

EXPLORING THE MOTIVATORS TO SATISFY UAE EMPLOYEES

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Abstract: This paper explores job satisfaction determinant influencing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees working in private and public sector organizations operating in Ras Al Khaimah. The purpose of this paper is to understand the degree to which job satisfaction determinants based on employees' intrinsic and extrinsic values affect their job satisfaction levels. Determinants such as the relationship with co-workers, supervision, pay, recognition, advancement, and working conditions were investigated. Data collected through the survey was analysed using two independent sample t-tests to determine whether job satisfaction depends on the nature of organization, private and public. This study found supervision as a key extrinsic factor and opportunities to be somebody, to support others, and to try own methods as key intrinsic factors causing higher satisfaction levels amongst private-sector employees.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Motivators, Herzberg Two-Factor theory, UAE, Private and Public organizations.

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Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a business hub in the Middle East and is a sought after place for work by expatriates. Gallup (2018) great jobs briefing reported UAE as one of the highest achievers for Job-Satisfaction rating, out of 128 countries. It was further reported that 72% of jobs are considered as 'good jobs' in the UAE, based on several determinants. However, there are some contradictory findings regarding employees' engagement level, wherein 69% of participants were not engaged in the workplace. Further reports from Gallup found more than 75% UAE employees as highly disengaged and the World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al., 2017) did not find UAE to be amongst the ranking of happiest countries. Further, there was disinterest in working with the private sector, as 62% of participants' preferred to work in the public sector of the UAE. The questions then arise, if employees are satisfied, why they are not engaged; Are there any motivational (de) factors that differentiates satisfaction level of employees working in UAE's government sector with those working in the private sector?

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The context of UAE is unique as it is a most developed country in the Arab World with 91% of the population comprised of expatriates. In the past decade, the UAE has revamped its strategic objectives to drive fourth industrial revolution (*FIR, UAE, 2017*) to become the most competitive knowledge economy through a happy and engaged workforce, that are innovative knowledge workers (Benuyenah & Pandya, 2020; *Vision 2021, 2019*). The UAE's workforce is highly diverse and it is noticed that the public sector is predominantly composed of UAE nationals (Patterson et al., 2018). Further, the Emiratization (localization) has increased participation of UAE nationals in its workforce (Waxin & Bateman, 2016). As organizations in the UAE aim to be the best in the regional market, their success requires a significant amount of dedication, commitment and strategic analysis. As job satisfaction is one of the well-known drivers towards success (Naseem et al., 2011), organizations within the UAE are well aware of the importance of job satisfaction.

Though widely researched otherwise, studies on job satisfaction in the UAE have remained understudied (Abdulla et al., 2011) especially with a focus on the public and private organisations. As job satisfaction is the feeling dependent on one's motivation level (Alkhateri et al., 2019), this empirical study aims to identify the intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors affecting the employees' job satisfaction and comparing the findings from the private sector with public sector organizations located in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE. To our knowledge, studies have not focused on job satisfaction, motivation, and comparisons of the private and public sector in this emirate of the UAE.

Literature Review

Employees are the most important asset for the success of any organization and it is paramount to fulfil their affective, emotional, physical, and cognitive psychological self through a culture of high motivation and high satisfaction. Job satisfaction, a well-established topic, is a psychological perception comprised of affective and emotional association with preference and liking of job leading to the attainment of organizational objectives (Abdulla et al., 2011b; Jabeen et al., 2018; Jenaibi, 2010). The determinants of job satisfaction include person-organization fit, turnover rate, the level of absenteeism, organization's culture, supervisor satisfaction, motivation, job characteristics (Park, 2020), supervisors, effective communication, interpersonal relationships (Al-Shammari & Musharraf, 2014) and work-life balance (Dave & Purohit, 2016). Further, the job characteristics variables such as autonomy, task significance, skill variety, and feedback are the key determinants, driven by leaders to enhance job satisfaction (Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006). Elwany and Mahrous (2016) noted some distinguished determinants of job satisfaction in the Middle East wherein organizational culture and structure made a major impact on employee satisfaction levels. Addressing the organisational culture prevalent in the Indonesian public organizations, Akhmad, Suryadi, and Rajjani (2020) found that employees in such organizations freely express their dissatisfaction. Role of

