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Employee Job Satisfaction and Work Performance

A Case Study of Finnish Retail Superstore

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Thesis abstract

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Employee job satisfaction and work performance inevitably lead to a company's profitability and success. Likewise, Finnish retail superstores try to ensure employee satisfaction. However, there is no in-depth research regarding the issue in Finland, although employee dissatisfaction is a concern. Therefore, the study explores the role of job satisfaction on work performance. According to interpretivism and constructivism research philosophy, the study applied an inductive approach, qualitative strategy, and open-ended questionnaire to investigate the issue in the Finnish retail superstore. It also used thematic analysis to evaluate the qualified data.

Empirical findings illustrate that employee job satisfaction is the primary goal of the Finnish superstore for market competitiveness. Moreover, a pleasant work environment, employee empowerment, freedom of speech through discussion and opinions with supervisors and managers, career development opportunities, and satisfaction surveys are essential to employee job satisfaction. The study also finds that customer satisfaction depends on employee job satisfaction and work performance simultaneously in the retail store. Assessing job satisfaction and work performance includes the effectiveness of actions, enhancing work performance with open communications and regular meetings, continuous improvement in solving problems, and guiding requirements. Theoretically, Finnish retail superstores practice motivation factors absolutely, but only the work environment is considered a hygiene factor.

The study suggests that Finnish retail superstores have already focused on motivation factors such as recognition, workplace autonomy, job advancement, growth opportunities, and working conditions. However, they must also focus on hygiene factors such as salary, policy, administration, competent supervision, and leadership. Retail stores should also have clear plans for coaching, mentoring, and empowering employees to grow.

¹ Keywords: Employee job satisfaction, work performance, retail sector, Finnish superstore, and customer satisfaction.

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Terms and Abbreviations

FIOH Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

IGD Institute of Grocery Distribution

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an in-depth overview of the thesis. First, it elaborates on the study's context to clarify the significance of employee job satisfaction and its impact on work performance. Subsequently, it analyzes the shortcomings in existing research by examining previous literature on the relationship between job satisfaction and improved job performance. Afterward, it establishes the research questions and objectives by considering the gaps in the previous studies about job satisfaction and performance. The following sections outline the study scope. The last part discusses the key concepts and structure of the study.

1.1 Background

A firm's financial success and long-term viability are often contingent upon the performance of its employees. Job performance is the primary emphasis of industrial and organizational psychology, with most research aiming to enhance it. Effective work performance is crucial for success since businesses want to accomplish their objectives and have a competitive edge in the market (Jalalkamali et al., 2016). In recent years, ensuring employee satisfaction has become a primary goal for corporations. To achieve high levels of quality in both products and customer service, organizations must ensure that their workers feel pleased and have a strong sense of identification with the firm. If staffs are satisfied, it leads to customer fulfillment, resulting in stakeholder satisfaction.

Therefore, management should consider moral conduct inside the organization for such behavior as a crucial element for enhancing corporate productivity (Islam & Salahuddin, 2013). Providing high-quality service is strongly related to staff performance, efficiency, work environment, expertise, proficiency, and decision-making independence. Promoting employee empowerment may positively influence both work and customer satisfaction. A thorough analysis of employee's competencies and deficiencies can lead to the desired outcomes from such empowerment activities (Pelit et al., 2011). Sultana and Bhuiyan (2023) revealed that mediating factors significantly influence job satisfaction among workers. The study suggested retail organizations should enhance monetary and non-monetary incentives to attract and retain talented employees. Generally satisfied employees contribute to the company's success.

Ahmad and Raja (2021) stated that job satisfaction factors include achievement, training opportunities, financial benefits, insurance, allowances, and working conditions. These factors can accurately predict job satisfaction, ensuring employees work in the organization's best interest. The success of an organization depends on personnel who feel satisfied and dedicated since they play a vital role in improving performance. Job satisfaction has a partly mediating effect on the link between organizational commitment and company success. Employee satisfaction correlates positively with motivation and commitment, enhancing corporate success. Nevertheless, the connection between organizational commitment and performance remains inconclusive in the existing body of research (Ahmad & Raja, 2021). The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) is creating a comprehensive set of criteria to detect early indications of occupational burnout. Although there have been thousands of recorded instances, several practical problems still need solutions. Employment breakdown is a cluster of signs associated with prolonged, unsolved job-related pressure. The project will be coordinated with various companies and occupational health professionals (Yle News, 2019).

Mehilainen's survey revealed that 43% of Finnish workers desire to retire far ahead of the official retirement age (Yle News, 2023c). Among those who want to retire early, the average desired departure time is 6.4 years before retirement age. Mehilainen's commissioned poll reveals a growing perception of increased stress and difficulty in working life. The survey showed that a significant majority (68%) of individuals desire to resign from their occupations before retirement age to get more satisfaction from life. Furthermore, the survey identified health concerns as a prominent factor influencing this inclination (Yle News, 2023c). The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health 2022 work-life survey exposed that burnout affects around 25% of working-age Finns. Unsurprisingly, lengthy periods of employment are not appealing. The study showed that engaging and flexible employment are the two most crucial factors for remaining in the workforce until retirement (Yle News, 2023a).

According to the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, those with higher levels of education are more likely than those with lower levels of education to suffer occupational burnout (Yle News, 2023b). Highly educated people also report higher levels of detrimental stress, although female workers are more likely to report substantial or moderately heavy levels of harmful stress. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified emotions of exhaustion and demotivation (Yle News, 2023b). Moreover, according to Finnish and French research, over half of workers are bored at work, which may result in burnout and long-term tiredness.

According to the survey, 40–50% of workers are bored daily. Researchers contend that while boredom may be impacted by several problems, including complexity and pointless duties, the nature of the job is essential in mitigating it (Yle News, 2023b).

1.2 Research Gaps

Yazdanpour and Maroofi (2015) examined the influence of the work environment on job attitudes and reduced uncertainty in retail employees' sales performance. They demonstrated that greater work freedom can lead to increased indecision, while indecision regarding clients is strongly influenced by reduced client service approaches and functioning. Consumer deal approaches are significantly associated with enhanced selling operations. Nevertheless, the research is limited by its cross-sectional design, the absence of longitudinal or experimental data, and its primary emphasis on younger females with minimal job experience in smaller stores. In addition, inadequate employment negatively affects both the employer and the employee. The employer must deal with the reflection of dissatisfied and likely frustrated employees, which may include high absenteeism, high attrition, and low morale (King & Holtfreter, 2011). On the other hand, Riyanto et al. (2021) stated that empirical evidence demonstrates that motivation positively impacts employee performance, but work satisfaction operates independently. Employee engagement has an indirect impact on worker achievement. Moreover, employee work performance may significantly affect the impact of mediation across work satisfaction and motivation. The results of the study demonstrate beneficial managerial implications through the participation of employees. To accomplish this, it is essential to foster more motivation, encouraging employees to be more proactive and inventive, ultimately leading to attaining desired outcomes.

A study conducted by Pelit et al. (2011) examined the influence of employee empowerment on work happiness, and data on work satisfaction, behavioral empowerment, and psychological empowerment were collected using a questionnaire. Nevertheless, the research does not investigate the connection between increased levels of employee satisfaction and exceptional job performance, particularly in the retail superstore. The main drawback of this study is its limited scope, which is restricted to staff only employed by five-star hotels. Conversely, Jalalkamali et al. (2016) analyzed the relationship among job significance (instrumental, cognitive, prestige, and social), interaction fulfillment (relational and informational), and worker work presentation (contextual and task).

However, the study just examined the employment satisfaction of employees within the context of Iranian joint ventures. Consequently, this study examines the relationship between job satisfaction and work performance in the retail superstore industry. Studies on employee job satisfaction and work performance have also shown that providing work flexibility allows workers to achieve an ideal balance between their professional and personal lives, resulting in increased job satisfaction, enhanced performance, and overall organizational improvement. The study's focus on Romanian workers may limit its relevance to other cultural contexts or countries with varying labor market conditions. Further studies should examine similar roles in other contexts and use more extensive assessment instruments or different methodologies, such as qualitative interviews and observations, to improve the accuracy and dependability of the results (Davidescu et al., 2020).

