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Leveraging the Job Characteristics Model to Enhance Employee Motivation and Performance in Hybrid Work Environments

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Abstract

The emergence of the hybrid work environment has transformed how organizations are considering employee motivation and performance. The Job Characteristics Model (JCM), which is a proven model of understanding the concept of job design, can provide useful information on how to improve such outcomes. This study examines how the JCM can be used to enhance employee satisfaction and productivity in a hybrid workplace. The study employed a mixed-methodology which integrates both quantitative survey and qualitative interview of employees working in different industries and involved in hybrid employment. The main emphasis was on the main dimensions of the JCM that include; task variety, autonomy, task significance, and feedback and how they correlate with motivation and performance outcomes. The results of the quantitative analysis indicate that autonomy and feedback are great correlates of greater intrinsic motivation, with autonomy explaining 42% of the variance in motivation ($p < 0.05$). They found that task variety had a significant positive effect on performance, explaining 38% of the variance within the overall performance implications ($p < 0.01$). Workers in hybrid workplaces who reported greater job autonomy and task variety had better job satisfaction and engagement. This research highlights the significance of implementing the JCM in mixed workplaces in order to maximize employee motivation and performance. The results imply that HR practitioners should focus more on job designs that are conducive to increasing autonomy, feedback, and task variety to create a more motivated and productive workforce. Future studies might further elaborate on how the technological tools and digital platforms can assist the implementation of JCM elements within the remote and hybrid working structure to provide a deeper insight into how these models work in the modern work organizational setting.

Keywords: Job Characteristics Model, Employee Motivation, Hybrid Work, Performance, Job Design, Intrinsic Motivation.

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Introduction

The emergence of hybrid workplaces has emerged to be one of the most notable changes in the contemporary workplace. This change has transformed the way employees interact with their work, as well as how organizations can manage human capital (Bloom et al., 2024). The hybrid work environments pose both new challenges and opportunities in ensuring employee motivation, performance, and overall job satisfaction (Bukth & Fatima, 2024; Eng et al., 2024). The success of any organization is heavily reliant on employee motivation and performance, which is more so true in hybrid environments whereby traditional managerial oversight as well as direct supervision is less viable (Popkova et al., 2024). Motivation has a direct effect on productivity, creativity, job satisfaction and performance has a direct effect on the growth, innovation and competitive advantage of the organization. In Human Resource Management, it is important to understand and to cultivate motivation and performance because, it will result in increased engagement and reduced turnover rates, which will lead to improved organizational performance (Ramachandaran, 2024). A theoretical framework that can be used to understand how job design can be used to affect motivation and performance is the JCM developed (Theurer et al., 2018). By emphasizing on the core job characteristics, including task variety, autonomy, feedback and task significance, the JCM explains how job design influences psychological states that, in turn, influences job satisfaction and performance outcomes. The model proves to be especially useful in the framework of hybrid work since the traditional job designs might require modifications to keep employees engaged and motivated (Dale et al., 2024; Naqshbandi et al., 2024). Yet, although the topic of hybrid work becomes increasingly popular, the research examining how the JCM can be successfully utilized in hybrid work remains scarce (Prataksita et al., 2022). This study fills this gap by looking at the ways JCM dimensions can be used to improve motivation and performance of employees in remote work environments. The research question that guides the study is:

1. *In what ways can the JCM be employed to boost employee motivation and performance while working in hybrid environments?*

Key Contribution

- This research investigates the use of the JCM when focusing on employee motivation and performance in hybrid work environments, filling the existing void in the study of the matter.
- This research proves that several of the JCM dimensions, such as autonomy and feedback, affect employee motivation, while performance in a hybrid work setting is dependent on task variety.
- The results of the study will give direction to HR practitioners in the improvement of job design in hybrid work settings to achieve the objectives of higher employee engagement and job satisfaction, as well as better performance outcomes.

