

## **The Role of the Job Characteristics Model in Psychological Well-Being among Employees at a Private University**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aimed to examine the role of the Job Characteristic Model on employees' Psychological Well-Being at a private university in Bali. A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design was employed in this study. The participants consisted of 48 employees selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data were collected through a survey method using the Motivating Potential Score developed by Hackman and Oldham to measure job characteristics and the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff to assess psychological well-being. Data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression. The results indicated that the Job Characteristic Model had a significant effect on employees' Psychological Well-Being, with a significance value of  $p < 0.05$  and a coefficient of determination of 0.210. These findings suggest that job characteristics accounted for 21% of the variance in employees' psychological well-being, while the remaining variance was influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study. Higher levels of job characteristic fulfillment are associated with higher levels of psychological well-being among employees. This study extends the application of the Job Characteristic Model within the higher education context in Indonesia and highlights the importance of job design as a key determinant of employees' psychological well-being.*

**Keywords:** *Job Characteristic Model, Psychological Well-Being, Employees, Private University*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Psychological well-being is a crucial aspect of individuals' lives, particularly within the context of work. For employees, work does not merely function as a source of income but also serves as a domain for self-actualization, identity formation, and the fulfillment of life meaning. Psychological well-being in the workplace is especially important because individuals' work experiences can substantially influence their psychological functioning, quality of life, and overall effectiveness, both in professional settings and in their personal lives (Simone, 2014).

In psychological literature, psychological well-being is conceptualized as an optimal state of functioning that reflects individuals' sense of life meaning, personal growth, self-acceptance, positive relations with others, and their capacity to function effectively in everyday (Ryff & Singer, 2008; Wells, 2010). Psychological well-being is particularly relevant in the work context because it captures long-term functioning and personal development, rather than short-term affective states or momentary job satisfaction. Unlike approaches to well-being that primarily emphasize happiness or subjective satisfaction, psychological well-being is grounded in a eudaimonic perspective that focuses on optimal psychological functioning and the realization of human potential. Consequently, psychological well-being represents a particularly relevant construct for examination in the work context, especially within organizational environments that demand sustained engagement, responsibility, and continuous adaptation.

In practice, however, not all employees experience optimal psychological well-being, even when job security or financial compensation has been achieved. This phenomenon was also observed among employees at a private university in Bali. Preliminary interviews revealed complaints related to work schedule arrangements, unclear job descriptions, and limited understanding of work objectives and responsibilities. These conditions were associated with difficulties in maintaining work-life balance, as well as reduced initiative and work engagement.

Such findings indicate that employees' psychological well-being is influenced not only by material factors but also by how work itself is structured and experienced.

One important factor influencing employees' work experiences and psychological well-being is job design. Poorly designed jobs have been shown to exert negative effects on individuals' mental health and well-being (Parker et al., 2001). Job design refers to the structuring of task characteristics and work responsibilities with the aim of enhancing employees' work experiences and productivity (Jones & George, 2012). Within the job design framework, the Job Characteristic Model (JCM) is one of the most widely applied models for explaining how job characteristics shape individuals' psychological states.

The Job Characteristic Model, developed by Hackman and Oldham, emphasizes five core job characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. These characteristics are considered capable of fostering intrinsic motivation and meaningful work experiences among employees (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Jones & George, 2012). Through the concept of the Motivating Potential Score, the model explains the extent to which a job has the capacity to generate positive psychological experiences. Empirical evidence suggests that well-designed job characteristics are associated with higher motivation, greater job satisfaction, and healthier psychological conditions (Noe et al., 2003; O'Toole & Lawler, 2006).

Several empirical studies have also demonstrated a relationship between the Job Characteristic Model and employees' psychological well-being. For instance, Lorente et al., (2018) found that job characteristics contribute to psychological well-being through meaningful work experiences and job satisfaction. These findings reinforce the view that job characteristics influence not only performance outcomes but also the long-term quality of individuals' psychological well-being.

Although the Job Characteristic Model has been widely examined in relation to job satisfaction and motivation, recent work design research has expanded its focus to broader outcomes, including employees' well-being. For instance, Sari (2022) found that job demands and personal characteristics significantly influence workplace well-being among university lecturers in Yogyakarta. Similarly, other studies have demonstrated that job characteristics are positively associated with employees' job satisfaction and performance in public sector organizations. However, these studies primarily focus on hedonic outcomes such as job satisfaction or general well-being, and often do not explicitly apply the full Job Characteristics Model as a comprehensive framework (Aliyah & Hakim, 2025; Fibrianti et al., 2021).

