

The Influence of Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors, and Motivational Factors on Employee Job Satisfaction in the Malaysian Service Sector

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Abstract: This study identifies the effect of Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors on Job Satisfaction in Service Sector of Malaysia. A quantitative approach was used in collecting the data from 117 respondents using a structured questionnaire and analysed with SPSS Version 30 and SmartPLS Version 4. The results show that all three factors have significant positive influence on Employee Job Satisfaction, Motivational Factors being the strongest. The study offers implications for human resource practitioners and organisations on how to improve the satisfaction and well-being of employees in the service sector in Malaysia.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors, Motivational Factors

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee job satisfaction is one of the organisational outcomes that is strongly linked to employee attitudes, employee productivity, employee performance, and employee retention. Higher levels of employee satisfaction are especially critical in the service sector where employees are pivotal to service delivery and organisational performance. For this reason, this research focuses on the impact of three workplace variables (namely Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors) on Employee Job Satisfaction in the Malaysian service sector.

1.1 Background of the Study

The services industry was the largest employment sector in Malaysia, with 65.8 per cent of employed people in the sector in 2023 [1]. While this is positive, employee retention is a cause for concern. In 2025, Malaysia had an employee attrition rate of 18.2%, compared to the retail and hospitality industry which had 22.2% [2]. These changes highlight the need to be aware of work factors that can help improve employee satisfaction and retention. The Physical Working Environment is an important aspect of the workplace because the design of the workplace, facilities, equipment, comfort and safety can have a significant impact on employee well-being and work experiences [3]. The physical setting at the workplace can support the job tasks and promote employee comfort and effectiveness, which can in turn influence employee satisfaction. Due to organisations relying on digital tools and systems for communication, work processes and task efficiency, Technological Factors have grown in significance. The suitability, accessibility and usability of technological resources are still key factors when it comes to employee satisfaction [4], but good technology can lead to positive outcomes in the workplace. Further, employees' attitudes and satisfaction can be affected by Motivational Factors like recognition, reward, compensation, career development, and meaningful work. Previous research in Malaysia revealed that factors such as motivation, rewards, recognition and career opportunities are important factors that affect the positive outcomes of employees [5, 6]. Therefore, the joint effect of physical working condition, technology and motivation can be used as a reference to study the job satisfaction of employees in the service sector of Malaysia.

1.2 Problem Statement

Job satisfaction is therefore an important concern for the organisation as employees' perceptions of working conditions and organisational support may influence their attitudes and experiences in the workplace. Seven factors were identified in Malaysian research that are related to employee job satisfaction; these include compensation and benefits, work-life balance, rewards and recognition, organisational support and career development [7]. Physical working environment is especially important as it has the potential to impact on employees' comfort, health, and satisfaction while at work. The physical working condition, job security, salary and organisational culture are factors which have been identified as related to employee satisfaction through Malaysian research [8].

Digital technologies are becoming more prevalent and altering the way workers do their work. While technology can make processes easier, and provide better employee experience, complex or challenging technologies can cause technostress among employees and deliver a less positive work experience [9]. Another motivation factor that is important in employee job satisfaction is employee recognition. Malaysian studies have illustrated the linkages between motivation, job satisfaction and employee turnover, which shows that the concept of motivation is relevant in the current work environment [5]. However, based on the findings reported, no studies have been found that have explored all three factors together, namely, Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors, to explain Job Satisfaction in the Malaysian service industry.

Much of the existing literature on Malaysian studies has been undertaken in specific settings such as manufacturing and multi-national organisations, with fewer studies encompassing these three predictors in the larger service sector [5, 7]. Hence, this research aims to fill the identified gap which examines the effect of the Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors on Job Satisfaction among employees in service sector in Malaysia. The results aim to give practical suggestions for organisations that want to enhance work environment, use of technology, and motivational strategies.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary goal of this study is to investigate the impact of PWE, TF and MF on the JOS of the Malaysian service sector employees. Specifically, the study compares the relative strength of the positive relationships between each predictor and Job Satisfaction and determines the significance of the relationships between each predictor and Job Satisfaction.

