

Factors Influencing on Job Satisfaction among Executives in Container Terminals in the Port of Colombo, specifically at Jaya Container Terminal

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ABSTRACT

Container terminals are crucial to global trade, handling over 95% of goods transported via sea, with Sri Lanka's Colombo Port offering a strategic role as a key maritime hub. Despite significant infrastructure advancements, the effectiveness of these investments is contingent upon the satisfaction and performance of human resources. This study investigates the factors influencing job satisfaction, focusing on hygiene factors such as salary and co-worker relationships and motivation factors like recognition and responsibility. A cross-sectional survey of 110 executives revealed that salary ($r = 0.818$) and co-worker relationships ($r = 0.709$) were the strongest predictors of satisfaction. To enhance satisfaction and organizational performance, recommendations include revising salary structures, fostering interpersonal relationships, and providing career development opportunities.

The findings emphasize the dual importance of hygiene factors such as competitive salary structures and fostering interpersonal relationships and motivation factor like meaningful work and acknowledgment to enhance job satisfaction and organizational performance. By addressing these dimensions, organizations can mitigate dissatisfaction, improve retention, and optimize productivity. The study contributes to the broader understanding of workforce dynamics in high-pressure industries, providing actionable recommendations for aligning organizational goals with employee well-being. These insights are particularly valuable for the maritime sector, where operational efficiency and competitiveness are closely tied to human resource management.

Keywords: Hygiene Factors, motivation factors, JCT terminal, SLPA, Mashlow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, McClelland's Need Theory, Job Characteristics Model of Hackman and Oldham, Adams Equity Theory, Discrepancy Theories, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, Organizational Commitment, Job Performance, Turnover, Absenteeism, Health and Well-Being, Life Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Shipping serves as a cornerstone of global trade and a significant revenue generator for nations, contributing substantially to economic growth. Sri Lanka, with its strategic position along key Asian maritime routes, is uniquely poised as a vital hub for international trade (Kavirathna et al., 2018). The Port of Colombo, home to major terminals such as the Jaya Container Terminal (JCT), East Container Terminal (ECT), South Asia Gateway Terminal (SAGT), and Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT), has established itself as a critical node in global shipping, with containerized cargo operations accounting for over 80% of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority's (SLPA) revenue (SLPA Annual Report, 2019). However, while infrastructure advancements have bolstered the port's capacity and global standing, the success of these developments depends heavily on the human element driving operations. Dissatisfaction among executives at JCT poses a significant challenge, risking operational efficiency and the retention of highly skilled professionals whose expertise is not easily replaceable. This issue is compounded by the global competition for talent, as executives increasingly drawn to lucrative opportunities abroad.

JCT distinguishes itself from global trends in job satisfaction due to its uniquely demanding environment, where every decision and action by employees can ripple through the international trade network. Unlike many ports around the world that rely heavily on automation and standardized systems, JCT operates in a dynamic, resource-limited setting. This means employees often have to think on their feet, adapt to challenges, and contribute in ways that go beyond routine operations. Adding to this complexity is Sri Lanka's socio-economic backdrop, which brings its own set of influences, like specific labour market conditions, cultural expectations, and industry pressures. These factors create a workplace experience that's markedly different from what's typically seen in ports located in wealthier, more automated regions.

Job satisfaction, a cornerstone of organizational behaviour research, plays a critical role in employee engagement and retention. Foundational theories, such as Taylor's emphasis on fair wages (1916) and the Hawthorne Studies' recognition of social dynamics (1924–1933), highlight the multifaceted nature of satisfaction. More recent frameworks, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model, emphasize the importance of both hygiene factors, such as salary and benefits, and motivation factors, like recognition and meaningful responsibilities, in shaping workplace morale. Despite the abundance of global literature, studies exploring job satisfaction within the unique operational and cultural contexts of South Asia, particularly the maritime sector in Sri Lanka, remain scarce. Recognizing the gap in understanding how these factors influence satisfaction in the specialized context of port operations, this study aims to examine the interplay between hygiene and motivation factors among JCT executives. By identifying key predictors of satisfaction, such as salary, supervisory support, recognition, and the meaningfulness of work, the study seeks to provide actionable recommendations to enhance employee morale and retention.

The significance of this research extends beyond JCT, highlighting the critical need to align organizational objectives with employee well-being. For the SLPA, fostering a satisfied workforce translates into improved productivity, operational efficiency, and service quality, reinforcing Colombo Port's competitive edge in global trade. At a national level, addressing job dissatisfaction ensures the sustainability of Sri Lanka's maritime sector, securing its strategic position in international shipping and supporting broader economic growth. By bridging this gap in understanding the human dimensions of port operations, the study offers valuable insights to inform policy and practice, ensuring the long-term success of both the workforce and the industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction has been defined in many ways. Following table describes different definitions developed by researches.

Table 1: Definitions of Job Satisfaction

	Definition	Person and Year
01	Job satisfaction is a positive feeling about one's job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics	Robbins and Judge (2007)
02	Job satisfaction is the difference between the amount of rewards employees receive and the amount they believe they should receive	Robbins (1997)
03	Job satisfaction refers to the amount of overall positive affect (or feelings) that individuals have towards their jobs	Arnold and Feldman (1986)
04	Job satisfaction as a one-dimensional construct; that is, one is generally satisfied or dissatisfied with one's job.	Porter and Lawler (1972)
05	Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are function of the perceived relationship between what one expects and obtains from one's job and how much importance or value one attributes to it.	Mobey and Lockey (1970)
06	Job satisfaction is multidimensional; an individual may be more or less satisfied with different aspects of their job, such as their supervisor, salary, or workplace. This means it is possible	Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969)

	for someone to be satisfied with one factor, like the work itself, but dissatisfied with another, such as salary.	
07	Affective orientations on the part of individuals toward work roles which they are presently occupying	Vroom (1964)
08	Job satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that cause a person truthfully to say 'I am satisfied with my job'.	Hoppock (1935)

Considering the different views of the authors, we can summarize all definitions and define job satisfaction as the level of contentment employees feel with their job and if goes beyond their work towards satisfaction with co-workers / supervisors, satisfaction with organizational policies, and the impact of the job on their personal lives. Job satisfaction is so important that its absence often leads to lethargy and reduced organizational commitment (Moser, 1997). Lack of job satisfaction is a predictor of quitting a job (Alexander, Lichtenstein and Hellmann, 1997; Jamal, 1997). Sometimes workers may quit from public to private sector and vice versa.

Other researchers (e.g. MacDonald, 1996; O'Toole, 1980) argue in favour of the control of job satisfaction by factors intrinsic to the workers. Their arguments are based on the idea that workers deliberately decide to find satisfaction in their jobs and perceive them as worthwhile.

2.1 Theories Related to Job Satisfaction

Theories focusing on the ones that have made the greatest contribution to the understanding of job satisfaction. Although these theories are well cited, many have theoretical and empirical problems as well as limited applicability to the workplace.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory provides a foundational framework for understanding the predictors of job satisfaction. It posits that employees' satisfaction levels are influenced by a hierarchy of needs, ranging from basic physiological requirements to higher-order aspirations such as self-actualization. These needs are categorized as:

Lower-order needs (physiological and safety): Satisfied by external factors such as salary, job security, and working conditions. Higher-order needs (social, esteem, and self-actualization): Addressed through recognition, responsibility, meaningful work, and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Maslow proposes that a person has five basic needs arranged in ascending hierarchical order as shown in figure 2.1

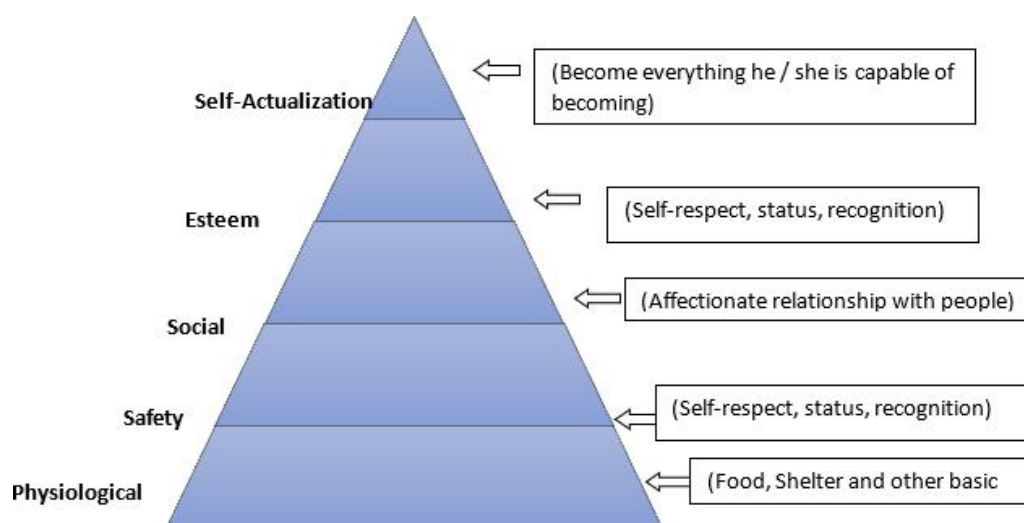


Figure 2.1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: A.H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd ed., R.D. Frager and J.Fadiman (eds.).