In addition, after reviewing a study conducted by Jutengren et al. (2020) based on work engagement and job satisfaction, it was suggested that individuals and organizations get advantages from a work environment characterized by high work engagement and job satisfaction. Besides enhanced psychological coherence sense, reduced compassion fatigue, and elevated psychological empowerment, health improvement is seen in employees with optimistic attitudes toward their active engagements and occupations. A potential limitation of this study could be its limited focus on a specific industry, namely the public healthcare sector. Although the research offers valuable insights into the relationship between social capital, job crafting, work engagement, and job satisfaction in this industry, its applicability to other businesses or sectors may be limited.

The results of a study by Natalia et al. (2022) based on the impact of occupation uncertainty on performance over work anxiety indicate that job worry significantly and favorably affects convenience retail store workers' performance. Due to job stress, job insecurity has a detrimental and severe impact on retail store workers' performance. The study's population, which consists of Surabaya-based retail convenience store employees, cannot provide the findings concerning Finish retail establishments. It is evident from the studies mentioned above that research on the role of job satisfaction and work performance in the context of retail superstores is limited. Therefore, this study investigates the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance. The importance of job satisfaction is substantial.

Low job satisfaction adversely affects organizations, leading to severe consequences such as compromised health, increased complaints, equipment damage, frequent absenteeism, and significant expenditures associated with high turnover, particularly for higher-level positions (King & Holtfreter, 2011). Job satisfaction has a direct impact on labor market behavior and economic efficiency. As job satisfaction is low, it directly affects work performance (Belay, 2016).

1.3 Research Question and Objectives

The previous discussion about employee job satisfaction and work performance indicates that seeking an answer to the following question is necessary for Finnish retail superstores. Hence, the research question is: What is the role of employee job satisfaction on work performance? Therefore, the general objective is to recognize the role of employee job satisfaction on work performance. The specific objectives are illustrated below.

- To understand employee job satisfaction in Finnish retail store
- To identify the factors behind the job satisfaction
- To understand the influence of job satisfaction on work performance
- To identify the assessment of job satisfaction and work performance

The study goals are theoretically and empirically coherent in addressing the research issue. It follows the guidelines of Herzberg's theory to answer the research question. The main question is also segmented into research objectives for the systematic form of action to answer the question. Empirically, this research collects responses from participants to understand the meaning of job satisfaction and its role in workers' performance in Finnish retail stores.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The level of job satisfaction and performance experienced by an employee is significantly impacted by their enjoyment, creativity, and aptitude for collaboration, which has already been documented. Nevertheless, the relationship between job satisfaction, employee work performance, and productivity remains questionable within the Finnish superstore businesses.

This study examines the role of employee job satisfaction on work performance in Finnish supermarkets. The research question refers to the role of employees' job satisfaction on work performance to sustain high-quality service. The study gathered data from individuals, including respondents from the case company. The study location is a retail supermarket in Finland. This case study ends when open-ended questionnaires have been filled out. Hence, the research employs a qualitative methodology to investigate the complete subject. Microsoft Forms is used during the survey to collect data from the respondents using open-ended questions.

1.5 Key Concepts and the Study Structure

The key concepts of the research are outlined and explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Key Concepts.

Term	Explanation
Employee satisfaction	Employee satisfaction encompasses a range of interpretations, but it may be broadly defined as the level of contentment a person has regarding their employment. Engaged workers contribute to the organization's security by reducing staff attrition and enhancing commitment (Al-Shammari, 2021).
Work performance	Employee work performance encompasses various behaviors and individual actions essential for accomplishing an organization's objectives (Ijigu et al., 2022).
Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction may be described as the consumer's positive and contented reaction. It is an assessment that a product or service characteristic, or the product or service itself, has provided or is delivering a satisfactory degree of fulfillment in consumption, which may be either below or over the expected level (Martins et al., 2012).

Figure 1 below illustrates the structure of the research, which is comprised of seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the research. In this study, Chapter Second explores the theoretical viewpoints on job satisfaction. Chapter Three subsequently addresses the study methods. This study includes Chapter Four, which provides a concise overview of the company being studied. Subsequently, Chapters Five and Six shows the empirical results and discuss the research, respectively. Ultimately, Chapter Seven presents a concise overview and significant implications of the findings made in this research.

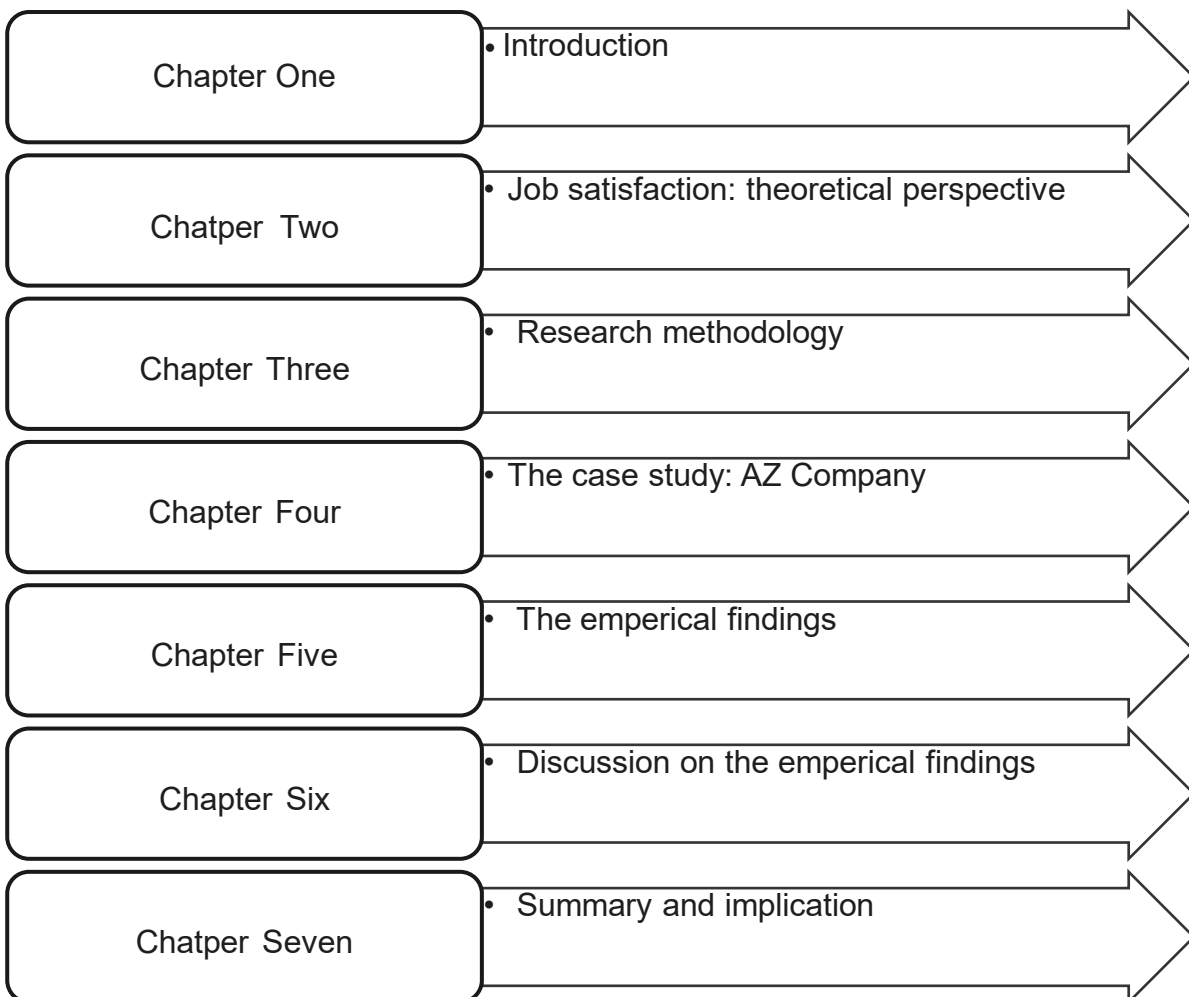


Figure 1. Structure of the Study.

2 JOB SATISFACTION AND WORK PERFORMANCE: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter outlines an overview of the theoretical perspective on the role of job satisfaction and work performance, explicitly focusing on Herzberg's Two-Factor theory. Next, it examines the determinants of job satisfaction and its consequences on work performance in the retail store. It also illustrates an assessment of the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance.

