

Examining the Influence of Equitable Pay Perception, Expectancy, and Organisational Justice on Employee Performance, Motivation and Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

In this literature review, I will be talking about the various factors that affect job performance and motivation of employees at the workplace. Naturally the workplace is a dynamic setting which constantly evokes different emotions, perspectives and opinions with regard to oneself or others which affect performance and motivation. However, these factors are not just inherent (educational qualifications, time, effort) that evoke certain responses but situational as well. People not only attribute the difference in reward allocation, performance appraisal to inherent factors but also to other factors some being equitable pay perception, work expectancy, organisational justice which eventually impact performance, motivation and job satisfaction.

Keywords: *Equity, Expectancy, Organisational Justice, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance and Motivation*

To fully grasp the relationship between these factors and how they interact to elicit specific responses, it is essential to understand each component individually. Therefore, to gain a deeper insight into concepts like equitable pay perception, work expectancy, and organizational justice, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of two key theories: John Stacy Adams' Equity Theory (1963) and Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory. Additionally, I will explore other related factors and examine how they interconnect and influence each other.

1. Equity Theory

John Stacy Adam's theory of equity proposes that individuals tend to compare their inputs (educational qualification, time and effort) to output (rewards, recognition, performance appraisal, promotion).

If they feel that the input output ratio is equal with that of the referent then they perceive fairness, but if the input output ratio is unequal with that of the referent then they perceive it as unfairness and being cheated. A **referent** is a person either within the organisation or outside the organisation which whom people compare their work exchanges with. The

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selection of a referent depends on two factors: a) attractiveness of the referent and b) knowledge about the referent.

There are 4 types of referent, these are as follows:

- I. **Self - Inside:** It refers to comparing one's previous with that of one's current job within the same organisation
- II. **Self – Outside:** It refers to comparing one's previous job and one's current job in two different organisations.
- III. **Other – Inside:** It refers to comparing one's job with that of someone else's within the same organisation.
- IV. **Other – Outside:** It refers to comparing one's job with that of someone else's from a different organisation.

There are various ways of responding to instances of inequity some are – changing input such as decreasing effort, changing output such as increasing quantity and decreasing quality, quit the field and by changing the referent.

Further there are two types of inequities these are: Overpayment/Positive Inequity and Underpayment/Negative Inequity. In the former the individual tends to receive a higher level of outcome as relative to the level of input. In the latter the individual tends to receive a lower level of outcome relative to a higher level of input. In either case there is a perceived imbalance in comparison with others. However significant research suggests that people tend to except overpayment or positive inequity readily as compared to underpayment as they are better able to rationalise it.

There are individuals who don't care about equity or input output ratio, these are called as **Equity Sensitive** individuals. There are 3 types of equity sensitive people, these are:

1. **Entitleds:** These are people who feel they deserve a lot with minimum input;
2. **Sensitives:** These are people who are affected by the input output ratio and try to maintain balance;
3. **Benevolent:** These are people who give without expecting anything (especially gains) in return.

Organisational Justice

Organisational justice is stated as the study of fairness at work. There are 3 types of organisational justice, these are as follows:

- **Distributive Justice:** It refers to the employee's perception of fairness of how rewards are allocated or distributed within an organisation.
- **Procedural Justice:** It refers to the perceived fairness of the process of distributing rewards in an organisation. It has two elements these are: Process control – the opportunity to present the employee's point of view; Explanations – reasons which management gives for the outcome.
- **Interactional Justice:** It refers to the fairness of the interpersonal treatment that one receives at the hands of an authority.

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2. Expectancy Theory

Expectancy Theory was given by Victor Vroom and it suggests that an individual's tendency to act in a certain way depends on two factors: a) strength of our expectation b) attractiveness of that outcome. Employee's will exert effort only if they feel:

- Their effort leads to a good performance appraisal
- The performance appraisal leads to a reward
- The reward will satisfy personal goals.

