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Towards an Understanding of Work Motivation in Temporary Organizations
Second Edition

by Dwivedula, Bredillet, Müller

Towards an Understanding of Work Motivation in Temporary Organizations[1]

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to propose an operational definition of work motivation in temporary organizations. We use job design perspective of work motivation as a theoretical lens. We present an extensive review of job design theories from I/O psychology and present the work motivation literature from temporary organizations along these theories. We then identify items for the work motivation construct based on this literature review. We empirically test the reliability and validity of these items using a survey with a sample of 199 project workers. The findings confirm the previously established construct of work motivation. Academic and managerial implications of these findings are discussed.

Key Words: *Work Motivation, Project Management, Temporary Organizations*

INTRODUCTION

Work motivation is a driver to organization's performance. Work motivation as a topic draws interest both from practitioners, and academic. It has been shown to lead to attitudinal, behaviour (Pierce, Gardner, Dunham, & Cummings, 1993) and performance outcomes (Moorehead& Griffin, 1998). Hence, it has important implications for managing the workforce. From an academic perspective, work motivation is a key construct in organizational research, where much research has been dedicated to an understanding of its antecedents and outcomes (Moorehead, & Griffin, 1998). While it has been extensively studied in Industrial/ Organizational (I/O) psychology literature, research from project management discipline on this topic has been modest and sporadic. In the current paper, we address this research gap. The present study contributes to the extant literature by suggesting an operational framework of work motivation for temporary organizations. To do this, we set the following objectives for this study:

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1. To consolidate the literature review on work motivation in temporary organizations by establishing a theory base
2. To propose a possible operational definition of work motivation in temporary organizations.

Organization of the paper. We have organized this paper as follows. First, we will review the major theories of work motivation from the Industrial/ Organizational (I/O) psychology literature. We will refer to the context or the job design perspective of work motivation. Second, we will review literature on work motivation in temporary organizations along the major theories of work motivation identified from the I/O psychology literature. Third, we will present the research design where we empirically test the proposed construct of work motivation. Fourth, we will present the findings. Fifth, we will discuss the findings in detail, followed by the concluding remarks.

THEORY

Theoretical Perspectives of Work Motivation. Over the years, several approaches have been pursued to investigate the constructs, antecedents, and outcomes of work motivation. Although there are several frameworks suggested to explain work motivation (c.f. Latham & Pinder, 2005), the common dimensions seem to be (i). needs, drives, and traits (that are largely biological in nature), (ii). Context (that explains constructs such as job design and person-context fit to define work motivation), and (iii). Cognition (that explain motivation as an outcome of one's (behavioral) self- regulation in relation to the context and needs/ drives. For the purpose of this paper, we will restrict the discussion to the Context-Work design theories of work motivation to derive an operational definition of work motivation, and use Pinder's definition of work motivation (1988) as a point of departure- set of energetic forces that originate both from within as well as beyond the individual's being to initiate work-related behavior (Pinder, 1998). It induces actions in the employees, and explains the direction, intensity, and duration of their behavior.

Context- work design approach to work motivation: Empirical research on work design has predominantly focused on Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristic Model (1975) that proposed five job dimensions which motivated employees- skill variety, task identity, task significance, feedback, and autonomy. The same model to measure work motivation has been used in the subsequent studies in this period (c.f. Champoux, 1980). The job characteristic model has also drawn considerably from the socio-technical system studies (Cherns, 1976) that identifies autonomy at work, challenging nature of work, opportunities for learning on the job, and feedback from work as being constituents of work motivation. Apart from the job characteristics model, other theoretical lenses that have shaped research on work motivation from the job design perspective are Tavistock Studies (Trist & Bamforth, 1951, Cherns, 1976), Scientific management research (Taylor, 1911), Herzberg et al Two factor theory of motivation (1959), Job enrichment perspective (Paul, Robertson, & Herzberg, 1969), Rockeach's Value expression & self identification (1973), Redundancy of Functions (Emery & Emery, 1976),

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Demand Control Model (Karasek, 1979), Distal Motivation (Kanfer, 1990), and Morgeson and Humphrey's Extended Job Characteristic Model (2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work Motivation in Temporary Organizations: There has been growing interest on what motivates project workers recently. Although the state of research is predominantly normative (connoting to practices), literature review reveals these practices connote to major theories of work motivation. Various theoretical lenses such as Socio-Technical Perspective (*c.f.* Schmidt &Adams, 2008), scientific management (*c.f.* Rose & Manley, 2008), job characteristic model (*c.f.* Mahoney, & Lederer , 2006; Hall, Sharp, Baddoo, Beecham, & Robinson, 2008; Bjorklund, 2010), and intrinsic motivation perspective (Hall et al, 2008) have been used to explain work motivation in temporary organizations. The extant literature is further presented in this section.

