



**ROLE OF JOB DESIGN ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA: A
CASE OF PRESBYTERIAN UNIVERSITY OF EAST AFRICA.**

NAOMI .W. KARIUKI

**ROLE OF JOB DESIGN ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA: A
CASE OF PRESBYTERIAN UNIVERSITY OF EAST AFRICA**

Kariuki, N., Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenya

Makori, M., Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenya

Accepted July 17, 2015

ABSTRACT

It is commonly acknowledged that human resources are the most important asset in any organization. In a turbulent economic environment characterized by high staff turnover and brain drain human resources practitioners' major challenge is to find ways of attracting and retaining creative and dedicated staff committed to the organization and to determine which working conditions stimulate employees to give their best, to be engaged, to go beyond what is expected and persist in the face of difficulties. The aim of the study was to establish the role of job design on employee engagement. The target population was 535 employees working at the top management, middle level management and low level management at The Presbyterian University of East Africa. A sample of 84 employees of the target population was considered by use of stratified sampling method. The primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires and secondary data was obtained from published documents such as journals, periodicals, magazines and reports to supplement the primary data. A pilot study was conducted to pretest the validity and reliability of instruments for data collection. The raw information was analyzed to yield qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed with help of SPSS version 20 and MS excel. The variables were regressed and study findings showed that skill variety, task identity, job design and job feedback significantly and positively influenced employee engagement at The Presbyterian University of East Africa. Job feedback was the most significant factor and had a positive significant relationship at 5% level of significance. This implied that the variables under study affected employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa and recommends for effective policies and strategies to enhance appropriate job designs for improving employee engagement and performance.

Key Words: Job Design, Employee Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Employees are the main source of performance, competition and survival of the organization (Golamzadeh, 2009). However in most cases employees' job performance depends on the characteristics of the jobs they hold. Job characteristics (Autonomy, task significance, skill variety and feedback from job address activities, duties, assignments and different aspects of a job and while some jobs are normal and repetitive, some of them are unusual and need different skills and have limited practical scope.

The theory of job design is an important concept in business management and has been well known in the private sector for over 30 years. According to its proponents, workers are motivated by jobs in which they feel they can make a difference—and jobs can be designed with that in mind. An employee may take on a whole position involving many tasks, or a reduced number of tasks, depending on ability, time allotment and other constraints (Darrah, 2002). The nature and characteristics of employees' work have a great impact on worker engagement. Well-designed jobs have a positive influence on employee commitment, leading to improved individual and group organizational performance outcomes such as their membership (joining/leaving an organization), reliable role behavior (how well the worker does their job), and innovative/spontaneous action (going above and beyond the normal job) (Ugboro, 2006).

Put simply, "job design refers to the way tasks are combined to form complete jobs" (Robbins and Stuart-Kotze). Using job design principles results in clear job descriptions, engaged workforce and successful completion of tasks.

People are assigned to a job because they are perceived to be able to fill its requirements. From an employer's perspective, the employee knows exactly what to do and is accountable. From the employee's perspective, the job requirements and responsibilities are clear.

A study conducted by Adam M. Grant, Yitzhak Fried, and Tina Juillerat showed that a job design has sufficient role in employee engagement and performance in FMCG industry of Pakistan. In a collectivist society like Pakistan people do prefer jobs with significance and autonomy. Job autonomy referring to the degree any worker has liberty to plan his or her tasks, take decisions according to the situation and find out all those means to achieve their work objectives. In 2005, a survey conducted in Thailand revealed only 12 per cent of Thailand's employee population are 'engaged', 82 per cent are 'actively disengaged' and 6 per cent disengaged. Similar Gallup studies have found the levels of engagement in Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore to be 18 per cent, 12 per cent, 9 per cent, 17 per cent and 9 per cent respectively (Gallup 2004).

In order for the employees to perform well organizations must continuously appraise employees through both formal and informal feedback channels on their performance level and what must be done to enhance their performance (Thompson & Prottas 2006). Poor performing employees need to receive the most feedback from their supervisor or managers on the measures to take to improve their performance, however, high performing employees also need recognition and feedback about their positive contributions (Alev, Gulem, Gonca & Burca, 2009).

Statement of the problem

In 2005, a survey conducted in Thailand revealed only 12 per cent of Thailand's employee population are 'engaged', 82 per cent are 'actively disengaged' and 6 per cent disengaged. Similar Gallup studies have found the levels of engagement in Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore to be 18 per cent, 12 per cent, 9 per cent, 17 per cent and 9 per cent respectively (Gallup 2004). Grant, (2008) in his study in United Kingdom (UK) noted that public service employees often lack opportunities to see the impact of their jobs, how their efforts make a difference in others people's lives. He said employees in public service jobs perform tasks that are critical to protecting and promoting the welfare of individuals, groups, communities and societies. However their commitment and engagement is often limited by a lack of connection to the difference that their work makes in other people's lives.

A study by Juan(2010); Geal(2009); Mullins(2011); Opel (2010) indicate that the employee engagement has not been effectively managed in many organizations and firms loose between 5%-15% of sales revenue as a result of lack of attention to employee engagement. This suggests that formal employee engagement management systems are important tools contributing to the performance and growth of organizations. The Gallup Research Report (2003) estimated that actively disengaged workers are 10 times more likely to say they will leave their organizations within a year than involved staff. Their 2003 survey in the US and Canada of 1000 workers found that only a quarter were actively engaged in their work with a huge group of between 56% and 60% not engaged and 17% actively

disengaged. The research estimates that actively disengaged (uncommitted) workers cost US businesses between \$270 and \$343 billion a year due to low productivity.

