

KEY PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF STAFF'S JOB PERFORMANCE IN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM (THAILAND)

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Abstract

This research was aimed at identifying the key psychological determinants of overall job performance and explaining the relationship levels of the identified psychological determinants of staff's job performance in the Department of Tourism of Thailand. The data were collected via self-administered questionnaires. Job performance components in this study are task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance. Stepwise Regression Analysis was conducted to investigate the significant determinants of staff's job performance. The findings provide evidence that employee empowerment and job motivation positively affect overall job performance and all three performance dimensions. On the other hand, job satisfaction has no significant effect on overall job performance and any performance dimensions in this research.

Keywords: Job performance, employee empowerment, job motivation, job satisfaction, task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance.

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อระบุปัจจัยหลักทางจิตใจที่มีผลต่อพฤติกรรมการทำงานและอธิบายถึงระดับความสัมพันธ์ของปัจจัยดังกล่าวกับพฤติกรรมการทำงานของพนักงานและเจ้าหน้าที่ในกรมการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทย โดยข้อมูลที่น่าวิเคราะห์นั้นได้มาจากการตอบแบบสอบถามของพนักงานและเจ้าหน้าที่ที่ปฏิบัติงานในฝ่ายต่าง ๆ ในกรมการท่องเที่ยว ซึ่งพฤติกรรมการทำงานในงานวิจัยฉบับนี้ประกอบไปด้วย พฤติกรรมการทำงานในเนื้องาน (Task Performance) พฤติกรรมการทำงานเชิงบริบท (Contextual Performance) และพฤติกรรมการทำงานแบบยืดหยุ่นปรับตัว (Adaptive Performance) โดยวิธีการศึกษาวิจัยในครั้งนี้ได้ใช้การรวบรวมข้อมูลในเชิงปริมาณเป็นหลัก ทั้งนี้วิธี Stepwise Regression Analysis ได้ถูกใช้ในการวิเคราะห์เพื่อระบุปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อพฤติกรรมการทำงาน ผลการวิจัยได้แสดงข้อสรุปว่า การให้อำนาจแก่พนักงาน (Employee Empowerment) และแรงจูงใจในงาน (Job Motivation) มีผลกระทบในทางบวกต่อพฤติกรรมการทำงานโดยรวม และรวมถึงพฤติกรรมการทำงานในแต่ละประเภทอีกด้วย ในทางตรงกันข้าม ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า ความพึงพอใจในงานไม่มีผลต่อพฤติกรรมการทำงานของพนักงาน

คำสำคัญ: ผลการปฏิบัติงาน, การมอบอำนาจให้พนักงาน, การสร้างแรงจูงใจในการทำงาน, ความพึงพอใจในงาน, พฤติกรรมการปฏิบัติในเนื้องาน, พฤติกรรมการปฏิบัติงานเชิงบริษัท, พฤติกรรมการปฏิบัติงานแบบยืดหยุ่นปรับตัว

INTRODUCTION

Department of Tourism

Tourism is regarded as one of the most dynamic devices in Thailand's economic development which involves production sectors at almost all levels, including local, provincial, regional, and national levels. The components of the tourism industry vary and they are related and linked to one another. The components and stakeholders of the tourism system are the government, local people and organizations, tourism resources, tourism service providers, and tourists (Suwan, 2002). Therefore, good management and supports must be strongly considered in order to make the tourism industry the most beneficial and enduring for the country in terms of economics, society, culture, and environment.

Thailand's tourism industry generates high income for the country. The rate of tourism growth has been continually increasing. This is a sign of the good cooperation between the tourism industry and development organizations and private firms, and the governmental organizations that legitimate policies, coordinate, and oversee the implementations.

The Department of Tourism under the authority of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports is assigned the mission of development of standards in tourism services and tourism sites. Moreover, the Department also takes charge of promotion of standardized tourist businesses and guides for the purposes of eco-

nomie, social, and cultural development, as well as sustainable tourism (Department of Tourism, 2012).

