CHARACTERISTICS OF JOB SATISFACTION FOR EMPLOYEES OF SMES IN SHAN DONG, CHINA

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Abstract

With the rise of domestic innovation and employees, the number of small and medium-sized enterprises in China has increased yearly, providing many jobs, making many contributions to maintain social stability, promoting social and economic development, and occupying an essential position in the national economy. However, there is little research on the SME market in Shandong, China. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the factors influencing Job Satisfaction for SME employees in Shand Dong. The quantitative method based on questionnaires is applied. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percent frequency, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation are introduced. Various inferential statistical methods are used to test the hypothesis, particularly the Independent Samples t-test, the One-way ANOVA, and the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. The results obtained from the study indicate that differences in all aspects of Demographic Factors, namely, Gender, Marital Status, Age, and Educational Level, generate differences in Job Satisfaction. Different aspects of Business Characteristics, namely, Number of Employees, Types of Business, Business Method, Hours Spent Per Week, and Business Development Stage, generate differences in Job Satisfaction based on the Independent Samples t-test and the One-way ANOVA statistics. The results obtained from the Multiple Linear Regression Analyses show significant positive impacts on some aspects of Job Characteristics: Task Identity, Task Significance, and Feedback on Job Satisfaction.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), Employee Characteristics, Demographics

Introduction

In 1996, the concept of harmonious human resource management was first put forward by scholars, and its theory has been constantly improved and enriched. The concept of harmony in the theory mainly explains that green human resources should cover three parts: the harmony of the human state, the harmony of mentality, and the harmony of ecology. Human harmony includes the relationship between employees and enterprises, employees and managers, and ordinary employees. That is to say that human-enterprise harmony and interpersonal harmony are two important indicators.

Research on the basic status quo of human resource management in small and medium-sized enterprises is the premise of long-term stable development. Regular surveys and analysis of employee satisfaction in small and medium-sized enterprises can help managers catch employees' psychological needs in time and take measures to prevent possible problems in management. It is helpful for enterprise managers to understand the problems that need further improvement in enterprise management. It also provides a basis for managers to make decisions and correct the problems in management work in time, that is, to establish a scientific and standardized salary system, improve the construction of enterprise culture, and strengthen employee career management. It can strengthen the effective management of employees, enhance the core competitiveness of enterprises, and ultimately make enterprises obtain higher economic benefits (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020).

In the current domestic market environment, employee retention has always been a long-term proposition for enterprises. For professional employees, fungibility is very low, playing a pivotal role in various departments of enterprises. How to find the relationship between employee satisfaction and retention is very important. Only by firmly grasping the core technical talents can we ensure the sustainable development of the enterprise for a long time. The competitive product competition in the headhunting industry and the same industry makes the mobility of talents huge. Improving employee satisfaction and enhancing their cognition and sense of belonging to the enterprise is an urgent matter for SMEs to pay attention to.

Most current research on job characteristics and satisfaction centers on bigger enterprises, frequently in Western nations. There is not much research on the SME market in Shandong, China. Our knowledge of how job characteristics affect job satisfaction in SMEs in Shandong is significantly lacking in the study. So that is why the researcher decided to study the influence of Business Characteristics and Job characteristics on Job Satisfaction for SME Employees in Shand Dong.

Literature Review

Demographics Characteristics of China SME Employee

Du Mont and Network (2002) believe entrepreneurial ability generally has the characteristics of scarcity, comprehensiveness, innovation, residual income participation, and dynamic. Employees are managers who are directly responsible for the enterprises' survival seeming as the enterprises' soul. Entrepreneur ability is the key factor that determines enterprise performance. Innovation is the ability of an entrepreneur to do something that no one else has done or to do it in a way that no one else has done. It is the core of an entrepreneur's ability and quality and the concentrated expression of an entrepreneur's ability. Small and medium-sized enterprises cannot compare with large enterprises in terms of capital, technology, workforce, scale, and strength and cannot compete with them head-on. Only the advantages of strong market adaptability are to enter or exit the market quickly and develop products and market potential at the right time and stage, from the depth and breadth of products and markets (Day and Schoemaker, 2016).

