

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION & MANAGEMENT

IJRCM



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**A THEORETICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON JOB SATISFACTION**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In an organization, the first and foremost requirement is employee's satisfaction in all the spheres and areas of the concern. Job satisfaction results when the quality needed for a particular job and the qualities of an individual are fitting in. This paper is a review of selected literature on Job satisfaction and its relation with Motivational theories. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction from the job leads to the psychological problem of morale. The review includes qualitative as well as quantitative studies that have been conducted in order to identify job satisfaction of the employees.*

**KEYWORDS**

Job Performance, Job Security, Motivation, Rewards, Satisfaction.

**INTRODUCTION**

Job satisfaction is a widely accepted psychological aspect of functioning in any profession. The credit of bringing the term in to prevalence goes to Hoppack on publication of his classic work 'job satisfaction'. He reviewed 32 studies on job satisfaction conducted prior to 1933. He conducted the earliest community wide study of job satisfaction in the town New Hope, Pennsylvania. Since then the topic has been a matter of public concern and research interest. Job satisfaction refers to a person's feeling of satisfaction on the job, which acts as an elevation to work. It is not a self satisfaction, happiness or self-contentment but the satisfaction on the job.

**DEFINITIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION**

Hoppack defines job satisfaction as any combination of Psychological, Psychological and environment circumstances that cause a person to truthfully say ; I am satisfied with my job.' Job satisfaction is the verbal expression of an employee's evaluation of his work life.

There are a plethora of definitions of job satisfaction, some of which are contradictory in nature. Spector (1997) refers to job satisfaction in terms of how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. Ellickson and Logsdon (2002) support this view by defining job satisfaction as the extent to which employees like their work.

Schermerhorn (1993) defines job satisfaction as an effective or emotional response towards various aspects of an employee's work. The author emphasizes that likely causes of job satisfaction include status, supervision, co-worker relationships, job content, remuneration and extrinsic rewards, promotion and physical conditions of the work environment, as well as organizational structure.

Similarly, Mc Namara (2004) points out that job satisfaction refers to an individual's feeling or state of mind giving heed to the nature of the individual's work. The author further explains that job satisfaction can be influenced by a diversity of job dimensions, inter alia, the quality of the employee's relationship with their supervisor, the status of the physical environment in which the individual works, degree of fulfillment in work.

In direct contrast, Rue and Byars (1992) refer to job satisfaction as an individual's mental state about the job. Robbins et al. (2003) add that an individual with high job satisfaction will display a positive attitude towards his job, and the individual who is dissatisfied will have a negative attitude about the job. This definition is expanded by Greenberg and Baron (1995) who define job satisfaction as an individual's cognitive, affective and evaluative reactions toward their jobs.

Katzel defined Job satisfaction as "The verbal expression of an incumbent's evaluation of his job".

**DETERMINANTS OF JOBSATISFACTION**

The various factors influencing job satisfaction may be classified into two categories:

1. Environmental factors
2. Personal factors

**2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

These factors relate to the work environment, main among which as follows:

**2.1.1 JOB CONTENT**

Herzberg suggested that job content in terms of achievement, recognition, advancement, responsibility and work itself tend to provide satisfaction but their absence does not cause dissatisfaction. Where the job is less repetitive and there is variation in job content and job satisfaction tends to be higher.

Specialization increases repetitiveness leading to boredom and monotony. But greater variety of tasks may not increase satisfaction unless the tasks form a unified, integrated and meaningful whole.

**2.1.2. OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL**

The higher level of the job in organizational hierarchy the greater the satisfaction of the individual. This is because, positions at higher level are generally better paid, more challenging and provide greater freedom of operation. Such jobs carry greater prestige, self-control and need satisfaction. One study revealed that professional people were the most satisfied, followed by salaried workers and factory workers were the least satisfied with their jobs.

**2.1.3. PAY AND PROMOTION**

The other things being equal, higher pay and better opportunities for promotion lead to higher job satisfaction.

**2.1.4. WORK GROUP**

Man is social animal and likes to be associated with others. Interactions in the work group help to satisfy social and psychological needs and, therefore, isolated workers tend to be dissatisfied. Job satisfaction is generally high when an individual is accepted by his peers and he has a high need for affiliation.

**2.1.5. SUPERVISION**

Considerate supervision leads to improve job satisfaction of workers. A considerate supervisor takes personal interest in his subordinates and allows them to participate in the decision making process. However, authoritarian people may be more satisfied under the supervision of high status and strongly directive leaders. Employee satisfaction from supervisor behavior depends upon the influence, which the supervisor exercises, on his own superior.

