What role does culture play? A look at motivation and job satisfaction among hotel workers in Brazil

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Job satisfaction has been associated with positive organizational outcomes such as increased employee productivity, higher innovation and reduced turnover, all of which are linked to improved firm performance. Motivation is considered to be a primary determinant of job satisfaction. Yet little research has focused on the links between motivation, job satisfaction and the impact of culture in the workplace. This qualitative research uses Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory of Motivation to assess job satisfaction in the Brazilian hotel industry. The results partially support the theory and suggest that culture influences the degree of job satisfaction.

Keywords: Brazil; hotel industry; job satisfaction; motivation

Introduction

Job satisfaction has been the topic of extensive scholastic research (Thierry 1998; Thomas and Au 2002). Schneider (1985) described satisfaction as the attitudes of workers towards outcomes on the job. Job satisfaction has been linked to positive employee outcomes such as lower stress levels and greater empowerment (Thomas and Dunkerley 1999), as well as increased firm performance as measured by enhanced employee productivity (Savery and Lucks 2001) and organizational growth. Satisfied employees have also been shown to exhibit lower levels of absenteeism and higher levels of motivation than their counterparts (Hwang and Chi 2005). Oishi, Diener, Lucas and Eunkook (1999) demonstrated that job satisfaction is correlated to life satisfaction as well as intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, Bushe, Havlovic and Coetzer (1996) found that empowerment led to enhanced innovation and efficiencies in the workplace, which subsequently led to increased customer satisfaction. Thus, researchers have linked job satisfaction to many desirable work-related outcomes.

In a seminal study on job satisfaction, using US workers, Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) discovered that specific job aspects promoted employee satisfaction, while other job aspects spurred feelings of dissatisfaction. Tests of Herzberg et al.’s theory (1959) have been common using US and European workers, but less frequent using other samples. Thus, given today’s global business and multicultural work environment, it is relevant to ask: Are these considerations still valid? Does culture matter when assessing job satisfaction? To help firms better manage and operate in the world market, researchers Thomas and Au (2002) and Galang (2004) emphasized the value of studying concepts cross-culturally. Hence, in addressing these...
considerations, this study assesses job satisfaction in Brazil utilizing the Herzberg et al. contribution (1959). This theory is an appropriate framework for studying job satisfaction and culture because it allows for the construct to be broken down into composite elements found in most jobs. Additionally, it is one of the most comprehensive theories of job satisfaction as it uses 13 components to assess the construct. By studying these distinct elements, it is possible to determine which job factors are most important to workers in various work environments and cultures.

Job satisfaction and Herzberg’s two-factor theory of motivation

The premise of the Herzberg et al. (1959) theory, known as the Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, was that managers could use factors known as ‘motivators’ to encourage employees to gain satisfaction and, subsequently, better performance in the workplace. Similarly, managers could try to minimize those factors that increase job dissatisfaction, ‘hygiene factors’ or ‘hygienes’ for short. Maximizing the motivators associated with their jobs could enhance employees’ job satisfaction. On the other hand, if employees believe that factors associated with hygienes drop below acceptable levels, job dissatisfaction grows. An interesting point of the theory is that lack of satisfaction does not equate to dissatisfaction. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction are on two separate continua. This means that when employees do not perceive satisfaction among the motivators, they also may not perceive dissatisfaction among the hygienes. Employees may well be in a state of limbo, where they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This is an unproductive state for both employees and organizations, as it does not fuel growth, creativity or innovation. Therefore, there is entity value for organizational leaders and managers to recognize those aspects of the jobs within their purview that can promote satisfaction among employees and optimize them.

According to Herzberg (1966), the factors associated with work considered to be motivators include: achievement; recognition; tasks (the work itself); responsibility; advancement; and personal growth. The factors associated with work considered to be hygienes include: policies and administration; supervision/managerial relationships; salary; working conditions; status; security; and coworker relationships.

