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Relationship of Job involvement with Employee Performance: Moderating role of Attitude

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Abstract

Job involvement was considered very important in the previous literature for increasing the performance of the employees. It is hypothesized that involved employees exert considerable efforts for achieving the goals and objectives of the organization. These kinds of employees are highly productive and produce better results as compare to the employees who are not involved with their job. These employees work for the organization with their hand, head and heart. Several studies examined the relationship of job involvement with employee performance and claimed that there is a positive relationship between these two variables. In this paper we try to further explain the construct of job involvement and combined the results of different studies in this context. This paper also tries to explain the controversies between the results of different studies and propose to make more construct valid measure for job involvement. Further we also conceptualize the relationship of employee attitude in this connection.

Keywords: Job involvement, Employee performance, Attitude, Empowerment, Knowledge, Information

1. Introduction

In previous years, a lot of interest was developed in the term job involvement. Many researchers claimed that the employee involvement clearly forecast employee outcomes, organizational performance and organization success. (Bates, 2004; Baumruk, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Richman, 2006). Besides this it is also claimed that the employee involvement is going to decrease in the recent years and employee are very much disinvolved with their jobs (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006). In the American workforce, it has been argued that the most of the workers are not fully engaged or disengaged with their jobs which cost US business to $300 billion a year by decreasing productivity and this phenomenon is referred to “involvement gap” in the employees (Bates, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Kowalski, 2003). Job involvement is described by kahn in a way that developing a behavior in the employee that connect him to work and to other actively with personal presence (physical, emotional and cognitive) leads to full performance (1990: 700). Involved employees attach and connect their full selves in the job, putting physical, cognitive and emotional efforts

to complete their job for the organization. These type of employees can be recognized by their psychologically presence, paying special attention, conscientious, sentimental, associated, integrated, and focused on their job. Involved employees are open to themselves, with other employees and as well as with the organization to put their complete selves to work (Kahn, 1992). Kahn described that the involvement can be noted by observing the behaviors of the employees whether he is putting personal, physical and emotion energy to complete the tasks (Kahn, 1992). To be very simple involvement means investing the hand, head and heart to the job (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995: 110) while working in the organization. This concept of involvement is very motivational because it describes the use of the personal resources to complete the tasks of the job and it also describe that by how much these forces are applied by the employee (Kanfer, 1990). It also subsumes the old concept of determining the physical and cognitive forces represented by the employee and the depth of engagement of the employee towards the organization. In simple word it defines the level of involvement of the employee to perform the work physically and cognitively as well as maintaining the efforts in a connected way instead of dispersed manner (Kahn, 1992). So, according to kahn job involvement can be explained the continuous efforts in the shape of physical, cognitive and emotional for full work performance. Job involvement as described by Hall and Mansfield (1971) is a non manipulated property of a person. Weber (1958) explains it as individuality and the virtue of work as an end (Brown, 1996). That means for the employees the work is a virtue of an end itself and possesses high job ethic level. Consequently, these kinds of employees perceive the work as an important part of their lives (Dubin, 1956; Rabinowitz and Hall, 1977). In this way, these kinds of employees dedicate a significant amount of time towards their job and highly involved in their job.

(Lodhal, 1964; Lodhal and Kejner, 1965). In a study, Brown (1996) observes a strong correlation between the job involvement and work ethics.

This study tries to find the relationship between the job involvement and employee performance. Although the relationship was prove in many previous researches but the main aim of the study to introduce a new moderating variable of attitude. Attitude is the liking or disliking of the employee toward his/her job. We hypothesize that if the job does not match with the liking of the employee the organization feels more difficulty to involve the employee in the job. As we said previously that the job involved employee has been described as one whose job is an integral part of his/her self-definition.

