

JOB SATISFACTION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Muhammad Sarfraz Ahmad Mirza

Govt. Degree College for Boys, Chawinda, District Sialkot.
Higher Education Department (HED), Govt. of the Punjab.

E-Mail: msamirzapk@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to review definitions and theories of job satisfaction, and factors that affect employees' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a work attitude that has considerable influence, directly or indirectly, on employees' job performance, organizational performance, and organizational productivity and success. It is concluded, based on literature review, that job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct and can be defined as employees' positive or negative feelings that they have about their job as a result of job experience at workplace. Also, it is inferred that theories of job satisfaction are not well developed and that this gap provides an opportunity to the scholars and theorists to offer a comprehensive model of job satisfaction. Moreover, there is a range of factors that affect employees' job satisfaction and can broadly be categorized into demographic, psychological and environmental factors.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, work attitude, definitions, literature review, theories

1. DEFINITIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION

The first formal definition of job satisfaction has been traced by Herzberg in the work of Hoppock. Hoppock, as cited in [1], declared that "job satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstance that causes a person to truthfully say I am satisfied with my job". Hulin and Judge wrote "job satisfactions are multidimensional psychological responses to one's job. These responses have cognitive (evaluative), affective (or emotional), and behavioral components" [2]. Other well documented definitions of job satisfaction are as follows:

- Locke viewed job satisfaction as "... a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" [3].
- Werther and Davis wrote that "job satisfaction is the favorableness or unfavorableness with which employees view their work" [4].
- Berry is of the view point that job satisfaction is "an individual's reaction to the job experience" [5].
- According to Wanous, Reiches, and Hudy, as cited in [6], job satisfaction is generally viewed as "attitudes concerning one's own job or work".
- Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn define job satisfaction in terms of "the degree to which employees feel positively or negatively about their jobs" [7].
- Robbins and Coulter defined job satisfaction in terms of "an employee's general attitude toward his or her job" [8].
- According to Armstrong, "job satisfaction refers to the attitudes and feelings people have about their work" [9]. Further, he described that favourable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction while unfavourable attitudes indicate job dissatisfaction.
- According to Spector, job satisfaction is the degree to which individuals like or dislike their jobs [10].

It can be concluded, based on the above mentioned definitions of job satisfaction, that job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct and a work attitude of employees. Moreover, it can be defined as employees' positive or negative feelings that they have about their job as a result of job experience at workplace.

An intensive review of published literature, pertaining to the concept of job satisfaction, revealed that there are different aspects in which job satisfaction is viewed by the theorists, scholars, and researchers. These are *intrinsic* job satisfaction, *extrinsic* job satisfaction [11, 12] and overall job satisfaction [11, 13, 14, 15] or *general* job satisfaction [12, 15]. Another term used in this domain is *global* job satisfaction [16].

Intrinsic job satisfaction is a function of an employee's attitudes toward tasks of the job whereas extrinsic job satisfaction is a reflection of the attitude that develops as the result of factors which are related but external to tasks of the work and are controlled by the organization [12]. Finchman and Rhodes, as cited in [16], wrote that "global job satisfaction reflects an individual's overall feelings towards his or her job. But in addition, people may express feelings about particular aspects or facets of their jobs".

2. JOB SATISFACTION THEORIES

Many theorists have attempted to explain the phenomenon that governs employees' feelings regarding their jobs [17] nevertheless theories on job satisfaction are not well developed [18]. Most of the so-called job satisfaction theories are basically work motivation theories i.e. content theories and process theories. Content theories attempt to explain what makes the employees motivated and satisfied at workplace whereas process theories offer explanation of how employees get satisfied [19]. In related literature, following theories have been found well documented as job satisfaction theories [13, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22]:

2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow offered his hierarchy of needs theory in 1943. This theory depicts that individuals have a hierarchy of five human needs [8] that determine human behaviour [20]. Those five human needs are:

- *Physiological needs*: food, water, shelter, sex satisfaction and other physical requirements.
- *Safety needs*: security and protection from physical and emotional harm.
- *Social needs*: affection, belongingness, acceptance and friendship.
- *Esteem needs*: self-respect, autonomy, achievement, status, recognition and attention.
- *Self-actualization needs*: growth, achieving one's potential, and self-fulfillment, the drive to become what one is capable of becoming [8].

