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Job enrichment: A tool for employee motivation

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Abstract

Job enrichment is a fundamental part of attracting, motivating, and retaining talented people, particularly where work is repetitive or boring. Employees in every organization want to draw fulfillments from their jobs and every human resource Manager wants the employees to be fulfilled being the most important resources of the organization. Globalization has created many challenges for multinational and local organizations such as cost of production that is on the increase day by day due to universal factors such as world recession, resource limitation, modern world computing, information technology and trends that have affected the way work is done and also changed the face of competition among organizations. The problem of job enrichment stemmed from the fact that in today's rapidly corporate environment, organizations globally want to maximize the potential of their human resources to stay ahead of the aggressive competition to survive in the middle of the quest. The present paper is an attempt to find job related characteristics that help in job enrichment programmes in organisations and to find out how job enrichment helps in the retention of employees. Job enrichment provides many opportunities for people's development. Enriched jobs lead to more satisfied and motivated workers.

Keywords: job enrichment, globalization, retaining, motivating, talented people, competition.

Introduction

The concept of Job enrichment has become a fundamental tool for management in improving employee's motivation and organizational growth. It occurs when an employer through development and intensification, placed extra amount of work on employees with the aim of making it more interesting, meaningful and increasing job challenge and responsibility. Jobs are enriched to motivate employees by adding to their responsibilities with a greater need for skill varieties in their jobs. Due to the rapid change in environment and increasing level of competitive rivalry, organizations are now beginning to shift from the traditional ideological orientation of seeing money as the greatest motivating factor to a situation where workers today will continue to value their work, have more control in scheduling their work and deciding how best the work should be done and to be esteemed for the work they do.

Job Enrichment is a "vertical" enlargement of job duties, providing the employee with tasks and responsibilities normally done by a senior employee or supervisor, and usually comes with more freedom and control over the planning, execution, and evaluation of job tasks.

The rationale behind job enrichment is to motivate employees. The traditional practice of specialization, or division of labour, dividing work into many components, and assigning each component to a separate worker results in employee boredom, and consequently loss of efficiency, and low productivity. The earliest approach to relieve such boredom was job rotation and job enlargement. Such concepts however did not have any backing from psychological studies. *Frederick Herzberg*, the noted psychologist, in his 1968 article, "*One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?*" advocated enhancing individual jobs and responsibilities to make them more inspiring and rewarding for the workforce. This became the basis of Job Enrichment, the earliest psychological backed approach to motivating employees at work. According to Herzberg, a few motivators are added to a job to make it more rewarding, challenging and interesting. According to Herzberg, the motivating factors enrich the job and improve performance. The motivating factors can be:

- a) Giving more freedom.
- b) Encouraging participation.
- c) Giving employees the freedom to select the method of working.
- d) Allowing employees to select the place at which they would like to work.
- e) Allowing workers to select the tools that they require on the job.

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- f) Allowing workers to decide the layout of plant or office.

Job enrichment gives lot of freedom to the employee but at the same time increases the responsibility. Some workers are power and responsibility hungry. Job enrichment satisfies the needs of the employees.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the importance of job enrichment in the lives of employees in organisation.
2. To study the job related characteristics that help in job enrichment programmes in organisations.
3. To analyse the effect of job enrichment on motivation of employees.
4. To find out how job enrichment helps in the retention of employees.

Rationale of the Study

The basic purpose of job enrichment is *to create jobs that employees will enjoy doing*. People, who really enjoy the tasks they perform, may not need the extra motivation of high pay and impressive designation. However, if such rewards are not distributed equitably and a conducive work climate is not created, problems certainly surface from more than one corner.

Job enrichment *demands a development effort*. Managers must have a better understanding of what people want. They must be genuinely interested in job enrichment programme. People like to see that their managers are really concerned about their welfare.

Job enrichment helps the employer bring about organisational changes easily, securing *employees loyalty and commitment*.

Job enrichment can *humanise an organisation*. Individuals can experience the psychological lift that comes from developing new competencies and doing a job well. Individuals are encouraged to grow and push themselves.

Many companies in India realised the importance of offering jobs having depth, variety and meaningfulness to their employees long back. ICICI, Proctor & Gamble, Infosys, Bharat Petroleum Corporation, Asian Paints, HLL, Huges Software have certain things in common: great opportunities to grow vertically, open communication, flexible working hours, excellent reward schemes, employee oriented work environment, sharing with and learning from others etc. The BT- Hewlett Associates study (BT, Jan 21, 2001) has clearly indicated the benefits of having such excellent practices:

1. Employees in the above companies displayed tremendous pride in what their company does and in its products and services. They also believed in its future prospects.
2. Employees in the above companies admired their leadership for making them feel safe and well-led.