There are 3 components of VIE these are – Valence, Instrumentality and Expectancy

Valence refers to the value or attractiveness of the reward to the employee, **Instrumentality** refers to the belief that performance will lead to reward and at last **Expectancy** refers to the belief that effort will lead to a performance appraisal.

The theory focuses on 3 relationships these are:

- **Effort – Performance Relationship:** The probability perceived by individual that exerting a given amount of effort will lead to performance
- **Performance – Reward Relationship:** The degree to which the individual believes performing at a particular level will lead to the attainment of a desired outcome.
- **Rewards – Performance Goal Relationship:** The degree to which organisational rewards satisfy an individual's personal goals or needs.

3. Job Satisfaction: It can be defined as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience (Locke, 1976).

4. Motivation: Motivation is derived from the Latin Verb *Movere* which means "to move". It can be described as the process which starts with a physiological or psychological need that activates a drive/ behaviour that is aimed at a goal or incentive.

Equitable pay perception and its impact shaping employee motivation, job satisfaction, and work performance.

Equity Pay Perception is based on Adam's Equity theory in 1963. Employees tend to compare their work exchanges or their input – output ratio with other people either within the organisation or outside it (also known as referents).

If they feel the ratio is equal they perceive fairness, however if the ratio is unequal then they feel cheated or unfairly treated. It has been seen that equitable pay leads to better work performance and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon which is greatly influenced by a wide range of factors such as salary, work environment, autonomy, communication and organisational commitment however the paramount or major factor being pay. Job satisfaction is based on a person's evaluation of whether one gets what he/she wants from a job.

Workers develop opinions about how their own inputs and outcomes should align compared to their perception of others' inputs and outcomes. Equity theory emphasizes social justice and fairness in social exchanges. In this context, pay is recognized as a key reward that significantly influences employee motivation and behavior toward achieving organizational goals.

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The study conducted by Joseph Attian titled “Equitable Pay as an Antecedent of Work Performance and Job Satisfaction: Experiences from University for about the author developmental studies”. This research was done to establish whether equitable pay can lead to work performance and job satisfaction among administrative staff of the University of Development Studies at its Central Administration in the Tamale Campus. It conducted a survey on 60 people out of which they gathered a total of 57 responses of which 37 were male and 20 females. The study found that equitable pay will make employees happy plus motivate them to work harder, to unleash the potential of staff for the development of university, serve as a morale booster, reduce injustice, suspicion, gossip, rumour, mongering, attrition, promote trust and confidence at the workplace. Further it was also revealed that when employees are happy they engage in quality work, accomplish multiple tasks without complaints and create a good rapport between the employee, supervisor and employer which eventually increases job performance.

They found out that dissatisfaction with pay can lead employee to decreased job satisfaction, decreased interest of working and decreased the learning level of employees, motivation and performance, increased absenteeism, turnover and more pay related grievances. It suggested that pay satisfaction positively influence overall job contentment, motivation, performance and lead to less absenteeism and turnover behaviour among employees.

One thing which was noticed here was that the public sector wage distribution system was based on the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS) which aimed to create equal pay for all and emphasised on “equal pay for equal work”. However some reported that people with same/similar qualification in different sectors of the public service received different salaries. Thus, employees demanded procedural justice wherein they demanded transparency in the salary distribution system as transparency is the key word to eliminate equity perception and making equitable decisions which in turn create the enabling environment to enhance improved performance.

It was further observed that many individuals were unaware of this system. By implementing transparent procedures, perceptions of fairness can be improved, even if the outcomes are less favourable overall. This is particularly important as there was a prevailing belief that the payment of allowances was influenced by favouritism and nepotism.

Thus, when they compared their pay with co equals from within the organisation or outside of it (self-inside and other outside referent) and if they found equity they were highly satisfied. However if inequity was observed then there was a sharp decline in job satisfaction and performance as the employees felt unfairly treated. Respondents did express their frustration and were demoralised to take up initiatives as a result of these differences in remuneration.

