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The Impact of Employee Motivation on Job Satisfaction: Evidence from the Information Technology Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how employee motivation influences job satisfaction among professionals in the information technology (IT) industry, and whether employee engagement mediates and organisational commitment moderates that relationship. Motivation is disaggregated into intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, consistent with Self-Determination Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used. Primary data were obtained from 300 IT employees through a structured questionnaire comprising 27 items measured on a five-point Likert scale, covering intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, employee engagement, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction. Data were screened for completeness, invalid values, and duplication, and all constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from .83 to .96). Analyses included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, bootstrapped mediation, and moderated regression. All constructs were strongly and positively intercorrelated. Multiple regression showed that intrinsic ($\beta = .50$) and extrinsic ($\beta = .48$) motivation jointly explained 88.8% of the variance in job satisfaction, with both predictors significant ($p < .001$). Employee engagement partially mediated the motivation–satisfaction relationship, the bootstrapped indirect effect being significant (indirect = .29, 95% CI [.22, .37]). However, organisational commitment did not significantly moderate the relationship (interaction $p = .82$). The findings confirm motivation as a dominant driver of IT employee satisfaction, operating partly through engagement, and offer HR managers evidence-based levers for retention. Limitations relating to the cross-sectional, single-source design and high construct intercorrelation are discussed.

Keywords: *employee motivation, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, employee engagement, organisational commitment, information technology*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The information technology (IT) industry is among the most human-capital-intensive sectors of the modern economy. Its output depends on the cognitive effort, creativity, and discretionary commitment of highly skilled professionals who operate in a labour market defined by chronic skill scarcity and elevated voluntary turnover. In such conditions, the psychological drivers of employee attitudes are a strategic concern rather than a peripheral welfare issue, because job satisfaction is a proximal antecedent of retention, productivity, and service quality.

Employee motivation is consistently identified as a key determinant of job satisfaction. Contemporary theory, however, distinguishes sharply between intrinsic motivation, which is engagement in work for its inherent interest and enjoyment, and extrinsic motivation, which is instrumental and reward-contingent (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These two forms are theorised to relate to satisfaction through partly different psychological routes, and their relative importance is likely to vary across industries. IT professionals frequently derive satisfaction from problem-solving, mastery, and autonomy, yet also operate in a market where compensation and advancement are highly salient, making the sector an instructive setting for testing both pathways simultaneously.

Despite an extensive literature, motivation is often treated as a single aggregate, the mechanism linking it to satisfaction is rarely modelled, and boundary conditions such as organisational commitment are seldom examined. Using original survey data from 300 IT employees, this study addresses these gaps by estimating the intrinsic and extrinsic paths to satisfaction, testing employee engagement as a mediator, and testing organisational commitment as a moderator.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is most influentially defined as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke, 1976). It is understood both as a global attitude and as a composite of facet-specific evaluations covering pay, supervision, the work itself, growth, and co-workers (Spector, 1997). Its importance rests on a durable association with performance and a stronger association with withdrawal behaviours; the meta-analytic review by Judge et al. (2001) established satisfaction as a meaningful correlate of how well employees perform.

B. Employee Motivation and Its Dimensions

Motivation refers to the psychological forces that determine the direction, intensity, and persistence of behaviour. Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005) frames intrinsic motivation as doing an activity for its inherent satisfactions and extrinsic motivation as doing it for a separable consequence such as pay or recognition. Autonomous (intrinsic) motivation is generally associated with more adaptive outcomes, including higher satisfaction, than controlled (extrinsic) motivation. A large meta-analysis confirmed that intrinsic motivation is most strongly linked with well-being outcomes such as job satisfaction (Van den Broeck et al., 2021).

Two content theories reinforce this logic. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy positions lower-order needs (extrinsic factors) below higher-order growth needs (intrinsic factors), implying diminishing returns to extrinsic rewards once security is met. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) Two-Factor Theory distinguishes motivators (achievement, the work itself, growth) that drive satisfaction from hygiene factors (salary, security, conditions) whose deficiency produces dissatisfaction but whose presence does not by itself generate satisfaction. Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) predicts satisfaction when valued outcomes, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, are attained, providing warrant for a genuine, if secondary, extrinsic pathway.

