

A discussion on job satisfaction and its managerial implications

[Business](#), [Career](#)



The subject Organizational Behavior studies how human beings behave in business settings and how they interact with each other. Job satisfaction is the degree to which one feels positively about his or her job. It is the attitudes that employees have towards their jobs. If job satisfaction is low, managers have to deal with its repercussions and take steps to improve it. Job dissatisfaction leads to stress and lack of motivation. This hinders productivity of the organization. What is Job Satisfaction? Job Satisfaction is the extent to which people feel positively or negatively about their jobs.

In other words, it is the attitudes that employees hold about their jobs. Although job satisfaction and motivation are two different concepts, they are closely interlinked. High motivation leads to higher job satisfaction and vice versa. Job satisfaction can be measured in many ways including the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, the Job Satisfaction Survey and the Job Descriptive Index to name a few (Williams, 1). Job satisfaction leads to employees being happy at work, and happy employees are more productive. This is reflected in a quote by William Shakespeare: "To business that we love we eagerly arise, and go to with delight."

"Job satisfaction comes from thinking positive and having a passion for one's work. However, one cannot always do the job he has always dreamt of. In this case, it is better for the organization and for the employee himself if he just focuses on finding areas in his job that he enjoys. All these things are inculcated in employees by managers. Hence for job satisfaction to exist, organizations must have inspirational managers who have excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Job satisfaction affects worker

commitment. Commitment is of three types: affective, continuous and normative.

Affective commitment refers to how emotionally attached the employees are to the organization. Continuous commitment arises from the fear of the drawbacks associated with leaving the organization. Finally normative commitment is a depiction of the employees' perception about their duties to the organization (Williams, 1). What are the factors that influence Job Satisfaction? Job satisfaction is influenced by various factors including an employee's relationship with his colleagues or employers, the work environment and the work itself. When employers are poor communicators, employees tend to get demotivated easily.

They do not have a clear understanding of their duties, goals, and work requirements. Moreover, changes in the environment are not communicated well to them. Hence they are left feeling alienated and suffer from an inferiority complex (Scott, 1). The degree of rewards and recognition also determine the level of job satisfaction experienced by employees. Employees want to be recognized for their work and achievements (Scott, 1). Job dissatisfaction results when employers do not recognize the effort put in by their employees. All managers are not necessarily motivational leaders.

Managers must have good interpersonal and motivational skills if they want to ensure employee satisfaction. Employees feel happy at work when their bosses work with them and inspire them. Often there is a mismatch of job and personnel. The wrong people are hired for the wrong jobs. This results in dissatisfaction at work. Hence, job satisfaction begins from the process of

hiring. To ensure job satisfaction, managers must take care in recruiting people for jobs that suit them best. Training is yet another factor influencing job satisfaction.

When employees' skills are developed and they are made to feel like the organization is investing in them, they are likely to be more motivated at work. This is likely to enhance their satisfaction and productivity. Other factors such as relationships with fellow workers, prospects of promotion, job security, salary, delegation of power, locus of control, age, degree of freedom at work and the office layout also affect job satisfaction (Mayo Clinic Staff, 1). Employees are more committed when they can understand and relate to the organizational goals. Also read about " Contemporary theory of management"

This only happens when their personal values are similar to the values of their organizations. It is the managers' duty to make sure employees can make the connection (Wiedmer, 1). Work can be viewed from three perspectives. Firstly, it can be viewed simply as a job. In this case, money is the main factor behind worker motivation and there is low job satisfaction. Secondly, work can be viewed as a career. In this case, employees are interested in advancement and in climbing the career ladder. Hence they are more motivated and more satisfied.

Thirdly, work can be viewed as a calling. In this case, employees feel inner satisfaction from the work that they do (Mayo Clinic Staff, 1). Job satisfaction can sometimes stem from an employee's personality traits. Personalities can be classified into Type A and Type B personalities. A person with Type A

personality is hard working, motivated, competent and able. Such people are always looking for challenges and areas in which they can succeed. In contrast, Type B personalities are relatively complacent and laid back. They do not have that driving force that urges them to succeed.

Both the personality types suit different kinds of jobs. To ensure job satisfaction, managers must match job requirements with personality traits. Employees should be given jobs that help them flourish and develop their potential (Wiedmer, 5). Job satisfaction correlates with life and family satisfaction. If someone has a healthy, balanced work and family life, he will generally be more content than one who has to struggle with both (William, 2). Theories of Job Satisfaction There are various theories of job satisfaction and motivation.

The most popular ones include Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs, John Locke's Value theory and the Hawthorne Studies. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Frederick Herzberg, a motivational theorist, carried out a study during the 1950s in which he interviewed people to find out what motivates and demotivates them at work. According to Herzberg, two things are important to ensure job satisfaction: Motivators and Hygiene factors. Hygiene factors are those factors that do not motivate people to work, rather their absence demotivates people.

