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INTRODUCTION

Due to rapid and multidimensional changes in business environment in the first quarter of the 21st century, companies and organizations faced with difficulty to recruit, keep and develop skilled human resources. Effective human resource management is gaining further importance as a competitive advantage contributing to firm's survival and success regardless to organizational size and structure or even the industry in which the business is conducted (Armstrong, 2006).

Among others, more and more scholars emphasize on job autonomy as a factor contributing to enhance employee performance. Saragih (2011) argues on its positive effect on employee and eventually firm's performance due to increasing satisfaction, self-efficacy, and mitigating job stress. Others argue that job autonomy contributes to increase in commitment (Sisodia and Das, 2013), motivation (Hackman and Oldham, 1976), employee engagement and more trust-building towards top management (Lu et al., 2017). According to Hackman & Oldham (1976) job autonomy is exercising authority, power, and decision-making by employee within a control of his/her own.

The word autonomy is a Greek term derived from "autonomia" and "autonomos" consisting "auto" meaning self and "nomos" which is rule, so combining together it refers to self-rule. "Self-rule" is practiced by someone or an entity that depends on her own laws and procedures to carry on actions and duties. Historically, city states in Greece were practicing autonomy in making decisions and governing their own affairs (Agich, 1994).

In the business context, job autonomy is defined by Heckman & Oldham (1976) as a substantial freedom, independence, and discretion. However, from the terminology perspective freedom, discretion and independence are different from each other (Breugh, 1999). Different elements of job autonomy can be traced in organizations including (but not limited to): work method, work schedule, pace of work, work procedures, workplace, work evaluation, working

hours, kind of work and amount of work, goals, priorities and work criteria (De Jonge, 1995).

Telecommuting (Onyemaechi et al , 2018), flexible working hours (Kattenbach, Demerouti & Nachreiner, 2010; Beckmann, 2016), and job sharing (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013) are among sub-divisional areas of job autonomy that are practiced in numerous organizations. Job autonomy is considered within the process of job design in human resource management. The concept of job autonomy is a controversial matter in profit and non-profit organizations as it works best in some cultures while it receives criticism in others. Therefore, managers and subordinates face struggle. As a result, the main research question authors try to answer in this paper would be formulated as following: Is there any relationship between job autonomy and employee's performance in existing HRM literature? If yes, how such relationship has been explained by HRM researchers?

METHODOLOGY

Current research takes a normative approach in studying the concept of job autonomy. Via comparative and critical study of existing body of knowledge, authors strive to provide and answer relevant question on relationship between job autonomy and job performance at organizational level.

RESULTS

Job autonomy is considered as a part of job design within human resource management (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Jeet & Sayeeduzzafar (2014) classify job design among main human resources management practices along with compensation, recruitment, selection, training & development, rewarding and employee relations.

Mathis and Jackson (2010) define job design as an arrangement of tasks duties and responsibilities into a fruitful unit of work. However, other scholars like Armstrong (2006) considered job design differently: "The specification of the contents, methods, and relationships of jobs in order to satisfy technological and organizational requirements as well as the social and personal requirements of the jobholder".

Meanwhile, Belias and Sklikas, (2013) and Tufail et al., (2017) identify job rotation, job enlargement and job enrichment (includes autonomy) as three major elements of job design resulting in productivity, learning, enhanced autonomy and improve performance.

Many scholars notice the linkage between job design and job autonomy via refereeing to job characteristics model (JCM) (Vanderfeesten and Raigers, 2006; Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013; Theurer et al., 2018; and Kreis and Brockopp, 2001) According to JCM, job autonomy is among core dimensions of each given position leading to motivation, better performance, commitment and satisfaction. Ivancevich & Konopaske (2013) consider five dimensions for any job including skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and

feedback.

There is an overall agreement among researchers on definition of job autonomy. Scholars defined job autonomy as granting employees a liberty in job scheduling and job method to deal with their tasks (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Adler, 1993; Langfred & Moye, 2004; Saragih, 2011; Ho and Nesbit, 2014; Ozkoc, 2016; Burcharth et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2017; Spector, 1986, cited in Lok, 2018). Others explain job autonomy as a responsibility of employees to make decisions towards the tasks (Kim et al., 2009; Lin et al., 2011; Sisodia and Das, 2013).

Wu et al., (2015) provide additional dimension to definition of job autonomy as giving a chance to employees to regulate their conduct and achieve targets according to their personal understanding and desirability. Job autonomy is also defined as a capacity of employees to fulfil their work and make decisions (Lippke, 1989; Laceulle, 2018), and how to realize goals (Fuller et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2015). It is worth mentioning that senior management in organizations plays an active role in embedding job autonomy within the organizational environment. Fernet et al. (2015) advocate that transformational leadership is related to empowerment, autonomous motivation and self-reflection.

