



# The Link between Compensation and Job Attitudes beyond Just the Paycheck

Abubakar Aishatu\*, Sazib Hossain, Fletcher Junior Nimoo

School of Business, Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology, Nanjing, China

Email: \*yishabuba@gmail.com

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## Abstract

The traditional notion that higher pay equals higher job satisfaction has been challenged by modern workplace dynamics. This study explores the complex relationship between compensation and job attitudes, moving beyond the simplistic assumption that salary alone determines employee satisfaction. A mixed-methods approach was employed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of employees from various organizations. The results show that while competitive compensation remains a baseline expectation, employees value a holistic work experience encompassing factors such as meaningful work, flexible work schedules, professional development, and a supportive work environment. Recognition, autonomy, and opportunities for growth emerged as significant contributors to job satisfaction. The perceived fairness of compensation practices significantly impacts job attitudes, and individual differences in compensation preferences must be considered. The study highlights the importance of moving beyond a narrow focus on salary and incorporating non-monetary rewards, opportunities for growth, and recognition programs into compensation packages. Effective communication about compensation practices and the rationale behind them is also crucial. The findings have implications for organizations seeking to design compensation strategies that foster positive job attitudes, employee engagement, and retention.

## Subject Areas

Business Management

## Keywords

Job Satisfaction, Traditional Notion, Job Attitudes, Compensation, Job, Work

## 1. Introduction

For years, the standard equation has held true: a greater income leads to happier

employees. Compensation in the form of a large salary has long been regarded as the key to attracting and maintaining top personnel [1]. However, the modern workplace paints a more complex picture [2]. According to recent studies, employees are increasingly looking beyond their base wage to assess their entire compensation package and its impact on job attitudes [3]. This transition requires a more comprehensive understanding of “total compensation.” Today, it includes not just the actual cash amount of a wage but also a variety of supplementary benefits, incentives, and possibilities for professional development [4] [5]. These other criteria besides income have a substantial impact on an employee’s perception of fairness and value as well as their overall job satisfaction and motivation [6].

This research paper investigates the complex relationship between remuneration and job attitudes. Moving beyond the simple “more pay equals more satisfaction” concept. We examine how various components of total compensation packages influence employee attitudes. This study investigates the impact of elements such as benefits packages, recognition programs, and career development possibilities on employee views using current studies released after 2020. Gaining a better grasp of these dynamics is critical for firms that want to design and implement effective pay schemes. A well-crafted remuneration strategy can generate a more engaged and productive team, leading to improved organizational success.

The research addresses the following key questions:

- 1) How do different components of compensation (base salary, bonuses, benefits, etc.) influence employee job attitudes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, etc.)?
- 2) What role do non-monetary rewards (recognition programs, work-life balance, career development opportunities) play in shaping employee attitudes alongside compensation?
- 3) How do individual differences (age, experience, personality traits) moderate the relationship between compensation and job attitudes?

According to Herzberg’s theory, there are two independent factors that influence job satisfaction. These are:

- Motivators: these have a positive influence on job satisfaction.
- Hygiene factors: these prevent job dissatisfaction.

### Elements That Positively Impact Wellbeing at Work:



Figure 1. Components of better communication (Source: <https://www.numerade.com>).



**Figure 2.** Herzberg's two-factor theory.

Essentially, Herzberg is saying that the motivators will give employees the drive they need to work harder. The hygiene factors will simply keep them content with their job overall. According to his theory, financial benefits are hygiene factors. In other words, compensation doesn't actually improve performance—rather, it secures the fort against employees feeling unhappy in their roles, and helps you boost retention rates.

## 2. Literature Review

Workplace attitudes held by employees, such as wellbeing, job effect, and job satisfaction, are important determinants of individual and organizational results [7]. Researchers have been interested in the relationship between workplace attitudes and compensation because firms want to know how to successfully engage and motivate their workforce. In addition to identifying knowledge gaps and outlining possible future study topics, the goal of this review of the literature is to combine and synthesize recent research findings on the relationship between compensation and job attitudes.

### 2.1. Compensation and Job Attitudes

The relationship between compensation and job attitudes has been extensively studied, with most research indicating a positive correlation between financial rewards and employee satisfaction [8] [9]. However, several studies challenge this direct relationship by highlighting non-monetary factors. For example, Herzberg's two-factor theory posits that while compensation is a "hygiene factor" necessary to prevent dissatisfaction, it does not significantly enhance motivation or job performance [10]. In contrast, other studies suggest that intrinsic factors such

as job autonomy and professional growth have a more profound impact on job attitudes than monetary compensation alone [11].