The physiological and security needs were described as lower order needs and the affiliation, esteem while self-actualization needs were classified as higher order needs (Fraser, 1989). The differentiation between the two orders was made on the basis that higher order needs are satisfied internally but lower order needs are satisfied externally by factors such as salary and tenure (Robbins, 2001). Vecchio (2000) states that most organizations are able to do a good job of satisfying employees' lower order needs, but are not as good at providing opportunities to satisfy the higher order needs for esteem and self-actualization.

Maslow's theory suggests that lower-order needs, such as salary and benefits (Hypothesis 1), must be fulfilled before employees can focus on higher-order motivators. For example, an employee's perception of fairness in salary and basic job security forms the foundation for subsequent engagement with their role.

As these needs are met, employees seek to strengthen their connections with colleagues and supervisors, aligning with Hypotheses 2 and 3. Belongingness, for instance, is cultivated through positive co-worker relationships and supportive management, fostering workplace harmony and satisfaction.

Higher-order needs, such as esteem and self-actualization, directly relate to Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6. Recognition (Hypothesis 4) addresses the esteem need, as employee's value acknowledgment for their contributions. Similarly, assigning responsibility (Hypothesis 5) and providing meaningful and enriching work experiences (Hypothesis 6) empower employees to achieve self-actualization, driving motivation and satisfaction.

In the context of JCT, applying Maslow's theory underscores the necessity of addressing both lower- and higher-order needs. Satisfying foundational needs such as salary and safety ensures employees can then focus on higher-order motivators, creating an environment that promotes sustained job satisfaction and operational excellence.

McClelland's Need Theory

The next theory to be discussed as shown in figure 2.1 is David McClelland's theory, who developed a model of motivation that was rooted in culture.



Figure 2.1: McClelland's Need Theory

Source: Bateman and Snell (1999)

David McClelland's Need Theory identifies three primary drivers of motivation in the workplace: the need for achievement, affiliation, and power. Each of these needs influences employee behaviour and satisfaction, closely aligning with the hypotheses in this study.

Need for Achievement (N-Ach):

Employees driven by achievement seek opportunities to excel, accomplish challenging tasks, and attain high standards. This aligns with Hypotheses 5 and 6, which emphasize the role of responsibility and meaningful work (e.g., work itself and advancement) in job satisfaction. JCT executives who are provided with challenging tasks and the autonomy to achieve goals are likely to experience heightened satisfaction. A work environment that supports their growth fosters a sense of accomplishment and engagement.

Need for Affiliation (N-Aff):

This need focuses on fostering positive relationships and a sense of belonging. It relates directly to Hypotheses 2 and 3, which highlight the importance of supervisory support and co-worker relationships. JCT executives who experience strong interpersonal bonds with their colleagues and receive encouragement and guidance from supervisors are more likely to feel valued and satisfied. This dynamic enhances workplace harmony and reinforces commitment to organizational goals.

Need for Power (N-Pow):

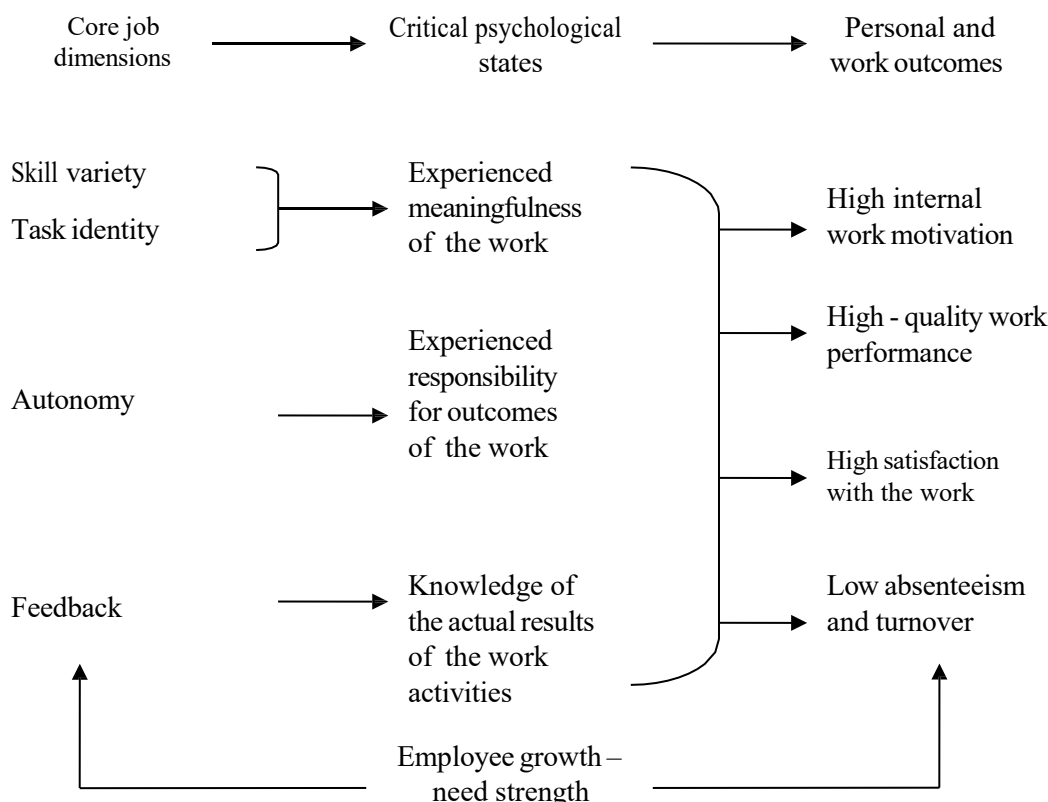
Employees with a high need for power desire influence over others and the capacity to make impactful decisions. In the context of JCT, this aligns with Hypotheses 4 and 5, which focus on recognition and responsibility. Empowering employees by recognizing their contributions and assigning them roles with decision-making authority satisfies their need for power, fostering loyalty and satisfaction.

McClelland's theory emphasizes that individuals vary in their dominant need, and organizations must tailor their strategies to address these diverse motivational drivers. At JCT, implementing policies that address all three needs—providing challenging work (achievement), fostering positive relationships (affiliation), and offering recognition and responsibility (power) can significantly enhance job satisfaction. This approach ensures a holistic understanding of employee motivation, directly addressing the hypotheses and improving overall workplace morale and productivity.

2.2 Job Characteristics Model of Hackman and Oldham

Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham developed the Job Characteristics Model. The model shows that certain job characteristics contribute to certain psychological states and that the strength of the employees need for growth has an important moderating effect (Luthans, 2005: 484). This model is presented diagrammatically in figure 3.1.

Figure 2: Job Characteristics Model



The model claims that skill variety, task identity and task significance lead to three critical psychological states: meaningfulness, responsibility and knowledge of result

Source: Luthans (2005).

Skill Variety, Task Identity, and Task Significance

These dimensions focus on the degree to which a job involves diverse skills, identifiable outcomes, and contributions to a larger purpose. At JCT, employees who see their work as meaningful and integral to port operations are more likely to be satisfied. This relates to Hypothesis 6, where meaningful work ("work itself and advancement") plays a vital role. When executives understand the impact of their roles—handling global trade logistics or improving operational efficiency—they feel more engaged and motivated.

Autonomy

Autonomy reflects the level of freedom and discretion employees have in their roles. This is closely tied to Hypothesis 5, which emphasizes responsibility. Empowering JCT executives to make decisions and take ownership of their tasks, fosters a sense of control and pride in their work. For example, allowing them to design solutions for operational challenges or optimize processes independently can enhance their satisfaction and productivity.

Feedback

Regular, constructive feedback provides employees with clarity about their performance and areas of improvement. This aligns with Hypothesis 4, which highlights recognition as a driver of satisfaction. At JCT, recognizing executives' contributions through performance reviews, acknowledgment of milestones, or even informal praise can motivate them to perform better and feel valued.

The psychological outcomes—experienced meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge of results—arising from these dimensions directly address job satisfaction concerns. For example experienced meaningfulness is linked to Hypotheses 6 and 4, where meaningful work and recognition contribute to satisfaction.

Responsibility for outcomes aligns with Hypothesis 5, emphasizing the impact of assigning significant roles. Knowledge of Results corresponds to Hypothesis 4, ensuring employees know their contributions are appreciated and impactful.

