Job Satisfaction Analysis for effective organizational change management: An Action Research Approach.

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Abstract

Aim of the paper focuses to identify and discuss the five job satisfaction fits and contracts between the employer and the employees as originally presented by Enid Mumford. The study data was derived from the preliminary work done on the case study in a telecommunication company adopting an action research approach. It is based on the researcher and participants' experience together with reflection, a collaboration between the researcher and the employees. The job satisfaction framework is used to measure and investigate the overall job satisfaction of the employees for effective organizational change management. Baxter & Sommerville [1] states that the system stakeholders inevitably have different concerns. It is important to meet the concerns of the stakeholders for effective organizational change management. According to Mumford [15], a job satisfaction survey of 2000 showed that a third of managers are unhappy with their jobs, 40% want to change jobs, 49% think that morale in their organization is low, 55% say they face frequent stress at work, 30% think their health is suffering and half say they have too little time to build relationships outside work.

The authors have developed a participative framework for investigation, job satisfaction analysis and stakeholder analysis through action research. Action research in an organizational setting draws the researcher and the employees involved into a joint process aimed at meeting agreed intentions. The relationship between the researcher and the employees is dynamic, as they develop over time. The research and the participants share their experiences and worries in action research to resolve issues and differences.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Action Research, Organization, Change Management, Stakeholder Analysis.

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

In this paper, we discuss the job satisfaction fits and contracts between the employer and the employees as originally presented by Mumford [9]. We look at this in the con-

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text of effective organizational change management. It is being recognized that a satisfied worker is a productive worker. If employees are satisfied then it will create a nice atmosphere for work inside the organization. Job satisfaction plays an important role in organizational change management, therefore it is important to examine employees job satisfaction when change occurs. This will help the organization to know how employees can be retained by making them satisfied and motivated to achieve extraordinary results. Achieving the goal of organizational change depends on employees job satisfaction which in turn contribute to organizational success and increases the quality of work. Data was collected from preliminarily investigating a case study in a multinational telecommunication company by conducting an Action Research (AR). Employees at different levels and different roles were interviewed. The researcher made it clear to the participants that the intention would be to use the results for academic publication. The organization gave a go-ahead and will also use the research result for improvement of the organization change management processes. For a detailed analysis, the authors have developed a participative framework for investigation. This is done by combining job satisfaction analysis and stakeholder analysis through action research. Employee's needs and job satisfaction as a concept is explained in this paper using the "job satisfaction fits". Stakeholders' analysis was used to investigate employees worldview. Techniques from Soft System Methodology (SSM) by Checkland [4] was implemented for a thorough analysis, for example, CATWOE, Rich Picture and Root Definition.

The purpose of this research study is to investigate employees job satisfaction by discussing job satisfaction fits and contracts between the employer and the employees for effective change management.

1.2 Background

In this paper, researchers examine the employees' job satisfaction by collaborating with the employees through action research. The investigation was carried in a multinational telecommunication company, the case study was a project which lasted for nine months. A job satisfaction analysis and stakeholder analysis was conducted, this is done by interviews, chats and meetings, the researcher investigating report(s) of job expectation, job experience/practices. AR was adopted because it offers participants the opportunity to get involve and learn. AR must possess an aspect of direct involvement in organizational change, and simultaneously it must provide an increase in knowledge [7]. This process involves action and research, the separation of the two as stated by Melin and Axelsson can be complicated and problematic both practically and analytically as it represents a dilemma [14]. For the researchers to avoid any problem(s), all participants were carried along and were fully informed on the situation and methods. According to Checkland and Howell, in researching human situations, the researcher is immersing himself in a human problem situation and following it along whatever path it takes as it unfolds through time [4].

AR focuses on the researcher's and employee's reality, it is the involvement of both. According to McNiff, action research is about real-life experiences of real-life people [13]. In an organizational setting, AR draws the researcher and the employees involved

in a joint process aimed at meeting agreed intentions. Before starting an AR in an organization, it is important to set boundaries and ground rules knowing that it is a colearning process for everyone. A process of new findings and diffusion of new ideas for the researcher and the employees. The researcher and the employees are co-investigators using AR to explore and share their experiences and practices. According to Susman and Evered, the action researcher collaborates with clients in diagnosis, selection of alternative actions, and evaluation of outcomes. The objective of the collaboration is to bring about a better future, i.e., with a problem solved [23]. The researcher creates a relationship with the employees, they interact sharing their experiences to resolve issues.

