



Elevating Job Performance Through Job Characteristics and Work Involvement

Johanim Johari¹, Tan Fee Yean², Khulida Kirana Yahya³ and Zurina Adnan⁴
School of Business Management, College of Business, University Utara Malaysia

Article Information

Keywords

Job characteristics, Work involvement, Job performance, Public servants, Malaysia

Abstract

The primary objective of this study is to assess the predicting role of job characteristics on job performance. Dimensions in the job characteristics construct are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Further, work involvement is tested as a mediator in the hypothesized link. A total of 151 public servants reported on their job characteristics and work involvement while supervisory-ratings were used to assess their level of job performance in terms of task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). SPSS version 14 and Smart PLS 2.0 were used for statistical analyses of the data. The findings revealed that feedback significantly and indirectly influence job performance and the relationships were mediated by work involvement. Overall, this study has managed to substantiate a marginal support for the Job Characteristics Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Creating a band of excellent workers, who are capable of delivering the expectations of both the management and precisely the clients, remains as one of the idealisms dreamt by many leaders of corporate and public organizations. The process of achieving it is no fewer complexes that justify, in many cases, yet another prolonging journey. In the process, there are many converging factors that form the thrust of being excellent performers. To be excellent, one has to possess the required level of exemplary competency, which normally is measured in terms of knowledge, skills, ability, attitude, and behaviors (Borman, 2004a; Borman, & Motowidlo, 1997; Organ, 1997). Contextual factors, such as leadership, job design, physical facilities, and technology, are of equal importance in ensuring high performance level is in place (Campbell et al., 1990). Both factors (i.e. personal and contextual) are dynamic in nature and complementarily compounding. Accordingly, literature (e.g. Campbell, 1990; Williams, 2002) has documented that there are two major determinants of performance, which are 'person factors' and 'system factors'. The former refers to motivation and ability that an individual has and it is determined solely by the criteria of an individual. 'System factors', on the other hand, are the aspects that the organizational environment has to offer, such as job design, organizational structure, work culture, and so forth that may affect individual performance (Williams, 2002). Job characteristics can be considered as the 'system factors' that may influence employees' behavioral outcome (Campbell, 1990; Williams, 2002).

The Job Characteristics Theory by Hackman and Oldham (1975) posits that job characteristics are the systems or situational factors affecting the psychological as well as attitudinal condition of employees. The theory also posits that enriched and motivating job design allows employees to have the opportunity to use different skills and talents to perform tasks, associate or identify themselves closely with the task completed, feel empowered in performing the job through autonomy obtained from the job, and get adequate feedback from the job done. In essence, enriched and complex jobs are associated with a higher level of job satisfaction, motivation, and other

positive attitudinal outcomes. This state determines the incumbents' way of behaving that is reflected in their behavioural outcomes, including job performance. In further understanding the theory, Langfred and Moye (2004) noted that mediating variable in the Job Characteristics Theory is useful by incorporating other attitudinal constructs (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Langfred & Moye, 2004). In light of these assertions, this study tests the theory by integrating work involvement as a mediating factor to better explain the theorized link between job characteristics and job performance among public servants. As such, the main objective of this study is to analyse the predicting role of job characteristics on job performance and the mediating role of work involvement in the hypothesized link.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Characteristics and Its Underlying Theory

Based on the literature (e.g. Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Hackman & Oldham, 1980), the first version of job characteristics definition and measurement were broad. According to Morgeson and Campion (2003), the earliest concept of the job characteristics dimensions was introduced by Turner and Lawrence (1965), which included the aspects of dealing with others and friendship opportunities. However, these two dimensions were later omitted because they are not centrally related to the job characteristics construct and too vague to be operationalised as part of job design (Morgeson & Campion, 2003). Basically, Job Characteristics Theory by Hackman and Oldham (1975) posits that enriched and motivating job characteristics would bring about positive cognitive, psychological, and emotional conditions for the job incumbent. The theory also purports that a positive cognitive state would result in a positive affective or attitudinal state, such as job satisfaction, motivation, and affective commitment (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Ultimately, positive affective and attitudinal condition promotes desirable workplace behaviour, such as a high level of job performance, demonstrated through task and contextual performance. In other words, effective job characteristics produce positive workplace attitudes, which inevitably encourage employees to engage in positive behaviours at work.

The Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) also purports that job characteristics could improve the motivational level of employee by developing three psychological conditions. Hackman and Oldham (1975) theorized that a high motivation level is related to experiencing three psychological states whilst working, which are meaningfulness of work, responsibility, and feedback or knowledge of outcomes. Meaningfulness of work is considered as the main source for intrinsic motivation. It is hypothesized that motivation can be achieved when a job allows employees to use a variety of skills in performing the job. The theory also posits that task identity concerns the ability to identify with the work at hand as more holistic and complete. As such, the job incumbent would have more pride in the outcome of the job that he or she has performed. Another factor to ensure the state of meaningfulness of work is task significance. This dimension is highly associated with the identification of the job done as something big for the organization (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Additionally, responsibility is derived from autonomy. The theory purports that without being given enough freedom of self-decision, it is not possible for an incumbent to succeed (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham 1975; Hackman & Oldham 1980). Finally, feedback is the crucial element that creates knowledge of outcomes of the job done, such as the production figures and customer satisfaction scores (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). This is because feedback offers information that once employees know, they can use to do things differently if they wish in order to improve their performance level from time to time (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), the three psychological states are the conditions that incumbents experienced based on the perceptions that they have towards their job. Employees will experience the meaningfulness of job if they perceive it as valuable, worthwhile, or important, consistent to the systems or values that they are acceptable to them. Incumbents would experience personal responsibilities if the job provides the feeling of accountability for the outcomes of work that they performed. Based on the theory, all three psychological states must be experienced by an incumbent so that positive behavioural outcomes are to transpire (Faturochman, 1997; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Bohlander and Snell (2010) and Hackman and Oldham (1975), on the other hand, asserted that all job characteristics factors would yield positive results only when certain conditions are met. First, incumbents must have the psychological need for enriched jobs, whereby variety, responsibility, and challenges are highly embedded in the job. Incumbents are also unlikely to experience the purported attitudinal and behavioural states if they perceive enriched jobs unfavourably. Second, incumbents resist enriched jobs if they have limited physical or mental skills, abilities, or knowledge to perform the job. Importantly, desirable workplace results are hardly achievable if enriched jobs are forced on people who are lacked of the necessary traits and knowledge, skill, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) to perform the job (Dunham, 1977; Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Work Involvement

Work involvement has been defined as the extent to which employees are normally interested in, identified with, and are preoccupied with their work in relative to other aspects of their life (Kanungo, 1982a). In terms of motivational approach, the concepts of alienation and involvement are viewed as opposite ends of a continuum of the same phenomenon (Kanungo, 1982b). This state is considered as an attitudinal condition that reflects the one-dimensional cognitive response of an individual employee. Although work involvement and job involvement are two distinct constructs, the terms have been used interchangeably resulting in confusion in the literature on their actual definition (Kanungo, 1982a). As such, it is crucial to clearly distinguish the two constructs.

Work involvement is also a normative belief about the value of work in an incumbent's life and this attitudinal state is a result of his or her previous cultural and socialization activities (Kanungo, 1982a). Based on Rottenbery and Moberg (2007), the work involvement concept can be used in assessing employees' level of involvement across jobs while job involvement is limited to a specific job. In fact, the job involvement construct should be operationalized based on the type of occupation that respondents have in a particular study (Rottenbery & Moberg, 2007). Accordingly, an empirical work by Elloy and Terpening (1992) concurs with Kanungo's (1982a) proposition on the orthogonality or distinctiveness of work involvement and job involvement. Specifically, a causal model tested by Elloy and Terpening (1992) demonstrates the theoretical distinction between the said constructs based on the data collected. Given the conceptual assertion and empirical evidence, it can be summed up that job involvement and work involvement are two distinct constructs.

