

Influence of Job Characteristics on Employees' Job Satisfaction: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT: Objectives - The objectives of the present study were to find out the influence of job characteristics on the job satisfaction in employees of Community Rehabilitation Projects and Sustainable Livelihood Project of non-Governmental organization. To respond to the problems presented and established on the literature reviewed, the researcher proposed several null hypotheses.

Methodology - The present study adopted survey method. Purposive random sampling technique was embraced to choose samples and the data was collected by using virtual platform. 38 items were used to assess the job satisfaction of the employee in our present study. Participants, n = 267 (89%) returned the filled questionnaires.

Findings - The findings of the present study of showed that the job satisfaction exists among the employees at mean value 5.65 with standard deviation of 0.64. It was very evident from the analysis that both job characteristics and psychological states are important for the employees' job satisfaction. The results were interesting and displayed that all the variables had significant relationship between skill variety, task identity, task significance, degree of autonomy and feedback and their perception of job satisfaction. The results revealed that the significant levels between all the variables were (0.00) which is significant at (0.05). All the values of correlation coefficient (r) between the variables of psychological states were interesting and showed less than 0.5 ($r \leq 0.5$), which indicated us there was a low positive correlation between the variables of job characteristics.

Keywords – Job Characteristics, Employees' Job Satisfaction, Job Characteristics Model

INTRODUCTION

Employee job satisfaction is one of the critical considerations for good performance of any organization. Several factors such as job characteristics determine the employee job satisfaction. Degree of autonomy or independence experienced by an employee in his work is one such important factor which influences the job satisfaction of an employee. A satisfied employee finds more meaningfulness in his job. An employee who is satisfied in his job is an asset to the organization. When an employee satisfied in his job, he becomes self-motivated, punctual, and regular in attending to his duties, willing to take additional responsibilities and ownership of the task he performs. A satisfied employee in his job likes to continue to work with the company for longer terms. There are several factors which determines employee job satisfaction, such as work environment, salary and perks, supervision, prospects in career growth, nature of task performed, relationship between supervisors and colleagues, organizations policies and procedures, etc. Rode (2004) defines the importance of job satisfaction in the general happiness of people. An employee who is satisfied in his job demonstrates higher personal well-being and is much happier and healthier when compared to an unsatisfied employee, as revealed in a meta-analysis, Cooper, Cass, and Faragher (2005). Anxiety, depression, and burnout can affect employee job satisfaction. Hence, organizations make every effort to address these issues through various involvements to keep their employees happy so that they are satisfied in their job. Organizations through their Human Resource Domain regularly monitors the following indicators, such as late coming, absenteeism, and employee turnover, and the statistics gets discussed at the level of senior management team (Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Boyard, 1997).

According to Kammeyer-Mueller and Judge, (2012), doing research on employee job satisfaction is one of the most focused topics around organizational psychology. Earlier studies on employee job satisfaction were not able to explain the correlation, (Locke, 1969, p. 311). Whereas the present studies especially the studies conducted during 21st century developed various conceptual methodologies.

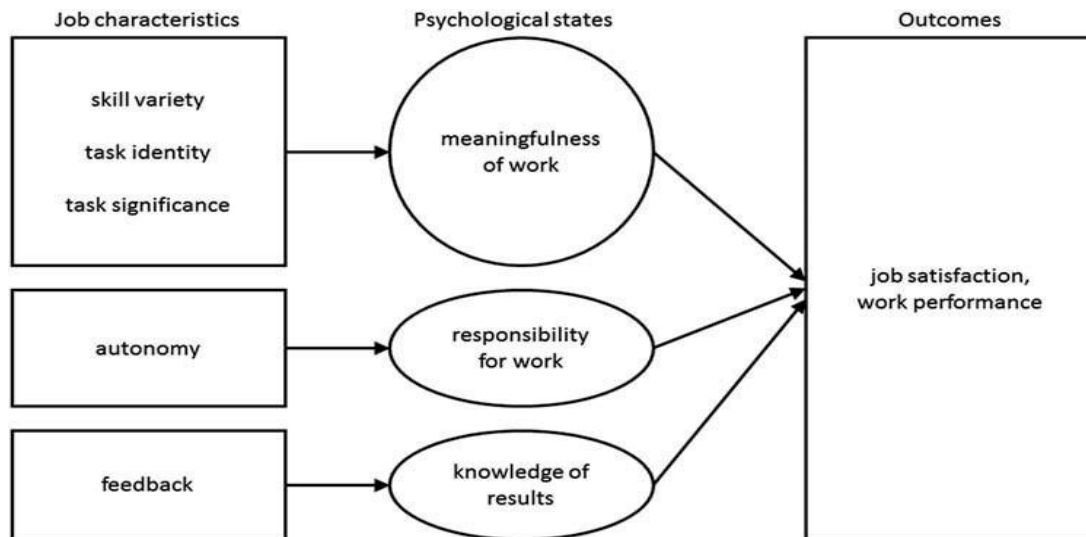
According to Judge and Klinger (2007), there are three research practices applied when studying the employee job satisfaction. The first research practice concentrates on the relationship between employee job satisfaction and personal characteristics, like neuroticism, locus of control and the self-esteem, Kammeyer-Mueller, and Judge, (2012). The second research practice concentrates on the relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee working conditions, such as working hours, etc. Finally, the third and the last research practice concentrates on the relationship between employee job satisfaction and job characteristics, in which the present study is centered.

