

Workplace Motivation And Job Satisfaction: A Comparative Study Of Public And Private Sector Employees



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ABSTRACT

Workplace motivation and job satisfaction are pivotal in shaping employee performance and organizational effectiveness. The study presents a comparative analysis between public and private sector employees to explore sectoral differences in motivational drivers, job satisfaction, and organizational support. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research integrated quantitative data from 400 structured questionnaires (200 per sector) and qualitative insights from 20 in-depth interviews. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, regression analysis, and thematic coding were employed to ensure analytical rigor. The results indicate that private sector employees reported significantly higher levels of intrinsic motivation ($M = 4.2$), extrinsic motivation ($M = 4.5$), and job satisfaction ($M = 4.0$), compared to their public sector counterparts. Regression models identified extrinsic motivation and career growth as the strongest predictors of job satisfaction, particularly in the private sector. Thematic analysis revealed that public sector employees prioritize job stability and work-life balance, whereas private sector employees emphasize leadership support, performance recognition, and advancement opportunities. The study concludes that sectoral culture, incentive structures, and leadership styles profoundly shape employee motivation and satisfaction. It recommends sector-specific HR reforms—public institutions should enhance recognition and career development mechanisms, while private organizations must address stress and security concerns. Future research should explore longitudinal dynamics and include rural or industry-specific populations for broader generalizability.

Keywords: Workplace motivation, Job satisfaction, Public sector, Private sector, Organizational behavior, Employee engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation and job satisfaction at work are essential factors of employee performance, commitment, and general well-being. Although motivation is an inner drive that guides behavior in reaching goals, job satisfaction is associated with the general satisfaction of an employee with their job (Amaliyah *et al.*, 2019). The two elements are essential in promoting a productive and harmonious workplace. The motivation may be both intrinsic and extrinsic, i.e., it is motivated by something in the work, or by such external factors as salary, recognition, or promotion potential (Abeyasekera *et al.*, 2019). The motivational drivers and job satisfaction rates are substantially different in the context of the public and private sector employment since the organizational structure and purpose in each of the sectors are also different (Eroglu *et al.*, 2016). The former is more likely to focus on job security and stability, a feeling

of serving the community, and being loyal to the government, whereas the latter is usually associated with competitive remuneration, performance-based compensation, and advancement opportunities (Anne *et al.*, 2017; Can *et al.*, 2019). These variances indicate that the employees in the two industries might have stimulation and pleasure differently.

Although the private sector might provide more financial compensation and a more hectic work environment, it can also present challenges connected to job performance and career advancement, causing more stress and burnout (Baruah *et al.*, 2019). Conversely, working in the public sector, employees are likely to enjoy greater job security and a more secure work-life balance, whereas their intrinsic motivation can be lower as many government institutions are rather bureaucratic (Diop *et al.*, 2017). Notwithstanding such general tendencies, there exist no

comprehensive and systematic studies that systematically compare the levels of job satisfaction and motivation in the two sectors in developing economies, and the area needs further investigation into the differences between the sectors in employee engagement.

The study has found that there exists a difference in the sector on workplace motivation and job satisfaction, but there is much room to understand the comparative factors that affect the dynamics between the situation in the public and the private sector of employees (Anderson, 2016). Prior studies have mostly looked at the individual sectors and have not implemented an effective comparative study to take into consideration various organizational policies and leadership styles and external demands (Adewole, 2015). The sector-specific issues, including bureaucracy in governmental organizations and pressure for performance in commercial companies, are hardly investigated in detail regarding employee motivation and job satisfaction. This disjuncture constrains the capacity of organizations to formulate viable and sector-specific plans to optimize the well-being and productivity of the employees.

As an example, the satisfaction rate of the employees working in the private sector is higher when their performance is linked to the reward and professional development opportunities (Huebner *et al.*, 2015). Conversely, the individuals working in the public sector may have stronger preferences about job security and social significance of the work they perform but feel dissatisfied about lack of progress or growth opportunities (Fleckenstein *et al.*, 2015). This implies that although both motivation and satisfaction are highly essential to the success of any organization, they owe their performance to sectoral and situational forces that need a closer examination (Harzer and Ehrlich, 2016).

