Chapter 52
Work Motivation in Temporary Organizations: A Review of Literature Grounded in Job Design Perspective

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Abstract The purpose of this chapter is to propose an approach to structure literature review along robust theoretical lenses leading to conceptualization of work motivation in case of temporary organizations. The chapter is in response to studies calling for a "seamless" theory of work motivation spanning across different management disciplines, without being confined to a specific theoretical stance. We use job design perspective from industrial/organizational psychology literature as a point of departure. We present a comprehensive review of these theories highlighting their premises. Then we focus on the literature on work motivation in case of temporary organizations. We map this literature to the theories in order to consolidate the theoretical corpus underlying work motivation. Various facets of job design that constitute motivating nature of work are identified.

Keywords Work motivation • Temporary organizations • Project management • Job design

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Introduction

Understanding the people management aspects and how they affect outcomes has been studied extensively in case of temporary organizations such as projects (c.f., Keegan, Huemann, & Turner, 2012). Variables such as leadership style, personality, and project workers' commitment for their effect on project success have been researched (Cohen, Ornoy, & Baruch, 2013; Müller & Turner, 2010). More notably, recent literature focused on understanding work motivation specifically in the context of temporary organizations (c.f., Sieler, Lent, Pinkowska, & Pinazza, 2012).

However, extant literature may have fallen short on consolidating the theories underlying work motivation in the case of temporary organizations. The theories on work motivation in case of industrial/organizational psychology are firmly established. However, such a comprehensive structure of theoretical corpus may not be available in the temporary organization literature. This limitation has led to a dialogue started by Locke and Latham (2004) who call for a seamless theory of work motivation that is able to integrate multiple theoretical lenses. This then calls for an approach where we do not demonstrate strong affiliation to any one specific theory to explain work motivation. Rather, we review a compendium of theories within the domain to explain the variable. However, we also need to balance our approach where our arguments are based on robust, established theoretical lenses which complement each other. Thus, the purpose of this study is to:

> *propose a comprehensive framework to structure work motivation literature in case of temporary organizations.*

We have structured this chapter in the following way. The first section, Positioning the Research Study, justifies our approach to consider multiple theoretical lenses to explain work motivation in case of temporary organizations. We draw from the works of Sandberg and Alvesson (2011) who offer guidelines to develop a research problem for such studies. In the second section, Theory, we briefly introduce the theories of work motivation from I/O psychology literature. While work motivation has been explained from various points of view such as the need-based theories, and cognition-based theories, we have considered the job design perspective that explains work motivation as an outcome of specific job characteristics. The third section of the chapter, Work Motivation in Temporary Organizations, is where we present the literature review from the temporary organization domain. We structure the review around the theories of work motivation identified from the I/O psychology literature. This is followed by conclusion.

Positioning the Research Study: Application Spotting and "Moving" Between the "Boxes"

Sandberg and Alvesson (2011) examine the merits of two different approaches to formulate research questions which can be useful to state the research problem. At one end of the continuum is the "gap spotting" which can include incrementally

extending an established theory or identifying significant gaps in the extant literature. Gap spotting may include confusion spotting (reconcile contradictions in the literature), neglect spotting (focusing on an underdeveloped area of research), and application spotting (identifying the shortcomings of a theory in a specific area and providing an alternative perspective to further our understanding of that theory). The purpose of such research is to reinforce or moderately revise the existing theories. On the other end of the continuum is "problematization." In this, the research questions are posed such that they challenge the underlying assumptions of existing theories in a significant way. It may include questioning minor assumptions pertaining to the theory to overtly question the assumptions of the entire field.

In a follow-up paper, Alvesson and Sandberg (2014) discuss the merits and demerits of research problems that have become extremely "contextualized," specific to (one) field without being relevant to other fields. Alvesson and Sandberg call such research studies as boxed-in research, where the research study can be limited or restricted by perspective (conforming and confining to specific theories/perspectives), domains (confining to specific topics without considering the cross-discipline influence on such topics), and methods (specific research methods being more prominently used than others to investigate research problems). Alvesson and Sandberg further present approaches to overcome these restrictions in three different ways—box changing, where the researcher has a primary point of reference (such as a theory) and the researcher considers new theories, ideas, or methods that significantly change the central elements in the existing thinking; box jumping—requires significant thematic, methodological, and theoretical considerations by embracing multiple theoretical, thematic, or methodological perspective by simultaneously working with two or more thematic or methodological perspectives; and box transcendence—working with very broad research questions that may not be confined to a particular field.

To explain the positioning of our research study, we consider these two criteria: (a) gap spotting versus problematization (which lie at the extreme ends of a continuum), and (b) box changing, box jumping, and box transcendence (which lie on a continuum).

The purpose of this research study is to demonstrate an approach to structure the literature on work motivation in temporary organizations by considering multiple theoretical perspectives. Our point of departure for this study is the lack of "consolidated" theoretical corpus. While we are not challenging the theoretical assumptions, we are extending the current theories on work motivation from I/O psychology literature to the realm of temporary organizations. This approach relates to "application spotting" as described by Sandberg and Alvesson (2011). In adopting this approach, it is obvious that we are considering multiple theoretical perspectives simultaneously while not confining the study to a particular research identity. This approach may connote to "box jumping" (as described by Alvesson and Sandberg (2014)).

