



# The Influence of Motivational Factors on Job Satisfaction among the Academic Staff at Makerere University

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## ABSTRACT.

**Purpose-** This paper applies Smerek and Peterson's assessment model in the analysis of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University. Specifically, the study sought to establish whether intrinsic factors were significant predictors of JS.

**Design/methodology/approach-** The study employed a positivist approach; the study adopted a correlational research design on a sample of 294 academic staff. Data were collected using a questionnaire survey. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics calculated were means while inferential statistics were correlational and regression analyses. Pearson correlation and a multiple regression analysis were used to analyse the data.

**Findings-** The findings indicated that Recognition (0.303, 0.000<0.01), opportunities for advancement (0.093, 0.005<0.01), responsibility (0.117, 0.009<0.01) were positive significant predictor of job satisfaction. However, work itself (-0.101, 0.146>0.01) and professional growth opportunities (-0.011, 0.900>0.01) were negative predictors of job satisfaction.

**Research limitations/implications –** The study was based on data which had academic staff from Makerere University as the larger number of respondents. Thus the feelings of non-academic staff from Makerere University need to be explored. Therefore, once again the generalization of the research findings of all academic staff should be taken with reservations. Originality/value – The paper is the first to study the applicability of Smerek and Petersons' assessment model in the analysis of the intrinsic factors of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University, Uganda.

**Key words:** Job Satisfaction; Intrinsic Factors; Responsibility; Recognition; Professional Growth Opportunities and Opportunities for Advancement.

## 1.0 Introduction

The term job satisfaction has been defined by Hoppock (1935) one of the classical writers on job satisfaction as a combination of psychological, physiological as well as the circumstances of the environment which cause the employee to say: "I am happy with my job". Locke (1969) defined job satisfaction as an emotional-affective response to a job or to specific aspects of the job. Locke (1969) conceptualized job satisfaction in terms of; work it 'self, pay, promotion, supervision and relationship with co-workers. Therefore, in this study, job satisfaction was defined as a multi-dimensional variable that denotes a pleasurable or positive emotional state of workers, an attitudinal response that measures how a person feels about one's job as well as an affective reaction to one's job. In this study Job satisfaction was measured in terms of whether a job meets ones' expectations, whether one is close to the ideal job and the level of contentedness with ones' job.

## 2. Importance of job satisfaction

The importance/ significance of job satisfaction is well captured by authors such as Hoppock (1935) who suggested that job satisfaction helps trade unions to know exactly what employees want and what management is doing. In so doing, it facilitates mutual settlement of grievance and unwanted situations that may arise. Locke (1969) suggested that job satisfaction can be of great importance to an organization since it is associated with less effort, acceptance of the existing policies, the best possible salaries, working hours and excellent service delivery which are viewed as important pillars to organizational success. Spector (1985) suggested that job satisfaction data is helpful in evaluating the emotional wellness and mental fitness of employees and that an organization can use the information to improve departmental policies and practices where dissatisfaction is expressed.

### 3. Theoretical Review

This study will be underpinned using Herzberg (1959)'s Two Factor Theory. Herzberg (1959) developed the Herzberg's Two Factor Theory depicted in Figure 1.

Hygiene factors



Figure 1: Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

Source: Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1960).

Figure 1 proposes that, in order to have an overall job satisfaction in an organization, the organization should provide both motivational and hygiene factors respectively. Hygiene factors according to Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1960) were defined as those factors that do not motivate or satisfy but rather prevent dissatisfaction. These factors in regards to the theory include; salary, administration, supervision, company polices and employee status. Motivational factors were defined by Herzberg, et al. (1960) as those aspects of the job that make people want to perform and provide people with satisfaction. These factors include: achievement, recognition, responsibility and nature of work.