Other motivation theories have been studied extensively in the business literature, but they do not break down the components of motivation as specifically as the Two-Factor Theory and consequently do not allow for such detailed analysis. For example, Maslow’s Theory of Needs (1954) states that individuals reach higher level needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization only after lower level needs such as belongingness and safety needs have been met. While useful in other contexts, this theory is not geared towards job-related motivation. Alderfer’s ERG Theory (1972) states that people have three core needs: existence; relatedness; and growth. This scheme does not include the rigid hierarchy of Maslow, indicating that employees may experience needs concurrently. But its broad categories lead to a generalized evaluation of motivation. McClelland’s Needs Theory (1961) also acknowledges three sets of needs: achievement; power; and affiliation. His research suggests that achievement needs, and to a lesser degree, power and affiliation needs, are related to job performance, thus linking employee motivation with job outcomes. While beneficial at an individual level, the Needs Theory does not focus on the dynamics of group-level motivation. Adams’ Equity Theory (1965) explains that employees will strive for equitable situations when comparing themselves to coworkers as they consider inputs to a job, level of effort expended and job outcomes. However, Equity Theory does not expound upon the actual motivators that cause individuals to act the way that they do in the workplace. Thus, Herzberg’s (1966) theory is best suited to this study because it
contains many categories for analysis which allow for cultural evaluation, it is tailored to the workplace, and it considers both individual and group level motivation.

Herzberg’s work (1966) is considered a major advancement in the literature. Befittingly, it has also been used recently by researchers in the study of job satisfaction (Brislin, MacNab, Worthley, Kabigting and Zukis 2005; DeShields, Kara and Kaynak 2005) with support for the theory. Herzberg’s work has been employed to evaluate travellers’ satisfaction (Crompton 2003) and student satisfaction (Chyung and Vachon 2005), illustrating its applicability to a variety of settings. Yet all tests of the theory have not been confirmatory. Park (1988) and Al-Mekhlafie (1991) found partial support for the motivator-hygiene dichotomy with samples from Korea and Yemen, while Williams (1992) and Timmreck (2001) found mixed results using US samples. In an evaluation of Herzberg et al. (1959) of the Thai construction industry, Ruthankoon and Ogunlana (2003) found partial support for the theory. They attribute differences in the literature to the varying occupations and variety of workplaces included in the research. Despite these mixed theory results, motivation has been often associated with job satisfaction. Those employees who express satisfaction with their jobs often are motivated in their jobs (Thierry 1998). Tietjen and Myers (1998) also linked motivation and job satisfaction using the Herzberg (1966) framework. They concluded that once managers understood what motivated employees, managers could focus on the appropriate strategies to create job satisfaction among those workers. These varying results set the stage for additional research to occur with a new emphasis, i.e. the role of culture.

Interestingly, the hospitality industry has been the focus of many job satisfaction studies. In a study of over 4,000 hotel workers, Barsky and Nash (2004) found that employee satisfaction on the job was driven by the emotions of the employees and their beliefs about their company. Aksu and Aktas (2005) studied job satisfaction among Turkish managers in first-class hotels. They discovered that despite long hours, low salaries and little colleague support (all hygienes), the managers were generally satisfied with their jobs due to the nature of the work itself and the authority (motivators) that came from managing a first-class facility. In a study of employee job satisfaction among Taiwanese hotel workers, Hwang and Chi (2005) found that internal marketing, or treating employees as customers, was positively related to job satisfaction and job satisfaction was positively related to organizational performance. Sizoo, Plank, Iskat and Serrie (2005) determined that among hotel workers at four-star hotels in Florida, employees with higher intercultural sensitivity expressed higher levels of job satisfaction and social satisfaction. This finding indicates that culture may influence employee perception of job satisfaction.

Although a great deal of research has been completed in the area of job satisfaction, an examination of South American businesses remains a topic of value considering the continent’s rapidly increasing economic and development status. Recent scholarship has been promising. Ritter and Anker (2002) found workplace safety and job security issues were important to Brazilians, while Spector, Cooper, Poelmans and Allen (2004) found that Latin Americans in general had high job satisfaction. Barreto (2005) found that hotel guest satisfaction in Bahia, Brazil increased when employee satisfaction programmes were implemented. Though interesting, these studies did not comprehensively address all of Herzberg’s (1966) factors and they did not fully consider the role of culture in the workplace.

