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## Motivational Factors on Job Productivity: Case Southeast Asia Nonprofit Organization

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# Motivational Factors on Job Productivity: Case Southeast Asia Nonprofit Organization

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## Abstract

This paper explores the importance of motivating non-profit organization employees to increase job productivity with participants using non-profit organizations' employees in Southeast Asia. This paper draws data from a qualitative case study conducted in Southeast Asia. It analyzes the factors that may contribute to more in-depth intrinsic motivation. The study was conducted on 20 informants working in different non-profit organizations in Southeast Asia. The findings show that the basic needs for employees include reasonable remuneration, adequate work facilities, funding for training, and support. Furthermore, some employees show a greater need to increase their job productivity. They feel this would increase their scope of work knowledge, making them better employees. It would also increase professionalism as an employee of a non-profit organization. However, lacking proper funding, support, and adequate work facilities is a barrier to employee job productivity. Therefore, non-profit organizations in Southeast Asia countries need to motivate their employees by providing facilities to increase job productivity. Few studies is published on the impact of motivational factors on job productivity in non-profit organizations. Therefore, the paper makes an empirical contribution of the non-profit organizations to the relationship between motivational factors and job productivity in Southeast Asia.

**Keywords:** intrinsic motivation, job productivity, nonprofit organization, employees, Southeast Asia

## Introduction

Literature shows the importance of motivation to increase employee productivity, though few studies showed its role in nonprofit organizations (DeVaro, Maxwell, & Morita, 2017). For instance, some studies showed the importance of motivation in management but ignore nonprofit organization employees (Word & Park, 2015; Bassous, 2015). Also, some are based on theory rather than data analysis (DeVaro et al., 2017; Hao, Farooq, & Zhang, 2018), and most focus on expert opinions and perceptions, but no empirical evidence is directly observed in the workplace (Leete, 2000; Germak & Robinson, 2014). Therefore, there are no empirical research linking motivation to employee job productivity in nonprofit organizations. Correspondingly, this study provides a new approach to exploring the relationship between employee motivation and job productivity.

Employee motivation significantly affects job productivity and nonprofit organizations' quality (Kang, Ou, & Mak, 2017). Also, it increases employee productivity, resulting in cost savings for nonprofit organizations (Kang et al., 2017). Therefore, employee motivation is an important issue rarely studied in nonprofit organizations. Employee motivation comprises three attributes, including autonomous, extrinsic, and intrinsic motivation (Hao et al., 2018). According to Gagné et al. (2015), autonomous motivation is the promotion to be involved in activity. Intrinsic motivation drives an employee to perform a task because it is inherently interesting, naturally satisfying, and enjoyable (Lim, Li, Fang, & Wu, 2018). In contrast, extrinsic motivation promotes

a person to engage in an activity to obtain praise or reward or to avoid punishment (Lim et al., 2018).

The three attributes measure employees' involvement in a given task. Therefore, highly motivated employees invest more effort than their less motivated colleagues in completing the given task (Bidee et al., 2017). The high and low job productivity is correspondingly influenced by employee motivation. Nonprofit organization employees may have several individual needs to be fulfilled to encourage them in social work. Therefore, the question is how one could identify this need. Moreover, It is necessary to determine how specific needs elicit the required response and job productivity.

Organizations seek to fill the gaps in motivation and job productivity by recruiting good employees and initiating on-the-job training. It is interesting to examine these gaps to improve the understanding of this problem by exploring the motivation and job productivity of nonprofit organizations' employees in Southeast Asia countries.

On that basis, this paper purpose to address the following research question:

RQ. How can intrinsic motivation and job productivity increase in the nonprofit organizational context?

