

Herzberg Revisited: Dimensionality and Structural Invariance of Herzberg's Two Factor Model

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Studies on Herzberg's two factor theory of job satisfaction show contradictory findings with respect to its dimensionality and external validity. Studies question the orthogonality of motivators and hygiene factors, socio-cultural invariance of the theory and place of monetary aspects in the two dimensional set up. The current study was carried out to investigate these issues in Indian conditions. Questionnaire measure was used to collect data from 144 middle level managers selected randomly from a list of participants of management development program conducted by a business school over a period of one year. The questionnaire consists of 14 attributes and each one of which was rated by the managers for its importance to overall job satisfaction of their current job on a five point scale. Data were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis with principle component factoring and varimax rotational procedure. Three independent factors namely, job content, organizational context and rewards and working conditions were extracted and which was further validated by confirmatory factor analysis. The findings suggest a three factor model including monetary attributes of job as a separate factor, cross-loading of many attributes across job content and context factors and contextual dependence of the model. The importance of socio-cultural milieu and monetary aspects in managing employee motivation is discussed.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Hygiene factors, Motivators.

Studies on two-factor theory

Herzberg (1959, 1987) in his two-factor theory of job satisfaction postulated motivators and hygiene factors in explaining job satisfaction at work place. Motivators include recognition, achievement, growth opportunities, advancement, responsibility, and the work itself. Hygiene factors include salary, interpersonal relations at work, supervision, company policies and administration, working conditions, and job security. According to this theory the presence of motivators results in job satisfaction and the presence of hygiene factors does not result in increase of job satisfaction, but only reduces or eliminates job dissatisfaction of the employees. This conceptualization of Herzberg challenged the hitherto existing views that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction as opposite poles of a single continuum. The two-factor theory posits Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction as two orthogonal dimensions and factors influencing job satisfaction are different from

those influencing job dissatisfaction. Hence to motivate employees, organizations have to deal with one sets of factors for increasing job satisfaction and entirely different set of factors for reducing job dissatisfaction. This theory has been very popular among scholars and practitioners because of its simplicity and its common-sense approach. The basic tenets of the two-factor theory provide insight into the areas managers can influence in order to increase the satisfaction of their employees, albeit the empirical support for this conceptualization is scanty, weak and often contradictory.

Plethora of studies conducted during 60s and 70s to test the empirical validity has shown contradictory results and did not convincingly support the two-factor model (Wernimont, 1966; Hulin, 1971 and Korman, 1971). The theory is found to be impractical because distinguishing between hygiene and motivator factors is not so simple and straightforward as they are highly related thus suggesting a single continuum as