



## **Impact of Training Programs on Career Path Planning Research in Human Resource Management**

**Eng. Wafaa Jassim Baqer**

PhD Researcher in Faculty of Finance and Business -The world Islamic sciences &  
Education University, Amman- Jordan

**E-mail: [W.baqer@hotmail.com](mailto:W.baqer@hotmail.com)**

### **Abstract:**

Training programs refer to a purposeful effort by an employer to facilitate staff members' efforts aimed at learning work-related activities or conduct. The primary purpose of this research is to examine the impact of staff training programs on career path planning. In this study, a sample of 150 participants will be used which will translate into about 15 percent of the target population. The participants will be grouped in individual clusters with a view to determining the total respondents needing to be sample in a given department. The theoretical framework of the study underlines the essential purpose of career planning as the holistic growth of employees into resourceful contributors to the organization's goals; this necessitates a career development process where the worker creates job identity. The core of educational programs was explained by four theories. The Social Cognitive Career philosophy (SCCT) suggests that one needs to possess certain skills and knowledge, as well as some individual persistence and positive outcome expectations in order to execute a difficult task well.



While, The Self-Concept Theory of Career Development suggests a life stage growth framework with different phases of exploration, development, maintenance, and disengagement, with the individual striving to accomplish their responsibilities within every stage. The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) sees career choice and development as a function of constant accommodation and modification, defining both the relationship between individuals and with their job environment. Finally, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory classifies factors like achievements, responsibility, the job itself and advancement into the motivator category, and contextual factors like administration, company policy, wages, supervision, interpersonal relations and working conditions as hygiene factors. This theory is well suited to provide researchers with insight into job satisfaction in any given work environment.

**Keywords:** Training programs, staff members', career path.



## **Introduction**

As argued by management experts like Ebri (2014), a career is more of a journey as opposed to a destination. This means a typical worker has to conduct some intensive professional planning if they are to progress seamlessly. Essentially, a well-structured plan enables an individual to determine both short-term and long-term objectives. As a result, they can make strategic decisions that will allow them to realize incremental gains as they work towards their targets. Training programs refer to a purposeful effort by an employer to facilitate staff members' efforts aimed at learning work-related activities or conduct (Ebri, 2014). Educational initiatives also act as a method to provide the staff members with the requisite competencies in order to improve their organizational skills. There has been a general misconception that staff education and development programs are solely intended to increase their specific work-related expertise like reading blueprints, word processing, goal setting or addressing employees' grievances. Today, however, staff educational programs seek to develop a worker's present competency levels while also preparing them for future roles within the organization (Woodside, de Villiers, & Marshall, 2016). For this reason, such programs play a vital role in equipping staff members with the requisite skills to plan accordingly both for the present and future.

## **Organization of the Paper**

This paper is organized into three main chapters that include the introduction, literature review and the theoretical framework. In the introduction, a background has been provided into the conception of career development and the critical role in ensuring proper professional planning on the part of the workers. This is followed by the problem statement that highlights the extent to which lack of staff education has negatively impacted the majority of employers. The next part illustrates the research questions followed by a section on the significance of pursuing this research.



To put this inquiry into perspective, the researcher has specified the objectives and proceeded to formulate a hypothesis. A sample of the study and procedural definitions of terminologies has also been provided including the researcher's delineation of the terms. The second chapter reviews literature published on the subject of training and development both globally and within the Arabian regions. This is followed by the theoretical framework that entails a discussion of some career development theories, their variables, and dimensions.

### **Problem of Study**

Although most workers have the academic qualifications to succeed in their respective careers, it is common for some professionals to rise through the ranks faster than their peers. While several factors including work ethic and overall competence may raise the probability of success in a given occupation, experts like Crimando and Rigggar (2017) posit that employees with the requisite professional preparation are more likely to succeed in their fields compared to those with no training as they have the benefit of foresight, which makes them better planners. Consequently, organizations are gradually embracing employee educational programs as a strategy to increase the productivity over the long term while also enhancing workers' capacity to plan and develop within their careers. Throughout the world, there is a vast proportion of literature on staff employee training. However, little focus has been put on understanding how these educational activities at the organizational level assist workers in planning their career paths better. |

Nevertheless, in the recent past, there have been growing concerns over the staff training programs in most organizations, which management pundits have termed as unplanned, haphazard and unsystematic at best (Crimando & Rigggar, 2017). As it stands, a significant proportion of the workforce including plant operators, account clerks, middle-level managers, and computer operators among others lacks the necessary forms of orientation with no comprehensive system for staff development (Crimando & Rigggar, 2017).



