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Sayani Mukherjee
Research Scholar, School of
Management Sciences,
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
University of Technology,
West Bengal, India

Dr. Arindam Ghosh
Associate Professor,
Department of Management
Science & Humanities, MCKV
Institute of Engineering
(Autonomous), Liluah,
Howrah, West Bengal, India

Dr. Sujit Mukherjee
Professor, School of
Management Sciences,
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
University of Technology,
West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author:
Sayani Mukherjee
Research Scholar, School of
Management Sciences,
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
University of Technology,
West Bengal, India

Comprehending the relevance of Job Characteristics Model (JCM) in the Context of MSME industrial workers in select districts of West Bengal: An empirical study

Sayani Mukherjee, Dr. Arindam Ghosh and Dr. Sujit Mukherjee

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Abstract

The industrial workers of West Bengal are found to have a discrete distribution in the districts like Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, Paschim Bardhaman etc. as these districts have the significant concentration of manufacturing companies. This study is focused on identifying the role of situational variables on job satisfaction as well as the productivity levels of these industrial workers. Moreover, our study has focused on micro, small, and medium-sized organizations only. In this study, we have considered Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham to define the independent variables responsible for job satisfaction and productivity level. A thorough review of literature was performed encompassing the regional, national, and international contexts. It has, nevertheless, been observed that relevant works are handful in the context of West Bengal, especially in the aforementioned MSME sector. This study has attempted to understand the relevance of the Job Characteristic Model to the motivation of MSME industrial workers in West Bengal. The result shows a significant relation of the JCM variables with job satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, the relevance of JCM for the industrial workers in select districts of West Bengal is established in this research.

Keywords: Industrial workers, job characteristics model, situational variables, msme of west bengal, job satisfaction, productivity

Introduction

The relationship between situational constraints and job satisfaction as well as productivity has been receiving significant attention over the years. By considering situational factors such as; skill variety, task identity, task significance as well as autonomy and feedback, different authors and researchers have focused on their roles in attaining employee job satisfaction and productivity, specifically across MSME industrial sector. This is because both of these aspects would indicate employee job performance. Thus, by constructing contradictory viewpoints, this present study would evolve through conducting critical analysis by centering the research area of studying the role of situational control variables in the modulation of job satisfaction and productivity among industrial workers.

Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model: The Theoretical Context

According to Siruri & Cheche, (2021) ^[24], the theoretical model of Job Characteristics by Hackman and Oldham has denoted that there are five core job characteristics such as; skill variety, task identity, task significance as well as autonomy and feedback. These five factors are further considered situational control factors that work as the basis for several strategies for job enrichment. Moreover, in this context, based on the views of, it can be stated that this Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham encourages managers across organisations to provide meaningful tasks to the employees. That would further work as a motivation method as employees would be feeling responsible for the task or job that has been assigned to them and in turn, it would boost the employee morale. Significantly, by posing this model, Tang & Do, (2019) have further denoted that the workers or employees across medium and small businesses in MSME industries would have the feeling of repeating of same tasks within the workforce.

Therefore eventually, the workers would lose engagement with their tasks and jobs. As a result, productivity level of the workers would decrease therefore, by focusing on various factors such as; variety of skills, identifying different tasks as well as signifying the tasks while giving the necessary autonomy and required feedback, management across the organisations can ensure higher worker productivity. Thus, it can be said that the job characteristics variables would categorise the factor that would further guide motivation among the workers and with higher motivation, the productivity level of the workers would also be higher.

