

## THE EFFECTS OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS TOWARDS JOB ENGAGEMENT AMONG ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AT ROYAL MALAYSIA POLICE, MALAYSIA

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### **Abstract:**

Companies have become critical in recent years due to the global economic downturn and reduction in engagement. Job engagement is a good and thorough emotional and cognitive state associated with work characteristics such as persistence and dispersion. This study looked at how work factors affected enforcement officers' job engagement. The study's goals were to investigate the links between job qualities and job engagement, as well as to discover predictors of job features (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) that lead to job engagement. A snowball sampling technique was used, with enforcement officers from the Royal Malaysian Police invited to participate in this study. 138 law enforcement officers completed the questionnaire. The research revealed the majority of participants were male (73.9%), aged (31-40 years old, 56.5%), married (84.8%), and had 6-10 years of job experience (27%). The association between work features and job engagement was discovered to be favorable, significant, and substantial ( $r=.586$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The study also found that the element of Task Identity was the most influential or sole predictor of job engagement ( $\beta =.330$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) followed by Task Significance ( $\beta =.220$ ,  $p <0.05$ ), Feedback and Skill Variety respectively ( $\beta =.213$ ,  $p <0.05$ ,  $\beta =.140$ ,  $p <0.05$ ). It is strongly recommended that enforcement officers be assigned task identities to boost their job engagement, particularly for new officers who must deal with unforeseen adversaries while completing a comprehensive and identifiable piece of work. A bigger sample size is recommended for future research to ensure that the findings may be generalized to other similar groups.

**Keywords:** Job Engagement, Physical Engagement, Cognitive Engagement, Emotional Engagement

### **Introduction**

Organisations must recognize that employees have distinct needs and desires that must be satisfied as a result of their involvement in the firm. This engagement can also be a factor in successful and lucrative businesses. This is particularly true for the service business. Zuniga (2023) remarked that the service business is encountering challenges as client expectations alter, resulting in high demands on staff, high turnover, and low engagement. Employees that are engaged have a wealth of resources to put into their work (Bakker, 2017). As a result, job engagement improves an employee's ability to participate in proactive behaviours (Harju Hakanen and Schaufeli, 2016). Job engagement has been shown to benefit both individuals and organisations. A person builds a

relationship with a corporation, which results in increased profits. According to Karanika-Murray et al. (2015), job engagement has a favourable impact on employees' job satisfaction and performance. As a result, pleasant experiences and mindsets can boost work outcomes, including attitude and intention.

### **Problem Statement**

Businesses face unprecedented problems (Juergensen, Guimón, & Narula, 2020). From the 1990s to the present, the concept of job engagement has been heavily contested in a variety of fields. Common meanings for engagement include involvement, commitment, excitement, enthusiasm, absorption, focused effort, passion, dedication, and energy. Employees are disengaged with job characteristics because persuasiveness is the most challenging aspect of building values in organizational behaviour that mirror the employee's personality. Business owners have been dubious in recent years of the global recession and the decrease in employee engagement induced by the influx of young people (Park, 2019). In an uncertain world, companies use processes and tools to plan work. Allowing employees to create their work environment based on their unique requirements and preferences could be one solution to the current problem (Mun et al., 2022). As a result of these scenarios, businesses are facing unprecedented problems (Juergensen, Guimón, & Narula, 2020). According to Osler and Zahavi (2022), internet platforms are gradually replacing traditional modes of contact in many organisations. This trend will have a substantial impact on firms' plans for creating a work culture that encourages engagement.

### **Research Questions**

- i. To examine the relationships between job characteristics and job engagement.
- ii. To identify the predictors of job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) towards job engagement.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Job Characteristics***

In 1975, Oldham and Hackman constructed the term "job characteristics". Job qualities' initial version comprised four job qualities. Hackman and Oldham (1975) defined task significance as the fifth factor that determines workplace conduct. The Job Characteristics Model assumes that if employees accomplish three psychological states, namely perceiving their job as meaningful, feeling accountable for the consequences of their work, and being aware of the results of their work, they will perform well both professionally and individually. Job features have been connected to distress and mental health difficulties in specific occupations. Job features contribute to crucial psychological states that influence personal and professional outcomes based on the employee's growth needs (Bohlander & Snell, 2013). According to Stajkovic (2006), in order to be effective, workers must have both talent (characteristics) and a strong will to perform tasks. Job features are affective aspects that trigger crucial psychological states in employees, influencing their intrinsic motivation (Fernet, Trépanier, Austin, Gagne, & Forest, 2015). According to the JCM, high-paying occupations with these traits are more inspiring, gratifying, and engaging for employees, which leads to better performance and reduced employee turnover rates. Organisations have increasingly adopted the approach to create more meaningful and rewarding work for their people.

