

Motivational Factors in International Nongovernmental Organizations in Vietnam

Nhung An and Ayi Gavriel Ayayi

Abstract The paper studies motivation factors of employees working in eight international nongovernmental organizations in Vietnam. We find, using the six factor work extrinsic and intrinsic motivation scale (Tremblay et al. in *Can J Behav Sci* 41:213–226, 2009) based on the self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan in *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. Plenum, New York, 1985), that employees are most influenced by intrinsic motivation. We also find that autonomous regulations have higher impact than controlled regulations. Additionally, we find that external regulation plays more important motivational role in these organizations than introjected regulation. Overall, these findings tend to provide insights for the managers of international nongovernmental organizations in Vietnam on how to attract and retain talents.

Keywords Motivational factors · NGOs · Employees' retention
Vietnam

1 Introduction

There were about 820 INGOs currently operating in Vietnam according to the 2015 statistics of the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM), a government body which is responsible for relations with INGOs, mobilizing aid and facilitating activities of INGOs in Vietnam. Most of them come from Western Europe, North America, and Asia-Pacific region. The main areas those INGOs operate in are

N. An

USAID Vietnam GIG Program—Chemonics International, Level 6, TNR Building,
115 Tran Hung Dao street, Hoan Kiem District, Hanoi, Vietnam
e-mail: anhongnhung@yahoo.com

A. G. Ayayi (✉)

Department of Finance and Economics, Université du Québec, 3351 Boulevard Des Forges,
C.P. 500, Trois Rivières, Québec G9A 5H7, Canada
e-mail: ayi.ayayi@uqtr.ca

health care, poverty reduction and hunger elimination, education, etc. In Vietnam, the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) is responsible for relations with INGOs and for mobilizing aid. PACCOM works closely with INGOs both at the central level and in all 63 provinces and centrally administered cities to facilitate foreign NGOs' activities in Vietnam. They also act as a focal point between INGOs and their Vietnamese counterparts, including ministries, central agencies and institutions, and local authorities. The size of INGOs can range from one staff (whose role is to maintain the legal status of INGO office in Vietnam) to few hundreds. On average, an INGO has close to 20 staff, including both expat and local employees. It can be seen that INGO sector is providing a lot of jobs in the labor market. It gives people the chance to contribute to the development of the country through various development funds, projects, and programs, while being paid to do so. As any other work sectors, INGO sector needs to analyze and understand its strengths and weaknesses to stay competitive in the labor market so as to attract and retain talents to enhance their maximum performance. In order to ensure the optimal performance of the organization, work motivation for employees, it is considered that work motivation is one of the most important momentums. However, little has been studied on the factors that bring motivation for employees working in the NGOs in Vietnam though the subject has been studied thoroughly a lot in other sectors and/or in other countries. The present study therefore aims at analyzing the motivations of the employees in INGOs in Vietnam, in order to determine which factors bring the best performance for employees, so as to help human resource managers in these organizations to attract and retain talents.

Looking back to the aforementioned definition of Morris (2000) of NGO, one difference between INGOs in Vietnam to other country is that while people in INGOs in other countries tend to work as volunteers in their organizations (Morris 2000; Lewis 2009), in Vietnam, it is observed that almost all INGOs offer paid jobs to employees. Moreover, although few surveys have been carried out to compare salary among sectors in Vietnam, it has also been stated that attractive factors of employment in INGOs can be listed as (1) multicultural working environment; (2) modern, professional working style, and (3) good pay (NGOs—Co hoi lam viec 2012). This is a fundamental difference which can bring compelling arguments to the hypotheses whether traditional tangible motivators such as compensation, benefit, and working condition can be seen as the most important motivation factors in nonprofit INGOs in Vietnam.

In order to explore such motivation factors and identify the significance as well as the level of impact of each factor, the study used the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) (Tremblay et al. 2009) based on the self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan 1985) as theoretical foundation. According to WEIMS, work extrinsic and intrinsic motivation includes six factors: intrinsic motivation (IM), integrated regulation (IN), identified regulation (ID), introjected regulation (IT), external regulation (EX), and amotivation (AM).

Methodology approach of the research was quantitative research. Data was collected from interviewing 71 employees from eight INGOs in Hanoi, Vietnam,

in 2016. Results show that the most important factor for employees in INGOs in Vietnam was IM. Next in order of importance were IN, ID, EX, and IT. AM played the minimal role, which is a good sign for INGO job sector.

In Sect. 2 below, we will provide an overview of the previous literature about the motivation of employees and the theory we used as a foundation for this study. Section 3 will present the method used to collect and analyze data. Section 4 will analyze data collected, present, and discuss findings. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2 Literature Review

2.1 *Classical Theories of Motivation*

Motivation subject has been discussed a lot in the literature. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow 1943) suggests that everyone is motivated when their five basic kinds of needs are satisfied. These needs are physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. These needs are hierarchical, which are arranged in an order that can be satisfied from externally (physiological and safety needs) to internally (higher-order needs). Though being greatly recognized in the world, this theory has been argued that people's needs do not always follow hierarchy like that, real-life is much messier than this theory. Little evidence from researches proved that people's needs follow that hierarchy as what is suggested by Maslow and that when people satisfy their need in one level, the need in the next level will motivate them to perform and work hard. Moreover, people may seek to meet multiple need level all at once.

Herzberg (Herzberg et al. 1959) concluded that job satisfiers are related to job content (labeled as motivation factors) and job dissatisfiers are allied to job context (labeled as hygiene factors). The hygiene factors, which are mostly concerned with the work environment, mean basic needs do not give motivation but merely create a conducive work environment. There would be no dissatisfaction among workers when basic needs are fulfilled, but it does not motivate them or give them satisfaction; it only removes dissatisfaction. These factors can be related to the first three externally satisfied needs of Maslow's theory—physiological, safety, and social. The motivation factors are the ones that when fulfilled would give employees satisfaction such as achievement, recognition, or the work itself. Again, these factors can be related to the two internally satisfied needs of the Maslow's hierarchy—esteem needs and self-actualization needs. This compatibility of Herzberg's Theory and the Hierarchy of Needs proves that Herzberg's Theory is different from Maslow's only in the method of categorization. Herzberg recognizes that true motivation comes from within a person and not from the environment or external factors.