Job enrichment programmes in companies like IBM, AT&T, Texas instruments in USA, Fiat in Italy, Renault in France, Volvo Inc. in Sweden, Volks Wagen in Germany too have yielded encouraging results.

Literature Review

Job enrichment is seen as a process where management give increasing responsibilities which are often assigned to the superiors to the employees. Several studies have indicated

that when tasks are routine, monotonous, repetitive and unrewarding with an over controlled authority structure, workers tend to be highly dissatisfied, bored and demotivated.

Williams 2009 ^[16]. Job enrichment is a fundamental aspect of stimulating the effort of employees by expanding job responsibilities and giving increased autonomy over the task processes and completion.

Feder, B.J. 2000 ^[6]. Job enrichment is a systematic way of inspiring employees by giving them the opportunity to use a number of different types of skills and capabilities in performing a task.

Kotila 2001 ^[10]. Job enrichment leads to job satisfaction by increasing the level of responsibility and giving the sense of freedom, autonomy and opportunity for employees to decide what and how the job is to be performed and accomplished.

Behson, Eddy, & Lorenzet, 2000 ^[2]. Job enrichment necessitates the practices that apportion greater responsibility for arranging, organizing, and designing work to the employees who actually produce product.

Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. 2011 ^[13]. Job enrichment develops jobs vertically and increases the variety of tasks in a job. What this means is that job enrichment gives room for the employee to have greater control over their work.

Rentsch and Steel, 1998 ^[14] asserted that the variety of tasks in an enriched job makes an employee to accomplish a given activity with increased sense of autonomy, individuality and responsibility

Armstrong, 2010 ^[1]. Feedback should be given to allow employees to assess and evaluate the level of completion which is the end result of the task itself

Saavedra & Kwun, 2000 ^[15]. Where jobs have been enriched; employee satisfaction tends to increase with a decrease in labour turnover and absenteeism.

Derek, & Laura, 2000 ^[5]. Job enrichment in organizational development has contributed in reducing these demotivating factors by giving employees the right of decision making, and control over their task in order to promote healthier performance to the workplace.

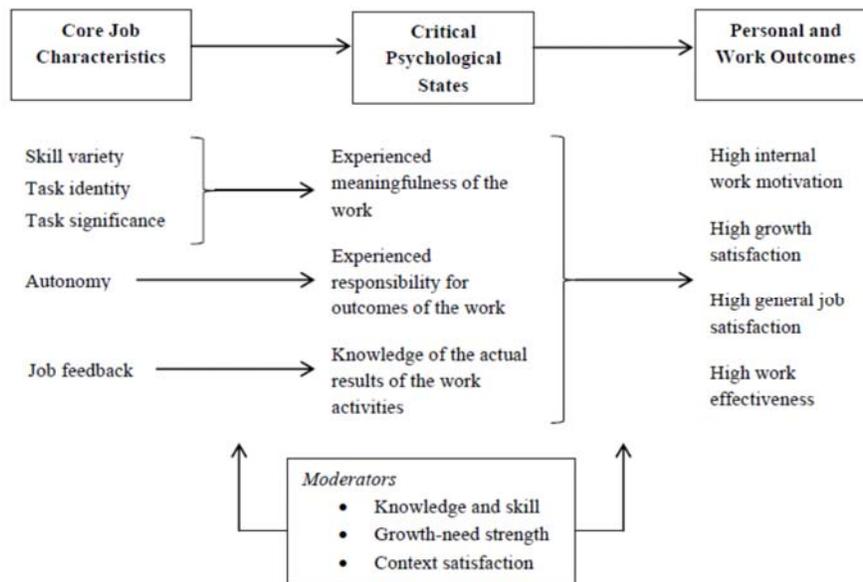
Brown, 2004 ^[3] argued that "Job enrichment doesn't work for everyone".

Hower, 2008 ^[9]. The principle of individual differences indicate that some people tend to assume more responsibilities which later leads to skill varieties, self-sufficiency, personal growth and satisfaction while others resist

However, it can be reiterated that job enrichment becomes effective, meaningful and interesting to employees provided the tasks will increase job satisfaction and productivity.

The Job Enrichment Model (Based on job characteristics)

How can jobs be enriched? What elements of a job need to be enriched for it to produce desired outcomes? J. Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham (1976) developed a job characteristics approach to job enrichment. The model is based on the assumption that jobs can be designed not only to help workers get enjoyment from their jobs but also to help workers feel that they are doing meaningful and valuable work. Specifically, the model identifies five core job characteristics that help create three critical psychological states, leading, in turn, to several personal and work outcomes (Figure 1).