The above discussion on the positioning of our research paper is summarized in Fig. 52.1.
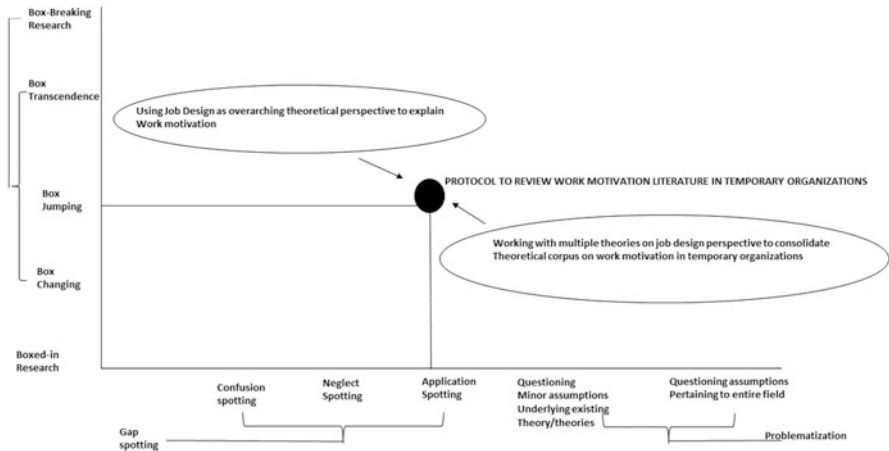
Fig. 52.1 Positioning the current research paper

Theory

There has been growing interest on what motivates project workers recently. Although the state of research is predominantly normative (connoting to practices), literature review reveals that these practices connote to major theories of work motivation. Various theoretical lenses such as socio-technical perspective (c.f., Schmidt & Adams, 2008), scientific management, job characteristic model (c.f., Beecham, Baddoo, Hall, Robinson, & Sharp, 2008; Björklund, 2010; Mahoney & Lederer, 2006), and intrinsic motivation perspective have been used to explain work motivation in temporary organizations. Table 52.1 summarizes the job design theories considered for the study and the corresponding basis for the work motivation item drawn from the theory.

Work Motivation in Temporary Organizations

We reiterate here that the focus of our chapter is to propose a theoretical framework to explain work motivation in temporary organizations. Therefore, specific characteristics of motivating nature of work are not discussed elaborately. However, we will present the major literature from temporary organizations that describe specific job characteristics which are motivating in the context of temporary organizations. We conducted an extensive literature review that is structured along the major theories of work motivation discussed above. We considered SCOPUS database to identify extant literature on work motivation in temporary organizations. In consonance with the purpose of this study, we restricted our review to scholarly articles that focused their discussion on the job design perspective to work motivation

Table 52.1 Job design theories of work motivation

Theory	Premise	Basis for work motivation item
Scientific management (Taylor, 1911)	Best way to perform each task in order to improve worker's productivity. This was done by emphasizing on employee supervision, and reward performance through financial incentives (piece-rate incentive system)	Financial incentives related to productivity (performance)
Tavistock studies on socio-technical systems approach (Trist & Bamforth, 1951; Cherns 1976)	Distinguishing the social and the technical subsystem of the organization and optimizing these subsystems to achieve individual and organizational objectives; job characteristics proposed for autonomous work groups	Principles of socio-technical systems—autonomy, task identity, meaningfulness of task, feedback on performance
Walker and Guest (1952)	Job redesign through job rotation and job enlargement	Employees required to undertake a variety of tasks through job rotation and job enlargement
Two-factor theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959)	Determinants of employee satisfaction are intrinsic (called *motivation factors*) while those of dissatisfaction are extrinsic (called *hygiene factors*)	Nature of work itself as an intrinsic motivator for the employee; job security as an extrinsic motivator
Job enrichment (Paul Jr, Robertson, & Herzberg, 1969; Paul & Robertson, 1970)	Greater scope for personal achievement by providing more challenging and responsible work	Challenging nature of work, autonomy at work, and providing a sense of achievement to the employee
Job characteristic model (Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1976)	Job characteristics leading to critical psychological states which in turn lead to individual and organizational outcomes; skill variety, task identity, and task significance lead to experienced meaningfulness at work; autonomy at work leads to greater experienced responsibility; feedback from work leads to more knowledge of the results	Five core job characteristics proposed—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback

Table 52.1 (continued)