Adams Equity Theory

Equity theory suggests that individuals compare themselves with others in an equivalent position in the company to determine if they are being treated fairly. The model makes two assumptions. The first is that people evaluate their interpersonal relationships. The second assumption is that people do not work in a vacuum. They make comparisons with others to determine if they are being treated equitably or not (Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman, 1998).

According to the equity theory, when making comparisons both inputs (the contributions the person makes to the organisation) and outputs (the rewards the person receives from the organisation) are considered.

In the context of JCT executives, this theory is particularly relevant to several hypotheses:

Salary and Benefits (Hypothesis 1)

Salary and benefits are fundamental inputs in the equity equation. JCT executives who perceive their salary as equitable—compared to peers within the port sector or in similar industries—are more likely to feel valued and satisfied. For instance, if an executive sees a colleague in a comparable role receiving higher salary for similar work, dissatisfaction may arise. Addressing this requires regular market benchmarking and transparent communication about salary structures.

Supervisory Support (Hypothesis 2) and Co-worker Relationships (Hypothesis 3)

Fairness is not only about material rewards but also about interpersonal treatment. JCT executives who experience supportive supervisors and positive relationships with colleagues are less likely to feel inequity in non-monetary aspects of their roles. For example, an executive whose contributions are acknowledged by their supervisor may feel a sense of fairness even if financial rewards are limited. This highlights the importance of fostering a culture of appreciation and collaboration at JCT.

Recognition and Responsibility (Hypotheses 4 and 5)

Recognition and responsibility are key contributors to perceived equity. At JCT, executives who are entrusted with significant responsibilities and whose efforts are publicly acknowledged are likely to feel a stronger sense of balance

in their input-output equation. Consider an executive who successfully manages a challenging operational task but does not receive due recognition—this lack of acknowledgment can lead to a sense of inequity and dissatisfaction.

Equity theory also has shortcomings as identified by Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman (1998). In research, the comparison group is always known. The research does not consider the effect if the group or situation changes. Additionally, the research focuses on short-term comparisons, failing to account for whether perceptions of equity alter over time. Finally, the equity model does not provide the corrective action for any perceived inequity.

Discrepancy Theories

Discrepancy theories propose that job satisfaction is a result of a comparison between the perception of the current situation and some standard of comparison (Lawler & Suttle, 1973; Locke, 1969; Michalos, 1985; Porter, 1961). Researchers have defined this standard of comparison in various ways, including what they want, what they feel they are entitled to, what they see others are getting, what they had in the past, or what they expected to have (Harwood & Rice, 1992; Michalos, 1985). In all these theories, larger difference between the perceptions of the current situation and the standard of comparison, result in lower job satisfaction.

In the context of JCT executives, Discrepancy discrepancy theories provide valuable insights into understanding their satisfaction levels, as the alignment between expectations and reality plays a critical role in their workplace experience:

Salary and Benefits (Hypothesis 1): Imagine an executive who joins JCT expecting a salary that matches industry standards. If they discover their compensation inadequate, dissatisfaction becomes inevitable. Regularly reviewing and adjusting salary scales to reflect market benchmarks can help close this gap, ensuring employees feel valued for their contributions.

Supervisory Support and Co-worker Relationships (Hypotheses 2 and 3): Workplace relationships significantly shape an executive's experience. Consider an employee who anticipates collaborative peers and a supportive manager to guide their growth. If these expectations remain unmet—if they face unhelpful colleagues or distant supervisors—it can create frustration and dissatisfaction, highlighting the importance of fostering strong, positive interpersonal dynamics.

Recognition and Responsibility (Hypotheses 4 and 5): Recognition for accomplishments and meaningful responsibilities are key motivators. Imagine an executive tasked with a critical project. If their effort goes unnoticed or if they feel their role lacks significance, it can lead to disengagement. Ensuring recognition and meaningful roles can realign their expectations with reality, making them feel valued and motivated.

By addressing these areas thoughtfully, JCT can create an environment where executives' expectations align more closely with their experiences, fostering satisfaction and long-term commitment.

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

In 1959, Hertzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman published their findings in which they concluded that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction must be separated into two different ranges. The findings supported their belief that job satisfaction was basically determined by one set of factors, and job dissatisfaction basically by a different set of factors.

The theory showed that job satisfaction was associated with positive intrinsic sources that related to the content of the job such as achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement which Herzberg termed motivators. On the other hand, job dissatisfaction stemmed from negative extrinsic sources relating to the context of the job such as company policy and administration, supervision, salary, recognition, and relationship with supervisor and peers which he labelled as hygiene factors

The two-factor theory was notable for proposing that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are separate continua, and that the factors which affect job satisfaction are different to the factors which affect job dissatisfaction. The original study from which the theory developed was methodologically flawed, and as such, it is not surprising that empirical studies evaluating the two-factor theory often demonstrate that motivator and hygiene factors affect both job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Researchers who report supportive findings often rely on less stringent hypotheses and criterion measures.

Regardless of criticisms, Herzberg's theory has been widely read and its popularity is maintained over the past 30 years for measuring job satisfaction (Santhapparaj, Srinivasan & Ling, 2005).

According to Mitchell and Lasan, (1987), it is generally recognized in the organizational behaviour field that job satisfaction is the most important and frequently studied attitude.

In the context of JCT executives, this theory provides a practical framework for understanding how various workplace elements impact their morale and performance.

Hygiene Factors (Aligned with Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3):

Hygiene factors such as salary, benefits, supervisory support, and co-worker relationships form the foundation of satisfaction. For instance:

Salary and Benefits (Hypothesis 1): Consider an executive who feels their salary does not reflect their workload or the industry standard. While competitive salary alone may not make them passionate about their job, fair compensation prevents dissatisfaction. Regular adjustments to salary structures are essential to maintain balance.

Supervisory Support and Co-worker Relationships (Hypotheses 2 and 3): Imagine a workplace where supervisors fail to guide or support employees, or where co-workers are unco-operative. This environment erodes trust and creates frustration. Strong supervisory relationships and teamwork are crucial for maintaining satisfaction and enabling effective operations.

Motivators (Aligned with Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6): Motivators include recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for meaningful work, all of which contribute to genuine job satisfaction.

Recognition (Hypothesis 4): Imagine an executive who successfully oversees a complex operation but receives little acknowledgment. This lack of recognition dampens their enthusiasm. Regularly celebrating achievements, whether big or small, can inspire continued excellence.

Responsibility and Meaningful Work (Hypotheses 5 and 6): JCT executives thrive when given significant roles and tasks that resonate with their skills and aspirations. For example, when entrusted with leadership opportunities or impactful projects, they feel empowered and valued. Such experiences enhance their connection to the organization and foster long-term loyalty.

2.3. Applicability of Theories to the Modern Container Terminal Context

The following table summarizes the applicability of theories relating to the job satisfaction in modern container terminal context.

Table: 2: Applicability of Theories to the Modern Container Terminal Context

Theory	Key Concepts	Relevance to JCT Context
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Employees are motivated by a hierarchy of needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Lower-order needs must be met first.	Highlights the importance of addressing basic needs such as salary and benefits (hygiene factors) while enabling career growth and recognition (motivation factors) to achieve higher job satisfaction.
Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory	Job satisfaction is influenced by two sets of factors: hygiene (e.g., salary, workplace policies) and motivators (e.g., recognition, achievement).	Reinforces findings that salary, benefits, and co-worker relationships are significant for JCT executives, with motivational factors contributing to long-term satisfaction.
McClelland's Need Theory	Employees are driven by three needs: achievement, affiliation, and power. Achievement-focused individuals excel when given responsibility and recognition.	Suggests the importance of assigning responsibilities and recognizing executives' contributions at JCT to enhance satisfaction and drive performance.
Adams' Equity Theory	Perceived fairness in rewards and recognition compared to peers	Addresses the need for fair salary structures and equitable treatment among

	influences job satisfaction and motivation.	JCT employees to prevent dissatisfaction and turnover.
Job Characteristics Model	Job satisfaction is influenced by skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, leading to psychological states like responsibility and purpose.	Aligns with the need for meaningful roles and autonomy for JCT executives to improve their engagement and satisfaction levels.

2.3 Contemporary Studies on Job Satisfaction

A study by Singh et al. (2020) evaluated Herzberg's two-factor theory in the context of hybrid workplaces, emphasizing the increasing relevance of intrinsic motivators such as recognition and professional growth opportunities. It highlighted that while hygiene factors (e.g., fair wages) remained essential, they were not sufficient for sustained job satisfaction, particularly in dynamic and rapidly changing industries.

