

# Examining Intrinsic Motivation and Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff at Svay Rieng University in Cambodia

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the intrinsic motivation level of academic staff at Svay Rieng University (SRU) and its relationship with job satisfaction. To understand what keeps these academicians from doing what they do, it is essential to research to establish the level by which achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth intrinsically motivate them as they dispose of their daily functions as academic staff. A quantitative survey was conducted on 91 SRU academic staff. The main findings revealed a positive and significant correlation between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. The staff members exhibit high intrinsic motivation, but variations exist across different aspects of their work. They express a need for increased recognition and praise. To enhance intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, it is recommended to implement recognition and reward policies, provide professional development support, and foster a supportive work environment. Involving staff in decision-making, conducting research-driven policy development, and monitoring and improving the work environment are vital. Additional measures include implementing flexible work policies, establishing regular feedback systems, creating recognition programs, and developing learning and development policies. Future research should explore the relationship between intrinsic motivation and other outcomes.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Jobs play an essential role in human life, and job satisfaction is an influential factor in an individual's working life. Job satisfaction is a broad concept that applies to various aspects of life [1]. Scholars believe that job satisfaction directly impacts staff performance at many levels of an institution [2], [3]. Job satisfaction refers to an employee's overall opinion or feeling towards their job within an organization. If an employee has a higher

level of job satisfaction, they are likely to have a positive attitude towards their job, while those with lower levels of job satisfaction tend to have a negative attitude towards their job [4].

Intrinsic motivation is the most effective way to increase employee satisfaction [5]. Furthermore, intrinsic factors have a more substantial influence than extrinsic factors on teachers' motivation to enter and stay in the lecture [6]. Job satisfaction significantly impacts work behavior and faculty members' attitudes toward employment [7]. The main task of the university is to identify the expectations and aspirations of the academic staff and to be aware and competent in creating an appropriate environment to meet these needs under the institution's regulations [8]. The concept of job satisfaction is related to how well the individual's needs match the occupation's ability to meet those needs [9], [10]. The term "job satisfaction" describes the optimistic attitude employees have toward their employment [11]

Since highly competent and talented employees are the most valuable resource, the management of academic institutions must pay special attention to attracting attention and making exceptional efforts to recruit, retain, and adequately reward them so that they can function effectively in a competitive world [12], [13]. Undoubtedly, the goodwill and result of an institution largely depend on its motivated workforce, which is considered a great resource, productive, and efficient. The staff will be more dedicated and engaged in the pursuit of success and making or failure of the institution's goals and objectives they feel satisfied or dissatisfied with their employment [14], [15], [13], [16], [17], [18].

The significance of this study is in its investigation of the relationship between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction of academic staff at Svay Rieng University. The research will guide initiatives to improve job satisfaction, attract experienced academics, and lower turnover by analyzing the attitudes, data, and variables influencing job satisfaction. The results will benefit the university administration in creating focused policies and tackling new issues in this field. In addition, the study intends to lay the groundwork for further research in this field by adding to the scant literature on intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction among academic staff at Cambodian institutions of higher learning.

### **Research Objectives**

The main aim of this study is to examine academic staff motivations at Svay Rieng University in Cambodia as they relate to their job satisfaction. The following specific objectives are explored in this study:

- To find out the level of intrinsic motivation among academic staff at Svay Rieng University in Cambodia
  - To determine the level of job satisfaction among academic staff at Svay Rieng University in Cambodia
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**Research Framework**

This research framework offers employers helpful guidance on how essential intrinsic motivation is to their staff's employment and how an increase in intrinsic motivation would improve employee performance [19].

