

Final Project 1

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The effect of motivation and hygiene factors on Employee Retention in the IT Industry in KSA

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Graduation Project – 1

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Introduction

Employee retention is a crucial factor in ensuring an organization's stability and long-term success (Ghani et al., 2022). High turnover rates can be costly as well as affect the employee productivity. Moreover it also disturbs the employee morale and overall business performance (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2020). Retaining employees helps in maintaining institutional knowledge, fostering innovation and reducing the financial burden associated with recruiting and training new hires (Rathi & Lee, 2021). Organizations spend a lot of resources when hiring employees such as recruitment process, training process etc. In industries where skilled professionals are in high demand, understanding the factors that influence employee retention becomes even more significant. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory highlights how motivation and hygiene factors influence job satisfaction and employee retention (Bhatt et al., 2022). While motivation factors such as recognition and career growth encourage employees to stay, hygiene factors like salary and working conditions prevent dissatisfaction (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2019). Organizations must strike a balance between these factors to create an environment where employees feel valued and are less likely to seek external opportunities.

The IT industry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is growing rapidly. It is driven by the country's Vision 2030 initiative that emphasizes digital transformation and technological advancements (Alkhateeb et al., 2022). The sector has seen a surge in investment, with both local and international companies expanding their operations in the region. With this expansion comes an increase in job opportunities, making it a competitive field for skilled professionals. The IT workforce is often presented with attractive job offers from multiple employers, leading to high turnover rates in the industry (Rahman et al., 2021). Given this landscape, companies must

understand what drives employees to remain committed to their current organizations and what factors could push them to leave.

In a highly competitive IT industry, retaining talented employees is critical to maintaining a company's competitive edge. Organizations invest significantly in recruiting, onboarding and training employees (Aziz et al., 2023). High turnover rates can result in financial losses and decreased efficiency (Elshaer & Marzouk, 2021). Moreover, experienced IT professionals contribute to innovation and strategic decision-making, which are essential for staying ahead in the market. If companies fail to provide adequate motivation and hygiene factors, they risk losing top talent to competitors, which in turn impacts their long-term sustainability. Understanding whether motivation factors such as career development or hygiene factors like competitive salaries play a bigger role in employee retention is essential for IT firms in KSA to develop effective retention strategies.

There are many factors that play a key role in employee retention. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, developed in 1959, has divided these workplace factors into two categories: motivation factors and hygiene factors (Rai et al., 2021). Motivation factors include aspects like recognition, career growth and responsibility, which contribute to job satisfaction and drive employees to perform better. On the other hand, hygiene factors such as salary, job security and work conditions do not necessarily increase satisfaction but their absence can lead to dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966). The theory suggests that organizations must address both factors to ensure employees are both satisfied and engaged in their roles (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Herzberg's theory plays a vital role in understanding what might retain the employees in a job.

Several studies have explored the impact of motivation and hygiene factors on employee satisfaction and retention. For example, a study by Bakker and Demerouti (2020) found that

motivation factors, such as career advancement and meaningful work, significantly improve employee engagement and reduce turnover rates. Similarly, research by Nguyen et al. (2019) highlighted that while salary and job security are essential for retaining employees, intrinsic motivators like recognition and a sense of achievement play a more prominent role in long-term job satisfaction. Another study by Awan and Tahir (2021) emphasized that organizations focusing on both hygiene and motivation factors experience lower turnover rates and higher productivity. These findings reinforce the idea that addressing both types of factors is crucial for creating a sustainable workforce.

Motivation and hygiene factors play a critical role in shaping employee retention within the IT industry. Research indicates that IT professionals prioritize motivation factors such as career advancement, skill development and workplace recognition over time (Sinha & Sinha, 2020). However, hygiene factors like competitive salaries, job security and favorable working conditions remain essential in preventing dissatisfaction. Studies have shown that when companies neglect either factor, they risk increased employee turnover and decreased job satisfaction (Gopal & Chowdhury, 2019). Therefore, IT organizations must balance both elements to maintain a productive and committed workforce.

The IT industry in KSA can utilize Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to enhance employee retention by implementing strategies that address both motivation and hygiene factors. Providing competitive compensation packages, ensuring job security as well as fostering a positive work environment which can help mitigate dissatisfaction (Thant & Chang, 2021). Simultaneously, organizations must invest in employee development programs, recognition initiatives and career growth opportunities to enhance job satisfaction and engagement. By incorporating both factors

into their retention strategies, IT firms in KSA can create a sustainable workforce, reduce turnover rates, and strengthen their position in the competitive market.

