

Understanding the Factors that Affect Employee Productivity and Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

In today's ruthless and cut-throat business world, companies must strive to achieve optimum efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in their workplace to keep the steady upward growth of companies. However, the paramount problem companies currently face is not knowing what affects the level of productivity in their workplace, which, as a result, hinders them from taking action to address the barriers that slow down their operations. This research paper can help identify factors affecting employee productivity, such as work environment, management practices, supportive managers, and burnout. The research paper uses data from a survey sent to working individuals in Singapore. Participants were asked to fill out 20 questions to evaluate how their preferences in the workplace affected their productivity levels on a 1-5 scale. Results showed that while most respondents were quite satisfied with their jobs and believed that the support, they received boosted their productivity, there were variations in the results across demographics like age, race, and the number of years the employee has worked at the company/organisation. This data can be used to make targeted improvements to increase productivity, helping organisations create a culture of productivity that benefits both the business and its employees, proving useful for Human Resource managers. Improved productivity has been shown to benefit employees by reducing their workload and stress levels, leading to greater job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Keywords: *Employee, Job Satisfaction, Productivity, Efficiency, Workplace, Organisation*

One of the most prevalent and pressing issues in today's workplaces has become the lack of motivation (World Economic Forum, 2023) and a decreasing level of job satisfaction (Collins, 2022) among employees which has resulted in reduced productivity among employees, with even a large number of them leaving their jobs (Picincu, 2020) in search of something more catered to their needs and wants.

In recent years, companies have struggled to juggle their employees' happiness and maintain their company's results (Carucci, 2022). However, it has been noticed that Managers and Human Resource (HR) professionals fail to see how the lack of a motivational environment results in the employees being more unproductive and lazy. Hence, a lack of effort is being put into improving the ecosystem and conditions in which the employees are working in (Heryati R, 2022).

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A manager's job is to motivate his/her employees and radiate empathy and trust in them (Reh, 2020). When a manager fails to motivate and reassure their employees, the employees may not be as engaged or invested in their work, making it difficult for them to stay motivated.

Employees wish for their efforts to be recognised and appreciated by their managers, and hence organisations must ensure that their employees know that their efforts are valid and that their contributions to the organisation are admired (Hastwell, 2023). Moreover, if the employees are treated well and rewarded for their efforts, it will result in greater job satisfaction and productivity. Managers should introduce and implement reward systems which reward employees regularly and fairly for their hard work and efforts (Andriotis, 2017). Backing this argument, it is proved that increased wages, awards and bonuses are among the main motivating and stimulating factors for productivity (Lucifora, 2023).

Furthermore, the negligence of employee wellness can significantly negatively impact employee productivity and overall organisational performance (Randstad, 2022). It refers to both the physical and mental well-being of the employees. Employees who are not well cared for may experience decreased motivation, concentration, and job satisfaction. This would, in turn, result in an exponential growth in the turnover of employees.

Businesses now face greater responsibilities for the welfare of their staff, and thus, it is time for companies to start seeing health and well-being as a crucial investment rather than an expense (Smith, 2023). One main consideration would be maintaining a healthy work-life balance which helps reduce stress and helps prevent burnout in the workplace (Kohl, 2023). Additionally, they should ensure that employees can maintain their work-life balance and provide stressed employees with modes of support.

This research could prove to be insightful for institutions and policymakers through which they can modify their work policies to cater better to the needs of their employees, resulting in greater job satisfaction and productivity. This paper investigates the influence of an organisation's culture, leadership, employee engagement and work environment on an employee's productivity and satisfaction levels. To this day, employees are not aware of the various factors in their workspaces that affect their employee's motivation and productivity.

METHODOLOGY

Aim of the study

The present study explores the relationship of various factors among employees between the ages of 26-48 and the impact it has on their job satisfaction and productivity at work.

Research Design

The research is an exploratory one which explores further into the broad categories that affect the productivity of employees including autonomy, support from peers and supervisors, respect, rewards and job satisfaction. The dependent variables would then be the level of satisfaction that the employees have based on various subcategories.

Consent and Ethical Issues

Informed consent was taken from industry professionals for data collection. Confidentiality and privacy of the respondents were maintained; no data would be disclosed to a third party. No identifiers, such as names or pictures, were disclosed in the article or while conducting the study. Ethical guidelines of research were followed.