Business Characteristics of SME Employees

When the contribution of informal enterprises is considered, SMEs contribute more than half of employment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in most countries, regardless of income level (IFC, 2010). With the continuous improvement of recent policies, technology, capital, talent, and other support, Shandong has been supporting the link between supply and demand and striving to optimize the environment, create a stable and predictable development environment, and serve the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Domestic and foreign scholars have studied its influence from many angles both from external objective characteristics and internal personality and other characteristics. Mazur and Zaborek (2016) concentrated on investigating 120 outstanding employees in China. Roblek et al. (2021) put forward that the characteristics of outstanding employees are concentrated in five aspects: age, performance, reform measures, ability, personality quality, and the spirit of overcoming difficulties. Carneiro (2000) divides the individual characteristics that affect the core competitiveness of enterprises into efficiency characteristics (the ability to grasp business opportunities, work relevance, and work experience), transactional characteristics (the personal influence of employees, the relationship with government departments, professional institutions and industrial groups), and dynamic characteristics (drive, emotional power, attraction and willpower). Rhodes et al. (2018) proposed that employee risk-taking tendencies, internal control tendencies, metacognition, communication ability, and industry experience positively impact enterprise management innovation. Dachner et al. (2017) studied the entrepreneurial spirit qualities of employees in Anhui, such as age, gender, culture, pre-service role and employment mode, risk-taking, and innovation. Chen et al. (2021) studied the relationship between entrepreneurial performance of enterprises from the aspects of objective characteristics such as age, education, gender, blood type, education level, age of starting a business for the first time, family background, work experience, social capital, and psychological characteristics (self-confidence, achievement motivation, risk preference, internal and external control tendency, mental model, and tolerance for uncertainty). After studying the characteristics of 124 small and medium-sized manufacturing employees, Milici et al. (2021) divided the characteristics of small and medium-sized employees into two categories, namely, objective characteristics (age, education, attention, social capital) and achievement psychological characteristics (demand, risk preference, mental model).

Job Characteristics

Job Characteristics Theory or Job Characteristics Model (JCM), proposed by Barrick et al. (2013), is a very influential model of job enrichment that attempts to address how a core set of job characteristics impact a number of psychological states, leading to specific related outcomes in the work environment. The model has been developed as a response to the shortcomings of Herzberg's Theory. This model indicates that Skill Variety is the degree to which the job requires several different skills, abilities, or talents. Second, Task Identity is the degree to which the job requires the completion of a whole and identifiable piece of doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome. Third, Task Significance is the degree to which the job substantially impacts the lives or work of other people. Fourth, Autonomy is the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom and discretion to an individual in scheduling the work and determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out. Last, feedback is the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by a job results in an individual obtaining direct and transparent information about the effectiveness of his or her performance either directly from the job itself or other people.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been the subject of research since the Hawthorne studies of the 1920s (Judge et al., 2020). Job satisfaction has been identified as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Fritzsche and Parrish (2005) have postulated that job satisfaction comprises the degree of positive attitude a person holds towards their job as perceived by the person. In contrast, job dissatisfaction is the degree of negative attitude a person holds towards his or her job. Thus, job satisfaction is a within-person construct an individual's attitude about his or her job should have meaningful implications for how he or she does it.

In general, job satisfaction refers to employees' overall attitude towards their work, that is, the behavioral tendency and overall evaluation of the work they are engaged in. Employee satisfaction is an important index to measure the level of human resource management and the quality of work and life of organization members. Due to internal factors, small and medium-sized enterprises often neglect employee satisfaction management, resulting in low work efficiency and high turnover, significantly wasting human capital; thus, improving employee job satisfaction is crucial (Zhang, 2021).

SME employees differ from other organizational groups in their degree of commitment to the organization (Amin, 2021). It can be argued that this commitment is because SME employees have developed the venture strategy and that the financial benefits of venture success often affect the SME employee directly. Thus, if SME employees are unsatisfied, they may reduce their commitment to the venture, leading to undesired consequences, such as lifestyle venture, withdrawal cognitions, and behaviors, or closing of the venture (Celik, 2011). On the other hand, job satisfaction and contextual performance are related at the individual level (Christen et al., 2006). When SME employees are satisfied, they are more likely to engage in organizational activities that exceed basic entrepreneurial tasks. Several effects of contextual performance at the individual level occur at the aggregate level of organizational performance (Izvercian et al., 2016).