From the manager's point of view about motivation, McGregor (1960) founded "Theory X and Theory Y" which analyzes how leaders perceived their employees

in different ways, either that they are lazy, dislike the work, and prefer to be led or that they are self-motivated, capable of taking responsibilities. In Theory X, McGregor believed that by nature people are lazy and work as little as possible. He also believed that man does not have ambition, is resistant to change, is not willing to take responsibility, and prefers to be led. If the managers do not motivate, control, and direct them, they will become passive to the organizational needs and reluctant to take responsibility (McGregor 1960). As employees can only be motivated by good pay and security, it can be said that motivation comes from external factors. On the contrary, Theory Y suggested that by nature people are enthusiastic and ambitious. If they seem to be passive, it is due to organizational management and structure. People's potential for development, their motivation, and their capability for taking responsibility are in fact present naturally in each of them and not something that managers put there. The managers' responsibility is to focus on creating a creative and positive organizational structure and environment, in order to encourage open communication, innovation, participative roles, and recognition (McGregor 1960). Similarity to the concept of higher needs, the self-actualization and esteem needs in the Maslow's Theory, it can be said that motivation comes from internal factors.

2.2 Contemporary Theories of Motivation

While Maslow and Herzberg developed their theories based on internal needs of individual, expectancy theory (Vroom 1964) argued that a person will act in a certain way based on their expectation of a given outcome or based on the attractiveness of that outcome to that person.

The result of these three factors is motivation. This is the driving force that leader can utilize to direct his team to complete an objective. When an employee wants to develop in his job, promotion will be of high valence for that person. If an employee believes that his well-performed work will be appreciated by everyone, it means that this employee has high expectancy. However, if the employee knows that the company will recruit people from outside to fill in the vacant manager position but not promote from internal human resource, that person will have low instrumentality and therefore will be difficult to be promoted to work better.

This theory would be valid if the managers of organization rewarded his staff for performance but not for any other factors. Otherwise, the theory is only idealistic and could only help explain why a lot of employees in organization lose their motivation and effort in performing their work.

Equity theory of motivation (Adams 1963) proposed that motivation can be affected by the perception of fairness in social interactions of an individual. Compared to others, people want to be fairly compensated for their contributions. A person's beliefs regarding what is fair and what is unfair can affect their motivation, attitudes, and behaviors. The equity theory helps explain why high paid

union members go on strike when no one else but members understand why and why millionaire athletes feel they are underpaid and do not feel they are making enough money.

The strengths of this theory are (1) it can help managers accurately predict behaviors of employees, (2) it makes practical sense as it is reasonable to assume that most people do compare “their inputs and outcomes relative to others” (Redmond 2009), and (3) it can fit with other theories (particularly the expectancy theory). For example, employees can use the equity theory to determine if inequity has occurred, and if so, they can use the expectancy theory to act upon the inequity. However, one of the main weaknesses of this theory is that it has little practical value. Therefore, it serves as an explanation after the fact better than as a prediction factor of employee’s behavior.

Self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan 1985): The theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was developed by Porter and Lawler (1968). According to Porter and Lawler, intrinsic motivation involves people doing an activity because they find it interesting and derive spontaneous satisfaction from the activity itself. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation requires an instrumentality between the activity and some separable consequences such as tangible or verbal rewards, so satisfaction comes not from the activity itself but rather from the extrinsic consequences to which the activity leads. The theory advocates managers to create working environment with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in order to bring total job satisfaction.

This theory generated a lot of researches later in order to refine its approach. Noteworthy research was then developed by Deci and Ryan (1980), arguing in cognitive evaluation theory (CET) that tangible extrinsic rewards such as salary, deadlines, surveillance, and evaluation can be of detrimental to intrinsic motivation. Although this theory was supported by a lot of researches, it still reveals some challenges and problems which set a foundation for Ryan, Deci, and Conell to formulate self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan 1985; Ryan and Deci 2000).

SDT describes a self-determination continuum ranging from completely lacks of motivation (AM) to constant self-determination (IM). Between these two ends are types of extrinsic motivation. The first type is *EX*, which means that “doing an activity only to obtain a reward” (Tremblay et al. 2009). Then comes *IT*, which means that behavior functions to avoid negative feelings and maintain self-esteem. Next is *ID*, behavior is more autonomous of which people accept as their own values. *IN* is the regulation which are conformed to one’s self in accordance with their own values. In this form, motivation is most internalized so it is called autonomous.

According to SDT, intrinsic factors bring the most positive motivation, consequences and create full attention and effort of people. Then comes integrated and identified regulations. Introjected and external regulations bring negative results and amotivation causes the most negative consequences, which may “include counterproductive performance and employee withdrawal” (Tremblay et al. 2009).

2.3 *Conceptual Model*

Being the most holistic theory of motivation, SDT has been selected to be the theoretical foundation of many researches of motivation especially in nonprofit domains “such as education, health care, work, parenting, religion, sustainability, psychotherapy, and sport/exercise contexts” (Ryan 2009). This is because when it comes to motivation researches, before the launch of SDT, CET was widely utilized until it revealed its limitation in terms of promoting performance and satisfaction in work setting. SDT inherited CET in the concept of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, but it provides more comprehensive view in terms of extrinsic motivation. The following content will provide a close-up to how SDT was supported or criticized in the recent literature.

Intrinsic motivational factors: It has been widely supported in the literature that this plays a key role in motivating employees in both general setting and NGO setting. More specifically, Tippet and Kluvers (2009) have emphasized in their research on employee motivation in Australia nonprofit organizations the importance of intrinsic motivational factors “in both the presence of an employee bonus scheme and in its absence”. Their study also revealed that in Australian NPOs people are “motivated by noneconomic rewards” and they love to witness the success of their clients, which is a form of competence needs of SDT.

Then, Schepers et al. (2005) in their article on how employees of nonprofit sector are motivated also stated that important motivators in educational setting are affiliation, altruism (needs of relatedness), and personal growth (need of competence). Their article also confirmed that autonomy is positively related to the work quality of people.

