



# The Role of Job Motivation in Faculty Members' Participation in Curriculum Development

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## Abstract

**Background:** Higher education researchers always need to analyze the factors that influence the faculty members' participation in curriculum development.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of faculty members' job motivation in their participation in academic curriculum development.

**Methods:** This was a cross-sectional descriptive-analytical study. The statistical population of the study consisted of all faculty members of Islamic Azad University, Kerman branch (213 faculty members), of whom 137 subjects were selected by simple random sampling. Data were collected using Hackman and Oldham job motivation scale and academic planning questionnaire by Zeinaddiny-Meymand. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression analysis using SPSS software.

**Results:** Job motivation and its components played an important role in the role of faculty members for curriculum development as "active planning". Task significance ( $r = 0.520$ ) followed by skill variety ( $r = 0.490$ ), task identity ( $r = 0.330$ ), job feedback ( $r = 0.280$ ), and autonomy ( $r = 0.164$ ) were effective, respectively.

**Conclusions:** Considering the importance of faculty members' job motivation for their active role in curriculum development, it is necessary to provide a good motivational system in higher education and universities to promote their attitudes toward understanding the significance and identity of their jobs. In addition to that, a suitable motivational system is essential to promote and diversify multiple specialized professional skills and to provide appropriate job feedback as well as securing the autonomy of faculty members.

**Keywords:** Job Motivation, Curriculum, Faculty Members

## 1. Background

One of the most important issues considered by the higher education system officials is to pay attention to critical responsibility of the academic staff of the universities through scientific and principled curriculum development. Providing the advancement of community by informing students about themselves and their surroundings is a major mission of higher education. In this regard, there are certain components that should be considered by university faculty members in the academic curriculum development process as the core of the educational system.

These may include stimulating students to cultivate and express their latent delicacy and desire for growth and development, equipping students for specialized job, un-

derstanding science and expanding the science in favor of economics and society and the revival of a main role in the formation of a democratic, civilized and thoughtful society (1). The main task of faculty members is research, teaching and service to achieve the important mission of the higher education system (2).

Faculty members are an important factor in curriculum development. They design and engineer courses, based on which develop their teaching. In general, regarding academic curriculum, they carefully consider important elements of the curriculum, including selecting valuable scientific goals, choosing appropriate ways to achieve the goals and also selection of appropriate evaluation methods to assess the extent to which the goals are met (3). Many researches emphasize the important role of faculty members in curriculum planning, because of

the awareness of students' learning needs and interests in a real and operational manner as well as the necessity to learn appropriate and effective teaching methods (4). Faculty members are important contributors to the University Curriculum Council, because of their theoretical and empirical knowledge of the factors that influence curriculum planning and in many cases, they design and teach useful curricula (3). According to research results, one of the reasons for the importance of faculty members in curriculum planning is that they identify many of the actual needs of the classroom and students and play an important role in reflecting it on higher decision-making authorities. Reflecting the actual needs and information of students and the surrounding community to include them into the curricula based on the scientific principles and criteria have made faculty members as the major factor for the curriculum planning and curriculum engineering process, production, implementation, and evaluation (5, 6).

Studying and analysis of the effective factors in faculty members' curriculum participation and production are of great importance, and motivational (internal and external) factors are one of the most important factors (3, 6). Aghdasi in his study indicated that the lack of motivation of faculty members to participate in curriculum development directly affects their performance (7). Zeinoddiny-Meymand identified motivational factors as one of the four factors influencing faculty members' participation in academic curriculum development (1). Momeni-Mahmouei also emphasized the role of motivation in the curriculum development of faculty members and found it necessary to have a scientific spirit, creativity and academic freedom (8). Helton identified intrinsic motivational factors (personal and technical) and extrinsic motivational factors (professional and organizational) as factors influencing the utilization of diverse resources in curricula development by faculty members (6). The following factors have found to affect job motivation of faculty members: self-esteem, job satisfaction and educational system environment, organizational commitment, a sense of responsibility and independence at work, of financial and moral support, benefits, a reward and promotion system, gratitude and appreciation of services and also a teamwork culture.

