

**ROLE OF JOB DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS ON WORK SATISFACTION
AMONG CAFETERIA EMPLOYEES OF SAINT MARY'S GIRLS HIGH
SCHOOL, ISIOLO COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
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DECLARATION

Declaration by the Student

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree or for any similar purpose in any other institution.

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Declaration by the Supervisor

This research report has been submitted with my approval as a University supervisor:

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Worldwide business trends are dynamic and are dramatically changing the stable ways of organizing and working (Harnaus, 2011). Jobs have become tasking and employees want to have flexible work conditions. Also, organizations have become more cultural diverse where individuals from different walks of life get employed. These changes have brought about different research interests especially in the field of work characteristics (Hernaus & Mikulic, 2014). Several researches have been done in pursuit of an enhanced understanding of the current jobs, how employees behave and their performance (Dierdoff & Morgeson, 2013; Grant, 2007; Grant *et al.*, 2010; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

In the hospitality sector, employees are part of the product in delivering services to customers. Thus, dissatisfaction of employees could negatively impact on the organizations' customer service and performance. Job characteristics and job design have been considered as factors improving job satisfaction and at the same time reducing turnover (Bartlett, 2007; Kuslvan, Kusulvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010). Work design characteristics encompass of five dimensions as suggested by Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristics model and include skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback from the job. Even though work design represents the central point of employee performance, is it still an area that is under-researched. Even, this holds true in sectors such as hospitality which characterized by challenging working environments.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The hospitality industry has been characterized by high employee turnover rate (Choi, 2006; Osman & Ronate, 2012). Employees in the industry have been recruited through contracts or on casual basis when need arises which means that hotel employees are less likely to be attached to the organization because of high job insecurity and dissatisfaction. At the same time, the hospitality industry has suffered scarcity of skilful and knowledgeable employees, thus ensuring that the reduction of skillful employees' turnover is top in hospitality organizations (Osman & Ronate, 2012). There has been a high turnover and increased complaints among the the cafeteria of Saint Mary's Girls High School, Isiolo.

The turnover of employees in the hospitality industry affects quality and consistency of services, while at the same time increasing recruitment costs (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). However, satisfied employees have been found to stick with their organizations (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Kusuluwan *et al.* (2010) have argued that jobs in the hospitality industry have become tedious and monotonous, thus leading to dissatisfaction among employees as well as increased job sickness. Thus, the present study aims at looking at the relationships between job design dimensions and employee work satisfaction.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of job design characteristics on employee work satisfaction.

1.4 Objective of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

To establish the effect of job design characteristics on employee work satisfaction.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- (i) To establish the influence of skill variety on employee work satisfaction.

- (ii) To determine the influence of task identity on employee work satisfaction.
- (iii) To investigate the influence of task significance on employee work satisfaction.
- (iv) To assess the influence of autonomy on employee work satisfaction.
- (v) To examine the relationship between feedback and employee work satisfaction.

1.5 Study Hypotheses

- (i) **H₀₁**: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and employee work satisfaction.
- (ii) **H₀₂**: There is no significant relationship between task identify and employee work satisfaction.
- (iii) **H₀₃**: There is no significant relationship between task significance and employee work satisfaction.
- (iv) **H₀₄**: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and employee work satisfaction.
- (v) **H₀₅**: There is no significant relationship between feedback and employee work satisfaction.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study findings make specific contributions to the management of Saint Mary's High School cafeteria. The findings of the study may act as a reference to cafeteria management when developing strategies directed towards enhancing employees' work satisfaction. For example, the findings may help to design or redesign the tasks in a way that their employees have freedom to discharge their duties. The findings may also help the management to formulate strategies that concentrate on implementing specific job characteristics, such as feedback, task significance and

autonomy. Last but not the least, the study serves as a platform for future research work.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study investigated the influence of job design characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) on employee work satisfaction. In addition, the present study was conducted in Saint Mary's High School cafeteria. Lastly, only employees working in the cafeteria were considered for data collection.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The following are the study limitations. Firstly, the target population of the study consisted of only employees working in Saint Mary's High School Cafeteria. This means that the results of the study cannot be generalized to other areas. Lastly, the study used descriptive cross-sectional research design which means that employee work satisfaction was only established at the time of research.