Research problem

Employee retention remains a persistent challenge for organizations operating in the IT industry, particularly in competitive markets such as KSA. The increasing job opportunities especially during the advancements made in Vision 2030, have posed a great problem in employee retention. Although there are many opportunities in the industry for qualified experts, organizational stability and long-term success are seriously threatened by the high turnover rate. Many businesses find it difficult to determine whether hygienic factors like pay and job security or motivational factors like career advancement and recognition have a greater impact on employee retention. IT companies must comprehend how these elements affect employee retention in order to create successful retention strategies, especially in light of the quick digital revolution and changing market dynamics in Saudi Arabia. This research aims to investigate the impact of Herzberg's motivation and hygiene factors on employee retention in the IT industry in KSA, providing insights into how organizations can create an optimal work environment that minimizes turnover and enhances workforce stability.

Significance of the study

Understanding the factors that contribute to employee retention in the IT industry of KSA is crucial for both academic research and practical business applications. This study is significant as it provides empirical evidence on the role of motivation and hygiene factors in retaining IT professionals. By identifying the factors that impact job satisfaction and turnover intentions, the study will help organizations tailor their HR strategies to create a more committed and engaged

workforce. Additionally, the research will contribute to the broader field of organizational psychology and human resource management, offering insights that may be applicable to other competitive industries facing similar retention challenges.

Research Questions

1. How do motivation factors influence employee retention in the IT industry in KSA?
2. How do hygiene factors impact employee retention in the IT industry in KSA?
3. Which factor, motivation or hygiene, plays a more significant role in employee retention among IT professionals in KSA?

Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of motivation factors on employee retention in the IT industry in KSA.
- To analyze the role of hygiene factors in influencing employee retention among IT professionals in KSA.
- To compare the significance of motivation and hygiene factors in determining employee retention.
- To explore the applicability of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in the context of the IT industry in KSA.

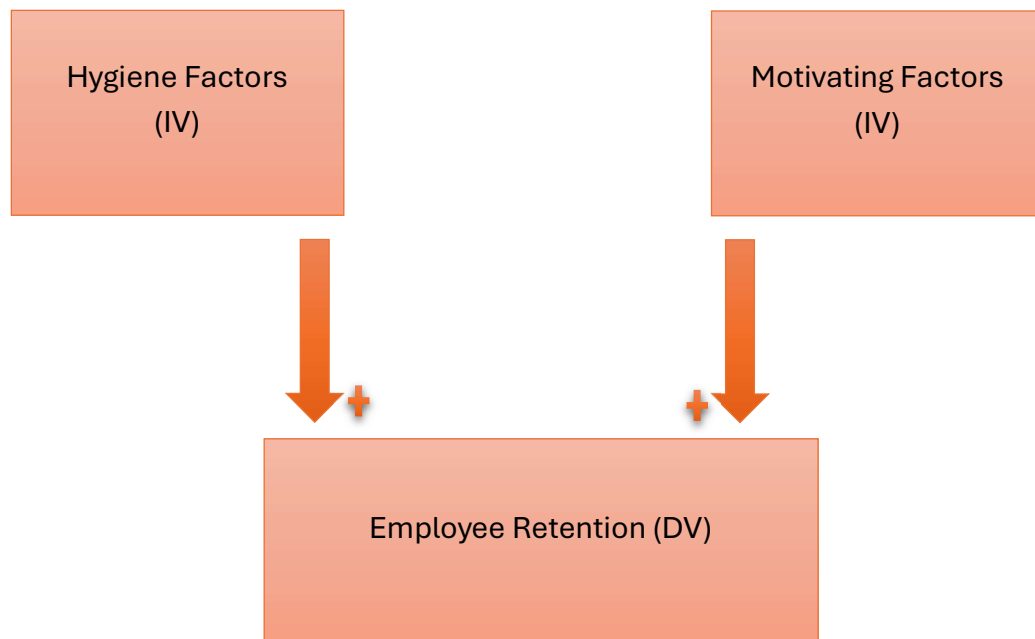
Hypotheses

H1: Motivation factors have a significant positive impact on employee retention in the IT industry in KSA.

H2: Hygiene factors have a significant positive impact on employee retention in the IT industry in KSA.

Research model

Here is the graphical representation of the conceptual model framework of the study:



Research methodology

Research Design

The research study will deploy a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional study method. A cross-sectional design is appropriate in this case because it allows for the collection of data at a single point in time to analyze the relationship between motivation factors, hygiene factors and employee retention in our given population.

