

# Job Satisfaction of Overseas Filipino Worker Professionals in Singapore at A Glance: A Study Using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

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**Abstract.** Overseas Filipino Workers consider working in Singapore due to its advantages over other neighboring countries; however, in the duration of their employment, attitudes towards their jobs are often left unexamined. A selected group of OFWs in Singapore were asked to participate in surveys and discussions to recognize the causes of satisfactions and dissatisfactions with their jobs. Herzberg's Two Factor Theory of Motivation, a popular and long-standing concept in the understanding of workers' job satisfaction, was used as a basis to evaluate the findings. Workload was the most common cause of dissatisfaction for the respondents. Nonetheless, the majority of the group experienced job satisfaction in their workplace. Thus, the participants' employers were able to promote factors that cause their employee's job satisfaction and minimize factors resulting in dissatisfaction in the workplace.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction, OFW, Singapore

## 1. Introduction

OFW is an acronym for the word Overseas Filipino Worker. An OFW is a Filipino national who lives in another country to fulfill his employment responsibilities to an employer for a specific period of time [10]. OFW may be an unknown term in other parts of the world, but to Filipinos, it is a popular word and is used in almost everyday conversations. Such is the popularity of the term as the typical Filipino may have a family member, distant relative, or at least someone in the neighborhood who is an OFW.

In a 2019 survey by the Philippine Statistics Authority, 81.1% of OFWs were based in Asia [5]. Factors that lead Filipinos to go abroad and choose Asia to work as OFWs include Low Family Income, High Cost of Living, and High Unemployment Rate in the Philippines. In addition to these are a Sense of Adventure, Valued Foreign Currency, Strong Demand for Filipino Workers (in Asian countries), and Geographical Proximity (between the Philippines and Asian country of employment).[4] In Southeast Asia and South-Central Asia, Singapore has the highest number of OFWs [5]. Singapore is a known choice of OFWs because it meets the three aforementioned factors adequately. Singapore has an active demand for OFWs, the foreign exchange rate is desirable, and it is only a 4-hour flight to all major cities in the Philippines.

Most often, the word OFW is associated with wealth and a better life created by the circumstances of the job an OFW has overseas against the average worker with a comparable job in the Philippines. But the experiences that their jobs create are often left unexamined. Even with the perceived advantages of their jobs, OFWs still have to deal with the factors that contribute to their job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction is the way a person feels about his job and the other aspects of the job. It is the degree to which a person is feeling satisfied or dissatisfied about it. Thus, as a general evaluation, it is an attitudinal variable or dependent on people's attitudes.[1] According to Armstrong (2006), it is the overall attitude and

feeling people have about their jobs. Positive and constructive attitudes toward the job indicate job satisfaction, while negative and critical attitudes with regards to the work show job dissatisfaction. [2]

A popular concept used to evaluate job satisfaction is Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory of Motivation which states that there are various factors that could affect employee’s satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their job. They are separated into two categories, the factors that promote satisfaction; intrinsic factors, which are also called motivators, and those factors that prevent dissatisfaction; extrinsic factors, which are termed hygiene factors. In Herzberg’s investigations, the list of motivation factors includes achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, growth while hygiene factors were itemized as company policy and administration, supervision, relationship with supervisor, work conditions, salary, relationship with peers, personal life, relationship with subordinates, status and security. [3]

Dealing with the impact of the global covid19 pandemic, the number of OFWs deployed in 2020 significantly decreased. [6] This will affect the dynamics of the OFWs’ work, being directly or indirectly affected by a lesser OFW community to support them in their work interactions within the company or in the related industries, or just with the psychological effect of knowing and experiencing such decline in OFW numbers in the community.

Thus, this study aims to take a glimpse into the situations faced by OFWs in Singapore in the current pandemic period. A global phenomenon like the covid19 pandemic and its impact may have a contribution on how OFWs in Singapore view factors that satisfy or dissatisfy them in their jobs.

Using the Herzberg Two Factor Theory of Motivation Approach, the study will determine which factors are most commonly satisfying in the OFWs’ job and also identify which factors cause them dissatisfaction, together with the reasons of why these factors are experienced (Figure 1).

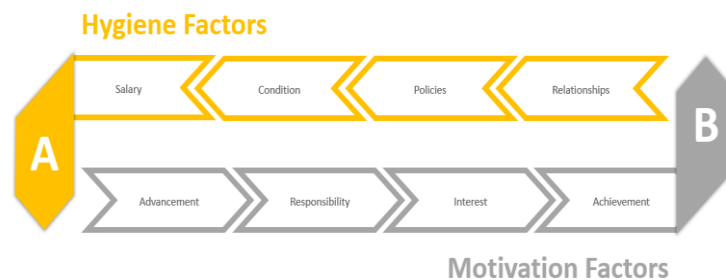


Fig. 1: Input-process-output model.