Thus, Adam’s Equity theory was used in this study which goes to tell us that employees will evaluate how much they receive from the job (outcome) in relation to their contribution (input) as pay is one of the significant factors that affects job satisfaction and motivation. However it is not the sole factor.

It was also noted in the study that it does not necessarily mean that if we double a person’s pay it would lead to better work rather respondents reported that some were also satisfied with relationship with subordinates, achievement and personal life.

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According to the study conducted by Friedlander and Margulies (1969) it was observed that management and friendly staff relationships contribute to high level of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a result of an individual's perception and evaluation of their job influenced by their own unique needs, values and expectations which they regard as being important to them.

The study does not come in isolation rather it is dependent on organisational variables such as structure, size, pay, working conditions and leadership. The study also attempted to know whether multiple tasks and challenging jobs can influence satisfaction. Respondents indicated that the failure of management to provide clear cut job descriptions for employees, resource constraints, closed communication resulted in dissatisfaction among staff.

In the context of job satisfaction, the most important thing to the employees were that their salaries were intact at the end of the month. This leads to a conclusion that respondents cherish their salaries more than being satisfied with the jobs they perform because you work hard or not the salary remains the same due to this employee contended that the current pay system does not provide opportunity for "Pay for Performance".

Further the study also delved into understanding that how respondents pointed out that with respect to qualifications, work experience, job demands, job challenges should commensurate with their pay and that they deserve to be paid more. They also stated that economic conditions eroded the value of their current salaries and therefor they deserve an increment.

Thus, the crux of the study is other social factors are important for enhancing job satisfaction but the major factor that leads to significant satisfaction is pay and that should be considered paramount.

Therefore, we can conclude that equity pay perception does affect job satisfaction and performance. The ratios of work exchanges of an employee and referent should be equal. If not then proper reasoning (procedural justice) must be given by management. There must be transparency in the policies, procedures and principles of a company to facilitate work performance. Proper discussions with employees must be encouraged to answer their apprehension regarding any sort of inequity that prevents them to unleash their full potential in their work. However, it must also be noted that not all employees seek high salaries or compare their input – output ratio with other referents. They might be happy with friendly relationship with subordinates and supervisors or good working conditions and not necessarily want a high pay. Therefore, we can say individual differences in what one seeks from job plays a major role in here.

Another interesting study conducted by Shruti Bekal and Dr. Uma Warriar titled "A study on the influence of perception of equity by contractual employees on their job satisfaction in the workplace" which deals with the perception of equity of contractual employees and how it affects job satisfaction in the workplace.

Contract workforce accounts for 55% of public sector jobs and 45% of private sector jobs in a country and raising their salaries to the level of regular workers would lead to significant cost escalation for employees. Employers mostly prefer contract workers owing to their flexibility to terminating their service as well as the fact that contract labourers are paid much less than permanent workers in a country like India with high unemployment rates.

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There are many organisations or companies that have policies which differentiate between permanent and contractual employees with zero regard for equity treatment. The majority of the workforce consists of contractual employees which results in a disheartened and demotivated workforce. Management needs to understand the importance of equity as it will lead to morale boost and better productivity among the workforce.

The study utilized a self-designed questionnaire comprising 9 demographic questions and 42 items divided into 5 subcategories: HR Processes and Policies, Perception of Equity, Motivation, Job Satisfaction, and Performance. They conducted it on a sample of 187 contractual employees of various IT companies located in Bangalore some of these being – Accenture, Cognizant, Mahindra Comviva etc.

The findings were that three fourth of job satisfaction is dependent on the contractual employees' perception of equity. This means that contractual employees perceive equity to ensure job satisfaction. If contractual employees do not perceive equity and feel that they are being unfairly exploited and that their salaries do not match their skills, they will not feel job satisfaction.

The study also reflects on the point that contractual worker feels that there is inequity in treatment in the workplace. The company's policies significantly influence how employees on contract perceive equity.