Performing AR in an organization is participatory, it involves interviews, chats, observations which has helped the project team to crystallize their thoughts about job satisfaction and changes in working practices. AR is a more grounded way of assessing employees' job satisfaction because it involves thinking about the past, now and the future, captured by interviews, chats and meetings. Through AR, the authors of this paper have attempted to explore the real-world usefulness of the relationship between employee satisfaction and participation during change. Through discussion with participants, it seems clear that the organization could learn a great deal about the change management and skill/knowledge management during change and after the change.

Planning and managing change

Employee's job satisfaction analysis for effective organizational change is very important for the success of the organization. The authors of this paper belief that change causes employees to feel anxious, involving them in the planning gives them an understanding of the change. Employees need to know and understand their new duties and everyday jobs [20]. This can help the employees to make useful contributions to solving the problems. Also, it can be agreed that the employees will be committed to operating efficiently a working system which they have planned. Research has found and agrees that employee participation is a necessity during change. According to Mumford [19], a requirement of participation in decisions for organizational change is that users will have the skills and knowledge to perform an important role in the total design process and can make informed decisions at each design stage from defining the problem to operating the new system.

Getting employees involved in planning organizational change is an approach to explore the employees need and also engage them. Here, we argue that by participation all those affected by the change will be able to play some part in its definition, design and in agreeing with plans for its execution. An organization should be designed to consciously plan to achieve employees needs to accomplish job satisfaction. Cumming and Worley [8], notes that activity planning involves making a road map for change, citing specific activities and events that must occur if the transition is to be successful. Participants of the case study revealed that organizational change can be difficult, thus, the need for planned activities is very important. For example, face to face meeting with the manager/change agents and training before, during and after the change.

We believe that greater user participation together with clear job satisfaction objectives will assist the successful planning and effective change management. Timely

and methodical planning to implementing change leads to organizational progress. The objective of planning with employees is to allow them to participate before, during and after the change. We support this view and we believe that the use of this approach will assist the achievement of employees job satisfaction and the reason for the change. Authors have adopted the participatory approach introducing job satisfaction and stakeholder analysis through action research, this tends to reduce conflict in the workplace. Planning and managing change are responsibilities which should be shared between the employer and the employees. Also, authors of this paper accept the fact that one of the oldest and most effective strategies for overcoming resistance is to directly involve employees in the planning and execution of change.

Mumford [21], points out that whatever route is taken to achieving effective change, it must be remembered that there is never 'one best way', they must be opportunities for choice and discussion on what is best and how to achieve it. In the case study investigated the authors use in-depth semi-structured interview designed to match dialogue with employees of different roles and levels. This allowed participants reflecting and discussing the best way forward on their terms. It is obvious to the researcher that participants reflected from their experiences when they were given the opportunity.

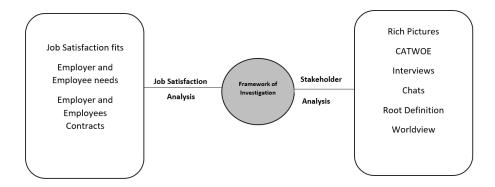
2 Framework of Investigations

Introduction

The framework of investigation is a participative approach, it is the researcher and the stakeholders' contribution. This is investigating the employees' job satisfaction as originally introduced by Mumford [20]. The authors of this paper choose a participative approach because it creates an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge between the researcher and the employees or amongst the employees. Participation permits a shared learning process to take place in which each of the interest groups can contribute to the problem-solving process [19].

Techniques from Soft Systems Methodology as developed by Checkland [4] was also adopted and implemented for stakeholders' analysis, this includes rich pictures (RP), root definition and CATWOE (Customer, Actor, Transformation, Worldview, Owner, and Environment). For a proper investigation of the case study the semi-structured interview, chats and meeting were designed to measure the job satisfaction problems and needs before, during and after a change is made. The framework lies behind the questions and communication between the researcher and the participants. The figure 1 below describes the main areas drawn from Mumford's "Job Satisfaction analysis" and Checkland's work "Stakeholders analysis".

