# JOB SATISFACTION: A CONCEPTUAL TREATISE

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**Abstract:** Job satisfaction, as an academic concept, has gained wide attentions from the fields of management, social psychology, and practical operations in recent years. Thisstudy enlightens the framework and concept of job satisfaction. Starting from the definition of job satisfaction and reviews the author discusses the several theories for the measurement of job satisfaction.  The study explains the importance of job satisfaction, without work one loss his/her identity.So, Job Satisfaction gives happiness, efficiency, and success.

**Keywords: job satisfaction, Theories, Satisfaction**

## INTRODUCTION

Work is an important part of human life. If life is characterized as an activity, work is a form of social activity having a universal proposal. It provides not only status to individual, but also binds him /her to the society. Without work one loss his/her identity. Work serves many functions for an individual- an individual's sense of wellbeing, of doing something worthwhile, of having consideration which may be compulsive that individuals may continue to work even if they are not pressed by economic needs. If people worked for money alone, there would be no explanation for the fact that some individuals who have plenty of money still continue to work .They work to satisfy their need of self actualization and self respect. Satisfaction of needs is essential both for physical survival as well as providing man with pleasure and comforts. Thus, every man works.

## CONCEPT OF JOB SATISFACTION

The concept of job satisfaction differs a lot in its meaning. In its lateral sense job satisfaction is a combination of two words that are Job and Satisfaction.  Before defining Job Satisfaction it is desirable to clear about connotation of such words as Job and Satisfaction.

**Job** refers to collection of tasks, duties, and responsibilities which as a whole is regarded as the established assignment to individual employee. "**Work","Occupation**", **"Job","Position"**have been generally used interchangeably.

Forum (1964) defined Work as a "General activity centering on subsistence and the specific routines of this activity as occupations".

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**According to Oxford dictionary** Job is "A small, definite piece of work done in a way of one's social occupation".

**Job Satisfaction may be defined**as the sum of all negative and positive aspects related to the individual's Salary, his/her physical and emotional working conditions, the authority he/she has the autonomous usage of this authority, the level of success he/she has maintained and rewards given due to his success, the social statue maintained in relation with his/her colleagues and administrators. Individual elements do not result in job satisfaction. Job Satisfaction can only be mentioned if all these elements exist in a place in harmony. So Job Satisfaction gives happiness, efficiency, and success. There is evidence from researches that if a man is satisfied with his work, not only he is profited from it but his employer too gets benefits. Studies have revealed that job satisfaction is of great significance for the functioning of any organization**.**

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Locke. E.A (1976)** conducted the study on the causal factors in job satisfaction. Among the most important values or conditions conducive to job satisfaction are: (1) mentally challenging work with which the individual can cope successfully; (2) personal interest in the work itself; (3) work which is not too physically tiring; (4) rewards for performance which are just, informative, and in line with the individual's personal aspirations; (5) working conditions which are compatible with the individual's physical needs and which facilitate the accomplishment of his work goals; (6) high self-esteem on the part of the employee; (7) agents in the workplace who help the employee to attain job values such as interesting work, pay, and promotions, whose basic values are similar to his own, and who minimize role conflict and ambiguity.

**Jung, K.,Jae Moon, M., DeukHahm, S. (1992)** conducted the study by collected data from the Korean Income and Labor PanelStudy to explore the relationship of age, gender, and servicesector with job satisfaction. No substantial difference wasfound in the perceived job satisfaction of public employeesof different ages, but an unexpected negative association wasfound in a subsample of private employees. Korean public andnonprofit employees are more satisfied with their jobs thanprivate employees are but are less satisfied with their wagesthan with job security and job content. The study supports theexpectation hypothesis and suggests there is a gender effecton job satisfaction, particularly for wages and work environment. **Rhodes, L.D., Hammer (2000)** investigated in this study the similarity of supervisors and sub-ordinates using two aspects of personality: agreeableness and locus of

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control. They compared these similarities to job satisfaction. They found that job satisfaction tends to increase when agreeableness similarity between supervisor and subordinate increases. Locus of control similarity was not found to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction.

**Sekaran, U. (2006)** traced the paths to the job satisfaction of employees at the workplace through the quality of life, factors of job involvement and sense of competence. For this study a sample of 267 bank employees was collected .The finding of this study  indicated that personal, job, and organizational climate factors influenced the ego investment or job involvement of people in their jobs, which in turn influenced the intrapsychic reward of sense of competence that they experienced, which then directly influenced employees' job satisfaction.