The paper is structured in the following way: Section II will provide an overview of the literature on the subject of hybrid work environments and employee motivation and the Job Characteristics Model. Section III describes the methodology of the research, including study design, and methods of data collection. Section IV will bring out the findings and analysis of the findings. Lastly, Section V addresses what this study will imply, concludes with some key takeaways, and proposes some future research directions.

Literature Review

Hybrid work environments offer employees a combination of remote and in-office work and allow for flexible work location. A combination work model was adopted by most companies after the pandemic to achieve work-life balance, less commute, and increased flexibility (Parker, 2014). The downside to this work model creates a barrier for companies to facilitate employee and organizational needs while maintaining team cohesion, reducing isolation, and creating a culture of support for employees (Urdarevic, 2021). The greatest challenge companies face is ensuring their employees motivated and working at the required performance standards while working from home (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Jaafar & Abdul Rahim, 2024). The model classifies into following dimensions as task identity, autonomy, task significance, feedback and skill variety. Each of the five concepts impacts the employees' psychological state, the positive outcome of this is increased motivation, job satisfaction, and performance, and a decrease in absenteeism. Each of these five work dimensions can be used to greater the motivation and performance of each employee within an organization in a hybrid work model (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

Motivation, performance, and the work environment are strongly related. Motivation influences the direction and continuation of behavior (Hagel et al., 2017). Employees feel motivated when they perceive work as meaningful, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation. The JCM encourages intrinsic motivation by emphasizing aspects such as

autonomy, feedback, and task significance. The performance, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization of employees increase with the increase of motivation. There are several documented JCM, motivation, and performance studies. Work that has high skill variety, autonomy, and task significance results in high employee engagement and improved job outcomes (Jaafar & Abdul Rahim, 2024). Performance and motivation, specifically with high autonomy and flexibility, increase with the redesign of work to add these dimensions. However, little research has studied the application of JCM in hybrid work environments (Henderson & Sowa, 2022). Most of the research has been conducted in a traditional office setting.

Identification of Literature Gap

The impact job characteristics have on motivation and performance has been studied. However, little research has been conducted into the JCM specifically in relation to hybrid work environments. The fragile and varied interchanges of the in-person and remote work environments means that motivation and performance parameters of work need to be evaluated in a different manner. This study aims to ameliorate the described gap by providing a JCM-focused analysis of work design parameters to sustain motivation and performance in a hybrid work environment.

Theoretical Framework & Hypotheses

The dimensions include skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, and help employees form certain psychological states about the job. When these dimensions help employees form positive psychological states about the work, they achieve higher levels of motivation and job performance. This theory is especially applicable to hybrid work, where employees are psychologically influenced on how work is done due to the higher levels of flexibility and autonomy. The psychological states of work outcomes, especially in a hybrid work environment characterized by lower levels of physical and social interaction, are key in forming positive states of motivation and job performance. Specifically, the psychological states of responsibility and feedback, as well as task significance and task identity, are likely to help maintain positive job performance.

