



# It's Not Just About the Money: How Job Satisfaction Facets Differently Influence Academic and Senior Non-Academic Staff Performance in a Polytechnic

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## Abstract

This study investigates the distinct impact of various facets of job satisfaction on the performance of professional staff within a Nigerian public higher education institution. Grounded in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, we differentiate between 'Hygiene' factors (Compensation, Job Security) and 'Motivator' factors (Recognition, Nature of Work) to test their respective influence on employee performance. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with a sample of 370 academic and senior non-academic staff at the Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, selected through stratified random sampling. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that both factor categories significantly predict performance, but their effects differ in magnitude. The results show that Motivator factors, particularly Recognition ( $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ) and the Nature of the Work itself ( $\beta = .25, p < .001$ ), were the strongest predictors. Among Hygiene factors, Compensation had a significant but smaller positive impact ( $\beta = .14, p < .01$ ), while Job Security was not a statistically significant predictor. The overall model was significant ( $F(4, 365) = 29.87, p < .001$ ) and explained 24.7% of the variance in employee performance (Adjusted  $R^2 = .238$ ). These findings suggest that while adequate compensation is important, performance excellence in this professional context is more profoundly driven by intrinsic motivators like acknowledgment and engaging work. The study provides evidence-based recommendations for institutional administrators to design more effective HR strategies that prioritize both motivational and hygiene needs to foster a high-performing workforce.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Motivator Factors, Hygiene Factors, Polytechnic, Nigeria.

## Introduction

The performance of employees is the cornerstone of organizational effectiveness, a principle that holds particularly true for public higher education institutions. In Nigeria, polytechnics play a crucial role in national development by providing essential technical and vocational education. The quality of this education, and thus the institution's ability to fulfill its mandate, is directly dependent on the performance and commitment of its academic and senior administrative staff (Ogbogu, 2011). Consequently, understanding the drivers of employee performance within this specific context is not merely an academic exercise but a matter of institutional and national importance.

The relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance is one of the most studied topics in organizational behavior, with meta-analyses confirming a moderate positive correlation (Judge *et al.*, 2001). However, treating job satisfaction as a monolithic concept can obscure the nuanced ways in which its different components influence behavior. An employee might be satisfied with their job security but dissatisfied with their opportunities for recognition, and these distinct feelings likely have differential impacts on their performance. This highlights a critical gap in the literature, particularly within the Nigerian public sector context, where research often fails to disaggregate the facets of job satisfaction.

Previous studies in similar contexts have been limited by methodological weaknesses, such as unrepresentative samples, inadequate theoretical grounding, and a failure to employ robust

statistical analyses. This study seeks to address these shortcomings by investigating the specific impact of key job satisfaction facets—categorized by a robust theoretical framework—on the performance of professional staff at the Federal Polytechnic Damaturu. By focusing on a large, representative sample of academic and senior administrative staff, we aim to provide reliable and generalizable insights into which aspects of the work experience are most critical for driving performance.

## Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

This study is anchored in Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory) (Herzberg *et al.*, 1959). Herzberg's theory makes a critical distinction between two sets of factors in the workplace:

1. *Hygiene Factors:* These are elements of the job context that do not necessarily motivate employees but whose absence can cause significant dissatisfaction. They are extrinsic to the work itself and include factors like compensation, company policies, supervision, working conditions, and job security. According to Herzberg, improving hygiene factors can prevent dissatisfaction but will not, on its own, create satisfaction or motivation.
2. *Motivator Factors:* These are factors that are intrinsic to the work itself and are associated with feelings of achievement, growth,

and satisfaction. They include recognition, responsibility, the nature of the work, advancement, and personal growth. Herzberg argued that these factors are the true drivers of high performance and motivation.

This framework provides an excellent lens through which to analyze the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction. It allows us to move beyond a simple “satisfaction-performance” link and test the differential impact of factors that prevent dissatisfaction versus those that actively promote motivation. Based on this theory, we formulate the following hypotheses:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Motivator factors (Recognition, Nature of Work) will have a significant positive relationship with employee performance.*

Herzberg’s theory explicitly posits that motivators are the primary drivers of high effort and performance. When employees feel recognized for their contributions and find their work inherently interesting and challenging, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to excel.

*H<sub>2</sub>: Hygiene factors (Compensation, Job Security) will have a significant, but comparatively weaker, positive relationship with employee performance.*

While Herzberg argued that hygiene factors primarily prevent dissatisfaction, subsequent research suggests they can also have a modest motivating effect, particularly when they are perceived as a form of feedback or recognition (e.g., performance-based pay) (Judge & Church, 2000). We therefore hypothesize a positive, but less powerful, effect compared to motivators.

## Methodology

### Research Design and Sample

A cross-sectional survey design was employed for this study. The target population was all academic and senior non-academic staff of the Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, which constitutes approximately 2,934 employees (52% of the total institutional workforce of 5,642). Using a standard sample size calculator with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the required sample size was determined to be 340.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation from both staff categories. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed proportionally across academic and senior administrative departments. Out of these, 370 were returned and deemed usable, resulting in an excellent response rate of 82.2% and a final sample size ( $n=370$ ) that exceeds the required threshold.

### Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*). The scales were adapted from established instruments to ensure validity.

- Employee Performance (PERF): A 5-item self-reported scale adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991), focusing on in-role job performance.
- Compensation Satisfaction (COMP): A 4-item scale assessing satisfaction with pay, benefits, and fairness, adapted from the Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (Heneman & Schwab, 1985).
- Job Security Satisfaction (SEC): A 3-item scale measuring perceived stability and security of employment.

- Recognition Satisfaction (REC): A 4-item scale assessing the extent to which employees feel their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated, adapted from Spector (1997).
- Nature of Work Satisfaction (WORK): A 4-item scale measuring how interesting, challenging, and meaningful the work itself is perceived to be.

### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using JASP software (Version 0.19.3). The analysis plan included:

1. Calculation of descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations.
2. Assessment of the internal consistency of all scales using Cronbach’s Alpha.
3. A standard multiple linear regression to test the hypotheses.
4. Verification of regression assumptions, including checks for multicollinearity (Tolerance, VIF) and autocorrelation of residuals (Durbin-Watson).

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Scale Reliability

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, and Cronbach’s Alpha reliabilities for all composite variables. All scales demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency, with Alpha values ranging from 0.81 to 0.89. As hypothesized, all four satisfaction facets are positively and significantly correlated with employee performance, with recognition and nature of work showing the strongest correlations.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Scale Reliabilities

| Var.    | M    | SD   | 1             | 2             | 3             | 4             | 5             |
|---------|------|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. PERF | 4.05 | 0.65 | <b>(0.89)</b> |               |               |               |               |
| 2. COMP | 3.15 | 0.98 | .29**         | <b>(0.85)</b> |               |               |               |
| 3. SEC  | 3.85 | 0.85 | .12*          | .31**         | <b>(0.81)</b> |               |               |
| 4. REC  | 3.30 | 1.05 | .42**         | .45**         | .25**         | <b>(0.88)</b> |               |
| 5. WORK | 3.95 | 0.78 | .38**         | .35**         | .28**         | .51**         | <b>(0.86)</b> |

**Note:** \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ . Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients are shown in parentheses on the diagonal.

### Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression was conducted to predict Employee Performance from the four facets of job satisfaction. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the overall model fit. The model is statistically significant and provides a good fit for the data.

Table 2. Model Summary

| R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adj. R <sup>2</sup> | F     | df1 | df2 | p      | SEE  |
|-------|----------------|---------------------|-------|-----|-----|--------|------|
| 0.505 | 0.255          | 0.247               | 29.87 | 4   | 365 | < .001 | 0.56 |

Predictors: Compensation, Job Security, Recognition, Nature of Work. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance.

Table 3. ANOVA for the Regression Model

| Model        | SS            | df         | MS   | F     | p      |
|--------------|---------------|------------|------|-------|--------|
| Regression   | 37.64         | 4          | 9.41 | 29.87 | < .001 |
| Residual     | 114.93        | 365        | 0.31 |       |        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>152.57</b> | <b>369</b> |      |       |        |

Table 4. Regression Coefficients

| Predictor      | B     | SE    | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | 95% CI for B    |
|----------------|-------|-------|---------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| (Intercept)    | 1.890 | 0.210 |         | 9.000    | < .001   | [1.480, 2.300]  |
| Compensation   | 0.092 | 0.034 | 0.140   | 2.690    | 0.008    | [0.025, 0.159]  |
| Job Security   | 0.088 | 0.077 | 0.050   | 1.140    | 0.254    | [-0.063, 0.239] |
| Recognition    | 0.192 | 0.035 | 0.310   | 5.490    | < .001   | [0.123, 0.261]  |
| Nature of Work | 0.208 | 0.045 | 0.250   | 4.620    | < .001   | [0.120, 0.296]  |

Table 4 presents the regression coefficients. The results show strong support for H<sub>1</sub>: both Recognition ( $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ) and Nature of Work ( $\beta = .25, p < .001$ ) were highly significant positive predictors of performance. H<sub>2</sub> was partially supported: Compensation ( $\beta = .14, p = .008$ ) had a significant positive effect, but Job Security did not significantly predict performance ( $p = .254$ ).

### Assumption Diagnostics

The assumptions for linear regression were met. Table 5 shows that all VIF values are well below the threshold of 5, and Tolerance values are high, indicating no issues with multicollinearity. Also, the result yielded a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.92, which is very close to 2, indicating no significant first-order autocorrelation in the residuals.

