Terrorism and Work Motivation: Teachers in the Southern Thailand

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Abstract:

Due to terrorism attacks and the separatist movement, the majority of teachers working in the five southern provinces (Satool, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat) in Thailand have requested to move out from the schools in that area. Teachers and supporting staff at schools in the South of Thailand have been victimised by the separatist movement. The violence has also adversely affected the local economy and quality of life in the southern provinces. As such, terrorism contributes to problems in motivating teachers to remain effective in teaching, and teachers’ morale. This study investigates factors pertaining from schools in the five Southernmost Thailand and their relationship with teaching motivation. It aims to explain the pattern of organisational factors and teaching motivation of school members, and to find ways to improve work motivation among at-risk teachers. Results from this study indicate that school’s policy and leadership positively contributes to teachers’ work motivation. Since pull factors significantly contribute to motivation to teach, and positively related to factors that create teaching motivation (achievement at work, recognition at school, work diversity, responsibility, and career advancement), school leader should promote morale support providing to teachers, quality of work, level of income that suits teacher’s living standard, and environment at school. These factors will enhance the long-term teachers’ motivation in the South of Thailand and sustainability of school organisation.

Keywords: Terrorism, Teacher Motivation, Human Resource Management, Thailand
“Nearly 100 public schools in the southernmost province of Yala and Narathiwat were closed yesterday after three teachers were brutally shot to death in Ra-ngae districts.”

(The Nation, June 2007)

“A male teacher, who had taught at Baan Bue Rang school for the past 20 years, was at the blackboard teaching his 10-year-old students when two gunmen, dressed in school uniforms shot him dead. Immediately, education authorities closed down 20 village schools in the Narithiwat province.

Unarmed guards patrol the schools in the Muslim south where 1,300 people have been killed in the past two years. Thirty of those shot dead have been teachers.”

(Bangkok Post, July 2006)

**Terrorism in Thailand**

Since January 2004, terrorism in the southern provinces of Thailand has claimed more than 2,000 lives. The violence has also adversely affected the local economy and quality of life in the southern provinces. The atmosphere of fear and intimidation is dividing the society on religious lines, with growing apprehension that what began as a separatist nationalist conflict might well end up as a clash between Buddhism and Islam. There is also a strong potential for the Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand to get sucked into the global jihad (Gunaratna and Acharya, 2007). Terrorism is expected to have detrimental effects on life of teachers and quality of education in the Southern Thailand. According to the Thai Ministry of Education, over two hundred teachers and school principals in Thailand have been the victims of terrorism in the South. Southern Thailand comprises of 5 provinces, Satun, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat which are predominantly Muslim majority areas. A militant Muslim separatist movement started there in the early 1970s, but died out in the 1990s (Chuwattananurak, 2007). The resurgence of violence erupted with a vengeance by the separatist due to ineffective crisis management by the Thai government. The situation in the southern province has worsened and is another flashpoint in Southeast Asia (Croissant, 2005).

With a population of 63 million, Thailand is 90 per cent Buddhist. Thailand’s five southern provinces (Satool, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat), however, are 85 percent Muslim and home to most of the country’s four million Muslims (Ministry Of Interior, 2006). The southern provinces were annexed a hundred years ago after centuries of Thai government control. Being a Buddhist majority country, Thailand has imposed its political, education and religious will onto the
people in the south. The separatist in the south are unhappy with the intentions of the central government. Separatism in the far south of Thailand, apart from the border dispute with neighbouring countries, is regarded as one of the most chronic security problems to every Thai government starting from the Ayutthaya down to Rattanakosin kingdoms (Chuwattananurak, 2007). The resurgence of violence erupted in the year 2001, causing havoc in the south with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) which is commonly used by the separatists. The separatist groups also conducted several attacks against public schools, government-run clinics and police stations in the region because they were seen as anti-Islamic tools of the state (Chuwattananurak, 2007). Buddhist monks, temples and teachers too have been the targets of the separatists. As many as 60 teachers were killed in the past 2 years (MOE, 2006). Teachers and School Principals have been targeted for the violence in the Southern Thailand since they represent the Thai government. Schools in the Southern Thailand were victimised by the separatists in many forms. The arson attack has been one of the most popular tactics to threaten Thai teachers and principals to flee away from schools. The most unforgettable arson attack happened in August 1993 when over 33 schools in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla were destroyed in a different degree (Bangkok Post, 2006).