On the other hand, has viewed that the model of Job Characteristics proposed by Hackman and Oldham is highly attributable to ensuring higher job satisfaction. Specifically, this model focuses closely on task designs for every individual within the job role compared to job as a whole. Additionally, based on the viewpoint in context of this model, the incorporation of core job characteristics within the job design would increase work satisfaction among the workers. According to Khalid Salaudin, five core job characteristics such as; skill variety, task identity as well as task significance alongside autonomy and feedback have significant impact on workers' experienced responsibilities as well as meaningfulness and knowing outcomes. These factors in turn influence the work outcomes while ensuring job satisfaction. On the other hand, have implied that Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model not only focuses on job motivation to enhance and maximise highest productivity level for a worker. This model is also observed to inspire or motivate employees in such a way that they would feel the responsibility of accomplishing the assigned tasks or jobs. Specifically, by giving the instances of MSME industries, Saud, (2020) has signified that monotonous as well as tedious tasks or jobs tend to be less motivating and as a result would lead to lesser level of job satisfaction. On the other hand, the job characteristics proposed by Hackman and Oldham have also paved that jobs that are more eclectic and have variation would have higher level of autonomy that in turn leads to higher job satisfaction among industrial workers. Thus, in this accordance, according to Azmy & Wiadi, (2023), management working and involved in small and medium-scale business industries need to outline their job and tasks in such a way that variation is there, so workers would be motivated to perform better and with higher productivity, there would be higher job satisfaction.

Literature Framework

Role of Situation Variables in Regulating Job Satisfaction of Industrial Workers

According to Rifai & Tirtoprojo, (2023), skill variety is one of the major job characteristics of Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model. This factor defines the range of activities or skills that are required to complete the job or task. Based on the views of Ali, (2015), skill variety has the function of ensuring job satisfaction by challenging the workers with tasks, where they can use variety of skills. With that, the job would be more satisfying for them. If the global or international business environment is considered then it can be found that, across the globe, the emerging MSME sector creates a working environment for the industrial workers in such a way that they can make the decisions. Moreover, according to Mukhtaruddin, the decision-making skills, the problem solving skills of the

workers lead them to have job satisfaction. On the other hand, by focusing on the national level specifically in India, Al-Tit & Suifan, (2015) has stated that being a diverse nation, India has one of the largest number of workforce working in the popularised and emerging MSME sectors of this developing nation. Thus, the possibility of utilising skill variation to maximise the motivation and performance level would certainly be attributable to ensuring higher job satisfaction. Contrarily, have emphasised India's regional economy West Bengal. It is seen that districts of West Bengal such as; Howrah, Hooghly as well as Paschim Bardhaman, Nadia, Bankura and Birbhum are mostly centric on micro, small and medium-scale businesses. However, have stated that despite having a strong demand and workforce, the lack of infrastructure can be responsible for diversifying and utilise the skill variation properly. This as a result could lower job satisfaction level of the industrial workers if their skills are not valued and utilised with recognition.

On the contrary, by identifying task identity as core job characteristics, have implied that this particular would measure the degree to which an individual would be able to accomplish the job in detail. Thus, it can be said that workers who are capable of undertaking an activity from the very first stage to the last to the point of finish would have higher level of job satisfaction. According to Omar, the international business environment reflects more diversity and flexibility in work culture, which imposes task identity to be more important. This is certainly because; jobs could feel additionally meaningful when employees would have the scope to observe their work. However, by focusing on the Indian work culture, of the SMEs, has defined that prolonging working hours could create hindrances in higher levels of job motivation and engagement. This in turn could affect the level of job satisfaction. On the argumentative note, have specified that on regional level in India, specifically in West Bengal where MSME industrial sector is highly growing has greater focus on dedication and commitment. This in turn, certainly can make identifying tasks individually play significant role in Influencing job satisfaction levels.

On the other side, according to Hussein, (2020), task significance is the factor that would look at the impact and influence of the job. Therefore, in this context, it is to be said that jobs would be more satisfying if workers were made to believe that as part of the organisation, they would make significant difference. Based on the views of global organisations always strive to add value to co-workers as well as the organisation and the larger community as a whole. Furthermore, in national context of country India, has stated that small and medium-scale enterprises across India on average emphasise more on worker's job performance. The intrinsic focus on job performance makes workers feel that their work is meaningful. As a result, higher job satisfaction can be observed. Contrarily, being a part of a developing or lower developed economy, West Bengal and its district regions such as; Howrah, Hooghly as well as Paschim Bardhaman, Nadia, Bankura, Birbhum and so on focus more on job enrichment for this industrial worker working in micro, small and medium-scale enterprises sectors. According to Khan *et al.* (2022), job enrichment exerts positive impact on tasks and their perception of others and as a result, it helps in ensuring higher level of job satisfaction for the workers.

