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## **Employee satisfaction in the sales department of the automobile industry in Beijing, China: an approach with Herzberg's two-factor theory**

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**Abstract:** From the perspective of Herzberg's two-factor theory, this study examines a model linking employee job satisfaction in the sales department of the automobile industry in Beijing, China. The study proposed five hypotheses and utilised 396 respondents. The model is examined using Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple regression. The findings indicate that employee job satisfaction is influenced by workplace environment, organisational identification, work engagement, perceived leadership style, and fringe benefits with correlation testing. In the regression analysis, the fringe benefits were not statistically significant to support job satisfaction. This research shows that fringe benefits cannot decrease job dissatisfaction in Beijing's automobile industry's sales department. This study suggests that positive job satisfaction outcomes can be achieved through the perceived leadership style, organisational identification, work engagement, and workplace environment. It largely depends on organisational support and human resource management practices with the appropriate leadership style in the automobile companies' sales department.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction; work place environment; organisational identification; work engagement; perceived leadership style; fringe benefits; Herzberg's two-factor theory; China.

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## 1 Introduction

Employee satisfaction is a proportion of progress for performance in an organisation. Manufacturing and sales of automobile companies require workers with satisfaction at more noteworthy statures. Naturally, satisfied employees tend to be more productive and creative in general than not satisfied employees (Kong et al., 2018). An organisation's failure to viably decide factors that lead to an ideal employee performance level will encounter employees' low satisfaction and the possibility of high employee turnover (Obisi, 2011). Studies have contended that manufacturing and sales of automobiles in Beijing, China, is confronted with extreme rivalry, and achievement requires sales execution (Gao et al., 2018). Also, Chinese organisations additionally experience the connection between job satisfaction and job performance moderately (Gu and Siu, 2009; Yang and Hwang, 2014; Zhang et al., 2019).

Resource-based ability with human capital management effectively contributes to employee satisfaction and performance for organisations' return on investment with the practice of employee expectation fulfilment, reinforcement of job rotation, job enlargement or enrichment, and leadership ability (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Demir et al., 2015; Fazlollahtabar, 2016; Rozkwitalska and Basinska, 2015; Kong et al., 2018; Decoster et al., 2013). Managing human resources with employee satisfaction will contribute to business productivity and sustainable competitive advantage (Fazlollahtabar et al., 2016). Employee satisfaction is an emotional element. Positive psychology or positive attitude derives from employee evaluation on organisation practice and contribution, ultimately expand its business efficiency and progression (Lu, 2019; Najimuddin and Abeyesundara, 2019). There is growing pressure to support that satisfied employees intrinsically and extrinsically in general as well with Herzberg's two-factor theory tend to be more productive, creative, reveal organisation identification, engaged, and committed in the organisation and to their employers (Ahmad, 2018; Bexheti and Bexheti, 2016; Lu, 2019; Miao and Kim, 2010; Najimuddin and Abeyesundara, 2019; Ahmad, 2018). Besides, improving organisational commitment towards employees' emotional states, individually or in a group of a department in any organisation, will have a favourable outcome on employee performance, and it could lead to long-run survival of the organisation (Najimuddin and Abeyesundara, 2019; Odongo et al., 2019) and possibly will reduce turnover intention and prevent from searching for different positions in the organisation. Studies have shown that work-related attitudes and behaviours among Chinese employee job satisfaction strongly supports its traditional work values like loyalty and 'guanxi,' which impacts the organisation (Lu, 2019; Miao and Kim, 2010; Zhang et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2001).

Although studies have evidenced the impact of environment, organisation identification, engagement, and perceived leadership with positive employee performance and satisfaction (Luz et al., 2018; Fazlollahtabar et al., 2016; Atouba et al., 2019; Agarwal and Mehta, 2014; Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2015; Demir et al., 2015; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Lo et al., 2013; Cek and Eyupoglu, 2019), there is still insufficient knowledge of what causes job satisfaction in various culture (Huang, 2008; Rozkwitalska and Basinska, 2015). Past studies have elucidated that the rapport between leader and subordinates could be strengthened through various leadership abilities (Dawley et al., 2010; Lo et al., 2013). Nevertheless, it does not find consistent evidence in all industries concerning leadership ability and individual job satisfaction. Some studies have confirmed that gender is the foremost essential traits (Korabik, 1997; Ridgeway, 1992). Hence, there appears to be a gap in the literature with the possibility of leadership style as a predictor of employees' job satisfaction with Herzberg's two-factor theory in China, particularly with the automobile industry.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned, research has additionally uncovered that in China, there are constraints and limitations on job satisfaction research with specific businesses (Zhang et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2013; Luo, 2016). These develop the concentration that specific intrinsic and extrinsic factors could influence an employee's job satisfaction as per different industry and its workplaces. Proceeding from these examples has shown that occasionally, companies might adjust or improve their marketing effort for performance, and it causes social loafing because of sudden work pressure in the organisation also leads to negative employees' job satisfaction (Singh et al., 2018; Odongo et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2013; Gao, 2010).

