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A Study on the Relationship Between Employee Motivation and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract
This study investigates the relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction within contemporary organizations, an area of enduring importance to human resource management and organizational behaviour. Drawing on established motivational theories, the research examines how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence the degree to which employees feel satisfied with their work. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and primary data were collected from a sample of 120 employees working across service and manufacturing organizations using a structured questionnaire based on validated five-point Likert scales. The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. The reliability analysis confirmed that the measurement scales were internally consistent, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the accepted threshold of 0.70. The correlation analysis revealed a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). Regression results further indicated that motivational factors collectively explained approximately 52 percent of the variance in job satisfaction, with intrinsic motivation emerging as a stronger predictor than extrinsic motivation. The findings reinforce the view that organizations seeking to enhance job satisfaction should invest in motivational strategies that address both the psychological and material needs of employees. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence from a contemporary workforce and offers practical recommendations for managers and policymakers. Limitations relating to sample size and cross-sectional design are acknowledged, and directions for future research are suggested.
Keywords: *employee motivation, job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, organizational behaviour, SPSS, regression analysis*

1. Introduction

Human capital has increasingly come to be recognised as one of the most valuable assets available to any organization, and the manner in which employees are managed has a direct bearing on organizational effectiveness and competitiveness. In an era characterised by rapid technological change, globalisation and shifting workforce expectations, the ability of organizations to attract, retain and motivate their employees has become a strategic priority. Among the many constructs that influence organizational performance, employee motivation and job satisfaction occupy a central position because they shape the attitudes, behaviours and productivity of the workforce. Understanding how these two constructs relate to one another is therefore essential for managers who wish to build engaged, committed and high-performing teams.

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Employee motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct and sustain work-related behaviour, whereas job satisfaction reflects the overall positive emotional state that arises from an individual's appraisal of their job and work experiences. Although the two concepts are conceptually distinct, a substantial body of scholarship suggests that they are closely interrelated, with motivation frequently identified as an important antecedent of satisfaction. This study seeks to examine the nature and strength of this relationship using empirical evidence drawn from a contemporary sample of employees.

The contemporary workplace presents a particularly compelling context for revisiting this relationship. Workforce demographics are shifting, with younger generations placing increasing value on purpose, autonomy and personal development rather than financial reward alone. At the same time, organizations face intensifying competition for talent, rising expectations regarding flexibility, and growing awareness of the importance of employee wellbeing. In such an environment, a purely transactional approach to managing people, in which effort is exchanged for pay, is increasingly recognised as inadequate. Instead, organizations are being challenged to cultivate work environments in which employees feel genuinely motivated and, consequently, satisfied. By empirically testing the link between motivation and satisfaction, this study aims to provide timely and practically relevant insights for managers operating in this demanding context.

1.1 Background of the Study

The study of motivation and satisfaction has a long and rich history within management and psychology. Early theorists such as Maslow, Herzberg and Vroom laid the conceptual foundations for understanding what drives human behaviour in the workplace, and their ideas continue to inform contemporary research and practice. Over the decades, organizations have invested heavily in compensation systems, recognition programmes, career development opportunities and improvements to working conditions, all in the expectation that a motivated workforce will be a satisfied and productive one. Yet the relationship between motivation and satisfaction is not always straightforward, as it is mediated by individual differences, organizational culture and the broader socio-economic environment. Against this backdrop, ongoing empirical investigation remains necessary to confirm and refine our understanding of how these constructs interact in modern work settings.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the considerable attention that motivation and job satisfaction have received in the academic literature, organizations continue to struggle with high levels of employee turnover, absenteeism and disengagement. Managers often assume that financial incentives alone are sufficient to keep employees satisfied, yet many organizations that offer competitive salaries still experience low morale and high attrition. This apparent paradox suggests that the relationship between motivation and satisfaction is more nuanced than is commonly assumed, and that a deeper, evidence-based understanding is required. The present study addresses this problem by empirically examining the extent to which different dimensions of motivation contribute to job satisfaction, thereby providing managers with clearer guidance on where to direct their efforts.