People can perform well in their jobs and have a good job performance when they are qualified and motivated to perform well (9, 10). Therefore, it is necessary to make accurate and systematic planning in order to create, maintain and increase the motivation of employees to promote organizational productivity. These plans require an in-depth study and prioritization of factors that influence the promotion of human resource motivation (11). Based on the theoretical foundations, the individual characteristics, job nature, organizational atmosphere and the surrounding

environment can be considered as effective factors in providing a good motivational system (12).

The motivation of individuals in organizations has special dynamic and complexities and is influenced by different conditions and factors. For this reason, different theories and models have been developed to explain and predict motivation in organizations. In this study, Hackman and Oldham's job motivation model was investigated. According to this framework, job motivation consists of five dimensions: "skills diversity, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback" (13).

The importance and role of job motivation and its five important components in academic curriculum planning of faculty members and, subsequently, the main and important elements of the curriculum should be considered. Based on the three basic stages of specialized curriculum science, specific elements and components, including educational need assessment, choosing educational goals, choosing a proper content, choosing the method of organizing the content, choosing the method of presenting content, choosing and adopting the time of presentation, choosing and using technology and choosing evaluation method have been discussed (1, 14). The process of curriculum planning is a systematic and purposeful process that requires decision-making on each of these elements, which requires the necessary motivation alongside professional and technical competence (15). Zeinaddiny-Meymand in his research aimed at examining the role of faculty members in curriculum development concluded that the current role of faculty members differs from their expected role in curriculum development. In the current period, the educator feels that he not allowed performing his role and he is asked to play his role based on the headlines and the approved framework, whereas faculty members are expected to play a more active role and participate in curriculum development with regard to the three sources of basic and specialized community needs, student conditions and the specialized and modern knowledge (16). A spectrum of faculty members is essential in faculty members' curriculum development, ranging from a passive executer based on the academic headlines to the executer tending to perform the approved academic curriculum and considered headlines, an active and independent executer based on the needs of the community, students and modern specialized knowledge.

The important role of faculty members' curriculum development is critical for the survival and maintenance of the educational system (17). Zeinaddiny-Meymand et al. concluded that female faculty members had more job motivation than men, and on the other hand, the motivation of nursing faculty members was higher than other faculties (18).

Based on the mentioned issues, the important question is “what role does the faculty members’ career motivation play in their role in curriculum development and how does it affect the considered community (Kerman Islamic Azad University)”

## 2. Methods

This study was a cross-sectional descriptive-analytical research. The statistical population of the study consisted of all faculty members of Islamic Azad University, Kerman branch (213 students) and the sample size was estimated 137 subjects using Cochran formula (19).

In this study, simple random sampling method was used; so that the samples were selected based on the list of faculty members introduced by the Employment Department and a code assigned for each subject and also using the random number table. The questionnaires were provided to the faculty members by referring to the relevant faculties. Inclusion criteria included full-time faculty members, at least one year (two semesters) of work experience, and consent to participate in the study. Faculty members with less than one year old of work experience or those who were not full time faculty members were excluded.

Data collection tools were Hackman and Oldham job motivation questionnaire and academic planning questionnaire by Zeinaddiny-Meymand. The Hackman and Oldham questionnaire is based on the translated questionnaire by the job diagnostic survey (JDS) of America and is designed to measure the level of job motivation of employees for all job types. It includes 15 four-choice questions (very much, much, low, and very low) assessing what are the features of a motivational job? The questionnaire identifies five key characteristics, including “skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback” that can be used to describe a job’s potential motivation.

The components of the job motivation questionnaire included skills diversity (questions 1, 6 and 11), task identity (questions 2, 7 and 12), task significance (questions 3, 8 and 13), autonomy (questions 4, 9 and 14) and feedback (questions 5, 10 and 15).

The minimum and maximum scores for the Hackman and Oldham questionnaire were 15 and 60, respectively. Its reliability in a study by Pasha Sharifi et al. was reported 0.72 using the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (20).