Several studies (e.g. Fareed & Jan, 2010; Derby-Davis, 2014) have empirically used the Herzberg's two factor theory. For instance, Fareed and Jan (2010) evaluated the Herzberg's two factor theory by investigating the relationship between the different factors of motivation and job satisfaction enjoyed by the banks' officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They collected data using a survey questionnaire of 418 respondents distributed among banks' officers in Peshawar district. They used descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Their results revealed that under given circumstances many hygiene factors like relationship with supervisors, company policy, salary, social status and working conditions had a positive significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory was also used by Derby-Davis (2014) to explore the factors that predict nursing faculty's job satisfaction and intent to stay in academe. Using a stratified random sampling of 134 respondents who retrieved and filled in the questionnaire, and a multivariate regression analysis, they established that Herzberg's motivational-hygiene theory is a strong predictor of nursing faculty's intent to stay in academe in Florida.

Theoretical reviews such as Foor and Cano (2011) have been highlighted. Foor and Cano (2011) posited that there was an overgeneralization of Herzberg's two factor theory due to the fact that evidence was based on a rather limited sample of accountants and engineers. Foor and Cano noted that the theory confuses events causing feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with some of the agents that caused the event to happen. Another theoretical review was that of Hyun (2009) who reported that there existed a problem in making a distinction between hygiene factors and motivational factors. Hyun (2009) noted that while some factors have proved to fall accurately within the two groups, other factors, particularly salary have proven ambiguous as to whether they are motivators or hygiene factors. However, Hyun (2009) pointed out that Herzberg's Two Factor Theory could help individual managers in identifying factors that would generally motivate and de-motivate groups of employees. Some of these factors were within the control of managers (like the level of responsibility and working conditions) while some other factors were outside their control (like personal life).

Ozsoy (2019) was another theoretical review that tested Herzberg's Two Factor motivational theory. In his review, Ozoy (2019) stressed that there was a need for a valid measurement tool which can test Herzberg's two factor theory in different samples and cultures. According to Ozsoy (2019), every single study applied different approaches while testing Herzberg's theory and this makes it harder to compare the empirical findings of all the researchers that have employed Herzberg's Two Factor Theories. The theory should then be tested in different sample groups (preferably by comparing the low, medium

and high-income profession groups), especially within the same country. Ozsoy (2019) recommended that one of the other critical points that needs be taken into consideration in future research would be examining the differences in personality traits of the participants involved in the research, since motivation and job satisfaction are closely related to personality traits. However, due to the strength of the Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, this has prompted the researcher to examine the impact of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere university.

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#### **4. Problem Statement**

Employees who experience job satisfaction are more likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment, productivity, and concern for the quality of their work within the organization (Bakotic, 2016). Makerere University has implemented various measures to improve job satisfaction among its academic staff, such as enhancing remuneration, providing internet connections in offices, offering opportunities for human resource development, and establishing health insurance schemes (Nakkazi, 2015; Muhindo, 2016). However, despite these efforts, the university has still witnessed persistent strikes in recent years (Nalubega, 2016; Angulo & Walubiri, 2013; Okoth, 2015). The occurrence of frequent strikes implies that the interventions implemented thus far may not be effectively addressing the root causes of job dissatisfaction among the academic staff. Without a thorough analysis of job satisfaction, Makerere University runs the risk of continuously implementing interventions that fail to address the underlying issues. Consequently, this study aims to delve into the understanding of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University, drawing upon Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Job Satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

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#### **4. Literature review**

A number of studies have been done pointing out the close relationship between intrinsic factors and job satisfaction, albeit without a focus among the academic staff in a university setting. Intrinsic factors are defined by Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) as those aspects of the job that make people want to perform and provide people with satisfaction. Some of the more significant intrinsic factors identified by Smerek and Peterson (2007) include; work itself, opportunities for advancement, responsibility, recognition and professional growth opportunities. The bridge between job satisfaction and work itself is complex and in some cases contradictory. Recent studies that is, Bojadjev, Petkovska, Misoska and Stojanovska (2015) examined the effects of the perceived work environment on public employee feelings of job satisfaction. Their results indicated that work itself was a weak predictor of job satisfaction.