The various ways through which management can ensure that contractual employees do not perceive inequity is by a. modifying the company's policies to ensure individual, internal and external equity of pay; b. Contractual employees' opinions should be valued and should also be involved in decision making by the company; c. Benefits of regular workers should be extended to contractual employees; d. Contractual employees should be given access to various company facilities; e. Orientation and training programs should be conducted for contractual employees as well.

Work Expectancy and its influence on Job performance and Motivation

The motivational force for a behaviour, action or task is a function of three distinct perceptions – expectancy, instrumentality and valence, which are also the components of expectancy theory given by Victor Vroom in 1964. Employees will not advance in their own career if they aren't motivated. Motivation is of two types: Intrinsic (internal feelings of pride, self-accomplishment and self-esteem) and Extrinsic (pay raises, promotion or recognition).

Both workers and management agree that motivation is crucial for better job satisfaction and performance. If management understands what motivates employees, they can create better strategies to inspire them. This not only improves employee happiness but also leads to better service quality.

A study conducted by Chun – Fang Chiang and SooCheong (Shawn) Jang titled “An expectancy theory model for hotel employee motivation” applied expectancy theory to employee motivation in a hotel setting. The results of this study show that a modified expectancy theory with five components – Expectancy, Intrinsic Instrumentality, Extrinsic Instrumentality, Intrinsic Valence and Extrinsic Valence explain the process for motivating hotel employees.

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This study also indicated that intrinsic motivation factors are far more influential than extrinsic factors for hotel employees, suggesting a focus on intrinsic factors to motivate employees.

The findings suggested that **intrinsic instrumentality** which refers to internal feelings like a sense of accomplishment when they do a good job contributes to motivation as they believe that their performance appraisal leads to a reward.

Intrinsic valence refers to internal satisfaction or pride that motivates employees to take on more responsibility and use their skills fully, as these individuals tend to focus on the feelings of accomplishment and praise more than any external award such as pay raise, promotion. Therefore, we can say that intrinsic valence also leads to motivation to perform well.

Expectancy and Extrinsic Valence refers to external rewards like money, which motivates employees as in the former, the person believes that the amount of effort exerted by him will lead to a greater performance. And the latter one is when a person focuses or demands external rewards in terms of pay raise, promotion, challenging task. If these are given to the individual, they feel motivated.

According to the study, **Extrinsic instrumentality** which refers to external rewards like pay, bonuses, or promotions for good work does not motivate employees. In fact, it had a **negative effect on motivation** if employees did not feel intrinsic instrumentality (a sense of personal accomplishment or pride in their work). This means if employees are only doing the job for external rewards and don't feel good about their work itself, their motivation drops when they don't get those rewards (like pay raises or bonuses).

Intrinsic factors (internal feelings), such as pride and accomplishment, are more effective in motivating employees compared to extrinsic factors (money or promotions). However, money and bonuses still play a big role, especially in the hotel industry, where pay is generally lower. Employees feel less motivated if they do a great job but don't receive the expected rewards like pay raises or bonuses.

Research has shown that **intrinsic rewards** (such as feeling good about one's work) predict better job performance and satisfaction than external rewards like money. Therefore, the managers should regularly encourage employees, give feedback, and recognize good work to keep them motivated, provide job training to help employees grow and use their skills, listen to employee concerns and involve them in job decisions, offer rewards like promotions, bonuses, or pay raises to boost motivation and supporting employees and acknowledging their contributions is essential for maintaining high motivation.

Motivation is crucial because motivated employees put in more effort, improve productivity, and perform better. A combination of intrinsic (feeling of accomplishment) and extrinsic (financial rewards) factors drives motivation, but intrinsic factors generally have a stronger impact.

Further employees are more motivated and perform well when there is a sense of an internal – external control. **Internal Control** when people with a strong sense of internal control believe that their efforts directly impact outcomes (e.g., success at work). They are more motivated and perform better because they feel in charge of their results and **External**

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Control when people with external control think that outcomes are mostly determined by outside forces, like luck or other people's actions. They tend to be less motivated and perform lower than those with internal control.