As discussed with the respondents engaged in the survey and discussion prior to their participation, the results will give them, a collective knowledge on how they view their jobs in relation to factors that affect them in this pandemic period. Also, readers who are connected to government agencies managing welfare services in Singapore can have an idea in the welfare program creation towards a better job satisfaction of OFWs and perhaps collaborate with Singapore government agencies in the succeeding programs. Lastly, this study can encourage government agencies to pursue similar studies aimed towards a more comprehensive understanding of the OFW situations in Singapore.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology used to conduct this study was a mixed method. Data gathering was primarily done through a survey to determine which factors contributed to the job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the participants (Figure 2).

Following the survey, a discussion was done to elaborate more on the specific reasons for their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. As these discussions were done online, the total cumulative time it took for the discussions lasted 1.5 hours.

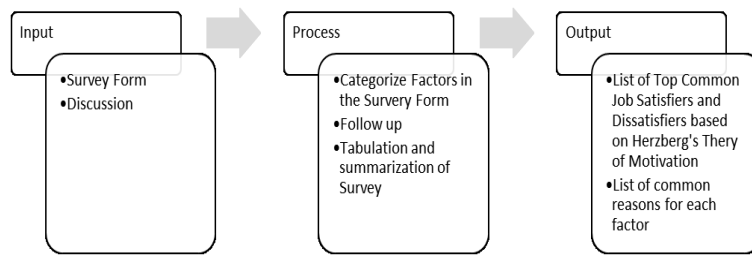


Fig. 2: Input-process-output model.

The responses from the surveys and discussions were summarized accordingly to each of the significant factors. These factors were primarily categorized based on the motivation and hygiene factors by Herzberg. The factors contributing to the job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were tallied and ranked to obtain the top responses. Percentages of the frequencies of every factor were calculated to determine the main causes of satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Specific reasons common in each of the factors were also listed.

Limited number of respondents in the S-Pass professional category, with a minimum of 5 years continuous work experience based in Singapore, were selected to form part of the survey and discussion. They are aged 29-45 years old, in the Manufacturing, Construction, IT & Professional Services, currently working through the pandemic period. Hesitancy of other respondents not involved in the survey point to the sensitivity of the topic, both for personal reasons or company-related approvals needed. Also, conducting this study online and during the surge of a pandemic wave made it more difficult to pursue other respondents.

### 3. Results

Based on the survey, ten categories were created based on the survey form (Figure 3). These are listed as follows: 1) Manager Relationship, 2) Relationship with Co-workers, 3) Salary, 4) Work Conditions, 5) Company Policy, 6) Job Security, 7) Sense of Fulfillment, 8) Promotion, 9) Personal Growth, and 10) Workload.

Table 1: Frequencies in percentages of hygiene and motivating factors.

	Factors	Job Satisfaction	Job Dissatisfaction
Hygiene	Manager Relationship	13%	2%
	Relationship w/ co-workers	12%	5%
	Salary	12%	5%
	Work Conditions	9%	14%
	Company Policy	10%	10%
	Job Security	9%	14%
Motivators	Sense of Fulfillment	12%	5%
	Promotion	9%	12%
	Personal Growth	9%	12%
	Workload	6%	21%

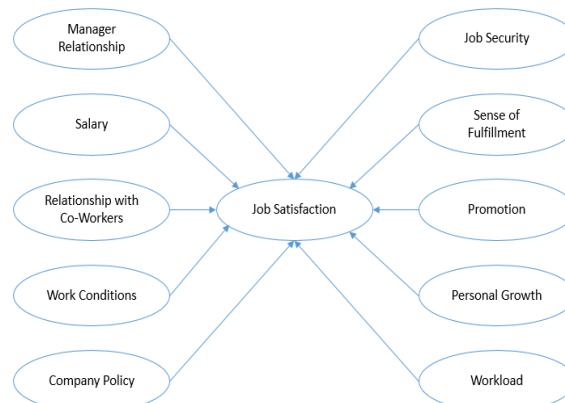


Fig. 3: Ten categories.

### **3.1. Manager relationship**

The main factor which causes the respondents to be satisfied is their relationship with their managers. Descriptions of their managers/ bosses include kind, cool, friendly, not toxic, easy to approach, confidant, mentor, (gives) good support. "I am given a lot of opportunities". Having a good relationship with one's superior affects one's satisfaction in the job.

### **3.2. Salary**

Salary is one of the primary sources of satisfaction for the respondents. Reasons point out to having a better salary than what is offered in the Philippines. They mentioned that it was also enough for their needs and their current lifestyle. Salary in Singapore is most competitive compared to other neighboring countries.

### **3.3. Relationship with co-workers**

Another primary source of satisfaction is their relationship with their co-workers. Teamwork, good working relations, respect in the workplace, pleasant and being friendly are used to describe their relationship with their peers.

### **3.4. Work conditions**

A significant source of dissatisfaction among the participants is the work conditions. Reasons for such disapproval include project-based location and no flexibility in the working arrangements. These must be considered especially in the threat covid19 in the workplace.