Research shows that executives have different attitudes and understanding about the concept of job autonomy. Some perceive autonomy as an opportunity to promote employees while others predict it as a melting pot to organizational outcome as they claim job autonomy without proper supervision leads to goal deviations (Lu et al., 2017).

Dimensions of job autonomy

Dimensions are main elements to underpin any construct and variable for scientific investigation. Reviewers and authors are advised to identify dimensions to be on the right track in their academic work (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Job autonomy like any other construct has its own respective elements, which attract attentions of different authors in the process of scientific. Major and minor elements are discussed below (Table 1). Hackman and Oldham (1976) in their definition of job autonomy define two main dimensions: job schedule (having autonomy to schedule the work) and work procedures (having autonomy to choose approach) whereas Sadler-Smith, El-Kot & Leat, (2003) add work criteria to those dimensions. This reflects the autonomy for employee to choose the criteria for evaluating her respective performance. DE Jonge (1995) suggests multiple dimensions as following: “the method of working, pace of work, procedures, scheduling, work criteria, work goals, the workplace, work evaluation, working hours, kind of work, and amount of work”. Burchardt et al. (2012) incorporated self-reflection (the action s/he takes is in accordance with one personal values and interest) and wide range of high quality options (several options available to people to choose any one of them). Finally, Friedberg et al. (2013) suggested working hours representing by time flexibility and part-timing and Theurer et al., (2018) added decision – making as another dimension to job autonomy.

Table 1 Definitions of job autonomy

Authors & Year	Definitions of job autonomy	Field of work	Method used for study
(Langfred and Moye, 2004)	Task autonomy is defined as the degree to which an individual is given substantial freedom, independence, and discretion in carrying out a task, such as scheduling work and determining procedures to follow.	Hman resource	No method mentioned
(Saragih, 2011)	Job autonomy is defined as the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out.	Human resource	Quantitative
(Lin et al., 2011)	Job autonomy can be defined as 'a practice, or set of practices involving the delegation of responsibility down the hierarchy so as to give employees increased decision-making authority in respect to the execution of their primary work tasks.	Human resource	Quantitative
(Ho and Nesbit, 2014)	Job autonomy refers to the extent to which a job allows employees discretion, freedom, and independence in the performance of tasks in their job.	Leadership	Quantitative
(Wu et al., 2015)	Autonomy gives individuals the opportunity to regulate their feelings and behaviours to pursue goals based on their personal values	Human resource	Qualitative
(Ozkoc, 2016)	job autonomy is defined as employees' level of authority and freedom to choose how they will perform their work	Human resource	Quantitative
(Burchardt et al., 2012)	We refer to employee autonomy as "the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out"	Human resource	Quantitative

In conclusion, the authors recognize job autonomy as a multi-faceted construct that has different dimensions. The above- mentioned dimensions considered good tools to measure job autonomy in relation to employee performance.

Challenges to job autonomy

Emergence of new technologies created an imperative situation for organizations of all kind to grant further autonomy to their employees (Tafti et al., 2007; Alavi et al., 2016). This, in return created serious challenges within different contexts, geographic locations and organizational cultures.

Daft (2010) showed structural dimensions represented by specialization, formalization, hierarchy of authority, and centralization which limit the scope of autonomy in practice. Mintzberg (1980) together with Sinding and Waldstrom (2014) highlight efficiency and effectiveness as autonomy killers in organizations. Culture as a set of beliefs, thoughts and views differs from one society to another and has its big impact on individual, family, community, and government. Wu et al., (2015) emphasize that job autonomy is affected by culture. Those individuals who may have accomplishment based on their

personal values welcome it. Therefore, it may be welcomed in western society whilst it faces obstacles in hierarchical and non-individualistic societies. Classical management styles and national culture are two detrimental impediments of job autonomy in some countries, organizations and companies. They lead to demotivate employees, lower production, lose trust and commitment (Mahmood et al., 2012; Wu et al., 2015).

Definition of Employee performance

Employee performance in the practice of HRM is considered as results, outcomes and achievement of employees towards organizational and sectional goals. Performance can be strong or weak that needs improvement. Boakye (2015) defines employee performance as an achievement of task to have an accurate and cost efficiency results. Other researches show productivity as a main indicator of employee performance depending on scientific management, which concentrates on number of units produced by employees within a timeframe. (Malkanathi & Ali, 2016; Inuwa and Idris, 2017).

Hirlak et al (2018) have different view from the above-mentioned scholars. They define employee performance as effect of efficiency and effectiveness of individual's effort towards specific tasks. Other researches referred to employee performance as quality and quantity of work accomplished by employees based on job description. (Darma & Supriyanto, 2017; Setiawan et al., 2018).