Internal motivation, driven by a sense of personal control and achievement, leads to better performance and greater satisfaction compared to external factors like pay or rewards, which are less effective for sustaining long-term motivation. This highlights that self-belief and the perception of control over outcomes are more powerful drivers of motivation and performance than external incentives. Therefore, managers should prioritize creating an environment where employees feel empowered, in control, and capable of achieving success through their own efforts.

Organisational Justice and its effects on job satisfaction

Organisational justice refers to when an individual/employee perceives that he/she is being treated fairly by the organisation or its management. When they are treated fairly they tend to do their task better and feel satisfied as compared to instances wherein they are treated unfairly which results in low satisfaction and motivation. Typically, organisational justice has 3 components – Distributive, Procedural and Interactional Justice.

Mottaz (1988) described job satisfaction as an effective response resulting from an evaluation of the work situation. Francies and Milbourn (1980) summarised various definition of job satisfaction into a comprehensive statement stating that job satisfaction is the result of the individual's perception of what is needed and what is received from different facets of the work situation.

According to Ivencevich and Matteson (2005) and Toposky (2000) job satisfaction results from a variety of aspects such as pay, promotion opportunities, supervisors and co-workers. Other dimensions include – policy and procedures, working conditions.

A research study by Hossein Zainalipour, Ali Akhbar Sheikhi Fini and Mohammad Mirkamali titled “A study of relationship between organisational justice and job satisfaction among teachers in Bandar Abbas middle school” findings indicate a positive correlation or relationship between organisational justice and job satisfaction.

Their study studied 120 teachers who were currently teaching in Bandar Abbas School. The author and their team created a list of secondary schools in two main districts of the city. They randomly selected 12 schools from this list and then randomly chose teachers from each school to participate. The teachers were asked to complete a survey, which was given to them in person. Participation was completely voluntary, and their answers were kept anonymous. Correlation analysis of the study showed that two dimensions of organisational justice namely distributive and interactional justice had positive relations with four dimensions of job satisfaction: supervision, co –worker, pay and promotion and they did not have correlation with nature of job as a dimension of job satisfaction.

Procedural justice demonstrated a significant correlation with all the five dimensions of job satisfaction.

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The lack of a positive relationship between distributive and interactional justice with job nature, compared to procedural justice, can be explained as follows: Distributive justice focuses on the fairness of reward distribution, while interactional justice emphasizes the fairness of interpersonal treatment. However, these do not clearly address the reasons or processes behind the allocation of rewards. Procedural justice, on the other hand, provides structure and feedback regarding these processes, making it more strongly associated with the nature of the job.

The nature of a job encompasses workplace environment, administrative policies and rules, and mechanisms for addressing grievances. Employees who prioritize reward distribution methods or interpersonal treatment tend to find higher job satisfaction in areas like pay, promotions, supervisory roles, and relationships with co-workers.

However, employees who seek clear feedback or explanations about not receiving promotions, pay raises, or leadership roles may experience lower job satisfaction. Constantly thinking about the reasons behind such decisions can create dissatisfaction and frustration.

To effectively motivate employees, managers must ensure all three forms of justice—distributive, procedural, and interactional—are applied and interconnected. This holistic approach is essential to improving employees' job satisfaction.

Higher levels of organisational justice would be associated with more positive attitudes toward job satisfaction. Therefore, the more perception of fairness in organisation, the more feeling of job satisfaction.

RESULTS

Equitable pay perception is crucial for employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. According to Adam's Equity Theory (1963), employees compare their input-output ratio with others, and when they perceive fairness, they feel motivated and satisfied. Conversely, perceived inequity leads to dissatisfaction, reduced motivation, and lower performance.

Pay significantly influences job satisfaction, as shown by Attiah's study (2015), which revealed that equitable pay increases job performance and satisfaction at the University of Development Studies. Dissatisfaction with pay results in absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher turnover. Transparent salary distribution and fair practices are vital to address inequity concerns.