The hotel industry is appropriate for this study as it is a service business in a multicultural environment that incorporates global business practices. The industry has become a significant contributor to the international economy due to the growth in world tourism. The World Tourism Organization (2006) reports that tourism accounted for almost 30% of world service exports in 2003 and anticipates that worldwide tourist and business travel is expected to grow 4% annually in subsequent years. Within Brazil, tourism expenditures rose 40% from 1995 to 2005 and the trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future (World Tourism Organization 2006).
Therefore, this article brings together the topics of job satisfaction and culture within the hospitality industry in Brazil. We believe an analysis of this particular mix of dimensions will be a valuable contribution to the field of international business research. Accordingly, to further extend the current research in these areas, this qualitative study addresses the following research questions; ‘What can Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory of Motivation reveal about job satisfaction among hotel workers in Brazil?’ and ‘How do cultural factors impact job satisfaction among hotel workers in Brazil?’ Deliberation and reflection on these inquiries can be catalysts for further debate and investigation on the topics of job satisfaction, culture and hospitality. Despite broad research on the Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, a qualitative study was deemed appropriate for this study due to its exploratory nature in an emerging market.

The importance of culture

Culture has become a common subject in international business research (Black 2005; Gerhart and Fang 2005), as well as in academic textbooks and the popular press. With the increasing globalization and mobility of the world-wide labour force, such emphasis is appropriate. Hofstede (1980) defines culture as ‘the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from that of another’ and incorporates ‘the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a group’s response to its environment’. Hofstede’s (1980) ‘dimensions of culture’ has been one of the most popular typologies in scholarly works due to its widespread applicability and its validation over time (Ross 1999; Kalliny, Cruthirds and Minor 2006). It is useful because it delineates the concept of culture into five continua which reveal preferences and norms. The dimensions are listed below:

1. Power distance: degree to which control and influence are distributed unequally in society.
2. Individualism versus collectivism: the concepts of ‘I and Me’ versus ‘We and Us’.
3. Uncertainty avoidance: the degree of risk aversion.
4. Masculinity versus femininity: the desire for material possessions and recognition versus the desire for relationships and family.

Taken together, these dimensions offer insights towards behaviour and standards in the context of culture. The dimensions will be used here to explore the forces behind the motivators and hygienes in the workplace.

Brazil

Brazil has the largest population in Latin America, the largest tourism industry on the continent, the fifth largest populace in the world and the ninth largest economy in the world, yet management scholars have studied the country relatively infrequently. Although the nation has been included in multi-country studies (Ritter and Anker 2002; Spector et al. 2004), it has not been the focus of many studies that are human resource-based.

Academics have used both anthropological and organizational perspectives to shed light on Brazilian culture. Roberto DaMatta is one of the most noted scholars on Brazilian life. In 1995 he presented the concept of a triad of influences on the Brazilian people as opposed to Hofstede’s (1980) dualistic model. Hess and DaMatta (1995) found Brazil to be an ‘intermediate society’ where members were often in the middle of collectivist or individualistic influences. This research also emphasized the importance of situational analysis of cultural implications. Both Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) and Hess and DaMatta (1995) advocate recognizing recurring themes when studying national culture while leaving room for variability and interpretation.
In an application of Hofstede’s model among Brazilians, O’Keefe and O’Keefe (2004) found that behavioural indicators supported the high power distance score of the country. They discovered that the opinions of senior workers carried more weight than those of lower level employees. The famous Brazilian jeitinho or ‘little way around’ was used to find solutions to conflicts and manage uncertainty in the workplace. Other validations of Hofstede’s work came in the form of the Brazilian’s strong long-term commitment to both nuclear and extended family groups. They also attached a great importance to their quality of life and were unlikely to take unfamiliar risks.

Often, studies on Brazil primarily focused on industry trends and economic issues (Brown 1995; Smith 2003). The country illustrates the entire spectrum of economic development, thus it provides a wealth of research opportunities for management scholars. Bahia is the largest of the coastal states in the North-eastern region of Brazil. Salvador, Bahia’s capital and the colonial capital of the country, has a population of 2.5 million and its tourism industry is second in Brazil only to that of Rio de Janeiro. Salvador is the third largest city in Brazil and accounts for roughly one-sixth of Bahia’s population. We chose the city of Salvador as our study location as it has a highly indigenous population, 60% of its citizens are employed in the service sector and it is representative of the demographic makeup of Bahia. It also reflects Brazil’s cultural mores based on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (1980) of high power distance, collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance, femininity, and a moderate long-term orientation, as indicated by a pre-test of 100 native Salvadorians conducted prior to the study.

Methods

Sample

Five hotels in Salvador, Brazil comprised the study locations. The hotels were selected to achieve diversity within the sample along several dimensions. The business models included locally owned operations, national hotel chain members and sole proprietorships to allow variety in type of establishment. Hotels located in both rural and urban settings in different segments of the city were used to optimize variability. Hotel class levels included 2-, 3- and 4-star operations. Hotels ranged in size from 30 rooms to 1,000 rooms. While hotel type, class and location were important for diversity, specific hotels were selected due to accessibility and guest traffic/or average occupancy rates. The more accessible establishments with a 50% occupancy rate were targeted.