From the literature review, this study endeavour to reduce the gap in the body of knowledge on employee job satisfaction with exploration a structure comprising of five potential influencing factors; workplace environment, fringe benefits, organisational identification, work engagement, and perceived leadership style with the application of Herzberg's two-factor theory to investigate the relative importance and its impact on employee job satisfaction in the sales department of Beijing automobile companies.

This paper has the following structure: Section 2 provides the literature review for background support and hypotheses development. Section 3 describes the research method (research design, techniques, and data collection). Section 4 presents the findings of the study. Finally, Section 5 provides a discussion and conclusion of this research.

## **2 Literature review and hypotheses development**

### *2.1 Employee performance*

An employee's ability to accomplish the organisation's expectations with appropriate quality and quantity of work indicated as employee performance (Demir et al., 2015; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). An organisation's success firmly connects to employee performance as a vital part of efficiency and effectiveness. In investigating the circumstances and logical results with performance and productivity, it is essential to note that employees must continuously match with satisfaction level reason being, satisfaction is an antecedence to employees' high performance, and it is one of the significant factors for gaining sustainable competitive advantage (Wright, 2006; Rodriguez et al., 2017; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Rodjam et al., 2020).

Companies have recognised the significance of employees' job performance. There could be different crucial variables which could influence employees' job performance in an organisation according to employee's need expectation, but one of the most researched areas for job performance is employee's job satisfaction level (Kerdpitak and Jemsittiparsert, 2020; Wright, 2006; Rodriguez et al., 2017; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Rodjam et al., 2020).

## *2.2 Employee job satisfaction*

The job satisfaction level is the fundamental point for an employee to sustain in an organisation. Job satisfaction is the means by which the worker feels or has an attitude about the organisation (Fazlollahtabar et al., 2016; Rozkwitalska and Basinska, 2015; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). All in all terms, it is the employee's preferences, or positive attitude compared to dislikes or negative attitude, about work in an organisation (Rozkwitalska and Basinska, 2015; Kong et al., 2018). In this context, job satisfaction is interpreted as the level an employee encounters joy (Locke, 1969). With that, job satisfaction is about an employee's very own need fulfilment and rewards provided by the organisation based on his/ her job function (Jones and Lloyd, 2005; Kong et al., 2018). These lead to the conceptual understanding that job satisfaction is an attitude formation towards an organisation's human capital management practice. It is a pleasant experience in an organisation, and it is a state of psychology that relates to the emotional feeling, and to measure it requires employees directly engaged with the job function (Raza and Nadeem, 2018; Artz, 2010). It is affirmed contextually by Locke (1969), referring to job satisfaction as the pleasurable emotional state with one's job function. From these, job satisfaction is the positive attitude that reflects the feeling employees have about their job functions.

Studies have purported that employee satisfaction is a factor in employee motivation, goal achievement, and positive employee morale, which correlate with the payment received, with job and environment, with the management or superior, with promotions, fringe benefits, and with the nature of the work itself (Lu, 2019; Najimuddin and Abeyesundara, 2019). Specifically, a few essential variables could be important for employee satisfaction that is; treatment given to employees in terms of salary or fringe benefits, provision of employee recognition, provision of empowerment, above industry-average fringe benefits and compensation, positive leadership style management, job content, training, rewards and recognition opportunities, teamwork, superior-subordinate relationship (Lu, 2019; Najimuddin and Abeyesundara, 2019; Miao and Kim, 2010; Zhang et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2001).

Experiencing the above factors will contribute to employees' satisfaction if they feel the receivables earned are higher from a particular job function. Research has likewise demonstrated that satisfaction comes from fulfilling specific desires or demands, and satisfaction can be categorised as fulfilling intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction (Ahmad, 2018; Gurnani et al., 2018). Intrinsic satisfaction is formed by work itself, which is the job content and rewards, which include accomplishments and the ability to apply one's expertise; on the other hand, extrinsic satisfaction formed by rewards received, for example, pleasing workplace environment, benefits, promotion (Ahmad, 2018). The extrinsic factors will affect job satisfaction, and if not adequately fulfilled, it can cause dissatisfaction, regardless of whether the motivating factors are given satisfactorily. With these, satisfaction can potentially look at as an individual's state of feeling, and it takes

place during a particular time in the work process. From these concentrations, Herzberg's two-factor theory can be incorporated for organisation success and will ultimately find solutions to reduce employee turnover rate.