**THEORIES OF JOB SATISFACTION:**

Job Satisfaction has been treated as a complex set of variables. There have been attempts to explain job satisfaction differently. A brief resume of these theories related to dynamics of job satisfaction will not be out of place. A reflection of theories will point out that in these discussion it will difficult to consider motivation as separate and apart from job Satisfaction, Although there  are both theoretical and practical differences between the two. **But, it must be noted that two are closely related and as Werniment, Toren, and Kapell(1970) points out that analysis of procedures used in  work motivation  are remarkably similar  to those used in studies of job satisfaction**. **Mullins** (**1996, p. 520)** states that "Motivation is a process which may lead to job satisfaction." Although the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction is not clear, it can be illustrated by means of the motivational theories (Mullins, 1996).

**According to Calder (2000),** Motivational theories can be classified into two categories, namely, **content theories and process theories.Mullins (1996**) concludes that the content theories of motivation are specifically related to job satisfaction and assume a direct relationship between job satisfaction and improved performance, while the process theories contemplate in more detail the relationship between motivation, satisfaction and performance. The following **content theories** will be addressed: **Maslow's needs hierarchy theory, Herzberg's two factor theory and McClelland'sachievement motivation theory. Processtheories** that will be given attention to include: **The Valence Instrumental Expectancy theory, Equity theory and Goal setting theory**. These theories endeavor to provide a supporting context for job satisfaction.

## CONTENT THEORIES

### Maslow's needs hierarchy theory

Extensive research has been conducted in the area of work motivation and satisfaction and many psychologists have attempted to explain it in terms of certain needs, interests and values. One theory that has explored these factors is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow, the individual personality is dynamic and continuously strives to satisfy a hierarchy of needs with an inherent tendency towards self actualization**(Joubert, 2000).**

Amongst others**, Abdullah(2002)** postulates that Maslow's hierarchy of needs is divided into five levels. **Edwards (1993 cited in Arnolds & Boshoff, 2001)** states that **level one** of the hierarchies refers to the satisfaction of the **psychological needs** which include the basic needs such as housing, material and financial benefits impacting positively on employee job performance.

**At level two, the safety needs** for security and protection from physical and emotional harm is prominent. At this level, the employer must provide a safe working environment, while the onus rests with individuals to ensure their own personal safety outside of the work sphere **(Abdullah, 2002)**. According to **Smith and Tisak (1993 cited in Arnolds & Boshoff, 2001**), at this level, safety and security in the form of job security and fringe benefits, have been found to enhance employee job performance.

**According to Abdullah (2002),** level three refers to the **social needs** that entail the need for affiliation focusing on the relationship with co-workers or subordinates. **Levine (1994)** concludes that at this level, social support of employees is necessary to enhance performance.

**The esteem needs** exist at **level four** of the hierarchy and is divided into two parts, namely, (i) the need for recognition and respect from others and (ii) a need for a positive self-image and self respect **(Abdullah, 2002)**. **According to Korman (1971) and Tharenou (1979) cited in Arnolds and Boshoff (2001)**, individuals with high self perceived ability and self-image are more likely to be higher achievers on task performance than those who have a low self-perceived ability, low success expectancy and low self-image.

The self-actualization needs are at the last level of Maslow's hierarchy and are arrived at when all previous levels have been satisfied to a large extent **(Heller &Hindle, 1998).** The satisfaction of self-actualization in the workplace is enhanced by creating opportunities for promotion, allowing autonomy, providing challenging assignments and the optimal utilization of individual's ability. This is specifically prevalent in the case of top management where the factors mentioned above impact positively on employee job performance **(Alpander(1990),Cranny, Smith & Stone (1992), and Mc Campbell (1996) cited in Arnolds & Boshoff, 2001**).

Although Maslow's needs theory is used extensively, wide criticism has been lodged against the theory as a lack of empirical evidence exists in substantiation for the theory (**De Cenzo&Robbins( 1988) cited in Arnolds & Boshoff, 2001).Steers andPorter (1991)** add that there is no evidence of the five categories of needs being reflected in order of satisfaction in any special hierarchy. Similarly, **Robbins et al.(2003)** posit that little support has been found for the prediction that need structures are organized along the scope suggested by Maslow.


## Herzberg's two factor theory

**According to Heller and Hindle (1998),** Herzberg's two factors is a set of motivators that drives people to achieve. **Nagy (n.d.)** asserts that Herzberg's theory consists of two dimensions known as "hygiene" factors and "motivator" factors. **According to Herzberg (1959) cited in Ruthankoon and Ogunlana (2002),** the hygiene factors also known as extrinsic factors are the parts of the jobs which create dissatisfaction but, if not present, only return the worker to a neutral point of job satisfaction. These job factors include supervision, interpersonal relations, benefits, job security, salary and working conditions. Herzberg states that hygiene issues cannot motivate employees but can minimize dissatisfaction and serve as a point of departure for motivation. On the other hand, satisfying motivator needs which are related to job tasks, job content and intrinsic aspects of the job can lead to job satisfaction, but the absence thereof cannot lead to job **dissatisfaction (Robbins, 1993).According Robbins etal. (2003),** investigations conducted by Herzberg in terms of the intrinsic (motivators) factors and extrinsic factors (hygiene) suggest that the opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction as was traditionally believed. The results of the studies reflected that the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction (motivators) and the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction (hygiene factors).