In a survey that was conducted in PUEA by the Human Resource Office on Employee Job Satisfaction(2014) it was reported that as much as 50 % of the University's work force merely shows up at work to do only what is expected of them, but are not willing to contribute more and thus are not considered engaged in their work. The study further revealed that many employees are reported to have visited and spent most of their time on social websites such as Facebook, you tube and twitter during working hours. There is high labor turn over, low staff morale, social loafing and lack of innovation and initiatives among employees which could be attributed to under-investment and detachment of employees from their work roles. The complaints register as well reveal that in a day there are more than ten complaints, which translates to customer dissatisfaction. The report concluded that there is an unused potential that must be addressed through further research. Extending this, Shuck et al., (2011) and Albrecht (2010) insist that the engagement literature must begin to focus far more on the work context in order to truly understand how and why employees are, or are not, engaged. It is in reference of these findings and observations that the research seeks to examine the role of job design on employee engagement in private Universities in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to examine the role of job design on employee engagement in private Universities in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to; Determine effects of job autonomy and job

feedback on employee engagement in private Universities in Kenya.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

- I. How does job autonomy affect employee engagement in private Universities in Kenya?
- II. Does job feedback affect employee engagement in private Universities in Kenya?

Scope of the Study

The study was conducted on Presbyterian University of East Africa employees and the respondents included management, middle level management and low level management staff who provided pertinent information about the research problem. A sample size of 84 employees was used in the study. The study also limited itself to two variables which include; job autonomy and job feedback on employee engagement

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

a) Socio-technical Systems Theory

The socio-technical systems approach arose from work conducted at the Tavistock Institute in Great Britain that discussed on the use of autonomous groups to accomplish work(Trist & , 2000). This perspective suggested that organizations are composed of people interacting with each other and a technical system to produce products or services. This interaction had a reciprocal and dynamic influence on the operational and appropriateness of the technology as well as on the behavior of the people that operate it

(Parsons, Simmons, Penn & Furlough, 2006).

Given the interdependence between human and technical systems, socio-technical systems theory suggested that productivity and satisfaction could be maximized via joint optimization. In other words, optimal or organizational functioning would occur only if the social and technical systems were designed to fit each other (Trist, 2003).

For socio-technical design to be appropriate, however, Clealand (2010) suggested that three conditions must be satisfied. First, there must be adequate task differentiation such that the tasks performed are autonomous and form a self-completing whole. This suggests certain minimum of interdependence within the tasks themselves. Second, employees must have adequate boundary control, so they can influence and control transactions within the task environment. Finally, employees must be able to control the immediate task environment so they can regulate their behavior and convert raw materials into finished product. The above theory facilitated understanding of the third study variable and objective to determine effects of job autonomy on employee engagement in private universities in Kenya.

b) Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Vroom (2005) presented a theory of worker motivation, which focused on motivational dynamics as a force within employees. His theory, called the Expectancy Theory, included three concepts, which contributed to the force of motivation: valence, expectancy and instrumentality. Valence represents the importance or value that a particular outcome or result has for the individual. Expectancy refers to the extent that an individual feels his or her efforts will

lead to a particular outcome. Instrumentality reflects the individual's perception of the relationship between direct outcomes and indirect outcomes. Vroom believed that motivation occurs when:(a) outcomes or rewards being offered are perceived by the worker as being desirable;(b) the worker knows what needs to be done to obtain desired outcomes;(c) the worker is confident that he or she is able to do what is necessary to perform adequately. Individual motivation is viewed as a function of a person's perception that his or her increased performance will result in certain rewards, which ultimately aids the pursuit of personal goals. In short, to be motivated, the worker must believe that it is possible to succeed and that he or she will be rewarded for being successful (Vroom, 2005). The above theory facilitated understanding of the fourth study variable and objective to explore effects of job feedback on employee engagement in private Universities in Kenya.

a) Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in doing the work (Rick &Nauret, 2006).It is considered fundamental in building a sense of responsibility in employees. Although most employees are willing to work within the broad constraints of an organization, employees want a certain degree of freedom. People are said to be intrinsically motivated to conduct a certain activity when they are 'freely engaging in activities that they find interesting, that provide novelty and optimal challenge' (Deci& Ryan 2000).

Organ *et al.* (2006:109) argued, autonomy increases employees' willingness to do whatever it takes (including citizenship) to accomplish the task. Employees in highly autonomous jobs, dictates their own job rather than being instructed by their bosses. Autonomy is expected to influence the employee's experienced responsibility for outcome of the work which in turn influences the final work outcome. The Social Exchange Theory (Blau 2006) provides a strong basis for this relationship. In explaining the relationship between job autonomy and OCB, employees who are provided the opportunity to make decisions in their task are expected to feel obliged to respond with positive work behavior such as OCB.

Experts say that workers who believe they are free to make choices in the workplace — and be accountable for their decisions — are happier and more productive. Although the desire for freedom from micromanagement may be universal, there is no cross-cultural definition of autonomy. What people from one culture perceive as workplace freedom, those from another may view as simple disorganization (Sara *et al.*, 2004).

Conceptual Framework

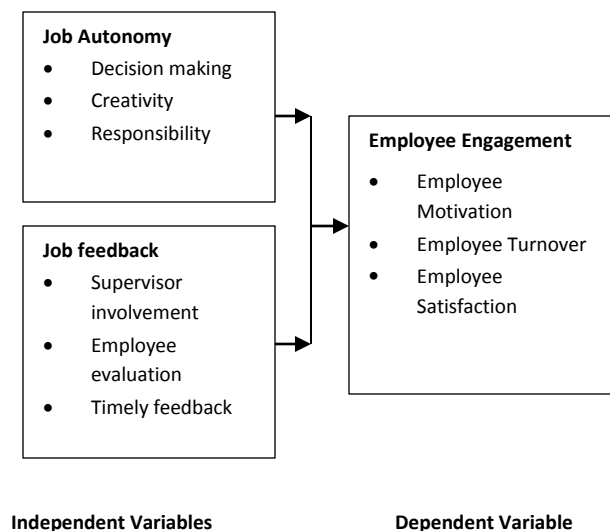


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Research also shows that when employees are given the freedom associated with autonomy, job satisfaction rises. It's theorized that this increased level of job satisfaction in employees stems from a feeling of greater responsibility for the quality of their work. Autonomy has also been shown to increase engagement and happiness, along with decreasing employee turnover. (Reena *et al*, 2009). People whose work is autonomous experience a feeling of responsibility, and are then more likely to invest effort into their work, even in the face of obstacles (Shantz *et al*, 2013). Such feelings of self-worth can generate high levels of engagement.