Work involvement has been theorized as a significant predictor of various workplace outcomes (Elloy & Terpening, 1992; Kanungo, 1982a; Kanungo, 1982b; Kanungo, 1990; Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007). Nevertheless, limited evidence and equivocal results on work involvement-behavioral outcomes association are due to several reasons. One of the reasons is researchers are more interested in testing other attitudinal conditions, such as motivation and commitment, as the antecedent to the behavioral outcomes (Bozionelos, 2004; Carmeli, 2005; Carmeli & Freund, 2004; Newton & Keenan, 1983; Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007). This is because these attitudinal factors have been widely used and theorized as strong predictors of job performance (Langfred & Moye, 2004).

This study incorporates work involvement as a mediator in explaining job characteristics and job performance link. Langfred and Moye (2004) and Fried and Ferris (1987) noted that mediating variable in the Job Characteristics Theory are not limited to motivational aspects. In fact, studies should look into other cognitive and attitudinal responses in articulating the theory. Taking into account this assertion, this study further tests the theory by adding in work involvement as a mediating factor to better explain the theorized link between job characteristics and job performance among public servants.

Job Performance

Job performance is one of the most important criterion measures in the industrial and organizational psychology research (Borman, 2004a; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, 1997; Organ, 1997). This is based on the fact that job performance has always been reported as a significant indicator of organizational performance although it has been conceptualized in many different ways (Organ, 1997). According to Jex and Britt (2008) and Motowidlo (2003), performance is oftentimes assessed in terms of financial figures as well as through the combination of expected behaviour and task-related aspects. Additionally, Schmitt and Chan (1998) categorized employee job performance into 'can-do' and 'will-do'. The former refers to the knowledge, skill, ability, and other characteristics (KSAOs) that an individual has and must have in performing a certain job. 'Will-do' reflects the motivation level of an employee in performing his or her work. Further, Cardy and Dobbins in Williams (2002) conceptualized job performance as work outcomes and job relevant behaviours. Work outcomes deal with task performance, such as quality or quantity of work done, while job relevant behaviour refers to the behavioural aspects useful in achieving task performance (Williams 2002). In other words, job relevant behaviours provide support in performing task-related matters. Most importantly, job performance measures, which may be based on an absolute value or a relative judgment, can be generalized to the overall organizational performance because in total it reflects the organizational performance to a certain extent (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Jex & Britt 2008; Sacket et al. 2006; Wall et al. 2004). Absolute value of performance is based on the objective results, such as total points from sales or productivity, while relative judgments are performance evaluation made based on the behavioural related aspects that are very subjective in nature (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007).

In relation to different conceptualizations of job performance, the main issue raised by scholars, such as Campbell et al. (1990) and Borman (2004a), is which employees' behaviours at work constitute job performance. Traditionally, job performance is limited to the core task activities that were based solely on job analysis (Campbell 1990; Jex & Britt 2008). The construct has, however, expanded into behavioural aspects related directly to the core tasks and other behaviours that support the core task performance. Scholars (e.g. Borman, 2004a; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Campbell, 1990; Jex & Britt, 2008; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994) asserted that job performance should be measured in terms of task performance and contextual performance in order to fully grasp a holistic concept of the latent construct. This is because contextual performance is the behaviours that support the core task performance in enhancing organizational effectiveness (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). In essence, task performance is concerned with behaviours that are required to complete job tasks while contextual performance is needed to safeguard and upgrade the organizational, social, and psychological environment in the organization (Jex & Britt, 2008; LePine, Hanson, Borman & Motowidlo, 2000; Van Dyne, Graham & Dienesch, 1994; Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). Both aspects of performance are crucial to achieve organizational objectives (Black & Porter, 1991; Jahangir et al., 2004).

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Job Characteristics and Job Performance

Hackman and Oldham (1975) theorized that a high motivation level is related to experiencing three psychological states whilst working, which are meaningfulness of work, responsibility, and feedback or knowledge of outcomes. Meaningfulness of work is considered as the main source for intrinsic motivation. It is hypothesized that motivation can be achieved when a job allows employees to use a variety of skills in performing the job. The theory also proposes that task identity concerns the ability to identify with the work at hand as more holistic and complete. As such, the job incumbent would have more pride in the outcome of the job that he or she has performed. Another factor to ensure the state of meaningfulness of work is task significance. This dimension is highly associated with the identification of the job done as something big for the organization (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Responsibility is derived from autonomy. The theory purports that without being given enough freedom of self-decision, it is not possible for an incumbent to succeed (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Finally, feedback is the crucial element that creates knowledge of outcomes of the job done (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). This is because feedback offers information that once employees know, they may choose to do things differently if they wish to in order to improve their performance level from time to time (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2007; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

