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Research Article

Factors Affecting Employee Motivation in Selected Local Government Units (LGUs) in Davao Del Norte

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative descriptive-correlational research aimed to investigate the factors affecting employee motivation in selected local government units (LGUs) in Davao del Norte. In this study, 365 employees from various LGUs participated, providing insights into how financial incentives, career development, promotional opportunities, and job security influence their motivation levels. The researchers used adopted research instruments to assess the variables. Data were analyzed using statistical tools like Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r), and Regression Analysis. Based on the results of the study, financial incentives, career development, promotional opportunities, and job security collectively scored very high, indicating that these factors are evident at a very large extent. Similarly, the level of employee motivation among employees is evident to a very great extent. The findings further show that there is a significant relationship between factors affecting motivation and employee motivation among employees. The results also showed that the factors affecting motivation significantly predict the employee motivation among LGU employees in Davao Del Norte. The findings suggest that enhancing these influencing factors can effectively lead to increased levels of employee motivation. Based on these findings, the study recommends maintaining and increasing financial rewards, investing in career development and job security programs. Also, the Human Resource Department of each LGU may implement transparent, merit-based promotion policies aligned with organizational goals and employee performance. They may also foster employee well-being by introducing programs such as team-building activities, wellness initiatives, and recognition awards to build a motivating and supportive workplace.

Keywords: *Human resource management, Employee motivation, Financial incentives, Career development, promotional opportunities, Job security, Davao del Norte, Philippines*

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Introduction

Highly performing and productive government employees are essential in ensuring the delivery of quality public service. However, their effectiveness heavily depends on their level of motivation, as low motivation often leads to poor performance. Since motivation is a key driver of organizational success, its absence prevents employees from giving their best, thereby reducing the overall efficiency of the institution (Alwedyan & Al-Balqa, 2021). Moreover, Mourad (2024) stated that motivation is a vital force that drives public sector employees to stay committed to their duties, missions, and organizational goals. However, the challenge lies in its unstable nature as it often fades over time, leading to declining engagement and reduced effectiveness in the workplace. In addition, a low level of motivation among government employees increases the rate of absenteeism as they need more excitement and stimulus to attend work (Ha & Moon, 2023). Also, research revealed that government employees depart from offices due to low motivation (Credo & Naparota, 2022).

Issues related to employee motivation also exist in other countries. In fact, the findings of Agbanero (2023) revealed that lack of motivation is one of the major issues impeding excellent service performance in the Nigerian civil service. In Jordan, government workers struggle with motivation due to insufficient alignment with their work and lack of consideration for physical and moral incentives (Alwedyan & Al-Balqa, 2021). A study based in Portugal shows that over 40% of the workers felt unmotivated to do their jobs. This is due to low pay and benefits and lack of recognition (Forte et al., 2022). In addition, more than 50% of the U.S. workforce expresses disengagement with their employment due to these individuals' poor productivity.

In Matalam, North Cotabato, some regular employees of their LGU are found to have moderate employee motivation, due to the lack of need achievements and affiliation (Nitafan & Camay, 2022). Similarly, in the Municipality of Sara, Province of Iloilo, government employees disclose in a survey that low motivation causes them to perform poorly in public service. This is due to many factors, such as policy/

procedure, workload, professional opportunity, promotion, recognition, etc. (Dela Cruz, 2019).

Locally, a study about motivation among government employees in the Davao Region reveals that government personnel need to be more committed to their employer, which may be caused by a lack of motivation (De La Salde & Gempes, 2018). Moreover, a study about public service motivation in six (6) city governments of the Davao Region divulged that public service motivation significantly decreased; this is due to the existing organizational culture, such as salaries, duties, budgeting, and work environment that are not desirable as perceived by the employees (Dagohoy & Dura, 2022).

While earlier studies, such as that of Novianty and Evita (2018), have primarily focused on financial incentives, there is limited research that holistically integrates other factors like career development, promotional opportunities, and job security, particularly within the context of Philippine LGUs. Additionally, studies like Kabuka (2019), which employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, differ from this study that adopts a purely quantitative approach. Furthermore, the absence of government employees as participants in the works of Kabuka (2019) and Novianty and Evita (2018) underscores significant knowledge and population gaps that this research addressed.