Job Characteristics Model:

Two-factor theory of Herzberg on work motivation was first to deal with the conditions of work from the characteristics of the work itself (Snyderman, Mausner, & Herzberg, 1966). Job Characteristics Model (JCM) by Hackman and Oldham (1976, 1980) addressed in detail the other characteristics of job such as Skill variety, Task identity, Task significance, Autonomy, and Feedback. The Job Characteristics Model predicts the influence of job characteristics such as Skill variety, Task identity, Task significance, Autonomy, and Feedback on the employee job satisfaction through psychological states such as experience meaningfulness, experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) is exhibited in Figure 01. Figure 01. The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

In the subsequent section the Job Characteristics Model features are explained in more detail.

1. **Skill Variety:** It is concerned with the degree of talents and skills variety required in the job. An employee experiences more meaningfulness in his work when his work includes variety of skills.
2. **Task Identity:** It is concerned with the aspect of employee's involvement in the job. An employee experiences more meaningfulness in his work when he engages himself in the complete processes of the work.
3. **Task Significance:** It is concerned with the extent to which the performed task by the employee creates difference in the lives of others. An employee experiences more meaningfulness when his work contributes to improve the lives of others.



4. **Autonomy:** It is concerned with the extent to which freedom is experienced by the employee in his work. An employee experiences more responsibility in his work when he is given freedom and independence to make choices and decisions pertaining to his work. In the present day it is called ownership and responsibility.
5. **Feedback:** It is concerned with the extent and the kind of assessment and evaluation received by the employee from supervisors in his work. An employee experiences his success by the knowledge of outcomes of the work performed by him. An employee experiences job satisfaction, when he gets open and honest feedback about his work and performance which helps him to improve his work further and there is a potential to grow up in his career.

So, it is very apparent from the above descriptions that the Job Characteristics Model anticipates the various job characteristics influencing three different psychological states in an employee.

1. **Experience Meaningfulness of the Work:** It is concerned with the extent to which an employee considers that his work has significance to others and himself.
2. **Experience Responsibility for Outcome of the Work:** It is concerned with the ownership and accountability that an employee experiences while performing his work.
3. **Knowledge of Results of the Work Activities:** It is concerned with an employee's experience of the success achieved in performing his work.

Hackman and Oldham devised a standard tool called the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) to assess all variables of the Job Characteristics Model in 1975 (Idaszak & Drasgow, 1987). The Job Diagnostics Survey (JDS) scales proved acceptable reliability and validity (Idaszak & Drasgow, 1987). It is implied that in the Job Characteristics Model, the job characteristics have substantial influence on the employee job satisfaction and further mediated through three psychological states to certain extent.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

This study is undertaken to find out the influence job characteristics on the job satisfaction in employees of Community Rehabilitation Projects and Sustainable Livelihood Project of non-Governmental organization. It was worth exploring the influence of variables of job characteristics such as Skill variety, Task identity, Task significance, Autonomy and Feedback, on the employee job satisfaction through psychological states such as experience meaningfulness, experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. The different questions involved in this study were:

1. To what degree the level of job satisfaction exists among the employees?
2. To what degree the level of skill variety exists among employees?
3. To what degree the level of task identity exists among employees?
4. To what degree the level of task significance exists among employees?
5. To what degree the degree of autonomy experienced among employees?
6. To what degree the level of feedback experienced among employees?
7. To what degree the level of meaningfulness experienced among employees?
8. To what degree the level of responsibility experienced among employees?
9. To what degree the level of knowledge of result experienced among employees?
10. To what degree the level of job characteristics variables exists among employees?
11. To what degree the level of psychological states experienced among employees?
12. To what degree the level of job characteristics model exists among employees?
13. Was there a significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' personal characteristics?
14. Was there a significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees job characteristics?
15. Was there a significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' psychological experience?
16. Was there a significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' job characteristics and psychological experience?
17. Was there any intercorrelation among job characteristics variables?
18. Was there any intercorrelation among variables of psychological states?
19. Was there any intercorrelation among job characteristics, psychological states, job characteristics model and employees' job satisfaction?

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study were to find out the influence of job characteristics on the job satisfaction in employees of Community Rehabilitation Projects and Sustainable Livelihood Project of non-Governmental organization. This study was centered on discovering the relationship between employees' job satisfaction and job characteristics using Job Characteristics Model developed by Hackman and Oldham in 1976. A similar study had been conducted in a hospital at Kenya covering doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, etc. to establish employee job satisfaction by Katua and Kamure (2014) using Job Characteristics model. Thus, the objectives of the present study were:

1. To discover the extent of job satisfaction exists among the employees.
2. To discover the extent skill variety exists among employees.
3. To discover the extent of task identity exists among employees.
4. To discover the extent of task significance exists among employees.
5. To discover the extent of autonomy experienced among employees.
6. To discover the extent of feedback experienced among employees.
7. To discover the extent of meaningfulness experienced among employees.
8. To discover the extent of responsibility experienced among employees.
9. To discover the extent of knowledge of result experienced among employees.
10. To discover the extent of Job Characteristics variables exists among employees.
11. To discover the extent of psychological states experienced among employees.
12. To discover the extent of job characteristics model experienced among employees.

HYPOTHESIS

To respond to the problems presented and established on the literature reviewed, the researcher proposed the following null hypotheses:

1. There was no significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' personal characteristics.
2. There was no significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees job characteristics.
3. There was no significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' psychological experience.

4. There was no significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' job characteristics and psychological experience.
5. There was no intercorrelation among variables of job characteristics.
6. There was no intercorrelation among variables of psychological states.
7. There was no intercorrelation among job characteristics, psychological states, job characteristics model and employees' job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted survey method. Purposive random sampling technique was embraced to choose samples from employees of Community Rehabilitation Projects and Sustainable Livelihood Project of non-Governmental organization. The data was collected by using virtual platform. The following tools were administered.

Measures

38 items were used to assess the job satisfaction of the employee in our present study from the JDS (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Kulik, Oldham, & Langer, 1988, Berger, 1984, Schmidt, Kleinbeck, Ottmann, & Seidel, 1985, Dick, 1999; Dick, Schnitger, Schwartzmann-Buchelt & Wagner, 2001). The questionnaire also had 7 items on demographics. The response scale ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree. Negative items were reversed before the data analysis.

Data and Sample

Investigators details such as name, address and contact numbers were mentioned in the questionnaires for the reference of the participants. Information on the aim of the study was also provided in the questionnaire for the participants information. Participants were free to take part in the survey and respond to the questionnaire and the confidentiality of the individual information was assured. The participation was fully voluntary, and no payments were made. Participants were given free choice to reject any questions from the survey, if they were not comfortable to answer. The names, address, organization which they work for, employment ID were not captured from the participants to keep the respondent completely anonymous. On an average, it took about 20 to 30 minutes to answer the questionnaire by each participant.

To gather data for the present study, purposive random sampling technique was adopted. N = 300 hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the employees of Community Rehabilitation Projects and Sustainable Livelihood Project of non-Governmental organization. Participants, n = 267 (89%) employees returned the filled questionnaires. Participants, n = 33 (11%) questionnaires were not returned or refused to return by the employees. Participants, n = 209 (79%) questionnaires were considered for the analysis. Participants, n = 58 (21%) were not considered and were excluded from the analysis as they did not complete the questionnaire.