#### ***Skill Variety***

Skill variety was defined as the amount to which a work demands individuals to accomplish a wide range of operations while also using a variety of equipment and methods. Skill variation is a job scope component that influences a job's complexity and cognitive difficulties (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). According to Buys, Olckers, and Schaap (2007), the variety and complexity of a work appear to be a combination of expertise and talent required to carry it out. Chopra (2014) defines skill variety as the set of abilities and knowledge needed for a job, as well as the criteria used to pick candidates. In other words, it refers to the degree to which a job necessitates a diversity of

behaviours when completing the work; it comprises the use of a person's diverse abilities and attributes to achieve a goal. This means that people pursuing high-skilled employment will need a variety of skills and qualifications to fulfil their work.

### ***Task Identity***

Task identity and task significance are work scope characteristics that influence the importance of a job and its impact on other people's lives (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). It can also refer to acquiring a complete and unique set of responsibilities in which an employee believes they have made an important contribution to a noteworthy production or achievement. According to Snell, Bohlander, and Bohlander (2010), task identity is the degree at which a job necessitates the execution of a significant piece of work from start to finish in order to create a viable result. People want to observe a task from start to completion, as well as completed tasks, when conveying a sense of purpose (Ryan, Ghazali, & Mohsin, 2011). Jobs with low task identity, on the other hand, may involve working on a smaller component of a bigger project or process, resulting in a less distinct sense of accomplishment or connection to the end product or outcome.

### ***Task Significance***

Hackman and Oldham (1975) defined task importance as the degree to which the job is dependent on the execution of a 'complete' and identifiable aspect of the job, i.e., completing a job from beginning to end with a discernible consequence. In an organization, task significance promotes meaningfulness because employees may see tasks and job obligations, such as participation, as an important component of making a difference in the lives of others. Schnell, Hoge, and Pollet (2013) define task significance as the belief that one's labor benefits others. Task significance has consistently been one of the strongest predictors of meaningful work, signaling that it may be a key component of improving a meaningful job. Scholars have defined task importance as seeing one's labor as benefiting others (Grant, Fried, & Juilerat, 2011). This can boost their motivation, job happiness, and sense of personal accomplishment.

### ***Autonomy***

Autonomy in the workplace is described as an employee's ability to work autonomously. Autonomy is an important workplace trait that influences the second key psychological state, feelings of responsibility for job success. Bakker (2017) described autonomy as a workplace resource that is often associated with job engagement. Autonomy is the ability to act freely, independently, and with judgment in carrying out one's responsibilities. According to Hackman and Lawler (1971), autonomy fosters a sense of responsibility for job accomplishments or failures and increases job satisfaction. According to Mbuni (2021), job autonomy can promote learning and growth, which improves job performance. Furthermore, Latham (2012) remarked that while employees are likely to seek more autonomy in decision-making, some may be unable to make better choices. As a result, participatory decision making is only effective when employees possess the requisite skills.

### ***Feedback***

Feedback is the most fundamental job element that determines the most significant psychological state: knowledge of job results. Feedback is the outcome of a task that offers quick and unambiguous information about how well an individual does. Coelho and Augusto (2010) found that feedback improves employees' knowledge acquisition, personal development, and job happiness, leading in individual innovation. Elder et al. (2007) believe that both positive and negative feedback can be beneficial. People who see failure in life, have low self-esteem, and are pessimistic, on the other hand, would reject additional feedback in order to avoid psychologically distressing and dangerous information. Hans and Gupta (2018) described feedback as clear indicators of an employee's performance and the quality of their outcomes. Job-based feedback is based on the outcomes literature, which connects feedback effectiveness to performance metrics.



### ***Job Engagement***

The term "job engagement" originated with Kahn (1990), who characterized both personal engagement and disengagement. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), engaged people are more content with their work, more devoted to their organisations, have less or no plans to leave their positions and seek other opportunities, and have better mental and psychosomatic health (Schaufeli, Taris & Van Rhenen, 2008). Sakovska (2012) identifies three variables that influence employment engagement: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Job engagement has been characterized as the alignment of organizational members' identities with their work roles; during role performances, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Job involvement also appears to have a symbiotic relationship with personal resources. Che and Huang, (2022). Many evident and recognized benefits of job engagement are pushing researchers and businesses alike to seek out various factors that may help to the increase of job engagement among the workforce.

### ***Physical Engagement***

The physical aspect of job engagement pertains to the degree of effort exerted in one's role, particularly evident during job performance. When individuals take on a role, they manifest themselves physically, exhibiting varying levels of involvement, from minimal to extensive. A study by Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010) suggested that physical energy could be allocated across different activities, including on-task, off-task, and self-regulation endeavors. Hackman and Oldham (1980) discovered a significant positive correlation between effort and performance. According to Brown and Leigh (1996), the time dedicated to a task signifies role presence rather than role engagement. Consequently, effort, measured in terms of intensity, strongly influences performance outcomes (Van Zyl & Olckers, 2021).