2.1 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Many theories examine job satisfaction within the framework of motivation. Herzberg's theory has been used to investigate employee job satisfaction. Herzberg's theory of motivation in the workplace identifies two types of motivating factors: satisfiers (motivation factors) and dissatisfiers (hygiene factors). Satisfiers, such as achievements, recognition, responsibility, and work advancement, are the primary drivers of job satisfaction. Dissatisfiers, including working conditions, salaries, relationships with colleagues, administrative policies, and supervision, are the leading causes of job dissatisfaction. Herzberg used this model to demonstrate that a person in a job environment may encounter happiness and unhappiness concurrently as these two arrangements of components function in separate sequences. Hygiene issues, also known as dissatisfiers, have no impact on increasing or decreasing satisfaction. They influence the level of discontent. To achieve job satisfaction in the workplace, it is necessary to align satisfiers and motivating aspects with hygienic considerations (Alrawahi et al., 2020).

Herzberg et al. (1959) introduced the two-factor model of work motivation and formulated the motivation-hygiene theory, which was inspired by Maslow's hierarchy of requirements. Herzberg developed a two-dimensional framework that identifies the aspects that impact individuals' attitudes toward employment. The core of the two-factor approach is in the distinction between motivation and hygienic elements, sometimes known as intrinsic and extrinsic variables. Herzberg categorized motivation as intrinsic to the profession, whereas hygiene considerations are extrinsic to employment. Therefore, motivation variables only enhance job satisfaction, whereas hygiene elements aim to minimize workplace dissatisfaction (Mukhopadhyay & Chatwin, 2020).

Furthermore, in Herzberg and his colleagues' 1959 book *The Motivation to Work*, two factors, hygienic concerns that demotivate when unsuitable and motivators that maintain effort, are suggested to affect job motivation. As a result of its suggestion that there was no relationship between financial rewards and work happiness, it gave rise to one of the most divisive management theories (Herzberg et al., 1959).

According to Herzberg's study, money is a hygiene issue and does not encourage individuals to an extent, even though having inadequate amounts of it might demotivate them. The theory challenged the most common theoretical assumptions of the time, which suggested that there may be a neutral state in the middle of a continuum that represented work satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Higher satisfaction levels would arise from increases in funds, oversight, or career prospects, whereas lower levels would come from declines in these factors. The absence of elements that cause contentment leads to dissatisfaction (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Then, Herzberg's classic publication (1968) incorporates his concepts of 'hygiene' and 'satisfier' variables and applies them to consumer happiness. The existence of motivating variables may generate job satisfaction, whereas their lack results in the absence of job satisfaction. Consequently, inadequate hygiene variables may lead to work discontent, whereas improved hygiene elements can alleviate unhappiness but cannot directly generate job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg said that the absence of work unhappiness is the reverse of job dissatisfaction (Mukhopadhyay & Chatwin, 2020).

Table 2. Factor in Herzberg's Theory (Mukhopadhyay & Chatwin, 2020).

Motivation Factor	Hygiene Factors
Achievement	Interpersonal relationships
Recognition	Salary
The work itself	Policies and Administration
Job advancement opportunities	Supervision
Growth opportunities	Working Condition

2.2 Job Satisfaction in the Retail Store

Job satisfaction is a crucial component of job superior performance. It is a favorable emotional condition affected by how an employee considers the alignment between their employment expectations and what the job provides. It is a personal and emotional condition shaped by several factors related to the job and the work environment. It is determined by individuals' preferences and satisfaction with their employment. The Human Resource Management Journal research documented that front-line retail store sales workers are often required to proactively boost demand by persuading clients to purchase a product or service. Employee satisfaction is believed to impact stimulating directly and meeting client demand, leading to business success. This is because satisfied workers are more likely to improve customer satisfaction (Huang et al., 2019).

King and Holtfreter (2011) suggested many adverse effects of workers' low job satisfaction on firms, including poor physical well-being, frequent grievances, equipment destruction, excessive employee absences, and a high staff turnover rate. The expense associated with excessive employee turnover might be significant. Employers often pay significant expenses when hiring and training a replacement for an hourly worker who has resigned, and these costs are much more significant for positions at higher levels. This study was carried out in two branches of a retail chain, focusing on assessing retail stores. The research findings indicate that when workers are not appropriately matched to their roles, the employee and the company experience negative consequences. Employees are experiencing discontent and likely frustration, necessitating the employer's attention to address the resulting consequences, such as increased absenteeism, high turnover, and diminished morale (King & Holtfreter, 2011).

To comprehend the internal factors that influence the sales performance of retail employees, it is essential to consider employees' work attitudes, which are influenced by the nature of their jobs and the uncertainty they face. The study of job satisfaction is very significant as it has a favorable impact on employee organizational commitment and customer satisfaction. It acts as a precursor to further favorable results. Employee work attitudes, which include positive affective-motivational states of satisfaction, have a significant relationship with sales success (Yazdanpour & Maroofi, 2015). Factors influencing job satisfaction include company policy, support, promotion, and advancement opportunities. Measurements include global measures, multidimensional measures, and multi-item or single-item instruments.

Six primary factors impact the job satisfaction of workers who interact directly with customers: working circumstances, interpersonal interactions, supervisors/managers, salary, opportunities for career growth, and training. These factors do not significantly influence job security and work autonomy.

2.3 Determinants of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a complicated and complex issue. It is impacted by compensation, working environment, autonomy, communication, and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction is the crucial factor that results in recognition, money, advancement, and the attainment of goals are additional factors that contribute to a sense of satisfaction. Nevertheless, the satisfaction of employees directly results in the fulfillment of customers. One of the most important goals of the services sector is to attain an increased level of client happiness, and often, workers serve as a catalyst for consumer satisfaction (Colin-Chevalier et al., 2024). Cultural and national differences may exist as factors that determine work satisfaction. Male workers' top factors influencing job satisfaction were money and opportunities for professional growth, whereas female workers prioritized employment stability, work-family balance, and professional standing. Training and workload are two key factors that affect job satisfaction equally for male and female workers (Huang et al., 2019). According to Huang and Gamble (2015), job satisfaction is a personal, pleasant emotional state that an individual experiences depending on many aspects of their employment and the work environment. The five primary determinants that influence job satisfaction include the terms and circumstances of the employment contract, work hours, financial benefits, the work environment, and the work orientation of the individual employee.

However, satisfaction is derived from intrinsic characteristics inside the activity, whereas extrinsic rewards are more strongly linked to instrumental values. The essential elements include both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. The extrinsic factors are salary, job stability, the relationship between subordinates and superiors, working hours, and workload, while intrinsic factors are training and customer interaction. To cultivate employee job satisfaction, it is essential to comprehend the factors that motivate and support such favorable results (Huang & Gamble, 2015).

According to Colin-Chevalier et al. (2024), the retail stores' job satisfaction determinants are compensation, work environment, autonomy, communication, and organizational commitment, all which impact job satisfaction. Achievement of goals, financial gain, recognition, and progress are essential factors. The influence of workload and training on job satisfaction is equivalent for male and female workers (Huang et al., 2019). Job satisfaction is an individual's subjective and positive emotional state shaped by their job and work conditions. The five main factors determining working conditions are the employment contract terms, the number of work hours, the financial benefits, the work environment, and the work orientation (Huang & Gamble, 2015).

2.4 Employee Job Satisfaction on Work Performance in the Retail Store

The attributes of the retail salesperson's work environment have an immediate relationship with improved work performance and less uncertainty. Increased levels of self-reliance in retail salesperson jobs can potentially result in higher stages of vagueness. Indecision amongst retail sellers concerning clients is greatly connected with reduced consumer provision manners and execution. Conversely, confident consumer provision manners among retail sellers are strongly connected to greater sales performance (Yazdanpour & Maroofi, 2015). Employees who experienced lower levels of job satisfaction exhibited higher rates of absenteeism and were more prone to resign from their positions. On the other hand, higher levels of employee work satisfaction are linked to decreased absenteeism, lower rates of job turnover, and improved job performance. Individual work satisfaction and job performance are positively connected and demonstrate the significance of this relationship for the success of an organization.