The importance of the study is related to various aspects. On the one hand, it will help address an acute gap in the literature by comparing the workplace motivation and job satisfaction of both the public and the private sector workers (Sanghi *et al.*, 2015). Although, to some extent, the key factors determining satisfaction in each sector are understood, there is a lack of systematic comparison of them to offer a more detailed picture of the peculiarities of motivation of employees working in these two environments (Baruah *et al.*, 2019). Second, the study will provide useful information regarding the effect of organizational policies, leadership styles, and sector-specific requirements on employee satisfaction and motivation. The insights will specifically help the HR practitioners and policymakers in both industries aim to establish more effective and people-oriented workspaces (Torre Frade, 2017).

The results of the research can also be used in designing motivation techniques that are customised

based on the needs of the employees in the two sectors. As an example, the non-monetary incentives like recognition and career stability can be used to motivate the workforce working in the public sector (Adewole, 2015), but such factors as bonuses, career development, and even the possibility to improve their skills can be used to motivate the employees working in the private sector (Clemente-Ricolfi, 2017). As long as an organization considers the sector-specific needs of employees, it can raise the level of job satisfaction, engage individuals, and improve overall organizational performance (Hawthorne, 2016).

The research is important since it will lead to better rates of retention in the two sectors. Dissatisfaction with work-life balance, career stagnation, or inadequate rewards are commonly referred to as the causes of high turnover rates, especially those in the private sector (Greenwood *et al.*, 2015; Mattar *et al.*, 2024). Identifying the variables that affect motivation and satisfaction in the two industries will enable the organizations to come up with specific measures to limit turnover and save talent. The problem in the public sector is that it is usually tough to keep workers interested in their employment when there are few promotions and relatively low pay. Learning about these dynamics will help create the means to ensure keeping motivation and decreasing burnout in employees working in the public sector (Anne *et al.*, 2017).

Research Objectives:

- To compare intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels between public and private sector employees
- To evaluate key determinants of job satisfaction, including job security, growth, and organizational culture
- To examine how organizational policies and leadership styles influence motivation and satisfaction across sectors

2. Literature Review

Workplace motivation and job satisfaction are critical constructs in organizational behavior, significantly influencing employee performance, retention, and institutional effectiveness. In comparative frameworks examining public and private sectors, scholars have long investigated the structural, psychological, and policy-driven variables that shape employee experiences.

2.1 Motivational Factors in Organizational Contexts

Lwin (2023) underscores the pivotal role of wages and welfare facilities in enhancing motivation and productivity, particularly in private enterprises where performance-based systems dominate. This aligns with findings by Fleckenstein *et al.* (2015),

who emphasize the impact of organizational expectations and reward systems on employee engagement. In a broader public context, Harzer and Ehrlich (2016) explore how different forms of life satisfaction, including affective components, contribute to intrinsic motivation, a factor often found more prevalent in public sector roles where job security is prioritized over rewards.

2.2 Sectoral Contrasts in Job Satisfaction

Public sector roles are frequently characterized by stability and lower performance pressure, yet they often suffer from bureaucratic stagnation and limited recognition structures. Abeyasekera *et al.* (2019) highlight how governance models rooted in neoliberal policies impact organizational functioning, especially in state institutions where structural rigidity hinders adaptive motivation systems. Private sector environments, as described by Myeni and Singh (2024), offer merit-based progression and inclusive leadership elements that have been shown to enhance job satisfaction.

Burnout and stress levels also differ significantly across sectors. Baruah *et al.* (2019) found that emergency healthcare workers in high-pressure environments, typically private, are more susceptible to burnout without sufficient motivational buffers. Similarly, Can *et al.* (2019) examined self-care agency and perceived stress, identifying a direct correlation with organizational support structures a factor more robust in well-managed private entities.

2.3 Organizational Policies and Leadership Impact

Leadership style is a dominant factor influencing both motivation and satisfaction. Palos and Aguayo-Camacho (2016) argue that organizations embracing digital transformation and change management tend to foster more adaptive work cultures. In the same vein, Greenwood *et al.* (2015) propose a comparative-advantage approach, stressing that institutional flexibility in financial and administrative practices can create a more engaging work environment.

The role of internal control and information technology in shaping organizational performance was explored by Amaliyah *et al.* (2019), who demonstrated that efficient financial management systems improve both the quality of output and employee morale. Similarly, Huebner *et al.* (2015) advocate for administrative innovation in public research institutions to reduce non-core workload and enhance scientist motivation.