In line with this, prior work design research has highlighted that job characteristics influence a broader range of outcomes, including employees' well-being (Parker et al., 2017). Moreover, much of the existing literature has focused on job satisfaction or motivation as outcome variables, while psychological well-being as a eudaimonic construct has received comparatively less attention. This gap is particularly important given that higher education institutions possess distinct work characteristics compared to industrial sectors, including differences in role demands, organizational structures, and work dynamics.

Given the substantial role of work in shaping individuals' lives, job design represents a critical factor influencing how employees experience and evaluate their work. Inadequately designed jobs have been shown to adversely affect employees' health and well-being (Parker et al., 2001). Therefore, empirical investigations that specifically examine the role of the Job Characteristic Model in shaping employees' psychological well-being within Indonesian university contexts are warranted.

Based on this rationale, the present study aims to examine the role of the Job Characteristic Model on employees' psychological well-being at University X. This study is expected to contribute theoretically by extending the application of the Job Characteristic Model to the higher education context, as well as practically by providing evidence-based insights for job design strategies that support employees' psychological well-being in university settings.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional correlational design, in which data were collected at a single point in time to examine the relationship and predictive role of the Job Characteristic Model on employees' Psychological Well-Being (Creswell, 2013). Data collection was conducted using a survey method.

The participants consisted of 48 employees working at a private higher education institution in Bali. A non-probability sampling technique using convenience sampling was applied due to limited access and the size of the employee population available at the time of data collection (Etikan, 2016). The number of participants represents the total population of permanent employees who were willing to participate and met the research criteria. The inclusion criteria were active employees working at the university who consented to participate in the study, whereas the exclusion criteria included employees who did not complete the questionnaire in full.

The Job Characteristic Model was measured using a revised version of the Job Diagnostic Survey, which assesses five core job characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). This instrument was used to calculate the Motivating Potential Score as an indicator of a job's motivational potential. The scale consists of 15 items rated on a seven-point response format, with higher scores indicating job characteristics that are more supportive of intrinsic motivation. Previous studies have reported acceptable internal consistency for the Job Diagnostic Survey subscales, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.67 to 0.79 (Buys et al., 2007).

Psychological Well-Being was assessed using the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff, which comprises 42 items designed to measure psychological well-being from a eudaimonic perspective (Ryff & Singer, 2008). The scale was translated into Indonesian and adapted to suit the characteristics of the study participants. Responses were recorded using a six-point Likert scale, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of psychological well-being. Data were collected offline by administering paper-based questionnaires that included an informed consent form at the beginning of the survey. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured that all data would remain anonymous and be used solely for research purposes, in accordance with ethical principles in social and psychological research (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Data analysis was conducted using simple linear regression with IBM SPSS Statistics version 24 to examine the role of the Job Characteristic Model on Psychological Well-Being. Regression analysis was deemed appropriate for testing the predictive relationship between a single independent variable and a single dependent variable in quantitative research (Field, 2018). Additional descriptive analyses were performed to summarize participants' demographic characteristics.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Descriptive analyses were conducted to summarize the participants' characteristics, including gender, age, and length of employment. A summary of the participants' demographic characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research participant data

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	28	58.3
	Female	20	41.7
Age Group	< 30 years	16	33.3
	31–40 years	17	35.4
	41–50 years	7	14.5
	> 50 years	8	16.7
Marital Status	Married	38	79.1
	Unmarried	10	20.8
Educational Level	Senior High School / Vocational High School	5	10.4
	Diploma	3	6.25
	Bachelor’s Degree	30	62.5
	Master’s Degree	10	20.8
Income Category	IDR 1,000,000 – 2,000,000	16	33.3
	IDR 2,000,000 – 3,000,000	26	54.1
	IDR 3,000,000 – 4,000,000	6	12.5

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents in this study were male (58.3%). Most participants held a bachelor’s degree (62.5%) as their highest level of education. The largest proportion of respondents fell within the 31–40 years age range (35.4%), and the majority were married (79.1%). In addition, more than half of the respondents reported a monthly income ranging from IDR 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 (54.1%). The data indicate that the majority of participants were in early to middle adulthood and had more than one year of work experience, suggesting that they possessed sufficient occupational experience to evaluate the characteristics of their jobs.

Table 2. Normality Test

Psychological Well-Being	
N	48
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,171

Based on Table 2, the results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov procedure for the Psychological Well-being variable yielded a p-value of 0.171 ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that the data distribution satisfies the assumption of normality.

Table 3. Linearity Test

Variabel yang diuji	F	Nilai P
Job Characteristic Model dengan Psychological Well-Being	13.439	0,001

As shown in Table 3, the results of the linearity test indicate that the relationship between the Job Characteristic Model and Psychological Well-Being is linear, as evidenced by a p-value below 0.05.