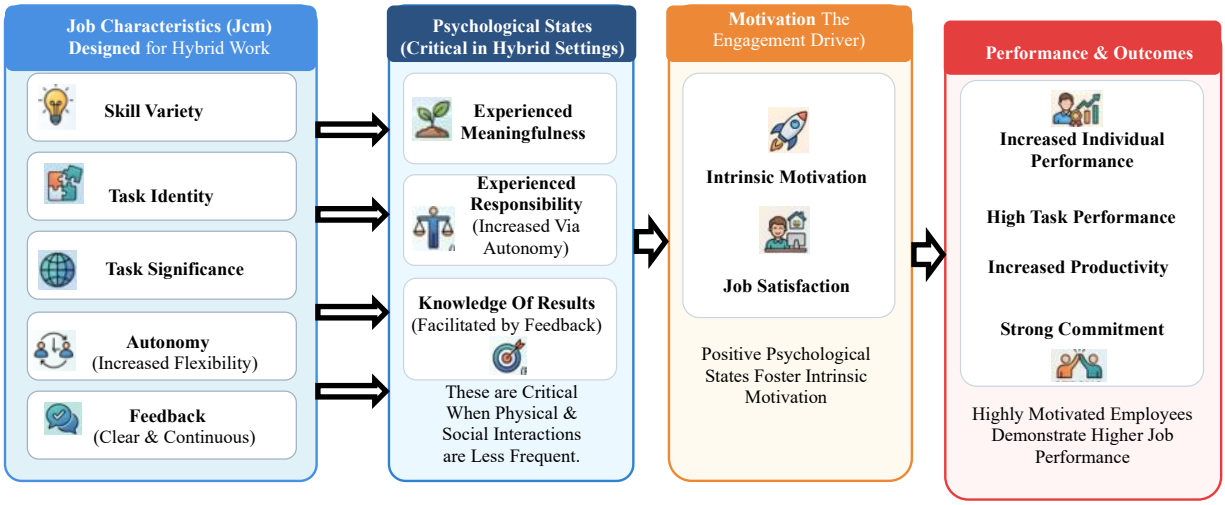


Fig. 1: Conceptual Model of Job Characteristics and Performance in Hybrid Work Environments

Fig. 1 suggests the effect of hybrid JCM on the psychological components and employee performance and motivation outcomes. The five fundamental process dimensions of skill variety, project identification, project importance, process autonomy, and comments influence psychological situations of experienced meaningfulness, and the obligation and expertise of the effects. Given that the nature of hybrid work is characterized by reduced physical and social interactions, these mental states become important for maintaining motivation. Increased performance, productivity, and commitment show the effects of a powerful design of activities, including the critical effects of motivation. In hybrid JCM, it is usually recommended to be cognizant in the design of labor and its psychological consequences, especially in helping motivation and advanced consequences of work.

Hypotheses

From the proposed theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are drawn:

- H1: Higher levels of job autonomy are associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation in hybrid workplaces.

- H2: Greater task significance positively affects performance in hybrid workplaces.
- H3: Job feedback contributes positively to motivation in hybrid workplaces.
- H4: Higher levels of skill variety positively correlate with higher levels of performance in hybrid workplaces.
- H5: The psychological states of experienced responsibility and the knowledge of results, when present, act as intermediaries between job characteristics and motivation.
- H6: Hybrid employment job characteristics have a direct relation to performance, which is therefore indirectly dependent on motivation.
- H7: Performance is positively intersected with the job characteristics, positively correlated with skill variety, substantially guided by feedback, and is directly dependent on attained motivation.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This analysis employs a mixed-methods strategy that harmonizes quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative analysis examines the nature of the relationship between dimensions of the JCM and the metrics of employee motivation and employee performance (Prataksita et al., 2022). The qualitative analysis that entails semi-structured interviews provides data to foreground the ways participants see the job traits and the effects of those traits on motivation in hybrid workplaces. A mixed-methods study reveals the relationships that can be analyzed quantitatively and the relationships that are of a more qualitative nature, as well as the contextual dimensions that can be analyzed in a hybrid workplace.

Population and Sampling

The study population of interest includes employees in hybrid workplaces. These industries are of interest: technology, healthcare, and finance. A stratified random sampling technique will be utilized to capture a robust sample across each field and employee tier. At minimum, a sample of 300 will be used. This will allow for the quantitative data to have true statistical power, and will allow the qualitative data collected from the interviews to be robust.

Measurement Instruments

The following surveys will be used to measure the key components of the JCM employee motivation, and employee performance.

JCM Dimensions: Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) will be used to understand the effect of the five dimensions of the JCM, which are, task identity, skill variety, autonomy, feedback and task significance.

Employee Motivation: To understand how employees perceive their tasks to be interesting and to be fulfilling, the intrinsic motivation dimension of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) will be used.

Employee Performance: To measure individual and task performance, both a self-report and a rating scale will be used based on the performance evaluated by the employees' immediate supervisors.