Job Performance

In order to accomplish tourism strategies, the performance of the staff in the Department of Tourism should be taken into consideration for the reason that their behaviors and work success affect the services provided to tourism and related sectors in Thailand. Individual performance has been defined as what the staff do (Aguinis, 2009), in which the action is relevant to the organization's goals (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler and Sager, 1993; Wright and Noe, 1996). Also, performance has been declared as what the organization hires one to do, and do well. (Campbell et al., 1993: 40).

For years, several scholars have stated that performance is a multi-dimensional construct (for example, Aguinis, 2009; Piercy, Cravens, Lane and Vorhies, 2006, Sonnentag & Frese, 2002; Whiting, Podsakoff and Pierce, 2008, Vandaele and Gemmel, 2006). It has been claimed that the different types of behaviors should not only be considered (Aguinis, 2009), but also should they be valued (Rotundo and Sackett, 2002). Nevertheless, as it can be swayed by various factors, the performance of an individual is not stable but changes over time (Sonnentag and Frese, 2002).

A particular individual's performance, that

has been recognized as a requirement in the job description, is widely named task performance which includes the activities contributing to the technical core and cannot be ignored in any jobs (Aguinis, 2009; Griffin, Neal and Parker, 2007; Johnson, 2003; Rotundo and Sackett, 2002; Whiting et al., 2008; Yang, Ko, Jang and Cho, 2012).

Notwithstanding, apart from task performance, softer aspects of behaviors that are not task-oriented (Bolino, Turnley and Bloodgood, 2002) have also gained attention as a crucial component of overall performance appraisals (Mohammad, Habib and Alias, 2011; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff and Blume, 2009). These behaviors positively contribute to the organization's goals and have been widely named contextual performance (Aguinis, 2009; Bolino et al., 2002; Daft and Marcic, 2011; Dunlop and Lee, 2004; West, 2005). (Table 1)

In addition to the two job performance components stated above, employees may also be required to demonstrate their adaptability (Barkema, Baum and Mannix, 2002; Heslin, 2005; Metz, 2004), ability to change (Daft and Marcic, 2011), and creativity (Alge, Ballinger, Tangirala and Oakley, 2006; Heifetz and Laurie, 2003; O'Reilly and Tushman, 2004) to help their organization cope with challenges and changing work (Daft and Marcic, 2011; Dobni, 2006; Hall and Chandler, 2005). Although these actions may not be required in the employment contract (Korsgaard, Meglino, Lester and Jeong, 2010), this type of behavior is nowadays important and discretionary for the organization's survival (Alge et al., 2006). This behavior can be characterized as adaptive performance and it also serves the organization's goals (Sparrow, Chadrakumara and Perera, 2010). (Table 2)

Table 1: Main Differences between Task Performance and Contextual Performance

Task Performance Activities	Contextual Performance Activities
Vary across jobs	Relatively similar across jobs
Likely to be role-prescribed	Likely to be more discretionary and extra role
Related to abilities and skills	Related to personality and motivation

Sources: Aguinis (2009), Borman and Motowidlo (1997); Motowidlo and Schmit (1999).

Table 2: Some of Compatible Concepts of Adaptive Job Performance

Reference	Conceptualized Term
Welbourne, Johnson and Erez (1998)	Innovator role
Hesketh and Neal (1999)	Adaptability performance
London and Mone (1999)	Proficiency of new learning self-management
Murphy and Jackson (1999)	Role flexibility
Pulakos, Arad, Donovan and Plamondon (2000)	Adaptive performance
Metz (2004)	Adaptability
Heslin (2005)	Adaptability
Alge, Ballinger, Tangirala and Oakley (2006)	Creative performance
Stokes, Schneider, and Lyons (2008)	Adaptive performance

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Staff members' job performance regarding the task, contextual, and adaptive dimensions of the Department of Tourism is the focus of this study. The effects of employee empowerment, employee job motivation, and employee job satisfaction on staff members' job performance were studied.

This study aims to investigate the variables that can serve as the key determinants of perceived overall job performance of the staff in the Department of Tourism, and the level of association between the identified psychological determinants and the perceived overall job performance of the staff in the Department of Tourism of Thailand.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses of this research are:

- H1: Employee empowerment and job motivation are more likely to have positive effects on job satisfaction.
- H2: Employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction are more likely to have positive effects on overall job performance.
- H3: Employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction are more likely to have positive effects on task performance.
- H4: Employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction are more likely to have positive effects on contextual performance.
- H5: Employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction are more likely to have positive effects on adaptive performance.