### **3.5. Company policy**

Company Policy are rules and regulations for employees to follow for the benefit of the employees and the company altogether. Respondents consider this as a satisfier. They describe these policies as strict, "strict but fair", "company policies are generally fair to all employees".

### **3.6. Job security**

One of the main dissatisfiers for the respondents was Job Security. Issues raised in relation to Job Security were "Work Pass concerns, more strict rules on work passes". "The security depends on the approval of the government whether your job demand is high or low".

### **3.7. Sense of fulfillment**

The respondents feel a Sense of Fulfillment with their current jobs; thus, this is a job satisfier. A feeling of achievement comes from relatability to the respondent's interest and profession and consideration that their work benefits the citizens.

### **3.8. Promotion**

The Promotion factor is a satisfier for the respondents. Comments from respondents include the "I have been promoted", "promotion comes for deserving employee", and "company recognizes the extra effort and commitment".

### **3.9. Personal growth**

Company Personal Growth is considered to be a job satisfier. "There are a lot of opportunities for growth in Singapore." Consistent with daily learning, able to see improvement in skills".

### **3.10. Workload**

The main factor that caused job dissatisfaction is the workload. Descriptions of their current workload include quite a high workload, "too much(workload) sometimes", "more than usual, after covid, job load doubled". "New company with high workload". "Most of the time the workload is more than the capacity". "No time for myself, all I do is work very tiring". Workload is very heavy. Management will not hire new people when staff has resigned. They will pass workload to current staff and ask to do overtime."

## 4. Discussion

Based on the results, most of the respondents reacted positively to both motivators and hygiene factors in their jobs (Figure 4). This outcome means that they have few complaints and are generally motivated to do their jobs.

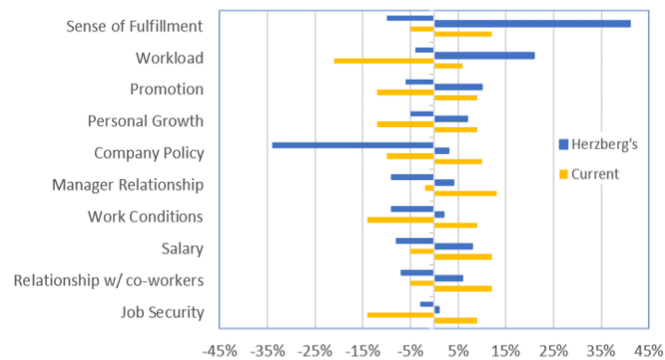


Fig. 4: Motivators & hygiene factors frequency percentages of this study vs. Herzberg.

Only the Workload factor resulted in having more respondents to discuss a negative experience against a positive one. With the rest of the factors, more participants had a positive experience than a negative one. With the combined experiences of the respondents, 128 instances led to their satisfaction, while only 42 occurrences contributed to their dissatisfaction.

Overall, their Relationship with their managers (13%) became the most viewed factor in achieving satisfaction in their workplace. This can be attributed to the fact that developed friendships in the workplace, whether from management or peers, improve job satisfaction by nearly 50% [7]. Relationship with co-workers (12%), Salary (12%), and Sense of Fulfillment (12%) closely followed as significant factors in creating a positive attitude to which the respondents achieve job satisfaction.

On the other hand, Workload (21%) became the factor that contributed the most dissatisfaction in their jobs. Depending on the workload, this can influence a worker's satisfaction in their jobs [8]. Effects of workload are also seen through tendency to quit, decreased commitment, mental health, exhaustion, and high tension [9]. Work Conditions (14%) and Job Security (14%) followed as these influenced the respondents in their job dissatisfaction.

Included in this study are its limitations. Based on the criteria set for the participants, the sample taken is limited to the 17 respondents above. This study only aims to provide an initial view into the subject matter. The results may or may not apply to a much broader population.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results, the study showed that the majority of the group had a positive attitude towards their jobs considering the high satisfaction and low dissatisfaction in their workplace.

The companies that most of the participants are employed in were successful in creating an environment where the employee felt motivated about his job and significantly reduced factors that lead them to feel bad about their workplace.

The top factors that satisfied group members in their jobs are a) Manager Relationship, b) Relationship with co-workers, c) Salary, and d) Sense of Fulfillment. It should be noted that based on Herzberg's categorization, Manager Relationship, Relationship with co-workers, and Salary will not satisfy the workers but instead prevent them from being dissatisfied in the workplace [11], [12].

Meanwhile, the main factors that caused dissatisfaction to the respondents are Workload, Work Conditions, and Job Security. In the same manner, Workload will not cause dissatisfaction but instead limit the satisfaction of the employee in his job.

It is essential that companies pay attention to the welfare of their employees by cultivating motivating factors that cause satisfaction and eliminating hygiene factors that result in dissatisfaction.

Companies in Singapore, such as those employing the respondents, must continue to build an environment that will satisfy their workers in order to retain their attractiveness to foreign talent such as OFWs.

As this study was conducted with a limited and specific set of participants, future research is recommended to enable a more generalized view from a more considerable number of a subject population.

## 6. Acknowledgment

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