

Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Mrs. D. Vithukshana

Lecturer (Probationary), Department of Education and Childcare, Faculty of Arts and Culture,
Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Introduction

Frederick Herzberg, was an American psychologist mostly known for introducing the two-factor theory or Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. His theory tries to get to the root of motivation in the workplace. Published in his famous article, "One More Time: How do You Motivate Employees," the conclusions he drew were extraordinarily influential, and still form the bedrock of good motivational practice nearly half a century later. He's especially recognized for his two-factor theory, which hypothesized that there are two different sets of factors governing job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction: "hygiene factors," or extrinsic motivators and "motivation factors," or intrinsic motivators. Motivation factors are essential to motivate an employee to higher performance. The term *hygiene* is used in the sense that these are maintenance factors. Hygiene factors are extrinsic to work.

Overview of Two Factor Theory

In 1959, Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman published the two-factor model of work motivation and developed the motivation-hygiene theory, which was influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Jones, 2011). Herzberg created a two-dimensional paradigm of factors influencing people's attitudes towards work. Initially, Herzberg and his colleagues developed a hypothesis that satisfaction and dissatisfaction with a job were affected by two different sets of factors and thus satisfaction and dissatisfaction could not be reliably measured on the same continuum (Alshmemri, 2017). Which factors in an employee's work environment caused satisfaction or dissatisfaction. After two pilot studies, the first involving 13 labourers, clerical workers, foremen, plant engineers and accountants, and the second involving 39 middlemanagers, his theory was further developed and expanded (Alshmemri, 2017). Herzberg et al. (1959) studied more than 203 accountants and engineers working in nine factories in the Pittsburgh area of the United States to determine which factors influence the worker's work environment and cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Alshmemri, 2017).

The main hypothesis of Herzberg's theory was that certain factors lead to positive attitudes towards work, and others lead to negative attitudes. The other hypotheses stated that the factors and effects involving long-range sequences of events and short-range sequences of events, respectively, were distinct (Alshmemri, 2017).

According to their research data, the original hypothesis of the Herzberg study was restated and then changed to the two-factor theory of job satisfaction. The two factors that had an effect on job satisfaction were divided into two sets of categories.

The first category was associated with 'the need for growth or self actualisation', and became known as the motivation factors. Motivation factors included achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement and the possibility for growth. The other category of factors was related to 'the need to avoid unpleasantness', and was known as hygiene factors. Hygiene factors included company policies and administration, relationship with supervisors, interpersonal relations, working conditions and salary (Timmreck, 2001& Cahill, 2011). Motivation factors led to positive job attitudes and hygiene factors surrounded the 'doing' of the job. At the heart of the two-factor theory is the difference between motivation and hygiene factors, or intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Herzberg described motivation factors as intrinsic to the job and hygiene factors as extrinsic to the job. Thus, motivation factors operate to only increase and improve job satisfaction; whereas hygiene factors work to reduce job dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg et al. (1959).

These two sets of factors affect employees in different ways and contribute to their overall job satisfaction and motivation. The following tables offer a summary of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. **Table 1** presents an overview of the **Motivational Factors** and **Hygiene Factors**.

Table 1: overview of the Factors in Herzberg's Theory

	Motivation Factors	Hygiene Factors
1	Advancement	Interpersonal relationship
2	Work itself	Salary
3	Possibility of growth	Policies and Administration
4	Responsibility	Supervision
5	Recognition	Working conditions
6	Achievement	

Source: Best & Thurston, 2004; Kacel et al., 2005

Motivation Factors

According to Herzberg, the motivator factors pertain to the job content, they are intrinsic to the job itself and do not result from “carrot and stick incentives”. They comprise the physiological need for growth and recognition. The absence of these factors does not prove highly dissatisfying but when present, they build strong levels of motivation that result in good job performance. They are therefore called satisfiers or motivators.

These factors include;

1. **Advancement:** Herzberg defined advancement as the upward and positive status or position of someone in a workplace. Meanwhile, a negative or neutral status at work represents negative advancement.
2. **Work itself:** The work itself should be meaningful, interesting and challenging for the employee to perform and to get motivated.
3. **Possibility of growth:** There must be growth and advancement opportunities in an organization to motivate the employees to perform well.
4. **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.

5. Recognition: The employees should be praised and recognized for their accomplishments by the managers.
6. 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.