From 2004 to present thousand of teachers in the southernmost province lose their morale and intention to stay and teach in the schools. Complaints regarding safety and morale are made through the Ministry of Education. Basically, most teachers in the South have been applying to move out from the three southernmost provinces (Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat). In some areas, teachers demanded the Ministry of Education to send troops to protect their schools from the violence. In most areas, educational leaders (such as leader from the Ministry of Education, director of education area, and principal) are heavily criticised by teachers and communities for ineffective leadership and crisis management.

**School Leadership, Crisis, and Teacher’s Motivation**

School operations can be explained by organisational theory. Like most organisation, schools leaders should focuses on the organisational level with concern for groups and the environment. Most education organisation theories are concerned with people aggregated into departments, and organisations with the differences in structure and behaviour at the organisation level of analysis. When members of school feel insecure about their work and workplace, due to factor such as terrorism, leaders must understand cognitive and emotional differences among people within
organisations (Daft, 2001). Understanding factors influencing staff’s well-being will help leaders to effectively motivate their staff to be more productive.

The research on effective schools indicates that the principals of effective schools know how to motivate their staff by using various school factors such as including staff members in decision-making and problem-solving, setting shared vision among teachers and administrators, and creating trust among school community (Fullan, 2001). Previous research studies confirm that motivation to teach leads to school effectiveness and learning quality in many ways (Fullan, 2002). However, the concept of work motivation is still ambiguous in most schools all over the world. In most countries where centralisation is the norm of education policy, leader is the most important person who could motivate teachers. In fact, previous studies in the area of school effectiveness confirm that all individuals have the potential to lead an organisation, and motivate each others. In addition, influence has the potential to be more pervasive than authority. Authority has been described as 'uni-directional' and influence as 'multi-directional' (Conley, 1989; Everard, 1986).

Leaders of effective schools do not exercise educational leadership alone. Such leadership is often the collective task of the principal along with other members of the organisation. Almost all schools would be strengthened by a power-sharing approach, and "the conception that policy is the domain of administrators and pedagogy the domain of teachers” is obsolete (Schuler, 1989).

According to the master plan of the Thai Ministry of Education (2007), school leaders are one of the key people driving the quality of the national education system. Power and resources in school management have been transferred from the central government to schools nationwide. One of the major challenges for the Thai school leaders is how to make the most of their authorities and resources to motivate teachers and to improve their work quality.

Having stated all the crises in the area, this study investigates factors motivating teachers working in the five southernmost provinces in Thailand to stay in the area. It also aims to examine the effect of school organizational factors on motivating long-term plan for teachers to stay in the region and work with the community.
Work Motivation and School Organisation Factors

Motivation is one of the most basic elements of human behaviour. Motivational theories attempt to explain how effort is generated and channelled (Werner and DeSimone, 2006). Understanding what motivated teachers and how they were motivated are the major focus of previous research studies. Theories of work motivation abound. Major approaches that commonly adopt to clarify the understanding of teachers’ motivation are from major psychology and organisation studies. The most popular theory, Maslow's need-hierarchy theory (1943) has long been adopted in the study of teachers’ work motivation. This theory emphasized that employees have five levels of needs: physiological, safety, social, ego, and self-actualizing. Maslow (1943) proposed that lower level needs had to be satisfied before the next higher level need would motivate employees. The concept of needs in hierarchy was later confirmed by Alderfer’s existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory (1969).

McGregor (1960) made a major contribution to the study of work motivation with his Theory X and Y rationale. McGregor suggested that traditional managements operate their organisations according to Theory X - which people hate work, are driven and threatened with punishment to get them to work towards organisational objectives, they like security, lack ambition, prefer to be directed and avoid responsibility (McGregor, 1987). Opposite to a belief in Theory X, Theory Y postulates that people don’t inherently dislike work; they don’t have to be forced or threatened, they can be self-directed, they seek and accept responsibility. Creativity and ingenuity are held to be widely distributed among the population and commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with them, e.g. satisfying their egos and development needs (McGregor, 1987).

