

# EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS DURING THE ENDEMIC PHASE

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**Abstract:** *COVID-19 outbreaks had somehow changed the employees' routine and activities, consequently influencing their work motivation. Even in the endemic phase, the employees need to adapt to changes that might further impact their job performance. Thus this study aims to identify the key motivational factors that can lead to job performance in the current context. This article provides a theoretical model that suggests the main elements that could influence job performance during the endemic phase, such as training, home office environment, remuneration, teamwork, and connection facilities. The model suggested is suitable to be the guideline for the management to enhance job performance during the endemic stage.*

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, Endemic, Motivation, Job Performance*

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic affects practically every employee's operation and working environment around the world. Studies have shown that employees productivity has been declined (Kumar, 2021). This is because the changes in the working environment, job insecurity and new technology adoption have impacted employees' performance (Narayanamurthy & Tortorella, 2021). Their emotion and thinking were also disrupted (Graves & Karabayeva, 2020). For that reason, the management must understand factors that can boost employee motivation during the endemic stage to ensure that performance does not degrade.

Motivation is one of the influences that lead employees' job performance and contribute to organisational effectiveness (Khan, 2012). Motivation is what people desire to do by reason of inducement or incentive (Golshan et al., 2011). Many organisations realise the importance of motivation is to encourage employees to achieve higher performance in accomplishing organisational success (Aye et al., 2019). Consequently, employees performance is vital not only for the organisation growth, but also for the individual growth (Meyer & Peng, 2005; Sonnentag & Frese, 2005). Hence, the employers should clearly understand the motivational factors that influence employees to demonstrate how good they perform jobs or activities to contribute positively to organisational goals even during the endemic era.

## Literature Review

### Motivation Defined

Motivation is one of the influences that lead to job performance. Motivation is what people desire to do by reason of inducement or incentive (Golshan et al., 2011). The word motivation derived from the word 'motive' which can be described as individual desires, needs, wants, or drives to achieve a targeted goal or fulfil performance level. According to Aarabi et al. (2013) motivation can be defined as the direction and persistence of action of an individual. Motivation is clearly valuable if a person performs a mixture of required skills, knowledge, and ability to perform the jobs (Ghaffari et al., 2017). Other factors such as adequacy of resources, information and support needs in organisation are also elements of performance effectiveness (Oyewole et al., 2019; Parveen et al., 2012). Therefore, if an organisation requires employees to perform according to the management mandate, they should consider motivational factors that will encourage the employees to perform in the desire manner.

According to Aarabi et al. (2013) and Kasule (2015), employees lack motivation when employers fail to provide their needs, which has affected their performance. One of the reasons is the employers' lack of work flexibility in compromising the new norm of working from home and working in an office (Davidescu et al., 2020). Other reasons for employee demotivation are slow career progression, feeling undervalued or appreciated, lack of development opportunities, poor leadership, workplace conflict, and unrealistic workload (Kalleberg et al., 2009). Therefore, employees perceive dissatisfaction, stress, unhappy, burnout and absenteeism (Davidescu et al., 2020; Jamal, 1984). Hence, employers need to motivate the employees when they have little feeling to work. They should provide what the employees' needs to ensure they deliver higher job performance for organisational goals.

The past literatures suggest lack of motivation or demotivation will affect employees' job performance. Jarour (2014) classify employees' demotivation are caused by financial limitations, unhealthy work atmosphere and external environment factors. According to Alwaki (2018) remuneration has directly changed employees' attitude and influence their job performance. They should be compensated fairly and offer expected rewards in monetary or other forms resulting to their performance (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2000). Therefore, the employers should stop demotivating the employees and begin to create enthusiastic workforce to enhance their job performance.

Common workplace issues such as gender discrimination, bullying and work-life conflict may impact job performance and lead to job stress (Foy et al., 2019; Green et al., 2009; Irigaray & Vergara, 2011; Robert, 2018). Besides, the organisation's noise exposure and sound effect will cause health problems and influence job performance (Siskova & Juricka, 2014). Therefore, failure to resolve these issues will create unhealthy work environment and unfavorable job performance amongst employees in organisation.