Yongcai (2010) proposed the significance of improving employee satisfaction in small and medium-sized enterprises based on human harmony, including the relationship between employees and enterprises, managers and ordinary employees, that is, the harmony between people and enterprises. Among them, the unequal status between employees and enterprises, unreasonable post design and uneconomical personnel allocation, the lack of promotion channels and fairness, the lack of performance appraisal function and fairness, the insufficient attention and communication degree of managers to employees, and the unreasonable salary system directly lead to the satisfaction of employees in enterprises. The key measures to improve employee satisfaction are to optimize the employee satisfaction path based on the concept of interpersonal harmony, establish the concept of "people-oriented" equality, strengthen the construction of employee harmony, improve the optimization of promotion mechanism, promote harmonious and fair performance appraisal, establish a sound salary system, and pay attention to employees by managers.

The more prominent feature of small and medium-sized enterprises is that the number of employees is small, and employees are the most direct part of the enterprise. Especially for small-scale and early-stage enterprises, their system construction, culture construction, and job responsibilities have not yet been perfected, and internal employees often bear heavy work tasks and the situation of one person and multiple posts. This situation is quite unfavorable to the improvement of employee satisfaction. Sheraz et al. (2014) stated that given the unequal status between employees and enterprises and according to the principle of harmony between human beings and enterprises in the concept of harmony between human beings and enterprises, SMEs should establish the concept of "people-oriented" equality, strengthen the harmonious construction of personnel allocation, and optimize the promotion mechanism.

Methodology

Research design is a strategy for answering the questions or testing the hypotheses that stimulated the research in the first place (McKerchar, 2008). This study employs a cross-sectional survey method to answer the research question: To what extent are job characteristics related to SME employee job satisfaction in China? This study has gathered descriptive information about the job dimensions and job satisfaction of SME employees in China. It has also involved regressive analysis to determine the degree of the influence between the selected independent variables (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction).

Result
Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Factors
Table 1: The Frequency and Percent Frequency Classified by Demographic Factor

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	247	49.40
Female	253	50.60
Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Single	76	15.20
Married	345	69.00
Divorced	71	14.20

Widowed	8	1.60
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Under 20	20	4.00
20-30	108	21.60
31-40	96	19.20
41-50	176	35.20
51-60	64	12.80
Over 60	36	7.20
Education Level	**Frequency**	**Percent**
High school	51	10.20
Bachelor Degree	183	36.60
Master Degree	90	18.00
Doctoral Degree	120	24.00
Others	56	11.20
Relevant Working Experiences	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	282	56.40
No	218	43.60
Previous Entrepreneurial Experiences	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	172	34.40
No	328	65.60
Total	**500**	**100.00**

Table 1 provides demographic information about the study sample. Regarding gender, men accounted for 49.40% while women accounted for 50.60%, showing a relatively balanced distribution. Secondly, in terms of marital status, married persons accounted for 69.00% of the total, singles recorded as 15.20%, divorced persons accounted for 14.20%, and widowed persons registered for only 1.60%. In terms of age distribution, those aged 41-50 accounted for the highest proportion of 35.20%, followed by those aged 20-30 and 31-40 with 21.60% and 19.20%, respectively, while those aged 60 and above accounted for the lowest proportion of 7.20%. About educational level, respondents at the bachelor's level were the most numerous at 36.60%, followed by those at the doctoral level at 24.00%. Regarding occupational experience, 56.40% indicated relevant work experience, while 34.40% indicated that they had entrepreneurial experience. These data provide insights into the respondents' demographic characteristics and background information and provide a basis for further research and analysis.|

Business Characteristics
Table 2: The Descriptive Statistics of Business Characteristics

Total Employees	**Frequency**	**Percent**
1-10	36	7.20
11-20	174	34.80
21-30	150	30.00
31-50	109	21.80
More than 50	31	6.20
Business Type	**Frequency**	**Percent**

Manufacturing	130	26.00
Service	250	50.00
Wholesalers	97	19.40
Retail	23	4.60
Business Method	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Establish	164	32.80
Predecessor	141	28.20
Join as a partner	98	19.60
Takeover	57	11.40
Others	40	8.00
Hours Spent Per Week	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Less than 10	8	1.60
10-20	45	9.00
21-30	71	14.20
31-40	119	23.80
41-50	101	20.20
51-60	58	11.60
61-70	61	12.20
Above 70	37	7.40
Other Businesses	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	174	34.80
No	326	65.20
Business Development	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Introductory Phase	54	10.80
Growth Phase	217	43.40
Mature Stage	185	37.00
Recessionary Phase	44	8.80
Total	500	100.00