## Literature Review

This study departs from "Self-Determination Theory" (SDT),

4 a macro human motivation theory. SDT defines motivation as "internal and external forces" that result in "behavior initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence" (Vallerand & Thill, 1993; Rigby & Ryan, 2018). Deci and Ryan (2017) stated that the three different forms of motivation are "Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Extrinsic Motivation (EM), and Autonomous Motivation (AM)." Intrinsic motivation is related to the pleasure, interest, or satisfaction generated by the behavior. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is concerned with the instrumental consequences of behavior. These behaviors could be in line with someone's life goals or values, either with integrated or identified regulation, respectively. Moreover, the practice of an activity is based on internal pressures such as mistakes, leading to negative things (introjected), or external reasons, such as rewards, punishments, or social pressures with external regulation. Autonomous motivation lacks intrinsic and extrinsic promotion, implying there is no reason to perform an activity (Grouzet et al., 2004).

The most studied motivation theory is Maslow's Hierarchical Needs Theory (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Although simple, Maslow created an individual's level of motivation known as the hierarchy of needs (Robbins & Judge, 2018). This hierarchy resembles a pyramid, where each level builds on the previous one. Therefore, once one need is fulfilled, other needs begin to be fulfilled (Robbins & Judge, 2018). The needs built from the bottom up are physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Colquitt, Lepine, & Wesson, 2018).

Motivation closely relates to job productivity and employee performance, including factors such as job productivity (Zhang, Liao, Li, & Colbert, 2018), organizational commitment (Posey, Roberts, & Lowry, 2016), satisfaction, and employee performance (Tella & Ibinaiye, 2019). However, the definition of motivation varies with studies, though the term comes from the Latin "movere," which means "to move". Since motivation, cognition, and human behavior are complex, this single word cannot sufficiently define the concept of motivation.

Lester (2013) defined motivation as a variable that drives employees choose actions that make them succeed at the workplace. Moreover, it is described as the energy that drives job-related behavior, influencing one's direction, effort, and persistence (Lester, 2013). Work motivation only applies to motivating employees at the workplace.

The two types of work motivation from internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) drive to increase job productivity because it promotes employees to perform tasks (Kuvaas et al., Buch, 2017). Internal motivation is personal and concerns completing work tasks (Kuvaas et al., 2017). This means that an employee completes a task early because it is satisfaction, not a possible reward. In contrast, external motivation comes from other sources, including feedback from the leader, setting team or company goals, and financial rewards (Kuvaas et al., 2017). Leaders influence and recognize their important role in increasing employee motivation. They need to know how to motivate their employees to create extrinsic motivation because of its insignificant effect on internal motivation.

Studies on motivation in an organization need to consider finance, hierarchy, and job performance as its components (Locke & Schattke, 2019). Finance in organizations could be a relatively simple concept. An organization should make money to survive and pay employees to retain skilled professionals to support themselves and others. Moreover, internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) motivation is important for job productivity to promote employees to perform tasks (Setiawana, 2020).

The organizational hierarchy exists to order and direct the organization members (Valentine, 2018). Communication within this hierarchy, such as between supervisors and employees, is critical to increase job productivity (Xu, Qin, Dust, & DiRenzo, 2019). Therefore, work motivation is based on the individual's ability to fulfill the job expectations, including mental and physical capacities. However, when the individual cannot carry out the job, motivation would not promote them as expected (Locke & Schattke, 2019).

For decades, motivation theory was familiar in nonprofit organizations (Word & Carpenter, 2013; Auger & Woodman, 2016). Individuals are involved in activities based on the ability to perform an activity and the expected rewards for completing the task. The literature review shows that nonprofit organizations rely on the latter motivation indicator. In this case, non-financial rewards are used secondary to increase employee motivation (Word & Park, 2015; Potipiroon & Ford, 2017). Nonprofit organizations provide financial incentives to employees based on their job performance. This could be assessed by various indicators, such as productivity, absenteeism, behavior at the workplace, and ability to work as a team. Therefore, non-financial rewards motivate employees to carry out their jobs productively.

Recent studies explained the role of motivation theory in nonprofit organizations. In Korea, Park and Kim (2016) found that socio-psychological needs, such as giving broad participation rights to decision-making, have two benefits. First, it strengthens the individual's perception of self and promotes intrinsic motivation. Second, it acts as a buffer between the individual and external pressures, weakening extrinsic motivation. Therefore, managers should change from sociopsychological to organizational factors to motivate nonprofit organization employees.