An abundance of empirical investigations (see for example Anderson, 1984; Bhuian et al., 1996; Bhuian et al., 2001; Bhuian & Menguc, 2002; Butler et al., 2005; Chang & Lee, 2006; Dodd & Ganster, 1996; Dunham, 1977b; Fang, 1996; Glisson & Durick, 1988; Goris et al., 2000; Harris et al., 1993; Jonge et al. 2001; Liden, 2000; Mannheim & Schiffrin, 1984; Marchese, 1998; Mierlo et al., 2007; Morrison, 1996; Panatik et al., 2009; Pollock et al., 2000; Rentsch & Steel, 1996; Schneider, 2003; Singh, 1998; Thomas et al., 2004; Ting, 1997) have recapitulated that enriched and motivating job design provides employees the opportunity to use different skills and talents to perform tasks, associate or identify themselves closely with the task completed, feel empowered in performing the job through autonomy obtained from the job, and get adequate feedback from the job done. In essence, enriched and complex jobs are associated with positive attitudinal outcomes. Taken together, this study hypothesizes that:

- H1: Skill variety exerts a positive influence on work involvement.
- H2: Task identity exerts a positive influence on work involvement.
- H3: Task significance exerts a positive influence on work involvement.
- H4: Autonomy exerts a positive influence on work involvement.
- H5: Feedback exerts a positive influence on work involvement.

The Mediating Role of Work Involvement

This study posits that work involvement significantly mediate the job characteristics and job performance relationships. As noted earlier, work involvement has been defined as the extent to which employees are normally interested in, identified with, and are preoccupied with their work in relative to other aspects of their life (Kanungo, 1982a). This state is considered as an attitudinal condition that reflects the one-dimensional cognitive response of an individual employee. According to Campbell (1990), Fishbein and Ajzen (1975),

Hackman and Oldham (1975), Kanungo (1979, 1982a), Motowidlo (2003), and Organ (1988a), attitudinal state is theorized as the main antecedent to various behavioral outcomes.

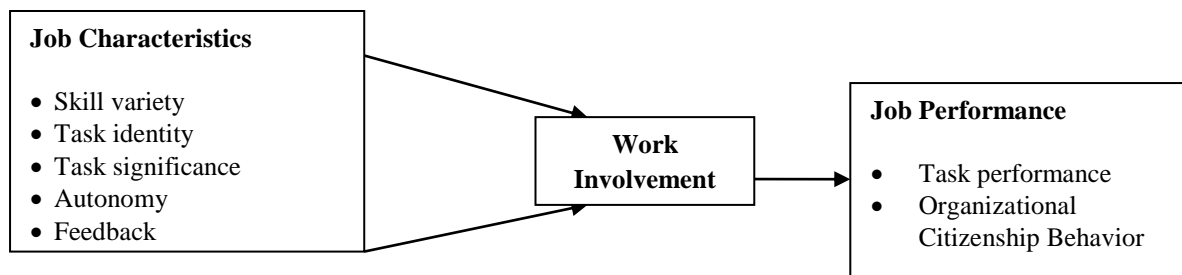
Likewise, Job Characteristics Theory by Hackman and Oldham (1975) demonstrates that job characteristics lead to a certain cognitive or psychological state, followed by a job relevant attitude and behaviour, depending on the level of meaningfulness, responsibilities, and knowledge of feedback. Rotenberry and Moberg (2007), for instance, reported that employees who are highly involved in their work will put forth an extra amount of effort in order to achieve organizational objective. By doing so, highly involved employees would be more likely to engage in productive work activities, resulting in improvement of task performance and OCB levels (Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007). In parallel fashion, Chiu and Chen (2005), Carmeli and Freund (2004), Edwards et al. (2008), Hechanove et al. (2006), Hunter and Thatcher (2007), Jones (2006), Murphy et al. (2002), Rifai (2005), and Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) reported a significant mediating role of attitudinal aspects in predicting task performance and OCB. As such, this study hypothesizes that:

- H6: Work involvement mediates the relationship between skill variety and job performance.
 - H6a: Work involvement mediates the relationship between skill variety and task performance.
 - H6b: Work involvement mediates the relationship between skill variety and OCB.
- H7: Work involvement mediates the relationship between task identity and job performance.
 - H7a: Work involvement mediates the relationship between task identity and task performance.
 - H7b: Work involvement mediates the relationship between task identity and OCB.
- H8: Work involvement mediates the relationship between task significance and job performance.
 - H8a: Work involvement mediates the relationship between task significance and task performance.
 - H8b: Work involvement mediates the relationship between task significance and OCB.
- H9: Work involvement mediates the relationship between autonomy and job performance.
 - H9a: Work involvement mediates the relationship between autonomy and task performance.
 - H9b: Work involvement mediates the relationship between autonomy and OCB.
- H10: Work involvement mediates the relationship between feedback and job performance.
 - H10a: Work involvement mediates the relationship between feedback and task performance.
 - H10b: Work involvement mediates the relationship between feedback and OCB.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Building upon the literature review, this study proposes a theoretical model that merges job characteristics, work involvement, and job performance. A complete description of the model is shown in Figure 1. The job characteristics dimensions are integrated as the predictors of job performance, and the association is theorized to be mediated by work involvement.

FIGURE I
THE RESEARCH MODEL



METHODOLOGY

Sampling, Procedures, and Measure

In the initial stage of data collection, letters asking for permission to conduct a survey was sent to each Human Resource Department of the public service departments and agencies in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. In the letter, the research objectives and methodology of this study were briefly explained. Only nine

departments and agencies responded and indicated their willingness to participate in the survey. Based on the number of departments and agencies responded, this study employed a stratified sampling method.

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to public servants in the respective departments and agencies and they were asked to respond to the items by indicating their level of agreement using a seven-point Likert scale (i.e. 1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). The questionnaires encompassed items measuring job characteristics, work involvement, and job performance. The Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) by Hackman and Oldham (1975) is employed to measure job characteristics. This variable consists of five dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. This brings to the total of 15 items, which were used to evaluate the job characteristics construct. Three items were utilized to measure each dimension and sample items are “this job is quite difficult and it involves no repetitiveness”, “this job is arranged so that I can do an entire piece of work from beginning to the end”, “this job itself is very significant and important in the broader scheme of things”, and “the job gives me the chance to use my personal initiative and judgment in carrying out work”. Work involvement is a one-dimensional construct measured by five items, which were adopted from Kanungo (1982b, 1990). Sample items for work involvement are “Doing my job well gives me the feeling that I have accomplished something worthwhile” and “In my job, I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected”.

This study used a supervisory-rating of job performance. There were two dimensions of job performance construct: task performance and OCB. Task performance was measured by seven items adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) while 18 items adapted from Morrison and Phelps (1999), Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990), and Van Dyne and Le Pine (1998) were used to gauge OCB among respondents. Sample items for this supervisory ratings measure include “He/she neglects aspects of the job that he/she is obliged to perform”, “He/she keeps up to date with changes in the organization”, and “He/she tries to adopt the improved procedures for this department”. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 156 were returned. However, only 151 questionnaires were usable for data analysis.