However, having too much autonomy can backfire. The culture of the organization will play a large role in how successful autonomy can be. For example, some employees work better with little oversight, while others need extra direction. Too little direction can be confused with disorganization, instead of freedom. (Baldoni, J, 2005). Autonomy can take many different forms. Organizations may let employees set their own schedules, choose how to do their work or even elect to work from home. No matter how autonomy is defined, when people feel they have latitude, the results are impressive. Potential benefits include greater employee engagement, high motivation, improved productivity and lower turnover.

b) Job Feedback

Job feedback is the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job provides the individual with direction and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance. Feedback can be positive or negative, but it is best when it is balanced appropriately. Feedback should occur frequently rather than be delayed until the annual evaluation meeting (Hassan *et al*, 2010). The only way employees can make adjustments in their performance is to know how they are performing

now, not later. Managers really lose a golden opportunity to motivate their employees if they forget to praise an employee on doing a great job, or ineffectively praise the employee by providing no personalized examples of how that employee performed well. On the other hand, there is nothing quite so disheartening as learning for the first time during an annual review that some aspect of your performance has been lacking for the past six months, but you were never notified (Hassan *et al*, 2010).

Feedback gives employees the opportunity to change behavior and also to charge forward, but if they don't know what worked and what didn't, then they are lost on what the management expect them to perform to their full potential. Feedback can come directly from the job itself, or it can be provided verbally by management or other employees. For example, salespersons receive information regularly about how many contacts they make per day or weekly and the monetary value of sales made (Hassan *et al*, 2010).

The concept of feedback is explained in different areas in different forms. In a performance evaluation system, it is the prime information to achieve development by confirming or rejecting a performance or behavior (Bee & Bee, 2004:9) from the aspect of interaction between individuals, how others perceive and evaluate an individual's behavior is explained by related data.

According to Towers Perrin (2004), it is also important that employees receive training and performance appraisal in order to feel more valued, involved and hence engaged. Reward and recognition as well as performance appraisal; drive the level of engagement within organizations. The sense of feeling valued and involved is the key driver of employee engagement and these driver origins from various facets including pay & benefits. But it is not the most important, to feel valued, neither is it the least important. It contributes to the factors and

cannot be neglected as people need to be satisfied with their level of pay & benefits before they can naturally think of committing to the business objectives and impacting positively.

Ashford and Cummings, (2003) characterized the concept of feedback as an individual consciously making the effort to develop correct and appropriate behavior in order to achieve the valuable results (Ashford, 2004:466). It has been stated that a performance feedback given in the right way which is meaningful and constructive yields exceedingly effective results in solving problems at work, increasing motivation, engagement, and stimulating learning (London, 2003:3).

c) Employee Engagement

Kahn (2002:694) defines employee engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. The cognitive aspect of employee engagement concerns employees’ beliefs about the organization, its leaders and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns how employees feel about each of those three factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organization and its leaders. The physical aspect of employee engagement concerns the physical energies exerted by individuals to accomplish their roles. Thus, according to Kahn (2002), engagement means to be psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organizational role.

An organization’s talent pool may be categorized into three groups. Engaged, Not Engaged and Actively and Disengaged. Engaged - “Engaged employees work with passion and they feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.” -

“Not - Engaged employees are essentially ‘checked out’; they are sleepwalking through their day, putting time – but not energy and passion- into their work.” “The ‘actively disengaged’ employees are just not unhappy at work; they are busy acting out their unhappiness” (Dee *et al.*, 2013).

To be engaged from an employee’s perspective is equally important. Arguably, employees want the best possible relationship with their organization and they want to be provided with the best possible circumstances, environment or management initiatives that will make them happier, feel valued and feel involved in the organization (Robinson *et al.* 2004). Engaged employees are more willing to “go the extra mile” (Bakker, 2011) often because they invest more of themselves in the job and find meaning and challenge in it (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Further, engaged employees appear to have a more trusting and loyal relationship to the organization (Saks, 2006), are inclined to help colleagues (Bakker *et al.*, 2011), and are more passionate about their work (Attridge, 2009).

On an organizational level, an engaged workforce has been connected with competitive advantage (Bates, 2004), higher customer satisfaction (Fleming & Asplund, 2007), lower turnover (Saks, 2006) and improved performance (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Because of its potential to positively influence critical organizational outcomes, Shuck (2011) insists that engagement has become a strategic imperative and important leverage point for Human Resource (HR) professionals.

Organizations must develop and cultivate engagement, which necessitates a two-way relationship between the employer and the employee (Robinson *et al.*, 2010). This is what brings the passion for work and enthusiasm of the employee to contribute towards the success of the company, and the employee being made

aware of the business objectives. Disengaged situations such as total disconnect from business makes people withdraw from themselves and may be seen as defensive. Companies that properly engage their employees experience a direct link to employee satisfaction, talent retention, customer satisfaction, employee loyalty, safety, productivity and profitability. Failure to effectively engage employees can result in wasted resources, suboptimal organizational performance, high labor turnover and deteriorating employee morale. On the other hand, successfully engaging and committing employees can result in higher levels of organizational performance as well as higher levels of job satisfaction, both of which are much needed in today's environment (Mangundjaya, 2012). Siddhanta *et al.* (2010) state that a well-functioning organization results from employees that are healthy, motivated and committed, that is employees that are engaged. Further, engagement occurs when employees are tied and committed to their job that is when they are interested indeed about their daily occupational activities and it encompasses loyalty, pride and faith in the organization a preparedness to publicly support the organization and above all a marked feeling of personal responsibility.

