

Skill Variety, Feedback and Employee Performance: A Case of Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital Eldoret

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Abstract

One of the major challenges facing the healthcare industry was to identify contributors to performance and to use those factors to implement an effective plan for the healthcare personnel retention. Therefore, this paper examined skill variety, feedback and their effects on employee performance a case of Moi teaching and referral hospital. This study was based on the goal setting theory and job characteristic theory. The main objectives of this study were; to determine effect of skill variety and feedback on employee performance. The study was an explanatory study which offers a profile to describe relevant aspects of the phenomenon of interest to the researcher. Hence, this research sought to examine job design and employee performance of nurses in the hospital. The target population was 1945 nurses who work in Moi teaching and referral hospital Eldoret. A sample of 320 nurses was selected using simple random sampling. The study used questionnaires as a tool of collecting data. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as tables, pie charts, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. From the findings, the null hypothesis that states that there is no relationship between job design and employee performance is rejected. This is because the results of the study showed that the level of job design predict 30.7 percent of employees' performance in the hospital. The study found that skill variety significantly affect job performance ($\beta_1=0.422$, P Value =0.000).However, feedback has no influence on job. Nurses need to be provides with more training to enhance their skills, in order to improve their job performance.

Keywords: skill variety, job design, feedback, employee performance.

1.0 Introduction

In healthcare industry, human resources and management may go to great lengths to vary the mix of skills required for a job, even implementing job design initiatives and programs to increase skill and task variety. Nurses are typically expected to perform a wide range of duties, simply because of the limited staffing and capacity. Benjamin (2012) asserts providing employees with an opportunity to take on variety of skills of greater complexity in their current roles enables an employee to learn new tasks in a supported environment and develop the skills needed to progress in his career. Management can also assess the employee's performance and see how he responds to feedback on the new responsibilities, thus enabling company executives to devise a job design that is workable and effective.

Garg & Rastogi (2006) revealed that well designed jobs can have a positive impact on both employee satisfaction and quality of performance. The perceived work demands, job control and social support through job design leads to high productivity (Love & Edwards, 2005 as in Garg & Rastogi, 2006). Likewise Campion et al (2005) suggested that Nature of work has a substantial impact on an employee's performance and attitude (as cited in Ali, 2010).

1.1 Problem Formulation

Kenya has experienced there is a serious shortage of nurses. One reason for this shortage is due to the work environment in which nurse's practice. In a recent review of the empirical human factors and ergonomic literature specific to nursing performance, nurses were found to work in generally poor environmental conditions (De Lucia, Otto, & Palmier, 2009). However, there are very few studied carried out in Kenya in respect of job design in hospitals. These researches have not focused on job design and nurses job performance. thus, there is a gap in this knowledge about testing the relationship between job design and nurses job performance. This paper

therefore examined the skill variety, feedback as components of job design and their effect on job performance in hospitals. The paper specifically investigated;

- i. To determine the effect of skill variety on employee's performance
- ii. To establish how feedback affects employee performance

2.0 Literature Review

2.0.1 Job performance

Job performance is defined as it focuses directly on employee productivity by assessing the number of units of acceptable quality produced by an employee in a manufacturing environment, within a specific time period.

Al-Ahmadi (2009) indicated that the nature of job itself was found positively correlated with performance, which indicates that satisfaction with amount of variety and challenge in one's job actually influence performance. The sense of job significant, feeling important in eyes of others, realizing ones' competence, and freedom to make decisions are positively related to performance. Ivancevich (1998) suggested that, approaches to job design place different emphasize on performance and satisfaction as desired outcomes. In other words, certain methods of job design are primarily interested in improving performance; others are more concerned with satisfaction.

2.0.2 Job Design

Job design was the creation of tasks and work settings for specific tools. The best job design is always one that meets organizational requirements for high performance, offers a good fit with individual skills and needs, and provides opportunities for job satisfaction (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2005). Job design by scientific management or job simplification standardizes work and employs people in clearly defined and specialized tasks. Hackman and Oldham (1980) identified five core job dimensions which include: task variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and job-based feedback