In total, job satisfaction can come perchance into three main areas: first, job satisfaction as an antecedent to organisational performance output, turnover and corporate citizenship behaviour, organisational commitment (Fazlollahtabar et al., 2016; Organ and Ryan, 1995). Second, job satisfaction is indicated as an outcome of organisational conditions, for example, work environment, leadership, and gender of the leader (Sparks and Schenk, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 1996). Third, job satisfaction is mentioned as an individual disposition with personality traits (Dormann and Zapf, 2001; Fazlollahtabar et al., 2016).

### *2.3 Two-factor theory*

Herzberg (1987) recommended that motivators are the primary cause of satisfaction, and the motivators are involved with a set of needs that relates to unique human characteristic based on his/her ability to achieve and the experience through achievement with psychological growth. Besides that, Herzberg (1987) also argued that the factors involved in producing job satisfaction are separate and distinct from the factors that led to job dissatisfaction. Satisfaction can produce from the growth factor or motivator factors intrinsic to an individual's job. The motivator factors could be achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth or advancement. Conversely, dissatisfaction is produced from avoidance or hygiene factors, which are extrinsic to the job. They include company policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security (Ahmad, 2018; Bexheti and Bexheti, 2016; Herzberg, 1987).

With that, it is contended that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two poles of one thing and motivator factors relate to job satisfaction, and hygiene factors relate to job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). This theory has proven its importance on job satisfaction, where studies have shown that motivator factors are variables such as achievement, making more money, chances of promotion, and recognition. Whereas hygiene factors are supervisor-employee relationship, company policy, and relationship with peers. (Aquino, 2020; Ahmad, 2018; Alshmemri et al., 2017).

### *2.4 Workplace environment*

The employee workplace environment is an essential factor for enhancing performance. When the workplace environment condition is poor, it becomes challenging to produce quality, productive output, affecting employee satisfaction level (Ganapathi and Balaji, 2008; Agarwal and Mehta, 2014). Studies have demonstrated that workplace environment has a consequence on employee productivity, commitment and job satisfaction (McCoy, 2002), employees' health, performance and job satisfaction (Birt and Newsham, 2009), employee health and well-being, and absenteeism (Kato et al., 2009; Baird, 2010), performance and productivity with workspace temperature and fresh air (Roelofsen, 2002; Deuble and Richard, 2010), space, workplace design, layout and level of satisfaction and psychological profit (Singh et al., 2010; Bangwal and Tiwari, 2019; Leder et al., 2016). Studies have also shown that the workplace environment significantly impacts employee performance and quality of work, security impact, and employee's

emotions (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). From this aspect, it is necessary to have a quality workplace environment with the use of the 5S method<sup>3</sup>; Seiri (sorting out), Seiton (systematic arrangement of neatness), Seiso (spic and span of cleaning), Seiketsu (standardising), and Shitsuke (self-discipline) (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). It reveals that workplace environment can systemically be described as physical and emotional aspects surroundings productivity and employees' satisfaction (Akinwale and George, 2020; McCoy, 2002). This uncovers that a workplace environment can be classified into two extensive range: work and context. Work consists of jobs and task activities, such as training, self-reliance, and a sense of accomplishment. In contrast, the context consists of the atmosphere and social conditions in the workplace (Edem et al., 2017; Akinwale and George, 2020).

In line with the above finding, studies have also revealed the relationship of Herzberg's two-factor theory with environmental factors, such as poor lighting, poor ventilation, and poor working conditions are causes for dissatisfaction in a job (Amoako and Dartey-Baah, 2011; Bangwal and Tiwari, 2019). Thus, it shows the importance of investigating the relationship between workplace environment and employee job satisfaction in the automobile industry's sales department in Beijing, China, the following hypothesis is developed.

H1 Workplace environment is positively related to employee job satisfaction in sales department of automobile industry Beijing, China.