### ***Cognitive Engagement***

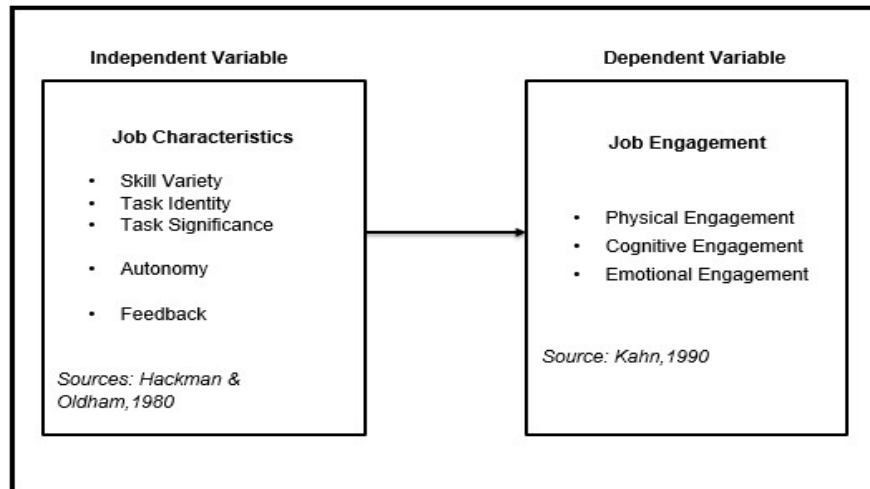
The term "job engagement" originated with Kahn (1990), who defined cognitive engagement as the degree to which employees are eager in learning, challenging themselves, and devoting themselves to understanding their jobs (Xie, 2021). Dolcos & Dolcos (2020) defined cognitive engagement as the amount of time spent thinking and the intensity with which an individual focuses on their work, also known as attention. Kahn also described absorption as a state of persistent concentration and attention (as Locke and Latham studied in 1990). According to Lee, Idris, and Delfabbro (2016), both absorption and attention can be connected to involvement via self-regulation.

### ***Emotional Engagement***

Emotional involvement is dependent on the organization's need for a positive interaction in order to understand how to develop a sense of belonging at work, enabling employees to trust and believe in the company's values and mission (Kahn, 1990). According to Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010), people are entirely engaged in their job because they have an emotional connection to their tasks. Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010) discovered, as Kahn (1990) had, that when people are emotionally invested in their professions, they are more engaged in their work obligations. Employees that are emotionally involved may have a deep attachment to their jobs, have positive relationships with their coworkers and bosses, and believe in their company's values and mission.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

Figure 1 below displays the conceptual framework for the relationship between Job Characteristics and Job Engagement.



**Figure1. Conceptual Framework**

### Methodology

Data were collected from Royal Malaysia Police enforcement officials. Using snowball sampling, the study collected 138 responses to surveys given online using Google Form. The link to the questionnaire was given by selecting one person from the Royal Malaysia Police to disseminate the link. A correlational research method was used to study the relationship and determinants of the antecedents of job features on job engagement among enforcement officers. The data were analyzed using SPSS 29, with descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis used to address the study objectives.

### Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Demographic Profiles of Respondents**

Respondents' Profile	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	102	73.9
Female	36	26.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>		
<b>20 – 30 years' old</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11.6</b>
31 – 40 years' old	78	56.5
41 – 50 years' old	40	29
51-60 years' old	4	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
<b>Single</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12.3</b>
Married	117	84.8
Others	4	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Working Experience</b>		
<b>Less than 5 years</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10.9</b>
6 -10 years	38	27.5
11-15 years	29	21
16-20 years	30	21.7
More than 20 years	26	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows the demographic profiles of the respondents. The majority of respondents were male (n=102, 73.9%), aged 31-40 years old (n=78, 56.5%), married (n=117, 84.8%), and relatively inexperienced with 6-10 years of job experience (n=38, 27%). The organization must recognize the middle-aged and young staff that will shape the organization's future orientation. As a result, extensive training is required to equip the youthful impertinent talent to lead the organization's future path.

