

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG
LAWYER ASSISTANTS IN ZHONGYUAN LAW FIRM,
GUANGDONG, CHINA



Master Thesis

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Acknowledgements

This paper is my final assignment in University of Twente, and it would not have been possible without the support of many people. I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. M.J. van Riemsdijk and Dr. L. Ren, who were abundantly helpful, and without their guidance, support and assistance, this study would not have been successful.

I also want to thank my external supervisor Ms. Liang Guo Ying, she was very patient all the time to help and provide me with information during the interviews. I would like to thank my sister Qianmei Li too, she helped me search materials on my study topic and encouraged me when I felt frustrated in the research.

I offer my regards and blessings to all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the thesis. Special thanks to Professor. Looise, he helped me solve the problems when I registered my colloquium in the BOZ. I would like to thank my friend Sheng-he Chen too, he gave me a lot of good advice and encouragement.

Lastly, I want to express my love and gratitude to my beloved husband Bas-Wim Versluis and my families both in China and in the Netherlands for their understanding and unconditionally support through the duration of my studies.

Qianqin Li

Enschede

27 of August, 2012

Abstract

This research project firstly aims to find out the key elements that measure the job satisfaction of the lawyer assistants in Zhongyuan Law Firm, China, and then it explores, by using these key elements, to what extent the lawyer assistants feel satisfied with their job.

The qualitative research method was used in this work, and the qualitative data analysis was used to give an elaboration on the participants' job satisfaction. Ten open-ended questions were designed for the interviews. There were 23 lawyer assistants who have been interviewed. The interview outcome was compared with the job satisfaction theory. In the end, based on the research results, recommendations are given as for what kind of work redesign could be done if the management wants to retain their potential staff and to decrease the turnover rate by enhancing the lawyer assistants' sense of job satisfaction.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, section 1.1 gives a brief description of the company which is the principal in this research. In section 1.2 the background and purpose of the current study is given. Section 1.3 presents the main structure of the research.

1.1 Guangdong Zhongyuan Law Firm

Guangdong Zhongyuan Law firm is the leading commercial law firm in Zhongshan city and one of the few local law firms that are able to provide a full range of services. Founded in Zhongshan city, Guangdong province in 1994, Zhongyuan is one of the first domestic partnership law firms in Zhongshan. Its business covers from civil action, commerce, finance, to real estate, intellectual property rights etc. “During these 17 years development” said Ms. Liang, the administrative director in the law firm, “Zhongyuan Law firm could provide clients the highest quality of legal service and has made itself as one of the law firm forerunners.”

Consistent with the booming economy in China, Zhongyuan Law Firm grew very fast during the last decade, it’s now a multi-skill legal service organization with their main office located in Zhongshan, and a branch office located in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong. There are about 30 lawyers and 50 other employees including the lawyer assistants, accountants, administrative personnel, and the part-time legal freelance consultants.

However, according to the report *The progress of China’s human rights* in 2008, till then there are more than 10,000 law firms in China, the competition between them is very fierce. And this competition is not just reflected on grabbing business, but also the manpower resource. Lawyer assistants are one of the major manpower resources to a law firm, as lots of legal service work is handled by them. There is a saying describing the lawyer assistants as “a person wearing a suit but doing the hardest work”.

For the current business in the legal service field, Zhongyuan now is not seriously lacking in work force, but the total number of lawyer assistants was actually reduced from 30 to 25 during the past 12 months. The turnover rate is almost up to 17%, and “due to the oversupply

in the legal service labour market in recent years, the job-hopping phenomenon of the lawyer assistants becomes more and more frequent. ” said Ms. Liang. In order to compete with other law firms and keep their business running successfully, Zhongyuan wants to retain the potential talents who are hard working and will probably become a promising future lawyer to work for them. Lawyers and lawyer assistants are the main work force in the law firm, but compared to the lawyers, the cost on hiring and keeping the promising young lawyer assistants are much lower. That’s because law firms usually adopt the commission pay system, it is the lawyers who take over the cases and have the clients, they have the right to obtain the majority of the emoluments and the lawyer assistants are paid by a modest part of it.

As mentioned above, to speak in the position of Zhongyuan, lawyer assistants are the cheaper human resource but playing an important role inside the law firm. According to the information provided by Ms. Liang, if the turnover rate of the lawyer assistants keep on growing, the firm will face an big amount of extra cost on recruitment and training. In order to avoid this, it’s necessary to keep the total number of work force stable. Moreover, in the long run, some of the lawyer assistants may develop themselves and become independent lawyers one day, it’s advisable to have their high commitment for the law firm now to save the re-hiring and re-training cost for the replacement. So, reducing the turnover rate could enable stable and quality work force in the future.

1.2 Background and purpose of the study

Employees are one of the most important determinants and leading factors that determine the success of an organization in a competitive environment. This is especially true for service organizations that rely heavily on their good behaved employees to provide friendly and courteous services to their customers in this competitive environment. (Shah, Memon & Laghari, 2011). Previous researches emphasized the importance of job satisfaction for the employees. In order for an organization to be successful, it must continuously ensure the satisfaction of their employees (Berry, 1997). Organization with more satisfied employees tends to be more effective (Robbins & Judge, 2007). And following the study by Seta et al. (2000), the lower an individual’s level of satisfaction with his or her job, the more likely that person is seeking for other working opportunities. In other words, to lower the turnover rates,

it's important to increase employees' job satisfaction. To do this, first of all, management of an organization has to know clearly whether their employees are satisfied with their job or not and how much is the extent of their job satisfaction.

This study is focused on the lawyer assistants in Guangdong Zhongyuan Law Firm, the aim is to find out the key elements that could measure the job satisfaction of the lawyer assistants, and regarding to the current level of their job satisfaction, the most relevant variables for it will be found out, then some insights will be given into the work design of the law firm. The research finding might guide the management of the law firm to seek related solutions for reducing the turnover rate and retaining their valued staff.

The purpose of this research can be achieved by means of answering the following two central questions:

- What is the level of the lawyer assistants' job satisfaction in Zhongyuan Law Firm, and what might be the major causes of that level?
- Regarding the level of the lawyer assistants' job satisfaction, what possible measures could be proposed to the management of Zhongyuan Law Firm to increase job satisfaction of this group of employees?

1.3 Structure of the research paper

In chapter two, this report focuses on conceptual issues on what characteristics predict the job satisfaction of the lawyer assistants through review of the relevant literature, which provides a general understanding on the theoretical knowledge. Chapter three is about the methodology used in the following chapters, how the qualitative research was conducted, and gives an understanding of the situation of the participants. Chapter four includes the data collected from the research, and analyzes them by combining information gathered through interviews using the theoretical concepts from chapter two. In chapter 5, based on the research findings, recommendations for the management will be proposed. In the end, some discussions including limitations in this study will be also put forward for possible future researches.

Chapter 2: Theory

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to the current study. Section 2.1 gives an introduction into job satisfaction, the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In section 2.2 previous theories related to job satisfaction and variables which could predict job satisfaction will be elaborated. Afterwards, the variables that will be used in this study to measure job satisfaction will be defined in section 2.3. Finally, research questions will be formulated in section 2.4.

2.1 Job satisfaction and its impact on turnover

Lots of previous researchers have defined “job satisfaction”, Locke (1976, p. 1304) stated it as “pleasurable or positive personal state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job experiences”. Schultz & Schultz, (1994) further defined it as the positive and negative feelings and attitudes the people hold about the job. Thus, job satisfaction could be understood as an emotional state of mind that reflects an affective reaction to the job and work situation” (Dipboye *et al.*, 1994; Farkas & Tetric, 1989; Lance, 1991, Russel & Price, 1988).

Previous researches have stated that job satisfaction is related to individual reactions to the work environment (Abdel-Halim, 1984; Rasch & Harrell, 1990). Schroeder, Harrel and Stahl (1984) pointed out that literature review on job satisfaction and turnover in the past has shown that an individual who experiences relatively low job satisfaction has an intention to change their jobs. According to Porter and Steers (1982), job satisfaction is consistently and negatively related to turnover. That means employees who are dissatisfied with their job are more likely to quit than those who are satisfied. Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2000) also stated that job satisfaction can affect turnover or decision by worker to terminate their employment. And again similarly, the study of Seta *et al.* (2000) also reported that the lower an individual’s level of satisfaction with his or her job, the more likely that person is seeking

for other working opportunities. Thus, if an employee wants to stay working in one company or not, is largely dependent on how much he feels satisfied from his job.

2.2 Theories and variables related to job satisfaction

Diverse job dimensions are related to job satisfaction According to Locke's report in 1976, it can be classified as event and agents. For instance, the work itself, rewards, the context of work, co-workers etc. all could describe most of the predictor variables in job satisfaction.

Among the previous researches, Motivation Theory is most known as the theory that described job satisfaction. In 1959, Frederick Herzberg developed the Two-factors Theory (Figure 2.1), which is one of the renowned motivational theories. He theorized that employees' job satisfaction depended on two sets of factors, which were hygiene issue and motivator issue.



Figure 2.1 Two-factors theory model

Source: <https://wikispaces.psu.edu/display/PSYCH484/10.+Job+Design>

Referring to this theory, satisfaction can only exist if there are motivating factors (i.e. achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth.), as positive satisfaction arises from intrinsic conditions of the job itself; Hygiene factors (i.e. company policy, supervision, relationship with boss, work conditions, salary, relationship with peers.) are extrinsic to the work itself and do not give positive satisfaction, though dissatisfaction

results from their absence. Essentially, hygiene factors are needed to ensure an employee is not dissatisfied. Motivation factors are needed to motivate an employee to higher performance. That is to say, “what makes people happy on the job and motivates them are the job content factors (motivators)” (Herzberg 1987). Although the two factors theory is widely used, it has faced criticism for being too dependent on a particular methodology and by restricting its categorisation to satisfiers and dissatisfiers (McKenna, 1987; Alzaidi, 2003). Besides, the theory does not consider individual differences, conversely predicting all employees will react in an identical manner to changes in motivating/hygiene factors. Furthermore, the model has been criticized in that it does not specify how motivating/hygiene factors are to be measured. (Hackman & Oldman, 1976).

A primary influence on job satisfaction is the application of job design, which aims to enhance job satisfaction. As an extension of the Two-factor theory, Hackman and Oldman (1976) postulated the Job Characteristics Model (Figure 2.2) which specified the five core job dimensions could influence and predict job satisfaction.

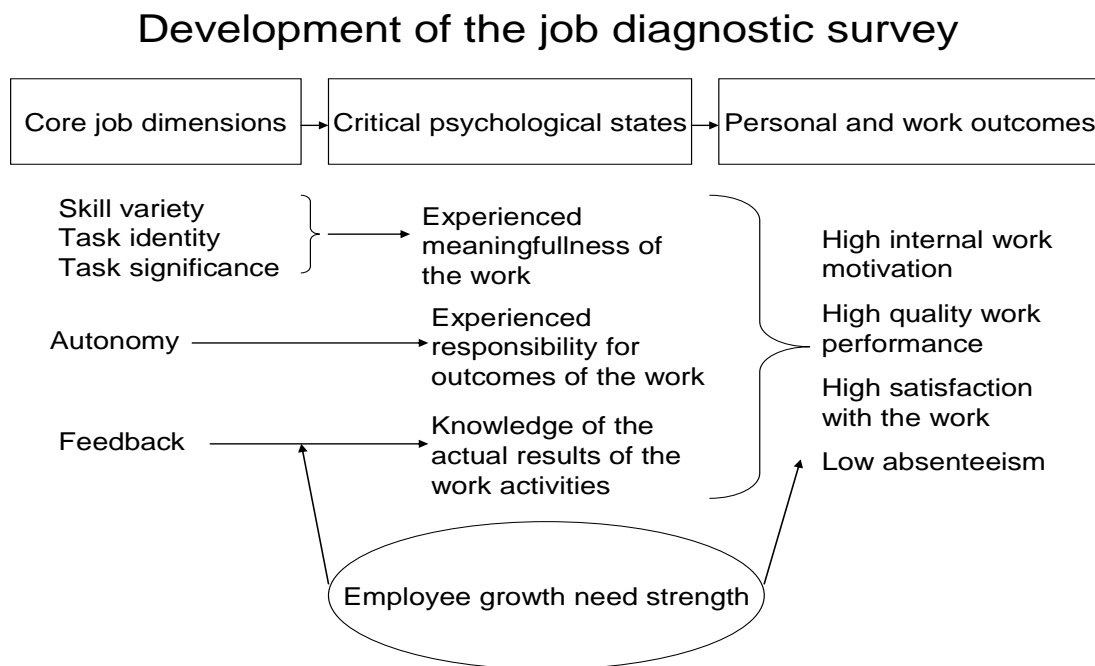


Figure 2.2 Job Characteristics Model
Source: Hackman and Oldham (1975, p161)

Hackman and Oldman (1976) stated “ the theory proposes that these critical psychological states are created by the presence of five ‘core’ job dimensions. Experienced meaningfulness of the work is enhanced primarily by three of the core dimensions: skill variety, task identity, and task significance. Experienced responsibility for work outcome is increased when a job has high autonomy. Knowledge of results is increased when a job is high on feedback.”

However, cited from the study of van Delden (2008), “ Later research has criticized this assumption, the research of James and Jones (1980) showed that these three psychological states are not mediating the proposed relationship between the core job dimensions and the outcome variable job satisfaction.”

Besides, Parker, Wall & Cordery (2001) pointed out the job diagnostic survey “ has focused on a narrow set of motivational job characteristics. This is problematic because numerous other work characteristics have been ignored.” For instance, the collective effects of the core job characteristics on affective responses (satisfaction and motivation) have been largely supported, but those for behaviour (i.e. work performance, turnover and absence) less consistently so. (Parker, Wall & Cordery, 2001; Parker & Wall, 1998).

With a more comprehensive measure, Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) created the work design questionnaire which “incorporates ideas from all work design perspectives, explicitly recognizing the costs and benefits of each.” And in the light of Morgeson and Humphrey (2006), there are four kinds of characteristics which could predict work satisfaction, they are task characteristics, knowledge characteristics, social characteristics, and contextual characteristics respectively.

2.2.1 Task Characteristics

According to Morgeson and Humphrey (2006), “ Task characteristics are primarily concerned with how the work itself is accomplished and the range and nature of tasks associated with a particular job.” It comprises the following five items.

Autonomy

Hackman & Oldham, (1975) defined autonomy as “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the employee in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out. ” Autonomy can be conceptualized as *work scheduling autonomy* (i.e., the freedom to control the scheduling and timing of work) and *work methods autonomy* (i.e., the freedom to control which methods and procedures are utilized). (Jackson et al., 1993; Morgeson et al., 2007) Additional research has suggested that *decision-making autonomy* (i.e., the freedom to make decisions at work) is also an important component of autonomy (Karasek et al., 1998; Morgeson et al., 2007). It has been found that the degree of autonomy is part of the construct of job satisfaction. (Armstrong,1977). And a Eurofound study "Measuring Job Satisfaction in Surveys" found that the degree of perceived workforce autonomy is often the most important and positive predictor of job satisfaction. (http://www.ehow.com/info_12107936_effects-autonomy-job-satisfaction.html)

Task Variety

Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) defined task variety as “the degree to which a job requires employees to perform a wide range of tasks on the job.” Rachid Zeffane (1994) examined that greater job variety tends to enhance job satisfaction. That is, if employees perceive positive performance, they may be more likely to exhibit positive attitudes and therefore experience satisfaction with their jobs.