1.9 Study Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 is the study proposed conceptual framework displaying the relationships between the study independent variables and the dependent variables. The framework theorizes direct relationships between job design characteristics dimensions (skill variety, task identity, task significance, task autonomy, and task feedback) and employee work satisfaction.

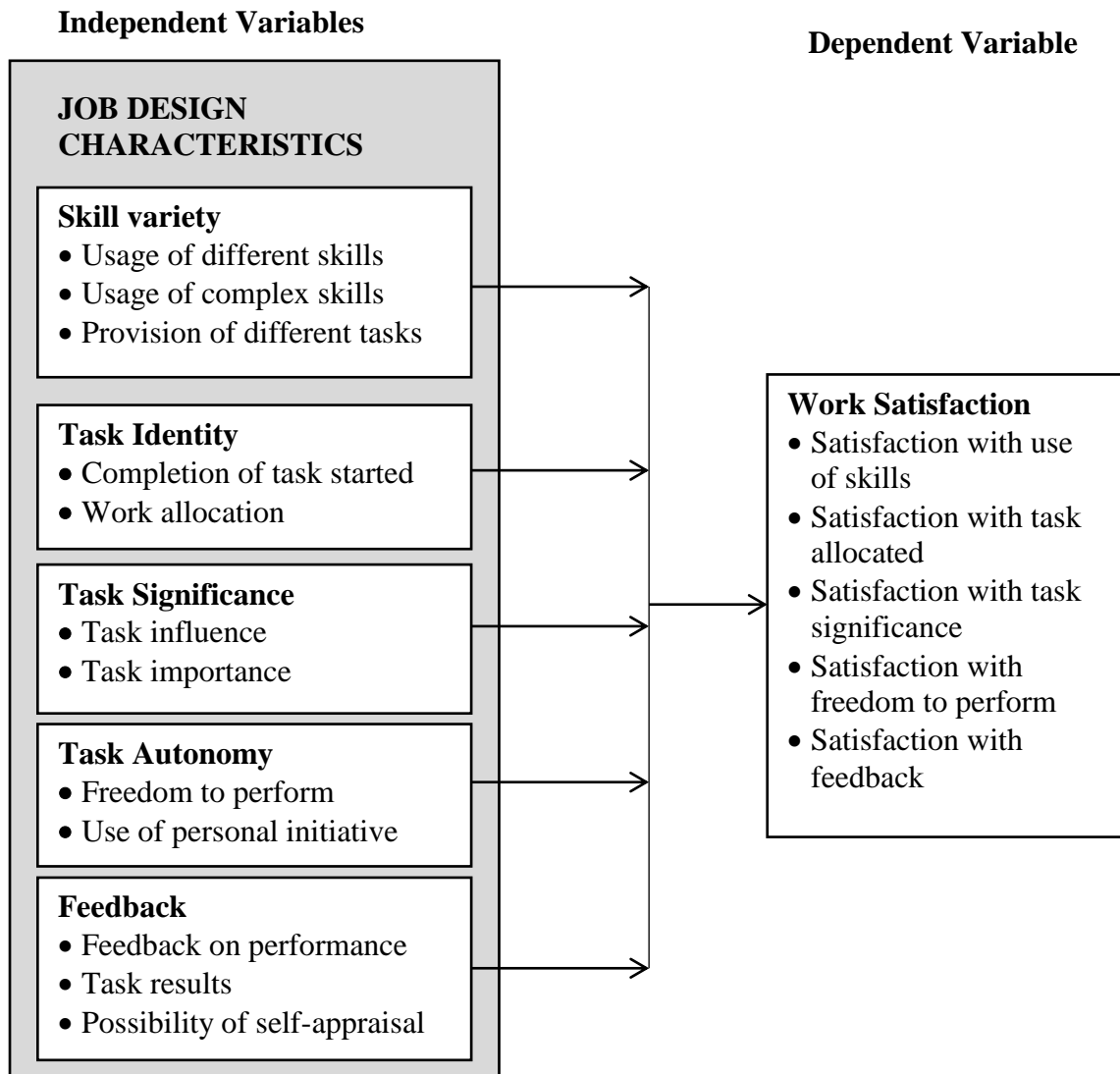


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Review of Literature (2019)

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses empirical and theoretical review of related literature. Empirical review consists of job design characteristics and work satisfaction. The chapter culminates with a discussion of the theory underpinning the present study.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Job Design Characteristics

Job design characteristics is an imperative phenomenon in the expansive field of human resource. The nature of jobs can vary between and within organizations. In the hospitality industry, the nature can vary between a hotel departments and within a department. However, although varied in nature, jobs can be thought of, analyzed and compared in broader perspectives. Work design provides a all-inclusive and an analytical view for studying jobs. However, work characteristics represent objective, measurable aspects of work and reflect conceptually clear features (Morgeson & Campion, 2003).