Similarly, Nguyen and Tran (2019) examined job satisfaction determinants in emerging economies, and found that cultural values, economic constraints, and organizational flexibility significantly impact employee morale. The authors emphasized that salary equity and professional development are critical for retaining talent in competitive labour markets similar to JCT.

An investigation of job satisfaction with regards to the South Asia's logistic sectors was carried out by Kumar et al. (2022) and revealed that cultural expectations often prioritize familial obligations, influencing workplace engagement. This aligns with the need for organizations to adopt flexible policies that accommodate local values while promoting productivity.

According to Chen et al. (2021), assigning meaningful responsibilities is pivotal to enhancing job satisfaction. It underscored that in high-pressure industries, clear communication and transparent recognition systems are essential for maintaining employee engagement.

A research study by Rahman and Akhter (2020) on Bangladeshi port operations, highlighted that job satisfaction is heavily influenced by workforce-specific challenges, including workload pressures and limited career advancement opportunities. Addressing these factors improved employee retention and operational efficiency, providing a regional comparison to the Sri Lankan context.

2.4 Consequences of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a critical factor for organizational success due to its influence on key outcomes such as commitment, performance, turnover, absenteeism, and overall well-being. Increased job satisfaction fosters greater organizational commitment, enhancing productivity (Tett and Meyer, 1993; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). The link between satisfaction and performance, however, is debated, with some suggesting that satisfaction drives performance, while others argue that performance leads to satisfaction through associated rewards (Newstrom and Davis, 1993). Turnover is closely tied to dissatisfaction, as employees who are unhappy are more likely to leave, although factors such as individual disposition and economic conditions also play a role (Hulin, Roznowski, and Hachiya, 1985; Judge, 1993). Similarly, absenteeism is often linked to dissatisfaction, though illness and lenient leave policies can also influence absentee rates (Clegg, 1983; Robbins, 2001).

The relationship between job satisfaction and health remains inconclusive, with some studies indicating that dissatisfaction may lead to more health problems, although personality traits could also contribute (Begley and Czajka, 1993; Brief et al., 1988). Satisfaction is also interconnected with life satisfaction, as fulfilment in one domain often spills over into another, creating a bidirectional relationship (Rain, Lane, and Steiner, 1991).

Herzberg's theory further categorizes the drivers of job satisfaction into hygiene and motivation factors. Hygiene factors, which include salary, fringe benefits, supervisory support, and co-worker relationships, address basic needs and prevent dissatisfaction. Motivation factors, such as recognition, meaningful work, and responsibility, fulfil psychological needs and drive superior performance. Together, these extrinsic and intrinsic factors significantly shape workplace experiences and determine overall satisfaction. These insights emphasize the wide-ranging implications of job satisfaction, making it a vital focus for both research and management practices.

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Sri Lanka, the problem of job dissatisfaction prevails for a long time. Industrial disputes, labour strikes, establishment of new labour unions are some of the evidences for the existence of the problem.

If the past 60 – 70 years are taken into consideration, plantation strikes have been most common, involving as many as 477,000 workers in 1949. In the remainder of the private sector, the most turbulent period was in 1962 and 1963, when over 1.28 million workdays were lost due to strikes. In 1970 new highs were reached, with 143 strikes and the loss of 1.31 million workdays. The mammoth general strike by public service and corporation employees in July 1980, resulted in thousands losing their jobs and many of them committing suicide, bringing untold misery to a large number of families (Source: Labour Department of Sri Lanka).

The unions have traditionally been strong in the state sector, especially in port sector, electricity, water supply, railway and road transport, and the clerical service. The problem of job dissatisfaction is not specific to a particular profession. It is not specific to a particular industry. According to the statistics of Labour Department of Sri Lanka from year 2009 to year 2022, there had been 52,907 reported complaints on industrial disputes. During the same period, 431 labour strikes reported causing average of above 725,936-man days lost annually. Further, 1,791 new labour unions were established during the 10 years period (Please refer Tables 3, 4, and 5).

Table 3 – Industrial Disputes: 2009 – 2022

Year	No of complaints	No. of cases settled	No. of cases referred arbitration	Amount recovered by settlement (Rs. '000)
2009	4,653	4,294	59	925,687
2010	3,948	3,462	24	612,212
2011	3,756	3,384	59	568,000
2012	3,702	3,695	43	415,275
2013	3,301	3,129	49	97,996,662
2014	2,602	2,589	53	37,895,428
2015	1,861	1,758	28	30,011,737
2016	2,483	2,088	62	41,753,492
2017	1,721	1,696	42	46,735,339
2018	4,780	3,040	72	40,669,303
2019	4,422	2,835	125	18,356,371
2020	2,763	669	59	1,999,640
2021	6,625	2,981	73	5,555,530
2022	6,290	3,565	93	9,3538,982

Source: Department of Labour Statistics, 2023

Table 4 – Number of Strikes, Workers Involvement and Man-Days Lost: 2009 – 2022

Year	No. of Strikes	Workers Involved	No of Man Days
2009	8	5,320	7,665
2010	15	5,108	25,071
2011	21	6,455	25,420
2012	34	9,904	35,817
2013	40	11,119	80,417

2014	38	6,451	37,323
2015	51	14,915	82,294
2016	41	21,352	104,327
2017	34	10,912	60,079
2018	51	12,155	49,618
2019	25	7,611	56,052
2020	30	6,648	25,449
2021	21	9,254	116,770
2022	22	5,558	17,095

Source: Department of Labour Statistics ,2023

Table 5 – Trade Unions: 2009 – 2022

Year	No of Unions Registered During the Year	No of Unions Cancelled and Dissolved During the Year	No of Unions Functioning at the end of the Year	Total Membership
2009	117	55	2,019	322,472
2010	107	106	2,020	765,404
2011	84	45	2,059	1,042,016
2012	114	2	2,171	401,171
2013	108	114	2,165	421,322
2014	128	256	2,037	393,819
2015	181	315	1,903	635,085
2016	147	268	1,782	704,718
2017	115	82	1,815	913,594
2018	183	83	1,915	605,344
2019	132	144	1,903	605,344
2020	105	165	1,843	453,349
2021	127	132	1,938	119,577
2022	143	28	2,053	N/A

Source: Department of Labour Statistics, 2023

In this highly competitive world, human resource plays a significant role in the success of any organization. Port industry is no exception to this. A satisfied and hardworking employee is the biggest asset of any organization. Workforce of any organization is responsible to a large extent for its productivity and profitability (Islam et al., 2023). Efficient human resource management and maintaining higher job satisfaction level in Port sector determine not only the performance of the organizations but also affect the growth and performance of the entire economy as energy considered as blood line of the nation. Consequently, for the success of a company, it is very important to manage human resource effectively and to find whether its employees are satisfied or not.

A trend has emerged in the Maritime and Port industry during the past decade that some of the executives from junior and middle and even senior level executives resign from their respective posts and embark to European and Asian countries for employment in the same sector. Further, a pilot survey carried out by the researcher which included junior and middle level executives' shows that a significant number of executives in Port sector express their willingness to go abroad or change their careers if given the opportunities and foreign exposure. Upon inquiry, the respondents who express willingness to either go abroad or change their careers said that they are not satisfied about the current job. Some highlighted the need for better career advancement opportunities, higher salaries, and more fulfilling work (Yang et al., 2012).

The above observations indicate a significant issue with job dissatisfaction among executives at JCT Terminal. If this issue is not addressed immediately, it could transform into a calamity because it is challenging to create experience person in this sector within a few years as needed specific technical knowhow and experience to handle port operation.

Furthermore, there exists a research gap pertaining to the job satisfaction of JCT container terminal executives in Port of Colombo. Hence, it is very important to carry out a research study regarding the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the occupation on job satisfaction of JCT container terminal in Port of Colombo, mainly because they play a major role in the rapidly expanding industry in Sri Lankan industry sector and world.

There is a possibility that potential executives of container terminal operators may leave for other sectors or pursue career opportunities overseas. Job satisfaction is the main reason for this trend. Hence there is a need to research what are the factors affecting container terminal employee's job satisfaction and underlying reasons for their resignations in recent past years.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate the factors influencing job satisfaction among executives at the Jaya Container Terminal (JCT) in the Port of Colombo. By adopting a systematic scientific approach, the research explores the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors using an empirically grounded methodology. The methodology encompasses research strategy, population and sampling considerations, and the framework for hypothesis testing.

4.1 Research Strategy

The study employs a survey-based research strategy to collect data from a defined population, aligning with the objectives of identifying relationships and characteristics influencing job satisfaction. Cross-sectional in nature, the research gathers data at a single point in time, making it suitable for capturing the current state of job satisfaction among JCT executives while addressing time constraints. This strategy, supported by insights from Saunders et al. (2007), facilitates an in-depth analysis of factors such as salary, supervisory support, co-worker relationships, recognition, responsibility, and meaningful work.