Task Significance

Task significance reflects “the degree to which a job influences the lives or work of others, whether inside or outside the organization. ”(Hackman & Oldham, 1975). An employee's knowledge of other people's dependence on the work he or she is doing is an important factor in his or her job satisfaction. And “by providing feedback based on task significance, one can see how their performance can positively impact the organization and its stakeholders.” (Grant, 2008).

Task Identity

Sim et al., 1976 defined task identity as “the degree to which a job involves a whole piece of work, the result of which can be easily identified.” In other words, task identity is the visible outcome of completing a task from start to end. Task identity is an important component of job satisfaction.

Feedback from Job

Feedback from the jobs reflects “the degree to which the job provides direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance.” (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). That is, information that tells employees how well they are performing. It can come directly from the job (task feedback) or verbally from someone else. Feedback about job performance is important for organizations and the people who work in them, as employees who receive constructive feedback tend to have higher job satisfaction, better understanding of job requirements, and greater job performance.

2.2.2 Knowledge Characteristics

Following Morgeson and Humphrey (2006), “knowledge characteristics reflect the kinds of knowledge, skill, and ability demands that are placed on an individual as a function of which is done on the job.” There are five types of knowledge characteristics according to Morgeson and Humphrey (2006).

Job Complexity

Job complexity here is defined by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) as a positive aspect, which refers to “the extent to which the tasks on a job are complex and difficult to perform”, but as it requires the use of various high-level skills, employees who take on these complex tasks shall feel more challenged and are more likely to have positive motivational outcomes like higher job satisfaction.

Information Processing

Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) deemed “the amount of information processing needed at work reflects the degree to which a job requires attending to and processing data or other information. Similar to job complexity, Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) stated higher level of information processing requires higher cognitive skills which are a characteristic of a motivational approach following Campion (1989).

Problem Solving

Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) cited from Jackson, Wall, Martin & David, 1993 and Wall et al., 1995 that “ problem solving reflects the degree to which a job requires unique ideas or

solutions and reflects the more active cognitive processing requirements of a job.” Problem solving is arguably a primary vehicle for learning in organizations; individuals may develop a better understanding of their environment by recognizing, exploring and resolving problems and opportunities (Huber, 1991; Gray, 2001). Thus, it requires creativity and brings challenges.

Skill Variety

Hackman & Oldham, (1975) defined skill variety as “the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involves the use of a number of different skills and talents of the employee.” Greater skill variety may foster greater meaning in the work because it allows employees to express more aspects of their personality in their work. It may also increase meaning because it reduces boredom. So, Jobs that involve the performance of a number of different work activities are likely to be more interesting and enjoyable to perform (Sim, Szilagyi, & Keller, 1976).

Specialization

Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) defined specialization as “the extent to which a job involves performing specialized tasks or possessing specialized knowledge and skill.” and besides, “specialization reflects a depth of knowledge and skill in a particular area” (Morgeson and Humphrey, 2006). From a practice perspective, the research of Willem, Buelens & De Jonghe (2007) showed that specialization was positively related to job satisfaction.

2.2.3 Social Characteristics

In the earlier organizational literatures, the social characteristics have often been ignored as one of the important factors to influence job satisfaction (Morgeson & Campion, 2003; Seers & Graen, 1984). The social characteristics may also hold some promise for mitigating the trade-offs between the improved affective outcomes and increased training and compensation requirements. In particular, social support has been found to be a valued aspect of work (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). In fact, there has been increasing recognition that individuals seek meaning through a connection with others (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003) and “warm, trusting, and supportive interpersonal relationships” are essential for human well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p.154). These kinds of positive work relationships are likely to be just as

effective at producing positive affective outcomes as are the more traditionally studied motivational work characteristics.(Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

Social Support

The definition of social support is “the degree to which a job provides opportunities for advice and assistance from others” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Social support might protect persons against the adverse effects of stressors by leading them to interpret stressful situations less negatively (Cohen & Hoberman, 1983; Cohen & Mckay, 1984). And social support from co-workers and supervisors has been found to be important in buffering workers from negative outcomes (Johnson & Hall, 1988; Karasek et al., 1998), thereby increasing satisfaction (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2007). Besides, Strengthening social support would not result in higher levels of training and compensation requirements, that is because positive interpersonal relationships have no impact on the mental demands of the work. In fact, training requirements may be lower for jobs with higher social support because of the ability to rely on the positive relationships in learning new tasks or getting help when problems arise .(Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

Interdependence

Some researchers (Johnson and Johnson, 1989) distinguish task interdependence, in which each member must take action for other members to do any part of their work from resource interdependence, in which each member can complete his or her part of the whole, but resources such as information are distributed among members and the whole task is not complete until each member has completed his or her part. Other scholars (Thompson, 1967; Van de Ven and Ferry, 1980), by contrast, focus on the different processes by which inputs can be combined to complete a whole piece of work. Interdependence reflects the degree to which the job depends on others and others depend on it to complete the work (Kiggundu, 1981; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Kiggundu (1981) disintegrated interdependence into two distinct forms: initiated interdependence (the extent to which work flows from one job to other jobs) and received interdependence (the extent to which a job is affected by work from other jobs). Research of Gam (2008) has proved that task interdependence directly and positively influences on job satisfaction.

Interaction outside The Organization

Morgeson & Humphrey (2006) defined that “Interaction outside the organization reflects the extent to which the job requires employees to interact and communicate with individuals external to organization.” And individuals external to organization could be suppliers, customers, or any other external entity. (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006) According to Ryan & Deci (2001), the well-being literature has demonstrated that interactions with others could make work more satisfying for employees.

Feedback from Others

Feedback from others reflects the degree to which others in the organization provide information about performance. (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Following research by Berman, Down, & Hill (2002), having feedback from others could provide job incumbents the opportunity to learn how to perform their job more effectively through the transfer of implicit and explicit knowledge, simultaneously higher their job satisfaction.

2.2.4 Contextual Characteristics

Contextual characteristics reflect the broad performance context, Morgeson & Humphrey (2006) have discussed four type of work context characteristics in their research.

- Ergonomics: “the degree to which a job allows correct or appropriate posture and movement.” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006)
- Physical demands: “the level of physical activity or effort required in the job.” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006)
- Work conditions: “the environment within which a job is performed.” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006)
- Equipment use: “the variety and complexity of the technology and equipment used in a job.” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006)

The results of Morgeson & Humphrey (2007) showed contextual characteristics would impact various work outcomes. If physical demands increase and work conditions or ergonomics decrease, job incumbents will become increasingly physically uncomfortable (Campion, 1988), which in turn will hurt attitudinal outcomes such as job satisfaction, as well as when there is a lack in proper equipments used. Moreover, if jobs are uncomfortable and

dissatisfying, it is likely that job incumbents will want to avoid going to work and will instead look for new jobs. (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2007)

2.3 Variables used to measure job satisfaction in this study

This research will focus on the factors that could lead to job satisfaction and are feasible in work (re)design. So, the work design theory by Morgeson & Humphrey (2006) will be used in our case. There are four types of work characteristics used to measure job satisfaction in the research of Morgeson & Humphrey (2006), which has been reviewed above. Morgeson & Humphrey (2006) also mentioned that “if the goal of redesign is to increase satisfaction, a range of design option is possible. Increasing virtually any of the motivational characteristics would serve to increase satisfaction.”, and “depending on the specific choices made, the job will take on decidedly different character.” In other words, the work design theory enables an assessment of different work characteristics so a wide range of options can be considered. (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006)

Regarding to our specific case in this study, from the work design model, only the variables of task characteristics and social characteristics will be considered to measure job satisfaction. As firstly the research subjects in the current study are lawyer assistants, usually their job is limited to assist lawyers but not handling complicating cases independently, which a very high level of knowledge, skill and ability are not necessarily required. Besides, they are called as students of the lawyers, that means the lawyer assistants are still fresher in their career, and they want to learn and grow till one day they could be professionals. So, their current working ability is limited and of an assisting nature. In light of this situation, it's not very suitable to use the variables of knowledge characteristics to measure the job satisfaction of the lawyer assistants in this case study.

Similarly, according to Morgeson & Humphrey (2006), the contextual characteristics are measures to predicting satisfaction too. But in this study, the nature of the lawyer assistants' job hardly concerns to the work context characteristics. They work in a flexible office environment and there are no high physical demands or high technical equipments used in their daily work. In other words, the work of legal service does not required to be designed in

terms of biological concerns. Thus, we could consider the contextual characteristics are not relevant and wouldn't impact on the job satisfaction in this case.

Further, learning from Morgeson & Humphrey (2006), task and social work characteristics could predict satisfaction without increased training and compensation requirements, while knowledge characteristics are related to training and compensation demands. Considering the work design or redesign from an aspect of economy drive in future, it would be advisable to choose the task and social characteristics as measures to resolve the trade-off between satisfaction and training and compensation requirements.

What is more, Scarpello and Campbell's (1983) concluded that a single-item global measure is more content valid than a composite facet measure for assessing overall job satisfaction. So for assessing overall job satisfaction, a single-item global measure will be also used by a question like: All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? And as mentioned earlier, the higher level of job satisfaction the employees feel, the lower turnover intentions they shall have.

In conclusion, the variables that will be used to measure satisfaction in this study are composed into a conceptual model as below:

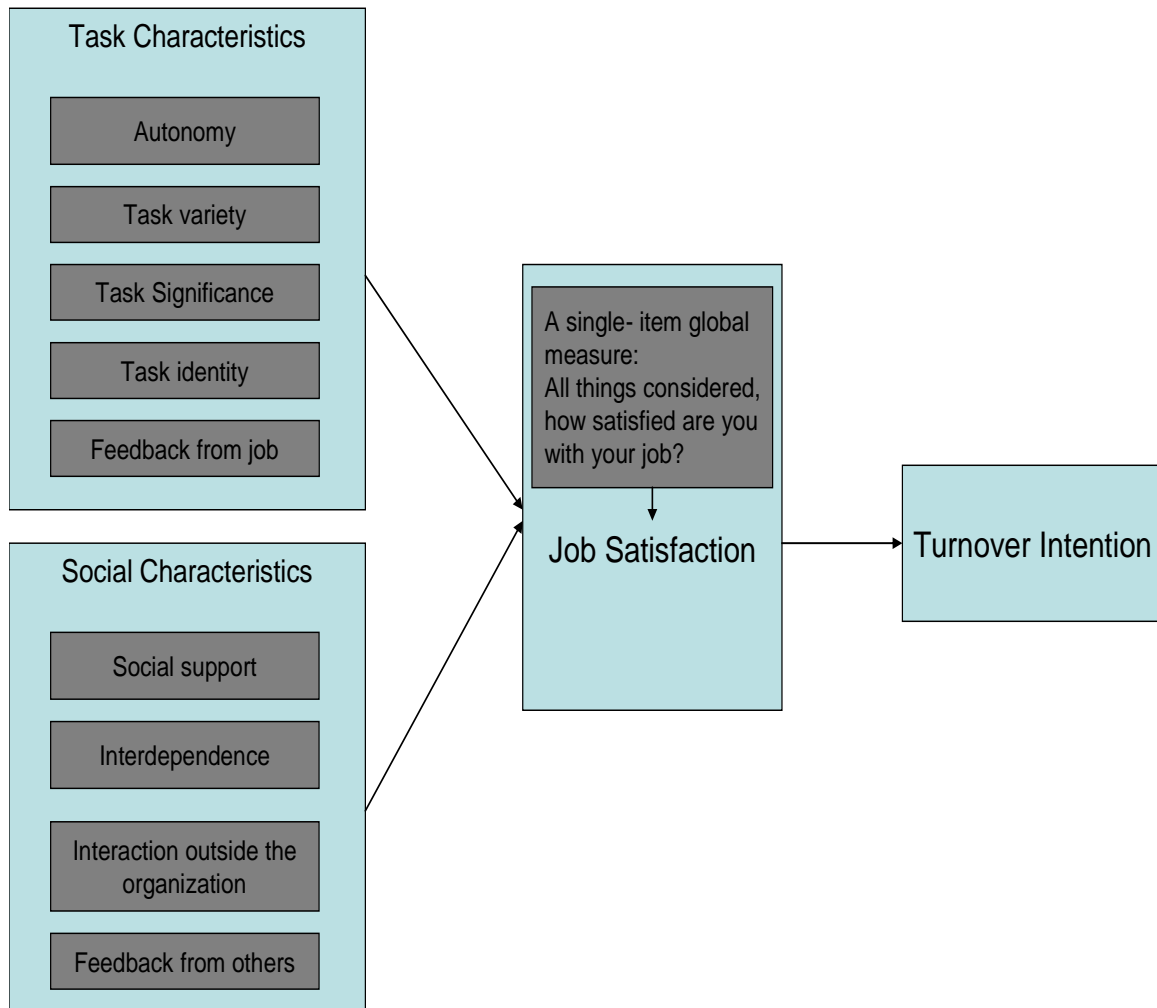


Figure 2.3 Conceptual model on job satisfaction

2.4 Research questions

In line with the research objective of this study and based on the theoretical background, research questions are formulated as follows:

- What is the effect of task characteristics to the lawyer assistants' job satisfaction?
- What is the effect of social characteristics to the lawyer assistants' job satisfaction?

By answering these research questions, the two central questions put up in the earlier chapter shall also be answered.

Chapter 3 : Methodology

This chapter contains three parts, they are research method (section 3.1), research participants (section 3.2), procedures and treatment of data (section 3.3).

3.1 Research methods

The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. As a qualitative approach gives detailed descriptions of the case being studied and provides analysis of the themes or issues (Stake, 1995), it is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. To be more specific, qualitative research allows the subjects being studied to give much 'richer' answers to questions put to them by the researcher, and may give valuable insights which might have been missed by any other method. Thus, in this study a qualitative approach will be used.

In more detail, the qualitative research method "In-depth interviews" will be adopted. "An in-depth interview is an open-ended, discovery-oriented method that is well suited for describing both program processes and outcomes from the perspective of the target audience or key stakeholder. The goal of the interview is to deeply explore the respondent's point of view, feelings and perspectives."(http://www.ivm.vu.nl/en/Images/PT8_tcm53-161513.pdf) That is to say, in-depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored. In our case, the resource of data were acquired via an in-depth interview with the lawyer assistants, the focus is to find out the level of the interviewees' job satisfaction. This interview was composed of 10 open-ended questions (in addition to the general information of the participants), they are listed as follows:

1. What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

2. How much task variety does your job require you to perform?
3. How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?
4. Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?
5. How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?
6. How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?
7. How much does your job depend on others (e.g. the lawyers, other lawyer assistants) and others depend on it to complete the work?
8. How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?
9. How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?
10. All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

3.2 Research Participants

Before the interview was conducted, a guideline was explained to the potential field staff to reflect the researchers' awareness that willingness to participate in an interview will depend on how well the participants understand what the study is about, what will be expected of them if they participate, and how their privacy will be respected, and the voluntary nature of participation in this research was also emphasized.