Empirical Review

a) Job feedback

The united review study conducted by Giga *et al.* (2003), who used parameters similar used in the above study, found out that of all -1990 studies reviewed that received a three star rating or higher, only 19% were employee engagement due to job feedback level interventions. This view is consistent with Kompier, Cooper and Geurt's (200) suggestion that work engagement programs are predominantly positive and should be reactive and tailored to an employee for better performance.

Narteh (2012) in his study of internal marketing and employee commitment surveyed 410 employees of banks in Ghana and investigated four internal marketing practices: empowerment, rewards, training and development and communication and their impact on employee commitment in the retail banking industry. The results indicated that, with the exception of communication, the factors are positively associated with employee commitment. The study concludes that in orders to influence employee behavior in the banking industry in Ghana, bank management must implement measures that provide direct benefit to employees.

b) Job Autonomy

Chughtai & Zafar (2006) also conducted a study with the purpose of determining if selected personal characteristics, and job autonomy, influence employee engagement of Pakistan University teachers. Data was collected from 125 full-time teachers in 33 Universities in Pakistan the results of the study indicated that the above variables have an influence on employee engagement.

In a study of retention of employees in Australian Organizations, Chew (2004) established that younger employees focused on remuneration, training and development, career advancement, challenging work, growth opportunities, and recognition and job autonomy. For older employees autonomy, opportunities to mentor and job challenge were of great importance. A study of 139 academics from Jordanian University (Al- Omari *et al.*, 2009) established that job satisfaction and autonomy had a significant positive effect on intention to stay among the academic staff. A study by Daly *et al.* (2006) on turnover intention of academics in public urban universities, established that structural factors such as faculty work environment, autonomy and communication were related to intent to stay. A

study of academics in Makerere University, (Amutuhaire,2010) established that job autonomy influenced employee engagement. Locally, Kipkebut (2010) in a study on organizational commitment and job autonomy of employees in universities in Kenya established that job autonomy and promotional opportunities, age were some of the factors that influenced employee intention to quit the university.

A critique of the literature

Using job design as certain measurement makes it easier to identify a certain problem by description of the job design, diagnose a certain job and eventually resolve the problem by measuring up to the requirements of the job design. Job design has become fundamental for certain measurements (Bulentetal,2009). Example based on job characteristics model, skill variety; job design gives us the possibility to characterize a certain job and eventually find a suitable person that fits the requirement of the job. This fundamental makes job design important as the work itself.

According to Maryetal(2003), one of the features of job design is that it is a tool that could transform the organizational context in actions. So eventually the job design determines how an employee should do his or her job. The creation of job design could eventually lead to certain competitive advantage when the requirement of job design is already taken in consideration at an early stage of job design.

In recent time job design is gaining more attention as domestic and international landscape has changed, resulting in new kinds of jobs, especially in service and knowledge/ creative sector (Elsback&Hargadon, 2006; Parker, Wall &Cordery, 2001; Rousseau & Fried, 2001). This change has started a rapid increase of autonomy, professionalism and service customization giving the employees more freedom and discretion to

change the job design. These new trends changes the perception of the employees and triggering them to craft their jobs (Wrzesniewski& Dutton, 2001), extending their role (Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 2003), revised their tasks (Staw&Boettger, 2004), and negotiate a new role and exceptional deals (Ilgen& Hollenbeck, 2001; Rousseau, Greenberg, & Ho, 2006) we still have to keep in mind that it has certain limits and still has to be acceptable within the organization, to say it short, it lowers the threshold of acceptance to bring changes in job design by employee itself. In addition employees are getting more information due to technological changes that is in benefit for the autonomy and empowerment in the job design (Sinha& Van de Ven, 2005).

Looking at these starting points of changes it shows that job design is still of high importance and that there are certain shifts of certain decision in creating job design, some will be in the hands of the manager while some has shifted into the hands of the employee themselves.

Research Gap

Recruiting and selecting high potential employees doesn't guarantee that they will perform effectively (Pinder, 2008). Engagement of administrative workers in the educational organizations is rarely studied and poorly understood, even though these employees have a significant influence in the institution and the quality of their performance contributes to the quality of relationships with faculty, students and the public (Scott, 2011).

The researcher seeks to find out the role of job design on employee engagement at Presbyterian University of East Africa. The review of the relevant research in the employee engagement shows that scholars focus literature has identified the critical variables that have been linked to job design such as, sjob autonomy and job feedback (Staw&Boettger, 2004;Sinha& Van de Ven, 2005; Bulentet al,2009; Scott, 2011). Although a number

of studies have found these variables to have significant impact on employee engagement, several studies have argued that these variables only provide partial insight into enhancing employee engagement and that alternative new variables should be brought into job design(Chughtai&Zafar (2006); Narteh,2012).