**2.2 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Personal life exercises a significant influence on the job satisfaction. The main elements of personal life are given below.

**2.2.1. AGE**

Some research studies reveal a positive correlation between age and job satisfaction. Workers in the advanced age group tend to be more satisfied probably because they have adjusted with their job conditions. However, there is a sharp decline after a point perhaps because an individual aspires for better and more prestigious jobs in the later years of his life.

**2.2.2 GENDER**

One study revealed that women are less satisfied than men due to fewer job opportunities for females. But female workers may be more satisfied due to their lower occupational aspirations.

**2.2.3. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

Generally more educated employees tend to be less satisfied with their jobs probably due to their higher job aspirations. However, research does not yield conclusive relationship between these two variables.

**2.2.4. MARITAL STATUS**

The general impression is that the married employees and the employees having more dependents tend to be more dissatisfied due to their greater responsibilities. But such employees may be more satisfied because they value their jobs more than unmarried workers.

**2.2.5. EXPERIENCE**

Job satisfaction tends to increase with increasing years of experience. But it may decrease after twenty years of experience particularly among people who have not realized their job expectations.

**FACTORS INHERENT IN THE JOB****TYPE OF WORK**

The most important factor inherent in the job is type of work. Several studies have shown that varied work brings about more job satisfaction than the routine work. It is difficult to separate the importance of type of work, skill, pay and status, since they usually go together. Skill required to job satisfaction has a bearing on several other factors like kind of work, occupational status and responsibility.

**FACTORS CONTROLLED BY MANAGEMENT****4. 1. SECURITY**

A summary of all the studies that can be compared shows that industrial employees say that what they want most is steady work. Security for old age was one of the five factors significantly related to the workers satisfaction. The other four were "interest in the job", "not being over worked", "ability to advise", and belief "that individual merit is rewarded". These five factors are even more important for satisfaction with the company than the satisfaction with the job.

**4.2. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Job training and employees career development are becoming generally accepted activities in industry. The fact that training also reduces absenteeism and turns over suggests that training has a favorable effect on morale and satisfaction.

There are different types of training methods such as

1. Lecture method
2. Circulars method
3. Sound motion pictures on job training

**4.3. PARTICIPATION**

Participation means active in pursuit of a goal, which involves the ego. The incentive of participation of workers is becoming more and more prominent for causing greater job satisfaction. Participation appears to incorporate two strongest incentives, the social motives of self-respect and self-approval.

**4.4. MOTIVATION**

Motivation refers to the behavior itself or the end results of all inputs. This motivation is a six-phased process beginning from the inner state or need deficiency to need fulfillment.

**GENERAL DETERMINANTS**

More important factors conducive to job satisfaction are mentally challenging work, equitable rewards, supportive working conditions, and supportive colleagues.

**5.1. MENTALLY CHALLENGING WORK**

Employees tend to do perfect jobs that give them opportunities to use their skills and abilities and offer a variety of tasks, freedom, and feedback on how well they are doing. These characteristics make work done well, but too much challenging creates frustration and feelings of failure. Under conditions of moderate challenge, most employees will experience pleasure and satisfaction.

**5.2. EQUITABLE REWARDS**

Individuals who perceive that promotion decisions are made in a fair and just manner are likely to experience satisfaction from their jobs.

**5.3. SUPPORTIVE WORKING CONDITIONS**

Employees are concerned with their work environment for both personal comfort and facilities for doing a good job.

**5.4. SUPPORTIVE COLLEAGUES**

People get more out of work than merely money or tangible achievements. For most employees, work also fills the need for social interaction. Having friendly and supportive co-workers lead to increased job satisfaction. The behavior of one's bosses also a major determinant of job satisfaction. Studies generally find that employee satisfaction is increased when the immediate supervisor understands and friendly offers praise for good performance, listen to employees' opinions, and shows a personal interest in them.

**DETERMINANTS FOR YOUNGER GROUP**

1. Type of work
2. Working conditions
3. Pay
4. Co-workers
5. Ease of commuting to work
6. Advancement opportunities



**DETERMINANTS FOR OLDER GROUP**

1. Security
2. Supervision
3. Company prestige
4. Working hours

**IMPORTANCE OF JOB SATISFACTION****8.1. REDUCES ABSENTEEISM AND TURNOVER**

High job satisfaction tends to have greater incomes and more education and enjoy more benefits, which promote longevity. On the other hand chronic dissatisfaction with work represents stress which in turn takes its toll on the organization.