2.4 Job Satisfaction and Performance Outcomes

Serebwa *et al.* (2017) identified performance target setting as a key strategy for improving employee

service delivery, particularly when linked to measurable outcomes. In education, Prast *et al.* (2015) emphasized that readiness-based differentiation improved teacher engagement an insight transferable to training and development in workplace settings.

Smith (2016) argued that personal epistemology influences desired practices in trainee teachers, suggesting that employees with aligned personal and institutional values report higher job satisfaction. Torre Frade (2017) extended this discussion in the tourism education sector, noting that institutional identity plays a role in shaping professional motivation.

2.5 Contextual and Cultural Considerations

Cultural and contextual dynamics also shape workplace experiences. Anderson (2016) noted that religious and cultural considerations play a critical role in educational institutions, influencing staff engagement and operational efficacy. In similar cultural studies, Timane *et al.* (2017) examined maternal health services in Nigeria and found client satisfaction closely tied to staff motivation and service quality. Díez (2017) and Clemente-Ricolfe (2017) offer valuable perspectives from the design and tourism industries, reinforcing the importance of user experience, aesthetics, and contextual understanding in workplace satisfaction especially in creative sectors.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design that the study used is mixed-methods research that combined both the quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to present a complete picture of workplace motivation and job satisfaction in both the public and the private sector employees. The quantitative part of the study relied on structured questionnaires to record numerical data that could be statistically analyzed, and the qualitative part relied on semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth information about personal experience and situational factors that had contributed to motivation and satisfaction. The triangulation of data was enabled by this two-pronged method and made the results more robust and valid. It was a cross-sectional study, and it measured the data at one time to be able to compare the level of motivation and satisfaction among sectors.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target group of the study was the full-time employees working both in the state institutions (government offices, municipal departments) and in the business (corporations, SMEs) in the urban areas. The sample entailed people who occupied different

positions, such as administrative, technical, and management positions. The stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure the representation in both sectors and job categories. The sample was stratified at the level of the sector (public and private), and afterward at the level of the job role (entry-level, mid-management, senior management). The respondents were chosen in a way such that 200 respondents were chosen in the public sphere and 200 in the private sphere to allow a sufficient sample size to make comparative analysis. Also, 20 individuals (10 representatives of each sector) were selected on purpose in order to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews to complement the interpretation of quantitative results.

3.3 Data Collection Method

A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data with items that are closed-ended and measured on a five-point Likert scale (with strongly disagree and strongly agree as the extreme ends). The questionnaire assessed some of the main workplace motivation aspects (intrinsic and extrinsic), job satisfaction, organizational support, and perceived fairness.

In the case of the qualitative component, the semi-structured interviews were performed with the help of an interview guide based on several themes, including job security, recognition, support of leadership, and industry-specific issues. The interviews were conducted by way of face-to-face interviews or video conferencing, which was dependent on the availability of the participants and convenience. The interviews were about 30 to 45 minutes each and were audio-taped with the consent of the participant.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Summarizing the data, Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions) were used to summarize the data. Independent sample t-tests, ANOVA were used as inferential statistical tests in determining the existence of significant differences between the employees in the public and private sectors on matters relating to

motivation and job satisfaction. The multiple regression was run to evaluate the predictors of job satisfaction in each sector as well.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data consisting of verbatim transcriptions of the interviews. Manual coding of the transcripts was used to determine a pattern, problems in the specific sector, and individual motivational factors. The codes were then categorized into themes that supported the quantitative results, and they provided greater contextual information concerning employee perceptions and workplace experiences.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The researchers followed a high ethical standard to protect and guarantee the confidentiality of the participants. Participants were made to give informed consent before the data were collected. The aim of the research, its voluntary character, and the opportunity of participants to leave it at any time were adequately clarified. Any data were de-identified to ensure the identity of participants, and interview audio records were stored safely and not available to anyone outside the research team. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the affiliating academic institution gave approval to the study. The information in the research was collected in such a way that the researcher did not offend the cultural sensitivities but conducted the research process with a certain level of professionalism.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Motivation and Satisfaction

