



The Effect of Job Autonomy on Work Passion

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Abstract

The research aims to explore the effect of job autonomy on work passion in a sample of employees of the Oil Drilling and Exploration Company affiliated with the Iraqi Ministry of Oil. So, a sample of 235 employees was selected, the questionnaire was distributed to them, and the results of their answers were analyzed by using SPSS. One main hypothesis was formulated to illustrate the influence of job autonomy on work passion, and several of statistical methods were used, such as the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and linear regression. The most prominent results that were reached that there is an effect of job autonomy on work passion, but the effect is not big. The most important recommendations from the research are that there must be attention in the way the organization is managed towards granting independence to employees and making them more confident in themselves, as this has an effect on generating feelings of attachment to their jobs.

Keywords (job autonomy, work passion)

Introduction

The pace of developments in societies and the institutions of these societies is accelerating, and this development is reflected in the complexities of the formation of institutions, their structure and organizational frameworks, which effect on the way in which government institutions are managed .So, there is a great tendency towards adherence to instructions and regulations, in addition to the lack of flexibility with which administrations deal with their

employees. The culture of restricting employees' work and not giving them a margin of freedom to accomplish their own tasks within the organization has become widespread. So, the unwillingness to not bear the responsibility of delegating to employees because responsibility, as is known, is not delegated with authority. All of this has become one of the characteristics that characterize government institutions. All of this has had a negative impact on the confidence that employees should have in achieving their tasks, in addition to increasing the psychological barriers between employees and managers . Therefore, the relationship between the employee and the job has become a relationship distinguished only by what is in the regulations, instructions and laws. There is no social aspect outside these limits in forming the relationship between the job and the employee. Therefore, this research came to explore the relationship between job autonomy and passion for job-related work and how the relationship between them can be beneficial in increasing productivity and speed of achievement.

Research Problem

The research problem is represented by the characteristics of government institutions in Iraq, where the most important thing that distinguishes them is commitment to instructions and administrative routine and what this reflects on the way in which institutions are managed and what distinguishes their internal environment. So, adherence to formal procedures and aspects of administrative work negatively affects the independence with which employees can carry out their work and tasks related to their jobs. Restricting employees' independence in their work affects their psychological aspects and their relationship with their jobs, Therefore, this research came to examine the relationship between job independence and work passion and how this independence affects employees' attachment to their jobs and positive feelings towards these jobs. Therefore, the research problem is represented in a set of questions:

- What is the level of job autonomy among the employees of the organization under study?
- What is the level of passion for work passion that distinguishes the employees of this organization?
- How does job autonomy affect work passion?

Importance of the Research

The importance of research is coming from its variables, It is clear that the environment of Iraqi government institutions is characterized by being an inflexible environment that adheres to routine and rigid administrative instructions, this, in turn, negatively affected the performance of employees and their desire to complete their work on their own without referring to the institution's senior management or adhering to its instructions. All of this had negative consequences on the independence that should be granted to employees in order to accomplish their work freely and quickly. This independence gives employees a feeling that management gives them confidence to accomplish all the work required of them without interference, and this in turn leads to creating emotional ties between employees and their jobs. This emotion increases the employees' volunteer activities and work outside of official working hours.

Research Objective

The research aims to explore the impact of job autonomy on work passion, how employees feel their organization deals with them, and the level of trust their organization shows towards them at work, in addition to the nature of employees' attachment to their work and how employees view their jobs,

The research hypothesis

The research was based on one main hypothesis:

There is a significant effect of job autonomy on work passion.

Two sub-hypotheses branch off from the main hypothesis:

There is a significant effect of job autonomy on Harmonic Passion

There is a significant effect of job autonomy on Obsessive Passion

Literature Review

Job Autonomy

It is the extent by which the organization provides the employee freedom and independence in organizing and conducting work (Gagne & Bhawe, 2011:3). According to (Breaugh,

1985), it is also defined as the degree to which an individual is able to determine the processes of his work in order to complete them quickly, to control work schedules, and to have a say in determining work goals (Dias, et al., 2022: 3). It also refers to the real degree of freedom granted to the employee to decide how to organize his work (Boskovic, 2021: 236), and according to (Laretey, 2021), it is defined as the employee's ability to make decisions about the place, time, and method of completing his tasks, so, he is decides when, where and how (Idmark, et al, 2022:5). According to (Hackman, Oldham, 1975), job autonomy leads to an important psychological state, which leads to the results of work, which in turn leads to results of high efficiency in work and high internal motivation to work. Researchers in job autonomy have shown that there is a positive correlation and relationship between job autonomy and performance, (Gallatly & Irving (2001)) found that there is a positive effect of perceived autonomy on contextual performance, and managers who reported higher job autonomy in their work had higher performance than managers who reported lower autonomy. (Claessen et al. (2004)) also found that perceived autonomy in time was positively associated with job performance and job satisfaction and negatively associated with work stress, according to (Lanfred & Moye, 2004), job autonomy enhances job performance because it is able to make employees believe that they are capable and have the resourcefulness to accomplish their tasks, and psychologically, employees will be motivated to do better and provide higher performance (Saragih, 2011: 205).

