

Understanding Job Satisfaction in Malaysia's Security Enforcement Services: A Quantitative Analysis of Key Predictors

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction plays a crucial role in maintaining the effectiveness, morale, and retention of personnel in security and enforcement services. This study investigates the influence of self-efficacy, job involvement, and organizational commitment on job satisfaction among security and enforcement personnel in two urban districts in Malaysia. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed, with data collected from 120 respondents through standardized self-administered questionnaires. Validated instruments measured self-efficacy, job involvement, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression in SPSS version 20. Results revealed that all three predictors were significantly and positively related to job satisfaction ($p < .01$). Regression analysis indicated that job involvement emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .382$), followed by organizational commitment ($\beta = .250$) and self-efficacy ($\beta = .217$), collectively explaining 37.7% of the variance in job satisfaction. These findings highlight the need for targeted strategies to enhance employee engagement, foster organizational loyalty, and build individual confidence to improve job satisfaction in the security and enforcement sector. The study offers practical implications for human resource policies, leadership approaches, and training programs in similar high-demand occupational contexts.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, self-efficacy, job involvement, organizational commitment, security services, enforcement personnel

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction has long been recognized as a critical factor influencing employee performance, retention, and organizational stability. Across industries, dissatisfaction among employees has been linked to increased turnover, reduced productivity, absenteeism, and diminished morale (Spector, 1997; Locke, 1976). In high-demand occupational settings such as security and enforcement services—where personnel operate under strict protocols, face high accountability, and often work in challenging environments—these consequences can directly undermine operational effectiveness and public trust.

Globally, numerous studies highlight persistent concerns about job satisfaction in public service and enforcement roles. In the United States, research indicates that law enforcement and security staff frequently report moderate to low satisfaction levels, citing workload pressure, limited career progression, and work-life imbalance as key factors (Brough & Frame, 2004; Zhao et al., 2002). In the United Kingdom, similar challenges have been observed, with organizational stressors, resource constraints, and perceived lack of recognition contributing to employee dissatisfaction (Houdmont & Elliot-Davies, 2016). In Australia, national

surveys of security personnel found that shift work, high job demands, and limited autonomy significantly lowered job satisfaction scores (Waters & Ussery, 2007).

In Malaysia, issues of job satisfaction within uniformed and enforcement-related sectors mirror many of these global patterns. Studies involving public enforcement agencies and auxiliary police units have reported concerns over excessive workloads, long and irregular working hours, limited promotional opportunities, and resource shortages (Ismail et al., 2010; Kadir et al., 2019). Additionally, cultural expectations and hierarchical work structures can intensify pressure, particularly when decision-making is highly centralized, leaving employees with limited perceived control over their work (Husin et al., 2020).

Persistent job dissatisfaction has far-reaching consequences for both individuals and organizations. Internationally, recent studies have linked dissatisfaction among security and enforcement personnel to heightened turnover intentions, reduced operational efficiency, and compromised service delivery (Basar et al., 2022; Kim & Lee, 2021). Prolonged dissatisfaction can also exacerbate occupational stress, leading to burnout, absenteeism, and declining mental health (Houdmont et al., 2017). In the Malaysian context, similar patterns have emerged. Rahman et al. (2021) found that dissatisfaction among uniformed enforcement staff was significantly associated with lower organizational commitment and higher rates of early resignation. Likewise, Kadir and Jusoh (2020) reported that persistent dissatisfaction, if left unaddressed, can undermine teamwork, erode public confidence, and negatively affect the perceived integrity of enforcement services.

Despite these well-documented consequences, empirical research in Malaysia remains concentrated on corporate and healthcare settings, with comparatively less focus on job satisfaction within the security and enforcement sector. Furthermore, studies often treat job satisfaction as an outcome without simultaneously examining the interplay of individual-level (e.g., self-efficacy), job-related (e.g., job involvement), and organizational-level (e.g., commitment) predictors in a single integrated model. This gap presents an opportunity to generate evidence that not only deepens theoretical understanding but also informs practical strategies to address dissatisfaction before it escalates into workforce instability.

The present study seeks to address this need by examining the predictive influence of self-efficacy, job involvement, and organizational commitment on job satisfaction among security and enforcement personnel in Malaysia.