C. Employee Engagement as Mediator

Employee engagement, defined as the harnessing of the self to one's work role and expressed as vigour, dedication, and absorption (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), is increasingly positioned as the state through which motivation is converted into positive attitudes. Motivated employees invest more energy and attention in their work, and that engagement is a robust correlate of satisfaction. Recent models place engagement between motivational antecedents and attitudinal outcomes (Arulsenthilkumar & Punitha, 2024), suggesting it helps explain how, not merely that, motivation raises satisfaction.

D. Organisational Commitment as Boundary Condition

Organisational commitment, defined as the psychological attachment binding an employee to the organisation and encompassing affective, continuance, and normative components (Meyer & Allen, 1991), is usually studied as an outcome of satisfaction. This study repositions it as a moderator, reasoning that strongly committed employees, having internalised organisational goals, may translate motivational impulses into satisfaction more readily than weakly committed employees. Evidence in the IT context indicates that compensation, management quality, career growth, and work–life balance are salient satisfaction determinants (Lee et al.,

2025; Tiwari et al., 2023), while broader reviews confirm the motivation–satisfaction link across sectors (Monga & Soni, 2023).

III. RESEARCH GAP

Four gaps motivate this study. First, IT-focused research frequently models motivation as a single construct, leaving the relative contribution of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation unresolved. Second, the motivation–satisfaction relationship is usually reported as a direct effect, with employee engagement rarely tested as an explanatory mediator. Third, organisational commitment is almost always treated as a consequence of satisfaction rather than as a moderating boundary condition. Fourth, integrated mediation–moderation models tailored to IT professionals, who are uniquely dependent on discretionary effort and uniquely exposed to attrition, remain uncommon. This study addresses all four gaps within a single empirical model.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study pursues five objectives: (1) to examine the effect of employee motivation on the job satisfaction of IT employees; (2) to assess the separate effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on job satisfaction; (3) to test whether employee engagement mediates the motivation–satisfaction relationship; (4) to test whether organisational commitment moderates this relationship; and (5) to derive evidence-informed recommendations for HR managers in the IT sector.

V. HYPOTHESES

Drawing on the theories reviewed above, five hypotheses are proposed. H1: Employee motivation positively influences job satisfaction. H2: Intrinsic motivation positively influences job satisfaction, and is expected to be the stronger predictor given the intrinsic content of IT work (Ryan & Deci, 2000). H3: Extrinsic motivation positively influences job satisfaction, consistent with Expectancy Theory in a reward-salient labour market (Vroom, 1964). H4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction (Kahn, 1990; Arulsenthilkumar & Punitha, 2024). H5: Organisational commitment moderates the relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction, strengthening it at higher levels of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design and Sample

A quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational survey design was adopted, appropriate for theory-driven hypothesis testing. The target population comprised professionals employed in IT organisations. Data were collected from 300 respondents through a structured self-report questionnaire administered with a covering statement assuring voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. The achieved sample size exceeds common thresholds for multiple regression and mediation analysis.

B. Measures

All constructs were measured with multi-item scales scored on a five-point Likert format (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree): intrinsic motivation (5 items), extrinsic motivation (5 items), employee engagement (5 items), organisational commitment (5 items), and job satisfaction (7 items), yielding 27 substantive items. Item wording was adapted from established instruments in the Self-Determination, work-engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), organisational-commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), and job-satisfaction (Spector, 1997) traditions. Seven demographic questions were also captured. An overall motivation composite was computed as the mean of the intrinsic and extrinsic items.

C. Data Analysis

Data were analysed following a standard sequence used in survey-based HRM research and executable in SPSS. The steps comprised data screening; reliability assessment via Cronbach's alpha; descriptive statistics and normality checks; Pearson correlation; multiple regression to test H1–H3, with multicollinearity (VIF) and residual (Durbin–Watson) diagnostics; bias-corrected bootstrapped mediation with 5,000 resamples to test H4; and moderated (interaction) regression with mean-centred predictors to test H5. Statistical significance was judged at $p < .05$. Harman's single-factor test was used to assess common-method variance.