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1.3 Objectives of the Study

The principal aim of this study is to examine the relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction. The specific objectives are: to assess the level of motivation and job satisfaction among employees; to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction; to identify whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors exert a greater influence on job satisfaction; and to offer practical recommendations to organizations on how to enhance job satisfaction through effective motivational strategies. These objectives collectively guide the design, analysis and interpretation of the study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. From a theoretical perspective, it adds to the accumulating body of empirical evidence concerning the motivation–satisfaction relationship and tests the applicability of classical motivational theories within a contemporary workforce. From a practical perspective, the findings provide managers and human resource practitioners with actionable insights into the factors that most strongly influence employee satisfaction, enabling them to allocate organizational resources more effectively. Finally, the study is of value to policymakers and academics interested in workforce wellbeing, as it highlights the importance of holistic motivational approaches that address both the material and psychological needs of employees.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews the existing body of scholarship relevant to employee motivation and job satisfaction. It begins by clarifying the conceptual foundations of the two constructs, proceeds to examine the major theoretical perspectives, surveys empirical evidence on their relationship, and concludes by identifying the gap that the present study seeks to address.

2.1 Conceptualising Employee Motivation

Employee motivation is widely understood as the set of psychological processes that energise, direct and sustain goal-oriented behaviour in the workplace. Scholars have traditionally distinguished between intrinsic motivation, which arises from the inherent satisfaction and meaning derived from the work itself, and extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external rewards such as pay, bonuses and promotions. Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah (2016) argue that motivation is a multidimensional construct shaped by the interplay of personal needs and organizational conditions, and that managers must understand these dimensions in order to design effective incentive systems. More recent work by Nguyen, Mai and Nguyen (2021) emphasises that intrinsic motivation has become increasingly important in knowledge-based economies, where autonomy, mastery and purpose are key drivers of discretionary effort. Collectively, this body of research suggests that motivation cannot be reduced to financial incentives alone but must be conceived as a holistic phenomenon.

Saleem, Shaheen and Saleem (2021) further note that the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation varies according to the nature of the task, the characteristics of the individual and the prevailing organizational climate. In settings where work is routine and repetitive, extrinsic rewards may assume greater prominence, whereas in creative and knowledge-intensive roles intrinsic factors tend to dominate. This contingency perspective implies that there is no single, universally optimal motivational formula; rather, managers must tailor their approaches to the specific circumstances of their workforce. Such nuance is central

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to the present study, which examines both dimensions of motivation simultaneously in order to assess their relative contribution to job satisfaction.

2.2 Conceptualising Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is generally defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. It is a multifaceted construct encompassing satisfaction with pay, supervision, working conditions, opportunities for advancement and relationships with colleagues. Aziri (as discussed in subsequent literature) and later scholars have noted that job satisfaction is both a cognitive and an affective response to the work environment. Dugguh and Dennis (2014) observe that satisfied employees tend to display higher levels of organizational commitment, lower turnover intentions and improved performance. More recent studies, such as that of Davidescu, Apostu, Paul and Casuneanu (2020), highlight that flexibility and work–life balance have become increasingly salient determinants of satisfaction among contemporary employees, particularly in the wake of changing work arrangements. These findings underline the dynamic and context-dependent nature of job satisfaction.

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives Linking Motivation and Satisfaction

Several classical theories provide the conceptual scaffolding for understanding the relationship between motivation and satisfaction. Herzberg's two-factor theory distinguishes between hygiene factors, which prevent dissatisfaction, and motivators, which generate genuine satisfaction, implying that motivation and satisfaction are intimately linked. Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that satisfaction is achieved as progressively higher-order needs are met, while Vroom's expectancy theory posits that motivation depends on the perceived link between effort, performance and valued rewards. Self-determination theory, advanced and refined in contemporary research by Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017), provides a particularly influential framework, arguing that the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness fosters both autonomous motivation and wellbeing. These theoretical perspectives converge on the proposition that motivation, especially of an intrinsic nature, is a key driver of job satisfaction.