Moreover, besides the feeling of doing something of great significance, value congruence was found by Ernst and Valvanne (2012) in their research on employee motivation in Finnish social businesses as the most crucial factor for the employees. Having the same purpose of serving the society and improving the lives of the poor as NGO sector, social businesses were found to bring most motivation to their employees when their values match with the personal values of their people. This is because in that case people find their work easier “as they do not have to think on which basis they have to make their decisions. They work according to their own values and in doing so they also represent the company values.” This helps people to achieve their needs for autonomy and relatedness.

Considering intrinsic work motivational factors from a different angle, Kummerfeldt (2011) in his study of job satisfaction, performance, and retention strategies for volunteers in an NPO has found some important factors that leaders of the organization could do to improve job satisfaction, retain volunteers, and bring high performance. “Communication of the mission and vision of the nonprofit organization” is one important factor among those. This can be seen as a factor that satisfies the need for relatedness of people working in the organization. When vision and mission are well communicated, it improves people’s belief in the program and helps people feel they are a part of the organization. On the other way

round, cognitive, instrumental, and prestige work values had significant effects on informational communication satisfaction as according to a study by Jalalkamali et al. (2016). Moreover, they find that communication informational and relational communication satisfaction are significantly related to both dimensions of employees contextual and task job performance.

In short, it can be stated that the literature has been consistent in supporting the theory that intrinsic motivational factors bring positive impacts to the people working in NGO job sector.

Extrinsic motivational factors: While it is quite clearly proved that strong motivational factors of employees working in NGOs come intrinsically, the extrinsic motivators cannot be found positive easily. Most of the researches supported the theory that extrinsic motivation can be detrimental to the intrinsic motivation in work setting. However, there were also researches delivered the opposite result.

On one extreme side, it has been evidenced in the literature by Shirom et al. (1999) in a research on the effects of pay systems on blue-collar employee's emotional distress in Israel. Although it was not studied in NGO sector, the result was still a surprise when it found that "all types of performance-contingent pay systems exerted a negative influence on employee's somatic complaints and depression" and that pay for performance program may be "hazardous" to employee's "psychological well-being." Additionally, Gagne and Deci (2005) also confirmed in their article that when NPOs introduced its "merit pay programs," it decreases the autonomy of its workers and thus indicates that financial rewards can weaken intrinsic motivation.

In a medium level of impact, Tippet and Kluvers (2009) stated that extrinsic motivation does play a role, but less important than intrinsic factors. In his study, the respondents to his questionnaire remained "ambivalent" to their satisfaction of the financial reward, which can be interpreted as not the most important factor, but cannot be seen as detrimental to the intrinsic factors as stated in the theories. This result corroborated by Speers and Andrea (2012) who contend that extrinsic factors, referred to as "hard, tangible variables (such as salary, benefits, and vacation time)" has less influence on employees' motivation and remain a neutral impact. In another study, Alam et al. (2012) show that in Dhaka urban slums a combination of financial and nonfinancial (social prestige and positive community feedback) incentives play a positive significant role in the improvement of volunteer community health workers.

On the opposite extreme, one can find the positive tangible extrinsic motivators in employee's motivation in the research of Păcesilăm (2014) identifying ways to motivate employees in NGO sector, including long-term employees, members, and volunteers in Romania. The conducted interviews revealed that "classical aspirations (high wages or other financial incentives, satisfactory working conditions) represent a priority" beside other intrinsic motivations. As for the intangible extrinsic motivators, Balthasar and Budiman (2015) show that organizational culture is positively and significantly influencing employee performance, strategic leadership, and job satisfaction. The influence of organizational commitment

toward job satisfaction is positive and significant, but not toward employee performance. The influence of strategic leadership is positive and significant toward employee performance and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is positively and significantly influencing employee performance. This can be understood that “classical aspirations” or financial rewards and external influencers or extrinsic motivations have higher priority in employees’ list of motivators in comparison with other nonfinancial rewards.

In a nutshell, the reviewed literature has shown that a lot of researches have been conducted to show how people could be motivated in general work setting. However, there is still a lack of studies identifying motivational factors in non-governmental or nonprofit sector, let alone in Vietnamese context. In the few researches reviewed above on the subject in NGO context, intrinsic factors have been well proved to be the main motivators for people working in the organization, while extrinsic factors remained a controversial subject to be determined to which extent they bring motivation to employees.

Within the frame of this paper where only international NGOs were studied, some factors that may influence the motivation of INGO workers have to be identified. Firstly, most of INGOs in Vietnam acquire full time, long-term, and paid employees, while in other countries, volunteers are the main workers in those organizations. Secondly, INGOs in Vietnam operate under the establishment of field offices or representative offices, which mostly adopt human resource and operational policies from their head offices, which are normally based in developed countries. This results in several following factors: (1) compensation and benefit package in INGOs are better than the average range of general employment sectors in Vietnam and (2) working condition must follow the standards set by home offices from developed countries and therefore is better than that in local organizations in a developing country like Vietnam. Lastly, the diversified multicultural environment brings a lot of advantages for its workers such as better cultural awareness, better knowledge, and exposure to international job opportunities. All these extrinsic factors could bring additional working motivation to INGO employees beside intrinsic factors.

Therefore, in order to explore and identify all possible motivation factors in INGOs in the context of Vietnam, it has been found helpful to test all six types of motivation in SDT to see how they work in the context of the present study.

3 Methodology

3.1 Hypotheses

This paper aims to find the answer to the following question: “Among six motivation factors measured by WEIMS (intrinsic motivation (IM), integrated regulation (IN), identified regulation (ID), introjected regulation (IT), external regulation

(EX), and amotivation (AM)), which factor plays the most important role and what is the level of impact of other factors in motivating employees in international nongovernmental organization in Vietnam?” In order to answer this question more easily, we came up with the following hypotheses based on the literature review conducted in the previous part:

- H1: IM has the highest influence on employees in INGOs in Vietnam than other motivation factors.
- H2: Within the extrinsic motivation, the autonomous regulations (IN and ID) have greater influence than the controlled regulations (IT and EX) on employee’s motivation in INGOs in Vietnam.
- H3: Within the controlled regulations (IT and EX), EX has greater influence than IT on employee motivation in INGOs in Vietnam.