Front-line retail sector sales employees are responsible for promoting sales by actively engaging customers to buy products or services. Employee satisfaction has a positive relationship with meeting consumer demand, and a firm's success is directly linked to staff satisfaction, which in turn reflects customer satisfaction (Huang & Gamble, 2015). A corporation's Employee performance heavily relies on work motivation and job satisfaction. These characteristics enhance staff dedication, productivity, and quality, improving quality and employee satisfaction. Within a retail store, the employees exhibit high motivation and job satisfaction. Demographic factors such as age, gender, tenure, employment status, educational attainment, and job position have no substantial influence on work motivation or levels of job satisfaction.

Highly motivated employees experience job satisfaction, enhancing their likelihood of engagement and commitment to the company's vision and objective. Hence, an organization must guarantee that the working environment maintains and improves these characteristics for overall work performance (Guinto & Magallanes, 2020).

The role of a salesperson has changed from merely managing customer contacts to adding value for both customers and businesses. They now must deal with difficult situations such as prevailing over customers, establishing trustworthiness, and achieving organizational objectives. Role perceptions, aptitude, skill level, motivation, personal traits, and factors related to organization and environment are substantial variables that influence sales performance. Variables like role ambiguity, cognitive aptitude, work engagement, adaptability, and sales expertise influence effectiveness. Function variables play a significant role in determining the performance of salespeople, mainly function ambiguity. A salesperson's effectiveness is influenced by various elements, including situational, buyer, coworker, and personal aspects (Chinelato et al., 2022).

According to Yazdanpour and Maroofi (2015), the work environment of a retail employee directly impacts their performance and attitudes towards customer service. Decreased levels of work satisfaction are linked to higher rates of absenteeism and job turnover—increased work satisfaction results in decreased absenteeism, reduced job turnover, and improved performance. The level of contentment among employees directly affects the level of contentment among customers, which then affects the overall prosperity of the firm. Their work motivation and job satisfaction significantly impact workers' performance. Huang and Gamble (2015) emphasize demographic factors, including age, gender, appointment duration, employment status, degree of education, and job position, have little influence on work motivation or job satisfaction. Guinto and Magallanes, (2020) highlight the highly motivated employees often experience job satisfaction, leading to increased engagement and devotion towards the company's objectives. The function of an employee has evolved from only maintaining customer contacts to delivering additional value for both customers and organizations. The sales performance is influenced by people's views of their position, innate talents, level of competence, motivation, and personal traits, as well as several factors related to the business and the external environment. The performance of a retail employee is greatly affected by function variables, especially function ambiguity (Chinelato et al., 2022).

2.5 The Assessment of Job Satisfaction and Work Performance

There are several methods to interpret job satisfaction. However, some scholars have proposed theories on specific employment characteristics associated with job happiness. When measuring work satisfaction, no "gold standard" specifies which components of the job should be included (Van Saane et al., 2003). Rutherford et al. (2009) found that company policy, support, promotion, and advancement opportunities significantly impact the job satisfaction levels of salespersons. Orisatoki and Oguntibeju (2010) found that supermarket workers are more satisfied with good working conditions and low employer expectations despite valuing pay, promotion, and relationships with colleagues in addition to supervisors.

Research by Gupta et al. (2018) stated that retailers must analyze multiple strategies to enhance employee work satisfaction and promote morale. To reduce expenses related to recruiting and training and minimize staff turnover, retailers must ensure optimal levels of job satisfaction. Researchers have developed many measurements, such as global, multidimensional, and multi-item or single-item instruments. These instruments are meant for either general job purposes or for specialized workforces. Several vital dimensions influence the job satisfaction of customer-facing employees in the organized retail sector.

Job satisfaction among customer-facing retail personnel is not influenced by certain factors such as job security and work autonomy. This is because these employees get modest salaries and do not experience fear of job loss. Due to the increasing number of local and international retail companies, this industry has many employment opportunities, particularly in customer-facing roles that are readily accessible due to cheap wages. Furthermore, customer-facing professionals must do monotonous duties that lack innovation and decision-making ability. As a result, these employees do not anticipate a significant level of independence in their roles. According to Van Saane et al. (2003), there is no widely agreed-upon standard for evaluating job satisfaction. Various elements, including business policy, support, promotion, and advancement chances, significantly impact workers' job satisfaction (Rutherford et al., 2009).

Orisatoki and Oguntibeju (2010) conducted research that found that supermarket workers have greater levels of job satisfaction when they work in attractive conditions and when their managers have reasonable expectations. Retailers should explore strategies to enhance employee work satisfaction to increase morale (Gupta et al., 2018). The measurements include global, multidimensional, and instruments that might be multi- or single items. Several influential factors affect the work satisfaction of customer-facing staff in the organized retail business. The qualities of low salary and lack of fear of job loss do not affect job security and work autonomy. Customer-facing professionals are involved in monotonous jobs that lack innovation and do not need problem-solving abilities, thereby limiting their independence.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology. It first highlights the research philosophy and then demonstrates the approach and research strategy. Subsequently, the study emphasizes collecting and analyzing data. The following parts pertain to the concepts of validity and reliability. Finally, the study examines the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the beliefs or ideas regarding the type of research problem and the methods of collecting, evaluating, and applying data. The research technique is crucial since it encompasses the classification, sources, and establishment of knowledge about the research (Arshed & Danson, 2015). The methodology selection in the empirical investigation is contingent upon philosophical positioning, research question, and study objectives. This study centers on employee job and work performance from a retail store perspective. Given that employee job satisfaction involves work performance, it is more advantageous to analyze the human-oriented matter from an ontology and epistemological perspective. Research paradigms include constructivism and are used to determine the data sources and category of its founded knowledge from the data. Therefore, analyzing the company's employee satisfaction and the technique of work performance is the appropriate approach to get knowledge in this research (Tomkins, 1997).

Thus, the present research adopts the constructivism paradigm, which holds that acquiring scientific knowledge requires qualitative techniques and an inductive approach to formulate or construct a theory. Business researchers often use quantitative or qualitative research strategies to gather and analyze data (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2004). The quantitative research strategy is characterized by its lack of flexibility, systematic approach, and rigid structure. In contrast, the qualitative research strategy offers a flexible approach to uncovering in-depth phenomena related to any subject. Therefore, the qualitative strategy to conduct this research study is the most suitable, given its more inductive approach (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

3.2 Research Approach and Strategy

Therefore, the research approaches are identified as the systematic means of outlining the correct way of collecting data within a research study (Mishra, 2019). Research often utilizes two main types of analysis: the deductive approach, which is related to quantitative research, and the second one is inductive approach, which is followed by qualitative research. The inductive approach requires moving from specific cases to general conclusions, while the deductive approach requires the contrary, from general principles to specific details. The inductive approach is suitable when arguing from everyday experience or observation; the deductive approach is ideal for arguing from legal or other socially agreed principles. The deductive approach involves testing concepts or generalizations, while the inductive approach involves constructing theories and generalizations (Soiferman, 2010).

The objective of this research is to examine the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance to uncover critical factors associated with job satisfaction on work performance. The study has been carried out using an inductive approach. The qualitative research investigated the role of job satisfaction and work performance. Therefore, the study employed an inductive approach and a human-oriented research philosophy. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the research did not use the deductive approach. The inductive approach has been selected as the overarching strategy for this qualitative investigation. The research methodology pertains to the procedures or techniques employed to gather and analyze data within the selected research design, such as the survey, interview, case study, experimental, and ethnographic research approaches. Three prevalent research strategies exist quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Research approaches involve a range of strategies and methodologies, ranging from overall ideas to specific techniques for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data. The objective of this research is to get a more profound comprehension of the role between employee job satisfaction and work performance.

The qualitative research strategy enables the researcher to prioritize analyzing words rather than quantifying data. This strategy facilitates a deeper exploration of underlying themes and a comprehensive understanding of participants' ideas, emotions, and perceptions, which is difficult with a quantitative research strategy (Joshi, 2015). Ugwu and Eze (2023) said that qualitative research examines the nature of occurrences, including their quality, manifestations, and context.