supervisors and leaders in enhancing job satisfaction is arguable as Akhras (2019) noted it as a positive factor while Shmailan (2016) found it the opposite. However, DeSantis and Durst (1996) found supervision to be the most significant factor influencing the job satisfaction of employees in public organizations. Nepotism (*Wasta*) is another key determinant influencing employees satisfaction in the Middle East region as expatriates perceive this as an unfair practice (Budhwar et al., 2019). Emiratisation in the UAE is another determinant wherein UAE nationals are given employment preference in public as well as private sector, raising satisfaction score amongst Emirati while dissatisfying expatriates (ibid., 2019). Abdulla et al. (2011) found that the key determinants for job satisfaction amongst employees of Dubai police were environmental factors, and not demographic factors. However, the study did not include private organizations and other public organizations. Besides, it was conducted in Dubai and other emirates were not included in the study. In the UAE, the major predominant job satisfaction determinants are salary, job security, job roles (Singh, 2012), public image, organizational policies, and co-workers relationships (Abdulla et al., 2011).

The determinants of job satisfaction can be classified into intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors. A study by Shah et al. (2018) explored the impact of motivating factors such as job clarity, compensation, supervisor's support, and employee empowerment on job satisfaction within a public hospital and found a positive relationship between certain motivators and job satisfaction. A study by Igalens and Roussel (1999) posited factors such as job insecurity, lack of promotion, and rewards reduces motivation and ultimately causes dissatisfaction. Park (2020) investigated motivation as a determinant of job satisfaction and found it as an indirect influencer on satisfaction. Iwu et al. (2018), adopted the job characteristics model and highlighted that extrinsic factors such as salary; and intrinsic factors like growth opportunities and responsibilities contribute to employees' job satisfaction. Parveen, Maimani and Kassim (2017), compared job satisfaction levels in public and private sector of Saudi Arabia and found a significant difference between demographic dimensions and job satisfaction; contrary to what Abdulla et al. (2011) found in a public sector in UAE. This indicates that a comparative study between private and public organization is important to understand a holistic view of satisfying employees across the nation. Almarzooqi, Khan, and Khalid (2019) emphasised the key role played by HR professionals in attaining higher levels of satisfaction through motivating employees in the UAE. Rao and Sharma (2018) noted that if employees are not adequately motivated, they will experience dissatisfaction, that results in high turnover, poor commitment, and a high level of absenteeism.

There are several theories explaining motivation, such as Maslow's Need Hierarchy, Social comparison theory, Adam Equity theory, Vroom's Expectancy theory (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010), Range of Effect theory (Obiora & Iwuoha,

2013), and Herzberg's Two-Factor theory (Herzberg, 1959). Nonetheless, these theories became the foundation to study job satisfaction (Ryan, 2016; Al Jenaibi, 2010), suggesting the value of motivating employees to derive higher job satisfaction. Guided by the studies conducted by Maidini (1991) and Hur (2018) as to comparing the job satisfaction of employees in the private sector and public sector, we made a conscious choice to apply Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959). Muchait (2011) noted that the Two-Factor theory suggests the factors causing dissatisfaction and satisfaction, which other theories such as Maslow's need hierarchy and Self-Realization theory could not justify. As per Herzberg, the factors that stimulate job satisfaction are motivators which are intrinsic in nature. These factors include stimulating job, achievement, recognition, advancement, and responsibility. On the other end of the spectrum, there are hygiene factors that are extrinsic in nature and include factors such as salary (Heneman et al., 2002), working conditions, interpersonal relationships, and organizational policies (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010). Herzberg's motivation theory indicates factors leading from job dissatisfaction (hygiene) to job satisfaction (motivators). Furthermore, as the UAE government is promoting Emiratisation in the private sector as well, it has become important to find if there will be any differences in the job satisfaction levels of employees working in private and public organizations. And, if there is any difference, what are the influencing factors. There are negligible studies conducted on this topic in the UAE and we aimed to bridge that gap using the below research methodology.

