

# Mba organisation analysis

Psychology, Motivation



" Everyone wants a job that scores high on the job characteristics model. Particularly in relation to the use of new technology, managers should design jobs with this in mind" Discuss. Whilst problems exist within the present plethora of models constructed to assist with the designing of jobs, the application of the models appears to be one that is becoming increasingly more commonplace.

This change can be attributed to the present labour shortages that have heightened corporate awareness of the need to attract and retain skilled and competent employees<sup>1</sup>, together with an increase in an individual's understanding of their self-concept and worth<sup>2</sup>, and a shifting in the demographic epicentre of knowledge within an organisation. <sup>3</sup> This shift in knowledge has been particularly evident in the field of technology.

The increased concentration of technical knowledge within the younger members of an organisation is in stark contrast to the changing demographic patterns and cultural influences experienced during the 1990s, which have resulted to an increasingly older workforce. <sup>4</sup> Given this growth in the size of an older workforce, together with an increase in the reliance of organisations on the implementation and use of new technology in the workplace and socio-economic changes, there has emerged a growing voice calling for 'all jobs to be designed with high job characteristic scores, particularly those which involve the use of new technology'.

It is this statement and its validity that will be the focus of this paper. In testing this, it is important that the term 'new technology' be defined. For the purpose of this paper it broadly encompasses, " the physical elements or

aspects of machines, processes and work layout involved in the transformation process, and the methods, systems and procedures involved in the performance of the work activities of the organisation". 5 The present process of job design bears little resemblance to that of the past.

In 1776, when Adam Smith wrote, *The Wealth of Nations*, owners and managers were all powerful over their workers. The limited sources of labour, the presence of small local economies, and restrictions on the mobility of labour, combined to ensure that the workers adhered to the requirements of the organisation with little resistance. Little changed until the emergence of the classical approach to organisational design during the early part of the 20th century.

Drawing upon the work of Adam Smith and formulated by Taylor and Fayol, organisational theory began to consider, to a limited degree, the needs of the worker. This shift in thinking, however, still maintained the focus on the organisation, and it was not until the human relations approach that the complex needs of the worker were initially acknowledged. Theorists from this school of thought, which included Maslow and McGregor, argued that workers were emotional, their needs being far more diverse and complex than the one-dimensional classical image of Taylor and others.

Their conclusions were that intrinsic job motivation and extrinsic rewards, together with communication, were a core aspect of any job and by implication, instrumental to the success of an organisation. Subsequent development of organisational theory, by the works of such theorists as Peters ; Waterman, Kanter, and Handy, have progressively acknowledged

the importance of the worker to the success of an organisation. 6 In the last few decades, many organisational research studies have shown that the presence or absence of certain job characteristics (e. g. job demands and job autonomy) may lead to attitudinal and behavioural reactions, such as job satisfaction<sup>7</sup>, self-esteem, exhaustion, health complaints, and even illness or disability.

As a consequence, several theoretical models have been developed to understand the relationship between such job characteristics and employee reactions. In general, these models can be described as situation-centred and person-centred. Situation-centred models focus primarily on explanatory factors or events outside a particular worker, while person-centred models seek explanations in the person whose actions are being studied (e. g. cognitions, habits, feelings, and needs).

Two such models are those of the Jobs Characteristics model developed by Hackman and Oldham, and the Job Demand-Control model devised by Karasek. Whilst these models, and others like them, examine behaviour as a function of a worker's personality, a given situation, or the environment, they have provided a degree of advancement to understanding the impact of job characteristics on a worker. However, they have also suffered from a highly disorganised and piecemeal approach owing to the different streams of research in this area.

Furthermore, a lack of consistency in the results recorded has been attributed by scholars to such factors as: distortions caused by the likes of the socio-economic status and health behaviour of the workers, a failing to

define accurately terms and thus avoid frequent overlaps in meanings, and difficulties experienced in identifying job characteristics from those of the worker. 11 Theorists have advanced many reasons to explain why someone is motivated to work. As a concept, work motivation has been defined as the process by which behaviour is energised, directed, and sustained in organisational settings.

12 One early theory that examines different sources of motivation was proposed by deCharms<sup>13</sup>, in which he suggests the dichotomy of intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation to characterise the different loci of 'causality'. Intrinsically motivated behaviours (i. e. , those behaviours that occur in the absence of external controls) are said to represent internal causality, whereas behaviours that are induced by external forces are said to represent external causality. A further understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is offered by Katz and Kahn.

They argue that the basis of motivation can be categorised in terms of legal compliance, external rewards, and internalised motivation. Internalised motivation is further broken down into self-expression, derived directly from role performance, and internalised values, resulting when group or organisational goals become incorporated into the value system of the individual. The work of these theorists together with others such as, Deci<sup>15</sup>, pointed to three sources of motivation: intrinsic process motivation, motivation based on goal internalisation, and extrinsic or instrumental motivation.

It is the first of these, the intrinsic motivation process, upon which Hackman and Oldham based their job characteristics model<sup>16</sup>. With this type of motivation, individuals behave in a particular way just because it is 'fun'. In other words, the motivation comes from the work itself. Individuals enjoy the work and feel rewarded simply by performing the task. There are no external controls regulating the behaviour, and the behaviour that is challenging may be considered enjoyable to some people. If the statement is to hold true, then 'all' employees must want to secure perceived 'fun' from their work.

By 'all', it includes every employee from the core, contractual, and flexible workforces of an organisation. <sup>17</sup> However, Handy suggests that future organisations will be run by core people at the centre, who properly motivated and having the appropriate skills, can create more added value than a large groups of unthinking, demotivated individuals. Evidence of this appeared in a recent article in which Microsoft's, " most important employees are not its managers, but its individual programmers (on the face of it, the lowest rung on the organisational chart), who own the company's only real lasting asset, its knowledge...".

Such is the importance attached to retaining these employees that they are permitted to chose how they do their jobs. However, the ages of the programmers, 20's to early 30's, do not fall in line with the median age in America, which is 35 and rising. This demographic change is also mirrored in Europe and there are other issues concerning the needs of workers beginning to emerge.