Survey of employees reveals that the management officials of most organizations perceive the expenses incurred on the purchase and maintenance of capital goods as more important than those costs associated with training or developing workers (Crimando & Riggarr, 2017).

Without training programs for both senior and junior level workers at the organization, some employees attempt to seek education on their own volition. The problem with this approach is that each worker pursues a different line of training that in most cases is not compatible with the organization's strategic blueprint or corporate goals (Crimando & Riggarr, 2017). A considerable number of companies still offer no form of support to the employees that decide to expand the scope of knowledge. Most organizations have gone as far as rejecting applications for study leaves filed by workers who would like to sharpen their skills and threatened them with dismissal (Kraiger, Passmore, dos Santos & Malvezzi, 2014). For the few workers that do undergo training, employers have made little effort to provide the career advancement opportunities that help staff plan for more responsibilities in the future (Kraiger et al., 2014). Consequently, this has leads to high employee turnover rates, which causes a reduction in the company's performance. This study is, therefore, aimed at learning the impact of training programs on career planning.

### **Study Questions**

- What is the primary objective of staff educational initiatives and processes?
- What is the relationship between such schemes and professional planning?
- In what ways does training enhance the ability to plan among employees within a given organization?
- Do educational programs have positive effects on one's path preparation?



## **The Importance of the Study**

The findings from this study will prove helpful in several ways. For instance, human resource managers will gain insight into the advantages of using training programs as a tool to empower workers. It is also vital in assisting HR practitioners within organizations to create strategies that enable succession planning leading to a smooth transition in case of a vacancy from turnovers or retirement. More importantly, it would help the company management better attend to the diverse needs of their personnel. Besides, the findings of the study would offer organizations a deeper insight into employee career aspiration as well as to align such goals into the overall strategic objective of the company. For the academic community, the findings would provide critical data for the future scholarly reference.

## **Objectives of the Study**

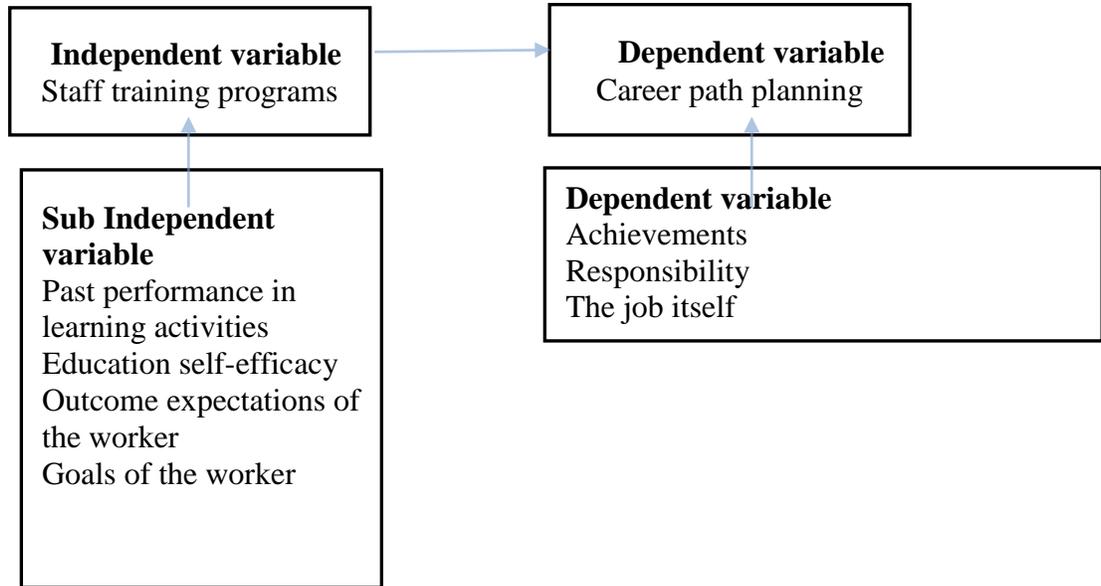
The primary purpose of this research is to examine the impact of staff training programs on career path planning. To attain this, the researcher has identified the following specific objectives:

- To establish the primary purpose of staff training programs and processes
- To find out the relationship between staff training programs, on the one hand, and occupational planning on the other.
- To examine in what ways training can enhance professional planning among employees within a given organization.
- To establish whether training programs have positive effects on planning.