Table 2 Definitions of job performance

Authors& Year	Definitions of job performance	Field of work	Method used
Malkanathi and Ali (2016)	Job performance is defined as it focuses directly on employee productivity by assessing the number of units of acceptable quality produced by an employee in a manufacturing environment, within a specific time period	Human resource	Quantitative
Darma and Supriyanto (2017)	"Employee performance" explained as the work of quality and quantity achieved by an employee in performing their duties in accordance with responsibilities given.	Human resource	Quantitative
Hirlak, et al., (2018)	level of efficiency and effectiveness displayed at the point of realizing the goals and objectives for the individuals	Organizational theory	Quantitative
Setiawan and et al., (2018)	Employee performance as a result of work in quality and quantity that an employee achieves in carrying out tasks by the responsibilities assigned to him	Human resource	Quantitative
Boakye (2015)	Performance is the accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed.	Human resource	Quantitative
(Inuwa and et al., 2017)	Employee performance can be defined as workers' complete ability and productiveness in attainment of a projected value and realisation of everyday jobs in line with the prescribed procedure and timeline of the organization.	Human resource	Quantitative

Currently, senior management in organizations and companies focus on result-based management approach to assess and evaluate employee performance in terms of outputs, outcomes, impacts and indicators of programs and projects achieved throughout the whole year (Setiawan et al., 2018).

DISCUSSION

Human resource specialists and authors in different ways point at the strong relationship between job autonomy and employee performance (Maheshwari, 1981; Dodd & Ganster, 1996). They also emphasize that such relationship may vary from one national culture to another (Hofstede, 1993) and from one leadership style to another (Dorgham & Al-Mahmood, 2013). Employees, who enjoy freedom in decision-making process, take responsibility of task and play a pivotal role to strengthen performance at workplace (Strain, 1999; Tai & Liu, 2007; Dost et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2017; Johari et al., 2018). However, lack of autonomy reduces performance (Maheshwari, 1981; Langfred & Rockmann, 2016; Sai, 2016), increases absenteeism and staff turnover (Johari et al., 2018), triggers stress, frustration, anxiety and paves a way for more control and vertical authority (Tai & Liu, 2007).

The influence of job autonomy on employee performance can be practiced in more than one way. Researchers restricted the effect of job autonomy on performance; to complexed tasks and put aside simple tasks, that job autonomy is considered ineffective on it. (Dodd & Ganster, 1996; Langfred & Rockmann, 2016). Supervisor's support to practice autonomy has attracted high level of attention when it comes to autonomy's role in performance as it provides employees with continuous learning, development and preferences (Maymon & Reizer, 2017).

Sometimes, mediating variable is a trigger to create a link between job autonomy and job performance (Wang and Netemeyer, 2002). They refer to self-efficacy that employees believe in their ability to exert efforts in the light of enjoying a level of autonomy, which enhances the performance of employees themselves. Job autonomy is one of factors contributing to build trust and raise enthusiasm among employees that they are part of efforts in achieving results (Terason, 2018).

Leach et al., (2005) connected positive impact of job autonomy on employee performance through high knowledge, skills and ability (KSA) and without KSA, job autonomy has little effect on employee performance.

Despite all positive aspects of job autonomy mentioned so far, there are authors criticizing job autonomy in certain situations. According to them, drawbacks of job autonomy have bad consequences at organizational and individual level.

Lu et al., (2017) demonstrates that excessive job autonomy results in unwanted acts that may harm organizational goals. Langfred & Rockmann (2016) showed that job autonomy is disadvantageous because it raises certain questions and concerns for managers in terms of personal preferences and traits of employees and degree of equality towards number of employees working in organizations

and companies.

Although, above mentioned scholars show the negative correlation between job autonomy and employee's performance, they fail to highlight the role of organizational culture in affecting the relationship between job autonomy and employee performance.

Another limitation of these studies goes back to absence of discussion on detailed dimensions of job autonomy.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, authors strived to critically review existing body of knowledge on relationship between job autonomy and employee performance. Such efforts resulted in critically studying different elements of job design and their relationship with job performance in scientific literature. We have noted that styles of top management and leadership play a pivotal role to either grant job autonomy or deny it to employees while transformational leadership was considered amongst styles in favour of granting further job autonomy to employees.

In conclusion, there are numerous evidences showing the positive relation between job autonomy and job performance. However, some issues need to be taken into consideration by top and middle management once they want to allow employees to practice job autonomy: organizational culture, limits of autonomy, level of cultural diversity in the organization and knowledge, skills and abilities of employees are among issues of consideration.

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Abstract: This paper aims at examining the role of job autonomy in organizations and its relation with employee performance. This will be achieved by providing a critical review of the subject matter in existing management literature. In recent years, the concept of job autonomy has gained an increasing importance in practice of Human Resource Management. Even some studies claimed that job autonomy directly affects job performance and some of its indicators including job satisfaction, motivation, job engagement and job commitment. As a result, current paper aims at studying the effect of job autonomy on employee performance by critically reviewing existing work of human resource scholars. Main research questions approached by authors include: Is there any meaningful relationship between job autonomy and employee's job performance distinguished in existing literature? If yes, what impact can be expected from job autonomy on employee's job performance?

Keywords: Job autonomy, employee performance, culture