The higher level needs are satisfied internally (by intrinsic rewards) while lower level needs are satisfied externally (by extrinsic rewards). When the lower level needs are met, higher level needs are strived to be fulfilled by the employees. This theory suggests that more the needs of the employees are satisfied at workplace, more the employees will be satisfied with their jobs. Blum and Naylor wrote, "Jobs which are able to satisfy more of the Maslow needs would be jobs which would result in greater satisfaction on the part of the employee" [20].

2.2 Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

Herzberg's two factor theory (also known as hygiene—motivator theory) is a well-known job satisfaction theory [23] and was proposed by Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman in 1959 [20]. This theory describes that there are two main categories of factors that affect peoples' job satisfaction. These factors are the motivators or growth factors that create satisfaction and the Hygiene or maintenance factors that prevent dissatisfaction [16, 19]. Fredrick Herzberg, as cited in Syptak, Marsland, and Ulmer [24], describes that once the issues pertaining to hygiene factors are addressed, the motivators create job satisfaction among employees. Hygiene factors are salary, working conditions, company policy, supervision and interpersonal relations. The motivation factors include the elements such as a sense of achievement, recognition, the rewards of the work itself, responsibility and opportunities for achievement [19, 24, 25].

Based on the combination of hygiene and motivators following four scenarios emerge at work place [26]:

- *High Hygiene—High Motivation:* Employees are highly motivated and have very few complaints. This is ideal situation.
- *High Hygiene—Low Motivation:* Employees have very few complaints and are unmotivated.
- *Low Hygiene—High Motivation:* Employees are highly motivated but have a lot of complaints.
- *Low Hygiene—Low Motivation:* Employees have lots of complaints and are unmotivated. This is worst situation.

2.3 Locke's Discrepancy Theory

Locke proposed his discrepancy theory in 1969. Locke's discrepancy theory is one of the most famous theories of job satisfaction. This theory, as cited in [23], depicts that job satisfaction is a function of the attainment of certain important values (which one considers important) pertaining to one's job. Equation form of this theory is as follows [27]:

$$\text{One's Job Satisfaction} = (\text{Want} - \text{Have}) \times \text{Importance}$$

$$\text{or}$$

$$S = (V_c - P) \times V_i$$

In the equation, "S" stands for one's job satisfaction; "V_c" means value content (amount one desires from the job); "P" means perceived amount of the value one receives from the job; and "V_i" means importance of the value to the one.

In other words, this theory describes that job satisfaction is a result of discrepancy between what an employee wants and what an employee receives from the job [22]. The greater is

the discrepancy, the lesser will be the job satisfaction of the employee [21].

2.4 Adams's Equity Theory

Equity theory was first proposed by Adams in 1956. The main premise of this theory is that people seek for fairness and equity at work place [8]. They compare their efforts (inputs) and rewards (outcomes) with the efforts and rewards of other relevant employees. When they feel equity in this comparison, the result is job satisfaction [8, 13, 19, 22] while inequity is associated with dissatisfaction [13]. This suggests that individuals' job satisfaction is a function of the degree to which the individuals feel that they are treated equally at work place [19].

2.5 Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Victor Vroom was the first who proposed expectancy theory. The basic model, proposed by Vroom in 1964, was later modified by many researchers including Porter and Lawler [19]. Following terms are used to describe expectancy theory [26, 28, 29]:

- *Valence:* Refers to the value that an individual attaches to an expected reward.
- *Expectancy:* Refers to an individual's belief pertaining to his or her ability to perform a given task.
- *Instrumentality:* Refers to an Individual's belief that his or her action will be followed by an expected reward.

The major premise of this theory is that the tendency of an individual to perform an act depends upon individual's perception pertaining to his or her ability to perform a given task (expectancy) and individual's expectation that the action will be followed by a reward (Instrumentality) and that the reward will be desired one (valence). This theory can be represented mathematically as follows:

$$\text{Motivational Force} = (\text{Valence} \times \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality})$$

This three variable equation can be used to determine and predict employees' job satisfaction. When all the three variables are high, the job satisfaction of employees will be high. If any of the three variables is low, job satisfaction will be low [29].

Vroom, as cited in Blum and Naylor [20], suggests that "job satisfaction is a reflection of how desirable a person finds his job—thus, it is a measure of person's valence for his work situation".