It must be mentioned that all questionnaires were directly distributed, and instructions were provided to every employee prior to finishing the questionnaire. In terms of demographic results showed that, participants, n = 183 (87.6%) of respondents were married and participants, n = 26 (12.4%) were unmarried. In terms of Pay Band (Positions) group of respondents, it was interesting to note that participants, n = 35 (16.7%) were from leadership role, participants, n = 100 (47.8%) were from technical cadre and participants, n = 74 (35.4%) were belonged to workers cadre. The result revealed that the participants, n = 145 (69.4%) had two children and participants, n = 20 (9.6%) had three or more children, whereas participants, n = 44 (21.1%) had children. It is important to note that only participants, n = 32 (15.3%) were between 18 years and 30 years and participants, n = 102 (48.8%) were from 31 to 45 years of age and the rest of the participants, n = 75 (35.9%) were above 46 years of age. The results discovered that participants, n = 144 (68.9%) were male and 65 (31.1%) were female members in the present study. As for the educational levels of these employees, participants, n = 44 (21.1%) were qualified up-to matriculation and participants, n = 123 (58.9%) were either had Diploma Degree or Graduation Degree and the rest of the participants, n = 42 (20.1%) were qualified post-graduates. It was interesting to note that participants, n = 116 (55.5%) were associated with the organization between 5 years and 25 years and participants, n = 37 (17.7%) were working for more than 25 years. Participants, n = 56 (26.8%) were working from 5 years or less.

DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVES 1 - To accomplish the first objective of our research to discover the extent of job satisfaction exists among the employees, we analyzed and found the reported mean value was 5.65 with standard deviation of 0.64. The result showed that the participants were extremely satisfied with their job and the nature of their work. Participants felt that they were satisfied with the ability to develop themselves personally through work and that they experienced the feeling of achieving something valuable by their work.

OBJECTIVES 2 - To accomplish the second objective of our research to discover the extent skill variety exists among employees, we analyzed and realized that the reported mean value was 5.77 with standard deviation of 0.83. Participants felt that their job provided a lot of variety. Many of the participants said that their job is very demanding and requires many different skills. Some participants felt that their work was simple and repetitive.

OBJECTIVES 3 - To accomplish the third objective of our research to discover the extent of task identity exists among employees, we analyzed and noticed that the reported mean value was 5.41 with standard deviation of 0.94. It was interesting to note that many of the participants felt that they consider their job as a holistic work. The employees felt that they not only partially but rather comprehensively influence the development of their clients. Some of the participants felt that they do not have the ability to edit a complete work task from beginning to end.

OBJECTIVES 4 - To accomplish the fourth objective of our research to discover the extent of task significance exists among employees, we analyzed and found that the reported mean value was 5.29 with standard deviation of 0.82. Majority of the participants responded that their work is important to the life and well-being of their clients and that the quality of their work directly impacts their clients. Some of them felt that their work is not very important and significant.

OBJECTIVES 5 - To accomplish the fifth objective of our research to discover the extent of autonomy experienced among employees, we analyzed and noticed that the reported mean value was 5.24 with standard deviation of 1.12. Participants strongly felt that they have full liberty in deciding how to structure their work. They also mentioned that they can independently plan and organize their work. Some participants reported that they have become so hampered by guidelines and specifications that they can hardly bring original ideas into their work.

OBJECTIVES 6 - To accomplish the sixth objective of our research to discover the extent of feedback experienced among employees, we analyzed and observed that the reported mean value was 5.63 with standard deviation of 0.87. Participants strongly felt that the rating given by clients showed them very well, how good or bad their work was. However, some participants felt that their job provides little feedback on the actual quality of their work.

OBJECTIVES 7 - To accomplish the seventh objective of our research to discover the extent of meaningfulness experienced among employees, we analyzed and noticed that the reported mean value was 5.27 with standard deviation of 0.79. Most of the participants strongly felt that they consider their work to be very important and useful. They also experienced that the work they do meant a lot to them. Hence, the participants had experienced a high degree of meaningfulness in their work.