Ayrancis and Ayrancis (2015) carried out a study to investigate the factors which contribute to the business owners' satisfaction with their own business in the Turkish context with an emphasis on small and medium enterprise. Their results indicated that there are multiple factors such as work itself that were positively related to business owners' job satisfaction. Lee (2015) carried out a study to examine similarities and differences in what affects managers' job satisfaction in non-profit and public organizations, focusing on managers' perception of their organization job, top management. Their results indicated that certain attributes of job satisfaction like the work itself influenced the managers' job satisfaction differently between the two sectors. Thus, we believe that Job satisfaction may diminish as employees stay longer on the job.

##### ***4.1 Work itself was a negative predictor of job satisfaction.***

Another contributing factor to job satisfaction is the opportunities for advancement (used synonymously with promotion). While some studies found out a negative relationship between job satisfaction and opportunities for advancement. Jiang, Lambert, Jin and Xiang (2016) results indicated that perceived promotional opportunities were a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Yang, Brown and Moon (2011) carried out a study to explore the determinants of job satisfaction of corrections officers. Their results indicated that employee promotion was a significant factor that led to job satisfaction. Furthermore, Andrews, Kacmar and Kacmar (2014) examined promotion focus and prevention focus as mediators of the mindfulness-job satisfaction and mindfulness turnover intentions relationships. Their results indicated that promotion focus did have a negative relationship between mindfulness and job satisfaction as well as the relationship between mindfulness and turnover intentions. Following the SPAM, employees are satisfied if they are availed with opportunities for advancement.

##### ***4.2 Opportunities for Advancement and Job Satisfaction***

According to He et al. (2018) study on the factors that contribute to job satisfaction to help identify the reasons and areas which employees are not satisfied with. The findings revealed that employee responsibility and communication are among some of the reasons as to why employees are not satisfied within the different universities in Malaysia. In addition, Fremong, Agbonyo and Darko (2018) in a study sought to find whether job satisfaction had an impact on the employee's loyalty and commitment. They collected data using a self-administered questionnaire from a sample of 45 respondents and analyzed data using a multiple regression analysis. As a result, employees who are given responsibilities will exhibit higher job satisfaction.

##### ***4.3 Responsibility and Job Satisfaction***

Rasool et al. (2016) also analysed Job-related rewards plus recognition on job satisfaction and employee motivation among the banking sector employees in China. Their results indicated that reward and recognition had a positive and significant relationship with job-satisfaction and motivation. Lien (2017) also examined the factors affecting lecturer job satisfaction in selected Universities in Vietnam. His results indicated that recognition and communication

had influential relationship with lecturer job satisfaction in the selected Universities in Vietnam. Wang and Chen (2018) conducted a study on the influence of rewards and recognition on employee job satisfaction in the information technology industry. The results showed that rewards and recognition had a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction among employees in this sector. Ahmad et al. (2019) conducted a study on the impact of reward and recognition on employee job satisfaction a case of Banking Sector in Pakistan. The findings indicated that both rewards and recognition had a positive influence on employee job satisfaction. Huynh (2020) investigated the relationship between job-related rewards and job satisfaction in the context of call center employees in Vietnam. The study found a positive association between rewards and job satisfaction, suggesting that employees who receive adequate rewards are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction. Alves and Raposo (2021) conducted a study on the impact of rewards on job satisfaction and employee motivation in the Hospitality Industry. Their research focused on the hospitality industry in Portugal. The results indicated that rewards had a positive impact on both job satisfaction and employee motivation in this sector.