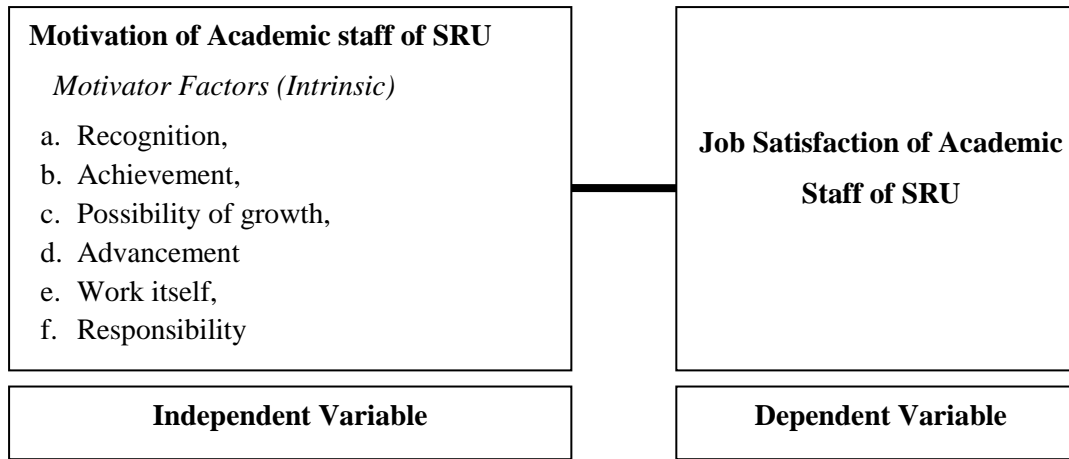


Figure 1. Research framework

**Operational definition**

*Academic Staff:* Academic staffs are the employees who work at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Cambodia and are involved in teaching, research, or both. Academic staff can be classified into four categories: professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and lecturers [20]. Academic staff must meet the minimum qualification requirements for each category, such as academic degree, teaching experience, research output, and professional development [21]. Academic staffs are also expected to follow higher education's code of ethics and conduct, such as academic integrity, academic freedom, and social responsibility.

*Motivation:* Motivator intrinsic factors relate to the nature and content of the work, such as recognition, achievement, possibility of growth, advancement, work itself, and responsibility [22].

*Job Satisfaction:* Based on Vroom's theory, work outcomes are the rewards or consequences that result from performing a job, such as pay, recognition, achievement, or promotion. Work expectations are the beliefs or probabilities that a certain level of effort will lead to a certain level of performance and that a certain level of performance will lead to a certain level of outcome. According to Vroom's theory, job satisfaction is high when the individual values the outcome, believes that good performance will lead to the outcome, and believes that high effort will lead to good performance [23].

**Main Theories**

*Herzberg's two-factor theory,* Also known as the motivation-hygiene theory or the dual-factor theory, is a prominent framework in motivation research. The theory was proposed by Frederick Herzberg, an American psychologist, and his colleagues in their

book *Motivation to Work* (1959). Motivators are intrinsic aspects of the job that enhance satisfaction, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and growth.

*Vroom's theory of job satisfaction*, Also known as the valence-instrumentality-expectancy (VIE) theory, is a prominent framework in job satisfaction research. The theory was proposed by Victor Vroom, a Canadian psychologist, in his book *Work and Motivation* (1964). The theory suggests that valence, expectancy, and instrumentality interact to determine job satisfaction. The theory implies that employees will be satisfied with their jobs if they value the outcomes or rewards, expect to achieve them, and believe that their performance will lead to them.

## 2. METHOD

### Research Design

This research mainly used a survey to collect the data needed to answer the research questions. The survey method was suitable for this study because it allowed the researcher to gather quantitative data from the academic staff of SRU and assess their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding their intrinsic motivations.

The questionnaire used in this study was mainly adapted from the work of Omar, Mohd Idrus, and Jamal [24], who developed a questionnaire on intrinsic, extrinsic, and job satisfaction for academic staff in Malaysian public universities. The questionnaire was based on the self-determination theory of Deci & Ryan (1985) [25], which proposes that the three psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are the primary sources of intrinsic motivation. The adapted questionnaire consisted of 9 items that established the demographic profiles of the respondents, thus ensuring that they had suitable profiles to participate in the survey. The questionnaire also included 6 items that measured intrinsic motivation: recognition, work, responsibility, advancement, and growth. The respondents were asked to rate the statements on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. A 5-point Likert scale was applied to measure each framework construct [26]. The Likert scale is one of social science and educational research's most essential and widely used psychometric instruments [27].

### Target Population and Sampling Strategies

The target population of this study was the academic staff of Svay Rieng University (SRU), a public university in Cambodia. SRU has a staff of 150, including administrative and lecturing staff ("Svay Rieng University," 2023, para.1). The university also has five faculties, each with its own dean and vice dean ("Svay Rieng University," 2023, para. 2). The study used a non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, to select the participants. Convenience sampling involves selecting participants based on their availability and accessibility to the researcher [28].

This study's population was 150, and the number of academic staff was at Svay Rieng University. The sample size was 91, about 60.7% of the population. This is a very high percentage, which indicates a high level of confidence and precision.