In the university curriculum planning questionnaire by Zeinaddiny-Meymand, four roles, including “an executor, an executor tending to be a planner and observe headlines, an active executor, and an independent planner (student-centered)” are considered for professors.

Being an active executor, planning is based on three areas, including the needs of the community, the need of

the student, and the need for global specialized knowledge and issues. It should be noted that in order to investigate the role of faculty members in curriculum planning, 9 components (subscales) of curriculum planning must be examined. In fact, curriculum planning consists of 9 components (steps) or subscales. In other words, the purpose was to determine which role each faculty member would select from the mentioned roles (an executor, an executor tending to be a planner and observe headlines, an active executor, and an independent planner) and the role of faculty members in each component or factor and subscale is examined; so that by examining 9 subscales or components, the role of members in curriculum planning is identified. Therefore, the university curriculum planning questionnaire consisted of 36 items and assesses 9 factors and components of curriculum development (need assessment, choosing educational goals, choosing a proper content, choosing the method of organizing the content, choosing the method of presenting content, choosing and adopting the time of presentation, deciding and choosing the place of presenting, selecting and using technology, and choosing evaluation method). For each component, four items indicating the considered roles are considered.

The components of university curriculum development questionnaire for faculty members include choosing educational goals (questions 1 to 4), need assessment (questions 5 to 8), choosing a proper content (questions 9 to 12), choosing the method of organizing the content (questions 13 to 16), choosing the method of presenting content (questions 17 to 20), selecting and using technology (questions 21 to 24), choosing and adopting the time of presentation (questions 25 to 28), deciding and choosing the place of presenting (questions 29 to 32) and the choosing a proper method for evaluation of content was selected (questions 33 to 36).

The validity of the university curriculum development questionnaire for faculty members based on the Sigma counting methodology and according to the opinions of five experts was 0.80 and its reliability was 0.85 using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (16). It should be noted that the questionnaire is scored on a 5-point Likert scale from completely appropriate (5 points) to completely inappropriate (1 point) and its minimum and maximum points were 9 and 36, respectively.

Data were analyzed using Pearson’s correlation coefficient and regression analysis after approval of the necessary assumptions by SPSS software version 21 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY).

### 3. Results

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the faculty members participating in the study. Accordingly, most of the participants were male and were associate professors.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Variable	No. (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	95 (69.4)
Male	42 (30.6)
<b>Work experience, y</b>	
< 5	6 (4.2)
5 - 10	29 (21.5)
11 - 15	49 (36.1)
16 - 20	43 (31.3)
> 21	10 (6.9)
<b>Academic rank</b>	
University instructor	35 (25.7)
Assistant professor	99 (72.2)
Associate professor and professor	3 (2.1)
<b>Major</b>	
Nursing and midwifery	31 (22.9)
Engineering	19 (13.9)
Basic sciences	42 (30.6)
Humanities	45 (32.6)

In the present study, job motivation was considered as a predictor and curriculum development as a criterion variable. Job motivation score was  $3.54 \pm 0.91$  and curriculum development score was  $3.87 \pm 0.82$ .

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to ensure the normality of data and its significance level was more than 5% for all data, indicating the normal distribution of data.

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the relationship between job motivation and its components with curriculum development. Accordingly, a positive and significant correlation coefficient was observed between job motivation and participation in curriculum planning, which showed that by increasing job motivation, the faculty members' participation in curriculum development also increased (Table 2). Also, job motivation components (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) were effective in faculty members' participation in the curriculum development actively and the most effective component was skill variety.

**Table 2.** Correlation Between Job Motivation and Its Components with Faculty Members' Participation in the Curriculum Development (137 Persons)

Predictive Variables and Their Components	Participation in the Curriculum Development	P Value
Job motivation	0.520	< 0.001
Skill variety	0.492	< 0.001
Task identity	0.330	< 0.001
Task significance	0.425	< 0.001
Autonomy	0.164	0.055
Job Feedback	0.279	< 0.001

Durbin-Watson test was used to check autocorrelation (for using regression). These statistics ranged from 1.5 to 2.5, indicating no correlation between residuals.