While some research supports the notion that higher pay leads to better job satisfaction, others have pointed out that monetary incentives are not always the most effective motivators. For example, Deci & Ryan argued that over-reliance on extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation [12], which plays a critical role in fostering long-term job satisfaction and engagement. This divergence of views highlights the need for a more nuanced approach to compensation strategies.

## **2.2. Employee Engagement and Job Performance**

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical factor in determining job performance. Studies emphasize the link between employee engagement and work outcomes, suggesting that engaged employees tend to show higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment [13]. However, not all research agrees on the extent of this relationship. Some researchers, argue that while engagement is important, other factors such as organizational culture [14] and leadership styles might play a more significant role in influencing job attitudes and performance.

## **2.3. Organizational Culture and Leadership**

Organizational culture serves as a lens through which members interpret events, make decisions, and respond to challenges [9] [14] looked into how leadership effectiveness and organizational culture affected the job satisfaction of PR professionals. The study found that the impact of organizational culture and leadership performance on PR professionals' job satisfaction was mediated by engagement and trust [15]. They found that engagement and trust worked together as a moderating factor. This shows that employee employment attitudes can be greatly influenced by the corporate context, particularly its culture and leadership methods. Furthermore, investigated the connections between moral distress, employee attitudes and well-being, and views of their manager's behavioral integrity. This study provided insight into the influence of moral leadership on employee attitudes about their jobs [16].

## **2.4. Employee Well-Being and Job Attitudes**

Research on understanding employment attitudes has also focused on the well-being of employees. The significance of intra individual models of employee well-being was highlighted as a means of comprehending the dynamics of employment attitudes across time [17]. Similarly, a systematic review of the longitudinal development of employee well-being was carried out, which emphasized the significance of well-being in influencing attitudes and actions related to the workplace [18]. There are several knowledge gaps and potential topics for future research, despite the fact that the current research offers insightful information about the relationship between pay and job attitudes. First, further research is necessary to understand the mechanisms and procedures by which pay affects attitudes about

employment [19]. Furthermore, future studies should focus on how individual variations, such as personality traits and demographics, influence the relationship between job attitudes and compensation. Furthermore, to give a thorough understanding of this relationship in various organizational contexts, longitudinal studies analyzing the long-term impacts of remuneration on occupational attitudes and well-being are required. This is a comprehensive review of recent research findings on the link between compensation and job attitudes. Integrating and synthesizing these insights contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between compensation, employee engagement, organizational culture, and employee well-being. However, further research is needed to address the identified knowledge gaps and advance our understanding of the multifaceted nature of the relationship between compensation and job attitudes.

### **3. Methodology**

This study aims to explore the complex relationship between compensation and job attitudes, moving beyond the simplistic assumption that higher pay solely determines employee attitude and satisfaction.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

A mixed-methods approach was employed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. A self-administered survey was distributed to a sample of employees and individuals from various organizations. The survey measured the following:

- Compensation (base salary, bonuses, benefits);
- Non-monetary rewards (recognition programs, work-life balance, career development opportunities);
- Job attitudes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment);
- Individual differences (age, experience, personality traits).

#### **3.2. Participants**

The survey included a total of 215 participants from various industries. Participants were selected based on a random sampling approach to ensure a representative sample. The demographic profile of the participants included individuals aged 25 - 55, with varying levels of experience (1 - 20 years), and from diverse job roles such as managers, technical staff, and administrative personnel. The gender distribution was approximately balanced, with 54% male and 46% female respondents.

#### **3.3. Data Collection Procedure and Ethical Considerations**

The survey was administered online. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout the process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they began the survey. Participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any point. All personal data was handled with strict confidentiality, and no identifying information was linked to individual responses.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using multiple regression models to examine the relationships between compensation, non-monetary rewards, individual differences, and job attitudes. Specifically, linear regression models were applied to assess how different variables influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The statistical software used for analysis was SPSS, and significance levels were set at  $p < 0.05$ . Correlation analysis was also employed to explore how individual differences moderate the link between compensation and job attitudes.