Population and Sampling Method

The target population for this research consists of employees working in the IT industry in Saudi Arabia (KSA). Saudi Arabia is currently working through their biggest project named as Vision 2030 project which seeks to create a knowledge-based digital economy. This project has propelled the country's IT sector's explosive expansion. The Saudi Ministry of Communications and Information Technology estimates that the KSA IT market was the largest in the MENA area in 2022, with a valuation of \$40 billion (MCIT 2023). There are many things in the IT industry that have raised the demand for qualified workers such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital transformation. Nonetheless, there is still a problem with significant employee turnover, which highlights the necessity for research on employee retention in this industry.

The sampling method for this study is simple random sampling. This technique ensures that all IT employees in KSA have an equal chance of being selected, reducing bias in the results. A representative sample will be drawn from various IT companies, including multinational firms, local enterprises and startups, to ensure a diverse data set.

Data Collection

Data will be collected through a survey method using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire will be designed to measure employee perceptions of motivation factors, hygiene factors and their impact on retention. The survey will include closed-ended questions using a Likert scale to facilitate quantitative analysis. To reach the target population, the survey will be distributed and data will be collected after gaining their consent.

Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Different descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, means, standard deviations will be carried out to summarize responses. Moreover, T-Tests will be done to compare retention levels based on different motivation and hygiene factors. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) will be applied to assess significant differences among various employee demographics (e.g., experience levels, job roles). Lastly, regression analysis will be done to determine the impact of motivation and hygiene factors on employee retention.

Literature review

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory was introduced in the 1950s which distinguishes between factors that cause job satisfaction (motivators) and those that prevent dissatisfaction (hygiene factors). According to Herzberg, motivation factors are intrinsic to the job itself, such as achievement, recognition as well as the work itself. In contrast, hygiene factors are extrinsic and are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction but do not lead to long-term satisfaction, such as company policies, working conditions or salary (Herzberg, 1959).

Herzberg's theory has been widely influential in understanding how job satisfaction affects employee motivation and performance. Research has shown that motivating factors tend to be more closely associated with employee engagement and on the other hand, hygiene factors can help avoid dissatisfaction but do not significantly contribute to motivation (Michaels & Spector, 2020). The theory provides a framework for examining employee retention, as it highlights the need for both adequate hygiene factors and strong motivating factors to keep employees satisfied and engaged. Further studies have supported Herzberg's argument that motivating factors lead to greater job satisfaction, especially when employees feel their work contributes to personal growth and organizational success (Chen, 2019). On the other hand, a lack of hygiene factors can lead to turnover, as employees may seek out more favorable working conditions elsewhere (Jang & Kim, 2021).

Herzberg's theory has been widely applied to employee retention studies, as it emphasizes the importance of creating a workplace where employees are both satisfied and motivated. For example, a study by Kim (2019) demonstrated that when both motivating factors (such as job responsibility and career advancement) and hygiene factors (such as compensation and work

environment) are adequately addressed, employee retention rates improve significantly. This has implications for organizations aiming to retain their best talent.

In the IT sector, where high turnover rates are common due to the competitive nature of the industry, applying Herzberg's theory can be particularly beneficial. Research suggests that IT companies that provide a balance of both motivators and hygiene factors tend to have more satisfied employees who are less likely to leave (Lee & Cheong, 2021). Moreover, the fast-paced nature of the IT industry means that companies must continuously adapt their motivation strategies to meet evolving employee needs.

Motivating factors, according to Herzberg's theory, are those that lead to job satisfaction and motivate employees to perform well. These factors are intrinsic to the job itself and include aspects such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and the work itself (Herzberg, 1959). Studies have shown that when these factors are present, employees are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and committed to their organization (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Employees who feel that their work is meaningful and contributes to the success of the organization are more likely to experience high levels of job satisfaction and remain with the company (Michaels & Spector, 2020).

In the IT industry, motivating factors play a crucial role in employee engagement and retention. Research by Zhang et al. (2020) found that providing employees with opportunities for professional growth and advancement was one of the most effective motivators in the IT sector. Additionally, recognition for achievements and contributions to projects was seen as a significant factor in enhancing employee satisfaction and reducing turnover rates. In a similar vein, a study by Jang and Kim (2021) highlighted that employees who feel recognized for their work are more likely to be committed to their job and organization, leading to greater retention.