Additionally, the above mentioned scholars have concentrated their studies in the developed countries and this leaves a gap for the researcher to carry out the same in a developing country like Kenya. In particular, Pinder (2008)) carried out a study of workers in USA revealed that the more design of jobs has been hampered by non-compliance with effective human resource practices and procedure in the organization. This has accounted for the failure of most organizations in meeting up to their expected following employee’s disengagement. Further, not many studies were identified that examined the relationship between job design and employee engagement. Finally, the other gaps identified included; no records were available to this study to show any research on job design on employee engagement in Kenya. This study therefore sought to fill these gaps.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design in collecting data from the respondents. The research design was cross-sectional whereby all the data was collected at the same time through questionnaires at the Presbyterian University of East Africa. The data provided through this design sought to assess the role of job design on employee engagement at Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Target Population of the study

The target population in this study was 535 staff working at Presbyterian University of East Africa. The study target population was divided into three categories as shown in Table 1;

Sampling Frame, Sample size and Sampling technique

The sampling frame used was the human resource register at Presbyterian University of East Africa. Owing to practical difficulties with responses from large survey groups, a meaningful survey sample size had to be determined. An appropriate sample size was calculated. A representative sample size with known confidence and risk levels was selected, based on the work of Yamane (1967) formula which consisted of 84 responses. Therefore, a proportionate sample size of approximate 84 respondents which is 10% precision of the population was selected using a stratified random sampling technique from the identified study population.

Table 1: Sample size Distribution

Stratum	Population(N)	Sample size(n)
Top Management	80	12
Middle level Management	214	34
Low level Management	241	38
Total	535	84

Data Collection Instruments

In this study the main data collection instrument used was questionnaires. A Questionnaire was used since according to Dempsey (2003) they are effective data collection instruments that allow respondents to give much of their opinions

pertaining to the researched problem. According to Kothari (2006) the information obtained from questionnaires is free from bias and researchers influence and thus accurate and valid data was gathered. The questions addressed by the questionnaires sought to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the role of job design on employee engagement at The Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Data Collection Procedure

Primary data presents the actual information that was obtained for the purpose of the research study. Primary data was gathered through the use of questioning method in form of a semi structured questionnaire (open and close ended questions). They further observe that questionnaires have the added advantage of being less costly and using less time as instruments of data collection. The questionnaire, which is semi-structured, was administered through drop and pick-later method to the sampled population. For the main purpose of this research, the study collected primary data and compared it with the available secondary data for the literature review. In a self-administered questionnaire a respondent had the advantage of asking a question when it was not clear to them (Chandran, 2004). Self-administered questionnaires allowed the participants to respond to the questions by themselves and at their own pace. They ease the respondents' burden by giving them the time to think through their responses (Monsen & Horn, 2008).

Data Processing and Analysis

The study used both descriptive statistics, and content analysis to analyze the data. The descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as analysis of frequencies and distribution was employed. Content analysis was used in qualitative data which first was coded to allow the use of some quantitative data analysis instruments. SPSS version 21 was used to aid in

data analysis and the results were then presented in tables to summarize responses for further analysis and facilitate comparison. For this study, the researcher was interested in finding out the role of job design on employee engagement in PUEA. This generated quantitative reports through tabulation, and measure of central tendencies. Regressions and ANOVA test were used to analyze the study variables.

$$Y' = b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$$

Where Y'=Dependent variable and X₁, and X₂ are the four independent variables

Where Y'- Employee Engagement

X₁- Job Autonomy

X₂- Job feedback

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Response Rate

The study targeted a sample size of 84 respondents from which 54 filled in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 64.29%.

Pilot Test Results

A pilot study was carried out to determine reliability of the questionnaires. The pilot study involved sampling respondents in various strata in the organizations. Reliability analysis was subsequently done using Cronbach's Alpha which measured the internal consistency by establishing that certain items within a scale measures the same construct.

Cortina (2008) established the Alpha value threshold at 0.7 and above is regarded as most reliable, thus forming the study's benchmark. Cronbach Alpha was established for every objective which formed a scale. The table below shows that Job autonomy had the highest

reliability ($\alpha=0.815$) and job feedback ($\alpha=0.812$). This illustrates that all the two variables were reliable as their reliability values exceeded the prescribed threshold of 0.7. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability test results

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Job autonomy	0.815	4
Job feedback	0.812	4

Demographic Information

Gender of the respondent

The study sought to determine the gender of the respondent and therefore requested the respondent to indicate their gender.

The study found out that majority of the respondents 53.7% were males where as 46.3% of the respondents were females, this is an indication that both genders were involved in this study and thus the finding of the study did not suffer from gender biasness.

Age distribution

On respondent's age distribution, the findings revealed that; most of the respondents 42% were aged between 41 to 50 years, 30 % of the respondents 30 to 40 years, 16% of the respondents were aged below 30 years, whereas 12% of the respondents were aged above 50 years. This implies participants were well distributed in terms of their age.

Duration of service

The study went further to establish the period of working at the organization. According to the findings most of the respondents (54%) had worked with the organization for duration of 5-10 years. 23% had worked with the organization for a

period less than 6 years and the same percentage worked for a period of 6 to 10 years. 15 % had worked with the organization for more than 10 years whereas 8% had worked with the organization for not more than a year. This implies that majority of the respondents had worked with the organisation for a considerable period of time and thus they were in a position to give credible information relating to this study.

Level of education

The researcher requested the respondents to indicate their highest level of education achieved. From the findings it was revealed that most of the respondents 34% of the respondents held bachelor's degrees, 27% of the respondents were holders of college diploma certificates, 25% of the respondents were holders of masters degrees whereas 14% of the respondents held PhD, this implies that respondents were well educated which means that they were in a position to respond to research questions with ease.

Study variables

a) Job Autonomy

The research sought to determine whether job autonomy affects employee engagement and the findings were as shown in Table 3

Table 3: Effects of Job Autonomy on Employee Engagement

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	77.78
No	12	22.22
Total	54	100

From the research findings in Table 4.6, majority of the respondents as shown by 77.78% were of the opinion that job autonomy affects employee engagement whereas 22.22% of the respondents

were of the contrary opinion. This implies that job autonomy affect employee engagement.

The research went further to establish the elements relating job autonomy on which respondents indicated as shown in Figure 2.