Protocol for Literature Review. Our first objective was to 'consolidate' the literature on work motivation in temporary organizations. To this end, we conducted an extensive literature review that is structured along the major theories of work motivation discussed above. We considered SCOPUS database to identify extant literature on work motivation in temporary organizations. In consonance with the purpose of this study, we restricted our review to scholarly articles that focused their discussion on the job design perspective to work motivation (in temporary organizations). The key strings used were "job design" and "project management"; "job design" and "temporary organization"; "job design" and "work motivation" and "project management". Articles from peer-reviewed journals, articles in press, conference proceedings, and book chapters were considered.

Table 1. Theoretical Lenses and Literature Review

Theory	Basis for work motivation item	Work Motivation in Project Management
Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911)	Financial incentives related to productivity (performance)	Rose & Manley (2009); Armstrong (2003). Polesie (2013)
Tavistock Studies on Socio-Technical Systems Approach (Trist & Bamforth, 1951); Cherns (1976)	Principles of Socio-Technical Systems-autonomy, task identity, meaningfulness of task, feedback on performance	Schmid & Adams (2008), Andersen (2010)
Walker & Guest (1952)	Employees required to undertake a variety of tasks through job rotation and job enlargement	Seiler, Lent, Pinkowska, & Pinazza (2012); Heimgärtner,R., Windl, H., Solanki, H. (2011)
Two Factor theory (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959)	Nature of work itself as an intrinsic motivator for the employee; job security as an extrinsic motivator	Parker ,Wall, & Cordery (2001); Mahoney & Lederer (2006); Schmid & Adams (2008)
Job Enrichment (Paul, Robertson, & Herzberg, 1969; Paul	Challenging nature of work, autonomy at work, and providing a sense of achievement to the employee	Procaccino,Verner, & Lorenzet (2006); Badir, Buchel, & Tucci (2012); Schmid & Adams (2008),

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& Robertson, 1970)		Polesie (2013)
Job Characteristic Model (Hackman, & lalwler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1976)	Five core job characteristics proposed- skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback	Mahoney, & Lederer (2006); Kluger, & DeNisi (1996); Ling, & Loo (2014)
Redundancy of Functions (Emery, 1976)	Creation of groups within the organization is a precursor to project-based organizations	Sieler, Lent, Pinkowska, & Pinazza (2011); Welch, Welch, & Tahvanainen (2008)
	Freedom to participate in decisions that affect their work activity, A chance to learn on the job and go on learning, optimal variety, mutual support, and respect of their work colleagues, a socially meaningful task	
Demand Control Mode (Karasek, 1979)	Challenging nature of work, autonomy at work	Sieler, Lent, Pinkowska, & Pinazza (2011), Leung, Chan, & Dongyu (2011)
Resource Allocation Perspective (Naylor, Pritchard, & Ilgen, 1980);	Personal growth, and job enrichment (autonomy at work)	Li, Bingham, & Umphress (2007)
Distal Motivation (Kanfer, 1990)		
Job Performance (Campbell, 1990)	Communication and collegiality among group members are specific task behaviors that lead to performance	Kluger, & DeNisi (1996); Sharp, Baddoo, Beecham, Hall & Robinson (2008); Zika-Viktorson,Sundstrom, &Engwall (2006), Nesheim, & Smith (2015)
Extension to Job Characteristic Model (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006)	Autonomy at work Five core job dimensions Task Variety, Skill Variety, feedback from others, feedback from work itself, access to work specific information, informal communication	Zwikael & Unger-Aviram (2009); Turner, & Lloyd-Walker (2008); Bjorklund (2010); Schmid & Adams (2008), Ling, & Loo (2014)

METHOD

Design. In consonance with the research question which is to propose an operational definition of work motivation in case of temporary organizations, we have adopted a post-positivist stand and therefore quantitative methodology (explained in the section Epistemology and Ontology).

Metrics. To measure work motivation, we used motivational items included as a part of the 'multi method job design questionnaire' (MJDQ, Campion, 1988, Campion and Thayer, 1985).

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Campion (1988) modified the original MJDQ to study employees from 92 different jobs using this instrument (N=1024). The self-report data from this sample produced an internal consistency reliability of .85 for the 'Motivational Items'. The measures are detailed in table 2.

Table 2. Work Motivation Items

Serial Number	Item
1	Allows freedom and discretion in scheduling work and other decisions
2	Is significant when compared to other jobs
3	Gives a feeling of achievement
4	Opportunity to participate in job related decisions
5	Chance to do a whole piece of work
6	Feedback from work about my performance
7	Feedback from managers and co—workers
8	Social interaction with team or co-workers
9	Goals are specific
10	Access to relevant communication channels
11	Adequate pay when compared with similar jobs
12	Gives adequate recognition
13	Offers job security
14	Advancement to higher level jobs
15	Opportunity for learning and improve competency
16	Variety of tasks and activities
17	Variety of knowledge and skills
18	Requires high level knowledge and skills

Sample & data collection. The participants were alumni of the authors' universities, and their contact information was made available to the authors. The potential participants identified were contacted in person by the authors. A copy of the survey was emailed to them. We also requested these respondents to forward the survey to their acquaintance. Only those working in a project-based organization were considered. 315 respondents were reached of which 199 completed the survey, giving a healthy response rate of 63.1%.A majority of the respondents were drawn from Information Technology, and Manufacturing sectors.

