good about the characteristics of the work or tasks they do, then their level of job satisfaction will be high. This high job satisfaction will trigger the formation of a higher commitment, which in turn will improve the performance of the lecturers.

Keywords

Job Characterstics, Job satisfaction, Lecturers.

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Introduction

The existence of an organization in the midst of a dynamic environment, which is characterized by competition between organizations, is basically related on how the organization utilized all available resources to win the competition (Ma, 1999). It is argued that competition in an industry is dynamic in the sense that competition itself never reaches an equilibrium condition for a long time. The study emphasizes the need for organizations to have resources that are capable of producing new creative strategies or competencies that are not easily being adopted by competitors to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. The ability of an organization to compete, including universities, is largely determined by the quantity and the quality of the resources they have, and the way in which these resources are used (Ma, 1999). One of the resources that could determine the success of a higher education institution is the lecturers. Lecturers are agents who carry out the process of transferring knowledge to students. One of the campus successes is determined by the accumulated performance from each individual lecturer. In addition to academic ability, lecturer performance is largely determined by his commitment to carry out his duties and responsibilities as well as possible.

Organizational commitment is an important topic in a number of studies and is an important variable in understanding the work behavior of workers in an organization (Ahmad, 2018) (Meyer and Allen, 1991). One of the main determinants for the formation of organizational commitment is job satisfaction (Bogler et al., 2005; Brahmana, 2007; Cohen et al., 2004; Gillen, 2000; Organ, 1988; Su-Chao et al., 2006). Job satisfaction would trigger organizational commitment. Therefore, management should focus on how to increase people job satisfaction within organization. Podsakoff et al. (2000) found that the level of job satisfaction is largely determined by the characteristics of the job. Job characteristics are attributes of a job that can produce motivational function for workers (Ahmad, 2018; Chiu et al., 2005; Su-Chao et al., 2006). Hackman et al. (1980) asserted that jobs that are considered to have attractive job characteristics are able to inspire workers to complete the jobs better, and in turn will ultimately satisfy the worker. This study is aim to explained the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction of lecturers in a private university in Bandung, West Java.

Literature Review

Job characteristics are attributes of a job that can produce motivational function for workers (Chiu et al., 2005). According to Hackman et al. (1980), job characteristics have five characteristics, namely: job variety, job identity, job significance, autonomy, and feedback. Hackman et al. (1980) asserted that jobs that are considered to have attractive characteristics will able to inspire workers to complete jobs better, and thus will increase the job satisfaction of the workers, which in turn will lead to better job performance. Hackman et al. (1980) introduced the theory of job characteristics to explain the conditions that can be intrinsically motivating when someone perform a job. According to this theory, organization can encourage positive work attitudes and improve work quality through the five dimensions of job characteristics. These five dimensions or characteristics are as follows:

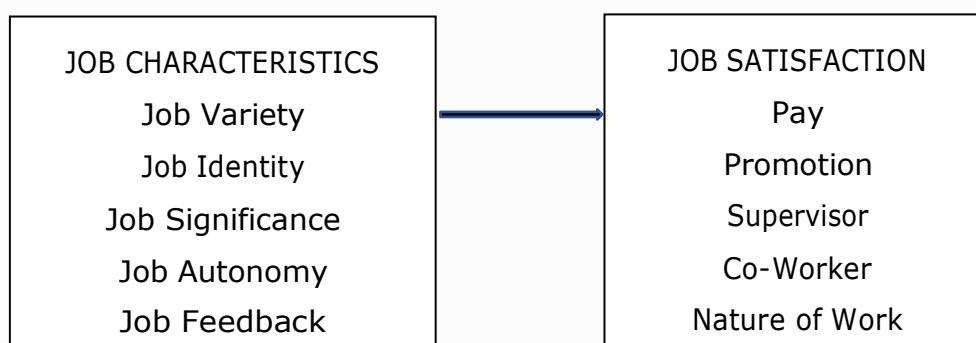
1. Variety: the degree of diversity of skills and talents required by a job;
2. Identity: the degree to which a job requires completing a part of a job, or completing a job in its entirety from start to finish;
3. Task Significance: the degree to which a job has an impact on the lives of others;
4. Autonomy: the degree of freedom a job can provide;
5. Feedback: the degree of clarity of information about the performance level of a job.