Studying what motivates government workers is vital because motivated personnel result in improved government services for all of us. The urgent need to improve government operations and provide the public with more efficient services is the source of the urgency since low motivation greatly affects how government employees meet the needs of the public. Moreover, the problem of employee motivation needs to be solved to create an end to or lessen practices such as low productivity, absenteeism, and low level of work engagement in the workplace, which hinder the delivery of services. This study aimed to determine the relationship between the factors that affect motivation and employee motivation in the selected local government units (LGUs) in Davao Del Norte.

Furthermore, this study was anchored to Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory, which is a psychological theory that suggests that people's actions and decisions are influenced by their future expectations. Also, it suggests that rewards, such as putting in significant effort on a project for their employer, can significantly impact motivation, particularly when the goal is to earn compensation, recognition, or promotion. Moreover, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) is another foundation for this research. This theory of motivation holds that a person's needs and goals are all structured in a five-level pyramid, with the lowest level to the highest, which is the most significant (Sharma, 2021).

Method

This study used a non-experimental quantitative research design, specifically utilizing descriptive-correlational approach. Quantitative research is a method that uses structured surveys, experiments, or observations to gather objective information, which is then analyzed using statistical methods to draw conclusions and make predictions (Bouchrika, 2024). Moreover, descriptive-correlational approach was utilized to better understand the factors that influence employee motivation in certain LGUs in Davao del Norte. By looking at financial incentives, career development, promotional opportunities, and job security, the researcher hoped to uncover how these aspects affect the motivation of employees. Through this approach, the researchers explored the connections between these variables and their impact on employee motivation.

In addition, this study was conducted in the three Local Government Units (LGUs) in Davao del Norte. These LGUs were purposively selected based on their employee population size and their geographical proximity. Moreover, the respondents of this study consisted of employees from selected LGUs, which included permanent, casual, and job order employees. They were chosen through stratified random sampling to ensure fair representation across employment categories. Among the participating LGUs, LGU A had a total employee population of 4,724, from which 237 respondents were drawn. LGU B had 2,040 employees, with

103 respondents selected, while LGU C had 495 employees, represented by 25 respondents. Overall, the combined employee population from the three LGUs was 7,259, based on records from their respective Human Resource Departments. Using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator, the recommended sample size was 365 respondents.

The study used adapted survey questionnaires from the study of Kabuka (2019) to measure the following factors: financial incentives, career development, promotional opportunities, and job security. The Cronbach's alpha of this tool was .928 which indicates high reliability and internal consistency. Another tool was adapted from Brooks (2007) to gauge employee motivation, with Cronbach's alpha of .964, indicating high reliability and internal consistency. The data collected were analyzed using statistical tools such as Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r), and Regression Analysis.

In addition, a key limitation of this study lies in the reliance on self-reported data gathered through surveys. Since the respondents were employees of LGUs, their answers may have been influenced by social desirability bias or fear of possible repercussions, despite assurances of confidentiality. This could result in overreporting positive attitudes and underreporting negative experiences, which may affect the accuracy and objectivity of the findings.

Furthermore, the researcher secured ethical clearances from St. Mary's College of Tagum, Inc. – Research Ethics Committee (SMCTI – REC) and rigorously adhered to the ethical principles such as securing the informed consent of all the respondents, whose rights were respected and whose privacy and confidentiality were treated with high regard.

Results and Discussion

Extent of financial incentives

Table 1 shows the extent of financial incentives which has an overall mean of 4.57, with a descriptive equivalent of very high. This suggests that the extent of financial incentives affecting employee motivation among LGU employees is evident to a large extent. Additionally, the small standard deviation of 0.63 suggests that the respondents' responses are

closely clustered around the mean, signifying greater precision and reliability in the measurements or observations. The results further reveal that a competitive salary and allowances

can motivate employees to perform better. Additionally, the results suggest that working overtime with pay may enhance organizational performance.

