

Skill Variety and Employee Performance of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship between skill variety and employee performance of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The target population of this study consists of 60 managerial staff of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. There was no need for sampling since the population was small. The instruments were validated by experts in the field and supervisor's scrutiny. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant skill variety and employee performance of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. The study recommends that Deposit Money Banks should use job rotation to increase the variety of skills that every employee possesses which is a form of motivation. Job rotation will create some level of inclusivity where employees' jobs are linked to the overall goal of the Organization. Some level of freedom in making decisions may be adopted for performance to increase.

Keywords: Skill Variety, Employee Performance, Deposit Money Banks, Port Harcourt.

Introduction

Performance improvement relies on HRM strategies that are successful in recruitment and selection, training, retaining an involved, dedicated and motivated personnel (Al-Ahmadi, 2009). Kaplan and Norton (2011) came up with some set of actions which were referred to as the balanced scorecard that provided a quick and in-depth way to look at personnel performance and included the process measures as well as results of the processes. The most effective way to establish employees' performance is by use of the balanced approach as opposed to a partial way of looking at the performance where the outcome is shared with the managers, team-mates, supervisors and colleagues.

According to Putterill and Rohrer (2013), the attainment of goals in the assigned tasks to workers in a given period is an indicator of employee performance. Besides the improvement of performance being a result of a properly operating firm, it also depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of the human resource strategies which are successful in selecting and retaining a dedicated and motivated workforce (A-Ahmadi, 2009). There are various pieces of evidence for the known association between job characteristics and the performance of employees. Al-Ahmadi (2009) suggested that performance of a task

was linked with its nature and this was an indication that indeed satisfaction with one's job influenced the employees' performance. The sense of job worth, feeling meaningful before others, discovering individual capabilities, and freedom in decision making positively relates to the performance of employees.

Jobs which have the best characteristics improve employees' motivation, satisfaction and dedication to work and also contributes to improvement of productivity in an organization hence eradicating some health issues while at the same time not having an impact on the morals and passion of the employees at work (Borman, 2004). Similarly, Campion, Mumford, Morgeson and Nahrgang (2005), suggested that how work is designed has a considerable impact on employees' performance and attitude. The required attitude enables employees to complete the assignments on time, in conformity with the required standards hence the achievement of set targets. This could be achieved by introducing job characteristics such as skill variety which shows the range of skills required to complete a particular piece of work that leads to the desired individual and job results.

Skill Variety, according to Hackman and Oldham (1975) is the instance where a job requires various tasks in order to carry out a complete piece of work and involves using various skills and abilities by the employee. Just as the job characteristics model indicates, the different skills that are required to complete a task often leads to desired performance by the intervening psychological state of experienced importance of a job. Garg and Rastogi (2005) indicated that skill variety involves the degree of utilization of different skills and abilities. A variety of Skills variety is one factor in the JCM which affects the meaningfulness of a job. A job that is high in the level of skill variety always requires a wide array of skills and abilities (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

In other studies, skill variety is considered as the number of various task elements that are necessary for the job fulfilment. Task Variety communicates clarity of knowledge (Pentland, 2003). According to the literature of careers, employees at the start of their careers make attempts to discover tasks from which they attain or achieve their goals (Feldman & Thomas, 2012). Inherent characteristics of a job including significance of a task and skill variety are usually mostly associated with low rates of absenteeism (Taber & Taylor, 1990). The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between skill variety and employee performance of Deposit Money Banks.

This study was guided by the following

1. What is the relationship between skill variety and efficiency of work of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the relationship between skill variety and timeliness of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt?