Theory	Premise	Basis for work motivation item
Redundancy of functions (Emery & Emery, 1976)	Proposed the idea of "industrial democracy" through creation of project groups (cutting across the organization's hierarchy), and suggested psychological requirements for the employees who are a part of such arrangement	Creation of groups within the organization is a precursor to project-based organizations
		Freedom to participate in decisions that affect their work activity. A chance to learn on the job and go on learning, optimal variety, mutual support, and respect of their work colleagues, a socially meaningful task
Demand control mode (Karasek, 1979)	Brings forward to main propositions related to autonomy and challenging work. High job demand and low job control lead to perceptions of the job being strenuous; jobs in which demand and control are high lead to perceptions of personal growth, learning, and well-being	Challenging nature of work, autonomy at work
Resource allocation perspective (Naylor, Pritchard, & Ilgen, 1980); distal motivation (Kanfer, 1990)	The choice to allocate resources to a particular task or a goal. This in turn depends on how valued are the outcomes to the individual and the benefits derived when compared to the efforts expended	Personal growth, and job enrichment (autonomy at work)
Job performance (Campbell, 1990)	Specific task and non-task behaviors at work that affect employee's performance; highlights the relation between job characteristics and performance	Communication and collegiality among group members are specific task behaviors that lead to performance
Extension to job characteristic model (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006)	In addition to the five core job dimensions, three types of autonomy (work scheduling autonomy, work method autonomy, decision-making autonomy); knowledge motivation (job complexity, information processing, skill variety, and specialization); social work (social support, interdependence-initiated interaction, feedback from others); contextual characteristics (ergonomics, physical demands, work conditions, and use of equipment)	Autonomy at work
		Five core job dimensions
		Task variety, skill variety, feedback from others, feedback from work itself, access to work-specific information, informal communication

(in temporary organizations). The key strings used were "job design" and "project management"; "job design" and "temporary organization"; "job design" and "work motivation"; and "project management." Articles from peer-reviewed journals, articles in press, conference proceedings, and book chapters were considered.

The literature on work motivation in temporary organizations, though "sporadic" in terms of not being able to offer integrative underlying theoretical lenses to explain motivating job characteristics, has been fairly extensive. Various facets of job such as financial incentives linked to performance (c.f., Armstrong, 2003; Rose & Manley, 2010, grounded in scientific management studies (Taylor, 1911)), task identity, task meaningfulness, and feedback on performance (c.f., Andersen, 2010; Schmidt & Adams, 2008) drawn from Tavistock Studies on socio-technical systems perspective (Cherns, 1976; Trist & Bamforth, 1951; Walker & Guest, 1952), task variety (c.f., Hiemgartner, Tiede, & Windl, 2011; Sieler et al., 2012), grounded in socio-technical perspective (Walker & Guest, 1952), work as intrinsically motivating, and job security as extrinsic motivator (c.f., Mahoney & Lederer, 2006; Parker, Wall, & Cordery, 2001; Schmidt & Adams, 2008), drawn from Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman's two-factor theory (1959), task significance (c.f., Badir, Buechel, & Tucci, 2012; Procaccino, Verner, & Lorenzet, 2006; Schmidt & Adams, 2008) drawn from studies on job enrichment (Paul Jr et al., 1969; Paul & Robertson, 1970), skill variety, and task identity (Ling & Loo, 2015; Mahoney & Lederer, 2006), autonomy at work (c.f., Leung, Chan, & Dondyu, 2011), drawn from demand control model (Karasek, 1979; job characteristic model, Hackman & Oldham, 1976), personal growth and job enrichment (c.f., Li, Bingham, & Umphress, 2007, grounded in Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen's resource allocation perspective, 1980), communication and collegiality between the project actors (c.f., Beecham et al., 2008; Nesheim & Smith, 2015; Zika-Viktorsson, Sundtrsom, & Engwall, 2006), grounded in distal motivation theory (Campbell, 1990; Kanfer, 1990), and access to work-related information, and informal communication among project actors (c.f., Björklund, 2010; Ling & Loo, 2015; Turner & LloydWalker, 2008), drawn from Morgeson and Humphrey's extended job characteristic model (2006) (Fig. 52.2).

Future Direction

This chapter is a part of the larger research study that investigates the role of work motivation on project success. We hypothesize that a project worker's commitment to the organization and profession mediates the relationship between work motivation and project success. In line with this research which requires a "construction" of our reality of work motivation and how it affects the project outcomes, while at the same time acknowledging that a certain reality exists independent of our knowledge, we adopt realism as our epistemological stance. Thus, we use mixed research methods, employing qualitative research techniques such as focus group

Fig. 52.2 Mapping literature to theories

interviews of project managers, and project management academicians to refine the operational definitions of our variables, and hypothesize the relationship between the variables. We use empirical approach, conducting a survey of project workers to test our hypotheses.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we build an interaction between established theories of work design from I/O psychology literature and those from the knowledge field of temporary organizations. It may be important to state that we are not merely "borrowing" literature from industrial/organization psychology and "domesticating" it to "fit" into the knowledge field of temporary organizations. Rather, we have genuinely attempted to build an interaction between the two domains of I/O psychology and temporary organizations by critically analyzing the theories and structuring the literature around these theories. It is expected that our work will lead to a comprehensive conceptualization of work motivation in temporary organizations that is grounded in multiple theoretical perspectives, and studies of similar nature will be undertaken in the future.

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