RESULTS

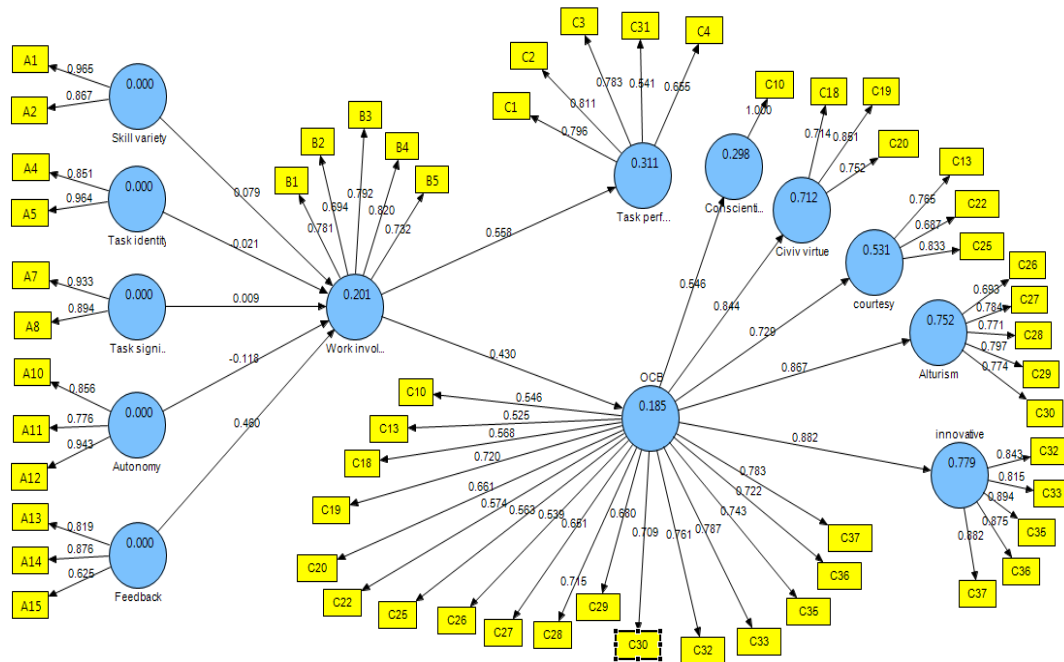
Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

The sample comprised of 53.64 per cent male and 46.36 per cent female. The majority of respondents, i.e. 33.80 per cent, were below 30 years old while 14.3 percent were above 50 years old. Given the fact that Malaysian public service departments and agencies were predominantly Malay-populated, 98.7 per cent of the respondents were Malays. Only 1.3 percent was Chinese. The majority of respondents, 56.7 per cent were secondary-school certificate holders and 29.30 per cent were diploma holders. The rest of the respondents or 13.7 per cent were bachelor and masters degree holders. A total of 72.9 per cent of the respondents had worked in the organization for less than 10 years while 27.20 per cent had worked for more than 10 years. A total of 102 respondents or 67.5 per cent had been in the current job position for less than 10 years while the rest were more than 10 years. Finally, a vast majority of the respondents or 67.50 per cent were support staffs and only 32.50 per cent were professional and management staff.

Validity and reliability

Figure 2 depicts the factor loadings of all observed variables ranged from 0.522 to 0.965. However, A3, A6, and A9 (i.e. the item of skill variety, task identity, and task significance), and two items of task performance (i.e. C5 and C6) were deleted from further analysis. In addition to that, 13 items of organizational citizenship behaviour, that are C7, C8, C9 (consciousness), C11, C12, C15, C16, 21 (sportsmanship), C14, C17 (civic virtue), C23, C24 (courtesy) and C34 (innovative behaviour) were deleted from further analysis due to its low loading value, which is less than 0.50. Therefore, after the analysis of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), organizational citizenship behaviour just consisted of five dimensions, namely consciousness, civic virtue, courtesy, and innovative behaviour. This is because sportsmanship has been deleted due to its poor loadings. Composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to measure convergent validity. Convergent validity is the degree to which multiple items to measure the same concepts are in agreement.

FIGURE II
MEASUREMENT MODEL



As indicated in Table 1, the value of CR for skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback, work involvement, task performance, and organizational citizenship behaviour is 0.914, 0.905, 0.910, 0.895, 0.821, 0.876, 0.844 and 0.886 respectively, which are above the acceptable value of 0.7 (Hair et al. 2010). In addition, to fulfil convergence validity, AVE for all constructs should be greater than 0.50 as suggested by Barclay et al. (1995). AVE values of all constructs were above the cut-off values of 0.50. Thus, all the measures used in this study have sufficient convergent validity.

