

Association between Decent Work and Employee Motivation: The Case of Industrial Estates in Nepal

Prakash Shrestha, Ph.D.*

prakash.shrestha1@ncc.tu.edu.np

Lecturer, Nepal Commerce Campus, T.U.

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to assess an association between decent work and employee motivation in the context of industrial estates of Nepal. In order to ascertain the association between them, this study takes into account six different types of employee motivation and seven criteria for decent work. The study employs a five-point Likert scale questionnaire using a survey research technique to examine the association between decent work and employee motivation. 450 people from the three industrial estates who work for diverse organizations make up the sample (including 30 companies and 15 workers in each). They were given a standardized questionnaire, and only 379 (84.22%) valid responses were received, which were then included in the study. The results embraced the idea that decent work has a significant association with employee motivation at the workplace. In fact, employee motivation generally appears to be enhanced by all dimensions of decent work, with favorable associations between identified and intrinsic work motivation and negatively associated with amotivation. In conclusion, decent work allows workers to balance work and personal life, develop personally and professionally, etc. It improves both work and life quality and also plays a significant role in organizational performance by increasing employee motivation. Therefore, in order to increase employee motivation and ultimately increase organizational performance and the long-term sustainability of today's organizations, they must create effective working environments and promote the concept of decent work in their workplaces.

Keywords: Association, Decent work, Employee, Employment, Industrial estates, Motivation, Work.

Introduction

The psychology of working theory, a recently developed theory, highlights the significance of decent work for all working people and explains how this work can help them feel successful and happy (Duffy et al., 2016). So, the current study attempts to identify, describe and analyze the primary mechanisms that account for the association between decent work (ILO, 1999; Ferraro, Pais, & dos Santos, 2015; Ferraro et al., 2017) and employee motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The term "decent work" first appeared in the late 90s (Adhikari, 2012). Mainly, this concept was introduced in 1999 at the International Labour

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Conference (ILC). Its roots were found in the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and the establishment of the ILO. The ILO and the United Nations have both made significant contributions to DW (Ferraro et al., 2016; ILO, 1944; UN, 2000a, 2000b, 2015; Ferraro et al., 2017).

Work serves as a vital link between the labor movement and society. The ability of employees to advance in their careers is intimately linked to decent work, which is also crucial for firms to maintain a competitive edge over rivals and for society as a whole to progress in performance (Haiming & Yan, 2020). In order to secure essential values and principles at work through social interaction among those participating in the decision-making processes about that work, the term "decent work" refers to meaningful employment and ethics. Decent work is the minimum standard of working conditions that allow for a good quality of life (Kroon, 2018) at workplaces. Such working conditions create a feeling of well both physically, mentally and socially (WHOQOL group, 1995) in the minds of workers. When workers have access to full and productive employment, they are allowed to exercise their rights at work, are protected by social protection, and can participate in social debate, those working circumstances are seen to be decent (International Labour Organization, 2013, cited in Kerti, 2020). On the one hand, from individual perspective, today's economy has caused workers to shift from their prior need for material possessions and safety to their current need for a sense of respect, need, and acquirement. These workers have also advanced higher expectations for the enhancement of their employment prospects and pursuit of career advancement. On the other hand, business firms are dedicated to building a strong employer brand to entice more exceptional workers and enhance their sustainable competitive advantages in light of the resurgence of humanistic management and the emergence of the new employee-centered economy (Haiming & Yan, 2020). As the matter of fact, decent work is quite important for both the workers and companies in today's context. Therefore, it is assumed that decent work can increase employee engagement and creativity (Qing et al., 2016). And of course, the concept of decent work is also important for the enhancement of employee motivation at work. Therefore, this study aims to assess an association between decent work and employee motivation in the context of Nepalese workplaces.

Literature Review

The concepts of decent work and employee motivation are researched all around the world. They are pertinent to employees, employers, organizations, and society at large (de Seabra Correia Casqueira, 2018). To promote "opportunity for women and men to attain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity," the concept of "decent work" was first developed (ILO, 1999, p. 3). Decent work is highly competent and effective and qualified work that is done in a setting that is safe and social. It exemplifies employment that gives workers satisfaction by letting them use their talents, knowledge, and expertise. The rights and dignity of the workers are also protected, and the labor is highly paid (Markovi, 2012). The concept of "decent work" encompasses a variety of qualitative aspects of work, such as rights at work, social protection, and the encouragement of social dialogue, in addition to full and productive employment (Piasna et al., 2020). In addition, this concept encourages the creation of employment possibilities that are both plentiful and high-quality, as well as social protection through compassion and the rule of law (recognizing the circumstances for health, safety, and work-life balance) (Ferraro et al., 2017).