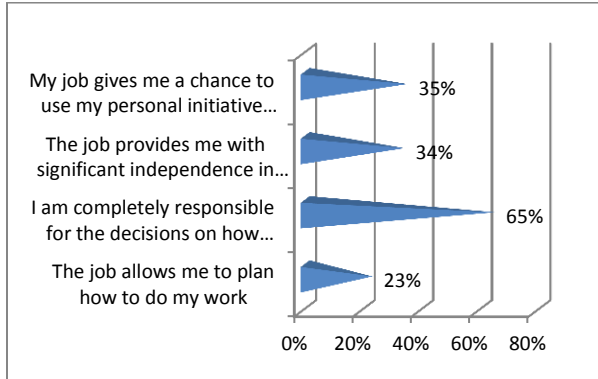


Figure 2: Elements relating Job autonomy

From the research findings in Figure 4.7, 65% of the respondents indicated that employees were completely responsible for the decisions on how and when the work is done, 34% indicated the nature of the job provided employees with significant independence in making decisions, 35% of the employees stated that their job gave them a chance to use their personal initiative in carrying out their duties and 23% of the respondents cited that the nature of the job allowed most of the employees to plan how to do their work. The above findings concurs with the findings by Herzberg (2003), job enrichment provides the opportunity for the employees' psychological growth, while job enlargement merely makes a job structurally bigger is the technique entails enriching job, which refers to the inclusion of greater variety of work content, requiring a higher level of knowledge and skill, giving workers, autonomy and responsibility in terms of planning, directing, and controlling their own performance, and providing the opportunity for personal growth and meaningful work experience.

b) Job Feedback

The research investigated whether job feedback affects employee engagement and the results were as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4: Effects of Feedback on Employee Engagement

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	70.37
No	16	29.63
Total	54	100

According to the research results in Table 4., majority of the respondents as shown by 70.37% were of the opinion that job feedback affects employee engagement whereas 29.63% of the respondents were of the contrary opinion. This implies that job feedback affect employee engagement

The research sought to establish the elements relating job autonomy on employee engagement on which respondents indicated as shown in Figure 3.

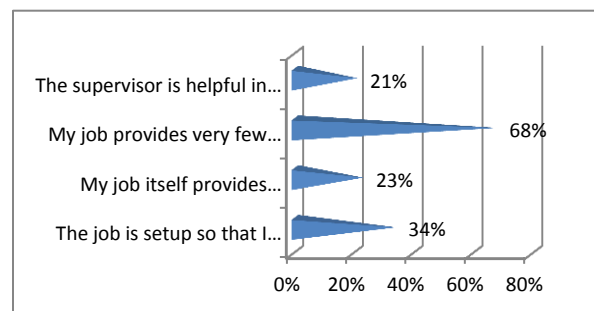


Figure 3: Elements relating Job feedback

From the research findings in Figure 4.8, majority of the respondents 68% indicated that the nature of the job provides very few clues about whether or not performing well., 21% of the respondents cited the supervisor remained helpful in getting

the job done, 24% indicated that the nature job was set up so that employees can get almost constant feedback about how they were performing and 23% of the respondents indicated that that the nature of the job itself provided many chances for employees to figure out how well were performing.

The above findings concur with the findings by Bulentetal, (2009) who stated that supervisors who affect engagement positively by tailoring their management and communication style help their organizations reach their strategic goals.

4.7 Employee Engagement

The research study sought to investigate whether employees enjoyed going to work every day and if they performed to their best. The results were as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Whether employees enjoyed going to work every day and if they performed to their best

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	74.07
No	14	25.93
Total	54	100

From the research findings in Table 5, majority of the respondents as shown by 74.07% agreed that they enjoyed going to work every day and that they performed to their best whereas 25.93% of the respondents were of the contrary opinion. This implies that majority of the employees enjoyed going to work every day and that they performed to their best.

The research sought to establish the elements relating employee engagement on which respondents indicated as shown in Figure 4.

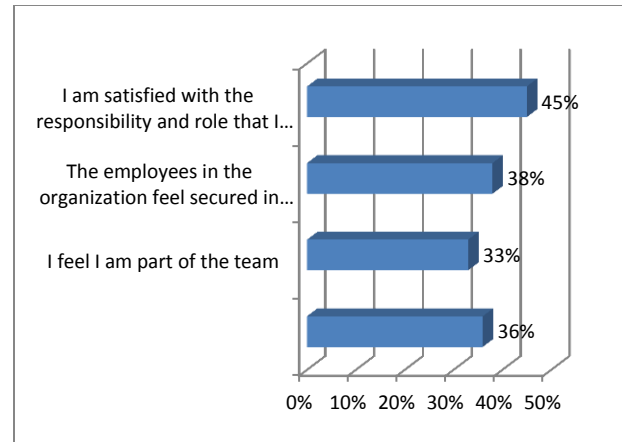


Figure 4: Elements relating employee engagement

From the research findings in Figure 4, the study established that, 45% of the respondents indicated that significant number of employees were satisfied with the responsibility and role that they played in their work, 38% indicated that the employees in the organization felt secured in their job, 36% of the respondents indicated that the organization provided tools and equipment required by employees to perform their tasks efficiently and that 33% of the respondents indicated that they felt to be part of the team. The above findings concurs with the findings by Al-Ahmadi (2009) indicated that the employee level of engagement is positively correlated with performance, which indicates that satisfaction with amount of variety and challenge in one's job actually influence performance.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The study adopted a multiple regression analysis so as to establish the relationship of independent variables and dependent variable that is employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa. The study applied SPSS version 21 to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regression.