Over five decades, job were majorly described and assessed through task characteristics. However, Hackman and Oldham (1975) established a Job Characteristics model (JCM), which ever since has emphasized on the importance of the motivation features of task characteristics. According to Spector and Van Katwyk (1999) task job characteristics are related to work environment and indicate the structural perspectives of work tasks. High levels of task characteristics lead to increased motivation of a particular job. According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), there are five task job characteristics: task variety, work autonomy, task significance, task identity, and feedback.

According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), high level of motivation is associated with job meaningfulness, responsibility and feedback. Empirical studies have summarized that enhanced and motivating job design provides employees the chance to use dissimilar skills and capacities to perform allocated tasks, identify or associate themselves closely with the completed task, feel empowered in performing their duties through freedom gotten from the job and get adequate response from the job completed (Ling & Toh, 2014; Zhao & Ghiselli, 2016).

Hackman and Oldham (1976) argued that *skill variety* as a task job characteristics denotes a degree to which a job entails an employee to perform different activities while discharging the duties, which requires such employees to use diverse abilities and talents to discharge such duties. Skill variety is a main source of intrinsic motivation and positive results can be achieved when a job allows an employee to perform different tasks using different skills rather than just follow tedious and boring work monotony. Empirical studies have underscored the prominence of skill variety towards motivating employees for better results.

Krasman (2012) study investigating putting feedback-seeking into context with emphasis on job characteristics and feed-back seeking behavior and Sulea *et al.* (2012) study reported that a job that allows employees to engage in different activities and to use various skills and talents will bring positive attitude and behavioral outcomes at work. In a hotel perspective, employees would feel that their job is meaningful and worth working if they have to use different set of skills while performing different tasks especially when serving customers.

Task identity is the level at which a job necessitates accomplishment of the entire and distinguishable portion of work. This, in other words, refers to performing a duty from

the start to the end and achieving noticeable outcomes (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). As task identify surges, employees are able to assess themselves in terms of the quality of work done. A study by Uruthirapathy and Grant (2015) found that employees who have enlarged jobs and are involved in many tasks in their workflow are more likely to perform better than those who are not undergoing such work condition.

Task significance is the level at which the job has a considerable influence on the lives or work of other employees – whether in the immediate organization/department or in the external arena (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Task significance promotes the state of job meaningfulness of which an employee identifies with the organization. When employees recognize that their jobs are important and that what they do in an organization is valued and important, there would be positive impacts on the organizations mission, vision, and established strategic touchstones.

Autonomy refers to the degree to which the job provides employees with considerable freedom to discharge their duties without or with rare supervision (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This relates to how employees plan for the work and specifically the procedures when performing such tasks. Empirical results have indicated that employees prefer to discharge their duties without much attention from their supervisors.

Feedback from the job is the degree to which discharging job duties makes an employee get to understanding the effectiveness required of his or her performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Knowledge of a job outcomes would help employees to improve on areas they are underperforming. Bacha (2014) study reported that

employees who obtained feedback from the work they have done are more likely to show positive attitude and behavior at work.

Considering all the task job characteristics, Ozturk, Hancer and Im (2014) results indicated that task significance and feedback significantly influence job performance and the relationships are mediated by work involvement. What these studies indicated is that, not all task job characteristics that could have similar effects on employees' satisfaction at the same time- it all depends on the job. It is then worth investigating whether this is the case with employees working in a conference hotel.

2.2.2 Employee Work Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the feelings or attitude of the employees in association with their jobs and the job features as the working environment, working conditions, equitable recognitions, and communication with other staff members (Kim *et al.*, 2005). Review of literature demonstrate that, the concept of job satisfaction is key towards success of organizations.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, instruments, validity and reliability, pre-testing, data collection procedures, analysis techniques, and data presentation. Additionally, logistical and ethical considerations are looked into.