The results of the means and standard deviation of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction by public and private sector employees are indicated in Table 1. As the results indicate, higher levels were reported in all three dimensions by the employees in the private sector. The mean intrinsic motivation was 4.2 (0.6) in the private sector compared to 3.5 (0.7) in the public sector, indicating a higher degree of intrinsic motivation in the private sector. On the same note, the feeling of extrinsic motivation and job satisfaction was also higher in the private sector (4.5 and 4.0) than in the public sector (3.8 and 3.6), and this shows that the work scene in the private organization is more rewarding and fulfilling.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Motivation and Satisfaction

Sector	Intrinsic Motivation (Mean \pm SD)	Extrinsic Motivation (Mean \pm SD)	Job Satisfaction (Mean \pm SD)
Public	3.5 \pm 0.7	3.8 \pm 0.7	3.6 \pm 0.7
Private	4.2 \pm 0.6	4.5 \pm 0.6	4.0 \pm 0.6

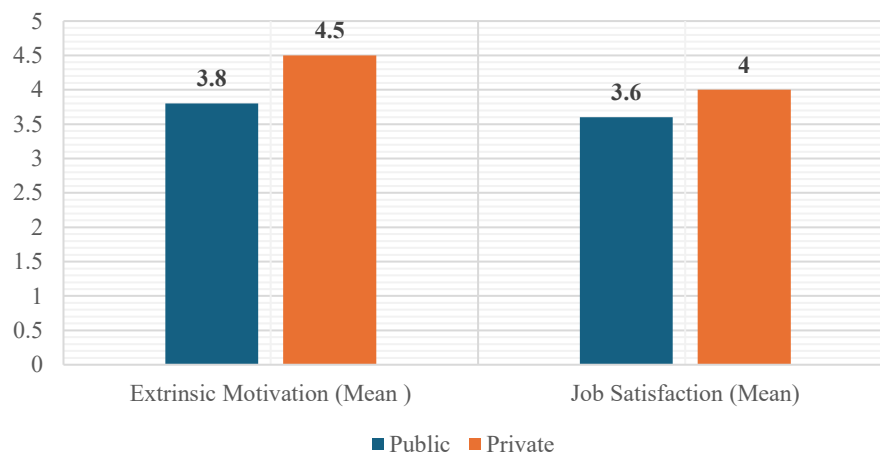


Figure 1: Mean Comparison of Motivation and Job Satisfaction by Sector

As shown in figure 1, the mean scores of the private sector employees in the aspects of intrinsic motivation (4.2), extrinsic motivation (4.5), job satisfaction (4.0) have higher ratings than those of public sector employees (3.5, 3.8, and 3.6 respectively), indicating stronger motivational factors and job satisfaction within the different organizations.

4.2 Sectoral Differences: ANOVA Analysis

The ANOVA results of the comparison between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction of the employees in the public and

private sectors can be observed in Table 2. The three variables have statistically significant results with p-values that are much less than 0.05, and this means that the sectoral affiliation has a significant impact on these workplace outcomes. Extrinsic motivation produced the greatest F-value (21.43), meaning the greatest sectoral difference, and extrinsic motivation ($F = 13.57$) and job satisfaction ($F = 9.89$) respectively. These results indicate that employees in the private sector also enjoy more motivation and job satisfaction than those in the public sector, mainly because of the variations in organizational incentives and environments.

Table 2: ANOVA Results - Sectoral Differences

Variable	Between Groups (df)	Within Groups (df)	F-value	p-value
Intrinsic Motivation	1	398	13.57	0.0003
Extrinsic Motivation	1	398	21.43	0.00001
Job Satisfaction	1	398	9.89	0.002

4.3 Predictors of Job Satisfaction: Regression Analysis

Table 3 provides the findings of a regression analysis that determines the variables of job satisfaction in the private sector. The p-values of all four variables, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, recognition, and career growth, indicate statistically significant positive correlations with job satisfaction (< 0.005). Extrinsic motivation was the best predictor

(0.44), followed by career growth (0.41) and recognition (0.38), which underlines the role of performance-based rewards and opportunities for career growth. The intrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.32$) was also significant, which implies that not only the internalized drive, but also external incentives are important to the satisfaction of the work in the private organization.

