
Performance Feedbacking through Job Characteristics Analysis of the Graduate Education Alumni in a State University

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Abstract

Performance feedback provides the actual result of the job not only to the jobholder but also to the agency that trains and prepares these jobholders. Using the job characteristics analysis as a feedback seeking strategy, this study hypothesis that understanding of job characteristics drives towards a high degree of job performance. Descriptive analysis reveals that, on the average, the alumni of SLSU-CTE Graduate Studies manifests high understanding of their job characteristics, and are performing at the very satisfactory level. Inferential analysis, however, failed to establish a strong and significant relationship between these variables. Degree of influence, other external factors and sample size are alternative reasons of the failure to reject the research hypothesis.

Keywords: Meaningful experience, core dimensions, work outcomes, knowledge of results, Advance Education

1.0 Introduction

Hackman and Stoner (2001) argue that employers who have responsible jobs that they understand are more motivated, satisfied, and productive with their positions. People whose jobs involve high level of skill variety, task identity, and task significance experience work as very meaningful. A high level of autonomy makes workers more responsible and

accountable for their acts. Feedback gives employees a useful understanding of their specific roles and functions. This study claims

that the closer the job comes to having all the five characteristics, the more likely it is that the person holds it will highly perform.

On a very general level, job performance can be defined as “all the behaviours employees engage in while at work” (Jex, 2002) which refers to how well someone performs at his or her work (Berghe, 2011). Performance is generally discussed within the contexts of leader behaviour, motivation, task design, goal setting, and most other primary areas of organizational research (Kassem&Sarhan, 2013). According to Vroom (1964), the pioneer researcher of performance, an individual who is thought to be highly motivated would not be able to perform a job well if he does not possess relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Job performance as a major aspect in every organizational evaluation, however, is determined by various complex factors. Job characteristics are just one of these many factors. Tungkiatsilp (2013) consider job characteristics as the behavioral approach, and concept that increases the importance of jobs by designing the job that emphasizes on its suitability and appropriateness that is measurable. He added that “The basic idea of this concept is that job characteristics will lead to high level of work motivation, satisfaction, and performance” (Tungkiatsilp, 2013).

Hackman and Oldham (1975,1976) have introduced the concept of the study and development of the model of job characteristics which consists of five dimensions as follows; Firstly, a skill variety refers to the degree to which a task requires a variety of different

activities in worker's responsibilities to be accomplished. Secondly, task identity refers to the degree which task requires performing the whole process from beginning to the end with visible outcome. Thirdly, task significance refers to level to which task has impact to live and others including the continued existence of the organization. Fourthly, Autonomy refers to the degree which task allows the operator the freedom to control and make decisions about his own work processes. And finally, feedback from job refers to the degree which task enables practitioners have the opportunity to get feedback on the effectiveness of their task.

The primary concept of the job characteristics model is that a job is redesigned so that the following attributes are provided; a task is given to one employee from beginning to end in order to create job identity, a task is sufficiently important to affect other employees, job autonomy is guaranteed, and feedback from the job is given to an employee (Vasconcellos, 2002). If employees recognize the positive effects of the five elements of job characteristics, they will generate a positive response such as passion for their work, or reduced stress. On the other hand, if workers cannot distinguish the expected job characteristics from what their tasks, a high level of internal motivation cannot be expected (Lin, 2007). Skill variety can suppress negative psychological conditions such as fatigue and stress which may occur during simple and repetitive job execution, in those circumstances skill variety reduces job burnout (Bakker, Demerouti&Euwema, 2005; Maslach, Schaufeli&Leiter, 2001) and absenteeism (Fried & Ferris, 1987).

As described above, when the key elements of job characteristics are positively perceived by workers, then workers feel that their working process or working experiences

are more attractive and that they work in stable job environments. Hackman and Oldham (1980) revealed that when a job had a certain characteristic that a worker preferred, a worker experience his or her job more attractively and positively, and such initial reinforcement could give them an incentive to create better performance continuously.

A number of studies have been conducted on job characteristics and performance already (Gu-Ne & Young-Min, 2015; Johari, Yean, Yahya& Adnan, 2015; Asumeng, 2014; Kassem&Sarhan, 2013; Na-Nan &Pukkeeree, 2013) but none of these studies consider job characteristics and performance as a feedback seeking strategy (Asumeng, 2014) for a university that keeps on tracking the performance records of their graduates. Moreover, unlike other studies which considers job satisfaction as (i) mediating variable of other dependent variable or (ii) directly as dependent variable, this study measures directly the relationship between job characteristics and job performance.

It is for this reason that this study is conceptualized to assess the core dimensions of the graduates of the graduate school of Southern Leyte State University who are employed in the different line agencies in Southern Leyte, in school years 2010-2016.

