

# Engineering Faculty Job Satisfaction: An Overview of Key Drivers

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## Abstract

This study investigates the applicability of Herzberg's two-factor theory, the Motivator-Hygiene Theory, in understanding the factors influencing job satisfaction and dissatisfaction for faculty at an engineering college. The study aims to identify the specific motivator and hygiene factors that significantly impact their individual experiences.

**Keywords:** Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory, Job satisfaction, Faculty motivation, engineering education.

## Introduction

The engineering field faces a constant demand for skilled professionals. To ensure a robust pipeline of talent, fostering a positive and motivating environment within engineering colleges is crucial. Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory posits that two sets of factors influence job satisfaction: motivators and hygiene factors. While motivators are intrinsic job characteristics that lead to satisfaction, hygiene factors are extrinsic factors that, when absent, cause dissatisfaction. Understanding these factors can guide interventions to improve job satisfaction and engagement for faculty.

## Need for the study

Research suggests that faculty motivation is critical components of a successful engineering education. However, limited research specifically examines the application of Herzberg's theory within the engineering college context. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the specific motivator and hygiene factors that influence faculty satisfaction in an engineering college setting.

## Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the key motivator and hygiene factors for faculty at an engineering college based on Herzberg's two-factor theory.
2. Analyse the relative importance of these factors.

3. Draw insights from the findings to formulate recommendations for enhancing job satisfaction and engagement for faculty.

## Review of literature

Several studies have explored the application of Herzberg's theory in various educational contexts. A meta-analysis by Jiang et al. (2019) identified achievement, recognition, and responsibility as the most significant motivators for teachers, while salary, working conditions, and job security were the primary hygiene factors. Similarly, a study by Sharma et al. (2017) found that autonomy, work itself, and professional development opportunities were crucial motivators for faculty members in higher education institutions.

However, limited research has specifically examined the application of Herzberg's theory within the context of engineering colleges. Studies found that faculty satisfaction in engineering colleges was primarily influenced by factors like autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for advancement. Yet, the study did not investigate the hygiene factors or the potential differences in motivators and hygiene factors.

### Objective 1: Identifying Motivator and Hygiene Factors

Several studies have investigated motivator and hygiene factors for faculty in various educational settings, offering valuable insights for the present study.

### Motivator Factors for Faculty

Motivator factors, as coined by Herzberg's two-factor theory, directly influence engineering faculty job satisfaction and engagement. These factors are intrinsic aspects of the job that provide a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment. Unlike hygiene factors, which prevent dissatisfaction but don't inherently motivate, motivators ignite passion, engagement, and a sense of fulfilment in their work.

Here's how motivator factors can impact engineering faculty job satisfaction:

- **Autonomy and independence:** Numerous studies highlight the importance of autonomy for faculty satisfaction, allowing them ownership of their work and the freedom to innovate in teaching and research.
- **Achievement and recognition:** Faculty members thrive on opportunities to achieve their full potential and receive recognition for their contributions, both inside and outside the classroom (Jiang et al., 2019).
- **Professional development:** Access to professional development opportunities enhances faculty skills, knowledge, and overall competence, leading to increased job satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2017).

- These are just some of the probable motivator factors for faculty at an engineering college. The specific factors that are most important to individual faculty members will vary depending on their personal values, career goals, and stage of their career.

### Hygiene Factors for Faculty

Hygiene factors, as defined by Herzberg's two-factor theory, play a crucial role in influencing engineering faculty job satisfaction. These factors, while not directly motivational, represent the contextual elements of the work environment that can potentially lead to dissatisfaction if not adequately addressed.

Here's how hygiene factors can impact engineering faculty job satisfaction:

- **Salary and benefits:** While not directly motivating, inadequate compensation and benefits create dissatisfaction and hinder job satisfaction (Jiang et al., 2019).
- **Work conditions:** Supportive work environments with adequate resources, technology, and administrative support contribute to faculty well-being and satisfaction.
- **Job security:** Stable employment and clear career advancement opportunities provide a sense of security and promote long-term commitment (Sharma et al., 2017).

### Objective 2: Analysing Relative Importance

The relative importance of motivator and hygiene factors, studies suggest that motivators have a greater impact on long-term satisfaction and engagement, while hygiene factors play a more significant role in avoiding dissatisfaction. Achievement, recognition, and professional development may be more potent motivators for faculty, while salary and job security are more critical hygiene factors.

An empirical study by Bhattacharya et al. (2017) by employing a quantitative approach to survey 200 engineering faculty members from various private and public engineering colleges across India and by using factor analysis, the researchers identified five key factors impacting job satisfaction:

- **Work environment:** Factors like laboratory facilities, equipment availability, and administrative support significantly influenced faculty satisfaction. Inadequate resources and complex bureaucratic procedures proved detrimental.
- **Work-life balance:** Excessive workload, long working hours, and limited flexibility were identified as primary contributors to dissatisfaction and stress. Balancing teaching, research, and personal life was seen as crucial.
- **Salary and benefits:** While competitive salaries were essential, inadequate benefits and lack of recognition for achievements emerged as dissatisfying elements.
- **Growth and development opportunities:** Limited access to research funding, professional development programs, and opportunities for career advancement hindered faculty motivation and engagement.