According to the data from Ms. Liang, one of the chief executives in Zhongyuan, there are 25 lawyer assistants working in the law firm presently. Two of the lawyer assistants refused to join the interview. Thus, the research participants of the study comprised of 23 full-time working lawyer assistants, and all of them were interviewed in Chinese, which creates a better understanding of questions for them and a more relaxed atmosphere for them to express their opinions. The profile of research participants are presented as Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Profiles of participants: Lawyer assistants in Zhongyuan Law Firm

Participant	Gender	Age	Marriage Status	Education	Tenure	How many lawyers you work for?	How much time for each lawyer every week?
A	Male	24	Single	Bachelor	1.5 years	2	20
B	Male	22	Single	Bachelor	2 years	1	40
C	Female	25	Single	Bachelor	2.5 years	3	15
D	Female	23	Single	Bachelor	1 years	2	20
E	Female	26	Single	Bachelor	8 months	2	15-20
F	Female	30	Married	Junior college	8 years	all the lawyers	38 hours for total
G	Female	27	Single	Bachelor	3 years	2	20
H	Female	27	Married	Bachelor	2.5 years	1	not sure
I	Male	25	Single	Bachelor	2 years	3	not more than 10
J	Female	22	Single	Bachelor	1 year	1-2	30, but it depends...
K	Male	27	Single	Bachelor	3 years	2	That depends...
L	Female	22	Single	Bachelor	7 months	2	20
M	Male	23	Single	Bachelor	1 month	1	40
N	Female	25	Single	Bachelor	1.5 years	2	20
O	Female	23	Single	Bachelor	half year	1	38
P	Male	25	Single	Bachelor	2 years	2	20 (excluding overtime working)
Q	Female	25	Single	Bachelor	2 years	2	25
R	Female	27	Single	Bachelor	4 years	2	20
S	Female	24	Single	Bachelor	1.5 years	1	36
T	Female	26	Married	Bachelor	2 years	2	20
U	Male	29	Married	Bachelor	6 years	2	20
V	Female	26	Single	Master	2 years	3	15
W	Female	28	Single	Master	1 year	1	36-40

Among the 23 lawyer assistants who have been interviewed, seven of them are male, and the other sixteen are female. Their age ranges from 22 to 30 years old, four are married, and the rest are single. Their tenure varied from 1 month up to 8 years the longest. Their education

background is quite similar, most of them have a bachelor degree in legal studies and work around 40 hours per week for 1-3 different lawyers.

3.3 Procedures and treatment of data

As mentioned earlier, firstly a guideline was explained to all the 23 interviewees, the related procedures was also reported to the management of the law firm. Then, an appointment was scheduled to meet with the informants at a time and location that facilitated the interview process and ensured enhanced confidentiality and convenience. The interviews were composed of a series of questions (See appendices) and each one took about 20 minutes.

During the interviews with the research participants, notes were taken and the conversations were tape recorded. After each interview, the resulting tape was transcribed and translated, the transcripts of each subject as well as the notes from the interviews were reviewed. During this process, the questionnaire has been slightly modified. New questions were sent via emails to all the original interviewees and all replies has been received within two weeks. Afterwards, the review was continued, and the transcripts consisted of identifying all references and content that related to job satisfaction.

The extent of the nine measures for job satisfaction answered by each participant will be classified into three levels: high (answers which are most positive and with a clear description for this certainty. Such as answers to question 1 by participant F: *“I have the whole independence, I could arrange my time freely as there is no certain regulation I need to follow...”*), medium (answers which are moderate and less clear, or partly positive or negative, or between positive and negative, or relative positive or negative under some specific conditions, or with a description including both positive and negative contents. Such as answers to question 1 by participant G: *“The work on legal service is with much freedom, ...But as an assistant, only the boss has the final decision on it.”*) and low (answers which are most negative and with descriptions in a state of denial. Such as answers to question 1 by participant A: *“Little, as I need to serve and assist two lawyers at the same time...”*).

Chapter 4: Result

In this chapter, results of this study will be presented. In section 4.1 there is an overview of the result concerning the study participant's general information. Then, a breakdown of the findings will be given in section 4.2, which is in a way "question by question" (from subsection 4.2.1-4.2.10), to indicate possible relational factors where applicable. This question by question analysis will focus on actual quotations from the study participants and how these were translated. In section 4.3, a brief summary will be drawn to verify in general whether all the measures are in line with the level of the study participants' overall job satisfaction in Zhongyuan Law Firm, and what might be the most relevant factors to predict their job satisfaction.

4.1 Overview

Twenty-three (out of 25) lawyer assistants participated in the interviews, the response rate was up to 92%. Regarding to the age and education, these interviewees had quite similar backgrounds, they were all young and well-educated. But the time they were working in the law firm varied quite a lot, and the numbers of lawyers they were assisting could be also different from each other, what is more, the exact working time of the lawyer assistants for their guiding lawyers was also not totally the same or in a unified standard norm.

And according to Zeffane (1994), age and tenure are positively correlated with satisfaction. That is, older individuals and those employees with longer tenure tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. This seems verified positively in our study. Five of the participants (F, G, K, R, U) who have more than three years of tenure responded they were satisfied or at least neutral with their current job. However among these five participants, there is no certain pattern to show the one who work the longest will have the highest satisfaction. For instance, participant F has had eight years of tenure, she felt neutral with her job; while participant R and U who have four and six years of tenure respectively did feel satisfied with their job.

Besides, when the participants were asked if there are significant differences between the tasks they have to do for each different lawyer, nineteen lawyer assistants didn't think so and only four participants answered " yes " and explained these differences. The major difference

lay in the types of cases (non-litigation or litigation) they were assisting. For instance, *“If helping a lawyer who is taking charge of a court case, then I need to sort out the materials and visit the court to file a case; if it’s a lawyer who is doing a non- litigation practice, then I more often assist to write some legal documents.”* (Lawyer assistant C). *“Yes, based on the nature of work for different lawyers, then my tasks are also different. For example, if it’s a litigation case, I need to make court documents, and then deliver to the court, and keep in touch with the related parties; if engaged as a consultant to assist lawyers in the unit of the consultation exercise, then I need more time to review materials, legal opinions and legal advice as to the answer.”*

Above are some similarities and differences of the participants regarding to their general information, following there is a question by question analysis on the measures to the participants’ job satisfaction. The extent of each measure will be classified into three levels: high, medium and low, as has been explained in the methodology part of this thesis.

4.2 Question by question analysis

On the basis of the task characteristics and social characteristics from the work design theory by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006), 10 questions were designed to ask the interviewees. The general result of this study based on the participants’ replies to the open-end questions will be presented as follows:

4.2.1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

As mentioned in the earlier chapter, autonomy includes three interrelated aspects centred on freedom in (a) work scheduling, (b) decision making, and (c) work methods (Morgeson and Humphrey, 2006). Notably, most participants in the interview have only described one or two aspects of autonomy in their work, that is the reason why not all the three aspects are ranked with levels by all the participants when the frequencies were summed up. The cause for this might be due to the deficiency of the first interview question designed. But based on the

available data, in general the frequencies by levels of these three aspects of autonomy of all the study participants are shown as below in the table 4.1a.*

Table 4.1a Frequencies by levels of three aspects of autonomy of Study Participants

	Work scheduling	Decision making	Work methods
High	10 (B, D, F, G, H, I, K, R, S, W)	2 (I, K)	5 (H, I, M, U, W)
Medium	0	1 (Q)	0
Low	3 (C, P, T)	9 (A, C, E, G, J, L, N, O, P)	2 (V, T)
Total	13 (<23)	12 (<23)	7 (< 23)

* Frequencies total per aspect of autonomy are less than 23 due to not all the themes raised by the participants.

On work scheduling, there were 13 study participants who have talked about their opinions on this. Ten of the participants deemed they have total autonomy, and could arrange their time scheduling quite freely in usual situation. *“Usually I can arrange my working time freely...”* (Participant D). *“I have the whole independence. I could arrange my time freely as there is no certain regulation I need to follow, I could decide to do 3 or 5 files a day.”* (Participant F) . *“Usually the supervisor decided the work tasks to me, then before the deadline to handing them in, I could arrange my time and schedule freely.”* (Participant R). There was no participants that described their opinions on autonomy of work scheduling between positive and negative opinions, or with contents fitting in the other criterions for the “medium” level. Three participants mentioned that it was the lawyers who decide on the schedule of work, i.e. they don’t self plan how they do their work. *“ ...Very often it’s the lawyers who tell and guide me how and when to work, I don’t have the decision making power totally.”* (Participant C). *“ Independence is relative, but I usually don’t self-organize my work or join making decisions on the cases. ”* (Participant P). *“ ...if a lot of work at the same time coming, I will become too busy, then it is very difficult to arrange all the work properly, I will consult the lawyers and he will re-schedule the arrangement of work.”* (Participant T).

On decision making, two of the participants think they had this in a high level at work, as they could use their own judgement to carry out their work. *“At work, I can share my ideas with the lawyers, and discuss together on some difficult issues, join the decision making process...”*(Participant I). *“I think I could arrange my work independently, when my boss gave me the work, I would check materials, and give my own judgement to some important issues on the case.”* (Participant K). One said she could relatively had some freedom and independence on decision making but that was depended on certain conditions. *“Relatively free and independent, in terms of creativity and judgment which I could make on the cases, I need to consider if my decision is permitted by law, and it is reasonable or not.”* (Participant Q). Nine participants described that they don’t make decisions when carrying out their work assignments as they lack enough experience and practise in legal knowledge. *“As a paralegal, I am still in the learning stage, my work is mainly to help the lawyers with their guidelines.”* (Participant L). It’s more likely that they get assignments from their superior and fulfil them in a certain given time. Their work is confined to the guiding lawyer’s ideas, the lawyer assistants also join and discuss the cases, but only the lawyers could decide to adopted them or not. *“ ... Sometimes I also tell my opinions on the cases, but only the lawyers have the authority to guide and decide, I don’t have much experience on carrying out the work independently.”* (Participant A). *“I would say at this stage there is not much opportunities to finish my work independently or make my own decisions on cases, I usually take orders from my support lawyer. Though I did have some research and learning opportunities, like reading and practice of the case.”* (Participant J).

On work methods, five participants stated the job allowed them to make decision on what methods they use to complete their work. *“As long as I could finish my work within the required time, then I could manage how I work and plan the schedule freely.”* (Participant H). *“...About the arrangement of work, most of time we could arrange it by ourselves.”* (Participant I). *“Usually when there is a new case, my guiding lawyer will let me do what I could do first according to my current knowledge and experience, then he will point out my mistakes when I submit my work.”* (Participant M). There were no participants that described the autonomy they have in work methods between positive and negative situations, or the like following the related criterions for the “medium” level mentioned earlier. Two participants said there was no opportunity for independence and freedom on how they did the work. *“Aspects and criteria must be set by the lawyers...”* (Participant T), and *“In most cases I work in accordance with the progress of the line...My creativity and judgment are based on*

my knowledge of law, so in an accurate statement of the case, the extent I can fully play my creativity is not great.”(Participant V).

According to the result classified in table 4.1a, not all of the three aspects of autonomy have been mentioned by every study participants. In spite of this, with the current and available data we have, there is an overview on the general levels of autonomy that the participants have drawn in table 4.1b.

Table 4.1b Frequencies and Percentages by levels of autonomy of Study Participants

Levels of autonomy	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	B, D, F, H, I, K, M, R, S, U, W	11	48%
Medium	G, Q,	2	9%
Low	A, C, E, J, L, N, O, P, T, V	10	43%

As participants B, D, F, G, R and S have gave their opinions only on “work scheduling”, so did participant M also in “work methods”, and all of them have a high level in the related aspects with positive answers. So, they are considered to have high level autonomy in our study; Similarly, participants H and W have given positive answers on both “work scheduling” and “work methods”, so did participant K in both “work scheduling” and “decision making”. Thus all of these three participants have a high level in autonomy. Participant I is the only one who have mentioned on all these three aspects of autonomy and with positive answers, certainly he has also a high level in autonomy.

Again, participant G have positive opinion in her “work scheduling autonomy” while a negative opinion in her “ decision making autonomy”. In this case, according to the standards for judgement on the levels of the measures, participant G have a medium level of autonomy as her opinions over autonomy were “ with a description including both positive and negative contents”. Participant Q has given a moderate answer on only “ decision making”, thus in this case she is also with a medium level of the general autonomy.

In much the same way, participants A, E, J, L, N and O have gave their opinions only on “decision making”, so did participant V also in “work methods”, and all of them have a low level in the related aspect with negative answers. So, they are considered to have low level autonomy in our study; Similarly, participants C and P have given negative answers on both “work scheduling” and “decision making”, so did participant T in both “work scheduling” and “work methods”. Thus all of these three participants have a low level in autonomy too.

In combination, table 4.1b shows in general 48% of the participants have high level of autonomy, 43% of the participants are with low level, and the rest 9% are with medium level.

4.2.2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

In response to this question, there are more than half of the total participants (up to fourteen) gave a negative answer “not much variety”, *“Almost every day I do the same things, copying, proofread the documents, phone calls etc. I don’t see much variety in my work.”* (Participant E). or described their tasks as some “simple and similar” trivial office work. *“My work are usually quite simple and similar, they are mainly some administration work like fax, phone calls, copies, delivering documents to different departments etc.”* (Participant H). *“...in general most of them are simple and repeating routines, not much different.”* (Participant K).

In contrast, Only one participant answered positively with “A lot variety” to this question. *“A lot, for instance, data auditing, consultation, assisting with investigation and obtaining evidence, and other paperwork like official writing, record comprising etc.”* (Participant N).

The other eight participants described their job tasks with certain variety, from simple to more complex ones within a reasonable range. *“Usually there are simple and complex tasks. The simple ones are such as collection and collation, which not much skilled required. The more complex ones are like studying about case materials and deep research into the case, to do this good you must have rich experience and enough professional knowledge about law. So I think they are quite different.”* (Participant R). And the job tasks are also quite different between non-litigation cases and litigation cases. *“Currently I am engaging in doing both litigation and non-litigation cases, their nature are quite different, the things I need to prepare and do are also different. With non litigation cases, they require me more to offer*

legal advice and act as an agent for companies. With litigation cases, my job is more inclined to join investigating cases, collecting evidences, visiting the court etc.” (Participant W).

A summary of these findings can be found in table 4.2 as below:

Table 4.2 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of task variety of Study Participants

Levels of task variety	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	N	1	4%
Medium	D, G, I, O, R, S, U, W	8	35%
Low	A, B, C, E, F, H, J, K, L, M, P, Q, T, V	14	61%

To sum up, about 61% of the participants have low level of task variety, 35% of the participants are with medium level, and only 4% of the participants are with high level.