The relationship between job satisfaction and its antecedents can be explained through several well-established organizational behaviour theories. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959) distinguishes between hygiene factors—conditions that prevent dissatisfaction—and motivators—elements that actively enhance satisfaction. Within this framework, self-efficacy, job involvement, and organizational commitment can be seen as motivators that directly contribute to an employee's sense of achievement, recognition, and personal growth.

Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model (1976) further supports the link between these predictors and job satisfaction. The model suggests that psychological states such as experienced meaningfulness and responsibility for outcomes are shaped by core job characteristics, which in turn influence satisfaction and work motivation. Higher self-efficacy may enhance an employee's confidence in handling task challenges; strong job involvement reflects personal identification with one's role; and organizational commitment strengthens the alignment between individual and organizational goals—each of which reinforces job satisfaction.

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capability to execute tasks successfully (Bandura, 1997), has been shown to positively influence job satisfaction through greater resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving ability (Luthans et al., 2007). Job involvement, representing the degree of psychological identification with work (Kanungo, 1982), fosters engagement and a sense of purpose, which have been consistently linked to higher satisfaction levels (Brown, 1996). Organizational commitment, often conceptualized through Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model, is a critical predictor of job

satisfaction because it reflects an employee's emotional attachment, willingness to exert effort, and desire to remain in the organization (Mowday et al., 1982).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction in security and enforcement services

Job satisfaction (JS) remains central to workforce stability and performance in high-demand roles such as security and enforcement. Higher levels of JS have been consistently linked to lower burnout, stronger performance, and better retention across public-facing occupations (Judge et al., 2017; Spector, 1997). In security settings specifically, multi-site studies report that hygiene factors (e.g., scheduling, pay fairness) and motivators (e.g., recognition, task significance) shape JS and, in turn, intentions to quit (Choi & Lee, 2023). Perceptions from the public and supervisors also matter: among private security officers, favorable citizen views and supervisor support have been associated with higher JS via self-legitimacy mechanisms (Lee & Jeong, 2019).

In Malaysia and the surrounding region, empirical work on JS has grown but remains thinner for security/enforcement compared with corporate or healthcare sectors. A recent Malaysian review of public-sector work outcomes highlights JS as a lever for reducing absenteeism and boosting productivity but notes gaps in enforcement-related contexts (Husin et al., 2020).

Self-efficacy and job satisfaction

Self-efficacy—beliefs about one's capability to perform job tasks—consistently shows positive links with JS. Large-scale and meta-analytic evidence, including studies from public-service contexts, indicate robust associations and, in some cases, reciprocal effects over time (Luthans et al., 2007; Judge & Bono, 2001). Although sector-specific data for security personnel are limited, the underlying mechanism—greater coping ability, problem-solving skills, and perceived control leading to higher JS—applies directly to high-accountability enforcement work.

Hypothesis 1 (H₁). Self-efficacy has a positive, significant relationship with job satisfaction among security and enforcement personnel.

Job involvement and job satisfaction

Job involvement (JI), defined as the degree to which individuals psychologically identify with their work (Kanungo, 1982), is typically associated with stronger engagement, greater meaning, and higher JS. Recent evidence shows that JI relates to downstream service quality through satisfaction in complex service systems (Hirschi & Jaensch, 2015), while Malaysian private-sector data connect JI with broader commitment pathways (Rashid et al., 2020). However, some studies report weaker or non-significant direct effects when controlling for other variables, underscoring the value of testing JI alongside other predictors (Yalabik et al., 2017).

Hypothesis 2 (H₂). Job involvement has a positive, significant relationship with job satisfaction among security and enforcement personnel.

Organizational commitment and job satisfaction

Organizational commitment (OC)—the psychological bond linking employees to their organization—is a well-documented predictor of JS. The three-component model (affective, continuance, and normative commitment) remains the dominant conceptualization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Contemporary studies continue to link OC with service quality, retention, and employee engagement (Al Zefeiti & Mohamad, 2017; Li et al., 2022). Meta-analyses reaffirm the JS–OC association, including longitudinal evidence that JS can predict subsequent OC (Meyer et al., 2002).

Hypothesis 3 (H₃). Organizational commitment has a positive, significant relationship with job satisfaction among security and enforcement personnel.