**8.2. JOB SATISFACTION HAS SOME RELATION WITH MENTAL HEALTH OF PEOPLE**

Many unresolved personal problems and make adjustments arise out of a person's inability to find satisfaction in his work. Job satisfaction is important for psychological adjustments and happy living of an individual.

**8.3. SPREADS GOOD-WILL ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION**

People who feel positively about their work life are more apt to voice favorable sentiments about organization to the community at large. Organizations will be in a position to enjoy talents of people as job satisfaction faster a pervasive residue of public good –will towards the organization.

**8.4. JOB SATISFACTION HAS SOME DEGREE OF POSITIVE CORRELATION WITH PHYSICAL HEALTH OF INDIVIDUAL**

People with greater satisfaction tend to have greater incomes and more education and enjoy greater benefits, which promote positivity on the other hand chronic dissatisfaction with work represents stress, which in turn takes its toll on the organization.

**8.5. IDENTIFICATION OF EMPLOYEE'S ATTITUDE**

A survey reveals how employees feel about jobs, what parts of their jobs these feelings are focused on, which departments are particularly affected and whose feelings are involved. Survey also indicates specific areas of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The survey is a powerful diagnostic instrument for assessing employee problem.

**8.6 SATISFACTION SURVEYS IMPROVING ATTITUDE**

For some employees, the survey is a safety valve on emotional realize, a chance to get things off their chest. For other the survey is a tangible expression of management's interest in employee welfare, which gives employees reasons to feed better towards management.

**8.7 IMPROVES COMMUNICATION**

Communication flows horizontally, vertically, upward and downward. As people want the survey, they talk and discuss its results particularly beneficial to the company. It is the upward communication when employees are encouraged to comment about what they really have in their minds.

**8.8 JOB SATISFACTION IS THAT THEY HELP MANAGEMENT TO ASSESS TRAINING NEEDS**

Employees are given an opportunity to report how they feel. The supervisor performs certain parts of jobs such as delegating work and giving adequate job instructions.

**8.9** Job satisfaction survey can help discover the causes of indirect productivity problems such as absenteeism, turnover which are highly correlated with job satisfaction. It was also noted that these in turn effect productivity.

**8.10.** A job satisfaction survey is an indicator of the effectiveness of organizational reward systems as was discussed earlier. There is a positive relationship between performance and satisfaction.

**MOTIVATIONAL THEORIES**

Mullins (1996, p. 520) states "motivation is a process which may lead to job satisfaction." Although the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction is not clear, it can be illustrated by means of the motivational theories (Mullins, 1996). According to Calder(2000), motivational theories can be classified into two categories, namely, content theories and process theories. Mullins (1996) concludes that the content theories of motivation are specifically related to job satisfaction and assume a direct relationship between job satisfaction and improved performance, while the process theories contemplate in more detail the relationship between motivation, satisfaction and performance.

Cronje, Du Toit, Marais and Motlatta (2003) further posit that content theories highlight the factors within people that guide behaviour, whereas process theories focus largely on why individuals opt for certain behavioural choices to satisfy their desires and how they assess their satisfaction after they have attained their objectives. Nel et al. (2004) make reference to content theories as the 'what' of motivation and to process theories as the 'how' of motivation. Nel et al. (2004) state that content theories concentrate on the needs and factors that motivate behaviour, while process theories are focused on the source of behaviour and the factors that affect the strength and direction of the behaviour.

**The following content theories will be addressed:**

Maslow's needs hierarchy theory,

Herzberg's two-factor theory

and McClelland's achievement motivation theory.

**Process theories include:**

The Valence Instrumental Expectancy theory,

Equity theory and Goal Setting theory.

These theories endeavor to provide a supporting context for job satisfaction.

**9.1 CONTENT THEORIES****9.1 .1 MASLOW'S NEEDS HIERARCHY THEORY**

Extensive research has been conducted in the area of work motivation and satisfaction and many psychologists have attempted to explain it in terms of certain needs, interests and values. One theory that has explored these factors is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow, the individual personality is dynamic and continuously strives to satisfy hierarchy of needs with an inherent tendency towards self actualization.(Joubert, 2000)

Amongst others, Abdulla (2002) postulates that Maslow's hierarchy of needs is divided into five levels Edwards (1993 cited in Arnolds & Boshoff,2001) states that level one of the hierarchy refers to the satisfaction of the psychological needs which include the basic needs such as housing, material and financial benefits impacting positively on employee job performance.

