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A REVIEW OF THE JOB SATISFACTION THEORY FOR VOCATIONAL COLLEGE EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

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Job satisfaction signifies a positive attitude toward tasks performed, fostering confidence and enthusiasm among individuals as they engage in their work. The concept of job satisfaction has been explored through various theories relevant to vocational teachers. This paper aims to formulate a comprehensive theory of job satisfaction, integrating variations in work values and perceived job characteristics as key explanatory factors. The study delves into the intricate relationship between job satisfaction and specific work-related elements. Through a literature review analysis, relevant theories are selected to map out the theory of job satisfaction and to understand the interplay between Maslow's Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The findings demonstrate that both Maslow's theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory influence job satisfaction within the organizational work environment of vocational colleges. Furthermore, the extent to which individuals can attain perceived job rewards is contingent on their level of control over their employment circumstances. Additionally, this paper examines previous theories related to teacher job satisfaction, providing valuable insights to teachers regarding the influencing factors that shape their control over achieving job satisfaction within the context of Malaysian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.

Keywords:

Job Satisfaction Theory, Vocational College, Maslow Theory, Herzberg Two Factor Theory, Vocational Teacher



Introduction

TVET Malaysia is making significant progress in alignment with the nation's TVET objectives, particularly in preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The primary goal of implementing the TVET education system is to equip students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills to enhance their employability upon entering the job market. In pursuit of this goal, TVET Malaysia places considerable emphasis on producing competent graduates with high market value, contributing to the creation of employment opportunities both domestically and internationally. However, concerns arise regarding the potential compromise of the effectiveness of the country's TVET strategies and objectives if instructors within these institutions fail to fulfil their responsibilities. Additionally, the success of TVET could be hindered if instructors are undervalued or subjected to workplace politics, which has the potential to undermine their crucial role as educators.

Vocational lecturers who specialize in technical subjects such as welding, culinary arts, hospitality, and technical drawing play a pivotal role in determining the sustainability of ongoing skills development within the TVET education paradigm. These educators are instrumental in enhancing the country's capacity to impart technical and vocational knowledge to future generations. Many TVET instructors possess extensive industry experience, rendering them valuable assets within the TVET system. It is undeniable that the quality of teaching and learning experiences, along with students' academic performance, significantly contribute to the achievement of TVET system goals. Consequently, vocational lecturers face the challenge of managing administrative duties that extend beyond their primary teaching responsibilities. Unfortunately, the stress associated with these additional tasks and excessive workloads has led some lecturers to contemplate changing careers and, in some instances, leaving the workforce altogether (Mertler, 2016).

This study provides an extensive literature review encompassing motivational theorists and their viewpoints concerning job satisfaction, while also examining the role of motivation within this context. Gaining a deep comprehension of these theories enables management to direct their attention towards devising strategies aimed at augmenting job satisfaction. The traditional model of job satisfaction, which posits that job factors can serve as sources of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, with their presence making a job desirable and their absence making it undesirable, finds support. Researchers argue that individuals in education settings should be acknowledged and appreciated for their hard work, even if it may not receive widespread recognition. When identifying the key elements for achieving teacher job satisfaction, various theories, including Maslow's and Herzberg's, can serve as valuable references.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the present study is to examine various theories of job satisfaction among tourism lecturers in the vocational college environment in Malaysia.

Methodology

The literature review serves as a crucial component in analysing, evaluating, and augmenting existing knowledge pertinent to the research problem (Hart, 2018). This review encompasses diverse published works concerning the correlation between job satisfaction and work productivity. Numerous journals, periodicals, seminal books, and other published resources have been consulted to undertake this literature review.



Literature Review

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction in Malaysia is a crucial factor contributing to organizational success and performance achievement. Considerable research has been conducted to explore ways of enhancing job satisfaction among workers in various sectors worldwide, including the academic sector (Mohd Rokeman, & Che Kob, 2023; Omar, Rashid, Puad, & Azman, 2018; Mustafa et al., 2019; Elmi, 2021; Sie & Eze, 2022; Penjor, 2020), the hotel sector (Sari, Bendesa, & Antara, 2019; Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020; Khuong & Linh, 2020; Sabri, Mutalib, & Hasan, 2019), and the automobile manufacturing sector (Bing, 2023; Ihemereze et al., 2023; Moraru & Popa, 2019) among others (Ajala, 2023; Moon, 2023; Yousaf, 2020).