## 2.5 *Fringe benefits*

Payment to employees can essentially be classified as first, direct financial payments, salaries, bonuses, incentives, and commissions; second, as indirect payment, called fringe benefits (Hayes and Ninemeier, 2008). Kose et al. (2015) argued that fringe benefits could include food, transportation, and health insurance. In the same context, fringe benefits are related to paid annual leave, insurance coverage, and free accommodation (Mabaso and Dlamini, 2017; Olsen, 2006). Besides, Pasztor and Valent (2016) revealed that fringe benefits are in line with hygiene factors. In line with these aspects, studies have shown that employee turnover can be decreased by offering the appropriate fringe benefits and improving employee productivity together with job satisfaction (Mabaso and Dlamini, 2017; Olsen, 2006).

In the context of employee behaviour, the element of fringe benefits requires an extensive understanding of satisfaction in Beijing, China's automobile environment work performance (Artz, 2010; Rodjam et al., 2020). Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2 Fringe benefits is positively related to employee job satisfaction in sales department of automobile industry Beijing, China.

## 2.6 *Organisational identification*

The organisational identification work nature has shown its importance on employee performance and productivity (Demir et al., 2015; Decoster et al., 2013; Falkenburg and Schyns, 2007; Karolidis and Vouzas, 2019). Researchers in various areas have indicated that organisational identification describes a phenomenon of how an employee is attached

to a particular organisation by establishing self-concept and inter-connect with perceived organisational performance and satisfaction (Atouba et al., 2019).

Organisational identification can be interpreted as the degree to which employees in the organisation associate themselves with their job functions and the organisation's commitment (Karolidis and Vouzas, 2019). If the association is favourable, employees will identify their organisations as their own identity (Mael and Ashforth, 1992, 1995) and generate organisational citizenship behaviours, job satisfaction, and job performance quality (Mael and Ashforth, 1992, 1995; Atouba et al., 2019; Karolidis and Vouzas, 2019) and ultimately it enhance organisation's image (Cek and Eyupoglu, 2019).

In total, organisational identification is revealed as a psychological linkage between the organisation and the employee. The employee feels a cognitive bond as part of the organisation and relates with self-defining attributes, which can picture the affective belongingness with the organisation as a social entity (Edwards and Pececi, 2007; Boros, 2008). Work behaviours such as cooperation, commitment, turnover, and resistance to change help understand organisational identification (Van et al., 2004).

Employees who possess strong identification with their organisation will be more likely to act and react according to its mission and vision, and indeed it can positively contribute to the increase of job satisfaction (Murray et al., 2015). On the other hand, if employees possess a lack of organisational identification, it may lead to discrepancies in motivation and goal achievement.

In the theoretical aspect, organisational identification recognises a sense of belonging with the job's intrinsic conditions that yield positive satisfaction (Pasztor and Valent, 2016). It is evident from the literature review that organisational identification is associated with employee job satisfaction, and it indeed stimulates employees' motivation. Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H3 Organisational identification is positively related to employee job satisfaction in sales department of automobile industry Beijing, China.

## *2.7 Work engagement*

Studies have revealed that employee work engagement in an organisation is an effective and robust connection with a worker's job cognitively, emotionally, and physically as a motivational psychological state (Karatepe, 2013; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010; Macey and Schneider, 2008). The cognitive can be referred to as alertness to work, and emotions could refer to connection with commitment, and physical can be related to physical involvement to the respective work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010; Macey and Schneider, 2008). In a work situation, engaged employees have strong connections and high involvement with their job (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010; Macey and Schneider, 2008) and positive relationship among employees contributes to work engagement and job satisfaction (Garg et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2016; Murray et al., 2015; Yeh, 2013; Rayton and Yalabik, 2014). From these aspects, organisational satisfaction scholars recognise that employee engagement contributes to the two-factor theory as a driver for the motivational and hygiene factors (Young, 2017).

The above review highlights that work engagement influences employees' job satisfaction to a greater extend. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the relationship between work engagement and employee job satisfaction with the sales department in the automobile industry of Beijing, China. With that, the following hypothesis is developed:

H4 Work engagement is positively related to employee job satisfaction in sales department of automobile industry Beijing, China.

## 2.8 *Perceived leadership style*

Many different taxonomies have been developed on leadership behaviour, but one parsimonious way to categorised is in terms of task oriented, relations oriented, or change oriented (Yukl, 2001). Leadership style is a process that can be recognised and exercised by a person to influence subordinates to achieve a particular target or goals in an organisation (Pardey, 2007; Howell and Costley, 2006). Studies have argued that leadership style is an individual's ability and quality to lead in an organisation (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016; Beyer, 2012) with a combination of leadership behaviours (Howell and Costley, 2006). The behaviours characterise in leadership style can be in various form, for example, human relations specialist, transformational visionary, controlling autocrat, coach, servant, and transactional exchange and also development-oriented behaviours (Banks et al., 2017; Howell and Costley, 2006; Fernandez, 2008; Gebert et al., 2016; Shaw and Newton, 2014; Yukl, 2001).

