

Job Descriptions as Predictors of Job Involvement: Empirical Evidence from Civil Servants in Enugu State

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ABSTRACT: *This present study investigated job descriptions as predictors of job involvement among employees. One hundred and thirty-four participants comprising 64 male and 70 female civil servants in Enugu between the age of 28 to 49 years ($M = 39.52$; $SD = 6.29$) were sampled using purposive sample technique. Job Description Index (JDI) and Job Involvement Scale (JIS) were used in data collection. A correlational survey design was adopted while multiple regression statistics was employed in testing the hypotheses, which stated that; job descriptions jointly and independently will not significantly predict job involvement. The results revealed that hypotheses were accepted because job descriptions did not significantly predict job involvement of employees. It was concluded that job descriptions' non-significant prediction of job involvement indicated that there are other factors apart from these job facets that are keeping the workers to their jobs.*

KEYWORDS: Job descriptions, Job involvement, Civil servants.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Job involvement has emerged as an important variable in organisational research. It has been defined, as an individual's psychological identification of commitment to his or her job (Kanungo, 1982). Muchinsky (2000) defined job involvement as the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with his or her work and the importance of work to one's self-image. Job involvement involves the internalisation of values about the goodness of work or the importance of work in the worth of the individual (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965). So, the effect of organisational structure and its environment (like supervisor, co-workers, promotional opportunities, pay etc) on the behaviour of its members has been an important issue of discussion and analysis over the years. For instance; Brown (1996) asserted that people may be stimulated by and drawn deeply into their work, or they are alleviated from it mentally and emotionally. He went further to state that, involvement implies a positive and relatively complete state of engagement of core aspects of the self in the job, whereas a state of alleviation implies a loss of individuality and separation of the self from the work environment (Brown, 1996).

However, during the early days of development of industrial psychology, only physical environment in the workplace was given importance and was considered a predominant determinant of employees' productivity (Sirvastava, 2008). However, no consistent relationship could be noted between those components of physical work environment and job involvement. After Hawthorne studies, industrial psychologist started shifting attention to the study of the social and psychological environment and its effects on employees' behaviour (Scott, Jusanne & Steven, 2000; Fine & Kabruck, 1978; Finkleman & Glass, 1970). Research studies over the past two decades, which have explored the construct of job involvement, are been studied with different perspective in the organisation. Fostering job involvement is an important organisational objective because many researchers consider it a primary determinant of organisational effectiveness (Pferffier, 1994) and individual motivation (Hackman & Lawler, 1971). The rationale is that, as employees become increasingly motivated to perform in their jobs, the likelihood their becoming job involved increases significantly. A well involved workforce feels that organisation value them and they are playing an essential role within their organisation which significantly enhance both employees as well as organisational performance (Fossey & Harvey, 2010). Suffice it to say that, in the world of work, peace and harmony are the keys for productivity and

growth in any organisation. Organisations can achieve this only if they have employees who are involved in the job they do for the organisation and employers who fulfil the various job descriptions due to the employees satisfactorily.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the olden days, once people graduate from schools they are given automatic employment in ministries according to their field of studies and they are held in high esteem by the society, hence communities will collectively sponsor their sons and daughters in the university just to have someone in the government. These persons work with every sense of involvement due to the attractiveness of their job descriptions. There were relatively peace and harmony as you hardly heard of strike, protest and the like. However, gone are the days, recently in Nigeria, it is no longer news on the issue of underemployment and the high level of unemployment. People who work in the ministries are seen as no do well and last hope of a common man. That notwithstanding, people still work here, with various job descriptions. For instance, the take home pay a civil servant receives as salary cannot even take him/her home. A visit to any of these ministries will tell you that all is not well. As workers struggle to survive, the job has to suffer setbacks. If workers are not satisfied with their job descriptions probably they are not going to be involved in the job, hence the incessant strikes, protests and the like. But they will not quit. Therefore, this study investigated job descriptions as predictors of job involvement among employees.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study was to investigate job descriptions as predictors of job involvement among civil servant employees. Specifically, it aimed at:

- 1 Determining whether job descriptions jointly will predict job involvement among civil servant employees.
- 2 Examining whether job descriptions independently will predict job involvement among civil servant employees.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptually, the construct of job involvement is somewhat similar to organisational commitment in that they are both concerned with an employee's identification with the work experience. However, the constructs differ in that job involvement is more closely associated identification with one's immediate work activities whereas organisational commitment refers to one's attachment to the organisation (Brown, 1996). Slee-Smith (1973) maintains that job involvement means the kind of co-operation and commitment that result in people finding significance and achievement in their work. Saleh and Hosek (1976) cited in Kanungo (1979) argued that job involvement is a complex concept based on cognition (the extent to which the individual identifies with the job). Action (the extent to which the individual actively participate in the job) and feeling (the extent to which the individual considers job performance important to personal self-worth). Lodahl and Kejner (1965) believed that there are four sub-dimensions that are important to job involvement:

Response to work: Employees have expectations about work, and the extent to which these expectations are met determine the level of job involvement they experience, which in turn, determine their response to work. Diener et al. (1994) cited in Riipen (1997) argue that employees are more job involved if their needs are fulfilled as a result of the congruence between job expectations and the job itself.