3.2 Data Collection Method

In the research strategy of this paper, a questionnaire was used in order to describe the general motivation factors of employees having working experience in INGO sector, classified by age, position, and years of working experience. The questionnaire “*Why do you do your work?*” designed and used by Tremblay and his colleagues in their research “Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale: Its Value for Organizational Psychology Research” (2009) has been asked for permission and allowed to be utilized for this research (see Appendix). The questionnaire includes two parts. Part 1 (added to the original questionnaire design by the researcher) asked about some demographic information, including age, work position, years of experience, and service length in INGO sector. Part 2 included 18 items, divided into six subscales, corresponding to the six types of motivation in SDT (IM, IN, ID, IT, EX, and AM). Participants were asked to indicate their answers on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (does not correspond at all) to 7 (corresponds exactly) expressing the extent to which the items represent the reasons they are presently involved in their work.

3.3 Method of Sampling for Questionnaire Survey

Participants of the survey were first identified from the network of the researcher. They were working in eight different INGOs in Hanoi, namely Chemonics International, Vietnam, Management Sciences for Health, Pact Vietnam, Family Health International 360, Netherlands Development Organization SNV, CARE International, Save the Children, Winrock International. These 8 INGOs out of total 820 INGOs in the country represent less than 1% of INGO population. As the main local counterparts of INGOs are ministries and central authorities, which all base in

the capital city Hanoi of Vietnam, this explains why the eight INGO samples are all from Hanoi.

Snowball sampling method was utilized. After primary participants were contacted, they were asked to identify more members from their own organization and from their wider INGO network. Those second-layered contacts were also asked to identify further participants from their own networks too. This method kept going until the survey reached its deadline and the sample obtained its desirable and manageable size.

This questionnaire was piloted in nine employees of an INGO in Vietnam. The initial results were analyzed to test the reliability of the responses and to see if questions needed any adjustment. After that the questionnaire was disseminated during personal visits to four different INGO offices of four primary contacts in Hanoi. In these visits, about 40 participants answered the printed questionnaires, meaning that those answers came from four primary participants and 36 secondary participants from four INGOs. Soft copy of the questionnaire was also sent to 25 other primary contacts working in other four INGOs by emails and Facebook. Nineteen of them returned the answers. The researcher also received 12 responses by email from secondary contacts, which were identified by the snowball sampling method. The organizations of these secondary contacts were difficult to be identified as we did not include demographic question regarding participant's name and organization's name, in order to ensure the privacy of the participants. In total, there were 71 people from eight INGOs responding to the questionnaire and all of the responses were valid.

3.4 Data Analysis Method

To start analyzing data, all of the results from filled questionnaire were input in an excel spreadsheet. From excel file, data was transformed into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.0, a program widely used for statistical analysis of quantitative data in social sciences. Two statistical tests were generated from this program to facilitate the analysis of the data: (1) descriptive statistics and (2) one-way analysis of variance or one-way ANOVA.

Descriptive statistical analysis was utilized to describe the characteristics of the survey sample. According to Saunders et al. (2009), people usually describe the "impression of values" of the quantitative data that "could be seen as common, middling, or average" and those measures are called "central tendency." Among the three ways measuring central tendency (mode, mean, median), we are going to use the *mean measure* to describe quantitative data of this research because it is the most frequently used measure in descriptive statistics and because it works well with numerical data (Saunders et al. 2009). The one-way analysis of variance

(ANOVA) was used to determine the difference in motivational factors scores among different age groups (age), between staff and manager-level respondents (position) and among groups with different years of experience (length of service).

4 Findings and Discussions

4.1 General Motivation—Findings and Discussions

In this part, the results of the questionnaire were presented and discussed. In the questionnaire, respondents indicated the level of relevance of the statements of their work motivation by assigning a score from 1 to 7 to each item. The higher the score was, the more relevant that statement was to their work. For the purpose of the analysis, following Tremblay et al. (2009), we group the 16 items of the questionnaire into the 6 types of motivation factor in Table 1 to facilitate the analysis of the results. To that end, in the rest of the section, we present the results and analyze them step-by-step based on the six motivation factors.

Before this detailed analysis, we provide throughout the descriptive statistics and the overview of the outcomes of the results.

4.2 An Overview of the Results

As the survey questionnaire was designed basing on the six types of motivation by WEIMS scale, it is able to see the descriptive statistics about each type of motivation. Descriptive statistics determined for each type of motivation were mean and standard deviation. Table 2 provides a full summary of this descriptive statistics.

Results show that, at the first glance, the factor that created the best motivation to employees of INGOs is IM, which yielded the highest mean of 5.16. This finding confirms the first hypothesis stating that intrinsic motivation has the highest influence on employees in INGOs in Vietnam than other motivation factors. It is also in line with Gagne and Deci (2005) who found that IM is the prominent and dominant motivation factor among other factors.

According to SDT, IM “generally applies to activities that people find interesting, optimally challenging, or aesthetically pleasing. Activities, which are not experienced as such, work for example, are unlikely to be performed unless there is, to some extent, an extrinsic reason for doing them” (Deci and Ryan 2000). This can help explain the reason why intrinsic factor brings the most motivation to INGO employee according to the above result. From observation of the researcher, INGOs have never created boring, routine jobs. On the contrary, people working in INGOs always have to use their creativity to find ways to obtain the organization’s development missions. Different mission in different country or different government counterpart would require a different approach, hence no molded solution to be applicable for all.

Table 1 Interpretation of questionnaire items

Type of motivation	Item no. in questionnaire	Description of item
Intrinsic motivation (IM)	Item 4	Because I derive much pleasure from learning new things
	Item 8	For the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges
	Item 15	For the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks
Integrated regulation (IN)	Item 5	Because it has become a fundamental part of who I am
	Item 10	Because it is part of the way in which I have chosen to live my life
	Item 18	Because this job is a part of my life
Identified regulation (ID)	Item 1	Because this is the type of work I chose to do to attain a certain lifestyle
	Item 7	Because I chose this type of work to attain my career goals
	Item 14	Because it is the type of work I have chosen to attain certain important objectives
Introjected regulation (IT)	Item 6	Because I want to succeed at this job, if not I would be very ashamed of myself
	Item 11	Because I want to be very good at this work, otherwise I would be very disappointed
	Item 13	Because I want to be a “winner” in life
External regulation (EX)	Item 2	For the income it provides me
	Item 9	Because it allows me to earn money
	Item 16	Because this type of work provides me with security
Amotivation (AM)	Item 3	I ask myself this question, I don’t seem to be able to manage the important tasks related to this work
	Item 12	I don’t know why, we are provided with unrealistic working conditions
	Item 17	I don’t know, too much is expected of us