To a greater extent, leadership style impacts employee job satisfaction directly or indirectly in any organisation, and it also produces effects on the organisation's climate and culture (Yang, 2014; Chang and Lee, 2007). Success of an organisation depends on appropriate leadership behaviour to improve employees' job satisfaction, and perceived leadership style is considered as one of the significant factors for employee job satisfaction (Shaw and Newton, 2014; Schyns, 2009; Yang, 2014; Chang and Lee, 2007; Chen and Silverthorne, 2005; Fernandez, 2008). Hence, investigating the relationship between perceived leadership style and employee job satisfaction will contribute to Beijing's automobile industry's sales department's job satisfaction. Consequently, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5 Perceived leadership style is positively related to employee job satisfaction in sales department of automobile industry Beijing, China.

## 3 **Research method**

This research focuses on the exploration of employee job satisfaction with a survey-based quantitative research method. It is designed to:

- 1 investigate the relationship between workplace environment and job satisfaction
- 2 investigate the relationship between fringe benefits and job satisfaction
- 3 investigate the relationship between organisational identification and job satisfaction
- 4 investigate the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction
- 5 investigate the relationship between perceived leadership style and job satisfaction.

### 3.1 *Sampling techniques and data collection methods*

According to the sample size suggested by Saunders et al. (2016), this study uses the report of the National Bureau of Statistics of Beijing (2014), which revealed that 95,152



employees work in the automobile industry in Beijing, China. Based on that, the sample size of 396 respondents was confirmed for this study.

This research implemented the volunteer self-selection sampling technique. First, the questionnaire link was posted to the selected automobile sales department employees through the 'WeChat' application since it is the most common social networking tool in China. These self-selected respondents are encouraged to click on the hyperlink with their free-will to participate in the survey. Chinese questionnaire platform called *Wen Juan Xing* (Questionnaire Star) was used in this study. In total, 396 fully completed questionnaires were received and analysed for the research finding and discussion.

In addition, the ethical considerations and the respondents' protection in the context of individual autonomy was given a central position in this study where the participants were informed about the purpose, procedure, and structure of the research, and all respondents were assured that the data or information obtained would remain anonymous.

### *3.2 Measurement instrument*

The survey questionnaire was used to analyse the responses to the statement posed in relation to the study hypotheses. A five-point Likert scale measurement was used with;

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 agree
- 5 strongly agree.

The instrument was self-created and adapted from prior validated scales for the variables used; workplace environment, fringe benefits, organisation identification, work engagement, perceived leadership style, and employee job satisfaction (Bangwal and Tiwari, 2019; Kasper et al., 2012; Garg et al., 2017; Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016; Yang and Hwang, 2014).

### *3.3 Normality test*

The normality findings for Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced *Sig.* below 0.05 shows that workplace environment, fringe benefits, organisation identification, work engagement, perceived leadership style, and employee job satisfaction data significantly deviate from a normal distribution. Studies have argued that normality tests on large sample size are too conservative, and the assumption of normality can become less critical (Ghasemi and Zahediasl, 2012). Besides, this study did not reveal any outliers from the constructs used.

### *3.4 Pilot study*

The pilot study was conducted with 50 selected employees from the sales department in the automobile industry. Using one of the most common indicators of internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, this study produced a well above the minimum

required alpha coefficient value of 0.70 for items used in the scale. Table 1 summarises the outcome of the pilot study.

**Table 1** Cronbach's alpha coefficient for pilot study

<i>Measure</i>	<i>No. of items</i>	<i>A</i>
Workplace environment	7	0.847
Fringe benefits	6	0.781
Organisational identification	6	0.802
Work engagement	6	0.916
Perceived leadership style	8	0.943

The finding shows that Cronbach's alpha coefficient is higher than 0.78, which is considered preferable. Besides, the corrected item-total correlation values were above 0.5, which indicates that each item had a high degree of correlation with the total score. It indicates that each item is measuring the same thing as the scale.

#### 4 Findings

From the results of Table 2 (correlations), Table 3 (model summary), Table 4 (ANOVA), and Table 5 (coefficients) for multiple regression, the finding interprets the variables' relationship and its essential relevance towards the research objective and hypotheses put forward for this empirical study. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure there is no violation of the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity.