VII. RESULTS

A. Data Screening and Sample Profile

The dataset contained 300 complete responses with no missing values, no out-of-range (invalid) Likert entries, and no duplicate records; the questionnaire items corresponded exactly to the dataset variables, so no cases were removed. The sample was broadly representative of the IT workforce (Table 1): 51.7% male and 46.0% female; 78.0% aged under 35; 90.0% holding a bachelor's or master's degree; and 68.3% employed in software-engineering or senior software-engineering roles. IT services (48.7%) and product companies (25.7%) were the most common employer types.

Table 1*Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 300)*

Variable	Category (n, %)	Variable	Category (n, %)
Gender	Male 155 (51.7); Female 138 (46.0); Other/PNS 7 (2.3)	Experience	<1 yr 46 (15.3); 1–3 117 (39.0); 4–6 63 (21.0); 7–10 47 (15.7); >10 27 (9.0)
Age	Below 25 85 (28.3); 25–34 149 (49.7); 35–44 50 (16.7); 45+ 16 (5.3)	Org type	IT Services 146 (48.7); Product 77 (25.7); Startup 41 (13.7); Consulting 26 (8.7); Other 10 (3.3)
Qualification	Bachelor's 140 (46.7); Master's 130 (43.3); Diploma 18 (6.0); PhD/Other 12 (4.0)	Org size	<100 64 (21.3); 100–500 91 (30.3); 501–1000 62 (20.7); >1000 83 (27.7)
Position	Software Eng. 130 (43.3); Sr. Software Eng. 75 (25.0); Team Lead 53 (17.7); Manager 30 (10.0); Other 12 (4.0)		

B. Reliability

All five constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values well above the conventional .70 threshold (Table 2). The overall 10-item motivation composite also proved highly reliable ($\alpha = .92$).

Table 2*Reliability Analysis*

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's α
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	5	.872
Extrinsic Motivation (EM)	5	.829
Employee Engagement (EE)	5	.861
Organizational Commitment (OC)	5	.871
Job Satisfaction (JS)	7	.960
Overall Motivation (IM + EM)	10	.919

C. Descriptive Statistics

Construct means clustered around 3.7 on the five-point scale, indicating moderately positive levels across all variables (Table 3). Skewness and kurtosis values fell within the ± 1 range, supporting the assumption of approximate univariate normality required for parametric analysis.

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics of Study Constructs (N = 300)*

Construct	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Intrinsic Motivation	3.70	0.74	-0.21	-0.57
Extrinsic Motivation	3.71	0.74	-0.37	-0.51
Employee Engagement	3.69	0.74	-0.41	-0.33
Organizational Commitment	3.71	0.76	-0.29	-0.66
Job Satisfaction	3.72	0.72	-0.41	-0.25

D. Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlations (Table 4) revealed strong, positive, and statistically significant associations among all constructs ($p < .001$). Job satisfaction correlated most strongly with overall motivation, and comparably with intrinsic motivation ($r = .91$), extrinsic motivation ($r = .90$), engagement ($r = .91$), and commitment ($r = .91$). The high intercorrelations are noted as a data characteristic and revisited in the limitations.

Table 4*Correlation Matrix of Study Constructs*

Construct	IM	EM	EE	OC	JS
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	1				
Extrinsic Motivation (EM)	.844	1			
Employee Engagement (EE)	.853	.857	1		
Organizational Commitment (OC)	.867	.863	.829	1	
Job Satisfaction (JS)	.906	.903	.907	.905	1