It usually contains non-numerical data that reveal minute details or ignite fresh research ideas. The goal is to understand social processes in their natural settings thoroughly. One of the positive aspects of using a qualitative research strategy is that it engages the participants in coming up with ideas or remembering incidents as the discussion continues. In addition, this strategy may help describe the action along with the social context and meaning the evaluator perceives in real time. The study enables the participants to make contributions that contain opinions and perceptions, which are presented as answers to questions that the facilitator asks compared to the open-ended questions in the survey instruments. Flexibility is an essential difference between quantitative and qualitative research strategies. A qualitative research strategy provides more spontaneity in interacting with an assessor and program participants (Jones et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, qualitative research has some limits. Newcomers to the field of assessment face numerous problems while interpreting the information collected using qualitative methods. As discussed in the subsequent section, qualitative data collection and analysis involve considerable time and effort due to their fluidity and inability to fit into a conventional past participle. It is seen that the information reviewed by qualitative research is highly non-intuitive, and it seems that it generally requires specific interpretations that can be quantified or presented (Locke, 2002). The qualitative research strategy allows for adequately displaying the subject's perspective. Therefore, the chosen strategy corresponds to the study subject: the significance of employee job satisfaction and performance.

3.3 Research Design and Sampling Strategy

A research design refers to a strategic plan that outlines the intended research endeavor, including the arrangement of circumstances for data collecting and analysis. The design balances the study objective, cost-effectiveness, and procedural considerations. The structure, approach, and research are designed to ensure a focused search question and control for variability (Akhtar et al., 2016). This study considers a case study research design under the qualitative research strategy to comprehend the role between employee job satisfaction and work performance. A case study research design focuses on a specific occurrence and allows for a thorough and in-depth investigation of that situation (Joshi, 2015). According to Gillham (2000), a case study explores specific research questions by analyzing different sorts of data within a particular context.

The researcher evaluates the credibility of all evidence, like a judge determining the reliability in a legal investigation, by comparing it to other pertinent evidence to provide the most accurate answers. This study explicitly examines employment job satisfaction and work performance, making it an ideal choice for a case study. This qualitative case study aims to get a more comprehensive knowledge of the influence of employee job satisfaction on employee work performance. Case studies may have substantial value when they are exemplary. Superior case studies have an uncommon individual situation that is of public interest and addresses topics of national importance (Bacala, 2019). This research is appropriate as a case study since it specifically examines the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance. The sampling strategy for this investigation is purposive sampling. Respondents from the case company answered open-ended questions regarding job satisfaction and work performance. Microsoft Forms has been used as a survey tool to facilitate open-ended questionnaires.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Data collection is obtaining precise, genuine, and methodical information to address research inquiries and accomplish intended results. Ensuring research integrity and scientific validity is of utmost importance. There are two types of data-gathering methods: secondary and primary. Secondary data is obtained from secondary sources, while primary data is collected first and necessitates much time, effort, and expense (Gunawan et al., 2022).

This research investigates the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance. The data-gathering approach mainly involves examining concepts derived from various theories. Subsequently, the study data is analyzed using self-interpretation to assess the results. This study employs a qualitative research strategy, which is based on the use of words to communicate and analyze data. It is used to comprehend ideas, thoughts, or experiences. This kind of study allows for collecting comprehensive insights on poorly comprehended subjects. Investigating the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance entails using qualitative research strategy with open-ended questionnaires. The study sample size comprises a limited number of respondents from the case firm. This research collects data from participants of a case company in a retail superstore in Finland using an open-ended questionnaire.

Furthermore, qualitative data analyses are significant in many ways, such as via processes, theoretical views, research practices or traditions, and academic disciplines (Lester et al., 2020). The five methodologies used for qualitative data analysis are thematic, discourse, narrative, content, and grounded theory analysis. This study used thematic analysis to examine the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method commonly applied to various kinds of research questions and paradigms of knowledge production. It is employed for studying, sorting, categorizing, describing, defining, and summarizing the data in terms of patterns or subjects. Thematic analysis is flexible in that it can be tailored according to the study's research objectives.

Thematic analysis ensures that the researcher takes an organized approach to collect, managing, and storing data, leading to a coherent and well-structured final report. Although thematic analysis has the benefit of flexibility, it might result in inconsistent and incoherent themes when building theoretical themes based on the research results (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis facilitates identifying, classifying, examining, and interpreting patterns in qualitative research data. This research is grounded in qualitative data, and thematic analysis exclusively applies to qualitative data. Its primary objective is to find patterns and themes. Therefore, the most appropriate method is thematic data analysis to comprehend this research's results and situation.

3.5 Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations

Research instruments must undergo validity and reliability assessments to be deemed effective measures. Reliability guarantees the consistent and impartial measuring of the desired notions. Test-retest or parallel form reliability assesses reliability by administering the same test to respondents. Validity assures that the instrument effectively and correctly depicts the intended notion, distinguishes between items based on specific criteria, and aligns with the underlying theories of the test. The need for confirmation in qualitative research is obviated since the ideas inherently mirror the reality being studied. Both checks guarantee precise data gathering (Dikko, 2016).

Qualitative research emphasizes the reliability of its findings, ensuring that the descriptions, conclusions, and explanations are accurate and credible. It is necessary to establish the suitability of the study for its intended purpose. However, it is essential to acknowledge the presence of bias, which may manifest in several forms, such as distortion by the investigators themselves, the participants, and the readers' preconceived notions and personal values. These biases offer potential dangers to the validity of the research. Failure to address validity risks might result in rejecting a research proposal. Consequently, the study must submit a well-thought-out plan to guarantee the accuracy and consistency of the findings (Coleman, 2021).

In a small sample size, the significance of each participant's response increases compared to a larger sample size. The study has a small sample size, with just a few case individuals being questioned. This makes it difficult to draw substantial conclusions from the respondents' replies. This implies some constraints on the extent to which the research findings may be used. However, the insights gained should be relevant to other research conducted on comparable organizations. Single case studies often lack adaptability compared to research that includes several instances. Due to the nature of this research being a single case study using a specific methodological technique, the results may be considered non-generalizable and insufficient. This study ensures the validity and reliability of the research. The personnel of the case company have the potential to influence this study. To maintain the validity and reliability of this research, efforts have been made to avoid expressing any personal opinions during the data collection and to prevent them from influencing the formulation of the open-ended questions.

However, these viewpoints may still influence the participants' responses somewhat. The respondents were encouraged to express their genuine views, with the guarantee that only the researcher would be privy to their answers. Nevertheless, there is a potential for inaccuracy, and some inquiries were intrusive and unsettling to respond to, such as those about income and employment opportunities at a different organization. Uniformity may enhance the reliability of collected data, but it can also undermine the validity of the results due to artificial and unnatural interactions. Transparency and comprehensive explanations of the study design and execution are essential for assessing the reliability.

Qualitative research strategy prioritizes the significance of honoring the rights, needs, values, and wishes of the individuals providing information. To safeguard the rights of informants, the study clearly defines its research goals, obtains written consent from the case company, and informs respondents about the tools and activities used for data collection. The study also considers the informants' rights, interests, and preferences when presenting the data and ultimately determines informant anonymity. The research investigates the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance in the retail sector. The research guarantees the preservation of secrecy, upholds participant confidentiality, and protects the integrity and pertinence of the study. The study ensures the firm's confidentiality and notifies participants about the goal and characteristics of the research.

4 THE CASE STUDY OF AZ COMPANY

This section outlines the AZ case company, its goods and amenities, and the retail industry's market situation.

4.1 Description of the AZ Case Company

AZ is a Finnish hypermarket business that has 81 shops around the nation. Founded in 1998, this establishment functions as a self-service retail shop, providing various items such as groceries, frozen meals, fruits, apparel, drinks, footwear, toiletries, and technological gadgets. Around 6,000 people are employed by the company AZ. The AZ ranked as the third biggest retail chain in revenue in 2020, with a total turnover of 2.23 billion Euros. Also, the case company assumes accountability for the consumer products industry and functions as a retail giant. The company's e-commerce platform lets users conveniently purchase items, offering various online and mobile usage options. AZ's adaptability and cost-effectiveness make it an excellent option for consumers in Finland. In 2008 and 2009, the Great Place to Work Institute Finland recognized company AZ as the fourth best workplace in Finland.

4.2 Products and Services

Therefore, the AZ Company evokes several products and services that automatically meet the user's needs. The company also provides various items, including fresh fruits and locally grown and imported dairy products. The shop supplies several products for the customers, including fruits and vegetables from local growers or other countries. Also, it offers bakery products, meat and fish, groceries and houseware, beverages and drinks, medicine, health and wellness, and groceries for pets. Unique store components like the customer service department, specialty butcher and seafood, deli and flower sections, and pharmacy section are also featured. On the other hand, a web platform provides a store-buying and delivery platform that relies on trusty home delivery services. Customers are involved in loyalty programs during persistent activities like community activities, rewards programs, and local suppliers.