Table 1. Extent of financial incentive

Items	Mean	SD	Des.
1. Good salary can motivate employee to work.	4.65	0.66	Very High
2. Fringe benefits lead employees to work hard.	4.57	0.70	Very High
3. Allowances do increase employee performance.	4.60	0.71	Very High
4. Bonuses influence employees' productivity.	4.59	0.71	Very High
5. Overtime can facilitate organization performance.	4.45	0.84	Very High
Overall Mean	4.57	0.63	Very High

The result is parallel to the finding of Novianty and Evita (2018), who demonstrated a clear connection between financial incentives and employee motivation. Their research concluded that financial rewards such as salaries, bonuses, and allowances significantly enhance employee performance and engagement. In addition, the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) by Deci (1971) explains the positive impact of financial incentives on employee motivation. CET posits that extrinsic rewards can enhance intrinsic motivation when they support an individual's sense of competence and autonomy. In addition, in motivating employees to retain in their work, Tejero et al. (2021) reported that aside from salaries, other financial incentives provided by the LGUs in the Philippines include travel allowances, the Personal Economic

Relief Allowance (PERA), hazard pay, and clothing and subsistence allowances.

Extent of career development

Table 2 shows the extent of career development which has an overall mean of 4.36, with a descriptive equivalent of very high. This means that the extent of career development among LGU employees is evident at a very large extent. Also, the standard deviation of 0.68 denotes that the responses of the respondents are clustered around the mean. The results further reveal that providing seminars and further educational training can stimulate the career of the employee. Additionally, the results suggest that having effective job rotation can also improve their motivation.

Table 2. Extent of career development

Items	Mean	SD	Des.
1. Seminars are provided by professionals.	4.42	0.71	Very High
2. Further education stimulates career of employee.	4.41	0.76	Very High
3. There are effective job rotation opportunities in the Institution.	4.32	0.80	Very High
4. There are education and self-training opportunities in workplace.	4.34	0.83	Very High
5. Employee development and succession plans are well implemented.	4.29	0.82	Very High
Overall Mean	4.36	0.68	Very High

The result aligns with Parsons' Career Development Theory, which emphasizes that aligning career opportunities with an individual's skills, interests, and values is crucial for job satisfaction and motivation (Andreev, 2023).

Gabriel (2023) supports this by demonstrating that training and development significantly enhance employees' skills and knowledge, thereby improving job performance. Similarly, Daang et al. (2024) revealed that career

development enhances skills for all LGU employees, fostering adaptability and boosting job satisfaction and efficiency. Additionally, the results are parallel to the findings of Thoyib et al. (2021), who demonstrated that career development plays a significant role in mediating employee motivation. Their study revealed that providing employees with opportunities for growth and advancement leads to higher levels of motivation.

Extent of promotional opportunities

Table 3 presents the extent of promotional opportunities which has an overall mean of

4.33, with a descriptive equivalent of very high. This means that the extent of promotional opportunities among LGU employees is evident at a very large extent. Also, the standard deviation of 0.76 denotes that the responses of the respondents are clustered around the mean. The results further reveal that promotional an employee has consequently improved the motivation of the employee and having also a clear organization structure can also affect the motivation itself. Additionally, the results suggest that a low rate of employee turnover may enhance employees' performance.

Table 3. Extent of promotional opportunities

Items	Mean	SD	Des.
1. Institution has a culture to promote its employees.	4.39	0.83	Very High
2. Promotion policies have fair promotion decisions.	4.29	0.88	Very High
3. Institution has a clear organization structure.	4.35	0.87	Very High
4. Institution promote employee at reasonable times.	4.31	0.89	Very High
5. Low rate of employee turnover.	4.29	0.94	Very High
Overall Mean	4.33	0.76	Very High

The result aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which posits that motivators such as recognition, achievement, and growth contribute directly to job satisfaction and motivation (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Hartman (2021) supports this by demonstrating that promotional opportunities provide employees with increased compensation and recognition, which are critical for maintaining high motivation levels. Similarly, Alrawahi et al. (2020) found that recognition and growth opportunities significantly enhance employees' job satisfaction and motivation. In the same vein, Ford et al. (2025) stated that when an organization's recognition system identifies high-performing employees with strong potential, it becomes advantageous for the organization to promote them to meet its internal staffing and leadership needs. On the other hand, in Cagayan, Philippines, although employee performance was generally high, inconsistencies existed in the implementation of promotion processes; thus,

there is the need to improve communication and evaluation procedures within the LGU's promotion system to ensure greater transparency, fairness, and alignment with the principles of the Local Government Code of the Philippines (Maramag, 2024).

