

Culture as a moderator of job design

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Management Summary

Job design in different cultural settings appears to be under investigated area in organizational research. Nevertheless, we feel intuitively that the design of jobs may not be the same in different cultural setting. Therefore, this thesis aims identify, investigate and explain the relationship between job design and cultures, by addressing the problem statement “*To what extent is job design culturally determined?*”. Establishing this relationship is important for organizations to understand more about job design, for the creation of new organizations or redesigning jobs when cultural differences exist.

In order to conduct this research, academic literature will be used. One of the interesting articles for this research is “Culture and Job design” by Miriam Erez (2010), identifying 3 different cultures with their own unique job design. The use of the literature by Miriam Erez and other literatures as well, will provide the view for this research on how job design and culture can emerge as one and to what extent.

This paper is organized as follows. First the research on job design and culture is briefly reviewed, focusing on the different approaches of job design (Job characteristics model, job enrichment, socio-technical, quality control circle) and for culture, Hofstede’s and Globe’s dimensions will be used to investigate the relations. Next, conceptual relationships between job design and culture are identified by comparing the approach of job design that is used by three cultures (United States, Northern Europe, and Japan). Finally, (the analysis) relationships between job design and cultures can be examined.

It is found that not every country maintains the same job design approach. Different factors may play different roles in the approach of job design. When job design is well defined based on its environment, the work motivation, satisfaction and performance will be positively influenced.

Preface

I have been studying at an International school for 5 years. Several countries seem to have a big impact for my knowledge about cultures. Ever since I became an university student and did internship in several different countries, I have grown an interest in organization management. To integrate what I like in this real world (cultural differences) and my interest in study field (organization management), it has inspired me to know more about culture differences and job design in organizations.

I would like to thank, my supervisor Dr. A.J.A.M. Naus who has guided me in the process to complete this thesis and my team members who provided me with useful feedback.

Arficità

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem indication

To be successful, some individuals try to imitate those people who have managed to gain the very best in life. Thus, it is not uncommon to find that they tried to match their approaches to achieve a maximum output as their predecessor. However, problems arrive when they realize that they cannot keep up to the work of their idol and that their results are in fact quite different from what they have imagined. Thus, they try to figure out their own way to success. This description demonstrates the influence of culture and job crafting. People shape the way they do their job in order to make their job more valuable (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Certain codes that differ across cultures seem to have certain influences on the way people craft their jobs. In general, there are requirements from organizations how people suppose to do their job, this in turn determine whether a certain job design is favorable and or meaningful. Different societies and cultures have different time perspectives, or orientations, with respect to their emphasis on the past, present, and future (Hall & Hall, 1987; Schein, 1992).

Previous research on job design has revealed mixed results on the relation between stimulating job characteristics and work outcomes such as job performance, turnover, and absenteeism (Fried & Ferris, 1987; Oldham, 1996; Parker et al., 2001).

Job designs have emerged in numerous organizations and nations. National-level cultural values, being internalized through the process of socialization, serve as criteria for evaluating whether a certain job design provides the opportunity for experiencing a sense of self-worth and well being (Erez & Early, 1993). For itself, a job has an immediate influence on the individual's perception of the situation as facilitating or inhibiting the opportunity for being successful and for experiencing self-worth and well-being (Erez, 2008).

Furthermore, much of the contemporary research on job design has been based on the job characteristics model (JCM; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Therefore, the goal in this literature review is to investigate the differences in job design that have emerged in different cultures, especially The United States, Japan and Northern Europe.

1.2 Problem statement

The goal of this research is to find out how cultural differences affect the design of jobs. Since the success of job design eventually influences the performance of organization, it is very relevant and useful to get some insight into this matter.

In order to prevent the research from becoming too broad, the study will be limited into just three cultures. The effect of cultural differences on job design will be demonstrated for three specific cultures namely The United States, Northern Europe and Japan. The problem statement is formulated as follow: ***To what extent is job design culturally determined?***

1.3 Research Questions

- Q1: *What are the characteristics of job design?*
- Q2: *What are the dimensions of the culture that can influence the organization?*
- Q3: *What are the culture differences in the U.S, Northern European and Japan?*
- Q4: *How is job design culturally determined in the United States, Northern European and Japan?*

1.4 Relevance

Before proceeding to the research design it is necessary to clarify and define the main concepts that will be investigated;

Job design the structure, content, and the configuration of a person's work tasks and roles (Parker & Ohly, 2008).

Culture the homogeneity of a characteristic that separates one human group from another and provides a society's characteristic profile with respect to norms and values that affords understanding of how societies manage relations (Hofstede, 2001).

An investigation toward job design's characteristics, namely; skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) shall be conducted by focusing on the three selected countries i.e. The United States, Northern Europe and Japan. Figure 1.1 shows some intermediary factors between job characteristics and Outcomes with culture as moderator.