According to Ferraro et al. (2016), the seven criteria of working circumstances are used to define decent work. These criteria can be used to assess the degree to which a certain workplace offers respectable working circumstances, as seen from the perspective of the particular employee:

- (a) *Fundamental principles and values at work*: participation, trust, fair decision-making, being treated with dignity and being able to exercise freedom of expression at the work.
- (b) *Adequate working time and workload*: the appropriateness of the number of hours worked each day and the employee's ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- (c) *Fulfilling and productive work*: creating value for others through work, and personal fulfillment.

- (d) *Meaningful remuneration*: receiving a reasonable living salary that pays for the expenses of caring for the people in their care.
- (e) *Social protection*: access to retirement plans, unemployment benefits, insurance and social security.
- (f) *Opportunities*: the opportunity to be promoted, develop professionally, and acquire new skills.
- (g) *Health and safety*: physical health, safe work, and adequate environmental conditions at the workplace (Ferraro et al., 2016).

An important factor at work is employee motivation, which affects how well the department and ultimately the whole business function. Employee motivation in this study is based on the self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985). SDT describes the sensation of engaging in meaningful, self-regulated activities that are either internally or extrinsically motivating. SDT proposes a paradigm with six distinct types of employee motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Gagné et al., 2015):

- (a) *Amotivation*: the absence of motivation for a task.
- (b) *Extrinsic material motivation*: engaging in an activity to earn money or other tangible incentives.
- (c) *Extrinsic social motivation*: the desire for praise and the avoidance of social punishment.
- (d) *Introjected motivation*: behavioural control caused by internal pressures like ego-involvement, shame, and guilt.
- (e) *Identified motivation*: doing something because one believes in its importance to society and identifies with its value or significance.
- (f) *Intrinsic motivation*: doing something because it is fun and fascinating on its own.

Gagné et al. (2015) rightly argue that every type of work motivation can exist in a worker with variable degrees of intensity, and the professional setting can help to support (or inhibit) various work motivations. Accordingly, it is possible to maintain employee motivation by giving employees chances to feel and grow their competence, autonomy, and interpersonal relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2014; Gagné & Deci, 2005, 2014). Instead, when their efforts are unsuccessful, they display more externally controlled forms of motivation or turn amotivated or demotivated (Deci & Ryan, 2014). Many researchers (e.g., Ferraro et al., 2017; Qing Tao et al., 2016; Ferraro et al., 2018; Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017) agree that decent work influences employee motivation at the workplace.

Research Methodology

The study's primary objective is to examine the situation of decent work and employee motivation in the organizations of Nepal's three industrial estates (Bhaktapur, Balaju, and Pokhara). Throughout the study, the larger context of their background and experiences in the labor market are taken into account. The study employs a five-point Likert scale questionnaire using a survey research technique to examine the association between decent work and employee motivation.

450 people from the three industrial estates who work for diverse organizations make up the sample (including 30 companies and 15 workers in each). They were given a standardized questionnaire, and only 379 (84.22%) valid responses were received, which were then included in the study. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 379)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Men	163	43
Women	216	57
Age (years)		

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
20 – 35	155	40.9
36 – 50	159	42
51 – 65	31	8.18
≥ 66	34	8.97
Educational level		
Masters	61	16.1
Bachelor	132	34.8
+ 2	130	34.3
School	56	14.8
Tenure (years)		
6 months to 5 years	197	52
6 years to 10 years	98	25.9
11 years to 15 years	46	12.1
16 years to 20 years	19	5.01
21 years to 25 years	8	2.11
≥ 26 years	11	2.9

Results

Descriptive statistics of decent work dimensions

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of decent work dimensions.

Table 2

Decent Work Dimensions

Decent Work Dimensions	Mean	S.D.
Fundamental principles and values at work	4.03	0.32
Adequate working time and workload	3.51	0.47
Fulfilling and productive work	3.83	0.44
Meaningful remuneration	3.57	0.51
Social protection	3.89	0.46
Opportunities	3.48	0.36
Health and safety	3.71	0.45

The highest values of the dimensions of decent work were observed in the fundamental principles and values of work (4.03) followed by social protection (3.89), fulfilling and productive work (3.83), health and safety (3.71), meaningful remuneration (3.57), adequate working time and workload (3.51), and opportunities (3.48). Results show that respondents strongly agree with the idea of decent work being the norm at their places of employment.

Descriptive statistics of employee motivation dimensions

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of employee motivation dimensions.