2.0 Framework of the Study

This study is anchored on the theoretical perspectives of job performance feedback seeking process located in the feedback literatures which are Self-Regulation or Control Theory (Ashford and Tsui, 1991; Carver, 2004), Feedback Intervention Theory (DeNisi and Kluger, 2000; Kluger and DeNisi, 1996), and Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Self-Regulation or Control Theory, a cybernetic model of self-attention (Carver and Scheier, 1981), is based on the assumptions that if a person detects a negative discrepancy between his/her performance and a designated standard of performance that is expected from them (i.e. there is public accountability), he or she could be motivated to reduce the discrepancy by improving performance. The theory suggests that discrepancy between current/actual performance and the standard performance is detected through feedback ratings and the person could be motivated to reduce the discrepancy by making effort to improve performance.

By contrast feedback intervention theory is concerned with organisation-based external mechanism of using feedback information to improve performance effectiveness. Such interventions are aimed at bridging the gap

between actual performance and the organization's standard or expected performance using feedback information.

In the concept of Hackman and Oldham (1980), feedback links the job characteristics to job performance. The job characteristics model identifies five 'core job characteristics': skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. These affect the employee's job performance (Tungkiatsilp, 2013).

The five core job characteristics determines three 'critical psychological states': skill variety, task identity and task significance together contributing to 'experienced meaningfulness'; autonomy to 'experienced responsibility'; and feedback to 'knowledge of results'. In turn, the critical psychological states are cast collectively as promoting work satisfaction and performance (Jelstad, nd).

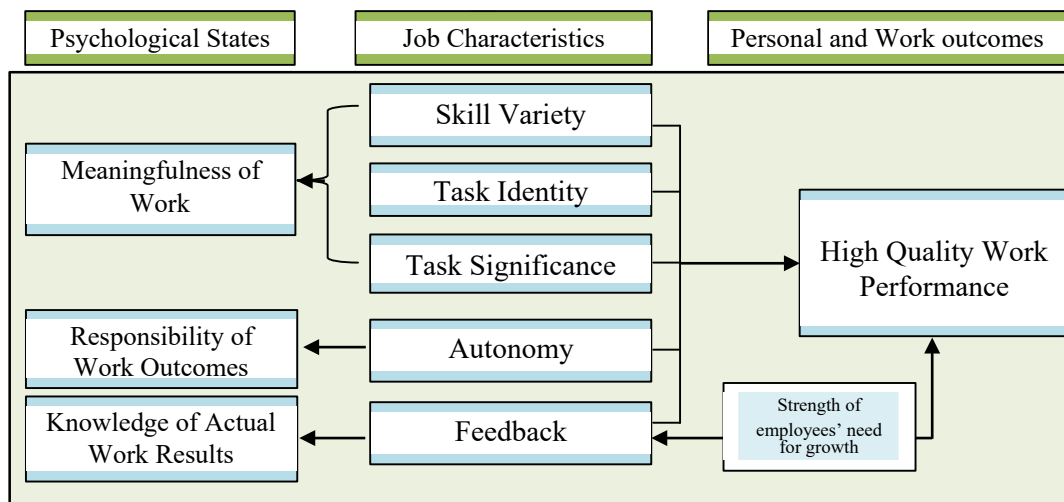


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

4.0 Methodology

This correlative-survey research utilized an enhanced researcher-made questionnaire fielded

to 45 supervisors of the alumni of the graduate education of Southern Leyte State University. Office and department visits were made to distribute the questionnaire and to conduct a close interview with the respondents. Purposive

identification was used to ensure that these supervisors are managing employees who are

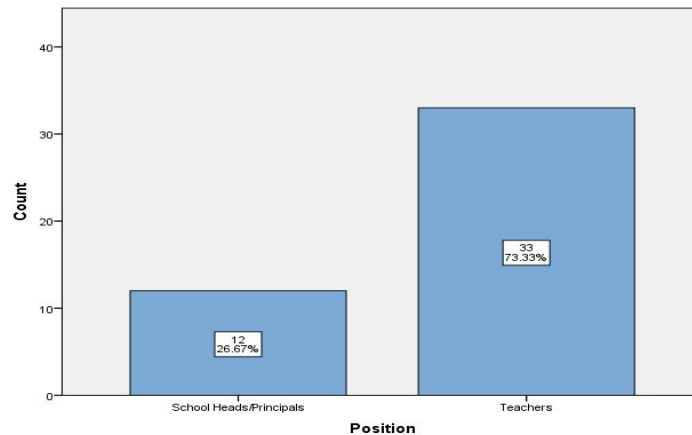
graduates of SLSU Graduate Studies. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

5.0 Results and Discussion

Results

Profile of the Respondents

Profile analysis of the data reveals that graduates of the Southern Leyte State University-Graduate Studies are employed at various academic levels – as a Principal/Head Teacher (n=12) and as a classroom teacher (n=33). Hypothetically, this result is expected as SLSU-College of Teacher Education is offering education-related graduate programs leading towards expertise in educational management and pedagogy. Figure 1. Distribution of the Alumni



The profile also informs that Southern Leyte State University-College of Teacher Education ensures the production of professionals in the field of education and educational management so as to conform to the demands of degree articulation of the students as required and mandated by the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education.