Fig. 1. Framework of investigation



2.1 Job Satisfaction Analysis

Authors take from this study that employees' satisfaction and involvement are related to achieving effective organizational change at a magnitude that is important to the organization. Employees' job satisfaction is an important factor in an organization, it describes the feelings, attitudes or preferences of individuals regarding work. Job satisfaction among employees is an indicator of organizational effectiveness. Mumford defined job satisfaction as a good fit between what a person does and has in his or her job and what he or she ideally wants to do and have [21]. Agreeing with Chen, numerous factors affect employees' job satisfaction due to individual differences, the factors vary among different employees [5]. It is the general understanding that job satisfaction is an attitude towards job and organizational performance depends on staff satisfaction [11]. Therefore, it is important to assess an employee's job satisfaction before and after a change, this will reveal employees' needs and allow the organization to find solutions. A person with high job satisfaction appears to hold generally positive attitudes and one who is dissatisfied to hold negative attitudes towards their job [12]. Explained further by Mumford [16], the employer will meet the employee's needs then the employee will help further the employer's interests. See table 1 below a series of contracts between management and employees [18], stating what the employer needs, the employee's needs and wishes. The employees' needs and wishes were extracted from case study report, from different employees.

Table 1: Employer and employees' contract, Mumford (p.51, 1972)

KNOWLEDGE Contract

<u>The employer (taken from Mumford):</u> Needs a certain level of skill and knowledge in its employees if it is to function efficiently.

Employee A, citation from the case study interview: "I would like my line manager to get me (employees) more involved before the change, or train us sufficiently before the change. I think that we will do better and some of us will be more confident".

<u>Researcher analysis:</u> Employees wishes for more training as new changes frequently demand new knowledge, skills and behaviors. Sufficient training will help employees work better.

PSYCHOLOGICAL Contract

<u>The employer (taken from Mumford):</u> Needs employees who are motivated to look after its interests.

Employee B, citation from the case study interview: "Actually, the changes have affected me in more than one way, the truth is that almost all project comes with changes, so we expect changes. These changes make us to do more work or learn new skills, we need some form of motivation to carry on (laughs)".

Researcher analysis: The employer seeks to be motivated and driven to do more.

EFFICIENCY/ REWARDS Contract

<u>The employer (taken from Mumford):</u> Needs to implement generalized output and quality standards and reward systems.

Employee C, citation from the case study interview: "I am up-to-date with my training, but if I feel I need any training I will let my manager know".

<u>Researcher analysis:</u> He is confident that he can do his job well and that he got the necessary training. He is self-assured that his manager will give him new training if he needs one or when he needs one.

ETHICAL(social value) Contract

<u>The employer (taken from Mumford):</u> Needs employees who will accept the firm's ethos and values.

Employee D, citation from the case study interview: "I will like more face to face communication when change happens, it allows me to question immediately what I do not understand or believe in. Sometimes we receive an email about a change instead of a meeting".

<u>Researcher analysis:</u> Employee wants to be treated nicely before and after a change. Wants better communication policies that all employees are given the chance to speak out.

TASK STRUCTURE Contract

The employer (taken from Mumford): Needs employees who will accept technical and other constraints which produce task specificity or task differentiation.

Employee E, citation from the case study interview: "I would like to know about a change before it happens and also it would be nice to be trained before implementation, this will help me to do my job well".

<u>Researcher analysis:</u> Employee wants to be trained to use the system effectively for a set of new tasks as a result of the change.

If these five areas of contracts are met then it can be said that a jointly beneficial work environment for the employer and the employees will have been achieved. If the contract between the employer and the employees are good on some and poor on others then the organization should ask the question 'why is this'. From the table above, it can be seen that the needs are not being fully provided for and this may lead the employees to think that they have unrealistic expectations. Other studies have indicated that job satisfaction positively affects employees working performance and organizational commitment. According to Lumley et al [12], satisfied employees tend to be committed to an organization

It can be argued that achieving employees job satisfaction must always be made a design objective. Mumford [21], mentions that it should be the team leader's responsibility to ensure that all members of the group have high job satisfaction by holding a regular meeting and by having a culture of open communication. Research made by Lumley et al [12] has indicated that job satisfaction does not come about in isolation, as it is dependent on organizational variables such as structure, size, pay, working conditions and leadership, which represent the organizational climate. Investigation of the literature on job satisfaction shows several different schools of thought, each with its particular focus. See table 2 below for different schools of thought on job satisfaction from different individuals with different opinions.