Source: Adapted from Hackman and Oldman (1975, p. 161)

Fig 1: Job Enrichment Model

Components of the Model

The five core job characteristics are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and job feedback. Let's examine each one of these more closely.

- a. **Skill variety:** *Skill variety* is the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities and involves the use of a number of different skills and talents of the employee. Jobs that are high in skill variety are seen by employees as: more challenging because of the range of skills involved; relieve monotony that results from repetitive activity; and gives employees a greater sense of competence. *For example*, an administrative assistant with high skill variety may have to perform many different tasks (e.g., schedule meetings, make airline and hotel reservations, do research, prepare written reports, and meet with customers).
- b. **Task identity:** *Task identity* is the degree to which a job requires completion of a "whole" and identifiable piece of work—that is, doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome. When employees work on a small part of the whole, they are unable to identify any finished product with their efforts. However, when tasks are broadened to produce a whole product or an identifiable part of it, then task identity has been established. *For example*, dress designers will have high task identity if they do everything related to making the whole dress (e.g., measuring the client, selecting the fabric, cutting and sewing the dress, and altering it to fit the customer).
- c. **Task significance:** *Task significance* is the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives of other people, whether those people are in the immediate organization or in the external environment. *For example*, medical researchers working on a cure for a terminal disease most likely recognize the importance of their work to society. Even more modest contributions to an organization can be recognized as being important to the extent that employees understand the role of their jobs to the overall mission of the company. The point is that employees should believe

they are doing something important in their organization or society, or both.

- d. **Autonomy:** *Autonomy* is the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in doing the work. Although most employees are willing to work within the broad constraints of an organization, employees want a certain degree of freedom. *For example*, a salesperson is considered to be highly autonomous by scheduling his or her own work day and deciding on the most effective approach to use for each customer without supervision.
- e. **Job feedback:** *Job feedback* is the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job provides the individual with direction and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance. Feedback can be positive or negative, but it is best when it is balanced appropriately. Feedback can come directly from the job itself, or it can be provided verbally by management or other employees. *For example*, salespersons receive information regularly about how many contacts they make per day or week and the monetary value of sales made.

As shown in the model (Figure 1), these core job characteristics have important effects on various critical psychological states. For example, skill variety, task identity, and task significance together contribute to a person's *experienced meaningfulness of the work*. Jobs that provide a great deal of autonomy are said to contribute to a person's *experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work*. When they have the freedom to decide what to do and how to do it, employees feel more responsible for the results. Finally, job feedback is said to give employees *knowledge of the actual results of work activities*. When a job is designed to provide employees with information about the effects of their actions in the workplace, they are better able to develop an understanding of how well they have performed—and such knowledge improves their effectiveness.

Table 1: Merits and Demerits of Job Enrichment

Merits	Demerits
1. Interesting and challenging job	Incomplete knowledge to take decisions and wrong attitude in workplace
2. Improves decision making	Overload of work of some employees
3. Identifies future managerial caliber	Ego Problems if power given to employees
4. Identifies higher order needs of employees	If internal dissatisfaction, then even job enrichment will not do wonders.
5. Reduces work load of superiors	Not suitable if jobs already gives a lot of freedom and responsibility

These five factors have shaped the ways by which organizations implement job enrichment. For instance, organizations try to enrich the work of an employee through:

- Job rotation or placing people in a variety of different job settings, giving them an opportunity to learn and use a variety of skills and experience, and perform different kinds of work.
- Combining work activities to give a “task identity” that helps employees visualize and complete tasks from start to finish, such as breaking typical functional line activities, and assigning project or product-focused work instead.
- Setting goals, and allowing team members a free hand in adopting means to attaining such goals, and granting more authority to workers for making job-related decisions.
- Allowing team members to participate in decision making considering their inputs during strategic planning exercises.