Work Passion

According to (Vallerand, et al, 2003), work passion is the state that occurs when an individual loves his work and believes that this work represents a part of his life and himself (Junjuanan, 2020: 66). According to (Chen & Lim, 2020), it also represents a strong determination of the line of work that the individual feels driven to engage in and generate a positive impact for the work (Cheah, et al, 2021: 22). It also indicates the individual's strong tendency to invest his real time and energy in his work related to activities that he loves and considers important for him (Jung & Sohn, 2022:3). Baum & Lock (2004) define it as feelings of love, connection, and longing. In other words, passion for work is based on a purely emotional experience towards work (Chen, et al., 2019: 141).

Dimensions of Work Passion

The dimensions mentioned in (Vallerand, et al., 2003) will be adopted in measuring the passion for work among the researched sample, which are:

1. Harmonic Passion

It is the passion that indicates a strong tendency to commit willingly and with full will. Therefore, in this type of passion, individuals do not experience an uncontrollable drive to commit to an enjoyable activity. This type of passion appears when individuals freely accept the activity that is important to them without any emergency attachment to it (Hervas, et al, 2019: 355). Harmonic passion results from the self-absorption of the activity's representation in the individual's identity. Self-absorption occurs when the individual freely accepts and this absorption stems from the essential and integrated tendency towards the self. In this passion, the activity occupies a large space, but it must not dominate the individual's identity, but rather it is consistent with the other dimensions of the individual's life (Vallerand, 2012: 4). Harmonic passion represents the enthusiasm that appears through self-absorption of activities and is an important influence when people participate in activities without restriction (Daskan, 2023:359).

2. Obsessive Passion

It refers to the controlled self-absorption of activities into one's own identity, which creates an internal pressure to engage in the activity one loves (Vallerand, et al., 2003:19). This type of passion is formed through an uncontrolled drive to engage in an activity that the individual loves passionately. This passion leads the individual to neglect or set aside other important activities, which causes a conflict between the activity that is passionate for the individual and other activities (Lalande, et al, 2015: 2). Obsessive passion is positively associated with negative emotions such as stubbornness, emotional conflict, health issues, rumination, frustration, and depression, and negatively associated with life satisfaction, happiness, vitality, and meaning in life (Lobato, et al., 2022:4). People with obsessive passion find themselves in a situation where they experience an uncontrollable urge to participate in an activity that they view as enjoyable and important (Vallerand & Filion, 2013:37).

The Procedures

The questionnaire was relied as a primary means of collecting data for the research sample. The scale (Lin & Ping, 2016) was relied to measure the level of job autonomy in the researched sample and the scale (Vallerand, et al, 2003) to measure the level of work passion. The procedures consisted of :

First. Results of internal consistency test

The results of the internal consistency test were obtained through the Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient. It is used to measure the stability of the measurement tool in terms of the internal consistency of the tool's phrases, which can be explained in Table (1), which confirms the internal consistency of the scale's paragraphs at the level of all variables after the values of the Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficients exceeded the minimum acceptable limit (0.70), which proves the internal consistency of the scale's paragraphs and thus the stability in the event of repeating the test.

Table () Results of the internal consistency test for variables and dimensions	
Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Variable
0.817	Job Autonomy
0.725	Work Passion
0.824	All questionnaire items

Source: by SPSSV.20

Second. Questionnaire stability

The internal consistency of the research model can be identified through the (Split-Half) method, which is represented by finding the correlation coefficient between the two halves of the questionnaire questions (part 1 & part 2), Where one of the Spearman-Brown and Guttman coefficients is used, and as can be seen from Tables (2) and (3), the Cronbach's alpha coefficients are close, but their variances are different, so the Guttman coefficient will

be adopted, and its value is 0.573, which is strong and this is an indicator of the stability of the scale.

Table (2) Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.804
		N of Items	9 ^a
	Part 2	Value	.735
		N of Items	9 ^b
	Total N of Items		18
	Correlation Between Forms		.406
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length		.577
	Unequal Length		.577
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient			.573

a. The items are: q1, q2, q3, q4, q5, q6, q7, q8, q9.

b. The items are: q10, q11, q12, q13, q14, q15, q16, q17, q18.

