

Job Requirements - Overview of Resource Theory

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Abstract: The Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R theory) was proposed by Demerouti et al. in 2001 and combines a number of related theories such as the Resource Conservation Theory, the Job Demands-Control Theory, and the Payoff-Return Imbalance Theory. The theory states that when job demands are too high, employees need to put in extra effort to achieve their work goals, which can lead to physical and mental exhaustion and affect overall health and performance. In addition, insufficient work resources can also pose a barrier to employees' achievement of their goals, which in turn can lead to job detachment and negative emotions. With the development of occupational health psychology, work engagement has been recognised as a positive dimension of well-being and has been incorporated into this theoretical framework. Job demands include the pressures and challenges that employees have to cope with in completing their work, while job resources are the support and tools that employees can utilise when facing these demands. By analysing both, job demands-resources theory provides an important framework for understanding employees' work experiences, and guides companies in making scientific decisions about improving employee well-being, engagement and performance. Specifically, job demands can be categorised into challenging demands, which promote personal growth, and hindering demands, which can act as barriers. Job resources, on the other hand, play a positive role in helping employees to achieve their goals, relieve stress, and promote personal development.

Keywords: Job demands-resources theory; job demands; job resources.

1. Introduction

The Job Requirements-Resources Theory was proposed by Demerouti et al. in 2001, and this theory is based on a synthesis of a number of related theories, including the Resource Conservation Theory, the Job Requirements-Control Theory, and the Payoff-Return Imbalance Theory⁰. According to Demerouti et al. when job demands are too high, employees often need to put in extra effort in order to achieve their job-related goals. This extra effort may lead to physical and mental exhaustion, affecting employees' overall health and performance. Similarly, if work resources are insufficient, employees will be hindered in achieving their work goals, which may in turn lead to alienation from work and negative emotions⁰. With the progressive development of occupational health psychology, Schaufeli and Bakker proposed in 2002 that work engagement be considered as a positive dimension of well-being and incorporated it into the Job Requirements-Resources Theory². This theory emphasises that working conditions are closely related to occupational characteristics and can usually be divided into two main categories: job requirements and job resources³. Job demands refer to the various pressures and challenges that employees need to cope with when completing their work, while job resources are the support and tools that employees can utilise when coping with these demands. By analysing job demands and job resources, the job demands-resources theory provides an important framework for understanding employees' work experience and helps organisations to make more scientific decisions in managing and enhancing employee well-being, work engagement and performance. This theory not only helps organisations to identify and optimise the work environment, but also creates working conditions that are more conducive to the physical and mental well-being of employees, which ultimately enhances the productivity and satisfaction of the whole team.

Job demands reflect 'the physical, social, or organisational factors required at work, which motivate employees to put in constant physical or mental effort, which may trigger certain physical and psychological costs'[1]. Common job demands include time constraints, job stress, role conflict, and work overload. Scholars have further expanded on this concept by categorising job demands into challenging and hindering demands. Challenging job requirements are usually considered to promote employees' personal growth and future development, and are viewed as opportunities for learning and advancement, whereas hindering job requirements may impede an individual's progress, and are often viewed as limitations or barriers⁴.

Unlike job demands, job resources are defined as 'factors that positively influence work at the physiological, psychological, social or organisational level, and which may play an important role in an employee's ability to achieve job goals, alleviate the stress associated with job demands, and promote personal growth and development'[1]. Typical job resources include autonomy, organisational support, and concern and assistance from superiors.

In the job demands-resources theory, two paths are constructed: the health depletion path and the motivation path. First, in the health depletion path, high intensity job demands may increase the risk of employees facing job burnout, which may lead to negative consequences such as health problems or turnover tendencies. Second, in the motivational pathway, job resources are seen as a motivational factor that promotes employees' work engagement and leads to positive organisational effects, such as enhanced job performance and increased organisational commitment³. In addition, insufficient job resources may trigger burnout, but adequate job resources can also counteract the negative effects of high job demands on burnout³.

2. Core Perspectives of The Job-demands-resources Theory

Bakker (2023) collated the main ideas of the job demands-resources theory and summarised six key aspects: firstly, the characteristics that all individuals face in the work environment can be divided into job demands and job resources; secondly, the processes of influencing job demands and job resources are two separate processes, each of which may trigger health depletion and motivational changes in individuals; thirdly, job resources can, to some extent, they can mitigate the negative effects of job requirements; fourth, the motivational effect of job resources will be more obvious in the case of high job requirements; fifth, individual resources and job resources have similarities and play similar roles; and lastly, motivational factors in the job positively affect the individual's outcome, while health depletion negatively affects the outcome of the job[5].

3. Application of Job Requirements-Resources Theory

Currently, the Job Requirements-Resources Theory has been widely applied in the field of organisational behaviour, covering research on various aspects of employees' psychology, behaviour and performance. First, on the psychological side, it has been found that high job demands, such as job stress and task complexity, tend to have a negative impact on employees' mental health, increasing the risk of psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, and burnout[6,7,8]. On the other hand, when employees are provided with adequate work resources, such as effective social support and good career development opportunities, their job well-being and job satisfaction are significantly increased[9,10]. Therefore, the improvement of mental health is closely related to the adequacy of work resources.

Secondly, research in the behavioural area has shown that when employees have sufficient resources to cope with high job demands, their willingness to leave their jobs is significantly lower, which means that employees are more likely to remain committed and loyal to their organisations[11]. At the same time, adequate resources can also help employees better adapt to organisational changes and enhance their flexibility and responsiveness in the face of change[12]. This suggests that effective allocation of resources not only improves employees' work experience but also enhances their behavioural performance in the organisation.

Finally, research in performance has shown that firms can optimise the work environment and task allocation by balancing job requirements and job resources to enhance overall employee performance[13]. This balance not only helps employees cope with work stress effectively, but also improves their productivity and innovation. Therefore, understanding and applying the job requirement-resource theory will help companies build more efficient and dynamic

teams and achieve sustainable development in the competitive market.

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