Hygiene Factors

The hygiene factors are also referred to as the maintenance factors and comprise the physiological, safety and love needs from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. They are factors that are not directly related to the job but the conditions that surround doing the job. They operate primarily to dissatisfy employees when they are not present, however, the presence of such conditions does not necessarily build strong motivation Gibson (2000). Herzberg called these hygiene factors, since they are necessary to maintain a reasonable level of satisfaction and can also cause dissatisfaction. The hygiene factors are not direct motivators but are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction and at the same time serve as a starting point for motivation (Huling, 2003).

These factors include;

1. Interpersonal relationship: The relationship of the employees with their peers, superiors and subordinates should be appropriate and acceptable. There should be no conflict or humiliation element present.
2. Salary: This includes all forms of compensation at one's place of work, such as wage or salary increases, or unfulfilled expectations of wage or salary increases or decreases. Hospital policies should be clear regarding salary increases and bonuses in the workplace.
3. Policies and Administration: The company policies should not be too rigid. They should be fair and clear. It should include flexible working hours, dress code, breaks, vacations, etc.
4. Supervision: Effective supervision doesn't directly motivate employees, it plays a crucial role in preventing dissatisfaction. Good supervision, which includes clear guidance, support, and fair treatment, helps create a positive work environment. However, poor supervision, such as micromanagement or inconsistent feedback, can lead to frustration and disengagement. Therefore, while supervision ensures a

satisfactory environment, it does not inherently inspire higher motivation or performance.

5. **Working Condition:** These factors involve the physical surroundings of the job, and whether there are good or poor facilities. Working conditions may include the amount of work, space, ventilation, tools, temperature and safety. A good environment, as opposed to a poor environment, makes employees satisfied and proud.

Combining the hygiene and motivator factors can result in some scenarios namely:

- **High hygiene + high motivation:** The ideal situation where employees are highly motivated and have few complaints.
- **High hygiene + low motivation:** Employees have few complaints but are not highly motivated. The job is then perceived as a paycheck.
- **Low hygiene + high motivation:** Employees are motivated but have a lot of complaints. A situation where the job is exciting and challenging but salaries and work conditions are not.
- **Low hygiene + low motivation:** The worst situation unmotivated employees with lots of complaints (George, J. M. & Jones, G. R., 2005).

This theory sought to encourage managers not to be one-sided in considering factors to motivate employees but rather consider all two factors optimally motivate and satisfy employees to get the best out of them.

Concluding Remarks

Institutional leaders understand that employee demotivation is often tied to factors beyond the work itself. Addressing these issues can lead to improved motivation, greater job satisfaction, and enhanced organizational performance. By recognizing individual goals and understanding broader skills and abilities, leaders can create more opportunities for growth and development. Employees should be seen as valuable assets to the organization, capable of acquiring new skills that are vital for future success. Investing in the enhancement of their skills and knowledge will, in the long run, increase the value of the organization's human

resources. More importantly, this investment fosters greater engagement, understanding, and commitment among staff.

Therefore, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is highly relevant across various organizational contexts, particularly in motivating employees. However, it's important to recognize that applying the theory alone may not yield absolute results, as other factors can also influence motivation and job satisfaction.

References

Alshmemri, M., Shahwan-Akl, L., & Maude, P. (2016). Job Satisfaction of Saudi Nurses Working in Makkah Region Public Hospitals, Saudi Arabia. *Life Science Journal*, 13(12).

George, J. M. & Jones, G. R. (2005), "Understanding and managing organisational behavior", (4th edition.). Upper Saddle River, NJ, Pearson Prentice, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Gibson, J., Ivanevich, L., John, M. & Donnelly, J. H. (2000), "Organisations-Behaviour-Structure- Processes"" 10th Edition. Boston. McGraw-Hill.

Herzberg, F. (1966). *Work and the nature of man*. New York: World Publishing.

Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman B. (1959). *The motivation to work*. New York: Wiley.

Huling, E. (2003). "Rough Notes", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 2 No. 1 pp. 17-24.

Jones, T. L. (2011). *Effects of motivating and hygiene factors on job satisfaction among school nurses*. PhD thesis, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN.

Timmreck, T. C. (2001). Managing motivation and developing job satisfaction in the healthcare work environment. *Healthcare Manager*, 20(1), 42–58.

