

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

In 1959, Frederick Herzberg, a behavioural scientist proposed a two-factor theory or the motivator-hygiene theory. According to Herzberg, there are some job factors that result in satisfaction while there are other job factors that prevent dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg, the opposite of "Satisfaction" is "No satisfaction" and the opposite of "Dissatisfaction" is "No Dissatisfaction".

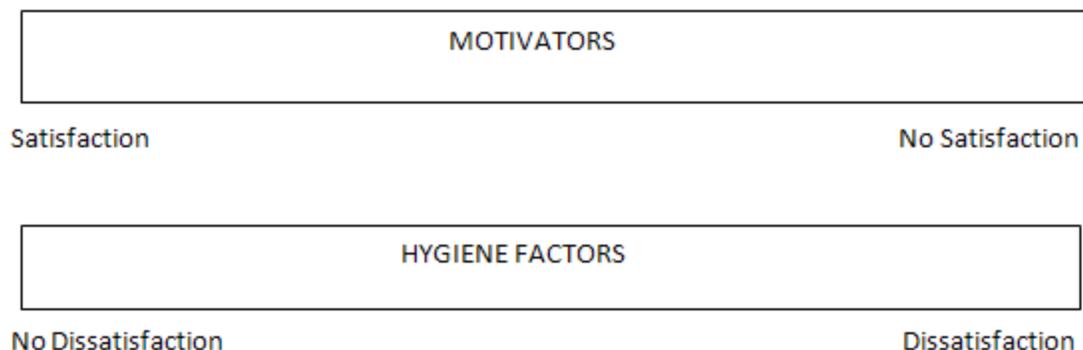


FIGURE: Herzberg's view of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

Herzberg classified these job factors into two categories-

a. **Hygiene factors-** Hygiene factors are those job factors which are essential for existence of motivation at workplace. These do not lead to positive satisfaction for long-term. But if these factors are absent / if these factors are non-existent at workplace, then they lead to dissatisfaction. In other words, hygiene factors are those factors which when adequate/reasonable in a job, pacify the employees and do not make them dissatisfied. These factors are extrinsic to work. Hygiene factors are also called as **dissatisfiers or maintenance factors** as they are required to avoid dissatisfaction. These factors describe the job environment/scenario. The hygiene factors symbolized the physiological needs which the individuals wanted and expected to be fulfilled. Hygiene factors include:

- Pay - The pay or salary structure should be appropriate and reasonable. It must be equal and competitive to those in the same industry in the same domain.
- Company Policies and administrative policies - The company policies should not be too rigid. They should be fair and clear. It should include flexible working hours, dress code, breaks, vacation, etc.
- Fringe benefits - The employees should be offered health care plans (mediclaim), benefits for the family members, employee help programmes, etc.
- Physical Working conditions - The working conditions should be safe, clean and hygienic. The work equipments should be updated and well-maintained.
- Status - The employees' status within the organization should be familiar and retained.
- Interpersonal relations - The relationship of the employees with his peers, superiors and subordinates should be appropriate and acceptable. There should be no conflict or humiliation element present.
- Job Security - The organization must provide job security to the employees.

b. **Motivational factors**- According to Herzberg, the hygiene factors cannot be regarded as motivators. The motivational factors yield positive satisfaction. These factors are inherent to work. These factors motivate the employees for a superior performance. These factors are called satisfiers. These are factors involved in performing the job. Employees find these factors intrinsically rewarding. The motivators symbolized the psychological needs that were perceived as an additional benefit. Motivational factors include:

- Recognition - The employees should be praised and recognized for their accomplishments by the managers.
- Sense of achievement - The employees must have a sense of achievement. This depends on the job. There must be a fruit of some sort in the job.
- Growth and promotional opportunities - There must be growth and advancement opportunities in an organization to motivate the employees to perform well.
- Responsibility - The employees must hold themselves responsible for the work. The managers should give them ownership of the work. They should minimize control but retain accountability.
- Meaningfulness of the work - The work itself should be meaningful, interesting and challenging for the employee to perform and to get motivated.

Limitations of Two-Factor Theory

The two factor theory is not free from limitations:

1. The two-factor theory overlooks situational variables.
2. Herzberg assumed a correlation between satisfaction and productivity. But the research conducted by Herzberg stressed upon satisfaction and ignored productivity.
3. The theory's reliability is uncertain. Analysis has to be made by the raters. The raters may spoil the findings by analyzing same response in different manner.
4. No comprehensive measure of satisfaction was used. An employee may find his job acceptable despite the fact that he may hate/object part of his job.
5. The two factor theory is not free from bias as it is based on the natural reaction of employees when they are enquired the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work. They will blame dissatisfaction on the external factors such as salary structure, company policies and peer relationship. Also, the employees will give credit to themselves for the satisfaction factor at work.
6. The theory ignores blue-collar workers. Despite these limitations, Herzberg's Two-Factor theory is acceptable broadly.

Implications of Two-Factor Theory

- ✓ The Two-Factor theory implies that the managers must stress upon guaranteeing the adequacy of the hygiene factors to avoid employee dissatisfaction. Also, the managers must make sure that the work is stimulating and rewarding so that the employees are motivated to work and perform harder and better. This theory emphasize upon job-enrichment so as to motivate the employees. The job must utilize the employee's skills and competencies to the maximum. Focusing on the motivational factors can improve work-quality.