Wiggill (2014) justified the importance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs by exploring approaches to the commitment and motivation of the nonprofit employee in southern Africa. Using expert opinion, the results showed that commitment, trust, and relationship satisfaction are significant motivators for employees.

In the Midwestern states of the US, Bang, Ross, and Reio (2013) explored the factors that influence the motivational 214 volunteers in 22 nonprofit sports organizations. Using expert opinion through a questionnaire survey approach, the study identified six indicators, including values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. It was based on motivation theory, stating that commitment is the main factor influencing employee motivation in nonprofit organizations.

Employee productivity depends on the willingness and openness of employees in carrying out their job (Shujahat et al., 2019; Martin, 2005). These factors increase productivity, leading to job productivity (Yassin, Ali, Ali, & Adan, 2013; Ahammad, Lee, Malul, & Shoham, 2006). Furthermore, Atkinson (2013) explained that standard productivity requires employees to complete tasks according to their goals to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, leaders could monitor their employees and help them increase their job productivity. Also, a reward system should be implemented based on employee productivity (Feige & Wallbaum, 2013) to motivate them to accomplish their tasks (Chang & Lee, 2013; Hanaysha & Majid, 2018).

Fernandez (2013) explained the success factors of job productivity, such as physical work environment, equipment, meaningful work, and productivity expectations and feedback. Other factors include rewards for good or bad systems, standard

operating procedures, knowledge, skills, attitudes. According to Huang and Wu (2010), productivity depends on internal motivation but is influenced by internal factors, such as the required skills, intellectual capacity, and resources to carry out the job. Correspondingly, leaders should provide suitable conditions to ensure employee job productivity meets the required standards.

Maslow (1943) stated that "people work to survive through financial compensation, make new friends, and have job security." They gain a sense of accomplishment and feel important in society, a sense of identity, and job satisfaction. Moreover, all employees with job satisfaction perform highly in their respective workplaces.

Job productivity is directly related to employee motivation (Ahammad, Lee, Malul, & Shoham, 2006; Itri, Bruno, Lalwani, Munden, & Tappouni, 2019). This statement is strengthened by Anjum, Ming, Siddiqi, and Rasool (2018), which stated that modern employee motivation management methods have evolved, such as differential work per unit and task and bonus pay systems. The method is employee-oriented and more effective (van der Kolk et al., 2019). Therefore, employee job productivity is a major multidimensional construct that aims to achieve results and strongly relates to the organization's goals (Jaskiewicz & Tulenko, 2012). Job productivity is a key multi-

character in achieving results that significantly relate to the organization's goals (Palvalin, 2019).

## Methodology

The "how" issue necessitates a qualitative analysis based on "a case study," which allows for an in-depth understanding of current and real-world phenomena, including key contextual conditions (Yin, 2018). Thus, we used qualitative research employing a case study methodology to discern how informants' motivation evolves during the interview process. Indeed, research on such intricate and dynamic phenomena must be contextual and process-oriented (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Process research describes how things change, focusing "on the sequences of incidents, activities, and actions unfolding over time" (Tracy, 2020). Therefore, we determine case selection criteria by adopting a theoretical sample (Gomes, Barnes, & Mahmood, 2016; Agostini & Wegner, 2018): five nonprofit organizations (NPOIND, NPOMYS, NPOTHA, NPOSGP, and NPOPHL) are selected to improve employee motivation and productivity in the workplace. The study used a semi-structured interview technique as an instrument to collect data (Yin, 2018), with ten questions, as shown in Table 1.

Questions
How are the factors that may help increase job productivity in nonprofit organizations?
What is the type of motivation needed in nonprofit organizations in Indonesia?
How are your views on the present state of job productivity?
How are your general attitudes as an employee have on job productivity?
How are your thoughts on the internal motivation influencing recruitment of employees, such as role clarity, organizational work, and improved non-financial benefits effect on job productivity?
How do your thoughts of money motivate job productivity, such as salary, bonus, and incentives?
How do you recruit talented people to work for nonprofits organizations?
Are you sure that job tasks influence one's professional identity?
How is the link between employee self-efficacy and motivation?
What are the obstacles faced by employees to increase job productivity?