Table 3

Employee Motivation Dimensions

Employee Motivation Dimensions	Mean	S.D.
Amotivation	2.51	0.29
Extrinsic – Material	3.84	0.71
Extrinsic – Social	2.97	0.69

Employee Motivation Dimensions	Mean	S.D.
Introjected	4.26	0.57
Identified	4.49	0.39
Intrinsic Motivation	4.71	0.61

The highest values of the dimensions of employee motivation were observed in the intrinsic motivation (4.71) that is followed by identified (4.49), intjection (4.26), extrinsic-material (3.84), extrinsic - social (2.97) and amotivation (2.51). Results show that respondents strongly agree with the intrinsic motivation, identified, introjected and extrinsic-material as the key dimensions of employee motivation at workplaces.

Table 4 presents correlations between decent work dimensions and motivation dimensions.

Table 4

Intercorrelation matrix between decent work and employee motivation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Fundamental principles and values at work	1												
2. Adequate working time and workload	0.34	1											
3. Fulfilling and productive work	0.58**	0.244	1										
4. Meaningful remuneration	0.51**	0.325	0.49**	1									
5. Social protection	0.036	-0.065	0.211	0.369	1								
6. Opportunities	0.151	0.084	0.09	0.023	0.02	1							
7. Health and safety	0.067	-0.011	0.034	0.132	0.014	.517**	1						
8. Amotivation	-0.245	-0.219	-0.211**	-0.021*	-0.136*	-0.081	-0.39*	1					
9. Extrinsic – Material	-0.25	0.213	-0.068	-0.058	-0.13	-0.069	0.27	.638**	1				
10. Extrinsic – Social	-0.101	0.197	-0.077	-0.13	0.23*	0.27*	0.379*	0.214	0.272	1			
11. Introjected	0.175	0.24**	0.22**	0.294	0.18	0.115	0.274*	0.27	0.039	0.257	1		
12. Identified	0.325	0.277**	0.59*	0.396*	0.197*	0.11*	0.148*	0.174	0.258	0.136	0.057	1	
13. Intrinsic Motivation	0.478*	0.181**	0.642*	0.412*	0.367*	0.17*	0.312**	0.367	0.34	0.35	0.17	0.244**	1

Note: *p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01

We observe that all decent work dimensions have a negative association with Amotivation but a positive correlation with other dimensions of employee motivation. Fulfilling and productive work has the highest correlation with both with Intrinsic Motivation (r = 0.642) and Identified (r = 0.59). In fact, there is a strong positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and fundamental principles and values at work (r = 0.478). Adequate working time and workload dimension is significantly positively correlated with Introjection, Identified and Intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, Meaningful remuneration dimension is significantly positively correlated with Identified and Intrinsic Motivation. Likewise, Social protection dimension of decent work is significantly positively correlated with Extrinsic-social, Identified and Intrinsic motivation. Opportunities dimension is also significantly positively correlated with Extrinsic-social, Identified and Intrinsic Motivation. Finally,

Health and safety dimensions of decent work are positively correlated with Extrinsic – Social, Introjected, Identified, and Intrinsic Motivation. Hence, employee motivation presents a positive and significant correlation with all the indices considered.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research aims to examine an association between decent work and employee motivation. The results embraced the idea that decent work has a significant association with employee motivation at the workplace. In fact, employee motivation generally appears to be enhanced by all dimensions of decent work, with favorable associations between identified and intrinsic work motivation (Ferraro et al., 2017; de Seabra Correia Casqueira, 2018) and negatively associated with amotivation. The ILO's conception of decent work is actually psychologically significant since it has a favorable relationship with the more advanced types of employee motivation (ILO, 1999, 2013).

In a similar vein, self-determination theory also asserts that how motivated employees are for their work activities affects both their performance and their wellbeing. This theory predicts that more autonomous forms of motivation will be more likely to predict long-term increases in persistence, performance quality, and well-being than controlled forms and that each of these forms of motivation will be systematically directly linked with work environments and compensation structures. This expectation has been supported by numerous researchers (e.g., Howard et al., 2016; de Seabra Correia Casqueira, 2018).

In conclusion, decent work allows workers to balance work and personal life, develop personally and professionally, etc (de Seabra Correia Casqueira, 2018). It improves both work and life quality and also plays a significant role in organizational performance by increasing employee motivation. Since decent work becomes a key component of an organization's long-term success, having motivated employees becomes especially crucial for modern businesses. Therefore, in order to increase employee motivation and ultimately increase organizational performance and the long-term sustainability of today's organizations, they must create effective working environments and promote the concept of decent work in their workplaces.

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