Table 3: Regression Analysis – Private Sector

Predictor	Beta Coefficient	p-value
Intrinsic Motivation	0.32	0.001
Extrinsic Motivation	0.44	0.0001
Recognition	0.38	0.002
Career Growth	0.41	0.0005

The result of the regression analysis of predictors of job satisfaction in the public sector is displayed in Table 4. The correlation between all variables, that is, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation,

recognition, career growth, and job satisfaction, was positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The strongest predictive value was on career growth (0.35), followed by extrinsic motivation (0.31) and

intrinsic motivation (0.28). Recognition was the least influential (which is not negligible, 0.22), and its significance was $p = 0.021$. Through these findings, it

can be indicated that in the public sector, where stability reigns supreme, growth opportunities and structured incentives lead to job satisfaction.

Table 4: Regression Analysis – Public Sector

Predictor	Beta Coefficient	p-value
Intrinsic Motivation	0.28	0.004
Extrinsic Motivation	0.31	0.002
Recognition	0.22	0.021
Career Growth	0.35	0.001

4.4 Organizational Support and Perceived Fairness

The comparison of perceptions of organizational support and fairness of the employees between the public and the private sector is given in Table 5. Based on the data, the mean scores of the employees in the private sector were considerably higher in both dimensions: the organizational support (4.1 ± 0.6) and the perceived fairness (4.0 ± 0.5) than those of

the employees in the public sector (3.4 ± 0.8 and 3.3 ± 0.7 , respectively). These findings indicate that the private organizations could provide more responsive leadership and improved communication, as well as transparent policies. Conversely, the workplace in the public sector might be thought of being less conducive or fair, which in turn might influence the satisfaction of jobs and engagement of employees in such a setting.

Table 5: Organizational Support and Perceived Fairness

Sector	Organizational Support (Mean \pm SD)	Perceived Fairness (Mean \pm SD)
Public	3.4 ± 0.8	3.3 ± 0.7
Private	4.1 ± 0.6	4.0 ± 0.5

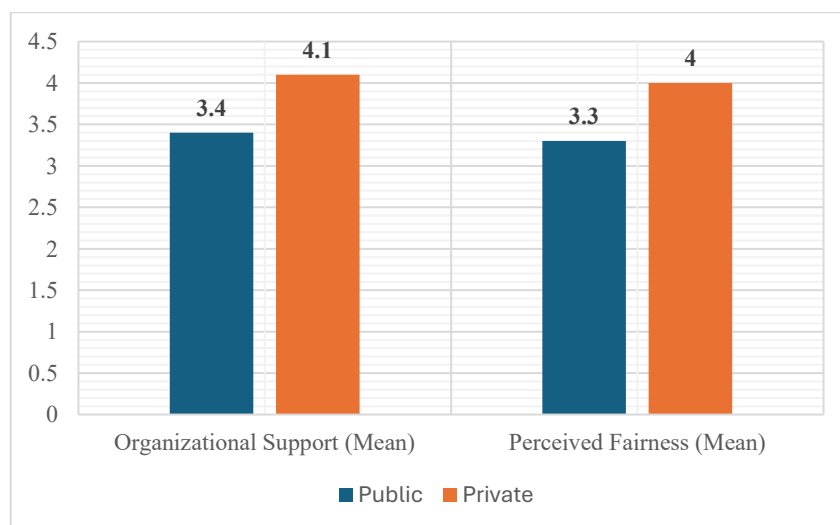


Figure 2: Mean Comparison of Organizational Support and Perceived Fairness by Sector

Figure 2 indicates that the private sector employees report having greater levels of organizational support (mean = 4.1), fairness (mean = 4.0) than their counterparts in the public sector (3.4 and 3.3, respectively). It means that it is possible to provide a more supportive environment and transparent practices in the activities of the private organizations, which will lead to increased employee satisfaction.