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## Demographic Profile

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	76	83.6%
	Female	15	16.5%
Age	20 - 29 years old	9	9.9%
	30 - 39 years old	22	24.2%
	40 - 49 years old	47	51.6%
	50 - 59 years old	13	14.3%
Marital status	Single	14	15.4%
	Married	75	82.4%
	Divorced	2	2.2%
Years of employment	Less than 5 years	17	18.7%
	5-10 years	14	15.4%
	11-15 years	27	29.7%
	16-20 years	23	25.3%
	21-25 years	9	9.9%
Employment Status	25+ years	1	1.1%
	Permanent	62	68.1%
Education qualification	Contractual	29	31.9%
	Diploma/ Associate's degree	5	5.5%
	Bachelor's degree	12	13.2%
	Master's degree	62	68.1%
Total	PhD/candidates	12	12.2%
		91	100%

According to the demographic profile from Table 1, of those who participated in the questionnaire, there were 91 participants, of which 83.6 % of the respondents were men and 16.5% were women. The age distribution of the sample was diverse, with the most significant sample consisting of those aged 40-49 (51.6%) and 30-39 (24.2%). Most responders (82.4%) were married, and 68.1% had permanent employment. Regarding educational attainment, a majority had master's degrees (68.1%), while lesser proportions had bachelor's degrees (13.2%) or were seeking doctorates (12.2%).

### Data Collection and Analysis

Research analysis can consist of one of three methods: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The questionnaires record job satisfaction and motivation of intrinsic factors influencing academic staff at Svay Rieng University. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the frequency, percentage (%), mean (M), and standard deviation (SD) to interpret and examine how intrinsic motivation factors affect the job satisfaction of academic staff.

### Data Analysis Procedure

Several statistical methods were employed to analyze data. Data was analyzed using SPSS. Statistical procedures used to validate measures involved the assessment of items and scale reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity. Details of structural equation modeling were analyzed in this chapter, along with the interpretation of results.

## Reliability Statistics (IV)

Table 2. Reliability Statistics of Intrinsic Motivation

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha, Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.736	.718	6

Table 2 displays that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .736, and Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items is .718. These values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater internal consistency. Generally, a Cronbach's Alpha above .7 is *acceptable* for research purposes, although higher values are desirable [29], [30].

Table 3. Reliability Statistics of Job Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.864	.866	15

Table 3 displays that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .864, and Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items is .866. Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater internal consistency. In this case, both coefficients are above the commonly accepted threshold of .7, which suggests *good* internal consistency [29] [30].

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Intrinsic Motivation among Academic Staff of Svay Rieng University

Table 4. Level of Intrinsic motivation among academic staff of Svay Rieng University

Indicators / Statements	Mean	Level Description	SD
<i>Achievement</i>			
1. I get a feeling of accomplishment from the job.	3.69	High	.798
<i>Recognition</i>			
2. I have received appropriate recognition or praise for doing good work.	3.49	Moderate	.848
<i>The work itself</i>			
3. I enjoy the type of work I do.	4.23	High	.539
<i>Responsibility</i>			
4. I have control over how I do my work.	3.95	High	.544
<i>Advancement</i>			
5. Opportunities for advancement or promotion exist within the institution.	3.53	High	.981
<i>Possibility of Growth</i>			
6. I have received the necessary training to do my job well.	3.65	High	.899
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>.516</b>

### ***Descriptive Statistics***

Table 4 indicates the levels of intrinsic motivation among academic staff at Svay Rieng University. The statements are based on the work of Herzberg et al. [22], who identified six factors contributing to intrinsic motivation: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and the possibility of growth [22].

The data reveals that the academic staff have different levels of intrinsic motivation for different aspects of their work. The highest level of intrinsic motivation is for the work itself (*I enjoy the type of work I do.*), with a mean score of 4.23, indicating that they enjoy the work they do very much. The lowest level of intrinsic motivation is for recognition (*I have received appropriate recognition or praise for doing good work.*), with a mean score of 3.49, indicating that they do not receive enough recognition or praise for doing good work or it may not be consistently provided and that they are moderately satisfied with this aspect. The other aspects of their work, such as achievement, responsibility, advancement, and the possibility of growth, also have high levels of intrinsic motivation, with mean scores ranging from 3.53 to 3.95, indicating that they feel accomplished, in control, and have opportunities to grow and develop in their work. Specifically, the mean score for achievement (*I get a feeling of accomplishment from the job.*) is 3.69, indicating that they feel a high sense of accomplishment. The mean score for responsibility (*I have control over how I do my work.*) is 3.95, indicating that they have a high level of control over how they do their work. The mean score for advancement (Opportunities for advancement or promotion exist within the institution.) is 3.53, indicating that they perceive a high level of opportunities for advancement or promotion within the institution. The mean score for the possibility of growth (*I have received the necessary training to do my job well.*) is 3.65, indicating that they have received a high level of training to do their job well.