Table 2: Different schools of thought on job satisfaction by Mumford (p.48-49, 1972).

| The psychological needs school, psychologists such as Maslow, Herzberg, Likert etc. | See the development of motivation as the central factor in job satisfaction and concentrate their attention on stimuli which are believed to lead to motivation - the needs of individuals for achievement, recognition, responsibility, status. |
|---|--|
| Psychologists like Blake and Mouton and Fiedler | Understands the behavior of supervision as an important influence on employee attitudes and they therefore, direct their observations at |

| | leadership style and the response of subordinates to this. |
|--|--|
| A third school strongly represented at the Manchester Business School by Lupton, Gowler, Bowey and Legge | Examine the effort-reward bargain as an important variable. This leads to a consideration of how the wages and salaries of particular groups are constructed, and the influence on earnings and attitudes to these of factors such as overtime pay and the state of the labour market. |
| The behavioral scientists | This group concentrates on the content of work and job design factors. |

There are different schools of thoughts but they have the same thing in common; that the employer, as well as the employees, has needs and these needs must be met if the organization is to survive and flourish when change happens. This understanding leads us to consider job satisfaction in two ways. First, in terms of the fit between what the employer requires of its employees and what the employees are seeking from the employer; and second, in terms of the fit between what the employee is seeking from the employer and what he is receiving.

Employees Needs

Organizational needs and employees needs are formed by the external environment and by its internal processes and procedures. It is important to note the demands and needs of each employee. Bednar and Sadok [2] point out that the diagnosis of job satisfaction needs includes an analysis of a questionnaire covering data about: Knowledge needs: The extent to which employees think their skills and knowledge are being well or poorly used. How would they ideally like their skills and knowledge to be used? Psychological needs: The extent to which their needs for advancement, recognition, responsibility, status and achievement are being well or poorly met. These different individual needs and expectations lead to job satisfaction. There should be trust between workers and management; workers have to believe that management's intentions are good and management believes that workers will work in the interests of the organization.

Job satisfaction is seen as being achieved when three kinds of needs are met in the work situation. These are personality needs, competence and efficiency needs, and needs associated with personal values [10]. The company and the employees have needs and these needs must be met if the company is to survive and flourish. These needs are as a result of internal and external factors. Authors of this paper created the semi-structured interviews for job satisfaction and stakeholder analysis considering all areas of employees' needs and carefully scanning the environment in which the company is functioning. Semi-structured interviews are a good means of identifying prob-

lems and very effective at explaining the reasons for the problem and sometimes participants suggest solutions. In this research five different types of are taken into consideration. See table 3 below for the five different types of needs which falls under the category of the personality needs, competency and efficiency needs. The table below was developed from Mumford 1993 and responses from participants interviews/communication in the case study.

Table 3

Developed from (Mumford et al., p.69-71, 1993)

Personality Needs:

- 1. Knowledge needs: To what extent does the existing organization of work meet the needs of the employees and what opportunities would they like to develop further?
- 2. Phycological needs: To what extent does the organization meet the needs of employees? Does the organization recognize the employees and does it also give them a sense of achievement?

Employee F interview response:

Interviewer: Could you please share with me the challenges you encounter in the area of change management (if any).

Interviewee: I would say not getting us involved before the change, or training the employees before the change. I think that employees will do better if they are properly trained before any change as this will make us more efficient.

Competency and efficiency in the work role

- Support /control Needs: What kind of support services do different employees believe will enable them to carry out their job efficiently? These support services include the information and materials necessary to work at a high level of competence, supervisory help, and encouragement and good working conditions.
- 2. Task needs: What kind of task structure do different groups of employees find motivating, interesting and challenging?

Employee G interview response:

Interviewer: As the key account manager, do you think that some of the team members need training?

Interviewee: Due to new inventions, constant training for the employees is needed for skill update.

Needs associated with employees values

3. Ethical needs: How do employees at every level want to be treated by the management? This applies particularly to issues such as communication, consultation and opportunities for participation in decisions which affect employee interests. Do the organization's policies meet the employee's expectations in these areas?

Employee H interview response:

Interviewer: Are the employees informed before any major changes?

Interviewee: I would say yes, but again it depends on if it is an urgent change that needs to be taken immediately, so on and so forth.

The Job satisfaction "fits".