Core Job Characteristics Analysis

Descriptive analysis on the core job characteristics of the alumni of the SLSU-GS reveals a high manifestation of these characteristics. The numerical value describes the degree to which the alumni of SLSU-GS understand the value, meaning, accountability, and responsibility of their respective jobs as evaluated by their supervisors.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics on the Core Job Characteristics of the Alumni

Job Characteristics	N	Mean	stdev	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Skill Variety	45	3.70	0.80	-0.07	0.35	-0.17	0.69
Task Identity	45	3.49	0.61	-0.12	0.35	-0.25	0.69
Task Significance	45	4.00	0.51	-0.20	0.35	0.19	0.69
Autonomy	45	4.13	0.74	0.20	0.35	-0.13	0.69
Feedback	45	4.14	0.21	0.16	0.35	-0.33	0.69

Note: 1.00 – 1.79 = Poorly Manifested; 1.80 – 2.59 = Fairly Manifested; 2.60 – 3.39 = Moderately Manifested; 3.40 – 4.19 = Highly Manifested; 4.20 – 5.00 = Strongly Manifested

The data further reveals normality of the distribution as evident in the skewness value at almost zero (sk=0). The variability of the responses also manifests homogeneity as evident in the smaller values of standard deviation.

Correlational Analysis of Job Characteristic and Performance

Statistical result shows that, on the average, the alumni of SLSU-GS perform as a “Very Satisfactory” level. Moreover, the data shows that with weak correlational values, job characteristics are not significantly related to job performance.

Table 2
Descriptive and Correlational Matrix of Job Characteristic and Performance

Variables	Descriptive		Correlational Values					
	Mean	stdev	1	2	3	4	5	6
1_Performance	4.18	0.53	-					
2_Skill Variety	3.70	0.80	.148	-				
3_Task Identity	3.49	0.61	.066	-.252	-			
4_Task Significance	4.00	0.51	-.062	.120	-.347*	-		
5_Autonomy	4.13	0.74	.140	.070	.132	.051	-	
6_Feedback	4.14	0.21	-.015	.144	.018	.050	-.066	-

*significant at 0.05 level of significance

Performance: 1.00 – 1.79 = Poor; 1.80 – 2.59 = Fair; 2.60 – 3.39 = Satisfactory; 3.40 – 4.19 = Very satisfactory; 4.20 – 5.00 = Excellent
Correlation: 0.01-0.30 = Weak; 0.31-0.70 = Moderate; 0.71-0.99 = Strong; 1.00 = Perfect

Modeling the Relationship between Job Characteristic and Performance

Inferential analysis confirms preliminary correlational analysis showing weak relationship between job characteristics and job performance of the alumni. The maximum values of R and

adjusted R-squared, respectively, reflects how small the influence of the job characteristics towards job performance.

Table 3
Model Summary for the Relationship between Job Characteristic and Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.226 ^a	.051	.071	.55196
2	.224 ^b	.050	.045	.54527
3	.215 ^c	.046	.023	.53959
4	.197 ^d	.039	.007	.53528
5	.148 ^e	.022	.001	.53365
6	.000 ^f	0.000	0.000	.53340

a. Predictors: (Constant), Feedback, Task Identity, Autonomy, Skill Variety, Task Significance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Task Identity, Autonomy, Skill Variety, Task Significance

c. Predictors: (Constant), Task Identity, Autonomy, Skill Variety

d. Predictors: (Constant), Autonomy, Skill Variety

e. Predictors: (Constant), Skill Variety

f. Predictor: (constant)

Discussion

The present study hypothesizes that each component of job characteristics is significantly related to the job performance of the alumni of the SLSU-CTE Graduate Studies.

At first, descriptive analyses were made between and among variables. Job performance analysis reveals that the alumni perform at a very satisfactory level. In the same way, analysis on the job characteristics shows that the same group of respondents highly manifests each of the components – skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback.