1.1 Objectives

Employee involvement has become a hot topic in recent years among consulting firms and in the popular business press. However, employee involvement has rarely been studied in the academic literature and relatively little is known about its antecedents and consequences. The purpose of this study was to propose a model of the antecedents and consequences of job involvement. The main objectives of the study are as under:

a. To define and understand the variable of Job Involvement
b. To explore the antecedents of Job Involvement
c. To conceptualize the consequences of Job Involvement and how they are beneficial for the organization
d. To check the impact of the attitude of the employee on Job Involvement

2. Literature Review

The term of job involvement can be described as ‘‘the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one’s present job’’ (Paullay et al., 1994, p. 225). These kinds of employees can be recognized by the level they feel that the job is an important aspect of their self definition. This statement and the construct is a popular term and widely used in the literature of employee performance (Robinson et al., 2004). However, a lot of work has been done by the practitioners and it can be found in the journals where it is recognized mostly as a theory rather than put it into practices and develops some empirical results. Robinson et al. (2004) argued that the most of the work is surprisingly attract low

attention from the organization and becomes popular. This results in a way that the concept is going to be faddish or just present in the academic literature rather than in practice. The situation becomes worst as the term job involvement was described by different researcher in a diverse pattern and these descriptions were very different from each other. Most of the times, these descriptions are similar to the term of organizational commitment or organizational citizenship behavior (Robinson et al., 2004). Some researchers also describes the term as intellectual and emotional commitment towards the organization (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005) or by the degree of discretionary efforts exercised by the employees in the organization (Frank et al., 2004). Different researcher explain the term by their own perception, Kahn (1990, p. 694) define it as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in involvement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". Putting it simply, the term involvement refers to the physical and mental presence of the employee while doing the work in the organization.

2.1 Consequences of Job Involvement

The point of interest in the term job involvement is the final consequences of this phenomenon that can be explained that if the workers put forth considerable efforts for the achievement of the personal and organizational objectives, this will lead to more productivity and the employee ultimately retain with the organization (e.g. Kahn, 1990; Kanungo, 1979; Lawler, 1986; Pfeffer, 1994). On the opposite side, the employees who are having low degree of involvement are more likely to experience low job satisfaction and inclined to leave the organization. Besides this if they remain with the organization they put their efforts towards non productive work or apply their energy in such activities that are not beneficial for the organization and the productivity decreases (Kanungo, 1979, p. 133). These kinds of employees engage themselves in different undesirable activities. There are some empirical researches showing a relationship between different work outcomes and the degree of job involvement. For example, in a research job involvement has been observed to be negatively related to the turnover intention, positively related to organizational commitment and also related to the extra-role behavior and employee performance (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003).

They also observed that job involvement mediate the relationship between turnover intention and job resources. Job involvement has been observed to have a vital affect on different import outcomes. For job performance Lawler (1986), Kahn (1990) and Brown (1996) explained that different work behaviors of the employees are the consequences of job involvement and it is hypothesized that involvement ultimately impacts on employees' efforts and motivation, which in turn explained performance. Meta analysis by Brown (1996) estimated that the population correlation is non significant between the job involvement and overall performance but the population correlation to be significant between the job involvement and different combination measures of performance, although the coefficient was relatively small. In this situation, different researchers have tried to discover the reasons for the complex relationship between the job involvement and employee performance. On the similar task, Diefendorff et al. (2002) described the reason that major previous researches were using the scale developed by either Lodahl & Kejner (1965) or Kanungo (1982). These scales were supposed to be contaminated by some extraneous constructs (Kanungo, 1982; Paullay et al., 1994). Diefendorff et al. (2002) argued that the positive association between the job involvement and performance can be found if the researchers used a more valid measure of job involvement. In a study by Diefendorff et al. (2002), when used a measure developed by paullay et al. which differentiate job involvement from work centrality, a significant positive correlation has been found between supervisor rated in-role performance and job involvement. While developing more valid and accurate scale for job involvement, researchers also need to focus on performance criteria to understand the relation of involvement and performance.

2.2 Attitude

An attitude is a measurement of the degree that represents that the level of liking or disliking of a person towards any item that can be a person, object, place or any event. Attitude can be determined by the negative or positive emotion or feeling of a person towards any item and this

item is referred to attitude object. Sometimes peoples are confused about towards any item that they the item attracts both positive and negative attitudes. In today era of globalization, when the information level of a person has been increased by considerable level this happened more frequently. In this situation, it creates a lot of problems and challenges for human resource practitioners and creates an extensive need for extensive studies to be conducted to better understand this phenomenon in cross culture organizations and provide guidance (Erez, 1994; House, 1995; Triandis, 1994). The considerable work on employee attitude had been done by Hofstede (1980, 1985). He expanded his research on employee attitude among 67 countries and verified that this construct has been separated into four groups and the countries varied on these aspects. These categories are Individualism-collectivism, Risk taking, Power distance and Masculinity-Femininity which now called achievement orientation. But when describing the job involvement the high situational influence was considered as the work itself or "intrinsic job characteristics". Different researches present the same results that when the employees are asked to rate the different factors of job like coworkers, advancement opportunities, environment, pay, promotion, supervision and so forth, the most important factor was found the work itself (Judge & Church, 2000; Jurgensen, 1978). These results does not mean that the others factors are not important for the employees but the conclusion is that to influence the job satisfaction the most important thing is the work itself. The work should be interesting and challenging for the employees. While mostly managers think that salary is the most important factor and exclusion the other job attributes such as the nature of work itself.