Authors draw on the works of Mumford for the five job satisfaction fits: knowledge fit, psychological fit, efficiency fit, task structure fit, and ethical fit [22]. To assess the level of job satisfaction, the researcher asks questions and observe the participants for the assessment of the five fits. This investigation enables the employees to set some job satisfaction objectives. The employer is expected to improve the work situations according to the employee's objectives. Semi-structured interview as earlier stated is a good means of identifying problems and sometimes participants suggest solutions.

The semi-structured interview questions obtain information that will enable the organization design jobs in such a way that employees will enjoy their jobs during and after a change. See table 4 below for examples of interview questions, these interview questions are intended to lead to a short conversation rather than a straight forward question and answer format.

Table 4: Examples of interview questions

Can you tell me how changes (project and organizational) are communicated to the employ-

Please can you make any recommendations as to how your job could be made more enjoyable

The job satisfaction analysis provides an opportunity for the employees to present their ideas. The researcher and the participants are all working within the system's boundary. For better analysis, participants tell their role, age, sex and number of years in the organization, as the diagnosis of good and bad FITS will be made in terms of these characteristics.

• The knowledge fit

or satisfying for you?

What do you like most about your role?

ees?

The organization have to decide what skill and knowledge requirements it has or has to recruit at this level or to train someone to the level desired. Ciborra suggested that a route to innovation is to attack the competency gap, allowing new competencies to begin and substituting the current ones [6]. There will be a good fit when employees believe that their skills are sufficiently used and that they are being trained to an advanced level. There will be a poor fit if employees believe that their skills and knowledge are being under-utilized and that their opportunities for personal growth are restricted. To get this requirement, the organization can train or can hire. To find out if employees possess the required knowledge, the researcher probed and ask questions using semi-structured interviews and chats.

• The psychological fit

It is known that everyone has powerful psychological needs, many of which we seek to gratify within the work situation. If the employer can ascertain and meet these needs then it will develop motivated employees. There will be a poor fit if employees have psychological needs related to work which the work situation cannot provide for [22].

Psychological needs are influenced by a variety of personal factors, for example, sex, age, family background, job role, education and class. They tend to vary at different stages of one's life so that the needs of a person starting his career are likely to be different from those of a person nearing retirement age. During the case study investigation, the researcher observed that the needs of a male employee are slightly different from that of a female employee and that needs also varies according to age, role and levels. The interview questions were structured to match different employees with different roles and levels.

• The efficiency fit

The organization need quality work and thus search for employees who will meet its output and quality standards. Also, the employer needs employees that will accept its organizational procedures and controls. Is the organization willing to provide the kind of support services needed by the employees? Mumford mentions that there is a contractual relationship based on the organization's need for quality and output standards and the individual's willingness to meet these providing: an effort-reward bargain is seen as fair and his economic needs are met; work controls are seen as reasonable, neither too rigid nor too loose; supervisory controls are acceptable [21].

• The task structure fit

This is how the organization has structured the employees work to meet their needs and opportunity to make decisions. A structure that the employees are not required to perform a task that is too simple, too difficult or too dull. This is the diagnosing of what the organization is expected to provide a work structure that meets the employees' needs and interests, and also that they can perform tasks which they regard as important. The researcher attempts to find out if the employees are comfortable in their work environment and that their opinion matters. The "fit" on this variable will be a good one if the

level and kind of work provided by the employer meet the employees' needs of stimulus and variety [22].

• The ethical or social value fit

This is related to personal values, in work most employees wish to be judged not only for their performance but also for their qualities as individuals. According to Bednar and Sadok [2], ethical fit is the extent to which the human relations policies and practices of the firm fit their own views on how they should be treated. The researcher collaborating with the employees attempts to find out how the organization rate personal qualities because some employers place a great deal of importance on performance thereby neglecting the employees' values. There will be a bad "fit" if employees are not human relations conscious while their employer is [22].

2.2 Stakeholder Analysis

This is done to generate knowledge about the participants, to understand their behaviours, intentions, and interests. The framework of this paper is built on critical reflection and inclusion of all stakeholders through action research. The addition of different stakeholders and their concerns is to get their different views on job satisfaction. Analyzing each stakeholder reveals more about his/her role, concerns, responsibilities and processes, this helps to identify organizational and employee needs. Stakeholders analysis exposes the fears and concerns of each employee. Bednar and Welch mention that employees also have issues of concern, not least that they will be rendered redundant by application of robotics in production or service delivery [3]. According to Baxter and Sommerville, each category of stakeholder is likely to have a different viewpoint and different criteria for success [6].