The standardized coefficient of job motivation was 0.520, which was significant at the level of 0.05 ( $P < 0.001$ ; Table 3). Therefore, job motivation was effective in participation of faculty members of Islamic Azad University, Kerman branch in curriculum development. Other data in the table also indicate the role of job motivation components in participation of the faculty members in curriculum development. The most effective component was skill variety, followed by task significance, task identity, feedback and autonomy ( $P < 0.001$ ).

### 4. Discussion

The results of the present study showed that faculty members' job motivation is one of the factors influencing their role in academic curriculum development and it motivates the faculty members to be an active planner. In curriculum development process, an active role in the curriculum development process considers the conditions and needs of students, their strengths and weaknesses, the needs and conditions of the society, expectations and values needed. On the other hand, scientific and ethical anomalies and trying to reduce them and, more importantly, paying close attention to the current level of global modern science and trying to become more specialized and using these concerns, it plans the curriculum and executes and evaluates it. Therefore, all these concerns will be purposeful and continues, when the job motivation is at the desired level and always strengthens the faculty member. It is notable that, other studies has shown that the current conditions of the universities make the faculty members as an executor (not a planner) in all of the curriculum components and also they are committed to the approved program and the headlines. However, in their desired situation, they tend to be an active planner, based

**Table 3.** Results of Regression Analysis for Predicting Participation in the Curriculum Development Using Job Motivation and Its Dimensions

Predictive Variables	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	P Value
Constant	1.249	0.210	-	5.273	< 0.001
Job motivation	0.581	0.054	0.520	10.741	< 0.001
Skill variety	0.559	0.057	0.490	6.410	< 0.001
Task identity	0.375	0.066	0.330	5.649	< 0.001
Task significance	0.590	0.075	0.425	7.860	< 0.001
Autonomy	0.084	0.032	0.164	2.630	0.009
Job feedback	0.267	0.058	0.279	4.590	< 0.001

on three important areas of curriculum development (student's needs and conditions, community's needs and the specialized modern knowledge) (21, 22).

Another important point is that curriculum development is done in a process and is also systematic, which starts with a needs assessment (a type of needs assessment) in one step and will continue with choosing valuable goals, choosing the appropriate written and non-written content, organizing and ordering the content, choosing and adopting the time of presentation (start time, presentation time and lesson value), choosing the place of presenting, and the choosing and using technology. It ends with choosing the appropriate evaluation method and will begin after implementation and reevaluation of the needs assessment (it can be the continuation of the final evaluation process of the previous stage) (1, 16, 21, 22).

Accordingly, job motivation is the primary need of every step of the decision making process in the active curriculum development by the faculty members. The lack of job motivation for any reason can result in failed university curriculum development. Aghdasi in his study, showed the lack of job motivation in faculty members as one of the factors that directly influences their participation in curriculum development (7).

Considering a significant relationship between each of the key components of job motivation (task significance, skill variety, task identity, feedback, and autonomy) and the active curriculum planning by faculty members, and also the fact that each component is effective in predicting the role of active curriculum planning (13), by careful consideration of each component and attempting to prepare an appropriate context to develop and enhance the level of these components, job motivation can be influenced leading to providing the basis for a more active curriculum development. The results of other studies on the factors affecting the job motivation of faculty members refer to the factors associated with each of the five components of job motivation.

Autonomy is one of the important issues that along

with feedback play a key and central role in the motivating potential score (MPS) formula. So, according to the formula, by reaching "independence" to the least or zero score, the job motivation will be reached to zero (it is also true for feedback) (23). Momeni-Mahmouei cited the "academic freedom" of faculty members as one of the important motivational factors (8). Other effective factors found in the results of other studies are: "confidence, job satisfaction, sense of responsibility, rewards and welfare facilities, having a scientific spirit, creativity, funding, acknowledgments and appreciation, specific plans, encouraging culture of the work, and organizational atmosphere" (6-8, 12, 18, 23, 24).