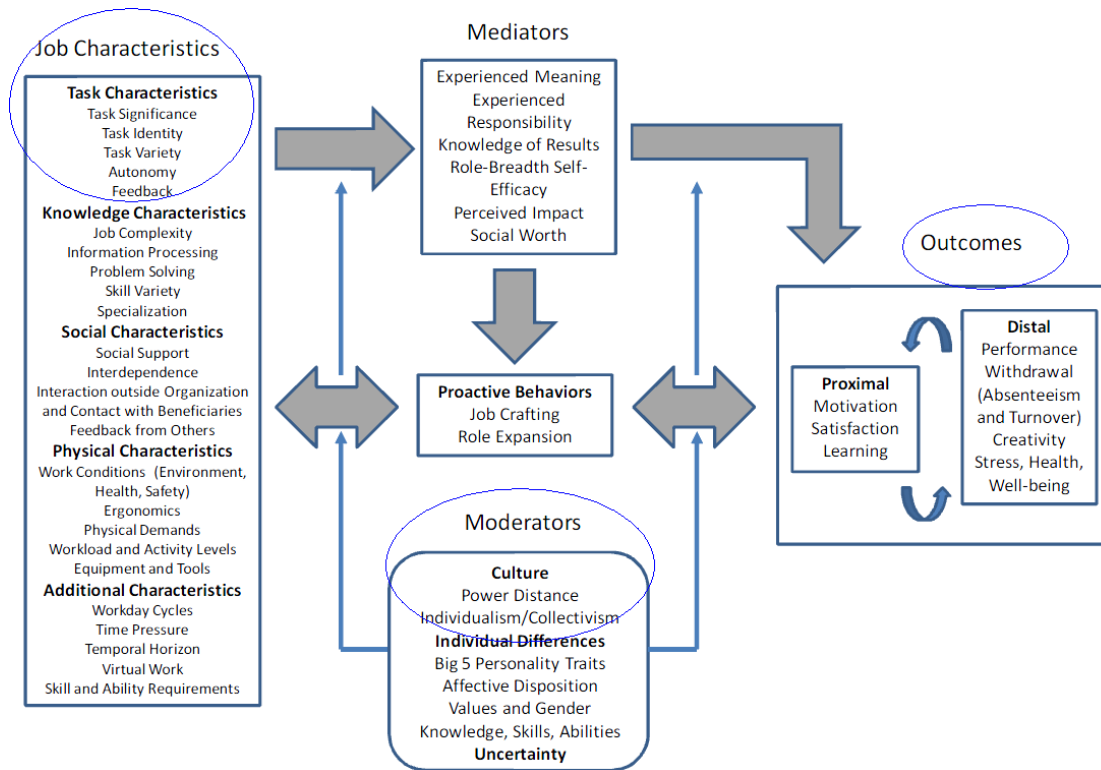


Figure 1.1 an integrative model of job design (sources: Grant, Fried & Juillerat, 2010)

An important remark has to be made about the focus of this research. The study will be done on the cultural differences between some countries and the way in which they influenced job design, so the focus will be on national cultures, not corporate cultures.

1.5 Research design and data collection

This research will use a literature study as the method of research. To be able to answer the research questions, the research method that shall be used is the literature study. This research is conducted to develop a theoretical model of job design that is universally applicable. To develop a feasible theoretical framework, exploratory studies are used in this research. It is the most ideal type of research for obtaining a clear understanding of the phenomena of interest (Sekaran, 2003). Additionally, academic search engine such as Wiley InterScience and JSTOR will be used to access the journals and articles in the field of Organization Behavior. Online sources also will be use to gain additional relevant information.

As the foundation for this research, significant findings from earlier studies will be used in order to answer the central research question by logically combining all relevant information and providing my own analysis.

As follows from above, the output of the study will be a theoretical model that relates job design and cultural differences, by explaining how the differences affected the designs of job and whether one job design of a country can be used in another country that has a different cultural background.

1.6 Overview of the rest of the thesis

In the remaining chapters the structure will be as follows:

Chapter 2 shall review and analyze some of the theories about job design and their characteristics, referring research question Q1.

Chapter 3, the theories about culture and its dimensions will be explained (research question Q2)

Chapter 4 will examine the relationship between culture and job design (research question Q3 and Q4). First, identifying the culture of each country, and second, analyzing the cultural differences among the countries.

In Chapter 5, conclusions will be drawn and the problem statement will be answered.

CHAPTER II: JOB DESIGN

2.1 Job design

Job design is the structure, content, and the configuration of person's work tasks and roles (Parker & Ohly, 2008). To have a better understanding why job design has always played a central role in the work system, it is best to look at the history of job design (Grant, Fried and Juillerat, 2010).

First, recent decades, job design has been one of only a handful of organizational theories rated as simultaneously high in validity, importance, and usefulness (Miner, 1984, 2003). Job design has indeed proved its importance throughout the time. Academic history has shown that applied psychologists, organizational scholars and practitioners have used job design to describe, diagnose and resolve certain problems.

Secondly, using job design as a measurement makes it easier to identify a certain problem by identifying a description of the job, diagnosing a certain job and eventually measuring up to the requirements of the job. Job design has become a fundamental factor for certain measurements. Example based on job characteristics model, skill variety; job design gives us the possibility to characterize a certain job and eventually find a suitable person that fits the requirement of the job. Such factor of measurement makes job design as important as the work itself.

Third, one of the features of job design is that it is a tool that could transform the organizational context of actions. So eventually the job design determines how an employee should do his or her job. (This relates) to what kinds of job design are favorable and meaningful within the requirements of the organization. For example, an employee that works at a bank is required to work structurally therefore job design that emphasizes the structure is favorable and more meaningful than other job designs. The creation of job design could eventually lead to certain competitive advantages when the requirement of job is taken into consideration at an early stage of job design.

Fourth, in recent time job design is gaining more attention as the domestic and international landscape has changed, resulting in the emerging of new varieties of jobs, especially in service and

knowledge/ creative sectors (Elsbach & Hargadon, 2006; Parker, Wall & Cordery, 2001; Rousseau & Fried, 2001). These changes have triggered a rapid increase of autonomy, a sense professionalism and service customization giving the employees more freedom and discretion to change their job design. Due to technological changes employees are getting more information that benefit the autonomy and empowerment in their job design (Sinha & Van de Ven, 2005). For example the use of the Internet, offers more freedom, and possibilities of wider communication. Therefore make us less dependent on internal sources.

Looking at these starting points of changes it shows that job design is still of high importance and that there are shifts of decision when creating job. Some will be in the hands of the manager while some has shifted into the hands of the employee itself.

2.2 Approach to job design

Job design approaches have been set up in such a way that they have indirectly affected employee's level of job satisfaction and motivation. Job design approaches have worked in different perspectives to create variety in organizational development. Many models of job design have been made in the last decade. As Garg & Rastogy (2005) mentioned, the field of organizational behavior only consider a job enrichment (JE) approach to job design. Now, job design has taken a broader perspective, with various dimensions such as job enrichment (JE), job engineering (JEng), quality of work life (QWL), socio-technical design, and social information processing approach (SIPA) and job characteristics adding to the approach of job design. The proposed model recognizes particular job characteristics that contribute to certain psychological states, and that the strength of employees' needs for moderate growth shows a very important effect. (Garg & Rastogy, 2005).