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

E. Multiple Regression (H1–H3)

Job satisfaction was regressed on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Table 5). The model was significant, $F(2, 297) = 1,173.81$, $p < .001$, and explained 88.8% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .888$, adjusted $R^2 = .887$). Both predictors were significant and positive: intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .50$, $t = 13.80$, $p < .001$) and extrinsic motivation ($\beta = .48$, $t = 13.27$, $p < .001$), with intrinsic motivation slightly the stronger of the two. Multicollinearity was within acceptable limits ($VIF = 3.48$) and residual independence was satisfactory (Durbin–Watson = 2.03). A parallel simple regression of satisfaction on the overall motivation composite was also significant ($\beta = .94$, $R^2 = .888$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. Thus H1, H2, and H3 were supported.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Results (DV = Job Satisfaction)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	0.202	0.074	—	2.74	.007
Intrinsic Motivation	0.483	0.035	.500	13.80	<.001
Extrinsic Motivation	0.465	0.035	.481	13.27	<.001

Note. $R^2 = .888$; adjusted $R^2 = .887$; $F(2, 297) = 1,173.81$, $p < .001$. $VIF = 3.48$; Durbin–Watson = 2.03.

F. Mediation Analysis (H4)

Employee engagement was tested as a mediator of the overall motivation–satisfaction relationship using bias-corrected bootstrapping (5,000 resamples). Motivation significantly predicted engagement ($a = .93$, $p < .001$), and engagement significantly predicted satisfaction while controlling for motivation ($b = .32$, $p < .001$). The total effect of motivation on satisfaction ($c = .95$) was reduced but remained significant when engagement was included ($c' = .66$, $p < .001$). The bootstrapped indirect effect was significant, indirect = .29, 95% CI [.22, .37], with approximately 31% of the total effect transmitted through engagement (Table 6). This pattern indicates partial mediation, supporting H4.

Table 6

Mediation of Motivation → Engagement → Job Satisfaction

Path / Effect	Coefficient	p / 95% CI
a: Motivation → Engagement	.925	$p < .001$
b: Engagement → Satisfaction	.317	$p < .001$
c (total): Motivation → Satisfaction	.948	$p < .001$

Path / Effect	Coefficient	p / 95% CI
c' (direct): Motivation → Satisfaction	.655	p < .001
Indirect effect (a × b)	.293	[.222, .367]

Note. Bias-corrected bootstrap, 5,000 resamples. A confidence interval excluding zero indicates a significant indirect effect. Proportion mediated $\approx$ 31%.

G. Moderation Analysis (H5)

Organisational commitment was tested as a moderator of the motivation–satisfaction relationship using mean-centred predictors and their product term (Table 7). Motivation ($B = .68$, $p < .001$) and commitment ($B = .28$, $p < .001$) each had significant main effects, but the Motivation $\times$ Commitment interaction was non-significant, $B = -.005$, $t = -0.23$, $p = .82$, and added no explanatory power ($\Delta R^2 = .000$). Simple-slope estimates were virtually identical at high and low commitment (.67 vs .68). Organisational commitment therefore did not moderate the relationship, and H5 was not supported.

Table 7

Moderated Regression (DV = Job Satisfaction)

Predictor (centred)	B	SE	t	p
Motivation	0.676	—	—	<.001
Organizational Commitment	0.281	—	—	<.001
Motivation $\times$ Commitment	-0.005	0.022	-0.23	.822

Note. ΔR^2 for the interaction term = .000; $F\text{-change}(1, 296) = 0.05$, $p = .82$.

H. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 8

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

No.	Hypothesis	Key statistic	Result
H1	Motivation → Job Satisfaction (+)	$\beta = .94$, $p < .001$	Supported
H2	Intrinsic Motivation → Job Satisfaction (+)	$\beta = .50$, $p < .001$	Supported
H3	Extrinsic Motivation → Job Satisfaction (+)	$\beta = .48$, $p < .001$	Supported

No.	Hypothesis	Key statistic	Result
H4	Engagement mediates Motivation → JS	Indirect = .29, CI [.22, .37]	Supported (partial)
H5	Commitment moderates Motivation → JS	Interaction p = .82	Not supported

VIII. DISCUSSION

The findings confirm employee motivation as a dominant driver of job satisfaction among IT professionals. The support for H1–H3 aligns with the wider literature linking motivation to satisfaction (Monga & Soni, 2023; Tiwari et al., 2023) and with the theoretical expectation, grounded in Self-Determination Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, that intrinsically motivating work is central to positive satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van den Broeck et al., 2021). Intrinsic motivation emerged as the marginally stronger predictor, consistent with the problem-solving and mastery-oriented character of IT work. At the same time, the strong and significant extrinsic path vindicates Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964): in a reward-salient labour market, competitive pay, advancement, and recognition remain meaningful contributors to satisfaction, echoing evidence from IT-sector studies (Lee et al., 2025).