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Sample

Sample size is 49. The gender ratio (female: male) is 3:4. Age group is between 26-48 years old. The geographical area is within Singapore, and the language through which the survey is conducted is English. All the respondents were employed in a corporate job and had a stable source of income. The majority of the respondents consist of employees that have been in the workforce for at least a few years after their graduation.

Scales used

A Google form that included 20 quantitative questions which required the respondent to rank their answer from a scale of 1-5 was circulated. It was completely anonymous, which allowed the respondents to honestly answer all the questions and allowed me to get the most accurate and precise results.

The questions also were categorised into 5 main categories, which were the most significant factors which affected job productivity that were highlighted during the groundwork for the research paper.

Examples of the questions in the survey:

1. I have opportunities for career growth within my company.
2. I am inspired by my coworkers to give my very best in my work.
3. My coworkers treat me with respect and I am accepted for who I am.
4. I receive meaningful recognition for work well done (for eg, getting affirmed by your supervisor, getting additional benefits, getting asked to contribute in meetings etc.)
5. I am satisfied with my wage/salary.

Each of these questions were answered on a Likert scale where 1 meant that the respondent disagrees with the statement to a large extent and with 5 meaning that the respondent agrees with the statement to a large extent. With 20 questions in the survey, the maximum score would be 100 and the minimum would be 20. A higher score would represent greater employee job satisfaction and productivity. The 20 questions focus on 5 main sub-scales that have been proven to be the ones that affect an employee's job satisfaction (Shaw, 2020) and productivity (Week Plan, 2023) the most. These include rewards and recognition, respect, job satisfaction, support from their peers and/or supervisors, and involvement.

Data Collection Procedure

The survey was circulated amongst working individuals over a period of one month. The Google form was sent out to working individually in various industries and it included questions focused on various subcategories that affect an employee's productivity at work. The survey had been circulated amongst several workplaces and through social circles.

RESULTS

Demographic Data

Table 1: Demographic representation of the sample group (N=49)

Demographic Characteristics	Number of participants	Percentages
Gender		
Male	28	57.1%
Female	21	42.9%
Nationality		
Indian	18	36.7%
Singaporean	18	36.7%

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Demographic Characteristics	Number of participants	Percentages
Chinese	11	22.4%
Malay	2	4.1%
Age Range		
25-30 Years	9	18.4%
30-39 Years	21	42.9%
40+ Years	19	38.8%

Demographic Data Within Subcategories

Based on the survey, an average score from each subcategory was calculated in order to further understand which factors are the main reasons for reduced productivity and job satisfaction amongst employees. A higher average rating would mean that the employee is more satisfied with that particular subcategory in their workplace and believe that it boosts their productivity.

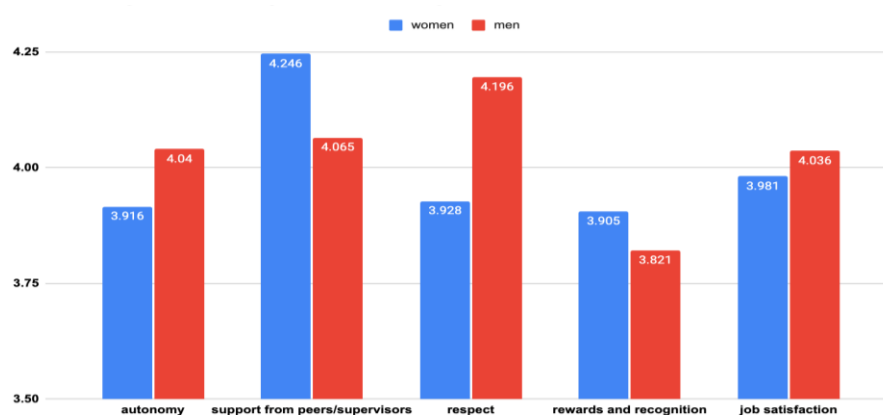


Figure 1: Graphical representation of the average score (out of 5) of the various subcategories that affect employees' productivity, amongst women and men. (N=49)

From Figure 4, it is evident that support from peers and/or supervisors is overall the highest rated subcategory, with it being the highest for women, with an average score of 4.246, and the second highest amongst men, with an average score of 4.065. In contrast, it can be inferred that both amongst men and women, rewards and recognition seem to be the factor that employees are most dissatisfied with and believe that it is the main reason for their lack of productivity at work, with the average rating being 3.905 for women and 3.821 for men. Generally, across all the subcategories, men have a higher average rating than women. Especially, for the respect received from their peers and supervisors, men have a higher average satisfaction rating of 6.82% more than the average satisfaction rating for female employees.