Evidence specific to security/enforcement and related public services

Beyond generic organizational behaviour findings, sector-specific research supports the present study's model. In Singapore, a large survey of security officers found JS to mediate the relationship between hygiene factors and turnover intention, highlighting its central role in retention (Choi & Lee, 2023). In South Korea, perceived citizen views and supervisor support improved JS through self-legitimacy in private security officers (Lee & Jeong, 2019). In Malaysia, although most recent quantitative work concentrates on manufacturing or general public service, determinants such as work environment, rewards, and recognition repeatedly surface as salient to JS (Husin et al., 2020; Rashid et al., 2020). This convergence supports examining individual (self-efficacy), job-related (job involvement), and organizational (commitment) factors together in enforcement settings.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the predictive relationships between self-efficacy, job involvement, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction among security enforcement personnel in Malaysia. This design allows for statistical testing of hypothesized relationships within a defined time frame using standardized measurement instruments.

Population and sampling

The target population comprised security enforcement personnel serving in Malaysia's central government administrative territory, which functions as the hub for national governance and houses the majority of the country's principal ministries and agencies. According to departmental records, the total population was 320 personnel. Using a simple random sampling technique, 120 respondents were selected to participate in the study. Random sampling was chosen to ensure that each member of the population had an equal chance of selection, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

Measures

Self-efficacy

Measured using the 10-item General Self-Efficacy Scale (Scholz et al., 2002), rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). Higher scores indicate greater perceived capability to execute job-related tasks.

Job involvement

Assessed with a 6-item scale by Kanungo (1982), rated on a 5-point Likert scale, capturing the extent to which employees psychologically identify with their work.

Organizational commitment

Measured using the 9-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Porter et al., 1974), evaluating emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization, rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Job satisfaction

Measured using the 20-item Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1997), assessing satisfaction across multiple dimensions including pay, supervision, and work conditions, with responses rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Reliability and validity

A pilot test involving 20 respondents from a similar occupational background was conducted to assess instrument reliability. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.76 to 0.91 across the four scales, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Content validity was ensured through expert review and the use of established, widely validated instruments.

Data collection procedure

Questionnaires were distributed and collected in person by the researcher and trained assistants over a two-week period. Respondents were briefed on the study's purpose, assured of anonymity, and informed that participation was voluntary. Written consent was obtained prior to participation.

Data analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics and scale scores. Pearson correlation analysis assessed bivariate relationships between variables, while multiple regression analysis determined the predictive power of self-efficacy, job involvement, and organizational commitment on job satisfaction. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

FINDINGS

Respondents' profile

A total of 120 security enforcement personnel participated in the study. The majority were male (70.8%), while females comprised 29.2% of the sample. Most respondents were aged between 31–40 years (42.5%), followed by those aged 21–30 years (35.0%), and above 40 years (22.5%). In terms of educational background, 56.7% held a diploma, 28.3% had completed secondary school, and 15.0% held a bachelor's degree. Regarding tenure, 40.8% had served between 6–10 years, 33.3% for 1–5 years, and 25.9% for more than 10 years.

Correlation analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships between all three predictors and job satisfaction ($p < .01$). Job involvement showed the strongest correlation with job satisfaction ($r = .502$), followed by self-efficacy ($r = .428$) and organizational commitment ($r = .369$). The results are as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation matrix of study variables (N = 120)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Self-efficacy	—			
2. Job involvement	.421**	—		
3. Organizational commitment	.354**	.398**	—	
4. Job satisfaction	.428**	.502**	.369**	—

** $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Regression analysis

Multiple regression analysis revealed that self-efficacy, job involvement, and organizational commitment together explained 37.7% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .377$, $F(3, 116) = 23.39$, $p < .001$). Job involvement emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .382$, $p < .001$), followed by organizational commitment ($\beta = .250$, $p < .01$) and self-efficacy ($\beta = .217$, $p < .05$). Table 2 summarised the results for multiple regression.

Table 2 Multiple regression results predicting job satisfaction (N = 120)

Predictor	β	t	p
Self-efficacy	.217	2.58	.011
Job involvement	.382	4.74	.001
Organizational commitment	.250	2.94	.004

Model summary: $R = .614$, $R^2 = .377$, Adjusted $R^2 = .360$, $F(3, 116) = 23.39$, $p < .001$

Hypotheses Testing Results

The multiple regression analysis results (Table 2) provide empirical evidence regarding the three proposed hypotheses:

H₁: Self-efficacy has a positive, significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Supported. Self-efficacy significantly predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = .217$, $p = .011$), indicating that higher levels of perceived capability are associated with greater job satisfaction among security enforcement personnel.