Expressions of being job involved: the way in which employees expresses job involvement defers from person to person, and in accordance with the level of job involvement expressed. For example, some employees may express high job involvement by thinking of the job even when they are not at work, while others may become depressed if they fail at something related to the job (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965).

Sense of duty towards work: Employees who are highly job involved have a great sense of duty towards work, for example, an employee who is willing to work overtime without pay in order to complete an assigned task.

Feelings about unfinished work and absenteeism: Employees who are job involved avoid being absent from work and feel guilty about unfinished work (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965).

Researchers have often debated whether job involvement occurs as a result of value orientations, occurring as an individual difference variable and a personal characteristics that differ from person to person (Dubin, 1956; Lodahl & kejner, 1965) or whether it occurs as a function of the situation (Bass, 1965; Vroom, 1962) or as a result of an individual – situation interaction (Lawler & Hall, 1970; Lodahl & Kejner, 1965).

Theoretically, to further understand this job involvement concept in this study, the researchers anchored it on Vroom (1964) theory of expectancy. According to the theory, administrators should make good use of personal expectancy to induce employees. This is based on the radium entry concept that inclination for an individual's action is determined by possible expected results and the relationship between the results and the action. To take a different approach, job involvement for an employee is determined by his/her expectancy

which results in incentives for action. If on the other hand, expectations are higher than the inducement provided by the organisation job involvement will decrease (see figure 1).

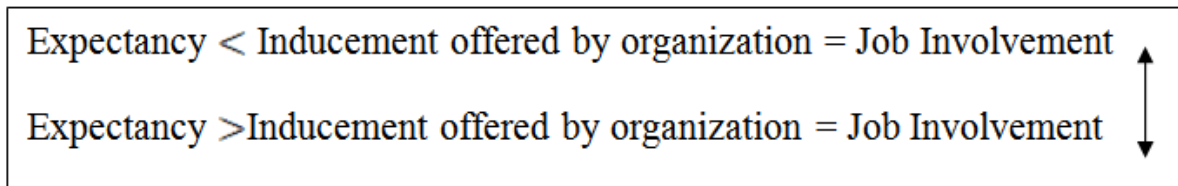


Figure 1: The Expectancy Theory Model of Vroom (1964).

However, employees bring high level of competence and expertise into an organisation and expect something in return if they are to remain with the organisation. They are therefore motivated by different things and based on their assessment of the organisation's job components; they choose whether or not to give their best effort (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel & Pierce, 2013), or to disrupt the peace and harmony in the organisation by engaging in some anti-work behaviours like strike, protest etc. This will always happen when the management/employers fail to address the various job components that are due to the workers appropriately. In other words, certain types of jobs descriptions or job characteristics of the work situation influence the degree to which an individual becomes involved in his or her job. That is to say, committed employees with high levels of job involvement are considered as an important asset to an organisation and keeping the employee motivation, commitment and job involvement up is always rewarding to a business as involved employees are more productive and less labour turnover (Fossey & Harvey, 2010).

On the other hand, the influence of various job descriptions has been extensively examined in the past two decades. The concept of job descriptions literally stands for the list of the general tasks, or functions, and responsibilities of a position. It may often include to whom the position reports, specifications such as the qualifications or skills needed by the person in the job, or a salary range (Torrington & Hall, 1991). However, job descriptions may serve a number of purposes, whether for internal management, performance reviews, recruitment, or something else, job descriptions may have other advantages such as:

- ❖ Improving cooperation by giving all members of the organisation insight into existing responsibilities/roles;
- ❖ Enabling career moves within the organisation;
- ❖ Determination of amount of pay per function;
- ❖ Increase of result by specification of responsibilities and key performance indicators;
- ❖ Development of job owner by specification and competencies.

More so, job analysis which is often confused with job descriptions is the process of gathering, analysing, and structuring information about a job's components, characteristics, and job requirement (Sanchez & Levine, 2000). In other words, the job analysis is the process of determining the work activities and requirement and job descriptions are the written result of the job analysis. Job analysis and job descriptions serve as the basis for the many human resources activities including employee selection, evaluation, training, and work design (Brannick & Levine, 2002).