Moreover, the nature of the IT work itself can be a powerful motivator. Employees who are given challenging tasks and opportunities to innovate tend to find their work more rewarding and are less likely to seek employment elsewhere (Chen, 2019). In the context of Saudi Arabia's rapidly developing IT sector, motivating factors such as career development, a sense of accomplishment, and personal growth opportunities are critical to retaining skilled professionals in a highly competitive market. In the IT industry, where the pace of change is rapid and the demand for skilled professionals is high, motivating factors are particularly important. Employees in this sector are often driven by the opportunity to work on innovative projects, solve complex problems, and contribute to the development of cutting-edge technologies (Li et al., 2019). Studies have found that providing employees with autonomy in their work and the ability to make decisions can significantly increase motivation and satisfaction (Deci et al., 2017). Furthermore, employees who feel that their work is meaningful and aligns with their values are more likely to stay with the organization (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

A study by Lee and Cheong (2021) on the IT industry in Asia found that employees who were given regular feedback and recognition for their contributions reported higher levels of job satisfaction and were less likely to leave their organizations. Additionally, the provision of training and development opportunities was seen as a key motivator in retaining top talent in the IT sector. This is especially relevant in the context of Saudi Arabia, where the government is investing heavily in the digital economy and creating opportunities for IT professionals to develop their skills and advance in their careers. While motivating factors are crucial to job satisfaction, hygiene factors are equally important in preventing job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors, according to Herzberg, are extrinsic to the job and include aspects such as salary, working conditions, job security, company policies, and interpersonal relationships (Herzberg, 1959). Although these

factors do not contribute directly to motivation, their absence or inadequacy can lead to dissatisfaction and ultimately result in high turnover rates (Katzell & Thompson, 1990).

In the IT industry, hygiene factors such as competitive salaries, job security, and a positive work environment are essential to retaining employees. Research has shown that when these factors are not met, employees may experience dissatisfaction, even if they are highly motivated by the nature of the work itself (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). For example, a study by Jang and Kim (2021) found that poor working conditions, including inadequate equipment or office space, were significant contributors to employee dissatisfaction in the IT sector. Moreover, job security is a major concern for employees in the IT industry, where rapid technological advancements and organizational changes can create uncertainty. A study by Michaels and Spector (2020) found that employees who feel insecure about their job or the stability of their organization are more likely to leave for opportunities that offer greater job security. In the context of Saudi Arabia, where the IT sector is evolving rapidly, ensuring job security and stability is critical to retaining talent in this industry.

In the IT industry, the importance of hygiene factors cannot be overstated. Employees in this sector expect competitive salaries, attractive benefits packages, and a positive work environment in order to feel satisfied in their jobs. Research by Lee and Cheong (2021) found that salary and benefits were the most important hygiene factors for IT professionals, with employees who felt their compensation was fair and competitive reporting higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, a study by Liu and Liu (2018) found that the physical work environment plays a significant role in employee satisfaction and retention in the IT industry. Factors such as comfortable office spaces, access to technology, and a safe work environment are all critical to

employee well-being. Poor working conditions, on the other hand, can lead to dissatisfaction and increased turnover.

In the context of Saudi Arabia, where the IT sector is expanding rapidly as part of the Vision 2030 initiative, addressing hygiene factors is especially important. The government's focus on developing the digital economy has led to a competitive job market for IT professionals, and organizations that fail to provide adequate hygiene factors may struggle to retain talent in this rapidly evolving industry (Zhang et al., 2020).

The IT industry is a vital part of the global economy, with rapid advancements in technology shaping the way businesses operate and individuals interact with the world. As the world becomes increasingly reliant on digital technologies, the demand for IT professionals continues to grow. The IT sector is known for its fast-paced and dynamic work environment, which often presents both challenges and opportunities for employees (Li et al., 2019). Research suggests that the IT industry is characterized by high turnover rates, particularly among skilled professionals who are in high demand. In many countries, including Saudi Arabia, the IT industry is a major contributor to economic growth and development. As businesses and governments invest in digital transformation, the need for skilled IT professionals is expected to continue to rise (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). However, this growth also presents challenges for employers, who must find ways to attract and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive market. Studies have shown that employee retention in the IT industry is influenced by a variety of factors, including job satisfaction, career development opportunities, and the overall work environment (Chen, 2019). As a result, organizations in the IT sector must focus on providing both motivating and hygiene factors to keep their employees satisfied and reduce turnover rates.

The IT industry in Saudi Arabia has seen significant growth over the past decade, driven by the government's Vision 2030 initiative, which aims to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on oil. As part of this vision, there has been a strong push to develop the digital economy, with investments in technology infrastructure, e-government services, and the expansion of the tech workforce (Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority [SAGIA], 2020). This growth has led to an increased demand for skilled IT professionals across various sectors, including telecommunications, cybersecurity, software development, and digital services. Research on the Saudi IT industry has highlighted several challenges related to employee retention. According to Alshammari et al. (2021), the competitive job market and the rapid pace of technological change make it difficult for organizations to retain skilled IT professionals. Many employees in the Saudi IT sector are attracted by higher salaries and better opportunities abroad, which creates a talent drain. This has led to a growing focus on improving employee satisfaction and retention through a combination of motivating and hygiene factors.