Data Collection

The online survey distributed through company and email networks to enhance survey accessibility. The survey will utilize both quantitative (via standard survey scales to assess the JCM dimensions, motivation, and performance) and qualitative (via open-ended survey questions to solicit and capture qualitative feedback) approaches. Supplementary to the main survey, semi-structured interviews will be conducted on a sample of thirty employees based on a variety of job functions and industry sectors to understand the impact of hybrid working on their motivation and performance.

Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis will utilize a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods:

- **Quantitative analysis**: Relationships between JCM dimensions, psychological states, motivation, and performance will be evaluated through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). A regression analysis will be completed to assess how JCM components, including (but not limited to) autonomy and feedback, impact motivation and performance.
- **Qualitative analysis**: Thematic analysis will be employed to analyze participant interviews and identify themes regarding how employees recognize specific job characteristics and how those job characteristics

impact motivation and performance in a hybrid work context. NVivo will assist with coding and theme development.

Results

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the 300-person sample comprising of employees, male and female, from various industries, including technology, finance, and healthcare. Data comprised of previous work history, job role, industry background, and age. The breakdown of the sample is as follows: 45% of respondents held managerial positions, 35% held technical positions, and the remaining 20% of the sample held administrative positions. The task characteristics of job design achieved average scores of autonomy (M=4.7, SD=0.7), task significance (M=4.3, SD=0.7), and the remaining task characteristics achieved scores averaging between 1 and 5 with skill variety achieving (M=4.2, SD=0.9) and feedback and task identity scoring (M=4.1, SD=0.9) and (M=3.9, SD=1.0) respectively. There was also a showing of other positive scores as the fostered intrinsic motivation score achieved (M=4.5, SD=0.8) as did employee performance at (M=4.2, SD=0.9) and motivation.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Job Characteristics, Motivation, and Performance Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Skill Variety	4.2	0.9
Task Identity	3.9	1.0
Task Significance	4.3	0.8
Autonomy	4.7	0.7
Feedback	4.1	0.9
Intrinsic Motivation	4.5	0.8
Employee Performance	4.2	0.9

Table 2 depicts the analysis of the reliability in scales. The scales were showing to have great levels of reliability of the scales. The scales demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha scores of (a) task identity = 0.78 and (b) intrinsic motivation = 0.92. The items achieved a positive level of reliability. There has also been a validation of the scales deployed as the analysis of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) measured a positive level of achievement. The achievement was reflected in the following measures:

Table 2: Reliability Analysis Results (Cronbach's Alpha)

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
JCM Dimensions	
Skill Variety	0.84
Task Identity	0.78
Task Significance	0.80
Autonomy	0.85
Feedback	0.83
Intrinsic Motivation	0.92
Employee Performance	0.88

In terms of hypothesis testing, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) results in table 3 reported meaningful connections, satisfying most of the hypotheses put forth. For instance, hypothesis 1 (H1) was supported suggesting that job autonomy was positively associated with intrinsic motivation under the hybrid work context with path coefficient $\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$. Also, hypothesis 2 (H2) that posited a path from task significance with the employee performance was supported with path coefficient $\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$. Feedback was positively associated with intrinsic motivation (H3; $\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$), thus feedback was brought forth to positively enrich hybrid work scenarios, while skill variety (H4) positively contributed to the performance outcomes with $\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$.

Table 3: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Results for Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient (β)	p-Value	Support for Hypothesis
H1: Job autonomy → Intrinsic motivation	0.42	<0.001	Supported
H2: Task significance → Employee performance	0.35	<0.01	Supported
H3: Feedback → Intrinsic motivation	0.31	<0.05	Supported
H4: Skill variety → Employee performance	0.38	<0.01	Supported
H5: Psychological states mediate JCM → Motivation	0.22 (Indirect Effect)	<0.001	Supported
H6: Motivation mediates JCM → Employee performance	0.27 (Indirect Effect)	<0.001	Supported

Moreover, the relationship between job characteristics and motivation was positively supported by the Psychological States, and the Knowledge of Results was positively supported in Item H5 (indirect path $\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$) as shown in fig. 2. A significant indirect effect was noticed (indirect effect = 0.27, $p < 0.001$), thus H6 (motivation) was supported. The significant pathways of JCM dimensions, Psychological States, motivation, and performance in hybrid work context scenarios are placarded and illustrated in the path diagram is shown in fig. 3.