Table 4: Summary of Independent T-test Analysis comparing the data sets of Females and Males on a Likert scale of 1-5 (N=49). (mean is out of 100)

Source	Females		Males		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job satisfaction and productivity	79.24	4.73	79.89	4.59	2.02	0.63

Note. * $p < .05$

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T-test for independent samples between female employees ($M=79.24$, $SD=4.73$) and male employees ($M=79.89$, $SD=4.59$). The variable was the Job Satisfaction and Productivity the employees had ($t=2.02$, $p>0.05$, two-tailed t-test for independent samples, Table 3). This data further means that there is no significant difference in the average ratings of female and male employees on their job satisfaction and productivity.

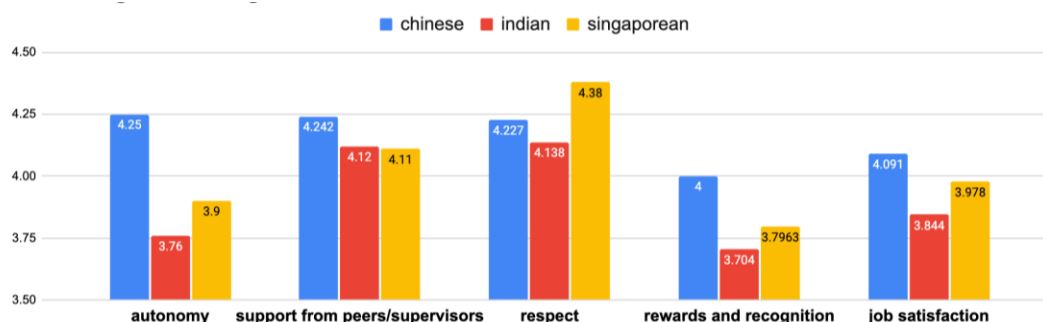


Figure 2: Graphical representation of the average score (out of 5) of the various subcategories that affect employees' productivity, amongst Chinese, Indians and Singaporeans. $N(\text{Chinese} = 11, \text{Indian} = 18, \text{Singaporeans} = 18)$

It can be concluded that amongst the 3 races, Indians generally have lower average ratings of satisfaction among all the subcategories. Especially for the autonomy given to the employees, Chinese employees have a higher average satisfaction rating of 13.03% more than the average satisfaction rating for Indian employees. Additionally, Chinese employees are seen to have pretty satisfactory ratings for all the subcategories, with all being above 4 on the Likert scale. One can see that for the autonomy subcategory, there is a significantly lower average percentage between Chinese and Indian employees, with an average rating of 13.0% higher than that of Indian employees. In general, all 3 races seem to be the most dissatisfied with the rewards and recognition they receive since it has the lowest average ratings, with it being 4 for Chinese, 3.704 for Indians and 3.7963 for Singaporeans.

Table 5: Summary of Independent T-test Analysis comparing the data sets of Indians and Singaporeans on a Likert scale of 1-5 ($N=49$). (mean is out of 100)

Source	Indians		Singaporeans		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job satisfaction and productivity	80.72	5.38	80.88	3.62	2.05	0.91

Note. $*p < .05$

T-test for independent samples between Indian employees ($M=80.72$, $SD=5.38$) and Singaporean employees ($M=80.88$, $SD=3.62$). The variable was the job satisfaction and productivity of employees ($t=2.05$, $p>0.05$, two-tailed t-test for independent samples, Table 4). Hence, from Table 4, it can be derived that between different races, there are no significant differences in the average ratings of the job satisfaction and productivity of the employees.

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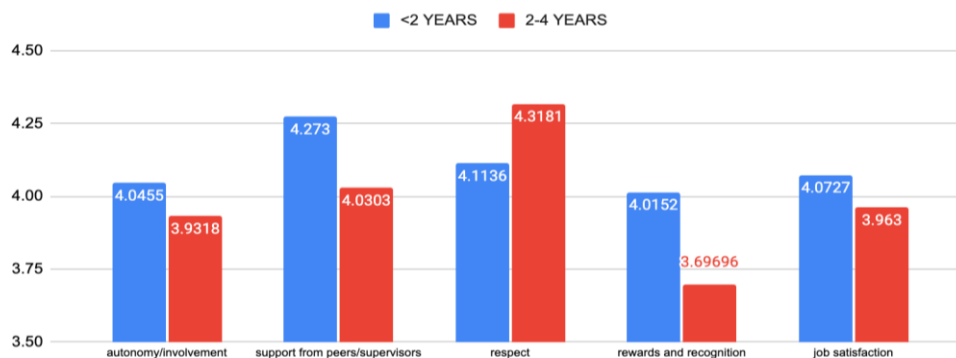