### Hypotheses of the Study

*If an organization conducts staff training programs, then they will be able to plan their career paths better.*



### Sample of the Study

In this study, a sample of 150 participants will be used which will translate into about 15 percent of the target population. The participants will be grouped in individual clusters with a view to determining the total respondents needing to be sample in a given department.

### Procedural Definitions

- *Staff training*: a program that aids workers to learn specific skills and knowledge so as to enhance performance in their present roles.
- *Staff development*: an expansive initiative that focuses on worker progression and future performance, as opposed to immediate job roles.



- *Career planning*: a practical blueprint that allows staff members to determine their skills and interests. It also enables them to establish professional goals and formulate action plans towards their achievement.
- *Career development*: managing one's occupation within the organization or at the inter-organizational level.

### **Limits of Study**

The research will focus mainly on the impact of staff training program on the career path planning of employees. However, the study will be restricted due to the challenges posed by spatial, temporal and human boundaries. For example, the researcher will not be able to move freely to different geographical locations because of logistic constraints. Similarly, the time frame within which the study is to be conducted is inadequate owing to the complexity of the paper and the material research involved. Other obstacles also come in the form of financial constraints and the possibility of some respondents giving reasonable answers because of privacy concerns. Lastly, the researcher will have to work with a smaller study population due to lack of resources that makes it difficult to get a larger sample.

### **Determinants of the Study**

The researcher expects to encounter certain obstacles in the course of the study. For example, there is common challenge of indifference or apathy on the part of respondents that can significantly affect the accuracy and validity of the research. Essentially, the nature of some questions may make some respondents uncomfortable, which may prompt them not to cooperate with the researcher. The researcher also expects to face a scarcity of peer-reviewed academic resources to be used in the preparation of this paper.



## **Literature Review**

The objective of this research is to examine the impact of training programs on the career path planning of employees. This section of the paper entails a review of the past scholarly works on the topic/questions with a specific focus on the studies in the Arab countries and those in the foreign environment as it shall be discussed in the subsequent chapters. This section of the paper provides a critique of the existing body of research on the topic.

## **Studies in the Arab Environment**

One of the most recent studies on the subject of personnel learning programs was undertaken by Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013) where the authors sought to develop conceptual research on employee education. The scholars explored the structures and elements of personnel learning programs with a view to highlighting these findings. Consequently, the results indicated that such educational programs improved professional competency, job satisfaction as well as organizational performance (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). In another research by Amin et al. (2013), the authors were seeking to establish the impact of personnel training on the overall efficiency in terms of customer satisfaction within the organization. It was evident that numerous advantages ranged from the improvement in individual and team performance (Amin et al., 2013). The study involved multilevel and multidisciplinary strategies with a global perspective. It is, therefore, evident from these studies that organizations which invest a significant amount of their resources to empower its workforce stand to gain in several ways due to increased employee competency, which leads to efficiency, sustainability and ultimately profitability.



## **Studies in the Foreign Environment**

The existing literature on staff training is quite expansive as more scholars continue to explore the subject. For example, there are numerous researches works as well as meta-analytic reviews of staff training programs that continue to assume a multi-dimensional outlook which has shrouded the personal needs of workers in organizations. Staff training programs lead to improved work performance, as well as other benefits including the acquisition of new skills that are beneficial to company (Burke & McKeen, 2014). Essentially, the new skills lead to better performance at work as evident in a study conducted by Lau (2015). The author discovered that training programs at the workplace stimulated greater innovation while also improved the tacit abilities of workers (Lau, 2015). In this study, it was established that employee education contributes positively to their proficiency by changing the knowledge structures within the employees' mental models (Lau, 2015). In this regard, it is safe to assume that personnel educational initiatives not enhance procedural and declarative knowledge but also to improve the general strategic thinking.