2.3 Operational Definition of Job Involvement

It was argued by different researchers that job involvement is an important factor for the success of the organization and also for retaining the employee by decreasing the intention to leave but the question is how the organizations help their employees to be more satisfied with the work and become involved? This question was answered by Marcus et al. (2009) by presenting some practices that can enhance the level of involvement of the employee. They propose four elements for making the employee more involved in the job and with the organization.

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to the degree of decision making that can be handled by the employee while working in the organization. These employees feel more confident in their ability and presume latitude over their work. Consequently, empowerment heightens employee autonomy in their work.

Information

Information means data about the quantity and quality of business operations such as unit outputs, costs, revenues, profitability and customer reactions. This includes developing a system in the organization by which the employees become more informed about different aspects of the organization. In case of providing information it is also included that the feedback should be provided to the employee about his/her work.

Knowledge

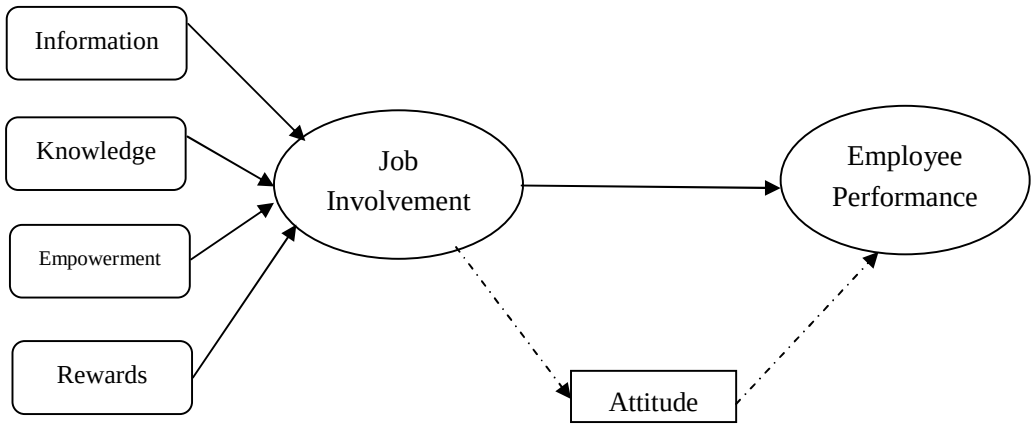
Knowledge is different from information. Information is the data about the company which knowledge refer to the level that the employee can evaluate and generate different inferences on these information. That can be done by providing the opportunities of training and development. The competency level of the employees should be enhance and upgrade to perform their duties well.

Rewards

Rewards are the financial or non financial benefits provided to the employees against their services to enhance organizational performance. These rewards are also considered as an important tool to motivate the employees and consequently the employees involved with their work.

3. Proposed Model and Prepositions

After reading and reviewing the available data we hypothesize that the job involvement has an impact on employee performance. The employees who are more involved in their job can produce better results for the organization. But the results cannot generalize for all the employees. One moderating factor can be the attitude of the employee, which has contingent effect on the relationship between the independent and dependent variable.



P1: Information has significant positive impact on Job Involvement.

P2: Knowledge has significant positive impact on Job Involvement.

P3: Empowerment has significant positive impact on Job Involvement.

P4: Rewards has significant positive impact on Job Involvement.

P5: Job Involvement has significant positive impact on Employee Performance.

P6: Attitude affects the relationship between the job involvement and Employee performance.