Employee retention in the IT industry is a complex issue, influenced by a combination of factors related to both the work environment and individual needs. Research has shown that job satisfaction is a key driver of retention in this sector, with employees more likely to stay with organizations that offer a supportive work culture, opportunities for career advancement, and a sense of purpose in their work (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Additionally, companies that offer competitive compensation packages, flexible working conditions, and a positive organizational culture are more likely to retain top talent.

In the IT industry, employees are often highly skilled and in demand, which means that they are more likely to leave for better opportunities if their current job does not meet their needs. A study by Liu and Liu (2018) found that providing employees with opportunities for personal

growth, job autonomy, and recognition for their contributions are all important factors in retaining talent in the IT sector. Furthermore, research by O'Neill and Davis (2011) suggested that companies that invest in employee well-being and work-life balance tend to have higher retention rates, as employees feel more satisfied and valued in such environments. However, retention in the IT industry is not solely dependent on motivating factors. Hygiene factors, such as salary, benefits, and job security, are also crucial for maintaining employee satisfaction and preventing dissatisfaction. A study by Zhang et al. (2020) found that employees who felt their compensation was not competitive or who faced job insecurity were more likely to leave for better opportunities.

Employee retention in Saudi Arabia's IT sector presents its own unique set of challenges and opportunities. With the country's growing digital economy, IT professionals are in high demand, and retention has become a key concern for companies seeking to maintain a competitive edge (Alshammari et al., 2021). In Saudi Arabia, the demand for skilled IT professionals is particularly high in sectors such as e-commerce, telecommunications, and cybersecurity, where rapid technological advancements are constantly reshaping the landscape.

Studies have indicated that employee retention in the Saudi IT industry is heavily influenced by both motivating and hygiene factors. For example, research by Alharbi and Alruwais (2021) found that while compensation and benefits were important to Saudi IT professionals, factors such as career development opportunities, work-life balance, and a supportive organizational culture played a more significant role in retention. This highlights the importance of providing a balance of intrinsic motivators (such as career growth) and extrinsic factors (such as salary and job security) to retain skilled employees.

Moreover, Saudi employees in the IT sector often seek opportunities for personal and professional growth. A study by Alshammari et al. (2021) revealed that IT professionals in Saudi

Arabia were more likely to stay with an organization that invested in their training and provided clear paths for career advancement. Additionally, employees valued companies that fostered a positive organizational culture, with open communication and recognition of individual achievements.

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory offers valuable insights into employee retention in the Saudi IT sector. By focusing on both motivators (such as career development and recognition) and hygiene factors (such as salary and job security), organizations can create an environment that reduces dissatisfaction and fosters long-term engagement. Research by Alshammari et al. (2021) has shown that Saudi IT professionals who perceive their work environment as supportive and fulfilling are more likely to stay with their employers, particularly if they are offered opportunities for career growth and recognition.

In Saudi Arabia, the implementation of Herzberg's theory can be particularly effective in addressing employee retention challenges. The country's IT sector is competitive, and companies that focus on improving both motivating and hygiene factors can create a more attractive work environment for skilled professionals. Studies have shown that providing training opportunities, clear career paths, and a positive work culture can significantly improve employee retention in the IT sector (Zhang et al., 2020).

Moreover, Herzberg's framework can help Saudi companies address issues related to job dissatisfaction. For example, if hygiene factors such as salary, benefits, and job security are not adequately addressed, employees may become dissatisfied, regardless of the motivating factors in their job. Research has shown that employees who feel underpaid or insecure in their jobs are more likely to leave for better opportunities (Michaels & Spector, 2020). Therefore, a balanced approach that addresses both intrinsic and extrinsic factors is essential for retention.

The application of Herzberg's theory in the Saudi IT sector is particularly relevant in the context of employee retention. As the IT industry in Saudi Arabia continues to grow, organizations must adopt strategies that address both motivating and hygiene factors in order to retain skilled professionals. Herzberg's theory suggests that while adequate hygiene factors are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction, it is the motivating factors that truly drive employee engagement and retention. Research by Alharbi and Alruwais (2021) supports this view, indicating that Saudi IT professionals who perceive their work as meaningful and who are recognized for their contributions are more likely to remain with their employer. At the same time, companies that provide competitive salaries, job security, and a positive work environment can minimize dissatisfaction and reduce turnover rates. Herzberg's theory provides a useful framework for IT companies in Saudi Arabia to assess and address the needs of their workforce in order to retain talent in an increasingly competitive market.

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