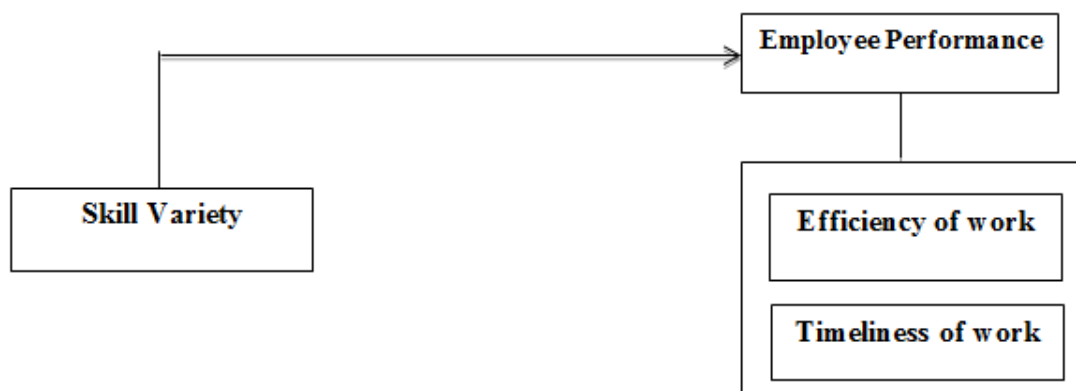


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework for skill variety and employee performance

Source: Desk Research (2022)

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Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

Job Characteristics Model

Model of job characteristics was developed by Hackman and contemporaries and it's majored on jobs structural characteristics. The jobs structural characteristics included variety of task, feedback, autonomy, identity and significance. Some researchers disputed that such characteristics can improve amongst others, motivation of work, satisfaction of job, and performance of job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980; Hackman & Lawler, 1971). In its early stages, the researchers had a condition on a variety of its features. For instance, Aldag, Barr and Brief, (1981) reported that there existed weak relations concerns between characteristics of job and job performance and with additional questions over the build between job perceptions nature as well as attitudes of job.

Aspersions have been casted as to its soundness with queries of whether simply matching enhancement in reimburse could establish preference for enrichment of job (Simonds & Orife, 1975). In line with the model, a member of staff will have internal motivation which is high if three significant states of emotion are experienced. The states which can be perceived as work place motivation precursors includes; work meaningfulness, Knowledge of the job results and Responsibility for the work outcomes. In order to attain the three basic states of emotion, the model of Job Characteristics supports that the job be designed with adequate five chief characteristics of job levels. The characteristics includes; variety of skill, identity of task, significance of task, feedback and autonomy. Out of the five characteristics of job, identity of task, variety of skill and significance of task are chief contributors to experienced work meaningfulness (Dodd, 2012).

It has been reported that it would be hard to find all the three characteristics of job at critical and high levels in a given job (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Nevertheless, the same researchers dispute that levels that are high of any one of the characteristics can alone add to superior knowledgeable meaningfulness at work and therefore by extension result to satisfaction of job (Loher, 2011). The researchers as well dispute that the fourth characteristic of job within the model, that is autonomy, is a vital contributor to experienced accountability for outcomes of work. In addition, in line with the model, results knowledge from the job could merely be satisfied if there is a system of feedback between the worker and the job (Ganster, 2012).

Skill Variety

Skill variety is the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities and involves the use of a number of various skills and talents of the workers. Jobs that are high in skill variety are seen by workers as more challenging because of the range of skills involved; relieve monotony that results from repetitive activity, and gives employees a greater sense of competence. According to Bratton (2007), when a variety of skills are essential to complete a task and those skills are perceived to be of value to the organization, employees find their jobs to be more meaningful. The idea behind providing skill variety in job design is that it will reduce boredom, thereby increasing job satisfaction and motivation. It has been proven that one-skill jobs that lead to repetition and monotony could bring about boredom, fatigue and stress that may negatively affect performance and productivity. According to Derek and Laura (2000), movement of employees from one job-task to another job within the organization and allowing them to adopt a variety of tasks in their work helps in mitigating the effect of repetitiveness and boredom.

Skill Variety, according to Hackman and Oldham (1975) is the instance where a job requires various tasks in order to carry out a complete piece of work and involves using various skills and abilities by the employee. Just as the job characteristics model indicates, the different skills that are required to complete

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a task often leads to desired performance by the intervening psychological state of experienced importance of a job. Garg and Rastogi (2005) indicated that skill variety involves the degree of utilization of different skills and abilities. A variety of Skills variety is one factor in the JCM which affects the meaningfulness of a job. A job that is high in the level of skill variety always requires a wide array of skills and abilities (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Jobs that are complicated have shown substantial but positive relatedness with job satisfaction, internal employee motivation and employee output (Spector, 2012; Jassen, 2001). Chandler (2007) stated that a wide range of skills are required for employees to grow and a vast range of skills is also necessary for the purpose of being flexible at. In other studies, skill variety is considered as the number of various task elements that are necessary for the job fulfilment. Task Variety communicates clarity of knowledge (Pentland, 2003). According to the literature of careers, employees at the start of their careers make attempts to discover tasks from which they attain or achieve their goals (Feldman & Thomas, 2012). Inherent characteristics of a job including significance of a task and skill variety are usually mostly associated with low rates of absenteeism (Taber & Taylor, 1990).