For the purpose of this study, cross-sectional design was used due to several reasons. Longitudinal studies require significant time and resources to track changes over extended periods. In a dynamic work environment such as JCT, where immediate interventions are critical to improving satisfaction, a cross-sectional design efficiently captures the current state of satisfaction without delays.

This study aimed to analyze the existing factors influencing job satisfaction at a single point in time. Cross-sectional design facilitates this by providing a snapshot of the environment, allowing the organization to implement immediate actionable strategies based on findings.

In dynamic work environments, changes in variables such as leadership, policy, or workload occur frequently. Capturing a single, stable time-point through a cross-sectional survey is more feasible and relevant than attempting to control for the evolving nature of the workplace in a longitudinal study.

4.2 Population and Sampling

The population for this study includes all 110 permanent senior, middle, and junior-level executives employed at JCT. Given the manageable size of the population, the researcher chose to include the entire population rather than selecting a sample. This decision ensures comprehensive representation and eliminates sampling errors, providing a holistic understanding of the collective attitudes and perceptions of JCT executives.

The study uses a probability sampling method, specifically random sampling, to ensure each individual in the population has an equal chance of being included. This approach enhances the reliability of the findings. Despite the benefits of studying the total population, the researcher acknowledges potential challenges, such as non-response bias, survey fatigue, and data overload. Steps were taken to mitigate these risks, including designing concise surveys and implementing follow-ups to improve response rates.

In a specialized organizational setup such as JCT, where each executive plays a critical role in operations, including the entire population is particularly beneficial. This approach allows for a detailed analysis of job satisfaction without

missing key insights from any subset of the workforce. Additionally, direct access to the population facilitates effective data collection, ensuring the study's findings are both accurate and representative.

Addressing Non-Response Bias

Studying the entire population of 110 executives eliminates sampling errors, however potential limitations such as non-response bias need explicit acknowledgment and mitigation strategies.

Non-response bias can skew results if individuals with strong opinions (either satisfied or dissatisfied) are more likely to respond. This creates a lack of representation for more moderate perspectives, affecting the validity of findings.

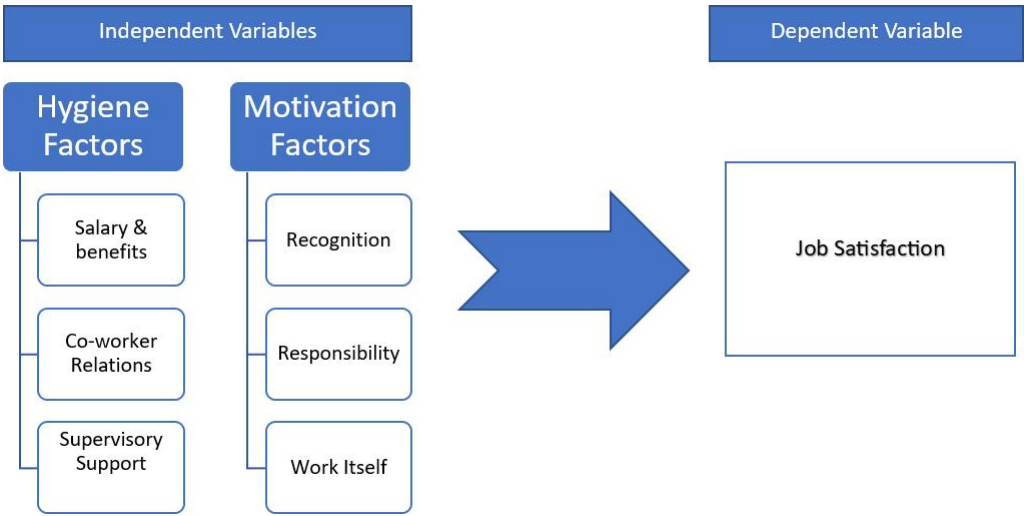
For the purpose of mitigating non-response bias, multiple reminders were used to enhance participation rates and confidentiality was ensured to give honest responses avoiding any fear for reprisal. Further, the questionnaire was designed to reduce fatigue so that the completion rate was enhanced.

4.3 Research Model and Hypotheses

The study adopts Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory as the conceptual framework, focusing on hygiene (e.g., salary, benefits, supervisory support, and co-worker relationships) and motivation factors (e.g., recognition, responsibility, and work itself). The hypotheses, derived from this framework, explore the relationships between these factors and job satisfaction, testing their individual and collective impact. Regression and correlation analyses are used to evaluate these hypotheses, ensuring robust statistical validation of the proposed relationships.

By integrating established theoretical models with a comprehensive and methodical research approach, this study aims to provide actionable insights into improving job satisfaction among executives in the port sector, with broader implications for workforce management in high-pressure industries. Frederick Herzberg’s two factor model is used here.

Figure 3: Conceptual Model



Hypothesis

In order to achieve the objectives of this research study, the following hypotheses will be tested.

H1: There exists a positive relationship between salary and benefits provided to executives and job satisfaction among JCT terminal executives.

Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between salary and benefits and job satisfaction. Regression analysis further tested the significance of salary as a predictor of satisfaction.

H2: There exists a positive relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives.

Correlation analysis measured the relationship between supervisory support and job satisfaction, followed by regression analysis to establish its predictive significance.

H3: There exists a positive relationship between co-worker relationship and job satisfaction of JCT executives.

The study applied Pearson correlation to examine how workplace relationships influenced satisfaction and included this variable in the regression model to quantify its impact.

H4: There exists an optimistic relationship between recognition and job satisfaction of JCT executives.

Correlation analysis assessed the link between recognition and satisfaction, while regression analysis determined its importance as a motivational factor.

H5: There exists a inter relationship between responsibility assigned and job satisfaction among JCT terminal executives.

The researcher used correlation to examine the association between responsibility and satisfaction and included it in the regression model to evaluate its influence.

H6: There exists a constructive relationship between work itself and advancement and job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives.

Both correlation and regression analyses were employed to assess how the meaningfulness and alignment of work with individual skills impacted satisfaction.

4.4 Data Collection

Data collection is a methodical process of gathering and analysing specific information to proffer solutions to relevant questions and evaluate the results. Interviews, questionnaires and surveys, observations, documents and records, focus groups and oral histories are considered as data collection techniques.

The study will be based on data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The method that will be used to collect primary data is the systematically designed questionnaire. From this method, the researcher is able to find quantitative as well as qualitative data. The questionnaire was selected as the method of data collection because of its flexibility, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, especially when using Google form to collect data online. It is also perceived as more anonymous and allows respondents more time to think about the questions.

The secondary data for the research were gathered from the sources such as research papers, journals, magazines, etc.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is essential for research as it organizes and interprets data to provide answers to research questions (Sekaran, 2009). This process involves using appropriate statistical techniques to structure data in a measurable form, enabling meaningful insights. Two primary approaches to data analysis are qualitative and quantitative. While qualitative analysis explores themes and patterns, quantitative analysis focuses on measurable data to understand variable behaviour and relationships (Mihas, 2019). With advancements in data technology, quantitative analysis has become a preferred method for informed decision-making (Investopedia, 2023).

This study employs quantitative techniques to test hypotheses about the relationships between independent and dependent variables. The analysis incorporates both univariate and multivariate methods. Univariate analysis examines single variables using techniques such as T-tests, which compare means between two groups, and ANOVA, which assesses mean differences among multiple groups. Descriptive statistics summarize data using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, often supported by visual representations such as tables and graphs.

To evaluate relationships between variables, correlation analysis is employed. Pearson correlation coefficients measure the direction, strength, and significance of relationships, particularly for interval and ratio-scaled variables. These correlations are essential for testing hypotheses related to factors such as salary, benefits, and job satisfaction. Multivariate analysis, including regression analysis, further explores the simultaneous effects of multiple predictors on the dependent variable. Regression analysis quantifies how much of the variance in job satisfaction is explained by independent variables, providing robust insights into the impact of factors such as recognition, responsibility, and supervisory support.

Regression analysis is used to examine the simultaneous effects of several independent variables on a dependent variable. In other words, multiple regression analysis aids in understanding how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by a set of predictors (Sekaran, 2009).

Regression analysis was chosen over other multivariate techniques for its ability to directly test hypotheses, quantify relationships, and handle multiple predictors simultaneously. Unlike methods such as factor analysis or cluster analysis, which focus on data grouping, regression provides precise statistical outputs that explain how much of the dependent variable's variance is caused by the independent variables. This makes it the ideal choice for evaluating the impact of salary, benefits, recognition, responsibility, and work itself on job satisfaction. Moreover, regression's versatility in handling both continuous and categorical data ensures accurate and actionable insights.

By integrating correlation and regression analyses, the study effectively quantified the influence of hygiene and motivation factors on job satisfaction, providing clear evidence to address the research objectives and inform organizational interventions.