STRUCTURAL EQUATIONS

The structural equations of this research are as follows:

$$\text{SATIS} = \beta_1 \text{EMPOW} + \beta_2 \text{MOTIVE} \quad (\text{Eq.1})$$

$$\text{PERFORM} = \beta_3 \text{EMPOW} + \beta_4 \text{MOTIVE} + \beta_5 \text{SATIS} \quad (\text{Eq.2})$$

$$\text{TASK} = \beta_6 \text{EMPOW} + \beta_7 \text{MOTIVE} + \beta_8 \text{SATIS} \quad (\text{Eq.3})$$

$$\text{CONTEXT} = \beta_9 \text{EMPOW} + \beta_{10} \text{MOTIVE} + \beta_{11} \text{SATIS} \quad (\text{Eq.4})$$

$$\text{ADAPT} = \beta_{12} \text{EMPOW} + \beta_{13} \text{MOTIVE} + \beta_{14} \text{SATIS} \quad (\text{Eq.5})$$

Where 1) SATIS: Job satisfaction, 2) EMPOW: Employee empowerment, 3) MOTIVE: Job motivation, 4) PERFORM: Overall job performance, 5) TASK: Task performance, 6) CONTEXT: Contextual performance, and 7) ADAPT: Adaptive performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Primary data were gathered by the researcher using self-administered questionnaires at the Department of Tourism. The instrument was tested for its reliability and validity, and was distributed to the staff working in all units in the Department of Tourism. Each independent variable and dependent variable includes 5 scale items. It was proven that there was no multi-collinearity problem among the employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction variables for this study.

A five-point Likert Scale was used to determine the degree of agreement of each item

as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Somewhat Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The level of measurement of these variables was the ordinal scale.

Data Analysis

Pearson Correlations, Variance Inflation Factors (VIF), and Tolerance values were utilized to determine the relationships among variables in order to avoid a multi-collinearity problem. In this research, path analysis was performed to test the hypotheses concerning the direct and indirect effects of the set of independent variables, which were employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction, on the dependent variable, which was job performance. Furthermore, the three specific dimensions (task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance) of overall job performance were specifically studied regarding the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables on each of them.

Table 3 shows the interpretations of the path coefficients for this research as per Manchasingh (2011).

Table 3: Strength of Path Coefficients Interpretation

Coefficients	Strength of Relationship
0.00	No relationship
0.01 - 0.09	Trivial
0.10 - 0.29	Weak
0.30 - 0.49	Moderate
0.50 - 1.00	Strong

Furthermore, Stepwise Regression Analysis investigated the significant determinants of staff members' job performance and also its three dimensions

RESULTS

Population Characteristics

The demographic data of the staff in the Department of Tourism were collected in June 2012. The returned 143 responses were valid for the analyses. The respondents were from all units of the Department of Tourism and there were more female than male. Most respondents were under 40 years old and had obtained a bachelor degree (Table 4).

Causal Relations between Independent Variables and Job Performance

Figure 1 illustrates the fact that employee empowerment was significantly and positively related to job satisfaction (Beta = .386). The figure also confirms that there was a significant positive relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction (Beta = .384). Moreover, the results shown in the figure reveal that employee empowerment (Beta = .471) and job motivation (Beta = .340) have positive relationships with the job performance of staff, but there was no significant association between job satisfaction and the staff members' job performance. This means that the employees perform better when they are more authorized to use their competency to work and that they do not have to always wait for their supervisors' orders or decisions. Also, when the staff members are more motivated, they perform better at work. Nonetheless, satisfaction with the job and the environments involved in the job did not lead to better performance of the staff.