RO1: To examine the relationship between Physical Working Environment and Job Satisfaction among Malaysian service sector employees.

RO2: To examine the relationship between Technological Factors and Job Satisfaction among Malaysian service sector employees.

RO3: To examine the relationship between Motivational Factors and Job Satisfaction among Malaysian service sector employees.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction is defined as a worker's feelings that are favourable toward his or her job, work environment, and employment experience [12]. It's an important organisational outcome for this reason: happy workers display positive attitudes and behaviours at work. The issue of Job Satisfaction is also relevant in Malaysia in service-based institutions such as the hospitality industry as when job satisfaction is high, turnover intentions are low and retention is high [13].

2.2 Physical Working Environment

Physical working environment means the environment and the facilities of the workplace offered to workers, such as the layout of the workplace, the equipment, the comfort of the workplace and safety at the workplace. The right working environment can have a positive impact on employee health and help achieve positive outcomes for the workplace. The working environment factors that are important, as found by Malaysian research, are environmental design, welfare facilities, work organisation, equipment and tools, and health and safety [3].

H1: Physical Working Environment has a significant positive influence on Job Satisfaction in the Malaysian Service Sector.

2.3 Technological Factors

Technological Factors are the availability and use of technological resources which assist employees in doing their work. The right technology can help to communicate, streamline work processes, and boost the efficiency of tasks. Studies in Malaysia have shown that technology adoption has a positive impact on employee and organisation outcomes such as employee satisfaction at work in service contexts [4] and employee engagement [14].

H2: Technological Factors have a significant positive influence on Job Satisfaction in the Malaysian Service Sector.

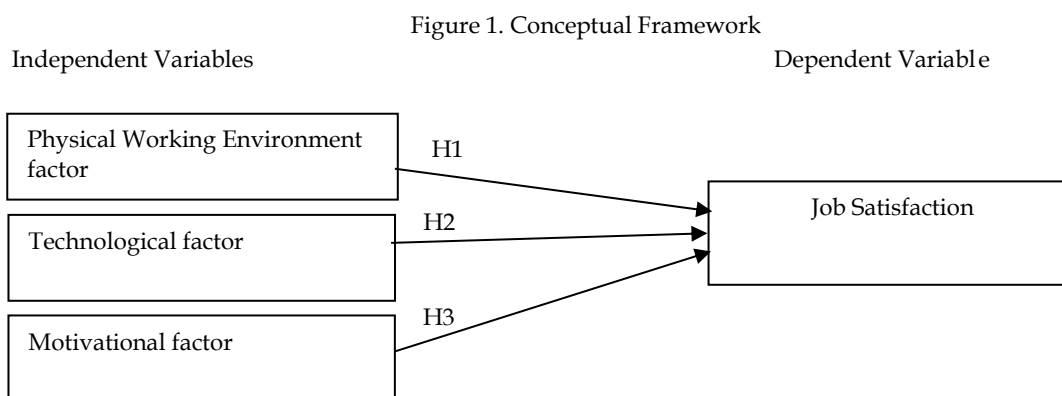
2.4 Motivational Factors

Motivational Factors are factors that motivate a worker to do his/her work well, such as recognition, rewards, career advancement, achievement, and organisational support. In the context of service organisations, it is important to consider motivation because a positive attitude in employees can be a factor influencing a positive service outcome. Research conducted in Malaysia has found a positive relationship between motivation and Job Satisfaction, and that career development, work-life balance and other workplace conditions are important factors that affect Job Satisfaction [5]. Other studies into the Malaysian hotel industry have also identified that employees' motivation contributes towards the enhancement of their performance in the workplace [15].