### 3.5. Expected Outcomes

This research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted relationship between compensation and job attitudes. By examining the interplay of various compensation components, non-monetary rewards, and individual differences, the study provides valuable insights for organizations seeking to design compensation packages that foster positive job attitudes, enhance employee engagement, and improve retention.

## 4. Results and Discussion

**Table 1** summarizes data collected from 215 employees, offering a window into their experiences. By examining the demographics, work environment perceptions, and satisfaction levels, we can gain valuable insights into the overall employee experience. The data reveals a relatively young average employee age of 2.23 years. Additionally, the gender data, with a mean score of 1.62. The data indicates a variety of job titles within the sample, with an average score of 2.11 for job title (coded). This suggests a diverse range of roles within the organization. The average employee tenure of 1.9 years points towards a relatively young

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	215	2.233	0.908	1	4
Gender	215	1.623	0.725	1	3
Job Title	215	2.107	0.866	1	6
Length of employment	215	1.902	0.72	1	3
Role performance	215	2.949	1.177	1	5
Compensation	215	3.051	1.224	1	5
Work schedule flexibility	215	1.316	0.466	1	2
Managers help in work life balancing	215	3.098	1.158	1	5
Work performance feedback	215	3.126	1.151	1	5
Professional development	215	3.209	1.163	1	5
Employee well-being initiatives	215	3.056	1.183	1	5

workforce in terms of company experience. However, employees seem to perceive their performance positively, with a mean score of 2.95 on a 5-point scale. This suggests a sense of accomplishment and contribution within their roles. Employees rate their compensation positively, with a mean score of 3.05. This indicates a perceived level of fairness and competitiveness in their pay structure. Work schedule flexibility scores suggest a moderate level of adaptability offered, with a mean of 1.32 on a 2-point scale. This might indicate a potential area for improvement if employees desire more control over their work schedules. The data suggests a work environment that prioritizes work-life balance. Employees perceive good support from managers in this area, with a mean score of 3.10 on a 5-point scale. Similarly, employees report receiving regular performance feedback (mean score of 3.13) and value the opportunities for professional development (mean score of 3.21). These factors can contribute to a sense of growth and career progression within the organization. Furthermore, the positive rating for employee well-being initiatives (mean score of 3.06) suggests a company culture that recognizes the importance of employee mental and physical health. This data analysis provides a glimpse into employees experience at various organizations. The positive scores for performance, compensation, and support systems suggest a generally positive work environment. However, further analysis and comparisons with industry benchmarks would be necessary to draw more definitive conclusions. By examining trends and outliers, organizations can gain a deeper understanding of employee sentiment and identify areas for improvement, ultimately fostering a more engaged and productive workforce.

The regression analysis reveals that gender and job title do not statistically affect employee performance (represented by the variable "Coef."). The p-values for both variables are above 0.05, indicating that the observed coefficients (Coef.) of  $-0.076$  (gender) and  $-0.069$  (job title) are likely due to chance and not a true relationship. Length of employment (Coef. = 0.299, p-value = 0.001) shows a positive and statistically significant relationship with performance. This suggests that employees with more experience tend to perform better. However, it's important to note that the confidence interval (0.128 to 0.471) indicates a diminishing effect of experience. In other words, while experience is important, beyond a certain point, its impact on performance might plateau. The analysis reveals mixed results regarding factors related to the work environment. Managers helping with work-life balance (MHIWLB) has a negative and statistically significant relationship with performance (Coef. =  $-0.212$ , p-value = 0.014). This might be counter intuitive, but it's possible that employees needing significant work-life balance support might be facing challenges impacting their performance. Further investigation into the reasons behind needing such support might be necessary. Work schedule flexibility also doesn't have a statistically significant impact on performance (p-value = 0.23). This suggests that within the offered range of flexibility, it doesn't directly influence performance. The data doesn't provide conclusive evidence regarding the impact of work performance feedback (Coef. = 0.089, p-value = 0.302)