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of quantitative survey

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Intrinsic motivation (IM)	71	2.67	7.00	5.16	1.14
Integrated regulation (IN)	71	2.00	7.00	5.01	1.27
Identified regulation (ID)	71	2.33	7.00	5.02	1.17
Introjected regulation (IT)	71	1.33	7.00	3.75	1.34
External regulation (EX)	71	1.67	7.00	4.93	1.09
Amotivation (AM)	71	1.00	6.33	1.89	0.98

Secondly, for the other two autonomous extrinsic motivation types, i.e., IN and ID, the means are 5.01 and 5.02, respectively, which are very similar. The reasons for their second and third highest results in the survey could be predicted from (1) the characteristics of the working environment that is autonomous supportive and (2) individual's autonomous orientation among the different causality orientations (Gagne and Deci 2005). These predictions can be supported by the fact that the majority of INGOs' rapport with local counterparts, either at central or grassroots level, has to rely on knowledge of local systems. While almost all INGOs in Vietnam are led by expatriates who have limited knowledge about local context, their working level employees are local Vietnamese. Therefore, in order to achieve the best results, leaders have no better way than creating an autonomous work climate for their employees to maximize their knowledge and develop their mastery. This is one reason for the positive result in autonomous extrinsic motivations of the survey. As for the second prediction, individual autonomy orientation "reflects a general tendency to experience social contexts as autonomy supportive and to be self-determined" (Gagne and Deci 2005). This can be supported by a fact that INGOs in Vietnam apply high standards in recruiting staff, especially in foreign language requirement. Naturally, those INGOs attract more people graduated from overseas, who enjoyed advanced education from developed countries characterized by self-determination, self-actualization, integration in personality. These are characteristics of autonomous causality orientation in SDT theory.

Thirdly, for the controlled motivation, i.e., the next two types of external motivation in the self-determination continuum (IT and EX), the means are 3.74 and 4.93, respectively. Same explanation can be taken from the one for the above two autonomous extrinsic types of motivation that INGOs create more autonomous work climate than a controlling one; hence people are working because of autonomous motivation more than controlled motivation. The interesting feature in this table is that external regulation brings more motivation to employees than IT. Its role in motivating people follows the other two types of autonomous motivation closely, proved by its mean at 4.93 in comparison with 5.02 and 5.01 of ID and IN, respectively. A possible explanation for this can account to a fact that INGOs in Vietnam offer relatively attractive compensation package (NGOs—*Cơ hội làm việc tại các tổ chức Phi chính phủ* 2012) which is one of the main reasons attracting and retaining people staying in the organization and doing their work.

Lastly, AM plays the least role among the six factors, with the mean of only 1.89. Its standard deviation of 0.98 is the lowest among the other motivation factors. In other words, it can be said that the answers are provided by the respondents to the three items (items 3, 12, 17) to grasp amotivation. The answers provided are closer to the mean than that of the amotivation factor.

This is explained by the fact that employees in those organizations are least impersonally oriented. According to Gagne and Deci (2005), impersonal orientation "relates to external locus of control (i.e., the belief that one cannot control

outcomes).” This cannot be the case for INGO sector, where missions and objectives are always clearly set to achieve by projects of 3–5 years. And one can only start doing their work when they see the objectives clearly and believe the outcomes are controllable.

To conclude this part, just by eyeballing the means of motivation factors, it could be pointed out that IM has the highest influence on employees in INGOs in Vietnam than other motivation factors. Autonomous extrinsic motivations, IN and ID, follow closely in terms of level of impact. Within controlled extrinsic motivations, EX plays more significant role than IT. Therefore, through this general analysis, all hypotheses of the research were supported.

In the following parts, the researcher analyzed the results from a different angle to make sure the conclusions are supported or to find out any possible missing factors in these conclusions. The respondents were then grouped by age, position, and length of experience. The six motivations of the SDT continuum would continue to be utilized in order to ensure the consistency of the overall conclusions. One-way ANOVA was used to analyze “the spread of data values, within and between groups of data by comparing means” (Saunders et al. 2009), and help determine if the differences among conditions in each group are significant. Deeper discussion about the results would also be presented to facilitate better understanding of the conclusions.

4.3 Motivation by Age—Findings and Discussions

The ANOVA Table 3 shows us that the significance levels of all six factors in different age groups were less than 5%. This indicated that there was no significant difference in scores of motivational factors among groups of different aged employees. The result would be further demonstrated by the graph below, which then facilitated a discussion about the impact of motivations to employees at different age (Fig. 1).

Overall, the IM, IN, and ID factors still play the most important roles in creating motivation for employees, while AM brings the least impact.

As for respondents aged under 30, the chart shows that their level of motivation at work is lowest in most of motivation factors. This may be illuminated by the fact that most people at this age are still busy continuing their higher education. Therefore, work maybe not their first or only priority.

For respondents aged from 31 to 35, it is shown in the chart that the means of their motivations are generally high from IM factor to ID factor and reach a prominent peak in IT regulation factor, which is characterized by “contingent self-esteem, which pressures people to behave in order to feel worthy, and ego involvement, which pressures people to behave in order to buttress their fragile ego”

Table 3 ANOVA for age

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
IM	Between groups	4.608	6	0.768	0.571	0.752
	Within groups	86.064	64	1.345		
	Total	90.672	70			
IN	Between groups	7.303	6	1.217	0.743	0.617
	Within groups	104.820	64	1.638		
	Total	112.123	70			
ID	Between groups	7.397	6	1.233	0.886	0.511
	Within groups	89.054	64	1.391		
	Total	96.451	70			
IT	Between groups	14.070	6	2.345	1.342	0.252
	Within groups	111.835	64	1.747		
	Total	125.905	70			
EX	Between groups	4.159	6	0.693	0.559	0.761
	Within groups	79.365	64	1.240		
	Total	83.524	70			
AM	Between groups	11.632	6	1.939	2.237	0.051
	Within groups	55.461	64	0.867		
	Total	67.092	70			