In addition, the research findings present that employee empowerment and job motivation positively affect the task performance,

Table 4: Demographic Data of the Department of Tourism Staff (N = 143)

No.	Factor	Operational Compositions	Number (Person)	Percent (%)
1.	Working Unit	General Affairs Division	24	16.8
		Bureau of Tourism Services Development	18	12.6
		Bureau of Tourism Business and Guide Registration	45	31.5
		Bureau of Tourism Sites Development	29	20.3
		Others	27	18.9
		Total	143	100.0
2.	Position	Supervisory	9	6.3
		Employee	134	93.7
		Total	143	100.0
3.	Tenure	≤ 2 years	54	37.8
		3 - 5 years	53	37.1
		> 5 years	33	23.1
		No answer	3	0.1
		Total	143	100.0
4.	Gender	Male	42	29.4
		Female	99	69.2
		No answer	2	1.4
		Total	143	100.0
5.	Age	< 30 years	61	42.7
		30 - 39 years	51	35.7
		40 - 49 years	13	9.1
		≥ 50 years	9	6.3
		No answer	9	6.3
		Total	143	100.0
6.	Education Attainment	Lower than Bachelor Degree	5	3.5
		Bachelor	94	65.7
		Higher than Bachelor Degree	43	30.1
		No answer	1	0.7
		Total	143	100.0

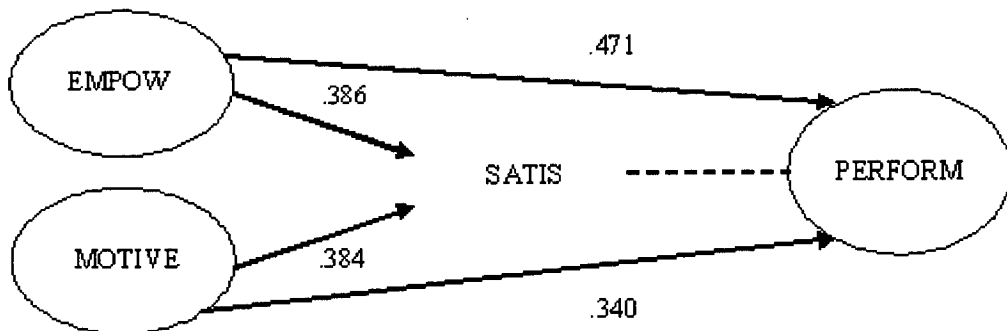


Figure 1: Path Model for the Key Psychological Determinants of Job Performance of Department of Tourism Staff (N = 143)

Note: Coefficients were significant at the .05 level.

Table 5: Summary of the Results of the Hypothesis Testing

No.	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Employee empowerment and job motivation are more likely to have positive effects on job satisfaction.	Failed to Reject
H2	Employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction are more likely to have positive effects on overall job performance.	Rejected
H3	Employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction are more likely to have positive effects on task performance.	Rejected
H4	Employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction are more likely to have positive effects on contextual performance.	Rejected
H5	Employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction are more likely to have positive effects on adaptive performance.	Rejected

contextual performance, and adaptive performance when these performance components are considered separately. On the other hand, job satisfaction had no relationship with any of the aforesaid behavioral types. Table 5 summarizes the results of the hypothesis testing.

DISCUSSION

To exhibit the degree of power of each psychological determinant of job performance and each performance type, the results displayed that employee empowerment was a critical factor in encouraging overall job performance and all of its dimensions when considered separately. If personnel are granted more authority and choices to make decisions on issues concerning their job positions, they will believe in their competence, perform their tasks better, and tend to cooperate and help other staffs more, as well as present more that they can accept unexpected changes, and are able to handle stress and adjust themselves to learning new things that are useful for their job and for the organization.

Further, the effects of job motivation were found on overall job performance and also on all three specified performance types.

When individuals are more invigorated by the job interests and the advantages attached to the job, they think that it is worth dedicating themselves to working on their core tasks better. Moreover, they are willing to help make the operations and work atmosphere smoother, generating new ideas to be implemented, and demonstrating their cognitive ability to develop and improve themselves for advancement.