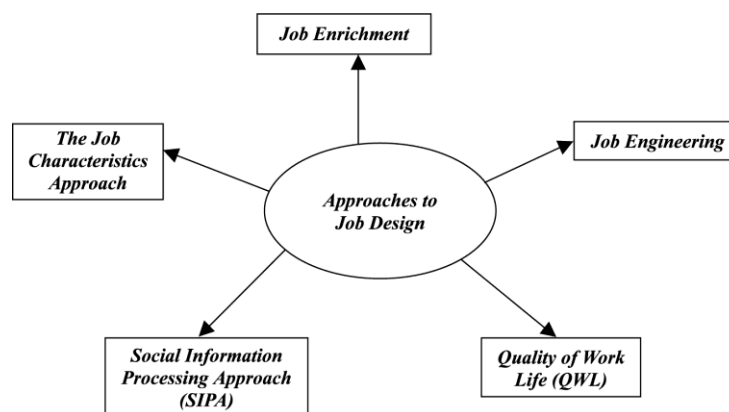


Figure 2.1: Job design approach, adapted from Garg & Rastogy (2005)

The purpose of this study is to identify the main issues of job design research and practice, especially in relation to cultural differences. In providing content for these issues, the job design approaches in each culture are described with the emphasis on the characteristics previously mentioned.

This research will limit itself to three job design approaches that are relevant within the chosen cultures. As Miriam Erez (2010) stated that the impact of culture on job design can be proved by the comparison of the three main job design models that appeared in three different cultures – in the 1970s and the 1980s, 1) The United States (Job Enrichment), 2) Northern Europe (Socio-technical) and, 3) Japan (Quality control circle):

2.2.1 Job Enrichment

The Job enrichment approach by Hackman and Oldham (1980) was targeted at the increasing critical psychological states of the employees that lead to intrinsic motivation, as job satisfaction, and performance outcome. These techniques refer to inclusion of greater work content that requires higher level of knowledge and skills, thus giving workers the autonomy and responsibility in planning, directing, and controlling their own performance. It also provides the employee with the opportunities for personal growth and meaningful work experience (Garg & Rastogy, 2005). This approach is a method to motivate employees by giving them a greater level of responsibility and some variety in their jobs.

2.2.2 Socio-Technical System (Autonomous Work Group)

Socio-technical systems theory, which was developed in the Tavistock Institute in the United Kingdom, is closely related to job design theory and research (Rousseau, 1977). A core preposition of socio-technical systems theory is that individual and organizational effectiveness depends on the collective optimization of human and mechanical-technological components of the organization (Trist, 1981; Trist & Bamforth, 1951). Creating an autonomous work group within socio-technical systems theory can create optimization. The autonomous work group is believed to facilitate communication and problem solving, which results in increasing productivity and welfare. Wall, Kemp, Jackson, and Clegg (1986) found that the introduction of an autonomous work group in a manufacturing company proved to have various effects. At the individual level, the autonomous work group achieves long-term increase in intrinsic job satisfaction like professional growth and short term increase in extrinsic job satisfaction like wage levels, however it was found that they did

not affect motivation to work or individual performance. At the organizational level, the autonomous work group does not only increase productivity by reducing the managerial positions that they don't need, but it also increases the velocity of voluntary labor.

2.2.3 The Quality Control Circles

The QC Circle in Japan began in the 1960s and spread rapidly, from industry to manufacturing, and eventually to services (Erez, 2010). Ross and Ross (1982) defines quality circles as a small group of employees doing the same or related job who meet regularly to identify, analyze, and solve product quality and production problems and to improve general operations. Each QC Circle aims to develop members' skills and provide opportunities to enhance self-actualization and make the workplace more efficient, important and satisfying. Moreover, these activities are considered as valuable factors in increasing customer satisfaction, and finally contribute to improving wider society.

2.3 The Job Characteristics Model (JCM)

Setting the course for a modern perspective on job design, Hackman and Lawler (1971) had tried to investigate the influence of job characteristics on attitudes and behavior. They have developed a conceptual framework derived from the works of Turner and Lawrence (1965), and also the classical formulation of the theory of expectations (Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968). The framework sets the following five cores of job dimensions:

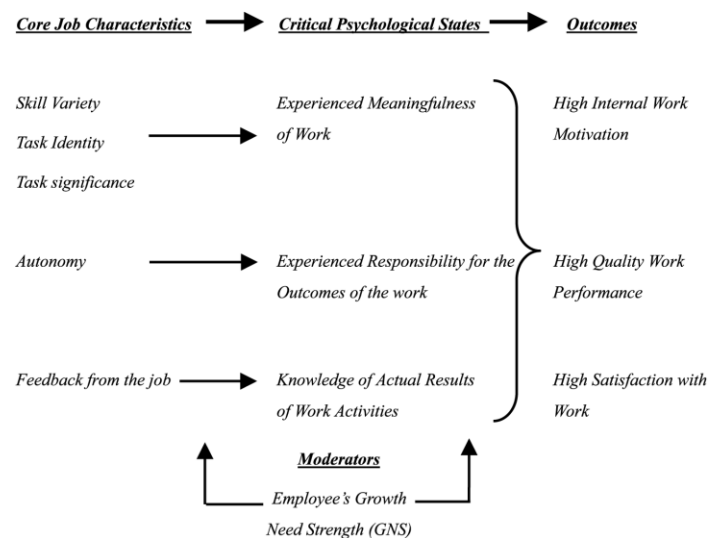


Figure 2.2: Job characteristics model illustrated by Hackman and Oldham (1980)

1. Skill variety: this refers to the extent to which the job requires the employee to draw from a number of different skills and abilities as well as upon a range of knowledge.
 2. Task identity: this refers to whether the job has an identifiable beginning and end or how complete a module of work the employee performs.
 3. Task significance: this involves the importance of the task. It involves both internal significance (i.e. how important the task is to the organization) and external significance (i.e. how proud the employees are to tell their relatives, friends, and neighbors what they do and where they work).
 4. Autonomy: this refers to job independence. How much freedom and control employees have in performing their job, for example, schedule their work, make decisions or determine the means to accomplish the objectives.
 5. Feedback: this refers to objective information about progress and performance that can come from the job itself, supervisors or any other information system.
- (Sources: Garg & Rastogy, 2005)

The framework shows how the work is being perceived within the five cores of job characteristics. In a broader perspective, these cores have such an impact on three critical psychological states as the meaningfulness of work, experiencing the responsibility for the outcomes of work, and the knowledge of actual results of work activities. There are many researches that had proven what the theory of job design holds. For example the research of Sokoya (2000) explains that the level of job satisfaction is mostly determined by a combination of jobs, employment and personal characteristics. Therefore bringing more variety within the job or rotating the employee for different jobs could improve the job satisfaction as well improving the performance. While Bassy (2002) observed that skills, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback, job security and compensation are all important factors for job design that motivate employees. The JCM model is therefore universal and is uniting of all the observations of all the main researches. For that reason the JCM model will be used to diagnose and compare the cultures of Japan, America and Northern Europe.