Managers were contacted in advance for permission to participate in the study. Hotel industry workers were identified for observation, interview, and participation in the study based upon job title and shift assignment. On-the-job observations and personal interviews constituted the primary data collection methods. Interviews continued until theoretical saturation had been achieved. Qualitatively, the number of subjects is contingent upon theoretical saturation of information, thereby, indicating that respondents were revealing no new information beyond that obtained from previous respondents. This procedure is consistent with the recommendations of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Appropriately, the sample size was 81. Analogous with the theoretical sampling procedure advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998), attempts were made to include a diverse sample of hotel employees and responsibilities as evidenced by the respondent demographics provided in Table 1.

Data collection

Data collection involved four modalities conducted by three American researchers and one Brazilian assistant over two three-week periods. One of the American researchers was familiar
Table 1. Respondent demographics (N = 81).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age distribution</th>
<th>Employment type</th>
<th>Hours in working week</th>
<th>Tenure (years)</th>
<th>Education*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Under 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Trades</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30–39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60–69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50–59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *Educational attainment: 1st Level = US 6th grade; 2nd Level = US Middle School; 3rd Level = US High School Diploma; Superior = Some College/College Degree; Post Superior = Advanced Degree. Sample job titles: administrative assistant, bartender, bellman, executive head waiter, front desk attendant, hotel clerk, lunchette worker, manager, marketing sales representative, owner/operator of the hotel, porter, receptionist, secretary, window washer.
with Bahian culture through acculturation and spoke the Portuguese language fluently. First, hotel employees were observed on the job. Second, primary and follow-up interviews were performed with hotel employees. At the hotels, contract workers commonly offered ancillary services such as transportation and tours for the hotel guests. Third, the contract workers were observed on the job. Fourth, contract workers for the hotels were interviewed. All observations and interviews were conducted using a previously designed in-depth protocol to assure consistency (Miles, Sledge and Coppage 2005). Interviews were utilized over self-report questionnaires to benefit from face-to-face communication and to allow for explanation of concepts that might be culturally bound or culturally specific. In addition, work environment surroundings together with non-verbal information allowed interviewers to capture reinforcement data on job satisfaction. Furthermore, the observations allowed an additional collection method to minimize the effects of common method variance (Saxton and Dollinger 2004). The structured interview questions requested demographic information such as sex, age, education/preparation, job level/position, job tenure and other factors noted in Table 1. No unions were operating in any of the hotels in the study, so union membership was not questioned. Global interview techniques such as back translation, dual listeners, translator presence, random sampling and multifaceted questions were used to reduce interviewer bias and ethnocentrism, as well as recency and halo effects from the participants.

We chose to modify existing job satisfaction survey instruments to conduct the interviews based on methodological concerns documented in the literature (Hwang and Chi 2005). Many of the previous instruments were constructed in a questionnaire format, which could limit the richness of the information captured. Face-to-face interviews allow for cultural cues to surface during the data collection process. Therefore, we integrated the elements from existing instruments deemed most useful to this study into a personal interview format. For instance, Hackman and Oldham’s (1980) Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) includes employee motivation, job satisfaction levels, and employee growth and development, all desired job outcomes. The JDS links these items to many of Herzberg’s (1966) factors, including task significance, autonomy, feedback, managerial relations, coworkers, meaningfulness of work, responsibility and appropriate training for the job. However, it does not incorporate the cultural aspects of work, which we felt were important. While the Job Description Index (JDI) of Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969) is one of the most commonly used scales, it was deemed somewhat inappropriate because we focus on the services sector and JDI is better suited to manufacturing environments (Hwang and Chi 2005). Spector’s (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) offers more application to the service industry but with a limited focus on culture. Our interview questions, accordingly, incorporate elements from the three instruments in order to address issues relevant to hospitality industry workers and to consider cultural factors. We include 13 factors, whereas JDS incorporates four factors, JDI incorporates five factors and JSS incorporates ten factors. Sample guidelines from the observation protocol and sample interview questions can be found in Box 1. Translators were present during each interview to ensure that respondents fully understood the questions.