Similarly, learning has been found to benefit workers and increase their capacity to perform tasks in a variety of environments and improve cultural competence in general (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2001). This study also reveals that training has the potential to improve the declarative knowledge, professional development planning, cooperative problem solving, communication and task coordination among others. Numerous studies have highlighted the impact of staff training on workers and the organization in general. According to their findings, there is a strong positive correlation between learning and different dimensions of efficiency and effectiveness (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2001). These elements of efficiency are manifested through human resource indicators, staff involvement as well as quality. The differences can also be felt in the company's bottom line through parameters such as sales volume.



In another study by Garcia, Cortes, Lajara, and Saez (2014) on the training policies of different organizations, the results indicated that initiatives created to develop human capital are directly related to the customer, worker and investor satisfaction. Another common advantage of staff training program comes in the form of social capital which is built through the constant interaction between members of staff (Aguinis, & Kraiger, 2009).

Similarly, Doeringer (2012) argues that training initiatives lead to significant improvements in the workforce quality which is the largest contributor to a country's gross domestic product GDP which is the element associated with the growth of the economy. In light of the apparent advantages of staff learning programs, it is incumbent on scholars to examine and present data on the impact of such initiatives on workers with a special emphasis on how it helps them become better planners. -

While the positive impacts of providing staff with education are well documented, it is the researcher's belief that training helps workers learn specific competencies that are instrumental in enhancing performance in their present roles, but also in the future engagements. This training is essential because it offers an employee insight into the skill gaps that need to be filled as well as how this can be done. Therefore, a decent staff education program is critical in the retention of workers and increasing profitability. As the competitive landscape gets ever more intense, the employee training programs have become vital. Ultimately, employing the finest talent is capital and labor intensive which warrants a review of methods used to train them.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Career planning is essentially a constant practical blueprint which enables a worker to define skillset or areas of interest, establish specific career objectives, and formulate action plans aimed at facilitating the attainment of such goals (Ebri, 2014). For this reason, professional planning is a continuous process that is also a summary of an employee's present skills or experiences.



The ultimate purpose of the career plan is to grow holistically and become a resourceful contributor to the organization's strategic goals. This requires a career development process where the worker creates job identity. The essence of educational programs can best be explained using human resources theories.

As noted by Foley and Lytle (2015), a theory refers to a methodical classification of interrelated doctrines and ideas that lead to a better understanding of phenomena. In this part of the paper, the models that will be discussed identify the relevant variables and their dimensions. The principles also link the causative factors to formulate hypotheses that can then be proved or disproved by the research findings. Consequently, the subsequent models offer an analysis of the career planning concept from different standpoints with a special emphasis on the variables and their respective measurements or operationalization. These concepts include the Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Concept Theory of Career Development, The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory as shall be discussed below.

### **Social Cognitive Career Theory**

The Social Cognitive Career philosophy (SCCT) is founded on the Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory and focuses primarily on two elements of academic performance (Bandura, 1997). These include the level of attained success or competency and the level of persistence in spite of the obstacles encountered. Accordingly, the theory postulates that performance of a complex activity requires one to be in possession of certain skills and knowledge along with some form of individual efficacy that enhances the translation of knowledge into prolific performances (Foley & Lytle, 2015). According to SCCT philosophy, an individual's self-efficacy belief system is affected by performance in past activities. Ultimately, this directly or indirectly impacts their present performance. Overall, one's previous performance, outcome expectations, self-efficacy as well as objectives collectively impact their execution of a given task (Foley & Lytle, 2015).



## **Performance Model**

This concept represents one of the few correlated models in the SCCT and is usually considered to be quite resourceful in explaining people's achievements regarding the goals set by others (Foley & Lytle, 2015). As a result, this philosophy focuses on the excellence of people's attainments and examines their persistence in sticking to their career plans and objectives. Consequently, there is a clear connection between a worker's previous performances, self-efficacy, and expectation of outcomes as well as objectives in dictating the outcomes of present activities (Foley & Lytle, 2015). In line with social cognitive career theory's perspective on human interaction, proponents recommend a loop of feedback between individual performance achievements and their subsequent course of action. Essentially, the types of objectives within this model are associated with the career goals that refer to a worker aspiration for in a given area of practice.