Table 2 highlights the correlations score on the relationship between the workforce environment and job satisfaction. The finding revealed a positive correlation between workplace environment and job satisfaction,  $r = 0.515$ ,  $n = 396$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . It relates to a high level of workplace environmental factors associated with a high level of job satisfaction. The result implies that the better and higher the workplace environmental factors utilised in the sales department, the higher the job satisfaction expectations rate. As for the variance shared between the two variables, the coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 26.52$ ) indicates that the workplace environment helps explain nearly 26% of job satisfaction variance. It is a relatively reasonable amount of variance. As such, this finding lends support to Hypothesis 1. There is indeed a significant positive and linear relationship between workplace environment and job satisfaction. The results suggest that the more workplace environmental factors are employed in the sales department, the possible and better job satisfaction outcome will be achieved, and vice versa.

In reference to fringe benefits, Table 2 highlights a positive correlation between fringe benefits and job satisfaction,  $r = 0.502$ ,  $n = 396$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The finding relates to a high level of fringe benefits factors associated with a high level of job satisfaction. The result implies that the better and higher the fringe benefits factors offered to the sales department employees, the higher the job satisfaction rate. As for the variance shared between the two variables, the coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 25.20$ ) indicates that fringe benefits help to explain nearly 25% of the variance in employee job satisfaction expectations. It is a rather small but reasonable amount of variance because fringe benefits play an essential role in employee motivation. As such, this finding lends support

to Hypothesis 2. There is indeed a significant positive and linear relationship between fringe benefits and job satisfaction.

**Table 2** Correlations

	<i>Job satisfaction</i>	
Workplace environment	Pearson correlation	0.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	396
Fringe benefits	Pearson correlation	0.502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	396
Organisational identification	Pearson correlation	0.688**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	396
Work engagement	Pearson correlation	0.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	396
Perceived leadership style	Pearson correlation	0.800**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	396

Notes: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and \*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As for relationship between organisational identification and job satisfaction the finding (Table 2) reveals a strong positive correlation,  $r = .688$ ,  $n = 396$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . These show that a high level of organisational identification factors associated with a high level of job satisfaction. In the context of this study, the finding implies that the better and higher organisational identification factors utilised by the organisation's sales department, the higher the outcome of the job satisfaction rate. As for the variance shared between the two variables, the coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 47.33$ ) indicates that organisational identification factors help to explain 47% of the variance in employee job satisfaction. It is a reasonable amount of variance. As such, this finding lends support to Hypothesis 3. There is indeed a significant positive and linear relationship between organisational identification and employee job satisfaction in the sales department. The results suggest that employee job satisfaction will increase with more organisational identification factors being exercised in the sales department. The increase in employee job satisfaction will have a favourable effect on employee productivity. This study also lends credence to Herzberg's two-factor theory. Indeed, organisational identification factors enhance employee job satisfaction with Herzberg's theory application.

In reference to work engagement and job satisfaction Table 2 reveals a strong, positive correlation,  $r = 0.778$ ,  $n = 396$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . It relates to a high level of work engagement associated with a high level of employee job satisfaction expectations. The result finding for work engagement and employee job satisfaction implies that the better and higher perceived work engagement utilised in the Beijing automobile sales department, the higher its job satisfaction expectations rate. As for the variance shared

between the two variables, the coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 60.52$ ) indicates that work engagement helps explain nearly 61% of the variance in employee job satisfaction. The finding shows a respectable amount of variance. As such, this finding lends support to Hypothesis 4. There is indeed a significant positive and linear relationship between work engagement factors and employee job satisfaction. The results suggest that in the cognitive behaviour of employee job satisfaction, with more work engagement are realised and put forward, the higher job satisfaction outcome will be achieved, and vice versa. This study also lends credence to Herzberg's two factors theory. Indeed, work engagement enhances employee job satisfaction.

As for relationships between perceived leadership style and job satisfaction Table 2 indicates a strong, positive correlation,  $r = 0.800$ ,  $n = 396$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . It relates to a high level of perceived leadership style associated with a high employee job satisfaction level. The result finding for perceived leadership style and job satisfaction implies that an appropriate and better-perceived leadership style exercised by the superiors in the Beijing automobile sales department, the higher the employees' job satisfaction rate. As for the variance shared between the two variables, the coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 64.00$ ) indicates that the perceived leadership style helps explain 64% of the variance in employee job satisfaction. The finding reveals a respectable amount of variance. As such, this finding lends support to Hypothesis 5. The results suggest that the perceived leadership style will have an important implication on employee job satisfaction. Senior management should realise and pay attention to sales department employee expectations concerning perceived leadership style and accordingly manage with a positive leadership style that can reward higher job satisfaction among sales department employees, which can lead to higher productivity.