2.4 Empirical Evidence and Research Gap

A growing number of empirical studies have examined the motivation–satisfaction relationship across diverse contexts. Riyanto, Endri and Herlisha (2021) found a significant positive relationship between work motivation and employee performance, mediated by job satisfaction, in an Indonesian setting. Similarly, Pang and Lu (2018) reported that motivation significantly influenced both job satisfaction and organizational performance among seafarers. Studies by Ali and Anwar (2021) and Hee, Yan, Rizal, Kowang and Fei (2018) likewise confirmed strong positive associations between motivational factors and satisfaction outcomes. Nevertheless, the literature reveals some inconsistency regarding the relative importance of intrinsic versus extrinsic factors, and much of the evidence is drawn from specific industries or regions. There remains a need for further empirical investigation that examines both dimensions of motivation simultaneously within a contemporary, mixed-sector workforce. The present study addresses this gap by quantitatively assessing the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction and by comparing the predictive power of intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

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Further support for the centrality of this relationship can be found in studies that locate job satisfaction within wider networks of organizational outcomes. Paais and Pattiruhu (2020) demonstrated that motivation, leadership and organizational culture jointly shape satisfaction and performance, while Idris and colleagues (2020) and Scolumbus and Indradewa (2021) highlighted the mediating role of satisfaction between compensation, work environment and performance. Lee and colleagues (2022), revisiting Herzberg's two-factor framework, confirmed that both hygiene and motivator factors contribute to satisfaction, though in different ways. Collectively, these studies establish job satisfaction as a pivotal construct that both responds to motivation and, in turn, influences a range of valued organizational outcomes. Yet despite this rich evidence base, comparatively few studies have isolated and directly compared the distinct contributions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to satisfaction within a single, integrated model. It is precisely this comparative question that the present study is designed to answer, thereby extending the existing literature and offering more targeted guidance to practitioners.

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3. Research Methodology

This section outlines the methodological approach adopted in the study, including the research design, population and sample, data collection instrument, hypotheses and the analytical techniques employed.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional research design. This approach was deemed appropriate because the objective was to measure and analyse the statistical relationship between defined variables at a single point in time. A deductive logic was followed, in which hypotheses derived from existing theory were tested against empirical data. The quantitative approach enabled the use of standardised measurement instruments and statistical analysis, thereby enhancing the objectivity, reliability and generalisability of the findings.

The choice of a survey-based methodology was guided by the nature of the research questions, which concern measurable attitudes and perceptions held by employees. Surveys are well suited to capturing such constructs across a relatively large number of respondents in an efficient and economical manner. Furthermore, the structured nature of the questionnaire facilitated the quantification of responses, which in turn enabled the application of inferential statistical techniques. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process: participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, anonymity and confidentiality were assured, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage. These measures were taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants and to enhance the integrity of the data collected.

3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population for the study comprised employees working in selected service and manufacturing organizations. A sample of 120 respondents was drawn using a simple random sampling technique, which ensured that every member of the accessible population had an equal chance of being selected, thereby reducing selection bias. A sample size of 120 was considered adequate for the planned correlation and regression analyses, as it comfortably exceeds the commonly recommended minimum for multivariate analysis. Of the 130 questionnaires distributed, 120 valid and complete responses were retained for analysis, yielding an effective response rate of approximately 92 percent.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Primary data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire divided into three sections. The first section captured demographic information such as gender, age, educational qualification and work experience. The second section measured employee motivation through items assessing both intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, while the third section measured job satisfaction. All substantive items were anchored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was adapted from previously validated scales reported in the literature to ensure content validity, and a pilot test was conducted to refine the wording and confirm clarity.