4.2.3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Regarding to the question on job significance, up to fifteen participants confirmed surely that their jobs have great impact to others, whether inside or outside the organization. *“Of course it will have influence on others, if the work is not good, then firstly that would affect our clients' interest, secondly it might damage our law firm's reputation, so we must do our work carefully.” (Participant I). “The nature of our work is about legislation, of course, it will directly affect the interests of the related parties. Internally, we provide services to our clients and if they are satisfied, that could reflect our values. So regardless of internal and external, I think our work is very important and meaningful.” (Participant W).*

And two participants felt to some extent their jobs might have influence to others, but the answers were with uncertainty. *“Sometimes just to work, I didn't think too much on the*

influence. It is often too busy then we need to work overtime. If there is influence, then it could be to assist the lawyers and enhance efficiency in the case we are handling, and also help to the realization of our clients' rights, but I am not totally sure my importance on this."

(Participant D). *"I think my work is relatively important because I am usually responsible for the data auditing, all legal advice must be based on a number of simplifying analysis of information, problem-solving is possible step by step. On the other hand, my tenure is not very long, the customer would like directly feedback to the attorneys, it is difficult to know my work is important or not from the clients' points."* (Participant N).

Although the majority of the participants have a positive attitude on their contributions to others, still six participants seemed hardly able to identify the value of their work for others, they have a negative image of their works' relevance. *"So far I don't feel my work is that important to others, as they are all simple assisting work, very often I cannot even find the sense of worth from my job."* (Participant A). *"Sometimes I worked very hard to finish my work, but the quality is not good enough, then I doubt on myself, I have no idea if I fit to this job or not...so I don't feel my job influence the live or work of others."* (Participant B).

A summary of these findings can be found in table 4.3 as below:

Table 4.3 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of task significance of Study Participants

Levels of task significance	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	C, F, G, H, I, K, L, O, P, Q, R, S, U, V, W	15	65%
Medium	D, N,	2	9%
Low	A, B, E, J, M, T	6	26%

As the figures shown in the table, 65% of the participants have high level of task significance, 26% of the participants are with low level, and 9% of the participants are with medium level.

4.2.4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

For this question, a little more than half of the study participants (twelve) only complete one or some parts of the entire work. Most of time they joined partly on the projects, or just simply helped the lawyer to prepare the documents used on court. *“So far I only can fulfil one part of the entire work, with my current ability it doesn’t seem I could finish one case independently, which is also a problem I have concerned for a time.”* (Participant B). *“I was just doing some simple assisting work, without integrity at all. sometimes a case was finished or not, I do not know at all because I was only involved in one small part of it, but not the whole.”* (Participant E).

Seven participants think that the level of task identity would depend on the level of the complexity of the case they were doing. For simple and small cases, they were competent to finish an entire piece of work from beginning to end; While for the big and complex ones, they were assigned to do only one part of the whole. *“For small projects, I will finish it wholly by myself, then my instructor will check my work and give amendments, but sometimes I only join partly of the big projects and it’s a bit more difficult to identify the result.”* (Participant U). And another one said: *“That depends on the complexity of the project. If it’s some daily advice, then I can follow and finish it by myself. If it is more important projects, then I am generally responsible for drafting the draft instrument.”* (Participant N).

The rest four participants said they complete the whole piece of work, but even when they were allowed to complete the work they started, all the documents and projects must be checked and approved by the lawyers. *“Usually I complete the whole work, but the results must be checked and determined by senior counsel.”* (Participant R). *“The basic framework of the work is done by me, lawyers will make the appropriate changes. Sometimes he thinks my work without mistakes, then he need not to make any amendments, but the legal documents must be reviewed by him before they will be issued.”* (Participant T). So, actually there is no complete task identity when the study participants fulfil their job.

A summary of these findings can be found in table 4.4 as below:

Table 4.4 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of task identity of Study Participants

Levels of task identity	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	None	0	0%
Medium	D, G, H, I, N, P, R, T, U, V, W	11	48%
Low	A, B, C, E, F, J, K, L, M, O, Q, S,	12	52%

The figures in the table showed around 52% of the participants have low level of task identity, 48% of the participants are with medium level, none of the participants are with high level.

4.2.5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

When answering the previous questions, many participants have mentioned they don't complete the whole piece of work usually, only join or perform part of it, and they don't have much decision-making autonomy either. It showed the nature of the lawyer assistants' work is usually not independent, it's more likely to be defined as "just assisting work". There is no specific standard or clear information for them to judge the quality of their work and the effectiveness of their task performance. Concerning this question, four participants answered they helped with the cases, and partly identify the result from how successful those cases were done in the end. *"Basically, when seeing the completion of a case, generally I already known a bit that my work results. .."* (Participant P). *"...I could know some my work performance from the progress of the case, if everything went on well, the final result is in line with my own judgement, then that meant I did it good. On the contrary, if things went wrong, not reach my expectation, that meant there must be problems with my performance."* (Participant K). But except this, there is no more clear information from the job directly to let them know how their performance are.

Or more often they get to know how they have performed from their guiding lawyer’s comments, but not directly from the job itself. The remaining nineteen participants have emphasized this. *“The lawyers I work for will give me some guiding opinions or suggestions, point out my deficiency in work, sometimes they also praise and give commendation if I’ve done a good job. So, I could know my job performance from their comments.”* (Participant A). *“Mainly from the extent how much my work is accepted by my guiding lawyer, if he said it’s a good job, then I know I have perform my job well.”* (Participant S).

But no matter what, the success and honour usually go to the lawyers. In the interview, a number of lawyer assistants emphasized that the degree of the satisfaction and acceptance from the lawyers, sometimes also the clients, is the usual way how they could know their work performance.

A summary of these findings can be found in table 4.5 as below:

Table 4.5 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of feedback from job of Study Participants

Levels of feedback from job	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	None	0	0%
Medium	D, K, P, R	4	17%
Low	A, B, C, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, M, N, O, Q, S, T, U, V, W	19	83%

As up to 83% of the participants have low level of feedback from job, 17% of the participants are with medium level, and none of the participants are with high level.

4.2.6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

When it comes to the topic about “social support”, there were two lawyer assistant who described her job as a relatively independent work which was not necessary to receive help and advice from others. *“I am always finish my work by myself and seldom need others’ help. ..”* (Participant F). *“Because relatively few colleagues are working together, the project I am responsible for is relatively independent, so I think in addition to direct assistance to lawyers, I didn't get many opportunities for help and advice from others.”* (Participant N).

There were other three participants stating in most cases their work tasks could be finished by their own, only when they found the work too difficult to be done alone, then they would turn to their superiors for help, but not the other lawyer assistants. *“I am generally pro-independence to complete my task. But when the things are beyond my own capabilities, I will go to my instructor for help, because he is the ultimate views of decision-makers.”* (Participant P). *“I think I can fully finish my own work. But sometimes, I will listen to opinions from my instructor, even though our views are often the same...”*(Participant W).

The other eighteen participants did think it’s common in work to share opinions with each other, they would like to help others, at the same time, they also often receive help and good advice, some of them even develop a friendship from the daily work. *“It’s very easy to develop a nice friendship inside our law firm, I am new here, I get lots of help from my boss and co-workers.”* (Participant M). *“My job do provide many opportunities for advice and assistant from others, especially from my colleagues, I remember once I made a big mistake when writing a contract for my clients, it's my co-worker found this out and remind me to correct it, I appreciate this very much.”* (Participant T).

A summary of these findings can be found in table 4.6 as below:

Table 4.6 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of social support of Study Participants

Levels of social support	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, O, Q, R, S, T, U	18	78%
Medium	P, V, W	3	13%
Low	F, N	2	9%

By and large, 78% of the participants have high level of social support, 13% of the participants are with medium level, and 9% of the participants are with low level.

4.2.7 How much does your job depend on others(e.g. the lawyers, other lawyer assistants) and others depend on it to complete the work?

The answers given by the following two participants to this question showed that the extent of the interdependence depends on different situations. If one big case must be handled by several lawyers cooperating together, then their assistants also need to cooperate with and count on each other, as to complete the case successfully, ones' work outcome could influence others' seriously, the job is depending on others and others also depend on it.

“When we work on the same case, we need to be responsible for each other. To complete the work that requires us a close communication among the colleagues, that is a necessary part in our daily work.” (Participant R). *“My work requires me an close liaison and co-counsel with my colleagues, for each stage of the case, we need to report to our guiding lawyers in order to carry out the next step.”* (Participant L). Also there were other five participants said even they are handling different cases from each other, the interdependence still exist as they need each others' help to complete the work. *“Generally speaking, each of us handle and assist with different cases, but legal work requires a highly professional knowledge, for some difficult cases we need to work together, I do need to ask advice from others, that is much better than work alone.”* (Participant J). *“Yeah, as lawyer assistants we work for different lawyers, then the cases are also different, but I still need to work closely with my colleagues*

most of time, and things can not work if without the signatures from the lawyers.” (Participant Q).

Even when the work is considerably independent, three study participants think their dependence on other colleagues did exist. *“Other lawyer assistants’ work wouldn’t be influenced by mine usually, so for the simple work I usually do it all by myself, for some complicated cases, I am more inclined to seek help from colleagues, to ask for their opinions.” (Participant G).* *“Although our tasks look like quite independent, still when I integrate and conclude all the information of the cases, it’s possible I need to ask my co-workers for some help.” (Participant H).* *“Usually I could finish the work by myself, but the quality could be better if discussing and cooperating the cases with others.” (Participant I).*

What’s more, it seems the extent of the interdependence on work between the lawyer assistants and their guiding lawyers is usually more than just between the lawyer assistants themselves. Up to twelve participants described the interdependence, especially the received interdependence like the guidance from the lawyers is most frequent in everyday work. *“One person’s ability is limited, but as our tasks are usually independent, I’ll first try by myself to finish it. If it is really beyond my abilities, I will discuss with my guiding lawyer to get inspiration. So, at work the cooperation with the lawyer is most frequent.” (Participant D).* *“The contacts with my guiding lawyer is most frequent as it’s him who gave me the work, and guide me how to complete it...” (Participant S).* *“Most of time, I need to work very closely with my leading lawyer together, as we are depending on each other to complete on case, for the rest I prefer to work more independently.” (Participant W).*

Other than the majority’s opinions above, there is one participant who denied the interdependence with others. *“All are done by myself, as I have my own case need to be taken care, it’s not necessary at all to depend on others...” (Participant F).*

And besides, it’s quite remarkable that of all of the survey questions, this one elicited the fewest direct responses, as frequently the participants responded to this question mainly by describing the importance of the help or instruction from the lawyers, while describe little initiated interdependence of themselves.

A summary of these findings can be found in table 4.7 as below:

Table 4.7 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of interdependence of Study Participants

Levels of interdependence	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	J, K, L, Q, R, T, U	7	31%
Medium	A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I, M, N, O, P, S, V, W	15	65%
Low	F	1	4%

To be concluded, up to 65% of the participants have medium level of interdependence, 31% of the participants are with high level, and 4% of the participants are with low level.

4.2.8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

In direct response to this question, only one participants stated it was not necessary for her to interact with people or organizations outside the law firm, as she is a filing clerk, whose work was quite different from other lawyer assistants'. *"In my situation, it's not necessary for me to contact the people or organization external to our law firm, maybe that happens more often to other lawyer assistants."* (Participant F).

For the other twenty two participants, all of them have identified the necessity of interaction with others outside the law firm. Two participants described the frequency as "sometimes". *"Sometimes, when the lawyers I assist are busy, then I need to call clients or receive call from clients to explain how their cases are going? And feedback their ideas to the lawyers."* (Participant E). *"Sometimes, when I doing paper work like writing contracts, then it's not necessary to contact people outside the law firm. While if I need to help investigate a case, then doing research is a must, I have to search materials and interact and communicate with the individuals or parties which are related."* (Participant V).

All the other twenty participants have emphasized the high frequency and importance for keeping contact with the individuals outside, especially their clients. *“Very often, as you know, law firms are some kind of service company, interact and communicate with our clients and the court are very important, I am busy with this every day almost.”* (Participant C). *“Sometimes I meet my clients a couple times just within one day, and when I deliver documents to different organizations, I also need to explain the cases to the people who work there, so interaction and communication with individuals outside is a must in my job.”* (Participant S). *“Almost every day I need to meet different kinds of people, as long as they are concerned in the cases I am doing. Most are the clients of course, building up a good relationship with the clients is very important to law firms.”* (Participant R).

A summary of these findings can be found in table 4.8 as below:

Table 4.8 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of interaction outside the organization of Study Participants

Levels of interaction outside the organization	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	A, B, C, D, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, W	20	87%
Medium	E, V	2	9%
Low	F	1	4%

As the figures shown in the table, up to 87% of the participants have high level of interaction outside the organization, 9% of the participants are with medium level, and only 4% of the participants are with low level.

4.2.9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Since there is no specific standard or clear information for the participant themselves to judge the quality of their work and the effectiveness of their task performance. To assess their efforts at work, Almost all of the participants hear the feedbacks from the lawyers or both the lawyers and the co-workers, there are no obscure answers in moderation, or answers sitting between “positive” and “negative” or the like. About thirteen participants said they mostly received feedbacks from their instructors only. *“From time to time my guiding lawyer will tell me how I perform in my job, but between colleagues I don't think we talk about this often as we usually finish our own work independently, everyone takes care of different cases, we don't know the details of others' case, so it's hard to give comment on this.”* (Participant N). *“My instructor often tell me how the performance of my work, while between the colleagues we seldom judge each other's work.”* (Participant S).

And there were eight participants who answered they got feedbacks from not only the lawyers, but also the peers or their clients. *“Basically, information is obtained from the guiding lawyers. If you have the cooperation with other colleagues, some of my work will be evaluated by them.”* (Participant O). *“Both the lawyers and the colleagues will give comments on my work, of course my support lawyer's opinion is the most important...”* (Participant C). *“ ... the most important feedback is from our guiding lawyers as they know my work best. oh, yes, sometimes also feedbacks from clients, because I must contact the clients directly for work, so the comments from my clients are also very important.”* (Participant D).

Only one participant answered “Not with any” as she thought *“...It's not common to give comments to others' work.”* (Participant F) and participant M has just worked in the law firm for one month, thus he stated he didn't receive much feedback about his job performance yet.

A summary of these findings can be found in table 4.9 as below:

Table 4.9 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of feedback from others of Study Participants

Levels of feedback from others	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
High	A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I, J, K, L, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W	21	91%
Medium	None	0	0%
Low	F, M	2	9%

Overall, up to 91% of the participants confirmed positively they have high level of feedback from others, and 9% of the participants are with low level. There is no answers in the medium level.