Theories of Job Satisfaction

According to Saif et al. (2012), the importance of a well-constructed theory cannot be emphasized enough. Essentially, a theory involves a systematic organization of interrelated concepts and principles, resulting in a structured framework that unifies a significant body of knowledge, as explained by Weihrich and Koontz (1999). To elaborate further, a theory plays a crucial role in identifying essential variables and establishing their interconnections, thereby generating "tentative propositions" that can be subjected to empirical scrutiny, aligning with the perspectives offered by Newstrom (2007).

Maslow Theory

This theory portrays human beings as rational entities who continually motivate themselves to fulfil their basic psychological needs (Maslow, 1954). Maslow's Theory places significant emphasis on individual personality and the comprehensive concept of motivation. Consequently, individuals with a high level of motivation are more likely to achieve their life goals. Firkhan, Hamid, Mohd Zalisham, and Mohd Norazmi (2021) observe that the failure to meet basic human needs can disrupt the human psyche, resulting in an inability to achieve self-satisfaction in areas such as personal development, career, or occupation. When individuals have their needs for self-satisfaction fulfilled, they tend to feel valuable, capable, and respected by society.

The theory proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1954 posits that humans possess basic needs (Norazmi et al., 2020). These fundamental needs serve as determinants of human satisfaction and impact the journey towards self-actualization, whether they are fulfilled or unmet. As depicted in Figure 2.1, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) illustrates the sequential progression in fulfilling these needs, commencing from the foundational level. Maslow's theory advises organizations to identify employees' pressing needs that may engender negative attitudes and behaviours. Simultaneously, it offers organizations an opportunity to address these needs, potentially serving as a source of motivation for their employees.

In their study, Rosnee, Mohamad Zaid, Suhaimi, Nur Hanim, and Mohd Norazmi (2021) underscore the significance of addressing basic psychological needs essential for survival, including necessities like food, beverages, clothing, and shelter, as a crucial aspect contributing to teacher job satisfaction. In other studies, physiological needs refer to the essential biological necessities required for sustaining life, including nourishment, hydration, clothing, comfort, and oxygen (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2018). In the context of teaching careers, physiological



needs encompass aspects such as salary, rest spaces, facilities, and other fundamental work requirements. After the fulfilment of physiological needs, the next level to address is security. According to Zaid, Norazmi, & Abdul Rasid (2020), security includes the right to personal and familial safety, encompassing property and workplace security. This encompasses the desire for a stable career, fair treatment, and a reasonable salary. Once security needs are met, social needs become crucial, as all individuals require attention, friendship, and affection. Norazmi (2020) emphasizes the importance of teachers feeling welcomed by their colleagues and administrators in school settings. The subsequent stage involves fulfilling self-esteem needs, which are essential for job satisfaction. Adequate working conditions address the safety requirements outlined by Maslow. According to Maslow (1943), individuals need to live without fear and enjoy good health to experience contentment. When teachers perceive unfavourable working conditions, they may feel their well-being is threatened and consider seeking employment elsewhere. Administrators seeking to enhance teacher job satisfaction should prioritize creating and maintaining a secure and well-organized school environment for both staff and students.



Figure 1. SimplyPsychology.org/Maslow, 1943

The following need is for respect and pride, where individuals seek recognition, appreciation, and a sense of self-worth. Fauziyana, Zaid, Rosnee, and Norazmi (2020) explain that at this stage, people desire acknowledgment and respect from those around them. Norazmi et al. (2020) suggest that teachers should receive praise or appreciation to fulfil these needs. Fundamentally, according to Maslow's Theory, humans work diligently to fulfil their needs, with motivation shifting to the next level once a need is met. Advancing to higher needs is challenging without fulfilling the lower ones. Teacher job satisfaction becomes achievable when all requirements, such as a competitive salary, acceptance, fair treatment, and appropriate rewards, are met. Maslow's theory has exerted a notable influence on the domains of education and human development (Nurhasanah et al., 2021).



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has served as the foundation for transforming low-performing, low-socioeconomic schools. This framework has assisted schools in crisis in achieving excellent performance and productivity (Fisher & Crawford, 2020). Meeting the most basic needs leads to stability and reduced competitiveness, allowing individuals to focus more on personal growth. This progression enables teachers to ascend the hierarchy towards self-actualization (Fisher & Crawford, 2020). The study hypothesizes that educators will strive to meet their basic needs to improve job performance and achieve set goals and objectives.