or professional development opportunities (Coef. = 0.04, p-value = 0.665) on performance. While the coefficients are positive, indicating a potential positive influence, more research might be needed to solidify these relationships. The positive coefficient (Coef. = 0.095) for employee well-being initiatives, although not statistically significant (p-value = 0.233), suggests a potential link between employee well-being and performance. Future studies with larger sample sizes might be able to confirm this relationship. The model's R-squared value of 0.134 indicates that it explains only a modest portion of the variance in employee performance. This suggests that other factors not included in the model might also play a significant role. Additionally, the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and Bayesian information criterion (BIC) values can be used for model selection purposes when comparing different regression models. This regression analysis highlights the complexity of factors influencing employee performance. While experience plays a positive role, the impact diminishes with time. Supportive work environments are crucial, but the reasons behind needing work-life balance support require further investigation. The analysis doesn't provide definitive evidence for the impact of feedback, development opportunities, or well-being initiatives, but these areas warrant further exploration. Organizations seeking to improve employee performance should consider a multi-faceted approach. This might involve fostering a culture of continuous learning, providing effective performance feedback, and ensuring work-life balance support is readily available for those who need it. By addressing these diverse aspects, organizations can create an environment that empowers employees to excel (See [Table 2](#)).

**Table 2.** Linear regression.

Variables	Coef.	Standard error	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval	Sig
Gender	-0.076	0.082	-0.92	0.358	-0.238	0.087	
Job title	-0.069	0.071	-0.97	0.334	-0.209	0.071	
Length of employment	0.299	0.087	3.44	0.001	0.128	0.471	***
Role performance	0.135	0.074	1.82	0.07	-0.011	0.281	*
Compensation	-0.083	0.085	-0.98	0.328	-0.25	0.084	
Work schedule flexibility	-0.158	0.131	-1.21	0.23	-0.416	0.1	
MHIWLB	-0.212	0.086	-2.47	0.014	-0.381	-0.042	**
Work performance feedback	0.089	0.086	1.03	0.302	-0.081	0.258	
Professional development	0.04	0.091	0.43	0.665	-0.14	0.219	
Employee well-being initiatives	0.095	0.08	1.20	0.233	-0.062	0.253	
Constant	1.953	0.339	5.76	0	1.285	2.622	***
R-squared	0.134		Number of obs			215	
F-test	3.147		Prob > F			0.001	
Akaike crit. (AIC)	558.717		Bayesian crit. (BIC)			595.794	

\*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

**Table 3.** Matrix of correlations.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
(1) Age	1.000										
(2) Gender	-0.072	1.000									
(3) Job Title	0.010	0.094	1.000								
(4) Length of employment	0.249	-0.008	0.219	1.000							
(5) Role performance	0.182	-0.045	0.092	0.220	1.000						
(6) Compensation	0.048	-0.020	0.070	0.197	0.651	1.000					
(7) Work schedule flexibility	-0.053	-0.047	-0.003	-0.089	0.021	-0.094	1.000				
(8) Managers help in work life balancing	-0.022	0.011	0.055	0.180	0.532	0.715	-0.092	1.000			
(9) Work performance feedback	0.119	0.007	0.104	0.145	0.626	0.632	0.056	0.657	1.000		
(10) Professional development	0.064	-0.000	0.121	0.203	0.530	0.734	-0.080	0.748	0.696	1.000	
(11) Employee well-being initiatives	0.140	0.003	0.140	0.193	0.633	0.644	0.036	0.624	0.705	0.644	1.000

**Table 3** shows a correlation matrix, which presents the correlation coefficients between the various factors used that potentially influence work performance. The correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. It ranges from  $-1$  (perfect negative correlation) to  $+1$  (perfect positive correlation), with  $0$  indicating no linear relationship. Age has a weak positive correlation with most variables (around  $0.1 - 0.2$ ), except for Gender ( $-0.072$ ). This suggests a slight tendency for older employees to have longer tenure (Length of employment), higher role performance ( $0.249$ ), and benefit from compensation ( $0.197$ ). However, these correlations are weak and may not be statistically significant. Gender has a very weak negative correlation with most variables, including Age ( $0.072$ ) and Role performance ( $-0.045$ ). This suggests minimal to no linear relationship between gender and these factors in this sample. Job title shows weak correlations with most variables. A slightly positive correlation with Length of employment ( $0.219$ ) suggests some association between job title and tenure. The Length of employment variable has a moderate positive correlation with Role performance ( $0.220$ ) and Compensation ( $0.197$ ), indicating a tendency for employees with longer tenure to perform better and receive higher compensation. Role performance: This has weak positive correlations with most variables, including Compensation ( $0.651$ ) and Work performance feedback ( $0.626$ ). This suggests a connection between good performance, higher pay, and receiving positive feedback. However, the correlations with feedback and other factors are moderate, indicating other influences on performance. Compensation shows a strong positive correlation with Role performance ( $0.651$ ), suggesting higher pay