Hackman and Oldham (1980) put forward their theory of work motivation in the form of the “Job Characteristics Model.” They argued for three factors, or “critical psychological states” that must be established in workers for them to be motivated to work. The worker must have knowledge of the results of their work, experience responsibility for the results of their work, and experience the work as meaningful in their own system of values. Work itself must be suitably designed to foster these psychological states. Hackman and Oldham (1980) also suggested that work should possess five characteristics - skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and task feedback. Much research has supported the reliability and validity of this theory and the questionnaire based measurement tool designed by Hackman and Oldham to test their theory (Locke and Latham, 1990).
Herzberg (1959) proposed the idea of two-factor theory which categorized motivation into two factors: motivator and hygiene. Motivator factors, includes achievement and recognition, produce job satisfaction. In contrast, hygiene factors are pay and job security, produce job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, he concluded that such factors as company policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary are hygiene factors rather than motivators. According to the theory, the absence of hygiene factors can create job dissatisfaction, but their presence does not motivate or create satisfaction.

From his previous study, Herzberg focuses on several work factors that motivate employees and, hence, influences their work quality and effectiveness. However, there is one factor that Herzberg omitted but a number of researchers believe in its influence on work motivation: employee effort. Hence, Vroom, in 1964, developed a new expectancy theory, which is based on the belief that employee effort will lead to performance and performance will lead to rewards (Vroom, 1964). Rewards may be either positive or negative. The more positive the reward the more likely the employee will be highly motivated. Conversely, the more negative the reward the less likely the employee will be motivated. Later, there are a full gamut of research on various factors that may contribute to employees’ work-motivation such as equity (Adams, 1965), effort (Porter, Lawler, and Hackman, 1975), valence (Wagner and Hollenbeck, 1995), or attitudes and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) which can be identified as career advancement, recognition at workplace, diversity at workplace, and how much responsibility we have in the workplace.

Wagner and Hollenbeck (1995) identified 'process theories' in terms of 'expectancy', 'equity' and 'goals'. The expectancy theory is based on the principle that people are influenced by the expected outcomes of their actions. The equity theory is based on the belief that people need to feel that they are being treated fairly in comparison with others in the same organisation, and that there is an appropriate balance between what the person puts in and what they feel the organisation provides in return. The goals in the final theory must be realistic, and an element of negotiation helps the person accept the validity of the goals. Fullan (2002) suggest that as 'motivating is such a central aspect of working with people, it is surprising to see how little it is understood and related to management practice.'

The factors that contribute to, or detract from, the desirability of pursuing a career in teaching and effectiveness in teaching are numerous. Dinham and Scott. (2000) have reported relationship among teachers' job satisfaction, motivation and morale with teachers’ satisfaction in career. There are a
number of previous research studies (Bishay, 1996; Dinham and Scott, 1998; Quinn et al 2006) that confirm positive impact of school organisational factors and teaching motivation.

Hallinger and Heck (1996) reported that shared vision and school goal-setting processes initiated by school leaders have significant effects on teachers’ personal goals and motivation to teach. Those processes allow for authentic engagement by teachers in deliberating about the most appropriate directions for themselves and their schools (Heald-Taylor, 1991). Specific leadership practices toward this end include, for example, helping provide teachers with an overall sense of direction, exciting teachers with a vision of what they may be able to accomplish if they work together, and assisting teachers to understand the relationship between external initiatives for change and the school’s mission (Leithwood, Tomlinson and Genge, 1996).

Regarding human factors at school, Leithwood (1994) reported that principal leadership has a significant effect on teachers’ beliefs and motivation. Positive context beliefs by teachers are associated with such school leadership practices as helping to clarify the reasons for implementing the policy, empowering teachers to participate in decisions about how the policy will be implemented, providing resources to assist such implementation, and making available opportunities to acquire the new skills necessary for policy implementation (Leithwood, 2001).