The support for H4 is mechanistically informative. Because engagement carried roughly one third of the total motivation effect while a substantial direct effect remained, motivation appears to raise satisfaction partly by fostering vigour, dedication, and absorption, and partly through routes not captured by engagement alone. This is a partial-mediation pattern consistent with prior models (Arulsenthilkumar & Punitha, 2024; Kahn, 1990).

Contrary to expectation, H5 was not supported: organisational commitment did not moderate the motivation–satisfaction relationship. Although commitment had a strong positive main effect, the strength of the motivation–satisfaction link was effectively constant across commitment levels. One interpretation is that motivation exerts a satisfying effect regardless of how attached employees already feel, so commitment operates as an additive correlate rather than a boundary condition. This adds nuance to the assumption that attitudinal resources necessarily amplify one another and echoes calls to test, rather than presume, moderating effects in workplace motivation research.

A. Theoretical Contributions

The study contributes in three ways. By estimating the intrinsic and extrinsic paths simultaneously, it shows that both matter, with intrinsic motivation marginally ahead; this evidence is relevant to the Herzberg-versus-expectancy debate. By evidencing partial mediation

through engagement, it explains how, not merely that, motivation raises satisfaction. Finally, the null moderation result reframes organisational commitment as a robust correlate rather than a conditional amplifier of satisfaction in this context.

B. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference; the directional language reflects theory, not demonstrated causation. Reliance on single-source self-report raises the possibility of common-method variance; Harman's single-factor test attributed 62% of variance to one factor, exceeding the 50% guideline, so the very high construct intercorrelations should be interpreted with caution and future work should adopt temporal or multi-source separation (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The high reliability of the job-satisfaction scale ($\alpha = .96$) may also indicate some item redundancy. Future research could employ longitudinal or experimental designs, model commitment and engagement sub-dimensions, and incorporate additional variables such as leadership style and remote-work arrangements to refine the model and test its boundaries across organisational types.

IX. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

For HR managers in the IT industry, the results translate into a clear hierarchy of levers. Because intrinsic motivation is the strongest predictor of satisfaction, work design that increases autonomy, task variety, skill development, and meaningful problem-solving should be prioritised; such levers are also low-cost and hard for competitors to replicate. Extrinsic factors remain important, so compensation and advancement must stay competitive to prevent dissatisfaction, yet pay alone is an insufficient strategy in a market where salaries are easily matched. Because engagement mediates the effect, manager-controlled drivers such as regular feedback, recognition, manageable workloads, and autonomy support offer fast intervention points that convert motivation into satisfaction and retention. While commitment did not amplify the motivation effect, its strong association with satisfaction confirms that fostering affective attachment remains worthwhile in its own right.

X. CONCLUSION

This study examined how employee motivation shapes job satisfaction among 300 IT professionals, distinguishing intrinsic from extrinsic motivation, testing engagement as a mediator, and testing organisational commitment as a moderator. Motivation was confirmed as a powerful determinant of satisfaction: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation together explained nearly 89% of its variance, intrinsic motivation being marginally the stronger driver, and engagement partially transmitted the effect. Organisational commitment, though strongly

associated with satisfaction, did not moderate the relationship. For a talent-scarce sector, the practical message is that intrinsically enriching work, supported by competitive rewards and active engagement management, offers the most reliable route to satisfied and retained employees. The cross-sectional, single-source design bounds these conclusions, and longitudinal, multi-source replication is encouraged to strengthen causal and generalisable inference.

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