However, this study is out to address the employees' evaluation of their job descriptions which will, in turn, affect their job attitude. Research has revealed that people develop overall feelings about their jobs as well as about selected dimensions or facets of their job, such as their supervisor, co-workers, promotional opportunities, pay, and the work itself. The job description index (JDI), created by Smith, Kendal, and Hulin (1969) is a specific questionnaire of job satisfaction that has been widely used. It measures one's satisfaction in five facets as mentioned above. That is, it describes how contented an individual is with his or her job. The happier people are within their job, the more satisfied they are said to be. So, job involvement can thus be viewed as a function of the extent to which the job can satisfy the individual's current needs. In other words, employees' psychological identification with a specific job depends on the extent of their needs and their perceptions of the potential of the job descriptions to satisfy them (Emery & Barker, 2007). Scott et al. (2000) reported that working conditions associated with employees job involvement, these working conditions are contained in Job description Research, has shown a wide range of correlations between job involvement and other work – related constructs,

Empirically, Diefendorff, Brown, Kanan, & Lord (2002) found a small but significant correlation between job involvement and supervisor – rated in – role performance. Rotenberry and Moberg (2007), also, using the same measure of job involvement as Diefendorff et al., (2002), reported a small but significant positive correlation between job involvement and in – role performance. Similarly, Govender and Parumasur (2010) in their study with 145 employees, assesses the current level of, and relationship between, employee motivation and job involvement among permanent and temporary employees in various department in a financial institution. The cross-sectional study result reveals that there are significant interrelations among the majority of dimensions and sub- dimension of employee motivation and job involvement. From the foregoing,

there is paucity of studies on the study variables and as such created a gap in knowledge in the understanding of job description and job involvement which are important aspect of organisational behaviour. Hence, this study is geared towards examining job descriptions as predictors of job involvement among employees.

Hypotheses

Therefore, it was hypothesised that:

- 1 Job descriptions jointly will significantly predict job involvement among civil servant employees.
- 2 Job descriptions independently will significantly predict job involvement among civil servant employees.

V. METHOD

Participants: A total of 134 participants comprising 64 male and 70 female employees between the age of 28 to 49 years ($M = 39.52, SD = 3.29$) the participants were sampled using purposive sampling technique from the population of civil servant employees in Enugu State who are on level 12 and below.

Instruments: The instruments used in this study were two: Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and Job Involvement Scale (JIS).

JDI is a 72-item inventory developed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969) designed to measure the feelings a worker has about different aspects of his/her job. It has direct and reverse scoring of items on 4-point Likert format. A test – retest coefficient of reliability with a time interval of 16 months was employed by Schneider and Dachler (1978) for American samples of 541 managers while Mogaji (1997) employed an interval of 72 days for Nigerian samples of 60 supervisors.

Subscales	American Samples	Nigerian Samples
a. Work	.61	.71
b. Pay	.61	.13
c. Promotion	.64	.26
d. Supervision	.46	.81
e. Co-workers	.47	.83

Coefficients of concurrent validity were obtained correlating Job Description Index with Job Involvement Scale (Lodall & Kejner, 1965) for a sample of 218 American by Saal (1978) and a sample of 60 Nigerians by Mogaji (1997)

Subscales	American Samples	Nigerian Samples
a. Work	.52	.23
b. Pay	.33	-.09
c. Promotion	.24	-.16
d. Supervision	.47	-.09
e. Co-workers	.29	-.11

Job Involvement Scale is a 20-item inventory developed by Lodall and Kejner (1965) designed to measure job involvement. That is the extent to which a person is attached and engrossed in his/her general employment circumstances and the concepts is distinct from the concept of job satisfaction and job motivation. There is direct and reverse scoring of the items.

Mogaji (1997) provided the properties for Nigerian samples. Lodall and Kejner (1965) obtained Spearman-Brown internal reliability coefficients of .72 and .80 for Female and Male respectively. The coefficient of test-retest reliability obtained in an interval of 72 days is .90. Concurrent validity was obtained by correlating Job Involvement with scales of Job Description Index (Smith et al. 1969).

Procedure: A total of 150 copies of the questionnaires were administered within 2 weeks. This administration was carried out among civil servants in Enugu metropolis which include the following offices, civil service commission ministry of Lands, ministry of justice and ENSUPEB (Enugu State Universal Primary Education Board). This was possible after obtaining permission and rapport with the participants on the nature of the research. A staff was always nominated to anchor for the researchers in the various office sampled. 142 (94.67%) copies of the questionnaire were returned, 8 (5.33%) copies were discarded due to error in completion. Hence, 134 (89.33%) copies were scored and analyzed in testing the hypotheses.

Design/statistics: The study has job descriptions as its predictor variable, while job involvement is the criterion variable. Correlation design was adopted for the study while Multiple Linear Regression statistic was used in testing the hypothesis of this study.

