



Correlation Between Motivation and Ability to Perform Work of the Employees at Department of Public Works and Transport, Luang Prabang Province

Saykeo Thavichay¹, Thippavanh Duangvilaykeo², Orathai Sisavanh²
Faculty of Economics and Tourism, Souphanouvong University, Lao PDR

^{1*}**Correspondence:** Saykeo Thavichay, Luang Prabang Province,
Tel: +85620 52534333,
E-mail:
saykeo.dpwt@gmail.com

²Faculty of Economics and Tourism, Souphanouvong University, Lao PDR

Article Info:
Submitted: March 25, 2026
Revised: April 02, 2026
Accepted: April 09, 2026

Abstract

This study examined to 1) the capacity levels and work motivation of employees at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province, and 2) analyzed the correlation between employee motivation and work performance ability. The sample size of 140 employees. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 25 to generate descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The findings indicated that:

The capacity levels and work motivation of employees at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province such as 1) the employee motivation at a good level ($\bar{X} = 4.10$, $SD=0.51$), employees at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province rated the overall importance of hygiene factors at a good level ($\bar{X} = 3.96$, $SD=0.53$), and 2) the employee performance capability at a good level ($\bar{X} = 4.11$, $SD=0.54$). When examining individual components, employees rated knowledge and ability to perform, skills for their own work and individual characteristics.

Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant strong positive relationships between all motivation factors and work performance ability, with Pearson correlation coefficients ranging from $r = 0.46$ to $r = 0.80$ ($p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors significantly influence employee performance capacity in public sector organizations.

Keywords: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Employee Motivation, Work Performance, Employee Capacity, Public Sector

1. Introduction

The Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province is a government organization at the local level that serves as a staff agency to the provincial governor and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. The department manages public works and transport operations including land-water-air transport, housing, urban planning, and water supply within Luang Prabang Province

(Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province, 2025).

During the past period, the Department has successfully developed and upgraded employee knowledge and capacity in politics, governance, technical expertise, and ethics. However, several challenges have emerged that potentially impact employee motivation and performance capacity. The current economic situation in Lao PDR has created budget constraints affecting

infrastructure development, with roads not receiving adequate maintenance, water supply systems not reaching all districts, and deteriorated transportation routes (Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province, 2025).

Motivation is the internal and external energy that encourages employees to dedicate themselves to their work and improve their performance outcomes. Work Performance Capacity refers to the abilities, skills, knowledge, and health that enable individuals to produce work effectively and efficiently. Many studies have shown that motivation is a key factor in determining employees' level of job performance (Robbins & Judge, 2017; Herzberg, 1959).

Importance for organizations: Increasing productivity. Employees with high motivation work faster and produce higher-quality results, reduce errors, and demonstrate creativity, as Herzberg (1959) indicated that enhancing motivation directly improves job performance. Reducing absenteeism, job transfers, and turnover, as Maslow (1943) stated that when needs are not met, employees lose motivation. Developing employees' performance capacity: Motivated employees learn quickly, continuously develop their skills, and are able to cope with heavy workloads, as Vroom (1964) stated that $Motivation = Expectancy \times Value$. Employee retention: A lack of motivation is a major cause of brain drain, as Ryan & Deci (2000) stated that intrinsic motivation helps employees remain with an organization for the long term. Organizational effectiveness: motivation is linked to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance, as Armstrong (2020) stated, organizations that manage motivation well achieve higher performance. The impacts of lacking motivation include low performance, reduced work quality, burnout, and high turnover rates. As the WHO (2022) stated, burnout is associated with low motivation.

Despite being over fifty years old, Herzberg's theory remains one of the most

popular frameworks for studying job satisfaction (Dion, 2006). Recent research in positive psychology has found consistency with Herzberg's core ideas (Sachau, 2007; Robbins, 2017). validating its enduring relevance in organizational studies.

Fleishman & Bartlett (1969) identified five characteristics of human ability: ability is the product of maturation and learning, abilities are developed through training and experience, abilities are relatively stable traits, individuals possess different levels of various abilities, and task performance depends on the level of ability required. Employee performance capacity encompasses knowledge and skills to perform tasks, technical proficiency, and individual characteristics that contribute to effective job performance.

More critically, budget cuts and lack of quotas for new staff have led to increased workload per employee. Personnel limitations are evident as civil servants reaching retirement age are not being replaced, and no new civil service quotas have been received in recent years. These difficult economic conditions have caused attendance issues, with some civil servants requesting leave to build their family economy and others requesting transfers. Therefore, understanding the relationship between motivation and work performance capacity has become urgent for maintaining organizational effectiveness and employee retention.