3.1 Research Design

The study used descriptive cross-sectional survey design.

3.2 Study Area

The survey was conducted in the cafeteria of Saint Mary's Girls Secondary School, Isiolo County. This boarding school is situated in Isiolo North Constituency. The school is privately owned and has employees from all communities in Kenya. The largest group of students come from the Muslim community in the Northern part of Kenya. Nonetheless, the school caters to the needs of other students from all over Kenya.

3.3 Target Population

The study target population comprised of all (32) employees working in the student cafeteria.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the sample size depends on the research design and that thirty cases are enough for data collection and reporting when a study uses a descriptive cross-sectional research design. Thus, convenience sampling technique was used to select 30 employees.

3.5 Research Instruments

Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was designed with questions based on Likert scale for easier faster data collection, coding and analysis (Kothari, 2012). The questionnaire was designed to collect demographic characteristics, job design characteristics, and employee work satisfaction. All the constructs were measured used measurement items adapted from previous studies.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

3.7.1 Validity of the Questionnaire

The content validity technique was used to assess the validity of the questionnaire using the supervisor's advice and comments on how well the questionnaire would collect the intended data.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

Chronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the validity of the constructs used in the study. In the present study, six separate Cronbach's Alpha were conducted for *work design characteristics dimensions (skill variety, task identify, task significance, autonomy and feedback from the job)* and *employee job satisfaction* constructs. The alpha coefficients for skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback from the job, and employee work satisfaction were 0.78, 0.89, 0.91, 0.79, 0.88, and 0.94 respectively. All the Cronbach's Alpha statistics were above the threshold level of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1959), thus were considered reliable.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

The process of data collection begun by obtaining permission from the Greta University School of Hospitality and Tourism and the human resource manager of Saint Mary's Girls cafeteria. Upon permission approvals, consent to participate in the study was sought and obtained from all the respondents. Subsequently, the respondents were given self-administered questionnaires to fill. The employees were

requested to respond to the items in the questionnaire in line with the used scale measurements.

3.9 Data Analysis

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) statistics was used for data analysis. In SPSS, items of each construct were summed and averaged to form individual composite scores. Descriptive statistics including the means and standard deviations were used in order to describe the characteristics of the variables. Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the study hypotheses.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The following are the ethical considerations that were observed in the present study. First, the researcher sought and obtained consent to participate in the study from all the respondents. Second, all the respondents were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that information gathered would be treated with confidentiality. Lastly, participants were briefed before data collection in order to be aware of what was expected.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of the data analysis are presented. The study aimed at establishing the influence of job design characteristics on employee work satisfaction.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 30 questionnaires were distributed and all were returned accounting for 100% response rate. This response could be attributed to the fact that the questionnaires were self-administered and participants were encouraged to fill them at the time of research. Nonetheless, 10 questionnaires were discarded on the basis incompleteness were discarded. Therefore, 20 surveys were considered for further analysis.

4.3 Participants' Demographics

Table 4.1 exhibits the descriptive statistics of the respondents' demographic characteristics. As indicated in Table 4.1, majority (50.5%) of the total respondents were female and 49.5% were male. Moreover, about 72.4% of the respondents were aged between 31 to 40years.

Table 4. 1. Demographic Characteristics

	n	%
Sex		
Female	11	50.5%
Male	09	49.5%
Age		
18-30	1	5.5%
31-40	15	72.4%
41-50	3	16.5%
51 and above	1	5.6%

With regard to the respondents' level of education, majority (56.5%) had a degree certificate. In addition, descriptive results of work experience indicated that majority 65.2% had worked for a period between 1 to 5 years.

4.4 Testing of Study Hypotheses

All hypotheses were tested using Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) at a 1% level of significance.

4.4.1 Correlations among Job Design Characteristics and Work Satisfaction

Table 4.7 shows the results bivariate correlations among job design characteristics (task variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy and feedback from the job) and work satisfaction.

Table 4. 2. Bivariate Correlation Results

Job Design Characteristics		Work Satisfaction
Task variety	r	.426**
	P-value	.000
Task significance	r	.388**
	P-value	.001
Task identity	r	.556**
	P-value	.000
Autonomy	r	.408**
	P-value	.000
Feedback from job	r	.470**
	P-value	.001

Notes: n = 20. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 4.7, all items of job design characteristics yielded significant positive correlations when correlated with work satisfaction. Pearson correlations for all items of job design characteristic ranged from +0.1 to +0.5 indicating that all had positive relationships with work satisfaction.