Motivation by age

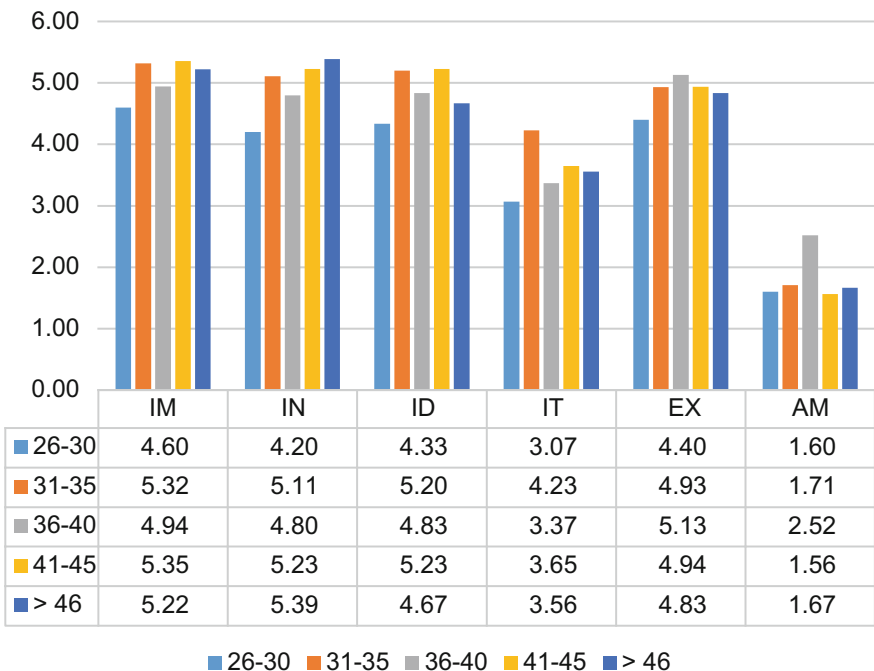


Fig. 1 Motivation by age

(Garne and Deci 2005). This finding is supportive by the following two findings in the literature review. First, internal rewards and punishment, which are characteristics of IT, have a positive role in people's tendencies toward workaholic (Stoeber et al. 2013). Second, the higher people age, the lower their scores of workaholic are (Andreassen et al. 2013). This can be interpreted as people tend to work harder when they are young, because they are more realistic. However, over time they quit working hard because they "wise up and adjust their work pattern over time because of other commitments" (Andreassen et al. 2013) and understand they cannot change the world. These two findings taken together have explained the reason why mean of introjected motivation of participants at this age reaches the highest.

At the age from 36 to 40, participants gave the highest mean result in extrinsic motivation. This may be claimed by the fact that this is the age where people care more about income to stabilize their life. This is also the age at which people start caring for health and retirement. Therefore, compensation and benefit, such as higher income as people obtaining more work experience and being promoted, health insurance, pension plans, which are characteristics of external regulation, have such high impact on their work motivation.

Another interesting finding is that, also at the age from 36 to 40, AM factor of these participants reaches a noticeable top. AM, described by having no intention to act, or impersonal causality orientation, may have suggested the cause of this type of motivation to people at this age. This is the age when their work life has been long enough to achieve a certain kind of promotion or work objectives they set in the earlier phase of their career. More often than not, in every circumstance, when objectives have been achieved, people start losing interest and switching their attention to other work goals or nonwork activities.

To sum up this part, it could be concluded from the graph and findings in this section that even though there were different level of impact of each motivation factor to each age group, general trend in each age group was still consistent with the general conclusions and that all of the hypotheses were supported.

4.4 Motivation by Position—Findings and Discussions

From the ANOVA Table 4, we can see that the significance levels of all six factors were less than 5%. This indicated that there was no significant difference in scores of motivational factors among groups of staff employees and manager employees working in INGOs in Vietnam. The graph below served to illustrate this conclusion and opened a deeper discussion on the motivation factors to the groups of staff and manager employees (Fig. 2).

Table 4 ANOVA for position

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
IM	Between groups	0.135	1	0.135	0.103	0.749
	Within groups	90.537	69	1.312		
	Total	90.672	70			
IN	Between groups	0.744	1	0.744	0.461	0.499
	Within groups	111.379	69	1.614		
	Total	112.123	70			
ID	Between groups	0.207	1	0.207	0.148	0.702
	Within Groups	96.245	69	1.395		
	Total	96.451	70			
IT	Between groups	2.711	1	2.711	1.518	0.222
	Within groups	123.194	69	1.785		
	Total	125.905	70			
EX	Between groups	0.016	1	0.016	0.013	0.908
	Within groups	83.508	69	1.210		
	Total	83.524	70			
AM	Between groups	0.543	1	0.543	0.563	0.456
	Within groups	66.549	69	0.964		
	Total	67.092	70			