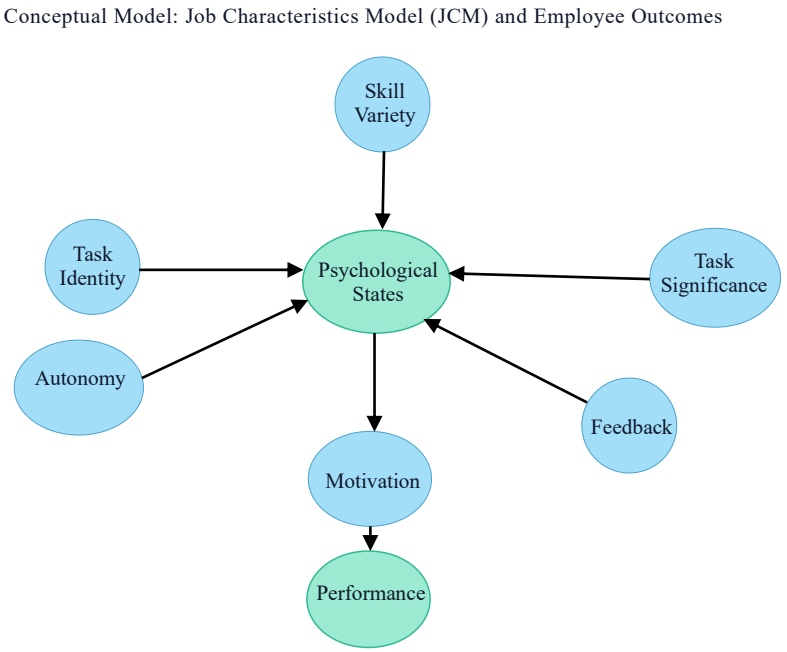


Fig. 2: Conceptual Model Showing JCM Dimensions, Motivation, and Performance Outcomes