Concept of Organizational Performance

Job performance of employees plays a crucial factor in determining an organisational performance (June & Mahmood, 2011). 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 (Ambrose, *et. al.*, 2013).

Performance is what the organization hires one to do, and do well (Campbell, 1990, as in June and Mahmood, 2011). Performance is a multi-dimensional concept (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). On the most basic level, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) distinguish between task and contextual performance (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). Use of several criteria becomes needed in order to evaluate job performance of an employee accurately (Opatha, 2009). He further noted employee performance can be focused based on traits, behaviors and results.

Job performance directly focuses on productivity of worker via assessment of the units' number of suitable quality created by a worker in a processing environment, in a specific period of time (Putterill & Rohrer, 1995). The business success is dependent on performance of employees. Increasing the employees' performance from the lowest organization levels to senior management is one of the most efficient techniques of increasing business profit as well as performance.

According to Al-Ahmadi (2009) improvement of performance is not only an outcome of well-running system but as well as dependent on efficient strategies of human resource that thrive in employing as well as keeping motivated and committed employees. Ivancevich (1998) reported that the performance dimensions on which a worker is assessed are called the evaluation criteria. Literature has shown that numerous criteria turn out to be useful so as to assess performance of job of a worker correctly (Opatha, 2002). Mathis and Jackson (2003) reported that the information or data that managers obtain on how well workers are executing their tasks can be divide into three dissimilar types and they include; Behavior-based information, Trait-based information, Result based information. Trait-based information spots employees' subjective character for instance initiative, creativity or attitude (Opatha, 2002). Mathis and Jackson (2003) revealed that behavior-based assessment of performance of job focuses on what is incorporated in the task itself. The outcomes are the results produced by the worker. On the other hand, result based information put into consideration achievement of employee. For the case of jobs in which evaluation is obvious and easy, an approach of results-based is appropriate.

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Different evident for association between performance of employees and design of job exists. According to Al-Ahmadi (2009), the job nature is positively associated with performance, which signifies that satisfaction together with quantity of variety as well as challenge in one's job essentially impact on performance. The feeling important in eyes of others, sense of job significant, realizing competence of an individual, and liberty to make decisions have been shown to be positively associated to performance.

Measures of Employee Performance

Efficiency

Ogboso and Amah (2016) opines that efficiency refers to the accomplishment of goals with minimum resources or waste. It includes measures such as time minimization, cost minimization, and waste minimization. Speed and time are important resources for any organization and must be seen to seek to maximize speed and minimize time. The way an organization does this indicates how efficient and productive they are. Speed and time were the essence of time and motion studies since the day of scientific management introduced by Taylor that led to management efficiency. They are sources of competitive advantage. Doing the right thing in corporate governance terms is an important, but not a sufficient, condition for performance. And doing the wrong thing (e.g., an ineffective audit committee, or lack of independence among the executives) will make it more difficult for an organization to perform but is not a measure of success or lack of it either. The questions relating to organization efficiency are: How effective is the organization in dispatching businesses (including through organization committees in and between meetings) and following up on decisions, does the organization identify and focus on key (not just a long list of) issues and risks facing the organizations; is the organization able to take initiatives, dealing with crises and identifying emerging issues? The conception of time here is the duration taken to accomplish a task. These honest questions are both a matter of choice. Since it is usually only after an extended period is it possible to know whether the organization has dealt with the right issues, how well it has done so, and which issues have not been addressed. Accordingly, failing to ensure succession or invest in new technology is just as much about performance as successful talent management or systems investment. Organizations can be really helpful in identifying risks that executive director alone, sometimes preoccupied with current challenges, and may not have spotted. There are two questions rather than one here because a history of dealing with key issues as they arise is not enough. The ability to take initiatives, deal with crises and identify issues that are not part of 'normal business' is a crucial differentiator between an efficient and a tolerable organization. For the same reason 'meeting organization objectives' isn't included as a performance measure, since it runs the risk of being too inward-looking and passively taking things too much as they are.