An order fulfillment plan considered specific to individuals is being introduced, and catering services for large-scale production or specialty items not usually stocked are also delivered. In addition, a company realizes the goal of a sustainable community by buying sustainable raw materials, disposing of ecological waste, and contributing environmentally preferable products for effective interaction with nature.

On the other hand, the business offers services to its customers that undoubtedly make them better during interaction and ensure the continuous delivery of these services. AZ Company provides an extensive range of premium cuisine, seasonal delicacies, and other consumable products via its online platform. Customers have the convenience of shopping for various products, including food, minor home appliances, and other stuff. The business provides the option of home delivery or pick-up services, making it a simple method of shopping for food and other things.

4.3 Market Position in the Retail Industry

AZ Company, a hypermarket chain, saw a 3.9% revenue growth compared to 2020, showcasing its organic expansion capacity without additional store openings. In 2021, the firm saw profitable expansion in the grocery sector by increasing sales, improving customer satisfaction, and strengthening profitability. The company allocated substantial money to enhance the retail network, specifically emphasizing updating and improving the current locations. The firm uses consumer data to mold its shops and services, prioritizing sustainable, high-quality offerings, uniqueness, convenience, and competitive pricing. The company's growth strategy focuses on enhancing customer experiences and cultivating digital services to distinguish itself from rivals in physical shops and digital platforms.

5 THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This chapter describes the process of collecting data and illustrates the data obtained from the open-ended questionnaires. The participants of the case company were questioned and responded to the role of employee job satisfaction on work performance. Finally, responses have been provided in this chapter to facilitate understanding of the results.

5.1 Results of the Study

In the study, data was collected from the case company's respondents, and data was gathered using an open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire served as a tool to get the necessary findings. Regarding the retail industry, the question is to obtain the essential information needed to understand how job satisfaction influences employee performance. The open-ended questionnaire has been developed to understand the role of job satisfaction in employee performance. The question has been designed clearly and comprehensively to enhance the respondent's capacity to share their experiences about the significance of work performance and job satisfaction. The open-ended questionnaire is found in Appendix 1.

The case company participants had open-ended questions to gather information about their real-life experiences. The purpose of the study questions turned out to address the primary objective following the four sub-objectives, including assessing the perception of customer satisfaction in retail stores, identifying the factors that contribute to job satisfaction, understanding job satisfaction on work performance, and assessment of job satisfaction and work performance in the retail sector of Finland. The open-ended questionnaire was promptly sent to the experts employed by the case company, and the study successfully generated responses from the participants throughout the company. The open-ended questionnaires were conducted to understand the role of employee job satisfaction on work performance in Finland's retail industry, and the required data was obtained.

5.2 Understanding of Employee Job Satisfaction in the Retail Store

As a component of evaluating employee job satisfaction in the retail store, this sub-objective aims to determine employee job satisfaction at the retail store or supermarket in Finland. The question is: How do you define employee job satisfaction at your retail store or supermarket in Finland? The case company has been questioned, and the answers are considered a company response, as indicated in H1. Below is a summary of the responses provided by the respondents during the open-ended questionnaire:

The primary goal is to have satisfied people with their jobs in the retail sector. (H1)

The company prioritizes the satisfaction of its workers as its crucial objective due to its beneficial influence on the retail industry.

5.3 Identification of the Factors Behind Job Satisfaction

The case firm was asked three open-ended questions to identify the key factors influencing work satisfaction in the retail superstore, which aligned with the study's sub-objectives. The inquiries encompass the following: What are the indicators or factors of employee job satisfaction at the retail store? The participants' responses to the following questions have been condensed below.

The company conducts an annual employee satisfaction survey, engages in monthly individual discussions with employees, and has sessions with the workforce. Also, maintain a collaborative work environment and actively seek ways to address any necessary changes. (H1)

The company has established a communicative work atmosphere, encouraged free debate, and conducted monthly staff meetings to collect opinions. The company emphasizes every piece of feedback the workers provide and implements essential improvements to preserve a collaborative work culture. The subsequent inquiry posed the management concerns: How does the company identify the indicators that ensure employee job satisfaction? Below is a concise description of the company's response.

Meetings are conducted jointly, and the company identifies areas that require improvement. Subsequently, progress is regularly assessed to see whether improvement has occurred. (H1)

The company gathers input from employees to identify indications of employee satisfaction. Additionally, it monitors the success of the advancement using the feedback gathered from the collaborative sessions, assessing the effectiveness of the applied adjustments. Finally, to comprehend the factors influencing work satisfaction among retail employees in the case organization, the respondents posed the following inquiry: How do you assess employee job satisfaction in the retail store? The following is a discussion on the summarization of the answer.

Employees experience high levels of work satisfaction. Therefore, they have less employee turnover due to employee job satisfaction. (H1)

5.4 Influences of Job Satisfaction on Work Performance

The chosen case firm was given a series of questions as part of the research to identify the influence of job satisfaction on work performance. The first inquiry is: Do you think employee job satisfaction influences work performance? The participants responded with the provided summary.

Indeed, it is closely associated with the achievement and effectiveness in the market. It is also visible to consumer satisfaction. (H1)

Based on the comprehension of job performance and its connection to employee happiness, the following question has been posed: How do you assess an employee's work performance? Do you have a standard format in the company? Or are you using any other measurement scale or assessment criteria? Below is a concise overview of the discussion of the input.

Indeed, they own a particular set of measures readily displayed in the store and on the scales. Optimal performance may be achieved when all necessary resources and equipment are properly organized and in place. Furthermore, the guidelines provided by the marketplaces ensure the effectiveness of the actions. (H1)

Ultimately, the company was asked the following question: Do you think the criteria for work performance assessment could be better? Below is a concise overview of the feedback.

The company can continuously enhance work performance by engaging in open communication and routinely convening meetings. If the company encounters any complaint, the team promptly seeks a resolution. (H1)

5.5 Assessment of Job Satisfaction and Work Performance

Based on the research sub-objective, the company's experts were asked questions about the company's evaluation of job satisfaction and work performance. The first inquiry was: Finally, what is your suggestion for improving employee job satisfaction in the Finnish retail store? The company provided the following suggestions.

The company ensures proper care and attention are given to the employees, actively engages with them, provides a strong introduction, and empowers them to excel. Provide consistent feedback and mentor employees to achieve success in their careers. (H1)

The second question concerns the evaluation of job satisfaction and work performance. It is as follows: What is your advice for employee work performance in the Finnish retail store? The management provided positive input on job performance in the retail sector, as indicated below.

Maintain a clear plan in thoughts, coach, and provide frequent feedback. (H1)

6 THE DISCUSSION ON THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from the open-ended questionnaires completed by the case company. It encompasses examining the data and the overall result, which is further interpreted considering the existing literature. It also involves building alignments and arguments that account for the research question and the study's objective.

6.1 Discussion of the Study

The study seeks to determine the role of employee job satisfaction on employee work performance in Finland's retail sector. The study aimed to achieve its goals by implementing four sub-objectives. These sub-objectives included understanding employee job satisfaction, identifying the factors that influence job satisfaction, examining the role of job satisfaction on work performance, and assessing the role of job satisfaction and work performance.

Hence, the study collected data using open-ended questionnaires, and the data was collected from the respondents of the AZ Company to fulfill the research objectives. The qualitative research methodology was used in this scenario, using the inductive research approach. The data from the AZ Company was evaluated using the thematic analysis process to get the study's overall findings. The research aimed to comprehend the role of employee job satisfaction on work performance. The literature evaluation identified several aspects contributing to job satisfaction and work performance. Additionally, Herzberg's two-factor theory distinguishes between motivation and hygiene factors, further enhancing the understanding of job satisfaction's role in work performance. The research found that job satisfaction is essential for workers to succeed in the market. It also proposed that an open work environment, open discussions, career development opportunities, and job satisfaction surveys are fundamental to job satisfaction. Additionally, the research demonstrated a strong connection between job satisfaction and work performance, which is also reflected in customer satisfaction. Finally, the respondent emphasized the need to provide workers with frequent feedback and coaching to enhance their job performance. They also stressed the need for a clear plan for employee job satisfaction and optimal work performance.