Moreover, results in Table 4.7 show that task identity had the highest positive correlation (r = 0.556) indicating that this characteristic of job design in an organization was critical towards ensuring that employees were satisfied about their jobs. Pearson correlations for task variety, task significance, autonomy, and feedback

from the job were 0.426, 0.388, 0.408, and 0.470 respectively. According to these results, all the null hypotheses (H_{01} , H_{02} , H_{03} , H_{04} , and H_{05}) were all not supported by the study findings, and thus were rejected.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Objective 1

The findings of this study showed that skill variety has a positive significant correlation with employee job satisfaction.

5.2.2 Objective 2

Analysis of data revealed this construct has a positive significant correlation with employee work satisfaction.

5.2.3 Objective 3

The bivariate results indicate a positive significant correlation between task identity and employee work satisfaction.

5.2.4 Objective 4

The study results of correlation analysis of data revealed a positive significant correlation between autonomy and employee work satisfaction.

5.2.5 Objective 5

The results of correlation analysis of data revealed a positive significant correlation between feedback from the job and employee work satisfaction.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made:

1. Task identity is the most crucial job design characteristic for fostering employee work satisfaction.

2. Job design characteristics are all crucial when it comes to employees' work satisfaction and hence performance.

5.4 Recommendations for Practice

Based on the study conclusions, the following recommendation are made:

1. The management of the institution cafeteria to ensure that better job schedules are developed in order for the employees to know where to work and when.
2. Management of the institution cafeteria to ensure that strategies are in place that would provide employees with the freedom to perform their duties.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for further research are made on the basis of the study findings. First, the fieldwork of the study was carried out in Saint Mary's Girls High School in Isiolo. A similar study need to be carried out incorporating other institutions. Lastly, another study need to be conducted incorporating other factors that could influence employee work satisfaction such as organization support.

APPENDICES

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Employees working in the Student Cafeteria

GRETSA UNIVERSITY School of Hospitality and Tourism

Part One: Demographic Information

1. *Gender:* Male Female
2. *Your age in years [tick appropriately]*
18 -30 31-40 41-50 51 and above
3. *Please indicate your level of education*
Primary High school Undergraduate degree Masters
4. *How long have you been working in the cafeteria?*
Below 1 year 1-5 years above 5 years

PART TWO: WORK DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

Use the scales below to indicate whether each statement is accurate or inadequate description of your present or most recent job:

(5 = Very descriptive, 4 = most descriptive, 3 = somewhat descriptive, 2 = most non-descriptive, 1 = Very non-descriptive)

<i>Skill Variety</i>	5	4	3	2	1
I have a chance to do a number of different tasks, using a wide variety of different skills and talents					
I get to use a number of complex skills on this job					
My job involves doing a number of different tasks					
<i>Task Identity</i>	5	4	3	2	1
The job provides me the chance to completely finish the pieces of work I begin					
The job is arranged so that I can do entire piece of work from beginning to end					
<i>Task Significance</i>	5	4	3	2	1
The outcome of my work can significantly affect the work, lives, or well-being of other people					
The job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well the work gets done					
The job itself is very significant and important in the broader scheme of things					
<i>Autonomy</i>	5	4	3	2	1
The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work					
The job gives me a chance to use my personal initiative and judgment in carrying out the work					
<i>Feedback</i>	5	4	3	2	1
My supervisor provides me with constant feedback about how I am doing					
The work itself provides me with information about how well I am doing					
Just doing the work provides me with opportunities to figure out how well I am doing					
Supervisors let us know how well they think we are doing					

PART THREE: EMPLOYEE WORK SATISFACTION

Please answer all questions in a scale of 1 to 5 (*5 – totally satisfied, 4 – satisfied, 3 – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 2 – dissatisfied, 1 – totally dissatisfied*)

<i>Statements</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>I am satisfied with:</i>					
Praise I get for doing a good job					
Chance to do different things					
Chance to do something that makes use of my abilities					
Chance to try my own methods of doing the job					
Freedom to use my own judgment					
Way my supervisor handles workers					