Out of the four information sources or knowledge experience, individual performance achievements yield the most considerable impact on the self-efficacy status. For that reason, outcome expectations can be defined as the self-confidence concerning the repercussions or results of executing a particular job (Foley & Lytle, 2015). On the other hand, personal goals mean an individual's desire to take part in the specific work-related task. Consequently, the Social Cognitive Career philosophy considers the formulation of a worker's professional plans based on his or her expectations and long-term interests. Overall, this model provides a basis upon which we can understand people's career choices and interests as described in the principle of efficacy (Foley & Lytle, 2015).



The table below shows the variables in the Social Cognitive Career Theory as well as its dimensions.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Dimension</b>
<b>The success of training program (dependent variable)</b>	<b>Test scores during and after the sessions</b>
<b>Past performance in learning activities (independent variable)</b>	<b>Test scores in past learning activities</b>
<b>Education Self-efficacy (independent variable)</b>	<b>General Self-Efficacy Scale</b>
<b>Outcome expectations of the worker (independent variable)</b>	Training Outcome Expectations scale (TOE), a 10-item dimension modified by researcher
<b>Goals of the worker (independent variable)</b>	<b>Using the S-M-A-R-T criteria</b>

### **Self-Concept Theory of Career Development**

This philosophy was coined in the 1990s when the author referred to the concept of career choice, development or planning as the process through which individuals not only create but also implement their self-concept (Swanson, & Fouad, 2014). In a nutshell, the theory posits that self-concept is caused by multifaceted interactions among several factors that may include personal encounters, physical and mental development, stimulation and environmental elements among others.



Using the founder's premise that self-concept philosophy is more or less a personal construct principle, majority of scholars have adopted a constructivist approach and claimed that the career construction process entails the creation and application of vocational self-concepts in different roles within the workplace (Swanson & Fouad, 2014). This theory suggests a life stage growth framework with different phases of exploration, development, maintenance, and disengagement (Swanson & Fouad, 2014). In every stage of this model, an individual must strive to successfully accomplish their vocational responsibilities that are expected from persons in that particular age bracket.

While the originator of **Self-Concept Theory of career development** theory initially had the stages and tasks arranged in a chronological manner, it was later decided that humans' cycle and recycle in the course of their lives as they embrace changes within themselves and at the work environments. Consequently, a thorough understanding of the chronological ages along with the relevant phases of career development is critical to a facilitator in determining the right activities and responses. The theory argues that to optimize self-fulfillment and gain social acceptance, individuals must negotiate with their respective environments in order to access the most viable alternatives (Swanson & Fouad, 2014). Accordingly, it is important to note that career planning or development involves compromises and negotiations where the individual has to be happy with his environment as opposed to being a direct process of implementing one's self-concept.

As a result, most of the theoretical elements of this philosophy have been found particularly desirable by global scholars and researchers in the fields of career guidance. Some of the most notable principles include developmental stages, vocational developmental tasks, life roles, as well as career maturity (Swanson & Fouad, 2014). While there is considerable work needed on this theory, its tenets will still continue to be instrumental in career planning throughout the world.



## **The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA)**

This principle of career planning and is founded on the personal divergence custom of vocational actions referred to as the person-environment correspondence theory, which perceives the choice and development of a career as a constant process of both accommodation and modification (Strauser, 2013). Essentially, Theory of Work Adjustment defines the relationship between individuals on the one hand, and their job environment on the other (Strauser, 2013). Like most other career expansion principles, this framework was formulated as the guiding structure for a course of study within the areas of vocational psychology where it continues to be applied to date. Over the years, TWA has contributed immensely to the creation of materials, tools and research monographs.

To put this issue into perspective, the points below offer a summary of the Theory of Work Adjustment and the common dimensions.

- Work is understood as the contact between a person and his job environment.
- The type of job environment makes it necessary that certain responsibilities are fulfilled, and that the worker applies the requisite skills in the completion of such tasks.
- In exchange for the work done, the individual must be duly rewarded or compensated for completing the task. Other expectations from the worker may be in the form of a pleasant environment that guarantees personal well-being and security.
- Both the individual worker and the job environment should constantly be in a position to satisfy each other's needs in order to sustain a mutual interaction.
- The extent to which the worker and the job environment meet each other's needs is referred to as correspondence.