An in-depth analysis of the characteristics of the 500 enterprises is presented in Table 2. First, in terms of employee size, the number of enterprises with 11-20 employees is the largest, accounting for 34.80%, followed by enterprises with 21-30 employees, accounting for 30.00%. Concerning business type, service-oriented businesses were the most prominent at 50.00 percent, followed by manufacturing businesses at 26.00 percent. Regarding the path to becoming a business owner, becoming a business owner by founding a business was the highest at 32.80%, followed by becoming a business owner by inheriting a predecessor at 28.20%. Regarding the distribution of business hours, the highest percentage per week is 31-40 hours at 23.80%, followed by 41-50 hours at 20.20%.

Regarding owning other businesses, 34.80% of respondents said they own other businesses. As for the current stage of development of business development, businesses in the growth stage were the most prevalent at 43.40%, followed by those in the maturity stage at 37.00%. These data provide an essential reference for understanding the size, type, ownership, stage of development, and entrepreneurial pathway of enterprises, which is the most essential aspect for formulating enterprise development strategies and policies.

Job Characteristics
Table 3: The Descriptive Statistics of Job Characteristics

variable	Mean	SD	Meaning	Rank
Skills Variety	4.60	1.799	Good	3
Task Identity	4.70	1.711	Good	2
Task Significance	5.00	1.578	Good	1
Autonomy	4.47	1.635	Medium	4
Feedback	3.51	1.178	Medium	5

Regarding Skill Variety, the mean was 4.60, with a standard deviation of 1.799, indicating a high level of overall skill variety rated "good" ranked third. The Task Identity, with a mean of 4.70 and a standard deviation of 1.711, was also rated "good" and ranked second. Task Significance has a mean of 5.00 and a standard deviation of 1.578, also rated as "good" and ranked first. Autonomy, with a mean of 4.47 and a standard deviation of 1.635, was rated as "Medium" and was slightly lower in the rankings, coming in fourth place. Feedback, with a mean of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 1.178, is also rated as "Medium" and is in last place in the ranking.

Job Satisfaction
Table 4: The Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction	Mean	SD	Rank
Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.	4.68	1.829	1
I frequently think of quitting this job (reversed score).	4.65	1.728	2
I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.	4.35	1.973	3
Total	4.56	1.843	-

Table 4 shows the three items measuring job satisfaction. The overall perceptions of the respondents on Job Satisfaction fell in the "Good" range, with an average weighted mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 1.843. These results indicate that the respondents generally felt they had high levels of Job Satisfaction. The most important item is "Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job," followed by "I frequently think of quitting this job. (reversed score)", Moreover, I am generally satisfied with my work in this job.

Inferential Statistics
Differences in Demographic Factors Generate Differences in Job Satisfaction
(1). Differences in Gender Generate Differences in Job Satisfaction

H_0: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H_a: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Table 5: The Independent Samples t-test of the Gender Factor

Items	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
Peripheral Performance	Male	247	3.57	1.568	-12.857	493
	Female	253	5.31	1.45	-	-

The above results show the statistical analysis of job satisfaction according to gender. The data shows a significant difference between males and females regarding job satisfaction. Specifically, the mean job satisfaction score for males was 3.57, with a standard deviation of 1.568, while the mean job satisfaction score for females was 5.31, with a standard deviation of 1.45. The t-test results showed a significant t-value of -12.869 (the t-value is a standardized statistic used to test for differences between two groups). The degree of freedom (df) was 498 with a p-value of 0.036, which means the difference is highly significant. This indicates that job satisfaction is generally higher among females than males, as the mean score of females is significantly higher than that of males, which may be because the work environment, assignment of duties, compensation, and benefits, or other factors differ between genders, resulting in different feelings about job satisfaction. This

result is instructive for organizational managers and policymakers as they can adjust their management strategies according to gender differences to improve their employees' overall job satisfaction.

(2). Differences in Age, Marital Status, and Educational Level Generate Differences in Job Satisfaction

$H_0 : \mu_i = \mu_j$

$H_a : \mu_i \neq \mu_j$ at last one Pair where i $\neq$ j.