TABLE I
RESULTS OF MEASUREMENT MODEL

Model construct	CR	AVE	R ²
Skill variety	0.914	0.842	
Task identity	0.905	0.827	
Task significance	0.910	0.835	
Autonomy	0.895	0.741	
Feedback	0.821	0.609	
Work involvement	0.876	0.585	20.1
Task performance	0.844	0.525	0.313
Organizational citizenship behaviour	0.886	0.614	0.185

Note: CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted (AVE); α = Cronbach's alpha; R2 = R square.

Besides that, discriminant validity, an analysis to test whether concepts or measurements that are supposed to be unrelated are, in fact, unrelated was also performed. Table 2 shows the result of the discriminant validity of all variables in this study. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE (i.e. the square root of AVE) should be more than the correlation coefficient of the two constructs to support discriminant validity. Each square root of AVE value is more than correlation coefficients of two constructs, thus discriminant validity is supported,

suggesting that there is no multicollinearity of items in representing their hypothesized latent factors. As such, it can be concluded that all measurements in this study are valid and reliable.

TABLE II
DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY OF CONSTRUCTS

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Skill variety	0.918							
2. Task identity	0.436	0.909						
3. Task significance	0.396	0.610	0.914					
4. Autonomy				0.861				
5. Feedback	0.386	0.347	0.247	0.447	0.780			
6. Work involvement	0.409	0.552	0.575	0.447	0.780	0.765		
7. Task performance	0.217	0.233	0.264	0.114	0.434	0.558	0.725	
8. Organizational citizenship behavior	0.347	0.421	0.382	0.241	0.540	0.558	0.725	0.784
	0.337	0.224	0.279	0.274	0.409	0.430	0.574	0.784

Note: Diagonals (in bold) represent the square root of AVE while the other entries represent the correlation coefficients

Besides that, the proposed model shows that 20.1% of the variance in work involvement was explained by skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. Meanwhile, 31.1% and 18.5% of the variance in task performance and organizational citizenship behaviour were explained by work involvement respectively.

Test of Hypotheses: Direct Effect

Figure 3 depicts the structural model derived from the partial least squares (PLS) analysis and Table 3 and 4 present the results of the PLS analysis. The results of the study showed that only feedback had a significant and positive influence on work involvement ($\beta = 0.460, p < 0.01$). In a parallel fashion, work involvement was also found to have a substantial impact on task performance ($\beta = 0.558, p < 0.01$) and organizational citizenship behaviour ($\beta = 0.430, p < 0.01$).

FIGURE 3
RESULTS OF THE PATH ANALYSIS

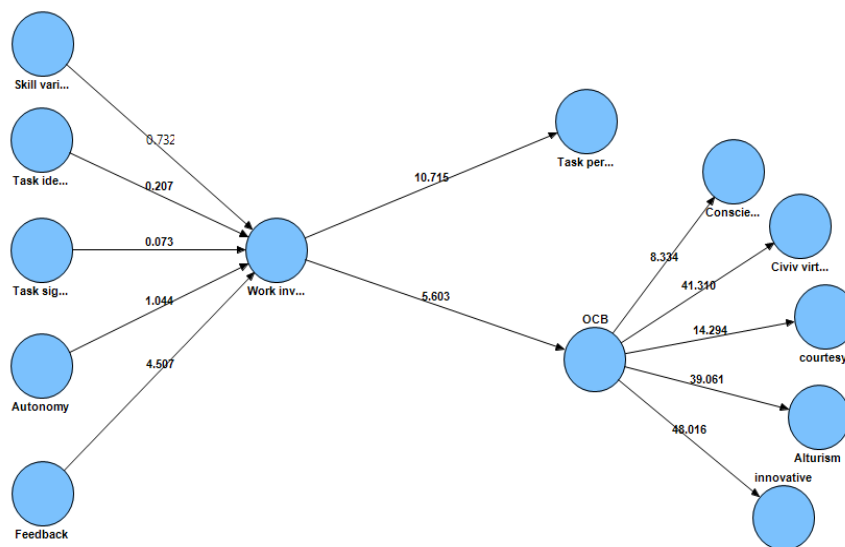


TABLE 3
PATH COEFFICIENTS AND HYPOTHESES TESTING (DIRECT EFFECT)