Methodology

This quantitative empirical study was approached with positivism paradigm (Creswell, 2009) as we wanted to investigate the influence of motivating factors on job satisfaction and compare the job satisfaction level between employees of private and public organizations. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H₁: There is a significant difference in overall job satisfaction between private sector employees and public sector employees.

H₂: There is a significant difference in the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of job satisfaction between private and public sector employees.

H₃: There is a significant difference at the satisfaction theme level (9 themes) between private and public sector employees.

H₄: There is a significant difference in job satisfaction between private and public sector employees at the measurement item (total 20) level.

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MCQ) with 20 items (Weiss et al., 1967) was adapted to collect survey data from employees working in private and public sectors located in Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), UAE. The items were grouped into eight themes related to job-satisfaction determinants – Supervisor, co-workers, pay, policies and working conditions, advancement and recognition, autonomy, engagement, and, authority and community presence. The instrument was tested for its content validity and reliability wherein the Cronbach alpha coefficients for

the intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, and satisfaction measures were 0.84, 0.71, and 0.86 respectively. The randomly selected population comprised of employees, within the LinkedIn network of the researchers, working in the public and private sector operating in RAK. As data was collected during the Covid-19 pandemic period, April – June 2020, snowball sampling method (Creswell, 2009) was used to conduct an online survey from 150 employees. The response rate was 46% as 69 participants responded with completed forms. The demographic information of the participants is presented through descriptive statistics (see Table 1) indicating that majority of participants were females (60.9%); College-educated (63.8%); and Emiratis (UAE nationals) (52.2%). And 50.7% of participants were private-sector employees. Using SPSS software, descriptive and interpretive statistical analysis was conducted using two independent sample t-tests in three stages to determine the impact of job satisfaction determinants on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees in public and private organizations. The results and discussions are presented in the next section.

Table 1. Participants' profile

Demographic information		Percentage of respondents	Demographic information		Percentage of respondents
Gender	Male	39.10%	Education	College	63.80%
	Female	60.90%		Other	36.20%
Age	<= 30	50.75%	Nationality	Emirati	52.20%
	> 30	49.25%		Other	47.80%
Organization	Private	50.70%			
	Public	49.30%			

Results and Discussion

The data was analysed in four stages wherein the first stage compared the combined average of all measures to determine if there is any difference in the job satisfaction based on nature of organizations, but no significant difference was found between private and public sectors. Thus, H_1 , which assumes overall job satisfaction between private sector employees and public sector employees was rejected. In the second stage, the comparison of intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of the job satisfaction was analysed depending on the nature of organizations, but there was no significant difference found in the satisfaction levels in the private and public sector, failing to support H_2 . The above two analyses were conducted with an assumption that there was a cancellation effect amongst the individual themes (total 9 themes). Hence, in the third stage, we compared the differences in job satisfaction between private and public sector at the satisfaction theme level. A

significant difference in the Supervision theme ($p\text{-value} = 0.068$) for both groups was found supporting H_3 for just this theme. However, digging deeper into the individual measurement items, in the last stage of analysis, out of the 20 job satisfaction measurement items, only for 5 items a significant difference in job satisfaction of employees in the private and public sector exists. Out of these 5 items, only one item was related to the extrinsic motivator where supervision style influenced the job satisfaction level of employees (see Figure 1), partially supports H_4 .

The results comparing job satisfaction difference between private and public sector employees were reviewed for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. There is a significant difference in the satisfaction score of employees from private and public sector on account of “considerate supervision” ($p\text{-value} = 0.072$), indicating supervision as a key extrinsic factor. Other extrinsic factors such as job advancement, recognition, company policies, working conditions, and pay were not found to be significantly different in impacting the satisfaction score of employees from both types of organizations.