Extent of job security

Table 4 presents the extent of job security which has an overall mean of 4.33, with the descriptive equivalent of very high, which shows that the extent of job security among LGU employees is evident to a very large extent. In addition, the standard deviation of 0.75 denotes that the respondents' responses are clustered closely to the mean. The results revealed that having pension funds and long-term job prospects creates an employee's interest in increasing their motivation. Furthermore, when employees work in a union term, they feel motivated to work.

Table 4. Extent of job security

Items	Mean	SD	Des.
1. Employment laws are well observed.	4.33	0.85	Very High
2. Employment contracts have long-term job prospects.	4.34	0.87	Very High
3. Institution has clear organization plan.	4.33	0.83	Very High
4. Employees join the workers' unions.	4.30	0.91	Very High
5. Organization allows employees to join pension funds.	4.37	0.81	Very High
Overall Mean	4.33	0.75	Very High

The result aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which posits that hygiene factors such as job security prevent dissatisfaction and contribute to overall job satisfaction and motivation. Employees who feel secure in their jobs are more motivated and able to concentrate on their tasks (Strick, 2022). In addition, Sohalia et al. (2020) support this by demonstrating that job security significantly enhances employee motivation and productivity. They also emphasized the importance of job security in enhancing job satisfaction and motivation. Similarly, Herrity (2023) found that increased job security motivates workers to perform better in their current positions and further their careers with the company. In the same vein, Alajlouni and Nawafleh (2018) found that employees with low job satisfaction and insecurity about their employment tend to reduce organizational productivity, suggesting that ensuring

job security enhances satisfaction and performance. Likewise, Kayar and Yesilada (2024) confirmed that job security has a positive impact on sustaining employees' job performance.

Level of employee motivation

Table 5 presents the level of employee motivation which has an overall mean of 4.32, with a descriptive equivalent of very high. This means that the extent of motivation among LGU employees is evident at a very large extent. In addition, the standard deviation of 0.59 denotes that the responses of the respondents are clustered closely to the mean. The results further reveal that when they do their job well it makes them different also employees are challenged to do their job while they are aiming for promotion in the company.

Table 5. Level of employee motivation

Variable	Overall Mean	SD	Des.
Employee Motivation	4.33	0.75	Very High

This result aligns with Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to act in certain ways based on their expectations of the outcomes (Vroom, 1964). In line with this, Grzesiak et al. (2024) confirmed in their study that highly motivated employees show higher work efficiency and care more about the quality of their products or services, which positively strengthens the organization's credibility and position as a stable employer. Furthermore, Tenney (2024) stated that motivation plays a role in engaging employees in their work, energizing their efforts, increasing their dedication, and driving their performance. He added that employee motivation is greater when employee needs are being met.

Also, Uka and Prendi (2021) reported that the more motivated the employees are, the better they perform at work. On the other hand, the result is in contrast with the findings of Sibonde and Dassah (2021) that employee motivation is low in the municipality in the Western Cape province, which indicates that participants are motivated to a little extent.

Significance of the relationship between factors affecting employee motivation

Table 6 shows the results of testing the significance of the relationship between factors that affect motivation and employee motivation among employees of the selected local government units (LGU'S) in Davao Del Norte. The

factors affecting employees towards work have displayed a moderate positive linear relationship significantly correlated to the employee's

motivation ($p < .05$), with a correlation coefficient of 0.731.

Table 6. Significance of the relationship between factors affecting employee motivation

Variables Correlated	r	p-value	Remarks
Financial Incentives	0.182	0.000	Significant
Career Development	0.174	0.001	Significant
Promotional Opportunity	0.229	0.000	Significant
Job Security	0.286	0.000	Significant

This result is consistent with the finding of Dessler (2014), who similarly identified that motivational factors such as financial incentives, career development opportunities, and job security significantly enhance employee motivation. Dessler's conclusions align with the results of this study, as both emphasize the importance of linking performance to rewards and offering clear career advancement pathways to maintain high levels of employee engagement and motivation. Likewise, the study by Novianty and Evita (2018) supports these results, demonstrating that financial rewards, including salaries and bonuses, are key drivers of employee performance and satisfaction. This congruence further reinforces the role of financial incentives as a vital motivational factor in the workplace. Furthermore, Uka and Prendi (2021) reported that employees feel satisfied and motivated when they receive extra bonuses, are promoted in their roles and responsibilities, and feel appreciated by others, especially by their supervisors.