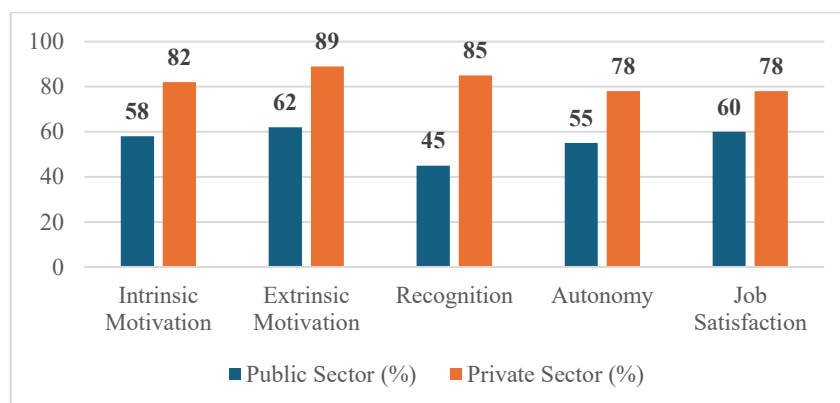
4.5 Frequency of High Ratings (≥ 4 on Likert Scale)

Table 6 shows what percentages of the public and the private sector staff rated high some of the most important dimensions of motivation and satisfaction

(a Likert scale of 4 or more). In all the categories, the employees in the private sector constantly showed a higher satisfaction rate, and the differences were very clear in recognition (85% vs. 45%), extrinsic motivation (89% vs. 62%), and overall job satisfaction (78% vs. 60%). The statistics highlight the ability of the private sector when it comes to providing performance-based rewards, independence, and favourable work conditions. The public sector, in turn, received rather moderate scores, which indicates its stability-driven focus but possible lack of recognition and development opportunities.

Table 6: Frequency of High Ratings

Dimension	Public Sector (%)	Private Sector (%)
Intrinsic Motivation	58	82
Extrinsic Motivation	62	89
Recognition	45	85
Autonomy	55	78
Job Satisfaction	60	78

**Figure 3:** High Ratings (%) on Motivation and Satisfaction by Sector

As figure 3 shows, the percentage of private sector employees who rated key dimensions, including extrinsic motivation (89%), recognition (85%), and job satisfaction (78%) at or above 4 on the Likert scale was higher than that of public sector employees, which suggests that in the private sector the employees perceive themselves as more motivated and satisfied with their jobs.

4.6 T-Test Results: Differences by Job Role

Table 7 shows the t-test results of motivation and satisfaction in comparison among job roles. Results

indicated that there was a significant difference between entry-level and mid-level employees in the aspect of intrinsic motivation ($t = 2.45$, $p = 0.014$), so it can be said that the mid-level employees are more internally motivated. Although the difference in extrinsic motivation between the mid and senior jobs turned out to be close to significance ($t = 1.87$, $p = 0.062$), the result was below the standard threshold. There was a strong difference between the entry-level and senior job satisfaction ($t = 2.95$, $p = 0.004$), and thus, the job satisfaction of a higher position is higher than that of a lower position.

Table 7: T-Test Results by Job Role

Job Role Comparison	Variable	t-value	p-value
Entry vs. Mid	Intrinsic Motivation	2.45	0.014
Mid vs. Senior	Extrinsic Motivation	1.87	0.062
Entry vs. Senior	Job Satisfaction	2.95	0.004

4.7 Motivation and Satisfaction by Job Role

Table 8 describes the mean scores of the intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction in job roles. The signs show that there is a gradual growth of all three dimensions between the entry-level and senior management. The topmost scores of intrinsic motivations (4.1 ± 0.5), extrinsic motivation (4.4 ± 0.4), and job satisfaction (4.1 ± 0.5)

were reported by senior managers. Entry-level employees, on the other hand, had the lowest score in all variables. This trend implies that organizational tenure and position are positively correlated with motivation and satisfaction, which could be attributed to greater autonomy, influence, and access to rewards at higher job levels.

Table 8: Motivation and Satisfaction by Job Role

Job Role	Intrinsic Motivation (Mean \pm SD)	Extrinsic Motivation (Mean \pm SD)	Job Satisfaction (Mean \pm SD)
Entry-Level	3.6 \pm 0.7	3.9 \pm 0.7	3.7 \pm 0.6
Mid-Management	4.0 \pm 0.6	4.3 \pm 0.5	4.0 \pm 0.5
Senior Management	4.1 \pm 0.5	4.4 \pm 0.4	4.1 \pm 0.5

4.8 Thematic Analysis: Sector-Specific Insights

Table 9 presents thematic findings from interviews, highlighting distinct workplace perceptions in the public and private sectors. Public sector employees highly valued job security as a primary motivator, while it was less emphasized by private employees. Recognition in the public sector was seen as inconsistent compared to the structured and

frequent recognition in the private sector. Leadership in public organizations was perceived as hierarchical, whereas private sector leadership was described as transparent and participative. Career advancement was slow and unclear in the public sector, contrasting with fast-tracked, merit-based growth in the private sector. Work-life balance was more favourable in the public domain.