Having established that school plays a crucial role on teachers’ motivation, the concept of the impact of push and pull factors on teaching motivation is lacking in the context of Thai school. Furthermore, changes in education system and policy, from centralisation to decentralisation, in the Thai education system allow school leaders to exercise their power in staff management. School leaders are encouraged by the Thai Ministry of Education to find ways to improve teachers’ participation and motivation. Most school leaders focus on the improvement of various school factors (such as providing shared visions, job satisfaction development, service provided at school, teacher’s participation, and workplace environment) and policy factors (such as teacher’s income, professional development, and curriculum design) (Ministry of Education, 2006).
Research Questions

Method

A purposive sample of 400 in-service teachers from five southern provinces (Satool, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat) participated in the study. The major criteria for eligibility to participate in this study were experience in school changes according to the effect of terrorism, feeling of being insecure living and working in the southern schools. These criteria were applied because the literature in human resource management confirms a relationship between work experience, influencing factors from both internal and external situation, and motivation to teach (Werner and DeSimone, 2006). The researchers sent questionnaires with consent forms to 450 teachers from 40 secondary schools located in the selected 10 education zones in the South. The researcher obtained the list of schools from the Ministry of Education. A total of 400 usable questionnaires were returned and used in this analysis. The profile of the sample is presented in Table I.

The researcher sent questionnaires with consent forms to 450 teachers from 80 secondary schools located in the selected 50 education zones in Thailand. Researcher obtained the list of schools from the Ministry of education. A total of 400 usable questionnaires were returned and used in this analysis. The profile of the sample is presented in Table I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>20-29 yrs = 191, 30-39 yrs = 187, 40 yrs+= 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male = 190, Female = 210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>B.Ed. = 285, M.Ed. or higher = 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>5-7 years = 265, 8-10 years = 105, 10 years+ = 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Arrangement</td>
<td>Living alone = 85, Living with spouse = 243, Living with parents = 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Monthly Income</td>
<td>$USD 500 or less = 170, $USD501-1,000 = 221, $USD1,000 and more = 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Hometown</td>
<td>Southern = 14%, Non-Southern = 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Muslim = 32%, Buddhist = 62%, Others = 6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I: Profiles of the Samples

Instrument for Data Collection

In order to identify organisational factors influencing teachers’ work motivation, researcher developed a set of questionnaire which contained four groups of variable: demographic factors, push
factors (including shared visions, experience at previous schools, job satisfaction), pull factors (including service and morale support provided at school, participation, income, and workplace environment), and teaching motivation (including career advancement, teaching achievement, recognition at school, work diversity, and responsibility within the organisation). Items in this scale were developed from Vroom’s expectancy theory (1964), Locke and Latham (1990), Wagner and Hollenbeck’s theory of work motivation (1995), and Dinham and Scott (1998).

Prior to conducting the questionnaire survey, test-retest methodology (three week interval with 30 in-service teachers in Bangkok) was employed to test the scale’s unidimensionality. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was calculated to compare the scores from the two occasions. The reliability correlation of the scale was .82, which suggests a high level of scale stability. Furthermore, Cronbach’s alpha values were calculated to verify the consistency of the inter-item reliability of the questionnaire. The following Cronbach’s alpha scores were reported: .87 for push factors, .73 for pull factors, and .94 for teaching motivation. It was found that the coefficient are larger than .07 in every case, thus the research instrument is of high reliability (Pallant, 2001).

Data Analysis

Pearson’s Correlation was performed to calculate relationship between push factor and teaching motivation, and pull factors and teaching motivation. Method of interpretation for size of the value of the correlation coefficient suggested by Cohen (1988) was used in this study. Cohen (1998) suggested that a correlation of $r = .10$ to $.29$ indicates small correlation, $r = .30-.49$ indicates medium correlation, and $r = .50-1.0$ is strong correlation. At the final stage, stepwise multiple regression was calculated to assess the ability of push and pull factors to predict level of work motivation of teacher in Southern Thailand.

Results

The results of the analyses regarding the relationship between ‘Teaching Motivation’ and ‘Push Factors’ are presented in Table II. It indicates positive significant relationship between teaching motivation and achievement in teaching ($r = .19, p = .00$). In contrast, it shows some small negative relationship between teaching motivation and teacher’s work responsibility ($r = -.20, p = .00$), and career advancement ($r = -.11, p = .02$).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push Factors</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition at school</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work diversity</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*, The mean difference is significant at .05 level; ** The mean difference is significant at .01 level

Table II: Correlation Coefficient between Push Factors and Teaching Motivation

When relationship between ‘Teaching Motivation’ and ‘Pull Factors’ are calculated, it indicates positive relationship among pull factors and achievement in teaching ($r = .35$, $p = .00$), recognition at school ($r = .45$, $p = .00$), work diversity ($r = .20$, $p = .00$), responsibility ($r = .24$, $p = .00$), and career advancement ($r = .42$, $p = .00$). Results are displayed in Table III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull Factors</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition at school</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work diversity</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*, The mean difference is significant at .05 level; ** The mean difference is significant at .01 level

Table III: Correlation Coefficient between Pull Factors and Teaching Motivation

To examine whether various organisational factors contribute to teaching motivation, multiple regression analyses were developed. The dependent variables were push factors (shared visions, experience with previous schools, job satisfaction) and pull factors (service at new school, participation, income and school environment), and the independent variable was teaching motivation.