However, they are still important and must be taken care of before managers divert their focus to Motivators. Hygiene factors include company policy, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations and working conditions. These are all things that employees take for granted, but if mishandled, are

likely to cause organizational unrest (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 1). Motivators on the other hand are factors that drive employees to perform better and improve worker satisfaction. These include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement. Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

Abraham Maslow, a motivational theorist, came up with a hierarchy of human needs. According to him, human beings have different driving forces for motivation at different levels of their jobs. The hierarchy starts off with the basic needs at the bottom of the pyramid to the highest order needs at its peak. The stages from bottom to top are physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs. Physiological needs are the very basic needs of shelter, food and clothing. Once these are met, a person moves to the second stage where his needs increase.

He wants a sense of security. Once met, a human being wants to feel a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Moving to the fourth step after this, he wants to boost his self-esteem by gaining respect from others and feeling a sense of achievement. Finally at the top of the pyramid is self-actualization beyond which a person cannot excel (Ewen, 432). Hence at every stage, job satisfaction will be a result of different factors for different employees depending on which stage in the hierarchy they are at. John Locke's Value Theory This is also known as the Affect Theory.

This theory says that job dissatisfaction results when there is a discrepancy between expectations from one's job and the actual job. Put differently, people are satisfied at work when they get what they expect (or more) from

it. For instance an employee who expects to get promoted within a year gets promoted within eight months will experience high job satisfaction. The Hawthorne's studies Hawthorne conducted studies to reveal the factors that motivate or demotivate employees at work. After a series of studies were conducted in Chicago it was concluded that management commitment is vital to employee job satisfaction (Wiedmer, 8).

Other than these four theories, the dispositional theory of job satisfaction states that every employee has the need for certain characteristics that cause them to have a certain level of job satisfaction regardless of their job. The four traits that affect one's job satisfaction are self-esteem, locus of control, self-efficacy and neuroticism. According to this theory, high self-esteem, self-efficacy (the belief in one's own level of competence), locus of control (the extent to which one holds himself responsible for his actions) and low neuroticism lead to high job satisfaction.

What can managers learn from the theories of Job Satisfaction to improve organizational efficiency? Since the employees of a company are its biggest asset and since job satisfaction of employees determines organization success, managers must know how to manage employees well in order to ensure job satisfaction. There are many ways in which managers can improve job satisfaction. Managers must realize the potential of their employees and assign appropriate work to them. The work that employees do must be challenging and must develop their skills.

Employees could be made to work in teams consisting of people having diverse strengths (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2). When employees show signs of low

productivity, lack of interest in their jobs, or frustration, managers must take steps to understand and remove their source of discomfort. This will help restore job satisfaction. Managers and employees must have a relationship based on genuine care and trust (Wiedmer, 7). Managers must find a way to break the monotony and boredom associated with certain jobs. They can implement techniques of job enrichment, job enlargement and job rotation.

They can also train the employees in a variety of odd jobs so that they become capable of performing multiple tasks. In addition to all this, in order to motivate employees, managers must be motivated themselves. They must plan ahead and think positively. They need to portray themselves as inspirational leaders (Mayo Clinic Staff, 3). Managers need to understand Herzberg's two factor theory and how it applies to their particular organization. Each of the hygiene factors will be discussed first followed by the motivators. Firstly, company policies can sometimes be frustrating for the employees.

Although good company policies will never be a source of motivation for employees, poor policies will cause lack of job satisfaction. This is especially true when the policies are unnecessarily stringent or unclear. Managers must make it a point to ensure that company policies are clear and simple and treat everyone fairly. Moreover, policy manuals must be updated and available to all to avoid any ambiguity (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 2). The second hygiene factor that managers must deal with is supervision. Many employees like to have a certain degree of freedom and empowerment.

Too much supervision demotivates them. Hence managers must assess the skills and abilities of the employees before deciding on the level of supervision needed by them. Another important factor to note is that everyone does not have the ability to be a good supervisor. An effective supervisor is one who has strong communication, leadership and interpersonal skills. Supervisors must also provide constructive feedback to employees from time to time. Having supervision will not motivate employees, but mishandling of it will make them dissatisfied at work (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 2).

The third hygiene factor is salary. On average, the presence of appropriate salary does not motivate employees to work harder. However, if employees feel like they are not paid well enough for their work, they will lose motivation to work hard. Hence managers must ensure that employees are paid fairly (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 2). The fourth hygiene factor is interpersonal relations. All human beings are social and feel the need to interact with their peers. It gives them a sense of belonging. The importance of this is also highlighted by Maslow in his Hierarchy of Human Needs.