Figure 3: Graphical representation of the average score (out of 5) of the various subcategories that affect employees' productivity, amongst employees that have worked in the same organisation for less than 2 years and those between 2 to 4 years. (N=49)

It can be observed that generally, as an employee works in a company for more than 2 years, their level of satisfaction amongst these 5 subcategories decreases. Amongst the 5 subcategories, rewards and recognition seemed to have the most significant drop in the average rating between employees that have worked at the firm for lesser than 2 years and those that have worked there for 2 to 4 years, with a difference of 8.6%. The only subcategory that has slightly risen as the employee has worked in the company is the respect given to the employee, but that too only has an increase of 4.97%.

Table 2: Summary of Independent T-test Analysis comparing the data sets of employees that have worked at their organisation for between 0-2 years and 2-4 years on a Likert scale of 1-5 (N=49). (mean is out of 100)

Source	0-2 Years		2-4 Years		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job satisfaction and productivity	81	5.57	78.09	3.10	2.03	0.038

Note. * $p < .05$

T-test for independent samples between employees that have worked at their company for 0-2 years (M=81, SD=5.57) and employees that have worked at their company for 2-4 years (M=78.09, SD=3.10). The variable was the Job Satisfaction and Productivity the employees had (t=2.03, $p < 0.05$, two-tailed t-test for independent samples, Table 1). This further means that the employee's job satisfaction and productivity decreases as the number of years worked in the same company increases. This is evident by the mean value of both groups of respondents, with employees who have stayed in the company for 0-2 years having a higher average than those who have worked at the same company for 2-4 years.

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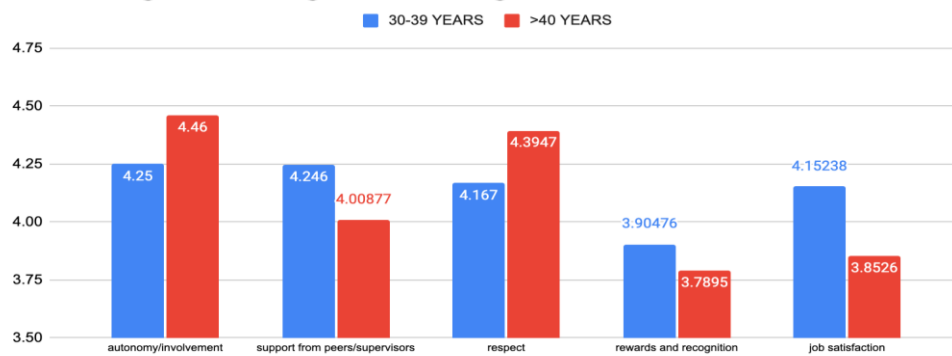


Figure 4: Graphical representation of the average score (out of 5) of the various subcategories that affect employees' productivity, amongst employees between the age of 30 and 39 years and those above the age of 40. (N=49)

Amongst the 5 subcategories, there is a decrease in 3 of the average ratings amongst the categories as the employee grows older, signifying a decrease in job satisfaction and their productivity levels. However, the respect the employee receives and the autonomy they have in the workplace have increased over the years, with the increases being 5.46% and 4.94%, respectively.

Table 3: Summary of Independent T-test Analysis comparing the data sets of employees that are between the ages of 30-39 and above 40 years on a Likert scale of 1-5 (N=49). (mean is out of 100)

Source	30-39 Years		Above 40 Years		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job satisfaction and productivity	81.3	5.54	77.56	2.71	2.05	0.012

Note.*p < .05

T-test for independent samples between employees that are between the age of 30-39 years (M=81.3, SD=5.54) and employees that are above the age of 40 years (M=77.56, SD=2.71). The variable was the Job Satisfaction and Productivity the employees had (t=2.05, p<0.05, two-tailed t-test for independent samples, Table 2).

From the table, it is evident that as the age of the employee increases, they become less productive in their work and less satisfied with their job since the mean ratings for respondents aged 30-39 years were higher than that of the respondents aged above 40 years.