5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The hypothesis of the research study is as follows:

H1: A positive relationship between salary and benefits and job satisfaction exists among JCT executives.

H2: Supervisory support positively influences job satisfaction. **H3:**

Co-worker relationships positively influence job satisfaction. **H4:**

Recognition positively impacts job satisfaction.

H5: Responsibility assigned positively impacts job satisfaction.

H6: Meaningful work positively impacts job satisfaction.

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

The central tendencies and dispersions shown in the table 4 are based on the calculations. The measuring instrument used to calculate hygiene and motivation factors as well as the level of job satisfaction are scaled from 1 to 5. The value 3 means "Neither Agree nor Disagree" while value 4 means "Agree". Hence, if value 3 was obtained as any of the subsequent measurement, it means that level is neither good nor bad, or in other words it is on "average" level. Similarly, if a value of 4 is obtained, it means a "good" level. Similarly value 1 and five (5) 5 mean "very bad" level and "very good" level respectively. In case of a value between 3 and 4 was obtained, it can be considered as "fairly good" level.

From table 6, it is evident that the mean scores for all factors are between 3 and 4. This implies that majority of respondents have a fairly good level of satisfaction with respect to their jobs as well as hygiene and motivation factors. The minimum, maximum and standard deviation show that scores range from "Not Satisfied at all" to "Extremely Satisfied". The variance for the variables except fringe benefits, working condition, relationship with superior and possibility of growth are not high, indicating that most of the respondents are very close to the mean with respect to the rest of the variables.

Table 6: Measures of Central Tendencies and Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Job Satisfaction	110	1.5	4.83	3.6827	.66017	.436
Salary and Benefits	110	1.5	4.00	3.1497	.72017	.519
Supervisory Support	110	1.0	5.0	3.7881	.78083	.610
Co-worker Relationship	110	2.0	4.5	3.5537	.68454	.447

Recognition	110	1.0	4.33	3.4991	.68454	.469
Responsibility	110	1.5	4.50	3.4492	.74446	.554
Work Itself and Advancement	110	1.5	5.0	3.5706	.69849	.488

Source: Survey Data

Table 6: Measures of central tendency for job satisfaction and its predictors. Key takeaway: All variables exhibit moderate to high mean values, with "Supervisory Support" showing the highest variation, indicating it may be an area needing focused attention.

5.2 Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the inferential statistical methods are employed to test the hypotheses. For the purposes of testing the stated research hypotheses, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is calculated and a multiple regression analysis, T-test and ANOVA test are performed. With the aid of these statistical techniques, conclusions are drawn with regard to the sample and decisions are made with respect to the research hypotheses.

Hygiene Factors

Hygiene factors encompass salary and benefits, co-worker relations and supervisory support. The findings reveal the relationship between these factors and the job satisfaction.

A strong positive relationship exists between salary and benefits provided and job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives. Salary is considered as a basic need and better salary with fringe benefits will satisfy employees and uphold the living standard and help them to progress to the next level.

This finding directly supports the objective of identifying significant hygiene factors influencing job satisfaction. Salary, as a core component of hygiene factors, ensures that employees feel financially secure and valued. In the Port sector, where the demand for skilled labour is high, competitive salaries are crucial to retain talent and reduce turnover. For JCT, ensuring market-aligned salary structures is critical to maintain operational efficiency and reduce the cost of recruiting and training replacements.

Supervisory support showed a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction. Executives who reported receiving clear guidance, mentorship, and constructive feedback from supervisors exhibited higher satisfaction levels. Support given by immediate supervisor also cause to job satisfaction of an employee. Better communication between supervisor and subordinate, receive clear instruction from supervisor, provide opportunities to success in carrier, sense of recognition will lead to job satisfaction of employee. Also, interruption to communicate, poor guidance, no recognition from supervisor will create unsatisfied employee.

This supports the study's focus on interpersonal dynamics as an influencing factor for job satisfaction. In an industry such as Port, where operations are complex and time-sensitive, effective leadership ensures not only job satisfaction but also smoother workflows and fewer bottlenecks. Enhancing supervisory training programs at JCT could improve team morale and operational outcomes.

Co-worker relationships had a moderate correlation with job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of teamwork and a collaborative environment. People spend most of their waking hours at work than spend with their families. Therefore, the relationship between co-workers / colleagues will directly affect not only the job satisfaction but also overall life satisfaction.

This finding aligns with the objective of examining social factors influencing job satisfaction. Terminals are high-pressure work environments requiring seamless collaboration. Positive relationships among colleagues improve communication, reduce errors, and enhance productivity. At JCT, fostering teamwork through regular team-building activities and promoting a collaborative culture could significantly improve overall job satisfaction.

Researchers identified relationships as a two-way process with the individual making a contribution and expecting an outcome. The second assumption is that people do not work in a vacuum. They make comparisons with others to determine if they are being treated equitably or not (Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman, 1998).

Table 7: Correlations between hygiene factors and job satisfaction

		Job Satisfaction	Salary and Benefits	Supervisory Support	Co-worker relationship
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.818(**)	.662(**)	.709(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	110	110	110	110
Salary and Benefits	Pearson Correlation	.818(**)	1	.876(**)	.707(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	110	110	110	110
Supervisory Support	Pearson Correlation	.511(**)	.415(**)	.450(**)	.680(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	110	110	110	110
Co-worker Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.663(**)	.602(**)	.395(**)	.521(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	110	110	110	110

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data

Table 7: Correlations between hygiene factors and job satisfaction. Key takeaway: Salary and benefits ($r = 0.818$) emerge as the strongest predictor of job satisfaction, followed by co-worker relationships ($r = 0.709$).

The result of Pearson's correlation coefficient is obtained for the sample and represented in table 7. All the hygiene factors have a statistically significant positive relationship with job satisfaction at 99% level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 are substantiated.

This implies that there exists a positive relationship between each hygiene factor and job satisfaction of JCT Container terminal executives.

Motivation Factors

The findings reveal how the motivation factors i.e. recognition, responsibility and work itself effect on the job satisfaction.

There exists a positive relationship between recognition and job satisfaction of JCT Terminal executives. Recognition emerged as a significant motivator, with executives reporting higher satisfaction when their contributions were acknowledged. It motivates the employees and it leads to their job satisfaction. Person believes that if they work harder, they should recognize by the management. This addresses the motivators identified in the study, specifically the role of intrinsic factors such as acknowledgment and appreciation. Research has indicated that distributive justice has a greater influence on employee satisfaction than procedural justice (Dailey and Kirk, 1992). In a terminal setting, where the contributions of individuals often go unnoticed amid large-scale operations, implementing recognition programs can be a game-changer. Simple gestures, rewarding exceptional performance or public acknowledgment, can boost morale and productivity at JCT.

There exists a positive relationship between Responsibility assigned and job satisfaction of JCT Terminal executives. Assigning meaningful responsibilities correlated positively with job satisfaction, suggesting that executives value roles that challenge and empower them. This finding supports the objective of understanding intrinsic motivators. It

has been identified that certain job characteristics contribute to certain psychological states and that the strength of the employees need for growth has an important moderating effect (Luthans, 2005: 484). Responsibility also identified as special job characteristic which led high-level job satisfaction. At JCT, empowering executives by involving them in decision-making and entrusting them with critical responsibilities can foster ownership and long-term commitment. In the broader port sector, this practice can lead to innovative problem-solving and higher efficiency.

There exists a positive relationship between nature of work, opportunities for advancement and job satisfaction among JCT Terminal executives. The nature of the work itself its meaningfulness and alignment with individual skills—was a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Variety of skill relates to doing different tasks using different skills and abilities. If the worker is aware that his/her work has significance and is making a difference this will positively impact on work outcomes. Autonomy refers to the freedom and discretion the worker has in scheduling work, decision-making, and determining how to do the work. This is essential for building a sense of advancement in carrier.

This supports the study's focus on identifying factors that directly enhance job satisfaction.

Terminals such as JCT need to ensure that roles are designed to be engaging and purposeful. Providing opportunities for skill development and aligning roles with individual strengths can enhance satisfaction and performance.

Overall, there exists a positive relationship between each motivation factor and job satisfaction of JCT Terminal executives.

The above hypothesis can be stated in null and alternative hypotheses as follows:

Null Hypothesis: There does not exist a positive relationship between each motivation factor and job satisfaction of JCT Terminal executives.

Alternative Hypothesis: There exists a positive relationship between each motivation factor and job satisfaction of JCT Terminal executives.