2.4 Summary

There have been a lot of efforts directed to conceptualize and measure the structure of job design. It is known that if the job is designed well, job satisfaction and quality of performance will improve.

Job design can be taken into a broader perspective. There are various approaches that allow organization to design jobs for its employees.

The motivational approach to job design, as reflect in their job characteristic model (JCM) has been applied in many empirical studies. Task variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback all have a positive effect to the process of job design in creating job efficiency and effectiveness.

CHAPTER III: CULTURE

3.1 Culture

Culture is the homogeneity of a characteristic that separates one human group from another it provides a society's characteristic profile with respect to the norms and values that affords understanding of how the societies manage relations (Hofstede, 2001). There has been a lot of discussion by scholars on choosing the right variable to conceptualize culture and eventually making culture operational. A leading concept of culture that has been widely used is the theory of Hofstede, used by many researches in the field of psychology, sociology, marketing and management (Sondergaard, 1994; Steenkamp, 1999). Using the 5 dimensions of culture by Hofstede, consolidates what has been earlier discussed by previous researchers. This approach embraces for what has already been discussed and prevent to "re-invent the wheel". Furthermore the theory of Globe will reinforce discussions where the theory of Hofstede would show some shortcomings.

3.2 Hofstede's 5 Dimensions

One of the most imposing features of Hostede's original studies is its sheer size. Hofstede used 116,000 questionnaires from more than 60,000 respondents in over 40 countries in empirical research (Hofstede 1984, 1991, 2001). He set the five dimensions as an index for all countries, and it connects the variable aspects of demography, geography, economics, and political aspects of a society (Kale and Barnes, 1992). This concept is useful in formulating hypotheses for comparative cross-cultural research.

Based on factor analysis, Hofstede (1980) interprets the consequences of differences in five original dimensions for work and organization, the explanations are (illustrated in table 1.1):

3.2.1 Power distance (PDI)

Describes the extent to which 'the less powerful the members of the institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1991:262).

Power distance and Organization,

The hierarchical system shows the distribution of power in an organization. This is not always the same in every organization. The differences depend on whether there is decentralization (low PDI) or Centralization (High PDI). With a High level of power distance, the decision will be made centrally and it shows the existence of the autocratic leadership style. On the other hand, with a low level of power distance, the social hierarchy will tend to adopt a consultative style of leadership, where the supervisions and subordinates can act interdependently.

3.2.2 Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)

Describes the extent to which 'the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations' (Hofstede, 1991: 263).

Uncertainty avoidance and Organizations

Uncertainty avoidance is associated with the fact that organization is facing an uncertainty in the future and considering how to deal with the level of reaction. In order to avoid uncertainty in an organization, system monitoring is used to monitor the process of the organization. For an organization whose culture is in low levels of uncertainty, they tend to use a relatively simple monitoring system for example by tolerating the ambiguity in the structures and procedures. Whereas organizations that have a culture of high uncertainty avoidance, have a complex monitoring system and work is being done carefully for example they tend to have highly formalized concept of management.

3.2.3 Individualism versus collectivism (IDV)

Describes whether 'the ties between individuals are loose, with everybody being expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family only' (individualism) or whether 'people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's life time continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty' (Collectivism) (Hofstede, 1991: 260-1).

Individualism versus collectivism (IDV) and Organizations

In organizations Collectivism has requires that has a greater emotional dependence compared with a culture that has the dimensions of Individualism (Hofstede: 1980 217). Therefore, Organizations that have a culture with high level of individualism will provide personal freedom and autonomy to individual interests. On the other hand, the organizations that have high level of collectivism are

more favor of the importance of interest groups and give more attention to each other. The evaluation system that is designed in an organization will pay attention to the culture within those organizations. For organizations with high level of individualism, the evaluation system will be designed based on the behavior and achievement of each individual. While for the organizations that have high level of collectivism is based on the achievement of the goals of the group.

3.2.4 Masculinity versus femininity (MAS)

Describes whether, 1) 'social gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; while women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life' (femininity), or whether 2) 'social gender roles overlap; both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede 1991: 261-2).

Masculinity and femininity and Organization

This dimension shows the dominant values of a group that is associated with the job. In a masculine organization, managers hold the ambitious career aspirations and they are expected to be decisive, firm, assertive, aggressive, and competitive. On the contrary, in feminine organizations, managers hold modest career aspirations, managers are expected to use intuition, deal with feeling and seek consensus. For an organization that has a masculine culture, it has a reward system based on individual recognition and promotions, bonuses, and so forth. While organizations that have the feminine culture, rewarding system would be based on system cooperation, security and sense of belonging.

3.2.5 Long-term versus Short-term Orientation

It is related to the 'fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift (long-term orientation) versus 'the fostering of virtues related to the past and the present, in particular respect for tradition, preservation of "face", and fulfilling social obligations' (short-term orientation) (Hofstede, 1991:261-3).

Long-term and short-term orientation and organization

The Confucian dynamism dimension of job describes cultures that range from short-term values with respect for tradition and reciprocity in social relations to long-term values with persistence and ordering relationships by status. This dimension includes such values as thrift, persistence, having a sense of shame, and ordering relationships. Confucian work dynamism refers to dedicated,

motivated, responsible, and educated individuals with a sense of commitment and organizational identity and loyalty.