At level two, the safety needs for security and protection from physical and emotional harm is prominent. At this level, the employer must provide a safe working environment, while the onus rests with individuals to ensure their own personal safety outside of the work sphere (Abdullah, 2002). According to Smith and Tisak (1993)cited in Arnolds & Boshoff, 2001) at this level, safety and security in the form of job security and fringe benefits, have been found to enhance employee job performance.

According to Abdullah (2002), level three refers to the social needs that entail the need for affiliation focusing on the relationship with co-workers or subordinates. Evine (1994) concludes that at this level, social support of employees is necessary to enhance performance.

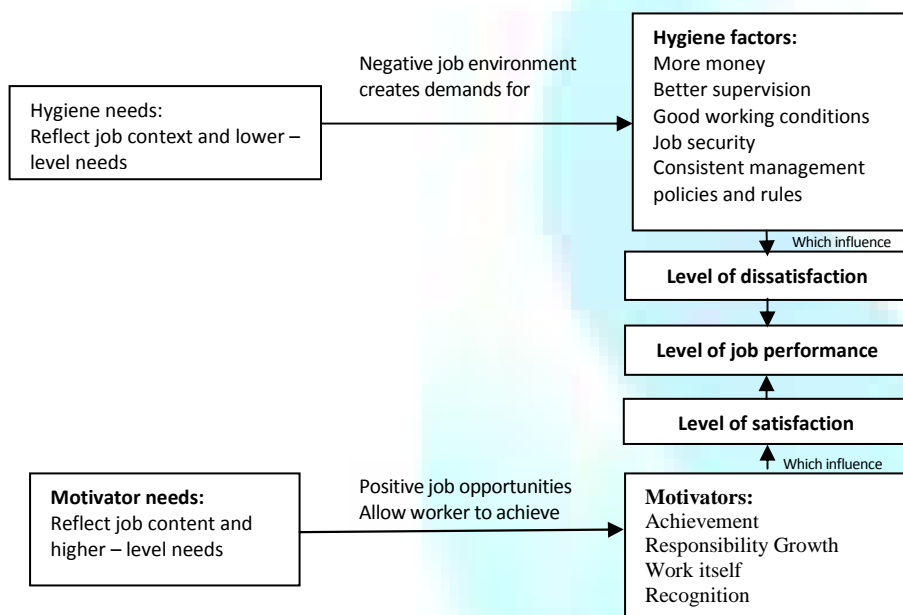
The esteem needs exist at level four of the hierarchy and is divided into two parts, namely, (i) the need for recognition and respect from others and (ii) a need for appositive self-image and self-respect (Abdullah, 2002). According to Korman (1971) and Tharenou (1979) cited in Arnolds and Boshoff (2001), individuals with high self perceived ability and self-image are more likely to be higher achievers on task performance than those who have a low self-perceived ability, low success expectancy and low self-image

The self-actualization needs are at the last level of Maslow's hierarchy and are arrived at when all previous levels have been satisfied to a large extent (Heller & Hindle, 1998). Creating opportunities for promotion, allowing autonomy, providing challenging assignments and the optimal utilization of individual's ability, enhances the satisfaction of self-actualization in the workplace. This is specifically prevalent in the case of top management where the factors mentioned above impact positively on employee job performance (Alpander (1990), Cranny, Smith & Stone (1992), and Mc Campbell (1996) cited in Arnolds & Boshoff, 2001). As each need in terms of the hierarchy becomes substantially satisfied, the following need becomes dominant (Robbins et al., 2003). Although Maslow's needs theory is used extensively, wide criticism has been lodged against the theory as a lack of empirical evidence exists in substantiation for the theory (De Cenzo & Robbins, 1988 cited in Arnolds & Boshoff, 2001). Steers and Porter (1991) add that there is no evidence of the five categories of needs being reflected in order of satisfaction in any special hierarchy. Similarly, Robbins et al.(2003) posit that little support has been found for the prediction that need structures are organized along the scope suggested by Maslow.