Table (2) Summary Item Statistics

		Mean	Variance	N of Items
Item Variances	Part 1	.898	.027	9 ^a
	Part 2	.808	.103	9 ^b
	Both Parts	.853	.063	18

a. The items are: q1, q2, q3, q4, q5, q6, q7, q8, q9.

b. The items are: q10, q11, q12, q13, q14, q15, q16, q17, q18.

Source: by SPSSV.20

Third: Descriptive analysis of research variables

The research in this analysis seeks to identify the reality of the work passion and autonomy of the sample being studied. The arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation for these answers will be relied, in addition to determining the level of relative importance for each dimension within the single variable based on the arithmetic mean. The research relied on the five-point Likert scale in the sample's answers to the questionnaire. The level of each variable will be between (1-5) with four levels, and Table (5) shows that. It includes two levels in the case of an increase from the hypothetical mean of (2.60 to 3.39), so it is good if it ranges between (3.40 to 4.19) and very good if it increases from (4.20 to 5). It also includes two levels if it falls below the hypothetical mean (2.60 to 3.39), so it is weak if it ranges between (1.80 to 2.59) and very weak if it falls below (from 1 to 1.79), as is clear in Table (5).

Table (5) Weighted average and response direction		
Answer level	Answer scale	Weighted average
Very weak	I totally disagree	From 1 to 1.79
weak	I do not agree	From 1.80 to 2.59
middle	neutral	From 2.60 to 3.39
good	I agree	From 3.40 to 4.19
very good	Totally agree	From 4.20 to 5

Source: by SPSSV.20

1.Job Autonomy

The mean of job autonomy according to the sample's answers was (3.365) with a standard deviation of (0.51). This means that the rate of job autonomy among the sample being studied is average, and this is an indication that most employees feel that they do not have significant autonomy in their work, they feel that they are allowed to decide how their work should be done, but in a limited extent, and they have a certain degree of freedom in choosing the way in which they do their work, but they feel that they have a somewhat greater degree of control over organizing their work, as well as arranging their business activities within the organization, in addition, they view the job as largely decision-making and not just implementing orders coming from higher authorities. However, employees do not have the ability to control the cancellation or focus on official work standards, as they are subject to what is official in a large extent, but they also have the ability to modify some of the activities that should be accomplished at work, so the mean of job autonomy came at an average level because the organization does not give them much freedom to control their jobs, perhaps due form considerations related to commitment to official aspects and fear of senior management in giving more freedom to employees for fear of bearing responsibility for that.

2.Work Passion

The results of the questionnaire for the variable of passion for work came with an arithmetic mean of (3.321) and a standard deviation of (0.58), this indicates that the work passion of the sample studied gives an indication that employees do not have that great passion towards their jobs for reasons related to the internal environment of the organization or commitment to routine. As for the dimensions of passion in work, the results came as follows:

-Harmonic Passion

According to the answers of the researched sample, the mean of the harmonious passion was (3.262) with a standard deviation of (0.68), this means that the harmonious passion of the researched sample was at an average level, that means the employees do not have great feelings of love towards their work or great positive feelings, also, employees do not have a strong feeling that their work has high importance, as their work occupies a small margin of their daily lives, in addition to the fact that enjoyment is largely absent while they perform their daily work within the organization.

-Obsessive Passion

The mean of the obsessive passion through the sample's answers was (3.381) with a standard deviation of (0.647). This means that the feeling of obsessive passion among the researched sample was at an average level, more than the harmonic passion. This is due to the fact that despite the fact that work constitutes an important centrality in the lives of employees, in addition to the speed in performing works, as well as the feeling of loyalty towards their work, but their work does not occupy a large part of their thinking and they do not feel motivated to perform their duties well. The results of questionnaire has been clarified in Table(6)

Table (6) shows the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation and relative importance of the research variables.

Relative Importance	Coefficient of Variation	Standard Deviation	Mean	Dimensions of research variables
2	15.15	0.51	3.365	Job Autonomy
1	19.13	0.647	3.381	Obsessive Passion
4	20.84	680.	3.262	Harmonic Passion
3	17.46	0.58	3.321	Work Passion
Number of Sample = 235				

Source: by SPSSV.20

Third: Testing the Research Hypothesis

A main effect hypothesis was put forward stating that "**there is a significant effect of job autonomy on work passion**" and according to the results in Table (7), the calculated F value between job autonomy and work passion reached (35.613) which is greater than the tabular F value (6.72) at a significance level of (0.000) i.e. less than the significance level of (0.05) i.e. there is a significant effect of job autonomy on work passion, so the hypothesis is accepted, The value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) reached (0.133), which means that the variable of job autonomy is able to explain (13%) of the change in work passion, while (87%) is due to other variables not included in the research model, the value of the slope coefficient of the straight line was (0.411), meaning that the change that occurs in the level of job autonomy by one unit leads to a change in work passion by (0.411), and the fixed value was (1.940), so the regression equation for the main hypothesis of the research is:

$$Y=1.940+0.411X$$

Y Work Passion X Job Autonomy

As for the effect of job autonomy on the dimensions of job passion, which is represented by two sub-hypotheses, the results in the Table (6) showed that the F value between job autonomy and harmonic passion (18.528) is greater than the tabular F value (6.72) at a significance level of (0.000), i.e. less than the significance level of (0.05), meaning that there is a significant effect of job autonomy on harmonic passion at work. So, so the first sub-hypothesis is accepted ,the value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) reached (0.070), which means that the variable of job autonomy is able to explain (7%) of the change in harmonic passion, while (93%) is due to other variables not included in the research model. the value of the slope coefficient of the straight line was (0.360), meaning that the change that occurs in the level of job autonomy by one unit leads to a change in the harmonic passion by (0.360) and the fixed value was (2.051), so the regression equation is:

$$Y=2.051+0.360X$$

Y Harmonic Passion and X Job Autonomy

The results in the table (6) also showed that the F value between job autonomy and obsessive passion (36.825) is greater than the tabular F value (6.72) at a significance level of (0.000), i.e. less than the significance level of (0.05), meaning that there is a significant effect of job autonomy on obsessive passion. So,the second sub-hypothesis is accepted. the value of the coefficient of determination (R^2) reached (0.136), which means that the variable of job autonomy is able to explain (13%) of the change in the obsessive passion, while (87%) is due to other variables not included in the research model. the value of the slope coefficient of the straight line reached (0.416), meaning that the change that occurs in the level of job autonomy by one unit leads to a change in the obsessive passion by (0.416), and the fixed value reached (1.828), so the regression equation is:

$$Y=1.828+0.416 X$$

Y Obsessive Passion and X Job Autonomy

Table (6) Effect between research variables						
Sig	Fixed Value	B	R²	F	Dependent variable	independent variable
0.000	1.940	0.411	0.133	35.613	Work Passion	Job Autonomy
0.000	2.051	0.360	0.070	18.528	Harmonic Passion	
0.000	1.828	0.416	0.136	36.825	Obsessive Passion	

Source: by SPSSV.20

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research reached a set of conclusions and recommendations through the results extracted from the sample's answers, which are:

1.The level of job autonomy granted by the researched organization to its employees is not good. There are still many obstacles towards granting such independence. This is perhaps due to adherence to procedures and instructions imposed by higher authorities, which prevent managers from giving a degree of freedom to employees to accomplish their tasks in the manner they see fit. Therefore, the research recommends that there should be a degree of freedom and independence that should be granted to employees. This would reduce the burden on managers in considering all the details related to work and focus on important decisions of a strategic nature for organizations.

2.The level of work passion among employees does not reach high levels. According to the results that have been reached, it seems that employees do not have any connections to their work outside the official aspects, and their feelings towards it do not go beyond the official aspects and what has been documented in the instructions in the organizational regulations in the organization. So, the research recommends that the organization should adopt methods and strategies to create a positive work environment that makes employees emotionally attached to their work, because this has a positive impact on strengthening the

bonds of the relationship between employees and their work within the organization. The relationship that goes beyond the formal aspects between employees and their work plays a major role in the rapid and accurate completion of activities related to this work. Passion for work plays a role in the employees' desire to develop themselves through their work.

3. The results also showed that the obsessive passion of employees is higher than the harmonic passion. This means that employees are attached to their jobs due to external pressures that force them to be attached to the work, i.e. their attachment to the work is due to an official aspect and not willingly. This means that the organization has established a culture of commitment to instructions. Therefore, the research recommends that the organization should adopt a more flexible policy that creates an organizational atmosphere of positivity and a positive climate within the organization and focuses on the social aspect in dealing with employees in order to create relationships that go beyond official lines so that employees feel that their work is an important and integral part of themselves.

4. Although the levels of both job autonomy and job passion are low, according to the results, job autonomy is not the main cause of the low level of job passion, as shown by the results that prove that the effect of job autonomy is not significant on job passion. However, job autonomy plays a psychological role in motivating employees to be attached to their work, which increases the likelihood of their passion for the work they do. Therefore, the research recommends that there should be attention in the way the organization is managed towards granting independence to employees and making them more confident in themselves, as this has an effect on generating feelings of attachment to their jobs.

5. Focusing on formal aspects helps increase levels of obsessive passion and makes employees feel compelled to perform their work and increase contact with it, which has harmful psychological effects on employees. Therefore, the study recommends that there be attention to the social aspect of work and the use of moral incentives that would create feelings of voluntary attachment among workers to activities related to their jobs, because attachment with willingness and self-desire makes work enjoyable and eliminates the boredom that can accompany the performance of such work.

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