4.2.10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

In order to get a general understanding of all the 23 participants' overall job satisfaction, a question with a five-level Likert scale was asked as an ending for this questionnaire. Reviewing on all the answers (See Table 4.10). There are no participants who chose 5 and 1, which means none of them felt very satisfied or very dissatisfied with their job. Six participants felt "satisfied" and five participants felt "dissatisfied". The rest twelve participants felt neutral, not satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Table 4.10 Frequencies and Percentages by levels of job satisfaction of Study Participants

Levels of overall job satisfaction	Study participants	Frequencies	Percentages
5=Very satisfied	None	0	0%
4=Satisfied	D, H, I, R, S, U	6	26%
3=Neutral	A, B, C, F, G, J, K, L, M, O, Q, W	12	52%
2=Dissatisfied	E, N, P, T, V	5	22%
1=Very dissatisfied	None	0	0%

Table 4.10 displays that more than half of the participants (52%) feel moderate for their job, a little more than one fourth (26%) feel satisfied, and the other 22% of the participants feel dissatisfied.

4.3 Summary

To have an overall review, a summary of the result will be displayed in table 4.11, in which all the levels of the related variables measured per participant will be presented, as well as the levels of the overall job satisfaction.

Table 4.11 Summary of the result

Study participants	Levels of autonomy	Levels of task variety	Levels of task significance	Levels of task identity	Levels of feedback from job	Levels of social support	Levels of interdependence	Levels of interaction outside the organization	Levels of feedback from others	Levels of overall job satisfaction
A	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Neutral
B	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Neutral
C	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Neutral
D	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High	High	Satisfied
E	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	Medium	High	Dissatisfied
F	High	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Neutral
G	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Neutral
H	High	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Satisfied
I	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Satisfied
J	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High	High	High	Neutral
K	High	Low	High	Low	Medium	High	High	High	High	Neutral
L	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	High	High	High	High	Neutral
M	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	High	Low	Neutral
N	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	High	Dissatisfied
O	Low	Medium	High	Low	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Neutral
P	Low	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	Dissatisfied
Q	Medium	Low	High	Low	Low	High	High	High	High	Neutral
R	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	High	Satisfied
S	High	Medium	High	Low	Low	High	Medium	High	High	Satisfied
T	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	High	High	High	High	Dissatisfied
U	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	High	High	High	High	Satisfied
V	Low	Low	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Dissatisfied
W	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High	Neutral

As shown in the table above, if compare each level of the overall job satisfaction with the levels of the nine variables, we found out the levels of the variables which are used to predict job satisfaction in this study were not always in line with the levels of the overall job satisfaction for every participant. For instance, participant P ranked the levels of the variable with 3 “high”, 4 “medium” and only 2 “low”, while he felt “dissatisfied” with his job; and participant F felt “neutral” with her job, but the levels of the variables are with 7 “low” and 2 “high”, and also in the earlier chapter, we have mentioned participant F has eight years tenures in the firm already while the tenure showed on her is not totally positively correlated with satisfaction. The reasons for this phenomena could be due to the following three aspects: Firstly, for why most participants answered “neutral” in the last interview question, one of the reason could be due to the cultural reason. Many Chinese people believe in “happy medium” as a philosophy of life, it’s more natural for the study participants to choose “medium” as a latent standard for expressing their satisfaction over their job. Secondly, the reason for this inconformity might because of some commonalities of the whole legal service business, like it might be there is not better work design either in other law firms, so even with more lower rankings of these variables, the lawyer assistants wouldn’t easily feel more dissatisfied. Thirdly, with different participants, their opinions on the importance for these nine work design items could be different, some might be more important than others. If the important ones are with a higher ranking, which fits the participant’s requirement, then the participant might feel more satisfied or less dissatisfied even though the rest items were ranked low; while on the contrary, if the important ones are with a lower ranking, even though the rest variables were in a high or medium level, it wouldn’t increase the participants’ satisfaction as they care these high or medium ranking items less, thus it’s possible for those participants to feel “dissatisfied”.

In spite of the irrelevance mentioned above, we continue to compare the levels of all these nine variables with the level of the overall satisfaction of the study participants, the research finding showed all the six study participants (D, H, I, R, S, U) who felt satisfied with their work have a high level ranking in autonomy; simultaneously all the five study participants (E, N, P, T, V) who felt dissatisfied with their work have a low level ranking in autonomy. Although it’s hard to judge or conclude the general level of autonomy for the majority participants, from the result presented above, it seemed autonomy here is playing an significant role in deciding the participant’s overall job satisfaction, while the other variables

are more or less not totally relevant and cannot form such a pattern. Based on this, autonomy is considered as the most relevant factor to predict job satisfaction in our study.

In the light of this result, research questions will be answered and some recommendations on work redesign will be brought forward in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Recommendations, Discussions and Limitations

This last chapter comprise two parts. In the first part, recommendations will be made to answer the research questions sited earlier. Following in the second part, some discussions as well as the limitations on this research will be brought forward for further research.

5.1 Recommendations

The goal of this study is to find out how satisfied are the lawyer assistants with their job in Zhongyuan law firm, and related to that level, what possible measures could be proposed to the management of the law firm for the job re-design. For doing so, a composite of nine facet measures and one single-item global measure has been used to estimate the level of the 23 study participants' job satisfaction. And in line with this, two research questions were put forward in the earlier chapter:

- What is the effect of task characteristics to the lawyer assistants' job satisfaction?
- What is the effect of social characteristics to the lawyer assistants' job satisfaction?

Learning from the work design model by Humphrey & Morgeson (2006), both task characteristics and social characteristics are positively related to job satisfaction. That is, the higher level of task characteristics (autonomy, task variety, task significance, task identity and feedback from job) and social characteristics (social support, interdependence, interaction outside the organization and feedback from others) the employees have, the more satisfied they would feel for their job. So in our study, the five task characteristics and four social characteristics are used to predict job satisfaction of the lawyer assistants.

Furthermore, Morgeson, Nahrgang & Humphrey (2007) have mentioned in their article that there are multiple options for redesigning work to achieve certain work outcomes. According to the findings of this current research, more than half of the participants (52%) feel moderate for their job, a little more than one fourth (26%) feel satisfied, and the other 22% of the participants feel dissatisfied. Learning from table 4.11 and the analysis in the last chapter,

even though it is apparently that majority study participant have a high level in “social support”, “interaction outside the organization” and “ feedback from others”, it seemed the effect of social characteristics to the lawyer assistants’ job satisfaction is not very significant, as there is no certain pattern from the result which could show clearly that prediction of job satisfaction by the four social characteristics fits to the actual overall job satisfaction. In the same way, except for autonomy, there is also no related pattern between the other four task characteristics and the overall job satisfaction. Thus, in order to redesign the work to higher the lawyer assistants’ job satisfaction, work re-design on improvements of autonomy is strongly recommended, as the most relevant factor to stimulate job satisfaction in our case is probably turned out to be the level of autonomy. Moreover, considering the specific situation in Zhongyuan, the work mode of master-apprentice relations doesn’t fit the modern business society anymore. Without autonomy, the lawyer assistants could only work passively, it’s hard for them to feel motivated and committed to the law firm. Thus, the lawyer assistants have to learn to work in a more independent way and what is more important is they are encouraged to do so. Thus, to increase autonomy, the management could consider to implement redesign on the following three aspects of autonomy:

Work redesign on work scheduling

Morgeson, Nahrgang & Humphrey (2007) stated “ work scheduling just suggests that an incumbent can influence how the behaviours are ordered.” But perhaps this is the first step to entitle the lawyer assistants more autonomy at work. Ten study participants who have described they have high level of work scheduling, perhaps these people could share their experiences with the other lawyer assistants as well as their guiding lawyers, like with more work scheduling autonomy, their working efficiency and quality are probably also higher. It is important that to some degree the management also encourage the lawyer assistants to make their own decisions about how to schedule their work.

Work redesign on decision-making

So far it is the lawyers who have the total decision making on all the cases, the result also showed among those twelve participants (see table 4.1a), nine of them mentioned they have a low level of decision-making autonomy. One of the reason to cause this in the culture perspective might be due to the hierarchic management systems in China. As mentioned earlier, this kind of work mode of master-apprentice relations doesn’t fit the modern business

society anymore, Zhongyuan should learn to implement some reforms on this. In order to motivate the lawyer assistants, it is advisable to give them a chance to use their personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work. For instance, experienced lawyer assistants could share more their ideas and join decision making on some complicated cases together with the lawyers.

Work redesign on work methods

According to Morgeson, Nahrgang & Humphrey (2007), “work methods autonomy allows job incumbents the opportunity to influence the specific behaviours on the job.” Thus, “compared to work scheduling autonomy, job incumbents with high levels of work methods autonomy should perceive that they have greater influence on how a task is accomplished.” So, work methods autonomy has a significant impact on deciding the total level of autonomy, it’s sensible to give the lawyer assistants considerable opportunities for independence and freedom in how they do the work, like encourage them to handle some simple non-litigation cases with their own work methods and ideas.

Besides, although it appeared that variables like task variety, task identity, feedback from job and interdependence seemed irrelevant with the overall job satisfaction in this study. Still according to Humphrey & Morgeson (2006), work re-design on task characteristics and social characteristics have positive effect on improving job satisfaction. Beside, with the development of integration of global economy, the western management theories will getting more and more popular in China, also become more and more practical and feasible for Chinese firms in future. So, in order to increase the lawyer assistants’ job satisfaction with more options and possibilities, besides autonomy, it’s also advisable to try implement the redesign on these variables which are shown in table 4.11 with a more frequent “medium” and “low” level than “high” level in this study.

Work redesign on task variety

Like other four task characteristics, task variety is also concerned with how work is performed and the specific tasks composing a job (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). As many participants mentioned their tasks are usually some simple and repeating office work like copying and calling, the level of task variety is rather low. That is actually not what the lawyer assistants expected. Being a lawyer assistant is the first and unavoidable step to become a lawyer in the

future, they want to learn and grow till one day they become a legal professional. If the law firm want to retain their potential staff, it's important for them to know how to satisfy the lawyer assistants' need in knowledge learning and experience growing by giving them different kinds of work and a wide range of tasks. For instance, other than the routine office work, the law firm could offer these juniors more opportunities to participate in different kinds of cases, ensure everyone has the same chance to perform a variety of tasks. The management could also ask for feedbacks from them and share the ideas on what kind of tasks are most challenging and best fit to them, by doing so, it could motivate the lawyer assistants and improve their job satisfaction.

Work redesign on task identity

“Jobs that involve an intact task, such as providing a complete unit of service or putting together an entire product, are invariably more interesting to perform than jobs that involve only small parts of the task” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Following this, the management could enhance the lawyer assistants' task identity by allowing them to try finish some small and simple non-litigation cases totally by themselves. By doing so, it could not only help them to build up their self confidence and self approval, but also make them feel more meaningful and successful for their job. Simultaneously, the more challenging tasks the lawyer assistants handle with, the more sense of responsibility they would feel for the work.

Work redesign feedback from job

According to Hackman & Oldham (1980), “feedback from the job is thought to enhance knowledge of the results of the job” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). In our case, only four participants answered they helped with the cases, and estimate how they have performed from how successful those cases were done in the end. For the rest of participants, they usually only hear feedback on their working performance from their supervisors, this is not always objective as bias could occur by people's subjective thinking. To be more fair and normalized, the law firm could establish a more comprehensive and competitive rewards and promotion systems. The quality of the working performance of the lawyer assistants can be well measured by certain standards, but not just by the lawyers' judgment. With a more fair evaluation system, it will not only increase the lawyer assistants' working motivation, but also higher their commitment to the law firm.

Work redesign interdependence

“Highly interdependent jobs provide increased contact and more opportunities to communicate what each worker requires”(Morgeson , Nahrgang & Humphrey, 2007; Salas, Rozell, Mullen, & Driskell, 1999). To increase the interdependence of the lawyer assistants, Zhongyuan could strengthen the corporate culture of “teamwork” inside the law firm. The interview has shown that between the lawyer assistants they have a harmonious relationship with each other, but as the detailed work tasks are different for everyone usually, the cooperation is actually not very strong. The law firm could encourage more lawyer assistants to join in some big cases, which they could learn from each other and help with each other, and sharing responsibility and interdependence for the connections to each others’ work. Then, their assisting work is no long just simply trivial, but should be a real teamwork which could play a significant influence together on the whole case.

In addition, the result has showed the majority of study participants have already high level of task significance, social support, interaction outside the organization, and feedback from others respectively, despite of their irrelevance to the overall job satisfaction in this study, these variables are still the preponderance the law firm has which they should retain according to the work (re)design theory. Especially social support, Morgeson, Nahrgang & Humphrey (2007) highly recommended social support as one of the best predictors of job satisfaction because “social support incrementally predicted satisfaction but was not related to increased training and compensation requirements” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

All in all, Zhongyuan law firm could implement the work re-design according to their own specific situation, try their best to “maximize the outcomes they are interested in and minimize the negative impact on other desirable outcomes” (Morgeson, Nahrgang & Humphrey, 2007).

5.2 Discussions and Limitations

After interviewing the participants based on the theory framework of work design, some discussion points are brought up as below:

From the profile of research participants, it shows the working hours in total of all the lawyer assistants are not exactly the same, it differs from 36-45 hours per week. Some of them mentioned the over-time working was not included even. And the amount of the lawyers they assist is also different. All of these might cause the difference on the workload of everyone, which will probably be an important factor for heightening the turnover rate. So, how to build up a more fair, formal and complete management systems inside a law firm could be discussed in the future studies.

And during the interview, when one participant was asked “*How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?*” She answered with great complain: “*My instructors let me know always how I perform in my job, between co-workers we also talk about the performance problems, as even we work very hard and have done a good job, but our salaries are not even 1/10 of the lawyers’, what we gave is not equal to what we get, I think it’s not fair.*” (participant T). According to Herzberg’s two-factors theory, salary is one of the hygiene factors which will lead to dissatisfaction. In this current study, the focus is more on work (re)design, the remuneration system has not been discussed yet. It might be a topic for further research to find out what are the main reasons that caused so much difference in treatments between the lawyers and the lawyer assistants in the general legal services’ field.

Moreover, this research verify only the level of autonomy is relevant with the overall job satisfaction. It might imply that there are other measures which are with more Chinese characteristics could predict better job satisfaction of the job incumbents in China. It is advisable to use this study to make a proper questionnaire in Chinese that could be administered to all layer assistant in future and to other employees as well.

As the whole interview was conducted within a short time, limitations on the interacting with the interviewees was inevitable. This was partly because most lawyer assistants who joined the interview were still in their working time, so they needed to go back to their work immediately after the interview was finished. Because of the interview was conducted in Chinese, the translation of the transcription in English could be not totally precise due to the subjective understanding by the researcher. Besides, a few interview questions have been modified after the interview and later they were sent via emails to all the participants for

answers, it might make the research less coherent. Furthermore, sub-questions were neglected when the questionnaire was designed, that caused some ambiguity like not all the three aspects of autonomy were mentioned by the study participants in question 1. At last, this is only a qualitative case study with small samples, the findings of this research cannot represent all the law firms in China.