Motivator	Job Satisfaction determinants	Measurement items	t statistics	difference	Mean	Supported
Extrinsic Motivators	Advancement & recognition	Steady employment	-0.112	0.911	-0.030	No
		Job advancement	0.588	0.559	0.140	No
	Company policies & working conditions	Company policies	0.374	0.710	0.182	No
		Working conditions	0.469	0.641	0.231	No
	Pay	Pay and amount of work	0.708	0.482	0.229	No
		Supervision	Considerate supervision	1.831	0.072	0.434
	Competent supervisor		1.634	0.107	0.490	No
Intrinsic motivators	Advancement & recognition	Appreciation	-0.130	0.896	0.085	No
		Accomplishment	1.894	0.063	0.528	Yes
	Authority and community presence	Job absorption	-0.319	0.751	-0.092	No
		Opportunity to be "somebody"	2.092	0.040	0.416	Yes
		Opportunity to support others	1.928	0.058	0.385	Yes
	Autonomy	Opportunity to direct	0.695	0.490	0.106	No
		To work alone on the job.	-1.381	0.172	-0.378	No
		To use own judgement.	0.962	0.339	0.170	No
	Co-worker	To try own job methods	2.646	0.010	0.582	Yes
		Co-workers getting along with each other.	-0.348	0.729	-0.018	No
	Engagement	Chance to do different things	0.194	0.847	0.005	No
		Being able to do things within own's conscience.	1.028	0.307	0.239	No
		Chance to use own abilities.	-0.139	0.890	-0.019	No

Figure 1: Paired t-test indicating job satisfaction determinants and motivators

Concerning intrinsic motivators impacting the job satisfaction of employees, the study found accomplishment (p -value = 0.063); opportunity to be somebody (p -value = 0.040); opportunity to support others (p -value = 0.058); and the chance to try own job methods (p -value = 0.010) play a significant role in differentiating satisfaction amongst employees from the private sector and public sector. Hence, we found that for job satisfaction themes – Advancement & recognition; Authority & community presence; and Autonomy were partially supported while the remaining job satisfaction determinants, namely, co-worker and engagement were found to be insignificant. Comparing mean differences of job satisfaction level amongst private versus public sector employees, we found that private-sector employees have higher satisfaction at the measurement item level for five supported items mentioned earlier, ranging from 0.385 to 0.582.

The interpretive analysis of results suggests the perceptions of employees working in RAK to be contradicting the general assumption that employees in the UAE's public sector have higher job satisfaction than private-sector employees. Budhwar et al. (2018) and Marchon and Toledo (2014) highlighted UAE nationals' attraction towards working in public-sector due to shorter working hours, higher salary and incremental packages. However, the findings from this study contradict this wherein pay, amount of work, and job advancement played no significant role in differentiating the job satisfaction of private versus public sector employees. Studies suggest salary as a key motivating factor affecting employees' satisfaction (Iwu et al., 2018 and Mucahit, 2011). In the UAE's private sector, despite starting salaries about one-third of the starting salaries in the public-sector (Marchon & Toledo, 2014), the private sector employees are more satisfied. This further refutes pay as a hygiene factor, a negative element, that Herzberg considered as a dissatisfying determinant. One may attribute the fewer job advancement opportunities in the UAE's public sector (Abdulla et al., 2011) as a reason for comparatively lower satisfaction level amongst public sector employees, nevertheless, it is not a significant determinant. Amongst all extrinsic motivators, supervisor's consideration towards employees emerged as a significant factor suggesting higher satisfaction levels in the private-sector. The supervisor's competency might have been supported as the p -value was very close to the limit we set for the significance level. This contradicts the findings by Akhmad et al. (2020) and DeSantis and Durst (1996) where supervision positively impacted the satisfaction level of public sector employees. Perhaps, this is due to high power distance culture and masculinity culture prevalent in the UAE's public sector (Al Jerjawi, 2016) where employees do not freely express their dissatisfaction as they do in the Indonesian public sector (Akhmad et al., 2020).

Applying the Herzberg's theory, four job satisfaction measurement items emerged as motivators (intrinsic factors) for private-sector employees where accomplishment, opportunities to be known and supporting others, and job

autonomy to try own methods were the dominating factors. This supports the study conducted by Piccolo and Colquitt (2016) where the job characteristic model played a significant role. Accordingly, employees in the UAE's private sector realized meaningfulness in their job through autonomy to perform job and to realise the opportunities making their task significant and varied. This justifies the Herzberg's philosophy of employees feeling satisfied through self-efficacy and attainment of their goals (Muchait,2011).