Hypothesized relationship	Coefficient	t value
Skill variety → work involvement	0.079	0.732
Task identity → work involvement	-0.021	0.207
Task significance → work involvement	0.009	0.073
Autonomy → work involvement	-0.118	1.044
Feedback → work involvement	0.460	4.507**
Work involvement → task performance	0.558	10.715**
Work involvement → organizational citizenship behaviour	0.430	5.603**

Note: t-value > 2.33 = significant at **p<0.01

Test of Hypotheses: Mediating Effect

To test whether work involvement significantly mediate the relationship between the dimension of job characteristics (i.e., skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback), task performance and organizational citizenship behaviour, bootstrapping, a nonparametric re-sampling procedure that does not impose the assumption of normality on the sampling distribution was used (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Thus, bootstrapping (500 resample) was used to generate standard errors (SE) and t-statistics with the percentile bootstrap 95% confidence interval. If the confidence interval for a mediation hypothesis does not contain zero, it means that the indirect effect between independent and dependent variables is supported. The bootstrapping analysis found that work involvement only mediate the influence of feedback on task performance (indirect effect = 0.257; SE = 0.068; t-value = 3.775) and organizational citizenship behaviour (indirect effect = 0.198; SE = 0.059; t-value=3.353).

TABLE 4
PATH COEFFICIENTS AND HYPOTHESES TESTING (MEDIATION EFFECT)

Proposed relationship	Indirect effect	t value	Percentile bootstrap 95% confidence interval	
			Lower	Upper
Skill variety → work involvement → task performance	0.044	0.723	-0.075	0.164
Task identity → work involvement → task performance	-0.012	-0.209	-0.121	0.098
Task significance → work involvement → task performance	0.005	0.069	-0.138	0.148
Autonomy → work involvement → task performance	-0.066	-1.013	-0.193	0.062
Feedback → work involvement → task performance	0.257	3.775**	0.123	0.390
Skill variety → work involvement →	0.034	0.723	-0.058	0.126

organizational citizenship behaviour				
Task identity → work involvement → organizational citizenship behaviour	-0.009	-0.210	-0.093	0.075
Task significance → work involvement → organizational citizenship behaviour	0.004	0.069	-0.106	0.114
Autonomy → work involvement → organizational citizenship behaviour	-0.051	-1.015	-0.149	0.047
Feedback → work involvement → organizational citizenship behaviour	0.198	3.353**	0.082	0.313

Note: t value > 1.645 = significant at *p<0.05; t value > 2.33 = significant at **p<0.01;

DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study attempted to provide empirical support for the purported relationships. The study also looked into work involvement as a plausible attitudinal condition that mediated the relationships between job characteristics and job performance. Only one of the five job characteristics factors have significantly influenced work involvement, which in turn influenced task performance and OCB. The structural equation modeling results indicated that the path coefficient estimates of feedback had a significant influence on work involvement. In other words, work involvement served as a mediating factor for the relationships between feedback and task performance and OCB. In essence, jobs that provide adequate feedback would give the public servants necessary information to upgrade the quality of work done. Feedback also allows the public servants to be aware of their performance level in executing their jobs. Based on the job feedback, public servants would be highly involved in their work and continuously exert efforts to improve their job performance, be it in terms of task performance or OCB. The results were in accordance to Hackman and Oldham's (1975) supposition that the higher the work involvement level of the incumbent, the more likely for them to become high performers.

Importantly, this study has provided a theoretical implication by giving additional empirical evidence in the domain of Job Characteristics Theory. The results suggested that feedback is very important in elevating work involvement and job performance among public servants. In terms of practical ramifications, focus should be given on developing a more enriching and fulfilling type of job with high level of feedback. This could be a useful basis for HR practitioners in the public sector so as to enhance public servants' work involvement as well as job performance.

This study has also paved several directions for future research. First, a longitudinal study would be of greater value to infer causal associations of job characteristics and job performance of public servants. Second, the theoretical model of this study should be replicated in other settings, such as the private sector, particularly in the manufacturing and service industries. The different nature of the private sector in terms of job design would perhaps elicit different results in relation to employees' job performance. A comparative study between the public and private sectors would be very insightful in understanding factors related to job performance of employees in different work environments.

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