#### 4.1 Model evaluation

The model in this study consists of five variables and job satisfaction as the outcome variable. The  $R^2$  square reveals the amount of variance in the job satisfaction variable explained by the model. The value of  $R^2$  square was 0.780, and adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.737 (Table 3). Since the adjusted  $R^2$  statistic corrects the value in the findings and reveals a better estimation of the true population value, this value is used for model evaluation. Accordingly, the model explains 74% of the variance in job satisfaction,  $F(5, 390) = 222.058$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (Table 4).

In explaining the predictive ability of perceived leadership style, workplace environment, fringe benefits, organisational identification, and work engagement, the standard multiple linear regression model was able to explain 74% (Table 3) of the variance in job satisfaction:  $F(5, 390) = 222.058$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (Table 4) in determining the best linear combination of all the variables for predicting job satisfaction. As shown in Table 5, the predictive ability of the workplace environment was statistically significant, with a beta value of 0.079 ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, the predictive ability of fringe benefits factors was not statistically significant. It revealed a beta value of 0.040 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The result indicates that fringe benefits do not influence employee job satisfaction in this study. However, considering the ANOVA (Table 4) result, when engaging to enhance employee job satisfaction in the sales department of automobile companies in Beijing, the effect of fringe benefits cannot be ignored arbitrarily.

**Table 3** Model summary

<i>Model summary<sup>b</sup></i>				
<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R-square</i>	<i>Adjusted R-square</i>	<i>Std. error of the estimate</i>
1	0.860 <sup>a</sup>	0.740	0.737	3.517

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Dependent variable: job satisfaction, <sup>b</sup>Predictors: (constant), perceived leadership style, workplace environment, fringe benefits, organisational identification, work engagement and 95.0% confidence level.

**Table 4** ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

<i>Model</i>		<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	Regression	13,733.014	5	2746.603	222.058	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4,823.862	390	12.369		
	Total	18,556.876	395			

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Dependent variable: job satisfaction, <sup>b</sup>Predictors: (constant), perceived leadership style, workplace environment, fringe benefits, organisational identification, work engagement and 95.0% confidence level.

**Table 5** Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

<i>Model</i>		<i>Unstandardised coefficients</i>		<i>Standardised coefficients</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
1	(Constant)	-1.001	1.393		-0.718	0.473
	Workplace environment	0.123	0.056	0.079	2.204	0.028*
	Fringe benefits	0.062	0.055	0.040	1.136	0.257
	Organisational identification	0.292	0.078	0.142	3.733	0.000**
	Work engagement	0.521	0.074	0.302	7.083	0.000**
	Perceived leadership style	0.507	0.047	0.433	10.737	0.000**

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Dependent variable: job satisfaction, 95.0% confidence level and \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

As for others, the predictive ability of organisational identification was statistically significant, with a beta value of 0.142 ( $p < 0.001$ ), work engagement was statistically significant, with a beta value of 0.302 ( $p < 0.001$ ), perceived leadership style was statistically significant, with a beta value of 0.433 ( $p < 0.001$ ).

## 5 Discussion and conclusions

This study focuses on exploring the certainty of job satisfaction among sales department employees in automobile companies of Beijing, China, with the application of Herzberg's two-factor theory. In the two-factor theory, Herzberg (1987) argued that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not opposites of each other. Herzberg (1987) differentiated the influencing factors of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction into two groups, motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators are the primary cause of satisfaction, and hygiene factors are the primary cause of dissatisfaction.

With the objective and hypotheses presented in this study, the investigation shows that there are contributing factors of organisational support, including human resource management practices and supervisor encouragement with appropriate leadership style and workplace environment related to employee job satisfaction. It is consistent with the two-factor theory. This study shows that the workplace environment can influence employee job satisfaction, but the dominant effect is less than organisational identification, work engagement, and perceived leadership style. It is in credence with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which indicates that the work conditions can possibly be one of the hygiene factors and could cause employee job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987; Ahmad, 2018).

Fringe benefits were another hygiene factor in this study; the correlation analysis shows a reasonable positive correlation with employee job satisfaction. However, regression analysis reveals that fringe benefits do not influence employee job satisfaction. Since the regression finding reveals the effect, this study interprets that job dissatisfaction cannot improve job satisfaction simultaneously with other variables used in the study. Naturally, employees want satisfied fringe benefits to reduce their job dissatisfaction, but increasing fringe benefits will not reduce job dissatisfaction among the sales department's employees in the automobile industry in Beijing, China.