### Job Performance

Performance can be defined as a function of outcome at workplace (Yilmaz, 2015). Performance is the work outcome to be accomplished by a person or group of people as directed by the management in accordance with ethical manner to achieve objectives of the organisation (Ismail, 2020). Performance can assess whether a person performs job well and contribute to business success (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). According to Frimpong & Fan (2004) performance is when managers determine employees' activities and outputs are congruent with

the organisation's goals. According to Lim et al. (2012) performance varies among individual working adults. They are desired to fulfil their dreams, social needs, and recognition status from the organisations they worked. Employees will achieve happiness when they accomplish tasks and demonstrate outstanding performance. However, employees will disappoint when they failed to complete jobs within the required time, affecting their performance. Therefore, organisation should encourage employees to develop higher performance by increasing better quality services and delivering jobs at optimum level.

### **Motivational Factors and Job Performance**

Past literature suggest on several motivational factors which influence employees job performance such as remuneration, skills, leadership, empowerment, training, teamwork, communication, and others (Ahmad & Manzoor, 2017; Akintola et al., 2015; Alwaki, 2018; Seetha, 2014; Siawash et al., 2013; Tsai et al., 2010). It is observed that various researchers examined different motivational factors to measure job performance. Aarabi et al. (2013) studied on the relationship between motivational factors and job performance of employees in Malaysian service industry. Whilst Narag (2018) studied on motivational factors and job performance of employees in Cagayan State University, Lal-lo Campus Philippine. Both postulate there is significant relationship between the two variables. According to Ismail (2020) employees performance are influenced by motivational factors which develop from their behavior in performing and managing jobs. Hence, motivational factors can give impact to employees' job performance.

### **Theories of Motivation by Maslow and Herzberg**

The following are motivation theories in the past and current studies which are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg Two-Factor Theory. The Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in 1943 from his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation* described about hierarchy of needs consists of five basic levels which are physiological, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation, which should be satisfied accordingly. The Herzberg Two-Factor theory in 1959 described about the motivators and hygiene factors which influence job satisfaction at workplace. Motivators factors include recognition, achievement, possibility of growth, advancement, responsibility, and the work itself. In contrast, hygiene factors include salary, interpersonal relations at work, supervision, company policies and administration, working conditions, factors in personal life, status, and job security The presence of motivators brings job satisfaction, and the lack of hygiene factors results in job dissatisfaction. Moreover, the presence of hygiene factors does not result necessarily in increase of job satisfaction, but only reduce or eliminate job dissatisfaction of the employees. For this study we will examine the correlation between motivation and job performance according to hygiene factors based on substantial past studies employing Herzberg Two-Factor Theory.

### **Key Debates and Controversies**

#### **Training and Job Performance**

Training is defined as a process to improve existing skills, knowledge, exposure, and abilities in individuals. Employees training in an organisation provides learning opportunities which is significant to improve job performance (EL Hajjar & Alkhanaizi, 2018). Effective training will enhance required knowledge, skills, create positive behaviour, improve quality of work, reduce lateness and absenteeism which contribute to employee growth and job performance (Siawash et al., 2013). Conversely, the ineffectiveness of training will reduce organisation's productivity because the organisations fail to provide employees with appropriate training needs (Anthony

& Weide, 2015). According to Aarabi et al. (2013) training is a significant predictor which contributed 40.4% of job performance among employees in Malaysian service industry. Consequently, Dang Kum et al. (2014) findings revealed that working conditions and lack of resources has affected the training of employees in ESCON Consulting in South Africa. Therefore, organisation will not be able to produce a suitable employee with the right skill, attitude, and capability without appropriate training program. It is important that organisation provide appropriate training for employees to ensure they demonstrate positive attitude in delivering work tasks.

### **Work Environment and Job Performance**

Work environment can be described as anything that exists around employees that can impact their job performance. Kasule (2015) explains work environment can be perceived into technical environment, human environment, and organisational environment. According to Asmui et al. (2012) a good and friendly work environment will influence employees to perform jobs in a secure, healthy and comfort zone whilst an unpleasant work environment will expose employees into toxic and unhealthy surroundings. Most of employees will change their jobs when they are stressful or dissatisfied with work environment, yet employees will give high commitment to perform tasks and duties effectively if they are happy with the work environment (Foy et al., 2019). Similarly, a harmonious relationship and respect among multicultural staff will create a decent work environment and improve job performance (Tsai et al., 2010; Yousef, 1998). Parveen et al. (2012) studied relationship between work environment and job performance of employees at Sargodha University and found there is positive correlation in terms of employees' relationship with their superior and communication, but workload had given negative impact to their social life. Al-Omari & Okasheh (2017) findings revealed that the constraints factors such as air factor, temperature, sound and noise effect, ventilation and light and workspace have negative impact on job performance of employees in engineering company in Jordan. Hence, organisations should take initiative to improve work environment.