H3: Motivational Factors have a significant positive influence on Job Satisfaction in the Malaysian Service Sector.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study of Job Satisfaction among the employees in service sector in Malaysia is shown in Fig.1. The model consists of three independent variables (Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors) and one dependent variable (Job Satisfaction). The relevance of workplace conditions, technology, and motivation, as part of the antecedents to employee job satisfaction and related workplace outcomes, were supported by previous research [5, 7, 9]. The framework suggested that the differences in physical working conditions, as well as technological support and motivational practices may give rise to differences in employee Job Satisfaction. This hypothesis is in line with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory that focuses on the positive relations between job resources and positive employee outcomes [10, 11]. The study thus examines the direct link between each of the independent variables and Job Satisfaction.



Demerouti et al. [10] (2001)

2.6 Research Gap

There are some gaps in the Malaysian literature. First, few studies have investigated the combination of Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors with respect to Job Satisfaction. Second, the evidence to date has tended to be in a more limited domain of specific settings including manufacturing, hospitality or multinational organisations, with a lack of evidence elsewhere within the service sector. Third, further empirical evidence is required to ascertain the relative contribution of these three workplace factors on Job Satisfaction of the service sector employees in Malaysia [5, 7, 9].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research approach is used in this study to investigate the effect of Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors on Job Satisfaction of the employees of the Malaysian service sector.

Numerical data were collected and the hypothesised relationships tested with a structured questionnaire. The quantitative approach helps to develop a logical way to measure variables and statistically test hypothesised relationships [16].

3.1 Population and Sample

The target population consisted of employees in the service sector engaged in various positions and departments, in Klang Valley. The study emphasized workers who are directly engaged in service sector work and who could evaluate their physical working conditions, technological assistance, motivational aspects, and job satisfaction. The study involved 250 respondents at various levels in the organisation. 250 questionnaires were distributed and 122 response was collected. After data screening 5 responses are invalid and only a total of 117 respondents were valid thus obtained in the final sample.

3.2 Sampling Technique

The sampling method used was convenience sampling, that is, respondents who were eligible, available and willing to participate were contacted to complete the questionnaire. This was necessary due to the restricted access to the larger cross-section of the service sector population and the heavy workload that respondents were subjected to.

3.3 Sampling Framework

The sampling framework was restricted to employees in the telecommunications industry in the Klang Valley, which is part of the Malaysia's service sector. The respondents were from a variety of organisational roles and departments which contributed to the diversity of experiences in the workplace. The unit of analysis was the individual employee.

3.4 Survey Instrument

The data collection instrument used was the structured question. The measurement items were selected and modified from existing literature that was pertinent to the constructs. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: Demographic Profile (Section A), Physical Working Environment (Section B), Technological Factors (Section C), Motivational Factors (Section D), and Employee Job Satisfaction (Section E). The substantive constructs were assessed by using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

3.5 Data Collection

Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire sent to the eligible participants of the service sector in Klang Valley, Malaysia. A questionnaire was used to assess the Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors, Motivational Factors and Employee Job Satisfaction by using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). A total of 122 questionnaires were returned of 250 sent out. Among the 122 responses that were screened, five were invalid or incomplete, and the remainder (117) were valid for analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using SPSS Version 30 and SmartPLS Version 4. Descriptive statistics were analysed using SPSS and the measurement model and structural models were analysed using the PLS-SEM approach, which employs the SmartPLS program. Data on the respondent profile and the study variables were summarised by descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The measurement model was assessed for the PLS-SEM analysis by measuring the outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, ρ_A , the composite reliability (ρ_C), and the average variance extracted (AVE). Path coefficient, Coefficient of Determination (R^2) and Bootstrapping were employed to evaluate the structural model; while the statistical significance of the hypothesised relationships was determined using t-values and p-values.

IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The results of the demographics show the characteristics of the 117 valid respondents that were used for the analysis. The respondents were classified based on citizenship, gender, race, education background, current position and years of

working experience. These features give an overview of the sample and help build up the diversity of employees included in the study.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents: n=117

Variables		n=117	Percentage (%)
Citizenship	Malaysian	112	96
	Non-Malaysian	5	4
Gender	Female	72	61.5
	Male	45	38.5
Race	Malay	102	87.1
	Chinese	9	7.7
	Indian	5	4.3
	Others	1	0.9
Education Background	Certificate	1	0.9
	Diploma	2	1.7
	Bachelor's	88	75.2
	Master's	26	22.2
	PhD	0	0.0
	Others	0	0.0
Current Position	Engineer	28	23.9
	Senior Engineer	21	17.9
	Manager	45	38.5
	Senior Manager	17	14.5
	General Manager	6	5.2
Years of Working Experience	1-5 Years	35	29.9
	6-10 Years	40	34.2
	11-20 Years	34	29.1
	More Than 20 Years	8	6.8

The demographic profile of the 117 respondents is presented in Table 1. As for citizenship, most of the respondents were Malaysian (112) and 5 (4.0%) were non-Malaysian. With respect to gender, 72 respondents (61.5%) were females, while 45 respondents (38.5%) were males, with female respondents making up the larger proportion of the respondents. The respondents were predominantly Malay (102 respondents or 87.1%) followed by Chinese (9 or 7.7%), Indian (5 or 4.3%) and Others (1 or 0.9%). When it came to educational level, the most common level of education was a bachelor's degree (88 respondents = 75.2%), followed by a master's degree (26 respondents = 22.2%). Of those that reported qualifications, only 2 respondents (1.7%) had a Diploma, and 1 respondent (0.9%) had a Certificate, with no respondents reporting having a PhD or other qualification.

As far as current positions, Managers were the highest number with 45 respondents (38.5 percent), followed by Engineers with 28 respondents (23.9 percent) and Senior Engineers with 21 respondents (17.9 percent). Senior Managers (14.5%) and General Managers (5.2%) were the categories with the lowest number of respondents. Lastly, from the perspective of work experience, 40 respondents (34.2%) had 6-10 years of experience, 35 (29.9%) had 1-5 years of

experience, 34 (29.1%) had 11-20 years of experience, and 8 (6.8%) had more than 20 years of experience. The respondents were mainly Malaysian, female, Malay, and bachelor's degree holders with the highest number of respondents being managers. Most of the respondents (34.2%) had between 6 and 10 years of working experience, which meant that a good proportion of the sample group had substantial employment experience.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Physical Environment	117	6.00	30.00	23.96	5.91
Technological	117	6.00	30.00	25.43	6.26
Motivation	117	6.00	30.00	22.92	6.74
Job Satisfaction	117	6.00	30.00	22.31	6.05