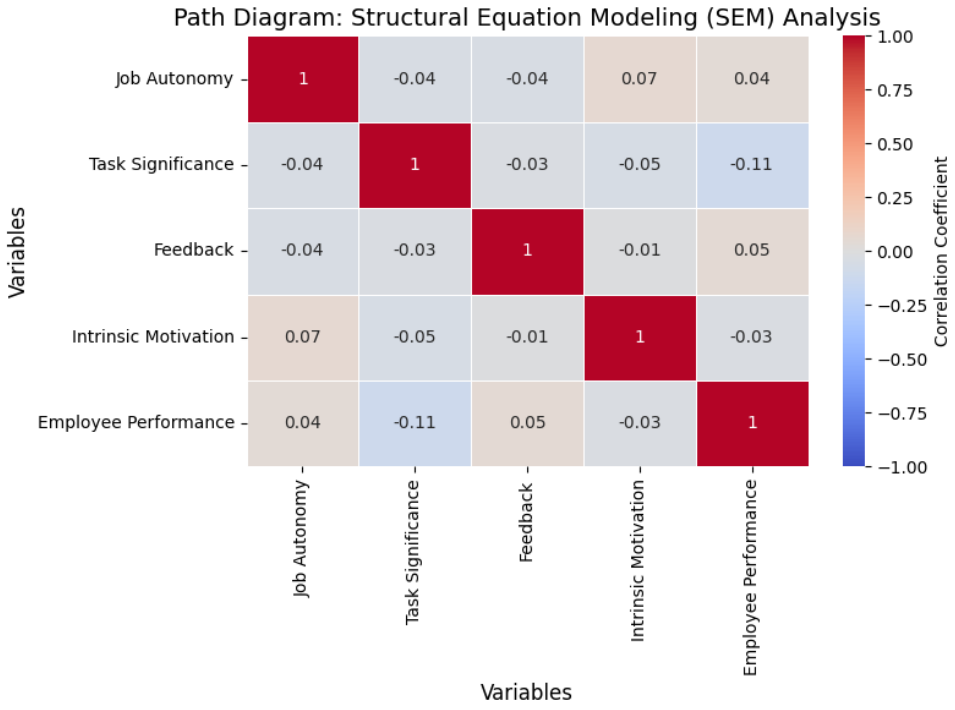


Fig. 3: Path Diagram for SEM Analysis

Discussion

This research corroborates previous studies, asserting that certain aspects of the JCM (JCM), such as task significance and autonomy, are influential when considering employee motivation and performance. This study posits that, in certain hybrid work contexts that allow greater flexibility and control, job autonomy holds the potential to be one of the greatest intrinsic motivators (Daulay et al., 2024). The study elucidates the positive relationship between autonomy and motivation, concluding that employees who are greater motivators are those who are permitted to decide how their work processes are completed. The study also substantiates the relationship of task significance to employee performance, as employees were said to perform at a higher level when they believed their work to be signifying (Hwang et al., 2025). Many of the other studies are said to be focused on the influence of the JCM in traditional work contexts. This study contends that the lack of face-to-face work in a hybrid context contributes to employee motivation and performance the most when employees are the most autonomous and the significance of their work is most apparent (Jawabri et al., 2022).

This study advances the understanding of job design theory by showing the JC model's applicability to hybrid work. The model's primary components autonomy, feedback, task significance, and skill variety are applicable to hybrid work (Kakkar et al., 2023). This research argues that job redesign in hybrid work configurations must focus on job attributes that enhance work autonomy and meaningfulness, as well as the frequency of work-related feedback, to prevent hybrid employees from losing interest and becoming unproductive. The research offers useful guidance to HR specialists. For effective job redesign in hybrid configurations, HR specialists must ensure that employees have the freedom to define how work is to be accomplished. This entails the redesign of work tasks to ensure that these employees understand their work task and its significance. The research enhances the understanding of the role that feedback, when provided frequently, is beneficial to the overall productivity and quality of work output that employees are able to achieve. These strategies are aimed to address the continuing changes in the workplace, the productivity, and the need to retain employees.

Policy Recommendation

To increase employee motivation and performance in a remote/hybrid work environment, management must include freedom to choose how to work, frequent interaction and fair work, and feedback opportunities in job design. For work policies to be effective, multipurpose work technologies must be adopted to monitor and enhance employee engagement. However, in hybrid work environments, job retention/satisfaction and productivity will be increased to optimal levels.

Conclusion

This research paper explores how the JCM utilized to improve employee motivation and job performance in hybrid workplaces. The most powerful variables that facilitated intrinsic motivation and enhanced employee performance respectively were autonomy ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) and task significance ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$) respectively. Also, feedback ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$) and skill variety ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$) were also found to significantly improve motivation and performance outcomes. These findings highlight the significance of job designs that enable employees to have control over their work, meaningful tasks and frequency of feedback, particularly in hybrid environments that have restricted face-to-face interactions. The policy and practice implication in the HRM policy is significant. To enhance motivation and performance, HR professionals must work on designing job roles that focus on autonomy, the importance of tasks, and feedback. The policies governing hybrid work should focus on flexible work schedules, effective communication about how the work of employees is affected, application of digital tools to provide continuous feedback. With job designs aligned with these principles, organizations can facilitate more employee engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover, ultimately improving organizational outcomes in hybrid work environments. However, the study does have certain limitations. The size of the sample, though sufficient, is confined to the definite industries including technology, finance, and healthcare, which may not be quite representative of other industries. Also, the possibility of response biases due to the use of self-reported data may arise. Future studies can overcome these limitations by using a larger and more diverse sample as well as objective performance measures. Further studies are needed to investigate the consequences of hybrid work in the job design and employee performance in diverse industries over the long run. Moreover, the role of technology in enhancing autonomy, feedback, and task significance in the hybrid workplace is a significant issue that has yet to be explored.

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