Data analysis
Respondent data gathered during the observations and interviews were analysed by using a comparative case method as suggested by Ragin (1994). Here, individual respondents were deemed to be separate cases for evaluation purposes. Based on the Two-Factor theoretical framework, key variables were identified from each case write up. Respondents’ key factors were identified and coded (Miles and Domke-Damonte 2000; Zhang and Rajagopalan 2002) using motivation theory and satisfaction theory frameworks. The initial analysis consisted
of reading each transcribed observation and interview and then coding themes, motivators and hygiene factors as well as levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction as provided by the respondents. This exercise was performed several times by each researcher in order to identify missed items, to solidify interpretations and codes, and to facilitate validity (Miles and Domke-Damonte 2000). This process was incorporated to address House and Wigdor’s (1967) concerns about Herzberg’s Theory and possible bias in coding.

Each respondent was coded alphabetically for tracking purposes, then by gender, job title and location. This descriptive coding scheme is consistent with suggestions by Miles and Huberman (1994). Next, hygiene and motivating job satisfaction factors were identified from the subject responses using Herzberg’s (1966) classifications. Box 2 contains concise definitions of the hygienes and the motivators which served as interview topics. These definitions were used for clarification and consistency during the observation and interview processes.

To check for inter-rater reliability, participant responses as well as a list of dimensional definitions, and coding categories from Box 2 were given to two assistants unfamiliar with the study. The assistants were asked to classify each definition and response according to the coding category to which it corresponded. The results indicated strong evidence for reliability of the coding categories with inter-rater agreement of 80% and 81%, respectively and an interclass correlation of .90 and .92, respectively between each of the assistants and the researchers (p < .001) (Miles 2000).

Results
A table was devised utilizing the coded data to outline the satisfaction state for each respondent and evaluated against the theoretical framework of Herzberg (1966). Satisfaction averages for
the sample report the average levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction for the 81 participants as
determined by interview questions. This information is presented in Table 2.

A cross-case analysis (Zhang and Rajagopalan 2002) was carried out where causal
conditions and satisfaction versus dissatisfaction outcomes were compared. Then similarities
and differences between the cases were recorded and compared to Herzberg’s (1966) theory.
Next emergent themes were documented by looking at the consistency of the results across the
cases. Commonalities between actual findings and theoretical arguments were also used to create
the themes and conclusions. Hofstede and Hofstede’s (2005) dimensions of culture were used to
explain divergence from and in some cases support of the Two-Factor Theory.

**Factor revelation**

In this section, factors that emerged during the interviews are revealed, and are presented in
terms of the 13 job-related factors that were included in the Two-Factor Theory. Common
sentiments and quotes from the participants are incorporated as evidence, and typical
observations are reported. Evidence of respondent concurrence with or divergence from the
Two-Factor Theory is also provided. As appropriate, references to Hofstede and Hofstede’s
(2005) cultural dimensions are included to add meaning to the findings.

**Motivators**

*Achievement*: Workers expressed a consistent desire to achieve on the job such as ‘I do my best’.
Some associated secular work with spiritual work: ‘I do God’s work, I achieve for God.’ This is
consistent with the 75% satisfaction level on this factor, supporting Herzberg’s theory. This was
also evident from the positive demeanour seen in almost all on-the-job observations.
Recognition: This did not seem to be an ultimate goal for the employees, but one that they accepted readily. In addition to individual acknowledgement of a job well done, respondents expressed fulfillment with teamwork and coworker collaboration. One manager replied, ‘I am responsible for my employees’, almost in a familial way. Another supposed, ‘I treat my coworkers with respect and we succeed together’ suggesting the assumption of joint responsibility for recognition. Respondents showed a 69% satisfaction rating on this factor. This finding supports the Two-Factor Theory, and it also indicates Brazilians’ preference for collectivist collaboration to get the job done, as suggested by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005).

Tasks: Almost every respondent showed contentment with the job that they held. ‘I like my job’ was a frequent response. Employees often arrived early and left late for their shifts in order to ensure full coverage by the staff. Cheerful attitudes and dedication to fulfill job requirements were commonplace. Several respondents stated, ‘I am happy with my job’. Accordingly, the task variable had an 84% satisfaction rating. This high level of concordance supports the idea of work being an intrinsic motivator. In the hospitality industry, a desire to serve others also acts as a motivating force and an underlying bond.

