Testing Herzberg’s two factor theory on millennials

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Abstract
This study tests Herzberg’s two-factor theory of motivation on working millennials. The purpose of the study is to evaluate what the assumptions and the findings of the original study hold for millennials. With the increasing trend of amalgamation of work life and personal life, job satisfaction and general job happiness have never been more on an individual’s personal life. This impact is far-reaching, with strong indications of affecting the employees’ physical, mental, and social health. In such a scenario, organizations need to keep their employees motivated and satisfied. For studying Herzberg’s two-factor theory of motivation on working millennials, we have selected respondents with work experience of at least one year. We have not restricted the study to any particular industry; hence our sample is across all industries. The type of sampling used was convenient sampling. From the analysis, we have found that for the concerned sample, hygiene factors tower above the motivating factors in terms of job satisfaction for millennials. From the data collection and analysis, we proved that both motivators and hygiene factors affect job satisfaction, unlike what has been said by Herzberg. This study will contribute to the exciting literature on motivation.

Keywords
Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene, Job satisfaction, Motivation, Millennials, Social health

1 Introduction
The most successful organizations are ones that are not only able to recruit the best talent but also able to retain them in the organization [1]. At the same time, the organization should also understand that what motivates this younger generation when it comes to motivation for work, which is so because millennials of today are going to be the future leaders who are going to fill the vacancies that are going to arise in the organization in future, as recorded by Patel, 2017.

Generation Y, or Millennials, are understood as born between 1981 and 2000, as recorded by Finney. However, many researchers argue that age is only an indicator. Employees from different generation groups need different motivation treatment in an organization, as recorded by Michalek & Long [2].

This study aims to understand how Herzberg’s two-factor theory and its application in motivating the millennial generation.

2 Literature review
Considering all the external factors like business environment, the technology available, etc., as common, companies have started focusing more on their human capital and their well-being. A highly motivated workforce performs better than their less motivated counterparts, which is precisely the reason why the managers today are expected to know the concepts of needs and motives, etc., as studied by Schulze & Steyn, which is imperative because if the managers are not aware of these concepts, they will not be able to gauge and evaluate the individual’s drivers and anchors and hence will not be able to motivate them [3]. There are different theories of motivation. These theories are used to understand why our employees do what they do in an evaluator study by Rowley. The first set of these motivation theories are called content theories. They were led by Abraham Maslow, who came up with the theory of needs. Further in time, many more academicians and professionals added their theories in this genre, namely, McClelland, Herzberg, Alderfer, etc. The principal belief in content theories is that all individuals have needs, which need to be fulfilled, and it is the endeavor to fulfillment that dictated our action [4].

The second set of motivation theories are called process theories. Process theories identified relations among variables, which make up motivation. Some of the academicians involved with these theories were Vroom, Adams, Locke, etc.
As the title name suggests, we will be considering Herzberg's two-factor theory for this paper. Frederick Herzberg was a behavioural scientist. He proposed the two-factor theory of motivators/hygiene factors in 1959 [5].

3 Both the Categories in Detail Are As Follows

3.1 Hygiene factors

These are the factors whose absence will give rise to dissatisfaction in a workplace. They do not influence satisfaction. If the factors are absent, then there will be high dissatisfaction [6]. Improving these factors will result in less dissatisfaction. These factors generally focus on the physiological needs of the employees.

Some of these factors are:
- **Company Policies**-
  They refer to the formal policies of an organization. Policies like flexible working hours, greater leaves are appreciated by employees.
- **Salary/Pay**-
  The above includes both the fixed as well as variable components of the salary structure. Internal and external equity, payment dates, etc., are also a part of this.
- **Working Conditions**-
  The above purely talk about the ergonomic aspect of the work environment. The working conditions should be comfortable and safe and should not cause any hindrance to the employee's work.
- **Interoffice relationships**-
  These refer to supervisory, peer, and subordinates' relationships. Any friction in-office relationships can be a cause of stress. Hence, it is important to have professional, cordial relationships at work.
- **Benefit**-
  These consider the non-monetary benefits that the employees avail. Some of the examples are housing, medical insurance, etc.
- **Job Security**-
  This factor considers the stability of an employee's job. Any employee who can be immediately let go will have higher stressed than his/her peers.

3.2 Motivational factors

Motivational factors are the factors that give rise to satisfaction for an employee. Like hygiene factors, the lack of motivational factors does not give rise to dissatisfaction; it results in low satisfaction [7]. Good motivators result in high satisfaction, and these factors focus on the psychological needs of the employees and affect them intrinsically.