Table 8: Correlations between motivation factors and job satisfaction

		Job Satisfacti on	Recognitio n	Work Itself	Responsibil ity
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.704(**)	.334(**)	.429(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	110	110	110	110
Recognition	Pearson Correlation	.704(**)	1	.619(**)	.758(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	110	110	110	110
Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	.429(**)	.758(**)	.627(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	110	110	110	110
Work Itself	Pearson Correlation	.334(**)	.619(**)	1	.627(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	110	110	110	110

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data

Table 8: Correlations between motivation factors and job satisfaction. Key takeaway: Recognition shows the highest correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.704$), followed by responsibility and work itself.

The results of Pearson's correlation coefficients is obtained for the sample and represented in table 8. All the motivation factors have a statistically significant positive relationship with job satisfaction at 99% level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and hypothesis 4,5 and 6 are substantiated. Accordingly, Job recognition has a significant correlation with job satisfaction indicated with 0.704 of Pearson Correlation at 0.01

alpha level. It is also indicated that responsibility and job recognition shows a significant correlation at .758 at 0.01 alpha level.

This means that there exists a positive relationship between each motivation factor and job satisfaction of JCT Terminal executives.

5.3 Multiple Regression Analysis and Testing Hypothesis

Hygiene and Motivation Factors significantly explain the variance in job satisfaction of JCT Terminal executives.

The above hypothesis can be stated in null and alternative hypotheses as follows.

- Null Hypothesis: Hygiene and motivation factors do not significantly explain the variance in job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives.
- Alternative Hypothesis: Hygiene and motivation factors significantly explain the variance in job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives.

For the purpose of determining the extent to which the hygiene and motivation factors explain the variance in job satisfaction of JCT Terminal executives, multiple regression analysis is performed. Model summary of the results of the multiple regression analysis, is presented in table 9.

Table 9: Results of Multiple Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.921(a)	.848	.838	.26603

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Salary and benefits, Supervisory Support, Co-worker relationship, Recognition, Responsibility, Work itself

Table 9: Model summary of multiple regression analysis. Key takeaway: The independent variables collectively explain 84.8% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.848$).

Table 10: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	65.028	11	5.912	83.533	.000(a)
Residual	11.677	165	.071		
Total	76.705	176			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Salary and benefits, Supervisory Support, Co-worker relationship, Recognition, Responsibility, Work itself
- b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 10: ANOVA results for regression analysis. Key takeaway: The model is statistically significant ($F = 83.533$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that hygiene and motivation factors significantly predict job satisfaction.

Table 9 indicates R, R Square, Adjusted R Square and Standard error of the estimate. Further, it lists the independent variables that are entered into the regression model. R (.921) is the correlation of the independent variables with the dependent variable after all the inter correlations are taken into account. In the "Model summary" table, R Square (0.848) is the explained variance in job satisfaction by the independent variables. The ANOVA table shows that the F value of 83.533 is significant at 0.001 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and Alternative hypothesis is substantiated. The result indicates that 70.77% of the variance of job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives has been significantly explained by hygiene and motivation factors (Table 10).

Table 11: Coefficients (a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	.485	.183		2.654	.009
	Salary and Benefits	.567	.104	.618	5.449	.000
	Supervisory Support	.032	.061	.038	.522	.602
	Co-worker Relationship	.244	.056	.247	4.347	.000
	Recognition	.198	.114	.205	1.729	.086
	Responsibility	.106	.056	.120	1.879	.062
	Work Itself and advancement	.083	.044	.088	1.904	.059

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Source: Survey Data

Table 11: Coefficients from multiple regression analysis. Key takeaway: Salary and benefits, along with co-worker relationships, are the only significant predictors of job satisfaction ($p < 0.001$), explaining 84.8% of the variance.

The table (Table 11) titled “Coefficients” helps to see which among the independent variables influences most the variance of job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives. By looking at the Beta under Standardized Coefficients, it is concluded that salary, benefits, and co-worker relationship are significant at 0.001 level.

As shown in table 11, when other variables are controlled, only salary, benefits, and co-worker relationship show significant correlation with job satisfaction. Table 9 and 10 depict that all hygiene and motivation factors are significantly correlated with job satisfaction when those factors are considered individually. This presents a contradiction. the results of this research, except for salary and benefits, and relationship with co-workers’ other hygiene and motivation factors are not significant predictors of job satisfaction.

5.4 Comparison with Previous Studies

The following table provides a comparison between present findings and previous studies which will provide a more comprehensive inside on the job satisfaction model.

Table 12: Comparison with Previous Studies

Key Finding	Present Study	Previous Study	Unique contributions of present Study
Salary and Benefits	Strong correlation with job satisfaction.	Kavirathna et al. (2018): Salary as a key driver.	Highlights the need for competitive salary specific to skilled port executives.
Supervisory Support	Moderate correlation; valued for guidance and feedback.	Robbins (2001): Trust and morale boost.	Stresses the operational significance in time-sensitive port environments.

Co-Worker Relationships	Positive correlation with teamwork and harmony.	Vecchio (2000): Collaboration improves morale.	Focuses on the operational interdependence in port workflows.
Recognition and Responsibility	Strong predictors; tied to motivation and engagement.	Herzberg (1966): Key motivators.	Suggests formal recognition programs for the unique needs of port workers.
Meaningful Work	Alignment with skills improves satisfaction significantly.	Hackman & Oldham (1976): Task significance is crucial.	Contextualizes job enrichment strategies in a high-pressure port setting.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Herzberg's two-factor theory posits that job satisfaction is influenced by two types of factors: hygiene factors, which prevent dissatisfaction, and motivators, which actively promote satisfaction. The findings of this study at JCT both support and, in some cases, challenge aspects of Herzberg's theory:

Herzberg theorized that hygiene factors, such as salary, benefits, workplace relationships, and supervision, do not create satisfaction but their absence can cause dissatisfaction. This study's findings strongly align with this principle:

Salary and Benefits: The study confirms that fair and competitive salary is essential to prevent dissatisfaction. Executives at JCT who felt underpaid reported lower levels of job satisfaction. This aligns with Herzberg's classification of salary as a hygiene factor, where its adequacy prevents dissatisfaction but does not necessarily lead to motivation or satisfaction on its own.

Supervisory Support and Co-Worker Relationships: The study also found that positive supervisory support and strong co-worker relationships are crucial for maintaining satisfaction. Consistent with Herzberg, these factors act as stabilizers, ensuring a harmonious work environment and preventing dissatisfaction but do not independently create lasting motivation.

Herzberg identified motivators, such as recognition, responsibility, and meaningful work, as the primary drivers of satisfaction. The findings of this study validate this aspect of the theory:

Recognition: The study demonstrated that executives who received acknowledgment for their contributions reported higher satisfaction levels. This strongly supports Herzberg's assertion that recognition is a motivator, as it fulfills higher-order needs related to esteem and self-actualization.

Responsibility: Assigning meaningful responsibilities was also found to enhance satisfaction. Executives who felt entrusted with significant roles were more motivated and engaged, echoing Herzberg's idea that responsibility drives intrinsic satisfaction.

Meaningful Work: The study highlighted that the nature of the work itself plays a significant role in satisfaction. When tasks were aligned with the executives' skills and provided a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction levels increased. This supports Herzberg's emphasis on the importance of job enrichment and task significance as motivators.

While the findings largely support Herzberg's framework, they also reveal nuances that challenge the rigid separation between hygiene factors and motivators:

Salary as Both a Hygiene Factor and a Motivator: Herzberg classified salary as a hygiene factor, arguing that it prevents dissatisfaction but does not promote satisfaction. However, in this study, salary emerged as a significant factor for both preventing dissatisfaction and positively influencing satisfaction, especially when it was perceived as competitive and equitable. This dual role suggests that in certain industries, such as ports, salary might straddle the boundary between hygiene and motivator.

Interdependence of Factors: The study found overlaps between hygiene factors and motivators. For instance, supervisory support (a hygiene factor) contributed not only to the prevention of dissatisfaction but also indirectly motivated executives by fostering a culture of trust and empowerment. This challenges Herzberg's strict categorization of factors into two distinct groups.

As per the research results, the following findings were identified:

According to hypothesis test 1, 2 and 3 Hygiene Factor, it implies that there exists a positive relationship between each hygiene factor and job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives. Hypothesis 4, 5 and 6 Motivation Factors, results indicate that there exists a positive relationship between each motivation factor and job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives. Hypothesis 7 indicates, except for salary and benefits, and relationship with co-workers' other hygiene and motivation factors are not significant predictors of job satisfaction.

As explained in literature review, Herzberg et al. (1959) proposed that paying attention to motivator factors will increase job satisfaction, but will not affect job dissatisfaction. Alternatively, paying attention to hygiene factors will decrease job dissatisfaction but will not increase job satisfaction.

But based on results in Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 which says there are positive relationship between each hygiene factor and job satisfaction of executives in JCT terminal.