Responsibility: Hotel employees were eager to perform tasks in a service capacity in order to please their guests ‘How may I help you?’ was asked often and witnessed repeatedly during the observations. Employees excitedly took on tasks when requested by customers as exemplified by the comment: ‘My manager is not here but I can assist you with that problem.’ The workers showed great self-reliance and ingenuity in pleasing the customer. For example, one worker spent over half an hour locating a pizza delivery business in order to fulfill a special customer request. Employees spoke of loyalty to their employer. Appropriately, this factor received a 73% satisfaction rating and supports the Two-Factor Theory.

Advancement: Employees were somewhat vague in their view of career advancement and future career plans. Observations revealed a focus on the present and the overriding outlook to let the future take care of itself. Little evidence of long-term planning, either personal or professional, was noted. A few workers showed the desire to move up within their own organizational hierarchies with comments such as ‘I want to become a manager’, but not many

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Raw score</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(number expression satisfaction)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivators</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal growth</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average satisfaction rating</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygienes</td>
<td>Policy and administration</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision/relationships with supervisor</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships with coworkers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average dissatisfaction rating</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Satisfaction ratings by factor (N = 81).
had definitive career goals. When queried about career plans, the most common response was a smile and a look of bewilderment. Among younger respondents, the desire to ‘finish college to get a better job’ was expressed. This variable had a lower satisfaction rating of 43%. According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) Brazil’s cultural norm of a moderate long-term orientation can explain this finding. With little societal focus on the long term, it is no surprise that the hotel workers did not have specific long-term career objectives. Thus, culture may explain in this case, why advancement was not considered a motivator.

**Personal growth:** Few participants expressed a desire for personal growth from a professional career perspective. When asked about personal growth activities, many expressed a desire to ‘grow spiritually’ and to ‘become a better person’. Likewise, pre-interview observations also revealed little reference to the idea of personal development activities such as learning a new skill, pursuing a hobby or taking a class for enjoyment. Participants exhibited a 38% satisfaction rating. Hence, this factor did not elicit motivation on the job as Herzberg (1966) suggested it might. Utilizing the Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) framework, it is likely that a high power distance frame of reference may deter employees from pursuing personal growth, given that most do not have a high power-base within the society. Therefore, the cultural norm of low power among the working class may impact individual aspiration for growth.

**Hygienes**

**Policies and administration:** Most comments regarding policies revolved around training and scheduling. Reinforcing Herzberg’s contention that this factor falls into the hygiene category 74% of respondents were dissatisfied with some aspect of organizational policy. Comments included: ‘Training is good here, but it is hard to get,’ indicating a scarcity of resources. Some respondents were considering attending hotel school for continuing education. In reference to schedules, ‘Sometimes I get the schedule I want’ summed up responses. One worker added: ‘I have to work a lot of hours . . . I can get off when my children are sick,’ indicated that managers tried to work with their subordinates on scheduling issues.

**Supervision/managerial relations:** With regard to work relationships, 67% of the employees displayed no dissatisfaction with their manager. ‘I like my manager,’ [Our manager] treats us well, [I have] ‘no problems’ [with my manager] were offered from participants. For those who were dissatisfied, they wanted more individualized time with the manager to discuss problems. This result, contrary to Herzberg’s hygiene hypothesis, can be explained by the Brazilian norm of high power-distance in organizational relationships. As Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) explained, the expectation on the part of the Brazilians that managers had significantly more power in the workplace than their subordinates was anticipated. Accordingly, this reality did not cause much dissatisfaction among the hotel workers.

**Working conditions:** Only 30% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their working conditions, denoting a departure from the hygiene label. The majority of respondents had positive comments on this factor such as: [Working conditions are] ‘nice – the office is clean and we have a break room’. Others spoke of ‘sharing an office with the manager’. Complaints on this factor were clustered around breaks. The fact that this hygiene factor promoted little dissatisfaction as predicted by the theory is very likely due to the predominant mentality of gratitude for having a job and a feminine-orientation (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). Many Brazilians exhibited the feminine value of honouring personal relationships over material items. Hence, working conditions did not appear to be a significant source of dissatisfaction for those in the study. During observations, the sharing of limited office equipment such as telephones, phone books and computers, among several employees, confirmed this finding.
Salary: Not surprisingly, this factor indicated the greatest level of dissatisfaction at 87%. Some comments were, ‘I work two jobs to support my family’ and ‘it could be better’. With a high unemployment rate and an abundance of workers in the service sector, Brazilian hotel managers have a tough time adjusting pay rates due to the competitive nature of the business. As confirmed in most studies using the Two-Factor Theory, pay was a classic hygiene factor in the workplace in this study.