Some of these factors are:
- **Growth opportunities**-
  They refer to the promotion, developmental opportunities that the organization can provide an employee.
- **Recognition**-
  Praise and acknowledgment are appreciated by one and all. Employees want to work in organizations, which will appreciate their contribution [8].
- **Work/Quality of work**-
  The above refers to the job itself. This factor has many aspects. Does the work matter for the employee, is it challenging, and can it keep him/her interesting, does it challenge the employee?
- **Authority**-
  The above factor refers to the extent of decision-making, which the employee can make.

3.3 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the fundamental aspects any employee looks for in life. It is one of the aspects, which helps employers differentiate themselves from their other competitors [9]. Hence, to retain and attract the best talent, organizations have to design jobs to provide maximum satisfaction to their employees. One of the obvious outcomes of satisfied employees is the job outcome. Satisfied employees tend to perform better than those who are not. There is an increase in productivity, as researched by Wright & Cropanzano [10].

As per the previous studies on job satisfaction, the summary is that job satisfaction is generally associated with salary, stress, Quality of work, degree of freedom, company policies, personal growth, ergonomics, and physical company environment, relationships with peers and supervisors, etc. However, it would be wrong to think of job satisfaction only in terms of productivity, performance, cost, etc. There is much more at stake here [11].

An average working professional works for 8-10 hours a day for 5-6 days a week, which means that an employee spends a large part of their life at the workplace. Also, the stresses of work-life do not end at the office [12]. Stress affects the life of the individual, even at home. As we can see, job satisfaction has a much larger impact on the employee, including his/her
physical and mental health and social life, as observed by Locke.

It has also been claimed that job and life satisfaction are co-dependent. People who are highly satisfied at work are happy and satisfied with their own lives and tend to be happier, as stated by Rain et al.

From the literature available, we can summarize that job satisfaction affects both work-related issues and the employee’s personal life [13].

For this paper, we are testing a motivation theory on millennials. First, we have to clarify the difference between motivation and satisfaction, as these are the two buzzwords, which will be repeated multiple times in the study. The basic difference between the two is that motivation is the drive and efforts to satisfy a want, whereas satisfaction refers to the contentment experienced when a want is satisfied. As satisfaction is an attitude, it is possible for an employee to be highly satisfied with his job and not be motivated. These two are not synonyms [14]. The truth of the matter is that one leads to the other one, according to Hersey.

4 Research gap & need for study

Hertzberg’s two-factor theory was formulated in 1959. The participants in the study were people from that generation. Over time, the newer generations have shown a change in priorities from their previous generations, which is especially true in millennials. As we can see in the corporate world, the number of companies investing heavily in ergonomics, office interiors, office catering, and entertainment has risen exponentially [15], which is as per the belief that millennials are strongly affected by these factors, which would directly contradict the two-factor theory as all of the mentioned parameters are hygiene factors. Due to this gap, there was a need to test this theory on millennials. Having gone through available literature regarding motivation in different industries, age groups, and domains, I have collated a comprehensive list of hygiene and motivator factors [16].

Based on the abstracts studied, it is observed that in each domain and sector, different factors are affecting the motivation of individuals and also that the two-factor theory can only be partially proved. Persons who perceive work-life factors as sources of satisfaction may not see the absence of the same as a source of dissatisfaction. It can also be observed that both motivators and hygiene factors contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the effects of the factors are not unidirectional, as stated by Rao.

Objective

Testing Herzberg’s two-factor theory on working millennials

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis: The two-factor theory holds for millennials.

5 Methodologies

The type of research is exploratory, undertaken to explore and rank the various attractors for millennial employees. For this study, a sample size of 180 working millennials born between the years 1981 and 1996 was taken [17]. These were working professionals from all across India and from all industries. The sampling method used was convenience sampling. A questionnaire was circulated via a google form, and its link was spread through WhatsApp, LinkedIn, professional groups, etc., to collect the information. The particular tool used was taken from “Teck Hong Tan and Amna Waheed” paper titled “Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory and job satisfaction in the Malaysian retail sector: the mediating effect of love of money.” The language used for the questionnaire was English. The original questionnaire from the referred research had 45 questions. The number of questions in my questionnaire is 35. Deleting 10 questions was that the referred research was also to evaluate the love for money amongst employees. I have not done that in my research, as my primary focus validates the two-factor theory for millennials. The responses were scored on a five-point scale ranging from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree”. Quantitative research was done. Multiple analyses, like correlation, factor analysis, etc., were done to analyze the data [18].

6 Analysis and findings

Table 1 shows Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.929, a very strong score and denotes a high consistency in our measurement. It also denotes that the constructs allocated in the questionnaire measure what they are supposed to. From Cronbach’s alpha value, we can also conclude that the data is reliable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability test with Cronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 As per Cronbach’s alpha values obtained, we see that all the questions are relevant, and therefore, we would not want to remove these questions, which denote consistency of the questions.