#### 4.1. Conclusions

Studying the main hypotheses of the present study, aiming at enhancing the quality of the active curriculum development by faculty members, based on the promotion of their job motivation through the important factors in job motivation, yielded the following results.

The results of the main research hypothesis showed that job motivation plays an important role in faculty members' active curriculum development. Accordingly, it is essential for higher education system officials to provide an effective and impressive support system to enhance the motivation of faculty members.

Based on the results of the present study, job motivation components have an important role in predicting faculty members' participation in active curriculum development. These components based on their importance included "task significance, skill variety, task identity, feedback, and autonomy."

#### 4.2. Suggestions

It is suggested to continuously evaluate the level of job motivation of faculty members based on its important components in order to find the affecting factors and appropriate measures as well as the level of job motivation

in candidates for faculty members for more scientific and informed selection.

In order to provide an appropriate context for officials and senior directors to promote their beliefs about the importance of faculty members in the university and society and also create a positive attitude toward this job among the faculty members, it is suggested to conduct consultative meetings, appropriate courses and workshops to promote the attitude and belief of faculty members and the importance of their role in the higher education system and also to meet the higher education's goal.

Considering the important role of "skill variety" as an influential component on the role of faculty members, it is suggested that appropriate conditions be provided for promoting and diversifying their professional skills (including teaching skills, educational management, educational evaluation, curriculum development, research methodology, etc.). Therefore, providing a support system to enhance the qualitative and quantitative skills of faculty members in technical, specialized, personal, and professional fields seems necessary.

Given the importance of "task identity", it is suggested that faculty members believe in their professional role regarding the core mission of the university and higher education in order to form a growing, civilized and thoughtful society. In this regard, emphasis on the role of senior and prominent faculty members in identifying this job at national and international level through modeling and model-making, and subsequently promoting positive thinking in the minds of other faculty members are suggested.

Providing a scientific and specialized evaluation system to advice on the results of faculty members' performance in their role demonstrates the importance of the role of the "feedback" component.

Given the important role of the "job autonomy", it is necessary to provide favorable intra organizational and extra organizational conditions for appropriate delegation of authority in different cases based on the academic, professional and personal level of the faculty members in their work. In this regard, moving from centralized curricula to semi-centralized or decentralized curricula is suggested.

#### 4.3. Limitations

One of the limitations of this study (controllable by the researcher) was that it was conducted among the faculty members of Islamic Azad University, Kerman branch and the faculty members with at least one year of work experience were selected. Only full-time (not part-time) faculty members were included.

Inability to conduct an interview or observation of faculty members' role in curriculum development and inabil-

ity of faculty members to evaluate curriculum and educational planning based on the results of the university Supervision and Evaluation Office were among the limitations uncontrollable by the researcher.

#### 4.4. Implication of the Study

The purpose of this study was to improve the professional and specialized performance of faculty members considering one of the factors affecting performance (job motivation). It is important to know and understand the importance and prominence of the faculty member's job and also understand which factors are effective on their job motivation. Understanding their conditions, position and needs should not be overlooked. Curricula are considered as the core of the higher education system, and faculty members are planners and are those who reform the curriculum truly. Conducting the present research and relevant studies is urgently and continuously needed for the higher education to accomplish its valuable national and global mission. The results of the present study showed that the proper participation of faculty members in curriculum development as their most important and essential role requires the provision of an optimal motivational system; so that by increasing the level of job motivation components (task significance, task identity, skill variety, job feedback, job autonomy), it can be expected that faculty members will perform well as independent and active planners.

#### Supplementary Material

Supplementary material(s) is available [here](#) [To read supplementary materials, please refer to the journal website and open PDF/HTML].

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#### Footnotes

**Conflict of Interests:** None declared by the authors.

**Ethical Approval:** The present study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Kerman University of Medical Sciences (approval code: IR.KMU.REC.1397.04).

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