6.2 Evaluation of Employee Job Satisfaction in the Retail Store

The research findings conducted with participants from AZ Company have shown significant favorable comments on incorporating employee satisfaction in the retail shop. According to the company's response, the firm prioritizes the contentment of its employees as its first goal, recognizing its positive impact on the retail sector. In the study, Huang et al. (2019) defined job satisfaction as the predominant positive emotional reaction that workers can display toward their tasks. Hence, the workers' satisfaction indicates the significant influence of satisfying customers' wants and directly impacting the firm's performance in the market.

The data collected from the investigation into job satisfaction revealed that management at AZ Company prioritizes employee satisfaction as a crucial objective, resulting in a workforce that appreciates working in the retail industry. The research indicates that measuring employee satisfaction is crucial for aligning positive emotional responses and enhancing organizational performance.

King et al. (2011) emphasized that inadequate job satisfaction harms companies, such as reduced physical well-being, frequent complaints, damage to equipment, excessive absenteeism, high employee turnover, and general employee dissatisfaction. The open-ended questionnaire conducted with the case company has indicated that employee enjoyment is crucial. This finding aligns with previous research and suggests that improving employee enjoyment can reduce absenteeism and enhance worker well-being and satisfaction in the retail market. Ultimately, this can lead to a competitive advantage in the market. Furthermore, Yazdanpour and Maroofi (2015) demonstrated that employee satisfaction benefits motivation, leading to an overall improvement in sales performance. The data collected from the open-ended questionnaire process further shows that employee satisfaction positively impacts the retail business.

6.3 Interpretation of the Factors Behind Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is paramount in Finland's retail sectors, and ensuring people love their work is essential. Multiple studies have proven that many variables contribute to employee happiness. Colin-Chevalier et al. (2024) have identified the determinants of work satisfaction as job satisfaction is determined by several aspects such as remuneration, work environment, independence, communication, and organizational commitment. It results in acknowledgment, financial gain, progress, and achieving objectives. The satisfaction level among workers directly influences the degree of customer fulfillment since employees often serve as an intermediary in this process. Furthermore, job satisfaction is influenced by two critical factors, including training and workload (Huang et al., 2019).

The participants of the Finnish retail store provided several interesting insights into the factors influencing job satisfaction in their company. The company has indicated that positive indicators are used to ascertain the determinants of work satisfaction. The company arranges meetings twice a month to evaluate workers' opinions and identify areas for future workplace satisfaction enhancement. In addition, the company expressed its strong commitment to open communication, allowing staff complete independence to share their views and comments for implementation purposes. Likewise, the company conducts annual job satisfaction surveys and private discussions to assess employee satisfaction levels and identify necessary improvement components.

Huang and Gamble (2015) identified that job satisfaction is predicated upon several factors, such as the terms of employment, the duration of work hours, the financial advantages of the work environment, and natural characteristics like training and client engagement. The analysis of job satisfaction in the Finnish retail industry has shown that a collaborative work environment is associated with high job satisfaction. During the study, the respondents said that the organization arranges collaborative sessions to improve the collection of suggestions from workers. These sessions provide a team-oriented work environment, which has a favorable impact on job satisfaction. Furthermore, respondents have said that as time progresses, the company assesses job satisfaction, and the workers exhibit significant satisfaction, so there is no turnover in the store. The company participants identified job security as a critical criterion for employee satisfaction and long-term employment. This finding aligns with previous studies on the subject.

6.4 Discussion of the Influences of Job Satisfaction on Work Performance

The Finnish retail shop respondents have shown a strong connection between job satisfaction and work performance. The existing literature regarding job satisfaction and work performance outcomes consistently shows a significant relationship between the two factors. The literature conducted by Yazdanpour and Maroofi (2015) stated that the work environment of retail salespersons significantly influences their performance and attitudes toward customer service. Uncertainty among retail salespersons about clients is significantly linked to reduced customer service attitudes and performance.

On the other hand, retail salespersons who have favorable attitudes toward customer service are closely associated with improved sales achievement and work performance. The study findings from the AZ Company indicate a connection between job satisfaction and work performance in achieving the business objective and success in the market. The participants have indicated a link between workplace satisfaction and work performance, which is also reflected in customer satisfaction. The study's findings align with previous research, indicating that job satisfaction positively impacts work performance, increasing consumer satisfaction in the market.

Job satisfaction is an essential component of efficiency and success in the market. During the study, the participants emphasized that there is a significant connection between market success and efficiency, which is evident in the customers as well. Thus, the study confirms that job satisfaction significantly contributes to the market success of the Finnish retail business by improving employee work performance. Also, the research findings by Huang and Gamble (2015) stated that the success of an organization depends critically on the link between job performance and individual work satisfaction. Salespeople working directly with clients in the retail industry are essential in increasing sales. Meeting customer demand is favorably impacted by employee happiness, and a company's performance is closely related to employee satisfaction, which reflects customer satisfaction. Guinto and Magallanes (2020) have stated that employees' success in organizations depends on their work motivation and job happiness since these factors contribute to increased devotion, productivity, and quality. Organizations must maintain and enhance these attributes to achieve overall performance enhancement.

The study accomplished at a Finnish retail store has shown that the company adheres to its standards of measurement, which are directly reflected in the store and on the scales. Additionally, the organization guarantees that everything is in proper order and that all equipment is well-maintained, enabling personnel to perform at their highest level of productivity. Consequently, the company can distribute and maintain all the essential resources required to enhance performance and maintain job satisfaction among employees in the market. According to Chinelato et al. (2022), several elements, such as employee motivation and job performance, impact sales performance. The study participants also confirmed the findings of the prior investigations. In addition, they emphasized the importance of the company's management ensuring employment growth, effective communication with employees, and regular meetings. If the company identifies the precise complaints, it takes thorough steps to resolve them.

6.5 Explanation of the Assessment of Job Satisfaction and Work Performance

Assessing job satisfaction and work performance is essential for enhancing efficiency in the highly competitive retail industry. Extensive prior research has resulted in the proposal of many measures to assess job satisfaction and work performance. Van Saane (2003) highlighted the absence of a universally accepted and readily accessible approach for evaluating job satisfaction and work performance. Rutherford et al. (2009) have demonstrated that several elements, including corporate rules, advancement prospects, and organizational support, significantly impact retail personnel's job satisfaction. Orisatoki and Oguntibeju (2010) proposed that assessing customer satisfaction and performance in retail shops could be influenced by various factors, including the quality of relationships with colleagues and supervisors, task performance, and the overall environment both within and outside the shops.

The study conducted open-ended questionnaires for participants to investigate work performance and job satisfaction at the Finnish Retail Shop, AZ Company. The company has implemented its performance evaluation system to assess the efficiency and productivity of its employees. Higher levels of worker satisfaction are directly linked to increased opportunities for advancement within the retail store. The respondents said the organization is always open to talking with workers to identify the underlying factors contributing to employee dissatisfaction.

The company proposed monitoring each employee's well-being should be conducted professionally, focusing on thorough attention to detail. They recommended that this practice be actively encouraged and included in professional development to guarantee retail industry employees' overall satisfaction and work performance. The participants emphasized the significance of clear goals, frequent feedback, and relevant assistance to improve employment results in the retail industry.

7 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a concise overview of the research data and then derives the theoretical implications using Herzberg's theory as the basis. Subsequently, the chapter outlines the managerial implications and then discusses the implications for policymakers based on the study's results. Lastly, it showcases the study's limitations and recommendations for further research.

7.1 Summary of the Study

This research aims to determine the role of employee job satisfaction and work performance in the retail industry. The objectives of this research endeavor include investigating the role of job satisfaction on work performance. The study addresses the following four sub-objectives. A qualitative method was used to research a Finnish retail establishment, where open-ended questionnaires were administered to participants of the case company. The research achieved the main goals and sub-objectives specified at the outset, yielding favorable outcomes. The study of the research data, which examined the mediator function of employee job satisfaction in work performance, revealed significant findings from the participants. In the retail industry, employee satisfaction is primarily determined by satisfaction, which refers to individuals finding satisfaction and enjoyment in their work within the market. Enhancing job satisfaction improves employee work performance, increases customer satisfaction, and helps achieve company goals.