DISCUSSION

The present study analysed the effect of the number of years worked in the same company, and found that despite working in the same organisation for multiple years, an employee's productivity and job satisfaction decreases over time (as shown in Table 2). A study at the Wharton School of Business explores the phenomenon of diminishing returns as employees stay with a company for a longer period and discuss how familiarity with the organisation's processes can lead to inefficiency and reduced productivity (Bidwell, 2023). It examines how longer job tenure can lead to reduced motivation, lower performance, and decreased satisfaction due to factors such as complacency and reduced learning opportunities.

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The research also suggests that as an employee grows older, they become less motivated and inclined to work more efficiently, which in turn affects their productivity levels. A study, conducted at the University of Münster, discusses how age-related changes, such as shifting priorities and different life circumstances, can impact motivation and engagement in the workplace (Roßnagel, 2013). It also discusses how learning goals are more attractive for younger as compared to older workers.

In order to help these employees acknowledge the relevance of their efforts in their work, many companies are implementing various strategies to retain their long-term and older employees. There has been an influx in the availability of flexible work arrangements, offering flexible work options, such as part-time schedules, reduced hours, telecommuting, or phased retirement. This allows older employees to maintain a work-life balance and continue contributing while accommodating their changing needs and preferences. Additionally, companies have started to establish mentoring programs where experienced employees can share their knowledge and expertise with younger or less-experienced colleagues helps retain the institutional knowledge and expertise of long-term employees. Additionally, companies have recognised that offering workshops, seminars, and training programs tailored to their employees' needs helps them stay up-to-date with industry trends and acquire new skills.

An unexpected result from the survey suggested that comparing males and females, and Singaporeans and Indians, the data sets are relatively constant across the demographics. It shows no significant differences in the average ratings of the job satisfaction and productivity of the employees across different races and genders. While it may be a perception that women often face more criticism and belittling microaggressions causing them to be less satisfied with their jobs, the research shows that this is often not true (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Over time, it is important to note that while progress has been made, gender disparities and biases persist in some industries and occupations, especially amongst low-skilled jobs. However, a research (Meshal Kh. Metle, Adnan A. Alali, 2023) conducted suggests that job satisfaction levels among male and female lawyers are converging over time. Ongoing efforts are needed to address barriers and create inclusive work environments that promote equal job satisfaction and productivity for all individuals, regardless of gender.

CONCLUSION

From the data collected, it is evident that numerous variations between the various demographics and subcategories affect the productivity levels and job satisfaction of the respondents. Respondents believed that support from peers or supervisors motivates them the most to be more productive, with rewards and recognition being the least.

The conducted research can help develop effective performance management systems and set realistic company goals. They can align their performance evaluation processes with the factors influencing employee productivity and job satisfaction, resulting in more accurate assessments and fairer recognition and rewards. They can also understand the drivers of job satisfaction and productivity, enabling them to identify and address issues that may impact employee retention.

However, employees' productivity and job satisfaction levels can vary based on not just four but thousands of factors. Employees have unique skills, abilities, experiences, and personality traits that affect their work performance and satisfaction. Some individuals may

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naturally excel in certain tasks or enjoy specific aspects of their job more than others. It's important to note that these factors can interact, making it a complex issue to understand and manage employee productivity and job satisfaction effectively. It may also depend on the employee's level of motivation to work, and it can be varied by different factors, such as recognition, job security, career growth opportunities, or personal fulfilment.

The degree of alignment between an employee's skills, interests, and job responsibilities can impact their productivity and satisfaction. When individuals are placed in roles that match their abilities and interests, they are more likely to perform well and derive satisfaction from their work.

Outside factors such as personal issues, health problems, or other life events can affect an employee's productivity and job satisfaction. These factors may be temporary or ongoing, and they can significantly impact an individual's work performance and overall satisfaction.

Hence, it is very difficult to analyse each factor and how it affects the productivity and satisfaction of each employee, making this a very broad and extensive situation to research. While we believe these limitations have not impacted the study's primary outcome, these factors and demographics can be analysed with a larger dataset and more specific subcategories for precise results. The survey and research paper can also look into what extent these factors affect the productivity levels of an employee, at what time, what type of tasks etc.

Additionally, the sample size was too small for some demographics, for example, age/gender/number of years worked at the company etc., so some data sets/values were not considered. This then limited the extent of the research conducted as we could not draw as many conclusions from the various subcategories.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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