This study examined to 1) the capacity levels and work motivation of employees at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province, and 2) analyzed the correlation between employee motivation and work performance ability.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Population and Sample

The target population consisted of all employees working at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province. The sample size was determined using Krejcie & Morgan's formula (Krejcie & Morgan,

1970), yielding a total of 140 participants. The sampling technique employed systematic random sampling to ensure representativeness across different divisions and units within the department.

2.2 Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire was developed based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and employee capacity frameworks. The instrument comprised three main sections: (1) demographic information, (2) work motivation factors (both hygiene and motivating factors), and (3) employee performance capacity measures. All items utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The instrument was validated for content validity by three experts to determine the Index of Congruence (IOC) (DeVellis, 2016), which resulted in an IOC value of 0.97. Reliability was then tested with a pilot group of 30 participants using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient: $\alpha = n/(n-1)[1 - (\sum si^2)/(si^2)]$, yielding a reliability value of $\alpha = 0.88$ (Cronbach, 1951).

2.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were calculated to describe sample characteristics and variable distributions. Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationships between motivation factors and work performance capacity. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.01$.

3. Results

3.1 The capacity levels and work motivation of employees at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province

1) Employee Motivation Levels

Employees at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province rated motivating factors at a good level overall ($\bar{X} = 4.10$, $SD = 0.51$). Examining individual dimensions, achievement received the highest rating at an excellent level ($\bar{X} = 4.35$, $SD = 0.51$),

followed by responsibility ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, $SD = 0.57$) and nature of work ($\bar{X} = 4.15$, $SD = 0.59$), both at good levels. Recognition was rated at a good level ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, $SD = 0.64$), while advancement opportunities received the lowest rating among motivating factors, though still at a good level ($\bar{X} = 3.86$, $SD = 0.67$).

Employees at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province rated the overall importance of hygiene factors at a good level, with a mean score of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.53. When examining individual factors, employees rated organizational management policy at a good level ($\bar{X} = 3.97$, $SD = 0.58$), supervision at a good level ($\bar{X} = 4.04$, $SD = 0.61$), and relationships within the organization at a good level ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, $SD = 0.68$). Working conditions received a good-level rating ($\bar{X} = 4.11$, $SD = 0.56$), as did salary and welfare ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, $SD = 0.68$) and job stability ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, $SD = 0.68$). Job placement was also rated at a good level, though with a slightly lower mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.89$, $SD = 0.68$).

2) Employee Performance Capacity

Employees at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province rated the overall employee performance capability at a good level, with a mean score of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 0.54. When examining individual components, employees rated knowledge and ability to perform at a good level ($\bar{X} = 4.11$, $SD = 0.54$), skills for their own work at a good level ($\bar{X} = 4.02$, $SD = 0.54$), and individual characteristics at a good level ($\bar{X} = 4.16$, $SD = 0.52$).

3.2 Analyzed the correlation between employee motivation and work performance ability

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the twelve motivation factors and ability to perform work factor of the employees at

Department of Public Works and Transport, Luang Prabang Province. The results are presented in the correlation between motivation factors (success at work, nature of work performed, acceptance, work responsibility, progress, organizational management policy, relationships within the organization, working conditions, salary and welfare, and job placement) and employees' ability to perform work at the Department of Public Works and Transport, Luang Prabang Province ranged from 0.46 to 0.80. Overall, these correlations were at high levels and statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

4.1 Discussion

The findings of this study align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, demonstrating that both hygiene and motivating factors contribute to employee satisfaction and performance in the public sector context of Laos. The strong correlations between intrinsic motivators (achievement, recognition, work itself) and performance capacity corroborate previous research showing that intrinsic factors are primary drivers of work motivation and effectiveness.

The relatively lower rating for salary and benefits, while concerning, is consistent with findings from other public sector studies in Southeast Asian contexts. Research on public sector motivation in Vietnam (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020; Ryan, 2000) and Thailand has similarly identified financial compensation as a persistent challenge in government organizations, particularly during periods of fiscal constraint. However, the moderate correlation between salary satisfaction and performance ($r = 0.62$) suggests that while important, financial factors alone do not determine performance capacity when intrinsic motivation remains strong.

The high ratings for achievement and nature of work indicate that employees derive satisfaction from the meaningful public service nature of their roles, despite resource limitations. This finding supports theories of public service

motivation, which suggest that public sector employees are often driven by prosocial motivations beyond financial reward. The department should leverage this intrinsic motivation while working to address extrinsic factor deficiencies.