Relationships with coworkers: The respondents demonstrated little dissatisfaction with this factor. Actually, 88% considered colleague relationships as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, and most reported that men and women were treated equally on the job. ‘I don’t see any differences in how men and women are treated’ was a typical response. Observations revealed cordial coworker interaction. A common occurrence was coworkers taking breaks or having meals together. These positive results support management’s attitudes towards inclusion and gender equity. Brazil’s feminine-based culture, where relationships are highly valued and the quality of life is important, can explain this result and divergence from Herzberg’s prediction.

Status: ‘I have worked at this hotel for 15 years, and I don’t want to change jobs or locations’ was a response given by a window washer and was typical of statements given by tenured employees. Both workers and managers valued employee loyalty to the employer. Another sentiment, ‘I helped build this hotel, and this is my home,’ reiterated the familial atmosphere of the workplace, where members of the staff were valued, regardless of status or job title. The tenure variable showed a weak dissatisfaction rating of 26%. As suggested by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), the collectivist nature of the people of Brazil, which emphasizes working together, along with their feminine-based orientation, may explain why this hygiene factor did not lead to significant dissatisfaction among the workers.

Security: The topic of job security elicited much dissatisfaction among the participants, at an average of 79%. Many were ‘not sure’ of what the future held in terms of their personal ability to retain their position and some cited increasing crime statistics when the issue was broached. The tough economic conditions in the country gave credence to these beliefs. Since the topic was broad, and it was evident that respondents included several definitions of security, it is not surprising that this factor yielded dissatisfaction as the theory proposed. Hofstede and Hofstede’s (2005) finding that Brazilians by nature are high uncertainty avoidants reinforces this result of dissatisfaction with job security among the hotel workers.

As evidenced from the topical categorizations of specific responses in Table 2, the data provide partial support for Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory. Those elements of work identified by Herzberg as motivators lead to satisfaction among the Brazilian hotel workers (38% to 84% of the time, with an average satisfaction rating of 67%). Those factors identified by Herzberg as hygiene factors led to dissatisfaction of 12% to 87% of the time with an average dissatisfaction rating of 49%. This result is indicative of a workforce with much valuable information that would likely lead to organizational improvements in operational efficiency and effectiveness. These results suggest that motivators are important sources of satisfaction among Brazilian hotel employees. However, respondent indication of hygiene factors promoting favourable influences suggests that cultural differences impact their attitudes on the job. Thereby, these findings merit further cross-cultural analysis.

Emergent themes: Several themes emerged during the observation, interview and analysis process that are noteworthy. First, respondents often referred to Brazilian ingenuity as ‘jeitinho’, meaning ‘a
little way around’. They were proud of their problem-solving skills and creativity. Bahians exhibited a great degree of comingling family life and professional life. Many of Hofstede’s dimensions of culture surfaced during the study period. Bahians showed a preference for collectivism via teamwork in decision-making. Assertiveness, masculinity, or the competitive strive to achieve (Hickson and Pugh 1995) were rarely mentioned during interviews but family and friends were discussed often. For many participants, personal relationships were highly valued, an indicator of a feminine perspective with respect to the Hofstede framework. The hierarchical culture was reinforced via law, policy and regulation. As Hickson and Pugh (1995) alluded, Latins and Brazilians specifically manage uncertainty and prefer authority, routines and rules. Furthermore, there appeared to be an overwhelming gratification in the performance of service work. Many workers exhibited excitement regarding task completion. This high reverence of service was noticeable in the absence of self-service operations and the constant availability of customer service.

Discussion

Job satisfaction is a universal term, however; culture may play a role in its existence. In our application of Herzberg’s (1966) Two-Factor Theory in Brazil, the results support the use of motivators to promote job satisfaction levels among hotel employees. As expected, the workers derived satisfaction from the factors labelled as motivators in many cases. Among the motivators, Brazilian employees showed the highest levels of satisfaction with the work itself at 84% and achievement at 75%. This finding reinforces Herzberg’s notion of the importance of work itself and the good feelings that work can engender among employees. This result also underscores the observed common Brazilian values of personal dignity, family-orientation, and making an honest living. Our findings were consistent with those of Au (1999), who found that Brazilians scored 7.6 out of 10 on a job satisfaction ranking, where 10 is high. This was above the 20-country average of 7.22. In his study, Brazilians scored above average for pride in work, with a 1.85 out of 4, where the 20-country average was 1.82. The present sample also demonstrated a proud presence on the job with the use of formal titles, protocols, tidy workspaces and attention to uniforms and personal grooming.