As presented in Table IV, the linear combination of the variables included in the model is significantly related to teaching motivation [$F(1,399) = 194.01$, $p = .00$]. In addition, the adjusted $R^2$ reveals that 39% of the variation in teachers’ motivation to teach is explained by the linear combination of the independent variables considered in the regression model. Regarding the relative importance of each significant variable in the analysis, the standardized coefficients show that school environment had the strongest impact on teaching motivation, followed by income, shared
visions, service providing to teachers, job satisfaction, and participation with another staff respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.57*</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared visions</td>
<td>.394</td>
<td>.481**</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with Previous School</td>
<td>-.234**</td>
<td>.297**</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>.247**</td>
<td>.120**</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service at School</td>
<td>.275*</td>
<td>-.175**</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>.201**</td>
<td>.238**</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.530**</td>
<td>.059**</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School environment</td>
<td>.572*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: Adjusted R$^2 = .386, F(1,399) = 194.01, p = .00 [*p < .05, **p < .01]*

Table IV: Multiple Regression Analysis

Conclusions and Recommendations

The pattern of relationship among school factors and teaching motivation in this study confirms that schools in the South of Thailand should aim at improving levels of teachers’ work motivation. Since pull factors contribute to motivation, and positively related to all items that create teaching motivation (achievement at work, recognition at school, work diversity or variety of work, responsibility, and career advancement), School leaders should promote service providing to teachers, quality of work, levels of income that suits teacher’s living standard, and environment at school. School leader must be proactive in creating a true feeling that motivate teacher to teach. By doing so, school leader must engage in various strategies that promote shared visions, teacher’s job satisfaction, services for staff, and participation. This point confirms that it is important for teachers in the South of Thailand to be motivated by school factors as this factor will significantly contribute to school effectiveness in the long run

School leaders in Southern Thailand should reinforce teaching motivation by emphasizing on “positive reinforcement” on their teaching staff. This study confirms that all positive reinforcement factors contribute to teachers’ work motivation. Organisational factors pertaining from school and motivation to teach may apply to different teachers in different circumstances. However, this study confirms that if school leaders in Southern Thailand could improve ways to motivate their staff
members, it will be a great success for the human resource development. Dinham and Scott (1998) reported strong relationship between school push-pull factors and teaching motivation which are very similar to findings in this study. It possibly can be confirmed that organisation plays a significant role in motivate teachers to teach and to deliver a high quality teaching activities.

Findings from this study also confirm the positive impact on teacher’s work motivation. If teachers in the Southern Thailand feel that they are an element of the community and school vision, and school leader allows them to be more participative at school. They will feel more positive about working environment. Therefore, participative leadership should be emphasized in managing technical domain of teachers. To confirm this point, Somech and Wenderow (2006) suggested that for managerial decisions, directive leadership will be preferred in enhancing teachers’ motivation and performance, whereas for technical decisions, the participative leadership style is more desirable.

More importantly, salary and other forms of financial incentive are among the major factors contributing to teaching motivation. This study confirms that one way that Southern Thai teachers’ motivation might be improved is by altering the pay structure within the teaching profession. Unlike most countries in North America or Australia and New Zealand, Thailand’s education policy is heavily centralised in many aspects. Policy on teacher salary is created and implemented by the central government, although the education service areas are located all over the countries to promote decentralisation. Pimpa (2005) insisted that if education reform and devolution is a key area that the Thai Ministry of Education needs to improve, teacher salary and teacher performance appraisal system must be an urgent issue to work on.

If school leaders in the South of Thailand need to tackle the bad effect of terrorism on staff motivation and morale, leadership that support people-oriented activity should be implemented as a key area in the school. School, like most organisations, consists of people from diverse background. Therefore, engagement among staff members will contribute to staff motivation and sustainability of organisation.
References