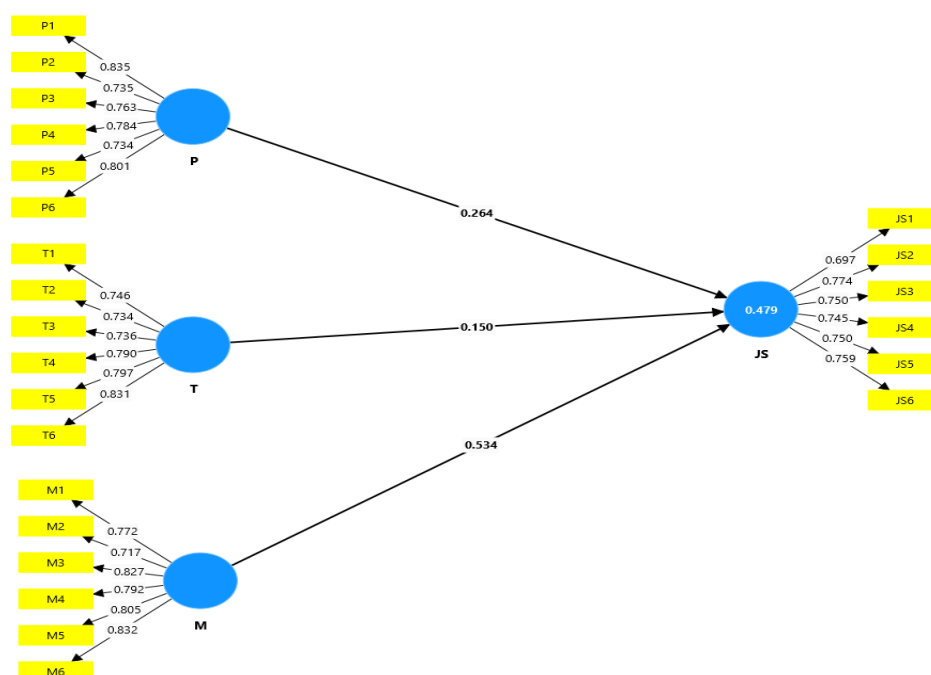
There were 117 valid respondents for the descriptive statistics shown in Table 2. The results showed that the means of the four study variables ranged from 22.31 to 25.43. Technological recorded the highest mean score ($M = 25.43$, $SD = 6.26$), followed by Physical Environment ($M = 23.96$, $SD = 5.91$) and Motivation ($M = 22.92$, $SD = 6.74$). The lowest mean score ($M = 22.31$, $SD = 6.05$) was obtained with Job Satisfaction. The results indicated that respondents responded to the various study variables with relatively positive perceptions with Technological receiving the highest score overall and Job Satisfaction receiving the lowest score overall. The standard deviations for the four variables ranged from 5.91 to 6.74 and suggest that there was some variation among respondents' responses to the four variables.

Table 3. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Indicator Loading Range	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	rho_C	AVE
Job Satisfaction (JS)	0.697-0.774	0.841	0.845	0.883	0.557
Motivational Factors (M)	0.717-0.832	0.882	0.898	0.910	0.627
Physical Working Environment (P)	0.734-0.835	0.869	0.886	0.901	0.603
Technological Factors (T)	0.734-0.831	0.866	0.879	0.899	0.598

All four measurement constructs are highly reliable and have good convergent validity. The Cronbach's Alpha (α) values are between 0.841 and 0.882, the rho_A values are between 0.845 and 0.898, and the composite reliability (ρ_C) values are between 0.883 and 0.910. The internal consistency of all values is satisfactory (all values are above the recommended level of 0.70). The range of AVE values is from 0.557 to 0.627, above the minimum value of 0.50, which indicates good convergent validity. The outer loadings for each indicator are between 0.697 and 0.835. Even though JS1 has a loading of 0.697, which is slightly below the recommended 0.70, it is close to the recommended level and could be kept, as the overall reliability and AVE for Job Satisfaction are acceptable. All indicators were therefore kept for later evaluation of the structural model.