Cultural Dimensions	Scale Anchors	
Power Distance: Beliefs about the appropriate distribution of power in society.	Low power distance: Belief that effective leaders do not need to have substantial amounts of power compared to their subordinates. Examples: Austria, Israel, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Sweden.	High power distance: Belief that people in positions of authority should have considerable power compared to their subordinates. Examples: Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia.
Uncertainty Avoidance: Degree of uncertainty that can be tolerated and its impact on rule making.	Low uncertainty avoidance: Tolerance for ambiguity; little need for rules to constrain uncertainty. Examples: Singapore, Jamaica, Denmark, Sweden, UK.	High uncertainty avoidance: Intolerance for ambiguity; need for many rules to constrain uncertainty. Examples: Greece, Portugal, Uruguay, Japan, France, Spain.
Individualism-Collectivism: Relative importance of individual vs. group interests.	Collectivism: Group interests generally take precedence over individual interests. Examples: Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Pakistan, Latin America.	Individualism: Individual interests generally take precedence over group interests. Examples: US, Australia, UK, Netherlands, Italy, Scandinavia.
Masculinity-Femininity: Assertiveness vs. passivity; material possessions vs. quality of life.	Masculinity: Values material possessions, money, and the pursuit of personal goals. Examples: Japan, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico.	Femininity: Values strong social relevance, quality of life, and the welfare of others. Examples: Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Costa Rica.
Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation: Outlook on work, life, and relationships.	Short-term orientation: Past and present orientation. Values traditions and social obligations. Examples: Pakistan, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia.	Long-term orientation: Future orientation. Values dedication, hard work, and thrift. Examples: China, Korea, Japan, Brazil.

Table 2.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, adapted from Nardon and Steers (2009)

3.3 GLOBE

The second model of national culture that is used in this research is GLOBE. The main focus on Globe study is to understand the influence of cultural differences on leadership process by Robert House Led and international team of researchers (House et al., 2004). GLOBE stands for to Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness. They came up with nine cultural dimensions. It is an extension of the previous dimensions of Hofstede's.

GLOBE uses using data based from 62 societies as their samples, including North Europe. This is one of the reasons why this research is using by GLOBE as the measurement for job design in Northern European.

The major constructions of GLOBE's research program are the nine dimensions of culture: (1) Uncertainty Avoidance, (2) Power Distance, (3) Collectivism I: Societal Emphasis on Collectivism, (4) Collectivism II: Family Collectivistic Practices, (5) Gender Egalitarianism, (6) Assertiveness, (7) Future Orientation, (8) Performance Orientation, and (9) Humane Orientation (House, et al., 2004).

From the first six-culture dimensions, GLOBE had their own origin by Hofstede's dimensions. Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance and Individualism are being recorded in the same label. The unique dimension is for the level of collectivism is divided into two: The Collectivism I dimension measures societal emphasis on collectivism, with low scores reflecting individualistic emphasis and high scores reflecting collectivistic emphasis by means of laws, social programs or institutional practices. The Collectivism II scale measures group (family and/or organization) collectivism – pride in and loyalty to family and/or organization and family and/or organizational cohesiveness. (House, et al., 2004).

Cultural Dimensions	Scale Anchors	
<i>Institutional Collectivism:</i> Extent to which society encourages collective distribution of resources and collective action.	High: Individuals integrated into strong cohesive groups; self viewed as interdependent with groups; societal goals often take precedence over individual goals.	Low: Individuals largely responsible for themselves; self viewed as autonomous; individual goals often take precedence over societal or group goals.
<i>In-Group Collectivism:</i> Extent to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations and families.	High: Members assume they are interdependent and seek to make important personal contributions to group or organization; long-term employer employee relationships; organizations assume major responsibility of employee welfare; important decisions made by groups.	Low: Members assume they are independent of the organization and seek to stand out by making individual contributions; short term employer-employee relationships; organizations primarily interested in the work performed by employees over their personal welfare.

Table 2.2: GLOBE Dimensions, adapted from Nardon and Steers (2009)

3.4 Summary

To summarize, the theory of Hofstede and GLOBE characterize cultures on the basis of culture value dimensions. The number of value culture dimensions is varying between the theories; Hofstede identified five value dimensions, while GLOBE identified nine value dimensions.

The advantage of Hofstede is that the framework of his research is specifically aimed at work-related values, making his dimensions intuitively understandable and specific. The main importance of his dimensions is that it has been demonstrated to correlate significantly with many societal and business phenomena. The disadvantage is that his work is outdated. A priori instrument of GLOBE is that, it is based from Hofstede dimensions. The core value of the idea is similar but the way a value is labeled varies. The reason GLOBE is used in this research is the uniqueness of GLOBE's dimension in term of Collectivism, which can be used in chapter 4 when explaining the Northern European culture. The level of collectivism is divided in two, which are Institutional Collectivism and In-Group Collectivism.

CHAPTER IV: APPROACH TO JOB DESIGN IN CULTURES

4.1 Introduction

Imagine yourself working in a big company in SBU's (Strategic Business Units) in Japan and in United States. You are being given the option to go abroad to one of these locations. You start to visualize how it would be to work there and start to look for information about current employees working conditions at these locations. During your search you received contact information of one employee in Japan and another one in the United States. You contact both of them and asked them questions of their first workday. The American told you that he was been assigned a desk and was expected to start to do his job that he had applied for. While the Japanese told you that he first had to attend an initiation process with 50 other new recruited employees and listen to a speech from members of the board, explaining what is being expected from them and emphasizing the company values. Are these differences more due to the differences of culture or is it more the difference of job design where for example the Japanese knows that the job design is a tool to translate the company values into the actual job exerts.

Different societies and cultures have different time perspectives, or orientations, with respect to the past or present and future (Hall & Hall, 1987).

In this chapter research question number 3 and 4 will be answered:

Q3: What are the Culture differences in the U.S, Northern European and Japan?

Q4: How is job design culturally determined in the United States, Northern European and Japan?

Three cultures have been chosen: The United States, Northern Europe, and Japan. The countries are chosen to represent the diversity of world cultures and job designs. Due to their variety of geographical, cultural, social aspects which make them good samples of research (and referring to one of the literatures from Miriam Erez (2010)) for commenting on job design and culture.

4.2 The Job design in the United States

The United States is known as the most powerful nation in the world with the best technology, medical facilities, education, military power, etc. Americans are very proud of living in a land that gives them great opportunities as well as freedoms.

U.S. culture is known for its freedom, individuality and equality. Thus, Americans can express their uniqueness in every aspect of their life.