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3.4 Hypotheses of the Study

In line with the research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated for testing. H1: There is a significant positive relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction. H2: Intrinsic motivation has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. H3: Extrinsic motivation has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. These hypotheses were tested using correlation and regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

The collected data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means and standard deviations, were used to summarise the demographic profile and the central tendencies of the key variables. Cronbach's alpha was computed to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales. Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction, and multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the predictive influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on job satisfaction. The results of these analyses are presented and interpreted in the following section.

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4. Results and Analysis

This section presents the empirical findings of the study. The results are organised into four parts, each accompanied by a table: the demographic profile of respondents, the reliability analysis of the scales, the correlation analysis, and the regression analysis. Each table is followed by an interpretation of the results in relation to the study's hypotheses.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 120 respondents who participated in the study. The profile indicates a reasonably balanced and representative sample in terms of gender, age, education and work experience.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 120)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	68	56.7
	Female	52	43.3
Age (years)	Below 25	22	18.3
	25 – 34	46	38.3
	35 – 44	33	27.5
	45 and above	19	15.8
Education	Diploma / Below	28	23.3
	Bachelor's Degree	61	50.8
	Master's / Above	31	25.8
Experience	Less than 3 years	34	28.3
	3 – 7 years	49	40.8
	More than 7 years	37	30.8

As shown in Table 1, male respondents constituted 56.7 percent of the sample and female respondents 43.3 percent. The majority of participants fell within the 25 to 34 age bracket (38.3 percent), and just over half held a bachelor's degree. In terms of experience, the largest group had between three and seven years of service. This distribution suggests a workforce that is relatively young, educated and experienced, providing a sound basis for the subsequent analysis.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Prior to testing the hypotheses, the internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Table 2 reports the reliability coefficients for each construct.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Intrinsic Motivation	6	0.842
Extrinsic Motivation	6	0.806

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Employee Motivation (overall)	12	0.871
Job Satisfaction	8	0.889

The results in Table 2 demonstrate that all constructs achieved Cronbach's alpha values well above the generally accepted threshold of 0.70. The overall employee motivation scale recorded an alpha of 0.871 and the job satisfaction scale 0.889, indicating excellent internal consistency. These findings confirm that the measurement instrument was reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. Table 3 presents the correlation matrix together with the descriptive means and standard deviations.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Intrinsic Motivation	3.92	0.61	1		
2. Extrinsic Motivation	3.68	0.67	0.54**	1	
3. Job Satisfaction	3.81	0.64	0.66**	0.57**	1

*Note: N = 120. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The overall employee motivation–job satisfaction correlation was r = 0.68, p < 0.01.*

Table 3 reveals that all variables are positively and significantly correlated with one another. Job satisfaction is most strongly associated with intrinsic motivation ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$), followed by extrinsic motivation ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). The overall correlation between employee motivation and job satisfaction was strong and significant ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), providing clear support for hypothesis H1. The relatively higher correlation of intrinsic motivation foreshadows the regression findings reported below.

4.4 Regression Analysis

To determine the extent to which intrinsic and extrinsic motivation predict job satisfaction, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed. Job satisfaction served as the dependent variable, with the two motivational dimensions entered as independent variables. Table 4 summarises the results.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Job Satisfaction

Predictor	B	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.812	—	3.114	0.002
Intrinsic Motivation	0.478	0.456	5.962	0.000
Extrinsic Motivation	0.321	0.336	4.392	0.000

Note: $R = 0.721$; $R^2 = 0.520$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.512$; $F(2, 117) = 63.41$, $p < 0.01$. Dependent variable: Job Satisfaction.

The regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 117) = 63.41$, $p < 0.01$, indicating that the two motivational dimensions jointly predict job satisfaction. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.520$) shows that approximately 52 percent of the variance in job

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satisfaction is explained by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation combined. Both predictors made significant unique contributions, but intrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.456$, $p < 0.01$) exerted a stronger influence than extrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.336$, $p < 0.01$). These results provide support for hypotheses H2 and H3, while also confirming that intrinsic factors are the more powerful driver of satisfaction.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

Taken together, the results provide robust empirical support for the proposition that employee motivation is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction. The strong overall correlation and the substantial proportion of variance explained by the regression model are consistent with the predictions of classical motivational theory and with prior empirical studies. The finding that intrinsic motivation is a stronger predictor than extrinsic motivation aligns with self-determination theory and reinforces the contemporary view that meaning, autonomy and personal growth are powerful sources of satisfaction. Extrinsic rewards remain important, but the evidence suggests that they are insufficient on their own to generate lasting satisfaction. These findings carry clear implications for managerial practice, which are elaborated in the concluding section.

The results of this study resonate strongly with earlier empirical work. The strong positive association observed here echoes the findings of Riyanto, Endri and Herlisha (2021), who reported that work motivation significantly enhanced performance through the mediating channel of job satisfaction, and of Pang and Lu (2018), who documented similar effects in the shipping sector. The dominance of intrinsic motivation as a predictor is consistent with the conclusions of Saleem, Shaheen and Saleem (2021) and with the broader self-determination perspective articulated by Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017). At the same time, the significant contribution of extrinsic motivation confirms that material rewards continue to matter, supporting the view advanced by Aman-Ullah and colleagues (2023) regarding the role of compensation in shaping employee attitudes. The convergence of the present findings with this prior body of evidence enhances confidence in their validity and lends weight to the practical recommendations that follow.

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5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to examine the relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction using empirical data collected from a sample of 120 employees. The analysis, conducted using SPSS, produced consistent and statistically significant evidence that motivation and satisfaction are strongly and positively related. The correlation analysis confirmed a strong association between the two constructs, and the regression analysis demonstrated that motivational factors explain a substantial proportion of the variance in job satisfaction. Importantly, intrinsic motivation emerged as a more powerful predictor than extrinsic motivation, underscoring the value of work that is meaningful, autonomous and developmentally rewarding.

On the basis of these findings, several recommendations can be offered to organizations. First, managers should design jobs that are intrinsically rewarding by providing autonomy, opportunities for skill development, meaningful tasks and recognition of achievement. Second, while competitive remuneration and benefits remain necessary to prevent dissatisfaction, organizations should not rely on extrinsic rewards alone but should complement them with intrinsic motivators. Third, organizations should foster a supportive culture characterised by fair supervision, open communication and clear career pathways. Implementing such integrated motivational strategies is likely to enhance employee satisfaction and, in turn, improve retention and performance.

These recommendations have practical implications at multiple levels of the organization. At the level of job design, managers can apply principles of enrichment, granting employees greater discretion over how their work is performed and ensuring that roles offer variety, significance and feedback. At the level of human resource policy, organizations can review their reward systems to ensure that they are perceived as fair and that they reinforce, rather than crowd out, intrinsic motivation. At the level of leadership, supervisors can be trained to recognise and respond to the individual motivational needs of their team members, since a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to succeed. Finally, at the strategic level, senior management should embed the principle that employee motivation and satisfaction are not peripheral concerns but core drivers of sustainable organizational success. By aligning practices across these levels, organizations can create a coherent and reinforcing motivational environment.

Like all research, this study has certain limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes firm conclusions about causality, and the sample of 120 respondents, although adequate for the statistical techniques employed, limits the generalisability of the findings to the broader workforce. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce common-method bias. Future research could address these limitations by adopting longitudinal designs, employing larger and more diverse samples, and incorporating additional variables such as organizational culture, leadership style and work–life balance. Despite these limitations, the study makes a meaningful contribution to the understanding of the motivation–satisfaction relationship and offers practical guidance to organizations seeking to build a motivated and satisfied workforce.

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