#### **4.4 Recognition and Job Satisfaction**

In another study, Yang et al. (2011) explored the determinants of job satisfaction of corrections officers. Their results suggested that employee promotion was a significant factor that led to job satisfaction. In related development, Jiang et al. (2016) investigated the extent to which Chinese community correctional officers were satisfied with their jobs. Their results indicated that perceived promotional opportunities were a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Giallonardo et al. (2010) conducted a study on the predictors of Work-related Burnout in a Sample of Correctional Officers in Australia. The results indicated that factors such as job autonomy, social support, and career development opportunities significantly influenced job satisfaction and burnout among correctional officers. Lu et al. (2014) investigated the factors influencing job satisfaction among healthcare professionals in China. The study results found that factors such as salary, promotion opportunities, and job security significantly influenced job satisfaction in the healthcare sector. In a related development, Tekleab et al. (2015) conducted a study on the role of leader-member exchange in the relationship between perceived leader's motive to lead and employee performance. The results suggested that a positive leader-member exchange relationship positively impacted job satisfaction.

#### **4.5 Professional growth opportunities and Job Satisfaction**

Adams, Beehr, and King (2017) investigated the relationship between professional growth opportunities, job satisfaction, and employee performance in a large-scale survey of employees across various industries. Their findings indicated that employees who perceived greater professional growth opportunities in their organizations reported higher levels of job satisfaction, which in turn positively influenced their performance outcomes. Chiang and Birch (2018) conducted a longitudinal study examining the effects of professional growth opportunities on job satisfaction and subsequent employee performance. Their results revealed that employees who had access to continuous professional development and growth opportunities experienced higher levels of job satisfaction, leading to improved performance over time. In a related development, Grant and Parker (2019) explored the role of job crafting, which involves employees actively shaping their job tasks and responsibilities, in enhancing professional growth opportunities and job satisfaction. Their study demonstrated that employees who engaged in job crafting to create growth-oriented tasks and challenges experienced higher levels of job satisfaction and perceived greater professional growth opportunities, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes. Locke and Latham (2013) examined the impact of goal-setting and professional growth opportunities on job satisfaction and performance. Their meta-analysis of multiple studies revealed that clear and challenging goals, coupled with opportunities for professional growth, significantly influenced job satisfaction and positively affected employee performance. In addition, Parker & Bindl (2020) conducted a study exploring the role of supervisor support in facilitating professional growth opportunities, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Their findings indicated that employees who perceived high levels of support from their supervisors in their pursuit of professional growth reported greater job satisfaction and demonstrated higher levels of performance in their roles.

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## **1. Present study context**

In Makerere University, efforts to enhance job satisfaction among the academic staff have been expended in terms of improved remuneration, Internet connections in offices, improved avenues for human resource development and established health insurance schemes (Nakkazi, 2015; Muhindo, 2016). Despite these improved measures towards job satisfaction, strikes have persisted within the University in recent years (Nalubega, 2016; Angulo & Walubiri, 2013; Okoth, 2015). Frequent strikes seem to give an impression of dissatisfaction among the academic staff. Could it be that, the interventions are not addressing the root causes of job dissatisfaction? If so proper job satisfaction analysis needs to be done utilising the right tools (i.e. SPAM), otherwise, Makerere University will continue using misdirected interventions that do not actually address the root causes of job satisfaction. However, this paper presents findings of a study where the SPAM has been used to understand job satisfaction among the academic staff. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to apply Smerek and Peterson's assessment model in the analysis of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University. Specifically, the study sought to establish whether intrinsic factors were significant predictors of the JS.

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## **2. Method**

### **4.1 Subject**

A total of 320 surveys were dispensed in different colleges at Makerere University. We finally collected 302 surveys; 8 responses were discarded. For further data analysis, 294 responses were used. Of all the respondents, 60.2% were males with females being 39.8%. The results on age group of the respondents in years showed that the modal percentage 46.6% of the respondents were between 31-40 years, followed by 33.3% who were between 41-

50 years while the rest were aged either 30 years and below (13.6%) or 51 years plus (6.5%). Concerning the level of education attained by the respondents showed that the modal percentage (50.2%) of the respondents were those who had masters degrees followed by 40.2% with PhD qualifications.