Table 6: The One-Way ANOVA of Differences in Age, Marital Status, and Educational Level Generate Differences in Job Satisfaction

	Age	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job satisfaction	Between Groups	296.468	5	59.294	24.102	0.00*
	Within Groups	1215.282	494	2.46		
	Total	1511.75	499			
	Marital Status	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job satisfaction	Between Groups	303.941	3	101.314	41.606	0.00*
	Within Groups	1207.809	496	2.435		
	Total	1511.75	499			
	Educational Level	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job satisfaction	Between Groups	414.146	4	103.537	46.693	0.00*
	Within Groups	1097.604	495	2.217		
	Total	1511.75	499			

It can be seen from Table 6 that the p-values of Job Satisfaction for Age, Marital Status, and Educational Level are all approximately .000, which is much less than the critical value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) of these aspects is rejected, meaning that differences in Age, Marital Status, and Educational Level generate differences in Job Satisfaction.

Differences in Business Characteristics Generate Differences in Job Satisfaction

$H_0 : \mu_i = \mu_j$

$H_a : \mu_i \neq \mu_j$ at last one Pair where i $\neq$ j.

Table 7: The One-Way ANOVA of Differences in the Number of Employees, Types of Business, Business Method, Hours Spent Per Week, and Business Development Stage Generate Differences in Job Satisfaction

Factor	Classification	SS	Df	MS	F=value	p-value
Number of Employees	Between Groups	286.945	4	71.736	28.992	0.000*
	Within Groups	1224.805	495	2.474		
	Total	1511.75	499			
Types of Business	Between Groups	331.535	3	110.512	46.444	0.000*
	Within Groups	1180.215	496	2.379		
	Total	1511.75	499			
Business Method	Between Groups	393.909	4	98.477	43.607	0.000*
	Within Groups	1117.841	495	2.258		
	Total	1511.75	499			
Hours Spent Per Week	Between Groups	436.026	7	62.289	28.489	0.000*
	Within Groups	1075.724	492	2.186		
	Total	1511.75	499			
Business Development Stage	Between Groups	342.744	3	114.248	48.475	0.000*
	Within Groups	1169.006	496	2.357		
	Total	1511.75	499			

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results obtained from Table 7 indicate that the p-value of Job Satisfaction concerning the Number of Employee, Types of Business, Business Method, Hours Spent Per Week, and Business Development Stage are all approximately .000, much less than the critical value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) of these aspects is rejected, meaning that differences in the Number of Employees, Types of Business, Business Method, Hours Spent Per Week, and Business Development Stage generate differences in Job Satisfaction.

Job Characteristics Influence on job satisfaction

Table 8: The Primary Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Job Satisfaction

Modela	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-0.125	0.251		-0.499	0.618		
Skill Variety (X1)	-0.028	0.041	-0.029	-0.68	0.497	0.655	1.526
Task Identity (X2)	0.306	0.042	0.3	7.365	0.000	0.693	1.443
Task Significance (X3)	0.299	0.041	0.271	7.262	0.000	0.827	1.209
Autonomy (X4)	0.058	0.044	0.054	1.325	0.186	0.685	1.461
Feedback (X5)	0.431	0.062	0.292	6.995	0.000	0.664	1.506

a.Dependent variable is Job Satisfaction

It is evident from Table 8 that the p-values of Skill Variety (X1) and Autonomy (X4) are equal to 0.497 and 0.186, respectively, which are much higher than the critical value of 0.05, implying that these two variables are not significant. Therefore, they are removed from the independent side. The results obtained from the second run of Multiple Linear Regression are shown in Table 9.

Table 9 The Final Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Job Satisfaction

Modela	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-0.071	0.245		-0.29	0.772		
Task Identity	0.313	0.038	0.307	8.18	0	0.817	1.223
Task Significance	0.297	0.041	0.269	7.293	0	0.848	1.179
Feedback	0.447	0.055	0.303	8.18	0	0.843	1.186

a.Dependent variable is Job Satisfaction

The results presented in Table 9 illustrate the outcomes of a regression analysis examining the relationship between various factors and a dependent variable. Task Identity, Task Significance, and Feedback emerge as significant predictors of the dependent variable. Task Identity exhibits the strongest impact on Job Satisfaction, evidenced by its standardized coefficient of about 0.307. It indicates that when Task Identity increases by 1 unit, Job Satisfaction will increase by 0.307 units in the same direction, holding other factors constant. Similarly, Task Significance and Feedback demonstrate notable impacts, with standardized coefficients of 0.269 and 0.303, respectively. These coefficients signify how each predictor contributes to changes in the dependent variable when all other predictors are constant. Notably, all three predictors display statistically significant t-values, suggesting robust associations. Additionally, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, which assess multicollinearity, fall within acceptable ranges, indicating that the predictors do not excessively correlate. Consequently, these findings underscore the importance of Task Identity, Task Significance, and Feedback in influencing Job Satisfaction, highlighting avenues for further research and potential implications for practical applications in relevant contexts.