Job enrichment was built in the US in order to develop skill, satisfaction and motivation of the employee for the improvement of their work performance. The job enrichment model relates to the job characteristics model (JCM), showing a positive feature in individuals with a strong need of personal growth rather than individuals with a weak need of personal growth.

From Hofstede's research, Americans (see table 4.1) are known to have a high level of individualism and low level of power distance (hofstede,2001). Connecting the job enrichment and the culture values that the United States has, Hackman and Oldham's (1980) stated that job enrichment design relates or connected to the members of whose cultural values prize in high individualism and low power distance.

United States	Scale	Rank
Power Distance	40 / 104	57-59 / 74
Uncertainty avoidance	46 / 112	62 / 74
Individualism Vs collectivism	91 / 91	1 / 74
Masculinity Vs Femininity	62 / 110	19 / 74
Long term Vs short term orientation	29 / 118	31 / 39

Table 4.1: The United States Culture Dimensions. Hofstede, (2005)

For individualism, America is ranked at the highest-level compared to other countries. This value defines the American people as independent, who experience a sense of self-worthy and their own well-being (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In organizations, American employees can be seen as individual, showing their uniqueness and differences. They prefer to work alone rather than work within a group; therefore, personal achievement is more valuable than group achievement. Furthermore, their uniqueness refers to the various skills that Americans have. American is able to draw from number of different skills and abilities as well as upon range of knowledge.

The low levels of power distance in the United States shows that the Americans tend to treat each other equally. They don't judge a person from his or her family background, occupation or the school one attends. Employees and managers regarded themselves as equal. Managers do not demand duties unrelated to their employees' job's descriptions. Americans are not afraid to give their boss their own personal opinion. Blue-collar or white-collar worker are equally proud of his or her own job (Kim, 2001).

The bargaining system of the US is a particular example of power distance. The bargaining system tends to be decentralized. While in most countries it uses to be an initiate from unions to bargain about the wages. But in US, it tends to be more decentralized and tend to be initiated by personnel. (Koen, 2005).

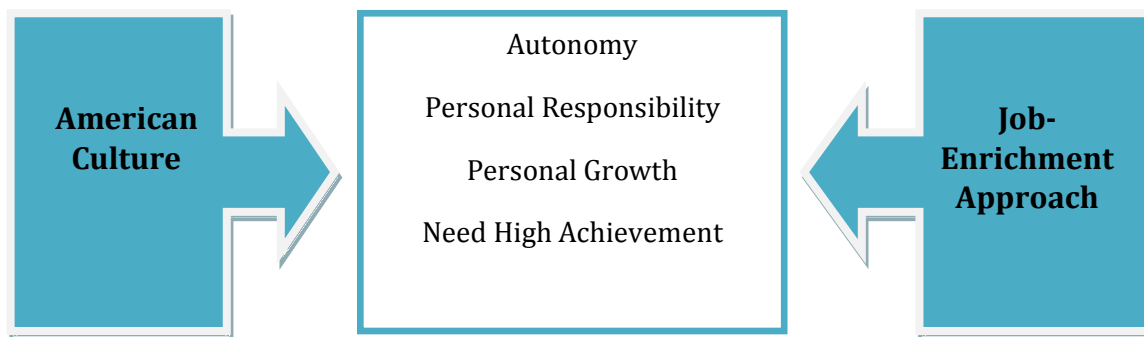


Figure 4.1: The United States and Job enrichment

In a nutshell, Job enrichment shapes the American culture by offering the workers the opportunity to experience autonomy and personal responsibility. As employees perform best as individuals, personal feedback enables the employee to attribute their best outcomes for themselves. Hence, it is only natural that the job enrichment model emerged in the United States and has been adopted by practitioners who implemented it in various industrial organizations (Erez, 2010). However it is interesting to highlight that job enrichment shows little attention to the relational characteristics of an organization. The lack of the relational characteristics may be explained by the level of individualistic values that dominates the American culture (Erez, 2010).

4.3 The job design in Northern Europe

Northern European or Nordic Europe consists of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden including Faroe Islands, Greenland, Svalbard, Scandinavian and Aland as their territory.

Up to now, Northern European is known as countries where job design is emerged by autonomous work group (Chern, 1976). The concept of socio-technical system theory is that individual and organization effectiveness depends on how the component of optimization collectivism and mechanism of technology organization. In northern Europe, they tend to focus on the group level rather than individual level. For that reason, it holds that the socio-technical approach fits in the Northern European.

Cultural Dimension	Performance Orientation	Assertiveness	Future Orientation	Human Orientation	Institutional Collectivism	In-Group Collectivism	Gender Egalitarianism	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance
Nordic-Europe	Mid-Score Clusters	Low-Score Clusters	High-Score Clusters	Mid-Score Cluster	High-Score Clusters	Low-Score Clusters	High-Score Clusters	Low-Score Clusters	High-Score Clusters

Table 4.2: Northern Europe Cultural Dimensions, House et al, (2004)

For Northern European as mentioned before, GLOBE's dimensions are chosen to classify how job design is culturally engrained. The social-technology approach matches with the societal or institutions values also known as the level of collectivism in GLOBE dimensions. Even though Northern Europe and the United States are Western cultures, they differ in the levels of collectivisms. US tend to have a high level individualism, while Northern European has a high collectivism in the societal level of institution. Societal level refers to the degree in which organizational and social institutional practices encourage and rewards collective distribution of resources and collective action (House et al., 2004). For example Sweden is in the highest rank in institutional collectivism. This is because of the high level of unionization rate, a total of 90 per cent of the supervisors and 70 per cent of the mid-level managers are members of unions. Dobbin & Boychuck (1999) stated that nine out of ten of wages that have been earned by an employee is determined by collective bargaining. Swedish work council and labor management collaboration has the function to create labor relations system. Workers are participating in decision and designing work process that have to be done (erez, 2010).