Aminah, Hisyam, Azra, and Norazmi (2021) assert that teachers who are treated fairly in duty division and rewarded for their efforts can achieve success. According to Ishak et al. (2021), in accordance with Maslow's Theory, teacher job satisfaction is achieved when their inherent human values receive acknowledgment., ensuring fair treatment, minimal burdens, and autonomy in decision-making. Overall, comprehending this hierarchy of needs provides insight into educators' motivation process, enabling an organized approach to assessing efforts and impacts made towards nurturing more motivated, creative, and productive educators within the organization. This theory aligns with the study's objective, reflecting the elements essential for understanding individuals' behaviour and responses to their needs within an organization.

In summary, comprehending the hierarchy of these requirements is crucial for providing early insight into the motivation process of lecturers, ensuring its systematic execution, and assessing the efforts and impacts aimed at fostering a more motivated, creative, and productive lecturer workforce within the organization. As elucidated by Holmes et al. (2019), when educational leaders possess a clear understanding of the factors within their schools that influence teacher job satisfaction, they can proactively address these factors to enhance overall teacher satisfaction. This understanding can be attained through a variety of approaches, including teacher surveys on relevant factors, conducting needs assessments, and actively fostering relationships with teachers to gain insight into their priorities. The selection of this theory aligns with the study's objectives, as it encompasses elements essential for comprehending individuals' behaviours and responses to their needs within the organizational context.

Herzberg Two Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1968), introduced by Herzberg, Mausner, and Synderman, underscores the significance of meeting self-needs and motivational needs in the process of self-development. This emphasis is evident in various studies (Mohd Rokeman, Che Kob, & Che Sobry, 2023; Aminah et al., 2021; Azlisham, Mohd Nor, Daud, Syarifah, & Mohd Norazmi, 2021; Kaspin, 2021; Firkhan et al., 2021; Ishak et al., 2021; Ashari, Muhammed Hariri, & Mohd Norazmi, 2021). According to the theory, individual job satisfaction can be expected based on two primary factors: the extent to which motivation fulfills one's personal needs at work (Fauziyana et al., 2021).

According to Herzberg (1959), depicted in Figure 2, there exist two distinct categories of factors: those that contribute to satisfaction and those that contribute to dissatisfaction. Herzberg (1959) contends that higher-level needs, such as psychological requirements like status, self-awareness, growth, and achievement, tend to exert a dominant influence on employees' motivation and satisfaction with regard to their job roles. Conversely, physiological needs, including salary and security, tend to evoke feelings of dissatisfaction. These two motivational factors are characterized by their volatility and the imperative need for fulfilment. Furthermore, Herzberg (1959) draws the conclusion that satisfaction and discontent do not fall



along the same continuum. Consequently, he argues that motivators can engender either satisfaction or dissatisfaction, whereas hygiene factors lead to dissatisfaction in their absence and the absence of dissatisfaction when they are present (Mohd Rokeman & Che Kob, 2024).

The Two-Factor Theory also influences employee motivation (Fauziyana et al., 2021; Norazmi et al., 2020; Zaid et al., 2020; Zaid et al., 2021). Motivating factors impact job satisfaction, and their absence does affect work satisfaction. Conversely, the lack of hygiene factors results in dissatisfaction, while their presence alone may not necessarily enhance job satisfaction. According to both Rosnee et al. (2021) and Roszi et al. (2021), Herzberg's theory underscores that fundamental needs and motivations have the potential to inspire individuals to wholeheartedly engage in their work and pursue excellence in performance.



Figure 2. Herzberg Two Factor Theory (1959)

Motivator factors serve as intrinsic motivators directly related to the job, while 'hygiene' factors are extrinsic, encompassing the work environment, supervision, interpersonal relationships, status, salary, security, and personal life. These factors can either trigger individual dissatisfaction or provide the highest level of satisfaction (Mohd Norazmi et al., 2021; Rosnee et al., 2021; Roszi et al., 2021; Nik Nurhalida et al., 2021; Nurhasanah et al., 2021; Yusaini et al., 2021).