VI. RESULTS

Table 1: Summary table of descriptive statistics and correlation between job descriptions and job involvement (N= 134)

	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Job Involvement	33.72	6.56	1					
2	Work	32.87	8.52	-.00	1				
3	Pay	5.19	2.79	.10	-.02	1			
4	Promotion	9.52	1.35	-.02	.06	.05	1		
5	Supervision	31.07	6.60	-.04	.05	-.06	.01	1	
6	Co-worker	42.62	6.99	.15	.06	-.07	.09	.07	1

*p<.05

From table 1, the results revealed that all the facets of job descriptions (work, pay, promotion, supervision and co-worker) were found not to significantly correlate with job involvement of employees at $p > .05$ level of significance. They were all inversely related with job involvement except for co-worker that had a positive relation. This implied that job involvements among employees in the civil service are not as a result of the job descriptions they encounter on the job.

Table 2: Summary table of multiple linear regression analysis on job descriptions as predictors of job involvement (N= 134)

Model	R	R ²	F	β	t	P	95% CI
Job involvement	.199	.039	1.052			.39	
Work				-.01	-.07	.95	[-.14, .13]
Pay				.12	1.32	.19	[-.14, .68]
Promotion				-.04	-.42	.67	[-1.02, .66]
Supervision				-.04	-.46	.65	[-.21, .13]
Co-worker				.17	1.91	.06	[-.01, .32]

*P<.05

Results in table 2 indicated that the multiple regression analysis revealed that jointly, there was no significant prediction between the predictor variables and criterion variable, as all the facets of job descriptions (work, pay, promotion, supervision, and co-worker) accounted for 3.9% variance in job involvement, with $F(5,128) = 1.05, p > .39, R = .19$. In the same vein, independently, none of the job descriptions facet predicted job involvement at $p > .05$ level significance. Thus, the hypotheses were rejected because job descriptions did not significantly predicts job involvement of employees in the civil service.

VII.DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study revealed that the hypotheses tested which stated that “job descriptions jointly and independently will predict job involvement among civil servant employees”, was rejected. Meaning that, job descriptions jointly and independently did not predict job involvement among civil servant employees. That is, independently, the facets of job description such as work, promotion, supervision and co-worker showed no noticeable relationship with job involvement.

The above finding happened to disagree with previous studies for example (Diefendorff et al., 2002; Govender & Parumasur, 2010) that found a small but a significant correlation between job involvement and supervisor-rated in-role performance. However, the outcome of the study was not surprising as civil servants ought to show involvement in other not lose their job since getting another one is an uphill task in Nigeria. Yes, they are not satisfied with their job descriptions, which portrayed the level of negligence by the government on its workers’ welfare. This go a long way to confirming the adage that says ‘Afuro ka eme, eme Ka afuru’ meaning ‘when the desirable is not available, you make the available desirable’. The importance of job descriptions cannot be overemphasised, because they are those things that generate agitations, bickering and anti-work behaviours that usually disrupt organisational peace and harmony.

Implications of the Findings

The major implications of the findings of this study hinge on the fact that employees’ job facets not appropriately attended to tends to go a long way in producing feeling of alienation of purpose, alienation in the organisation or feeling of separation between what the employees see as their life and the job they do as that will end in anarchy.

It portrays the eye-service syndrome in civil service which produces perceived job involvement among workers which is not the ideal thing, meaning that something illegal or otherwise are going on underneath.

It implies governments' insensitiveness to the core job facets of employees and the need for employers to endeavours to foster good working conditions for their employees.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study sought to investigate job descriptions as predictors of job involvement among civil servant employees. The results of the current study revealed that a very unique no significant relationship between facets of job descriptions and job involvement indeed exists. To this end, it was concluded that regardless of the fact that the civil servant employees showed involvement with their job, the non-significant prediction by job descriptions indicate that there are other factors apart from these job facets that are keeping the workers to their jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommended that, organizations and employers can reap the positive benefits of job involvement by providing resources to employees at the level of job description (work, pay, promotion, supervisor and co-worker support) this will offer a growth towards positive job involvement among the employees and reduce the tendencies of anarchy among the employees.

More so, employers should restructure policies concerning job descriptions in order to consolidate on the employees' job involvement; this would increase satisfaction, performance, and productivity.

Limitations of the Study

Although the findings of this study are useful, it is limited by several factors. One limitation of this study is that it uses a self – report questionnaire.

Also, the use of only civil servants limits the generalisation of the result to the entire or larger population.

Too much items on the questionnaire which lead to non-completion of some the items which rendered such questionnaire invalid thereby reducing the number of the participants.

Suggestion for Further Studies

In view of the above findings, the researcher suggested that future researchers should replicate this study for cross – validation purposes. The use of larger samples and a broader geographic base is recommended. Also, replication of this study with samples from other sectors of the economy, public, co-operate and private sectors to increase the knowledge concerning job descriptions as a very important determinant of organisational behaviour.

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