What is more, considering the nature of qualitative research, it also has some downsides. Like it is more difficult to determine the validity and reliability of linguistic data and the extent of influence that the researcher had over the results. For example, researcher bias will be built in and unavoidable. Thus, there is more subjectivity involved in analyzing the data. Moreover, replicability is very difficult. To remedy these, a quantitative research is recommended for future studies as validity test and confirmatory analysis can be implemented well and the cost for quantitative researches is much lower, it saves more time as well compared to qualitative researches.

Nevertheless, this qualitative research can be a preliminary study in the legal service business in China, from which it helped to understand in general the current level of the lawyer assistants' job satisfaction in Zhongyuan Law Firm, also found out the most relevant factors on this. And related to that level, some proposals on work re-design to increase job satisfaction have been brought forward for the managements' reference to decrease the turnover rate in future.

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Appendix A. The questionnaire

备注 1: 以下问卷的用途只作为本人硕士毕业论文的研究问题所用，一切资料将保密，多谢你的信任和合作。(**The use of following questionnaire is only for a research in my master thesis, all the personal information will be in confidential, thank you for your trust and cooperation.**)

备注 2: 专业词语翻译参考 (Translations of the key words)

- **Autonomy** — the degree to which the job gives the worker freedom and independence in scheduling work and determining how the work will be carried out. (自主性: 工作中让员工有多少实质上的自由, 独立性以及让员工能自行安排工作进度及决定何种工作方法的程度。)
- **Task variety** — the degree to which a job requires employees to perform a wide range of tasks on the job. (工作多样性: 工作中的任务所需多样性的程度。)
- **Task significance** — the degree to which the job has a perceivable impact on the lives of others, either within the organization or the world at large. (工作重要性: 工作对于他人的生命或工作有多少影响力的程度。)
- **Task identity** — the degree to which a job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work. (工作完整性: 工作中的任务是否完整及工作段落如何辨认出成果的程度。)
- **Feedback from job** — the degree to which the job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance. (工作反馈: 工作中让员工个人直接而清楚地获知自己工作绩效情形的程度。)
- **Social support** — the degree to which a job provides opportunities for advice and assistance from others. (社会支持: 工作中让员工获得帮助和建议的机会的程度。)
- **Interdependence** — the degree to which the job depends on others and others depend on it to complete the work. (互相依存性: 工作中员工要完成整件工作所需互相依赖的程度。)

- Interaction outside the organization — the extent to which the job requires employees to interact and communicate with individuals external to organization. (组织外的互动性：工作中员工需要与组织外的个体沟通和互动的程度。)
- Feedback from others — the degree to which others in the organization provide information about performance. (他人反馈：组织内他人提供工作绩效信息的程度。)

General information
基本资料

Gender:

性别:

Age:

年龄:

Marriage Status:

婚姻状况:

Education:

教育程度:

Tenure:

在职时间:

How many lawyers you work for:

你通常为多少个律师工作:

How much time for each lawyer every week:

每星期为各律师工作的时间大约是多少:

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer:

为不同的律师工作所要完成的任务有重大的区别吗:

1. What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?
在工作中你有多少实质上的自由和独立性，以及能自行安排的工作程度?
2. How much task variety does your job require you to perform?
你的工作需要你执行任务的多样性程度是多少?
3. How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?
你的工作对于他人的生命或工作的影响力程度有多少，是在组织内还是在组织外的?
4. Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

你的工作中的任务是否完整以及工作段落如何辨认出成果的程度？

5. How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?
在工作中能让你个人直接而清楚地获知自己工作绩效情形的程度是多少？
6. How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?
你的工作给你提供多大的机会去聆听他人的意见和接授他人的帮助？
7. How much does your job depend on others (e.g. the lawyers, other lawyer assistants) and others depend on it to complete the work?
在完成工作中你需要与他人(如律师，其他律师助理)密切合作的程度有多少？
8. How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?
你的工作需要你有多经常与公司外的人产生沟通联系？
9. How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?
你从其他人（主管或同仁）当中清楚获知的回馈信息有多少？
10. All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)
总的来说，你对你的工作满意程度是多少？

This is the end, thank you very much for your time and cooperation.
本问卷到此结束，非常感谢你的合作和宝贵时间。

Translations of questionnaire is based on the reference from:
Ben-Hsien Wang (2002), <Studies on the Relationship between Job Characteristics Model and Work Satisfaction the employee in a national university as a research objective>, National Sun Yat-sen University.

问卷翻译主要参考：

王本贤（2002），《工作特性模式與工作滿足關係之研究-以某國立大學職員為研究對象》，國立中山大學人力資源管理研究所。

Appendix B. Transcriptions

Transcriptions

Lawyer assistant (A)

General information

Gender: Male

Age: 24

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 1.5 years

How many lawyers you work for: 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 20 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Not much difference, all are just assisting work.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Little, as I need to serve and assist two lawyers at the same time, and these two lawyers take care of different kinds of cases, I could learn a lot of different things. Sometimes I also tell my opinions on the cases, but only the lawyers have the authority to guide and decide, I don't have much experience on carrying out the work independently.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Mainly the variety is not so much, most are ancillary work, like drawing up a rough writ, copying, binding up documents, service of legal process, visiting the local industrial and commercial bureau and the Land and Resources Bureau, to assist the lawyers to investigate some companies' or personal situations of their credit standing and respectability.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

So far I don't feel my work is that important to others, as they are all simple assisting work, very often I cannot even find the sense of worth from my job.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

Usually I only join one section of the whole case, because the core part of the case shall be handled by the chief lawyer as the job is already out of my experience and ability, like attendance in a court and some complicated official documental writing.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

The lawyers I work for will give me some guiding opinions or suggestions, point out my deficiency in work, sometimes they also praise and give commendation if I've done a good job. So, I could know my job performance from their comments.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

Usually when I have questions at work or something I don't understand, I will turn to my colleagues asking for help. I feel us lawyer assistants would like to help each other, we also make friends in life.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

I usually work closely with my supporting lawyer, he guide me, and I assist him. The assisting work I could finish by my own, but to the whole case, the main work is done by the lawyer. Sometimes my supporting lawyer will discuss the case with me, sometimes not, he can accomplish the important part by himself.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Quite often, I need to keep frequent contacts with the companies or clients to feedback to them how were their cases going on, renew information, answer their questions etc.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Sometimes my support lawyer will directly give me some advice on my job performance, but also sometimes he let the other co-workers tell me the feedbacks on my work, both of them give comments in good manners.

- 10 If things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

In general I gave 3 points.

Lawyer assistant (B)

General information

Gender: Male

Age: 22

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 2 years

How many lawyers you work for: 1

How much time for each lawyer every week: About 40 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: I only work for one lawyer, so no difference...

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Basically I could arrange my working time freely, I only work for one lawyer, sometimes he went on business trip or when he was not at the office, after I finished the work he left for me, then I feel quite relaxed that I could do other things I like, I can surf on line or read a book, but sometimes I will also do some enquiry work, to see if I have the ability to solve some instant problems for clients or not.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Not much, most are some simple copy and typing works.. my support lawyer ever let me try handling one case by myself, but it turned out not very successfully.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Sometimes I worked very hard to finish my work, but the quality is not good enough, then I doubt on myself, I have no idea if I fit to this job or not...so I don't feel my job influence the live or work of others.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

So far I only can fulfil one part of the entire work, with my current ability it doesn't seem I could finish one case independently, which is also a problem I have concerned for a time.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

My support lawyer will tell me... I need his opinion to know the effectiveness of my task performance. I don't have enough confidence in myself, as before when I thought I have done quite a good job, but actually my boss and clients didn't think like this.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

I get along very well with my co workers, we often sit together to talk and share opinions, I like this atmosphere. When we are working, I will ask other lawyer assistants to help, as you know, you cannot always go to ask the lawyers for help, you don't want them to think you are not smart enough.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Usually my job has no need to depend on other co-workers except my supervisor. But I'd like to discuss the cases with others, to learn more... as one person's ability is limited. But my support lawyer said, I should enhance my independence on working.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

I need to interact and communicate with our clients almost every day, some of them even become my friends now.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

My support lawyer often points out my goods and bads on my job performance, still he thinks I am not active enough at work. Nevertheless in my own opinion the problem also lies on that he didn't give me the chance to finish a case by myself, which decrease my confidence as well. There are also some other co workers who have the similar situation think the same as I did, we sometimes feel there is meaningless at work.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

3 for neutral.

Lawyer assistant (C)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 25

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 2.5 years

How many lawyers you work for: 3

How much time for each lawyer every week: About 15 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: I don't think there are much difference, if there is, then maybe it is just different types of cases taken charged by different lawyers, then the detailed jobs could be a bit different from each other. For example, if helping a lawyer who is taking charge of a court case, then I need to sort out the materials and visit the court to file a case; if it's a lawyer who is doing a non- litigation practice, then I more often assist to write some legal documents.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

I think I am quite busy as I work for three lawyers at the same time. Therefore, I feel very tire sometimes. Very often it's the lawyers who tell and guide me how and when to work, I don't have the decision making power totally. If two lawyers want me to help them at the same time, but I only could serve one for them, you see, there could be collision.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

As an assistant, the most frequent work we do are as follows: First of all is to help the lawyers to sort out all the documents, that's including copying, typing, binding etc. Secondly is to help him filing a case and go to visit some related departments searching for credit certificate and deposit certificate; Thirdly is to draw up some simple legal writings. To me they are just similar routine tasks.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Because we assist different lawyers, the work will be also different. For example, when I assist to help the case of the disadvantaged in the community, like in the cases of labour dispute, I act for the workers, then I feel I have much responsibility on it as I think I am helping the weak party in the society, which is very meaningful. Moreover, I also feel it's very challenging to help do projects like mergers and acquisitions for big companies, I could learn a lot from it too. So, I think my job has influence to others, no matter it's inside or outside the organization, yes, more or less at least.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

If just one part or one section of work is concerned, I may say I finish them completely, but this is just one part of the whole case, the detail requirements of the work is usually explained by the lawyers we work for, he will conduct me how to do it. After I finish the work, I will hand them in to him for check, if it is ok, then my working performance is approved, if it's

not good, then the lawyer will teach me how to modify and improve it till he is satisfied. Sometimes when i really failed to do it, then the lawyers will do the work by themselves. The job evaluation by the lawyers to me is the only standard to judge my job performance is good or not.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Some lawyers will give me suggestions according to my job performance, such as what is good, what is not good enough yet, and help me to improve it. But there are also some lawyers who think you didn't do a good job, then they don't adopt your work, they will do by themselves. Anyway, only the lawyers have the decision power to judge your performance.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

At work we often need to listen to different opinions from the co workers, as well as the suggestions from the lawyers and the requirements from the clients. Some are useful , some are not I think. But I like this kind of atmosphere, as we could learn from each other. Only sometimes when you want to ask somebody to help, it could be that he is also busy or he just tried to ignore you, that could happen, but not often.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Generally speaking, I finish my work independently, after it's done, then I hand them in to the lawyer to have a check. If they could be approved, then it can be sent to the clients. I work most closely with my support lawyer, sometimes I also discuss the cases with other lawyer assistants to share each others' ideas, then I hand in my work to the lawyers for a check up.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Very often, as you know, law firms are some kind of service company, interact and communicate with our clients and the court are very important, I am busy with this every day almost.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Both the lawyers and the colleagues will give comments on my work, of course my support lawyer's opinion is the most important. As I work for three lawyers at the same time, there are also quite different comments from them. The lawyer who take charge of non-litigation practice give me a best appraisal, maybe that is because I am better at dealing with the cases of non-litigation practices. This will also make an influence when I choose my major in the future.

10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

It shall be 3.

Lawyer assistant (D)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 23

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 1 years

How many lawyers you work for: 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 20 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer:

There are difference as it depends on the lawyers, some lawyers only want us to do simple copying work, sort out documents and do simple writings, those are comparable trivial work; some other lawyers will hope me to join in his case, to help in every section, including the initial program formulation and implementation for substantive work, so I could really learn a lot from it.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Usually I can arrange my working time freely, but sometimes two lawyers need me to help at the same time, then I have to refuse one. when it was too busy, I will use this as an excuse too (one lawyer ask me to help, then I answered I was helping the other one), to refuse some work.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

As I have mentioned, my job task comprise trivial office work like copying, simple writings, phone calls etc.. and assisting the lawyer proceeding our cases, that is including the initial program formulation and implementation for substantive work. So, to me my tasks are quite various.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Sometimes just to work, I didn't think too much. it was often too busy then we need to work overtime. if there is influence, then it could be to assist the lawyers and enhance efficiency in the case we are handling, and also help to the realization of our clients' rights, is this can be

the affect both inside and outside the organization? But in the reality people paid, but not always with gains as return.

4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

With different lawyers then my tasks will be also different, if just completed one part of the work, I cant really see any effect from my work; but if I has participated in every link of the case, then I can recognize the impact from my effort.

5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

The lawyer will directly give me guidance, and the case can be successful or not at the end can make me know my working performance directly.

6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

Sometimes we were very busy, we even don't have the time to develop friendship between colleagues, but it doesn't mean our relationship is poor, just work is work. However, when it's necessary, colleagues and me will still discuss the difficulty of the cases, the lawyers will also often give an opinion, I am quite happy to accept the job tasks and guidance for me, that helps me grow.

7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

One person's ability is limited, but as our tasks are usually independent, I'll first try by myself to finish it. If it is really beyond my abilities, I will discuss with my guiding lawyer to get inspiration. So, at work the cooperation with the lawyer is most frequent.

8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

I need to keep in contacts with our clients very often, and not just the clients, also some other business partners and organizations from the local government.

9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

The lawyer will give me appropriate guidance, and as there are comparison and competition between the lawyer assistants, we will have comments on each other. but the most important feedback is from our guiding lawyers as they know our work best. oh, yes, sometimes also feedbacks from clients, because I must contact the clients directly for work, so the comments from my clients are also very important.

10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

I give 4 points.

Lawyer assistant (E)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 26

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 8 months

How many lawyers you work for: 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 15-20 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Not much difference. We are doing the most simple work, not much skill necessary.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Mostly I will do whatever the lawyer ask me to do. Sometimes when I am too busy and too tired, I would make an excuse to say I have too much work already, cannot take more. Anyway, even if I work more hard, I am still a common assistant, my salary wouldn't be higher.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Almost every day I do the same things, copying, proofread the documents, phone calls etc. I don't see much variety in my work.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Little influence. sometimes I think it is unfair to the assistants without the practising licence yet, we can only be assistant, and do some of the unimportant simple task, we have a lower level. therefore, I feel such work is really not nice.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

I was just doing some simple assisting work, without integrity at all. sometimes a case was finished or not, I do not know at all because I was only involved in one small part of it, but not the whole.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Sometimes people do not tell about my performance but I will know anyway, after all, how much effort you spent on your work, you are the person who know it best.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

The relationship between most of my colleagues and I is very good as we might have similar situations at work. No matter when we are at work or off work, we get along pretty well , and also help with each other.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Mostly I need to finish my work by myself. About the cooperation with others, then it shall be with the lawyers, after the work is done, if the lawyers are not satisfied, then the amendments must be done according to their opinions.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Sometimes, when the lawyers I assist are busy, then I need to call clients or receive call from clients to explain how their cases are going? And feedback their ideas to the lawyers.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Mostly it's the lawyers who tell me about my performance. I seldom go to ask people about this, I feel a bit strange to ask it.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

2 points.