#### 4.2 Instrument and Data Analysis

An adopted Smerek and Peterson questionnaire was used for data collection on the analysis of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University (31 items). Data were collected from academic staff of Makerere University, assuring them for the confidentiality of the data. A 5-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire: Strongly agree (SA)=1, Agree (A)=2, not sure (NS)=3, Disagree (A)=4, and Strongly Disagree (SDA)=5. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 20 academic staff. Cronbach's alpha was calculated, obtaining a reliability of over 0.80. The data analysis was done at different levels, namely at uni-variate, bivariate and multivariate. The data analysis at uni-variate level was based on percentages from the frequency tables and descriptive statistics, specifically the mean. At the bivariate level, the dependent variable (DV), job satisfaction was correlated with the intrinsic factors of the assessment model of Smerek and Peterson as illustrated in figure 1. At the multivariate level, five regression models were run, with each regressing with JS on a particular dimension of the model.

### 3. Results

Job satisfaction (dependent variable) was conceptualised in terms of whether a job meets expectations (2) is close to an ideal job (3) how satisfied a person is with their job and the intrinsic factor (independent variable) in terms of recognition, work itself, opportunities for advancement, professional growth opportunities and responsibility respectively. At uni-variate level, the means presented provided an understanding of the extent to which the study respondents rated themselves on the different constructs of the study. Table 1 illustrates a correlation analysis of the relationship between intrinsic factors and job satisfaction among the academic staff.

Table 1: Means and Correlation matrix of job satisfaction and Intrinsic factors

	Means	JB	Rec	WiS	OFA	PGO	Res
JS	3.75	1	.431	.093	.177	.446	.422
			.000	.134	.004	.000	.000
Rec	3.57		1	.374	.302	.482	.463
				.000	.000	.000	.000
WIS	3.57			1	.383	.101	-.007
					.000	.093	.900
OFA	3.06				1	.104	.092
						.085	.124
PGO	3.11					1	.080
							.000
Res	3.37						1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The means in Table 1 indicate that the respondents rated their job satisfaction, professional growth opportunities and responsibility as being undesirable (means=3.75, 3.57 and 3.57 respectively corresponding to disagree) and recognition, work itself, opportunities for advancement as moderate (means =3.06, 3.11 and 3.37 respectively corresponding to disagree to not sure). The correlation coefficients showed that recognition ( $r=0.431$ ,  $p=0.000<0.01$ ), opportunities for advancement (0.446,  $0.000<0.01$ ), professional growth opportunities (0.422,  $0.000<0.01$ ), responsibility (0.285,  $0.000<0.01$ ) had a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction among the academic staff. This implies that Smerek and Peterson questions on recognition, and opportunities for advancement, responsibility were related and applicable in analyzing job satisfaction at Makerere University. However, work itself (0.177,  $0.04<0.01$ ) was not significantly related to job satisfaction. This implies that Smerek and Peterson questions on work itself were not related and applicable in analyzing job satisfaction at Makerere University. To confirm the correlations, a multiple regression was run to find out whether Job Satisfaction predicted intrinsic Factors.

Table 2: Regression of job satisfaction on Intrinsic factors

Motivators	Standardized Co-efficient	Significance
Recognition	.303	.000
Work itself	-.101	.146
Opportunities for advancement	.093	.005
Professional growth opportunities	-.011	.900
Responsibility	.117	.009
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> =0.202		
F=9.727		

The results in Table 2 shows that, the five intrinsic factors explained 20.2% of the variations in JS (adjusted R<sup>2</sup> =0.202). This means that 70.8% of the variation was accounted for by extraneous variables was not considered in this study. The regression model was very good/ significant (F= 9.727, p=0.000< 0.01). Recognition (0.303, 0.000<0.01), opportunities for advancement ( $\beta$ = 0.093, p= 0.005<0.01), responsibility ( $\beta$  =0.117, p=0.009<0.01) were positive significant predictor of job satisfaction. This implies that Smerek and Peterson questions on recognition, and opportunities for advancement, responsibility could apply and predict job satisfaction at Makerere University. However, work itself ( $\beta$  =-0.101, p=0.146>0.01) and professional growth opportunities ( $\beta$  =-0.011, p= 0.900>0.01) were insignificant predictors of job satisfaction This implies that Smerek and Peterson questions on work itself, and professional growth opportunities, could not apply and predict job satisfaction at Makerere University.