Table 1. Questions for Interview

Data for this study were gathered through interviews as well as secondary sources such as nonprofit organization briefings, corporate websites, news announcements, and internal reports, allowing for data triangulation and increasing the research's validity (Neuman, 2014). The interviews were conducted in accordance with a semi-structured protocol created in base on the research question and literature review. More specifically,

we inquired about the levels of motivation factors and productivity, attempting to determine the specific role that various motivation factors may have played in their increase/decrease. For this purpose, we asked general information on participants in table 2 (i.e., the organization's name, the interviewee's position as a representative of the organization, and the number of employees and country).

Name of Organizations	Position	Number of Employees	Country
NPOIND	Accounting and Reporting Officer	NPOIND 1	Indonesia
	Financial and Investment Officer	NPOIND 2	
	General Affair and Personnel Officer	NPOIND 3	
NPOMYS	General Affair and Personnel Officer	NPOMYS 1	Malaysia
	Personnel and Administration Officer	NPOMYS 2	
	Audit Officer	NPOMYS 3	
	Accounting and Reporting Officer	NPOMYS 4	
NPOTHA	Finance and Investment Officer	NPOTHA1	Thailand
	Finance and Investment Officer	NPOTHA2	
	Accounting and Reporting Officer	NPOTHA3	
	Accounting and Reporting Officer	NPOTHA4	
	HRM and Logistic Officer	NPOTHA5	
	HRM and Logistic Officer	NPOTHA6	

Name of Organizations	Position	Number of Employees	Country
NPOSGP	Membership Officer	NPOSGP1	Singapore
	Membership Officer	NPOSGP2	
	Membership Officer	NPOSGP3	
NPOPHL	Human Resources and Logistic	NPOPHL1	Philippines
	General Affair Officer	NPOPHL2	
	Investment Officer	NPOPHL3	
	Program and Service Officer	NPOPHL4	

Table 2. Informants Background

2 We employed "semi-structured interview" approach as a guideline and then allowed interviewees to speak freely in order to obtain important information that would be further researched to answer our study question about the motivation factors. We interviewed 20 employees as informants working full-time in non-profit organizations in Southeast Asia countries. Each interview lasted about 35-50 minutes by using a zoom meeting. We recorded and transcribed all interviews from February 2021 to March 2021. Attention was paid to ensure that the interviewed employees did not deviate from the study objectives and the relevant statement of the informants were consistent with the main topic. Also, the theme was based on the pattern of questions in the interview.

2 We conducted ten "in-depth interviews" with informants (i.e. non-profit organization representatives and non-profit organization managers) involved in the non-profit organization. Taking inspiration from Liu and Hou (2018), who collected data on motivation factors from employees representing a particular non-profit organization and the leads of non-profit organizations. In this study, we decided to interview employees of each non-profit organization to avoid recording only the motivation factors of leadership (Liu & Hou, 2018).

In this study, data were analyzed using an analytical framework, including themes, thematic framework, indexing, mapping, and interpretation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The themes that developed from these informants responses were tabulated and analyzed for a clear understanding (Hashimov, 2015). The main themes and characteristics of the informants were compiled to obtain categories and interview transcripts and checked for grammatical and informational errors. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using Nivo 12 software to highlight and categorize the main themes. In addition, the ethical issues considered are related to the confidentiality and anonymity of the informants. Moreover, participants signed the consent document before the interview was conducted.

## Results

This section describes indicators related to the internal and external factors promoting informants working in nonprofit organizations to perform job tasks.

We asked informants about the factors that help to increase job productivity in nonprofit organizations. The primary theme that was identified included the need for a better and more robust infrastructure to carry out job tasks, more qualified employees and a culture that promotes job productivity.

"I think our organization lacks the necessary funds to buy new equipment." (NPOIND 3 informant).

"I feel more work and outreach programs that promote task completion in nonprofit organizations should be introduced." (NPOSGP1 informant).