Looking at the low level of power distance in Northern Europe, smiley (1999) notes that Northern European or Nordics tend to be modest, punctual, honest and high-minded. Rich people generally dress, eat and travel in the same style as the middle class people. All of this refers underplaying of assertive, familial, and masculine authority and emphasize on certainty, social unity and cooperation. This clarifies that the hierarchical system in Northern European tends to be horizontal rather than vertical. The good education system that is delivered in a well-trained labor system is used for the development of flexible job design and worker autonomy. This relates to the

variety of job characteristic skill. Northern European especially Sweden, has a great deal of flexibility in moving workers among different kind of job, including jobs in different geographical area (Koen, 2005). This flexibility shows that Swedish people have a high value of skill variety and are very knowledgeable.



Figure 4.2: Northern European and Socio-technical

To sum it up, Northern European's culturally shape job design with the labor relation system that reinforces the autonomous work group model (or Socio Technical Model).

4.4 The job design in Japan

Japan is a country with a fascinating and a strong culture tradition. Harmony is the guidance how to life for Japanese people and therefore the key value in Japanese society. At very young age Japanese children are taught to act harmoniously and cooperatively with others, growing up amongst other children. Japanese takes into account the value in the politeness, personal responsibility and working together for universal purpose. Age and status considered a prominent matter in their hierarchy of life. Everyone has a distinct place in the hierarchy, which means the older you are, the more you will be honored.

Japan is well known for their system of work. One of the successful job design created by Japanese is Quality Control (QC). The main objective of QC is to contribute to quality improvement, identify problem and implement the solutions (Erez, 2010).

Japan	Scale	Rank
Power Distance	54 / 104	49-50 / 74
Uncertainty avoidance	92 / 112	11-13 / 74
Individualism Vs collectivism	46 / 91	33-35 / 74
Masculinity Vs Femininity	95 / 110	2 / 74
Long term Vs short term orientation	80 / 118	4-5 / 39

Table 4.3: Japan Cultural Dimensions, Hofstede (2005)

Since Quality control Circle system consists of a group of people working in the same or homogeneous workstations with objective goal is to generate ideas for better performance at work, the cultural values that fit with the QC in Japan are power distance, collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. And for job characteristic, QC is related to the autonomy and feedback in Japan.

The level of power distance in Japan tends to be higher compare to the one in The United States and Northern European (see table 3.3). This high level of PDI is similar with the hierarchy that reflects existence of inequality between employees of the higher level and the lower level. In Japan, hierarchical management culture is still exist, where seniority is rewarded because Japan is still known as a society in which age is important for the status and social identity. There are clear generation gaps, age-peer identity and the life stage in Japan (Lebra, 1993). For that reason, in this country, the organization is very much top down, the subordinate have not much to tell to the middle manager, who are responsible as the major decision makers. Since there is hierarchy in the QC circle therefore it fits to the power distance of its culture.

One of the examples of the hierarchical system also can be found in Japan's wages system, Japanese reward structure features seniority-based pay and promotion, this reward structure means that 'a system or practice which emphasizes number of years of the service or age and educational background in determining pay and promotion' (Koen, 2005). The wages of Japanese worker start from low paid salary then continue to increase, as the employee gets older.

In Japan there is a high level of collectivism. This can be seen when Japanese are working in organizations, they are looking for group level harmony rather than harmony at individual level. Within internal organization, people tend to diffuse authority and responsibility for decision making by individually as a reason of 'nemawashi & ringiswido' Meaning that responsibility and authority take a place within a group (diffuse responsibility) (Fetters, 1995). This loyalty to group produces a feeling of solidarity, and underlying concept of group consciousness is seeded in the diverse aspects of Japanese life. In Japan, workers have their own social codes of behavior; the

group consciousness has become a normal common aspect in Japanese society. Relating to the job design approach, this way of working, autonomous group fits with the quality circle model, since in the QC Circle model, working as a group is more valuable than working individually.



Figure 4.3 : Japan and QC Circle

Furthermore, Japan and Northern European have the same values of collectivism, but this doesn't mean they are the same in the hierarchical level (Northern Europe is in low hierarchical level).

The participative labor-management teams and autonomous groups determine Japanese organizations as organizations that operate like self-management teams. In Japan, QC circles are not part of a given organization's day-to-day activities; rather, a hierarchical organization structure manages day-to-day activities (Erez, 2010). For Japanese people, doing things together is important. Sharing group time and consistently spending time with the same people forms a social tempo or rhythm for the group. Thus, in Japan, being present when people gather is often valued more than contributing individually at work. Japanese people spend much more overtime than the US. The longer working hours doesn't mean that they are eager to spend more time with co-workers, this personal effort is appreciated and recognized as the contribution to the group effort and such is valued as personal quality. Thus, it shows that the hierarchical structure and QC circle system operate parallel to each other in Japan.

Nevertheless, Japan has a high level of uncertainty avoidance. The high-level uncertainty avoidance is related to the one of JCM, Feedback. Feedback has been one of the most frequently cited areas of frustration for Japanese managers. The research of Tomoko Masumoto (2004), who observed the American intern workers in Japan, found out that during the time of intern, the American expressed anxiety from not receiving clear and timely feedback on their work performance and Americans perceive Japanese managers as giving more critical feedback than positive feedback. Furthermore,

timing for giving feedback also matters; Japanese tend to delay the feedback until certain moment due to the appropriateness time in a more informal setting.

Briefly, Japan matches with the Quality control circle approach; the main reason is that the Japanese cultural value fits the characteristic of this approach. This approach aims Japanese to show their capabilities and providing to enhance their self-actualization in order to make them work in harmony and conformity. Thus, satisfaction and outcomes achieved.

4.5 Job design culturally determined (Summary)

After investigating the job design in The United States, Northern Europe and Japan. The relation of Job design to the cultures can be illustrated. The aim of this research is to support the notion of the job characteristic model followed by job design approaches, which are affected by the national culture in which organizations are embedded. While investigating those three examples of cultures, it shows that the influence of job characteristic to the outcomes varies within cultures.

From the research and explore of the literatures, it is proposed that job design actually relates to cultures, as a moderator. Power distance, Individualism, collectivism and uncertainty avoidance are the dimensions that have a strong effect to the application of job design approach (see table 4.4 for further information).

The level of power distance is actually related to the work autonomy in an organization. on the other hand, work autonomy and empowerment are also congruent with individualistic values; emphasizing the freedom of choice and providing the opportunity to influence and to attribute the behavioral outcomes to one self (Chua & Iyengar, 2006; cf. Chirkov, Ryan, Kim & Kaplan, 2003). Research found that work autonomy could result to different effect on satisfaction and performance in every culture.