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**FACTORS THAT AFFECT JOB SATISFACTION
IN TERMS OF HERZBERG'S THEORY**
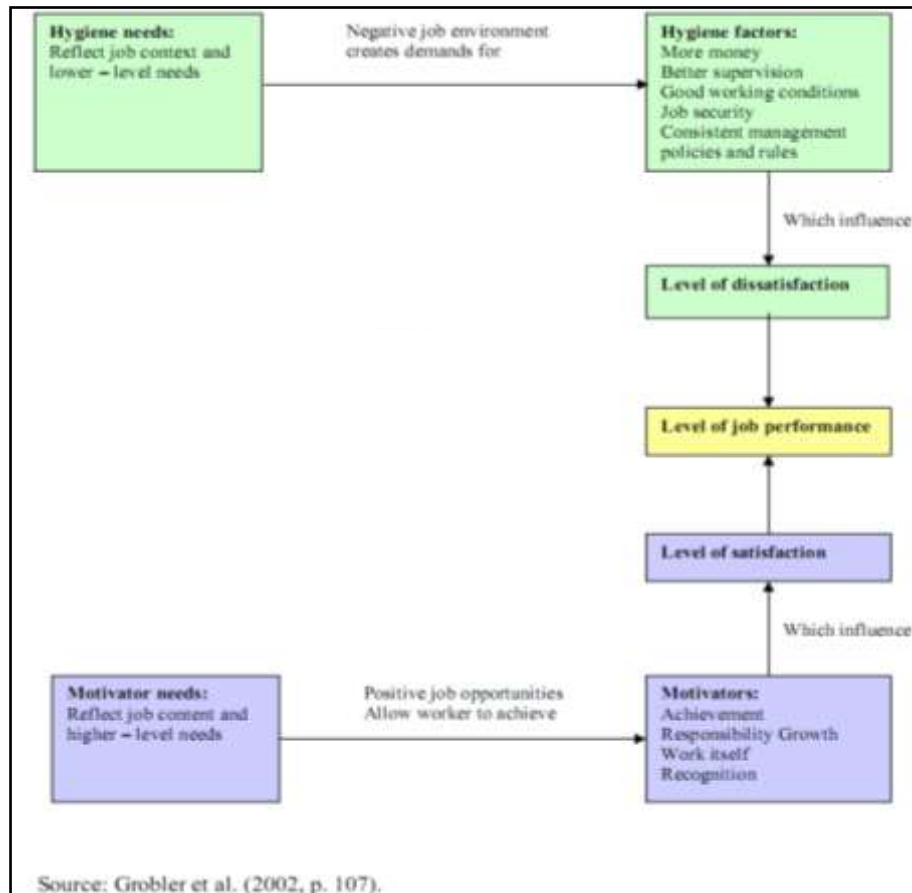


Source: Grobler et al. (2002, p. 107).

Fig. 1.1

A criticism of Herzberg's theory is that it oversimplifies work motivation. There are job factors that lead to both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Despite this criticism, Herzberg extended Maslow's needs hierarchy concept and made it more applicable to work motivation **(Abdullah, 2002).**

## McClelland's need for achievement theory

McClelland's need theory was one of the popular motivation theories in the 1950's and his theory relates to management by objectives **(Di Rodio, 2002).Robbins et al. (2003)** report that McClelland's theory focuses on the needs for achievement, power and affiliation.

The need for achievement, **According to Greenberg (1999),** is where individuals strive for goals that are challenging, but attainable, with the hope of feedback on achievement. **Greenberg (1999)** further states that this need is concerned with an individual's longing to strive for personal achievement rather than the rewards of success.

The need for power refers to individuals' desire to control their surroundings, including people and material resources. In this regard some people have a high need for personalized power while others have a high need for socialized power **(McShane & Von Glinow, n.d.).**

In terms of McClelland's need for affiliation, **Stuart-Kotze (n.d.)** states that the need for affiliation is similar to Maslow's need to belong. **Stuart-Kotze** contends that the need for affiliation manifests itself in the desire to be liked by other individuals, to be accepted in a group and to enter into warm personal relationships. **Cronje et al. (2003)** posit that research indicates that people with a high need for power and low need for affiliation make good managers, whilst individuals with a high need for achievement, in most instances, make successful entrepreneurs.

## PROCESS THEORIES

### Vroom's expectancy theory

**Vroom** regarded Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two factor theory as too simplistic and as a result put forward a model that constituted the concepts of **valence (V), instrumentality (I) and expectancy (E).** Vroom's theory is referred to as **VIE theory**. Vroom explained the scope of motivation as a process governing choices between alternative forms of voluntary activity **According to the VIE theory**; most behaviors are under the voluntary control of a person **(Abdullah, 2002**).