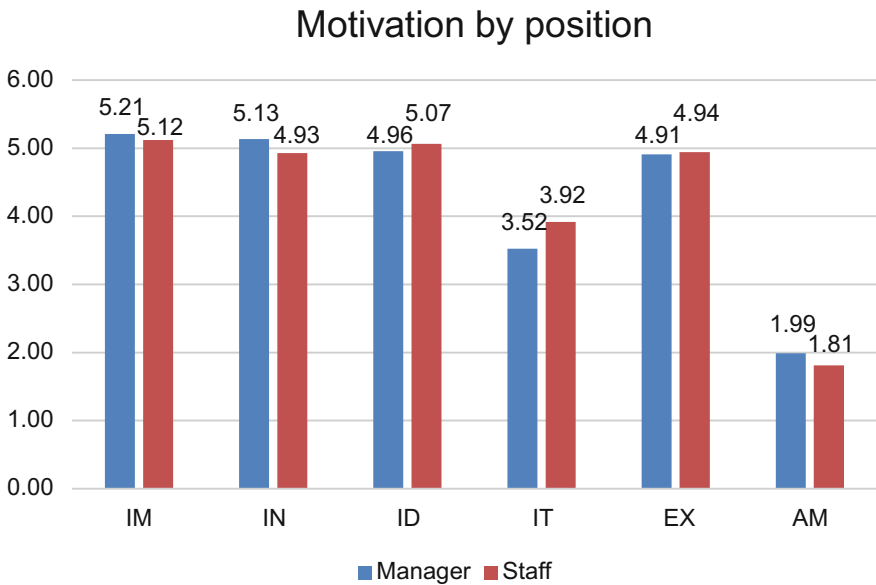


Fig. 2 Motivation by position

Findings in this section once again follow the same pattern as the one in the general findings, i.e., participants are more motivated by autonomous motivators and less by controlled ones. There are not a lot of differences in motivation level between staff and manager level, which can be supported by the literature. According to Shiva et al. (2012), “NGOs are mostly run as one-man-show supported by a handful of professionals and even fewer staff functionaries and are mostly devoid of hierarchy.” This is also true to most INGOs in Vietnam, of which offices are set up and human resources are maintained small enough to run one or two projects in a definite timeline. In such circumstances, leaders and managers, who normally lack physical or financial resources, have to “provide a kind of exemplary, selfless, and dedicated service, and develop a service-oriented culture,” which are characteristics of transformation leadership. These leaders are the ones who create visions, missions, and values of the organization. When recruiting, they make sure that “there is no mismatch between the basic values, norms, and beliefs of NGOs and those of the potential jobseekers who want to join the NGO” (Shiva et al. 2012). Acting on the same ground of values and beliefs, in a work environment that fosters the use of innovative perspectives in solving problems, it is easy to understand why there is no substantial difference in motivation level between manager and staff in these organizations.

However, taking a closer look to each motivation factor between the staff and manager categories, it could be noted that controlled motivation factors (IT and EX) had more influence on staff than manager. According to Gagne and Deci (2005), if one is motivated by controlled factors, they will act with a “sense of pressure, a sense of having to engage in the actions.” This could be explained by the fact that staff in general has less self-control than manager, due to their lack of experience and lack of autonomy at work. Therefore, they have to act under the command and follow the order of their managers. This is why they scored higher for controlled motivations than the managers.

To conclude, these findings remained consistent with results in the general conclusions; hence all hypotheses were supported.

4.5 Motivation by INGO Length of Service—Findings and Discussions

Once again, this ANOVA Table 5 presented that the significance data across all six factors on different lengths of INGO work experience was less than 0.05 meaning that there was no significant difference in scores of motivational factors among employee groups of different years of experience.

Table 5 ANOVA for employee's length of service in INGOs

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
IM	Between groups	3.797	3	1.266	0.976	0.409
	Within groups	86.874	67	1.297		
	Total	90.672	70			
IN	Between groups	11.020	3	3.673	2.434	0.072
	Within groups	101.103	67	1.509		
	Total	112.123	70			
ID	Between groups	8.074	3	2.691	2.040	0.117
	Within groups	88.377	67	1.319		
	Total	96.451	70			
IT	Between groups	10.406	3	3.469	2.012	0.121
	Within groups	115.499	67	1.724		
	Total	125.905	70			
EX	Between groups	7.184	3	2.395	2.102	0.108
	Within groups	76.339	67	1.139		
	Total	83.524	70			
AM	Between groups	0.656	3	0.219	0.221	0.882
	Within groups	66.436	67	0.992		
	Total	67.092	70			

Graph below showed us a more visible presentation of the influence of the six motivation factors to employees of different years of experience (Fig. 3).

From this angle of analysis, same level of motivation pattern was repeated but there were still some interesting findings to be discussed. Considering the first three autonomous motivation factors (IM, IN, and ID), there is a notable trend that the more time people spend with the INGO sector, the higher level they were autonomously motivated. The upward trend in motivation level starts from when people have less than 5 years of NGO experience and keeps increasing steadily until when they reach 15 years of experience. This result can be well explained by the claim that the longer people work for INGO sector, the better they internalize extrinsic motivation. In other words, the longer people work, the more interest they find in the activity, or the better they integrate value and regulation of the activity into themselves. From the different perspective, it can also be explained that people could have quitted their job and switched to other work sector if they had not found their job interesting at a certain time of their service in NGO.

Once again, these findings continued to follow the trend of impact of each motivation in the general analysis. Thus, it could be concluded that research's hypotheses were supported.

Motivation by employee's length of service

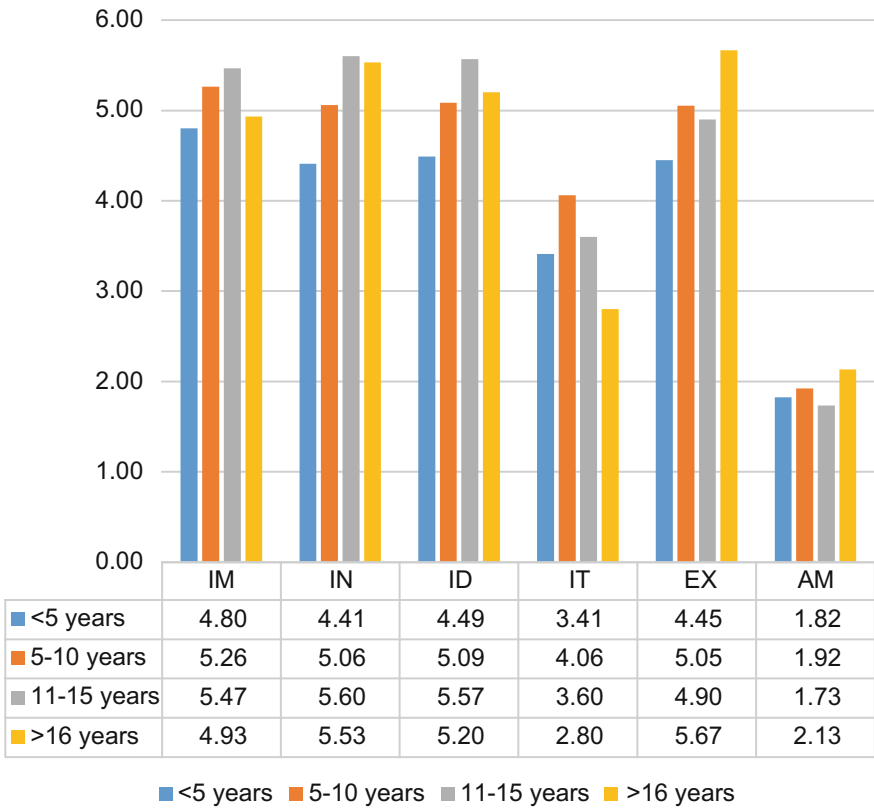


Fig. 3 Motivation by employee’s length of service in INGOs

5 Conclusions

The main purpose of this research is to explore the motivation factors of employees working in INGOs in Vietnam based on the theory of self-determination of Deci and Ryan (1985) on motivation. In order to do this, the research was designed to be conducted using quantitative method, to answer the research question: Among six motivation factors measured by WEIMS (IM, IN, ID, IT, EX, and AM), which factor plays the most important role and what is the level of impact of other factors in motivating employees in international nongovernmental organization in Vietnam?