We asked informants for their opinion on the various types of motivation needed to improve job performance in their nonprofit organization. The primary themes that emerged in their responses were increasing intrinsic motivation, providing good remuneration for performing, and planning job tasks.

"I think I am interested and motivated to carry out job tasks is because I have a passion for the tasks and that job guides are helpful." (NPOTHA1 informant).

"I think funding is most important to carry out a good job using various techniques and methods." (NPOTH5 informant).

"We could motivate employees by planning job tasks." (NPOMYS1 informant).

Informants were asked about their perceptions of their current work-related productivity. The main themes identified were that the job tasks were new, they did not receive support or guidance from the leaders, lack of communication with other employees, and insufficient funds. The informants indicated reasons that are simple to deal with but pose obstacles.

"I feel that task execution is not part of the planning. One should not be forced to perform job tasks outside their field of work." (NPOPHL1 informant)

"The support given by the leaders and colleagues is not enough." (NPOMYS 3 informant).

"Since the funds are limited, my intention to carry out new tasks is reduced." (NPOMYS 4 informant).

"I feel the more we communicate with them, the more knowledge we gain. However, I barely interact with my co-workers." (NPOTHA3 informant).

The informants gave mixed answers when asked about employees' general attitudes towards job productivity. The main theme is the desire to perform job tasks to improve knowledge and career and become good employees. The negative theme is that job tasks are complex, time-consuming and there is no employee recognition.

"I feel that when a person performs a job task, the work experience and knowledge gained improve the employee's skills." (NPOSGP2 informant).

"Only when rewards appear, one is truly motivated." (NPOSGP2 informant).

We asked informants about their thoughts on various internal



motivations factors that affect recruitment of employees. The themes identified include the impact of non-financial rewards as follows:

"I feel that I gain better clarity when I have time to carry out more tasks." (NPOIND2 informant).

"Sufficient funding for the task execution is more important because of the high cost of carrying out the job. Also, to increase job productivity, all other non-financial rewards seem secondary." (NPOTHA2 informant).

Informants were asked about their thoughts on money as a motivator for increased job productivity. The main themes were analyzed as a fixed salary with regular incentives and promoting external funding.

"I feel when their nonprofit organization is involved in carrying out tasks, employees are motivated to perform the job." (NPOTHA6 informant).

"Leaders and other co-workers who receive grant funds should be appreciated and given incentives that promote them to perform the job." (NPOMYS2 informant).

We asked informants about their opinions of the significance of individual needs and how to recruit talented people to work in nonprofit organizations. The main theme was the importance of work knowledge and establishing role clarity.

"I feel that concentrating on one particular job task is not useful, but multi-job tasks increase work knowledge." (NPOTHA4 informant).

"With the advent of technology, the world is growing rapidly in terms of effectiveness in work. However, there is a lag in this area in Philippines due to technology failure." (NPOPHL4 informant).

This section examines informants' views on employee knowledge and professional identity.

Informants were asked about the potential impact of work knowledge on a person's professional identity and their willingness to focus on such work knowledge processes. The main theme was a growing sense of shared identity and increased engagement with other nonprofits.

"I feel that with the emergence of new technology, job tasks are accomplished faster and the opportunity to increase perceptions about collaboration between nonprofit organizations in Philippines is very large." (NPOPHL3 informant).

"I think increasing the quality and number of collaborations with other organizations worldwide would increase the diversity in work knowledge. Consequently, this would increase the quality and level of professionalism in my nonprofit organization." (NPOIND1 informant).

We further asked informants about their opinions of the link between self-efficacy and motivation and its potential influence on work-related decision-making. The main theme was high motivation to carry out the job, impacting the quality of work knowledge.

"I feel that motivation is related to self-efficacy, and I am highly motivated when I believe in this study. Moreover, this motivation increased when we received outside funds for proposal submission, though this is related to self-efficacy." (NPOPHL2 informant).

"When someone carries out a good job, they should also focus on the task because this experience increases their confidence." (NPOPHL1 informant).