Figure 2. PLS-SEM Measurement and Structural Model of Employee Job Satisfaction



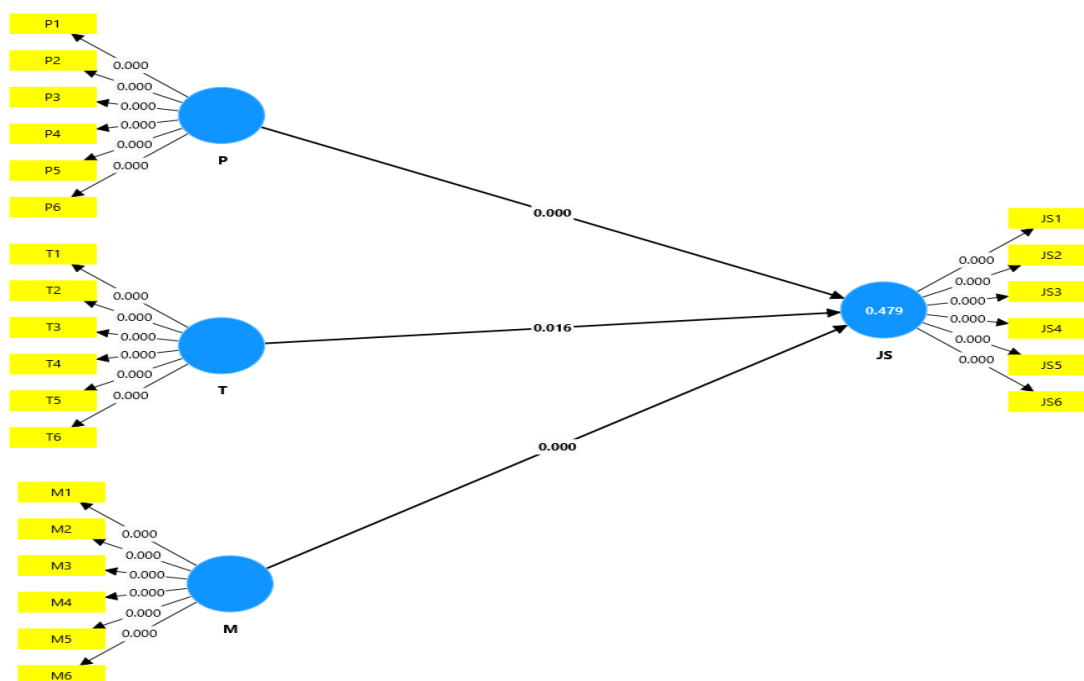
As seen in the results of the PLS-SEM in Fig. 2, the Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors are related positively to Employee Job Satisfaction. With the highest level of positive influence, Motivational Factors had $\beta = 0.534$, followed by Physical Working Environment (PWE) with $\beta = 0.264$, and Technological Factors (TF) with $\beta = 0.150$. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.479$) shows that the three predictor variables account for 47.9% of the variation in employee job satisfaction. The outer loading ranged from 0.697 to 0.835, with most of them above the recommended outer loading value of 0.70. JS1 had a slightly lower loading (0.697), but this is still relatively close to the acceptable limit and might be kept provided there is acceptable reliability and convergent validity. Overall, the model shows that Motivational Factors have the highest relative contribution to Employee Job Satisfaction.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β (Original Sample)	Sample Mean	STDEV	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Physical Working Environment $\rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction	0.264	0.271	0.066	4.005	<0.001	Supported
H2	Technological Factors $\rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction	0.150	0.157	0.063	2.400	0.016	Supported
H3	Motivational Factors $\rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction	0.534	0.533	0.058	9.169	<0.001	Supported

The significant and positive values obtained in the bootstrapping results presented in Table 4 suggest that all three relationships are statistically valid. The physical working environment had a significant positive effect on Employee Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.264$, $t = 4.005$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H1. Moreover, Technological Factors also had a significant positive effect on Job Satisfaction with $\beta = 0.150$, $t = 2.400$, $p = 0.016$, thus supporting H2. The results showed that Motivational Factors had the highest positive influence on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.534$, $t = 9.169$, $p < 0.001$), hence supporting H3. Thus, all three hypotheses have been confirmed, with Motivational Factors proving to be the greatest influence followed by Physical Working Environment and Technological Factors.

Figure 3. PLS-SEM Bootstrapping Results for Employee Job Satisfaction



Based on the results presented in Fig. 3, it can be concluded that all three structural relationships are statistically significant. Physical Working Environment is significantly and positively related to Job Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$) and supports H1. Technological Factors also have a positive significant relationship with Job Satisfaction ($p = 0.016$) which supports H2. Motivational Factors are positively related to Job Satisfaction ($p < 0.001$) and this supports H3. Thus, the three possible hypotheses are confirmed. Three predictors account for 47.9% of the variance in Job Satisfaction as reflected by the R^2 value of 0.479.