### 9.1.2 HERZBERG'S TWO FACTOR THEORY

According to Heller and Hindle (1998), Herzberg's two factors is a set of motivators that drives people to achieve. Nagy (n.d.) asserts that Herzberg's theory consists of two dimensions known as "hygiene" factors and "motivator" factors. According to Herzberg (1959) cited in Ruthankoon and Ogunlana (2003), the hygiene factors, also known as extrinsic factors are the parts of the jobs which create dissatisfaction but, if not present, only return the worker to a neutral point of job satisfaction. These job factors include supervision, interpersonal relations, benefits, job security, salary and working conditions. Herzberg states that hygiene issues cannot motivate employees but can minimize dissatisfaction and serve as a point of departure for motivation. On the other hand, satisfying motivator needs which are related to job tasks, job content and intrinsic aspects of the job can lead to job satisfaction, but the absence there of cannot lead to job dissatisfaction (Robbins, 1993). According to Robbins et al. (2003), investigations conducted by Herzberg in terms of the intrinsic (motivators) factors and extrinsic factors (hygiene) suggest that the opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction as was traditionally believed. The results of the studies reflected that the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction (motivators) and the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction (hygiene factors).

FIGURE 2.1: FACTORS THAT AFFECT JOB SATISFACTION IN TERMS OF HERZBERG'S THEORY



Source: Grobler et al. (2002, p. 107).

A criticism of Herzberg's theory is that it oversimplifies work motivation. There are job factors that lead to both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Despite this criticism, Herzberg extended Maslow's needs hierarchy concept and made it more applicable to work motivation (Abdullah, 2002).

Nagy (n.d.) points out that empirical evidence for Herzberg's theory is scarce and most support around this theory has been obtained using Herzberg's own unique methods consisting of critical interviews.

However, according to Schermerhorn (1993), Herzberg's two-factor theory is an important frame of reference for managers who want to gain an understanding of job satisfaction and related job performance issues. Schermerhorn asserts that Herzberg's two-factor theory is a useful reminder that there are two important aspects of all jobs: what people do in terms of job tasks (job content), and the work setting in which they do it (job context). Schermerhorn suggests that managers should attempt to always eliminate poor hygiene sources of job dissatisfaction in the workplace and ensure building satisfier factors into job content to maximize opportunities for job satisfaction.

### 9.1.3 MCCLELLAND'S NEED FOR ACHIEVEMENT THEORY

McClelland's need theory was one of the popular motivation theories in the 1950's and his theory relates to management by objectives (Di Rodio, 2002). Robbins et al.(2003) report that McClelland's theory focuses on the needs for achievement, power and affiliation.

The need for achievement, according to Greenberg (1999), is where individuals strive for goals that are challenging, but attainable, with the hope of feedback on achievement. Greenberg (1999) further states that this need is concerned with an individual's longing to strive for personal achievement rather than the rewards of success.

The need for power refers to individuals' desire to control their surroundings, including people and material resources. In this regard some people have a high need for personalized power while others have a high need for socialized power (McShane & Von Glinow, n.d.)

In terms of McClelland's need for affiliation, Stuart-Kotze (n.d.) states that the need for affiliation is similar to Maslow's need to belong. Stuart-Kotze contends that the need for affiliation manifests itself in the desire to be liked by other individuals, to be accepted in a group and to enter warm personal relationships. Cronje et al. (2003) posit that research indicates that people with a high need for power and low need for affiliation make good managers, whilst individuals with a high need for achievement, in most instances, make successful entrepreneurs.

## 9.2 PROCESS THEORIES

### 9.2.1 VROOM'S EXPECTANCY THEORY

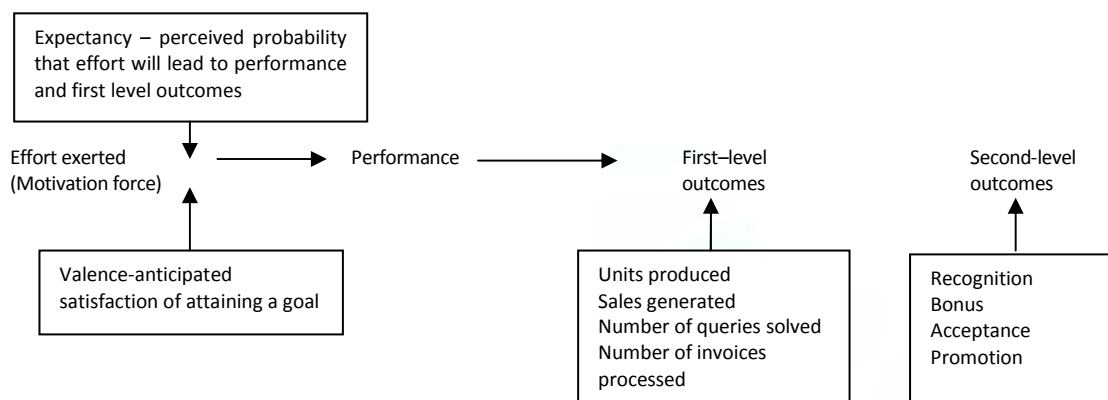
Vroom regarded Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two factor theory as too simplistic and as a result put forward a model that constituted the concepts of valence (V), instrumentality (I) and expectancy (E). Vroom's theory is referred to as VIE theory. Vroom explained the scope of motivation as a process governing choices between alternative forms of voluntary activity. According to the VIE theory, misbehaviors are under the voluntary control of a person (Abdullah, 2002).