In conclusion, research has consistently demonstrated that motivating and hygiene factors exert varying degrees of influence across different sectors, industries, and career fields. For instance, civil servants tend to be more strongly influenced by hygiene factors than their counterparts in the private sector (Maidani, 1991). On the other hand, direct sales workers are found to be more susceptible to the impact of hygiene factors than motivators (Hong & Waheed, 2011). In the case of teachers and lecturers, motivation appears to heavily depend on hygiene factors (Ghazi, Gulap, & Shuaib, 2013). Nevertheless, certain studies suggest that a combination of motivator and hygiene factors can act synergistically to enhance job satisfaction and motivation (Kotni & Karmuri, 2018; Alrawahi, Sellgren, Altouby, Alwahaibi, & Brommels, 2020).



Job Satisfaction Theory in TVET Educators

In a comprehensive research analysis of job satisfaction theory, particularly in the context of TVET institutions such as vocational colleges, it is suggested that college administrators can assess the needs of students and staff using Maslow's theory as a framework. The initial step for administrators is to address every requirement at the lowest hierarchical level. As these needs are met, progress through the hierarchy begins, and the institution can move away from issues, conflicts, and crises. Once the foundational needs are fulfilled, both the school and its staff become more stable. Lecturers and staff shift their focus from competing with each other to personal growth, thereby ascending the hierarchy of needs towards self-realization (Fisher & Crawford, 2020). By implementing the hierarchy of needs and gaining a deeper understanding of its application, administrators can effect positive changes within the school environment, benefiting students and staff alike. Furthermore, school leaders aiming to bring about improvements in vocational colleges and their staff may find value in considering Maslow's hierarchy of needs, starting with the identification and fulfilment of basic needs.

Nevertheless, as the foundational framework underpinning the examination of job satisfaction in this research, Maslow's Theory (1954) and Herzberg's (1959) assumes paramount importance. The hierarchical structure expounded within this theory harmonizes with the needs and circumstances encountered within TVET institutions, particularly within Vocational College settings. As delineated by this theory, work-related contentment necessitates the fulfilment of each level of need, encompassing physiological, security, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1954). A critical analysis of these human needs levels reveals their applicability to the context of Vocational Colleges, where educators frequently grapple with feelings of marginalization and under recognition. This challenge is further exacerbated by the prevailing low or absent job satisfaction experienced by tourism lecturers in vocational colleges. To address these issues, BPLTV and college administrators can assess and attend to the various levels of needs delineated in Maslow's Theory (1954), fostering an environment wherein vocational college lecturers derive satisfaction from their work. Hence, it is reiterated that Maslow's Theory (1954) constitutes the primary theoretical framework in this study for comprehending the job satisfaction construct.

Maslow's Theory (1987) and Herzberg's (1959) serve as fundamental references in this theoretical framework, representing models of motivating factors and employee needs that contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Khan, Bhatti, Hussain, Ahmad, & Iqbal, 2021; Amin et al., 2021). These theories prove to be relevant and appropriate for addressing the needs and realities of lecturers in the Tourism Programme, as identified through an initial survey. Each level of need must be fulfilled to attain work satisfaction, including physiological needs, security needs, love needs, self-esteem, and even self-actualization (Maslow, 1954).

Upon examining all levels of human needs, it becomes evident that they are highly applicable to the situation at the Vocational College. Lecturers often experience marginalization and a lack of recognition. Management and administrators can utilize this theory to gain a better understanding of the needs of Tourism Programme lecturers, with the goal of providing them with job satisfaction and, consequently, improving their performance within the organization.

Conclusions

The utilization of job satisfaction theory varies depending on the context of the organizational work environment. Administrators aiming to understand the fundamental needs of their



subordinates are likely to be more successful in enhancing employee well-being and overall work quality. In the context of this study, two prominent theories that underpin the examination of job satisfaction and performance achievement are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. These theories can serve as valuable references and guides within the vocational college environment.

Moreover, it is imperative for these theories to evolve and integrate emerging domains of study within human psychology, including the burgeoning field of 'positive psychology,' which is increasingly influential in the investigations of human motivation and job satisfaction by researchers. Hence, the examination of job satisfaction theory should encompass the evolving aspects of positive psychology and their influence on the behaviour of individuals, groups, and organizations within the context of Vocational Colleges in Malaysia.

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