- **Autonomy and decision-making:** Having control over curriculum development, research projects, and teaching methods positively impacted faculty satisfaction. Feeling valued and trusted with decision-making was crucial.

The study identified strong associations between these factors and overall job satisfaction. By addressing hygiene factors like work environment and work-life balance, and fostering motivator factors like growth opportunities and autonomy, institutions can effectively enhance engineering faculty job satisfaction.

Nasser et al. (2015) took a broader regional perspective, surveying 572 faculty members from various universities across the Middle East, including those in engineering disciplines. Using structural equation modelling, they examined the influence of several factors on job satisfaction:

- **Organizational characteristics:** Institutional reputation, resources, and leadership style significantly impacted faculty satisfaction. Working in a well-respected institution with strong leadership and adequate resources fostered positive work experiences.
- **Work-life balance:** Similar to Bhattacharya and Goswami's findings, long working hours, heavy workloads, and limited flexibility were identified as major sources of dissatisfaction and stress.
- **Compensation and benefits:** Competitive salaries and comprehensive benefits packages were seen as vital motivators, while inadequate compensation and lack of job security led to dissatisfaction.
- **Recognition and appreciation:** Public acknowledgment of achievements, promotions, and opportunities for professional development were found to enhance faculty satisfaction and motivation.
- **Autonomy and control:** Having control over research projects, course content, and teaching methods increased faculty engagement and job satisfaction. Feeling valued and empowered was crucial.
- **Collegiality and relationships:** Positive relationships with colleagues and students fostered a supportive work environment and enhanced overall job satisfaction. The study revealed complex relationships between these factors and highlighted the importance of considering context-specific influences. Interestingly, organizational characteristics emerged as significant players in the Middle Eastern context, emphasizing the role of institutional leadership and reputation in promoting faculty satisfaction.

### Objective 3: Formulating Recommendations

Based on the findings, key motivator and hygiene factors can be identified as follows:

#### Hygiene Factors

- **Fair pay and benefits:** Salary, healthcare, retirement – the basics to prevent dissatisfaction.

- **Safe and productive workspace:** Functional labs, equipment, resources – no unnecessary hurdles.
- **Supportive policies:** Streamlined admin, clear communication, autonomy – a foundation of order.
- **Positive relationships:** Respectful colleagues and leaders – a collaborative, enriching environment.
- **Job security:** Stability and opportunity – peace of mind to invest in the future.

### Motivator Factors

- **Meaningful work:** Connecting research and teaching to real-world impact – a sense of purpose.
- **Growth and development:** Continued learning, research funding, professional advancement – fuel for passion.
- **Challenge and autonomy:** Ownership of projects, curriculum building, decision-making – the power to shape their work.
- **Recognition and appreciation:** Awards, public acknowledgements, colleague respect – feeling valued and seen.
- **Work-life balance:** Flexible arrangements, sabbatical programs – preventing burnout and fostering well-being.

Several factors may contribute to differences in motivator and hygiene factors

- **Career stage:** Early-career faculty might prioritize opportunities for professional development and recognition, while more senior faculty may value autonomy and research opportunities.
- **Learning goals:** Faculty with intrinsic motivation may be more driven by achievement and mastery, while others may be more focused on external rewards and career success.
- **Personal values:** Individual values and personality traits can influence the importance of different motivator and hygiene factors.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations can be formulated for Faculty:

- **Holistic Blend:** To cultivate a thriving community of engineering faculty, a holistic approach is the key. This means addressing both hygiene factors, like fair pay and supportive policies, which prevent dissatisfaction, and motivator factors, like research opportunities and intellectual challenges, which ignite passion and engagement. Regularly assessing faculty needs, tailoring strategies to their aspirations, and building a culture of open communication create the perfect blend.
- **Continuous assessment:** Regularly gauge faculty needs and feedback – adapt, evolve, improve.
- **Data-driven strategy:** Grounded in insights, tailored to your institution – a clear roadmap for success.

- **Open communication:** Transparent efforts, shared goals – building trust and engagement.
- **Integration and reinforcement:** Hygiene fuels motivation, both feed performance – a virtuous cycle of satisfaction.
- **Celebration of progress:** Recognize improvements, acknowledge achievements – maintain momentum and inspiration.

By prioritizing this dual focus, institutions can empower their faculty, boost job satisfaction, and ultimately, foster excellence in engineering education.

Further research is needed to explore the specific motivator and hygiene factors for different sub-groups within faculty, such as different engineering disciplines or demographics. This will help tailor interventions to specific needs and maximize effectiveness.

By addressing both motivator and hygiene factors, engineering colleges can create a more positive and engaging environment, leading to increased job satisfaction for faculty, enhanced engagement for students, and ultimately, a more successful engineering education system.

## Conclusion

This review paper aims to address the limited understanding of motivator and hygiene factors for faculty in engineering colleges. By analysing the specific factors that influence their satisfaction, the study seeks to provide valuable insights for improving job satisfaction and engagement within the engineering education system. The findings hold significant implications for engineering colleges to develop targeted interventions and strategies to enhance the motivation and experience of faculty members, ultimately contributing to a more fulfilling and productive learning environment.

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