Adjusted R squared is coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the dependent

variable due to changes in the independent variable. From the findings in Table 6 the value of adjusted r squared was 0.796 an indication that there was variation of 79.6 percent on employee engagement due to changes in job autonomy and job feedback at 95 percent confidence interval. This shows that 79.6 percent changes in employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa could be accounted to job autonomy and job feedback. R is the correlation coefficient which shows the relationship between the study variables, from the findings shown in the Table 6 is notable that there exists strong positive relationship between the study variables as shown by 0.919. Additionally, this therefore means that factors not studied in this research contribute 20.40% of the employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa and a further research should be conducted to investigate the other factors (20.40%) that affect employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Table 6: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
	.919	0.844	0.796	.223

4.8 Analysis of Variance

From the ANOVA statics Table 7, the study established the regression model had a significance level of 0.1% which is an indication that the data was ideal for making a conclusion on the population parameters as the value of significance (p-value) was less than 5%. The calculated value was greater than the critical value (1.4660>1.3997) an indication that job autonomy and job feedback all affects employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East

Africa. The significance value was less than 0.05 indicating that the model was significant.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.9748	2	.7437	1.4660	.001 ^b
1 Residual	24.86	51	.5073		
Total	27.835	53			

- a. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Job autonomy and Job feedback

Critical value =1.3997

Regression Coefficients

The finding revealed that holding independent variables constant (job autonomy and job feedback to a constant zero), Employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa would be at 11.298, a unit increase in Job autonomy would lead to increase in Employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa by a factor of 0.639 and unit increase in Job feedback would lead to increase in Employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa by a factor of 0.781.

From the data in Table 4.16, it was established that regression equation was $Y = 11.298 + 0.639 X_1 + 0.781 X_2$. Therefore, Employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa = 11.298 + (0.639 x Job Autonomy) + (0.781 x Job feedback). From the results of this study, job feedback influenced more to the employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa. The findings of this study corroborates with literature review by Ashford & Cummings, (2003) that an organization adopting the concept of feedback to employee help consciously in making the effort to develop correct and appropriate behavior in

order to achieve the valuable results(Ashford, 2004).It has that been stated that a performance feedback given in the right way which is meaningful and constructive yields exceedingly effective results in solving problems at work, increasing motivation, engagement, and stimulating learning (London, 2003).

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
	Constant	11.298	.453		2.865	.006
1	Job autonomy	.63	.075	.008	3.1	.003
	Job feedback	.78	.064	.031	4.3	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement in Presbyterian University of East Africa

At 5% level of significance, Job autonomy had a p-value of 0.0003; Job feedback had a p-value of 0.001 Therefore, the most significant factor was Job feedback. The findings are in line with David and Lewis (2006) who indicated that the job feedback mechanisms of an organization motivates employees to perform better thus improving their productivity when they are properly engaged in various activities and management of tasks.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is important to the organization as well as to the individual employees. Many of the world’s best successful organizations are aware that the provisions they make for job autonomy

activities lie at the heart of their ability to attract retain and engage best employees in their organization. From the employee perspective, job autonomy makes employees feel recognized for their strengths and also creates possibilities for developing their careers. Aspects related to job autonomy include decision making, creativity and responsibility with the job autonomy offered by the organization, application of the job autonomy policy, comparison of job autonomy opportunities with other organizations and satisfaction with job autonomy practices. This study sought to find out whether job autonomy affects employee engagement in private Universities in Kenya.

From descriptive analysis majority of respondents stated that job autonomy affect employee engagement to a high extent. The study also established that significant number of employees were not completely responsible for the decisions on how and when the work is done, the nature of the job rarely provided employees with significant independence in making decisions, employees disagreed that their job gave them a chance to use their personal initiative in carrying out their duties. The study further established that the job autonomy was statistically significant and positively influenced employee engagement in Presbyterian university at 5% level of significance. This implies that the job autonomy was an important factor that influenced employee engagement at Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Therefore, from the qualitative analysis, these findings show that the research which sought to establish the influence of job autonomy on employee engagement was achieved because it established that job autonomy influences employee engagement. It was also established through qualitative data that employee’s freedom in decision making, their creativity recognized and responsibility positively influenced employee

engagement at Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Job Feedback

According to literature reviewed, Job feedback carry out the work activities required by the job provides the individual with direction and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance in an organization. Feedback can be positive or negative, but it is best when it is balanced appropriately. Job feedback can help promote an organization and make it attractive to employee engagement. This underscores the fact that employee skills are critically important in employee engagement. Therefore, the study sought to find out if the skill variety affects employee engagement in private Universities in Kenya

From the descriptive statistics, the findings show that job feedback affect employee engagement. Additionally, majority of the respondents agreed that the job is set up so that he or she get almost constant feedback about how well they are doing; the job itself provides chances for employee to figure out how well he or she is doing; the job provides very few clues about whether or not he or she is performing well. The supervisor is helpful in getting the job done. The study further established that the job autonomy was statistically significant and positively influenced employee engagement in Presbyterian university at 5% level of significance. This implies that the job autonomy was an important factor that influenced employee engagement at Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Therefore, from the qualitative analysis, these findings show that the research which sought to establish the influence of job feedback on employee engagement was achieved because it established that it affects employee engagement. It was also established through qualitative data that employee's freedom in superior involvement, employee evaluation and timely feedback

positively influenced employee engagement at Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Employee Engagement

The study revealed that majority of the employees do not enjoy going to work every day and that they don't perform to their best, significant number of employees were dissatisfied with the responsibility and role that they played in their work, the employees in the organization felt insecure in their job, the organization provided tools and equipment required by employees to perform their tasks efficiently , and that significant number of employees felt part of the team and that the employee level of engagement is positively correlated with performance, which indicates that satisfaction with amount of variety and challenge in one's job actually influence performance. Finally it was established all the independent variables affected the employee engagement at Presbyterian University of East Africa. This implies job autonomy and job feedback influence employee engagement at Presbyterian University of East Africa.