A closer look at the performance analysis leads to an understanding that alumni of SLSUCTE Graduate Studies perform beyond what is expected, that is, beyond the expected target within the rating period. At a very satisfactory level, performance exceeds expectation. All goals, objectives, and targets are achieved above the established standards (CSC Memo # 6, 2012). This result informs that the complexity of the tasks performed by the alumni inside and outside of the school perimeter does not hinder them from performing beyond what is expected.

It is always a fact that the life lived by the principals and classroom teachers embraces the complexity of life (Easthope&Easthope, 2000) responding personal, professional, administrative, and social concerns and issues. Yet, this study provides evidence that performing beyond what is expected is possible despite layers of responsibilities executed and performed by teachers and principals (Day, 2017).

A different descriptive analysis also reveals that the alumni of SLSU-CTE Graduate Studies understand very well their job characteristics. Evident in their evaluation is the high level manifestation of these various components of core job dimensions. Here, one can attest that the alumni has positive cognitive, psychological, and emotional conditions for the job (Johari, Yean, Yahya& Adnan, 2015) making them see their work the focus rather than the design of work itself (Jelstad, nd).

At a theoretical level, the result would mean that the alumni posits positive affective and attitudinal condition which promotes desirable workplace behaviour, such as a high level of job performance, demonstrated through task and contextual performance (Ivancevich, 2010). In other words, effective job characteristics

produce positive workplace attitudes, which inevitably encourage employees to engage in positive behaviours at work (Johari, Yean, Yahya& Adnan, 2015).

At a more specific level, the alumni experience their work as important, valuable and worthwhile. They use their skills and talents (skill variety) from the beginning to the end of the work with visible outcomes (task identity) because they found their work to have a substantial impact on their lives (task significance). Such great accomplishment provides more pride in the outcome of the job that they performed (Johari, Yean, Yahya& Adnan, 2015).

Furthermore, analysis reflects the degree of autonomy that the alumni exercise in the performance of their assigned tasks and responsibilities. The high manifestation of autonomy indicates that they have “control over the process of completing a particular task, including the freedom to choose the methods and strategies necessary to reach a goal” (Crane, 2012). This feeling of control creates a sense of goal ownership, dedication and responsibility (Ivancevich, 2010) which gives individuals the opportunity to choose how to complete a task (Daguplo, 2015; Flowerday&Schraw, 2003) that leads towards high task performances (Joo, Jeung, & Yoon, 2010; Deci& Ryan, 2011).

Feedback, the degree to which the job incumbent receives about how effectively he or she is performing the job, is also highly manifested as evident in the result of the analysis. This implies that the job incumbent, in this case – the Alumni, obtains direct and clear information about the effectiveness of their performance (Omar, Dahalan, Mohammed, Shah, &Azman, 2016; Ivancevich, 2010; Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004).

This high level of manifestations on the understanding of the job characteristics of the alumni of the SLSU-CTE Graduate Studies does not significantly define their performance. Correlational analysis shows that job characteristics do not significantly correlate with job performance for this group of respondents. In this manner, the weak relationship between job characteristics and job performance among alumni does not support the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) and contradicts various studies which show strong and significant relationship between these two variables.

Rejection of the research hypothesis that this study adheres is better understood in the various models analyzed to measure the degree in which job characteristics explains job performance among alumni of the SLSU-CTE Graduate Studies. The maximum values of R and adjusted R-squared, respectively, reflects how small is the influence of the job characteristics towards job performance.

The result can also be interpreted in a way that understanding job characteristics do not necessarily drive an individual to better perform in the organization. Meaningful and responsible experiences towards the job including the appropriate knowledge of the result of the job do not guarantee good performance. There might be other significant factors that push the alumni to perform better in their respective organizations.

A closer look on the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) would give an understanding that its components are generally drivers of intrinsic motivation. When employees have high autonomy, receive feedback about their performance, and have an important,

identifiable piece of work to do which requires skill variety, they may experience feelings of happiness and therefore intrinsic motivation to keep performing well (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). If such is the case, the alumni whose performance, generally, is very satisfactory might have been motivated to perform because of some extrinsic factors like salaries, benefits, promotions, and other privileges (Kassem & Sarhan, 2010).

Lastly, non-significant relational results can also be attributed to the small sample size analyzed in this study. Literatures suggest that sometimes a much bigger sample size is needed to get a significant result. This is the area that could have changed the result of the study if tracking system of the alumni records which would help identify more evidences is accessible and is in place.

6.0 Conclusion

Evidences collected from the alumni of SLSU-CTE Graduate Studies does not provide enough proof to support the claim that a useful understanding of the job characteristics results to a high quality work performance. Theoretically, understanding job characteristics does not necessarily drive job performance among employees. Instead, other external factors or the combination of intrinsic (JCM) and intrinsic factors can define work performance of jobholders.

7.0 References

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