Timeliness of Work

When the employees are productive, they accomplish more in a given amount of time. In turn, efficiency saves their company money in time and labor. When employees are unproductive, they take longer time to complete projects, which cost employee's more money due to the time lost (Olajide, 2000). The importance of higher productivity of the employees in public enterprise cannot be overemphasized, which include the following; Higher incomes and profit; Higher earnings; Increased supplies of both consumer and capital goods at lower costs and lower prices; Ultimate shorter hours of work and improvements in working and living conditions; Strengthening the general economic foundation of workers (Banjoko, 1996). Armstrong (2006) stated that productivity is the time spent by an employee actively participating in his/her job that he or she was hired for, in order to produce the required outcomes according to the employers' job descriptions. As suggested by Bloisi (2003) the core cause of the productivity problems in the South African society are people's motivation levels and their work ethics.

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Timeliness according to Mayberry, Nicewander, Qin and Billard (2006) can be referred to as the ability to reduce waiting times and sometimes harmful delays to clients by employees in attending to their needs. The scholar went further to emphasize that a high degree of responsiveness with respect to an activity that is not essential in achieving the organizations goals does not contribute to the effectiveness of organizations; hence hindering their ability to become competitive. Timeliness refers to the delivery of value to customers at an appropriate time. This is distinguished from the notion of speed which typically refers to how fast an organization could be in producing and introducing valuable products to the market ahead of its competitors (Mayberry *et al.*, 2006). This simply goes to mean that speeding up the work that is being done does not necessarily translate to responsiveness even though it can certainly yield greater output.

The present business milieu has become greatly influenced by globalization and as such is consistently breeding hyper-competition among key players in various industries both locally and internationally. These circumstances have forced organizations to adopt various strategies which they intend to use in redefining their approach towards dealing with the needs of their customers. Most organizations today more than ever have adopted the concept of empowering their teeming customers as a panacea towards attaining desired competitive advantage (Ekis & Arasli, 2007). However, organizations in their bid to respond to the challenges of environment and influence in business should focus on customer needs, wants and retention ability by being prompt in their service and product delivery.

Relationship between Skill Variety and Organizational Performance

Skill Variety, according to Hackman and Oldham (1975) is the instance where a job requires various tasks in order to carry out a complete piece of work and involves using various skills and abilities by the employee. Just as the job characteristics model indicates, the different skills that are required to complete a task often leads to desired performance by the intervening psychological state of experienced importance of a job. Garg and Rastogi (2005) indicated that skill variety involves the degree of utilization of different skills and abilities. A variety of Skills variety is one factor in the JCM which affects the meaningfulness of a job. A job that is high in the level of skill variety always requires a wide array of skills and abilities (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Jobs that are complicated have shown substantial but positive relatedness with job satisfaction, internal employee motivation and employee output (Spector, 2012; Jassen, 2001). Chandler (2007) stated that a wide range of skills are required for employees to grow and a vast range of skills is also necessary for the purpose of being flexible at work. Chandler (2007) further suggests that to be effective, employees must break their alliance on a contracted assortment of job competencies created when working on a particular task. Work which needs the input of various skills will allow for workers to complete a meaningful piece of a job as opposed to just repeating simple tasks are viewed to have an impression on other people and also seen as worthwhile and meaningful the employees in these jobs. Skill Variety could also incorporate the influence of task difficulty. Work that involves too much repetition of an exercise and require less skills and talent is seen to be of low task difficulty while the work that involves varying tasks, activities and skills are considered to have high task difficulty (Spector, 2012).

In other studies, skill variety is considered as the number of various task elements that are necessary for the job fulfilment. Task Variety communicates clarity of knowledge (Pentland, 2003). According to the literature of careers, employees at the start of their careers make attempts to discover tasks from which they attain or achieve their goals (Feldman & Thomas, 2012). Inherent characteristics of a job including significance of a task and skill variety are usually mostly associated with low rates of absenteeism (Taber & Taylor, 1990).

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Some of the studies that have been done on the component of skill variety include those by Kemboi, Biwott, Chenuos and Rutto (2013) on skill variety, feedback and employee performance. Their research employed a descriptive design that provided a description of related aspects of the areas of interest to the current researcher. This study sought to look at the design of the job and performance of employees who are nurses at the hospital. One thousand nine hundred and forty-five (1945) nurses were the target, mainly working at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret in Kenya. Three hundred and twenty nurses were then selected as the sample, using the simple random sampling. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics like the mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics involved Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis.