**According to Vroom's expectancy theory,** the success of motivation is dependent on two factors, namely, that the value of the outcome should be high and that the individual should be of the opinion that the task undertaken is attainable and will lead to the expected outcome **(Dessler, 1988).** In this regard, Vroom's theory links expectation and task accomplishment to the probability of recognition **(Luthans, 2002).** In support **Nel et al. (2004)** state that expectancy refers to an individual's belief that a certain level of effort will lead to a certain level of performance and reward.

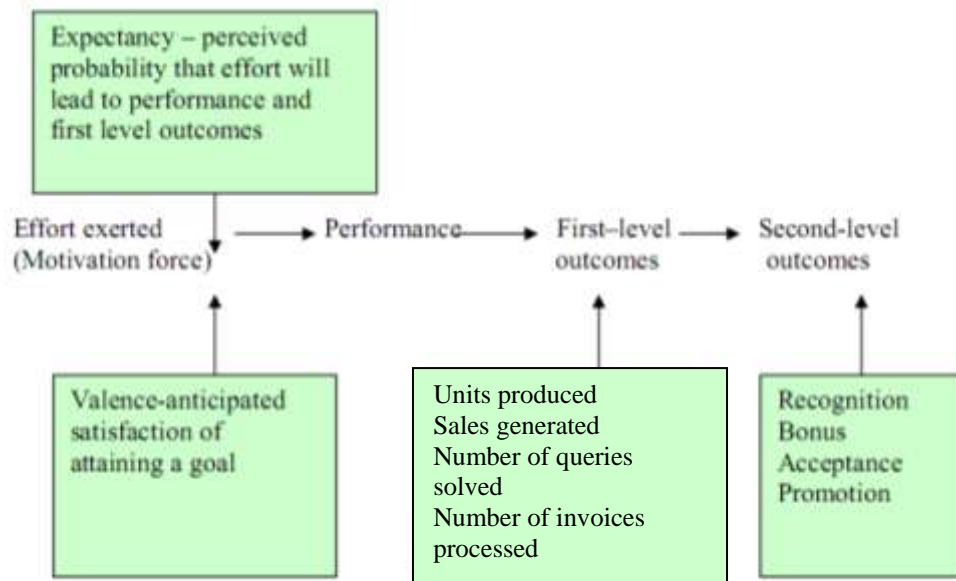## ILLUSTRATES THE KEY CONCEPTS OF VROOM'S EXPECTANCY THEORY



Fig. 1.2

Source: Nel et al. (2004, p. 318).

A criticism of Vroom's theory however, is that he did not succeed to convert motivation to perform an act into the actual performance of that act **(Bottomley,1987).** Although the theory has its criticism, most of the research evidence is supportive of the theory **(Dessler, 1988).**

## Equity theory

The Equity theory of job satisfaction suggests that individuals have a strong want to maintain a balance between what they perceive their inputs or contributions to be in relation to expected rewards **(Dessler, 1988**). In terms of the Equity theory, **Robbins(1993)** states that satisfaction is determined by an individual's input-outcome balance. The author further mentions that satisfaction occurs when perceived equity exists, and dissatisfaction results when perceived inequity exists.

### EQUITY THEORY
## Ratio Comparisons Perception

O / lA< O / lBInequity due to being under – rewarded

O / lA= O / lBEquity

O / lA> O / lBInequity due to being over – rewarded

*Where: O / lArepresents the employees; and O / lBrepresents relevant others.
Source: **Robbins (1993, p. 224).**

Fig. 1.3

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In terms of the theory, individuals regard a state of equity to exist when their job inputs in relation to their job outputs are equivalent to that of relevant others. In this regard a situation of fairness is said to exist (**Robbins, 1993**). Employees might assess their relation to friends, neighbors, co-workers, colleagues in other organisations or previous jobs they themselves have occupied (**Robbins, 1993).**

## Goal setting theory

**Locke (1968 cited in Robbins et al., 2003**) proposed that aiming towards attaining a goal is a significant source of work motivation. According to **Heery and Noon (2001),** the goal setting theory stems from the notion that the behavior of employees can be changed by influencing their goals and targets. **Nel et al. (2004)** add that employees are motivated if they are aware of what needs to be done in achieving a specific goal, irrespective of the difficulties they might encounter in doing so. They refer to the Management by Objectives (MBO) technique that harbors' employee involvement in goal-setting, decision-making and feedback.

**Heery and Noon (2001, p. 142) note** four general principles to elicit high performance and increase motivation in terms of the goal setting theory:

- Goals should be challenging but attainable;
- Goals should be specific rather than vague;
- Employees should be involved in the process, setting their own goals; and
- Goals should be measurable in terms clearly understood by employees.

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