### **Remuneration and Job Performance**

Remuneration is defined as performance benefits or reward received by employees resulted from their work achievements or work done in the organisations. Remuneration includes gifts, awards, rewards, or promotions, should be offered proportionally according to employees performance (Ismail, 2020). There seems to be evidence to confirm the positive relationship between financial factors and job performance in organisations. According to Arnolds & Boshoff (2000) monetary rewards have been a strong motivator for top management, middle management and frontliners employees. Muogbo (2013) posits relationship between extrinsic motivation (salaries, benefits, promotion, bonuses, and contract service) and job performance existed. However, no relationship existed between intrinsic motivation (achievement, appreciation, recognition, and considerate manner) and job performance in selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State. Findings by Alwaki (2018) posits that remuneration influences employees attitude that influences employee performance. Therefore, organisations should emphasise the most satisfactory remuneration schemes for employees so that they demonstrate positive attitudes towards their jobs to increase higher performance.

### **Equipment and Facilities and Job Performance**

Parveen et al. (2012) studied basic office equipment for employees in Sargodha University, including office furniture and air-conditioning systems. He found infrastructure at the workplace had no significant impact on employees performance. According to Jihan Pratiwi et

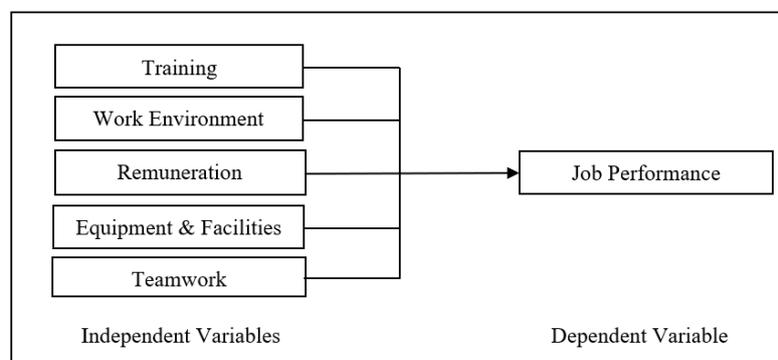
al. (2018) the work facilities significantly influence employee performance in the Regional Financial Management Agency Secretariat of South Sulawesi Province. The work facilities provided machinery and equipment, office infrastructures such as roads, fences, bridges, work equipment such as office furniture and electronic equipment, land and building. According to Kasule (2015) there is a negative impact between equipment and facilities and job performance for academic staff at Uganda University. There is a problem of insufficient office equipment coupled with low academic staff performance in the university in low-income countries like Uganda. Based on the above studies, every organisation should provide good quality and essential office equipment and facilities to enhance employees' enthusiasm, facilitate a smooth work process, and increase work quality and job performance. Doing this will positively impact employees productivity, minimise work stress, and improve work processes in an organisation.

### **Teamwork and Job Performance**

Teamwork is essential for a team to share commitment and work effectively to achieve job performance. When the skills and strengths of the team members are united, they can achieve organisation goals successfully. According to McShane & Glinow (2010) employees must have more than technical skills to work effectively in a team. Septiani & Gilang (2017) posits that teamwork had significant influence of 23.5% on the performance of employees in state-owned enterprise in Bandung, Indonesia. Ahmad & Manzoor (2017) posits the teamwork had significant positive effect of 27.8% on employee performance. It demonstrates the employees already realised the value of teamwork instilled by the company in carrying their jobs. Conversely, Kalleberg et al. (2009) found teamwork increase job stress of Norwegian workers. He added there is a negative consequence for workers participated in teams and the stressfulness was greater for self-directed teams than for supervised teams. Therefore, teamwork has never been easy and has become more complex and challenging in recent years. Teamwork can be achieved when individual strengths and skills are combined with common objectives to deliver meaningful results.

### **Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis**

Based on the literature review, a theoretical framework has been developed to signify the relationship between motivational factors and job performance. This study's factors influencing job performance consist of training, work environment, remuneration, equipment, facilities, and teamwork. The dependent variable in this study is job performance. The theoretical framework for this study is presented in below table.



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