4. Discussion & Conclusion

The primary theoretical contribution of this paper is that we extend the theory of Kahn (1990) by considering that job involvement is an important aspect by which organization can increase the productivity of the employees. These results are checked and verified by different studies that the there is a positive relationship between the construct of job involvement and employee satisfaction and performance (for ex. Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003; Diefendorff et al., 2002; Brown, 1996; paullay et al., 1994; Kahn, 1990). By high degree of involvement the employee produce more favorable results for the organization. This will not only beneficial for the organization but also the satisfaction of the employee increase as the level of involvement increases. We argued that Kahn's theory should be considered as an important explanation how the organization can involved the employee and what are the consequences of this job involvement. If the employees are more involved in their jobs they will put extra efforts for the completion of the organizational objectives. These employees exert high level of efforts during their jobs and these efforts are comprises of physical, cognitive and emotional efforts. More involved employees are supposed to be actively present on their job and avoid the activities which are undesirable for the organization. In this way not only the productivity of the organization will increase but the employees will be more satisfied with their working in the organization. This satisfaction leads to the level as explained by Kahn that these employees invest their hand, head and heart on the job. The organization need to focus on the strategies by which they can involve their employees and become a successful organization. The

possible antecedents of job involvement are well explained by the Butt and his colleagues that can be helpful for the organization to create this kind of environment. While developing this kind of culture one important thing is the attitude of the employee. The work should be design in a way that reflects the positive feeling of the employee. The nature of work is very important for the satisfaction of the employees and ultimately satisfaction will lead toward the higher degree of performance. So according to our theory while making the employee more involved a universal approach is not so much useful and work should be design according to the attitude of the employees. Many researches prove that the nature of work is one of the most important factors considered by the employee and normally management neglect this factor and suppose that salary are most important factor for the motivation of the employee. Attitude restricts us to develop a universal approach for the involvement of the employees. We have to consider the attitude of employee before going to check the involvement of the employee. The employee can easily be involved in his work if we design the job according to the attitude of the employee. This means that the employee should consider the job challenging and enjoyable. In this way the employee will be more involved and put extra efforts for the fulfillment of the organizational goals. In this way the employee will engaged in the job with the hand, head and heart as described by kahn in his research. By hand we means that the employee exert physical efforts to complete the job. By head we means that the employee will feel satisfaction and proud of doing the work in the organization. By heart we wants that the employee is not only working physically but also emotions are involved in his work. In this way the employee can say that this is my kind of job. If the organization produces this kind of environment in the office they can achieve their objectives easily. This thing not only increases the efficiency level of the employee but also decrease the intention of turnover and absenteeism. The impact of stress was also discussed in different studies that the stress level will be low if the employee are involved in his work. Attitude of the employee is very important in this context because the employee can be involved in case the job is according to his perception. That is very difficult for the organization to involve the employee in such a job that is not suited to the employee attitude. In this case the employee will do the work only to pass the time and remain in the organization and the objectives of the organization will remain unattained. These kind of non involved employees are not the requirement of the organization and these employees can not worth for the human capital of the organization. The organization needs the employees who are not only doing the work physically but also present mentally. These kinds of employees work physically, cognitively and emotionally.

5. Managerial Implication

The purpose of the research is to help the management in producing the desired results for the organization. If the employees are involved in their work they can work more effectively and efficiently. The involved employees put extra efforts for the completion of their task. These employees become involved in the work not only physically but also emotionally and cognitively. So the organization can best achieve their objectives and targets by these kinds of employees. The organizations also try to recruit the employees who produce best results but by involving the existing employees the organization can do the same. But involving employees can be easier by designing the characteristics of the job according to the attitude of the employee. If the nature of the job matches with the attitude of the employee, these employees will be more productive and helpful for the organization for achieving their objectives and goals. Job involvement is a tool for the management that can be used for enhancing the performance of the company and attaining the desired objectives. The current study describes it that the job design is important in this aspect. Employees should be considered in this respect and make the work challenging and interesting for them. In this way the employee can be more involved in their job and work effectively.

6. Recommendations

According to our conceptual frame work the management should be aware of the benefits of involving the employees. That is very simple and applicable work that the employee should be involved in their work in the organization. But the level of involvement that enhances the performance of the employee can be achieved by considering the attitude of the employees. It needs to review and redesign the job according to

the perception of the employees.

7. Future Research

This research is qualitative and exploratory in nature. In which we try to hypothesize that performance of employees can be increased by involving the employees in the job. Along with this, management has to consider the factor of attitude while developing the strategies for job involvement. There is a need to conduct an empirical study with a substantial sample size to prove the relationship between discussed variables.

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