2.6 Job Characteristics Model (JCM)

Job Characteristics Model was proposed by Hackman and Oldham in 1980. This model hypothesizes that high job satisfaction is a function of certain psychological states (meaningfulness, responsibility, and feedback) which are the result of contribution of certain core job characteristics i.e., skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback [19]. The enrichment of these core job characteristics makes a job more challenging, motivating and satisfying for employees as compared to the job which shows lesser degree of their presence [2]. Another integral component of this model is growth need strength [2, 19] which is employee's desire for personal growth; is influenced by employee's cultural background [2] and "has an important

moderating effect” [19]. The five core characteristics of the model are as follows:

- *Skill Variety*: The extent to which job demands the use of knowledge, skills and abilities.
- *Task Identity*: The degree to which job offers an opportunity to visualize the job from beginning to completion.
- *Task Significance*: The degree to which job is seen as important and significant.
- *Autonomy*: The extent to which job offers independence and freedom of task performance.
- *Feedback*: the degree to which job offers clear information pertaining to the progress and effectiveness of job performance [2, 8, 19].

In addition to the above described theories and models McClelland's Achievement Theory, Alderfer's ERG (Existence, Relatedness and Growth) Theory, Variance Theory, Situational Occurrences Theory, Dispositional theory, and Cornell Model also provide with how or/ and what energizes, motivates or satisfies people at their workplaces.

3. FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION

There is not a single but many actors that affect employees' job satisfaction. According to Crossman and Harris, the factors that can affect teachers' job satisfaction can be broadly categorized as “environmental (the job itself or the working environment) psychological (personality, behaviour attitude) or demographic (age, gender)” [14]. Armstrong wrote, “The level of job satisfaction is affected by intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors, the quality of supervision, social relationships with the work group and the degree to which individuals succeed or fail in their work” [9]. Herzberg's two factor theory presents good picture of two sets of factors (i.e. motivator factors and hygiene factors) that are determinant of job satisfaction. Presence of motivator factors creates satisfaction among employees and presence of hygiene factors reduces dissatisfaction [24]. Certain factors that determine job satisfaction are: achievement, recognition for achievement, responsibility for task, interest in the job, advancement to higher level tasks and growth while typical factors the presence of which reduces job dissatisfaction are: working conditions, quality of supervision, salary, status, security, company, job, company policies and administration, interpersonal relations [26]. Purcell et al., as cited in [9], identified that “the key factors affecting job satisfaction were career opportunities, job influence, teamwork and job challenge”. Winfrey, while summarizing few studies regarding job satisfaction, identified four common job satisfaction themes i.e. working conditions, interaction with colleagues and students, professional autonomy, and opportunities for advancement [1].

Giacometti [30], after an extensive literature review on factors that affect teachers' job satisfaction and retention, has summarized certain factors in the following order:

- *Compensation*: salaries; benefits; retirement; inequities with level of skills or education not comparable to other fields; scholarships; tuition reimbursement; coupons; relocation costs; signing bonuses for hard-to-fill positions.

- *Pre-service preparation*: skills and abilities necessary to teach; knowledge of subject matter; preparation for a diverse classroom setting; preparation for organizing tasks in operating a classroom; dealing with conflict; student assessment; classroom management; curriculum needs; confidence Level to teach; length of student teaching.
- *External forces*: district spending; job security; social issues; attitudes of parents, students, community; parental support; community support; partnerships; job availability.
- *School culture*: administrative support with discipline; administrative support with helping new teachers; staff involvement; teamwork; positive environment; endless paperwork; organization of special needs population; climate; safety; evaluation process; staff morale.
- *In-service training*: induction process; mentors; professional development; intensive support; peer evaluations; observations of experienced teachers; portfolio.
- *Motivation to teach*: desire to work with young people; desire to teach others; challenge of the profession; professional growth; contribution to humanity; making a difference in society; strong commitment; social status.
- *Emotional factors*: mental health; enthusiasm; stress; burnout; anxiety; positive attitude; frustration [31].

4. CONCLUSION

From the above literature review, it is concluded that job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct, and employees' feelings and attitudes toward their jobs determine their levels of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be defined as positive or negative feelings that employees have about their job as a result of job experience at workplace. The so-called theories of job satisfaction are content and process theories of motivation that offer explanation of what makes employees motivated and satisfied at work place, and attempt to explain how employees get satisfied, respectively. However, a model that could explain the phenomenon of job satisfaction at large is still lacking and this gap provides an opportunity to the researchers and theorists to offer a comprehensive model of job satisfaction. Also, there is a range of factors that affect employees' job satisfaction and can broadly be categorized into demographic, psychological and environmental factors.

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