Furthermore, have identified autonomy as the most significant factor in the function of situation control variables to have functional utility for ensuring job satisfaction. Autonomy as the characteristics of job defines the amount of individual choice as well as discretion being involved within the task or job. Thus, in this context, if Western countries across the globe such as; USA, Canada, UK as well as France, Australia, Germany and so on are considered, then, it could be found that these nations have higher levels of autonomy and flexibility within the working environment of organisations. Therefore, has stated that with higher autonomy levels on job, workers feel highly engaged and participative as well as inclusive. This in turn enhances their level of job satisfaction. However, by focusing on India at national level and West Bengal at its regional level, have signified that small and medium-scale enterprises mainly focus on worker's remuneration and monetary compensation as their job motivation and performance enrichment rather than focusing on autonomy of the workers. Moreover, the working environment could be seen as centralised hierarchy. Thus, based on the views of lack of autonomy could hinder the decision-making and problem-solving skills of the industrial workers Wu, (2019). As a result, job satisfaction could decrease and hence, the function of autonomy for industrial workers in MSME industries would be highly significant.

On the other hand, according to Yaacob *et al.* (2018), feedback is the dimension of job characteristics that would measure the amount of information any worker receives about own performance level. Therefore, the more practice of feedback on worker's performance is observed in an organisation, the better the interest of the workers to perform their job better which would ensure higher job satisfaction. Significantly, in this context, have stated that international organisations operating in MSME sectors across developed economies such as; USA, UK, Canada mainly consider either 360-Degree Feedback or Management by Objective or MBO feedback method. That helps in boosting engagement and inclusiveness in the organisational culture. However, being a developing nation with continually evolving MSME sector, India and its state such as; West Bengal and its districts such as; Howrah, Hooghly as well as Paschim Bardhaman, Nadia and Birbhum, Bankura lacks in constructive feedback system. Therefore, based on the viewpoint, function of feedback would help these emerging businesses and the involved industrial workers to boost their performance to attain maximum job satisfaction levels.

Role of Situation Variables in Regulating Productivity Levels of Industrial Workers

According to Gull, adding variety of skills could become stressful for employees if they are not qualified to address the skill variety and its needs. Significantly, in context it can be said that simply adding minimal skills as well as basic skills without adding any core intrinsic value to the job to be performed, might have opposite effect on job motivation. That could further lower the productivity level. However, by considering the small and medium-scale enterprises across international market, have stated that global organisations in this MSME industry have focused on employee branding and value creation to diversify their skills and effectiveness of those. Thus, with additional value created indeed the level of employee performance and productivity of the

industrial workers are considered to be upward rising. Likewise, according to Omoankhanlen & Eyakephovwan, (2022), India as a developing nation is relying heavily on MSME sector and its growth. Thus, for skill variety and development, major focus has been on improving value-adding infrastructure for worker's skill development. Moreover, have stated that state government of West Bengal for its MSME sector growth across different regions or districts have undertaken skill development initiatives that are further expected to enhance job performance and productivity level of the industrial workers involved in this industry.

On the other hand, has stated that task identity is the factor that would have the functionality to influence productivity level. It is to be said that motivated workers would be more likely to complete the assigned task if they can identify with them. According to Yu *et al.* (2022), the process of task identity makes the workers habituated to the task assigned to them from the very first stage, so they can stage the overall task and related job responsibilities accordingly from first to finish stage. As a result, the level of productivity among the workers is subjected to be higher. In this accordance, has stated that MSME organisations across the globe mainly focuses on the job enrichment process involving delegation of task, teamwork and so on for creating the necessity of task identity among the workers. This helps them to see the result that is to be achieved. As a result, higher motivation can be seen which increases the level of productivity further. On the other hand, according to Pearl Dlamini, Suknunan & Bhana, (2022), majority of the Indian MSME organisations on national level as well as West Bengal and regional levels across Howrah, Hooghly, Paschim Bardhaman as well as Nadia, Bankura and Birbhum do not consider creating awareness among the industrial workers regarding the task identity. Industrial workers perform only the task that is assigned to them, therefore, the level of productivity without having proper motivation as driving force has created major obligations.