Overall, the academic staff of Svay Rieng University has a high degree of intrinsic motivation, as evidenced by the average mean score of (M=3.79) across all intrinsic motivator factors. This implies that academic staff have a sense of accomplishment, enjoy their work control over their responsibilities, perceive opportunities for advancement, and access required training. These factors contribute to a positive and decent working environment.

### **3.2. Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff of Svay Rieng University**

Table 5. Level of job satisfaction among academic staff of Svay Rieng University

Statements	Mean	Description	SD
1. I enjoy my work more than my leisure.	4.22	High	.711
2. I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job.	4.30	High	.658
3. I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.	3.82	High	.768
4. Most days, I am enthusiastic about my work.	4.09	High	.608
5. I find real enjoyment in my work.	3.82	High	.810

Statements	Mean	Description	SD
6. I like the geographic location of the institution.	4.29	High	.719
7. I am satisfied with various activities in the university and love participating in them.	3.93	High	.771
8. I am satisfied and think I've been awarded the right set of duties, as per my ability.	3.75	High	.864
9. I am satisfied & able to maintain a healthy balance between work and family life.	3.81	High	.855
10. Fulfilling my responsibilities gives me a feeling of satisfaction and personal achievement.	4.03	High	.640
11. I consider my work to be interesting.	4.13	High	.600
12. My lifestyle is comfortable.	3.80	High	.777
13. I am satisfied with the chance to do different things from time to time.	3.84	High	.703
14. I am satisfied with the chance to be 'somebody' in the community.	3.93	High	.663
15. I am satisfied with the way my job provides for steady employment.	4.02	High	.729
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>.428</b>

Table 5 indicates job satisfaction among academic staff at Svay Rieng University. Academic staff demonstrate a high degree of job satisfaction. All the items had median values between 3.75 and 4.30, indicating that people have a favorable perception of various aspects of their jobs.

Academic staff report enjoying their work more than their leisure time (mean = 4.22) and feeling reasonably satisfied with their present job (mean = 4.30). Academics also demonstrate happiness at work compared to others (mean = 3.82) and enthusiasm about their work on most days (mean = 4.09). This indicates a strong sense of enjoyment and fulfillment in their roles. Employees also find their current jobs interesting (mean = 4.13) and pleasurable (mean = 3.82). Most of them (mean = 3.93) are satisfied with the range of university activities. The chance to try new things and receive recognition from the community are some things that academic staff members are delighted to have (mean = 3.84). Employees are happy with the work-life balance by maintaining a healthy balance (mean = 3.81). Additionally (mean = 4.02), they express happiness with their work's stable employment.

A high degree of job satisfaction among academic staff at Svay Rieng University is shown by the average mean score of 3.99 across all statements. The staff's positive perceptions and satisfaction across various aspects of their work suggest a contented and fulfilled workforce.



### 3.3 Relationship between Intrinsic Motivation and Job Satisfaction of Academic Staff at Svay Rieng University

#### Pearson Correlations/ Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Between Intrinsic Motivation and Job Satisfaction Among Svay Rieng University Academic Staff

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.801	.238		7.573	.000
	Mean of Intrinsic Motivation	.582	.063	.701	9.271	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Mean of Job Satisfaction

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction of academic staff at Svay Rieng University in Cambodia. The results indicated that the relationship between the two variables is significant.

Table 6 represents the relationships between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of intrinsic motivation is .582. This indicates that, on average, for every one-unit increase in intrinsic motivation, the mean job satisfaction is expected to increase by .582 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is .701, which suggests that a one-standard-deviation increase in intrinsic motivation is associated with a .701 standard deviation increase in the mean of job satisfaction.

The t-value associated with the coefficient is 9.271, and the corresponding p-value is .000. This indicates that the relationship between the mean of intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction is statistically significant. The p-value of .000 suggests a low probability of obtaining such a strong relationship by chance alone.