We asked informants about the various challenges faced in job productivity. The primary themes were a lack of awareness of job tasks, proper training, and motivation in individuals.

"I feel that lack of study awareness is a major concern because individuals do not know where to start and how to carry out work." (NPOMYS2 informant).

"Training increases work knowledge and job productivity." (NPOTHA5 informant).

## Discussion

Based on Maslow's theory of motivation, behavior is prompted by "the prevalence of unsatisfied needs" (Maslow, 1943). When individuals fulfilled basic needs, individuals are motivated to achieve higher goals. In the case of nonprofit organizations employees in Southeast Asia countries, the basic needs contain good remuneration, adequate work facilities, funds for training, and support. Moreover, employees stated that the lack of proper funding, support, and adequate work facilities to carry out the job are obstacles. Therefore, when they are unsatisfied at a basic level, they lack the motivation to work harder and carry out more tasks.

Semi-structured interview results show that there is a fairly positive attitude towards job productivity according to McClelland's needs theory (McClelland, 1987). Some employees show a greater need to increase their job productivity because it would improve their work knowledge, making them better employees. Moreover, increasing work productivity would increase employee knowledge and skills. Therefore, these employees feel the need to increase job productivity.

Some employees may be interested in achievement, others gain power, while others prefer strong affiliations (McClelland, 1987). This theoretical aspect seems to be supported by the current results. When asked about the intrinsic factors affecting employee recruitment, employees show different needs related to increasing job productivity. Several employees interviewed stated that being sent to training is a big draw regarding new jobs. Also, others want a detailed job profile and more clarity on their tasks.

Deci et al. (2017) evaluated the motivational strength based on three factors (intrinsic extrinsic, and autonomous). The theory suggests that employees find work motivated only when they feel a connection between their performance and the results achieved. Furthermore, this study indicates that appropriated to Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), financial reward is the main motivating factor for employees in increasing job productivity. The semi-structured interviews show that most employees feel they would be more inclined to carry out the job when the organization provides a regular and decent salary package. Moreover, they indicated that other motivation aspects to increase job productivity include external funding sources. They feel that nonprofit organizations and external funders should promote and motivate employees to carry out tasks by offering greater funding.

People perform better when their goals are more difficult. This requires a goal-setting motivation technique that is more effective than other methods but could still be a support system. Therefore, nonprofit organizations are responsible for setting

targets for their job (Locke & Schattke, 2019).

Nonprofits have a major role in recruiting the right talent and motivating existing employees to carry out more tasks. The semi-structured interviews conducted showed some perceptions of the employees' working in nonprofit organizations in Southeast Asia countries.

Understandably, employees feel that nonprofit organizations should have a wider range of tasks to expand the number of job fields in which the tasks are carried out. Furthermore, they feel that the organizations should improve the basic infrastructure needed to perform effectively. A recent study in Denmark investigated barriers to job completion. The results were consistent with this study, indicating that administrative and funding problems help make completing tasks environmentally friendly (Jensen & Bro, 2018).

Employees involved with social work are better at identifying activities and outcomes to increase work knowledge (Bidee et al., 2017). Another study found more evidence on how being actively involved in social work increases the self-confidence of employees. This enhances their professional status and contributes to their career growth and self-actualization (Aydogmus, 2019). Therefore, employees with a background as social workers are considered skilled and serve as a benchmark for new hires and others developing their job execution agenda (Jensen & Bro, 2018).

## Conclusion

Most of the employees interviewed felt that the main barriers to better job productivity are inadequate training and awareness of social work opportunities and benefits. Therefore, nonprofit organizations should eliminate some of these challenges and set goals for employees. Moreover, the analysis showed that some employees feel less motivated to carry out additional tasks. However, nonprofit organizations need to stress their efforts and facilities to motivate their employees to carry out more social work.

The next researcher should expand this study in the future to obtain more apparent implications. It is essential to investigate how job productivity could be increased when there is a comprehensive motivation plan. Additionally, future studies should investigate independent measures to improve key factors related to job productivity and employee needs.

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