Conclusions

The study revealed that Employees' ability to influence decisions at work is one of the most important factors affecting their motivation and psychological well-being thus the study concludes that the level of autonomy influenced employee engagement in Universities in Kenya

The study established that if effective feedback is designed into a performance management program, individual and team performance will improve, which will make the organization more effective thus the study concludes that effective feedback processes influenced employee engagement in Universities in Kenya.

Recommendations

The study recommends that management of Universities in Kenya should adopt a more

systematic design of job in order to improve its employees' performance for the purpose of enhancing quality level of job design as it is essential to work on all 5 dimensions, such as job autonomy and job feedback.

The study recommends that management of Universities in Kenya should give employees freedom associated with autonomy; this will help to increase job satisfaction in employee's, autonomy will also tend to increase motivation and happiness, along with decreasing employee turnover.

The study recommends that management of Universities in Kenya should keep employee expectations in line with the duties assigned to the employee, it's worth noting that expecting more from an employee than they were hired for, or than their background which the organization has prepared them for, can diminish employee performance.

Suggestions for further Research

Since this study sought to establish the role of job design on employee engagement in Kenya, it was established that from literature review most studies are conducted in USA, Canada among other European countries and scanty studies are

available in Africa and specifically in Kenyan organization set up. More so very little has been undertaken to explore job design on employee engagement related to private Universities reason why the researcher call for further studies to be undertaken in Kenya.

The researcher also recommends further studies on job design on employee productivity related to employee satisfaction and encourage more studies on job design approaches, discursive approaches, practitioner /consultant approach and job design theories to build up more scholarly work in this field. Similar studies should also be conducted on the other contemporary trends in job design on employee engagement to provide realistic and contextual solutions to these employee engagement challenges in human resource management.

This study confined itself to the Presbyterian University of East Africa a private University. A comparative study should be carried out to compare whether the findings also apply for the public Universities in Kenya in order to validate whether the findings can be generalized to academic staff in public Universities.

REFERENCES

- Bakker,A.B. (2008). Specific determinants of intrinsic work motivation, burnout and turnover intentions:a study among nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*,vol.29(6) , 493-589.
- Campion,M.& Thayer,P. (2006). Job design: Approches, outcomes and trade-offs. In *Organizational Dynamics*,15 (pp. 66-79).
- Darrah,C. (2002). "Workforce skills in context: Rhetoric Versus reality. In *Work and occupation* (pp. 39-45). New York: Free Press.
- Day,K.M & Delvin,R.A. (2008). "The payoff to work without pay: Volunteer work and an investment in human capital". *Canadian Journal of Economics*,vol.31(5) , 1179-1191.
- Dwivendi,R.S. (2002). *Human Relations and Organization Behaviour*,5th Edition. India: Prentice Hall.
- Frederick.M. (2006). The work design questionnaire: Developing and validating a comprehensive measure for assessing job design. *Journal of Applied Psychology* , 20-39.
- Fried,Y.& Ferris,G. (2005). The validity of the job characteristics model: A review and Meta-analysis. In *Personnel Psychology* (pp. 287-322). India: Prentice Hall.
- Gardner,D.G,&Cummings,L. (2008). Activation theory and job design: Review and onceptualization. *International Journal of Research in Organizational Behaviour*,Vol.10 , 81-122.
- Gary,J.R. (2004). *Motivation in work organizations*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- GoK. (2009). *Sector Performance Standards:Office of the prime minister*. Kenya.
- Golamzadeh. (2009). *Retaining high performance employee through job design*. London: McGraw Hill.
- Grant,A.M. (2010). Employee without a cause.The motivational effects of social impact in public service. *International Public Mngement Behaviour*,vol.31 , 463-479.
- Gulem,A. & Burca,G. (2009). Exploring the antecedents of organiazation: The role of job dimension,individual characteristics and job involvement. *International Journal of Nursing Management*,17(1) , 66-73.
- Hackman,J.R. & Oldham,G.R,. (2004). 2002. *Development of the job diagnostic survey* , 45-55.
- Katz,R. & Van,J. (2002). The loci of work satisfaction. In *Human relations* (pp. 469-486). India: Prentice Hall
- Kemboi,A. (2013). Skill variety, feedback and employee performance:Acase of Moi Teaching and Referall Hospital. *European Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*, vol.5 , 30-47.
- Kothari,C.R. (2008). *Research Methodology:Methods and techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.

- Morgenson,F.P,Delanley-Kinger,K & Hemingway,M.A. (2005). The importance of job autonomy, cognitive ability and job-related skill for predicting job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*,vol 90(2) , 399-406.
- Parsons,E.& Broad,A. (2008). Job motivation and satisfaction: Unpacking the key factors for charity shop manager. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*,13(2) , 121-131
- Robertson.I & Smith,M. (2003). *Motivation and job design: Theory,research and practice*. London : Prentice Hall.
- Ross,D.L. (2008). "Percieved job characteristics and internal work motivation". *Journal of Mngement Development*,24(3) , 253-266.
- Rush,H. (2004). *Job design for motivation:Experiements in job enlargement and job enrichment* . New York: Free Press.
- Taylor,F.E. (2000). *Principles of scientific managemment*. New York: Harper.
- Thompson,C.A & Gonca,G. (2006). Relationships among organizational family support,job autonomy,percieved control and employee well-being. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* , 100-118.
- Torrington,D & Stephen,T. (2008). *Human Resource Management*. Edinburg: Person Education Limited.
- Ugboro,I.O. (2006). Organizational commitment, Job redesign,Employee empowerment and Intent to quit among survivors of restructuring and downsizing. *Journal of Behavioural and Applied Management*,7(3) , 232-254.
- Vroom,V.M. (2002). *Work and motivation*. San Fransisco: Bass Inc.