OBJECTIVES 8 - To accomplish the eighth objective of our research to discover the extent of responsibility experienced among employees, we analyzed and saw that the reported mean value was 5.61 with standard deviation of 0.75. Very good number of the participants experienced a great deal of personal responsibility for the work they do. They felt that they were clearly responsible for whether their clients learn something or not.

OBJECTIVES 9 - To accomplish the ninth objective of our research to discover the extent of knowledge of result experienced among employees, we analyzed and witnessed that the reported mean value was 5.50 with standard deviation of 0.83. Most of the participants felt that they usually know if they have done their job satisfactorily or not. Some of the participants reported that they find it often very easy to predict whether they have done their job well or not.

OBJECTIVES 10 - To accomplish the tenth objective of our research to discover the extent of Job Characteristics variables exists among employees, we analyzed and examined that the reported mean value was 5.47 with standard deviation of 0.63. The table clearly indicated that all the variables of job characteristics were present in their work and were equally important.

OBJECTIVES 11 - To accomplish the eleventh objective of our research to discover the extent of psychological states experienced among employees, we analyzed and spotted that the reported mean value was 5.46 with standard deviation of 0.61. The table clearly indicated that the experience of all the three psychological states were important for the employees' job satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES 12 - To accomplish the twelfth objective of our research to discover the extent of job characteristics model experienced among employees, we analyzed and detected that the reported mean value was 5.46 with standard deviation of 0.56. It was very evident from the results that both job characteristics and psychological states are important for the employees' job satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS 1 – There was no significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' personal characteristics.

To accomplish the first hypothesis of our research, we analyzed the one-way ANOVA between employees' job satisfaction and employees' personal characteristics such as work experience, marital status, pay band, number of children, age in years, gender and qualification to see if there were significant relationship between them and the perception of employees' job satisfaction. Using one-way ANOVA between employees' job satisfaction and employees' personal characteristics, significant at $p < 0.05$, the results showed that there as significant relationship exists between marital status, pay band and age in years and their perception of job satisfaction which was significant at $p < 0.05$.

HYPOTHESIS 2 – There was no significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' job characteristics.

To accomplish the second hypothesis of our research, we analyzed the one-way ANOVA between employees' job satisfaction and employees job characteristics to see if there were significant relationship between them and the perception of employees' job satisfaction. Using one-way ANOVA between employees' job satisfaction and employees' job characteristics the results were interesting and displayed that all the variables had significant relationship between skill variety, task identity, task significance, degree of autonomy and feedback and their perception of job satisfaction. The results revealed that the significant levels between all the variables were (0.00) which is significant at (0.05).

HYPOTHESIS 3 – There was no significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' psychological experience.

To accomplish the third hypothesis of our research, we analyzed the one-way ANOVA between employees' job satisfaction and employees' psychological experience to see if there were significant relationship between them and the perception of employees' job satisfaction. Using one-way ANOVA between employees' job satisfaction and employees' psychological experience the results were interesting and revealed that all the variables had significant relationship between experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility and knowledge of results and their perception of job satisfaction. The results discovered that the significant levels between all the variables were (0.00) which is significant at (0.05).

HYPOTHESIS 4 – There was no significant correlation between employees' job satisfaction and employees' job characteristics and psychological experience.

To accomplish the fourth hypothesis of our research, we analyzed the one-way ANOVA between employees' job satisfaction and employees' job characteristics and psychological experience to see if there were significant relationship between them and the perception of employees' job satisfaction. Using one-way ANOVA between employees' job satisfaction and employees' job characteristics and psychological experience the results were interesting and exhibited that all the variables had significant relationship between the variables of job characteristics and the variables of psychological states and their perception of job satisfaction. The results disclosed that the significant levels between all the variables were (0.00) which is significant at (0.05).

HYPOTHESIS 5 – There was no intercorrelation among variables of job characteristics.

To accomplish the fifth hypothesis of our research, we analyzed the intercorrelations among job characteristics variables to see if there were significant correlation coefficient (r) exists between the variables of job characteristics. All the values of correlation coefficient (r) between the variables of job characteristics were interesting and showed less than 0.5 ($r \leq 0.5$), which indicated us there was a low positive correlation between the variables of job characteristics.

HYPOTHESIS 6 – There was no intercorrelation among variables of psychological states.