On the contrary, has viewed that when task significance is concerned then it would refer to the sense of meaning related to the task. Therefore, in this accordance, it can be said that employees would draw meaning from the tasks or jobs when they would have tangible effects on other individuals' well-being. Significantly, in this context, have stated that international organisations focus more on rewards and recognition and set different rewards and recognition based on the level and severity of task significance. This therefore creates the conscience among the employees to understand the significance of the task and in that way, productivity level is enhanced. On the other hand, according to Cahyana & Ubaidillah, (2023), on national level, Indian MSMEs specifically in context of the state-level MSME sector of West Bengal across several regions, strategic interventions are taken to create awareness regarding the task assigned to the industrial workers. This would further have the functionality of improving job performance and productivity levels.

Contrarily, according to Lappalainen *et al.* (2019), autonomy as part of job characteristics variables would focus on the control of boundaries within which employees would be able to work in more flexible as well as comfortable working environment as per their basic necessity. Based on the views of Junianti *et al.* (2023), this particular sense of freedom would highly encourage workers to think and perform or execute their jobs efficiently without

having any burden. This as a result would simultaneously lead to increased level of productivity. Significantly, in this context, if the international organisational environment is undertaken, then, it could be seen that regardless of the organisational structure of hierarchy, the main focus is given to the management practices of delegation of authority. This, as a result, creates a sense of responsibility among the workers with the given autonomy to them. As a result, with the sense of job responsibilities, the tendency to perform better with higher productivity level can be ensured. However, on the other hand, given the organisational structure and hierarchy of majority of the MSMEs across India and specifically small-scale business-centric state of West Bengal and its different regions, it can be seen that the bureaucratic management can create hindrances in ensuring autonomy of workers at workplace and, the lower level of autonomy or freedom of performing the task among industrial workers would decrease the productivity level. On the other hand, according to Zhu, (2023), giving feedback is the major way to boost job motivation among employees. Through the power of self-awareness and showing direct impact of skills and strengths on employee job performance, the process of feedback enhances the level of productivity. Moreover, based on the views of Pattnaik & Pattnaik, (2020), concerning feedback practices, international organisations can focus on self-awareness and self-evaluation practices among employees. It helps employees identify their strengths and weaknesses and allows them to improve productivity levels. However, has stated that in India, on national level and across the regions of Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, Paschim Bardhaman and Bankura, Birbhum on average, the traditional work culture is followed by majority of the organisations, specifically in small and medium-scale enterprises. This traditional work culture only considers feedback from supervisor or top management to the worker. Thus, has stated that feedback has poor functionality to enhance productivity levels in traditional working environments.

Identified Research Gap

Following the literary discussion above, it is evident that the core focus has been on the job characteristics variables of Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model. The critical discussion throughout the literature review has undertaken all five model variables to have their functionalities on job satisfaction and productivity level of the industrial workers working in MSME industries of several regions of West Bengal. However, the literature study has not focused on which factor of all the five job characteristics factors would have most or least impact or role to play on MSME industrial workers across Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, Paschim Bardhaman etc. Hence, in this context, major gap has occurred that is further required to be addressed through the in-depth research study.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the relation of the variables of Job Characteristics Model (JCM) with the outcome for the industrial workers - job satisfaction and productivity level.
2. To check the relevance of the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) for the MSME workers of industrially developed districts in West Bengal in this context.

Research Methodology

1. The respondents of this study were the industrial workers of the aforementioned select districts of West Bengal.
2. The data about job characteristics was obtained from the industrial workers through standardized questionnaire of JCM.
3. The data regarding the dependent variables - job satisfaction and productivity, was collected from the industrial workers through a questionnaire survey using the ordinal scale.
4. As far as the productivity is concerned, the items of the survey questions were about their productive behaviour i.e. regularity, motivation to work, critical incidents behaviour etc.
5. A pilot survey was conducted with a sample size of 30 respondents to check the reliability of the survey questionnaire.
6. A sample size of 208 industrial workers was obtained
7. A composite score of the aforementioned two variables was obtained calculating the arithmetic mean of the variables scores of job satisfaction and productivity.
8. Linear regression was performed with all variables of JCM as independent variables and composite variable (renamed as Job Satisfaction and Productivity) as dependent variable.