- Work adjustment refers to the process through which individual and the organization are in a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Work adjustment is manifested through the employee's satisfaction with the work environment. It is also indicated by the worker's value proposition to the organization.
- The capacity to fulfill and be fulfilled at work lead to job tenure which is the ultimate gauge of work adjustment.
- Prediction of the tenure may be done from the correspondence of someone's job personality in relation to the job environment.
- Both work environments and personalities may be defined by the style and structure variables which can be tested on similar dimensions.

The materials and resources that can be accessed from Vocational Psychology Research are vital in measuring both work and personality environment and this increases the employer's capacity to analyze whether members of staff are happy or not.

### **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**

The final theory for this section is founded on the motivational research in which the author surveyed over 200 engineers and accountants via the critical incident approach to data collection (Strauser, 2013). Essentially, the survey instruments had two questions the first of which sought to establish the last time the respondents felt fulfilled at their jobs. In this respect, the interviewer was trying to establish what motivated workers to perform diligently, when they last felt extremely bad about their careers as well as what demoralized them. Eventually, Herzberg was able to tabulate his findings which were classified into motivator or job-satisfiers and hygiene factors.



Accordingly, the motivators were identified to include factors such as achievements, responsibility, the job itself and advancement (Strauser, 2013). On the contrary, hygiene factors constrain enthusiasm and increase the employees' general levels of dissatisfaction. These include contextual factors like administration, company policy, wages, supervision, interpersonal relation, as well as working conditions (Strauser, 2013). In this respect, this theory is the most ideal in the study of career planning as it helps the researcher gain an insight into the job satisfaction in a work environment



## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this research paper is to study the effect of training programs on career planning. Under the supposition that employees with the requisite training are likelier to be successful than the ones that do not, organizations have increasingly adopted employee educational programs for the dual purposes of improved productivity and employee development.

However, little is known about the positive effects of these programs when it comes to career path planning. Additionally, these training programs often lack a comprehensive system for staff development, with the majority of them being described as “haphazard and unsystematic at best”. In the absence of properly structured programs, employees will sometimes seek education themselves, but such training may not be compatible with the company’s goals.

The study, therefore, hypothesized that an organization that conducts staff training programs will be better able to plan out its career paths. The research faced limits in the form of spatial, human and temporal boundaries – restricted geographical movement, an inadequate timeframe and a small study population, as well as the possibility of falsified answers in the face of uncomfortable questions.

The theoretical framework of the study underlines the essential purpose of career planning as the holistic growth of employees into resourceful contributors to the organization’s goals; this necessitates a career development process where the worker creates job identity. The core of educational programs was explained by four theories.

The Social Cognitive Career philosophy (SCCT) suggests that one needs to possess certain skills and knowledge, as well as some individual persistence and positive outcome expectations in order to execute a difficult task well.



This theory can be used to examine the quality of people's attainments and their persistence in sticking to their career plans, drawing a link between the employee's previous performances, self-efficacy, the expectation of outcomes and career objectives to determine what effect training programs will have on their career paths.

The Self-Concept Theory of Career Development suggests a life stage growth framework with different phases of exploration, development, maintenance, and disengagement, with the individual striving to accomplish their responsibilities within every stage. Optimized self-fulfillment requires negotiation with the environment – for career development, individuals need to compromise to the point that they are happy with their environment instead of imposing their self-concept on it.

The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) sees career choice and development as a function of constant accommodation and modification, defining both the relationship between individuals and with their job environment. Work is a contract between an individual and a job environment that necessitates the fulfillment of certain responsibilities through the application of relevant skill, in exchange for due compensation. The individual worker and environment should mutually satisfy each other through a process called work adjustment which is manifested through the employee's value proposition and satisfaction, culminating in fulfillment.

Finally, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory classifies factors like achievements, responsibility, the job itself and advancement into the motivator category, and contextual factors like administration, company policy, wages, supervision, interpersonal relations and working conditions as hygiene factors. This theory is well suited to provide researchers with insight into job satisfaction in any given work environment.



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