The theory proposed by Hackman et al. (1980) is based on several theory, including Herzberg's two-factor theory which stated that different factors affect workers satisfaction; the activation theory proposed by Podsakoff et al. (2000) which analyzes the understanding of individual work behavior I organization; socio-technical system theory which not only provide a significant perception of the interdependence between the technical view of a job and the wider social environment in which the work is carried out, but also provides a clear specification of how the work itself and their social environment influence each other (Hackman et al., 1980). Hackman et al. (1980) model are intended to systematize, improve, and develop knowledge about the relationship between job characteristics and individual response in work setting.

Job satisfaction is one of the most in-demand areas of behavioral research. Locke (1969) estimates that by 1976 about 3.350 articles and dissertations on job satisfaction had been written. Cranny (1992) estimate that more than 5.00 studies on job satisfaction have been published. Job satisfaction is basically an of how a person feels about work and various other aspects of his/ her job. In other words, job satisfaction is a person's attitude towards his/ her job. Traditionally, job satisfaction is defined as an emotional reaction to a work situation (Cranny, 1992; Hauff et al., 2015; Ilies et al., 2004; Iqbal et al., 2018; Locke, 1969; Rai et al., 2021). Perhaps the most famous and widely used definition is the definition put forward by Locke (1969), which says that job satisfaction is a feeling of pleasure or positive emotion that arises from a person's assessment of his/ her work or work experience.

Several attempts have been made to develop measuring tools that can accurately measure job satisfaction. The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Cranny (1992) measures job satisfaction through five dimensions of job satisfaction, namely: work, pay, promotion, supervision, and coworkers. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaires (MSQ) measures job satisfaction through twenty dimensions, each of which consists of five items. This measuring tool is more specific than other measuring tools. The Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) studies the effect of different characteristics of a job on workers, and covers several areas or dimensions of job satisfaction such as growth, pay, security, social, and supervision. Spector (1985) developed a measuring instrument that measures job satisfaction through nine dimensions, namely: pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work and communication.

Theoretical Framework



Whether a worker will be able to complete his job well depends on his perception of the work itself. Workers who find their work interesting will tend to be able to complete their work well (Hackman et al., 1980). Several studies have found that job characteristics are positively related to job satisfaction (Ahmad, 2018; Hackman et al., 1980; Thomas et al., 2004). Based on di above discussion, the hypotheses of this research are as follows:

- H1. Job variety is positively and significantly influence job satisfaction.
- H2. Job identity is positively and significantly influence job satisfaction.
- H3. Job significance is positively and significantly influence job satisfaction.
- H4. Job autonomy is positively and significantly influence job satisfaction.
- H5. Job feedback is positively and significantly influence job satisfaction.

Methodology

The research object of this study is the perception of lecturers on attributes of their job characteristics and job satisfaction. The unit of analysis is individual. The population of this study consists of 160 lecturers of private and public universities. A total of 160 questionnaires will be sent to all geography and history lecturers, and the number of questionnaires that are returned, completely filled out and could be processed for further statistical analysis will be considered as research samples.

To obtain data on individual perceptions, an instrument was compiled in the form of a questionnaires. The questions or statements in the questionnaires are designed in the form of closed-ended questions. The questionnaires are designed following a 7- point Likert Type scale pattern. The questionnaires will consist of three parts, namely: a section to measure job characteristics, job satisfaction, and a section aim to capture respondents' demographics.

Job characteristics were measured by adapting measuring tool developed by Hackman et al. (1980) which consisted of 15 questions, where 3 questions for each of the five dimension of job characteristics: job variety, job identity, job significance, job autonomy, and job feedback. On the other hand, job satisfaction measurement is adapted from the measurement developed by Celluci and DeVries (1978) consisting twenty items, where each of the five dimensions of job satisfaction (pay, promotion, supervisor, co-workers, and nature of work) is measured by four items. Since the population of this research is reachable and manageable, the questionnaires are directly sent to the respondent individually. The researchers leave each of the questionnaires on each lecturers' desk, and collected the questionnaires after one week later.

Findings and Discussion

Out of 160 questionnaires sent, a total of 124 questionnaires have been received back, and it is found that eighteen questionnaires were not completely filled out, hence the eighteen questionnaires are waived from further analysis. The number of questionnaires returned and valid to be used in the subsequent analysis was 106 questionnaires. Thus, the response rate of this research is 71%. To check the goodness of measures, this study tests the reliability of the measurement using Cronbach' Alpha Criteria, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is using to test the validity of the measurement. The result of reliability test found that all item of the measurement is reliable.