Findings of our study suggested that the most important factor for employees in INGOs in Vietnam was IM. When the study was divided into subgroups (by age, position, and years of experience) for deeper analysis, the specific findings for each

subgroup remained consistent with that in the general group. Next in order of importance were IN, ID, EX, and IT. AM played the minimal role, which is a good sign for INGO job sector. It therefore facilitates the answer for the research question that among the six motivation factors for employees in INGOs in Vietnam, IM plays the most important role, autonomous extrinsic motivations have higher impact than controlled extrinsic motivations, and EX has higher impact than IT.

These findings supported the previous studies on the positive and utmost impacts of IM to employees (Tippet and Kluvers 2009; Schepers et al. 2005). They were also in line with findings of other studies on how important extrinsic motivation factors are (Păcesilă 2014). However, regarding EX type of extrinsic motivation, these findings were not supportive to other studies. In the current studies, it was found out that EX, specifically hard, tangible variables (such as salary, benefits, physical working environment), are not necessarily detrimental to the intrinsic motivators (Shirom et al. 1999). On the contrary, they have almost similar influence on employees' motivation as the second and third type of motivators in the SDT continuum (IN and ID). More surprisingly, they even play a prominently higher role in motivating employees in comparison with the preceding motivator in SDT continuum, the introjected regulation.

6 Contributions of Findings and Recommendations

Theoretical contributions: To the best of our knowledge, in the review of the literature on the motivation for employees in INGOs in Vietnam, this is the first study conducted in NGO sector in Vietnam. Moreover, as discussed in the literature review part of the study, according to the self-determination theory on motivation and many other studies, controlled motivation, which includes tangible rewards and evaluation, will yield poorer performance on heuristic task than autonomous motivation (Gagne and Deci 2005), decrease creativity, and diminish deep processing. Despite diversification in findings of follow-on studies, EX (hard and tangible factors) still plays from a neutral to limited role in motivating staff. The paper has proven that EX plays an equal role to some other autonomous motivators, especially in the context of INGO sector in Vietnam, where volunteer work is less popular than that in other countries, and the nature of the work is heuristic and requires a lot of creativity. The contribution of the study, therefore, is that it enriches the existing theory in the way people analyzed and concluded about EX type of motivation.

Practical contributions to HR management practices and recommendations to INGO's managers: The findings of the research have had humble yet positive contributions to the practice of HR management of INGO sector in Vietnam.

Firstly, good news for all INGOs' managers in Vietnam is that staff working in those organizations is mostly motivated by intrinsic factors. This means that people

are working for passion. With this passion, they can find joys in the nature of the work itself. This is the highest level of motivation, which brings highest and electrifying performance that all managers can expect from their staff. In order to nurture such motivation, according to STD, the first thing manager should do is to respect the autonomy of the staff and give them opportunity to master their job.

Secondly, according to the result researcher found on extrinsic autonomous motivators, managers should find ways to satisfy the three psychological needs of staff (mastery, autonomy, and relatedness) to facilitate staff to better internalize the extrinsic motivation, which would lead to better job satisfaction.

Lastly, while the literature suggested that IM is important and EX can be detrimental to IM, especially on heuristic tasks of any INGOs as Chemonics International, Vietnam, the above research results show that EX (i.e., salary, benefit, promotion, physical work environment etc.) plays no less important role in motivating staff. Managers should find out ways to build more generous and fair compensation and benefit package to retain talents. At the same time, they also need to strengthen the performance evaluation practice in order to provide staff fair, encouraging, and constructive feedback for their work.

Practical contributions to the government of Vietnam: In the reality of Vietnam, beside a lot of favorable conditions that the government creates for the INGOs, there are still some obstacles to the implementation of INGO's activities in Vietnam. Among which we can name two main hindrances. The first one is the suspicion about activities of INGOs in Vietnam, especially those that relate to democracy, human rights, and national security in the border areas. This creates lots of difficulties to INGOs in general and to their expat employees in particular. The second one relates to the issuance, extension, amendment of registration of INGOs working in Vietnam by PACCOM. In general, these procedures are too bureaucratic and require a lot of unnecessary steps and papers.

In order to facilitate the old INGOs to continue their activities in Vietnam and to welcome the new ones to enter the country, there are few actions that can be recommended to the government. Firstly, government should create a more effective communication channel with INGOs for them to share their missions and build trust. Once trust is set up, autonomy will be granted, intrinsic motivation is created, and INGOs will be more encouraged to follow and complete their missions. In the same vein, Visser et al. (2016) contend that high levels of autonomy are positively related with work-life balance satisfaction when trust in the management of the organization is high. Secondly, the government should frequently acknowledge the contribution and roles of INGOs in different forms (compliments, friendship medals, acknowledged in documents issued by the government, etc.). At the same time, PACCOM could also find ways to simplify their requirements on permission issuance or extension and so on. These two actions together will more or less create external regulations, which, according to the result of this study, will also enhance the motivation of people working in INGOs.

Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

WHY DO YOU DO YOUR WORK?

Part 1: General information

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: Under 21 21 – 25 26 – 30 31 - 35
 36 – 40 41 – 45 46 – 50 Above 50
3. Years of working experience: _____
4. Years of working experience in INGOs: _____
5. Position: Manager Staff

Part 2: Why do you do your work?

Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent each of the following items corresponds to the reasons why you are presently involved in your work. Please mark (x) into the appropriate box.

		Does not correspond at all			Corresponds moderately		Corresponds exactly		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	Because this is the type of work I chose to do to attain a certain lifestyle.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2	For the income it provides me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3	I ask myself this question, I don't seem to be able to manage the important tasks related to this work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4	Because I derive much pleasure from learning new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5	Because it has become a fundamental part of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6	Because I want to succeed at this job, if not I would be very ashamed of myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

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