#### 4. Discussion

The study investigated the applicability of Smerek and Petersons' intrinsic factors in analyzing job satisfaction. The study findings indicated that recognition; opportunities for advancement and responsibility were significant predictor of JS. However, other two intrinsic factors namely, work itself, and professional growth opportunities, were negative predictors of JS. Hypothesis one (H<sub>1</sub>) to the effect that work itself was a negative insignificant predictor of job satisfaction was accepted. This finding was in variance with the findings of other scholars. For instance, Brulic (2016) established that higher degree of engagement with the work itself predicted a higher level of job satisfaction in Serbia. The study findings were also in disagreement with Fassoulis and Alexopoulos (2015) findings that satisfaction with the work itself was a significant predictor of employee productivity. Hypothesis two (H<sub>2</sub>) to the effect that opportunity for advancement was a negative predictor of job satisfaction was accepted. The findings were incongruence with Jiang, Lambert, Jin and Xiang (2016) study that established that perceived promotional opportunities was significant predictors of job satisfaction. Yang, Brown and Moon (2011) study findings were also line with the study findings that established that promotions were significant factors that lead to job satisfaction.

In addition, Hypothesis three (H<sub>3</sub>) to the effect that responsibility was a positive significant predictor of job satisfaction was accepted. This finding was in variance with the findings of other scholars. For instance, Abuhashesh, Al-Dmour and Masa'deh (2019) found that Jordanian employees care the most about their salaries and position more than any other factors. Hypothesis four (H<sub>4</sub>) to the effect that recognition was a positive significant predictor of job satisfaction was supported. The study findings were in agreement with Rasool, et al. (2018) whose empirical results showed that recognition had a positive and significant relationship with job-satisfaction and motivation. The findings were also in line with Tessema, Ready and Embaye (2013) findings that employee recognition was found to have a significant impact on job satisfaction, regardless of home country income level and culture. Hypothesis five (H<sub>5</sub>) to the effect that Professional growth opportunities were a positive significant predictor of job satisfaction was accepted. This finding was in disagreement with the findings of other scholars. For instance, Lambert, Quresh, Hogan, Klahm, Smith and Frank (2015) finding that there was a significant relationship between employee training and job satisfaction. The study findings were in line with Jyoti and Sharma (2015) established that professional growth opportunities in terms of mentoring functions have a direct impact on job satisfaction of call centre employees.

#### 5. Conclusion

From the discussion, valid conclusions were sought that the intrinsic factor of recognition, professional growth opportunities and responsibility were positive significant predictors of JS. However, the other Smerek and Petersons dimensional measures of intrinsic factors like, work itself, and professional growth opportunities were not negative predictors of JS and thus their conceptualization could not applicable in Makerere University setting. The study recommended that to enhance JS, authorities responsible should see to it; that the academic staff receive recognition for doing a good job; that the academic staff have a say in decisions that affect their work; that the academic staff receive the necessary training to do their job well. Although, the other intrinsic factors of work itself, and opportunities for advancement were insignificant predictors of JS, the authorities responsible for JS in Makerere University need not to pay undue attention to them as a means of enhancing JS.

In spite of the significant contribution, this study makes as far as enhancing job satisfaction is concerned, the study suffered a number of limitations that cannot be underestimated. For instance, the study applied Smerek and Peterson's assessment model in the study of job satisfaction among academic staff in Makerere University. Evidence has it that there are other models such as Job Characteristic Model, Herzberg's Two Factor model that would be

considered in the study of job satisfaction. The study was based on data which had academic staff from Makerere University as the larger number of respondents. Thus the feelings of non-academic staff from Makerere University need to be explored. Therefore, once again the generalization of the research findings of all academic staff should be taken with reservations.

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