Regression analysis on factors affecting employee motivation

Table 7 presents the results of the regression analysis on factors that predict employee motivation among employees of the selected local government units (LGU'S) in Davao Del Norte. The results indicate a significant influ-

ence of the factors affecting motivation on employee motivation, as evidenced by the statistical outputs. The B-Coefficient of 0.731 suggests a strong positive relationship between the motivational factors and employee motivation, indicating that for every unit increase in the factors affecting motivation, employee motivation increases by 0.731 units. This strong positive B-Coefficient highlights the substantial impact that motivational factors have on enhancing employee motivation.

Furthermore, the R-Squared value of 0.534 indicates that the factors affecting motivation can explain approximately 53.4% of the variance in employee motivation. This suggests that more than half of the changes in employee motivation can be attributed to the combined influence of financial incentives, career development opportunities, promotional opportunities, and job security.

The results indicate a significant influence of the factors on employee motivation. This result aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which asserts that financial rewards, such as salaries, allowances, and bonuses, are crucial for enhancing employee motivation by preventing dissatisfaction. Herzberg's theory categorizes financial incentives as hygiene factors that, while not necessarily motivating, eliminate dissatisfaction and contribute to improved performance.

Table 7. Regression analysis on factors affecting employee motivation

IV	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	p	Re-mark
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Cons.)	1.132	.158	-		7.177	.000	Sig.
Financial Incentives	.168	.043	.182		3.907	.000	Sig.
Career Development	.150	.045	.174		3.535	.001	Sig.

IV	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	p	Re-mark
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
Promotional Opportunities	.176	0.42	.229		4.205	.000	Sig.
Job Security	.225	0.42	.286		5.403	.000	Sig.
r= 0.731; R squared = 0.534; F-value =416.631; p =.000							

Moreover, the finding is also congruent to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, where job security is considered part of the safety needs, which must be fulfilled before an individual can focus on higher-level motivators like self-actualization. In addition, the finding aligns with the Goal-Setting Theory, which emphasizes the importance of clear career progression goals in driving motivation. The availability of promotions is a powerful extrinsic motivator, encouraging employees to enhance their performance in pursuit of higher positions. Furthermore, the research of Thoyib et al. (2021) supports this finding by demonstrating that career development opportunities play a critical role in increasing employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. The alignment between these theories and studies with the findings of this research underscores the importance of offering career development opportunities as a key factor in fostering employee engagement and motivation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, employees of selected LGUs in Davao del Norte experience financial incentives, career development, promotional opportunities, and job security to a very large extent, highlighting the robust measures in place to support their professional and personal well-being. Additionally, the level of employee motivation among these employees is also evident to a very large extent, reflecting their high engagement and satisfaction with their roles. The study further establishes a significant relationship between the factors affecting motivation and the level of employee motivation, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these elements. Moreover, these factors significantly predict employee motivation, underscoring their critical role in fostering a motivated and productive workforce within the

LGUs of Davao del Norte. These findings highlight the importance of continuous efforts to enhance motivational factors to sustain and improve employee performance and satisfaction. At the policy level, LGUs may institutionalize capacity-building and promotion frameworks to sustain motivation and productivity among employees.

Furthermore, from a theoretical standpoint, this study validates Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory within the context of Philippine local governance. The findings affirm that intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, such as promotional opportunities, recognition, and financial incentives, remain central to employee motivation even in public sector.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that Local Government Units (LGUs) institutionalize policies that ensure sustainable employee motivation and performance. Specifically, LGUs may adopt ordinances or administrative policies that formalize financial incentive systems, including regular salary reviews, performance-based bonuses, and standardized allowances, to recognize merit and sustain motivation across departments. At the policy level, LGUs are encouraged to invest in long-term career development frameworks, such as continuous professional training programs, competency-based promotion systems, and clear career progression pathways. Strengthening job security policies may be done, through fair contractual practices, transparent employment regularization, and compliance with civil service standards; this is also to foster trust and loyalty among employees.

For future researchers, it is recommended to employ longitudinal or qualitative research

designs to explore changes in employee motivation over time and gain deeper insights into personal and organizational experiences that quantitative data may not fully capture. Expanding future studies to include different LGU contexts or other public institutions may also yield more comprehensive findings on employee motivation dynamics.

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