Analysis of Data and Findings

Reliability Analysis of the Survey Questionnaire

As mentioned in the earlier section, the survey questions were designed for the dependent or outcome variables i.e. composite variable (Job Satisfaction and Productivity). The following table (Table 1) shows the reliability statistics to of the said questionnaire. The Cronbach Alpha score of 0.979. Table 2: was obtained which strongly established the reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	208	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	208	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.979	21

Regression Analysis

Null hypothesis (H₀) = The job characteristics model variables (Feedback, Task Identity, Task Significance, Skill Variety, and Autonomy) do not have any impact on Job Satisfaction and Productivity of MSME industrial workers in select districts of West Bengal.

Alternative hypothesis (H₁) = The job characteristics model variables (Feedback, Task Identity, Task Significance, Skill Variety, and Autonomy) have an impact on Job Satisfaction and Productivity of MSME industrial workers in select districts of West Bengal.

The most crucial part of Table 3 is the Model Summary, where the adjusted R² value of 0.830 indicates 83% variance in the dependent variable (a value range of 0.1 to 0.2 is accepted in social science research) and shows the model's fitness. Reduced numbers of non-significant and non-

contributing independent variables in the model are shown by a smaller gap between R^2 and Adjusted R^2 . Here, the difference between them suggests that there are four non-contributing predictors in the model— Feedback, Task

Identity, Task Significance, Skill Variety. Therefore, a model fit is not established in this study between JCM variables and job satisfaction and productivity of the industrial workers in general.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.830 ^a	.688	.682	.50142

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

The Analysis of Variance result (Table 4) shows that there was a substantial association between the predictors and the criterion variable in the model for this specific study

(industrial workers of select districts of West Bengal), as indicated by the significant F value ($p < 0.05$) at the 95% significance level.

Table 4: ANOVA^a

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	113.222	4	28.306	112.583	.000 ^b
	Residual	51.290	204	.251		
	Total	164.512	208			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction and Productivity

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

The multicollinearity in the model is described in the Collinearity Statistics part of the accompanying Coefficient table (Table 5). The regression-based model is useless if multicollinearity is found (Gaur & Gaur, 2009). A tolerance

value of less than 0.2 is indicative of multicollinearity (Gaur & Gaur, 2009). As the tolerance value is less than 0.2 in this case, the multicollinearity exists for the variable Autonomy, hence excluded from this regression model.

Table 5: Excluded Variables

Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
					Tolerance
1	Autonomy	. ^b	.	.	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction and Productivity

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Feedback, Task Identity, Task Significance, Skill Variety

It can be concluded that the null hypothesis is not accepted i.e. the alternative hypothesis stands. Therefore, it can be stated that the job characteristics model variables (Feedback, Task Identity, Task Significance, and Skill Variety) have an impact on Job Satisfaction and Productivity level of industrial workers in select districts of West Bengal.

Conclusion

The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) is an established model of framework of the job for the employees to have proper motivation. As obtained from the study of literature, this motivation is primarily reflected through the job satisfaction and productivity levels of the employees. The motivational levels of industrial workers, especially in the MSME sector in West Bengal, is controlled by some situational but job related factors. Obviously, there are other factors which are not job related. However, those factors are the mediating and moderating control variables that are beyond the scope of our present research. The present study has focused on job-related factors and their relation with the motivational aspect of the industrial workers. Therefore, in this study, an attempt has been made to relate the JCM with the outcome variables – job satisfaction and productivity level. Although, this research could not establish a generic linear regression model to fit such relationship for the MSME workers in West Bengal, an ANOVA-based model has established the relation between the aforementioned variables for the present population of MSME industrial

workers of select districts (Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, Paschim Bardhaman) of West Bengal.

Implications of Study

This study will provide the framework of decision making for the management of MSME in West Bengal at least in the districts where the research was conducted, to consider the factors (independent variables) of JCM as motivators for industrial workers.

Scope of Further Study

Future research with larger population and sample size covering the entire West Bengal will provide more opportunities for a better model fit. In addition to that, the present relationship is linear in nature without consideration of the mediating and moderating variables. Therefore, the future study will focus upon the variables which can have a modifying and controlling role in establishing the relation between JCM and motivation of industrial workers.

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