Table 5. Collinearity Diagnostics

| Predictor      | Tolerance | VIF  |
|----------------|-----------|------|
| Compensation   | 0.75      | 1.33 |
| Job Security   | 0.88      | 1.14 |
| Recognition    | 0.65      | 1.54 |
| Nature of Work | 0.69      | 1.45 |

## Discussion

The results of this study offer a nuanced, theory-driven understanding of the job satisfaction-performance relationship, providing valuable insights into the specific motivational landscape of professional staff within a Nigerian public polytechnic. The central finding—that intrinsic motivator factors are more powerful predictors of employee performance than extrinsic hygiene factors—not only supports our primary hypotheses but also breathes contemporary relevance into Herzberg's classic Two-Factor Theory within a non-Western context. As hypothesized, both motivator and hygiene factors play a role, but their influence is far from uniform.

### The Primacy of Intrinsic Motivators (H<sub>1</sub> Supported)

The strong, significant, and positive predictive power of Recognition ( $\beta = .31$ ) and the Nature of the Work ( $\beta = .25$ ) provides robust support for our first hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>). This finding aligns squarely with Herzberg's (1959) proposition that the most potent drivers of high performance are intrinsic to the job itself. For the academic and senior administrative staff in our sample, feeling that their work is valued, acknowledged, and inherently interesting appears to be a far more powerful motivator than contextual factors. This resonates deeply with modern theories of motivation, such as Self-Determination Theory, which argues that fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness—all of which are enhanced by recognition and engaging work—is essential for fostering high-quality, intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

This is particularly relevant for knowledge workers, such as academic staff, whose performance is often tied to creativity, innovation, and deep engagement rather than simple task completion (Davenport, 2005). Our finding is consistent with research showing that for professionals, recognition for a job well done can be a more significant performance driver than financial incentives alone (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003). The significance of the "Nature of Work" further suggests that performance is enhanced when jobs are designed to be challenging and meaningful, a core tenet of the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), which complements Herzberg's theory.

### The Role of Extrinsic Hygiene Factors (H<sub>2</sub> Partially Supported)

The results for the hygiene factors were mixed, providing partial support for our second hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>). The finding that Compensation remains a statistically significant predictor of performance ( $\beta = .14$ ), albeit with a smaller effect size than the motivators, offers a crucial refinement to a rigid interpretation of Herzberg's theory. While Herzberg originally posited that hygiene factors only prevent dissatisfaction, this result aligns with a more contemporary view that compensation can play a modest but significant role in performance motivation (Judge, Piccolo, Podsakoff, Shaw, & Rich, 2010). This can be understood through the lens of Equity Theory (Adams, 1965), which suggests that employees are motivated when they perceive fairness in the ratio of their inputs (effort) to their outcomes (pay). Thus, while fair compensation may not be the primary driver of *excellence*, its presence is a necessary foundation that signals fairness and prevents the demotivation that arises from perceived inequity.

Perhaps the most intriguing finding is the non-significance of Job Security. In the context of a Nigerian public institution where employment is generally stable and governed by civil service rules, it is plausible that job security functions as a largely "satisfied" hygiene factor. As it does not vary significantly among employees and is often taken for granted, it lacks the power to differentiate performance levels (De Witte & Näswall, 2003). Its non-significance in our model does not imply it is unimportant; rather, it suggests that in this specific environment, it has reached a threshold where it no longer functions as an active performance lever. This contrasts sharply with studies conducted in private sectors or during periods of economic instability, where job insecurity has been shown to be a powerful negative predictor of both well-being and performance (Sverke *et al.*, 2002).

## Conclusion

This study disaggregated job satisfaction into its core facets and examined their differential impact on employee performance. We found that motivator factors (Recognition, Nature of Work) are the most powerful predictors of performance among academic

and senior staff, followed by the hygiene factor of Compensation. Job Security, another hygiene factor, did not have a significant impact.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Overall, our findings support a more integrated and less dichotomous view of Herzberg's theory. Motivators are indeed the primary drivers of high performance, but hygiene factors like compensation serve as a critical foundation upon which motivation can be built. The study demonstrates that while Herzberg's core distinction is valid, the interplay between the two factors is more complex than a simple on/off switch for satisfaction.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings offer clear, evidence-based guidance for the management of the Federal Polytechnic Damaturu and similar institutions:

1. **Prioritize Recognition Systems:** While fair pay is essential, administrators should invest heavily in formal and informal recognition programs. Simple acts of acknowledging excellent teaching, innovative administration, or research contributions can yield significant returns in performance.
2. **Focus on Job Enrichment:** Managers should strive to make jobs more interesting and meaningful. For academic staff, this could involve providing opportunities to develop new courses, engage in interdisciplinary projects, or lead research initiatives.
3. **Ensure Competitive and Fair Compensation:** While not the strongest motivator, compensation remains a significant factor. The institution must ensure its pay and benefits are perceived as equitable and competitive to prevent dissatisfaction from becoming a demotivating force.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study, while methodologically robust, has limitations. Its cross-sectional nature precludes causal inference. The use of self-reported performance data, though common, is another limitation. Future research would benefit from a longitudinal design that tracks employees over time and incorporates objective performance metrics (e.g., publication counts, student evaluation scores, project completion rates). Furthermore, exploring the mediating role of psychological states like work engagement could provide an even deeper understanding of the mechanisms linking satisfaction to performance.

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