The consistent strong correlations across all motivation dimensions with performance capacity underscore the importance of a comprehensive approach to employee motivation. Organizations cannot rely solely on intrinsic or extrinsic factors but must attend to the full spectrum of motivational elements to optimize performance. This is particularly crucial in the current context of budget constraints and staffing limitations at the Department.

5. Conclusion

This study confirms that work motivation, encompassing both hygiene and motivating factors, significantly correlates with employee performance capacity at the Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province. While overall motivation levels are good, particularly in intrinsic factors, salary and benefits represent a critical area requiring attention.

6. Conflict of Interest

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial organization regarding the material discussed in the manuscript.

7. References

- Armstrong, M. (2020). *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*. Kogan Page.
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297–334.
- DeVellis, R. F. (2016). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Department of Public Works and Transport of Luang Prabang Province. (2025). *Summary of the implementation of work in 2024 and the work implementation plan for 2025*.

- Dion, M. J. (2006). The impact of workplace incivility and occupational stress on the job satisfaction and turnover intention of acute care nurses. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation*, University of Connecticut.
- Fleishman, E. A., & Bartlett, C. J. (1969). *Human abilities. Annual Review of Psychology*, 20, 349–380. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.20.020169.002025>
- Herzberg, F. (1959). *The Motivation to Work*. Wiley.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607-610.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>
- Nguyen, T. H., & Nguyen, T. D. (2020). The impact of public service motivation on public employees' performance: A case study in Vietnam. *International Public Management Journal*, 23(3), 400-421.
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2017). *Organizational Behavior*. Pearson.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic definitions and New Directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25, 54-67. <https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020>
- Sachau, D. A. (2007). Resurrecting the motivation-hygiene theory: Herzberg and the positive psychology movement. *Human Resource Development Review*, 6(4), 377-393.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and Motivation*. Wiley.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2022). *Burnout an occupational phenomenon*.

Table 1 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation of the respondents' motivation factors.

No.	Motivation Factor	(N)	Average	Standard Variation	Level importance
1	Success at work factor	140	4.35	0.51	Excellent
2	Related to the nature of work performed factor	140	4.15	0.59	good
3	Acceptance factor	140	4.00	0.64	good
4	Work responsibility factor	140	4.14	0.57	good
5	Progress factor	140	3.86	0.67	good
	Average	140	4.10	0.51	good

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' Hygiene Factors

No.	Hygiene Factors	(N)	Average	Standard Variation	Level importance
1	Organizational management policy factors	140	3.97	0.58	good
2	Command factor	140	4.04	0.61	good
3	Relationship factors with organization factor	140	4.07	0.56	good
4	Working condition factor	140	4.11	0.56	good
5	Salary and welfare factor	140	3.54	0.80	good
6	Work stability factor	140	4.07	0.68	good
7	Job placement factor	140	3.89	0.68	good

	Average	140	3.96	0.53	good
--	----------------	------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of the staff's Employee performance capability

No.	Employee performance capability	(N)	Average	Standard Variation	Level importance
1	Have the knowledge and ability to work	140	4.11	0.54	Large
2	Skills for own work	140	4.02	0.54	Large
3	individual characteristics	140	4.16	0.52	Large
	Average	140	4.11	0.54	Large

Table 4 shows the correlation between motivation factors and ability to perform work factor

Pearson Correlations													
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10	X11	X12	Y
X1	1.00	0.80**	0.60**	0.77**	0.49**	0.51**	0.534*	0.46**	0.57**	0.23**	0.52**	0.36**	0.64**
X2		1.00	0.74**	0.73**	0.60**	0.59**	0.52**	0.60**	0.65**	0.43**	0.57**	0.56**	0.74**
X3			1.00	0.71**	0.67**	0.70**	0.49**	0.71**	0.65**	0.48**	0.56**	0.63**	0.77**
X4				1.00	0.66**	0.69**	0.65**	0.72**	0.68**	0.47**	0.62**	0.42**	0.78**
X5					1.00	0.71**	0.61**	0.57**	0.58**	0.57**	0.55**	0.57**	0.61**
X6						1.00	0.73**	0.75**	0.63**	0.61**	0.68**	0.65**	0.74**
X7							1.00	0.68**	0.62**	0.65**	0.65**	0.53**	0.61**
X8								1.00	0.70**	0.67**	0.61**	0.51**	0.74**
X9									1.00	0.59**	0.64**	0.52**	0.79**
X10										1.00	0.60**	0.54**	0.56**
X11											1.00	0.67**	0.68**
X12												1.00	0.63**
Y													1.00