Validity of the measurement was tested using confirmatory factor analysis. Factor analysis for the construct of job characteristics converged and fulfills all the criteria in one iteration. All items (fifth teen items) of job characteristics converge to form five factors that correspond to the theoretical dimensions of job characteristics. The result of factor analysis for job characteristics are as follows:

- Factor 1: Job Feedback (item no. 13, 14, 1 and 15).
- Factor 2: Job Autonomy (item no. 10, 11, and 12).
- Factor 3: Job Identity (item no. 4, 5, and 6).
- Factor 4: Job Significance (item no. 7, 8, and 9).
- Factor 5: Job Variety (item no. 1, 2, and 3).

Job satisfaction was measurement using 20 items. Confirmatory factor analysis for job satisfaction scale is converged in five iterations since there were problems with anti-image, communalities, and cross loading. Consequently, five items should be removed from the analysis. The four items removed are as follows: item no. 13, 19, 12, and 20. The result of factor analysis for job satisfaction form 5 factors:

- Factor 1: Pay (item no. 1, 2, 3, and 4).
- Factor 2: Promotion (item no. 5, 6, 7, and 8).
- Factor 3: Co-Workers (item no. 14, 15, and 16).
- Factor 4: Supervisor (item no. 9, 10, and 11).
- Factor 5 (item no. 17 and 18).

Multiple regression analysis is used to test the hypotheses. Table 1, 2, and 3 shows the result of multiple regression analysis. In this test, five dimension of job characteristics is entered as independent variables, and the total score of the five dimension of job satisfaction is entered as dependent variable. Table 1 and Table 2 shows the result of F test, which is aim to test the regression model. This result shows that the value of F is significant at 1%, which is mean that the independent variables could explained or predicted the dependent variable. It is found that the independent variables of the regression model could explained the dependent variables by 76.3%, while the other 23.7% is explained by other factors which is not included in this research.

Table 1.
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.880	.774	.763	68.436	0.000

- a. Predictors: Variety, Identity, Significance, Autonomy, Feedback
 b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 2.
ANOVA

Model		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	101.451	5	20.280	68.438	.000
	Residual	29.647	100	296		
	Total	131.098	105			

- a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction
 b. Predictors: Variety, Identity, Significance, Autonomy, Feedback

Table 3
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coeff.		Standardized Coeff.	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.333	.249		1.336	.164
	Variety	.476	.166	.474	2.854	.005
	Identity	.247	.157	.240	1.934	.037
	Significance	.221	.184	.208	2.802	.043
	Autonomy	.295	.098	.296	1.986	.050
	Feedback	.308	.096	.322	3.203	.002

- a. Dependent variable: job satisfaction

In Table 3, it can be seen that the results of the t-test on all the coefficients of the independent variables were positive and significant at the 1% and 5%. Based on the results of this t-test, it can be concluded that all independent variables have a positive and significant effect on the independent variables. The results of this hypotheses testing can be concluded as follows:

1. Job variety positively and significantly effect on job satisfaction.
2. Job identity positively and significantly effect on job satisfaction.
3. Job significance positively and significantly effect on job satisfaction.
4. Job autonomy positively and significantly effect on job satisfaction.
5. Job feedback positively and significantly effect on job satisfaction.

The findings of this study indicate that the five dimensions of job characteristics have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. The results of this study are in line with several previous studies which found that job characteristics is an important predictors of job satisfaction (Ahmad, 2018; Hauff et al., 2015; Iqbal et al., 2018; Rai et al., 2021).

The results of this study clearly indicate that in order to increase the organizational commitment of workers whose ultimate goal is to improve organizational performance, the organization must

be able to design tasks that have characteristics that are then able to increase job satisfaction. The management of educational institutions need to design jobs or tasks that must be carried out by lecturers, where these tasks must have variety, identity, significance, autonomy, as well as clear and interesting feedback. The characteristics of the tasks that are perceived as interesting by the lecturers will certainly increase the satisfaction of the lecturers when they carry out their duties.

Conclusion

This study found that job characteristics and their five dimensions are very important determinants in determining job satisfaction of lecturers in universities. Higher education management need to design tasks that contain elements such as variations in carrying out tasks, clear task identities, the importance of these tasks in relation to the successful achievement of overall learning objectives, freedom in carrying out tasks, and clear and measurable feedback of the execution of the tasks performed.

One of the weaknesses of this research is the generalization aspect. This study only examines data that comes from only one university, so the level of generalization is not too high. Future research is expected to be carried out by examining data from more universities so that the level of generalization is higher.

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