The Brazilian sample indicated that some of the hygiene factors did promote dissatisfaction, as expected. These primarily included the areas of salary, security, and policy and administration. Other hygiene factors, such as supervision, working conditions, relationships with coworkers and status did not elicit overwhelming dissatisfaction among the employees. These results support the findings of Garibaldi de Hilal (2006), who noted that ambiguity, hierarchy and relational networks permeate Brazilian organizational culture. It may be that these workplace factors are important in service industries and in South American organizations. For instance, the observed discomfort associated with queries regarding the degree of satisfaction may explain this finding and may be indicative of cultural mores. Perhaps it is not acceptable to exhibit dissatisfaction with work given the high reverence of service. Or perhaps, holding a job is so valued that one dare not display dissatisfaction with work. Given the observed presence of teamwork and employee loyalty, possibly commitment is the more pertinent precursor to employee performance than job satisfaction in the environment assessed. These findings merit further study in this area.

Limitations of this study include possible loss of meaning through interpretation and translation. Furthermore, the Hawthorne Effect may have been a factor, although the use of observation prior to interview solicitation was utilized to minimize its affect. Moreover, the research may benefit from quantitative follow-up and further cross-cultural extensions. Given the exploratory nature of this study, formal statistical non-parametric and parametric procedures
were not considered appropriate for this data. The emergent data made possible by qualitative analysis were considered an important component of this study. Further larger-sample analyses should build on the themes identified in this study by measuring the applicability of these attitudes and observations across other cultures.

In addressing the question: ‘What can Herzberg’s (1966) Two-Factor Theory of Motivation reveal about job satisfaction among hotel workers in Brazil?’ we find usefulness in the theory and a combination of factors that influence both job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Herzberg’s contention on motivating factors appears to hold in this study in that motivators promote attitudes of satisfaction in the workplace. Specifically, the work itself suggested high degrees of satisfaction among workers. Herzberg’s contention on hygiene factors was not totally upheld in this study as hygiene factors such as working conditions generated attitudes of favourability. In answering the question ‘How do cultural factors impact job satisfaction among hotel workers in Brazil?’ we find that culture can help explain why the classic motivators or hygienes did not affect some employees. Initially, the Herzberg studies included an American sample, which is almost the complete opposite of Brazil in the Hofstede (1980) context (masculine, low power distance, individualistic, low uncertainty avoidance). Given the mixed results relative to Herzberg applicability, cultural differences may be an important antecedent to job satisfaction. The high reverence of service work in Brazil may highly influence attitudes towards work.

It appears that job satisfaction for many employees is more complex than Herzberg’s (1966) dichotomy suggests. There are likely many cultural, gender, institutional, socio-economic and societal issues that must be taken into consideration. Many of these factors are not easily discovered in a standard written survey and, therefore, lends support to the value of qualitative study. Hence, more work is needed in this area to determine how such information might be captured. This study is one step in that direction. Chiu and Lin (2004) reiterate that Herzberg’s (1966) two groups of attributes are still relevant in today’s workplace. The findings generated from this research add credence to the results of Stevens, Oddou, Furuya, Bird and Mendenhall (2006), which emphasize the role that human resource practices can play in employee job satisfaction. Employers need to be sure that motivators are directed and focused on meeting the interests and concerns of others such as coworkers, customers and stakeholders of the company. Accordingly, stakeholder theory would be another fruitful direction for future research. Employers must also recognize the importance of culture in the workplace and adjust motivators on the job accordingly. Oishi et al. (1999) showed that job satisfaction is correlated to life satisfaction as well as intrinsic motivation. Spector et al. (2004) propose that job satisfaction may not be merely an outcome of work, family and life factors, but in fact, may be a cause of stress or happiness in these areas. They point out that it is likely that the concepts of family and work are different across cultures. Investigating these ideas would broaden the research stream and would provide new links to the topic as well.

The findings herein, coupled with previous work on motivation theory, illustrate the fact that job satisfaction is both cogent and applicable in both domestic and global markets. It is our hope that this research will continue and yield insights that will improve the quality of work life for employees worldwide.

References


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