Overall, the regression analysis results suggest a positive and significant relationship between the mean of intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. An increase in intrinsic motivation is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction.

#### Discussion

The order of intrinsic motivation observed from the highest to the lowest was *the work itself, responsibility, achievement, the possibility of growth, advancement, and recognition (see Table 4 above), which influenced the job satisfaction of academic staff. The study's findings align with the studies by Xolani Enock Tyilana (2022) that intrinsic motivation factors such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility had a more substantial impact on job satisfaction. Ali Bayad Jamal and Govand Anwar (2021) recognition and appreciation positively and significantly affected job satisfaction and performance [31]. Chavadi et al. (2021) personal growth influences employees' job satisfaction [32]. Hanif et al. (2021) state that job satisfaction is positively connected with opportunities for promotion [33]. Omar et al. (2021) state that intrinsic motivations*

positively and significantly influence job satisfaction [24]. Orajaka (2021) states that there is a strong correlation between the *recognition* of employees and job satisfaction in the South East of Nigeria's public universities [34]. Rudancic et al. (2021) state that the academic staff was motivated by intrinsic factors such as *personal growth, autonomy, and achievement* [35]. Vulley (2021) states that teacher motivation is influenced by intrinsic factors such as *achievement, recognition, and responsibility* [36]. Yusuf (2021) *said that intrinsic motivation had a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction and employee performance* [36], and Kim (2013) *showed that there was a positive correlation between motivation and job satisfaction* [6].

## CONCLUSION

### *Main Findings*

The academic staff of Svay Rieng University have a high level of intrinsic motivation, which varies depending on their work. They enjoy their work, but they need more recognition or praise for their work. The high level of job satisfaction displayed by academic staff members indicates that they have positive opinions about many different areas of their work. Furthermore, the regression analysis results indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation between the academic staff at Svay Rieng University's mean intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Enhanced intrinsic motivation is correlated with elevated job satisfaction levels.

### *Implications*

Based on the inferred main findings, the following implications are presented:

*Policy:* The findings imply that academic staff at Svay Rieng University are primarily motivated by intrinsic motivation factors. This suggests that SRU administrators and policymakers should think about developing and putting into practice policies that uphold and strengthen the intrinsic motivation of the academic staff. Some examples of these policies include giving them greater freedom, constructive criticism, and acknowledgment for their work, fostering a collaborative and encouraging work environment, and giving them additional chances for growth and learning.

*Practice:* The findings show that although the academic staff at SRU enjoys what they do, they should be given more credit or acknowledgment for it. This suggests that SRU's managers and supervisors should consider implementing procedures recognizing and valuing the faculty's work, including providing constructive criticism, expressing gratitude and respect, and commemorating their accomplishments and contributions.

*Ensuing Research Studies:* The study provides several directions for future investigation, including examining the elements that influence academic staff intrinsic motivation in various settings, such as various departments, fields, or organizations. Due to this, future studies on the connection between intrinsic motivation and other outcomes, including academic achievement, creativity, or well-being, may be possible.

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### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussed main findings and implications, the following recommendations are given:

**Policy:** Based on the implication that the academic staff of SRU is motivated by intrinsic factors, some recommended courses of action for policy are establishing a flexible work policy that permits certain academic staff members to select their schedules, locations, and rates as long as they fulfill the requirements for both quantity and quality of work completed, setting up a regular feedback system that allows academic staff to receive constructive and timely feedback on their work performance, achievements, and areas for improvement, implementing a recognition program that rewards the academic staff for their work excellence, innovation, and contribution, and developing a learning and development policy that provides academic staff with more opportunities for professional growth.

**Practice:** Based on the implication that the academic staff of SRU enjoys their work but needs more recognition or praise for their work, some recommended courses of action for practice are Giving the academic staff positive and constructive feedback on their work, expressing gratitude and respect to the academic staff for their work, and recognizing the achievements and contributions of the academic staff.

**Ensuing Research studies:** Future researchers may undertake the following: Conduct a systematic review or a meta-analysis of the previous studies on intrinsic motivation and its outcomes, and assess the quality, consistency, and robustness of the evidence, Design and conduct longitudinal or experimental studies that examine the causal effects of intrinsic motivation on various outcomes, Develop and validate reliable and valid measures or indicators of intrinsic motivation, and use them to assess the level and change of intrinsic motivation among different groups or individuals, and Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of interventions or programs that aim to enhance intrinsic motivation among the academic staff.

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