Table 3 shows the correlation matrix between motivational factors, hygiene factors, and job satisfaction. I have highlighted all the correlations above 0.65. We can see that the correlation between Achievement, Work, and growth is .66, .67, and .81, respectively. All of them are strong correlations, but the correlation between growth and job satisfaction, which is at .81, is the strongest in the group. Similarly, the correlations between company policy, Supervisor relationship, and working conditions with Job satisfaction are .70, .71, and .75, respectively.

The remaining factors, such as advancement, recognition, relationship, security, and money, have low correlation scores. From the above data, we can observe that job satisfaction is strongly correlated to motivators and hygiene factors.

Table 2
Data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item-Totals Statistics</th>
<th>Scale Mean</th>
<th>Scale Variance</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Totals Correlation</th>
<th>Squared Multiple Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>40.51</td>
<td>49.743</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td>0.512</td>
<td>0.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Itself</td>
<td>40.517</td>
<td>48.183</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>0.592</td>
<td>0.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>40.538</td>
<td>48.351</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>40.537</td>
<td>45.507</td>
<td>0.824</td>
<td>0.773</td>
<td>0.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Policy</td>
<td>40.742</td>
<td>48.277</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>40.353</td>
<td>51.44</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>0.431</td>
<td>0.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>40.602</td>
<td>47.687</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Superior</td>
<td>40.725</td>
<td>44.985</td>
<td>0.791</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>0.919</td>
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<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>40.323</td>
<td>47.543</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>40.877</td>
<td>48.136</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.505</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Conditions</td>
<td>40.543</td>
<td>46.857</td>
<td>0.765</td>
<td>0.707</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>40.593</td>
<td>45.993</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.794</td>
<td>0.916</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Correlation between motivation/hygiene factors and job satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Advancement</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Relationship with Supervisor</th>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Working Conditions</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Supervisor</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Conditions</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 contains the R square value, which is 0.7934, which means that all the variables explain 4/5th variation in the dependent variable, i.e., job satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5, we can observe that the f-value is well below .05 and .01 for 95% and 99% confidence levels, respectively. Hence, the model is statistically significant.

From Table 6, we observe that Work, Growth, and Working conditions have a p-value less than 0.05 at a confidence level of 95%. Only 3 factors out of 11 are significant for the dependent variable “Job Satisfaction.” Growth is the most significant variable of Job Satisfaction, followed by working conditions and the least significant of the three is the work itself.

7 Discussions

The purpose of the research was to check if Herzberg’s two-factor theory holds for working millennials. From this analysis, we can observe that only motivators affect satisfaction, unlike Herzberg’s two-factor theory. We can see that hygiene factors also affect job satisfaction, which is first seen in Table 3. When finding a correlation between different motivation and hygiene factors with job satisfaction, we see that the strongest correlation is with job growth, which is a motivator but posts this, the next three strongest correlations are with working condition, supervisor relationship, and company policy with values of 0.75, 0.71, and 0.70 respectively, all of them being hygiene factors, which proves that for working Indian millennials, all the three hygiene factors, namely, “Working Conditions,” “Supervisor Relationship,” and “Company policies” are related to Job satisfaction. Next, if we look at the results from Table 6, we can see that only three factors have a p-value, which is significant. The factors are work, growth, and working conditions. Of the three, two of them are motivators, and one is a hygiene factor.
The surprising pattern observed from the analysis is that there is no great differentiation in the factors, which affect job satisfaction.

8 Implications for practice

The findings have forced us to evaluate our understanding of motivation and what motivates millennials. Based on this, organizations will have to redesign their EVP and accommodate hygiene factors, which cannot be limited to just monetary benefits. Other factors like conditions and supervisory relationships are equally important.

9 Conclusions

The working millennials in India place greater emphasis on hygiene factors than on motivator factors. The factors being working conditions, supervisory relationship, and company policy. Working conditions are specifically very important to the working millennials, as this factor has been highlighted in two different analyses. From the motivators, work itself and growth opportunities are the factors, which affect job satisfaction the most. Out of the two, Job growth is very important to the respondents, as it has also been highlighted in two different analyses. We can confirm that our null hypothesis, “The two-factor theory holds for millennials,” is rejected from the analysis. Herzberg’s two-factor theory of motivation does not hold for working Indian millennials. From this analysis, we can observe that only motivators affect satisfaction, unlike Hertzberg’s two-factor theory. When finding a correlation between different motivation and hygiene factors with job satisfaction, we see that the strongest correlation is with job growth, which is a motivator but posts this; the next three strongest correlations are with working condition.

Statement on ethical issues

Research involving people and/or animals is in full compliance with current national and international ethical standards.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

Author contributions

The authors read the ICMJE criteria for authorship and approved the final manuscript.

References