This study identified many factors that lead to work satisfaction in Finland's retail industry. Based on the study results, it can be concluded that the main factors influencing job satisfaction are effective channels for employees to express their opinions, favorable working conditions, constructive handling of feedback, job security, and opportunities for advancement. The retail industry in Finland puts great importance on work satisfaction, and numerous analyses of the sector have identified key variables that contribute to its rise. The study establishes that an open work environment, independence, communication, and organizational commitment are critical determinants of employment satisfaction.

Additionally, the Finnish retail industry illustrates how a collaborative work environment is linked to elevated levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, it emphasizes that job security is crucial in determining employee satisfaction and the length of employment within an organization. The results derived from the study conducted on Finnish retail establishments demonstrate a vital role in job satisfaction and work performance. Prior research has repeatedly shown a substantial link between job satisfaction and work performance. The work environment of retail salespeople noticeably impacts their performance and attitudes towards customer service.

The research results suggest the role of job satisfaction and work performance in achieving corporate goals and market success. The research highlighted the connection between workplace satisfaction and job performance, which is also evident in customer satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a crucial factor in enhancing employee job performance, leading to increased efficiency and success in the market. It plays a significant role in the success of the Finnish retail sector in the market. Research has shown that contented workers exhibit a higher level of customer orientation, which, in turn, leads to the firm's success in the market. To improve overall performance, organizations must maintain and strengthen these characteristics.

The research conducted at a Finnish retail shop demonstrated the company's commitment to maintaining its measuring standards, guaranteeing that all aspects are meticulously organized, and that all equipment is well maintained. This enables people to achieve optimal productivity, improving performance aligned with job satisfaction. Employee motivation and work performance are key factors that affect sales performance. The study results demonstrated concurrence with previous research, highlighting the significance of the company's dedication to job growth, transparent communication with employees, and regular meetings. If the company finds any complaints, it promptly pursues a settlement. Assessing job satisfaction and work performance is essential for enhancing efficiency in the competitive retail sector. Previous studies have highlighted the need to assess job satisfaction and work performance by introducing several measurement scales. The research collected crucial work performance and job satisfaction data via participants' responses. The company has an internal performance assessment system to gauge job performance, and a better level of employee satisfaction ensures the progression of workers' careers inside the retail store. The respondents said that employee well-being should be given top priority in the retail firm. They recommended implementing this with careful attention to detail, providing regular feedback, and offering coaching for job performance and career development. The goal is to ensure employee pleasure.

7.2 Theoretical Implications of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

The findings of this research align with Herzberg's motivation elements (achievement, recognition, work experience, growth), which include open communication, workplace environments, and career development opportunities. The study highlights the importance of efficient aspects such as open communication, workplace environments, and career development opportunities. These variables might result in high work satisfaction, increased motivation, and performance. Consequently, there is a strong connection between establishing a productive work environment, which includes providing challenges, incentives, and chances for employee development, and the satisfaction and motivation of workers. Therefore, companies should create an exceptional work environment for their employees.

The research identified Herzberg's hygiene variables, such as interpersonal relationships, remuneration, personnel policies and administration, supervision, and physical working environment. However, these characteristics were not shown to be directly linked to job satisfaction. Job security, seen as significant in the study, can be attributed to Herzberg's hygiene factors. While these aspects may not directly lead to satisfaction, their fulfillment may serve as a preventive measure against discontent and provide the fundamental basis for motivation. If hygiene components are not adequately supplied, they lead to unhappiness and decreased employee engagement.

7.3 Managerial Implications for the Retail Superstore

The research provided valuable insights from the case company's respondents about the role of employee job satisfaction on work performance. The organization has elicited a favorable emotional reaction from workers regarding job satisfaction, as they have preferred hiring individuals who enjoy working in the retail industry. The organization prioritizes job satisfaction as a primary objective to achieve employee satisfaction, enhancing work performance and consumer satisfaction, which is evident in the market. The company has successfully established the link between employee satisfaction and work performance and has identified numerous significant factors contributing to job satisfaction in the retail industry. The company identified open discussion, an open work environment, career growth, a feedback culture, and private discussions as essential markers for achieving employee job satisfaction in the retail industry.

The company may enhance job satisfaction and performance among workers by implementing a more flexible work culture, providing training and learning opportunities, and facilitating access to government-sponsored learning programs. In addition, the firm might give performance incentives to workers who consistently perform well monthly to inspire them to enhance their performance. Furthermore, the company can provide remuneration and benefits suitable for the employees' work. Besides, it is recommended that the company actively encourages an excellent equilibrium between work and work in the workplace. This may be achieved by implementing an employee productivity monitoring system, which can then be used to organize counseling programs or adjust flexibility to achieve a better work-life balance. In addition, the company may schedule team-building events more regularly due to the company's adherence to an open work community. This will enhance the interaction between colleagues and ultimately increase workplace satisfaction so that job performance will be positively impacted. The AZ Company adheres to rigorous standards to ensure employee satisfaction in the workplace. However, implementing the strategies can enhance work-life balance, career growth, expertise, and work performance in the retail sector.

7.4 Policy Implications for the Company and Government

This research aims to demonstrate that the existing policies may enhance job satisfaction and work performance in Finland's retail industry. The government can incentivize companies, such as monetary grants, to encourage the advancement of training and development initiatives and to give fresh funding to assist mental health programs. It may be legally mandated and includes regulations for flexible work arrangements. Training should be conducted to enhance efficiency and improve the quality of goods, as well as to develop the abilities of workers to align with business goals and satisfy consumers' expectations. The apprenticeship courses serve those seeking specialized vocational training that equips them to work in the retail industry and acquire practical knowledge.

In addition, working conditions can be improved through regular evaluations and updates of the existing minimum wage or salary standards, regulations concerning workplace safety and health, and other factors such as consistent and efficient information communication, as well as the enforcement of employees' rights and representation through unions or employee councils. The development of provided policies may enhance improved circumstances for workers and retail enterprises, leading to a more efficient and competitive retail sector in Finland.

7.5 Limitations of the Research

The research on satisfaction with work performance in Finnish retail stores has several limitations. The study's limitations include a limited sample size of respondents, potential bias in collecting observations, subjective opinions conveyed, emphasis on outcomes, and the study's lack of applicability to a vast population. The research might be expanded to include a broader range of participants using questionnaires, focus groups, and formal interviews. This would provide more opportunities and resources for a more precise and authentic perspective. Moreover, the study investigating the impact of employee job satisfaction on work performance was exclusively conducted utilizing qualitative research methodologies. In such a scenario, relying only on qualitative methodology cannot provide a sufficient sample size for aggregating the data. Furthermore, the research just concentrated on a single case study, thus resulting in a shortage of genuine data about the study's outcome.

The study results may also lack generalizability to other nations or the retail business due to potential variations in work environments and worker profiles. Additional research might investigate the variables influencing job satisfaction in Finland's retail industry.

7.6 Suggestions for Future Research in the Retail Industry

The study is constrained by its reliance on the qualitative method, which restricts the analysis of large samples and hinders the acquisition of high-quality data. Hence, further research might be conducted using quantitative methods or a combination of mixed methods. Furthermore, the research gathered data exclusively from a single case study, which may not be relevant for understanding the impact of employee job satisfaction on work performance. Therefore, it has been proposed that many case companies be used to discover the elements and evaluate the role of job satisfaction on work performance. Moreover, this research is limited to the retail sector alone in Finland, so the results' implications may not apply to other regions or industries. It is recommended that the role of employee job satisfaction in work performance be assessed by comparing them across various sectors and doing this analysis in different regions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaires on employee job satisfaction on work performance in the Finnish retail store

Appendix 1. Questionnaires on employee job satisfaction on work performance in the Finnish retail store

1. How do you define employee job satisfaction at your retail store or supermarket in Finland?
2. What are the indicators or factors of employee job satisfaction at the retail store?
3. How does the company identify the indicators that ensure employee job satisfaction?
4. How do you assess employee job satisfaction in the retail store?
5. Do you think that employee job satisfaction influences work performance?
6. How do you assess an employee's work performance? Do you have a standard format in the company? Or are you using any other measurement scale or assessment criteria?
7. Do you think the criteria can be better for work performance assessment?
8. Finally, what is your suggestion for improving employee job satisfaction in the Finnish retail store?
9. What is your advice for employee work performance in the Finnish retail store?