Conclusion

In terms of Demographic Characteristics, the sample was about equally divided between males and females, with each accounting for about half of the sample. Most respondents were married, followed by unmarried and divorced, while widowed persons accounted for a relatively small proportion. The age

distribution of the respondents was relatively even, with a major concentration in the 31-50 age group. Most respondents had a bachelor's degree or higher, followed by high school and below. Most respondents have relevant work experience, and a significant proportion have had entrepreneurial experience.

Concerning Business characteristics, most businesses have a total number of employees between 1-5. Respondents had a wide distribution of business types but were mainly concentrated in one category. Most people became business owners by creating a business in some way. Respondents typically spend more time weekly on their business, averaging about 4.73 hours. Most respondents had no other business ownership. Most businesses are at a medium level of business development.

Regarding Job Characteristics, higher scores on skill diversity, task homogeneity, importance of tasks, autonomy, and feedback indicate that respondents are satisfied with the work environment and job content. Respondents were generally satisfied regarding job satisfaction, but some often considered giving up their jobs. Overall, these results reveal the status of respondents' basic information, work experience, business situation, and job satisfaction. This information is essential for understanding and analyzing the respondents' work environment, needs, and satisfaction levels.

Regarding Inferential Statistics, differences in Gender, Marital Status, Age, and Educational Level generate differences in Job Satisfaction. Different aspects of Business Characteristics (Number of Employees, Types of Business, Business Method, Hours Spent per Week, and Business Development Stage) generate differences in Job Satisfaction. The results obtained from the Multiple Linear Regression Analyses show significant positive impacts of some aspects of Job Characteristics (Task Identity, Task Significance, and Feedback) on Job Satisfaction at the critical level of 0.05.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have several practical implications for management and human resource practices in SMEs in Shandong Province, China:

Emphasis on task-related factors: The results show that task congruence and task importance significantly impact job satisfaction. Therefore, organizations should focus on task coherence and importance to ensure that employees understand the tasks clearly and that the tasks are aligned with the overall goals and mission of the organization.

Enhancing Feedback Mechanisms: The impact of feedback on job satisfaction is also significant. Organizations should establish effective feedback mechanisms, including regular assessment and communication of employee performance, and provide timely feedback and coaching to help employees improve performance and enhance job satisfaction.

Promoting autonomy: Although the impact of autonomy is relatively small, it still deserves attention. Organizations can engage employees by providing more autonomy and decision-making power, enhancing job satisfaction and engagement.

Fostering Skill Diversity: Although the impact of skill diversity is not significant, it is still a factor of concern. Organizations can help employees improve their skill levels and enhance their diversity and flexibility by providing training and development opportunities.

In summary, by fully understanding and applying the above practical insights, organizations can effectively enhance employee job satisfaction and promote sustainable organizational development and success.

Recommendation for Future Research

Long-term follow-up studies: Long-term follow-up studies explore the long-term effects of task-related factors, autonomy, and feedback on job satisfaction. Such studies can help us better understand how these factors affect employee attitudes and behaviors.

Cross-cultural research: Conducting cross-cultural research to explore whether there are differences in the effects of task-related factors, autonomy, and feedback on job satisfaction across cultures can help us understand the impact of cultural factors on organizational management and employee behavior and provide guidance for human resource management in a globalized environment.

Explore skill diversity in depth: Although skill diversity does not significantly impact the current model, it still deserves further research. Future research could delve deeper into the potential mechanisms by which skill diversity affects organizational performance and employee job satisfaction and how to maximize its positive effects.

Exploring other potential influences: Besides the factors considered in the current model, many other factors, such as leadership style and organizational culture, may affect job satisfaction. Future research could explore the relationship between these factors and task-related factors, autonomy, and feedback to understand the mechanisms that shape job satisfaction entirely.

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