The researcher adopted techniques from SSM for a better analysis, examples are, rich pictures and CATWOE. The researcher uses these techniques to identify stakeholders problems. All stakeholders have different worldviews, to identify this, each stakeholder was interviewed. Semi-structured interview sessions were conducted lasting for about one hour, other means of communication consist of informal discussions and study of problem situation with the use of Rich Pictures (RP). See figure 2 below.

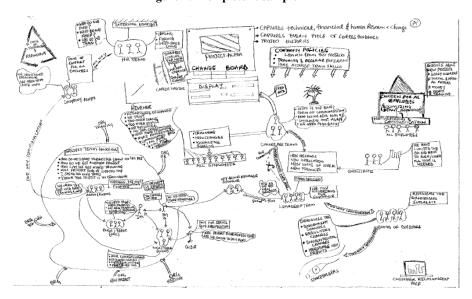


Figure 2: Rich picture sample

The RPs was analyzed by the researcher, the project manager and the implementation manager. It was updated at different stages of the project and alterations were made according to observations. RP sample (figure 2) shows the employees and organizational concerns. The RP was drawn by the researcher showing the case study setting and pointing out some issues. Examples of the issues are communication, workload, training, financial and time issues. The RP and the issues captured were discussed with the project manager, changes were made and other versions were created.

2.3 Future Analysis

Planning and implementing an organizational change takes time and resources. The extent of the change will determine the time and funds needed, and participants to be involved. According to Mumford, even quite small system changes take significant time and resources, whilst the execution of major systems may require a period of several years [10]. Those who design and plan the organizational change must be capable of foreseeing the needs of the employees that if not met can cause resistance or jeopardize the intended goal of the change. Job satisfaction analysis and stakeholder analysis should be done before a change is implemented. Indeed, it is clear that employees are ready to open up about the challenges they encounter daily if the organization are ready to fix it and make work easier.

Authors of this paper recommend that organizations should have small group discussions with the employees before the organization considers ways of improving job satisfaction. This will enable employees to provide helpful feedback and create their desired job satisfaction objectives. The employer and the change management team should list those objectives which are most important to all employees and this does not mean that other objectives should be overlooked. The organization should have strategies for meeting the needs identified as this will lead to achieving employees job satisfaction.

3 Results

Eighteen employees were interviewed, all were involved in the project of investigation. Participation was voluntary, based on the acceptance of the interview/meeting request sent out. For the reason that it was an action research, the researcher had the opportunity to interview and chat with employees more than once. The results and findings of the research study are,

- Efficiency problems due to changes from the organization/customer. Employees need training before and after a change is introduced.
- Employees who have a higher level of satisfaction tend to derive more satisfaction in participating in organizational change, while employees who have lower level feel left out and lost when change happens.
- The organization could learn a great deal about the change management and skill management during change and after the change.
- Financial benefits, reward, promotion plays a very important role to satisfy, retain and attract employees.
- Employees engaging in more face to face meetings with group/project leaders will help the organization to figure out employees problems and ways to fix it.
- Organizations that have employees with high job satisfaction are more productive during organizational change.
- Employees want to be involved in decisions making.
- Employees seem to be comfortable and work better in a good working environment during change.

4 Conclusion

This paper presents an approach to studying employees' job satisfaction for effective organizational change management through job satisfaction and stakeholder analysis. It attempts to integrate Enid Mumford's job satisfaction fits and contracts between the employer and the employees, together with the researcher and participants' experience through action research. Systems approaches such as Soft Systems Methodology and CATWOE as developed by Peter Checkland was applied.

Paper acknowledges that organizational needs and employees' needs are influenced by the external environment and by its internal processes and procedures, and individual needs are a product of the employee's personal environment and his work expectations/aspiration. The employee needs are not something that remains constant, it alters during an individual's lifetime and also the needs of an organization can change. It is important to note the demands and needs of each employee, these different individual needs and expectations support job satisfaction. According to Mumford, if job experience does not meet job needs and expectations then there will be an absence of job satisfaction [20]. Management and employee relationships have been viewed as a series of contracts covering five broad areas of employee needs. These are knowledge needs, psychological needs, effectiveness needs, ethical needs and environmental needs. A good fit on all these variables was experienced produce mutually beneficial relationship and job satisfaction.

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