Effect of Job Enrichment on Motivation of Employees

To uncover the influencers of employee motivation, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, psychologist Frederick Herzberg conducted a series of studies and stumbled across a fascinating discovery: The contributors to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction aren't related. In other words, fixing problems or establishing a positive work environment won't translate into more satisfied employees; it just means they're no longer *dissatisfied*. Herzberg concluded that true employee satisfaction rests in a fulfilling job experience – more commonly known as job enrichment or vertical job loading. Employers who deepened their staff's knowledge through programs or benefits promoting achievement, recognition, responsibility and advancement had the happiest, most productive workforces. They also had more cohesive work cultures, increased company loyalty and more motivated teams. To enrich the work experience and instill motivation in employees, following practices can be implemented in organization:

Find a balance between job enrichment and job enlargement

A growing business will inevitably require to expand employees' duties and responsibilities, known as job enlargement or horizontal job loading. While some thrive under a heavier workload of diverse tasks, others prefer more intensive and challenging tasks. It's important to understand where employees fall on this spectrum so as to balance the duties and enrichment opportunities effectively; keeping everyone satisfied and motivated to go the extra mile.

Initiate career development discussions

Establish collaborative, cross-departmental discussions about the types of enrichment opportunities that employees feel would be most beneficial to them and their co-workers. Monthly lunches can be held with an employee and an executive who don't normally interact with each other. Because of flat hierarchy and emphasis on collaboration, employees can be encouraged to ask questions about the company, discuss career road bumps and successes and gain new insights into the business. This establishes a level of transparency and accessibility for employees to understand company decisions and gain new perspectives.

Offer continued education and training opportunities

Offering continued education, training, mentorship and/or tuition reimbursement can be highly beneficial to employees. Employees appreciate the opportunity to broaden their skill sets and improve their standing in the company. As a result, a well-trained and adaptable workforce can be prepared. Collaborate with local colleges or professors to set up informational sessions to give employees an idea of the opportunities available to them.

Implement cross-functional training

Begin a cross-functional training program that enables employees to learn skills and business strategies from other departments. This will give employees a clearer understanding of how their work fits into the company's broad business objectives. Because this approach leverages talent from within your current workforce, organizations will spend less on outside recruitment to fill vacancies, including temporary positions for employee vacations and leaves of absence.

Hand over some responsibility

When employees feel trusted and valued by their employers, they gain an enhanced sense of purpose, motivation and responsibility. Demonstrate trust in your employees by stepping away from the supervisor role, giving individuals more responsibility over projects or departments and training them to take on managerial duties.

Job Enrichment and Retention of Employees

Job enrichment is the process of offering added value to employees through a variety of programs. Enrichment helps to relieve the feeling that a job is repetitive or offers no career path. Using enrichment programs helps to increase employee productivity and lower costly turnover. *There are several types of job enrichment programs that can help employer to help retain employees in their organizations.*

Variety of Tasks

Job enrichment should expose employees to a variety of tasks that can help broaden the scope of their assigned job duties. One way to accomplish this is to give employees related tasks to their position that can help add variety to their day. For example, a warehouse worker whose primary job is stocking shelves could also help process incoming inventory and fill order slips. By adding a variety of tasks to his daily job, he can break up his routine and avoid the feeling of repetition.

Employee Development

Employee development consists of training classes and tuition reimbursement for employees that wish to go back to school. As company grows, more employees are needed to fill new roles within the organization. By offering training and educational opportunities to existing employees, more career paths and opportunity are created that will keep employees motivated. Recruitment costs are also reduced by developing qualified employees for new positions with your existing staff.

Incentive Programs

Job satisfaction derives partially from the personal pride of a job well done, and from the recognition that comes from the company. That recognition can come in the form of additional pay, paid time off or prizes such as vacations for top producing employees. Incentive and recognition programs allow employees to track their progress against company goals, and attempt to exceed those goals to gain rewards. Achieving incentive goals becomes the motivation that keeps employees focused and productive.

Rotating Shifts

Some employers use rotating shifts to offer job enrichment to their employees. Working a variety of shifts allows employees to come into contact with different co-workers each time the shifts change. It also helps employees experience how production varies from shift to shift, and gives them a chance to come into contact with a variety of managers. Employees can learn from the approaches of different managers, and proactive employees can increase their chances of a raise or promotion by performing at peak levels for a variety of supervisors.

Conclusion

Job enrichment is an excellent means of enhancing employee job satisfaction and prevention of staff turnover or intention to leave an organization. Job enrichment has become an essential aspect in motivating employees for better and greater performance through a mutual sense for skill variety, task identity, task significance and autonomy. Increased recognition of task significance will stimulate the employees to further raise their commitment towards the attainment and realization of the goal and objectives of the institutions/organizations. The principle of job enrichment in the practice of human resource management has tremendously been seen as a dynamic process of increasing the work structures and processes with an environment that gives room for autonomy, flexibility, personal growth and satisfaction to the workplace. Strike a balance between increasing job responsibilities and job enrichment opportunities. This is the key to keep employees satisfied, motivated and focused on success - both for themselves and their company.

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