In contrast, job satisfaction did not show an impact on job performance or any performance types proposed in the model of this study. This indicated that happiness with the job and the relevant environments of employees did not lead to better performance. These results manifest that satisfaction with one's job and its related factors did not make the employees put more effort into his or her work, adhere to organization's values, or even volunteer putting in extra efforts at work. In addition, an individual who is conscientious about achieving, is self-motivated, and believes in his or her capability is ready to prepare to respond to challenges and new things for self-development and progress, regardless of whether the current job and job-related issues gratify him or her or not.

The possible reasons are:

- 1) The Department of Tourism is a public

organization where the nature of the work is routine. The staff members may be satisfied with their job in terms of security in the long term and the tangible benefits that they expect to gain. The staff's job requirements and the expected level of achievement for each assignment were acknowledged. They may feel that they only need to reach the standard of performance stated in the job description, which is routine, and complete each task assigned on schedule.

2) The key performance indicators (KPIs) for organizations in the Thai public sector are normally at the working unit level rather than the individual level. The employees may feel that their work success is eventually presented as an achievement of the working unit. Their outstanding or better performance may not influence or cause any changes in the overall unit performance outcome, which in turn will not affect their performance evaluation.

3) Incentives for job accomplishment are limited and normally not according to outstanding performance. The Thai public sector regularly provides a yearly pension at a fixed rate to government officials and employees, and the performance evaluation is normally carried out by the supervisor. If work completion complies with the objectives and goals, the yearly pension is a common reward.

The agreement levels of the respondents with each variable were also interesting to consider. For employee empowerment, the highest percentage of agreement (79.7%) among all 5 items was with "I believe in my ability to perform my job successfully", which conformed to the high agreement of the job satisfaction item "I am satisfied with work accomplishment" (76.9%). These findings im-

ply that the employees in the Department of Tourism have self-confidence in performing their assigned job and believe that their jobs are well done. However, only 38.5 percent of the employees perceived they were rewarded when they successfully completed their job.

Nonetheless, the high percentage of agreement on "I enjoy serving the public and public interest" item (80.5%) may be used to relieve the feeling of not being rewarded. The agreement on this item presents the idea that the employees correspond to the obligations of their Department of Tourism, which is a Thai public organization, to serve the public and work for the public interest in terms of tourism-related activities.

The moderate level of contextual performance agreement may be supported by the qualitative session where the staff feels that their current responsibilities and job allocation are somewhat unclear and unsystematic. For this reason, they may not want to be burdened with more work.

Interestingly, a little more than half of the respondents (51.1%) confirmed that they did not negatively tell outsiders about their organization. For this matter, as it affects the organization's image and reputation, meetings are encouraged for employees to share their ideas and opinions toward issues in the organization, and the management should consider and develop measures to improve the staff's attitudes, loyalty, and commitment.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Only certain psychological factors comprising employee empowerment, job motivation, and job satisfaction were selected as the

independent variables for this study. Moreover, this study did not deal with other performance dimensions apart from task, contextual, and adaptive behaviors that might have affected the Department of Tourism staff's perceptions.

The researcher expected to interview the Department of Tourism staff regarding their opinions of their performance in all three dimensions as well as their opinions about factors that influence their behaviors. Nevertheless, some staff members, including the supervisors, had to carry out their projects outside their offices which made the interviews very difficult to arrange; therefore, the data derived from the open-ended questions on staff's opinions served as the qualitative analysis of this study.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Firstly, only the perceptions of the Department of Tourism of Thailand staff were investigated in this study; therefore, more working units and organizations should consider the utilized scales used in this study to investigate employees' perceptions and performance.

Secondly, the effects of the identified determinants might be compared among working units in the Department of Tourism to discover the employees' perceptions more thoroughly.

Thirdly, the job satisfaction scale utilized in this study proved to be usable for its validity and reliability although this factor did not exhibit its influence on job performance in this study which was contrary to the results and conclusions disclosed in several previous studies. Therefore, more research is encour-

aged in order to explore whether a relationship between job satisfaction and job performance exists.

Additionally, other factors such as leadership, job involvement, job commitment, and knowledge-sharing practices are plausible to play critical roles in predicting employees' performances. Furthermore, to broaden employee's job performance context understanding, different performance dimensions existing in the job performance domain could be taken into consideration for further studies.

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