### Descriptive Statistics

The interpretation of the level of job engagement scores is based on the Best Principle (Thaoprom, 2004). Scores are divided into three categories such as high, average and low and reported in means and standard deviations. Thus, the interpretation is categorized and interpreted as follows:

- Mean scores less than 2.33= Low scores
- Mean scores between 2.34 to 3.67= Average scores
- Mean scores more than 3.68= High scores

**Table 2: Mean Scores for Job Engagement**

Independent Variable(s)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Overall Job Engagement	138	5.0161	.62851	High Score
1. Physical Engagement	138	5.0580	.63923	High Score
2. Cognitive Engagement	138	5.0000	.75910	High Score
3. Emotional Engagement	138	4.9903	.80367	High Score

In assessing the level of job engagement among enforcement officers, majority of the respondents reported that they were highly embark on job engagement (M=5.01, SD=0.62) as displayed in Table 6.2. All other sub-variables (physical, cognitive, emotional) also revealed high scores as perceived by the respondents. These findings corresponded with Sidharta & Meily (2012) who stated employees who had a high level of engagement will exert more effort in achieving company goals.

### Reliability Analysis

**Table 6.4: Correlation Coefficient between ODL and Psychological Well-Being**

Variable(s)	Dimension(s)	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Independent</b>	Skill Variety	5	.630
	Task Identity	4	.721
	Task Significance	3	.719
	Autonomy	6	.745
	Feedback	5	.645
<b>Dependent</b>	Physical Engagement	6	.859
	Cognitive Engagement	6	.959
	Emotional Engagement	6	.950

Reliability analysis assessed the internal consistency of questionnaire items. The most commonly used reliability value is the Cronbach's alpha. Sekaran (2010) stated that an alpha level of more than 0.60 indicates a reliable instrument for research. The instrument's reliability was assessed and the lowest alpha value was 0.630 (skill variety) while the highest was 0.959 (cognitive engagement). A general accepted rule is that an alpha value of 0.6-0.7 indicates acceptable reliability and 0.8 or higher indicates very good reliability. However, values greater than 0.95 are not necessarily desirable because they may indicate redundancies (Hulin, Netemeyer and Cudeck, 2001).

### Correlation Analysis

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was applied to determine the relationship between the job characteristics and job engagement among. The findings on the correlation between job characteristics and job engagement among enforcement officers is shown in Table 6.4. In measuring the strength of the relationship between job characteristics towards job engagement, it was discovered that there was a large, positive and significant relationship in accordance with Hair et al., (2010) interpretation of correlation coefficient. ( $r=.586^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

**Table 6.5: Correlation Coefficient between Job Characteristics and Job Engagement**

Variable(s)	1	2
Job Characteristics	-	.586 <sup>**</sup>
Job Engagement	.586 <sup>**</sup>	-

Table 6.5 displays the results for correlation analysis for the dimensions of job characteristics towards job engagement. The correlation value for both was  $r=.586^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ .

### Multiple Regression Analysis

The findings from the regression analysis between job characteristics and job engagement were tabulated in Table 3 below.

**Table 6.6: Multiple Regression Analysis**

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		4.059	.000		
Skill Variety	.140	1.826	.070	.768	1.303
Task Identity	.330	4.229	.000	.743	1.346
Task Significance	.220	2.668	.009	.665	1.505
Autonomy	-.058	-.690	.491	.647	1.546
Feedback	.213	2.246	.026	.504	1.984
<b>R Square</b>			.403		
<b>F</b>			17.792		
<b>Sig. of F value</b>			.000		
<b>Durbin Watson</b>			1.622		

In essence, it was found that  $R^2$  value was .403, in which all of the independent variables (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) explained 40.3% of the variance (R square) for job engagement, with significant of F value of .000. Plus, the Durbin Watson value was 1.622 which values approaching 1.5 – 2.5 indicating positive autocorrelation, in line with one of the assumptions for bivariate and multivariate correlation analysis. The analysis revealed that task identity was the most influential component or the sole predictor of job engagement ( $\beta = .330$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Task significance ( $\beta = .220$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was found to be the second predictor of job engagement, followed by feedback and skill variety ( $\beta = .213$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $\beta = .140$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Based on this analysis, it is evident that skill variety, task identity, task significance, and feedback significantly contribute to predicting job engagement among enforcement officers. However, job autonomy did not emerge as a predictor of job engagement ( $\beta = -.058$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that these four variables from job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, feedback) play a significant role in determining the level of job engagement among enforcement officers.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on this analysis, it is evident that skill variety, task identity, task significance, and feedback significantly contribute to predicting job engagement among enforcement officers. However, job autonomy did not emerge as a predictor of job engagement ( $\beta = -.058$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that these four variables from job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task



significance, feedback) play a significant role in determining the level of job engagement among enforcement officers. This underscores the importance of designing roles that offer diverse tasks, clear identification, meaningful contributions, and regular feedback to foster higher levels of engagement within this workforce. Further research could delve deeper into understanding why job autonomy did not influence engagement levels and explore potential contextual factors that may moderate these relationships.

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