Managers should allow for adequate socializing during work otherwise employees will feel frustrated and unhappy. The fifth and last hygiene factor is working conditions. The environment in which people work has a great affect on their job satisfaction. Employees are unhappy and unproductive when cramped in a small place with inappropriate temperature. Managers need to give employees their comfort and own personalized space to work

and feel a sense of pride in their jobs (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 3). The first motivator that Herzberg talks about is the work itself.

Managers need to make their employees feel like the work they are doing is meaningful and important to the overall success of the product. Employees must be made to feel like their time and efforts are worth it and are being put to some use. The second motivator is achievement. Most employees want to perform well. Managers must facilitate them to achieve their tasks by setting clear and attainable goals and by making employees capable of achieving them. Linked to achievement, recognition is the third motivator.

Managers must realize that employees want to be appreciated and acknowledged for the work done by them. They must regularly provide feedback and publicly praise work done well (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 4). Employees are more productive when their performance is linked to rewards. The fourth motivator is responsibility. Employees perform better when they feel that they are wholly responsible for the task they are doing. Thus managers must delegate a certain level of authority and freedom to their employees.

However managers must take care when doing so because not all employees are capable of such responsibility. For those who are incapable, supervision or training may be necessary before such delegation takes place (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 4). The fifth and last motivator of Herzberg's theory is advancement. Advancement implies the prospects of promotion. Managers must realize that employees will work harder if they believe that it will lead to their career advancement. Moreover, to develop their skills, managers

might decide to support an employee in achieving further education (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 4).

In compliance with John Locke's theory, managers must gauge what employees expect from their jobs in order to meet or at least come near their expectations. Keeping the Hawthorne theory in mind, managers must ensure that they show interest in the employees and their work. What are recent findings and research results on the relationship between 'job satisfaction' and management issues such as productivity and turnover? When employees are unhappy with their work, the result is low productivity, high turnover and high absenteeism.

On the other hand, high job satisfaction results in greater productivity, better team work, low employee turnover, high motivation and low absenteeism. The issues of absenteeism and turnover are critical to any organization because they require additional training and recruitment costs to replace the missing workers. This is costly as well as time consuming. Job satisfaction is essential because it determines organizational commitment. When workers are dissatisfied with their jobs, the result is high employee turnover, absenteeism and organizational unrest.

Due to this, employers have to spend more on recruiting and retraining workers to replace the ones that have left (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 1). An interesting point to notice here is that when absenteeism is followed by negative feedback such as a warning or a cut in salary, it increases employee dissatisfaction and hence re-enforces absenteeism (Wiedmer, 9). Research suggests that there is a correlation between the three types of

commitments namely affective, continuous and normative, and work-related outcomes such as stress, turnover, absenteeism and so on (Williams, 2).

Affective commitment is the best determinant of job satisfaction. The more strongly a person feels about his job, the more likely he is to be satisfied with it. However this can go both ways. If a person has strong negative feelings about his job, he will be far from satisfied. Continuous commitment is not a very good determinant of job satisfaction because it implies that employees only work because they do not want to lose the job. This would mean that they would do the bare minimum work only to survive in the organization.

Normative commitment could lead to job satisfaction as well as dissatisfaction, depending on the employees' perception of the organization. Another view point is that when employees are satisfied with their jobs, they become complacent and tend to slack off. This would mean lower productivity and days taken off from work. This situation arises when employees feel so content with their jobs that they do not feel the need to put in much effort (Martin & Miller, 1). Moreover, sometimes its not job satisfaction that leads to better performance, in fact, performance leads to higher job satisfaction.

If an employee feels a sense of achievement and recognition in his work, he is more likely to be satisfied. Managers must keep in mind that symptoms such as absenteeism and turnover do not necessarily mean that the employees are not satisfied with their jobs. There could be many different reasons for why these factors exist in an organization. Employees could simply be going through a rough phase in their lives or at home.

Misunderstanding them at this stage will just worsen the situation. Also, good performance does not necessarily mean that the workers are satisfied with their jobs.

Managers who make this assumption dig their own graves. Often employees are hard working or productive due to other reasons such as purely financial needs or to compete with another employee to win his supervisor's confidence (Wiedmer, 8). Recently employees are becoming increasingly aware of the concept of social responsibility. An organization that engages in environmentally sound methods of production and waste disposal will generate greater job satisfaction than one that engages in socially unacceptable behavior.

Employees might continue to work for such an organization, but only because they do not have an alternative. They will remain unhappy with their work and will constantly and sub-consciously feel guilty about it. Works Cited A Book Ewen, R. An introduction to theories of personality. 4th edition. PsychologyPress (1992). Author's last name, first name initial. Title of the book. City of Publishing: Publisher. (Date published). A Web Page Mayo Clinic Staff. " Job Satisfaction: Strategies to make work more gratifying" Mayo Clinic. 11th April, 2009.

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