The study shows that employees do not consider fringe benefits for their satisfaction; it is not a hygiene factor. For the analysis, this study used items such as food, travel expenses, subsidies, paid holidays, social insurance, and housing funds for fringe benefits. Employees in the sales department have more interest in perceived leadership style, organisational identification, and workplace environment than fringe benefits. It shows that there could be other hygiene factors to decrease dissatisfaction or to create basic need fulfilment. This finding reveals that the organisation's management should use factors based on employee's internally generated drives, not externally stimulated incentives for increasing satisfaction (Jones and Lloyd, 2005). With that, it shows further exploration in the employee's job satisfaction, and factors such as loyalty, 'guanxi' could play a crucial role. From these aspects, management could show moral obligation to employees by providing an appropriate package of fringe benefits according to employees' experience and performance based on every year target to avoid employee dissatisfaction because fringe benefits cannot be ignored in the sales department. This study shows that employee internally generated drives could be an opportunity for increasing job satisfaction in the sales department.

As for organisational identification, it can be mentioned that individuals having a sense of recognition and belonging to or of membership in a particular organisation. This study indicates a significant relationship between organisational identification and employee job satisfaction, and this result is consistent with Herzberg's two-factor theory. It also in accordance with Pasztor and Valent (2016), who argued that organisational identification is the motivators and they are the primary cause of satisfaction. The study highlights that employees can experience psychological growth through the high-level of organisational identification, and job satisfaction will be promoted naturally. The cause of it can make a sales department in Beijing increase productivity and reduce turnover rate, and notably, the element of trust can be built among employees of the sales department in automobile companies.

In reference to the work engagement construct, this study has proven that work engagement is a significant influencing factor for employee job satisfaction. It can be interpreted that employee attachment to the performing job function is a motivator, which

leads to job satisfaction in the sales department. The result of this study confirms that work engagement is in line with the two-factor theory application. Work engagement can be considered a special human characteristic that positively affects employee job satisfaction if an organisation exercises it to fulfil its long-term goal to achieve competitive advantage.

As for perceived leadership style, this study has also revealed its effect on employee job satisfaction significantly. It is consistent with the two-factor theory that proposed that when achievement and recognition are appreciated, it can possibly influence job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). The items used in this research, such as importance on development, attention, personal need, communication skills, obsessed with control, and subordinate interest, has revealed that leaders with human skills will be able to create an atmosphere of trust, belongingness where employees can feel encouraged and willing to be involved in their job. The leader must choose an appropriate leadership style in the automobile industry's sales department in Beijing, China, for employee job satisfaction and possibly to reduce turnover in the future. Apart from that, if leaders are to be selected, an appropriate succession plan should be implemented to appoint qualified leaders.

In conclusion, employee job satisfaction with the application of Herzberg's two-factor theory in the sales department of automobile companies in Beijing, China, could play an essential key factor in influencing the business performance and overcome competition through employee job satisfaction. This study has revealed the influencing factors on employee job satisfaction in the sales department in Beijing's automobile industry. It shows that workplace environment, fringe benefits, organisational identification, work engagement, and perceived leadership style can possibly promote the sales department's employee job satisfaction and management of automobile companies in Beijing should provide a comfortable workplace environment and a reasonable package of fringe benefits to remove hygiene factors to decrease employee job dissatisfaction. Besides, the management should also pay considerable attention and invest more resource-based ability for building a high level of organisational identification, work engagement, and employee expected leadership style that can contribute to motivators. It will possibly relate well with employee job satisfaction in the sales department of automobile companies in Beijing. These can bring employee performance to a new height and improve a business's long run survival.

Apart from the positive finding produced, there are some caveats regarding this research finding. The effective methods to promote employee job satisfaction is still not explicit. First, this research variable was concentrated on the job satisfaction of the sales department with identified variables such as perceived leadership style, workplace environment, fringe benefits, organisational identification, and work engagement. Research finding can also reveal other variables and their actual behaviour reaction on the employee, which was not put forward in the research framework. Other variables, such as economic factors, psychological or socio-psychological, gender difference factors could reveal employee behaviour motivation. These lead to the factors that the assurance of all relevant contextual variables in the equation can be incomplete. In addition, this research is managed with cross-sectional data. A longitudinal study with a qualitative approach would be beneficial for clear judgment on employee behaviour because time comparison can reveal behaviour modification and other uncertainty.

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