A study by Bekal and Warriar (2017) highlighted the importance of equity for contractual employees in IT companies in Bangalore. When these employees felt unfairly treated, their job satisfaction and performance decreased. Ensuring equal treatment and benefits for both permanent and contractual workers is essential for improving morale and productivity.

In addition to pay, intrinsic factors like workplace relationships and a sense of achievement contribute to satisfaction. Research by Friedlander and Margulies (1969) emphasized the value of positive work relationships. Furthermore, Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) showed that employees' motivation is shaped by their belief that effort leads to desired rewards, with intrinsic rewards often being more influential than external ones.

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Organizational justice, including distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness, is also vital for job satisfaction. Zainalipour et al. (2010) found that employees who perceive fairness in reward distribution and procedures have higher job satisfaction. Transparent policies and fair treatment are crucial for motivating employees and enhancing their performance.

In conclusion, equitable pay, transparency, and fairness in the workplace are essential for employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance, with both extrinsic and intrinsic factors contributing to overall job contentment.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Limitations

1. **Overemphasis on Pay:** The focus on pay and benefits as indicators of equity may overlook individual differences and other factors that contribute to job satisfaction and performance, such as recognition, positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and a conducive work environment.
2. **Limited Generalizability:** Due to the small sample size in the research, the findings may not apply to a larger or more diverse population. The study does not fully account for individual differences in job evaluation and satisfaction, making it difficult to extrapolate the results to various industries or job roles.
3. **Under exploration of Intrinsic Motivation:** The research neglects the role of intrinsic factors like autonomy, personal growth, and meaningful work—elements that are critical for fostering long-term motivation and job satisfaction.
4. **Bias in Self-Reported Data:** The reliance on self-reported surveys could introduce social desirability bias or result in inaccurate responses, especially in areas related to job satisfaction and perceptions of equity.

Future Directions

1. **Examine the Interplay of Motivators:** Investigate the combined impact of both extrinsic factors (such as pay) and intrinsic factors (including personal growth, autonomy, and relationships) on employee satisfaction to gain a deeper, more holistic understanding.
2. **Managerial Training:** Develop and assess leadership training programs that focus on promoting equitable treatment and enhancing communication skills to improve fairness perceptions within the workplace.
3. **Expand the Concept of Equity:** Broaden the definition of equity to incorporate non-monetary rewards, such as opportunities for career advancement, skill development, and greater workplace flexibility.
4. **Further Research on Expectancy Theory:** Conduct additional research to deepen the understanding and communication of the relationship between effort, performance, and reward in expectancy theory, aiming to boost employee motivation and enhance job performance.
5. **Study Organizational Justice for Contractual Employees:** Explore how organizational justice influences equity perceptions among contractual employees, who often feel inequity due to varying company policies and practices.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the interplay between perceptions of equitable pay, expectancy theory, and organizational justice significantly influences performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. However, it is crucial to recognize that different individuals have varying expectations from their jobs, and thus, individual differences and factors beyond pay also impact performance. While intrinsic motivators, such as personal growth and a sense of purpose, often play a stronger role in motivating employees than extrinsic factors, not all employees are driven by external rewards. Motivation and job satisfaction are influenced by a wide range of factors, and each person may be motivated by unique elements. Managers must therefore understand the specific motivators for each employee, rather than assuming that everyone is driven by the same factors. Tailoring rewards to align with personal goals can lead to greater performance and satisfaction. Additionally, if employees can clearly see the connection between effort, performance, and reward, they are better able to focus their efforts on achieving desired outcomes, leading to improved performance and job satisfaction. To ensure quality work and consistent motivation, employees must be provided with positive working conditions and effective communication from management, particularly when addressing issues of perceived inequity or unfair treatment. This helps maintain morale and motivation, rather than leaving employees focused on what went wrong.

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Conflict of Interest

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