Table 9: Thematic Analysis Summary

Theme	Public Sector Response Summary	Private Sector Response Summary
Job Security	Highly valued, cited as key motivation	Less emphasized
Recognition	Perceived as lacking or inconsistent	Frequent and structured
Leadership Support	Hierarchical, low employee input	Transparent and supportive
Career Advancement	Slow progression and unclear criteria	Fast-tracked, merit-based
Work-Life Balance	Generally positive	Challenging due to high demands

5. DISCUSSION

The research offers substantial quantitative data to draw the line between the experience of the employees in the public and the private sphere in terms of motivation and satisfaction. Particularly, employees in the private sector had an intrinsic motivation score of 4.2 (0.6), extrinsic motivation 4.5 (0.6), and job satisfaction 4.0 (0.6), which were all better as compared to their counterparts in the public sector (3.5, 3.8, 3.6, respectively, and each 0.7). These findings indicate a stronger motivational system and better working conditions in the private organizations.

These differences were indeed significant as revealed by the ANOVA results ($F = 13.57$, $F = 21.43$, and $F = 9.89$ in intrinsic, extrinsic, and job satisfaction, respectively, with $p < .005$ in each case). Remarkably, extrinsic motivation recorded the highest F-value, which implied that the reward systems and promotion policies in the sectors wield the most pressure on employee morale.

Regression models also revealed that career growth ($\beta = 0.41$, $p = .0005$) and extrinsic motivation ($\beta = 0.44$, $p = .0001$) were the most influential factors of job satisfaction on the private sector, whereas the coefficients were slightly weaker in the public sector (e.g., career growth $\beta = 0.35$, $p = .001$). These differences coincide with the result that 82 percent of the privates reported high intrinsic motivation (4 or more on Likert), whereas 58 percent reported so in the public sector. Finally, concerning the organizational support, it was found that the former scored it much higher (mean = 4.1) than the latter (mean = 3.4), and the same can be said about perceived fairness (4.0 vs. 3.3). Such institutional perceptions are reinforcing as far as satisfaction is concerned especially in the private sector.

Job role analysis also showed positive upward trends: senior managers had higher scores in motivation (4.1-4.4 range) and satisfaction (4.1-4.4 range) when compared to entry-level employees (3.6-3.9 range). The independent t-tests presented statistically

significant differences, particularly between the entry and the senior levels (job satisfaction $t = 2.95$, $p = .004$), confirming the relationship between a hierarchical level and engagement at work. Lastly, thematic analysis indicated that public employees were appreciative of job security and work-life balance, whereas private employees focused on leadership support, performance recognition, and accelerated progression.

The high levels of extrinsic motivators and hierarchy of progress that exist in private organizations support the works of Lwin (2023), who pointed towards the influence of wages and welfare amenities on the productivity of employees. In a similar vein, Serebwa *et al.*, (2017) noticed that results-based outcomes of performance targets corresponded to institutional objectives that resulted in better service delivery, a trend that has been replicated in the private sector in terms of focusing on merit-based advancement. The theme of leadership in the interviews of the private sector corresponds to Myeni and Singh (2024), who discovered that transformational leadership under B-BBEE frameworks enhanced motivation by using inclusive management styles. This is starkly different from the top-down, bureaucratic systems reported in the public sector and mirrors the same problem of systemic inertia described by Songca and Karels (2016) in governance systems.

Palos and Aguayo-Camacho (2016) contend that the adaptability of organizations, especially in the context of digital transformation, leads to motivation, which is a probable reason for higher scores in the private sector. Such institutions are more likely to provide dynamic working conditions, KPIs, and improved support systems, which is observed by Stephens *et al.*, (2018) in healthcare systems. The neural network-based prediction of behavior based on empirical modeling used by Phadermrod *et al.*, (2015) is a supplement to the regression findings of our study. Their request for data-driven HR interventions is justified by the fact that extrinsic

motivation and career growth are strong predictors ($\beta > 0.40$ in the case of the private sector) (Beker *et al.*, 2018).