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Key Findings

Punadi and Singh [6] listed the following motivational factors to be important for employee outcomes: Recognition, Career development, Rewards and Job security. In line with this evidence, the present study revealed that the Motivational Factors had the highest positive correlation with Employee Job Satisfaction. This indicates that good motivational practices may lead to improved workers' satisfaction and positive attitudes towards work. Also, the Physical Working Environment had a significant positive impact on Employee Job Satisfaction. Kok and Alia [3] pointed out that environmental design, facilities, equipment and health and safety are important elements of the workplace. This is supported by the present finding which indicates that working conditions that are comfortable, safe and supportive may help to increase job satisfaction.

Shahreki and Lee [4] pointed out that technology adoption can have a positive impact on work-related outcomes. Likewise, the current investigation revealed that Technological Factors had a significant positive impact on Employee Job Satisfaction, although the impact was weaker than that of Motivational Factors and the Physical Working Environment. This finding suggests that technology can enhance employees' task performance and work experience when it is implemented and used appropriately. Previous research also highlights that technology-related changes in the workplace can influence employees' experiences and well-being, particularly when technological systems affect the nature and demands of their work [17].

Generally, the results indicate that Motivational Factors, Physical Working Environment and Technological Factors all influence Job Satisfaction among the employees. As in Loo et al. [7], the results lead to the conclusion that employee satisfaction is affected by several conditions at work and not by one condition alone. Therefore, it is necessary to consider an integrated approach with a view to enhancing motivation, maintaining the favourable physical environment and technology necessary for service-sector organisations.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

Based on JD-R theory, this study adds to the literature by showing that Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors, and Motivational Factors can be treated as job resources that relate to positive employee outcomes. The significant relationships with Job Satisfaction suggest that supportive working conditions, appropriate technological resources and motivational support are relevant resources for workers. The results, therefore, have implications for extending the JD-R theory to the Malaysian service-sector context [10, 11].

5.2.2 Practical Implications

The results have implications for organisations in the service industry in Malaysia. As Motivational Factors emerged as the most significant factor towards Job Satisfaction, organisations are required to enhance the recognition and reward system, career development and motivational practices. Comfortable, safe and supportive physical working conditions as well as available technological resources, training and technical support should also be maintained by organisations. These practices can all help increase employee Job Satisfaction and help support employee retention.

VI. CONCLUSION

6.1. Limitations And Recommendation

6.1.1 Limitations

A few limitations of this study exist. First, the sample of 117 respondents was limited to Klang Valley, and in the telecommunications industry, so it may not be generalised to other service industries or areas. Secondly, the cross-sectional design only provides information at one point in time and does not allow for causal inferences. Thirdly, the study was based upon self-reported data from questionnaires in which response bias could be a possibility. Fourthly, it was a small model with only three predictors, accounting for 47.9% of the variance in Job Satisfaction, meaning that the other variables of interest are not included in the model.

6.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings, organisations should emphasise motivational practices, such as recognition, career development, performance incentives and meaningful work, as these had the highest impact on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.534$). Another significant predictor ($\beta = 0.264$) was Physical Working Environment; thus, organisations should improve the level of comfort, security, facilities and equipment in the workplace. Also, it is recommended to continue investing in reliable, easy-to-use technology and systems, as well as employee technology support, because Technological Factors also have a significant influence on Job Satisfaction ($p=0.016$, $\beta=0.150$). Further studies should be conducted on larger and more diverse samples and on other variables like leadership, organisational culture, compensation, work-life balance and employee engagement..

6.3 Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the effect of Physical Working Environment, Technological Factors and Motivational Factors on the Job Satisfaction of the employees in the service industry in Malaysia. The results indicate that there are significant positive relationships between all three factors and Job Satisfaction, where Motivational Factors are the highest predictor, followed by Physical Working Environment and Technological Factors. It is concluded from the overall result that there is a great need to develop employees' motivation, maintain a supportive physical condition of their work, and equip them with suitable technology so that their Job Satisfaction can be improved.

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