Lawyer assistant (F)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 30

Marriage Status: Married

Education: Junior college

Tenure: 8 years

How many lawyers you work for: all the lawyers

How much time for each lawyer every week: 35 hours for total

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: no difference.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

I have the whole independence. I could arrange my time freely as there is no certain regulation I need to follow, I could decide to do 3 or 5 files a day.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

I am a filing clerk in this law firm, I need to code all the finished cases and save them into the computer. It's like some assembly-line work, so not much variety.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

As I said, my work is a bit like those assembly line work, everyone could do it. But if those work were not done, then the management for the files will be in a mess. So, I think my work has its value to reach good management in our law firm.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

What I need to do is some simple binding and typing work, that repeats every day. When a lawyer finish his case, then he will pass it to me for filing in the computer, after this, all the documents will be sent to the depot, then I finish my task.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

My job is a bit different from others I think, usually no one will come to keep an eye on me, sometimes the financial manager will come to have a check in the file, for the rest I am my own boss on deciding the quantity and quality of my work, if there is no big mistakes found out by the lawyers, then I think I have done a good job. I like my job, it's not very important but it has its impacts.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

I am always finish my work by myself and seldom need others' help. On the contrary, I do help the lawyers and assistants to do some copy and trying work, I would like to help them, after all I have plenty of time to finish my work, so i usually try to help the others as much as possible, thus I have a very good relationship with my co-workers.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

All are done by myself, as I have my own case need to be taken care, it's not necessary at all to depend on others. Oh, it could be when the files are too many and heavy, i will ask some male colleagues to move them.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

In my situation, it's not necessary for me to contact the people or organization external to our law firm, maybe that happens more often to other lawyer assistants.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Not with any, but I think they all like me, just it's not common to give comments to others' work I guess.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

I think 3.

Lawyer assistant (G)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 27

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 3 years

How many lawyers you work for: 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 20 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: No

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

The work on legal service is with much freedom, you could choose how and when to work freely if handling some cases outside. But as an assistant, the boss has the final decision on it.

2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

I have simple and repeating work like typing and copying, also have some complex work with high level of skills. For example, when I do the legal writings, I need to use specific legal terms, and when I do a in-depth research on cases to see if different expressions would lead to different results on the case confirmation, then the good use of basic legal knowledge and the skills on legal action are very important.

3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Legal act or an event will lead to a certain legal consequences, to both the legal representative and the agents ad litem. The agency's work will of course affect the rights and interest of the clients, also their judgement. So there is no point to say if these are not important.

4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

Cases are usually handled under senior lawyers guidance, the core issues are all by their inspection, the degree on how much I join in cases is quite different each time. Some times I only join part of it, sometimes I finish the simple ones like writing business contracts by my own.

5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

I could see my job performance from my work ability and work attitude, like the satisfaction from my boss and how the case ends which met my expectation or not, that is working ability I meant, about the working activity, I will check I am on time or not and my dress suitable for my job or not.

6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

On the premise of no conflicts of rights and interest from each other, we will share our opinions on work, and I would like to listen to other's advise too, this is also a rational regal worker should do.

7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Other lawyer assistants' work wouldn't be influenced by mine usually, so for the simple work I usually do it all by myself, for some complicated cases, I am more inclined to seek help from colleagues, to ask for their opinions.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Very often I must say. As there are many chances I need to go outside to handle our cases, like visiting the court, the local judicial bureau, our clients etc..

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

As an assistant, if I was not doing good enough in my job, my boss will instruct and let me know what was going wrong.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

3.

Lawyer assistant (H)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 27

Marriage Status: Married

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 2.5 years

How many lawyers you work for: most of time 1

How much time for each lawyer every week: not sure but I must be there when needed.

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Not actually.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

As long as I could finish my work within the required time, then I could manage how I work and plan the schedule freely.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

My work are usually quite simple and similar, they are mainly some administration work like fax, phone calls, copies, delivering documents to different departments etc.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

The quality of my work will influence the whole team's work outcome.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

I will finish the simple work by myself, sometimes I also join some part of work in special cases.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

The effectiveness of my task performance need to be judged by my instructor.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

Some of the work I need the assistance from my co-workers, thus we have built up a good relationship.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Although our tasks look like quite independently, still when I integrate and conclude all the information of the cases, it's possible I need to ask my co-workers for some help.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Very often, especially the interaction with our clients, I answered their questions on phone and feedback their opinions to the lawyer I assist.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

My instructor will give me some guidance and periodically.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

I feel reasonably satisfied, so it's 4.

Lawyer assistant (I)

General information

Gender: Male

Age: 25

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 2 years

How many lawyers you work for: 3

How much time for each lawyer every week: not more than 10 hours for each one

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer:

There are some differences, when we deal with cases about litigation , we need to write some legal documents, besides, we also participate in trial. And when we do the non-litigation business, we need more often to keep contacts with clients, things usually get more trivial and complicated.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

At work, I can share my ideas with the lawyers, and discuss together on some difficult issues, join the decision making process. About the arrangement of work, most of time I could arrange it by myself.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Quite much, as mentioned earlier, my tasks includes cases about litigation , I need to write some legal documents, and participate in trial. I also help with non-litigation business, then I need to keep contacts with clients, things usually get more trivial and complicated.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Of course it will have influence on others, if the work is not good , then firstly that would affect our clients' interest, secondly it might damage our law firm's reputation, so we must do our work carefully.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

For litigation business, I mainly do the paper work but not totally participate in trial. For non-litigation business, most of time I finish the whole cases by ourselves, then I hand them to the lawyer for a check.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Often, I could know I am doing a good job from the approval of my boss and the lawyers.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

I have a good friendship with my colleagues personally. As to the work, most of time I take care of my own cases, but sometimes I also ask help from others and they would like to help me too.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Usually I could finish the work by myself, but the quality could be better if discussing and cooperating the cases with others.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

To me it's very often, keeping frequent contact with my clients that is one of the important task I need to do. Besides, I also visit the court and communicate the people working there often.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

It's easy to know my performance good or not just by looking how my boss' reaction.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

I will give 4 points.

Lawyer assistant (J)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 22

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 1 years

How many lawyers you work for: 1-2

How much time for each lawyer every week: That depends on how busy it could be, sometimes more than 30 hours, sometimes not even with enough work.

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Not with much difference, maybe working for different lawyers, the job details and requirement they want could be a bit different from each other.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

I would say at this stage there is not much opportunities to finish my work independently or make my own decisions on the cases, I usually take orders from my support lawyer. Though I did have some research and learning opportunities, like reading and practice of the case

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

My job is to assist my support lawyer with the cases he took, but mostly I help with typing and copying, contacting clients, or filing legal documents. Not much special or various I think.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

I could say at this stage of my work it is not very important to others, because so far I am still fresh and learning, I need to keep on learning from the experienced lawyers on how to deal with various cases.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

Most are just part of the job, especially at the practice lawyer stage, mainly we learn from the lawyers, try to help as assistants, sometimes the lawyers will tell us their ideas, then we need to type them out, under the guidance of the lawyers we formalise the documents we have done, so I can not say our work could be done totally independently.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

It's quite often to hear from my instructing lawyers about my performance, as the legal work requires us to have a detailed thinking and with professional knowledge, when I deal with one case for the first time, I need to search information by myself, and do my part of work under the lawyers instruction, it's not avoidable if there is criticism, but I appreciate the comments they gave to me.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

Usually everyone is busy with their own job, but it's possible we discuss some special cases together sometimes...I don't think that is sensible if there is no communications between colleagues, this is an important factor for having a good working environment.

7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Generally speaking, each of us handle and assist with different cases, but legal work requires a highly professional knowledge, for some difficult cases we need to work together, I do need to ask advice from others, that is much better than work alone.

8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Almost every day, especially when the lawyers are busy, it's me who need to take care of giving the information to the clients, and if we need to hand in documents to the court, I also need to interact with the judges.

9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

My instructor will let me know how I performed for my work after the documents I wrote or one case has been done, so I know clearly what I could do better.

10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

It's 3, neutral.

Lawyer assistant (K)

General information

Gender: Male

Age: 27

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 3 years

How many lawyers you work for: 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: It depends, sometimes the whole week I only work for on lawyer.

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Not that I could know actually.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

I think I could arrange my work independently, when my boss gave me the work, I would check materials, and give my own judgement to some important issues on the case.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Some work is more complex than others, in general most of them are simple and repeating routines, not much different.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

The quality of my work will surely influence the progress of the whole case inside the organization.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

I usually finish one part of the whole, if my boss is satisfied with it and adopt the work, then I know I have done a good job.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

I could know the effectiveness of my work, after I finished them, I handed them in to my boss, the lawyer would check them, to see they are qualified or not. Besides, I could know some my work performance from the progress of the case, if everything went on well, the final result is in line with my own judgement, then that meant I did it good. On the contrary, if things went wrong, not reach my expectation, that meant there must be problems with my performance.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

My colleagues and me discuss a lot the cases, and we also develop a good friendship.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Most of the work I finish independently, when in the situation I am not sure with the solution, then I will ask for others' help.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Very often, not just the contact with our clients, but also I assist the lawyers to go to different places to investigate the cases and interview people.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

After I submit my work, I usually hear from my boss about my work performance very soon, as he would check them and correct them if necessary.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

I feel neutral, so I choose 3.

Lawyer assistant (L)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 22

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 7 months

How many lawyers you work for: 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: about 20 hours for each lawyer.

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Not much difference.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

As a paralegal, I am still in the learning stage, my work is mainly to help the lawyers with their guidelines. But the work could offer me an opportunity to develop my creativity and insight when discussing the case with my boss and colleagues.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Not much, mostly are some paperwork, checking and looking for materials that are useful for the cases, sorting out documents, copies, calling customers and answering phone calls as well, something like that.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Law firm as a social agency we provide legal service for the government, enterprises and individual citizens, so advice and judgments provided by the lawyers will influence the government and corporate decision-making, behaviour, and thus affect the social and economic development and processes. Therefore, the law firm's work is important, as the part of law firm, although we are just assistants, there is no doubt we have influence outside the organization.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

As a lawyer assistant, I cannot finish one case totally by my self yet, but I will join the work and help it proceeding. Sometimes I take care of one part of it, and other co-workers finish the rest, then we could achieve the specialization of work.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

I get feedbacks from my clients and could know my performance a bit from the progress of the case but not much I think.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

A harmonious relationship among colleagues could help a lot, like we often discuss work problems at lunch time, I could always listen to the views of others and seek help from them.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

My work requires me to work closely with my colleagues, especially my support lawyers. As I am new here, for each stage of the case, I need to report to my guiding lawyers in order to carry out the next step.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

No matter it's a litigation case or a non-litigation case, it's always important to keep close contacts with our clients. We see each other in a meeting, or have discussions on phone almost every day.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

My boss and colleagues at work will discuss with each other, to point out some deficiencies in my work, such as the drafting of documents which I should have noticed the problems but I did not, on the other way, I got praise when I have done a good job.

10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

So far I will give 3.

Lawyer assistant (M)

General information

Gender: Male

Age: 23

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 1 month

How many lawyers you work for: 1

How much time for each lawyer every week: 40 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Not that I know

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Usually when there is a new case, my guiding lawyer will let me do what I could do first according to my current knowledge and experience, then he will point out my mistakes when I submit my work.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Only few, currently I am doing some simple work like copies, communications with clients, phone calls etc. Gradually I hope to do more complex work like writing pleadings.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

So far, my work has not much influences to others I think, because they will be corrected by the lawyers first.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

I only take care partly of the case.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

My guiding lawyer will tell me directly how I perform on my work, so I know I have done it good or not quite clearly.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

It's very easy to develop a nice friendship inside our law firm, I am new here, I get lots of help from my boss and co-workers.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

My work connects very much to my guiding lawyers' , I do need others' help when at work, and cooperation as well, I will ask questions whenever necessary.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

It's part of my daily job to do communications with our clients, and sometimes go to visit the courts together with my support lawyer.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

I am still new here, I didn't get much feedback yet, I work very hard now and also want to learn more, so I believe I will get appreciation soon.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

Currently 3.

Lawyer assistant (N)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 25

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 1.5 years

How many lawyers you work for: about 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: about 20 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer:

Yes, based on the nature of work for different lawyers, then my tasks are also different. For example, if it's a litigation case, I need to make court documents, and then deliver to the court, and keep in touch with the related parties; if engaged as a consultant to assist lawyers in the unit of the consultation exercise, then I need more time to review materials, legal opinions and legal advice as to the answer.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

At this stage, I do not think I have the ability to arrange my own progress. I think I have other capabilities to be developed to improve.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

A lot, for instance, data auditing, consultation, assisting with investigation and obtaining evidence, and other paperwork like official writing, record comprising etc.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

I think my work is relatively important because i am usually responsible for the data auditing, all legal advice must be based on a number of simplifying analysis of information, problem-solving is possible step by step. On the other hand, my tenure is not very long, the customer would like directly feedback to the attorneys, it is difficult to know my work is important or not from the clients' points.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

That depends on the complexity of the project. If it's some daily advice, then I can follow and finish it by myself. If it is more important projects, then i am generally responsible for drafting the draft instrument.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Little. The reason is that our law firm does not establish a sound performance evaluation system, I only could hear from my guiding lawyers about my performance, thus this may have some subjective evaluation.

6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

Because relatively few colleagues are working together, the project I am responsible for is relatively independent, so I think in addition to direct assistance to lawyers, I didn't get many opportunities for help and advice from others.

7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Most of my work must be checked by the lawyer I assisted before I hand in the report to my clients, so I think from this way we reach the "cooperation."

8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Very often I need to visit the court, the local procuratorial organization, and of course also the clients.

9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

From time to time my guiding lawyer will tell me how I perform in my job, but between colleagues I don't think we talk about this often as we usually finish our own work independently, everyone takes care of different cases, we don't know the details of others' case, so it's hard to give comment on this. The disadvantage is we cannot learn from each other actually, also not easy to get progress.

10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

A bit dissatisfied, so 2.

Lawyer assistant (O)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 23

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: half year

How many lawyers you work for: about 1

How much time for each lawyer every week: 38 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: No, so far I only has the experience to work for one lawyer.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Basically I work under the guidance by the lawyer, but I can also put forward my point of view, but the lawyer decides to adopt them or not.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Some but not much, as an assistant, we have both complex and simple work. The simple work is about filing and collation of documents; the complex work is about to write specific legal instruments, such as the complaint, pleadings, legal opinions and the word agent.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

I think that even though the work is trivial, but because each case are with vital interests to our clients, and my job is to affect the interests of the parties is ultimately protected or not, if we do good, customers will give us a high evaluation, so I think my job has an impact both inside and outside the organization.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

Since my participation in the work time is very short, so I rarely complete a separate case. Mainly I work under my guiding lawyers' instruction, learning by doing, and also learn from the seniors. So only part of the participatory work are done.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Sometimes I am aware of my own achievements, but more evaluation is given by the guiding lawyers. Sometimes out of bias, because the lack of experience, feel good about myself, but in fact my work result is not recognized by my colleagues, that could happen.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

Our new colleagues regularly discuss issues on the cases, we have good cooperation, now we are all in the initial stage, competition is not very strong.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Most closely with the guidance of legal counsel, the final point should be from them.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

I spend a great deal of time with our clients together to discuss the cases, offer them advice and hear their feedbacks etc.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Basically, information is obtained from the guiding lawyers. If you have the cooperation with other colleagues, some of my work will be evaluated by them.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

Not satisfied or dissatisfied, neutral.