On other hand Herzberg's theory support by results on this research under Hypothesis 4, 5 and 6 test, hypothesis results indicates that it is exists a positive relationship between each motivation factor and job satisfaction of JCT terminal executives. As per the results salary and benefits and relationship with co-workers significantly affect the job satisfaction of executives. But other hygiene and motivation factors not affect the job satisfaction.

Several implications for policy and practice at the SLPA level were recognized. It is necessary to make a regular benchmarking of salaries against industry standards to ensure equity and prevent dissatisfaction. In other words SLPA should provide a competitive compensation package.

Further, investing in leadership development programs to enhance supervisory support and foster positive workplace relationships is essential while establishing formal recognition systems to acknowledge employee contributions and foster intrinsic motivation. In addition to that it has a paramount importance in aligning work roles with employees' skills and aspirations to enhance job satisfaction and operational efficiency.

When it comes to the global perspective the findings have implications for other ports and similar high-pressure industries including the dual role of salary in this context that suggests the Herzberg's framework might require cultural and industry-specific adaptations.

Similarly, the overlaps between hygiene and motivator factors highlight the importance of a holistic approach to workforce management, addressing both foundational and aspirational employee needs.

The main objective of this research was to find out the impact of hygiene and motivation factors on job satisfaction of Executives in JCT terminal, Port of Colombo. The correlation coefficients between job satisfaction and each hygiene and motivation factor are significant at 0.01 level. Furthermore, hypothesis three states that 70.77% of the variance in job satisfaction will be significantly explained by hygiene and motivation factors. This implies that all other factors which may affect the job satisfaction have a less effect than that of hygiene and motivation factors. Furthermore, except for salary and benefits, relationship with co-workers' other hygiene and motivation factors are not significant predictors of the job satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the main objective of this study has been achieved satisfactorily.

Evaluating the present level of job satisfaction among container terminal executives is one of the secondary objectives in this empirical study. Research findings imply that the majority of the respondents have a fairly good level of satisfaction with respect to their jobs as well as hygiene and motivation factors. Hence, it is apparent that the said objective has been achieved satisfactorily.

Next objective was to examine whether there exists a significant difference of job satisfaction among the container terminal executives working JCT Terminal. The results of the data analysis indicate that there does not exist a significant difference in job satisfaction among the executives working in JCT terminal.

By analyzing the objectives and findings of the study, it is apparent that all the objectives of this research study have been achieved satisfactorily.

6.1 Contradictions between Findings and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

The findings of the study reveal several contradictions and nuances when compared to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

According to Herzberg, salary is a hygiene factor that prevents dissatisfaction but does not promote satisfaction. However, the study indicates that salary not only prevents dissatisfaction but also positively influences job satisfaction when perceived as competitive and equitable. This suggests salary operates as both a hygiene factor and a motivator in this context, challenging Herzberg's strict categorization.

Further, Herzberg's theory maintains a clear separation between hygiene factors (e.g., supervisory support) and motivators (e.g., recognition). However, the findings of this study indicate interdependence between hygiene and motivators where supervisory support (a hygiene factor) not only found to be preventing dissatisfaction but also promote trust and empowerment showing that hygiene factors can indirectly influence satisfaction which Herzberg's model does not support for.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study offer a clear and practical guide for improving job satisfaction among executives at JCT. One of the most critical areas identified is the need to address salary structures. Competitive and transparent salary systems are key to reducing dissatisfaction and keeping skilled professionals on board. Regularly benchmarking salaries against industry standards, introducing performance-based incentives, and maintaining open communication about salary adjustments can build trust and help mitigate turnover in a highly competitive labour market.

The study highlights actionable steps to improve job satisfaction at JCT, emphasizing competitive salary structures, leadership development, and fostering a collaborative workplace. Implement competitive and transparent salary systems to reduce dissatisfaction and retain skilled professionals. Regularly benchmark salaries against industry standards to ensure fairness and competitiveness. Introduce performance-based incentives tied to key performance indicators to reward high-performing employees. Maintain open communication about salary adjustments through structured updates during team meetings or newsletters, ensuring transparency and trust.

Leadership training should focus on communication, mentorship, and conflict resolution, while regular feedback sessions and open-door policies can enhance supervisory support. Encouraging team-building activities, cross-functional collaborations, and diversity initiatives can promote harmony and belonging. Formal recognition programs, peer-to-peer acknowledgments, and role rotations are key to boosting morale and ownership.

Providing meaningful responsibilities aligned with career aspirations, offering challenging projects, and implementing structured feedback systems further ensure alignment with organizational goals and employee growth. By adopting these strategies, JCT and other ports globally can foster a resilient workforce and achieve sustained operational excellence.

Another major factor influencing satisfaction is leadership support. Positive supervisory relationships are essential for boosting morale and trust among executives. Investing in leadership training, conducting regular one-on-one feedback sessions, and fostering open-door policies can create a more supportive and empowering work environment. Equally important is cultivating a collaborative workplace culture, as positive relationships with co-workers significantly enhance satisfaction. Team-building activities, cross-functional collaborations, and diversity initiatives can promote harmony, reduce conflicts, and create a sense of belonging.

Recognition also emerged as a strong motivator. Establishing formal programs to acknowledge achievements, encouraging peer-to-peer recognition, and celebrating milestones can uplift morale and reinforce positive behaviours. Similarly, providing meaningful responsibilities aligned with executives' skills and career aspirations enhances engagement and prepares them for future leadership roles. Tailored development plans, role rotations, and opportunities for decision-making not only boost confidence but also instil a sense of ownership.

The study underscores the importance of meaningful work, where tasks align with individual skills and interests. Offering professional development, challenging projects, and regularly reviewing roles can keep work stimulating,

reduce monotony, and improve job satisfaction. Open communication and constructive feedback mechanisms further strengthen the organizational fabric. Structured feedback systems, regular town halls, and surveys ensure employees' voices are heard, fostering alignment with organizational goals and boosting trust.

Together, these recommendations highlight the need to address both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in a comprehensive manner. By implementing these strategies, JCT can create a motivated and engaged workforce, ensuring both individual satisfaction and long-term organizational success in an increasingly competitive industry.

Policymakers and organizational leaders within the SLPA and other ports globally are urged to prioritize workforce satisfaction by implementing targeted strategies that address both hygiene and motivation factors. By investing in leadership development, equitable compensation, and job enrichment programs, organizations can create a resilient and engaged workforce capable of driving sustained operational excellence.

4. LIMITATIONS

Following limitations were observed in the study.

Narrow Focus on JCT Executives: This study specifically examines job satisfaction among executives at the Jaya Container Terminal (JCT) in the Port of Colombo. While the findings are insightful, they are limited to this particular group and may not reflect the experiences or dynamics of other terminals, industries, or regions. The unique challenges and environment at JCT might differ significantly from those faced in the broader port sector.

Snapshot Approach: The research provides a valuable snapshot of job satisfaction at a single point in time. However, it does not capture how satisfaction levels might change over months or years, especially with evolving organizational practices or industry trends. This makes it difficult to evaluate the long-term impact of potential interventions.

Self-Reported Responses: The data relies on self-reported surveys, which means participants' answers could be influenced by personal biases. For instance, some respondents may have been overly positive to align with perceived expectations, while others might have downplayed their true feelings.

Focus Exclusively on Executives: While executives play a critical role in JCT's operations, this study does not consider the perspectives of other employee groups, such as operational staff or contractors. Since these groups also contribute significantly to the organization's success, excluding them leaves out valuable insights into job satisfaction across the workforce.

Limited Range of Factors: The study primarily investigates selected hygiene and motivation factors. Other important elements, such as organizational culture, work-life balance, or the role of technology in job satisfaction, were not included. Exploring these aspects could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of what drives satisfaction in this environment.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH

Expand the Study to Other Terminals and Roles

Future research could include other terminals within the Port of Colombo or similar ports globally to compare findings and enhance generalizability. Including non-executive roles would provide a holistic view of satisfaction across all employee levels.

Longitudinal Studies

Conduct longitudinal research to assess how job satisfaction evolves over time and to evaluate the long-term impact of implemented interventions, such as salary adjustments or recognition programs.

Incorporate Additional Variables

Future studies could examine additional factors influencing job satisfaction, such as work-life balance, employee wellness programs, and the role of technology in streamlining port operations.

Examine Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Investigating how cultural differences impact job satisfaction in port operations across countries could provide valuable insights for multinational organizations.

Investigate Job Satisfaction-Performance Link

Research could explore how changes in job satisfaction affect individual and organizational performance metrics, such as productivity, efficiency, and retention rates.

Study the Impact of Leadership Styles

Examining how different leadership styles influence job satisfaction could provide actionable insights for supervisory training programs at JCT and other ports.

Incorporate Qualitative Methods

Future studies could use qualitative approaches, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into employees' perceptions and experiences that quantitative methods might not capture.

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