2.1 Skill Variety and Job Performance

In the view of Garg & Rastogi (2006), Skill variety refers to the extent to which the job requires the employee to draw from a number of different skills and abilities as well as upon a range of knowledge (cited in Ali,2010). According to Benjamin (2012) the theory behind providing skill variety in job design is that it will reduce boredom, thereby increasing job satisfaction and motivation. This is likely to be true as long as the employee enjoys the skills and perceives the addition and mix of skills to be a benefit to the job. But adding a variety of skills the employee finds stressful, isn't qualified to address, or simply adding basic duties and minimal skills without adding to the intrinsic value of the job could actually have the opposite effect and increase dissatisfaction. Involve employees in job design to have the greatest positive impact on motivation and satisfaction. From the aforementioned the study tested:

H₀₁: skill variety has no significant effect on Job performance

2.2 Feedback and Job Performance

Feedback refers the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the individual's obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance (Garg & Rastogi,2006 cited in Ali,2010). In his study Morris and Venkatesh (2010) revealed that feedback has positive relationship with job performance.

Feedback from the job reflects the degree to which the job provides clear and direct information about one's effectiveness of performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). In nursing, feedback includes feedback from others such as patients, co-workers and supervisors and affords nurses the opportunity to monitor their performance. Job feedback can assist nurses with understanding their impact on the patient/client, program, organization and health care system in general. Job feedback can also be linked to reflective practice

H₀₂: feedback has no significant effect on Job performance

3.0 Methodology

This section entailed, research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection instruments and data analysis techniques. The total population in this study was 1945 nurses (MTRH database, 2012). The study employed explanatory study to ascertain the effect of skill variety, feedback on job performance among healthcare personnel. A sample of 320 nurses was selected using Cochran formula because the population size was below 10,000. The researcher made use of simple random sampling because it is considered the simplest, most convenient and bias free selection method

Primary sources of data came from the field by using questionnaires .Respondents were requested to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement for each item in the questionnaire using five-Point Likert-type scale as given below: 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Not Sure 4=Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement by choosing a value that corresponds to what they think or feel on

job design practices. Cronbach Alpha value was used to measure reliability of the research instruments .The table below shows the reliability analysis for the study variables.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Alpha Value	Items
Skills variety	0.721	5
Feedback	0.784	5
Employee Performance.	0.881	5

Source: Survey data, 2012

3.2 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data was cleaned, coded in the computer and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics e.g. measures of central tendency mean, mode, median) measures of dispersion (range , standard deviation, Variance, percentages, frequency. Inferential statistics (multiple regression model and person correlation) were used to draw inferences about a given phenomenon in the population based on the results from a randomly selected sample and to test hypothesis and enable the researcher generalize results from the sample to the population

Regression equation is a function of variables x and β

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \mu$$

Where β_0 is the intercept, β_1 measures change in Y with respect to X_1 , holding other factors constant, β_2 measures the change in Y with respect to X_2 holding other factors constant, Where in this context X_1 represents skills variety and X_2 represents feedback while Y represent job performance

4.0 Study findings

4.1 Demographic Data of the Respondents

These sections dealt with data analysis, interpretation and presentation of the study findings. The study is to document job design and work performance based on a sample of nurses in MTRH. Findings showed the level of job delivery is dependent on gender (chi-square value of 16.937 with a p-value $<<\alpha=0.05$). The females, especially those who are married, are faced with many other duties such as taking care of the family and this is bound to affect their level of job delivery. there is a significant dependency between age and job delivery (chi-square value of 29.337 with a p-value of $0.001<<\alpha=0.05$). The relationship between marital status of the respondent and satisfaction with job delivery indicated that these two factors were indeed dependent on one another (chi-square value of 10.738 with a p-value $<\alpha=0.05$). This might be explained by the fact that marriage is an issue when it comes to the effective and efficient delivery of services at work. The individual is faced with other tasks of taking care of the family while at the same time having to deal with the demands from work. More findings reported that job satisfaction is independent of the level of education (chi-square value of 10.943 with a p-value of $0.09>\alpha=0.05$). This shows that there are other factors that touch on education such as skill and experience which can influence satisfaction with job delivery.

4.2 Skill Variety

Table 4.2: Skill Variety

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Skewness	Kurtosis
	%	%	%	%	%				
Feeling of achievement and a compliment	44.8	53.7	1.5	0	0	4.42	0.567	0.025	-1.357
Job provides opportunities for advancement to higher level jobs	37.3	58.2	0	4.5	0	4.29	0.733	-1.218	3.108
Job involves doing a number of different	7.5	40.3	22.4	25.4	4.5	3.21	0.671	-0.283	-0.893
Ability to influence origination decisions.	11.9	4.5	14.9	37.3	22.4	1.73	0.871	1.689	2.096
Average Mean						3.12	0.783	0.241	-1.421

Source (Survey Data, 2012)

SA =strongly agree, A=Agree, N=neutral, D=disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, S.D = standard deviation

Nurses felt that skill variety provide the feeling of achievement and compliments, Moreover findings nurses agreed that having more variety of skills increase job opportunities and more chances for promotions.