To accomplish the sixth hypothesis of our research, we analyzed the intercorrelations among variables of psychological states to see if there were significant correlation coefficient (r) exists between the variables of psychological states. All the values of correlation coefficient (r) between the variables of psychological states were interesting and showed less than 0.5 ($r \leq 0.5$), which indicated us there was a low positive correlation between the variables of job characteristics.

HYPOTHESIS 7 – There was no intercorrelation among job characteristics, psychological states, job characteristics model and employees' job satisfaction.

To accomplish the seventh hypothesis of our research, we analyzed the intercorrelations among job characteristics, psychological states, job characteristics model and employees' job satisfaction to see if there were significant correlation coefficient (r) exists between job characteristics, psychological states, job characteristics model and employees' job satisfaction. All the values of correlation coefficient (r) between the variables of psychological states were interesting and showed less than 0.9 ($r \leq 0.9$) which indicating us there was a high positive correlation among job characteristics, psychological states, job characteristics model and employees' job satisfaction, except among job satisfaction and psychological states which showed the value less than 0.5 ($r \leq 0.5$), indicating low positive correlation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study of showed that the job satisfaction exists among the employees at mean value 5.65 with standard deviation of 0.64. Many of the participants reported that their job was very demanding and requires many different skills. It was interesting to note that many of the participants touched that they consider their job as a holistic work. Majority of the participants responded that their work is important to the life and well-being of their clients and that the quality of their work directly impacts their clients. Participants strongly felt that they have full liberty in deciding how to structure their work. They also mentioned that they can independently

plan and organize their work. Participants strongly felt that the rating given by clients showed them very well, how good or bad their work was. Most of the participants strongly felt that they consider their work to be very important and useful. They also experienced that the work they do meant a lot to them. Hence, the participants had experienced a high degree of meaningfulness in their work. Very good number of the participants experienced a great deal of personal responsibility for the work they do. They felt that they were clearly responsible for whether their clients learn something or not. Most of the participants felt that they usually know if they have done their job satisfactorily or not. It was very evident from the analysis that both job characteristics and psychological states are important for the employees' job satisfaction.

The results showed that there as significant relationship exists between marital status, pay band and age in years and their perception of job satisfaction which was significant at $p < 0.05$. The results were interesting and displayed that all the variables had significant relationship between skill variety, task identity, task significance, degree of autonomy and feedback and their perception of job satisfaction. The results revealed that the significant levels between all the variables were (0.00) which is significant at (0.05). Likewise, it was revealed that all the variables had significant relationship between experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility and knowledge of results and their perception of job satisfaction.

All the values of correlation coefficient (r) between the variables of job characteristics were interesting and showed less than 0.5 ($r <= 0.5$), which indicated us there was a low positive correlation between the variables of job characteristics. All the values of correlation coefficient (r) between the variables of psychological states were interesting and showed less than 0.5 ($r <= 0.5$), which indicated us there was a low positive correlation between the variables of job characteristics.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Like any study, our study has numerous restraints that should be acknowledged. The first deficiency of this study was that the data gathered were self-reported. Hence, prejudice and bias may exist. Second, behavioral objectives rather than reliable performances were measured, while objectives are not frequently seamless predictors of performance, our style is constructed on the desire to rationalize the power of employees' job satisfaction, which were objectives that can the accomplished more voluntarily by quantifying behavioral objectives rather than performances.

Other restraints of the data described here indicates to the point, that some additional moderator variables of the JCM have not been taken into consideration in the present study. One of them is "Growth Need Strength," which refers to workers' need for personal performance, learning, and development (Graen, Scandura, & Graen, 1986). Another such variable is the level of "Knowledge and Skill" the workers possess. The JCM posits that both variables would moderate the relationship of job characteristics and psychological states, and the link between psychological states and work outcomes (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Kulik, Oldham, & Hackman, 1987)

Future studies should go further than this to weigh the likely cause and effect of the association among job characteristics and job satisfaction. This research also recommends more study to investigate the correlation amongst the variables of job characteristics, psychological states, and employee's job satisfaction. Hence, the suggestion is for further studies to be employed to additional areas and situation as needed.

The other limitation to the present study were to find out the influence of job characteristics on the job satisfaction in employees of Community Rehabilitation Projects and Sustainable Livelihood Project of non-Governmental organization. The study should be applied to wider reach covering more samples.

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