H₂: Job involvement has a positive, significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Supported. Job involvement was the strongest predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = .382$, $p < .001$), confirming that employees who are more psychologically invested in their work report higher satisfaction levels.

H₃: Organizational commitment has a positive, significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Supported. Organizational commitment significantly predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = .250$, $p = .004$), suggesting that employees with stronger loyalty and attachment to the organization tend to experience higher satisfaction.

All three hypotheses were supported, and the final model explained 37.7% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .377$).

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that self-efficacy, job involvement, and organizational commitment are significant positive predictors of job satisfaction among security enforcement personnel in Malaysia's central government administrative territory. The strongest predictor, job involvement, suggests that employees who psychologically identify with their work and see it as a central part of their lives are more likely to report higher satisfaction. This aligns with prior findings from public safety and service-oriented occupations, where high job involvement fosters engagement, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of achievement (Chaudhary & Akhouri, 2019; Hirschi & Jaensch, 2015).

The significant contribution of organizational commitment supports the notion that employees who feel emotionally attached and loyal to their organization are more satisfied with their jobs. This is consistent with Meyer et al. (2002), who found that affective commitment is strongly linked to satisfaction across occupational contexts, including public sector roles. In high-accountability environments such as security enforcement, strong commitment may buffer against stressors and enhance perceived job meaning (Li et al., 2022).

Self-efficacy's positive effect on job satisfaction reinforces the role of personal agency in occupational well-being. Personnel who believe in their capability to handle job challenges tend to approach tasks with greater

confidence and persistence, resulting in more positive job evaluations. This is in line with the findings of Judge and Bono (2001) and recent security-sector research by Basar et al. (2022), which highlight self-efficacy as a protective factor against job strain and dissatisfaction.

From a practical perspective, these results suggest that efforts to improve job satisfaction in the security and enforcement sector should prioritize initiatives that deepen job involvement—such as expanding role autonomy, recognizing contributions, and aligning tasks with employees' personal values. Concurrently, fostering organizational commitment through transparent communication, career development opportunities, and fair treatment can strengthen satisfaction and retention. Finally, training programs designed to enhance self-efficacy, such as skills mastery workshops and scenario-based drills, may equip personnel with the confidence needed to thrive in demanding roles.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the predictive roles of self-efficacy, job involvement, and organizational commitment on job satisfaction among security enforcement personnel serving in Malaysia's central government administrative territory. The results demonstrate that all three factors significantly and positively influence job satisfaction, with job involvement emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings provide empirical support for integrating individual, job-related, and organizational-level strategies to enhance satisfaction in high-accountability enforcement roles. By addressing these factors, organizations can improve morale, reduce turnover intentions, and strengthen overall operational effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study suggest several practical measures for enhancing job satisfaction among security enforcement personnel. First, organizations should seek to deepen employees' job involvement through role enrichment, participative decision-making, and recognition of contributions. Such initiatives can strengthen the psychological connection between personnel and their work, thereby increasing satisfaction. Second, organizational commitment can be fostered by providing clear career development pathways, implementing structured training programs, and maintaining transparent communication channels. These steps can build trust and loyalty, which in turn contribute to more positive job attitudes. Third, targeted training aimed at building self-efficacy—such as simulation-based drills, crisis-response exercises, and skills mastery workshops—can equip personnel with the confidence and competence needed to perform effectively in demanding environments. Finally, cultivating a supportive work environment through adequate staffing, safe working conditions, and respectful interpersonal relationships can help sustain high levels of satisfaction and performance.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study offers important insights into the determinants of job satisfaction, several limitations should be acknowledged. The use of a cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships; future research could adopt longitudinal approaches to explore how satisfaction evolves over time. The focus on security enforcement personnel in a federal administrative context also limits the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or regions. Comparative studies involving different enforcement agencies and geographical settings would enhance external validity. Furthermore, as the data were collected through self-administered questionnaires, responses may have been influenced by social desirability bias or common method variance; triangulating survey data with supervisor assessments or objective performance indicators would help address this limitation. Finally, while this study focused on three predictors—self-efficacy, job involvement, and organizational commitment—future research could incorporate additional variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, or work-life balance to develop a more comprehensive model of job satisfaction.

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