3.Determinants of Job Characteristics and Autonomy

The topic of job design and job characteristics has been studied extensively by management researchers and practitioners over the last seven decades (Herzberg, 1966; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Marchese, 1998). Since the 1930s numerous studies have supported the connection of job design and job characteristics with (i) subordinates' satisfaction (Campion, Medsker & Higgs, 1993; Pollock, Whitbred, & Contract, 2000); (ii) employees' wellbeing (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Karasek & Theorell, 1990); (iii) employee motivation, involvement and attendance (Herzberg, 1966; Griffin & Chonko, 1977); (iv) organisational commitment (Batt & Appelbaum, 1995; Cohen *et al.* 1996); (v) organisational and team performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Hackman, 1986; Campion *et al.* 1993; Wageman, 1995); and (vi) leadership (Hunt & Liebscher, 1973; Miles & Petty, 1977; Landeweerd & Boumans, 1994; Yeh, 1996).

Although it appears that there is a connection between job characteristics and job related attitudes and team performance, a review of the literature revealed that there is no agreement as to which particular job characteristics framework best explains employees' satisfaction, commitment, job involvement and employees' wellbeing (Politis, 2001a). However, it is generally accepted that job characteristics and especially autonomy are important in relation to different aspects of employees'

wellbeing and organisational outcomes. It is suggested that the autonomy of the job and some organisational characteristics play an important role in fostering organisational success (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

In relation to job autonomy instruments, a review of the literature revealed a set of job autonomy dimensions that are sensitive to expected differences between different types of jobs of advanced manufacturing technology and have been previously tested on a sample of blue-collar workers. Jackson, Wall, Martin and Davids (1992) have developed a questionnaire which consists of 22 items. The questionnaire items use a five-point Likert-type response scale: *not at all* (1); *just a little* (2); *a moderate amount* (3); *quite a lot* (4); and *a great deal* (5). Respondents indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement on the questionnaire. The questionnaire measures five job characteristics factors salient to employee wellbeing and behaviour: *timing control*, *method control*, *monitoring demand*, and *problem-solving demand* and *production responsibility*. According to Jackson *et al.* (1993: 754) *timing control* refers to individuals' opportunity to determine the scheduling of his or her work behaviour. *Method control* refers to individual choice in how to carry out given tasks. *Monitoring demand* refers to the extent of passive monitoring demand. *Problem-solving demand* reflects the more active, cognitive processing required for preventing or recovering errors. Finally, *production responsibility* refers to the employee's responsibility