Lawyer assistant (P)

General information

Gender: Male

Age: 25

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 2 years

How many lawyers you work for: about 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 20 hours, overtime working hours excluded.

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: I would say no difference.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Independence is relative, but I usually don't self-organize my work or join making decisions on the cases.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Not as much as I expected, I feel my job task is more about clerical work, such as copying, collating information, delivery service of documents, but not about professional legal services.

3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

No matter it's to the lawyers or clients, I consider the influence are very big. Because our job is to solve the problem for others, and to obtain benefits. Only if we work well, then we could achieve good economic returns.

4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

After gaining two years of assistant's experience, I feel good that I can independently complete some not particularly complicated case, of course, for the large, complex cases, I will complete the initial legislation program before hand it in to the guide lawyers, if we reach agreement, then I can act more independent; if we have different opinions, I am finally in his view-based, or try to make a balance of them .

5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Basically, when seeing the completion of a case, generally I already known a bit that my work results. However, if reflected in the income, I am afraid that it is still asymmetric input and output. Sometimes work very hard, the customers are very satisfied, but it's not assigned to a high income, income does not reflect the work which is one of the biggest problem.

6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

I am generally pro-independence to complete my task. But when the things are beyond my own capabilities, I will go to my instructor for help, because he is the ultimate views of decision-makers.

7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

I contact most frequent with my instructors, before I obtain my license and to practice law, they are our leaders.

8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

My job requires me to interact and communicate the people external to our law firm very frequently, especially to the companies and clients that has a big business with us.

9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

The guiding lawyers will tell us the working direction and give the final summary evaluation, but we need to manage the work process. All my colleagues are required in the annual year-end summary meeting to evaluate and summarize the work, but I do not know that is sincere or not.

10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

To be honest, dissatisfied.

Lawyer assistant (Q)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 25

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 2 years

How many lawyers you work for: about 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 25 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: no difference

1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Relatively free and independent, in terms of creativity and judgment which I could make on the cases, I need to consider if my decision is permitted by law, and it is reasonable or not.

2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

My work tasks are usually including making legal documents, writing contracts and giving advice to our clients, so it's all about legal service and knowledge on law, I don't think there are much variety in my tasks.

3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

In the work team, the quality of my work will affect the entire team's work quality and reputation. In organizations, we play an important role for the entire social and economic development, also the social harmony.

4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

Most of my work is not a whole piece, because it is a project, there is division of labour. But our achievements of the cooperation group, everyone shared, have their own devotion.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Evaluation from the supervisor, customer feedback, and from communication in general with the colleagues i can know that my job performance situation.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

Most of the work is done with my colleagues together, listen to their views, if I don't understand I will seek help, mutual support among colleagues is a solid guarantee of progress.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Yeah, as lawyer assistants we work for different lawyers, then the cases are also different, but I still need to work closely with my colleagues most of time, and things can not work if without the signatures from the lawyers.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Very often as one major mission of my job is to giving advice to our clients and answering their questions or enquiry, help them to know our law firm better.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

If it's necessary to correct and improve the work, my supervisor will remind me and help me faster learning and improve the professional level.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

At this moment, I feel neutral.

Lawyer assistant (R)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 27

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 4 years

How many lawyers you work for: about 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 20 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: A little bit.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Usually the supervisor decided the work tasks to me, then before the deadline to handing them in, I could arrange my time and schedule freely.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Usually there are simple and complex tasks. The simple ones are such as collection and collation, which not much skilled required. The more complex ones are like studying about case materials and deep research into the case, to do this good you must have rich experience and enough professional knowledge about law. So I think they are quite different.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Lawyer's work is also a team work, even among the lawyers and a trainee solicitor or assistant. Each person's work no matter good or bad will affect the others to a certain extent.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

Usually I complete the whole work, but the results must be checked and determined by senior counsel.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Results of the work and the work attitude can reflect our achievements' good or bad I believed, in most cases I am still able to understand whether the performance of my work is good or not.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

As I already mentioned above, Lawyers' work are also teamwork, we give and receive advice from each other, form which we also develop a good friendship.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

When we work on the same case, we need to be responsible for each other. To complete the work that requires us a close communication among the colleagues, that is a necessary part in our daily work.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Almost every day I need to meet different kinds of people, as long as they are concerned in the cases I am doing. Most are the clients of course, building up a good relationship with the clients is very important to law firms.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Mainly I know my job performance from my supervisor, I hand in my work to him then he will check and let me know his comments on it soon.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

I am satisfied, so 4.

Lawyer assistant (S)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 24

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 1.5 years

How many lawyers you work for: 1

How much time for each lawyer every week: 36 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: I have only worked for one lawyer, so I cannot tell the differences.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Comparatively speaking, sometimes with lots of freedom, because we do not work at all times staying in office, but often outside, such as go to court, to the Trade and Industry Bureau \ Land bureau \ customers' office. So sometimes after finishing the official work, we can go off work earlier.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Mediate I think. My job tasks mainly include firstly the administration work in the office, to help the lawyers with some official writings, copies, phone calls etc. And secondly is to deliver documents to different organizations and the clients. Sometimes I also need to go for business trips.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

Our work that will affect other people, made the proceedings, for example, if successful, the interests of customers will get greater protection, if lost, then vice versa. So, even if my work is to assist the lawyer, I think it is very important.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

I do not obtain a license to practice law, I can not independently take the case, but only do some assisting work for my guiding lawyer..

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

Mainly from the extent how much my work is accepted by my guiding lawyer, if he said it's a good job, then I know I have perform my job well.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

We often need to listen to other views like the customer's advice, the lawyers' and other colleagues' opinions, this helps very much when solving problems of the difficult cases. It can be said, in the law firm, between lawyers and assistant, between assistant and assistant, we have a very close relationship.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

The contacts with my guiding lawyer is most frequently as it's him who gave me the work, and guide me how to complete it. Besides, I will also ask my colleagues' help when I meet difficulties at work.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Sometimes I meet my clients a couple times just within one day, and when I deliver documents to different organizations, I also need to explain the cases to the people who work there, so interaction and communication with individuals outside is a must in my job.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

My instructor often tell me how the performance of my work, while between the colleagues we seldom judge each other's work.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

4, reasonably satisfied.

Lawyer assistant (T)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 26

Marriage Status: Married

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 2 years

How many lawyers you work for: 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 20 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Not much difference as the work nature is similar.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Aspects and criteria must be set by the lawyer, how to complete it is my kind of thing. Lawyers usually do not ask how would you complete the process, they only care the results. So, relatively speaking, the work is with freedom. Of course, if a lot of work at the same time coming, I will become too busy, then it is very difficult to arrange all the work properly, I will consult the lawyers to re-schedule the arrangement.

2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Little, phone calls, copies, faxes, some paper work like legal writings, filing a case, handling the inquiries and feedbacks from our clients, that is it.

3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

I don't feel I have a significant responsibility for my work, as that is just how I make my living, I have worked for 2 years, I don't see my work with much important influence to others as they are trivial and simple, I often feel that everyone who finished his bachelor degree could do it well.

4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

The basic framework of the work is done by me, lawyers will make the appropriate changes. Sometimes he thinks my work without mistakes, then he need not to make any amendments, but the legal documents must be reviewed by him before they will be issued.

5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

I know the effectiveness of my task performance from my instructor and the evaluation from my clients, I could see my working quality by they are satisfied with it or not.

6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

My job do provide many opportunities for advice and assistant from others, especially from my colleagues, I remember once I made a big mistake when writing a contract for my clients, it's my co-worker found this out and remind me to correct it, I appreciate this very much.

7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

First I need to work closely with my guiding lawyers, besides, team work between lawyer assistants are also very important, you don't have to work on the same case, but to discuss some important points together always enrich your own experience and knowledge.

8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

I answer the phone calls from clients every day, also need to call and visit some companies and bureaus which are related to the cases we are handling quite often.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

My instructors let me know always how I perform in my job, between co-workers we also talk about the performance problems, as even we work very hard and have done a good job, but our salaries are not even 1/10 of the lawyers', what we gave is not equal to what we get, I think it's not fair.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

2, I feel dissatisfied indeed.

Lawyer assistant (U)

General information

Gender: Male

Age: 29

Marriage Status: Married

Education: Bachelor

Tenure: 6 years

How many lawyers you work for: 2

How much time for each lawyer every week: 20 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: No, the work is similar.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Like contract review, and the judgment I could do this independently according to my ability, but more complex contracts will be brought to the competent lawyer to review.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

From common office work to participating in some complex cases all are included, and I feel the more different things I try, the more challenge I got and more knowledge I learnt.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

I feel a great impact, because if it is my negligence, that may result in the loss of others, and affect the image of our law firm.

4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

For small projects, I will finish it wholly by myself, then my instructor will check my work and give amendments, but sometimes I only join partly of the big projects and it's a bit more difficult to identify the result.

5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

By the extent of other people's acceptance of my work I could have a clear sense that they are good enough or not.

6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

I discuss a lot the cases with my co-workers and I would like to hear their opinions too, team work is important.

7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

In order to solve problems quickly and well, you need very close cooperation with colleagues, that is what I always appreciate at my work.

8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

No matter what kind of tasks I am performing, it's inevitable to keep in close contact with our clients and other parties which are concerned.

9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Very much, I mainly know my job performance from my supervisor and peers.

10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

4, I am satisfied.

Lawyer assistant (V)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 26

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Master

Tenure: 2 years

How many lawyers you work for: 3

How much time for each lawyer every week: about 15 hours

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: I don't think so, but the work could differ from the quantity and the details.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

In most cases I work in accordance with the progress of the line, but for a limited time i can decide for myself how to distribute the workload. My creativity and judgment are based on my knowledge of law, so in an accurate statement of the case, the extent i can fully play my creativity is not great.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Not much, It's mainly contract writings, sorting out documents and other simple office daily work.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

I work for 2 years, I don't have much exciting feeling for my job but a responsibility mind is very important and necessary. No matter it's a contract writing or a trial proceedings , I have to consider how my work would influence others and the consequence, I hope my work is more of a positive impact, which will benefit to my company and give a good example to others.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

Work are often in a secondary nature, but because I need full participation in some projects, for various stages of workflow my working result still can be identified after being checked by the lawyers.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

My instructors rarely tell me whether the project would work or not, but in the follow-up work I can feel the influence from my performance. Of course, I'm just one of many among the chain, I feel happy if I could finish my work without hindering others' work.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

Our competition between groups is relatively small, because except for some necessary help from the leading lawyers, the division between us is relatively clear and can not be replaced by each other, and it is still very harmonious coexistence. But I do not believe that workplace friendship can be as general as a close friend, there will be an appropriate distance.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

If the project is to complete a legal instrument, I will complete our own part, with not much discussion, the work will be finalized by my director.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Sometimes, when I doing paper work like writing contracts, then it's not necessary to contact people outside the law firm. While if I need to help investigate a case, then doing research is a must, I have to search materials and interact and communicate with the individuals or parties which are related.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

The leading lawyer will tell me how my job performance is, while between the co-workers we evaluate each other's performance less, I think our boss know everyone's ability and working attitude very well, and will give feedback to us time to time.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

I will say 2, dissatisfied.

Lawyer assistant (W)

General information

Gender: Female

Age: 28

Marriage Status: Single

Education: Master

Tenure: 1 year

How many lawyers you work for: 1

How much time for each lawyer every week: 36-40 hours, not including overtime working

Is there significant difference between the tasks for each different lawyer: Management system due to different law firms, it will be different. I used to work at a law firm, which belongs to individual responsibility, I just need to assist the lawyer who paid me the salary, he was mainly engaged in criminal cases, so that was also what I study most. Now the law firm I work for belongs to the company management, in addition to working under my guiding lawyers instructions, I still need to comply with our company's rules and regulations, in addition, the leading lawyer engaged in a more widely business, which covering both litigation and non-litigation cases, then it requires me to master the knowledge more comprehensive.

- 1 What is the amount of freedom and independence you have in terms of carrying out your work assignment?

Most of the time, I was working independently. This is due to the rich working experience I gained from other lawyers in the early years, which is also recognized and appreciated by the lawyer I worked for now.

- 2 How much task variety does your job require you to perform?

Currently I am engaging in doing both litigation and non-litigation cases, their nature are quite different, the things I need to prepare and do are also different. With non litigation cases, they require me more to offer legal advice and act as an agent for companies. With litigation cases, my job is more incline to join investigating cases, collecting evidences, visiting the court etc.

- 3 How much does your job influence the lives or work of others, whether inside of outside the organization?

The nature of our work is about legislation, of course, it will directly affect the interests of the related parties. Internally, we provide services to our clients and if they are satisfied, that could reflect our values. So regardless of internal and external, I think our work is very important and meaningful.

- 4 Does your job involve a whole piece of work, how can the result be identified?

Most of time I participate throughout the entire workflow, I am not a fresh man, I have worked for different law firms, I am quite critical for my working quality. Luckily, so far my guiding lawyer is satisfied with it.

- 5 How much does your job provide direct and clear information about the effectiveness of task performance?

I usually know my job performance from my experience. Of course, if I could have the recognition and appreciation from my guiding lawyer and other colleagues, then it is the real achievement.

- 6 How much does your job provide opportunities for advice and assistance from others?

I think I can fully finish my own work. But sometimes, I will listen to opinions from my instructor, even though our views are often the same. But between colleagues it's hard to develop a true friendship. After all, the minds of adults in the society are more complicated.

- 7 How much does your job depend on others and others depend on it to complete the work?

Most of time, I need to work very closely with my leading lawyer together, as we are depending on each other to complete one case, for the rest I prefer to work more independently.

- 8 How often does your job require you to interact and communicate with individuals external to the organization?

Both job tasks on litigation cases and non-litigation cases require me to interact and communicate frequently with individuals external to the organization, that is no doubt on this.

- 9 How much do other people (supervisor or peers) in the organization provide information about your job performance?

Between colleagues, we will not try to evaluate each other. Because everyone's different attitudes, different thoughts, so the views on work are inevitably inconsistent, we can not say who is wrong, whose performance is not that good etc. However, the guiding lawyers know very clear how their assistants perform for work I believe, and I also hear feedbacks on my performance from my guiding lawyers.

- 10 All things considered, how satisfied are you with your job? (5=Very satisfied, 4=Satisfied, 3=Neutral, 2=Dissatisfied, 1=Very dissatisfied)

From my experience so far, I feel it's 3, neutral.