Levels of individualism and collectivism also have a strong correlation in autonomy and feedback. Some researchers have argued that autonomy is a universal psychological need across cultures that can be differentiated from individualism and independence: autonomy involves choice, while individualism and independence involve separation from other people (Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & 2003). Other researchers, however, have argued that autonomy is still more important in individualistic than collectivistic cultures (Chua & Iyengar, 2006). Meanwhile, feedback is the characteristic of the job that can enhance the person's understanding about their job. Cultures with

a high level of collectivism are more likely to be open to accepting feedback than culture with a high level of individualism (Van de Vliert et al., 2004).

Uncertainty avoidance is another dimension of culture that correlates with feedback. In Asia, such as Japan, having feedback from the boss is sometime rare and often considered as something an employee is not looking forward to hear. While in western countries, feedback is very important and valuable to increase employees' performance.

Based from explanation above, it can be seen that the cultures itself create job design approach that fits with their values. American creates job enrichment, Northern European creates socio technical, and Japanese creates quality circles.

	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity Vs Femininity	Individualism Vs Collectivism
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hierarchical system Decentralization, low concentration of authority (Low PDI) Centralization, high concentration of authority (High PDI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power of superiors depend on position and relationship (low UAI) Power of superiors depend on control of uncertainty (High UAI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In term of employee decision. Example, preference for higher pay (Masculinity) and preference of fewer hours worked (Femininity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emphasizing freedom of choice and providing the opportunity to influence and to attribute the behavioral outcomes to oneself
Task identity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerance for ambiguity in structures and procedures (Low UAI) Highly formalized conception of management (High UAI) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees work best in group (collectivist) Employees perform best as individuals (Individualist)
Task significance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship orientation (Low UAI) Task orientation (High UAI) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belief in collective/individual decision
Skill Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultative relationship between superior and subordinate leads to satisfaction, performance and productivity (low PDI) Authoritative leadership and close supervision leads to satisfaction performance and productivity (High PDI) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job applicant oversell themselves (masculinity) Job applicants undersell themselves (femininity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving each member to perform a group task
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness with information, also non superior (Low PDI) Information constraint by hierarchy (High PDI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerate the ambiguity system by simple monitoring system (low UAI) Complex monitoring system (High UAI) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring system Employee-employer relationship Whether direct appraisal can be seen as a threat Collectivist) or improves the productivity (Individualist)

Table 4.4: Job characteristics and Culture dimensions

4.6 Cross culture of JCM

Combining the researched countries and the theory of JCM generates the following table.

	United States (Job enrichment)	Northern Europe (Socio Technical)	Japan (Quality control circle)
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low power distance: Autonomous in the matter of remuneration • Low Uncertainty avoidance: Tolerance for ambiguity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Autonomous work group, collective action • High Uncertainty avoidance: Risk avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Power distance: Hierarchy, obedience towards higher authorities • Collectivism: Autonomous work group, group task • High uncertainty Avoidance/ Power distance: Diffuse authority and responsibility of decision making
Task id entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualism: Individual perspective to complete a specific task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Collective perspective to complete specific task, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Collective perspective to complete specific task,
Task significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualism: Individual achievement towards self worthy and personal well being (the American dream) • Low Uncertainty avoidance: Short term achievement and contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Collective achievement towards collective contribution • High Uncertainty avoidance: Task orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Social hierarchy, social identity, contribution to overall well-being • High Uncertainty avoidance: Task orientation, avoidance negative social consequences
Skill Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualism: Relying on individual knowledge • Low Power distance: Consultative relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Relying on group knowledge, high value skill of variety • Low Power distance: Consultative relationship • Masculine: Self-confident over ones knowledge, Assertive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Relying on group knowledge, high skilled • Power distance: Authoritative relationship, hierarchy reflects gaps in higher/ sub/ lower ordinate • Masculinity: Career aspirations,
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualism: Personal responsibility, Personal feedback more effective to contribute better performance • Low Power distance: Open information, more likely to show personal opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Collective responsibility, collective distribution of resources, Collective feedback more effective to contribute better performance • Low Power distance: Open information, more likely to show opinion in group setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivism: Group consciousness, Collective responsibility, Collective distribution of resources • High power distance: Information constraint by hierarchy, humble, unlikely to show personal opinion

Table 4.5 cross cultural of the JCM in three cultures

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the main conclusion will be drawn and answering the central research question. Furthermore, the recommendation will be conducted.

5.1 Conclusion

Job design is a topic that continues to fascinate many researchers, given its theory, approach and characteristics, and the understanding of how certain jobs are created.

Organizations have been using different approaches to job design, depending on how workers complete their job (task identity), the importance of their task (task significant), how does this affect the ability to perform their job (skill variety), how to inform their progress (feedback) and how much freedom and control they are given to perform their job (autonomy), all within the given culture.

Culture determines the approach of job design in terms of the general values and beliefs a country wishes to hold. And with the support of Hofstede and Globe, it could generate the characteristics that a certain job should hold for a certain culture. When the approach is clear and the characteristics are determined, it will result in a kind of a blueprint of a certain job within the given culture.

In response of the main research question: based on the 3 cultures that the research has been focused on, it holds that job design is indeed culturally determined. It does not only give a better understanding of what is preferred in a certain culture, but with the combination of Hofstede and Globe, it could create an outline that can be used as a foundation or fundamental frame for creating a certain job.

5.2 Recommendation

The abundance of the theories and approaches of job design is sometimes confusing. Many researchers have investigated many perspectives. Furthermore, the values of cultural dimensions vary between researches. In today's globalization, environment has changed significantly. The old

approach might have to be replaced with a new one, and for that reason further research should be conducted in order to keep it updated.

The theoretical model development in this research should be tested in order to ensure its validity and reliability. Therefore, this thesis strongly challenges those who enjoyed reading this, to continue with this subject and to optimize the theory and make it more valid by accommodating shortcomings.

Those who wish to apply one of the approaches of job design, it is recommended that when designing jobs, take cultural differences into account and do not think globally. The use of culture and job design it can define the characteristics of the job that can be intuitively accepted by the people.

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