Reliability and Validity. The internal reliability of the work motivation items was established using Cronbach alpha, Guttman split-half coefficient, and Spearman-Brown coefficient. The convergent validity was established using item-to-item correlations, and item-to-total correlations (Icobucci & Churchill, 2010) (see table 4).

The reliability of the items was established using Cronbach Alpha, Guttma split-half coefficient, and Spearman-Brown coefficient. In line with the accepted research practice where the items should report correlation of 0.7 or higher, the cronbach alpha of the 18 items was 0.85, Guttman Split-Half coefficient was 0.84, and Spearman-Brown coefficient was 0.84. These results indicate strong correlations between the 18 items of the proposed work motivation construct.

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We first attempt to establish the content validity and face validity of the work motivation items. Content validity should establish whether the items cover a representative sample of all the questions that can be used to measure the construct, which in this case is work motivation. It is drawn from a rigorous review of theory. In this case, we have reviewed major theories and literature on work motivation from the job design perspective in two domains- Organizational Behavior and Project Management. Furthermore, these items have been reviewed by two subject matter experts. Thus, we have established the content and face validity of our items.

The convergent validity of the construct was established using item-to-item correlations and item-to-total correlations (Icobucci & Churchill, 2010). The average item-total correlation is reported as 0.72, and the average inter-item correlation is reported to be 0.30. Further evidence of Construct Validation can also be derived from the observed Cronbach Alpha value (Edwards, 2003). He posits that construct validity concerns the degree to which a measure represents a particular construct. This has been established in our study where the 18 items of Work Motivation report a cronbach alpha of 0.85.

Table 3. Item Reliability and Construct Validity

Variable	Number of items	Construct	Cronbach alpha	Guttman Split-Half coefficient	Spearman-Brown coefficient		Item-Total Correlation ($p= .01$)	Average inter-item correlation ($p= .01$)
					Equal length	**Unequal length**		
Work motivation	18	All items	0.85	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.72	0.30

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The empirical analysis of the work motivation items confirms the previously developed construct of work motivation (Campion & Thayer, 1988). The theoretical bases of this construct lies in the job design studies which firmly establish the motivating nature of job design. As established in the I/O psychology literature, we derive a uni dimensional construct of work motivation. This suggests that facets to job design such as intrinsically motivating nature of work itself, opportunities for professional growth, and rewards cumulatively contribute to a project worker's motivation.

Project workers tend to value their skill sets highly and therefore are motivated by jobs that offer a challenge, allowing them to participate in decisions pertaining to their work, and thus give them a sense of achievement. These results complement earlier research which posit that project workers look for opportunities to maximize their competencies through nature of work which they find intrinsically motivating. In enhancing the competencies of project workers, empowering management practices play a pivotal role.

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Empowering management practices are the formal and the informal organizational procedures that encourage the employees to take on more responsibilities, and contribute to one's professional development. Our results have shown that project workers demonstrate a strong proclivity towards jobs that offer enriching job design (knowledge variety, high level of knowledge, advancement on the job), social learning (opportunities to learn on the job), participative decision making , and intrinsic motivation (employees having a sense of achievement). The proclivity for empowering nature of work is more in case of project workers because their work requires a great deal of flexibility, innovation, creativity, and intellectual analysis (Parker, Wall, & Cordery, 2001). This also renders project environments to be characterized by sense of discontinuity and therefore job insecurity. Thus, it becomes important for project managers to set and communicate clear goals to the project workers.

An important determinant of employees' positive perception of the organization's climate is the information which the employee obtains on his or her performance on the job. In case of project management specifically, Li¸ Bingham, and Umphress (2007) argue that employees' perception of this fair treatment or lack of it within the organization has performance implications Professionals, in this case the project workers especially value a sense of responsibility. Kluger and DeNisi (1996) posit that team members will especially value feedback with respect to project performance parameters such as product's functionality, budget, and schedule. On the other hand¸ financial rewards, especially if they are linked to performance, also is a form of feedback on the individual's performance. Further, employees are motivated only when performance is linked to rewards. (Armstrong, 2003).

CONCLUSION

Motivating project workers is an important aspect of managing projects successfully. While there have been few rigorous and comprehensive studies on work motivation in case of temporary organizations, there is a need to consolidate this research, and revisit the theoretical underpinnings of work motivation in the context of temporary organizations. Based on an extensive review of theory and literature, and empirical analysis, we find that work motivation in case of temporary organizations is not very dissimilar from permanent organizations. Our study reveals that nature of work, the project worker's intrinsic motivation, and proclivity for collegiality, financial, and non-financial incentives are motivating to project workers. Theoretically, these findings also give us an opportunity to bring work motivation research in project management on par with the ongoing research in I/O psychology literature. Thus, it addresses the research gaps pertaining to the theoretical rigor and operational definition of work motivation in case of temporary organizations.

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