Skill variety was found to significantly affect job performance. Similarly, skill variety was seen to provide the feelings of accomplishment, when the nurses who had a higher variety of skills increased their opportunities for the job and had higher chances of being promoted. However, feedback was found to have no influence on the job. It was also found that the nurses required more training in order to advance in their skills so as to improve their work performance. Their study was based on health sector and did not give a view of the same in other sectors or industries.

Bremner and Carrière (2011) studied on the effects of skill variety, autonomy, task significance and task identity on job-related work stress at the medical facility and the mediating effect of the importance of work. A survey was conducted on a sample of approximately 1100 workers from a Canadian hospital and was administered in the French language. The study established that skill variety was the most significant of all other job characteristics. The direct relationship between skill variety and cynicism suggests that having the opportunity to conduct complex and challenging work is engaging for those that work in the healthcare field. The four job characteristics examined in the study only helped to explain about twenty-four percent of the variance in meaningful work. This suggests that there are other important variables that can explain incremental variance in meaningful work. It also implies that there are additional ways in which practitioners and managers can help to facilitate the emergence of meaning at work.

Based on this position, the following hypotheses are put forward:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and efficiency of work of employee of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and timeliness of employees of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The target population of this study consists of 60 managerial staff of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. There was no need for sampling since the population was small. The instruments were validated by experts in the field and supervisor's scrutiny. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

Bivariate Analysis

The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ($p < 0.05$).

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Table 1: Correlation for Job Enlargement and Measures of Employee Performance

			Skill Variety	Efficiency	Timeliness
Spearman's rho	Skill Variety	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.675**	.564**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	59	59	59
	Efficiency	Correlation Coefficient	.675**	1.000	.835**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	59	59	59
	Timeliness	Correlation Coefficient	.564**	.835**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	59	59	59

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output Version

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and efficiency of work of employee of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a significant relationship between skill variety and efficiency. The correlation coefficient 0.675 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between skill variety and efficiency of work of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and timeliness of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a significant relationship between skill variety and timeliness. The correlation coefficient 0.564 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between skill variety and timeliness of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that a significant relationship between exists between job design and employee performance of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation tool and at a 95% confidence interval. The findings of this study confirmed that job design has an effect on employee performance of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. This finding agrees with the assertions of Bremner and Carrière (2011) who studied on the effects of skill variety, autonomy, task significance and task identity on job-related work stress at the medical facility and the mediating effect of the importance of work. A survey was conducted on a sample of approximately 1100 workers from a Canadian hospital and was administered in the French language. The study established that skill variety was the most significant of all other job characteristics. The direct relationship between skill variety and cynicism suggests that having the opportunity to conduct complex and challenging work is engaging for

those that work in the healthcare field. The four job characteristics examined in the study only helped to explain about twenty-four percent of the variance in meaningful work. This suggests that there are other important variables that can explain incremental variance in meaningful work. It also implies that there are additional ways in which practitioners and managers can help to facilitate the emergence of meaning at work.

The results of the study agree with the findings of Chandler (2007), who indicated that a large variety of skills are necessary for employees to achieve growth, and diversification of skills is also required for flexibility at work. Chandler (2007) further suggests that to be meaningful, employees should not link their alliance on a contracted assortment of job competencies created when working on a particular task. In line with Garg and Rastogi (2005) the findings show that a variety of skills involves a degree of making use of several skills and capabilities. Previous studies by Bremmer and carrier (2011) as well as Kemboi, Biwott, Chemos and Rutto (2013) found that skill variety was significant to employee performance using samples from the health sector among the highly educated.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Skill variety in the job shows the range of skills required to complete a particular piece of work that leads to the desired individual and job results. Based on the study findings, the study concludes that skill variety significantly influences employee performance of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

The following specific recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- i. Deposit Money Banks should increase the variety of skills that every employee possesses which is a form of motivation. This will create some level of inclusivity where employees' jobs are linked to the overall goal of the Organization. Some level of freedom in making decisions may be adopted for performance to increase.
- ii. Deposit Money Banks should focus on skill variety in planning and evaluation of employees' jobs and performance respectively. Job rotation are some of the methods that can be adopted to ensure that all employees are part of the organizations entire goal.

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