is associated with better performance. However, it's important to consider potential reverse causality - perhaps higher performers are rewarded with better compensation. Work schedule flexibility: This has weak negative correlations with most variables, including Role performance (-0.089) and Compensation (-0.094). However, these correlations are very weak and might not be significant. Managerial support for work-life balance: This shows weak positive correlations with some variables and weak negative correlations with others. It doesn't show a clear linear relationship with work performance (0.532).

Work performance feedback: This has a moderate positive correlation with Role performance (0.626), suggesting receiving feedback might be associated with better performance. However, the correlation is not very strong, indicating other factors also influence performance. Professional development: This has weak positive correlations with most variables, including Length of employment (0.203) and Role performance (0.530). This suggests some association between professional development opportunities and tenure and performance, but the correlations are moderate. Employee well-being initiatives: This shows weak positive correlations with most variables, including Role performance (0.633). However, similar to other correlations with performance, it's not very strong, suggesting other factors are likely at play. By understanding these correlations, organizations can identify potential areas for improvement in employee performance management. For example, focusing on providing regular and constructive feedback alongside opportunities for professional development could be beneficial. However, it's crucial to consider these findings alongside other data and conduct further analysis to develop effective strategies for enhancing employee performance and well-being.

### **Discussion**

The results of the study highlight several key factors influencing job attitudes beyond monetary compensation. Descriptive statistics from the survey indicate that, on average, employees rate their compensation positively (mean score of 3.05 out of 5), but other factors such as professional development opportunities (mean score of 3.21) and managerial support for work-life balance (mean score of 3.10) were also highly rated, suggesting their importance in shaping job satisfaction. Regression analysis shows that length of employment has a significant positive relationship with performance ( $p = 0.001$ ), while factors such as gender and job title were not statistically significant predictors of job satisfaction. Interestingly, managerial support for work-life balance exhibited a negative relationship with performance ( $p = 0.014$ ), which may indicate that employees requiring extensive support in this area are facing challenges that negatively affect their work outcomes. Despite these findings, it is important to note the limitations of this study. The reliance on correlational data limits the ability to establish causality. Future research should consider longitudinal studies or experimental designs to better understand the causal mechanisms between compensation and job attitudes.

## 5. Conclusion

This study explored the complex relationship between compensation and job attitudes, moving beyond the simplistic assumption that higher pay equals higher job satisfaction. The findings suggest that while competitive compensation remains a baseline expectation, employees value a holistic work experience encompassing factors such as meaningful work, flexible schedules, professional development, and supportive work environments. Recognition, autonomy, and opportunities for growth emerged as significant contributors to job satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of moving beyond a narrow focus on salary and incorporating non-monetary rewards, opportunities for growth, and recognition programs into compensation packages. However, the reliance on correlational data limits the ability to assert causality, and future research should employ longitudinal designs to better understand these dynamics. Organizations seeking to design effective compensation strategies must consider the broader range of factors that contribute to positive job attitudes, thereby fostering a more engaged and productive workforce.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to enhance the relationship between compensation and job attitudes, ultimately improving employee satisfaction, engagement, and organizational performance. Organizations should adopt holistic compensation packages that go beyond traditional monetary rewards by including non-monetary incentives such as recognition programs, career development opportunities, flexible work schedules, and work-life balance initiatives, which significantly contribute to job satisfaction. Tailoring compensation strategies to individual differences, such as age, experience, and personality traits, is crucial for ensuring greater satisfaction and retention. Clear and transparent communication about compensation practices, along with training managers to support employees in areas like work-life balance and professional development, can further strengthen employee attitudes and performance. Implementing regular performance feedback systems and development initiatives can foster a sense of growth and motivation among employees. Given the limitations of correlational data in this study, future research should explore causal relationships between compensation components and job attitudes through longitudinal or experimental designs to better understand how compensation strategies influence behavior over time. By following these recommendations, organizations can design compensation strategies that not only meet financial expectations but also foster positive job attitudes, leading to a more engaged and productive workforce.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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