Conclusion, Limitations and Managerial Implications

This research provided a deeper understanding of the motivator and hygiene factors influencing the job satisfaction of employees working in the private and public sector of the RAK, UAE. In the UAE, a job within the public sector is a 'dream job' in the opinion of many Emiratis and Expatriates. As opposed to this common belief, the results are quite contrary. The private sector employees were found to be more satisfied with their jobs and overall extrinsic factors had a significant influence. This refutes the findings presented by Gallup reports (2018). This could be due to the limited participation from a smaller Emirates of the UAE, Ras Al Khaimah. The results may vary in other Emirates, which needs further investigation. Moreover, operationalising the constructs such as autonomy and chance could have strengthened the study as participants may have interpreted these differently, knowing that around half the participants were Emiratis with English as their second language. Further, the quantitative nature of the study could not provide an in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions. In future, incorporating focus groups or interviews could be planned for deeper investigation. Also, a comparative study with a larger sample size and across different countries would create a deeper understanding of the determinants of job satisfaction.

For managerial implications, if the private sector recognises the value of keeping employees busy, providing autonomy, recognising the efforts, and encouraging teamwork; then the common belief that working in the public sector is more satisfying than working in the private sector can be altered. However, Daleure (2016) presents challenges for industries and occupations in the private sector to accomplish this as intrinsic factors are driven by self-efficacy and are rooted in the psychological self of one. Through the findings of this research, the private sector and UAE government can attain the Emiratisation target of 40% Emirati workforce to be employed in the private sector. The human resources professionals and policymakers need to rethink how to increase job satisfaction levels in the public sector, applying both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Private organizations need to be aware of the intrinsic factors that motivate employees and direct their energies to engage and satisfy their employees. This study is unique as studies on a comparison between public and private organizations in the UAE are scanty and specifically where Herzberg's Two-Factors Theory as to extrinsic and intrinsic factors was explored. Further, related studies specific to smaller Emirates on this research topic are non-existent.

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ODKRYWANIE MOTYWATORÓW DO ZADOWOLENIA PRACOWNIKÓW ZEA

Streszczenie: W artykule omówiono czynnik determinujący satysfakcję z pracy wpływający na wewnętrzną i zewnętrzną motywację pracowników pracujących w organizacjach sektora prywatnego i publicznego działających w Ras Al Khaimah. Celem tego artykułu jest zrozumienie, w jakim stopniu determinanty satysfakcji z pracy oparte na wewnętrznych i zewnętrznych wartościach pracowników wpływają na ich poziom satysfakcji z pracy. Zbadano takie czynniki, jak relacje ze współpracownikami, nadzór, wynagrodzenie, uznanie, awans i warunki pracy. Dane zebrane w ankiecie zostały przeanalizowane za pomocą dwóch niezależnych prób t-testów w celu określenia, czy satysfakcja z pracy zależy od charakteru organizacji, prywatnej i publicznej. Badanie to wykazało, że nadzór jest kluczowym czynnikiem zewnętrznym i okazją do bycia kimś, wspierania innych i wypróbowywania własnych metod jako kluczowych wewnętrznych czynników powodujących wyższy poziom satysfakcji wśród pracowników sektora prywatnego.

Słowa kluczowe: Satysfakcja z pracy, motywatory, teoria dwóch czynników Herzberga, ZEA, organizacje prywatne i publiczne.

探索使阿联酋员工满意的动力

摘要:本文探讨了工作满意度的决定因素, 该因素影响在拉斯海马运营的私营和公共部门组织的员工的内在动机和外在动机。本文旨在了解基于员工内在和外价值观的工作满意度决定因素在多大程度上影响其工作满意度。调查了诸如与同事的关系, 监督, 薪酬, 表彰, 晋升和工作条件等决定因素。通过两次独立的样本 t 检验对通过调查收集的数据进行了分析, 以确定工作满意度是否取决于组织的性质(私人 and 公共)。这项研究发现, 监督是一个关键的外部因素, 并且有机会成为一个人, 可以为他人提供支持, 并尝试使用自己的方法作为在私营部门员工中引起较高满意度的关键内在因素。

关键词:工作满意度, 动机, 赫兹伯格两因素理论, 阿联酋, 私人 and 公共组织