Educational literature is a source of helpful parallels as well. Smith (2016) addressed how personal epistemologies of trainee teachers had been refined in line with the desired pedagogical practices, something like our senior employees, who expressed more satisfaction. On the same note, Prast *et al.*, (2015) pointed out the importance of readiness-based differentiation in student instructions, indicating that structured learning and support systems that are more common in privately owned firms are more effective in obtaining engagement.

The findings provided by Timane *et al.*, (2017) and Handayani *et al.*, (2022) based on the healthcare setting showed increased satisfaction in the setting with resources. This is the same as our organizational support findings, in which the availability of resources is directly proportional to the morale of the employees. It was the same case in Stephens *et al.*, (2018), where they associated the structured care processes with better results.

Even such a niche study as Levine *et al.*, (2018) that deals with imaging consistency emphasizes the role of clarity of processes and support of systems, which is in tune with the perceptions by the employees of a private company regarding leadership and feedback. Macroeconomic evaluations, such as Kozera (2017), suggest that the systemic potential of investment defines the performance of the same based on organized growth environments available in the privately owned firms.

The study has limitations, notwithstanding its strengths. To begin with, it has a cross-sectional design, and it limits the causal interpretations. A longitudinal design would have a more appropriate capture of the time dimension of motivation and satisfaction. Second, the sample was balanced in terms of the industry representation, but it was more concentrated on urban institutions. There are investigations on public sector realities in rural areas where job security may have even a greater role to play. Also, the analysis was not broken down by industry (healthcare vs. education), which would have been able to uncover motivation differences between sectors. Finally, the number of interviews (20) used to obtain qualitative data, although rich, inhibited a greater generalization.

The results can be useful both in research and practice. To the theorists, the findings reinforce contextual motivation theories that consider the institutional culture, leadership, and reward systems. The statistical significance of the extrinsic motivators and perception of leadership also confirms the multifactorial orientation of job satisfaction. In practice, it is imperative that the resourcefulness of the public sector organizations must fill the motivation gap by incorporating systematic

appreciation systems and merit-based advancement mechanisms. On the other hand, the firms in the private sector, despite a high degree of motivation, need to enhance the work-life balance and job security systems to maintain long-term interaction. Policymakers ought also to think of adjusting HR policies based on sectoral needs. Universal reforms have a potential risk of unsuitability to the institutional cultures. Rather, the implementation of the data-informed, sector-specific approaches will guarantee a higher level of effectiveness in workforce management.

6. CONCLUSION

Comparative analysis of employees in the public and private sectors brings out key differences in terms of motivation at the workplace and job satisfaction. Quantitative findings indicated that employees in the private sector were constantly higher in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, as well as organizational support. Regression models found extrinsic motivation and career development as the single most important predictors of job satisfaction in the private sector. Qualitative ideas supported these observations, as the employees working in the public service focused on job security and stability, and employees in the private sector valued the feedback of the leaders, recognition, and the possibility of development. These findings indicate the effect of industry-specific cultures, organizations, and rewards on worker experiences. Performance-based systems and dynamic forms of leadership that are evident in the private sector seem to be in a better position to create motivation and satisfaction. The public sector, on the other hand, offers more job security and a balance between work and life, albeit with strict hierarchies and fewer chances of promotion. The recommendations are the reconsideration of motivation approaches in various spheres. Transparent promotions, capacity-building programs, and recognition mechanisms are some practices that should be adopted in public institutions to increase employee engagement. Conversely, health, stress, and job security should be the priorities of the private organizations as a way of retaining and making employees productive in the long run. The human resource policies must be based on the dynamics of the sector by avoiding generalized policies. Future studies need to be longitudinal as well to be able to detect changes in motivation over time and at different stages of life. To be more nuanced, the sample should be extended to rural areas and certain industries. The effect or influence of digital transformation and remote working culture on the scope of motivation and satisfaction can be an area of relevant extensions in the current changing workplaces. Altogether, motivation and satisfaction are complex phenomena that are entrenched in organizational settings. The need to align policies

with sector-specific motivators is essential towards improving employee well-being, performance, and the effectiveness of an institution.

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