Table 4. Simple Regression Analysis

Model	R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	Sig	Koefisien Regresi	Kontribusi
1	0,210	14,848	0,001	0,458	21%

Based on Table 4, the significance value is 0.001, which is lower than the probability threshold of 0.05. Accordingly, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted, indicating that the Job Characteristic Model has a positive effect on Psychological Well-Being. The strength of the association between the two variables is reflected by a correlation coefficient of 0.458, which falls within the high category. Furthermore, the Job Characteristic Model accounts for 21% of the variance in Psychological Well-Being, while the remaining variance is explained by other factors not examined in the present study. These findings also indicate that the Job Characteristic Model significantly predicts Psychological Well-Being by 21%.

### Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the Job Characteristic Model has a significant effect on employees' Psychological Well-Being, accounting for 21% of the explained variance. This finding also suggests that while job characteristics contribute to psychological well-being, their influence may be more limited in capturing deeper eudaimonic aspects such as personal growth, meaning, and self-actualization, which are shaped by broader organizational and social factors. Furthermore, job characteristics play an important role in shaping psychological well-being, particularly through meaningful work experiences and a sense of control over one's job. From a eudaimonic perspective, psychological well-being is associated with life meaning, personal growth, and individuals' optimal functioning in fulfilling their roles (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Accordingly, jobs that provide skill variety, autonomy, and feedback may serve as essential mechanisms through which individuals' psychological needs are fulfilled (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

However, the contribution of 21% should also be interpreted critically. This value indicates that although job design is a significant factor, most of the variance in employees' psychological well-being is influenced by factors beyond job characteristics alone. Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct shaped not only by structural aspects of work but also by relational and contextual factors within organizations (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Thus, the Job Characteristic Model is more appropriately positioned as an enabling condition for psychological well-being rather than as a sole determinant.

In the context of higher education organizations, the limited contribution of the Job Characteristic Model becomes particularly salient. This may explain why the contribution of the Job Characteristics Model is relatively modest, as the complexity of work in higher education institutions involves not only task-related factors but also relational, academic, and organizational dynamics. University work environments differ from industrial organizations in several respects, including fluctuating administrative demands, seasonal workloads linked to academic calendars, and work relationships that are both hierarchical and collegial. These conditions may influence how employees perceive autonomy, task clarity, and task significance in their daily work (Parker et al., 2001); Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Consequently, job characteristics that are formally well designed may not always be fully experienced as sources of psychological well-being.

Moreover, previous research has demonstrated that relational factors and organizational support play a substantial role in shaping employees' psychological well-being. Supervisor support, leadership quality, job security, and a fair and supportive organizational climate have been shown to contribute significantly to individuals' psychological well-being (Kahn &

Byosiere, 1992; Guest, 2017). Within university settings, unsupportive work relationships or role ambiguity may weaken the positive effects of well-designed jobs.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Lorente et al. (2018), who reported that the relationship between job characteristics and psychological well-being is often mediated by meaningful work experiences and job satisfaction. This suggests that the association between the Job Characteristic Model and Psychological Well-Being is indirect and influenced by other psychological processes not fully captured in the present study. Accordingly, these findings extend current understanding of the boundaries of the Job Characteristic Model, particularly within the context of higher education organizations in Indonesia.

From a practical perspective, these findings indicate that efforts to enhance university employees' psychological well-being should not focus solely on improving job design. While clear and meaningful job design remains important, organizations must also develop supportive organizational systems, responsive leadership, and policies that promote work–life balance. Such a more comprehensive approach aligns with the view that employees' psychological well-being is shaped by the interaction between job characteristics and broader social and organizational contexts (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Guest, 2017)

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) has a significant effect on the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) of employees at a private university in Bali. Higher levels of congruence between individuals and their job characteristics—particularly in terms of work meaningfulness, autonomy, and feedback—are associated with higher levels of perceived psychological well-being. Quantitatively, JCM accounts for 21% of the variance in PWB, indicating that job design constitutes an important, albeit not the sole, factor in supporting employees' psychological well-being within academic settings.

These findings imply that while improving job design is essential, it should be complemented by broader organizational efforts, such as strengthening leadership support, fostering a supportive work environment, and promoting work–life balance. Theoretically, this study contributes to extending the application of the Job Characteristics Model by highlighting psychological well-being, particularly from a eudaimonic perspective, as a key outcome within higher education contexts.

Nevertheless, this study is limited its cross-sectional design and a relatively small sample size from a single institution. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples and more diverse organizational settings, as well as to explore additional factors that may influence employees' psychological well-being.

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