4.3 Feedback

Table 4.3: Feedback

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	%	%	%	%	%				
Work I do provide me with direct feedback about the effectiveness	4.7	23.3	22	40.3	9.7	3.27	0.988	-0.307	-0.807
Managers provide feedback about the effectiveness of job performance	2.7	65.7	17.3	9	5.3	2.49	0.433	1.423	1.351
Coworkers inform me on how I perform on my job quality and quantity.	1	47.7	39	7.3	5	2.68	0.511	1.09	1.006
Organization periodically provide me with feedback of the total output of my job progress.	9	69.3	9.7	7.3	4.7	2.29	0.542	1.522	2.2
Feedback average mean						2.87	0.711	0.871	0.782

Source (Survey Data, 2012)

SA =strongly agree, A=Agree, N=neutral, D=disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, S.D = standard deviation

Nurses revealed that they are provided feedback on their job effectiveness. As reported by the respondent provides feedback to employees on employees' performance appraisal. Nurses inform each other on their job quality and quantity. MTRH periodically provide feedback to employees on the total output of their job progress.

4.4 Correlation Statistics

Table 4.4: Correlation Statistics

	Employee Performance	Skill variety	Feedback
Employee performance	1		
Skill variety	.293**	1	
Feedback	0.091	.449**	1

** Significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Source (Survey Data, 2012)

Skill variety was positively and significantly correlated to job performance in an organization (Pearson correlation = 0.293) significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This suggests that skills had positive influence on employee performance of the organization. However, feedback was not correlated to job performance suggesting that feedback has no influence on nurses job performance.

4.5 Test of Hypothesis

Table 4.5 Multiple Regression Statistics

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.774	0.275		13.702	0.000	0.497	2.012
Skills (β_1)	0.456	0.066	0.422	6.934	0.000	0.786	1.272
Feedback(β_2)	0.04	0.045	0.05	0.902	0.368	0.497	2.012
R Square	0.307						
Adjusted R Square	0.295						
ANOVA(F-ratio)	25.925						
ANOVA(p-value)	0.0000						

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

H₀₁: skill variety has no significant effect on Job performance

Results from table 4.5 indicated that skills variety had coefficient estimate (β_1) of 0.422 with p value of 0.00 which was less than 0.05 level of significance, hence the study rejects the first study null hypothesis that there no significant relationship between skills and job performance and concluded that there is significant positive relationship between skills and job performance. This implies that skills positively affect job performance with 0.422 units, increase in skills with one unit increase job performance with -0.422 units. T ratio 6.934 reveals that skills had the second largest effect on employee performance.

H₀₂: feedback has no significant effect on Job performance

Feedback was reported to have coefficient estimates of $\beta_2 = -0.05$ and p value of 0.368 which is more than 0.05 hence was no significance in predicating employee performance, hence accept the null hypothesis that There is no relationship between feedback and employee's performance,

4.6 Discussions, Conclusion and Implications of the Findings

The study found empirical evidence to infer that skills variety significantly and positively related to job performance. This finding empirically confirms the theoretical arguments given by Al-Ahmadi (2009), Ivancevich (1998), (Kahya, 2007), Garg & Rastogi (2006), Aswathappa (2006), Mathis and Jackson (2003), Campion et al (2005), and Perry et al., (2006). They explained that strong, positive relationship exist between the extent of a firm's adoption of high involvement HRM strategies including skill variety and job performance. Implication of finding is that, hospitals should provide nurses with more training to enhance their skills in order to improve nurses job performance.

Feedback from the job reflects the degree to which the job provides clear and direct information about one's effectiveness of performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). In nursing, feedback includes feedback from others such as patients, co-workers and supervisors and affords nurses the opportunity to monitor their performance. Job feedback can assist nurses with understanding their impact on the patient/client, program, organization and health care system in general. Job feedback can also be linked to reflective practice. Although feedback is traditionally linked to feedback from others, through the process of reflection, nurses can critically analyze both feedback and their own experiences and knowledge to augment their understanding of their practice. However, the study found no evidence that feedback affect job performance.

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