According to Vroom's expectancy theory, the success of motivation is dependent onto factors, namely, that the value of the outcome should be high and that the individual should be of the opinion that the task undertaken is attainable and will lead to the expected outcome (Dessler, 1988). In this regard, Vroom's

theory links expectation and task accomplishment to the probability of recognition (Luthans, 2002). In support Nel et al. (2004) state that expectancy refers to an individual's belief that a certain level of effort will lead to a certain level of performance and reward.

Figure 9.2.1 illustrates the key concepts of Vroom's expectancy theory.

FIGURE 9.2.1: VROOM'S EXPECTANCY THEORY



Source: Nel et al. (2004, p. 318).

A criticism of Vroom's theory however, is that he did not succeed to convert motivation to perform an act into the actual performance of that act (Bottomley, 1987). Although the theory has its criticism, most of the research evidence is supportive of the theory (Dessler, 1988).

### 9.2.2 EQUITY THEORY

The Equity theory of motivation suggests that individuals have a strong want to maintain a balance between what they perceive their inputs or contributions to be in relation to expected rewards (Dessler, 1988). In terms of the Equity theory, Robbins(1993) states that satisfaction is determined by an individual's input-outcome balance. The author further mentions that satisfaction occurs when perceived equity exists, and dissatisfaction results when perceived inequity exists.

To illustrate the Equity theory, reference is made to table 1 below.

TABLE 1: EQUITY THEORY

Ratio Comparisons	Perception
$O / IA < O / IB$	Inequity due to being under – rewarded
$O / IA = O / IB$	Equity
$O / IA > O / IB$	Inequity due to being over – rewarded

\*Where: O / IA represents the employees; and O / IB represents relevant others.

Source: Robbins (1993, p. 224).

In terms of the theory, individuals regard a state of equity to exist when their job inputs in relation to their job outputs are equivalent to that of relevant others. In this regard a situation of fairness is said to exist (Robbins, 1993). Employees might assess their relation to friends, neighbors, co-workers, colleagues in other organizations or previous jobs they themselves have occupied (Robbins, 1993). Similarly, Robbins et al. (2003) concur that employees compare their job inputs (such as their contribution, experience, education and competence) to their job outputs (salary levels, salary increases and recognition) in relation to that of others.

Similarly, inequity exists when there is a perception amongst employees that they are under-rewarded relevant to others or whether they are over-rewarded in relation to their job outputs. The resultant effect is that individuals might contribute less in the workplace if they are of the opinion that they are being underpaid. On the other hand, employees might offer more in terms of their expected job outputs as they may be more motivated to contribute if a job pays well in comparison to their job outputs (Dessler, 1988).

### 9.2.4 GOAL SETTING THEORY

Locke (1995 cited in Robbins et al., 2003) proposed that aiming towards attaining a goal is a significant source of work motivation. According to Heery and Noon (2001), the goal setting theory stems from the notion that influencing their goals and targets can change the behaviour of employees. Nel et al. (2004) add that employees are motivated if they are aware of what needs to be done in achieving a specific goal, irrespective of the difficulties they might encounter in doing so. They refer to the Management By Objectives (MBO) technique that harbors employee involvement in goal setting, decision-making and feedback.

Robbins (1998) states that employees will perform better if they get continuous feedback in terms of how well they are progressing toward their goals. Furthermore, Robbins (1998) adds that continuous feedback will also identify possible discrepancies that might hamper the achievement of attaining goals. Employees granted the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of their own goals would be more committed in achieving such goals.

Heery and Noon (2001, p. 142) note four general principles to elicit high performance and increase motivation in terms of the goal setting theory:

"Goals should be challenging but attainable;

Goals should be specific rather than vague;

Employees should be involved in the process, setting their own goals; and

Goals should be measurable in terms clearly understood by employees."

## CONCLUSION

This brief review of selected literature indicates that extensive research has been conducted to study the relationship between job satisfaction and Motivational theories. The centrality of work in modern economies has made an understanding of the psychology of motivation and job satisfaction a key component of business and management.

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